



White Rock Concerts

Presents

OCTAGON '99



OCTAGON '99
1. Andrew Dawes, *violin*
2. Rivka Golani, *viola*
3. Joel Quarrington, *doublebass*
4. Angèle Dubeau, *violin*
5. Amanda P. Forsyth, *cello*
6. George Zukerman, *bassoon*
7. Martin Hackleman, *frenchhorn*
8. James Campbell, *clarinet*



Friday, April 9, 1999



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Octagon '99

Andrew Dawes, *violin* Angèle Dubeau, *violin*
Rivka Golani, *viola* Amanda Forsyth, *'cello*
Joel Quarrington, *contrabass* James Campbell, *clarinet*
Martin Hackleman, *French horn* George Zukerman, *bassoon*

Programme

Ludwig van Beethoven [1770-1827]

Septet, Op. 20

Adagio - Allegro con brio, Cantabile, Minuet, Theme and Variations, Scherzo, Andante - Presto

for violin
viola
'cello
contrabass
clarinet
French horn
bassoon

Intermission

Franz Schubert [1797-1828]

Octet, Opus 166

Adagio, Allegro - Andante un poco mosso - Scherzo - Theme and Variations (Andante) - Minuet - Andante Molto, Allegro

for violins I & II
viola
'cello
contrabass
clarinet
French horn
bassoon

Octagon '99

A remarkable recipe for unusual chamber music.

Take

8 international recording stars

add

6 winners of Juno recording awards

and

3 principal players of leading Canadian Orchestras

and stir gently with

4 holders of the Order of Canada

Rehearse at a high temperature for sufficient time to bring
to a musical boil...

= 1 new Canadian ensemble of extraordinary unanimity and
unequaled excellence.

OCTAGON '99 features eight of Canada's most widely recorded instrumental soloists in a programme built around the rarely heard Octet by Franz Schubert.

Founding member of the world-renowned Orford String Quartet, **Andrew Dawes, O.C.** is one of Canada's most distinguished violinists, acclaimed around the world as recitalist, chamber musician and soloist. With the Quartet he garnered JUNO awards in 1984 for Mozart Quartets, 1986 for Schubert String Quintet and 1990 for R. Murray Schaeffer Quartets.

Angèle Dubeau, O.C. is in the forefront of major Quebec violinists on the international scene. She has thrilled audiences from London to Tokyo with dazzling performances. Founder of the LA PIETA Dubeau received the ADISQ award for Classical Recording of the year [The Quebec equivalent of the JUNO award] in 1990, 1993, 1994, 1995 and 1997.

Rivka Golani, for whom more than 200 works including 33 concertos have been written, is recognized as one of the great violists and musicians of modern times. She is presently engaged in a massive project to record 3 new CDs of the works of Bach and Schumann.

Amanda Forsyth, Principal 'cellist of the NAC orchestra, is known as an adventurous and energetic artist, and one of Canada's finest soloists. Her recording "Electra Rising" won a 1998 Juno award.

Joel Quarrington, Principal double-bass player of the Toronto Symphony, was the winner of the Geneva International double bass competition and has been soloist in Canada, the USA, Europe and China.

Widely recorded, internationally renowned, clarinetist **James Campbell, O.C.** is among Canada's most honoured and distinguished soloists. He also celebrates 15 years as artistic director of "The Festival on the Sound". His "Stolen Gems" album on Marquis Classics won a 1986 JUNO award.

Hornist **Martin Hackleman** is widely celebrated for his pioneer chamber

music activity as a long-time member of Canadian Brass. He is now principal horn of the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra. In 1985, the Canadian Brass won the JUNO award for Instrumental Artists of the year.

In four decades of active international touring, *George Zukerman, O.C., O.B.C.*, has been credited with elevating the bassoon from the back ranks of the Symphony Orchestra to an honoured role as soloist.

The instruments of **OCTAGON '99**

Andrew Dawes plays on a J.B. Guadagnini made in 1770 in Parma, Italy.

Angèle Dubeau plays the Des Rosiers Stradivarius, made in Cremona in 1733.

Rivka Golani plays a "Cutaway" viola made in 1979 by the Hungarian-Canadian craftsman, Otto Erdesz.

Amanda Forsyth plays a modern 'cello, #13, made for her in 1981 by the Nebraska luthier, David Wiebe.

Joel Quarrington's bass was made by the Brescian master, Giovanni Paolo Maggini in 1630.

James Campbell plays Selmer clarinets.

Martin Hackelman plays on a hand made Englebert Schmid double Horn.

George Zukerman plays a Heckel bassoon, #9174, hand crafted in 1950 from Black Forest Maple wood.

