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Sunday, October 19th, 2003 ▪ 4:00 pm  
Montgomery Place  
5550 South Shore Drive  
Chicago, IL.

*Mostly Music at NEIU* presents

## *The Merling Trio*

Renata Artman Knific, violin  
Bruce Uchimura, cello  
Susan Wiersma Uchimura, piano

### Program

Piano Trio in c minor, Hob. XV:13 Haydn  
Andante  
Allegro spiritoso

De Las Cuatro Estaciones Portenas Piazzolla  
Verano porteno  
Otono porteno  
Invierno porteno  
Primavera porteno

### Intermission

Trio in D minor, Op. 32 Arensky  
Allegro moderato  
Scherzo: Allegro molto; Meno mosso  
Elegia: Adagio  
Finale: Allegro non troppo



## The Merling Trio

Renata Artman Knific, violin

Bruce Uchimura, cello

Susan Wiersma Uchimura, piano

The Merling Trio was founded in 1988, and quickly established itself as a premiere ensemble. A truly International trio, it brings together musicians from Polish, Japanese, and Dutch backgrounds. The Merling Trio has been hailed as a brilliantly distinguished group endowed with remarkable gifts of communication, magnificent precision, and an impeccable blend of sound. The trio made its New York debut in Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall in 1993, and was named a finalist for the Naumburg Foundation Chamber Music Award in 1994. They have coached with Bonnie Hampton, Ruth Laredo, Martin Canin, Joyce Robbins, Joel Krosnik, and Anne Epperson.

The Merling Trio has given numerous recitals throughout Canada and the United States. Members of the Trio have performed with orchestras such as the English Chamber Orchestra, the Honolulu Symphony, the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, the Concerto Soloist of Philadelphia, and the South Carolina Philharmonic, under the baton of such notable conductors as Daniel Barenboim, Simon Rattle, and Christoph Eschenbach. Recent trio performances include concerts at New York's Merkin Hall and at Gartner Auditorium at the Cleveland Museum of Art as well as three performances of the Beethoven Triple Concerto with the Grand Rapids (MI) Symphony.

Several contemporary composers have written works for the Merling Trio, and in 1993, they commissioned and premiered C. Curtis-Smith's *Second Piano Trio*. In February 1998, the trio returned to Carnegie Hall for a sold-out performance of a new work by New York composer Terry Winter-Owens commissioned by The Merling Trio with a Commissioning Grant from the American Composers Forum. In 2003, the trio premiered a new work by jazz great Frank Proto for piano trio with jazz bass at St. John's Smith Square in London, England. Performances by The Merling Trio have been broadcast widely on television and radio, including WNYC and Peachstate Public Radio. Their first CD, entitled "The Merling Trio performs works of C. Curtis-Smith," was released in 1995 by Albany Records, in collaboration with conductor Dennis Russell Davies. About the CD, *Fanfare* wrote, "The composer could not ask for better interpreters." The trio's latest CD, including works by Haydn, Mozart, Brahms, Schumann, and Liszt, was released by Pamplin Records in 2001.

In residence at the School of Music at Western Michigan University, members of the trio are also faculty members at the ENCORE School for Strings, and at the Lancut Festival in Poland. Festival appearances include the Banff Centre for the Arts, the Pensacola Summer Music Festival, the Skaneateles Festival, the Saugatuck Chamber Music Festival, and the Fontana Festival of Art and Music. Recent educational activities include performances and master classes for the California Music Teachers Association and Music Teachers National Association.

## About the artists

A native of Warsaw, Poland, violinist RENATA ARTMAN KNIFIC earned undergraduate academic and violin diplomas with honors from the K. Szymanowski Liceum in Warsaw, a post-graduate diploma in violin performance from the Royal College of Music in London, England, and an Artist Diploma in Violin from the Cleveland Institute of Music. Her major teachers have been David Cerone and Tessa Robbins. She has also studied chamber music with Josef Gingold, Mischa Schneider, and the Guarneri Quartet.

Ms. Knific has performed in Great Britain with the English Chamber Orchestra and the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra. Her tenure with the former includes extensive tours throughout Europe and the United States, South America, and Asia, as well as recordings on EMI, Decca, and CBS labels; and performances with Herman Bauman, Barry Tuckwell, Jean-Pierre Rampal, Maurice Andre, Pinchas Zukerman, Itzhak Perlman, Isaac Stern, Shlomo Mintz, Salvatore Accardo, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Vladimir Spivakov, Richard Stoltzman, and George Malcolm. She has worked under such notable conductors as Daniel Barenboim, Simon Rattle, Edo De Waart, and Christoph Eschenbach. In this country she has performed with the Concerto Soloists of Philadelphia, the Santa Fe Opera Orchestra, the Ohio Chamber Orchestra, the Cleveland Opera Orchestra, and the Cleveland Ballet Orchestra. She has served as concertmaster of the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra and of the Northwood Festival Orchestra. She is currently a Professor of Music at Western Michigan University where she performs with the Merling Trio, teaches violin, and coaches chamber ensembles. Formerly she taught at the Interlochen Arts Academy, the ENCORE School for Strings, the Cleveland Institute of Music, and the Lancut Festival in Poland.

