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November, 13, 14 and 15, 2023

Message from the President



REID PARKER

Since SNB's last concert, world events have been foremost on people's minds. The terrible and terrifying conflict in the Middle East reminds us of the valiant efforts by conductor Daniel Barenboim to bring Jews and Palestinians together as stand-mates in the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra. Since 1999, this youthful ensemble has performed all over the world and represents an ideal, a prayer and a hope for the future. It is an example of how great music bridges the gulf between religious, ethnic and political differences and enables young people of differing heritage to work together.

Symphony New Brunswick also brings together musicians from several countries and the result you hear on stage right here is further evidence that music is an international and inspirational language we can all enjoy together regardless of any differences.

I will remind everyone that Symphony New Brunswick Foundation will be applying this month to Canadian Heritage for a significant matching grant to add to our endowment fund. The Foundation is close to its fund-raising objective and the goal can be reached with a little more help. Please contact me or Gillian Gresh if you need more information; but please consider a gift as soon as possible. A pledge will not work for this application; the Foundation needs to have the funds in hand for the gift to be eligible for matching. The future of SNB depends on continuing the growth of this fund.

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Biography

MÉLANIE LÉONARD

Born in Montreal, Mélanie Léonard is music director of Symphony New Brunswick and the Assistant Professor of instrumental conducting (contemporary music) at McGill University's Schulich School of Music. She was previously resident and associate conductor at the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra and Music Director at the Sudbury Symphony Orchestra.

As a guest conductor, she has worked with many institutions including the Montreal Symphony Orchestra, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Les Violons du Roy, Orchestre Métropolitain, the National Arts Center Orchestra, as well as symphony orchestras in Edmonton, Regina, Victoria, Winnipeg, Québec and Nova Scotia.

Ms. Léonard has worked on soundtracks for Aura at the Montreal Notre-Dame Basilica, Paradise City in South Korea, and for Cirque du Soleil's Land of Fantasy. Melanie has founded three contemporary music ensembles: Prima Ensemble, Wild West New Music Ensemble and the Calgary New Music Festival. In 2023-2024, Ms. Léonard will conduct Orchestre Métropolitain and the Saskatoon Symphony. She will also be making her début with the Ottawa Symphony Orchestra. Ms. Léonard was the first woman to complete a doctorate in orchestra conducting from University of Montreal. In 2012, she received the Canada Art Council's Jean-Marie Beaudet award for orchestral conducting.





Welcome Message

MÉLANIE LÉONARD

All of the works on this program are linked in some way to the concept of time. "Sandman's Lullaby – Variations symphoniques" by Canadian composer Christian Girard draws its inspiration from a short piece every pianist would have played when they were beginners: Michael Aaron's Sandman Lullaby. Girard turned this 14 notes theme into an exuberant post romantic work through 13 variations.

Philip Glass, American composer, wrote the music to the movie *The Hours*. The suite, for piano and ensemble, was extracted from the soundtrack. We are thrilled to welcome CBC top 30 under 30 pianist, Victoria Wong to perform this work with us.

Finally, we complete the program with Haydn's beloved symphony, number 101, "The Clock". The symphony received the nickname due to the ticking rhythm present in the second movement.

Special Guest

VICTORIA WONG



Named as one of “Canada’s Hot 30 Under 30 Classical Musicians” in 2022 by the CBC, Victoria Wong holds degrees from the New England Conservatory of Music and The Juilliard School of Music. A frequent guest soloist with orchestra, she performed Rachmaninov’s famous second piano concerto on tour in China with the Hong Kong

Symphonia, and has toured Italy as concerto soloist with the Canadian Sinfonietta. She has been invited back to perform on multiple occasions with the Shenzhen Symphony Orchestra, and is also often invited as a guest artist to perform at prestigious festivals, including the 5th Shenzhen Piano Music Festival in China, Note in Citta Festival in Italy, and many festivals in Canada.

She is the recipient of numerous awards, including the First Prize winner of the Lancaster International Piano Competition, International Fringe Award, EPTA International Piano Competition, San Francisco International Music Competition, and Canadian Music Competition. She is also a top prizewinner at the Canadian Chopin Competition and the Russian Music International Piano Competition, and the winner of the Orford Music Award. In 2021, she participated in the 18th International Chopin Competition in Warsaw.

