



Ben Van Winkle and The Figment

February 17, 2024 | 7:30 PM

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Chattanooga Symphony & Opera Presents
BEN VAN WINKLE & THE FIGMENT

February 17, 2024 | 7:30 PM
Walker Theatre

BEN VAN WINKLE

THE FIGMENT

Given Graber | electric bass

Ethan McGrath | piano

Gordon Inman | sax/reeds

Keith Lloyd | drummer

Lon Eldridge | guitar

Adrienne Ziarkowski | dancer

Maria Jordania | singer

Video/audio recording of this concert is prohibited.

Act I - A Medley (34")

Falling Leaves

Garden

Supernatural?

Duet

Arkai

Driving Buddy

Thru

New Shoe

Act II - MYTHS (31")

Insatiable desire

Goddess Waltz

Only Time

Daffodils

Able

Tentation Infinie

Fall Too Hard

I Don't Need It

Tempted By the Effort

Stay a While

INTERMISSION (15")

Act III- Alive (38")

Introduction

Time to Be Alive

Some Would Say

Everything is Energy?

Blur and Beach

*Figment
Have a Good Time
Real You*

This performance is funded in part by:



ARTS *Build*

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Artist Biography



Ben Van Winkle

cellist, singer, composer

Ben Van Winkle is a cellist, singer and composer from Chattanooga Tennessee. He graduated from Tennessee Tech with a 4.0 in Mechanical Engineering, then in 2016 he quit his engineering job to pursue music full time which he says was “all part of the plan”. Since then he has made frequent appearances in the cello section of the Chattanooga Symphony, and has had two of his orchestral works, “Pure Music No.1” and “Sense of Scale” performed by the orchestra. In 2021 he composed a piece that is featured in “The Light We Share” - a feature length film produced by the local group “The Popup Project”. Also in 2021 in collaboration with the Figment Chamber Ensemble, Ben released his debut album, “Saunter On” which is available on all platforms.

Program Notes

Act I - A Medley

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The first act consists of a selection of music that Van Winkle has released as well as a couple of short orchestral works. This act will start with a purely orchestral work called "Falling Leaves" which depicts the graceful dance of leaves as they first fall from the tree in autumn. After that many of the songs in this medley are from Van Winkle's debut album "Saunter On" except for "Arkai" which is another purely orchestral piece and "Garden" which was Van Winkle's first single.

Act II - MYTHS

Act II - MYTHS

The second act to be performed on this program is a suite of music called "MYTHS" that Van Winkle intends to record and release as an album. Each of the songs in this set of music is an allegory to an ancient Greek myth. Inspired by Carl Jung's idea of the need for all of us to find our "personal myth" that lives in each of our lives, Van Winkle attempts to represent these timeless stories with circumstances and emotional experiences from his own life, and that he has witnessed in the lives of others.

The first piece in this set, dubbed "Insatiable Desire", depicts the story of Euripides and Demeter where, for punishment for cutting down a tree sacred to her, Demeter curses Euripides to have insatiable hunger no matter how much he eats. Van Winkle relates this to the feeling he suspects we all feel from time to time where we just cannot satisfy ourselves no matter how much we eat. Following this is the short "Goddess Waltz" where our dancer, Adrienne Ziarkowsky is first introduced.

The next short installment, dubbed "Only Time" is told from the perspective of Chronos when he realizes that he's planted the seed for all of the future and the only way to see how it will unfold is to let time pass. This is tied closely with the scientific idea, spearheaded by Stephen Wolfram, of computational irreducibility, where there are no shortcuts in the chaotic system that is our universe, it must unfold on its own.

After that is a bubbly song called "Daffodils". This song depicts the untold happy ending of Echo and Narcissus. In the classic myth, Echo is cursed to only be able to repeat the words of other people, and Narcissus, after treating Echo poorly because of this, is cursed to fall in love with the reflection of himself that he sees in the water. After years and years, a daffodil grows in his place (This is where we get the scientific name for the flower, Narcissus!) In the song the characters explore their powers of reflection and use them to fall in love with each other, Narcissus reflects the way Echo moves and Echo imitates the way he sings.

The next myth to be represented in song is the myth of "Tantalus" told in Van Winkle's "Tentation Infinie". According to the myth, Tantalus is cursed to be forever hungry and thirsty but with fruit a water just out of reach. The more that he reaches for the fruit on

the fruit tree the further it goes away, and the more he attempts to drink the water just at his feet, the further it recedes. Van Winkle relates this to romantic relationships that seem to become more and more impossible as one falls more and more in love.

Next we have "Fall Too Hard" which represents the myth of Icarus, who, despite being warned, flew too close to the sun and his wings burned which caused him to fall. Van Winkle relates this to how with many things in life, we are tempted to "see for ourselves", and sometimes being told not to do something only makes us want to do it even more.

In the next song, "I don't need it", Van Winkle relates the process of getting over an addiction, or getting out of a harmful dependent relationship, to the myth of Hecate, who is sometimes known as the Goddess of Boundaries.

