

TOBY JOHNSTON-STEWART



LIVE CONCERT

CATHEDRAL *AFTER* DARK

PERFORMED BY:

JILLIAN FORSTER FAIR, *Piano* / EMILY CARR STRING QUARTET / BRUCE MEIKLE, *Bass*

INTROSPECTIVE, ATMOSPHERIC NEOCLASSICAL MUSIC

Composer *Toby Johnston-Stewart* presents *Cathedral After Dark*, a live recording captured on September 12, 2025, within a space renowned for its vast, resonant acoustics. Conceived as a seamless, continuous narrative, the album unfolds as an immersive journey, extending beyond the format of a standard concert recording.

Pianist *Jillian Forster Fair* anchors the performance with a sensitive and commanding touch, bridging the intimate and the expansive while shaping the harmonic narrative. She is joined by the *Emily Carr String Quartet*—*Müge Büyükçelen* (violin I), *Cory Balzer* (violin II), *Mieka Michaux* (viola), and *Alasdair Money* (cello)—whose technical brilliance and emotive depth support the work's musical architecture. Double bassist *Bruce Meikle* adds a profound layer of gravity, grounding the ensemble with a rich, cinematic texture.

Avoiding traditional categorization, *Cathedral After Dark* moves through shifting atmospheres, from delicate, whispered string passages to grand, room-filling crescendos. Each section flows seamlessly into the next, creating a meditative yet driving momentum that sustains the album's continuous arc.

Captured in the unique energy of a late-night performance, the recording reflects the interaction between musicians and space, where the architecture itself becomes an instrument. For those seeking a sophisticated, atmospheric soundscape to get lost in, *Cathedral After Dark* offers a captivating and transformative listening experience.







TOBY JOHNSTON-STEWART

COMPOSER

BORN AND RAISED IN SWITZERLAND, TOBY MOVED TO CANADA IN 1989 AND TOOK AN EARLY INTEREST IN CLASSICAL MUSIC AND COMPOSING. HE SOON NARROWED HIS INTERESTS TO INTROSPECTIVE AND ATMOSPHERIC MUSIC THAT EBB AND FLOW IN THE REALMS OF NEOCLASSICAL AND CLASSICAL MINIMALISM. TOBY HAS BEEN FORTUNATE TO STUDY FOR MANY YEARS WITH TIM JANZ, WHO IS AN INSTRUCTOR AT MT. ROYAL UNIVERSITY CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC. IN ADDITION, HE FREQUENTLY COLLABORATES AND RECORDS WITH LOCAL INSTRUMENTALISTS.

TOBY IS AN AVID TRAVELLER, HIKER, AND SKIER AND IS ALWAYS EXPLORING NEW ADVENTURES IN THE MOUNTAINS. HE CURRENTLY LIVES IN VICTORIA, BC WITH HIS FAMILY.



JILLIAN FORSTER FAIR

PIANIST

JILLIAN FORSTER FAIR HOLDS A BACHELOR OF MUSIC IN PIANO PERFORMANCE FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA, WHERE SHE STUDIED WITH BRUCE VOGT. SHE ALSO HOLDS AN ASSOCIATE OF MUSIC FROM THE WESTERN BOARD OF MUSIC. SHE STUDIED MUSIC AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA, EARNING TOP PRIZES AT LOCAL AND PROVINCIAL MUSIC FESTIVALS WHILE SHE STUDIED WITH JANET SCOTT-HOYT.

MS. FORSTER FAIR HAS PERFORMED THE SCRIBIN PIANO CONCERTO WITH ORCHESTRA UNDER CONDUCTOR JANOS SANDOR. SHE ENJOYS HER ROLE AS A COLLABORATIVE PIANIST, PERFORMING REGULARLY WITH INSTRUMENTALISTS, VOCALISTS, CHOIRS, CHURCHES AND SCHOOLS IN VICTORIA. SHE ENJOYED HER TIME AT THE BANFF CENTRE SUMMER ARTS FESTIVAL.

JILLIAN BEGAN GIVING PERFORMANCES AT AGE 5, SINGING AND PLAYING PERCUSSION AS WELL AS THE PIANO. SHE HAS BEEN PERFORMING AND TEACHING PIANO AND THEORY CLASSES FOR OVER 30 YEARS. HER DIVERSE BACKGROUND IN JAZZ, MUSICAL THEATRE, COUNTRY, CHORAL, CLASSICAL AND CONTEMPORARY GENRES ENRICH HER MUSICAL INTERPRETATION AND INSTRUCTION.

MS. FORSTER FAIR WORKS WITH COMPOSER TOBY JOHNSTON-STEWART TO PERFORM AND RECORD HIS MUSIC IN THE STUDIO, AS WELL AS LIVE, WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF LOCAL MUSICAL COLLEAGUES IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST. SHE ENJOYS SINGING SOPRANO AND ACCOMPANYING THE VANCOUVER ISLAND CHAMBER CHOIR, UNDER MUSIC DIRECTOR BRIAN TATE. SHE HAS SUNG WITH THE CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL CHOIR, VICTORIA CHORAL SOCIETY, AND THE UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA CHORUS.





