Art of Élan

bringing back the excitement of classical music
Art of Élan is an exciting new chamber music organization that is committed to changing the cultural climate of San Diego by presenting chamber music concerts in an artistically stimulating and invigorating environment. Created by flutist Demarre McGill and violinist Kate Hatmaker, Art of Élan specifically aims to expose new audiences to classical music, explore (and expand) the horizons of the classical music scene, energize audiences and musicians alike, and ultimately educate and cultivate a future generation of classical music lovers. Art of Élan promises to provide a more engaging concert experience for audiences, focusing on both innovative and colorful programming, as well as the energy of live performance. Concert-goers should expect an event where, start to finish, their senses are being constantly stimulated by the various artistic elements being presented to them. Thank you for being a part of the Art of Élan experience!
PROGRAM

Pièce pour flûte seule

Jacques Ibert (1890-1962)

Demarre McGill, flute

Sérénade, op. 30

Albert Roussel (1869-1937)

Allegro
Andante
Presto

Demarre McGill, flute; Julie Smith, harp; Kate Hatmaker, violin;
Travis Maril, viola; Erin Breene, cello

String Quartet in F Major

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Modéré-Très doux
Assez vif-Très rythmé
Très lent
Agité

Tai Murray and Kate Hatmaker, violins; Travis Maril, viola; Margo Drakos, cello

We would like to express our gratitude to both Paige Satter and the San Diego Museum of Art for collaborating with us on “The Red Series.” Thank you, as well, to the anonymous friends of Art of Élan, who graciously underwrote the concert. And to Gordon J. Brodfuehrer, thank you for your generous gift and for your support of our mission.
COMPOSITIONS

Ibert’s “Pièce pour flûte seule”

Widely known for his “light” and “witty” compositional style, Jacques Ibert composed his “Pièce pour flûte seule” in 1937 at a party, of all places, after the premiere of his Flute Concerto by the famed flutist, Marcel Moyse. As the story goes, both Ibert and Moyse were invited to a reception at the French Embassy in Prague, right after the premiere concert, and as a “treat” for the guests, Ibert decided to compose a short, five-minute “encore” for Moyse to perform (to sight-read, essentially). Partially due to its strange genesis, this piece has become quite famous in the flute world and is similar in style to Debussy’s “Afternoon of a Faun” and “Syrinx” for solo flute.

Roussel’s “Sérénade” for flute, harp, violin, viola and cello

Orphaned at a young age, Albert Roussel was always characterized as a man of maturity, although his interest in music did not develop until quite late in life. His love of the sea, mathematics, and serving his country as a Naval officer occupied his time until he was well into his thirties. He completed his studies (at the age of 39!) with famous composer Vincent d’Indy and then immediately began to teach, counting the Impressionist composer Erik Satie and Edgard Varese among his students. Roussel’s compositional style, however, could neither be classified as Impressionist nor neo-classicist. He was greatly influenced by Debussy (and naturally the Impressionist qualities of his music), but also by the Eastern, exotic sounds that he had experienced during his travels of India and Southeast Asia (prior to studying music). The “Sérénade,” written in 1925, provides a perfect example of this “mixed” compositional style, as it certainly bears the stamp of the French masters of the day, while also sounding almost orchestral in texture, despite there being only five musicians involved. The first movement opens with a long flute melody that becomes increasingly faster as the movement goes on, which is contrasted nicely by the calm, other-worldly feel of the second movement. It is in this movement that one hears a bit of the “exotic” sounds that reflect his travels in the Orient, and the dialogue between the cello and the flute towards the end of the movement certainly sets the stage for all of the rhythmic interplay that takes place in the final movement.

