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# Message from the President



REID PARKER

This is a special concert which brings the full orchestra back to the stage for the premiere performance by SNB of the magnificent Second Symphony of Johannes Brahms and the world premiere of the orchestral version of Heather Schmidt's magnificent River Run, commissioned by Dr. Mary Pedersen in memory of her late sister, Cheryl Pedersen Sutton. This latter music was so well-received by audiences in its chamber music version last May that we couldn't resist asking Heather to score the music for a larger ensemble.

Symphony New Brunswick and Symphony New Brunswick Foundation are both in the midst of campaigns to ensure the continued financial health of your symphony. Many of you may know that the Canadian orchestral community was saddened to learn last month of the failure of the renowned Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony, one of Canada's top orchestras. While we don't know all the facts, we are saddened that so many fine musicians and symphony workers and patrons have been affected by this tragedy. The events in Kitchener-Waterloo underline the fragility of these wonderful cultural institutions and remind us that, if we want great orchestral music to continue in our communities, people must buy tickets and contribute financially as much and as often as they are able. Your symphony has received wonderful support from New Brunswickers which, among other things, has enabled the growth of a wonderful financial backer, Symphony New Brunswick Foundation. Let's all work towards keeping Symphony New Brunswick healthy. Both the Symphony and the Foundation need your continued support. I'd be happy to meet anyone in person who would like to help but is unsure of how best to do it.

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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

Last season, Symphony New Brunswick premiered *River Run* by Canadian composer Heather Schmidt. This new work for a small ensemble was commissioned by Dr. Mary Pedersen in memory of her late sister, Cheryl Pedersen Sutton. The music is inspired in part by their childhood and New Brunswick's landscape. Heather Schmidt has revised the orchestration, and we are proud to present this new version tonight.

Bruch's first violin concerto and Brahms second symphony complete the program. Brahms second symphony is majestic, subtle, luminous, lush, light, deep and a pillar of the romantic era.

Virtuoso violinist Adrian Anantawan is an inspiring talent. We are looking forward to welcoming him to New Brunswick to play Bruch's concerto no.1 with us.

# Special Guest

## ADRIAN ANANTAWAN



Adrian Anantawan holds degrees from the Curtis Institute of Music, Yale University, and Harvard Graduate School of Education. As a violinist, he has studied with Itzhak Perlman, Pinchas Zukerman, and Anne-Sophie Mutter. Memorable moments include performances at the White House, the Opening

Ceremonies of the Athens and Vancouver Olympic Games, and the United Nations. He has played for the late Christopher Reeve, Pope John Paul II, and His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Adrian has performed as a soloist with the orchestras of Toronto, Nova Scotia, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Montreal, Edmonton, and Vancouver. He has also presented feature recitals at the Aspen Music Festival and Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall. Adrian helped to create the Virtual Chamber Music Initiative at the Holland Bloorview Kids Rehab Centre; this cross-collaborative project brings researchers, musicians, doctors, and educators together to develop adaptive musical instruments capable of being played by a young person with disabilities. He is also the founder of the Music Inclusion Program, aimed at having children with disabilities learn instrumental music with their peers.

Adrian is also a Juno Award nominee, a member of the Terry Fox Hall of Fame, and was awarded a Diamond Jubilee Medal from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II for his contributions to the Commonwealth. He is the current Chair of Music at Milton Academy, the Artistic Director of Shelter Music Boston, and is on faculty at Boston University Tanglewood Institute during the summer. Adrian continues to perform, speak, and teach around the world as an advocate for disability and the arts.

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# Program

**Heather Schmidt** (b. 1974)

River Run - Commissioned by Dr. Mary Pedersen in memory of Cheryl  
Ann Pedersen Sutton

I. Lento

II. Vivace

**Max Bruch** (1838 - 1920)

Violin Concerto no. 1 Op.26

Vorspiel: Allegro moderato

Adagio

Finale: Allegro energico

*Intermission*

**Johannes Brahms** (1833 - 1897)

Symphony no.2 Op.73

Allegro non troppo

Adagio non troppo

Allegretto grazioso (quasi andantino)

Allegro con spirito

IN MEMORY OF

# Cheryl Ann (Pedersen) Sutton



1956-2018

Cheryl Sutton (nee Pedersen) was a bright shining light in the lives of many, always positive and grateful. "How lucky are we?" was exclaimed with every new experience. Cheryl Sutton built a reputation as a longstanding pharmacist, champion athlete excelling in tennis and golf, avid traveller with favourites being Lake of Bays and Fiji, and true friend to all.

She was born in Four Falls, New Brunswick and grew up on a beautiful and prosperous potato farm. She was daughter of Nickolaj and Marion Pedersen. She studied at Dalhousie University in Halifax, NS earning a degree in Pharmacy. This led to a forty year career of which she was always proud. She continued her dedicated work up to her final days at Southlake Regional Health Centre in Newmarket, ON.

Cheryl always demonstrated deep love, loyalty, and support to her family. She was present for every important milestone, overflowing with warmth and encouragement. Cheryl is sorely missed by her husband David; her two daughters, Krista and Kimberly; her grandchildren Frederick and Matilda; and her sisters; Mary, Joyce, Joan, Dorothy, and Nikki.

