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Make it a double!

Double volley

There is, sure as anything, a double volley of questions I'm going to have to deal with over the phone before I write my next editorial.

The first volley will start about a week and a half (from now). I'm writing this on November 25th: "But when did you stop publishing a January WholeNote?" The questioners will be concert presenters, and their tone will range from outraged to disbelieving. "Um, we never have published a separate January issue" I will reply.

"But we have a January concert that didn't make it into the listings!" they will say. (I have to confess it's secretly gratifying to think how disappointed some of them will be.) "We were counting on it!"

"Well, the good news is you should send the listing anyway," I will soothingly say. "Because we announced to our readers in my December editorial (and everyone reads my editorial) that this year we will be updating the January listings on our website before the end of December." (Because, even after fourteen years, there are some presenters who still haven't figured out that we never have published a separate January issue.)

The second volley will be a variation on the same theme, but will start in the last days of December and continue for a week or so into January. The questioners this time will be faithful concert goers and their tone will range from grumpy to grumpy. "Where's my January WholeNote?" they will ask. "I've checked all the usual places!"

"You mean you didn't read my December editorial?" I will say (making no effort to hide my disappointment).

On behalf of all of us here at WholeNote, to all of you, much joy in the music you give and receive over the next two months. (And remember, check our website at the end of December.)

A dram too much?

We've had some great comments on November's Talisker cover (including the sharp suggestion that our designer must have had a dram too much of the featured ensemble's namesake brew). There are sharp eyes out there, too, along with the tongues! One person pointed out that the person framed by the harp in the top left (unnamed in our caption) is soprano Teri Dunn, and that the violinist's arm, mid-left, should have been credited as belonging to none other than Cathy Riches, Terry Robbins, Bruce Surtees, Robert Tomas, Ken Waxman, Dianne Wells

David Perlman, editor
Andrew Burashko is the Artistic Director of Toronto’s Art of Time Ensemble. This year marks the organization’s 10th anniversary season. Art of Time is known for its unconventional pairing of classical music with unwitting artistic bedfellows: rock’n roll, jazz, pop, poetry, experimental film, modern dance … Virtually any contemporary art form that the human spirit has thus far conceived can find its way onto an Art of Time concert program. The result? Audience alchemy that sets Toronto’s “all-the-usual-suspects” classical music scene on its ear.

Not surprisingly, Burashko has always placed the listener’s experience at the centre of his vision. “This whole idea is born in the ardent belief that all music is music, and that as such it all comes from the same creative place, and connects with the same place in the listener. Whether it’s classical or whatever, if it’s performed compellingly, it will connect, period.”

Art of Time attracts an eclectic blend of followers, concert by concert, then holds on to those who came to a given concert for the “other art” on that particular program. Quite an accomplishment in this day and age where the Toronto cultural scene is brimming and the arts are vying for people’s “disposable time” as much as for their disposable income.

Burashko started out with a desire to build a wider audience for classical music. It’s now turned into a mandate to put classical music into the non-classical world. The first ever Art of Time Ensemble was originally a one-off performance of contemporary and classical Russian composers, staged ten years ago, at the Glenn Gould studio. Burashko describes himself as a performer, who was trying to be an arts administrator, who never had the head space or time to think beyond a plan for the next rehearsal. “Basically I called everyone I knew – and eighty people showed up.”

Fast forward four years, and Art of Time was gaining much needed support and momentum. A grant from the Metcalf Foundation provided the resources for the beginning of an organizational infrastructure. At that time, the group made what Burashko calls their “major leap of faith” – moving from two one-off concerts a season at the Glenn Gould Studio to a three concert season, two performances each at Harbourfront Centre.

So what is it that’s so different, so special, or compelling about Art of Time? According to Ted Dyksra, performance artist, actor and musician, long-time friend and collaborator of Burashko, Art of Time is “one of the most unrecognized treasures in Toronto. We’re lucky that he hasn’t gone elsewhere. If he was in New York doing what he’s doing, you wouldn’t be able to get a ticket.” According to Peggy Baker, a founding catalyst, inspiration and collaborator with Art of Time, it’s about Burashko’s “unique and complete sense of musicianship. “It’s intellectual, physical, emotional, there’s a huge sense of urgency and spontaneity, as well as necessity, and he’s interested in pushing himself to the brink.”

According to Burashko, it comes down to two c’s: contrast and calibre. Contrast is not just quirky pairing, it’s about the particular synergies that emerge when two works of art come up against each other. Burashko’s own programming journey has led him to what he describes as “crazy stews of styles”.

Burashko uses the example of an all-Beethoven concert, “for someone who knows Beethoven and can appreciate the evolution in the different periods, they might be able to appreciate the contrasts, but to everybody else it all sounds the same.” On the other hand, if you play a Beethoven sonata after say, rock and roll, “everything about Beethoven is kind of revealed. You hear what is unique and special and amazing about Beethoven. You free the listener to experience something much deeper.” Transposing an anecdote into axiom – “the greater the contrast between two works, the more their nature reveals itself – the more you see something for what it is.”

The second “c” stands for calibre. “It’s one thing to have an idea, it’s another thing to communicate it.” Burashko pulls together a core team of international calibre artists including (but definitely not limited to – there are nearly eighty artists listed on the website) violinists Erika Raum, Steven Sitarski and Hugh Marsh, cellists David Hetherington and Yegor Dyachkov, violinist Steven Dann, pianist/composer, Jonathan Goldsmith, and bassist George Koller. Burashko has never invited anyone to participate whose music he didn’t know, but he constantly seeks new collaborators. He gives them free rein when it comes to arranging, editing or adding to the creative mix – a rare opportunity for many, and in
Burashko's mind, the dividends pay off "in spades. Most of these people live in the commercial world. For them to have an opportunity to create something completely of their own without limitations or guidelines, is a thrill. They are coming up with really interesting things, way more interesting than any pop music that I've heard. So it's not just a case of classical musicians accompanying the pop people, but it a much richer collaboration."

Casting and commissioning aside, there are always other wild cards in producing an Art of Time concert. "So much of it is just an intuitive balancing act - inside it feels like it should work - but there's no way to calculate or know until you actually experience it yourself. Sometimes the best elements are surprises that weren't part of what I imagined."

Aside from two years in Vancouver, and a few years commuting to New York for studies, Toronto has been Burashko's home for the past three decades. He is single (the father of a sixteen-year-old daughter who opted out of a music career). "It was completely with it - if you're not serious, and willing to sacrifice everything, then there's no point. So I thought, fine - being a doctor was a noble way to go." This love-hate relationship with his own talent continued to play out. Then, the following summer, long-time friend and fellow musician, Roman Borys, convinced a somewhat disillusioned Burashko to join him at the Banff Centre. That summer, Burashko met piano teacher/mentor, Marek Jablonski, and ultimately went back to music on his own terms.

The next decade was consumed by "the grind" of chasing a solo concert pianist career. Burashko found himself ripping through repertoire, learning ten times more music in a year than he'd ever learned before. His early successes stood him in good stead. He leveraged a considerable amount of unprocessed raw talent. "I never could bring myself to do the competitions, I did the solo thing, I worked hard. I really had to rewire and relearn. Until then I hadn't really thought about what I did. I was like a trained monkey - I was talented, I was able to absorb what people were telling me. One of the great things about music is that you can pull it off as a prodigy - unlike painting or writing - even though it comes from a very visceral place."

By 1990, Burashko was ready to pack it in again. He was getting two or three gigs a year. Then he met celebrated modern dancer Peggy Baker. Baker recalls their first meeting. "He just arrived business-like, briefcase in hand. He had a metronome, he took it out and put it on the piano, and he started asking about metronome markings. I just said to him, 'We will not be using a metronome whatsoever. We're going to get a feel for what you're playing and what I'm doing, and we're doing and find a meeting place somewhere in between.'" At the beginning, Burashko was so focused on being a concert pianist he had no idea of the impact Baker would have in shaping his future. Eighteen years of collaborations have bred a deep sense of mutual respect and admiration between both artists. Burashko credits much of his world-view in terms of experimentation to Baker. "As far as Art of Time goes, it was that relationship - the understanding it gave me of experimentation and the worlds associated with it - that was huge."

Burashko talks about making the quantum shift in thinking about programming in two
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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

dimensions, to three dimensions in 2003. Sandy Casonguay, then head of programming at Roy Thomson Hall/Macsey Hall, asked Burashko to open for k.d. lang. He had programmed a show with jazz singer, Melissa Stylianou, and wanted to push the boundaries even farther. “My mission was to bring classical music to a wider audience. I was still thinking, ‘there’s a jazz singer doing jazz songs, and here are the classical musicians, and maybe there could be an arrangement that involves some extra classical singers, something by themselves, something with the classical musicians’... not realizing at that point that you could create something synergistic, that would be a meaningful combination of something. I’m not into crossover stuff. I’m not into hearing classical musicians playing pop music or vice versa – and until that point I was still thinking in those terms.”

The three-dimensional impetus for blending pop with classical remains at the core of Burashko’s vision. The collaboration with Stylianou led to a programme with pop singer Sarah Slean, and Steven Page was a natural next choice for “tinkering with that particular kind of formula.”

In an effort to prove his point, Burashko programmed the Prokofiev violin sonata on the heels of a hell-raising Jerry Lee Lewis number for his season opener this year. “I thought people got it. People who didn’t even come to hear classical music got it ... I’m introducing a whole bunch of people to classical music in their world – in a context that is closer to their world than if they were to come into mine.”

Another pivotal performance for Art of Time was their production of Mauricio Kagel’s Variété, at the Gladstone Hotel in early 2004. This was a co-production with Volcano Productions that involved staging an eleven-movement avant-garde chamber work in the style of vaudeville, complete with aerialists, magicians and contortionists from Cirque du Soleil. The performance sold out three nights in a row, and garnered Kagel a Dora Award. Burashko counts these performances as “hugely satisfying experiences in terms of creating something new.”

Burashko is not however necessarily driven to constantly create anew. His feeling is that there’s so much great music already out there, and of the thirty-something programmes Art of Time has produced, “hardly anybody” has seen them all. Art of Time’s December show, Vive la Di’France, is essentially a repeat of a fall 2004, pre-Harbourfront Centre program. One of the works is a piece Peggy Baker commissioned from New York choreographer Doug Varone. Heaven is an abstract piece about memory that is set to César Franck’s Prelude, Fugue and Variation. It’s a piece where Burashko is not only a musician, he’s an actor, and he’s called on to endure a kind of invasion of space that goes above and beyond what might generally be considered normal in terms of a musician’s realm. Baker describes working through the choreography as “the most tenacious that Andrew and I have ever had in our working relationship. It’s not at all comfortable for Andrew. I’m all over him, sitting on the bench, draping over the piano, actually playing a few notes.”

The programme is a tribute to all things French. Burashko will perform Debussy’s Sonata for Cello and Piano with Yegor Dyachkov; Martin Tielli (of Rheostatics fame) has chosen a few songs of Jacques Brel to interpret; and in a gutsy move, Burashko has programmed Olivier Messiaen’s Quartet for the End of Time featuring clarinetist James Campbell. This near hour-long piece of music is about as far as you can get from “accessible” classical music. It demands a great deal of emotional investment from both the performers and its audience. Recalling the 2004 performance, Burashko admits that “it felt like a risk. It was a really important concert in that it encouraged me, getting back to this premise that if you create an environment that is not intimidating to the listener, it will move you because it’s powerful. It’s not like sitting through a whole night of classical music. A whole lot of people who had never heard classical music, let alone Messiaen, were just blown away by this work. I love that.”

What’s on the horizon for Burashko and Art of Time? In short, more. “There are a lot more musicians whom I would like to work with, whom I haven’t worked with – I would like to keep evolving towards something grander and more sort of unified.”

Touring is another virtually uncharted territory for the group. The release of their upcoming CD with Sarah Slean will start a whole other wheel turning. Last month the group went into studio with Steven Page to record last summer’s extraordinary coupling of cover songs with this modern-day pop icon. “The beauty of this Art of Time thing is that it can co-exist simultaneously in so many different worlds – ideally it would be great to tour more than one project at time.”

True to form, Burashko sums up his goals for the Ensemble in a deceptively simple statement: “I just want to be able to sell out the DuMaurier [Enwave] for two nights.” Set in contrast to his vision, and ambition, this statement is transformed into an expression of the yearning of one artist’s mission to make classical music matter to more people, one person at a time.
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As a flautist, composer, conductor, and teacher Robert Aitken has had an impact on musical life in Canada that is hard to over-estimate. But his highest profile locally is with New Music Concerts, which he founded in 1971 with composer Norma Beecroft. As its long-time artistic director, he has put Toronto on the map as an international centre for contemporary music. He has attracted the top composers in the world here - like Iannis Xenakis, Witold Lutoslawski, Pierre Boulez, György Ligeti, John Cage, Elliott Carter, Toru Takemitsu, Helmut Lachenmann and Mauricio Kagel. As well, he has premiered many pieces by Canadian and international composers. His own compositions have all been published and recorded. As a conductor in Canada he leads the New Music Concerts ensemble, and has been involved in a great variety of performances including the turbulent Canadian Opera Company production of R. Murray Schafer's Patria 1 in 1987.

Yet ironically, outside Canada, Aitken is known more for his virtuosic flute-playing in a broad range of repertoire from the baroque, classical and romantic eras than for his work in contemporary music. As well, his conducting and teaching take him throughout the world. In fact, for sixteen years, up until 2004, he was professor of flute at the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik in Freiburg, Germany. His technique of flute-playing has even been the subject of a Ph.D. thesis, "A Description and Application of Robert Aitken’s Concept of the Physical Flute," by Robert Billington.

Born in 1939 in Nova Scotia, Aitken counts as his main teachers Nicholas Fiore in Toronto and Marcel Moyse at Marlboro, and then in France. For many years Aitken played in the Lyric Arts Trio with his wife, pianist Marion Ross, and soprano Mary Morrison. He also teamed up with pianists like Glenn Gould and William Aide, harpist Nettia Goodman and harpsichordist Greta Kraus. Aitken joined the Toronto Symphony in 1965 but left five years later to pursue his solo career. It was the next year that he started New Music Concerts.

I met with him at the office of New Music Concerts in downtown Toronto. Before I even had a chance to ask him a question, he jumped in to voice his frustration over having so many things to get done before he heads off to Europe to give concerts and sit on a competition jury.

Aitken: There’s so little time to do everything. That was always the story of my life, and it hasn’t changed now that I’m older. I love everything that I’m doing — there’s almost nothing that I don’t like. But there’s not enough time to enjoy it, and sometimes not enough time to do it to my total satisfaction.

Margles: Is it difficult to find the time to compose?

I’ve been trying for a couple of years now to finish a piece for the American Flute Association. The phone keeps ringing, or personal things come up. You can’t just shove them away in order to compose, because our families are a big part of our lives.
I’m also trying to finish a chapter I’m writing on John Weinzweig, who was my composition teacher at the University of Toronto. It’s for a book that John Beckwith and Brian Cherney are editing on his music. He was a great orchestration teacher. When you look at his music, it looks almost naïve, and it’s never virtuosic. But you can get into real trouble performing it. So I’m calling my chapter, “How To Play Weinzweig”.

On top of everything else you’re involved in, you do the pre-concert interviews with guest composers and players before performances at New Music Concerts. Do you enjoy doing those?

I’m always very nervous about those talks - more nervous about the talks than the concerts. So I’m in a bad mood most of the afternoon before the concerts just worrying about them. I’m always trying to get someone else to do them. But people say they really like them because I ask questions that are sometimes surprising.

You ask questions that I want to hear the answers to. I try to ask questions that I want to have the answers to. Have they ever been published?

Unfortunately most of them were not recorded. But we did just produce a video of a pre-concert talk I did with Elliott Carter, along with a recording of our most recent concert of his music. He has his 100th birthday in December.

And he’s still writing. You’ve had such a long relationship with him - do you find his music has changed?

It’s warmer and more affectionate. Yet he hasn’t compromised his style. Are you surprised that such a supposedly difficult composer has achieved so much success? Now - but before, people stayed far away from playing his music. That changed when he started to write single-voiced pieces in the early 1990’s.

He wrote his first solo piece, Scrivo in Vento for me in 1991. Many of us had been asking him for a long time to write a solo piece for them. But because he only wrote contrapuntal music, he didn’t want to. I was living in Freiberg, and he had come to Basel, which is close by, to bring some music to the Sachar Institute, where they keep all his manuscripts. When we went out for supper, I said he should write a fifth movement for Bach’s Sonata for Flute Solo because it ends with the bourrée, and Bach never ended with a bourrée. He listened - he’s a very good listener, and he remembers everything. About three weeks later, he phoned me and said that the piece was almost done, but he just had a few questions. I said, “You’re kidding!” Now he writes solo pieces without end.

Carter, Boulez, Xenakis, Lutoslawski - you’ve given Toronto audiences a chance to hear the most important composers of our time. Do you find that the composers ever get influenced by their experiences here with New Music Concerts?

For a lot of people we’ve brought, it was their first time in North America. When oboist Heinz Holliger made his first trip here, we had Carter on the program with him. Heinz is very outspoken. He said, “Why are you doing Elliott Carter? That old fogey - his music’s not interesting.” But then, after doing that program, he became a great lover of Carter’s music, one of Carter’s biggest supporters. He phones him probably every week. That’s amazing, because he had been totally against Carter until then.

Holliger’s career strikes me as being similar to yours because, as well as performing contemporary music and composing, he played the whole range of repertoire including baroque.

I just wish that I would get concerts playing traditional music in Toronto today. I seem to be labelled a contemporary music specialist here. Before, especially when harpsichordist Greta Kraus was alive, I played
equal amounts of traditional and contemporary music. Greta and I played together every
Thursday afternoon for maybe ten years. We did a concert series called Flute Through the
Ages at the St. Lawrence Centre that would sell out in a day. In other countries I frequently
perform and conduct concerts of traditional repertoire. I recently took the Wiener
Konzertverein, which is a chamber orchestra out of the Vienna Symphony, on a ten concert
tour. The repertoire was not contemporary at all - I played a C.P.E. Bach concerto, and
conducted Grieg's Holberg Suite.

Is it tricky for a modern flute-player to perform baroque music today, with so many period
instrument players specializing in baroque music?

People don't seem to want to listen to baroque music played on modern instruments. At the moment I
don't know any flutists that are playing both contemporary and baroque. Most of
us are too inhibited now to play baroque music on our modern instruments.

Is it because of the style of playing?

Greta had a style of playing like Wanda Landowska she used the same kind of harpsichord. In a way it was very romantic, but it was fabulous to listen to. The balance was always excellent. Plus, we played with a natural rubato nobody plays with today. I suspect they don't want to, but I'm not sure if anybody can.

If Greta were still alive I would do a baroque concert in Toronto, I bet you it would come under super, super criticism - but I also bet that people would like it.

Do you have problems with period performance styles today?

Oh, lots of problems. Especially when string players crescendo and decrescendo on every note, and then the flute players copy. They say that's the way people played in that time. But how do they know for sure? And even if the strings did do that, well, why would the winds do it just because the strings did it? Anyways, I'm sure that the best string players did everything in their power to not do that. The mere fact that it happens by drawing a baroque bow across a string doesn't mean that they actually played like that. And there are wonderful baroque flute players like Barthold Kuijken and Conrad Hartstaller who don't do that.

Before period instruments; were modern flute players paying much attention to authenticity in baroque music?

Jean-Pierre Rampal, I think, did. I went to him to study French baroque. He was fabulous at Couperin, Rameau, Blavet and all the French baroque composers.

Would his style of playing be appreciated by period performers today?

Not with the authentic period-instrument people - not a hope!

Why?

Because he played in a natural musical way. But today, people still love his old recordings. They have lots of improvised ornaments which relate well to period playing, except that he kept sticking in diatonic runs all the time. We know that wasn't done, because we have lots of other examples where composers wrote out the ornamentation that they wanted. But when it came to trills and ornaments of that type, no one could beat him. Then, nobody today, either - he was fabulous.

How do you choose pieces to program for New Music Concerts?

We try to show what is most interesting among the current directions in contemporary music. From the very beginning the series did not just reflect my taste or Norman's. So when we did Grand Pianola Music of John Adams, it wasn't my direction in music, but we picked one of his greatest pieces, and it really spoke for him. The same with Steve Reich - when he began to write phasing music, I thought "Come on - show that to children, but not to us." I was totally against him for a long time. But after Russell Hartenberger and Bob Becker, who were anchors in Reich's own ensemble, moved to Toronto, they kept pressuring me to do his music. I realized we had to because he was becoming so famous.

I had a really big fight with Reich on the phone, because he didn't want to have anyone except his own group performing his music. I said, "We have very good musicians in Toronto. We will learn the music perfectly. We have all the instruments - everything you need."

He said, "But they'll never be able to learn this music - it's so difficult."

So I said, "If you don't let us play this music, what's going to happen when you die? Nobody is going to know how to play your music. Don't you think it's time that someone plays it besides your own ensemble?" So finally he agreed. Our concert was the first time any ensemble played Steve Reich's music that was not his own group. Of course, we were very well coached, having Russell and Bob involved, and Steve himself came for at least a week. After that concert, I had a different appreciation of his music. I still think the phasing is just too obvious. But Drumming, I think, is a great piece, and it does employ phasing.

How do you judge today's music?

I prefer pieces that are provoking and challenging. But I have a lot of difficulty today judging what is a good piece and what is not a good piece. It may be easier to say what is an effective piece and what is not an effective piece.

I remember when we did John Cage's Roaratorio in Convocation Hall with Cage reading James Joyce, and loudspeakers all over the place. The first night we had 1,300 people - imagine, for a contemporary music concert! The next night there was a terrible snowstorm and still 800 people came. John Beckwith showed up on his cross-country skis. That was 1982. In those years we had lots of pieces that were really on the edge. We could afford to take chances. Today, whenever we want to do something controversial, we always have to worry about whether we can get the money.

Are composers themselves taking fewer chances today?

Absolutely - I think the computer did that. Computers kill the imagination in music. When you compose with a computer, it's too much trouble to do something like complicated rhythms or really wide intervals. Unfortunately, there's now a whole generation that has been trained by using a computer. Any time I'm on a jury for an international composition contest, we can always tell which pieces were composed on the computer.

But it's harder for composers today because they have to make their own rules. There are people taking chances, but the funny thing is, the chances they are taking are the same ones that were being taken in the 60's and 70's, because it's all cyclic. Often when I look at those pieces by composers who think they are doing something really risky, all I see is something that was done before.

Right from the beginning of New Music Concerts you set the mark high, presenting Italian composer Luciano Berio in your very first year. That was actually our first concert. Before that concert, we put little ads in the newspaper that just said, "Berio is coming."

Do you think Toronto is good for new music?

It really is. There are a lot of groups now, not just us, so I do wish that our councils would recognize our value. We had a couple of years where they cut us down, seriously reduced our grants - not the Toronto Arts Council but the Ontario Arts Council and the Canada Council. Now we are creeping up again, but we are still not up to the level that we were at in 1982.

Are there many organizations in the world devoted to contemporary music like yours?

There are actually lots in Europe, but they have salaried players. The musicians play only contemporary music all the time.

Does that affect the way they play?