Ravel’s “String Quartet in F Major”

Maurice Ravel has often been referred to as an “Impressionist” composer, a characterization that both he and his colleague, Claude Debussy, disliked immensely, feeling that it was a term reserved for paintings, not musical compositions. Both composers’ compositions, however, do seem to offer up mere “impressions” of ideas, rather than concrete and structured melodies. But structure was one thing that Ravel was determined to incorporate in his writing, even if not always noticeable to the listener. Like Roussel, Ravel was greatly influenced by the writing of Debussy, who was a slightly
older colleague. In fact, many argue that Ravel’s string quartet is quite similar (in form) to that of Debussy, although the two vary greatly in melodic content. Ravel wrote this (his only) string quartet in 1903, as a final submission to the Paris Conservatoire (where he was enrolled) and the Prix de Rome (which he never managed to win). Dedicated to his teacher, Gabriel Faure, it contains many of the unusual harmonies and chord progressions that Debussy introduced to the composition world of the early 20th century, but there is a precision in the writing that perhaps explains why Ravel came to be regarded as one of the greatest orchestrators of all time. Unfortunately for Ravel, his teacher was not so impressed with this four-movement quartet, and thus Ravel decided to leave the Conservatoire, dejected and frustrated with the entire French establishment. Incidentally, the one person who did happen to like the work was Claude Debussy, who wrote to him “In the name of all the gods and my own, don’t change a thing you have written in your quartet.”

* PROGRAM NOTES WRITTEN BY KATE HATMAKER

MUSICIANS

Erin Breene

Erin Breene, cello, performs extensively both as a chamber musician and an orchestral musician throughout the United States. She currently holds the position of Principal Cellist of the San Diego Chamber Orchestra as well as the title of Associate Principal Cellist with Opera Pacific Orchestra. Since moving to San Diego, Ms. Breene has been a member of the California Quartet, a group that has toured both the U.S and Europe. She is a frequent performer on the San Diego-based Camarada Ensemble and has formed a piano/cello duo with pianist, Ines Irawati. Breene received her BM degree from Rice University as a student of Paul Katz. She then received her MM degree at the Juilliard School as a student of Timothy Eddy.

Margo Tatgenhorst Drakos

Margo Tatgenhorst Drakos, one of the most recognized young cellists in America, has performed throughout the US, Europe, South America, & Asia. In April 2007 Ms. Drakos was appointed Chief Operating Officer of InstantEncore.com, a site for live classical music. Margo has collaborated with the world’s leading artists including the Emerson, Tokyo, & Guarneri Quartets and regularly tours with “Musicians from Marlboro”. Ms. Drakos was the cellist of the American String Quartet from 2002-2006. She also served as Associate Principal of the Pittsburgh Symphony & Principal of the San Diego & Oregon Symphonies. Margo is a faculty member of the Manhattan School of Music. A graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music, Margo is completing her Masters in International Affairs at Columbia University. Her publications appear in the Stanford Social Innovation Review & the Cornell Law Journal.
Kate Hatmaker

Kate Hatmaker is currently a violinist with the San Diego Symphony, in addition to being the co-founder and Artistic Director of Art of Élan. Ms. Hatmaker has played with a wide variety of American orchestras, including the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, the New World Symphony, and the Pittsburgh “Live Chamber Orchestra,” which she helped promote in an effort to draw younger audiences to classical music. In addition to teaching in the San Diego area, Kate has been a frequent chamber music recitalist, performing most recently at Point Loma University and the San Diego Museum of Art. She has also been a featured soloist with the San Diego Symphony and the Breckenridge Music Festival orchestras. She completed her Masters of Music at Carnegie Mellon University, in the studio of Andres Cardenes, and her undergraduate training at both the University of Iowa and the Sorbonne University in Paris, France, graduating Phi Beta Kappa with high honors and degrees in both Political Science and French.

Travis Maril

Hailed as both “vivacious” and “highly polished and finely tuned,” violist Travis Maril is quickly gaining nationwide recognition as a chamber musician. While violist with the Hyperion String Quartet he won a top prize at the Fischoff National Chamber Music Competition, had performances broadcast on NPR’s Performance Today, and collaborated with the Miro Quartet and members of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. He has been a winner of the La Jolla Young Artist Competition and Aspen Concerto Competition, the latter win resulting in a performance of Piston’s Viola Concerto with the Aspen Academy Orchestra. He plays frequently with the San Diego Symphony and Chamber Orchestra, and was a member of the Tulsa Philharmonic Orchestra while still in high school. Mr. Maril earned his B.A. magna cum laude from the University of Southern California’s Thornton School of Music, where he was a Trustee Scholar and selected as an Outstanding Graduate, and his M.M. from Rice University’s Shepherd School of Music. His principal teachers have included Ralph Fielding, Karen Ritscher, Brian Chen, and Donald McInnes. Mr. Maril is currently viola faculty at San Diego State University.

