



WHITE ROCK
CONCERTS

AFIARA STRING QUARTET

VALERIE LI, VIOLIN
YURI CHO, VIOLIN
DAVID SAMUEL, VIOLA
ADRIAN FUNG, CELLO
FEBRUARY 11, 2011

about the artists



Currently Graduate Quartet in Residence at the Juilliard School, the **Afiara String Quartet** won top prize at the Munich International Music Competition in 2008 and was winner of the coveted Concert Artists Guild Competition, in that same year. Twice running, the Afiara was among laureates of the Banff International String Quartet Competition.

Already in its young career, the Quartet has appeared at Carnegie Hall and at San Francisco State Center for the Arts. Recent engagements include San Francisco Performances, Chamber Music of the Rockies, Montreal Chamber Music Festival. The all-Canadian Afiara String Quartet is a regular visitor to Banff and is featured in the Road to Banff documentary.

Violinist **Valerie Li** has performed at the Kennedy Center and Carnegie Hall. Early in her career, she won First Prize in Chamber Music at the National Music Festival of Canada and was the recipient of a British Columbia Arts Council Award to study at Peabody, in Baltimore. Ms. Li has played with the Baltimore and Singapore Symphonies and served as Concertmaster of the New England Philharmonia, the Peabody Symphony Orchestra and the National Youth Orchestra of Canada.



Our Next Concert

Richard Margison, Tenor

Kinza Tyrrell, Pianist

Friday, March 25, 2011

*This concert takes place, as usual at the
White Rock Baptist Church*

**COME PREPARED TO RENEW
FOR THE 11-12 SEASON!**

about the artists (continued)

Violinist **Yuri Cho** has been a featured soloist with the Seoul Royal Symphony in Korea and Japan, the Concordia Symphony Orchestra in Canada, and has performed in Carnegie Hall and Alice Tully Hall in New York, as well as on tour in Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Slovakia and the Czech Republic. Ms. Cho was named an Osher Scholar at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where she is currently a faculty member.

Violist **David Samuel** has performed in Canada, the U.S. and more than a dozen countries in Europe, where his concerts have taken him to Berlin Konzerthaus, Leipzig Gewandhaus, Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center. As an orchestral musician, Mr. Samuel has been the principal violist of the Juilliard Orchestra and the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival Orchestra. As a chamber musician, his collaborators include Robert Mann, Bonnie Hampton, Norman Fischer and Pinchas Zukerman. Mr. Samuel is currently a faculty member at the San Francisco Conservatory.

Cellist **Adrian Fung** has given solo recitals in New York's Carnegie Hall, the Goethe Institute, Montreal's Pollack Hall, the Toronto Centre of the Performing Arts, the Living Arts Centre and Taiwan's National Concert Hall. He has appeared as soloist with Ensemble 212, the Columbia Chamber Players and the Oakville Symphony. Mr. Fung was awarded an Artist Grant from the New York Foundation of the Arts and received the Goodrich Award from the National Arts Centre of Canada.

www.afiara.com

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message from the president

How time flies (or as Groucho Marx said, "Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana").

At our next concert, on March 25th, featuring the spectacular tenor Richard Margison, it will again be time to renew for next season. And you are the lucky ones, with first rights to renew at that concert and the one on April 22, before we open up any remaining subscriptions to the over 400 people on our waiting list. And as I told you last time, it will be a grand season, with seven exciting concerts.

Back for a full concert is *musica intima*. Also appearing is the renowned soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian, currently appearing with the Canadian Opera Company in the *Magic Flute*. Two of Canada's leading instrumental ensembles, the St. Lawrence String Quartet, and wind ensemble Pentaedre will warm those cold winter nights. After a pursuit lasting literally years, we have secured internationally heralded pianist Angela Hewitt. And the season will also be graced by the fine choir from Toronto, The Elmer Iseler Singers. We will round off the season in grand style with a performance by the full Victoria Symphony Orchestra.

I am thrilled to be able to present this season to you, from start to finish filled with top international artists that also again happen to be all Canadian.

So please avoid disappointment by renewing early.

