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This month’s main idea

For the main idea in this month’s Opener, credit is due to WholeNote editorial colleague, Colin Eatock, who, among other things, coordinates our listings department. In this latter capacity, he has just completed the task of designing a system to tag every concert listing by musical genre. So now you can go to our online listings and search for =NewM, or =Chor, or =MusT, (or a dozen other genres), and look just at the listings in your chosen categories. Out of curiosity, I ran an =NewM (i.e. new music) search on this month’s listings. The search turned up sixty concerts with at least some significant new music content. Some of these, to be sure, are unsurprising – coming from presenters who either present new music all the time, or occasionally turn their attention in a big way to the topic of new creation.

More surprising (and heartening) was being able to trace the extent to which new works are also showing up in concerts where one would not have expected them – choirs, community orchestras, chamber groups. Heartening, because every time a choir wraps its collective mind and voice around something new, so too they invite their audiences to adventure.

Last month’s Opener

I do however take full responsibility for the ideas expressed in last month’s Opener, and am pleased to say that the piece even drew a couple of huzzahs!

London-based Robert McMaster (soundscape percussionist) wrote:

“(We) picked up a copy of the February issue of WholeNote while in Cobourg, Ontario to perform a concert at the Cobourg Library as part of the city’s Winter Festival. I want to comment and commend you on your For Openers article, ‘Keeps rainin’ all the time’. We here in London are really feeling the Arts pinch and there are many citizens (including a good number on city council) who feel that the Arts are a useless frill, as shown in the battle to keep Orchestra London, our symphony orchestra, afloat as they do a financial restructuring, not to mention the lack of support for the individual musicians and artists. A great number of citizens and council members have that ‘Bean Counter/Corporate Profit Attitude’ and seem to scream out ‘What good is it to us anyway? Get rid of it if it ain’t making a profit in real hard cash.’”

David Perlman, Editor
editorial@thewholenote.com
At home with Alexina Louie

By Colin Eatock

Composer Alexina Louie offers a warm greeting at the door of her home, in Toronto's High Park neighbourhood. Repeatedly, she apologizes for the not-quite-finished renovations to the house she shares with her partner, conductor Alex Pauk, and their children. The renovation has been going on for several years – and at one point even threatened her compositional activity. (More on that later.)

Soon we’re sitting around the kitchen table, looking at the score to her newest piece, Pursuit, for orchestra and string quartet. The work was composed for the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and the Tokyo String Quartet, and will be premiered on March 7, as part of the TSO’s New Creations Festival. Such an unusual combination of instrumental forces was, Louie admits, a challenge.

“I spent a lot of time thinking about this piece,” she observes, turning the pages of the big score, “before I started to write the notes. At the outset, I had a meeting with the Toronto Quartet – I heard them play, and we met the next day. I said I’d like to write a piece that won’t have to be amplified. But I’m not sure, even at this point, if the quartet will need microphones. Roy Thomson is a big hall.”

She continues: “Also, I didn’t want to relegate the orchestra to the occasional chord, or to create a separation between the orchestra and the quartet. I had to come up with creative solutions.”

As composers go, Louie can be remarkably candid when talking about her compositional processes. In February, when the Esprit Orchestra gave the Toronto premiere of her Infinite Sky With Birds, she told the audience, just before the performance, that “a sense of panic” often sets in when she’s asked to write a new piece.

“I used the word ‘panic,’” she explains with a smile, “but it’s not that I get blocked. I have a great respect for the activity of creating music. Trying to create a work of art that expresses something that I feel, and is important enough to take up people’s time, is a big responsibility. And I don’t want to let myself down. I don’t want to write a piece that’s less fulfilling – for myself, for the performer, and also for the listener.”

Louie is a rarity in Canada’s musical culture: a freelance composer who derives almost all of her income from composing.

She’s been plying her trade for more than three decades, and her catalogue of works at the Canadian Music Centre contains 47 compositions. And she has about a dozen more compositions that haven’t yet found their way to the CMC library, as yet.

“Trying to create a work of art that expresses something that I feel, and is important enough to take up people’s time, is a big responsibility.”

She works constantly. “In the last year,” she recalls, “I had something to do with my music every single day. I was working on a piece for the Montreal Pianist Competition, and pieces for the Montreal and Toronto orchestras, and also a made-for-television opera. They were all cooking at the same time. They all presented different challenges, and required completely different solutions.”

So how does she do it? According to Louie, the creativity is a “two way street: images come to you, but your own creative urges drive the process as well. Some pieces are inspired by a form or a structure. Sometimes it’s just a feeling.”

When she begins to commit her ideas to paper, she likes doing things the old-fashioned way, working with a pencil (and eraser), rather than a music-notation program on a computer. “There’s a grey area where creativity develops. And if you enter your ideas into a computer too soon, they become concrete.” Louie also likes working at the piano. “I can plan a piece without the piano – and I think about different sound-combinations away from the piano. But when it comes to putting notes on the page, I try to play everything.”

Two years ago, Louie’s use of the piano as a compositional tool was threatened by her personal circumstances. The ongoing renovation of her home had reached a point where the family had to vacate the premises, putting many of their possessions – including Louie’s piano – into storage. “If you’re a freelance composer,” she points out, “you don’t have the luxury of having a studio where you teach.”

For part of the time, the family rented a house that came with a piano. But the renovation work wasn’t finished when they had to leave their rented home, and so they moved from one temporary house-sitting arrangement to another. This left Louie without an instrument to compose on.

“If push comes to shove,” she says, “I can work under almost any circumstances. That said, I called people I knew, begging for a piano studio. Finally, a friend came up with a solution: he and a friend who was an artist worked in a commercial building. It
turned out that the landlord had a space in the building with a piano that I could use. I relied on the kindness of strangers – and friends!"

Also important to Louie’s creative process is contact with the musicians she’s writing for. “I try to write a piece that fits the commission. Hardly ever do I write a piece that’s totally unconnected with a performer’s talent. For an orchestral piece, I might listen to recordings. I might talk to administrators and ask which performers are of solo calibre. But sometimes I just work with an idea I have about the sound of the orchestra itself.”

Louie’s works have been performed by just about every orchestra in Canada, and she’s built strong relationships with the TSO, the MSO and Ottawa’s National Arts Centre Orchestra. She’s equally respected as composer of solo piano, chamber and choral music. As well, a slew of awards and honours have come her way: “Composer of the Year” in 1986, the Jules Leger Prize for chamber music in 1999, the Order of Ontario in 2001, and SOCAN awards as most performed Canadian composer in 1990, 1992 and 2003.

It would be nice to say that she’s led a creative life undisturbed by setbacks or obstacles – but that wouldn’t quite be true. In 1996, the Canadian Opera Company commissioned a full-length opera from her and playwright David Henry Hwang. However, the opera, entitled The Scarlet Princess, soon became bogged down in artistic differences between Louie and then-General Director Richard Bradshaw. Although the work was presented in one concert performance in 2002, it’s never received a fully staged production from the COC, or any other company.

“The Scarlet Princess was a huge labour – it took six years,” says Louie, clearly frustrated that the opera has never been seen as she intended it. Yet she remains optimistic about the work’s future. “I feel still positive about The Scarlet Princess as an opera. I had a very successful concert performance of it, and I still have people asking me when it’s going to be staged, because they want to see it. There are no immediate prospects, but I’m always working on it. I haven’t met with Alexander Neef at the COC, but I hope to.”

Louie has had some performances outside Canada, too. The orchestras of San Francisco, Indianapolis and St. Louis have played her music. Her Love Songs for a Small Planet has been sung by a choir in Sweden. Yet, she’s aware of the “glass ceiling” that often limits this country’s composers to a “world-famous in Canada” status.

“It’s a challenge, says Louie, “because I don’t have a publisher who’s working on my behalf. You really have to have a champion for your work, because a performing organization doesn’t take you seriously if you don’t. I’ve approached a few publishers, and they said that my music was good, but they didn’t know what to do with it.” (That’s polite code for “We don’t think anyone outside Canada is interested in Canadian music.”)

“I like to be aware of the performer. I like to know the kind of repertoire the performer is comfortable with.”

Buoyed by strong support at home, Louie continues her artistic journey. “I don’t think of myself as writing quickly – but when you think of the amount of music that I’ve written, you might say that I do. No piece is ever written in a week, or a month. I guess what I’m saying is that I may not always write quickly, but I do write relentlessly.”

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Peter DeSotto: Reinventing Quartetto Gelato

by Allan Pulker

In December 2006 Cynthia Steffes, co-founder of Quartetto Gelato, died after a short but intense battle with an asbestos-related form of lung cancer. After a two-year period of reconstruction, now with two new members, and with the next two seasons planned, including an autumn 2009 Asian tour, the ensemble has been re-incarnated. Its other co-founder, violinist, tenor and Cynthia’s widower, Peter DeSotto, brings continuity; and management is provided by entrepreneur and graphic designer Darlene Kulig. The group celebrates its rebirth with CD launch concerts at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa on March 19 and at Toronto’s Glenn Gould Studio on March 21.

Allan Pulker talked to Peter in mid February about the ensemble, its meteoric ascent, the tragic loss of Cynthia, its members, way of working and the new CD and concert.

Allan: How did you find the strength and the will to keep going after Cynthia’s death? It was a devastating loss, for you as her husband, of course, but also for the other members of the quartet as well.

Peter: I have a lot of trouble talking about it. Cynthia was a real sweetie. But I made a commitment to her that I would keep the group going; and it’s also a commitment to the group’s themes. With their help I was able to do it. But, you know, it’s these experiences that make you a great musician, a person who actually has something to say. You don’t live a passive life, a life without anything happening to you and come out with profound performances.

A: Not many people have had to endure what you’ve endured.

P: I have amazing friends, fans and family, people who really carried me through this whole thing. With their help I was able to do it. But, you know, it’s these experiences that make you a great musician, a person who actually has something to say. You don’t live a passive life, a life without anything happening to you and come out with profound performances.

A: Let’s go back to Quartetto Gelato’s beginnings. How and when did it get started?

P: We always say that we started the day we started our bank account in 1993; but we were actually performing for at least a year before that.

In 1992 I was a member of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. I went to Gunther Herbig and told him that I was going to need some time off. He asked how much and I said I needed seventy concerts off. His reply left no doubt that this was the point at which I had to make a decision whether I was going to be a Toronto Symphony player or a Quartetto Gelatin!

A: So you took the plunge.

P: By this point we were booked to do the Debut Atlantic tour – forty engagements. We won the NPR Artist of the Year Award, and then immediately everybody in Canada started booking us like crazy! Immediately after that IMG Artists in New York got wind of us, and they signed us on and suddenly we were all over the United States. We sold 50,000 copies of our first CD, which was unprecedented – we were actually outselling the three tenors.

A: You can’t have known it was going to take off like this!

P: No idea. It was music to entertain ourselves. We did the repertoire we wanted to play, the way we wanted to hear it. I wanted to do my operatic arias, of course, and I had been a strolling violinist to put myself through school. So, I said, I’ll do some strolling violin, and Cynthia wanted to do some virtuosic showpieces, so virtuosity and tenor arias became the group’s themes. We added folk music, then tango and it just went on and on.

A: Was there a role model, a group that was an inspiration for you?

P: The Canadian Brass, our mentors. They were the first and we were the second classical crossover entrepreneurs. They make a living at it and so do we; like us, and unlike most other chamber ensembles, they don’t have a residency to fall back on.

A: Talk to us about the other members.

P: Our cellist is Carina Reeves. Carina is very theatrical, flamboyant, beautiful, both to look at and a great musician. Our clarinetist, Kornel Woleck, is the fastest clarinetist I’ve ever heard. He came here to study with Joaquín Valdenebas - the clarinet guru of the world - who told me he was the most talented student he’d ever had. We snatched him up, and are lucky to have him.

As for Alex [Sebastian], there are very few accordionists who can play the way he plays. He’s a four-time world champion - he wins competitions for a hobby!

I really like this combination of people. I’m feeling so confident with them, and we’re getting audience reaction like we’ve never had.

A: How do CDs fit into the business?

P: CD sales have dropped off substantially since the MP3 and musical downloading, but at the same time more people are coming to our concerts and we’re getting a broader audience.
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Thursday, April 16, 2009, 8:00pm
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BRAHMS Variation on a Theme by Haydn
DVORAK Selected 1 Piano, 8 hands works
GERSHWIN Rhapsody in Blue
Tickets: $30 adult, $10 students

Sunday, March 8, 2009, 2:00pm
Great Artists Series
NADINA MACKIE JACKSON, bassoon
GUY FEW, trumpet
With a guest string ensemble
Programme: BALDASSARE Sonata No. 1, VIVALDI Concerto No. 26, LACHNER Concertino Op 43, LUSSIER Bacchanale, and others
Tickets: $30 adults, $10 students

Friday, April 17, 2009 8:00pm

Great Artists Series
ATIS BANKAS, violin
DIANNE WERNER, piano
This concert will feature Karol Shimanovsky's Nocturne and Tarantella, Op. 28, Leos Janacek's Ballade and two of the greatest works written for these instruments, the Frank Sonata for Violin & Piano and Debussy Sonata for Violin and Piano.

Tickets: $30 adult, $10 students

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A: Is that related to the internet?

P: Absolutely. I feel it's just good advertising. But we still do sell CDs, especially after concerts; and in fact we're always among the top sellers in the country. We're on MySpace and YouTube, which are great ways to reach a younger audience and to build sales. There are just so many ways now to sell that didn't even exist twenty years ago. The benefits of the internet far outweigh the reduction in CD sales.

A: Tell me about your upcoming CD launch concerts.

P: The program and the CD are called "Musica Latina." A member of the new Cuban community in Toronto, the pianist Hilario Duran, has done most of the arrangements. We've been known for the romantic pieces, our soft approach, so were looking for more rhythmic and up-tempo repertoire. Hilario performs on the first track of the CD, but won't be with us in the concerts. For the first time ever we've added percussion, and in "Suite Latino Americana" we've added the Penderecki String Quartet. The singing is more in the style of the modern tenors, like Andrea Bocelli or Josh Grobin.

BEAT BY BEAT: EARLY MUSIC

Haydn, Handel, et al.

by Frank Nakashima

What would we do without conductors? Would we be wandering aimlessly around the musical streets, searching for direction signs? Conductors offer ideas, projects, sense of purpose, interpretations, and guidance, not to mention encouragement and inspiration.

For example, take the Classical Music Consort, conducted by the new kid on the block, Ashiq Aziz. If it's Haydn that you're seekin', take a look at his extraordinary concert series dedicated to Franz Joseph Haydn, marking the 200th anniversary of his death. Highlights of the CMC series include Haydn's twelve London Symphonies, Nos. 93 to 104, in four concerts, in the order they were first performed, to allow the listener to hear the progression of compositional refinement.

Aziz clearly reveres this classical master and notes that interpretive clues are in the score. "I hope," he says, "that we are somehow able to bring out the wonderful humour that is so inherent in his music. Often the cleverness and wit of his ideas are expressed through the manipulation of form, harmony and structure." Aziz continues: "For example, the element of surprise in Haydn's music is one that I feel is quite important to recognize in order to ensure a successful performance."

I tell him that I notice the CMC performances use period and modern instruments. Aziz says he is aware of the differences, but his general approach is not significantly changed. "The concepts, with respect to phrasing and articulation, remain the same. It is just when dealing with balance issues that it becomes slightly more complicated, as modern instruments generally sound brighter and louder. Also, achieving the phrasing and articulation that comes naturally with period instruments is sometimes more difficult, as players have been trained in a different manner." Aziz is thankful that his players are "open and flexible in trying out different manners of interpretation" and that rehearsal time enables them an opportunity to overcome these obstacles. His enthusiasm is...

There are more Haydn performances coming up. Giles Tomkins will be singing a selection of Haydn's Scottish song arrangements (September 25); the Salomon quartets will be presented in their entirety by the Windermere and Cecilia string quartets (September 10, and October 7, respectively); Adam Sherkin will perform three London piano sonatas (April 22); and the most famous of his many trios, the Gypsy Trio in G Major, along with a few other trios will be played by the Duke Trio (May 14). See the website for more details: www.classicalmusicconsort.org.

Also commemorated this year is the 250th anniversary of Handel's death. This month, the Toronto Chamber Choir, under the direction of their new conductor, Mark Vuorinen, is presenting a reconstruction of a Vespers service comprised of music from Handel's Italian period, around 1707, some chant, as well as the demanding Dixit Dominus (March 28). Website: www.torontochamberchoir.ca. And the Tafelmusik Orchestra, Chamber Choir and soloists, under the guidance of Ivars Taurins, perform festive choral music (March 12 - 15) by Handel (Ode to St. Cecilia) and Zelenka (a mass dedicated to St. Cecilia).

Of course, there are other noteworthy early music performances coming up that aren't related to anniversaries. David Fallis conducts one of the greatest masterpieces of all time, Monteverdi's Vespers of 1610 (March 20, 21). Singers and players, including British tenor Charles Daniels, are directed by Fallis, one of our country's foremost early music specialists. Website: www.torontoconsort.org

Join Tafelmusik and Montreal's Les Voix Baroques for a performance of Bach's St. Matthew Passion (April 2 - 5, 7). The international cast of vocalists include Hana Blazikova, Monika Mauch, Matthew White, Margaret Bragle, Hans Jorg Mammel, Stephen MacLeod, Sumner Thompson, and Charles Daniels as the Evangelist. Often performed in grand style, with two big choirs and two big orchestras, Bach's great masterpiece is, this time, sung with one voice to a part, and no conductor. However, the performers will still be under the watchful eye of director-violinist Jeanne Lamon. Website: www.tafelmusik.org

Canada's conducting Wunderkind Yannick Nézet-Séguin, now music director of the Rotterdam Philharmonic, is, in fact, conducting many of the leading orchestras of the world (such as the London Philharmonic). He will be in Toronto (March 29) conducting a performance of Bach's St. John Passion, marking his fifth appearance with the Bach Consort. Maestro Nézet-Séguin has led their Christmas Oratorio, the B Minor Mass, the St. Matthew Passion, and now, the St. John Passion. For many, he has certainly proven his mastery in conducting the music of this Baroque master.

The vocal ensemble Cantemus celebrates the first day of spring (March 21) with a program La Primavera, which includes some favourites and also some rarely heard sacred and secular music of the Renaissance and early Baroque - works by Gibbons, Gesualdo, Schutz, Buxtehude and others, directed by Michael Erdman. Website: www.cantemus.ca

Correction: In last month's column, I incorrectly stated that the Women's Musical Club of Toronto had presented the Flanders Recorder Quartet, when, in fact, they had presented that other ensemble, the Amsterdam Loeki Stardust Quartet (in 2003). Sorry for any distress this may have caused.

Frank T. Nakashima (franknak@interlog.com) is the President of the Toronto Early Music Centre, a non-profit charitable organization which promotes the appreciation of historically-informed performances of early music.

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East, West, and the Big Bang

by Jason van Eyk

More often than not these days I can hear the sounds of new musical ideas coming through my walls, coaxed from the keys of my next-door neighbour’s grand piano. Living next to a composer is one of those curious joys of living in a big city like Toronto. If I’m patient, eventually I can hear those kernels of melody and harmony form into exciting new works that open brand new musical perspectives. But it’s not only my neighbour who’s been busy this winter, as March seems to be packed full with world premieres from local composers.

The month launches off with the TSO’s fifth New Creations Festival, which is focusing on music for string instruments and Far East influences (an odd connection, perhaps, but one that seems to work). This year’s special guest is Tan Dun, one of the world’s most accomplished living composers and perhaps most known for his Grammy Award-winning film score for Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon. The first two dates of this three-concert festival (March 5, 7 and 12) will feature several of Tan’s concerti and large ensemble works, which marry together music of Eastern and Western heritage with avant-garde techniques to explore cultural and spiritual themes. While more concerti from Toru Takemitsu and Toronto-based Gary Kulesha will add to the overall experience, I’m most keen to hear the results of Alexina Louie’s latest commission, a concerto for string quartet and orchestra.

I had the chance to chat briefly with Alexina about her motivations for tackling such a big commission. Her inspiration, she explained, came from the opportunity to write for the renowned Tokyo Quartet, which will premiere the work with the TSO on March 7th, and specifically to work again with quartet violinist (and Canadian) Martin Beaver. Louie and Beaver met back in 1991, when he gave what she credits as the best performance of her Thunder gate concerto at the Montreal International Musical Competition. Her new concerto, though, isn’t about one instrument. Rather, it tries to find a soloist’s virtuosity in the voice of the quartet. More info about the New Creations Festival can be found online at www.newcreationsfestival.com.

