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DEANNA OYE (PIANO) & MUSAEUS STRING QUARTET

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Programme Order

Other Names for Birds String Quartet No. 1

Lavinia Kell Parker

Five Folksongs in Counterpoint for string quartet

*Florence B. Price
(1887-1953)*

- I Calvary*
- II Clementine*
- III Drink To Me Only With Thine Eyes*
- IV Shortnin Bread*
- V Swing Low Sweet Chariot*

INTERMISSION

Quintet in F sharp minor, Op.67 for piano and strings

*Mrs. H. H. A. Beach
(1867-1944)*

- I Adagio. Allegro moderato*
- II Adagio espressivo*
- III Allegro agitato. Adagio come I ma. Presto*

For Everyone's Enjoyment,

Please Remove All Hats To Preserve Sightlines.

Please Set All Electronics To Silent And Lower The Screen Brightness.

Please Do Not Photograph During The Performance.

Absolutely No Audio Or Video Recording Without Prior Permission.

Latecomers Are Seated At A Suitable Break.

No Outside Food Or Drinks - Water Is Available In The Lobby.

Fire Regulations Require That Every Person Has A Ticket.

The Lethbridge Symphony Association acknowledges that we are gathered on the lands of the Blackfoot, Stoney, and Tsuut'ina people of the Canadian Plains. We pay respect to the Blackfoot, Stoney, and Tsuut'ina peoples' past, present, and future while recognizing and respecting their cultural heritage, beliefs, and relationship to the land. The City of Lethbridge is also home to the Metis Nation of Alberta, Region III.

About the Performers



Musaeus String Quartet

Since Musaeus' foundation in 1982, the Lethbridge Symphony's resident professional string quartet has earned a reputation as one of Alberta's most versatile and accomplished classical performing groups. Composed of the Symphony's principal strings (violins Norbert Boehm and Airdrie Ignas; viola Gabriel Kastelic; and cello Mark Rodgers), their repertoire ranges from masterpieces of the Baroque, Classical and Romantic eras through to 20th century classics, as well as arrangements of jazz, popular, and contemporary music. In addition to leading our string sections for the Symphony Series, and other events that form part of each Season, like Kids Choir and our Symphony Soiree fundraising gala every spring, Musaeus String Quartet & Friends present the Musica Intima concerts. In addition, Musaeus performs at numerous private, public, and corporate events every season.

About the Special Guest



Deanna Oye *Piano*

Pianist Deanna Oye is Associate Professor in the Department of Music at the University of Lethbridge where she teaches Studio Piano and Collaborative Piano, and also teaches with the UofL Conservatory of Music. She holds a doctorate from the Eastman School of Music (Rochester, NY), where she studied with Dr. Jean Barr, and has given solo and collaborative performances throughout Canada, the U.S., Scotland, Germany, the Netherlands and Japan. In addition, her work has been broadcast on CBC Radio Two and National Public Radio in the United States. She is a founding member of the piano ensemble, FOURtitude, with colleagues Cheryl Emery-Karapita, Carolyn Herrington, Kevin Ngo, and Brad Parker, and The Unconventional Trio with brass colleagues Josh Davies and Nick Sullivan.

A strong commitment to teaching and innovation led to the development of the unique Collaborative Piano/Guitar course series at the UofL, which gives undergraduate pianists and guitarists the opportunity to develop skills of high-level musical partnership with singers and other instrumentalists. Deanna's piano students have achieved success in a variety of music endeavours, including performance and musicology studies at masters and doctoral levels, collaborative pianist positions, and piano competitions. In addition to frequent master class teaching and adjudicating, she is often invited to give career talks to aspiring young musicians. She is an enthusiastic advocate for new music and music in interdisciplinary contexts, with special interest in helping her students make connections between piano performance and their other passions.

Programme Notes

Lavina Kell Parker: Other Names for Birds String Quartet No. 1

Each spring Southern Alberta sees the arrival of the migratory Thick-Billed Longspur. This distinctive songbird is at the centre of an ongoing controversy and has become a symbol for change. Previously known as McCown's Longspur, it honored a confederate general and a perpetrator of indigenous genocide. Renaming this species prompted a proposal to reclassify exclusionary and harmful bird names. As a former resident of South Carolina, I witnessed the removal of the confederate flag on statehouse grounds, and the withdrawal of other long-standing symbols of the confederacy. When I returned to Canada, however, the controversy surrounding this threatened species caused me to question if any of my own long-held convictions might be unknowingly detrimental to others.

As statues topple, buildings are renamed and scientific common terms lose their honorific titles, what culpability do I have as a musician?

In the West, we so easily assumed the primacy of the classical canon, notably the "Three B's" (Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms). This was largely due to antiquated music scholarship that limited inclusion and diversity. My work, *Other Names for Birds*, invites the listener on a personal pilgrimage to re-examine musical hierarchy. The opening motive, woven throughout this string quartet, captures bird-like imagery, and evokes Beethoven's pastoral symphony. The entirety of the piece explores classical influence syncretised with my own "Three B's": Barndance, Bluegrass, and Baptist hymnody. Central to the work are moments of silent reflection for those musics which remain unheard. Familiar melodic lines, driving rhythm, and ample opportunity to "showboat" create a compelling energy eliciting hope for the future.

