

CON BRIO

FRIENDS OF THE NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE ORCHESTRA NEWSLETTER

— WINTER 2016

The 2015-16 FNACO season began with a resounding and joyous BANG! As music took center stage we moved indoors to meet up with friends, explore some of Ottawa's hidden and long treasured venues, and enjoy soul-warming culinary delights. This Newsletter captures the highlights to date and celebrates all that is to come.

EMBASSY CONCERTS — ALLEGREZZA!

Embassy of the People's Republic of China: Crossing Boundaries at Full Gallop

Friends of NACO opened its 2015-16 season with élan and éclat Sept 8 — and at full gallop!



Photo Courtesy of Lois Siegel: Cheng2 Duo - Bryan Cheng and Silvie Cheng performing at the Embassy of the People's Republic of China

His Excellency Luo Zhaohui and Doctor Jiang Yili graciously hosted the first FNACO chamber concert at the Embassy of the People's Republic of China. On stage and in full musical virtuosity were NACO's principal clarinetist Kymball Sykes and the Cheng2 Duo, Bryan and Silvie, cello and piano.

The concert and reception offered a triple treat, crossing boundaries, elegantly and spiritedly, in three cultures, French, Chinese and Canadian. Four musical pieces featured composers Johannes Brahms, Huang Haihuai, Alexina Louis, Chen Gang and He Zhanhao. Commentary elided eloquently from Chinese to French to English among the numbers and in the introductory remarks, which marked the celebration of 45 years of co-operation between Canada and the People's Republic of China, FNACO President Robert Lafleur and His Excellency Luo Zhaohui emphasized this concord in welcoming the 200 guests.

The hot September evening was nothing compared to the standing ovation and heated enthusiasm of the stylish audience representing Ottawa's

distinguished diplomatic, educational, and artistic circles.

Bryan Cheng, in his snazzy trademark socks, and Silvie Cheng, in a sleek ruby sheath, whom Ottawa proudly claims, had adapted the Huang and Chen-He pieces for occidental

instruments. Indeed Cheng2 Duo are noted for crossing their presentations. Rich, stunning visuals with equestrian motifs back-dropped this chamber concert. A new FNACO feature, presaging Music Director Alexander Shelley's innovative presentation of "Dear Life" a week later.

Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany: Memorable Evening

Nov 9, 2015 was a very special occasion both for the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany and for Friends of NACO.

His Excellency Werner Wnendt and Dr. Elenore Wnendt-Juber hosted a concert and supper for the Friends of NACO at their Rockcliffe residence. Nov. 9 marks the anniversary of Kristallnacht, as it does, Mauerfall, the fall of the Berlin wall. In a gracious welcome, His Excellency recognized both occasions with dignity and solemnity all the while citing the longstanding, warm and very cordial relationship with Friends of NACO who in turn appreciated the invitation for this special night.

Some 75 attendees enjoyed soprano Sasha Djihanian's excellent stylings of R. Strauss, Schubert, and Weill, along with songs by Rachmaninoff, Dvořák, and Lehár. Accompanying her, was the concert pianist Jean Desmarais on the residence Bechstein grand. A powerful combination of artists and artistry. Highlight of concert: impromptu waltz to which Ms. Djihanian trillingly invited His Excellency to join.

Afterward, the ambassadorial couple invited the guests to supper in the dining room, which featured German specialties from Ullrich's on Main in Pembroke. Everyone agreed the mushroom pockets in a cream sauce was indeed a "signature note" of the evening.

Embassy of Romania: Salon Concert in Contemporary Time

In thanking Romanian Ambassador Her Excellency Maria Ligor, and her husband Mr. Adrian Ligor, for graciously hosting the Oct 16, 2015 salon concert and reception, FNACO President Robert Lafleur commented that scone lights lent a yesteryear elegance, a perfect ambience, for a quartet of fine young musicians.

Ceilidh Briscoe, Blythe Allers, Ethan Balakrishnan, and Ethan Allers performed delightful string arrangements of Romanian folk dances by Bartók/Willner, Haydn, and Dvořák. A buffet of sapid Romanian fare and delicately flavoured desserts followed.

In this intimate setting, some 45 FNACO attendees enjoyed the warm Romanian hospitality with romantic flair. Another perfect evening.

MUSIC TO DINE FOR

Music To Dine For is an event that started a number of years ago and has always been a significant fundraiser for Friends.

We invite Ambassadors/High Commissioners to host a dinner at their residence. The musicians are either young FNACO bursary winners, musicians from the Young String Performers' Foundation or members of the Conservatoire. It is a very special and elegant evening with a beautiful location, amazing dinner and lovely music. There are some who consider the cost of the evening, at \$100 for members and \$125 for non-members, expensive, but it is a one-of-kind evening and anyone who has attended one of these dinners has always been very enthusiastic. There is also a generous charitable donation receipt for attendance. Music To Dine For events at the Embassy of Belgium (Feb. 16th) and Embassy

of the Philippines (Mar. 30th) are already sold-out! Tickets go fast for these must-attend events so book early.

MUSIC 2 TOAST

The December 18, 2015 Music 2 Toast was a delightful evening of entertainment with gourmandise for members and guests, as echoed in the testimonials below:

“...very enjoyable evening...” “...super time...”
“...event of the season...” “...beautiful music...”
“...food was delicious...” “...elegant tables...”
“...guests made the evening...” “...met many new people...”
“winning formula to be repeated...” “...definitely annual event...”

All aspects of Music 2 Toast offered a true respite from Holiday Season stress.

Venue – Galerie St. Laurent + Hill, Ottawa’s premiere art gallery, so easily accessible by bus, taxi, and municipal parking next door.

Music – A program performed by Stellae Boreales, violin quartet accompanied by keyboard, was inspiring.

