

Monday, April 13th, 7:30pm
Canadian Mennonite University,
Laudamus Auditorium,
500 Shaftesbury Avenue

Echoes and Tracings



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Curator's Message

I first discovered the music of Valentyn Silvestrov through his beautiful Symphony No. 5 (1982), and I have long wanted to present some of his music in Winnipeg. While exploring repertoire for this concert, I encountered the music of Anna Pidgorna. Although she shares Ukrainian heritage with Silvestrov, her musical language is quite different, and the contrast between their voices suggested an engaging and balanced program.

The idea behind *Echoes and Tracings* grew from a desire to bring together music that reflects in diverse ways on memory, gesture, and imagination. Silvestrov's piano miniatures and his Five Pieces for Violin and Piano belong to the distinctive late style he has described as "metaphorical music," in which fragments of melody and harmony appear like distant recollections—musical echoes that emerge briefly before fading again into silence.

Anna Pidgorna's works trace a different path through sound. Stockhausen *Menagerie* presents a lively aviary of fantastical birds for flute and clarinet, each movement sketching a vivid musical character. *Tiny Choreographies of a Sleepless Mind* follows the restless associations of an insomniac imagination, moving through a sequence of sharply drawn musical scenes.

Between these works stands my own *Two Pieces for Solo Violin*, written for Karl Stobbe and exploring the expressive and colouristic possibilities of the instrument.

Together these pieces suggest a web of echoes and tracings—resonances across styles, generations, and musical ideas that connect the program in subtle and unexpected ways.

Michael Matthews

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GroundSwell is proud to exist on Treaty 1 Territory, the traditional lands of the Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene Peoples, and on the homeland of the Métis Nation. We respect the Treaties that were made on these territories and acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past. We are committed to honouring the land on which we create and share music and dedicate ourselves to move forward in partnership with Indigenous communities in a spirit of reconciliation and collaboration.



CS4:

Echoes and Tracings

Barkarole from Two Epitaphs (2001)

Valentyn Silvestrov

Two Pieces (2001)

Valentyn Silvestrov

I. Benedictus (Nacht/Night)

II. Sanctus (Morgen/Morning)

Nostalgia (2001)

Valentyn Silvestrov

Laura Loewen, *piano*

Stockhausen Menagerie (2022)

Anna Pidgorna

I. Right-Winged Aries Bird

II. Left-Winged Aries Bird

III. The Martian Robin

IV. The Taurus Warbler

V. Gemini Wren

Laurel Ridd, *flute*;

Alex Whitehead, *clarinet*

Two Pieces for Solo Violin (2026)*

Michael Matthews

Karl Stobbe, *violin*

INTERMISSION



Hiver Dorien (Dorian Winter) (2026)*

An original composition written and performed by the students of Collège Louis-Riel— Gabriel Fields, teacher, Guy Michaud, mentor composer.

Five Pieces for Violin and Piano (2004)

Valentyn Silvestrov

I. Elegy

II. Serenade

III. Intermezzo

IV. Barcarole

V. Nocturne

Laura Loewen, *piano*;

Karl Stobbe, *violin*

Tiny Choreographies of a Sleepless Mind (2026)**

Anna Pidgorna

I. Racing and Tripping (Stravinskyesque)

II. Nocturnal I (Contemplative)

III. Meandering (a Messiaenesque dream)

IV. Nocturnal II (Anxious)

V. Ambiguous (Satieesque, But a Little Wrong)

Laura Loewen, *piano*;

Élise Lavallée, *viola*

* *World Premiere*

** *World Premiere - commissioned by GroundSwell*

with financial assistance from the Canada Council for the Arts

Programme Notes

Valentyn Silvestrov's piano works of the early 2000s belong to the distinctive late style he has often described as "metaphorical music." Rather than pursuing dramatic development, these pieces unfold as quiet reflections—echoes of familiar musical gestures that seem to arise from memory and dissolve back into silence.

Barkarole, from *Two Epitaphs* (2001), evokes the gentle rocking rhythm traditionally associated with Venetian boat songs, yet Silvestrov transforms the genre into something inward and elegiac. The music moves slowly, its melody emerging like a distant recollection, suggesting both nostalgia and farewell.

The Two Pieces (2001) form a small diptych framed by sacred titles. *Benedictus (Night)* unfolds in a hushed, contemplative atmosphere,

its sparse textures and suspended harmonies suggesting a nocturnal meditation. *Sanctus (Morning)* offers a subtle contrast: the music brightens slightly, though its lyricism remains restrained, as if greeting the first light of day with quiet reverence.

