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presents

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Pancultural!

Hadley McCarroll
piano

Sunday, March 13, 2022 at 4 PM

Old First Church

1751 Sacramento St. at Van Ness Ave.

San Francisco, CA 94109

(415) 474-1608 www.oldfirstconcerts.org

Old First Concerts' piano is a New York Steinway D model, circa 1980, with Hamburg action. It was donated by The Stanley Ibler Fund, and is maintained by David Love Piano Service and Restoration.

ABOUT OLD FIRST CONCERTS

- Great venue for music with beautiful acoustics and amazing Steinway concert grand piano.
- Primarily local emerging and mid-career professional musicians presenting innovative programs.
- Every concert offers new insights and virtuosic performances.
- Complimentary refreshments served at intermission or after the concert.
- An independent 501(c)3 non-profit organization devoted to presenting music at affordable prices, especially for low-income seniors and students.
- Solo, chamber music, and world music concerts year-round since 1970.

DONATING TO OLD FIRST CONCERTS

Ticket sales provide about 38 percent of our operating revenue each year. In addition, we rely on support from private foundations and Grants for the Arts from the city of San Francisco. Our generous individual donors complete the picture. We invite you to join us in our mission to connect audiences and local musicians and build up the classical music and world music scene in San Francisco. Donations are tax-deductible and donating on our website is easy and secure: www.oldfirstconcerts.org/give/, or checks can be mailed to: Old First Concerts, 1751 Sacramento Street, San Francisco, CA 94109. Thank you!

COVID-19 RESPONSE: RETURNING TO THE MUSIC

Old First Concerts is committed to the health and safety of our audiences, performers and staff. We look forward to having all audiences back in our space when it is safe to do so. In the meantime, we are happy to be able to continue presenting artists of the highest caliber to our audience in the Bay Area—and beyond—via livestreamed events. We are following city guidelines and safety protocols to help ensure the safest possible environment for our performers and staff.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Following us on **Facebook** is a great way to keep informed about the latest concert information. While you are there, don't forget to **share** events with your friends and hit the "Like" button liberally. [facebook.com/oldfirstconcerts/](https://www.facebook.com/oldfirstconcerts/)

You can also find us on **Instagram @oldfirstconcerts** with information about upcoming events plus photos and videos from our concerts.

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COMING UP AT OLD FIRST CONCERTS

Sunday, March 27 at 4 pm

Junior Bach Festival

An all-J. S. Bach concert showcasing some of the most talented young musicians in Northern California. Hear J. S. Bach's music played with great skill and youthful exuberance!

Friday, April 8 at 8 pm

Laure de Marcellus, *mezzo soprano*; **Alberto Urroz**, *piano*

Seldom-heard music of Pauline Viardot and her admirers — including Fauré, Gounod, Chapí, and Saint-Saëns.

Sunday, April 10 at 4 pm

Motoko Honda—*The Emergent Piano*

With stylistic influences ranging from jazz to Indonesian music and contemporary prepared & electrified piano, Honda is a musical force of nature, bringing a unique creative sound to her solo works and wide-ranging collaborations.

Friday, April 22 at 8 pm

Miles Graber, *piano*; **Mary Artmann**, *cello*; **Kate Stenberg**, *violin*

The piano trios of Maurice Ravel, Rebecca Clarke and Dmitri Shostakovich were composed within a ten-years of WWI and express emotional currents reflecting this transformative time.

For tickets & more information visit www.oldfirstconcerts.org

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PROGRAM

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Sonata No. 27 in E minor, Op. 90 (1814)

Mit Lebhaftigkeit und durchaus mit Empfindung und Ausdruck (With liveliness, and with feeling and expression throughout)

Nicht zu geschwind und sehr singbar vorgetragen
(Not too fast, and in a very singing manner)

B.P. Herrington (b. 1976)

How Come That Blood?

seven variations and a canonic rhapsody on a local ballad (2020)

West Coast Premiere

Reena Esmail (b. 1983)

Rang de Basant (2012)

INTERVAL

Leoš Janáček (1854-1928)

Po zarostlém chodníčku (On an Overgrown Path) (1900-08)

Book I (selections)

Naše večery (Our evenings)

Lístek odvanutý (A blown-away leaf)

Dobrou noc! (Good night!)

