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2018-2019  
OUR 62<sup>ND</sup> SEASON

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# DUO CONCERTANTE

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WITH NANCY DAHN, VIOLIN, TIMOTHY STEEVES, PIANO  
AND THE JOHN AVISON CHAMBER ORCHESTRA  
CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM ROWSON

Friday, March 22, 2019

## About the Artists

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# DUO CONCERTANTE

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WITH NANCY DAHN, VIOLIN  
AND TIMOTHY STEEVES, PIANO



Canada's premiere violin and piano ensemble, Duo Concertante, are partners in music and in life. Their name, Duo Concertante, was taken from the inscription over Beethoven's Kreutzer Sonata which reads *in stilo molto concertante*, implying that the two performers must be equal and dynamic voices.

This notion defines Duo Concertante's artistic relationship. Known for the passion and brilliance of their performances, critics have praised Nancy Dahn and Timothy Steeves' "deeply integrated performances that flow naturally as if the music were being created on the spot" (Gramophone). The Duo's busy touring schedule across North America, Europe, and China, has led to performances at Wigmore Hall, Carnegie's Weill Recital Hall, Roy Thomson Hall, the National Arts Centre, and the Forbidden City Concert Hall in Beijing.

Duo Concertante have consistently revealed a passion for new music, commissioning a total of thirty-five new works for violin and piano from many of Canada's leading composers. Their CDs *Wild Honey* and *Wild Bird* consist entirely of commissioned Canadian works and in May 2017 the Duo released *Incarnation*, an all-Canadian album featuring works by Chan Ka Nin, Denis Gougeon, Alice Ho, Jocelyn Morlock and Andrew Staniland. It was recently picked by CBC as one of the top ten classical recordings of 2017 and won the 2018 ECMA for Classical Recording of the Year.

Based at Memorial University in St. John's, Nancy and Tim are energetic, experienced teachers who have given hundreds of master classes and workshops across Canada, in the US, and in China. Their commitment to working with young musicians gave rise to the annual Tuckamore Chamber Music Festival, which they founded in 2000 to bring together young chamber music performers with world-class artists and ensembles for an intensive two weeks of learning and performance.

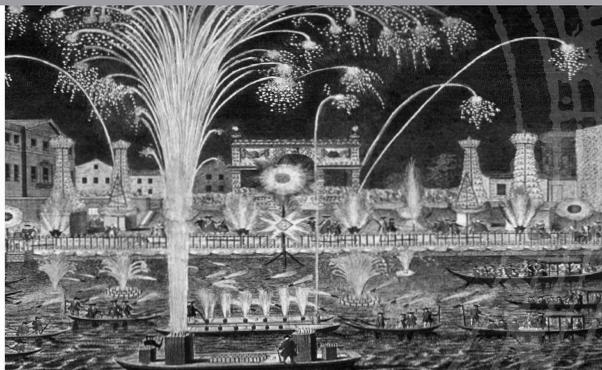
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## Programme

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# DUO CONCERTANTE

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WITH NANCY DAHN, VIOLIN, TIMOTHY STEEVES, PIANO  
AND THE JOHN AVISON CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

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**Sonata in E Major for Violin and Keyboard BWV1016**     **Johann Sebastian Bach**  
(1685-1750)

- I.     *Adagio*
- II.    *Allegro*
- III.   *Adagio ma non tanto*
- IV.   *Allegro*

**Sonata No. 1 in A minor, Op. 105**     **Robert Schumann**  
(1810-1856)

- I.     *Mit leidenschaftlichem Ausdruck*
- II.    *Allegretto*
- III.   *Lebhaft*

**F-A-E Sonata in C minor WoO2: III. Scherzo**     **Johannes Brahms**  
(1833-1897)

## INTERMISSION

**Concerto for Piano, Violin & Strings in D minor MWV O4**     **Felix Mendelssohn**  
(1809-1847)

- I.     *Allegro*
- II.    *Adagio*
- III.   *Allegro Molto*

with the John Avison Chamber Orchestra, conducted by William Rowson

### **Robert Schumann**

#### **Sonata No. 1 in A minor, Op. 105 for violin and piano**

Schumann's first movement, designated "*With passionate expression*," sets a mood of quiet unrest with the main theme beginning in the violin's low, throaty range. Throughout, the piano does not merely "arpeggiate", but exhibits the distinctive multiple voices and textures that are quintessentially Schumann. A special feature of this movement is the masterful blurring of the border between development and recapitulation that became such a Romantic art.

