



# **White Rock Concerts**

*Presents*

**Les Violons du Roy**  
Jean-François Rivest, Conductor



*Friday, April 7, 2006*

# Les Violons du Roy

Guest conductor : Jean-François Rivest

Musicians :

**Violins 1 :**

Pascale Giguère\*/ Pascale Gagnon,  
Véronique Vychytil/ Angélique Duguay,  
Michelle Seto

**Violins 2 :**

Nicole Trotier\*/ Maud Langlois,  
Renaud Lapierre/ Charles-Etienne Marchand

**Violas :**

Annie Morrier/ Jean-Louis Blouin,  
Marilou Hains-Robitaille

**Violoncellos :**

Benoit Loïselle/ Sylvain Murray, Laurence Leclerc

**Double-bass :**

Raphaël McNabney

\*Alternate violin soloists

## Les Violons du Roy

The chamber orchestra Les Violons du Roy borrows its name from the renowned string orchestra of the court of the French kings. The group, which has a core membership of fifteen players, was brought together in 1984 by artistic director Bernard Labadie and specializes in the vast repertoire of music for chamber orchestra, performed in the stylistic manner most appropriate to each era. Although the ensemble plays on modern instruments, its approach to the works of the Baroque and Classical periods has been strongly influenced by current understanding of performance practice in the 17th and early 18th centuries; in this repertoire Les Violons du Roy uses Baroque bows and bowing technique. The orchestra has been widely acclaimed for the exceptional energy, brilliance and vitality of its performances.

Les Violons du Roy has, since 1988, made over a hundred concert appearances in Austria, Belgium, Canada, Ecuador, England, France, Germany, Mexico, Morocco, Norway, Spain, and United States. Its performance of Handel's *Messiah*, regularly presented in Québec City, Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto always create a critical and public sensation. The group also performed Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* in April 2000 and *St. John Passion* in April 2004, both in Québec City, Montreal and Toronto. After a first visit in 1997, Les Violons du Roy played at Lincoln Center in New York in March 2001 as part of their North American tour and also in September 2001 presenting Mozart's *Requiem* and Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass* in the same setting; they returned in August 2004.

## *Programme*

- H. PURCELL *Fantasia upon one note, in F major*
- H. PURCELL *Fantasia in C minor*
- H. PURCELL *In Nomine*  
(1659-1695)
- W. A. MOZART *String quartet in D minor, K. 421*  
(1756-1791)  
**Transcription : Jean-François Rivest**  
Allegro moderato  
Andante  
Menuetto  
Allegretto ma non troppo  
Transcription : Jean-François Rivest

## *Intermission*

- R. STRAUSS *Sextet from Capriccio, op. 85*  
(1864-1949)  
**Transcription : Jean-François Rivest**
- J. BRAHMS *Liebeslieder Walzer*  
(1833-1897)  
Im Ländler – Tempo  
Più agitato  
Più lento  
Tempo primo  
Più animato  
Più lento
- B. BARTÓK *Romanian Folk Dances*  
(1881-1945)  
I. Stick dance  
II. Brâul  
III. In One Spot  
IV. Dance of Buchumi  
V. Romanian Polka  
VI. Fast Dance



## *Programme Notes*

### **Henry Purcell (1659 – 1695)**

As England's greatest composer of the Baroque, Henry Purcell was dubbed the "Orpheus Britannicus" for his ability to combine pungent English counterpoint with expressive, flexible, and dramatic word settings.

Purcell was born in 1659 to Henry Purcell, master of choristers at Westminster Abbey, and his wife Elizabeth. When he was five, his father died, forcing his mother to resettle the family of six children into a more modest house and lifestyle. In about 1668, Purcell became a chorister in the Chapel Royal, studying under chorus master Henry Cooke. In 1673, Purcell was appointed assistant to John Hingeston, the royal instrument keeper.

On September 10, 1677, Purcell was given the Court position of composer-in-ordinary for the violins. It is believed that many of his church works date from this time. Purcell, a great keyboard virtuoso by his late teens, received a second important post in 1679, as organist at Westminster Abbey, a position he would retain all his life. Around the same time, he began writing anthems with string accompaniment, completing over a dozen before 1685, and welcome songs. Purcell was appointed one of three organists at the Chapel Royal in the summer of 1682, his most prestigious post yet.