Demarre McGill

Flutist Demarre McGill was a 2003 winner of an Avery Fisher Career Grant. He has performed concertos with a variety of orchestras including the Chicago Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, Pittsburgh Symphony, Milwaukee Symphony, Baltimore Symphony and The Florida Orchestra. An active chamber musician, McGill is a member of the Jacksonville, Florida based Ritz Chamber Players and has been a member of Lincoln Center’s Chamber Music Society II. He has participated in the Marlboro, Music From Angel Fire, Kingston, La Jolla, Mainly Mozart, and Santa Fe music festivals. He has also performed on the Ravinia Festival’s “Rising Star” series and was a special guest on the “Mr. Roger's Neighborhood” television program. He is currently principal flutist of the San Diego Symphony, and has held the same position with The Florida Orchestra, the Santa Fe Opera Orchestra and the Pittsburgh Symphony for the 2005-2006 season. In addition to his performance schedule, Mr. McGill is the co-founder and Artistic Director of Art of Élan, as well as Adjunct Professor of Flute at San Diego State University. McGill studied with Julius Baker and Jeffrey Khaner at the Curtis Institute of Music and received his Master of Music degree from The Juilliard School.
Tai Murray

Proclaimed “superb” by Anthony Tommasini of the New York Times, violinist Tai Murray, at age 25, has been heard on such concerto stages as Copenhagen’s Tivoli Gardens, New York’s Carnegie Hall, and Berlin’s Konzerthaus, collaborating with a wide range of conductors including Marin Alsop, James DePreist, Jorge Mester, Alan Gilbert, and Daniel Hege. Critically acclaimed concerto performances ranging across the USA lead to returns with the Cincinnati and Columbus Symphonies. Recent past engagements include debuts with the National Youth Orchestra of Venezuela, Louisville, and Santa Barbara Symphonies. Also a dedicated chamber musician, Tai is a member of the Jacksonville-based Ritz Chamber Players, and the conductorless string orchestra ECCO.  She as been on tour numerous times with Musicians from Marlboro and was a member of Lincoln Center’s Chamber Music Society II program during the 2004-06 seasons. Winner of an Avery Fisher Career Grant in 2004, Ms. Murray is also an avid recitalist presenting a program, with pianist Lambert Orkis, in the upcoming season.

Julie Smith

American concert artist and orchestral performer Julie Ann Smith is one of the most exciting young harpists today and has gained international recognition for her charismatic performing style and diverse repertoire. Currently Principal Harpist of the San Diego Symphony, Ms. Smith has held this same position with numerous other orchestras, including the New World Symphony and Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra for the 2006-07 season. She has served on faculty at Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp and regularly gives master-classes across the country. Ms. Smith released her first album, “The Rhapsodic Harp,” in July 2006, which is available from her website, www.harpjas.com. Attending the Cleveland Institute of Music, she received her Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees in harp performance where she studied with Yolanda Kondonassis.  A native of Hastings, NE, Ms. Smith is represented in the Great Lakes region by Great Lakes Performing Artists Associates.

UPCOMING EVENT

Asian Program, May 20, 2008 at 7:00 p.m.

While paying homage to Asia’s most celebrated melodies, this program will demonstrate that there can be nostalgia and familiarity in music from the most distant places. Opening with the unusual pairing of the pipa (a traditional plucked Chinese instrument) and cello, Bright Sheng’s “Three Songs” sets the tone for the entire program. The journey continues with the world-premiere of the Korean Folk Song, “Arirang,” arranged by the American jazz pianist and composer Geoffrey Keezer. The pairing of East and West in this program will prove that the beauty of melody does transcend borders.
élan: momentum, surge, burst (of) vigor, spirit