

April, 2010

Dear Friends,

Chamber Music Rochester will present the grand finale of its 33rd Season on May 2 at 7:30 PM in the Performance Hall of the David Hochstein School of Music and Dance with a gala program entitled “The Genius of Brahms”. Few composers mastered as many compositional styles as Johannes Brahms. We probably recognize him first and foremost as a symphonic composer of the highest order. However, the rest of his output, including the concerti, the solo and chamber works, and the vocal music is equally magnificent. It is no wonder that, in the quest for the heir to the mantle of the great Ludwig van Beethoven, the honor fell upon Brahms. That awesome responsibility both challenged and inspired his life’s work.

CMR contributes annually to the Scholarship Chamber Music Program at the Hochstein School. The concert will begin with a performance by a student brass quintet chosen by the school’s administration to represent this vibrant program. Our tribute to Brahms will begin with the master in a decidedly light-hearted mood. **The Hungarian Dances for Piano Four-Hands**, of which we have chosen a mixture of the familiar and the less well known, are full of good humor and gypsy flair. The **Liebesslieder Waltzes for Vocal Quartet and Piano Four-Hands, Op. 52** reveal the composer as an unabashed romantic. The sultry melodies and lush harmonies as well as the unusual scoring have made this one of Brahms’ most beloved and enduring works. The monumental **Sextet for Strings in G Major, Op. 36** is partly autobiographical, having been written during and in the aftermath of a serious love affair. This masterpiece runs the gamut of human emotions, from pensive to passionate to stormy, and even includes references to the first name of his lover, spelled out in actual pitches. There is no better way to complete our portrait of Brahms, who faced his own human failings with transcendent music.

We have assembled a stellar array of musicians to bring these challenging works to you. These include sopranos Pamela Kurau and Constance Fee, tenor Carl Johengen, baritone Derrick Smith, violinists Mikhail Kopelman and David Brickman, violists George Taylor and Michael Larco, cellists Stefan Reuss and Kathleen Murphy Kemp, and pianists Michael Landrum and Joseph Werner.

The pre-concert chat will feature lively discussion with selected performers, and a preview of next season, which should be one of the most exciting in our long history. Seating at the Hochstein School is not reserved, so please get there early for your favorite seats. There is ample parking in the lot across the street and at the Sister Cities Garage around the corner on Church Street.

We look forward to seeing you on May 2 in the Performance Hall of the Hochstein School!

Stefan Reuss and Joseph Werner, Co-Artistic Directors