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FEATURE: April is Opera Month
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26 years after his death Glenn Gould remains probably the best-known Canadian classical musician. A phenomenal and controversial pianist, he was no less impressive—or eccentric—as a thinker, writer, and radio producer. However, Gould defined himself as “a composer who plays piano”. He applied the label “Opus 1” to his String Quartet in F minor. There were to be no higher opus numbers, for Gould then launched his dazzling international career as a pianist.

Principal of the Royal Conservatory, conductor of the TSO, and long-time organist at Timothy Eaton Memorial Church, Sir Ernest MacMillan was synonymous with classical music in English Canada in a way that seems almost unimaginable today. MacMillan was on the podium when a 15-year-old Glenn Gould made his TSO debut.
FOR OPENERS

A bit of this ... a bit of that

When is a play not a play? A word of reassurance or condolence, depending on your musical proclivities. Calling April "opera month" as Chris Hoile does this month (page 11), doesn't mean every other musical genre vanishes from the scene. But it's an interesting intellectual exercise, applying a particular thematic lens to our monthly snapshot of the musical landscape. If April were an opera festival in Southern Ontario, look at all the stuff that would qualify for the brochure!

Another example of this: I remember going to a very early meeting of an informal group that was to evolve into the Coalition of New Music Presenters of Toronto. It was around the time the TSO was abandoning its stewardship of the annual November Massey Hall New Music Festival. "Well, just take what's going on in new music in November and call it a festival" was my cheerful suggestion (not particularly well received at the time). A marketing ploy, someone called it. Ploys can be good, if they get you seeing things afresh. So, opera month it is. WholeNote says so.

Speaking of festivals...
The first half of June used to be a time when concert presenters could plan big—even pull together a festival of one kind or another. But not any more. LuminaTO, as we all know now, effectively owns every last iota of mainstream media attention for the first two weeks of June. You'd no more hold a competing event during that time than climb a beanstalk to rob a giant's castle.

Mind you, the end of June gets pretty crazy too, with the TD Canada Trust Jazz festival kicking in. Although it must be said the June/July jazz giant is a bit more affable in terms of letting what was going on anyway shelter under its umbrella.

So what does WholeNote go and do? We go ahead and plan a BIG EVENT for June 24th, right between the two giants. "Movies embracing music" is our title and, this time, choral music is our theme. Jack Buell explains (Choral Scene, page 16). So write it down! June 24, Bloor Cinema, 6.30pm to 1:00am.

The canaries are coming!
Speaking of choral music, the merry month of May is to the choral scene what April is to opera. Choirs across southern Ontario hold more concerts in May than any other month of the year. Choristers and would-be choristers start to think ahead to where they want to be in the fall. And choirs in their hundreds flock to WholeNote's Canary Pages, our annual directory of who's who in the Southern Ontario choral world. If your choir didn't get a reminder, better move fast! Directory listings are due Tuesday, April 14. Contact Karen Ages in our membership department for info (see contact info below).

Full circles
It's nice to see Sonic Mosaics by Paul Steenhuizen reviewed in BookShelf this month (page 52). As noted in the review, a lot of the composer interviews in the book were incubated here in WholeNote over the years. The debt we owe Steenhuizen is that he carved a niche in our magazine for lengthy interviews, in which the voice of an artist being asked good questions has a chance to shine through. (This month's cover story is a good example of that.)

But the issue of assigning space in a print magazine these days is no small thing, as most of you will be aware. Every month one or another aspect of what we usually do gets pinched or squeezed. This month is no exception, as I explain further on page 24.

David Perlman, editor editorial@thewholenote.com
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Focus on OPERA:
Adrienne Pieczonka
Interview by Pamela Margles

There's an audio clip on Adrienne Pieczonka's website of her singing Richard Strauss' Morgen. It was recorded at a recital she gave at Roy Thomson Hall in 2001. After the applause, she tells the audience, "I haven't lived in this country since 1988. I've lived in Austria, and I live now in the United Kingdom - and I still say, 'I'm going home,' and mean Canada. You just can't take the Canada out of the girl, I guess."

At that time, she had no thought of moving back to Canada. Even when she sang Sieglinde in Wagner's Die Walküre with the Canadian Opera Company three years later, she was still happily living in London. But by the time she sang the role again as part of the Ring Cycle which opened the COC's new home in the Four Seasons Centre in 2006, she had moved back to Toronto.

She left Canada as a promising young soprano hoping to establish a career. Now, after almost two decades living in Europe, she returned as a star in major opera centres like Munich, Bayreuth, Dresden, Vienna, Salzburg, Zurich, Milan, New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Pieczonka sang Mimi in La Bohême with the COC in 1994, but it wasn't until her first recital in Roy Thomson Hall seven years later that Toronto audiences really became aware of her, responding to her distinctive radiance and clarity. Along with Die Walküre, a second recital at Roy Thomson Hall in 2006 and her recent performances in Beethoven's Fidelio with the COC have made her a Toronto audience favourite. I spoke with her at her home, a lovely Victorian in Toronto's Annex neighbourhood, on the day before the final performance of Fidelio.

I settled down at a long table in Pieczonka's kitchen while she made coffee. Her partner, Laura Tucker, came in and she introduced me. "Laura is a singer," she said, "a mezzo". "That's probably the only way it would work," Tucker said, laughing. "Exactly," says Pieczonka, as Tucker went off to mind their three-year-old daughter Grace, who was home sick from nursery school. "I can't think of any voice-type partnerships, although there probably are"

Do you ever get a chance to sing together?
We just did a concert in Hamilton together. It was a great program, so I hope we can get more mileage out of it. It will be good to do in Toronto.

With all the financial problems and cut-backs happening, have you had anything cancelled?
No, but I know a lot of people that have. If someone does cancel, you just have to accept it, even if you have a signed contract. But sometimes I think if something got cancelled I would be happy to have the time off. Tomorrow is my tenth performance of this Fidelio. Then next week I leave for Munich to do Otello. So if I got a call saying something was cancelled, I'd say, "Great - we're on holiday! Let's go down to Florida."

Sometimes my fantasy is that something will get cancelled to allow me a bit of a break.

Your schedule certainly is packed. Do you like being able to work in the city where you're living?
Having a company like the COC here is a real bonus. It's great to know that I'll have at least two months at home each year. I've been home for quite a while, and it will be painful to get those suitcases out.

Do your family travel with you?
I love having Laura and Grace with me. Laura loves Europe and Grace is a great traveller. The kid has a pretty full passport already. After Munich, Laura and Grace will join me in Vienna - I'm doing Arabella at the Vienna State Opera. Then we'll all be in San Francisco for May and June. I'll sing Tosca. Laura is from northern California so that's nice for her. But we don't want to pull Grace out of school all the time. Some singers home-school their kids, but I feel a child needs stability and routine.

Did you know the new director of the COC before he came here?
I didn't meet Alexander Neef until we started rehearsing Fidelio just after Christmas. But we have talked about what I would sing here, and how to make it work. I'll miss out next season, but after that I'm here for the next three seasons.

Did doing the Ring Cycle here with Richard Bradshaw have anything to do with you returning?
Singing Die Walküre here with Richard the first time in 2004 was really important for me. It was before I decided to move home, and it created some interest. I was pleased to sing at the opening gala concert of the Four Seasons Centre, before the Ring. But then Richard died so suddenly... He was supposed to conduct me in Don Carlos, so it was nice to be able to sing at his memorial.

Why did you move back?
The decision to move to Toronto was definitely based on where to raise our child. It all happened very quickly, meeting Laura, then having Grace. I was living in London at the time.

Why did you move back?
The decision to move to Toronto was definitely based on where to raise our child. It all happened very quickly, meeting Laura, then having Grace. I was living in London at the time.

Why had you moved to London from Vienna?
I had lived in Vienna for six years, but I was tired of the politics. I wanted to live in an English-speaking country and I just wanted a change. I was a member of the ensemble in Vienna, and I knew I had to go freelance. I chose London because I had a lot of friends there and it is an exciting city - I love London.

But it was weird that while I lived in London I didn't have much work there. I still worked mainly on the continent. When I moved there I was with a London agent, and I had sung at Glyndebourne and Covent Garden. But then I switched agents, and the work in London dried up. So I was leaving London to work. It didn't make much sense. It so often happens to singers that for some reason they don't sing where they live. I don't want that to happen to me here.

Is there anything you miss, living here?
The weather does get me down. I forget how brutal the Canadian winters are. I am looking forward to going back to Europe, because I love those cultural centres like Vienna, Munich and London. But returning to Canada was the right choice, so I don't regret it at all. Canada has welcomed me.

You were gone a long time.
Eighteen years. I'm no spring chicken!

Are you giving up anything living in Canada?
I don't think I'm missing out on anything. I have an established career, so it certainly can't harm me professionally. My presence is still strong in Europe, and I am still singing there a lot. I don't want my career to be just in North America. I want to keep my presence up on both sides of the ocean.

Did you move back?

Adrienne Pieczonka as Elizabeth de Valois, Nathalie Paulin as Thibaudi (left), and the COC Chorus in the Canadian Opera Company's production of Don Carlos, 2007.
Is that tricky to pull off?
It’s interesting to try to think of singers who are equally known in Europe and North America. It is really hard to maintain a strong career in both places – except for megastars like Placido Domingo.

You have worked with him a lot.
I’m singing with him at the Met in a couple of months doing Die Walküre, and next year we’ll do Simon Boccanegra there. That is going to be very exciting because he will sing a baritone role. Domingo is in a class of his own. I turned on the radio on Saturday and he was singing Adriana Lecouvreur from the Met. They said he had first done that role 40 years ago. His voice sounds so fresh.

I am a huge admirer of his, and not just for his singing. The way he runs Los Angeles Opera, he is passionate about that company, and has even taken a fee reduction. He is the sweetest man, the most generous colleague – he really is a gentleman. You meet a lot of people in this business, some are charming and some are less charming. But I find the really great talents are kind people. They’re not the ones having the diva fits and pulling huffs. That’s for egos that are not intact.

What’s it like to work with Domingo?
It’s a real thrill. Some singers check out. They do their bit and then when you’re singing, they’re not there – they’re just thinking about their own voice. But he’s on, even when he’s not singing.

I’ve done quite a bit with him on stage. He conducted me in Vienna in Carmen and Tales of Hoffman when I was a complete unknown and he was just getting into conducting. It was scary to have this great star conducting me. But he was so encouraging. He’s always there for you.

Speaking of tenors, had you worked with Richard Margison before Fidelio?
I had never sung with Richard. We had sung at the same gala, but not together. I’m really enjoying singing with him, and hanging out with him. He helped us out when he stepped in to this production with just one day’s rehearsal.

You have a new recording of Lohengrin coming out - have you performed it on stage with that cast?
No, but I’ve worked with all the principals. The Lohengrin, Johan Botha will be my Otello in Munich in a couple of weeks. I got called in on that recording at the 11th hour. The original soprano had had a problem with the conductor. I had just finished my last Tosca in Los Angeles, so I flew to Cologne and jumped into Elsa’s shoes. It was gruelling because I was often singing to playback. But it came out well.

You sang Lohengrin in Götz Friedrich’s production Munich ten years ago. I see they’re doing a new production now with Jonas Kaufmann and Anja Harteros.
This is a much more lyric casting of Wagner than when Peter Seifert and Waltraud Meier sang it with me. But we are going to do this opera together again in the 2011 Munich Summer Festival. So it will be us oldies coming back to do the new production.

Have you managed to escape the heavy pressure young stars are exposed to unscathed?
There are a lot of singers my age who are no longer in the business. They have taken things too fast and burned out. I’m still here. I feel that I’m coming into my glory years. These are my years for the great Tosca’s and other big roles that, with good technique and a lot of hard work, I will continue to keep doing.

Are there too many unrealistic demands placed on singers today?
We are expected to look fantastic on stage and do glamorous photo shoots. All that tires me out. It’s not me, anyways. I’m not into what they call in Germany the ‘schickimicki’, the parties and champagne receptions. I like to drink and go out with my friends. But I can’t do all the public relations stuff. I do a little bit, but the amount these megastars are doing is daunting to me.

What about a singer like Edita Guburova, who is still taking on new roles and singing so beautifully at sixty-two. I know you have worked with her a lot.

continues next page
Clifton Forbis as Siegmund and Adrianne Pieczonka as Sieglinde in the Canadian Opera Company's production of Die Walküre, 2004

In fact Edita is having a big premiere tonight in Lucrezia Borgia in Munich. I am a friend of hers, and she sets an example for me - to be singing with that technique at her age. We are going to Tokyo to do Ariadne auf Naxos again. It's a real thrill for me to work with her. They adore her in Europe, and she's a huge star in Japan. But if she came to Roy Thomson Hall ... She never had success at the Met, and she didn't like New York. She's a very down to earth woman who likes her quiet time. But she is determined - when she wasn't getting recordings, she started her own company, Nightingale. I'm full of admiration. I know at Lucrezia tonight in Munich they will clap for her for probably half an hour.

I've never experienced anything like the clapping and foot-stomping - and the extended curtain calls - in Munich, especially for Gruberova. We never do anything like that here. In fact, at the performance of Fidelio I saw last week the curtain started coming down while you were all still bowing.

That's the one thing about the Canadian Opera Company. After a performance the audience claps, we bow twice and then bring the curtain down. In Europe they really show their appreciation. And if they don't like something they will boo. I like that, because it's demonstrative, and that's exciting for a performer. I really felt that excitement here in the Ring. People cheered and bravedo - that was great.

Fidelio is a new role for you - do you enjoy singing it?
Yes, but it's a taxing sing. Beethoven is not one of my favourite composers. For me, Beethoven was not an opera composer. He treats the voice like a clarinet or French horn or something, and it's uncomfortable. Even Beethoven's Ninth Symphony - I do it, but it's not a pleasant sing.

At least in the Ninth the vocal part is short.
It's short, but I'm thinking technically a lot of the time. I've grown to like it more than I ever thought I would, because for me it has a lot of Mozart moments, which I love. So I approach it as a beefy Donna Anna with extra dramatic stuff. A lot of singers try to muscle through this role, but then you're lost. It has to be done like a lacer or a trumpet.

Have you done many pants roles?
No, I've never played a pants role before. Laura, as a mezzo, has played them her whole career. But this is the only pants role I will ever get to play. It's very compelling dramatically because the character I play has a double life, and that
FOCUS On Opera:
April is Opera Month
by Chris Hoile

Once again the stars have aligned to make April the most opera-intensive month in Southern Ontario. At time of starting to write this article there were no fewer than fourteen examples of music theatre on offer spanning the 17th to the 20th century. (There have been a couple of hiccups, as you will see, but opera lovers will still have quite a task deciding how to fit them all in.) Here they are in chronological order.

1642: The Coronation of Poppea. Renowned mezzo-soprano Kimberly Barber makes her Opera Atelier debut as Ottavia in the company's revival of its highly successful 2002 production of Claudio Monteverdi's final opera. American male soprano Michael Maniaci returns as Nerone with Peggy Kriha Dye in the title role of the unscrupulous courtesan who schemes her way to the top. The cast also includes Carla Huhtanen as Drusilla, João Fernandes as Seneca, Olivier Laquerre as Ottone and Laura Pudwell as Arnalta. David Fallis conducts the Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and Marshall Pynkoski directs. The opera runs April 25-May 2 at the Elgin Theatre. See www.operatelier.com for more.

1691: King Arthur. This, the culmination of Toronto Masque Theatre's five-year Purcell Cycle, tells John Dryden's fanciful tale about Arthur's attempts to rescue his fiancée, the blind Cornish princess Emmeline, from the clutches of his arch-enemy the Saxon King Oswald of Kent. This work likely marks the first appearance of Valkyries in opera. In true masque tradition this "semi-opera" integrates singing, dance and acting. Directed by Derek Boyes with choreography by Marie-Nathalie Lacoursière, it features Daniel Auchincloss, Benjamin Butterfield, Daniel Taylor and Giles Tomkins. Larry Beckwith leads a period instrument band from the violin. Performances run April 23 and 24 at the MacMillan Theatre. See www.torontomasquetheatre.ca.

1790: Così fan tutte. Part of the RCM's "Rising Star" series, Mozart's acerbic opera about the supposedly innate unfaithfulness of women is performed by the by Glenn Gould School Opera and the Royal Conservatory Opera April 2-7 at Mazzoleni Hall. The GGS Opera Ensemble is conducted by Mario Bernardi and directed by Jennifer Parr. Admission is free.

1817: Cinderella. Kitchener used to share an opera company with Hamilton. Now it does so with Brampton. "Cinderella" is none other than Gioacchino Rossini's "La Cenerentola" sung in English. The cast features Jennifer Fina as Angelina (a.k.a. "Cinderella"), Emilio Fina as Don Ramiro, and Anna Bateman and Louisa Cowie as Angelina's annoying sisters. Under the aegis of Opera Kitchener, the opera was to play on April 5 at Centre in the Square. But this performance has been postponed (date TBA). Under the aegis of Brampton Lyric Opera, the opera plays May 14 at the Rose Theatre, Brampton. Consult www.bramptonlyricopera.ca or www.operakitchener.com for further details.

1879: Eugene Onegin. From April 4-11 Opera Lyra Ottawa presents its first ever production of Tchaikovsky's operatic masterpiece with Russell Braun singing the title role for the first time in Canada. Those who saw Brett Polegato in the role just last year with the COC may be interested to compare and contrast the interpretations of two of Canada's finest baritones. Joining Braun are Inna Dukach as Tatiana, Richard Troxell as Lenski, Elizabeth Turnbull as Olga and Peter Volpe as Prince Gremin. Tyrone Patterson conducts the National Arts Centre Orchestra and Joe Bascetta directs. Visit http://operalyra.ca.

1881: Simon Boccanegra. (COC, Apr 11-May 7 at the Four Seasons Centre). This, the COC's first production of Verdi's dark masterpiece since 1979, tells the story of the first Doge of Genoa, elected to unite warring factions who, nevertheless, plot his downfall. The work premiered and failed in 1857. Twenty-five years later Verdi with the help of Arrigo Boito (Verdi's librettist for "Falstaff"

Matthew White and Peggy Kriha Dye in Opera Atelier's 2002 Poppea.

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with Maureen Forrester as the formidable Queen of the Fairies. That role will be played by Wendy Hatala Foley, the TOT's outstanding Katisha last year, with Elizabeth DeGraza as the innocent shepherdess Phyllis. Robert Cooper conducts the TOT Orchestra and Guillermo Silva-Marin directs. See www.torontooperetta.com.

1982: Iolanthe. (Toronto Operetta Theatre, Apr 18-16, at the Jane Mallett Theatre). For many Savoyards this is the quintessential Gilbert and Sullivan operetta. The overturning of the British Parliament by a band of fairies and the reductio ad absurdum conclusion make it the ultimate in the duo's visions of topsy-turvymdom. Despite its fame the professional production of "Iolanthe" was back in 1984 when it formed the climax of the Stratford Festival's G&S series directed by Brian Macdonald and designed by Susan Benson. Last year OLI artistic director Marianne Zin-Orlowski is looking for people willing to donate time or financial support in helping the company achieve its twin goals of establishing a showcase for emerging Canadian artists fresh from opera school and providing affordable, fully-staged operas for the greater Toronto community. For information visit www.operaliricaitaliana.ca or contact Ms. Zin-Orlowski directly at 416-882-0246 or marianne@operaliricaitaliana.ca.

