New Horizons

Nouveaux horizons

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Mélanie Léonard

With | Avec

Symphony New Brunswick Symphonie Nouveau Brunswick

Special Guests | Invités Spéciaux

Lexie Krakowski, cello Heather Schmidt, composer-in-residence

Série









22.23



Message from the President

REID PARKER



Every so often, Symphony New Brunswick performs a major work by a composer who has journeyed from afar to New Brunswick for the concert. Christine Donkin joined us from Ottawa; Oscar Morawetz, from Toronto; and this week we welcome Heather Schmidt to New Brunswick all the way from Los Angeles. Heather has established herself as one of Canada's pre-eminent composers, so it is a special honour to have her here while SNB presents her Symphony no. 1 ("Manufactured Landscapes"). But that's not all! Heather is composing a new work to be premiered by Camerata New Brunswick on our Virtuoso Series later in May. Further details about this exciting new commission will be announced very soon.

Last month, Symphony New Brunswick Foundation was pleased to confirm a \$245,000 grant from Canadian Heritage's Canada Cultural Investment Fund, Endowment Incentives Component. Special thanks must be made to the Minister of Canadian Heritage and especially to his staff who have been so supportive over the past dozen years or so. The official announcement is coming soon. In order to receive the maximum in this year's application to the program in November, we have a fund-raising challenge to surmount, but we are making progress. We have reached over 67% of our objective and we thank those who have contributed so far. We require \$400,000 in the pool of eligible matching funds and we need to find approximately \$129,000 before the application deadline in November. I hope you can help.

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NEW HORIZONS

Biography Mélanie Léonard

Born in Montreal, Mélanie Léonard was most recently the music director of the Sudbury Symphony Orchestra. She has also been resident conductor and associate conductor of the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra.

She was invited to conduct at the Montreal International Jazz Festival and several Canadian orchestras including the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre Métropolitain, the National Arts Centre Orchestra, the Edmonton, Regina, Calgary and Winnipeg Symphony Orchestras and Symphony Nova Scotia.

Maestra Léonard has recorded soundtracks for Aura at Montréal's Notre-Dame Basilica; Land of Fantasy, a Cirque du Soleil show presented in Hangzhou, China; and Paradise City, an immersive multimedia universe in South Korea.

Mélanie Léonard was the first woman to complete a doctorate in orchestral conducting at the University of Montreal. In 2012, she received the Jean-Marie Baudet Prize in orchestral conducting awarded by the Canada Council for the Arts.





This program showcases dazzling virtuosity, Canadian talent, impactful orchestral sonorities, romantic melodies, boldness and excellence.

We are pleased to welcome Lexie Krakowski in her debut with us performing Dvořák's cello concerto. We paired this timeless masterwork with the New Brunswick's premiere of Heather Schmidt's imposing and spectacular Symphony no. 1. It will be an evening of firsts you don't want to miss!





First prize and Grand Award winner at the 2021 National Music Festival, 19-year-old cellist Lexie Krakowski has been described as a thoughtful and elegant performer. Hailing from Victoria, BC, she received early instruction from Brian Yoon, Paula Kiffner and Karen Whyte at the Victoria Conservatory of Music (VCM). As a student of the VCM, she competed in a range of local to national competitions, where she placed first in numerous solo and chamber music categories. Other notable first prize accolades include the 2020 Don Chrysler Competition, 2019 Roberto and Mary Wood Scholarship Competition, and 2018 Louis Sherman Competition.

Lexie has been fortunate to have appeared as soloist with the Victoria Chamber Orchestra, Sidney Classical Orchestra, and Victoria Conservatory of Music Orchestra. Lexie is now pursuing her undergraduate degree with Hans Jørgen Jensen and Andrés Díaz at the Glenn Gould School of the Royal Conservatory of Music (GGS) in Toronto, where she gratefully receives full scholarship support from The Patrick and Barbara Keenan Foundation. While at GGS she has also had the opportunity to work with musicians such as Joseph Johnson and Bryan Epperson. Lexie has had the opportunity to attend summer institutes such as The Meadowmount School of Music, Orford Academy, and Domaine Forget de Charlevoix; learning from acclaimed cellists such as Hans Jørgen Jensen, Lynn Harrell, Johannes Moser, Lluís Claret, Richard Lester, among others. Lexie is thrilled for the opportunity to perform with Symphony NB, and to experience Canada's East Coast.

Lexie currently plays on a french cello and bow generously on loan from the Gail O'Riordan Climate and the Arts Legacy Fund under the auspices of the Victoria Foundation.



Born and raised in Calgary, Alberta, Heather began her musical studies at the age of 4 and pursued double majors in piano performance and composition throughout her musical education. She studied at Juilliard in New York City and at Indiana University, where, at age 21, she became the youngest student ever to receive a Doctor of Music degree.

As a virtuoso pianist, Heather regularly performs as a guest soloist with orchestras – including exciting performances of her own six piano concertos – as well as in numerous television and studio recordings. She has received First Place in the Eckhardt-Gramatté National Music Competition, and First Place, the Audience Choice Award, and the Maestro's Choice Millennium Foundation Award at the Canadian Concerto Competition.

Heather's extensive catalogue includes works for solo instruments, chamber ensembles, orchestras, and vocal/choral groups, as well as for film, television, and video games. She has received commissions from the CBC, the Canada Council for the Arts, the Alberta Foundation, the German Westdeutsches Rundfunk, the Elaine Kaufman Cultural Center, the New York State Council for the Arts, the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, and the Harvard Musical Association. Her accolades include three consecutive Broadcast Music Inc. Awards, SOCAN Composer Awards, the Zwilich Prize in the International League of Women Composers Competition, the Juilliard Composers Competition, and the Dean's Composition Prize at Indiana University, as well as a Juno nomination in the category of Best Classical Composition. She has held numerous composer residencies, including a long-term residency with the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra.

