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Musicians excited to be performing in Winter Bach concert on March 4

THE KINGSTON Road Village Concert Series presents The Side by Side Winter Bach #2 concert on Saturday, March 4, at 7:30 p.m.

The concert will take place at Kingston Road United Church, 975 Kingston Rd.

The March 4 concert will feature University of Toronto music students Emma Schmiecke on cello and Arlan Vriens on violin performing "side by side" with their teachers and Toronto Symphony Orchestra (TSO) members.

The March 4 concert will also feature a double violin concerto of J.S. Bach performed by Mark Fewer.

Both Schmiecke and Vriens are excited for the opportunity to perform in the Side by Side concert.

"It's always exciting to collaborate with artists from Toronto's many brilliant ensembles," said Vriens.

"Every new combination of musicians gives us a chance to make something new and magical happen, and the mixing between established orchestra players and the upcoming generation of performers gives an important opportunity for cross-pollination and mutual learning."

Schmiecke agreed. "I currently study with Joseph Johnson, principal cellist of the TSO, and many other members of the orchestra have been my coaches and mentors," she said.

"To have the chance to perform side-by-side with them is an incredible opportunity. It is one thing to learn in a private studio or coaching setting, but to put those musical ideas into practice

alongside those teachers and mentors is a wonderful learning experience in and of itself."

Vriens is especially looking forward to joining Fewer in the performance of the double violin concerto.

"This is a piece that almost every violinist spends their life learning, shaping and revising," he said. "I find something new every time I come back to play it, and somehow it never gets boring or repetitive. There's something about it that really keeps giving."

Schmiecke said that the performance by Fewer and Arlan should be a special one.

"Mark has been one of my mentors for many years and Arlan is a dear friend of mine, so we are bringing together members of the Toronto string community who know each other and enjoy working together - it will be a special performance for all of us," she said.

A third-year doctoral student in cello performance at U of T, Schmiecke grew up in and around New York City and is from a family of musicians. "Both my parents were opera singers as well as music educators," she said.

Schmiecke received her undergraduate degree in cello performance from the Bard College Conservatory of Music in New York as a student of Peter Willey before she moved to Canada to pursue graduate work.

"I first attended The Glenn Gould School of the Royal Conservatory of Music here in Toronto, followed by studies at the Schulich School of Music at McGill University in



Emma Schmiecke on cello and Arlan Vriens on violin will perform in The Side by Side Winter Bach #2 concert on March 4 as part of the Kingston Road Village Concert Series.

Montreal before returning to Toronto to attend U of T for my doctorate," she said.

"I love the Toronto music community and the rich diversity it provides to players and audiences, with everything from Baroque repertoire being presented on an almost daily basis."

Vriens is concluding his doctorate at U of T in violin performance.

"So I suppose this is year 13 of university for me," he said.

"I'm originally from Edmonton and, before coming to Toronto, I spent some time as associate concertmaster of the Newfoundland Symphony Orchestra; I've also completed music studies at McGill and at Cambridge University," said Vriens.

"My doctoral research is actually examining the ways

in which violinists of Bach's time interpreted his music. Those historical approaches were radically different from how performers tend to play Bach's music today, so I'm looking forward to bringing just a little bit of that into our performance!"

He said audiences for the March 4 concert should expect to hear just how vital and entertaining the music of Bach is.

"It's easy to think of Bach as a kind of dusty white marble statue, scowling down on us with seriousness and heavy authority. But if we shake off that image and listen with open ears, Bach is nothing like that. His music is still vital, inspiring, and important, and I think we're going to give a performance that really shows off Bach's music as a living entity instead of a dry historical text."

Schmiecke added that the upcoming concert at Kingston Road United Church is going to be "fantastic fun, with amazing performers and a wonderful program of music".

Advance tickets to the March 4 concert are \$35, and they are \$40 at the door. Children under 12 are admitted free. Those attending are reminded that food bank donations are always gratefully accepted.

To order tickets or for more information, please go to www.kruc.ca/concert-series

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