

# JANAKI STRING TRIO

*debut*



YARLUNG RECORDS  
BOB ATTIYEH, PRODUCER

# JANAKI STRING TRIO

## debut

(track times)

1-2	Krzysztof Penderecki <i>String Trio</i>	(12:10)
	1	(7:17)
	2	(4:53)
3-6	Ludwig van Beethoven <i>String Trio in C Minor Opus 9, Nr 3</i>	(24:29)
	1 Allegro con spirito	(8:09)
	2 Adagio con espressione	(7:07)
	3 Scherzo: Allegro molto e vivace	(3:04)
	4 Finale: Presto	(6:09)
7-10	Jason Barabba <i>String Trio</i>	(14:43)
	1 Congruity Theory	(3:17)
	2 Obstinate Spaces	(3:40)
	3 Anamnesis	(2:34)
	4 Lost in Soquel	(5:12)
11	David Lefkowitz <i>Duet for Violin and Viola</i>	(4:32)
12-13	Krzysztof Penderecki <i>String Trio</i> (live performance)	(12:00)
	1	(7:22)
	2	(4:38)

Those who would bemoan the early demise of classical music — of splendid new performers arriving on the scene and avid audiences to greet them — are simply out of the loop these days. In that loop the outlook is far rosier. Young composers, rising through the ranks at schools and conservatories here and abroad, are indeed getting their music heard by sympathetic and enthusiastic audiences. More and more performing ensembles — chamber groups, small orchestras, live-plus-electronic mixes — are coming to the fore, carrying off major prizes and pulling down major dates in music centers across the map. As small but impressive positive evidence, here is this disc: performances by three splendid young string players who, as students, decided to come together as a finite ensemble, now have carried off two of chamber music's most prestigious prizes, and are devoting time and effort on this, their first recording, to music by past, established masters but also to two composers of their own time, who, like themselves, are just now pushing their way through toward public acclaim.

The three members of the Janaki Trio — violinist Serena McKinney, violist Katie Kadarauch and cellist Arnold Choi — found common cause while students at The Colburn Music School in Los Angeles, and the quality of their performances



there won first recognition in the 2005 International Coleman Foundation Award. Only a year later the Trio had moved skyward, with New York's much-coveted Concert Artists Guild Award. Now, as inevitable and delightful consequence, they are ready with the first recorded evidence of their high skills — and also, in the breadth of this program, of their awareness of the broad scope of the musical world they are now out to conquer. Their program includes one familiar masterpiece by one of music's established masters, another by a contemporary master also becoming well known, and music by two Southern California composers, still active and working their way upward.

The medium of the string trio, as compared to the more familiar quartet, is a challenging one. The texture is, naturally, sparse; instead of the lushness of two violins in harmony we concentrate on the strength of the melody, and we also concentrate on the lower voices, most of all the cello.

Beethoven's Trios — he wrote four in all — are early works, but already in the C Minor work on this disc the tread of the dramatic master is apparent. Just the opening, a dark, menacing melody that shows up again in the great Opus 131 Quartet of many years later, tells us that. C Minor was, of course, Beethoven's most dramatic tonality throughout his lifetime; even though this early trio tends to slither into happier C-major tones rather readily, the dark shadows are never completely out of earshot.

The short, two-movement String Trio of Krzysztof Penderecki dates from 1990 — later, therefore, than the time of his violent, dramatic heaven-stormers like his opera *The Devils* and the big choral works. Here is Penderecki in a conversational, almost neo-romantic mood. His instruments chat each other up during the agreeable slow movement, and then do so again at a busier pace in the second movement. This charmer of a movement begins as a fugue and gallops congenially toward its end.

After earning his Bachelor's degree in Latin American Studies at Occidental College, Los Angeles-based composer Jason Barabba studied music at the University of Chicago, the University of California, Irvine and the University of California, Los Angeles. His teachers include John Eaton, Andrew Imbrie, Christopher Dobrian and David Lefkowitz. His *DNR for Large Orchestra* was recently recorded by the Kiev Philharmonic for ERM Media's "Masterworks of the New Era" recording project, and will be released on Volume 10 of that series. His recent commissions include this Trio for Janaki and *Study in Orange* for the Orange County High School for the Arts. His Trio is in four movements. Bela Bartók looks in now and then, especially in the haunting third-movement nocturne and for some rhythmic hijinks in the finale.

David Lefkowitz, on the UCLA Faculty, is Jason's teacher and teacher as well of hundreds of young hopefuls. His *Duet for Violin and Viola* was originally written as a violin solo, premiered by Los Angeles Philharmonic violinist Mark Kaplan. Lefkowitz later dedicated it and transcribed it as this duet in memory of Danish composer Thomas Koppel (1944-2006).

— Alan Rich

### **Producer's Notes:**

Yarlung Records had the pleasure of recording Janaki String Trio's debut album in February and March, 2006. As with previous Yarlung Records albums, we used minimalist recording techniques to best capture the individual sound of these musicians, their instruments, and the natural warmth and transparency of Zipper Hall in Los Angeles. For this recording, I chose the AKG C-24 tube stereo microphone and recorded directly to two tracks through our tube microphone preamps and custom cables. We recorded analog tape, as well as high definition 24-bit PCM digital media at 176,400 samples per second. I hope you enjoy these performances and the sound.

Capturing Janaki Trio on this recording, and doing justice to the group's talent, dynamics and energy, was a challenge and a treat. The album's repertoire, from Beethoven's Trio in C Minor written the late 18th century to Barabba's *String Trio*, commissioned for Janaki in 2006, provides Serena, Katie and Arnold with rich material to showcase their ability at this time in the trio's budding international concert career.

