Creating Community Through Great Music 2023-2024

Chamber Music Amici

Mt. Pisgah Arboretum's White Oak Pavilion

Tuesday, September 5 & Wednesday, September 6

Outdoor Salon Party

Welcome to Chamber Music Amici's Outdoor Salon Party Concert! In this eclectic but refreshing program, you will enjoy some outstanding music inspired by popular and folk traditions around the world, including Dvorak's Five Bagatelles and Piazzolla's tango arrangements for the piano trio (Oblivion and *Otoño Porteño*). The enchanted evening will continue with the playful and sometimes adrenaline-filled chamber music by two iconic American living composers, Paul Schoenfield, and the Pulitzer-Prize laureate William Bolcom.

I am thrilled to welcome back violinist Sunmi Chang for this concert with Amici. Please join us congratulating Sunmi as she begins her first year in Eugene as the new violin faculty at the University of Oregon School of Music and Dance!

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Program

Oblivion **Astor Piazzolla**

Sunmi Chang, violin; Eunhye Grace Choi, piano; Steven Pologe, cello

Autumn from "The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires" **Astor Piazzolla**

Sunmi Chang, violin; Eunhye Grace Choi, piano; Steven Pologe, cello

Five Bagatelles, Op. 47 **Antonín Dvorák**

I. Allegretto Scherzando
II. Tempo di Minuetto
III. Allegretto Scherzando
IV. Canon. Andante con moto
V. Poco Allegro

Sunmi Chang, violin; Eunhye Grace Choi, piano; Steven Pologe, cello; Sharon Schuman, violin

Graceful Ghost Rag **William Bolcom**

Sunmi Chang, violin; Eunhye Grace Choi, piano

Café Music **Paul Schoenfield**

I. Allegro
II. Andante Moderato
III. Presto

Sunmi Chang, violin; Eunhye Grace Choi, piano; Steven Pologe, cello

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Program Notes

by Dr. Terry McQuilkin

Astor Piazzolla: Oblivion and **Otoño Porteño**

Astor Piazzolla, born in the costal resort city of Mar del Plata, Argentina in 1921, spent much of his childhood in New York, where he absorbed a mélange of musical traditions. The family returned to Argentina in 1937, and Piazzolla worked as a bandoneon player and arranger for a prominent tango orchestra. In the 1940's he began composing classical pieces and began studying composition with Alberto Ginastera. In 1954, he won a scholarship that enabled him to study in Paris with the famed composer and pedagogue Nadia Boulanger, who urged him to continue composing tangos.

After returning to Argentina, Piazzolla formed various tango bands, and composed tangos infused with elements of jazz and classical music. His particular style, which came to be known as *nuevo tango*, met with resistance by purists in his own country, but garnered wide praise elsewhere, although even traditionalists eventually recognized the importance of his contribution to Argentine music.

In 1984, Italian director Marco Bellocchio commissioned Piazzolla to compose and record the music for his film adaptation of the play *Enrico IV* by Luigi Pirandello. *Oblivion*, probably the most enduring portion of the film score, has been arranged for a numerous instrumental combinations, including the version for piano trio by José Bragato, who was a cellist and a member of Piazzolla's Octeto Buenos Aires. *Oblivion* is a slow *milonga*, and poignantly captures the title character's delusion and melancholy.

Piazzolla wrote the four pieces that comprise *Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas* (The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires) between 1965 and 1970, and although the four pieces are often performed as a set, each was originally a stand-alone work. Alternately dynamic and pensive, *Otoño Porteño* (Autumn in Buenos Aires) is structured in ABABC form, and in Bragato's piano trio arrangement, features short cadenzas for the cello and the violin.

Antonín Dvorák: Bagatelles, op. 47

Writer Josef Srb-Debrnov, an active promoter of Czech music and a friend to both Bedřich Smetana and Antonín Dvorák, hosted weekly musicales in his apartment. It was initially for informal performances at this residence that Dvorák composed his *Maličkosti* ("Bagatelles"), for two violins, cello and harmonium. The unusual instrumentation can be explained by the fact that the composer's friend's apartment did not have a piano, but did have a harmonium (a small reed organ); moreover the Srb-Debrnov family included, besides Josef (an amateur cellist), two violinists and a harmonium player. Dvorák composed the Bagatelles between May 1 and May 12, 1878, though he devoted much of that time finishing up work on his first set of Slavonic Dances.

When Simrock published the Bagatelles – probably in 1880 – the keyboard part was designated for "harmonium or piano," and either instrument works quite suitably.

