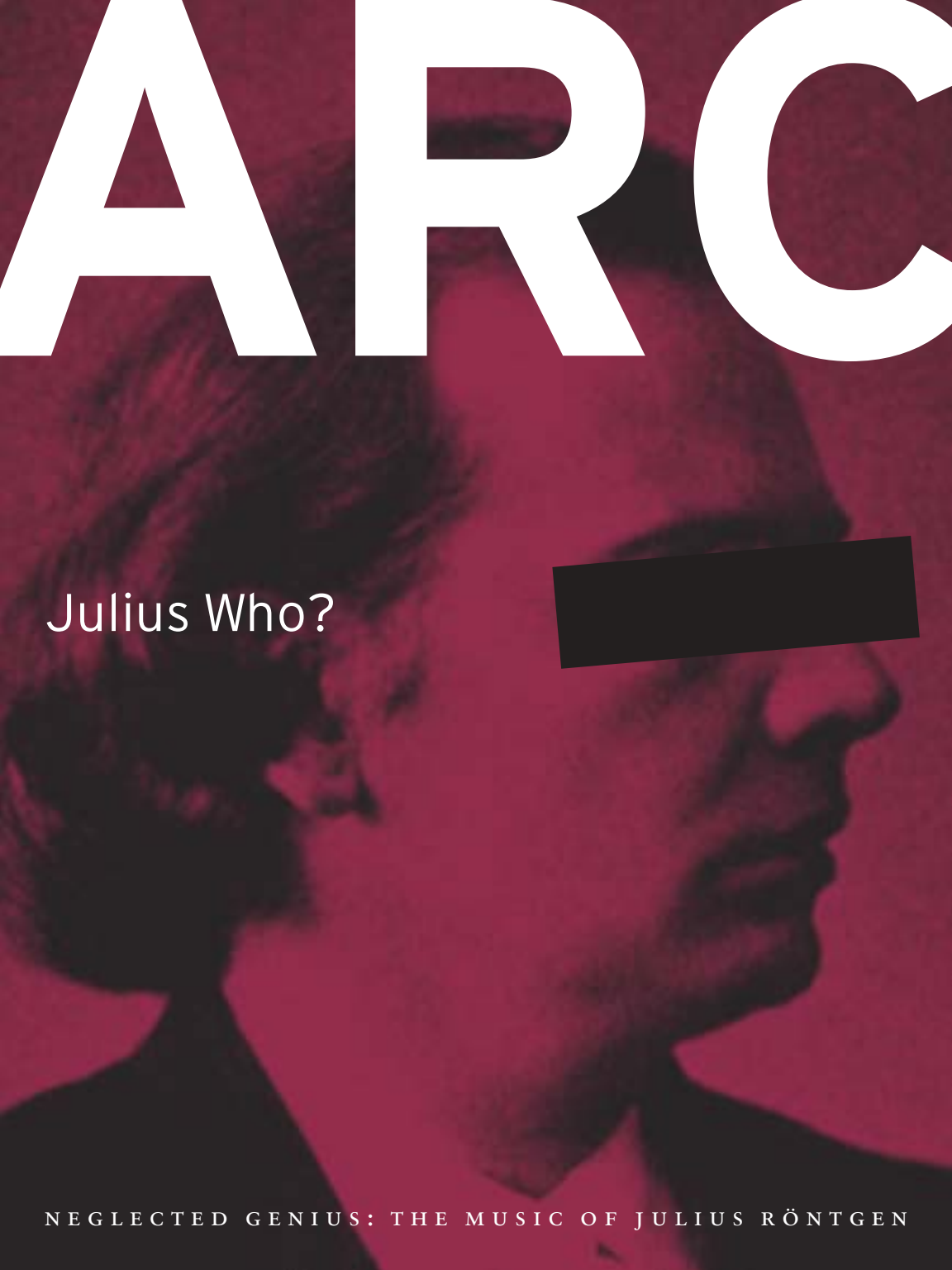
ARC
Julius Who?
NEGLECTED GENIUS: THE MUSIC OF JULIUS RÖNTGEN

In keeping with ARC's thoughtful and thematic programming, tonight's concert is devoted to the music of Julius Röntgen, a wonderful composer who was much admired by contemporaries such as Brahms and Grieg but is now largely neglected. The Royal Conservatory of Music and ARC are fortunate in welcoming the distinguished critic, music historian and Röntgen scholar Jurjen Vis of Amsterdam who will contribute to the broadcast of tonight's concert. His participation has been made possible by the generosity of the Consulate General of the Netherlands. We are grateful to them and to CBC Radio 2 for their support of our Röntgen project.

ARC was founded a little over three years ago and has already established itself as a formidable musical presence. The group's appearances in Toronto, New York, Stockholm and London, as well as several national and NPR broadcasts have all been greeted with enormous enthusiasm. ARC's 2006 season includes a major tour of China in April as well as recordings and concerts in Canada – including the second Music Reborn series. ARC is a standard bearer for the musical excellence of both The Royal Conservatory of Music and Canada. Its members represent the very best this country has to offer and in their roles as mentors and performers they continue to inspire, stimulate and delight.

Dr. Peter Simon
President

Julius Who?
Neglected Genius: The Music of Julius Röntgen

The Music of Julius Röntgen
November 10th, 2005

SONATA FOR CELLO AND PIANO IN G MINOR (1905)
Allegro pensieroso, Un Poco vivace, Andante tranquillo, Con fuoco

David Hetherington cello, **Dianne Werner** piano

SEXTET IN G MAJOR (1931)
Allegro, Andante – prestissimo – tempo primo, Andante con variazioni, Allegro

Erika Raum & Marie Bérard violins, **Steven Dann & Carolyn Blackwell** violas,
David Hetherington & Peter Cosbey cellos

INTERMISSION

SONATA FOR VIOLA AND PIANO IN C MINOR (1924)
Allegro assai, Andante mesto-lento – quasi una fantasia, Allegro molto,
Un poco sostenuto-energico

Steven Dann viola, **Dianne Werner** piano

TRIO FOR CLARINET, VIOLA AND PIANO IN E FLAT MAJOR (1921)
Andante, Allegro deciso, Sostenuto

Joaquin Valdepeñas clarinet, **Steven Dann** viola, **David Louie** piano

QUINTET FOR PIANO AND STRINGS IN A MINOR, OP. 100 (1927)
Andante, Allegro, Lento e mesto, Con moto ma non troppo allegro

David Louie piano, **Erika Raum** violin, **Marie Bérard** violin, **Steven Dann** viola,
David Hetherington cello

"Röntgen's compositions, published and unpublished, cover the whole range of music in every art form; they all show consummate mastery in every aspect of technique. Even in the most facile there is beauty and wit. Each series of works culminates in something that has the uniqueness of a living masterpiece..."

