



Stefan Jackiw VIOLIN



Yoonah Kim CLARINET



Arnold Choi CELLO



Henry Kramer PIANO

Saturday | January 18 | 7:30 PM

Romantic Gems

**THE Valley
Concert
Society**

**WORLD
CLASS
MUSIC**

**OUR 42ND
SEASON**
2024-2025

Program Guide

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No unauthorized photography or electronic recordings are allowed during today's performance.*

Romantic Gems

Clarinet Trio in A minor, Op. 114

Johannes Brahms

1833-1897

I. Allegro

II. Adagio

III. Andantino grazioso

IV. Allegro

Quartet for Piano, Violin, Clarinet, and Cello, Op. 1

Walter Rabl

1873-1940

I. Allegro moderato

II. Adagio molto—Un poco più lento—Allegro vivace—Adagio molto e cantabile—Andante ma non troppo—Lento grandioso

III. Andantino un poco mosso

IV. Allegro con brio

INTERMISSION

Piano Trio, Op. 15

Bedrich Smetana

1824-1884

I. Moderato assai—più animato

II. Allegro, ma non agitato

III. Finale. Presto

Artist Profile

Stefan Jackiw

Stefan Jackiw is one of America's foremost violinists, captivating audiences with playing that combines poetry and purity with impeccable technique. Hailed for his "uncommon musical substance" and praised as "striking for its intelligence and sensitivity" (*Boston Globe*), Jackiw has appeared as soloist with major orchestras, including the Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, New York, Philadelphia, and San Francisco symphony orchestras.

A passionate chamber musician, Jackiw tours frequently with pianist Conrad Tao and cellist Jay Campbell as part of the acclaimed Junction Trio. His collaborations extend to pianist Jeremy Denk, with whom he has toured the complete Ives Violin Sonatas, soon to be released on Nonesuch Records. Additionally, he recently recorded Beethoven's *Triple Concerto* with Inon Barnatan, Alisa Weilerstein, Alan Gilbert, and the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields.

Jackiw has performed in prestigious festivals and venues worldwide, including the Aspen Music Festival, Ravinia Festival, Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival, New York's Mostly Mozart Festival, the Philharmonie de Paris, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, and the Celebrity Series of Boston.

Born to physicist parents of Korean and Ukrainian descent, Jackiw began playing the violin at age four. His teachers include Zinaida Gilels, Michèle Auclair, and Donald Weilerstein. He holds a Bachelor of Arts from Harvard University, an Artist Diploma from the New England Conservatory, and is a recipient of the prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant. Jackiw plays a 1704 violin by Vincenzo Ruggieri and resides in New York City.



by Kevin Park

Artistic Director at Vancouver Chamber Music Society



Artist Profile

Yoonah Kim

Praised by *The New York Times* for her “inexhaustible virtuosity,” clarinetist Yoonah Kim is recognized for her exceptional musical depth and versatility. She enjoys a dynamic career as a soloist, chamber musician, orchestral performer, and educator.

Yoonah launched her career with a historic win at the 2016 Concert Artists Guild International Competition, becoming the first solo clarinetist to win in nearly 30 years. She has also won top prizes at the Vandoren Emerging Artist Competition, George Gershwin International Competition, and Vienna International Competition.

In addition to performing standard clarinet repertoire, Yoonah is a dedicated advocate for contemporary music, commissioning and premiering works such as Eric Nathan’s *Double Concerto for Violin and Clarinet* (with her husband, violinist Stefan Jackiw), Texu Kim’s reimagining of Gershwin’s *Rhapsody in Blue*, and Andrew Hsu’s *Erebus*.

Yoonah is a sought-after orchestral musician, appearing regularly as guest principal clarinet with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Albany Symphony, and Princeton Symphony. She has also performed with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and the Binghamton Philharmonic.

Born in Seoul, Korea, and raised in Langley, British Columbia, Yoonah is currently pursuing her doctoral degree as the C.V. Starr Doctoral Fellow at The Juilliard School. She also holds a Master of Music from Juilliard and a Bachelor of Music from Mannes College, where she studied with Charles Neidich. She now calls New York City home.



by Kevin Park

Artistic Director at Vancouver Chamber Music Society



Artist Profile

Arnold Choi

Described by *The New York Times* as having a “rich tone and muscular style,” Canadian cellist Arnold Choi has earned acclaim for performances across North America, Europe, and Asia. A prizewinner of Korea’s Gyeongnam (Isang Yun) International Cello Competition and Mexico’s Carlos Prieto International Cello Competition, he has also claimed top honors in numerous North American competitions, including the Montreal Symphony Orchestra Competition and the Canadian National Music Festival.