Skipping way ahead in the month, the Esprit Orchestra concert on March 26 promises to blend the brand new with the pre-loved. The local composer commission on this program comes from Andrew Staniland, who was recently named a finalist in CBC’s Evolution young composers’ competition. Big Bang! is the title of the work, a percussion concerto for the extremely talented Aiyun Huang.

In corresponding with Andrew about his inspirations for the piece, he wrote “Big Bang generally refers to the idea that the universe has expanded from a primordial condition at some finite time in the past and continues to expand to this day. This idea has long captured my creative imagination. I thought a percussion concerto to be the perfect place to experiment with this idea. The first movement of the work is the big bang - loud, heterophonic cacophony. This gives way to a second movement, Cadenza, featuring virtuoso multi-percussion. The third movement, Credo, is soft and slowly undulating. It slowly fades away - an homage to the 'big chill,' a theory that postulates the fading, cooling fate of the universe.”

It’s a shame that Andrew won’t get to hear the premiere of Big Bang! (he will still be in Banff competing for the Evolution prize) but you can certainly catch it, alongside works by Bruce Mather, Omar Daniel and Dutch composer Mayke Nas (now known to Torontonians through February’s Shift festival) at the Jane Mallett Theatre. Further details are available through www.espiritorchestra.com.

Directly on Esprit’s heels falls the fifth incarnation of Tapestry New Opera Works’ Opera to Go program. Starting on March 26 at Mississauga’s Living Art Centre, and continuing from March 27-29 at the Enwave Theatre, Tapestry will offer a menu of bit-sized operas on subjects ranging from the darkly comedic and farcical, to the dramatically suspenseful and mechanically melodramatic. The evening will culminate in the world premiere of The Perfect Screw, a new one-act opera from composer Abigail Richardson and librettist Alexis Diamond - a comic allegory for Canadian-American trade relations that follows the race between Robertson and Phillips to have their own brand of screwdriver become the industry standard. For full Opera to Go details, including info about
the stellar cast and creative team, visit

If time allows, my last stop for the month will be at the Music
Gallery on March 28 to hear the Attar Project – a collaborative
effort between composer/improviser/performer Parmela Attariwala
and tabla player Shawn Mativeksy. Parmela and have happily
crossed paths since 2005, and I recently had the chance to ask her
about how the project, which she formed back in the 1990s, was
reborn. “Subsequent to our first performance together,” she replied,
“Shawn expressed a desire to continue working with me and we
have since resurrected the Attar project – a moniker reserved for
material I performed, commissioned and created that crossed genre
and discipline boundaries. Over the past year, I have begun the
process of commissioning and creating a new series of works for
violin and tabla. It is these new works – alongside Shawn’s solo
repertoire and new solo choreographies for me by Gitanjali Kolanad
– that I will present to Toronto audiences.”

On the program are recently commissioned works by Andrew
Staniland (with whom Parmela improvises in The Human Remains –
a free-improv band that meets weekly) and Toronto-based film and
TV composer Meiro Stamm. Rounding out the concert will be recent
commissions from Hamilton-based Christian Ledroit (his Never the
Twain Shall Meet for violin, tabla and electronics was premiered by
the Attar Project as part of the New Music in New Places series in
2008) and jazz composer Nicole Rampersaud. Full details are
available through www.musicgallery.org. The Attar Project can be
heard online on MySpace.

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QUATUOR BOZZINI
(BOZZINI QUARTET)
Part of SHIF Festival • From Quebec
Works by Walter Boudreau, Martijn Voorvelt,
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SATURDAY MARCH 21
MARILYN NONKEN:
SOLO PIANO
New York’s rising star of the contemporary piano
Works by Liza Lim, Richard Festinger, Drew Baker

SATURDAY MARCH 28
THE ATTAR PROJECT
Featuring Parmela Attariwala (violin/dance, Toronto)+
Shawn Mativeksy (tabla/percussion, Montreal)

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MARCH 1 – APRIL 7 2009
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The Passionate Voice
by mj huell

Gonna rise, gonna rise up singing
Gonna raise the bucket from down in the well
And I feel like I'm just beginning
Cause I made that choice, to raise that voice
And that bucket's gonna rise, rise up singing
(Quaker, traditional)

Reasons for singing are probably as many as all the colours in all the windows of every windowed place of worship in the world, real or imagined.

And at the same time, maybe there is after all, only one fundamental reason: to express a passion that cannot be conveyed so well in any other way. Shared passion is one of those things that keeps us feel fully alive, and fully human.

From start to finish the March listings illustrate this diversity within a unified purpose - to "rise up singing" as a way of sharing fear, hope, despair and joy. As the days begin to get a little longer perhaps you will feel more like going out to hear some inspiring choral music, so re-think some of the subjects that inspire us compose and sing: "mystery, destruction and healing", "primavera", "midwinter magic", "songs for springtime", "love, life, and loss".

Please take time to look closely at the details in the listings and the choral advertisements: it's clear that we have reasons to sing beyond saving our own sanity and souls. We sing as much for others as we do for ourselves: many of this month's choral concerts are benefits, with proceeds going to arts education programs and music schools, AIDS education, shelters for homeless youth, and homes for the aged, and hospices. In sobering times many who cannot afford to give big cash donations to good causes, need to rise up some other way. Lending our voices is one, being there to listen is another.

NOTE: Our online listings can now be searched by musical genre (e.g. Choral).

Give it a try.
Pick of the month:
The Silk Road was a series of trade routes linking ancient China to the Mediterranean and Europe. Not only were silks transported along these roads, but also ideas, technologies and cultures, linking East and West. The Silk Road Ensemble, a pet project of world-renowned cellist Yo-Yo Ma, seeks to do the same, in music.

Made up of around sixty or so musicians, composers, artists and storytellers from around the world, the ensemble, now celebrating its tenth anniversary, performs in various configurations, transcending musical genres. The ensemble's mission is "to connect the world's neighborhoods by bringing together artists and audiences around the globe". "Every time I open a newspaper" writes Yo-Yo Ma, "I am reminded that we live in a world where we can no longer afford not to know our neighbours."

Among the Silk Road Ensemble's instruments is the Chinese pipa, a 2000-year-old pear shaped lute, played by virtuoso Wu Man. She has performed as soloist with many of the world's great orchestras, and has an extensive discography, including several recordings with the Kronos Quartet. In addition to performing with Silk Road at their Roy Thomson Hall concerts on March 19 and 20 (they're presenting two different programs), she'll also be the soloist in the Canadian premiere of Tan Dun's Pipa Concerto with the Toronto Symphony, as part of the New Creations Festival, March 7.

Around the GTA:
Irish vocal/instrumental group Dervish performs at the Rose Theatre in Brampton on March 5; The Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre presents its Spring Festival March 7 and 8, featuring traditional Japanese music and dance; The Toronto Classical Turkish Music Ensemble presents a concert March 7 at the Noor Cultural Centre; U of T's Faculty of Music presents its annual end-of-term concert March 14 at MacMillan Theatre and March 19 in Walter Hall; All Saints Kingsway Anglican Church welcomes the Watoto Children's Choir of Africa, March 19; the Ashkenaz Foundation presents Jaffa Road, a middle-eastern/Jewish/jazz ensemble in a CD release concert at the Lula Lounge March 25; Heliconian Hall is host to a concert of Georgian and Balkan vocal music, with Machari, Megobrebi and Kundzuli, March 27; The Music Gallery presents The Attar Project, featuring violinist Parmela Attariwala and tabla player Shawn Mativsky, in contemporary works influenced by Indian music; the Victoria College Chorus presents a concert of Celtic music and folk songs from Africa and Asia, April 5 at the Isabel Bader Theatre.

And beyond...
McMaster University presents Nagata Shachu, Japanese taiko drumming ensemble; Peterborough's Showplace Performance Centre presents Celtic Blaze, with fiddler Stephanie Cadman and her band; and the Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society presents the Orchid Ensemble, in arrangements of traditional Chinese music and newly commissioned works, on traditional instruments.

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Pick of the month:

**Silk Road Stops in Toronto**

by Karen Ages

**March/April Highlights**

**Opera:** Ravel Double Bill
*L'enfant et les sorcières and L'heure espagnole*, Sandra Horst, conductor. Michael Patrick Albano, director. 3/6, 6, 7 - 7:30 p.m.

3/8 - 2:30 p.m. MacMillan Theatre, $26 (15*)

**Gryphon Trio with Robert Kapilow**
Acclaimed composer/conductor Robert Kapilow presents his engaging commentary on Beethoven's Archduke Trio, with a performance by the Gryphon Trio. 3/6 - 7:30 p.m. Walter Hall. $25 (15*)

**Lecture:** Kay Kaufman Shelemay
Title: Traveling Music: Mustufa Astabaki and the Genesis of Ethio-Jazz.
3/19 - 12:10 p.m. Walter Hall. Free

**Earth, Water, Wind and Fire**
Tenor Darryl Edwards and pianist Elizabeth Upchurch present a vocal recital with music by Mozart, Britten, Lundeen and others.
3/20 - 7:30 p.m. Walter Hall. $25 (15*)

**U of T Wind Ensemble**
3/21 - 7:30 p.m. MacMillan Theatre. $14 (10*)

**Edith Wiens Voice Master Class**
3/23 - 12:10 p.m. Walter Hall. 3/24 - 12:10 p.m. Tabor Room. Free

**Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra**
A free concert by the Faculty's Baroque Orchestra-in-Residence.
3/25 - 12:10 p.m. Walter Hall. Free

**U of T Wind Symphony**
Jeffrey Reynolds conducts works by Bernstein, Fergal Carroll, Robert Russell Bennett, Jack Stamp and Adam Gorb.
3/27 - 7:30 p.m. MacMillan Theatre. $14 (10*)

**Toronto Wind Quintet** with guests
Featuring Rota's Petite Offrande Musicales, Françaix's Divertissement, Janacek's Mirail and Hindemith's Septet.
3/30 - 7:30 p.m. Walter Hall. $25 (15*)

**Maria Schneider**
Grammy Award-winning composer and Roger D. Moore Distinguished Visitor in Composition. Lecture: 4/2 - 12:10 p.m. Walter Hall. Free. Concert with the U of T Jazz Orchestras: 4/4 - 7:30 p.m. MacMillan Theatre. $14 (8*)

**U of T Symphony Orchestra**
Debussy's Pelléas et Mélisande, Elgar Enigma Variations, and Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 5. V. I. Ivanov, conductor. 4/9 - 7:30 p.m. MacMillan Theatre. $18 (10*)

*Senior/student price in brackets.

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Walter Hall and MacMillan Theatre are located in the Edward Johnson Building, 60 Queen's Park (Mission subway stop).
March Hears
by Jim Galloway

I'LL START OFF THIS MONTH with mention of a few upcoming events which caught my eye and should catch your ears.

Mavis Staples with special guest James Hunter will be onstage at Massey Hall on March 21. Both artists have appeared here in recent years at the TD Canada Trust Jazz Festival and both were knock-out successes. From her early days with the family group, The Staples Singers, to her present day solo performances, Mavis Staples has been steeped in her gospel traditions. She has a great voice and she's also a pretty neat lady. By contrast, English born James Hunter's background is classic R & B. In the 80's he borrowed the name of classic blues performer, Howlin' Wolf and in the 90's sang back-up for Van Morrison, who later described him as one of the best voices in British music. Massey Hall will rock.

Beatus Rex
The name "Rex Hotel Orchestra" conjures up in my mind an earlier age when elegant hotels had their own resident orchestras - the Royal York Hotel and King Edward Hotel in Toronto, the Windsor Hotel and Ritz Carlton Orchestra in Montreal, the Chateau Laurier in Ottawa, Chateau Frontenac in Quebec City and the Empress Hotel in Victoria, to name a few. Well, The Rex in Toronto hardly qualifies as a five star hotel, but it does have its own resident orchestra - at least on the last Monday of every month. The Rex Hotel Orchestra is the musical brainchild of leader and trumpet/flugelhorn player, composer, arranger John MacLeod and it's a terrific band, well worth a visit to The Rex. They will be there March 30 at 9:30pm.

The Stardust Trail
Also on March 30 from 8-11pm, JAZZ.FM91's Sound Of Jazz Series at The Old Mill Inn will present Joe Sealy in a tribute to one of the most prolific and uniquely American songwriters, Hoagy Carmichael. Carmichael's is a truly wide ranging body of work from the early "Riverboat Shuffle," his first recorded song, written for Bix Beiderbecke, to the dark melancholy of "Ballad In Blue" and enough in between to paper a wall. The young Carmichael received musical instruction from his mother, Lida Robison Carmichael, a movie theatre pianist in their home town of Bloomington, Indiana. When he was 16 the family moved to Indianapolis where he further studied with black ragtime pianist, Reggie Duval.

Several of his songs have become standards, perhaps the most famous being "Stardust." The first recording of it was on October 31, 1927, by Hoagy Carmichael and His Pals on Gennett at what then would have been called a fox trot tempo - in other words, much faster than the ballad we all know. When he wrote the song, Hoagy showed it to fellow musician Don Redman and it was Redman who suggested changing the working title of the future hit from the less inspired "Then Will I Be Satisfied" to "Stardust!" Good move, Don. (And let us not forget, by the way, that the lyric to this masterpiece was by Mitchell Parish.)

Mr. T and Joe Showler
Another of Hoagy Carmichael's great songs was "Rockin' Chair," and I can never think of that song without thinking of the wonderful vocal by Jack Teagarden, one of the great trombone players in jazz, born Weldon Leo Teagarden, in Vernon, Texas, on August 20, 1905. He was a wonderful musician with a warm, unique tone and a sound which, as with all jazz greats, was instantly recognizable, partly because he was largely self-taught and in his playing used some unorthodox slide positions. Not only was Teagarden a groundbreaking trombone player, he was one of the most distinctive jazz singers of all time. He pretty well took ownership of Hoagy Carmichael's "Rockin' Chair," sung in his languid, smoky voice which, like his friend and longtime musical partner, Louis Armstrong's, seemed to be an extension of the way he played his horn.

Almost anything I ever wanted to know about Mr. T as he was known, I could have found out by asking Joe Showler, that is until recently. Joe died of cancer of the liver on February 10, and with him went his encyclopedic knowledge of his musical idol, Jack Teagarden, but leaving behind probably the world's most complete collection of Teagarden memorabilia and an unpublished biography of the trombone great, minute in its detail. His life's work was the study and enjoyment of the extraordinary talents of Jack Teagarden. Like his hero, Joe was a one-off and we'll miss him.

Apropos of nothing, but for any fishing enthusiasts who might read this, Hoagy Carmichael's son, also called Hoagy, was the author of the most authoritative book on building bamboo fly rods! I, for my part, was hooked by the music. No jokes about reel to reel, please!

Happy listening - and please make some of it live. Club listings start on page 39.

"SO MUCH JAZZ, SO LITTLE TIME"
10 RECOMMENDED ARTISTS & VENUES
by Ori Dagan

(2) Pat LaBarbera will dazzle with the Canadian Jazz Quartet as part of 'Fridays at Five' March 13 from 5-8pm at Quotes, with Frank Wright (vbs) Gary Benson (g) Duncan Hopkins (b) Don Vickery (d).
(3) Laura Hubert is a jazz/blues vocal artist with a style all her own. Grossman's Tavern every Monday 9:30-1:30pm with band led by dependable Peter Hill (p).
(4) Ron Davis launches Ron Davis & Friends: a monthly playing, weekly hosting gig at The Old Mill's Home Smith Bar Friday and Saturday March 6 & 7 from 8-11pm with Mike Downes (b) and Ted Warren (d).
(5) Julie Michels (voice) and Kevin Barrett (guitar) are two of Toronto's most beloved resident musicians. Statlers every Thursday at 7:30pm outside at the Rex Hotel Electric Cafe.

Mr. T and Joe Showler
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Happy listening - and please make some of it live. Club listings start on page 39.
Crazy for Theatre: The Scarborough Choral Society's Search for a Home

by Terry Robbins

THE SCARBOROUGH CHORAL SOCIETY has been around for well over fifty years, with an unbroken run of annual shows stretching back to their G&S days in 1955. They are the only Toronto musical theatre group to limit their stage activity to a single production each year, but their annual Sounds of Christmas concert at Markham Theatre, first produced in 1986, has become so successful that the society now essentially runs two separate activities.

In recognition of this, the stage musical section was given the name Onstage Productions two years ago. Ron Turner, who was President of the Society from 2002 to 2006, explains that the new name is intended simply to emphasize that the group presents fully staged show productions, and not just concert versions as the name "Choral Society" apparently suggested. Members, he says, became tired of being asked such questions as "Are you going to have any scenery?"

When Onstage Productions presents Crazy For You at Bayview Glen Upper School at the end of March, it will be their second year at a venue they hope will be their home for at least the next little while. The show, rather appropriately, centres on the problems of theatre management, and the trials and tribulations of mounting a show. But its storyline is tame compared to the recent theatrical adventures of the SCS, for whom Bayview Glen is the sixth show location in just ten years.

It's truly been a "crazy" period for the SCS members. The songs from the show offer a whimsical guide to their search for a theatre - amply illustrating the problems that can befall community theatre groups, and the resourcefulness, resilience and commitment needed to overcome them.

I Can't Be Bothered Now

For many years Scarborough Choral's regular base for their annual stage show was the cavernous auditorium at Cedarbrae C.I., which, complete with balcony, could hold about 1,100 people. The huge stage was ideal for the large chorus, but the huge hall capacity made for a short single-weekend run; opening on a Thursday, the show was usually just getting settled in by the time it closed on Sunday. The deteriorating state of the facilities, however, together with increasing rental costs, finally convinced SCS to give up and leave after their 1999 show, Me and My Girl.

They Can't Take That Away From Me

Since then, SCS has mounted shows in a wide variety of venues. Bendale Acres (a Scarborough retirement home), the Latvian Cultural Centre, Stephen Leacock C.I., and the Armenian Youth Centre all played host to productions.

The other main community-theatre venues, meanwhile - Scarborough Village, Fairview Library, and Burnhamthorpe Auditorium - may not be completely problem-free, but their users all enjoy a dedicated theatrical facility and an established and secure home base. And if they don't appreciate just how lucky they are then they should try giving Ron Turner a call.

For the full version of this article, visit www.thewholenote.com.
Opera Freshly Squeezed and Well Aged

by Christopher Hoile

This March, the emphasis is clearly on contemporary Canadian opera. There are five on offer: four as part of Tapestry New Opera Work's annual Opera to Go, plus the world premiere of Charles Wilson's Kamouraska.

Tapestry's Opera to Go has a special "Press Opening and Community Night" on March 26 at the Living Arts Centre in Mississauga, followed by its regular run March 27-29 at the Enwave Theatre at Harbourfront. All four works are conducted by Wayne Strongman and directed by Tom Diamond, and all involve a troupe of five well-known singers in various groupings. This year the troupe consists of soprano Sally Dibblee, countertenor Scott Belluz, tenor Keith Klassen, mezzo-soprano Kristzina Szabo and baritone Peter McGillivray.

The first half of the evening is devoted to three short operas. The first is The Virgin Charlie by William Rowson to a libretto by Taylor Graham. Labelled "a dark comedy in retro musical theatre form," the opera concerns the drag performer Charlie, who has an unexpected visitation from Virgin Mary. The second work, One Lump or Two, by Glenn James and librettist Sandy Pool, concerns four ladies who want to poison their husbands and meet over tea to plan the deed. The third short opera is My Mother's Ring, by Stephen Andrew Taylor to a libretto by Marcia Johnson. Here, the central character is convinced that two strangers are posing as his parents.

The second half of the evening comprises a full one-act opera, The Perfect Screw, by Abigail Richardson to a libretto by Alexis Diamond. This is the duo's second opera together having written Sanctuary Song, which premiered at last year's Luminato Festival. This work, described as "a comic allegory filled with double entendre and innuendo," deals with the race between American and Canadian inventors, who both hope that their screwdriver will become the industry standard. Opera to Go invariably provides us with an exciting glimpse into the future of Canadian opera. From these four works we can see definite leaning toward comedy, and an interest in the possibilities of the countertenor voice. For tickets phone 416-973-4000 or visit www.harbourfront.com. For more information visit www.tapestrynewopera.com.

