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its 38th program of the 1988-89 season:

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1989
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ERIC SHUMSKY,
viola

DAVID GROSS, *piano*

with

STEVEN STARYK, *violin*

FELIX SKOWRONEK, *flute*

February 23, 1989
8:00 PM, Meany Theater

DAT # 11, 405 (recorded in undecoded M-S)

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PROGRAM

BEETHOVEN
(1770-1827)

SERENADE FOR FLUTE, 25'
VIOLIN, VIOLA, Op. 25
Entrata-Allegro
Tempo ordinario d'un
Minuetto
Allegro molto
Andante con variazioni
Allegro scherzando e vivace
Adagio, Allegro vivace-
desinvolto

SHOSTAKOVICH
(1906-1975)

SONATA FOR VIOLA AND 27'
PIANO, Op. 47
Moderato
Allegretto
Adagio

Cass side A
side B

SCHUBERT
(1797-1828)

SONATA (FOR ARPEGGIONE) 22'
VIOLA AND PIANO
Allegro moderato
Adagio
Allegretto

FRITZ KREISLER
(1875-1962)

PRAELUDIUM AND ALLEGRO, 6'
VIOLA AND PIANO

Encore 5'
Brahms - Sonata ?

Serenade in D Major, Op. 25, is BEETHOVEN's only chamber work featuring the flute with strings. Published in 1802, the Op. 25 is deceptive. It really belongs to an earlier period of another serenade, the String Trio, Op. 8, of 1797. These are the only two times that Beethoven used the serenade form, or at least labeled them as such. They are both in the inherited style of Haydn and Mozart. The flute serenade is probably the most winsome of all his chamber works for it is lighthearted throughout its six movements.

The mood is established immediately by the vivacious opening solo flute melody. The flute also introduces the second movement: a minuet with two trios, the strings taking a more active part in both. The third movement is in *da capo* form and, for a little spice, makes a short journey in the minor mode but quickly returns to the major. The next movement, the fourth, is a theme with three variations. It is the most developed of the sections and has more of the later Beethoven in it, reminiscent of the Op. 18 string quartets to come. The fifth movement is a scherzo instead of the usual second minuet in a serenade. The last movement is a happy rondo, preceded by a short meditative opening that quickly bursts into a gay, skipping allegro with the instruments trading off and ending in a unison coda.

John Erling

The viola sonata of Dmitri SHOSTAKOVICH is the last work which was written by the composer. It is an austere work reminiscent of his later symphonies. Certain introductory notes are necessary to describe the work. First of all, I do not feel that this sonata is an 'audience piece.' Certainly not in the sense of some of his earlier works. Upon first hearing it some years ago, I found my mind wandering and often thought that the work was repetitive and monotonous. Having studied this sonata in depth, I now find that it was my lack of understanding which kept me from realizing the work's greatness. More than almost any other composer, Shostakovich expressed his life through music. Certainly his life was not peaceful, and perhaps a sense of drudgery and struggle pervaded his character.

The first movement (moderato) starts with the viola playing pizzicato open strings (not unlike the opening of the Berg *Violin Concerto*). Contrasted by the piano's chromatically descending motive in *piano*, these motives are extended and lead to the development which has now reached *forte*. Again Shostakovich returns to the A Section, but this time with the viola playing the descending chromatic line in *ponticello*. The effect is haunting—the icicles of a frozen wasteland. This section is followed by a quasi cadenza for viola in which the introductory open string motive and chromatically descending motives are skillfully woven together, and eventually, with minute support from the piano, the movement fades away.

The second movement (*allegretto*) is the most easily accessible. It is march-like in character, but Shostakovich breaks up the meter from 2/4 to 5/8 to 3/4 time to time to keep it from being mundane. The primary march material gives way to a repeating two-note accompaniment in the piano, which although originally of secondary importance eventually becomes obsessive in terms of its repetitiveness. It also serves to link the A and B Sections, culminating the movement with the distant fading of the military march.

Movement No. 3 (*adagio*) is in a way the most fascinating. I see two motives being contrasted against one another. The opening motive is played by the solo viola, and its descending fourths strike me as the inversion of the ascending fifths from the opening bars of the first movement. It also serves as a prologue to the secondary motive, which is a direct quote from Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata*, Op. 27, No. 2. Shostakovich holds us in suspense and just when we think we have recognized the famous quote, he modulates back to the primary motive. The actual implication of the *Moonlight Sonata* is given to us in the piano accompaniment. After an ingenious development (containing even the fragments of our famous two-note accompaniment from Movement 2), we arrive at a solo quasi cadenza (as if mirroring its function from Movement 1), in which the principal two motives are again woven together. The principal theme seems to be the struggle against death, represented, in my opinion, by Beethoven's motive. The struggle is given up, and it is as if Shostakovich knew his end was near.

