

Ottawa Chamber Orchestra

MEDIA RELEASE
For Immediate Release

January 17, 2013

The Ottawa Chamber Orchestra's second concert of the 2012-13 season will take place on Saturday January 26th at 8:00 pm, at Dominion Chalmers United Church hosted by CBC's Laurence Wall. This concert is a celebration of the OCO's 20th Anniversary, and features a number of special elements.

The concert will welcome back Donnie Deacon for his second appearance this season as a guest conductor with the orchestra. He brings a wealth of experience as an orchestral musician and his brilliant musical intuition to this program of works by Dvorak, Grandjany, Büsser, Ager and Brahms.

The orchestra is joined by the tenor and bass voices of Harmonia and Tone Cluster choirs for a performance of the Brahms Alto Rhapsody with Ottawa's celebrated contralto Julie Nesrallah. Julie Nesrallah is an extremely versatile singer and actress, at ease in all styles, who has achievements and standards of musical excellence established across the continent and abroad. She dazzles audiences with her rich tone, engaging personality and deeply expressive communicative skills. We are thrilled that she is able to join us for a performance of this deeply moving and introspective work.

As well, Juno-nominated harpist Caroline Léonardelli returns as soloist for performances of music by Henri Büsser and Marcel Grandjany. Both of these works by French composers are heard in arrangements receiving their Canadian premiere performances.

Also receiving its world premiere performance is a piece, commissioned by the Ottawa Chamber Orchestra, by Ottawa composer Andrew Ager. The orchestra is pleased to continue its commitment to presenting music by Ottawa composers, which it has been doing since its 2009 season. The orchestra is grateful for the support provided to this program by the Trillium Foundation. Ager has composed a suite from "The Wings of the Dove", an original opera by Ager which will be premiered this spring in Toronto. This suite features eight movements depicting a variety of scenes from the opera.

The concert concludes with a performance of the Czech Suite by Antonin Dvorak. This work, based on Czech folk idioms, was written shortly after Dvorak came to the attention of Johannes Brahms. Brahms enthusiastically recommended him to his publisher, who was anxious to present more music in the style of Brahms's Hungarian Dances. Who better to carry on than Dvorak, whose Slavonic Dances and Moravian Duets fully satisfied the bill? The Czech Suite's set of five movements will have the audience leaving the hall with its themes dancing in their ears.

The concert takes place at Dominion Chalmers United Church on Saturday, January 26th, starting at 8:00 pm. Tickets can be purchased in advance at The Leading Note (370 Elgin Street – (613) 569-7888). You can also reserve advance tickets for pick-up at the door by contacting the OCO [ticket Manager](mailto:tickets@ottawachamberorchestra.com) (tickets@ottawachamberorchestra.com).

Ticket prices are:

\$25 adults

\$20 seniors

\$10 students

\$60 families (parents or grandparents and children under 18 qualify)

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OTTAWA CHAMBER ORCHESTRA – 1993-2013

Community based orchestras, those in which the players perform not for pay but purely for the pleasure and love of making music, are amazing and potentially quixotic organizations. They grow from dreams and desires. With determination and dedication they come into existence and serve to enhance the lives of musicians and listeners alike.

OCO has been fulfilling this role for 20 years. The origins of the orchestra stem from the efforts of a core group of musicians who sought an opportunity to participate in a group which would allow them to develop their musical skills both as individuals and as an ensemble. Clarinetist John Kittle deserves a great deal of credit for, in the early 1990's, he approached Calvin Sieb with this idea to form an amateur orchestra.

Sieb, who took joy in imparting his love of and knowledge of music, was keen to take on the role of conductor. Prior to becoming a professor, Sieb had been concertmaster with the Montreal Symphony and the Toulouse National Symphony in France. Sieb was enthralled with the idea of leading and teaching an ensemble made up of dedicated adult players. His positive approach and his many years of experience provided an ideal springboard to get the group off the ground.

Sieb was patient and thorough. Celia McInnis recalls him working with the group on Mozart's Symphony #40 for an entire year. The original group of players includes current members Celia McInnis, Doug Murphy, Gabriella Csoti, Marie Kusters, Janos Szanto and Peggy Florida. Sieb stayed with the group until it managed to solidify and add players, then handed it off to other conductors.

Over the years, Jacques Destrempe, Alfred Ho, Douglas Sturdevant, Kimball Sykes, Gerald Corey, Thomas Annand and Gordon Johnston have taken turns conducting the group. In 2001, David Thies-Thompson signed on as the orchestra's Principal Conductor and Music Director. Under his direction the group has continued to develop musically and to fulfill the dreams of Kittle and his fellow musicians.

ARTIST BIOS



Born in Glasgow, Scotland, Donnie Deacon studied at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music. He continued his studies at the Yehudi Menuhin School in London under the tutelage of Natasha Boyarskaya and Lord Menuhin. He finished his schooling at the prestigious Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia with Jaime Laredo and Ida Kavafian.