My backyard bird, the Thick-Billed Longspur, can inspire us to create new ways for inclusivity in our teaching, music making, and all that we do.

Lavina Kell Parker

Florence B. Price (1887-1953) *Five Folksongs in Counterpoint* for string quartet

As a black woman composer, Florence B. Price was an indomitable trailblazer for her time. She herself wrote in a letter to the conductor Serge Koussevitzky towards the end of her career in 1943, "I have two handicaps, those of sex and race." Despite courageously overcoming these handicaps in her lifetime, much of her work remained unpublished until recently. In fact, a large cache of her music was not discovered until 2009. Thanks to concerts such as tonight's, at last she is receiving the public attention she deserves.

Born in Little Rock Arkansas, she was first trained in music by her mother; then pursued further studies in Boston at the New England Conservatory. Although she experienced success as a teacher on her return, first in Little Rock and then in Atlanta Georgia, where she was appointed head of the Music Department at Clark College, she moved back north with her husband and family to Chicago in 1927 due to the impossible conditions she experienced with the rampant racism and Jim Crow laws of the American south. In Chicago she continued her musical studies at the American Conservatory and the Chicago Musical College and began to gain recognition for her work, culminating in her winning the 1932 Wanamaker Competition with her *Symphony in E minor*. The *Symphony's* premiere in 1933 marked her as the first black American woman to have a symphony performed by a major orchestra and established a firm foundation for the later successes of her career.

The manuscript of *Five Folksongs in Counterpoint* is dated 1951, although its genesis could be as early as 1927. The five tunes consist of two spirituals and three folksongs. As the title indicates, these melodies are worked against various counterpoints and developed through all of the voices, creating a rich harmonic treatment of the material. The first of the five folksongs is based on the great spiritual "Calvary," the opening phrases of which permeate the movement in many ingenious combinations ending with a moving statement of the full melody in the viola. "Clementine" provides the musical substance for the second movement.

Programme Notes

Here the tune goes through a series of different harmonisations ending in a lively final statement. The third movement is based on "Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes." The text of the song is actually a poem by the Elizabethan poet, Ben Jonson. Little is known about the melody, however, and when it originated. Movement four is an infectiously bright setting of "Shortnin Bread," which acts as a fitting foil to the solemnity and beauty of "Swing Low Sweet Chariot" for the final movement. This spiritual is heard first in the cello and then moves upward through the ensemble with a statement by the viola, then the second violin and finally the first violin. This is followed by a working out of various ideas derived from the melody before a brilliant final statement of the full spiritual ending in a grand flourish.

Amy Beach (1867-1944): Quintet in F sharp minor Op.67 for piano and strings

Amy Beach was one of the most successful women composers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, especially in large-scale compositions. Born into a well-established and respected New England family, she was a child prodigy, rivalling even Mozart in her precocious accomplishments. By the age of two she was already improvising countermelodies against her mother's singing. At four she could compose in her head and at six she gave her first piano recital playing works by Handel, Chopin and her own pieces.

Astonishingly enough, she received little formal training at major institutions during her life but instead received instruction from various private teachers. In piano she studied first with the German-born Ernst Perabo, one of the leading pianists and teachers in Boston, then with Carl Baermann, a pupil and friend of Liszt's who had only recently settled in the city. In 1883 at the age of sixteen she played her highly successful debut with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, thus launching her long career as a concert pianist.

In composition, Beach had only one year of lessons in harmony and counterpoint from 1881 to 1882 with Junius W Hill, a Boston

organist and teacher. With the guidance of the conductor of the Boston Symphony, Wilhelm Gericke, she developed her own ten-year composition course, including fugue and orchestration. During this time, she produced a series of major works including her Mass, the Symphony op. 32 and the Piano Concerto op. 45. This creativity continued unabated until well into the 1930s resulting in a large and impressive corpus of solo piano, chamber and orchestral works and songs marked by a highly original approach, above all in the realm of harmony.

The Quintet in F sharp minor Op.67 for piano and strings was composed in 1907. It is a passionate work of late romanticism, influenced to some extent by the music of Brahms, specifically his Piano Quintet, opus 34. Beach, in fact, derived an important recurring theme of her Quintet from the subordinate theme of the last movement of the Brahms Quintet. This 'motto' theme is first heard in the opening slow introduction of Beach's Quintet, which begins with long held F-sharp octaves in the strings against darkly mysterious arpeggios in the piano. The F sharps then grow into the motto theme, which descends into the depths of the ensemble to prepare for the ensuing Allegro moderato. This Allegro is a movement of great urgency and power whose main theme is also derived from the motto theme. It is followed by a profoundly lyrical slow movement, Adagio espressivo, suggesting an evocative night piece. For the Quintet's finale, Beach created an especially complex movement. It begins as a lightning Scherzo with a subdued trio. However the music suddenly veers off to the Quintet's opening introduction before launching into a fiery coda which brings the work to a brilliant conclusion with one last passionate statement of the motto theme.

Dr. Brian Black

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