The Amaranth Duo

Christopher Ladd, guitar & Asa Gudjonsdottir, violin

Contact by email: theamaranthduo@gmail.com
The amaranth flower has come to represent unfading color, beauty and immortality.

The Amaranth Duo presents an evening of music which will capture your imagination with beautifully crafted interpretations and stunning virtuosity.

Invoking musical characters from the somber to the sublime with luminous sound and elegant simplicity, the duo passionately performs classic selections of repertoire, folk-inspired pieces or newly composed works.

The Amaranth Duo delivers a colorful and unfading presentation.

“The Amaranth Duo is an exciting blend! Violinist Asa Gudjonsdottir and guitarist Christopher Ladd are an irresistible pair in a multitude of ways. Their fascinating programming combines new works, folk elements, classical traditions and even a taste of the North with Asa's authentic Icelandic flair. Their audience appeal is tremendous.

As a presenter for over twenty years, I have not often witnessed such organic alignment as an ensemble combined with such sophistication. Their sound matches their onstage aura. They are unforgettable!”

-Lisa Bergman, Artistic Director
Mostly Nordic Chamber Music Series
Nordic Heritage Museum

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BIOGRAPHIES

With her flawless musicality and interpretation, Asa Gudjonsdottir has awed audiences around the world.

Born in Reykjavik, Iceland, Asa came into a family devoted to the arts. Beginning her studies at the age of 3, and instantly became mesmerized with the instrument. At the age of 12, Asa was admitted to the Reykjavik Conservatory, ultimately leading up to her acceptance at the prestigious Icelandic Academy of the Arts where she studied with Auður Hafsteinsdottir. Asa Gudjonsdottir has cultivated her talent with some of the greatest musicians in the world, of which includes Routa Kroumovitch at Stetson University, Boris Kuschnir, in Vienna, and most recently with Anton Miller at the Hartt School of Music in Connecticut.

As a winner of the Reykjavik Conservatory Concerto Competition in 2004, Asa Gudjonsdottir gave a raving review performance of Sarasate’s Zigeunerweisen with the Reykjavik Youth Orchestra. In 2006, she was awarded Third Prize at the Simon-Fiset Violin Competition in Seattle, WA. From 2010 -2011, Asa Gudjonsdottir held a yearlong position at the Icelandic Symphony Orchestra before continuing her further studies.

Asa Gudjonsdottir has been regularly invited to perform in concerts and music festivals in Europe and United States, as a soloist and as a chamber musician. Her recent performances include a performance of the Mendelsohn Violin Concerto with the Icelandic Youth Orchestra and a premiere of Depo Flux, concerto grosso by Ken Steen at Lincoln Theater in Connecticut. She is a recipient of the Visa cultural award in Iceland, Fulbright Foundation and the American-Scandinavian Foundation.

Award winning guitarist Christopher Ladd has rapidly become known throughout the country as one of the most promising classical musicians of his generation. Fingerstyle Guitar hails his performances as being “… rendered confidently and expressively.” Praised as “… an exercise in extremes.” by Soundboard Magazine, he is highly sought after as a soloist and chamber musician.

Performances of note include Mengi and the Kaldalon Theater at Harpa in Reykjavik, Iceland, the DiMenna Center in New York City, the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C., the Viennese Opera Ball hosted by the Austrian Embassy, the historic Byrdcliffe Theater in Woodstock, NY and for former vice-president Al Gore at his residence in Washington, D.C. Active also as a chamber musician, Mr. Ladd is a founding member of the New England Guitar Quartet, The Pandora Duo which features acclaimed flutist Janet Arms, and The Amaranth Duo with Icelandic violinist Asa Gudjonsdottir.

In addition to performing pieces of standard repertoire, Mr. Ladd has premiered numerous new works by composers such as Kenneth Steen, Robert Carl, Nolan Stolz, Lief Ellis, Kathryn Swanson, Ty Alan Emerson, Ernst Bacon, Phillip Houghton and Frank Wallace. Recently he had the opportunity to work with Grammy and Academy Award winning composer John Corigliano, in a performance of his work Troubadours for guitar and chamber orchestra conducted by Edward Cumming.

As a recording artist Mr. Ladd’s multi-faceted career exemplifies his continual search for new ways to present the classical guitar. He has appeared on numerous projects for feature film, theater and the

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stage. His performance of Rodrigo’s *Concierto de Aranjuez* can be heard on the documentary *The Real Royal Trip* directed by Sangh Kim and a selection of his performance of J.S. Bach’s *Prelude, Fugue and Allegro*, BWV 998 can be heard in The Asylum’s cult-hit *Megashark vs. Giant Octopus*. Most recently he contributed his skills to the 25th Anniversary of the epic metal band While Heaven Wept’s newest release “Suspended at Aphelion” on Nuclear Blast Records which was released in late October 2014.

Mr. Ladd has been a prize winner in numerous competitions including the Appalachian Guitar Festival Solo Competition, American String Teachers Association Competition and was twice a semi-finalist in the prestigious Guitar Foundation of America International Competition.

Mr. Ladd is currently serves on the faculty of The Hartt School in West Hartford, Connecticut as an Artist/Teacher, Director of The Hartt School Guitar Festival and as the Chair of the Guitar and Harp Program.

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