The Bagatelles are very different in character from the Slavonic Dances; the latter are more dramatic and extraverted, whereas the Bagatelles are restrained and genteel. But both works have the flavor of folk music, with dance rhythms and modality employed extensively. Dvorák even used a Czech folk song, "Hrály dudy," as the basis for the opening Bagatelle; this melody returns in both the third and fifth Bagatelles. Although the spirited first Bagatelle, in G minor, is built entirely around the folk tune, the melody undergoes subtle variation. The second movement (marked "Grazioso") is a graceful minuet whose main theme is built from a rising figure in dotted rhythms. The third Bagatelle (like the first, marked "Allegretto scherzando") reprises the "Hrály dudy" theme, but presents further variation. The "Andante con moto," in E major, is a canon – mostly two-voiced, but in three voices for an eight-measure section in F-sharp minor. Dvorák's use of strict canon in no way diminishes the expressive lyricism of the movement. A good-natured theme in G major launches the spritely finale ("Poco allegro"). Toward the end of the movement, the tune "Hrály dudy" returns, after which the movement's main theme (in G major) is heard one last time, and the work ends softly but with cheerful brio.

Although each movement is built around one or two themes, the melodic charm and Dvorák's imaginative scoring make the Bagatelles a delight, either as *Hausmusik* or as repertoire for performance in the recital hall.

William Bolcom: Graceful Ghost Rag: Concert Variation

Born in Seattle in 1938, William Bolcom received degrees from the University of Washington (BA), Mills College (MA) and Stanford (DMA) with further study at the Paris Conservatory with Darius Milhaud and Olivier Messiaen. He joined the faculty of the University of Michigan in 1973, retiring in 2008.

While his early compositions employed modernist serial techniques, Bolcom gradually turned to a more accessible style, forging a syncretic language suffused with popular and classical music genres. In the late 1960s, while teaching at Queens College in New York, he became interested in the music of Scott Joplin and other ragtime masters, and began composing his own rags, including *Graceful Ghost Rag*, written in 1970, in memory of his father. Bolcom recorded it in 1971, and it has remained his most popular work.

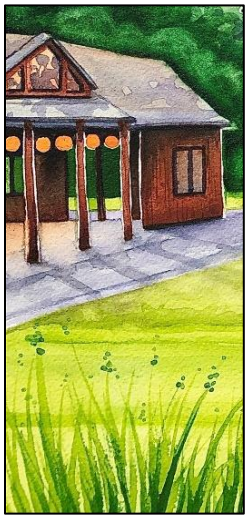
In 1979 Bolcom adapted *Graceful Ghost Rag* for violin and piano as a wedding gift for Sergiu Luca and Anne Epperson, calling it a "Concert Variation." For this version, he transposed the work to keys more hospitable to the violin and inserted before the trio a variation of the main theme; hence the subtitle, "Concert Variation."

Paul Schoenfield: Café Music

Paul Schoenfield (often spelled Schoenfeld) was born in Detroit in 1947 and studied at Carnegie Mellon University (BA) and the University of Arizona (DMA 1970). Among his teachers were the eminent pianists Ozan Marsh and Rudolf Serkin and composer Robert Muczynski. For much of his career he was active as a pianist as well as a freelance composer. He is also a scholar of mathematics and Talmudic literature and has lived in Israel and several U. S. states. For many years he taught at the University of Michigan, where he is now a professor emeritus of composition. Schoenfield's music often reflects his interest in folk music, Klezmer, and an array of popular music styles. His writing is typically contrapuntal, rhythmically complex and technically challenging.

Café Music, commissioned by the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra and premiered in 1987, is the composer's most widely performed work. Schoenfield writes: "The idea to compose *Café Music* first came to me in 1985 after sitting in one night for the pianist at Murray's Restaurant in Minneapolis…My intention was to write a kind of high-class dinner music – music which could be played at a restaurant, but might also (just barely) find its way into a concert hall." Among the disparate idioms that find their way into the work: popular music of early twentieth century America, Viennese, light classical and Broadway styles. The work is in three movements, marked "Allegro," "Andante moderato," and "Presto." The composer notes that the second movement includes a paraphrase of a lovely Hasidic melody.