Eric Shumsky

The 'Arpeggione' was a guitar-like instrument tuned in the same way as the guitar (E A d g b é), but held between the knees and played with a bow. Invented in 1821 by the Viennese guitar maker Johann Georg Stauffer (1778-1853), it was originally called 'Guitarre d'amour,' but soon dubbed 'Arpeggione' because it lent itself so well to arpeggio playing. However, its peculiar guitar-like body made adequate performance on it very awkward; especially in loud passages it was very difficult to keep the bow on one string only. But the instrument possessed a warm sound quality, and it was this attribute which SCHUBERT exploited in the sonata which he wrote for it in 1824. Naming his composition *Sonata for Arpeggione*, he honored the instrument's nickname by making it, so to speak, official. However, despite the attention brought to the new instrument through public performances of the Schubert work by Vinzenz Schuster, and the publication of an instruction book by the same musician, the arpeggione soon became obsolete: its beauty of tone could not make up for its playing difficulties and rather small volume of sound.

Schubert's manuscript in the Bibliothèque National in Paris contains an alternate violin part which dates from the same period. To

avoid an excess of leger lines and clef changes Schubert wrote the arpeggione part almost exclusively in the treble clef which the performer was expected to read an octave lower than written. The work, printed with both violin and cello parts in 1871, was edited for the viola when it came into its own as a solo instrument around the turn of the century. This music remains a standard work in the viola repertoire because its sound qualities and range make it beautifully suited for that instrument.

Paul Doktor

Although KREISLER's charming and brilliant showpiece, *Praeludium and Allegro*, is labeled as a work by Pugnani, it is a well-known fact that Fritz Kreisler wrote many compositions using other composers' names. In Kreisler's own words, "It was necessary to expand the repertoire for violin, and I was not famous at that time. I was obliged commercially to write in the style of Vivaldi, Tartini Pugnani, etc."

The construction of the work is aptly described by its title, a slower section preceding a faster, more virtuosic allegro. Although the work is a favorite on violin recitals the world over, it is not very often performed on the viola. I was inspired by a recording of Lionel Tertis, the great English violist, who was born in the same year as Pablo Casals. I have also performed by own version of this piece transcribed for viola with string orchestra. The viola is a beautiful instrument—it is not the violin—and in performing this wonderful work, I must always play it with the darker sonorities in mind.

Eric Shumsky

Born in 1953, ERIC SHUMSKY received his first violin lessons at age six from his celebrated father, the violinist Oscar Shumsky. At age 17, he switched to the viola and received a full scholarship to study with violist Lillian Fuchs at the Juilliard School of Music, and played in chamber music concerts in New York and other major cities under a grant from the Ford Foundation.

With his father, Shumsky has recorded the major repertoire for violin and viola, including duos by Mozart, Haydn, Spohr, Kalliwoda, R. Fuchs, Folla and Martinu, as well as the virtuoso Handel Halvorsen duos. He has been recorded on the Jecklin, Spectrum, Pan, Adda and EMI labels. He recently recorded the Mozart Sinfonia Concertante for violin, viola and orchestra with Oscar Shumsky for EMI.

Shumsky has been a member of the American Piano Quartet and the Ensemble Arpeggione. He has appeared with the Cherubini, the Manhattan and the Viotti String Quartets. Based in Paris for the past eight years, he has soloed with orchestras in over 75 cities in Europe, America and the Far East, including the Salzburg Sinfonietta, the City of London Symphonia, the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and the International Chamber Soloists of Paris of which he is the director.

Shumsky has taught viola at the Karlsruhe Hochschule in Germany and at Les Arcs in the French Alps. He has broadcast for the BBC, Radio France, Sudwest Deutsche Rundfunk, Salzburg Radio, and Spanish and Korean television. He is presently a professor of viola at the University of Washington in Seattle.

Pianist DR. DAVID GROSS was born in Cleveland, Ohio, and studied with Arthur Loesser at the Cleveland Institute of Music and later with Rudolph Serkin at the Marlboro Music Festival in Vermont. A practicing medical doctor, Gross is also widely sought after as a chamber music partner. He has performed with violinists Joseph Suk and Oscar Shumsky and cellists Leonard Rose and Mischa Maisky among others. Presently, he lives and practices medicine in Stanford, California.

STEVEN STARYK, one of the most versatile of today's internationally renowned violinists, has had equally dazzling careers as soloist, chamber musician, and orchestral concertmaster. By the age of 35, he had already been concertmaster of three of the world's major orchestras: The Royal Philharmonic of London, the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, and the Chicago Symphony. He was a founding member of Quartet Canada and enjoys a discography of over 190 entries. He has held professorships at nine conservatories and universities in Europe and North America, and his students occupy positions in orchestras and chamber ensembles on both continents. In September 1987 he accepted a Professorship at the University of Washington School of Music.

FELIX SKOWRONEK, a Seattle native, graduated from the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia after four years of study with William Kincaid, legendary principal flutist of the Philadelphia Orchestra. Skowronek subsequently served as principal with the Seattle, Puerto Rico, and St. Louis Symphonies. He was a founding member of the Soni Ventorum Wind Quintet which in 1968 became the wind instrument faculty at the University of Washington. Skowronek was Founding President of the Seattle Flute Society, President of the National Flute Association, and currently is Music Director of Belle Arte Concerts, the Eastside's chamber music series.

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VIOLA

in

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*featuring works by
J.S. Bach, Lillian Fuchs, Max Reger,
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8:00 p.m.

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