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CONCERTS

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===== 2023-2024 SEASON =====

THE PLANETS

WITH PERCUSSIANO 3

Bergmann Duo, pianos and Rod Thomas Squance, percussion

SATURDAY, MARCH 9, 2024



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BIOGRAPHY



Percussiano3 is a veritable pageant for the eye and the ear bringing together a myriad of percussion instruments with one piano or two pianos. The two hands of percussionist Rod Thomas Squance and the four hands of Elizabeth and Marcel Bergmann join together to perform a six-handed musical marvel. With their dazzling array of instruments and brilliant display of virtuosity, Percussiano3 deliver all of the excitement of a percussion ensemble without losing the classical touch of a traditional concert, presenting great masterpieces and unique transcriptions for percussion and piano. Their repertoire spans across musical styles and periods and includes works by composers like Bach, Schubert, Ravel, Chabrier, Copland, Rachmaninoff, Piazzolla, Brubeck, Saint Saëns as well as their own original compositions.

BIOGRAPHY (cont.)

It all began at the Banff Centre for the Arts some 20 years ago, where the musicians first met and performed together over several weeks. Their connection both personally and musically was instant and from that time they have collaborated on a huge variety of musical projects covering a range of repertoire from standard classical to contemporary chamber music, and from jazz to a children's opera production. They have recorded for the CBC and for several years performed extensively as members of the award winning Calgary based Land's End Chamber Ensemble.

Their enthusiasm is infectious as audiences experience the dynamic energy and communication of the three friends performing together. The trio enjoys connecting with audiences through their lively performances and engaging explanations, and love taking the time to speak with enthusiastic audience members on stage after concerts.

A stunning soloist, percussionist Rod captivates audiences with his perfect blend of compelling musicianship, sparkling technique, and exotic sound. He has performed with Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Project, Paquito de Rivera, Dong-Won Kim, Kojiro Umezaki, Yu Hongmei and Prafulla Athalye. Rod has appeared on national radio and television, solo recitals and with many orchestras. Classically trained, Rod also plays jazz vibraphone, Balinese shadow-puppet music and Indian classical music. He currently teaches at the University of Calgary.

The prize winning Bergmann Piano Duo's dynamic and energetic performances of uniquely eclectic programmes have inspired audiences nationally and internationally. They have performed in concert and with orchestras in the United States, Italy, Germany, The Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, France, Macedonia, Greece, China and Canada. The duo has recorded extensively and their repertoire ranges from the Baroque to the contemporary, including a myriad of Marcel's own arrangements and compositions. The duo also enjoy their roles as Artistic Directors of White Rock Concerts and curate a very popular series of coffee concerts throughout the Greater Vancouver Area and on Vancouver Island.

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PROGRAMME

Nocturnes

(Arr. for 2 pianos M. Ravel, percussion Arr. R.T. Squance)

Nuages

Fêtes

Claude Debussy

Prelude from Suite for Solo Lute in G Minor

(Transcr. R.T. Squance)

J. S. Bach

Selections from West Side Story

(Arr. M. Bergmann/ R.T. Squance)

Leonard Bernstein

Something's Coming

Mambo

Maria

The Rumble

Somewhere

America

INTERMISSION

The Planets

(Arr. for 2 pianos G. Holst, percussion Arr. R.T. Squance)

Gustav Holst

Mars, the Bringer of War

Venus, the Bringer of Peace

Mercury, the Winged Messenger

Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity

Saturn, the Bringer of Old Age

Uranus, the Magician

Neptune, the Mystic

PROGRAMME NOTES

Nocturnes - Claude Debussy

Debussy's orchestral Nocturnes were completed in 1899, but had been half a dozen years in gestation. Debussy had originally asked three younger musicians - Raoul Bardac, Lucien Garban and Ravel, to transcribe one movement each of the set; Ravel was given *Sirènes*. Debussy, along with Ricardo Viñes first performed *Nuages* and *Fêtes* in their two-piano guises on 21 April, 1903 - and he disliked the arrangements almost immediately. So Ravel was asked to have a go at the entire suite, a job he did not complete until the relationship with Debussy had all but died away. Still, knowing a good arrangement when he had one, Debussy gave the Ravel transcription its first performance - along with pianist Louis Aubert - on 24 April, 1911.

