1 Resonance

1 **Fantasy for Violin and Piano in C Major, op. 159, D. 934** (1827) 24:35
FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797–1828)

BENJAMIN BEILMAN, *violin;* JUHO POHJONEN, *piano*

2 ***Six German Dances,* D. 820** (1824) 7:27
FRANZ SCHUBERT

GILBERT KALISH, *piano*

3–6 **Piano Trio in E-flat Major, op. 70, no. 2** (1808)
LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770–1827)

Poco sostenuto – Allegro ma non troppo	10:22
Allegretto	5:02
Allegretto ma non troppo	6:16
Finale: Allegro	7:46

JUHO POHJONEN, *piano;* BENJAMIN BEILMAN, *violin;*
DAVID FINCKEL, *cello*

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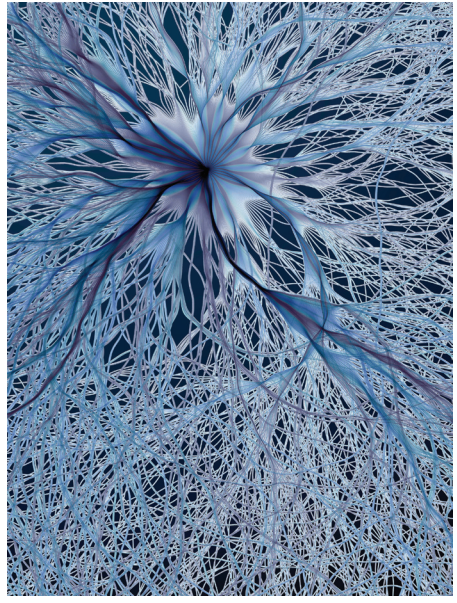
Music@Menlo *LIVE*

1 Resonance



SCHUBERT	Fantasy for Violin and Piano in C Major
SCHUBERT	*Six German Dances*
BEETHOVEN	Piano Trio in E-flat Major

Music@Menlo *LIVE*

1 Resonance

Music@Menlo's tenth-anniversary season, *Resonance,* explored the many ways in which music resonates within the listener. Music has an immense capacity to nurture the mind, transport listeners to new places, and, ultimately, delight the ears and stir the hearts of all people. Each disc of the 2012 edition of Music@Menlo *LIVE* captures the essence of *Resonance* and the festival's milestone season.

Disc I presents two works by Franz Schubert, the Fantasy in C Major (1827) followed by *Six German Dances* (1824). Schubert wrote these pieces as he entered the final stages of his life, offering audiences holistic sustenance and strength. This theme is continued with Beethoven's Piano Trio in E-flat, one of the grandest essays of the composer's Heroic period.

Ludwig van Beethoven's Piano Trio in E-flat Major, op. 70, no. 2. L-R: Benjamin Beilman, Juho Pohjonen, and David Finckel.

FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797–1828)
Fantasy in C Major, D. 934 (1827)

Schubert's musical life was as ephemeral as it was remarkable. He became gravely ill in 1823, contracting what almost certainly was syphilis. Well aware of his mortality, he wrote to a friend in March of 1824: "I find myself to be the most unhappy and wretched creature in the world. Imagine a man whose health will never be right again, and who in sheer despair continually makes things worse and worse instead of better." Despite the great physical suffering and psychic anguish at the end of his life, Schubert remained incredibly prolific. Indeed, for the composer who had once proclaimed, "I have come into this world for no other purpose but to compose," music truly represented an essential source of spiritual sustenance. In the final year of his life, Schubert completed the two piano trios, the Ninth Symphony (appropriately known as *The Great*), the Cello Quintet, and the last three piano sonatas, among numerous other keyboard, vocal, and orchestral works—all told, an imposing set of masterpieces, miraculously concentrated within a deeply trying twelve months and unequaled by many composers over entire lifetimes.

The C Major Fantasy for Violin and Piano dates from this exceptional final chapter of Schubert's life. It was composed in December 1827 for a young Bohemian virtuoso named Josef Slawjk, whom Schubert had met the previous year. The work masquerades somewhat as a virtuoso showpiece, intended perhaps to appeal to the Viennese

appetite for Paganini's pyrotechnic caprices for solo violin. But, while it does indeed require its share of virtuosity, the fantasy's expressive richness betrays it as something more than simply a soloist vehicle. Also, its substantive twenty-five minutes of music—which speak to a Schubertian quality famously praised by Robert Schumann as "heavenly length"—likewise place the piece in a different class. When Slawjk premiered the Fantasy in C Major in January 1828, one critic observed that the work "occupied rather too much of the time the Viennese are prepared to devote to the pleasures of the mind."

