Wu Man
On The Silk Road
THE HUMAN PASSIONS

VIOLINIST AND GUEST DIRECTOR
RODOLFO RICHTER
MEZZO-SOPRANO SOLOIST
MIREILLE LEBEL

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For me, this is the moment I never tire of in this process: sitting with the issue almost complete, gobsmacked as always by the sheer diversity of musical life teeming under the lens of the month’s microscope.

September’s writers often spend a fair bit of time looking back at the summer past, as much as looking ahead at the month to come. In part, as I have noted in other Septembers, this is because the Toronto International Film Festival strides like a colossus across the middle of the month, so there are fewer live concerts in September than any other in the year. No major musical presenter in town hoping for undivided media attention goes head to head with TIFF. (For devotees of this magazine hungering for their customary musical fix, all is not lost, though. Once again managing editor Paul Ennis, in TIFF Tips, has seized the opportunity to combine his twin passions for film and music and has combed the TIFF catalogue for films with one or another musical slant. As always it’s a rich and eclectic mix and worth a look.

There are those rare and serendipitous coincidences (too neat to be planned) where a film of significance comes to TIFF right at the same time as a concert by the subject of the film in question. It sort of happened three September ago when the Brennan String Quartet came to town, for a concert at Music Toronto, at the same time as the film A Late Quartet for which they had done the actual playing. This year’s example is way more interesting—the Silk Road Ensemble is coming to Massey Hall two days after the world premiere of The Music of Strangers: Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble at TIFF. If the movie delves into the social aspects of the Silkroad Project touched on in Andrew Timar’s cover story, taking in both events will be a real treat for lovers of music and film alike.

That being said, the propensity of our September writers to look back at the summer because of slim concert pickings is even more pronounced than usual this year because it has been, to say the least, an unusual summer. “The Summer to End All Summers” we called it on our June cover—a bit too apocalyptic, it should be said. John Dodington, one WholeNoter muttered, darkly. “Let’s hope not!”

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The reference—a bit too oblique in retrospect—was to the eagerly anticipated Luminato mounting of R. Murray Schafer’s magnum opus, Apocalypsis, at the Sony Centre.

Readers will notice that Apocalypsis features in the summer musings of more than one WholeNote writer; In with the New columnist, Wende Bartley, joined up with the Element Choir to experience...
the event from the inside out; Brian Chang, who steps into Ben Stein’s choral shoes this issue, was in the
corner with the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir in which he sings (tenor, I suspect from his first column); and
David Jaeger refers to the work’s genesis in his musings on the golden years of CBC Radio (The Future
of Canadian Music, Back Then, page 57), this time on the topic of commissioning.

Speaking of Jaeger’s piece I got a bit of a chuckle (that’s 20th century talk for LOL) in his description of
another commission mentioned in the piece – a song cycle titled Private Collection by John Weinzeug.

“[It was] written for the young, emerging soprano, Mary Lou Fallis. I remember John telling me, that she
was ‘pretty hot stuff’ as a performer, besides being an excellent singer.”

As for Mary Lou Fallis, she is a welcome guest in this issue, writing in Just the Spot (page 54) about her
long association with Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre; where she, along with yours truly, will, on September 25,
host what promises to be a splendid concert/celebration of this magazine’s 20 years of existence. For
details (and to arrange your free ticket to the event) see the magazine’s back cover!

But back to the topic of Luminato and Apocalypsis, one last time. Beyond the writers already
mentioned in this opener, I counted at least ten other WholeNote staff and contributors, myself included,
who went to see and hear Apocalypsis. And for every two who saw it, there were at least three different
opinions as to its artistic merit and significance: it was an overblown insult to the perfection of Schafer’s
vision; it was a tribute to director Lemi Ponifasio’s genius that he could massage Schafer’s bombast into
something genuinely theatrical; it was an artistic triumph; it was an artistic failure; it was more than the
sum of its parts; it never really came together….

As for me, to borrow a phrase from Bob Ben’s column Mainly Clubs, Mostly Jazz, page 45, “when petty
concerns of quality and integrity eclipse art’s purpose (whatever it is), that, to me, is tragic.” Granted, Bob
is talking about jazz jams, but there’s an idea worth delving into here. Apocalypsis for me had a purpose
that was as much social as artistic. It brought together, under one tent, a thousand performers and twice
as many witnesses, to experience something that as a totality existed only in the moment of enactment.
Each of the performers, musicians, singers and soloists alike played their part. None had a chance to see
the whole picture, only to be part of a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Whoever is charged with taking Luminato into the future should reflect on this: as a festival, as a
fixture, its future depends on being more like this one show – a giant tent under which our city’s artists
are invited to play. Bringing in the headliners, the stadium shows, the big names is part of that mix, for
sure. But the real spectacle is the musical and artistic city we already are and can continue to be if top-
down “bring in experts to fix it” cultural policies are set aside in favour of humane social policies that
enable our artists, along with the other working poor, to afford to live and play here.

We’ll be watching, and keeping score.

publisher@thewholenote.com
Silk Road Stories: Spinning a Musical Web

ANDREW TIMAR

The historic trade routes collectively referred to as the Silk Road, an interconnected web of maritime and overland pathways, have, for centuries, served as sites for cultural, economic, educational, religious – and purely musical – exchanges. In that light, “silk roads” can be seen as a significant factor in the development of the ever-evolving hybridities that have shaped the face of the modern musical world.

In 1998 the Grammy Award-winning cellist Yo-Yo Ma proposed “Silk Road” as the name of his new non-profit organisation. That project, inspired by his global curiosity and eagerness to forge connections across cultures, disciplines and generations, has grown several branches, the first of which was the successful music performing group, Silk Road Ensemble (SRE). It has played to sold-out houses at Roy Thomson Hall in 2003 and 2009 and will return to perform at Massey Hall on September 15. (Serendipitously, Toronto audiences will have another opportunity to see the SRE up close this September. Morgan Neville’s feature-length documentary The Music of Strangers: Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble graces TIFF’s red carpet, enjoying its world premiere.)

Wu Man’s view from the pipa. Chinese-born Grammy Award nominee Wu Man, widely hailed as the world’s premier pipa (Chinese lute) virtuoso, has a unique perspective on the SRE’s career. An educator, composer and ambassador of Chinese music, she has a prolific discography of 40 albums and counting. She was among the first musicians to get the call from Yo-Yo Ma to help in founding SRE.

We spoke by phone on August 14. “It was actually in 1998, even before we officially announced the ensemble in 2000 at Tanglewood [the Boston Symphony Orchestra’s summer festival home]. Of course many other musicians have joined us since then.”

Asked about her early encounters with Western classical music and musicians, Wu recounted her first live exposure as a young student. “In 1979 I saw Seiji Ozawa conduct the Boston Symphony Orchestra performing in Beijing. At the time I was still a pipa student at the Central Conservatory of Music” (where she became the first recipient of a master’s degree in pipa). The Boston Symphony, she explains, was “conducted by a charismatic Asian conductor, so the hall was packed with curious people from across the county. It wasn’t easy to get a ticket.

The music played that night proved to be a revelation to me and my classmates.”

Her next Western musical encounter came a year later. “I participated in an inspiring Beijing masterclass with violinist Isaac Stern.” (The 1980 Academy Award winning documentary film From Mao to Mozart: Isaac Stern in China provides insight into the great maestro’s groundbreaking tour.)

These two musical experiences proved to be pivotal influences in Wu’s subsequent professional music career in the West, launched when she moved to the U.S. in 1990. They also undoubtedly played a role in her eagerness to be among the SRE founders.

How does she respond to concerns some have around cultural appropriation? “I’d have to say that there’s nothing ‘pure’ in a given culture – or in a national state for that matter – as illustrated for instance by the box we may label ‘China.’ When we can equitably share cultures however, it puts us in a much bigger [and more inclusive] box called ‘the world.’”

Wu’s 2012 Borderlands CD/DVD, co-produced by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture and the Smithsonian Institution Center for Folklife and Culture Heritage, traces the history of the pipa in China. Its narrative also speaks to the primary mission of the SRE. “My instrument’s roots extend to Persia 1,000 years ago, but its origins had largely been forgotten in China,” she noted. It was only through the SRE, working with Central and South Asian musicians, that “I became aware of the commonalities between many plucked string instruments and their performance methods. Only then was I able to appreciate our common roots. I feel that only if you know your roots can you then imagine how to create something new.”

Above all, Wu Man takes very seriously her responsibility “to represent the pipa to the audience, most of whom have never seen or heard it live.” The pipa, she says, is the musical vehicle which she uses to “bridge many cultures. This is my mission. In recent years I’ve gone back quite often to give masterclasses at Chinese music schools.” Her rediscovery, embrace and showcasing of the musical traditions of her birthplace, projects she has titled her “Return to the East,” are often expressed in stage appearances with the SRE. They can also be seen as completing the circle Ozawa and Stern’s example modelled for the young pipa student in Beijing nearly two generations ago.

Behind the Cello. “Behind the Cello,” published January 21, 2014, is a wide-ranging and penetrating Huffington Post article I found, adapted from a conversation Ma had with WorldPost. In it Ma talks about having founded the Silk Road Project “to study the flow of ideas among the many cultures between the Mediterranean and the Pacific over several thousand years.”

The silk road as a useful and enduring metaphor for exploration of intersecting and cross-pollinating musical routes has served other musicians and ensembles well over time, but it is particularly well suited to Ma’s capacious intellectual curiosity, encrusted as it is with historic and personal echoes. As he and his travelling companions in the SRE continue to experiment with these ideas, on stage and in the larger social project these performances are encased in, the metaphor takes on greater and greater resonance. Positive audience response to the SRE’s always musically engaging concert performances have given the groups a special niche on world stages. Beyond that, in my view, the group is also operating at the leading edge of the evolution of a greater pan-cultural musical consciousness in the 21st century. Let’s explore some of these grand assertions.

While making music is SRE’s essential mission, Ma’s vision for the group as stated in his “Behind the Cello” interview is no less than to bring “the world together on one stage.” Calling SRE’s musicians a “peer group of virtuosos, masters of living traditions,” he has enlisted Euro-Asian, Arabic, Azeri, Armenian, Persian, Russian, Central Asian, Indian, Mongolian, Chinese, Korean and Japanese participants into its ranks. The group modus operandi entails generous sharing of received knowledge, curiosity about other forms of expressions and a reciprocal keenness to learn from each other. That much is evident to audiences attending live SRE concerts or one of its workshops, and even to those casually flipping through YouTube videos.

Ma argues that invention and evolution hand-in-hand hold the keys to cultural engagement and growth. “...we have found that every tradition is the result of successful invention. One of the best ways to ensure the survival of traditions is by organic evolution, using all the tools available to us in the present day, from YouTube to the concert hall.”
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Not everyone has been eager to jump on the “we are the world” bandwagon, however. For decades numerous critical voices have raised concerns about globalization’s dire effects: on one hand that it further marginalizes rural and minority forms of expression, sometimes pushing them to the point of extinction, and on the other hand privileging commercially dominant mass-mediated ones. Ma’s optimistic view firmly stresses globalization’s positive rewards however, summarized by his statement, “globalization creates culture.”

