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Goodyear has something new in store for Kingston

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will debut his first chamber work. The Piano Quartet will be Goodyear's third world premiere as a composer this year. This past February, his suite for piano and orchestra, "Callaloo," was premiered in Leipzig by Kristjan Jarvi and the MDR Symphony Orchestra, with Goodyear on piano. His orchestral piece, "Dust Devil," commissioned by the Niagara Symphony, premiered in May.

Goodyear replied in writing recently to questions about his Piano Quartet to be performed in Kingston. Asked to characterize the work, he said:

"This piece is a one-movement rhapsody that is inspired by integration: Besides the integration of the individual sounds of each instrument, each section of the rhapsody has integration of musical styles inspired by various centuries in Western music."

In recent years, Goodyear has immersed himself in Beethoven. On three occasions he performed all 24 Beethoven piano sonatas, roughly 11 hours of music, in a single day. Last fall, he performed all five Beethoven piano concertos with two Canadian orchestras. In his spare time, Goodyear transcribed Tchaikovsky's orchestral score for the Nutcracker Ballet into a work for piano. His recording of it won much acclaim, including a nod from the New York Times as one of the

best classical albums of 2015.

Asked about how all the works of the great composers inform his own compositions, he said: "I can only compose when I can allow myself to turn the status quo of composing completely on its head."

"The challenge of composing something for piano quartet is to always celebrate the diversity of each instrument while also celebrating why the union of the four instruments is so beautiful!" he said.

The pianist's home base is Philadelphia, where he earned a bachelor's degree at Curtis Institute of Music before heading to Juilliard for his master's degree. He holds dual citizenship in the U.S and Canada.

Goodyear will also be performing in Kingston, at concerts five and six. He is paired with cellist Clancy Newman for Rachmaninoff's massive Sonata in G Minor on July 29, and will take on the Bartok Piano Quintet to close the festival on July 31.

Asked to compare performing the works of the great composers to sitting in the audience, where he will be in Kingston this summer, listening to his own composition, he said: "It is an exhilarating experience every time I hear my compositions performed by other artists because of what they bring to the interpretation. Performing a work by other composers is just as exhilarating. It is very difficult to compare the experiences!"

PRE-FESTIVAL EDITION of Festival Notes



Kingston Chamber Music
FESTIVAL NOTES

Summer 2016

Natalie Zhu, artistic director

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Assembling A Music Festival

PIECE-BY-PIECE

How Natalie Zhu blends composers, works and players for six concerts

Pianist and festival Artistic Director Natalie Zhu said programming even her own, solo piano recitals can be a challenge. "There is so much repertoire to choose from. It's a very complicated thing how you combine composers and find pieces that relate to each other."



■ Natalie Zhu

Multiply a repertoire for many more instruments and musicians — and for several concerts — and programming for a festival becomes much more of a challenge. "Each and every artist has something unique to offer, with their own conception of the music and their own personalities," Zhu said, adding, "It is so amazing to see different artists sharing their ideas in only a couple of rehearsals, then at the concerts the same pieces we know will recharge with fresh ideas and energy, occasionally with a completely different interpretation."

Zhu said she picks most of the repertoire first and then matches the artists to the pieces. "The music always comes first because you need to think of each festival as a concert in itself and then you need to know who will be a good fit for each of the pieces."

Asked about her philosophy in selecting the music, Zhu said, "I enjoy revisiting the masterworks that bring out the best in the festival's string players. I think we have the best string players in the nation and I love the rich string ensembles . . . Of course, I also like to experiment with offbeat pieces and combinations of instruments that the audience hasn't heard before."

Compared to last summer's festival, Zhu feels she programmed 2016 to be "fun," with a lot of smaller pieces that have something to do with dance or folk music."

Zhu was asked to comment on each concert, piece-by-piece.

Concert 1, July 20, 7:30 p.m.

Clara, Robert and Johannes

Zhu characterizes the first concert as the most traditional of the six subscription concerts, with a strong flavor of romance. There has always been speculation among music historians about a possible romance between

Clara Schumann and Johannes Brahms, but little doubt that Clara inspired much of what Brahms composed. Zhu named her daughter after Clara Schumann so there is also little doubt the pianist is fond enough of Schumann's music to have it open the 2016 festival.

Clara's Three Romances for Violin and Piano is "an intensely beautiful work that fits this concert very well," said Zhu, who performs the piece with violinist Bella Hristova. **The Piano Trio No. 2** by Clara's husband, **Robert Schumann**, is



■ Wilhelmina Smith

"vibrantly intense and dramatic," Zhu said. Violinist Noah Geller and cellist Yumi Kendall will be joined here by the young, Bulgarian-born pianist, Viktor Valkov, who makes his Kingston debut. Rounding out this triangle of pieces and composers is one of the masterworks for strings Zhu likes to program, **Brahms' String Sextet No. 2 in G Major**, another piece "full of life and passion with that Bohemian feeling," she said. Cellist Wilhelmina Smith, above, makes her Kingston debut in the Brahms.

