



ACC

Winter Concert

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12th | 3:00pm
Trinity Episcopal Church, Highland Park, IL

WELCOME

Dear Friend of Artemis Chamber Orchestra,

It is my absolute pleasure to welcome you to this afternoon's concert. We have some thrilling and beautiful music to share. When I found this string orchestra arrangement of *Death and the Maiden*, I had to program it; a product of two of the most dramatic and insightful composers, Franz Schubert and Gustav Mahler!

Schubert's *Death and the Maiden* string quartet is an intense, fierce piece. Written soon after discovering his own death was imminent due to the effects of syphilis, one must only listen to the opening to hear the darkness in his heart. The nickname of the piece comes from the use of a melody he had written years before in a song named *Death and the Maiden*, which we will hear performed by Angela Born, a wonderful soprano and member of our venue, Trinity Episcopal Church.

To lighten the mood of the program, I decided to pair the quartet with a set of Brahms waltzes, also arranged for string orchestra. Initially I thought we might play a few selections from the set, but ultimately I did not have the heart to split them up because Brahms takes us on a wonderful journey through his waltzes.

I hope you enjoy the performance,
Diana Economou





Winter Concert

Sunday, February 12, 2023

3:00pm

Trinity Episcopal Church

Highland Park, IL

Diana Economou, Conductor

Johannes Brahms

(1833-1897)

arr. Ferdinand Thieriot

Sixteen Waltzes, Op. 39

Franz Schubert

(1797-1828)

Death and the Maiden, D. 531,

Op. 7, No. 3

Franz Schubert

arr. Gustav Mahler

String Quartet No. 14, D. 810 -

"Death and the Maiden"

I. Allegro

II. Andante con moto

III. Scherzo: Allegro molto

IV. Presto

PROGRAM NOTES

Sixteen Waltzes, Op. 39



The bulk of Brahms's career was spent in Vienna where he lived from 1872 until his death. In 1866, as he worked towards making a name for himself and settling in Vienna, he wrote this set of Viennese waltzes for piano-four-hand. He shrewdly dedicated them to Eduard Hanslick, a prominent Viennese music critic. They sold with great success in the city and contributed significantly to his popularity. Today's renditions have been arranged for string orchestra. They are wonderful examples of Viennese waltzes. Blogger FugueForThought perfectly expressed their beauty in a post:

"There aren't words to describe the brilliant vividness of these little works that are apparently light and carefree. There's a magical elegance attached to every one, and unrestrained by the shackles of any kind of potentially abstruse form (for even the most uninitiated of listeners), it's one of the most direct examples I can currently think of to convey the sheer, blissful joy of beautiful music. This is not the Brahms of the Requiem or even the first symphony. It's full of charm and beauty, but The Bearded Wonder never relinquishes the deep, awe-inspiring sense of perfect craft in even these small works."

Death and the Maiden, D. 531

Schubert is known as a prolific songwriter, or "liedermacher" in German. In total he composed over 600 songs in his short career. This song, written in 1817 when Schubert was 20 years old, sets a poem by Matthias Claudius in which Death comes to claim an adolescent girl:

Das Mädchen:

Vorüber! Ach, vorüber!
Geh, wilder Knochenmann!
Ich bin noch jung! Geh, Lieber,
Und rühre mich nicht an.

Der Tod:

Gieb deine Hand, du schön und zart
Gebild!
Bin Freund, und komme nicht, zu strafen.
Sey gutes Muths! Ich bin nicht wild,
Sollst sanft in meinen Armen schlafen!

The Maiden:

Pass me by! Oh, pass me by!
Go, you savage skeleton!
I am still young! Go, dear,
And do not touch me.

Death:

Give me your hand, you beautiful and
tender form!
I am a friend, and come not to punish.
Be of good cheer! I am not savage,
Softly shall you sleep in my arms!

The piano begins a slow, solemn funeral march in minor invoking the maiden's impending death. Suddenly she sees his bony form and frantically begs him to leave her. Death responds by bringing back the funeral march. He draws her to him softly and gently. On the word "strafen" (punish), the music turns suddenly to major; it seems her peaceful departure in the arms of Death is not as horrible as she feared. It is a powerful and beautiful piece of music.

String Quartet No. 14 - "Death and the Maiden", D. 810

String Quartet No. 14 which Schubert wrote seven years later in 1824 comes by its nickname because the second movement uses Death's theme from this song. As a theme and variation movement, it presents this melody and repeats it with changes on every repetition. Schubert did not subtitle the piece "Death and the Maiden"; that came after his death when the connection to the song was recognized. Thus any claim that Schubert intended the piece to symbolize the story of *Death and the Maiden* or his own approaching death is not substantiated by the composer. Regardless, the music's force and passion clearly expresses struggle or suffering.



This suffering was mirrored in his life. In 1823, at age 26, Schubert contracted syphilis. The next year, at the same time that he was writing this very quartet, he wrote to a friend of his deep depression, about how his hopes for himself have perished and how he wishes for death to come every night. Of his music he wrote, "What I produce is due to my understanding of music and to my sorrows."

