

Gerald Carpenter: Santa Barbara Music Club Feeling Romantic

Saturday's free matinée concert will feature works by Chopin, Beethoven and Strauss

By Gerald Carpenter, Noozhawk Contributor | Published on 02.17.2011

The **Santa Barbara Music Club** will put on its February matinée concert at 3 p.m. Saturday in its traditional venue, the **Faulkner Gallery** of the **Santa Barbara Central Library**, 40 E. Anapamu St. As always, admission is free and the public is most cordially invited.

The proximity to Valentine's Day has inspired a program of romantic works, including the *Sonata in G-Minor for Cello and Piano, Opus 65* by **Frédéric Chopin**, performed by siblings Andrew Saunders on cello and Ben Saunders on piano; **Ludwig Beethoven's** *Piano Sonata No. 14 in C#-Minor, Opus 27, No. 2* — which the composer called a “Sonata quasi una fantasia” and which a music critic named **Ludwig Rellstab**, five years after Beethoven's death, dubbed the “Moonlight” — played by pianist Allen Bishop; and the *Sonata in Eb-Major for Violin and Piano, Opus 18* by **Richard Strauss**, passionately rendered (I have no doubt) by Nicole McKenzie on violin and Betty Oberacker on piano.



Composer Richard Strauss shortly after the premiere of his only *Violin Sonata*.

Chopin published a total of four pieces of chamber music: a *Trio in G-Minor for Violin, Cello, and Piano, Opus 8* and three works for cello and piano, of which the last, the beautiful *G-Minor Sonata*, was the final work of his published during his lifetime. It was written for and dedicated to **Auguste Franchomme**, and premiered by Franchomme and Chopin at the composer's last public concert.

Strauss wrote his *Violin Sonata* in 1887, when he was 23. It was the last of his works without some literary basis or extra-musical program. The self-confidence of the music is staggering. I doubt that any composer who ever lived — not even

excepting **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** — has achieved such early and apparently effortless mastery of every aspect of his craft.

The *Sonata* is a sparkling stream of melody and a flawless example of the form, yet I never get the feeling — as I do with Beethoven and **Johann Sebastian Bach** — that I am hearing the thoughts of a great soul.

Strauss was, I think, the classical equivalent of **Paul McCartney** or **Michael Jackson**: Someone for whom making music was the same as breathing, as being alive.

— *Gerald Carpenter covers the arts as a **Noozhawk** contributor. He can be reached at gerald.carpenter@gmail.com*