

This afternoon's concert is co-sponsored by
A FRIEND OF ESSEX WINTER SERIES

PROGRAM OF TRIOS
FOR PIANO, VIOLIN, AND CELLO

Mihae Lee, *piano*

Chee-Yun, *violin*

Julie Albers, *cello*

Piano Trio No. 39 in G major, "Gypsy"

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

Andante

Poco adagio, cantabile

Rondo a l'Ongarese: Presto

Piano Trio in A minor

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Modéré

Pantoum (Assez vif)

Passacaille (Très large)

Final (Animé)

INTERMISSION

Piano Trio No. 2 in C minor, Op. 66

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1809-1847)

Allegro energico e con fuoco

Andante espressivo

Scherzo: Molto allegro quasi presto

Finale: Allegro appassionato



Praised by Boston Globe as “simply dazzling,” Artistic Director and pianist **Mihae Lee** has been captivating audiences throughout North and South America, Europe, and Asia in solo recitals and chamber music concerts with her poetic lyricism and scintillating virtuosity. She has performed in such venues as Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center, Jordan Hall, Berlin Philharmonie, Academia Nazionale de Santa Cecilia in Rome, Warsaw National Philharmonic Hall, and Taipei National Hall. An active chamber musician, Ms. Lee is an artist member of the Boston Chamber Music Society and is a founding member of the Triton Horn Trio with violinist Ani Kavafian and hornist William Purvis. Her recordings

of Brahms, Shostakovich, Bartok, and Stravinsky with the members of BCMS were critically acclaimed by High Fidelity, CD Review, and Fanfare magazines, the reviews calling her sound “as warm as Rubinstein, yet virile as Toscanini.” Ms. Lee has appeared frequently at numerous international chamber music festivals including Dubrovnik, Amsterdam, Groningen, Festicamara (Colombia), Great Woods, Seattle, OK Mozart, Mainly Mozart, Music from Angel Fire, Chamber Music Northwest, Rockport, Sebago-Long Lake, Bard, Norfolk, Mostly Music, Music Mountain, Monadnock, and Chestnut Hill Concerts. In addition to many years of performing regularly at Bargemusic in New York, she has been a guest artist with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, and Speculum Musicae; has collaborated with the Tokyo, Muir, Cassatt, and Manhattan string quartets; and has premiered and recorded works by such composers as Gunther Schuller, Ned Rorem, Paul Lansky, Henri Lazarof, Michael Daugherty, and Ezra Laderman. In addition to her concert career, Ms. Lee maintains her commitment to give back to her community and help many worthy charities. At the invitation of the Prime Minister and the First Lady of Jamaica, she has organized and performed in concerts in Kingston and Montego Bay to benefit the Jamaica Early Childhood Development Foundation. For many years she brought world-class musicians, both classical and jazz, to perform in fund-raising concerts for the Hastings Education Foundation outside of New York City, and she recently launched an annual Gala Concert for the Community Health Clinic of Butler County, a free health clinic outside of Pittsburgh. Born in Seoul, Korea, Ms. Lee made her professional debut at the age of fourteen with the Korean National Orchestra after becoming the youngest grand prizewinner at the prestigious National Competition held by the President of Korea. In the same year, she came to the United States on a scholarship from The Juilliard School Pre-College, and subsequently won many further awards including First Prize at the Kosciuszko Foundation Chopin Competition, the Juilliard Concerto Competition, and the New England Conservatory Concerto Competition. Ms. Lee received her bachelor’s and master’s degrees from The Juilliard School and her artist diploma from the New England Conservatory, studying with Martin Canin and Russell Sherman. She has released compact discs on the Bridge, Etcetera, EDI, Northeastern, and BCM labels.



Winner of the 1989 Young Concert Artists International Auditions and the 1990 Avery Fisher Career Grant, violinist **Chee-Yun** performs regularly with the world's foremost orchestras, including the Philadelphia Orchestra, the London Philharmonic, and the Toronto, Houston, Seattle, Pittsburgh, and National symphony orchestras among many others, and has performed with such distinguished conductors as Hans Graf, James DePriest, Jesus Lopez-Cobos, Michael Tilson Thomas, Krzysztof Penderecki, Neeme Järvi, and Pinchas Zukerman. Internationally, Chee-Yun has toured with the Haifa Symphony, the Hong Kong Philharmonic, Germany's Braunschweig Orchestra and the MDR Radio Leipzig and performed with the St. Petersburg Camerata, the Bamberg Philharmonic, the Bilbao Symphony, the London Festival Orchestra, the Nagoya Philharmonic, and the KBS Symphony Orchestra. She has toured the United States with the San Francisco Symphony (Michael Tilson Thomas conducting), and Japan with the NHK Symphony.