1990: Cavalleria rusticana / 1892: Pagliacci. Our second hiccup. Opera Lirica Italiana had planned to present this favourite verismo double bill April 23 and 25, but the WholeNote has learned that the three-year-old company has had to postpone the production until the fall. In the meantime, OLI artistic director Marianne Zin-Orlowski is looking for people willing to donate time or financial support in helping the company achieve its twin goals of establishing a showcase for emerging Canadian artists fresh from opera school and providing affordable, fully-staged operas for the greater Toronto community. Last year OLI formed a children's chorus to involve youth at an early age in the art form. Given government cutbacks to the arts OLI is dependent on the commitment of individuals of diverse backgrounds to sustain the company as it continues to grow. For information visit www.operaliricaitaliana.ca or contact Ms. Zin-Orlowski directly at 416-882-0246 or marianne@operaliricaitaliana.ca.

1896: La Bohème. The COC stage the world's most popular opera April 17-May 24 at the Four Seasons Centre. The almost entirely Canadian cast includes Frédérique Vézina as Mimi, David Pomeroy as Rodolfo, Peter Barrett as Marcello, Robert Gleadow as Colline and Jon-Paul Décosse as Schaunard. The single non-Canadian is New Zealander Anna Leese as Musetta. The familiar production by Wolfram and Amrei Skalicki is directed by Maer Gronsdal Powell with Julian Kovatchev and Derek Bate trading off conducting duties on the podium.

1904: Madama Butterfly. Another favourite by Giacomo Puccini will be staged by Opera Hamilton April 2-3 at Hamilton Place. This, the final offering of Opera Hamilton's first season since its resurrection last year, CONTINUES ON PAGE 61.
The Russians are ... here!

By Colin Eatock

The Russians Are Coming is film director Norman Jewison’s silly 1966 comedy about a Soviet-era submarine that runs aground off Cape Cod, Massachusetts, sending the local citizenry into unfounded Cold-War hysterics. In the last two decades, there’s been another kind of Russian invasion: a flood of musicians, dancers and theatrical artists. This artistic outpouring was largely caused by the collapse of the USSR in 1991.

On one hand, this triggered a financial meltdown for many Russian musicians, due to deep funding cuts for cultural institutions and activities. On the other hand, it allowed Russian musicians to travel much more freely.

Even Russia’s most esteemed musicians found that in order to succeed in the new environment, they needed new skills: entrepreneurial savvy, a competitive spirit, and sheer determination. “In Russia in the 1990s,” the famous Russian conductor Valery Gergiev told me in an interview a few years ago, “you couldn’t possibly plan by thinking first about money. You must have your plans — and if you have artistic force, the money will find you.”

Like many Western cities, Toronto has benefited from the political and economic upheavals half a world away. Since the 1990s, Toronto has played host to such Russian pianists as Evgeny Kissin, Boris Berman, Michael Berkovsky, Olga Kern and Alexander Todadze (he’s Georgian, strictly speaking). Concert-pianist Alexander Tselyakov lives here. So do Inna Perkis and Boris Zarankin, who run Toronto’s Off Centre Music Salon.

And that’s just the pianists; we also get a parade of Russian conductors, singers, instrumental soloists, chamber musicians, even the occasional opera director. We also get large ensembles — most notably, Gergiev’s Kirov Orchestra of St. Petersburg, which has visited Toronto three times. The next big Russian ensemble to visit will be the National Philharmonic Orchestra, with pianist Denis Matsuev, which makes its Toronto debut at Roy Thomson Hall on April 28.

In March, violist/conductor Yuri Bashmet brought his Moscow Soloists to Roy Thomson Hall. Following a masterclass that he gave at the Ramey House of Music the day before the concert, I had a chance to interview him. I soon learned that when speaking about his chamber orchestra, he’s anything but modest.

“It’s the best orchestra,” Bashmet stated with matter-of-fact directness. “I’ve heard many orchestras, and this is the truth — it’s not just publicity. It’s because they are musicians from the best schools, and we began the orchestra together. The chamber orchestra is 16 years old, and only two musicians have changed.”

However, back in 1991, everything had changed. Bashmet’s first chamber orchestra — also called the Moscow Soloists — suddenly disbanded in 1991 when all the players decided to relocate to Western Europe. Undaunted, by this “divorce,” he rebuilt his chamber orchestra in Russia with the players he leads today.

Bashmet’s astonishing concert at Roy Thomson Hall the next evening underscored his grand claim about “the best orchestra.” But the collapse of the Moscow Soloists in 1991 had underscored something else. Russia had officially joined the capitalist world. But Russia’s musical culture hadn’t quite adjusted to the new way of doing things. Things happen there that probably couldn’t happen elsewhere.

“I cannot say that a new system is well established,” says Vladimir Spivakov, conductor of the National Philharmonic Orchestra, by phone from Moscow. “But even in this current un-system, when the government doesn’t want someone to go away, they organize an orchestra.”

continues next page
Spivakov speaks from experience. Six years ago, he abruptly resigned from the National Orchestra of Russia, over a dispute with the ensemble's chief administrator (a former KGB officer). "I broke the contract, because I could not accept how he behaved with the musicians," Spivakov explains. "Musicians are not soldiers, or slaves."

"Mr. Putin called me, when he heard this news, and said that he didn't want me to leave Russia - and had I thought about a new national orchestra? I said no, and he said I should start to think about it." The result was the creation of the National Philharmonic. "I listened to 400 musicians," Spivakov recalls, "and I chose the best 100."

Putin's name often arises in conversations about music in Russia - and prominent Russian musicians are careful to pay their respects. Indeed, the level of political involvement in culture in Russia would horrify Canadians who are more comfortable with government at "arm's length". On the other hand, Putin's interest shows just how important classical music is in Russia. (Which of Canada's political leaders could name the conductor of Ottawa's National Arts Centre Orchestra?)

Spivakov is clearly grateful to Putin for his support. And Bashmet offers unalloyed praise for the Russian leader. "If he says yes to something, then it will be done. And he doesn't say yes if he can't do it. That's why I like him."

What does all this mean to concert-goers in Toronto? It means that those musicians who are resourceful enough to navigate the difficult economic and political waters of today's Russia - such as Gergiev, Spivakov and Bashmet - will continue to grace our concert halls. And with the current downturn in the world's economy, we may well hear more of them.

"They all want to come here," says Svetlana Dvoretskaia of Show One Productions, who points out that international touring brings Russian musicians both money and prestige. "But they can't just come to Canada. To work, it has to be a tour of North America - especially with the big groups."

Born into a musical family in St. Petersburg, Dvoretskaia is well connected in artistic circles in Russia. She moved to Canada in 1998 and since 2004 she's brought many Russian musicians to Toronto - including the Moscow Soloists last month, and the National Philharmonic of Russia this month. Much of her audience is drawn from the 250,000 people in the GTA who are of Russian descent (or belong to some other former Soviet nationality). But she also attracts a "mainstream" audience - and in the last five years she's learned a thing or two about promoting classical music in Canada.

"Toronto audiences are very conservative," she says. "They will go and see the same orchestra every year, but it's hard to get them to hear an artist whom they may not know so well. That's a serious challenge. I've presented Gidon Kremer, and the Borodin Quartet - and it was a huge challenge to get the mainstream audience out."

During the Cold War, political tensions made appearances by Russian artists rare and fascinating events. Today the appearances are no longer rare, but the fascination remains. The current "un-system" (as Spivakov puts it) seems to be working in our favour, creating a survival-of-the-fittest musical culture that produces remarkable results.

To be sure, there have been some problems. In 2002, the St. Petersburg Philharmonic was ordered off a plane in Washington DC, en route from Amsterdam to Los Angeles, because of drunk and disorderly conduct. Two years earlier, the entire Moscow Philharmonic was impersonated in Hong Kong. A concert-manager there had engaged (what he thought was) the renowned orchestra; a plane-load of (presumably) Russian musicians claiming to be the Moscow Philharmonic landed, played several concerts to critical acclaim, picked up their paycheques, reboarded their plane and left. It was not until several weeks later that the real Moscow Philharmonic (which was on tour in Europe through all this) learned of the hoax.

Such shenanigans aside, we should be glad both for the Russians who arrive, and those who are here to stay.
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Friday, April 3, 2009 7:30pm*
Sunday, April 5, 2009, 2:00pm
Tuesday, April 7, 2009, 1:00pm
Rising Stars Series
GGS Opera: MOZART'S COSI FAN TUTTE*
Glenn Gould School Opera Ensemble and the Royal Conservatory Orchestra
MARIO BERNARDI, Music Director
JENNIFER PARR, Stage Director
Maestro Mario Bernardi returns for a second season to conduct The GGS Opera Ensemble in a concert version of Mozart's Cosi Fan Tutte.
Location: Mazzoleni Hall, The Royal Conservatory, 273 Bloor St. W.
Tickets: Free (donations in support of The GGS Opera Ensemble gratefully accepted)
*Please note programme and time change.

Thursday, April 16, 2009, 8:00pm*
Rising Stars Series
NEW MUSIC ENSEMBLE
BRIAN CURRENT, conductor
Join The GGS New Music Ensemble for an hour of cutting-edge contemporary music for acoustic and electronic media.
Location: The Conservatory Theatre, The Royal Conservatory, 273 Bloor St. W.
Tickets: Free (donations in support of The GGS New Music Ensemble gratefully accepted)
*Please note time change.

THE ROYAL CONSERVATORY PRESENTS

Friday, April 17, 2009 8:00pm
Great Artists Series
ATIS BANKAS, violin
DIANNE WERNER, piano
This concert will feature Karol Shimanovsky's Nocturne and Tarantella, Op. 28, Leos Janacek's Ballade and two of the greatest works written for these instruments, the Franck Sonata for Violin & Piano and Debussy Sonata for Violin and Piano.
Tickets: $30 adult, $10 students

July 28, 2009 7:30pm
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Paeons and needles
by mJ buell

For a number of different reasons, I find myself sitting here pre-occupied with the old question "How many angels can dance on the point of a needle?" The origins of the question are nearly as debatable as the various answers to it. What delights me is that the debate assumes that there are angels. And, equally delightful, that they can dance!

What got me thinking about this? One thing was that someone asked me "How many potential choristers will be reading WholeNote's May Canary Pages?" I found myself trying to come up with a total, based on last year's Canary Pages. How many choirs? How many singers already in each? So, that's about 12,000. But what about lapsed choristers ready to take the plunge again? And what if each of them has just one friend, who had never been in a choir, but inspired by association finds herself suddenly seized by a secret powerful longing...

So this is where thinking about angels helps. Angels don't dance because they can. Angels dance *because they must*. And that's how it is, sooner or later, with singing.

It's a good time of year to spur that awareness. This round of ecstatic singing begins for many in April with sacred works relating to the Christian calendar. The Amadeus Choir's St. John Passion (Apr. 4); The St. Matthew Passion (Tafelmusik, April 2-8, Georgetown Bach Chorale Apr 10, Grand Philharmonic Choir Apr.10); a singalong Messiah ( Armour Heights Presbyterian, April 10); Music at Metropolitan's "All Creation Wept" (also April 10 - which is Good Friday); Pax Christi's Bach Mass in B minor (April 25), and The Amadeus Choir's performance of the Rutter Gloria (May 2).

And sacred does not necessarily mean "old": as evidenced by the Jazz Mass: there's one by Steve Dobrogosz (Annex Singers, April 25) and another by David Mott (called CREATION) which will be performed along with Paul Winter's Missa Gaia (Mississauga Choral Society, May 3). So many of our choirs have spring concerts that are celebrations of one kind or another. Examples of this: Elmer Iseler Singers' 30th anniversary celebration on April 17; the John Laing Choral Society, May 3. So many of our choirs have spring concerts that are celebrations of one kind or another. Examples of this: Elmer Iseler Singers' 30th anniversary celebration on April 17; the John Laing Choral Society, May 3.

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CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

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BEAT BY BEAT: IN WITH THE NEW
by Jason van Eyk

Operatic Tangents

I prefer to set this column’s tone with anecdotes or insights; this time around I’m obliged to start with apologies for two errors in last month’s column. First, the final concert in the TSO’s New Creations Festival took place March 11, not 12 as was written. Second, the Opera to Go concert slated for the Living Arts Centre March 26 took place at the Enwave Theatre at Harbourfront Centre. My sincere apologies for any confusion or complications that may have been caused.

From a new music perspective, March was a real contender for the title of opera month, with Queen of Puddings wrapping up its premiere of James Rolfe’s Inès, Tapestry offering a quartet of new creations for Opera to Go, and Opera in Concert premiering Charles Wilson’s re-worked Kamouraska. However, in scanning the April and early May listings, there are a few events that still fit the bill, even if occasionally from an oblique angle.

On April 2nd, Continuum and the Images Festival close out the SHIFT Festival at the Isabel Bader Theatre with a partnered program called “Notes on Composing: Five Collaborations in Film and Music.” Five Canadian filmmakers were commissioned to create new works, each scored by a Dutch or Canadian composer. Rather than laying down a soundtrack, however, the music will be performed live by the Continuum ensemble (with the exception of one piece created and performed by violinist Malcolm Goldstein). The result is a marriage of moving image and live sound as one single discipline – a modern parallel to the operatic tradition. The most operatic in tone is Glorious by Canadian filmmaker Guy Maddin and British/Dutch composer Richard Ayres. Set amidst a lingering fashion show held in the stairwells of a derelict apartment block, it tells the story of an aging crime-family patriarch, visited by his dead father’s ghost. The film is described as “an orgy of paranoia, bursting ammo shells, rackety disarrangements and oral gratification from beyond the grave.”

Full information, including artist bios and project descriptions, may be found at www.shift-festival.ca. Tickets may be purchased online at www.imagesfestival.com/2009/, at Soundscapes or Pages Books and Magazines, or in person at the venue.

Soundstreams Canada and Luminato recently announced the dates for their co-commission of R. Murray Schafer’s latest opera, The Children’s Crusade. In typical Schafer tradition, this dynamic, full-length work calls for over 100 performers, both amateur and professional, including the Canadian Children’s Opera Company, the haunting voice of Maryem Tollar, the crystalline tones of boy soprano Jacob Abramse and early music specialists the Toronto Consort. The performance site - an industrial warehouse on Dufferin Street in Toronto - will allow for the movement of audiences and cast from scene to scene. Performances are scheduled for June 5-11, but this month you can catch a glimpse of what to expect at Soundstreams’ free Salon 21 on April 29 starting at 7pm at the Bata Shoe Museum. For more information, visit www.soundstreams.ca or call 416-504-1282.

Stretching the opera theme a bit further, Esprit Orchestra’s “Demon” concert at the Jane Mallet Theatre May 1 includes Douglas Schmidt’s Discouraged Love for chorale and orchestra. Discouraged Love is described as “quirky with a comedic twist, brilliantly delivered.” The choral parts, which will be performed by the Nathaniel Dett Chorale, are based on Portuguese lyrics from 1900 that tell the story of a man forced to break up with his girlfriend because of the grief he gets from her parents. The father makes him tremble and suffer and the mother is a fierce viper from Hell… For full details visit www.espiritorchestra.com. For tickets visit www.stfc.com or call 416-366-7723.

There is a wealth of other new music concerts worthy of mention, many from beyond the usual culprits. Yes, The Element Choir and CONTACT Contemporary Music are pairing up for an event on April 3 at the Music Gallery, and Array is launching its season with concerts on April 24 and 26 in various locations, but the Scarborough Philharmonic will also premiere Alex Eddington’s new work...
Vladimir Spivakov
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Oct 23, 2009
Lara St. John Violinist
Haydn Quartet op 42
Vaughan-Williams The Lark Ascending
Piazzola The Four Seasons
Tchaikovsky Serenade

Nov 13, 2009
Antonio Di Cristofano Pianist
Chan Ka Nin Poetry on Ice
Mozart Piano Concerto K 449
Schubert Death and the Maiden

Dec 11, 2009
Catherine Manoukian Violinist
Filippo Lattanzi Marimba
Puccini Three Minuets
Hovhaness Violin Concerto
Biscione Marimba Concerto
Sejournee Vibraphone Concerto
Strauss Die Fiedermaus

Jan 22, 2010
Yuval Fichman Pianist
Somers North Country
Chopin Piano Concerto No. 2
Ravel Sinfonia in F Major

Mar 12, 2010
Hyuk-Joo Kwun Violinist
Sangwook Park Pianist
Burge A Light Fantastic Round
Mendelssohn Double Concerto
Dvorak Sinfonia op 105

Apr 9, 2010
Heather Schmidt Pianist
Xiaohan Guo Violinist
Mozart Divertimento K 138
Saint-Saens Caprice
Waxman Carmen Fantasy
Schmidt Piano Concerto No. 6
Piazzolla Oblivion and Four for Tango
Shostakovich Prelude and Scherzo

May 14, 2010
Shauna Rolston Cellist
Puccini Crisantemi
Chan Ka Nin Soulmate
Schmidt Cello Concerto
Tchaikovsky Nocturne
Tchaikovsky Valse Sentimentale
Brahms Sextet in G Major op. 34

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A Tribute to Talivaldis Kenins

Talivaldis Kenins wrote some 200 works in just about all genres, from his self-proclaimed “Opus 1” for string quartet to his viola concerto of 1998. Combined, his complete opus would take over 20 concerts to perform. However, his final years until his passing in January 2008 at age 88 were not prolific, so the impact of this Canadian composer of Latvian heritage and French schooling has become less and less felt. A tribute concert slated for the middle of this month will break this silence and place Kenins deservedly among a growing pantheon of pioneering Canadian composers.

In his early years, Kenins was an amazing talent. Nadia Boulanger, George Enescu, Arthur Honneger, Jacques Ibert and Francis Poulenc collectively gave him the “premier prix” of the Paris Conservatory in 1950 for his Cello Sonata. He went on to travel in the same circles as Henri Dutilleux, legendary film composer Michel Legrand, and Pulitzer Prize-winner Karel Husa.

It was these early achievements and influences that opened the door to teaching at the University of Toronto in 1952, only a year after his arrival in Canada. At U of T he groomed outstanding Canadian musicians such as Edward Laufer, Bruce Mather, Imant Raminsh, Arthur Ozolinsh, James Rolfe and Ronald Bruce Smith, among many others.

The Toronto Latvian Concert Association will pay tribute to Talivaldis Kenins April 19 at 7pm in the Glenn Gould Studio. (Like the Canadian Music Centre, where Kenins is represented as an Associate Composer, the TLCA is celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2009.)

The April 19 program spans over 45 years of the composer’s music, from the career-launching Cello Sonata to the Piano Quintet (1994). Performers include rising stars of Latvian heritage (mezzo Vilma Vitals, violinist Una Tone), past students (pianist Arthur Ozolinsh, cellist David Hetherington) and colleagues to whom works were dedicated (flautist Robert Aitken and pianist William Aide).

For full details visit www.torontolatvianconcerts.com/whatson.html. For tickets, visit www.masseyhall.com and click on the “Buy Tickets” link, or call 416-872-4255.

