

2017

Concert recording 2017-09-14

Er-Gene Kahng

Dominic K. Na

Tomoko Kashiwagi

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UNIVERSITY OF
ARKANSAS

J. William Fulbright College of Arts & Sciences

The Fulbright Trio

Er-Gene Kahng, *violin*

Dominic K Na, *cello*

Tomoko Kashiwagi, *piano*

UAMusic

September 14, 2017 | 7:30 PM
Stella Boyle Smith Concert Hall

Concert Program

- Piano Trio in G Major (1880) Claude Debussy (1862–1918)
- I. Andante con molto allegro
 - II. Scherzo. Moderato con allegro
 - III. Intermezzo. Andante espressivo
 - IV. Finale. Appassionato
- Piano Trio in D minor, Op. 120 (1923) Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924)
- I. Allegro, ma non troppo
 - II. Andantino
 - III. Allegro vivo

INTERMISSION

- Piano Trio in E minor (1891) Saint-Saëns (1835–1921)
- I. Allegro ma non troppo
 - II. Allegretto
 - III. Andante con moto
 - IV. Grazioso, poco allegro
 - V. Allegro

Program Notes

Claude Debussy's music is often associated with the contemporary impressionist movement in painting, and his approach shares some characteristics of this style. "The primary aim of French music," Debussy wrote in 1904, "is to give pleasure." Debussy, more than anything, was interested in the sensuous quality of music. Even as a student he let his concept of sound override many of the rules he was so assiduously taught by his teachers (much to their consternation). From this he developed a style that was wholly his own, but that also owed much to a wide variety of disparate influences. He also was a passionate champion of a purely French style, and he proudly referred to himself as "Claude Debussy, musicien français."

Debussy was educated at the Paris Conservatory, and in 1885 he won the coveted Prix de Rome. His period in Rome, however, was not pleasant for Debussy and he longed to return to Paris. His early works show his desire to break the constraints of Western harmony and form (he especially

disliked sonata-allegro form, which he came to see as overly Germanic and not fitting for a French composer).

The reconstruction of Claude Debussy's Piano Trio in G Major, once thought to be among those early works either destroyed by the composer or lost during the ensuing hundred years, surely must count among the musicological triumphs of the 1980s. Though a certain amount of recomposition was necessary, most of the work was pieced together from a variety of authentic sources, including several partial manuscripts and a copy of the original cello part. Debussy composed the work during the summer of 1880 while employed by Madame von Meck (the legendary sponsor of Tchaikovsky). Debussy traveled through Interlaken, Paris, Nice, Genoa, Naples, and Florence with Madame von Meck, teaching her children piano lessons, accompanying her 27-year-old daughter in vocal recitals, and playing piano duets with her. While in Florence, von Meck's entourage was joined

by a violinist and cellist, recent graduates of the Moscow Conservatory, who were asked to perform piano trios with Debussy every evening. It was during this time that he composed his only piano trio, his Piano Trio in G (at age 18). The first movement, instead of the usual sonata form of an exposition, development and recapitulation, is more episodic and free-flowing. The Scherzo-Intermezzo which follows is very playful, with all three players tossing the sparkling melodic lines back and forth. The Andante espressivo third movement is very romantic and simply constructed with long, lyrical melodies and countermelodies, and the Finale, marked *Appassionato*, has a fervent intensity throughout.

— Jason Duckles

A central figure in 19th and 20th century French music, **Gabriel Fauré's** life spanned an astonishing timeline of musical history particularly emphasizing the innovations of his countrymen. Berlioz was still alive in Fauré's youth. He was friends with Saint-Saëns, Chabrier and d'Indy. As an influential academic reformer and professor of composition, Fauré would number Maurice Ravel, Florent Schmitt and Nadia Boulanger among his students. Outliving Debussy by several years, he completed his final works in the mid-1920's thereby bridging the rise of Romanticism and the full flowering of Modernism and, arguably, through Boulanger, influencing a whole generation of young American composers studying abroad. His musical style lay somewhere in between this imponderable range. The most advanced French composer before Debussy, Fauré would eventually be regarded as "conservative", within the tradition of tonal music albeit vastly expanded and ingeniously reconfigured in that particularly French way by the turn of the century. Fauré has consistently been highly regarded as a composer particularly for his Requiem, his catalog of unsurpassable French art songs,

and his substantial chamber music. Fauré composed chamber music throughout his life where an affinity for intimate ensemble remained central to his aesthetic. His works include the magnificent piano quartets and quintets and a number of excellent duo sonatas. Fauré's final years yielded the single Piano Trio in D minor, Op. 120 and the very last composition, his only string quartet, both unquestionable master works in a late style of considerable formal freedom, graceful lyricism and an unmistakable, personal language.