Ms. Knific has also performed extensively as a soloist and chamber musician. Her U.S. recitals include the premier performance of *Fantasy Pieces* by C. Curtis-Smith at Town Hall in New York City, as well as appearances in Ann Arbor, Iowa City, Detroit, Chicago, and Cleveland. Her recitals abroad have been featured in England, in Scotland at the Edinburgh Festival, and on BBC Scotland Radio and Hong Kong Radio. As a chamber musician she has been first violinist of the Interlochen String Quartet and the Merling String Quartet, and has appeared on the Severance Hall Chamber Music Concerts with members of the Cleveland Orchestra, and the Cleveland Institute of Music Concert Series.

BRUCE UCHIMURA earned the Bachelor of Music degree from the Juilliard School of Music where he studied cello with Leonard Rose and Channing Robbins, and chamber music with Felix Galimir and the Juilliard String Quartet. He earned the Master of Music degree with an Artist Diploma in Cello from the Cleveland Institute of Music, where he studied cello with Alan Harris and chamber music with Koichiro Harada and Bernhard Goldschmidt. He has also studied at the Aspen Music Festival, the Meadowmount School of Music, and the Banff School of Fine Arts, and has held an orchestral fellowship at the Spoleto Festival in Italy.



Mr. Uchimura has performed with the Charleston Symphony, the Honolulu Symphony, the Grand Rapids Symphony, the South Carolina Philharmonic, and the Macon (Georgia) Symphony. He served as Principal Cellist of the Augusta (Georgia) Symphony, and was the first person ever to be named Associate Conductor of that ensemble. In that capacity he created and developed a highly successful Symphonic Pops and Youth Concert Series. He has also been Principal Cellist of the Greater Lansing Symphony, the Kalamazoo Symphony, the Battle Creek Symphony, and the Spoleto Festival Orchestra. His activities as a chamber musician include membership in the Augusta Symphony String Quartet and appearances in numerous recitals throughout the U.S. with the Seraphin String Quartet.

Mr. Uchimura is Professor of Music at Western Michigan University, where he performs with the Merling Trio, conducts the University Symphony Orchestra, teaches cello, and coaches chamber ensembles. He taught previously at the Augusta College Center for Creative Arts, the Augusta Country Day School, Michigan State University, the Cleveland Institute of Music, and Calvin College. He is also a faculty member at the ENCORE School for Strings in Cleveland, where he serves as coordinator of chamber music and instructor of cello.

Mr. Uchimura has served on the Georgia Council for the Arts Advisory Panel for artist-initiated grants. In addition, he has adjudicated major string competitions throughout the U.S., including the Illinois Young Artist Competition and the Michigan ASTA Concerto Competition. He is president of the Michiana Cello Society, is affiliated with ASTA and MTNA, and is a member of Pi Kappa Lambda, the national music honor society.

Pianist SUSAN WIERSMA UCHIMURA earned bachelor of music degrees in theory and piano from the Cleveland Institute of Music, where she studied piano with Jack Radunsky and Eunice Podis, and chamber music with Alan Harris and Anne Epperson. She earned the master of music degree in pedagogy from the University of South Carolina, where she studied with Max Camp and Charles Fugo. She has also studied at the Banff Centre School of Fine Arts, at the Aspen Music School with Edith Oppens, and in New York with Dorothy Taubman and Edna Golandsky. She has performed with the CIM Symphony, the Augusta Symphony, the Western String Chamber Orchestra, the Capriccio Chamber Orchestra, the Grand Rapids Youth Symphony, the Grand Rapids Symphony, the Kalamazoo Symphony, and the Battle Creek Symphony.

Ms. Wiersma Uchimura is currently Resident Artist with the Merling Trio at Western Michigan University's School of Music, where she is also staff accompanist. Previously, she served on the piano faculties of the Cleveland Institute of Music Preparatory Division and the Augusta College Music Center in Georgia, and the accompanying faculties of the Meadowmount School of Music and the Aspen Music School.

