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## InConcert Full 40-piece chamber orchestra



Saturday, November 17 • 5:00pm St. John the Divine

> Mei-Ann Chen, Conductor Heather Schmidt, Composer Scott St. John, Soloist

> > Anna Clyne Within Her Arms ----15 minutes----

Louise Farrenc (Fah-RENCK) Symphony No. 3 in G minor, op. 36 I. Adagio - Allegro • II. Adagio cantabile • III. Scherzo. Vivace IV. Finale. Allegro

LIVENOTE

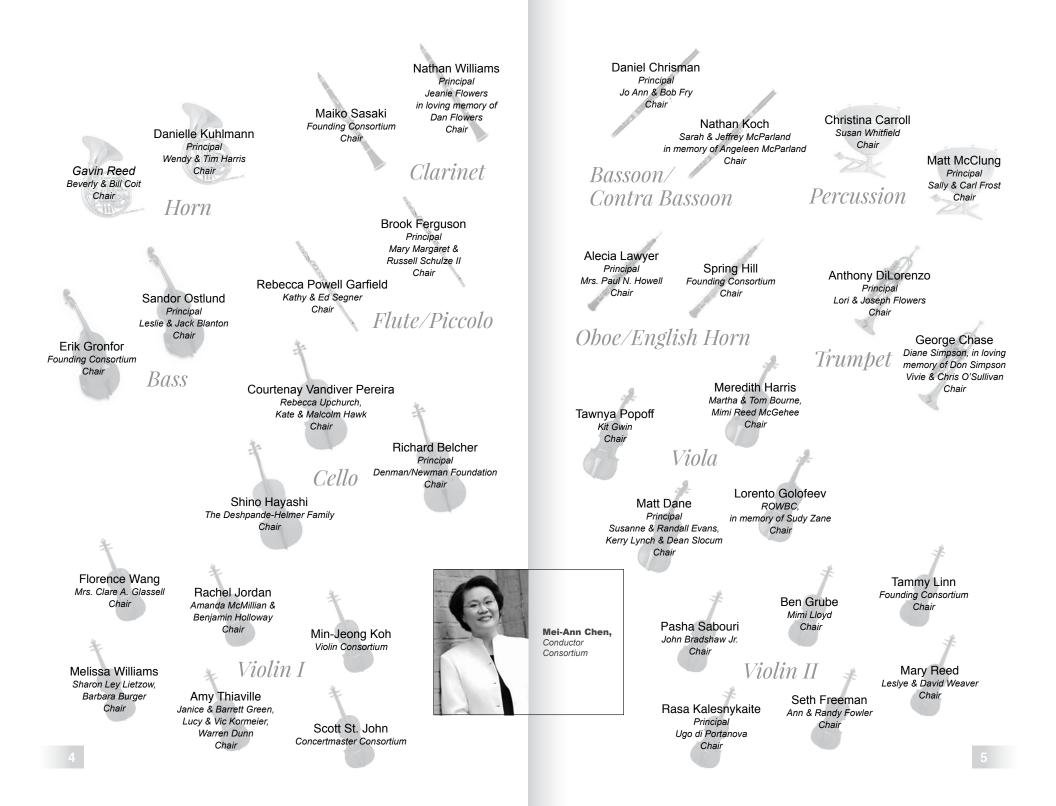
Ruth Gipps Seascape, op. 53 ----8 minutes----

Heather Schmidt Solitaire for violin solo

#### **ROCO WORLD PREMIERE COMMISSION**

----15 minutes----

This evening's music will include the pieces above, not necessarily in this order, with a Take 5 (short intermission) and possible surprises.





#### Featured Artist

Mei-Ann Chen, conductor

Innovation, imagination, passion and dynamism are the hallmarks of Taiwanese-American conductor Mei-Ann Chen. Music Director of the MacArthur Award-winning Chicago Sinfonietta since 2011, and Artistic Director & Conductor for the National

Taiwan Symphony Orchestra Summer Festival since 2016, Ms. Chen is acclaimed for infusing orchestras with energy, enthusiasm, high-level music-making, and galvanizing audiences and communities alike. A sought-after guest conductor, Ms. Chen's reputation as a compelling communicator has resulted in growing popularity with orchestras globally.