I think the music comes better with musicians who play a mixture of repertoire. With New Music Concerts, I cannot think of any occasion where a composer who came here didn't say we had given the best performances he had ever had of his pieces. If musicians play only con-
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Rising Stars Series
Pandora's Locker (WORLD PREMIERE)
BRIAN CURRENT, conductor
JENNIFER PARR, stage director
The Glenn Gould School presents the world premiere of Dean Burry’s Pandora’s Locker, a new music opera commissioned by The GGS, written for and about the most dramatic and non-fictional people on earth: teenagers. Inspired by the Greek myth of Pandora’s Box, this contemporary youth opera is set within an inner-city high school and cast upon a canvas of urban music and electronics. Music and libretto by composer Dean Burry.
Tickets: Free!

Friday, December 12, 2008, 8:00 pm
Great Artists Series
PAUL KANTOR & VIRGINIA WECKSTROM, violin & piano
Join by members of ARC (BRYAN EPPERSON, cello and JOAQUIN VALDEPENAS, clarinet).
Programme: MENDELSSOHN Piano Trio, FRANCIS POULENCE and PETER (PDQ BACH) SCHICKELE
Tickets: $30 adult, $10 students

Sunday, January 18, 2009, 2:00 pm
Great Artists Series
MONICA WHICHER & LIZ UPCHURCH, soprano & piano
Hear this exceptional soprano as she joins pianist LIZ UPCHURCH in an afternoon of outstanding artsongs.
Tickets: $30 adult, $10 students

Friday, December 6, 2008, 8:00 pm
Rising Stars Series
Academy Symphony Orchestra
DAVID VISENTIN, conductor and artistic director
Featuring senior string students of the Young Artists Performance Academy of The Royal Conservatory.
Programme: VIVALDI, ATTERBERG, PART and HAYDN
Tickets: Free!

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Tickets: Free!

Tuesday, January 20, 2009, 8:00 pm
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. The second half of the performance will feature the GGS Opera's Pandora’s Locker.
Tickets: Free!

Friday, December 12, 2008, 8:00 pm
Great Artists Series
LEON FLEISHER, piano
Solo repertoire first half, second half performing Brahms Piano Quintet in F minor with members of ARC (ERIKA RAUM & MARIE BERARD, violins, STEVEN DANN, viola and BRYAN EPPERSON, cello).
Tickets: $30 adult, $10 students

Thursday, December 11, 2008, 11:00 am
World Music Concerts
GENTICORUM, Québécois folk
One of the most sought-after proponents of Québécois musical culture.
Tickets: $20 adult, $10 students

Thursday, December 11, 2008, 11:00 am
World Music Concerts
GENTICORUM, Québécois folk
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temporary music there is a risk that they just do what's on the page, and forget about doing something with the music. But our musicians are so accomplished in all repertoire that they bring interpretive abilities to contemporary music. It's not only with New Music Concerts -- it's like that all over Toronto.

It's also because we try to rehearse enough, which doesn't just mean getting the notes right and in tune. It's to be familiar enough with the piece that when you are playing your line, you know what's going on somewhere else. If you can hear the counterpoint or some chords that are against you, then you play differently.

You usually manage to bring the composer here -- is that important?

From the first day our intention was to always have the composers here. Without the composer, you don't have a hope in hell of knowing what you're doing is correct. The players play with more enthusiasm, because they want to please him. And when they have questions, they can get the answer right away. When it is possible to speak to the composer, that's the best situation of all.

Does being a composer have an effect on your approach to playing?

I use a lot of analysis when I'm playing. Marcel Moyse, the flute teacher who had the biggest influence on me by far, taught us analysis. He made us aware of how a piece was composed so that we had a better idea of how to play it. Like any language, if you don't understand the musical language of the composer, you can't understand what's being said. And if the performer doesn't understand the language there is no hope of the audience understanding the piece being performed.

Does the fact that you write music influence your teaching?

When I teach flutists, basically, I teach them how to analyze the piece. All a teacher can teach you at any time is how to listen and how to teach yourself -- those are the most important things you can teach anybody.

Have your compositions changed much over the years?

Even the titles I'm using show a change in my attitude towards composition. The piece I'm working on now is called Remembrances, and I'm calling the first movement Tsunami. The whole piece will certainly be more accessible than any of the other pieces I have written. In what sense?

In the sense that I'm not choosing an obscure title and writing an obscure piece around it. Each of my pieces is quite different, although I like to think that all my music takes the listener to a world they didn't know, somewhere that they've never been before. Otherwise, why write the piece? But when I began to compose, I wanted to write pure music. Then I went around the world -- Japan, Hong Kong, Sri Lanka (which was Ceylon at the time), India, and Turkey. When I got home, I had so many musical experiences in my head that I needed to get them out. I had always been outspokenly against composers writing music influenced by other cultures, unless they were from those cultures. But after that trip I had to do it.

I wrote Remembrances for a flute orchestra of twenty-six flutes -- piccolos, C flutes, alto, bass and contrabass flutes. If I had decided to write for flute quartet, with just four parts, it would have been finished already. But I'm writing 26 parts.

Are these titles descriptive?

Tsunami is fairly literal at the beginning because a flute orchestra is fabulous for doing virtuosic things like cascades. The second movement, Solenmes, recalls the monastery in France which was assigned the job of researching and reestablishing the old Gregorian chant for the Roman Catholic Church. I learned about that from my University of Toronto days, when I studied paleography with Harvey Olnick. The first time I went to a church service at Solenmes it was beautiful beyond belief. Everything was sung. It was a total experience, with incense and so much atmosphere. That experience is still very big in my mind. Solenmes opens up like a cloud from a torrent of piccolos and low bass flutes to unison Gregorian. When you have that many flutes playing unison, they create a sound you will never forget.

What's slowing me up is the last movement, which I want to call Caracas. It's inspired by unbelievable Venezuelan flute players like Húscar Barradas. I think the greatest Latin flute playing by far is in Venezuela. It's tricky because I don't want to copy the style literally.

If you had to choose one aspect of music-making to concentrate on, what would that be? Practising the flute.

Do you mean performing?

Yes. I think as we get older, our ears become more acute, and we are much more critical. To be a good player, you have to be critical of yourself, so I am very critical. As I criticize myself, I think my playing gets better. I think I'm actually doing it better than ever before.

RECORDINGS and COMPOSITIONS

A list of Robert Aitken's many recordings is available on his website at www.bobaitken.ca, as is a list of his compositions.

UPCOMING PERFORMANCES

On Monday December 15, 2008 7:30 -- 9:30, Robert Aitken, along with New Music Concerts ensemble members Fujiko Imajishi, David Hetherington and Max Christie will be performing at the launch of a CD + DVD from New Music Concerts on NAXOS (8.559614) celebrating Elliott Carter's 100th birthday. The launch will take place in the Party Room, 1st Floor, 38 Avoca Ave (at the corner of St. Clair, 2 lights east of Yonge St). Admission is $60.00 (charitable receipt issued), and includes a complimentary copy of the CD + DVD, refreshments. Reservations are required through New Music Concerts on 416-961-9594.

Aitken will also be performing with New Music Concerts on Sunday March 29 2009, in a program entitled Roger Reynolds and his Protégés.

On April 19 2009, Aitken will be performing in a concert celebrating Talivaldis Kenins at the Glenn Gould Studio.

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BEAT BY BEAT

EARLY MUSIC

A moment with Mallon

by Frank Nakashima

Toronto’s Aradia Ensemble, under the direction of Kevin Mallon, plans to perform and record all of Antonio Vivaldi’s sacred music. So far, they’ve made three CDs (out of ten) of music rarely performed, perhaps never, in Canada. Mr. Mallon took a moment to chat.

FN: What would you say is special about Vivaldi’s sacred music, say, compared to his secular stuff?

KM: I know it’s odd, especially considering I’m a string player, but I think that Vivaldi’s sacred music is of a far higher quality than the secular works. I don’t think he’s unique in that regard – most composers of the time reserved their most profound efforts for music that worships God. Vivaldi was a priest, so I think that this is doubly so.

FN: Why so rarely performed? Anything to do with technical demands?

KM: Interesting question. Some of the music, the solo cantatas for example, is difficult, but most choral movements are easy enough to perform. I think the main reason for this music’s relative obscurity comes down to lack of good accessible editions. Even now, when there’s so much research into works of obscure composers and little-heard works of popular composers, performers are still slaves to the need for good musicological editions. Until recently, most of Vivaldi’s sacred music was not available or, if they were, only in bad editions. Thankfully, Ricordi has now published a scholarly new edition of all the works.

FN: What’s going to be in Volume 4? And after?

KM: Still working on it! I’ve got a bit of time because we won’t be recording any more in the cycle until 2010. Even Naxos is feeling the pinch and cautiously cutting back next year! I’ve been making at least 4-5 CDs per year over the last 10 years, but we are only making one CD next year, and that’s to complete Handel’s opus 6 concerti grossi.

But to answer your question – Volume 4 will in fact include the famous Gloria RV 589. We’ve also started another cycle to record all of Purcell’s theatre music.

FN: The composers in your next program are familiar, but not the specific works. Are they recently discovered? Not popular? Too difficult?

KM: To answer, I think I want to go back to the musicologists, bless their hearts! At the time when music was only to be found in manuscripts, we relied on the musicologists to sort through the material and tell us what was worthy of performance! Of course, the most popular and accessible works come to attention first – Four Seasons, etc. But now, with nearly a century of good research behind us, it is important to re-assess things – in the case of Vivaldi, for example, to look more closely at the sacred music or the operas.

I’ve been trying to use the same principal in exploring more obscure works by other well-known composers – Purcell, Blow and Handel – hence the performance of three little-known anthems in our next concert (December 14): Welcome, Vicegerent of the Mighty King by Purcell; My song shall be alway of the loving kindness of the Lord by Handel; I beheld, and lo, a great multitude by Blow.

FN: You’ve got a lot of projects on the go. How is Aradia managing?

KM: We have financial concerns like most small organizations, but we’re working hard on the local, national and international scene, always with new plans and projects. Presently, we divide our Toronto performance time between the Gladstone Hotel (a more informal concert approach) and Church of the Blessed Sacrament (for larger works).

FN: Any collaborations happening?

KM: With Opera in Concert we present a different Baroque or Classical opera each year. This has resulted in performances of Handel’s Semele, Rinaldo, Tamerlano, Rameau’s Castor and Pollux, Vivaldi’s Orpheus, Mozart’s Zaide and upcoming, Haydn’s Il mondo della luna. Also, for three years, Aradia was orchestra-in-residence at the Grand River Baroque Festival.

Frank T. Nakashima can be reached at franknak@interlog.com.
Christmas Joy
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Canadian Children's Opera Chorus: www.canadianchildrensopera.com
Ann Cooper Gay, Artistic Director & Conductor
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John Austin | Brian Current |Bright Sheng | Marcos Balter | Elliott Carter |John Melby

Sunday March 29, 2009 | Roger Reynolds & His Protégés at Isabel Bader Theatre
David Swan | Robert Aitken | NMC Ensemble with electroacoustic processing
Roger Reynolds | David Felder | Chaya Czernowin | Juan Campoverde | Antonio Borges-Cañha

Saturday April 18, 2009 | The Wit of Jürg Wytenbach at Glenn Gould Studio

Introductions # 7:15 | Concerts # 8:00

www.NewMusicConcerts.com
Royal home-coming!

For three long years the Royal Conservatory of Music has been in makeshift temporary quarters in a Toronto Board of Education school building on Croatia Street near Bloor and Dufferin Streets. During that time, its building at 273 Bloor Street West has undergone extensive renovation and reconstruction, with a price tag near $100 million, covered mainly by generous gifts from private and corporate donors as well as some federal and provincial government support. This summer, with most of the work complete (except for the interior of the 1100-seat Koerner Concert Hall), the school moved into its new home.

Have the work, money and inconvenience been worth it? Will the new “bricks and mortar” make things better? What difference will all this make to students and faculty now and in the future? What will be possible that wasn’t possible before? With these questions in mind, I spoke to two very different people from the RCM: “Learning Through the Arts” manager Jeff Embleton, who gave me a tour of the building; and violin teacher and ARC (Artists of the Royal Conservatory) performer Marie Bérard.

It became clear over the course of Jeff Embleton’s tour that there were two equally important dimensions to the project—the tangible and the intangible. The tangible is easy to see and talk about. In addition to the concert hall, which I will write about next year, there are many new spaces and facilities. The new L-shaped building, which wraps around McMaster Hall, adds 130,000 sq. ft. to the original 60,000. The five-storey high atrium between the old and new buildings brilliantly bridges the old and the new: on the right, the cleaned up old south wall with café tables along it as you enter from Philosopher’s Walk; on the left, the new structure, with reception desk and glass display areas where historical instruments will be housed when not in use. It is almost a metaphor for Canada—human activity thriving in a vast empty space. Another impressive new space is the 900 square foot rehearsal room (large enough for a large choir and orchestra together), acoustically engineered to resemble the stage of the concert hall and completely separated acoustically from Bloor Street. It is also beautifully finished and will be equally effective as a performance space, a dual function that makes good sense. There are also many new practice studios with one and sometimes two grand pianos, and all wired for internet access. The old building has been completely renovated to the same standard of finish and acoustical separation as the new. It retains the character of the old building and at the same time feels new.

The intangible aspect of the project, while somewhat more subjective, is equally real. Writing about it, architect Marianne McKenna of Kumbicka Payne McKenna Blumberg Architects stated that “Our ambition for The Royal Conservatory was to create an environment that not only supports [the RCM’s] mission, but also motivates—the through beautiful spaces and superior acoustics—the students and the musicians to aspire to greater heights of performance.” The variety of spaces, ceiling heights, the striking choices of materials, especially wood, are indeed memorable. Bold repetitive grains in the veneers on doors, the subtly variegated pattern of the parquet floors, the dark stained, almost three dimensional wood throughout the large rehearsal room, and the completely refinished floors of the original building all work together to create an atmosphere that is beautiful, comfortable and at the same time dignified. Large windows provide an abundance of natural light and vistas of the city in all directions.

Everything is simply done but with a care and quality that one can feel. Even the one thing that might be accused of being gimmicky isn’t, because it is so whimsical and so organic: the incorporation of part of the west roof of the old building, including a dormer, into the interior of the northwest corner of the new building. While it is fun it is also instructive to be able to see up close something that could otherwise be seen only from the street, five stories below. The combined effect of these factors and many others is a place that people will enjoy, and which offers a variety of spaces and atmospheres to accommodate a variety of uses, from practising and rehearsal to large formal gatherings to spontaneous tête-à-têtes.

As a teacher and a member of the ARC Ensemble, Marie Bérard is at the centre of the activities that the new facility exists to support. She commented on the exhilaration she felt looking out the window as she was teaching, seeing the Royal Ontario Museum’s Michael Chin Lee Crystal, and feeling herself in the midst of a culturally dynamic metropolis. How, I asked, has this move to the new building affected her? In addition to her mention of the great view from her studio window, she commented that the atmosphere in the building, even the old building, is completely different from before the move to Croatia Street three years ago. The impact of the new environment is evident in making itself felt. The ARC Ensemble of which she is a member, has just returned from a tour to New York and Washington, acting as ambassadors for and promoters of the Conservatory. ARC’s performance in Toronto on November 7 kicked off an expanded performance program, which will continue at full throttle to the end of the second week of December, with master classes by Leon Fleisher, a lecture series on Beethoven by Anton Kuerti, performances by the Academy Symphony Orchestra on December 6, a new opera, “Pandora’s Locker,” on December 5, 11 and 13, the Quebec group, Genticorum, on December 11, and the RCM’s new “all-star” violin teacher Paul Kantor with pianist Virginia Weckstrom on December 12. This flurry of activity puts the renovation in its true context: not as an end in itself, but as a means to the RCM’s true purpose—great music making.

The new Royal Conservatory’s home is the product of a lot of effort by many people over a long period of time (planning began back in 1991) but the result is, in the words of the RCM’s own publicity, “a new vibrant cultural destination and... resource,” which will benefit generations to come. Kudos to the vision and tenacity of those behind this great gift to Canada’s cultural heritage!
FEBRUARY

A new performance series being launched by the Tubman Institute’s Performing Diaspora program, which will bring several internationally renowned African and Afro-Diasporic performance artists to York every year for public concerts as well as talks and workshops with students and the wider community”, says Amy Stewart of York’s Faculty of Fine Arts. Stay tuned for more info on this series in February.

DECEMBER

Karen Ages is a freelance oboist who has also been a member of several world music ensembles. She can be reached at KarenAges@thewholenote.com

Karen Ages

World View

Soul-full world

by Karen Ages

It's that time of year when you flip through the listings and find umpteen performances of Handel's famous Messiah. Well, here's one with a twist: Ballet Creole presents Soulful Messiah, December 5, 6 and 7 at the Fleck Dance Theatre (207 Queen Quay West). Set to a rhythm and blues version of Handel's work, Aretha Franklin, The Boys Choir of Harlem, Patti Austin and Gladys Knight lend their voices to the music, while the movement melds classical ballet, tap, jazz, African and Caribbean dance. Featured is tap dancer David Cox.

Best known for its biennial end-of-summer Festival of Jewish Culture, the Ashkenaz Foundation presents "Judeo-Spanish Songs from Bosnia", a concert featuring octogenarian Flory Jagoda, who will sing a variety of songs in Ladino (historically the language of many Sephardic Jews), December 6 at Glenn Gould Studio. Born in Sarajevo, she moved to the US in 1946, having survived the obliteration of her birth place's Jewish community. Known as "Keeper of the Flame" she has made it her mission to preserve the rich musical heritage of Bosnia's Jews. She'll be accompanied by members of Toronto's Jewish/Balkan fusion group Beyond the Pale, and others.

December 11, the RCM hosts Gentilcorum, one of Quebec's best known folk music ensembles. Recently back from touring the UK (and earlier this year a tour of Australia), their latest CD, La Ribournoise was nominated for Traditional Album of the Year by the Canadian Folk Music Awards. This trio combines fiddle, wooden flute, vocal harmonies, foot percussion, guitar and bass in repertoire ranging from traditional vocal tunes to original instrumental compositions. Pascal Gemme, Alexandre de Grosbois-Garand and Yann Falquet, performers.

Another, very different folk ensemble, Sisters of Sheynville holds their 3rd annual "Chamukah Extravaganza", Dec 14 at the Rex. This all-girl band was also nominated by the Canadian Folk Music Awards for their latest album. Describing themselves as a "vintage Yiddish swing-klez, jazz/original music" ensemble, they were originally inspired by the Barry Sisters who performed extensively from the 30s to the 60s. Band members are: Lenka Lichtenberg, Isabel Fryszberg (vocals), Fern Lindzon (piano/vocals), Rachel Melas (string bass), Kinneret Sagee (clarinet) and Lorie Wolf (drums). Check them out at www.sistersofsheynville.ca.

From South Africa, the Soweto Gospel Choir comes to Massey Hall, December 17 and 18. Formed in 2002, the choir has achieved international recognition and has toured the globe to critical acclaim. Rich harmonies characterize both a cappella and accompanied numbers, with dancing and colourful costumes. They perform traditional and contemporary music, in six of South Africa's official languages.

Also on December 17 and 18, co-organizers Justin Gray, Jon Kay and Andrew Kay once again present the Toronto Indo-Jazz Festival, to be held at the Trane Studio. Proceeds from last year's as well as this year's festival will be hand-delivered to underprivileged music students in India. The ensembles performing include Monsoon, Saawun, and Tasa, which combine Indian classical music with jazz. Musicians are the aforementioned organizers (saxophones, winds, bass, percussion), tabla player Ravi Naimpally, Adam Telczeira and Alex Goodman (drums, percussion, guitars, piano, keyboards) and Alan Hetherington, Ernie Tollar, Chris Garner and John Gzowski (percussion, winds, electric bass, electric guitar). See www.monsoon-music.com.

Looking ahead, Malian kora master Ballake Sissoko performs February 5 at York University's Tribute Communities Recital Hall, Accolade East Building. The kora is a 21-stringed west African harp. With numerous international tours and recordings to his credit, Sissoko will give a free talk and Q&A February 4. “Sissoko’s visit to York kicks off a new performance series being launched by the Tubman Institute's Performing Diaspora program, which will bring several internationally renowned African and Afro-Diasporic performance artists to York every year for public concerts as well as talks and workshops with students and the wider community”, says Amy Stewart of York’s Faculty of Fine Arts. Stay tuned for more info on this series in February.

Karen Ages is a freelance oboist who has also been a member of several world music ensembles. She can be reached at worldmusic@thewholenote.com
The Ghost of ‘Christmas Present’  
by Jim Galloway

It’s that “fes­tive” time of the year again — rival groups of Ho! Ho! Hos! in the red corner and Bah Humbugs! in the blue, myself among them. Please don’t misunderstand. I’m just tired of the commercialism and big sell sincerity. School may be out, but crap isn’t dismissed.

The first Christmas card’s inscription read: "Merry Christmas and a happy New Year to you.” "Merry" was then a spiritual word meaning "blessed," as in "merry old England." But today the secular meaning of merry is winning at a canter, with what might well be called “giftmas” lasting for at least two months.

By far, most of the music associated nowadays with Christmas is of a secular nature; I was going to suggest some Christmas jazz albums — until I discovered the enormous number of available Yuletide recordings. The rest of this column could simply consist of a list! So instead, here’s some history.

It was widely believed that the earliest jazz recording celebrating Christmas was Bessie Smith’s “At The Christmas Ball”, composed by Fred Longshaw and recorded on November 18, 1925 in New York City with Joe Smith on cornet, Charlie Green on trombone, and a piano player who was destined to be a major figure in the big band era, Fletcher Henderson. It was widely believed that the earliest jazz recording celebrating Christmas was Bessie Smith’s “At The Christmas Ball”, composed by Fred Longshaw and recorded on November 18, 1925 in New York City with Joe Smith on cornet, Charlie Green on trombone, and a piano player who was destined to be a major figure in the big band era, Fletcher Henderson. The 1940s gave us the all-time nonreligious in character (although "Christmas Song" by Mel Torme is by contrast a rare, somewhat religious version of "White Christmas") by Charlie Parker with Miles Davis on trumpet, Al Haig on piano, Max Roach on drums and Curly Russell on bass, recorded at the Royal Roost, New York on Dec 25, 1948.

The Modern Jazz Quartet, not surprisingly, was among the first to adapt a sacred song to their brand of jazz — an 1833 English carol, “God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen” (there’s that “merry” again!) which they recorded under the title “England’s Carol”. Stan Kenton also chipped in with an album of Christmas carols, and in 1960 Tchaikovsky’s “Nutcracker Suite” was given a wonderful and respectful jazz interpretation by Ellington and Styxhorn.

Perhaps as jazz became more introspective, willingness to accept a spiritual awareness grew. Think Coltrane’s “A Love Supreme”. In vocal jazz it was Ella Fitzgerald who raised the bar with her "Ella Wishes You a Swinging Christmas", (re-released on CD this year with six bonus tracks). If you like Ella, this should be in your collection. Anyway, there is absolutely no shortage of seasonal jazz CDs. It seems that just about everybody who is anybody has made at least some of your listening list — so, to take liberties with the John Clark. His real name was Junius — named June. His name does indeed show up in some lists of early female jazz players! A minor female jazz players! A minor masterpiece of humour. Vocalist Sophia Perlman Quartet is "chordless"; only bass and drums support the vocalist. Leading this group with finesse, Bobby Hsu is an alto saxophonist whose fortes include warm tone and an intelligent sense of humour. Vocalist Sophia Perlman’s dazzling set of pipes and phenomenal pair of ears produce a hit since launching in September. Highlights have included the miraculous Maureen Kennedy Songs for Hipsters and Beatnick and Heather Bambrick’s hilarious Life, Laughs, Love. Get madly happy with George Evans as he proudly presents Happy Madness: Songs of Love and Hypomania on Friday, December 5th at 8 o’clock.

