

WOMEN'S MUSICAL CLUB OF TORONTO

15
16

118TH SEASON

MUSIC IN THE AFTERNOON



DAEDALUS STRING QUARTET

*Min-Young Kim and Matilda Kaul, violins;
Jessica Thompson, viola; Thomas Kraines,
cello; with Romie de Guise-Langlois, clarinet*

MARCH 3, 2016 | 1.30 PM



MUSIC IN THE AFTERNOON

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Today's concert is sponsored by

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The Women's Musical Club of Toronto gratefully acknowledges the
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Music in the Afternoon.





GREETINGS from Simon Fryer, Artistic Director Women's Musical Club of Toronto

Welcome to the third concert of the 118th season of the Women's Musical Club of Toronto's *Music in the Afternoon*. For the 118th time the WMCT proudly presents the most sought-after musicians on the world stage, as well as younger performers who will surely be in that position before too long. I am excited to bring you five programmes of the finest chamber music, brought to life by artists of the most vivid imagination. Our opening concert featured a magical program from harpist Caroline Léonardelli, the Afiara Quartet and double bassist Joe Phillips, paving the way for the remarkable vocal beauty of our November recitalist, Simone Osborne. 2016 opens with the Daedalus Quartet and clarinettist Romie de Guise-Langlois performing the monumental clarinet quintet by Brahms, followed by *Dannthology*: a program initiated by well-known Canadian viola hero, Steven Dann. Steve presents an intriguingly eclectic array of works and performers including the 2016 commissioned work from celebrated young Canadian composer, Zosha Di Castri. Our season closes with extraordinary pianist Pavel Kolesnikov. Honens Competition Laureate, Pavel is winning hearts around the world and will surely continue to do so at the WMCT.

Today we welcome the return of the Daedalus Quartet with guest clarinettist Romie de Guise-Langlois. In thirteen years of performing together, the Daedalus has established itself among the leaders of a new generation of string quartets. We celebrate the 150th anniversary of Sibelius' birth with a rare performance of his string quartet, explore the intensely colourful world of James MacMillan, and revel in Brahms' monumental clarinet quintet.

Thank you for subscribing to the 118th season of the WMCT – the heart of artistry, the essence of chamber music.

Women's Musical Club of Toronto

56 The Esplanade, Suite 203A, Toronto, Ontario M5E 1A7 www.wmct.on.ca

PROGRAMME

String Quartet in D Minor *Voces Intimae*, Op.56

Andante – Allegro molto moderato

Vivace

Adagio di molto

Allegretto (ma pesante)

Allegro

Jean Sibelius
(1865 - 1957)

Tuireadh for Clarinet and String Quartet

James MacMillan
(b. 1959)

INTERMISSION

Clarinet Quintet in B Minor, Op.115

Allegro

Adagio

Andantino

Con moto

Johannes Brahms
(1833 - 1897)

Visit the artists' websites at www.daedalusquartet.com and <http://deguise-langlois.com>

Complimentary refreshments will be available at intermission.

Please come and meet the artists in the lobby following the concert.

NOTES

A few years ago in these notes I imagined a sort of musical stock exchange on which the reputations of composers rose and fell over the years, for reasons that were often completely obscure. I didn't include Sibelius in this fantasy, but he would have been the perfect illustration, since no other composer has seen such wild fluctuations in the critical assessment of his work. As Alex Ross pointed out in a very perceptive 2008 *New Yorker* article, "during the late 1920s and early 1930s...when atonality and other modern languages dominated the European scene, he was simultaneously "being lionized as a new Beethoven in England and America, and dismissed as a purveyor of kitsch in the tastemaking European music centers." Ross includes Sibelius as one of a group of composers who came to represent the peripheral "small countries that constituted another Europe" – Milan Kundera's description – but unlike such "celebrity composers" as Grieg in Norway, Dvorak in Czechoslovakia, and Carl Nielsen in Denmark, he had much more thrust upon him. Sibelius "was not merely the most famous composer Finland ever produced, but the country's chief celebrity in any field, and he played a symbolic but active role in the drive toward Finnish independence, which was finally achieved in 1917." In other words he was, and remains, a national hero in a way that is rarely the lot of a composer. It is this that Yousef Karsh manages to portray in his famous photograph of the eighty-four year old Sibelius; the living composer seemingly immortalized already in granite or bronze.