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Goodyear has something new in store for Kingston

Backstage, shortly after the concluding work of last summer's festival, pianist Stewart Goodyear approached pianist and festival Artistic Director Natalie Zhu to offer high praise for Natalie and her mates in the Clarosa Piano Quartet for their performance of Brahms' Piano Quartet in A Major.

"I thanked Stewart and then asked him right away if he'd like to compose something for our quartet. And he quickly said, 'Sure,'" Zhu recalled.

Thus was the almost offhand genesis of

Stewart Goodyear's Piano Quartet, which will have its world premiere by Clarosa at this summer's fourth subscription concert — at 7:30 p.m., Wednesday, July 27 — with Goodyear in the audience.

This rare commissioning of a work by the festival was made possible by a grant from the Roitman Fund for Chamber Music at the Rhode Island Foundation.

Goodyear has composed works for chorus, piano and orchestra, but Kingston

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■ Pianist and composer Stewart Goodyear

CONCERTS ASSEMBLED PIECE-BY-PIECE BY NATALIE ZHU

Concert 2, July 22, 7:30 p.m.

Variety is the Spice

If she had to identify one concert as a favorite, this would probably be it, Zhu admitted. This concert is heavily influenced by the guitar, either by the appearance of the guitar itself, played by the Grammy-winning Jason Vieaux, or by composers who played the guitar or composed works influenced by it. Dance and folk tunes also predominate, Zhu said. Several **Boccherini** quintets were influenced by Spanish dances, including the famous "Fandango" for guitar quintet. His **Cello Quintet is C Major** has tons of charm, lightness and optimism, coupled with frequent influences from the guitar tradition. Paganini was a virtuoso violinist and guitarist who in this **Concertante** for guitar, viola and cello was more interested in instrumental color than pure virtuosity, Zhu said. The **Seven Popular Spanish Songs for cello and guitar by DeFalla** has been transcribed and rewritten for several different instruments and even full orchestra, Zhu said, adding, "These are the most expressive of melodies. Yumi (Kendall) and Jason (Vieaux) will be perfect . . . I think it's going to be great." In **Escaich's Tango Virtuoso**, the dance theme continues but the guitar is abandoned in favor of the close harmonies of an award-winning saxophone quartet, Project Fusion. Finally, **Escena Andaluza by Turina**, a contemporary of DeFalla, composed a work for viola and piano, accompanied by a string quartet. The viola solo part belongs here to the extraordinary Roberto Diaz, president of Curtis Institute. There's no guitar in the Turina, Zhu said, but lots of pizzicato in the strings that's reminiscent of guitar.



■ Yumi Kendall

Concert 3, July 24, 4 p.m.

Afternoon Delights

Selections for Concert 3 are all signature works designed by the composers to show the virtuoso strengths of a particular instrument, Zhu said. **Bach's Concerto Italiano** is a work for keyboard that nearly every pianist plays for practice or in performance. Its familiarity makes it all the more interesting and remarkable to hear on the quartet of saxophones played by Project Fusion, the first ever such grouping of instruments in Kingston. Zhu said **Tedesco's Quintet for Guitar and String Quartet** was suggested by guitarist Jason Vieaux. Tedesco was most famous for being a prolific composer of Hollywood film scores, but he also wrote many works for the guitar. The piece is complex, Zhu said, especially for the accompanying string players who will no doubt be performing it for the first time. Zhu called **Mendelssohn's Piano Trio in D Minor**, with its intricate and expressive melodies, "a crowd pleaser," some-



■ Project Fusion, saxophone quartet, performs at Concerts 2 and 3. Members are, from left, Michael Sawzin, tenor; Dannel Espinoza, soprano; Matt Amedio, alto; and Matt Evans, baritone.

thing she wanted to program to balance a first half that she termed "a little unusual."

Concert 4, July 27, 7:30 p.m.