His SRE musical journeys have only reinforced this conviction. Interactions brought about by globalization “don’t just destroy culture; they can create new culture and invigorate and spread traditions that have existed for ages precisely because of the ‘edge effect,’” notes Ma in “Behind the Cello.” “Sometimes the most interesting things happen at the edge. The intersections there can reveal unexpected connections. Culture is a fabric composed of gifts from every corner of the world.”

“As a leading cello soloist, it’s almost predictable that Ma would cite the story of one of the movements in J.S. Bach’s Cello Suites, at the core of cello repertoire, to support his main thesis. He tells us it’s one of his favourite stories. “At the heart of each suite is a dance movement called the sarabande. The dance and its music originated among the North African Berbers, where it was a slow, sensual dance. It next appeared in Spain where it was banned because it was considered lewd and lascivious. Spaniards brought it to the Americas, but it also traveled on to France, where it became a courtly dance. In the 1720s, Bach incorporated the sarabande as a movement in his Cello Suites. Today, I play Bach [as] a Paris-born American musician of Chinese parentage. So who really owns the sarabande? Each culture has adopted the music, investing it with specific meaning, but each culture must share ownership: it belongs to us all.” (“Behind the Cello” 2014)

Ma’s tracing of the sarabande’s musical (but also choreographic) journey, a string of exchanges and evolutions, bring to light at least six geo-cultural regional affiliations: North African, Spanish, American, French, German and Chinese. Ma’s statement, moreover, forcefully promotes inclusiveness and multiple authenticities while challenging normative monocultural ownership models and also by implication, notions of simple cultural authenticity and “purity.” In his statement Ma proposes an equitable extension of ownership of cultural practices across several regions, rather than to sole actors, further suggesting its ultimate and most appropriate resting place is universal (“ownership...belongs to us all”).

Ma also points out in “Behind the Cello” the importance of cultural “necessary edges,” liminal boundaries where intersections and exchanges often first take place, using another metaphor borrowed from another discipline. “The ‘edge effect’ in ecology occurs at the border where two ecosystems – for example the savannah and forest – meet. At that interface, where there is the least density and the greatest diversity of life forms, each living thing can draw from the core of the two ecosystems. That is where new life forms emerge.” Human society also requires such necessary edge sites, he argues. “The hard sciences are probing one far end of the bandwidth, searching for the origins of the universe or the secrets of the genome. People in the arts are probing the other far end of the bandwidth.” He concludes that only when “science and the arts, critical and empathetic reasoning, are linked to the mainstream will we find a sustainable balance in society.”

Is this the sort of liminal juncture, the “necessary edge” where the SRE also does its most creative, its most culturally valuable work? Having a Toronto street named after him – Yo-Yo Ma Lane runs across from the Music Garden he helped design – certainly gives a living musician street cred in this too often cold burg. And there is evidence that the SRE’s secular universalist musical philosophy may have a particular resonance with Toronto audiences’ musical values and expectations. Chris Lorway, director of programming and marketing for Massey Hall/Roy Thomson agrees. In an August 18 e-mail he wrote that SRE’s guiding
principles and mandate to promote “collaboration and cultural exchange, performing music that links to the past, yet reflects our 21st-century global society, align seamlessly with our evolving music city.” It’s a view that meshes well with Toronto’s public and political persona as “one of the most diverse cities in the world.”

Bassist Jeffrey Beecher: inside the SRE. Jeffrey Beecher is principal bassist with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and serves on the faculties of the Glenn Gould School of the Royal Conservatory of Music and the University of Toronto. He also makes time to tour the world with the SRE and to perform with international orchestras. On August 13 the affable Beecher took a break from an orchestral gig in upper New York State to speak to me on Skype. I was curious about how and when he was invited to play with the SRE.

“It was my sixth-degree-of-separation connection to some of the string players in the group that got me an invitation in 2004 to play with the SRE and then to tour with them.” It proved a satisfyingly collegial experience. “It certainly wasn’t an ordinary orchestral audition,” he mused “and I’ve been playing with them ever since!”

I explored with Beecher the constellation of ideas which gave birth to the SRE, primarily couched in this article so far in the words of its founder Yo-Yo Ma. Ma’s celebrity draw is such that even today, 15 years to the SRE, primarily couched in this article so far in the words of its founder Yo-Yo Ma. Ma’s celebrity draw is such that even today, 15 years to the SRE, primarily couched in this article so far in the words of its founder Yo-Yo Ma. Ma’s celebrity draw is such that even today, 15 years to the SRE, primarily couched in this article so far in the words of its founder Yo-Yo Ma. Ma’s celebrity draw is such that even today, 15 years to the SRE, primarily couched in this article so far in the words of its founder Yo-Yo Ma. Ma’s celebrity draw is such that even today, 15 years to the SRE, primarily couched in this article so far in the words of its founder Yo-Yo Ma. 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One of Yo-Yo Ma’s gifts is keeping many people and ideas in his mind at the same time,” he replied. “His attention, and the group’s, is not centrally located in one particular ethnic community, but rather it’s always mobile. I like to think of our model of music making as a caravanserai resting for one night and then moving on.” There’s that silk road metaphor again.

As for the educational component of SRE’s work, the parent Silkroad organization has been affiliated with Harvard University since 2005, encouraging “dialogue among artists and musicians, educators and entrepreneurs, through mentorships and workshops,” as its website declares. This chimes with Ma’s objective of attaining a sustainable educational balance where science and the arts, critical and empathetic reasoning – qualities too often unbalanced in mainstream society – are linked in symbiotic harmony.

SRE continues that mission during its September 2015 Toronto residency – not that it hasn’t held workshops in the city before. Beecher reports that “last year we led a series of rewarding workshops with Regent Park School of Music students during the inauguration of the Aga Khan Museum.” Over the years the Aga Khan Trust for Culture has been an enthusiastic SRE supporter. For example, not only is it a partnering presenter of the SRE’s September 15 Massey Hall concert, but it is also hosting a music workshop at the Museum, inviting students from Massey Hall and Roy Thomson Hall’s Share the Music program. These lucky learners will participate in a special educational program at the Aga Khan Museum with the Ensemble the week of the performance.

Yo Yo Ma’s Silk Road Ensemble has grown well beyond the model of a gigging musical ensemble, the breadth and scope of its vision eloquently articulated by its high profile cellist leader and gifted musicians. Already enjoying success today, the SRE is well positioned to continue to influence the course of future musical streams, an ambition only a very select few other musical groups have considered putting on their bucket lists.

Andrew Timar is a Toronto musician and music writer. He can be contacted at worldmusic@thewholenote.com.

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Launching September 26, the Aga Khan Museum’s 2015–16 Season gives Toronto audiences the extraordinary opportunity to enjoy live arts and film from Spain, Afghanistan, Iran, Azerbaijan, Syria, and Canada.

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Welcome to The WholeNote’s fourth annual guide to the 2015 Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF), shining a light on films in which music plays an intriguing role. This year’s selection includes a film version of one of the most compelling musicals of the new century, several titles documenting musicians and their work – from two biopics and movies whose characters revolve around music – to those featuring soundtracks integral to their films’ artistic success. With 289 feature films from 71 countries, the following 27 choices are not the product of an exact science, only a loose guide for music-loving readers with a cinematic appetite.

Rufus Norris’ London Road is a film adaptation of The National Theatre’s groundbreaking musical by Alecky Blythe and Adam Cork about the “Suffolk Strangler” murders in Ipswich in 2006. London Road uses the townspeople’s own descriptions of the events they lived through as the basis for the show’s lyrics, creating a fresh and arresting re-imagining of the form. The emotionally empathetic Tom Hardy is one of the townspeople. CanStage brought London Road to Toronto last winter in one of the highlights of the past season. It was a mesmerizing evening, a musical hybrid, as satisfying as it was innovative. After TIFF announced its selection, Rebecca Caine tweeted that she had seen both the stage and film versions, and that the film version was better.

Director Andrew Cividino describes his well-crafted Sleeping Giant as a cross between Lord of the Flies and Stand By Me. The Ryerson grad wanted to capture the energy of being a boy growing up near Lake Superior. He succeeds in doing so in this slick character study of a cottage boy and two locals hanging out over one summer of awkward adolescence. Their bullying and braggadocio are as wild as the setting itself. Toy Piano Composers co-founder Chris Thornborrow wrote the evocative score which is further underpinned by a handful of songs by indie rock band Bruce Peninsula.

Twenty Feet from Stardom director Morgan Neville follows up his Oscar winner with The Music of Strangers: Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble, a documentary about the international musical collective created by legendary cellist Yo-Yo Ma. The film tracks this group of diverse instrumentalists, vocalists, composers, arrangers, visual artists and storytellers as they explore the power of music to preserve tradition, shape cultural evolution and inspire hope. The world premiere of the movie at TIFF September 13 (2:45pm at the Elgin) is just days ahead of the Silk Road with Yo-Yo Ma’s concert appearance at Massey Hall September 15. There are additional screenings September 15 (8:45am at TIFF Bell Lightbox 3) and September 18 (5pm at Isabel Bader).

In Al Purdy Was Here dozens of literary talking heads led by Margaret Atwood bring the charismatic Canadian poet to life with anecdotes, reminiscences and first-hand history but it’s the copious video evidence of Purdy himself that makes the best case for his unique voice. The fate of Purdy’s Roblin Lake A-frame house in Prince Edward County is the starting point for this thorough documentary directed by former Maclean’s magazine film critic Brian D. Johnson and written by Johnson and his writer/editor wife Marni Jackson. Elevating the proceedings are a number of songs inspired by Purdy’s poetry that mainly succeed in their genre cross-pollination. Standouts include “Say the Names” performed by violinist Jesse Zubot, Giller Prize-winning writer Joseph Boyden and the extraordinary Tanya Tagaq, who internalized Purdy’s words (as spoken by Boyden) and transformed them into raw emotional energy. Bruce Cockburn’s “3 Al Purdys” ends the film, offering the singer-songwriter’s own inimitable take on the poet, summing up the previous 90 minutes in a song.

Laurie Anderson’s Heart of a Dog is a personal essay film exploring themes of love, death and language. The director’s unmistakable musical voice is a constant presence as stories of her dog Lolabelle, her mother, her husband Lou Reed, childhood fantasies and political and
philosophical theories unspool in a song-like stream. 

*Amazing Grace* is the late Sydney Pollack’s film of Aretha Franklin’s live 1972 performance that became her multi-million-selling album, *Amazing Grace*. Filmed during church services in Los Angeles, the footage, which should be required viewing for anyone with even a passing interest in the music of the last half of the 20th century, has never been seen until now.


