

# *Concerts at the Point*

17TH SEASON 2013-2014



*presents ...*

THE CLAREMONT TRIO

NOVEMBER 24, 2013, 3:00 PM

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# *Concerts at the Point*

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2013

## THE CLAREMONT TRIO

Emily Bruskin, violin

Julia Bruskin, cello

Andrea Lam, piano

## PIANO TRIO IN G MAJOR, OP. 1, NO. 2

**BEETHOVEN**

*Adagio, Allegro vivace*

*Largo con espressione*

*Scherzo: Allegro*

*Finale: Presto*

## PIANO TRIO, OP. 120

**FAURE**

*Allegro, ma non troppo*

*Andantino*

*Allegro, vivo*

**INTERMISSION . . .**

## PIANO TRIO IN E MINOR, OP. 90, NO. 4

**DVORAK**

*Lento Maestoso*

*Poco Adagio*

*Andante*

*Andante Moderato (Quasi Tempo di Marcia)*

*Allegro*

*Lento Maestoso*

## THE PERFORMERS: THE CLAREMONT TRIO



The Claremont Trio was formed in 1999 at the Julliard School. Twin sisters, Emily Bruskin, violin, and Julia Bruskin, cello, and pianist Andrea Lam are all based in NY City near their namesake—Claremont Avenue.

Lauded as “one of America’s finest young chamber groups” by *Strad Magazine*, the Claremont Trio is sought after for their thrillingly virtuosic and richly communicative performances. First winners of the Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson International Trio Award and the only piano trio ever to win the Young Concert Artists International Auditions, the Claremonts are consistently recognized for their “aesthetic maturity, interpretive depth, and exuberance” (*Palm Beach Daily News*).

Their prolific discography includes: Mendelssohn Trios, a Russian disc of Shostakovich and Arensky, American Trios, and Trios by Beethoven and Ravel. A reviewer in *Audiophile Audition* raved about the Beethoven/Ravel disc “these are some of the most impassioned, moving and notable readings of these favorites that I have ever heard, bar none. I am especially picky about the Beethoven, one of my favorites, and to this point best projected by the legendary

Istomin-Stern-Rose Trio, but the Claremont has their measure fully, and this is something I never thought I would say.” Their collaborative disc with clarinetist Jonathan Cohler—encompassing works by Beethoven, Brahms, and Dohnanyi—gathered a glowing review from *Fanfare Magazine* and received a Critic’s CHOICE award from BBC Magazine. Most recently, Bridge Records released their newest recording of Beethoven’s Trio Concerto with the San Francisco Ballet Orchestra and Beethoven’s Trio Op. 1, No. 1, to critical acclaim.

The Claremont has commissioned trios from Nico Muhly, Mason Bates, Gabriela Lena Franck, Sean Shepherd, Helen Grime and Hillary Zipper. When the Claremonts presented a series of concerts, including the concert inaugurating the new hall, at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, they presented some of these newly commissioned works.

**EMILY BRUSKIN**, violin, has performed as soloist with noted orchestras and has given recitals around the world in such venues as Carnegie Hall, the American Academy in Rome, the Kennedy Center and Boston’s Jordan Hall. As violinist of the Claremont Trio, she has made critically acclaimed recordings, appeared at many festivals and has given master classes at Columbia University, the Eastman School of Music, and Duke University. A graduate of the Columbia-Julliard program, Ms. Bruskin holds degrees in Neuroscience and in Music. Ms. Bruskin’s violin is a Lupot from 1795.

**JULIA BRUSKIN** made her concerto debut with the Boston Symphony at age 17, and has established herself as one of the premier cellists of her generation. She performed Samuel Barber’s Cello Concerto with conductor Jahja Ling at Avery Fisher Hall, and has been soloist with noted symphonies. Ms. Bruskin plays frequent solo recitals with her husband, Aaron Wunsch—pianist and faculty member at Julliard, including tours in Asia and concerts in New York, Texas, Massachusetts and New Jersey. Ms. Bruskin completed the five-year double degree program at Julliard and Columbia University, and is on the faculty at the Aaron Copland School of

Music at Queens College. Ms. Bruskin's cello is a J. B. Vuillaume from 1849.

