

24 / 25 CONCERT  
SEASON

# Timothy Chooi Jane Coop

Sunday, February 2  
Raven's Cry Theatre, Sechelt

This concert sponsored by Sunshine Coast Slipper Factory



THE COAST RECITAL SOCIETY

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# The artists

Born in Victoria, **Timothy Chooi** began playing at three and made his debut at 16 as a soloist with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra. He went on to win a string of major music competitions: First Prize at the Joseph Joachim International Violin Competition in Hannover, Germany; Second Prize at the Queen Elisabeth International Competition in Belgium and the Yves Paternot Prize from the Verbier Festival in Switzerland.

He's racked up a tonne of frequent flyer points playing with orchestras in Berlin, London, Vienna, Amsterdam and throughout Asia. He recently recorded with superstar violinist Anne-Sophie Mutter and Mutter's Virtuosi for Deutsche Grammophon.

He's also a Professor of Violin at the University of Ottawa and has the choice of playing on two exceptional violins: the Titan Guarneri Del Gesu violin from 1741, on loan from CANIMEX INC. in Drummondville, Quebec, Canada, and the Engleman Stradivarius violin from 1709, on loan from the Nippon Music Foundation in Japan.

Timothy is extremely active on social media, creating videos about music and the life of a musician. His posts have attracted over 100,000 followers and over 10 million views.

Timothy Chooi is represented by Colbert Artists Management, Inc.

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**Jane Coop** is one of Canada's most distinguished artists.

Born in Saint John, NB and raised in Calgary, AB, she studied with Anton Kuerti in Toronto and Leon Fleisher in Baltimore. She made recital debuts at Wigmore Hall and Carnegie Recital Hall and toured the US as soloist with Mario Bernardi and the National Arts Centre Orchestra. She's played in over 20 countries and throughout Canada.

Coop is a faculty artist at the Kneisel Hall Chamber Music Festival, the oldest chamber festival in North America, and was a senior professor and Head of the Piano Division at the University of British Columbia where she received a Killam Teaching Award. She's a member of both the Order of Canada and the Order of British Columbia. And when not residing in Vancouver, she enjoys a second home in Gibsons.



# The program

## CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS

Born in Paris, October 9, 1835; died in Algiers, December 16, 1921

### DANSE MACABRE, OP. 40

Saint-Saëns' symphonic poem *Danse macabre* (*Dance of Death*) was inspired by a ghoulish poem by Henri Cazalis, who wrote under the pen name of Jean Lahor. Saint-Saëns at first set the poem as a song, then discarded it, claiming it was unsingable. As an orchestral piece (1874) it has long enjoyed great popularity for its vivid graveyard imagery and sensation of Death a-dancing. The composer arranged it for violin and piano in 1877.

A mood of eerie fantasy prevails. At midnight Death arrives with his violin, tunes up, and begins his evil dance. The violin plays a second melody—suave and lyrical but still with an undercurrent of menace. At various points there are references to the *Dies irae* the chant for the dead from the Catholic liturgy. The two main themes become ever more frenzied and intertwined, culminating in a fearful climax. But dawn is imminent; a cock crows, and the diabolical assembly quickly dissipates into the darkness.

## LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Born in Bonn, December 16, 1770; died in Vienna, March 26, 1827

### VIOLIN SONATA NO. 9 IN A MAJOR, OP. 47 (Kreutzer)

I. *Adagio sostenuto*; *Presto*

II. *Andante con variazioni*

III. *Finale: Presto*

Beethoven originally wrote his *Kreutzer* Sonata for the violinist George Augustus Polgreen Bridgetower (1779–1860). Bridgetower was born in Poland of a European mother (German or Polish) and a Black father (an “Abyssinian prince,” if one untrustworthy source is to be believed). He became a sensation as a child prodigy, renowned for the dash and brilliance of his playing.

Beethoven met Bridgetower in Vienna when the violinist was 24. He was so impressed with his virtuosity that he immediately set about writing a violin sonata for him, which the violinist premiered on May 24, 1803 with the composer at the piano.

Then the two had a violent quarrel (over a woman, sources suggest) and when it came time to publish the sonata, Beethoven dedicated it not to Bridgetower but to Rodolphe Kreutzer, whom Beethoven described as “a good and amiable man.” But surely no one ever less deserved a dedication from Beethoven than Kreutzer, who never performed the work and even called it “outrageously unintelligible.”

