

Student Chamber Recital

QUINTANTŌ

RENEE SANTOS, violin

OLLIE BOSTIAN, violin

ALLIE SCHUMACHER, viola

OSKAR KAUT, cello

CALVIN KOTRBA, piano

Monday, December 5, 2022, 7:30 PM**STARK OPERA STUDIO**

*PROGRAM*String Quartet No. 1 in E major, Op. 17 (*Premiere Performance*)

C. Kotrba (b. 2001)

*Dedicated to Renee Santos and Sarah Harmon**Warm**Regretful**Rollicking*

Piano Quintet No. 2 in A major, Op. 81

A. Dvořák (1841-1904)

*Allegro, ma non tanto**Dumka: Andante con moto**Allegretto espressivo alla Romanza**Allegro animato*

This program is being presented by Quintantō as an optional recital.

Quintantō is coached by Prof. Elizabeth Oakes through the Chamber Music Residency Program.

Renee Santos and Ollie Bostian are students of Dr. Scott Conklin.

Allie Schumacher is a student of Prof. Christine Rutledge.

Oskar Kaut is a student of Prof. Anthony Arnone.

Calvin Kotrba is a student of Dr. Ksenia Nosikova.

PROGRAM NOTES

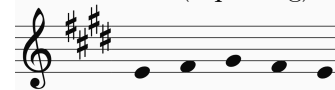
Calvin Kotrba, *String Quartet No. 1 in E major, Op. 17* (2022)

I began working on this quartet earlier this year, but most of the work occurred during this semester, as soon as it was proposed that the Quintantō string section might perform it. I began with the “Initial Motif”, and the piece unfolded from there. The entire three-movement quartet is based around two themes, with the initial motif appearing virtually throughout, often obviously but sometimes very discreetly. The first theme opens the quartet in the cello part, beginning with a very simple series of five notes. The “second theme”, though it was actually written first, is teased in the first movement but formally introduced in the violin part at the beginning of the second movement.

Initial Motif



First Theme (Opening)



Second Theme



Much of the first movement, which is in sonata form, is intended to be almost hymn-like, not quite exactly happy, but reverent, and deeply joyous beneath the surface. During the minor fast section, the initial theme is transformed, eventually resulting in a dancing violin duet; with the return to the original key, the dancers come to a contented rest.

The second movement, the heart of the piece, is the saddest of my compositions. The violin introduces the spare second theme, a lament which is taken up as a fugue in the first part of the movement. As passion gathers, the first theme is transformed, first by the violins in grief and then by the cello in anger. The notes spin out into aimlessness, vainly attempting a return to the hopelessness of the second theme, but finally clinging to the initial motif as the only certainty in a confusing, consuming grief.

A joyful jig opens the third movement, which brings together all the material introduced so far. As the tempo is gradually halved, we hear, first in the background and then in a full chorale the major version of the second theme, representing the final triumph of joy over despair. The first notes of the first theme emerge within a brief quote of one of my favorite hymns, “Leaning on the Everlasting Arms”, hinting at the return to God as the only true source of happiness and certainty. In the coda, this theme at last becomes a quick, merry dance. The final syncopated rhythm, which had been present beneath the surface even in the sorrowful second movement, declares that from the beginning, everything has been all right.

Calvin Kotrba

Antonin Dvořák, *Piano Quintet No. 2 in A major, Op. 81* (1887)

One of the most sensational examples of late Romantic chamber music is Dvořák's Piano Quintet in A major, Op. 81. Composed between August and October of 1887, the piece was Dvořák's second attempt at composing a piano quintet—his first remained unpublished after he was largely unsatisfied with its quality. After attempting to make substantial revisions, Dvořák eventually abandoned it altogether and instead started writing Op. 81, an entirely new work.

The first movement—Allegro ma non tanto—begins with a brief rolling theme in the cello before abruptly transforming into F-sharp minor, bringing about the entry of the rest of the strings. Similar to much of the rest of the quintet, this movement is built around contrasts in dynamic ranges, shape, and character. The second movement (called a “Dumka”) alternates a languorous refrain with more upbeat verses. Though literally translated as “thought” in the Ukrainian language, *Dumka* refers to a form of Slavic folk ballad defined primarily by the mixing of slow and fast tempi. Dvořák himself was a violist, and he prominently features the viola within this movement.

The playful third-movement scherzo is an up-tempo race with a more relaxed middle section. The middle section takes a calm, nostalgic look at the opening theme before returning to the scherzo proper in its spiraling conclusion. Dvořák's sense of fun resonates in the winsome final movement. Throughout the finale, he contrasts folk-like melodies with graceful contrapuntal motifs in the development section. The exuberant coda serves as a merry yet introspective farewell to the work.

Oskar Kaut