**ANDREA LAM** has been lauded for her "melting lyricism, filigree touch and spirited eloquence" (*The Australian*) and pronounced a "real talent" (*Wall Street Journal*), and is gaining recognition for her "great style and thrilling virtuosity" (*Sydney Morning Herald*). In recent years, she has given over seventy performances with orchestras in Australia, New Zealand, the United States, Japan, and Hong Kong. She has worked with renowned conductors including Alan Gilbert, Edo de Waart, Michael Christie, and Marcus Stenz. Ms. Lam was a Semifinalist in the 2009 Van Cliburn Competition. In 2009, she was also the Silver Medalist at the San Antonio Piano Competition, where she won additional prizes for the Best Classical performance and Best Russian performance. In 2010, she joined the Astral Artists Roster as a winner of their national auditions.

Ms. Lam holds degrees from the Yale School of Music, where she studied with Boris Berman, and the Manhattan School of Music, where she studied with Arkady Aronov. Unlike her string partners in the Claremont Trio, Ms. Lam must play the instrument she finds on the stage. We are happy to note that during her first visit to C@P in January 2012, Ms. Lam made our little Baldwin sound like a 10-foot grand piano.

## PROGRAM NOTES

### **LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN** (1770–1827)

PIANO TRIO IN G MAJOR, OP. 1, NO. 2

*Adagio, Allegro vivace*

*Largo con espresssione*

*Scherzo: Allegro*

*Finale: Presto*

In 1795, a twenty-five-year-old Beethoven published his very first opus, a set of three piano trios, Op. 1. The choice of piano trio was safe and practical. Safe, because the piano trio was thus far a generally lighter genre with a less daunting history than the string quartet. Practical, because Beethoven himself was a brilliant pianist in need of performance material favoring his participation and leadership.

Haydn had written a large number of wonderful piano trios that were essentially piano sonatas with string reinforcements. Mozart also had written a handful, at least two of them masterworks worthy for three independent players. But both composers wrote trios with three or fewer movements, never exceeding around twenty minutes in length and hardly ever broaching the profundity of their more distinguished genres. With his three new piano trios, Beethoven raised the stakes by adding a fourth movement, extending the length, deepening the emotional expression, giving almost equal roles to each of the players and gathering a great diversity of character and mood within a single set.

Beethoven's larger ambitions are apparent right in the opening sonata movement. It begins with a substantial introductory *Adagio* that floats, defers and generally delays any kind of substantial arrival at a home key until several bars into the *Allegro vivace* that follows. For the essential sonata components, Beethoven provides a variety of themes—a satisfying development that begins with a cloudy touch of *fugato* (using the main theme as a counter subject) and a faithful return to the opening material with fresh elaborations. As a counterweight to the introduction, Beethoven presents a substantial coda recalling the *fugato* again, a shadow that makes the final happy cadence really “pop.”

Mozart comes immediately to mind with the second movement, a graceful, lyrical song that stretches out longer than the other movements in time as well as in its mood of delicate repose as foretold by the unusual marking of *Largo con espressione*. More surprisingly, even the *Scherzo* is mild by Beethoven's standards. No fierce tempo, jarring syncopations or cross-rhythms here. Curiously, Beethoven writes a coda for the *Scherzo*, extending its usually trim, sectional form with an unusual musical addendum.

The *Finale* dispenses with any *grazioso* evocations of Mozart, substituting the rollicking humor of Haydn instead. A swift rondo romps through easy, mirthful chord changes and a rapid exchange of brief leading motifs, like a game of hot potato or musical chairs; like the games, the music abruptly stops, catching the unaware off guard.

Source: Kai Christiansen and Music at Kohl Mansion

**GABRIEL URBAIN FAURE** (1845–1924)

PIANO TRIO, OP. 120

*Allegro, ma non troppo*

*Andantino*

*Allegro, vivo*

Gabriel Urbain Faure was a French composer, organist, pianist and teacher. Faure's music has been described as linking the end of Romanticism with the modernism of the 20th century. When Faure was born, Chopin was still composing, and by the time of Faure's death, jazz and the atonal music were being heard. The Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians notes that his harmonic and melodic innovations influenced the teaching of harmony for later generations. Op. 120 is one of his very last works, written in 1924 with Faure was 78 and most likely completely deaf. In contrast with the charm of his earlier music, his works from this period are sometimes elusive and withdrawn in character, and at other times turbulent and impassioned.



The first movement follows the contours of a sonata form with rich and constant variation eluding such simple ideas as development and recapitulation. Like a flowing river in which one can never step twice, ideas recur but always in fresh treatments. A signature of Faure's musical technique, his melodies build seamlessly from small rhythmic motifs that form chains, sequences and long lines as well as producing a mosaic of tiny fragments echoed throughout the ensemble in fluid imitation, the overlapping counterpoint of rich dialog.

