

## GREETINGS from SIMON FRYER

125 years is a significant anniversary - an anniversary worthy of significant celebration!

Throughout those 125 years of *Music in the Afternoon*, the Women's Musical Club of Toronto has demonstrated a continuous and substantial connection to our city, to Canadian and international artists, and to the global canon of musical creation. Our anniversary celebration highlights these connections in contemporary format and explores the continuity of our committed approach in integrated and immersive style.

We continue our practice of inviting significant artists at various stages in their careers to perform. However, for the 125th, these artists "anchor" their concert and invite their mentors, or those they themselves mentor, to perform alongside them. Our performers establish our view of the present; through their mentors we explore their history, and through those they mentor, the future.

The achievement of 125 years of musical history will be divided chronologically into 5 blocks of 25 years with each concert in our series featuring a representative work from one of these periods. The context of this work in local and international events will be featured in the program and elaborated online by dedicated WMCT historian Robin Elliott.

In keeping with this approach, the commissioned composer, Fjóra Evans, has curated a program around her new work. In the manner of the other anchor artists of the season, she has selected works and performers who have influenced her musical development, in this way expressing her past, present and future direction.

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How fitting that our 125th season should be launched with a spectacular program from our most recent CDA winner, accordionist extraordinaire Michael Bridge. As our "anchor" artist, Michael has invited his mentor Joseph Macerollo to appear with him in the sultry Piazzola work *Oblivion* – most certainly the first time that two accordions have ever appeared simultaneously on the WMCT stage! Michael demonstrates the depth of his artistry with Sofia Gubaidulina's *Et exspecto* – the work that acts as our historical gateway for this program - and also brings his colleagues from Ladom. This ground-breaking group's musical identity is drawn from many sources and reflects a beautiful new world using a Western classical

toolset to express an authentically Canadian experience. A truly new route in the diversity of our musical journey.

With our second concert of the season, I am very happy to introduce Quatuor Despax to you. It is often said that a string quartet is like a marriage, but this is a family! Four siblings who, originally mentored by their father, have been playing together for most of their lives. The wonders of Haydn's Op.76 coupled with Shostakovich's epic 8th quartet lead us to this concert's gateway work: the super-intense romanticism of Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht*. Here the quartet will be joined by two of their most distinguished mentors: violist, Milena Pajaro-van de Stadt – lately of the Dover Quartet – and cellist Brian Manker of the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal and New Orford Quartet. Music separated in time by two centuries but united by the friendship and respect of contemporary performing artists.

-Simon Fryer, WMCT Artistic Director

## WMCT at 125

I am delighted to be writing about the WMCT's 125th season, having begun my association with the club by writing its centennial history, *Counterpoint to a City* (1997), then following that up with *Counterpoint Continued* (2008) to bring the story up to the 110th season. Later this season a further installment of the history will be appearing, covering the past 15 years.

For this special season, WMCT artistic director Simon Fryer has created an imaginative series that constitutes a reflection upon the past 125 years of the WMCT, of the city of Toronto, and of international music history. To accomplish all of this within just five concerts, he has divided that 125-year span into five 25-year blocks. As 25 years is the length of a generation, Simon had the additional creative idea of including, in each concert, musicians who are in a mentor/mentee relationship, thus reflecting the past, present and future of the invited guest artists, as well as of the WMCT itself. For each concert, an anchor work is drawn from one of the five 25-year blocks of time, which provides an opportunity to reflect upon that period in WMCT and world history.

-Robin Elliott

The November 17th, 2022, concert

## Quatuor Despax

with Milena Pajaro-van de Stadt and Brian Manker

is supported by

Artist Sponsor

## The Toronto Arts Foundation Resiliency Fund



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The WMCT also gratefully acknowledges  
Dianne Henderson  
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*We acknowledge the land on which this Music in the Afternoon concert is performed is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. We are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land. We acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit.*

Please turn off cell phones and other noise-making devices.  
No photography or recordings of any type during the performance.

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Please come and meet the artists on the stage following the concert.

