Wednesday Noon Hours
UBC SCHOOL OF MUSIC

43rd Eckhardt-Gramatté National Music Competition
2020 Virtual Winner’s Tour

Brittany Rae soprano
with Jesse Plessis piano

Amore

Tanzer Lieder
   i. Sur une étoile
   ii. Stimmen
   iv. Wishing Well

Han Kang: Lost in Translation

But Stars Remaining

Hymnen an die Nacht

Mysteries of the Macabre

Composed: Morlock (2005); Sokolović (2004); Fitzell (2020); LeFanu (1970); Vivier (1975); Ligeti (1974-1977/1991)

This performance is being broadcast from Montréal, which is on the traditional lands of both the Kanien'kehá:ka, “Mohawk,” and the Anishinabeg, “Algonquin,” peoples. Tiohtià:ke/Montréal is historically known as a gathering place for many First Nations.

We acknowledge that the University of British Columbia is situated on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Musqueam people.
The UBC School of Music’s Jocelyn Morlock (b. 1969) is a composer of record for several significant music competitions, including the 2008 Eckhardt-Gramatté National Music Competition and the 2005 Montreal International Music Competition, for which she wrote Amore, a tour de force vocal work that has gone on to receive more than 70 performances and numerous radio broadcasts.

Serbian-born and Montréal-based, Ana Sokolovic (b. 1968) has become one of Canada’s foremost composers. Her song cycle, Tanzer Lieder (2004), features poetry from Austrian poet, Francisco Tanzer’s, Blätter collection. The five songs in the cycle shift between three languages-French, German and English. Ana’s settings brilliantly mirror the rich, imaginative and intimate atmosphere of the poetry. When asked to describe her role as a composer in Canada’s art scene, Ana replied, “My role is to invent a different kind of truth, and to bring listeners into an imaginary world...My job is to create a world where others can enter and dream.”

Han Kang: Lost in Translation (2020) by Manitoba-based composer, Gordon Fitzell (b. 1968) was this year’s commissioned piece for the Eckhardt-Gramatté National Music Competition. Gordon writes that the piece “is an exploration of the rich and complex world of translation. It is a highly personal work, emerging directly from my recent trips to South Korea. Over the course of these travels, I found myself becoming increasingly aware of the process of translation. I am particularly interested in translation of poetry by the Korean writer, Han Kang, whose work I read while traveling the country. The recent translations of her work into English and other languages has allowed many new readers to experience her writing, yet one cannot help but wonder to what extent we are truly appreciating her intended nuances. Indeed, a flurry of controversy on this very topic erupted following her being awarded the 2016 International Man Booker Prize.” The listener will hear that the music itself also becomes a type of mistranslation, with harmonies askew, and elements of Western and Eastern classical music and jazz combined with electronica, musical theatre and even ‘noraebang’ (karaoke), an ever-present part of Korean culture.

But Stars Remaining (1970) was written by English composer, Nicola LeFanu (b. 1947) for soprano, Jane Manning. Featuring lines from two different poems by Cecil Day-Lewis, the piece is an aubade or dawn-song. The scena shifts between outward, extrovert energy and more intimate, inward moments, leading to the sky and stars finally welcoming the dawn. LeFanu imagined the piece being sung from a high rock and one can hear the voice imitate the ‘kestrel’, a type of falcon that hovers and swoops down on its prey.

Hymnen an die Nacht (1975) by French-Canadian composer, Claude Vivier (1948-1983) encapsulates many aspects of his unique compositional style, as well as his tragic life. The calm, mystical nature of the piece reflects the paradise described in the poetry of German Romantic poet, Novalis. One can also detect several autobiographical elements. Vivier led a troubled life that was cut short when he was murdered in Paris. He was greatly affected by love and death and never having known his parents, he identified as a lonely, innocent, and motherless child. His use of the soprano voice and a made up, child-like language can be seen as musical representations for this lonely child identity or for the mother he never knew, but always longed for.