Academy Award-winning director Morgan Neville (*Twenty Feet from Stardom*) has been a busy man. This portrait of Keith Richards, *Keith Richards: Under the Influence*, follows the iconic rocker on the road as the director explores the origins of his distinctive musical voice. Packed with music and archival material, this Netflix Original draws on hours of recent conversations with “Keef.” It charts the journey of his sound and influences, back to the music that inspired him as he creates his first solo album in 23 years.

*Miss Sharon Jones!* is a propitious meeting of two creative spirits. Two-time Academy Award-winner Barbara Kopple follows R&B queen Sharon Jones over the course of an eventful year, as she battles a cancer diagnosis and struggles to hold her band the Dap-Kings together.

Kahlil Joseph’s *The Reflektor Tapes* is a fascinating insight into the making of Arcade Fire’s international hit *Reflektor*. The film carries the viewer into a kaleidoscopic sonic and visual landscape, blending personal moments and interviews to dazzling effect.

Ido Haar’s documentary, *Thru You Princess*, follows Israeli musician Kutiman as he trolls YouTube for unknown musical talent that he can sample in his own popular audiovisual creations. When he discovers Princess Shaw, a kind of musical diarist/singer-songwriter from New Orleans, he increases her audience by millions and changes her life. It sounds like an intriguing look into the reach and power of the Internet as well as a portrait of a struggling young woman for whom music is her salvation.

Argentina’s María Nieves and Juan Carlos Copes are the best-known couple in the history of the tango. They have danced passionately, loved and hated each other for almost 50 years, until the day they separated. Now, almost at the end of their lives, they tell their story for the first time in German Kral’s documentary *Our Last Tango*, executive produced by Wim Wenders.

Tom Hiddleston stars (with Elizabeth Olsen) and does his own singing in *I Saw the Light*, a biopic about country music icon Hank Williams. His distinctive vocals and penetrating lyrics have been part of American musical history for more than half a century but Williams also suffered from crippling pain (due to spina bifida) and substance abuse, leading to his sudden death from heart failure at 29 on New Year’s Day, 1953. Written and directed by Marc Abraham, *I Saw the Light*, is based on the 1994 biography by Colin Escott, George Merritt and William MacEwen.

Based on factual and fictional material, Robert Budreau’s *Born To Be Blue* re-images jazz trumpeter Chet Baker in the late 1960s when he is cast to star in a film about himself. He takes up with his enigmatic female co-star and stumbles when his past returns to haunt him, threatening his musical career. Look for Dizzy Gillespie (Kevin Blanchard) and Miles Davis (Kedar Brown). Insider word has it that Ethan Hawke (whose documentary *Seymour: An Introduction* was one of the highlights of last year’s TIFF) is a convincing Baker.

Part of the City To City selection, Michael Caton-Jones’ *Urban Hymn* is a redemptive coming-of-age story about a neglected and wayward teen whose incredible singing voice offers an escape to a better life. Another London title, Owen Harris’ *Kill Your Friends*, follows a 27-year-old A&R man searching for his next hit record in the 1990s. As the hits dry up and the industry changes, he takes the concept of “killer tunes” to a murderous new level. Elaine Constantine’s *Northern Soul*, also a London film, is built on the eponymous 1970s phenomenon that influenced songwriter, continues to page 78
There are so many composers and so many projects,” Stewart Goodyear said recently to WholeNote editor David Perlman. “What makes this life so exciting is that the discovery is endless; the road doesn’t end and there’s discovery galore.”

The two men were wrapping up the latest edition of Conversations <at> The WholeNote for the magazine’s YouTube channel, a conversation prompted by Goodyear’s upcoming appearance as soloist in the first concert of Moordale Concerts 2015/16 season, September 27. Billed as “Legendary Piano Variations,” it’s the coupling of two major works, Bach’s joyful Goldberg Variations and Beethoven’s Diabelli Variations (the essence of which, according to Alfred Brendel and others, is humour).

Goodyear talked about the similarities in the two pieces: “They both centre around dances, There is humour in both (of course used very differently), voices, innovative harmonies – one in each set almost sounds like a 21st-century work, the harmonies are so advanced it still shocks the listener. Even if the listener has heard it around 10,000 times – like yours truly – it always makes a huge impression and I’m bowled over by what I hear.”

That’s the boyish pianistic explorer talking, the 37-year-old pianist who is famous for the Beethoven “Sonatathon” in which he has played all 32 sonatas in chronological order at one sitting, who calls himself a “music gourmet” with an appetite for big programs (such as performing all five of the Beethoven piano concertos with the Niagara Symphony Orchestra on Hallowe’en night, repeating the marathon the following Sunday afternoon, November 1). Or, on the same weekend as the Moordale date, performing all five Beethoven concertos in a slightly more traditional setting with Edwin Outwater and the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony: One and Four on Friday evening; Three (and Symphony No.8) on Saturday afternoon; Two and Five Saturday evening.

“I humbled me as an interpreter,” Goodyear continued, discussing his Toronto recital. “I always want to bring an intimacy to both of those works...to get into the marrow.”

Playing these two monumental works on the same recital is “like a Canadian program for me,” he says. His introduction to the Goldberg Variations was Glenn Gould’s 1955 recording of the piece “and then immediately after, I heard [Gould’s second recording].” The first recording of the Diabelli Variations he heard was Anton Kuerti’s. Goodyear own CD of the Diabellis was released last fall by Marquis and very favourably reviewed, by among others Christina Petrowska Quilico in our November 2014 issue.

Goodyear had lived with the Goldbergs all his life before finally performing them in public for the first time on Gould’s own piano at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa last spring, surrounded by portraits of Gould. “I was face to face with Glenn Gould,” he said. “It gave me another excuse to connect with the audience.”

Gould’s piano felt custom made to him, he says. He found playing it “challenging” with its “brilliant sound and lots of colours. Just being a part of that history inspired me a lot,” he continued. “I felt that there was something spiritual going on.”
John Perry
SUN., SEPT. 20, 2015 2PM
MAZZOLENI CONCERT HALL
John Perry is known for his “illuminating and always engaging performances.” (LA Times) At 80, Perry presents Mozart’s Sonata in B-flat Major, Kv. 333, Brahms’s Intermezzi, Beethoven’s Sonata in A-flat Major, and Schubert’s Sonata in B-flat Major.

The ARC Ensemble (Artists of The Royal Conservatory)
SAT., SEPT. 26, 2015 3PM
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FREE (TICKET REQUIRED)
ARC “sets the skin rippling at every turn, with its ear-tingling corporate intonation and magical phrasing.” (The Strad) ARC will perform Weinberg’s Violin Sonata No. 1, Mozart’s Clarinet Quintet in A Major, and Shostakovich’s Piano Quintet.

Julian Kuerti conducts the Royal Conservatory Orchestra and Alexis Hatch (violin)
FRI., OCT. 2, 2015 8PM
PRELUDE RECITAL AT 6:45PM
KOERNER HALL
Kuerti’s “natural, genuine musicianship…” (Cincinnati Enquirer) leads the RCO in a program of Elgar’s Violin Concerto with Alexis Hatch and Mahler’s Symphony No. 4 with Mireille Asselin (soprano).

Generously supported by Leslie & Anna Dan.

Jane Bunnett & Maqueque and Emeline Michel
SAT., OCT. 24, 2015 8PM
KOERNER HALL
Celebrated Canadian flutist and saxophonist Jane Bunnett introduces the world to Maqueque, some of Cuba’s most promising female musicians. Emeline Michel is the reigning Queen of Haitian Song.

Generously supported by an anonymous donor.

Jane Bunnett & Joo: And Now Mozart
SUN., OCT. 18, 2015 3PM
KOERNER HALL
The “classical-music tricksters” (Seattle Times) have created this outrageously funny show for people who love Mozart and those who have never even heard of Mozart! “Their blend of classical music and comedy... is fueled by genuine, dazzling virtuosity.” (The New York Times)

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The Moordale recital will be Goodyear’s fourth performance of the Bach this year. “Every time I do it, it’s different,” he said. The notational text is sacrosanct, the basis for all Goodyear’s formal preparatory work until it feels “like it’s in every pore.”

“So that whatever happens, it feels like I’m improvising,” he elaborated. “I know it 500 percent that whatever comes out it’s not like I’m reciting something or reiterating something: it’s just coming out.”

Part of his practising method is delving into a piece’s history and its qualities. In the case of Messiaen’s Turangalîla Symphony which he’s playing again with Paavo Järvi, later this season with the Orchestre de Paris, it’s trying to “find the seed to this masterpiece.” Listening to him talk about its character reveals the way he relates to a musical work: “It’s very theatrical; there are sweeping gestures, extremely lyrical, very colourful, with fermatas, rallentandos. There are moments when you see the lovers running to each other just like Hollywood; there are slow-motion moments when they finally embrace. It’s a technicolor extravaganza. It’s a beautiful work, 80 minutes long. It’s decadent, it’s pure, it’s everything. It’s romantic.”

It’s a telling insight into Goodyear’s approach. Despite the marathons, despite the prodigious technique and memory that they require, the basis for Goodyear’s appeal is his empathetic relationship with the music he performs and his ability to communicate that to an audience – qualities that will undoubtedly be evident to all who hear him in Walter Hall on the last Sunday afternoon of September.

**Summer Pleasures**, A completely different traversal of the Beethoven piano concertos took place in Stratford August 27 to 29 when Stratford Summer Music presented Jan Lisiecki and the Annex Quartet with Roberto Occhipinti, bass, in three programs encompassing all five of the concertos in transcriptions by the German composer and conductor, Vinzenz Lachner’s (1811-1893). It was Lisiecki’s first time performing all five piano concertos. In the days leading up to our September production deadline, I was fortunate to find time to attend the middle concert which paired the Second and the Fourth.

The 20-year-old wunderkind was his usual gracious and charming self as he introduced the concert. “We can’t give you all the drama,” he said. “But we can give you intimacy and the beauty of this music.”

St. Andrew’s Church is a bright room acoustically but Lisiecki met its challenge (and that of the Yamaha grand) in the Piano Concerto No.2, Op.19, begun when Beethoven was still a teenager and only published after his first six string quartets (Op.18). Lisiecki’s touch was even-handed, very classical, marvellous. He made every note count. The Allegro con brio was Mozartean in its passagework, Haydn-like in its succession of swells but intimations of the composer-to-be were clearly present. The Largo that followed is not one of Beethoven’s best but Occhipinti’s rich, sonorous sound stood out. The lively Rondo, however, is a delight, presaging the more mature symphonist, and the performers seemed to relish playing it, bringing out the joy that flows from the return of the opening theme in its inverted form.

The six played like cohesive, well-balanced chamber musicians in the Rondo, and the piano part especially stood out since it didn’t have to compete with a full orchestra. This transparency continued in the Op. 58 concerto, a piece composed in that luminous time just after the “Waldstein” and “Appassionata” Sonatas and the “Emperor” Concerto, in which Lisiecki said, “But we can give you intimacy and the beauty of this music.”

