

DUO MAJOYA IN RECITAL:
UNDER THE WESTERN SKY
JACK SINGER HALL
CASAVANT ORGAN, OPUS 3623

JULY 5



Duo Majoya—organist **Marnie Giesbrecht** and pianist **Joachim Segger**—appeared on stage fittingly attired in cowboy hats, shirts, and neckties. Two selections from Joe Utterback’s *Images* opened the program: these jazz/blues-inflected pieces were effortlessly performed. Burge’s “Windows” (*Cathedral Architecture*), a thoughtfully programmatic composition, used the brightness of the organ to beautiful advantage as a contrast to the piano. Wadsworth’s *Longlac Tableaux* was comical and delightful: the nastiness of “Black Fly Season” was unmistakable in the ever-present buzzing figures either in the piano or the organ, with occasional slaps from the organ part; “The Aurora in Snow” created a sense of stillness, a mesmerizing moment frozen in time exploiting the upper registers of the organ in contrast to the more percussive repetitive figures in the piano.

The performance of *Wind Riders of Alberta*, a programmatic piece in five movements commissioned from Cary Ratcliff, was a world premiere: “A Blinding of Snow” was filled with shards of sound in the organ and perpetual swirling motion in the piano, whereas “A Cluster of Aspens” included asymmetrical and shivering melodic fragments tossed back and forth between the two instruments; “Whooping Cranes” featured jazz-like rhythms and melodic fragments that favoured large (long-necked?) intervals; “A Circling of Hawks” was rhapsodic and expansive, whereas “Dust Devils” was an energetic whirling dervish that flitted from one instrument to the other and then disappeared completely.

Jacobus Klopper’s *The Last Rose of Summer* was a loving, at times hymn-like, tribute that included beautiful moments of counterpoint and showcased both performers in solo roles. The program ended with the energetic finale of Denis Bédard’s *Duet Suite for Organ and Piano*. One could not hope for a more satisfying end to a perfect, early-afternoon program, in the lovely Jack Singer Hall, on the equally splendid Casavant. What a gift it is to hear these two pros share their energy, good humour, and incredible talent!

—LOTTIE ENNS-BRAUN