



Presents

Amy Sims and Anne Nagosky, violin
Clark Potter and Judy Divis, viola
Patricia Ritchie, cello
William Ritchie, double bass

A Program of String Sextets

Sunday, March 30th, 2008

3pm

Program

String Sextet #1 in Bb, Opus 18 (1860) Johannes Brahms
1833-1897

Allegro, ma non troppo

Andante, ma moderato

Scherzo - Allegro molto

Rondo - Poco Allegretto e grazioso

INTERMISSION

String Sextet in D minor *Souvenir de Florence*, Opus 70 (1890)
Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
1840-1893

Allegro con spirito

Adagio cantabile e con moto

Allegretto moderato

Allegro vivace

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ARTIST BIOS

Violist **Judy Divis** has been a member of the Omaha Symphony since 1986, and the Omaha Symphony Chamber Orchestra since 2000. She graduated *cum laude* from the University of Connecticut in 1984 with a degree in violin performance. Her teachers and mentors include Gerard Rosa, Carroll Glenn, Peter Sacco, Theodore Arm, Wendy Undercofler, Peter Loro, Victor Yamoplsky, Thomas Kluge and Clark Potter.

Judy has also trained in Suzuki pedagogy with Laurel Thurman and Barbara Krauss at the University of Connecticut. She continues to enjoy teaching in her private studio and as a String Specialist for the Omaha Public Schools. She has previously taught at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, Midland Lutheran College, Central Connecticut State University, and through the Office of Continuing Education at the University of Connecticut.

She has served as violinist and violist with the Lincoln Symphony, Nebraska Chamber Orchestra in Nebraska and New Britain Symphony, Harkness Festival Orchestra, Bridgeport Symphony and the Faculty Chamber Players of the University of Connecticut. She also performs regularly with the Nova String Quartet and is an active freelance and chamber musician in the Omaha area.

Judy is also a proud, busy mom, and will be happy to tell you all about Emily 15, Connie 17 and Ben 20, just ask!

Anne Nagosky has been a full-time member of the Omaha Symphony since 1998. Before moving to Omaha, she performed for two years in the Pioneer String Quartet, based in Des Moines, Iowa, and served as Principal Second Violin of the Des Moines Symphony.

Anne is an active music educator and maintains a large private studio of pre-college violinists and violists, ranging in age from three to eighteen. She works regularly with students in the Omaha Area Youth Orchestras; served as an Artist-Faculty member of the UNO Department of Music for seven years; and served as a faculty member for Northwestern University's National High School Music Institute.

Anne performs regularly in the Organ Vesper Series, and has also appeared on the Omaha Chamber Music Society's Summer Concert Series, Music as Medicine at UNMC and the Blue Barn Music Festival. She has also been a featured concerto soloist with orchestras in several states, including the Omaha Symphony Chamber Orchestra.

Anne received her Bachelor of Arts degree, *summa cum laude*, in music and psychology from Washington University in St. Louis and a Master of Music degree in Violin Performance from Northwestern University School of Music, where she was a recipient of the Northwestern University/Chicago Symphony Orchestra String Fellowship and graduated with program honors. Her principal violin teachers have been Mimi Zweig, Nina Bodnar, David Halen and Gerardo Ribeiro.

William Ritchie has been the assistant principal bass of the Omaha Symphony since 1983 and is a former member of the Florida Orchestra (Tampa Bay) and the Grand Rapids Symphony in his home state of Michigan. He holds a Bachelor of Music degree from Western Michigan University and a Master of Music Degree in Stringed Instruments from the University of Michigan. An avid recitalist, he has performed on many local recital series as a soloist and with colleagues from the Omaha Symphony. He has performed with the Detroit Symphony numerous times including two DSO European tours. In 1997, he performed at the Montreux Jazz Festival with the Nebraska Jazz Orchestra and leads his own jazz quartet. During the summer, Bill performs with the Grand Teton Music Festival in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. Ritchie maintains a large private studio and is a bass sectional coach for local area school and the Omaha area Youth Orchestra. He has served as President of the Nebraska ASTA unit and Chair of ASTA National Solo Competition

Patricia Ritchie has performed professionally as a cellist and has taught orchestra in the Omaha and Millard schools for the past 26 years. She received her Bachelor's Degree in Music Education from Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana, and her Masters Degree in Cello Performance from the Lamont School of Music, at the University of Denver. Whether teaching, coaching, adjudicating, conducting, or performing, Patricia is weaving a strong musical tapestry in the Omaha community. Ms. Ritchie teaches at Millard West, Rohwer and Willowdale Elementary Schools, and was

voted the 1994 Nebraska "Orchestra Teacher of the Year" by the Nebraska Unit of ASTA. She is happiest when young musicians discover they can make meaningful music, including her sons, Miles and Drew.

