EASTMAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC

VERDEHR TRIO AWARD RECITAL

Monday, December 9, 2024
Hatch Recital Hall
2:30 PM



EASTMAN
SCHOOL OF MUSIC
UNIVERSITY of ROCHESTER

PROGRAM

Ebbrovory (1991) — David Ott (b. 1947)
Allegro
Andante molto
Allegro con fuoco

Variations on an Original Theme (2002) — Charles Rochester Young (b. 1965)

Trio (1996) — Gian Carlo Menotti (1911-2007)
Capriccio
Romanza
Envoi

TRIO DELUXE
Rumeng Liao, violin
Zhiwei Ni, clarinet
Hanxiao Lai, piano

PROGRAM NOTES

Ebbrovory (1991) David Ott

The title *Ebbrovory* is an invented word created from the colors of each instrument of the Verdehr Trio: ebony (clarinet), brown (violin), and ivory (piano). Conceived in three movements, the piece is based on traditional elements in approach to structure and, to large measure, style. While constructed in sonata form, the first movement evidences much freedom in its treatment of sonata elements. The opening theme, given first to the violin, is immediately repeated by the clarinet. It is somewhat spiky, motivic, and undergoes much development later. The subordinate theme is extremely lyrical and is set over rich harmonies. Following a rather extended development which houses the climactic peak, the recapitulation follows but with the order of the two themes reversed because so little of the cantabile material seemed appropriate for development and hence received little attention there. It is in the reprise where the piano is finally given the principal theme. The ending is quickly paced and bravura in spirit. The second movement is based on a sustained lyricism throughout and accomplished through a good deal of conversation among the three instruments. The pent up energy of the second movement is finally set free in the finale. The rhythmic impetus is carried by the piano virtually throughout. Some rather sharp, incisive dissonances add impact to the driving character.

— *David Ott*

Variations on an Original Theme (2002) Charles Rochester Young

Variations on an Original Theme was commissioned by the Verdehr Trio and Michigan State University. As the title suggests, the work explores the expressive potential of a short tonal theme through a series of contrasting variations.

— *Charles Rochester Young*

Trio (1996) Gian Carlo Menotti

The capricious first movement of the *Trio* combines witty dance-like figures with the composer's innate feeling for drama and melodic line. Skillful voice leading and rhythmic vitality highlight the interplay among the three performers. The expressive slow movement, Romanza, displays the true genius of the operatic master as emotionally intense melodies ring forth spontaneously. The third movement, a lively fugato entitled Envoi, brings the work to a brilliant exciting close.

— *Walter Verdehr*

MEET THE ARTISTS

Formed in September 2024, **Trio Deluxe** is a chamber ensemble featuring clarinetist Zhiwei Ni, violinist Rumeng Liao, and pianist Hanxiao Lai, winners of the 2024 Verdehr Trio Chamber Music Award at the Eastman School of Music. The trio is united by a shared passion for exploring diverse musical styles and creating meaningful musical experiences and is dedicated to crafting thoughtful and engaging musical interpretations.

Rumeng Liao earned her master's degree in Violin Performance from the Eastman School of Music, where she studied with Oleg Krysa. She is currently pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA) degree in Violin Performance and Literature under the guidance of Robin Scott, while holding a Teaching Assistantship. Ms. Liao has extensive experience as both a soloist and an orchestral musician. Her musical journey began at a young age, and at sixteen, she embarked on a solo tour in China, performing in cities such as Changsha, Wuhan, Bengbu, Shenzhen, and Zhaoqing. In 2011, she served as the concertmaster of the YALI Symphony Orchestra, performing at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. In 2015, she joined the Idaho State Civic Symphony as assistant concertmaster. As the winner of the 2016 Idaho State Civic Symphony Young Artist Competition and the 2018 Idaho Falls Symphony Young Artist Competition, she performed as a guest soloist at the L.E. and Thelma E. Stephens Performing Arts Center under the baton of Grant Harville and at the Idaho Falls Civic Center for the Performing Arts under the baton of Thomas Heuser. In 2024, Ms. Liao was invited to perform at Carnegie Hall as a winner of the American Virtuoso International Music Competition. She has also participated in renowned music festivals, including the Music Academy of the West, the Colorado College Summer Music Festival, and the Montecito International Music Festival.

