

“The World Is Too Much With Us”

~William Wordsworth~

*The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;—
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not. Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.*

In 1802, William Wordsworth, horrified at some of the changes wrought by the Industrial Revolution, wrote these memorable lines as a warning to Brits: they were losing their connection to beauty and nature as they concentrated more and more on “getting and spending” faster and faster. Two hundred years later in 2007, **The Washington Post** commissioned Joshua Bell, his Stradivarius, and Bach to send a similar warning to twenty-first century Americans caught up in the rush of the Industrial Revolution on technologically induced overdrive (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hnOPu0_YWhw).

For some forty-three minutes one of the finest violinists in our time played some of the most glorious music every written on one of the finest violins ever crafted in the midst of a Washington subway station. A thousand passers-by rushed on or hesitated a moment or two; a few put bills or change in his open violin case, but no more than six or seven ever stopped to listen, even for a few moments. Following the last note of the last piece, without applause, Joshua packed up his 3.5 million-dollar Strad, pocketed his 32 dollars and some cents, and went off to rehearse for his next concert.

These cautionary tales clearly depict Wordsworth’s and the **Post’s** fears that we are so intent on going and coming, now also Tweeting, Tik Toking, and bingeing, that we shall miss much of the beauty the world has to offer. The **Post** reporter sums up the situation with, “The people scurry...in a dance to indifference, inertia, and the dingy, gray rush of modernity.”

USCB Chamber Music has high hopes that this season Lowcountry residents will not be running errands, be on-line, or be in front of the tv and miss the incredible experience of great music, well played. We hope that when the extraordinary violinist James Ehnes, like Mr. Bell a world-class talent, plays Brahms and Schumann on his Strad at the USCB Center for the Arts to open the 42nd season of USCB Chamber Music on Halloween, he will play live before a packed house and virtually for many around the world. Please help us get the word out that brilliant music will be played right here in Beaufort by some of the world’s finest musicians on five Sundays at five in our upcoming season: October 31, December 5, January 9, March 6, and April 10 for both live and virtual audiences.

Of course, you could experience live classical music's power and beauty by buying plane tickets and more expensive seats, standing in security lines, paying parking fees, and making overnight reservations to hear these same artists in famous venues around the world in cities like New York, Seattle, Amsterdam, London, and Geneva; or you can buy local. No serious travel, no parking hassles, and very reasonable ticket prices.

A season subscription for USCB Chamber Music will bring us the beauty and passion of classical music and will support our community's finest Chamber Music Series. In these uncertain times, it will bring "glimpses" that will make us less "forlorn"; it will help us avoid the "dingy, gray rush of modernity"; and we and our community will be the better for it.

Information on the Series will be updated throughout the season on this website. For questions, call 843-208-8246 during working hours.