SATURDAY, JUNE 25 :: 5 PM

Marc-André Hamelin, piano
Viano String Quartet

Lucy Wang, violin | Hao Zhou, violin
Aiden Kane, viola | Tate Zawadiuk, cello

STRING QUARTET NO. 1, OP. 20 (1948)
Alberto Ginastera (1916-83)
Allegro violento ed agitato
Vivacissimo
Calmo e poetico
Allegramente rustico

PIANO QUINTET: NOWHERE FAST (2005/2019)
Marc-André Hamelin (b. 1961)

:: INTERMISSION ::

PIANO QUINTET NO. 2, IN A MAJOR, OP. 81, B.155 (1887)
Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)
Allegro, ma non tanto
Dumka: Andante con moto
Scherzo [Furiant]: Molto vivace
Finale: Allegro

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Like many South American composers of the last century, Argentine Alberto Ginastera faced a dilemma when confronting the distinctive folk music of his country. To incorporate it prominently would lead to accusations of being simply old fashioned. To ignore it altogether, what to put in its place? The first of Ginastera’s three string quartets marks the beginning of his attempts to move beyond his heritage. Behind him was a series of colorful, strongly nationalistic works like the ballet scores Panambi (1937), Estancia (1941), and the piano suite Danzas Argentinas (1937). They reflect the folk songs and dances of Argentina and the music of the pampas in the gauchesco tradition that revered the tough and tender horseman (gaucho) as a symbol of national pride. Then, in 1948 Ginastera decided to turn his back on what he called this ‘objective nationalism’ and make it a little more personal. “It was time,” he said, “to drop ethnic realism in favor of the creation of an imagined folklore.”

Ginastera was an innovator, but not a revolutionary. He welcomed new ideas but did not wish to join causes. Looking back on his earliest quartet, a quarter of a century later, when he was completing his Third Quartet, he pointed to its strong, incisive rhythms, its adagios (which are poignant, lyrical and contemplative) and to its mysterious atmosphere of nocturnal surrealism. The First String Quartet was premiered by the Mozart Quartet in Buenos Aires on October 24, 1949, and later chosen for the 25th anniversary festival of the ISCM (International Society for Contemporary Music), held in Frankfurt. Ginastera, increasingly out of favor with the Perón régime in Argentina with his support for civil liberties, took the opportunity to make the first of many trips to Europe, where he eventually settled. The quartet’s opening movement is full of driving, motoristic rhythms, syncopation and folk-inspired sounds, not unlike the music of Bartók.

The second movement is a scherzo. It is lightly drawn with carefully crafted effects like the delicate, nocturnal textures towards the end of the movement, produced by playing close to the bridge of the instrument. The slow movement is the emotional heart of the quartet. It opens with a chord that permeates much of Ginastera’s music, formed when the open strings of the gaucho’s guitar are gently strummed. The sounds of the guitar, more vigorously played this time, return in the finale. Its rhythmic theme alternates with a folk-inspired theme in the criolla tradition.

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**PIANO QUINTET: NOWHERE FAST**

Marc-André Hamelin (b. Montreal, Canada, September 5, 1961)

Composed 2005/2019; 6 minutes 30 seconds

Pianist-composer Marc-André Hamelin has a catalog of over 30 compositions, with his 12 Études in all the minor keys as its centerpiece. These were composed in the spirit of perpetuating the art of the pianist-composer, a species once dominating the concert platform, but much rarer throughout the 20th century and, arguably, somewhat less endangered in our own times.

Not shy to admit being given to lampooning, or, at least, paying humorous homage to composers of the past (witness the Scarlatti and Rossini Études), these days Hamelin increasingly composes to commission for an audience beyond pianophiles. He wrote Four Perspectives for cello and piano for the 2016 La Jolla Summerfest, the Focata on L’homme armé for the 2017 Van Cliburn International Piano Competition and, more recently the Suite à l’ancienne (Suite in the old style). This is a substantial, involving and technically demanding, yet often poetic recreation of the Baroque suite from the perspective of a 21st century virtuoso pianist–composer and it is an absorbing listen, too. It was premiered in February 2021 by pianist Rachel Naomi Kudo with funding from herGilmore Young Artist Award.

Nowhere Fast, initially started in 2005, then set aside until 2019 when it was completed, was first performed July 20, 2021, and its composer reveals the following about what we may expect: “Curiously, the piece is its own program note. Anything I could say about it would give everything away, and I certainly don’t want that.”

