



WHITE ROCK
CONCERTS

2017-2018
OUR 61ST SEASON

RUSSIAN MASTERS

THE JOHN AVISON
CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

CONDUCTED BY
LESLIE DALA

NARRATED BY
GEORGE ZUKERMAN

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FRIDAY NOVEMBER 17, 2017

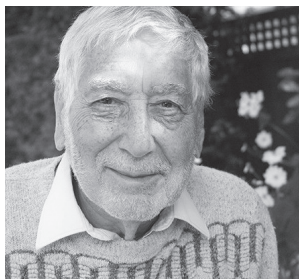
About the Artists



Leslie Dala, Conductor

Conductor Leslie Dala enjoys a multi-faceted career spanning the genres of opera, symphonic music, choral and contemporary works. Named one of the “Top Ten Artistic Leaders” by the Vancouver Sun, Dala’s national profile has grown steadily with guest conducting appearances with Pacific Opera Victoria, Edmonton Opera, COSI Festival in Sulmona, Italy, Vancouver’s Goh Ballet and the University of Toronto Opera.

As Music Director of the Vancouver Bach Choir and Vancouver Academy of Music Chamber Orchestra, he has conducted a wide range of orchestral and choral repertoire including their annual performances at the Bard on the Beach Festival. He is a frequent guest conductor of the UBC Opera Ensemble, and this last March he conducted them in the White Rock Concert’s “Chamber” production of La Boheme, and in September’s Bergmann Piano Duo concert.



George Zukerman O.C., O.B.C.

Peter and the Wolf Narrator Extraordinaire!

The founder of White Rock Concerts in 1956, George Zukerman remained as its Artistic Director until the 2015-16 season.

Simultaneously he enjoyed a meteoric sixty-year career as a virtuoso bassoon soloist and as a leading Canadian concert organizer. He was made an Officer of the Order of Canada, [1993] a member of the Order of BC, [1996] and a Surrey Civic Treasure, [2011].

As soloist, he was the first artist on his instrument ever invited to tour the former Soviet Union, the People’s Republic of China, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. In the course of over 50 seasons of international touring, he undertook 41 European tours. At home he played extensively for Canadian concert societies, symphony orchestras, festivals and schools. Under the Remote Tours Canada programme he visited and performed in hundreds of isolated northern communities in Nunavut, Nunavik, Nunatsiavut, Northwest Territories and the Yukon.

He has recorded the major bassoon concerto repertoire with the Wurtemberg Chamber Orchestra in Stuttgart and recently issued a new CD of bassoon and piano repertoire recorded in Montreal, Vancouver, Canberra, Capetown and Hong Kong.

About the Artists

Celebrated by colleagues, critics and audiences alike as the “High Priest of the bassoon”, [Halifax Telegraph] “The Pablo Casals of the bassoon” [Singapore Sun] and the “The Great Magician of the bassoon” [Munich Tagesblatt] the sobriquet he appreciates the most came from the Prince George Citizen which named him “The Eddie Van Halen of the bassoon”.

As Impresario and concert manager, he developed a network of risk-free subscription concerts throughout Canada. He was also responsible for numerous tours by Canadian artists and groups, often sending celebrity soloists to tiny remote communities. The late Jack Wasserman dubbed him “The Hurok of the Hamlets” after the celebrated American Impresario, Sol Hurok.

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Since 1980, he has lived in South Surrey with his partner, the violin teacher Erika Bennedik.

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John William Trotter

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About the Artists

John Avison Chamber Orchestra

For 70 years, from 1938 to 2008; the CBC maintained a recording and broadcast orchestra at its Vancouver studios. For the final 15 years, the *CBC Vancouver Chamber Orchestra* stood as the last remaining orchestra anywhere in North America.

In recent seasons, the orchestra has been re-established as the *John Avison Chamber Orchestra*, featuring key players of the Vancouver free-lance musical community. It is dedicated to the faithful rendition of the great orchestra repertoire which John Avison first cultivated in Vancouver, and to accompanying numerous visiting guest artists, including the opera *La Boheme* last spring, and the *Bergmann Piano Duo* this September.

Tonight's Musicians

Violin 1

Mark Ferris
Ellen Farrugia
Karina Slupski

Violin 2

Domagoj Ivanovic
Ken Lin

Viola

Manti Poon
Marie-Claude Brunet

Cello

Rebecca Wenham
Sue Round

Bass

Les Kasprzak

Flute

Brenda Fedoruk

Oboe

David Owen

Clarinet

Mary Backun

Bassoon

Ingrid Chiang

French Horn

Laurel Spencer

Trumpet

Tom Shorthouse

Keyboard

David Boothroyd

RUSSIAN MASTERS

THE JOHN AVISON
CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

CONDUCTED BY
LESLIE DALA

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GEORGE ZUKERMAN

Suite from the ballet, "Pulcinella" (1922)

Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971)

Sinfonia
Serenata
Scherzino, Allegretto, Andantino
Tarantella
Toccata
Gavotta (with two variations)
Vivo
Minuetto and Finalé

Serenade for Strings, Op. 48

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840 - 1893)

Pezzo in forma di sonatina: Andante non troppo -
Allegro moderato
Valse: Moderato - Tempo di valse
Élégie: Larghetto elegiaco
Finale (Tema russo): Andante - Allegro con spirit

INTERMISSION

Peter and the Wolf, Op. 67 (1936)

Sergei Sergeyevich Prokofiev (1891 - 1953)

A Symphonic Fairy Tale

George Zukerman: Narrator

Programme Notes

A special treat for you tonight - Combined with his Blog, this time - George's Programme Note and Prologue - And the latter is in rhyme!

