



2020 - 2021
35TH SEASON

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
JOAN BLACKMAN

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A T r i b u t e t o E u g e n e O s a d c h y

Classic piano trios of Haydn, Brahms and Schubert

Watch online anytime between
Thursday, November 26th, 2020 at 2 p.m. PST to
Sunday, November 29th, 2020 at midnight PST

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DREAM PIANO TRIOS

P R O G R A M

Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

Piano Trio in E flat minor, Hob. Xv:31

Andante

Allegro (Jacob's Dream)

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Piano Trio in C minor, Opus 101

Allegro energico

Presto non assai

Andante grazioso

Allegro molto

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Piano Trio in E flat major, Opus 100, D.129

Allegro

Andante con moto

Scherzando. Allegro moderato

Allegro moderato

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CONCERT SEASON 2020/2021

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*Acknowledging the unceded homelands of the x̱w̱məθkʷəy̱əm (Musqueam),
S̱ḵw̱x̱w̱ú7mesh (Squamish), and Seḻíḻw̱iṯḻh (Tseil-Waututh) Nations.*

PROGRAM NOTES BY RALPH ALDRICH

Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)
Piano Trio in E flat minor,
Hob xv:31

In answer to a question we might also liked to have asked Haydn, “How did you ever begin to write so many fine works?” he explained, “I sit down at the keyboard and begin to improvise, happy or sad, as my mood dictates, serious or frivolous. When I grasp an idea, my entire effort then is devoted towards developing and elaborating it according to the principles of art. Years ago I resolved to continue working in this manner, and it is here that so many new composers are lacking. They line up one little bit after the other, and stop before they have scarcely started, so that after the first hearing, nothing stays in the listener’s heart”. While Haydn took classical form to new heights in the development of the symphony and string quartet, his

keyboard trios remained largely outside this design. He chose to publish almost thirty with the title “Sonatas for Keyboard with the accompaniment of Violin and Cello” in the form of two or three movement works using various rondo, minuet, three part song and variation forms.

In 1709 the harpsichord-maker Bartholomeo Cristofori had created the first version of the piano by replacing the crow quills which plucked the strings of the harpsichord, with leather-covered wooden hammers. In addition to a richer tone quality, the hammers allowed for a larger dynamic range, and improved response to the sensitivity of the player’s touch. During Haydn’s London sojourn (1891-1895) he had time to compose a series of piano trios intended as music for private enjoyment and publication. They were noted primarily for their entertainment at the soirées of the nobility and for the enjoyment of amateur musicians. Most were dedicated to women, some from the aristocracy, or for other

prominent keyboard players. The Piano Trio in E flat minor was composed in a rarely used key for its time for Haydn's friend Thérèse Jansen who he considered to be one of the most important keyboardists of the time.

The first movement opens with an expressive Andante Cantabile written in double variation or alternating variation form- a type of theme and variations using two themes. The concluding Allegro of the work's two movements is subtitled "Jacob's Dream", a biblical reference in which Jacob dreamt of a ladder stretching up to heaven. Typical of Haydn's subtle humour he begins the movement in a simple easily sight-readable manner, but the violin is soon launched into hair-raising heights with little opportunity to easily descend. The violinist who premiered the work was known to exaggerate his prowess and accuracy on the high E string, so Haydn decided to expose the conceited fellow's shortcomings with a lesson in humility!

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) ***Piano Trio in C minor, Opus 101***

In the ancient Swiss town of Thun, 25 kilometers south of Bern in the foothills of the Bernese Alps nestled a villa on the shore of Lake Thun in the nearby hamlet of Hofstetten. To escape the hot Viennese summer of 1866, Brahms

settled into that charming cottage for a long, thoughtful sojourn, the results of which were three of the most heartfelt and deep chamber works of his composing life. He began with the Violin Sonata in A major (Opus 99), then Cello Sonata in F major (Opus 100), and finally the C minor Piano Trio on this program which combines both the elements and instruments from the other two chamber works. To this day the surrounding mountains seem to rise out of Lake Thun, leaving several gaps through which winds can sweep in to converge at the lake's centre, causing mysterious turbulence in otherwise calm surroundings. It is thought that this phenomenon influenced and can be heard in these three chamber works, particularly in the Trio.

The main theme of the first movement opens with dramatic triplets which gain more tension through a change to dotted, troubling rhythmic patterns but just as the lake would react, the second theme becomes more subdued but is never far from restlessness. The second movement, delicate and somewhat nervous, achieves a tragic air by the use of muted strings and pizzicato. One study of this Trio describes this movement as "one of the most delicate that Brahms ever wrote, and yet it is a profoundly uneasy movement of grey half-lights, rapid, stealthy motion and suppressed sadness." Brahms' Austrian roots are

apparent in the third movement where we glimpse a lilting country dance which provides a respite from the tension of the foregoing apprehension. This is to be short-lived as even though the key has moved to a bright C major, the pervading tragic drama and power of the elements, never far from the nature of Lake Thun, become distilled and reflected in the voices of three instruments.

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)
Piano Trio in E flat major,
Opus 100, D. 129

Having opened this program with the sounds of E flat minor, the musicians close their performance in the brighter key of E flat major, with one of the last of his works Schubert would hear. It was performed at a party to celebrate the engagement of his school friend Joseph von Spaun but tragically, its creator was to live only a year thereafter. It is a masterpiece which could be considered among the few

greatest Piano Trios in the repertoire and in Schumann's estimation, "A trio by Schubert passed across the musical world like an angry comet in the sky!" The composer's humility answered, "This work is dedicated to nobody but those who might find pleasure in it."

