

Jason Vieaux and Adam Barnett-Hart open Tuesday Musical season

by Mike Telin



When guitarist Jason Vieaux and the Escher String Quartet first performed together at Music@Menlo in 2007, the musicians knew they needed to keep the collaboration going. “Since then the Quartet has played with him many times,” Escher first violinist Adam Barnett-Hart said during a

telephone interview. “We’ve performed some duos as part of the Quartet programs,” Vieaux said during a separate conversation, “but next week will be the first full concert as a duo.”

On Tuesday, September 24 at 7:30 pm at E.J. Thomas Hall, Jason Vieaux and Adam Barnett-Hart will open Tuesday Musical’s 2019-20 MainStage season. Audience members can get to know the performers during the Concert Conversation at 6:30 p.m. in E.J.’s Flying Balcony Club. Accessible by elevator, the Club features lounge seating and libations. Tickets are available [online](#).

Putting together an evening-length program for guitar and violin is not without challenges. “There isn’t a huge amount of music that’s written for that combination,” Barnett-Hart noted. “You need to be creative about finding pieces, and come up with enough variety in the music.”

The program is bookended by two *Histoires*, beginning with Ibert’s. “I first heard it through one of my students at Curtis,” Vieaux said. “It’s originally for violin and piano. I loved it and really enjoyed coaching it. So when Adam and I decided to go with the *Histoires* thing, we thought we would open with this. It’s very French and makes a nice appetizer for the rest of the program.”

Following de Falla's always enjoyable *Siete Canciones Populares Españolas*, the duo's program will take on a Baroque twist with Handel's *Violin Sonata in D* and Bach's "Fuga" from *Sonata No. 1 in G*, BWV 101.

"The *Sonata in D* is one of Handel's most famous," Barnett-Hart said. "While a lot of Baroque pieces were not played until more recently, this one was played by all the great violinists. There's a Milstein recording, and Leopold Auer taught it to all of his students. It's a piece with a lot of history, which I particularly like."

The second half will open with Barbara Kolb's *Umbrian Colors*, another piece that Vieaux was introduced to by coaching it at Curtis. Kolb, a student of Franchetti, Lukas Foss, and Gunther Schuller, was the first American woman composer to win the Rome Prize. From 1979 to 1982 she served as the artistic director of contemporary music at New York's Third Street Music School Settlement and held teaching positions at Rhode Island College and the Eastman School of Music.

"It's a piece that's been at the back of my mind as one I would like to study and eventually perform," Vieaux said. "It has a free-dissonance type of language with four very different moods. They're basically sketches but they're very interesting."

Barnett-Hart said that the minimalist feel of Ysaÿe's *Sonata No. 5*, Op. 27 for solo violin pairs nicely with the Kolb. "And the program ends with a big bang. Piazzolla's *L'histoire du Tango* is such a great piece. Everybody likes it for good reason. I think it's one of his better works, and he wrote a lot of music."

Although he has played it countless times, Vieaux said it's a piece he never gets tired of. "My part is challenging and there are some nice guitar moments. And it's always a great crowd pleaser — they really go crazy over it."

Published on ClevelandClassical.com September 17, 2019.

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