

Chamber Music Society of Louisville
Morgenstern Trio Concert, November 19, 2017

Pre-Concert Performance at 2:45 PM

Cardinal Guitar Quartet

Josh Glenn, Arturo Calvo, Michael Jones, Jacob Miers

Les 4 Points Cardinaux, Op. 139

Francis Kleynjans
(b. 1951)

Nord (Melodie Scandinave)

Sud (Habanera)

Est (Valse Viennoise)

Ouest (Ragtime)

Paisaje Cubano con Rumba, per Quattro Chitarre

Leo Brouwer
(b. 1939)

Morgenstern Trio

To name a piano trio after the popular nineteenth-century German poet Christian Morgenstern was the inspiration of Catherine Klipfel, piano; Stefan Hempel, violin; and Emanuel Wehse, cellist. The performers had met during their studies at the Folkwang Conservatory in Essen, Germany.

After two years of working together, the Morgenstern Trio emerged on the German music scene by being awarded top prizes and awards. One such prominent recognition was receiving the Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson International Trio Award in 2010. This prize catapulted them onto the music scene in the U.S. with performances in Washington, DC's Kennedy Center and at Carnegie Hall, including concerts in such cities as Chicago, Detroit, Kalamazoo, Carmel, Louisville, Lexington and Palm Beach. *The Washington Post* wrote: "the group displayed a unanimity, polished technique and musical imagination that I thought had vanished from the scene with the demise of the Beaux Arts Trio."

A few years earlier, the Trio took first prize at the International Joseph Haydn Competition in Vienna. More recently the Trio was named "ensemble in residence" at their alma mater, the Folkwang Conservatory. The summer 2014 marked the inauguration of their own Morgenstern Festival in Germany, offering eclectic programs with guest artists. Other festival appearances have included the Pablo Casals Festival in France.

Mentors such as the Alban Berg Quartet and Menahem Pressler have given the Morgenstern Trio invaluable coaching and musical insight.

Trio for Piano, Violin and Cello, on popular Irish melodies

Frank Martin
(1890-1974)

Allegro moderato

Adagio

Gigue. Allegro

Swiss composer, Frank Martin (1890-1974), has always been something of an enigma, for while he has had a devoted following among professional musicians and was honored with commissions and prizes, he has remained relatively unknown. An accomplished composer, he has a long work list that includes everything from folk-song arrangements to large-scale compositions. His was a rather interesting development for he began as a committed conservative—rejecting even the music of Debussy—but beginning in 1918, he encountered Ernst Ansermet, the Swiss conductor, who introduced him to contemporary repertoire that he embraced to the point that in 1932 he adopted a form of Schoenberg's 12-tone composition. Extremely active for many years as a harpsichordist/pianist and organizer of musical societies in Switzerland, his first success as a composer came in 1940 (at the age of 50) with a performance of his secular oratorio, *Le vin herbé*. In 1946, he moved to the Netherlands where he lived and worked the rest of his life.

In the early 1920s at a point relatively early in Martin's development he studied in Paris and became deeply committed to rhythmic experimentation. The *Trio pour piano, violon et violoncelle, sur des mélodies populaires irlandaises* was composed at that time and is, then, quite an early work. It may have been inspired by the revival of interest in Irish traditional culture in the early 20th century that was linked to Nationalist calls for independence. On his return to Geneva in 1926, he met Émile Jaques-Dalcroze, who originated the eurhythmics system of musical instruction and with whom Martin explored Bulgarian and Indian rhythms. From that time forward, Martin's mature work maintained a certain rhythmic preoccupation.

