Tonight we celebrate the life of Virko Baley, and especially his influence on the Las Vegas community beginning 48 years ago when he joined the music faculty at UNLV. Virko has been a true friend to so many in Las Vegas: amusing us, challenging us, and lifting us up. What better way to celebrate his 80th year, than by listening to his music? This music, with all its diversity, beauty and complexity, mirrors his unique personality. With tongue firmly in cheek, Virko titled his publishing company “Troppe Note” (too many notes). But we are grateful for all your music, Virko, and look forward to many more notes!

— Stephen Caplan
Virko Baley is Distinguished Professor of Music, Composer-in-Residence and co-director of N.E.O.N. at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, as well as a Jacyk Fellow at Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute. He received a 2007 Grammy® Award as recording co-producer for TNC Recordings, and the prestigious Academy Award in Music 2008 from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. The citation read:

“A highly cultured, polyglot intellectual, brilliant pianist and a dynamic and accomplished conductor, the Ukrainian-born Virko Baley composes music which is dramatically expansive of gesture, elegant and refined of detail and profoundly lyrical. It is music which ‘sings’ with passionate urgency whether it embraces (as in his more recent work) folkloric elements from his origins or finds expression in a more universal style of modernism typical of his earlier music. It is always a singular voice and a deeply felt and acutely heard music.”

Virko Baley moved to Las Vegas and joined UNLV’s Department of Music in 1970. He was founder and director of the Annual Contemporary Music Festival that existed through 1986. In 1975, he received an NEA grant, the first such grant in Nevada, to establish a chamber ensemble, The Las Vegas Chamber Players, which gave each season from 8 to 10 concerts and was the resident ensemble of the Annual Contemporary Music Festival. In 1980 he was one of the founders, and for 15 years the Music Director and Conductor, of the Las Vegas Symphony Orchestra (renamed in 1986 as Nevada Symphony Orchestra). During his fifteen-year tenure with the orchestra, in addition to performing the standard symphonic repertoire, Baley programmed many contemporary works, including Berio’s Sinfonia, Bernard Rands’ Canti del Sole, Donald Erb’s Trombone Concerto and works by such composers as Wuorinen, Artyomov, Copland, Revueltas and many others. He also served as the music director of NEXTET (2001-2016), and co-founded with Jorge Grossmann the annual composers’ conference, N.E.O.N.

Born in Ukraine in 1938, Baley has spent his creative life in the United States and considers himself a citizen of the world. His musical training began in Germany and continued in the United States at the Los Angeles Conservatory of Music (now California Institute of the Arts), where his principal teachers were Earle C. Voorhies and Morris H. Ruger, and where he received BM (magna cum laude) and MM degrees. Multi-lingual and multi-disciplinary, Baley infuses his music with themes of contemporary and traditional motifs. Shirley Fleming, reviewing a concert of his music given by CONTINUUM®, in the New York Post called his music “vibrant, dramatic, communicative, much of it framed by extra-musical allusions that place it in a solid context.” Reviewing a recent CD release of Virko Baley’s music, Robert Schulslaper wrote that “Baley’s music [is] deeply lyrical and emotively powerful in equal measure. Recommended,” while American Record Guide pronounced, “These are exceptional compositions and fantastic performances. The language in these pieces is a part of a larger context of exploration for new sounds in the world of instrumental music.”

For a number of years (1994-2001), Virko Baley was principal guest conductor and music advisor of the Kiev Camerata in Ukraine. In 1989, Virko Baley co-produced with the renowned Ukrainian film director Yuri Illienko and composed the music for the film Swan Lake. The Zone, which won two top awards at Cannes, the first Ukrainian film ever to receive a prize there. More recently, he wrote his second film score for another feature film, the final film by Illienko, A Prayer for Hetman Mazepa.

In addition to his activities as composer, conductor and pianist, Virko Baley is a recognized writer on music, having written a number of articles on various musical topics and is a contributing editor to both New Grove Opera and New Grove 2000 Dictionary of Music on the subject of Ukrainian music.

