

**Mikhail Schmidt***Violin*

—a native of Moscow, was awarded first prize at the Concertino-Prague Competition in 1978 at the age of 14. He toured and recorded extensively as a member of the Moscow Radio String Quartet, and among his teachers are Valentin Berlinsky of the Borodin Quartet and Halida Akhtiamova. Graduated *summa cum laude* from the Gnessin Musical Institute in Moscow, he served as assistant principal second violin in the Moscow State Symphony Orchestra. Since 1991, he has been a member of the Seattle Symphony, and has appeared as a soloist with that orchestra.

**Helen Callus***Viola*

—was born in England and recently was named Artist-in-Residence at the University of Washington. Her degrees were obtained at The Royal Academy of Music London and The Peabody Institute in Maryland. Performing in all the major concert halls in London including the Royal Festival Hall and Wigmore Hall, she has been the winner of numerous awards including the Countess of Munster Competition, London; the Greek Women's Competition in Chicago; and Special Prize Winner, Lionel Tertis International Viola Competition U.K.. She has performed at many festivals in the U.S., including the Olympic and Seattle Chamber Music Festivals in Washington.

**David Tonkonogui***Cello*

—is also a native of Moscow, where he studied cello with Natalia Shakhovskaya (the Gold Medalist of the first Tchaikovsky Competition), and chamber music with Dmitry Shebalin of the Borodin Quartet. He was co-principal cello with the internationally acclaimed Moscow Soloists Chamber Orchestra, and won first place in the 1984 National Chamber Music Competition. He holds a doctoral degree from the Tchaikovsky Conservatory. He joined the Seattle Symphony in 1990, and he performs in numerous music festivals throughout Europe, Japan and the United States.

**Karen Sigers***Piano*

—a native of Georgia, she has been taught by Ralph Votapek, Carlos Corma, and Maria Luisa Faini. She earned her doctorate in music performance at the University of Nebraska. Since moving to the Northwest, she has established herself as one of the foremost pianists in the region, performing with the Seattle Symphony, the International Music Festival of Seattle, and in Taiwan, Spain and Switzerland. She has performed with Lynn Harrell, Paula Robison, Michael Collins and Cecile Licad, and recently completed a European and American tour with the New European Strings.

University of Washington  
THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC

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1998  
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DATE 13, 229  
CLASS 13, 230

presents

**THE BRIDGE ENSEMBLE**Mikhail Schmidt, *violin*Helen Callus, *viola*David Tonkonogui, *cello*Karen Sigers, *piano*

School

of

Music

University

of

Washington

8:00 PM, April 4, 1998

Brechemin Auditorium

## PROGRAM

14110  
DATE 12:11  
D1 Miniatures for Piano Trio.....Frank Bridge  
(1879-1941)

*Valse Russe*  
*Intermezzo*  
*Romance*  
*Salterello*

31:40  
D2 Still Movement with Hymn (1993)... Aaron Jay Kernis  
(b. 1960)

—Seattle Premiere—

INTERMISSION Cass side A  
side B

D3 Piano Quartet in E<sup>b</sup> Major,..... Robert Schumann  
Op. 47 (1810-1856)

*Sostenuto assai/Allegro ma non troppo*  
*Scherzo: Molto vivace*  
*Andante cantabile*  
*Finale: Vivace*

D4-encore: A. Serper "Why Not?" 2:52

## Miniatures for Piano Trio

Frank Bridge (1879–1941)

English composer Frank Bridge was born February 26, 1879 in Brighton. He studied violin and composition at the Royal College of Music, where he quickly made a professional reputation as an outstanding conductor and chamber music player. In 1906 he joined the famous Joachim Quartet as violist, and later played in the English String Quartet. During the first two decades of this century, he conducted such major orchestras as the London Symphony and the Orchestra of Covent Garden. In 1923, Bridge visited the US, to conduct his own music in Boston, Cleveland, Detroit, and New York. He was also a remarkable teacher, though Britten was his only composition student. Later, Britten immortalized his teacher in his famous "Variations on a Theme by Frank Bridge."

Without underestimating Bridge's achievements in other fields, it was with chamber music that he made his most substantial impact. Among his chamber music masterpieces are the Phantasy Trio and Piano Quartet, 4 String Quartets, and Violin Sonata. Bridge wrote his Nine Miniatures for Piano Trio in 1906-07. For today's performance, The Bridge Ensemble has chosen four pieces of the nine, Valse Russe, Intermezzo, Romance, and Salterello. Though not his most substantial compositions, the Miniatures are arguably some of the most charming, written specifically for the intimacy of original chamber music, "music played at home." With their melodic grace, simplicity and heartfelt nostalgia, they represent "salon music" at its best.

The first piece, Valse Russe (Russian Waltz), offers reflection and longing, so characteristic of the Russian Romantics. Following is the playful Intermezzo, in which Bridge very wittily displays frolicsome counterpoint. The Romance is, without doubt, the gem of the entire cycle. With a melody of rare beauty and quintessential British understatement, the composer creates one of his most touching moments. As a finale, the exciting

Salterello dance provides a rousing conclusion to this little suite.

## Still Movement with Hymn (1993)

Aaron Jay Kernis (b. 1960)

Every composition by Aaron Jay Kernis bears the stamp of his emotional directness, multilayered response to poetic imagery, and love of fresh, bright vocal and instrumental textures. "Kernis' invention is exuberant," wrote Andrew Porter in *The New Yorker*, capturing in four words the quality that has propelled this young composer's music to a prominent place on orchestral, chamber, and recital programs throughout the United States and internationally.

