

*Dear Listeners,*

**W**elcome to Pizzicato Landscapes with the New Orford String Quartet! We are in for a treat tonight with these four all-star musicians from Québec and Ontario. Their imaginative program showcases the fascinating textural palette pizzicato provides to the medium of the string quartet in the hands of composers from Beethoven and Ravel to Sokolovic and Shaw.

Tonight's opening piece will be performed by a special group formed by three members of our Young Artist Program. A warm welcome to the Haleine Trio comprised of soprano Alice Macgregor, flautist Joel Ulrich, and pianist Grace Lu.

There is still time to subscribe to five concerts this season, and in doing so to become part of Virtuosi's growing community. Your participation in the season through subscriptions, ticket purchase, attendance, listening, feedback, volunteering, or donating is immensely appreciated as we embark on this next chapter together. Please also join us for our fundraising concert on December 10th with the incredible Winnipeg Boys' Choir, soprano Monica Huisman, strings and piano, followed by a celebratory reception.

With a fresh perspective, Virtuosi Concerts continues our tradition of presenting truly unforgettable musical experiences for all curious listeners this season. Enjoy the show!

Sincerely,



**Jennifer Thiessen**  
*Artistic Director,  
Virtuosi Concerts*



# Concert Etiquette

## Good Scents Policy

Due to the allergic sensitivities of some of our performers and patrons, we ask you to refrain from using perfumes, colognes, hairsprays or other fragrances when planning to attend Virtuosi Concerts performances.

## Electronics

Please turn off your cell phone. No recording or photography permitted during the performance.

**Candies** Please unwrap lozenges before the music begins. If you are concerned about a persistent cough, please see us at the Patron Services table and we will try to accommodate a seat closer to the exit.

**A little late?** Please wait at the rear of the Hall. Latecomers will be seated at a suitable interval.

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## Virtuosi Concerts

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## *A Message from our Board President*

Welcome to tonight's Virtuosi concert, the second in our 2023-2024 season!

Tonight, we are delighted to present the New Orford String Quartet, in their much-anticipated return to Virtuosi! One of Canada's most celebrated string ensembles, the Quartet debuted on the Virtuosi stage just over a decade ago, in October of 2012.

Since that time, the Quartet has welcomed a new member, violist Sharon Wei, joining cellist Brian Manker and violinists Jonathan Crow and Andrew Wan. Sharon has previously performed for Virtuosi as a member of Ensemble Made in Canada.

In tonight's concert, the Quartet will showcase their extraordinary musicianship in works using pizzicato, a deft plucking of strings that creates dazzling effects. This expert technique is featured in the Quartet's chosen selections, including quartets by Ludwig van Beethoven, Ana Sokolović, and Maurice Ravel. The program opens with a piece by American composer Caroline Shaw, inspired by Beethoven's String Quartet No. 6.

Virtuosi Concerts deeply appreciates the unwavering support and patronage of our wonderful audience, our funding organizations, and individual donors. Through your contributions, Virtuosi continues to provide remarkable and intimate musical experiences of the highest artistic calibre.

We thank our Artistic Director Jennifer Thiessen, Executive Director Heather Lewis, and our Board of Directors for their hard work and creative vision. Their commitment to excellence has resulted in an exceptional program we will enjoy today.

Thank you for attending tonight's event, and we look forward to seeing you again throughout the season!

*Paul R.J. McCulloch*

**Paul R.J. McCulloch**  
*Board President,*  
*Virtuosi Concerts*



# New Orford String Quartet



Photo by: Dahlia Katz

*Virtuosi Concerts wishes to thank:*



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**YOUNG ARTIST PROGRAM**

**HALEINE TRIO**

ALICE MACGREGOR, soprano, JOEL ULRICH, flute, GRACE LU, piano

Bravura Variations on  
“Ah! Vous dirai-je maman” (1849)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
(1756–1791)  
From “Le Toréador” by Adolphe Adam  
(1803–1856)

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**PIZZICATO LANDSCAPES**

**NEW ORFORD STRING QUARTET**

ANDREW WAN & JONATHAN CROW, violins,  
SHARON WEI, viola, BRIAN MANKER, cello

Blueprint (2016)

