

The Paramount Players is the Tri-Cities' premier chamber music ensemble dedicated to promoting artistic excellence, sharing chamber music with local audiences, and ensuring that chamber music is a vital part of life in our communities.

Concert News

Gala Benefit Concert

**World premier by Tennessee composer,
Evelyn Pursley-Kopitzke**

Vignettes from an African Childhood

plus

*Piano Trio in E Minor, Op 90 "Dumky"
by Antonin Dvorak*

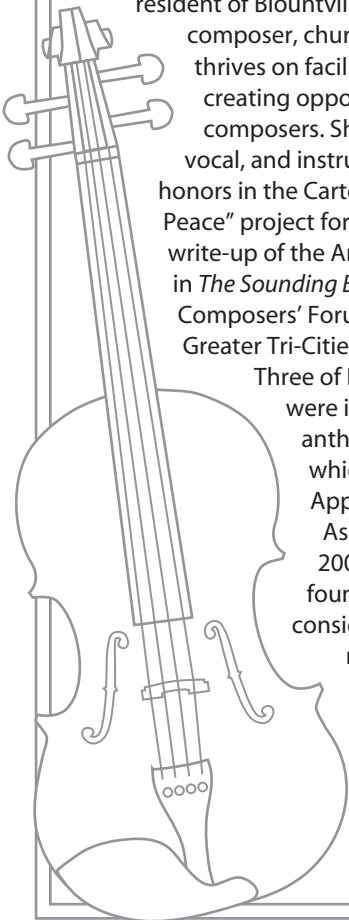
*Five Pieces op. 56 for Flute, Violin, and Piano
by Ceasar Cui*

*Hungarian Dances for Flute, Clarinet and Piano
by Johannes Brahms*

**Paramount Center for the Performing Arts
Bristol, TN
Thursday, May 24 • 8pm**

Guest Composer Evelyn Pursley-Kopitzke, Tanzania-born resident of Blountville, Tennessee, is a neo-classical composer, church musician and teacher who thrives on facilitating collaborative ventures and creating opportunities for herself and fellow composers. She has written numerous choral, vocal, and instrumental works and received top honors in the Carton Savage international "I Wage Peace" project for her cannon, "Salaam, Frieden." Her write-up of the Artistic Reflections concert/art show in *The Sounding Board* (magazine for the American Composers' Forum) gave national recognition to the Greater Tri-Cities Area Composers' Consortium.

Three of Pursley-Kopitzke's piano pieces were included in the GTCACC 2005 anthology of piano teaching music, which was commissioned by the Appalachian Music Teachers' Association. She was also the AMTA 2005 Composer of the Year. She is a founding member of the GTCACC and considers herself the group's "designated nag" and she functions as the group's primary communication liaison and PR writer. Read Evelyn's full biography at www.paramountplayers.com.



Mark Your Calendar

2007

May 24 Gala Benefit Concert, Paramount Center

August 10 Tunes at Noon, Paramount Center

October 5 First concert of the 2007–2008 season, Paramount Center

October 7 Highlands Farms, Black Mountain, North Carolina

October 18 *Voice of the Whale* in collaboration with Carolina Chamber Symphony, and the Chamber Music Society of Wilmington, Paramount Center

2008

March 8 Family Concert, Paramount Center

May 10 Gala Benefit Concert for 2008–2009 season

Paramount Players Premier Music by Regional Composers

At the March concert, we performed the first of five compositions that have been especially composed for The Paramount Players—Ann Holler's *Appalachian Airs*. It was a smashing success and the audience responded beautifully to the composition. Ann really caught the spirit of our Call for Compositions, to "reflect a connection between the creative urge of the composer and the audience that we serve in our region". Thanks to Ann for her submission.

At the Gala Benefit Concert on May 24th, we will perform the second composition, *Vignettes From an African Childhood* by Evelyn Pursley-Kopitzke. It may seem an odd title, but Evelyn explains in her own words.

"My parents were missionary teachers, and we lived in Tanzania and Zambia with short sojourns in Uganda and South Africa. I was 9 years old when we came "back" to the US. My usual answer to the common icebreaker question, "where are you from," is "I live in Tennessee". When people find out that I'm "from" Africa, they always want to know what it was like. Well, I was a child; and I didn't know anything different at the time. My life in Africa was very protected, and the cultures and political climates were completely at the periphery of my experience. However, I shall attempt to tell you, to paint a picture for you—in music—of what it was like".


Be sure to come to the concert to hear Evelyn's musical descriptions of childhood memories in Africa!



