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Old First Concerts

presents

Circadian String Quartet

Monika Gruber & David Ryther, *violins*

Omid Assadi, *viola*

David Wishnia, *cello*

with special guest

Amy Zанrosso, *piano*

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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.

Saturday, February 3, 2024 at 8 PM

Sunday, February 4, 2024 at 4 PM

Old First Church

1751 Sacramento St. at Van Ness Ave.

San Francisco, CA 94109

(415) 474-1608 www.oldfirstconcerts.org

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!

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Enjoy free concerts, make new friends, and help support your favorite non-profit organization! Volunteering with Old First Concerts is a wonderful opportunity for students, seniors, or anyone with a passion for music—and we'll work with your availability!

contact: curtishuth@oldfirstconcerts for more information.

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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

Monday, February 5 at 7:30 pm

Earplay—*The Poetry of Physics*

Challenging the audience to broaden its concept of music with new emotional and auditory experiences, Earplay performs the World Premiere of stellar Chilean-American composer Miguel Chuaqui's *Ad Hoc*, West Coast Premieres by Suzanne Sorkin and Yotam Haber, and works by Kaija Saariaho and Ines Thiebaud.

Sunday, February 18 at 4 pm

Duo Chiaroscuro—*Love and Dreams*

Tristana Ferreyra-Rantalaiho, alto; Johanna Tarcson, piano

Duo Chiaroscuro explores the play of light and shadow in art and music, with works by Schubert, Boulanger, Chausson, Duparc, Paladilhe, Debussy, Lieberson, Guastavino and Ginastera.

Friday, February 23 at 8 pm & Sunday, February 25 at 4 pm

Sixth Station Trio—Anju Goto, violin

Federico Strand Ramirez, cello; Katelyn Tan, piano

Be immersed in the world of Studio Ghibli through the music of *Howl's Moving Castle!* Sixth Station Trio, whose mission is to keep classical music accessible to the general public and to challenge the boundaries of what a classical piano trio can do.

For tickets & more information visit www.oldfirstconcerts.org

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PROGRAM

Saturday, February 3: *Motherland*

Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971), arranged by David Rhyther

The Firebird

(this arrangement is dedicated in loving memory of Peter Eastman)

Introduction

L'oiseau Feu et sa Danse

Variations de l'oiseau Feu

Rondes des Princesses

Danse infernale

Berceuse

Final

Intermission

Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904)

Piano Quintet No. 2 in A major Op. 81, B 155

Allegro, ma non tanto

Dumka: Andante con moto

Scherzo "Furiant" Molto vivace

Finale: Allegro

Sunday, February 4: *The Personal and the Political*

Robert Schumann (1810–1856)

Piano Quintet in E-flat major Op. 44

Allegro brillante

In modo d'una marcia. Un poco largamente

Scherzo: Molto Vivace

Allegro ma non troppo

Intermission

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906–1975)

Piano Quintet in G minor Op. 57

Prelude: Lento

Fugue: Adagio

Scherzo: Allegretto

Intermezzo: Lento

Finale: Allegretto

ABOUT THE MUSICIANS

Circadian String Quartet was born in 2013 during some of the more hopeful months of the Arab Spring. Ideas and culture were colliding in unexpected ways. What if a musical concert could express the collision of culture, politics and ideas? The Four of us set out to explore this question and picked a name that evoked the circular rhythms of the day as well as a mythical name that might be of Mesopotamian origin.

We chose repertoire based on what kind of story we wanted our concert to tell. When we were looking to tell the story of the relationship of Claude Debussy and Igor Stravinsky we did something bold. We knew that they had met at a dinner party and sat down together and played Stravinsky's as yet unfinished score of *The Rite of Spring* and the meeting enriched both of their artistic lives. Given this, we knew that come hell or high water we were going to create our own version of *The Rite of Spring* and pair it with Debussy's *String Quartet*. That's the kind of Quartet we are, we will go to great lengths to realize a good idea. This good idea became our *Stravinsky Project*, a concert series and dance collaboration focusing on the early ballets of Stravinsky including *The Rite of Spring*, *Firebird* and *Petroushka*. Our premieres of our original transcriptions of *The Rite of Spring* and *Firebird* were premiered to critical acclaim in 2017 and 2019.

