

SCHOOL OF MUSIC, THEATRE, AND DANCE



VIRTUOSO
SERIES CONCERT
DUO
FRANCOIS

RON FRANCOIS / VIOLIN SILVANA SANTINELLI / PIANO

SEPTEMBER 13, 2022 | 7:30 P.M.

O R G A N R E C I T A L H A L L



Colorado State University



PROGRAM :

RON FRANCOIS / VIOLIN **SILVANA SANTINELLI** / PIANO

SONATA NO. 4 IN C MINOR BWV 1017

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685-1750)

- I. Largo
- II. Allegro
- III. Adagio
- IV. Allegro

SONATA NO. 2 IN D MAJOR, OP. 94A

SERGEI PROKOFIEV (1891–1953)

- I. Moderato
- II. Allegretto scherzando
- III. Andante
- IV. Allegro con brio

INTERMISSION

SONATA NO. 5, OP. 95 VAULT, VEIL, VEER*

ANDREW PAUL MACDONALD (B. 1958)

- I. Vault - Adagio-Allegro giusto
- II. Veil - Misterioso con moto
- III. Veer - Agitato

*This piece was commissioned by the Duo Francois

PROGRAM NOTES

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

Sonata No. 4 in C Minor, BWV 1017

Johann Sebastian Bach has become a household name, famous for his large output of sacred compositions and challenging keyboard repertoire. It is often forgotten, however, that Bach was an accomplished violinist. In fact, one of Bach's earliest jobs was as a court violinist in Weimar at seventeen-years-old, when he began what would become a lifelong dedication to composing various violin partitas and sonatas. **Sonata No. 4 in C minor** is the fourth in a set of six violin sonatas. The piece was written during Bach's brief time in Köthen (1717–1723), where he served as *Kapellmeister* (director of music) in the court of Prince Leopold. During this time, Bach wrote some of his most well-known secular pieces, including the *Brandenburg Concertos*, the six cello suites, and *The Well-Tempered Clavier*.

The sonata—in *da chiesa* form (slow, fast, slow, fast)—begins with a siciliano movement, evoking a pastoral tone in a dance-like meter of 6/8. With a gentle, expressive melody in the violin, a melancholic tone of sorrow and longing is conveyed. Trendsetting in his time, Bach liberates the keyboard from traditional continuo-style accompaniment in the second movement and creates a duet-like relationship between the keyboard and violin through exuberant counterpoint. Composed in a polyphonic style similar to the finale, simultaneous melodies emerge from both instruments. A lyrical violin melody then announces the arrival of the third movement. Performed in the lower register of the violin, rich, amber tones stream forth. This contemplative movement allows for a moment of respite from the vigor of the surrounding allegros. Then, the finale swiftly arrives with a thematic introduction in the keyboard. Following in a canon-like suit, the violin joins the keyboard but quickly takes on aspects of a fugue. As the musical lines join in fugal dialogue, thematic material from the second movement is evoked in a dancing fashion.

Sergei Prokofiev (1891–1953)

Sonata no. 2 in D Major, op. 94a

When the Second World War broke out, I felt that everyone must do his share, and I began composing songs and marches for the front. But soon events assumed such gigantic and far-reaching scope as to demand larger canvases. ~ Sergei Prokofiev

Making his name as an iconoclastic pianist and composer, Sergei Prokofiev is known for his virtuosic and dissonant works. In his earliest pieces, starting at the age of 11, Prokofiev was already laying the basis for his own musical style that veered away from, as Prokofiev described, “square” phrase structure and convention. Many years after graduating from the Saint Petersburg Conservatory and touring abroad, Prokofiev managed to escape the war-torn front in 1943 to work on film music for *Ivan the Terrible*. During this time, Prokofiev was said he felt “compelled” to compose **Sonata No. 2 in D major**.