Notes on the Music



Gala Benefit Concert • May 24




Cesar Cui (1835-1918) Five Pieces op. 56 for Violin, Flute, and Piano

(notes by Craig Combs)

Cesar Cui received musical training as a child but initially chose a career in the military as an expert in fortifications. His acute interest in music began when he met Mily Balakirev, the founding member of the “mighty handful” also known in English and French speaking countries as “The Five” or “Le Cinq”, a group that initiated what we currently know as the Russian style of composition. Cui became an important member of Balakirev’s group as both composer and music critic. Other members of The Five are better known, and you may recognize some of their names: Borodin, Mussorgsky, and Rimsky-Korsakov. Cui was the most prolific of all the Russian Five, but it was his writings that propelled the idea of a Russian national music to the foreground.

Cui’s musical reputation is an excellent example of how a composer’s standing in the eyes of his peers may shift over time. He wrote about Russian music for thirty years, giving his critics fertile ground to move public opinion. By the end of his life, his attacks on some very important musicians including Debussy and Strauss, created a conservative reputation. It was clear to his readers that he failed to understand where the future of music was headed. Since his death (ironically the same year as Debussy), his reputation ebbed and flowed with changing tastes of subsequent generations. Currently, he is considered one of the significant second tier Romantic Russian composers. Some of his music is very highly regarded, as is *Five Pieces op. 56* that we will perform tonight.

Five Pieces op. 56 are unabashedly romantic music, excellent examples of a musical world where melody predominates. These compositions are free from the self-consciousness of a composer who feels the need to be original. But rather, *Five Pieces* stand as a reminder of the simplicity and authentic beauty that nineteenth-century chamber music has to offer. *Badinage* is a light and playful tune reminiscent of children playing in a school yard. *Berceuse* brings to mind the light humming of a mother as she sings her baby to sleep. In *Scherzino*, the violin and flute joke around while the piano supports with a quietly humorous accompaniment. *Nocturne* is music appropriate for the evening with a slightly more pensive character providing the only “serious” moment of the group. *Waltz*, the longest of the five pieces, creates a whirling flurry of sound images appropriately supplying a gentle flourish at the end.



Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) Hungarian Dances for flute, clarinet, and piano No. 5 & 6


(notes taken from the Preface of Hungarian Dance Suite No. 1 by Michael Webster)

Vienna acted as a cultural magnet for composers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Brahms was one of the many who settled there, and due to proximity with Budapest, became influenced by Hungarian music.

Brahms’ seminal performing experience had been as piano accompanist for the famous Hungarian violinist, Eduard Remenyi, on tour during the 1852-53 season. He brought that background with him when he moved to Vienna in 1862 and incorporated overt references to the Hungarian style in many of his major works. He also wrote 21 Hungarian Dances, published in four books, two each in 1869 and 1880, originally for piano, four hands. All of them were orchestrated by Brahms, Dvorak, and some lesser-known composers, and became immensely popular during Brahms’ lifetime.

Bittersweet is the word that best characterized Hungarian music. It tends to be happy and sad at the same time, or to vacillate quickly between contrasting moods. In No. 5, the popular Hungarian dance form, the czardas, a fast dance in two beats permeates the texture. And in No. 6, you will hear Major and minor scales as well as the “gypsy” scale which is created by altering the scale.

During more than 130 years since they were written, both of the Hungarian Dances you will hear tonight have achieved immeasurable popularity in their orchestrated version. The version you hear tonight was transcribed and edited by Michael Webster from the original four-hand piano versions for the flute, clarinet, and piano. He transcribed the dances in hopes of bringing this music to an even wider audience.



Antonin Dvorák (1831-1904) Dumky Trio in E minor, op. 90 for Piano, Violin, and Cello

(Notes taken from 8notes.com and triosoleil.com)

In 1831, Dvorák was born in Nelahozeves near Prague where he spent most of his life, receiving his musical education in Prague’s Organ School. Through the 1860s, he played viola in the Bohemian Provisional Theatre Orchestra. His career was a national one that grew an international reputation over time. Dvorák is rarely credited with his major influence in the development of American music. From 1892 to 1895, Dvorák was director of the National Conservatory in New York City. The Conservatory was founded by a wealthy socialite, Jeannette Thurber, who wanted a well-known composer as director in order to lend prestige to her institution. She wrote to Dvorák, asking him to accept the position, and he agreed, providing that she were willing to meet his conditions: that talented Native American and African-American students, who could not afford the tuition, must be admitted for free. She agreed to his conditions, and he sailed to America.

It was during his visit to the United States that he wrote his most popular work, the Symphony No.9, *'From the New World'*. Dvorák was a colorful personality. In addition to music, there were two particular passions in his life: locomotive engines, and the breeding of pigeons. He was married with nine children.