Caroline Shaw  
(b. 1982)

Selections from *Commedia dell’arte* (2010-2013)

Innamorati  
Colombina  
Zanni  
Ghost 1

Ana Sokolovic  
(b. 1968)

String Quartet No. 10 in E-flat Major, op. 74 (“Harp”)

I. Poco Adagio - Allegro  
II. Adagio ma non troppo  
III. Presto  
IV. Allegretto con Variazioni

Ludwig van Beethoven  
(1770-1827)

**Intermission**

String Quartet in F Major (1903)

I. Allegretto moderato, très doux  
II. Assez vif, très rythmé  
III. Très Lent  
IV. Vif et agité

Maurice Ravel  
(1875–1937)

## Performer Biographies



*Photo by Elizabeth Delage*

### ANDREW WAN, VIOLIN

Andrew Wan was named concertmaster of the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal (OSM) in 2008. As soloist, he has performed worldwide under conductors such as Rafael Payare, Maxim Vengerov, Vasily Petrenko, Bernard Labadie, Carlo Rizzi, Peter Oundjian, Xian Zhang, Michael Stern and James DePreist, and has appeared in recitals with artists such as the Juilliard Quartet, Vadim Repin, Marc-André Hamelin, Daniil Trifonov, Menahem Pressler, Jörg Widmann, Emanuel Ax, James Ehnes, and Gil Shaham. His discography includes Grammy-nominated and Juno, Felix and Opus award-winning releases on the Onyx, Bridge, and Naxos labels with the Seattle Chamber Music Society, New York's Metropolis Ensemble, and the New Orford String Quartet.

In the fall of 2015, he released a live recording of all three Saint-Saëns violin concerti with the OSM and Kent Nagano under the Analekta label to wide critical acclaim. His recent live album of works for violin and orchestra by Bernstein, Moussa and Ginastera with Nagano and the OSM won a 2021 Juno award for Classical Album of the Year – Large Ensemble. He enjoys a close collaborative relationship with Charles Richard-Hamelin, with whom he has recorded the entire Beethoven piano and violin sonata cycle. Mr. Wan graduated from The Juilliard School with a Bachelor of Music, Master of Music and Artist Diploma degrees, is currently Artistic Director of the Prince Edward County Chamber Music Festival and for the 2017-18 season was Artistic Partner of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra. Associate Professor of Violin at the Schulich School of Music at McGill University, he was the recipient of the Part-Time Teaching Award at the Schulich School in 2019. He has sat as guest concertmaster for the Pittsburgh, Houston, Indianapolis, National Arts Centre, Toronto and Vancouver Symphony orchestras.

Andrew Wan performs on a 1744 Michel'Angelo Bergonzi violin, and gratefully acknowledges its loan from the David Sela Collection. He also enjoys the use of an 1860 Dominique Peccatte bow from Canimex.



*Photo by Bo Huang*

## *JONATHAN CROW, VIOLIN*

Jonathan Crow has been Concertmaster of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra since 2011. A native of Prince George, British Columbia, Jonathan earned his Bachelor of Music in Honours Performance from McGill University in 1998, at which time he joined the Montreal Symphony Orchestra as Associate Principal Second Violin. Between 2002 and 2006 Jonathan was the Concertmaster of the Montreal Symphony Orchestra; during this time he was the youngest concertmaster of any major North American orchestra. Jonathan performs as guest concertmaster with orchestras around the world, including the National Arts Centre Orchestra, Pittsburgh Symphony, Mahler Chamber Orchestra, Filarmonia de Lanaudiere and Pernambuco Festival Orchestra (Brazil).

Jonathan joined the Schulich School of Music at McGill University as an Assistant Professor of Violin and was appointed Associate Professor of Violin in 2010. Jonathan is currently Associate Professor of Violin at the University of Toronto.