The next "Tempted by the Effort" represents the myth of Sisyphus who is tasked with pushing a boulder to the top of a hill every day for eternity where it inevitably rolls back down to the bottom for him to push it again. Despite this, Sisyphus is not miserable, which is similar to how we can find the meaning and purpose in work itself and in the suffering that we experience in pursuit of the goal, not necessarily the goal itself.

The last song in this suite of music, "Stay A While" represents the myth of Eros and Psyche. The song depicts the ending of that myth where, after a long period of mutual betrayal and lack of trust, the two forgive each other and Eros offers that Psyche join him and live in the sky with the gods for eternity. The song depicts two lovers who haven't seen each other for quite some time who realize their mistakes, and commit that they have learned from them and that they are ready to give unbounding love to the other to the end of time.

Act III - Alive

Act III - Alive

The third act of this concert will comprise music that will go on to become an album called "Alive". This suite of music explores many of the different psychological and emotional experiences involved with being a human. The act starts with an "Introduction" which seems to be a passionate explosion into reality. One could see this as the big bang or an awakening of sorts. The second song, "Time to be Alive", depicts a gathering of friends coming together to celebrate. Certain gatherings can feel magical and give a sense of synergy to all the people who are there. This song is about that feeling, about sharing the present moment with others, about celebrating each other and the life we share together. "Some Would Say" muses about the idea that humans often are drawn to idols. So much so that they can create them knowingly just so they have someone or something to ground them and unite them. The song toys with the possibility of this being a beneficial and good thing in spite of the blatant delusional nature of it. The song "Everything is Energy" explores the theory that every piece of matter is made-up of the same thing, energy, and how there's nothing that separates each of us and every inanimate object we encounter. It questions the

definition of life and asks if the universe itself is alive. "Blur and Beach", a lyric-less piece designed to provide Ben with a deep soundscape for him to channel inner expression thru his improvised cello playing and singing. "Figment" questions what happens to all the different versions of ourselves that are lost to us every time we make a decision. Perhaps the alternate versions of ourselves go on to exist without us. Perhaps we have a sense for this extra dimension, and perhaps our decisions are influenced by our awareness of the multiple outcomes that can transpire from every moment. "Have a Good Time" Depicts the scene of someone at their deathbed reflecting on their life and coming to the conclusion that with all its ups and downs it's been a good life. They are happy knowing that they have experienced life in all of its exciting and also mundane forms, because perhaps when one transcends into everything-ness those experiences become invaluable memories that distinguish the soul from everything else. Although it is an intensely emotional experience they accept their fate and look forward to whatever is on the other side of death. "Real You" is a song about expression. It simply states that, when it comes down to it, people seem to appreciate genuine expression in others. Often we are so focused on how the outside sees us that we forget to see ourselves from the inside. This song is simply reminding us to dance confidently and disregard the opinions of the people watching, and to focus only on the movement of our bodies themselves.

Musicians

Tonight's Musicians

Violin 1

Joshua Holritz

Violin 2

Sheri Peck

Viola

Metiney Suwanawongse

Cello

Eric Reed

Bass

Taylor Brown

Flute

Kristen Holritz

Amelia Dicks

Oboe

Jessica Smithorn

Clarinet

Joseph Miller

Bassoon

Carlos Clark

French Horn

Gordon James

Percussion

David Pedigo

Nathan Shew

Harp

Kate Rogers

CSO Contract Musicians

Violin 1

Joshua Holritz, Associate Concertmaster

Nicholas Naegele, Assistant Concertmaster

Nathan Banks

Caroline Drexler

Jeanne Johnson

David Katz

Calvin Lewis

Mark Reneau

Jasper Sewell

Violin 2

Sheri Peck, Principal Second Violin

Mary Benno

Emily Drexler

Nick Hoy

Rebecca James

Rachael McFarlane

Lee Smith

Jennifer Whittle

Viola

Metiney Suwanawongse, Principal

Katelyn Hoag

Cristina Micci-Barreca

Casie Runkle

Susan Saliny
Gabriel Schlaffer

Cello

Eric Reed, Principal
Spencer Brewer
Annie Camp
Micah Donar
Suzanne Sims
Paul Vest

Double Bass

Taylor Brown, Principal
Dexter Bell
Kaleb Collins
Jonathan McWilliams

Flute

Kristen Holritz, Principal
Lisa Meyerhofer (Leave of Absence)
Amelia Dicks, Principal Piccolo

Oboe

Jessica Smithorn, Principal
Teresa Spilko
Carey Shinbaum, English Horn

Clarinet

Robert West, Principal (Leave of Absence)
Emily Bowland
Joseph Miller, Bass Clarinet

Bassoon

Eric Anderson, Principal
Shelby Jones
G. Eddie McCrary, Contrabassoon

Horn

Gordon James, Principal
Angela DeBoer
Matthew Meadows
Joseph Demko (Leave of Absence)
Mackenzie Newell

Trumpet

Christian Pagnard, Principal
Michael Brown

Trombone

Prentiss Hobbs, Principal
Kevin Dombrowski
Christopher Brown (Leave of Absence)
Evan Clifton

Tuba

Neil Konouchi, Principal

Timpani

Alex Wadner, Principal

Percussion

Matthew West, Principal
David Pedigo

Harp

Caroline Brown Hudson, Principal

Keyboard

Alan Nichols, Principal

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