

PROGRAM NOTES BY KEN MELTZER

DANIEL HOPE & FRIENDS IV

Friday, April 5 at 6 pm
Trinity United Methodist Church

VINCENT D'INDY (1851-1931)**String Sextet in B-flat Major, Opus 92 (1927)**

- I. *Entrée en sonate. Résolument animé*
II. *Divertissement. Animé*
III. *Thème, variations et finale. Lent et expressif*

RICHARD STRAUSS (1864-1949)**Sextet from Capriccio, Opus 85 (1942)**

INTERMISSION

CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS (1835-1921)**Piano Quintet in A minor, Opus 14 (1855)**

- I. *Allegro moderato e maestoso*
II. *Andante sostenuto*
III. *Presto*
IV. *Allegro assai, ma tranquillo*

Daniel Hope, violin
Benny Kim, violin
Simos Papanas, violin
Paul Neubauer, viola
CarlaMaria Rodrigues, viola
Eric Kim, cello
Keith Robinson, cello
Simon Crawford-Phillips, piano

String Sextet in B-flat Major, Opus 92 (1927)

Vincent d'Indy was born in Paris, France, on March 27, 1851, and died there on December 2, 1931.

 Approximate performance time is 21 minutes.

 SMF performance history: SMF premiere

Vincent d'Indy was a highly influential figure in French musical life during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. D'Indy began music studies in his teenage years. In 1872, d'Indy commenced studies with César Franck (1822–1890), first in private, and later, at the Paris Conservatory. For the duration of his life, Vincent d'Indy remained a devoted follower and advocate of Franck and the Belgian-born composer's music. D'Indy was also greatly influenced by the German school of composition (he authored a biography of Beethoven). He also attended the opening of Richard Wagner's Bayreuth Festival in 1876, returning there six years later.

In 1894, d'Indy co-founded the Schola Cantorum, a private conservatory in Paris that emphasized traditional approaches. From 1912 to 1929, d'Indy taught conducting and orchestration at the Paris Conservatory. D'Indy composed in a wide variety of genres, both instrumental and vocal. Today, he is best remembered for a handful of works, including his *Symphony on a French Mountain Air*, Opus 25 (1886), for solo piano and orchestra, and the orchestral variations, *Istar*, Opus 42 (1896).

The String Sextet (pairs of violins, violas, and cellos) in B-flat Major, Opus 92, is a late work by d'Indy, written when the composer was 76. It is a piece brimming with elegance and *joie de vivre*. And at a time when many composers were rebelling against tradition, d'Indy demonstrated a commitment to the musical structures and notions of tonality embraced by his 19th-century predecessors.

I. *Entrée en sonate. Résolument animé*—The opening movement, in sonata form, begins with the ensemble's *fortissimo* introduction of the proud initial theme. The violas launch the presentation of another, syncopated theme. A development of those themes is followed by a varied recapitulation, in which the two themes are at times combined. A final statement of the


opening theme brings the first movement to an emphatic close.

II. *Divertissement. Animé*—The second movement, a brief *Divertissement*, opens with a scurrying episode for muted strings. The central portion (*Un peu retenu*), juxtaposes harmonics and pizzicato effects. The mutes, removed for the latter part of this interlude, are restored for a repetition of the opening episode. The final measures (mutes once again removed) bring the *Divertissement* to a scintillating conclusion.

III. *Thème, variations et finale. Lent et expressif*—The finale, longer than the first two movements combined, is a theme and set of variations. The first violin leads the introduction of the central melody d'Indy directs be played in a singing fashion (*mais bien chanté*). A series of variations, exploring an impressive range of moods and instrumental sonorities, ensues (Variation IV evokes the *Forest Murmurs* from Wagner's *Siegfried*, an opera that premiered at the 1876 Bayreuth Festival d'Indy attended). In the closing measures, a reprise of Variation IV provides the peaceful *dénouement*.

Sextet from Capriccio, Opus 85 (1942)

Richard Strauss was born in Munich, Germany, on June 11, 1864, and died in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, on September 8, 1949.

 Approximate performance time is 12 minutes.

 SMF performance history: 4/06/16, 3/31/12

The final decade of Richard Strauss' long and productive life was, in many ways, the most difficult. Along with the kinds of challenges often encountered in one's later years, Strauss witnessed the destruction of his native Germany as World War II reached its devastating conclusion. Ultimately, Strauss and his wife, Pauline, left their home in Garmisch, seeking refuge in Switzerland.