The sound post

the sound post

WWW.THEWHOLENOTE.COM APRIL 1 – MAY 7 2009
Chamber wealth
What a wealth of chamber music there is on offer this month! The early days of April offer two opportunities to hear Arnold Schoenberg’s seminal early work, Transfigured Night — April 2 in its original string sextet version by the St. Lawrence String Quartet complemented by former quartet members, cellist, Marina Hoover and violinist/violist, Barry Shifman, and April 3 by Sinfonia Toronto in the string orchestra version.

April 3 Amici will present “Poulenc’s Musings,” a program of Francis Poulenc’s chamber music, including his famous Sextet with the brilliant TSO wind principals, and his “Story of Babar” for piano, with Steven Page (formerly of the Barenaked Ladies) as narrator. Definitely not your average evening out!

Those who love Haydn’s string quartets will have two opportunities to hear the Eybler Quartet play an entire program of them: on April 6 at the Church of St. George-the-Martyr, and on April 9 at the Music Room of the Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society. And all this in just the first 9 days of the month. (See the listings for many others, or better still search for chamber music in the listings on our website.)

Wolfgang Bottenberg
May 3 there will be a concert that will feature the music of the German-born Montreal composer, Wolfgang Bottenberg, presented by Alex and Nadia Jacobchuk, under the auspices of the Etobicoke Music Festival. Born in Frankfurt-am-Main in 1930, Bottenberg came to Canada in 1958, and began formal musical studies at the University of Alberta, then at the University of Cincinnati. He began his teaching career at Acadia University in 1965 and retired as a full professor from Concordia University in 1997. He views the early twentieth century as a time of “super romanticism,” which he explains as “putting originality before craft,” with “problematic” results. For the past ten years he has set himself the challenge of seeing whether it is still possible to compose tonal music, using the techniques of the eighteenth and nineteenth century masters, that also relates to contemporary sensibilities. “An amalgam of Schubert and Brahms” is how he puts it.

I have always been interested in the idea — expressed by such different thinkers as the English editor Alfred Orage and the Russian writer Boris Pasternak - that by absorbing an artistic tradition an artist gains access to the new and the original. Listening to a CD of Bottenberg’s music, I found myself feeling that he is engaged in the journey of discovery that they wrote about.

Vocal Recitals
When the singer knows how to communicate with an audience, including adjusting his/her voice to the dimensions of the hall, and the collaborative pianist is truly collaborative, there is nothing better than a vocal recital. The first vocal recital of the month in Toronto or beyond is soprano Melanie Conly’s performance for Syrinx Sunday Salons on April 5 of André Prévost’s Improvisation for soprano, Samuel Barber’s Knoxville — Summer of 1915, Kurt Weill’s Youkali and Debussy’s Ariettes Oubliées. Melanie’s thoughts on the program are that it is about the tension between the innocence of childhood and young love and the inevitable disillusionment that comes with experience. The Barber piece, she told me, with its movement in the text between the author’s childhood voice and his adult voice, captures this most poignantly, as does Youkali’s evocation of longing for an unattainable peace and harmony.

Again I invite you to peruse (or search) the listings for the wealth of vocal recitals this month.

Continued
by Jim Galloway

April-Full

Who is 90 years old, male but known as "mother", brought new meaning to the word vibrato, can hear a wrong note from fifty paces, has more yarns than a knitting store and still plays a sexy saxophone?

The answer is Gordon Evans, one of the great musicians in Canada who celebrated his 90th birthday last month. We had a party for Gordon and rarely has a room been more filled with love and good vibes. Musicians, friends and admirers were there - young and old - all with lives touched by Gordon Evans.

Gordon grew up in downtown Toronto on Dundas Street just east of Parliament, and at that time on the corner of Berkeley and Dundas there was a little music store. One day Gordon’s brother came home with a ukulele and after they had fooled around a bit on it his brother said, “You should have a saxophone and we could play together.”

So on Gordon’s next birthday his father took him the Whaley and Royce music store on Yonge Street and bought him an alto saxophone - not an expensive one, for this was the beginning of a 75-year career that takes us up to last month’s celebration.

By age 15 Gord was playing at the Silver Slipper, one of the top nightclubs in town and that was the beginning of a 75-year career that takes us up to last month’s celebration. Not that it was plain sailing all the way. During the war years, not the Crimean as we sometimes say to tease him, but the 2nd World War - (the one after the war to end all wars), he was invalided out of the Air Force with pleurisy and a collapsed lung. He was told he couldn’t play a wind instrument any more. A bitter blow, you might say, and it sidelined Gordon for some months. But eventually he did sit in one night with a band and everything seemed to be O.K., so he started taking engagements again, of which there were many during wartime, and eventually ended up in one of the top bands in the country, the Ellis McLintock band.

Fast forward a few years and in 1954 Gordon had the opportunity to join the Sam Donahue band, one of the best bands in the United States at that time. After that stint he returned to Toronto where he re-established himself as one of the busiest musicians on the scene. He frequently played for visiting stars at the O’Keefe Centre and Royal York Hotel.

One of the great stories concerns the time he was in the Royal York orchestra when the headliner was Don Rickles, who made a career out of insulting people. At the time Gord’s wife Joyce was heavily pregnant and came to the show one night with friends. They had a front row table and during Rickles’ act one of the men at Joyce’s table had to go to the washroom. Mr. Rickles immediately seized on the moment and said to Joyce, “I suppose you think he’s coming back?” Joyce responded by saying, “Oh, he’s not my husband. My husband is playing in the orchestra.” Rickles turned to the band and said, “All right, which one of you guys is responsible for this?”, whereupon the whole band stood up!

For once in his life Don Rickles was at a loss for words. Gordon Evans entered my life as one of the founding members of The Wee Big Band and for 30 years has held the lead alto chair.

He is, in my opinion one of Canada’s musical treasures. So, happy birthday Gordon. We all love you.
Looking Ahead
I have mentioned in earlier columns the emergence of The Old Mill as a significant player on the jazz front. This year’s Ken Page Memorial Trust fund-raising Jazz Party will be in the dining room there, May 21. I’ll be hosting some of Toronto’s top jazzers - Al Kay, Lorne Lofsky, Neil Swainson, Kevin Turcotte and Don Vickery. In addition The Gala will introduce a new young talent to Toronto, 15 year old pianist Alex Einwein, whose first CD was recorded last year and reviewed in last month’s WholeNote. And from Italy, Rossano Sportiello, one of the most brilliant pianists to take the international jazz scene by storm, will make his first Canadian appearance.

It promises to be a very special evening of jazz that swings. And it is for a very good cause. In 2008 the KPMT gave financial support to The 1000 Islands Jazz Festival, the TD Canada Trust Toronto Jazz Festival, the Prince Edward County Jazz Festival and the Markham Jazz Festival, and to workshops and master classes at Humber College and the Uof T Faculty of Music. It also assisted three young Toronto musicians to take part in the Jazz Series Programme at The Banff Centre - and that is a partial list of the KPMT achievements.

May April shower you with music - at least some of it live! Happy listening.

BEAT BY BEAT: JAZZ IN THE CLUBS

“Spring-a-ding-swing!”

By Ori Dagan

To celebrate the breath of spring, the three breathtaking LaBarbera brothers will play a concert at the Humber College Lakeshore Auditorium. All born in upstate New York in the 1940’s, saxophonist Pat, drummer Joe and trumpeter John have each enjoyed a lucrative career and rarely have the opportunity to perform together. This highly anticipated event takes place on April 8th at 8:00pm, with general tickets at $20 and $10 for seniors.

A noteworthy CD release this month is that of contagiously groovy guitarist, Dr. Andrew Scott. His third record, Nostalgia, is devoted to bebop heads derived from hits of the American Songbook. Americans Dan Block on tenor sax/clarinet and Jon-Erik Kellso on trumpet are featured alongside Dr. Scott, with the rhythm section rounded up by Canadian all-stars: pianist Mark Eisenman, bassist Pat Collins and drummer Joel Haynes. Arrive early at The Pilot Tavern on April 11th from 3:30 to 6:30.

This month The Rex Hotel Jazz & Blues Bar welcomes a plethora of out-of-towners, including New York City's Rudder, Oren Neiman and Dan McCarthy; Rochester’s Madeline Forster; Snarky Puppy from Texas; San Francisco’s Transit Collective; Montreal’s Viva Nova, Bharath Rajamukur and Joel Miller and Frenchman Philippe Lejeune. Dates and details are available at www.therex.ca.

Continues page 46

BEAT BY BEAT: BANDSTAND & PODIUM

Brass band, silver lining

Preparing to write this month’s column, no fewer than three announcements for significant events featuring Silver Bands landed on my desk. In order: the Hannaford Silver Band’s 6th annual Festival of Brass; the Weston Silver Band’s Concert with special guest Douglas Yeo (bass trombone of the Boston Symphony); and the Metropolitan Silver Band’s 75th anniversary celebration. My editor seemed to find this more significant than I did, so I took to the internet to find out if there were important distinctions between Silver Bands and Brass Bands.

“Silver Band” entered into Google produced tens of thousands of vendors of wedding rings. Searching “Brass Band” was more useful. If you didn’t already know, you’d have learned, inter alia: that with the exception of the trombones all of the brass are conical-bore instruments, which gives the British-style brass band its distinctive bright, mellow sound (as opposed to a dark symphonic sound); that the 1930s were the heyday of the brass band, with around 20,000 brass bands in the UK alone; that the modern form of the brass band in the United Kingdom dates back to the 19th century, with a vibrant tradition of competition based around local industry and communities; and that The Stalybridge Old Band was formed in 1809, was the first civilian brass band in the world, and is still in existence; and that ‘Silver Band’ and ‘Brass Band’ don’t carry the nuances that my editor was hoping to find. Personally, I have always been under the impression that many players preferred silver instruments in the belief that, since silver was a soft metal, the instrument would produce a more mellow tone.

While these coming weeks are certainly Silver Band weeks, they are also very much trombone weeks. The Hannaford Band’s Festival of Brass includes three solo trombone performances; two from the youth band ranks and one by none other than Joe Alessi of the New York Philharmonic. To top that off the guest conductor for the Alessi performance will be Alain Trudel. If that weren’t a good helping of trombone, two weeks later Douglas Yeo, bass trombone of the Boston Symphony will appear as both conductor and soloist with the Weston Silver Band. As icing on the cake, that will be followed with a master class the next day at Long and McQuade’s main store. Doug Yeo’s website has a wealth of information, not just for trombone aficionados, but anyone with broad musical interests. Do yourself a favour and visit it at www.yoedoug.com.

In last month’s column we
made reference to a few bands in Southern Ontario which have in recent years established "beginners' bands" for adults.

Well, in my search for information on Silver Bands I stumbled across an interesting organization in Alberta, the Lethbridge Community Band Society. They operate two bands; The Gold Band and The Silver Band. "Gold Band is the original founding band. While personnel have changed over the years, the Gold Band takes on more demanding music, soloist performances and more advanced literature. Silver Band offers musical opportunities for adults who have not played in many years, and wish to "fine tune" their skills. Weekly rehearsals are held. Attendance and preparation are expected. Concert schedules and content are less demanding that the Gold Band, but the benefits and pleasures of music performance are just as high."

It's a model worth contemplating.

Recognition: On March 10 the Mayor and Council of the Town of Markham held a special recognition ceremony to honour the Markham Concert Band. In addition to congratulations for winning the Ontario Band Association Gold Standard Award, special recognition was accorded band members for their continued contributions in the planning of the town's proposed new recreation complex.

Coming Events
I'm going to mention only one of well over a dozen events here:
Sunday, May 3, 10:45 am The Metropolitan Silver Band under the baton of Conductor Fran Harvey celebrates its 75th Anniversary with a band prelude performance and worship service followed by a luncheon. Founded in 1931, and associated with Metropolitan United Church since 1934, the band invites alumni, current members, family and friends to join them. There will be special presentations, and displays of memorabilia. For details and/or luncheon tickets contact band manager Michele McCall at 905-916-1808.

Space constraints preclude listing other events in the magazine, but you'll be glad to know that a more extended version of this article can be found on our website at www.thewholenote.com

... at thewholenote.com
WHOLENOTE LISTINGS

SECTIONS 1-4: INTRODUCTION

WholeNote listings are arranged in four distinct sections:
1) Concerts in Toronto & GTA (Greater Toronto Area) (page 25-42)
2) Concerts Beyond the GTA (page 43-45)
3) Jazz in Clubs (page 46-47)
4) Announcements ... EtCetera (page 47-50)

SECTION 1: Toronto & GTA covers all of the City of Toronto plus Halton, Peel, York and Durham regions. (Zones 1, 2, 3 and 4 on the map below.)

SECTION 2: Beyond the GTA covers many areas of Southern Ontario, outside Toronto and the GTA. (Zones 5, 6, 7 and 8 on the map below.)

There is a colour version of this map on our website at www.thewholenote.com, showing the boundaries between zones. On the website, all listing can be searched by zone as well as by musical genre.

SECTION 3: Jazz in Clubs is organized alphabetically by club.

SECTION 4: Announcements ... EtCetera is for lectures, symposia, master classes and other music-related events (except performances) that may be of interest to our readers.

A general word of caution: a phone number is provided with every WholeNote listing - in fact, we won't publish a listing without one. Concerts are sometimes cancelled or postponed; and artists or venues may change after listings are published. Please check before you go out to a concert.

How to List
Listings in the WholeNote in the four sections above are a free service available, in our discretion, to eligible presenters. If you have an event, send us your information no later than the 15th of the month prior to the issue or issues in which your listing is eligible to appear. Please note, the next issue covers the period from May 1-June 7, 2009, so listings must be received by April 15.

Listings can be sent by e-mail to listings@thewholenote.com or by fax to 416-603-4791 or by regular mail to the address on page 6. We do not receive listings by phone, but you can call 416-323-2232 x27 for further information on listings.
**AMICI Chamber Ensemble**

**CONCERT SEASON**

**Join us**

**Schoenberg - Transfigured Night**

- Toronto's Chamber Orchestra
- Nora Shulman, flute; Sarah Jeffrey, oboe; Michael Sweeney, bassoon; Nell Deland, horn
- Enlisted TSO wind principals: Nora Shulman, flute; Sarah Jeffrey, oboe; Michael Sweeney, bassoon; Nell Deland, horn

**CALL ROY THOMSON HALL FOR TICKETS**

- **416-872-4255**
- www.amiciensemble.com

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**Sinfonia Toronto**

**NURHAN ARMAN**

**MUSIC DIRECTOR**

Toronto's Chamber Orchestra

**Friday, April 3, 8 pm**

**TRANSFIGURED NIGHT**

**DARRETT ZUSKO**

**Pianist**

**HAYDN Divertimento**

**LISZT Piano Concerto No. 1**

**HAYDN Divertimento**

**Fridays, April 3**

**9:00** - **Maestro Hall** & **Roy Thomson Hall.**

- **35 Fairview Mall Dr. 416-703-93 Charles St. W. 416-964-6337.**

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**Schoenberg Transfigured Night**

- Toronto's Chamber Orchestra
- Nora Shulman, flute; Sarah Jeffrey, oboe; Michael Sweeney, bassoon; Nell Deland, horn

**Friday, April 3, 8 pm**

**Music Toronto**

**ST. LAWRENCE QUARTET**

**Thursday April 2 at 8 pm**

**2009-2010 in GLENN GOULD STUDIO**
Saturday April 04
- 10:00am to 10:00pm: Hanaford Street Silver Band. Festival of Brass: Community Showcase. Plumbing Factory Brass Band; Whirly Brass Band; Cflilla Silver Band; Kincar-dine Brass Band; Ottawa’s Maple Leaf Brass Band; and other community bands from Ontario, Ohio and Michigan. St. Lawrence Centre, 27 Front St. E. 416-366-7723/1-800-708-6754. $25.
- 1:15: FOKONtario 19. Music Based on Science Fiction and Fantasy. Juliana McCori

Sunday April 05
- 1:00: FINDYOUR18. Children’s Hour and Half of Fanfare Concert. Delta Airport West, 5444 Dixie Rd., Mississauga. 905-574-6212. $25.


Bach St. John Passion
LYDIA ADAMS, Conductor & Artistic Director
SATURDAY, APRIL 4TH, 2009, 7:30 P.M.
TORONTO CENTRE FOR THE ARTS - 5040 YONGE STREET, NORTH YORK

First performed in 1724, this is a more stream-lined setting of Christ’s Crucifixion than Bach’s St. Matthew Passion. But it is every bit as magnificent, with choruses and arias that will leave you almost unbearably moved. Bach’s genius is never more obvious than in this marvellous work.

Don’t miss one of the most important events of the 2008/2009 concert season!

The Amadeus Choir with orchestra and soloists:
Monica Whitcher, James McLennon, Daniel Cabena, Daniel Aunchinloss and Alexander Dobson
LYDIA ADAMS, conductor
TICKETS AVAILABLE FROM TICKETMASTER: 416-872-1111 OR TORONTO CENTRE BOX OFFICE
INFORMATION: AMADEUS CHORUS: 416-446-0188
WWW.AMADEUSCHORUS.COM

Cathedral Bluffs Symphony Orchestra
Norman Reintamm, Principal Conductor
Mahler Symphony No. 2
“Resurrection”
8:00 p.m. April 4th
P.C. Ho Theatre
5183 Sheppard Ave. East


Bach St. John Passion
LYDIA ADAMS, Conductor & Artistic Director
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Cathedral Bluffs Symphony Orchestra
Norman Reintamm, Principal Conductor
Mahler Symphony No. 2
“Resurrection”
8:00 p.m. April 4th
P.C. Ho Theatre
5183 Sheppard Ave. East


Holy Week at St. Mary Magdalene’s
Palm Sunday, April 5 • 11am Procession & Solemn Mass - Josquin, Missa Pange Lingua
Wednesday, April 8 • 8pm Tenebrae - Allegri, Miserere & Wilan Responsaries
Maundy Thursday, April 9 • 6pm Solemn Mass - Gregoryan Chant / 8:30pm Tenebrae
Good Friday, April 10 • 10am Stations of the Cross for Children / 12pm Solemn Liturgy / 8pm Tenebrae
Holy Saturday, April 11 • 9pm Great Easter Vigil - Palestrina, Pope Marcellus Mass
Easter Day, April 12 • 9:30am Folk Mass / 11am Solemn Mass - Victoria, Missa Vidi Speciosa

...join us in our Holy Week journey of spiritual music and prayer. THE CHURCH OF ST. MARY MAGDALENE, ANGLICAN

Downtown Toronto at the corner of Ulster St & Manning Ave • www.stmarymagdalene.ca • 416.531.7955

APRIL 1 - MAY 7 2009 www.THEWHOLENOTE.com

27
Western Recital Hall, Toronto Centre for the Arts, 5040 Yonge St. 416 872-1111. $35; $20(sr/st); $10 (students). Proceeds to support Stonegate Driveview Blvd. 416-239-2381. $10. Children under 12 free. Proceeds to support Stovneigatan Ministries.

