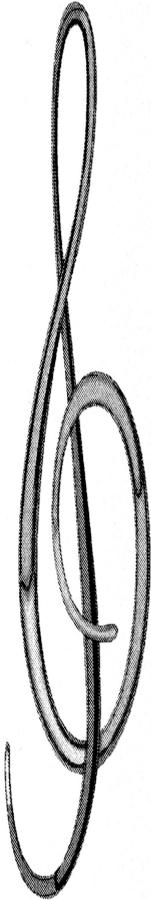


Christopher's Classics
Series XXVI 2021
presents

Trio Élan



Donald Armstrong (violin), Sarah Watkins (piano), Simon Brew (saxophone)

Thursday, April 8th, 2021, 7:30 PM
The Piano, 156 Armagh St, Christchurch

The busiest lives deserve beautiful music.

Presented by
Sunday Classics Inc



Elizabeth Ball Trust



This concert is presented in association with Chamber Music New Zealand.
The CMNZ Regional Series is supported by The Deane Endowment Trust Artist
Development Fund.

Programme:

Russ Peterson - *Trio for Alto Saxophone, Violin and Piano*

Peter Liley (NZ) - *"Deux Images" for Trio*

Debussy - *Violin Sonata in G minor*

Interval

Marc Eychenne - *Cantilène and Dance*

Gareth Farr (NZ) - *Meditation (sax and piano)*

Piazzolla - *Otoño Porteño*

Gareth Farr (NZ) - *Tango: Un Verano de Passion*

Trio Élan is an electrifying new ensemble made up of three of New Zealand's leading chamber musicians.

Simon Brew graduated from the ArtEZ Conservatorium, Netherlands, where he won the prestigious Grachtenfestival Conservatorium Competition and the Artez Kunstnacht Competition for top graduating student. Simon freelances regularly with the NZSO, as well as other regional orchestras and chamber groups.

Donald Armstrong is Associate Concertmaster of the NZSO. He was formerly Principal Second Violin of the Tivoli Sinfoniorkester in Denmark and Co-Concertmaster of the Orchestre Philharmonique de Nice in France. Donald performs regularly in chamber groups throughout New Zealand. As a violinist, teacher, conductor and mentor he encourages young instrumentalists while continuing his quest for the wild, wacky and wonderful in music. He plays a violin by Nicolo Gagliano of 1754.

Pianist **Sarah Watkins** is a highly regarded performer and recording artist, perhaps best known as a founding member of NZTrio. A graduate of New York's Juilliard School, she regularly appears as a freelance player with the APO and ACO, and is on the teaching staff at the University of Auckland.

Programme Notes

Russell Peterson (1969—) Trio for Alto Saxophone, Violin & Piano

- I. *Allegro*
- II. *Adagio*
- III. *Allegro moto perpetuo*

American saxophonist, bassoonist and composer Russell Peterson is active in both the classical and jazz scene. He has numerous awards both as a composer and performer, including winning the prestigious International Geneva Saxophone Concours which brought him international recognition. Much of his compositional output features the saxophone and he regularly crosses sound worlds to include elements of rock, pop and jazz in his writing.

This trio, utilises strong rhythmic pulses, flourishing technical passages and a sustained intensity throughout. The extended use of the altissimo register in the saxophone part is almost a trademark of his writing and performing. The trio was commissioned by the Fargo-Moorhead Symphony for their 2007 Chamber Music Series and dedicated to violinist Eric Grossman and pianist Jay Hersheberger.

Duration: 22'

Peter Liley (1997—) Deux Images

- I. *Small Scurrying*
- II. *Glimpse*

Peter Liley is a saxophonist and sound artist based in Wellington. He has produced many classical, contemporary, ambient, electronic and experimental works, and performs regularly around New Zealand. Peter studied composition, sound art and saxophone at the New Zealand School of Music where he received first prize at the New Zealand School of Music's Lilburn Composition Competition.

"Deux Images" is a continuation of his *Pattern Series*—a group of brief compositions for varying instruments and ensembles that explore the possibilities of repeating and alternating tiny fragments of musician material. The premier of the work was given by Peter himself in the original form of flute, saxophone and piano. This version has been adapted to include violin by Peter especially for this tour.

