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47th season | 391st event

Sunday January 14, 2018

Betty Oliphant Theatre, 404 Jarvis Street, Toronto

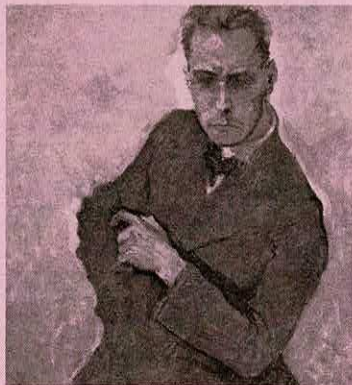
New Music Concerts presents:

Kammerkonzert

Duo Diorama: MingHuan Xu violin Winston Choi piano

NMC Ensemble directed by Robert Aitken

Sunday February 4, 2018 @ 8 INTRODUCTION @ 7:15



Portrait of Anton Webern

LAND'S END ENSEMBLE

John Lowry violin Beth Root Sandvoss cello

Susanne Ruberg-Gordon piano

with special guests

Robert Aitken flute

James Campbell clarinet

Gallery 345 | 345 Sorauren Avenue

Hope Lee (China/Canada b.1953) – *Imaginary Garden VII* (2017)

Sean Clarke (Canada b.1983) – *Delirium Nocturnum* (2017)

Matthew Ricketts (Canada b.1986) – *Graffiti Songs* (2010)

Arnold Schoenberg (Austria/USA 1874-1951) – *Kammersymphonie Op. 9** (1906)

* 1922 quintet arrangement by Anton Webern (Austria 1883-1945)

Sunday February 25, 2018 @ 8

INTRODUCTION Larry Weinstein's documentary *Arnold Schoenberg:*

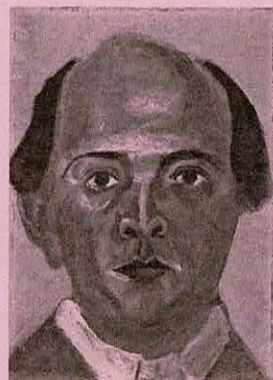
My War Years – NOTE SPECIAL SCREENING TIME – 6:30

TRIO ARKEL

Marie Bérard violin Teng Li viola

Winona Zelenka cello

Gallery 345 | 345 Sorauren Avenue



Arnold Schoenberg – Self Portrait

Kaija Saariaho (Finland b.1952) – *Cloud Trio* (2009)

Krzysztof Penderecki (Poland b.1933) – *String Trio* (1990-91)

James Rolfe (Canada b.1961) – *And Then Grace* (2000)

Arnold Schoenberg (Austria/USA 1874-1951) – *String Trio, Op.45* (1946)

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Duo Diorama: MingHuan Xu violin Winston Choi piano

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Programme:

Michael Oesterle (Canada b.1968)

Chamber Concerto (2017, World premiere)

for violin, piano and 13 winds

New Music Concerts commission in cooperation with Daniel Cooper

Arnold Schoenberg (Austria/USA 1874-1951)

Phantasy Op. 47 (1949)

for violin and piano

— Interval —

Alban Berg (Austria 1885-1935)

Kammerkonzert (1923-25)

for violin, piano and 13 winds

Duo Diorama:

MingHuan Xu violin Winston Choi piano

New Music Concerts Ensemble:

Dianne Aitken piccolo Douglas Stewart flute Keith Atkinson oboe

Cary Ebli cor anglais Max Christie, Colleen Cook clarinets Michele Verheul bass clarinet

Peter Lutek bassoon Fraser Jackson contrabassoon James Gardiner trumpet

Christopher Gongos, Bardhyl Gjevori horns Ian Cowie trombone

Robert Aitken direction

Please join us for a post-concert reception, courtesy of New Music Concerts' Board of Directors

Paul Hodge recording engineer | Sandor Ajzenstat stage manager
PLEASE TURN OFF YOUR CELL PHONES AND OTHER DEVICES!

New Music Concerts notes with sadness the passing of long-time friend and patron Lino Magagna, who died on December 7 after a brief battle with cancer. Our thoughts and sympathies are with Lino's family, and his partner Robbie Shaw.

New Music Concerts

Robert Aitken, c.m., Artistic Director

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Michael Oesterle (Canada b.1968)

Chamber Concerto (2017, World premiere)

My Chamber Concerto is a single-movement work, with a duration of approximately 19 minutes. The instrumentation of this piece is for Piano and Violin with 13 Wind Instruments: identical to the instrumentation of Alban Berg's masterpiece, "Kammerkonzert." With thanks, I dedicate this work to Daniel Cooper who had the brilliant, albeit intimidating, idea of mirroring Berg's instrumentation.

