



LOOKING EAST

THE NASON A. HUROWITZ MEMORIAL CONCERT

April 22 | Fitchburg Art Museum & April 24 | JMAC BrickBox Theatre

Program

Trio for Flute, Viola, and Cello

György Kósa
(1897-1984)

1. Andante, molto misurato
2. Larghetto
3. Allegro
4. Andantino

KRAUS, SULSKI, FALK

String Quartet No. 1 in G minor, op. 27

Edvard Grieg
(1893-1918)

1. Un poco Andante – Allegro molto ed agitato
2. Romanze
3. Intermezzo
4. Lento – Presto al Saltarello

BUCKLAND REISNER, GREGORY, BERGER, GORDON

-----INTERMISSION-----

Piano Quintet No. 1

Grażyna Bacewicz
(1909-1969)

1. Moderato molto espressivo
2. Presto
3. Grave
4. Con passione

BUCKLAND REISNER, GREGORY, SULSKI, GORDON, HODGKINSON

Funded in part by grants from the Fitchburg and West Boylston Cultural Councils, local agencies funded by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

WCMS Musicians

Tracy Kraus, flute • Krista Buckland Reisner, violin 1
Rohan Gregory, violin 2 • Mark Berger, viola • Peter Sulski, viola
Ariana Falk, cello • Joshua Gordon, cello
Randall Hodgkinson, piano

PROGRAM NOTES

György Kósa (1897-1984)

Trio for Flute, Viola, and Cello (1946)

György Kósa was one of the major figures in 20th-century Hungarian music. Born in Budapest, he studied in that city's Academy of Music with Belá Bartók, Zóltan Kodály, and Ernő von Dohnanyi, later spending much of his professional life as a piano professor at the same institution. Given such a pedigree, it's unsurprising that many of Kósa's compositions reflected the day's prevailing interests in Eastern European folk music. That's certainly true of this four-movement Trio for Flute, Viola, and Cello, which was completed shortly after the composer's liberation as a slave laborer during World War II.

The opening *Andante* begins genially, with strumming strings accompanying a halting flute melody. Gradually, all three instruments come together and engage in a series of spirited dialogues. A sort of call-and-response marks the central *Larghetto*, with the flute and strings exchanging melodic fragments that build into a warmly reflective essay. Finally, the picturesque third movement dances vigorously and a concluding *Andantino fatigoso* wraps up the piece with serene, if slightly benumbed, lyricism.

Edvard Grieg (1843-1907)

String Quartet in G minor, op. 27 (1878)

By the time Edvard Grieg completed his G minor String Quartet, he was a decade removed from the triumph of his Piano Concerto in A

minor and three years out from composing his celebrated incidental music to Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*. Which is to say, Grieg was firmly established both popularly and stylistically.

Yet his Quartet has remained somewhat on the fringes of the repertoire, eclipsed by contemporaneous efforts by Tchaikovsky, Brahms, and Dvořák, among others. Perhaps that's partly because Grieg's reputation as a composer of miniatures -- mainly songs and piano pieces, like the lovely books of *Lyric Pieces* -- has overshadowed his small body of chamber music.

Regardless, the Quartet is a wonderful, invigorating piece, whose four movements channel both the composer's own music (there's a recurring theme in it that's based on his song, "Minstrels") and his love of Nordic folk music. Throughout, the writing is highly involved technically and expressively: nary a moment goes by that isn't of some sort of rhythmic, textural, or melodic interest.

The outer movements are tempestuous – the finale is actually based on the Italian *saltarello*, a leaping dance that originated in Medieval times. In between comes an affecting *Romanze*, whose gentle waltzing theme builds to a whirling, fervent climax, and a rollicking *Intermezzo* that evokes a rustic festival.

Grażyna Bacewicz (1909-69) **Piano Quintet No. 1 (1952)**

Alongside her contemporaries Witold Lutoslawski and Andrzej Panufnik, Grażyna Bacewicz was one of the most distinctive and important Polish composers of the 20th century. Trained as a violinist (she was concertmaster of the Polish Radio Philharmonic before World War II), Bacewicz wrote in all the major genres: symphonies, concertos, ballet – even a radio opera. She was also a prolific composer of chamber music, with seven string quartets, five violin sonatas, and assorted other pieces to her name. The Piano Quintet No. 1 dates from the middle of Bacewicz's post-War career

and showcases, with remarkable precision, her embrace of Polish folk music, keen ear for gesture, and rigorous technical chops.

Its first movement begins with a haunting introduction that's followed by a vigorous *Allegro*. The second is a spunky, hearty *oberek* (a sort of fast mazurka) while a pungent *Grave* – noble, lyrical, inexorable – functions as the Quintet's expressive heart. In the finale, a muscular opening subject and meditative second theme alternate before culminating in a heroic coda.

Program notes by Jonathan Blumhofer

In Memory of Nason A. Hurowitz



Though most people who knew Nason knew him as the owner and pharmacist of Tech Pharmacy in Worcester, he also had a lifelong interest in music, especially classical music. He came from a musically talented family and majored in music at Dartmouth College, from which he graduated prior to going to pharmacy school. He played the cello and was thrilled to have some lessons from WCMS' Ariana Falk during the last years of his life.