

# *Strings* of St. John's *in concert*



**CELEBRATING 25 YEARS**

Presenting works by

**MOZART, MENDELSSOHN, FINZI, TARTINI,  
HARRIS BAIOCCHI and NIELSEN**

**MEHDI JAVANFAR**, music director and conductor

**SUNDAY, MARCH 3, 2024 AT 2:00 PM**

St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church  
(Elgin St. at Somerset St. Ottawa)



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# PROGRAMME

*Divertimento in B♭ major K. 137,*      **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**

Andante

Allegro di molto

Allegro assai

*Sinfonia in E♭ major No. 6*      **Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy**

Allegro

Menuetto

Prestissimo

*Romance, Op. 11*      **Gerald Finzi**

## INTERMISSION

*Sinfonia in D Major*      **Giuseppe Tartini**

Allegro

Andantino

Allegro

*Kaleidoscope*      **Regina Harris Baiocchi**

ii "Mirrors"

*Little Suite for Strings, Op. 1*      **Carl Nielsen**

Präludium

Intermezzo

Finale

# PROGRAMME NOTES

## **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)**

*Divertimento in Bb major K. 137*

At the end of 1771, following two successful tours in Italy, Mozart and his father returned home to Salzburg. There, around the time of his sixteenth birthday, Wolfgang composed three divertimenti, K. 136-138, for strings.

These pieces are often counted as his first string quartets, but it has been remarked that the writing is unlike that in his other quartets, including even the ones that he wrote later that same year. Here the writing is more orchestral and the inner voices have less individual character than in most of Mozart's chamber music. He may well have considered this music useful for either orchestral or chamber music performance, and indeed it is often played by string orchestras. Mozart scholar Alfred Einstein speculated that Mozart may even have composed these divertimenti to be ready should he be asked for symphonies during his next Italian tour, in which case he could simply have added wind parts.

These are delightfully simple, youthful pieces, with exuberant energy, lyrical slow movements, and even some Haydnesque humor.

*Notes by Martin Pearlman (<https://baroque.boston/mozart-divertimenti>)*

## **Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy (1809-1847)**

*Sinfonia in Eb major No. 6*

Mendelssohn composed this delightful work in 1821 at the age of 12. Mendelssohn's early string symphonies are a testament to his prodigious talent and precocious abilities as a composer. This symphonia begins with an energetic and lively Allegro movement. Mendelssohn's melodic inventiveness shines through, and the strings engage in playful dialogues. The movement features a clear sonata form structure, with contrasting themes and development sections.

The second movement is a graceful Menuetto, characterized by its elegant dance rhythm. Within this movement, Mendelssohn provides two contrasting Trios: Trio 1 in B major – that is lyrical and expressive versus Trio 2 in B flat major that is more light-hearted in character.

The final movement, marked Prestissimo, is a whirlwind of energy. It races forward with rapid passages, showcasing Mendelssohn's skillful orchestration and rhythmic drive. The movement concludes with a vibrant and exhilarating finale.

### **Gerald Finzi (1901-1956)**

#### *Romance, Op. 11*

Gerald Finzi is one of Britain's most underrated composers. Perhaps because his life was short and his output relatively small that he never achieved the fame and success of, say, Vaughan Williams, Gustav Holst or William Walton. But there's so much beauty to discover in Finzi's music, which sounds so typically English despite his roots which were Italian, German and Jewish.

The death of Finzi's first music teacher Ernest Farrar in the First World War affected him deeply, as did the loss of his father and three of his brothers also during his formative years. This sadness and bleak worldview infused most of the composer's music, even from an early age.

Perhaps another factor in Finzi's relative obscurity was his dislike of London city life and its scene. He settled in Wiltshire, where he devoted himself to composing and apple-growing, saving a number of rare English apple varieties from extinction.

This elegiac quality and a profound love of the English countryside is evident in Finzi's *Romance* in Eb major, a short but beautiful piece written in 1928. It seems that the raw emotion of losing his father, brothers and music teacher is still infused into its yearning passages. The music is reminiscent of Elgar at his most rapturous - and deeply touching, anticipating the languid melodic lines underpinned by pizzicato basses of his later clarinet concerto.

