

Piano Trio No. 1 in B-flat major, D. 898

Franz Schubert finished this piano trio in the last year of his life. He died tragically at the age of 31 from mercury poisoning. Mercury was a common treatment for syphilis at the time. Schubert was said to be introverted and shy. He battled illness throughout his life, from depression to headaches to skin rashes. In spite of his poor health, he was a prolific composer, writing more than 1,000 works in his short lifetime. This piano trio demonstrates his skills as both a pianist and violinist, and the lyricism of the piece reminds us that he was also a great composer of songs. Schubert worked as a schoolmaster into his early twenties, but he ultimately chose to make his living through writing music. Because his works were not well received during his lifetime, he struggled financially; this trio was published six years after his death. Although the facts show financial and emotional struggles in Schubert's life, his music is full of hope and an understanding of life's dramas, from deep sorrow to love, all crafted by a masterful musician.

Kumiko Uyeda

In Paradiso

Composer Henry Mollicone has been active as a composer, conductor, and pianist since his first job as an assistant conductor at New York City Opera. He is best known for his operas and choral works, which have been performed all over the world. A resident of San Jose, Mr. Mollicone has also worked actively in the area as a freelance conductor of opera, symphonic, and new music.

In Paradiso was originally composed as the final movement of his *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra*. He later re-wrote it as a stand-alone work for solo violin with strings and harp, and finally adapted it to this version for violin and piano. Mollicone writes, "... *In Paradiso*, is another slow and lyrical movement based on a long tonal melody. It is dedicated to a dear friend, the brilliant late Canadian-American composer, Robert Frederick Jones. As Robert was deeply religious and spiritual, this is an attempt to portray the beauty of heaven through music, as is with a chorus in a Requiem Mass."


Cynthia Baehr-Williams

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Morpheus

Rebecca Clarke's first major success as a composer came during a recital at Carnegie Hall in New York in 1918 when she gave the first performance of *Morpheus*, which was immediately acclaimed by the critics. Women composers were almost unknown at this time, and those who were making their way were regarded with great suspicion. The manuscript of this piece was therefore signed with the pseudonym "Anthony Trent." Morpheus, son of Hypnos, was the Greek god of dreams. Clarke's music is entirely apt, with its almost French impressionism (she was deeply influenced by Debussy), its wistful and romantic aura and perfectly matched solo and accompaniment.

Paul Spicer © 1994

"Death of a Princess" Trio No. 1

It was August 31st, 1997. I had just settled into my New York City apartment to start my graduate composition studies when the tragic death of Diana, Princess of Wales, was announced to the world. The grief of her demise came to me immediately in the form of a dark, ascending, angular 7-note tone row programmatically indicative of her sudden and mystical departure. This series of notes begins to perpetuate unified motion in the first movement. "A Mystery," which contrastingly starts in a mystic fog of sound appropriately marked *Grave* in tempo and explores extended techniques reminiscent of avant-garde composer George Crumb. Some of these techniques include, in this first movement, plucking with fingertips and striking with palms the strings of the piano.

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The second movement, which recently came to me in a dream sequence of that fateful car crash, is entitled “The Chase” and is a rapid *Agitato con fuoco* in 4/8 and then 7/8 mirroring the tone row in time only with constant interplay between instruments. The second movement culminates into a sudden, roaring halt into what came to me that tragic day as the news reports poured in – the theme of the third movement, “Diana’s Lament.” This final movement in an ABA structure and very tonal in nature, is a deliberately slow *Poco adagio* – a funeral procession as she is finally laid to rest in my mind. This *quasi passacaglia* explores the theme in different variations eventually shared amongst each instrument.

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Tribute

Award-winning pianist and composer Emily Wong began her professional career as a pianist, ultimately dividing her time between performing, composing and teaching. As a pianist, she was a First Prize winner of the Hodges International Concerto Competition, and the Schubert Competition. She is the pianist for Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music and is a staff pianist for American Ballet Theater. As a composer, Emily Wong has written a large catalogue of works for piano, chamber ensemble, and orchestra. Her performance of *Circle Dance* for solo piano in recital at UCSC in 1998 triggered a request from conductor Marin Alsop for an orchestral piece. *Waves and Raves* was a result of that inquiry, dedicated to Ms. Alsop, and was premiered by the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music Orchestra in August 2000.

Tribute was the result of another commission. Ms. Wong includes this introduction in the score and parts of the work: “*Tribute* was commissioned by the Chappaqua Concert Artists in 2001, and I had barely begun work on the piece when 9/11 happened. This then became my 9/11 piece. It was impossible not to respond to the impact of this tragic event, particularly since it struck so close to home as I watched and listened to many of my friends who experienced it firsthand. Our whole psychology changed so dramatically, from feeling on top of the world, to looking more intently for a sense of connection, of hope, freedom and love that might bring us back in touch with some spiritual core. We were awakened, if only momentarily, to a glimpse of those things which are truly important to us. This piece is dedicated to all who are compelled to endure such tragedies of the heart, and who find themselves in the process.”

Kristin Garbeff



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