North American guesting credits include appearances with the Symphony Orchestras of Atlanta, Baltimore, Cincinnati, Chicago, Detroit, Fort Worth, Houston, Indianapolis, Oregon, River Oaks Chamber, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle, Toronto, and Vancouver. Overseas engagements include the symphonies of BBC Scottish, Denmark's National, Aalborg, Aarhus, and Odense, Sweden's Gävle, Gothenburg, Helsingborg, Malmö, and Norrköping, Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra at the Concertgebouw, Norwegian Radio and Trondheim, Finland's Tampere Philharmonic, Austria's Grosses Orchester Graz, Germany's Badische Staatskapelle Karlsruhe, Brazil's São Paulo (OSESP), and National Taiwan.

Summer 2018 highlights included Switzerland's Sinfonieorchester Basel, Vienna's Tonkünstler-Orchester at Grafenegg Festival, and National Taiwan Symphony Orchestra's debut US Tour, including its debut as the first Taiwanese orchestra at Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles. 2018-19 season engagements include debuts and return engagements with Atlanta Symphony Orchestra (Gala program with Lang Lang), San Francisco Symphony, multiple programs with Austria's Recreation Grosses Orchester Graz and Sweden's Malmö Symphony Orchestra, Denmark's Copenhagen Philharmonic 7-city tour, Norway's Oslo Philharmonic, Turkey's Bilkent Senfoni Orkestrasi, Canada's Symphony

Nova Scotia & Orchestre Symphonique de Québec, ROCO, Asheville and Knoxville symphonies.



In memory of our ROCO friend and advocate by her friends, family, and husband Chuck to support the Conductor's travel. Honors and awards include being named one of Musical America's 2015 Top 30 Influencers, 2012 Helen M. Thompson Award from the League of American Orchestras, and First Prize Winner of Copenhagen's 2005 Malko Competition. Ms. Chen also holds the title of Conductor Laureate of the Memphis Symphony Orchestra.

#### Featured Artist

Heather Schmidt, pianist and composer

Composer and pianist Heather Schmidt has inspired audiences around the world with performances, broadcasts and premieres in numerous countries, including Canada, the USA, Russia, France, Germany, Switzerland, Poland, the Czech Republic, England, Finland, Iceland, Cyprus, Mexico, Brazil, and the British West Indies.

Heather began piano studies at the age of four and started composing at age 5. She gave her first public performance at age 6, performed on TV at age 8 and had her first published composition at age 9. After private studies in Calgary, she went on to study both composition and piano performance at Juilliard in New York City, and at Indiana University, where a 21 she became the youngest student to ever receive a Doctor of Music degree.



...continued 7

#### Heather Schmidt, continued. . .

Her numerous awards include two Juno nominations for "Best Classical Composition", two SOCAN awards, three consecutive BMI Awards, the Juilliard Composers Competition, the Robert Fleming Prize from Canada Council and many others.

Alongside her classical career, Heather has become increasingly active as a composer for film and television. Her most recent film scores include: Lifetime TV movie *Break-Up Nightmare*, AXS TV movie *Elvis Lives*, the Netflix family film *Jurassic School*, SyFy movie *Empire of the Sharks* and the independent comedy feature film *How to Get Rid of A Body and Still Stay Friends*.

Born and raised in Calgary, Alberta, Heather currently lives in Los Angeles with her husband Corey Field. She's a devoted animal lover and has four dogs, three cats, two pigeons and a horse. She recently founded a non-profit dog rescue called *Hollywood Huskies* that in its first two years saved and rehomed over 150 dogs.

For more information on Heather's career, please visit her website

#### www.heatherschmidt.com



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#### Featured Artist

#### Scott St. John, soloist

Violinist Scott St. John is the Director of Chamber Music at The Colburn School in Los Angeles. He leads the chamber music programs in the Colburn School's degree-granting Conservatory of Music and pre-college Music Academy. Scott is concertmaster of the innovative ensemble ROCO, in Houston, Texas, and returns frequently to the summertime Marlboro Music Festival in Vermont.

Scott was a member of the St.

Lawrence String Quartet and faculty member at Stanford University for seven years, from 2006 – 2013. The SLSQ, known for its compelling and energetic style, tours regularly in the US and around the world. From 1999 – 2006, Scott was Associate Professor of Violin at University of Toronto, and founded the Felix Galimir Chamber Music Award for U of T students.

Early success in Canada and the US led to a Carnegie debut in 1988, followed by the Young Concert Artists Award in 1989. Solo concertos, recitals, and an enormous variety of chamber music were played in numerous halls throughout the world. More recently Scott played a performance of Bruce Adolphe's violin concerto "I Will Not Remain Silent" with the ROCO Chamber Orchestra, and Korngold's Violin Concerto with Sinfonia London.