It is quite fascinating to observe what Martin has done with the idea of Irish music which in traditional form has very specific characteristics including whole-sale repetition of regular phrases with no tendency to develop. Rather, once a tune has been played, a new tune—often a very similar one—follows directly with its own regular phrases and repeats, perhaps with some sort of charming variation. Sometimes the succession of tunes includes some that differ from the previous ones, but frequently they are very similar; the difference is in the particular turn of phrase. In any case, each 4 or 8-bar phrase is repeated without a change, all melody instruments play the same tune, accompaniment is very simple, and counterpoint—if it exists at all—is very elementary. One of the most appealing aspects of Irish music is the subtle treatment of the rhythm. While the meter rarely indulges in anything more than 2, 3 or 4 counts to the measure, depending on complications such as shifts in metric or rhythmic accentuation, or extended elongations of phrases, it quite simply “lilts.” Martin has taken all of these aspects of Irish music and expanded them: ensemble, melody, phrasing, rhythm and, of course, harmony.

The first movement of the Trio uses a series of Irish (or Irish-like?) tunes that sing along in rather regular four-measure phrases. Rarely does that change, the patterns often feature a repetition of the first phrase, followed by a contrasting four-measure phrase and a return of the original one. Perhaps the only thing that remains pretty much unchanged is

the prevailing four-measure phrase, but the introduction of contrasting segments or of entirely new tunes is quite constantly varied. First the violin, then the cello, carry the tune, and as things get really warmed up the piano provides constantly changing accompaniments of interesting and progressively challenging character. The rhythm becomes more challenging, even to the point of being at odds with the rhythmic character of the tune. Toward the end of the first movement, one is tempted to think of Charles Ives.

The second movement, an air, begins with a thoughtful tune in 2/4 played by the solo cello who is joined eventually by the piano with an embellishing tune—in 6/8. As the music develops the cello continues its tune, while the violin and piano move on to other material; the texture thickens, tempo increases section by section, and at the peak of the passage the original mood of the movement has been abandoned, temporarily at least. An eventual return to the original tempo and tune is effected during one of the more surprising moments in the work as the piano plays a tune with irregularly accented eighth-notes while the violin plays altogether strange and dissonant double stops.

The third movement begins as a well-mannered gigue (jig) featuring the violin. Clearly meant to be high-spirited the opening segment features solo passages for all three instruments but when the violin begins to play in measures that alternate 12/8 and 9/8 while the cello and piano play simultaneously in measures alternating in 4/4 and 3/4, things begin to heat up. Again, Charles Ives is brought to mind, but not only because of the rhythmic and metric complexity. Like his American counterpart, Martin manages to keep the whole last segment musically quixotic and come to a rousing conclusion.

Dönüşümler / Transformations for Violin, Violoncello and Piano

İlhan Baran
(1934-2016)

- Fantasia *Poco rubato dolcissimo; calmato; con passione; con elevazione*
Dönüşüm I /Transformation I *ma ben ritmo; pesante; con fuoco*
Dönüşüm II /Transformation II *grazioso; con amore*
Dönüşüm III /Transformation III *deciso; ma ben ritmo; con fuoco*
Dönüşüm IV /Transformation IV *barbaro; sempre ffff e ben marcato; deciso*
Dönüşüm V /Transformation V *con grazia ma poco marcato; sempre ben ritmotp*
Dönüşüm VI /Transformation VI *con fuoco*
Dönüşüm VII /Transformation VII *affetuoso; con delicatezza;*
poco misterioso; lontano
Dönüşüm VIII /Transformation VIII *allegro tanto possibile;*
maestoso, perdendosi e rit.

The musical culture of Turkey reflects its geography—a fascinating crossroad with a rich confluence of influences from a variety of regions, including the Middle East, Eastern Europe and Central Asia. For centuries, two principal agents dominated Turkish music. One, an elaborate and highly structured classical form that was cultivated during the Ottoman Empire, the other, a wide array of different types of regional folk music reflecting many influences. Then in the mid-twentieth century, composers, inspired by the radical changes in Turkey's culture and politics initiated by Atatürk, began to develop new approaches to musical composition by creating a synthesis of Western and traditional Turkish musical cultures.