In *Nostalgia* (2001), Silvestrov returns to one of his central poetic ideas: the persistence of musical memory. The piece unfolds in fragments of melody and gentle harmonic resonance, recalling distant Romantic idioms while remaining unmistakably modern in its stillness.

Together these works create a cycle of introspective miniatures—music that listens to its own past, inviting the performer and listener alike into a space of reflection, remembrance, and fragile beauty.

Having created a remarkable body of symphonic works through the 1990s, Silvestrov turned in the new millennium to smaller forms — waltzes, lullabies, postludes, nocturnes, barcaroles and serenades — collectively described by the composer himself as 'bagatelles' or 'moments'. *The Five Pieces for Violin and Piano* (2004) — an Elegy, Serenade, Intermezzo, Barcarole and Nocturne — are among the finest examples of this late style.

In these pieces, Silvestrov's primary concern is melody: not as something complete, but as a response to

fleeting intonations and motives that, once heard, never leave him. The short form allows him to capture a moment without the burden of thematic development. What results is outwardly simple — 'weak', in Silvestrov's own word — yet rendered with extraordinary care: agogics, tempo, dynamics and pedalling are all brought to the fore, giving the music its multi-dimensionality and, despite any 'neo' connotations, a genuine sense of modernity.

The demands on performers are equally high. Silvestrov conceives the violin as carrying the melodic 'voice',

while the piano acts as doppelgänger or echo. Together they sustain what appears at first to be an unending meditation, though the attentive ear discovers a multitude of nuances within it.

The music — by turns dark, cheerful and mysterious — draws the listener into an intimate conversation about melody itself. As Silvestrov put it: “Here there are only fleeting melodies, songs without words — words that are possibly lost or forgotten.”

Anna Pidgorna, *Stockhausen Menagerie*

The *Stockhausen Menagerie* is a collection of miniatures drawing on phrases from Karlheinz Stockhausen’s *Tierkreis* (the Aries, Taurus and Gemini movements) to create portraits of fantasy birds. The bits of phrases are “birdified” and shaped into imaginary interactions between displaying males. Males of some species, like the Right-Winged Aries Bird, are antagonistic and territorial, whereas the males of the Martian Robin and the Gemini Wren species perform intricate collaborative

choreographies for the observing females. The Left-Winged Aries Bird is related to its Right-Winged cousin; the two populations were separated by geography and developed their own variations on the courtship display while retaining some original features. The Taurus Warblers are gentle birds, which can be heard on mild summer mornings; the males display independently but in close proximity to each other, resulting in songs that intertwine in pleasant counterpoint.

Hiver Dorien (Dorian Winter)

Hiver Dorien is an original composition composed by the students of the grade 11 guitar class at Collège Louis Riel. This project was led by their music teacher Gabriel Fields and local composer Guy Michaud with the financial support of GroundSwell. Collège Louis Riel is a DSFM High School of about 500 students and offers both guitar and band as music options to their students.

The students started by exploring the different musical church modes and their individual characteristics.

They were also exposed to American minimalist music, especially the music of Philip Glass. Eventually, they chose to focus on the Dorian mode, which can be described as a minor scale with a raised 6th degree. Under the guidance of their mentors, the students generated numerous musical ideas, then worked collectively to gather, refine, and organize them into a final composition. The result is a beautifully woven minimalist tapestry à la Philip Glass.

The project is the culmination of many hours of work and dedication

by the students and their mentors. Most students have agreed to perform their composition tonight and share their musical talent with our wonderful GroundSwell

community. We sincerely hope you enjoy our new composition, and we thank GroundSwell for their support of this project.

Michael Mathews: *Two Pieces for Solo Violin*

The pieces you will hear this evening have their roots in 2011, though their story begins even earlier. In 1985 I wrote a work for solo violin, *Fantasy*; since then, I have composed extensively for strings — including four string quartets — but other activities intervened and the new solo violin project remained unfinished, existing only as sketches.