The first movement follows the contours of a sonata form with rich and constant variation eluding such simple ideas as development and recapitulation. Like a flowing river in which one can never step twice, ideas recur but always in fresh treatments. The notion of water is more than mere metaphor: the music begins with a gently rippled piano figuration and a long, swaying melody from the cello that immediately evokes the Venetian gondolier's barcarolle that Fauré frequently used. A signature of Fauré's musical technique, the melodies build seamlessly from small rhythmic motifs that form chains, sequences and long lines as well as producing a mosaic of tiny fragments echoed throughout the ensemble in fluid imitation, the overlapping counterpoint of rich dialog. While the strings predominate the first theme, the piano calmly introduces the second. In what might be formally regarded as a repeat of the exposition, the instrumentation is reversed infusing each of these themes with a whole new sense of color. The long, practically unbroken line of development throughout gives a wonderful taste of Fauré's progressive harmonies as the imitative dialog of simple melodic fragments becomes more and more far-reaching through supple adjustments to the basic intervals and a constant process of searching modulation. Comparing the opening with analogous musical rhymes toward the end, one sees just how far the music has evolved though a process of steady permutation.

Fauré's gift for melody is evident throughout the trio but especially charming in the gentle repose of the central *Andantino*. A particularly French character pervades this tender, singing duet for violin and cello with piano eavesdropper, an indescribable mood one might attempt to describe as wistful nostalgia or sad joy. But the mood intensifies as the music gives way to a darker hued introspection that stretches into the longest movement of the trio. It is here that Fauré deploys an unusual texture at length: the violin and cello in octave doublings for a single, thick line of melody to a piano accompaniment like an art song. Once habituated to this somewhat spare and haunting sound, the ear is especially prepared for the eventual departure of the unison lines into divergent counterpoint, a graceful and precious flowering. The gentle song momentarily returns followed by a second episode further deepened by greater contrapuntal contrast between the strings and a conclusion of great repose. Here again is the distinctive slow process of meditative transformation of minimal material found in the first movement and throughout much of Fauré's music. At times, the subtlety borders on austerity.

The finale is a marvel of color, energy and contrast. It begins with the same peculiar octave doublings of the strings found throughout the trio (and also, curiously, in the chamber music of Debussy and especially Ravel) in a slow articulated melody that seems like an overflow from the previous movement. This is immediately interrupted by a dazzling flourish from the piano announcing the energetic rhythm that, despite attempts to foil it, will animate this *Allegro vivo*. Fauré seems to interleave and ultimately superimpose two different conceptions of time in this movement, each with its own recurring theme. The strings throttle the momentum with a dramatic declamation in slow motion while the piano races forward with an almost frantic drive. The dazzling finesse cannot fail to recall

Ravel's single piano trio of a decade earlier. Despite the spirited playfulness and the luminous, exotic modalities throughout the trio, the predominating key of d minor lends the music a certain dark cast. One of his very last works, the trio was written in 1924 when Fauré was 78 and most likely completely deaf.

— Kai Christensen

Camille Saint-Saëns had the good fortune, or perhaps bad fortune, to have written a handful of "big things": *Carnival of the Animals*, a cello concerto, the opera *Samson and Dalila*, a symphony with organ solo (without which no dedication of a new instrument is complete), several orchestral bonbons, and a few others. These seem to have co-opted any wider view of the composer's prodigious and varied output. There's no doubt that Saint-Saëns was a master craftsman as a composer of opera, symphonies, concertos, chamber music, and keyboard works both for organ and piano. Perhaps part of the problem is that he was so skilled and clever in his compositions, which are full of fascinating rhythms and rich sonorities, that they're really fun to listen to and perhaps not as serious and deep as they "should" have been. Indeed, there's some truth to this notion. However, his second piano trio, separated from his first by about thirty years, is a work at once varied and complex. The first movement of five opens with a rather somber duet for piano and cello, after which the music's development becomes complex, even grandiloquent. The second movement opens tenderly and reflectively. It is followed by the only slow movement in the work, and the shortest one at that. A cheerful *grazioso*, *poco allegro* is followed by an *allegro* which ends in a *moto perpetuo*. However you may place this work in the chamber music canon, and it should rank fairly high, it's a delightful, close-to-ideal closing to an evening's music.