A recording of Mozart's Symphonia Concertante with his sister Lara St. John won a Juno Award for best recording: solo with orchestra. Working with composers has been important throughout his career; Scott has worked with John Adams, Charles Wuorinen and Oswaldo Golijov in the US, and Arsenio Giron, Gary Kulesha, Elizabeth Raum and many others in Canada.

Scott began his violin studies at age three with Richard Lawrence, in London Canada. He is a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music where he studied violin with David Cerone, Arnold Steinhardt, and chamber music with Felix Galimir. Current non-musical interests include transportation advocacy, and supporting HanVoice, a lobby organization for North Korean refugees in Canada.



#### Artist Statement: "Case Studies"

Musician cases are so much more than carriers for their instruments. They contain memories, words of encouragement and reminders of home. And they reveal much about the personalities of their owners.

"Case Studies" is a photo essay about musical instrument cases. I began the series in 2009 while working with ROCO, and continue it to this day. Every case tells a story about its owner and his/her journey, family, fears and aspirations. I am honored to share their stories through these photos.

See more photos at **terrigolas.com** and follow Terri on Instagram @terrigolas



#### Anna Clyne: Within Her Arms

**Quick Intro:** Written 2008-09 and dedicated to the composer's mother, who died in 2009. Premiered by the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Esa-Pekka Salonen.

**The Music:** Within Her Arms traverses that difficult space between mourning and fond remembrance. Clyne crafts a truly striking sound here; she explores the full range of the string ensemble, contrasting near-silence with moments when the strings are allowed to soar, yet avoiding any undue sense of ebullience. Alex Ross, music critic for *The New Yorker*, calls the piece a "fragile elegy" (indeed, isn't grief itself the most fragile thing of all?) and compares the entwined tendrils of the upper strings to "English Renaissance masterpieces of Thomas Tallis and John Dowland."

**Pure Poetry:** Clyne's program note consists simply of a brief dedication to her mother, "with all my love," and a poem by Vietnamese peace activist Thich Nhat Hahn:

Earth will keep you tight within her arms dear one— So that tomorrow you will be transformed into flowers— This flower smiling quietly in this morning field— This morning you will weep no more dear one— For we have gone through too deep a night. This morning, yes, this morning, I kneel down on the green grass— And I notice your presence. Flowers, that speak to me in silence. The message of love and understanding has indeed come. (Courtesy Anna Clyne/Boosey & Hawkes) **For the Non-Musicians:** Since the strings are all members of the same family of instruments, listen to how well their sound blends: it's like a choir here, but with a wider range. You'll also notice that string players usually gently "shake" their left hand while playing the notes; this is vibrato, intended to warm up the sound and emulate the quality of the human singing voice. But in this piece, the players don't always do it, so the result is a "colder," more pure sound.

**Further Listening:** Clyne's stunning *Night Ferry*; Giya Kancheli's *Night Prayers*; Valentin Silvestrov's *Four Postludes*; Arvo Pärt's *Summa* for strings.





#### Heather Schmidt: *Solitaire*

#### Quick Intro:

A ROCO-commissioned world premiere for solo violin and orchestra

**Music from Solitude:** Tasked with writing a piece inspired by games, Schmidt pursued an exploration of a card game to match the scoring. She notes that the piece is not "a literal musical interpretation of playing cards, but more a reflection of the state of mind being alone. What someone feels and what goes through their mind, the rises and falls, the moments where tension builds versus moments of relaxation, it's really up to the individual person, whether they are playing a game of solitaire or listening to this piece of music."

**A Concerto or a Concert Piece?** Schmidt writes, "Solitaire is a one-movement piece that constantly grows and evolves. There is a brief

solo violin cadenza like in a traditional violin concerto, and often the violin plays a more active virtuoso line above the orchestra, but at other times, the solo violin joins in with the orchestra as a new layer of color blending in and highlighting the melody."

**A Nod to the Classics:** The composer references a three-note motive used by Brahms and Robert Schumann: F-A-E, which stands for *Frei aber einsam* ("Free, but solitary").

**Listening Highlights:** "There are some interesting interactions between the solo violin and percussion, especially with the timpani. For instance, coming out of the solo violin cadenza, there is a brief duet between tubular bells and solo violin, which is an unusual combination of instruments."

**If This Piece Were Edible:** "I would say it's like vanilla ice cream with just the right amount of your favorite topping. The music has a simplified tonal palette just like the purity and deliciousness of vanilla ice cream. Yet there are definitely layers of color and emotion which can be interpreted by the individual listener to suit their own tastes, which is where the personalized topping comes into play!"

