Beer & G-Strings Concert
featuring the Christiana Trio and guest violinist Philip Pan
plus violinist Chee Yun, cellist Andrés Díaz and pianist Elizabeth Pridgen as the Amelia Tango Trio

March 14, 2021
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The support from the organizations and individuals listed below has made this concert possible. The Board of Directors and all of us at the Festival are most appreciative and very thankful for their commitment to bringing musical excellence to Amelia Island and its environs.

Bob and Robin Bolan
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About the AICMF

The Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival is nationally recognized as one of the foremost music events of its kind. The Festival is a not-for-profit, tax-exempt organization under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

All venues for Amelia Island Chamber Musical Festival in-person concerts are handicap accessible.
PROGRAM
March 14, 2021

Christiania Trio
David Coucheron, violin
Christopher Rex, cello
Julie Coucheron, piano

dspecial guest Philip Pan, violin

Amelia Tango Trio
Chee Yun, violin
Andrés Díaz, cello
Elizabeth Pridgen, piano

Also featured are dancers Marco Tacandong and Kacey Mickler,
under the direction of Susan Dodge courtesy of The Amelia Island Dance Festival

VIVALDI AND PIAZZOLLA: THE FOUR SEASONS

L’estate (Summer) in G minor
from Le quattro stagioni Op. 8, RV 315
(The Four Seasons)
   Allegro ma non molto
   Adagio
   Presto

Christiana Trio and Philip Pan, violinist

“Otoño porteño” (Autumn)
from Las cuatro estaciones porteñas
(The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires) arr. José Bragato
Amelia Tango Trio

L’inverno (Winter) in F minor
from Le quattro stagioni Op.8, RV 297
(The Four Seasons)
   Allegro non molto
   Largo
   Allegro

Christiana Trio and Philip Pan, violinist

“Primavera porteña” (Spring)
from Las cuatro estaciones porteñas
(The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires) arr. José Bragato
Amelia Tango Trio

ANTONIO VIVALDI
(1678 - 1741)

ASTOR PIAZZOLLA
(1921 - 1992)

YAMAHA Grand piano generously provided
by Keyboard Connection Pianos & Organs
ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Christiania Trio

Violinist **David Coucheron** is concertmaster of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. He has performed as a soloist with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra and Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra and performed solo recitals at Carnegie Hall, London’s Wigmore Hall and the Kennedy Center.

Cellist **Christopher Rex**, the Festival’s artistic and general director, retired as principal cellist of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra in 2018 after serving in that position for nearly 40 years. He performed with the Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy before joining the Atlanta Symphony.

Pianist **Julie Coucheron** has won first prizes at competitions in Italy, Germany and the U.S. She has worked with Lazar Berman, Claude Frank, Emanuel Ax and Vladimir Feltsman and toured internationally. Ms. Coucheron is Artist-in-Residence in Piano at the Kennesaw State University School of Music.

Violinist **Philip Pan** retired in 2017 as Concertmaster for the Jacksonville Symphony, which he joined in 1984. He also has appeared with the Boston Pops, Albany and Schenectady Symphonies and the Bach Aria Festival. He joins the Christiania Trio to fill out the string parts of the Vivaldi Concerti.

Amelia Tango Trio

Violinist **Chee-Yun** has received exceptional acclaim as a recording artist since the release of her debut album of virtuoso encore pieces in 1993. Her recent recording of the Penderecki Violin Concerto No. 2 on Naxos was acclaimed as “an engrossing, masterly performance” (The Strad) and “a performance of staggering virtuosity and musicality” (American Record Guide).

Cellist **Andrés Díaz** has exhilarated both critics and audiences with his intense and charismatic performances. He has earned exceptional reviews for his “strongly personal interpretive vision” (The New York Times) and his “bold and imaginative” playing (The Boston Globe).

Pianist **Elizabeth Pridgen** is a distinguished soloist and chamber musician. Pridgen performs regularly at the Rome Chamber Music Festival in Italy, the Strings Music Festival in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, and the Aspen Music Festival. She has collaborated with Robert McDuffie, Yo-Yo Ma, Hilary Hahn, and Anne Akiko Meyers.
Antonio Vivaldi
The Four Seasons Op. 8 Summer and Winter

"Being a musician, he could not have been in his right mind."