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The second movement conversation between the dark and dissonant strings and the gorgeous lyricism of the keyboard set up the magical, rhapsodic piano cadenza. The spirited third movement Rondo, seemed to outrun its musical sense. But all was right in the encore, the Rondo of the “Emperor” Concerto, in which Lisiecki

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**SEASON HIGHLIGHTS**

**Early Music**
Performances by Schola Cantorum and Theatre of Early Music, a lute song recital with Dame Emma Kirkby

**Chamber Music**
New Orford String Quartet, Beverley Johnston and Christos Hatzis, Gryphon Trio, Cecil String Quartet

**Workshops/Master Classes/Lectures**
Atom Egoyan, Sondra Radvanovsky, Barbara Hannigan, Michael Colgrass, Norma Winstone, Lawrence Shragge, Scott Burnham

**Opera**
The Medium and The Telephone, Paul Bunyan

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seemed re-engaged if not re-energized. It was a generous gift to an appreciative audience who greeted the conclusion of each of the three pieces with a standing ovation.

(All of which makes me look forward to Lisiecki’s December 6 recital in Koerner Hall when his program will include Chopin’s 24 Preludes, Mendelssohn’s Variations sérieuses and Mozart’s marvellous Piano Sonata, K331 among other works.)

Paul Lewis. Still on the subject of Stratford Summer Music, on the last Thursday afternoon of July in a warm St. Andrew’s Church (hand-held fans were provided) British pianist Paul Lewis spoke to his congregation, as it were, those of us privileged to hear this supreme interpreter of Beethoven and Schubert, describing how he saw the pieces he was about to play – what he called “true peaks of the piano repertoire” – Beethoven’s last three piano sonatas.

The concert turned out to be the highlight of my summer. You can read more about it in my blog on thewholenote.com. (Lewis will also be giving a recital, of Brahms, Schubert and Liszt, in Koerner Hall March 20, 2016. I already have a ticket.)

Botos and Bartók. Meanwhile, the tenth anniversary season of Toronto Summer Music reached a significant climax August 6 with separate concerts late in the afternoon and into the evening. Robi Botos and Béla Bartók, two Hungarian-born émigrés to the New World, were appropriate poster boys for the well-conceived and multi-layered 2015 TSM festival.

With its extensive schedule built around a foundation of TSM Academy fellows and mentors, the concerts, masterclasses, lectures, films and open rehearsals flowed organically, buttressed by a number of additional concerts featuring special guests such as soprano Measha Brueggergosman, pianists Garrick Ohlsson, Ingrid Fliter and Danilo Pérez and the Danish String Quartet. They provided ample evidence for artistic director’s Douglas McNabney’s contention at the opening concert that TSM provides “a significant contribution to the cultural life of this city in the summer.” Not to mention a significant contribution to the life of the Academy fellows.

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2. Saturday December 12, 2015
   McCauley Christmas Carol Fantasia
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3. Saturday February 6, 2016
   Puccini Gianni Schicchi
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4. Saturday March 12, 2016
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I took in six concerts, one dress rehearsal, two masterclasses and a lecture over the 25 days of the festival and barely scratched the surface. Highlights included the well-devised “American Avant-Garde” program devoted to Cage, Feldman, Ives and Zorn with the personable pianist Pedja Muzijevic and the irrepressible Afiara String Quartet; Ohiolson’s Scriabin; the Danish String Quartet’s playing of Ades’ audacious Arcadia; the Borromeo String Quartet’s complete Bartók cycle in one evening, preceded the day before by first violinist Nicholas Kitchen’s illuminating lecture on the week he once spent exploring Bartók’s original manuscripts in Budapest; Finnish lyric soprano Soile Isokoski’s memorable masterclass; Botos’ exuberant tribute to Oscar Peterson in the presence of Peterson family members at a rollicking, jam-packed Heliconian Hall; Brueggergosman’s touching and extra-ordinarily beautiful Summertime. Further details on TSM 2015 can be found on thewholenote.com.

September is here. The TSO begins its 2015/2016 season with a crowd-pleasing program headed by guest soloist Itzhak Perlman in Bruch’s dazzling Violin Concerto No.1. With its gorgeous melodic lines and virtuoso passages seamlessly integrated, it’s one of the most popular concertos in the violin canon. Having just turned 70, Perlman will celebrate that milestone as well as his ongoing relationship with the TSO (which goes back to 1966) in Roy Thomson Hall, beginning at 7pm September 24. The orchestra then jumps into the deep end with a rousing program featuring the legendary Three B’s. Following Leopold Stokowski’s arrangement of Bach’s Toccata and Fugue in D Minor the TSO moves on to the rich and melodic Double Concerto of Brahms with TSO concertmaster Jonathan Crow and principal cellist Joseph Johnson as soloists. Post-intermission comes Beethoven’s iconic Symphony No.5. If you have never heard this piece live, get yourself down to RTH September 25 or 26 or experience it September 27 in the glorious acoustics of the George Weston Recital Hall. If you haven’t heard it recently, now’s the time. A live reacquaintance with this music is essential at least once every decade. September 30, Shostakovich’s jaunty Suite for Variety Orchestra (which may be familiar to some readers for its use in Stanley Kubrick’s final film, Eyes Wide Shut) is joined on the program with Gershwin’s challenging Concerto in F. The multi-faceted Russian-born, American Kirill Gerstein is the piano soloist and the guest conductor is the gifted American James Gaffigan. October 1 and 3 Prokofiev’s indispensable Symphony No.5 augments the program, making for a full musical evening indeed.

QUICK PICKS


Sept 16: KWCMS. The New Orford String Quartet opens its program with Beethoven’s String Quartet No. 3, Op.18, No.3 before moving on to the seminal Op.130 and its original ending, the Grosse Fuge, Op. 133.


Sept 19: PECMF. The Gryphon Trio’s concert includes Beethoven’s Archduke Trio at the Church of St. Mary Magdalene.

Sept 19, 20, 21: KWCMS. Georgy Valtechev, violin, and Lora Tchekoratova, piano, perform all ten of Beethoven’s sonatas for violin and piano in a series of three concerts.


Sept 25: PECMF. “Inspired by Clara” – chamber music by Clara Schumann, Robert Schumann and Brahms at the Church of St. Mary Magdalene.

Sept 26: PECMF. The ARC Ensemble’s ambitious program includes the sublime clarinetist Joaquin Valdepeñas in Mozart’s Piano Quintet Op.57 and Weinberg’s Sonata No.1 for Violin and Piano Op.12. You’ll need a ticket, but it’s FREE, part of Culture Days.

Sept 26: PECMF. An evening of German and French cabaret songs with Patricia O’Callaghan at the Regent Theatre.

Paul Ennis is the managing editor of The WholeNote.
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The Soaring Female Voice

WENDALYN BARTLEY

As things go, the sweet sounds of summer are winding down as we gear up for the beginning of a new concert season. Three highlights of the summer for me personally were joining with 1000 other performers as a choir member in R. Murray Schafer’s Apocalypsis, singing with the Element Choir backing up the mind-blowing Tanya Tagaq at Nathan Phillips Square and experiencing the purely delightful piece DIVE, featuring singer Fides Krucker and the music of Nik Beason. In all three, the voice was a predominant player. As I looked over the listings for this coming month, I couldn’t help observing the number of concerts and events featuring music by women composers and leading performers. One can question whether a point should be made about this, but given the long struggle for gender equality in both composition and conducting, it is worth noting that something is shifting. One element that appears in common among several of these events is the presence of the female voice.

Monk Feldman and Caitlin Smith: On September 29 Arraymusic is collaborating with the Canadian Opera Company to present the works of two women composers – Barbara Monk Feldman and Linda Caitlin Smith – for the free noon hour series at the COC’s Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre. Monk Feldman’s piece, Love Shards of Sappho, originally commissioned by Arraymusic in 2001, is being presented in celebration of the COC’s premiere in late October of her opera Pyramus and Thisbe. The piece is built around texts written by the Greek lyric poet Sappho, who lived during the 600s BC on the Greek island of Lesbos. Renowned during her time, only a few fragments of Sappho’s writings remain. The texts used by Monk Feldman are clear and full of musicality. The words begin: Harmony clear voiced/I shall go/Clear voice I go/Clear voice/Garlanded/Adorned/ Delightful choir. Feldman’s music has been described as quiet and full of an intense intimacy. One can easily imagine the inspiring pairing these words and musical style will create, particularly in the hands of soprano Ilana Zarankin.

The other work on the program is Hieroglyphs, written in 1998 by Linda Caitlin Smith. Smith's music is characterized by great attention to the sensuous qualities of sound.
Voices of Children, composed in 1970. Drawing on the evocative poetry of Federico García Lorca, the piece uses a variety of sonic techniques, such as the soprano singing into the piano strings, and incorporates temple bells, musical saw and toy piano to convey Crumb’s essential vision: a request to God to “give me back my ancient soul of a child.” Other pieces on the program include selections from Crumb’s American Songbook, Luciano Berio’s arrangements of songs by Lennon and McCartney and a world premiere by Argentinian-Canadian composer Analia Llugdar. A Jules Léger Prize winner in 2008, Llugdar’s works frequently incorporate singing and speaking voices while pursuing her aesthetic vision of a search for “the core of the sound.” Her piece in this program, Romance de la luna, luna is inspired by the Lorca poem of the same name. Soundstreams’ press release is in sync with the theme of this month’s column: “a concert celebrating the soaring voices and talents of Pieczonka, Szabó and Lludgar, three exceptional musical women.”

Companion events: At a companion event to the September 29 concert, Soundstreams will present one of their popular Salon events on September 18 further exploring the poetry of Lorca as interpreted by poet Beatriz Hausner. Kristzina Szabó will perform new compositions by Anna Atkinson, Juliet Palmer, James Rolfe and Christopher Thornborrow, each of which was written using the same Lorca excerpt. Other events that offer insight into the concerts mentioned above include a discussion of the sources that inspired Barbara Monk Feldman’s opera on September 24 at U of T’s Faculty of Music. Arraymusic will present a talk on Linda Smith’s Heiroglyphs

new music concerts 2015–2016

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SAT. OCT. 17, 2015 | TURNING POINT ENSEMBLE
TPE performs works by Morlock, Sokolovic, Chang, LC Smith and Louie • Betty Oliphant Theatre, 404 Jarvis St.

SUN. NOV. 8, 2015 | R. MURRAY SCHAFER: LOVING/TOI
Preview of NMC’s latest CD (non-subscription event) • Gallery 345, 345 Sorauren Ave. RESERVATIONS 416.961.9594

SUN. DEC. 6, 2015 | A PORTRAIT OF PHILIPPE LEROUX
Music by Leroux, Grisey, Rubin and Carter • Betty Oliphant Theatre, 404 Jarvis St.

THURS. JAN. 14, 2016 | JACK STRING QUARTET
NMC + Music Toronto present works by Adams, Otto, Zorn and Xenakis • Jane Mallett Theatre, 27 Front St. E. TICKETS 416.366.7723

MON. FEB. 15, 2016 | BOULEZ AND BASHAW
Honouring Pierre Boulez in his 90th year plus a premiere by Howard Bashaw • Betty Oliphant Theatre, 404 Jarvis St.