MEET THE ARTISTS

Zhiwei Ni began playing the clarinet at the age of nine under the tutelage of renowned clarinet educator Fan Lei. His musical journey has taken him through distinguished institutions, including Interlochen Arts Academy, where he studied with Emil Khudyev, and Colburn Music Academy, where he worked with Yehuda Gilad. In 2020, he was admitted to the Eastman School of Music with a full scholarship and is currently pursuing his studies under Professor Michael Wayne. Zhiwei has earned numerous prizes, including Second Prize at the Third Central Conservatory of Music International Mozart Clarinet Competition (2016), First Prize at the China National Clarinet Competition in Qingdao, and Second Prize at the Vandoren Emerging Artist Competition (2020). His awards also include First Prize in the China-Spain International Music Competition (2021), the Grand Cash Prize at the Rising Star Berlin International Music Competition (2021), and recognition as a prizewinner in the 2023 ICA International Clarinet Competition. In 2022, he was selected as a candidate for the prestigious Carl Nielsen International Competition. An active orchestral musician, Zhiwei performed with the China Youth Symphony Orchestra (NYO-China) during its European tour in 2019 and 2020. He has participated in esteemed festivals, including the Bowdoin and Sarasota Music Festivals, as a fellowship member, and most recently joined the Schleswig-Holstein Festival Orchestra, collaborating with renowned conductor and pianist Christoph Eschenbach. The following February, Zhiwei will be featured as an artist-in-residence on National Public Radio's Young Artist program, further establishing his reputation as a rising clarinetist of exceptional talent.

Hanxiao Lai, age 25, is the 2024 Second Prizewinner of the Thousand Islands International Piano Competition held early this September in Cape Vincent, New York. Born in Shenzhen, China, she began her piano studies at the age of six. With performances spanning the United States, China, and Europe, Hanxiao is recognized for her engaging artistry and compelling musicianship. As a concerto competition winner, Hanxiao has appeared as a soloist with the Idyllwild Arts Academy Orchestra and the Coachella Valley Symphony. She has been featured in the Malibu Friends of Music Concert Series as both a soloist and chamber musician and has performed in concerts hosted by the Steinway Society. She has attended distinguished festivals including the Aspen Music Festival and School, PianoTexas International Festival and Academy, Rebecca Penneys Piano Festival, and Chautauqua Music Festival. During her studies in the United States,

Hanxiao was featured on National Public Radio's From the Top. Additional achievements include First Prize in the Steinway Society Concerto Competition, Second Place in the CAPMT Honors Competition, and Alternate in the Music Teachers National Association (MTNA) Senior Piano Competition of California. Currently, Hanxiao is pursuing her Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA) degree in Piano Performance and Literature at the Eastman School of Music, studying under Professor Alan Chow.

We acknowledge with respect the Seneca Nation, known as the "Great Hill People" and "Keepers of the Western Door" of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. We take this opportunity to thank the people whose ancestral lands the Eastman School of Music of the University of Rochester currently occupies in Rochester, New York.

UPCOMING EASTMAN SERIES CONCERTS

Tickets for all series concerts can be purchased at EastmanTheatre.org

KODAK HALL SERIES

Elf in Concert

Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre
Saturday, December 14, 2024 at 2:00 PM & 7:00 PM

Experience your favorite Christmas film transformed with the music of a live symphony orchestra in Elf™ in Concert! For the first time ever, audiences can rediscover the magic of this holiday classic while a live symphony orchestra performs John Debney's wonderful score and Santa Claus soars across the big screen in high-definition.

UPCOMING STUDENT ENSEMBLE CONCERTS

All student performances are free unless otherwise noted.

Eastman School Symphony Orchestra

Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre
Monday, December 9, 2024 at 7:30 PM

Music of Fanny Mendelssohn-Hensel, Felix Mendelssohn, and Mozart

Vocal Jazz

Kilbourn Hall
Monday, December 9, 2024 at 7:30 PM

CHAMBER MUSIC EXTRAVAGANZA

Duo Piano Recital

Hatch Recital Hall
Monday, December 9, 2024 at 8:30 PM

Messiah Sing-Along with Eastman Rochester Chorus

Kilbourn Hall
Tuesday, December 10, 2024 at 7:30 PM

For the most up to date information on Eastman concerts and events, scan this code to visit our online calendar.

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