



University  
of Victoria

School of  
Music

GRADUATE RECITAL

Ilya Gotchev, violin  
Forte Zhang, piano

Thursday, April 19, 2018, 1.30 pm

Phillip T. Young Recital Hall, MacLaurin Building  
Free admission

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PROGRAM

**Serenade** after Plato's Symposium

Leonard Bernstein  
(1918–1990)

I. *Phaedrus; Pausanias* (Lento; Allegro marcato)

II. *Aristophanes* (Allegretto)

III. *Eryximachus* (Presto)

IV. *Agathon* (Adagio)

V. *Socrates; Alcibiades* (Molto tenuto; Allegro molto vivace)

**Graceful Ghost**

William Bolcom  
(b. 1938)

Program notes

**Leonard Bernstein**

"Bernstein? He was always such an exhibitionist; a playboy. I suppose it's rather sad - a little like when the great clown Grock died!" These words were spoken by a famous European conductor immediately following Bernstein's death. Conductor, composer, pianist, political activist, teacher, beloved the world over, this quote shows what a controversial and complicated figure he was. There is no doubt however, that he remains one of the greatest musicians of the 20th century.

Leonard Bernstein grew up in Lawrence, Massachusetts and started playing the piano at the age of ten. He attended Harvard, nevertheless, while there, partly due to his enormous interest in philosophy, he took as few music courses as possible. After completing his studies at the Curtis Institute and finding it impossible to get a stable job in either Philadelphia or Boston, Bernstein moved to New York where he achieved his major breakthrough. Strongly influenced by Fritz Reiner and Serge Koussevitzky, he took advantage of Bruno Walter's illness and subbed for him conducting the New York Philharmonic with great success. While renowned over the world as a conductor, Bernstein always saw himself primarily as a composer. He was extremely prolific and the vast majority of his music contained literary allusions.

The "Serenade" after Plato's Symposium was one of the many successes for Bernstein during the decade of the 50's along with "Wonderful Town", "On the Waterfront" and "West Side Story".

## “Serenade” after Plato's Symposium

The “Serenade” was commissioned by the Koussevitzky Foundation. Bernstein composed it in 1954 and considered it his best work. The premiere took place in September of the same year in Venice, Italy with Isaac Stern on the violin and Bernstein conducting the Israel Philharmonic. Like “The Symposium”, the “Serenade” is a series of related statements in praise of love.

**I. Lento, Allegro.** Phaedrus opens the symposium with a lyrical fugato-like theme in the solo violin, often using the interval of the augmented fourth which later would appear in another love story work - “West Side Story”. Pausanias continues by describing the duality of lover and beloved. This is expressed in a classic Sonata-Allegro form, based on the material of the opening.

**II. Allegretto.** In the second movement the comedian Aristophanes doesn't play the role of a clown, but instead that of a bedtime story-teller. The company is captivated by the fabulous tale about the origins of the deeply-rooted desire in every human being towards their other half. The atmosphere is calm and much of the material comes from the grace notes of the first movement.

**III. Presto.** The physician Eryximachus speaks of bodily harmony using a scientific model. This very short fugato scherzo is based on mystery and humour.

**IV. Adagio.** This is the most intimate and introspective speech where Agathon embraces all aspects of Love's power, charms and functions. This movement is based on a simple three-part song.

**V. Molto lento; Allegro molto vivace.** Socrates describes his visit to the Philosopher and Priestess Diotima, quoting her discourse on the demonology of love. His speech is of a greater weight and could be seen as a development of the reprise of the middle section of Agathon's movement, suggesting a hidden Sonata form. At the end Socrates is interrupted by Alcibiades' band of drunken ushers in the Allegro, which is an extended Rondo ranging from agitation to joyful celebration in jazz style.

## William Bolcom

The winner of several prizes, renowned American composer and pianist William Bolcom composed Graceful Ghost as one of three “ghost rags” for piano in the early 1970's. Written in memory of his father, it is now considered his most famous work. Full of flowing syncopation, elegant melodies, and gentle minor harmonies, it is not the typical ragtime piece. While indeed graceful in spirit and moderate in tempo, it has a wistful longing and class that sets it apart.

*Program notes by Ilya Gotchev*

*Ilya Gotchev is a member of the Chroma String Quartet, and is from the class of Professor  
Ann Elliott-Goldschmid*

*This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Music (Performance)  
program.*