Mr. Deacon has performed all over the world with such distinguished orchestras as the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Ulster Orchestra, BT Scottish Ensemble, London Soloists, Concerto Soloists of Philadelphia, Pablo de Sarasate Orchestra, and the Orchestra of the Curtis Institute of Music. He has been principal second violin with the National Arts Centre Orchestra since 2001, the youngest player to do so in the history of the Orchestra. He has performed as guest Concertmaster of both the Vancouver Symphony and The National Arts Centre Orchestra.

As an advocate for Canadian music, he has given the world premiere of Gary Kulesha's 2nd violin concerto and William Rowson's violin concerto.

Mr Deacon is currently co-artistic director of Festival Pontiac Enchanté in Quebec.



Mezzo-soprano Julie Nesrallah is an extremely versatile singer and actress who dazzles audiences with her rich tone, engaging personality and deeply expressive communicative skills. She is regularly engaged by leading opera companies, symphonies, festivals and chamber music ensembles across North America and abroad.

On July 1, 2011 Miss Nesrallah sang “God Save the Queen” for His Royal Highness Prince William and Her Royal Highness Princess Catherine during Canada Day festivities in Ottawa on Parliament Hill. Miss Nesrallah performed for “An Evening for Peace” in Montreal for Her Majesty Queen Noor of Jordan. She also sang for Her Royal Highness Princess Haya in Amman, Jordan, to launch an endowment fund for underprivileged girls to study music in Canada.

Miss Nesrallah has been the recipient of many distinguished awards & prizes, including the Canada Council for the Arts Emerging Artist Award & Mid Career Grant. She has made several recordings and is frequently featured on CBC Radio and National Public Radio in the United States. Miss Nesrallah is also the host of “Tempo” CBC Radio 2's flagship national classical music program, and the host of “Solo” for CBC Television.

Miss Nesrallah delighted her avid fans with her participation at the Ottawa Jazz Festival in June 2012, and has just returned from an engagement with the Bogota Philharmonic Orchestra, performing a concert version of Georges Bizet's opera, Carmen.



Caroline Léonardelli is an accomplished concert harpist, chamber musician, orchestra musician and teacher. She is known for her passionate and bold interpretations of French and Canadian repertoire. Caroline's first solo recording *El Dorado* received a 2010 JUNO nomination in the category of Classical Album of the Year Solo or Small Ensemble. In 2012 Caroline received the Canada Council for the Arts Mid Career Award to develop a new program with Kathleen Bride at the Eastman School of Music.

Caroline was born in France. During her youth, she studied in France with Lily Laskine, one of the most celebrated harpists of the 20th century, and graduated with first prize in harp from the Paris Conservatoire at the age of 18. After immigrating to Canada, Caroline completed an Artist Diploma at the Schulich School at McGill University with Judy Loman.

Caroline's recent orchestral performances include Marjan Mozetich's *The Passion of Angels* double harp concerto with the Orchestre symphonique de Gatineau, and both the Rodrigo *Concierto serenata* for harp and Michael Conway Baker's *Concerto for Harp & Orchestra* with the Ottawa Chamber Orchestra. This season's festival appearances include *Music and Beyond*, Ottawa International Chamber Festival, Elora Festival, Kincardine Summer Festival, World Harp Congress, American Harp Society in New York, and a France tour in November 2012.

Caroline's recording projects have all have received critical acclaim, with *El Dorado* receiving a JUNO Award nomination. Her latest, titled *Légendes* for harp and organ, was reviewed in *La Scena Musicale*: "A delicate soloist is revealed on the 2nd movement of Glière's *Harp Concerto*....Caroline Léonardelli is a high-calibre harpist and Matthew Larkin's performance is laudable yet subtle".

Caroline's recording releases include *Panache* with tonight's other soloist Julie Nesrallah, *Impressionisme* by the Para Arpa Duo, *A Christmas Story* with the Ottawa Bach Choir, and *El Dorado* featuring the Penderecki String Quartet and title composition with bassist Joel Quarrington.

Caroline is principal harpist with the Ottawa Symphony Orchestra and the Orchestre symphonique de Gatineau.

Harmonia Choir of Ottawa



This 50-voice choir was formed in 2003 by Artistic Director Kurt Ala-Kantti. It quickly established a reputation in Ottawa with its wide variety of repertoire and a focus on promoting local and Canadian composers and compositions. Their busy schedule includes performances with various other musicians including Rajaton, Scott Leithead, Divertimento Orchestra, Ottawa Chamber Orchestra, Garth Hampson, and the Maple Leaf Brass. Harmonia Choir performs at Ottawa's version of the "Last Night of the Proms" each fall.

The Choir regularly premieres new works and arrangements in many concerts; they also commission new works. Harmonia has a Composer-in-Residence programme, and they run the Canadian Choral Composition Competition for new choral works based on Canadian texts.

The choir is one of the host choirs of the annual Canada Day festival "Unisong" and also hosts "Mosaik", a multi-generational festival celebrating the diversity of the Canadian mosaic.

Members of Harmonia's tenor and bass sections are joined by those of the Tone Cluster choir for this performance of Brahms' Alto Rhapsody.