upcoming concerts

Monday, November 17, 2014
Schubert: Quintet for Piano and Strings in A Major, D. 667 “The Trout”

Monday, December 15, 2014
Schubert: String Trio Fragment in B-flat Major
Mozart: Duo for Violin and Viola in G Major, K. 423
Tchaikovsky: Piano Trio in A minor

Tuesday, February 17, 2015
Mendelssohn: Lied ohne Worte for Cello and Piano in D Major, Op. 199
Schubert: Sonata for Cello and Piano in F minor, Op. 38
Schubert: Quintet for Piano and Strings in A Major, D. 667 “The Trout”

Monday, March 9, 2015
Schoenberg: Transfigured Night
Tchaikovsky: Piano Trio in A minor

Monday, March 16, 2015
Brahms: Sonata for Cello and Piano in F Major, Op. 99
Myriad Trio (Program TBA)

Monday, April 13, 2015
Brahms: Sonata for Viola and Piano in F minor, Op. 120, No. 2
Mussorgsky: Quartet for the End of Time

Monday, April 27, 2015
Myriad Trio
Program TBA

Monday, May 11, 2015
Brahms: Sonatensatz in C minor, WoO 2 for Violin and Piano
Gershwin: Piano Quintet No. 2 for in B minor, Op. 63
Brahms: Piano Quintet in F minor, Op. 34

For more information about tickets, contact the San Diego Symphony ticket office at 619.235.0804 or via the web at: [Link]

Tonight’s concert will be broadcast Saturday, October 18th at 7 pm on kpbs-fm 89.5 or streaming at kpbs.org

Artistic Director - Charles Curtis
Executive Coordinator - Colin McAllister
Program notes - Lukas Schulze
Recording engineer - Tom Erbe
Production manager - Jessica Flores

For more information:
[www.cameracarolucida.org]
The tragic brevity of Schubert’s life is primarily an issue of aesthetics, rather than one of biology. While he wrote a substantial body of music by the time he died at 31, the artistic trajectory displayed in the late works forces us to imagine the unwritten next—the next sonata, the next symphony, the next string quartet—and wonder what might have been.

In this sense he is a more poignant figure than Mozart, who had managed to find and explore his maturity fully in all genres. This is especially true of Schubert’s string quartets.

Though he wrote 15 quartets, the early efforts are largely good-natured examples of Hausmüll, written for amateurs, with little indication of the musical weight his late quartets would reveal.

This changed with his 12th quartet, in C minor. Written in 1820, this quartet movement (Quartettzitat in German) seems to be the beginning of an imagined larger piece (41 measures of a second movement exist), though this single finished movement has come to stand alone as an autonomous work, one that represents the first mature statement by Schubert in the string quartet genre.

Immediately, the music strikes the listener with its initial gravity and focus, and quickly one is struck by a similarity with another truncated masterpiece, the Symphony No. 8 in B minor—two themes state a principal theme in the minor, that uses tremolo repeated sixteen notes, but both invert the importance of first and second themes found in Beethoven and virtually every other composer before him. Often in Schubert’s later music—and this can be heard here—the principal theme is quickly dispensed with in favor of an expansive and lyrical melody that so takes over the discourse that the lasting memory after hearing the piece (especially in the Unfinished Symphony) is this secondary idea. Thus in context, this quartet is a context—a battle between these melodies and the musical pacing of their respective expressive states: on the one hand, a severe, goal-directed first theme, one which rushes through musical time, and on the other, a jaunty, roaming second theme, in no hurry to arrive at any particular place, utterly untroubled by the darkness of the opening. This emotional (and temporal) contrast could not be more stark to illustrate that the principal idea and its mood, be the finishing stamp put on the music, the ending is a fairly clear indication of Schubert’s real impulse, as it is only in a brief coda that the sobriety of the music’s beginning returns to close out the structure.

