

THURSDAY, APRIL 3, 2014 AT 8:00PM
Richardson Auditorium in Alexander Hall

Musical Preview by Princeton pianists
Paul von Autenried '16, Darya Koltunyyuk '15 and Edward Leung '16 at 7pm

THE NASH ENSEMBLE OF LONDON

Amelia Freedman CBE, Artistic Director

Ian Brown, *Piano* • Philippa Davies, *Flute* • Richard Hosford, *Clarinet*
Stephanie Gonley, *Violin* • Laura Samuel, *Violin*
Lawrence Power, *Viola* • Rebecca Gilliver, *Cello*

Bedřich SMETANA *Overture to The Bartered Bride* for Piano,
Flute, Clarinet and String Quartet (arr. David Matthews)
BROWN, DAVIES, HOSFORD, GONLEY, SAMUEL, POWER, GILLIVER

Viet CUONG *Trains of Thought* (World Premiere)
BROWN, DAVIES, HOSFORD, GONLEY, SAMUEL, POWER, GILLIVER

Robert SCHUMANN *Märchenerzählungen* ("Fairy Tales")
for Clarinet, Viola and Piano, Op. 132
Lebhaft, nicht zu schnell
Lebhaft und sehr markiert
Ruhiges Tempo, mit zartem Ausdruck
Lebhaft, sehr markiert
HOSFORD, POWER, BROWN

— INTERMISSION —

Dmitri SHOSTAKOVICH Four Waltzes for Flute, Clarinet and Piano
Spring Waltz
Waltz-Joke
Waltz
Barrel-Organ Waltz
DAVIES, HOSFORD, BROWN

Antonín DVOŘÁK Quintet for Piano and Strings in A Major, Op. 81
Allegro, ma non tanto
Dumka: Andante con moto
Scherzo (Furiant) – molto vivace
Finale: Allegro
BROWN, GONLEY, SAMUEL, POWER, GILLIVER

*Please join us briefly following the performance for a post-concert
Talk Back moderated by Professor Dan Trueman.*

ABOUT THE NASH ENSEMBLE OF LONDON

The Nash Ensemble has built a remarkable reputation as one of Britain's finest and most adventurous chamber groups, and through the dedication of its founder and Artistic Director Amelia Freedman and the caliber of its players, has gained a similar reputation all over the world. The repertoire is vast, and the imaginative, innovative, and unusual programs are as finely crafted as the beautiful Nash terraces in London from which the group takes its name. By the end of the 2013/14 season the group will have premiered around 300 new works, of which 186 have been specially commissioned.

An impressive collection of recordings illustrates the same varied and colorful combination of classical masterpieces, little-known neglected gems and important contemporary works. Recent releases receiving critical acclaim include all the Mozart String Quintets, Russian chamber music, chamber works by Schumann and Joaquin Turina, and chamber works by Czech composers incarcerated in the Theresienstadt concentration camp between 1941 and 1945. In 2011 a David Matthews CD entitled *Winter Passions* was shortlisted for a Gramophone Award. Future releases include chamber works by Frank Bridge and Alexander Goehr. In January 2013 the Nash and the BBC Singers recorded Harrison Birtwistle's *The Moth Requiem*.

American popular music in its many guises has conquered the world, and it has also influenced many American concert composers in their search for a national or a personal style - while the USA has attracted many leading European composers to its shores. During the 2013/14 season, the Nash Ensemble explores these strands, with programs featuring Europeans in New York, Americans in Paris and the best of Hollywood and Broadway, including highlights of the late musicals of Richard Rodgers. In addition there will be guest appearances: the jazz singer Claire Martin singing American songs associated with Paris, and the acclaimed pianist Joshua Rifkin playing classic Scott Joplin rags. The Nash's annual new music showcase is both a final installment of the Ensemble's "American Series" at Wigmore Hall - including a seminal work by John Adams and three of the finest chamber works written by the great American composer Elliott Carter - and an 80th Birthday Tribute to Sir Harrison Birtwistle, with an atmospheric septet, written for the Nash in 2011, and, with the BBC Singers, a recent choral work evoking the mysterious world of moths.