The quartet on today's programme, the composer's only mature venture in this genre, was written in 1909 when Sibelius was experiencing, in James Hepokoski's words, "alternating periods of buoyant confidence and corrosive despair" with both his "finances and health [having] reached a crisis point." The previous year he had undergone the first of several operations for a tumour on his throat and his doctors had banned both smoking and alcohol; the composer's already morbid nature was made even darker and more introspective. A number of trips that he made abroad confirmed for him the ambivalence that existed about his work. In February he conducted some of his orchestral works at the Queen's Hall in London and these were well received by audiences and critics alike. He began work on the quartet while he was in London and continued with this as his travels took him first to Paris and then to Berlin where he completed the composition. In Berlin he also consulted a doctor who confirmed that the earlier operation had been successful; writing to his wife in Finland and telling her that he had handed the finished quartet to his publisher he said, "It turned out as something wonderful. The kind of thing that brings a smile to your lips at the hour of death. I will say no more." It is clear that in these years Sibelius's music took on a darker, brooding, and more introspective character, but Hepokoski is overstating the case when he says that "the language of the...quartet seems to turn its back on

audiences altogether..." A more positive approach is offered by Tim Paige: "*Voces Intimae* is a sort of sustained study of various shades of musical gray, quite beautiful in its measured way." In the third, Adagio movement, over three repeated and isolated chords, Sibelius wrote the inscription '*Voces Intimae*' (inner or intimate voices) that has become the title of the whole work. Sibelius hated attempting to explain the meaning of his music: "I don't like to speak about my music. When I do, I regret it the next day." The meaning here is enigmatic. The phrase is, after all, a commonplace description of the ideal of all chamber music, but we can assume that it has a much more personal and hidden meaning for Sibelius.

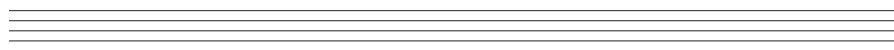
On the 6th of July 1988 there was an explosion on Piper Alpha, a North Sea oil drilling platform located some 120 miles north east of the Scottish city of Aberdeen. Fire broke out destroying the rig and killing 167 of the 228 workers on board and on the patrolling standby vessels; it remains the world's deadliest oil rig disaster. James MacMillan's *Tuireadh* was written in 1991 as a musical memorial to those who lost their life, and is thus a musical complement to the sculpture by Sue Jane Taylor that was installed in Hazlehead Park in Aberdeen.

MacMillan was born in Scotland in 1959 and studied in Edinburgh and Durham. As a student he was strongly influenced by the Polish composers Lutoslawski and Penderecki, but in 1988 he returned to Scotland and, according to Stephen Johnson, he began "to identify more positively with his national and religious roots...[exploring] ways in which a Roman Catholic faith, socialist sympathies and feelings about homeland could be brought together productively in music." One result was that his musical language became more easily accessible to larger audiences. The composer says that in writing *Tuireadh* – the Gaelic word means a lament or requiem for the dead - "I was specifically inspired by a letter sent to me by the mother of one of the dead men in which she wrote movingly of her visit to the scene for a memorial service. The ceremony became a rite of passage for those whose loved ones had not been found, and the mother described how a spontaneous keening sound rose gently from the assembled mourners. *Tuireadh* attempts to capture this outpouring of grief in music and makes allusions to the intervallic and ornamental archetypes of various lament-forms from Scottish traditional music." The piece was given its first performance in St Magnus Cathedral, Kirkwall, Orkney by the Canadian clarinettist James Campbell with the Allegri Quartet.