New impetus came two years ago, shortly after the premiere of two movements of what has since grown into a four-movement string sextet. I had a wide-ranging and inspiring conversation with violinist Karl Stobbe in which we reflected on some of our favourite solo and

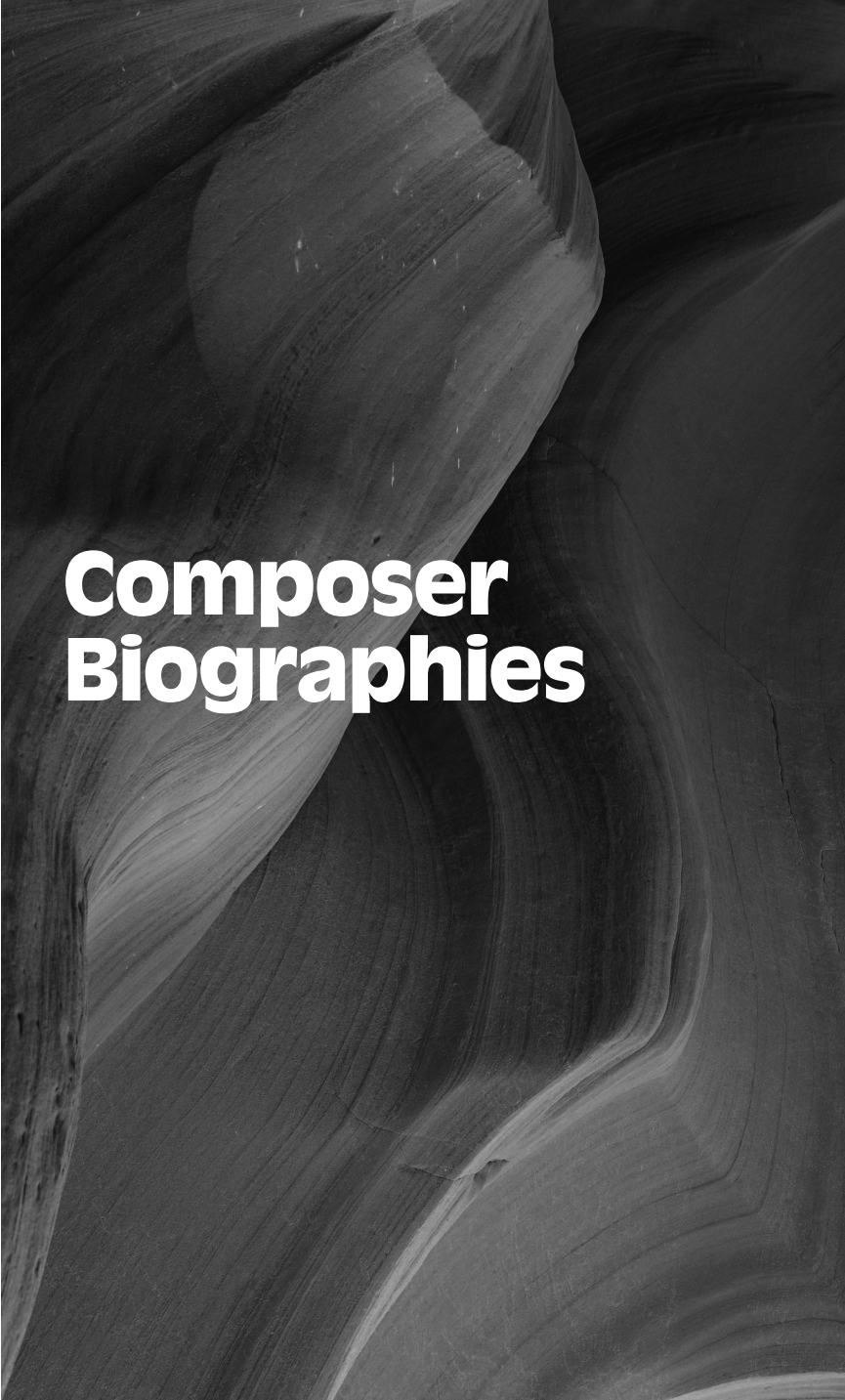
chamber string repertoire — Biber, Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Ysaÿe, Bartók — and in addition discussed the possibility of expanding my sextet. That conversation proved the catalyst I needed: in 2024 I returned to the 2011 sketches with fresh ears and new purpose, developing and expanding them into the pieces you will hear tonight.

These two works are drawn from a projected set of five, all dedicated to Karl Stobbe. Working with Karl on these compositions has been a genuine joy, and I am delighted that he is performing them this evening.

Anna Pidgorna, *Tiny Choreographies of a Sleepless Mind*

Tiny Choreographies of a Sleepless Mind is a collection of whimsical miniatures that capture the mental states of insomnia, something that afflicts me rather frequently. The mind is sometimes anxious, sometimes contemplative. Sometimes half remembered thoughts and memories float through a state of semi-wakefulness. This gentle invasion of half-remembered images is

captured by unintended references to various 20th century composers. Stravinsky, Messiaen and Satie sneaked into my work as I sketched, dusting themselves over my sketches until their form took on an awakened self awareness. There are also nods to Saariaho's approach to string writing and general vibes from the romantic era.



