

Fredericksburg Music Club, Inc. Presents Rodica and Friends - In Concert November 18, 2018

Rodica and Friends, Rodica Gonzalez (Strings and Piano)

Rodica Gonzalez is an accomplished violinist who has been studying and performing since the age of four. She has been a member of the first violin section of the Houston Symphony since 1990.

Rodica Gonzalez, Violin

Originally from Romania, Rodica studied, as a child, at the George Enescu Music School, giving her first solo performance with an orchestra at the age of eleven. As a teenager, she studied with the acclaimed Romanian music teacher, Modest Iftinchi at the Ciprian Porumbescu Conservatory in Bucharest. In the mid-eighties she was awarded scholarships at prestigious music academies in Italy and Switzerland. It was then that she had the opportunity to meet and study with Sergiu Luca who was at Houston's Rice University. Her life took an exciting turn when Mr. Luca invited her to study with him at Rice's Shepherd School of Music. She received her Master's degree in music at Rice University in 1990.

Early in her career, Rodica performed with the Houston Ballet Orchestra and was concertmaster and soloist with the National Repertory Orchestra in Keystone, Colorado. She was winner of the Shepherd School Concerto Competition as well as the Campanile Orchestra Concerto Competition. She has been soloist with the Houston Symphony on many occasions, including the Sounds Like Fun! music festival.

In the spring of 1996, Rodica embarked on her first solo tour of Switzerland and her native Romania. Since then, she has performed extensively as a recitalist and in chamber ensembles in Romania, Italy, Canada, Mexico and the United States. She has performed as a soloist with the Bucharest and Constanta Philharmonic, Doctor's Orchestra of Houston, Galveston Symphony, the Houston Civic Symphony and Houston Chamber Orchestra, where she was concertmaster. She is the founding violinist of the Tre Voci Trio and the Fidelis Quartet, ensembles that perform extensively in Houston and other parts of the United States.

Rodica has had the great honor of performing at Carnegie Hall several times. She performed her debut recital at Carnegie Hall in 2002 with her colleague John Hendrickson and had the privilege of returning twice with Tre Voci and pianist Ilgin Aka. She performed again in Carnegie Hall with the Fidelis String Quartet and was privileged to be invited back to perform with her sister Mihaela and pianist Ilonka Rus. In June 2011, Rodica performed a program of Brahms and Piazzola in Carnegie Hall with the Fidelis Quartet, flutist Judy Dines and clarinetist Danny Granados.

Music is the centerpiece of Rodica's life, more than a profession, it is her avocation and passion. Of her playing, Atencion San Miguel wrote that she "uses the most delicate and articulate phrasing in her playing, yet her capriciousness at times yields the exciting singing of strings that audiences revere...her playing shows a polished and confident style."

Rodica will be making her London recital debut at ST.JOHN SMITH SQUARE on May 29, 2019. In addition to her performing duties, Rodica enjoys teaching young, aspiring musicians. She taught for many years at Houston Baptist University and is now on the faculty of The University of Saint Thomas. She and her husband Robert are proud parents of their son, Matthew.

Jeffrey Butler, Cello

Jeffrey Butler has been a cellist in the Houston Symphony since 1986. He holds degrees in music performance from Boston University and the University of Michigan School of Music, where he was recipient of that school's highest award, the prestigious Stanley Medal. He began cello studies at an early age with his parents, both professional cellists, and continued studies with Jerome Jelinek, George Neikrug, and Claus Adam. Mr. Butler has served on the faculty of the Stetson University School of Music, where he was a founding member of the Stetson Trio. Before joining the Houston Symphony he was a

member of the Detroit Symphony.

As a member of the Boston Composers Quartet, Mr. Butler premiered many new works with Composers in Red Sneakers and Nu-Classix Composers. In Houston he has performed chamber music with the Bad Boys of Cello and Tre Voci, trio in residence at Houston Baptist University. He is the cellist of the Fidelis String Quartet, which recently performed to acclaim in San Juan, Puerto Rico and Weill Recital Hall in Carnegie Hall, and has appeared as soloist with the Houston Chamber Orchestra and the Galveston Symphony.

Ilgin Aka, Piano

Ilgin Aka started her piano training at the age of four and gave her first solo piano recital when she was eight years old. She has earned her Doctor of Musical Arts from Peabody Institute (Johns Hopkins University), Master of Music from the Juilliard School, Advanced Solo Studies Degree from Guildhall School (London), Bachelor of Music from Istanbul University State Conservatory.

She has won many prizes and awards including the prestigious Fulbright Grant, Austrian Government Grant, British Council Award, Peabody Graduate Award, ATAA Arts Recognition Award and Peabody Career Grant.

Ilgin Aka maintains a busy schedule performing and teaching. She has played in a wide array of venues including Carnegie Hall, Alice Tully Hall (NYC), Mozarteum(Austria), Corcoran Gallery (Washington D.C.), Auditorium Saint Pierre (France), Ataturk Cultural Center (Istanbul) , Wortham Center (Houston) as well as numerous radio and TV appearances.

Dr. Aka is a member of the Tre Voci Trio with Rodica Gonzales and Jeff Butler(both members of the Houston Symphony) and resides in Houston where she has a private piano studio.

Mihaela Frusina, Guest Violinist

Mihaela Frusina was born in Bucharest, Romania. She received a high school diploma in violin performance from the George Enescu Music School before coming to Houston to study with Sergiu Luca at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music. Mihaela earned both her bachelor and master of music degrees at the Shepherd School. She played with the Houston Ballet and Grand Opera orchestras before joining the Houston Symphony in 1995. Her sister, Rodica Gonzalez, is also a member of the orchestra's violin section.