— Philip A. Metzger

Artist Biographies

Er-Gene Kahng has held title positions with the Baton Rouge Symphony Orchestra, the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, as well as section positions with the Lancaster Symphony, New Haven Symphony Orchestra, and Eastern Connecticut Symphony. She is currently serving as Concertmaster of Arkansas Philharmonic and Assistant Concertmaster of Fort Smith Symphony. She also performs as a substitute section violinist with the Tulsa Symphony Orchestra and Arkansas Symphony Orchestra. She was previously the Associate concertmaster of SoNA (Symphony of Northwest Arkansas) as well as a previous member (season 2011 and 2012) of the Artosphere Festival Orchestra.

In addition to being a member of the Fulbright Trio, the resident faculty piano trio, Kahng participates and co-founded the Fulbright Summer Chamber Music festival, a 6-week summer chamber music series. The festival explores chamber music from a variety of stylistic periods and instrumentation, and allows for the collaboration of local and national musicians during mid-May through June every year. In the latter part of the summer, Kahng serves as the violin faculty and 2nd violinist in a string quartet as part of the Bay View Music Festival in Petoskey, Michigan.

Dominic Kyungseu Na was born in Seoul, South Korea, to a musical family. His father is a luthier and his mother is a violinist. Dominic first studied in Russia, attended the Central Music School for Talented and Gifted Children under the supervision of St. Petersburg State Conservatory. His education in music continued at the Konservatorium of Vienna, Austria and at the Musikhochschule Luebeck with one of the world's finest cellists Lynn Harrell.

Dominic holds a konzertenexamendegree, the highest musical arts performance degree in Germany. Na also studied chamber music with Miguel Da Silva, the founder of Ysaÿe quartet, as well as earning an Artist Diploma with celebrated artists such as Andres Diaz, Eugene Osadchy, and Christopher Adkins in the United States.

Pianist **Tomoko Kashiwagi**, a native of Japan, began her piano studies at the age of 6. She completed her Bachelor of Music and Master of Music degrees, as well as the Performer Diploma in Piano Performance, at Indiana University. She is the first recipient of the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Collaborative Piano from the University of Texas at Austin.



Dr. Kashiwagi performs regularly with double bass soloist DaXun Zhang nationally and internationally. These performances have taken the duo to such prestigious venues as the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C., the 92nd St. Y in New York, the Gardner Museum and Jordan Hall in Boston. They have also performed at the Suntory Hall in Tokyo, Central Conservatory in Beijing, Guildhall School in London and Teatro Nacional in Panama among others. In 2010, the duo was awarded the Aoyama Music Award for best performance of the year at the Aoyama Music Memorial Hall in Kyoto, Japan.

Ms. Kashiwagi served as a piano faculty at the Austin Chamber Music Center and worked as a staff pianist as well as the Program Coordinator for the Collaborative Piano Program at the Butler School of Music at the University of Texas at Austin. She has been the official pianist at the International Society of Bassists Conventions as well as MTNA competitions.

UPCOMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

- Sat 16** **Tatsuya Percussion Improv**
7:30 p.m., Stella Boyle Smith Concert Hall, free
- Wed 20** **Arkansas Beethoven Performing Series, Concert 3**
7:30 p.m., Stella Boyle Smith Concert Hall, free
- Thu 21** **Faculty Recital: Cory Mixdorf, trombone**
7:30 p.m., Stella Boyle Smith Concert Hall, free
- Thu 21** **Guest Artist Recital: Aaron Ragsdale, percussion**
7:30 p.m., Faulkner Performing Arts Center, free
- Sun 24** **Faculty Showcase**
3:00 p.m., Faulkner Performing Arts Center, free
- Tue 26** **Jake Hertzog Trio**
7:30 p.m., Stella Boyle Smith Concert Hall, free

SEPTEMBER, CONT.

- Wed 27** **Faculty Recital: Catalina Ortega, flute**
7:30 p.m., Stella Boyle Smith Concert Hall, free
- Thu 28** **Guest Artist Recital: William Wielgus, oboe**
7:30 p.m., Stella Boyle Smith Concert Hall, free
- Fri 29** **Guest Artist Recital: Patrick Dailey, countertenor**
7:30 p.m., Stella Boyle Smith Concert Hall, free

OCTOBER

- Sun 1** **Guest Artist Recital: Philip Wharton, violin and John Krebs, piano**
3:00 p.m., Stella Boyle Smith Concert Hall, free
- Mon 2** **Malis Voice Studio Recital**
6:00 p.m., Stella Boyle Smith Concert Hall, free

Ushering and stage management for this concert provided by Sigma Alpha Iota and Phi Mu Alpha.

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Through generous support from alumni and friends, the Department of Music became an All-Steinway School in 2010. The University of Arkansas is the third SEC school to gain the distinction and one of only 150 universities worldwide with the honor.

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For more information on the Department, contact us at (479) 575-4701, email us at music@uark.edu, or visit our department page at www.music.uark.edu.