Composer Biographies

Michael Matthews

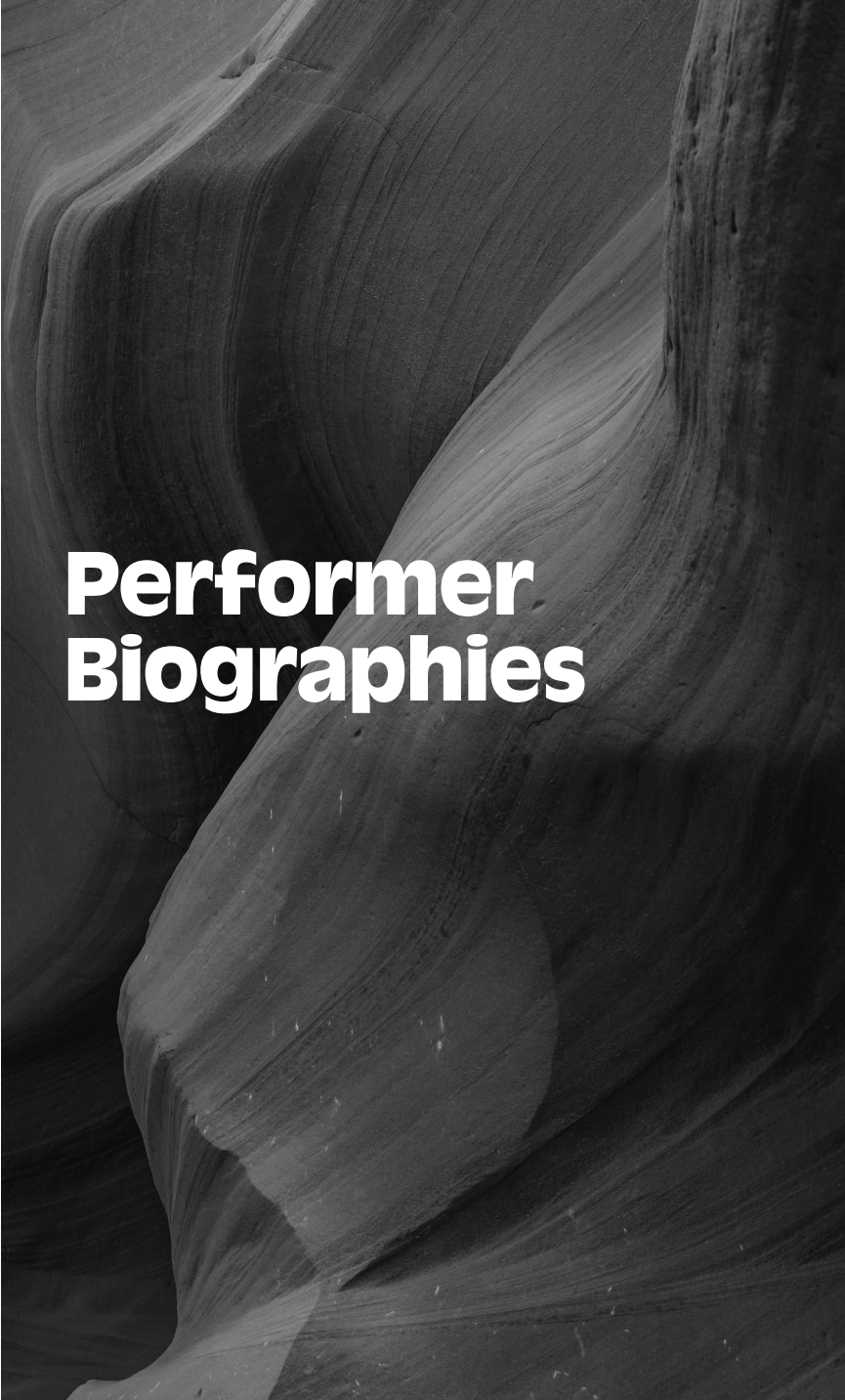
Inspired by the worlds of nature and literature, Michael Matthews creates music that compels the listener to step beyond the everyday to dwell for a while in images of paradox, to consider the ever-changing tapestry of life. Matthews has a deep love for the contemporary symphonic tradition and has established himself as a master of large-scale musical structures, motivic relationships, and organic wholeness, all of which lie at the core of symphonic thought. The symphony is, for Matthews, both a vital form and a special challenge that allows for musical ideas to be carried between movements. Compositional influences include Beethoven, Mahler, Schoenberg, Shostakovich, Schnittke and, more recently, Scandinavian composers Pettersson and Aho.