İhlan Baran was born in Artkin, a city in a province on the eastern border of Turkey close to Georgia. Baran attended the State Conservatory in Ankara, where he was a student of the Turkish composer and musicologist, Ahmed Adnan Saygun (1907–1991), the musical "voice" of the newly founded republic of Turkey whose music integrated Turkish modes and melodies in a post-romantic style. Baran also studied with composer and musicologist Kemal İlerici (1910-1986) who developed a theory of Turkish harmony using chords with intervals of the fourth to harmonize melodies based on the Turkish *Makam*, the latter perhaps best described as a system of modes or scales.

In 1960, after graduating in Ankara, Baran went to Paris where he studied with Henri Dutilleux at the École Normale de Musique and with Maurice Ohana, a composer associated with the Paris Radio and Television. In 1965, he returned to Ankara where he taught for many years.

Dönüşümler / Transformations is a series of rather short musical studies or musical meditations in which rhythm, melodic line and harmony reflect elements that are fundamental to Turkish musical expression although they are not taken from traditional musical practice. Notice how each instrument in the ensemble is explored for its singular potential to produce melody, harmony and rhythm and how a musical structure that is essentially free from western style formal development facilitates a certain kind of independence and equality among the instruments. Notice how, from one *Dönüşüm* to the next, these changing relationships are explored. Note that the expressive markings found in the performers' parts have been added to the above list of movements to facilitate listening and tracking progress, as a number of them move to the next one without pause.

Some melodic ideas are beguiling, others are interesting or dramatic—and some are simple melodic patterns, repeated *extensively*. In several of the Transformations, these entities become pounding drivers insistent on forward motion, and in others, they evoke a languid, even static, atmosphere. Baran uses non-diatonic (non-Western) scales, taking full advantage of the expressive character of the unfamiliar turns and exotic intervals. While most of these modal—or linear—forms, are unfamiliar to uninitiated listeners, there is one that might be more familiar, for he does make use of the octatonic scale—both varied and in its basic form of alternating half and whole steps. Like many other modern composers, he values its usefulness in facilitating movement by half-step and by minor thirds as well as its flexibility in forming chordal structures. These and other complex chords are used often as percussive devices as well as harmonic ones. Most of the rhythms are dance-like or rhythmically active. In several of the segments, relatively long stretches of repetitive additive meters (for example, 5/16 in groups of 2+3, or, 7/16 in groups of 4+3) are the driving force. To summarize: patient listening with curiosity will be generously rewarded.

- I. Mysterious, nocturnal, desolate
- II. Agitated, relentless

Originally from the Northeast, American composer Pierre Jalbert graduated from Oberlin College and then studied with George Crumb for his PhD in Composition at the University of Pennsylvania. Jalbert's work list primarily features works for instrumental combinations, many of these—with evocative titles like *Shades of Memory* (2011), *Fire and Ice* (2007), *Autumn Rhapsody* (2008)—commissioned by American orchestras and by numerous chamber ensembles including the Emerson Quartet, Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. Trio No.2 was commissioned by the Arizona Friends of Chamber Music for the Morgenstern Trio and was premiered in 2014. Pierre Jalbert has enjoyed prestigious awards such as the Prix de Rome and the Stoeger Award from the Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society. He has served as composer in residence for the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra (2002-05), Chicago's Music in the Loft Chamber Music Series (2003), and the California Symphony (1999-2002). Currently he is Professor of Composition and Theory at Rice University in Houston. He has written the following comment about his work.

The work is in two movements of contrasting character. A couple of ideas served as starting points for each movement: the first was the thought of a desert landscape at night, desolate and calm; the second came from an incident driving home in the city of Houston. I was driving through downtown late at night on an elevated highway, which runs through the center of town. There were just enough cars on the road to feel like it was busy, but there were no traffic jams so everyone was going at a high rate of speed, some cars weaving in and out of lanes. Coming around a large curve, I looked over at the downtown skyline as I passed very near the buildings. Since this was an elevated highway, I was looking at the 4th or 5th floors of most buildings, and as I glanced at the buildings, they seemed to be going by in slow motion, even though our cars were moving at very high speed. This provided the impetus for the second movement. The music is not meant to be pictorial – it is absolute music. These were simply starting points and the music itself eventually developed on its own terms.