For additional information, go to virkobaley.com
LUCY SHELTON

Lucy Shelton is winner of two Walter W. Naumburg Awards – as chamber musician and solo recitalist – and continues to enjoy an international career bringing her dramatic vocalism and brilliant interpretive skills to repertoire of all periods. An esteemed exponent of 20th and 21st Century repertory, she has worked closely with today’s composers and premiered over 100 works. Notable among these are song cycles by Elliott Carter, Oliver Knussen, Louis Karchin and James Yannatos; chamber works by Carter, Joseph Schwantner, Mario Davidovsky, Stephen Albert, Lewis Spratlan, Charles Wuorinen, Gabriella Lena Frank, Bruce Adolphe, Alexander Goehr, Poul Ruders, Anne Le Baron and Thomas Flaherty; orchestral works by Knussen, Albert, Schwantner, David Del Tredici, Gerard Grisey, Ezra Laderman, Sally Beamish, Virko Balej and Ned Rorem; and an opera by Robert Zuidam. In recent seasons, Shelton has premiered works written for her by Shulamit Ran, Dan Visconti, Frank Stemper, Kathleen Ginther, Tamar Muskal and Fang Man.

Shelton’s extensive discography is on the Deutsche Grammophon, Koch International, Nonesuch, NMC, Bridge, Albany and Innova labels and includes works by Carter, Knussen, Stravinsky, Messiaen, Wuorinen, Del Tredici, Adolphe, Rands, Ginastera, Kim, Le Baron, Balej, Ung and Schwantner. She received a 2010 Grammy® Nomination (with the Enso Quartet) for the Naxos release of Ginastera’s string quartets.

A native of California, Shelton’s primary mentor was mezzo-soprano Jan De Gaetani. Ms. Shelton taught at the Third Street Settlement School in Manhattan, Eastman School, New England Conservatory, Cleveland Institute and the Britten-Pears School. She joined the resident artist faculty of the Tanglewood Music Center in 1996 and in the fall of 2007 she was appointed to the Manhattan School of Music’s Contemporary Performance Faculty. Shelton teaches privately in her New York City studio. In recognition of her contribution to the field of contemporary music, Shelton has received Honorary Doctorate Degrees from both Pomona College (2003) and the Boston Conservatory (2013).

LAURA SPITZER

Dr. Laura Spitzer is Associate Professor of Piano at New Mexico State University. A Steinway artist, she has performed under contract with Columbia Artist’s Community Concert Association and Canada’s Festival Concert Society, and was the recipient of four touring grants from the Nevada State Council on the Arts and the Nevada Humanities Committee. Spitzer traveled with her Steinway grand packed into her truck from 1984 to 2003, bringing classical music to hundreds of rural communities and schools throughout the U.S. and western Canada. In recognition of this contribution, she was honored with the Nevada Governor’s Arts Award. She has been featured on major television networks and in such publications as People, Time, the New York Times and Clavier.

Laura Spitzer attended Oberlin Conservatory, and completed her undergraduate studies at the Mozarteum in Salzburg, Austria, where she was awarded the Bösendorfer Stipend and graduated with distinction. She performed frequently as a member of the Austrian Ensemble for New Music, and recorded numerous programs for Austrian Radio. After taking first prize at the Kurt Leimer Competition, she earned her MM at the Peabody Institute and her DMA from the University of Southern California. Her principal teachers have been Walton Ball, Hans Leygraf, Leon Fleisher, and John Perry. As an adjunct instructor at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, she recorded, performed, and toured with the Las Vegas Chamber Players. She teaches each year at the Idyllwild Arts Summer Program in California.
AMBROISE AUBRUN

Ambroise Aubrun just joined the UNLV faculty in Fall 2018, formerly teaching Violin and Chamber Music at the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music and UC Santa Barbara. He is the music director of the Sonnets and Sonatas Lecture-Concert series at the Getty Center in Los Angeles, a cultural series combining lectures, readings, musical performances and screenings that explore the relationship between music and literature. The recipient of numerous awards, (laureate of the Langart Foundation, winner of the Charles Oulmont Prize of the Fondation de France), Dr. Aubrun has performed extensively in Europe and North America and has shared the stage with Jean-Yves Thibaudet, Scott St. John, Martin Chalifour, Fred Sherry, Clive Greensmith and Carrie Dennis, among others. Highlights of the 2017-18 season include debuts at the Cambrai Festival as the “revelation of the year,” and the release of his first album, War Romance, with the Hortus Label. Aubrun graduated at age 19 from the Paris National Superior Conservatory where he studied with Roland Daugareil and Serge Pataud. He then studied at UCLA with Guillaume Sutre and at the Colburn Conservatory of Music with Martin Beaver. Aubrun plays a Matteo Goffriller violin, on a generous loan by the Langart Foundation.