Matthews' music has been performed in countries around the world, including by the Mexico City Woodwind Quintet, the Mondriaan Quartet of Amsterdam, the Sequitur Ensemble of New York City, the Kiev Camerata Orchestra, the Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestra and the BIT 20 Ensemble of Bergen, Norway. In Canada, Matthews has been commissioned, and his work performed, by the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra, the Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra, GroundSwell and CBC Radio.

Anna Pidgorna

Anna Pidgorna is a Ukrainian-Canadian composer, vocalist, multidisciplinary artist and producer with a sharp eye for society's absurdities. Her work perches on the intersection between personal and political, fusing elements of classical technique with Ukrainian folk idioms and natural soundscapes. With funding from Canada Council for the Arts, she travelled through rural Ukraine to record local singing practices in 2012 and 2013. To date, this research has culminated in numerous instrumental works, as well as the song cycle "Invented Folksongs" recorded with Ensemble Ludovico in Boston and in the process of becoming an album, and "A Soul's Keening for her Beloved", a 20-minute work for voice and string orchestra premiered with Delirium Chamber Orchestra in Los Angeles in 2020 and receiving its Canadian premiere with Turning Point Ensemble in Vancouver in 2022. Along with writer Maria Reva, Pidgorna holds a Canada Council for the Arts grant to conduct research in Ukraine during the war. The duo are recipients of the Mécénat Musica Prix 3 Femmes 2020 Award, and have written two operas together: "Our Trudy", commissioned and premiered by the Ad Astra Festival in Russell, Kansas in 2021, and "Plaything", developed by Musique 3 Femmes and premiered at UfaFabrik

in Berlin in September 2022. "Plaything" received its Canadian premiere with Opera McGill in November 2022. Pidgorna is currently working on a theatrical collaboration with Irish composer Brian Irvine, co-produced by Red Note Ensemble in Edinburgh and Soundstreams in Toronto. Having studied visual arts from an early age, Pidgorna has produced musical scores in unique formats such as the illuminated score for violin duo "Through closed doors" notated on an antique door and the illustrated score for the mini-opera "Mirror, mirror" produced through linocut printing. Pidgorna holds two SOCAN Foundation Emerging Composers' Awards and represented Canada at the ISCM World New Music Days 2013 festival in Vienna. Her work has been commissioned, performed and recorded by soloists, ensembles, presenters and festivals in Canada, USA, Uruguay, Ireland, Scotland, France, Germany, Austria, Italy, Greece, Poland, Ukraine and South Korea. Pidgorna is the founder of Pickle Underground, a multi-disciplinary organization dedicated to developing and promoting work by Ukrainian artists in Canada. She holds a PhD from Princeton University, an MMus from the University of Calgary, and a BA from Mount Allison University.



Performer Biographies

Élise Lavallée, *viola*

Élise Lavallée began her violin studies at age 9. She fell in love with the rich sound of the viola at age 15 and completed her bachelor studies at Le Conservatoire de Musique de Québec. On a full scholarship from The Manhattan School of Music, she completed a Master of Music, then returned to Canada to earn an Artist Diploma from McGill University. Currently Acting Principal Viola with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, she regularly appears with the Winnipeg Chamber Music Society, Candlelight Concerts, Virtuosi Series, GroundSwell, Music at The Millennium, Camerata Nova, Canzona, WSO Home Recitals, Rosamunde Festival, Music

N'Mavens, and Skywalk Concerts. Elise has also been a radio columnist at Radio-Canada Manitoba, hosted the WSO's podcast series, The Silence Between and hosted the WSO's Pre-concert Talks. She has served as a member of the WSO, Winnipeg Boys Choir and Rosamunde Academy Boards of Directors, as well as founded Les Grands Concerts de la Cathédrale de St-Boniface, Les Café-Concerts d' Elise and the summer concert series Live at The Drive.

