

THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC, THEATRE, AND DANCE PRESENTS

VIRTUOSO SERIES CONCERT:

Ron Francois, violin, and **Silvana Santinelli**, piano

Duo Francois

Monday, September 29, 7:30 p.m.

ORGAN RECITAL HALL



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VIRTUOSO SERIES: DUO FRANCOIS
SEPTEMBER 29, 2025 | 7:30 P.M | ORGAN RECITAL HALL

RON FRANCOIS – VIOLIN
SILVANA SANTINELLI – PIANO

PROGRAM

'Peace' for Violin and Piano (2020)

Jessie Montgomery (b. 1981)

Sonata No. 9 in A major, Op. 47 "Kreutzer"

L.V. Beethoven (1770-1827)

Adagio-Presto

Andante con Variazioni

Presto

Sonatusatz in C Minor, Scherzo (Op. Posth)

J. Brahms (1833-1897)

PROGRAM NOTES

Jessie Montgomery: *Peace for Violin and Piano*

Jessie Montgomery—Grammy Award-winning composer, violinist, and educator—has become one of today’s most distinctive voices, praised for music that is at once vivid, poetic, and socially conscious.

Written in 2020, *Peace* was born out of the solitude and uncertainty of the Covid pandemic. For Montgomery, peace is not simply the absence of struggle but the ability to transcend emotions such as sadness and frustration. The piece unfolds as a quiet meditation: the violin’s lyrical voice and the piano’s gentle harmonies breathe with space and intimacy, evoking both vulnerability and resilience. *Peace* reminds us that stillness can coexist with struggle, and that beauty often emerges from tension.

Ludwig van Beethoven: Sonata No. 9 in A Major, Op. 47 “Kreutzer”

Beethoven’s “Kreutzer” Sonata (1803) is one of the great monuments of the violin–piano repertoire, demanding equal brilliance from both instruments. Its stormy contrasts, lyricism, and explosive energy reflect Beethoven’s own lifelong battle with inner demons—yet also his capacity to transcend them through art.

The sonata opens with a noble introduction that gives way to a volatile Presto, followed by a set of imaginative variations, and concludes with a fiery tarantella. From introspection to ferocity, the work captures Beethoven’s unyielding spirit: peace not as calm, but as strength forged in struggle.

Johannes Brahms: Scherzo in C minor, WoO 2 (“Sonatensatz”)

In 1853, the young Brahms contributed this Scherzo to the collaborative *F.A.E. Sonata*, written with Robert Schumann and Albert Dietrich as a gift for violinist Joseph Joachim. The project was an act of friendship and artistic kinship—an example of how music can unify voices, and how collaboration can grow from shared effort.

Brahms’s Scherzo brims with youthful fire: bold rhythms, tempestuous energy, and lyrical contrast. Though just one movement, it showcases the hallmarks of his early style—dramatic contrasts, structural clarity, and a strong personal voice.

DUO FRANÇOIS

The Duo François unites Canadian violinist Ronald François and Mexican pianist Silvana Santinelli, both acclaimed as soloists, chamber musicians, and educators. Their debut CD, *Mexico City Blues*, available on the Itinerant Classics label earned a Silver Medal at the Global Music Awards and recognition from the American Prize in Chamber Music. In 2022, they premiered *Vault, Veil and Veer*, a commissioned sonata by Juno Award–winning composer Andrew Paul MacDonald. A CD recording of this and other works are in the planning stages. Ron François has appeared as soloist, chamber musician, and orchestral leader across North America, Europe, and Mexico. A former member of the Mendelssohn Trio and I Musici de Montréal, he has collaborated with artists such as Boris Garlitsky, Martin Chalifour and the Borromeo Quartet. He is Professor of Violin and Head of Strings at Colorado State University, where he is also active as a masterclass presenter in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, and China.

Silvana Santinelli, a Fulbright García-Robles scholar, has won numerous international competitions and performed as soloist with orchestras including the San Antonio Symphony, the Cheyenne Symphony Orchestra, the Ohio Valley Symphony, and Mexico's Orquesta Sinfónica de Guanajuato. She has appeared in prestigious venues such as the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., and the Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City, and has released recordings on the Centaur Label.

Together, Duo François brings to the stage a unique blend of virtuosity, sensitivity, and international experience.

THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC, THEATRE, AND DANCE

UNIVERSITY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Conducted by Rachel Waddell

Awakenings

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