



**Alexis Castrogiovanni
&
Richard Gracious**



Alexis Castrogiovanni is going into her 3rd year at Wilfrid Laurier University's Faculty of Music and is working toward a double major in Cello Performance and Women's Studies. She began her musical studies in piano and theory in grade 2 and was soon after accepted to L.B. Pearson School for the Arts where she took up violin. In grade 7 she moved to Montreal where she was finally given a cello to play in a high school music program. She has participated in many music festivals and competitions, and has partaken in master classes with Matt Haimovitz (McGill) and Richard Aaron (Juilliard). She is now the cellist of the Tylsa String Quartet, member of the WLU University Orchestra and is currently studying under Paul Pulford. She has played Festa Italiana for 2 years now; her family is from Trapani, Sicily.

Richard Gracious started his musical career at the age of seven on the violin. After taking lessons, he was not captivated by the violin so he decided to focus on piano as his main instrument of study. At the age of nine he was accepted into Lester B. Pearson School for the Arts where he started studying vocal, keyboard and French horn while continuing to take regular piano lessons. In high school he took interest in playing guitar, started taking drum lessons and also began playing the double bass. By the end of his high school career he had obtained a grade twelve University credit in French horn, piano, double bass, and guitar. He is part of a successful local band the Gracious Collective, which plays regularly at various venues in South Western Ontario and has recorded at Beach Road Studios, OAK Studio and Metal Works. He is currently in the Music Industry Arts program at Fanshawe College.

Alexis Castrogiovanni and **Richard Gracious** have known each other since they attended Pearson together. They later began performing in high school with what became the Gracious Collective and started a duo as a professional venture for weddings, parties and other functions.