Rick Gambrel
rickgambrel@gmail.com

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White Rock Concerts c/o Community Arts Council Suite 90 - 1950 152 St. Surrey BC V4A 9E3
rickgambrel@gmail.com or gzuk@telus.net
www.whiterockconcerts.com

AFIARA STRING QUARTET

VALERIE LI, VIOLIN

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ADRIAN FUNG, CELLO

Hugo Wolf

(1860-1903)

Italian Serenade in G Major

Brett Keüper Abigaña

(1980 -)

String Quartet No. 2 (2010)

Psalm

Berceuse

Vocalise

March

Franz Schubert

(1797-1828)

Quartettsatz [movement] in C minor, D.703

Allegro assai

INTERMISSION

Ludwig Van Beethoven

(1770-1827)

String Quartet in F Major, Op. 59, No. 1

[Rasumovsky]

Allegro

Allegretto vivace e sempre scherzando

Adagio molto e mesto

Thème Russe: Allegro

Afiara String Quartet is a winner of the Concert Artists Guild

International Competition and is represented by:

Concert Artists Guild--850 Seventh Ave.

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Hugo Wolf

Italian Serenade

Wolf's life bears ironic similarities to Schubert's and Schumann's: poverty, frustrated love, disease, madness, and early death. With those masters he also shares the crown of German art song, perhaps even surpassing Schubert in terms of a understanding of the relationship between language and music. Between 1887 and 1889 he produced his most important work consisting of two books of songs inspired by poetry from Spain and Italy.

However, songs were not all that Hugo Wolfe wrote. Along with a complete string quartet, his *Italian Serenade*, - a single movement for the same combination - has become a staple of the 19th century repertoire. After he died, fragments of a second string quartet and sketches for a piano quintet and a violin sonata were discovered among his papers.

Curiously, the *Italian Serenade* is bright and light-hearted from its opening melodic motif until a kind of musical shrug which ends the work. Displaying a wonderful balance of all four instruments, it belies the difficult circumstances of Wolf's life under which it was composed.

Brett Keüper Abigaña

String Quartet no. 2 (2010)

String Quartet no. 2 was written for the Afiara Quartet and is dedicated to the memory of a mutual friend, Betty Samuel. The work is in four movements, each trying to capture a facet of Betty's personality. The first movement, Psalm, has a very simple, almost un-moving harmonic background supporting a wandering vocal-like line in the viola. The second movement is a Berceuse, a lilting lullaby with a playful side. The third movement, Vocalise, is a strophic song over harmony which is simple on the surface and never actually arrives at a resolution. The final movement is a sarcastic circus march that slowly disintegrates into strands of the three preceding movements before restarting and spinning wildly out of control.

Brett Abigaña has written a wide variety of works including chamber music, song cycles, and numerous pieces for orchestra and symphonic band, including several concertos. He has gained a reputation for writing expres-

sive, melodic music. Mr. Abigaña's is currently working on his first Symphony, commissioned by the United States Naval Academy Band. A graduate of the Julliard School and Boston University Mr. Abigaña also studied overseas in Paris. He is currently on the faculty at Boston University, and is an affiliated artist at The Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Franz Schubert

Quartettsatz [movement] in C minor, D. 703

The string quartet absorbed Schubert throughout his lifetime, and he wrote most of his twenty quartets for his family ensemble in which he played viola. But the *Quartettsatz* - along with the monumental *Death and the Maiden* Quartet, written two years later -, suggest an ensemble far beyond the talents of amateurs. Some scholars believe that Schubert intended to add another three movements to the *Quartettsatz*, yet there is a perfection about the piece that also suggests he knew when to stop. The *Quartettsatz* is a fully developed work with many themes and moods and the genius of the piece seems to lie in its condensation and intensity.

Ludwig Van Beethoven

String Quartet Op. 59 No. 1 ["Razumovsky"]

Beethoven's sixteen string quartets span thirty-six of his fifty-seven years and clearly define the early, middle and late periods of his compositional life. In broadest terms, these so-called "Periods" reflect Beethoven's awareness of his encroaching deafness, from its first to its final and awful silence.

Named after Count Razumovsky, the wealthy nobleman who commissioned them, they clearly represent Beethoven's middle period. The works met with a discouraging reception from players of the day, ranging from sheer animosity to puzzled bewilderment. Members of one quartet reportedly laughed at the first of these quartets, which may have caused Beethoven's famous retort: "Do you think I worry about your wretched fiddle when the spirit speaks to me?" When the first violinist said to Beethoven, "Surely you do not consider this music," the composer was ready with a prophetic reply: "Not for you, but for a later age."



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