We gravitate toward bold original ideas that break boundaries or reach across cultures, that is why we love working with composers. CSQ is proud to have given world and U.S. premieres of exciting new pieces of chamber music written by Sahba Aminikia, Ben Carson, Toronto-based Noam Lemish, and British composer Ian Venables. We first performed Sahba Aminikia's *One Day Tehran* live on air on KPFA's radio show *Music of the World* with Joanna

intense love of chamber music has led her to more fully admire and explore her favorite composers while sharing the experience with countless inspiring, dedicated players and appreciative audiences. In addition to freelancing in the Bay Area with various musicians and ensembles, the RossoRose Duo, founded in 2015, keeps Amy and violinist Alisa Rose occupied learning and performing repertoire from Beethoven to Auerbach.

After her Bachelor's, Amy furthered her studies for a few years in Italy and then completed a Master's Degree at McGill University in Montreal. Her life filled with a wealth of chamber music and was rounded out by some Broadway musicals, German cabaret and a number of years in an Argentine tango quintet. In 2014, Amy moved from Montreal to the Bay Area with her partner Dave and her dog Roscoe. She is currently based in Oakland. Since the big move, Amy went on tour to China with the GRAMMY award-winning Pacific Boychoir, rehearsed Beethoven's *9th Symphony* with Gustavo Dudamel at the podium and was the pianist for Chorissima, the five-time GRAMMY award winning San Francisco Girls Chorus Premier Ensemble throughout the 2017–18 season.

Like performing, Amy finds teaching to be a highly rewarding part of a musician's life. She is a faculty member and chamber music coach at the Pre-College Academy of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music as well as at The Nueva School in Hillsborough, CA. She is constantly fueled by her fantastically inspiring students and enjoys forcing her favorite composers on them as well as telling them what to do. Amy is looking forward to all the superb music, musicians, students and enthusiastic audiences that will come her way in the future. Many thanks to Beethoven and Brahms for inspiring her to come this far – she wouldn't change a thing.

ensembles, including the Berkeley Symphony, Modesto Symphony, Sacramento Symphony, Russian Chamber Orchestra, and Marin Oratorio, among others. David received his Master of Music degree from the Yale School of Music, where he studied with Aldo Parisot. He also studied with Jerome Carrington and Maurice Gendron, and received coaching from Paul Tortelier, Janos Starker, and Pierre Pasquier.

Amy Zanrosso's playing has been hailed as expressive, magnetic and masterful but since no one at *The New York Times* has said this, she's not allowed to put it in quotes. Her first touch of a keyboard was a two-octave electric organ that her parents had found who knows where. She enjoyed picking out tunes like *O Sole Mio* and *Ode to Joy* until her cousin decided to show her *Heart and Soul* on an acoustic piano. That's the moment Amy fell in love. Thanks to her attentive and industrious Italian immigrant mom, piano lessons started at the age of 6 and by the age of 15, Amy had made the decision to make music her life. A few years later she was accepted into the University of Victoria in British Columbia, Canada where, in Bruce Vogt's studio, she realized that she had way too much to learn and would always be in awe of the absolute force that is music. Bruce's wisdom and humor still influences her life today and she will always be thankful for his guidance in those early years of learning what playing the piano really meant.

As a soloist, Amy is addicted to the thrill of performing with orchestra. Since 2016, concerto repertoire, similar to chamber music but on steroids, has forced her to push her limits, helping make her into the confident and electrifying player she always hoped to be. She has appeared as a soloist with the Symphony of the Kootenays, the Russian Chamber Orchestra and the Contra Costa Chamber Orchestra. Her

Manqueros in 2015. Then in 2016 we commissioned Aminikia to write a new piece for string quartet and narrator. The result, a glowing kaleidoscopic mixture of text by Allan Ginsburg and Hafez called *The Weight of the World* was premiered in 2017 at the Piedmont Arts center and exemplifies what we are about.

The narrator for this piece, the historian and storyteller Nicolaus Holmann helped us tell the story of the events surrounding World War Two. We set his stories and poems to music and our *Chiaroscuro* project was born.