Originally written for flute, the sonata was adapted for violin during 1944, at the request of Prokofiev's close friend, violinist David Oistrakh. The first movement *Moderato* opens with a sweeping melody evocative of Romantic era sonatas. What starts as a bright D-major opening, however, soon becomes overshadowed with dissonant, trill-

like motives and virtuosic string crossings. Moving into the second *Scherzo-Presto*, intense dialogue between the piano and violin summons a biting vigor, followed by brief evocations of Russian folk music, one of Prokofiev's trademarks. Scholars have described this movement's end as "the musical equivalent of both instruments tumbling down a flight of stairs." An *Andante* then begins with Mozartian-like elegance. Offering rest from the vigor of the preceding movements, the lyrical tones of the violin are momentarily swept away by chromatic passages mimicked by the piano. An *Allegro con brio* finale pulls us back into an upbeat jubilation with dissonant dialogue peppered throughout.

Andrew Paul MacDonald (b. 1958)
Sonata No. 5, *Vault, Veil, Veer*

Andrew Paul MacDonald is a Canadian composer, pianist, guitarist, conductor, and music educator. MacDonald earned his DMA in Composition from the University of Michigan in 1985 and has since become an accomplished and celebrated composer. In 1995, MacDonald was awarded the Juno Award for "Best Classical Composition" for his Violin Concerto. MacDonald's compositions have been performed internationally by renowned orchestras such as the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, L'Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal, the Esprit Orchestra, and more. The Duo Francois met MacDonald at Bishop's University about a decade ago, where MacDonald served as chair of the music department. After forging a quick connection and later performing his third sonata, the Duo Francois "immediately fell in love with Andrew's language" and MacDonald's references to Greek mythology, jazz, and blues. A few years later, the Duo Francois commissioned MacDonald to compose ***Vault, Veil, Veer***.

Also referred to as the "Triple V Sonata," *Vault, Veil, Veer* begins with a cadenza-like violin solo. The solo expresses an expansive mood, possibly referencing that of a large, vaulted cathedral. Upon the entrance of the piano, a deeper presence is established, as though the piano was revealing what may lie within these deep cathedral vaults. The second movement, *Veil*, once again begins with unaccompanied violin, although this time *con sordino* (with mute). As the movement evolves, a torrent of dialogue is expressed between the piano and violin through trade-offs of melodies. The finale *Veer* is often chromatic, though it calls back to the beautiful lyricism found throughout the prior movements. Notably, the middle of this last movement features an *aksak* (limping) rhythm (2+2+3), as a means to call on Middle Eastern folk music. Composers Bartók and Stravinsky were known to utilize this rhythmic technique in their works. As MacDonald states, "These words of action [vault, veil, veer] stimulated musical contrasts: aggression for the outer movements and a secretive, inward-looking mood for center-positioned movement, *Veil*."

— program notes by Annie Koppes

BIOGRAPHIES

The **DUO FRANCOIS** combines the extraordinary gifts of Canadian Violinist Ronald Francois and Mexican Pianist Silvana Santinelli. The energetic ensemble has quickly become well known and sought after for their dynamic performances. The Duo brings together two internationally acclaimed soloists and chamber musicians, who combine charisma, musical command, synchronicity and virtuosity.

RON FRANCOIS has performed in venues across the United States, Canada, Europe, and Mexico as a soloist, chamber musician and orchestral player. His performances have consistently won the acclaim of notable musicians. "...A fantastic violinist...a big talent," said Abram Shtern — concertmaster of the Kiev State Opera and professor at the Kiev Conservatory. Francois' playing is "...extremely musical. Francois plays with great sensitivity and warmth," said concert violinist Daniel Heifetz "...A wonderful musician...sensitive ensemble player and a brilliant violinist," said Michael Tree from the Guarneri String Quartet.

Founder of the Duo Francois with pianist Silvana Santinelli, the duo was recently awarded the Silver Medal in the 'Duo' and 'Emerging Artists' categories at the Global Music Awards. This prize was awarded for the 2017 release of the Duo Francois' first CD entitled "Mexico City Blues" on the Itinerant Classics label.

Most recently, Mexico City Blues was nominated as a semi-finalist at the American Prize Music Awards in the category of Chamber Music- Professional Division. The finals take place in Spring 2019.

