



*International
Presentations of
Music & Dance*

THE UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Borodin Quartet

MIKHAIL KOPELMAN, *Violinist*
ANDREI ABRAMENKOV, *Violinist*

DMITRI SHEBALIN, *Violist*
VALENTIN BERLINSKY, *Cellist*

SUNDAY AFTERNOON, FEBRUARY 25, 1990, AT 4:00
RACKHAM AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

P R O G R A M

- Quartet No. 2 in F major, Op. 92 PROKOFIEV
Allegro sostenuto
Adagio, poco piu animato, tempo 1
Allegro, andante molto, tempo 1
- Quartet No. 3 (1984) SCHNITTKE
Andante
Agitato
Pesante

I N T E R M I S S I O N

- Quartet in B-flat major, Op. 130, with Grosse Fuge, Op. 133 BEETHOVEN
Adagio, ma non troppo; allegro
Presto
Andante con moto, ma non troppo
Alla danza tedesca: allegro assai
Cavatina: adagio molto espressivo
Finale: Grosse Fuge

*The Borodin Quartet is represented exclusively in North America
by Mariedi Anders Artists Management, Inc., San Francisco.*

Cameras and recording devices are not allowed in the auditorium.
Halls Cough Tablets, courtesy of Warner Lambert Company, are available in the lobby.

PROGRAM NOTES

Quartet No. 2 in F major, Op. 92 SERGEI PROKOFIEV
(1891-1953)

Sergei Prokofiev, born in Sontsovka, in the Ekaterinoslav district of the Ukraine, began piano lessons at age three with his mother, who also encouraged him to compose. It soon became clear that the child was musically precocious, writing his first piano piece at age five and playing the easier Beethoven sonatas at age nine. He continued training in Moscow, studying piano with Reinhold Glière, and in 1904, entered the St. Petersburg Conservatory where he studied harmony and counterpoint with Anatoly Lyadov, orchestration with Rimsky-Korsakov, and conducting with Alexander Tcherepnin. During these years, he continued to compose, culminating his early years with the *Classical* Symphony in 1918. After the Russian Revolution, he moved briefly to America, where he performed his own piano music in recitals, including one presented by the Musical Society in Ann Arbor on December 14, 1918. Also, the Chicago Opera commissioned and presented the world première in 1941 of his opera *The Love for Three Oranges*, the only work that gained international acclaim during the composer's lifetime. Financed by the proceeds of his American concerts, Prokofiev moved to Paris in the early 1920s, where his style became more settled, broader, and more lyrical; his association with the impresario Diaghilev resulted in music for three ballets. Never fully at home in the West, though, Prokofiev returned to Russia in 1933 to remain permanently (except for concert engagements in Europe and America). This move, however, came at an inopportune time, just when the doctrine of "socialist realism" in the arts had been propounded. Nevertheless, Prokofiev found an outlet for his gifts in film music, including brilliant scores for *Lieutenant Kije* and *Alexander Nevsky*, and in ballet for *Romeo and Juliet* and later, *Cinderella*. Although he was a target of sharp criticism for his "decadent" practices in adopting certain modernistic procedures, his status on the whole remained very high, and his music became a major influence on the young generation of Soviet composers.

With the outbreak of war in 1941, the Soviet government evacuated large numbers of artists, Prokofiev among them, away from capital to the comparative safety of the southern republics. Thus, he spent varying periods of time in the Caucasus, in Georgia, and in Kazakhstan. In Nalchik, he began several works, including the opera *War and Peace*, his film score for Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible*, and the Second String Quartet. This Quartet was the first of his "wartime" compositions to be completed and the first to reach performance, in September 1942. The Quartet embodies Prokofiev's reaction to the folklore and the landscape of the Northern Caucasus, and its thematic material is based on folk songs that he heard sung to the accompaniment of native instruments. The Second Quartet was first heard in Moscow in March 1944, performed by the Beethoven Quartet in the Conservatory Hall of the Moscow State Philharmonic Society at a composer's evening devoted solely to Prokofiev's works.

The first movement is marked *Allegro sostenuto*; sharply dynamic, it is given unusual intensity by the energy of its rhythms and its severe harmonies. The second movement, *Adagio*, has the lyrical quality of an impassioned song by a Caucasian folk singer; before the movement ends, the song is transformed into a light, graceful dance. The final movement is an *Allegro* with sharply contrasting moods.

