



Meranofest

International Music Festival
School for Superior Performance Studies



Meranofest is an international classical music festival that brings together generations of musicians. The festival places primary emphasis on the interaction between established concert artists and young musicians taking their first professional steps. The festival presents a select group of artists, teachers and exceptionally promising students who participate in concerts and masterclasses. The mission of the festival is to stimulate the creativity of everyone involved. The small alpine city of Merano, with its rich culture, remarkable climate, traditional hospitality and incomparably beautiful concert halls was chosen to help create the setting and provide the environment for a few weeks of intensive music making.

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Lev Natochenny, piano
The Penderecki
String Quartet

Schubert – Piano Sonata in A Major, D. 959
Brahms – Piano Quintet in F minor, Op. 34



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Franz Schubert (1797-1828)
Piano Sonata in A Major Opus Posthumous D. 959

Allegro 11:15
Andantino 8:05
Scherzo, Allegro vivace 5:09
Rondo, Allegretto 11:13

Lev Natochenny, piano

Schubert composed his last three, and probably greatest piano sonatas in the last year of his life, completing them by September, 1828. He died on November 19. Schubert mentions the sonatas in a letter to Probst, the publisher, on October 2, 1828: "I have composed, among other things, three sonatas for pianoforte solo, which I should like to dedicate to Hummel." Hummel, however, never received the dedication. It was not until 1838 that the sonatas were published, and Haslinger, who bought the sonatas and sold them to Diabelli, finally asked the publishers to dedicate them to "Robert Schumann in Leipzig." The great romanticist, Schumann found the sonatas "not first class" and started to read things into them: "These sonatas seem to me to differ from his others in their greater simplicity of invention, their voluntary resignation and indulgence in a new brilliance and modernity of effect." Schumann's criticism – that Schubert seemed in them consciously to avoid anything of striking individuality, and to spin out "general musical ideas" – is interesting.

It must be said that in comparison with the three great sonatas of 1825-26, those in C minor, A major and B flat are more "normal" in a classical sense; one may feel that the opening of the G major sonata of 1826 is the very essence of Schubert, but the opening of the A major sonata is only a solemn flourish. The three posthumous works are less impulsive, less sensuous, maybe even less richly poetical, than those

of 1825-26. However the B flat sonata has a sublimity and the A major a spiritual unity which Schubert never achieved before in his piano music. When one remembers that at the same age Beethoven was still been in his "first period," these works seem as miraculous as "Gretchen am Spinnrade."

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)
Quintet for Piano and String Quartet Opus 34 in F minor

Allegro non troppo
Andante un poco, Adagio
Scherzo, Allegro
Finale: Poco sosenuto
& Allegro non troppo

Lev Natochenny, piano • Penderecki String Quartet

A product of the 1860s, the Brahms Quintet blends youthful impulse with the skills the composer had acquired by his early thirties. It is a work of power and breadth unequalled in any composition for piano and strings. The composer himself had more than usual trouble in getting it into final and satisfactory shape. He wrote it first as a string quintet with two cellos. Unsatisfied, he turned it into a sonata for two pianos that still exists as Opus 34b. When Clara Schumann insisted on strings in the music, he set to work again to produce the version of "Klavierquintett" which is so familiar.

When he wrote the quintet, Brahms was not yet thirty. Gloomy as these years may have sometimes been, they were extraordinarily productive, for out of them came not only the F minor quintet, but the first strong sextet, the Handel variations for piano solo and the Schumann variations for piano duet as well.

The romantic elements are very strong in this work. There is, for example, the profusion of thematic material. The first movement alone contains four contrasting themes, while the Scherzo is built out of three. There is the storm and stress of the first movement, with the seemingly ceaseless conflict between passion and austerity, tenderness and defiance. The trio of the Scherzo is a gloriously lyric melody that, in Clara Schumann's opinion, turned out "too short."

The fascinating last movement begins with an introduction filled with almost Wagnerian intensity, Schönbergian mystery and Mahlerian sadness. The main body of the movement has in its music profoundly disturbing tragedy.

Lev Natochenny

Described as a "real genius in his creativity" by European critics and a "rare master of his instrument" by New York critics, Lev Natochenny combines innovation, intelligence, technical brilliance and attention to every detail of the musical text in his approach to music.

Influenced by some of the world's greatest artists such as Sviatoslav Richter and David Oistrakh, Lev Natochenny received his education from the Moscow Conservatory under the guidance of eminent professors Lev Oborin, Boris Zemliansky and Elisso



Virsaladze. He went on to receive his PhD with Honors from the same Conservatory, where he continued to develop his uncommonly independent style recognized by critics and audiences alike.

