

# 5 From Bach

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## 1–4 Piano Trio no. 3 in c minor, op. 101 (1886)

**JOHANNES BRAHMS** (1833–1897)

*Allegro energico* 6:59

*Presto non assai* 3:33

*Andante grazioso* 3:40

*Allegro moderato* 5:53

JEFFREY KAHANE, *piano*; JOSEPH SWENSEN, *violin*; CARTER BREY, *cello*

## 5–10 Divertimento in E-flat Major, K. 563 (1788)

**WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART** (1756–1791)

*Allegro* 8:41

*Adagio* 10:53

*Minuetto I* 5:22

*Andante* 7:11

*Minuetto II: Allegretto* 5:47

*Allegro* 6:15

ARNAUD SUSSMANN, *violin*; PAUL NEUBAUER, *viola*; COLIN CARR, *cello*

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# Music@Menlo *LIVE*

## 5 From Bach



BRAHMS

Piano Trio no. 3

MOZART

Divertimento in E-flat Major

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Music@Menlo's eleventh season, *From Bach*, celebrated the timeless work of Johann Sebastian Bach, the composer whose profound legacy has shaped Western music over the two and a half centuries since his death. Each disc of the 2013 edition of Music@Menlo *LIVE* captures the spirit of the season.

Disc V features two works indebted to the legacy of Johann Sebastian Bach. His sonatas for violin and keyboard—typically performed with the cello augmenting the continuo—gave birth to an entirely new genre, after which Johannes Brahms would write his Piano Trio in c minor. Mozart's Divertimento, a masterpiece as beguiling in character as it is epic in breadth, illuminates the splendor of the string trio ensemble, as first realized by Bach in works such as his *Brandenburg* Concerto no. 3.

### **JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833–1897)**

#### **Piano Trio no. 3 in c minor, op. 101 (1886; rev. 1891)**

Brahms composed the c minor Piano Trio (op. 101) in Hofstetten during the summer of 1886. A stormy outburst in urgent triplets serves as the first movement's main theme. The music's intensity is heightened by dramatic dotted rhythms but then becomes more subdued for the entry of the formal second subject, a lyrical strain for the strings which is derived from the rising three-note motive of the opening. The development section is so thoroughly absorbed with the main theme and the dotted-rhythm motive that they are skipped at the beginning of the recapitulation, the music proceeding directly to a transitional idea and the second subject. The two main-theme



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's Divertimento in E-flat Major, K. 563. L-R: Paul Neubauer and Colin Carr.

motives return in the coda to balance the form and provide a turbulent ending. Malcolm MacDonald, in his study of the composer, wrote that the second movement “is one of the most delicate that Brahms ever wrote and yet is a profoundly uneasy movement of gray half-lights, rapid stealthy motion, and suppressed sadness.” The movement’s three-part form (A–B–A) wraps itself around a sinuous theme that the piano unwinds in the outer sections (with spectral echoes from the strings) and a central episode layering mysterious pizzicato arpeggios in the strings upon unsettled chords suspended in the keyboard. The gentle *Andante*, with its lilting quality reminiscent of Austrian country dances, provides an expressive foil to the surrounding movements. The finale, in compact sonata form, resumes the impassioned manner of the opening



Johannes Brahms's Piano Trio no. 3 in c minor, op. 101. L-R: Joseph Swensen, Jeffrey Kahane, and Carter Brey.

movement, though the music turns to the bright tonality of C major in its coda to provide an affirmative close.

—Dr. Richard E. Rodda

## **WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756–1791)**

### **Divertimento in E-flat Major, K. 563 (1788)**

The Divertimento in E-flat, written in 1788, was dedicated to Johann Michael Puchberg, a Masonic brother to whom Mozart owed large sums of money, and debuted to critical acclaim during a German tour in April 1789. Mozart divided the work into six movements, which constitute what Alfred Einstein called “the finest, most perfect



trio ever heard.” The opening *Allegro*, in sonata form, immediately establishes the key with a unison E-flat major arpeggio, which naturally flows into the buoyant violin theme and complex lower accompaniment. The second theme illustrates Mozart’s skill in writing for the string trio ensemble, with the viola pacing a steady bass below the violin and cello melody. The development, though comparatively brief—Mozart had developed many of these themes before the development officially began—casts the sunny themes from the exposition in a more sinister nature. The recapitulation closes the movement with an even more euphoric sensibility than when the movement began. The *Adagio* second movement, in sonata-allegro form, provides a dramatic and lyrical balance to the work. Painting a pensive portrait, the movement’s three sections

expound on the tranquil arpeggio melody presented by the cello in the exposition. Then naturally follows the first of two *minuettos*, a delightfully syncopated dance. The fourth movement *Andante* begins simply with a unison melody in the violin and viola, above a dance-like pizzicato accompaniment in the cello. The movement evolves into a series of four variations, each growing contrapuntally more intricate. Then follows the second *minuetto*, which begins with the violin and viola mimicking a horn-like hunting call. The movement contains two trios, rather than the typical single trio, each resembling a rustic *ländler*, an Austrian folk dance. The movement concludes with a coda in the same lighthearted fashion with which it began. The finale is in sonata-rondo form, each episode further revealing the complex thematic development that Mozart deploys as the trio gallops towards the final joyous E-flat major chord. Of the concluding *Allegro*, Einstein writes, “each instrument is *primus inter pares*; every note is significant—every note is a contribution to spiritual and sensuous fulfillment in sound.”

—Andrew Goldstein



## 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.