Of *Nuages*, (Clouds), Debussy wrote, "It is night on the pont de Solférino, very late at night. A great stillness...The Seine, without a ripple, like a tarnished mirror. Some clouds slowly pass through a moonless sky, a number of clouds, not too heavy, not too light: some clouds. That is all." *Fêtes* (Festivals) depicts an imagined procession in the *Bois de Boulogne*. "Lights approaching, and the crowd running towards the path where the procession is going to pass," Debussy has written.

Notes by D. T. Baker

Selections from West Side Story - Leonard Bernstein

The American composer, conductor, pianist, author and lecturer Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990) is one of the icons of twentieth-century classical music. From 1958 until 1969 he was the music director of the New York Philharmonic. Bernstein conducted most of the world's leading orchestras throughout his career and left behind a remarkable legacy of audio and video recordings. His books and televised lectures on music (especially the extraordinary Young People's Concerts) also established Bernstein as an important and influential educator.

PROGRAMME NOTES (continued)

West Side Story, premiered on 26 September 1957, is Leonard Bernstein's most well-known work. It occupies a singular position in the history of musical theatre due to its near-operatic dramatic qualities and Bernstein's compositional mastery.

The selections from West Side Story were my first major arranging project. My work on these arrangements, spread out over several years, formed the basis for my activities as an arranger and composer. Thus, most of the compositional approaches and techniques that I describe in detail below also apply to my other arrangements for two pianos.

The doubling of two identical instruments opens up a wide range of options for musical exchange and dialogue between the two performers. The possibilities range from assigning a specific role or function to each player (e.g. orchestra or soloist) to splitting up the musical textures more evenly between the two pianos. The stereo-effect that results from the spatial juxtaposition of the instruments is a key compositional feature that showcases the ongoing musical interaction most effectively. Often, one instrument presents a musical statement that is immediately repeated by the other, either verbatim or with some form of variation. Mozart's masterful works for two pianos are a prime example of this imitative process, treating the two pianos as equal partners engaging in an ongoing conversation. In this case, the roles of melody and accompaniment are reversed as they follow the inherent logic of the musical narrative. At various points the melody line itself is divided up between the two instruments, resulting in an acoustic "ping-pong" effect.

Throughout 'Something's Coming', I separated the roles of melody and accompaniment between the two pianos. In 'Somewhere', on the other hand, the main melody and accompaniment figures are given to the same instrument, with the other instrument providing a beautiful secondary melody as a counterpoint.

Notes by Marcel Bergmann

PROGRAMME NOTES (continued)

Prelude from Suite for Solo Lute in G Minor - J. S. Bach

The presence of the G minor Suite for Lute by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) played on marimba, is actually an adaptation of an adaptation. Bach did in fact score this work for lute, but the suite is in fact a transcription by the Baroque master of his Suite for Unaccompanied Cello No. 5 in C minor. It has come down to us in two forms: an original manuscript with the title “Pièces pour la Luth à Monsieur Schouster par J.S. Bach” in staff notation, and in anonymous tablature form. In the suite as understood and written by Bach, an extended *Prelude* movement is followed by a series of French or Italian dance forms; in this case, an *Allemande*, a *Courante*, a slow *Sarabande*, a pair of *Gavottes* and a concluding *Gigue*.

Notes by D. T. Baker

===== BOOK ANNOUNCEMENT =====

George Zukerman's memoir, *Have Bassoon, Will Travel: Memoir of an Adventurous Life in Music*

With humorous anecdotes and compelling stories, White Rock Concerts' founder, George Zukerman recounts his life as concert bassoonist and impresario. Full of entertaining tales, his passionate book will be available soon for pre-order at your favourite bookstore and online at Chapters and Amazon.

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