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THE ST. PETERSBURG
STRING QUARTET

ALLA ARANOVSKAYA, VIOLIN
ALLA KROLEVICH, VIOLIN

BORIS VAYNER, VIOLA
ADRIAN DAUROV, CELLO

ASSISTING ARTIST
ALEXANDER MEKINULOV, PIANO

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2008 at 3:00 P.M.

GORDON HALL

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SEVENTY-NINTH YEAR
2008

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Steinway Piano

AIR CONDITIONED

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2008

THE ARTISTS

THE ST. PETERSBURG STRING QUARTET

This is the 20th year that the St. Petersburg String Quartet is appearing at Music Mountain. One of the world's leading string quartets, the St. Petersburg was founded as the Leningrad Quartet by Alla Aranovskaya, Alla Krolevich (Goryainova) and Leonid Shukayev, all three graduates of the Leningrad Conservatory. The Quartet blazed a trail through international chamber music competitions, winning First Prize at the All-Soviet Union String Quartet Competition, the Silver Medal and a Special Prize at the Tokyo International Competition of Chamber Ensembles, First Prize and both Special Prizes at the Vittorio Gui International Competition for Chamber Ensembles in Florence, Italy, and First Prize and the "Grand Prix Musica Viva" at the International Competition for Chamber Ensembles in Melbourne, Australia.

When the city of Leningrad resumed its historic name, the Quartet changed its name to the St. Petersburg String Quartet. The Quartet has continued its ascendancy, building a reputation of worldwide proportions including a Grammy nomination, "Best Record" honors in both Stereo Review and Gramophone Magazines, and the Chamber Music America/WQXR Prize for Best CD of 2001. The Quartet was Quartet-in-Residence at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music from 1999 to 2003.

In 2008, the St. Petersburg Quartet will play in the Library of Congress, Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival and the Concertgebouw.

Audiences from Toronto to Tokyo, from Lithuania to London and in music halls across the United States give the St. Petersburg Quartet standing ovations. No classical CD collection is complete without recordings by the acclaimed group. This season the Quartet plans to release new CDs of the Ravel and Debussy quartets as well as Tchaikowsky's complete chamber music works.

www.stpetersburgquartet.com

ALEXANDER MEKINULOV

A native of Leningrad, Russia, Alexander Mekinulov began his studies at the Leningrad Specialized Music School for Gifted Children before attending the Leningrad State Conservatory where he received his M.A. and Ph.D. in Music. While at the Conservatory, Alexander won the First Prize in the All-Russian Chamber Music Competition. From 1983 he was a professor in the Rimsky-Korsakov Music College and actively performed in various chamber music series with soloists of the Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra. Since emigrating to the United States in 1989. Mr. Mekinulov has established himself as a professor of piano and as an active chamber performer. He is currently a distinguished faculty member at the MILI (Music Institute of Long Island). As a chamber musician, Mr. Mekinulov has extensively performed throughout the United States, Austria, Italy and Brazil with various soloists. Alexander Mekinulov has also been featured on WQXR and WEVD in New York.

PROGRAM NOTES

With today's concert, the final one of our 79th season, we bring to an end our tour of examples of "Borrowed Melodies" with three interesting examples:

The opening work, the Mozart Trio was originally written by Mozart to be played by piano, viola and clarinet with his favorite piano student playing the piano, the clarinet played by his friend, the clarinetist, Anton Stadler, and himself playing the viola. Mozart also transcribed the work for a more conventional piano trio with the violin replacing the clarinet, as you will hear, today.

The Piazzolla reference to Vivaldi and his Four Seasons is another example of "Borrowed Melodies." Here, Piazzolla takes a tango-inspired work and combines it with elements that are recognizable from the Vivaldi model. And, in today's performance a further transformation takes place with the change in instrumentation from Piazzolla's original of violin, bandoneon, electric guitar, piano and contrabass to violin, viola and piano.

And, finally, the Brahms G Minor Piano Quartet, which has been enormously popular ever since its first performance with Brahms at the piano. Certainly one of the reasons for the lasting success of this work is the last movement, the

Rondo alla Zingarese (Rondo in the Gypsy Style) in which Brahms uses folk music elements as a basis for his thematic material.

We hope you have enjoyed this summer's visit to "Borrowed Melodies." We were glad to be able to explore it with you. It remains a fascinating subject with almost endless examples.

TRIO FOR VIOLIN, VIOLA AND PIANO IN E FLAT, K. 498, "KEGELSTATT" (1786)

by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Mozart's "Kegelstatt" Trio in E Flat Major, K. 498 was originally written by Mozart for piano, viola and clarinet. It is quite often played with the violin replacing the clarinet, as it will be today.

It earned its nickname from the fact that Mozart and his good friends Gottfried and Franziska von Jacquin would have parties every week where they would play games, have discussions and make music. Mozart wrote several pieces of music to be performed at the Jacquin house, particularly by Franziska, who was a student of Mozart's. "Kegelstatt" is the German word for "skittles," which is a game that evolved into the equivalent of today's bowling. Mozart wrote on his autograph manuscript "Vienna, 27 July 1786 while playing

skittles,” most likely with Gottfried and Franziska. The trio was performed at the Jacquin house with Franziska playing the piano, Mozart playing the viola, and Anton Stadler playing the clarinet.