- 4:00: Cathedral Church of St. James. Sunday Concert Series. Kirsten Fielding and Natalie Mahon, sopranos. 65 Church St. 416-364-7855. Free.
- 7:00: St. Michael's Cathedral. Bach, Daveluy, Franck, Vierne, and medley from My Fair Lady. Taylor Swift, pianist; Susan Layard, singer; Paul Dutton, speaker; Pierre Tremblay, visual projections; Mani Mazinani, sound recording. Victoria University, Emmanuel College Chapel, 75 Queen's Park. 416-929-5849.
- 8:00: Tafelmusik. St. Matthew Passion. See Apr. 2. Runs Apr. 3-12. See Apr. 2.
- 12:00 noon: Canadian Opera Company. Vocal Ensemble. Workshops. See Apr. 2.
Music at Metropolitan presents
All Creation Wept
Music and Poetry for Good Friday
Music from Britain, including a commissioned work by Jonathan Willcocks
Poetry read by Gary Brennan
Good Friday, April 10 at 7:30 pm
Admission: $20
Tickets and information: 416-363-0331 Ext. 26
www.metunited.org
**Tuesday April 14**

- 12:00 noon: *Canadian Opera Company, Chamber Music Series: Music Star—Music of Japan*.
  - Staniland: new work; contemporary Japanese music
  - Artists from the GSS New Music Ensemble, Brian Current, conductor.
  - Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre, Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W.

- 1:00: *Cathedral Church of St. James, Tuesday Concert Series*. Andrew Ager, organ.
  - 65 Church St. 416-364-7865. Free.

- 7:30: *Canadian Opera Company, Simco Boccaccio*.
  - See Apr. 7.

- 8:00: *Les Amis, European Tour Preview Concert*. Works by music by Porter, Berlin, Gershwin.
  - See Apr. 11.

**Thursday April 16**

- 7:30: *George Brown College Theatre, Festival Theatre*. Elmer Iseler Singers, conductor.
  - 416-872-4255.

**Friday April 17**


**Saturday April 18**


**Monday April 20**

- 7:30: *Canadian Opera Company, Operetta*. Selections from The Beggar's Opera and Front Porch. Marie McElwee, mezzo-soprano; John Ford, baritone; Martin Winkler, tenor; Michael Pepa, Artistic Director.

**Tuesday April 21**

- 7:30: *Ontario Arts Council, European Tour Preview Concert*. Works by music by Porter, Berlin, Gershwin.
  - See Apr. 11.

**Wednesday April 22**


**Thursday April 23**

- 7:30: *Toronto Symphony Orchestra*.
  - See Apr. 15.

For tickets and information please call Janet at 416-217-0537.
839-3411. $20; $17 (children under 17).
Also Apr. 18, 24, 25.

Saturday April 18
- 2:00: Scarborough Gilbert and Sullivan Society. Trial By Jury/Everything I Know. I learned from Gilbert & Sullivan. See Apr 17.
- 4:30: Canadian Opera Company. Simon Boccanegra. See Apr 11.
- 7:30: Peel Choral Society. Sweet 16. Emmanuel United Church, 420 Balmoral Dr., Brampton. 905-783-7534. $15-$25; $12(sr/st); $5 (child 5-10 years).
- 7:30: Singing Together. 14th Annual Multi-Cultural Concert. Works by Handel, Haydn and Mendozah. Chinese Canadian Choir of Toronto; Core San Marco; Creative Notes; Cro Arts Choral; Edelweiss Chor; Nayiri Armenian Choir of Toronto; Schola Cantorum. Toronto Korean Presbyterian Church, 67 Scarsdale Rd. 905-275-6880. $15.
- 7:30: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Hungarian Rhapsody No. 5; Liszt: Piano Concerto No. 1; Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2; Bartók: Hungarian Sketches; Kodály: Peacock Variations; Brahms: Hungarian Dance No. 1; Tchaikovsky: 1812 Overture. Emmanuel United Church, 420 Balmoral Dr., Brampton. 905-783-7534. $15-$25; $12(sr/st); $5 (child 5-10 years).
- 8:00: Healey Willan Singers. In Paradisum. Fauré: Requiem (arr. for women's voices); other motets; Debussy: Masses Breve, Rondeau, cantor; John Stephenson, organ. Church of St. Martin in-the-Fields, 151 Glenlake Ave. 416-519-0528. $15; $10 (sr/st).
- 8:00: New Music Concerts. Jurg Wyttenbach. Music theatre works by Wyttenbach.

FOLLIES FROM VERSAILLES

Aradia Ensemble
Directed by Kevin Mallon
featuring Marie-Nathalie Lacoursière

8:00pm April 18th 2009
Winchester Street Theatre
80 Winchester Street, Toronto
Tickets $25 | 815 www.aradia.ca

Symphony Orchestra
David Bowser, Music Director and Conductor

April 18, 2009 8:00 pm
Grace Church on-the-Hill, 300 Lonsdale Road

featuring Melanie Conly, soprano

Jean Sibelius
Finlandia, Opus 26
Karelia Suite, Opus 11 (excerpts)
Symphony No. 2 in D Major, Opus 43 (excerpts)

Franz Joseph Haydn
With verdure clad the fields appear &
On mighty pens uplifted soars
the eagle from The Creation
Melanie Conly, soprano

Johannes Brahms
Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit
from A German Requiem
Melanie Conly, soprano

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Alleluiah
from Exultate jubilate
Melanie Conly, soprano

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or see www.nyco.on.ca for more information.
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Sundays at Three
2008-2009 CONCERT SERIES

APRIL 19, 2009 AT 3:00 P.M.
THE GLENN GOULD SCHOOL ENCORE
THE ANNEX QUARTET

ST. CLEMENT'S ANGLICAN CHURCH
59 Bloor Hill Avenue, Toronto, ON M4R 1H8
Tel: 416-483-6664 www.stclements.church.ca

...1: CONCERTS: Toronto and GTA

Drei Liebeslieder; Two Nonsense Verses, an Epigram and a Madrigal; Flute Alors!; Divisions. New Music Concerts Ensemble; Jürg Wyttenbach, conductor. Glenn Gould Studio, 250 Front St. W. 416-872-4255. $35; $20(arts workers); $10(st). 7:15: pre-concert chat.

— 8:00: North York Concert Orchestra. Third subscription series concert. Sibelius: Finlandia; Karalla Suite (excerpts); Symphony No. 2; Brahms: Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit from German Requiem; Haydn: excerpts from The Creation; Mozart: Ave verum dehline. Melanie Conly, soprano; David Bews, conductor. Grace Church on-the-Hill, 300 Lonsdale Road. 416-628-8195. $20; $15(st).

— 8:00: Oakville Symphony Orchestra. Ending Masterpieces. Dvorak: Cello Concerto; Beethoven: Symphony No. 7. See Bea, cellist; Roberio De Cima, conductor. Oakville Centre, 130 Navy St., Oakville. 905-615-2021. $45; $40(st); $20(st).

— 8:00. Orchestras Mississauga. Symphonic and Silent Film. Silent Film, "The General" and "Mighty Like a Moose" with live music. Mississauga Philharmonic; Rodney Sauer, pianist and silent film musician. Hammerson Hall, Living Arts Centre, 4141 Living Arts Dr., Mississauga. 905-387-6000. $32.50-147.50; 433-75-442.75 (st); $155(st).


— 8:00: Toronto Operetta Theatre. Johnnie Gilbert & Sullivan. Elizabeth DeGrada, soprano (Phyllis); Wendy Satake-Foley, mezzo (Fairy Queen); David Letoig, baritone (Lord Chancellor); Corey O’Brian, baritone (Stephano); Guillome Slive-Main, director; Robert Cooper, conductor. Jane Mallet Theatre, 27 Front St. E. 416-386-7723/708-8754. $39-478. Also Apr. 18, 24, 25.

Sunday April 19

12:00 noon: Derek MacRae. Classical Guitarist. See Apr. 5.


2:00: Canadian Opera Company. La Boheme. See Apr. 17.

2:00: City of Toronto. Sunday Serenades: Uptown Swing Band. Scarborough Civic Centre, 150 Borough Dr. 416-386-7766. Free.

2:00: Oakville Symphony Orchestra. Ending Masterpieces. See Apr. 18.


TOLENTINO LATVIAN CONCERT ASSOCIATION
50TH ANNIVERSARY CONCERT

A Tribute to Talivaldis Kenins
Sunday, April 19, 2009 at 7:00 pm
Glenn Gould Studio, 250 Front St W, Toronto

Vilma Indra Vitols - mezzo-soprano
Una Tone - violin
Arthur Ozolins - piano
Peteris Zarins - piano
Robert Atken - flute
Joaquín Valdepenas - clarinet
David Hetherington - cello
William Aide - piano
Piano Quintet:
Andrejs Streljevs - piano
Peter Seminovs - violin
Una Tone - violin
Arturs Jansons - viola
George Juris Kenins - cello

Tickets:
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Email: music.tlv@sympatico.ca
www.torontolatvianconcerts.com

All Saints' Kingsway Presents......
I Was Glad

Organ Dedication, Choral Evensong and Concert
Sunday, April 19th 2009 • 4:00 p.m.
With The Amadeus Choir of Toronto,
Lydia Adams, Conductor,
Shawn Grenke, Organist,
All Saints’ Kingsway Choir

With works by Parry, Durufle,
Watson Henderson, Raminsh,
Handel and Holst

Featuring the new
3 Manual Casavant Organ

Reception to follow
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2850 Bloor St., West, Toronto
Royal York Subway Station
(Prince Edward/Bloor Intersections)
2:00: Toronto Operetta Theatre. 8:00: Toronto Organ Club.
3:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. 12:00 noon: Canadian Opera Company.
12:30: York University Department of Music.
8:00: Massey Hall & Roy Thomson Hall. 7:30: Dmitri Levkovitch, in Recital.


Dmitri Levkovitch - Piano Recital
Sunday, April 19, 2009 - 7:30 p.m.

Beethoven: Sonata no. 3 in B minor, Op. 58

Dmitri Levkovitch - Piano Recital
Monday, April 20, 2009 - 7:30 p.m.

NEW MUSIC CONCERTS MONDAY APRIL 20 GALLERY 345 SORAUREN

Thursday April 23


Monday April 20


Wednesday April 22


5:00: Canadian Opera Company. Simon Boccanegra. See April 11.

7:00: Village Voices. A Celebration of Songs from Broadway to Broadway. Tri Congregational Churches, 1080 Finch Ave. E. 416-494-2442. $15. Fundraiser for Iona Presbyterian Church.

Thursday April 23


Monday April 20


... 1: CONCERTS: Toronto and GTA

- 7:00: Toronto All-Star Big Band. A Great Night of Big Band Dancing. Music by Goodman, Dorsey, Miller. Newmarket Community Centre, 200 Doug Duncan Dr., Newmarket. 905-853-7285. $35. Proceeds to St. Paul's Church Newmarket.
- 8:00: Ensemble Polaris. Viking Vacations Destinations. Scandinavian- and Mediterranean-influenced music. Marco Cera, guitar; Kirk Elliott, violin, bagpipes, mandolin, etc.; Margaret Gay, cello; Ben Grassman, hardy gurdy; Katherine Hill, voice, nyckelharpa; Alison Molitka, flute, recorders, salterfloyne; and others. Edward Day Gallery, 952 Queen St. W. 416-588-4301. $15; $10/arts/unwaged/children.
- 8:00: Heliconian Music Concert Series. Delightful Duets. Baroque to contemporary repertoire. 55 Hazelton Ave. 416-822-9618. $20.
- 8:00: Masterworks of Oakville Chorus and Orchestra. Rutter: Mass of the Children; Demuyck: Ah My Love Flutters. Harold Cyril, soprano; Leonard Manseau, tenor; Neil Aronoff, bass; guests: Oakville Children's Choir, Knox Presbyterian Church, 89 Dunn St. Oakville. 905-844-5501. $20-$25.
- 8:00: Scarborough Gilbert and Sullivan Society. Trial By Jury/Everything I Know. I learned from Gilbert & Sullivan. See Apr 17.
- 8:00: Toronto Operetta Theatre. Gilbert & Sullivan's Iolanthe. See Apr 18.
- 8:00: Toronto Youth Wind Orchestra. A Night with the Canadian Brass. George Weston Recital Hall, Toronto Centre for the Arts, 5040 Yonge St. 416-872-1111. $50, $45.
See Apr 17.

— 2:00: Walmer Road Baptist Church. Organ Recital. Works by Bach, Mozart, Mendelssohn, Ireland and Jenkins. Imre Olah, organ; Noemi Klucsik, flute. 188 Lowther Ave. 416-924-1121. Donations accepted. Reception to follow.

— 7:30: Annex Singers. Shout! Dobrogosz: Jazz Mass; Haydn: Te Deum; also contemporary madrigals and more. Maria Case, music director. Bloor St. United Church, 300 Bloor St. W. 416-968-7747. $15; $12 (sr/st); free (children under 12).

— 7:30: Canadian Opera Company. la Bohème. See Apr 17.


— 7:30: Opera Atelier. The Coronation of Poppea. Monteverdi. Michael Maniaci, male soprano (Nero); Kimberly Barber, mezzo-soprano (Stella); John Femmedes, bass (Otto); Olivier Lequeux, bass-baritone (Seneca); and others. Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra; Marshall Pynkoski, director; David Fallis, conductor. Elgin Theatre, 189 Yonge St. 416-872-5555. $30-$135; $20 (sr/st). Also Apr. 26, 28, 29, May 1, 2.


— 8:00: Academy Concert Series. Inspired by Greece. Works by Constantinides, Veal, Watson, Samonov. Jani Papadhimitri, violin; Nicolai Tarasov, clarinet; Alexander Kats, piano. Eastminster United Church, 310 Danforth Ave. 416-927-9099. $17; $11 (sr/st).

— 8:00: Chamber Music Society of Mississauga. Family Ties. 20th and 21st century repertoire. Jacques Israelievitch, violin; Erica Goodman, harp. Great Hall of the Unitarian Congregation of Mississauga, 84 South Service Rd., Mississauga. 905-848-0015. $30; $25 (sr/st); $12 (children).


— 8:00: Toronto Operetta Theatre. The Hambert Music Society. Family Ties. 84 South Service Road (just east of Hwy. 10) Mississauga. Adults $30; Seniors $25; Students $12; Family $80 (2 adults + 2 children).

THE GREAT HALL OF THE
UNITARIAN CONGREGATION IN MISSISSAUGA
84 SOUTH SERVICE ROAD (JUST EAST OF HWY. 10)
MISSISSAUGA

Adults $30
Seniors $25
Students $12
Family $80

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APRIL 1 - MAY 7 2009 WWW.THEWHOLENOTE.COM

“Inspired by Greece”
Saturday, April 25th at 8 pm

A contemporary homage to the ancient traditions of Greek music.

Jani Papadhimitri, violin
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Works by Constantinides, Samonov, Watson, Veal and other compositions.

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Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Brahms, Kabalevsky

Sat., April 25, 2009 at 8 p.m.
Heliconian Hall
35 Hazelton Avenue
Tickets $20, $10 students/seniors
**CONCERTS: Toronto and GTA**

**Saturday, April 25**
- **8:00**: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Itzhak Perlman, Beethoven: Coriolan Overture; Symphony No.4; Violin Concerto. Itzhak Perlman, violin; Peter Duguid, conductor; guests: Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra. Roy Thomson Hall, 80 Simcoe St. 416-593-4028. 416-484-7151. pre-concert chat.

**Sunday, April 26**
- **12:00 noon**: Derek Macrae. Classical Guitarist. See Apr. 5.
- **2:00**: CAMMAC. Ontario Music Centre Participants Concert. Northern District Library, 40 Orchard View Blvd. 416-393-7810. Free (donations welcome).
- **2:00**: City of Toronto. Scarborough Music Lovers Orchestra. Scarborough Civic Centre, 150 Borough Dr. 416-396-7766. Free.
- **2:00**: Toronto Operaetta Theatre.
- **3:00**: Pax Christi Chorale.
- **4:00**: A S.T.A.B. Opera. Handbell Ensemble. St. Dunstan of Canterbury Church, 905-927-9100. $50.
- **10:00am**: Toronto District School Board.
- **12:00 noon**: Canadian Opera Company.
- **3:00**: Opera Atelier. The Coronation of Poppea. See Apr. 25.
- **3:00**: Rex Christi Chorale. Bach's Mass in B minor. See Apr. 25.
- **3:00**: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Beethoven Symphony 4. Violin Concerto: Symphony No.4; Violin Concerto. Henning Kraggerud, violin; Peter Duguid, conductor; George Weston Recital Hall, Toronto Centre for the Arts, 5040 Yonge St. 416-593-4028. 416-393-4899.
- **4:00**: A S.T.A.B. @ Opera. Opera Arias and Ensembles. Isabel Pargara, soprano; Arunas Radzis, tenor; Joy Klopp, mezzo; Giuseppe Mirabella, baritone. Eastminster United Church, 310 Danforth Ave. 416-593-7073. 416-482-0137. $20; $14 (children under 12).
- **4:00**: Cathedral Church of St. James. Sunday Concert Series. The Empire Trio. 65 Church St. 416-394-7865. Free.
- **5:00**: Nocturnes in the City. Drew Jurczak. Jazz String Quartet. St. Wenceslas Church. 416-872-4255. $15.

**Monday, April 27**
- **10:00am**: Toronto District School Board. Panfest: Elementary and Secondary Steel Band Festival. See Apr. 24.
- **7:30**: Assorted Ensemble. The Art of Song. The Empire Trio. 65 Church St. 416-394-7865. Free.

**Tuesday, April 28**
- **10:00am**: Toronto District School Board. Panfest: Elementary and Secondary Steel Band Festival. See Apr. 24.

**Wednesday, April 29**
- **10:00am**: Toronto District School Board. Panfest: Elementary and Secondary Steel Band Festival. See Apr. 24.
- **7:30**: Opera Atelier. The Coronation of Poppea. See Apr. 11.
- **8:00**: Opera Atelier. The Coronation of Poppea. See Apr. 25.
May 19 - 8:00: Massey Hall & Roy Thomson Hall. Addie British soul/jazz singer-songwriter, Massey Hall, 15 Shuter St. 416-872-4255. $34.50-$49.50.

Thursday April 30
- 10:00am to 8:30pm: York University Department of Music. Music of Richard Meek. Steve Marcus's Cuban Music Ensemble, Brian Katz's Klezmer Ensemble; Isaac Akpong and Lola Drumming Ensemble; Larry Graves' Ghana Drum and Dance Ensemble; Rick Langer's Escola de Samba; and others. Martin Family Lounge, Room 219 and Room 235 Canada University East Building, York U. 416-736-2100 x22926. Free.
- 12:00 noon: Canadian Opera Company. Susan Hecox, soprano; Richard Page, tenor; Paul Appleby, baritone; Andrew Malley, piano; Richard Page, W MAH. 27 Front St. E. 416-363-8231. Free.
- 12:00 noon: Massey Hall & Roy Thomson Hall. Sacred Christmas. See Apr. 25.
- 2:00: Northern District Library. Orchestra: Joan Zelinsky, piano; 40 Orchard View Blvd. 416-393-7610. Free.

15th Anniversary Gala Cabaret
Toronto Botanical Gardens
777 Lawrence Ave. E. @ Leslie St. Free Parking

Friday May 01
- 7:00: Studio Recital of Derrick Lawson & Morri Dalevsky. Stars and Planets.