A Myriad of Festival Firsts

Schubert's Quartettsatz is the first movement of an unfinished work and a forerunner of the late string quartets that are among Schubert's greatest works, Zhu said. Violinist Ayano Ninomiya makes her first return to Kingston since 2013. The Myriad Trio debuts in Kingston with **Debussy's Trio in G Major** for flute, harp and viola, a signature work for this configuration of instruments. Harpist Julie Smith makes her Kingston debut and flutist Demarre McGill returns for the first time since 2008. Pianist **Stewart Goodyear** returns to Kingston for the third consecutive season, but he will be in the audience to hear the world premiere of his own **Piano Quartet**, commissioned by the festival and performed here by Zhu and her Clarosa Piano Quartet. As of this writing, Goodyear was still working on the piece, but Zhu said the pianist characterized the work as rhapsodic, free-spirited and almost improvisational. Zhu said she programmed **Dvorak's Bass Quintet** as "a great contrast" to the serious nature of Schubert's opening work. The quintet has "a bright, open-air quality" with many Bohemian folk melodies, Zhu said. Double bass player Harold Robinson returns to Kingston for the first time since 2008.

Concert 5, July 29, 7:30 p.m.

Duo to "Rach" the House

Mozart's Divertimento in F Major is "a very lively, sunny, familiar piece" that serves as a contrast to what follows in Concert 5, Zhu said. When English composers Arnold Bax and Herbert Howells do appear on concert programs they often appear together, as they were contemporaries. **Bax's Elegaic Trio** was composed in the early 20th century during a dark time in British history, and this brief work is "emotionally intense" with a "heavy" part for the viola. Clarosa quartet violinist Juliette Kang and husband, cellist Thomas Kraines "like to explore unknown works" and they recommended the

Howells' Piano Quartet score, Zhu said. The work is based on nature and the environment. "I had come up with the Bax first and then this Howells came along and it seemed like a good idea to pair them," Zhu said. The notion to pair pianist Stewart Goodyear and cellist Clancy Newman again, after last year's incredible performance of the Prokofiev Cello Sonata, was an easy one. Together they picked the massive, four-movement **Rachmaninoff Sonata in G Minor**, which is a tour de force for both instruments, full of Russian romanticism and emotion, Zhu said. She should know as she and Newman performed the work at the Brooklyn Public Library earlier this year. This time, Zhu will enjoy the show from the back of the hall.

Concert 6, July 31, 4 p.m.

Bowing Out with Bartok

The **Saint-Saens' Fantasie** for harp and violin is a very elegant piece for two elegant ladies, Zhu said. The two instruments complement one another in different ways. It was written for two musical sisters, Clara Eisler, a harpist, and Marianne Eisler, a violinist, so it showcases their abilities and the unusual combination of these two instruments. Zhu said the **Kodaly Intermezzo for String Trio** was suggested by her husband, violist Che-Hung Chen. "It's short and beautiful and a collection of folk melodies," she said. With a flutist and bass player available from the previous two concerts, Zhu said she was looking for a piece that might combine the instruments and the **Schulhoff Concertino** for flute, violin and double bass was suggested by bassist Harold Robinson. Zhu found the piece to her liking. "It's very Far Eastern sounding, with lots of counterpoint, contrasting episodes, fast dance and very contemporary -- all at the same time. There are also elements derived from Czech folk dance and song from the Carpathian Mountains in what is now the western Ukraine." Finally, the **Bartok Piano Quintet** is beautiful and melodic. "I don't want people to be scared by this Bartok," Zhu said. It was written early in Bartok's career and "sounds both like Brahms and Dohnanyi, and speaks to a Hungarian language of culture and melody."

Church Concert

Introducing Victor Valkov

"We are looking at a serious, intellectual and dramatic recital" that is all about love, life and death, according to Zhu. The young Bulgarian-born pianist Viktor Valkov will make his Kingston debut this summer. The setting for this concert is the beautiful and intimate Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd in Kingston. Zhu said she likes how Valkov's program covers piano compositions from the 16th through the 18th centuries, showing the connection between baroque contrapuntal style through one of **Beethoven's** greatest testaments, the "Hammerklavier" Sonata, with its massive fugue.

Reaching Children Through Music



Photo by Michael Derr of The Independent

■ Violinist Pat Petersen makes a point with children at Wakefield Elementary School during the festival's annual Schools Outreach program in February. Other musicians participating were violinist Emily Chen, cellist Morgan Santos, and violist Ilana Revkin, all members of La Bella Musica, a Rhode Island-based ensemble. The outreach program, which reached 12 schools in the region, was co-sponsored by Musica Dolce, a core group of musicians who hold concerts and music education programs throughout the region.

You don't need to buy a ticket to hear some music at Kingston

There is much music to enjoy without buying a ticket to the Kingston Chamber Music Festival.

Two open, Saturday morning rehearsals will highlight a variety of works in progress as musicians prepare for future concerts; and two, late-afternoon master classes offer an opportunity to see great artists coach aspiring young musicians.