Subsequent honors, including Gold Medal in F. Busoni International Piano Competition, First Prize in Young Artists International Piano Competition and Gina Bachauer Award, led to concert appearances in major halls throughout Europe and the U.S. with major American orchestras and with the Russian National Orchestra as both pianist and conductor. During these concert tours Lev Natochenny developed a particular affinity for chamber music with its special refinement and delicate intimacy. Performances with artists including cellist Mischa Maisky, clarinetist Stanley Drucker, pianist Vladimir Feltsman, bassist Rustem Gabdullin and the New York Philharmonic followed.

In addition to concertizing, Mr. Natochenny maintains a rigorous teaching schedule, with his students ranging from exceptionally talented youngsters to accomplished young professionals, including winners of national and international competitions. Currently, he is Professor of Piano at the Hochschule für Musik (Music Academy) in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. In 1990 Lev Natochenny founded Meranofest International Music Festival and Academy for Superior Performance Studies - where the highest level of music making and preparation of young talent go hand in hand.

Other Marquis Classics recordings featuring Mr. Natochenny are *Schubert: Schwanengesang* with baritone Kevin McMillan (ERAD 151) and Shostakovich and Schnittke *Piano Quintets* with the Penderecki String Quartet (ERAD 183).

The Penderecki String Quartet, approaching the second decade of an extraordinary career, has become one of the most celebrated chamber ensembles. The Quartet's performing schedule takes them annually to the great concert stages of North America, Europe and the Far East.

The Penderecki String Quartet's engagements have included concerts in New York, Washington, Seattle, Montreal, Toronto and Mexico City. Their European schedule has included repeat performances in Salzburg, Merano, Heidelberg and a smashing debut in Leipzig's MDR Musiksommer festival.

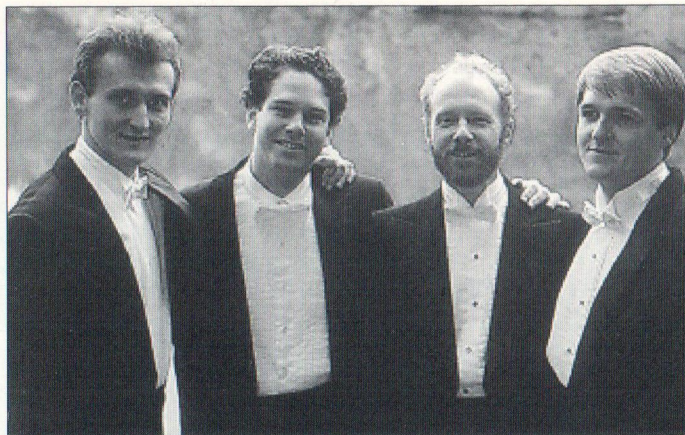
The Penderecki Quartet has collaborated with eminent ensembles such as The Borodin Trio and The Fine Arts Quartet as well as with artists such as Vladimir Feltsman, James Campbell, Lev Natochenny, Tsuyoshi Tsutsumi and Janina Fialkowska.

The Penderecki Quartet was founded in Poland in 1986 with the support of pre-eminent Polish composer Krzysztof Penderecki. The fruit of their association includes the authoritative interpretation of Penderecki's complete works for String Quartet on CD (United Records, England). The Quartet is a devoted champion of the music of our time, and has commissioned new quartets from Brian Cherney, Aleksandr Lason, Alfred Fisher, and Randolph Peters.

The Penderecki String Quartet devotes much of its time to Quartetfest, a non-profit organization which produces a Festival of String Quartets in Waterloo, Ontario. The Festival combines a week of performances in Waterloo and St. Jacob's, Ontario with a month-long seminar in quartet playing for students of all ages and backgrounds.

Education is a year-round commitment for The Penderecki String Quartet. They are Quartet-in-Residence at Waterloo's Wilfrid Laurier University. Under the Quartet's direction, the string program has become one of Canada's most prestigious. The Quartet offers chamber music and studio instruction to students from all over the world.

The Penderecki String Quartet's on-going collaboration with Lev Natochenny includes Piano Quintets by Shostakovich and Schnittke (Marquis Classics ERAD 183). They have also released the Shostakovich String Quartet No. 3 and Britten String Quartet No. 3 on Marquis Classics (ERAD 173).



(l-r) Piotr Buczek • Yariv Aloni • Paul Pulford • Jerzy Kaplanek