From 2008-2012, Ron Francois served as the violinist for the Mendelssohn Trio and performed numerous concerts in Europe and the United States with this group and in 2010, the *Denver Post* named the Mendelssohn Trio one of Colorado's top chamber music groups. As a member of the Canadian Chamber Orchestra, IMusici de Montreal, Francois toured extensively in Canada and the U.S.A. Francois appears on two CD's with this group on the Chandos Label.

Ron François has also collaborated with some of the world's finest musicians including Boris Garlitsky, former concertmaster of the London Philharmonic Orchestra; Martin Chalifour, concertmaster of the Los Angeles Philharmonic orchestra; Arkady Fomin of the Dallas Symphony; and the Borromeo String Quartet to name a few.

Ron Francois' most influential mentors were concert violinist Daniel Heifetz; Arnold Steinhardt and John Dalley from the Guarneri String Quartet; Elizabeth Adkins, former concertmaster of the National Symphony; David Salness of the Audubon Quartet; Zvi Zeitlin; and Charles Castleman from the Eastman School of Music.

As a teacher and pedagogue, Ron Francois has been in demand since 2004. He has presented numerous masterclasses in Canada, the United States, Mexico, and China. In 2013, he won the "Outstanding Service Award for Teaching" from the American String Teacher Association, Colorado chapter.

Since 2002, Ron Francois has served as the head of the string area and professor of music at Colorado State University.

SILVANA SANTINELLI has performed in Russia, Czech Republic, France, Canada, China and Switzerland, in addition to the United States and her native Mexico. Santinelli's many accomplishments include being the winner of the "XI Juegos Culturales para la niñez" in Mexico City; the "Young Artist Award" in San Antonio Texas; the "Ulrich Piano Competition", in Maryland; the "French International Piano Festival Competition" in Paris; the "Josef Hoffman International Piano Competition". She has won important prizes at the "Corpus Christi International Concerto and Piano Solo Contest"; "Kingsville International Young Performers Competition"; "Mid-Texas Symphony Society Young Artist Contest"; and "Five Towns Music and Art Foundation". Santinelli was a semifinalist at the International Competitions in Missouri, San Antonio and New Orleans.

Santinelli has performed as a soloist with important orchestras around the world including the San Antonio Symphony, the Ohio Valley Symphony Orchestra, the Colorado Symphony Orchestra, the "Orquesta Sinfónica de Guanajuato" and most recently, the Cheyenne Symphony. Among other venues, Silvana Santinelli has performed at the "Kennedy Center" in Washington DC; Palacio de Bellas Artes, in Mexico City; "Festival Sala Beethoven" in Monterrey Mexico; University of Xalapa, in Xalapa Veracruz, Mexico; Festival "El Paseo" in South Padre Island Texas; Tuesday Music Club in San Antonio, Texas; Instituto Cultural Mexicano en Washington, D.C; Phillips Collection in Washington, DC; "Arts Club" en Washington, D.C.; Teatro Juárez, in Guanajuato México.

Santinelli has a Bachelor of Arts from St. Mary's University, San Antonio, Texas; a Master of Music from the University of Texas, San Antonio Texas; a Doctoral of Music Arts from the University of Maryland, College Park Maryland. Her main instructors include: Santiago Rodríguez, Andre Watts, Alexander Alexandrov, Emmett Vokes, Pauline Glickman, Valeri Grokovski and Robert Avalon.

The former winner of the prestigious Fulbright Garcia-Robles, has two CD's with the piano music of Mexican composer Rodolfo Halffter. Those are available under "Centaur Records" label. At the end of this year the recording of the *Piano Concerto* by Carlos Chávez will be available under "Itinerant Classics".

In addition to her extensive career as a soloist, Dr. Santinelli is a member of the "Duo Francois" with violinist Ronald Francois.

Newly commissioned works by Andrew Mac Donald and Gabriella Ortiz for the Duo Francois are in the preparation stages and a recording of CD number two is in the planning stages.



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