

Music @ St. Alban's

Sunday Concerts in Davidson

Concert Notes – September 27, 2020
Earle Cheshire-Wood

Passacaglia for Violin and Viola

George Frideric Handel & Johan Halvorsen

Halvorsen's Passacaglia is based on the final movement of Handel's harpsichord suite in G minor, and was also written for violin and cello. Handel was revered by several composers, and Beethoven even referred to him as "the master of us all...the greatest composer that ever lived." Passacaglia translates from the Spanish words "pasar," meaning "to pass," or "to happen," and "calle," meaning "street." This suggests that in 17th-century Spain, passacaglias were played by musicians in the streets. The duo of violin and viola creates a thrilling dialogue that expands to four, and sometimes even five, parts simultaneously.

Präludium from Partita no. 3 in E Major for Solo Violin

Johann Sebastian Bach

Bach's Prelude from *Partita no. 3 in E Major*, the final work of his *Six Sonatas and Partitas*, mirrors court music of France with its spirit and nobility. Almost a decade later, Bach arranged the Präludium for organ and strings of a wedding cantata. A few years after that, Bach arranged the whole Partita for piano. Bach wrote "Sei solo," rather than "Sei soli" above this work of six solos. "Sei solo" translates to "You are on your own?" and it is argued whether he meant this, or had an informal or alternate spelling of "Sei soli," which translates from Italian to mean "six solos." This prelude was also used as a ringtone of one of the earliest Nokia mobile phones!

Terzetto op. 74 for Two Violins and Viola

Antonin Dvorak

Introduzione: Allegro ma non Troppo Larghetto

Dvorak's mother-in-law rented out a room to an amateur violinist. Dvorak was living with his mother-in-law at the time, and wanted to play along with the duets of his neighbor and their

violin teacher. Dvorak was a violist, and wrote this trio piece in only a week's time so he could accompany them. Unfortunately, the work was too difficult for his neighbor, but Dvorak nevertheless took great pleasure in writing this piece, "as much as if I were writing a large symphony," he said.

Tango "Por una cabeza" arrangement for two violins

Carlos Gardel

Arranged by Augustin Hadelich

Gardel is responsible for making tango, previously music associated with the lower class, popular among the middle and upper classes. "Por una cabeza" is a Spanish horse-racing term and translates to "by a head". It is used to describe a horse barely winning a race, by only about the length of its head. The phrase is comparable to the English expression "by a nose." *Por una cabeza* is also written with lyrics by Alfredo La Pera that weave together Gardel's disappointments in the racetrack with his disappointments in love. The pair later died together in a plane crash in 1935. Earlier that same year, Gardel himself sang the song in the film *Tango Bar*. The piece lives on today in numerous films, including *Schindler's List*, *Scent of a Woman*, *True Lies*, and *Bad Santa*.

Program notes written by Earle Cheshire-Wood

Earle is a youth member on the board for Music at Saint Alban's. She lives in Davidson and is a junior at North Mecklenburg High School. She has played the viola for over five years, performing in several youth orchestra events across the southeast, and has recently picked up the drums. Earle's favorite things include discovering new music, fashion, ice-skating, her pit bull named Pickles, and running for her school's track and cross-country teams.