SUN. MAR. 13, 2016 | QUASAR SAXOPHONE QUARTET
Recent Canadian works composed for the virtuoso Montréal ensemble • The Music Gallery, 197 John St.

SUN. APR. 3, 2016 | VIVA ELECTRONICA
Premieres by Tan, Hamel, Ahn and Steenhuisen • Betty Oliphant Theatre, 404 Jarvis St.

SUN. APR. 24, 2016 | FLUTES GALORE!
Music for 24 flutes by Aitken, Pauk, Mather and Butterfield • Saint Luke’s United Church, 353 Sherbourne St.

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and the extended piano techniques in the work of Barbara Pentland on October 3 as part of the Toronto Public Library’s Music 101 series. In addition, at the Canadian Music Centre, September 26 will see the launch of Pioneers of Electronic Music, a new book by Norma Beecroft, as well as a special performance by the Canadian Electronic Ensemble. David Dacks, artistic director of the Music Gallery, will interview Beecroft about her research covering both international and Canadian composers working in this medium.

ACWC: As is evident from these numerous events, the focus on the musical artistry of women is rising fast and strong. It wasn’t always this way, and in 1981 a group of women met to find a way to address the absence of women composers in concert programming across the country. The Association of Canadian Women Composers was formed the next year and is currently working to actively promote the organization and present concerts. On September 18, their “Earth Music Concert” in Waterloo will feature music by 12 ACWC composers.

New Beginnings: With the Labour Day weekend marking the end of the summer, I want to bring your attention to an event that occurs each year at Yonge-Dundas Square – the New Music Marathon and Musicircus! produced by Contact Contemporary Music. Because Labour Day falls a bit later this year, you just might be reading this in time to go and check it out. On Saturday, September 5 there will be a series of performances and interactive installations, including John Oswald’s epic composition Spectre recreated for 1000 string instruments. Then on September 6 in an intimate setting in an east-end loft space – The Jam Factory – Montreal’s ensemble Shalabi Effect will be performing, among others.

Continuum Contemporary Music begins their season on September 19 with their program “At the Seams.” On centre stage will be the awarding of the Jules Léger Prize to Thierry Tidrow for his composition Au fond du cloître humide commissioned by Continuum. The program will go on to feature world premieres by three other former Léger Prize winners: Chris Paul Harman, André Ristic and Alec Hall. Rounding out the program will be a work for Gergory Oh by New York-based Esprit Orchestra starts off with their “Con Brio” concert on October 4 with a newly commissioned work by Omar Daniel, a thriller inspired by the Nordic myth of the husband killer that uses Estonian folk idioms. The other Canadian composer represented on the program is Josha Di Castri whose piece is treated as an evolving narrative recreating the sounds of a fictitious culture. Two other works by Jörg Widmann from Germany and Thomas Adès from England complete the theme of musically creating other worlds.

The Music Gallery season gets underway on September 25 with a program of contrasting cellos. The Visit, a group comprising cellist Raphael Weinroth-Browne and vocalist Heather Sita Black, will perform and launch their new CD Through Darkness Into Light. Europe-based Tristan Honsinger joins Montreal’s In The Sea, an improvising trio formed by Nicolas Calola. Honsinger has returned to his former home of Montreal where he got his start improvising more than 40 years ago to join up with the younger Montrealers of In the Sea.

Quick Picks:
September 19: Canadian Music Centre. ∆TENT New Music Ensemble. Tsurumoto and others.
September 24: “Hogtown Brass at the CMC.” Music composed especially for brass quintet.
October 4: Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society. “Moveable Feast.” Two Bach cello suites plus two newly commissioned works related to them.

Wendalyn Bartley is a Toronto-based composer and electro-vocal sound artist. sounddreaming@gmail.com.
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Krisztina Szabó and Phillip Addis. Photo: Michael Cooper  Creative: BT/A Advertising
I don’t know how many people I can speak for when I say that I’m not too eager for summer to be over so soon, but it does seem as though many Toronto ensembles aren’t quite ready to start their new seasons just yet either. Happily there are a few performances in September that are well worth going to see.

Rodolfo Richter: One group that’s definitely ready for the new season is Tafelmusik, which has its first concert the week after Labour Day. The superstar orchestra will, in fact, be very busy, very soon – they have two concert runs between now and October as they continue their search for a new artistic director. The first concert will feature the Brazilian-English violinist Rodolfo Richter, who, as the associate leader of the Academy of Ancient Music and a Handel/Bach specialist, may be exactly what Tafelmusik is looking for.

Richter is an experienced player who has worked his way to the top of the European musical scene. Initially a modern violin player and composer – he studied composition with Pierre Boulez – he decided to make the switch to baroque violin in his mid-20s, studying with Monica Huggett. He also comes with an impressive discography as a leader, chamber player and soloist, having made the first recording of the complete violin sonatas of Erlebach and a solo album of 18th-century Italian composers Giuseppe Tartini and Francesco Veracini in addition to his recordings with the AAM.

With an extensive musical CV behind him, Richter will likely do a fine job with Tafelmusik as he leads them in a performance of music by Vivaldi, Handel and Bach at Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, Jeanne Lamon Hall, September 16 to 20. The group will also be joined by mezzo soprano Mireille Lebel for some Handel arias and the wonderful bassoonist Dominic Teresi for a Vivaldi concerto.

Cecilia Bernardini: Tafelmusik will also be bringing back violinist Cecilia Bernardini, who dazzled Toronto audiences when she debuted with the group in March last year. Bernardini was hired as a replacement for the virtuoso violinist Stefano Montinari, but she exceeded expectations with her performance of one of Jean-Marie Leclair’s notoriously difficult violin concertos which she had added to the regular program. Bernardini is a gifted soloist and performer, and has the potential to bring a great deal of youthful energy to the group – she’s barely 30 years old. Besides touring as a soloist, she already has her own ensemble (the string trio Serafino) and is in the trial period for leadership of both the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and Camerata Salzburg. She has fewer recordings to her name than Richter – just a couple of La Serenissima recordings as a section player – but is nevertheless an up-and-coming player on the international music scene.

Besides being an exceptional player, Bernardini chooses exciting
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and interesting concert repertoire that doesn’t get performed very often. Her concert series with Tafelmusik, taking place October 1 to 4, and 6, is no exception. She and the group will be playing a Geminiani follia, as well as Jan Dismas Zelenka’s wind-rich (but nevertheless very queasy sounding) Hypochondria. Vivaldi and Telemann, respectively, will round out the program with two pieces the group is playing for the first time – Il Proteo, o il mondo al rovescio, and the misleadingly titled La Bizarre (with the exception of the last movement, it doesn’t sound that strange).

Anne Boleyn: If you’re more in the mood for something a bit less manic, the Musicians in Ordinary have a chamber concert September 25 featuring music sung and enjoyed by one of the most famous women in English history.

Anne Boleyn was just a girl when she was sent from England to the Netherlands and France in order to be trained to be a lady-in-waiting for the English court. Part of her education was in music, and she was familiar with, and very likely performed, the works of some of the most influential composers of the time. In particular, Boleyn had the work of Josquin des Prez (1450-1521), widely considered to be the greatest composer of the early Renaissance, in her collection, and his compositions will be featured in the Musicians’ concert. Soprano Hallie Fishel and lutenist John Edwards will be joined by a group of four singers for an 8pm concert of vocal music and dances for solo lute at Father Madden Hall in the Carr Building at St. Michael’s College.

If you’re also interested in some of the history behind how Anne Boleyn found herself studying music in the Netherlands, consider showing up early for an edifying pre-concert lecture by Deanne Williams, author and associate professor of English at York University. And if you’re really a history geek (or binge-watched The Tudors way too much), you might want to check out the history colloquium organized that day by the Centre for Renaissance and Reformation Studies at the University of Toronto, based around the discovery of this manuscript and what it tells us about music in Europe in Boleyn’s time. You can find information on the colloquium at their website, crrs.ca.

TEMPO: If you’re not content to simply listen to baroque music and would like to actually try playing it, you should learn about TEMPO. The Toronto Early Music Players Organization is a group devoted to making early music accessible to amateur musicians who want to learn to play early music repertoire, and they have brought in lutenist Lucas Harris to coach their first workshop of the 2015/16 season. Harris is an excellent choice to coach amateurs – aside from being a professional lute player of the first rank, he’s also a coach for the Toronto Continuo Collective and an experienced choral conductor besides. No word on what they’ll be playing yet, so be prepared to sight-read, I suppose. If you’re at all interested in playing with the group, the workshop is at the Armour Heights Community Recreation Centre on Sunday, September 13 from 1:30 to 4pm. To participate, go to their website (tempotoronto.net), fill in the application form and show up with an instrument and a music stand. And have fun.

Going public: Finally, I should mention one new feature of this season that I haven’t seen before. Some of the top players in Tafelmusik will be giving lectures in their various areas of expertise over the next few months. It’s a natural outgrowth of period performance – most early music specialists have traditionally studied musicology alongside their studies in performance practice. As a result, there are many early musicians who have a wealth of knowledge to share about music history. This month, the Toronto Public Library will feature Christopher Verrette lecturing on the origins of the symphony in the 17th and 18th centuries at the North York Central Library on September 23 at 7pm. Verrette is an intelligent player with a wide knowledge of instrumental playing and a lifetime of experience playing early symphonic repertoire, so it should be quite interesting to hear what he has to say on the subject.

David Podgorski is a Toronto-based harpsichordist, music teacher and a founding member of Rezonance. He can be contacted at earlymusic@thewholenote.com.

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Seasons to Savour

CHRISTOPHER HOILE

The 2015/16 opera season in Toronto is shaping up to be an exciting one. Based on the schedules that have already been announced, there are already two world premieres on offer along with a North American premiere and several Canadian premieres.

COC entices: While the 2014/15 season was a very safe one for Canada’s largest opera company, the coming COC season is much more enticing with a world premiere plus two company premieres alongside four standard repertory works, two of which will be in new productions. The season opens with Verdi’s La Traviata running from October 8 to November 6. The COC has replaced its unloved production by Dmitry Bertman with a new co-production with Lyric Opera of Chicago and Houston Grand Opera by Arin Arbus. Russian Ekaterina Skurina and Canadian Joyce El-Khoury will alternate in the role of Violetta; American Charles Castronovo and Canadian tenor Andrew Haji will sing her lover Alfredo; and American Quinn Kelsey and Canadian James Westman will sing Alfredo’s disapproving father Germont. The conductor is Marco Guidarini.

The most anticipated opera of the season, however, is the one running in repertory with La Traviata. This is the Pyramus and Thisbe (2010) by Canadian Barbara Monk Feldman. This work is important for the company for several reasons. First of all, it is the first Canadian opera that the COC has produced on its main stage since The Golden Ass by Randolph Peters in 1999. Thus, what has been far too long a wait is now over. Second, this will be the first Canadian opera ever staged in the auditorium of the Four Seasons Centre. Third, this will be only the second opera by a female composer that the COC has ever staged, the first being L’Amour de loin (2000) by Kaila Saarilahio in 2012, and the first ever by a female Canadian composer.