“revelation of the year…”
— Cambrai Festival

STEPHEN CAPLAN

Stephen Caplan’s performances have been heard at venues throughout the world, including the Kennedy Center and Carnegie Hall, and have been featured on several recordings. His solo recording of American music for the oboe, A Tree in Your Ear, has received international acclaim. Caplan is praised by Fanfare magazine as a “superb soloist, alternately plaintive and exuberant” for the just released recording with the UNLV Wind Orchestra of the Jean Francaix concerto, L’Horloge de Flore. Principal oboist with the Las Vegas Philharmonic, Caplan also plays in orchestras accompanying popular superstars on the Las Vegas Strip. His eclectic performance background includes professional affiliations with a baroque period-instrument ensemble and a Sousa style concert band, as well as soundtracks for television and film. He has been a concerto soloist with numerous orchestras throughout the United States and in Europe. Caplan is the only performing artist to receive the Nevada Arts Council’s prestigious Artist Fellowship Award three times, and was awarded the 2017 NAC Fellowship Project Grant, resulting in a series of teaching and performance videos.

With the Sierra Winds, Caplan made six critically acclaimed recordings and was the recipient of numerous awards including the Nevada Governor’s Award for Excellence in the Arts. Caplan is Professor of Oboe at UNLV and is author of two books, Oboemotions: What Every Oboe Player Needs to Know about the Body, and The Breathing Book. He has developed innovative coursework for music students incorporating a better understanding of the body in performance, and has been a guest clinician for music programs internationally. He has a Bachelor of Music from Northwestern University, a Masters and Doctor of Musical Arts from the University of Michigan, and is a licensed Andover Educator. Caplan is a Buffet Group USA Performing Artist. More information can be found at oboemotions.com

“…superb soloist, alternately plaintive and exuberant”
— Fanfare Magazine
JENNIFER GRIM

Hailed as “a deft, smooth flute soloist” by the New York Times, Jennifer Grim’s remarkable depth and breadth as a performer of solo and chamber repertoire has gained broad national acclaim. First prize winner in several national chamber music competitions, Ms. Grim has performed with such renowned ensembles as the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and St. Luke’s Chamber Ensemble. She is the flutist of the award-winning Zéphyros Winds and the New York Chamber Soloists. Other solo appearances include the Caramoor, Aspen, Norfolk, and Skaneateles Chamber Music Festivals.

Highlights of recent seasons included solo performances with the Lviv Philharmonic (Ukraine), UNLV Symphony Orchestra, Boca Raton Symphonia, Henderson Symphony Orchestra, and the Vermont Summer Music Festival. Ms. Grim has also been a guest artist with the Boston Chamber Music Society and the American String Quartet with harpist Nancy Allen.

Dr. Grim has given masterclasses across the country, specializing in both solo and chamber music. Among the institutions at which she has appeared are the Juilliard School, Yale University, Eastman School of Music, Arizona State University, University of Oregon, and the Idyllwild Arts Academy.

A native of Berkeley, California, Grim holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Stanford University and Masters and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees from Yale University. An Ambassador Clinician for Haynes Flutes, Ms. Grim is currently Associate Professor of Music at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Artistic Director of the UNLV Chamber Music Series, and serves on the Board of Directors of Chamber Music America and the National Flute Association.

KATE HAMILTON

Kate Hamilton, the newly appointed Assistant Professor of Viola at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), has been described by critics as “hot viola playing, she uses her bow to draw out a rich stew of colors... and has a sound like liquid gold” (Minnesota Public Radio, 2015). In demand as a soloist, chamber musician, and teacher, she also holds the title of International Artist of Viola at the University of Chile (Santiago). Recently, she has been heard as soloist with the Wuhan Philharmonic Orchestra (China), Central Oregon Symphony, Chamber Orchestra of San Jose (Costa Rica), Cartago Symphony (Costa Rica), Vale Veneto Festival Orchestra (Brazil) and the Kansas City Civic Orchestra. Her recent solo recitals have been heard in Beijing, Paris, Italy, Costa Rica, Brazil and throughout the USA. Her 2011 recording of Tedesco’s Sarabande for Viola and Cello for Soundset Records received high praises from Fanfare magazine.

