



2022 - 2023  
37<sup>TH</sup> SEASON  
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR  
JOAN BLACKMAN  
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## CONCERT ONE INSPIRATION

Jane Coop, *piano*  
Joan Blackman, David Gillham *violins*  
David Harding, *viola*  
Zoltan Rozsnyai, *cello*

**FRIDAY OCT. 14<sup>TH</sup> at 2PM**  
WEST POINT GREY UNITED CHURCH

**SATURDAY OCT. 15<sup>TH</sup> at 7:30PM**  
WEST VANCOUVER UNITED CHURCH

**SUNDAY OCT. 16<sup>TH</sup> at 2PM**  
PYATT HALL  
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**MONDAY OCT. 17<sup>TH</sup> at 7:30PM**  
ARTSPRING  
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**Hildegard von Bingen** (1098-1179)  
*O Virtus Sapientiae*  
arr. for string quartet by Marcus Goddard

**Marcus Goddard** (1973-)  
*Three Wings*

**Leoš Janáček** (1854-1928)  
*String Quartet No. 1 "Kreutzer Sonata"*

i. Adagio-Con moto  
ii. Con moto  
iii. Con Moto-Vivo-Andante  
iv. Con Moto-(Adagio)-Più mosso

### INTERMISSION

**Johannes Brahms** (1833-1897)  
*Piano Quintet in F minor, Opus 34*

i. *Allegro non troppo*  
ii. *Andante, un poco adagio*  
iii. *Scherzo: Allegro*  
iv. *Finale: Poco sostenuto – Allegro non troppo – Presto, non troppo*

**Hildegard von Bingen *O Virtus Sapientiae*** arr.  
for string quartet by Marcus Goddard

Hildegard von Bingen was a German abbess and polymath, active as a writer, composer, philosopher, mystic, visionary, and as a medical writer and practitioner. She is one of the best-known composers of sacred monophony and is considered to be the founder of scientific natural history in Germany.

**Marcus Goddard *Three Wings*** (2016)

Marcus Goddard is a Vancouver based composer and trumpet player. Commissioned by Elizabeth Bell for the Archytas String Quartet, *Three Wings* premiered in May of 2016 in Vancouver BC, on the Music on Main concert series. In the spring of 2022, Vetta asked Goddard to arrange for string quartet the piece by Hildegard von Bingen that inspired him to write *Three Wings - O Virtus Sapientiae* (Divine Wisdom).

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Goddard explains the connection between these two works; "Three Wings takes its title from Hildegard Von Bingen's text from her vocal work, *O Virtus Sapientiae*. The legacy of Bingen's powerful creative and intellectual influence that extends into our time today is breathtaking, and her words resonate with musical direction. *Three Wings* is built around the all-encompassing three-layered world so poetically expressed in Bingen's text. The opening of the quartet leaps forward with accented bursts of energy that

jump from player to player, sometimes building and climbing to such height that it motivates skitter and slide down. The second section is a calm, reflective meditation on our earthly presence. The third section of the work integrates the soaring motives of the opening with the distilled essence and underlying tranquility of the middle section in an effortlessly propelled flight to the work's climax."

The vocal drone is maintained in this instrumental version of *O Virtus Sapientiae*, with each player taking a turn "singing" the chant melody. In Marcus Goddard's string quartet *Three Wings*, the drone is replaced by the constantly evolving sound of tremolo, percussive beatings of the strings with the wood of the bow and other extended string techniques which are used brilliantly to invoke the winged flights described by Goddard's description of his music and Hildegard's text.

O Virtus Sapientiae,  
quae circuiens circuiisti  
comprehendendo omnia  
in una via, quae habet  
vitam,  
tres alas habens,  
quarum una in altum volat,  
et altera de terra sudat,  
et tertia undique volat.  
Laus tibi sit, sicut te decet,  
O Sapientia.

