



P R E S E N T S

Gryphon Trio



Photo credit: Bo Huang

Roman Borys, *cello*

Jamie Parker, *piano*

Annalee Patipatanakoon, *violin*

Sunday, March 3, 2019
3:00 p.m.

John H. Williams Theatre
Tulsa Performing Arts Center

This concert weekend is underwritten by the Charles and Marion Weber Foundation.

Gryphon Trio

For over 25 years, the Gryphon Trio has firmly established itself as one of the world's preeminent piano trios, garnering acclaim and impressing international audiences with its highly refined, dynamic and memorable performances. With a repertoire that ranges from traditional to contemporary and from European classicism to modern-day multimedia, the Gryphons are committed to redefining chamber music for the 21st century.

Creative innovators with an appetite for discovery and new ideas, Gryphon Trio has commissioned over 85 new works and frequently collaborates on projects that push the boundaries of Classical music. Christos Hatzis' multimedia work *Constantinople* – produced by the Gryphon Trio in partnership with Banff Centre, Tapestry New Opera, Ex Machina, and Music Toronto – continues to enrapture audiences in venues such as the Royal Opera House's Linbury Studio.

The Trio tours regularly throughout North America and Europe and enjoys longstanding relationships with organizations such as Music Toronto, Chamber Music Society of Detroit, and Ottawa Chamberfest. Triple concertos have allowed performances with major orchestras including NACO Ottawa, Toronto, Vancouver, and San Francisco Symphonies and tours with smaller orchestras such as the Württemberg Chamber Orchestra.

The Gryphon's prolific recording catalogue includes over 20 releases on the Analekta and Naxos labels and is an

encyclopedia of works for the genre. Honors include nine nominations and two Juno Awards for Classical Album of the Year, and the prestigious 2013 Walter Carsen Prize for Excellence in the Performing Arts from the Canada Council for the Arts.

Deeply committed to community engagement, education and the development of next generation audiences and performers alike, the Gryphons conduct masterclasses and workshops at universities and conservatories and are Artists-in-Residence at the University of Toronto's Faculty of Music and Trinity College. Since 2010, the Trio's ground-breaking outreach program, *Listen Up!*, has inspired and engaged 16 Canadian communities to collaborate on large-scale multi-faceted arts creation projects. The Trio has led Orford Music's Piano Trio Workshop since 2013.

Gryphon cellist Roman Borys is Artistic and Executive Director of the Ottawa Chamber Music Society. Annalee Patipatanakoon and Jamie Parker serve as the Society's Artistic Advisors, in addition to their responsibilities on the University of Toronto's Faculty of Music, where Mr. Parker is the Rupert E. Edwards Chair in Piano Performance and Ms. Patipatanakoon is Associate Professor of Violin and Head of Strings.

For more information on the Gryphon Trio's activities, visit their website, www.gryphontrio.com.

Program

Piano Trio

Rebecca Clarke
(English-American, 1886–1979)

In three movements:

Moderato ma appassionato (Moderately but passionately)

Andante molto semplice (Very simply, at a walking tempo)

Allegro vigoroso (Vigorously fast)

Love Triangle

Dinuk Wijeratne
(Sri Lankan-Canadian, born 1978)

INTERMISSION

Piano Trio in A Minor

Maurice Ravel
(French, 1875–1937)

In four movements:

Modéré (Moderately)

Pantoum: Assez vif (Rather brightly)

Passacaille: Très large (Very broadly)

Final: Animé (Animated)

We ask that the audience please hold their applause until after the last movement of each work.

Today's concert is preceded by a lecture by Dr. Jason Heilman, host of Classical Tulsa on Classical 88.7 KWTU.

Chamber Music Tulsa's concerts and educational outreaches are presented with the assistance of the Oklahoma Arts Council and Arts Alliance Tulsa.



About the Program

by Jason S. Heilman, Ph.D., © 2019

Rebecca Clarke

Born August 27, 1886, in Harrow, United Kingdom

Died October 13, 1979, in New York City, U.S.A.