**Further Listening:** Lera Auerbach's extensive oeuvre for solo violin; Berg's violin concerto, which has a similarly mysterious opening; Schmidt's *Solus* for solo piano

#### Ruth Gipps: Seascape, op. 53

**Quick Intro:** Written in 1958 for the Portia Wind Ensemble, which the composer founded.

#### **About the Composer:**

Ruth Gipps was born in 1921 in a small town on the English coast. In addition to her work as a composer she was a virtuoso oboist and pianist, and studied with the prominent oboist Léon Goossens and composition with Ralph Vaughan Williams. Throughout her career, Gipps struggled against sexism; she received pushback from conductors who doubted her ability to play such works as Brahms' second piano concerto (despite the fact that she in fact excelled at this piece), and received reviews from critics who wrote her off as a "mere girl." Notably, Gipps wrote several other works based on the sea: a 1939 suite for oboe and piano, a 1940 piece for English horn and piano, and a 1941 orchestral work.

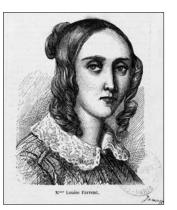
**A Rising Tide:** The sea, both literally and as a conceptual force, has inspired so many great works of art, from ancient Greek dramas (see Homer's "wine-dark sea") to Japanese landscapes; and in music, ranging from Beethoven's Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage to Debussy's tourde-force La mer. The unifying factor in these works seems to be the immense breadth and unknowable mystery of the sea, but Gipps goes a different direction, scoring her portrait for double wind quintet with optional double bass. The result is a more intimate, abstract rendering closer in essential nature to the aforementioned Japanese wave paintings of Hokusai and others.

B Vivid Imagery: Gipps so expertly emulates the moods of the mercuric ocean: at the beginning and at points throughout the piece we hear the gentle rise and fall of waves, followed soon thereafter by the stillness of the glass-calm sea (and its counterpart, the listless midocean doldrums), the puckish vagaries of the wind, and at times the hint of faraway cultures brought close by ancient trading routes.

Further Listening: Gipps' 1983 Wind Octet; Malcolm Arnold (a classmate of Gipps at the Royal College of Music), Three Shanties for Wind Quintet; Vaughan Williams, A Sea Symphony; Eugene Goossens (brother of Gipps' oboe teacher), Fantasy for Nine Woodwind Instruments.

**Louise Farrenc:** Symphony No. 3 in G minor. *op.* 36

**Quick intro:** Written in 1847; premiered two years later at the Société des concerts du Conservatoire in Paris (progenitor of today's Orchestre de Paris).



B A Neglected Composer: Critics and composers, most notably Robert Schumann, thought highly of Farrenc. But Farrenc had difficulty reaching any significant audience, and publishers by and large ignored her. While she faced an uphill climb as a non-male composer, there were slightly fewer barriers to women who performed or taught, and it was in these two fields that Farrenc eventually made more of a name for herself, touring as a concert pianist and teaching at the Paris Conservatory. In the latter portion of her career some of her chamber works finally began to gain attention, and Farrenc was able to demand pay equal to that of her male counterparts. In recent years her music, and this symphony in particular, has received some long-overdue attention.

Female Music": Critics and theorists of earlier eras often dismissed music by women (indeed, I hesitate to use the past tense here!). Even theorists used to refer to cadences as "masculine" or feminine," depending on whether or not the final chord fell on a strong beat. Women were expected to write lighter music, devoid of the sturm und drang of men's music. But even within this false distinction, Farrenc refuses to play by the rules; this symphony packs as big a punch as anything by Schumann or Mendelssohn (that is, Robert and Felix, as well as their composer wives).

B Chamber Symphony: This is one of the smallest of Farrenc's orchestral works, with no trumpets and only two horns. Contrast this with Berlioz's Symphonie fantastique, written 17 years earlier.

B What to Listen For: The momentum buildup at the very beginning is brilliant: gradually gaining steam at the end of the introduction and rolling right into the Allegro. That first movement contains echoes of Beethoven's third symphony, filled with similar bold gestures and sweeping lines. Listen to the long, lyrical lines in the slow second movement, and to the sprightly figures in the fast third movement, where Farrenc "out-Mendelssohns Mendelssohn" (The Guardian). And I love the drama with which she infuses the dark final movement; there's counterpoint everywhere, as if Farrenc is showing the fellas that she can handle "academic" music just as deftly as they can.

**Further Listening:** Farrenc's other symphonic output, including two other symphonies; Beethoven's Symphony No. 3 'Eroica'; Fanny Mendelssohn's piano trio; Clara Schumann's piano concerto.

