

PROGRAM NOTES BY KEN MELTZER

DANIEL HOPE & FRIENDS VI:
BALKAN ROOTS

Wednesday, April 10 at 6 pm
Trinity United Methodist Church

Digenis

Traditional, from Crete, Greece

FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797-1828)

String Quartet No. 14 in D minor, D. 810
("Death and the Maiden") (1824)

I. Allegro

I lygeri tzi o haros ("Beauty and death")

Traditional, from Cyprus

FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797-1828)

String Quartet No. 14 in D minor, D. 810
("Death and the Maiden") (1824)

II. Andante con moto

INTERMISSION

San ta marmara tis polis
("Like the marbles of Istanbul")

Traditional Greek song from Istanbul

Hira ("Widow")

Traditional Greek song from Izmir

Olmaz ("Impossible")

Traditional, from Greece, Turkey

GIUSEPPE TARTINI (1692-1770)

Violin Sonata in G minor, B.g5,
"The Devil's Trill" (ca. 1740)

I. Larghetto affettuoso

II. Allegro (Tempo giusto)

III. Andante; Allegro assai

Malka Moma ("Young girl")

Traditional, Bulgaria

Vrisi mou Petrokamari

("My stone-arched fountain") Traditional,
from Macedonia, Greece


Horo Yove ("Yove dance")

Traditional, from Bulgaria

Daniel Hope, violin
Benny Kim, violin
Simos Papanas, violin
Paul Neubauer, viola
CarlaMaria Rodrigues, viola
Keith Robinson, cello
Joseph Conyers, bass
Sebastian Knauer, piano
Eirini Tornesaki, vocals

Digenis (Traditional, from Crete, Greece)


 Approximate performance time is 4 minutes.

 SMF performance history: SMF premiere

String Quartet No. 14 in D minor, D. 810
("Death and the Maiden") (1824)

Franz Schubert was born in Vienna, Austria, on January 31, 1797, and died there on November 19, 1828.

 Approximate performance time is 26 minutes.

 SMF performance history: 3/29/18, 3/28/14, 3/29/09

In March of 1824, Franz Schubert made the following entry in his notebook:

O imagination! thou greatest treasure of man, thou inexhaustible wellspring from which artists as well as savants drink! O remain with us still, by however few thou art acknowledged and revered, to preserve us from that so-called enlightenment, that hideous skeleton without flesh and blood!

It is clear that when he wrote those words, Franz Schubert's imagination and creative genius were in full flight. That same month, Schubert completed his magnificent String Quartets in A minor, D. 804, and D minor, D. 810.

The D minor is also known as the "Death and the Maiden" Quartet. This is a reference (not made by Schubert) to the title of the composer's 1817 song for solo voice and piano, based upon a text by Matthias Claudius. In that song, a terrified young woman confronts the specter of Death, who tries to offer consolation:

Das Mädchen

Vorüber, ach, vorüber!
Geh, wilder Knochenmann!
Ich bin noch jung, geh, Lieber!
Und rühre mich nicht an.

The Maiden

Pass me by, o pass me by!
Go, wild skeleton!
I am still young, go, dear one!
And touch me not!

Der Tod

Gib deine Hand, du schön und zart Gebild!
Bin Freund und komme nicht zu strafen.
Sei gutes Muts! ich bin nicht wild,
Sollst sanft in meinem Armen schlafen!

Death

Give me your hand, o fair and tender form!
I am your friend; I do not come to punish.
Be of good cheer! I am not wild,
You shall sleep softly in my arms.

The piano's prelude and accompaniment to Death's pronouncements in the song form the basis for the D minor Quartet's theme and variations second movement.

In January of 1826, at the Vienna home of composer Franz Lachner, the Schuppanzigh Quartet rehearsed the Schubert D minor Quartet. The leader of the Quartet, Ignaz Schuppanzigh, had performed the premieres of several of Beethoven's greatest chamber works. According to Lachner, Schuppanzigh, who encountered difficulties with the first violin part, told Schubert: "My dear fellow, this is no good, leave it alone; you stick to your songs!"

In time, of course, the "Death and the Maiden" Quartet became recognized as one of Schubert's finest chamber compositions. It is a work demonstrating that Schubert, in the final years of his life, was able to combine his unfailing lyric genius with an exceptional intensity, concentration, and depth of expression. One can only imagine what Schubert might have accomplished had he been given more time on this earth. As Franz Grillparzer's inscription on Schubert's monument reminds us: "The art of music here entombed a rich possession, but even fairer hopes."

