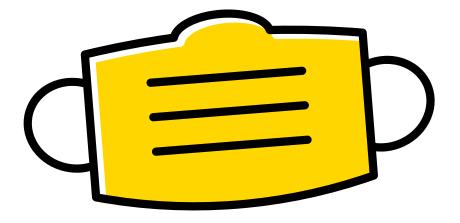
2021/2022 SEASON

HANCHER AUDITORIUM

Friday, November 12, 2021 7:30 pm

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HERMITAGE PIANO TRIO

MISHA KEYLIN, violin SERGEY ANTONOV, cello ILYA KAZANTSEV, piano

Friday, November 12, 2021, at 7:30 pm Hancher Auditorium, The University of Iowa

Piano Trio, Op. 150

Allegro Lento espressivo Allegro con brio

Piano Trio in A Minor

Modéré Pantoum; Assez vif Passacaille: Très large Final: Animé

INTERMISSION

Trio Élégiague No. 2 in D Minor, Op. 9

Moderato Ouasi variazione Allegro risoluto

> Hermitage Trio is represented by MKI Artists; One Lawson Lane, Suite 320, Burlington, VT 05401. **Recordings: Reference Recordings** www.hermitagepianotrio.com

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873 - 1943)

Amy Beach

(1867 - 1944)

Maurice Ravel (1875 - 1937)

EVENT PARTNERS

François M. and Doris E. Abboud Douglas and Linda Behrendt Dale and Cyndy Crider Deborah and Rodney Zeitler



ABOUT THE ARTISTS

"...more striking even than the individual virtuosity was the profound level of integration among the players, who showed a rare degree of ensemble from beginning to end."

- The Washington Post

Now entering their second decade, the United States-based Hermitage Piano Trio has solidified its place as one of the world's leading piano trios, garnering multiple GRAMMY® Award nominations and receiving both audience and press accolades for their performances that *The Washington Post* singled out for "such power and sweeping passion that it left you nearly out of breath."

The Trio is a champion of immense repertoire ranging from the works of the great European tradition to more contemporary American pieces. Hallmarks of the Hermitage Piano Trio is their impeccable musicianship, sumptuous sound, and polished skill, which have led to demand for many repeat performances. They have appeared on major chamber music series and festivals in Los Angeles, New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Tucson, Portland (OR), Tulsa, San Diego, Corpus Christi, Newport (RI), San Miguel de Allende (Mexico), and New Orleans. Highlights of the 2021-2022 concert season include Dallas Chamber Music Society, Arizona Friends of Chamber Music, University of Iowa, Chamber Music Oklahoma, Waterford Concert Series (VA), and The Morgan Library & Museum (NY).

The Trio began its multiple-album recording deal with Reference Recordings, debuting its CD titled *Rachmaninoff*, which features Sergei Rachmaninoff's two trios and his unforgettable *Vocalise*. Echoing many other enthusiastic reviews, *The Strad* lauded the Trio's "outstanding playing in intense, heartfelt performances," and *American Record Guide* praised that "the Hermitage wants to burst forth with passion, to let the whole world know! I am really glad that someone can still play that way in our utterly unromantic age."

A rarity in the chamber music world, this elite Trio brings together three accomplished soloists in their own right. An established soloist, violinist Misha Keylin has performed in 45 countries spanning five continents. He has captured special attention with his world-premiere CD series, released by Naxos, of Henri Vieuxtemps seven violin concertos and showpieces. These recordings have already sold hundreds of thousands of copies worldwide and have garnered numerous press accolades and awards, including "Critic's Choice" by The New York Times, Gramophone, and The Strad. Hailed as "a brilliant cellist" by the legendary Mstislav Rostropovich, Sergey Antonov went on to prove his mentor's proclamation when he became one of the youngest cellists ever awarded the gold medal at the world's premier musical contest, the guadrennial International Tchaikovsky Competition. Antonov's entry into this elite stratum of sought-after classical artists has already placed him on stages at world-renowned venues from Russia's Great Hall at the Moscow Conservatory to Suntory Hall in Tokyo. And pianist Ilya Kazantsev, praised by The Washington Post as "virtually flawless," has performed as a recitalist and a soloist with orchestras in Russia, Canada, Europe, and the United States. Mr. Kazantsey's many awards and honors include first prize at the Nikolai Rubinstein International Competition (France) as well as top prizes at the International Chopin Competition (Russia) and the World Piano Competition (USA).