DONALD FRANCIS TOVEY - AN EXTRACT FROM RÖNTGEN'S OBITUARY IN THE TIMES

Program Notes

Although Julius Röntgen lived most of his life in Holland, he retained a strong German identity and continued to use his first language in most of his correspondence, and even with his own children. He also kept a keen interest in German politics and despite his prodigious contribution to Dutch music – in the areas of education, performance and the exploration and revivifying of indigenous folk music traditions – one senses that his musical loyalty and cultural spirit never strayed too far from his native Leipzig where he was born on May 9th, 1855.

Julius' father was the Dutch-German violinist Engelbert Röntgen. In 1848, with most of Europe gripped by revolution, Engelbert left the provincial Dutch town of Deventer to study with the celebrated virtuoso Ferdinand David (1810 – 1873) who was the pre-eminent violin professor at the Leipzig Conservatory. Röntgen married the German pianist Pauline Klengel, daughter of the prominent Moritz Klengel, principal second violinist of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, and on Ferdinand David's death took over duties as this orchestra's concertmaster, a job he shared with another former David student, Henry Schradieck, whose method and technical studies are still used by violin students. Both taught at the Conservatory, Engelbert from 1857 – 1874.

In Engelbert's letters to his Dutch friend Abraham Loman, he describes the four-year-old Julius' instrumental and compositional precocity. For Engelbert, his talent conjured up images of Europe's most famous boy-genius, Felix Mendelssohn, who had dedicated his E minor violin concerto to David and had been the driving force behind the establishment of the Leipzig Conservatory. Clearly Julius' gifts were out of the ordinary. Music was his constant pre-occupation, and by his teens he was already producing substantial works; Breitkopf and Härtel issued his first publications in 1871 when he was just 16. Like Felix and Fanny Mendelssohn, Julius was educated at home, by his mother and his grandfather, and also at his uncle Julius Klengel's house, a three minute walk away from the Röntgens. Julius was a major influence on the boy. He was a philosopher, violinist, school teacher and the chairman of the board of the *Bachverein*. Both of his sons were distinguished musicians: Paul, a violinist and choral director; Julius (junior) a virtuoso cellist, sometime principal of the Gewandhaus and later one of the instrument's legendary pedagogues.

"GOD DOES NOT ABANDON A GERMAN!"

Julius Röntgen

Moritz Hauptmann (1792 – 1868) was among Julius Röntgen's first music teachers. A learned theoretician, violinist, and Cantor at the St Thomas Church – the position Johann Sebastian Bach had filled just over a century before – he taught the 10-year-old harmony and counterpoint. Julius received his final lesson from Hauptmann just two hours before his death. Röntgen would later describe this as "the first sadness of my life". Other teachers included the pianist Louis Plaidy and Engelbert's influential colleague Carl Reinecke (1824 – 1910), a highly regarded composer and the director of the Gewandhaus Orchestra who also taught Röntgen's contemporaries Edvard Grieg (who was tormented by Reinecke's conservatism) Christian Sinding and Arthur Sullivan. Leipzig was a major commercial and cultural hub and the heart of Germany's book and music publishing industry. Its university, Goethe's alma mater, was one of the most important in Europe. Although his was a sheltered life, the city provided Julius with a stimulating intellectual and musical education, as well as the company of remarkable men like Gottlob Frege, the mathematician and philosopher; Philipp Spitta the music historian and Bach biographer, and Spitta's close friend and fellow Bach devotee, the composer Heinrich Von Herzogenberg.

LEAVING LEIPZIG

Not surprisingly, Röntgen's early works exhibit the strong influence of the Leipzig school: Reinecke, Robert Schumann and especially Johannes Brahms. Röntgen also met Franz Liszt, for whom he played in June 1870, aged 15. The legend passed down over the years describes how Liszt, on hearing Röntgen's performance of an original Prelude and Fugue based on the B-A-C-H theme, took over with an extempore variation, and that Liszt then invited Julius to play at a home soirée. The truth of the matter (as related by the Röntgen scholar Jurjen Vis) is typically a rather more prosaic tale. Liszt did indeed invite Julius to play, but when concert time approached he was unable to perform. In fact Liszt found the teenager's compositions rather dull and predictable. Engelbert's dislike of Liszt's music was shared by his son and after 1870 Röntgen's diary entries have adjectives like "hässlich" (ugly), and "scheusslich" (ghastly) attached to assessments of Liszt's music.

In Munich Röntgen's studies continued with Franz Lachner, one of the city's pre-eminent

Moritz Hauptmann

composers, organists and conductors. Lachner had also been a member of Franz Schubert's inner circle and it was with a similarly broad set of accomplishments – as a piano virtuoso, composer and conductor – that Röntgen began his professional career. Through the circle of Brahms, Clara Schumann and Joseph Joachim, Röntgen met and then accompanied the legendary tenor Julius Stockhausen. Although still in his early fifties, Stockhausen's powers were now waning and this may explain why Röntgen, rather than a more senior pianist, was invited to concertize with him.

In his early twenties, the possibility of a permanent post opened up in Amsterdam. The offer came through Engelbert's friend Loman, a Lutheran priest; a professor at the Lutheran Seminary of the University of Amsterdam and now also a member of the board of governors of the *Maatschappij tot Bevordering van de Toonkunst* (The Society for the promotion of Musical Arts) and an influential figure in Amsterdam's cultural realm. When Julius eventually settled in Amsterdam in 1877, Loman was his loco parentis, introducing him to Amsterdam's musical circles and helping him to adapt to the language and culture. The young man's initial impressions of Amsterdam were unfavourable. He found it a backwater, the standard of musicianship low and the concert and intellectual life a far cry from Leipzig. However, he was eventually convinced to accept the modestly paid piano position offered by the *Maatschappij* and began to recognize that the city had huge potential for musical growth, as well as nascent opportunities for his own development as both a composer and educator. The appointment provided the beginnings of a stable income which enabled him to marry the Swedish violinist Amanda Maier (1853 – 1894), one of Engelbert's students and later an accomplished composer, which he did in 1880.