O strength of Wisdom  
who, circling, circled,  
enclosing all  
in one lifegiving path,  
three wings you have:  
one soars to the heights,  
one distils its essence  
upon the earth,  
and the third is every-  
where.  
Praise to you, as is fitting,  
O Wisdom.

**Leoš Janáček *String Quartet No. 1 "Kreutzer Sonata"*** (1923)

This quartet was inspired Leo Tolstoy's short story entitled *The Kreutzer Sonata*, which describes a

husband who murders his wife in a jealous rage upon finding her dining with a violinist with whom she has performed the Beethoven *Kreutzer Sonata*. If the piece is not strictly programmatic, the neuroticism and violence of the novella's protagonist is matched by the music. "I was imagining a poor woman, tormented and run down, just like the one the Russian writer Tolstoy describes in his *Kreutzer Sonata*", Janáček confided in one of his letters to his young friend Kamila Stösslová.

The brief first movement, while outlining sonata form, certainly creates an air of passion and tension with its opening of yearning, sustained lines overlaid with scurrying phrases. The second theme seems to start more cheerfully but becomes stormy and then ruminating before the return of the opening.

Janáček infuses his second movement with the elements of a polka, yet these merry dance strains are constantly interrupted by darting fragments, disquieting tempo adjustments, pauses, an eerie rustling played *sul ponticello* (on the bridge), and an impassioned melodic snippet with an insistent accompaniment that becomes positively angry.

The violin and cello duet that opens the third movement recalls the second theme in the first movement of Beethoven's *Kreutzer Sonata*. The calm of this opening is short-lived. Again, Janáček interrupts with sul ponticello jabs. The struggle between these ideas becomes monumental, which, combined with later pensive moments, make this movement possibly the most emotionally draining of the Quartet.

The last movement opens quietly with a reminiscence from the first. The finale also features long melodic lines over driving accompanimental patterns, which erupt in a remarkable sounding pizzicato passage toward the center of the movement. After a climax of almost unbearable anguish, the ending sinks to a resigned rather than restful quiet.

## Johannes Brahms Piano Quintet in F minor, Opus 34. (1864)

Inspiration came to Brahms in various ways: by being in nature, connecting with his dearest friends, and through working within the classical forms that provided the foundation of everything he wrote.

This quintet was completed in the summer of 1864

in the countryside where Brahms could walk freely while pondering new ideas and reviewing the musical sketches he had jotted down over the winter months. Like the changing landscapes of the fields, meandering streams, and woodland paths Brahms liked to wander, this piano quintet underwent several transformations. First as a quintet for just string instruments (c.1861), then he transcribed it as a sonata for two pianos and finally as the magnificent masterwork it became.

His dear friends helped nudge it on its path. A letter from friend and violinist Joseph Joachim in April 1863 provided Brahms with some collegial criticism about the original string quintet version “... *what is lacking is, in a word, charm*.” One of his most trusted confidants Clara Schumann liked the two piano version but thought the ideas called for more instrumental forces, perhaps even orchestral in scope. “... *I had a feeling that it was an arrangement ... So please remodel it once more!*” Once remodeled into a piano quintet, Brahms received a letter from Hermann Levi in November 1865. “*You have turned a monotonous work for two pianos into a thing of great beauty, a masterpiece of chamber music ...*”

As the quintet begins, the first theme is simply stated then explodes into a dramatic exploration. The slow movement in  $\frac{3}{4}$  time, a dance between piano and strings, perhaps a dance between two people just getting to know one another with gentle, tentative steps. The third movement Scherzo requires strength from the musicians with its march-like syncopated, driving, staccato rhythms full of kinetic energy.

The fourth movement's ascending opening with drawn out notes and more experimental harmonies than one expects from Brahms, grips and pulls building towards a tormented, anguish filled stormy intensity. Building and releasing. Dense orchestration alternating with lighter textures with calmer melodic episodes as the momentum builds and abates until the final rush to the end.

Program notes by Joan Blackman and Laurie Townsend

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