Recent highlights include guest principal viola of the Bodo Sinfonietta- 2016 (Norway), Guest Principal Viola of the Augusta Symphony (2016-17) master classes at the Boccherini Conservatory (Lucca, Italy), Sydney Conservatory of Music (Australia), Yong Cho Conservatory (Singapore) and solo recitals in New Zealand, Italy, France, Brazil, China and as an invited guest duo at the 43rd International Viola Congress in Cremona, Italy. In March, 2017 she will be as soloist with the Irvine Symphony (CA).

A committed teacher, she has been Artist-in-Residence and violist of the Esterhazy String Quartet at the University of Missouri and Associate Professor of Viola at Illinois State University. From 2006-2008, she was guest lecturer at the University of Otago in New Zealand and Co-President of the String Teachers Association of New Zealand.
Active in charitable work, Ms. Hamilton has been a guest teacher at the Lugano String Project in Buenos Aires, Argentina. From 2001-2006, she was the recipient of a $40,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) to fund a string program that offered low-cost lessons to young children in rural areas of central Illinois. As a result of this highly successful program, she was awarded the 2002 Faculty Research Award from Illinois State University.

Kate began playing the viola at eight years of age in the public schools of Buffalo, New York. She is a graduate of the Oberlin Conservatory and the Peabody Conservatory, and was a full scholarship student at the Aspen Festival of Music. She studied with Karen Tuttle and Jeffrey Irvine. For more information go to katehamiltonviolist.com

TIMOTHY HOFT

A pianist of unique versatility, Timothy Hoft has been praised for his recent performances. “Hoft’s objective approach to performing new music was especially successful…[his] precise control of dynamics and quiet approach to the keyboard with a perfect technique led to a beautiful, automatic sense of music making…” (Michael Lodico, Ionarts.org). His debut CD, Reflections on Ukrainian Piano Music Vol. I, has also been favorably reviewed. “Here is piano music that needs to be known, piano music that abounds with visceral vibrancy and expressive intensity, not to mention being skillfully and subtly wrought for the instrument. Timothy Hoft’s ardent and caring virtuosity is captured in superb, lifelike sonics. You can’t ask for a more auspicious start to what promises to be an important series.” (Jed Distler, Gramophone critic)

Hoft has given performances as soloist and chamber musician in the concert halls of Ukraine, France, Italy, the Czech Republic, England, Scotland, and the U.S., including Carnegie Hall’s Weill Recital Hall, the John F. Kennedy Center, the Phillips Collection, the Yamaha Piano Salon, the Ukrainian Institute of America, the Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, and the Smith Center. He has performed with ensembles such as the Lviv Philharmonic, Phillips Camerata, Peabody Camerata, Peabody Wind Ensemble, UNLV Symphony Orchestra, UNLV Wind Ensemble, Henderson Symphony Orchestra and the Detroit Civic Symphony Orchestra.

A graduate of the University of Michigan and the Peabody Conservatory, Hoft holds Bachelor’s, Master’s, and Doctoral Degrees in piano performance. His primary teachers were Logan Skelton and Benjamin Pasternack. During his graduate studies, Hoft was awarded a fellowship through the La Gesse Foundation, giving him numerous performances in Europe and in the U.S. He was also granted the Earl Wild Scholarship of the Ivory Classics Foundation, allowing him to study with the legendary pianist, Earl Wild.