Tak neskonale úzko (Unutterable anguish)

V pláči (In tears)

Sýček neodletěl! (The little barn owl has not flown away!)

Book II

Andante

Allegretto – Presto

Più mosso

Vivo

Allegro

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Ludwig van Beethoven *Sonata No. 27 in E minor, Op. 90*

Beethoven had not written anything for the piano during the five years prior to writing this sonata in 1814. Between family problems, war, his own bad health, and writing his opera *Fidelio* (and other commissions), it had been a difficult time – to say the least. When he finally had the time to sit down and write this piano sonata, we see him with one foot in the past and one in the future. Even though this compact piece is much shorter in length and number of movements than the forthcoming five last sonatas (Opp. 101, 106, 109, 110, and 111), clocking in at the comparatively short time of around 13 minutes, it is a tour de force of concentrated effort on the part of the performer. Speaking to us with never-ending novelty, the music is both enigmatic and straightforward. Beethoven wrote that the two movements—major and minor—represent first a struggle between the head and heart, and then a conversation with the beloved. In the words of the great pianist Sir András Schiff: "... ideally, there should be no applause after the sonata, because nothing has happened." It ends quietly, as if no one noticed it was over. - HM

B.P. Herrington *How Come That Blood?*

In the folk ballad *How Come That Blood?* a mother sees one of her sons come in from the fields with blood on his shirtsleeve. He lies that the blood has come from "the old gray mare." His mother does not believe him and he lies again that it is "the blood of the old gray hound." He finally confesses that he slew his brother in the fields (archetypal fratricide) for "killing yonders bush that might have made a tree." In the opening theme, the tune is heavily marked in evocation of a hard, country tenor voice. Each phrase culminates in a cadence of resonant tones.

Variation I – *Lining it out surrounds* each tone of the ballad with ornaments of rural singing, as well as registral exaggerations of these ornaments. Throughout the variation, notes are repeated rapidly in the manner of a hammered dulcimer. **Variation II – *Holy Ghost Boogie*** is a mad, twitchy dance inspired by the Pentecostal tradition, in which worshippers possessed by the Holy Ghost dance

James Baker, Ensemble Linea, El Perro Andaluz, the London Sinfonietta, the Royal Academy Symphony Orchestra, the New York Youth Symphony, and the BBC Singers, in venues such as Rothko Chapel, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Carnegie Hall, and London's Purcell Room.

Composition awards include the Royal Philharmonic Society Composition Prize, Morton Gould Award (ASCAP), Leo Kaplan Prize (ASCAP), First Music Award (New York Youth Symphony) and two composition awards from the Royal Academy of Music. He has twice been a finalist for the American Prize in composition for orchestra and wind ensemble; his music has been selected for performance at June in Buffalo, Wellesley Composers Conference, the Cleveland Composers Recording Institute, Pharos Arts Festival in Cyprus, the Soundscape Festival in Italy, and the British Society for the Promotion of New Music.

Herrington earned a Ph.D. in music composition from the Royal Academy of Music, London, (on an Overseas Research Scholarship), where he studied with Simon Bainbridge. He has attended composition masterclasses with Brian Ferneyhough, Mario Davidovsky, Eric Chasalow, Melinda Wagner, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, Karel Husa and Donald Erb. Herrington also attended masterclasses with Helmut Lachenmann, Beat Furrer and Georges Aperghis at the Darmstadt International Summer Courses in 2006. He taught for over 10 years at Sam Houston State University, and joined the faculty of Lone Star College-CyFair in 2008.