Ms. Wiersma Uchimura performs regularly with major young artists around the world. She has been resident collaborative pianist for the Julius Stulberg Young Artist Auditions, the Music Teachers National Association Wurlitzer-Collegiate Artist Competition, the ENCORE School for Strings, and the Pensacola Summer Music Festival. She has recently collaborated with virtuoso double bassist Mark Bernat, cellist Tony Ross, violist Catherine Barak, and violinists Soovin Kim, Leila Josefowicz, Tamaki Kawakubo, Jennifer Koh, and Robert Chen.

Ms. Wiersma Uchimura has been a member of the board of directors of the Michigan Music Teachers Association. She has adjudicated many major competitions, including the Illinois Young Artist Competition and the Midland Music Society Annual Music Contest, and has given numerous master classes throughout the country.



## Program Notes

### Haydn: Piano Trio in c minor, Hob. XV:13

Haydn's c minor trio is one of three composed during 1788-89. He titled these trios as written for clavier "accompanied" by violin and cello, indicating that the strings still played the traditionally subservient role to the keyboard.

Hans Christoph Wobbs writes that when Haydn delivered this trio to his publisher on March 29, 1789, he wrote a letter indicating that he had "indulged his publisher's taste" by including a variation movement, which were always popular and sold well. This movement is the first of the two in the trio. It opens with the folk-like theme in the major key, stated first by the piano. This is followed by an Allegro spiritoso movement in C major, in more-or-less traditional sonata form with multiple themes that form the basis for the musical content and are repeated in the closing section.

-Gregory Fitzgerald, Western Michigan University

### Piazzolla: De Las Cuatro Estaciones Portenas

An Argentinean of Italian descent, Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992) was a bandleader and expert player of the bandoneon (a type of accordion) as well as a composer. He was born and died in Buenos Aires, and lived also in New York and Paris. He studied classical music with Alberto Ginastera and Nadia Boulanger.

Piazzolla is best known for his "nuevo tango," or "new tango," a style based upon tango and using such musical devices as fugue, chromaticism, dissonance, and elements of jazz. This distinctive style first found acceptance in the U.S. and France, but by the 1980s was popular even in Argentina, where it initially met resistance. Most recently, classical performers, particularly the Kronos Quartet and cellist Yo-Yo Ma, have performed many of Piazzolla's works, of which there are some 750 in all. *Las Cuatro Estaciones Portenas* ("The Four Porteno Seasons" or "The Buenos Aires Seasons") originated in 1965 when Piazzolla wrote "Verano porteno" ("Summer") for a play. Piazzolla completed the work in 1970. As the title implies, his inspiration was Vivaldi's famous "Four Seasons"--hardly surprising given that all four of Piazzolla's grandparents were Italian immigrants. There are passages that sound much like Vivaldi or are borrowed from him, but overall the style and spirit is that of Piazzolla's "nuevo tango."

-Gregory Fitzgerald, Western Michigan University

### Arensky: Trio in D Minor, Op. 32

Born in Novgorod in 1861, Anton Arensky was closely associated with some of the most famous names in Russian music of his time. He studied with Rimsky-Korsakov at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. Later, as a professor of counterpoint and harmony at the Moscow Conservatory, he counted Rachmaninoff and Scriabin among his students. He died of tuberculosis in 1906.

Arensky's style of composition shows many influences, but it most resembles Tchaikovsky in its fluency and use of strong, lyrical melodies. He composed three operas and two symphonies as well as a respectable catalog of piano, vocal, and chamber music works, but he is known today for only a handful of them.

This piano trio, dating from 1894, is the best known of Arensky's large-scale works. The first movement shows the importance of melody to his style, as it is based on three distinct themes that are richly developed and are heard again with little alteration in the recapitulation. The first part of the scherzo is dominated by a virtuosic piano part; in the second section, a waltz, the strings are highlighted. A lyrical cello melody introduces the *Elegia*, which features both strings muted. The rhythmic finale recalls the principal themes of the first movement and the *Elegia*.

-Gregory Fitzgerald, Western Michigan University



**Hyde Park Series**

November 2, 2003 at 4:00 pm

*Magical Strings*

**Fry Street Quartet**

Beethoven Quartet Op. 18, No. 3, Rorem Quartet No. 4

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January 11, 2004 at 4:00 pm

*Scandalous Strings*

**Vienna Waltz Ensemble**

Location: The Quadrangle Club 1155 E. 57<sup>th</sup> Street

February 1, 2004 at 4:00 pm

*La Belle Trio*

Patrice Michaels, soprano, Lyon Leifer, flute

and Elizabeth Buccheri, piano

Location: Hyde Park residence

May 2, 2004 at 4:00 pm

*The Carl Turner Young Award Winners' Concert*

**Pianists, Christina and Michelle Naughton**, winners of the

Steinway Society of Chicago Competition

Location: Hyde Park residence

*Mostly Music at NEIU*

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