The composer remained quite prolific in the middle part of the decade, primarily producing music for royal occasions. With the ascension of William and Mary to the throne on April 11, 1689, Purcell retained his post as royal instrument keeper, and he shared the duties of Court composer. With his royal duties reduced, he was able to pursue other opportunities, including teaching and writing for other organizations. In the final year of his life Purcell remained exceedingly busy, writing much for the stage, including *The Indian Queen*, left incomplete at his death on November 21, 1695.

### **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**

The incomparable and inimitable Mozart, who signed himself W.A. or Wolfgang Amadé (never "Amadeus" except in jest after 1773), was the lone surviving son of a proud, shrewd, exploitative father. Leopold toured the boy and his sister, Nannerl, as prodigies between 1762 and 1773, from London to Italy via Germany, France, England, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and, of course, Vienna, the Hapsburg capital. Mozart, although frequently and seriously ill, including with typhus and smallpox, spent less than four years at home in Salzburg before 1773. The arrival of a haughty, stingy new archbishop in 1771 curtailed father-son travel time (Nannerl was dropped from the act in 1766). Grudgingly, Leopold sent his wife in 1777 to chaperone an ill-fated trip to Paris (where she died). En route, Mozart fell in love at

Mannheim with Aloisia Weber, whose sister Constanze he happily married in 1783.

Mozart's reprieve from provincial Salzburg came from the Elector of Bavaria: a commission to compose *Idomeneo* for Munich's 1781 Carnival season. From there, the archbishop summoned Mozart to Vienna for the coronation of Joseph II, Maria Theresa's successor, where he dismissed his exasperating employee. From 1782 on, Mozart was his own man (although perpetually nagged by his father, whose funeral in 1787 Mozart boycotted). Before age 20 he had written nine operas, five violin concertos, at least 30 symphonies, a sheaf of divertimentos and serenades, a ream of liturgical pieces, six sonatas, and six concertos for klavier.

Although Mozart achieved celebrity in Vienna early on, Emperor Joseph II never formally employed him despite a high regard for Mozart's genius. Mozart began presenting solo concerts with orchestra, which produced a trove of sublime klavier concertos between 1782 and 1786.

In his last year, Mozart earned the equivalent of 80,000 U.S. dollars, including his fee for the unfinished Requiem, completed by a pupil.

### **Bela Bartok**

Through his far-reaching endeavors as composer, performer, educator, and ethnomusicologist, Béla Bartók emerged as one of the most forceful and influential musical personalities of the twentieth century. Following his graduation from the Royal Academy of Music in 1901 and the composition of his first mature works Bartók embarked on one of the classic field studies in the history of ethnomusicology. With fellow countryman and composer Zoltán Kodály, he traveled throughout Hungary and neighboring countries, collecting thousands of authentic folk songs. Bartók's immersion in this music lasted for decades, and the intricacies he discovered therein, from plangent modality to fiercely aggressive rhythms, exerted a potent influence on his own musical language.

From its roots in the music he performed as a pianist — Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin, Brahms - Bartók's own style evolved through several stages into one of the most distinctive and influential musical idioms of the first half of the twentieth century. The complete assimilation of elements from varied sources - the Classical masters, contemporaries like Debussy, folk songs - is one of the signal traits of Bartók's music. Perhaps above all other elements, though, it is the ingenious application of rhythm that gives Bartók's music its keen edge. Inspired by the folk music he loved, Bartók infused his works with asymmetrical, sometimes driving, often savage, rhythms, which supply violent propulsion to his works.

Of Les Violons du Roy recordings, seven of them have been nominated for JUNO awards, and two won the JUNO award for Best Classical Album, Choral or Vocal Performance.