As a recitalist, Chee-Yun has performed in many major U.S. cities including New York, Chicago, Washington, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Atlanta. She has toured with Music from Marlboro and appears frequently with Spoleto USA, a project she has been associated with since its inception. Additional chamber music appearances include the Ravinia, Aspen, Bravo! Vail Valley, La Jolla, Caramoor, Green Music, Santa Fe and Bridgewater festivals in the US, and festivals in Ireland, Italy, France, Poland, and Japan.

Chee-Yun has received exceptional acclaim as a recording artist since the release of her debut album of virtuoso encore pieces in 1993. Her recent recording of the Penderecki Violin Concerto No. 2 on Naxos was acclaimed as were releases on the Denon label of concertos by Mendelssohn, Lallo, and Vieuxtemps; three French violin sonatas and the violin sonatas of Szymanowski and Franck; and the violin sonatas of Brahms and Strauss. Two compilation discs, *Vocalise d'amour*, and *The Very Best of Chee-Yun*, feature highlights of Chee-Yun's earlier recordings. In 2007, Chee-Yun recorded the Beethoven Triple Concerto with Camerata Ireland for Satirino Records and in 2008, Decca/Korea released "Serenata Notturmo," an album of light classics that went platinum within six months of its release.

Chee-Yun's first public performance at age eight took place in her native Seoul after she won the Grand Prize of the Korean Times Competition. At thirteen, she came to the United States and was invited to perform in a New York Philharmonic Young People's Concert In Korea, Chee-Yun studied with Nam Yun Kim. In the United States, she has worked with Dorothy DeLay, Hyo Kang, Daniel Phillips and Felix Galimir at The Juilliard School.

Chee-Yun gives master classes around the world and has held several teaching posts at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, and the Indiana University School of Music. In August 2007, she was appointed Artist-in-Residence and Professor of Violin at Southern Methodist University in Dallas.

Chee-Yun plays the Stradivarius "Ex-Strauss" (Cremona, 1708), which is on loan through the generous efforts of the Samsung Foundation of Culture of Korea and the Stradivari Society of Chicago, Illinois.



American cellist Julie Albers is recognized for her superlative artistry, her charismatic and radiant performing style, and her intense musicianship. She was born into a musical family in Longmont, Colorado and began violin studies at the age of two with her mother, switching to cello at four. She moved to Cleveland during her junior year of high school to pursue studies through the Young Artist Program at the Cleveland Institute of Music, where she studied with Richard Aaron. Miss Albers soon was awarded the Grand Prize at the XIII International Competition for Young Musicians in Douai, France, and as a result toured France as soloist with Orchestre Symphonique de Douai.

Julie Albers made her major orchestral debut with the Cleveland Orchestra in 1998, and thereafter has performed in recital and with orchestras throughout North America, Europe, Korea, Taiwan, Australia, and New Zealand. In 2001, she won Second Prize in Munich's Internationalen Musikwettbewerb der ARD, and was also awarded the Wilhelm-Weichsler-Musikpreis der Stadt Osnabruch . While in Germany, she recorded solo and chamber music of Kodaly for the Bavarian Radio, performances that have been heard throughout Europe. In 2003, Miss Albers was named the first Gold Medal Laureate of South Korea's Gyeongnam International Music Competition, winning the \$25,000 Grand Prize.

In North America, Miss Albers has performed with many important orchestras and ensembles. Recent performances have included exciting debuts on the San Francisco Performances series and with the Grant Park Music Festival where she performed Penderecki's Concerto Grosso for 3 cellos with Mr. Penderecki conducting. Past seasons have included concerto appearances with the Orchestras of Colorado, Indianapolis, San Diego, Seattle, Vancouver, and Munchener Kammerorchester among others.

