

From Russia with Love

Written by Margaret Evans

Tuesday, 18 April 2017 12:45 - Last Updated Wednesday, 19 April 2017 05:40



Andrew Armstrong
Piano

Jennifer Frautschi
Violin

Host, Edward Arron
Cello

The season-ending USCB Festival Series chamber music concert, on Sunday, April 30 at 5 pm, is an all-Russian affair, featuring music that will appeal to every temperament. The four works include passionate (Tchaikovsky), austere (Stravinsky), sentimental (Schnittke), and Mother-Russia (Glière) moods and constructions.

Opening the program is Igor Stravinsky's *Suite Italienne* for violin and piano. Prior to World War I Stravinsky's music was bold, exotic, and rule-breaking; following the war, when commissions for giant works were more difficult to come by, he slimmed down and adopted a leaner, neo-classical style.

Suite Italienne is a series of movements arranged from his chamber orchestra suite *Pulcinella*

(1920), which was a seminal work that Stravinsky described as "the epiphany through which the whole of my late work became possible."

Reinhold Glière composed in all genres, from massive symphonies to diminutive compositions like the second work on the program, a set of eight violin-cello duets. From the first notes it is clear that these are not studio-lesson etudes but masterfully crafted and evocative miniatures dripping with Russian sentiment. Alfred Schnittke's *Musica Nostalgica* for cello and piano is a short work that uses a minuet as a backdrop from which a dialogue between past and present is created.

The concert concludes with Tchaikovsky's vast and intensely Russian *Piano Trio in a minor*, which he dedicated "To the memory of a Great Artist." It was an homage to the close friendship and creative bond between Tchaikovsky and Nikolay Rubenstein, who became the most formidable interpreter of Tchaikovsky's

Piano Concerto No. 1

From Russia with Love

Written by Margaret Evans

Tuesday, 18 April 2017 12:45 - Last Updated Wednesday, 19 April 2017 05:40

To play this music Artistic Director Edward Arron brings another star-studded cast to Beaufort. Pianist Andrew Armstrong has mastered more than 50 concertos with orchestra. He has augmented this repertoire with solo recitals and chamber music performances in Asia, Europe, Latin America, Canada, and the United States, at venues such as Alice Tully Hall, Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, and the Grand Hall of the Moscow Conservatory. Mr. Armstrong is an ideal collaborator for a concert of Russian music as can be inferred from an American Record Guide review of his debut album: "I have heard few pianists play [Rachmaninov's Second Piano Sonata], recorded or in concert, with such dazzling clarity and confidence."

Violinist Jennifer Frautschi, a two-time Grammy nominee and Avery Fisher career grant recipient, has garnered worldwide acclaim as an adventurous musician with a remarkably wide-ranging repertoire. Similar to Mr. Armstrong, Ms. Frautschi regularly appears as a soloist with multiple orchestras, chamber musician, and recording artist. She performs on a 1722 Antonio Stradivarius violin known as the "ex-Cadiz".

Attendees of this series are familiar with Edward Arron's cello playing and may be forgiven if they take for granted his dark, rich tone and singing, passionate approach to music making. One of his compelling strengths is that all of his performances sound as if he is discovering the music anew.

Come and experience the intimate conversation of chamber music among friends on Sunday, April 30th. Information and tickets are available on www.uscb.edu/festivalseries or 843-208-8246, Monday through Friday. The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute will present "A Preconcert Conversation" with Dr. Michael Johns at USCB's Center for the Arts auditorium from 3:30-4:30. The class is free and is open to public. Dr. Johns will discuss the composers and music to be performed during the concert that begins at 5 pm.