



Ronald Beckett, Director

presents

Piano Escape

Featuring 2022-2023 Arcady Emerging Artists Eric and Stuart Eigler

Saturday, July 8, 2023, 7:30PM

Central Presbyterian Church, Brantford ON

PROGRAM

Scheherazade by Rimsky Korsakov

Scheherazade is based on the story '1001 Arabian Nights'. The story goes that the Sultan discovered his wife to be having an affair. She was beheaded. The Sultan then decides to marry a virgin every day and have her beheaded the next morning. After beheading many noble virgins, Scherazade decided to marry the Sultan. Unbeknownst to the Sultan, Scherazade had asked her sister to ask her to tell a story. Scheherazade is a great story teller and the Sultan becomes captivated by her story, but just as she reaches the climax of the story, she claims there is not enough time to finish the story so she will need to finish it the next night. She has escaped death for one night. This repeats for 1001 nights. By the end of 1001 nights, 1000 stories, Scheherazade has run out of stories to tell. But during this time the Sultan had fallen in love with her, so her life is spared and she is made queen.

The Symphonic suite is composed of four movements. Each movement represents one of the stories "The Sea and Sinbad's Ship", "The Kalander Prince", "The Young Prince and The Young Princess", and "Festival at Baghdad". The fourth movement had parts from each of the previous three movements.

The 4th movement starts with the loud, angry Sultan, followed by the quiet voice of Scheherazade heard through the solo voice of the violin. The Festival at Baghdad is heard in the fast, lively section, followed by The Kalander Prince, then it is interrupted by the soft, gentle love story of the prince and princess. Near the end of the we hear the powerful waves of the sea that then calms down. Finally the story telling is done, the sultan theme returns but more gently, and Scherazade speaks one last time.

Deux Nocturnes Op. 48 No. 1 by Chopin

During Chopin's lifetime, nocturnes were his most popular compositions. Nocturne in C minor Op. 48 No. 1 (1842) has been described as his greatest nocturne, being solemn and dramatic. The piece is written in ternary form, A-B-A. The piece begins with a slow, very sad melody. The middle section consists of a contrasting major chorale section interspersed with chromatic octaves. The final section is the same as the first section, but now faster. It is more frustrated and desperate.

Diabolical Suggestion by Prokofiev

Prokofiev composed this piece in 1908, when he was 16 years old. It is the final movement of Four Pieces, Op. 4. The original Russian title means "obsession", "delusion", or "hallucination". It was inspired by a winter storm in St. Petersburg, and anger at his harmony and counterpoint professor, Anatoly Lyadov. It was arranged for orchestra by multiple composers. The piece sounds like it could accompany a scary scene in a movie. The weird chords down low might stand for the roars of a monster, the high theme could be children dashing away.

Pictures at an Exhibition by Mussorgsky

"Pictures at an Exhibition - A remembrance of Viktor Hartmann" was written in 1874 when Mussorgsky's friend, Viktor Hartmann, an architect and painter, died from an aneurysm. The piano suite was composed in three weeks, and it has many arrangements for other instruments, for example the orchestra version composed by Ravel in 1922. The 35-minute piano suite was inspired by 10 of Viktor Hartmann's paintings. 4 of the original paintings have been lost and often those images are replaced by other pictures from other painters.

Promenade 1

The audience can imagine Mussorgsky entering the exhibit hall, walking up to the first picture. This theme is interspersed several times throughout the suite. Suddenly:

Gnomus

The original picture showed a gnome with large teeth, running with crooked legs. A drawing of an evil wizard with those characteristics by Hartmann which still exists is the closest image to the original gnome.

Promenade 2

The visitor keeps walking.

The Old Castle

The original lost painting shows a troubadour singing in front of an old castle. The orchestra arrangement by Ravel is one of the very few classical pieces for saxophone.

Promenade 3

The visitor keeps walking.

Tuileries

Tuileries is a public garden near the Louvre in Paris. In this movement, children are playing and fighting in the garden. The original painting is lost, but other paintings from other painters of that era still exist. Some believe the children are saying nyanya (Russian for nanny) at the beginning of the movement.

Bydlo

The next piece is Bydlo. Bydlo is a Polish word that means cattle. It was borrowed into Russian, English (into a slur like "redneck"), and Czech. This is a painting of an oxcart, with the animal working thanklessly, endlessly. The original piano version starts fortissimo and ends pianississimo Ravel's orchestra arrangement instead starts quietly and crescendos to fortissimo. It inspired a creepy stop-motion NFB (National Film Board of Canada) movie.

Promenade 4

The visitor keeps walking. This version of the promenade theme is in a minor key, suggesting the visitor is still contemplating the sad picture.

Ballet of the Unhatched Chickens

Viktor Hartmann designed the costumes for Trilby, a Russian ballet choreographed by Marius Petipa and composed by Yuli Gerber. The ballet included children dressed up in unhatched chicken costumes.

Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle

This movement is based on two separate pictures of Polish Jewish men, from real life. Samuel Goldenberg is rich, depicted by booming sound, while the poor Schmuyle is quiet and afraid. The two paintings were given to Mussorgsky by Hartmann.

Promenade 5

The visitor keeps walking. The major key is back, with only a few accidentals that indicate less than certain optimism.