In 2016 Jonathan was named Artistic Director of Toronto Summer Music, which recently announced record attendance in his first full season. An avid chamber musician, he has performed at chamber music festivals throughout North America, South America and Europe including the Banff, Ravinia, Orford, Domaine Forget, Seattle, Montreal, Ottawa, Incontri in Terra di Sienna, Alpenglow, Festival Vancouver, Pernambuco (Brazil), Giverny (France) and Strings in the Mountains festivals. He is a founding member of the Juno Award-winning New Orford String Quartet, a project-based new ensemble dedicated to the promotion of standard and Canadian string quartet repertoire throughout North America. As an advocate of contemporary music he has premiered works by Canadian composers Michael Conway Baker, Eldon Rathburn, Barrie Cabena, Gary Kulesha, Tim Brady, Francois Dompierre, Ana Sokolovic, Marjan Mozetich, Christos Hatzis, Ernest MacMillan and Healey Willan. He also includes in his repertoire major concerti by such modern composers as Ligeti, Schnittke, Bernstein, Brian Cherney, Rodney Sharman, Vivian Fung and Cameron Wilson.

Jonathan has recorded for ATMA, Bridge, CBC, Oxingale, Skylark, and XXI-21 labels and is heard frequently on Chaîne Culturelle of Radio-Canada, CBC Radio Two, and National Public Radio, along with Radio France, Deutsche Welle, Hessischer Rundfunk and the RAI in Europe



## SHARON WEI, VIOLA

Canadian violist Sharon Wei is a dynamic and multi-faceted musician, establishing herself as one of the most respected violists on the scene today. She has appeared as concerto soloist with orchestras such as Symphony of the Redwoods, Kingston Symphony, Sinfonia Toronto, Orchestra of Southern Utah, San Francisco Chamber Orchestra and Connecticut Valley Chamber Orchestra and in 2022 premieres Richard Mascal's "Ziigwan" viola concerto with the London Symphonia. She has performed recital tours with pianist Angela Park under the auspices of Debut Atlantic and Prairie Debut. As a chamber musician, she regularly takes part at international festivals such as Verbier, Marlboro, Prussia Cove, Banff, Seattle and Ravinia.

Sharon has performed with renowned musicians including James Ehnes, Lynn Harrell, Peter Wiley, Gary Hoffman, Claude Frank, Joseph Silverstein and the Amernet, New Orford and St. Lawrence String Quartets. Sharon co-founded Ensemble Made in Canada in 2006. Their Mosaïque Project won a 2021 JUNO for Classical Album of the Year and toured to every province and territory in Canada in both traditional venues and eclectic ones such as the seabed of Hopewell Rocks at low tide.

Sharon has been guest principal violist of the Cincinnati Symphony, Canadian Opera Company, and Ensemble Matheus in Paris. Recently she was a guest violist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic on their 2021 Grammy recording of Ives Symphonies.

Sharon was on faculty at Yale and Stanford University and is currently Associate Professor of viola at Western University. She has given masterclasses at the American Viola Society Festival, Beijing Conservatory and universities across Canada. In summers she is a regular faculty violist at Curtis Summerfest, Scotia Festival, Tuckamore Festival, and Orford Academy. At Western Sharon has created a course for performance majors in which students learn off-stage initiatives such as networking, grant writing, website design, and managing finances. Sharon won the viola prize at Yale University and has been the recipient of grants through the Canada Council for the Arts, Ontario Arts Council, FACTOR and Western University.





*Photo by Sian Richards*

## *BRIAN MANKER, CELLO*

Principal Cellist of the Montreal Symphony Orchestra (OSM) since 1999, Brian Manker enjoys a diverse and varied musical career as a performer and teacher. In addition to being a frequent concerto soloist with the OSM, and his work with the New Orford String Quartet, Mr. Manker is a member of the Adorno Quartet.

Mr. Manker has performed throughout North America as a member of the Harrington String Quartet, the Cassatt Quartet, and the Atlanta Chamber Players, and performed chamber music with many distinguished artists including Walter Trampler, Laurence Lesser, Gary Graffman, Lee Luvisi and Jean-Philippe Collard. A Grand Prize winner as a member of the Harrington Quartet at the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition, Mr. Manker also received a special commendation from Sir Yehudi Menuhin at the Portsmouth International String Quartet Competition.