The pretext for my Chamber Concerto is straightforward, an aesthetic struggle between the violinist and the pianist. Throughout the piece they engage in a rhapsodic skirmish as they vie to outshine one another, shamelessly enlisting members of the wind band to their respective camps. For instance, it becomes clear that the violin and the English Horn are well companioned while the trombone is easily allied to the piano's faux big-band sensibility. The fracas comes to a boil, when surprisingly, a short truce ensues during which the duelling soloists set aside their virtuosity, yet still find ways to charm the remaining winds into joining their respective companies. The lull is short lived. Once again, the lines of battle redrawn, the action accelerates to a whirl of one-upmanship, until the winds, exhausted, abandon the fight, leaving the violin and piano on their own to sulk. Alban Berg's Kammerkonzert was among the first pieces of music I studied. Over the years I have periodically returned to the Kammerkonzert score only to face the same remembrance: In a casual conversation with Milton Babbitt I complained, "I'll never be able to write anything as ingenious as this piece." "You're right," was his reply. — Michael Oesterle

Michael Oesterle, born in 1968, is a Canadian composer living in Deux-Montagnes Québec.

Arnold Schoenberg (Austria/USA 1874-1951)

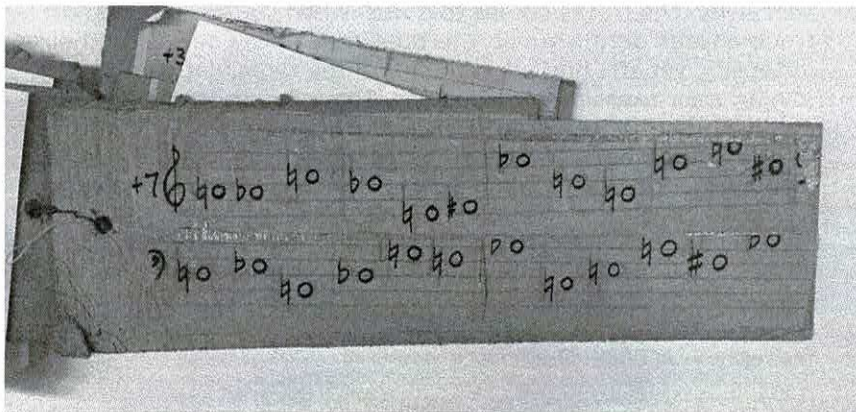
Phantasy Op. 47 (1949)

In March 1949 Arnold Schoenberg, who had emigrated to the USA in 1933, composed a 'piece for violin solo, accompanied by the piano' at the behest of the violinist Adolph Koldofsky; at this time he was also composing the choral pieces *Dreimal tausend Jahre* and *Israel Exists Again*. The method of composition, which can be clearly determined from the manuscript sources, reveals that the soloistic nature of the violin part – both conceptually and as indicated in the title – should be taken at face value: Schoenberg first wrote out the complete violin part (which he completed on 22nd March 1949) before finishing the piano accompaniment a week later. For the first performance, in the context of his 75th birthday on 13th September 1949, Schoenberg provided an

alternative ending for Koldofsky, who performed the piece and whom the composer regarded as an ideal interpreter.

In coarse schematic terms the Phantasy is divided into four parts: a motif-forming section with transition (the main idea in the work is six bars long), a Lento section that could be compared to the slow movement of a sonata, a scherzando passage and a coda (each with transitions). The Phantasy undeniably possesses a certain classical, Viennese tone; this expressive aesthetic is, for instance, sometimes nourished by dance-like triple metres of which counterparts can be found in similarly violinistic writing from Schubert to Mahler. The technical variety of the delicate soundscape ranges from double-stopping of extremely large intervals, glissandi, pizzicati and harmonics to complicated tremolo effects and dynamically differentiated chord arpeggios.

– Therese Muxeneder, Arnold Schoenberg Center



A page from Schoenberg's booklet of serial permutations for his Phantasy Op. 47

Alban Berg (Austria 1885-1935)

Kammerkonzert (1923-25)

Alban Berg's dedicatory letter to Schoenberg was first printed in the Viennese musical magazine 'Pult und Taktstock' (February 1925).

9th February 1925

My dear honoured friend Arnold Schoenberg!