AMSTERDAM

Röntgen's career trajectory was steep. Within a year of his arrival he was given artistic responsibility for the chamber music series presented by the Felix Meritis, which he both programmed and performed in, and from 1886 – 1888 and the opening of the Concertgebouw, he also took charge of the orchestral concerts. Shortly thereafter, he assumed the conductorship of the prestigious *zangvereniging Excelsior* (Excelsior Choral Society) and from 1886 to 1898, when Mengelberg took over, the large and

"WHAT IS THIS SO-CALLED ORIGINALITY, THIS SO-CALLED NOVELTY? IT IS NOT OF THE GREATEST IMPORTANCE. MOST IMPORTANT IS TRUTH. THE TRUTH OF FEELING. AND I HAVED ALWAYS ADMIRED YOUR MASTERY, YOUR SENSE OF FORM AND SOUND!"

Grieg to Röntgen (1904)

accomplished *Toonkunst* choir which was also part of the *Maatschappij* activities. In 1884 Röntgen co-founded the Amsterdam Conservatoire, together with the Dutch composer Daniel de Lange, the violinist Frans Coenen and the baritone Johannes Messchaert. His association with this institution lasted some 42 years, the final 11, from 1913 – 1924, as its director. Röntgen's influence was substantial. He introduced the Netherlands to Grieg, Brahms and Nielsen, as well as to works of the new Russian school by Alexander Borodin and César Cui. He prepared and mounted the first Dutch performances of Bach's B minor Mass, the Magnificat, several cantatas, Handel Anthems and other now repertory pieces. But the elevation of Dutch musical standards would take a considerable time. In 1884, when Brahms visited Amsterdam to conduct his Second Piano Concerto with Röntgen as the soloist, he opined that in spite of Röntgen's wonderful performance – "a photograph of myself" as Brahms enthusiastically described it – the single reason he could offer for visiting Holland was to take advantage of its delicious food and drink. It was certainly not for the orchestral playing which, evidenced by a performance of his Third Symphony, he found dismal.

Röntgen also played a part in the disposition of Amsterdam's most famous building, the Concertgebouw. When a committee of city elders was formed to discuss the construction of a new hall, it was he that suggested they study the dimensions and acoustic qualities of Leipzig's new and recently completed Gewandhaus building. Two members went to Leipzig to research the hall. The completion of the Concertgebouw in April 1888 changed the city's performance tradition forever, as did the formation of its eponymous orchestra, which, in time became one the world's greatest. The selection of Röntgen's friend and colleague Willem Kes as its first music director – Hans von Bülow had been the intended incumbent – yielded a number of performance opportunities for Röntgen. He continued to develop the Conservatory; to compose and teach, and to perform with musicians of the first rank, among them the legendary violinist Carl Flesch (from 1905 to 1915) and the renowned baritone, Johannes Messchaert, with whom Röntgen toured for 25 years, including annual trips to Vienna and regular social visits to Johannes Brahms. In later life Röntgen also performed with his two older sons as part of a family piano trio, and between 1904 and 1910, collaborated with the great Catalan cellist Pablo Casals who became a close family friend.

"WHILE I FEEL YOUR WORDS ABOUT MY VIOLIN SONATA ARE MUCH BETTER THAN THE PIECE DESERVES, IT MAKES ME SO HAPPY AND PROUD THAT YOU THINK THIS WAY ABOUT MY MUSICAL STYLE."

Röntgen to Grieg (May 3, 1904)

In his memoirs, Casals talks warmly of Röntgen's CELLO SONATAS which he programmed long after the composer's death. The cello had a particular significance for Röntgen. His initial acquaintance with the instrument dates from his encounter with Emile Hegar, solo cellist of the Gewandhaus Orchestra and teacher of his cousin, Julius Klengel. Röntgen dedicated his first cello sonata to Hegar in 1868 and that year the 12-year-old performed a number of concerts with him – Hegar was at least 10 years his senior. Julius Klengel was to become principal cellist of the Gewandhaus Orchestra and later taught both Emanuel Feuerman (1902 – 1942) and the Portuguese virtuosa Guilhermina Suggia (1885 – 1950) for a while Pablo Casals' partner. Two of Röntgen's sons, Edvard Frants (1902 – 1969) and Engelbert (1896 – 1956) studied with Casals. Nevertheless, it is still startling to find no less than 14 cello sonatas, a solo sonata, several shorter pieces and three cello concertos in the Röntgen catalogue. The three sonatas composed for Casals date from between 1905 and June 1907, when he completed the third in B minor. The G minor sonata's high-lying lyricism and technical demands clearly betray the identity of the work's dedicatee, as well as the influence of César Franck.

From 1892 until 1914, and after the end of the First War, when Amsterdam's musical activity slowed in the summer, Röntgen and his family would decamp to Fuglsang Castle on the Danish island of Lolland in the Baltic. This large country house became an important musical nexus and is now a major cultural landmark. It had been built in 1869 by one Rolf Viggo de Neergård who married the young Bodil Hartmann, granddaughter of J.P.E. Hartmann, a key Danish composer of the 19th century. In this idyllic setting Röntgen would compose and play through chamber music with, among others, Bodil, Hartmann, Carl Nielsen and Edvard Grieg who also had a summer cottage near Lofthus in Norway's Hardangerfjord region. Julius' friendship with Bodil began here and formed the foundation of a long-standing relationship with the Danish cultural scene. Röntgen and his family all became fluent Danish speakers.

Amanda Maier died in 1894 just 41. With his second wife, the pianist Abrahamina des Amorie van der Hoeven, Röntgen had another four sons, and a daughter Amanda who died when she was still a child. Three of the boys entered the musical profession. With the arrival of his sixth son, Joachim, Julius wrote to Grieg: "With this sixth son I have completed my sextet". The voluminous and illuminating correspondence

Johannes Brahms

between Röntgen and Grieg, replete with the older composer's observations of Röntgen's work, and rich with discussions of contemporary musical, political and social life, survives as part of Röntgen's estate in the Hague and in the Grieg sammlingen in Bergen, Norway.

RÖNTGEN THE PROLIFIC

Röntgen's industry increased with age, as his administrative, performing and teaching obligations declined. In the last eight years of his life he produced over 100 works and in total some 650 pieces survive. The catalogue compiled by his grandson Jurriaan is overwhelming: myriad works for piano, including sonatas, character pieces, dances, suites and variations; sonatas for solo strings, piano trios (14), string trios (16), string quartets (over 20), piano quartets (3), piano quintets (3), symphonies (25!), piano concertos (7), violin concertos (5) and a corpus of vocal music the creation of which could credit the achievement of another lifetime.

