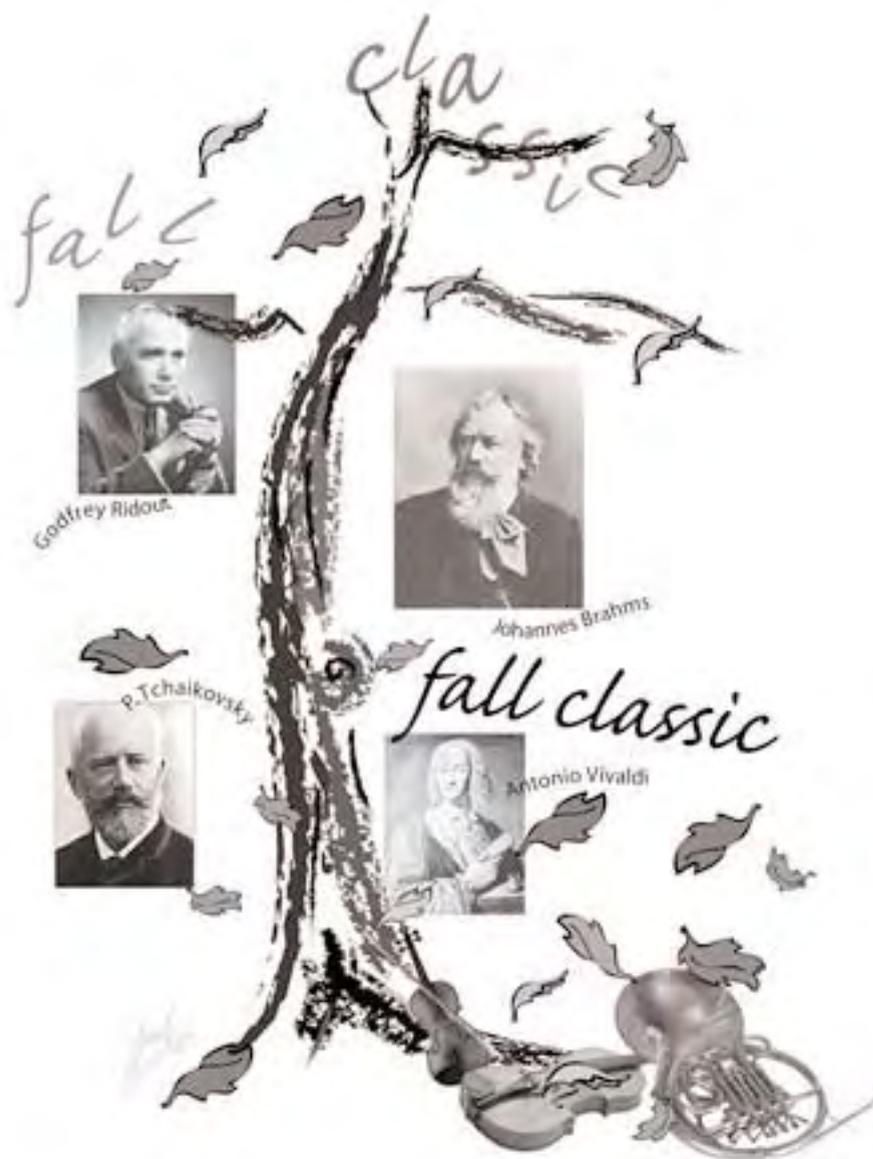


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Counterpoint Community Orchestra
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JOHANNES BRAHMS - SYMPHONY NO 1



Brahms started work on his first symphony in 1862, and it took him 14 years to complete, by which time he was 44 years old. The long gestation of this work may be put down to two factors: on one hand, Brahms was extremely self-critical (leading him to destroy much of his early work), and on the other, the expectation by the public and Brahms' friends that he would continue "Beethoven's inheritance" and produce a symphony of appropriate dignity and intellectual scope was something Brahms didn't feel equal to, in view of the monumental reputation of Beethoven. When it finally premiered in 1876, the symphony was a success and it was felt that Brahms met the lofty expectations of his admirers. So much so, in fact, that the conductor Hans von Bülow was moved to call it "Beethoven's Tenth", a tribute Brahms understandably received with mixed feelings. There is no denying that there are many musical similarities with Beethoven, but all references to composers that, Brahms, forever the reluctant romantic, admired were fully intentional; it was his way of acknowledging his debt to them.

The symphony opens with a majestic slow introduction characterized by an ascending chromatic theme on top of a relentless kettledrum beat. This is followed by an agitated fast movement rich in thematic material, and in which Beethoven's "fate" motto from his Fifth Symphony is quoted. The nervous drive continues throughout the movement until almost the very end, which comes on an unexpected note of quiet resolve.