MÜGE BÜYÜKÇELEN

VIOLIN I

MÜGE BÜYÜKÇELEN IS A PASSIONATE VIOLINIST KNOWN FOR HER MULTI-GENRE VERSATILITY. HIGHLIGHTS OF HER RECENT PERFORMANCES INCLUDE THE PREMIER OF JARED MILLER'S VIOLIN CONCERTO DEDICATED TO MÜGE, THE BEETHOVEN VIOLIN CONCERTO, A CONCERT TOUR THROUGH AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND, PERFORMANCES OF NEW WORKS BY JENNIFER BUTLER, PAUL FREHNER, MICHAEL FINNISSY, AS WELL AS VARIOUS CONCERTS WITH THE EMILY CARR STRING QUARTET. SHE RECENTLY FINISHED PERFORMING "BEETHOVEN CYCLE" ALL 16 QUARTETS WITH THE EMILY CARR STRING QUARTET. HER LATEST RECORDING "SPANNING TREE" HAS BEEN NOMINATED FOR "BEST CLASSICAL ALBUM IN 2022" BY WESTERN CLASSICAL MUSIC AWARDS.

SHE IS A CURRENT MEMBER OF THE VICTORIA SYMPHONY, EMILY CARR STRING QUARTET AND THE AVENTA ENSEMBLE AS WELL AS AN ACTIVE VIOLIN TEACHER AT THE VICTORIA CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC. MÜGE HAS BEEN A FEATURED SOLOIST WITH NUMEROUS ORCHESTRAS AROUND THE WORLD. SHE HAS PREMIERED MANY WORKS SUCH AS "ARCHIMEDES' CODEX' A CANADIAN WORK DEDICATED TO HER BY COMPOSER MICHAEL OESTERLE, CAMERON WILSON "CANADIAN FOUR SEASONS" TO NAME A FEW. SHE HAS SERVED A JURY MEMBER FOR "THE ECKHARDT - -GRAMATTE NATIONAL COMPETITION", "FRIENDS OF CANADIAN MUSIC AWARD" , "BCARTS COUNCIL" AND HAS ADJUDICATED AT MANY MUSIC FESTIVALS. SHE HOLDS A MASTERS DEGREE IN MUSIC PERFORMANCE FROM BILKENT UNIVERSITY, IN ANKARA TURKEY, AN ASSOCIATE TEACHING DIPLOMA FROM THE VICTORIA CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC AND WAS A TEACHING ASSISTANT STUDENT AT THE TOULOUSE NATIONAL CONSERVATORY, FRANCE.



CORY BALZER

VIOLIN I

CORY BALZER BEGAN PLAYING THE VIOLIN AND PIANO AT THE AGE OF FIVE IN HIS HOMETOWN OF CALGARY, ALBERTA. SINCE HIS EARLY DAYS STUDYING VIOLIN WITH DR. LISE ELSON AT THE MOUNT ROYAL COLLEGE, HE HAS GONE ON TO PERFORM IN RECITALS AND CONCERTS THROUGHOUT CANADA, US, AUSTRALIA, ASIA, EUROPE AND THE CARIBBEAN. HE HAS PERFORMED IN VENUES AS DIVERSE AS CARNEGIE HALL AND THE SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE TO SIDNEY BC.

FOLLOWING COMPLETION OF A BACHELOR OF MUSIC PERFORMANCE DEGREE AT MCGILL UNIVERSITY, CORY PLAYED FOR TWO SEASONS IN LES JEUNES VIRTUOSES DE MONTREAL. AS A MEMBER OF THE CARTIER STRING QUARTET, HE WAS A WINNER IN THE DEBUT YOUNG CONCERT ARTISTS SERIES AND PERFORMED ON CBC AND RADIO CANADA ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS. CORY CONTINUED HIS STUDIES WITH KENNETH GOLDSMITH AT RICE UNIVERSITY IN HOUSTON, TEXAS WHERE HE EARNED A MASTER OF MUSIC DEGREE. IN 1997 CORY MOVED TO VICTORIA TO JOIN THE VICTORIA SYMPHONY. HE SPENT THE 2000 AND 2001 SEASONS PLAYING WITH THE TRIUS QUARTET AT THE SHAW THEATRE FESTIVAL IN NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE ON. THE QUARTET PERFORMED BI-WEEKLY CONCERTS IN ADDITION TO BEING HEARD IN VARIOUS PLAYS AND MUSICALS FOR SHAW FESTIVAL. THE QUARTET ALSO EMBARKED ON A ROCKY MOUNTAIN TOUR BRINGING MUSIC TO MANY SMALLER TOWNS IN ALBERTA AND BC. CORY HAS ALSO PLAYED AT THE CHARLOTTETOWN FESTIVAL AND HAS PARTICIPATED IN FESTIVALS AT THE BANFF CENTRE, STANFORD UNIVERSITY, SNOWBIRD (UTAH) AND MEADOWMOUNT SCHOOL OF MUSIC.