Pyramus and Thisbe is presented with two vocal works by Claudio Monteverdi, the Lamento d’Arianna (1608) and Il combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda (1624). The first is the sole aria remaining from a lost opera by Monteverdi while the second, though sometimes called an opera, is really a narrative sequence of madrigals. Both are company premieres. Krzyszta Szabo sings Arianna, Clorinda and Thisbe; Phillip Addis sings Pyramus and Tancredi; and Owen McCausland sings Testo, the narrator in Il combattimento. American Christopher Alden, who directed La Clemenza di Tito in 2013 and Die Fledermaus in 2012, is the stage director and Johannes Debus will conduct. The triple bill will run from October 20 to November 7.

The winter season begins with a remount of Wagner’s Siegfried in the familiar production by François Girard. American soprano Christine Goerke, who thrilled audiences earlier this year as Brünnhilde in Die Walküre, returns to continue Brünnhilde’s journey in Siegfried. German tenor Stefan Vinke sings the title role; Austrian Wolfgang Ablinger-Sperrhacke is Siegfried’s mentor Mime; and American Alan Held sings the god Wotan. Johannes Debus conducts and the production runs from January 23 to February 14.

Playing in repertory with Siegfried is Mozart’s The Marriage of Figaro in a production from the Salzburg Festival directed by Claude Guth. Austrian bass-baritone Josef Wagner sings the title role, Canadian Jane Archibald is Susanna, Canadian Erin Wall sings the Countess, Russell Braun is the Count and American Emily Fons is Cherubino. Johannes Debus conducts.

The COC spring season pairs the familiar and the unfamiliar. Bizet’s Carmen reappears after only six years, this time directed by Toronto’s own Joel Ivany, artistic director of the popular avant-garde opera company Against the Grain. Georgian Anika Rachvelishvili and French mezzo Clémentine Margaine alternate in the title role; American Russell Thomas and Canadian David Pomeroy sing Don José; Americans Christian Van Horn and Zachary Nelson share the role of Escamillo; and Canadians Simone Osborne and Karine Boucher are Micaëla. Carmen, conducted by Paolo Carignani, runs from April 12 to May 15.

The unfamiliar opera is Maometto II (1820), the only non-comic opera by Rossini the COC has ever presented. The opera concerns the attempt of Ottoman Sultan Mehmet II (1432-81) to conquer Venice, which unsurprisingly is framed as a story of thwarted love. Italian bass-baritone Luca Pisaroni sings the title role; Leah Crocetto is Maometto’s former lover Anna; Elizabeth DeShong sings the trousers role of Anna’s current lover Calbo; and Bruce Sledge is the Venetian noble Erisso. David Alden will direct the production from Santa Fe Opera as he did when it premiered there in 2012 and Harry Bickett will conduct. The opera runs from April 29 to May 14.

Opera Atelier’s 30th anniversary season also feature something old and something new. Old will be the company’s second revival of Lully’s Armide (1686), previously presented in 2005 and 2012. Following the Toronto run from October 22 to 31, OA takes the work to Versailles where OA now has a recurring engagement. The production will include such OA favourites as Colin Ainsworth, Daniel Belcher,
Peggy Kriha Dye and Carla Huhtanen. The new production will be Mozart’s early opera Lucio Silla (1772). Director Marshall Pynkoski and choreographer Jeannette Lajeunesse Zingg had such success with it at the Salzburg Festival in 2013, they were invited to take it to La Scala in Milan. Now they will present it for a Canadian audience. Krešimir Špicer sings Lucio based on the Roman dictator Lucius Cornelius Sulla (c.138–78 BC). Meghan Lindsay sings Giunia, the woman Lucio lusts after but who is already engaged to the Roman senator Cecilio, a trousers role sung by Peggy Kriha Dye. Performances run April 7 to 16 and are likely to be in high demand.

Toronto Operetta Theatre also offers two fully staged productions this year. Its season begins with a concert performance of Gilbert and Sullivan’s H.M.S. Pinafore (1878) on November 1, but its end-of-year show is a fully staged return of Sigmund Romberg’s The Student Prince (1924) starring Ernest Ramirez, Jennifer Taverner and Curtis Sullivan. The season concludes with the Canadian premiere of Jacinto Guerrero’s Los Gavilanes (The Sparrow Hawks) from 1923. Running April 27 to May 1, this work, well-known in Spain, is the latest in TOT’s admirable exploration of the Spanish and Latin American form of operetta known as zarzuela and stars Guillermo Silva-Marin and Miriam Khalil.

CanStage: An unexpected source for opera this year is Canadian Stage. The company’s artistic director Matthew Jocelyn directed both plays and opera during his time in Europe and now fulfills his dream of broadening Canadian Stage’s scope to include opera. As a co-production with Soundstreams, the company will present the North American premiere of Julie (2005) by Belgian composer Philippe Boesmans from November 17–29. Based on Strindberg’s seminal naturalistic play Miss Julie (1888), the opera stars Lucia Cervoni as Julie, Clarence Frazer as Jean and Sharleen Joynt as Christine. Les Dala conducts and Jocelyn directs.

Opera in Concert: Adding variety and sparkle to Toronto’s opera scene are the offerings of Voicebox Opera in Concert. Its 2015/15 season begins with the Canadian premiere of Alexander Borodin’s Prince Igor (1890) on November 22 in Russian with English surtitles. On February 7, it presents the Canadian premiere of Falstaff (1799) by Antonio Salieri (1750–1825) – yes, the villain of Peter Shaffer’s play Amadeus (1979) whom Shaffer unjustly accuses of murdering Mozart. Luckily, due to the efforts of such singers as Cecilia Bartoli, Salieri’s reputation has revived and Voicebox, with accompaniment by the Aradia Ensemble under Kevin Mallon, will give us a rare chance to hear Salieri’s take on Shakespeare’s great comic character. The season ender is the world premiere of Isis and Osiris by Peter Anthony Togni to a libretto by poet Sharon Singer. Based on ancient Egyptian mythology, the opera concerns the sibling rivalry of the titular gods, fratricide and the quest for immortality. It stars Lucia Cesaroni, Julie Nesrallah, Ernesto Ramirez and Michael Nyby. Robert Cooper conducts the orchestra and the Voicebox Chorus.

Although not every company has announced its plans, there is already much to look forward to. Stay tuned for more.

Christopher Holle is a Toronto-based writer on opera and theatre. He can be contacted at opera@thewholenote.com.

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Stage Director – Renee Salewski
Production Design – Frank Pasian

Puccini’s
**Tosca**
Thursday, November 5, 2015 at 7:30 pm
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Over the years Soundstreams has specialized in the performance of contemporary works. Many of the composers featured were Canadian and a number of new works were commissioned. In 1988 Soundstreams programmed George Crumb’s *Ancient Voices of Children*. The soloist was a young soprano called Adrianne Pieczonka. September 29 at Koerner Hall, Pieczonka, now a famous singer, will again sing this work with Soundstreams. She will also perform Luciano Berio’s arrangements of songs by John Lennon and Paul McCartney. Together with the mezzo Krisztina Szabó she will sing selections from Crumb’s *American Songbook* as well as the world premiere of Analia Llugdar’s *Romance de la luna*, based on the poetry of Frederico García Lorca (as is Crumb’s *Ancient Voices of Children*). Soundstreams is also presenting, on September 18 at the Gardiner Museum, an exploration of the connections between poetry and music through the work of Lorca, including four new works. The singer will again be Krisztina Szabó. PWYC.

**Hannigan sings Nono at TSO:** Another important concert featuring modern music will take place on October 7 and 8 at Roy Thomson Hall, when the soprano Barbara Hannigan will perform Luigi Nono’s *Djamila Boupacha*. Boupacha was a member of the Algerian National Liberation Front. She was arrested in 1960, subjected to torture and rape, and condemned to death in 1961. She was released in 1962 after the Evian Accords. The work has been recorded by Sophie Boulin and there is a haunting rendition by Janet Pape on YouTube. Hannigan has never been the kind of artist who restricts herself by concentrating on only one kind of music. The concert will also include three arias by Mozart as well as a number of orchestral works conducted by Hannigan: Haydn’s *Symphony No. 49 “La Passione,”* Ligeti’s *Concert Românesc* and Stravinsky’s *Symphony in Three Movements*.

**The Cathedral Church of St. James** continues its *Cantatas in the Cathedral* sequence. On September 2 Sheila Dietrich, soprano, Christina Stelmacovich, alto, and David Roth, bass, will perform Bach’s Cantata BWV 78; on October 7 the featured work is Bach’s Cantata BWV 5. Roth will again be the bass soloist and the other singers are Julia Morson, soprano, Laura McAlpine, alto, and Andrew Walker, tenor. PWYC.

**Lunch-time recitals** in the Richard Bradshaw Auditorium at the Four Seasons Centre will resume on September 22 with a performance by the incoming artists of the COC Ensemble Studio. On September 29

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**Pieczonka in Soundstreams Spotlight**

HANS DE GROOT

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**The Cathedral Church of St. James** continues its *Cantatas in the Cathedral* sequence. On September 2 Sheila Dietrich, soprano, Christina Stelmacovich, alto, and David Roth, bass, will perform Bach’s Cantata BWV 78; on October 7 the featured work is Bach’s Cantata BWV 5. Roth will again be the bass soloist and the other singers are Julia Morson, soprano, Laura McAlpine, alto, and Andrew Walker, tenor. PWYC.

**Lunch-time recitals** in the Richard Bradshaw Auditorium at the Four Seasons Centre will resume on September 22 with a performance by the incoming artists of the COC Ensemble Studio. On September 29
Arraymusic will present Love Shards of Sappho, with music by Barbara Monk Feldman, and Hieroglyphs by Linda Catlin Smith. October 6 is “Alma Innamorata,” a free program of Italian baroque music about love, composed by Handel, Corelli and Scarlatti. Free.

The Friends of Gravity perform The Seven Deadly Sins, a “ballet chanté,” composed by Kurt Weill to a text by Bertolt Brecht, on September 25 and 26 at St. Bartholomew Anglican Church, with Stephanie Conn singing the main part. This work was first performed in Paris in 1933 with Weill’s wife Lotte Lenya taking the main role of Anna. It has since been recorded several times by Teresa Stratas, Ute Lemper and Anne Sofie von Otter. The role of Anna is split between two performers: Anna One, a singer, and Anna Two, a dancer. The full title of the work is The Seven Deadly Sins of the Petty Bourgeoise: it is Anna’s virtues that are considered sins.

Other Events:
September 10 traditional Welsh folk music will be performed at the Tranzac Club. The singer will be Bethan Rhiannon.

September 13 Missa Septem Dolorern, a new composition for two sopranos and organ by Philip Fournier, will be performed at The Oratory, Holy Family Church. Free.