PROGRAM NOTES

Quoting from Wiley Francis Gates’ Anecdotes of Great Musicians Antonio Vivaldi nicknamed “il Prete Rosso” (the Red Priest) frequently was preoccupied with musical musings rather than liturgical thoughts: “Once when officiating at Mass, a musical idea occurred to him, and not wishing to lose it, he left the altar and, going to the vestry, jotted it down for future use, and then returned to his place in the church and resumed the service.” Vivaldi’s superiors were in favor of relieving him of his priestly service, but the diocese’s bishop who had “a weak spot in his heart for the musical art and its followers” restored Il Prete Rosso to his post saying: “being a musician, he could not have been in his right mind.”

Antonio Lucio Vivaldi was born on March 4, 1678 in Venice during a minor earthquake. His musical studies began with his father who was a professional violinist and his preparation for the priesthood began at age 15. Vivaldi was ordained as a Catholic priest in 1703 and that same year he was appointed violin teacher at Pio Ospedale della Pieta, a Venetian orphanage. “The Ospedali”, one of four well known orphanages, provided fine musical training for the young residents as their musical performances were a means of financial support. Here Vivaldi was required to teach and rehearse the students as well as maintain the musical instruments. Thought to have suffered from asthma, he was frequently excused from daily celebration of mass complaining of a “tightness of chest.”

He was a prolific composer of orchestral and sacred music. Not only did he compose for violin, but for other instruments including the flute, piccolo, bassoon, and oboe. His most well known violin concerti, The Four Seasons, was composed around 1720. Published in Amsterdam in 1725, this work included sonnets possibly written by Vivaldi himself. This work of program music cleverly depicts the poetry in which he included verbal cues within the scores to reinforce the season’s personalities and desired images.

His life was full of contradictions as his humble beginnings as the son of a Venetian baker turned professional violinist evolved into European fame as a priest, teacher and composer. Yet, he died in poverty and was interned in a pauper’s grave. He is quoted as saying: “There are no words, there is only music there.” Yet, the composition most associated with his name ironically is paired with a series of sonnets.

Summer, the second concerto sometimes referred to as the storm, begins with the heat of the season accompanied by the bird song of a cuckoo, turtle dove and goldfinch. Marked Presto and set in G minor, the chords and dramatic overtones foreshadow a storm and the worry of the shepherd. The hurried, anxious and wild arpeggios of the third movement unfold and the storm is as mighty and tempestuous as feared.

Winter, the fourth concerto, begins and ends in F minor. Fast, running notes and wide leaps describe the icy cold, chattering teeth and stamping feet. The second movement, Largo, is in E-flat major. Slower calming chords bring an inside warmth while the pizzicato strings demonstrate raindrops. Pulsating notes and descending octaves later convey the sensation of skidding across the ice in the third movement which returns to F minor.
L’Estate (Summer)

I. Allegro ma non molto
   In the harsh season scorched by the sun, man and flock languish, and the pine is on fire; the cuckoo begins to call and soon after, the turtle dove and the goldfinch are heard singing. Zephyr [the west wind] gently blows, but Boreas [the north wind] suddenly enters into a contest with its neighbor, and the little shepherd weeps for he hears the awesome threatening storm and his fate.

II. Adagio
   To his tired limbs rest is denied by the fear of lightening, awesome thunder, and the furious swarm of flies and hornets!

III. Presto
   Alas, his fears are justified. The sky is filled with thunder and lightning and hail cuts down the proud grain

L’Inverno (Winter)

I. Allegro non molto
   Trembling with cold amidst the freezing snow, while a frightful wind harshly blows, running and stamping one’s feet every minute, and feeling one’s teeth chatter from the extreme cold.

II. Largo
   Spending quiet contented days by the fire while the rain outside drenches people by the hundreds

III. Allegro
   Walking on ice, and moving cautiously, with slow steps, for fear of falling, spinning around, slipping, falling down, again walking on ice and running fast until the ice cracks and splits; hearing Sirocco, Boreas, and all the winds at war burst forth from the bolted doors - this is winter, but it also brings joy!