CORY HAS BEEN A MEMBER OF THE GALIANO ENSEMBLE SINCE 2001 AND A FOUNDING MEMBER OF THE EMILY CARR STRING QUARTET SINCE 2006.





MIEKA MICHAUX

VIOLA

ORIGINALLY FROM VICTORIA, B.C., MIEKA MICHAUX IS A VERSATILE ORCHESTRAL AND CHAMBER MUSICIAN PERFORMING IN MANY ENSEMBLES ON BOTH MODERN AND BAROQUE VIOLA AND VIOLIN.

MIEKA HOLDS A BACHELOR OF MUSIC FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA, B.C. AND A MASTER OF MUSIC FROM RICE UNIVERSITY IN HOUSTON, TEXAS. SHE HAS ALSO ATTENDED THE MUSIC ACADEMY OF THE WEST, THE BANFF CENTRE FOR THE ARTS, ORFORD CENTRE FOR THE ARTS AND THE TAFELMUSIK BAROQUE SUMMER INSTITUTE. HER PRINCIPAL TEACHERS INCLUDE YASUKO EASTMAN, JOANNA HOOD, KAREN RITSCHER, AND KAREN TUTTLE. SHE IS A CORE MEMBER OF THE VICTORIA SYMPHONY AND ALSO REGULARLY PERFORMS WITH ONE OF CANADA'S FINEST NEW MUSIC GROUPS, THE AVENTA ENSEMBLE, THE NEWLY FORMED ENSEMBLE, VICTORIA BAROQUE PLAYERS AND THE EMILY CARR STRING QUARTET. SHE HAS ALSO PERFORMED WITH THE VANCOUVER SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, NATIONAL YOUTH ORCHESTRA OF CANADA, VANCOUVER ISLAND SYMPHONY, GALIANO ENSEMBLE AND PACIFIC BAROQUE ORCHESTRA.



ALASDAIR MONEY

CELLO

CELLIST, ALASDAIR MONEY GREW UP IN VICTORIA AND STUDIED WITH JAMES HUNTER FOR MANY YEARS AT THE VICTORIA CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC. HE GRADUATED IN 1991 FROM THE ASSOCIATE IN MUSICAL ARTS DIPLOMA PROGRAM AND WENT ON TO COMPLETE A BACHELOR OF MUSIC DEGREE AT THE NEW ENGLAND CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC IN BOSTON. WHILE THERE, HE STUDIED WITH LAWRENCE LESSER AND MICHAEL HABER. AFTER GRADUATING FROM NEC IN 1995, ALASDAIR WENT TO ENGLAND TO STUDY IN LONDON WITH RAPHAEL WALLFISCH AT THE GUILDHALL SCHOOL OF MUSIC AND DRAMA WHERE HE RECEIVED A POST-GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN CELLO PERFORMANCE.

ALASDAIR HAS ATTENDED SUCH FESTIVALS AS BANFF AND ORFORD IN CANADA AND THE DARTINGTON, EVIAN AND VERBIER MUSIC FESTIVALS IN ENGLAND AND IN EUROPE. WHILE BACK IN CANADA, ALASDAIR WORKS WITH THE VICTORIA AND VANCOUVER ISLAND SYMPHONIES, THE EMILY CARR STRING QUARTET, THE ODYSSEY STRING QUARTET, THE GALIANO AND AVENTA ENSEMBLES AND HAS PLAYED WITH THE VANCOUVER SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA. HE ALSO COMPLETED A MASTER OF MUSIC DEGREE IN CELLO PERFORMANCE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA WHERE HE STUDIED WITH PAMELA HIGHBAUGH-ALONI AND PAULA KIFFNER.





BRUCE MEIKLE

BASS

BRUCE WAS FIRST INSPIRED TO PLAY BASS BY GARY KARR, RAY BROWN AND SNOOPY – ALTHOUGH NOT NECESSARILY IN THAT ORDER.

GROWING UP IN VANCOUVER, HE STUDIED WITH KENNETH FRIEDMAN. AFTER THREE SUMMERS WITH THE NATIONAL YOUTH ORCHESTRA, HE COMPLETED HIS MUSIC DEGREE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA AS A STUDENT OF DAVID CURRIE. UPON GRADUATION, HE HURRIED BACK TO THE WEST COAST TO FREELANCE WITH THE VANCOUVER SYMPHONY BEFORE JOINING THE VICTORIA SYMPHONY. HE ALSO REGULARLY ENJOYS PLAYING CHAMBER MUSIC AND JAZZ.





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CREDITS:

ROBERT DETTLING, *Videographer*

JAMIE WATERS, *Audio Recording*

ANDREW DOWNTON, *Mastering*

BRAELEY WONG, *Artwork*

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