

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Michael Bridge, accordion (2021), **Jeanie Chung**, piano (1997),
Yegor Dyachkov, cello (2000), **James Ehnes**, violin (1992),
Francine Kay, piano (1990), **Vincent Lauzer**, recorder (2012),
Shannon Mercer, soprano (2006), **Blake Pouliot**, violin (2018),
Charles Richard-Hamelin, piano (2015)

A “wizard of the accordion” (CBC), **Michael Bridge** is internationally-renowned for his warm stage personality and striking musical versatility. He tours in Europe, across the USA and Canada, giving over one hundred concerts annually as a soloist, with orchestra, and with his two groups, Bridge & Wolak and Lodom Ensemble. A recipient of the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta’s Emerging Artist Medal, he is invested in the future of the accordion and performs almost exclusively his own transcriptions of concert music or new contemporary works, including over 50 world premiers.

Off stage, he is the first Canadian to pursue a doctorate in accordion performance, studying at the University of Toronto with Joseph Macerollo. While on tour, frequently he gives masterclasses at universities and plays school shows for all ages. Bridge’s first accordion was purchased at a garage sale for \$5 when he was five, and two decades later, he is redefining the perception of his traditional instrument.

Pianist **Jeanie Chung** enjoys a rewarding performing and teaching life. She has given solo recitals, concerto performances and chamber music concerts throughout North America, Central America, Europe, Asia, and Africa. Recent and long term collaborations include projects with Barry Shiffman, Andres Diaz, Colin Carr, Rachel Mercer, Ian Swensen, Yehonatan Berick, Mayumi Seiler, Susan Hoepfner, Ian Clarke, Frank Morelli, Shalom Bard, YaoGuang Zhai, William Vermeulen, Michael Sachs, Alexander Dobson, Laurence Lemieux, Margie Gillis, and Ted Robinson. Ms. Chung was the recipient of the Career Development Award from the Women’s Musical Club of Toronto and numerous grants from the Canada Council and the Chalmers Fund. She is a faculty member of the Royal Conservatory of Music’s Glenn Gould School and the Taylor Academy for Young Artists.

Since being named Artist of the Year by the CBC / WMCT’s CDA winner in 2000, cellist **Yegor Dyachkov** has gone on to perform throughout Europe, Latin America, Asia, Canada and the United States. He has appeared with major orchestras in Antwerp, Geneva, Montreal, Rio de Janeiro, Toronto and Vancouver, and has performed at international festivals in Evian, Kronberg, Lanaudiere, Ottawa, and Tanglewood. A champion of new music, he took part in Yo-Yo Ma’s Silk Road Project, and premiered works by Jacques Hetu, Christos Hatzis, Andre Prevost and Ana Sokolovic. He has recorded extensively for Chandos, Analekta and Atma. Deeply committed to chamber music, Dyachkov has partnered with the Arditti, Borromeo and St. Lawrence quartets, pianists Anton Kuerti, Marc-Andre Hamelin and Jean Saulnier, violinists

James Clark, Scott St. John, Axel Strauss and Antje Weithaas, cellist Steven Isserlis, and clarinetists James Campbell and Todd Palmer. Founding member of the Magellan Ensemble and of the Montreal Piano Trio, he teaches at the Schulich School of Music of McGill University and is professor of cello and head of strings at l'Université de Montreal.

James Ehnes has established himself as one of the most sought-after violinists on the international stage. Gifted with a rare combination of stunning virtuosity, serene lyricism and an unflinching musicality, Ehnes is a favorite guest at the world's most celebrated concert halls. Recent orchestral highlights include the MET Orchestra at Carnegie Hall, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, San Francisco Symphony, New York Philharmonic, Frankfurt Radio Symphony, London Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, and Munich Philharmonic.

His extensive discography of more than 50 releases has won many awards including two GRAMMY awards, a Gramophone award, and 11 Junos. Recent releases include the complete Beethoven Sonatas with pianist Andrew Armstrong, the 6 Solo Sonatas by Ysaÿe, and concerti by Kernis, Howard, Strauss, and Beethoven.

Ehnes is a fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and a member of both the Order of Manitoba and the Order of Canada. He plays the "Marsick" Stradivarius of 1715.