Quartet No. 3 (1984) ALFRED SCHNITTKE
(b. 1934)

Alfred Schnittke is a Russian composer of German origin, born in Engels in the German Volga Republic, near Saratov. He had private piano lessons in Vienna (1946-48), where his father was stationed as a correspondent of a German-language Soviet newspaper. Returning to Moscow, he studied composition with Evgeny Golubev and instrumentation with Nicolai Rakov at the Moscow Conservatory from 1953 to 1958. In 1961, he was appointed to the faculty of the Moscow Conservatory, where he served until 1973. He also worked in the Moscow Experimental Studio of Electronic Music.

After writing in a conventional manner, Schnittke became acutely interested in the new Western techniques and was influenced by the twelve-note composers and also by Karlheinz Stockhausen, John Cage, and György Ligeti. Soon he became known as one of the boldest experimenters in modernistic composition in Soviet Russia. After 1966, Schnittke began to use dramatic and programmatic concepts in his work, such as the *Canon in memory of Stravinsky* (1974); *Der gelbe Klang*, a scenic composition after the poetic drama by the abstract painter Wassily Kandinsky (1973); *Prelude in memory of Shostakovich* (1975); *Moz-Art à la Haydn* (1977); and *Seid nüchtern und wachet* (1983), a choral work based on the version of the Faust legend published in 1587 under the title *Historia von Doktor Johann Fausten*, commissioned by the Vienna Choral Academy on the occasion of its 125th anniversary. Schnittke's works also include an opera; two ballets; four symphonies; concertos for violin, piano, and other instruments; solo vocal and choral works; and a wide range of chamber music. He has also written articles on aspects of Shostakovich's work.

Schnittke's juxtapositions of disparate material are found in his Third Quartet, with the incorporation of past styles within a musical language of the present. In the opening of the work

are quotations from a Stabat Mater by Lassus, a theme of Beethoven's Grosse Fuge, and the personal musical monogram of Dmitri Shostakovich, DSCH. These quotations, in one sense symbolic of two past masters of the quartet idiom, are carefully chosen for their motivic correlations — the DSCH motive being no more than a transposition of the first four notes of the Beethoven theme. From this kind of musical wit grows an opposition between the contemporary world they represent and the diatonic world of Lassus — and the consequent synthesis of the two. Schnittke interrelates the movements by shared material, and within this thematic unity are allusions to different historical musical periods, from canonic imitation in the first movement to the nineteenth-century waltz-scherzo of the second. Throughout, the opening cadence by Lassus returns in its original form at important junctures, like a punctuation mark containing the overall diversity of style.

Quartet in B-flat major, Op. 130, with Grosse Fuge . . . LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN
(1770-1827)

Beethoven's last five string quartets inhabit a sphere of their own, which differs greatly from the world of his previous quartets. He becomes an almost wholly inward artist, perhaps suggesting his advancing age combined with his tragic affliction of deafness. The Opus 130 Quartet is written on a grand scale, with six movements in a continuous alternation of fast and slow tempos. The *Adagio* introduction to the first movement is integrated into the fabric of the movement proper, its smoothly burnished surface contrasted with the jagged emphasis of the *Allegro*. The *Presto* is a wispy sketch in duple time, with a Trio section that returns to the conventional triple meter; a chromatic sliding figure leads to the embellished return of the opening. The third movement, *Andante con moto*, is an unusual combination of mechanical rhythms and a simple, childlike melody, exploring juxtapositions and expressive possibilities before a curt ending. The *Alla danza tedesca* employs simple, popular elements in a stylized and emotionally charged context and experiments with embellishment and fragmentation of the theme.

A rich texture and timeless trajectory characterize the *Cavatina*, whose exquisite scoring and expressive melody are perhaps matchless in the literature. An extraordinary passage in the middle of the movement marked *beklemmt* (oppressed), projects the first violin over quietly insistent chords in the other instruments. Here, inserted silences speak as eloquently as the notes.

The monumental Grosse Fuge was Beethoven's original finale for this quartet. (He was later persuaded to write a new and lighter final movement and the Fuge was published as a separate entity.) One of the most powerful of his works, the Grosse Fuge opens with an introduction presenting several elements that will become substantive throughout the movement, characterized by a four-note motive of two half-steps, in different guises. The fugue that ensues unleashes an explosive force, unflagging in its intensity. This dissolves into a second, smoother fugue, and then a light, dancelike section that is metamorphosed into a powerful series of passages, severely abstract and impressionistic. Lightly lilting themes, tossed back and forth, alternate with powerful chords. The ending is delayed. The fragmentary opening synopsis is repeated in reverse order, and then a powerful build-up of intensity carries the music forward to the final, emphatic, implacable close.

About the Artists

One of today's most famous quartet groups, the Borodin Quartet was founded in 1946 within the walls of the Moscow Conservatory. In forty years of concert activity, the ensemble has performed more than 4,000 concerts embracing all continents of the planet.