Formerly the co-director of Festival Alexandria (Ontario), Mr. Manker has participated in many music festivals, including Norfolk, Blossom, Chamber Music East, Roundtop, Swannanoa, the Ottawa Chamber Music Festival, masterclasses at Orford, Domaine Forget, and at the Canton International Summer Music Academy in China. He has performed for radio, television, and internet broadcasts on the CBC, WFMT Chicago, and WQXR New York, and can be heard on his 2010 recording of the complete Bach Cello Suites on STORKCLASSICS, as well as numerous recordings of chamber music and of course with the OSM. Mr. Manker served on the jury of the prestigious and historic Prague Spring International Cello Competition in 2006.

Currently on the faculty of the Schulich School of Music of McGill University, Mr. Manker has also taught at West Texas State and Emory Universities. In 2007, Mr. Manker launched the Beethoven Project, which aims to perform all the quartets of Beethoven in their proper context, the private salon. As a companion to this project, Mr. Manker maintains a blog at <http://bquartets.blogspot.com/>. He also enjoys a critically acclaimed sonata recital partnership with the pianist André Laplante. Brian Manker plays on a cello made by Pietro Guarneri of Venice in 1729, and a bow by François Pecatte loaned by Canimex.

# Program Notes

Tonight, the New Orford String Quartet presents the chamber music of two multi-award winning contemporary female composers, Ana Sokolović and Caroline Shaw, paired with two historical gems of the Western art music canon, one by Beethoven and one by Ravel. Although composed centuries apart, the four string quartets on tonight's program are united by their exceptional use of the pizzicato string technique. Pizzicato directs string players to pluck the strings with the pads of their fingers, in contrast to arco, which directs players to produce sounds by bowing. Celebrated American violinist Sonya Monosoff notes that although the pizzicato technique can be traced back as early as the seventeenth century, it did not become a regular feature of orchestral repertoire until the Classical era when Beethoven put it to use for truly dramatic purposes. Indeed, Beethoven's String Quartet No. 10 in E-flat major, Op. 74, which rounds out tonight's program, was nicknamed the "Harp" quartet owing to its prominent use of pizzicato, resembling the sound of a harp. In the first movement, arpeggiated pizzicato figures are passed from the paired viola and cello to the first and second violins. In the later half of the movement, the cello, viola, and second violin perform scalar arpeggios in pizzicato style, accompanied by sustained notes at first and then rapid improvisatory-like passagework in the first violin. Ravel's one and only contribution to the string quartet genre holds a prized place in the French chamber music repertory, often paired in performance with Debussy's single string quartet, the Op. 10 in G minor. Although the work was dedicated to Ravel's teacher, Gabriel Fauré, music scholar Mark DeVoto notes that the rapid pizzicato opening of the second movement reveals the influence of Debussy.

The program opens tonight with selections from Ana Sokolović's *Commedia dell'arte*. Originally from Belgrade, she moved to Montréal, Québec in 1992 and is currently serving as the first Canada Research Chair in Opera Creation at l'Université de Montréal. Her music is self-described as grounded in the "rhythmic universe of Balkan folkore ... coloured with playful images and inspired by differing artistic disciplines," particularly those for the stage. The title of the work, *Commedia dell'arte*, draws on the sixteenth and seventeenth-century Italian theater tradition of the same name which utilized stock characters and plots that make fun of scandalous social situations. The four movements selected for tonight's performance are inspired by particular character types: *Innamorati*, *Colombina*, *Ghost 1*, and *Zanni*. Although pizzicato technique is featured prominently in *Innamorati* (a pair of lovers) and *Zanni* (the trickster servant), it is far from the only specialized string technique on display in tonight's program. Keep an eye and ear out for sounds produced by slapping, scratching, knocking, and sliding!

Caroline Shaw, composer of "Blueprint," is a multifaceted musician with expertise in producing and composing, as well as performing as a violinist and vocalist. Shaw won the Pulitzer Prize in Music in 2013, has received several Grammy awards, and an honorary doctorate from Yale University. "Blueprint" was commissioned for the Aizuri Quartet, whose name refers to Japanese blue-ink woodblock printing called "aizuri-e." Shaw explains that the name of her composition refers to both the woodblock printing technique and architectural blueprints for structural design. According to Shaw, the work originated as a harmonic reduction or "blueprint" for Beethoven's String Quartet Op. 18, No. 6. In keeping with the theme of tonight's concert, "Blueprint" features pizzicato to a significant degree. At times, the pizzicato weaves seamlessly in and out of a predominantly arco texture. In other passages, the musical lines played with the bow are abruptly punctuated by simultaneous plucking in all four parts.