Röntgen was a creature of habit. He began his day by cycling before breakfast through Vondelpark from his large house in Van Eeghenstraat. Mornings were spent composing and dealing with correspondence and in the afternoon he would walk to the Conservatoire and return home by tram. Evenings were filled with social activity, concerts and impromptu chamber music readings. These would often end with Röntgen vanishing to his study in order to continue composing.

In 1919, following the Great War, Röntgen was finally obliged to take out Dutch citizenship. His son Johannes, the first child of his second marriage had been conscripted into the German Army and ironically Engelbert, his second son, had emigrated to the USA and then joined the US Army Medical Corps. The war had kept Röntgen away from Germany for some time. But Germany, and the Germany of the 19th century was still a very prominent part of his artistic life.

Röntgen's brief TRIO FOR CLARINET, VIOLA AND PIANO completed on April 3rd, 1921 is one of the repertoire's few works for this instrumentation. Earlier models include Mozart's famous *Kegelstatt Trio* and Schumann's *Marchenerzahlungen,* ("Fairytales"), op. 132, and there are more contemporary examples by Max Bruch, his Eight Pieces

"HE IS A COMPLETELY ORIGINAL AND HIGHLY LIKEABLE PERSON. HE HAS REMAINED A CHILD: INNOCENT, PURE, OPEN, ENTHUSIASTIC..."

Brahms on Röntgen

op. 83 (1910), and Carl Reinecke, the substantial Trio (1905). This elegant contribution to the genre consists of three movements, the subdued outer two framing an *Allegro deciso* that uses a Swedish children's song as its simple, unaffected theme. Tonight's performance of this Trio is one of the first in modern times as until very recently the work only existed in manuscript.

THE BILTHOVEN YEARS

On retiring from the Conservatory in 1924, Röntgen moved to the village of Bilthoven in Utrecht where his son Frants designed a large villa for him in the then vogueish style of the "Amsterdam school". It was named "Gaudeamus" and survives today as an important Dutch cultural facility in which the Walter Maashuis Foundation organizes concerts, lectures and festivals. It features a conical roof and a circular music room with "floating" floor. Here Röntgen composed, performed and continued to teach. Among his younger friends was the brilliant Australian pianist and maverick composer, Percy Grainger whom Röntgen met in 1907 at the Griegs' house in Troldhaugen. Röntgen felt like a father to him and greatly admired his pianistic abilities. He invited him to perform in Holland in 1910 and 1912, a significant contribution to the development of his career.

Of his taste in contemporary music, Röntgen disliked Schönberg's music intensely and held up Hindemith, Stravinsky and the Dutch composer Willem Pijper (1894 – 1947) as the "big three" of modern music. He discussed and analyzed their work in lectures, together with jazz inspired pieces like Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*. But his own style remained as accessible as his Brahmsian roots (if occasionally a little more astringent). In later life he developed a working friendship with Heinrich Schenker, the father of modern music-analytic theory.

The C MINOR VIOLA SONATA dates from 1924, the beginning of Röntgen's Bilthoven period. It would certainly have received a first performance around that time, although it has had to wait 75 years to receive the beginnings of appropriate attention. It is a substantial, closely argued piece and, like most of Röntgen's chamber pieces, the movements are dense and pithy. There are hints of Debussy, César Franck and the familiar Brahmsian echoes, but Röntgen's own personality is not overwhelmed in this

"TO LIVE BY MUSIC IS TO LIVE IN MUSIC."
Julius Röntgen, as quoted by Dame Ethel Smyth (1858-1944)

amalgam. The unsettled almost bi-tonal harmony of the *Allegro molto* could scarcely be attributed to these composers (there exists a bi-tonal symphony by Röntgen, as yet unpublished) and the ponticello effects at the start of the second movement are certainly no derivative of the Leipzig school.

The 1927 PIANO QUINTET OP. 100, a lighter and more immediate work, is characterised by an apparently effortless integration of thematic material. The first movement's rhythmic opening, played on the piano and lower strings, is quoted at the quintet's conclusion, and the six note violin melody that begins the piece is the basis of the main motif of the second. In turn, the busy neo-Baroque violin figure with which the motoric *Allegro* opens is clearly born in the viola figure of the first pages of the opening *Andante*. The *Lento e mesto* is no more than an atmospheric prelude to the final movement, a Mendelssohnian romp that continues the *Lento's* unusual and remote key of G flat major, and with driving piano arpeggios and scurrying, syncopated string passages moves the movement to conclude in the home key of A minor.

Röntgen also experimented with film music, notably for a co-operative venture with the folklorist Dick van der Ven – which Röntgen performed live in Amsterdam. His productivity remained intense. In March 1930, in his 75th year, he received an honorary doctorate from Edinburgh University. On the April 10th he performed two new short piano concertos (his "Siamese Twins") with Willem Mengelberg and the Concertgebouw in celebration of both his doctorate and his 75th birthday. His final public appearance was the performance on May 10 of Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto with the Rotterdam Philharmonic under Alexander Schmuller. His Edinburgh Symphony, originally composed for the receipt of his doctorate was premiered that December.

Röntgen's STRING SEXTET, composed the following year, is one of his last pieces. The work has been recently resurrected and tonight's performance is probably its North American premiere, assuming that Röntgen's son Engelbert, who settled in New York City, never programmed it. This is not music that one immediately associates with the soundworld of the early 1930s, but neither does it quite follow the Brahmsian sextet

SHORTLY BEFORE HIS DEATH RÖNTGEN ACKNOWLEDGED TO HIS WIFE: "JETZT FÄLLT MIR NICHTS MEHR EIN" (NOTHING MORE OCCURS TO ME).

models. The language remains lush, passionate; full of drama and momentum but Röntgen's Sextet is hardly epic in its proportion or development. If anything, its brevity and concision invest it with a particular energy and charm, and more of the feel of a serenade. In some ways the Sextet possesses the same wholly unashamed conservatism and technical bravura of another onetime Brahms devotee, Max Bruch, and has the atmosphere of a work composed entirely for diversionary pleasure.

Julius Röntgen died on September 13, 1932 aged 77. It is worth quoting the words spoken on his deathbed, an extraordinarily poetic and grateful summation of a prolific and generous life:

"Let this be my word of farewell, when I go from here. What I saw is unsurpassed. I tasted the hidden honey of the lotus blossoming on the ocean of light and thus I am blessed. In this playroom of endless forms I had my game and I saw the One without form. If this is the end – let it be!"