Limoges - A Market Place in Limoges

The painting has been described as women in the marketplace gossiping and arguing. Mussorgsky had written a little description but then later crossed it out. In his description, Mr. Puissangent has great news. He has just retrieved his cow, but the good ladies of Limoges do not quite agree that is the big news, because Mrs. Renhousous has purchased beautiful porcelain dentures while Mr. de Ponte always keeps his nose an annoying shade of peony. The crowd is arguing and bickering creating chaos. This piece is scherzando and uses ternary form (ABA). It ends in a ruckus leading to the next movement.

Catacombs

The picture shows Viktor Hartmann, his architect friend, Vasily Kenel, and a guide of the Paris Catacombs in the tunnels. The Catacombs were created to relieve the overflowing cemeteries of Paris. Over 6000 remains were brought into the tunnels. The piece begins with suddenly loud chords depicting the shock and terror experienced during their walk as they see the bones and skulls. In the second half of this piece, "With the Dead in a Dead Language", the promenade theme is accompanied by scary tremolos. Instead of walking to the next painting, Modest Mussorgsky is walking with Viktor Hartmann's ghost.

The Hut of Baba-Yaga

Baba Yaga is a wicked witch from Russian folk tales who lives in a hut on chicken legs, searching for children to eat. She flies in a giant mortar with a pestle which is also used to grind the bones of bad children. In addition her house is able to walk around in the woods.

Great Gate of Kiev

This is the last movement of Pictures at an Exhibition. Tsar Alexander II survived an assassination attempt and wanted to remember it by building a Great Gate for Kiev. Viktor Hartmann entered the contest to design the gate. The gate was cancelled because the Tsar realized he did not want to remember that he could have been murdered. The piece is majestic, with church bells ringing and the promenade theme returning one final time.

Concertino for two pianos

Dmitri Shostakovich composed Concertino for his sixteen year old son, Maxim, in 1953. They recorded it in 1956. The piece begins with a hymnlike Adagio. Next, it is Allegretto, and the second theme is circus music. The adagio main theme repeats before the end, and it ends Allegro. It's difficult to describe, except perhaps as "action movie soundtrack music". Perhaps one can imagine the story of a people oppressed, a hero, a battle, the climax, and a celebration at the end. This sort of fun episodic music seems more common in Russian romantic composers than those of Western Europe.

Rhapsody in Blue by G. Gershwin

Rhapsody in Blue premiered at "An Experiment in Modern Music", an educational concert in 1924 at Aeolian Hall in New York. Paul Whiteman, a bandleader and orchestra director, commissioned a piece for this concert, but George Gershwin declined because there was not enough time to compose it. But once Gershwin read a newspaper article that said he was working on a jazz concerto, he started working and composed it in a few weeks. He was inspired by the sounds of New York City while riding the bus. It was originally composed for two pianos, then Paul Whiteman's arranger, Ferde Grofé, arranged it for piano and orchestra. It was also arranged for other instruments, like solo piano, violin and piano, and trumpet and piano. It was even bollixed into a piano quartet much later. We are performing Gershwin's original arrangement. It is a little longer than the version lovingly animated in Disney's Fantasia 2000, which we highly recommend.

Piano Escape concerts started early during the Covid lockdowns. Eric and Stuart Eigler set up their keyboard and performed on their driveway a dozen times to entertain the neighbours. They mostly performed classical music with the occasional pop favourites. The series included a show at Whistling Gardens last fall, and now, at last, indoors.

When not piano escaping, the boys have performed at fundraisers for North York Concert Orchestra, in the Sanderson lobby at many Brantford Music Club (BMC) shows, and starred at BMC Young Artists' Recitals. In 2022, Eric was the Young Artist soloist at BMC, and later played Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 1 with the Brantford Community Symphony Orchestra.

Eric and Stuart each starting taking piano lessons when they were turning three. They had have multiple teachers near and far, and are now studying with Olga Tcherniak. The boys have participated in many music festivals through the years at the local and provincial levels, and won many scholarships and trophies for their solo and duet playing. Eric and Stuart have recently completed their Conservatory Licentiate and Grade 10 levels, respectively.

*We are extremely grateful to all of our sponsors and donors who helped make this event possible, and to you, our patrons.
Merchandise will be available for purchase and donations to Arcady can be made at intermission, and before/after the performance.*

UPCOMING EVENTS

A Garden Walk

Featuring Arcady vocalists and instrumentalists, and the premiere of a new, immersive sonic experience with music by Ronald Beckett

Saturday, August 26, 2023 • 4:00PM

Rain Date: Sunday, August 27, 2023 • 4:00PM

Whistling Gardens; 698 Concession 3, Wilsonville ON

Tickets \$37 General, \$15 Under 18

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Handel's Messiah- Port Colborne

Handel's classic masterpiece performed by Arcady's incredible ensemble and conducted by Ronald Beckett

Friday, November 24, 2023 • 7:30PM

Roselawn Theatre, 296 Fielden Ave, Port Colborne ON

Tickets \$40, fees may apply at time of purchase

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Christmas with Arcady

A festive treat featuring the players and singers of Arcady

Saturday, December 2, 2023 • 7:30PM

St. Andrew's Church; 95 Darling St, Brantford ON

Tickets \$30 General, \$12 Youth

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Handel's Messiah- Port Dover

Handel's classic masterpiece performed by Arcady's incredible ensemble and conducted by Ronald Beckett

Friday, December 22, 2023 • 7:30PM

Lighthouse Festival; 247 Main St, Port Dover, ON

Tickets \$40, fees may apply at time of purchase