The Nash tours throughout Europe and the United States. Highlights have included 3 concerts at the 92nd Street Y in New York City featuring the Theresienstadt project "Will to Create, Will to Live," performances in the Berlin Konzerthaus, Musée d'Orsay (Paris) and the Vienna Konzerthaus; at the BBC Proms and the Edinburgh International Festival; residencies at the Toronto Festival in Canada and the Lofoten Festival in Norway; a weekend of concerts, masterclasses and films at the Prague Conservatoire, featuring the music of composers incarcerated in the Terezin concentration camp between 1941-45; and concerts in Vevey, Brussels and Bologna.

The Nash Ensemble has won numerous accolades including The Edinburgh Festival Critics award "for general artistic excellence" and two Royal Philharmonic Society awards in the chamber music category "for the breadth of its taste and its immaculate performance of a wide range of music." The Nash Ensemble has had a long relationship with Princeton University Concerts and often works with students when they visit. This particular visit included work with the Graduate composer Viet Cuong, whose work was written for the Nash Ensemble and is being premiered tonight, and masterclasses with Princeton undergraduate musicians.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

By Dr. Richard E. Rodda

Overture to *The Bartered Bride*

BEDŘICH SMETANA (1824-1884)

Arranged by David Matthews (born in 1943)

Overture composed late in 1863; opera completed on March 15, 1866; arranged in 2010. Opera premiered May 30, 1866 in Prague; arrangement premiered on June 20, 2010 at Wigmore Hall in London by the Nash Ensemble.

It was Johann Herbeck, the noted Viennese conductor who introduced Schubert's long-forgotten "Unfinished" Symphony to the world in 1865, who sowed the seeds of Smetana's splendid comic opera, *The Bartered Bride*. When conductor and composer met in Weimar in 1857, Herbeck allowed that the Czechs were generally fine performers, but seemed incapable of creating their own musical works.

Incensed, Smetana returned home to Prague vowing to prove Herbeck wrong. He took an active role in Czech musical life, supporting the new National Theater founded in 1862 and completing his first opera, *The Brandenburgers in Bohemia*, a year later. He found some truth in the criticism that the opera was too Wagnerian in style, and, still not satisfied that he had disproved Herbeck's comments, he determined to create as its successor a new work more specifically Czech in style. In July 1863 he received a libretto from the writer Karl Sabina that met his requirements, and he began composing *The Bartered Bride* immediately. (Curiously, Smetana worked from a German translation of the libretto, since his Czech was not as good at the time as was his German, the language of his childhood home, his education and his early professional life.) The Overture was composed first, and the rest of the opera written during the next two years.

The Bartered Bride garnered little success at its first performance, in Prague on May 30, 1866. The day was an official holiday that also proved to be one of the hottest of the year, and most of the opera-going audience had retreated to the country. In addition, political tension between Prussia and Austria was running high (Bohemia — today part of the Czech Republic — like Hungary and Poland, was frequently a point of the contention between those aggressive neighbors), and there was little interest in a new comic opera. War broke out only two weeks after the premiere. Smetana and his family fled from Prague before the invading Prussians (his *Brandenburgers in Bohemia* had harshly criticized them), and remained away until the army withdrew at the end of the summer. Upon his return, he was made conductor of the National Theater, and resumed his vigorous work to promote Czech music. *The Bartered Bride* soon came to be recognized as the first great Czech opera, and quickly thereafter gained the popularity it had been denied at its premiere, especially after Smetana reworked the score and dramatic structure of the piece. (The original version was in two acts, had spoken dialogue, no scene changes and no dances. The work went through four extensive revisions before reaching its definitive three-act form with sung recitatives and its wonderful dances.) On May 5, 1882 it was given in Prague for the 100th time. By 1953 it had been performed in that city 2,000 times, and it remains an almost weekly adornment of the repertory of Prague's National Theater. More than simply a delightful opera, *The Bartered Bride* — and its composer — became symbols of Czech pride at home and abroad. "Smetana is more than a mere musician," according to his biographer Vladimir Helfert. "He is one of the chief builders of modern Czech civilization, one

of the chief creators of Czech culture.”

