

## I Musici de Montréal with pianist Katherine Chi

*"a program of musical entertainment, fascinatingly complex yet light-hearted....performed with heart and the singing intonation of this excellent ensemble"*

**showtime magazine.ca**

### I Musici de Montréal & Katherine Chi

October 4th, 2010  
Stanley Fefferman

Sunday, October 3, 2010, Walter Hall, Toronto.

To open Mooredale Concerts' 22nd season, I Musici offered a program of musical entertainment, fascinatingly complex yet light-hearted, and a couple of beguiling discoveries. The first discovery is Vania Angelova, a Bulgarian composer who works out of Montreal. Her short composition *Pagan Dances on Burning Coals* begins with bass and cello grunting like bullfrogs while the higher strings whine like mosquitoes. These sonics are layered over a primordial pulsing rhythm and an enchanting staccato melody that combine to remind one of the bluesy, manic sadness of Shostakovich. The whole ensemble of 12 strings close the piece in unison with a long, wonderfully greasy tongue-in-cheek portamento slide.

The second discovery is Katherine Chi, gold medalist of the 2010 Honens Piano Competition. Ms. Chi sat in with I Musici bringing her control and warmth into Turina's romantic and richly harmonic *Symphonic Rhapsody Op.66*. She got to show flashes of her technical power in the brief scherzo allegro vivo section before blending back in with the ensemble.

Ms. Chi showed her chops in a solo performance with a piece written during the Golden Age of Pianism, Godowsky's *Symphonic Metamorphosis on Themes from Die Fledermaus* by Johann Strauss Jr. This show-off piece, full of lightning figurations, arpeggios and change-ups as themes of long beloved waltzes are constructed, deconstructed, and subtly reconstructed adorned with contrapuntal inner linings in motley colours was a treat to hear. Although there is not a hint of clowning in her stage presence, Katherine Chi's treatment brought out all the fun in this outrageous piece, as though the spirit of Victor Borge were in the hall.

The afternoon was filled out with the satisfaction of hearing two old standards performed with heart and the singing intonation of this excellent ensemble: Elgar's *Serenade for*

**Artist Management**

*Strings in E minor, Op. 20, and Tchaikovsky's Serenade for Strings in C major, Op.48.*  
The beautiful opening chords of the latter demonstrated the balanced tone of this ensemble. The waltzes of the 2nd movement and the transition to the 4th movement were quite sublime.

The next Mooredale Concerts presentation, October 31, is the Afiara String Quartet and pianist Wonny Song – both winners of the 2010 Young Canadian Musicians Award. The Afiaras also won second prize and the Szekely Prize for Beethoven at Banff last month.