

USCB Chamber Music

A New Season With the Same Old Excellence

by Michael Johns

USCB Chamber Music is about to begin its 39th season. Five Sunday concerts with five different instrumental combinations will feature fourteen performers playing the music of twenty-two composers ranging across a period of 250 years. Strings and piano predominate with clarinet and guitar being featured on one concert each.

For the past ten years, cellist Edward Arron has hosted, curated, and performed on every concert. He has been responsible for selecting repertoire and engaging guest artists. The series' continued artistic success is largely attributable to his custodianship. Gregarious and affable, articulate and irrepressible, Ed's infectious love of music and people is obvious to even a casual observer. These qualities and his programming philosophy are clearly discernible in his reflections on presenting chamber music: "Chamber music has been an absolute passion of mine since I was a very young child. There are countless masterpieces and rarely performed treasures in the literature, and I get the greatest pleasure out of creating programs and bringing those treasures to the audience. Not unlike putting together certain ingredients in cuisine or colors and textures in a painting, assembling programs is an art. I enjoy creating a context and bringing the audience on a journey for the time that we are together. I try very hard to bring variety and also to create combinations that are illuminating. And like the legendary Charles Wadsworth [founding artistic director of USCB Chamber Music], I like to talk to the audience and share a little bit of what I know about the music, the composers and my fellow artists. The thing that I enjoy most about chamber music is that I am able to have my own solo voice, but that I am constantly sharing in a dialogue with others....Good chamber musicians know how to get along with one another, and they know when to lead and when to defer. I think a good artistic director can help to bring exactly the right personalities together to create exciting performances and pleasurable experiences for the artists and the audience."

The opening concert, on November 4, 5:00pm, begins with the music of Mozart, *Clarinet Quartet, K. 317d*, and concludes with Brahms' haunting, autumnal *Clarinet Quintet in b minor*. Sandwiched between is Verdi's passionate and breathless *String Quartet*. Todd Palmer, well known to Low Country audiences for his many performance on this series and at the Spoleto Festival, will play the clarinet. The December 9 concert features music of Beethoven, *Piano Trio, Op. 44*, Elgar's infrequently performed *Violin Sonata, Op. 82*, and concludes with one of chamber music's most beloved works, Schubert's rich and tuneful *Piano Trio in E-flat Major*. Hailed as "the real thing, a player with a virtuoso's technique, a deeply expressive musicianship, and a probing imagination" (American Record Guide), guitarist Colin Davin is featured on the third concert, January 13, 2019. Davin and violinist Tessa Lark will romp around Europe and the America's, bringing out the dance qualities of north German Baroque works by J.S. Bach and Telemann and the virtuosity in passionate, red-blooded, show pieces from Spain (de Falla), Venezuela (Lauro), Argentina (Piazzolla), Paraguay (Mangoré), and Brazil (Gnattali, Villa-Lobos).

Concert number four, March 17, concludes with Fauré's emotionally-charged *Piano Quartet, Op. 15*, performed by frequent and respected USCB guest artists Phillip Bush, piano, Aaron Boyd, violin, and Dimitri Murrath, viola. Three other works showcase the instruments in different lights: Dvořák: *Silent Woods* (cello and piano), Rebecca Clarke: *Dumka: Duo Concertante* (violin, viola, piano) and Schubert: *String Trio in B-flat Major*. The final concert, April 14, is sure to leave the audience wanting

more. Pianists Jeewon Park and Andrew Armstrong take turns teaming up with violinist Chee-Yun and Edward Arron in the music of Pärt: *Spiegel im Spiegel*, Saint-Saëns: *Sonata Violin and Piano Sonata, Op. 75*, and Turina: *Trio, Op. 76*. The curtain rises with an orchestral overture, one of the most well-known in the repertoire, Mendelssohn: *Hebrides Overture, Op. 26*, arranged for four-hands piano, violin and cello. Park and Armstrong will conclude the concert and season by bringing the house down with a four-hand version of Gershwin's beloved *Rhapsody in Blue*.

Support the Arts! Fill the hall and become an indispensable contributor to the concert. Join in with spirited listening. Help create an environment that inspires the artists to greater heights and encourages them to speak directly to you. Series information and tickets, as well as information about the newly launched Endowment, are available on www.uscb.edu/chambermusic or at 843-208-8246, Monday through Friday. The USCB Center for the Arts, located at 801 Carteret Street, opens at 3:30pm on the day of the concert. Come and experience the joy of chamber music for yourself!