It all comes down to kindness. Cheryl approached others with an open heart, seeing the best in everyone. She would always engage with strangers, truly interested in their stories. Throughout her time, she built lasting relationships with innumerable people of all walks of life around the globe. She was known for her sun-hat wearing, animal-loving, vegetable-scrubbing, nature-seeking, fair weather-skiing, fastest potato-peeling, out of rhythm-dancing, spritzer-drinking, fun-loving joie de vivre. She will continue to live on in the hearts and minds of all of those who were fortunate enough to have Cheryl in their lives.



# Program Notes

REID PARKER

## ***Heather Schmidt – River Run (Orchestral Version)***

Throughout recorded history, humans have commemorated a lost loved one by commissioning a work of art, be it by means of the written word, a painting, a statue or a photograph. Unless produced by an artist of renowned ability, these memorials seldom serve as long-lasting tributes. Statues, even of the finest marble, are stationary in a mobile world; photographs fade and are seldom preserved beyond a generation or two; the poetic odes, if exceptionally well-written, may find a place in a dusty archive, perhaps later to be found by an enterprising genealogist whose research attracts little subsequent attention.

But, ahh! A great musical threnody! If well-written by a composer of international repute, the testimonial can survive forever and easily travel around the world where its original inspiration is captured by program annotators (like the present scribbler) and passed along to the next performance.

Symphony New Brunswick is honoured to have worked with Dr. Mary Pedersen of Fredericton in her commission of *River Run*, a remembrance of her beloved sister Cheryl Ann (Pedersen) Sutton (1956-2018) and written by one of Canada's pre-eminent composers, Heather Schmidt. Symphony New Brunswick patrons became acquainted with Schmidt in April, 2023 when the orchestra performed her *Symphony no. 1* ("Manufactured Landscapes") and we welcomed her to New Brunswick as she conducted workshops for young composers.

The world premiere of *River Run* in its chamber music version occurred during Heather's New Brunswick residency and proved so popular that SNB asked to have it expanded to a full orchestral score. The version to be heard on this tour is another premiere of this remarkable music. Schmidt's music is inspired by happy childhood days growing up in Four Falls and Perth-Andover along the St. John River. It commemorates the life of Cheryl Sutton but it serves equally well to all of us who live so close to New Brunswick's majestic rivers and coastlines and have enjoyed their beauty with ones we love.

## ***Max Bruch – Violin Concerto no. 1 in G Minor, op. 26***

Near the end of his life, the renowned violinist Joseph Joachim (1831-1907) remarked, "The Germans have four violin concertos. The greatest, the most uncompromising, is Beethoven's. The one by Brahms vies with it in

seriousness. The richest, the most seductive was written by Max Bruch. But the most inward, the heart's jewel, is Mendelssohn's." Joachim was uniquely qualified to pass judgement, having frequently performed all four concertos and having personally edited the concertos by Brahms and Bruch.

In his day, Bruch's Violin Concerto no. 1 was played so often and achieved such widespread acclaim, the composer hated hearing it. But, save for this concerto, Bruch's popularity soon waned and, after his death, his other 200 or so compositions quickly sank into undeserved obscurity. Not everyone forgot him. The indefatigable Tovey said, "...the two other violin concertos and the Scottish Fantasia need nothing but the attention of violinists to prove quite as grateful to performers as to the public." Several commentators, including Sir Donald, thought Bruch's best works were his choral compositions.

So, what is so remarkable about the first concerto that has kept it so securely entrenched in the repertoire? It is indeed a work of remarkable beauty, especially its second movement in which the lower registers of the violin are so wonderfully presented. But, likely, it is the flash and fire of the rousing finale which has thrilled so many generations of enthusiasts. Seldom in the violin literature does the soloist so deservedly earn his or her pay per note. And, when taken with Bruch's splendid orchestration, the listener is treated to an aural feast that ranks with the best.

A revival of interest in Bruch's large catalogue has yet to occur. Thanks to YouTube, fans can now enjoy the infrequent performances and recordings of many other works and they are well worth listening time. For starters, try the beautiful rhapsody for cello and orchestra Kol Nidrei to see what I mean.

### ***Johannes Brahms - Symphony no. 2 in D, op. 73***

Haunted by the symphonic legacy of Ludwig van Beethoven, Brahms struggled to complete his First Symphony only in 1876 at age 43. He had tinkered with it off and on since 1855. However, it was well received, especially by the influential conductor Hans von Bülow who described it as "Beethoven's Tenth". Von Bülow's enthusiasm has to be put in context. The intense rivalry between the traditionalists, represented by Brahms, and the reactionary Romantics, Wagner, Liszt and their ilk, had divided the Viennese music community. But Von Bülow had more than artistic reasons to side with Brahms, given that his wife Cosima had left him to become Wagner's paramour. The popularity of the Brahms First overcame the composer's symphonic inhibitions and Symphony no. 2 was completed just a year later. Citing several examples, the critic Alfred Frankenstein points out that writing similar works in pairs was not unusual for Brahms,

as if finishing one created a well of surplus inspiration and energy that had to be dispelled by writing the next.