Her performances, and interviews have been broadcast on Radio Television Hong Kong, Polish National radio, Shenzhen Satellite TV, US television channel Sino TV, and Fairchild TV and OMNI 2 in Canada. She was also the featured guest on a televised interview show for Guangdong Radio and Television Station in China. In 2022 she worked with and gave the West coast premiere of a new etude written by American composer Nico Muhly.

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SUPPORT TODAY

Program

Philip Glass (b. 1937)

Suite from "The Hours" [arr Riesman]

- Victoria Wong, solo pianist

I. Untitled

II. Untitled

III. Untitled

Frédéric Chopin (1810 - 1849)

Waltz op.64 no.1 ("Minute Waltz")

- Victoria Wong, solo pianist

Christian Girard

Sandman's Lullaby

Thème

Crépuscule

Chant de Morphée

Mobylette

Brouillard 1

Rose des vents

Larme

A bon Port

Au bord de l'Étang

Chasse aux Papillons

Pique-Nique

Brouillard 2

Lettre

Les Adieux

Intermission

Joseph Haydn (1732- 1809)

Symphony no.101 ("The Clock")

Adagio; Presto

Andante

Menuetto. Allegretto; Trio

Finale. Vivace

IN MEMORY OF

Bernadette Hedar 1958-2023



From a very early age Bernadette Hedar displayed her musical talent in piano and violin. Her love of music would continue throughout her life. Among her many musical activities, she was a valued member of Symphony New Brunswick's violins for twenty-five years. Bernadette worked at the N.B. Musicians Association Local 815, and also for Symphony New Brunswick. After her move to Vancouver, she continued to play in orchestras on the west coast. Bernadette loved to encourage others in their musical pursuits and often volunteered her time in helping others. Many have described her as a special and unique person, a gentle soul and radically humble. That is how her former colleagues at Symphony New Brunswick will always remember her.

Program Notes

REID PARKER

Philip Glass – Suite from “The Hours”

American composer Philip Glass wrote the music for the 2002 Academy Award nominated film “The Hours” which was based on a 1999 Pulitzer Prize winning novel by David Cunningham. As well, the music itself was nominated for both an Oscar and a Grammy. From the soundtrack, Glass derived a three movement suite, scored for piano and string orchestra to be performed on this tour.

The film (and presumably the book) is depressing psychodrama, depicting the suicide of author Virginia Woolf in 1941 and similar morbid events in the lives of two other fictional characters. With that inspiration as background, it is best to forget the storyline and listen to the music as an independent abstraction.

Glass is well-known as one of the fathers of the school of minimalist music. It started with a group of composers in the United States and Europe – in the U.S. by Steve Reich, Glass and John Adams. It grew out of the popularity of pop music by mixing the simplicity of pop with the sophistication of advanced musical education and technique. Its characteristics are compressed melody, drone bass lines, simple tonal harmony, extended ostinato passages and repetition that, if not well-written, can become monotonous.

The most famous example is the Symphony of Sorrowful Songs by Polish composer Henryk Gorecki. This almost hour-long symphony was so well-written and marketed that it sold over a million CDs and reached no. 6 on Britain’s top-selling recordings in 1992.

While it has most of the characteristics listed above, Glass’s Suite from the Hours is lyrical, free of dissonance and harmonically pleasing. The concerto-like part for piano adds instrumental colour to music that otherwise might seem tedious. The work is about 25 minutes in duration, the second and third movements each about seven minutes long. Glass’s suite is a perfect film score and one can easily imagine hearing it as the credits roll.

Franz Joseph Haydn – Symphony no. 101 in D (the “Clock”)

