

Mendelssohn's *Quintet in B-flat Major, Op. 87*, was written when he was thirty-six years old, just two years before his untimely death. Mendelssohn was expressively sentimental and romantic in many of his chamber works, as is evident in his *Octet in E-flat, Op. 20*, and *Sextet in D, Op. 110*. He divested himself of such emotional gestures in this quintet, however, preferring instead to return to the serene and more controlled atmosphere of the classical tradition. Music critic Allan Rich (*New York Magazine*), in his critique of a performance of the work, noted that "it (*Op. 87*) is a well-made work of little emotional consequence, aside from the pure emotion of giving pleasure to player and listener alike."

The opening movement (*Allegro vivace*), with its hint at drama through the use of massive chordal tremolos, follows the layout of the sonata-allegro form and is a prime example of the strengths and brilliance of Mendelssohn's string writing. Laid out in binary song form, the second movement (*Andante scherzando*) is a typical Mendelssohnian venture into the play world of the elf or the mischievous fairy. Oddly enough, it is without the evanescence of his more familiar scherzos, such as those of *A Mid-Summer Night's Dream* or the *Octet, Op. 20*; it is performed at a lower speed with a tone that is a little less than gleeful. The third movement (*Adagio e lento*) presents a moment of sublime intervention, mystical yet divine. Here Mendelssohn judiciously manipulates his strings to "suggest deep contrasts of light and shadow" (Rich). Entering without a break, the finale (*Allegro molto vivace*) may not be perceived to have reached the level of the previous movements, but the tension derived from its momentous drive and energy balances the jewel-like quality of the sonata itself. A rarity in the repertoire of many of contemporary chamber groups, this exceedingly animated and well-organized quintet deserves to be reevaluated and given a permanent place in the repertoire.

Ernest Chausson's *Concerto in D for Violin, Piano, and String Quartet, Op. 21*, was written for and dedicated to the Belgian violinist Eugène Ysaÿe (1858–1931). In the early 1880s, Chausson took lessons

in composition from Jules Massenet (1842–1912) and César Franck (1822–1890), but would soon feel the influence of the music of Germany, with Richard Wagner exercising the greatest impact. Chausson, who made every attempt in his music to avoid overindulgence in the follies of the declining romantic period, embraced wholeheartedly the prismatic harmonies of his mentors, Franck and Wagner. Consequently, the listener is able to experience in Chausson the rapid surge of lyricism that is associated with French music, coupled with repetitive exhibitions of inherent turbulence, a recurring feature in German romantic music.

Beginning with a nucleus that is defined by a three-note motive, the first movement of the concerto (*Décidé; calme; animé*) unfolds in several disjointed sections, in each of which a solo instrument vies for dominance. The opening theme grows out of the three-note motive and gives away to a second theme that is presented by the solo violin. The same instrument plays the principal melody of the second movement (*Sicilienne: Pas vite*), which is an expression of luxury and elegance, with a surrounding presence of intimacy. The third movement (*Grave*) opens with a slow-moving chromatic passage in the bottom register of the piano, followed by a soulful melody in the violin. The solo instruments are the protagonists at this juncture. The finale (*Très animé*) is rhythmically energetic and harmonically spicy, bringing the work to a brilliant close.

Program notes by Elmer Booze

*The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed.*

*For the convenience of concertgoers the Garden Café remains open until 6:30 p.m.*

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**THE CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER**

**David Shifrin, artistic director**

**The Miami String Quartet**

**Ivan Chan, violin Cathy Meng Robinson, violin  
Chauncey Patterson, viola Keith Robinson, cello**

**with Ida Kavafian, violin, and Anne-Marie McDermott, piano**

Sunday Evening, 25 February 2001

Seven O'clock

West Building, West Garden Court

*Admission free*

PROGRAM

Ned Rorem  
(b. 1923) Autumn Music for Violin and Piano  
(1996)

Felix Mendelssohn  
(1809–1847) Quintet No. 2 in B-Flat Major  
Op. 87 (1845)

Allegro vivace  
Andante scherzando  
Adagio e lento  
Allegro molto vivace

INTERMISSION

Ernest Chausson  
(1855–1899) Concerto in D Major for Violin, Piano,  
and String Quartet, Op. 21 (1889–1891)

