



THUNDER BAY
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

SEASON 60: STILL SHINING!

Paul Haas
Music Director

The TBSO Presents Estacio & Price

January 29, 2022 - 7:30 p.m.
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Estacio & Price

January 29, 2022 - 7:30 p.m.



Such Sweet Sorrow

John Estacio
(b. 1966)

Piano Quintet

Florence Price
(1887-1953)

Allegro non troppo
Andante con moto
Juba - Allegro
Scherzo - Allegro

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING YOUR TBSO

The first half of our season was a success. We were glad to finally see you in person once again. We continue to overcome the hurdles and restrictions put in place. We can't thank you enough for sticking by our side while we figured out how to share the music with you while keeping our staff, musicians, and you safe.

Our patrons really are the best we could ask for. You have shown your support by donating, viewing our live-streamed concerts, and spreading the word to your friends and family around the world. You are noticed and you are appreciated!

We look forward to planning our next season and hopefully seeing you face to face very soon.

Stay healthy and happy!

- TBSO Family

Programme Notes

Piano Quintet in A minor

Composer: Florence Price (1887-1953)

Composed: Late 1920s or early 1930s

Premiere: Unknown

Length 28 minutes

Florence Price, African American composer, organist, and pianist was born into the racially segregated Jim Crow era of the south. Originally from Little Rock, Arkansas, Florence's family was well respected, belonging to Little Rock's black bourgeoisie, managing to flourish despite the social climate and discrimination they faced.

At the age of 14, Florence graduated as valedictorian from her high school, going on to double major at the New England Conservatory of Music, one of the only universities accepting black students, in organ and piano teaching. At the urging of her mother, Florence disguised her racial identity from the school and her peers, listing her hometown as Pueblo Mexico, in the hopes of passing as Mexican. Though proud of their heritage, Florence's mother feared that her daughter would face the same prejudices in Boston as she had in Arkansas.

After graduating with honours with an artist's diploma and teaching certificate, Florence's returned to the south, becoming head of the music department of what is now Clark Atlanta University, but eventually gave up her position to return to her now completely segregated hometown of Little Rock in 1912, where her husband was a lawyer. In 1927, after years of racial discrimination, race riots, and routine lynchings, Price and her family, now her husband and 2 daughters, were forced to relocate north, to Chicago. It was here, that Price began composing again, encouraged by the community she found in her new neighbourhood, and divorced her husband, who had become abusive.

After venturing out on her own as a single mother, Price began to re-pave her musical path, receiving two first-prize Rodman Wanamaker Music Awards. Her ventures were hard fought however, and she continued to face discrimination from her peers and colleagues. In a letter to conductor Serge Koussevitzky, she introduced herself "My dear Dr. Koussevitzky, to begin with I have two handicaps- those of sex and race. I am a woman; and I have some Negro blood in my veins."

Price eventually gained favour from the conductor of the Chicago Symphony, and her Symphony in E minor was premiered in 1933. Price's works have been celebrated in the black community for decades, being inducted into the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers in 1940.

After Price's death in 1953, most of her music was lost and forgotten. Due to her race and gender, historians and archivists did not see the value in her compositions, and many of her transcripts were packed and stored away without further thought. It wasn't until 2009, when boxes of manuscripts were uncovered in Price's summer home by the new owners that her music saw the light of day once more.

Around the same time, scholar Dr. Rae Linda Brown also happened across some uncatalogued works at Yale University Library where she was doing her graduate studies and Dr. Brown began the process of cataloguing Price's music. One of these previously unknown works is her Piano Quintet in A minor. It is believed that this piece was written around the same time as her Symphony in E minor and Piano Sonata; the fourth movement of the quintet and the third movement of her piano sonata share the same theme, indicated they were composed during the same era.

Price's compositional style was impacted by both her classical European training received from the New England Conservatory, and her African American culture, evident by her use of melodies inspired by spirituals, folk songs, and dance forms found in the Harlem Renaissance Movement.

Such Sweet Sorrow

Composer: John Estacio (1966-)

Premiere: 2001, Roy Goodman and the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra

Length: 15 minutes

Newly appointed Order of Canada awardee, and Juno nominated composer, John Estacio, has been a Canadian staple in classical music for decades, being one of Canada's most frequently performed and commissioned composers. A native of Newmarket, Ontario, Estacio grew up in a farming community, studying piano and accordion as a child, and playing organ at church every Sunday. He has served as composer in residence for the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, Calgary Philharmonic, Calgary Opera, and Pro Coro Canada. Estacio's works have been performed world-wide, reaching audiences in Europe and the Americas.

Mr. Estacio has the following to say about his piece, Such Sweet Sorrow:

"In many ways, I consider Such Sweet Sorrow to be a companion piece to another work I wrote for Winnipeg audiences [in 1993], Saudades. Both pieces were written while my life was in a state of flux complete with a change of living location, a change in my personal life, a change of jobs, and a change in the people with whom I socially interacted. In retrospect, I can only assume that I have composed both works to serve as security blankets as I plowed through into a new life. This piece is a personal and melancholic requiem for the life I left behind.

This commission gave me the opportunity to compose my own lyrical Adagio for Strings, a rare treat as most of my work has scored for full orchestra. The piece follows 2 thematic ideas; the first is introduced in the very opening measures of the work, a simple melody that expands over the ensuing 29 measures. The lower strings play the second melody while a solo violin elaborates rhapsodically. With the 2 themes introduced, the piece undergoes a development of these melodic ideas, at times with serenity and calm, at other times with impassioned restlessness.

The middle of the piece features solos for the cello, viola and violin, solos that draw the piece to its climatic statement, a fiery juxtaposition of both the thematic ideas. Gradually, the intensity abates into a brief passage that has some of the players performing out of sync with each other. The piece eventually concludes with the solo violin and cello performing the opening theme in unison."



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