Late in 1891, at the age of 58, Brahms declared his intention of retiring from composition. He drew up his will and remarked in a letter to his publisher, "the time has come for you to say goodbye to any further compositions of mine." He did not in fact give up composition and one

stimulus for further activity was the playing of the clarinetist Richard Mühlfeld, a member of the court orchestra in Meiningen. The orchestra of the German duchy of Saxe-Meiningen had a long and distinguished history, having been founded at the end of the seventeenth century, but under the leadership of Hans von Bülow who became director in 1880, it grew into an elite European ensemble. Brahms had visited the city a number of times and had collaborated with von Bülow on many occasions – the *4th Symphony* was given its first performance there – so he had often heard Mühlfeld play. It was, however, von Bülow's successor, Fritz Steinbach who drew Brahms' attention to the clarinetist and persuaded the composer to hear him perform a number of solo works, including concertos by Mozart and Weber. Brahms was suitably impressed, calling him the "nightingale of the orchestra," and telling Clara Schumann in a letter that "nobody can blow the clarinet more beautifully than Herr Mühlfeld of this place." In the summer of 1891 Brahms moved to his summer residence in Ischl and produced not one, but two works for Mühlfeld, a *Clarinet Trio* and the *Quintet* on today's programme; three years later he wrote two sonatas for the same performer. The *Quintet* received its first, private, performance in Meiningen in November 1891 and this was followed by the public premiere in Berlin with Mühlfeld and the Joachim Quartet. The same players performed the work in various other cities and in 1892 took it to London where it was received with great acclaim by everyone except a rather dyspeptic George Bernard Shaw, who compared Brahms' gifts for music with those of Gladstone's for words: "it is a verbosity that outfaces its own commonplaces by dint of sheer magnitude." Clara Schumann, a much more sympathetic listener, first got to know "this heavenly work" in a transcription for two pianos, but eventually, in 1893, heard the work in rehearsal in its proper form, and confided to her diary: "it is a really marvellous work, the wailing clarinet takes hold of one; it is quite moving. And what interesting music, deep and full of meaning! And how Mühlfeld plays! As if he had been born for this work. His playing is at once delicate, warm and unaffected, and at the same time shows the most perfect technique and command of the instrument."

John Mayo



TODAY'S ARTISTS

Daedalus String Quartet:
Min-Young Kim, violin; Scott St. John, violin;
Jessica Thompson, viola; Thomas Kraines, cello

with
Romie de Guise-Langlois, clarinet

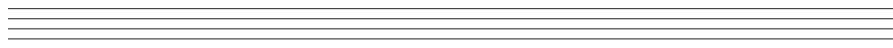
The Daedalus Quartet has established itself as a leader among the new generation of string ensembles, receiving plaudits for the security, technical finish, interpretive unity, and sheer gusto of its performances. Banff International String Quartet Competition 2001 winner, the Daedalus performs regularly in the world's leading musical venues, and is acclaimed for its adventurous exploration of contemporary music. The Quartet has built a discography ranging from the seminal works of Haydn to those of Joan Tower, and its most recent recording, featuring the music of George Perle, has been praised by *Strad Magazine* for the quartet's 'exemplary intonation and balance.'

'a strikingly unique voice... simply stunning'
Cleveland Plain Dealer

www.daedalusquartet.com

Praised as 'a formidable clarinetist' by *The New York Times*, Canadian Romie de Guise-Langlois has appeared, as soloist and chamber musician, on major concert stages throughout the U.S.A., Canada, Europe, and Asia. She captured top prizes in the Canadian Music Competition and at Yale and McGill Universities, and is the recipient of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation award.

<http://deguise-langlois.com>





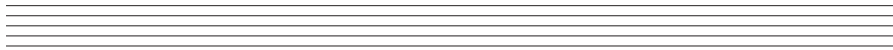
The Women's Musical Club of Toronto
congratulates **Charles Richard - Hamelin**,
winner of our 2015 Career Development Award,
on placing second overall and winning Best Sonata prize
at the International Fryderyk Chopin Piano Competition
in Warsaw in October 2015.

We knew you would do it, Charles!



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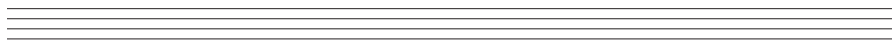
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with

Nico Dann, percussion; Robin Dann, voice;

Lucas Dann, piano; Ilana Zarankin, soprano;

Joel Quarrington, double bass; James Parker, piano

Programme:

Heinrich Ignaz Franz Biber, Zosha Di Castri, Peter Lieberon, Robert Schumann, Johannes Brahms

Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building
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Tuning Your Mind lecture *Katharine Rapoport, speaker*

Presented in partnership with the
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