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The Louis Sherman Concerto Competition for Young String Players was established in 2000 with the generosity of Louis' daughter, Claudia Chance, and the Victoria Chamber Orchestra. This honours the memory of an outstanding musician. Born in Toronto, 1907, the eldest of five brothers, Louis died in October 1999.

Louis was very active in the Victoria music scene, and is remembered most for his kindness and generosity toward his fellow musicians, particularly talented young string players and emerging artists. As a benefactor, he helped to establish the Victoria Chamber Orchestra, and many of this evening's performers remember him fondly as a friend.

This season's concert will be **Friday, April 27, 2012, 8:00 pm**, and will include the winning young player's performance.

The competition for the finalist is at the Copeland Lecture Hall, St. Michael's University School, 3400 Richmond Road, Tuesday, February 21, 2012, 7:00 pm. Admission is free, so do come and hear the excellence of our young players as they compete for the opportunity to play with the Victoria Chamber Orchestra.

The Island String Players Society, PO Box 31122,
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The Victoria Chamber Orchestra

A CONCERT OF EXCEPTIONAL WORKS



Yariv Aloni
Music Director

Friday February 17, 2012 - 8:00 pm
First Metropolitan United Church
Quadra and Balmoral

A PRESENTATION OF THE ISLAND STRING PLAYERS SOCIETY

Joaquin Turina (1882 – 1949)

Among the 20th century Spanish composers Joaquin Turina was the only one to extensively commit his talents to chamber music. He lived and studied in Paris, where he was encouraged by Debussy, Ravel, and D'Indy. One can hear the influence of Debussy in his use of lush descending parallel ninth chords. The influence of the music of the Andalusian Gypsies is also heard. This piece became one of the composer's most popular works.

"*The Bullfighter's Prayer* is marked by a striking contrast of moods and colors. It opens quietly: after progressing with impulsive rhythms to moods of impetuous character, an expansive melody which dominates the composition is unfolded. A forceful climax then arrives. After this has been fully realized, the ideas stated at the beginning of the piece are repeated. The principal melody brings the work to a gentle conclusion." (David Ewen, 1952)



Nicholas Fairbank is an accomplished composer and organist, a Victoria native who has studied in Paris and California. His organ background connects him to an

ancient musical practice which has the most direct lineage from previous generations (some organists suggest their training is fewer than 6 generations from Bach himself). Nick loves the playfulness of Poulenc, who enjoyed witty quotes throughout his music. Nick received a suggestion in 2001 from Sidney Classical Orchestra for a Suite for Orchestra, and he was able to add new movements to some of his solo keyboard works in a truly Handelian style of Suite. This opens with a Prelude. The Baroque art of *préluder* was an improvisation on the key of the sonata, to reinforce the sound in the ear. The joke in this Prelude is the introduction of off rhythms, and the introduction of the tritone, the devil's chord, an uncomfortable sound with no specific tonality, the exact opposite of the Baroque prelude. This is heard in fast interval leaps, and in polytonality, where two conflicting chords are mashed together a tritone apart, A and Eb here, equally confusing to the ear. The First Gavotte is lumpy, and initially graceless, in stark contrast to the dance. The Fuguetta is fascinating. A fugue has always hinted at an academic exercise: Bach's Art of the Fugue lacks concrete instrumentation. Previous generations loved this articulation of the composer's art; our generation wants it to be musical. This fugue is in a whole tone scale, so there are only 7 notes in the scale, and our usual two half steps (diatonic) are gone. There are only two transpositions possible (one of the "scales of limited transposition" of Olivier Messaien, another organist), so familiarity with the scale gives one a sense of comfort. The joke in the Second Gavotte is a quotation of one of Bach's French Suites. Which Suite and movement? The Pavane is a movement of aching beauty. This is a more contemporary pavane, like Ravel's *Pavane pour une enfante defunte*. The final Hornpipe is a joke only a sailor could promote. The hornpipe is the dance taught to graceless male adolescents forced into ballet classes by fathers who are on the local arts council which has just hired a dance teacher who is undersubscribed. The introduction of triple rhythms is undanceable, but represents the unpredictably heaving deck of a ship no one would consider dancing on anyway. The final joke is the emergence of the hornpipe theme, bar 67 of 95, plucked in the lowest strings where it growls like a wreck grinding on the rocks.



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The Victoria Chamber Orchestra

- Violin I:** Yasuko Eastman, concertmaster; Anja Rebstock, Anne McDougall, Allyn Chard, Jennifer Fisher, Don Kissinger
- Violin II:** Sue Innes, principal; Cathy Reader, Leah Norgrove, Heather Gatland, Fiona Millard, Gwen Isaacs
- Viola:** Martine den Bok, principal; Mary Clarke, Catheryn Kennedy, Jon O’Riordan, Michele MacHattie
- Cello:** Mary Smith, principal; Janis Kerr, Ellen Himmer, Trevor MacHattie, Zach Taylor
- Bass:** Richard Watters, principal; Richard Backus

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TIMES COLONIST

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Alexander Glazunov (1865-1936) was a Russian Romantic who spanned the time from Rimsky-Korsakov to Stravinsky and Shostakovich. He directed the St. Petersburg Conservatory through the Bolshevik revolution. He was a staunch traditionalist, labeling the new music as cacophonous on the one hand, but studying and admiring the orchestration on the other. He commented on the orchestration of Petrushka, which bore the Petrushka chord, the polyphony of two chords a tritone apart first heard tonight in Nick Fairbank’s Prelude. Late in life, commenting on Debussy, he wondered if it was he himself who imparted such excellent orchestration to the cacophony he was trying to understand even as he condemned it. Tonight’s Theme is probably his best known, and the variations are felicitously composed.



