

WOMEN'S WORK



IVES
COLLECTIVE

Winter Collective



Friday, January 27, 2023

7:30PM

St. Mark's Church, Palo Alto

Sunday, January 29, 2023

4:00PM

Old First Concerts, San Francisco



Kay Stern, violin
Robin Sharp, violin
Clio Tilton, viola
Stephen Harrison, cello
Elizabeth Schumann, piano



Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel

String Quartet in E-flat Major (1834)

Felix Mendelssohn

Adagio from the String Quartet in F Minor,
Op.80 (1847)

Florence Beatrice Price

Piano Quintet in A Minor (1936)



Please save these dates!



2022-2023 Concert Series

SPRING COLLECTIVE

St. Mark's Church, Palo Alto: **Friday, March 10, 2023**

Old First Concerts, San Francisco: **Sunday, March 12, 2023**

Helen Grime - Quartet for Oboe and String Trio (2012)

Amy Beach - Theme and Variations for Flute and String Quartet, Op.80 (1916, rev. 1920)

Antonin Dvořák - Piano Quintet in A Major, Op.81 (1887)

Artists: Kay Stern, violin; Susan Freier, violin; Clio Tilton, viola; Stephen Harrison, cello
Kyle Bruckmann, oboe; Tod Brody, flute; Keisuke Nakagoshi, piano

4 PM Sunday Salon Series

March 5, 2023

SALON VENUE

Social Hall - St. Mark's Episcopal Church

600 Colorado Ave, Palo Alto, CA

Salon Concerts

Along with guest moderator, U.C. Santa Barbara musicologist Derek Katz, we discuss and demonstrate what fascinates us about a chosen piece, taking us deeper into the creative process. We particularly enjoy the exchange of ideas with patrons about the composer's intentions and our interpretation of the music. This season Salon concerts will be offered in the Social Hall at St. Mark's Church, Palo Alto, in order to allow for socially distanced seating.

All programs, artists and policies of the Ives Collective are subject to change without notice.



IVES COLLECTIVE

Kay Stern and Robin Sharp, violins
Clio Tilton, viola; Stephen Harrison, cello
Elizabeth Schumann, piano

String Quartet in E-flat Major, H.277 (1834)

Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel

(1805-1847)

Adagio ma non troppo

Allegretto

Romanze

Allegro molto vivace

String Quartet in F Minor, Op.80 (1847)

Felix Mendelssohn

(1809-1847)

Adagio (Third Movement)

Intermission

Piano Quintet in A Minor (ca.1936)

Florence Beatrice Price

(1887-1953)

Allegro ma non troppo

Andante con moto

Juba. Allegro

Scherzo. Allegro - Coda

String Quartet in E-flat Major

Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel

Fanny Mendelssohn and her brother Felix were born into the same wealthy and privileged family, received a broad and excellent education from the same private tutors, and were precocious as both keyboard players and composers. Fanny seems to have been at least as gifted as her brother, and the siblings regarded each other as musical equals, showing each other their compositions and offering critiques to each other. And yet, one sibling became one of the most famous musicians in Europe, while the other confined herself to presenting salons in a Berlin garden house. In a sadly explicit 1820 letter, their father wrote to Fanny, "Music will perhaps become Felix's profession, while for you it can and must only be an ornament, never the foundation of your being and doing... Remain true to this line of conduct; it is feminine, and only what is truly feminine is an ornament to your sex."

Felix's participation in public musical culture resulted in works involving large forces, especially orchestral music and oratorios. Fanny, meanwhile, concentrated on short solo piano works and songs, exactly the music best suited for domestic use. This split between two musical worlds, one male, public and professional, and the other female, private and amateur, could hardly be clearer.

Fanny Mendelssohn was a very prolific composer, but her 1834 string quartet is a rare example of an extended multi-movement ensemble work. There is no evidence that it was played at one of her salons, or that she ever heard the piece. The manuscript languished unpublished until 1988. The first two movements of the quartet were originally conceived as part of a piano sonata, begun in 1829 and never completed.

The initial bars of the first movement are immediately reminiscent of the opening of Beethoven's "Harp" Quartet, Op. 74, and thereby of Felix Mendelssohn's 1829 Quartet, Op. 12, which also opens with a reference to the same Beethoven quartet. (All three quartets are in E-flat Major, although Fanny's quartet begins in C Minor.). Fanny's incomplete piano sonata was clearly a response to her brother's new work, and she surely must have had a string quartet in her ear even as she wrote for the piano. Both the Beethoven and Felix Mendelssohn models begin with slow introductions, but Fanny's response turns out to be a self-contained slow movement that does not arrive at the home key of E-flat Major until its end. The movement is fantasia-like, moving from key to key, and trying out different melodic ideas. Felix criticized the freedom of the modulations and the apparent lack of form of this movement, although Fanny (in a strikingly passive-aggressive exchange of letters) pointed out that he himself had done similar things in a recent work.

The ensuing C Minor Scherzo was her brother's favorite part of the quartet. The outer sections of the Scherzo are mostly quiet, with some sneaky plucked notes enlivening the texture. The middle section is assertive, major and contrapuntal.