Noted for "an extraordinary range of colour" (*Montreal Gazette*), and "poetic brilliance" (*Toronto Star*), New York-based Canadian pianist **Francine Kay** has performed extensively as a soloist and chamber musician in Europe, North America, and Asia. Since making her debut with the Toronto Symphony, she has performed with major orchestras across North America under conductors Georg Tintner, Mark Laycock, Nurhan Arman, Agnes Grossman, Kevin Mallon, Jonathan Yates, and Simon Streatfeild. Amongst her many acclaimed recordings, *Debussy* was nominated for a JUNO award and chosen as Disc of the Month by the German publication, *Fono Forum*. Francine's performances have been broadcast on NPR, the BBC, WFMT, Radio France, and the CBC.

Francine Kay made her debut at the Carnegie Recital Hall as winner of the Pro Piano Competition. Ms. Kay is on the piano faculty at Princeton University, and at the Zodiac Academy and Festival in France.

Révélation Radio-Canada 2013-2014 and Breakthrough Artist of the Year (2012 Opus Awards), **Vincent Lauzer** graduated from McGill University where he studied with Matthias Maute. In October 2018, his recording of Vivaldi's concertos with Arion Baroque Orchestra and Alexander Weimann was awarded a Diapason d'Or by the French magazine *Diapason*. Winner of several prizes in national and international competitions, he has been awarded the 2015 Fernand Lindsay Career Award and the First Prize at the Stepping Stone of the Canadian Music Competition in 2012. In 2009, he was awarded the First Prize and the Audience Appreciation Prize in the Montreal International Recorder



Competition.

Vincent is a member of Flûte Alors! and Les Songes and performs as a soloist with Arion Baroque Orchestra, La Bande Montréal Baroque, the Pacific Baroque Orchestra and Les Violons du Roy.

Recognized for the luminosity and effortless agility of her voice, as well as her commanding stage presence and profound acting ability, Canadian soprano **Shannon Mercer** enthusiastically embraces a range of repertoire from early to contemporary music, from Francesca Caccini and Monteverdi to John Beckwith and Ana Sokolovic. Shannon has performed and specialized in many genres of the classical idiom including concert and recital engagements throughout North America and Europe all while sustaining an active recording presence, capturing some rarely performed works. Ms. Mercer also takes great pride in passing on her knowledge of singing to the next generation. Her passion for the artform and her talent translates into engaged and inspired students.

Violinist **Blake Pouliot** has joined the upper echelons of brilliant soloists, establishing himself as a consummate 21st century artist with the rigor and passion to shine for a lifetime. He has been praised by the *Toronto Star* as, “one of those special talents that comes along once in a lifetime.”

Pouliot has performed with the Detroit, Dallas, Milwaukee, Montreal, San Francisco, Seattle, and Toronto symphonies, among others. His debut album earned a five-star rating from *BBC Music Magazine* and a 2019 Juno Award nomination for Best Classical Album. Pouliot was named Grand Prize winner of the 2016 Orchestre symphonique de Montréal Manulife Competition.

Pouliot performs on the 1729 Guarneri del Gesù, on generous loan from the Canada Council for the Arts Musical Instrument Bank as First Laureate of both their 2018 and 2015 Competition.

Silver medalist and laureate of the Krystian Zimerman Prize at the 2015 International Chopin Piano Competition in Warsaw, Canadian pianist **Charles Richard-Hamelin** is standing out today as one of the most important musicians of his generation. Charles is the recipient of the Order of Arts and Letters of Quebec and the Career Development Award offered by the Women’s Musical Club of Toronto.

Richard-Hamelin has appeared in various prestigious festivals including La Roque d’Anthéron in France, the Prague Spring Festival, the “Chopin and his Europe” Festival in Warsaw and the Lanaudière Festival in Canada. As a soloist, he has performed with more than fifty ensembles including the main symphony orchestras of Canada, among others. He has recorded eight albums to this day, all published on the Analekta label. Most recently, the second volume of his complete Beethoven sonatas for violin and piano with Andrew Wan was released, as well as a new Chopin recital featuring the 24 Preludes, *the Andante spianato* and the *Grande polonaise brillante*, Op. 22.