November 9th, 2008 at Gate 403 marked the official debut of a new jazz quartet. Much like the Lina Allemano Four, the Bobby Hsu/ Sophia Perlman Quartet is "chordless": only bass and drums support the vocalist. Leading this group with finesse, Bobby Hsu is an alto saxophonist whose fortes include warm tone and an intelligent sense of humour. Vocalist Sophia Perlman’s dazzling set of pipes and phenomenal pair of ears produce a hit since launching in September. Highlights have included the miraculous Maureen Kennedy Songs for Hipsters and Beatnick and Heather Bambrick’s hilarious Life, Laughs, Love. Get madly happy with George Evans as he proudly presents Happy Madness: Songs of Love and Hypomania on Friday, December 5th at 8 o’clock.

A couple of Canadian releases did come my way this year: “Hark, The Herald Angel Swings” presents Bob De Angelis and his "Champagne Symphony" orchestra, arranged and conducted by John MacLeod with guest singers Melissa Stylianou and Robin Langdon. You can also hear them live at Roy Thomson Hall at 2 pm on New Year’s Eve.

“A Jazz For Christmas” on the Analoka label features the Lorraine Desmarais Trio with Camil Belisle, drums, Frederic Alarie, bass, and special guest Jean-Pierre Zanella, saxophone, reinventing some of the festive classics including Jingle Bells and Schubert’s Ave Maria.

By the way, if you want to swing into the New Year, I’ll be at Quotes, 220 King Street West with Laurie Bower (trombone), Ian Bargh (piano), Rosemary Gallo­way (bass), Don Vickery (drums). For info call 416-979-7717.

Closing thought: Don’t eat the stringent version of “White Christ­mas” by Charlie Parker with Miles Davis on trumpet, Al Haig on piano, Max Roach on drums and Curly Russell on bass, recorded at the Royal Roost, New York on Dec 25, 1948.

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“White Christmas” and “The Christmas Song” (re-released on CD this year with six bonus tracks). If you like Ella, this should be in your collection. Anyway, there is absolutely no shortage of seasonal jazz CDs. It seems that just about everybody who is anybody has made at least some of your listening list — so, to take liberties with the John Clark. His real name was Junius — named June. His name does indeed show up in some lists of early female jazz players! A minor female jazz players! A minor masterpiece of humour. Vocalist Sophia Perlman Quartet is "chordless"; only bass and drums support the vocalist. Leading this group with finesse, Bobby Hsu is an alto saxophonist whose fortes include warm tone and an intelligent sense of humour. Vocalist Sophia Perlman’s dazzling set of pipes and phenomenal pair of ears produce a hit since launching in September. Highlights have included the miraculous Maureen Kennedy Songs for Hipsters and Beatnick and Heather Bambrick’s hilarious Life, Laughs, Love. Get madly happy with George Evans as he proudly presents Happy Madness: Songs of Love and Hypomania on Friday, December 5th at 8 o’clock.

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Closing thought: Don’t eat the Christmas decorations. You get tinsel fists! Hope yule have a merry jazzy Christmas, and will re­solve throughout the new year to make at least some of your listening live!
Whether it be Christmas, Hanukkah or some other festival, most winter solstice observances have, as dominant components, celebration through music and gift giving. For community musical groups, this translates to a busy, but rewarding, schedule of performances at a broad spectrum of venues from seniors' residences and long term care facilities to church functions. From performances with chorus and full orchestra to small ensembles, the message is the same. We are giving the gift of music. But we are receiving it too! As musicians we receive personal satisfaction in the knowledge that we have conveyed pleasure to our audiences. However, there is growing evidence that performers derive an additional gift – enhanced mental capabilities. Just as physical exercise does for body health, mental stimulation maintains brain function.

It's not rocket science - arguably it's something far more complex! Think how a series of little black dots on a piece of paper prompts the almost infinite variety of complex psychomotor tasks required of the various members of a modern band or orchestra. Provide the same sequence of dots to a cellist, bassoonist and trombonist and compare how they translate those marks into such diverse physical tasks. All three can produce the same melody. However, the information processing in their brains translated into the playing of their instruments couldn't be much more diverse. For the cellist, superb dexterity for the fingers of the left hand is paramount, but the thumb does not participate. For the bassoonist, not only is finger dexterity required, but the thumb has no fewer than eight keys to deal with. For the trombonist, the left hand supports the instrument, but in many instruments the left thumb must be kept free to operate the valve to shift from Bb to F. What this all means is that the human brain is processing patterns on a page into complex movements which result in the production of what we call music.

Each year at this time I play in a small ensemble at long term care facility where all of the residents have some form of dementia. We, as performers, have no way of knowing the effects of our music in the minds of our audience, but we do observe a broad spectrum of facial expressions to convey to us that our message is being received. And the event serves as a reminder of what a gift it is to still be able to make music the way we do.

My curiosity about the benefits of music in maintaining and/or enhancing brain function led me to two research facilities: the Baycrest Centre, affiliated with the University of Toronto; and McMaster University in Hamilton. I contacted one of the researchers in the Research Centre for Aging and the Brain at Baycrest and mentioned my personal interest in how lifelong involvement in music might minimize or slow the adverse effects of aging on brain function. This led to my volunteering as a subject in one of their research studies. Initially I was given a standard audiology test to determine any hearing loss due to aging (or my exposure to gunfire while serving in the navy). This standard test determined that my hearing was as good as, or better than, the average for my age. Then I spent two hours in the same small anechoic chamber performing a series of sound perception tests. This data, and that from other subjects with lifelong musical experience, will be compared with the results of subjects with no significant experience as musicians. Hopefully, we will learn more on the results of these experiments in the coming months.

With a visit to the website of McMaster University’s Institute for Music and Mind, I learned that their 4th Annual Music and the Mind Workshop: Musical Connections in the Brain was to be held on Saturday, November 29, 2008. It was too short notice to consider attending. But the findings will be worth pursuing. The introductory comment on their website states: “Critically, the developmental neuroscience perspective will inform the research community on how music induces emotional reactions, how musical experience and training affect brain development, and how musical training/exposure affects language, cognitive, and social abilities in both children and adults.” Visit their website at http://mim.mcmaster.ca/

From the preliminary information we have seen so far, there is strong evidence that when musicians give the gift of music, they give two gifts. They give the gift to listeners, but they also give a significant gift to themselves in the form of a healthier brain.

Musicians wanted: The Markham Concert Band is looking for another tuba player. For information contact kchapin@sympatico.ca.

Coming Events - Please see the listings section for full details

Sunday, December 7, 2:00 pm The Northdale Concert Band at Scarborough Civic Centre. Free.

Sunday, December 7, 2:00 pm The East York Concert Band wind up their 60th Anniversary Celebrations with a Christmas Concert at St. Patrick Catholic Secondary School

Tuesday, December 9, 7:30 pm The Weston Silver Band present their Annual Community Christmas Concert at Central United Church.

Saturday, December 13, 8:00 pm The Hannaford Street Silver Band present Christmas Joy with The Canadian Children’s Opera Chorus, Metropolitan United Church.

Saturday, December 13, 8:00 pm The Milton Concert Band present their Second Annual Christmas Concert at St. Paul's United Church.

Sunday, December 14, 3:00 pm The Northdale Concert Band present a holiday concert at St. Jude’s Anglican Church (Wexford).

Friday, December 19, 8:00 pm The Etobicoke Community Concert present Christmas Pops at Etobicoke Collegiate Auditorium. Please write to us: bandstand@thewholenote.com

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It used to be that there were fairly slow periods in Toronto’s opera calendar—but not any more. From December 2008 to January 2009, there are five fully staged operas, including two Canadian works, plus a high-profile concert version of a perennial favourite. The period kicks off on December 5 with the world premiere of “Pandora’s Locker” with music and libretto by Dean Burry, composer of “The Brothers Grimm”, which holds the record as the most-performed Canadian opera ever written. The work, commissioned by the Glenn Gould School of the Royal Conservatory of Music, was written specifically for a high school audience. Inspired by the Greek myth of Pandora’s Box in which Pandora’s curiosity leads to the unleashing of all the world’s evils, the work reveals the many elements of people’s lives they seek to keep locked up, but which demand release. Themes such as gender issues, sexuality and gun violence, and a musical ensemble including modern “urban music scratch electronica” place the Pandora myth within a contemporary high school setting. Brian Current, a composer himself, conducts and Jennifer Parr directs. Performances at Mazzoleni Hall are on December 5, 11 and 13 and admission is free. There is a fourth performance at the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre at the Four Seasons Centre on December 10 at noon. For more information visit www.rcmusic.ca.

As has now become a welcome tradition, a production by the Toronto Operetta Theatre sees out the old year and sees in the new. This year the work is “The Bird Seller” ("Der Vogelhändler") by Carl Zeller from 1891, last presented by the TOT in 1992. In North America this may not be the best-known of Viennese operettas, but in Central Europe it is standard repertory. Anyone who has Elizabeth Schwarzkopf’s famous EMI recording of operetta arias will be familiar with two of the work’s greatest hits, “Schenk man sich Rosen in Tirol” and “Ich bin die Christel von der Post”. The show stars James McLennan in the title role with Allison Angelo, Keith Klassen and Miriam Khalil. Derek Bate conducts and Guillermo Silva-Marin directs. “The Bird Seller” runs from December 26, 2008 to January 4, 2009, with a special New Year’s Eve Gala. See www.torontooperetta.com for more.

In January, for the first time in its annual Mozart Festival, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra is presenting an entire Mozart opera in concert. The opera is “The Magic Flute” conducted by Bernard Labadie and directed by Graham Cozzubbo with Bill Richardson as Narrator. It features Benjamin Butterfield as Tamino, Karina Gauvin as Pamina, Joshua Hopkins as Papageno, Aline Kutan as the Queen of the Night and Gary Relyea as Sarastro. The work will be sung in German with English surtitles on January 22 and 24.
At nearly the same time, January 23-24, TrypTyh presents that rarity of rarities—a revival of a Canadian opera, in this case “A Boiler Room Suite” by Quentin Doobitle to a libretto by Rex Deverell that premiered in Banff in 1989. According to Talonbooks’ ecription of Deverell’s original 1977 play, “Two of life’s losers pass an evening huddled for warmth in the basement of a derelict prairie hotel. Together they act out their fantasies, trying to bring ‘a little warmth, a little kindness to each other’s lives.’” The opera stars Vanessa Grant, Doug MacNaughton and Lenard Whiting and is conducted by William Shookhoff and directed by Edward Franko. The production serves as a fundraiser for Street Haven at the Crossroads Housing and Social Services for Women. See www.tryptych.org for more information.

January finishes with two new productions from the COC. The first is Beethoven’s “Fidelio” (1806) running January 24-February 24, a co-production with l’Opéra National du Rhin and Staatsantheater Nürnberg. It features Adrianne Pieczonka in the title role with Jon Villars as Florestan and Gidon Saks as Don Pizarro. Perhaps even more exciting is the COC’s first production of Dvorak’s opera “Rusalka” (1901) running January 31-February 8. The story is based on the Czech version of the story of “The Little Mermaid”. Julie Makover stars as the water nymph of the title, Michael Schade is the Prince with whom she falls in love and Irina Mishura is the witch who effects the nymph’s transformation to a human being for which Rusalka must pay a terrible price. John Keenan conducts and Dmitri Berman directs.

Years ago, Richard Bradshaw had promised Nicholas Goldschmidt, co-founder of the COC, that the COC would perform the work to celebrate his 100th birthday. Though both masters have passed away, the COC has not forgotten the promise.

*Christopher Hoile

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**THE WHOLE NOTE**

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25
If you managed to catch the Don Shebib documentary A Song to Sing O on the Bravo channel last year you will already be acquainted with the Schatz family and the St. Anne's Music and Drama Society, Toronto's premiere Gilbert & Sullivan performing group. Currently in rehearsal for their staging of The Pirates of Penzance next January, MADS, as they are affectionately known, won't have much time to rest once the show closes, for they have been invited to perform Pirates at the prestigious International Gilbert & Sullivan Festival in Boston, England in August 2009, an honor accorded to only two overseas companies each year.

There is something so intrinsically and unmistakably English about the operettas of Arthur Sullivan and W. S. Gilbert that, while the continued existence of G&S societies throughout England may seem perfectly understandable, the existence of an equally enthusiastic and committed tradition in Toronto may seem a bit difficult to explain. Until, that is, you remember that Toronto's multicultural landscape is a relatively recent development, and that prior to the waves of immigration that swelled Toronto's population after the Second World War this was essentially an English city with very strong ties to its British roots.

Even so, pre-war G&S activity tended to be sporadic rather than consistent: a group from Canada Packers performed at the Eaton Auditorium during the 1930s and 1940s; the West Toronto Players gave the occasional performance at St. Anne's Anglican Church Hall; and Frank Houston directed a few shows at his Simpson Avenue United Church in the mid-1930s.

Ironically, it was the post-war immigration flood that, far from rendering the G&S scene obsolete, actually ensured its survival and growth, with the large number of British immigrants in the 1950s and 1960s providing a sizeable pool of prospective performers—and audience members, too. Several of the current Toronto area community musical theatre groups that now perform Broadway-style shows started out in this period staging exclusively Gilbert & Sullivan works in their early years: Clarkson Music Theatre (1945-1968); Scarborough Choral Society (1953-1961); and Yorkminstrels (1958-1967).

The 1960s proved to be a particularly productive decade, for it also saw the birth of three new groups that grew into the three societies that are now the main standard-bearers for G&S stage productions in the Toronto area—St. Anne's Music & Drama Society in 1964, St. Peter's Choral Society (now Scarborough G&S Society) in 1966, and St. Timothy Players (now North Toronto Players) in 1967. In addition, the Toronto Gilbert & Sullivan Society, which had been formed in 1947, although not specifically as a performance group, began staging regular performances in 1969.

Roy Schatz founded the St. Anne's group with Clifford Poole in 1964, and 44 years later it is still the Schatz family that gives the society its unique character and personality, a relationship that was highlighted in the Don Shebib film. Now in his seventies, Roy still performs with the Toronto G&S Society as well as with St. Anne's; his wife Dianne, who has only recently managed to divest herself of most of the producer's duties, is still heavily involved behind the scenes, and daughter Laura, an outstanding soprano who has sung every soprano role that Gilbert and Sullivan ever wrote, has also taken hold of the artistic director's reins in recent years, ensuring that the family tradition will continue for at least the next generation.

Two things lie at the heart of MADS's continuing success: the outstanding quality and depth of their vocalists, most of whom are members of the church choir at St. Anne's; and their respect for the integrity of the musical scores and for the G&S performing tradition. The G&S works are, after all, operettas, and although the music has an amazing capacity to be effective in any number of different stylistic interpretations, the vocal numbers are undoubtedly heard at their best when performed by singers with the appropriate voice and technique. It isn't sufficient simply to have a few good vocal leads, for the secondary (and even tertiary) character roles, along with the chorus, are of critical importance in the musical balance.

Performing tradition can, of course, be a severely restricting influence in the wrong hands. Gilbert was an absolute stickler for every conceivable aspect of the original staging, and this strictness continued well into the 20th century with the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company; performers were forbidden to ad lib or change any aspect of the words or performance without prior permission. Gilbert's lyrics were, of course, extremely topical and satirical, but the contemporary references have been mostly lost on the average audience for many years. The resulting argument about whether or not to update the works, and if so to what extent, is a long-standing one that became even more relevant following the expiration of the copyright in 1961, when full-scale 'updating' to modern settings became possible.

While St. Anne's will frequently insert references to current events and personalities in their performances, the opposite end of the spectrum is represented by the only other G&S society in Toronto to stage performances with full orchestra, the North Toronto Players. Their musical director, John Ricciardelli, has an extensive background in G&S performances stretching back over 30 years, and he delights in finding new ways to make the operettas interesting, entertaining and relevant for new and old G&S enthusiasts alike. Together with artistic director Michael Harms, the two have updated and staged some startlingly original G&S productions for NTP in the last 10 years, including HMS Starship Pinafore, a Gondoliers set in Las Vegas around the search for Elvis Presley's heir, a Pirates of Penzance with a 1950s-style biker gang replacing the pirates, and a Mikado set in the 1880s American West.

It's not just the words that are updated either; musical inserts and additions over the past few years have included Spice Girls, the Three Tenors, the theme music from Bonanza, and movie scores like The Magnificent Seven!

The Scarborough G&S Society, like MADS, is a group with a strong family tradition. Stan Farrow has been their rehearsal and performance pianist for over 30 years, ably supported in recent years by his son Brian, who has just stepped down after 9 years as music director, and by Brian's wife and brother-in-law, brother and sister-in-law, aunt, niece, and daughter! Their April show will be a repeat of their very first performance in 1966—Trial By Jury for one half of the evening, and highlights from other G&S works in the second half.

The G&S societies in the Toronto area may have their roots in the English tradition, but the current scene is vibrant proof of the extent to which that tradition has been adopted and adapted by dedicated and talented Canadian performers and creative artists.

Go and see for yourself!

Here are the details for upcoming G&S performances in early 2009:

**St. Anne's Music & Drama** presents **Pirates of Penzance** at St. Anne's Anglican Church Hall, January 23 - February 1; 416-922-4415. www.stannes.on.ca/musicdrama

**North Toronto Players** present **Iolanthe** at The City Playhouse, Vaughan, February 20 - March 1; 905-727-2209. www.northtorontoplayer.com

**Scarborough Gilbert & Sullivan Society** presents **Trial By Jury** and selected highlights from other G&S works at Jubilee United Church, April 17/18 & 24/25. www.gilbertandsullivan.ca

The Toronto Gilbert and Sullivan Society website (www.gilbertandsullivan-toronto.ca) is also well worth a visit; apart from anything else it has the complete libretto for seven of the G&S operettas.

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Modified Rapture... The Gilbert & Sullivan scene in Toronto

by Terry Robbins

Laura Schatz in Yeomen of the Guard
I paused in the middle of all this singing and concert-going to give our own ways for peace in the world, the concept of a “just war” to any reason is hard to swallow. But St. Augustine is also commonly reputed to have said “He who sings, prays twice.” The Latin is actually Qui bene cantat bis orat “He who sings well prays twice” (something with which the less talented and perhaps more literal among us could understandably take issue). Take comfort: some scholars, however, have asserted that this does not appear in anything St. Augustine actually wrote.

He did however write Cantare amantis est – “Singing belongs to one who loves” – a sentiment that strikes a glorious multicoloured chord in my heart. At this time of year even the crustiest, most curmudgeonly non-singers among us will be cajoled into singing along at some point. And people who have forgotten how much they love to sing may find themselves wondering why they don’t do it more often.

Past forward to 1588. In Psalms, Sonnets & Songs, composer William Byrd set forth eight reasons “to persuade every one to learn to sing” (all the way from being “a singular good remedy for stammering in the speech” to its being “the onely way to know where Nature hath bestowed the benefit of a good voice.”). His final couplet sums it up: Since singing is so good a thing, I wish all men would learn to sing. Couldn’t have said it better myself.
WHOLENOTE LISTINGS
SECTIONS 1-4: INTRODUCTION

WholeNote listings are arranged in FOUR DISTINCT SECTIONS:

1) Toronto & GTA (Greater Toronto Area)
2) Beyond the GTA
3) Jazz in Clubs
4) Music-related events

(a.k.a. “Announcements...EtCetera”)

This double issue contains listings from December 7, 2008 to February 7, 2009.

SECTION 1: Toronto & GTA (pages 28-46) covers all of the City of Toronto plus the adjoining “905” area - more or less corresponding to the areas accessible from Toronto by phone without long distance charges. Section 1 includes communities as far west as Oakville, as far north as Aurora and as far east as Pickering.

In this issue Section 1 includes:
Brampton, Clarkson, Kleinburg, Markham, Milton, Mississauga, Oakville, Richmond Hill, Toronto & GTA, Unionville, Weston

SECTION 2: Beyond the GTA (pages 47-50) covers many areas of Southern Ontario, outside Toronto and GTA. The towns and cities vary from month to month.

In this issue Section 2 includes:

SECTION 3: Jazz in Clubs (pages 51-52) is organized alphabetically by club, and provides as much detail on what clubs are as we had at the time of publication, which varies greatly from club to club. Phone numbers and website addresses are provided to facilitate access to more up-to-date information.

SECTION 4: Announcements, Lectures/Symposia, Master Classes...EtCetera (page 53-52) is for music-related events and activities, other than performances, which in our judgment will 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 a phone number. Concerts are sometimes cancelled or postponed; artists or even venues change after the listings are published; or occasionally corrected information is not sent to us in time. Please check before you go out to a concert.

HOW TO LIST
Listings in WholeNote Magazine in these four sections 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 February 1-March 7 2009 so listings must be received by January 15th.

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 416-523-2232 x21 for further information on listings.
Upcoming Events
DECEMBER / JANUARY HIGHLIGHTS

Guitar Orchestra
Jeffrey McFadden, director. 12/2 - 7:30 p.m. Walter Hall. Free

Gamelan Ensemble
IWAYAN SINTI leads the Gamelan Ensemble in concert
12/3 - 7:30 p.m. Walter Hall. Free

10 O’Clock Jazz Orchestra
Terry Promane, director. 12/4 - 7:30 p.m. Walter Hall. $14 ($8*)

Annalee & Friends
Violinist Annalee Pallatarkanon of the Gryphon Trio performs a mixed program with friends.
12/5 - 7:30 p.m. Walter Hall. $25 ($15*)

Choirs in Concert
Opera-in-Season! U of T choirs, Doreen Rao, conductor.
12/6 - 7:30 p.m. MacMillan Theatre. $14 ($8*)

TorQ, Christos Hatzis & Friends
TorQ percussion ensemble performs student works and a new composition by award-winning composer Christos Hatzis.
1/8 - 7:30 p.m. Walter Hall. Free

New Music Festival
Four days of contemporary music performances, including electroacoustic music, opera scenes, improvisation and a lecture/presentation on Karheinz Stockhausen. Performers: NEXUS, Phil Nimmons, Parmela Attarwal, Mark Laver and others.
1/20 - 23. Walter Hall. Free

Wind Symphony
CELEBRATING HOWARD CABLE - A tribute to the great Canadian musician featuring his compositions and works by John Zdeblick and Erik Whitacre. Jeffrey Reynolds, conductor
1/28 - 7:30 p.m. MacMillan Theatre. $14 ($10*)

U of T Symphony Orchestra
Wagner: Prelude to Tristan and Isolde; Kevin Lau: Fountain of Dreams (student composer competition winner);
James MacMillan: Veni, Veni, Emmanuel (Jamie Drake, solo);
Debussy: Nocturnes; Alain Trudel, conductor
1/31 - 7:30 p.m. MacMillan Theatre. $18 ($10*)

*Senior/student price in brackets

BOX OFFICE: 416.978.3744
Walter Hall and MacMillan Theatre are located in the Edward Johnson Building, 80 Queen’s Park (Museum subway stop).
The BACH CHILDREN'S CHORUS
and the BACH CHAMBER YOUTH CHOIR
Linda Beaupré, Conductor
Eleanor Daley, Pianist

Saturday, December 6, 2008 at 7:30pm
Toronto Centre for the Arts
George Weston Recital Hall
5040 Yonge Street
(north of Sheppard Ave.)