The composition of this Concerto, dedicated to you on your fiftieth birthday, has been completed only today, on my fortieth birthday. Though late presented, I beg you nonetheless to accept it in a spirit of friendship; all the more so since it has also turned out – though unintended from the start – to be a little memorial to a friendship now twenty years old. In a musical motto that precedes the first movement the letters of your name, Webern's and my names have been captured – as far as is possible in

musical notation – in three themes (or motifs) which have been allotted an important role in the melodic development of this music. This already announces a *trinity of events*, and such a trinity – it is after all a matter of your birthday, and all the good things, that I wish you, makes three – is also important for the whole work.



The three parts of my Concerto, united in a single movement, are characterized by the following three headings or tempo indications:

- I Thema scherzando con variazioni
- II Adagio
- III Rondo ritmico con Introduzione (cadenza)

A particular sound body is proper to each of these, whereby I have made use of the trinity of available instrumental families (keyboard, stringed, and wind instruments). First the piano (I), then the violin (II), and finally both of the concertante instruments are set against the accompanying wind ensemble. The ensemble itself (which with the violin and the piano makes up a chamber orchestra *fifteen strong* – a holy number for this kind of instrumental combination since your Opus 9) consists of: piccolo, flute, oboe, cor anglais, clarinets in E-flat and A, bass clarinet, bassoon, double bassoon; two horns, trumpet and trombone. *Formally* too the number three or its multiples keeps cropping up: In the *first* movement we find a six-fold recurrence of the same basic idea. This idea, stated like an exposition by the wind ensemble as a ternary variations theme of 30 bars, is repeated by the piano alone in the virtuoso character of that instrument, thus constituting a first variant (first reprise). Variation 2 presents the melody notes of the 'theme' in inversion: variation 3 uses them in retrograde order; and variation 4 uses the inversion of the retrograde form (these three middle variations can be regarded as a sort of development section in this 'sonata first movement'). The last variation returns to the theme's basic shape. But this occurs in the form of stretti between piano and wind ensemble (these are canons in which a group of voices that enters later tries to overtake another group that entered first, succeeds in doing this, flies past and leaves the first group far behind), so this last variation (or reprise) also acquires a totally new shape, corresponding to its simultaneous position as coda. It is not really necessary to draw attention to this fact, since obviously every one of these transformations of the theme has its own profile, although – and it does seem important to say this – the scherzo character predominates throughout this first part.

Tabular General Survey

I	Thema	Var. I	II	III	IV	V	Number of bars
Thema con Variazioni	in the basic shape	retrograde	inversion	retrograde inversion	basic shape		
	(Exposition)	(First reprise)	(Development)		(Second reprise)		
	bars: 30	30	60	30	30	60	240
II	Ternary		Retrograde				
Adagio	A1	B	A2	A2	B	A1	
			(inversion of A1)		(mirror form of preceding B)		
	bars: 30	12 36	12 30	30	12 36	12 30	240
III (= I plus II)	Introduction (cadenza for violin and piano)	Exposition	Development (da capo)		Second reprise or coda		
Rondo ritmico con Introduzione	bars: 54	96	79		76		305
		Repeat: 175					175
							480
							960

The structure of the *Adagio* is also based on 'ternary song form': A1-B-A2 where A2 is the inversion of A1. The repetition of this first half of the movement (120 bars) takes place in retrograde form, partly a free formation of the reversed thematic material, but partly - as for example the whole of the middle section B - in the form of an exact mirror image. The third movement, finally, is an amalgamation of the two preceding movements (see the tabular general survey!). As a consequence of the repetition of the variation movement that this necessitates - although it is enriched by the simultaneous reprise of the *Adagio* - the architectonic construction of the whole Concerto also manages to be ternary in form.

The uniting of movements I and II produced three important methods of combination:

1. free counterpointing of the parts corresponding to one another;
2. the successive juxtaposition of individual phrases and little sections, like a duet, and
3. the exact summation of whole passages from both movements.

The problem of collecting all these disparate components and characters under one roof (just think, honoured friend: on the one hand a variation movement of circa nine minutes duration, scherzoso throughout, and on the other a broadly sung, extended *Adagio* lasting a quarter of an hour!),

of making a new movement out of them with a quite independent tone, resulted in the form of the 'Rondo ritmico'. *Three rhythmic forms*: a main rhythm, a subsidiary rhythm, and a rhythm that can be considered as a sort of motif, are laid under the melody. notes of the main and subsidiary voices. The rhythms occur with manifold variations - extended and abbreviated, augmented and diminished, in stretto and in reverse, and in all imaginable metrical shifts and transpositions, etc., etc. Thematic unity is obtained by means of these rhythms and their recurrence according to the design of the Rondo. This unity is nowise inferior to that of the old Rondo form, and guarantees the relatively easy 'intelligibility' - if I may make use of one of your technical terms - of the musical action.