The work begins with a hushed tremolando figure in the piano, from which emerges a long, generous melody in the violin. The violin hangs suspended above the trills and turns of the piano accompaniment, its infinite slowness seemingly belonging to another world. The second movement *Allegretto* takes a more piquant turn, characterized by a mischievous repartee between the violin and piano. The centerpiece of the fantasy is the third movement *Andantino,* a set of variations on Schubert's *lied* "Sei mir gegrußt." The particular character of the *Andantino* movement derives from its seeming melodic innocence combined with the poignancy of Schubert's harmonies. Four variations on this vintage Schubertian theme follow, each one illustrating the composer's melodic inventiveness.

—Patrick Castillo

FRANZ SCHUBERT
Six German Dances, D. 820 (1824)

In 1824, four years before his death, Schubert returned to Zselíz, one hundred miles east of Vienna. He spent his summer in the home of Count Johann Karl Esterhazy, where he had previously been employed. While there, Schubert tutored the count's two daughters, the Countesses Marie and Karoline, and composed numerous works for keyboard, including his *Six German Dances,* D. 820.

Each of the six dances, though relatively short in length, demonstrates Schubert's ingenious and subtle pianistic writing and use of such forward-thinking techniques as rhythmic and metric displacement. Performed without pause, the six dances come across as one piece with six distinct episodes. The first three dances are in A-flat major, and the first of these begins with a lilting primary theme. In each of the two following dances, the primary theme of the first dance returns after sections of wistful reflection. The final set of dances, all in B-flat major, begins with a rustic quality, with heavy use of the bass register. In the final two dances, Schubert's characteristic Viennese elegance shines forth, before the rustic earthiness of the fourth dance returns.

—Isaac Thompson

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770–1827)
Piano Trio in E-flat Major, op. 70, no. 2 (1808)

By writing the two Opus 70 trios, Beethoven raised the technical and artistic standards for the piano trio to new heights. The German Romantic author, composer, and cultural commentator E. T. A. Hoffmann offered his rapturous praise to the composer upon discovering the works, writing:

> How deeply, O! exalted Master! have your noble piano compositions penetrated into my soul; how hollow and meaningless in comparison all music seems which does not emanate from you, or from the contemplative Mozart, or that powerful genius, Sebastian Bach...I am unable to tear myself away from the marvelous variety and interweaving figures of your trios. The pure siren voices of your gaily varied and beautiful themes always tempt me on further and further.

As much as any other works from the early 1800s, these works signify Beethoven's determination to "embark on a new path." Hoffmann later wrote of the Opus 70 trios, "Beethoven carries the romantic spirit of music deep into his soul and with what high geniality, with what deep sense of self-possession he enlivens each work."

Franz Schubert's Fantasy for Violin and Piano in C Major, op. 159, D. 934. Benjamin Beilman.

As useful a perspective as the categorization of Beethoven's works into early, middle, and late periods offers for beginning to understand the scope of Beethoven's creativity, the system nevertheless has its flaws: within each of these periods we find works of extremely diverse character. The Opus 70 piano trios demonstrate this point perfectly. Beethoven biographer Lewis Lockwood has commented, "After the *Ghost,* the E-flat Trio, op. 70, no. 2, turns from the demonic to the human." Although not as well known as the *Ghost* Trio, the E-flat Trio is every bit as marvelous. While the former presents polarized extremes of emotion in a more concentrated fashion, this work offers more understated musical ideas reliant on subtlety and nuance.

—Patrick Castillo

About Music@Menlo

Music@Menlo is an internationally acclaimed three-week summer festival and institute that combines world-class chamber music performances, extensive audience engagement with artists, intensive training for preprofessional musicians, and efforts to enhance and broaden the chamber music community of the San Francisco Bay Area. An immersive and engaging experience centered around a distinctive array of programming, Music@Menlo enriches its core concert programs with numerous opportunities for in-depth learning to intensify audiences' enjoyment and understanding of the music and provide meaningful ways for aficionados and newcomers of all ages to explore classical chamber music.