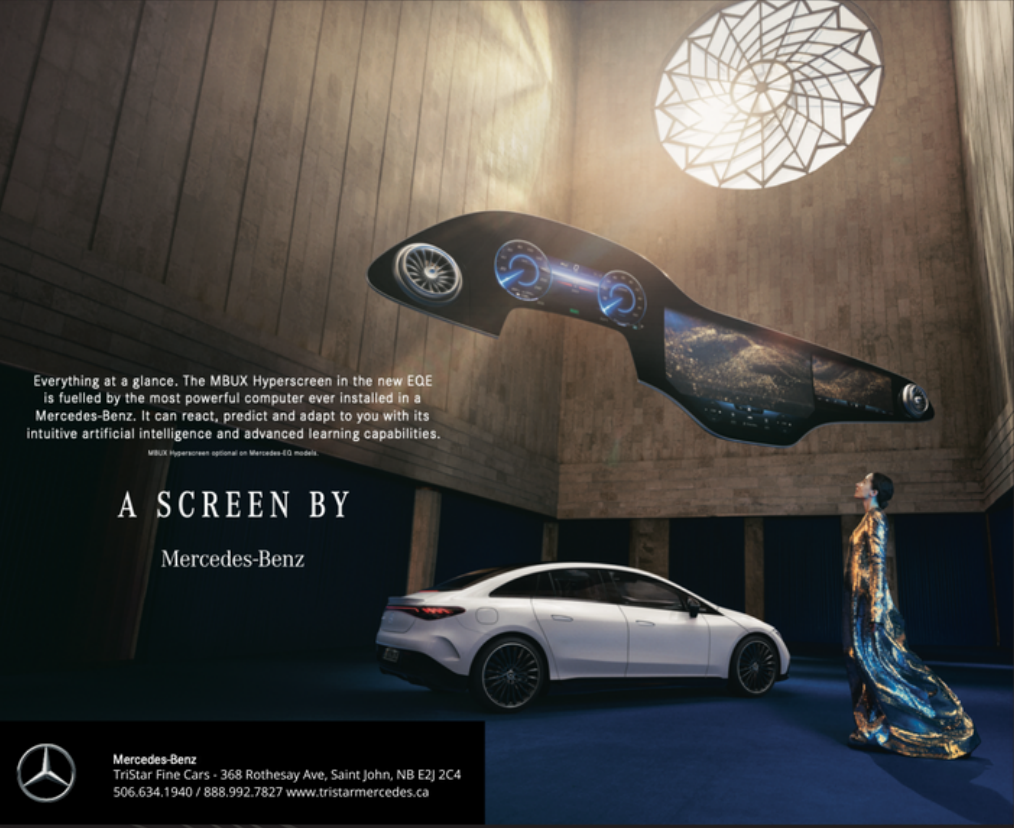
Freed from the artistic restraints imposed when his employer, Prince Nikolaus Esterházy, died in 1790, Haydn’s subsequent symphonies exhibited a more innovative and robust character. At the invitation of the

impresario Peter Salomon, Haydn visited London twice, in 1791 and again in 1794. These were not just week-long holiday larks, but working visits of many months duration. During each trip, he composed six of the twelve symphonies now collectively called the “London Symphonies”, nos. 93 to 104. From this amazing collection, we hear for the first time in SNB’s forty seasons Symphony no. 101 in D, nicknamed by persons unknown the “The Clock”, an appellation justified by the tick-tock rhythm in the second movement.

So, how can any composer be taken seriously who wrote more than 100 symphonies in his lifetime? Surely, these works were churned out by the dozen, probably following a set pattern while varying a few notes and tempos here and there; maybe making occasional key changes and adding a few squeaks from the winds to liven things up. Well, surprise, surprise – Haydn’s symphonies are anything but mundane, each a gem worthy of much study and enjoyment. Haydn invented the symphony and slowly but surely expanded the form, establishing a developmental progression that continued to the days of Anton Bruckner, Gustav Mahler and beyond. The final group of London symphonies represent a passing of the torch to Beethoven, each a statement that Ludwig and the Romantics who followed could not ignore.

In the Clock Symphony, Haydn surprises us by the freedom he allows his wind players and especially his tympanist who is given carte blanche to bang away with abandon. But in every Haydn symphony, including the Clock, we are treated to wonderful string writing - placing big demands on his players but allowing their virtuosity to sparkle.


The symphony is in the four-movement form that Haydn established as the proper way to structure a long orchestral piece. It is richly scored for winds, with pairs of oboes, flutes, clarinets, bassoons, trumpets and horns. The opening sonata is marked presto after a short slow introduction. The indomitable Sir Donald Tovey admired the contrasts in this movement, stating, “The tutti romp in with all the vigour that gave Haydn the contemporary reputation of being a noisy composer, a reputation which is perfectly justified.” Lest anyone think the tick-tocking in the second movement is a bit gimmicky, listen to how it comes and goes and how the instrumentation is varied. Haydn was known to be a humorous maverick at times, nowhere better illustrated than in this movement. Throughout the symphony, including the final two movements, a minuet and a robust finale, Haydn demonstrates the harmonic and thematic freedom which belied the rigid formality of which he is sometimes incorrectly accused.



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