Musicians



Eunhye Grace Choi is an active pianist and chamber musician and is currently Artistic Director of Chamber Music Amici. She has performed extensively throughout the United States, France, Belgium, the United Kingdom, and South Korea, and has recorded for Naxos, Emeritus, and Origin Classical. A versatile keyboardist, she was harpsichord soloist for J. S. Bach's Brandenburg Concerto cycle and collaborated with Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg in Vivaldi's Four Seasons at the Eastern Music Festival. She is frequently invited as a resident pianist at competitions and conventions, including the International Clarinet Association's ClarinetFest and the Meg Quigley Vivaldi Competition and Bassoon Symposium. Grace served as collaborative piano faculty for six years at Eastern Music Festival, where she was the principal keyboardist of the Festival Orchestra under the baton of Gerard Schwarz. She served as music faculty and collaborative pianist at the University of Oregon (2017-2018) and Tennessee Tech University (2013-2017) in addition to summer faculty positions at the Chapel Hill Chamber Music Workshop and Interlochen Summer Arts Camp. Choi received collaborative piano degrees from Florida State University (MM) and University of Minnesota (DMA).

Steven Pologe has performed throughout the United States, and in Italy, Sweden, Taiwan, South Korea, Thailand, New Zealand, and Canada. His CDs include quartets by William Grant Still and All That Jazz (both with the Oregon String Quartet), works by Jon Deak for solo cello and piano trio, and the piano trio of Lev Abeliovich. Steven is professor of Cello at the University of Oregon. He has performed frequently with the Oregon Bach Festival, Grand Teton Music Festival, Aspen Music Festival, Rome Festival Orchestra, and the Green Mountain Chamber Music Festival. In 2006, Pologe and Emeritus Professor Marjorie Woollacott (neuroscience), won a grant from the organization behind the coveted Grammy awards, the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences. The award supported his research and publications documenting the precise movements of string players. Prior to moving to Oregon, Pologe was principal cellist with the Honolulu Symphony and faculty member at the University of Hawaii. To keep up with all Steven's activities, find him here, on his website, www.stevenpologe-cello.com.

Sharon Schuman is co-founder of Chamber Music Amici and served as Artistic Director for the first six years. As a child, she studied violin with Carol Weston, a student of Leopold Auer. After a summer grant to the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, she won a full scholarship in music to Stanford University, where she performed on a resident Strad. After she graduated with a degree in English, she earned a Ph.D. in that discipline at the University of Chicago. She has performed in a master class for Vladimir Spivakov and as concerto soloist with Oregon Mozart Players and the Salem Chamber Orchestra. She has also performed with the Oregon Bach Festival and Eugene Symphony, and she has served as concertmaster for Eugene Opera, Eugene Ballet, Eugene Concert Choir, and Oregon Mozart Players. She is now Assistant Concertmaster of the Eugene Opera Orchestra. After publishing Freedom and Dialogue in a Polarized World (2014), she edited A Voice for Justice: Writings of David Schuman (2021). Sharon is the 2021 recipient of the Eugene Arts and Letters Award.

Guest: Sunmi Chang

As the laureate of both the 2007 International Markneukirchen and Sion-Valais International Violin Competitions, Sunmi Chang has performed widely to much acclaim throughout North America and Europe as a soloist and chamber musician. In 2008, she was the soloist on Yale Philharmonia's tour to Seoul, Beijing, and Shanghai, performing the Beethoven Concerto.

She studied at the Yehudi Menuhin School in England and at the Hanns Eisler Musikhochschule in Berlin with Prof. Eberhard Feltz. While a student, she performed regularly in prestigious venues such as Wigmore Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, and Royal Albert Hall. In 1998 & 1999, she toured with the YMS orchestra playing Bach's Double Concerto for 2 violins conducted by Lord Menuhin in UNESCO Headquarters and Guildford Cathedral. She has worked and collaborated with renowned artists such as Lord Menuhin, Zakhar Bron, Kim Kashkashian, Donald Weilerstein, Rainer Kussmaul, Midori, and others in various festivals and masterclasses. An active chamber musician, Ms. Chang won first prize at the Plowman Chamber Music Competition. She was invited to take part in various chamber music festivals such as the Rising Stars Series at Caramoor, Music@Menlo, and Chamber Music Northwest. She completed her studies with Peter Oundjian and Ani Kavafian in 2009, earning the Artist Diploma and the Master of Music degree at Yale University, where she won the School's concerto competition in 2006. She performed as a tenured violinist with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra from 2009 to 2015. Currently, she works as the Artistic Director of Summit Chamber Music Series and will join the University of Oregon School of Music & Dance as an Assistant Professor of Violin starting this fall.

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Next:

15th Birthday Celebration Dinner and Fundraiser • 5:30 PM, Saturday, September 30
Jaqua Concert Hall, The Shedd Institute for the Arts • Single Ticket: $75; Table for 8: $500

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