

## ?Great Artists? are Aurora-bound for fourth season



**By Brock Weir**

Over her career as a classical musician and musical director, Aurora's Bonnie Silver has come up with a winning recipe for crafting the perfect musical interlude.

A strong opening is important. Developing a tailored program to draw your audience in is another. Without a good performer who can bind everything together, however, all bets are off.

These were the principles kept in mind when Ms. Silver began laying the groundwork for the 2014 Great Artists piano series at the Aurora Cultural Centre. Entering its fourth season, the series is the brainchild of Ms. Silver and her husband, Norbert Kraft, both Grammy-winning classical musicians and music producers.

The Krafts put the initial series of concerts together not only to share their love of classical music with others, but also to directly connect these classical musicians with local audiences. Plus, they had a hunch that this was a perfect fit for Aurora.

?Our first year was sold out and it certainly showed me Aurora has an appetite for live, classical music,? says Ms. Silver. ?As a music producer, I am sitting under headphones a lot and one can ask, in a high tech world, why they shouldn't just download music or watch these performers on YouTube. I think the truth is nothing gives you the same experience as a live performance.

?Knowing what I know about digital media and the profession, as advanced as it is, it is still only a sampling of the sound and it is not the real sound that you get from being in the same room as the performer.?

The fourth season kicks off Friday, February 28 with a joint performance from acclaimed violinist Moshe Hammer accompanied by Angela Park on the piano. Mr. Hammer, who studied under Jascha Heifetz, is one of the benchmarks of Canadian classical music. Ms. Park's performance will be a return engagement in the series after previously performing with the Seller Piano Trio.

The February 28 concert, as is the case with all other concerts in the series, will be held in Brevik Hall. It's an intimate venue for approximately 120 ticketholders and in this environment, they will indeed be able to experience the full flavour of the sound.

?Moshe Hammer has a particularly special gift of being able to communicate with an audience and reach out and draw listeners into his world of beautiful sound,? says Ms. Silver. ?He has a huge emotional range and all on a little violin. Being up close to that is very, very special.?

Additional concerts in the series include the piano duo of Fung-Chiu, who have wowed audiences with their 'four hands' performances on the piano on Friday, April 11, and the series concludes on Friday, May 30 with pianist Jane Coop.

Each musician offers a different style and different interpretations of classical favourites and more contemporary standards, but all performances are drawn together around the same piano.

Ms. Silver works with each artist to finalize their individual programs to suit the audiences she has become familiar with over the past three seasons, along with a few surprises to keep interest up.

'The first piece of the program has to be an instant grabber,' she says. 'I also like the last piece before an intermission to leave people on a high. [My husband and I] did hundreds and hundreds of concerts but still the moment just before the artist walks on stage, sits down and plays the first few notes, my hands are clammy and I am as nervous as if it were me!

'It is almost a heightened state, but I quickly settle down and it just becomes pure pleasure, as I think it is for most of the audience. No matter how much schooling and how much practice artists have, they need places to play. They need people to listen to them. People who love classical music, and maybe even those who don't know they love it yet, need an opportunity to see these performers play live and preferably close to where they live. That is why it is so great we have a venue in Aurora.'

Tickets for the 2014 Great Artist Piano Series are now on sale at the Aurora Cultural Centre. Individual tickets are \$30 for adults and \$25 for seniors and students. Subscriptions to the three concert series are available for \$80 for adults (\$70 for seniors and students). If purchased before January 31, subscription holders will receive a free CD from the Naxos classical music label. For more information, contact the Centre at 905-713-1818 or visit [www.auroraculturalcentre.ca](http://www.auroraculturalcentre.ca).