

PHILADELPHIA CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY

a life more beautiful

PREVIEW
NOTES

Apollon Musagète Quartet

Paweł Zalejski, *violin* • Bartosz Zachłód, *violin* • Piotr Szumieł, *viola* • Piotr Skweres, *cello*

Garrick Ohlsson, *piano*

Friday, October 14 –7:30 PM

Perelman Theater, Kimmel Center

PROGRAM

String Quartet in D Major, D. 94

Franz Schubert

Born: January 31, 1797, Vienna

Died: November 19, 1828, Vienna

Composed: 1812

Duration: 18 minutes

The early quartets are among the first instrumental works Schubert composed. They occupy the period from roughly 1810, when he was thirteen, to 1816, when he was on the verge of a career as a free-lance composer. Schubert's quartet begins with a unison "D" before breaking a lovely tune in D-Major. The Schubert quartet continues in much the same vein as it begins. Its benign, sunny lyricism shines through all four movements, virtually without a cloud. The first *Allegro* and following *Andante* suggest the deep well of melodic invention that would ultimately flow over with some six-hundred songs, while the *Menuetto* and *Finale* bubble with dancing energy and good humor. As mentioned earlier, Schubert had not yet fully mastered classical forms, so there is occasionally either too much repetition or an uncertainty of direction. This reminds us that the quartets were intended for family entertainment in the first place, and hardly detract from the pleasure of watching a young genius in his first efforts.

String Quartet in B-flat Major, D. 36

Franz Schubert

Composed: 1813

Duration: 26 minutes

Schubert completed his Third Quartet in the last part of February 1813. The opening movement is an *Allegro* in B-Flat Major. The interplay between the fetching main theme in the violins and the harmony of running 8th notes in the cello, and later the viola too, starts as counterpoint but eventually morphs into the second theme. The second movement,

Andante, begins with a melody which is introduced by the cello and then taken over by the violin. Far more striking is a lengthy chromatic episode which appears dramatically in the cello's lower registers. It ends in a sudden tremolo, an effect Schubert would use time and again. The third movement, *Menuetto, Allegro non troppo*, is a real Viennese Minuet in sound and feel. The finale, *Allegretto*, begins with a genial theme Schubert develops exploring many different possibilities. For the first time, the lead violin is taken into its highest registers while the second plays octaves below with telling effect.

Piano Quintet in G Minor, Op. 57

Dmitri Shostakovich

Born: September 25, 1906, St. Petersburg

Died: August, 9, 1975, Moscow

Composed: 1940

Duration: 38 minutes

This is the younger Shostakovich at his most serious and purely musical. There are no distracting jokes and little melodrama. Instead a spacious and haunting neo-classical story unfolds that looks back to the famous chamber-music masterpieces of the romantic age and often glances towards Bach, while at the same time speaking a language of its own, of unusual purity and plainness. Every note is clean and poised, the music moving seamlessly between the apparently light-hearted and the intensely moving. The finale is strikingly simple and powerfully memorable. As so often with this composer, we can hear dark shadows lurking and gathering in the background, which is hardly surprising given that this quintet was composed as Western Europe was already at war and the USSR soon to be invaded by Nazi Germany. This quintet is the song before the storm.