Notes on the program
By Harry Haskell

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART
Born Salzburg, January 27, 1756; died Vienna, December 5, 1791
Piano Trio in B-flat major, K. 502
Composed in 1786; 22 minutes

The Piano Trio in B-flat major is the third of six piano trios that Mozart wrote in two batches in 1786 and 1788. The 30-something maestro was then the toast of Vienna as both pianist and composer. This fruitful period saw the creation of his greatest piano concertos, the last three of his path-breaking string quartets dedicated to Haydn, his "Prague" and "Jupiter" symphonies and *The Marriage of Figaro*. A few months earlier, Franz Joseph Haydn had bestowed his blessing on Mozart, declaring him "the greatest composer known to me either in person or by name."

While the B-flat-major Trio represents Mozart at the top of his form, it was written with a very practical purpose in mind: to satisfy the growing demand for such works among Vienna's legions of amateur chamber musicians. In the Austrian capital alone, by one tally, no fewer than 70 piano trios were published during the 1780s.

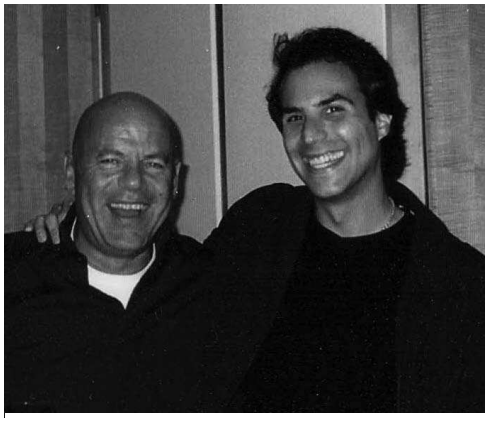
Although Mozart was eager to enlarge the market for his works, the idea of writing "down" to his audience was anathema to him. He saw no reason to stint on technical display, especially since he performed most of his music himself, and he didn't bother to disguise the prominence of the piano part. Indeed, the score of the Trio was advertised for sale as one of three "quite new Sonatas for the pianoforte, with the accompaniment of a violin and violoncello." In fact, the string parts in K. 502 are fully emancipated from the strictures of the early 18th-century trio sonata, which is to say that Mozart treats the three players as more or less equal partners.

Mozart's mastery of the medium is evident in the carefully calibrated colloquy of the opening Allegro. A genial melody in B-flat major is introduced by the piano, then briefly taken up by the violin before abruptly veering off into a darkling G-minor netherworld festooned with increasingly elaborate keyboard figurations. Despite such artful disguises, the principal theme never plunges far beneath the surface. Even the F-major variant that launches the movement's second part, with its distinctive snap rhythm, bears an unmistakable family resemblance.

The slow movement, a radiantly lyrical Larghetto in E-flat major that might have been plucked from one of Mozart's piano concertos, is similarly economical in thematic material and lucid in texture. The final Allegretto, with its playful skips and turns, takes us into more chromatic and contrapuntal territory. The music brims with variety and invention, its whimsically capricious spirit classically disciplined but never tame or predictable.

STANLEY SILVERMAN
Born New York, July 5, 1938
Piano Trio No. 2, "Reveille" (world premiere)
Composed during 2010-11; 30 minutes

Stanley Silverman's Piano Trio No. 2 was conceived as a musical memorial to Herman Sandler, a prominent investment banker, philanthropist and friend of the Silverman family, who died in the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Despite the tragedy it commemorates, the work is more freewheeling celebration than somber lamentation. Ben Silverman, CEO and founder of multimedia studio Electus, whose credits include such pop-culture icons as "The Office" and "The Biggest Loser," commissioned his father Stanley to write the Trio. The music itself is playfully allusive: "Reveille" refers to the television and film production



Herman Sandler (left) with Ben Silverman
(Photo courtesy of the Sandler Family)

studio founded by Emmy and Golden Globe Award winner Ben Silverman. In short, there is more to this engaging and ingeniously crafted score than meets the ear or eye.

Stanley Silverman is as hard to pigeonhole as his music. From the outset of his career in the 1960s, he nimbly straddled the worlds of classical and popular music. Studies with Leon Kirchner, Darius Milhaud and others gave him a firm grounding in ultramodern compositional technique. At the same time, he was playing jazz guitar and writing film scores, and he created a series of cutting-edge music-theater pieces with stage director Richard Foreman. Over the years, he has collaborated with such musical luminaries as James Taylor, Paul Simon, Tashi, Pierre Boulez, Michael Tilson Thomas, Paula Robison and the artists participating in tonight's premiere.