Music for the medieval English mystics
Friday, May 1, at 8 pm
Saint Thomas's Church
383 Huron St.
Tickets $18 / $12
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Music Director J. Bev Stainton and his Favourites from Bach to Broadway
Enjoy Guest Soloists, Chamber Orchestra, Accompanist Anne Marie Leonard and much more . . .
Glen Abbey United Church
1469 Nottinghill Gate, Oakville

Friday May 1, 2009
Saturday May 2, 2009
7:30 pm
Tickets
Adults $22
Children (under 12) $10
Call 905-845-5359
or 905-827-6129
...1: CONCERTS: Toronto and GTA

Haydn’s Creation
In commemoration of the 200th anniversary of his death
Oakham House Choir of Ryerson University
Matthew Jaskiewicz, Music Director
Soloists Katie Murphy, Stuart Howe & Andrew Tees
Toronto Sinfonietta
Saturday, May 2, 2009, 7:30 p.m., Bloor Street United Church
300 Bloor St. W. (between Spadina & St. George) 416-214-0183 x13
$20 in advance; $25 at the door; $15 students

The Musicians In Ordinary
For the Lutes and Voices
May 2–2009 8:00pm
The Infinity of Love
Music of the Court Ladies of 15th and 16th Century Italy

The magic of music cast its spell as the TCC charms you with Canadian works, traditional Maori folk music and the work of chorus alumni, composer Cassandra Luftspring. Featuring all Toronto Children’s Chorus choirs and the Alumni Choir.
Sat May 2 2009 - 7:30 p.m.
Toronto Centre for the Arts - 5040 Yonge Street
Tickets: $32-$40
To purchase tickets: info@torontochildrenschorus.com
(416) 932-8666 ext. 231 www.torontochildrenschorus.com
**Alicia*s Chamb*r Music**

**April 10: Cambridge May 3: Toronto**

**2:30: Alicia Arts Chamber Music.**

- Gypsy Ails, Bartók: Hungarian Folksongs for flute and piano; Haydn: "Gypsy" Trio; Fedrigo: new commissioned work. Miroslav jazz string trio; Phoebe Tsang, violin; Aleksander Gajic, violin and viola; Stephanie Chua, piano; Kimberly Schein, flute; Bret Higgins, bass; and others. St. George's on-the-Hill Anglican Church, 6800 Dundas St. W. 416-731-3599. $20; $18 (sr/st); $15 (adv).

**3:00: Markham Concert Band.**

- Heroes and Villains: Music from Lord of the Rings, also film music by Williams. Doug Manning, artistic director. Markham Theatre, 171 Tenn Centre Blvd., Markham. 905-505-7408. $20; $15 (sr/st); $10 (st).

**3:00: Mississauga Choral Society.**

- Creation: A Jazz Oratorio, Mott; also Winter: Missa Gaia. David Mott, baritone sax; Mike Downes, bass; Anthony Michelli, percussion; Andrew Craig piano; Kathryn Domoney, soprano; Adi Braun, mezzo; Martin Howman, tenor; Gillian Williams, baritone; Mervin Fick, conductor. Hammond Hall, Living Arts Centre, 4141 Living Arts Dr. 905-305-6000. $25; $20 (sr/st); $15 (st).

**3:00: Symphony Hamilton.**


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**German-Spanish Salon:**

- The nightingale's flight from North to South. Wo*ho spirit is the most Romantic? The nightingale—the 19th century symbol of yearning, of unrequited love—sings his sorrowful song in Spain as he does in Germany. From Granados to Brahms, join our nightingale in celebration of the equally restless flamenco and *Shura and Djang* spirits, performed by baritone Russell Braun, sopranos Monica Whicher and Lucia Cesaroni with pianists Carolyn Maule, Inna Perkis and Boris Zarankin.

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**2008-2009**

**14th Season**

**May 3, 2009**

**German-Spanish Salon:**

- The nightingale's flight from North to South.

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**Creation**

Canada's first Jazz Oratorio

**SUNDAY MAY 3, 2009**

**HAMMERSMITH HALL**

**LIVING ARTS CENTRE MISSISSAUGA**

Mississauga Choral Society conducted by Mervin Fick 
Exclusive sponsorship by BMO Nesbitt Burns.

**TICKETS:** $25, $20-Seniors, $15-Students 
905.306.6000 www.livingartscentre.ca
**...1: CONCERTS: Toronto and GTA...**


4:30: Etiobicoke Music Festival. Chamber Music by Wolfgang Bittner, Emily Sun, violin; Hanna Kim, viola; Matha Madahan, cello; Nadia Jaaychuk, piano. Kingway Baptist Church, 41 Birchview Blvd. 416-243-9340. $20.


**Monday May 04**


7:30: COC. La Bohème. See Apr 17.

7:30: Peel District School Board. Peel Music Showcase. Honour Ensembles from Grades 3 to 12. Living Arts Centre, 4141 Living Arts Dr. 905-361-8200.


1:00: Cathedral Church of St. James. Tues­day Concert Series. Randy Mills, organ. 416-364-7865. Free.

7:30: Canadian Opera Company. A Midsummer Night's Dream. Britten. Lawrence Zazzo, countertenor (Oberon); Laura Claycomb, soprano (Tytania); Wolfgang Holzmair, baritone (Demetrius); Gesile Allan, soprano (Helena); Robert Goodwin, bass (Biron); and others; Neil Armfield, director; Anne Mason, conductor. Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. 416-363-8231. 463; 515; Also May 10, 13, 16, 18, 12, 23.


8:00: Irish Choral Society of Canada. Bring it Home. Newman Centre, Thomas Aquinas Chapel, 89 St. George St. 416-853-6102. $36; $136free to subscribers.


**Sunday May 3, 2009**

4:00 P.M.

**Brahms**

A German Requiem

Christ Church Deer Park

1570 Yonge St.

(at Heath St. W)

Conductor Jurgen Petrenko

Solistos

Marion Samuel-Stevens

Soprano

Bruce Kelly

Baritone

Accompanied by

The Telfisker Players Orchestra

Tickets

Adult: $25

Student/Seniors: $20

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Harris Loewen, conductor

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The Church of the Redeemer

**A Woman's Voice**

Church of the Messiah

240 Avenue Road (at Dupont)

www.churchofthemessiah.ca

416-922-4371

Sunday May 3, 2009 7:00 pm

Tickets: $20 ($15 Seniors/Students)

**Syriox Sunday Salons presents**

Christian Prévost, violin

Alain Aubut, cello

Richard Raymond, piano

Beethoven: Moonlight Sonata op.27 #2

Prevost: Violin Sonata

Brahms: Trio in B+ (Sextet #1 op.18)

Schumann: Fantasietucke op.73 for cello & piano

Sunday May 3, 2009 3 pm

Heliconian Hall, 35 Hazelton Ave.

Tickets $20, students $15


**The Alexander Singers & Players Present:**

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May 6,7,8 - 7:30 p.m.

May 9 - 2:00 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.

May 10 - 2:00 p.m.

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For tickets call:

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**York Woods Library Theatre, 1785 Finch Ave. W. South side of Finch, West of Keele to Tobermory Dr.**

**The York of the Guard**

By Gilbert & Sullivan

www.thewholenote.com

APRIL 1 - MAY 7 2009
- 5:30: Canadian Opera Company. Chamber
Music Series: Prokofiev String Quartet No.2.
Aya Miyagawa, Bethany Langman, violins; Joshua Genovese, viola; Elisabeth Poole, cello. Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre, 145 Queen St. W. 416-393-8231. Free.
- 6:00: Organix 09. Happy Birthday Felix
Mendelssohn! Sonatas by Mendelssohn. Peter Bish
op, Elisa Mangina, Mark Teens, organ. Church
of the Redeemer, 162 Bloor St. W. 416-363-
9785. $10.
Woods Library Theatre, 1265 Finch Ave. W.
416-324-1259. $25; $20(sr/sl). Also May 7, 8, 9 and 10.
- 7:30: Living Arts Centre Mississauga. Bye­ Bye Birdie. Stewart & Strouse. 4141 Living Arts
Dr., Mississauga. 905-306-6000. $25 and up.
- 7:30: York University Department of Mu­sic. Jazz Festival: Jazz Combos. Artie Roth,
Mike Malano and Kelly Jefferson, directors.
Martin Family Lounge, 219 Accolade East
Building, YU, 4700 Keele St. 416-736-2100 x22926. Free.
- 8:00: Harbourfront Centre. Canadian Inter­national Dance Festival Programme A. Fleck
Dance Theatre, 207 Queens Quay W. 416-973-
4000. $30; $25(sen). 8:00: Talisker Players Chamber Music. Carmina Nova. See May 5.
- 8:00: The Old Mill Inn and Spa. Mary Lou
Faile, soprano; Peter Tiefenbach, piano. Kerry
Stratton, emcee; guests: Amao String Quartet.
21 Old Mill Rd. 416-236-2641. $39 (dinner a la
carte).
Thursday May 07
- 12:00 noon: Canadian Opera Company. World Music Series: Introduction to South Indian
Vehicles. An exploration of the technique and
culture of Carnatic violin. Subhadra Vijaykumar, violin. Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre,
- 12:30: York University Department of Mu­sic. Jazz Festival: Vocal Ensemble. Frank Falco,
director. Martin Family Lounge, 219 Accolade
East Building, YU, 4700 Keele St. 416-736-2100 x22926. Free.
- 8:00: Harbourfront Centre. Canadian Inter­national Dance Festival Programme A. Fleck
Dance Theatre, 207 Queens Quay W. 416-973-
4000. $30; $25(sen). 8:00: Talisker Players Chamber Music. Carmina Nova. See May 5.
- 8:00: The Old Mill Inn and Spa. Mary Lou
Faile, soprano; Peter Tiefenbach, piano. Kerry
Stratton, emcee; guests: Amao String Quartet.
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carte).
- 8:00: Harbourfront Centre. Canadian Inter­national Dance Festival Programme A. Fleck
Dance Theatre, 207 Queens Quay W. 416-973-
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Dance Theatre, 207 Queens Quay W. 416-973-
4000. $30; $25(sen). 8:00: Talisker Players Chamber Music. Carmina Nova. See May 5.
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Faile, soprano; Peter Tiefenbach, piano. Kerry
Stratton, emcee; guests: Amao String Quartet.
21 Old Mill Rd. 416-236-2641. $39 (dinner a la
carte).
- 8:00: Harbourfront Centre. Canadian Inter­national Dance Festival Programme A. Fleck
Dance Theatre, 207 Queens Quay W. 416-973-
4000. $30; $25(sen). 8:00: Talisker Players Chamber Music. Carmina Nova. See May 5.
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Our audience has spoken. Join us as we count down the top ten choral favourites. Will your choice be among them?

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Robert Cooper, Conductor

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LISTINGS: SECTION 2
CONCERTS BEYOND THE GTA

N.B. For a list of Beyond GTA communities see LISTINGS INTRODUCTION, page 25.

Wednesday April 01
- 12:00 noon: Midday Music With Shigara. The Blues, Chris Fess, piano; Harald "Jowbade" Heron, harmonica and trumpet. Hi-Way Pentecostal Church, 50 Anna St. N., Barrie. 705-726-1181, ext. 2.
- Stephen Straker, guest conductor; Lisa Gemmel, harp; Bremen String Quartet. First Uni
ted Church, 16 William St. W., Waterloo. 519-578-1570. $32.

Thursday April 02
- 8:00: Northumberland Players. The Last Roust. Arden & Foster. Victoria Hall, 55 King St. W., Cobourg. 905-372-2110. $25. Also Apr. 3 and 4.
- Stephen Straker, guest conductor; Lisa Gemmel, harp; Bremen String Quartet. First Uni
ted Church, 16 William St. W., Waterloo. 519-578-1570. $32.

Friday April 03
- 7:30: Collar Singers. Haydn: Missa Sancti Nicolai. Also Bernstein: Chichester Psalms; and seasonal selections. Albert Greer, conductor. Trinity United Church, 240 Muskoka Rd. N., Gravenhurst. 705-867-0078. $25. Also Apr. 3.
- 8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestra. George and Edward. Harcourt Memorial United Church, 87 Dean Ave., Guelph. See Apr. 1.
- 8:00: Northumberland Players. The Last Roust. See Apr. 2.
- 8:00: Opera Hamilton. Madama Butterfly. See Apr. 2.

Saturday April 04
- 2:00 & 8:00: Northumberland Players. The Last Roust. See Apr. 2.
- 7:00: Arcady. A Baroque Messiaen. Handel: St. Andrew's (Hespel); Presbyterian Church, 73 Queen St. E., Cambridge. 519-685-2652. $15.

Sunday April 05
- 7:30: Collar Singers. Haydn: Missa Sancti Nicolai. Also Bernstein: Chichester Psalms; and seasonal selections. Albert Greer, conductor. Trinity United Church, 240 Muskoka Rd. N., Gravenhurst. 705-867-0078. $25. Also Apr. 3.
- 8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestra. George and Edward. Harcourt Memorial United Church, 87 Dean Ave., Guelph. See Apr. 1.

Wednesday April 08
- 7:30: Steeped in Music. Breakhead Dread Jazz. Trinity United Church, 100 Main St. W., Gravenhurst. 905-845-3246. $15. Also Apr. 9.
- 8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society. Orchestra Ensemble. Contemporary settings of ancient Chinese music along
commissioned works by BC composers. KWCMC Music Room, 57 Yeung St. W., Wa
terloo. 519-868-1673. $20. $15/st.
- 8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestra. George and Edward. Central Pres
tbyterian Church, 7 Queen's Sq., Cambridge. See Apr. 1.
- 8:00: Tactus Vocal Ensemble. Mad Muff. Cabella. The Many Masks of Mad Muff. The Mummer; also Renaissance and Baroque music. See Apr. 8.

Thursday April 09
- 8:00: University of Western Ontario. Student Performance. Student composers concert. Room 104, Music Building, UWO, London. 519-865-2043.

Friday April 10
- 3:00: Alixer Arts Chamber Music. Akler Art Quartet. Haydn: The Seven Last Words of Christ on the Cross. Pianist Tang and Sarah Findlay-Sayers, violinists; Cameron Ogil
vie, viola; Peter Cosby, cello. Central Presbyterian Church, 7 Queen's Sq., Cambridge. 416-731-3599. (5s.
- 7:30: Grand Philharmonic Choir. St. Matthew Passion. Bach. Rufus Miller, conductor; Nathalie Paulin, soprano; Daniel Taylor, contralto; Lawrence Wilford, tenor; Natha
n Ang, baritone; Grand Philharmonic Children's Choir; Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony; Howard Dyck, conductor. Centre in the Square, 101 Queen St. N., Kitchener. 519-578-1570. $18; children $10.
- 8:00: Georgetown Bach Chorale. St. Matthew Passion. Bach. Ron Grdnlaus, directo
r/harp; orchestra and soloists. Knox Presbyterian Church, 116 Main St. S., Geor
towten. 509-873-1213. 92s. $10.

Saturday April 11
- 8:00: Guelph Chamber Choir. St. Matthew Passion. Bach. Meredith Hall, soprano, Rosamaria van der Hoeft, mezzo; James Melean, tenor; Justin Welsh, bass; period orchestra; Gerald Neufeld, conductor. River Run Centre, 35 Woolwich St., Guelph. 519-760-3300. $30.
- 8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society. Complete Haydn Trios 1, XV: No. 36 in F flat; XV: 31 in F; XV: 30 in Eb; XV: No. 27 in C. Mercuri-Oli Trio. KWCMC
**Monday April 13**

- **8:00:** Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society. Complete Haydn Trios 2, XV: No. 37 in F; XV: 17 in B; XV: 25 in G. Meridian Trio. KCWMS Music Room, 57 Young St. W., Waterloo. 519-886-1673; $20; $15(st); $10(sch). 110(tst).

**Tuesday April 14**

- **8:00:** Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestra. Complete Haydn Trios 2, XV: No. 37 in F; XV: 17 in B; XV: 25 in G. Meridian Trio. KCWMS Music Room, 57 Young St. W., Waterloo. 519-886-1673; $20; $15(st); $10(sch). 110(tst). 44

**Wednesday April 15**


**Thursday April 16**


**Friday April 17**

- **7:30:** Perimeter Institute. Vladimir Feltsman, piano, Mike Lazaridis Theatre of Ideas, 31 Carolin St. N., Waterloo. 519-883-4480. SOLD OUT.


- **5:30:** Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society. See Apr. 16. Centre in the Square, 101 Queen St. N., Kitchener. 519-743-0372. 39.3.

**Saturday April 18**

- **7:30:** Lindsay Concert Foundation. Beethoven Sonata No. 2; Piatti: Variations in F; Sonata in F; Griffes: Tone-Pictures and Cathedral of St. Gathor. Marion Samuelle Stevens, soprano; Ruth White, keyboard; Leonhardt Ensemble, conductor. First United Church, 15 William St. N., Kitchener. 519-578-1700. Free.

- **7:30:** Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestra. Open Ear: Spring Concert Tour. Centre in The Square, 101 Queen St. N., Kitchener. See Apr. 22.

**Saturday April 25**


**Sunday April 26**

- **7:30:** Lindsay Concert Foundation. The Hebrides; Schafer: The Darkly Splendid Earth; The Lonely Traveller; Bridge: The Sea; How Can I Keep From Singing? – Songs to Soothe and Uplift. St. John the Evangelist Church, 23 Water St. N., Kitchener. 519-743-0372. 39.3.

**Monday April 27**

- **7:30:** Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestra. Open Ear: Spring Concert Tour. Centre in The Square, 101 Queen St. N., Kitchener. 519-578-1700. Free.

**Tuesday April 28**

- **7:30:** Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestra. Open Ear: Spring Concert Tour. Centre in The Square, 101 Queen St. N., Kitchener. 519-578-1700. Free.
MAY

Night of the Proms. Mieres of music and dance.

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Recital Series.

Church of the Good Shepherd, 116 Queen St., Guelph. See Apr 30.


10:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestra. Open Ear: ETC. Post jazz from Halifax, Montreal and NYC. Wax, 125 King St. E., Owen Sound. 519-372-0212. $26; $24; $15 (sr); $10 (child).

Thursday April 30


10:30pm: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestra. Open Ear: Bella Concert. Trans Over Leg, sound artist. Waterloo Regional Children's Museum, 10 King St. W., Kitchener. 519-578-7570. $22.

Friday May 1


8:00: Hamilton Theatre Inc. Hot Mikado. See Apr. 24.


10:30pm: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestra. Open Ear: Hard Rubber Orchestra. New music big band from Van-
Jazz Sundays 8PM
NO COVER

Commensal, Le
655 Bay St. 416-966-6364
www.commensal.ca
Jazz Fridays 6:30pm - 9:30pm
NO COVER

Concord Café, Tho
317 Bloor St. W 416-523-3689

Every Tue
9:30-12:30 $5 Cover

Corktown, Tho
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Every 1st & 3rd Sun
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Country Home: 2261 Dundas St. W 416-727-1222

Every Fri & Sat
7pm, pwyc.

Drake Hotel, Tho
1150 Queen Street West 416-531-5042
www.thedrakehotel.ca (full calendar)
Every Sun 1-4pm Big Rude Jake Brunch.

Forte Bistre & Lounge
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www.fortebistro.ca
Every Wed Live Jazz 6:30-9:30pm

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Every Mon Laura Hulet Band.
Every Tue Broken Jokers, Jerome Gradus, Alec Fraser, Joe Toole.

