

The guitar connection: flute and guitar concert

Duo Beija-Flor

Jan DeGrass / Arts & Entertainment Writer

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Duo Beija-Flor performs in concert at Living Faith Lutheran Church in Davis Bay at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 12.

When the flute and guitar duo of Beija-Flor perform in Davis Bay on Feb. 12, they will have a special connection to the Coast. Guitarist Charles Hobson performs on a Martin Blackwell guitar, a finely balanced, top-of-the-line, classical instrument made in Gibsons.

Blackwell specializes in handcrafting classical guitars. "I like all kinds of music," the guitar artisan said. "I was attracted to the sound of nylon string guitars rather than steel strings."

He's been designing and making custom guitars since 1991 after taking a specialized course in Vancouver. He also spent time playing bass and touring with a band. Originally from the Coast, he moved back here in 1998 and has been making what musicians have been ordering ever since. The guitars, crafted of various woods, often local red cedar and spruce, are expensive – he might build only 12 guitars in a year. Many of his clientele have praised the balance of tone that Blackwell guitars offer them.

"Good players want something they can express themselves on," said Blackwell, "without adjusting to the limitations of the instrument." Blackwell has met the visiting guitarist Hobson before – he likes getting to know his customers – and they will meet again when Hobson performs.

The Duo Beija-Flor play what they call ethno-classical music – world music with a classical flair – and the concert will feature work by the Argentinian tango composer Astor Piazzolla. Other selections include compositions from Spain and Portugal, and a piece, Quebra Queixo - Pé de Moleque, from Brazilian/Canadian composer Celso Machado, who lives on the Sunshine Coast.

They have a unique repertoire and have performed on radio and TV in Canada, the U.S. and Argentina and have released two critically acclaimed albums, *Muzica* (2013) and *Envol* (2011). Duo Beija-Flor is currently working on their third album, *Costas*, based on music inspired by the Latin countries of the Atlantic coasts – this is what the audience will hear at the concert.

Hobson is an award-winning and active solo and chamber music musician. With the ensembles *Forestore* (guitar orchestra) and *Duo Beija-Flor* (flute and guitar), he has had the chance to perform in numerous reputable concert halls and myriad concert societies and festivals. After obtaining a Bachelor of Music in 2006, Hobson was invited to continue his studies in Montreal with guitarist Daniel Bolshoy.

Marie-Noëlle Choquette, flutist, is characterized for her expressive and dynamic playing. She has performed as a soloist and chamber musician in several concert series, festivals and venues in Canada, the U.S., Argentina and Austria. A creative artist, she has produced and performed in various multi-disciplinary shows that combine contemporary and improvised music with dance, video, puppets and theatre. An accomplished teacher, she's called upon as a guest flute specialist in several Montreal area schools and teaches music history, theory and chamber music at the Polyvalente Curé-Mercure in Mont-Tremblant, Québec.

The concert is at Living Faith Lutheran Church in Davis Bay (corner of Highway 101 and Whitaker) at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 12 presented by the Coast Guitar Group. Tickets are at the door for \$25.

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