Tickets: $20 and $24 at the Toronto Centre box office or TicketMaster at 416.870.8000

Tickets and Details: 416-469-2847

The Bach Children's Chorus, a member of VocalBCO, is grateful for lending accommodation to the Toronto Arts Council and The Toronto Centre for the Arts.
ian Congregation of Mississauga, 84 South Service Rd., Mississauga. 905-848-0015.
$30; $25(sr); $12(st); $80 (family).
- 8:00: Civic Light Opera Company. Scrooge - the Musical. See Dec.3.
- 8:00: Counterpoint Community Orchestra. in Concert. Works by Tchaikovsky, Offenbach, Gluck, Mussorgsky and Copland. Guests: Forte - Toronto Men's Chorus. St. Luke's United Church. 353 Sherbourne St. 416-926-8806. $20; $16(advance);
- 8:00: Music Gallery. Removable Parts. Song cycle by Dargel. Kathleen Supove, piano; Corey Dargel, voice and electronics; Emma Griffin, director; Yvan Greenberg, choreographer. 157 John St. 416-204-1080. $15; $10(advance).
- 8:00: Scarborough Philharmonic. Christmas Concert. Nicolai: Merry Wives of Windsor Overture; Puccini: La Bohème Act 1 (conclusion); Anderson: Christmas Festival; Boito: Ave Signor from Mefistofele; also music by Mozart, Handel, Franck, and Christmas carols. Sinead Sugrue, soprano; Michael Toby, tenor; Toronto Choral Society; Sabatino Vagaca, conductor. Birchmount Collegiate, 3663 Danforth Ave. 416-429-0007. $30; $25(sr); $10(st).
AMICI CHAMBER ENSEMBLE

Join us

a stunning concert

... an arresting balance.

Concert no. 2: End of Time
Sunday December 7, 2008, 3:00pm
Glenn Gould Studio (250 Front St. W.)
Pre-concert chat hosted by Keith Horner, 2:30pm
Performing works by Arutunian, Kradjian and Messiaen's Quartet for the End of Time
with Artists:
Benjamin Bowman, violin; Serouj Kradjian, piano; Joaquin Valdepenas, clarinet and David Hetherington, cello

Tickets and Subscriptions available
CALL: 416-368-8743 www.amiciensemble.com

89 CONCERT SEASON

Toronto Classical Singers
HANDEL'S MESSIAH (highlights)

SUNDAY DECEMBER 7, 2008
4:00PM
Conductor Jurgen Petrenko
Accompanied by The Tafelmusik Orchestra

Soloists
Jennifer Tavenar, soprano
Sandra Boyes, mezzo-soprano
Cory Knight, tenor
Michael Uloth, bass

Christ Church Deer Park
1570 Yonge Street (at Heath St W)

www.torontoclassicalsingers.org
Monday December 08

- 7:00: Star Potential Studios. A Very Merry Pops. Program includes Silver Bells, White Christmas, Sleighbell Ride and other Christmas music. Terri DiPolo, tenor; Mississauga Choral Society; Canadian Children’s Opera Company; Jeff Tyzik, guest conductor; Ryan Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. W. 416-593-4828. $33-99.

- 8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. A Very Merry Pops. Program includes Silver Bells, White Christmas, Sleighbell Ride and other Christmas music. Terri DiPolo, tenor; Mississauga Choral Society; Canadian Children’s Opera Company; Jeff Tyzik, guest conductor; Ryan Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. W. 416-593-4828. $33-99.

Wednesday December 10


- 2:30: Yorkminster Park Baptist Church. Toronto Mendelssohn Youth Choir. Festival of Carol. Christmas favourites. Michael Bliss, organ; Toronto Mendelssohn Youth Choir; Festival Brass; Noel Edision, conductor & narrator.

Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, 1585 Yonge St. 416-598-0422. $35-95; $10(child).

- 8:00: Croatia International. Little Stars (Espey girls) Choir. See Dec. 6. Living Arts Centre, 4141 Living Arts Dr., Mississauga, 435.

Thursday December 11

- 11:00: Royal Conservatory of Music. Pandora’s Locker. See Dec. 5.


- 7:30: Bloor Street Gospel Church. Good News! Pieces include Way Down Yonder in Bolthead; Hush. Somebody’s Calling My Name; Down To Water To Pray. Norm Breun, piano. Bloor Street United Church, 300 Bloor St. W. 416-477-9310. $12; $8(sr); $10(advance).


Vive la DiFRANCE

Featuring
Peggy Baker Dancer
Martin Tielli Vocals
James Campbell Clarinet
Andrew Burashko Piano and others

A unique program of dance and French music featuring the choreography of Doug Varone and the music of Claude Debussy, César Franck, Jacques Brel & Olivier Messiaen’s Quartet for the End of Time.

Dec 12/13, 2008, 8pm
Enwave Theatre at
Harbourfront Centre, Toronto

Tickets $25-$59
Buy tickets or subscribe to the 2008/09 season at:
ARTOFTIMEENSEMBLE.COM or call 416.973.4000

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THE PRÆTORIUS CHRISTMAS VESPER

December 12 & 13, 2008 at 8
Singers, violins, cornetti, sackbuts, theorbs and keyboards arranged around the balconies and stage of Trinity-St. Paul's Church, recreating the joyful celebration of Christmas Vespers as it might have been heard under the direction of Michael Praetorius in 17th-century Germany - this lavish Toronto Consort Yuletide offering has become a beloved Toronto tradition. In the spirit of celebration, the audience will join with the assembled musical forces in singing favourite Christmas carols.

A Christmas concert like no other!

For Tickets call 416-964-6337
Trinity-St. Paul's Centre, 427 Bloor St. West

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... 1: CONCERTS: Toronto and GTA

- 7:30: Etobicoke School of the Arts. A Festive Celebration. See Dec. 10.
- 8:00: Civic Light Opera Company. Scrooge - the Musical. See Dec. 3.
- 8:00: Music Gallery. Wallace Halladay and Ryan Scott - New Music for Saxophone and Percussion. Lindberg: Ablauf; Desantis: +8; Ross: new work; Veldhuis: White Flag; Stannard: True North; Ueno: WATT; Zivkovic: Pezda de Concerto No. 1. Wallace Halladay, saxophone; Ryan Scott, percussion. 197 John St. 416-204-1080. $20, $15(member/st); $10(st).
- 7:30: Toronto All Star Big Band. A Christmas Special. Markham Theatre for the Performing Arts, 101 Town Centre Blvd., Markham. 905-305-7489. $42.68; $8.68(st).
- 9:00: Toronto All Star Big Band. A Christmas Special. Markham Theatre for the Performing Arts, 101 Town Centre Blvd., Markham. 905-305-7489. $42.68; $8.68(st).

FRIDAY DECEMBER 12

- 7:30: Etobicoke School of the Arts. A Festive Celebration. See Dec. 10.
- 7:30: Toronto All Star Big Band. A Christmas Special. Markham Theatre for the Performing Arts, 101 Town Centre Blvd., Markham. 905-305-7489. $42.68; $8.68(st).

The Annex Singers

Choruses & Carols
Highlights from Mendelssohn, Bach, Handel and Lauridsen

Friday, December 12
7:30 pm
Bloor Street United Church
300 Bloor St. West

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Exultate Chamber Singers

Around the World
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2008 AT 8:00 PM
St. Thomas's Anglican Church
383 Huron Street, Toronto

TICKETS Regular $25; Senior $20; Student $15
To order or for more information: 416.971.9229
www.exultate.net exultate@exultate.net

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THE PRÆTORIUS CHRISTMAS VESPER

December 12 & 13, 2008 at 8
Singers, violins, cornetti, sackbuts, theorbs and keyboards arranged around the balconies and stage of Trinity-St. Paul's Church, recreating the joyful celebration of Christmas Vespers as it might have been heard under the direction of Michael Praetorius in 17th-century Germany - this lavish Toronto Consort Yuletide offering has become a beloved Toronto tradition. In the spirit of celebration, the audience will join with the assembled musical forces in singing favourite Christmas carols.

A Christmas concert like no other!

Order online at www.torontoconsort.org

For Tickets call 416-964-6337
Trinity-St. Paul's Centre, 427 Bloor St. West
- 8:00: Art of Time Ensemble. *Vive la DIFFERENCE*. Program includes Mussorgsky: Quartet for the End of Time; works by Debussy, Franck and Brah. Andrew Gurshnik, piano; Steven Sitarski, violin; Yagov Dychov, cello; James Campbell, clarinet; Peggy Beger, dancer; and others. Enwave Theatre, 231 Queen’s Way. 416-573-4000. $25-439.

- 8:00: Civic Light Opera Company. Snorgue – the Musical. See Dec.3.

- 8:00: Danemarkers. *The Future Memory Heartbreak Junction*. See Dec. 11.

- 8:00: Etobicoke Philharmonic Orchestra. Jublent Overtures. Sing along. Silent Auction. Saclant Heights Entrepreneurial Academy, 15 Telthorpe Dr. 416-239-5865. $20; $15(st); $10(st). See Dec. 11.

- 8:00: Exultate Chamber Singers. *Christmas Around the World*. John Tuttle, conductor. St. Thomas’s Anglican Church, 383 Hume St. 416-971-6224. $25; $20(st); $15(st).

- 8:00: Music Gallery. *Alice Licht/Aki Onda/ Michael Snow*. Pop Avant Series. exclusive Canadian engagement of three contemporary musicians. Alan Licht, guitar; Aki Onda, tapes; Michael Snow, piano. 179 John St. 416-204-1080. $20; $15(member/earlybird) $10(st).

- 8:00: Royal Conservatory of Music. Great Artist Series: Paul Kantor, violin, and Michael Snow; and various others. Enwave Theatre, 231 Queen’s Way. 416-971-9229.

- 8:00: Art of Time Ensemble. *Vive la DIFFERENCE*. Program includes Messiaen: *In Terra Pax*;tata; also works by Enns, Lauridsen, Britten, Mendelssohn and others. Meghan Fleet, soprano; Graham Robinson, baritone; Edward Connell, organ. Dallas Bergen, director. St. Timothy’s Anglican Church, 100 Old Orchard Grove. 416-697-9561. $15($15/st); free under 18 yrs.

**Saturday December 13**

- 2:00: Royal Conservatory of Music. *Paderewski’s Lecter*. See Dec. 5.

- 2:00: Toronto All-Star Big Band. *Christmas Special*. Jane Mallett Theatre, St. Lawrence Centre, 27 Front St. E. 416-398-7723. $33.

- 2:00 & 7:30: Mississauga Children’s Choir. *Christmas Carol and Chanukah Song Writing Competition*. also Britten: Ceremony of Carols; Susa: Carols and Lullabies; Rutter: Dancing Day, Shawn Grenke, organ; Lydia Adams, conductor; guests: Erica Goodman, harp; Eleanor Daley, piano; Bach Children’s Choir, Linda Bearp, conductor. Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, 1585 Yonge St. 416-446-0188. $35($10/student rush seat).


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**In Terra Pax**

Finiz’t in Terra Pax
Pinkham’s Christmas Cantata
Jeff Enns, Lauridsen, Mendelssohn, and Britten

**Friday • December 12 • 8PM**

St. Timothy’s Anglican Church 100 Old Orchard Grove
$15 / $10 students and seniors
...1: CONCERTS: Toronto and GTA

Chapel, 2747 Jane St. 416-275-6720. $15; $10(st);
- 7:30: Tryptophic Productions. Messiah / St. Cecilia Mass. Melanie Conly, soprano; Olenna Sliwa, mezzo; Sean Clark, tenor; Michael Robert-Brader, baritone. Tryptophic Choral Chamber, St. John's United Church, Toronto. 905-278-4758. Pwyc.

Sunday December 14
- 7:30: Mussey Hall & Roy Thomson Hall. St. Margaret's Choir; guests: Trillium Brass Quintet. 59 Birr Ave. 416-483-9664. $20; $15(st).
- 3:00: St. Paul's Lorne Park Anglican Church. Family Christmas Concert. Vocal and instrumental solos and ensembles; sing-a-longs. 1190 Lorne Park Rd., Mississauga. 905-278-4785. Free, donations for non-perishable food or infant to toddler care items, for the Compass Food Bank and Drop In Centre. Refreshments during intermission.

...2. CONCERTS: GTA and surrounding areas

Chapel, Appleby College. 540 Lakeshore Rd. W. Oakville. 905-337-7104. $15; $10(st; under 10).

Sunday December 14, 2008 3pm
Heliconian Hall, 35 Hazelton Avenue
Tickets $20, students $15
info: 416.654.0877 www.syrinxconcerts.org

Syrinx Sunday Salons presents
Musica Camerata Montreal
Mozart Flute Quartet in D Major.
Prévost "Mobilier" Mendelssohn Piano Quartet Op.2 #2 in F-
Sunday December 14, 2008 3pm
**Monday December 15**

**Canadian Sinfonietta Messiah!**

Sunday December 14 at 8 pm
Glenn Gould Studio
250 Front St W.

Featuring
Toronto Cantata Chorus
St John's Chorus
and
Jerome Summers
clarinet

Messiah Part I,
Mozart Clarinet Concerto
and
Jason Locke
Christmas Suite

Tickets: Adults $25, Stu/Sen $15
GGS Box Office: 416 872-4255

**Wednesday December 17**

- 12:00 noon: Canadian Opera Company.
- 7:30: Trafalger St. Paul's Church.
- 7:30: Sacred Serenade.
- 8:00: Toronto Mendelssohn Choir/Toronto Symphony Orchestra.

**Tuesday December 16**

- 12:00 noon: Toronto Mass Choir.
- 7:30: Counterpoint Chorale.
- 8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra.

**Monday December 15**

- 8:00: Music Gallery. Contemporary Keyboard Society. Programme includes Ligeti: Continuum; Harmon: New Work; Mant: New Work; Gurko: Xenos Book; Xenos Pastora; piano; Fernando Rocha, percussion; Katelyn Clark, harpsichord. St. George the Martyr Church, 197 John St. 416-204-1000. $15; $10 (student/retiree).

**Saturday December 13**

- 8:00: Havanarte Productions. One Night in Havana. 70 years of the best in Cuban music. Rose Theatre, 1 Theatre Ln, Brampton. 905-874-2800. $45-$65.
- 8:00: TSO. Toronto's Favourite Messiah. Gillian Keith, soprano; Alyson McHardy, mezzo; Frederic Antoon, tenor; Robert Gedov, bass; Toronto Mendelssohn Choir; Noel Edison, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-939-4823. $35-$499.

**Wednesday December 17**

- 7:30: Orpheus Choir. A Child’s Christmas in Wales. Carols and Thomas’s childhood recollections. Robert Cooper, artistic director; Edward Moroney, accompanist. Eglington St. George’s United Church, 35 Lytton Blvd. 416-530-4429. $30; $25(s); $15(st).
- 7:30: St. Clare’s Catholic Church. Celebrate Concert. Dvořák: Symphony-Passion “The World Awaits the Saviour”; Bach: In Dali Jubile; Weigh not; Christmas Cantata; Christmas carols; Italian selections. St. Matthew’s Choir; St. Clare’s English Choir; Antonio Cavallaro, cantor; Paul Jessee, organ and choir director; St. Clara’s Italian Choir; Luigi Rizzo, director. 111 St Clair Ave. W. 416-691-6594. Freewill donation toward restoration fund.
- 7:30: Tafelmusik, Messiah. Handel. Nancy Argenta, soprano; Laura Polvereli, alto; Lawrence Wilford, tenor; Brent Pogue, baritone; Tafelmusik Chamber Choir and Baroque Orchestra; Ivars Trauning, director. Trinity-St. Paul’s, 427 Bloor St. W. 416-984-6337. $38-$97.
- 8:00: Metropoulos Hall. Bay & Thomson Hall. Soveito Gospel Choir. Music for the season and traditional favourites. Metropoulos Hall, 15 Shuter St. 416-972-2652. $18.
- 8:00: Toronto Mendelssohn Choir/Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Toronto’s Favourite Messiah. See Dec 16.
... 1: CONCERTS: Toronto and GTA

December 19
- 7:00: Ballet Jorgen Canada. The Group of Seven Nutcracker. Rose Theatre, 1 Theatre Lane, Brampton. 905-674-2800. $30-495. Also Dec. 20.
- 7:30: Oriole York Mills United Church. A Mostly Old-Fashioned Christmas. Derrick Lewis, piano and organ; Meri Dolevski, clarinet and piano; other performers. 2609 Bayview Ave. 416-238-2921. $15; $10(st/child);
- 7:30: Tafelmusik. Messiah. See Dec. 17.
- 8:00: Civic Light Opera Company. Scrooge — the Musical. See Dec. 3.

Saturday December 20
- 2:00: Toronto Children's Choir. A Christmas Magic: Music of the Season. Brunner: Sir Christmas (Canadian premiere); Dallé: Magnificat; also seasonal favorites. Guests: the True North Brass; Elise Bradley, artistic director. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-761-7775. $29.50. 1 free student/child ticket with 2 adult tickets.
- 2:00 & 7:00: Tafelmusik. Messiah. See Dec. 17.
- 7:00: Rainbow Voices of Toronto. Have You Heard the Sound? St. Luke's United Church, 335 Shanbore St. 416-925-9872 $21.66; $12; $15(advance); $12(st/child).
- 7:30: Tafelmusik. Messiah. See Dec. 17.
- 8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Toronto's Favorite Messiah. See Dec. 16.

Sunday December 21
- 2:00: Civic Light Opera Company. Scrooge — the Musical. See Dec. 3.
- 2:00: Tafelmusik. Sing Along Messiah. Handel. Nancy Argenta, soprano; Laura Pedwell, alto; Lawrence Wilford, tenor; Brett Polegato, baritone; Tafelmusik Chamber Choir and Baroque Orchestra; Ivans Taurins, director. Massey Hall, 15 Shuter St. 416-872-4255. $29.50.
- 3:00 & 7:00: Ballet Jorgen Canada. The Group of Seven Nutcracker. See Dec. 19.
- 7:00: Royal York Road United Church. Christmas portion of Handel's Messiah. Tatier Strings; William O'Meara, organ; Lydia Pedersen, conductor. 851 Royal York Rd. 905-293-0339. Free will offering.
- 7:30: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Toronto's Favorite Messiah. See Dec. 16.
- 8:00: St. Anne's Church. Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols: St. Anne's Choir. 270 Gladstone Ave. 416-922-4415. Free will offering.
- 8:00: St. James Cathedral. Braten's Cere·mony of Carols. Natalie Mahon, Kirsten Fridling, sopranos; Elaine Robertson, mezzo-soprano. 65 Church St. 416-364-7665. Free.
- 8:00: A.C.T. Productions. Paid Tidings. Sequel to Forever Plaid with seasonal holiday favorites. Rob Woodcock, director. Rose Theatre, 1 Theatre Lane, Brampton. 905-674-2800. $25-140. Also Dec 22, 23.

Medieval music and readings for Advent and Christmas
Friday, December 19, at 8 pm
Saint Thomas's Church
383 Huron Street
Tickets $18 / $12
416-539-9445
sine.nomine@3wek.net

sine nomine
Ensemble for Medieval Music

Medieval music and readings for Advent and Christmas
Friday, December 19, at 8 pm
Saint Thomas's Church
383 Huron Street
Tickets $18 / $12
416-539-9445
sine.nomine@3wek.net

Organ Recital
Widor - Symphony no. 2 and other organ music for Christmas
Andrew Ager
Director of Music & Composer-in-Residence
Friday December 19
7:30 pm
Free-will offering
ST. JAMES CATHEDRAL
65 Church St. (King at Church)
416 364 7865

A Chorus Christmas: Magic of the Season
The six choirs of the Toronto Children's Chorus bring the warmth of the season to the city.
An awe inspiring tradition featuring their alumni choir plus guest artists. A co-production with Roy Thomson Hall.
Sat Dec 20, 2008 - 2 PM
Roy Thomson Hall - 60 Simcoe Street
Tickets: $34.50 -$44.50
To purchase tickets: info@torontochildrenschorus.com
(416) 932-8666 ext. 231 www.torontochildrenschorus.com

The Group of Seven Nutcracker.
See Dec. 19.
- 7:00: St. James Cathedral. Andrew Ager, organ. Widor: Symphony No. 2, also Christmas music. 65 Church St. 416-364-7865. Free-will offering.
- 7:30: Tafelmusik. Messiah. See Dec. 17.
- 8:00: Civic Light Opera Company. Scrooge — the Musical. See Dec. 3.

Saturday December 20
- 2:00: Toronto Children's Choir. A Christmas Magic: Music of the Season. Brunner: Sir Christmas (Canadian premiere); Dallé: Magnificat; also seasonal favorites. Guests: the True North Brass; Elise Bradley, artistic director. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4255. $34.50-$44.50.
- 2:00 & 7:00: Civic Light Opera Company. Scrooge — the Musical. See Dec. 3.
- 2:30 & 7:00: Canadian Ballet Theatre. The Nutcracker. Chiu khiok skye, Choreography by Vasily Vainonen. Victoria Harding, Alys Daley: Magnificat; also seasonal favorites. Rob Woodcock, director. Rose Theatre, 1 Theatre Lane, Brampton. 905-674-2800. $25-140. Also Dec 22, 23.
I SING THE BIRTH

Join the Scholars for a festive and spirited celebration of Seasonal music as they present a concert of carols from Christmas past and present by composers from Canada and around the world.

Sunday, Dec. 21, 2008
7:30pm
Our Lady of Sorrows Church
3055 Bloor Street West
(1/2 block west of the Royal York subway)
General Admission $25
Seniors & Students $20

For Tickets call 416.761.7776

TUES. JAN. 13 - 7:30 PM
AL HENDERSON
SEPTET
The jazz bassist, composer and arranger leads an ensemble of friends and colleagues in a showcase concert featuring his own compositions.
Matt Brubeck, Mark Chambers, Alex Dean, Al Henderson, Pat Labarbiera, Barry Romberg, Richard Whiteman

TUES. JAN. 27 - 7:30 PM
JACQUES ISRAELIEVITCH
violin
Christina Petrowska Quilico, piano
Mark Chambers, cello
The former concertmaster of the TSO joins forces with two of his new colleagues for his debut concert at York, featuring works by Debussy, Ravel and Kelly Marie Murphy.

TUES. FEB. 10 - 7:30 PM
DOROTHY DE VAL
piano
Playford’s Pleasure
& The Regency Dancers
Flirting with Mr. Darcy
Revisit romance with an evening of English country dance music from the age of Jane Austen.

MERCEDES CHEUNG

“Yeah! I’m Still Six”
Mozart: Violin Concerto No. 3
Hubay: Hejje Kati: ‘Chopin: Nocturne in C# minor
Sarasate: Zigeunerweisen
Beethoven: Romance
Elgar: Salut D’Amour & more?