The same weekend that Opera to Go winds up, March 28-29, Opera in Concert presents the world premiere of Charles Wilson's Kamouraska, composed in 1974-75 to his own libretto and based on Anne Hébert's 1970 novel. The opera depicts the life in 19th-century rural Quebec of Elizabeth d'Aulnieres, her marriage to Antoine Tassy, his violent murder and her passion for the American doctor George Nelson. The twelve-member cast includes such singers as Miriam Khalil, James McLennan and Alexander Dobson. Alex Pauk conducts the Esprit Orchestra.

Kamouraska had a first reading in Toronto in the 1970s, but nothing came of it. Opera in Concert discovered the score in 2004 and approached Wilson to revive the work, precipitating a complete rewrite of the opera. OIC will present the English version of the rewrite. (Wilson also wrote a French version to take into account the different rhythmic patterns of the language.) This, OIC's first-ever world premiere, will take place at the Jane Mallett Theatre. Phone 416-366-7723 or 1-800-708-6754 for tickets or visit www.operainconcert.com for more information.

Two final notes: First, the U of T Opera Division will present a Ravel double-bill March 5-8 of L'Heure espagnole (1911) and L'Enfant et les sortilèges (1925). Second, TrypTych was to present a workshop production of Marc Richard's new opera, Hamlet, March 18-22, but that has now been postponed to June 24-29.

©Christopher Hoile
On the state of community music groups

by Jack MacQuarrie

Two disparate recent events prompt these ruminations. The first is the massive downturn of the global economy with its inevitable adverse effect on disposable income. The second was the receipt in the mail of an excellent biography. The book, *In The Firing Line* by Toronto author Wallace L. Court, is a biography with a difference. It chronicles the life of noted Salvation Army composer, Colonel Bramwell Coles.

Recession woes led us to wondering what effect this financial situation might have on the health of community musical groups. In the tough times projected for the foreseeable future, will band and orchestra members curtail their participation to save money, or will they turn more to this form of recreation?

As for the biography of Bramwell Coles, many of its episodes prompted us to ponder the effect the brass band movement had on community music making. The invention of valves for brass instruments in the early part of the 19th century spawned a whole new era for community music, because the entire family of brass instruments had now achieved fully chromatic melodic capabilities. Founded in the 1870s, by the turn of the century the Salvation Army had established its presence in 50 countries. In the early days of the Salvation Army, a significant part of their ministry involved taking their evangelistic message to the people in the streets. Where they had previously relied on songsters for music, the versatility, durability and portability of these new valved brass instruments provided the opportunity to take their instrumental music into the streets in less than ideal weather conditions. By the dawn of the 20th century there were hundreds of Salvation Army bands throughout Britain.

Almost simultaneously we saw the formation of company bands throughout the British Isles. Almost without exception, these British works bands were all brass bands. With such all brass instrumentation and common notation, where all of the instruments are scored in the treble clef, it was easy to provide inexpensive uniform group instruction to all band members. While these bands were originally established as company sponsored recreational outlets for employees, they grew in stature to the point where the top company bands sought potential band members and found employment for them within the company. It was not long before the company band phenomenon spread to Europe and North America.

One of the most notable of these in Canada was the band of the Anglo-Canadian Leather Company in Huntsville, Ontario. In 1918, Herbert L. Clarke, usually considered the world's greatest cornet virtuoso of his era, was lured to Huntsville to conduct and train that company's band. For that he was reportedly paid, what was then, the...
princely sum of $18,000 year. He remained there until 1923 when his wife’s poor health forced them to move to a warmer climate. In his earlier days, before joining the band of John Philip Sousa, Clarke had conducted the Heintzman Company Band and subsequently, the Taylor Safe Works Band both in Toronto.

While “Works Bands” still flourish in Britain, over the past 60 or so years company bands have all but disappeared from the musical scene in Canada. The last significant such group that I can recall seeing was the White Rose Oil Company Band from Petrolia, Ontario. Where such bands have continued, they have produced some amazing musicians. In the latter part of the twentieth century, one of the world’s top trumpet masters, Maurice André, rose from the ranks of a French coal mine band to performing worldwide and teaching at the Paris Conservatory.

So where am I going with this? Well, it has often been said that in hard times people make their own entertainment. What better way than with like-minded friends (or co-workers) making music? For those who already own their instruments, the costs are significantly less that many other forms of recreation. The organizations normally have an adequate library of music. Other than the costs of transportation to rehearsals and performances, usually the only other expense is a small annual membership fee. Up to and through the great depression of the 1930s one would be hard pressed to locate a town of any size in this country which did not have a community band and/or orchestra. Even through the dark days of WW II, band tattoos were a popular form of entertainment. My personal recollection of this era is of travelling with my boys band to a different town tattoo almost every Saturday throughout the summer, culminating in a season ending trip to the Canadian National Exhibition to compete with other bands (including a number of company bands). We know of a few bands in Southern Ontario which have in recent years established “beginners” bands for adults. Is it time for the company band to re-emerge as a relatively inexpensive employee benefit?

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Coming Events - Please see the listings section for full details

Sunday, March 1, 3:00 pm Hannaford Street Silver Band with Artistic Director Curtis Metcalfe continues the celebration of its 25th Anniversary season with Brass & Steel: A Caribbean Celebration featuring steel pan virtuoso Luan Teague, Jane Mallett Theatre, St. Lawrence Centre, 27 Front Street East, Toronto.

Friday, March 6, 8:00 pm The Etobicoke Community Concert Band, John Edward Liddle, Music Director present: Last Night of the Proms with Pomp and circumstance and much flag-waving - A nostalgic tribute to all things British from Parry’s Jerusalem to Elgar’s Pomp and Circumstance and Thomas Arne’s Rule Britannia. Etobicoke Collegiate Auditorium, 86 Montgomery Road, Etobicoke

Sunday, March 8, 2:00 pm The Northdale Concert Band, with Stephen Chenette, Music Director, present a concert at Hope United Church, 2500 Danforth Avenue (corner of Main Street and Danforth Avenue).

Down the Road

Please write to us: bandstand@thewholenote.com

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Long & McQuade

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

A series of fine career-enhancing clinics specifically tailored to the needs of musicians, songwriters, producers and home studio enthusiasts.

During the month of March at all local L&M locations. Visit www.long-mcquade.com for clinic and registration information.

Long & McQuade

Www.long-mcquade.com

March 1 - April 7 2009
WHOLENOTE LISTINGS

SECTIONS 1-4: INTRODUCTION

WholeNote listings are arranged in four distinct sections:

1) Concerts in Toronto & GTA (Greater Toronto Area)
2) Concerts Beyond the GTA
3) Jazz in Clubs
4) Announcements ... EtCetera

SECTION 1: Toronto & GTA covers all of the City of Toronto plus Halton, Peel, York and Durham regions.

SECTION 2: Beyond the GTA covers many areas of Southern Ontario, outside Toronto and the GTA. The towns and cities vary from month to month. This month, The WholeNote contains listings for events in the communities of Barrie, Brantford, Cambridge, Cobourg, Dundas, Georgetown, Gravenhurst, Guelph, Hamilton, Kingston, Kitchener, Lindsay, London, Owen Sound, Peterborough, Port Hope, St Catharines, Waterloo and Whithby.

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

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

General word of caution: a phone number is provided with every WholeNote listing – in fact, we won’t publish a listing – in fact, we won’t publish a listing if a phone number is not provided. Subsequent performance dates may be found on the dates below.

How to List

Listings in the WholeNote in the four sections above are 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 April 1–May 7, 2009, so listings must be received by March 15.

Listings can be sent by e-mail to listings@thewholenote.com or by fax to 416-603-4791 or by regular mail to the address on page 8. We do not receive listings by phone. Please check before you go out to a concert.

Visit www.THEWHOLENOTE.COM

Searching Listings Online

You can now search WholeNote listings online by geographic area and musical genre. For instructions, go to our website (at www.thewholenote.com), click on "Search Listings," and follow through to "Search Listings."
Wednesday March 04


Thursday March 05


6:00 Friday evening: Liza Minnelli. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-368-3310.

Saturday March 06

7:30 Saturday evening: James Sommerville and Friends. Great Hall, 7 Hart House Circle. 416-978-3744. $15; $10; $5 (students) and seniors.


5:30 Saturday night: Liza Minnelli. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-368-3310.

Sunday March 07

5:30 Sunday evening: Liza Minnelli. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-368-3310.

Monday March 08


5:30 Sunday evening: Liza Minnelli. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-368-3310.
April
Spring Festival.
12:00 noon: Japanese Cultural Centre.
736-2100 x 22926. Free.

March

march
Spray Festival.
five hours of events including traditional Japanese music and dance.
Ayuami-Kai, Sakura-Kai, dance groups; Toronto Chikushikei, koto, jazz

nese-Canadian Cultural Centre, 6 Garamond Court. 416-441-2345. $25 (family pack); $25 (per person).

May

Saturday, March 7
7:30 pm
Jacques Israelievitch
and
Erika Goodman

Violin and Harp in Recital
Programme features the works of Saint-Saëns, Polgar, Bloch, Adaskin, Tournier, Spohr and Lothar Klein

Tickets: $30; $20 (seniors/students)
Heliconian Hall, 35 Hazelton Avenue 416-964-6398

Friday, March 6, 7:30 pm

Grace Church on-the-Hill
300 Lonsdale Rd
www.sinfoniatoronto.com
416 499 0403
$40, $32, $12
$5 off online

Sinfonia Toronto
NURHAN ARMAN
MUSIC DIRECTOR
Toronto's Chamber Orchestra

Friday, March 6, 8 pm

CELSSIMO!
DENISE DJOKIC, Cellist
SLIMACEK Partita Danzante
SLIMACEK Sonatina
SAINT-SAENS Cello Concerto #1
SHOSTAKOVICH Sinfonia op. 73

2009-2010 in GLENN GOULD STUDIO

Charles Demuyck, conductor. Central Baptist Church, 340 Rebecca St, Oakville. 905-833-8700. $25 (adult); $15 (student); $10 (child).

Saturday, March 7
8:00 pm


Orchestra's Mississauga
Illuminating Music
Janet Obermeyer, Soprano
with Sinfonia Mississauga
Saturday, March 7 at 8:00 p.m.
First United Church in Port Credit

Mississauga Symphony Orchestra
Saturday, March 28 at 8:00 p.m.
Hammerstein Hall, Living Arts Centre, Mississauga

For Tickets Call 905.306.6000 or visit www.livingartscentre.ca

You Saw Them First!

Stanislav Pronin, Violin
Laura Chambers, Flute

Sketching with my Flute
Saturday, March 7, 2009 @ 7:30 pm
Good Shepherd Community Church (390 Bamburgh Circle) Free Admission
Sam Nathanson, flute; Ellen Meyer, piano

Part of Samantha's eleven-city Canadian tour, featuring music from her debut album "Flute Sketches"

Information: (416) 293-1302 or www.samanthaflute.com
Concerts:

- **Sunday March 8th**
  - **12:00 noon**: Japanese Cultural Centre. Spring Festival. See Mar 7.
  - **2:00**: Northdale Concert Band. In Concert. Stephen Chenette, music director. Hope United Church, 2550 Danforth Ave. 416-468-3011. $10; $15(syst), freeholder 12.
  - **2:00**: Royal Conservatory of Music. Great Artists Series. Nadia Mackie Jackson, bassoon; Guy Frew, trumpet; members of the GGS string faculty. Baldassare. Sonata No. 1, Vivell; Concerto No. 20; Lochner; Concerto Op. 43; Lucien. Bachevalier; and other works. Mazzoleni Hall, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-498-2824 x231; $10(syst);
  - **2:00**: University Settlement Music and Arts School. End of Term Chamber Concert. St. George the Martyr Church. 197 John St. 416-588-3444 x243/244. Free (donations welcome).
  - **2:00**: Villanova College. An Afternoon Concert of Continental Music. Songs, opera and Broadway selections in French, English, Italian, German, Spanish and Hebrew. Jean-Paul Raymont, baritone; Jolandas Nel, soprano; Richard Heinzl, piano. 2400 15th Sideman, King City. 505-833-6855. $12; $15(syst). Benefit concert for Marylake Augustinian Monastery.
  - **2:00**: City of Toronto. Sunday Serenades. Casablanca Orchestra. Scarborough Civic Centre. 150 Borough Dr. 416-398-7766. Free.
  - **2:30**: University of Toronto Faculty of Music, Opera Series. Ravel’s ‘L’Enfant et les sorciers’ and L’Heure espagnole. See Mar 6.
  - **3:00**: Oakville Chamber Orchestra. In Concert. See Mar 7. St. Simon’s Anglican Church. 1450 Litchfield Rd., Oakville.
  - **4:00**: All The King’s Voices. Christmas Oratorio. Grace Church on the Hill, 300 Lonsdale Rd. 416-225-2255. $20; free (children 12 and under w. an adult).

- **Monday March 9th**
  - **12:30**: Toronto University Department of Music. Music at Midday: Classical instrumental recital featuring student soloists. Tribute Communities Recital Hall, Accademia East, YU, 7400 Keele St. 416-738-2100 x22826. Free.

- **Tuesday March 10th**
  - **8:00**: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. String Concerts: Takemitsu: A Way A Lone II; Kuosha: Cello Concerto; Higon: Violin Concerto.

- **Wednesday March 11th**
  - **8:00**: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. String Concerts: Takemitsu: A Way A Lone II; Kuosha: Cello Concerto; Higon: Violin Concerto.

**The Kreutzer Sonata**

Featuring:
- R.H. Thomson, Actor
- Coleman Lemieux
- Compagnie Dance

Marie Berard, Violin
Andrew Burashko Piano

The performance will include 15 Heterosexual/Duets, choreographed by James Kudelka to Beethoven’s Kreutzer Sonata, as well as a theatrical adaptation of Tolstoy’s novella. The Kreutzer Sonata, directed by Ted Dykstra.

Tickets $25-439 Buy tickets at: ARTOFTIMEENSEMBLE.COM or call 416.973.4000
Music TORONTO

JONI HENSON
Thursday
March 12 at 8 pm

- 8:00: Music Toronto. Joni Henson, soprano. Beethoven: Ah, perfido; Wagner: Wesendonk Lieder; Britten: On This Island; Morawetz: Songs from the Port of Heaven. 56 Queen St. E. 416-364-7865 x224. Free.

www.groupof27.com

group of twenty-seven presents:
Eric Peatkau, Artistic Director and Conductor

ENERGIA

- Haydn - Symphony 83
- Wagner - "Siegfried Idyll!"
- Michael Oesterle - "Compression"
- Schubert - Symphony 5

Glenn Gould Studio
March 13, 2009 at 8:00pm
250 Front St. West, Toronto
Tickets at www.glengouldstudio.cbc.ca or RTH/Massey Box Office 416 872-4255
presented by George Fierheller

Friday March 13

- 8:00: Rose Theatre. The Drowsy Chaperone. 1 Theatre Lane, Brampton. 905-874-2800; 905-4100. Also Mar. 14.

Saturday March 14

- 7:30: Toronto Opera Repertoire. Operatic excerpts. See Mar 11.
- 8:00: Music Toronto. Joni Henson, soprano. Beethoven: Ah, perfido; Wagner: Wesendonk Lieder; Britten: On This Island; Morawetz: Songs from the Port of Heaven. 56 Queen St. E. 416-364-7865 x224. Free.
- 8:00: Music Toronto. Joni Henson, soprano. Beethoven: Ah, perfido; Wagner: Wesendonk Lieder; Britten: On This Island; Morawetz: Songs from the Port of Heaven. 56 Queen St. E. 416-364-7865 x224. Free.

Sunday March 15

- 10:00: Noontime Concert. Toronto Symphonette. Edited by James Palfreyman. 56 Queen Street W. 416-736-2100 x22926. Free.
- 2:00: City of Toronto. Sunday Sare Wednesdays: Eddie Grief Orchestra. Scarborough Civic Centre, 190 Borough Dr. 416-398-7786. Free.
- 3:00: Oakville Chamber Ensemble. Passion. Schutz: St Matthew Passion; Palestrina: Stabat Mater; St Peter's Pianos: Schubert: Piano Concerto. Oakville Performing Arts Centre, 723 Balmoral Dr., Bramalea. 905-458-8332. $20.
- 8:00: Rose Theatre. The Drowsy Chaperone. 1 Theatre Lane, Brampton. 905-874-2800; 905-4100. Also Mar. 14.

Music at Metropolitan presents

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

Metropolitan United Church
56 Queen Street East at Church Street, Toronto
416-383-0331 ext. 51
www.metunited.org

Music set to texts by the Irish author, including a new work by Rolfe. Katherine Whyte, soprano; Lynne McMaster, mezzo; Michael Colvin, tenor; Peter Barrett, bari-
Mondays March 16


3:00: Suitcase Theatre: The House That Jack Built. See Mar. 16.

Tuesday March 17


1:00: St. James Cathedral. Music at Midday: Thomas van der Leu, organ. 65 Church St. 416-364-7865 x224. Free.

3:00: Suitcase Theatre: The House That Jack Built. See Mar. 16.

6:00: Massey Hall & Roy Thomson Hall. That Jack Built. See Mar. 16.


$12 (first), $9 (members). Also Mar 17-21.


8:00: Jazz FM 91. Sound of Jazz. The music of Art Tatum. Adam Makowicz and Robi Bolos, piano. Old Mill Inn, 21 Old Mill Rd. 416-595-0404 x256. $30; $27 (students).

Wednesday March 18


3:00: Suitcase Theatre: The House That Jack Built. See Mar. 16.

Thursday March 19


2:00: Northern District Library, Orchardview. Advanced students from the studio of Lawrence Pitschke, 40 Orchard View Blvd. 416-333-7610. Free.

3:00: Suitcase Theatre: The House That Jack Built. See Mar. 16.
March 20 & 21 at 8 pm

As a finale to our 36th Anniversary Season, the Toronto Consort presents one of the greatest musical masterpieces of all time, the Monteverdi Vespers of 1610! From the splendour of the richly-scored psalms to the intimacy of the sensuous motets, this is a work of infinite variety and profundity. For this special performance we have brought together an international group of singers and players, led by British tenor Charles Daniels whose exquisite singing of this repertoire is legendary.

Order online at www.torontoconsort.org

For Tickets call 416-964-6337

Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, 427 Bloor St. West
March 1 - April 7, 2009

...1: CONCERTS: Toronto and GTA

Edward Johnson Building, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-597-3411. 375, 120(tickets).
- 4:00: St. James Cathedral. Twilight Recital Series. Andrew Ager, organ. 65 Church St. 416-364-7685 x 224. Free.
- 8:00: St. Clement’s Church. I Furtiati! High School Confidential. See March 21. St. Clement’s Church, 89 Bloor St. 416-483-6884. 420; $18(tickets).

Monday March 23

- 7:30: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Sounds of our Time. Student composers concert. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-978-3744.

Tuesday March 24

- 1:00: St. James Cathedral. Music at Midday Series. John Danforth, organ. 65 Church St. 416-384-8686 x 224. Free.
- 8:30: Mozart Society. Ivan Zenaty, violin; and Vahid Macha, piano. Works by Mozart, Beethoven and Bach. First Unitarian Congregation, 175 St. Clair Ave. W. 416-495-2718. $20 recommended at the door.

Wednesday March 25


April 5, Walter Hall, 3 pm

Pianist Richard Raymond

Mooredale Youth Orchestras: date not yet changed to Sunday March 29, 3 pm, Rosedale Hts. School

Anton Kuerti conducts Beethoven Symphony #2

THE

Albburgh CONNECTION

Celebrating the Art of Song
Artist Directors: Stephen Ralls and Bruce Ubukata

The Greta Kraus Schubertiad

Winterreise

Schubert’s last, great song-cycle

BRETT POLEGATO
baritone

STEPHEN RALLS
piano

Wednesday, March 25, 8 pm

Glen Gould Studio, 250 Front Street West
Tickets: $50 — from the Roy Thomson Hall/ Glenn Gould Studio box office, 416.872.4255 or at the Studio from 6 pm on the night

www.alburghconnection.com

30 www.thewholenote.com
FRIDAY, MARCH 27, 2009 AT 8:00 PM
St. Thomas’s Anglican Church
383 Haron Street, Toronto

East Meets West
Richard Sparks, Guest Conductor

Exultate welcomes guest conductor Richard Sparks to share his musical passion with us. Richard is conductor and artistic director of Pro Cora Canada, Edmonton’s professional choir. In this concert, Richard leads Exultate in music from Alberta, as well as choral treasures old and new from England and other parts of Canada.