Duration: 7'

Claude Debussy (1862–1918) Violin Sonata in G minor

- I. *Allegro vivo*
- II. *Intermède: Fantasiaque et léger*
- III. *Finale: Très animé*

In Paris, 1915, Debussy was suffering from a painful cancer and was depressed by the effects of war. Intended as a set of 6 sonatas for various instruments that was never completed, the violin sonata was the last piece that he wrote.

The first movement develops out of two serene and simple chords in the piano which seem to suggest openness and endless possibility. With the entrance of the violin, the piece's thrillingly unpredictable and mercurial drama begins to unfold. We move abruptly from turbulence to celestial serenity and back again. After an almost improvisatory second movement we are reminded of the first movement again before a final movement that Debussy described as "filled with tumultuous joy."

Duration: 14'

Marc Eydenne (1933–) | Cantilène and Dance

- I. *Cantilène: Très librement*
- II. *Danse: Très rythmé*

Algerian-born Marc Eydenne studied violin, chamber music and solfeggio at the conservatory in his hometown. In 1954 he was awarded the Grand Prix by the city of Algiers for his achievements on the violin. Eydenne moved to France to pursue violin studies, but composition soon became his focus. He wrote much chamber music and several pieces for saxophone; "Cantilène et Danse", written in 1961, is among his most popular. It has an unmistakably French, 'everyday' sound—somewhat like Poulenc.

The *Cantilène* establishes a seductive, melancholy mood, with rich interplay between the instruments. The *Danse* is joyful, spiky, and full of brilliant, syncopated energy.

Duration: 14'

Gareth Farr (1968—) | Meditation

Gareth Farr is an indisputably colourful figure in New Zealand music. And whether scored for percussion duet or the resources of two large orchestras, Farr's music reflects his personality—bold & brash, or delicate & sensuous, but inevitably, immediately engaging. Rhythmic elements of his compositions can be linked to the complex and exciting rhythms of Rarotongan log drum ensembles, Balinese gamelan and other percussion music of the Pacific Rim.

"Meditation" is Farr at his most expressive. The opening piano chords set the atmosphere for a lyrical melody; the accompaniment then becomes more flowing as the saxophone opens out, and the work ends in full voice. Originally written for viola and piano in 1996, it was arranged for alto sax in 2004 at the request of Simon Brew.

Duration: 6'

Ástor Piazzolla (1921-1992) | Otoño Porteño

Ástor Piazzolla was the foremost composer and ambassador of tango music, who carried the signature sound of Argentina to clubs and concert halls around the world. Otoño Porteño (Buenos Aires Autumn) is the first of four tangos known as Estaciones Porteñas or "The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires". The music is quintessential Piazzolla, reflecting the life and soul of his native Buenos Aires. Two versions of an energetic theme surround a central, reflective version. Written originally for Piazzolla's ensemble it has been arranged in many versions. Today's arrangement is by José Bragato.

Duration: 5'

Gareth Farr | Tango: Un Verano de Passion

In addition to his many classical compositions, Gareth Farr is a prolific writer for television, movies and plays. In its original form, this piece was written by Gareth in 2002 for the television drama "The Strip" which is the story of corporate lawyer Melissa Walker, who decides her life needs a new direction and quits her job after finding her husband in bed with his male lover. She opens a male strip club, catering especially for women. The music accompanies a smouldering tango between one of the male strippers and the choreographer in front of an enthusiastically screaming crowd of women. Gareth has since arranged the tango for two different ensembles and this arrangement has been done by Keith Moss especially for Trio Élan.

Duration: 4'

Christopher's Classics Next Concert:



Serenity Thurlow and Diedre Irons

performing **Hindemith, Brahms and Shostakovich**

Thursday 29th April 2021, 7:30 PM

at **The Piano** 156 Armagh St.

Tickets: Door Sales: \$45 (students **\$20**) by cash
\$50 (students **\$22**) by credit card/EFTPOS.

On-Line Sales: www.eventfinda.co.nz (all charges to purchaser)

For general concert information

email: treasurer.christophers.classics@gmail.com

or visit our website www.christophersclassics.nz

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