Simon Wynberg, 2005

Julius who?
Accounting for neglected genius

This year is the 150th anniversary of the birth of Julius Röntgen – a composer whose immense creative gifts appear to be inversely proportional to his almost total obscurity."Julius who?" is the usual response to his name…"any relation of the Röntgen who discovered the X-ray?" (He isn't, although he andWilhelm Röntgen were contemp-oraries). Tonight's chamber program is perforce an unrepresentative sample of a massive output that covered most of the 19th century's musical genres. It hopes to provide a glimpse of Röntgen's chamber music, and to provoke discussion about the ways in which contemporary repertoire choices and our listening habits are regularly determined by extra-musical considerations.

Ironically, were Mr Röntgen a more established name, and his works a regular part of our musical diet, his anniversary would be cause for a major promotional exercise – Mozart's 250th anniversary is a few months away and it will be interesting to see how much more mileage marketing consultants are able to squeeze out of this scandalously neglected composer! Röntgen's excellence and his near oblivion present an interesting anomaly, for he is a composer whose works do deserve regular outings, and not just on the occasion of an anniversary year. As a conservative musician who straddled the last half of the Romantic period and its subsequent fragmentation during the first three decades of the 20th, Julius Röntgen's music is richly immediate, highly inventive and infectiously melodic. His influences include Robert Schumann,

IN THE 21ST CENTURY, WE CONTINUE TO WHITTLE DOWN A MASSIVE TRUNK OF CLASSICAL REPERTOIRE, REDUCING IT TO A GROUP OF WORKS BY MUSICAL IDOLS WHO HAVE ATTAINED A KIND OF "BRAND" STATUS.

Johannes Brahms, Max Reger and Edvard Grieg, a close friend and valued colleague. Why then Röntgen's anonymity?

Classical music is commonly identified by the compartments into which we divide it. We love to label: Baroque, Classical, Romantic, Impressionist etc. And while it may be convenient to have these rigid divisions, styles typically change and transform in gradual, spasmodic fashion; bleeding into one another, rather than concluding with a convenient full stop and then re-emerging in wholly different garb. The composers who we believe represent the culmination of a particular era are those whom we typically hail. Those, like Röntgen, who persist in a tradition that may cast them as anachronistic; as musicians out-of-touch with their time and interlopers in our system of musical progression, often have to wait for their works to be judged on their own terms. And once they have been written off as archaic and passé this becomes ever more difficult.

In the 21st century, we continue to whittle down a massive trunk of classical repertoire, reducing it to a group of works by musical idols who have attained a kind of "brand" status. The introduction of a new line, not to mention a new brand, is greeted with stubborn resistance, and this compulsion to focus on a limited number of star composers and "chosen" pieces, in the same way the recording industry promotes a relatively small number of star performers, has succeeded in turning many worthy musicians, especially those who are older, uglier, passive, politically naïve, or out-of-step with the status quo, into musical footnotes.

WE ONLY WANT "THE BEST"

The competitiveness of sport and business, and a need to identify and promote "the best" has wormed its way into our adjudication of musical art. Identifying "the best" in a non-cultural arena is usually straightforward, and in North America fame and a dollar value are usually the chosen reductio. In the arts, a consumerist approach applies a similar crassness, as marketers and publicists assure us that we are buying or attending "the best" or "the greatest" – as if music-making were like the 110 metre hurdles. Music competitions, in spite of their value as career aids, and for all the promotional and sponsorship dollars they generate, are antithetical to creative music-making. And so when it comes to music, "the best" is often no more than a shorthand

SOMETIMES THE GREAT COMPOSER IS THE HEAD OR THE CULMINATION OF A SCHOOL OR A MOVEMENT, BUT IN ALL CASES HE COMPLETELY OVERWHELMS THE "MINOR" FIGURES

for the safety of the known; familiar composers, famous artists and multi-national labels. As well as being an utter nonsense, not to mention horribly vulgar, the pursuit of "the best" is by definition an insidiously restrictive habit.

Our obsession with finding new stars, rather than discovering new repertoire, means that additions (or replacements) to the firmament usually record yet one more version of a stock work, which typically is then lavishly marketed and promoted with live concerts that further narrow repertoire choice. The evisceration of music education in schools; the declining presence of the true amateur and the increasing international homogeneity of instrumental and symphonic colour, style and interpretations have all combined to compromise and narrow our musical field-of-vision. It has become ever more expensive to sustain our concert halls in a traditional manner; to offer more than a routine experience and to successfully compete with recorded music, as well as a huge variety of other entertainment and distractions; all of which vie for our time. Some genres, like song recitals are extinct outside celebrity events. The irony is that there is a huge reservoir of under-explored music that has been researched and recorded and which has enthusiastic champions. These generally poorly distributed recordings appear on smaller or artist-sponsored labels. Röntgen has several CDs in the catalogue and a number of devoted enthusiasts, in Europe particularly. Nevertheless he has yet to make substantial inroads, even in Holland, the country that for most of his adult life he called home.

The concept of the musical past as a parade of great composers also infuses the way in which most of our institutions teach music history, adopting an antiquated perspective which sees the world turning on the deeds of great men. Where all the rest is fate, circumstance and incidental players. In music history this manifests itself as the "great composer" construct. Sometimes the great composer is the head or the culmination of a school or a movement, but in all cases he completely overwhelms the "minor" figures, whose role is reduced to little more than defining and context-ualizing the great man's importance. By using the author, rather than the work, as the point of departure we turn art on its head. If one applied this orthodoxy to the study and dissemination of theatrical, literary or poetic achievement, one would ignore a wealth of creativity. In music this is common practice.

RÖNTGEN'S DECISION TO MOVE TO AMSTERDAM AND AWAY FROM GERMAN CENTRES OF INFLUENCE LIKE LEIPZIG AND HAMBURG WOULD NOT HAVE BENEFITTED HIS HISTORICAL POSITION.