The story of *The Bartered Bride* derives from the personalities, customs and lore of the Czech countryside. The lovers Hans and Marie are prevented from marrying by her father, who has secured a more lucrative nuptial arrangement from the village matchmaker, Kezal. Kezal has engaged Marie to the half-wit Wenzel, son of the second marriage of Micha, a wealthy landowner. Hans makes sure that the marriage contract specifies Marie must wed the son of Micha, and then pockets the money that Kezal promised him for breaking his betrothal to Marie. With a plot twist worthy of Gilbert and Sullivan, Hans reveals that he is also the son of Micha — by Micha’s first marriage — and claims Marie as his wife. Wenzel, his mind unhinged at the thought of marriage, appears in a bear costume, and has to be dragged away while the couple and the villagers celebrate the upcoming wedding.

The effervescent Overture (“a grand *Allegro*” said Smetana) was written before the rest of the opera, and served as the source of themes (“leitmotifs”) later used to identify some of the work’s characters and situations. The boisterous opening melody represents the matchmaker Kezal.

The arrangement of the Overture to *The Bartered Bride* for chamber ensemble was done in 2010 for the Nash Ensemble by London-born composer, musicologist and music administrator David Matthews.

Trains of Thought

VIET CUONG (b.1990)

By Viet Cuong

My goal in writing *Trains of Thought* was to aurally bring life to the mind’s stream of consciousness. Ideas in the mind are usually interconnected through a cohesive sequence of events, but their journeys and destinations can be unpredictable. In this way, the piece deals with the listener’s expectations and often foreshadows ideas before fully realizing them. As the mind deviates from and returns to an original idea, the idea’s return is informed by its travels. References to the exciting kinetic energy of an actual locomotive can be heard as the piece travels through various sections.

Viet Cuong is currently a Naumburg and Roger Sessions Fellow in Princeton University's doctoral program. At Princeton he has studied with Steve Mackey, Donnacha Dennehy, and Paul Lansky. Viet holds Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from the Peabody Conservatory of the Johns Hopkins University, where he studied with Oscar Bettison and Pulitzer Prize-winner Kevin Puts. During the Aspen and Bowdoin Music Festivals Viet studied with composers Sydney Hodkinson, Derek Bermel, and Robert Beaser. He is among the youngest group of composers to receive artist residencies from the Atlantic Center for the Arts (under Melinda Wagner), the Ucross Foundation, and Yaddo, where he was the 2013 recipient of the David del Tredici Residency. He wants to thank the Nash Ensemble and Michael Pratt for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

***Märchenerzählungen* (“Fairy Tales”), Op. 132**

ROBERT SCHUMANN (1810-1856)

Composed in 1853

In September 1850, the Schumanns left Dresden to take up residence in Düsseldorf, where Robert assumed the post of municipal music director. He was welcomed to the city with a serenade, a concert of his works, a supper and a ball. Though he had been cautioned a few years before by his late friend Felix Mendelssohn that the local musicians were a shoddy bunch, he was eager to take on the variety of duties that awaited him in the Rhenish city, including conducting the orchestra's subscription concerts, leading performances of church music, giving private music lessons, organizing a chamber music society, and composing as time allowed. Mendelssohn's advice notwithstanding, Schumann found the players acceptable and plunged into his work with energy and enthusiasm. Surprisingly, this busy, new situation had a salutary effect on his creative work, and within months, he had composed the Scenes from Goethe's *Faust*, an Overture to Schiller's *The Bride of Messina*, many songs and choral works, a large cache of chamber and piano pieces, the “Rhenish” Symphony (inspired by a trip upstream on September 29th to Cologne's awesome cathedral) and the Cello Concerto, started an oratorio on the subject of Martin Luther (never finished), and revised his D Minor Symphony of 1841 as the Symphony No. 4.

