

The Peabody Trio

Long Biography – not for program use

Violaine Melançon • *violin*

Natasha Brofsky • *cello*

Seth Knopp • *piano*

Playing with its signature intensity, producing what *The New York Times* calls its “beautifully polished, lush sound,” The Peabody Trio has become one of the leading piano trios in the world. Whether they are finding something new to say about the origins of the piano trio repertoire in Haydn, or singing along in a fresh piece by Aaron Jay Kernis, the musicians in the Peabody bring what *The Washington Post* describes as “the romantic fervor of the early 20th century greats” to every performance.

It was for making music with this kind of fervor and delicacy that the Peabody was given the Naumburg Chamber Music Award in 1989, an event which launched the Trio’s international career. The Trio itself was formed a few years earlier, in 1987, when violinist Violaine Melançon and pianist Seth Knopp, who are now married, played a recital together in Quebec. They soon decided to seek out a cellist, to explore the great piano trio literature. Accordingly, the Peabody’s repertoire ranges from the classical to the contemporary, from Haydn to Shulamit Ran. The Peabody likes to perform new music, Knopp says, “because losing yourself in a new language gives you something...The more new music you do, the more you expand your range and the universe that you can draw upon.” To date, the Peabody has worked with Kernis, Ran, Zhou Long, Bright Sheng, Charles Wuorinen, Nathan Currier, and Leon Kirchner, among others, and this in turn has enriched its interpretation of the pieces by Haydn, Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, and Ravel that lie at the core of the traditional repertoire. The Trio has recently made a recording of Nathan Currier with CRI and of Shulamit Ran with New World, both of which will be released soon.

The Peabody Trio gave its New York debut in 1990 at Alice Tully Hall and has since performed in many of the most important chamber music series in North America, including the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, the 92nd St. Y and the Frick Gallery in New York, and in Chicago, Denver, Indianapolis, Vancouver, Montreal, San

Francisco, La Jolla, Boston, Philadelphia, Seattle, and Memphis. They have also appeared at London's Wigmore Hall, and in Japan. In 1996, they made their first appearance in Israel under the auspices of the first Biennale for contemporary music, *Tempus Fugit*, and returned two years later for an extensive tour.

The Peabody Trio has also performed at many summer festivals, including the Tanglewood Music Center, the Ravinia Festival, and the Skaneateles Festival. It has also been heard in radio broadcasts on Saint Paul Sunday Morning, Morning Pro Musica, NPR's Performance Today, CBC, Radio Canada, and the WQXR Listening Room in New York.

The Peabody collaborates frequently in performance with such eminent artists as clarinetist Charles Neidich, (in Messiaen's "Quartet for the End of Time", Bartok's "Contrasts", and the Brahms Trio for Piano, Clarinet, and Cello, Opus 114), soprano Phyllis Bryn-Julson (in Shostakovich's "Romantic Suite"), and actor Andre De Shields, (who read the Marinetti text that the Trio enacted musically in Kernis's "Four Seasons of Futurist Cuisine.")

The Trio currently serves as the resident faculty ensemble of the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore, a position it has held since 1989. The musicians spend their summers as ensemble-in-residence at the Yellow Barn Music School and Festival in Putney, Vermont. As full-time faculty of the Peabody Conservatory, Melançon, and Knopp teach graduate and undergraduate students and hold a weekly seminar in the performance of chamber music. On tour, the Trio is often asked to give master classes and performance workshops, and to participate in audience outreach activities. Highlights of the Peabody's upcoming season include concerts in San Francisco, Chapel Hill, Urbana, St. Louis, Indianapolis, and San Jose.

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