

St. Albert Chamber Music Society features piano-cello concerto

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Staff Writer

Put pianist Milton Schlosser and cellist Brian Yoon in a room together, and you have well over half a century of classical music expertise brimming with emotion and sensitivity.

Both Victoria-based virtuosos have amassed a national and international following with a staggering list of professional credits as soloists and in symphony repertoire.

A retired University of Alberta professor and adjunct professor at the University of Victoria, Schlosser has spent the last decade tickling the ivories as a soloist and collaborative pianist in Canada, the United States, Japan, China, Ireland and mainland Europe.

Yoon instead enjoys a versatile career as a soloist, chamber musician, teacher and principal cello of the Victoria Symphony. He has performed for half a season with Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, as guest principal at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, and the Auckland Philharmonic Orchestra in New Zealand.

Among their varied projects, the two musicians have initiated a new partnership and will be celebrating their second concert together as part of St. Albert Chamber Music Society's next concert on Saturday, Nov. 19.

The duo will feature three major compositions ranging from the sublime and romantic to the more peppery and exciting. The works include Ludwig van Beethoven's *Sonata No. 3 in A Major, Op. 69*;

Frédéric Chopin's *Ballade No. 1 in G Minor, Opus 23*, and Edvard Grieg's *Sonata in A Minor, Op. 36.1*

Schlosser, who enjoys playing piano-cello repertoire, originally initiated contact with Yoon. While teaching at Augustana University in Camrose, he had played several recitals with the late great cellist, Tanya Prochazka.

"When I played with Tanya, it was a way to ground myself. And I wanted to get back to working with a cellist," said Schlosser.

The program leads with Beethoven's *Sonata*, a work with a wide range of emotions and contrasts. It was also a watershed moment for cello repertoire.

"It was the first time cello and piano were equal in standing. Before that cello played an accompanying role to the piano. They were equal partners and it was way for Beethoven to emphasize an important solo voice," said Yoon.

Second on the program is Chopin's *Ballade*, a work performed strictly on piano. *Ballade* is a new work for Schlosser, however he notes it is often featured in movies and is easily recognizable to audiences.

Chopin was known for revolutionizing the piano. By the time he was playing, the piano became more standardized. It was shaped into a steel frame. Both the size and number of keys had grown said Schlosser.

"Chopin takes the piano technique and musical ideas of the time to a challenging place. What's striking is there is an incredible wistfulness and melancholy contrasted with fiery expression. Poland was under

Russian occupation and he was living in Paris. He was an immigrant longing to be back in Poland. His music evokes Polish elements, but it also has that melancholy and yearning to be back home."

The third piece is Grieg's *Sonata* performed by both Schlosser and Yoon. Grieg dedicated the 30-minute composition to his younger brother, an amateur cellist.

"It incorporates Norwegian folk like melodies and is very dramatic. The pianist is all over the map. He uses the full extent of the piano. The first movement is dramatic and you're swept away. The second movement is very intimate and has a glorious climax. The third movement is a rousing Norwegian dance. It's very dramatic and you can hear trolls in the music."

Yoon currently plays a 1905 cello fashioned by Gaetano Sgarabotto. Showcasing his love of the stringed instrument, he booked an extra seat on the airplane.

"I connect with the quality of sound. It's easy to play. Because it has so many dimensions, it challenges me to explore all its potential," Yoon said. "It has a very warm sound. It has a lot of power, but with a darker tone quality."

Opening the concert is emerging cellist Elena Hryciw. Accompanying her is pianist Tegan Hryciw. Elena will play Benedetto Marcello's *Sonata in e minor, Op. 1 No. 2*.

The concert is on Saturday, Nov. 19 at 7 p.m. at St. Albert United Church, 20 Green Grove Drive. Tickets range from \$15 to \$35 at www.eventbrite.ca

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ERIK VISSER/Photo

Pianist Martin Schlosser returns for a special performance for a St. Albert Chamber of Music concert on Saturday, Nov. 19 at St. Albert United Church.



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Cellist Brian Yoon joins pianist Martin Schlosser at St. Albert Chamber Music Society's next concert on Saturday, Nov. 19 at St. Albert United Church.

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