Box Office
MARKHAM THEATRE
5 Town Centre Blvd.
(Holy 7 & Warden)
December 21, 2008
Adult: $5.50 (2 Adults $1 Free)
Child/Student: $3
Piano: Dr. Nancy Tye
Directed by Markham Chamber Music

Tribute Communities Recital Hall
York University | 4700 Keele St. Toronto
$15 or $30 for all three concerts
Students & Seniors: $5 per concert
Box Office: 416.736.5888
www.yorku.ca/perform/boxoffice

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC | FACULTY CONCERT SERIES
**Music**

**Monday, January 12**


- 8:00: Jazz FM91. Sound of Jazz. Ben Sidran, jazz pianist. Old Mill Inn. 21 Old Mill Rd. 416-585-0404 x258. $30; $27 (students).

**Tuesday, January 13**

- 1:00: St. James Cathedral, Music at Midday Series. Andrew Ager, organ. 65 Church St. 416-364-7865. Free.


- 7:30: York University Department of Music. Faculty Concert Series: Al Henderson, Voice Performance Class. L. van Beethoven-Trio Op. 9, #2, c minor


**Wednesday, January 14**


- 8:00: Jazz FM91. Sound of Jazz. Ben Sidran, jazz pianist. Old Mill Inn. 21 Old Mill Rd. 416-585-0404 x258. $30; $27 (students).

**Thursday, January 15**


- 8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Symphony No. 1 in G; Shostakovich: Symphony No. 10. Roy Thomson Hall, 363-8231. Free.

**Friday, January 16**

- 7:30: St. James Cathedral, Music at Midday Series. Andrew Ager, organ. 65 Church St. 416-364-7865. Free.

**Saturday, January 17**


- 3:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Symphony No. 1 in G; Shostakovich: Symphony No. 10. Roy Thomson Hall, 363-8231. Free.


- 3:00: CAMMAC/McMichael Gallery. Great Artists Series: Monica Whicher, soprano (Narrator); Mark Bower, tenor (Narrator); Henry Iribe, tenor (Narrator); Lorraine Michael, soprano (Siciliana); Nadine Guerin, soprano (Georgiana); Henry Iribe, tenor (Narrator); Peck: Concerto for Violin, Piano and Computer; Mignunian Xu, violins; Winston Choi, piano. Macc occasion Hall, 737 Bloor St. W. 416-406-2624 x321. $10 (students).

- 3:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Symphony No. 1 in G; Shostakovich: Symphony No. 10. Roy Thomson Hall, 363-8231. Free.


**Sunday, January 18**

- 1:30: CAMMAC/McMichael Gallery. Great Artists Series: Monica Whicher, soprano (Siciliana); Lice Quach, piano. Art-song recital. Macc occasion Hall, 737 Bloor St. W. 416-406-2624 x321. $10 (students).

- 3:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Symphony No. 1 in G; Shostakovich: Symphony No. 10. Roy Thomson Hall, 363-8231. Free.


- 3:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Symphony No. 1 in G; Shostakovich: Symphony No. 10. Roy Thomson Hall, 363-8231. Free.


- 3:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Symphony No. 1 in G; Shostakovich: Symphony No. 10. Roy Thomson Hall, 363-8231. Free.


**Monday January 19**

- 7:00: Riverdale Youth Singers. *Chillout*. Songs for a winter’s night, including ambient and electronic music. Ryan Shatinsky, artistic director; guests: Rosina and DJ Murr of LAL. St. John’s Presbyterian Church, 415 Broadview Ave. 416-975-1587. Free.

**Tuesday January 20**

- 12:30: York University Department of Music. *Jazz at Noon*. The Barry Elmes Quintet. New compositions by Elmes plus selections from recorded repertoire. Barry Elmes, drums;
  Mike Murley, saxophones; Kevin Turcotte, trumpet, flugelhorn; Reg Schwager, guitar;

**Wednesday January 21**

- 12:30: York University Dept of Music. *New Music Festival: Student Composers Concert*. Works by graduate student composers.
- 1:00: St. James Cathedral. *Music at Midday Series*. Siwan Whelan, organ. 65 Church St. 416-964-7665.
- 7:00: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. *New Music Festival*. Student Composers Concert. Works by graduate student composers.

**Thursday January 22**

Polka Vespers with Walter Ostanek - the "Polka King"
Sunday, January 18, 4:00 PM
St. Philip's Anglican Church
25 St. Phillips Road, Etobicoke
Free will offering
For info, call 416-247-5181

Off Centre Music Salon
2008 2009
14th Season
January 25, 2009

Italian Salon:
Rossini's La Petite Messe Solennelle

Our Italian Salon features Rossini's La Petite Messe Solennelle for four soloists - direct from Italy! - soprano Serena Farnocchia, mezzo soprano Francesca Provisinnato, tenor Antonio Poli, bass Paolo Pecchioli, two pianos - Inna Perks and Boris Zararkin, accordion - Joseph Macerello, and chorus lead by Robert Cooper. Enjoy La Petite Messe Solennelle as it was originally performed in Comtesse Louise Pillet-Will's Parisian salon!

Piano Virtuoso Series: Prokofiev Piano Sonata No. 7

Toronto Organ Club Recital
Sunday, January 18, 4:00 PM
St. James Cathedral
4700 Kew St. 416-747-3237.
Free.

Toronto Symphony Orchestra - The Magic Flute (Opera in Concert)
Sunday, January 18, 7:30 PM
An end-of-season benefit for Street Haven at the Crossroads.
See Jan. 23.

Music Toronto
BARRY DOUGLAS
Tuesday
January 27 at 8 pm

---

Naughton, baritone; Sinfonia Tryptych; Ed Franke, stage director; William Shoekhoff, music director. Trinity Presbyterian Church, 2757 Bayview Ave. 416-763-5066 x 140. $50/adult. A fundraiser for Street Haven at the Crossroads.

- 8:00: St. Anne's Music & Drama Society. Gilbert & Sullivan's Pirates of Penzance. Maura McGroarty, music director; Laura Schatz, artistic director. St. Anne's Parish Church. See Jan. 23.


Saturday January 24
- 2:00 & 8:00: St. Anne's Music & Drama Society. Gilbert & Sullivan's Pirates of Penzance. See Jan. 23.

- 12:00 noon: Toronto Organ Club. Recital: Robert Douglas, organ. 65 Church St. 416-364-7865.

- 8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. The Magic Flute (Opera in Concert). See Jan. 22.

Sunday January 25
- 2:00: Bluegrass Sundays. The Abrams Brothers. Royal Canadian Legion 268, 45 Lawson Rd. 416-779-2627. $20.
- 3:00: St. Clement's Anglican Church. Debbie Bews in Song and Story. 59 Brier Hill Ave. 416-453-8664. $20; $15/adult. See Jan. 23.
- 4:00: St. James Cathedral. Twilight Recital Series. Works by Bach and Brahms. Andrew Agar, organ. 65 Church St. 416-364-7865.

Monday January 26
- 12:00 noon: Toronto Organ Club. Recital: Robert Douglas, organ. 65 Church St. 416-364-7865.
- 8:00: TSO. Evelyn Glennie. See Jan. 28.

Friday January 30
A performance of Korngold's Suite for piano, two violins and cello, followed by six brand new songs inspired by the Suite.

Tickets $25-$39
Buy tickets or subscribe to the 2008/09 season at: ARTOTIMEENSEMBLE.COM or call 416.973.4000.

Korngold: Source & Inspiration

Featuring
Danny Michel
Martin Tielli
John Southworth
Stephen Sitarski
Violin
Ben Bowman
Violin
Tom Wiebe
Cello
Andrew Burashko
Piano

The theory of the four elements, and related principles of alchemy, were powerful influences in Renaissance Europe. Both in the physical sphere, and the spiritual, alchemy was a serious discipline much misunderstood today, yet the ideas and images of alchemy can be seen in many musical works of the period. In this program, we paint a musical portrait of the four elements with music by Dowland, Campion, van Eyck, and Lawes. David Fallis, director. Trinity-St. Paul's Centre, 427 Bloor St. West. 416.964-6337. #14-453.

Saturday January 31


Cathedral Bluffs Symphony Orchestra

Back to Back Bach
Four Piano Concertos

The Toronto Consort presents
Earth, Air, Fire, Water

January 30 & 31 at 8 pm

The theory of the four elements, and related principles of alchemy, were powerful influences in Renaissance Europe. Both in the physical sphere, and the spiritual, alchemy was a serious discipline much misunderstood today, yet the ideas and images of alchemy can be seen in many musical works of the period. In this program, we paint a musical portrait of the four elements using music from Renaissance England, Germany and France with works by John Dowland, Thomas Campion, Jacob van Eyck and Henry Lawes.

Order online at www.torontoconsort.org
For Tickets call 416-964-6337

Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, 427 Bloor St. West
THE ALDEBURGH CONNECTION

The Wings of Song
Celebrating Mendelssohn’s 200th birthday
Gillian Keith, soprano
Elizabeth Turnbull, mezzo
Lawrence Wilford, tenor
Stephen Ralls and Bruce Ubukata, piano
Sunday, February 1, 2:30 pm
Walter Hall, University of Toronto
Tickets: $50 (Students $12)
Afternoon tea at intermission.

Tickets: 416.735.7982 www.aldeburghconnection.org

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Music Toronto

Cecilia Quartet
Thursday
February 5 at 8 pm

Programme includes Haydn: String Quartet in B flat Op.76 No.4 "Sunrise"; Brahms: Sextet.

Saturday February 07

- 2:30 & 7:00: Amadeus Choir. A Celtic Celebration. Lydia Adams, conductor; guests: Kettle’s On (Celtic Band); Christopher Mac-Donald (fiddler); Highland Dancers. Toronto Botanical Gardens, 777 Lawrence Ave. E., 416-445-0188, $35; $30(st). Saturday, March 14, 2009 at 7:30 pm


Music at Metropolitan

Piano Spectacular!

Pianist Arnold Tirzits plays works by Beethoven and Liszt

Inaugurating the historic 1924 Hamburg Steinway concert grand piano at Metropolitan

Saturday, March 14, 2009 at 7:30 pm

Admission: $20
LISTINGS: SECTION 2
CONCERTS BEYOND THE GTA

N.B. For a list of communities in this section see LISTINGS INTRODUCTION, page 28

Monday December 01
- 8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestra. Messiah. See Dec. 5. St. Peter's Church, 123 Queen St. N., Waterloo. 519-885-6173. $30, $25(st), $20(s/t).

Tuesday December 02

Wednesday December 03
- 12:00 noon: Midday Music With Shigeru Miyawaki. Piano, John Bairdmore, violinist. McWii Pentecostal Church, 50 Anne St. N. Barrie. 705-728-1161. Free.
- 12:00 noon: University of Waterloo. Dav­is Center Carol Sing. Traditional music for the season, sing-along. University of Waterloo Chamber Choir and Chapel Choir. Davis Cent­re Atrium, 140 Westmount Rd. N. Waterloo. 519-885-0220 x24226. Free.
- 12:15: St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. Noontime Concerts: Cherry Fraser, mezzo; Douglas Haas, organ and piano. 34 Queen St. N., Kitchener. 519-578-4303. Free (optional light lunch 15).
- 7:00: St. Michael the Archangel Parish. A Child is Born, St. Michael's Choir School Junior Choirboys. Carol Dalby, conductor; Nelly and Yuri Kreckovskiy, pianists. 378 Division St., Cobourg. 905-372-8844. 410.

Thursday December 04
- 7:30: Perimeter Institute. Lynn Farrell, cellist, and Jon Kimura Parker, piano. Mike Lazaridis Theatre of Ideas, Perimeter Institute, 31 Caroline St. N., Waterloo. 519-893-4480. SOLD OUT.
- 7:30: Lindsay Concert Foundation. Jamie Parker, piano, Works by Chopin, Smith, Bar­tók, Brahms, Griffen, Debussy and Beethoven. Glenn Cramer Theatre, Fleming College, Lindsay. 705-878-5628, 30, $10(st).
- 8:00: Barrie Concerts. A Christmas to Remember. Osina Wenn's Choir; William Brown, conductor. Wi­ley Pentecostal Church, 50 Anne St. N. Barrie. 920, 911, $160, $180(st). Subscription series only.
- 8:00: Bravado! Show Choir. Songs For A Winter's Night. See Dec. 5.

Friday December 05
- 8:00: A Folk Under the Clock. An Irish Christmas With Danu. Traditional Irish Christ­mas music. Peter McSweeney, button accordi­on and melodeon; Muiruinn Nic Aasbaich, vocals, flutes and whistles; Eoinn Dooler, bouzouki and fiddle; Donald Clancy, guitar; Gary Damer, dancer, Showcase, 290 George St. Peterborough. 705-742-7086. 43.
- 8:00: Gibson Centre. The Hampton Ave­nue. 43 Tupper St. W. Alliston. 705-435-2826.
- 8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestra. Jazz Meets Orchestra. Joe Fenza, guitar, and melodeon; Muireann Nie Amhlaoibh, bouzouki and fiddle; Donal Clancy, guitar; Sarah Damer, dancer, Showcase, 290 George St. Peterborough. 705-742-7086. 43.
- 8:00: The Achill Choral Society. True North Sounds of Christmas. True North Brass. St. Timothy RC Church. 42 Davein Dr. Orangeville. 519-825-8765.

Sunday December 07
- 2:00: Canadian Broadcasting Corpora­tion, 4th annual CBC Christmas Carol Read­ ing. Readers include Ted Barrie, Whitney Bar­rie, Maureen Bresson and others. Christ Church Anglican, 254 Sunset Blvd. St. Catharines. 905-642-2853.
- 8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestra. Jazz Meets Orchestra. See Dec. 5.
- 8:00: The Achill Choral Society. True North Sounds of Christmas. True North Brass. St. Timothy RC Church. 42 Davein Dr. Orangeville. 519-825-8765.

The divine voice of soprano Hamisk Papián in stunningly rich and beautiful Four Last Songs of Strauss and Mahler's 4th Symphony.

Oshawa Durham Symphony Orchestra conducted by Music Director Marco Parissoto.

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STUDENT: $15
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...SECTION 2: Beyond the GTA


Sunday December 14


Thursday December 18

Friday December 19
- 9:00: Georgetown Bach Chorale. Christmas Concert. 157 Main St. S., Georgetown. 905-677-6857, 340 00.

Saturday December 20

Sunday December 21
- 4:00: Huronia Symphony Orchestra. Christmas and all that Jazz. Holiday concert. Celebrating the season. Guests: Heather Bambrick, vocals; Emilie Lorn, harp; Tony Gomes, conductor. Collar St. United Church, 112 Collar St. Barrie. 1-888-222-6608, 1425; 421(two) children under 12.
- 8:00: Georgetown Bach Chorale. Christmas Concert. See Dec. 19.

Monday December 22
- 8:00: Elora Festival Singers. Festival of Carols. See Dec 18.

Friday December 26
- 6:30 & 7:00: Show One Productions. Age Room! 10 MacNab St. S., Hamilton. 905-546-4040. 320 54-49.50.

Saturday December 27
- 3:30 & 7:00: Show One Productions. Age Room! See Dec. 26.

Thursday January 01
- 3:00: Guelf Symphony Orchestra. Dreams of Vienna. Waltzes, marches and polkas. Mark Dubois, tenor; dancers; Simon Irving, conductor. River Run Centre, 35 Woolwich St., Guelph. 519-733-3000, 135; 117(two).

Saturday January 03

Wednesday January 07
- 8:00: Orchestra London Canada. Christmas Concert. Celebrate the season. Guests: Eileen Beaudette, viola; Gisele Dalbec, Karma Tomm, violins; Jill Vitals, cello; Robert Hulse, narrator; Michael Bloss, organ; Noel Edison, conductor. St. John’s Church, Woolwich St., Elora. 519-846-0331.

Friday January 08
- 13:00: Queen’s University Department of Music. Music for the season. Guests: Eileen Beaudette, viola; Gisele Dalbec, Karma Tomm, violins; Jill Vitals, cello. 550 Wellington St., London. 519-677-8878, 435 36; 441 42.

Saturday January 10
- 8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. Le Mozart Noir. Centaur Presbyterian Church, Cambridge. See Jan. 7.
- 8:00: Queen’s University Department of Music. Music Faculty Series: Takai String Quartet. See Jan 16. Center in the Square. 101 Queen St. N., Kitchener. 519-576-1570, 322.

Sunday January 11
- 8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Chamber Music Society. Sonatas for Violin and Recorder. Bendis: Sonata for Violin and Cello. Contempoto: also recorder sonatas and concertos by Bach, Telnan and Vitali. Megan Jones, violin; Matthew Jones, cello; recorder; Justyna Szaraj, piano. KWCMS Music Room, 57 Young St. W., Waterloo. 519-888-1673, 20; 15(2); 10(18)

Thursday January 14

Friday January 15
- 8:00: River Run Centre. Anturickshaw & Peidererck String Quartet in Concert. 35 Woolwich St. Guelph. 519-733-3000, 20; 421(two).

Friday January 16
- 4:00: The Cellar Singers. Rossel Box in the Drift Opera House. The Cellar Singers; Carolyn Maule, piano. 200 Mississauga St. W., Orillia. 1-888-774-5429 or 705-326-6011, 65; 95; 40(advance). Post-concert reception included.

Monday January 19
- 8:00: University of Western Ontario. Faculty Recital. Music by Mozart, Poulenc, and Schmittke. Annette Barbara Vagi, violin; Pierre van der Westeheki, piano. 519-661-2043.

Tuesday January 20

Wednesday January 21
**Friday January 23**

- **12:30:** University of Western Ontario. 12:30 Fridays: Triptych. Works by Weber, Beethoven, and Moravec. stones. Kingston. 905-540-200. $35-$45; 105-$65. **10:**

- **9:** McMasters University. Celebrity Concert Series. Moscow Virtuoso Variations. Brahms: Piano Concerto No. 1; 110; $95. **10:**

**Saturday January 24**

- **8:** Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society. Pondered String Quartet. Beethoven: Quartets Nos. 6, 11, 15. 905-540-200. $35-$45; 105-$65. **10**


**Sunday January 25**

- **2:** Hamilton Conservatory of the Arts. Valerie Tryon, piano. 126 James St. S. 905-540-200. **10:**


- **2:** Queen's University Department of Music. Faculty Artist Series - Lukashin Ramgatan and Friends. Kristi Ask (new work). Lukashin Ramgatan, voice; Aaron Craig, clarinet; Michel Szczasny, piano; Wolf Tam-ello, cello. Dunning Auditorium, 94 University Ave., Kingston. 613-533-2066. **10:**


**Friday January 30**

- **12:** University of Western Ontario. 12:30 Fridays: American Opera. Works by Ives and Copland. S. A. Leon, violin. Peter Wilson, piano. **10:**

**Saturday January 31**

- **10:** University of Western Ontario. Great Masters: Von Kuster Hall, Music Building, UWO. London. 519-691-2111. **10:**


**Thursday February 05**


- **8:** Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society. Angele Ayadov & Irina Turowa, piano duo. Deluxsbe: Petite Suite; Two Preludes; Rimsky-Korsakov: Sheherazade (ex­cerpts); Ravel: Alborada del Graciés. Con­cert: Sonata No. 2; Rachmaninov: Nutcracker Suite. KWCMS Music Room, 57 Young St. W., Waterloo. 519-886-1673. **10:**

**Friday February 06**

- **12:** University of Western Ontario. 12:30 Fridays. True North Brass. Von Kuster Hall, Music Building, UWO. London. 519-691-2111. **10:**

- **7:** Queen's University Department of Music. Marcello's Abelias. See Feb. 9.

- **8:** McMasters University. Celebrity Concert Series. Sosenko Ramgatan Quartet. Jazz. Convocation Hall, University Hall, 1 Scholer's Rd., Hamilton. 905-540-200. **10:**


**Saturday February 07**

- **7:** Queen's University Department of Music. Marcello's Abelias. See Feb. 9.

- **8:** Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Orchestra. Haydn Anniversary. Haydn: Symphony Nos. 8 and 76; various operatic arias. Cheryl Campbell, soprano; Graham Coles, music director. Maureen Forrester Recital Hall, Wilfrid Laurier University, 75 University Ave. W., Waterloo. 519-746-3285. **10:**

- **8:** Queen's University Department of Music. Faculty Artist Series - Canzona Camera. Hahn, Furst: String Quartet No. 7; various operatic arias: Cheryl Campbell, soprano; Graham Coles, music director. Maureen Forrester Recital Hall, Wilfrid Laurier University, 75 University Ave. W., Waterloo. 519-746-3285. **10:**

- **8:** Queen's University Department of Music. Faculty Artist Series - Canzona Camera. Hahn, Furst: String Quartet No. 7; various operatic arias: Cheryl Campbell, soprano; Graham Coles, music director. Maureen Forrester Recital Hall, Wilfrid Laurier University, 75 University Ave. W., Waterloo. 519-746-3285. **10:**

- **8:** Queen's University Department of Music. Faculty Artist Series - Canzona Camera. Hahn, Furst: String Quartet No. 7; various operatic arias: Cheryl Campbell, soprano; Graham Coles, music director. Maureen Forrester Recital Hall, Wilfrid Laurier University, 75 University Ave. W., Waterloo. 519-746-3285. **10:**

- **8:** Queen's University Department of Music. Faculty Artist Series - Canzona Camera. Hahn, Furst: String Quartet No. 7; various operatic arias: Cheryl Campbell, soprano; Graham Coles, music director. Maureen Forrester Recital Hall, Wilfrid Laurier University, 75 University Ave. W., Waterloo. 519-746-3285. **10:**

- **8:** Queen's University Department of Music. Faculty Artist Series - Canzona Camera. Hahn, Furst: String Quartet No. 7; various operatic arias: Cheryl Campbell, soprano; Graham Coles, music director. Maureen Forrester Recital Hall, Wilfrid Laurier University, 75 University Ave. W., Waterloo. 519-746-3285. **10:**

- **8:** Queen's University Department of Music. Faculty Artist Series - Canzona Camera. Hahn, Furst: String Quartet No. 7; various operatic arias: Cheryl Campbell, soprano; Graham Coles, music director. Maureen Forrester Recital Hall, Wilfrid Laurier University, 75 University Ave. W., Waterloo. 519-746-3285. **10:**
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www.commemoral.ca
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Every Wed Jazz @ The Concerto hosted by Darcy Hammond.
Dec 10 Montal College Music Faculty Christmas Party & Jam.