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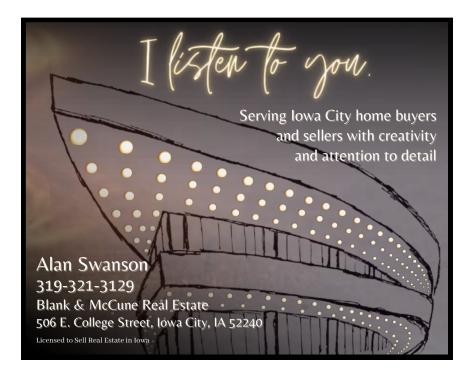
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Piano Trio, Op. 150 (1938) Amy Beach (1867-1944)

Amy Marcy Beach was an American pianist and composer that achieved critical acclaim domestically and internationally. As a pianist, she was the first female solo pianist to perform with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and was regarded as a virtuoso by contemporary reviewers. As a composer, Beach is widely regarded as the preeminent American female composer during her lifetime and became wellknown for her large-scale compositions. Her Gaelic Symphony (1894) was premiered by the Boston Symphony Orchestra-the first time a major American orchestra had premiered a work by a female composer. Despite Beach's success during her lifetime, her oeuvre is perhaps underappreciated and underperformed today.



Amy Beach in an undated photograph

Beach was a primarily self-taught composer and is often associated with the "Second New England School"—a group of New England composers influenced by the German Romantic musical tradition. Other members of the Second New England School include John Knowles Paine, Arthur Foote, George Whitefield Chadwick, and Horatio Parker. In her early works, the influence of romanticism (Brahms, in particular) is clear with a focus on creating a variety of harmonic colors and textures through modal and mixed-modal techniques. She was also well-known for drawing upon songs and folk music as inspiration for themes. As her career and compositionally style developed, Beach used increasing amounts of chromaticism, seventh chords, and augmented sixth chords—likely inspired by the late romantics.

Beach composed ten chamber works including piano—most notably Piano Quintet, op. 67 (1907, scored for piano and string quartet) and Piano Trio, op. 150 (1938). Beach was known for working quickly and completed Piano Trio, op. 150 in 15 days. It would be her final chamber work including piano. In this work, each member of the trio is scored with equal importance. Unlike many of her earlier works, opus 150 does not strictly follow a specific form. Instead, several abrupt and striking contrasts in styles and characters provide the piece's structure. In keeping with Beach's tendency to borrow from folk music, some scholars have noted the second and third movements may contain Inuit themes.

The first movement, *Allegro*, opens with a flurry of chromatic arpeggios in the piano and a wistful melody in the cello—invoking the opening of a dream sequence. This quality is explored as the movement develops. The score calls for repeated variations in tempo and an extremely wide range of dynamics. Moments reminiscent of Debussy's style may be found throughout the movement.



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The second movement, *Lento espressivo*, is written in a ternary form (A-B-A-Coda). The two primary sections are in sharp contrast with each other—the A sections are marked *Lento espressivo* while the middle section is marked *Presto*. The sections have not only distinct tempi, but distinct characters with the *Presto* taking on a much more jovial character than the somewhat contemplative A sections. The movement concludes with a very brief coda in the style of the *Presto*.

The piece closes with a scherzo-like movement marked *Allergo con brio*. In this movement, the strings often play in unison rhythm or create compound rhythms and are countered by the piano. Moments of frivolity and grandeur can be found throughout the movement. The piece concludes by nearly coming to a complete halt prior to an energetic conclusion.

- Bryan Cline

Bryan Cline studied music and aerospace engineering at Wichita State University. He is currently pursuing his PhD in aerospace engineering at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. His dad is Hancher's Director of Marketing and Communications, and he is a longtime attendee of Hancher's chamber music offerings.

Piano Trio in A Minor (1914)

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

When his friend Maurice Delage asked Ravel about a piano trio he had been discussing for some time, but had not yet started to write, the composer replied, "My Trio is finished. I only need the themes for it." The jesting, offhand remark was probably quite accurate; Ravel had thought through the style of the instrumental writing and the formal structure he would follow. All that he lacked were the melodies with which to realize his conception.

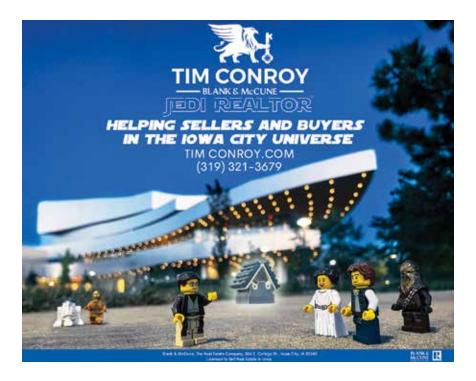
Ravel began the actual composition of the trio during the summer of 1913 that he was spending at Saint-Jean-de-Luz, a city in the Basque region of France near where he was born. But he made little progress until the following year, when he began intensive work in April. As he struggled to complete the trio, the imminent outbreak of World



Maurice Ravel in 1910

War I drove Ravel to a frenzy. "I think that at any moment I shall go mad or lose my mind," he wrote to his friend, Cypa Godebski, on August 3, just before he finished. "I have never worked so hard, with such insane heroic rage."