Finzi only published his *Romance* in 1951 after some revision. He would live just five more years, dying the day after a broadcast of the first performance of his Cello Concerto on the radio.

*Notes by Jane Jones*

<https://www.classicfm.com/composers/finzi/music/romance-in-eb-jane-jones/>

## **Giuseppe Tartini (1692-1770)**

### *Sinfonia in D Major*

Giuseppe Tartini was an Italian baroque composer and violinist known for his contributions to the development of violin technique and the establishment of the modern violin bowing technique. While Tartini is perhaps best remembered for his violin sonatas and concertos, he also composed many orchestral works, including sinfonias.

Written in the key of D major, a key often associated with brilliance and majesty, this sinfonia showcases Tartini's ability to craft vibrant and engaging orchestral music.

The opening Allegro introduces the listener to Tartini's lively and energetic musical language. The buoyant rhythms and playful melodies captivate the audience from the outset, setting the stage for the journey ahead.

The second movement, marked Andante, offers a moment of repose amidst the exuberance of the first movement. Here, Tartini demonstrates his skill in crafting expressive and melodious passages for the orchestra. The graceful melodies flow effortlessly, evoking a sense of serenity and beauty.

The final movement, a spirited Allegro, brings the sinfonia to a thrilling conclusion. Full of energy and drive, this movement showcases Tartini's mastery of counterpoint and orchestration. The intertwining melodies and dynamic rhythms create a sense of excitement and anticipation, leaving the listener exhilarated by the journey they have undertaken.

## **Regina Harris Baiocchi (1956-)**

### *Kaleidoscope*

Regina Harris Baiocchi is a composer, author, and poet. Her music has been performed by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Seattle Philharmonic, US Army Band, Chicago Sinfonietta, American Guild of Organists, Chicago Brass, Gaudete Brass, and Milwaukee Brass quintets, Lincoln Trio, Avalon String Quartet, and other acclaimed artists. She has written for symphony orchestra; a mass; libretto, opera; marimba concerto, hand drum concerto, ballet; chamber, choral, jazz, gospel, solo music for voice, flute, oboe d'amore, bass oboe, clarinet, trumpet, trombone, piano, and organ.

*Kaleidoscope* (i. realizations, ii. mirrors, iii. confetti) for strings begins with a musical reflection of a kaleidoscope filled with colors of a 12-tone row. Helen Walker-Hill refers to the row as Regina Harris Baiocchi's "musical footprint"

because the composer uses it in several compositions. Today, Strings of St. John's will perform the "mirrors" which is an elusive mixture of arpeggiated chords, often built on fourths, canons in A-flat major and F-minor.

### **Carl Nielsen (1865-1931)**

#### *Little Suite for Strings, Op. 1*

Carl August Nielsen (9 June 1865 - 3 October 1931) was the seventh of twelve children in a poor Danish family. His father was a decorator who played the violin and accompanied his wife in the performance of songs at weddings and other festive occasions. Nielsen studied violin as a child, along with other instruments, and participated in many musical activities, including being an army bugler. At the age of 18 he was admitted to the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen. Although he was not ranked an outstanding student, he was sufficiently skilled as a violinist to gain a place in the orchestra of the Royal Theater in Copenhagen in 1889, a post which he held until 1905.

He married the talented Danish sculptress Anna Marie Brodersen in March 1891. The marriage, although a meeting of artistic minds, was not a successful one. Anne Marie was very determined to develop her own career, and frequently Carl was left for months at a time to look after the home, and their three young children, while still having to play at the Royal Theater. This put a strain on the marriage, and Carl even suggested divorce in 1905. However, despite long separations and several extra marital affairs, they remained married for the remainder of his life, and his dynamic wife may in some ways have given him the inspiration and drive to work on his great compositions: the six symphonies, and his concertos for violin, flute and clarinet.