For decades now this historical rather than textual approach to musical study has been married to a German musicological hegemony – a natural by-product of German musical dominance during the 18th and 19th centuries which still prevails in most universities and music institutions. In spite of his strong German ties, Röntgen's decision to move to Amsterdam and away from German centres of influence like Leipzig and Hamburg would not have benefitted his historical position. Neither would have his attraction to nationalistic and folkloric content and musical forms. While there are some famous (and generally exaggerated) instances of composers leaving and re-entering the pantheon of the "greats", this is rare. While he was still alive, Bach was widely acknowledged as Europe's leading composer. He was then somewhat neglected until Mendelssohn re-introduced his work. Mahler, whose music so complemented that era's libertarian, pantheistic spirit began a major and uninterrupted revival in the 1960s. In the early 1990s, the 11th century abbess and composer, Hildegard van Bingen enjoyed a sudden wave of attention, generated not solely by her remarkable music, but because her gender, mysticism and extra-musical accomplishments made her life so particularly compelling and marketable, not to mention peculiarly attractive to what was then emerging as the "new-age" audience. A cogent historical study of the commercial, social and political forces that lie behind the fashionability of Western art music remains to be written.

MUSICAL ASSOCIATIONS

The fundamentals of how we listen have shifted as well. Classical works are essentially intrinsic in their nature. A fragment of Rossini or Beethoven may be purloined for use in a different context, and in the process acquire added layers of reference or meaning – in a commercial or as a theme tune for a radio or TV show for example – but art music generally begins life as something that explains nothing more than itself. Very infrequently does its construction and purpose refer to or describe anything outside of the work, and then only in the most limited terms. For music, and certainly music without a text, has modest powers when it comes to providing a narrative.

On the other hand, the many historians, annotators, commentators and critics of popular music, have as their primary pre-occupation the manner in which songs

Julius Röntgen

express a particular spirit and consciousness; how they capture and reflect the zeitgeist and encapsulate a singular time and place. They do not dwell on or dissect musical quality to anything like the same degree. Popular music, and almost all popular music includes a text of some kind, has a tremendous capacity for recalling times past. It is one of our primary agents for nostalgia. In an instant a handful of notes can whisk us back in time, to a a failed romance, a senior prom or a summer vacation, and this has less to do with a song's musical and narrative substance than with its associative and suggestive meaning; an ability to recall history in ways similar to a long-forgotten scent. This magical property is popular music's greatest strength. Lyrics apart, it is accounted for by both the brevity of the form and the total familiarity of individual songs – through repeated airplay and massive commercial success, chart-toppers have an inevitable universality. Like classical music, the popular catalogue is huge and varied. But both sides of the music industry – even if the popular side captures over 97% of the revenue – share a similar reluctance to stray too far from the familiar and the already successfully hyped.

"They're playing our song" has not typically been a phrase associated with a Beethoven symphony or a Schubert piano trio, but as the classical repertoire shrinks to a core collection of pieces that are relentlessly re-recorded; repackaged (often in compilations of "greatest hits"), re-released, and endlessly rotated on FM radio, aspects of classical music and the way in which we assimilate it may actually be moving closer to our associative experience of popular music. In other words we are no longer listening to classical music as standalone, self-referential pieces that have an independent musical argument. Rather, works are acquiring a patina of commercial nostalgia with ever-broadening references. Even under ideal conditions, the greatest pillars of the repertoire cannot remain forever fresh and appealing under this battering of constant repetition.

Furthermore, instead of music having an intellectual purpose, or providing a gateway to personal, emotional or spiritual revelation, it is now regularly touted as an aid to relaxation; reduced to the status of a massage or aromatherapy – an after-work, La-Z boy Martini, or even a kind of sonic Tylenol. North American radio stations invite you not to engage, but, in soporific, honeyed voices, to "relax", often without even

MUSIC IS NOW REGULARLY TOUTED AS AN AID TO RELAXATION; REDUCED TO THE STATUS OF A MASSAGE OR AROMATHERAPY.

identifying the music one is to "relax" to. Obscure composers and unknown works do not present an immediate fit for this particular commercial model, where musical quality is assumed rather than assessed and where advertising considerations are paramount. First, one has to provide a rationale for a choice that departs from the familiarity of *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*.

IS MUSIC TOO AVAILABLE?

We are inundated by music. It saturates our lives and is instantly accessible. In olden days, a music-lover might have had to wait months to hear a new work in a live performance, and in the interim would have familiarised himself with it by struggling through a piano version (often for four-hands) or a reduction for chamber ensemble. Those days are all but gone. The practice of hands-on learning is now the preserve of the curious professional and very occasionally, the conscientious amateur, a rare breed whose numbers have dwindled alarmingly over the past few decades. The ubiquity of music has meant that we are no longer required to concentrate in quite the same way, or with the same intensity. And listeners are presumed to be at their happiest when they are in familiar territory. New works, whether freshly-minted or harvested from out-of-the-way fields may require more sustained attention and greater commitment – a state-of-mind incompatible with relaxation. In any case, this is the belief widely held by programmers and presenters, who have not just turned the concert-hall into a museum (and a museum *can* be a thrilling place) but reduced it to one with a contracting number of rotated exhibits and no curator.

The association of classical music with "relaxation", energetically embraced in North America is one thing, but music's true magical and transcendent qualities, its ability to move and effect, has also been hijacked and perverted by more prosaic, supposedly science-based, claims. The "Mozart effect" for example, whereby the master's scores – which in this context are appreciated as a sorcerous sonic wash - succeed in elevating junior's IQ with neither his nor his parents direct involvement. Why Mozart (rather than Haydn or Boccherini or any other classical period composer) possesses this unique ability to generate neural connectivity has yet to be divulged. Does a piece of Mozart juvenilia work as well as the "Jupiter" Symphony? Is *The Impresario* as

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powerful as *The Magic Flute?* In a sense this "effect" admits to musical substance and quality without obliging anyone to actually know or do anything about it.

In spite of this apparently calamitous degredation of music's meaning and a mass cultural defection to a musical basement deeper and more rank than we ever could have imagined, there may yet be hope for change. It could be that the fragmentation of music in the 21st century; the return of tonality as an acceptable modus operandi; a receptiveness to non-Western musical traditions or a stylistic eclecticism, ultimately opens ears to the unknown and the unplayed. A younger generation who is not limited by the traditional pre-conceptions of a musical hierarchy could also change the listening landscape. Composers like Julius Röntgen and the many other creative spirits who have been pushed to the margins of musical history certainly deserve the opportunity.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted to the music historian and Röntgen scholar Jurjen Vis of Amsterdam for his help in preparing the foregoing biographical sketch. His input was absolutely invaluable. His colleague, John Smit, also of Amsterdam, provided not only excellent advice and enthusiastic encouragement, but a copy of the Röntgen portrait reproduced in this program and beautifully prepared scores and parts for the Trio and String Sextet. These works would otherwise have been unavailable to us. The Nederlands Muziek Instituut were most helpful and obliging in supplying ARC with scores for the other works in the program. Leslie Kinton's insightful and scholarly suggestions were happily incorporated into the second part of this program note. I owe special thanks to Martin Anderson of Toccata Press, London, who first urged me to explore Julius Röntgen's music.

