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47th season | 393rd event

Sunday February 25, 2018

Gallery 345, 345 Sorauren Avenue, Toronto

New Music Concerts presents:


TRIO ARKEL

Marie Bérard violin Teng Li viola Winona Zelenka cello



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Canadian New Music Network 
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TRIO **Arkel**

Marie Bérard violin Teng Li viola Winona Zelenka cello

Special Screening @ 6:30:

My War Years: Arnold Schoenberg

(A Larry Weinstein Production)

Concert @ 8:00

Programme:

Kaija Saariaho (Finland b.1952)

Cloud Trio (2009)

Krzysztof Penderecki (Poland b.1933)

String Trio (1990-91)

— *Intermission* —

James Rolfe (Canada b.1961)

And Then Grace (2000)

Arnold Schoenberg (Austria/USA 1874-1951)

String Trio, Op.45 (1946)

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

New Music Concerts

Robert Aitken, c.m., Artistic Director

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Kaija Saariaho (Finland b.1952)

Cloud Trio (2009)

Kaija Saariaho is a prominent member of a group of Finnish composers and performers who are now, in mid-career, making a worldwide impact. Born in Helsinki in 1952, she studied at the Sibelius Academy with the pioneering modernist Paavo Heininen and in Freiburg with Brian Ferneyhough and Klaus Huber, attended the Darmstadt summer courses, and, from 1982, worked at the IRCAM research institute in Paris. At IRCAM, Saariaho developed techniques of computer-assisted composition and acquired fluency in working on tape and with live electronics. Saariaho was also influenced by the French 'spectralist' composers, whose techniques are based on computer analysis of the sound-spectrum. This analytical approach inspired her to develop her own method for creating harmonic structures. More recently Saariaho has turned to vocal music, with outstanding success. Her opera *L'Amour de loin* received widespread acclaim in its premiere production directed by Peter Sellars at the 2000 Salzburg Festival, and won the composer a prestigious Grawemeyer Award. The experience of writing for voices has led to a simplification of Saariaho's language, with a new vein of modally oriented melody accompanied by more regular repeating patterns. In the profusion of large and small works which Saariaho has produced in recent years, two features which have marked her whole career continue to stand out. One is a close and productive association with individual artists; the other is a concern, shown equally in her choice of subject matter and texts and in the profusion of expression marks in her scores, to make her music not a working-out of abstract processes but an urgent communication from composer to listener of ideas, images and emotions.

A string trio is a fascinating ensemble. Even if its instruments come from the same family it magnifies the individual characters of each. When writing the trio, I was surprised how different it was to writing for a string quartet. In this piece, the three instruments all have different tasks and functions, they represent very different aspects of string playing. These tasks are sometimes very concrete: the violin tends to behave as an echo or reverberation, the viola creates new clouds next to the existing ones and the cello often has a function of a shadow to the upper instrumental lines.

My ideas for this piece are about common textures; how to create one coherent texture - still complex and detailed - with individual lines. The four sections of the piece have their own colours and characters, and I leave it to the listener to imagine what kinds of clouds were their sources of inspiration.

Why *Cloud Trio*? When composing this piece in the French Alps (Les Arcs), watching the big sky above mountains I realized once again how rich a metaphor a natural element can be: its state or shape is so recognizable, and yet it is always varied and rich in detail. *Cloud Trio* is written for and dedicated to the Zebra Trio. — *Kajja Saariaho*

Krzysztof Penderecki (Poland b.1933)

String Trio (1990-91)

A violinist and pianist by training, **Krzysztof Penderecki** studied composition with Artur Malewski and Stanislas Wiechowicz at the Krakow Academy of Music where he was subsequently appointed as professor in 1958. He rapidly acquired international fame with his first works in the serial vein (*Strophen*, 1959; *Anaklasis*, 1960). Microtonal intervals, clusters and glissandos characterize his influential sound-mass compositions of the 1960s such as his *Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima* (1960) and *Passion According to Saint Luke* (1966). In the 1970s these avant-garde gestures were abandoned in favour of post-romantic simplicity and conventional forms such as concertos and symphonies. Penderecki's celebrity also grew through his operas (*The Devils of Loudun*, 1969) and in the cinema, where his music was used by directors such as Stanley Kubrick and Martin Scorsese. Extensive political-social associations can also be found in his epic *Polish Requiem* which he began in 1980. In 1972, Penderecki was appointed as rector of the State Academy of Music in Krakow and also taught at Yale University in the USA from 1973 to 1978. Penderecki has gained an international reputation as the conductor of both his own compositions and other works and has been rewarded with doctorates and honorary professorships from dozens of universities and conservatories around the world.