Despite Schumann's promising entry into the musical life of Düsseldorf, it was

not long before things turned sour. His fragile mental health, his ineptitude as a conductor and his frequent irritability created a rift with the musicians, and the orchestra's governing body presented him with the suggestion that, perhaps, his time would be better devoted entirely to composition. Schumann, increasingly unstable though at first determined to stay, complained to his wife, Clara, that he was being cruelly treated. Proceedings were begun by the orchestra committee to relieve him of his position, but his resignation in November 1853 ended the matter. By early the next year, Schumann's reason had completely given way, and on February 27th, he tried to drown himself in the Rhine. A week later he was committed to an asylum in Endenich, near Bonn, where he lingered with fleeting moments of sanity for nearly two-and-a-half years. His faithful Clara was there with him when he died on July 29, 1856, at the age of 46.

Among those friends who helped ease Schumann through the troubled Düsseldorf days of 1853 were two gifted young musicians: Albert Dietrich, 24, who had settled in the city in 1851 after completing studies in piano and composition in Dresden and Leipzig; and a pianist and aspiring composer from Hamburg named Johannes Brahms, 21, who presented his letter of introduction from the celebrated violinist Joseph Joachim to the Schumanns on the last day of September 1853. The friendship and mutual admiration that developed immediately among Dietrich, Brahms and Schumann ("here is one who comes as if sent straight from God," Clara recorded of Brahms in her diary) proved to be a creative stimulus to them all, and they collaborated on a violin sonata for Joachim's stop in Düsseldorf at the end of October to premiere Schumann's Fantasy for Violin and Orchestra (Op. 131) — they dubbed the project the "F.A.E." Sonata, after the phrase that Joachim had taken as his motto: *Frei aber einsam* ("Free but alone"). Between October 9th and 11th, Schumann composed his own set of four pieces for the darkly hued combination of clarinet, viola and piano that he titled *Märchenerzählungen* — "Fairy Tale Stories." When the *Märchenerzählungen* was published by Breitkopf und Härtel the following February, Schumann sent a copy of the score to Dietrich with the following inscription: "To Albert Dietrich/in lasting memory/Düsseldorf, 20 February 1854/(on a good day)." Seven days later Schumann tried to commit suicide by jumping half-clothed into the River Rhine.

Though Schumann, a voracious reader from childhood (his father ran a book store), knew well fantasy tales from Grimm, Andersen, Novalis, Hoffmann and

other legendary and literary sources (he loved to read them to his own children), the *Märchenerzählungen* do not attempt to depict any specific stories. They are really chamber character pieces, a genre at which Schumann had excelled since his earliest piano works, meant to evoke mood and release the imagination to conjure its own fantasies. "They are predominantly cheerful pieces, written with a light heart," Schumann explained to Breitkopf und Härtel when he submitted his manuscript for publication, very different in technique and effect from the somber colors, plangent lyricism and rhythmic dislocations of the *Märchenbilder* ("Pictures from Fairy Land") that he had written for viola and piano two years earlier. The first, second and fourth of the *Märchenerzählungen*, arranged in simple, three-part forms (A–B–A) with few shadows cast across their harmonies and straightforward, even often march-like, rhythms, have an almost child-like naïveté. (Schumann had written three *Kindersonaten* — "Children's Sonatas" — the previous June and a collection of piano duets for children titled *Kinderball* in September.) Only in the third movement is there the sort of dreamy thoughtfulness that suggests an adult's recollection of childhood, a lyrical remembrance of the awakening feelings of youth.

Four Waltzes

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH (1906-1975)

Shostakovich earned his enduring international reputation with his symphonies, concertos, operas and chamber works, but throughout his life he also composed in the more popular idioms — film scores, incidental music, ballets, jingoistic anthems — that were not only officially encouraged by the Soviets but in which he also firmly believed. "I consider that every artist who isolates himself from the world is doomed," he maintained. "I find it incredible that an artist should wish to shut himself away from the people." He composed incidental music for no fewer than thirteen theatrical productions in Moscow and Leningrad and contributed scores to some three-dozen films, and during the 1950s and 1960s excerpts from several of them were arranged into concert works — including the Four Waltzes for Flute/Piccolo, Clarinet and Piano — by his friend Levon Atovmyan (1901-1973), a composer, one-time musical assistant to the famed Russian director Vsevolod Meyerhold (who was arrested in 1939 and executed the following year for his non-conformist productions), and administrator in various composers' and music

associations.

