

PERFORMING ARTS  
SUNDAY SERIES 2021/2022  
presents



# Valerie Tryon

Sunday, March 20, 2022 • 2pm

**BLACK  
BOX**

THEATRE

HCA Black Box Theatre  
126 James St. S.,  
(Hamilton Conservatory for the Arts)  
905-528-4020  
HCArts.ca

HCA

It is my great pleasure to welcome you back to the theatre! Today's performance is a celebration of the resilience of the arts and reminds us that the performing arts are alive and well.

I am thrilled to welcome Valerie Tryon back to the Conservatory, and to be gathering in our beautiful Black Box Theatre! Through the support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation, we have updated our historic Recital Hall with new technical equipment and a beautiful physical refresh. These upgrades have made this space more versatile and will give us the opportunity to present even more exciting events in the future, including opera, chamber music, piano performances, theatre, and dance. These performances will make up our Performing Arts Sunday Series, or PASS. Now in its first season, our goal is to continue to develop the Series and host an event every Sunday throughout the year, bringing artists of the highest calibre to downtown Hamilton.

This may sound like a lofty goal, but with the generous support of our sponsors, I believe we can make this dream a reality. I welcome the opportunity to speak with you if you are interested in sponsoring our upcoming events, whether through single or group donations. The Black Box Theatre is operated by our charitable arm, HCA Dance Theatre, and charitable receipts will be available to all donors. Now more than ever, I recognize the importance of coming together as a community to keep the arts alive.

Today's event is a particularly exciting one. Not only do we celebrate Valerie Tryon's long-awaited return to the Conservatory, but this event is our first hybrid event, providing in-person audiences with the thrill of live performance, and sharing this same performance with audiences at home via live stream. It is a wonderful opportunity to broaden our audience and share an accessible way to continue to enjoy the arts, even during these turbulent times.

We are working behind the scenes to solidify our 2022-2023 season, and I cannot wait to update you on all we have in store! Be sure to sign up for our mailing list and follow the Conservatory on social media for all programming announcements.

As we emerge from this difficult time for the arts, I am optimistic when I think of the future. I look forward to hearing music ring through the halls of the Conservatory this afternoon, continuing a tradition that started over 120 years ago in this very building. I feel such deep gratitude to our audience and to our sponsors for making events like this possible. Enjoy the show!



Vitek Wincza  
Artistic Director



Valerie Tryon has performed a Valentine's Day recital at The Hamilton Conservatory for the Arts for many years and despite playing all over the world in many different concert halls, she particularly enjoys this venue and the warm Hamilton audience.

Valerie is a world-renowned concert pianist. Born in England, the youngest student to be admitted to the Royal Academy of Music in London, she still travels to Europe annually to perform, and manages an extraordinary schedule in North America and abroad, of recitals, recordings, masterclasses and teaching.

Valerie's repertoire is vast and diverse and although her particular reputation is for her interpretation of the Romantics – Chopin, Liszt, Rachmaninov and others – she retains a lifelong and enduring passion for Debussy and Ravel, initiated by her prizewinning scholarship to Paris as a young student to study with the distinguished French professor, Jacques Février.

Retiring with an honorary doctorate from McMaster University, where she was Artist-in-Residence and Associate Professor for many years, Valerie continues as Artist-in-Residence and teacher at Redeemer University in between her many concerts and recitals worldwide. She is a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Music, a Juno Award winner, a Gallery of Distinction Inductee, holds the Harriet Cohen Award for Distinguished Services to Music, and the Franz Liszt Medal from the Hungarian Ministry of Culture for her lifelong commitment to and promotion of Liszt's music. In December of 2017, she was awarded Canada's highest honour, The Order of Canada, performing at the Awards dinner for Governor General Julie Payette, at her request.

Valerie has made innumerable albums for many recording companies over the years, some of which are now regarded as collector's items. The most recent series of discs are from Somm Recordings and include de Falla's Nights in the Gardens of Spain, Cesar Franck's Symphonic Variations released in 2013, the Rachmaninov Piano Concerto #1 in 2014, a Ravel/Debussy disc in 2015, and a Mozart concertos disc in 2018, all with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. Valerie's archives to date reside at McMaster University.