It's easy to hear the sorrow and anger from the start. The piece opens with a strong, fiery triplet motive that Schubert develops throughout the rest of the movement. The immense energy is unceasing until the end when it fizzles to a whisper. It's a perfect segue into the funeral march of movement two.

Schubert biographer Brian Newbould writes, "More often than not Schubert returns to one of his songs because he relishes the possibilities for musical elaboration or development which were not available to him in the constraining context of the song itself." With each variation, Schubert has an opportunity for this elaboration. He writes six variations for Death's theme. As is typical in this form, each variation builds energy by using faster rhythms until the climax which comes in variation five. From there it settles back to the mood of the original theme and dies away.

In movement three Schubert borrows an idea from Beethoven who replaced the minuet dance with a fast version, the "scherzo", literally meaning "joke". It may be because minuets were falling out of style and considered boring that a fast version could be seen as funny, but there's nothing funny about this scherzo. Much like movement one, it starts passionately yet aggressively and a lovely lyrical reprieve follows. It's in ABA form, the typical layout for minuets and scherzi, both of which are usually found in quartets and symphonies.

Something that sets post-Beethoven music apart from pre-Beethoven music is the weight fourth movements have in the overall structure of a piece. Listen to any of Haydn's or Mozart's fourth movements and you'll hear quick, easy to listen to music. Not in Beethoven. By the end of his career, his fourth movements were dramatic and integral to the piece as a whole. Just so in this piece. Movement four is fast, furious, and massive. Giving the fourth movement more substance is necessary to the balance of a piece with such long, heavy first and second movements.

ANGELA BORN, SOPRANO



Commended for her “fire and conviction” on stage (Chicago Classical Review), Angela Born is an opera theatre artist committed to artistic integrity. Praised for her “rich, clear voice, geared towards storytelling” (Chicagoland Musical Theatre), Angela is frequently sought to perform new works, most recently the Chicago premiere of Han Lash’s opera *Beowulf* and the art song cycle debut of *Are Women People* by Michelle Isaac. As a recitalist, Angela was praised for her “impeccable musicianship” in the premiere of Michelle Isaac’s suffragist art song “Our Idea of Nothing at all,” in *songSLAM Chicago*. Angela also produced and toured the concert *There Always, Something Sings* which featured music by living American composers from varied religious and cultural backgrounds. The recital was a reflection on the power of peaceful dialogue and the brutal repercussions of cultural division. Within the realm of opera, favorite contemporary roles include Lucinda in Nico Muhly’s *Dark Sisters*, Patience in Paula Kimper’s *Patience* and Sarah, and Meg Murry in Libby Larsen’s workshopped production of *A Wrinkle in Time*. Equally comfortable in traditional classical repertoire, some of Angela’s favorite roles include Musetta in *La Bohème*, Ännchen in *Der Freischütz*, and Despina in *Così fan tutte*.



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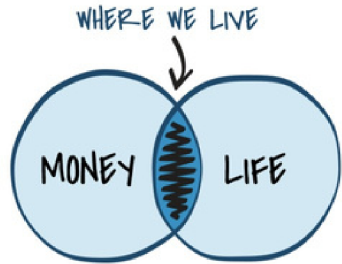


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ABOUT ACO

Music is capable of affecting its listeners in profound ways. Perhaps more than any other art, music is able to enter our souls directly and alter us for the better. Live music brings people together to share in a momentary, but beautiful and unique communal experience, something sorely needed these days.

Artemis Chamber Orchestra was formed to provide this experience to the people of the North Shore. We seek to perform masterworks of the orchestral chamber music repertoire at the highest level to provide our audience with the experience of beautiful music, something capable not only of engaging and inspiring, but transforming lives.

There's a surprising absence of chamber music in our community. By staying local and accessible to our audience, hiring from the abundance of highly qualified local musicians, and commissioning local composers, we are actively working to grow the classical music scene in the North Shore. Additionally, the ACO holds Partner Concerts with underprivileged schools in order to provide outstanding musical experiences to students who otherwise would not have the opportunity to play with and hear professional orchestras.

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MUSIC DIRECTOR



Diana Economou is a conductor from Chicago's north suburbs whose passion and talent for music has led her to perform around the world including in the Chicago Symphony Center, the Sydney Opera House, and in Sofia, Bulgaria. She's trained with leading conductors such as Markand Thakar, Larry Rachleff, Gary Lewis, and Donald Schleicher and has conducted professional orchestras such as the Baltimore Chamber Orchestra and the Bulgarian New Symphony Orchestra. In 2019

Diana founded the Artemis Chamber Orchestra and proudly serves as music director. After obtaining her music education degree from the University of Illinois U-C, she now works as a passionate and beloved orchestra teacher in Waukegan, Illinois.

Dr. Peter S. Petrovas

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We are particularly proud to support the Artemis Chamber Orchestra and its mission of providing professional musical experiences to students.



"Something I learned from this experience is that with time, we will improve and be more confident in playing."