University of Texas at Austin. She lives in Oakland with her husband and son.

Indian-American composer **Reena Esmail** works between the worlds of Indian and Western classical music, and brings communities together through the creation of equitable musical spaces. Esmail's work has been commissioned by ensembles including the Los Angeles Master Chorale, Kronos Quartet, Imani Winds, Richmond Symphony, Chicago Sinfonietta, San Francisco Girls Chorus, Juilliard415, and Yale Institute of Sacred Music. Upcoming seasons include new work for Seattle Symphony, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Santa Fe Desert Chorale, Amherst College Choir and Orchestra, Santa Fe Pro Musica.

Esmail is the Los Angeles Master Chorale's 2020-2023 Swan Family Artist in Residence, and Seattle Symphony's 2020-21 Composer-in-Residence. Previously, she was named a 2019 United States Artist Fellow in Music, and the 2019 Grand Prize Winner of the S & R Foundation's Washington Award. Esmail was also a 2017-18 Kennedy Center Citizen Artist Fellow. She was the 2012 Walter Hinrichsen Award winner from the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

Esmail holds degrees in composition from The Juilliard School and the Yale School of Music. She received a Fulbright-Nehru grant to study Hindustani music in India. Her doctoral thesis, entitled *Finding Common Ground: Uniting Practices in Hindustani and Western Art Musicians* explores the methods and challenges of the collaborative process between Hindustani musicians and Western composers. Esmail is currently an Artistic Director of Shastra, a non-profit organization that promotes cross-cultural music connecting music traditions of India and the West.

Composer **B.P. Herrington** - "... an intriguing blend of common-man expression and formal acuity..." (*The New York Sun*) - was born and raised in the Big Thicket of Texas, and his music is firmly rooted in the folk ballads and rural music of this unique region. His works have been performed by soprano Tony Arnold, conductor

in the aisles and jump over pews (I come by this honestly). The theme is quite refracted here. **Variation III – *Ballad*** gently expands and contracts the motives of the tune in a rich, multi-voiced texture, and emphasizes the blue note ambiguities of folk music. **Variation IV – *Testify! (accompanying a sermon)*** evokes the Hammond organ punctuating a fire-and-brimstone sermon and the congregation loudly interjecting "Amen!" throughout. **Variation V – *Elemental*** returns to the heavily marked tune of the opening theme, emphasizing both the resonance of keys struck percussively, as well as the resonance of wide registers using the pedal. **Variation VI – *Shimmering Creek*** breaks the motives apart in little rippling patterns and larger waves. **Variation VII – *The flying arrow is at rest ...*** (named after Zenó's paradox) obsesses over the shuffling patterns of fiddle music, and yet this repetition creates a sense of stasis. The variations culminate in a **Canonic Rhapsody** which takes quite literally the Greek sense of the artist (*rhapsoidos*), who is "a stitcher of tunes." In the final passage, the plain tune is marked out in the piano's lowest register, with important motives in the middle register and florid ornamentation in the highest register. – BPH

Reena Esmail *Rang de Basant*

One of the most fascinating *raags* I have yet encountered in my study of Hindustani music is *Raag Basant*. *Basant* means 'spring' in Hindi, but it couldn't be further from the Western conception of the season. Against a canvas of chirping birds and pastel colors, *Basant* feels dark and exotic, rendered in bold colors, and winding through passages of sinewy chromaticism. The piece starts with large dense chords that change one note at a time, until they find their way slowly into *Basant*. This is followed by an excerpt from a short Hindustani composition (called a *bandish*) in *Basant*, stylized and notated to accommodate the sonic possibilities of the piano. This *bandish* builds and eventually vanishes back into the dense chords, only to have a little bit of *Basant* bleed through at the end.