This is another unmistakable Beethoven reference, this time to the middle of the Scherzo from the Symphony no. 5. Felix also was very fond of the theme of the third movement, *Romanze*. The opening phrases sound like the beginning of a song-like piece, as implied by the title, but the lyrical phrases shared by all four string players quickly give way to unsettled music that is more about development than about singing. The final movement is the only one in the nominal home key of E-flat Major, and is light and charming, especially in comparison to the predominantly serious music that has preceded it. There are some particularly effective combinations of lyrical melodies with rapid accompaniments, including a lilting violin melody over passage work from the viola, and, near the end, a gesture very typical of her brother, with the first violin soaring over brilliant arpeggios from the second violin.

String Quartet in F Minor, Op.80
Adagio (Third Movement)

Felix Mendelssohn

Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel died in May 1847, suffering two strokes while rehearsing a cantata by Felix for one of her Sunday salon concerts. Felix was devastated by the news, and collapsed in shock. After retreating with his family from public life for a few months, he gathered himself to write his final string quartet, which has always been understood as a kind of requiem for his sister. Three of the four movements are filled with stormy, agitated music. The slow movement that will be played today, however, is the one glowing moment of comfort in the quartet, seeming to offer a memorial to Fanny in the midst of anger and confusion over her death.

The movement starts with a simple descending scale fragment from the cello, seemingly an introduction to the true theme, presented by the first violin and beginning with an expressively drooping sigh. As the violin melody rises in pitch and volume, it climaxes with the same scale fragment first heard in the cello. This fragment then drops through the instruments, returning to the cello, where it once again introduces the violin sigh. The contrasting material consists of repeated chords articulated in dotted rhythms, offering a more affirmative sentiment.

Felix never truly recovered from his sister's death, and died, also from a series of strokes, six months after Fanny. The Op. 80 string quartet was his final substantial composition.

Quintet for Piano and Strings in A Minor

Florence Beatrice Price

The Piano Quintet in A Minor is from a trove of unpublished compositions by the African-American composer Florence Price, rescued from her long-abandoned summer home in St. Anne, Illinois in 2009. Nearly all accounts of Price's career

juxtapose the near-loss of these manuscripts with a performance of Price's first symphony by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in 1933, creating a compelling story of fame, neglect, and now rediscovery. While it is true that Frederick Stock and the Chicago Symphony premiered Price's symphony, that her name was unknown even to musicians and academic specialists for much of the 20th century, and that her works are now frequently performed and recorded by high-profile ensembles, the simple narrative arc is a little misleading.

The Chicago Symphony performance was not a subscription concert, but a one-off performance as part of a program of African-American music presented at the "Century of Progress" World's Fair. Price was a successful musician in the 1930s, but she was a regional success, based in the Upper Midwest. There is no doubt that she suffered from racism and sexism, but she also benefited from a support network of local music clubs, national awards and New Deal programs that in many ways offered more opportunities for women and African-Americans in the 1930s than have been available since. To give two examples, Price's first symphony won the top prize in the annual Wanamaker Music Contest for African-American composers, and her third symphony was premiered by the Michigan Works Progress Administration Orchestra in 1940. It is likely that this Piano Quintet was composed for the Chicago Composers-Forum Laboratory, another WPA group. The neglect of Price's music after her death is mostly a consequence of her major works not having been published. She did publish many pedagogical works for piano as well as other short piano works and even popular songs (under a pseudonym), but the symphonies and chamber music remained in manuscript.

As far as its style and musical characters, the Piano Quintet in A Minor is similar to Price's other major works of the 1930s. Her musical language is lush and romantic, and strongly marked by musical topics that would have been recognized as African-American at the time. The themes of the first movement use a pentatonic, gapped scale and melodic figures that evoke African-American spirituals. Price would have known the spiritual as a form of art song, and arranged many spirituals herself. (One of Price's arrangements was the closing number for Marian Anderson's recital at the Lincoln Memorial in 1939.) Price also would have known of Antonín Dvořák's use of elements of spirituals in his "New World" Symphony, and she is clearly following his prescription to create a "national" style (in this case, African-American) through the addition of "national" elements to a basically European style.

The second movement theme is set over hymn-like chords in the piano, again using pentatonic scales that suggest spirituals. The third movement is called *Juba*, after an African-American vernacular dance that involved foot-stomping and patting various parts of the body. Price also used *Juba* dances in her symphonies and in her string quartet, as well as in independent piano works, but she probably knew the style from art music like R. Nathaniel Dett's "In the Bottoms" rather than from ver-

nacular practice. Price's syncopated movement sounds much like the stylized cakewalks popular in the early ragtime era, with something that sounds suspiciously like a boogie-woogie bass line in the piano left hand near the end. The last movement, again typically for Price, is a lively Scherzo in 6/8 meter.

—Notes by Dr. Derek Katz



Kay Stern is currently the Concertmaster of the San Francisco Opera Orchestra, a position she has held since 1994. She has served as assistant to Dorothy DeLay at the Aspen Music Festival, assistant to the Juilliard Quartet at the Juilliard School, has been a faculty member at the Cleveland Institute of Music, the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and the University of San Francisco.