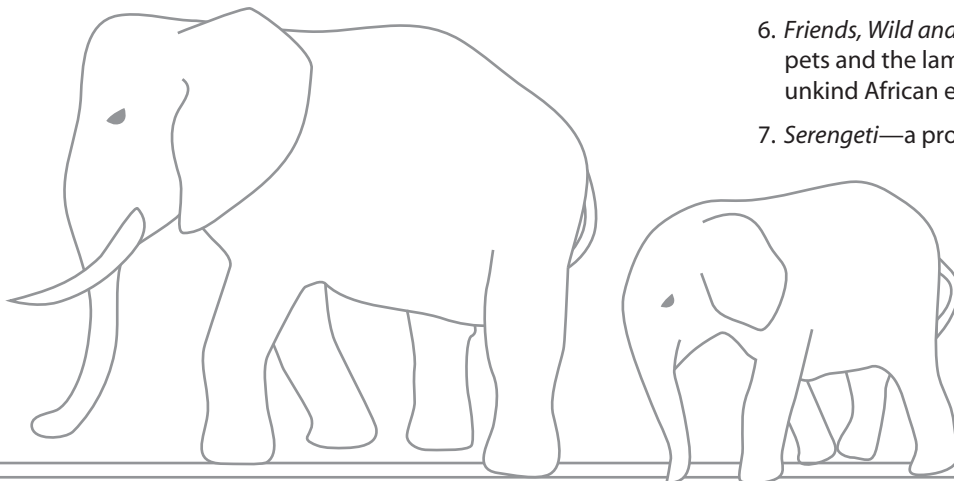
Dvorák returned to Prague where he was director of the conservatoire from 1901 until his death in 1904. He was interred in the Vysehrad cemetery in Prague.

The Dumky Trio is the last and best known of Dvorak's piano trios. "Dumky" is the plural of "Dumka" which can be translated as "a fleeting thought". The Trio is made up of six movements, each a "dumka". Dumky therefore refers to the work as a whole. Dvorak translated the idea of fleeting thoughts into music by contrasting slow elegant sections with fast passionate ones. It is a work suffused with the simple beauty and colorful quality of folk song and dance, yet the melodies are Dvorak's own. The Trio was composed toward the end of the composer's nationalistic period. The work was premiered in Prague on April 11, 1891 (with Dvorak as pianist) at a concert at which the composer received an honorary doctorate from Prague's Charles University. The work was so well received that it was presented on a forty concert tour, just before Dvorak left for the United States to head the National Conservatory of Music in New York City. The Trio was published while Dvorak was in America and was proofread by none other than his friend, Johannes Brahms.

Evelyn Pursley-Kopitzke Vignettes from an African Childhood

(Notes for the seven vignettes are too extensive to print in full in this publication but will be provided at the concert.)

Vignettes From An African Childhood is programmatic music. That designation simply means that the music was conceived as a way of evoking a specific image or story. Famous examples of this type of music are *The Four Seasons* by Vivaldi, *Symphony Fantastique* by Berlioz, *Pictures at an Exhibition* by Mussorgsky, and *Don Juan* by Strauss. Prior to the 20th century and the advent of movie music, the idea of creating music around a story or visual idea was a major alternative to abstract music. In fact, Strauss is reputed to say that music could describe anything, even a teaspoon!



Programmatic music morphed into movie music in the 20th century. Superlative examples of movie music are heard in the music of John Williams: *Star Wars*, *Jaws*, *Superman*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *Jurassic Park*, and all the *Harry Potter* movies. It is powerful and emotional music that has touched the hearts of many people.

In *Vignettes From An African Childhood*, Evelyn Pursley-Kopitzke has returned to the historical meaning of programmatic music. She has chosen the word "vignette" to describe her artistic vision for the program she wishes to evoke. Historically, a vignette is a picture which is focused in the center and fades off at the edges. Even in its more current definitions, there is almost always the idea of an object out of focus and yet still recognizable. This concept will be very helpful in the hearing of this new piece. Music is an inexact activity and as such does not lend itself to specific communication. You are free to personalize the images that Evelyn provides to you. Below, I have given you an idea of what each of the seven vignettes are about but at the concert, you will have a longer and more complete idea of her vision that will be provided with your concert notes:

1. *Baobabs, Anthills and Thorntrees*—Baobabs are gigantic trees with diameters of over twenty feet. The anthill she composes about is taller than her father. The Thorntrees are called "wait-a-bit" trees by locals describing the time it takes to extricate yourself from the thorns if caught up in them.
2. *Azure Skies and Thunderstorms*—Daily, violent thunderstorms are juxtaposed with the clearest blue skies Evelyn has ever seen.
3. *Floods on the Zambezi*—Annual floods in Zambia create surrealistic scenes of islands floating down the river and treetops poking out of the water. The bloated river makes water-loving animals more active – hippopotami, crocodiles, fishing birds, and snakes.
4. *Sunset on Dream Mountain*—A dream of Mt. Elgon in Tanzania where a little girl dreams of whirling fast enough to fly!
5. *Kopjes and Marmots*—Memories of hiking on a flat-topped rocky hill (Kopjes) while trying to get close enough for a better look at the "rock-rabbits" (Marmots) moving so fast that one minute they were there and the next gone!
6. *Friends, Wild and Tame*—evocation of the memory of pets and the lament of having to say goodbye when the unkind African environment always took them away.
7. *Serengeti*—a programmatic description of the migration of massive herds of animals that Evelyn witnessed on the equatorial plains during her childhood.

DYNAMIC CONTRIBUTORS

2007–2008 Concert Season Fund Raising Goal—\$20,000

Become an Advocate for Chamber Music

Join the Dynamic Contributors

You may have received a call from a member of The Paramount Players' Steering Committee asking you to consider becoming a Dynamic Contributor by donating \$100 or more. If you have supported us over the past two years, we are deeply thankful and hope that you will be equally generous for our third year. If you have not yet joined, we hope that you will consider joining our group of chamber music advocates.

Why is joining the Dynamic Contributors is so important and how does it make you an Advocate?

Like most nonprofits, our fiscal sponsor, The Paramount Center, gets some funding from arts councils and large corporations. This year, we intend to approach these sources under the fiscal sponsorship of the Paramount. However, it is important that when we do approach the Tennessee and Virginia Arts Commissions as well as area corporations for financial support that we can demonstrably show that there is community support for chamber music. More simply stated, our request for financial support will be more seriously heard if it is backed up by your support!

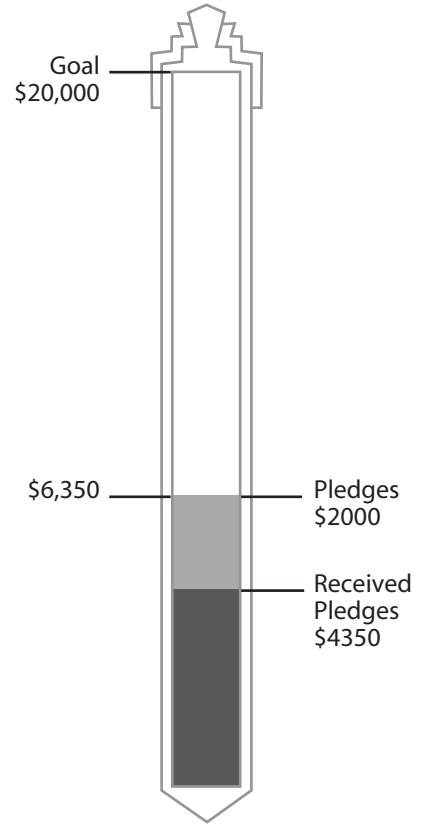
There is a long history of philanthropy in the American culture. Financial advocacy is the front line of philanthropy also known as the bottom line. We need your financial support to pay artist fees, our single most significant cost. Our ultimate goal is to be able to start paying some of the administrative costs that have been so graciously donated in-kind by The Paramount Center. For this to happen, your participation is crucial.

Let your voice be heard! Become an Advocate for chamber music and join the Dynamic Contributors.

2007-2008 Budget

As of April 16, 2007, we have received donations and pledges totalling slightly more than 31% of our goal of \$20,000.

- 50%** enables us to bring you four concerts for the season.
- 75%** enables us to add an educational concert for the children of the community for a total of five concerts.
- 100%** will allow us to invite a guest string quartet making our concerts even more interesting!
- 125%** would give us a head start on the 2008–2009 season.



To mail: cut at dotted line

Dynamic Contributor Donation Form

All levels of dynamics are necessary to make music interesting. All levels of giving are necessary to make music possible.

Name: _____

Please circle your desired giving level:

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Sforzando \$5000

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Phone: _____ Email: _____

Forte \$500

Donations are tax deductible.

Make your check payable to: **The Paramount Center**

Piano \$250

with a note in the memo field: **For Paramount Players**

Mail to: **The Paramount Center, 518 State Street, Bristol, TN 37620.**

Pianissimo \$100