The title of the piece comes from an iconic Hindi film, "*Rang De Basanti*" (which literally translates to "Give it the color of

Saffron"). Instead of giving this piece the color of saffron, I wanted to "color" it with the aesthetic of Raag Basant. –RE

Leoš Janáček *On an Overgrown Path*

The first five pieces of *On an Overgrown Path* were composed around 1900 for the harmonium (a small, foot-pumped reed organ that was a very fashionable instrument at the turn of the 20th century.) Janáček called these early pieces "Our Nights," intending the book to be a musical memory of his time spent as a child in his native Hukvaldy. Book I was completed as ten piano pieces in 1908, and Janáček then gave them their programmatic titles. The second book was written nearly five years after his beloved daughter Olga's death at age twenty-one from typhoid fever, and the completion of his opera *Jenůfa*, which he played in its entirety for Olga the night she died. As with Beethoven, there was quite a gap in time before he returned to this cycle and completed it. Of the five pieces in Book II, only the first was published in Janáček's lifetime, and the complete cycle was not published until 1942. The overall title, *On an Overgrown Path*, references a Moravian wedding song in which the bride, who feels she has perhaps made a poor choice, laments that "the path to my mother's has become overgrown with clover."

Janáček wrote that the pieces "... contain distant reminiscences ... so dear to me that I do not think they will ever vanish." Some memories are more pleasant than others. The last three pieces of Book 1 certainly refer to Olga's death. He wrote of *Unutterable anguish*: "... a foreboding of certain death. An angelic being lay in deathly anguish through hot summer nights." In the final piece of Book I, *The barn owl has not flown away*, the screech-owl's cry is ominously woven through the music. (In Czech folklore *Sýček*, the screech-owl, is a bird of ill-omen and death. Strangely, the published English-language translation depicts a barn-owl.) The owl's relentless cry alternates with a chordal motif that Janáček calls "an intimate song of life." The owl—fate—has the last word. As Janáček wrote: "All in all, there is suffering beyond words contained here."

Book II's five pieces seem to step away from the programmatic feel that infuses Book I, paying homage to the shorter pieces of Schumann, while presaging Debussy's preludes, written around the same time. Curiously, Janáček doesn't seem to have a pressing need to write the titles in Czech here, opting instead for traditional tempo markings in Italian. -David Matthews (Faber) & HM

ABOUT THE MUSICIANS

Pianist **Hadley McCarroll**, hailed for her "... lively and exhilarating ... pianism" (*San Francisco Classical Voice*) is a well-known collaborative/solo pianist based in the San Francisco Bay Area. She has performed in the United States, and internationally with, among others: Alonzo King's LINES Ballet in Paris and New York, the Festival del Sole in Napa Valley, and Kronos Quartet violist Hank Dutt in San Francisco. For more than fifteen years she has been the pianist in the acclaimed cello/piano duo *martha & monica*, organizing several multi-day festivals of cello/piano music, including many premieres. Hadley has worked on the staff of the Royal Danish Opera, San Francisco Opera, San Diego Opera, and West Edge Opera. A long-time proponent of contemporary music, she appears frequently at the Center for New Music, with Composer's Inc., Left Coast Ensemble, and Sonic Harvest. As pianist for the sfSoundGroup she has performed works by Berio, Ligeti, local composers Matt Ingalls, Gino Robair and Eric Ulman, and modern Italian masters with Ravinia Festival conductor John Kennedy. Hadley enjoys working with living composers, including John Harbison, Robert Greenberg, and Thomas Adès, and often premieres new works. Equally at home as a soloist, Hadley has given wide-ranging performances, including Carnival of the Animals (Santa Rosa Symphony), Cage's *Sonatas and Interludes* (San Francisco Museum of Modern Art), and in recitals featuring Carter, Beethoven, Ligeti, Liszt and Schumann. Hadley taught piano for nearly twenty years at the San Francisco Community Music Center, while maintaining her private studio since 1996. She is a sought-out competition adjudicator and panelist, and received her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in piano performance from the