Faure's gift for melody is evident throughout, but especially charming in the gentle repose of the central *Andantino*. A particularly French character pervades this tender, singing duet for violin and cello with piano eavesdropper, a mood one might attempt to describe as wistful nostalgia or sad joy. But the mood intensifies as the music gives way to a darker hued introspection that stretches into the longest movement of the work. It is here that Faure deploys an unusual texture at length: the violin and cello in octave doublings for a single, thick line of melody to a piano accompaniment like an art song. Once habituated to this somewhat spare and haunting sound, the ear is especially prepared for the eventual departure of the unison lines into divergent counterpoint, a graceful and precious flowering.

The *Finale* is a marvel of color, energy and contrast. It begins with the same octave doublings of the strings, but is immediately interrupted by a dazzling flourish from the piano announcing the energetic rhythm that will animate this *Allegro vivo*. Faure seems to interleave and ultimately superimpose two different conceptions of time in this movement, each with its own recurring theme. The strings throttle the momentum with a dramatic declamation in slow motion while the piano races forward with an almost frantic drive. Despite the spirited playfulness and the luminous, exotic modalities throughout the work, the predominating key of D minor lends the music a certain dark cast. Sources: Wikipedia; Earsense Chamberbase

**ANTONIN DVORAK** (1841–1904)

PIANO TRIO IN E MINOR, OP. 90, NO. 4 “DUMKY”

*Lento Maestoso*

*Poco Adagio*

*Andante*

*Andante Moderato (Quasi Tempo di Marcia)*

*Allegro*

*Lento Maestoso*

Dvorak was a Czech composer whose style has been described as the fullest recreation of a national idiom with that of the symphonic tradition, absorbing folk influences and finding effective ways of using them. Following the nationalist example of Bedrich Smetana, Dvorák frequently employed features of the folk music of Moravia and his native Bohemia (then parts of the Austrian Empire and now constituting the Czech Republic).

The title “Dumky” is the plural form of *dumka*, a term that refers to epic ballads, specifically a song or lament of captive people. Another “translation” suggests that *dumky* are “fleeting thoughts.” Many a PhD in Central European history could hang on these two verbal hooks. During the nineteenth century, composers from other Slavic countries began using the *dumka* as a brooding, introspective composition with cheerful sections interspersed within. Yet Dvorák did not use any original *dumky* melodies. He preferred to invent his own.

This composition features six episodes. The initial three are connected together with only the slightest pause (*attaca subito*), in effect forming a long first movement. The final three are presented in unrelated keys, thus giving the overall impression of a four-movement structure. Music critic Daniel Felsenfeld describes the “form of the piece as structurally simple but emotionally complicated, being an uninhibited Bohemian lament. Considered essentially formless, at least by classical standards, it is more like a six movement dark fantasia—completely original and successful. Being free of the rigors of sonata form gave Dvorák license to take the movements to some

dizzying, heavy places, able to be both brooding and yet somehow, through it all, a little lighthearted.”

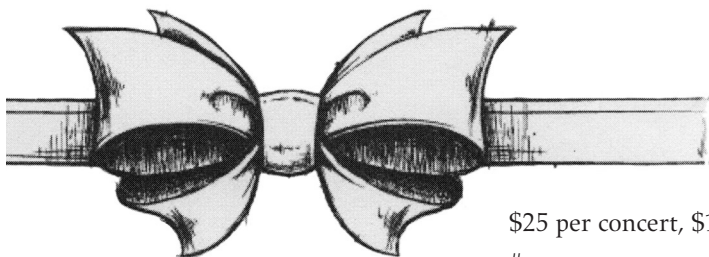
Each of the six episodes incorporates a contrast between slower and faster tempos; the contrasts generally involve changes between the major and minor modes as well. But there are innumerable shades and gradations between those emotional states in the music, just as there are in life.

The first movement juxtaposes a certain majestic pathos with a wild, syncopated dance. In the second, a melancholy *Adagio* alternates with a light-hearted melody that, however, stays in the minor mode and gradually takes on a *furioso* character. In the third, the slow theme is in the major and the fast one in the minor, not the other way around as before. The expressive cello melody of No. 4 continues with a playful “*scherzando*.” In No. 5, both the tempo and the key relationships are reversed: a passionate melody in a major key is followed by a dreamy, “quasi-recitative” episode in the minor. The biggest surprise, however, comes in the last dumka, scored in an unremittingly tragic C minor. Its slow melody is perhaps the most poignant of all, and the fast theme ends the work with breath-taking dramatic force, without the slightest relief from the accumulated tensions. Sources: Wikipedia; Peter Laki, Kennedy Center Program Notes

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