This concert is generously supported through special funding from the Canada Council for the Arts.

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

The Ninth Inga Jarrett Memorial Concert
Saturday March 28, 2009 7.30 p.m.

Don Heights Unitarian Congregation presents
Classics for piano by Debussy and Chopin
Arias by Puccini

Leading 20th Century Georgian composers
Azarashvili and Taktakishvili
Flute, Cello and Piano Sonata by Jean-Michel Damase
And the Premier of “The Blackening Landscape”
A song cycle by Mark Richards

Jubilee United Church, 40 Underhill Dr., Lawrence/DVP
Tickets: $20 ($10 students) Tel: 416-444-8839
CONCERTS: Toronto and GTA

1111.

32

ductor. Hammerson Hall, Living Arts Gen·

dington: Reiteration; Ravel: Tzigane. Laura

 Orchestra; Tchaikovsky: Melodie; Ed­

Saw Them First!

Chambers, flute; Stanislav Pronin, violin;

chestra; Liebermann: Concerto for Flute

8:00: Orchestras Mississauga.

Jane Mallett Theatre, 27 Front St. E. 416-

366-7723. $38-$58 . Also Mar. 29 .

tone; Guillermo Silva-Marin, dramatic advi­

Mclennan, tenor; Alexander Dobson, bari·

Wilson. Miriam Khalil, soprano; James

416-204-1080. $15; $10(sr/st) .

ivesky, tabla and percussion. 197 John St.

- 8:00: Music Gallery.

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MARCH 1 – APRIL 7 2009

32
NEW MUSIC CONCERTS
SUNDAY MARCH 29
ISABEL BADER THEATRE

WEDNESDAY APRIL 01
- 1:00: St. James Cathedral. Music at Midday: Singi from the studio of David Lidow. Tributes Communities Recital Hall, Accolade East, YU, 4700 Keele St. 416-736-2100 x22928. Free.

TUESDAY APRIL 02
- 8:00: City Centre Musical Productions. South Pacific. See Mar. 27.
- 8:00: Massey Hall & Roy Thomson Hall. Gabriela Montero, piano. Gabriela Montero, piano.
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Notes on Composing:
5 collaborations in film and music
Opening night of the Images Festival
Thursday, April 2, 8 pm
Isabel Bader Theatre, 93 Charles St. W

Film makers/Composers
Christina Battle/Martin Arnold, Guy Maddin/Richard Ayres, Clive Holden/Oscar van Dillen, Vera Frenkel/Rick Sacks, Da-,-chi Sa'i'to/Malcolm Goldstein

$15 adults | $12 students & seniors
www.shift-festival.ca

... 1: CONCERTS: Toronto and GTA

Music TORONTO

ST. LAWRENCE QUARTET
Thursday April 2 at 8 pm
companying adult pays half price); pay your age (10-36).

Friday April 3
— 2:00 & 8:00: Scarborough Choral Society. Crazy For You. See Mar. 28.
— 7:30: pre-concert chat.
— 8:00: City Centre Musical Productions. South Pacific. See Mar. 27.
— 8:00: Contact Contemporary Music. Elemental. Programme includes Bowie: Warszawa; Eno: Not Yet Remembered; and new works by Falaise and Haynes. Mary Katherine Finch, cello; Sarah Fraser Rafi, violin; Wallace Halladay, saxophones; Rob MacDonald, guitar; Peter Pavlovsky, bass; Jerry Pergolesi, percussion; and Allison Wiebe, piano; guests: Christine Duncan and The Element Choir. Music Gallery, 197 John St. 416-204-1080. $10.
— 8:00: Curtain Call Players. Into The Woods. See Apr. 2.
— 8:00: Massey Hall & Roy Thomson Hall. Scotland the Brave. The best of Scottish music.

BACH St. JOHN PASSION

LYDIA ADAMS, Conductor & Artistic Director

SATURDAY, APRIL 4TH, 2009, 7:30 P.M.
Toronto Centre for the Arts - 5040 Yonge Street, North York
First performed in 1724, this is a more streamlined setting of Christ's Crucifixion than Bach's St. Matthew Passion. But it is every bit as magnificent, with choruses and arias that will leave you almost unbearably moved. Bach's genius is never more obvious than in this marvellous work.

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

The Amadeus Choir with orchestra and soloists:
Monica Whitcher, James McNam, Daniel Cabena, Daniel Auchincloss and Alexander Dobson
Lydia Adams, conductor

Tickets available from TicketMaster: 416-872-1111 and Toronto Centre Box Office

www.amadeuschoir.com
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**Sunday, April 5**

- **1:30:** CAMMAC/Michael Gallyon, Richard Whitter. JAZZ. 10350 (angle Ave., Keinburg, 905-983-1131, 115. $49 (adult).
- **2:00:** City of Toronto. Sundy Volunteers: North Toronto Community Church, Scarletron Civic Centre, 150 Bermond. 416-486-3011.
- **3:00:** U of T Faculty of Music. Queen's Park. 416-587-9411. $10.
- **3:00:** Ensemble Tryptych Chamber Choir. St. Matthias Church, 93 Charles St. W. 416-763-7171. $20.
- **4:00:** Ensemble Tryptych Chamber Choir. St. Matthias Church, 93 Charles St. W. 416-763-7171. $20.
- **6:00:** Cathedral Bluffs Symphony Orchestra. Subscription Concert No. 4. Mahler: Symphony No.4 "Resurrection." Norman Reimann, conductor. P.O. Box Theater, Chinese Cultural Centre, 5183 Sheppard Ave., E. 416-879-5565. $20-25. 7:30: pre-concert chat with John Stephenson.
- **7:30:** Scarbourough Choral Society. Crazy For You. See Mar. 28.

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**THE ETERNAL DANCE OF LIFE**

**Music for percussion by Cage, Cahn, Ewazen, Hartenberger, Pärt, and Stout**

April 5, 2009 at 7:30 p.m.

Glenn Gould Studio, 250 Front Street West, Toronto, Ontario


For ticket sales contact Roy Thomson Hall @ (416) 872-4255

For more information about NEXUS, please visit: www.nexuspercussion.com

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**ORCHESTRA**

**ERROL GAY, MUSIC DIRECTOR AND CONDUCTOR**

Catherine Manoukian, Artist-in-Residence

Celebrating Creative Lives

Sunday, April 5, 2009 at 3pm

Toronto Centre for the Arts, 5040 Yonge St.

**MORLOCK**

Oiseaux bleus et sauvages

MARTINU Symphony No 5

DVOŘÁK Symphony No 8

Pre-concert talk at 2:15 pm

Tickets: Adults $35, Sr/Std $30 at the TCA Box Office or TicketMaster Special Rates: Children/Youth up to 18 years $10 and groups of 10 or more $22. Otopus program for those 19 to 29. Call Orchestra Toronto office at 416-487-7142 for information.

**otontoro@on.alibn.com**

**www.orchestratoronto.ca**

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**THE WHOLE NOTE**

March 1 - April 7 2009

www.thewholenote.com

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Ewazen: Soliloquy and Rondo (from The Eternal Dance of Life); Stout: Prelude · Winter Song.

Glenn Gould Studio, 250 Front St. W. 416-872-4255. $40; $20 sr.; $1 dt.


Monday April 06

- 8:00: Eybler Quartet. All Haydn: Quartets Op. 9 No. 4; Op. 50 No. 2; and Op. 77 No. 1. St. George the Martyr Church, 197 John St. 416-778-5911. $12-$20.

Tuesday April 07


Sunday April 5, 2009 3pm

Heliconian Hall, 35 Hazelton Avenue

Tickets $20, students $15

info: 416.654.0877 www.syrinxconcerts.org

Music at Metropolitan

presents

All Creation Wept
Music and Poetry for Good Friday

Music from Britain, including a commissioned work by Jonathan Willecocks
Poetry read by Gary Brennan

The Metropolitan Festival Choir and brass

Good Friday, April 10 at 7:30 pm

Admission: $20

Tickets and information: 416-363-0331 Ext. 51

Metropolitan United Church

56 Queen Street East at Church Street, Toronto

416-363-0331 ext. 26 www.metunited.org

Music TORONTO

WINDERMERE STRING QUARTET

on period instruments

Haydn, Mozart
Beethoven

Sunday, Mar. 22, 3:00

nyco

Symphony Orchestra

David Bower, Music Director and Conductor

April 18, 2009 8:00 pm

Grace Church on-the-Hill

300 Lonsdale Road

featuring

Melanie Conly, soprano
Calvin Powell, baritone
NYCO Symphony Chorus

Jean Sibelius

Finlandia Symphony No. 2

David Bower

The world premiere of Songs of the Great Land

"Based on a collection of poems, written by Toronto anthologist, John Robert Colombo, based on traditional poems and song lyrics of the Native Peoples of Canada."

Tickets can be purchased at the door, or see www.nyco.on.ca for more information.

Adults $20 • Seniors/Students $15

Visit www.nyco.on.ca for more info
N. B. For a list of Beyond GTA communities see LISTINGS INTRODUCTION, page 23.

Sunday March 01
- 2:00: Gallery Players of Niagara. Niaga­
ra Winds. Paul Taffarel: Quintet; Mikeau: La Che­
nima du re; Windsor Wind Quintet No. 1; Bar­
tise: Passacaglia. Danielle Miller, flute; Chris­
tie Godfrey, oboe; Zoltan Kollar, clarin­
et; Christian Sharps, bassoon; Tim Lock­
vind, French horn. St. Barnabas’ Church, 33
Queen St. W., St. Catharines. 905-347-1625.
2:30; 4:30.
- 7:30: Chorus Niagara. Mass in B minor.
Back, Laura Abino, soprano; Jennifer Enns.
also: Lawrence Wilford, tenor; Alexander Dub­
son, bass; Talilker Players, Robert Cooper.
conductor. Cathedral of St. Catharine of Alex­
andria, 67 Church St., St. Catharines. 905-989-9350 x2376. 6:15; 8:15.

Monday March 02
- 8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Mu­
sic Society. Piano Trios. Beethoven: "Arch­
duke"; Mendelssohn: Scales of Joy, Sorrow,­
Schumann: Trio No. 3. Harry Harris, violin; And­
rzeu Herzog, cello; David McEvoy, piano.
KWCMS Music Room, 57 Young St. W., Wa­
terloo. 519-898-9362. 7:30; 8:00.

Tuesday March 03
- 7:30: Chorus Niagara. Mass in B minor.
Back, Laura Abino, soprano; Jennifer Enns.
also: Lawrence Wilford, tenor; Alexander Dub­
son, bass; Talilker Players, Robert Cooper.
conductor. Cathedral of St. Catharine of Alex­
andria, 67 Church St., St. Catharines. 905-989-9350 x2376. 6:15; 8:15.
- 7:30: Children’s Choir. Of Kingston. A­
vocation. Sydenham Street United Church, 82
Sydenham St., Kingston. 613-530-2050.
5:30; 8:15.

Wednesday March 04
- 12:00 noon: Midday Music With Shigeru.
Sho Boso, cello, and Noda Buncher.

Thursday March 05
- 8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Or­

Friday March 06
- 12:30: University of Western Ontario.
12:30 Fridays: Extended Clarinets.

Saturday March 07
- 7:30: University of Western Ontario.
12:30 Fridays: Extended Clarinets.
...SECTION 2: Beyond the GTA


Friday March 20

- 3:00: Georgetown Bach Chorale. Piano Trios. Trios by Rachmaninoff and Mendelssohn; solo piano music of Scriabin. Ron Einridius, piano; Phoebie Tsang, violin; Mary Katherine Finch, cello. Private home, 157 Main St., Guelph. 519-873-1243, 40.

- 8:00: Sarena Paton. "La Carissima": CD Release Concert: Songs from La Carissima, and classical and crossover selections, with quartet, Studio at Hamilton Place, 1 Summers Lane. Hamilton. 905-527-7689, 75.
- 8:00: St. James Anglican Church. UWO. Wind Ensemble. Christopher Herrick, organ. 137 Melville St., Dundas. 905-827-1424, 20.

- 8:00: University of Western Ontario. UWOpera Series: Too Many Sopranos. For more info: 519.846.0331 1.888.747.7550

Saturday March 21

- 2:00 & 8:00: University of Western Ontario. UWOpera Series: Too Many Sopranos. See Mar. 20.
- 8:00: Cambridge Community Orchestra. In Concert. Beethoven: Triple Concerto in C. Brahms: Hungarian Dance; Copland: Concerto for Harp, Strings, Trumpet, and Horn; Stephen Stanski, pianist; Paul Purford, cellist; Leslie O'Daith, pianist; Sabatino Vaca, conductor. Forwood Baptist Church, 455 Nightingale Dr., Kitchener. 519-602-2020 x24226. $10 (st); $15 (sr).

- 8:00: University of Waterloo. Ensemble in Concert - Voices of Light. University of Waterloo Choir, Gordon Bennett, music director. St. Louis Church, 50 Allen St. E. Waterloo. 519-885-0220 x24226. 140; 18 (st)

Sunday March 22

- 2:00 & 8:00: University of Western Ontario. UWOpera Series: Too Many Sopranos. See Mar. 20.


- 3:00: Elora Festival Singers. Springtime Melodies. Concert and silent auction. Helen Christensen German University Church, 4240 Anderson St. W., Whitby. 905-728-0717. $15. 92 (sr); $5 (st).
- 7:30: Lindsay Concert Foundation. A tuneful combination of music from the Renaissance, also works by Part, Tavener and Lauridsen. St. George's Anglican Church, 321 Fischer Dr., Kitchener. 519-745-6675. 420; $15 (sr); $10 (st); $5 (children under 12).

Sunday March 29

- 2:00: Centre for International Music. "la Carissima" CD Release Concert. See Mar. 20. St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, 50 Anne St. Barrie. 705-726-1181. $10 (st); $15 (sr).

- 2:00: Organ Festival. Organ Recital. Stephen Brier, organ. Parish Church of St. John the Evangelist, 90 Watergate Street, Barrie. 705-726-1181. $10 (st); $15 (sr).

Facebook Page

Organ Fireworks at St. James, Dundas

Christopher Herrick
International Concert Organist

For more info: 519-627-1424

Monday March 30


Tuesday March 31

- 7:30: Snowplace Performance Centre. Celtic Eire. Stephanie Cadman, fiddle, with band: 290 George St. N., Peterborough. 705-742-7489, 12; $20 (st); $10 (sr); $5 (children under 12).
Saturday April 04

- 2:00 & 8:00: Northumberland Players. The Last Resort. See Mar. 27.
- 7:30: Cellar Singers. See April 3. 
  Paul's United Church, 62 Peter St. N., Orillia. 705-326-8011.
- 7:30: Peterborough Pop Ensemble. 
  Canziffero, Murray Street Baptist Church, 75 Murray St., Peterborough. 705-745-1820. 120; $15(st)."
"SO MUCH JAZZ, SO LITTLE TIME"

10 RECOMMENDED ARTISTS & VENUES

continued from page 18

(6) Rita di Ghent is a vocalist/composer known for her unique sound and sophisticated phrasing. "Ten Feet Tall" on Sunday March 8 from 3:30 to 6:30pm.

(7) Richard Whitman's one of the country's hardest-swinging piano players. "The Pilot" on Saturday March 7 from 3:30 to 6:30. Trent Reschny (t) Richard Whitman (p) Rob McBride (b) Syl Juhas (d)

(8) Eli Bennett is a tremendous tenor player destined for greatness. Tequila Bookworm, Thursday March 12th at 9pm with Darcy Myronuk (p) Devon Henderson (b) Fabio Ragnelli (d) and with Ragnelli at The Rex Wednesday March 4th & 18th at 6:30.

(9) Drew Austin hosts a happenin' jam every first monthly Friday 8pm-12am at Dave's Gourmet Pizza.

(10) Whitney Ross-Barris sings beautiful jazz framed by a convincing theatrical approach. She debuts at Gate 403 on Sunday March 29th from 5-8pm.

Ori Dagan, Jazz@thewholenote.com

Grossman's Tavern
378 Spadina Ave. 416.898.6588
www.grossmantavern.com
NG COVER, Pay What You Can

Every Mon Laura Herbst Band; Every Tue Broken Joe; Jamie Geneve, Alte Frasse, Joe Tool; Every Sat Matttines The Happy Pals; Every Sun Nicole Vaughan Acoustic Jam 4-8pm. The Nationals with Brian Colben: Double Slide Guitar Open Stage Jam 9:30pm-2am.

Harlem Restaurant
87 Richmond Street East 416-386-1920
www.harlemandrestaurant.com
No Cover Jazz Fridays & Saturdays 2:30 - 11:00pm.

Hugh's Room - Toronto's home of live Folk and Roots
2281 Dundas Street West 416.531.8804
www.hughsonroom.com (full music schedule)

Joe Momma's
31 King Street West 416.340.6469
Live music every night, specializing in Motown and Rhythm & Blues.

Every Sun Domino Sambas Ork Trio with Nathan Hiltz & Syl Juhas.

Latino Café
1871 Bloor Street West 416.913.9716
www.latinoa.ca
Live Music Wednesday to Sunday

Lula Lounge
1585 Dundas West 416.588.0307
www.lula.ca
Specializing in Salsa and Latin Jazz, see website for full listings.

Manhattan's Music Club
951 Gordon St., Guelph 519.767-2440
www.manhattans.ca

Mezzetta Middle Eastern Restaurant
881 St. Clair Ave. W. 416.651-5897
www.mezzetarestaurant.com

Nathan Hiltz
Live Music Wednesday to Sunday

Latinada
Mar 30
Live music every night, specializing in Motown and Roots
9pm, The Nationals with Brian Caber: Double Slide Guitar Open Stage Jam 9:30pm-2am.

Harlem Restaurant
2281 Dundas Street West 416.531.8804
www.harlemandrestaurant.com

Every Mon Laura Herbst Band; Every Tue Broken Joe; Jamie Geneve, Alte Frasse, Joe Tool; Every Sat Matttines The Happy Pals; Every Sun Nicole Vaughan Acoustic Jam 4-8pm. The Nationals with Brian Colben: Double Slide Guitar Open Stage Jam 9:30pm-2am.

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www.mezzetarestaurant.com

Nathan Hiltz
Live Music Wednesday to Sunday

Latinada
Mar 30
Live music every night, specializing in Motown and Roots
9pm, The Nationals with Brian Caber: Double Slide Guitar Open Stage Jam 9:30pm-2am.
SECTION 4: announcements, masterclasses, etcetera

ANNOUNCEMENTS
* March 7 1:00-5:00: Canadian Children’s Opera Company, Open House. How all five divisions of chorus “in action”. Includes guest workshops, props making & drama classes; a Make-an-Opera workshop; bake sale; displays; merchandise; audition information. Dan Burry & Sophia Perlman, workshop leaders. First Unitarian Church, 175 St. Clair Ave. W. 416-398-0467.

* March 18 10am-1:30: Royal Canadian College of Organists, Toronto Centre. Pedal, Pianos, and the-bone. Learn how the organ works, hear it played, have a chance to play yourself, & even walk around inside it. Pizza lunch; all ages welcome. Glenview Presbyterian Church, 1 Glenview Ave. RSW appreciated but not required: 416-623-8714 x208. Free.


* March 29 5:30-8:30: Stinfinio Toronto. Celebrate the world of Italian cinema, through tales of musical adventures told by Nurhan Arman; silent auction; props making & drama workshop; bake sale. Fine dining, true tales of musical adventures told by Nurhan Arman; silent auction; music by Sinfonia Quartet. 918 Bathurst St. 416-924-8180. $25.


LECTURES/SYMPOSIA


* March 2 2:00: RCM. 5-Part Lecture Series on Beethoven. Anton Kuerti speaks from the piano, sharing his interpretive insights into the piano concert of 273 Bloor St. West. 416-408-2824 x321. Free.

* April 4 7:30: Toronto Gilbert and Sullivan Society. True Characters. Was the Major-General based on a real person? Find out! St. Andrew’s Church, 117 St. Clair St. E. 416-763-0832. 45.