The Borodin Quartet possesses a vast repertoire, from Mozart to Bartók, Hindemith, and Britten, among many others. Twentieth-century Soviet composers, such as Prokofiev, Miaskovsky, Shebalin, Weinberg, and Schnittke, have often heard their works premiered by the Quartet. Among the Quartet's greatest achievements in this part of the repertoire is its performances of Dmitri Shostakovich's chamber works. Considered among the top interpreter of the Shostakovich quartets, the Borodin Quartet often performs cycles comprising all fifteen of the Shostakovich quartets in various cities in the Soviet Union, Western Europe, and America. The cycle was presented for the first time in North America by the Borodin Quartet in 1988, in a series of six concerts at Pasadena's Ambassador Auditorium.

Over the years, the Quartet has collaborated with eminent artists such as David Oistrakh, Vladimir Spivakov, and Sviatoslav Richter. With Richter, the Borodin Quartet has performed piano ensembles by Shostakovich, Brahms, Reger, and Franck, many of which have been recorded. The Quartet's recordings can be heard on the Philips and Melodiya labels, with particular distinction for its Angel/EMI release of the Shostakovich quartet cycle.

The Borodin Quartet now returns to Ann Arbor after appearing in the Musical Society's 1967 Chamber Music Festival. Two members from that first performance — Dmitri Shebalin and Valentin Berlinsky — are performing in this afternoon's concert, joined by younger musicians, violinists Mikhail Kopelman and Andrei Abramnikov.

Coming Concerts

- Maurizio Pollini, *pianist* Fri. Mar. 9
Contemporary American Dance Festival Mon.-Fri. Mar. 12-16
Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra Sat. Mar. 17
Dmitri Kitaenko, *conductor*; Vladimir Krainev, *pianist*
Thomas Allen, *baritone* Wed. Mar. 21
Baltimore Symphony Orchestra Sun. Mar. 25
David Zinman, *conductor*; Isaac Stern, *violinist*
Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields / Iona Brown Sun. Apr. 1
The Feld Ballet Wed., Thurs. Apr. 4, 5
Jim Cullum Jazz Band Sat. Apr. 7
William Warfield, *narrator*; Gershwin's "Porgy and Bess"
Murray Perahia, *pianist* Sat. Apr. 14

Pre-concert Presentations

All presentations free of charge, in the Rackham Building one hour before the concert.

- Friday, Mar. 16, preceding American Contemporary Dance Festival Final Concert
Debra Cash, Dance Critic, The Boston Globe
Topic: "American Dance: A Critic's Perspective"
Saturday, Mar. 17, preceding Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra
Roland Wiley, Assoc. Prof. of Music, U-M
Topic: "Insights into Russian Music"
Wednesday, Mar. 21, preceding Thomas Allen, baritone
Martin Katz, Prof. of Music in Accompanying, U-M
Topic: "An Accompanist's Look at Lieder"
Sunday, Apr. 1, preceding Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields
Glenn Watkins, Prof. of Music History/Musicology, U-M
Saturday, Apr. 14, preceding Murray Perahia, pianist
Deanna Relyea, Director, Kerrytown Concert House
Topic: "Problems Peculiar to Pianists: Their Instruments, Their Careers"

97th Annual May Festival — May 9-12, 1990

Hill Auditorium, Ann Arbor, 8:00 p.m.

Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra
André Previn, *Guest Conductor and Pianist*

The Festival Chorus

Hei-Kyung Hong, *Soprano* Richard Stilwell, *Baritone*

Wednesday — Gershwin: Piano Concerto in F; Rachmaninoff: Symphony No. 2

Thursday — John Harbison: Concerto for Brass Choir and Orchestra; Mahler: Symphony No. 4,
with Hei-Kyung Hong

Friday — Beethoven: Symphony No. 4; Shostakovich: Symphony No. 4

Saturday — All-Brahms: "Tragic" Overture; "A German Requiem," for Chorus, Orchestra,
and Soloists

Concert Guidelines

Starting Time: Every attempt is made to begin concerts on time. Latecomers are asked to wait in the lobby until seated by ushers at a predetermined time in the program.

Children: Children not able to sit quietly during the performance may be asked by an usher, along with the accompanying adult, to leave the auditorium.

Coughing: *From London's Royal Festival Hall:* "During a test in the hall, a note played *mezzo forte* on the horn measured approx. 65 decibels; a single 'uncovered' cough gave the same reading. A handkerchief placed over the mouth assists in obtaining a *pianissimo*."

Watches: Electronic beeping and chiming digital watches should be turned off during performances. In case of emergency, advise your paging service of auditorium and seat location and ask them to call University Security at 763-1131.



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