Open rehearsals will be from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. both Saturdays during the festival. On July 23, at 9 a.m., guitarist Jason Vieaux and a quartet of string players will rehearse the Castelnuovo-Tedesco Quintet for Guitar and String Quartet. At 11 a.m., pianist Natalie Zhu will rehearse the Mendelssohn Piano Trio in D Minor with violinist Bella Hristova and cellist Wilhelmina Smith.

On July 30, from 9 to 10 a.m., flutist Demarre McGill, violist Che-Yen Chen and double bassist Harold Robinson will rehearse Erwin Schulhoff's Concertino for Flute, Viola and Double Bass. At 10 a.m., pianist Stewart Goodyear and a quartet of string players will rehearse the Bartok Piano Quintet.

A master class program conducted by festival musicians was initiated at last summer's festival. This year, the Clarosa Piano Quartet will coach string ensembles on Tuesday, July 26, from 4 to 5:30 p.m., and pianist Stewart Goodyear will do the same for pianists on Thursday, July 28, from 4 to 5:30 p.m.

Successful student applicants will perform on stage at the URI Fine Arts Center Concert Hall and then be coached by the festival artists. Both sessions are open to the public.

Kingston Artists Spreading Their Talents Around World

Artists headed to Kingston this summer, or Kingston alums of past seasons, continue to impact the music world at-large and reach personal milestones at home.

Festival Artistic Director **Natalie Zhu** recently completed a three-city solo recital tour in China, and last month paired with cellist Robert deMaine for a Maestro Foundation concert in Santa Monica, Calif. Two weeks after this summer in Kingston, she will perform in three concerts at the Skaneateles Festival, including one concert featuring the trio of Zhu, violinist Hilary Hahn and cellist deMaine.

Festival founder and former Artistic Director **David Kim**, now concertmaster of the Philadelphia Orchestra, recently launched the first annual David Kim Orchestral Institute of Cairn University in Philadelphia, where he is also a professor of violin studies.

Longtime Kingston favorite, cellist **Priscilla Lee**, recently won an audition to become the Associate Principal Cellist of the Philadelphia Orchestra. In a Facebook post, Priscilla gave much of the credit to her husband, violist **Burchard Tang**, already an orchestra member and another Kingston favorite, for occupying their two children so she could practice. "I'm still in a state of shock, it's truly hard to believe. I'm so excited to play and be a part of the BEST orchestra in the world!" she wrote.

Pianist **Stewart Goodyear** and guitarist **Jason Vieaux**, both returning for their third consecutive appearances in Kingston this summer, maintained active performance schedules this past year with too many appearances around the world to mention here.

Cellist **Yumi Kendall** recently founded the Suzuki Alumni Project to celebrate the Suzuki method of music education. Violinist **Ayano Ninomiya**, who returns to Kingston this summer is also a "Suzuki Kid," as are several other Kingston alums. Visit suzukialumniproject.org.

Violinist **Bella Hristova** performed her composer-husband David Ludwig's Violin Concerto with the Kansas City Symphony in April. During that performance she stood close by Kansas City Concertmaster **Noah Geller**. These two will play together again during the first week in Kingston this summer. Geller was married recently to Mari Yoshinaga, a percussionist and graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music.

The **Clarosa Piano Quartet**, with pianist Zhu and her husband, violist **Che-Hung Chen**, and violinist **Juliette Kang** and her husband, cellist **Thomas Kraines**, returns to Kingston this summer. The quartet recently performed a concert for the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society that included the world premiere of a piano quartet commissioned by the society. The quartet will premiere another piano quartet (by **Stewart Goodyear**) in Kingston this summer.

Six Kingston alums were among those appearing for the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center at two weekend concerts, May 13 and 15, at Alice Tully Hall in New York City. They were cellist **Efe Baltacigil**, bassist **Timothy Cobb**, oboist **James Austin Smith**, clarinetist **Alexander Fiterstein** and horn player **Julie Landsman**.

The Formosa Quartet, with Kingston favorites, violinist **Jasmine Lin** and violist **Che-Yen Chen**, is maintaining an international schedule, with recent concerts in England, Taiwan and Canada, and with several more concerts in Taiwan set for this August. Che-Yen and his wife, Tricia Lee, are new parents. Sebastian Eugene Chen was born on Feb. 20.

Earlier this year, Cellist **Clancy Newman** paired with Zhu at the Brooklyn Public Library for a recital that included a performance of Rachmaninoff's Sonata in G Minor for cello and piano. Zhu will take a seat when the same piece is performed in Kingston on July 29 by Newman and pianist Goodyear.

Kingston's many artists and alums in the Philadelphia Orchestra recently completed a seven-city tour of Asia.



■ Priscilla Lee

For Concert Tickets: Call the box office, at 401-874-2106 or visit kingstonchambermusic.org