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# PROGRAM for NOVEMBER 17, 2022

String Quartet No. 60 in G major,  
Op. 76, No. 1

Joseph Haydn  
(1732-1809)

1. Allegro con spirito
2. Adagio sostenuto
3. Menuet. Presto
4. Finale. Allegro ma non troppo

String Quartet in F major

Maurice Ravel  
(1875-1937)

1. Allegro moderato – très doux
2. Assez vif – très rythmé
3. Très lent
4. Vif et agité

## INTERMISSION

*Verklärte Nacht*

Arnold Schoenberg  
(1874-1951)

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### *Tuning Your Mind Lecture:*

1899-1923: *Concert music and the WMCT's history through the lens of*

*Verklärte Nacht* by Arnold Schoenberg

Robin Elliott, Professor of Musicology, U of T Faculty of Music

Open to all, 12.15 p.m. sharp, Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building

*We are looking for people with skills in fundraising and non-profit governance to volunteer with the WMCT. If you, or someone you know, loves chamber music and could envision serving on a WMCT Committee, please contact us by calling the office at 416.923.7052, x.2 or writing to [wmct@wmct.on.ca](mailto:wmct@wmct.on.ca).*

## WMCT AT 125: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

### VERKLÄRTE NACHT (1899)

The anchor work for the first 25-year period is the sumptuous *Verklärte Nacht* ("Transfigured Night"), composed for string sextet in 1899 by Arnold Schoenberg. The most important event in WMCT history from this period was, of course, the founding of the club, which took place on January 23, 1899 ... about eight months before Schoenberg began writing his string sextet. The musical life of Toronto was quite conservative on the whole 125 years ago, though there were some surprisingly innovative events, including a performance of music by Schoenberg by a local string quartet in 1915. This era was notable in world history for the cataclysmic descent into the First World War with the ensuing almost inconceivable brutality and loss of life, resulting in the fall of four empires and a redrawing of the European political landscape. Somehow the WMCT managed to continue its operations during these tumultuous times, dedicating its services to the war effort and emerging with renewed strength as the Roaring Twenties began.

-Robin Elliott

To read more about this time in WMCT history, visit [www.wmct.on.ca](http://www.wmct.on.ca).

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

### QUATUOR DESPAX

**Cendrine Despax**, violin | **Jean Despax**, violin  
**Maxime Despax**, viola | **Valérie Despax**, cello  
with

**MILENA PAJARO-VAN DE STADT**, viola  
**BRIAN MANKER**, cello

Formed in 2003 in Gatineau by four siblings, the **Quatuor Despax** regularly gives concerts in Canada's national capital and in the Outaouais.

The quartet has performed in various festivals or concert series in Ontario and Quebec such as: the Westben Festival (Campbellford), The Abbey for the Arts (Alexandria), the Mardis Classiques series (Gatineau), the Montée des Arts du Mont-St-Hilaire, the Abitibi-Témiscamingue Classical Festival (Val d'Or), the Ponticello Concerts (Gatineau), Music and Beyond (Ottawa), Chamberfest City Series (Ottawa), Luminato Festival (Toronto), The Art of Music Festival (Gatineau), SweetWater Music Festival (Owen Sound), Festival of the Sound (Parry Sound),

Xenia Concerts (Toronto) and LAMP (Lunenburg).

Since September 2013, the Quatuor Despax has been in residence at Notre-Dame-de-la-Guadeloupe Church in Gatineau where they have a series of concerts.

Beginning in August 2021, the Despax Quartet has been a member of the Obiora Ensemble.

Visit the artist's website at [www.quatuordespax.com](http://www.quatuordespax.com)

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Violist **Milena Pajaro-van de Stadt** has established herself as one of the most sought-after violists of her generation. In addition to appearances as soloist with the Tokyo Philharmonic, the Jacksonville Symphony, and the Sphinx Chamber Orchestra, she has performed in recitals and chamber-music concerts throughout the United States, Latin America, Europe and Asia.

Ms. Pajaro-van de Stadt was the founding violist of the Dover Quartet, and played in the group from 2008-2022. During her time in the group, the Dover Quartet was the First Prize-winner and recipient of every special award at the Banff International String Quartet Competition 2013, and winner of the Gold Medal and Grand Prize in the 2010 Fischhoff Chamber Music Competition. She also won First Prize at the Lionel Tertis International Viola Competition and top prizes at the the Sphinx Competition and the Tokyo International Viola Competition. While in the Dover Quartet, Ms. Pajaro-van de Stadt was on the faculty at The Curtis Institute of Music and Northwestern University, and in residence at the Kennedy Center.