ARC and The Royal Conservatory are most grateful to Mr. Jan Hesseling, Consul-General of the Netherlands for generously supporting this ARC project.

Artists of The Royal Conservatory

Toronto's Royal Conservatory of Music has a rich tradition of giving life to new musical ensembles and strengthening Canada's cultural foundations. Both the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and the Canadian Opera Company, now integral to the Canadian musical landscape, had their beginnings at The Royal Conservatory. The recent establishment of ARC (Artists of The Royal Conservatory) provides The RCM with a vehicle to present its exceptional faculty in varied musical collaborations, both to communities throughout Canada and abroad. ARC also celebrates the excellence of The Glenn Gould School, the creativity of Canadian musicians and the unique voices of Canadian composers.

As a flexible ensemble ARC's programs are exploratory, thematic and instrumentally diverse, and while ARC has at its core The Glenn Gould School faculty, it also collaborates with special guests and outstanding GGS students. ARC's mandate includes the performance of both the traditional chamber music canon, as well as repertoire that through political changes or shifts in musical fashion has been ignored.

ARC also fosters the creation of new compositions and develops creative associations with musicians outside the Western classical tradition, as well as artists from other disciplines. Its concerts are complemented by the mentoring of students and educational work that serve as a catalyst for creativity.

Since its creation in 2002, ARC has presented a number of highly successful concert series and symposia in Toronto, including explorations of music of the Holocaust – "Music Reborn"; programs of British chamber music from the early 20th century – "A Green and Pleasant Land", and most recently chamber music by film composers "Reel Music". These have been broadcast by the CBC and by National Public Radio throughout Canada and the US. ARC made its New York debut in 2003 and performed in Stockholm and London in November, 2004. Among its forthcoming engagements is a tour of China in the spring of 2006, and of Europe in the fall of 2007 to coincide with the release of its first recordings. ARC's artistic director is Simon Wynberg.

ARC Biographies




MARIE BÉRARD, VIOLIN

In addition to her work as concertmaster of the Canadian Opera Company Orchestra and as assistant concertmaster of the Mainly Mozart Festival in San Diego, Marie Bérard is a sought-after soloist, chamber musician and teacher. She has worked with Canada's Amici, ArrayMusic and New Music Concerts and has premiered sonatas by Bright Sheng and Anthony Davis as well as several new works with the Accordes String Quartet. Among her solo recordings are works by Alfred Schnittke (Concerto Grosso, no.1 and A Paganini), and the "Meditation" from Thaïs. Her recording of the concerto for violin and brass ensemble by Henry Kucharzyk was released in 2002. Marie performs regularly at chamber music festivals, notably Ottawa, Speedside and Music in Blair Atholl, Scotland. When she is not playing her 1767 Pietro Landolfi violin Marie enjoys cooking and gardening.

STEVEN DANN, VIOLA

One of North America's most distinguished and versatile violists, Steven Dann has served as principal viola with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Zurich's Tonhalle and the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa. In concerto appearances he has collaborated with Sir Andrew Davis, Jiri Belohlavek, Sir John Elliott Gardiner, Jukka-Pekka Saraste and Vladimir Ashkenazy. Steven has also been a guest principal of the Boston and City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestras under Sir Simon Rattle, and with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, with whom he also recorded. He has been a member of the Smithsonian Chamber Players in Washington D.C. and a featured performer on their Sony Classical recording series. He is currently a member of the Axelrod String Quartet. Steven Dann has a great interest in both early and contemporary music and has commissioned concerti from Alexina Louie and Peter Lieberson as well as chamber works from R. Murray Shafer, Frederick Schipitsky and Christos Hatzis. This season he recorded Luciano Berio's Sequenza #6 (Naxos). His teachers include Lorand Fenyves, Bruno Giuranna, Zoltan Szekely and William Primrose.

DAVID HETHERINGTON, CELLO

A native of St. Catharines Ontario, David Hetherington is currently the Toronto Symphony Orchestra's Assistant Principal cellist. He received his musical training at The Royal Conservatory of Music and the University of Toronto, and furthered his studies in New York, Italy and Germany with Claus Adam, André Navarra and Paul Tortelier. A member of the TSO since 1970, Mr. Hetherington is on the faculty of The Glenn Gould School and is also Music Director of the Inter-Provincial Music Camp near Parry Sound, Ontario. As a soloist, Mr. Hetherington has performed with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the Niagara Symphony and the Symphony Orchestra of Canada. As a chamber musician, he has toured Canada, the United States, Mexico and Europe. Mr. Hetherington is a founding member of the Amici Chamber Ensemble, which presents an annual series of concerts at the Glenn Gould Studio in Toronto. He is also a founding member of the string quartet, Accordes, which performs regularly for New Music Concerts and other contemporary music organizations. In 2001, the Canadian Music Centre, through Centrediscs, released Accordes' recording of Harry Somers' String Quartets, which received a Juno Award nomination. Mr. Hetherington has appeared on several recordings for the CBC and for Centrediscs with whom he made the Canadian premiere recording of Talivaldis Kenins' prize-winning cello sonata. In addition, he has recorded nine discs with Amici for Summit Records, Naxos and CBC records.

DAVID LOUIE, PIANO

New York debut with the venerable Peoples' Symphony Concerts and since then has performed at major series in Chicago (the Dame Myra Hess Memorial Concerts); Mosel Festwochen, Germany, and the National Auditorium, Madrid. He has appeared with the Vancouver Symphony; the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa; the Gulbenkian Chamber Orchestra, Lisbon; and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, London; and has collaborated with many distinguished artists, including the Takacs Quartet. David Louie completed graduate studies at the University of Southern California. His principal teachers include Boris Zarankin and John Perry whom he now assists at The Glenn Gould School. Away from the keyboard, he enjoys languages, literature, art, film and the great outdoors.

ERIKA RAUM, VIOLIN

Erika has played the violin professionally since the age of 12. Since winning the Joseph Szigeti International Violin Competition in 1992 she has been invited to Europe on many occasions, most recently to Portugal, Austria, Germany, England, Italy, France and Hungary, where she appeared with the Budapest Radio Orchestra, the Austro-Hungarian Orchestra, and the Franz Liszt Chamber Orchestra. Erika has performed throughout



Canada: at the Parry Sound, Ottawa and Vancouver chamber festivals and regularly at the Banff Centre. Abroad she has attended the festivals at Caramoor, Budapest and Prussia Cove. She is much in demand as a chamber musician and performs regularly with the distinguished pianist Anton Kuerti, with whom she recorded a landmark CD of Czerny's piano and violin works (on CBC's Musica Viva label).