* April 6 8:00: Toronto Wagner Society. Opera Canada at 50: Celebrating Canada’s Grand Opera but were afraid to ask; staging opera in the 21st century. Guest speaker: director Michael Patrick Albono. An audiovisual presentation. CDs to be won. Room 330, Edward Tanenbaum Opera Centre, 227 Front St. E. 416-408-2824 x321. Free.


WONDER HOUSE
SATURDAY, MARCH 27TH
First Unitarian Church
175 St Clair Avenue W
Ages 5-10: 1-3:30
Ages 10-15: 2:30-5:00
Come see the CCOC in action!

Workshops

* March 1 2:00: CAMMAC, Toronto Region. Singers, instrumentalists invited. A reading of Schubert’s Mass in A flat under direction of Eric Gero. Elliott Hall, Christ Church Deer Park, 1570 Yonge St. 416-421-0775. $10 (non-members), membership fee included.

* March 7 10am-5pm: Canadian League of Composers/Le Ligue canadienne des compositeurs. Cultivating Your Career: A workshop for composers at all stages of their careers. Presenters’ Panel includes: Jennifer Walley, Lawrence Cherney, Darren Copeland; Jonathan Bue, moderator, Composers’ Pan-

By Stephanie Martin. Bring a music stand.

Singers in a reading of Bach's B minor Mass, directed by Stephanie Martin. An informal group that meets for the purpose of performance & exchange of songs. Audiences are welcome. Trancas Club, 392 Bloor West, 416-532-0800.


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Singing Lessons

Singing Lessons

Singing Lessons

Canadian Friends Historical Association. Singing to Freedom - Negro Spirituals in the United States and Canada. Two workshops presented by Dr. J. Laney, mezzo-soprano, pianist, conductor & Negro spiritual specialist. Morning workshop and lunch at the historic Yonge Street Meeting House, south of Davis Drive, Newmarket. Afternoon workshop and 7:30pm choral performance at Pickering College, 10045 Bayview Avenue, Newmarket. Pre-registration required: 905-888-8118.


Singing Lessons

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CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

INSTRUCTION

CCM YOUTH ORCHESTRA STARTS ENROLLMENT Chinese Cultural Centre and Maurice Matthews Japanese School invite young string, woodwind and brass players of all backgrounds to join the new Youth Orchestra. Concerts and rehearsals will take place at the prestigious CC Ro Theatre (5180 Sheppard Ave East). More information and applications available at www.assuming.com.

CONCERT PIANIST EVE EGYPT (www.sympatico.com) offers lessons to committed musicians - advanced players as well as returning students (erv@uwo.ca or 416-894-3344).

PIANO, THEORY LESSONS. RCM exam preparation. Samantha Cheng, Royal Conservatory of Music, ARCT, 416-523-1333, s.christine@rogers.com www.samanthaoftheflute.com

HIGHLANDS BRASS ACADEMY summer workshop in college country NE of Toronto. July 27 to 31. Brasses ensemble rehearsals, sectional with clinicians, participant concert. 705-435-8787 highlandsbrass.org


Marilyn Lerner teaches private lessons in piano, theory, classical. jazz, pop, RCM exams. Feel the joy of making music! Downtown location.


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MISCELLANEOUS

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MUSICALS WANTED

CHOIR DIRECTOR REQUIRED. The Durham Girls’ Choir, a non-profit organization dedicated to the achievement of excellence in choral music located in Durham Region, Ontario requires a music director for two youth choirs commencing September 2009.

Junior choir ages 8-11 and a senior choir ages 11-13. The Durham Girls’ Senior Choir is an international touring choir and has participated in numerous international festivals over the past 35 years. Candidates wishing to apply should have a post-secondary degree in music with choral conducting experience. Please forward your resume along with wage expectations to durhamgirlschoir@hotmail.com

JOIN OUR COMMUNITY: CANADIAN MUSIC GROUP: Soh Plynyn. Tuesdays, 6:30-9:00 at The Toronto Concert Hall. $10 covers refreshments. For more information, please email tsym@rogers.com

NEW MUSICIANS wanted immediately! If you are a musician looking for a community music outlet, the Festival Winds Orchestra wants to hear from you. We are always looking new members to join our ensemble, however currently, Saxophones, Percussion, Tuba, French Horn, Oboe, and Bassoon players are especially welcome! If you play a concert band instrument and are interested/advanced level we invite you to join us. We rehearse every Tuesday (7:30-9:30 pm) in the Yonge/Shippard area. For more information, please email trombonelikes@yahoo.com, call 416-529-2625, or visit www.festivalwinds.ca

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Musical Life: 
We Are All Music’s Children

by MJ Buell

February’s Child...

...with Kerry Stratton:

Conductor and Music Director of the Toronto Philharmonia; founder and conductor of the Grand Salon Orchestra; Music Director (since 1992) for the Huntsville Festival of the Arts, Ontario. Through his company, International Touring Productions, he has created Canadian tours for the George Solti Orchestra, Budapest; the Vienna Concert-Verein, Czech Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra and Orchestra Internazionale d’Italia.

www.kerrystratton.com

Earliest musical memory? Being allowed to “play” on the piano at my aunt’s house. 2 or 3 years old. “Play softly, your cousin is sleeping.”

Other musicians in your family? Not really, but everybody sang, or so it seemed.

First experiences? Outside of the family, it would have been what I now realize was a highly reliable public school system which encouraged children’s choirs. There were few concerts in our little town but the Community Concerts Association brought really first rate artists including a performance one memorable year by the Prague Chamber Orchestra. I was enchanted.

What was your first instrument? When did you start conducting? My first instrument was the violin. I started conducting in my last year of high school: my music teacher let me conduct the band for assemblies.

Did you ever think you would do anything else? In my childhood, I wondered if there was any work available leading cavalry charges or in piracy. In my teens I toyed with teaching history.

Starting to think of yourself as a musician? When I moved away from home I met other young musicians who wanted this as much as I did. Suddenly, I was no longer alone in my love of this music. My first experience away from home to study music was at the Congress of Strings in Ohio in 1970, the summer of Kent State. In the autumn of that same year I left for McGill just in time for the Quebec crisis.

If you could travel back through time to the young person in that childhood photo (or maybe just a little older), what might you say? Be patient. You will leave this place, you will travel and you will meet so many wonderful people. I would also tell him that he would get over his crush on Hayley Mills.

Upcoming: Kerry Stratton conducts Toronto Philharmonia (March 5, April 2, May 7); the Grand Salon Orchestra who launch a “Palin Court style” Concert Party series at The Old Mill Inn (April 15th); and a Canadian tour with Slovak Sinfonica April 29-May 9, 2010

Recent recordings: Vivaldi Four Seasons Czech Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra, International Music Festival, Cesky Krumlov, recorded by Arveix; Brahms Violin Concerto and Double Concerto with Nuremberg Symphony, soloists: Daniel Weiss, cello and Jung Yoon Yang, violin.

Congratulations to our Winners!!!Tickets & Recordings!!

Bonnie Craig: two tickets for the very first Concert Party at The Old Mill Inn (Wed. April 15), featuring the Grand Salon Orchestra (concert begins at 8pm, dinner at 6. reservations are suggested)

Lorna Rogers: two tickets for Toronto Philharmonia’s Piano Concerto No 3; Chan, Revelation; with Simon Docking, piano.

Judith Haynal will receive Hovhaness: Celestial Fantasy (DORIAN-93166) featuring the Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra Bratislava, conducted by Kerry Stratton. Hovhaness’ music evokes spirituality, the mystery and grandeur of nature, and the power of faith.

Music’s Children gratefully acknowledges Linda Litwack, The Old Mill Inn and Spa, The Toronto Philharmonia, and people who sing in the car.

March’s Child...

Photo: circa 1949, in Watonga Oklahoma. The gaze already says “Subdivide and conquer!”

“Knock, knock.”

“Who’s there?”

“Knock, knock.”

“Who’s there?”

“Knock, knock.”

“Who’s there?”

Think you know who March’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 March 15 2009.

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Music Education
Summer & beyond

WE ISSUED TWO INVITATIONS LAST MONTH:

1. to organizations offering summer music education to join our online SUMMER MUSIC EDUCATION Directory
2. to musicians, amateur and professional, to talk about the place of Summer Music education in their own musical lives.

Listings for the Directory keep coming in (approaching 30 at the time of writing). And it’s never too late to join! (See page 46-7 for details.)

The summer music education musings keep rolling in too!

Musical Musings
Reflections of a happy camper
by Debbie Vine

Driving home from Week One at the CAMMAC Ontario Music Centre camp, our family is listening to Hemp’s Hump on our new funk CD. We are singing scat and improvising percussive sounds at the top of our lungs! The jazz and world music week has altered our consciousness, opening us up in many different ways and allowing us to live life how it should be!

How should one greet the still of the day on the pastoral Lakefield campus? Perhaps listening to how the percussive and melodic sounds of the day fit together. Alternatively, with a Navajo chant of “Now I walk in Beauty” or the Arabic wedding song, complete with ululating.

Mornings rush by in a blur of technical and musical inspiration — choir for some, classes and practice sessions for all. One instructor’s food for thought: “Do you have fun when you practice?”

The long, lazy summer afternoons are punctuated by yells and laughter from children of all ages playing outside, (finished their morning “music and more” program), gently guided and minded so parents can sleep, read, practice, compose or relax.

Musical theatre completes the afternoon, expanding our repertoire from Maria waltzing in the mountains to Sondheim’s fractured fairy tale characters, killing, dying and philosophizing in the woods.

Finally the close of the day brings a time for sharing musical expertise and experimentation. One could call the concerts, evenings of contrast and evolution, moving from the precision of Bach’s French Suite through explosive African dance, and drumming, musical travel through Sicily to the cacophony of “Dead Weasels Ripped my Flesh”.

The return to the real world feels like a deafening silence.

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It's already summer at www.thewholenote.com!

Thinking about how and where you’d like to make music this summer? Whether you are an amateur or professional musician, there’s a program to suit your needs. Please visit our website and click on “Directories – Summer Music Education” to browse through a growing list of participating summer programs. When you click on a program name, you’ll find detailed information about what they are offering this summer, along with photos and a link to the program’s own website. We’ll keep the directory online right till the end of summer, up-dating it as new information comes in, so check back from time to time for new directory additions!

To feature your summer program in our online Directory, e-mail: summer@thewholenote.com

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Welcome to the WholeNote summer musical directory!

27 Programs to browse ONLINE (and Counting)

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DEADLINE IS APRIL 1
When I heard that the Molinari Quartet will premiere Brian Cherney’s String Quartet No.6 in Montreal this May I was surprised to learn that he had composed so many. McGill Records recently released a CD featuring the Lloyd Carr-Harris Quartet in Cherney’s String Quartets Nos. 3-5. These works span a decade and a half beginning in 1985 and are an excellent representation of the mature work of one of Canada’s most uncompromising composers. Much of Cherney’s work is a response to trauma, both personal loss and universal tribulations, in particular the Holocaust. The Third Quartet was written in memory of the composer’s father who died in the year preceding its composition and it draws on an earlier string trio, written to commemorate his father’s 60th birthday, for some of its material. Beginning in near silence as its predecessor ended, Cherney’s Fourth seems a continuation of the Third. Written in 1994, this time the inspiration is the 50th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. The program notes mention numerical sequences at play in the fabric of the composition which hint at the influence of Elliott Carter on Cherney’s approach. This quartet too ends in the “stillness” which is a frequent aspect of this composer’s work. Although the Fifth quartet begins in quiet, almost immediately we hear cries of anguish. This work, commissioned by the Strings of Canada for the Future festival in Ottawa in 2000, does not have any stated programmatic inspiration. In form (and substance) I would liken it to the work of Polish master Witold Lutoslawski with its Episode-Interlude-Episode-Interlude-Episode structure and we hear references to Bartók’s quartets, but in an assimilative, rather than derivative way. Cherney has absorbed the most important works of the 20th century and found his own way to carry them forward.

Back in 2006, their 35th anniversary season, Toronto’s second oldest contemporary music organization Array embarked on a recording project called Legacy (Artifact Music ART 038) to document highlights of its remarkable history. Founding members (Alex Pauk and Marjan Mozetich) and former and current artistic directors (Doug Perry, Henry Kucharzyk, Linda C. Smith, Allison Cameron and Bob Stevenson) curated this 2 CD set which features a broad spectrum of the music written for Array over the past three decades. In May 2007 the Legacy concert took place at Glenn Gould Studio with Array members Bob Stevenson, Michael White, Stephen Clarke, Rebecca van der Post, Peter Pavlovsky, Blair Mackay and Rick Sacks joined by guest artists Doug Perry and Paul Widner (both former Array members), Dianne Aitken, and Rachel Thomas thereby adding viola, cello, flute and trombone to the current instrumentation of the ensemble – clarinet(s), trumpet, piano, violin, bass and 2 percussion – to facilitate performance of works written for previous incarnations of the group. Highlights for me include the late Michael J. Baker’s La vie de Bohème for multiple clarinets, John Rea’s wings of silence… for ensemble and tape, Marjan Mozetich’s Ice for flute, trombone, piano and viola and Stevenson’s Trace, but certainly others may find Pauk’s Magura, John Abram’s Steiner Shmony, Kevin Volans’ Into darkness or Kucharzyk’s arrangement of Claude Vivier’s classic Palau Dewata more compelling. While in recent times Arraymusic has reinvented itself as a resource centre for new music rather than exclusively a performance vehicle, this release is a welcome testament to the creative force of the Arraymusic ensemble in its heyday. The packaging is visually attractive, however the program notes are almost impossible to decipher with the director’s message printed in minuscule silver type on a white background and the extensive, though unattributed, program notes in grey on green. Had these been easier to read the Legacy would have been much better served. You can check out Array’s new developments at www.arraymusic.com.

Former Array director Henry Kucharzyk also has a presence on a new Naxos release featuring the Toronto Wind Orchestra under Terry Gomes’ direction. Northern Winds (8.572248) is an eclectic collection of Canadian compositions. The disc opens with a boisterous overture entitled High Spirits by Louis Applebaum. Applebaum wrote hundreds of compositions for a myriad of media, but it is all too rare to hear his music performed these days outside of the fanfares he created for the Stratford Festival which are still in use today. Kudos to the Toronto Wind Orchestra for reminding us of his vibrant contribution to Canadian music. Dream Dancer is an extended work by Michael Colgrass for solo saxophone (the exceptional Wallace Halladay performing) and wind orchestra with a large percussion section. The work moves from haunting slow passages through virtuosic pyrotechnics and sections reminiscent of a variety of exotic cultures with more than a nod to the Indonesian gamelan. Next we are treated to a more abstract work, Kucharzyk’s Some Assembly Required, which with its three contrasting movements gives us a somewhat more avant garde approach to the wind orchestra although its rollicking final movement reminds us somewhat of Copland and Bernstein as seen through the eyes of John Adams.

Gary Kulesha’s Ensembles inverts the usual fast-slow-fast structure and places its dynamic toccata-like piano and percussion movement in the middle of two slow meditations. The disc is rounded out by Harry Freedman’s Laurentian Moods, a suite of French Canadian Folksongs which unfortunately seem a bit trite in this context and a centenary tribute to Olivier Messiaen in the form of Oiseaux exotiques featuring pianist Simon Docking.

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.

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VOCAL

Extended Play - VOCAL RECITALS
by Seth Estrin

Six new recital discs from a variety of great operatic singers offer opportunities to hear them in a new light - in new repertoire, with different partners, or for the first time on a recital disc.

Until she recently gave up the role, the German soprano Diana Damrau was known as the most thrilling Queen of the Night on stage today. She has descended from the stratosphere into other Mozart roles, as heard on the recital disc Furore: Opera Arias (Virgin Classics 5 19038 2), and we are the luckier for it. Her sparkling high notes and effervescent coloratura is still heard to excellent effect on several tracks, but what is new here is the darkness and depth of her voice. It is rare that a single singer can sound so convincing in such a variety of Mozart parts - from Donna Anna to Donna Elvira to Blonde to Kostanze - but Damrau's remarkable versatility makes her sound at home in each role. The period orchestra Le Cercle de l'Harmonie under Jeremie Rhorer provide expert support.

American mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato has emerged as one of the most exciting Rossini singers in recent years, but on the recital disc Ilaria: Rossini Arias (Virgin Classics 2 12023 2), she presents an all-Handel program. DiDonato is a sensitive stylist of baroque music, and uses her rich but clear voice to great effect. For an essentially light mezzo voice, she has unusual darkness in her lower register, and is not afraid to dip into her chest voice. She gives rich, impassioned readings of the music without romanticizing it, and she ornaments de capos elaborately but with taste. Christophe Rousset and Les Talens Lyriques help make this one of the best Handel recitals in recent years.

Juan Diego Florez may be one of the most celebrated tenors of his generation, but with the great bulk of his repertoire coming from the work of only three composers - Rossini, Donizetti and Bellini - it must be difficult for him to come up with new arias to record. So on the disc Bel Canto Spectacular (Decca 478 0515) sampling works from those same three composers we get to once again hear his nine high C's in the famous aria from Donizetti's " Daughter of the Regiment" - but this time in Italian instead of French. We also get five wonderful bel canto duets, which pair him with five fantastic singers, including Placido Domingo. With a balance of usual and the unusual repertoire, this makes a charming disc that, with the variety of singers, never gets monotonous.

Baritone Thomas Quasthoff's operatic recital Italian Arias (Deutsche Grammophon 4777469) is unusual because it contains only arias by Joseph Haydn - a composer famous for almost everything except his operas. But several of Haydn's many operas have been staged in recent years, and Quasthoff makes an excellent case for continuing this trend. The disc covers selections from the dramatic operas, such as Armida, perhaps the best known of Haydn's operas, to buffo roles in comic operas such as The World on the Moon. Quasthoff, one of the finest lieder singers of his generation, is a supremely intelligent singer, but he shows himself an excellent comedian as well. With top-rate support from the Reiburger Barockorchester, this disc provides an excellent overview of Haydn's operas - from a baritone's perspective, at least.

Everything René Pape offers on Gods, Kings and Demons (Deutsche Grammophon 4774608) will be new to listeners, since this is his debut solo recording. But Pape has for some years been considered the outstanding operatic bass of his generation, with a burnished, warm sound that is commanding without being simply a wall of dark sound. This disc showcases his versatility as an artist - the Wagner, Verdi, and Gounod tracks stand out in particular. Sometimes extended scenes can sound out of place on recital discs, but Sebastian Weigle, conducting the superb Staatskapelle Dresden, gives both the longer and shorter selections unusual shape and dimension.

Whether we really need another recital disc from Russian soprano Anna Netrebko is perhaps not a fair question, but her latest disc Souvenirs (Deutsche Grammophon 4777639), in what by now must be the most substantial biography of any soprano of her generation, fails to make a convincing case for itself. Netrebko presents this disc as a selection of her favourite songs and light arias from operas and operettas. It is, for the most part, a lovely if somewhat insubstantial selection. Netrebko's dark, plangent voice is skillfully deployed to create several beautiful moments. But the voice sounds slightly looser than on earlier discs, and her diction is poorer than ever. Besides the eclectic repertoire, there is nothing here that cannot be heard to better effect on Netrebko's earlier discs.

EARLY, CLASSICAL AND BEYOND

Late Beethoven - Commentary and Performance
Luisa Guembes-Buchanan
Del Aguila DA 59306 (www.beethovenplanoworks.com)

Although Beethoven lived to age 56, he wrote his last piano sonata at the age of 52 - a period when his everyday existence was marked by deteriorating health and total deafness. Nevertheless, he was still able to rise above the complexities of his daily existence, creating some of his finest music, where he pushed the boundaries of tonality and form as he never had before. This fine 6-disc set on the Del Aguila label featuring pianist/musicologist Luisa Guembes-Buchanan and cellist Philip Wehrmeier on examination of the products of Beethoven's final years, taking as its premise that these late works have numerous stylistic qualities in common. And what a wealth of music is included! Not only are there five late piano sonatas (#28 through #32) but also the Diabelli Variations, 11 Bagatelles Op.119 and 6 Bagatelles Op.126, in addition to numerous smaller pieces all from the sketchbook, plus the two Cello Sonatas Op.102 - enough to keep a Beethoven connoisseur happy for weeks!

