



Music on the Hill

— The Archduke —

March 21st, 2021, 4:00 pm

Timothy Lovelace, piano
Steven Copes, violin
Richard Belcher, cello

Piano Trio in B-flat major, Op. 97, 'The Archduke'

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Allegro moderato

Scherzo. Allegro

Andante cantabile ma però con moto. Poco più adagio

Allegro moderato - Presto

Program Notes

by Dr. Stephanie Thorpe

One of Beethoven's loveliest piano trios, the *Erzherzogtrio*, or the "Archduke Trio," for piano, violin, and cello, was composed in 1811 and premiered on April 11, 1814 in Vienna with Beethoven at the piano, and composer Louis Spohr on the violin. Spohr reported:

It was not a good performance. In the first place the piano was badly out of tune, which was of little concern to Beethoven because he could not hear it. Secondly, on account of his deafness, there was scarcely anything left of the virtuosity of the artist which had formally been so greatly admired. ... It is a great misfortune for anyone to be deaf, but how can a musician endure it without giving way to despair? From now on Beethoven's continual melancholy was no longer a riddle to me.

Beethoven apparently knew his performing days were numbered, as the premiere of the "Archduke Trio" was his penultimate public performance. However, the charming trio is easily one of Beethoven's most famous chamber works. Composed for the Archduke Rudolf of Austria, a longtime friend, student, and benefactor of Beethoven, the virtuosic trio features four movements instead of the typical three movements of the time period.

The opening movement, written in sonata form, features the mellifluous theme in the piano first before moving to the violin and cello for further expansion. Beautifully elaborate, the harmonic movement is equally supportive of all players. A playful Scherzo follows the Allegro Moderato with the piano leading the movement's thematic material while the cello and violin are harmonically supportive with dancelike rhythms, giving way to a dramatic middle section before returning to the opening melodies.

The third movement, an exquisite Andante cantabile, presents a serene and lyrical motive that exudes tenderness and passion. The middle section introduces jauntier thematic materials interspersed with the singable opening melody. The final section of the Andante cantabile is deeply romantic, deftly trading the sonorous motivic material between each instrument. The finale, an ebullient rondo movement, begins abruptly and charges happily to the presto coda finishing with a mischievous flourish.

Meet the Musicians



Steven Copes

Violinist Steven Copes joined the SPCO as Concertmaster in 1998, leading the orchestra from the first chair, performing concertos old and new and joining his colleagues in chamber music. He is an enthusiastic advocate of the music of today, having given the world premiere of George Tsontakis' Grammy-nominated Violin Concerto No. 2 (recorded with the SPCO for KOCH Records), as well as the NY premiere of Lutoslawski's Subito for Violin and Piano. Copes has performed at chamber music festivals and concert series such as Boston Chamber Music Society, Chamber Music Northwest, Chestnut Hill, Colorado College, La Jolla Summerfest, Mainly Mozart Spotlight Series, Marlboro, Mozaic, Skaneateles and Styriarte in Graz.

He founded Accordo, a dynamic chamber group now in its seventh season, presented by the Schubert Club and Kate Nordstrum Projects. Copes is also a frequent Guest Concertmaster, having led the Chamber Orchestra of Europe and Mahler Chamber Orchestra on numerous tours and recordings, and has served in the same capacity with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, the San Francisco Symphony, the London Philharmonic, the Pittsburgh Symphony and the Baltimore Symphony. He holds degrees from Curtis and Juilliard, and performs on a violin made by Samuel Zygmuntowicz in 2014.



Timothy Lovelace

Pianist Timothy Lovelace heads the Collaborative Piano program at the University of Minnesota and is an active recitalist, having been featured at Rio de Janeiro's Sala Cecilia Meireles, Carnegie's Weill Recital Hall, Washington's Kennedy Center, New York's Merkin Concert Hall, Chicago's Dame Myra Hess Memorial Concerts and on chamber music series sponsored by the symphony orchestras of Chicago, Cincinnati, Detroit, Minnesota and the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra. As a soloist, he has performed with the Minnesota Orchestra conducted by Osmo Vänskä. The roster of internationally-known artists with whom Lovelace has appeared includes Miriam Fried, Nobuko Imai, Robert Mann, Charles Neidich, Paquito D'Rivera, and Dawn Upshaw. For thirteen years, he was a staff pianist at the Ravinia Festival's Steans Institute, where he played in the classes of Barbara Bonney, Christoph Eschenbach, Thomas Hampson,

Christa Ludwig and Yo-Yo Ma, among others. A proponent of new music, Lovelace has performed the works of many living composers, and he has presented premieres of works by John Harbison, Osvaldo Golijov, and Libby Larsen. He has recorded for the Albany, Arabesque, Blue Griffin, Boston Records, MSR and Naxos labels. His principal teachers were Harold Evans, Gilbert Kalish, Donna Loewy, and Frank Weinstock.



Richard Belcher

New Zealand cellist Richard Belcher joined the SPCO in 2019 after a twenty-year career as founding cellist of the Grammy-nominated Enso String Quartet. With the quartet he earned highly critical accolades from recording and concertizing in many of the world's major concert halls such as Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, and Kennedy Center in the United States, as well as abroad in Europe, South America, Australia and New Zealand.

Richard is the Artistic Director of Music on the Hill in Mankato, Minnesota, and since 2008 has been Principal Cellist of River Oaks Chamber Orchestra in Houston, Texas. He has taught and performed at many festivals including St. Bart's, Festival d'Aix en Provence, Prussia Cove, Madeline Island, Campos do Jordao International Winter Festival, SummerFest La Jolla, and the San Miguel de Allende International Chamber Music Festival.

In demand as a teacher and chamber music coach, Richard has previously served as Adjunct Faculty at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music and has given numerous masterclasses around the world.

Richard moved to the United States in 1998 to study with Aldo Parisot at Yale University, and it was while there that he founded the Enso String Quartet. Richard's other principal teachers include Norman Fischer, Marc Johnson, and Alexander Ivashkin. He plays an N.F. Vuillaume cello made in 1856, and is married to Cecilia Belcher, Assistant Principal 2nd Violin of the Minnesota Orchestra.

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