

VIS-À-VIS SAXOPHONE QUARTET

8PM JUNE 5, 2010 • P.T. YOUNG HALL • SCHOOL OF MUSIC • UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA

1. *Quartet in Bb, Op. 109 (1932)*

Alexander Glazounov 1865 - 1936

Glazounov's music is his own, melodious, and filled with talent. He utilized folk melodies and songs that give his music its Russian character. He was immensely popular in his day and hailed as both a great teacher and exceptional composer. His teachers, Rimsky-Korsakov and Balakirev, encouraged the young Glazounov to compose and when, at just 16 years old, he wrote his first symphony they ensured it was performed. Rimsky-Korsakov declared the work a success: "The public was astounded when the composer came forward in his high school uniform to acknowledge their applause."



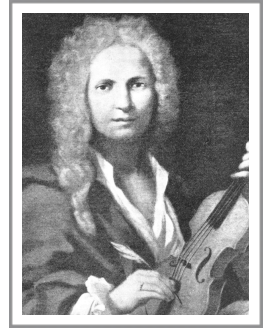
- I. Partie: *Allegro*
- II. Canzona Variee • Thème: *Andante*
 - Variation I
 - Variation II
 - Variation III (à la Schumann)
 - Variation IV (à la Chopin)
 - Variation V (Scherzo)
- III. Finale: *Allegro moderato*

2. *La Tempesta di Mare Op. 8 No. 5 RV 253*

Antonio Vivaldi 1678 - 1741

- I. *Allegro*
- II. *Largo*
- III. *Presto*

Vivaldi wrote more than 500 concertos, many of them likely premiered by the young women in his charge at the Ospedale della Pietà in Venice where he first gained employment in 1703.



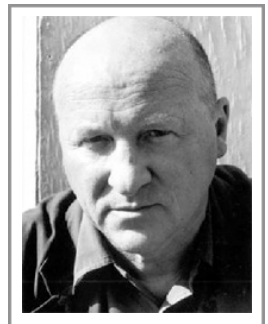
Baroque Venice established itself as a seat of artistic excellence in Europe largely due to its four conservatories (ospedali) of music. Beginning as charitable foundations, they developed gradually as centres of learned musicianship. By the early 1700s, their excellence was unrivaled. Charles de Brosse, French Magistrate and President of the Parlement de Dijon, visited Italy in 1739 and confirmed that "the Ospedali have the best music here. There are four of them, all for illegitimate or orphaned girls whose parents cannot support them. These are brought up at the State's expense and trained exclusively in music. Indeed they sing like angels, play the violin, flute, organ, oboe, cello, bassoon... The performances are entirely their own and each concert is composed of about forty girls." - *Lettres familières écrites d'Italie* (pub. 1799).

Intermission

3. *Alaric I or II*

Gavin Bryars b.1943

"The music of Gavin Bryars falls under no category. It is mongrel, full of sensuality and wit and is deeply moving. He is one of the few composers who can put slapstick and primal emotion alongside each other. He allows you to witness new wonders in the



sounds around you by approaching them from a completely new angle. With a third ear maybe. . ." - Michael Ondaatje.

4.

Sonata in G minor K30 (The Cat Fugue)

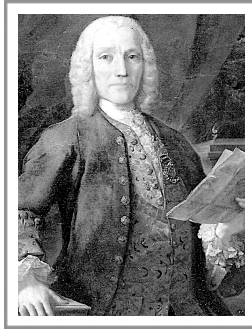
Sonata in B minor K87

Sonata in F minor K519

Giuseppe Domenico Scarlatti 1685 - 1757

The nickname "Cat Fugue" wasn't introduced until the early 19th century. Legend has it that Scarlatti had a pet cat called Pulcinella. The composer claimed that the cat enjoyed walking across the keyboard, always curious about its sounds.

On one occasion, so the story goes, Scarlatti wrote down a phrase from one of Pulcinella's strolls across the keyboard and used it as the opening motif in the fugue.

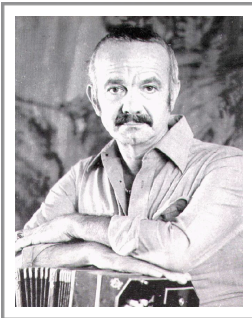


5. **La Muerte del Angel**

Astor Piazzolla 1921 - 1992

In 1953 Piazzolla entered his symphony *Buenos Aires* in a contest and won a grant from the French government to study in Paris with Nadia Boulanger.

"When I met her I showed her my kilos of symphonies and sonatas. She started to read them and suddenly came out with a horrible sentence: 'It's very well written.' And stopped, with a big period, round like a soccer ball. After a long while, she said: 'Here you are like Stravinsky, like Bartók, like Ravel, but you know what happens? I can't find Piazzolla in this.' And she began to investigate my private life... she was like an FBI agent! And I was very ashamed to tell her that I was a tango musician. Finally I said, 'I play in a *night club*.' I didn't want to say *cabaret*. And she answered, 'Night club, mais oui, but that is a cabaret, isn't it?' 'Yes,' I answered. It wasn't easy to lie to her. She kept



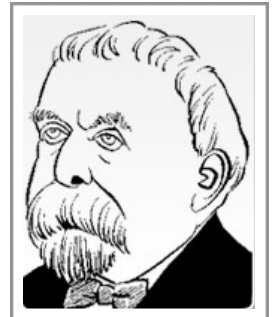
asking: 'You say that you are not a pianist. What instrument do you play, then?' And I didn't want to tell her that I was a bandoneon player, because I thought, 'Then she will throw me from the fourth

floor.' Finally, I confessed and she asked me to play some bars of a tango of my own. She suddenly opened her eyes, took my hand and told me: 'You idiot, that's Piazzolla!' And I took all the music I composed, ten years of my life, and sent it to hell in two seconds." - Ástor Piazzolla, *A Memoir*.

6. **Introduction et Variations sur une ronde populaire**

Gabriel Pierné 1863 - 1937

Gabriel Pierné's output as a composer includes: eight operas, oratorios, instrumental chamber and orchestral music, and songs. He avoided the symphonic form in favour of orchestral poems and character pieces. His works are marked by his perspicuity and pleasing synthesis of varied compositional techniques strongly influenced by Franck and Debussy. His operettas are replete with a charming sensuality (e.g. *Sophie Arnould*, 1927), his large-scale works (e.g. the 1897 oratorio *L'an mil* and the opera *Vendée*), display a mastery of musical architecture, and the smaller chamber works (e.g., sonatas for both violin and cello and a string quintet), are indicative of his exceptional facility. His most popular works are the oratorio *La Croisade des Enfants* (1905), *Marche des petits soldats de plomb* and *Entrance of the Little Faun* for piano, and the *Introduction et variations sur une ronde populaire* featured on tonight's program.



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