I admit the name Luisa Guembes-Buchanan was not one familiar to me. Originally from Lima, Peru she studied in her native city at the Conservatorio National de Musica, and later at the Manhattan School of Music before concluding her studies at New York and Boston Universities. Since then, she has held teaching positions at Amherst College and the New England Conservatory, where she has assumed the dual role of musicologist and pianist perhaps not unlike that of Charles Rosen 40 years ago. The scholarly notes she provides in the attractive 60-page booklet are impressive (they are in both English and German and even contain end-notes), but there is certainly more to Ms. Guembes-Buchanan than scholarship. To anyone who might initially dismiss this recording as an example of a musicologist who "also happens to play the piano", this is clearly not the case! From the serene and reflective opening measures of the Sonata Op.101 to the bravura of the Diabelli Variations, Guembes-Buchanan demonstrates an effortless command of this demanding repertoire. Her playing is noble and majestic, coupled with a flawless technique - quite clearly an artist who not only performs admirably, but possesses a deep understanding of the music and is keen to share that knowledge with others.

The two Cello Sonatas presented here, Op.
Tchaikovsky - Violin Concerto; Souvenir d’un lieu cher

Janine Jansen: Mahler Chamber Orchestra; Daniel Harding
Decca 4780651

The Dutch violinist Janine Jansen is rapidly rising to the very forefront of the international ranks, and this outstanding CD, her second full concerto recording, clearly demonstrates why.

Recorded live in July 2008 at the Festival Via Siellae in Santiago de Compostela, Spain, it is Jansen at her best: intelligent, articulate phrasing; stunning technique; a full, warm tone; and a rich sweetness with that characteristic underlying steely strength.

I had high praise for the Vadim Gluzman recording of this concerto last year, and if you ever needed proof of the need for contrasting interpretations, then this is it. There may perhaps be less sheer excitement here at times, but Jansen presents a beautifully thoughtful, introspective and fully committed performance that I actually find more satisfying. Nothing is rushed or glossed over, and the somewhat slower tempos are well-balanced in the overall structure. Clearly Jansen and Daniel Harding are of one mind here, a sentiment borne out by even a cursory glance at the DVD footage of their rehearsals and performance for this that is currently viewable on YouTube.

The three pieces that comprise Souvenir d’un Lieu Cher make an obvious coupling choice, as the first piece, Meditation, is the concerto’s original slow movement which Tchaikovsky rewrote for violin and piano. The version heard here is not the usual Glazunov orchestration but a smaller and extremely effective arrangement for violin and strings by the Romanian-Dutch conductor Alxandru Lascac.

Gergiev conducts Mahler Symphonies 1, 2, 3, 6 & 7

London Symphony Orchestra; Valery Gergiev
LSO LIVE

LSO LIVE, the London Symphony Orchestra’s own label, is well into its Mahler cycle recorded ‘live’ in the Barbican, their home venue. The label has been remarkably successful since its introduction in 2000 with selected concert performances conducted by Colin Davis, Bernard Haitink, Mstislav Rostropovich, and now Valery Gergiev. The discs are usually hybrid-SACD discs and are, as this Mahler cycle, state of the art technically with extraordinary dynamic range and true to life timbres. Tutti never become congested. Acoustically, the Barbican is not an ideal venue but producer James Mallinson’s recordings are articulate with a sparkling clarity.

Valery Gergiev is one of the busiest conductors around today, in demand everywhere it seems. He has brought his Kirov Orchestra to Thomson Hall, treating us to stunning performances of Russian music, each work given definitive performances. His Le Sacre du Printemps was both illuminating and shattering ... an unforgettable performance; his Scheherazade electrifying. However his performances certainly did not reveal the essence of some non-Russian repertoire which brings us to this ongoing Mahler cycle.

It has become standard practice for conductors who ‘understand’ Mahler and ‘feel his pain’ to wear their hearts on their sleeve and subtly, or not so subtly, convey this empathy to the listener, whether live or from recordings. Leonard Bernstein comes immediately to mind. But can a conductor simply play what is written when every reading is a new encoding of the composer’s notation?

Gergiev’s Mahler may well be the most articulate on disc! There can be no doubt that the LSO is one of the very finest on the planet and under the proven eye of their current principle conductor they have turned inspired, immeasurable performances. However, Mr. Gergiev does not, as yet, have the special insight that leads to Mahler’s anima which would have elevated these acclaimed performances from outstanding into Mahler’s inspired visions. Still, acknowledging this shortcoming, these five initial releases are so well performed and recorded that I look forward to the balance of the cycle.

Extended Play – CANADIAN STRINGS

By Terry Robbins

Three Sonatas for Violin and Piano - a mature work by Elgar, and early works by Richard Strauss and Ravel - are presented on an excellent disc by the Canadian duo Jonathan Crow and Paul Stewart of the CSSQ. (ACD2 2534). Elgar’s sonata, completed in September 1918, is a somewhat conservative piece that reflects the sombre effect on the composer of four years of World War. It has never really established a secure place in the repertoire, but is a work that really deserves to be heard more often. The Strauss sonata, written in 1887, is a passionate Romantic work clearly influenced by the chamber music of Brahms. The Ravel is an early single-work movement from 1897 that remained unknown until its discovery in manuscript many years after the composer’s death; its first public performance was in 1975. Crow, a Professor of Violin at McGill University and former concertmaster of the Montreal Symphony, plays with faultless intonation and a sweet, clear tone throughout. He has a sympathetic partner in Stewart, who is particularly outstanding in the Strauss. Recorded in Saint-Irene, Quebec, the sound is...
Odd Couple, the title of a new CD of American works from cellist Matt Haimovitz and pianist Geoffrey Burleson (Oxendale OX2015) is not a comment on the players; rather, it is taken from Matt Haimovitz’s description of the relationship between these two seemingly disparate instruments. Unsuitable partners they may be in some respects, but the music on this outstanding disc shows none of the weaknesses and all of the strengths of the cello and piano duo can display. The two central works are the sonatas by Samuel Barber and Elliott Carter, the former having its roots firmly in the Romantic tradition of the two Brahms sonatas, although firmly stamped with Barber’s own unmistakable voice, and the latter, from 1948, harking back to the Beethoven sonatas in some respects while still looking ahead to Carter’s mature style. The opening and closing works are both world-premiere recordings: David Sanford’s 22 Part I from 1998 and Augusta Read Thomas’ Cantos for Slava, which was commissioned as part of an ASCAP award Haimovitz received in 2006, shortly after the death of Mstislav (“Slava”) Rostropovich. Thomas had worked closely with the great Russian cellist over the previous 15 years. The disc was recorded this past June at McGill’s Schulich School of Music, where Haimovitz is Professor of Cello. The sound quality is excellent, and both players are outstanding in difficult and challenging, but highly rewarding, repertoire.

There are two recent CDs of the Buch Goldberg Variations in the string trio arrangement by the violinist Dmitri Sitkovetsky. On the first the abovementioned Jonathan Crow and Matt Haimovitz team up with violinist Douglas McNabney (Oxendale OX2014): the other features Vancouver’s Trio Accord Mary Sokol Brown (violin), Andrew Brown (viola) and Ariel Barnes (cello) (Skytark Music SKY0802). As McNabney points out, Bach’s music is strong enough to transcend the many transcriptions that have been made of this work; certainly this version, which Sitkovetsky dedicated to Glenn Gould, serves the predominantly three-part keyboard writing extremely well. There are many differences in tempo and track timings here, the latter probably due to the observance - or lack thereof - of repeats as much as anything, but both recordings are extremely satisfying performances. The playing is excellent on both CDs, both from an individual and ensemble viewpoint, and the recording ambiance - both were recorded in a church - is warm and resonant. On first hearing I preferred the brightness and contrast in the Trio Accord CD, whereas the Quebec-based ensemble plays with a touch more legato throughout, but on further comparison I’m not so sure; in two outstanding recordings I have a feeling that it’s Jonathan Crow and friends who come closest to the spiritual heart of this astonishing work.

MODERN & CONTEMPORARY

Shostakovich; Weinberg; Ichiouvrat I Musici de Montreal; Yuli Turovsky Analekta AN 2 9899

Though the name of Shostakovich is primed in the largest typeface on this engaging release from the ever-reliable I Musici ensemble, in truth his music serves as bookends for some lesser-known works, most importantly the Chamber Symphony No. 1 by the Polish-Jewish composer Mieczyslaw Weinberg (1919-1996). Weinberg (sometimes spelled as Vaynberg) fled to Russia in 1939 while the Nazis decimated Warsaw; the remainder of his family would later perish in the Trawniki concentration camp. During his evacuation to Tashkent he met Dmitri Shostakovich. Impressed by his talent, Shostakovich later encouraged the younger man to move to his Moscow neighbourhood in 1943. They subsequently became very close friends, and while Weinberg was never formally a student of Shostakovich his own music was closely modelled on that of his mentor, though in the case of his Chamber Symphony (a late work from 1987) evidencing a more neo-classical and abstract approach betraying little of his harrowing life experience. The young composer, clarinettist and conductor Airat Ichiouvratov was born in 1973 in Kazan, Tatarstan and now enjoys a busy concert life in Montréal. His Fantastic Dances for piano trio (his own Muczynski trio) and strings was commissioned by I Musici in 2007. It is an affectionate tribute to both Shostakovich and Weinberg incorporating klezmer elements and includes a recasting the second movement of Shostakovich’s Ninth Symphony as part of a demented waltz. The ghost of Gustav Mahler also makes a perplexing cameo appearance in the Ravel-derived grand finale. The Shostakovich works include the youthful Prelude and Scherzo Op. 11, notable for its hard-driven second movement, as well as string orchestra arrangements of the Elegy from the opera Lady Macbeth of Mzensk and the sardonic Polka from the ballet: The Age of Gold. Excellent sound and intriguing programming make this one a winner.

Daniel Foley

Elliott Carter - 100th Anniversary Release
New Music Concerts; Robert Atkin
Naxos 8.559614

Elliott Carter’s one hundredth birthday is being celebrated this year on a scale previously unthinkable for a living composer - especially a composer whose music was for long considered excessively complicated and difficult. Carter is now recognized as America’s greatest composer - and not just because he has been around the longest. Amazingly, he is still composing.

This CD/DVD set of late works is a standout. It was recorded live in Toronto in 2006 at two concerts given by New Music Concerts. The most significant works are the two beautifully performed ensemble pieces, Dialogues and Mosaic, both presented in audio and video formats. But what particularly drew me on this disc are the virtuosic pieces for solo instruments, especially the exquisite wind pieces. The jazzy, playful Steep Steps is performed with remarkable versatility by the lone non-Canadian performer, American bass-clarinettist Virgil Blackwell, the dedicatee of the piece. In Gra clarinettist Max Christie shapes contrasting layers into a single eloquent voice. Scrivo in Vento, written for New Music Concerts artistic director, flutist Robert Aitken, provides an intense, expressive exploration of the instrument.

I especially enjoyed Aitken’s pre-concert interview with Carter on the DVD. You can feel the affectionate relationship between these two long-time friends. Carter is genial, witty, and brilliant - and quite mischievous. Aitken handles him deftly, but Carter doesn’t make his job easy. Asked about the genesis of a piece, he says, “I’m interested in the music - I’m not interested in where it came from.”

Superb recorded sound, exemplary booklet notes, and sassy camera work contribute to a terrific set, not just for Carter aficionados but for those wanting to know more about the music of our time.

Pamela Marges

JAZZ AND IMPROVISED

Mombacho
Mike Janzen and Friends
Signpost Music 8P43-102
(www.mikejanzen.ca)

Michael Janzen completed his Masters in Composition at the University of Toronto in 1997. Under the first name Mike, Janzen is a gifted composer, jazz pianist, organist, vocalist and heaven knows what else. This self-produced sophomore release is a work of art with respect to all musical processes from start to finish: composition, personnel, performance, and having a John “Bookey” Bailey’s killer mix doesn’t hurt. Every tune is a winner, from Where It Goes to Swankometer. It’s obvious that Janzen considered his band carefully, and he had his work cut out for him with such a deep pool of talent to choose from on the Canadian scene. Bass-wise, one can’t go wrong with the luminous George Koller,
the only musician other than leader to appear on every track. Drum duty primarily belongs to Ben Riley with guests Davide DiRienzo and Larnell Lewis. Special guesting are Phil Dwyer on tenor saxophone, Kevin Brett on guitar, Alan Hetherington on percussion and a 13-piece string section led by Lenny Solomon on the beautifully titled Beauty. The sweet Almost Tango is an 8-minute suite of sheer amusement, with another highlight being the romping instrumental rendition of Mrs. Robinson. Besides playing the piano, organ and Rhodes on “Monbão”, Janzen lends his voice to Bruce Cockburn’s All the Diamonds and his own Masary. While singing the odd tune is not unusual for an instrumentalist, having a voice as velvety as Janzen’s certainly is.

Ori Dagan

Alex Ernewein
With Terry Clarke; Kelly Jefferson; Jake Langley; Kilian Oyers
Independent 0209135

When this CD was recorded in May of 2008 at Canterbury Sound Studio in Toronto, Alex Ernewein was 14 years old and quite the debut album it is. Wise enough to surround himself with four of the top musicians on the scene who give him all the support he needs, and then some, this is a very impressive display by any standards. There are eleven selections, wisely mostly familiar, ranging from the Rodgers & Hart standard My Romance to Monk’s Straight No Chaser and there is one original, a piano solo called Improv Suite One. The line-up varies throughout the album and Ernewein moves comfortably from piano to Fender Rhodes to Hammond B3.

The music was improvised on the spot and any imperfections are a worthwhile trade-off against the spontaneity of the music. You will hear more of young Mr. Ernewein.

Jin Galloway

After Hours
Jeff Dyer; Bill Brennan
Independent 0209135

Pour yourself a drink, put on “After Hours” after hours and you will enjoy an eclectic, varied program of choice standards and genuine originals. Newfoundland’s Bill Brennan is a pianist, percussionist, composer and producer who can be heard on some 80 albums to date. Wonderfully warm and very witty, Brennan’s work proves he is the consummate accompanist; no wonder, considering he has previously backed up Cab Calloway, Placido Domingo and Dizzy Gillespie.

Apart from five vocal/piano duets, seven tracks feature the superb Jim Vivian on bass, Michael Billard on drums and Patrick Boyle on trumpet and flugelhorn. But the spotlight is on Jeff Dyer’s full-bodied, emotionally raw singing style that suggests a natural, experienced talent. The baritone’s larger-than-life voice is not technically faultless, but this does not get in the way of the singer’s captivating, earnest delivery. Fans of the old standards will enjoy authentic readings of Lucky Be Me and the like, but even more intriguing are Dyer’s spicy originals. Iona is a haunting, poetic ode to a Newfoundland ghost town, whereas the sentimental Time is a Dragon is a “smooth jazz” offering. In contrast, Nucorquis is a composition devoid of words but rich with intensity, trumpet doubling the voice. Dyer’s musical setting of John McClure’s In Flanders Fields is inspired and respectful. Come to think of it, any time is appropriate to relish this recording, a healthy marriage of traditional and contemporary vocal jazz.

Ori Dagan

Extended Play - FACE OFF
By Ken Waxman

Sonic battles involving musicians who play the same instrument facing off against another part of the universe goes back to Kansas City jam sessions. This sort of competition isn’t unique to jazz. Probably as much as its strings to tell stories. Inca musical battle fuses Eastern and Western instruments and properties of guitars’ attachments and properties. Improvisation is a “smooth jazz” offering. In contrast, Nucorquis is a composition devoid of words but rich with intensity, trumpet doubling the voice. Dyer’s musical setting of John McClure’s In Flanders Fields is inspired and respectful. Come to think of it, any time is appropriate to relish this recording, a healthy marriage of traditional and contemporary vocal jazz.

Ori Dagan

This joy is also apparent on In Between Stories which features Darren Johnston’s United Brassworkers Front (Evander Music EM 040). This Bay-area band of two trumpets, two trombones, tuba, guitar, bass and drums plays mostly Johnston’s compositions, while echoes of Balkan marches, brass chorals, Dixieland and mariachi music abound. As bumbling tuba provides the pedal-point bottom, shuffle drum beats and walking bass lines add an R&B feel. Johnston is surprisingly expressive and romantic on the sardonic Long Live the Yes Men, yet breaks up the initially stately In Between Stories with splattering triple-tongued, jazz shakes and rubato slurs. Chunky rhythm guitar licks and half-honk/half-hi-ho from tuba adds to the transformation. Elsewhere Johnston’s arrangements showcase polyphonic undulations, ensuring the massed brass playing is neither protracted nor gratuitous. (www.evandermusic.com)

Brass band-inflected jazz is also the rason
d’être on Quinsin Nachoff/ Bruno Tocanne Project’s 5 New Dreams (Cristal CD 0824), although clarinetist/tenor saxophonist Nachoff’s co-leader is a French drummer, as are the two trumpeters and another saxophonist. Eschewing chordal instruments the unbridled power of Tocanne’s drumming manages makes the band evoke drummer Art Blakey’s Jazz Messengers. With nearly every tune a foot-tapper, Tocanne’s ruffs and flams encourage doubled brass triplet, so that the trumpeters often sound like an intertwined Lee Morgan and Freddie Hubbard. Lionel Martin often confines himself to ostinato phrasing breaths, buzzing upwards into waves of altissimo before Tocanne’s press rolls surgically cut off the exposition. In contrast Goodbye Lullaby OTter Sound OB 105 Like Light Off Water Daphne Marlatt; Robert Minden Phragm breaths , buzzing upwards into waves (www .LostSound.com) Carla Hallett ’ s singing makes for a beautifully pure sound, shifting the listener’s consciousness to the depths of pure feeling.

POT POURRI
Like Light Off Water Daphne Marlatt; Robert Minden Carla Hallett Otter Sound OB 105 (www.LostSound.com) Under the Canopy The Huppah Project Independent HP0001 (www.thehuppahproject.com)
I first heard Aviva Chernick in concert with her band Jaffa Road, in the packed Brigantine Room at last fall’s Ashkenaz Festival at Harbourfront. That same weekend saw the release of her latest (and second) CD, “Under the Canopy”. Part of “The Huppah Project”, this CD is a collection of Jewish wedding music, sung entirely in Hebrew, with instrumental accompaniment. Many of the lyrics come from the Song of Songs or other liturgical texts, with either traditional music or music composed in our own era, and at least one song is from 1950s Israel. All are arranged by Chernick and/or ensemble members Aaron Lightstone, who plays ud, guitar and saz, and Jeff Wilson (drums, percussion, cornet). Chernick is the one who shines in this recording and is definitely one to watch on the Toronto music scene. She sings with a purity and clarity of vocal tone that carries this genre well, and to my knowledge is one of the only female vocalists in Toronto specializing in Jewish music of this sort (i.e. non-klezmer, Hebrebased). Other back-up musicians include Ernie Tollar (ney) and George Sawa (qanun), who are featured in Reviantel el Beit Hayygeh (To the Vineyard’s house), a traditional Moroccan song. Visit www.avivachernick.com for more about this artist’s activities.

Karen Ages

Concert note: Aviva and her band Jaffa Road will be giving a CD release concert at the Lula Lounge, March 25 (see www.jaffaroadmusic.com).
Quartetto Gelato returns with a soulful collection of Latin American selections. Both joy and tragedy have resulted in personnel changes for this much loved Canadian ensemble. Cellist Kristina Cooper has left for marriage and parenthood. The untimely death of founding member oboist Cynthia Steljes is extremely gripping - both as a musician and individual she was a bright light in the musical community and is deeply missed. It is with gratitude that we note the superb playing of these two on "Mediango and BesameMucho" in this new release.

New QG members cellist Carina Reeves and clarinetist Kornel Wolak join violinist/tenor Peter De Soto and accordionist Alexander Sevastian to continue the ensemble's musical journeys. The right ensemble playing, astute musicality and sheer happiness illuminate each track. The selections featured should be familiar to most listeners. "Tico Tico" is a rhythmic joy to listen to with Sevastian's florid accordion work. Wolak melts the aural senses in "Um a Zero" while De Soto charms his way through "Mambo De Carnival." I wish that cellist Carina Reeves could be heard in the forefront more often - her supportive playing is superb but her elegant performance as a lead instrumentalist is underutilized. A number of special guests are featured including the wonderful Penderccky String Quartet.