The ninth of Beethoven's ten sonatas for violin and piano is the grandest and most impressive of them all. It is by far the longest, the most difficult, contains the richest textures, and, to a greater extent than any other, puts both musicians on an equal footing throughout. This is no music for amateurs; it is unequivocally intended for accomplished and seasoned professionals. Of the ten sonatas, only the *Kreutzer* has a slow introduction, a feature usually reserved for Beethoven's grandest, most imposing works. Throughout the opening movement the violinist is called upon to execute numerous chords in triple and quadruple stops (playing across three and four strings simultaneously), beginning with the sonata's initial chord for violin alone.

The *Andante con variazioni* is the longest movement in all ten sonatas, clocking in at about thirteen minutes. The theme—lofty, elegant, noble in its simplicity—is followed by four variations, some quite virtuosic, with decorative filigree. The last, nearly five minutes in length, is replete with trills, turns, rapid scales and other ornaments for both instruments. There are even a few 128th notes in the piano part towards the end. The audience at the premiere of this nobly elegant music was so entranced that it demanded an encore on the spot.

The finale is no less impressive. The rapid, nearly continuous rhythmic pattern of long–short–long–short belongs to the tarantella, a dance that originated in Italy and, according to legend, served to counteract the poisonous bite of the tarantula spider. The dizzying whirl of notes is briefly interrupted several times by contrasting moods and pulses, only to reel on again and again until it reaches its triumphant conclusion.

## INTERMISSION



# The program

## KA NIN CHAN

Born in Hong Kong, December 3, 1949; now living in Toronto

### SOULMATE

Ka Nin Chan was born and raised in Hong Kong, moved to Canada in 1965 and became a naturalized Canadian citizen in 1971. Since then, he has risen to become one of this country's leading composers. He has written works for the Calgary Philharmonic, the National Arts Centre Orchestra, the CBC Radio Orchestra, the Esprit Orchestra, the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra and Symphony Nova Scotia, among many others. He has won awards from the Canada Council, the Ontario Arts Council, Ontario's Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration and the Toronto Arts Council. He also has two Juno Awards for Best Classical Composition.

Chan studied composition with Jean Coulthard at the University of British Columbia while concurrently pursuing a degree in electrical engineering. He did his graduate studies in music at Indiana University, where he earned a Master's degree in 1978 and a Doctorate in 1983. He also pursued advanced studies in composition in Darmstadt, Germany. In 1982 Chan joined the faculty at the University of Toronto, where he still teaches.

The six-minute *Soulmate* is derived from a larger score, *Poetry on Ice*, written for figure skating and commissioned by the Ontario Arts Council for the Guelph Spring Festival in 1995. In the published score, Chan writes that "the piece describes two people who accept each other beyond love and affection. Their understanding is subtle, mutual and wordless, like a pair of dancers on ice. The unending melody depicts their graceful, florid movement as well as their voices from the heart."



## SERGEI PROKOFIEV

Born in Sontsovska (today Krasnoye), department of Ekaterinoslav, Ukraine, April 27, 1891; died in Moscow, March 5, 1953

### VIOLIN SONATA NO. 2 IN D MAJOR, OP. 94a

*I. Moderato*

*II. Scherzo: Presto*

*III. Andante*

*IV. Allegro con brio*

This work originated as a flute sonata, premiered in 1943 by Nikolai Charkovsky and Sviatoslav Richter. It didn't have much of an impact in this form, so when David Oistrakh suggested that Prokofiev turn it into a violin sonata, the composer eagerly agreed. Prokofiev related: "The work involved was not very extensive, as we soon found that the flute part could quite easily be adapted to suit the technique of the violin. It required only a few alterations to facilitate bowing; the piano part remained unaltered." Oistrakh and Lev Oborin gave the first performance on June 17, 1944.

Prokofiev said he "wanted to write the sonata in a gentle, flowing classical style." These qualities are immediately evident in the first movement, whose principal themes are lyrical and eloquent. The Scherzo, in A minor, bubbles over with witty, energetic writing in the form of flying leaps, rapid register changes and strongly marked rhythms, while the brief, expressive slow movement possesses, in Alan Rich's words, "the tenderness of a Mozartian andante." The Finale goes through several changes of mood and tempo. For its concluding pages, it hurtles along with a white-heat intensity to a thrilling close.

Program notes: Robert Markow



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