Containing six thematic ideas in the patterns of the first movement, it flows with vocal ease to dramatic heights while the slow movement suggests a poignant march with a lamenting cello solo. The following scherzo is a genial dance through which the piano and strings imitate each other or indulge in friendly Viennese conversation until the Trio section seriously discusses a theme from the first movement. Three melodies share the final movement with a further march them quoted from the second movement- all in brilliant music colour but never far from a certain despondence shadowing the impending demise of a melodic genius.



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Arthur Rowe
PIANO

Canadian pianist and Steinway Artist Arthur Rowe is a critically acclaimed recitalist, soloist with orchestra and chamber musician. Following a New York solo recital, The New York Times wrote: "The Canadian pianist Arthur Rowe made an immediate and positive impression...before eight bars had gone by, one knew he was capable of vigor without heaviness, energy without excess of drive. It was first-rate playing: a kind of execution tinglingly alive to the shape and contribution of each phrase". Reviewing a solo recital in London England, The London Times spoke of his "unusual clarity of articulation", and "poetry of expression", and David Burge, writing in The San Diego Tribune said, "Rowe is a marvelous pianist...even when he is pushed to the limit by extreme virtuosic demands...he can concentrate all of his considerable talents on vital matters of phrasing, tone and ensemble".

Arthur Rowe has recorded with various artists for the Crystal, ebs, Innova, GM and Fanfare labels. In 2007, he released an all Schubert recording on the Centaur label (available on iTunes). Fanfare magazine's review says, "Rowe's reading (of the posthumous B flat Sonata) is one of the most beautiful I have heard... The D. 899 Impromptus are equally impressive...his purling right-hand runs recall Schnabel's velvety sound.... every harmonic change is underscored by a delicate

nuance of color change. This kind of expression cannot be taught; it is in the bloodstream and the soul.

A highly respected chamber musician, Mr. Rowe has collaborated with artists and chamber ensembles across North America. Recent and upcoming performances include concerts with the Dover, Rolston and Pacifica and Penderecki Quartets, as well as the complete Beethoven sonatas for violin and piano with Jonathan Crow, Concertmaster of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Mr. Rowe has been a guest artist at summer festivals in Blossom, Interlochen, Niagara, Santa Fe and Seattle, as well as in France, New Zealand, and Yugoslavia. In 2004 The Harrington String Quartet joined forces with Arthur Rowe and William Preucil in New York for a performance of the Chausson Concerto for Violin, Piano and String Quartet, which was reviewed by Harris Goldsmith as a "reading that rivaled the benchmark recordings by Franzescatti/Casadesus/Pascal, and Heifetz/Sanroma/New Arts".

In addition to his performing activities, Arthur Rowe is the Artistic Director of both the Victoria Summer Music Festival, and The Jeffery Concerts in London Ontario.

Having previously held positions at the University of Iowa and the University of Western Ontario, Arthur Rowe is Professor of Piano at the University of Victoria, where he has also served as Acting Director of the School of Music and Acting Associate Dean of Fine Arts.



Joan Blackman
VIOLIN

Artistic Director of Vancouver's Vetta Chamber Music Society, Ms. Blackman enjoys a vibrant and varied musical life. She served as Associate Concertmaster of the Vancouver Symphony for many years and has performed and recorded as soloist with the Vancouver Symphony, Victoria Symphony, CBC Radio Orchestra, Turning Point Ensemble and the Banff Festival Orchestra. She also teaches privately and has given masterclasses throughout B.C.

Ms. Blackman is known throughout Canada and the U.S. as a fine chamber musician and has performed with premier groups such as the Penderecki String Quartet, the Purcell String Quartet and the Gryphon Trio. Besides performing and curating the Vetta Chamber Music series in Vancouver, she works with the Canadian Music Centre in their Celebration concert series.

Joan is also a member of the Sea and Sky collective which has released two CDs and performs throughout B.C.

Joan has appeared on numerous series including Music in the Morning, Music Fest Vancouver, the Jeffrey Concerts in London, Ontario, and the American String Project. She has also appeared at summer festivals including the Hornby Island Festival, the Pender Harbour Chamber Music Festival, Kaimeraata, and the Victoria Summer Music Festival.

"Your heart would need to be made of stone not to have loved Joan Blackman's splendid solo". "Shapelier phrases and sweeter tone would be hard to imagine", "a ravishing tone", "first rate soloist", "exchanged lines meltingly in a flawless performance" "playing with lyricism, precision, and evident joy", are some of the accolades that have graced Joan's reviews.

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Brian Yoon is currently the Principal Cello of the Victoria Symphony. He has also served as guest principal with the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa, and more recently the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra in New Zealand.

Since winning First Prize at the 35th Eckhardt-Gramatté Competition, he has performed for audiences across Canada, presenting works by Bach and Beethoven to George Crumb and Metallica. In 2012, CBC Music featured Brian as “Canada’s next cello superstar” with a national broadcast of a recital recorded at the Glenn Gould Studio.

Brian’s main teachers include Judith Fraser (Vancouver Academy of Music), Paul Marleyn (University of Ottawa), and Desmond Hoebig (Rice University). He has received support from the BC Arts Council, the Canada Council for the Arts, and the Sylva Gelber Music Foundation. Brian appreciates the generous loans from Dr. Fritz Boehm and the Gail O’Riordan Memorial Fund for the Performing Arts at the Victoria Foundation to purchase the 1905 cello by Gaetano Sgarabotto of Milan.

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