Heather has also written and directed four short films. Her feature film Dissonance is currently in development at A71 in Canada.

NEW HORIZONS

Program

Heather Schmidt (b. 1974)

Symphony no.1 ("Manufactured Landscapes")

Allegro moderato

Adagio

Allegro moderato

- INTERMISSION -

Antonin Dvorak (1841 - 1904)

Concerto for Cello and Orchestra Op.104

Allegro

Adagio, ma non troppo

Finale - Allegro moderato

Program Notes

BY HEATHER SCHMIDT

Symphony No.1 "Manufactured Landscapes"

Commissioned for the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra through the Composer Residency Program, and funded jointly by Canada Council and the HPO

This symphony was inspired by the photography of Edward Burtynsky, specifically, a series of photographs known as "Manufactured Landscapes." When I first saw the photographs in this collection in their full-scale size, I was immediately struck by their power, beauty and originality.

The photographs of "Manufactured Landscapes" include scenes of quarries, mines, railways, oil refineries, recycling plants and shipbreaking facilities. These photographs capture the grandness of man's advances in technology and industrialization, the destruction of these advances upon nature, and the unique and unexpected beauty that arises from the man-made landscapes themselves. The angles, the color palettes, and the images themselves cannot adequately be described in words.

The music in my symphony does not portray a specific photograph. Instead, I attempted to shape the music in a way that would evoke many of the emotions, sounds and colors that I feel and see when looking at these remarkable photographs. Some of the thoughts that were foremost in my mind as I composed this symphony were the process of industrialization, man's desire and struggle to constantly strive towards higher levels of achievement, the beauty of nature in its pure untouched state, and the superimposition of technology upon nature.

Although the photographs of "Manufactured Landscapes" were the original inspiration for this symphony, the music

goes beyond this starting point and transcends the details of specific photographs or philosophies of technology and nature. I believe that audiences who are familiar with the photography will understand the connection, and audiences who have not see the work will be carried through the music on their own path of sound and landscapes.

Antonin Dvorak - Cello Concerto in B Minor BY REID PARKER

Over the centuries, composers who wrote concertos mostly ignored the cello or, for that matter, most instruments except the violin and the keyboard instruments. Only a handful of pre-twentieth-century cello concertos remain in the repertoire – a couple of beautiful works by Haydn and one by Robert Schumann are the most memorable. Baroque composer Antonio Vivaldi wrote a bunch and Haydn contemporary Luigi Boccherini added a dozen and there were others like Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, Henri Vieuxtemps and Edouard Lalo. However, late in the nineteenth century, things began to change. Several prominent composers decided the rich sonority of the instrument should be put to better use. Camille Saint-Säens, Edward Elgar and Antonin Dvorak wrote masterpieces.

On this tour, we have the pleasure of hearing the Dvorak Concerto for just the second time in SNB's history. It is considered by many as the finest concerto for the instrument ever written. Composed in 1894 during Dvorak's sojourn in the United States, it was first performed in London two years later. The composer had started a cello concerto many years earlier but abandoned it after deciding he didn't think the cello's high and low registers were well-suited for such a prominent solo role. However, after hearing a concerto written by the noted operetta composer Victor Herbert (1859-1924), Dvorak changed his mind and the Concerto in B Minor was the result.

It is in conventional three-movement form – allegro – adagio - and a closing allegro rondo. In the opening sonata movement, the cello is the star, but listen for the beautiful secondary theme in the horns in the orchestral exposition. This writer is fond of quoting his mentor, the irrepressible Sir Donald Tovey who, after extolling the virtues of the first allegro, said, "Both the slow movement and the finale relapse into Charles the Second's apologies for (taking) such an un-conscionable time in dying, but it is impossible to grudge them their time, and as a matter of fact none of the three movements of the concerto is of unreasonable length." Tovey might best have heeded his own reservations, for he rambles on for five pages about the concerto when perhaps two would have sufficed. So, I will be brief! The middle adagio is a lyrical love poem with a lovely opening theme, a wonderfully sonorous passage for the three horns later in the movement and an extended dialogue between the cello and flute near the end. The closing rondo, marked allegro moderato, is a cornucopia of lovely themes and cello pyrotechnics, ending with a reminder of the Concerto's opening theme and a glorious conclusion by the full orchestra.



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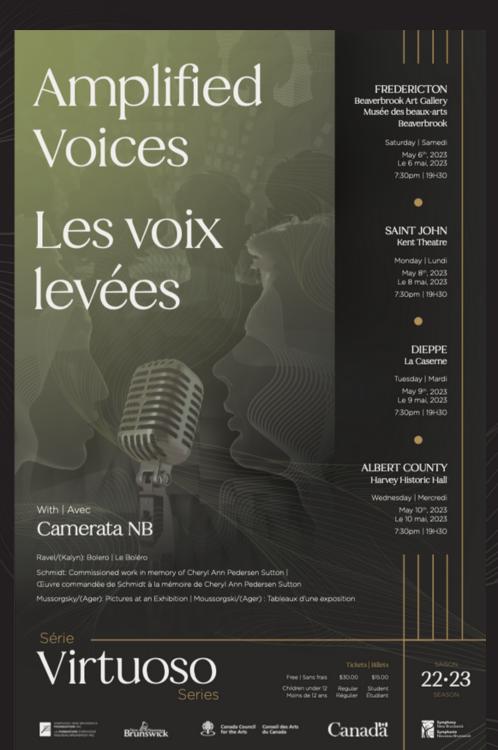
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