Choi has appeared as soloist with renowned orchestras, such as the Montreal Symphony Orchestra, Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, Quebec Symphony Orchestra, and Shanghai Opera House Orchestra. At 14, he gave his first recital tour in Mexico and has since performed extensively as both a soloist and chamber musician.

As a former member of the Janaki String Trio, Choi won the Grand Prize at the Coleman Chamber Music Competition and the Concert Artists Guild International Competition. The trio toured extensively, performing at major venues like Carnegie Hall’s Weill Recital Hall and the Kennedy Center, and collaborated with Australian pianist Kathy Selby during their Australian tour.

Choi’s discography includes recordings with the Janaki Trio and six volumes of cello repertoire for the Royal Conservatory of Music. These recordings serve as pedagogical tools for students across North America.

Arnold began studying cello with John Kadz in Calgary before earning degrees from the Colburn Conservatory, Yale School of Music, and Stony Brook University, where he studied with esteemed teachers Ronald Leonard, Aldo Parisot, and Colin Carr. He is the principal cellist of the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra and performs on a cello from the French School of Caussin, circa 1880.



by Kevin Park

Artistic Director at Vancouver Chamber Music Society



Artist Profile

Henry Kramer

Praised by *The Cleveland Classical Review* for his “astonishingly confident technique” and by *The New York Times* for his “thrilling [and] triumphant” performances, pianist Henry Kramer is celebrated for his rare sensitivity and imaginative programming. His artistry earned him international recognition with a Second Prize win at the 2016 Queen Elisabeth Competition and a 2019 Avery Fisher Career Grant—one of the most coveted honors for young American soloists.



Kramer has won numerous awards, including top prizes at the National Chopin Competition, Montreal International Competition, and Honens International Piano Competition. He was also selected as an Astral Artist in 2014, joining an elite roster of rising stars in classical music.

Teaching is one of Kramer’s greatest passions. In 2022, he joined the faculty of Université de Montréal. Previously, he held positions at the Schwob School of Music, Smith College, and the University of Missouri Kansas City Conservatory.

A Juilliard graduate, Kramer studied with Julian Martin and Robert McDonald and earned his Doctorate of Musical Arts from Yale under Boris Berman. His lineage traces back to the pedagogical traditions of Beethoven, Chopin, and Busoni. Kramer is a Steinway Artist.

by Kevin Park

Artistic Director at Vancouver Chamber Music Society



Program Notes

by Kevin Park

Artistic Director at Vancouver Chamber Music Society

Clarinet Trio in A minor, Op. 114 – Johannes Brahms

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897) composed his Clarinet Trio in A minor, Op. 114, in 1891, during the twilight of his career. It was written for clarinet, cello, and piano—a combination he explored as part of a late creative surge inspired by clarinetist Richard Mühlfeld. Brahms was so captivated by Mühlfeld’s expressive artistry that he jokingly nicknamed him “Fräulein Klarinette.” At a point when Brahms had been contemplating retirement, Mühlfeld’s playing reignited his enthusiasm for composition.

This trio reflects Brahms’s mature style, where emotional depth meets compositional clarity. The work is intimate and introspective, blending the clarinet’s warm voice with the cello’s resonance and the piano’s harmonic richness. Together, the instruments create a balanced, intertwined dialogue that has captivated listeners for generations.

I. Allegro

The opening movement begins with a wistful melody introduced by the cello, soon joined by the clarinet and piano. Brahms takes this lyrical material on a journey of intricate development, seamlessly weaving moments of tenderness and introspection. The interplay among the instruments is a hallmark of his chamber music, offering both contrast and unity.

II. Adagio

The second movement offers a hauntingly beautiful melody led by the clarinet, accompanied by gentle lines in the cello and piano. Its simplicity is deceptive; the emotional impact of this section stems from Brahms’s ability to craft music of deep resonance through subtle harmonic shifts and delicate textures.

III. Andantino grazioso

This movement serves as a lighthearted interlude, with a charming and dance-like quality. The instruments exchange playful themes in a graceful conversation, with the piano adding a lively sparkle to the overall texture. It’s a moment of elegance and relief amid the trio’s introspective character.



IV. Allegro

The finale brings a sense of urgency, with its driving rhythms and complex counterpoint. Brahms combines energy and precision to create a stirring conclusion that highlights the trio's dramatic and emotional arc.