Kernis has written works for a variety of forces, including the recent *New Era Dance*, commissioned for the 150th Anniversary of the New York Philharmonic; *Air* for violinist Joshua Bell; an a cappella work for the Birmingham Bach Choir; *Lament and prayer*, a work for violin and chamber orchestra for Pamela Frank and the Minnesota Orchestra; and *Double Concerto for Violin, Guitar, and Orchestra*, for Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg and Sharon Isbin.

Aaron Jay Kernis was born in Philadelphia on 15 January 1960. He began his musical studies on the violin; at age 12 he began teaching himself piano, and, in the following year, composition. He continued his studies at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, the Manhattan School of Music, and the Yale School of Music, working with composers as diverse as John Adams, Charles Wuorinen, and Jacob Druckman. Kernis received national acclaim for his first orchestral work, *Dream of the Morning Sky*, premiered by the New York Philharmonic at the 1983 Horizons Festival.

*Still Movement with Hymn (1993)* was commissioned by American Public Radio for its tenth anniversary. It was written in memory of Stephen Albert for Pamela Frank, Paul Neubauer, Carter Brey, and

Christopher O'Riley, who premiered the work in Princeton, New Jersey in November 1993. It is mournful, elegiac music, unfolding in long unbroken melodic lines that show the influence of both medieval Church music and Jewish cantillation. It melds Christian prayer for the dead and Jewish Kaddish. The horrors of the seemingly unresolvable war in Bosnia and Croatia were, Kernis has said, inescapable in his imagination, as was his shock at the sudden death of the American composer, Stephen Albert [who, incidentally, left his mark on Seattle as the composer-in-residence for the Seattle Symphony]. In a stunned, single, slow movement, he questions the possibility, even the feasibility, of the whole notion of resolution in the modern world.

This movement with its two thematic groups, is in three large sections. And although the third is a modified reprise of the first followed by a coda, the form provides less a sense of emotional resolution than simply a traditional way of coming to a rooted stop. For Kernis, the loss of innocence in the modern world is the realization that such resolution is false and impossible. Hence, while this deeply moving and unflinching work does not necessarily give comfort, it provides something more important. It shows us, through music, the need and ability to simply go on.

## Intermission

## Piano Quartet, Op. 47

Robert Schumann (1810–56)

"Thus it is throughout human life: the goal once reached is no longer a goal, and we aim, and strive, and wish to get higher, until our eyes close, and our exhausted soul lies slumbering in the tomb...", so Schumann wrote to his mother when he was still barely eighteen. Little could she have guessed that these words foretold his own future. A pianist himself, in love with Clara Wieck, one of the finest young pianists of the day, he was content to

compose little else but piano music until 1840. As dreams of marriage blossomed into certainty, he wanted only to pour out his heart in song. Each year thereafter found him spreading his wings still wider to encompass in turn the orchestra, chamber music, extended choral cantatas, and even one opera.

In 1842, as he approached his 32nd birthday, composing chamber music became his overriding goal. Consequently, in a creative rage, he completed two masterpieces for strings and piano, first a Quintet, then a Quartet, both in the same key of E-flat. Although of the two, the Piano Quartet (Op. 47) is less often heard, after its first performance at a private gathering in April 1843, Schumann wrote his publisher, "It was very effective; more effective, I think, than the quintet."

Preceded by an imposing *Sostenuto assai* introduction, reminiscent of Beethoven, containing the seed of the movement's main first subject, the opening *Allegro ma non troppo* at once reveals a more classically-minded Schumann than encountered in the Quintet, with the *staccato* scales of the second subject certainly confirming his growing interest in counterpoint. The climax of the spaciouly conceived sonata-form argument arrives with the masterly fusion of development and recapitulation. While the nimble eighth-notes of the Scherzo (*Molto vivace*) clearly salute a Mendelssohnian world of elves and sprites, the syncopation in the second of its two contrasting trios is wholly and unmistakably Schumann's own. The ternary-shaped *Andante cantabile* in its turn could well be described as a *Song without Words*. Yet its nostalgia has all the same heartfelt beauty of Schumann's early, Clara-inspired love songs. The opening motif of the Finale (*Vivace*) is artfully anticipated at the end of the slow movement in a link for which the cellist is requested to lower the instrument's bottom string a whole step to B-flat. In form a free rondo, though hearkening to Bach in its fugal nature, Schumann wrote of this last movement that it is "really spirited and full of life."

—Notes compiled by The Bridge Ensemble

## THE BRIDGE ENSEMBLE

Mikhail Schmidt, *violin*  
Helen Callus, *viola*  
David Tonkonogui, *cello*  
Karen Sigers, *piano*

Tonight's concert is a Special Preview Recital of the Bridge Ensemble's Fifth Anniversary Concert tomorrow at Greenlake Methodist Church (6415 First Avenue NE, Seattle, 3:00 PM), in which they are proud to make a new debut with University of Washington faculty member and Artist-in-Residence, Helen Callus. Thank you for joining us on this special occasion!

Our next concert in Seattle will be on October 13, 1998 in the Benaroya Recital Hall, featuring the World Premiere of Giya Kancheli's *Piano Quartet in L'istesso Tempo*, written for The Bridge Ensemble. Kancheli has been called by Time Magazine "the most important Soviet composer since Shostakovich," and has been commissioned by Rostropovich, Gidon Kremer, and the Kronos Quartet, among many. We will be honored with this world-renowned composer's presence in Seattle for this event, and hope you will join us again! You may make reservations by calling (206) 329-5853.

### BRIDGE Cds

#### "LIVE FROM THE BRIDGE"

contains *Piano Quartets* of Brahms and Schnittke, plus Schoenfield's entertaining *Café Music*, and is available at Tower Records, Barnes and Noble, Silver Platters, and Virtuoso Music.

#### "IVORY"

includes The Bridge Ensemble performing Daniel Asia's *Piano Quartet*, on Koch International Classics.