Clark Potter began work as the viola professor at the University of Nebraska - Lincoln in 1996, where he also teaches conducting and serves as principal viola of the Lincoln Symphony. Mr. Potter is an active performer as a solo recitalist and chamber musician, and he has premiered dozens of pieces for the viola in the last few years. Mr. Potter is the director of *NEBratsche*, the viola ensemble at UNL (for whom he is busy arranging music) and he conducts the Lincoln Youth Symphony. He is also a member of the Third Chair Chamber Players and is in demand as an adjudicator and clinician at schools in Nebraska and around the region. In 2007 Mr. Potter conducted honors orchestra from the high schools in Reno, NV and Fort Hays, KS, as well as the Alabama All-State Elementary School String Orchestra and the Iowa All-State Middle School String Orchestra. He holds degrees from Western Washington University, Indiana University, and California Institute of the Arts.

Omaha Symphony Concertmaster **Amy Sims** is a native of Los Angeles, and earned her bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Southern California as a student of Eudice Shapiro. Before coming to Omaha, Ms. Sims served six years as Principal second violinist for the Pacific Symphony Orchestra, while freelancing throughout Southern California, including playing in studio orchestras for movie soundtracks and television commercials. She was also a member of Southwest Chamber Music, a chamber ensemble based in Pasadena whose primary cause is to commission and perform contemporary works. Through her various professional affiliations, Ms. Sims has mentored extensively to young music students in public schools and continues to teach privately.

-Program Notes-

Johannes Brahms in his String Sextet in B flat Major, Op. 18, the first of his two sextets, presents the form not as a string quartet plus two or a doubling of a string trio but in a form all its own, reflecting, if anything, the serenades of Mozart and Beethoven but with an imprint singularly his own. The Sextet was Brahms first published chamber work without piano and it marks the beginning of his early maturity. This work was written between 1858 and 1860 during a particularly happy time in Brahms' life when he had accepted a brief position at the Court of Detmold, deep in the Teutoburger forest. His despair over the death of Robert Schumann had abated, and even his unrequited love of Clara Schumann had been abandoned. So it is that this sextet exudes a certain sunniness and ease seldom associated with Brahms because of his profound self-criticism of his work. The work had its premiere in Hanover in 1860 by an ensemble that included Brahms' great friend and musical advisor, violinist Joseph Joachim.

The first movement is almost Schubert-like in its Viennese three-quarter waltz time except that it bears Brahms' affinity for the linking of melodic motifs. The second movement is the form of a theme and six variations. The third is a Scherzo. Respect for Classical style is honored again in the Rondo although the first cello's opening is a new effect. (Adapted from notes by Lucy Miller.)

As early as June 1887, Tchaikovsky had started on a string sextet for the St. Petersburg Chamber Music Society (which had requested a work the preceding October), but he gave it up after a few days. He was not to return to the medium until the early months of 1890 when, while living in Florence and deeply involved with his opera *The Queen of Spades*, he wrote down the melody that was to become the main theme of the slow movement. This fact alone-and no further programmatic connotation-motivated the title of the finished composition, *Souvenir de Florence*.

Souvenir de Florence is one of Tchaikovsky's last multi-movement instrumental works (only the Sixth Symphony followed) and the last in which he retained the traditional patterns of abstract symphonic form. He worked out a splendidly detailed sonata-form exposition for the first movement, in which the transition grows out of a three-note figure that appears in the main theme and then continues under the surprisingly shy entrance of the second theme in the first violin.

Although formal structure was always something of a struggle for Tchaikovsky, this exposition clearly demonstrates the hard-won mastery he had earned over the years.

The slow movement is among the most purely personal passages in Tchaikovsky's output, and the one place in the score where his love of melodic lines laid out as duets comes to full flower. The third movement takes a melody that suggests a Slavonic folk song and puts it through its paces, alternating two different versions with varied textures and accompaniments.

For the finale, Tchaikovsky offered another sonata-form movement based on a dancing theme of Slavonic imprint varied with two sections of vigorous contrapuntal development. In writing for the mostly German membership of the St. Petersburg Chamber Music Society, Tchaikovsky knew that he would be expected to offer some display of his ability at counterpoint in the Bach tradition, and he obliged with these two passages, the second of which becomes an imitative, fugue-like passage leading to a wildly sonorous close.

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Notes on this performance by Ken Harper & Bill Ritchie

The bass part to the Brahms was transcribed from the original 2nd cello part by Colorado Symphony Assistant Principal Bassist Ken Harper, a colleague of Bill from the Grand Teton Music Festival. It makes an extremely satisfying bass part and lies very well on the instrument. In some ways, the part works better on the bass. Much of the part is written in the basement of the cello register, which is the middle of the bass register, making it easier for the bass to support the entire ensemble. Pizzicatos on the bass are more deeply resonant and they support the 1st cello with a wonderful cushion on which to float. On the whole, the part is written for the bass to sound at the same octave as the cello. However, there are a few passages that were chosen to keep as written (sounding an octave lower than the cello) and others where it seemed appropriate to go below the range of the cello to preserve the voice leading. The Tchaikovsky 2nd cello part was modified by Bill using many of the same criteria as Ken did with the Brahms.

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