Upcoming Concerts

Women's Choir and Vocal Chamber Ensembles
Wednesday, December 6, 2017 at 7:30 p.m.
Sonia Vlahcevic Concert Hall
W.E. Singleton Center for the Performing Arts

Tickets:
$10 General Admission
Free for VCU students with ID

Holiday Gala to benefit The Doorways
Friday, December 8, 2017 at 7 p.m.
Sonia Vlahcevic Concert Hall
W.E. Singleton Center for the Performing Arts

Tickets:
$10 General Admission
$5 Children 12 and under

Leon Fleisher and Katherine Jacobson, piano
Mary Anne Rennolds Chamber Music Series
Sunday, January 28, 2018 at 3 p.m.
Sonia Vlahcevic Concert Hall
W.E. Singleton Center for the Performing Arts

Tickets:
$35 General Admission
$32 Seniors (60+) / VCU Employees / VCU Alumni Association members
$25 Children (16 and under)

VCU Symphony
Daniel Myssyk, conductor
Magdalen Adamek, piano

Tuesday, December 5, 2017 at 8 p.m.

Sonia Vlahcevic Concert Hall
W.E. Singleton Center for the Performing Arts
Virginia Commonwealth University
Richmond, VA

arts.vcu.edu/music
Program

Piano Concerto No. 2 in F-minor, Op. 21........Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849)
I. Maestoso
II. Larghetto
III. Allegro Vivace

Magdalena Adamek, piano

blue cathedral...........................................Jennifer Higdon (b. 1962)

-INTERMISSION-

Symphony No. 8..............................Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)
I. Allegro con brio
II. Adagio
III. Allegretto grazioso - Molto vivace
IV. Allegro ma non troppo

artistic project involves promoting piano music by composers from her native country: Fryderyk Chopin, Karol Szymanowski, Maria Szymanowska, and Feliks Nowowiejski. Over the past few years the artistic project concerning Nowowiejski involved world premiere recordings of Nowowiejski's music for piano solo, doctoral essay devoted to Nowowiejski's music for piano solo ("Piano Works by Feliks Nowowiejski"), both national and international lectures, solo performances, and presentations, the book The Unknown face of Feliks Nowowiejski: The Piano Works, published by VDM in Germany in 2008, and recently - articles on Feliks Nowowiejski's piano compositions in collaborative books under editorship of Krzysztof Sztarawski from the University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn, Poland.

Magdalena Adamek is a recipient of many prestigious scholarly and performing awards, including Izaak Walton Killam Memorial Scholarship, Dissertation Fellowship, Mary Louise Irrie Graduate Award, FS Chia PhD Scholarship, Beryl Barns Memorial Graduate Scholarship, Harriet Snowball Winspear Graduate Prize in Performing Arts scholarship (University of Alberta), and also Marek Jablonski Piano Scholarship for the Banff International Keyboard Festival and a scholarship by the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage (awarded twice).

Her projects have also been generously supported by The Kosciusko Foundation, D.C. Chapter in Washington, D.C., the Wirth Institute for Austrian and Central European Studies at University of Alberta, the Polonia Foundation of Alberta, Polish Culture Society of Edmonton, Polish Federation of Women in Edmonton, Polish Combatants Society of Edmonton, Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Vancouver, and the Alberta Registered Music Teachers’ Association.

Magdalena Adamek won 2nd prize and a special distinction for the best performance of piano works by Frédéric Chopin at the International Milosz Magin Piano Competition in Paris. She also won 3rd prize in the piano trio category at the Kiejstut Bacewicz International Chamber Music Competition in Łódź, Poland, 3rd prize at the National Piano Competition in Warsaw, and distinction at the National Chamber Music Competition in Warsaw. She also represented Poland at the II European Piano Forum at the Hochschule der Künste in Berlin.