Penderecki's dramatic and lyrical "String Trio" scored for violin, viola, and cello, of approximately 13 1/2 minutes in duration, was composed in 1990 - 91. Nine strident block chords open this work, and the viola opens announcing its character to us in a rhapsodic and lamenting "Andante" solo. Fourteen strident chords, and the cello enters with a flighty "Allegretto" solo that has a touch of the plaintive. Three chords. Pause. Then seven chords make way for a highly brilliant and energetic violin solo. The three exchange rolling, on-rushing sixteenth-note triplets in "Vivo" tempo. Descending pizzicati introduce the lamenting character of the first "Adagio" trio which is expanded upon by all the instruments. Again we hear the rolling triplets, interlaced with violent marcato attacks on repeated block chords. The second "Adagio" quickly grows from this, expanded by imitative counterpoint which reaches

an incredible emotional tension, the two higher instruments ascending and the cello falling away from them. A single sustained note with a hint of the triplets. A vivace finale sneaks up on us with a jolly Bartókian-like theme which is developed in fugal style. A brief pizzicati and the fugue begins again in ever increasing tempi. The pizzicati episode is developed further. The fugue theme is played in unison and then breaks apart in separate contrapuntal lines with imitative shakes, incredibly fast virtuosic runs and other passages which build to a classic end. — "Blue" *Gene Tyranny*, *AllMusic.com*

James Rolfe (Canada b.1961)

And Then Grace (2000)

Toronto composer **James Rolfe** has been commissioned and performed by ensembles, orchestras, choirs, theatres, and opera companies in Canada, the USA, Europe, Asia, Australia, and New Zealand. His work has been recognized with a Guggenheim Fellowship, the K. M. Hunter Music Award, the Louis Applebaum Composers Award, the Jules Léger Prize for New Chamber Music, SOCAN's Jan V. Matejcek Concert Music Award, a Chalmers Arts Fellowship, and the Outstanding Choral Work Award from the Association of Canadian Choral Communities.

The Queen of Puddings Music Theatre Company production of Mr. Rolfe's opera *Beatrice Chancy* played to sold-out houses and rave reviews in Toronto, Dartmouth, and Edmonton. The company later produced *Inês*, which was nominated for a Dora Award. Three masques (*Orpheus and Eurydice*, *Aeneas and Dido*, and *Europa*) were premiered by The Toronto Masque Theatre to critical and audience acclaim. *Elijah's Kite*, an opera for children, was co-produced in New York by Tapestry Opera and the Manhattan School of Music, and given its Canadian premiere before the Governor-General at Rideau Hall. His opera *Swoon* was premiered by the Canadian Opera Company, which subsequently commissioned *Crush*, mounted in a workshop production at The Banff Centre in July 2015. Current projects include an operatic version of Gogol's *The Overcoat* with writer Morris Panych, to be produced by Tapestry Opera with Canadian Stage and Vancouver Opera (running March 27 to April 14, 2018 in Toronto, and April 28 to May 12 in Vancouver) and the song cycle *I Think We Are Angels* for Soundstreams (6-7 June 2018).

Like its title, an anagram of Gwendolyn MacEwen's poem "The Grand Dance", *And Then Grace* freely remixes certain elements of her poem. Musical ephemera whirl past. Some come from an imagined vocal rendering of the poem, others from left field—Barry White, the South Park movie, ersatz Stravinsky,

numerous plundered snippets of my own pieces—but like so many ghosts, they never settle down or take root. *And Then Grace* was commissioned by The Gallery Players Association with the assistance of the Ontario Arts Council. — *James Rolfe*

Arnold Schoenberg (Austria/USA 1874-1951)

String Trio, Op.45 (1946)

Arnold Schoenberg (born Vienna 13 September 1874, died Los Angeles 13 July 1951) was a revolutionary Austrian composer and painter, associated with the expressionist movement in German poetry and art, and the leader of the Second Viennese School of composition. Schoenberg was admired early in his career for simultaneously extending the traditionally opposed German Romantic styles of Brahms and Wagner. Later, his name would come to personify radical innovations in atonality (Schoenberg preferred the term pantonality) that would become the most polemical feature of 20th-century art music. In the 1920s, Schoenberg developed the twelve-tone technique, an influential compositional method of manipulating an ordered series of all twelve notes in the chromatic scale. Following the election of the Nazi Party in 1933 Schoenberg's works were denounced as degenerate Jewish music and he left Berlin for the United States in 1934. Schoenberg was also a painter, an important music theorist, and an influential teacher of composition; his students included Alban Berg, Anton Webern, Hanns Eisler, Egon Wellesz, and later John Cage, Lou Harrison, Earl Kim, Leon Kirchner, and other prominent musicians. Many of Schoenberg's practices, including the formalization of compositional method and his insistence that audiences should listen analytically are echoed in avant-garde musical thought throughout the 20th century.

