



'Where the biggies leave off...'

# Hill & Lake Press

Published for East Isles, Lowry Hill, Kenwood Isles, & Cedar Isles Dean Neighborhoods

VOLUME 42 NUMBER 9

www.hillandlakepress.com

SEPTEMBER 21, 2018

## Isles Ensemble musicians return on Sunday, September 30 for four-concert 15th season

By Michael Wilson

The eleven musicians of the Isles Ensemble, string players all, return to our Hill and Lake neighborhood for their 15th season with a concert on Sunday, September 30, at 2 pm at Lake of the Isles Lutheran featuring works by Carolyn Shaw, Brahms, and Schubert.

In 2004, according to Leslie Shank, violinist and Lowry Hill East resident, she and violinist Joanne Opgenorth were walking around Lake of the Isles and were struck by the beauty of Lake of the Isles Lutheran Church as they viewed it across the water. Opgenorth poked her head in the church, Shank recalls, and said, "The acoustic is great. This would be a marvelous performance space for a chamber group." Shortly afterwards the Isles Ensemble was born.

The Isles Ensemble members come from the top tier of chamber musicians in the Twin Cities. Chamber music is their passion, and their mission is to help build a vibrant chamber music community in the Twin Cities. The players introduce each piece with a few brief remarks about the music to provide some listening guidance as well as a performer's perspective, Shank says. After each concert, audience members are invited to join the performers at an informal reception for a chance to mingle, meet the players, and discuss the music in more depth.

The players all agree Lake of the Isles Lutheran Church, built in 1925, has excellent acoustics and provides a beautiful and intimate atmosphere for enjoying music. And we all appreciate the ease and convenience of wonderful music right in our own backyard.

**Shaw was youngest Pulitzer winner in 2013.**

The September 30 concert begins with Entr'acte, by Carolyn Shaw. "I am excited that the Isles Ensemble can introduce our audience to the remarkable music of Caroline Shaw," says cellist Tom Rosenberg. "She is a violinist, singer and composer whose music seems tremendously genuine and organic. She is the youngest composer ever to receive the Pulitzer Prize in 2013 at the age of 32 and maintains a busy career of performing and has become one of the most sought-after composers. The SPCO is one of the many musical organizations that have commissioned her for a new work."

Entr'acte, a piece approximately ten minutes in length, is a beautiful work in which the string quartet is used in fascinating and varied ways, according to Rosenberg. "Many parts sound vocal...at times like choral music, at times like speaking and conversation. Colors, special techniques and the use of silence draw the listener into her beautiful and sometimes strange world. After the opening music returns near the end of the piece, the music seems to vaporize, and the listener is transported to a completely new place that seems to have limitless space."

Adds Rosenberg, "So that's what MY imagination gets from this piece. I am sure our audience will love Entr'acte as it will affect each person in a different way!"

**Schubert at his most delightful.**

The concert continues with Schubert's Sonata in D Major, D. 384 (Opus 137, No. 1). David Leung explains that Mozart's spirit is strong in the three violin sonatas Schubert composed in March and April of 1816. These are 'Sonatas for piano, with violin accompaniment' with a very classical model in mind. "When the sonatas were published by the firm of Diabelli (yes,



Isles Ensemble members, from left: Sifei Cheng, violin; Ivan Konev, piano; David Leung, violin and viola; Laura Sewell, cello; Tom Rosenberg, cello; Leslie Shank, violin and viola; Thomas Turner, viola; Timothy Lovelace, piano; Helen Chang-Haertzen, violin; Stephanie Arado, violin; and Joanne Opgenorth, violin. Go to <islesensemble.org> to learn more about the musicians.

Photo: Leslie Shank and Sifei Cheng

### Isles Ensemble 2018-19 Season

Lake of the Isles Lutheran Church  
2020 W. Lake of the Isles Parkway

**Sunday, September 30th -- 2 pm**

Caroline Shaw  
Brahms - Schubert

**Sunday, November 11th -- 2 pm**

Bruch - Haydn  
Shostakovich

**Sunday, February 24th -- 2 pm**

Pärt - Mozart  
Tchaikovsky

**Sunday, May 5th -- 2 pm**

Reinaldo Moya - Brahms  
Beethoven - Rachmaninoff

For more information: [islesensemble.org](http://islesensemble.org)

that's the same name that Beethoven used for his famous piano variations) in 1836, eight years after Schubert's death, they were advertised as 'sonatinas', doubtless to lure the fast-growing amateur market," Leung says.

The music is technically undemanding yet highly dramatic in this D major sonatina, D384. Schubert seems to have modeled the main theme of the Sonata in D major's opening Allegro molto, heard first in unison then in free imitation between violin and piano left hand, on Mozart's legendary E minor Sonata, K304,

according to Leung.

"Nonetheless," Leung says, "Schubert's compact movement is far more amiable, even naive, not least in the delightful second subject. The song-like and elegant Mozartian outer sections of the A major second movement enclose a contrasting A minor melody for violin, while the swinging and playful 6/8 finale (almost jig-like) alternates a bounding refrain with episodes featuring numerous episodes of imitative counterpoint, and brings the bubbling work into a humorous and brilliant ending."

**'Grand and heroic' Brahms piano trio.**

The September 30 concert concludes with Brahms' C Major piano trio, Opus 87. "I am really looking forward to playing one of the masterpieces of the chamber music literature, the second piano trio of Johannes Brahms," says cellist Laura Sewell, who will be joined by colleagues Leslie Shank, violin, and Ivan Konev, piano. Brahms was notoriously picky about which of his works he allowed to be published so virtually ANY piece by Brahms that has come down to us has been gone over with a fine-toothed comb for sure!

"We musicians often lament the fact that there were undoubtedly many wonderful compositions of Brahms' that ended up in the trash bin," Sewell says. "Needless to say, the trio we are going to play on the 30th is one of the most beautiful and beloved works for violin, cello, and piano. It is a grand and heroic piece with gorgeous singing melodies and virtuosic writing for all three of us."

Sewell is pleased to pass on some Isles Ensemble news -- David Leung and Ivan Konev, both of whom are playing on the opening concert, became first-time fathers within the last month. "I think they are both really good sports to be playing on the September concert!" Sewell says.

Future concerts are on November 11, February 24, and May 5. Find out more about the musicians at <islesensemble.org>