Piano Trio

Composed in 1921; duration: 24 minutes

Despite her obvious talent, Rebecca Clarke was never able to gain full acceptance within the male-dominated world of music composition – and she languished in obscurity for decades as a result. Born northwest of London to a German mother and an American father, Clarke was not particularly interested in music at first. She only started playing the violin after her younger brother began taking lessons, but she quickly excelled, entering the Royal Academy of Music at age 17. Unfortunately, she was forced to withdraw two years later when her violin teacher made an unwelcome marriage proposal, but in 1907, Clarke was accepted into the composition program at the Royal College of Music, where she became the first woman student of Sir Charles Villiers Stanford. This, too, came to a premature end when Clarke's father revoked his financial support after she confronted him over his extramarital affairs. Now on her own, Clarke was forced to support herself as a freelance musician, but a major break came in 1912 when she was hired as a violist in Sir Henry Wood's previously all-male Queen's Hall Orchestra. Soon, the viola became Clarke's primary instrument, and she quickly gained fame in London and abroad as a chamber musician and recitalist.

It was at this same time that Clarke began to come into her own as a composer. Like much of her generation, she was enamored with the impressionistic sound world of Claude Debussy and Maurice Ravel, and her own music reflected this influence, tempered by the English folk style of Ralph Vaughan Williams and the brooding post-romanticism of Swiss composer Ernest Bloch. In 1919, Clarke submitted her Sonata for Viola and Piano – under a male pseudonym – to a chamber music competition organized by American philanthropist Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge at the Berkshire Festival in Massachusetts. After a long deadlock, Clarke's sonata came in second in the final results, losing to Bloch's own Viola Suite by just one vote. She continued to compose and perform throughout the 1920s and '30s, recording and touring with several all-women chamber ensembles, until the onset of arthritis made playing the viola impossible.

Caught in the United States at the outbreak of World War II, Clarke became reacquainted with Scottish-born composer and pianist James Friskin (1886-1967), whom she had first met as a student at the Royal College of Music. The two married in 1944 and took up residence in New York, where Friskin was teaching at the Juilliard School. Soon afterward, Clarke bowed to social pressures and

abandoned her composition career for good. Her catalogue of some 32 instrumental pieces, a dozen choral works and more than 60 songs was nearly forgotten until a 1976 interview with the 90-year-old composer on New York's WQXR radio station revealed it to the world. This sparked a renaissance of interest in Clarke's music that continues to this day.

Apart from her Viola Sonata, Clarke's most celebrated composition is her Piano Trio, which she wrote in 1921 for another iteration of Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge's chamber music competition. It, too came in second – this time to a string quartet by Hungarian composer Leo Weiner – but the piece impressed the competition's patron enough for her to take the unusual step of commissioning a new chamber work from Clarke: her 1923 *Rhapsody* for cello and piano.

With its brooding tone, Clarke's Piano Trio has been linked by many commentators to the traumatic aftermath of the First World War, which decimated an entire generation of young men. This is especially palpable in the first movement, marked *moderato ma appassionato*, which begins with a dramatic hammering gesture in the piano that is gradually revealed to be the unifying motif of the entire trio. As this impassioned music subsides, faint echoes of what sound like bugle calls lead into a muted second theme, introduced by the piano before being elaborated by the serpentine strings. The nervous return of the hammering motif from the beginning announces the development section, which blends these themes together before they are recapitulated individually in the leadup to the movement's uneasy coda. A plaintive violin solo over sparse piano chords opens the *andante molto semplice* second movement, which is not quite as simple as its designation implies. A new melody in the piano helps to propel this movement towards a lush climax before subsiding into a subtle close, which again features the solo violin, echoing the work's opening motif. The *allegro vigoroso* finale begins with a bouncing melody reminiscent of a folk dance, albeit one that seems to blend English and Eastern European accents. This tune recurs throughout the movement, occasionally interrupted by dreamlike episodes, but always returning to dispel the mood. A dramatic restatement of the hammering opening motif heralds a reappearance of the brooding tone of the first movement, but one final restatement of the dance melody propels the piece to a sudden and resounding finish.

Dinuk Wijeratne

Born in 1978 in Sri Lanka

Love Triangle

Composed in 2014; duration: 16 minutes

Composer, conductor, and pianist Dinuk Wijeratne cre-

ates boundary-crossing and genre-defying music, blending influences from around the world in a way that mirrors his own upbringing and experiences. Originally from Sri Lanka, Wijeratne grew up in Dubai before going to Manchester, England, to study composition at the Royal Northern College of Music. He then went to New York to study composition at the Juilliard School, under John Corigliano, and conducting at the Mannes College of Music, before completing his conducting studies in Canada at the University of Toronto. In 2004, Wijeratne made his Carnegie Hall debut with Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble and in 2016, his *Two Pop Songs on Antique Poems* won a Juno award from the Canadian Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences for Classical Composition of the Year. Wijeratne currently lives in Halifax, Nova Scotia, where he serves as Music Director of the Nova Scotia Youth Orchestra.