Her discography includes five compact discs for an independent Polish label Acte Préalable with world premiere recordings of works by Polish composers (Feliks Nowowiejski, Milosz Magin, Romuald Twardowski, Józef Elsner), and CD Romantic Central Europe, which was made in collaboration with the Wirth Institute of Austrian and Central European Studies at the University of Alberta. Her performances have been broadcasted on CBC, Polish National Radio, Radio France, and ABC Radio Classic FM.

Apart from being an active performer, Magdalena Adamek is also a dedicated instructor. She has been piano instructor and collaborative pianist at Chopin University of Music in Warsaw, the Stanisław Moniuszko Warsaw Music Society Music School, and the University of Alberta in Edmonton; collaborative pianist at the String Quartet Program at S.U.N.Y. Fredonia led by a widely acclaimed violinist and pedagogue Charles Castleman; and piano instructor at the Alberta Music Academy and the Alberta College Conservatory of Music (Grant McEwan University) in Edmonton. Her students have consistently received high marks at Royal Conservatory of Music piano examinations. They have been also recognized through awards and scholarships at the Edmonton Kiwanis Music Festival and at Provincial Music Festival, Alberta Registered Music Teachers Association High Exam Marks Awards, and a gold medal for the highest exam mark in the province of Alberta, presented by The Royal Conservatory of Music.

In addition to performing and teaching Magdalena Adamek enjoys being adjudicator, clinician, and workshop presenter. She also works as freelance pianist-collaborator. She has served as the assisting artist for the Shean Competition and Canadian Music Competition, National Finals in Canada.

In her spare time, she enjoys spending time with her family, hiking, biking, reading, and watching her favorite TV shows.
Daniel Myssyk

Virginia Commonwealth University Associate Professor and Director of Orchestral Activities Daniel Myssyk was Music Director of the Montréal based Orchestre de chambre Appassionata from 2000 to 2016. During his tenure, he brought Appassionata on its first American tour, which included two concerts in Richmond. The orchestra also toured before enthused audiences in Ontario in January of 2014. A year later, Myssyk made his debut in Guanajuato, Mexico, where he was immediately invited back, and also conducted the Michoacan State Orchestra. He is a regular collaborator with the Richmond Symphony.

Myssyk conducts repertoire from the classical, romantic, modern and contemporary periods with great attention to stylistically appropriate detail. He maintains a continuous engagement with opera in a variety of styles ranging from Mozart to Menotti. Sensitive to the music of our time, he has contributed to the creation of many contemporary North-American works, including the world-premiere of Anthony Brandt’s opera, “The Birth of Something” with Da Camera in Houston. Under his leadership, three recent VCU Opera productions of “The Gondoliers” (2015), “The Old Maid and the Thief” (2012), and “Hansel & Gretel” (2011) won top prizes at the National Opera Association competition.

His involvement toward the youth reflects a well-honed passion for music education. In addition to his work at VCU, he is a regular collaborator with the All-Virginia State Orchestra, the American Youth Philharmonic Orchestra, the Richmond Symphony Youth Orchestra, and the Hampton Roads Chamber Players, among others.

Myssyk’s recordings have received widespread critical acclaim. In 2012, he completed the recording of “Czech Serenades” with works by Suk and Dvořák. The CD was in nomination for best recording of the year at the “ADISQ” awards, Québec’s equivalent of the Grammys, and at the Prix Opus from the Conseil québécois de la musique. Jean-Yves Duperron of Classical Music Sentinel writes: “Conductor Daniel Myssyk and the members of the Appassionata Chamber Orchestra ply their magic in this music, and shape each and every phrase, and infuse each and every note, with care and sincere expression. I’ve rarely heard these two works played with such conviction.”

In 2010, his CD “Idylla” (on the Fidelio label), was nominated for an Opus Prize as best recording of the year. A CD featuring American trumpet player and VCU colleague Rex Richardson playing Dana Wilson’s “Concerto for Trumpet and Strings” was released on Summit Records, earning rave reviews from the International Trumpet Guild Journal. His most recent CD, on the Atma label, features works by Québec composer François Dompierre and has earned excellent reviews from Radio-Canada and Magazine Son et image. Upcoming engagements will bring him back to Mexico and Canada.