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- Go to the App Store or Google Play, search for "ROCO Houston," and download the app to your phone.
- Open the ROCO app.
- LiveNote only runs during specific pieces (check your program). When it's time, you'll see a "LiveNote" icon along the bottom menu of the app. Tap this to launch LiveNote to access the musician's commentary.
- On the next screen, tap on the highlighted box around the name of the first movement and LiveNote will automatically advance once the music starts.
- Two fun features: The dot at the bottom of the screen shows where we are in the piece and if you see any highlighted terms, you can tap on them to get a definition.
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---The ROCO Team----



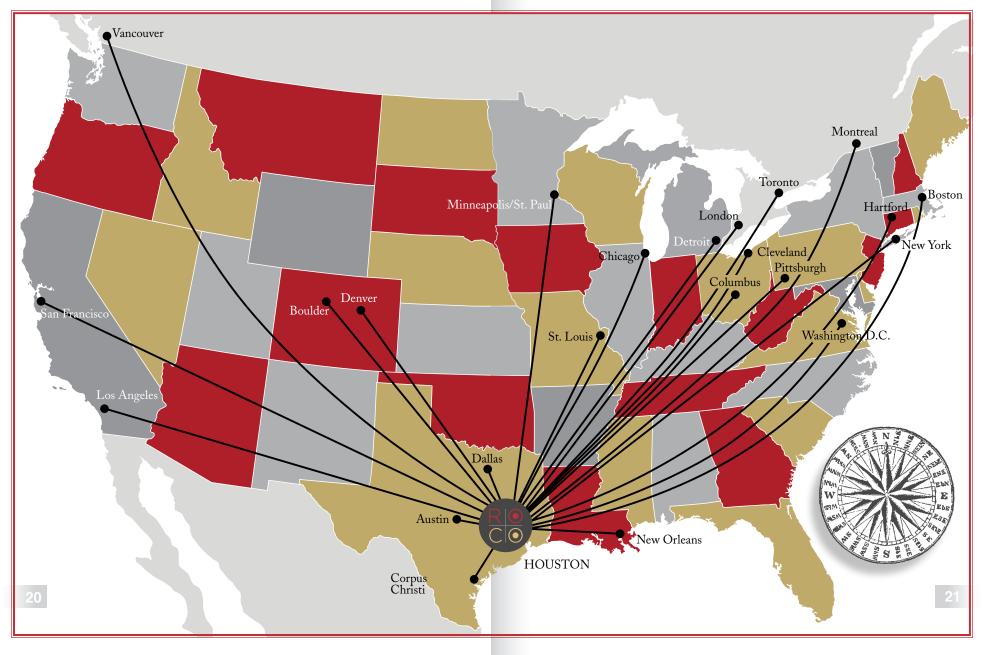
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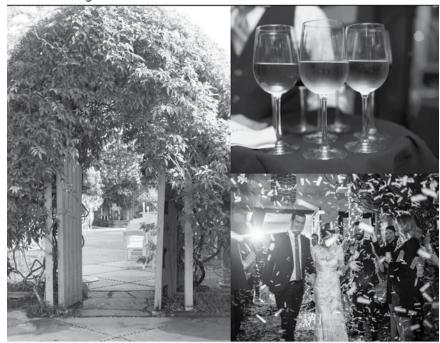
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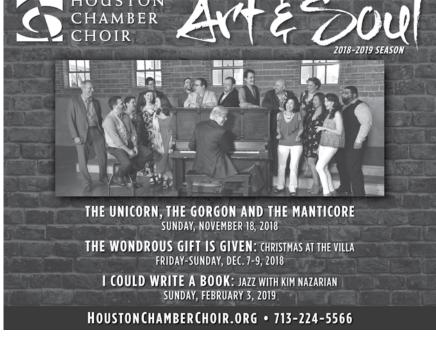
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  St. Arnold's Brewery 2000 Lyons Ave
- Peter and the Bear
  Sunday, January 27 2:00, 3:00, 4:00pm
  Houston Zoo 6200 Herman Park Dr
- Terzetto
  Saturday, February 9 5:00pm
  MATCH 3400 Main St
- Ticket to Ride
  Saturday, February 23 5:00pm\*
  St. John the Divine 2450 River Oaks Blvd
- Musical Chairs
  Thursday, March 7 5:30pm Reception
  6:00pm Concert The Heritage Society
  1100 Bagby St
- ▲ Chase Sequence

Saturday, April 6 • 5:00pm • MATCH • 3400 Main St Tuesday, April 9 • 3:00pm • Cypress Creek FACE 5830 Bermuda Dunes Dr

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