Every Sat
Live Vocal Jazz (featuring a calendar on website)

Every Mon 8pm: Jazz Band at the St. Catharine's Park, 154 St. Catharine St. 416-642-2937

APRIL 1 - MAY 7 2009
April 1 – May 7 2009  www.thewholenote.com  44

ANNOUNCEMENTS


* April 4 7:30-10:30: Echo Women's Choir, Cellifite. Come and join in our take on an old fashioned candlelight kitchen party, including fiddlers, singers, storytellers, and dancers. Learn your own candle dance and play the spoons. Participate in a Cake Walk for a chance to win a beautiful homemade cake. Free appetizers and sweets. Church of the Holy Trinity, 10 Trinity Square. 416-519-5116. 10:45 (child); 25 (family).


* April 16 7:00: Canadian Opera Company. 10th Annual Fine Wine Auction. Offers bidders a chance to purchase from a wide variety of fine wines from around the world. Stephen Ranger, auctioneer. Live auction; silent auction. 8:00.

LECTURES/SYMPOSIA

* April 2 12:15: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Lecture by Maria Schneider, composer, arranger, bandleader and pianist. Walter Hall, 80 Queen's Park. 416-978-3744. Free.

* April 3 3:00: Royal Conservatory of Music. One of a 5 Part Lecture Series on Beethoven. Anton Kuerti speaks from the piano and shares his interpretive insights into these staples of the piano repertoire. 723 Bloor St. West. 416-408-2824 x321. Free.

* April 4 7:30: Toronto Gilbert and Sullivan Society. The Artists' Garden Cooperative welcomes proposals for summer garden salon concerts for the Plein Air Concerts Series '09 (20+ Wednesday evening concerts in 8th season). Proposals to include information about concert dates and times are available at www.artistsgardencoop.com. Deadline for submission is early April.


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Double Reed Exhibition
On Monday, April 13th at Long & McQuade
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Menénig oboe d'amore and English horns
Oscar Adler oboes
Ménign bassoons
Place: Long & McQuade Clinic Hall
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... SECTION 4: ... etcetera

York University, 4700 Keele St. 416-738-2100 x22926. Free.

* April 18: 2:00-4:00: Long & McQuade. Master class with Douglas Yeo, bass trombone, Boston Symphony Orchestra. BSO Bloor St. West. 416-988-7866. Free.

* April 19: 2:00-5:30: Singing Studio of Deborah Stainham. Master class in musical theater preparation. See April 5.

* April 26: 2:00-5:30: Singing Studio of Deborah Stainham. Master class in musical theater preparation. See April 5.

* May 3: 2:00-5:30: Singing Studio of Deborah Stainham. Master class in musical theater audition preparation. See April 5.

WORKSHOPS


* May 5: 10:00am: Worlds of Music Toronto. Georgian Singing with Andrew Murchison. Experience the distinctive polyphonic singing of Canada through songs in diverse regional styles and a depth of repertoire in this remarkable choral tradition. St. W. 416-588-8813 x 1. $20 per workshop.

* April 12: 1:00-3:30: Worlds of Music Toronto. African Drumming with Waleed Abdulhamid. See April 5. continues

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- Youth and Music in Vienna, International Festival and Competition, July 11-14, 2009; July 10-13, 2010, Austria Centre; www.austrianfestivals.at

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MAY 30th PLAY IN Countercross Community Orchestra’s 25th anniversary gala - Beethoven’s 9th Symphony. Instruments especially needed: strings, harp, harpsichord. Monday evenings. Contact Music Director Terry Kowden (416-558-5359) or write to info@ccorchestra.org.


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MARCH'S CHILD......

...was Russell Hartenberger: a member of the percussion ensemble NEXUS, also the Steve Reich Ensemble. He is a professor of percussion, the Chair of Graduate Education, and the Dean (since October 2007) of University of Toronto's Faculty of Music.

A Musical Ride

Seated together on a bus, if I asked you what work you do, what would you say?

I get this question going through the customs line at the airport. I tell them I'm a musician, and if they inquire further, I tell them I play drums or percussion. That response has often led to a long discussion with the customs agent about their favourite drummers.

Earliest musical memory?

...helping my Dad ring the bell in the church steeple in our small town. My Dad would lift me up to hold onto the rope and let the rope pull me up and down as the church bell rang.

Music in your family?

In your early life?

My Mother played the church organ and taught piano every day after school and all day on Saturdays. A stickler for rhythmic precision with her students - she had them play with lubricating the valves, and play counted out loud as they played.

Dad stopped playing trumpet because the church steeple in our small town. My Dad would lift me up to hold onto the rope and let the rope pull me up and down as the church bell rang.

My first real instrument was the snare drum, and I would occasionally pull out his horn, go through the intriguing process of lubricating the valves, and play the high school fight song. One sister directed church and community choirs, and my other sister played the clarinet in school bands.

My sister and I used to make up a piano piece we called "Thunder and Lightning". One of us would play chord clusters in the bass register while the other would play crashes of sound in the high register.

I was also the mascot for the local high school band and attended many of their rehearsals, especially during marching band season.

My wife, who is a visual artist, plays the cello, piano, and recorder. My two daughters sing in choirs and play instruments. Neither is pursuing a career in music, although they are both extremely talented musicians.

First instrument? Ambitions?

My first real instrument was the snare drum, which I began playing in the Grade 6 school band. I had a wonderful percussion teacher named Alan Abele when I began taking lessons at age eleven.

Hooked on percussion I aspired to follow Mr. Abele's footsteps. Prior to my snare drum, I was already feeling a sense of rhythm and enjoying music in general.

My wife, who is a visual artist, plays the cello, piano, and recorder. My two daughters sing in choirs and play instruments. Neither is pursuing a career in music, although they are both extremely talented musicians.

Anything you would say to the young person in that childhood photo?

You'll never in your wildest dreams imagine the wonderful life you have in store for you!
Sonic Mosaics: Conversations with Composers
by Paul Steenhuisen
University of Alberta Press
344 pages, photos; $34.95

Canadian composer and writer Paul Steenhuisen surveys contemporary Canadian music - and contemporary music in general - by interviewing twenty-six of Canada's most interesting composers, along with six European and American composers like Pierre Boulez and George Crumb.

Steenhuisen shows an understanding of the work of everyone he interviews, no matter what their musical style. This especially pays off with an experimental composer like John Oswald, whose technique of plunderphonics challenges traditional approaches to composition. Things get lively when he asks Oswald whether his pieces have an expiry date. Steenhuisen's questions are thought-provoking, and his thorough preparation allows him to follow wherever the subject takes him. A surprising answer can turn things in an entirely different direction.

One of the most engaging aspects of this book is the way Steenhuisen approaches the issues involved in being a Canadian composer, and whether Canadian music has "a certain sound, a unique aesthetic". John Weinzweig can't identify what the sound is, but insists that it exists. John Beckwith says, "There is a Canadian repertoire and it goes back further than most people are aware." But later he says, "Your music doesn't get played very much if you're Canadian." Gary Kulesha goes even further, saying, "At this moment there is no Canadian composer who has a substantial international presence." Barbara Croall, whose mother is Aboriginal, adds a more positive dimension when she says that her identity as a Canadian lies in the intuitiveness of her creative process.

Almost all the interviews that make up this collection were originally published in WholeNote Magazine. Most of them relate to a particular performance or recording. In some cases, this means that the questions focus so narrowly on a single work that you don't get a well-rounded picture of the composer's musical personality, especially with someone as multi-faceted as R. Murray Schafer.

Steenhuisen makes no claims to have interviewed every significant Canadian composer, and, inevitably, a number are absent. But of the thirty-two composers interviewed, just five are women. In a country where women composers have always played a major role, this is a disproportionately small representation. But many things in this important book have been particularly well-considered, from the design, the photos and the cover art, to the discography, annotations, and index (which even has an entry for playfulness).

Moving to Higher Ground
by Wynton Marsalis
Random House
202 pages, photos; $30.00

Wynton Marsalis covered the same territory in previous books. But now he is not just describing the ways jazz can touch your soul and stir up your sense of beauty. What he's saying is that jazz can teach concrete life lessons - to listeners and players alike. It teaches you to recognize your strengths and weaknesses, develop your own unique sound, and learn to work things out with other people. His explanations of what jazz is are as good an I've ever read, and his comments on musicians he has known, "Lessons from the Masters", are fascinating. Mostly he is admiring, but, to illustrate his 'Be true to your dreams, don't compromise' mantra, he comes down hard on Miles Davis for selling out towards the end of his career.

Marsalis, a well-known jazz and classical trumpeter, composer, and director of Jazz at Lincoln Center, offers an insider's perspective, having known and played with almost all the great players of his time. He understands what makes them great. Sometimes he goes too far, writing that "Jazz musicians get closer to expressing the actual diversity in the ways of love than any musicians before them." But we get the idea nonetheless.

Terrific anecdotes illustrate his points. There's the time, as an overeager kid, he first played for Harry "Sweets" Edison, and Edison said "Man, you just played more notes than I played in my entire career."

Marsalis is fortunate in his co-author Geoffrey Ward. "One touch of his hand on the piano and the moon entered the room" is a lovely evocation of Ellington's piano playing. A pithy comment about Dizzy Gillespie, "His playing showcases the importance of intelligence," says much about this eloquent book as well.

The Cello Suites: J. S. Bach, Pablo Casals, and the Search for a Baroque Masterpiece
by Eric Siblin
House of Anansi Press
328 pages; $29.95

An encounter with Bach's solo Cello Suites at a concert in Toronto, a chance conversation in a Montreal café with an elderly cellist who turns out to be a "living breathing link with the past", the opportunity to study the oldest existing score of the Suites in a Brussels library - all this spurrs Eric Siblin to uncover the story behind the Suites.

Siblin never found Bach's original score. But he did find a copy of the same edition of the Suites that Pablo Casals had discovered in 1890, which had lead the young cellist to perform them together for the first time in their history. "I had stumbled into my own prelude," writes Siblin.

The former Montreal pop music critic is curious, resourceful and passionate. Even though this is a tale of personal discovery, Siblin knows when to get out of the way. So we get biographies of Bach, and Casals, as well as the performance history of the Suites.

Siblin is a skillful writer. His passion for the music and instinctive grasp of the issues comes through. He has done extensive research, although he gets a few minor things wrong. For example, the Berkeley Symphony, which Kent Nagano conducted for almost thirty years, is hardly an "amateur hippied-out" orchestra. The instrument that Dmitry Badarov promotes for the sixth suite is the violoncello piccolo, which is in fact held like a cello. He offers a reliable bibliography to back up his research. But, frustratingly, his endnotes are hidden at the back, with nothing in the text to indicate what they are annotating.

Siblin is right that the Cello Suites provide a perfect entry into the sound world of Bach. He provides a delightful and illuminating journey into that world.

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Do all good things come to those who wait? This month I really had no idea what I was going to write about until the arrival of two discs from ATMA which brought back musical memories from my formative years. The first was the Alcan Quartet performing string quartets of Ernest Bloch and Glenn Gould (ATMA ACD2-2596). These two important Canadian works are rarely performed although there have been a few recordings over the years. MacMillan began work on the String Quartet in c minor while interned as a civilian prisoner in Germany during the First World War. He had been attending the Wagner Festival in Bayreuth at time the war broke out. Although the quartet shows some influence of Ravel and Debussy - MacMillan had been in Paris before heading to Bayreuth - it most firmly reflects the composer’s roots in the English school of the time. It is charming and well-crafted and ever since first hearing it some four decades ago on a Deutsche Grammophon recording by the renowned Amadeus Quartet I have wondered why it has not become a staple of the repertoire. The Gould quartet, completed in 1955, is a bit problematic. An extended single movement work lasting more than half an hour, it is a brooding backward-looking piece which reflects Gould’s interest in the early works of Schoenberg and the New Viennese School as well as Brahms and Richard Strauss. There are fugal elements, as we would expect from someone who spent his life immersed in the work of Bach, and occasional sunny bits, but for the most part this is a dark and at times troubling piece. The Alcan plays both works with passion and conviction. Their sound is captured in full fidelity by producer-recordist Anne-Marie Sylvestre in the warm acoustic of Salle François-Bernier at Domaine Forget. The recording also includes MacMillan’s most frequently performed instrumental work “Two Sketches on French Canadian Airs” with the rollicking waves of “À Saint Malo” bringing the disc to a vibrant conclusion.

One of my most important early classical memories is from a rehearsal I was privileged to attend at Hart House back in my high school years. Walter Babiak was conducting a string orchestra in Ernest Bloch’s Concerto Grosso No.1. I am afraid I can’t remember who the pianist was on that occasion (it’s an obbligato role rather than a virtuosic one) but the work was imprinted on my brain and left a lasting impression. Once again I cannot understand why this piece is not more frequently performed and so it was a great pleasure to find it included on the new CD Schindler’s List (ATMA ACD2-2579) featuring the Swiss Orchestre Symphonique de Bienn. The title work is John Williams’ suite for violin and orchestra extrapolated from the soundtrack to “Schindler’s List”. Both that and Bloch’s “Suite Hébraïque” feature the outstanding young Canadian violinist Alexandre da Costa who is in fine form here. But the highlight for me is the performance of Bloch’s Concerto Grosso under the direction Thomas Rösner who captures the rustic energy of the dance movements and brings a driving force to the fugal finale without sacrificing any of the inherent stillness of the work. And in this instance I can tell you the name of the pianist, Marc Pationton.

The ATMA package also included an eclectic offering entitled La Rencontre (ATMA ACD2-2608) featuring Anne-Julie Caron, a young marimba player who won the Quebec Opus Prize for “Discovery of the Year” in 2007. The disc includes original works by American marimba-composer Julie Spencer, Ukrainian-Canadian composer Oleksa Lozowuch, French percussionist Emmanuel Séjourné, Argentinean guitarist-composer Guillermo Espel and Japanese marimba virtuoso Keiko Abe, along with Caron’s own transcriptions of works by Pat Metheny and Astor Piazzolla. Many of the works show influences of jazz and folk-dance rhythms, but there are moments of contemplation and abstract expression too. The highlight for me is Abe’s complex depiction of “Wind in the Bamboo Grove”. Caron proves herself up for the challenges throughout this intriguing recording.

When I first saw the next disc I must admit I cringed at the thought of more than an hour’s music for just piccolo and piano. The piccolo’s register is so high and its timbre so often shrill that I could not imagine listening to the disc in its entirety. But I was amazed to find that after the first listening I went back and put it on again. National Arts Centre Orchestra piccolo player Patrick Healey (aided here by Montreal contemporary-avantgarde Brigitte Poulin) is a truly accomplished performer and the repertoire he has chosen to showcase his instrument is very effective. I was not previously familiar with any of the composers on this disc except Denis Gougeon whose Canto del Piccolo both concludes and provides the title for this disc (XXI-CD2 1620). Perhaps living composers Frank Hamwary, Cecilia McDowell, Michael Isaacson, Mike Mower, and the late Alan Ridout are well known in the flute world. They certainly should be if this disc is any indication.

My Guilty Pleasure of the month? Soul Stew Volume Two. Produced by bass player Roberto Occhipinti for Modica Music (www.modica­music.com), this CD features covers of some of the most iconic R&B tunes of the 70s and 80s soulfully sung by Michael Dunston. Soul Stew was formed in 1990 and served as house band at the Bamboo Club and later at The College Street Bar. The current offering was recorded “live off the floor” at MacLear Studio several years ago, but mixed and mastered by John “Beetle” Bailey in February 2009 and launched at Lula Lounge last month. The disc proved to be the perfect soundtrack for a drive in the country recently, with its powerful rhythm section provided by Occhipinti and drummer Mark Kelso complemented by Matt Horner’s omnipresent Hammond organ, David Gray’s tasty guitar licks and John Johnson’s funky saxes. And if you think maybe you’d need a bigger horn section to do justice to some of Motown’s greatest hits, have no fear because the band was filled out by Dave Dunlop and Terry Promane on trumpet and trombone for this session. Dunston convincingly makes familiar songs by Sly Stone, Al Green, Billy Paul, Marvin Gaye, James Brown and even Stevie Wonder his own. The whole car was singing along.

I mentioned that marimba player Anne-Julie Caron won an Opus Prize in 2007. The 2008 Opus Prize for “Jazz and World Music Concert of the Year” went to Montreal group La Nef for the project Deserts, subtitled “creative music inspired by the deserts of the world”. La Nef is dedicated to creating and producing early, world, and original music through collaborations with musicians from eclectic backgrounds and artists from diverse disciplines. “Deserts” will be released on CD in April by the Fidelio label (www.fidelio­dio.com). Concert note: You can hear La Nef at the Music Gallery here in Toronto on April 7 when internationally renowned tambourine virtuoso (?) Carlo Rizzo joins Claire Gignac (Artistic Director and flutes), Patrick Graham (Musical Co-Director and multiple-percussion), Andrew Wells-Oberegger (oud, saz, guembri, zhong ruan and percussion) and Toronto-based Ben Grossman (electroacoustic hurdy-gurdy and percussion) for a program entitled “Skin - A Percussion Blaze”.

We welcome your feedback and invite submissions. CDs and comments should be sent to: The WholeNote, 503 - 720 Bathurst St. Toronto ON MSS 2R4. We also encourage you to visit our website, www.thewholenote.com, where you can find added features including direct links to performers, composers and record labels and “buy buttons” for on-line shopping.

David Olds
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WWW.THEWHOLENOTE.COM
Voical

Bach - Jesu, Meine Freude
Agnes Zsigovics; Daniel Taylor; Benjamin Butterfield; Daniel Lichti; Ottawa Bach Choir and Baroque Orchestra;
Lisette Canton
Ottawa Bach Choir OBC2009CD (www.ottawabachchoir.ca)

For this CD, which finds its column just in time for Easter, the Ottawa Bach Choir’s conductor and founder, Lisette Canton, has chosen three works by Bach which focus on the theme of salvation through death and resurrection, and which represent three distinct periods in Bach’s output. The first Cantata, BWV 4, Christ lag in Todes Banden is famous for its exquisite descending semitones. The ensemble artfully resigns itself to the recurring sighing motif of cascading counterpoint. Sandwiched between the two cantatas on this disc is one of Bach’s most famous motets, BWV 227, Jesu, meine freude.

The choir does a brilliant job with the starts and stops that represent the type of hesitant, breathless, yet joyful declaration reminiscent of someone recovering from long periods of weeping. Lastly is the Cantata, BWV 78, Jesu, der du meine Seele, the highlight of which is the soprano/aldo duet sung with great agility and energy by Agnes Zsigovics and Daniel Taylor. Benjamin Butterfield and Daniel Lichti execute the dramatic recitatives and arias of this cantata beautifully. True to its name, this choir appears to make an annual pilgrimage to perform at Bach’s Thomaskirche in Leipzig. I’m sure Bach would be pleased.

Dianne Wells

Concert note: On April 25th at St. Matthew’s Anglican Church in Ottawa the Ottawa Bach Choir presents “Prelude - Europe 2009”, a concert to launch the choir’s third European tour to London, Paris and Leipzig.

The Ice Age and Beyond: Songs by Canadian Women Composers
Patricia Green; Midori Koga
Blue Griffin Records BGR173

Unsleeping: Songs by Living Composers
Patricia Green; John Hess
Blue Griffin Records BGR177 (www.bluegriffin.com)

The songs on these two discs were all written in the last fifty years. Patricia Green, a Canadian mezzo known especially for interpreting modern music, does full justice to these always interesting, frequently moving songs.