The Second Piano Trio (the first had likewise been written for The Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio in 1989; it also premiered at 92nd Street Y.) bears witness to Silverman's omnivorous musical appetite, sampling everything from classical fugue to Latino folk music and contemporary pop styles. Yet Silverman's eclectic sensibility enhances, rather than obscures, his distinctive musical voice.

The Trio's seven movements are laid out after the fashion of a Baroque suite, with a sequence of strongly rhythmicized, dancelike instrumental pieces framing a poignant vocal centerpiece. The text is a lyrical meditation on mortality and immortality from Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* (sung here by Sting), containing the famous couplet, "Golden lads and girls all must, as chimney-sweepers, come to dust."

How does this motley patchwork of styles, genres and idioms cohere? Silverman makes it clear that the unifying thread starts from the very character of the man who is memorialized and his relationship to the Silverman family. He explains this in extended score notes which are provided here. In them, he writes:

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Herman Sandler was well known as a driving force in the international classical music community who, along with his wife Suki, supported the entire gamut of the concert world, from student development to the Israel Philharmonic. Professionally, I was involved with Herman at the Rainforest Fund concerts held at Carnegie Hall. But it was as a family friend that I have the most cherished memories of Herman. Our children were classmates from grade school through college, and he was a mentor and important influence on my son Ben.

Dear listener, this piece is not intended to "hang together" anymore than life itself. In fact, the dedicatee, a joyful, lively chap, would spend an entire day shopping and cooking a Michelin restaurant-quality gourmet dinner and then gleefully roll out corner-store candy bars for dessert with an aperitif.

Consequently, taking a page from Mahler and Ives, I have utilized several musical languages, both tonal and abstract, each with their own rules. Included are classical key relationships and "schoolboy" fugues, all original and connected thematically. Interspersed are a few brief quotes of existing songs and melodies that are so blatant, they will be easily recognizable.

I must also acknowledge the influence of Sting, whose performance of the English Renaissance master John Dowland was an inspiration for this entire piece; his participation in the premiere is a true delight.

1. *Meadow Lane* is a narrow strip of land in Southampton, NY, which separates the waters of the rough Atlantic Ocean from the calm bay. The piano introduces the accompaniment part of the upcoming fifth movement in passages that alternate between rough and smooth, resulting in a kind of "water music."

2. Prelude to *Guajira y Fuga* (Cello Solo): This movement also looks ahead as the cello "comments" on themes from the fifth movement with variations that are fed by permutations (inversions, etc.). The florid

improvisatory sound of the cello owes a debt to Sainte Colombe, a 17th-century basse de viol player and composer. The cello also gives a free-form introduction to the next movement through rhythmic pieces that are prevalent in Latino dance music.

Herman Sandler at the 2001 Gala of the American Friends of the Israel Philharmonic. (*Photo: Steve Sherman)*

3. *Guajira y Fuga* takes its direct inspiration from the fact that the classical and Latin music FM radio stations in New York are right next to each other; I often compulsively switch from one to the other. The challenge presented to the performers is to be able to "surf" the abruptly shifting musical languages.

A *Guajira* is a traditional Cuban *vaquero* (cowboy) song. Over this particular *Guajira* I have introduced Boccherini-esque variations. The fugue is original and uses the bass line of the *Guajira* as the theme, and it is meant to sound "authentic" in contrast to the "Latin" music. (Incidentally, Herman Sandler had developed a talent for Latin dancing after a trip to Cuba in 2001). The movement also quotes a Shakespearean-era piece: "Joyne Hands" by Thomas Morley. I incorporated it here because it gets my vote as one of the happiest tunes of all time.

4-5. Introduction & Lute Song, "Fear No More the Heat o' the Sun" is a setting of Shakespeare's lyric from *Cymbeline,* Act IV, Scene 2, a prayer sung by two princes in which, long before climate control, a family member is laid to rest in peace unthreatened by extreme elements. Musically, I was influenced by late 19th-century composers, such as Fauré, who had the ability to avoid the maudlin while concentrating on melody. The form is based on an Elizabethan pavanne.

Fear No More the Heat O' The Sun

Fear no more the heat o' the sun,
Nor the furious winter's rages;
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages;
Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

Fear no more the frown o' the great;
Thou art past the tyrant's stroke:
Care no more to clothe and eat;
To thee the reed is as the oak:
The sceptre, learning, physic, must
All follow this, and come to dust.

Fear no more the lightning flash,
Nor the all dreaded thunder stone;
Fear not slander, censure rash;
Thou hast finished joy and moan;
All lovers young, all lovers must
Consign to thee, and come to dust.