September 16 to 20 Tafelmusik opens its 2015/16 season with “The Human Passions.” The mezzo Mireille Lebel will sing arias by Handel and Vivaldi; the concert will also include instrumental work by Bach and Vivaldi at Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre.

September 20 instrumentalists of Ensemble Caprice and vocal soloists from the Theatre of Early Music will perform works by Handel and Vivaldi. This is a fundraising event for the Early Music/Historical Performance of the University of Toronto. On September 27 music students from the Baroque Academy will perform. Both events are in the Trinity College Chapel.

There are several events at the University of Toronto. On September 22 Michael Albano will lead a performance class for singers which will concentrate on the relationship between song and the spoken word. On September 24 there will be a discussion of the mythic, literary and visual art sources that inspired Barbara Monk Feldman’s opera Pyramus and Thisbe (to be premiered by the Canadian Opera Company later in the fall). With Professors Caryl Clark, Holger Schott and Julia Easterlin at Revival Bar.

October 1 the baritone Wilbert Ward will sing a free concert at Metropolitan United Church. Free. Also on that day there will be a concert of traditional songs from Mali and of the sounds of ancient Africa mixed with blues and rock. The singers are Vieux Farka Touré and Julia Easterlin at Revival Bar.

October 4 Kripa Nageshwar, soprano, and William Shookhoff, piano, will perform works by Dvorak and Kapralova at St. Wenceslaus Church.

And beyond the GTA: October 7 Jennifer Potter, soprano, and Keiko Kuepfer, piano, will perform in the “Midday Music with Shigeru” concert at Hi-Way Pentecostal Church, Barrie. For free.

Hans de Groot is a concertgoer and active listener who also sings and plays the recorder. He can be contacted at artofsong@thewholenote.com.
A

n unusual but fantastic summer has just passed, filled to the brim with culture and sport. With Toronto playing host to the Pan Am and Parapan Am games, the concurrent Panamania cultural events truly allowed our city to showcase its diversity and love of music. Unprecedented energy filled many corners of the GTA as facilities opened their doors and neighbourhoods flew their colours and opened their arms in welcome. Choirs from across the GTA were highlighted across the GTA, from the University of Toronto Scarborough to Nathan Phillips Square to Ajax and the Milton Velodrome. The Element Choir was everywhere, supporting Polaris Prize winner Tanya Tagaq in her transformative music on several occasions. Perennial favourite, the inclusive, open concept Choir! Choir! Choir! also featured in a Panamania event in the Distillery District with their pop culture approach to choral music. And who can forget the fantastic Hamilton Children’s Choir singing “Shine Your Light” in front of a sold-out Rogers Centre and millions on TV?

Apocalypsis: For those of us lucky enough, the beginning of summer was enriched by the revelatory powerhouse that was Luminato’s presentation of Apocalypsis. As a tenor in the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir, I sang in one of the 12 choirs that made up the second half of this grand masterpiece of art. One thousand performers brought this uniquely conceived piece to fruition for only the second time since its premiere in 1980. Unfortunately, the choristers caught only a brief glimpse of the staging and choreography. I wonder if the audience was even aware of about 400 of us entering towards the end of the first act as Babylon is crumbling. I relished this moment, entering into the darkness of the dim balcony amidst the cacophony of thick chain metal crashing as the Seven Seals of Myth are broken; and then, in the residue of the broken world, an old woman emerged. I never saw her but the privilege of hearing her was humbling; Tanya Tagaq in her

TanyaTagaq and Joseph Boyden in Al Purdy Was Here

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Lydia Adams
Conductor & Artistic Director

Oriana Women’s Choir

Season 2015 / 2016

Snow Angel
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Concerts take place at Grace Church on-the-Hill, 300 Lonsdale Road, Toronto. Box Office: 416-978-8849

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The evocative portrayal of the old woman. We are lucky she was around so much this summer.

Luminato Artistic Director Jörn Weisbrodt has one more festival under his helm before he passes on the reins. Luminato has been good for choirs in our region right from the start with such pieces as R. Murray Schafer’s The Children’s Crusade. But this summer’s Schafer work, Apocalypsis, was Luminato’s largest act of civic engagement so far; it was a truly monumental task to produce and assemble the forces needed for this. One thousand performers will forever remember this unique event in history. I myself made friends with choirs and people from Ottawa to Kitchener. Between the festivities of the Parapan Am and Pan Am games and the grandeur of Apocalypsis, city-building through choral music has been given a real shot in the arm. Here’s to much more!

Building time: Followers of choral music are aware of the rehearsal hours and planning that go into a full season of music. There is often a lag between the start of the season and the first choral performances. It takes time to get a choir back into itself. Noel Edison puts it well when talking about the 130-voice Toronto Mendelssohn Choir: “There’s a lot of humanity in this room.” All choirs, regardless of size, need this time together to build good sound.

As adults we may forget the mix of elation and comfort kids feel after returning to school from summer vacation. But this fun, slightly nervous feeling hits me afresh as choirs return from break and begin making sound anew. Most choristers will spend the first few rehearsals listening to funny quips from conductors about the dismal quality of the sound or cries of tone deafness, flat basses and sharp sopranos. (Tenors are always on pitch. Always.) The reality is that it takes a while for an ensemble to get back into it. Ensembles may have new members, they definitely have new repertoire. For choral music audiences, September is a quiet month as choristers get back into the habit. But for those of us in the choirs, we are busy at work.

A few early birds, of course, are always the exception to the rule: Intersection: Toronto continues to offer some exemplary opportunities to experience the civic experience of choral music with Contact Contemporary Music’s Intersection: New Music Marathon on September 5. Christine Duncan and the Element Choir will be making an appearance at Yonge-Dundas Square along with a host of other performers in a display of performance and interactive installations. Check them out starting at 2pm.

Wilfrid Laurier leads its school year performances October 4 with “Sing Fires of Justice 10th Anniversary Concert.” Held at St. Matthew’s Lutheran Church, donations are accepted in lieu of ticket sales. For ten years now, WLU has used this concert as a commemoration of murdered and missing indigenous women across Canada creating a fusion of community-based music and social justice.

Sweetwater: In the last couple of years there have been quite a few productions of Bach’s Mass in B Minor (one of which I performed with the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir). I am excited to see it on the lineup for the Sweetwater Music Festival staged as a sing-a-long September 19 at 1pm in Owen Sound. There are quite a few moments of emotion in the piece that are a pleasure to sing as a performer. The Gloria in Excelsis Deo is one not to miss with its bold trumpets and the choir going almost at full tilt before settling into the beautifully gentle Et in Terra Pax. Conductors Kenneth Slowik and Adrian Butterfield have rightfully chosen the Gloria as a feature in the sing-a-long. Unless one is in the Amadeus, Oakham House Choir or Tafelmusik’s sing-a-long Messiah how often does one get to sing with an orchestra? The Bach’s Mass in B Minor can be watched in full the next day, September 20 at 3pm.

Singsation: The Centre for Social Innovation and the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir are offering a free Culture Days’ Singsation. Singsation Saturdays are a mainstay for hundreds of people throughout the season and offer enjoyers of choral music a chance to sing some fabulous music with fantastic local conductors. A highlight of last year was COC chorus master Sandra Horst’s Opera Choruses Singsation. This year VOCA conductor Jenny Crober leads off with a smattering of diverse choral music. Culture Days runs from September 25 to 27 across the country. The Culture Days Singsation takes place September 26 at 10:30am. Free. Last year over 100 people sang, some of them for the first time ever with a choir, some of them for the first time since they were children.

So the new season is upon us. I haven’t yet got any of my new music and rehearsals have yet to start. Like most choristers out there, I’m ready to get back into it and to tackle new works. With a chamber choir, a full symphonic choir and a concert band ahead this year – I’ll be busy. Rehearsing is often considered the painful part with performances as the reward. I very much feel that rehearsing is where the community is built, where the people come together and where choirs truly become great. Performances are merely evidence that everything else is working well. In this, choirs become fantastic acts of community, working together towards a goal. At the start of a new season, there is no time like this in the life of a chorister. A new season. New voices. New music. New challenges. It’s all very exciting. Now is the best time to find an ensemble, try it out and reignite or stoke that love for music and performance.

Brian Chang is a bass clarinet- and horn-playing policy analyst who sings tenor. Follow him on Twitter @bfchang

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56 Queen Street East, Toronto (at Bond Street)
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Bud Roach, Tenor; Matthew Zadow, Baritone
Robert Venables and Robert DiVito, Trumpets
Patricia Wright, Organist and Orchestra

La Création du Monde
Thursday, March 31, 2016 at 8:00 pm
Koerner Hall, Royal Conservatory of Music
with the Esprit Orchestra,
Alex Pauk, Conductor

Musical Friends
Sunday, May 8, 2016 at 4:00 pm
Eglinton St. George’s United Church
35 Lytton Blvd., Toronto
with VivaVoce of Montreal
Lydia Adams and Peter Schubert, Conductors

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Toronto Mendelssohn Choir
Sound the Cornets! News from Orono

JACK MACQUARRIE

Well summer, what was there was of it this year, is almost over. What a difference from last summer in my musical life. Last summer we (Joan and I) drove to Halifax for the very first North American Brass Band summer school, which included playing in all performances of the Royal Nova Scotia International Tattoo. Even though that was a very rewarding experience, this year we decided to stay closer to home and explore some local musical offerings. This included playing in a few concerts, but the variety came from a few quite unexpected sources most of which wouldn’t really qualify as band events.

The first of these took place in early July when we were invited to attend a concert by students of the Durham Music Camp. This was not a band concert. Rather it was an end of year performance of children as young as six performing on violins and cellos. To see six year olds take up centre stage and perform, from memory, with all of the aplomb of someone four times their age certainly reassured us that we will have a good supply of musicians in years to come.

Two weeks later we were treated, by the older generation of musicians, to an unusual big band jazz event. Organized by French horn player James MacDonald, a former member of the very first Boss Brass, we attended a concert by “Amis du Jazz – Encore,” as they styled themselves that day. The 20 member Rex Hotel Orchestra, led by John MacLeod, performed on the back deck of James MacDonald’s house in Port Perry as members of the audience relaxed under the trees in the back yard. There were a few members of the group (clarinetist Bob DeAngells and trombonist Alastair Kay in particular) whom I remembered from the days, more than thirty years ago, when they were star performers in high school band festivals.

Adding a bit of variety to the summer’s offerings, we also took in an amazing amateur performance of the musical A Chorus Line, followed a few days later with a block “Birthday Bash” for a neighbour celebrating a milestone. Although not exactly to my taste, there was lots of folksong playing by the guest of honour and friends.

(As you will see, it was a chance encounter at the second of these summer musical forays that led to the main story in this month’s column. But first a roundup of other band news.)

New bands: I am in the fortunate position of being able to announce the establishment of two new bands in the Toronto area. The first is a new concert band which is forming for seniors in Oakville. As yet we haven’t heard of a name for this band, but they say that they are looking for beginner/intermediate musicians who have played in their youth or new musicians who need a concert band setting to hone their craft. They meet every Monday evening (except holiday Mondays) year round. Unlike some other bands, they will not be going on break during the summer. For information contact Russ Abbott at 905-465-3352.