The Allegretto shows the intimate charm of many of Schumann's piano miniatures. Twice he interrupts with contrasting episodes—the first in the contemplative manner of Eusebius, the introverted fictional character of his prose and musical writings, and the second à la Florestan, his happy, extroverted persona.

The finale cavorts like a scherzo but with a demonic cast, as opposed to the elfin scherzos characteristic of Mendelssohn, Schumann's contemporary. A wonderful major-mode middle episode imparts a lyrical warmth to offset the more "brusque" drive of the main theme. Toward the end Schumann shows his concern for unity across movements by reintroducing the low restless main theme of the first movement before the final fiendish push to the close.

*Notes by Jane Vial Jaffe*

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### **Johannes Brahms**

#### **F-A-E Sonata in C minor WoO2: III. Scherzo**

The F-A-E Sonata, a four-movement work for violin and piano, is a collaborative musical work by three composers: Robert Schumann, the young Johannes Brahms, and Schumann's pupil Albert Dietrich. It was composed in Düsseldorf in October 1853.

The sonata was Schumann's idea as a gift and tribute to violinist Joseph Joachim, whom the three composers had recently befriended. Joachim had adopted the Romantic German phrase "Frei aber einsam" ("free but lonely") as his personal motto. The composition's movements are all based on the musical notes F-A-E, the motto's initials, as a musical cryptogram.

Schumann assigned each movement to one of the composers. Dietrich wrote the substantial first movement in sonata form. Schumann followed with a short Intermezzo as the second movement. The third movement, the Scherzo, was by Brahms, who had already proven himself

## Programme Notes *(continued)*

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a master of this form in his E flat minor Scherzo for piano and the scherzi in his first two piano sonatas. Schumann provided the finale.

*Notes from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*

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### Felix Mendelssohn

#### Concerto for Piano, Violin & Strings MWV O4 (Double Concerto)

Felix Mendelssohn was only 14 years old when he composed his *Concerto for Violin and Piano in D minor*. The composer gave the first performance in 1823 with his friend and violin teacher Edward Rietz at the Mendelssohn family home in Berlin in front of 60 guests. Following the premier, Mendelssohn re-scored the concerto and added winds and timpani. This revision was performed about a week later at the Berlin Schauspielhaus. The work then fell into oblivion for over 100 years until the autographic score was re-discovered at the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin. The first 20th-century performance with string orchestra was given in Berlin in 1957 and the first performance of the wind version in 1999.

In style and texture, the work closely resembles Mozart and follows the traditional fast - slow - fast concerto structure. However, even at his young age, Mendelssohn is already writing with a more dramatic and romantic sensibility, and one hears, particularly in the second movement, the beautiful lyricism for which he became famous. He uses recitativo sections to increase drama, and Mendelssohn's characteristic sparkling and virtuosic writing is in much evidence in both solo instruments and extends beyond the technical expectations of his day.

*Notes by Timothy Steeves*

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### Orchestra Members

Violin 1	Violin 2	Viola	Cello	Bass
Mark Ferris	Domagoj Ivanovic	Isabelle Roland	Sue Round	Les Kasprzak
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## George's Blog

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I must start out tonight's blog with a profound "thank you" to the entire *White Rock Concerts* audience for that incredible version of "Happy Birthday" - sung so meaningfully along with the full throated *Vancouver Cantata Singers*... what an honour! You really did take me by surprise.

And then the second wonderful surprise of the evening was the extraordinary performance by the *Cantata Singers*. Well, not only was their performance extraordinary, but equally memorable was the wonderful reception which you gave to them! Joe Whitman, Secretary of *White Rock Concerts*, nailed it beautifully when he described the evening as "Magical, mesmerizing and magnificent." I added... and "masterfully musical." My impression was that their conductor, Paula Kremer, played her choir like a precious instrument.

