

“...one of the clearest performances of Opus 133 that I have had the pleasure to experience. That clarity may owe much to the ensemble’s performing on period instruments.”

Stephen Smoliar, reviewing New Esterházy Quartet’s “A Flight of Fugues” program, January 2015

THE NEW ESTERHÁZY QUARTET

Kati Kyme, violin

Lisa Weiss, violin

Anthony Martin, viola

William Skeen, violoncello

present:

At the Opera

highlights from Mozart’s operas *The Marriage of Figaro* and *The Abduction from the Seraglio* in 18th century arrangements for string quartet

Friday, March 6, 2015, at 8pm, Hillside Club, 2286 Cedar Street (at Spruce), Berkeley, 94709 ***tickets for this Friday concert are \$20, and sold only at the door***

Saturday, March 7, 2015, at 4pm, St. Mark’s Lutheran Church, 1111 O’Farrell Street (at Franklin), San Francisco, 94109

Sunday, March 8, 2015, at 4pm, All Saints’ Episcopal Church, 555 Waverley Street (at Hamilton), Palo Alto, 94301

Tickets for Saturday & Sunday are \$25 (discounts for seniors and students)
(415) 520-0611

www.newesterhazy.org

San Francisco, February 3, 2015—**In the 18th century opera was the most popular, extravagant, and scandalous art form.** Music, drama, dance, pantomime, painting and special effects all contributed to the fascination of a public from all classes and stations of society. Those who wanted to re-live the experience at home had of course no recordings to listen to, but could purchase sheet music of the opera’s highlights for piano, piano four-hands, or various small ensembles, and play those with friends or relatives. The New Esterházy Quartet bring these period arrangements for string quartet to the concert stage, presenting highlights from Mozart’s operas *The Marriage of Figaro* and *The Abduction from the Seraglio*.

In 2013 and 2014, audiences and critics praised two similar concerts by the New Esterházy Quartet, “Grand Concert Symphonique” and “Paris Symphonies,” including arrangements for string quartet of Mozart and Haydn Symphonies and a Mozart piano concerto.

The members of the New Esterházy Quartet—violinists Kati Kyme and Lisa Weiss, violist Anthony Martin, and cellist William Skeen—often occupy the first chairs of Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and American Bach Soloists. With Haydn’s 68 quartets as their core repertoire, the New Esterházy Quartet is increasingly recognized as one of the world’s top period-instrument string quartets. The quartet has been praised for their “sumptuous sound with beautifully controlled dynamics” and recently received accolades in *Early Music America Magazine* for their *Haydn in America* CD.

From the program notes:

Before recordings existed, the way to re-live a night at the opera or symphony was simple. In the words of the last couplet of a 17th-century satirical song about Oliver Cromwell: *The saddle and bridle are laid on the shelf;
If you want any more, you must sing it yourself.*

Sing it themselves they did. Sometimes, of course, from actual vocal parts: collections of “Favorite Airs,” or the vocal scores that (then as now) were how singers learned the parts of operas and oratorios. But there was much more. Solo piano and piano-four-hands arrangements proliferated, for everything from chamber music to symphonies and overtures to operas. Four-hands was ideal in condensing a large score, because it combined a large octave range with not so much difficulty for either player, and it persisted into the 20th century, with arrangements of late Mahler, Schoenberg, early Stravinsky, and other composers of those first decades.

There were arrangements for a pair of treble instruments – flutes, violins, or (possibly) recorders – that captured the melodic essence of an aria or a symphony or a string quartet, and often little more. At the other end of extravagance, there were arrangements for *Harmonie* (wind ensemble) of the best tunes from all the latest operas.

And then there were the operatic string chamber arrangements. This was a rarefied but important branch of the trade; there weren’t that many arrangements, but they remained significant. They began more or less about the time of Mozart’s first mature operas, and continued on through much of the 19th century – through Rossini, Weber and even Verdi.

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