PROGRAM

(1990) Francine Kay, piano

Jeux d'eau

Maurice Ravel
(1875-1937)

(1992) James Ehnes, violin

Fantasia No. 1 in B-flat major

Georg Philipp Telemann
(1681-1767)

1. Largo
2. Allegro
3. Grave
4. Allegro

Caprice No. 10: *Klage*

Sophie-Carmen Eckhardt-Gramatté
(1899-1974)

(1997) Jeanie Chung, piano

Sonata No. 21 in B flat major, D.960

Franz Schubert
(1797-1828)

1. Molto moderato

(2000) Yegor Dyachkov, cello

Sonata, Op. 25, No. 3

Paul Hindemith
(1895-1963)

(2006) Shannon Mercer, soprano

with Steven Philcox, piano

Music for a while from *Oedipus*

Henry Purcell
(1659-1695)

Y Gog Lwydlas = The Grey Cuckoo *

arr. Mervyn Roberts
(1906-1990)

Codiad yr Hedydd = The Rising of the Lark *

arr. Joseph Haydn
(1732-1809)

I could have danced all night,
from *My Fair Lady*

Frederick Loewe
(1901-1988)

*song translations from Welsh on pages 9-10

(2012) Vincent Lauzer, recorder

L'arte del arco: Variations on a theme of Corelli

Giuseppe Tartini
(1692-1770)

(2015) Charles Richard-Hamelin, piano

Preludes, Op. 28

Frédéric Chopin
(1810-1849)

No. 15 in D flat major

No. 16 in B flat minor

No. 17 in A flat major

(2018) Blake Pouliot, violin

with Hsin-I Huang, piano

Aucassin and Nicolette
Syncopation

Fritz Kreisler
(1875-1962)

(2021) Michael Bridge, accordion

Tango-Toccata

Petri Makkonen
(b. 1967)

NOTES

Those of you with long memories may recall a time before the pandemic when restaurants offered tasting menus: a single meal made up of small portions of a lot of different dishes. Wikipedia usefully tells us that these may be used “to provide a sample of a house specialty.” Today’s concert surely provides wonderful samples of WMCT’s house specialties. The following are my tasting notes. Bon appetit!

Ravel: *Jeux d'eau*

Partly inspired by Liszt’s earlier piece, *Les jeux d’eaux à la Villa d’Este*, Ravel wished to conjure up the “noise of water and ... the musical sounds which make one hear the sprays of water, the cascades, and the brooks.” On the manuscript he added a quotation from the French symbolist poet, Henri de Régnier: “Dieu fluvial riant de l’eau qui le chatouille...” [“River god laughing as the water tickles him ...”]. The work was dedicated to Fauré and given its first outing in 1901 for the informal group of Parisian musicians, artists, and writers known as Les Apaches and later publically by Ricardo Viñes.

Telemann: Fantasia No 1 in B flat major

Telemann is not exactly an unknown name, especially if your tastes incline towards the baroque, but we probably hear a very small part of his output. And that is because he wrote such an incredible amount of music; one authoritative source calls him “the most prolific composer of his time.” In this regard he had the advantage of living a very long time for an eighteenth century man – 86 years. The 12 Fantasias for solo violin were published in Hamburg in 1735 and follow in a long tradition of German works for solo string instruments that nevertheless explore ways to suggest complex textures.

Eckhardt-Gramatté: Caprice No. 10: *Klage*

Eckhardt-Gramatté was born in Russia where her mother was a music teacher to the Tolstoy family and she spent some years in an English Tolstoyan colony run on utopian socialist ideas. Study at the Paris Conservatoire on piano and violin, at both of which she excelled, was followed by a career as a performer, sometimes on piano and violin in the same concert. She performed with Stokowski and with his encouragement studied composition in Berlin with Max Trapp and finally moved to Winnipeg with her art historian husband in 1953. The ten Caprices for solo violin were written in the decade after 1924 and demonstrate her intimate knowledge of both the classics of this repertory and the possibilities of the instrument.

Schubert: Sonata No. 21 in B flat major

This is the last of the three sonatas that Schubert wrote in 1828. The context of these works has been discussed recently in previous notes: the miraculous compositional output of his final two years and the rapid decline in his health, followed by his very early death. Perhaps it is enough here to quote Alfred Brendel, one of the most vigorous modern champions of Schubert’s piano music: “Of Schubert’s last three sonatas ... one could call the one in B flat the most beautiful and moving, the most resigned and harmoniously balanced ... everything in [this] sonata seems controlled and considered.”