**Domenico Scarlatti**

(1685-1757)

Two Sonatas:

*D minor (K. 1/L. 366)*

*C major (K. 159/L. 104)*

**Franz Schubert**

(1797-1828)

Two Impromptus (D. 899)

*in G-flat major*

*in E-flat major*

**Johannes Brahms**

(1833-1897)

Piano pieces from op. 118

*no. 1. Intermezzo in A minor*

*no. 2. Intermezzo in A major*

*no. 3. Ballade in G minor*

Piano pieces from op.76

*no.2. Capriccio in B minor*

*no.5. Capriccio in C-sharp minor*

**Intermission**

**Claude Debussy**

(1862-1918)

Suite: "Pour le Piano"

*Prélude*

*Sarabande*

*Toccata*

**Kreisler-Rachmaninoff**

(1875-1962) - (1873-1943)

*Liebesleid ("Love's Sorrow")*

*Liebesfreud ("Love's Joy")*

**PROGRAMME CREDITS**

Artistic Director: Vitek Wincza

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**We gratefully acknowledge our generous anonymous sponsor.**

Programme notes by Jason Scozzari, M.A, Hons B.Mus (Performance)

## **Domenico Scarlatti** (1685-1757)

Two Sonatas

*D minor (K. 1/L. 366)*

*C major (K. 159/L. 104)*

Born into a musical family, Domenico Scarlatti was an Italian composer of the Baroque period. He composed, among other works, an astonishing 555 Sonatas for solo keyboard. At the time, these pieces would have been performed on the harpsichord, although today they are often played on the piano. Many of Scarlatti's sonatas are composed in binary form (including the ones in today's programme) in which the first theme returns in the reprise of the second section. His innovative figurations, textures and harmonic schemes remain paramount in the Baroque repertoire.

The D minor Sonata (K. 1/L. 366) opens with a series of energetic scales and rapid sixteenth-note melodies and is marked *Allegro* on the score. Characteristic of Scarlatti's style, this piece features several imitative patterns and sequential passages. The Sonata in C Major (K. 159/L. 104) opens with a brisk theme filled with trills and grace notes. The pianist's hands move in parallel motion and are forced into close proximity with each other, demanding great agility. While playful in character, the work requires a high level of finger dexterity in order to maintain clarity in the ornamentation.

## **Franz Schubert** (1797-1828)

Two Impromptus (D. 899)

*No.2 in E-flat major*

*No. 3 in G-flat major*

While best known for the Romantic Lied, Franz Schubert was also a prolific composer of many genres and instruments. In a mere 31 years of life, he produced an output of nearly one thousand works. He studied piano, voice, organ, counterpoint and took composition lessons from Antonio Salieri. Schubert was a freelance composer, but earned so little income from his published music that he had to rely on his work as a schoolteacher for his income. He possessed an incredible gift for creating beautiful melodies and unique textures. Many of his works evoke different moods and characteristics by alternating major and minor modes, or through complex modulations. At the piano, Schubert's lyrical style remains present in many of his marches, waltzes, dances and short pieces such as the *Impromptus*. His larger works, such as the piano sonatas and fantasies, also drew stylistic inspiration from his songs.

In the *Impromptu in E-flat Major*, the listener is automatically attracted to the stream of gentle scales in triplets played by the pianist's right hand. The second section of the piece provides a contrasting texture, a change to a minor tonality and rhythms that echo the first theme. The opening measures of the *Impromptu in G-flat Major* instantly convey a strong sense of lyricism. Marked in a  $4/2$  time signature, this work displays Schubert's affinity for a long melodic line. The pianist faces the challenge of balancing two contrasting voices in the right hand. The spacious melody notes are played almost exclusively by the fifth finger, while the remaining fingers are left to control the fluttering broken-triad accompaniment.

## Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Piano Pieces from Op. 118

- No. 1. *Intermezzo in A minor*
- No. 2. *Intermezzo in A major*
- No. 3. *Ballade in G minor*

Piano pieces from op.76

- No.2. *Capriccio in B minor*
- No.5. *Capriccio in C-sharp minor*

Brahms was a leading German composer of the late romantic period and had a significant influence on twentieth-century music. As a child, Brahms studied the piano, cello, horn, and later, developed a love for folk and popular music. He composed for orchestra, chamber and choral settings, solo voice, and the piano. In addition to the sales of his published music, Brahms also earned a living as a concert pianist and conductor. Brahms developed a unique style of piano music characterized by full sonorities, broken chord figurations, doubling the melodic line in octaves, thirds or sixths, large stretches, and wide-spread chords. Many of his piano works express a wide range of emotions over the course of one piece and feature song-like melodies that resemble songs without words.