# Virtuosi Young Artists



## *ALICE MACGREGOR, SOPRANO*

Alice began her musical journey in Newfoundland and Labrador with the award-winning children's chorus, *Shallaway* (6 yrs). Mentors Kellie Walsh and Cheryl Hickman supported her in, notably; Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* as second spirit guide (9yrs) (Memorial University), and as a soloist in Fauré's *Requiem* (12yrs) (Newfoundland Symphony Orchestra). Following mentorship from Tracy Dahl, Canada's premier coloratura soprano, Alice graduated in April 2023 with a B.Mus. with distinction in Voice Performance from the University of Manitoba.

Recent recognitions include the Madeleine Gauvin Scholarship (Women's Musical Club), the Dorris (Mills) Lewis Memorial Trophy, the Alice F. "Lal" Mills Memorial Trophy, the Gilbert and Sullivan Society Trophy and the Tudor Bowl (Winnipeg Music Festival). In 2022 Alice was the winner of the Zita Bernstein German Lieder Competition. In January 2023, Alice soloed as one of three shepherd girls in E. Grieg's *Peer Gynt*, Op. 23 (Act II) (Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra). With Manitoba Underground Opera in May 2023, she debuted as "Meg" in the premiere of *The Mansplaining Division*, and played "Dorabella," in their August 2023 children's opera tour of *The Bremen Town Musicians*. Alice is also a frequent performer with Winnipeg's own professional choirs, *Dead of Winter*, and *Canzona*. Alice is grateful to family, friends, and outstanding mentors for unstinting support.



## *GRACE LU, PIANO*

Grace Lu is a 20-year-old pianist in her third year of the Bachelor of Music in Performance program at the University of Manitoba, studying with Dr. David Moroz. She has had several successful performances at the Winnipeg Music Festival, the Associated Manitoba Arts Festivals' provincial competition, and the Manitoba Registered Music Teachers' Association scholarship competition. Grace has her ARCT Diploma in Piano Performance from the Royal Conservatory of Music and she received the provincial gold medal for her level 10 exam in 2019. In addition, Grace has participated in the Cremona International Music Academy and the Orford Music

Academy, having been automatically accepted to both by her teachers in the programs. Grace was selected as a Virtuosi Young Artist for Virtuosi Concerts' 2022/23 season and opened for the renowned piano quartet, Ensemble Made in Canada alongside mezzo-soprano, Shea Carter. Last year, Grace was a finalist in the University of Manitoba's Lawrence Genser Scholarship Competition which recognizes the most outstanding undergraduate solo performance in the faculty of music. Grace is thankful for her longtime piano teacher, Jane Petroni, and for her current teachers and mentors, David Moroz, Judy Kehler-Siebert, and Derek Chiu.



## JOEL ULRICH, FLUTE

Joel Ulrich recently graduated with a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Manitoba, where he studied with flute instructors Laurel Ridd and Layla Roberts. He has participated in numerous provincial honour bands, and has played principal flute with the Winnipeg Youth Orchestra, the University of Manitoba Wind Ensemble, the University of Manitoba Symphony Orchestra, and the University of Manitoba Opera Ensemble.

Additionally, Joel has been selected as principal flute of the National Youth Band of Canada for three consecutive years. Joel is a four-time winner of the Adam N. Leckie memorial trophy, for the most outstanding woodwind or brass performance at the Winnipeg Music Festival. In addition, Joel is a two-time winner of the Jessica Bernardin memorial award, for the most outstanding performance at the Syrinx Flute Festival. Joel was also selected as a winner of the University of Manitoba concerto competition during his first semester of studies at the U of M. Recently, Joel was featured as a soloist with the University of Manitoba Wind Ensemble, and was selected as the 1st-prize winner in the Lawrence Genser competition at the U of M. Joel has had the privilege of studying with many outstanding flute teachers. In particular, during the summer of 2021, Joel studied with the renowned flutist Julien Beaudiment at Domaine Forget. Joel is also a passionate music educator, and works regularly with private students and school groups.

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A beautiful bunch!*