TRIO FOR VIOLIN, VIOLA & PIANO, “WINTER,” “AUTUMN” (1964-1970)

by Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992)

Tango was the rage of Europe and America soon after World War I and was undistinguishable from the popular dance of the same name. This aggressive yet passionate tango, begotten in the brothels of turn-of-the-century Argentina and raised in the dance halls of Paris, became a quick, easy victim of parody. Tango became *passé*. In the mid-1950’s, however, Argentinean composer Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992) began revolutionizing the tango. He created the Nuevo Tango by adding elements of dissonance, chromaticism, rhythmic complexity, and jazz. Piazzolla received death threats from Argentinean “nationalists” and tango purists in response to his radical treatment of the tango. Only recently has his music become accepted, both in Argentina and also in concert halls throughout much of the world.

Piazzolla began writing *Las cuatro estaciones porteñas* (*The Four Buenos Aires Seasons*) in 1965 and finished the

suite in 1970. Originally written for his quintet of violin, bandoneon, electric guitar, piano, and contrabass, *Las cuatro estaciones porteñas* has become one of his best-known works. Piazzolla pays homage to the tango of Buenos Aires as well as the “serious” music of the great Italian composer Antonio Vivaldi. Vivaldian traces are most obvious in the closing bars of “Invierno porteño,” (“winter”) and a fugue-like section begins “Otoño porteño” (“autumn”). With a breath of Nuevo Tango, Piazzolla gives new life to traditional classical forms.

The trio you will hear today is one of many forms this work has taken, including a violin concerto, among many others. This is a transcription made by the St. Petersburg String Quartet of an earlier violin, cello and piano version.

STRING QUARTET #8, OPUS 110 (1960)

by Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)

In December 1959, Shostakovich learned that he was suffering from myelitis, an inflammation of the spinal cord, considered in the Soviet Union at that time to be incurable. As a result of this diagnosis, Shostakovich spent the following summer of 1960 in Gohrisch, near Dresden, undergoing treatment. Officially he was in the city to provide a soundtrack for the East German war film, *Five Days, Five*

Nights, but this was merely a pretext. It was the first time that he saw the remains of the city's bombardment, and the experience directly inspired his Eighth String Quartet, Opus 110, which he wrote in just three days, July 12 to 14. Shostakovich's music frequently employs self-quotation. In the Eighth Quartet he raised self-quotation to a new degree. The result is a powerful, emotionally direct score. The emotion is almost too intense. We know that in his dedication of the score to the "memory of the victims of fascism and war," Shostakovich included himself as a victim.

...Adapted from the liner notes by Robert Mathew-Walker of the Hyperion recording of the Eighth Quartet by the St. Petersburg String Quartet (CDA 67154).

PIANO QUARTET FOR PIANO & STRINGS IN G MINOR, OPUS 25 (1861)

by Joannes Brahms (1833-1897)

In the summer of 1861, Brahms rented a quiet place in Hamm, a suburb of Hamburg, in order to live and work in a quiet atmosphere that would be conducive to his creative work. He had accumulated sketches for the Symphony in C Minor, the G Minor, A Major and C Minor Piano Quartets, some songs and the German Requiem. Brahms's biographer, his friend, Max Kalback, reported that Brahms, Joachim, and others played the G Minor Quartet in Detmold in 1857

but that this was not the definitive version of 1861 played informally by Clara Schumann in Hamburg in 1861. The official premiere of the G Minor Piano Quartet took place in Vienna on November 16, 1862. It was also Brahms' debut performance in that city and it won him immediate and warm praise. Joseph Hellmesberger, leader of the Hellmesberger Quartet, whose members gave this premier performance with Brahms, acclaimed, "This is Beethoven's heir." Brahms' Viennese career was launched and the handsome young composer was quickly accepted as one of the outstanding performers of his generation.

The genesis of the final movement is particularly interesting. In this movement, Rondo alla Zingarese (in the gypsy manner) Brahms evokes memories of his concert tour, mostly on foot, with Eduard Remenyi, the talented violinist of gypsy temperament. By employing the Hungarian idiom but raising the melodies to the level of chamber music, Brahms created a virtuoso piece, which has continued to thrill audiences for over 147 years.

The Brahms G Minor Piano Quartet was first played at Music Mountain on July 19, 1931 by members of the Gordon String Quartet: Jacques Gordon, violin; Paul Robyn, viola and Naoum Benditsky, cello and the wonderful Canadian-American pianist, Muriel Kerr.

**MUSIC MOUNTAIN
2009 - 80TH YEAR**

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The cooperation of the audience in keeping noise to a minimum is greatly appreciated.

Visit Music Mountain's web site:
www.musicmountain.org
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Music Mountain is listed in the
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This program uses the same typefaces, color paper, and design as the original Music Mountain programs of the 1930s. The typefaces are New Century Schoolbook and **Times Ten** by Opticraft. The cover drawing is from the first Music Mountain poster in the 1930's.