Kay has been featured on television and radio. She has appeared in PBS's "Live from Lincoln Center," CNN's "Women Today," Minnesota Public Radio's Garrison Keillor "A Prairie Home Companion," "St. Paul Sunday Morning," and WQXR-NY Robert Sherman's "Listening Room". As former first violinist and founding member of the Lark String Quartet, she performed and gave master classes throughout the United States, Europe, and Asia. Some of Kay's Concertmaster positions have included The Orchestra of St. Luke's, Concordia at Lincoln Center, Cabrillo Music Festival, Cleveland Chamber Symphony, and the Youngstown Symphony Orchestra.



Violinist **Robin Sharp** is on the music faculty at Stanford University as a Senior Lecturer in Violin and Chamber Music, and also maintains a private teaching studio. She performs as Concertmaster of the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra and is frequently featured as a soloist. Her chamber music engagements include ongoing collaborations with the Saint Michael Trio, the ensemble in residence at the Montalvo Arts Center, and with the Prospect Park Chamber Players. Ms. Sharp played in the San Francisco Symphony violin sections for several seasons and is currently an active substitute violinist with them.

Ms. Sharp has appeared in recital at many prestigious venues including Carnegie Hall in New York, the Musikverein in Vienna, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the National Music Hall in Taipei, and the Palace of the Legion of Honor in San Francisco where she performed on Jascha Heifetz's Del Gesu violin.

She has participated in music festivals worldwide, including California Summer Music, the Musikalischer Sommer Festival in Germany, the Marlboro Music Festival, the Aspen Music Festival, the Sandor Vegh masterclasses at Prussia Cove, and the Isaac Stern Seminar in New York. She has formerly served as first violinist of the Ives String Quartet, which toured nationally, and was based in California.



Freelance violist **Clio Tilton** delights in the diversity and excitement in her career. Seeking to share her gifts through both teaching and performing, she can be heard around the Bay Area in a wide range of groups: early music ensembles, symphony orchestras, and chamber groups.

Clio performs with the San Francisco Symphony, the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra, the San Francisco Contemporary Players, Oakland Symphony, Berkeley Symphony, the American Bach Soloists, as well as other regional orchestras. Sought-after as a chamber musician, Clio has performed with the Friction Quartet, Classical Revolution, Candlelight Concerts, and is a founding member of the Chamber Music Society of San Francisco. She has recorded for Time Warner with the Camerata de Lausanne, and has also been heard in recordings with Shajarian, Geographer, and Meklit.



Stephen Harrison, cello, and Co-Artistic Director of the Ives Collective has been on the Stanford University faculty since 1983. A graduate of Oberlin College and Boston University, he has been solo cellist of the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players since 1985. He has toured internationally and recorded on the Delos, CRI, New Albion and Newport Classics labels. Stephen has been on the faculty of the Pacific Music Festival, the Orfeo and Schlern International Music Festivals (Italy) and the Rocky Ridge Music Center. He is currently principal cellist at the Mendocino Music Festival and performs and teaches at the SoCal Chamber Music Workshop.



Pianist **Elizabeth Schumann** has a diverse career portfolio of projects, recordings, and performances that have brought her all over the world as recitalist, chamber musician, and concerto soloist. The Washington Post Magazine noted her playing as “deft, relentless, and devastatingly good—the sort of performance you experience not so much with your ears as your solar plexus.”

The first place winner of both the Bösendorfer International Piano Competition and the Pacific International Piano Competition, Elizabeth has won over 25 prizes and awards in other major national and international competitions, including the Cleveland International Piano Competition and the Hilton Head International Piano Competition. Elizabeth was honored with the prestigious Gilmore Young Artists Award, and was highlighted in a PBS Television documentary on the Gilmore Festival.

She has performed solo recitals and chamber music concerts worldwide, in such venues as the Kennedy Center, Vienna’s Bösendorfer Saal, Toronto’s Koerner Hall, and Montreal’s Place des Arts. Featured at the International UNICEF benefit concert for Hurricane Katrina Victims, the Cannes Film Festival, the Gilmore Festival, Australia’s Huntington Festival, the Musica Viva chamber music series, the Ravinia “Rising Stars” Series, and National Public Radio’s “Performance Today”, her recitals have been broadcast live on public radio and television in cities around the world, including Washington D.C., New York, Sydney, Cleveland, Montréal, Dallas, and Chicago. Elizabeth gave the world premiere performance of Carl Vine’s Sonata No. 3, which the composer dedicated to her.

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Charitable support covers more than half of the programming expenses, allowing us to provide you and all of our audience members with extraordinary concerts and memorable music at affordable prices. Every gift is important because, without contributions from you and others, our lowest priced ticket would be well over \$100!

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Mission

The Ives Collective presents powerful live music experiences through fresh and informed interpretations of established masterworks and under-appreciated gems.

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We are so pleased to welcome you back!

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