In addition to solo performances, Miss Albers regularly participates in chamber music festivals around the world. 2009 marked the end of a three year residency with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center Two. She is currently active with the Albers String Trio and the Cortona Trio. Teaching is also a very important part of Miss Albers' musical life. She currently is Assistant Professor and holds the Mary Jean and Charles Yales Cello Chair at the McDuffie Center for Strings at Mercer University in Macon, Georgia.

Miss Albers' debut album with Orion Weiss includes works by Rachmaninoff, Beethoven, Schumann, Massenet, and Piatagorsky and is available on the Artek Label. Julie Albers performs on a N.F. Vuillaume cello made in 1872 and makes her home in Atlanta with her husband, Bourbon, and their dog, Dozer .

Program Notes

By Barbara Leish

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

Piano Trio in G major, Hob. XV: 25, “Gypsy” (1795)

For many years Haydn served contentedly as Kappellmeister at the court of the Hungarian Prince Nicholas Esterházy, producing a huge body of work that made him famous throughout Europe. After Esterházy died in 1790, however, Haydn was eager for a change of scene. Within weeks the violinist and concert promoter Johann Peter Salomon arrived at his door and announced, “I am Salomon from London and have come to fetch you.” With that, Haydn set off on the first of two extended visits to London, where he was given a hero’s welcome. The adulation, the availability of a bigger orchestra, the discovery of a more modern piano, the opportunity to have his music performed publicly before large and enthusiastic audiences – all this rejuvenated him and inspired him to compose his last and greatest symphonies, string quartets, and piano sonatas and trios.

Haydn’s last piano trios are among his most musically distinguished and thoroughly delightful works. Yet during his lifetime (and even today) they were not generally regarded as among his greatest achievements. One reason is that in the 18th century the piano was seen as an instrument played mostly by women, at home. So music for combinations that included the piano wasn’t taken as seriously as music for a string quartet. In addition, piano trios in Haydn’s day were dominated by the piano, with the violin given an occasional solo and the cello assigned primarily to double the piano’s bass line. While Haydn sticks to this pattern, his handling of the instrumental combination is imaginative and inspired.

Like his other late piano trios, the Piano Trio in G major is marked by wit, surprise, inventive modulations, and brilliant piano writing. The surprise is in the structure: Haydn lulls his listeners with two slow movements before jolting them with the high-spirited Rondo that gives the work its name. The Trio begins with a gracious and relaxed theme and variations, with the violin and the piano playing the theme together while the cello gives important support. (The bass of Haydn’s fortepiano was thin and weak, and the cello provided essential reinforcement.) The variations, which alternate between major and minor, develop mainly through rhythmic embellishments. The flowing second movement, in the unexpected key of E major, is a gentle Adagio whose middle section features a particularly lovely melody for the violin. Then come the fireworks. Haydn drew his tunes for the Rondo all’Ongarese (Rondo in the Hungarian gypsy style) from the gypsy and Magyar music he had heard over the years, including the verbunkos, the recruiting dance played in villages by gypsy bands to entice young men to join the army. His Rondo is a feast of zestful melodies and foot-stamping rhythms -- a bravura example of the inventiveness Haydn brought to his last piano trios.

Haydn dedicated the “Gypsy” Trio to Rebecca Schröter, an English widow whom he later described to a friend as “lovely and amiable and in all likelihood I should have married her if I had been single.”

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Piano Trio in A minor (1914)

In a comment that sheds fascinating light on how Ravel worked, he wrote to a friend who had asked about a piano trio he was working on, “My Trio is finished. I only need the themes for it.” In other words, he had first worked out the intricate shapes and the harmonic plans of the movements before composing the melodies themselves. Before Ravel completed the Trio, though, war with Germany broke out. Although he was 39 years old, short and underweight, he was determined to enlist – but first he had to finish the last movement. While he usually proceeded slowly and fastidiously, now he worked frantically to finish as quickly as possible. Finally he was able to report to Stravinsky, “The idea that I should be leaving at once made me get through five months’ work in five weeks!” Surprisingly, the Piano Trio reflects none of the tension that Ravel must have felt. It is an altogether stunning achievement -- a bright and energetic work that contains exotic inspirations and dazzling harmonic effects within a Classical framework.