Ludwig van Beethoven—String Trio in D Major, Op. 9, No. 2
When the young Beethoven managed to gain an audience with Mozart, as the story goes, the encounter ended with Mozart’s proclamation that the younger composer would “make a noise in the world one day.” Few composers after Beethoven’s time were shielded from the encounter ended with Mozart’s proclamation that the younger composer would “make a noise in the world one day.” Few composers after Beethoven’s time were shielded from the anomaly: Op. 130 had, in its original form, the Menuetto scherzando vivace; Op. 131, the famous opening ricercare; Op. 135, the final movement that asks: “must es sein?” What is this quarter’s great, storied riddle? It doesn’t seem to have one, and it lags behind in the critical race toward superlative apocalypse. And yet this music is laden with the same symptoms that push us toward mythology in our efforts to interpret it, and for some, Op. 127 is at the top of the late works—Joseph Kerman referred to it as “of all Beethoven’s works his crowning monument to lyricism.”

The Menuetto—Allegro is massive sonata form featuring several ideas that return in such a way that their structural function is obscured. This begins with the opening gesture, a declamatory figure, a ritualized, hesitant dance-rhythm, with the flavor of a recitative, and the second idea, which supplies the opening theme melody. After this theme, the support the opening theme modifies to itself, as they expand beyond any boundaries the listener might expect from hearing the theme and its implications. Pushing further and further, the music seems to have been taken over by Kerman’s lyricism, and as in the symphonies of Mahler, the idea that we are in the second movement of a projected four projects no restraining impulse. The Scherzo vivace is agitated, with digressions so differing and earnest that they threaten to derail any narrative thread, forcing us to wonder who, or what, is the guiding impulse here—how do these ideas come together to form a coherent whole? The main idea of the Finale, mercifully, offers a tone of assurance. The quality some have seen, in Beethoven’s late music, of universality, or inclusiveness, can be heard here, as an arousal of musical diacriticals ranging from the hasty-gurdy to the peasant celebration come together here, unified by the buoyant refrain.

Ludwig van Beethoven—String Quartet No. 12 in E-flat Major, Op. 127
Beethoven’s late string quartet music is made up of a group of five full-length quartets and the Grosse Fuge as the finale of one of the quartets, though it proved so imperative that, on the publisher’s suggestion, Beethoven replaced it with another movement and issued it as a separate work). The string quartet offers a complete representation of Beethoven’s late period style than any genre, as neither the symphony nor the piano sonata go as late into his life as the quartet. This is the latest of the late music in more ways than one. The elements and tendencies that typify his last period are found in these works in the most extensive, and often challenging, manifestations.

The Quartet in E-flat, Op. 127 is one of these late quartets. Finished in 1825, it is part of a group of three commissioned by Russian Prince Nikolay Galitzin, an adherent of Beethoven and amateur cellist. Galitzin had written to Beethoven in 1822, requesting quartets, offering to pay Beethoven “whatever amount you would deem adequate.” Beethoven began the work in 1824, and Op. 127 was premiered by the Schuppanzigh Quartet in March of 1825. The E-flat quartet is unique among these last quartets not only in the fact that it launches the set, but further, in that its mysteries seem to lack the identity that the other quartets possess. All of the other late quartets have, of them, some astounding, tragic, named anomaly: Op. 130 had, in its original form, the Grosse Fuge; Op. 132 has the Heilige Thangksgiving; Op. 131, the famous opening ricercare; Op.135, the final movement that asks: “must es sein?” What is this quarter’s great, storied riddle? It doesn’t seem to have one, and it lags behind in the critical race toward superlative apocalypse. And yet this music is laden with the same symptoms that push us toward mythology in our efforts to interpret it, and for some, Op. 127 is at the top of the late works—Joseph Kerman referred to it as “of all Beethoven’s works his crowning monument to lyricism.”

The Maestoso—Allegro is a massive sonata form featuring several ideas that return in such a way that their structural function is obscured. This begins with the opening gesture, a declamatory introduction that, by its third repetition, is not known to be an introduction at all. Traditional distinctions between types of material—expository vs. developmental, for example—are obscured, as the movement seems to begin again in different keys, each time more removed from a collectively understood basic musical coherence.

This is one of the aspects of Beethoven’s late style that for many critics, both during Beethoven’s life and since, has represented an abandonment of earthly reality, and a turn toward some other realms, one of alienation and keenly felt mortality.