Considering the great emotional turmoil that we know he was experiencing during this period, the music is remarkably remote and objective, with no reference to extra-







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musical events. True to his belief that "one can have a head and have guts, but never a heart," he kept his personal feelings to himself yet was able to make the trio an intense, expressive piece of music.

Ravel derived the rhythm for the Modéré first theme from a popular Basque folk dance with an underlying 3-2-3 rhythm. This folk-like theme, stated first by the piano and then by the strings, undergoes several remarkable transformations in the course of the movement. The violin introduces the second theme, which is slightly slower but in the same 3-2-3 rhythm. It places incredible virtuosic demands on all three players, forcing them to exploit their instruments to the limit in order to obtain the amazing range of tone colors and effects that Ravel seeks.

The composer titles the bright and sparkling second movement Pantoum from pantun, a Malayan verse form that was used on occasion by Victor Hugo and Charles Baudelaire and also became the basis of a type of declamatory, guitar-accompanied song. Really a scherzo, the movement opens with a series of sharp, highly rhythmic motifs. After building to a climax, the music quiets and the violin plays a transition to a solemn chordal progression, which is played by the piano while the strings continue their sprightly patter. This middle section is actually polymetric; the strings remain in 3/4 time, while the piano switches to 4/2 time, creating a fascinating interplay of cross accents. The concluding section recalls the opening portion.

The Passacaille, or passacaglia, is based on a famous Baroque form in which a melody, usually in triple meter, is subjected to continuous variation. The eight-measure theme is heard first in the bass of the piano, and each of the variations that follows raises it in pitch and increases its textural density. The dynamics and intensity continue to build to the seventh variation, after which the music starts its descent, dropping in power and ending with the tenth variation played by the piano alone. Some of the most fervent, impassioned music of the entire trio is found in this movement.

The music proceeds without pause to the Final, a musical tour de force. The instrumental writing is spectacular, with Ravel using all sorts of technical devices to create an amazing range of sonic effects. The first theme is an inversion of the first theme of the Modéré; the subsidiary theme is an expansive outpouring by the piano while the strings sustain many measure of trills. With flashing virtuosic runs the music coruscates to a dazzling conclusion.

The trio, which was dedicated to André Gédalge, Ravel's counterpoint teacher at the Paris Conservatoire, received its first performance in Paris on January 28, 1915, played by Alfredo Casella, piano, Gabriel Willaume, violin, and Louis Feuillard, cello.

-Notes from Melvin Berger's Guide to Chamber Music, used with permission



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Trio Élégiaque No. 2 in D Minor, Op. 9 (1893)

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)

Rachmaninoff was 20 years old when Tchaikovsky died of cholera in St. Petersburg on November 6, 1893, at the age of 53. Tchaikovsky had been a strong supporter of Rachmaninoff's compositional talents, had made the arrangements for Rachmaninoff's first commission, and had brought Rachmaninoff to the brink of international fame. Rachmaninoff was devastated by the news of Tchaikovsky's death and immediately began writing a piano trio in his memory, his Piano Trio in D Minor, op. 9, "Élégiaque."

The Trio is a worthy memorial to Tchaikovsky, as Tchaikovsky's A-Minor Piano Trio, op. 50, was to his friend and pianist Nicholas Rubinstein in 1881. The connections between these memorial trios run deeper; structurally, Rachmaninoff's work is



Sergei Rachmaninoff in 1892

strongly based on Tchaikovsky's—to the extent of having a set of variations as the second movement, and the thematic likeness of both variation themes implies that Rachmaninoff based his on Tchaikovsky's. The first movement of Rachmaninoff's D-Minor Trio is based on a broad outline of sonata form, but without the usual melodic contrast of this traditional structure. The introductory lament is restated and expanded, leading to a wealth of music that appears to be a succession of interrelated variations. The second movement uses theme and variation for its structural blueprint, with eight variations (although not numbered by the composer in the score) that are quite extensive and wide-ranging. The piano has greater importance in this movement; it alone announces the theme, and also has a long solo variation. The Finale is quite short and structurally simple. Halfway through, it features the return of the lament from the first movement, and finishes with an absent voice, only cello and piano playing as the work concludes.

The original version of this trio called for a harmonium to be played in the second movement. Of course, the writing of the piano part is so complex that it is impossible for the pianist to attempt to play both instruments at the same time. In a 1907 revision, Rachmaninoff eliminated the harmonium part, and cut a number of sections to simplify the structure. The original version of the work was performed on January 31, 1894, with the composer performing at the piano. An additional performer was used to play the harmonium.

Jason Duckles

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We've weathered the pandemic and will continue to adjust to the changes in university funding because of your steadfast generosity-both financially and in terms of ongoing encouragement. Thank you all!

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