About the Composer

Johannes Brahms was one of the leading figures of the Romantic period, revered for his ability to combine classical traditions with his own deeply personal voice. His chamber music, symphonies, and piano works reflect a profound understanding of form and emotion. The Clarinet Trio in A minor is a testament to his late-career brilliance, revealing music of both intimacy and sophistication that continues to resonate with audiences worldwide.

Quartet for Piano, Violin, Clarinet, and Cello, Op. 1 – Walter Rabl

Walter Rabl (1873–1940), an Austrian composer and conductor, wrote his Quartet for Piano, Violin, Clarinet, and Cello, Op. 1, in 1896. This remarkable debut earned first prize in a prestigious competition held by the Viennese Musicians' Society (Wiener Tonkünstlerverein), a distinction made even more notable by Johannes Brahms's endorsement of its publication.

Rabl's choice of instrumentation is relatively uncommon, but his understanding of each instrument's expressive possibilities shines throughout the work. The quartet blends lyricism and structural clarity, reflecting the influence of both Brahms and Richard Strauss. Its lush harmonies, dramatic contrasts, and vivid interplay between instruments create a soundscape that feels at once intimate and expansive.

I. Allegro moderato

The opening movement unfolds with sweeping themes and intricate development, establishing a rich emotional landscape. The dialogue between instruments is dynamic and fluid, balancing moments of lyrical calm with bursts of intensity.



II. Adagio

The Adagio presents a tender and introspective contrast, featuring long, flowing lines in the clarinet and cello. The violin and piano add depth through subtle counterpoint and delicate harmonies, creating a deeply moving centerpiece.

III. Scherzo: Presto – Trio

A playful and rhythmically vibrant scherzo follows, full of syncopated energy and quick exchanges between the instruments. The contrasting trio section introduces a gentler, more lyrical theme before returning to the scherzo's buoyant character.

IV. Allegro con brio

The final movement bursts with energy and bold thematic ideas, showcasing Rabl's ability to balance exuberance with structural precision. Its lively momentum and dramatic conclusion leave a lasting impression.

About the Composer

Though not widely known today, Walter Rabl was a respected figure in late 19th- and early 20th-century music. Born in Vienna, he went on to focus primarily on conducting and teaching. His Op. 1 quartet remains his most celebrated composition, offering a glimpse into the creative potential of a composer whose contributions, though limited, are worthy of admiration.

Piano Trio in G minor, Op. 15 – Bedřich Smetana

Bedřich Smetana (1824–1884), often regarded as the father of Czech music, composed his Piano Trio in G minor, Op. 15, in 1855 as a deeply personal response to tragedy. The work was written in memory of his eldest daughter, Bedřiška, whose life was cut short at the age of four. Her musical talent had been a source of joy and pride for Smetana, and her passing left a profound mark on him, inspiring one of his most heartfelt compositions.

The trio blends Romantic intensity with early hints of the Czech nationalism that would later define Smetana's music. Its dramatic themes and poignant interplay among the piano, violin, and cello make it a cornerstone of the Romantic trio repertoire.

I. Moderato assai – Allegro, ma non agitato

The opening movement begins with a plaintive violin melody that sets a somber tone, soon giving way to a more impassioned Allegro. Themes of grief and resilience intertwine, as the instruments engage in an emotionally charged dialogue full of contrasts and intricate textures.

II. *Allegro, ma non agitato*

The second movement offers a lively yet bittersweet scherzo. Its rhythmic drive and playful energy evoke fleeting memories of happier times, while the contrasting lyrical trio section adds a reflective, tender note. The movement's lightness is shadowed by an undercurrent of melancholy.

III. *Finale: Presto*

The finale begins with a burst of urgency, combining folk-like themes with bold dynamic contrasts. Smetana weaves together moments of sorrow and triumph, crafting a movement that feels both cathartic and uplifting. The trio concludes with a sense of resolution, drawing emotional threads from the earlier movements into a powerful ending.

About the Composer

Bedřich Smetana played a pivotal role in shaping a distinct Czech musical identity. Best known for his symphonic cycle *Má vlast* (My Homeland) and the opera *The Bartered Bride*, Smetana's works celebrate his homeland's culture and history. The Piano Trio in G minor reveals a deeply personal side of the composer, transforming his grief into a universal expression of love and loss.



About the Valley Concert Society

Beginnings

The Vancouver Symphony Orchestra was key to creating the society. They had been performing outreach concerts in Clearbrook with the help of some Abbotsford residents taking care of local arrangements. The symphony suggested that this group form a local society that would present programs offered by the symphony for a fixed fee.

