10-6-2013

Shanghai Quartet with Miró Quartet

Office of Arts + Cultural Programming

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No food or drink is permitted in the theater. The taking of photographs or videos and the use of recording equipment are not permitted.

In consideration of both audience and performers, please turn off all electronic devices.

The program for Alexander Kasser Theater on Sunday, October 6, 2013 / 3:00pm is as follows:

**Museon Polemos**

1. Prologue: Introduction of the Rival Teams
2. The Challenge: Introduction and Barcarolle
3. The Battle—Epilogue

**Octet in E-Flat Major, op. 20**

- Allegro moderato ma con fuoco
- Andante
- Scherzo: Allegro leggierissimo
- Presto

Dan Welcher's Museon Polemos for double quartet was commissioned by Texas Performing Arts, made possible by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. It was premiered by the Shanghai and Miró Quarters at The University of Texas at Austin on September 28, 2012.

Duration: 1 hour 30 minutes, including one 15-minute intermission.

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**Shanghai Quartet with Miró Quartet**

**Sunday, October 6, 2013 / 3:00pm**

**Alexander Kasser Theater**
Nobis Pacem

this fast-and-furious fun, though, and it leaves us in the dust, unable to move. Gradually, though, we do move... and
decides to strut his stuff with a big cadenza. This happens twice, until it appears that Quartet B will win the day,
the floor to the other.

Each quartet are preceded by swirling introductory music, with a sort of “your turn” feeling, as one quartet cedes
connected short sections, about a minute each—just long enough to get one set of dancers into the wings while
Quartet A are different from the materials used for Quartet B.

Nonetheless. Each quartet is a “tribe,” or a “gang,” with its own sonic identity and its own way of acting and
timing that those pieces have. I concocted a scenario in which Quartet A is one “tribe” and Quartet B is another.

Phase one is a 25-minute ballet without dancers—but with two rival dance teams. When I say
“ballet,” I’m thinking of the classic Balanchine/Stravinsky works of the 30s and 40s, like Orpheus and Jour de
Carême. These pieces don’t exactly tell a story, they imply one, with the wonderful flexibility of mood, speed, and
timing that those pieces have. I concocted a scenario in which Quartet A is “tribe” and Quartet B is elusional.
They don’t all sit together but are separated on the stage, facing each other on a half-angle to the audience.

The piece is in three big sections. It’s completely abstract, in that there is no real “story,” but it has a scenario
nonethless. Each quartet is a “tribe,” or a “gang,” with its own sonic identity and its own way of acting and
acting, Quartet A is Agrippina and Quartet B is Dionysus. The former is cool, well
disciplined, thoughtful, “neoclassic,” whereas the latter is bolder —hedonistic, swaggering, governed
by the senses. Each of the two quartets has its own musical language: the various chords and scales that are used for
Quartet A are different from the materials used for Quartet B.

Part 1 introduces the players, first as separate quartets and then with individual solos. It consists of many
connected short sections, each minute—just long enough to get one set of dancers into the wings while
the next set ships on, although it begins and ends with both quartets in full sail. The individual “shoe-” solos for each quartet are preceded by swirling introductory music, with a sort of “your turn” feeling, as one quartet owes
the floor to the other.

Part 2 is a “challenge” a standoff between the quartets. Quartet A plays choral music, but Quartet B’s violinist
decides to strip his soloist of that stuff with a big cadenza. This happens twice, until it appears Hall Quartet B will win the day,
but then Quartet A begins a slow, barcarolle-like motion that is emotionally contained but nonetheless very
exhilarating. Within a minute or two, all eight musicians are rocking back on that board, and after the climax (actually quite
romantic), the groups re-separate and leave the way they came: separate, but equal.

Part 3 is the actual fight—a sort of “rumble” of the quartets. The gangs take turns being the aggressor, and a hint of the choppy chords of “Dame dos adolescentes” from Le Sacre du Printemps appears. The music is as fast a
tantrum with side trips, and both groups feisty trade material throughout. There is a tragic high point to this
tale-and-furious fun, though, and it leaves us in the dust, unable to move. Gradually, though, we do move... and
a song begins, rising slowly from the depths with a cantor fumaris of Gregorian chant soundings in the voices, over
and over. The source tune quoted here is the original fourth-century music for the Latin Mass to the words Dios
Alfonsa Facem. The piece ends with a frame of the very beginning: the two gangs known and respect each other now,
and although they may never completely reconcile, there is harmony between them.

The dynamic Miro Quartet, one of America’s highest-profile chamber groups, enjoys its place at the top of the international chamber scene. For twenty-five years, the ensemble—formed in the 1980s—has evolved into one of the world’s finest chamber ensembles. They have been highly decorated: between 1992 and 2012, they received 35 major prizes, with 24 awards from the world’s major competitions. The Miro Quartet is the only American string quartet to have won the Jessye Montgomery Award (1987), the Grammy Award (1999), and the Avery Fisher Award (2010). They have appeared at Carnegie Hall, as well as a performance at the Library of Congress, to commemorate the bicentennial of the United States. The Miro Quartet is also a favorite of many leading American and European string quartet competitions. They have performed in Boston, Chicago, Denver, Los Angeles, and Fort Worth. The Miro Quartet has also appeared in the United States, the United Kingdom, Ireland, and throughout Europe. The Miro Quartet has performed with the Berlin, Vienna, and London Philharmonic orchestras, as well as the American Symphony Orchestra. Their performances have been heard on national television in the United States and Europe, and are broadcast on more than 300 radio stations worldwide.

The Miro Quartet has recorded over 60 albums for various labels, including Sony Classical, Deutsche Grammophon, and Erato. Their recordings have received numerous awards, including three Grammy Awards and the Avery Fisher Award. The Miro Quartet has also been honored with the Kennedy Center Honors and the National Medal of Arts. The Miro Quartet is the recipient of the 2012 Grammy Award for Best Chamber Music.

The Miro Quartet is named for the Spanish artist Joan Miro, whose surrealistic works—subject matter drawn from the realm of memory and imaginary fantasy—are some of the most successful of the last century. The Miro Quartet has recorded over 60 albums for various labels, including Sony Classical, Deutsche Grammophon, and Erato. Their recordings have received numerous awards, including three Grammy Awards and the Avery Fisher Award. The Miro Quartet has also been honored with the Kennedy Center Honors and the National Medal of Arts. The Miro Quartet is the recipient of the 2012 Grammy Award for Best Chamber Music.

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