The prevailing mood of the second movement is one of calm and solace, a serene vision of peace in the typically Brahmsian simple yet extremely lyrical motif introduced by the solo violin. The third movement is not quite a scherzo, but rather one of Brahms' characteristic intermezzi: it is cheerful in a gentle, restrained way, but also touched by melancholy and with a short, animated trio-like section.

The last movement opens, like the first one, with a slow section in which a choral-like theme is introduced by the brass (an obvious tribute to Bach). Following this the strings come in with the majestic theme of the finale proper, the famous paraphrase of the choral theme in the finale of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. When someone remarked on the similarity between the two themes, Brahms, who resented the implicit insinuation of plagiarism, testily replied that "any ass can see that". The movement becomes more exultant and culminated in an extended coda in which the brass chorale from the movement's introduction returns in a blazingly assertive form.

by Joseph Nachman, violin

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PYOTR TCHAIKOVSKY - SWAN LAKE



Born in 1840, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's life was in turmoil from the start. As a child, he was viewed as neurotically excitable and discouraged from applying his natural musical talents. Having lost his mother as a teen, Tchaikovsky was sent to a military boarding school because music was not considered a proper profession in Russia at the time. During this period, the young man also discovered his romantic attraction to other boys.

Tchaikovsky didn't begin to study music seriously until his twenties, after quitting his civil servant job. After graduating from the St. Petersburg Conservatory, he became a music professor and spent the next ten years teaching and composing.

Many of Tchaikovsky's neuroses stemmed from his homosexuality and often made him feel depressed and insecure. Unable to come to terms with it, he married a female admirer, hoping to settle his problems. This union was a failure and the composer suffered a nervous breakdown and left his wife. Tortured by his sexuality, he attempted

suicide, quit his conservatory job and went abroad.

Tchaikovsky composed Swan Lake in 1875 as a commissioned symphonic piece for a ballet performance. At the time, ballet music was written merely to provide pleasant background music for the dancers.

Swan Lake is the story of forbidden love between Odette, a young woman transformed by an evil sorcerer into a swan, and Prince Siegfried. The music sweeps the audience through many worlds of the ballet - from the light-hearted festivities of the royal court, to the passionate tenderness of the couples' duets, to the mysterious moonlit lake and other folk dance numbers. The composition is dramatic in its evocation of the story's themes: tragic, tangled love and unwitting betrayal.

Rehearsals began in Moscow before the composer had finished his score. Though Tchaikovsky himself wrote about his excitement over this new work, Swan Lake was a huge failure in its first year. The symphonic structure and emotional content was so advanced, audiences criticized it for being too complicated and "undanceable."

However, Tchaikovsky's composition was ahead of its time. It wasn't until after the composer died in 1893 that Swan Lake became popular. Eventually, Tchaikovsky was recognized for helping to shape a new landscape for the future of ballet music.

To this day, no one knows how Tchaikovsky died - whether from cholera after drinking infected water, or by suicide following attempts to blackmail him over his homosexuality. In many ways, Tchaikovsky's life and career placed him uncomfortably between opposing worlds, and this conflict was a central aspect in both his creative life and musical works.

by Katya Diakow, violin



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GODFREY RIDOUT - FALL FAIR



Godfrey Ridout was a Canadian composer born in Toronto in 1918. His interest in music began as a child when he went to see the newly reformed Toronto Symphony Orchestra perform.

As an adult, he taught music at the Toronto Conservatory of Music and at the University of Toronto, where he worked as a professor in the music faculty until 1982.

Ridout composed a wide variety of music, ranging from chamber and symphonic pieces, to radio drama scores for the CBC and film scores for the NFB. These assignments led to an interest in the spontaneity of jazz and developed his respect for popular music.

While critics labeled his tastes as old-fashioned, Ridout was not a conformist. Unlike other 20th-century composers, his works were noted for their fundamental sunny and affirmative tone. Ridout was known for enjoying the fun in music and often concluded his pieces with tuneful passages. Ridout was commissioned to write a piece for a United Nations concert in New York in 1961. The work was inspired by the composer's love of Canada's fall fairs. "I couldn't get fall fairs out of my head," Ridout said. "I used to go to the fair at Lakefield when I was a kid, and what I remember best is the dust. There were horse races and dust, a ferris wheel and dust, sideshows and dust."

Ridout's *Fall Fair* appeals to audiences as a short and striking overture which uses a dancing tempo and big-band effect to suggest several musical scenes. The work has become one of the most well-known and performed Canadian compositions.

by Katya Diakow, violin



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to Counterpoint Community Orchestra's 24th season. We are excited to be presenting Brahms's First Symphony at our first concert on December 1st.