On July 12, 1983, a group gathered in the home of Paul Moritz and elected an organizing committee with Paul as its president. On August 31, 1983, the BC Government issued the Certificate of Incorporation that made The Valley Concert Society a reality.

An intense campaign of mailing and phoning as well as advertising and fund-raising followed, all of it intent on procuring an audience and sufficient funding for their opening season. They achieved their goals with little time to spare, and the season opened with a chamber group from the VSO playing the program you will hear today. The rest of the first season consisted of two performances by the full symphony and a concert featuring the VSO's concertmaster Gerald Jarvis on violin and pianist Linda Lee Thomas.

A similar season was planned for the next year, but the society was not able to sell sufficient subscriptions, and the season was cancelled. They did receive a grant for \$500 and were able to present one concert featuring the Vancouver Cantata Singers.

A period of grappling with various organizational and promotional ideas resulted in a new beginning with a new format. Instead of relying exclusively on the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, the society presented a variety of small-group performers. The Purcell String Quartet opened the season on November 1; they were followed by programs featuring the Vancouver Chamber Choir, pianist Robert Silverman, and the quintet A Touch of Brass. The VSO did perform once to close the season.

Forty Years of Outstanding Music

The Valley Concert Society has brought over 200 remarkable musical experiences to the residents of Abbotsford. The most frequent performer has been the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, which performed sixteen times in the first nineteen seasons. The Victoria Symphony and the North Shore Sinfonia also played three times each. Smaller



chamber orchestras made frequent appearances including such outstanding groups as I Musici de Montreal, Tafelmusik, and the Pacific Baroque Orchestra.

Choral groups were often booked. They came from near—the Vancouver Chamber Choir, the Vancouver Cantata Singers, and Chor Leone—and from far—the Soweto Choir of South Africa, the Cuban National Choir, and the Little Eagles of Siberia. Smaller vocal ensembles included Chanticleer, QuintEssence, and Gesualdo Six. Some of Canada's greatest singers made solo appearances: Maureen Forrester, Isabel Bayrakdarian, and Ben Heppner.

Solo piano recitals included such transcendent talents as Robert Silverman, Janina Fialkowska, Charles Richard-Hamelin, and David Jalbert.

Classic chamber music repertoire held an important place in the society's history. The Shostakovich, Minguet, and St. Lawrence String Quartets all made memorable visits to Abbotsford. The Gryphon Trio played in Abbotsford three times, and the recent performance by Ehnes, Tsang, and Armstrong was unforgettable.

Other diverse strings made an appearance. Guitars came in solo, trio, and quartet combinations. Rita Constanzi performed on a solo harp while harp ensembles brought several varied programs, as did the Langley Ukulele Ensemble.

There were some definite favourites among the many brass groups that performed. A Touch of Brass, Foothills Brass, and Cosmos Brass played here a combined fourteen times. Less common were woodwind ensembles such as the Prairie Winds from Chicago and the Winds of the Southern Cross from Brisbane, Australia.

The diversity of performing groups was endless. The Sidestreet Strutters were a Dixieland combo, Acclarion came with a clarinet and accordion, Sal Ferreras performed twice with a percussion ensemble, Trio Voronezh brought Russian music, there was a concert featuring only a bassoon and a guitar. Chris Jarrett performed a piano accompaniment to the silent film classic *Battleship Potemkin*. The actor Colin Fox narrated a program based on letters between Robert and Clara Schumann along with music by a soprano and piano.



People to Remember

George Zukerman was never a part of The Valley Concert Society, but he looms as an enormous figure throughout the history of the organization. He was a critical contributor during the restructuring of the society in its third year by providing performers who were touring in the area. He himself performed in Abbotsford more than once on his bassoon as part of varied groups. He came to the rescue on one occasion when the Kiev Symphony Orchestra did not come as scheduled, and he filled in with a program entitled *The Great Mozart Hunt*. He also narrated programs, including his last one in April of 2022 less than a year before his death at age 95.

Paul Moritz was the founding president of The Valley Concert Society and provided effective leadership for that intrepid group that had the vision to bring this kind of music to our city. He served intermittently in that position until 1997. The society recognized his important contribution by naming a bursary in his honour.

Lorna Keith was the longest serving president in the society's history. She assumed that position after Paul Moritz stepped down until her retirement in 2014. She guided the organization through the transition from the Abby Arts Centre to the Matsqui Centennial Auditorium as performing venues. The society named the endowment fund that it holds at the Abbotsford Community Foundation in her honour, a fitting tribute as she played a key role in establishing that fund.

