



*International
Presentations of
Music & Dance*

THE UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Academy of St. Martin in the Fields

IONA BROWN
Director and Violin Soloist

MONDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 3, 1980, AT 8:30
HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

PROGRAM

- Concerto Grosso in A major, Op. 6, No. 11 HANDEL
 Andante, larghetto e staccato
 Allegro
 Largo e staccato
 Andante
 Allegro
- Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 in G major BACH
 Allegro moderato
 Allegro
- Holberg Suite, Op. 40 GRIEG
 Praeludium
 Sarabande
 Gavotte
 Air
 Rigaudon

INTERMISSION

- Rondo in A major for Violin and String Orchestra SCHUBERT
 Adagio
 Allegro giusto
- IONA BROWN, *Violinist*
- Divertimento for Strings BARTÓK
 Allegro non troppo
 Molto adagio
 Allegro assai

Argo, Angel, and Philips Records.

PROGRAM NOTES

Concerto Grosso, Op. 6, No. 11 GEORGE FREDERICK HANDEL (1685-1759)

In the Baroque age, the concerto grosso occupied a position similar to that of the symphony in classical times. This essentially Italian compositional form, with its emphasis on pure string tone, was taken by Handel as the model for his twelve concerti grossi, Opus 6.

There is no doubt that Arcangelo Corelli, in spite of his precursors from Gabrieli to Stradella, was the originator of the classic form of the concerto grosso. In the preface to his concerti grossi, George Muffat mentions that as early as 1682 he had, through Corelli, become aware of the fusion of "profound Italian expression" with the lighter tone of French ballet.

The form, as a whole, is the outcome of the efforts of a century to embody in one idea an entire system of Italian baroque music: the Concertante style. In vocal or instrumental music the virtuoso solo part stands out above the subservient bass; in heavier orchestrated pieces of sacred or secular music one tonal mass is contrasted with a second.

Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 in G major JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685-1750)

Among the friends of Prince Leopold was Christian Ludwig, Margrave of Brandenburg. At his palace at Potsdam he maintained an orchestra and had amassed a large library of music. It is probable that he met Bach on a visit to Prince Leopold since he commissioned of Bach a set of six concertos. As the concerto form at that time had not yet become clearly defined, the composer was free to write for any combination of instruments that seemed fitting.

Bach worked on these for three years and forwarded the score to Christian Ludwig in March 1721, with a humble letter of dedication in French. It is not known what the Margrave of Brandenburg replied or even if he ever heard the music performed, but his name has been perpetuated because of these works.

The choice of instruments for the six concertos offers the utmost variety, no two of them being for the same combination. The third concerto is scored for violins, violas, cellos, bass, and harpsichord. It has no slow movement. The two Allegros are divided by two Adagio chords which stand for the traditional slow second movement.

Holberg Suite, Op. 40 EDVARD GRIEG (1843-1907)

Ludvig Holberg, a contemporary of Bach, was Scandinavia's greatest literary figure of the eighteenth century. Toward the end of the next century his fellow Norwegian, Grieg, honored his memory with the composition of a set of piano pieces cast in the form of the early keyboard suite and entitled, "From Holberg's Time." Later he rearranged it for string orchestra. The work follows the typical pattern, opening with a Prelude and progressing through dance movements of contrasting styles and tempi. Many composers have looked backward in their music, but with Grieg this seems to be an exception. For one so definitely romantic in spirit and with so definite a style of his own, the ease with which he handles an earlier style is quite admirable.

Rondo in A major for Violin and String Orchestra FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797-1828)

1816 was a very productive year in Schubert's career. The 19-year-old composer was busy writing many vocal works and also an abundance of instrumental compositions, including the 4th and 5th symphonies and the A-major Rondo. Like many other compositions of the same period, the influence of Mozart and Haydn is still there, yet Schubert's own personality and genius are also quite evident in the imaginative melodies, original modulations, and a unique harmonic language.

The Rondo has a broad, slow introduction, followed by the appearance of the main theme. The many interludes and virtuoso passages give the work its light and happy character.

Divertimento for Strings (1939) BÉLA BARTÓK
(1881–1945)

The *Divertimento for Strings* was the last of a series of works written by Bartók at the instigation of Paul Sacher, the conductor of the Basle Chamber Orchestra—the earlier ones being *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta* (1936) and *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion* (1937)—for the tenth anniversary concert of the Basle group of the International Society for Contemporary Music. To enable him to work on it undisturbed, Sacher invited Bartók to his chalet at Saanen. In a letter to his son describing his stay there, Bartók wrote that he felt like an old-time musician, invited to be the guest of his Maecenas who had commissioned him to write a work (for string orchestra), a situation, too, similar to that of a much earlier era. It would be tempting to attribute to this eighteenth century atmosphere Bartók's use in the *Divertimento* of some of the features of the concerto grosso, a form popular in that period. But this idea had occurred to him earlier, as he had previously mentioned it in a letter to Sacher. The title *Divertimento* had not yet been decided on and at that time Bartók thought the work might be a suite. The final form resembles the three-movement plan (moderate, slow, fast) of a concerto grosso with a suggestion of the original idea of a suite.