Spring Waltz derives from director Alexander Dovzhenko's 1949 film *Michurin*, about the Russian botanist and geneticist Ivan Vladimirovich Michurin (1855-1935), whose theories were adopted by the Soviets to improve agricultural production. *Waltz-Joke* comes from Shostakovich's 1933 ballet *The Bolt*, about a worker fired from his job for drunkenness who schemes to ruin a lathe by inserting a bolt into the machinery; he is stopped by guards just in time. The third movement, titled simply *Waltz*, was written for the film *Maxim's Return* (1937), the second part of a trilogy about the rise of a Soviet "everyman" who begins his political indoctrination in prison in 1910, returns as a Bolshevik agent in 1914, and is appointed head of the National Bank after the Revolution. The film's director was Grigori Kozintsev, with whom Shostakovich collaborated on a dozen movies between 1928 and 1971, including screen adaptations of *Hamlet* and *King Lear*. The concluding *Barrel-Organ Waltz* is taken from the music for the film *The Gadfly* (1955), based on a novel by the late-19th-century English writer Ethel L. Voynich set in 1840 in Austrian-occupied Italy. The "Gadfly" is a revolutionary leader, so called because his "sting" had become legend.

Quintet for Piano and Strings in A Major, Op. 81

ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK (1841-1904)

Composed in 1887; Premiered on January 6, 1888 in Prague

By the time that Dvořák undertook his Piano Quintet in A Major in 1887, when he was nearing the age of fifty, he had risen from his humble and nearly impoverished beginnings to become one of the most respected musicians in his native Bohemia and throughout Europe and America. His set of *Slavonic Dances* of 1878 (Op. 46) was one of the most financially successful music publications of the 19th century, and the work's publisher, Fritz Simrock of Berlin, convinced Dvořák to add a sequel to it in July 1886 with the *Slavonic Dances*, Op. 72. (Dvořák received almost ten times the payment for Op. 72 as he had for the earlier set.) Simrock also saw the possibility of financial gain on the chamber music front at that time, and he encouraged Dvořák to compose a piece for piano and strings. To meet Simrock's request, in the spring of 1887 Dvořák dusted off a Piano Quintet in A Major he had composed in 1872 but filed away after its premiere as a failure. His attempts

at revision proved futile, however, so he decided to compose a completely new Quintet in the same key, which he did between August 18th and October 8th at his recently acquired country summer home at Vysoká. The composition was enthusiastically received at its premiere, in Prague on January 6, 1888, and quickly became a favorite of chamber players throughout northern Europe and Britain.

Dvořák's range of expression, melodic invention and skill at motivic elaboration are abundantly evident in the Piano Quintet's opening movement. The cello presents a lovely melody, almost folkish in its simple phrasing and touching directness, as the main theme. This motive progresses through a number of transformations before the viola introduces the subsidiary theme, a plaintive tune built from a succession of short, gently arching phrases. The main theme, rendered into the melancholy key of the viola's melody, returns to close the exposition. Both themes are treated in the expansive development section. A full recapitulation and a vigorous coda round out the movement.

The *Dumka* was a traditional Slavic (especially Ukrainian) folk ballad of meditative character often describing heroic deeds. As was typical of the folk form, the *Dumka* that occupies the Quintet's second movement uses the slow, thoughtful strain of the opening as a returning refrain to separate episodes of varying characters. The movement may be diagrammed according to a symmetrical plan: A-B-A-C-A-B-A. The "B" section, quick in tempo and bright in mood, is led by the violin before being taken over by the piano. "C" is a fast, dancing version of the main *Dumka* theme given in imitation.

Though the *Scherzo* bears the subtitle *Furiant*, the movement sounds more like a quick waltz than like the fiery, cross-rhythm dance of Bohemian origin. The central trio is occupied by a quiet, lilting metamorphosis of the *Scherzo* theme.

The *Finale*, woven from formal elements of sonata and rondo, abounds with the high spirits and exuberant energy of a Czech folk dance. The playful main theme is introduced by the violin after a few introductory measures; contrasting material offers brief periods of repose. The development section includes a fugal working-out of the principal theme. A quiet, hymnal passage in the coda provides a foil for the joyous dash to the end of this masterwork of Dvořák's maturity.