Liz Carter was the last remaining charter member of the board when she passed away during the season in 2015. While not very visible publicly, she was enormously valuable behind the scenes. She chaired the committee that programmed each season. She was the Volunteer Coordinator. She was the House Manager. Liz had her hands on most of the organization's key functions. It was a considerable challenge to replace her many roles on short notice. The society honoured her memory by giving her name to its pre-concert talk.



VCS Contributes to the Community

The Valley Concert Society has two key elements in its mission statement. Providing concerts and other musical performances is the obvious one. The second is to support the musical education of young people in the community. The organization addresses this goal in several ways.

■ *Bursaries*

The Valley Concert Society has created two bursaries to be given annually to deserving music students in the community. They are named in honour of two founding board members, Paul Moritz and Marjorie Nixon. The value of the awards has increased over the years and currently stands at \$500. The society also provides a scholarship for the Abbotsford Music Festival named in honour of former board member Rudy Baerg at a value of \$200.

■ *Master Classes*

Since 2016, The Valley Concert Society has been holding master classes which give talented young music students the opportunity to work on a prepared piece of music with some of the artists that we bring to our stage. Piano students have had the privilege of working with such luminaries as Jane Coop and Charles Richard-Hamelin. In alternate years, string students have worked with the likes of Bryan Cheng, Nancy Dahn, and are working with violist Molly Carr this year.

■ *Performances*

The society has provided several opportunities for local music students to perform publicly. At its 25th and 35th anniversaries, it presented a concert of former bursary winners. This gave the audience the opportunity to experience the talent of these remarkable young people. The society has also programmed two past bursary winners in its regular season, recognizing their growth as musicians.

■ *Community Outreach*

In the season just past, The Valley Concert Society has initiated a new venture aimed at allowing various members of the community to enjoy the wonderful artistry of our performers. Axiom Brass played for seniors in a high-rise complex, and for children participating in a Day Camp at The Reach. This year the society is presenting an outreach concert to the community served by the Salvation Army. These concerts come at no cost to the audience.



OUR 42ND
SEASON
2024-2025



Subscription can be purchased for all 6 concerts at \$140 for adults, \$130 seniors and \$60 for students. The Tickets for individual concerts will be available online at \$32 for adults/seniors and \$20 for students.

Season Calendar

musica intima

Friday, September 20, 2024



Vancouver's brilliant choral ensemble **musica intima** will open our season with a flourish. These twelve professional singers, known for their creative and dynamic programs, perform a wide range of musical styles from standard classical repertoire to contemporary works.

Butter Quartet

Friday, November 8, 2024



Based in the Netherlands, this outstanding young string quartet will bring a program featuring the music of Haydn and Mendelssohn. They have made a name for themselves with their research and their performances on historically-setup instruments.

Romantic Gems

Saturday, January 18, 2025



The wonderful violinist Stefan Jackiw has assembled American colleagues Yoonah Kim, clarinet, and Henry Kramer, piano, along with Calgary's Arnold Choi, cello, to perform the music of Brahms and Smetana along with a recently uncovered gem from Walter Rabl.

Jarred Dunn

Friday, February 21, 2025

Yamaha Artist Jarred Dunn, pianist, has an international reputation as a recitalist, educator, and scholar.



Having studied in Poland with the daughter of composer Henryk Gorecki, Dunn's concert will highlight the music of Chopin.

Johan Dalene

Friday, March 21, 2025



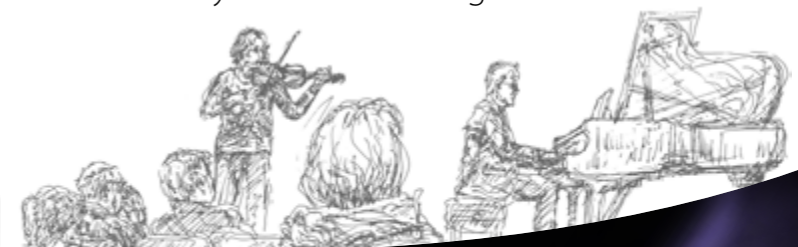
A rising star in Europe, Norwegian violinist Johan Dalene was named Gramophone Young Artist of the Year in 2022. His diverse and captivating program will include works by Schumann, Ravel, and his countryman Edvard Grieg.

Quartetto Gelato

Friday, April 11, 2025



Combining classical virtuosity with comedy, this ensemble plays on everything from violin and cello to oboe, accordion, and musical saw. Classical and pop tunes, romantic and gypsy music make for a lively and entertaining evening.



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Invitations to special events.

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