Wijeratne composed *Love Triangle* on a commission from the Gryphon Trio in 2013. Like much of his music, the piece conscientiously juxtaposes the musical cultures of the global East and West, as the composer explained:

“This single-movement piece entitled *Love Triangle* is not autobiographical, nor is it similar to the many concept-driven pieces I write. The music evolved rather rhapsodically from two distinctive features: the Middle Eastern-inspired melody heard in the strings at the outset, and the underlying rhythmic pattern inspired by a seven-beat Indian Classical ‘time cycle’. It also attempts to integrate a Western Classical sense of structure with three very improvisatory cadenzas from each instrument – the musicians and I are aiming for an effect akin to that glorious ‘out-of-time’-ness that occurs when an Arabic *oud* solos over the unyielding fixed groove of the band. There are several other melodic and rhythmic devices that are Middle Eastern and North Indian.

“The Gryphon Trio, with their staggeringly diverse résumé of collaborations, are no strangers to music that is about the meeting of cultures, or about blurred boundaries between what sounds improvised and what does not. I was utterly thrilled to have this opportunity to write for them!”

Maurice Ravel

Born March 7, 1875, in Ciboure, France

Died December 28, 1937, in Paris

Piano Trio in A Minor

Composed in 1914; duration: 28 minutes

Today, we remember Maurice Ravel as a quintessentially French composer, but his music had a wide variety of influences. This is in part the result of his blended heritage: Ravel was born in the Basque region of France to a Spanish Basque mother and a Swiss father. His parents encouraged his early interest in music, sending him to the

Paris Conservatoire as a teenager. But regimented musical study did not agree with the hotheaded young Ravel, and he was expelled from the Conservatoire twice before finally graduating. Yet his colorful compositions earned him a great deal of fame on the Parisian music scene – along with some prominent supporters in the press. When Ravel failed to win the prestigious Rome Prize in 1905, the public outcry was such that the Conservatoire director was forced to resign.

After the Rome Prize fiasco, Ravel was given the opportunity to take a six-week tour of the Mediterranean on the private yacht of a Parisian newspaper publisher. He spent a large part of this trip in Spain, and many of the works Ravel composed after returning were tinged with a certain Spanish flair, including his 1905 piano work *Alborada del gracioso* (“The Jester’s Aubade”), his 1908 orchestral suite *Rapsodie espagnole* (“Spanish Rhapsody”), and his 1911 opera *L’heure espagnole* (“The Spanish Clock”). After this Spanish decade, Ravel returned to his homeland, spending the summer of 1914 in the French Basque town of Saint-Jean-de-Luz, not far from where he was born. There, he reacquainted himself with Basque folk music, which subsequently found its way into several more of his compositions – including his only piano trio, which he had just begun to compose that summer.

Initially, Ravel’s work on his Piano Trio in A Minor proceeded slowly, but the outbreak of World War I that August led him to redouble his efforts so he could finish in time to enlist in the French Army. The piece is cast in four movements; the melody of the moderately paced first movement (*modéré*) was, according to the composer himself, inspired by the traditional Basque *zortziko* dance. The piano intones the dance’s characteristically irregular rhythm of 3+2+3 beats at the outset, which is then taken up by the violin and cello. A lilting second theme in a similar 3+2+3 rhythm is introduced by the strings shortly afterwards, and the two melodies combine at the movement’s climax. Ravel called his scherzo-like second movement a *pantoum*, after the poetic form of the same name, and the two intertwining themes of this rather sprightly movement (*assez vif*) seem to recall interlocking quatrains by the likes of Victor Hugo and Charles Baudelaire while evoking the form’s Southeast Asian origins. The third movement is a very broad (*très large*) *passacaille*, or *passacaglia*: a Baroque musical form in which a single short, repeated motif is overlaid with a series of increasingly intricate variations. This movement’s repeating theme, introduced by the piano, is played by at least one of the three instruments at any given time, even as its elaborate variations come into the foreground. The brilliantly animated finale (*animé*), which follows without a pause, is characterized by a complex alternation of five- and seven-beat meters, also inspired by Basque folk rhythms, bringing Ravel’s trio to a virtuosic close.

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