“The Ice Age and Beyond: Songs by Canadian Women Composers” presents new and rarely heard art songs by women composers. Why just women composers? To call a disc “Songs by Canadian Men Composers” would be laughable. But it would also be unnecessary, because almost all recordings - Canadian or otherwise - contain just male composers.

In the booklet notes Green writes that Barbara Pentland “laid the path for young women composers across Canada”. Pentland’s searing, gorgeous works are visionary, and she remains one of Canada’s most important, if under-appreciated, composers. What I like best about Green’s performances of her songs is that they capture Pentland’s fierce passion. In Ice Age, Green is especially sensitive to the mood of desperation summed up in poet Dorothy Livesay’s concluding question, “Who among us dares to be righteous?”

Shifting rhythms enliven Emily Doolittle’s charming Airs of Men Long Dead. The shimmering lyricism of Isabelle Panneton’s Echo reflects the colourful imagery of the text. In City Night, Alice Ping Yee Ho explores the more percussive qualities of voice and piano. Kati Agocs uses clarinet, violin and cello to capture the more percussive qualities of voice and piano. The engineer exaggerates this equality by his microphone placement. Their disc runs through the work of seven different composers, including Canadian John Burge, who contributed a commissioned piece. Reger’s short Romance sounds ill-suited to body copy. Both organs are depicted in the usual way of listing, with full-frontal photos of each. Both CD’s are suitable for serious collections, and enthusiasts will note that Karl Wilhelm (builder of Toronto’s St. Andrew’s Presbyterian organ) helped prepare the instrument for Zeituoni.

John S. Gray

Concert notes: The month-long organ festival Organix 2009 kicks off on May 1 at the Church of the Holy Trinity with a recital by Dame Gillian Weir and runs throughout May. See our current listings for two organ recitals on May 4 and a tribute to Felix Mendelssohn on May 6.
Ms. Chang is at her best in the lyrical music she has chosen for the CD. She has a strong affinity, for example, to A Caged Partridge's Longing, by Toronto flutist, composer and her first teacher, Mizi Tan, using a sound akin to that of a bamboo flute, entirely appropriate to the piece. Her interpretation of Schulhoff's Sonata, especially the first movement, is very convincing, although I often wished she could bring to more of her playing the intensity of sound she produced about three-quarters of the way through Carl Reinecke's late (1908) composition, Ballade. The always confident but never intrusive piano playing of Ellen Meyer makes a tremendous contribution through all. Amy Laing's expressive cello in Piazzolla's Oblivion and Khai Nguyen's capable violin playing in the Piazzolla and in Goossens' Romance and Humoreske add variety and interest.

Ms. Chang is a young and resourceful artist with a strong personal commitment to the flute. This CD is a promising beginning.

Allan Paluker

Lisz - Sonata in B minor
Patrice Lare
XXI XXI-CD 2 1533

Patrice Lare is a Paris born pianist who studied in Russia and came to Quebec in 1993. He is building an impressive career (see www.patricielare.com) and has already issued two CD's with his cellist wife Velitchka Yatcheva. This is his first solo CD as a pianist.

Playing these ambitious showpieces of the great magician of the keyboard is no mean task. The pianist possesses an elemental, masculine force, lots of stamina and powerful hands to handle the thundering climaxes. His technical prowess is unquestionable and his playing is very precise. Note for example the fugato section in the Sonata where his skill in Bach shows up par excellence.

The Sonata in B minor is a titanic masterpiece, a milestone in the literature where Liszt experimented with changing the traditional form by compressing or 'telescoping' the movements. Although the form seems loose, there is an inner logic difficult to interpret. In Lare's playing I feel the overall structure is too rigid and lacking the natural sweep of emotion, the ebb and flow that only the greatest pianists could achieve. At this point I couldn't rightly recommend this performance, but given time and maturity he will assuredly overcome this challenge.

The shorter, bravura pieces however generally come off very well. My favorite is the Mephisto Waltz, where his powerful hands build up a very effective crescendo right at the beginning and the transition to the lyrical mid-section is beautifully done. There are many changes of mood here but the structure is held together and the piece really becomes a brilliant mockingly devilish dance. In similar vein, the Rhapsodie Espagnole, a very colourful, challenging and enjoyable work is given a big workout. The pianist possesses an elemental, great magician of the keyboard is no mean task.

German-born Heinrich Alpers offers an all-Schumann disc, featuring the Fasching­schnick aus Wien, the Kinderszenen, and the less-often played Sonata in F# minor. Alpers studied at the Hanover Hochschule für Musik and later at the Juiliard School, and he currently teaches piano, improvisation, and music theory at the Institute for Highly Gifted Children in Hanover. He won rave reviews at his New York debut in 2008, and little wonder! Alpers' playing is stylish and eloquent - and while his solid technique is evident at all times, it never becomes an end unto itself. Clearly this music played by a musician rather than a mere technician, and one who displays an innate feeling for the repertoire.

From 19th century Leipzig we turn to 18th century Vienna for a recording of keyboard music by Mozart performed by third Laureate Hong Xu. Included on this disc are the sonatas K.282, 310, 332, and 576 as well as the Adagio in B minor K540. A graduate of Wuhan Conservatory and the Juilliard School, Xu admits a love for the piano works of Mozart, and this admiration is clearly reflected on this recording. The playing is polished and self-assured, while always demonstrating the subtle nuances so important in interpreting this deceptively complex music.

Three different artists, each playing very different repertoire, and doing it well, make for very satisfying listening - a perfect melding of heart and intellect!

Richard Haskell

FELIX MENDELSSOHN - A BICENTENNIAL SALUTE

Felix Mendelssohn will celebrate Mendelssohn's 200th birthday with the North American premiere of his Piano Concerto No. 3 in E minor. The score was recently completed and reconstructed by composer/conductor Marcello Bufalini for exclusive performance by Italian pianist Roberto Prosseda. Julian Kuerti conducts the all-Mendelssohn program on May 11, 2009 at Jack Singer Concert Hall in Calgary, which also includes the Hebrides Overture Op. 26 (Fingal's Cave) and Sinfonia for String Orchestra No. 10 in B minor. Roberto Prosseda will be joined by his wife Alessandra Maria Ammara (2000 Honens Laureate) to perform the Concerto for Two Pianos in E major.

Mendelssohn - Complete works for cello and pianoforte
Sergei Istomin; Viviana Sofronitsky
Passacaille 947 (www.passacaille.be)

During his short life Felix Mendelssohn
composed five pieces for cello and piano, all remarkable for their perfect blend of Romantic expression clothed in classical language. That these pieces comprise exactly enough music to fill a single CD is quite a stroke of luck; that it has been recorded on period instruments by Viviana Sofronitsky and Sergei Istinin is not only fortunate for us all today, but a posthumous stroke of luck for Felix Mendelssohn as well. Istomin, formerly with Tafelmusik and now resident in France, plays an 18th-century Wilhelm cello here; and Sofronitsky, founder of Toronto’s Academy Concert Series and now living in Prague, plays a Graf copy fortepiano by Paul McNulty.

The “big ticket” items on this CD are the three-movement sonata op. 45 and its later, larger counterpart, op. 58. The first movements of both are grand and dramatic, and brilliantly played. The sardonic quality of op. 58’s allegretto scherzando is delightful here, and the innocent ending of op. 45 perfectly concludes this program of rich musical chiaroscuro. Also included are the Variations Concertantes (op. 17), premiered on Mendelssohn’s first trip to London in 1829; the short Romance without words, published posthumously in 1868; and a short Assai tranquillo, the ephemeral ending of which leaves us wanting just a little more...

This recording will no doubt come as a revelation to many. Here there is no struggle for a balance between the voices of cello and piano, a problem all too familiar in modern instruments. Istomin and Sofronitsky’s performance is a genuine and focused musical dialogue, full of thoughtful phrasing and a fluid and natural exchange of roles as the music requires. Both artists play with virtuosic flair, refined musical sensitivity, and an obvious affection for the repertoire. And their breadth of their tonal and dynamic palette is pretty astonishing!

On top of that, this disc is beautifully recorded and packaged. The cover features a Swiss landscape painted by Mendelssohn himself in his last year; the notes are informative and readable; and the CD’s program order is brilliant, highlighting the composer’s variety of approach to this instrumental combination. Buy this disc. You won’t be sorry!

Alison Melville

Mendelssohn - Piano Concertos
Anton Kuerti; London Philharmonic Orchestra; Paul Freeman
DoReMi DHR-6606 (www.doremi.com)

Mendelssohn’s Violin Concerto remains a concert-hall staple – but the two concertos that he completed for the piano (an instrument on which he himself was a virtuoso performer) have fallen into relative neglect. Why did they vanish from the repertoire?

This recording of Toronto pianist Anton Kuerti’s performance of the concertos – and also the Capriccio Brillante Op. 22 – raises the question. The CD is a reissue from 1986, and Kuerti is heard with the London Philharmonic Orchestra under Paul Freeman. While the sound quality is not quite up to today’s standards, the commitment of Kuerti and Co. shine through – illuminating both the strengths and weakness of the music.

The first concerto is unconventional: the three movements follow without a pause, and there is no formal cadenza. But there’s plenty of glittery pianism in both the first and third movements, which Kuerti renders with an admirable facility and evenness of tone. The second movement, by contrast, is more introspective. Kuerti’s approach is dreamy and tender – although, at times, his interpretation verges on the diffuse.

Like the first concerto, the second is also cadenza-less and continuous in its structure. It opens with a Beethoven’s Fifth-inspired movement that’s milked for every drop of drama. Kuerti’s handling of the transition to the slow movement is impressive, and what follows is probably the best playing on this disc. In the final movement, Kuerti and the LSO make the most of the music’s operatic ebullience.

Completing the disc is Mendelssohn’s Capriccio Brillante – which, as its title suggests, is a joyful single-movement romp. There are also moments of repose – and Kuerti takes full advantage of the opportunities for expressiveness that they afford.

I said something about strengths and weakness didn’t I? To be sure, there’s much that is beautiful, and even sometimes profound, in this music. But there’s also an excess of “passage work” for the piano – and the naive charm of the concertos’ final movements is sometimes more naive than charming.

Colin Eatock

MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY

Shostakovich - Symphony No. 11
Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra; Vasily Petrenko
Naxos 8.572082

This is remarkably fine performance, superbly recorded. The first performance one hears is often imprinted as the way to perform a certain work. I first heard the Shostakovich 11th symphony on an EMI recording by André Cluytens and the ORTF orchestra. Made in the presence of the composer on May 15, 1958, it is, by definition, unerringly faithful to Shostakovich’s wishes and is my ideal (available in stereo on Testament SBT1099). 1958 was a good year for the work as Stokowski made his celebrated recording for Capitol in Houston exactly 51 years ago this month and another Russian performance under Stokowski from 1958 was issued. Since then there have been a score or more versions that have been listened to and filed away.

Titled “The Year 1905”, this symphony depicts the events of Bloody Sunday when more than 200 peaceful demonstrators were massacred by Czarist soldiers outside the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg. From the very opening bars, Petrenko perfectly shapes and balances the composer’s mood picture of the inanity of the multitude leading to the second movement during which the pregnant stillness is devastatingly broken by the deadly attack. All is quiet again and pain and sorrow lead to bitter resolution, pressing the revolu-
tion to follow 12 years later.

Petrenko does far more than get it right. From manifest compassion to total brutality, he conducts from the inside, exposing the composer’s sources of inspiration, his Muse.

The state-of-the-art recording is the best yet, making this CD a must-have for audiophiles and the composer’s following.

This is the first instalement of Naxos’s announced complete cycle with Petrenko and his orchestra, presaging an exciting project.

Bruce Surtees

Liquid
Francois Houle; Turning Point Ensemble; Owen Underhill
ATMA ADC22394

Canada has produced a vibrant cohort of clarinetists who specialize in new music; a short list should include Robert W. Stevenson, Lori Freedman, James Campbell, Joaquin Valdepeñas, André Moisan, Jean-Guy Boisvert and François Houle - the featured soloist on this recent disc by the Turning Point Ensemble, conducted by Owen Underhill.

First up is Vancouver composer John Korsrud’s Liquid. Houle’s virtuosic technique is highlighted throughout, from the opening highly rhythmic figuration, which gradually disperses into a more fragmented ensemble texture. It resembles a concerto grosso, with an extended slow section featuring a sparsely-accompanied solo clarinet - replete with the seemingly obligatory multiphonics - gradually returning to the opening rhythmic figurations.

Next is Schrift, by Quebec composer Yanick Plamondon. The liner notes inform us that Plamondon, like Eric Satie, has placed enigmatic texts throughout the score, such as "The mechanistic noise of a language that seeks itself." Plamondon’s inventive use of percussion sounded “mechanistic.” I suppose, but the piece ended before I finished puzzling over that one.

The third work on the disc - Concerto - features Houle as both soloist and composer. The title is in keeping with the original 18th-century convention of an opening section, or ritornello, introducing the soloist. Like Korsrud’s piece, Concerto is a three-part single movement: a slow meditative section, a more fragmented ensemble texture. It resembles a concerto grosso, with an extended slow section featuring a sparsely-accompanied solo clarinet - replete with the seemingly obligatory multiphonics - gradually returning to the opening rhythmic figurations.

James Tenney - Arbor Vitae
Quatuor Bozinni
Quatuor Bozinni CQB 0806 (www.actuellecd.com)

This recording by the Quatuor Bozinni of the American-Canadian composer James Tenney is essential for anyone interested in experimental music of the 20th century. Superbly recorded at Radio Frankfurt by tonmeisters Christoph Classen and Udo Wustendorfer with the assistance of sound engineer Thomas Eschen, the two CD set brings together all of Tenney’s music for string quartet, as well as works for string quartet and additional instrument.

James Tenney composed for string quartet throughout his life, and so this release provides an excellent overview of his compositional interests throughout his diversely productive career. From his lifelong interest in just intonation and other tunings, to his use of electronics and computers, his systems of stochastic development, his constant desire to engage in an exchange of ideas with other members of both the music community and the wider society of artists from all disciplines, this collection brings forward all of these interests with great clarity and passion. The playing is both accurate (and I can tell you that as a performer who worked with Jim for over twenty-five years, this is no small accomplishment), and sensitive to the sensuality of Tenney’s music. The Bozinnis are ably assisted by percussionist Rick Sacks, pianist Eve Egoyan and contrabassist Miriam Shalinsky.

Robert W. Stevenson

Canadian Oboe Quartets

Gallery Players of Niagara

Gallery Players GPN09001

James Mason, principal oboe of the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony for the past twenty years, is joined by his distinguished colleagues Julie Baumgartel on violin, Patrick Jordan on viola and Margaret Gay on cello in this intriguing recording by The Gallery Players. The ensemble’s original concept for this project was to commission Canadian composers to create works derived from Mozart’s Oboe Quartet in F major K370 in celebration of the 250th anniversary of the divine Amadeus.

Of the composers on this disc only Peter Hatch fully accepted this challenge, albeit in quite a perverse way. His Wiki Mozart superimposes a distracting tape collage upon what seems to be a quite sensitive performance of Mozart’s work, with the droning voice of Gertrude Stein thrown in for no good measure. You can replicate the effect quite easily in your own home by turning your television, CD, DVD and radio on all at once. James Rolfe’s Oboe Quartet, while not in the least bit derivative, echoes Mozart’s refined style in its carefully wrought performances.

Michael Oesterle’s Sunspot Letters finds its inspiration in the solar observations of Galileo Galilei, juxtaposing frenetic, highly ornamented oboe passages upon the inexorable cosmic pulsation of the string trio to great effect.

The studied monotony of John Abram’s Oboe Quartet and while not in the least bit derivative, echoes Mozart’s refined style in its carefully wrought performances. Michael Oesterle’s Sunspot Letters finds its inspiration in the solar observations of Galileo Galilei, juxtaposing frenetic, highly ornamented oboe passages upon the inexorable cosmic pulsation of the string trio to great effect.

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JAZZ AND IMPROVIZED

TV Trio
John Stetch
Brux Records BRUX 14112
(www.johnstetch.com)

John Stetch was born in Edmonton, Alberta and was exposed to the sounds of jazz at an early age through his father's record collection. He began as a reed player before switching to piano, earned his Bachelor of Music degree in Montreal and built a reputation touring across Canada before re-locating to New York in 1990.

For this CD John has chosen a dozen themes from TV shows and transformed them into jazz performances. I have to make a confession. I was only familiar with six of them, (a prize if you can guess which six), but that certainly didn’t prevent me from enjoying the music.

John is extremely imaginative in his concepts of the various themes and has technique in abundance with which to express his ideas. Of the dozen titles only “The Flintstones”, which John chose to put into the minor, giving it a somewhat dark character, has been frequently played by jazz musicians although on listening to this album it seems to me that, for example, “The Waltons” and “Bugs Bunny” and “The Mighty Hercules” could well be adopted by others.

With the exception of “All My Children”, which is a brief but beautiful solo piano performance, Stetch is ably supported by Doug Weiss on bass and Rodney Green on drums.

Jim Galloway

Live at the Orbit Room - The Ultimate Jam
Tony Monaco & his Toronto Trio
Chicken Coop CCP 7012
(www.b3monaco.com)

According to any dependable jazz cookbook, the recipe for a tasty live recording requires an appetizing artist, a hungry audience and a venue that allows for passion to sizzle. Established in 1994, the unpretentiously hip Orbit Room in Toronto’s Little Italy is a happening hang frequented by avid music lovers and musicians alike. The upper level performance space is armed with a B3 organ and offers nightly live acts including roots, R&B, rock and reggae, as well as jazz.

On June 22nd of 2007, critically acclaimed Columbus, Ohio native jazz organist Tony Monaco played the Orbit Room as part of the TD Canada Trust Toronto Jazz Festival, joined by two of our city’s extraordinary resident jazz musicians: guitarist Ted Quinn and drummer Vito Rezza. Supported generously by both Torontonians on this particular night, Monaco’s playing is rich with meaty musical chops and incontestable enthusiasm. The sidemen consistently listen, react and enhance the musical experience. Quinn is quintessentially on top of his game, delivering spirited solos that tell exciting stories and Rezza is not only supportive, but soulful. On every track, especially ‘Shout Time and Slow Down Sag’, the trio grooves contagiously and the audience eats it up. From appetizer to dessert, “The Ultimate Jam” follows the live recording recipe flawlessly. Let it be a model for capturing some of the delectable jazz entertainment served regularly in Ontario’s capital.

Ori Dagan

All’opera Profumo di Violetta
Gianluigi Trovesi
ECM 2068

Emphasizing the streak of romanticism which characterizes nearly every Italian instrumentalist - no matter how avant-garde - multi woodwind player Gianluigi Trovesi interprets a series of familiar operatic airs. Backed by the wind and percussion Filarmonica Mousiké, the veteran improviser fashions an original take on 17th, 18th and 19th Century themes by Monteverde, Cazzati, Pergolesi, Verdi, Puccini, Rossini and Mascagni without jazzing up or burlesquing them.

Making full use of the luscious crescendos and cushioning timbres available from the 54-piece orchestra, the only additions are cellost Marco Remondini and percussionist Stefano Bertoli to enhance the rhythmic impetus.