Laura Loewen, *piano*

Praised for expressivity, virtuosity, and committed playing, Canadian collaborative pianist Laura Loewen has appeared in concerts throughout North America and in Europe, Asia and South America. Dedicated to sharing her passion for ensemble playing and coaching, she is Professor of Collaborative Piano and the Vocal Coach at the University of Manitoba's Desautels Faculty of Music, where she was recently named the Associate Dean. She was a founding faculty

artist of VISI (Vancouver International Song Institute) and is a long-time member of the faculty of Opera NUOVA in Edmonton, Alberta. An extremely versatile pianist, Dr. Loewen has performed extensively with singers, instrumentalists and chamber ensembles. She holds a Doctorate of Musical Arts degree in Accompanying/Coaching from the University of Minnesota, where she was a fellowship student of Margo Garrett and Karl Paulnack.

Laurel Ridd, *flute*

Laurel Ridd is active as a freelance flutist, performing with the Winnipeg Symphony, the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra, the Winnipeg Chamber Winds Collective and other ensembles. As a soloist she has appeared with MusikBarock in works by JS Bach, CPE Bach, Vivaldi, Devienne, Cimarosa and others, while her interest in new music has led to performances on the GroundSwell series and its precursor, Music Inter Alia, founded by Diana McIntosh in

1976. Laurel is a sessional instructor of flute and chamber music at the University of Manitoba, maintains a private studio, and teaches annually at the International Music Camp. A recipient of the Manitoba Band Association Award of Distinction, she is a founder of the Syrinx Flute Festival, a performance and learning opportunity for flutists of all ages and levels.

Karl Stobbe, *violin*

Karl Stobbe is recognized as one of Canada's most accomplished violinists, known for his dedication to excellence on the violin and classical music in all its forms. Noted for his generous, rich sound and long, poignant phrasing, he is described by the San Francisco Classical Voice as "an artist with soulful musicianship," and by London's Sunday Times as "a master soloist, recalling the golden age of violin playing... producing a breathtaking range of tone colours." Avie Records' recording of Karl performing Ysaÿe's Solo Violin Sonatas received worldwide attention,

including in Gramophone magazine, which hailed it as "full of spirit and energy... exciting, fearless..." It was nominated for a 2015 JUNO Award for Best Classical Album. The year 2015 also saw the release of a live recording of Karl, joined by Jonathan Crow and the National Arts Centre Orchestra, for the title track of Cobalt, a CD of the music of Jocelyn Morlock. Karl frequently performs and records new music and has been involved in numerous commissions and world premieres.

Alex Whitehead, *clarinet*

Alex Whitehead is a devoted orchestral performer, soloist and pedagogue. He has performed with the Winnipeg Symphony, Houston Symphony, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, North Carolina Symphony, Chicago's Music of the Baroque, and the Amici Chamber Ensemble.

A native of North Carolina, Alex completed his undergraduate studies at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro as a Minerva Scholar. He was the winner of the Student Artist Concerto Competition in 2018 with Debussy's *Première Rhapsodie*. Upon graduating from UNC-G, Alex went to the Glenn Gould School in Toronto to receive an Artist Diploma as an Ichnatowycz Emerging Artist Scholar. After graduating in 2020,

he went on to complete a master's degree at Northwestern University as an Eckstein Scholar. Alex has spent summers participating in the Aspen Music Festival, the Banff Masterclass Program, and the Brevard Music Center. He currently serves as the Second Clarinet of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra since 2023 and joined the Desautels Faculty of Music at the University of Manitoba as a sessional instructor in the fall of 2025. Alex has been fortunate to learn from and study with many wonderful teachers such as Mark Nuccio, Steve Cohen, Joaquin Valdepeñas, Dr. Anthony Taylor, Sam Almaguer, and Mike Cyzewski.

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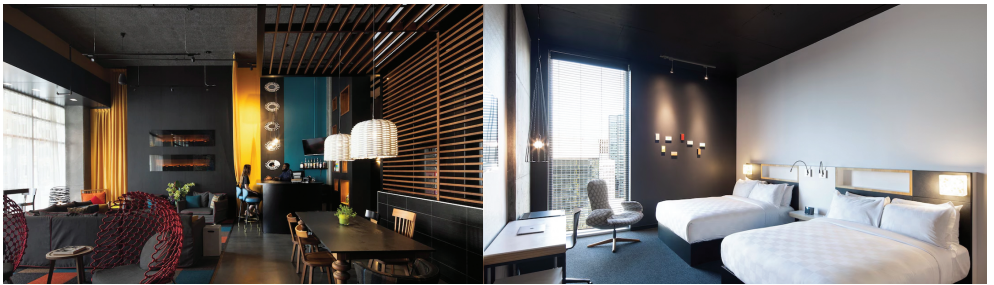
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