The Second Symphony shows Brahms in a more contemplative mood and in full command of his growing confidence. One hesitates to call the symphony sombre, but Brahms wrote to a colleague, "The orchestra will play my new symphony with crepe bands on their sleeves. It is to be printed with a black edge too."

The melody, counterpoint and orchestration in this symphony could only be written by a composer of the first order and here, more so than in the first symphony, we see why Brahms is considered one of the exclusive three B's – (Bach, Beethoven and Brahms). It's a pity the Second is not heard more often (this is a Symphony New Brunswick premiere), but it seems to have been surpassed in popularity by his first and fourth symphonies.

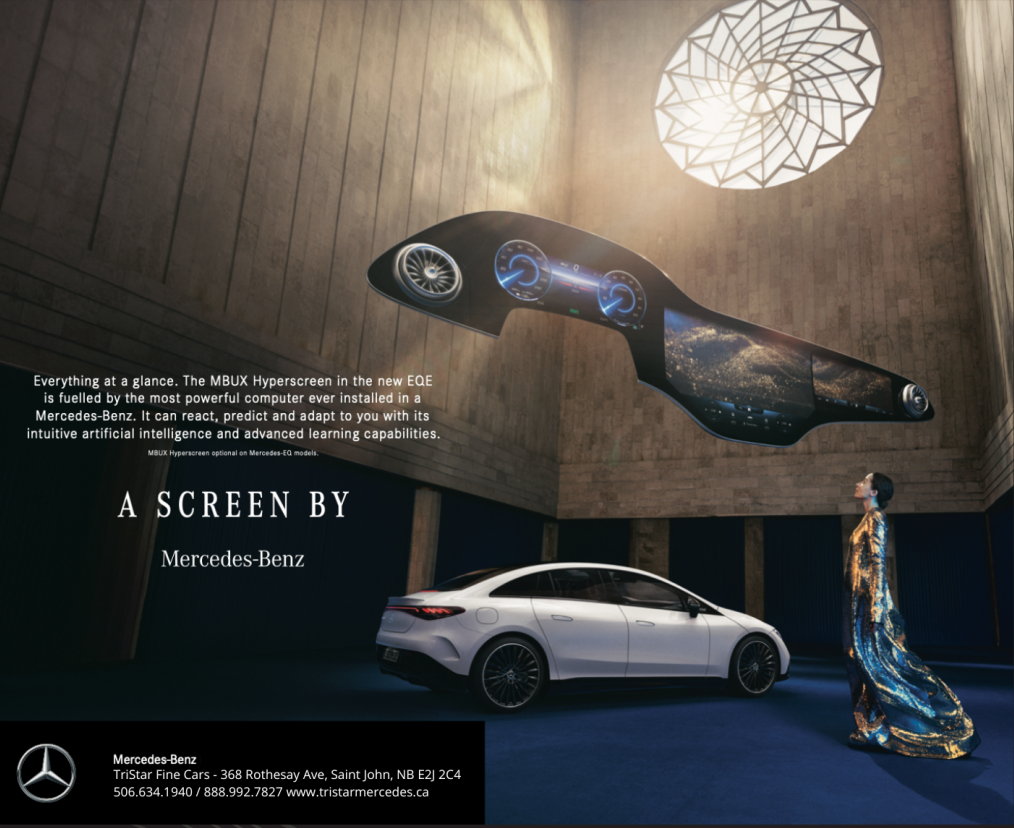
The Symphony has the traditional formal structure of four movements marked respectively *allegro non troppo* (fast but not too fast), *adagio non troppo* (slow but not too slow), *allegretto grazioso* (a scherzo played graciously) and finally *allegro con spirito*. With such contradictory instructions, finding exactly the right tempos and nuances in this work tests the mettle of many conductors.

So how should we listen? With patience and in a relaxed frame of mind! The work is a bit long at about 45 minutes; but it is time well spent and emotionally rewarding if you give it a chance.

What should we listen for? The very first bar is the most important, so listeners should pay heed. It is a sequence of three notes, D-C#-D, a figure which dominates throughout both this movement and the finale, unifying the symphony not only by the D-Major key signature of both movements but also by common thematic kernels at the beginning and end. This writer is impressed by the grandeur of this movement, perhaps the finest opening of the four symphonies.

The *adagio*, also in a major key, can be thought of as an extended love poem with a brief stormy interlude in the middle introduced by a beautiful tune in the violins. Think of the love of your life while listening to this movement.


The *allegretto* in G-Major is a cheerful A-B-A-C-A structure. The trios (B and C) are more agitated than the more leisurely scherzo sections; but Brahms varies the A parts to make them more interesting. The composer loosens the reins in the fourth movement and we are treated to a wonderful finale. It is in easily discernible sonata form but it places considerable demands on the musicians, especially the woodwinds. Listen for the rushing scale passages near the end of the first series of themes. They will be repeated later shortly before the glorious ending.



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BRUCH & BRAHMS

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**Nov 15**  
PLAYHOUSE  
FREDERICTON

Symphony New Brunswick Foundation Inc.  
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