I. Allegro—The "Death and the Maiden" Quartet opens with powerful, triplet-based motif that recalls the immortal "Fate" theme of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony (1808). The motif serves as the nucleus for the dramatic opening theme that, as in the case of the Beethoven Fifth, journeys throughout the ensemble in a lightning-quick and dramatically gripping fashion.

The second principal theme—softly intoned by the violins over a repeated figure in the viola—is far more gentle. But in later permutations, it also assumes a forceful character, leading to exposition's terse conclusion. The development features a concentrated juxtaposition (and sometimes even a synthesis) of the two principal themes. The ensemble introduces the *fortissimo* start of the recapitulation. In the coda, the opening motif predominates, as the tempest ultimately resolves to a hushed close.

II. *Andante con moto*—The ensemble presents the hushed introduction of the slow-tempo movement's central theme—derived from Schubert's 1817 song, "Death and the Maiden," and in the spirit of a funeral march. This theme serves as the basis for a series of five variations, finally leading to the movement's peaceful conclusion.

I lygeri tzi o haros ("Beauty and death")
(Traditional, from Cyprus)

🕒 Approximate performance time is 4 minutes.

📅 SMF performance history: SMF premiere

San ta marmara tis polis ("Like the marbles of Istanbul") (Traditional Greek song from Istanbul)

🕒 Approximate performance time is 4 minutes.

📅 SMF performance history: SMF premiere

Hira ("Widow") (Traditional Greek song from Izmir)

🕒 Approximate performance time is 4 minutes.

📅 SMF performance history: SMF premiere

Olmaz ("Impossible") (Traditional, from Greece, Turkey)

🕒 Approximate performance time is 4 minutes.

📅 SMF performance history: SMF premiere

Violin Sonata in G minor, B.g5, "The Devil's Trill" (ca. 1740)

Giuseppe Tartini was born in Pirano, Italy, on April 8, 1692, and died in Padua, Italy, on February 26, 1770.

🕒 Approximate performance time is 14 minutes.

📅 SMF performance history: SMF premiere

Giuseppe Tartini was one of 18th century Italy's foremost musicians, celebrated for his achievement as a virtuoso violinist, composer, and teacher. Tartini composed more than 400 works, one of the most famous of which is his Violin Sonata in G minor, "The Devil's Trill." In his book *Voyage d'un François en Italie* (A Frenchman's Journey to Italy), astronomer Jérôme Lalande related Tartini's narrative of the Sonata's origin:

One night, in 1713, I had a dream in which I made a pact, and the devil was at my service: all went as I desired, my wishes were always anticipated, and my longings always surpassed by the services of my new domestic. I dreamed that I gave him my violin to see if he could manage to play me beautiful songs: but imagine my astonishment, when I heard a sonata so remarkable and beautiful, executed with such superiority and intelligence, that I could not even conceive of anything that could be its equal! I felt so much surprise, delight, pleasure, that I lost my breath: I was awakened by a violent sensation; I immediately took my violin in hand, hoping to rediscover some of what I had just heard; but it was in vain: the piece I composed was, in truth, the best I had ever done, and I named it *The Devil's Sonata*; but it's so far beneath what had originally stunned me, and I would have smashed my violin and abandoned music forever, if it had been possible to deprive myself of the joys it gives me.

Many scholars believe that the work's characteristics suggest Tartini may not have completed the Sonata until around 1740. It was first published in 1799 by Jean-Baptiste Cartier, as part of a collection titled *L'Art du Violon* (*The Art of the Violin*). In that publication, the score is preceded by the following: "A Sonata by Tartini that his school named 'The Devil's Trill,' after the Maestro's dream, in which he said he saw the devil, at the foot of his bed, execute a trill, written in a portion of the finale of this Sonata." The work is in three movements. The slow-tempo first movement (*Larghetto affettuososo*), lyrical and featuring double stops, leads to a vibrant *Allegro*. The finale (noted as "the author's dream" in the Cartier publication) alternates slow and quick tempo episodes. The "Devil's Trill" makes its

brilliant and hypnotic appearance, leading to the emphatic closing bars.

Malka Moma ("Young girl") (Traditional, Bulgaria)

🕒 Approximate performance time is 3 minutes.

📅 SMF performance history: SMF premiere

Vrisi mou Petrokamari ("My stone-arched fountain") (Traditional, from Macedonia, Greece)

🕒 Approximate performance time is 4 minutes.

📅 SMF performance history: SMF premiere

Horo Yove ("Yove dance") (Traditional, from Bulgaria)

🕒 Approximate performance time is 3 minutes.

📅 SMF performance history: SMF premiere