Notes

Ludwig van Beethoven [1770-1827]

Septet, Op. 20

Adagio - Allegro con brio, Cantabile, Minuet, Theme and Variations, Scherzo, Andante - Presto

Beethoven wrote his Septet around the same time as his first symphony and second piano concerto. It was an extremely popular work at the time of its creation. Salons and private homes welcomed great music, but often didn't have space to accommodate a full symphony orchestra! In choosing the ensemble of strings, clarinet, horn and bassoon [later imitated by Schubert in his great Octet], Beethoven captured the essential solo qualities of three of the orchestra's key wind instruments. The Septet is a true Serenade, with an extra minuet, as well as a theme and variations to enhance the traditional four movements of the Sonata form. The Theme and Variations features in turn each of the instruments in the Septet, either as soloist, or in duet.

Franz Schubert [1797-1828]

Octet in F Major, Opus 166

Adagio, allegro - Andante un poco mosso - Scherzo - Theme and Variations - Minuet - Andante Molto, Allegro

Schubert's magnificent (and slightly mysterious) Octet Opus 166 has often

been referred to as "a missing Schubert Symphony." Quite certainly, the addition of the double bass to the traditional string quartet creates an orchestral string sound. The three wind soloists, each selected for their sonority and lyricism, give parts of the Octet a sense of concerto, with required virtuosity as well as the associated instrumental prominence. None the less, the great Austrian musicologist Alfred Einstein [cousin of the eminent scientist, Albert] says of the work "In spite of the double-bass, the Octet is, in fact, the purest and most delicate chamber music, which never oversteps its limits." So which is it?

Today's audiences may choose equally to view the work as an expanded string quartet or a scaled-down symphony, both opulently clothed in the garb of the multi movement Divertimento. Given this constant and ever apparent dichotomy, the work seems to hover somewhere between the two forms, conjuring up at one moment an intensity that stems from the heart of the string quartet, at another a "romantic" version of the old Cassation, coupled - as Einstein suggests - with the traditional mixture of martial and pastoral.

Schubert wrote the Octet in February 1824 on a commission by Count Ferdinand Troyer, who stipulated that the new work should be exactly like Beethoven's Septet, which preceded it by nearly 20 years. Its similarity to the Beethoven extends beyond the choice of instruments [it is identical there, except for the addition of an invaluable second violin part] to a parallel structure of movements. Even within the movements, the tempo changes are identical - for instance both the first and last movements of the Beethoven Septet begin with slow introductions. We need not be surprised when we note that Schubert in obliging obedience to his patron, follows the same pattern!

Some special notes about the Schubert Octet:

String Quartet players lead a charmed musical life with a plethora of such glorious repertoire that it is inevitably hard for them to say that one great work stands out above any other.

Wind soloists, and sadly neglected double bass players, on the other hand, find chamber music opportunities far less frequent. The Schubert Octet, therefore, has special meaning for these players, and Messrs. Campbell, Hackleman, Zukerman and Quarrington have each contributed a few lines about their beloved Opus 166.

Jim Campbell writes succinctly:

The Schubert Octet is a dream come true for any clarinet player who values the lyrical quality of the instrument. The opening of the second movement is one of the greatest melodies ever given to the clarinet.

Martin Hackleman comments to the point:

The Schubert Octet is always a joy to play. Its sincerity is never maudlin, and each player feels he is indispensable because Schubert wrote with such clarity for each of us. The solos for the horn are judicious and the music evokes a wistful melancholy, especially at the end of the first movement.

George Zukerman observes: [at somewhat greater length]

The Octet provides a glimmer of what Schubert might have been able to offer the bassoon had he ever written more extensively for it. In the first movement, the instrument is allowed spectacular leaps and harmonic replies to the horn. In the slow movement there are glorious passages where the bassoon achieves the limpidity of the dolce clarinet. High point is in the Minuet movement, where the gentle landler scored for violin and bassoon in octaves is reminiscent of similar scoring in the 5th Symphony.

But Joel Quarrington has the last, and expansive word.

Like his "Trout Quintet", Schubert's "Octet" occupies a significant place in the world of the double bassist who plays chamber music. In fact, significant may not even be strong enough. After all, when you talk about these two pieces, you are referring to 66% of the repertoire for chamber music with double bass. [The remaining third is, of course, represented by Beethoven's "Septet".]

These are the masterworks the public never tires of, and we bassists, never tire of performing them. We might not know much, but boy, do we know those pieces!

We may never play the melody in them, or even have a very exposed line, but you would miss us if we were'n't there. We add the heft and the weight to the sound. Mind you, the same might be accomplished by turning on the air-conditioning, but we are better for the environment. On behalf of generations of bass players, I thank Mr. Schubert and Mr. Beethoven for their shrewd choices in instrumentation. I like to think they still would have chosen the bass even if electricity have been at their disposal.

Members of Octagon '99 are available, courtesy of the following managements:

James Campbell
Rivka Golani
Angèle Dubeau
Amanda Forsyth

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