Ms. Pajaro-van de Stadt graduated from the Curtis Institute of Music, where she studied with Roberto Diaz and Michael Tree. She received her Master's Degree at Rice University as a student of James Dunham.

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Principal Cello of the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal since 1999, **Brian Manker** leads a diverse musical career as a performer and pedagogue. Besides giving frequent solo concerto performances with the OSM, Mr. Manker is a member of the Opus and Juno Award-winning New Orford String Quartet. Currently a Professor at the Schulich School of Music of McGill University, Brian launched the Beethoven Project and founded the Adorno Quartet in 2007, whose objective is to perform all Beethoven's quartets in their original setting: a private salon. In 2010, he made a recording of the complete Cello Suites of J. S. Bach.

Brian Manker plays a cello built in Venice c. 1728–1730 by Pietro Guarneri with a bow crafted c. 1850 by Joseph René Lafleur, generously loaned to him by Canimex.

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## NOTES for NOVEMBER 17, 2022

The story of Haydn's lifelong connection with the aristocratic Esterházy family is well known. He was employed by them from 1761, when he was twenty nine, until his death in 1809. Although he often said that this isolated him from the contemporary musical scene, he exaggerated somewhat and in his later life he became widely known in Austria and abroad, especially in England. On two separate visits to London, in 1791 and 1794 he encountered a musical world quite different from that of Vienna and was treated like a modern-day media celebrity. In London, music was a commercial enterprise and he was frequently faced by a rather different audience from those he had written for so far. That he adjusted, apparently effortlessly, is borne out by the ecstatic reviews he received in the London press. The London journeys were undertaken during the few years that Prince Anton was head of the Esterházy family. He was little interested in music and Haydn was free to be away from the court. When Anton died in 1794 and was succeeded by his son, Nikolaus II, the musical establishment was built up again and Haydn was reinstated as music director, although his official duties consisted mainly in writing a yearly mass for the name day of Nikolaus's wife. The six quartets of Op. 76, were written in this period and dedicated to another Hungarian aristocrat, Count Joseph Erdödy.

We know that Haydn was well into the composition of these works by June of 1797, when the Swedish diplomat, Frederik Silverstolpe, heard the composer play through some of them at the keyboard. They were "more than masterly and full of new thoughts," he says. A couple of years later, after the works had been published both in Vienna and in London, the English musician, Charles Burney wrote to the composer echoing these sentiments: "I had the great pleasure of hearing your new quartetti (opera 76) well performed before I went out of town, and never received more pleasure from instrumental music: they are full of invention, fire, good taste, and new effects..."

This last part of Haydn's career saw the beginning of a general move away from the aristocratic patronage of music towards a broader based public support that was to become more and more commercially driven. Eighteenth-century writers often divided listeners into connoisseurs – those who were knowledgeable about music – and amateurs – those who were lovers of music. As the 19th century approached, the make-up of audiences began to tip towards the second. It is a measure of Haydn's skill, demonstrated particularly well in the Op. 76 quartets, that he was able to cater to these so-called amateurs without alienating the connoisseurs. This is more or less what Burney is saying about these works.





submitted his string sextet, *Verklärte Nacht* (Transfigured Night) to the Vienna Music Society for performance, it was rejected, according to the composer, because it contained a “non-existent” harmony. Now this is Schoenberg himself relating the story at a later date and having a little fun at the expense of his critics. Of course there is no such thing as a non-existent chord; what the rejection was saying was that there was a harmony that they couldn’t categorize, couldn’t explain, but what they really meant was that they didn’t like any of it. A comment from another critic was that it was as though someone had taken the score of Wagner’s *Tristan* while the ink was still wet and smudged all the notes together. Oliver Neighbour in a more recent and level-headed assessment says “Wagnerian and Brahmsian modes of thought meet in harmonious accord.”

Underlying Schoenberg’s music is a poem by Richard Dehmel. One writer has summarised the five verses as follows: “a forest scene with two figures [a man and a woman]; the words of the woman who loves the man but is expecting a child from another, and who thus reproaches herself; the words of the man, who comforts the woman and accepts the child as his own.” Half a century later, the composer supplied a detailed analysis showing the correspondence of the various sections of the music with the equivalent lines in the poem. For our purposes, however, Dehmel’s own reaction to a performance may be more valuable: “I had intended to follow the motives of my text in your composition; but I soon forgot to do so, I was so enthralled by the music.”

- John Mayo

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