

Wind ensemble works featured in upcoming White Rock concert

Rarely-heard Mozart serenade highlighted

Alex Browne
Staff reporter

Many Mozart scholars believe the composer's *Gran' Partita* (also known as *Serenade No. 10*) was written to be played at his wedding to his bride Constanza, which took place in Vienna in 1782.

Whatever the legitimacy of this romantic connection, the celebrated – yet rarely-heard live – work in the wind ensemble repertoire will be one of the treats offered Nov. 23 at White Rock Baptist Church (1657 140 St.) for subscribers to the sold-out White Rock Concerts series.

Performing the piece – along with other seminal works of the repertoire by Beethoven and Dvorak – will be an ensemble of members of the John Avison Chamber Orchestra, under the direction of Leslie Dala.

“This program is the wind players’ revenge,” said series artistic director emeritus George Zukerman – before his retirement an internationally-recognized master of the bassoon – noting the usual domination of strings in classical concert programming.

Zukerman designed this particular programme, as well as brought together the outstanding Vancouver-based wind soloist featured.

These include a newcomer to the Lower Mainland, Spanish clarinet virtuoso Jose Franch-Ballester, now head of wind chamber music and clarinet studies at UBC's School of Music.

A member of the Lincoln Centre Chamber Players and a frequent guest at international festivals, Franch-Ballester has also recorded major clarinet repertoire pieces for Deutsche Grammophon.

Also included in the ensemble are oboist Emma Ringrose, formerly a member of the BBC Philharmonic; bassoonist Jesse Read, formerly head of music at UBC and a veteran member of the Carmel Bach Festival; and French horn player Steve Denroche, a regular member of the Vancouver Opera Orchestra.

Dala, lately returned to Canada after conducting at the Wexford Opera Festival in Ireland, is conductor of the Vancouver Bach Choir and associate conductor of the Vancouver Opera.

Zukerman also noted that the program will include an early Rondino by Beethoven for wind octet, and the *Serenade, Op. 44* for winds, cello and double bass, by Dvorak.

Adding extra interest to the Mozart piece, Zukerman said will be the ensemble's use of two examples of a historic instrument, the

‘basset horn.’

“It's an alto clarinet – popular in Mozart's time, but seldom used today,” he added.

“The two rare instruments are owned by the UBC School of Music, and have been readied for contemporary performance by noted Vancouver instrument repairman, Morey Backun.”

For information, visit whiterockconcerts.com, email info@whiterockconcerts.com.



Contributed photo

Spanish-born clarinet virtuoso Jose Franch-Ballester.