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The Bobby Hsu/Sophia Perfman Quartet See “In the clubs” page 22

Jazz in the clubs
**LISTINGS**

**SECTION 4 W: ANNOUNCEMENTS, WORKSHOPS, ET C**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*January 24 1:00: Fort York National Historic Site, Queen Charlotte's Birthday Ball. Day-long celebration of music, food and dance, including afternoon dance workshop & presentation; elegant Georgian-style buffet supper; evening ball with live music. 100 Garrison Rd. 416-204-2927 x172. Free.*


**LECTURES/SYMPOSIA**

*December 12 2:00: Royal Conservatory of Music, GGS Lecture Series: Beethoven's Second Piano Concerto. TELUS Centre for Performance and Learning, 273 Bloor St. West. 416-408-2824 x321. Free.*

*January 11 2:00: Toronto Opera Club. Obscure Operas and Forgotten Composers. Audio-visual presentation by Robert Pierre Temas, CD's to be won. Room 330, Edward Johnson Bldg, 80 Queen's Park. 416-924-3940. $10 (includes refreshments).*


**MASTER CLASSES**

*December 2 time tba: The Royal Conservatory of Music, GGS Master Class Series: Leon Fleisher, piano. TELUS Centre for Performance and Learning, 273 Bloor St. West. 416-408-2824 x321. Free.*

*December 4 10:00 & 2:00: Royal Conservatory of Music, GGS Master Class Series: Leon Fleisher, piano. TELUS Centre for Performance and Learning, 273 Bloor St. West. 416-408-2824 x321. Free.*

*December 5 time tba: The Royal Conservatory of Music, GGS Master Class Series: Leon Fleisher, piano. TELUS Centre for Performance and Learning, 273 Bloor St. West. 416-408-2824 x321. Free.*


**WORKSHOPS**

*December 7:00 Featuring the Toronto Early Music Players Organization. Seaside Frisk. A festive party of singing and playing of seasonal music, and feasting on home-baked goodies. Led by Linda Dushin and Chris McClymont. Bring a home-baked goodie, your early instruments & stand; music available at the door. Lansing United Church, 48 Bognor Ave. 705-563-5480, 416-537-3733, 416-922-7997 or pleasancecrawford@rogers.com

*December 7 1:30 Featuring the Toronto Early Music Players Organization. Recorder Virtuosi. Music of Scotland and Scandinavia. Workshop by Alison Melville, recorder and flute. Bring your early instruments & stand; music available at the door. Lansing United Church, 48 Bognor Ave. 705-563-5480, 416-537-3733, 416-922-7997 or pleasancecrawford@rogers.com

*December 8:00 Featuring the Toronto Early Music Players Organization. Recorder Recital with the Toronto Recorder Ensemble. Lansing United Church, 48 Bognor Ave. 705-563-5480, 416-537-3733, 416-922-7997 or pleasancecrawford@rogers.com


MUSICAL LIFE:
WE ARE ALL MUSIC’S CHILDREN
by mJ Buell

DECEMBER’s Child...

Photo: a very musical family home in Halifax, 1983. A self-described “late beginner”, her good posture habits began early; feet apart, nice straight back, a relaxed hand. Her mother, Ly, is holding the violin.

Think you know who DECEMBER’s child is? Send your best guess to musicchildren@thewholenote.com (be sure to send us your mailing address, just in case your name is drawn!) Winners will be selected by random draw among correct replies received by January 15 2009.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR WINNERS
Louie Madrid Calleja, Caroline Bonner, Frances Giles and Cockeye MacDonald each win a copy of Maryem and Ernie Tollar’s third and newest CD Cairo to Toronto.

Maryem is the voice of this world music journey, and Ernie plays sax & flutes. He also composed some of the songs. Rooted in Arabic music with infusions of jazz and folk, this is a rich, eclectic musical collaboration of displacement, alienation, fear and longing, dreaming and desiring, “Cairo to Toronto maps an intricate inner journey and offers a dream of peace.” With: Levon Ichkanian, guitarist; Andrew Stewart and Rich Brown, bass; Debasish Sinha, percussion; Alan Hetherington, drums and percussion; and Daniel Barnes drums. Special guests: Dr. Alfred Gamil, violin and Mohamed Aly, oud, violin and vocals.

Music’s Children gratefully acknowledges Nadia Hassan, Maryem Hassan Tollar, and Luisa Trisi.

Didn’t win a CD? http://cdbaby.com/cd/maryemernietollar

NOVEMBER’s Child was ...

singer Maryem Tollar, born in Egypt and raised in Canada with frequent sojourns in the Middle East. Maryem has acquired a reputation as a musician who thrives in a wide variety of musical milieus. She was a founding member of Maza Meze and Doula before starting her own ensemble with her husband, Ernie Tollar. Recent collaborations include tours of the multi-media project astantionome (with The Gryphon Trio and Patricia O’Callaghan), and epulcher of life (both composed by Christos Hatzis), and the premiere of a new Hatzis work rom the ong of angels commissioned by Tafelmusik. She has sung on several film and television scores including the theme music for CBC Television’s “Little Mosque on the Prairie” and A. R. Rahman’s hit “Mayya Mayya” in the Bollywood movie “Guru”. Maryem lives in Toronto with Ernie Tollar and their two children.

Earliest musical memory?
Ever since I can remember, I’ve always loved singing. My earliest musical memory is singing in choirs in elementary school; recorder in grade 4 and duets with my brother, Ashraf; piano lessons and improvising songs I knew on the piano; and guitar lessons after I found out my brother Ayman was taking them.

Other musicians in your family?
My oldest brother, Ahmed (13 years older) was a percussionist and composer for modern dancers and was in the world music ensemble, Mother Tongue. My brother Ashraf (5 years older) was always musical but ended up an engineer. My brother Ayman, who is extremely musical, has pursued theatre and acting instead of music. But we always sang together for fun.

At the time the photograph was taken...
I was living in Ottawa - had started guitar lessons, was still playing around on the piano in my own. In high school I was very involved in both choir and drama. Ayman and I were both in odspell at Cairo American College in Egypt (he was in grade 12 and I was in grade 11) and we did West end story in grade 12. I performed with the “swing choir” (a choir that sang and danced) and in straight theatre – Titania in “A Mid Summer Night’s Dream”.

The time when you began to think of yourself as a musician?
I always wished I could be a professional musician. I was afraid to tell my parents - kept it to myself until after university, where I studied French and Spanish. I finally had the guts to join a folk/pop group called Hot D.A.M. (David and Maryem). During that time, around 1993, my brother Ahmed was looking for a singer who could sing in Arabic for a piece he was composing for Dancemakers. He told me he’d hire me if I took Arabic singing lessons, so I started with Dr. George Sawa, here in Toronto. That’s where I met Roula Said and Ron Allen who introduced me to many musicians in Toronto also interested in world music, a huge turning point in my life.

Did you ever think of doing anything else?
I considered becoming a translator – but my heart wasn’t in it. I also thought about becoming a speech pathologist. I volunteered for one Mt. Sinai Hospital to see how it would be – but it turned out I have a faint heart and it wasn’t a good environment for me to be in.

If you could travel back in time and meet face to face with the young person in that childhood photo, what would you tell her? Definitely – I would tell her to just follow her heart passionately and go straight into music from the beginning. I wish I would have followed the music path more seriously when I was younger because I always knew deep down that was what I was meant to be doing.

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MUSICAL LIFE:
A Choral Life Q&A
compiled and edited by ml buell

FEATURING Trevor McLain

Your first ever choral experience?
My mom conducted the choir in the Cut Knife Catholic Church (Saskatchewan), so all of us children sang on Sundays.

What choirs have you sung with?
In Saskatoon, I sang with Quance Chorus and Greystone Singers. In Toronto, I sang with Eastminster United, Rhapsody in Bluejeans (which sang Gershwin I had arranged during my University days), Boys of Joy, forTE - The Toronto Men's Chorus, and Timothy Eaton Memorial.

Currently?
I sing with Vancouver Men's Chorus. I love to sing. I like the camaraderie, and the artistic life is very gratifying. VMC rehearses on the side of the Burrard Bridge opposite to where I live, so getting there is easy.

Are you a musician in some other capacity?
I am a pianist for dance, a profession into which I fell accidentally. I was pursuing someone and discovered he took adult ballet, so I made an appointment to audition to play at his studio when I knew he would be there. I got the job – not the man, and have enjoyed this career since 1970! I improvise for dance, and I write choral arrangements based on my awareness of harmony, honed over nearly forty years of harmonic exploration for dance accompaniment.

What qualities make you admire a choral conductor?
The ability to know the material and how to get the best work from the singers means having both high expectations and patience. Every chorus is different and every chorister requires special awareness. A combination of confidence and humility gets the best results.

What makes a choral conductor difficult to work with?
A conductor who literally does not know the score, or who lacks a reliable conducting manner invites distrust and frustration. A conductor whose message is more ego than music disappoints singers and audiences alike.

For me, changing the key is disastrous. If the music is in F, and the conductor decides to try it in E, my pianistic brain has a battle between what it sounds like and what it looks like. I hear a score because I know what it will sound like on the piano: a great advantage as long as the music is performed in the written key!

Choir tales?
In 2002, with forTE at the Canadian GALA in Toronto, we did a co-concert with Vancouver’s Rainy City Men’s Chorus. I had written an arrangement of There’s No Business Like Show Business, giving every singer a solo line which bonded the two groups of men. After this wonderful event, I partied with them and ended up with laryngitis. I could not utter a sound for three days and lip-synched my way through forTE’s concert and the festival’s men’s choir. I was one of the few who had managed to memorize the music, and it was all for naught! People said I had never sounded better!


Deadline is Friday, December 12, 2008.

One piece, In Flanders Fields, is special because it involved the junior grades of Canada’s National Ballet School singing descant when it debuted at the School in 2002. I played piano there for 32 years.
OPERA AT HOME
by Phil Ehrensaft

The Scientific Art of Singing

The neuroscience and physics of music are advancing at a brisk clip. A surprising—and pleasing—amount of public attention is being generated as the research results pour in. This is Your Brain on Music: the Science of a Human Obsession, written by the McGill neuropsychologist Daniel J. Levitin, is an impressive bestseller. As a rock musician who is also well versed in classical music, this studio producer turned neuroscientist is well poised to integrate art and science.

Levitin deepens and updates the science writer and composer Robert Jourdain’s earlier synthesis, Music, the Brain, and Ecstasy: How Music Captures Our Imagination. Levitin generates as the research results pour in.

The popular science of music is a healthy niche of the publishing industry. From the perspective of opera, I was looking for a book that provided a specific synthesis of science for vocal art singing. There is a bookcase full of works aimed at music students which integrate scientific findings into vocal pedagogy. Richard Davis’ A Beginning Singer’s Guide is one good example. I was looking for a book that went further, one that provided a synthesis of aesthetics and science.

While browsing through the new books section of the Metropolitan Opera Shop this spring, I found a book that travels a good way towards this synthesis: Dan H. Marek’s Singing: The First Art, published by the Scarecrow Press in late 2007. Singing is a textbook aimed at advanced students of vocal art music. But Marek’s very clear reasoning and prose, coupled with a thoughtful integration of science and art, make his book an excellent resource for a lay audience devoted to opera and art song.

Marek has appeared as a lead tenor at the Met and is now chair of the voice department at the Mannes College of Music in New York City. In 1989, Mannes became part of The New School, a progressive university which also began as a community education project. The New School rose to eminence both through University in Exile, its refuge for European intellectuals fleeing fascism, and as focal point for the modernist impulse in the arts.

Singing is quite in the spirit of the New School’s philosophy of exploring music from different perspectives. To cite one of the catchy quotes that prefaces the book, one that was copied from the blackboard of a subway ticket booth: “Keep on doing what you’ve always been doing, and you’ll always get what you’ve always got.”

Marek modestly claims that his book has a double-core: the pioneering work of Berton Coffin (1910-1987) which integrates science with music history to create a new vocal pedagogy; and his own 19 years of teaching Coffin’s insights. There’s more to it than that, if only because both the science of music and music history have advanced substantially since Coffin’s death. Besides, Marek (a professor who quotes subway clerks and paraphrases Yogi Berra—50 percent of singing is 90 percent mental) is unlikely to just tread along somebody else’s path.

This is a book with strong character. It begins with a quote from Albert Einstein: “We should be careful not to make the intellect our god. It has, of course, powerful muscles, but not personality.”

The structure of the book is a three-part statement. 1) Oriented towards integrating the science of singing and vocal pedagogy, Marek the Met singer starts out with a history of how opera singing has developed as an art form since the early seventeenth century. 2) Marek the technician lays out the anatomy and bodily acoustics of opera singing. 3) Marek the teacher provides a series of musical exercises to apply the insights of the first two sections.

Marek insistently makes the point, as a technically oriented singer and teacher, that technique is a servant of art. The impulse of most students is to get right to it. Marek tells them that they won’t get to “it” unless they understand the evolution of their art form. With that historical knowledge in hand, they can advance through a first stage of craftsmanship and mastery of techniques to the second stage of musicianship. When they are sufficiently confident in technique, they can make choices about matters of phrasing and tempo. The final stage is art, where singers can move on to inhabiting the characters they portray and thinking about how this fits into the total drama at hand. Opera is an art of continuous learning, even for the top singers.

Marek is insistent that the peak of great singing occurred during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, during what he defines as the Bel Canto era. During that era, singers and composers enjoyed an equal role. Improvisation on stage was expected. The training of that time focused on one-on-one mentoring by masters on a daily basis, an arrangement which today’s university and conservatory accountants would never permit. Although we have no aural record of that era, Marek is confident that historical documents back up his stance.

Marek believes that Beethoven began a new era where the composer and librettist assumed dominant roles in defining the music. Singers became one part of a grand opera team that included the composer, librettist, conductor, stage director, and impresario who marshalled and managed the resources to make opera happen.

Marek also looks forward to the day when science can specifically offer more to opera. Apart from what he covers in his book, the important contribution of new scientific discoveries to opera have been in the field of vocal pathology. The bulk of the new science of voice has focused on speech. We await its extension to the art of singing.
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Book Shelf

by Pamela Margles

Hallelujah Junction: Composing an American Life
by John Adams
Farrar, Straus and Giroux
352 pages, photos; $26.00 US

In his engaging autobiography, American composer John Adams describes coming on stage to take a bow after the premiere of Grand Pianola Music. "The blood rushed to my face at the sound of the booping, but the pianist Ursula Oppens, a veteran of countless contemporary music concerts, grabbed my hand and said, "Oh my god, they’re actually booing... don’t you just love it?" Adams actually does not love controversy, but he continues to cause far more than his fair share.

He started out in the 60s and 70s as an experimental composer immersed in the vibrant avant-garde culture of California, where he still lives. "I too produced several pieces that seriously pushed the boredom envelope," he writes about works with titles like Schedules of Discharging Capacitors, written for the Studiobaker, an electronic instrument he built.

His epiphany came when he realized that what he really wanted to do was to create music which had the order and sensuality of Renaissance architecture combined with the pure expressivity of German romanticism. "Artistically," he writes, "rather than enriching the expressive palette of the composer, in fact did just the opposite.

This memoir serves as an elegant apologia for writing tonal music today. What stands out about Adams’ music, and in part explains his broad appeal, is its engagement with our times. His operas in particular deal with controversial topics. The Death of Klinghofer is about Palestinian terrorists capturing a cruise ship and murdering one of the passengers; Nixon in China is about that historic visit; and, most recent, Dr. Atomic is about the man who invented the first atomic bomb.

At the same time, Adams provides an insightful perspective on the music of our time. His text is enlivened by snapshots of people he admires, such as his teacher, Gary Graffman, who convinced him that playing the piano isn’t about winning a trick. Lang Lang’s success as a concert pianist is monitored his practicing, sat in on his lessons, and cavedroppe on other student’s lessons to report back to him what he should be doing. "My job," the father would say, "is to make sure my son becomes the Number One piano player in the world."

Despite it may have been, did it the trick. Lang Lang’s success as a concert pianist is phenomenal. Yet this compelling account of his journey to achieve that success, written with the zealous David Ritz, raises many troubling issues.

When Lang Lang was fifteen, he moved with his father to Philadelphia to study at Curtis. His teacher, Gary Graffman, convinced him that playing the piano isn’t about winning prizes, but about discovering the spirit of the music.

Yet at his Carnegie Hall debut Lang Lang brought his father on stage to play the etude, because his father had always dreamt of playing Carnegie Hall. "Despite the truly terrible times we had been through, the times I’d hated and resented him, I would not have had a career in music were it not for him," he writes. Will this courageous young man have to pay a price for that career, especially when he is no longer, so to speak, Number One?

CORRECTION:
A few words were inadvertently dropped from the final paragraph of my review of The Oxford Companion to the American Musical by Thomas Hirschhorn in the October issue of WholeNote, thereby reversing the meaning. It should have read: Performers who don’t have their own entries are infrequently listed in the index, even if they actually are mentioned in the book, like Pitré, or like two other performers I tried to track down - Phyllis Hyman, a great singer who died too young, and singer-lyricist June Carroll, who was composer Steve Reich’s mother.
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EDITOR'S CORNER

To begin with the season, The Call of Christmas is a lovely disc from extraordinary local French horn legend Joan Watson (TNB 005 www.joanwatson.com). Featuring arrangements by Watson's life-mate J. Scott Irvine and Jim McGrath, and performances by some of Toronto's finest musicians including special contributions from violinist Marie Berard, harpist Erica Goodman and Watson's colleagues from the horn section of the COC orchestra, I must say that this disc rises above the usual seasonal fare. From the first track, Irvine's Novell Echoes, through to the closing Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas Joan Watson's purity of tone and immaculate control over her notoriously unpredictable instrument make this new take on some traditional fare a disc to treasure. Concert Note: Joan Watson and her True North Brass perform with St. Michael's Choir at Massey Hall on December 12 and 13 and with the Toronto Children's Chorus at Roy Thomson Hall on December 20.

Tafelmusik and Bruno Well continue their exploration of the music of Beethoven with Symphonies 7 & 8 on a new Analekta release (AN 2 9947). Their bright and animated approach brings a breath of fresh air to these familiar pieces. The CD is accompanied by a DVD documentary with performance highlights from the George Weston Recital Hall.

Also from Analekta, a newly discovered work by the "little Canadian Mozart", André Mathieu (1929-1968) whose career as a child prodigy began in earnest at age seven when he performed as soloist in his own Piano Concerto No.1 with the CBC Radio Orchestra. Best known for the Concerto de Québec, Mathieu was fired in his early life, but later forgotten, even before his early death at 39. Pianist Alain Lefèvre has become a champion of Mathieu's music, cataloging, publishing, performing and recording it extensively in his effort to bring attention to this remarkable musician. When a recording of Mathieu performing the piano part of a later concerto, previously assumed lost, recently came to light, Lefèvre had it transcribed and orchestrated. The resulting Concerto No.4 (AN 2 9281) was premiered and recorded live with the Tucson Symphony Orchestra under the direction of George Hanson. The disc also includes Mathieu's Scenes de ballet and four songs for choir and orchestra.

Speaking of Canadian piano music, A Shrinking Planet (SSP 0088 www.shringkingplanetproductions.com) is a beautiful and thoughtful CD by Rea Beaumont that we managed to overlook when it was released a year or so ago. Recorded at Glenn Gould Studio its centrepiece is the world premiere recording of Barbara Pentland's Small Pieces for a Shrinking Planet, miniatures composed rather late in that iconic composer's career between 1988 and 1990. These pieces pay homage to The Mothers of May Plaza who from 1977 have held vigils in Buenos Aires searching for information about their "disappeared" children. Also included are Alice Ping Ye Ho's angst-ridden Garage about people trapped in and seeking escape from an underground garage, Chan Kuan Nim's In Search Of..., a work commissioned by the CBC for Beaumont which asks the perennial question "What are we in search of", and Walter Buczynski's seminal 1967 Piano Sonata No.1 "Sounds".

Watching the TV presentation "Everybody Knows", a tribute to Leonard Cohen from last year's Montreal International Jazz Festival a few weeks back, somehow set the stage for my encounter with Born to the Breed: A Tribute to Judy Collins (WFL 1313 www.wildflowerrecords.com). I tend to think of Collins less as a writer than as an interpreter of songs, especially those of Leonard Cohen, and so it came as a welcome surprise to realize that the more than a dozen titles included here, all penned by Collins, were imbedded in my psyche from those formative years of the 60s and early 70s. Highlights include Joan Baez singing Since You Asked, Chrissie Hynde's My Father, Amy Speace's Born to the Breed, Rufus Wainwright's Albatross and Ali Eskandarian's Song for Sarajevo. Less effective for me are Dolly Parton's rendition of Fisherman's Song, Bernadette Peters' Trust Your Heart and James Mudriczki's take on Che, but overall this a very satisfying disc. The album ends with a tribute from Leonard Cohen himself.

One final brief note: Karina Gauvin's new ATMA CD of Handel Arias with Tempo Rubato and Alexander Weimann (AN 2 2589) is bound to please fans of this fine Montreal-based soprano and those of George Frideric Handel alike. Featuring oratorio arias and dramatic scenes from Samson, Rinaldo, Semele, Jephta, L'allegro, ti pensero and ti moderato and of course Messiah, this is a welcome addition to the discography.

We welcome your feedback and invite submissions. CDs and comments should be sent to: The WholeNote, 503-720 Bathurst St. Toronto ON M5S 2R4. We also welcome your input via our website, www.thewholenote.com.

David Olds, DISCoveries Editor; discoveries@thewholenote.com
These CDs are by far the two best Canadian Christmas choral recordings heard from this year's offerings. Vancouver's Musica Intima, a 12-voice a capella ensemble perform seasonal gems, some modern, some ancient with fresh arrangements, many by the members themselves, and selections by Willan, Howells and Britten. The purity of sound, perfect intonation and ethereal quality of the tonalities evoke an often-mystical experience throughout the album. Yet this sound is not without the warm, lush harmonies representing the heart's fires kindled by love at yuletide. Add to this a shimmering, luminous quality suggesting an angelic presence and all the elements of Christmas are perfectly awakened.

In contrast, we have the splendour of orchestration and richness of passion represented in four cantatas by Bach, performed by Montréal Baroque with four soloists alone handling recit, aria and chorales: soprano Monika Mauch, alto Matthew White, tenor Charles Daniels and bass Harry van der Kamp. Eric Milnes, who has undertaken the monumental project of recording all the Bach cantatas for the ATMA label, conducts this 4th volume in the series from the organ. He matches Bach's zeal in these complex, multi-layered, highly interwoven and ornamented works with great energy and vivacity. The voices are superb and the period-instrument orchestra brilliant in its virtuosity.

Dianne Wells

Magdalena Kočená - Songs My Mother Taught Me

Magdalena Kočená; Dorothea Roschmann; Malcolm Martineau; Michael Freimuth Deutsche Grammophon 4777949

One of the world's most beloved and popular operas, Puccini's masterpiece, has had such a resounding success that in the past 100 odd years it has hardly ever left the stage. One can't but admire its compositional mastery, the unceasing flow of melodic inspiration, its concise, succinct economy with not a single superfluous note, its tightly structured score and Puccini's unerring skill in writing for the voice. La Bohème is every opera company's principal box office draw. Not necessarily a good thing, as this has resulted in many cheap, hackneyed, mediocre performances turning the work, unjustly, into a syrupy musty. This trend was fortunately reversed by Sir Thomas Beecham's classic Castell set in the 50's with a bold new refreshing look at the score.

Happily, now Deutsche Grammophon follows suit by cooperating in a film production, directed by Robert Dornhelm that promises to turn millions again into lovers of this opera. The cast of the film and the 'soundtrack' is identical to an earlier released CD set, but thanks to the computer here we are given trailers, interviews and glimpses into the film itself. Musically, leading opera conductor Bertrand de Billy, propels the music vigorously, with inspiration, and upbeat tempi, but able to relax and let the music 'breathe' when necessary. The two principals have great chemistry and Villazon's tenor is impassioned, youthful, heartfelt and impetuous, injecting an exciting new dimension into the role of the poet Rodolfo. Superstar Anna Netrebko is most intriguing, with her darker hued, womanly voice expressing vulnerability and innocence with underlying passion, quite unlike many sopranos I have heard. The other 'loving' couple, Nicole Cabell and Boaz Daniel also in fine voice and good characterization, is a worthy addition to the superb cast.

Superb, atmospheric, well detailed recording. Looking forward to the DVD!!

Janos Gardonyi

Strauss - Salome

Anna Netrebko; Rolando Villazon; Bayerischen Rundfunks; Bertrand de Billy Deutsche Grammophon 4777949

The recent Saturday afternoon Salome 'live from the Met' at movie theatres may have whetted the home-viewer's interest. With perfect timing, two new Salomes have arrived on DVD.