It was in a scene in my opera *Wozzeck* that I showed for the first time the possibility of this method of allotting such an important *constructive* rôle to a rhythm. But that a degree of thematic transformation on the basis of a rhythm such as I have attempted in the Rondo under discussion is admissible, was proved to me by a passage in your *Serenade*, where in the last movement (admittedly for quite different motives) you place a number of motifs and themes from preceding movements on rhythms that do not belong to them from the start; and vice versa. And I have just read an article by Felix Greissle (Anbruch, February 1925) about the formal foundations of your Wind Quintet in which he writes, among other things, in the last sentence 'The theme always has the same rhythm, but in each case it is made up of notes from a different series', and this seems to me to be further proof of the rightness of such a rhythmic method of construction.

The choice of *time signatures* provided another means of setting the finale of my Concerto on its own feet (despite the fact that all the notes are dependent on those of the first two movements). The whole of the variations movement was in *triple* time; the *Adagio* is predominantly in *duple* time; the Rondo on the other hand is constantly changing between all conceivable even and odd, simple and compound metres, so that in the metrical field too I accentuated the ever recurrent trinity of events. This is also expressed in the harmony: besides the long stretches of completely dissolved tonality, there are individual shorter passages with a tonal flavour, and also passages that correspond to the laws set up by you for 'composition with twelve notes related only to one another'. Finally I should mention that the *number of bars*, both in the whole work and in the individual sections, was also determined by divisibility by three; I realize that - insofar as I make this generally known - my reputation as a mathematician will grow in proportion (... to the square of the distance) as my reputation as a composer sinks.

But seriously: if in this analysis I have spoken almost exclusively of things connected with the number three, this is because, firstly, it is just those aspects that will be ignored by everybody (in favour of other more musical aspects); secondly, because as an author it is much easier to speak about such external matters than about inward processes, in which respect this Concerto is certainly no poorer than any other music. I can tell you,

dearest friend, that if it became known how much friendship, love, and a world of human and spiritual references I have smuggled into these three movements, the adherents of programme music – should there be any left – would go mad with joy; and the representatives and defenders of 'New Classicism', and 'New Matter-of-factness', the 'Linearists' and 'Physiologists', the 'Counterpointists' and 'Formalists' would rush to attack me, outraged by my 'romantic' leanings, if I were to let slip the fact that they too – if they take the trouble to seek out their respective references – are taken into account in the work.

For it was in the intention of this dedication really to bring you 'all good things' on your birthday, and the 'Concerto' is the very art form in which not only the soloists (including the conductor!) have the chance of show off their brilliance and virtuosity, the author can too, for once. Many years ago, honoured friend, you advised me to write such a work, if possible with chamber orchestral accompaniment; it never crossed your mind then (or perhaps it did?!) that with this piece of advice – as with everything you said and did – you were anticipating a time when just this genre would awake to new life. And, as I hand it to you now to mark a three-fold jubilee as I said at the outset, I can hope to have found one of those 'better occasions' of which you wrote prophetically in your *Harmonielehre*:

'And so this movement too will perhaps return to me once more.'

Your ALBAN BERG
Translation: Cornelius Cardew

DUO DIORAMA comprises Chinese violinist MingHuan Xu and Canadian pianist Winston Choi. MINGHUAN XU performs extensively in recital and with orchestra in China and North America. She is also a highly sought-after chamber musician, having collaborated with the St. Petersburg Quartet, Colin Carr, Eugene Drucker, Ilya Kaler, and Ani Kavafian. She delights audiences wherever she performs with her passion, sensitivity and charisma. Xu was a winner of the Beijing Young Artists Competition and gave her New York debut at age 18 as soloist with the New York Youth Symphony Orchestra. Currently on faculty at Loyola University Chicago and the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University, she plays on a 1758 Nicolas Gagliano violin. WINSTON CHOI was Laureate of the 2003 Honens International Piano Competition (Canada) and winner of France's 2002 Concours International de Piano 20e siècle d'Orléans. He regularly performs in recital and with orchestra throughout North America and Europe. Already a prolific recording artist, he can be heard on the Albany, Arktos, Crystal Records, empreintes DIGITales, Intrada and QuadroFrame labels. He is Associate Professor and Head of Piano at the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University.