Your Orchestra's Board changed at this fall's AGM. David Spek, Addison Tallman, Colin MacAdam and Jennifer Langton, all of whom worked tirelessly for the orchestra, have retired from the Board. From the Community, we welcome to the Board, Don St. Jean as new Vice-Chair, and Chris Hoover, as our new Treasurer, as well as our newest Orchestra representative, Lise Beaupré.

Currently, we are following up and bringing the Orchestra's strategic plan to life. If you are interested to assist and ensure the continuity and future of the CCO, we now have two additional Board vacancies and there is a place for you in this important work of the Orchestra. You are invited to contact us through the orchestra's email: info@ccorchestra.org.

The orchestra members and Music Director Terry Kowalczyk, look forward to seeing you at our December 1st concert.

Paul Willis, Chair

ANTONIO VIVALDI - FOUR SEASONS, FALL



Antonio Lucio Vivaldi was a boastful composer known for writing more than 500 concertos. Born in Venice in 1678, he learned to play violin from his barber father, and the two toured together performing.

By age 25, Vivaldi became an ordained priest and was given the nickname *Il Prete Rosso* (The Red Priest) due to his flaming red hair. He quit saying mass soon after because of severe asthma. For many years, he taught at a girls' orphanage, where he composed many of his works for the institution's renowned orchestra.

Though Vivaldi wrote an impressive amount of music in other genres, including more than 50 operas, his concertos remain as his greatest musical contribution.

Composed in 1723, the *Four Seasons* is Vivaldi's best-known work, and one of the most recognizable pieces of Baroque music - often used in movies and TV commercials, and played at weddings.

Each concerto represents a different season, using sound to illustrate descriptions from an accompanying poem, allegedly written by Vivaldi himself. The inspiration for these tone poems is said to be the countryside around Mantua in Italy.

The musical conception of the piece made Vivaldi a revolutionary. Using his ingenuity and

playfulness, the composer took both mundane and dramatic sounds from daily life and portrayed them in a way which challenged players and engaged listeners.

The Fall season begins with a fast movement depicting peasants celebrating the harvest with liquor, song and dance. A slower movement represents a mild, pleasant air which invites everyone to enjoy a peaceful slumber. The final fast movement signals hunters emerging at dawn with horns, guns, and hounds.

The music in this movement contains a short theme of an ascending scale, followed by a low note. This represents the unsuccessful efforts of various inebriated revelers to get up and leave the party. At the end of the movement, this theme is repeated in the coda, indicating that the music itself has failed to escape the drunken fall bash.

Like many of Vivaldi's pieces, the *Four Seasons* reflects two sides intrinsic in Baroque music - buoyant exuberance and dignified seriousness. The composer was acclaimed for his success in composing music meant to be appreciated by the general public, not just by an intellectual, privileged minority.

While Vivaldi earned considerable money for his compositions, he spent frivolously and died in poverty at 63.

by Katya Diakow, violin

CONCERT PROGRAMME

SYMPHONY No. 1 IN C MINOR, Op. 68

JOHANNES BRAHMS

FALL FAIR

GODFREY RIDOUT

FOUR SEASONS: FALL

ANTONIO VIVALDI

with James Aylesworth, violin

SWAN LAKE ~ Selections

PYOTR TCHAIKOVSKY



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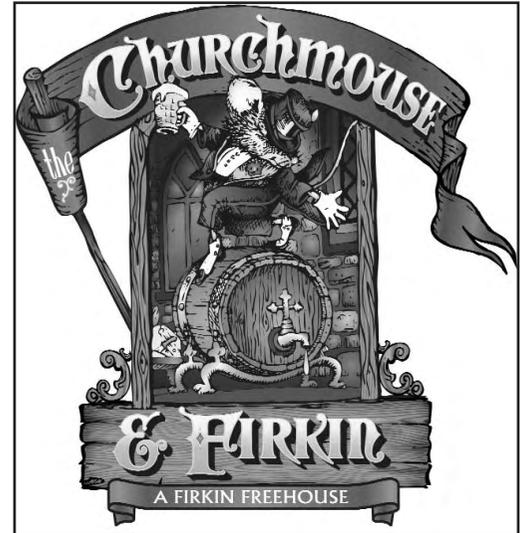
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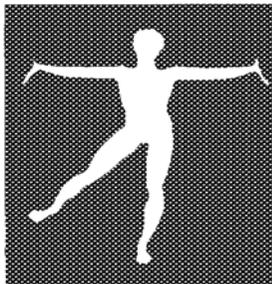
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