



Zoltán Kodály (1882-1967)
Serenade, Op. 12 (1920)

Zoltán Kodály had a many-sided career. In addition to his composing, he was a leading ethno-musicologist, working with Béla Bartók in compiling and editing more than 3,000 Hungarian folk songs. He was an educator, a music critic, and the author of numerous scholarly writings on central European folk music. And he was an internationally recognized music educator; his "Kodály method" for developing musical literacy in schoolchildren, using songs and exercises based on folk material, has been adapted to many other countries including the United States.

The Serenade, Opus 12, was for the unusual combination of two violins and viola. Apparently, Kodály had been interested in such a blending for some time since he had attempted a trio for these instruments while still a schoolboy. The Serenade is typical of Kodály's style: a blend of folk inspiration and modern harmonies, wrapped in classical form. It begins with a rousing rhythmic pattern and ends with a rambunctious, dancelike finale. These movements bracket an unusual Lento, a witty and entertaining dialogue between the viola and the first violin, carried out over the second violin's tremolo. The viola opens with a seductive, come-hither melody, which the violin answers with chirps that Kodály marks *ridando* (laughingly). For Bartók the movement was a delight: "We find ourselves in a fairy world never dreamed of before."



Henriette Renié (1875-1956)
Trio for Harp, Violin and Cello (1901)

Harpist, teacher and composer Henriette Renié was a musical prodigy who excelled in harp performance from a young age, rapidly advancing through training and receiving several prestigious awards in her youth. She is known for her many original compositions and transcriptions, as well as codifying a method for harp that is still used today. She was an

inspiring mentor to her many students, and gained prominence as a woman in an era where fame was socially unacceptable for women.

In 1810, Sébastien Érard patented a double-action mechanism that dramatically altered the trajectory of the instrument. While this invention granted the harp a newfound voice in orchestral music, it still struggled to gain ground as a solo instrument. Finding existing literature to be somewhat limited, Mlle. Renié composed significant works that showcased the harp's virtuosic abilities and unique qualities.

The Trio for Harp, Violin and Cello occupies an important place in the harp chamber repertoire, demonstrating Renié's mastery of late-Romantic idioms while advancing the role of the harp beyond its traditional function as an accompanying instrument. Throughout its four movements, this lovely work employs rich harmonic language and intricate counterpoint. As one of the earliest extended chamber works to feature the harp as an equal voice, it reflects Renié's dual legacy as a virtuoso performer and forward-thinking composer, contributing to both harp literature and broader chamber music traditions.



Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)
Piano Quintet in G Minor, Op. 57 (1940)

Shostakovich has come to be regarded as one of the most important 20th century composers. He primarily worked with traditional forms within a largely tonal harmonic vocabulary, albeit with a distinctively contemporary and personal sound. This sense of a modern voice within an unbroken traditional lineage is nowhere more apparent than with his glorious piano quintet of 1940.

Impressed with his first string quartet, the Moscow-based Beethoven quartet asked Shostakovich to write a quintet featuring Shostakovich himself at the piano. The result was an immense success earning Shostakovich the Stalin Prize and a cash award of 100,000 rubles often cited as the largest sum ever commanded by a chamber music work. An early entry in his chamber music catalog, Shostakovich's quintet is one of his most popular works destined to join the small pantheon of singular piano quintets from the likes of Schumann, Brahms and Franck.

Traditional forms and modes of expression pervade the entire quintet. The first two movements supply a massive prelude and fugue in the finest Bach-ian sense. The third movement is a fantastic scherzo and trio which dance with the wild abandon, colorful parody, and dark sarcasm so typical of Shostakovich. Less traditional is a second slow movement, a ponderous intermezzo placed between the scherzo and finale that rises to a peak of anguish then quickly fades into a relaxed, breezy tone. The finale has a march-like feel just beneath the surface,

occasionally swelling in grand gestures before a brief return of the intermezzo temporarily clouds an otherwise peaceful end.