However, the term *Divertimento* is a slight misnomer also. It applies well enough to the gay and jocular *Finale*, but hardly does justice to the first two movements. The opening *Allegro non troppo* is in the typical style of the mellow first movements of a number of Bartók's later works, tenderly lyrical in tone, with the slightest suggestion of a rueful humor in its theme, and in a highly organized and ingenious sonata-form, complete with the composer's almost habitual inversion of part of the thematic material in the recapitulation.

The slow movement, charged with an intensity as great as anything Bartók wrote, opens with a restrained and typically Bartókian theme, over a similar accompaniment, gradually leading to a more gypsy-like theme, suggestive of a melancholy czardas. This is followed by a dirge-like middle section of rich sonority. A brief and modified recapitulation of the opening section ends the movement.

It is only the *Finale* that is gay. This is a *rondo*, with themes rhythmically and melodically as elementary as nursery rhymes, above simple thrumming accompaniments. Occasionally it resembles a children's round, and there is a tongue-in-cheek fugal episode in the middle. This is an irresistibly diverting movement, momentarily leaving a light-hearted impression of the entire work. As a whole, however, the *Divertimento* gives a deep and lasting satisfaction, far beyond mere diversion.

Academy of St. Martin in the Fields

IONA BROWN, *Director*

Violinists: Iona Brown, Roger Garland, Colin Sauer, Andrew McGee,
Peter Thomas, Susan Lynn
Malcolm Latchem, Marilyn Taylor, Douglas Weiland, Rosemary Furniss

Violists: Stephen Shingles, Anthony Jenkins

Cellists: Roger Smith, Benjamin Kennard

Double Bassist: Raymund Koster

Harpichordist: John Birch

Harpichord tuner: Malcolm Russell

About the Artists

Situated alongside Trafalgar Square in London, St. Martin in the Fields is not really the country church its name suggests, although it was in the fields outside the city when the Scottish architect James Gibbs supervised its building between 1721 and 1726. More than 200 years later, in 1959, the ensemble known as the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields was formed as a string group by Neville Marriner at the request of, and on a small grant from the church. All prominent musicians drawn from London's leading players, their extraordinary music-making attracted a large and discerning public. At the request of the church council, their Sunday concerts following Evensong expanded to six mid-day concerts in the church. Since those early years the ensemble's activities have increased to include concerts elsewhere, mostly at Festivals in England and, when individual schedules permit, tours to Europe, and as far afield as Australia, the Far East, and Japan. Last season alone, the musicians performed in Germany, Poland, France, Greece, Switzerland, South America, Yugoslavia, and Spain. The present tour, the first time that the original group of strings and harpsichord has visited North America, is made possible with financial assistance from the firm of Andry Montgomery.

The Academy of St. Martin in the Fields is very much an academy in the eighteenth century sense of an association of people who love and make music, and promote it through their enthusiasm and artistic standards. Vitality, complete technical confidence, and spontaneity in performance were fundamental elements in the formation of this ensemble, and remain as part of the Academy's distinctive character. These qualities are known to music lovers everywhere through numerous recordings. One of the world's most widely recorded ensembles, the Academy has received six Edison awards, the Canadian Grand Prix, and many "Golden Discs."

Iona Brown was born in Salisbury, England, and studied in Rome, Brussels, Vienna, and in Paris with Henryk Szeryng. She has been a member of the Philharmonia Orchestra, performed as soloist with all the British orchestras, and toured extensively throughout the world. For the last five years she has been directing and appearing as soloist with the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields. Miss Brown's violin is by J. B. Guadagnini from Piacenza, dated 1740.

Coming Events

VLADIMIR HOROWITZ, <i>Pianist</i> (sold out)	Sun. Nov. 9
JULIAN BREAM, <i>Guitarist</i>	Mon. Nov. 10
MURRAY PERAHIA, <i>Pianist</i>	Thurs. Nov. 13
KENNETH GILBERT, <i>Harpsichordist</i>	Sat. Nov. 15
MARTTI TALVELA, <i>Basso</i>	Sun. Nov. 16
THE FELD BALLETT	Mon.-Wed. Nov. 17-19
KALICHSTEIN-LAREDO-ROBINSON TRIO	Thurs. Nov. 20
CARIBBEAN CARNIVAL OF TRINIDAD	Fri. Nov. 21
LOS ANGELES PHILHARMONIC / CARLO MARIA GIULINI	Sun. Nov. 23
HANDEL'S "MESSIAH"	Fri.-Sun. Dec. 5-7
NEW SWINGLE SINGERS	Fri. Dec. 12
RUDOLF SERKIN, <i>Pianist</i>	Mon. Dec. 15
PITTSBURGH BALLETT, TCHAIKOVSKY'S "NUTCRACKER"	Thurs.-Sat. Dec. 18-20

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