JOAQUIN VALDEPEÑAS, CLARINET

One of the most distinguished clarinetists of his generation, Joaquin Valdepeñas has performed with the BBC Welsh and Toronto Symphonies, the English Chamber Orchestra, the Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio at New York's 92nd Street "Y", and with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. Festival appearances include Edinburgh, Marlboro, Banff, Casals, Evian, Mostly Mozart, Nagano, and Aspen, where he is a faculty member and the conductor of the wind ensemble. A founding member of the Juno award-winning chamber ensemble, Amici, Joaquin has also collaborated with the Quartetto Latinoamericano, the American, Ying, and Muir Quartets and with members of the Cleveland, Vermeer, Guarneri, and Tokyo String Quartets. With recordings on the CBC, Summit, Centrediscs and Sony labels. His most recent releases are Contrasts and a CD of the Brahms Clarinet Sonatas. In addition to his teaching work, Joaquin has conducted the Toronto Symphony Orchestra on several occasions, and for ten years conducted the Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra.

DIANNE WERNER, PIANO

After initial training at The Royal Conservatory with Margaret Parsons-Poole, Dianne continued her studies with Peter Katin, Gyorgy Sebok and Alicia de Larrocha. She went on to win a number of major prizes including the Silver Medal at the prestigious Viotti-Valsesia International Piano Competition in Italy and second prize in the Young Keyboard Artists Association Competition in the United States. Dianne also received a number of major awards in Canada, including three Canada Council Grants and a Floyd Chalmers award from the Ontario Arts Council. An exceptional soloist, accompanist and chamber musician, her collaborations include a national tour and recordings with soprano Nancy Argenta and a wide array of performances with the principal players of the Toronto Symphony, the New York Philharmonic, and the Canadian Opera Company Orchestra. Acclaimed for her lyrical and poetic style she has given solo recitals across Canada,

at the United States and Europe and appeared as soloist with several orchestras; The Nybrokajen Concert Hall, Stockholm and at Canada House in London. Dianne frequently performs as a duo partner with cellist Bryan Epperson.

SIMON WYNBERG, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, ARC

Simon Wynberg enjoys a diverse career as a guitarist, chamber musician and artistic director. Simon established the Scottish chamber festival Music in Blair Atholl in 1991, which he still runs, and was Artistic Director of Music at Speedside and the Guelph Spring Festival from 1994 to 2002. In addition he has programmed and directed festival events in the United Kingdom and the Bahamas. His entry in the New Grove Dictionary of Music & Musicians describes him as "not only a virtuoso performer of distinction but one of the guitar's foremost scholars". He has edited over 60 volumes of hitherto unknown guitar music and his many recordings (on Chandos, ASV, Hyperion, Narada, Stradivari, Vox and Naxos) have received glowing reviews and awards: a Penguin CD Guide Rosette; Gramophone Critics' Choice, and a Diapason Award. His Bach Recital CD has sold over 100,000 copies. Simon has recorded and collaborated with the English Chamber Orchestra, George Malcolm, the Gabrieli String Quartet, flautist William Bennett, violinist Mark Peskanov and many Canadian musicians, including violinists Martin Beaver and Scott St. John. Recent engagements include concerts in New York at the Bargemusic series, the Banff Centre and the Bermuda International Festival. Simon's non-musical enthusiasms include contemporary fiction and worrying.

Special Guests

CAROLYN BLACKWELL, VIOLA

Carolyn Blackwell is a student of Steve Dann at The Glenn Gould School of The Royal Conservatory of Music. She switched from violin to viola while studying under Nick Pulos at the Mount Royal Conservatory, Calgary. Her summer studies include three years of the Morningside Music Bridge Program, where she was awarded first place in the Chamber Music Competition, and has attended programs at the Banff Centre, where she studied with Karen Tuttle, Tom Rolston and played under Krzysztof Penderecki. She has also studied with Pinchas Zukerman, Patinka Kopec, Michael Tree, Joseph Kalichstein and Danny Philips at the National Arts Centre's Young Artist Program in Ottawa. This

year she performed at the Domaine Forget Festival, Quebec with Geoff Nuttall of the St. Lawrence String Quartet and the Finnish cellist, Anssi Karttunen. As an orchestral player, Carolyn has worked with the Calgary Philharmonic under Hans Graf and toured both New Zealand, as assistant principal of the Calgary Youth Orchestra, and China with the Royal Conservatory Orchestra. This year, Carolyn's performances include an appearance as soloist with the Mooredale Orchestra.

PETER COSBEY, CELLO

A graduate of The Royal Conservatory of Music's Glenn Gould School and a student of Bryan Epperson, Peter began his cello study in Regina with Cameron Lowe. His orchestral experience with the Canadian Opera Company, Windsor Symphony, Regina Symphony and the National Youth Orchestra was recently expanded with a one year term as Assistant Principle Cello with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra. Peter has performed chamber music throughout Canada including the Scotia Festival of Music, Domaine Forget, and the Banff Centre. His work with The Cosbey Trio and Quinsin Nachoff has been heard on CBC radio, and his work with the ARC on WCLV-FM radio. Peter's awards include the Dr. Howard Leyton-Brown bow award and the Director's Gold Medal from the Conservatory of Performing Arts in Regina. In his spare time, Peter is interested in the mathematics of prime numbers, alternative energy and Japanese culture.

JURJEN VIS, SPECIAL GUEST

Jurjen Vis studied medieval history at the university of Amsterdam and music education and collaborative piano at the Sweelinck Conservatory. He has worked as a freelance historian, musician and musicologist since 1987, and is active as a conductor, singer and pianist. He is the music critic for Amsterdam's Financieele Dagblad and has lectured and published widely on a range of musical topics: from Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck and William Byrd, to Grieg and Debussy. His contributions to the study of the Dutch Reformation and biographical studies of Jan Arentsz and Cornelis Cooltuyn won Mr Vis the Alkmar Historical Association prize. His biography of Leo Smit (1900 – 1943) *Silhouetten*, appeared in 2001, and 2006 will see the publication of *Gaudeamus*, his biography of Julius Röntgen and thesis for the University of Utrecht.

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