The two *Intermezzos*, as well as the *Ballade* are taken from the collection *Six Pieces for Piano, Op. 118*, which Brahms dedicated to his lifelong friend Clara Schumann in 1893. They are among the final pieces Brahms composed and have become a popular favourite in the solo piano recital. Despite the generic titles, the *Intermezzos* are filled with passion and beauty, as well as a sense of yearning and nostalgia. The genre of the *Ballade* typically tells a dramatic tale through music and was championed by composers such as Frédéric Chopin. Brahms' *Ballade in G Minor* opens with an energetic theme that instantly conveys a strong sense of rhythm, which is contrasted by a lyrical middle section.

Throughout the 19th century, "character pieces" became a quintessential genre featured by several prominent composers, Schumann and Mendelssohn among them. The *Capriccios* from Brahms' Op.76 fall into this category. Though in a minor key, No.2 conveys a sense of playfulness while No.5 demands virtuosity! Both pieces unfold within a loose rondo structure in which the theme returns multiple times with episodes interjected between each statement.

## Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

"Pour le Piano"

- Prélude*
- Sarabande*
- Toccata*

Claude Debussy was one of the most influential composers of the early twentieth century. After completing his studies at the Paris Conservatoire, he travelled to Russia and Italy where he encountered several composers that had an influence on his musical style. He drew inspiration from French traditions as well as the impressionist painters of the period. The term *impressionist* is generally attached to his music which often evokes a mood, feeling, atmosphere or scene. Debussy experimented with compositional devices that broke away from conventional rules of music theory.

Innovative harmonic structures, exotic scales (such as the whole tone, octatonic and pentatonic scales), instrumental timbre, parallel sonorities and unresolved dissonances were utilized in combination to create unique musical images. These traits are prominent in Debussy's piano music.

*Pour le piano* is a three-movement suite for solo piano. Though published in 1901, Debussy initially composed the second movement's *Sarabande* in the winter of 1894. The suite demonstrates a maturation in Debussy's writing style and is one of his most developed works for the piano. It was premiered in 1902 in the Salle Érard by the Spanish pianist Ricardo Viñes, who was a friend of both Debussy and Ravel, and promoted their music. A wide variety of virtuosic techniques are incorporated in the *Prélude* and *Toccata* – large fortissimo chords, glissandi and flourishes shared between the two hands – all contrasted with a slow and solemn *Sarabande* which the composer described as being "...rather like an old portrait in the Louvre".

### **Kreisler-Rachmaninoff** (1875-1962) - (1873-1943)

*Liebesleid* ("Love's Sorrow")

*Liebesfreud* ("Love's Joy")

Friedrich "Fritz" Kreisler was an American violinist and composer born in Vienna. As a performer, his expressive phrasing and unique tone were instantly recognizable. He was a graduate of both the Paris and Vienna Conservatoires, where he studied under Anton Bruckner. After briefly departing music to pursue studies in medicine, Kreisler returned to the violin in 1899, giving a concert with the Berlin Philharmonic. A series of tours followed that garnered him critical acclaim. Between 1915 and 1945, he also recorded an extensive number of violin concertos and sonatas for the RCA Victor and HMV record labels.

Kreisler composed several pieces for violin, a string quartet, operettas and a number of cadenzas for concertos by Brahms, Paganini and Beethoven. *Liebesleid* and *Liebesfreud* are among a set of three short pieces written for violin and piano titled *Alt-Wiener Tanzweisen* (Old Viennese Melodies) and were published in 1905. The two works were transcribed for solo piano (and later recorded) by Kreisler's friend Sergei Rachmaninoff. The virtuosic arrangement of *Liebesleid* conveys a sense of sorrow, which is juxtaposed by the optimistic waltz accompaniment. Rachmaninoff enriches the original compositions through altered harmonies, new introductions and codas, as well as several inner voice melodies that complement the main theme.

L = Longo Catalogue

K = Kirkpatrick Catalogue

D = Deutsch Catalogue

# PASS

## Upcoming PASS Performances:



**André Laplante**  
Pianist

*"What a tour de force!"*  
- *Globe and Mail*

**April 10, 2022 • 2pm**

*Sponsor: François Verschaeve*



**Janina Fialkowska**  
Pianist

*"One of Canada's finest gifts to the international piano world"*  
- *Ottawa Citizen*

**May 8, 2022 • 2pm**

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For Tickets visit  
[hearts.ca/pass](https://hearts.ca/pass)

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