Both the new productions feature the sensational soprano Nadja Michael but there the similarity ends. The Covent Garden production, from early March, 2008 enjoys the better cast and more elaborate staging. The action takes place downstairs 'in a debauched palace in Nazi Germany' which has no relevance to the story, nor affects our perception of the plot. Particularly effective are Thomas Moser's suave Herod and the Narraboth of Joseph Kaiser. Jokanaan (John the Baptist), without whom there would be no story, is sung with religious fervour by Michael Volle. Nadja Michael's flawless technique and her total absorption into her role add credence to the story, supported by a flowing choreography. The virtuoso orchestra, so very important in Strauss operas, plays with unrelenting intensity conducted by the flamboyant Philippe Jordan (see Carmen in Old Wine, New Bottles in this issue). The 2 DVD set includes revealing interviews and extensive behind the scenes footage.

The La Scala production from exactly a year earlier is a far cry from the opulent London production. The set is as simple as it needs to be

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Bach - La Nativité Cantatas
61; 122; 123; 182

Monika Mauch; Matthew White; Charles Daniels; Harry van der Kamp; Montreal Baroque; Eric Milnes
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Puccini - La Bohème
(A Film by Robert Dornhelm)

Anna Netrebko; Rolando Villazon; Bayerischen Rundfunks; Bertrand de Billy Deutsche Grammophon 4777949

The recent Saturday afternoon Salome 'live from the Met' at movie theatres may have whetted the home-viewer's interest. With perfect timing, two new Salomes have arrived on DVD.

Both the new productions feature the sensational soprano Nadja Michael but there the similarity ends. The Covent Garden production, from early March, 2008 enjoys the better cast and more elaborate staging. The action takes place downstairs 'in a debauched palace in Nazi Germany' which has no relevance to the story, nor affects our perception of the plot. Particularly effective are Thomas Moser's suave Herod and the Narraboth of Joseph Kaiser. Jokanaan (John the Baptist), without whom there would be no story, is sung with religious fervour by Michael Volle. Nadja Michael's flawless technique and her total absorption into her role add credence to the story, supported by a flowing choreography. The virtuoso orchestra, so very important in Strauss operas, plays with unrelenting intensity conducted by the flamboyant Philippe Jordan (see Carmen in Old Wine, New Bottles in this issue). The 2 DVD set includes revealing interviews and extensive behind the scenes footage.

The La Scala production from exactly a year earlier is a far cry from the opulent London production. The set is as simple as it needs to be
and is not over populated. As Salome, Michael is elemental, blindly driven to relentlessly demand instant gratification with unbridled energy. The Herod is not the traditional overweight sybarite as seen in the London production but an energetic, smaller fellow who moves erratically. The entire production is totally different from the London; simpler, more transparent, less horrifying and, perhaps, more easily followed.

Each version has its strengths but I prefer the Covent Garden cast, set, choreography and costumes, and in no small way, the brilliance of the orchestra.

Bruce Surtees

EXTENDED PLAY – AS SEEN AT THE MET

By Seth Estrin

The Metropolitan Opera in New York, under its new director Peter Gelb, has made efforts in the last couple of years to dispel criticism that it prefers the old over the new: old-fashioned productions over modernized ones, tried-and-true singers over talented up-and-comers, and popular operas over new commissions. These six performances of six different operas both testify to Gelb’s efforts and show why the Met is one of the greatest opera houses in the world. Not everything is perfect, but the level of professionalism, the depth of the casting and the consistent quality of these performances is exceptional. That these performances were recorded is thanks to what is perhaps Gelb’s most successful innovation: live telecasts from the Met to movie theatres around the world. Recorded is thanks to what is perhaps Gelb’s most successful innovation: live telecasts from the Met to movie theatres around the world. Pre­

Almost as successful is the new production of Benjamin Britten’s Peter Grimes (2 17414 9). Anthony Dean Griffiths in the title role gives a tremendous performance – that he has a sweet, vibrant voice only makes his outbursts of violence all the more frightening. Patricia Racette shines as Ellen Orford with her radiant, full soprano. The production, which centres on a large, multi-storied set, is monochromatic but evocative, while the chorus and orchestra, under Donald Runnicles, are especially effective here.

Puccini’s Manon Lescaut (2 17420 9) is musically a triumph. Karita Mattila is one of the most charismatic and artistically compelling sopranos of her generation. Her voice – powerful and earthy – might not seem a natural match for Manon, but she brings everything she has to this role (including the splits). More idiomatic is Marcello Giordani, who emits raw, passionate spinto sounds as her infatuated lover Des Grieux. Best of all is James Levine who conducts the opera as if he wrote it himself. Too bad the production – a hyper realistic, gaudy pastiche of various locales in 19th century France – is, for the most part, an eyesore.

The new production of Verdi’s Macbeth (2 06304 9) is similarly unbalanced. Zeljko Lu­

The Metropolitan Opera in New York, under its new director Peter Gelb, has made efforts in the last couple of years to dispel criticism that it prefers the old over the new: old-fashioned productions over modernized ones, tried-and-true singers over talented up-and-comers, and popular operas over new commissions. These six performances of six different operas both testify to Gelb’s efforts and show why the Met is one of the greatest opera houses in the world. Not everything is perfect, but the level of professionalism, the depth of the casting and the consistent quality of these performances is exceptional. That these performances were recorded is thanks to what is perhaps Gelb’s most successful innovation: live telecasts from the Met to movie theatres around the world. Pre­served on DVD by EMI Classics, these performances, recorded over the last two seasons, retain the excitement of live performances. The excellent original intermission features are included too, so we get live interviews with sing­ers, conductors, and others involved in the productions right as the opera is happening. Even these back-stage features are starry cast – among the hosts are two of the world’s most famous sopranos, Renée Fleming and Natalie Dessay.

Despite all this new energy, it is telling that the best of these performances is that of the Met’s most performed opera, Puccini’s La Bohème conducted by Nicola Luisotti (2 17417 9). Franco Zeffirelli’s iconic production is admittedly over­stuffed, but the beautiful, realistic

cityscapes of Paris look wonderful on camera. Angela Gheorghiu is phenomenal as Mimi, shaping her beautiful, plangent voice with ex­quisite care. Gheorghiu has a reputation for being a diva (in an off-stage interview, she dares jest to Fleming that Fleming is her un­der­dog), but onstage she is demure and en­dearing. Ramon Vargas is a warm Rodolfo with a honey-toned voice.

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The new production of Verdi’s Macbeth (2 06304 9) is similarly unbalanced. Zeljko Lu­cznic Macbeth has a beautifully burnished and smooth baritone; he is able to bite without having to bark. The powerhouse Russian soprano Maria Guleghina plows her way through the treacherous role of Lady Macbeth with the determination of a bulldozer; the results are gripping if a little messy. Canadian bass John Relyea is a commanding, noble Banquo. But once again, the real star is James Levine in the pit. Anthony Noble’s production, which updates the setting to the early 20th century, is unevocative and staid.

Engelbert Humperdinck’s Hansel and Gre­tel (2 06398 9) can never quite decide whether it is an opera for children or adults, and this dark, morbid new production conducted by Vladimir Jurowski does nothing to resolve the issue. To make it accessible to children, the opera is sung in English translation; since, apart from Philip Langridge the disturbing, almost pedantic witch, the principles are unable to articulate clearly. Diction apart, Alice Coote and Christine Schäfer are superb as Hansel and Gretel, singing like seasoned lieder performers while acting like children.

Part of Gelb’s plan for the Met is more new commissions – and when the Met does commission a new opera, it generally does so on the same mighty scale as its most famous pro­ductions. So Tan Dun’s The First Emperor (2 15129 9) is opera on the grandest scale possible, with a starry cast headed by the indefatigable Plácido Domingo and conducted by the composer. Dun’s music crosses between traditions of Western and Chinese opera in tell­ing the dramatic story of China’s first emperor, but the music never takes flight. Instead, the characters languish in unending, repetitive melodies that are neither musically compelling nor emotionally relevant. If The First Emperor does not fully succeed as an opera, it is because it has all the immediacy of a history textbook and all the intimacy of the 2008 Summer Olympics opening ceremony (which also featured Dun’s music). I for one would take the overdue but gloriously sung La Bohème any day.

EARLY MUSIC AND PERIOD PERFORMANCE

200 Ans de Musique à Versailles Various Artists MBF MBF1108

What a treat arrived in my mailbox when I agreed to write this review! A 20­

CD, beautifully boxed set produced by the Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles (CMVB) in celebration of its own twentieth birthday, featuring music composed for the regal residents of the palace in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The discs are grouped and packaged according to monarch, and the most flattering portrait of each man graces the cover of each disc. The music itself is glorious, richly varied and often quixotic, as any fan of the French Baroque will already know. Mainly a collection of live concert recordings from the CMVB’s 2007 anniversary year, performances from earlier seasons and excerpts from studio recordings are also included. Most of these recordings were made on site at the palace in Versailles, and also provide us with a fascinating overview of three generations of French period instrument performer-ensembles, with their widely varied approaches. A generous booklet is included.

The first two discs, devoted to music from the reign of Louis XIII, offer airs de cour and instrumental music by Boisset, Ballard, Lambert, Moulinié, Gau tiers and others. Lunenst Clair Antonini and soprano Monique Zanetti do very well with this repertoire, and though Zanetti’s strong vibrato is a bit too consistent for my taste she negotiates Boisset’s ornamentation with aplomb, sensitivity and intelligence. Similar material in the hands (should I say throats) of Il Seminario Musicale is very musically performed; Christine Plaubou’s solo viol playing is of special note.

The six CDs celebrating the era of Louis XIV include excerpts from Lully’s Isis and Anaxid (performed respectively by Les Pages et les Chantres du CMVB and Musica Florea), and samplings from operas by Charpentier, Marais, DESTouches and Colasse played by the Concert Spirituel. Works for the Chapel Royal by Dumont, Lully, Demarest, Brossard, Charpentier, and some of Couperin’s Lesçons de ténèbres make plain this era’s wealth of sacred
music, and the fact that these recordings were made in the Chapelle Royale itself adds to their moving effect. The final disc, “Concerts et symphonies pour le Roi”, presents some very sweet orchestral music by Delalande and Lully fils (!) and two of Couperin’s Concerts Royaux.

Of the music from the era of Louis XV, the special discoveries for me were the diversissements Zélideor (by François Rebel and Francoeur), performed by Ausonia, and Blaumont’s Égide as performed by les Nouveaux Caractères. The four other discs, all great but presenting more familiar fare, feature operatic music of Rameau, music from the Concert Spirituel and chapel royal by Mondonville, Rameau/Campora, Balbastre, Corette and Daquin; and early symphonic music by Mondonville and Delalande.

The six final CDs, focused on the age of Louis XVI, include ‘Italians at the French Court’ with music by Sacchini and Piccinni; a collection of post-Rameau opera excerpts by Philiidor, Gossec, Monsigny, etc.; French symphonies by Gossec, Leduc and Rigél; fortepiano music performed by Andreas Staier; chamber music for string quartet and flute, in which a Boccherini quartet and a Devienne quartet are a distinct pleasure; and a disc of sacred choral music and organ works. The collection closes in suitably proud style with Claude-Bénigne Balbaste’s wacky set of variations on La Marsellesaise, played with brilliance and panache by Olivier Latry.

A great find for fans of the French Baroque, French culture in general, or for anyone wishing to expand their horizons on this wonderful repertoire!

Alison Melville

EXTENDED PLAY — KEVIN MALLON RIDES AGAIN (AND AGAIN)

By Terry Robbins

Here are three more outstanding NAXOS CDs from Baroque and Classical specialist Kevin Mallon with his Aradia Ensemble and Toronto Chamber Orchestra. All were produced by Norbert Kraft and Bonnie Silver at St. Anne’s Church (TCO) and Grace Church-on-the-Hill (Aradia), so the recorded sound is of the highest quality.

I must admit that I’m not particularly fond of a lot of Vivaldi’s instrumental music, sometimes thinking that there’s not much there other than constant arpeggios, scale passages, sequences and circles of fifths. All of which made my complete enjoyment of the Vivaldi Sacred Music Vol.3 (8.570445) with the Aradia Ensemble all the more pleasing. You expect a stronger melodic line with vocal music, but what is really special here is the expressiveness of the music, and the sense of a deeper personal involvement than in a good deal of Vivaldi’s instrumental works. The liner notes refer to “passages of great tenderness and sombre beauty, rich in cantabile expressiveness”, and that’s also a perfect description of the playing on this beautiful CD.

Works include the Magnificat RV610/611, the Salve Regina RV617, the Noli Dominius RV608 and the Kyrie RV387. Soprano Carla Huth­tanen and mezzo Lynn McMurry carry the bulk of the vocal work; Huhtanen is particularly outstanding in the glorious motet In fuoris hastissimae traeth that closes the disc.

Poor Leopold Mozart. Despite his renowned violin method, he was overshadowed by his famous son, and has generally been regarded as, at best, an uninspired composer remembered chiefly for the Toy Symphony and the Musical Sleigh­ride. Such works, however, form only a small and unrepresentative part of the output of a very successful composer who produced over 70 symphonies. With Leopold Mozart Symphonies (8.570499) Kevin Mallon and the Toronto Chamber Orchestra go a long way toward redressing the balance, although they are some what undermined by having the Toy Symphony take top billing on the CD front cover. Three sinfonias edited by Mozart specialist Cliff Eisen plus the New Lambacher Sinfonia in G are given a new life by the performers, and certainly broaden our perception of Leopold Mozart as a composer; indeed, six of his symphonies were at one time or another attributed to Wolfgang.

Don’t be alarmed by the high numbers on Haydn Symphonies Nos. 62, 107 and 108, the 34th and final volume in the NAXOS set (8.572130); far from being mature works that you didn’t know existed. Nos. 107 and 108 are renumbered early works written prior to 1760, thus pre­dating Haydn’s employment with the Ester­házy family. No. 62 is a middle-period symphony that reflects Haydn’s growing precociously with the musical theatre at the Ester­házy summer estate. Two opera overtures, La vera costanza and Lo speziale, complete the disc, although as was the case with Mallon’s recent CDs of Cimarosa overtures, these mus­t­move works sound more like early symphonies than music for the opera. The mu­sic may lack the richness of invention of the mature Haydn, but spirited, clean playing by the TCO and bright, crisp tempos from Mallon make this an extremely enjoyable disc.

CONCERT NOTE: In preparation for the next volume of Aradia’s recording of the complete sacred music of Vivaldi they will perform the renowned Gloria on December 14 at the Church of the Blessed Sacrament.

CLASSICAL AND BEYOND

The Essential Evgeny Kissin

Evgeny Kissin

RCA Red Seal 88697301102

“Genius” is a word used with far too much frequency, but I would say pianist Evgeny Kissin fits the bill admirably. Who else but a genius would begin to improvise at the piano at age 2, make his debut with a Mozart piano concerto at 11, and play not one, but both Chopin piano concertos at 12? (I still wonder how those 12­year-old hands could have made the stretch­es!). But no matter, this two-disc set, part of the “Essential” series from Sony, is a fine portrait of a pianist who has rightfully taken his place among the greats. Perhaps not surprisingly, most of the repertoire here is drawn from the Romantic period, with an abundance of Chopin with whom Kissin has always had an affinity. But also included are works by Bach (as arranged by Busoni), Brahms, Rach­maninov, Gluck, and Stravinsky, all of it recorded between 1988 and 2005. While most of the recordings were made at the SWR­Studio in Freiburg, Germany, three were taken from live concerts elsewhere in Europe.

For lovers of piano music such as myself, this set is a treat, owing not only to the eclectic program, but the inherent musicianship evident at all times in Kissin’s playing. Apart from the extraordinary technique, I am always struck by his deeply rooted sensitivity. While certain pianists of his generation seem eager to impress by fast­fingered pizzazz, Kissin seems more intent on letting the music speak for itself. Throughout the disc he effortlessly captures the wide­ranging moods of the music, from the cheekiness of Stravinsky’s Danse Russe, to the quiet introspection of Chopin’s D flat Nocturne Op.27 82.

In all, this set is an outstanding tribute to Kis­sin’s 25 year career, bearing in mind that he’s not yet 40 - highly recommended.

Richard Haskell

Mahler - Symphony No.3

Lucerne Festival Orchestra; Anna Larsson; Arnold Schoenberg Choir; Töltzer Knabenchor; Claudio Abbado

Medici Arts 2056338

Formed from the most distinguished of European instrumentalists and amplified by younger members of the Gust­ Mahler Youth Orchestra, Claudio Abbado’s hand­picked members of the Lucerne Festival Orchestra have met each summer since 2002 to accomplish performances of utter commitment and astounding virtuosity. This live
The filmed performance of Gustav Mahler's monumental Third Symphony from August of 2007 is perhaps their greatest accomplishment to date. The wonderful sprawl of Mahler's truly audacious 35 minute first movement is unified by Abbado's steady yet supple, perfectly paced march tempo. This massive movement, of which Mahler ruefully remarked, "You'd sometimes think you were in a tavern or a sty", often overshadows the two shorter movements which follow it. Fortunately in this performance these interludes positively sparkle and dazzle, thanks to the stellar contributions of the distinguished first chair soloists and Abbado's buoyant, no-nonsense tempo. Special kudos are also due to the uncredited "Posthorn" soloist for his perfectly executed off-stage solo.

Though Anna Larsson's oracular interpretation of the fourth movement solo solo may fall a little short on sentiment, it is an appropriately sepulchral element to the hushed and mysterious atmosphere Abbado establishes. The subsequent brief choral movement follows like a ray of sunshine. The concluding Finale conveys a unique serenity and warmth, a sense of unconditional love without longing that leaves the audience in stunned silence at the luminous conclusion of Mahler's kaleidoscopic epic. This is without question a performance of truly historic dimensions.

Daniel Foley

Alfred Hill - String Quartets, Vol.2
The Dominion Quartet
Naxos 8.572097

We were introduced to the string quartets of New Zealand composer Alfred Hill (1869-1960) in volume one (NAXOS 8.570491). I was impressed by the beauty of his melodies and the clarity, invention and expert composition skills.

All is brilliant if you place him chronologically between Mendelssohn and Dvorak or Tchaikovsky. He had studied in Leipzig upon the advice of Ede Remenyi, whom he had met when the violinist, who had been a collaborator of Brahms, was on tour in New Zealand. Hill was, however, a contemporary of Schoenberg and Stravinsky. Listening to these three quartets is a delightful experience thanks to Hill himself and to the superb ensemble of the Dominion Quartet, polished and spontaneous. The splendid engineering is a model of its kind, being clearly focused and perfectly balanced. Would that all recordings were technically as fine as this.

Alfred Hill wrote 17 string quartets, and with this release Naxos has six of them with this ensemble. There is an earlier Naxos recording of numbers 5, 6 and 11 played by the Australian String Quartet, now out of print in these here parts. Hill has been treated well by Naxos who has issued three CDs of orchestral music, including six of his symphonies. Any group playing chamber music for fun will enjoy adding one or two Alfred Hill quartets to their repertoire.

Bruce Surtees

MODERN & CONTEMPORARY

Delicate Fires
Tirestius
Redshift TK421
www.redshiftmusic.org

West Coast chamber music has a tendency to be free of varnish and mysterious, with a debt to Asian and French influences that lend refinement to its traditionally sparsely aural landscape. "Delicate Fires" is the first recording by the Vancouver duo Tirestius, Flautist Mark McGregor and pianist Rachel Iwaasa perfrorm British Columbia music spanning nearly sixty years, including several commissions. The music's fire with birdy or windy melodic lines that are picturesque and strange like an unidentifiable wood carving found in a lonely forest.

McGregor and Iwaasa have excellent rapport and capture each score's naturalistic poise. The core of the disc is three works by Barbara Pentland, which range from breezy tonality to eclectic atonal material. New pieces by Jocelyn Morlock, Rodney Sharman and Jennifer Butler vary in idiom from Satiean quirk to Feldman-esque pensiveness. It's all inviting music, without any of that tired stoic overreach that haunts so many contemporary compositions.

Most people don't know what BC music is like, how when it's properly performed it whiffs of cedar, ocean mist and rainwater, with whiffs of birdy or windy melodic lines that are picturesque and strange like an unidentifiable wood carving found in a lonely forest. McGregor and Iwaasa have excellent rapport and capture each score's naturalistic poise. The core of the disc is three works by Barbara Pentland, which range from breezy tonality to eclectic atonal material. New pieces by Jocelyn Morlock, Rodney Sharman and Jennifer Butler vary in idiom from Satiean quirk to Feldman-esque pensiveness. It's all inviting music, without any of that tired stoic overreach that haunts so many contemporary compositions.

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Dime Store (1932) for violin, piano and kitchen hardware also celebrates another faction of early American culture. Brant writes in the liner notes: “My piece was written in the hope that it might one day be played in an actual Woolworth 'five and dime', but as far as I know this never happened.”

There is a genuine sense of humour and good ole' American rebellion that is infused in Brant’s music. This CD clearly outlines Brant’s fearless need to mix genres, or use a Bach theme in a honky-tonk polka. Henry Brant is all over this recording, and whether he’s performing as a pianist, percussionist, or conductor, he’s clearly not afraid to get his hands dirty with music.

Richard Marsella

Symphony in Waves - Music of Aaron Jay Kernis
Grant Park Orchestra; Carlos Kalmar
Cedille CDR 90000105

Aaron J. Kernis (b. 1960) has, in the last decade, positioned himself increasingly at the head of the elite small group aspiring to assume the mantle left behind by the late Mr. Copland. Kernis’ idiom is pure post-Romantic modernism, free from any obeisance to the repetitiveness of his own works. With its impulsive camerawork and a wide variety of terrific content here, and Glass is unstinting with his musical ideas. Mosher chose a wide variety of excellent brass, woodwind and reed players, all of whom deserve to be mentioned: Storytime consists of the leader on soprano, oboe and English horn, Brian Landrus on bass and tenor clarinet, Same Sadgursky on flute, clarinet, and alto sax, Peter Hess on clarinet and tenor sax, Micah Killion on trumpet and flugelhorn, Rachel Drehmann on French horn, Michael Fahie on trombone, Nir Felder on guitar, Garth Steven son on acoustic bass and Ziv Ravitz on drums. Instrumental to the album’s success is the fact that Mosher’s compositions and arrangements vary greatly in their temperament. Clocking in at over ten minutes, the extended Twilight starts off gracefully as the twinkle of a star, eventually building into a majestic skyline of constellations that ultimately vanish. The mysterious Silhouette of a Man In the Fog grows increasingly eerie even as it disintegrates. The heavier tracks on this album are balanced by several hilarious interludes: When Snowflakes are Plotting (1:45), The Tall Tales of Todd Toven (1:12) and 1920’s Car Chase (2:17) are all minimalist works of art that beg for repeated listening.