David Lefkowitz' duet for violin and viola delves courageously into the internal world of the composer, and hence entices us as listeners toward a meditative place as we enjoy the work. Lefkowitz describes the composition's "...introspective feeling, like a dialogue with oneself." Lefkowitz writes further that the duet "...is also an exploration of a side of string writing not usually explored, from slow sustained notes to extremely high harmonics. It was originally composed in April, 1994 [and titled *Miniature VIII*]; the new arrangement here for Violin and Viola is dedicated to the Memory of Thomas Koppel, and to the members of Janaki Trio."

Thanks to my friends Barbara Vyden for introducing me to Janaki Trio and championing its cause, and to Debby Berman for her support and for her help with the live concert recording of the Penderecki Trio. Special thanks to Margie McKinney, who enabled us to record this album in Zipper Hall. I wish to dedicate this album to the memory of Lorraine Hunt Lieberson, whose magnificent voice sounded like Katie's viola, and whose musicality inspired all of us.

— Bob Attiyeh, producer

## Notes on *String Trio*, a new work by Jason Barabba

Many of my recent pieces have centered on ideas of diverse personalities in conflict. I enjoy the challenge of finding ways for these diverse elements to work together. This is certainly true of my *String Trio*.

The first movement, *Congruity Theory*, is named for a psychological concept which explains how one individual's attitude can be affected by interaction with the attitude of other individuals, how being exposed to a different perspective can cause you to reevaluate your own. In this movement, the viola introduces disjunctive ideas that must be examined and eventually absorbed by the violin and cello. The movement begins with the violin and cello sharing the same hexachord (set of six notes). When the viola enters, it utilizes the hexachord made up of the note values not in use by the violin and cello. The viola uses not only different notes, but its rhythmic and melodic figures intentionally antagonize the others. By the end of the movement all three instruments come together with something that is influenced by their earlier musical material but is completely new.

*Obstinate Spaces* takes its title from the ostinati that form the backbone of the movement. The word "ostinato" traces back to the Latin word for "stubborn" or "obstinate." In this movement the violin takes the lead, but is certainly willing to share the spotlight with the others, as long as the violin gets the last word. *Anamnesis* is a recalling to memory, in which material from the first movement is reviewed from a new, more harmonious perspective.

I chose a different approach for the fourth movement, *Lost in Soquel*. Instead of using the six-note chords of the opening movement, I divided the scale into four-note sets that shift among the individual instruments fluidly throughout the movement. The movement is the most rhythmically complex and energetic, taking advantage of the specific talents of the trio for whom I was writing. Soquel is a small town near Monterey Bay where I wrote this movement, surrounded by friends, family and redwoods.

*String Trio* was commissioned by the Janaki String Trio in 2006, and is dedicated to them (Serena, Katie and Arnold). They were prominent in my thoughts during the entire compositional process. It is a thrill to work with such talented and enthusiastic musicians.

— Jason Barabba



**Janaki String Trio** brings together three friends and virtuoso musicians whose passion and commitment captivate their audiences as they tackle their music with freshness, energy and maturity. Founded at The Colburn School of Music in Los Angeles in early 2005, the group soon won the 59th Annual Coleman Chamber Music Competition, and in March 2006, the threesome came to national attention as the first string trio ever to win the Concert Artists Guild International Competition. The Trio also garnered the inaugural BMI Foundation Commission Prize, awarded by Concert Artists Guild at the 2006 Competition.

The Janaki Trio makes its New York recital debut in Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall in January 2007. Selected to participate in Canada's Banff Music Festival in June 2006, this honor follows an exciting 2005-06 season, highlighted by performances on such series as Sundays Live at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Lagerstrom Chamber Music at Caltech, South Bay Chamber Music Society and the Music Guild Chamber Music Series.

The ensemble takes its name from the Sanskrit word *Janaki* (YAHN-uh-kye), which symbolizes self-realization, a quality Janaki Trio aims to facilitate in themselves and in their listeners through their music. Indeed, the Trio makes a unique connection with audiences, not only with the standard works of the repertory, but also with rarely heard new masterworks, such as the string trios by Penderecki and Barabba on this album. The audience's consistent enthusiasm for this adventurous programming has convinced the Trio that listeners are open to new music when it is presented in an exciting way. This has strengthened the ensemble's commitment to expand the string trio repertoire by commissioning new works from both celebrated and emerging composers. Janaki Trio commissioned Jason Barabba's *String Trio* for their upcoming concert repertoire and for this recording.

Each member of the Janaki Trio has a strong commitment to music education and has organized and performed in outreach concerts across the United States and Canada. In 2006-07, the Janaki Trio worked with the Da Camera Society in promoting music education in elementary schools, hospitals, retirement communities and other community venues throughout the Los Angeles area.

Individually, the members of the Janaki Trio have performed at the Marlboro, Tanglewood, Yellow Barn, Aspen, Great Lakes, and Schleswig-Holstein music festivals and have performed with such eminent musicians as David Soyer, Ronald Leonard, Jaime Laredo and Mitsuko Uchida.

Members of the Trio have studied with Kim Kashkashian, Isodore Cohen, Sylvia Rosenberg, and the Guarneri, Juilliard, Cleveland, Orion, and Takacs Quartets. Currently, the Trio studies individually and

collectively with Robert Lipsett, and with Paul Coletti and Ronald Leonard, who also serve as the Trio's coaches at The Colburn School.

**Serena McKinney** performs on a Camillus Camilli violin (circa 1742);  
**Katie Kadarau** performs on a Giovanni Grancino viola (circa 1695);  
and **Arnold Choi** performs on a Carlo Tononi cello (circa 1725).







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- 7-10 Barabba *String Trio*
- 11 Lefkowitz *Duet for Violin and Viola*
- 12-13 Penderecki *String Trio (live performance)*

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