THE PHILADELPHIA STRING QUARTET

The Philadelphia String Quartet has been the Quartet-in-Residence at the University of Washington since 1966. The Quartet annually makes tours of Great Britain and Europe, appearing in the major Festivals. Audiences and critics alike acclaim its “impeccable ensemble” — NEW DEHLI, its “exceptional technique and extraordinary musicianship” — LISBON, and its “superb quartet playing” — NEW YORK. These are typical responses to performances not only of the standard repertoire but also of music of modern American composers, many of whom have been commissioned to write works for the Quartet.

STANLEY RITCHIE is an Australian who graduated from the New South Wales State Conservatorium of Music, later studying in Paris as a recipient of the first Ginette Neveu Traveling Scholarship. After coming to North America, he was Concertmaster of the New York City Opera and the Musica Aeterna Orchestra, and Associate Concertmaster of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, and toured North America and Europe with the New York Chamber Soloists. He joined the Philadelphia Quartet in 1975, at which time he had been Lecturer in Violin and Chamber Music at the University of British Columbia. Mr. Ritchie is also well known as a baroque violinist and performs as a member of the Duo Geminiani together with harpsichordist Elisabeth Wright.

IRWIN EISENBERG was born in St. Louis, and studied violin at the Eastman School of Music, and privately with Bronstein in New York. He was a first-desk member of the St. Louis and Philadelphia Orchestras, organized the St. Louis String Quartet, and was co-founder of the Philadelphia String Quartet, as well as the Coffee Concert Series and the Contemporary Music Society of Philadelphia.

ALAN IGLITZIN studied viola with the renowned William Primrose. He studied at Long Island University and did graduate work at Hunter College and the University of Minnesota. He was founder of the Arts Quartet of Minneapolis and a member of the quartet-in-residence at Macalaster College. For several years he was associated with the Aspen Music Festival, and was assistant solo violist of the Minneapolis and Philadelphia Orchestras.

CARTER ENYEART joined the Quartet in 1976 after the death of founding member Charles Brennand. He graduated with distinction from the Eastman School of Music where he studied with Georges Miquelle, and later studied with the Lenox and Amadeus Quartets, and with Zara Nelsova. While in the U.S. Navy, he reorganized the Navy String Quartet and was a member of the Meridian String Quartet. He later took a Master’s degree in performance from Carnegie-Mellon University, and spent four years with the Pittsburgh Symphony. He was actively engaged in setting up the San Francisco Chamber Music Center when he was invited to join the Philadelphia Quartet.

STANLEY RITCHIE, violin
IRWIN EISENBERG, violin
ALAN IGLITZIN, viola
CARTER ENYEART, 'cello

8:00 P.M.
JANUARY 27, 1978
MEANY THEATER
Schubert-Quartet in E flat major, Op. 125, No. 1

Allegro moderato
Scherzo: Prestissimo
Adagio
Allegro

Kodaly-Quartet No. 2, Op. 10

Allegro
Andante, quasi recitativo;
Allegro giocoso

Beethoven-Quartet, Op. 59, No. 2

Allegro
Molto Adagio
Allegretto
Presto

Notes

Schubert started to compose when he was about 14. When the Eb quartet was written in 1813, the young Schubert was still only about 16. But he had always been prolific and had already written six quartets by the time this piece was composed. These early quartets, designed to be played in his own home, by his family, tended to be somewhat experimental: they ramble, their sense of form is weak and they hop from melody to melody. However, Schubert had gained some mastery over the classical forms that contain musical exuberance by the time that this quartet was written.

The first movement of the piece provides an excellent example of a well-balanced and proportioned work. It also shows Schubert's early flair for lyricism and transparent scoring. The second movement has a playful first section interrupted by a ländler in a minor key, before the first tune returns. Incidentally, the placement of this minuet before the slow third movement was the publisher's choice, not Schubert's. The third movement is clear and concise. The simplicity of the texture (no fugues here!) better portrays the depths of Schubert's emotion than a dense texture ever could. The final allegro, like the first movement, has a pulsating, sparkling charm and is a model of formal clarity.

Kodaly-Quartet No. 2, Op. 10
During the First World War, Kodaly was a teacher of theory and composition at the Budapest Academy of Music. Most of his chamber music was written during this period, and much of the music reflects the temper of the times. The second quartet contains passages that are melancholy, enlivened by passages of folk-like dance tunes.

The work is in two movement, the first an allegro, and the second of which combines a slow movement (Andante quasi recitativo) with a faster section (Allegro giocoso). Kodaly was influenced early on by the style and technique of the French Impressionists—especially Debussy. A lot of the chordal colors of the first movement reflect this influence. But a strong influence on the composer was the indigenous folk music of Hungary, evidenced by the folk tunes that form the basis for the third movement.

Kodaly's music, in general, is characterized by its clear textures and rhapsodic, free character. The "dialogues" between the cello and violin that wake up the recitativo portion of this quartet show another aspect of the Kodaly style: lyricism, often meditative and reliance on melody to convey emotion.

Beethoven-Quartet, Op. 59, No. 2

In 1805, Beethoven was commissioned by the Russian ambassador to Austria, to write three string quartets. He completed them in rapid succession during the summer of 1806. This marked his return to string quartet writing since the opus 18 set completed six years earlier. In picking up the string quartet form, Beethoven called forth the full tonal capacity of strings almost symphonically. The three quartets represent to many ears the subtlest, the most viable and deeply personal expression of Beethoven's middle compositional period.

The Russian element is emphasized in the trio section of the Scherzo, the same melody that Moussorgsky subsequently used in the Coronation Scene of his opera, "Boris Godunov." Perhaps the highlight of the quartet is a second movement of surpassing eloquence, not tragic, but what d'Indy described as "deep religious calm."