Chiaroscuro is a technique in Renaissance oil painting using contrasts of light and darkness to show depth of perspective. For us *Chiaroscuro* became a short musical piece or interlude composed or improvised by us, using light and dark to color and shade the larger works on our program. *Chiaroscuros* are now a regular part of all our concerts and help us create a narrative arc and throughline for our concerts. Some of our recent projects include our collaboration with world class santour player Hamid Taghavi, and the premiere of *Eurydice's Defiance*, David Ryther's new opera written especially for Kitka Soprano, Lily Storm. These projects highlight the breadth of our repertoire as we continue to expand the string quartet's possibilities.

Praised by critics for her "irresistibly melting tone, which she can also imbue with gripping fire", **Monika Gruber** is a versatile violinist, appearing in concerts throughout the United States and Europe. As violinist of the Eusebius Duo she was invited to perform in Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, following the duo's success as first prize winners of the CMFONE International Chamber Music Competition. Throughout her years of study she was the recipient of numerous scholarships and awards, notably the Rotary

Ambassadorial Scholarship, which enabled her to continue her studies in the US.

Monika received her training at Hochschule für Musik in Weimar, Germany, Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique in Lyon, France, and at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where she studied with Ian Swensen. She is equally active as chamber and orchestra musician, performing lots of modern music in addition to the classical and romantic repertoire, as well as some branching out into baroque music.

Always eager to share her passion for music in many ways, Monika was a teaching assistant in Weimar while receiving her Teaching Degree, and she continued to teach, instill and foster the love of music in people of all ages ever since. Upon completion of her Masters Degree in San Francisco she was offered a position as violin instructor at SFCM's Pre-College Division, where she is now also coaching chamber music. Her students are doing well in competitions, and they got accepted into the San Francisco Youth Orchestra as well as into colleges, such as Rice University Shepherd School of Music, Cleveland Institute of Music, Vanderbilt University Blair School of Music, and UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music.

David Ryther, *violin*, has brought his interpretive powers as a soloist to such festivals as the Darmstadt Summer Festival of New Music, the Banff Center, and the Green Umbrella Series at the Bing theater in Los Angeles. He has been featured playing new music with adventurous ensembles sfSoundGroup, Earplay, San Francisco Contemporary Players, the Berkeley New Music Ensemble, Sonor, and Octagon. An active violinist, he can be found playing in many of the orchestras and ensembles in the Bay Area including the

San Francisco Ballet Orchestra. David graduated with highest honors in music from UC Santa Cruz and recently received his doctorate in contemporary violin performance from UC San Diego. A dedicated teacher and conductor, David is a teacher and assistant conductor with Villa Sinfonia in San Francisco, teaches violin at the Crowden School, and has served as coach and interim conductor with the Berkeley Youth Orchestra. As a composer, David has had world premieres played by the Villa Sinfonia, an orchestra piece called *Friend* commissioned by the Croi Glan dance troupe in Cork, Ireland, and has worked in residency with Kate Weare company in New York and Dandelion Dance Theater in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Native of Iran, **Omid Assadi**, *viola*, holds a B.M. and M.M. from San Francisco Conservatory of Music where he studied with Jodie Levitz and Bettina Mussumeli. Mr. Assadi is an active ensemble player and soloist; he has concertized with many of the Bay Area's orchestras and has appeared numerous times as soloist with Golden Gate Philharmonic, City College of San Francisco String Orchestra, Kensington Symphony Orchestra, and Villa Sinfonia. Omid's love for chamber music has led him to study chamber music with the members of the Kronos String Quartet as well as the San Francisco Conservatory of Music faculty members. In addition, he has collaborated with Jennifer Culp, Jodi Levitz, Jorja Fleezanis, and with the Shams Ensemble.

An active chamber musician, **David Wishnia**, *cello*, routinely concertizes with both the Circadian String Quartet and the Villa Piano Trio, and has taught at the Zephyr Point Chamber Music Camp and Sequoia Chamber Music Workshop. David has also appeared as a soloist with the Contra Costa Chamber Orchestra and Villa Sinfonia. He is currently a member of the Marin Symphony, and has performed in numerous Bay Area