Ravel’s Basque roots inspired the opening movement, *Modéré*, whose exotic first theme is based on a Basque folk dance with a characteristic 3-2-3 rhythm. A lyrical, brighter second theme, introduced by the violin, is in the same rhythmic pattern. The ending of the movement is as striking as the beginning: an extended coda melts away as the pianist goes to the bass of the piano to repeat the first theme. An example of how Ravel created his unusual textures and sonorities occurs at the beginning of the movement, when the cello and the violin repeat the first theme together while bracketing the piano in widely spaced octaves. Ravel’s love of the exotic surfaces again in the second movement. The pantoum is a complex Malaysian verse form, and Ravel ingeniously captures its patterns with a shifting series of rhythmic phrases: an opening staccato theme, a lyrical modal theme, and a spacious chorale-like melody. The metrically interesting middle section features cross rhythms, with the piano playing in 4/2 time while the strings play in 3/4 time. Like the first movement, this scherzo brims with distinctive sonorities.

With the third movement *Passacaille*, Ravel looks back for inspiration to a Baroque theme-and-variations format. The piano introduces a haunting eight-measure theme in the bass. As the other two instruments join in, each variation rises in pitch and becomes texturally denser until, reaching its peak, the music reverses course, gradually becoming lower and thinner in texture. The last variation is played by the piano, again alone, again in the bass. The dazzling *Finale* opens with great splashes of color and features spectacular instrumental writing that has the three instruments sounding like an orchestra and gives everyone a workout right up to the exuberant ending.

After he finished the Piano Trio, Ravel did go off to war. He survived, but neither Europe nor his music was the same when he returned.

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1809-1847)

Piano Trio No. 2 in C Minor (1845)

Mendelssohn's short life was crowded with achievements, beginning with the great Octet that he composed at the impossibly young age of 16. At 20 he conducted a widely heralded revival of Bach's St. Matthew Passion that precipitated the 19th-century's rediscovery of Bach's music. At 26 he was appointed director of the renowned Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, a post he filled with distinction for many years, during which time he revolutionized the art of conducting. He founded the Leipzig Conservatory, mentored young musicians, and performed as a brilliant pianist throughout Europe, all the while composing prolifically. Amiable and gracious, he was lionized by everyone from England's Queen Victoria to the female admirers who, after one concert, grabbed his handkerchief and tore it into shreds to have mementos of the event.

By 1844 the years of whirlwind activity had begun to take their toll. Tired, Felix retired with his family to Frankfurt, where he devoted most of the next year to composing. The rewarding results included the superb C Minor Piano Trio. Mendelssohn dedicated the Trio to the violinist and composer Ludwig Spohr, to whom he wrote, "I would like to have saved the honor for a somewhat longer piece, but then I should have had to put it off, as I have so often of late." Felix's reservations notwithstanding, the Trio is a major achievement – a work that wonderfully demonstrates his inexhaustible melodic gifts, his technical mastery, and the distinctive way he melded Classical form with Romantic spirit.

The Trio is an intense and impassioned work – no surprise given its key of C minor, the same key Mozart and Beethoven used for particularly dramatic works. Mendelssohn sets the tone with the restless rising and falling arpeggios with which the sonata-form first movement opens. The entire movement grows out of this arching figure, which Mendelssohn manipulates rhythmically and contrapuntally in striking ways. As one example, at various points the opening motif is played staccato, over triplets, as a brief canon, and at half speed. While there are tranquil stretches, especially in the development section with its focus on the melodious second theme, for the most part the movement surges with explosive energy. Mendelssohn follows this fiery opening with two signature movements: a lyrical Andante that has the charm of one of his Songs without Words and that features a lovely violin-and-cello duet; and a fleeting, scurrying Scherzo of the kind he invented in the Octet (Felix described this one to his sister Fanny as "a trifle nasty to play"). The intensity of the first movement returns in the Finale. It begins dramatically with the cello's leap of a ninth, an unusual interval for Mendelssohn; includes the surprise appearance of a Lutheran chorale; and ends with a jubilant major-key coda that brings the Trio to a thrilling close.

The Trio was the last chamber work published during Mendelssohn's lifetime. A year later, grief-stricken at the sudden death of Fanny, he died at the age of 38.