The little suite for strings is an early work composed just after Nielsen graduated from the Academy. The programme note accompanying the concert in which it was premièred in 1888 referred, rather disparagingly, to the composer as "Mr. Carl Nielsen, whom nobody knows". On hearing the little suite, many of the audience must have sensed that that description would not remain appropriate for long. The work is one of great originality and inventiveness and immediately appealing musical ideas. It is in three movements, of which we are playing just the first. This is a simple movement based on a slow ostinato which accompanies a simple lyrical elegiac theme, possibly derived from one of his mother's songs.

*Notes from Portobello Orchestra*

(<http://www.theportobelloorchestra.co.uk/ProgrammeNotes/NielsenLittleSuite.php>)



# MEHDI JAVANFAR

## MUSIC DIRECTOR & CONDUCTOR



Mehdi Javanfar is an active conductor and educator. He is a two-time recipient of the Graduate Merit Awards in Conducting at the University of Michigan, where he studied with Maestro Kenneth Kiesler. His other conducting mentor includes the late Gustav Meier. Mehdi has conducted the London Ontario Symphony Orchestra, Windsor Symphony Orchestra, Hamilton Symphonic Band, University of Michigan various orchestras, Hart house Strings, the Composers' Orchestra consisting of the members of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Kharkiv Philharmonic Orchestra in Ukraine, and the Toronto Sinfonia of Nations, which he founded. Also, he has held the position of the Music Director of the Pembroke Symphony Orchestra from 2017 to 2023.

Mehdi began his musical career as a violinist in Tehran Symphony Orchestra. Following immigration to Canada in 1994, while studying at the University of Toronto, he joined the Scarborough Philharmonic Orchestra where he served as the Principal Second Violin. As a conductor, his first concert at the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto, in 1997, featuring Dvořák's Serenade in D minor, and Stravinsky's Histoire du Soldat was recorded and broadcast by CJRT FM. His conducting repertoire is varied and includes more than a hundred forty pieces from the standard repertoire, as well as pieces by contemporary composers of various nationalities, such as Behzad Ranjbaran, Arsalan Kamkar, Shahin Farhat, Reza Vali, Suad Bushnaq, Fikret Amirov, Vladimir Solyanikov, and Goulak Artemovsky. As an advocate for Canadian music, Mehdi has performed pieces by Gary Kulesha, Marjan Mozetich, Larysa Kuzmenko, Abigail Richardson-Schulte, Murray Schafer, Tawnie Olson, Maya Badian, Andrew Ager, Carmen Braden, Elizabeth Raum, André Gagnon, and John Weinzweig to name a few.

As an educator, Mehdi is a senior member of the College of Examiners at the Royal Conservatory of Music. He has taught and prepared



countless students for RCM examinations in various subjects of Theory, History, as well as Violin, and Piano, from elementary to advanced levels. As a music writer, Mehdi's activities include participation in writing a textbook of fundamentals of music for the University of Tehran, Iran; translation of "The Story of Music" by Geoffrey Brace (Ladybird Books) into Persian; biographical writings on Tchaikovsky, Bartok, Prokofiev, and Mahler; correction of the list of errata published in the journal of the Conductors' Guild, for "Rite of Spring" by Stravinsky; essays on Iranian Traditional Music, and a variety of other subjects, published in various magazines.

Mehdi is a graduate of the University of Toronto with a Bachelor of Music Education, the University of Michigan with a Master's degree in Orchestral Conducting, and the University of Ottawa with an M.A. in Music Research, He is currently pursuing his PhD in Interdisciplinary Research in Music at the University of Ottawa.



# THE STRINGS OF ST. JOHN'S

## **Violin I**

Mira Negovora,

*Concertmaster*

Sonia Dimitrov

Carolyn Phillips

Marg Macpherson

Lauren Phillips

Khalid Ahmad

Marko Yaniskevsky

## **Viola**

Mary Young,

*Principal*

Stephen Rouble

Laura Mennill

Shalva Chabukiani

## **Violin II**

Margot Lange,

*Principal*

Katherine Tinkler

Jennifer Arrigo

Gabriella Csoti

Mohsin Bhujwalla

Alessandra Kempson

## **Cello**

Andrew Deaville

*Principal*

Catherine Campbell

Catherine Mennill

David Van Dine

## **Bass**

Patrick Kline,

*Principal*

Jamie Tait Glossop

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