Hindemith: Sonata, Op. 25, No. 3

Paul Hindemith began his performing career at an early age; you can find a photo online of the three young Hindemith children - Paul, Toni, and Rudolf - billed as the Frankfurt Children’s Trio. Both Paul the violinist and Rudolf the cellist went on to have careers as performing musicians, and in Paul’s case this overlapped with a growing portfolio of compositions. He was closely associated with the early years of the Donaueschingen Music Festival, where he appeared both as a performer – the violist in the Amar Quartet – and as a composer. The Op 25 sonata was written there in 1922 for the quartet’s cellist, Maurits Frank. “We had,” the composer wrote later, “a competition in writing cello sonatas; I wrote four movements that evening.”

Purcell: *Music for a While* from *Oedipus*

This aria is part of the incidental music Purcell supplied for a revival of John Dryden and Nathaniel Lee’s popular play *Oedipus: A Tragedy*. It occurs as an

interlude in Act 3 and is set "In a Grove." Here a bunch of pagan priests led by the blind Tiresius attempt to conjure up the ghost of Oedipus's father, Lajus, in order to ask him who it was that killed him. Dryden's preface makes it quite clear why this scene is introduced: "[Our] treat is what your palates relish most/ Charm! song! and show! a murder and a ghost!"

Mervyn Roberts (arr.): *Y Gog Lwydlas - The Grey Cuckoo*

Joseph Haydn (arr.): *Codiad yr Hedydd - The Rising of the Lark*

You may be surprised to see Haydn's name associated with Welsh songs. The important figure here is George Thomson, a Scottish amateur musician and folk-song collector, who had the magnificent title of Clerk to the Board of Trustees for the Encouragement of Art and Manufactures in Scotland. He published a substantial number of folk songs and commissioned well-known composers to provide "Symphonies and Accompaniments ... and to render them, in all respects, as interesting as possible." Haydn did exactly this for a large group of Scottish and later, Welsh songs.

Lerner and Loewe: *I Could have Danced all Night from My Fair Lady*

This song, sung by the cockney flower girl Eliza Doolittle, occurs just after her successful negotiation of the tricky English upper-class vowels of "The rain in Spain falls mainly in the plain." Henry Higgins, the phonetics professor who is trying to transform her into a society lady, dances delightedly round the room with her. When the housekeeper suggests that it is getting late, Eliza responds with this song.

Tartini: *L'arte del arco: Variations on a theme of Corelli*

In 1727, the Italian violinist and composer Giuseppe Tartini set up a violin school in the city of Padua. He already had an international reputation as a performer and composer and this attracted students from all over Europe. In his teaching he was particularly concerned with control of the bow which he likened to the singer's control of breathing. When he composed a set of variations on a theme from Corelli's Op. 5 sonatas, he used them to explore the complete art of the bow – *L'arte del arco*. In a transcription for recorder one supposes that this must be translated back into the art of breathing, Tartini's starting point.

Chopin: Preludes Op. 28 Nos 15, 16 and 17

The circumstances surrounding the composition of Chopin's Preludes on the island of Mallorca have also been discussed recently in this season's notes. It is a romantic story, if you're looking through the right sort of glasses, with its old monk's cell as study and a locally made piano, but in reality, I suspect, rather uncomfortable. The word Prelude in this context has troubled many. Chopin's lover, George Sand, thought he was merely being modest, Schumann tried to explain them as sketches, or the beginnings of Etudes. Liszt got it right; they are, he said, "compositions of an order entirely apart: they are not merely ... introductions to other *morceaux*."

Kreisler: *Aucassin and Nicolette; Syncopation*

As a composer the renowned violinist, Fritz Kreisler frequently presented his compositions as newly discovered works by well-known 18th century composer, a joke to save his name appearing too often on the program, he said. Other compositions he issued under his own name, and *Aucassin and Nicolette* appears to be one of those. Although it has the sub-title *Medieval Canzonetta*, there is nothing remotely medieval about the music. *Syncopation* is a very mild homage to the popular music of the Roaring Twenties when it was written.