Mysteries of the Macabre (1991) is an arrangement by Elgar Howarth of the three arias for Gepopo, the secret chief of police, from György Ligeti’s (1923-2006) apocalyptic opera, Le Grand Macabre (1974-77). Gepopo attempts to warn Prince Go-Go that a giant comet is coming to destroy the planet. However, Gepopo gradually becomes more and more paralyzed by fear and hysteria to the point that all coded warnings turn into utter panic and frenzy, leading to an anxiety-ridden finale. This tour-de-force, super virtuosic work showcases how Ligeti was such a master of delivering dark subject matter with wit, irony and absurdity.
Canadian pianist and composer Jesse Plessis grew up in Sparwood, British Columbia, and has been described as a “force of nature” with “a skilled hand at crafting textures that pulse with life,” (Winnipeg Free Press). He has regularly appeared in concert series and music festivals across Canada, England, and continental Europe, performs as a guest artist with several orchestras and ensembles in Canada, and has garnered numerous awards in both piano and composition. His compositions have been called “ardent and incredibly well-structured” (Arlan Schultz) and have been performed across Canada by ensembles such as Land’s End Ensemble and the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra. In 2013 he founded the Centric Festival, an annual classical music festival in Lethbridge, Alberta. Plessis obtained a Master of Music degree from Brandon University where he studied piano with Megumi Masaki and composition with Patrick Carrabré. He holds a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Lethbridge where he studied piano with Deanna Oye and composition with Arlan Schultz. He currently resides in Montréal where he studies piano with Paul Stewart at the University of Montréal and composition at McGill University with Denys Bouliane.

BIOGRAPHIES

Brittany Rae soprano

Praised for her “supple and agile voice” (Les ArtsZé), Calgary-born and Montréal-based soprano, Brittany Rae, is becoming known in the worlds of both classical and contemporary music. Recent season highlights include winning first prize at the 43rd Eckhardt-Gramatté National Music Competition, attending the ‘Concert in the 21st Century’ residency at the Banff Centre with pianist, Jesse Plessis, and Le Vivier’s ‘Concert Vivier Interuniversitaire.’ Brittany has performed with Toronto City Opera (Susanna, Le nozze di Figaro), Tapestry Opera (Songbook IX), Chants Libre (Oper’Actuel 2019), Opera McGill (Lucia, Lucia di Lammermoor), and in exhibitions with Fondation Phi pour l’art contemporain. An avid performer and advocate of contemporary music, Brittany recently attended the SoundSCAPE Festival 2019 where she studied with soprano and contemporary music specialist, Tony Arnold, as well as Against the Grain Theatre’s 2019 Summer Modern Intensive opera program. Upcoming engagements include Sensors IV (Alcides Lanza) with Société de musique contemporaine du Québec and soprano soloist with the McGill Contemporary Ensemble (2021).

Jesse Plessis piano

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Join us for our online concert streams at music.ubc.ca/streaming!

Wed Nov 4

**Wednesday Noon Hours — Introducing Krisztina Szabó, our new faculty member**

Krisztina Szabó *mezzo-soprano*  Leslie Dala *piano*

Wagner *Wesendonck Lieder*

Jeffrey Ryan *Miss Carr in Seven Scenes*

12:00 noon, streaming live from the Chan Centre

FREE, online only

Wed Nov 18

**Wednesday Noon Hours — Cris Derksen, cello and electronics**

Cris Derksen *cello and electronics*

This performance is a collaboration between the UBC School of Music, Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery and Chan Centre for the Performing Arts as part of Soundings: An Exhibition in Five Parts

12:00 noon, streaming details TBA

FREE, online only

Wed Jan 20

**Wednesday Noon Hours — Roger Cole, oboe and Terence Dawson, piano**

Roger Cole *oboe*

Terence Dawson *piano*

Poulenc *Oboe Sonata, Op. 185*

Ravel *Piece en forme de Habanera*

Hindemith *Sonata for Oboe and Piano*

12:00 noon, streaming live from the Chan Centre

FREE, online only

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For further details and a complete list of events, please visit: music.ubc.ca/calendar or call 604.822.5574.

Want a weekly list of events delivered to your inbox every Monday? Sign up for our weekly Hot Sheet by sending an email to music.concerts@ubc.ca.

Presented by the UBC School of Music
The E-Gré Competition acknowledges the support of the Canada Council for the Arts.

The 2021 Eckhardt-Gramatté National Music Competition is open to string players: See e-gre.ca for details. The first-place winner will receive a cash prize of $6000 and a Canadian tour (recital fees approximately $5,000).