Magdalena Adamek

Magdalena Adamek holds a Master of Arts in Piano Performance from the Chopin Academy of Music in Warsaw, Poland, and Doctor of Music in Piano Performance from the University of Alberta, in Edmonton, Canada. Her principal teachers include Barbara Hesse-Bukowska and Jacques Despres. She has also participated in masterclasses under renowned pedagogues, such as Halina Czerny-Stefanska, Andrzej Jasinski, Paul Badura-Skoda, Stéphanie Lemelin, Kyoko Hashimoto, and Kevin Fitz-Gerald.

Currently Adamek serves as Assistant Professor of Collaborative Piano at the Department of Music at Virginia Commonwealth University, where she teaches chamber music ensembles, the advanced keyboard skills class, and performs in numerous recitals with VCU faculty, guest artists, and students.

Adamek has led an active performing career giving solo and chamber music performances across Poland, Germany, Austria, Lithuania, France, China, USA, and Canada, with repertoire ranging from the classical period to the contemporary music. Her long-term engagement with opera in a variety of styles ranging from Mozart to Menotti. Sensitive to the music of our time, she has contributed to the creation of many contemporary North-American works, including the world-premiere of Anthony Brandt’s opera, “The Birth of Something” with Da Camera in Houston. Under his leadership, three recent VCU Opera productions of “The Gondoliers” (2015), “The Old Maid and the Thief” (2012), and “Hansel & Gretel” (2011) won top prizes at the National Opera Association competition.

His involvement toward the youth reflects a well-honed passion for music education. In addition to his work at VCU, he is a regular collaborator with the All-Virginia State Orchestra, the American Youth Philharmonic Orchestra, the Richmond Symphony Youth Orchestra, and the Hampton Roads Chamber Players, among others.

Myssyk’s recordings have received widespread critical acclaim. In 2012, he completed the recording of “Czech Serenades” with works by Suk and Dvořák. The CD was in nomination for best recording of the year at the “ADISQ” awards, Québec’s equivalent of the Grammys, and at the Prix Opus from the Conseil québécois de la musique. Jean-Yves Duperron of Classical Music Sentinel writes: “Conductor Daniel Myssyk and the members of the Appassionata Chamber Orchestra ply their magic in this music, and shape each and every phrase, and infuse each and every note, with care and sincere expression. I’ve rarely heard these two works played with such conviction.”

In 2010, his CD “Idylla” (on the Fidelio label), was nominated for an Opus Prize as best recording of the year. A CD featuring American trumpet player and VCU colleague Rex Richardson playing Dana Wilson’s “Concerto for Trumpet and Strings” was released on Summit Records, earning rave reviews from the International Trumpet Guild Journal. His most recent CD, on the Atma label, features works by Québec composer François Dompierre and has earned excellent reviews from Radio-Canada and Magazine Son et image. Upcoming engagements will bring him back to Mexico and Canada.

Myssyk made his debut with the Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal this fall. He is currently a finalist for the music director position with the Lubbock Symphony Orchestra (TX).

Magdalena Adamek

Magdalena Adamek holds a Master of Arts in Piano Performance from the Chopin Academy of Music in Warsaw, Poland, and Doctor of Music in Piano Performance from the University of Alberta, in Edmonton, Canada. Her principal teachers include Barbara Hesse-Bukowska and Jacques Despres. She has also participated in masterclasses under renowned pedagogues, such as Halina Czerny-Stefanska, Andrzej Jasinski, Paul Badura-Skoda, Stéphanie Lemelin, Kyoko Hashimoto, and Kevin Fitz-Gerald.