Ori Dagan

The Tortoise
Rob Mosher’s Storytime
Old Mill Records MILL233 (www.robmosher.com)

“The Tortoise” is not slow to deliver the goods. One listen makes it clear that Rob Mosher is an accomplished, imaginative musician with great range as a composer, arranger and soloist. The album draws from both jazz and classical inspirations, showcasing the leader’s secure knowledge of both genres as he tastefully blends his musical ideas. Mosher chose a wide variety of excellent brass, woodwind and reed players, all of whom deserve to be mentioned: Storytime consists of the leader on soprano, oboe and English horn, Brian Landrus on bass and tenor clarinet, Same Sadgursky on flute, clarinet, and alto sax, Peter Hess on clarinet and tenor sax, Micah Killion on trumpet and flugelhorn, Rachel Drehmann on French horn, Michael Fahie on trombone, Nir Felder on guitar, Garth Stevenson on acoustic bass and Ziv Ravitz on drums. Instrumental to the album’s success is the fact that Mosher’s compositions and arrangements vary greatly in their temperament. Clocking in at over ten minutes, the extended Twilight starts off gracefully as the twinkle of a star, eventually building into a majestic skyline of constellations that ultimately vanish. The mysterious Silhouette of a Man In the Fog grows increasingly eerie even as it disintegrates. The heavier tracks on this album are balanced by several hilarious interludes: When Snowflakes are Plotting (1:45), The Tall Tales of Todd Toven (1:12) and 1920’s Car Chase (2:17) are all minimalist works of art that beg for repeated listening.

Ori Dagan
Everydays
Alan Licht & Aki Onda
Family Vineyard FV8
(www.family-vineyard.com)

Midway between virtual soundscape and bruitism, the sounds on this album’s five tracks assail and edify listeners’ senses with their own logic. That’s because every texture — from vibrating drones to sputtering signals to coarse interjections of unadulterated discord — are created by the guitar and electronic manipulations of New York’s Alan Licht plus the cassette tapes and electronics used for particular ends by Japanese-born Manhattan resident Aki Onda.

Together, Licht who has a degree in film studies and Onda, who has worked as a photographer, create cinematic-oriented sounds that suggest further pictorial images. Perhaps that’s why the two often work with Toronto’s Michael Snow, whose work also encompasses cinema and music. Throughout this CD only Licht’s chromatic chording and ragsuede do create recognizable thematic material. Meanwhile rhythmic undertow comments on the proceedings arrive via Onda’s ring modulator-like electronic flanges or by tape-replicated resonance of footfalls, voices or musique concrete-like rhythmic intonation.

Tiptoe for instance, defines different degrees of sonic understatement. Beginning with intermittent clanging mixed with aviary whistles, broken-octave string clusters outline a theme, which repeats and echoes throughout the piece. After buzzing sequenced loops repeat discordant polyrhythms, canon-like, gentle guitar arpeggios move to the foreground, resulting in conclusive finger-style licks and string-snaps.

Grinding pulses, spatters and snores elsewhere reinforce the duo’s mastery of reconstituted sound fields. Remaining opaque, the presentation still leaves plenty of room for individual interpretation and analysis.

Downward Dancing
Karin Plato
Independent KVP 5555
(www.karinplato.com)

Jazz is one of those elusive things that is sometimes hard to pin down. But when you hear it, you know it, and I have heard it on Karin Plato’s latest disc, “Downward Dancing”. She scats, she back phrases, she swings and yet she doesn’t grandstand. The song writing still gets to shine, as it should when covering masters like Porter and Rodgers & Hart. Other less familiar songs counterbalance the familiar, like the opening Gypsy In My Soul and the funk ode to a footwear fetish Shoe Passion Blues, written by Plato.

We don’t get to hear a lot of Plato in these parts, since she makes her home in Vancouver, and moreover, Toronto has a dearth of rooms where established, grown-up jazzers can play for more than beer. But for this, her sixth album, she chose to collaborate with Toronto musicians — Nancy Walker, piano, Steve Wallace, bass and Joel Haynes, drums — who turn in their customary sensitive and skilled back-pedaling support and strong solo.

Horrors Ensemble
Quinsin Nachoff
Musictonic (www.quinsin.com)

This challenging recording is neither conventional nor light-hearted, nor easily categorized. Unique in instrumentation and dramatic in nature, the album functions as a complex series of large moody paintings; in order to fully grasp their beauty, the listener must take time and focus to pay close attention to the details. The artist’s meticulous choice of colours, multifaceted arrangements and dynamic range of emotion unfold slow but sure. Each given theme is patiently developed, eventually revealing contrasts in dynamics, melodic peaks and valleys and much harmonic interest along the way.

Six tracks range in length from 8:17 to 13:47, from the deep longing of A River Remembers Rain to the melting serenity of Glacial Lake to the personified sweltering heat illustrated in Desert Landscape and African Skies. In contrast to the said climatic pieces, the wholly unpredictable Cartoon-Scape is refreshingly frantic, pushing the boundaries of each instrument in the ensemble.

Throughout the album Nachoff’s technical prowess on both tenor and soprano saxophone is on high, at times recalling the divinity and daring of John Coltrane. His moving energy is only enhanced by the pitch-perfect ensemble assembled here, of whom contribute greatly to the recording’s abstract brand of musical expressionism. Internationally admired British pianist John Taylor and Dutch cellist Ernst Reijeseger, as well as Canadian violinists Nathalie Bonin and Pamela Attarwala consistently deliver with precision and radiance. Although on paper it may seem like a heavy meal to digest, this meditative album gets more rewarding with every listen.

Ori Dagan

EXTENDED PLAY
Jazz Icons DVDs – Series 3
By Don Brown

Produced by Reelin’ in the Years Productions and distributed by NAXOS this third Jazz Icons boxed set maintains the high level of the first two in the series. It contains eight DVDs including a bonus disc only available with the set, otherwise the discs may be purchased individually. The material was filmed between 1958 and 1975 and it all comes from European television companies. Running times are in the 60 to 90 minute range.

Cannonball Adderley - Live in ’63
The Adderley comes from a pair of sessions filmed two days apart, one in Switzerland, the other in Germany, with Cannonball on alto, brother Nat on cornet, Yusef Lateef, tenor, flute and oboe, Joe Zawinul, piano, Sam Jones, bass, and Louis Hayes, drums. The sextet comes on like a big band in these supercharged performances but the Swiss program, filmed before a live audience, has the edge over the German show which was done in a TV studio. An essential disc.

Bill Evans - Live in ’64-75
The Evans features five separate performances by the introspective pianist filmed in Sweden, France and Denmark. His sidemen include bassists Chuck Israels, Niels-Henning Orsted Pedersen and Eddie Gomez, and drummers Larry Bunker, Alan Dawson, Marty Morell and Eliot Zigmund. At the French concert altoist Lee Konitz is added for My Melancholy Baby. Highlights include the trio’s interpretations of Detour Ahead, If You Could See Me Now and Round Midnight. Two of the segments are in colour.

Lionel Hampton - Live in ’58
This concert, filmed in Belgium, features Hampton’s 17-piece orchestra. Of all the discs in the set it’s probably the weakest and I’m not sure if it’s Hampton’s fault or Belgian TV’s. With this leader one expects an outrageous yet entertaining show, but what we get is pretty tame by Hamp’s standards. Too much time is taken up with a ‘history of jazz’ and expected Hampton flag-wavers like Flying Home are missing. Something tells me this was a TV director’s decision.

Rahsaan Roland Kirk - Live in ’63 & ’67
Multi-instrumentalist Rahsaan Roland Kirk’s magic has been captured here in Belgium, Holland and Norway. His accompanists are pianists George Grundt and Ron Burton, bassists Guy Pederson and Niels-Henning Orsted Pedersen, and drummers Daniel Humair and Alex Riel. If you were never lucky enough to have caught Kirk in person this one’s a must. Needless to say watching someone play several saxophones simultaneously can be fascinating, but what’s far more important is that Kirk always delivers on a musical level.

By Don Brown
NOTATED MUSIC AND IMPROVISATION

By Ken Waxman

So-called classical music and jazz have had an uneasy relationship since the beginning of the last century. Notated musicians yearned for jazz’s rhythmic and improvisational freedom, while musicians coveted orchestral colors and financial support. Until the late 20th century, most adaptations of each music by jazz or classical artists were misguided attempts at popularity. Now a new generation of musicians is comfortable in both idioms. On the improvised music side — as these CDs indicate — performers subtly subvert notated themes producing statements that draw from both strains while adding something extra.

Interestingly, three of the discs here — the Mike Westbrook, Uri Caine and Reinhold Friedl — were commissioned by European festivals eager for original takes on traditional themes. The fourth — Jugendstil (ESP-Disk ESP 4048 www.espdisk.com) — includes a five-part suite influenced by Elliott Carter, who turns 100 December 11. Reminiscent of the composer’s clear-textured chamber works, the Carter Variations played by clarinetist Chris Speed, saxophonist Chris Cheek and bassist/composer Stephane Furic Lebovici replicate Carter’s complex counterpoint. Surging originally modulated, well-spaced lines, the program hitches intertwining woodwind harmonies with the bass’ chromatic percussiveness. With organized dissonance expressed by shrilling diaphragm vibrato and adagio glissandi, string pops keep the presentation on an even keel. The orchestra is comfortable in both idioms. On the improvisation side, the trio performs here like a well-oiled machine, sometimes a tad too well-oiled for this listener. In places I get the feeling everything’s been pre-planned, leaving absolutely nothing to chance.

Sonny Rolls - Live in ’65 & ’68

There are two Danish concerts on the Rollins DVD. In 1965 the ‘saxophone colossus’ is backed by Niels-Henning Orsted Pedersen on bass and Alan Dawson on drums. In 1968 Kenny Drew is added on piano, Pedersen’s back on bass, and Albert “Tootie” Heath is the drummer. In both performances ideas pour forth like water from the open tap of Sonny’s fervid imagination. It’s instructive to watch the different ways the great tenorman works with and without a piano. This one’s another must-have.

Nina Simone - Live in ’65 & ’68

Expect a pair of riveting performances on this one. The first comes from Holland, the second from England. In both locales Ms. Simone plays to rapt audiences. There’ll be no doubt be purists acquiring this set who’ll ask whether or not Nina Simone belongs in a collection of jazz artists. I pity them. Forget about categories and be prepared for a rare treat.

Bonus Disc - Sonny Rolls ’59, Rahsaan Roland Kirk ’63 & Nina Simone ’65

Often when a collection contains a “bonus” disc what one gets is incomplete scraps and inferior out-takes. Well, this one’s jam-packed with first-rate material. I’d strongly recommend purchasing the boxed set of Jazz Icons. It’s the only way you’ll get this bonus disc which contains stellar performances by Sonny Rollins in Sweden and Holland, Rahsaan Roland Kirk in Holland and Nina Simone in Sweden.

EXTENDED PLAY -

Oscar Peterson - Live in ’63, ’64 & ’65

The Oscar Peterson trio, Peterson, Ray Brown and Ed Thigpen together with a couple of guests, are seen in concerts filmed in Sweden, Denmark and Finland. Trumpeter Roy Eldridge sits in on one number at the Swedish concert while Clark Terry is present on all but one piece from Finland. He plays trumpet and flugelhorn on three numbers, then puts down his horn to ‘vocalize’ on Mumbles, the famous blues parody he’d recorded only a year earlier with Peterson. Peterson’s trio performs here like a well-oiled machine, sometimes a tad too well-oiled for this listener. In places I get the feeling everything’s been pre-planned, leaving absolutely nothing to chance.

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EXTENDED PLAY -
Klezmachine
Klezfactor
Independent 2008 (www.klezfactor.com)
An extraordinary clarity of vision is what makes Klezfactor’s “Klezmachine” a surprising success. Be it the compositions, the performances, or the production qualities, here is an unusually charming musical adventure. The tour de force behind the project is saxophonist/clarinetist/composer Mike Ankiewicz who has penned all but one of the tracks. In his liner notes, he is exceedingly clear about from where he draws his compositional influences, be it the funk gods in The Jewce (Munieschwitz), to the gentle stylings of pianist Marilyn Lerner in Waltz for Ronit, to the more heavy metal(!) groove of Gonif. This sharing of musical styles is justified as a peak on the KlezFactor website which states that klezmer music traditionally draws from different stylistic roots. Ankiewicz is a clever note smith – the defining elements of his compositions are a sly wit and an even stronger compositional technique.

Klezfactor the band is good – pianist Ali Berkok, guitarist Jaro Dubrowski, drummer David MacDougall, violinist/violist Ben Plotnick and bassist Michael Smith are a strong unit. They are joined by special guests cellist Erika Nielsen and vocalist Linnor Twena. The band plays a bit too safe occasionally, but thankfully these moments are few and far between. This is a moot point however as all players shine whether following their charts or improvising intelligently.

This is the second release for KlezFactor. Kudos to Ankiewicz and the band as “Klezmachine” is an unexpected yet pleasant musical surprise.

Ken Waxman

POT POURRI

Tango Nuevo
Gryphon Trio
Analekta AN 2 9857
Credited with having brought tango to the concert hall, Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992) incorporated harmonies and rhythms of classical music in his nuevo tango, often meeting with fierce resistance from traditionalists.

The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires, not really related to Vivaldi’s Four Seasons, is filled with frequent and sudden shifts of mood, sweet introspective lyricism, alternating with upbeat jazzy syncopation.

The Invierro features a rhapsodic piano solo, while the Pri mavera takes a bluesy turn becoming a roller-coaster ride full of romantic melody and jagged rhythms, but always with an underlying dance step (imagine heads, arms and legs tossed back and forth in ecstasy).

Not surprisingly, the beautiful sweeping melody of Oblivion is a wonderful movie soundtrack theme; the Resurreccion del Angel, a baroque lament chaconne, with its slowly descending chromatic bass line, is very moving. The lyrical sensuality of Milonga del Angel is contrasted by the driving fugue of Muerte del Angel.

Juno award-winning Cuban-Canadian composer Hilario Duran takes the traditional Con tradanza one step further by adding an habanera rhythm, rich jazz harmonies, and pizzicato/glissando string accents, with great results, continuing the tango movement that Piazzola began.

The Gryphon Trio brings a welcome playful, saucy touch to this passionate repertoire. Be prepared to be swept off your feet.

Frank Nakashima

Bowfire
Live in Concert
Bowfire AN-01039 (CD)
AN-01022 (DVD) (www.bowfire.com)
“Bowfire” is jazz violinist Lenny Solomon’s vision. And what a vision it is. As the artistic director of Bowfire, he has assembled a team of world class performers to create a visual and aural spectacle starring the violin/ fiddle.

A gamut of styles from jazz to Celtic to bluegrass to classical to world music are performed with breathtaking musical and technical finesse. This is not a “string smörgåsbord” however. Much care, thought and expertise has been put into the programming so that the flow from for example, a fiddle medley to a Klezmer track is seamless.

Joining Solomon are violinists Jon Plautzke, Bogdan Djukic, Raymond Leger, Shane Cook, Kelli Trottier, Yi-Jia Susanne Hou, Stephane Allard, and Stephanie Cadman. A brilliant addition is George Gao on erhu (Chinese violin). Each string player is a star in his/her own right, and has a chance to solo and shine. A tight team of ensemble musicians backs them up. Highlights include Hou literally letting her hair down performing Zigeunerweisen, the ensemble rocking in Kashmir and Gao in Galloping Horses.

With the strong visual components of choreography, dancing, and lighting, the DVD really needs to be seen in order to fully appreciate the amazing “stage show” that Bowfire is. It also features some tracks not included on the CD like the Solomon composed tango Dijango.

A slick and smart show, “Bowfire” is a labour of love and a remarkable achievement.

Tiina Kiik

Chances
Jill Barber
Outside Music (www.jillbarber.com)
The Juno-nominated and East Coast music award-winning singer-songwriter, Jill Barber, has switched gears from being a self-described “smoky folkie” to, well, whatever this is. I don’t think there’s an existing category to slot “Chances” into. It’s a collection of last dances – the get-your-best-girl-out-on-the-floor-this-is-it folks-closing-time type of song that is vaguely reminiscent of post-World War II era dance halls. Complete with lots of warbling saxes, flutes and lush, lush strings, all the songs on the disc are written at least in part by Barber. The versatile Joel Cooper is a huge presence on the album, with his distinctive, throaty voice may not be everyone’s cup of tea. But who wants everyone’s cup of tea? Sometimes the mood calls for a warm, earthy Lapsang Souchong instead of run-of-the-mill Orange Pekoe.

Cathy Riches

CONCERT NOTES: Jill Barber will be touring Ontario in February with performances in Belleville on the 12th, Peterborough on the 13th, Kingston on the 14th, Toronto on the 16th with a free lunchtime performance at First Canadian Place, Wakefield on the 18th and 20th, Toronto at the Diesel Playhouse on the 21st, at Kitchener’s Centre In the Square on the 26th and Hamilton’s Studio Theatre on the 27th.
OLD WINE IN NEW BOTTLES – Fine old recordings re-released
by Bruce Suttrees

Leonard Bernstein would have been 90 this year and the industry has done rather well by him. Deutsche Grammophon winds up the year with an unprecedented release of DVDs including performances of Beethoven with the Vienna Philharmonic. Some people who are old enough to have long memories may remember a weekly series on television c. 1977, introduced by Maximillian Schell, commemorating the 150th anniversary of Beethoven’s death, featuring all the symphonies. These are on three DVDs (sans Max) available separately: 1, 8, and 9 (0734497), 2, 6, and 7 (0734498), 3, 4, and 5 (0734499). Also Overtures and the String Quartet op.131 (0734502); The Missa Solemnis, The Choral Fantastique, Prometheus music (0734501). The four Schumann Symphonies are miraculously on one DVD (0734512) and Tchaikovsky’s Fourth and Fifth Symphonies plus the Violin Concerto (with Boris Belkin) from New York and Boston are on a single DVD (0734511).

I was riveted to the screen throughout the monumental Once at a Border, a biography of Igor Stravinsky directed by Tony Palmer (TPDVD126). Very well researched, the film follows the composer’s life and career using archival material, his personal reminiscences and newly documented performances of excerpts from his familiar and unfamiliar works. The film will be a revelation to both the Stravinsky devotee and neophyte and may indeed gain some converts. Produced for the composer’s centenary in 1982, this film received universal praise. Included are invaluable archival treasures of this man who really did change music. Interviews with his sons, his wife and his associates from the world of music and ballet are included.

Tony Palmer directed and edited a film on William Walton entitled At the Haunted End of the Day (TPDVD113) in 1981 only a few years before the composer’s death. Walton narrates and lends fascinating asides about the characters of the day including the Sitwells and their eccentric goings on, together with many excerpts from performances. In the last chapters his wife takes over and leads us through his years on the island of Ischia. This is a fascinating, gentle film of prime interest to Walton’s admirers who would be interested in the composer’s life, his circle of friends and colleagues and musical milestones.

The 2002 Glyndebourne production of Carmen, already available from OpusArte, is now available on Blu-ray (OABD7015) on 2 high definition DVDs. Anne Sophie von Otter is magnificent as the tartiest Carmen imaginable, abetted by an all-star cast including Marcus Haddock, Laurent Naouri, and Lisa Milne. The conductor is Philippe Jordan, the Swiss maestro who energizes orchestras with the most idiosyncratic and exaggerated gestures, under whose direction the orchestra, the London Philharmonic is outstanding. The new Blu-ray discs are spectacular and worth the difference in cost but there are no complaints with the regular DVD set.

New from Naxos is the third of three CDs containing the complete Beethoven violin sonatas played by Joseph Fuchs with Arthur Balsam, piano (8.111253). These are creative and personal performances, recorded in 1952. The superb transfers bring the entire cycle sonically up to date. The earlier volumes are 8.111251 and 8.111252. All are recommended without reservation.

One of the foremost and longest lasting string quartets, the Loewenguth Quartet achieved international fame and recognition soon after their founding in Paris in 1929. Known for their superb renditions of the classics, in 1950 they became the first featured string quartet of DG, winning the coveted Grande prix du Disque. Their repertoire ranged from Baroque to modern Russian and French. Volume One in a proposed DOREMI series includes 3 CDs devoted to Haydn and Mozart (DHIR-7846-8), ably demonstrating the artistry of a group that achieved cult status.

Juno Nominee
THIS ISN’T SILENCE
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David Oistrakh was ruthlessly used and misused by the Soviet Union while around the world he was lionised by legions of fans and fellow musicians. A new DVD release of Bruno Monsaingeon’s 1994 video, Artist of the People? (Medici Arts 3073178) includes many archive performances and astonishing revelations from conversations and interviews with Rostropovich, Menuhin, Kremer, Rozhdestvensky, and others. An intriguing eye-opener to the way things were not so long ago.

Gennady Rozhdestvensky can also be seen on another Medici Arts DVD (3085278) live from The Proms of 1978/79 conducting charged performances of Rimsky-Korsakov’s Russian Easter Festival Overture, Rachmaninov’s First Piano Concerto with Viktoria Postinova (Mrs. Rozhdestvensky) and Shostakovich’s huge Fourth Symphony. These sensational read-
"Under Mr. Oundjian the orchestra has maintained its shine, but now it packs a firm punch as well."

What’s on at the TSO?

A Very Merry Christmas
December 9 & 10 at 8:00pm
December 10 at 2:00pm
Jeff Tyzik, conductor
Tonio DiPaolo, tenor
Mississauga Choral Society
Canadian Children’s Opera Chorus
Ring in the season with a Christmas concert of traditional favourites and timeless classics!

Toronto’s Favourite Messiah
December 16, 17, 19 & 20 at 8:00pm
December 21 at 3:00pm
Noel Edison, conductor
Gillian Keith, soprano
Allyson McHardy, mezzo-soprano
Frederic Antoun, tenor
Robert Gleadow, bass
Toronto Mendelssohn Choir

National Arts Centre Orchestra
January 10 at 8:00pm
Pinchas Zukerman, conductor & soloist
Mozart: Violin Concerto No. 3, K. 216
Beethoven: Symphony No. 5

Mozart Jupiter Symphony
January 14 at 6:30pm
January 15 at 8:00pm
Peter Oundjian, conductor
Robert Levin, piano
Mozart: Suite from Les petits riens, K. 299b (Jan 15 only)
Mozart: Piano Concerto No. 24, K. 491
Mozart: Symphony No. 41, K.551 “Jupiter”
Part of the Mozart@253 Festival

Mozart Fantasy
January 17 at 7:30pm
January 18 at 3:00pm
Peter Oundjian, conductor
Robert Levin, piano
Sarah Jeffrey, oboe
Joaquin Valdepeñas, clarinet
Neil Deland, horn
Michael Sweeney, bassoon
Mozart: Overture to Così fan tutte, K. 588
Mozart: Sinfonia Concertante for Winds, K. 297b
Improvisations by Robert Levin
Mozart: Piano Concerto No. 20, K. 466
Part of the Mozart@253 Festival

The Magic Flute
January 22 & 24 at 8:00pm
Bernard Labadie, conductor
Karina Gauvin, soprano (Pamina)
Benjamin Butterfield, tenor (Tamino)
Joshua Hopkins, baritone (Papageno)
Aline Kutan, soprano (Queen of the Night)
Gary Relyea, bass-baritone (Sarastro)
Nathan Berg, bass-baritone (Sprechrol)
University of Toronto MacMillan Singers
Mozart: The Magic Flute, K. 620
Part of the Mozart@253 Festival

Evelyn Glennie
January 28 & 29 at 8:00pm
Giancarlo Guerrero, conductor
Evelyn Glennie, percussion
Michael Daugherty: Desi
John Corigliano: Conjure
Haydn: Symphony No. 99 “Fire”
Falla: The Three-Cornered Hat Suites Nos. 1 & 2

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Nancy Fabiola Herrera, mezzo-soprano (Spain)

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