



## Lysander Trio – September 19, 2021

### *D'un matin de printemps* (A Spring Morning)

Lili Boulanger  
1893-1918

The younger sister of famed teacher, conductor and composer Nadia Boulanger, Lili (Marie-Juliette Olga) Boulanger was one of the most innovative composers of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Unfortunately, a chronic illness cut her career short at age 24.

Boulanger was the first woman to win the coveted *Prix de Rome* at age nineteen. Her songs and choral works, especially her three Psalm settings and *Pie Jesu* were widely admired and performed.

Boulanger composed *D'un matin de printemps* in 1917-18, first for violin and piano, and then for orchestra. It was the last composition she completed, composed when she was near death. Its cheerful and lively mood contrasts with her grim personal situation. It has since been arranged for many instrumental configurations.

### **Piano Trio**

Brian Raphael Nabors  
b. 1991

Born in Birmingham, AL, Brian Nabors describes himself as the beneficiary of a charming Southern upbringing, which exposed him to many deep-rooted musical ideals, many of which are rooted in spirituality; one of the main principles that inspires his music. He received a Doctor of Musical Arts and Master of Music degree in Composition at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. He spent 2020 as a recipient of a Fulbright scholarship at the Conservatorium of Music in Sydney, Australia.

Nabors composed the Piano Trio in 2019. He writes: "Of all of my chamber works, this piece has been one the most fun to compose! The piece has a very unique take on form because of its narrative. It is in three movements: I. Hyde to Jekyll, II. A Day in the Life, III. Jekyll to Hyde.

"If you're familiar with the story of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, you'll remember the intense battle Dr. Jekyll has with controlling his inner evil personality, Mr. Hyde. Over the course of the story Dr. Jekyll attempts to suppress the evil persona with potions until Mr. Hyde gets so out of hand that he has to take his own life to stop Mr. Hyde's murderous rampage.

"Each movement of the piece is crafted in a way where a good battles evil. The first movement goes from Mr. Hyde's chaotic persona to Dr. Jekyll's sweet nature. The second movement is a blues in which both personalities constantly fight each other for control. This idea manifests itself with rapid chaotic interruptions in the same way that Mr. Hyde would interrupt Dr. Jekyll's daily life in the story. The third movement is an inverse of the first with

a variation of Dr. Jekyll's theme slowly being taken over by Mr. Hyde, who ultimately seizes complete control through to the end."

**Piano Trio No.1 in B-flat major, D. 898**

Franz Schubert  
1797-1828

Franz Schubert's pace of composition in the last year of his life was phenomenal. Beginning in October 1827, he composed a series of major works that include three huge Piano Sonatas D.958-960, two Masses, the Four Impromptus D. 935, the Three Piano Pieces D. 946, the C Major String Quintet, many *Lieder* and the two Piano Trios D. 898 and 929. These show the richness and diversity of Schubert's musical powers during his final year. They are all long and complex compositions, the chamber works written in the four-movement grand sonata style of Beethoven, Schubert's idol.

The first of these to be finished was probably the Piano Trio in B-flat, D. 898. In spite of his large output of chamber music, Schubert had not touched the medium of the piano trio since the age of 15, when he composed a single movement work (D.28) that he called "Sonata." Why he suddenly returned to the medium is not known. The Trio received a private performance in January 1828 at the engagement party for Schubert's boyhood friend, Joseph Spaun. It was published by Diabelli in 1836, eight years after the composer's death, as Op. 99.

The Trio demonstrates that Schubert's output is not necessarily a reflection of his mental state. He started work on this bright and ebullient work at the same time he was finishing the last of the *Winterreise* songs, probably his darkest creation. He had lived for over four years with syphilis, and the disease – at that time considered a death sentence – took randomly different courses with its victims. However, during the course of 1827 Schubert's symptoms from secondary syphilis, especially recurring severe headaches, became progressively worse, although there was no evidence at this time that he was approaching the end of his life. As his friend Spaun commented in October 1827, "From then on he was a sick man, although his condition gave no cause for anxiety."

Robert Schumann wrote of the B-flat Trio "One glance at it, and the troubles of our human existence disappear and the whole world is fresh and bright again." The work presents no particularly unusual features or complexities. There is, in fact, a kind of resolute quality in the first movement, with its pounding repeated chords in the piano accompaniment, taken up again in the Scherzo and in the second theme group of the Finale. The second movement, *Andante con moto*, is a gentle lullaby, were it not for the contrast of the more anguished middle section. In the last movement are echoes of Vienna's popular music at the time.

Late in 1827 Schubert composed an Adagio in E-flat for piano trio, D. 897, that is commonly assumed to be a discarded slow movement for the Piano Trio in B-flat. It was also published by Diabelli in 1845 as Op. 148, and given the title "Notturmo."

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