Décidé; calme; animé  
Sicilienne: Pas vite  
Grave  
Très animé

The **Miami String Quartet** has recently been appointed to the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center's "Chamber Music Society II" program for emerging young musicians. The quartet won the 1989 Fischhoff Chamber Music Competition and first prize at the Concert Artists Guild New York Competition in 1992. The Miami String Quartet's most recent performances have included concerts in New York, Paris, Lausanne, Champaign-Urbana, Houston, Los Angeles, and San Diego. In addition, it maintains its own concert series in Palm

Beach, Florida, and at Kent State University in Kent, Ohio. The quartet is deeply committed to the performance of new music; several new works have been written for it by composers Maurice Gardner, Bruce Adolphe, and David Baker, among others. Orchestral collaboration for the quartet has included the American Sinfonietta, the New World Symphony, and the Miami Chamber Symphony. The recording labels on which the quartet can be heard are Pyramid and BMG Conifer.

Violinist **Ivan Chan** joined the Miami String Quartet in January 1999. As a soloist, he has appeared with the Hong Kong Philharmonic and the Detroit, Indianapolis, Houston, and New World Symphonies. He was a founding member of the Windham String Quartet and the Felix Quartet. Violinist **Cathy Meng Robinson**, a founding member of the Miami String Quartet, received the bachelor of music degree from the Curtis Institute of Music and the master of music degree from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. As a soloist, she has performed with the Deerfield Beach Symphony, the West Palm Beach Symphony, and the Greenville Symphony. Violist **Chauncey Patterson** joined the Miami String Quartet in 1990. His solo performances have included appearances with the Buffalo Philharmonic, the Ars Nova Chamber Orchestra, the Eastern Philharmonic, the Blossom Festival Orchestra, and the Colorado Philharmonic. He attended the Curtis Institute of Music and the Cleveland Institute of Music and is currently on the faculty of the Florida International University, the Kent/Blossom Music Festival, and the Cleveland Institute of Music. Cellist **Keith Robinson**, also a founding member, was a member of the Thouvel and Montani Quartets. In 1989 he won the P.A.C.E. Classical Artist of the Year Award, which allowed him to engage in numerous solo performances throughout South Florida. A member of the faculty of the Florida International University and the Kent/Blossom Music Festival, he continues to perform with orchestras throughout Florida and Texas.

Violinist **Ida Kavafian** has performed in solo recital, as soloist with leading orchestras, and in chamber music concerts that include duos with her sister, violinist Ani Kavafian. An artist and board member of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center from 1989 to 1993, she joined

the Beaux Arts Trio for a period of six years, returning to the Society as an artist member in 1996. She appears regularly with the Guarneri Quartet and is the artistic director of New Mexico's Music from Angel Fire. A teacher at the Curtis Institute and the Mannes College of Music, she recently co-founded the piano quartet Opus One, together with pianist Anne-Marie McDermott, violist Steven Tenenbom, and cellist Peter Wiley.

**Anne-Marie McDermott**, an artist member of the Chamber Music Society since 1995, studied piano with Constance Keene and John Browning at the Manhattan School of Music before winning the 1983 Young Concert Artists International Auditions. The 1987 Avery Fisher Career Grant, the Joseph Kalichstein Piano Prize, and the Silver Medal of the first Hamamatsu Piano Competition in Japan are also among her many awards. As a chamber musician, she participates in various major festivals and is a member of the Opus One Piano Quartet and the McDermott Trio, in which the string players are her sisters, violinist Kerry McDermott and cellist Maureen McDermott.

Ned Rorem's *Autumn Music* for violin and piano is a co-commissioned work by the McKim Fund of the Library of Congress and the International Violin Competition of Indianapolis, with a grant from the Payn Fund. In one movement, the work opens with a protracted recitative on the violin that is both gallant and resolute in its delivery. At the end of the violin's introductory solo, the piano enters, changing the milieu from an agitated state to a more placid one. Rorem depicts this state aptly through his employment of smooth, nonarticulated passages on the violin over extended arpeggios on the piano. Following this period of respite there is a gradual increase in loudness in which the violin's full tessitura is exploited, utilizing rhythmic note groupings of five, six, nine, and ten. The work continues with a visceral display of technical prowess on the violin with pizzicato and bowed passages, while the piano gives a lofty show of fulminating arpeggios covering its full range. After a last-ditch attempt by the violin to surge once again, the work is brought to a serene close, blending the two instruments into a blissful autumnal state.