Makkonen: *Tango-Toccata*

Like all good specialists, accordionists have an international confederation (CIA) and their annual competition (World Cup/Coupe Mondiale) is truly global. The 2011 competition was held in Shanghai and the Finnish accordionist-composer Petri Makkonen won the prize for the Best New Original Work – the composition on today’s program. The title says all that you need to know: the mood and stylised gestures of the popular dance, overlain with the complex figuration we associate with the toccata – the quintessential virtuoso showpiece.

-John Mayo

SONG TRANSLATIONS

Y Gog Lwydlas (The Grey Cuckoo)

As I o’er the mountain
Was making my way
Alone, heavy hearted,
One morning in May,
I heard the grey cuckoo
In glorious glee
Confessing its story
Upon a birch tree.
“My season for singing
Is April, May,
And so to the middle
Of June, as you say;
Ere daylight be waning
And dusk shall come on,
My lay will be ended
And I shall be gone”.

Fel ‘roeddwn y’n rhodio
A’m calon yn brudd
Ar ddydd Liun y bore
Ar doriad y dydd;
Mi glywn y gog lwydlas
Yn tiwnio mor lwyn
Ar ochor bryn uchel
Ar gangen o lwyn.
“Fy amser i ganu
Yw Ebrill a Mai,
A hanner Mehefin,
Chwi wyddoch bob rhai;
I ffwrdd af oddiyma
Fy adar sydd fan,
A chym Dygwyl lfan
Fe dderfydd fynghan”.

As I o’er the mountain
Was making my way
Alone, heavy hearted,
One morning in May,

Fel ‘roeddwn i’n rhodio
A’m calon yn brudd
Ar ddydd Liun y bore
Ar doriad y dydd;

I heard the grey cuckoo
In glorious glee
Confessing its story
Upon a birch tree.
"The days of the cuckoo
Are April and May,
And so to the middle
Of June, as you say;
Then I shall go seeking
The days that are long,
In climes where I revel
In sunshine and song".

Mi glwyn y gog lwydias
Yn tiwnio mor lwyn.
Ar ochor bryn uchel
Ar gangen o lwyn.
"Ni chan y gog lwydias
Ond Ebrill a Mai,
A hanner Mehefin
Chwi wyddoch bob rhal;
Ac wedyn eheda'
Dros donnau y mor
I wledydd pellennig
I 'mofyn fy stor".

Codiad yr Hedydd (The Rising of the Lark)

Hark, Hark, at the morning tide
The lark's pure song ring far and
wide
To greet celestial choirs.
Up to the radiant skies,
Where faint and far those notes arise
The enraptured soul aspires.
All enchanted 'neath the spell
In dreams and meads and moun-
tains dwell
Winds and waters silent stay
In cloudless air, in caverns deep,
Their restless music charm'd to sleep
By song so wondrous fair.

Clyw! Clyw! for eu ol glod,
O! fwyn ed yw'r defn yn nau n dod,

O wyn fa lan i lawr.
Ai man ddefn yn nau can,
An ei rif lu ryw dyr fa lan,
Ddi hangodd gyd a r wawr?
Mud yw'r aw el ar y waun,
A brig y grug, yn esmyth gryn.

Gwran do mae yr ab er gain,
Ac yn y brwyn ymguddia'i hun.
Mor nefol serch ol ydw'r sain,
Sy'n dod i swyn o dyn.

Rise, rise, O singing sprite,
Till you are one with heavenly light,
And faded from our eyes.
But thrilling loud and clear
Still enchanted notes we hear
A peon of paradise.
Sing until thy soaring song
Mounts up to join the angel throng;
Fain our souls would follow thee,
Where sin and sorrow fade away
In glory of immortal day
To reach Eternity.

Cwyd, cwyd ehedydd, cwyd,
O le i le ar aden lwyd.
Yn uwch, yn uwch o hyd:
Can, can dy nodau cu,
A dos yn nes at lawen lu
Adawodd boen y byd.
Canu mae, a'r byd a glyw
Ei alaw lon o uchel le:
Cyfyd hiraeth dynolryw,
Ar ol ei lais i froydd ne':
Yn nes at Ddydd, yn nes at Dduw
I fyny fel efe!

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