No exorciser harm thee!
Nor no witchcraft charm thee!
Ghost unlaid forbear thee!
Nothing ill come near thee!
Quiet consummation have;
And renowned be thy grave!

—William Shakespeare

6. Postlude to *Guajira y Fuga* features the violin, and it is a double, or variation, of the cello movement, which has been further developed. The notes B-natural (in alphabetical notation identified as "H") and E-flat (or "S") are highlighted, symbolizing HS, for Herman Sandler.

7. **Closer: *Les Folies d'Al* (Second Line)** is a set of variations on the well-known motif from Paul Simon's landmark song, "You Can Call Me Al," used with permission. The movement celebrates a 1970 holiday party at Paul's home to which I brought Pierre Boulez, who was then in his first year as the conductor of the New York Philharmonic. This was the very party that inspired the song, where Paul was inadvertently called "Al" and his wife Peggy called "Betty." It was also where I first met James Taylor.

Consequently, as an hommage to that wondrous evening, I have written a set of abstract variations called "couplets," derived from the French Baroque, as is the title of the movement. "Closer" is the term for the

finale in a pop concert, while “Second Line” refers to the upbeat dance that follows traditional New Orleans funeral music. Perhaps the biggest influence for this work is Jordi Savall, the Catalan viol player, who reawakened interest in early music string playing with verve and panache. Particularly impressive is his ability to build long improvisations based on four-measure fragments. This procedure inspired the construction of the “Al” movement.

—Stanley Silverman

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN
Born Bonn, baptized December 17, 1770; died Vienna, March 26, 1827
Piano Trio in B-flat major, Op. 97, “Archduke”
Composed during 1810-11; 40 minutes

The archduke of the Piano Trio in B-flat major was Rudolph, son of Holy Roman Emperor Leopold II, and younger brother of his successor, Emperor Franz I. As Beethoven’s diligent composition pupil, lifelong friend and most magnanimous patron, Archduke Rudolph was more than deserving of the tribute the composer paid him in the dedications of such masterworks as the *Missa solemnis*, the “Emperor” Piano Concerto, the “Hammerklavier” Piano Sonata and the “Archduke” Piano Trio. Beethoven’s relations with the young archduke were singularly warm and free of tension and guile. Surely it is not reading too much into the Trio to see Beethoven’s feelings for the archduke mirrored in its majestic phrases and nobility of conception.

Beethoven sketched the B-flat major Trio in 1810 and completed the score early the following year, shortly before starting work on his Seventh Symphony. As the last and most overtly symphonic of Beethoven’s seven canonic piano trios (excluding variations, arrangements and juvenilia), the “Archduke” points the way to the trios of Mendelssohn, Schumann and Brahms. The opening bars of the Allegro moderato, with its broadly arching piano melody, piquant intensifications of harmony, and ecstatic violin and cello outbursts, sets the stage for a movement charged with dynamic drama and tender lyricism in equal parts. After such boldly striding music, the delicate, mincing tread of the Scherzo is all the more delightfully startling. Here too, Beethoven works on an expansive scale, deftly transforming the cello’s bouncy staccato theme first into a flowing legato melody and then into a slithering, chromatic fugue.

An even sharper contrast lies in store in the luminous Andante, which Beethoven marks *cantabile, ma però con moto* (songlike, but with movement). A softly pulsing melody limned in block chords gives way to a pearly cascade of triplets in the piano part, the two hands in contrary motion, accompanied by unison sighing figures in the strings. This is the first of four richly imaginative variations that Beethoven weaves upon his simple D-major theme, topped off with a coda that pivots adroitly back to the home key before striking off in a new and totally unforeseen direction. The finale, like the first movement, is marked Allegro moderato, but its antic spirit and ingenious rhythmic repartee might almost come from a different world.

Three years after composing the “Archduke” Trio, on April 11, 1814, Beethoven played it in a benefit concert for a military charity in Vienna. According to the composer Ludwig Spohr, the performance “was not a treat, for, in the first place, the piano was badly out of tune, which Beethoven minded little, since he did not hear it, and secondly, on account of his deafness, there was scarcely anything left of the virtuosity of the artist, which had been so greatly admired.”

The pianist Ignaz Moscheles gave a more forgiving account: “In the case of how many compositions is the word ‘new’ misapplied! But never in Beethoven’s, and least of all in this, which again is full of originality. His playing satisfied me less, being wanting in clarity and precision; but I observed many traces of the *grand* style of playing which I had long recognized in his compositions.”