Hoft is an Associate Professor at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, where he teaches solo and collaborative piano. Hoft is currently exploring and performing solo piano repertoire of 20th and 21st century Ukrainian composers, including the Nocturnals of Virko Baley, the piano sonatas of Valentin Silvestrov, the monumental cycle of 34 Preludes and Fugues by Valentin Bibik, the piano sonatas of Boris Lyatoshynsky, and others, for a series of recordings entitled Reflections on Ukrainian Piano Music, to be released on the Troppe Note/Cambria label. For more information, please visit his website at timothyhoft.com
ANDREW SMITH

Cellist Andrew Smith is Professor of Music at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and the Principal Cellist of The Las Vegas Philharmonic. He is an original member of the Camerata Deiá, a group founded in 2001 to be the resident ensemble with The Festival Internacional de Deiá, a summer festival in Majorca, Spain. He was also a founding member of The Adriatic Chamber Music Festival, a summer music program in southern Italy, where he taught and performed from 1998-2008. An active recitalist, Andrew has collaborated with pianist Alfredo Oyagüez in cello/piano recitals in Spain, Italy, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, New Zealand, Argentina, and Japan, as well as in Kosovo, Serbia, and Macedonia. Recent recitals include performances at the Emilia Romagna Festival, the Accademia Musicale Chigiana in Siena, and Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall in New York City. The Smith/Oyagüez duo recently released a CD entitled, “Spanish Music for Cello and Piano,” on the Delos label in January, 2017. Of the CD, the American Record Guide said the duo plays “with verve and sensitivity,” and recommended the program “without reserve.”

During summers, in addition to The Festival Internacional de Deiá, in Spain, and The Adriatic Chamber Music Festival in Italy, Smith has taught and performed in several music festivals, including the Marrowstone Music Festival, Festival Mozaic in San Luis Obispo, CA, the Rocky Ridge Music Center, the Blue Mountain Festival, Dakota Chamber Music, The Green Valley Chamber Music Festival, the Tuacahn Summer Arts Institute, and The Las Vegas Music Festival.

Mr. Smith is a recipient of the Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of California, Santa Barbara, where he was a member of the Young Artists String Quartet. He has also earned a Master’s degree from The Mannes College of Music in New York, and a Bachelor of Music degree from the Hartt College of Music in Hartford, CT. He has studied cello with Timothy Eddy, Bernard Greenhouse, Leslie Parnas, Ron Leonard, and Geoffrey Rutkowski.

YING ZHANG

Described by the Singapore Straits Times as “Impressive violin solo, plenty of breathtaking passages...” violinist Ying Zhang received her Bachelor’s degree from Shanghai Conservatory of Music (with Excellent Graduate Certificate) in Shanghai, China, and her Master’s degree from Roosevelt University in Chicago, under Robert Chen and Shmuel Ashkenasi. She was a member of Chicago Civic Orchestra, and was a full scholarship recipient at the Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival (Germany), and Asian Youth Orchestra (Hong Kong). Prior to her move to Las Vegas, Zhang was the concert soloist and orchestra musician with the Shenzhen Symphony Orchestra in Shenzhen, China. Additionally, she was on violin faculty at the Jinhua Arts School in Jinhua, China. Ms. Zhang is currently pursuing her DMA degree at the UNLV. She is enrolled in the violin studio under Professor Weiwei Le and Dr. Ambroise Aubrun.
SONG TEXTS:
EMILY DICKINSON SONGBOOK, Book 1

4. There is a solitude of space
   A solitude of sea
   A solitude of death, but these
   Society shall be
   Compared with that profounder site
   That polar privacy
   A soul admitted to itself -
   Finite infinity. (J1695)

1. Love can do all but raise the Dead
   I doubt if even that
   From such a giant were withheld
   Were flesh equivalent
   But love is tired and must sleep,
   And hungry and must graze
   And so abets the shining Fleet
   Till it is out of gaze.
   (J1731)

2. Oh honey of an hour,
   I never knew thy power,
   Prohibit me
   Till my minutest dower,
   My unfrequented flower,
   Deserving be.
   (J1731)

3. I held a Jewel in my fingers -
   And went to sleep -
   The day was warm, and winds were proesy -
   I said “ ‘Twill keep” -
   I woke - and chid my honest fingers,
   The Gem was gone -
   And now, an Amethyst remembrance
   Is all I own -
   (J245)

2. ‘Hope’ is the thing with feathers -
   That perches in the soul -
   And sings the tune without the words -
   And never stops - at all –
   And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -
   And sore must be the storm -
   That could a-bash the little Bird
   That kept so many warm –
   I’ve heard it in the chillest land -
   And on the strangest Sea -
   Yet, never, in Extremity,
   It asked a crumb - of Me.
   (J254)