Quartetto Gelato's music is extremely appealing. It is the choice of repertoire combined with an esoteric musical approach that makes the unmistakable sound so lovely. Yes, you have probably heard most of the tunes on "Musica Latina" thousands of times before. You just haven't heard them the Quartetto Gelato way!

Tiina Kiik

OLD WINE IN NEW BOTTLES
Fine old recordings re-released
by Bruce Surtees

Lately I have had the pleasure of going through several complete sets of Beethoven Piano Concertos by leading pianists such as Barenboim, Zimmerman, Petrenko, and others. Each is special in its own way. Because his unassuming, self-effacing demeanour, I really did not have high expectations of a new DVD set played by Murray Perahia (Medici Arts/ BBC 5085298, 2 DVDs).

However, as I write this I am of the opinion that this set is the best of all... for pianistic command, musicality, beauty of phrasing, and rapport between soloist and conductor. These 1988 performances were transmitted live from The Royal Festival Hall, showcasing the young and deservedly esteemed Perahia with the ever perfect Neville Marriner and his Academy of St. Martin in the Fields. None of the other versions generates the sense of forward motion and excited expectation that often has the listener (figuratively) on the edge of his, or her, chair. This edition easily eclipses the Sony CDs of Perahia's collaboration with Haitink and the Concertgebouw recorded in 1983-86. When I want to hear any of these concertos this is the set I'll turn to.

One of the colossals masterpieces of the Romantic era, Verdi's Messa da Requiem, remains a particular favourite. Even though I have heard it countless times, live and on record, I was tempted to acquire yet another performance. This one was recorded live during a performance in Stuttgart on November 2nd, 1960 with a dream cast of distinguished soloists: Fritz Wunderlich, Maria Stader, Marga Höffgen, and Gottlob Frick. The Stuttgart Radio Symphony Orchestra and Choir, the Stuttgart Singing Teachers Association Choir are conducted by Hans Müller-Kray (DG 4766382 2CDs). What a treasure this turned out to be! To my ears this is a total performance... "Normally the soprano and tenor soloists are prominent in the ensembles but this time everything was well balanced, just like a string quartet... it was just as it should be: mutual respect, listening to one another making music together." For readers who may not know the soloists, they were Germany's best of the era and all steeped in the Bach tradition which accounts, I believe, for their perception what this work is about. Muller-Kray unerringly draws four soloists, three choirs and orchestra together in this exceptional performance. In excellent sound, this appears to be a co-production with the SWR.

For many classical music lovers who listen to FM radio, WBEN-FM is the station of choice. I listen to it in my car and recently I heard, not on the same day, outstanding performances of two long time favourites, Tchaikovsky's Manfred Symphony and Rachmaninov's Symphonic Dances, opus 45. I sat in my driveway waiting for the extros to identify the recordings. As it turned out, they were both Naxos discs! The Tchaikovsky was played by the Liverpool Philharmonic under Vasily Petrenko (8.550568) and the Rachmaninov featured the Royal Philharmonic conducted by Enrico Batiz (8.550583). I acquired both discs and found them to be all that I expected both in the high octane performances and wide-open, dynamic sound. I recommend them enthusiastically.

Pierre Monteux, one of the finest and revered conductors of the last century, had a long association with the Boston Symphony, starting in 1919. In his 1947 book, "The Other Side of the Record", Charles O'Connell, RCA's producer and conductor argued that Monteux's music making was superior to Toscanini's!

Pierre Monteux in Boston 1951-58, West Hill Radio Archives (WHRA-6022, 8 CDs priced as 5) brings us some solid reasons to agree with O'Connell. These were halcyon days for Monteux as he guested in Boston after a 27 year absence. Included in this treasure trove of live performances in astonishingly good sound are lots of Tchaikovsky's including the last three symphonies and the "Hantlet Overture, Le Sacre du Printemps", Petrushka (a suite and also complete in stereo), Schubert's Ninth Symphony, Schuman's Third, and Prokofiev's First. Also works by Bartok, Debussy, Wagner, Szymanowski, Elgar, and others. The aristocrat of conductors with the "Aristocrat of Orchestras" - self recommending I would think.

A true legend but not a household name in the celebrated elite group of 20th century violinists, Paul Makanowitzky did not make many recordings but he has a most devoted cult following. Recently on EBay a three LP set sold for US$6,500! Makanowitzky had the élan of the French School with the expressivity of the Russian School. He was born in Sweden to Russian immigrants in 1920 and studied in Paris, aged four, with the mega pedagogue Ivan Galamian. Later with Jacques Thibaud and Nadia Boulanger. The ex child prodigy became a war hero as a volunteer in the USAF in WW2. After the war he enjoyed a brilliant career as soloist with American orchestras. In 1954 teamed up with fellow Boulanger alumnus, Noël Lee who was based in Paris. As duos, they were critically acclaimed and their performances were always a hot ticket everywhere. For the French label Lumen they recorded the complete Bach, Beethoven and Brahms violin sonatas, the Bach set winning the 1959 Grande Prix du Disc.

DOREMI's new 4 CD set contains the Beethoven (1955/6) and the Bach (1958) sonatas (DHR7946/9). The musical revelations are both striking and satisfying in their communication of heartfelt and sincere music making. Listeners will be surprised at the refreshing sweetness and purity of tone. The engineer for the Lumen LPs was the iconic André Charlin, whose work is faithfully transmitted here.
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idiom. His predominantly serious mood is sometimes relieved with humorous pieces showing Kodaly’s lighter side that later became so irresistible in his famous Harry Janos singspiel.

In the 7 pieces, Op. 11 one can see how much Kodaly developed in less than 10 years. Themes are more meaningful, full of feeling and the ideas previously experimented with have become integrated into the music’s message. Some of the pieces are based on haunting, lamenting melodies of Transylvania, that foreboding, mysterious region of the Carpathians where much of Kodaly’s research took place. Ms. Kenedi’s firm, authoritative hands are most impressive in No.18 Rubato where she carries the assertive, long melodic line with wonderful atmosphere. The piece de resistance is the well known Dances of Maroszek (1927) in its original version, a formidable difficult, colourful bravura piece that reminds me of Liszt’s piano transcriptions. Here Kenedi pulls out all the stops and brings this disc to an exciting close.

Perhaps due to the recording, some harsh tones are noticeable that detract from the otherwise very fine performances.

Janos Gardonyi

Remembered Voices
Ralitsa Tcholakova; Elaine Keillor
Carleton Sound CSCD-1012

As a violin and piano recording, this one is immediately evident as being at the top of the genre. Performers are first rate, and playing with a passion. Audio production is unusually well done, with none of the bizarre qualities one finds so often nowadays, either of the violinist sounding as if she is larger than the accompanist, or the listener being right inside the piano.

Excellent choices were made for the music on this CD, with special emphasis on Bulgarian icon figure Pantcho Vladiguerov, who is represented by the Chant from his larger Bulgarian Suite, the widely-known Rhapsody Vardar, a Humoreske, plus an encore arrangement of Dinicu’s Horn Staccato.

Tcholakova and Keillor show an admirable commitment to Canadian repertoire, beginning with Gena Branscombe’s unjustly neglected Minor Sonata, well represented in this performance. Violet Archer’s Fantasy and Prelude and the Prelude and Allegro are equally well served. But the best is saved for last: we get to hear the violin version of the late Patrick Cardy’s Liessel, Suse, Ike, and Gerda, and Mary Gardner’s monumental Remembered Voices, here finally blossoming in a hall vastly superior to the Heliconian Club.

The Glenn Gould Studio’s hand-picked Steinway is on its best behaviour. No fewer than three sound engineers did the microphone wizardry. All photos are posed, with none showing the actual recording sessions.

An excellent CD.

John S. Gray

Manhattan Music

Canadian Brass; Eastman Wind Ensemble

Opening Day Records OD 7368

The Eastman Wind Ensemble (EWE) is a celebrated student ensemble at the University of Rochester with a tradition of very high standards honed through extensive rehearsals. Tubist player Chuck Dallenbach of the Canadian Brass was a student at the Eastman School of Music in the 1960s, where he shared lodgings with the producer of this recent souvenir album, fellow tubist Dixon van Winkle.

The title track, British composer and conductor Bramwell Tovey’s Manhattan Music, is a brash and bountiful set of seven variations which somehow manages to hang together quite nicely. Originally commissioned for the Canadian Brass, Tovey has recast the work for wind ensemble since leading the premiere with the Vancouver Symphony in 2005. A subsequent suite carved from Leonard Bernstein’s controversial Mass wrests the most attractive sections of music from this sadly dated 1971 work, while sparing us the cringe-worthy theatrical scenario. The arrangement by Michael Sweeney highlights the quintet most effectively. Rayburn Wright’s Shaker Suite calls up the familiar ground in this work long ago by Aaron Copland but with a felicitous close. Mark Scatterday conducts the fine-sounding, slightly slap-happy ensemble with vigour.

The perplexing liner notes include a plenitude of enthusiastic rejections of the virtues of the 1950s Mercury record label (marketer of some two-dozen EWE Frederick Fennell albums back in their glory days) and a snide jibe that classic rock is a better product. This recent souvenir album, fellow tubist Dixon van Winkle.

Daniel Foley

Oppens plays Carter - Elliott Carter at 100

The Complete Piano Music

Ursula Oppens

Cedille CDR 90000108

In 1997 Charles Rosen recorded all of Elliott Carter’s piano music for a disc called “The Complete Music for Piano”. At that time, the composer was over ninety years old. Now, some ten years later, Ursula Oppens offers “The Complete Piano Music”, with six new works. All shorter than the earlier pieces, none is a masterwork like Night Fantasies. But what they lack in monumentality, they compensate for in warmth and charm, especially the lovely Matritude and the ebulliently virtuosic Cadenza. Both are recorded here for the first time.

Oppens has long been recognized as a singularly eloquent interpreter of contemporary music. She has worked closely with Carter for many years, and was one of the four pianists responsible for commissioning Night Fantasies, along with Rosen, Paul Jacobs and Gilbert Kalish. In fact, she gave the premiere performance at the Bath Festival in 1980.

Oppens’ luminous performances of Mozart piano concertos with Mark Morris’ dance troupe during last summer’s Luminato Festival in Toronto attested to the breadth of her musical scope. This stands her in good stead here as she illuminates Carter’s complex textures with muscular insight, revealing the poetry in this expressive music. This is a disc to treasure, and would serve as a fine introduction to a seminal composer of our time.

Carter just turned one hundred, and is still composing brilliantly — a miracle of creative activity surely unmatched in the history of music. I hope the next complete piano recording offers even more new works.

Pamela Margies

Nicole Lizée - This Will Not Be Televised

Various artists

Centrediscs CMCCD 13508

Not all CDs were created equal. This CD wipes a smile across my face. After listening to it over and over, it’s apparent: Nicole Lizée knows the good stuff. I began doing anthropological studies by having this recording playing in the background and watching people’s reactions. What I deduced is that “This is not background music” could have been an easy alternative to “This Will Not Be Televised”.

The title composition is a wonderfully creepy musical adventure. The music goes in so many interesting directions. In the liner notes of this 2008 Centrediscs release, it’s mentioned that this piece was named after a tape that played at the 2008 International Rostrum of Composers. I would agree that this piece sets the bar for great contemporary music.

The piece REM Blends turntables with a larger orchestra. I love this sound, and I think the symphony orchestras of the future should make it standard to include an entire turntable section. It’s very difficult to describe the magical combination of turntables and ensemble that Lizée has achieved. It is obvious that every sample she uses is carefully chosen and appropriately placed. I love the sense of play in this music, from the live mimicking of skipping records, to the nostalgic use of cheesy 1980s heavy metal albums. When I close my eyes, a lot of this music is the soundtrack to the cartoon in my mind.

Girl You’re Living a Life of Crime is a pop-based piece, reminding the listener that the composer is also a multi-instrumentalist in the successful Montreal pop outfit Besnard Lakes. This piece certainly is not a standard pop tune though as it messes with the idea of tape-splicing and in the end the musicians create a shaky ostinato and eventually drive it off a cliff.
This CD does such a genuine job in celebrating jazz music, improvisation, pop music, contemporary music and everything in between. Lizée’s music clearly reflects the many identities of Canadians, and the next generation of its composers. Her fearless approach is engaging and I highly recommend raising children on this music...

Richard Marsella

JAZZ AND IMPROVIZED

**Phénix**
Les Poules  
Ambiances magnetiques AM 176 CD

Sampling everyday sounds while electronically mixing them with extended and unusual techniques, the Montreal-based Les Poules produces music that is both subtly feminist and sonically expressive. On their own, each of Les Poules (“the hens” in English) — alto saxophonist Joane Hétu, percussionist Danielle Palaridy Roger and sampler-manipulator Diane Labrosse — also composes for dance and theatre companies and performs with such associates as guitarist Fred Frith (Roger); pianist Marilyn Lerner (Labrosse) and saxophonist Jean Dorome (Hétu). Arriving at their second decade as a trio however, “Phénix” is an unbeatable demonstration of their interactive prowess.

Over the course of 24 miniatures, lasting from barely a minute to slightly less than three, the trio creates unique juxtapositions that for example contrast the percussiveness of bass drum thumps and a sewing machine motor; or alternately compare approximations of infant cries, the power of a passing freight train and the jocular result is as much from barely a minute to slightly less than three, the trio creates unique juxtapositions that for example contrast the percussiveness of bass drum thumps and a sewing machine motor; or alternately compare approximations of infant cries, the power of a passing freight train and the ratling of a bell tree. Mostly narrowing her focus to timbres scraped and scratched on cymbals, Roger’s abrasions dovetail with the shrill reed bites, unattached mouthpiece peeps and wide-vibrato growls that Hétu forces from her horn. Meantime Labrosse’s ring-modulator flanging, drifting loops of buzzing static and motor-driven grinding underline or connect the shifting tonal centres.

With each woman vocalizing a babble of nonsense syllables, gargles, scat singing, snores and juicy quacking, the jocular result is as much music de maison as musique concrete. In short Phénix is one hen party you’d be well-advised to attend.

Ken Waxman

Concert Note: Diane Labrosse will join Marilyn Lerner in “Seconde Nature” at The Music Gallery on February 20.

Willie the Weeper

**Patrick Tevlin’s New Orleans Rhythm**  
**New Orleans North CD-008**

Some of the delights of any art form lie in the rich diversities to be found. Jazz has evolved into an immensely factored sophisticated culture, but the simple joys of the music in its early form can still be heard, thanks to small, dedicated groups of musicians all over the world.

This recording features three stalwarts of the Toronto traditional scene: Patrick Tevlin on trumpet, Roberta Hunt on piano and Colin Bray on bass, all of them members of the popular Toronto group, The Happy Pals. They are joined by Brian Carrick one of England’s leading New Orleans style clarinet players with a strong George Lewis influence.

This music is unpretentious and sincere and, in truth, at its most enjoyable when heard live. That’s the case with any music, but none more so than traditional jazz with its direct emotional communication with the audience. That is not to detract from the listening pleasure to be found in this CD which is a collection of mostly familiar traditional themes like the title song, Willie The Weeper, I’m Confessin’ and Martha along with a few lesser known pieces such as the old rag, Trombonium, the 1924 Armand Piron Bright Star Blues and, adding a Jamaican touch, the 1925 Myn Mongoose.

The musicians convey an infectious enthusiasm and lovers of traditional jazz will find much to enjoy in this recording.

Jim Galloway

Extended Play — LOCAL JAZZ

**By Ori Dagan**

The artistry of Ron Davis is revealed not solely by his playfulness on the piano, but all the more by his creative decisions as leader. Davis has achieved critical acclaim for his pristine presentation of, and devotion to, the jazz tradition.

On The Bestseller (Minerva/Dav nor 233377), his sixth recording, he has pared it way down. Aside from two solo piano tracks, this is an entire album of piano/clarinet duets with Sasha Boychouk, a formidable Ukrainian musician who has recently relocated to Canada. Playing with remarkable virtuosity and a fine sense of humour, Boychouk is an ideal musical match for Davis. In addition to nine collaborative interludes, the original material is mostly penned by Davis, with several gems worth citing: Rhythmman plants a fresh twist on the Gershwin standard I Got Rhythm, Alleluia is a luminous, tense waltz and Street Somp is the Klezmener answer to Dancing in the Streets. For good measure, a few covers, including the Sesame Street Muppet Show anthem Manta Manha. Humorous, bold, engaging and energetic, “The Bestseller” is a sure-fire winner.

(www.rodavismusic.com)

Known for his fiery tone and flair for burning tempo, Juno award winner Kirk MacDonald is one of Canada’s pre-eminent jazz saxophonists. Since the release of his first album nearly twenty years ago, MacDonald has gradually gravitated towards the strength of his own original compositions.

Family Suite (Romhog Records 116), MacDonald’s sixth album as leader, is a personal affair. The poignant opening and closing theme, Dark Autumn, refers to the fall of 2002, an arduous time in which MacDonald lost his mother while still mourning the deaths of long-time collaborators Jerry Fuller and Joe Bednars. Each movement in the suite is meaningfully titled and dedicated. One of the liveliest, Four Shades of Light, features an electrifying tête-à-tête between the leader and Barry Romberg on drums, as well as Romberg trading fours with the exquisite Brian Dickinson on piano. Along with bassist Jim Vivian, the sensitive rhythm section is as good as it gets. Musically multifaceted as always, MacDonald delivers a highly rewarding, emotionally raw performance on this unques­tionably cathartic recording.

(www.kirkmacdonald.com)

A first-rate guitarist, composer and arranger, Michael Occhipinti is best-known for co-leading the spirited NOJO (Neufeld-Occhipinti Jazz Orchestra) and has also previously released four titles under his own name. His 2000 release, Creation Dream, offered jazz renditions of Bruce Cockburn’s music. Conceptually similar, Occhipinti’s ambitious fifth outing, The Sicilian Jazz Project (True North Records TND 516), pays tribute to his roots by reinventing traditional Sicilian folk repertoire. The selected material is tastefully steeped in jazz without sacrificing its authentic folk flavour. Occhipinti’s arrangements emphasize strings and percussion, along with Kevin Turcotte on trumpet, Louis Simao on accordion and Ernie Tollar on saxophone and flute. Five of the nine tracks feature heartfelt vocals by Dominic Mancuso and Maryem Tollar, both impeccable storytellers. Brother Roberto Occhipinti lays down the bass and wears the producer’s hat. Ultimately what comes through in this recording is a deep dedication to the material. Extensive liner notes effectively introduce the listener to each song’s meaning, origin and the leader’s intention. If one is of Sicilian lineage, this recording is essential; for everyone else, it is a recommendable labour of love.

(www.michaelocchipinti.com)

The elder brother of Michael and a cousin of guitarist David, Roberto Occhipinti has enjoyed a productive career primarily as bassist, secondarily as producer. Initially mentored by Joel Quarrington and Dave Young, he spent decades as an orchestral player and sideman before releasing his first album as leader at the turn of the century. Occhipinti’s fourth release, A Bend in the River (Alma Records ACD11182), showcases his refined skills as player, producer, arranger and composer. The core personnel consists of pianist David Virelles, drummer Dunsie Prie-
to, Occhipinti on bass and Luis Deniz on alto saxophone. Collectively the group outlines each composition’s shape, but the canvas is splashed with many other colours, including guest appearances by flautist Les Allt, bass clarinettist John Johnson, trumpeter Kevin Turcotte and a full string orchestra on three of the seven cuts. The title track is a memorable standout for its logically flowing melody, sweeping harmonic movement and a rhythmically inventive saxophone solo by Deniz. Occhipinti’s string arrangements, especially those featuring the Globalis String Orchestra, create a lush lyricism that lingers long after the disc plays out. (www.roberttococchipinti.com)

Extended play – VOCAL JAZZ
By Cathy Riches
A passel of new discs by Canadian singers – some relative newcomers, others more experienced – ended off 2008 in style. The first, and most notable, is by Yvette Tollar, an independent release entitled Ima (ROM 10). The Tollar name may be familiar to some, as brother Ernie is an established woodwind player in Toronto who lends his talents to this collection of Canadian songs. Most are written by local players like keyboardist Dave Restivo (the gorgeous Prayer for Human Kindness appears twice on the disc, once with just piano accompaniment and the other with nimble tabla playing by Ravi Naimpally), guitar guru Kevin Breit and Tollar herself, but Joni Mitchell’s Edith and the Kingpin is also here and given a funky but reverential treatment by Tollar. Tollar sings with a jazz sensibility underpinned with a gospel/soul sound that makes for a rich, appealing combination.

