

Con Brio

February 2025



LES *Amis* DE L' **ORCHESTR**
Friends OF THE NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE
DU CENTRE NATIONAL DES ARTS

Honorary Patron - *Président honoraire*
Alexander Shelley



*From left: His Excellency Kenji Yamanouchi Ambassador of Japan, Frédéric Lacroix, Charles Hamann, Lauren Anker.
Photo © Ülle Baum*

Grand Evening of Japanese-Inspired Chamber Music!

By Mary McNamara Roy and Philippe Roy, FNACO members

In the bleak mid-winter of Tuesday evening January 28, 2025, members of FNACO were warmly hosted by the Ambassador of Japan, his Excellency H.E. Kanji Yamanouchi, at the Japanese Ambassador's Residence in Rockcliffe Park, for a lovely Japanese inspired Chamber Music event.

Les Amis de l'Orchestra du Centre National des Arts

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The venue was a grand and gracious historical stone mansion, overlooking the beautiful Ottawa River, and aptly named Waterstone. FNACO members were seated in a large semi-circle in front of a massive blazing fireplace, so warm and comforting on a cold winter's eve, and were offered welcoming refreshments.

His excellency welcomed the attendees in both English and French and remarked that this has been his second winter in Canada and the second time that the FNACO chamber music event has been hosted by Japan.

The Chamber music program was introduced by members of the N.A.C's Orchestra, Lauren Anker French horn and Charles "Chip" Hamann oboe and Ottawa's famous pianist and composer Frédéric Lacroix.

They in turn introduced the music of three composers, one a Canadian composer inspired by Japanese culture, Jean Coulthard, and two Japanese composers, Takashi Yoshimatsu and Taru Takamatsu.

The first composer, Jean Coulthard, lived most of the 20th century (1908-2000) in Vancouver. The piece chosen was Shizen: Three Nature Sketches for oboe and piano. The three movements were inspired by different aspects of Japanese nature and culture these being: Wind in the Pines, Meditation Garden, and the Temple Festival. The musicians Charles Hamman and Frédéric Lacroix transported us delightfully to a both calm space and visions of a warm garden.

The second composer Takashi Yoshimatsu is a renowned Japanese composer born in Tokyo in 1953. Known for his unique blend of classical, jazz, rock and Japanese traditional music, he is particularly inspired by the music of Beethoven and Tchaikovsky. The piece shared was "Romance from a Spiral Bird Suite" music for Horn and Piano Op. 111 performed by Lauren Anker and Frédéric Lacroix. They had us imagine a bird calling from a branch far away in fanciful bird notes, so very lovely.



Photo © M.V-Pugsley

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The next two compositions were solo piano pieces brilliantly performed by Frederic Lacroix. The first by Toru Takemitsu (1930-1996) and was from AME no ki sobyo 11 (Rain Tree Sketch 11) as a tribute to and in memory of the French composer Olivier Messiaen he admired so much. The piece shared captured the rain tree's cascading leaves and showcased the composer's ability to blend Eastern and Western musical traditions.

The second piece composed by Takashi Yoshimatsu, Capriccio for Bird was one of his Six Vignettes Op.105 and showcased his style of blending traditional Japanese music with western music influences and had us envisioning birds in flight.

The final composer was Carl Reinecke (1824-1910). This aptly written piece for Oboe, Horn and Piano, Op. 188 in 1886 during the Romantic period, demonstrated the abilities of our musicians to perform so perfectly together. The piece consisted of four movements: Allegro moderato, Scherzo Molto vivace, Adagio and finally Allegro ma non troppo. We were challenged by the musicians to guess which composer Reinecke might have been championing especially with his last movement. After further discussion with Chip, it was suggested the composer might have been Brahms.

Following this grand Chamber Music performance, FNACO President, Christine McLaughlin graciously thanked Ambassador Kanji Yamanouchi and the musicians on behalf of FNACO.

The attendees then went on to savour the delicious hors d'oeuvres and sake that had been prepared for the evening.

A huge thank you to our generous host, Ambassador Kanji Yamanouchi and his staff, to FNACO President Christine McLaughlin, and to Melina-Vacca-Pugsley, the FNACO Concert Director, for organizing such a wonderful evening. ■



From left: Frederic Lacroix, Charles Hamann, Lauren Anker. Photo © Ülke Baum

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101 Years Young!

Happy Birthday to Maryse Robillard, who turned
101 on February 7th.

Congratulations from us all.



NOTES OF LOVE



A special side-by-side fundraiser for OrKidstra
featuring the National Arts Centre Orchestra.

February 14, 2025, at 7 PM
Carleton Dominion-Chalmers Centre (355 Cooper St.)

NAC-O O-CNA
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OrKidstra
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*F*arewell to Edvard Škerjanc, NACO Violinist

Edvard Škerjanc, one of our wonderful NACO violinists, is retiring this year.

On behalf of the Friends, we thank him for all the years he has performed for us in the NAC Orchestra, and we shall miss him but wish him good fortune in his retirement.



A Message from Edvard

Looking back, now, on 40+ years as a professional violinist, I can honestly say that I've been very lucky and truly blessed!

Having started my career in Europe, where I was born and raised, I met the love of my life and my wife, Ilona, in Nice, France, at a summer music festival. We decided that I'd follow her to North America, where she pursued her successful career in science.

After a few years of playing with a marvellous chamber music group, "I musici de Montreal", I joined the amazing world class NACO, some 30+ years ago.

That may seem like a long time, but it goes by so fast!

I am grateful and honoured to have had the privilege to work at this amazing institution, sharing the stage with some of the world's best musicians and artists! There have been many thrilling concerts, exciting tours, wonderful friendships, and much more. Being able to represent Canada on the international stage was among the top privileges for me.

Now, I am excited to look forward to the next chapter in my life, devoted to my family, drawing (huge passion of mine), traveling and - spending time with our young puppy, Maple.

Also, I feel very good about passing the torch to the next generation.

Edvard Škerjanc, NACO

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Obituary

We are saddened to share the news of the passing of **Douglas Payson (Pace) Sturdevant** on January 14, 2025.

Pace joined the NAC Orchestra in 1974 as second trumpet and soon became Principal Trumpet, a role he held until his retirement in 1998. He then continued his dedication to music education as a valued member of the NAC Orchestra's learning and engagement team until 2016.

Our heartfelt sympathies go out to his family and musical colleagues.

A celebration of Pace's life will take place at the National Arts Centre on Sunday, March 2, at 2 p.m.

Obituary within the *Ottawa Citizen*: [Douglas Sturdevant | Obituary | Ottawa Citizen](#)



Con Brio

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