The String Trio op. 45 was commissioned by the music department of Harvard University for a symposium on Musical Criticism in spring 1947. It was premiered by members of the Walden String Quartet at Harvard (in Cambridge, Massachusetts) on 1 May 1947. Schoenberg had begun work on the piece already in June 1946, but the majority was composed between 20 August - i.e. only two-and-a-half weeks after Schoenberg suffered a severe heart attack - and 23 September. This traumatic episode, which Schoenberg survived only through an injection directly into his heart, took its toll on the 71-year-old composer, and Schoenberg told Thomas Mann (as reported in "Die Entstehung des Doktor Faustus") that his Trio reflected his physical and psychological suffering during this period. The single-movement work is divided into five sections: three "parts" and two "episodes." Part three begins like Part one and recapitulates aspects of the

whole work. Thematic development is spread throughout the work. The piece ends with a 12-note statement in the violin in which the basic motifs are presented. The variety of surface details (abrupt dynamic contrasts, expressionistic string effects, variations in tone) stand in contrast to the rigorous serialism that undergirds the work's structure.

— *Camille Crittenden, Arnold Schoenberg Center*

PERFORMER BIOGRAPHIES

Best known as the concertmaster of the Canadian Opera Company Orchestra (COC), **Marie Bérard** is also a sought-after chamber musician, soloist, recording artist and teacher. She is a former member of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and has performed with a variety of smaller ensembles such as Amici, Array Music and New Music Concerts. She is also a member of Trio Arkel as well as the ARC Ensemble which has toured in Europe, China and the United States. Highly regarded as an interpreter of contemporary music, Ms. Bérard has released a recording of a concerto by Henry Kucharzyk for violin and brass ensemble on the Opening Day label and can be heard on numerous CBC recordings. Ms. Bérard is a regular performer at chamber music festivals, notably the Domaine Forget International Festival, the Ottawa International Chamber Music Festival, The Blair Atholl Festival in Scotland, and holds the position of Associate Concertmaster of the Mainly Mozart Festival in San Diego. Ms. Bérard joined the faculty of the Glenn Gould School in the fall of 2000 and plays a 1767 Pietro Landolfi violin.

Teng Li is establishing herself as a diverse and dynamic performer internationally. Along with her TSO solo appearances, Ms. Li has performed with the National Chamber Orchestra, the Santa Rosa Symphony, the Munich Chamber Orchestra, the Haddonfield Symphony, Shanghai Opera Orchestra, the Canadian Sinfonietta and Esprit Orchestra. Ms. Li is also an active recitalist and chamber musician participating in the festivals of Marlboro, Santa Fe, Mostly Mozart, Music from Angel Fire, Rome, Moritzburg (Germany) and the Rising Stars Festival in Caramoor. She has performed with the Guarneri Quartet in New York (04/05), at Carnegie Hall (Weill Recital Hall) and with the 92nd St. "Y" Chamber Music Society. Teng was also featured with the Guarneri Quartet in their last season (2009), and was also a member of the prestigious Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society Two Program. Teng is a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia.

Winona Zelenka is one of Canada's finest cellists on the scene today. As a soloist, she has performed concerti with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the Mississauga Symphony and the Toronto Philharmonia

Orchestra among many others. She is a dedicated recitalist and chamber musician as well as a proponent of new music, having performed several world premieres of works written for her by Canadian composers. In 2006 she formed Trio Arkel with violinist Marie Berard and violist Teng Li which has presented a chamber music series at Trinity St. Paul's Centre in Toronto since 2013. In June of 2010 Winona released her first CD set of the Bach Suites for Solo Cello, a recording on Marquis Classics. Her second recording, released in 2012, is titled "Connections" and is a collaboration with the celebrated pianist Connie Shih. A graduate of Indiana University under the tutelage of Janos Starker, Winona has won orchestral positions in England, Canada and the United States. Her professional career has included two seasons of Acting Principal Cellist of the Santa Fe Opera Orchestra, and five seasons as Acting Principal Cellist of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, of which she has been a member since 2001.

My War Years: Arnold Schoenberg

(A Larry Weinstein Production)

Actors portraying Arnold Schoenberg and his friends and students (including Alban Berg, Anton Webern, Alexander von Zemlinsky, Alma Mahler, Erwin Stein, Roberto Gerhard, Wassily Kandinsky and Hanns Eisler) tell the story of the composer's life in their own words. The film takes us on a journey from the beginning of the 20th century, when Schoenberg composed his last post-Romantic pieces and first atonal works, through to the WWI years, to the discovery of his Twelve-Tone method in the early 1920s. It features excerpts from live performances of Schoenberg's works such as *Verklärte Nacht*, the *Gurre-Lieder*, the Second String Quartet, *Erwartung* and *Pierrot Lunaire*. Featured artists include: Pierre Boulez and the Ensemble Inter-Contemporain, Marianne Pousseur, the Schoenberg Quartet, London Symphony Orchestra, Oliver Knussen and Michael Tilson Thomas. Produced and directed by Larry Weinstein.

Our next event:

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Premieres of new works on texts by
dissident Iranian poet Simin Behbahani

Thursday March 22, 2018 @ 8 • Intro @ 7:15

Marie-Annick Béliveau soprano
Instruments of Happiness guitar quartet

Tim Brady director

The Music Gallery at 197 John Street