Daniela Nardi first graced the Toronto music scene with her personal songwriting style and smooth, earthy voice in 2003, but took a hiatus to nurse her mother through cancer. So it’s no surprise that her second CD Rose Tattoo (MINOD3) is rich with self-examination and introspective lyrics. Produced by Greg Kavanagh, the disc is polished and richly arranged – lots of percussion, backing vocals, horns and subtle electronics – but never loses its earnest intensity. Rich Brown and George Koller share bass duties, Davide Direnzo drums and Nardi does the keyboard work. Ranging from the urban funkiness of 483 to the Calabrian folk singing that precedes the touching bulla Rostera, to the Middle Eastern bluesiness of Longest Road, the record covers diverse musical and emotional ground. (www.danielanardi.com)

Two discs with similar offerings – standards played with traditional jazz treatments and instrumentation (no djelem or oud here) and straightforward vocal interpretations – round out the latest batch of releases. First is Molly Johnson’s Lucky (Universal 0251786014). Johnson is a popular singer in Toronto not only for her performances but also her fundraising work and, lately, radio hosting on CBC 2. Her mature, chesty voice imbues the songs on “Lucky” with a world-weariness that makes Lush Life and I Loves You Porgy utterly believable. While swingy, up-tempo treatments – courtesy of backing trio Phil Dwyer, piano and sax, Mike Downes, bass, and Mark McLean/Ben Riley, drums – take the normally sombre Mean to Me and Ode to Billy Joe (which could be renamed Ode to Killer Joe for the debt the arrangement owes to that song) to new, light-hearted places. (www.mollyjohnson.com)

Beta’s sumptuous, complex voicings, sung by Berger and Ross Lynde, add a dash of verve to fellow Cadence members Kevin Fox, Carl Berger and Ross Lynde, add a dash of verve to otherwise straight forward record. (www.almarecords.com)

Extended play – AIMToronto
By Ken Waxman
 Barely four years since its founding, The Association of Improvising Musicians Toronto (AIMToronto), has raised the profile of local improvisers, while nurturing the scene. This almost 200-member, non-profit collective helps fund venues in which to hear improvised music most prominently Somewhere There in Parkdale – presents concerts featuring visiting musicians interacting with locals, and has organized a large improvisers orchestra. One of AIMToronto’s highest profile gigs took place at the Guelph Jazz Festival in 2007, where 18 AIMToronto members played the music of the American improv guru Anthony Braxton with the composer on soprano saxophone. The result was Creative Orchestra (Guelph) (Spool Line SPL 130). It showcases the AIMToronto members following the ever-shifting toral centres in five Braxton compositions. Throughout these sequences and intervals it’s evident that overtones and undertones are as audible as the melodies, so the aural coloration takes on a 3-D-like effect.

Germine to these tracks are the bravura contributions of vocalist Christine Duncan, who personifies the program not only with guthural or bel canto warbling plus inflated or truncated syllables, but also with parto declarations. Another connecting thread is percussive – with strokes, vibrations and rattle-like noises of varied pitches and pressures from Nick Fraser’s and Joe Sorbara’s drums and Brandon Valdavian’s clattering xylophone. Most characteristic of the pieces is Composition 307, a variation of sprechstimme, with Duncan’s falsetto dramatics sharing space with antiphonal vamps from the horns and gong-ringing and rim shots from the percussion. As the resonance arrangement itself is architrecturally, slender, syllables and syllables deep from the layering, with particularly noteworthy contributions from tenor saxophonist Colin Fisher, grows from Ronda Rindone’s clarinet and Scott Thompson’s shaggy trombone triplets. (www.spoolmusic.com)

The Orchestra’s artistic director, saxophonist Kyle Breenders, studied with Anthony Braxton at Wesleyan University and his recording Flows and Intensities suggests one of Braxton’s solo outings. Each of the eight compositions – all but two by Breenders – is oriented around a specific theme or motif played on soprano or tenor saxophone. Works with extended reed techniques and circular breathing, the results are alternately
pretty or gritty. Not conventionally "pretty," however, since the modulus operandi involves chunky air blown through the horns' body tubes, echoing ghost notes, adagio pitch-sliding plus extended meditative and undulating textures where audible air intake alternates with flatter tonguing. Repetition of selected clusters or tones are part of the strategy as are times where Benders seems to be playing two parallel reed lines – one consisting of puffing notes, the other ornamenting them with ghost tones. (www.aimtoronto.org)

Another alumna of the orchestra's Guelph foray is guitarist Ken Aldcroft, whose solo guitar lexicon on VoCaBuLaLy (Trio Records TRP-SS01-008) is as varied as Benders' is for saxophone. Using diverse tunings, the guitarist's distinctive florid tone makes full use of open strings and reverber. Some tracks become exercises in controlled feedback, others are built around metallic micro tones and snapping flat picking. Sometimes his spiky runs reference Monkish licks; other times, loops, claw-hammer banjo tones or serrated rock-music extensions are present. Like Benders he creates a call-and-response pattern as if a guitar duo is present. However his repeated phrases often fade into silences or transform themselves into patterns that form a combination of slack-key and microtonal stylings. These spidery, interlaced textures reverberating back onto one another are most accessible on Sling Road Blues, which match a non-showy blues progression that emphasizes the bass, with hesitant string-clumping, finally downshifting into ringing, but not reverberating timbres. (www.kenaldcroft.com)

Bringing this game plan to group improv, Trolleys (Trio Records TRP-009) finds Aldcroft's Convergence Ensemble meandering between group and solo work. Trombonist Thompson, alto saxophonist Evan Shaw, drummer Joe Sorbara and bassist Wes Neal join Aldcroft here for an outing where pauses are as much a part of the sound as polyphony, though there are points at which disconnection is evident between soloists and band. Individually each player impresses, especially Sorbara with drum stick nerve beats, thick riffs and distinct hi-hat bops; Shaw, who undulates accentuated lines with a wide vibrato and snorting obbligatos; plus Thompson's tongue-blurring plunger work and staccato grace notes. At points the trombonist's blustery braying corrals the others into a bluesy stop-time amble which moves forward for a period until all the players disperse on individual paths. A rubato near-ballad, Apples showcases the most co-operation, involving multilayered counterpoint from each player. Shaw's irregularly shaped reed osculation makes common cause with Aldcroft's rhythmically sophisticated echoing fills, while walking bass propels the interaction of bubbling trombone runs and ringing guitar licks. Before the climax, Sorbara goesos the tempo as the piece speedily double then triples in time, adding discursive riffs from Thompson and Shaw.

Impressive as part of an orchestra, AIMToronto members are just as estimable individually.

**POT POURRI – Extended Play**

**WORLDS OF MUSIC IN TORONTO**

by Karen Ages

The Toronto area boasts some of the finest talent representing non-Western and traditional music, and four recently released CDs attest to the rich diversity of the city's cultural fabric. The Georgian vocal ensemble Darbazi has been around since 1995, performing music from the Caucasus region that bridges Europe and Asia. While director Shalva Makharashvili hails from that region, the other nine or so members are primarily local, but you wouldn't know it, listening to this CD entitled Vakhtanguri. This is folk music and vocal polyphony at its finest, it's easy to hear why Darbazi has been so well received during visits to Georgia. The ensemble and soloists deliver each number with that wonderful open-throated vocal style characteristic of Georgian music, good diction, and outstanding harmonic intonation. The title song, described as a table song, is one of the most intricate, and features yodelling from member David Anderson (of Clay and Paper Theatre fame). The dance song Kakheri Satevkao features Makharashvili as melismatic vocal soloist. Some of the numbers are accompanied by traditional instruments; both plucked and bowed, expertly played by ensemble members. All songs are traditional, and include "tasting" songs, dance, love, and work songs, liturgical and epic poem settings, and songs about life in general. The CD is dedicated to the memory of ensemble member John Martin, who passed away in 2007. (www.darbazi.com)

Having celebrated its tenth anniversary, Nagata Shachu (formerly the Kiyoshi Nagata Ensemble) recently released its sixth CD, Tsuzure (Tapestry). Toronto's best known Japanese Taiko ensemble delivered polished performances of eleven works, composed by founder and director Kiyoshi Nagata and ensemble member Aki Takahashi. These compositions are part of the strategy as are times where Nagata, a former Kodo Drummers protegé, refers to as "looking within the box." What distinguishes this ensemble is its use of instruments in addition to Taiko drums. The title piece of this CD is a good example of this, employing the zither-like koto, shimbue (transverse flute) and ankle bells alongside the drums, weaving a delicate texture of sound. Other instruments used include shakuhachi (end blown flute), and shamisen (lute), with various others added for the final piece, Managato, literally "child's play." Koe Narashi is purely vocal. Percussion lovers won't be disappointed though; this is primarily a drumming ensemble, featuring Taiko drums of all shapes and sizes generously donated by their drum-manufacturing sponsors in Japan. Expertly engineered, this CD is dedicated to the memory of Nagata's teacher Oguchi Darhachi (1924-2008). (www.nagatashachu.com)

Husband and wife team Maryem and Ernie Tollar need no introduction here; Maryem is probably this country's best known Arabic vocalist, while Ernie is a multi-instrumental wind player and composer. Cairo to Toronto (ROM 09) is their third CD together, and is to a certain extent an autobiographical account of Maryem's own journey, exploring themes from alienation and longing to freedom and hope for a better future. The title also refers to the two guest artists on this recording, Dr. Alfred Gamil (violin) and Mohamed Aly (violin and oud), who came here from Egypt to work and perform with Maryem and her ensemble this past year. This is a stunning recording all around - a melding of traditional Arabic-rootsed melodic style with jazz and pop nuances. The vocal selections are sung and primarily composed by Maryem, with some of the lyrics by her uncle Elah Lotayef. Some of my favourite tracks however are among the five purely instrumental numbers, three of which are composed by Ernie Tollar, the other two by Alfred Gamil. These sound the most authentically traditional Arabic, though are not quite. The track Duetto Nativity, a violin duet featuring Gamil and Aly closes the CD. The other musicians are familiar to Toronto audiences: Levon Ichkhanian (guitar), Andrew Stewart and Rich Brown (bass), Deb Sinha (various percussion), Alan Hetherington and Daniel Barnes (drums). (www.cdbaby.com/cd/maryemernietollar)

When we think of sitar and tabla, the vast tradition of Indian classical music comes to mind. But United Voices departs from this path. Described as "An Indo-Canadian venture of world Christian hymns", produced by Hamilton-based sitarist Neeraj Prem, this is gospel with an Indian twist. While the overall sound is decidedly Indian, the texts and musical settings are indicative of another East meets West endeavour. The recording opens with a lively rendition of The Lord's Prayer (composed by Manick Deep Mash), and includes settings of other Christian hymns arranged Prem. Two songs (My Heart and My Offering) written by Prem, were inspired by ancient Hindi hymns. The "band" includes sarangi (bowed lute), shehnai (Indian oboe), keyboards, saxophone, guitar, percussion, and several fine vocalists. The closing number, Amazing Grace, is a seventeen minute meditation (Prem and Margaret Bardós vocals), retaining the melody that we're all familiar with but employing Indian vocal/melodic techniques.
and instrumental accompaniment that reminds me of the arrhythmic “alap” section of some Indian classical pieces. This CD is dedicated to the memory of Prem’s parents. (www.raganamusicschool.com)

OLD WINE IN NEW BOTTLES
Fine old recordings re-released
by Bruce Surtees

The Hidden Heart is a DVD of a 2001 TV documentary by Jake Martin concerning Benjamin Britten, his compositions and his relationship with Peter Pears (EMI 50999 21657191). Following the immediate success of Peter Grimes in 1945, Britten was acclaimed and music lovers around the world waited for his next opera. Then came The Rape of Lucretia in 1946, Albert Herring in 1947 and The Beggar’s Opera in 1948. The relationship between the composer and his tenor was no secret but it was against the law in Britain in those days. “The Hidden Heart” leads us through their lives to Death in Venice. Some of their private correspondence is read and it is their last words which close this exceptionally well fashioned appreciation of their special relationship. Film clips of Britten, the operas, rehearsals, and many new and archival videos around The War Requiem are featured in this memorable presentation. Get It.

A recent Britten-Pears DVD from the BBC archives (DECCA 07433257) contains a formal Winterreise produced by John Culshaw in 1970 with Britten accompanying off-stage and also three of the songs filmed in rehearsals at home. Many of Britten’s arrangements of folk songs are heard in a recital before a select audience in 1946. For me, these little songs were worth the price of the disc... The Foggy Foggy Dew; The Ploughboy; O Waly, Waly; Oliver Cromwell; and many others. Oh, by the way... Decca has assembled their Britten recordings into several packages: Operas, volume 1 on 4CDs (4756020): Operas, volume 2 on 10CDs (4756029): Choral works on 10CDs (4656040); and a mainly instrumental collection of 7CDs (4756051). Check out the contents with your dealer or on the Decca site at http://www.deccaclassics.com.

Last year’s MET production of Peter Grimes, as seen live in high definition on movie screens around the world, is available on an EMI DVD exactly as seen live, plus interviews and behind the scenes activities (EMI 509921 741494.2 DVDs). Donald Runnicles conducts with Anthony Dean Griffey perfectly cast as the unfortunate Grimes. Watching at home is quite an experience, arguably better than sitting in the opera house, especially with the (optional) English subtitles to clarify the text.

Among the foremost violin exponents of the 20th Century, Christian Ferras (France 1933-1982) holds a special place. He had a rather short career but while his playing was well in the league of the superstars of the era, Heifetz, Oistrakh and Francescatti, he suffered from severe depression which eventually led him to end his life. His achievements from an early age were so sensational that EMI placed him in their top line-up along with Menuhin and Oistrakh. His success was such that the powerhouse DGG picked him to assume the top position on their roster. In short time he recorded the four most popular concertos of the repertoire, Tchaikovsky, Brahms, Beethoven and Sibelius with Karajan and his Berlin Philharmonic. These marvellous recordings remained in the active catalogue for over forty years. DOREMI’s 2nd set of four live concerto performances from Paris confirms his place in the violinists’ pantheon (DHR-7880/1). The Mendelssohn E minor (1965) is beautifully communicative; Tchaikovsky (1968) impassioned; Mozart K.219 (1955) pure and stylistic while Jean Martinon’s intriguing, post-Berg 2nd concerto (1968) is brilliant. Derived from recently discovered pristine radio archives, this is an attractive collection.

The illustrious Zino Francescatti (France 1902-1981) had a totally different kind of career and personal life. For more than half a century he was a frequent and favourite guest of almost every important orchestra in the world. We know him from his many Columbia recordings with the New York, Philadelphia and Cleveland orchestras but none with Boston, with whom he often performed. DOREMI has corrected this in Volume 3 of their Francescatti discs (DHR-7888) with Charles Munch conducting the Tchaikovsky (1958, stereo) and Brahms Double (1956) with first chair cellist Samuel Mayes. Hear Francescatti in his prime and his distinctive sonority and characteristic artistry. I have reservations about the sound but the three bonus tracks from The Bell Telephone Hour of 1952 are very good.

Silvia Marcovici (Romania b.1952) had a sparkling career during the last three decades of the century. Lesser known than the above, judging from these live performances she well deserved prime billing on a major label but was only heard on a number of lesser ones, except for the Sibelius on BIS and the Glazunov with Stokowskis on Decca. Marcovici’s complete mastery of the instrument is amply conveyed playing seven concertos in the new DOREMI set (DHR-7942-4) containing 2 CDs and a DVD. Her characteristic sensitivity and warmth illuminate the Tchaikovsky, Brahms, Beethoven, and Saint-Saëns No. 3 on the CD. On the DVD she plays Lalo, the Bruch no.1 and the Bartok 2nd to perfection, made all the more enjoyable by her striking, charismatic stage presence.
pretty or gritty. Not conventionally "pretty" however, since the modus operandi involves chunky air blown through the horns' body tubes, echoing ghost notes, adagio pitch-shifting plus extended meditative and undulating textures where audible air intake alternates with flutter tonguing. Repetition of selected clusters or tones are part of the strategy as are times where Brenders seems to be playing two parallel reed lines - one consisting of puffing notes, the other ornamenting them with ghost tones. (www.aimitoronto.org)

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Fine old recordings re-released by Bruce Surtees

The Hidden Heart is a DVD of a 2001 TV documentary by Jake Martin concerning Benjamin Britten, his compositions and his relationship with Peter Pears (EMI 50999 21657191). Following the immediate success of Peter Grimes in 1945, Britten was acclaimed and music lovers around the world waited for his next opera. Then came The Rape of Lucretia in 1946, Albert Herring in 1947 and The Beggar's Opera in 1948. The relationship between the composer and his tenor was no secret but it was against the law in Britain in those days. "The Hidden Heart" leads us through their lives to the last opera, Death in Venice. Some of their private correspondence is read and it is their last words which close this exceptionally well fashioned appreciation of their special relationship. Film clips of Britten, the operas, rehearsals, and many new and archival videos around The War Requiem are featured in this memorable presentation. Get It.

A recent Britten-Pears DVD from the BBC archives (DECCA 0743257) contains a formal Winterreise produced by John Culshaw in 1970 with Britten accompanying off-stage and also three of the songs filmed in rehearsals at home. Many of Britten's arrangements of folks songs are heard in a recital before a select audience in 1946. For me, these little songs were worth the price of the disc... The Foggy Foggy Dew; The Ploughboy; O Waly, Waly; Oliver Cromwell; and many others. Oh, by the way... Deca has assembled their Britten recordings into several packages: Operas, volume 1 on 8CDs (4756020); Operas, volume 2 on 10CDs (4756029); Choral works on 10CDs (4656040); and a mainly instrumental collection of 7CDs (4736051). Check out the contents with your dealer or on the Decca site at http://www.deccaclassics.com.

Last year's MET production of Peter Grimes, as seen live in high definition on movie screens around the world, is available on an EMI DVD exactly as seen live, plus interviews and behind the scenes activities (EMI 5099921 741495, 2 DVDs). Donald Runnicles conducts with Anthony Dean Griffey perfectly cast as the unfortunate Grimes. Watching at home is quite an experience, arguably better than sitting in the opera house, especially with the (optional) English subtitles to clarify the text.

Among the foremost violin exponents of the 20th Century, Christian Ferras (France 1933-1982) holds a special place. He had a rather short career but while his playing was well in the league of the superstars of the era, Heifetz, Oistrakh and Francescatti, he suffered from severe depression which eventually led him to end his life. His achievements from an early age were so sensational that EMI placed him in their top line-up along with Menuhin and Oistrakh. His success was such that the powerhouse DGG picked him to assume the top position on their roster. In short time he recorded the four most popular concertos of the repertoire, Tchaikovsky, Brahms, Beethoven and Sibelius with Karajan and his Berlin Philharmonic. These marvellous recordings remained in the active catalogue for over forty years. DOREMi's 2cd set of four live concerto performances from Paris confirms his place in the violinists' pantheon (DHR-7880/1). The Mendelssohn E minor (1965) is beautifully communicative; Tchaikovsky (1968) impassioned; Mozart K.219 (1955) pure and stylistic while Jean Martinon's intriguing, post-Berg 2nd concerto (1968) is brilliant. Derived from recently discovered pristine radio archives, this is an attractive collection.

The illustrious Zino Francescatti (France 1902-1981) had a totally different kind of career and personal life. For more than half a century he was a frequent and favourite guest of almost every important orchestra in the world. We know him from his many Columbia recordings with the New York, Philadelphia and Cleveland orchestras but none with Boston, with whom he often performed. DOREMi has corrected this in Volume 3 of their Francescatti discs (DHR-7888) with Charles Munch conducting the Tchaikovsky (1958, stereo) and Brahms Double (1956) with first chair cellist Samuel Mayes. Hear Francescatti in his prime and his distinctive sonority and characteristic artistry. I have reservations about the sound but the three bonus tracks from The Bell Telephone Hour of 1952 are very good.

Silvia Marcovici (Romania b.1952) had a sparkling career during the last three decades of the century. Lesser known than the above, judging from these live performances she well deserved prime billing on a major label but was only heard on a number of lesser ones, except for the Sibelius on BIS and the Glazunov with Skowinski on Decca. Marcovici's complete mastery of the instrument is amply conveyed by her striking, charismatic stage presence.
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