

Diana Cohen & Roman Rabinovich

*Violinist Diana Cohen, concertmaster of the Calgary Philharmonic and former concertmaster of the Richmond Symphony, returns to Richmond with her fiancée pianist Roman Rabinovich for two Chamber Music Society concerts in April 2017. Diana and Roman talk with CMSCVA about their careers and balancing **A life in music.***

Q. Audiences are always fascinated with musician couples and the positives and negatives inherent with two performers. Can you address the challenges and joys?

It is a great privilege to make music with someone you love and respect as an artist. We also feel lucky that we can play for one another when we are looking for feedback in our own artistic growth. Music is such an innate part of who we are that it is magnificent to share. We think it is as strong as culture, religion and politics can be for other couples.

One of our biggest challenges is that music often brings us geographically apart. Putting together a travel schedule and calendar that allows us to be together as much as we need to sustain the relationship is a constant effort-- but one we are committed to.

Also, because we respect each other so much as musicians, if a concert goes especially well and our partner affirms this-- it is an extra joy. We always love and respect each other's music making, but the



concerts that don't go as we wish can be extra hard when with someone who understands every musical nuance.



Diana Cohen, by Roman Rabinovich

Q. Give us a brief idea of what your careers are like these days. What are some upcoming projects or concerts?

(Diana)

- I love what I do in large part because I love the musical balance I have in my career.
- My main job is Concertmaster of the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra. Playing the orchestral repertoire with such a wonderful group is a great thrill. As a concertmaster, I have significant flexibility in my schedule with the orchestra. When I'm not performing in Calgary, I'm often traveling to play chamber music or with various groups.
- I also founded a chamber music festival called ChamberFest Cleveland. It is a three-week festival that takes place in each June and has been dubbed "LoveFest" by the press.

Co-director alongside my father, clarinetist Franklin Cohen, ChamberFest Cleveland has become one of the great joys in my life. I get to invite world-class musicians who are also some of my closest friends.

- Finally, solo and concerto playing also have a prominent role in my career. This year, a particular highlight was playing the Bartok 1st concert with maestro Gabor Takacs-Nagy, a musical giant and a longtime hero of mine. Next season, I will

perform John Adams' "Dharma at Big Sur," and exiting concerto for electric violin and orchestra.

- I often collaborate with my family-- my father-- longtime principal clarinet of the Cleveland Orchestra, my brother, timpanist and budding conductor Alexander Cohen, and my fiancée Roman Rabinovich.

(Roman) I will start my next season with a European tour of recitals (including Lodon's Wigmore Hall) and concerto appearances with Scottish Royal National Orchestra and Sir Roger Norrington. I'm currently in the midst of performing and recording the complete Piano Sonatas of Joseph Haydn, a composer I particularly adore. These pieces are mostly unknown to the general public so it has been very exciting for me to delve into this world. I will play the complete cycle at the Bath Festival in UK next May, among other festivals.



Self portrait, by Roman Rabinovich

Q. Diana, you are a former concertmaster of the Richmond Symphony. What are you looking forward to being back in Richmond?

I'm so excited to be back on so many levels. I only spent one full orchestra season with the Richmond Symphony, but I loved playing with the musicians and found that there was such a creative energy and enthusiasm in the group. I also love the city of Richmond-- I love the restaurants, the nature, the architecture and most of all, the people. I found RVA to be such an incredibly welcoming place. I'm looking forward to reconnecting with many friends, and checking out my old haunts.



Q. Roman, you have won many awards and have played all over the world. Is there a particular musical experience that stands out as being the most memorable or special?

There are many memorable musical experiences. Playing with Zubin Mehta for the first time when I was ten was very special. Winning the Rubinstein competition was a highlight in my life, especially because I grew up in Israel and the competition takes place there. Of course it is always a joy to play in amazing halls like Wigmore Hall and playing chamber music with close friends and family.