The first movement, marked “mysterious, nocturnal, and desolate,” begins with high, ethereal harmonics in the strings, slowly building a long line. The movement eventually builds and accelerates directly into a scherzo-like Presto agitato section, only to dissipate back into the opening materials. The second movement, marked “agitated and relentless,” contains frenetic motion, only occasionally interrupted by slower, non-synchronized segments of music. The fast-paced motion always returns, and after several segments where each instrument takes on the main role, the instruments join together, racing to the end.

Phantasie in C Minor for Piano, Violin and Violoncello

Frank Bridge
(1879-1941)

Allegro moderato ma con fuoco
Andante con molto espressione
Allegro scherzoso
Andante
Allegro moderato
Con anima

A quintessential musician whose understanding of counterpoint was legendary, Frank Bridge was both an excellent violist who performed extensively in chamber ensembles and a skilled conductor who could step in at the last moment to lead ensembles in important concerts. Bridge's composition teacher was the legendary Sir Charles Villiers Stanford, a most imposing individual, known for his stringent criticism and insistence on excellence—especially in counterpoint. He was a stolid supporter of the late Romantic school, especially Brahms.

Initially Frank Bridge's style was conservative, but starting in 1913 he began to transition into a more modern style and after the death of Stanford in 1924, he became interested in the ideas of Bartók and Schoenberg and eventually even adopted some elements of 12-tone compositional technique. Perhaps the best-known detail concerning Frank Bridge is that in 1925, he became Benjamin Britten's (b. 1913) teacher. Predictably, he gave him a sound technical foundation and introduced him to the music of a "wide range of composers from many different countries."

In 1905, under the auspices of the Worshipful Company of Musicians, Walter Willson Cobbett (1847-1937), a British businessman, endowed a competition with the goal of encouraging Britons to compose chamber music. Winning works were rewarded with money, performances and publication. In an effort to resonate with the English "fancies" of earlier times, entries were required to be a one-movement "phantasy," with sections in varying tempos and rhythms. The instrumental parts were to be of equal importance and the whole should not last more than 12 minutes. In the first competition (1905), Frank Bridge won second prize with a String Quartet, Phantasie in F Minor, and then in the second competition (1907), he won first place with his Phantasie for Piano Trio.

The Phantasie in C Minor has six sections that alternate between fast and slow tempos; overall, the structure is in three parts. The beginning section, Allegro moderato ma con fuoco, returns as the last segment, and the Andante-Allegro scherzoso-Andante serves as a central contrasting part, and is, itself, also in three parts. Bridge uses two formal elements to create coherence and structure the first of which is found in the opening passage, a kind of fanfare, *con fuoco*, which returns to mark structural points. Another small passage, *poco tranquillo*, heard first in the move from the first key to the second, facilitates transitions from one formal segment to the next. Bridge's harmonic language is richly chromatic. Moving constantly and rather surprisingly through many distant relationships, he nonetheless maintains unmistakable overall tonal stability. The roles of the instruments are balanced, most often solo passages featuring the two strings alternate with those featuring the piano.

The opening Allegro moderato has two main segments. In the first, in C minor, the strings the theme is heard in the strings, and is followed by the second, in E♭ Major, with the piano as soloist. When this segment, Allegro moderato, returns after the central contrasting section, the sole difference is that the instruments trade the roles as soloists—the piano has the first solo in C Minor and the strings play the music of the E♭ Major segment. Notably, the returning Allegro moderato is repeated literally—without any harmonic adjustment—contrary to what would have occurred had the formal structure been a sonata form; the E♭ Major passage would have returned, transformed, in the major form of the tonic key. This leaves the adjustment to be made in the extended coda, Con anima, where a satisfying conclusion is brought to the work as a whole, now in C Major.

- Program notes by Dr. Jean Christensen

*All are welcome to come to the pre-concert presentation beginning at 2 PM in Room 130
presented by Dr. Devin Burke of the Music History Department
at the University of Louisville School of Music.*