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**PIANO QUINTET NO. 2, IN A MAJOR, OP. 81, B. 155**

Antonín Dvořák (b. Nelahozeves, Bohemia, September 8, 1841; d. Prague, May 1, 1904)

Composed 1897; 29 minutes

By 1887, Dvořák was an established, successful composer with requests coming in for new works from musicians throughout Europe. His Seventh and Eighth symphonies and, above all, the Slavonic Dances were winning a wide audience for his music. In England, conductors were jealously fighting with one another to get the première of the next new Dvořák symphony. To speedily fill the need for new music, Dvořák turned to several works he had written a decade or two earlier. These included a Piano Quintet in A, which he set about revising. But both Dvořák himself and his music had changed and, although no political animal, he was now caught up in a strong nationalist current that swept throughout Bohemia. It gave him an incentive to turn again to the Slavic folk melodies he had grown up with, music that he both knew and loved. His style now combined Bohemian, or Czech, nationalism with an up-to-date musical internationalism. The old piano quintet [eventually published in 1959 as No. 1] belonged to the composer he had left behind. A new work was called for.

The resulting piano quintet was also in A major. Its composition went smoothly. Dvořák was happily living in his renovated farmhouse in the countryside at Vysoká, approximately 50 kilometers south-west of Prague. In less than seven weeks, from mid-August to the beginning of October 1887, the score was complete. From the outset, it was recognized as a masterpiece, standing with the Schumann, the Brahms and the Franck Piano Quintets at the pinnacle of the romantic piano quintet repertoire. Two striking characteristics of the new work are its clarity of design and effortless lyricism. Dvořák moves rapidly from the gentle cello melody of the opening movement to a more passionate statement of its material. It is done in an entirely natural way, where nothing is contrived, with the help of the dumka, a popular folk form that Dvořák frequently turned to. Originally a narrative folk poem celebrating heroic deeds, the mood in a dumka alternately swings from quiet meditation (dumka comes from the Slavic word dumati, meaning ‘to meditate or recollect’) to the most exuberant celebration. This stimulated Dvořák to incorporate a wide range of emotion in his music – including the elegiac second movement, with its skilful A-B-A-C-A-B-A structure. The Scherzo is full of melodic vitality and rhythmic bounce. It’s based on a dance, the furiant, from Dvořák’s own region of Bohemia, though without the dance’s traditional displaced accents. A high-spirited finale rounds off the work with unstoppable momentum.

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**FAMILY CONCERT**

**A FAR CRY**

Friday, July 1

11 AM

Enjoy this one-hour family-friendly concert fun for all ages!

Free, no tickets required.

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PROGRAM NOTES
ABOUT THE ARTISTS

MARC-ANDRÉ HAMELIN, piano

Pianist Marc-André Hamelin is known worldwide for his unrivaled blend of consummate musicianship and brilliant technique in the great works of the established repertoire, as well as for his intrepid exploration of the rarities of the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. Mr. Hamelin records exclusively for Hyperion Records. He was honored with the 2014 ECHO Klassik Instrumentalist of Year (Piano) and Disc of the Year by Diapason Magazine and Classical Magazine for his three-disc set, Busoni: Late Piano Music. An album of his own compositions, Hamelin: Études, received a 2010 Grammy nomination and first prize from the German Record Critics’ Association, an organization that also gave him a lifetime achievement award. To date, Hamelin has received seven Juno Awards and eleven Grammy nominations. In 2017, Mr. Hamelin was a distinguished member of the jury of the 15th Van Cliburn International Piano Competition where each of the 30 competitors performed Hamelin’s Toccata on L’Homme armé. Mr. Hamelin makes his home in the Boston area with his wife, Cathy Fuller. Born in Montreal, he is an Officer of the Order of Canada, a Chevalier de l’Ordre du Québec and a member of the Royal Society of Canada.

VIANO STRING QUARTET

Lucy Wang, violin | Hao Zhou, violin
Aiden Kane, viola | Tate Zawadiuk, cello

Winners of the 2019 Banff International Competition and recently named Ensemble-in-Residence at Curtis Institute, the Viano Quartet is primed to take its place among today’s most sought-after quartets. As part of the Banff International String Quartet Competition prize, the quartet will be in residence at the Meadows School of Music at Southern Methodist University through the 2022-23 season. In addition to the Banff Competition win, the Quartet has received numerous awards, including Grand Prize at the 2019 ENKOR International Music Competition and second prize at the 2019 Yellow Springs Chamber Music Competition. The Viano, who formed in 2015 at the Colburn Conservatory of Music, is committed to engaging with communities outside the concert hall and is educating school children and students of all ages through residencies in Bellingham, Washington.

YOUNG ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

Morningside Music Bridge program at NEC

Friday, July 8 :: 11 AM

Students from New England Conservatory’s acclaimed Morningside Music Bridge program perform works of Debussy, Ginastera, Gershwin and much more.

Free, no tickets required.