## **Jean-François Rivest**

Audiences and critics are unanimous about **Jean-François Rivest**: he is a conductor endowed with tremendous energy, precision, emotion and exaltation. Great depth of feeling as well as a strong sense of structure characterize his interpretations. His discography of a dozen titles is quite varied and expands every year: Händel, Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Dvorak, Sibelius, contemporary works, etc. He was granted a Felix Award from Adisq in Canada for the best Orchestral recording of 2001 (Mozart with Alain Lefèvre). On top of his guest conducting all over Canada, he has conducted in Europe, in Peru, in Mexico as well as in Russia, in the famous 'Bolshoi' concert hall. He is presently Artistic Director and conductor of the Orchestra of the University of Montréal, The Laval Symphony (nearby Montréal) and the Thirteen Strings chamber orchestra in Ottawa.

### **Concert Etiquette**

When the music starts, please don't talk or whisper, don't get up from your seat, and don't clap until the piece is over. Please turn off your cell phone, pager, and alarm watch before the concert begins. If you have a cough, bring cough drops and unwrap them and place them in a handkerchief before the concert begins. Also, it is okay to cough between selections or between movements but not during. If you hear a high pitched sound coming from your neighbor, it is their hearing aid. During a break in the performance you may ask them to adjust it. And please remember that we cannot open the doors to the hall before 7:15 so do not arrive too early!

## **A Message from the Artistic Director**

I am happy to welcome the VIOLONS DU ROY to our stage tonight....it has taken a long time to organize their return. In fact, there's quite a story to how this all came about..... Four years ago we had a confirmed booking on one of their frequent Western tours. Then a rare opportunity arose for us to bring in the NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE ORCHESTRA. We discussed this sudden availability with the Violons and they graciously agreed to postpone their appearance until a future season, a future tour. And then - as quickly as it had been offered, the NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE could no longer appear for us! The Violons, meantime, had made other plans. Fortunately our devastation didn't last long. TAFELMUSIK was on tour at precisely the right time, and we were still able to complete our season with a significant orchestral attraction.

## *"Message from the Artistic Director," [continued]*

Not every concert booking is surrounded by such frantic behind-the-scenes-activity. Much long range planning goes into our search for programmes. Consider some of the other scenarios. Chairman Rick Gambrel and I attend a national conference in Ottawa at which we hear several pre-selected performances. Some of them are shocking in their disrespect for audiences....but one emerges as so fantastic, that in a blink of an eye we knew that we would eventually bring **Philippe Magnan** to White Rock. It took us five years, but we made it!

Erika and I attend the 8<sup>th</sup> Banff International String Quartet Competition, where we hear the **Jupiter String Quartet**, the contest winners. Success in that exalted chamber music stratosphere carried with it a major national tour as part of the prize. I am on tour in Russia [the former Soviet Union] and the State apparatus in a heavy handed display of cultural bureaucracy suggests that big brother knows best what Soviet attractions should visit Canada. At the risk of great unpopularity with the regime I insist on going to Siberia [I did manage to return!] to hear a youth choir about which I have been told about.....as a result, in 2007, the **Little Eagles of Siberia** return on their fourth Canadian tour since that 1988 encounter.

My friends and colleagues in the arcane world of concert management constantly tell me of artists and groups which are coming West on tour. White Rock [that's you!] has become so well respected as an important Western presenter, that very few opportunities fail to come to our attention. We choose our artists on the basis of their world-wide reputation and their ability to satisfy and delight our audience with consummate musicality, charm and practiced stage presence. My job, I suppose, is to keep my finger on the pulse of what is happening in Canada, in the USA and abroad, and eventually to bring to you - over the years - a cross section of what is significant, musically satisfying, immensely varied and [ultimately] affordable.

Turning to next season, I wish I could claim that the idea of bringing **Ben Heppner** was completely mine, but the credit really goes to Loretta Bell-Harvey in Vernon. She phoned me one day and said [out of the blue] wouldn't it be sensational if you could get Mr. Heppner for a date in the Okanagan. I said, "why not?" ....and the rest is history. It took contacts at the highest echelons of New York managements and Major European opera houses, and in the end a visit from Rick Gambrel backstage to Ben's dressing room at Covent Garden....but we did it!

Which now leaves us a fine question for the future. What shall we do for an encore? Stay tuned! Enjoy a peaceful summer. I look forward to seeing you at the start of next season.

Sincerely,

George Zukerman

*Our Next Concert:*

***Jasper Wood***  
*violinist*



*Friday, October 13, 2006*

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