Currently Adamek serves as Assistant Professor of Collaborative Piano at the Department of Music at Virginia Commonwealth University, where she teaches chamber music ensembles, the advanced keyboard skills class, and performs in numerous recitals with VCU faculty, guest artists, and students.

Adamek has led an active performing career giving solo and chamber music performances across Poland, Germany, Austria, Lithuania, France, China, USA, and Canada, with repertoire ranging from the classical period to the contemporary music. Her long-term engagement with opera in a variety of styles ranging from Mozart to Menotti. Sensitive to the music of our time, she has contributed to the creation of many contemporary North-American works, including the world-premiere of Anthony Brandt’s opera, “The Birth of Something” with Da Camera in Houston. Under his leadership, three recent VCU Opera productions of “The Gondoliers” (2015), “The Old Maid and the Thief” (2012), and “Hansel & Gretel” (2011) won top prizes at the National Opera Association competition.

His involvement toward the youth reflects a well-honed passion for music education. In addition to his work at VCU, he is a regular collaborator with the All-Virginia State Orchestra, the American Youth Philharmonic Orchestra, the Richmond Symphony Youth Orchestra, and the Hampton Roads Chamber Players, among others.

Myssyk’s recordings have received widespread critical acclaim. In 2012, he completed the recording of “Czech Serenades” with works by Suk and Dvořák. The CD was in nomination for best recording of the year at the “ADISQ” awards, Québec’s equivalent of the Grammys, and at the Prix Opus from the Conseil québécois de la musique. Jean-Yves Duperron of Classical Music Sentinel writes: “Conductor Daniel Myssyk and the members of the Appassionata Chamber Orchestra ply their magic in this music, and shape each and every phrase, and infuse each and every note, with care and sincere expression. I’ve rarely heard these two works played with such conviction.”

In 2010, his CD “Idylla” (on the Fidelio label), was nominated for an Opus Prize as best recording of the year. A CD featuring American trumpet player and VCU colleague Rex Richardson playing Dana Wilson’s “Concerto for Trumpet and Strings” was released on Summit Records, earning rave reviews from the International Trumpet Guild Journal. His most recent CD, on the Atma label, features works by Québec composer François Dompierre and has earned excellent reviews from Radio-Canada and Magazine Son et image. Upcoming engagements will bring him back to Mexico and Canada.

Myssyk made his debut with the Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal this fall. He is currently a finalist for the music director position with the Lubbock Symphony Orchestra (TX).
Frédéric Chopin: Piano Concerto No. 2 in F-Minor, Op. 21

Chopin was born in March 1810 near Warsaw. His father was a tutor for the Polish aristocracy, and his mother played and taught piano. Considered a child prodigy by his teachers, Chopin started playing and composing music at the age of 7, even giving his first public concerto performance at 8 years old. In 1826, he began his studies at the Warsaw Conservatory, studying music composition and theory, while performing recitals and concerts in various locations around Warsaw. His reputation as a fine pianist spread quickly, even gaining the attention of Tsar Alexander I who invited Chopin to play for him in one of his visits to Warsaw.

After school Frédéric traveled across Europe, eventually settling in Paris. By 1835, he gained his French citizenship and more fame, becoming friends with the likes of Franz Liszt and Hector Berlioz. In France, his talents in performance and music composition continued to shine, once being cited as a musical genius by Robert Schumann. Tragically, his health would soon decline, leaving him mostly at home teaching lessons. After a final concert in London he returned to Paris, noticeably unhealthy. On October 17, 1849 Chopin passed away presumably from complications of tuberculosis. His funeral was attended by thousands and his legacy continues on today.

Tonight, in conjunction with the VCU Symphony Orchestra, Magdalena Adamek will be performing his second piano concerto. He wrote it around 1829 and it premiered in Warsaw on March 17, 1830. Although designated as No. 2, this was technically the first piano concerto he wrote, however the second to be published.