   ~ Emma Mills Bledsoe 2021
Astor Piazzolla

From The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires  Spring and Autumn

*Tango: “a four legged animal with two beating hearts”*

Director and composer Astor Piazzolla aka El Tigre del Bandoneon was best known for being the father and inventor of the Tango Nuevo, a revolutionary new genre in which jazz rhythms and classical music were infused in tango. Of Italian heritage, he was born on March 11, 1921 just south of Buenos Aires, Argentina. At birth his right leg was terribly twisted due to polio. He and his parents moved to New York when he was four years old. In 1929, his father gave him an eighteen dollar bandoneon, an Argentinian accordion-like instrument that used buttons rather than a keyboard. Astor was greatly disappointed as he had asked for a pair of roller skates. Later he said: “To give pleasure to the old man, I clumsily tried to learn, and I was dreadfully bad.”

Growing up in New York, his nickname was “Lefty.” His strong, left handed punch once resulted in his expulsion from school. Wanting to pursue a career in boxing, he was given a pair of boxing gloves. This “career” was cut short due to losses against friend Rocky Graziano and Jack LaMotta.

As a young man, he would slip into the New York Jazz clubs to hear Duke Ellington, Cab Calloway, and Benny Goodman. Piazzolla was introduced to classical music by his neighbor and piano teacher Bela Wilda, a student of pianist Sergei Rachmaninov. He became obsessed with Johann Sebastian Bach. Recalling when he was sixteen: “In my head I had Bach and Schumann and Mozart and very little tango.” When he was twenty he entered a period of concentrated classical music and jazz. His work “Buenos Aires” won first prize at the Fabian Sevitzky Competition. This provided a scholarship at the Paris Conservatory to study with Nadia Boulanger. Her encouragement helped to create his avant-garde style of tango. Upon hearing Piazzolla perform on the bandoneon Boulanger said: “Astor, your classical pieces are well written, but the true Piazzolla is here, never leave it behind.” Upon returning to Buenos Aires in 1955 he formed an orchestra. Gaining international fame, he continued to experiment with infusing jazz and classical music into that of the tango. However, his handling of the country’s national pride was criticized by some tango purists and in the late 1960’s even the government criticized his work.

Las Cuatro Esaciones Portenas known as The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires was originally published for piano solo and later arranged for Piazzolla’s own ensemble. This collection is not specifically pictorial as Vivaldi’s Four Seasons, but is rather “general evocations of the changing seasons” from Piazzolla’s native Argentina. It was not his intention to create a parallel suite to Vivaldi’s Four Seasons as Piazzolla’s were composed separately for his Tango Nuevo Quintet which was comprised of bandoneon, violin, electric guitar, piano and bass. The first, Summer, of Piazzolla’s Four Seasons was written in 1965. Autumn was written in 1969 while both Spring and Winter were written in 1970. It was not until other ensembles began to perform these pieces that the collective title of The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires was linked to the 18th Century Four Seasons by Vivaldi.

In each of his compositions Piazzolla fuses the fire and passion of the traditional tango with “the vast expressive resources of modern harmony, texture and sonority. The result expands the genre’s range “from violent to sensual, from witty to melancholy, from intimate to theatrical.” He now is credited with moving his country’s most famous genre from the dance hall into the concert hall. In response to his critics he said: “I still can’t believe that some pseudo critics continue to accuse me of having murdered the tango. They have it backward. They should look at me as the saviour of tango. I performed plastic surgery on it.”

In 1990 he suffered a massive stroke which left him seriously debilitated. He died in Buenos Aires on July 4, 1992.

~ Emma Mills Bledsoe 2021
MISSION STATEMENT

The Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival’s threefold mission is to:

1. Present the world’s greatest musical artist in chamber music concerts of classical and alternative genres for diverse audiences;
2. Offer music education to concert attendees, students, and aspiring young musicians; and
3. Promote local businesses and tourism by attracting music lovers from Nassau County, Northeast Florida and beyond.

Thank you for your continued support!

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