Tonight is an opportunity to meet a pair of colleagues who I have not seen for many years. Tim Steeves played for me many years ago on one of my frequent tours of the Maritimes. After concerts in St. John's and on the Avalon Peninsula, I headed up to Goose Bay with members of the Newfoundland Symphony to play for schools at several of the isolated air-access-only out-ports of coastal Labrador. We were a crazy ensemble of violin, accordion, clarinet and bassoon and our programmes included Mozart, Vivaldi and Strauss, as well as the theme songs from *The Pink Panther* and *The Simpsons*. Some of the schools had as few as seven students. The picture is from the unincorporated village of Mud Lake.

Labrador tours are inevitably at the mercy of the weather, and this trip was no exception. Fog blanketed Goose Bay as we finally took-off, three hours later than planned. "Where are we going?" I shouted to the pilot over the din of the aircraft's twin motors. "I don't know yet," he yelled back, "We'll just have to find out what's open." At 3,500 feet the sun was shining and the town of Goose Bay lay under a thick blanket of snowy alto cumulus. Our pilot turned his craft due East (more or less towards Greenland) and was on the radio to nearby airports. After a few moments he raised his thumbs in a sign of victory. "Black Tickle is open, let's start there!" At least we would be able to rescue one of the three concerts scheduled for that day.

The tiny village of Black Tickle (population 220) is about as far out in the Atlantic Ocean as one can possibly travel and still remain in Canada. Located on the Island of Ponds, off the coast of mainland Labrador, the community is subjected to fierce Atlantic storms, as well as endless banks of fog from the nearby Grand Banks. The village is nearer to Qaanaq, Greenland, than it is to Ottawa. According to *Google Maps* it takes approximately 2 days and fifteen hours to reach

either. As the crow flies (and as we flew that day) from Goose Bay it was only 270 km.

We landed beneath an ominously low ceiling. A school bus drew alongside the plane as the motors were stilled. In twenty minutes we were in the school, set up and ready to play. All twenty two students were there that day, and a sizeable number of the town's adult population joined us. As we played, our pilot stood at the back of the room. Every few moments he disappeared to the Principal's office to check the weather conditions. But in fact, he didn't need the telephone. He could see the front moving in. We were in the middle of an arrangement of "*La Donna è mobile*" from the opera Rigoletto, when he started waving his arms furiously, gesturing first to the door, then to his watch, then helplessly at the approaching clouds. As we came to an early stop, he pre-empted the balance of the concert. "Sorry folks." he called out. "If we don't get off the ground in the next twenty minutes you'll have house guests for a week!"

The teachers nodded sympathetically, helped us dismantle our music stands, thrust a huge bag of sandwiches into our hands, and piled us back into the school bus. Fifteen minutes later we were airborne. The fog buried Black Tickle five minutes after we left. The ocean surrounding the Island of Ponds was no longer visible. All we could see, emerging magically from the clouds, was the gleaming, translucent peak of an offshore iceberg, frozen in the very sea that created it. As we climbed above Black Tickle, the sun shone an incredible brilliant hue above the cloud blanket. We turned toward Cartwright, a mere 70 km inland, but in minutes our pilot reported that the airport there was socked in. "We have just enough gas to make it to Rigolet." He paused, then added "with luck they'll have fuel there for the trip home!"

We lunched on Black Tickle sandwiches. As we were landing, we could see the school bus waiting for us. It crossed our mind that by this time, given that our pilot had contacted at least eight airports and schools, on every remote airstrip in Nunatsiavut, a school bus was likely standing by in case we turned up at that particular village for our promised concert. And so, at the Rigolet school we once again played our repertoire, this time without interruption. Our pilot, meantime, had successfully found enough aviation fuel for the return trip and, when the school bus brought us back, we all breathed a collective sigh of relief that the Rigolet airfield had remained open for our final take off for the day.

That night, back in Goose Bay, I proudly reported to the funding agencies that, despite the most daunting weather, we had successfully played two out of our three scheduled concerts. A justly proud pronouncement.

But, in the end, we had one that was even better. Who else in the world could possibly claim to have played Rigoletto in Rigolet?

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