Nevertheless, that decade proved to be a remarkably creative period, one affectionately referred to as the composer's "Indian Summer." During the 1940s, Strauss produced several marvelous works, notable for their haunting lyricism, magical instrumental colors,

and economy of expression. These works include the Second Horn Concerto (1942), *Metamorphosen* (subtitled “A Study for 23 Solo Strings”) (1945), the Oboe Concerto (1945), and *Four Last Songs* (1948).


Strauss’s final opera, *Capriccio* (1942), is another worthy member of the “Indian Summer” works. *Capriccio* explores the relative importance of words and music in opera. Conductor Clemens Krauss (1893–1954), assisted by Strauss, fashioned the final libretto. *Capriccio* received its premiere at the Munich National Theater on October 28, 1942. Krauss conducted and his wife, soprano Viorica Ursuleac, sang the role of the Countess Madeleine.

Strauss described *Capriccio* as “A Conversation Piece for Music in one act.” The “conversation,” focuses on the eternal debate of whether words or music should take precedence in opera. The story takes place in May of 1777, in a chateau on the outskirts of Paris. The Countess Madeleine is pursued by two lovers—the musician, Flamand, and the poet, Olivier. As the opera opens, musicians are performing the slow-tempo movement of a String Sextet Flamand composed for the Countess. This beautiful Sextet (*Andante con moto*), scored for pairs of violins, violas, and cellos, also serves as *Capriccio*’s Overture.

Piano Quintet in A minor, Opus 14 (1855)

Camille Saint-Saëns was born in Paris, France, on October 9, 1835, and died in Algiers, Algeria, on December 16, 1921.

 Approximate performance time is 31 minutes.

 SMF performance history: SMF premiere

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791) and Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847) are two of the most celebrated examples of classical music prodigies. At a very tender age, they excelled both as instrumentalists and composers. The impressive early accomplishments of Mozart and Mendelssohn are placed into further relief by the tragically short time they spent on this earth. By contrast, the life span and musical career of Camille Saint-Saëns far exceeded those of Mozart and Mendelssohn combined. But the young Saint-Saëns also exhibited precocious talents that rivaled his Austrian and German predecessors.

On May 6, 1846, the 10-year-old Saint-Saëns made his formal concert debut at the Paris Salle Pleyel. On that occasion, Saint-Saëns performed concertos for piano and orchestra by Mozart and Beethoven, as well as solo compositions by Hummel, Bach, Handel, and Kalkbrenner. Saint-Saëns played all of these works from memory. For his encore, Saint-Saëns offered to play, again from memory, any of Beethoven’s 32 Piano Sonatas. By the age of 13, Saint-Saëns entered the Paris Conservatory, where he studied organ with François Benoist, and composition with Jacques Fromental Halévy. In his teenage years, Saint-Saëns created numerous musical works that would do credit to a composer at the height of his experience and maturity.

From 1853 to 1857, Saint-Saëns was the organist at the Church Saint-Merri in Paris. It was during this period that Saint-Saëns composed one of his earliest chamber works, the Piano Quintet in A minor. Saint-Saëns completed the Quintet in 1855. The first public performance, and publication, took place a decade later. Saint-Saëns was one of the finest keyboard artists of his day (he was the soloist in the world premieres of all Five of his Piano Concertos). It’s not surprising that the keyboard part in the Quintet is both highly prominent and technically demanding, much like a piano concerto. In fact, Saint-Saëns ultimately performed the Quintet in collaboration with a full complement of orchestral strings, replacing the original two violins, viola, and cello.

I. *Allegro moderato e maestoso*—The Quintet opens with a dramatic exchange between the piano and strings. This develops into the surging first principal theme. The key changes from A minor to C Major for the radiant second theme. The themes undergo an extended and wide-ranging development. A reprise of the opening measures, now with the roles of the piano and strings reversed, heralds the recapitulation of the principal thematic material. The movement concludes with a vigorous and intense coda.

II. *Andante sostenuto*—The slow-tempo second movement, in F Major, opens with a noble hymn sung by the piano, and echoed by muted strings. A shimmering central episode leads a restatement of the opening, capped by the tender final bars, juxtaposing pizzicato and bowed string effects. The third movement follows without pause.

III. *Presto*—The third movement scherzo is in A minor, and 6/8 meter. The piano’s restless sixteenth notes propel a ghoulish dance. The scherzo’s irrepressible momentum does not abate until the final measures.

IV. *Allegro assai, ma tranquillo*—The cello introduces the finale’s central theme, continued as a fugue by the viola, second and first violin. The piano enters with its own version of the theme. The remainder of the finale proceeds as a fantasia on the seminal melody, culminating in the triumphant closing bars.