Wine – Professional sommelier Randy Fitzpatrick of Algonquin College and Petit Bill’s Bistro presented the two sides of “vino”, pleasure and practice (red wine with truffles). Consensus is a resounding, “repeat the event”. The \$25 ticket offered all of the above, plus copious amounts of fine cheese, figs, truffles and limitless wine. See you next December 2016 for a FNACO members’ evening of music and wine.

The romantic music of Stellae Boreales, Kai McCall paintings, a witty sommelier lesson with Randy Fitzpatrick of Petit Bill’s Bistro, all at Ottawa’s premiere art gallery generously lent by Pierre-Luc St Laurent. A new, not-to-be-missed adventure for NACO Friends. Worthy of Berlin, New York, Paris. Brava, Bravo. – Gerard Lavelle

MUSIC ALIVE PROGRAM – FIDDLES – NUNAVUT

In 2015, Friends of NACO purchased a violin for the Music Alive Program – Fiddles (Nunavut), to assist the NAC. This program is collecting violins for the community of Kimmirut (Nunavut). In partnership with the Music Alive Program, Kimmirut hosted their first ever two-day music camp in the summer of 2015. The camp was a great success and the community is keen to continue supporting music education through regular school music programming. All instruments will go to Qaqqalik School, which serves all Kimmirut students from Kindergarten to Grade 12. We will continue to purchase more violins in 2016. In addition, the NAC would like to purchase instruments for Cape Dorset (Nunavut), since there was a fire at the high school recently that destroyed almost everything. The NAC will need some time to figure out exactly what they need. Once they know, Friends of NACO will try to assist in any way possible. We thank our members who have made generous donations towards this project. If you wish to donate to this project, please send your cheque to: Friends of NACO, PO Box 839, Stn. B, Ottawa, ON K1P 5P9.

FNACO is proud to take part in the Fiddles initiative, sponsored by The National Arts Centre Music Alive Program, and with the generosity of our members we are able to provide musical instruments for children in First Nations communities and expand the love of music across Canada – Irene Layton

ACCOLADES AND STANDING OVATIONS

Earlier this season the Friends of the NAC Orchestra Board of Directors presented a well-deserved citation to Lois Siegel who literally makes us all... LOOK GOOD. This long time member of FNACO has highlighted our efforts

and covered our events with much skill and artistry as an ace photojournalist, and has contributed greatly to Canada's arts, business and culture. An award winner in many fields, she is an accomplished musician, playing numerous instruments. Most impressive about Lois is her involvement with children – those who suffer with dyslexic, autism and other special needs. Lois is a true inspiration to us all – a warm, kind, caring individual whom we've come to appreciate and to know as a colleague and most importantly – as a special Friend.



Photo Courtesy of Bill Pugsley: The special Citation was presented to Lois by Joan Forbes, Administrator of FNACO, on the right. On the left is Master of Ceremonies, Laurence Wall, of CBC fame.

SPECIAL THANKS

The FNACO Membership Outreach Committee decided to conduct a Membership Satisfaction Survey to benchmark the association's performance. Almost a quarter of our membership (22%) participated in providing us with feedback – that's really amazing! Please go to [2015 Member Satisfaction Survey](#) (this is a link to the FNACO website) to see the results in detail.

Thank-you for your participation we really appreciate your feedback!

WHERE ARE THEY NOW

Lara Deutsch, flutist

– www.laradeutsch.ca



Photo courtesy of Brent Calis Photography: Laura Deutsch

There are few words which can express how fortunate I feel to have grown up as a musician in Ottawa. A great deal of my musical education and many of my most memorable experiences happened in and around the National Arts Centre, all of which had a major impact on the person I am today.

It is without a doubt that your organization has also been an integral part of my growth and, for this, I would like to express my sincere thanks. I can't even imagine an NAC Orchestra without the Friends of NACO! It first began with your prize in the Bursary Competition, a scholarship which helped during my studies at McGill. I had the opportunity to play at the AGM brunch and to meet many of your members who then supported me through the following years of competitions and recitals, as

well as at my solo feature at FanFair 2014. I also cannot thank you enough for sponsoring my time in the Young Artists Program, one of my favourite musical experiences to date. I have fond memories of performing in a thank you concert for the FNACO volunteers – I can still remember the energy in the room, and the unfaltering support and encouragement you provided for all participants.

Years later, as a regular additional musician in the NAC Orchestra, I feel your support more than ever. My dream was always to play in this orchestra and your organization helped in giving me the opportunities that got me to this point. To me, the Friends are a large part of what makes the NAC special – you give so much to continually better our musical community, one which (in my humble opinion!) is truly unique in Canada.

Thank you for everything you have done for me, for young musicians across the country and at home, for the orchestra and for the musical community at large. I wish you all the very best and look forward to seeing you in the 2016 season.

UP AND COMING

March 13, 2016 | National Arts Centre Orchestra Bursary Benefit Concert

Mar 15, 2016 | Music To Dine For: The Embassy of Sweden – sold out

Mar 30, 2016 | Music To Dine For: The Embassy of the Philippines – sold out

April 7, 2016 | Music To Dine For: The Embassy of Argentina – sold out

April 24, 2016 | Music at Perth Manor

May 11, 2016 | Music To Dine For: The Embassy of Columbia – sold out

May 25, 2016 | Open Rehearsal

July 5, 2016 | Venezia Mia: Residence of the Ambassador of Italy

* The Embassy of Turkey has graciously offered to host a *Music To Dine For* event for FNACO's 2015-16 season. The date has yet to be confirmed and we will let our members know as soon as tickets are available. We thank-you for your support and for your participation.

For updates and upcoming events please go to www.friendsofnaco.ca.