Taking the role of operatic vocalist, Trovesi produces a fantastic series of glissandi, portamento runs and just plain beautiful playing, using at different junctures all his horns - piccolo and alto clarinets plus alto saxophone. Nearly always playing legato, he emphasizes the emotional and melodic undercurrents of these pieces without ignoring their poignant roots.

Mixing world famous and obscure parts of the opera repertoire, these arrangements interweave the popular airs - which the clarinettist has loved since his childhood near Bergamo - with improvisational freedom. Listeners familiar with standards such as Verdi’s “E Piquillo un bel gagliardo” and Rossini’s “Largo al factotum” will marvel at how Trovesi’s re-interpretations refresh them. More remarkable is how well Trovesi’s own compositions - such as Salterello amoroso with its shimmering smooth Johnny Hodges-like timbres atop contrapuntal orchestra lines, or Vesprosone, a big-band swing piece enlivened with reed split tones and shrills - fit among these traditional tunes without disruption.

Ken Waxman

Ken Waxman

Paco Paco
Bill McBirnie Duo/Quartet
Independent EF04
(www.myspace.com/billmcbirnieextremeeflute)

Anyone who has heard him knows that Bill McBirnie is a wonderfully gifted flautist. This CD finds him in the company of three of his favourite players on six of the twelve tracks, the others being duo performances with Bernie Senensky.

It is of those CDs where I find it difficult to choose favourite numbers. The entire album is a joy to listen to, not only for Bill’s beautiful playing, but, as one would expect, the musicality and sensitive contributions from pianist Senensky, Neil Swainson on bass and drummer John Sunner.

As is his wont, Bill has shown a preference for playing standards, ranging from Keith Jarrett’s ‘My Song’ to Bright Mississippi, Thelonious Monk’s variation on the changes of Sweet Georgia Brown via the hymn ‘Stand Up’, ‘Stand Up For Jesus’ which becomes something of a march for Jesus! The one exception to familiar material, although fans of the Moe Koffman Quintet might remember it, is the album’s title piece, a tour de force called ‘Paco Paco’, composed by Bernie Senensky.

I don’t know how widely distributed this recording will be, but if you have trouble finding it you could send an e-mail to billmcb@idirect.com. Say that Jim sent you!

Jim Galloway

EXTENDED PLAY:
The “Other” Peggy Lee
By Ken Waxman

Established in Vancouver for nearly 20 years following extensive musical study in her native Toronto, Peggy Lee has become one of the most in-demand cellists in both improvised and New music. Occasionally working with her husband, drummer Dylan van der Schyff, but more frequently on her own, Lee’s string prestidigitation is prominent in meetings with Canadian, American and European musicians.

Recent discs show the range of her talents. Spiller Alley (RogueArt ROG-0016 www.rougart.com) features her as part of a trio completed by Bay area saxophonist Larry Ochs and New York koto player Miya Masaoka. Meanwhile Escendido Dreams (Drip Audio DA00206 www.dripaudio.com), is a trio with other Lower Mainland guitarists Tony Wilson and saxophonist Jon Bentley. Wilson, Bentley and van der Schyff are also on the cellist’s New Code (Drip Audio DA00318 www.dripaudio.com) along with other West Coast luminaries - trumpeter Brad Turner; guitarist Ron Samworth; trombonist Jeremy Berkman and electric bassist André...
Lachance. On Continuation (Cryptogramophone CG 140 www.cryptogramphone.com), percussionist Alex Cline gathered a similar group of California-based improvisers - violist Jeff Gauthier, pianist Myra Melford, bassist Scott Walton to play his tunes. Lee is the only non-American.

Alex Cline’s writing has an Asian feel to it. Scene-setting gong resonations color nearly every track, with Melford’s winnowing harmonium drone sometimes adding to the Far Eastern emphasis. Eclectic in execution, most of the compositions bounce from near-syrupy melodies usually advanced by the fiddler, to modern swing propelled by thumping bass and the pianist’s dynamic patteming. In between, Lee’s malleable timbres join with Gauthier’s brusque lines for thematic elaboration, or add staccato runs and spiccato jumps to advance the rhythm. On the Bones of the Homegoing Thunder is the most spectacular tune. It manages to wrap an exposition and recapitulation of temple bell peals and mournful cello runs around walking bass lines, kinetic piano runs plus string-clipping and triple-stopping from cello and violin.

Lee’s octet CD is less formalized, though no less eclectic, but democratic in its solonig. Both guitarists are partial to folky twangs as well as Hard Rock-like distortions; the horns produce R&B-like vamps plus procesional harmonies; Turner on flugelhorn is the languid melodist; and van der Schyff constantly produces R&B-like vamps plus processional techniques than Bentley on “Spiller Alley”, while the multi functions of Masaoka’s many-stringed koto negate the need for drums. Ironically, despite the textures of the venerable Japanese instrument, and unlike “Continuation”, this CD has almost no Asian reflections. Expert in rasgueado and chromatics, Masaoka treats her koto as if it is a combination harp, 12-string and six-string guitar. Bringing out node striations as well as the sounds of the notes struck - as does Lee - the string duo attacks and touches timbres to mutate the program as Ochs enlivens his work with wide octave jumps, staccato figurations, and circular breathing. Climaxing the session during the 18 minute title tune, the three criss-cross each other’s lines and runs, off-setting or cushioning when needed. With Ochs pepping and shrilling arpeggios, Masaoka unleashes a torrent of cascading tones and Lee exposes multi-string runs. The cumulative consequence showcases imperfectly formed but not unpleasant textures from each. Operating in triple counterpoint, blurry interaction comes into focus, with the end result trilled, swept and resonated into a stripped-down mutual rapprochement. While each musician’s skill melds to produce these notable CDs, each would be unthinkable without Lee’s talents and interactive expertise.

POT POURRI

Bataclan! Denis Plante; Mathieu Lussier; Catherine Perrin ATMA ACD2 2581

I almost fell off my chair when I began to listen to the opening track from this new release. Astor Piazzolla’s Libertango is a familiar work - I’ve heard the late great bandoneonist/composer perform it, I own his recording of it, I’ve played it and a number of my students play it - but I have never heard it like this! Harpsichordist Catherine Perrin plays the familiar melody with such aplomb that my interest is tweaked though I’m a little confused about the instrumentation. Gradually the other two instrumentalists, bandoneonist Denis Plante, and bassoonist/early music specialist Mathieu Lussier join in, and the stage is set for some fascinating albeit at times totally odd tracks of Latin flavoured originals and covers. The experimentation with instrumentation is the key here. Both Plante and Lussier are composers too. Their contribution of pieces here are the most successful tracks. Lussier’s Fantaísie is a strong, wistful work that walks the thin line of popular and classical music in its contrapuntal writing. Tango a Los Niñeron from Plante’s “Le Tombeau D’Astor” is a comically tongue in cheek take on tangos. Both composers act as arrangers too, with their takes on Piazzolla, Villa-Lobos, Ayala and Falu respectable though not as intriguing as their own works.

Even though the performances and production qualities are superb, and the instrumental grouping results in an odd timbre, and the occasional thin sound. This aside, “Bataclan!” is worth a listen to hear smart musicians experiment intelligently. Tiina Kilk

OLD WINE IN NEW BOTTLES

Fine Old Recordings Re-released

By Bruce Surtees

Thanks to the readers who wrote about last month’s column in which I said WBEN-FM is the choice of musical listeners in our area. I meant WNEF-FM at 94.5 or on their web site.

A pleasant surprise on Great Voices of the Golden Age (Medici Arts DVD, EDV1333) was the opportunity to see Dutch soprano Grü Brouwenstijn (1905-1999) singing Wagner. Two songs from the Wesendonck-Lieder are followed by Isolde’s Liebestod, recorded live in 1969 during a concert in Paris conducted by Charles Bruck. She possessed a rich voice, an Ingrid Bergman-like countenance and a stage presence that together attracted conductors Kemperer, Karajan, Beecham and others. I wish there were more from her on this disc which includes Gundula Janowiz, Irmgard Seefried, Gafina Viscnevskaya, Rita Streich and Christa Ludwig.

Christa Ludwig has an excellent DVD containing Die Winterreise and part of a Mozart Master Class (Arthaus DVD 102147). Schubert’s song cycle which is set to the two cycles by Wilhelm Müller is an astonishing
realisation of the human condition. Traditionally sung by a male voice, it is no less poignant from a female voice, particularly from an artiste of Ludwig’s calibre. She had them transposed to her natural vocal range so that “... it was my voice and not an artificial voice created just so you can sing something in the original version... I maintain that this is the winter’s journey of a soul and not that of a man or a woman.” Recorded in Athens in 1994, this is an exceptional, devoted performance reflecting a total empathy with the thoughts and implications of the texts.

For those who wish a male voice for Die Winterreise, the DVD of Thomas Quasthoff with pianist Daniel Barenboim, issued a couple of years ago, is the finest I’ve ever seen or heard (DG 0734049). Filmed in the Berlin Philharmonie on 22 March 2005, the disc also contains some interviews and rehearsals. We are privy to singer and accompanist freely exchanging ideas and arriving at meaningful interpretations of matchless intensity.

Daniel Barenboim is the conductor of his West-Eastern Divan Orchestra in a new DVD of the Leonora Overture No.3 and the Beethoven Ninth (Medici Arts 2055528). This was a concert given in the Berlin Philharmonie on 22 January 2008. The program opens with the Beethoven Violin Concerto followed by an encore of the Sarabande from Bach’s Partita No.2 for solo violin and finally the Tchaikovsky Sixth Symphony (Medici Arts 2072514 for Blu-ray; 2072518 for DVD). All three works are in the stratosphere of superlative interpretations and performances, quite faultless, I thought. The deeply felt performance of the symphony, played without any histrionics, immediately joins the very short list of the greatest on record. Frankly, I didn’t believe that Ozawa had it in him. Mutter has never played better or more brilliantly than she does here, employing the Fritz Kreisler cadenza in the first movement. Her fans, as well as lovers of the concerto will be beside themselves. As are abetted by the best sound ever accorded these pieces. The camera work demonstrates how far the art has progressed over the years, in this case seen from the Blu-ray disc. If you are yet undecided about Blu-ray then this may well be the tipping point for you.

Last year was the centenary of the birth of Olivier Messiaen, the French composer whose music is still an enigma for the majority of world’s classical music lovers. He was also a teacher who led his pupils into the captivating and alluring, yet knotty ways of departure from the establishment. He was an organist and, more significantly, an ornithologist. Significant because he was fascinated by bird songs and believed birds to be natural horn musicians. Maybe they are. He notated bird songs around the world and ardently incorporated transcriptions into his works as if they were divinely obliged to do so. His best known work probably is the Quartet for the End of Time which he wrote while a prisoner of war for short time in 1940 after the fall of France in WW2. The combination of instruments was dictated by the available players; piano, violin, cello and clarinet. As an aside, during a conversation, an interview, I asked conductor Ricardo Chailly this question: “You work in a record store. A grandmother asks for a recording to introduce her nine year old granddaughter to classical music. What do you give her?” Without any hesitation whatsoever he answered, The Turangalilla Symphony. Not his recording, but the ‘definitive’ version conducted by Myung-Whun Chung is included in Olivier Messiaen Complete Edition issued by Deutsche Grammophon in France on 32 CDs in a very neat little box (DG 4801333), available in a limited edition. At a special low price, here are all Messiaen’s published works performed by a host of well known musicians, far too numerous to list here. Indeed, un vrai Banquet céleste.
April Is Opera Month
continued from page 12


1952: Trouble in Tahiti. This one-act comic opera by Leonard Bernstein is part of the concert series in the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre of the Four Seasons Centre. Baritone Jon-Paul Décosse (Sam) and mezzo-soprano Megan Latham (Dinah) are joined by a trio of jazz vocalists. In this satire on American suburban married life, Dinah and Sam face marital breakdown, from which the latest movie release “Trouble in Tahiti” is their only escape. The opera plays from noon to 1pm on April 23. Admission is free.

1957: West Side Story. For more Bernstein one need only head over to the Stratford Festival, where “West Side Story” begins previews on April 11. The show opens on June 5 and runs until October 11. Paul Nolan is Tony, Chilina Kennedy is Maria and Tessa Alves is Anita. Stratford last presented “West Side Story” in 1999 at the Avon Theatre. This time it’s at the larger Festival Theatre directed by Chicagoan Gary Griffin. See www.stratfordfestival.ca for more.

1984: Sunday in the Park with George. The Shaw Festival continues its exploration of Stephen Sondheim with this meditation on artist Georges Seurat (1859-91) and his creation of the pointillist masterpiece “Un dimanche après-midi à l’île de la Grande Jatte” (1884). While Act 1 concerns itself with Seurat, Act 2 focuses on his great-grandson George, also an artist, who comes to learn about art from the ghosts of the past. The musical stars Stephen Sutcliffe as Georges/George with Julie Martell as his muse Marie/Dot and a strong cast including, Neil Barclay, Kyle Blair, Patty Jamieson, Gabrielle Jones and Jay Turvey. The production is conducted by Paul Sportelli and directed by Alisa Palmer. Previews begin April 1, with the show opening May 22 and playing until November 1 at the Royal George Theatre, Niagara-on-the-Lake. Visit www.shawfest.com.

1996: Ruth. Arcady, an ensemble dedicated to the recording and performance of the music of Canadian composer Ronald Beckett, will perform his “Ruth” written to a libretto by Roger Bayley, the first in the composer’s trilogy of religious music dramas that includes “John” (1997) and “I Am...” (1998). The CD of “Ruth” employs a number of soloists, a chorus of 28, a youth chorus of 44, string quintet, keyboards and percussion. For church performances the forces are reduced to violin, cello and percussion with Beckett himself leading from the keyboard. The opera will be performed at Forward Baptist Church, 455 Myers Road, Cambridge, on April 24. For tickets, call 519-220-1542. A second performance will take place at the Central Presbyterian Church, 97 Wellington Street, in Brantford on June 5. Both performances feature Marion Samuel-Stevens as Ruth, Michael York as Boaz and Christopher Fischer as the Narrator. Visit the Arcady website (www.arcady.ca)

As if full opera performances were not enough there are also several opera and music theatre concerts on hand. The University of Toronto Opera Division hosts “Why Can’t You Behave?” a revue of the songs of Cole Porter and witticisms of Dorothy Parker April 3-4 (www.music.utoronto.ca), and renowned diva Renee Fleming with Harriute Hoell at the piano gives a concert of art songs by Dutilleux, Messiaen, Richard Strauss and others at Roy Thompson Hall on April 17 (www.roythomson.com).
Pearl, cont'd. from p. 10

has been very challenging. I love playing the boy. It's been fun to slip into that Oliver Twist costume and the short-hair wig. It is freeing - I can flounce round and be boish.

What were you like as a kid? I was a tomboy - totally.

Did you sing?

I did. I was artistic, but I was also very athletic. I loved sports and played them all. But I also did voice lessons. I can remember having to cut out of basketball practice early, and the other girls would say, "Singing lessons? How weird!" and they would giggle.

Were your parents interested in music?

They were, though not opera. They listened to popular music - singers like Frank Sinatra, musicals and light pops. But we all subscribed to the Hamilton Philharmonic concerts. Now my parents love opera, and that's great. They have become opera fans through following my career.

How did you end up in opera?

I discovered opera on my own - you often find that with singers. I just liked to sing. One of my teachers said, "That's quite a voice you have," and led me towards the classical side.

I was a ham. I liked doing everything, not just singing. I just wanted to be on stage, so I was in musicals and plays from an early age. My idol was Julie Andrews, but I loved the Sonny and Cher show, and I adored Carol Burnett. I wrote to her and said, "I want to be like you". She wrote back - well, it was probably her publicist - telling me I should go to university. And it was in university that I discovered the Met broadcasts and the whole opera scene.

Do you feel a need to be on stage?

Yes, it's a powerful drug being on stage. I think that's why singers like Placido and Edita can't stop, even though they could comfortably retire. Something compels them to keep doing it. It's their lifeblood. But then there are singers who sing past their sell-by date - maybe they have developed a wobble, or the power of their voice has diminished. I hope I'm never one of them. I will be happy to retire, because I want to teach. Like Joan Sutherland, I want to go out with a bang - at my peak.

For a soprano who does the big dramatic roles, your voice is remarkably light and clear, and your vibrato is so fast. It takes a lot of work. If my vibrato ever got unfast I would worry about it.

Have you done much baroque music?

In our recital Laura and I sang some Purcell duets. In the past a lot of singers with these big voices like Maureen Forrester would open recital with a Handel aria. Jon Vickers loved to do that - and why not? I guess today they sound old-fashioned. Do you enjoy Handel?

I do. I just want to chill out. I listen to Handel, or Bach. Those are for me the meditative composers. That's pure, fine music, and it's cleansing for me. I just love it. So I enjoy Tafelmusik, and they're just around the corner. It would be great to sing with them.

Are you interested in Handel opera roles you would like to do?

It's my fantasy to do Alcina. But I think my voice is maybe one number too heavy. Coltraruta is not my forte. I do have to do it in some roles, and I try to manage it as best I can.

There were splendid passages in your Fidelio. Those little bits were challenging. I think my voice is most suited to long stretching lines. That's why I love Richard Strauss so much.

You sing so many different types of parts and composers. Even if you're not singing Bellini. But I did! Laura and I did a big sections of Norma in our recital in Hamilton. I did 'Casta diva', and then we did 'Mira, o Norma'. It was wonderful, and Laura is a great Adalgisa. I actually contemplated doing Norma when I was asked to record it. I had to think long and hard. If I had a year or even six months to devote myself to it, it could be possible. But my schedule doesn't allow me the time to fine-tune and perfect it.

What roles are you asked to do that you would never?

I wouldn't do Brunnhilde or Isolde. And Turandot - forget it. You need a lot of heft for those big climaxes in 'In questa reggia'. Strauss and Wagner. Canada produces a disproportionately large number of accomplished singers - do you have any idea why?

The training here is excellent, and there are opportunities like the COC Ensemble. People assume that I studied in Europe, but I am trained in Canada. I went to Western, then the University of Toronto. I have great teachers like Mary Morrison, I still work with her.

Morrison has taught so many of Canada's top singers. But it's interesting that in her own career as a singer she didn't do much opera. No, Mary went into new music. So I have to watch it because I don't champion it in the way she does. She would be thrilled if I brought in one of those crazy modern pieces. I admire that she can do it - it takes a lot of brain work.

What makes her such a great teacher?

She has a real understanding of the voice. She tailors her approach to your voice so that when you come to her with a problem she can dissect it. It's not a set technique for every singer. It's a dedication to training. And she is tireless. She always has time for you, even if you need to come in on a Sunday morning. Unfortunately I don't get a chance to go to Mary as much as I would like. I do think you always need a teacher. When singers say, "Oh no, I don't go to a teacher anymore. I am past that," I think, one is never past that.

Edita Gruberova still goes for voice lessons and she is over sixty.

Are you doing many recitals these days?

Not at the moment. It's hard to fit them in, though I do love recitals. But with the amount of operatic performances I do, it's hard to switch gears. For a recital I need a lot of prep time. I don't want to be singing Fidelio and then two days, or even a week, later give a recital. I sometimes sit down at the piano and sing Schubert, and have just a lovely time. And if something comes up in lieder I am happy to do it. But I've come to accept that I am an opera singer. And that's fine with me - opera is my place right now.
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