Christmas time is always exciting in the musical world. For White Rock Concerts we take a break from concerts, but in Metropolitan Vancouver, this is the time for other great musical events!

You don't have to look any further than our own programme, and the exciting announcements from *Early Music Vancouver*, the *Vancouver Chamber Choir* and *Chor Leoni*. The Early Music "*Messiah*" will take place right here in our own concert-hall church. It promises to be a truly authentic performance of that noble work - in the style and tradition of the century in which Handel wrote the work. Erika and I are certainly attending. We look forward to seeing many of you there.

Now to tonight's concert. I'm looking forward to being back on stage. But it isn't going to be easy! Past narrators for *Peter and the Wolf* have included Peter Ustinov, Boris Karloff, Basil Rathbone, Eleanor Roosevelt, Bill Clinton and Leonard Bernstein! I'll try my best, but I am certainly up against admirable competition!

Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf* was written at the time of the Great Purge, and the height of Stalinist repression in 1936. Although it was created for a Moscow-based children's theatre and conceived as a symphonic fairy tale, innocent childhood pleasure and delight had a difficult time surviving, when confronted everywhere by remorseless dialectic materialism.

Flash forward to 1978. On one of my Soviet tours in the Ukrainian city of Zaporozhze, *Peter and the Wolf* was on the first half of the programme. The narrator was the Educational Commissar of the famous Z. coal mines. Even with my limited Russian I could tell that his narration was awkward and stilted, and at rehearsal the orchestra musicians could not stop themselves from laughing - not at Prokofiev's charming tale - but at the embarrassing narration. At intermission the conductor came into the musicians' lounge and lectured the players severely, warning them to take the didactic tale of Peter far more seriously, lest the entire orchestra be in deep political trouble. As a result, at the performance that evening, the orchestra retained suitably glum expressions throughout, not daring to laugh. However, the audience was not so restrained, and they reacted just as the musicians had at rehearsal: they could not stop giggling - not at Prokofiev's charming tale - but at ineptitude of the *Educational Commissar*. I never heard the final outcome, but quite probably, the entire crowd of 1500 people were reported to the administrative apparatchiks of the Zaporozhze commune.

Recalling this incident, I created my own prologue for tonight's performance of

Peter and the Wolf

The tale of Peter, the Wolf and his friends
Is one that - we now learn - might have had other ends.
T'was published at first as a children's delight
But it didn't take long to set that score right.

Zhdanov and Stalin conceived of a plot
To turn a children's account into something it's not.
With Marxist dialectics a convenient excuse
They altered the story to serve their own use

Our Peter's a brave chap, from communist youth,
The wolf is a capitalist, truly uncouth.
The bird is a trickster, trained to jump any hoop
The duck is a false proletariat dupe
The cat is the lackey who serves any cause
And Grandad's a Kullak, who just obeys laws.

The hunters are Red army troops - always there
To defend motherland both on ground and by air
The Zoo is the gulag where opponents must stay
While the victors Parade for a joyous May Day.

Well, none of it happened, and childhood prevailed!
Breathe cheerful, for once again tyranny failed!
Pete's just a kid with inquisitive thoughts
The cat chases birds regardless of sorts.
The duck swims in circles while searching for food
The bird whistles happily: depends on his mood.
"Keep that gate closed" is what Grandfather grunted
While the wolf is a species endangered and hunted.
The Soviet soldiers, were ground keepers, all
The May Day parade took place in the Fall.

And if you are seeking the ultimate truth
You really don't need to look hard for proof.
Prokoviev's melodies are far too sublime,
To support a false cause and be lost to our time!

Editor's note:

In preparing the programme of Russian Masters the John Avison Chamber Orchestra considered including Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture. The plan was cancelled when we discovered that the cannon wouldn't fit through the Church doors.

Programme Notes

Suite from the ballet, Pulcinella [1965 version] - Igor Stravinsky

Stravinsky was living in Paris in 1919 when he wrote his Pulcinella Ballet. It was based on an early 18th century commedie dell'arte, and for it he selected music attributed to the Baroque composer Giovanni Battista Pergolesi (1710-1736). He then re-wrote the music interjecting his own modern rhythms, cadences and harmonies.

Paris in 1910 was a crucible of artistic creativity and innovation. Stravinsky was right in the middle, as disciplines converged and interacted. Pulcinella, When it was first produced in 1920, was choreographed by Leonide Massine. The producer was none other than Sergei Diaghilev, and the costumes were designed by Pablo Picasso. The premiere performance was conducted by Ernst Ansermet. Some team!

Stravinsky wrote about the work "Pulcinella was my discovery of the past, the epiphany through which the whole of my late work became possible. It was a backward look, of course - the first of many love affairs in that direction - but it was a look in the mirror, too." The suite is generally considered to be the first work of the composer's neo-classical period. In 1922, he created the Orchestral Suite from the music of the ballet, and revised it again 1949 and 1965.

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