Jennifer Higdon: blue cathedral

Jennifer Higdon was born on December 31, 1962. She is one of the most performed American composers living today. Being mostly self-taught, she played flute and percussion with her high school's concert and marching bands, however had little experience with classical music before college. After graduating high-school she went on to study flute at Bowling Green University, writing her first composition there - a two-minute piece for flute and piano titled “Night Creatures.” While there she also met Robert Spano, a conductor and later champion of Higdon's music in the American orchestral scene. Higdon would go on to earn an Artist's Diploma from the Curtis Institute of Music, even teaching violin virtuoso Hilary Hahn while there. She would then earn a Master of Arts and Doctor of Composition in composition from the University of Pennsylvania, studying under George Crumb.

Jennifer Higdon is a major figure in contemporary Classical music, receiving the 2010 Pulitzer Prize in Music for her Violin Concerto and a 2010 Grammy for her Percussion Concerto. Higdon enjoys several hundred performances a year of her works, and blue cathedral is one of America's most performed contemporary orchestral works, with more than 600 performances worldwide since its premiere in 2000. Her works have been recorded on nearly fifty CDs. Higdon's most current project was an opera based on the best-selling novel, Cold Mountain, by Charles Frazier. It was co-commissioned by Santa Fe Opera, Opera Philadelphia and Minnesota Opera in collaboration with North Carolina Opera. Higdon recently won the International Opera Award for Best World Premiere and the opera recording was nominated for 2 Grammy awards. She holds the Rock Chair in Composition at The Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. Her music is published exclusively by Lawdon Press.

Higdon's blue cathedral was commissioned in 1999 to celebrate Curtis Institute of Music's 75th Anniversary. Higdon dedicated the piece to her younger brother Andrew, who died of cancer the year prior. Consisting of only one movement, listeners and critics alike have described the piece as being incredibly ethereal, atmospheric and even otherworldly at times.

Antonín Dvořák: Symphony No. 8

Born September 8, 1841, Antonín Dvořák showed promising signs of musical adeptness from a very young age. He started his musical journey by taking lessons on organ, piano and violin. At the age of 16, his father allowed him to pursue a career in music, so long as he worked towards being an organist. In 1857, he left for Prague and began taking organ lessons at the city's organ school. While there he took German language classes and even filled in as a violinist in several local orchestras and bands. In 1859, he graduated second in his class. After school, he played with the Bohemian Provisional Theater Orchestra which gave him more exposure to operas and bigger works of music. Dvořák had an incredible admiration for Richard Wagner. Wagner even conducted a piece dedicated to himself with the orchestra. This only strengthened Dvořák's admiration and soon after he ventured into composing himself.

Dvořák went on to work on various genres including operas, symphonies, concertos, chamber music, and even some choral works. Influences in some of his work can be traced to traditional Slavic music, as well as his idols such as Wagner and even some classical composers like Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert. After a slow but steady start, Dvořák's works won him the affection of many and his reputation would quickly grow around the world, with help from supporters such as Brahms. He would later in life take up a job as director of the National Conservatory of Music in New York before returning to Europe to live out the remainder of his life. He died May 1, 1904 in Prague after a five-week battle with influenza.

Symphony No. 8 was written as a form of thanks from the composer to the “Bohemian Academy of Science, Literature and Arts” for their election of him into it. The main difference between this and his seventh symphony is that the eighth is more cheerful and lyrical, taking influence from Bohemian folk music that the composer adored. It is comprised of four separate movements. The first movement starts off in G minor (going against the G major key signature shown) with a very moving theme that continues and develops throughout the movement, captivating and drawing the audience in. The second movement alternates back and forth between C minor and C major, starting off somewhat gloomy and quiet, then leading to a boastful middle section before ending gently back into C major. The third movement is a waltz full of life and emotion. And finally, with a spectacular and memorable theme introduced by the cellos, the fourth movement ends the piece in an exciting fashion.

Chopin and Dvořák notes by Tyler Martin, Class of 2020
Higdon notes by Tyler Martin and Lawdon Press