Nicolai Myaskovsky (1881-1950) was long recognized as an individualist even by the Soviet establishment. In the 1920s the critic Boris Asafyev commented that he was 'not the kind of composer the Revolution would like; he reflects life not through the feelings and spirit of the masses, but through the prism of his personal feelings. He is a sincere and sensible artist, far from "life's enemy", as he has been portrayed occasionally. He speaks not only for himself, but for many others'. He never married and was shy, sensitive and retiring; Pierre Souvtchinsky believed that a 'brutal youth (in military school and service in the war)' left him 'a fragile, secretive, introverted man, hiding some mystery within. It was as if his numerous symphonies provide a convenient if not necessary refuge in which he could hide and transpose his soul into sonorities'. Stung by the many accusations in the Soviet press of 'individualism, decadence, pessimism, formalism and complexity', Myaskovsky wrote to Asafiev in 1940 'Can it be that the psychological world is so foreign to these people?' When somebody described Zhdanov's decree against 'formalism' to him as 'historic', he is reported to have retorted 'Not historic—hysterical'. Shostakovich, who visited Myaskovsky on his deathbed, described him afterwards to the musicologist Marina Sabinina as 'the most noble, the most modest of men'. Mstislav Rostropovich, for whom Myaskovsky wrote his Second Cello Sonata late in life, described him as 'a humorous man, a sort of real Russian intellectual, who in some ways resembled Turgenev'.—from Wikipedia. Certainly in this beautifully crafted little symphony, his introspection is evident, and the pain of the war just gone and the incomprehensible judgements of the Stalinists are drawn with chromatics of narrow range. The second movement has a yearning little dance that sounds like Prokofiev. The piece ends in the ratatats of a snare drum, or machine gun?

Yariv Aloni, director of the Victoria Chamber Orchestra since 1995, is also the founder and music director of the Galiano Ensemble of Victoria and music director of the Greater Victoria Youth Orchestra. Acclaimed by critics for his sensitivity and virtuosity, he performs in major concert halls around the world. He received his early training in Israel, where he studied viola with David Chen at the Rubin Academy of Music in Jerusalem and subsequently with the late Daniel Benyamini, principal violist of the Israel Philharmonic. His chamber music studies took him to the United States, where he studied with Michael Tree of the Guarneri String Quartet at the University of Maryland. A former member of the Aviv and the Penderecki Quartets, he can be heard on CDs issued by the United, Marquise, Tritonus and CBC labels, and has recorded for the CBC, the BBC, National Public Radio, Radio-France and the Israeli Broadcasting Corporation. Mr. Aloni studied conducting with the Hungarian conductor János Sándor, and he participated in conducting workshops with Gustav Mayer and Helmuth Rilling. As a conductor, he has received praise for conducting his impassioned, inspiring and "magnificently right" interpretations of major orchestral and choral repertoire. Reviewers also describe him as "a musician of considerable insight and impeccable taste."



As the audience of the Victoria Chamber Orchestra knows, Yariv Aloni has a penchant for exploring exciting and as yet little known works—usually not readily available for purchase, rental, or borrowing. Nicholas Fairbank's Suite for String Orchestra is from a living, breathing Victorian. The other three works in this program had no recent publication and were no longer copyright.

Charles Encell, orchestra librarian, found some parts of Joaquin Turina's The Bullfighter's Prayer (La oración del torero) in Madrid but had to do a search of the world's libraries for a copy of the bass part.

The two Russian works are out of print and unavailable. Again a search of world libraries provided a copy of Alexander Glazunov's Theme and Variations available at the University of Berkeley, California. A geographically convenient relative of Charles' scanned the copy and sent it electronically to Victoria for Charles to make a usable set of parts.

Nicolai Myaskovsky's Symphony #2 was impossible to find in any of the world's libraries and the Soviet publisher no longer exists. A visiting family friend from Ottawa said she would contact a former school friend who is now conducting in St. Petersburg. Yes, he had done it a few years ago from hand-written parts with many errors. So it seemed the writing of a new set of parts was in order, but a few days later, the St. Petersburg contact called that a conducting friend in Kiev had just completed that job and then made it available to the Victoria Chamber Orchestra.

This gorgeous set of rarities is amazing in that the music has been made available, and it is heard tonight only because of the tenacity of Charles Encell.

Programme

La oración del torero

Joaquin Turina 1925

Suite for String Orchestra

Nicholas Fairbank 2001

Prelude

First Gavotte

Fuguetta

Second Gavotte

Pavane

Hornpipe

Theme and Variations for String Orchestra

Alexander Glazunov 1895

Theme *Moderato*

Variation I *Pizzicato*

Variation II *Poco più mosso*

Variation III *Tranquillo*

Variation IV *Moderato scherzando*

Variation V *Allegro moderato*

Variation VI *Allegretto*

Variation VII *Moderato*

Intermission

Sinfonietta No. 2 in a minor

Nicolai Yakovlevich Myaskovsky 1946

I *Allegro-andante-largo-allargando*

II *Andantino grazioso*

III *Andante elevato*

IV *Allegro con fuoco*