The other new group is an all brass band called The York Brass Ensemble. They are scheduled to start rehearsals in September on Wednesdays from 7:00 to 9:00 pm at the Alexander Muir Residence in Newmarket. For details contact Peter Hussey at phussey@rogers.com.

Open Rehearsal: About to begin their second full season, The Toronto Concert Band is inviting adult musicians from across Toronto to sit in with them as they kick off rehearsals for their second concert season. Amateur community players, post-secondary students and professionals who want to play in the community are all welcome.

Under the musical direction of Ken Hazlett and Les Dobbin, the Toronto Concert Band has local roots in Etobicoke but far-reaching musical goals. Anyone interested is asked to pre-register by phoning 647-479-2941 or visiting their website: www.torontoconcertband.com. The first rehearsal is September 22 from 7:00 to 9:00 pm at Lambton Kingsway Junior Middle School, 525 Prince Edward Drive.

Returns: The summertime only group, the Uxbridge Community Ensemble wound up their season with another of their theme concerts on August 29. This year’s theme was Music of the Night with selections ranging from Mozart’s “Queen of the Night” aria and selections from Andrew Lloyd Webber’s Phantom of the Opera.

The Toronto New Horizons group will be establishing yet another new band termed Beginner Level II for people joining who want a more challenging level. Anyone interested is invited to attend their Instrument Explorations night on Friday, September 25 from 7 to 9 pm at the Long and McQuade main store 925 Bloor St. W. in Toronto. For anyone who has thought about playing in a band, here’s a chance to check out any instruments that have interested you and decide which would be the one for you. All classes beginning the week of September 14. Scheduled dates and times are on their website: newhorizonsbandtoronto.ca and classes will be held at the Salvation Army Hall, 789 Dovercourt Rd., until further notice.

The Orono Cornet Band: While I was at the aforementioned Amis du Jazz concert in Port Perry I bumped into two friends that I hadn’t seen for some time. I first met Dave Climenhage about twenty years ago in the Clarington Concert Band. I first met Herb Poole over thirty years ago while playing in the Metropolitan Silver Band. They invited me to a concert by the Orono Cornet Band in the town of Orono, where Dave Climenhage had organized the Great Canadian Town Band Festival (GCTBF) in Orono from the year 2000 to the year 2005.

For six consecutive years this festival brought together some of the finest brass and woodwind ensembles in Canada and the U.S. such as The Boss Brass, The Hannaford Street Silver Band, The True North Brass, The Spitfire Band and The Central Band of the Canadian Armed Forces. It also hosted guest artists like conductor and trombone virtuoso Alain Trudel.

After the annual festival was discontinued, the Great Canadian Town Band Festival still existed as an entity in name. Dave was looking for a project that would bring alive Canada’s musical heritage and further the objectives of the GCTBF. He still had the charter for the GCTBF and the desire to continue in some fashion. He was a long time collector of brass and woodwind instruments and eventually linked up with fellow collector Herb Poole, bass trombonist with the Canadian Opera Company. Together they began to work on the idea of a Heritage Brass band that would recreate the 19th century Brass Band movement in Canada. From the early 1850s on, the saxhorn band concept (12 brass instruments) had spread to almost every town and village in Canada. This movement began in France and England in the 1840s and quickly spread all over Europe and North America. These newly developed valved brass instruments were relatively easy to learn to play and could play any notes on the chromatic scale. They became the mainstay of musical performance in Canada, which did not have a classical orchestral tradition at the time. These bands performed at local dances, in parades and at all civic events including July 1 which later became Canada Day. In short it was the music that was most accessible to Canadians from 1850 to the end of the century.

Herb and Dave decided that they would hire professional brass players from the GTA who were interested in taking up the challenge of performing on 150-year-old instruments and who were willing to work with them as they tried to establish an audience for the brass music of 19th century Canada. Herb recruited musicians from the Canadian Opera Company Orchestra and a number of top level freelance brass players from other GTA ensembles.

The aim of the Orono Cornet Band is to recreate a 12 piece brass band of the Confederation period in Canada to perform on period instruments and to play music composed in Canada or known to be regularly performed in Canada. Gathering Canadian music of the period took time. As they looked at brass band music collections from the period, it was clear that most of the music they performed came
from American publishing companies. They worked hard to glean from these sources important works by Canadian composers such as Calixa Lavallee (Marche Indienne). They have also found music originating outside Canada but performed regularly here, such as popular marching songs like The Girl I Left Behind Me.

Herb Poole is the band’s artistic director and has sourced music with very distinct Canadian period content. The instruments the band performs on come from Herb’s and Dave’s collections and were built in the period 1850 to 1870. Many of these were restored by Herb. They are both constantly researching historic events for important music. The Battle of Ridgeway in 1866 is one such event, for example. It resulted in the composition of The Maple Leaf Forever and the words to the Canadian Militia Fenian Marching Song. They hope to perform these at a re-enactment of the Battle of Ridgeway in June next year.

The band has been performing now for over five years. They have performed at heritage events each of those five years, including the V-Brass festival at Toronto’s Harbourfront, Clarington’s Heritage Festival and the RCMP Musical Ride. For the RCMP Musical Ride they performed music of the Band of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police at Fort MacLeod, Alberta, first performed in 1876.

They are currently working on getting people to know about the Orono Cornet Band and have completed their first recording. They also have a new website at oronocornetband.com with videos and sound-tracks. It’s worth checking out that website.

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Upper Left: (from left to right) Members of the Orono Cornet Band playing rotary valve trombone, bass saxhorn, ophicleide and helicon.
Above: Herb Poole, artistic director of the band; “I love to play an instrument I can wear,” says Herb.

Definition Department

This month’s lesser known musical term is stringendo: An unpleasant effect produced by the violin section when it doesn’t use vibrato. We invite submissions from readers. Let’s hear your daffynitions. ☐

Jack MacQuarrie plays several brass instruments and has performed in many community ensembles. He can be contacted at bandstand@thewholenote.com
The WholeNote listings are arranged in four sections:

**A. GTA (GREATER TORONTO AREA)** covers all of Toronto plus Halton, Peel, York and Durham regions.

**B. BEYOND THE GTA** covers many areas of Southern Ontario outside Toronto and the GTA. Starts on page 43.

**C. MUSIC THEATRE** covers a wide range of music types: from opera, operetta and musicals, to non-traditional performance types where words and music are in some fashion equal partners in the drama. Starts on page 51.

**D. IN THE CLUBS (MOSTLY JAZZ)** is organized alphabetically by club. Starts on page 44.

**E. THE ETCETERAS** is for galas, fundraisers, competitions, screenings, lectures, symposia, masterclasses, workshops, singalongs and other music-related events (except performances) which may be of interest to our readers. Starts on page 51.

**A GENERAL WORD OF CAUTION.** A phone number is provided with every listing in The WholeNote— in fact, we won’t publish a listing without one. Concerts are sometimes cancelled or postponed; artists or venues may change after listings are published. Please check before you go out to a concert.

**HOW TO LIST.** Listings in The WholeNote in the four sections above are a free service available, at our discretion, to eligible presenters. If you have an event, send us your information no later than the 8th of the month prior to the issue or issues in which your listing is eligible to appear.

**LISTINGS DEADLINE.** The next issue covers the period from October 1 to November 7, 2015. All listings must be received by Monday night September 8.

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

**LISTINGS ZONE MAP.** Visit our website to see a detailed version of this map: thewholenote.com.

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**LISTINGS FOR SEPTEMBER 1-7, 2015**

**TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 1**

- **Sep 01 8:00:** Musidrome. Rus Nerwich. Beyond the Walls. Rus Nerwich, sax; Steve Koven, piano; Rob Clutton, bass. Suite 133 (main floor). 401 Richmond St. W. 416-599-7223. $20.

- **Sep 02 5:00:** Rob Thomson Hall. Live on the Patio: Mar-Aberto SoundSystem. 60 Simcoe St. 416-593-4822. Free. Food & drinks available.

- **Sep 02 5:00:** Roy Thomson Hall/Lula Music and Arts Centre. Live on the Patio: Mar-Aberto SoundSystem. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-593-4822. Free. Food & drinks available.

**WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 2**

- **Sep 02 5:00:** The Cathedral Church of St. James. Cantatas in the Cathedral. Bach: Cantata BWV8 and organ works. Sheila Dietrich, soprano; Christina Stelmachovich, alto; tenor: TBA; David Roth, bass; Michael Bloss, organ. Cathedral Church of St. James, 65 Church St. 416-364-7865. PWYC. All donations go directly to the artists.

- **Sep 02 8:00:** Flato Markham Theatre. Pat Metheny Trio. Contemporary jazz. Pat Metheny, guitar; Scott Colley, bass; Antonio Sanchez, drums, 171 Town Centre Blvd., Markham. 905-305-7489. $67.

- **Sep 02 8:00:** Musidrome. Evan Malach. Evan Malach, vocals, guitar, mandolin, harmonica, Rich Grossman, guitar; Tyler Emond, bass; Jeremy Kleyhans, percussion. Suite 133 (main floor). 401 Richmond St. W. 416-599-7223. $15(adv); $20(door - includes beverage); PWYC for students & artists.

**THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 3**

- **Sep 03 12:00 noon:** Encore Symphonic Concert Band. In Concert: Classics and Jazz. John Edward Liddle, conductor: Wilmar Heights Centre, 983 Pharmacy Ave., Scarborough. 416-346-3910. $10. Incl. coffee and snack. Also Oct 1.

- **Sep 03 5:00:** Roy Thomson Hall/Lula Music and Arts Centre. Live on the Patio: Lula All Stars. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-593-4822. Free. Food & drinks available.

- **Sep 03 5:00:** Roy Thomson Hall/Lula Music and Arts Centre. Live on the Patio: Lula All Stars. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-593-4822. Free. Food & drinks available.

- **Sep 03 7:00:** Harbourfront Centre. Summer Music in the Garden: Arrelumbre – Light after Dark. Flamenco, Balkan, Sephardic, Turkish and original music. Ventanas; Tamar River; Flamingo, cello; and others. George Weston Recital Hall, 5040 Yonge St. 1-855-985-2787. $30-$90.

- **Sep 03 8:00:** Contact Contemporary Music. Intersection: New Music Marathon. A day of performance and interactive installations. Oswald: Spectre for 1000 violins; other works. Music in the Barns, string ensemble; John Oswald, conductor; The Element Choir; Christine Duncan, director; Tatsuya Nakamura, percussion; Flowers of Hell, shoegaze orchestra; and others. Yonge-Dundas Square, 1 Dundas St. E. 416-902-7010. Free.

- **Sep 03 8:00:** Music Gallery/Bicycle Opera Project. Shadow Box. Works by Thornborrow, Burge, Héstman, Rolle, Bury, and others. Larissa Konjuk, soprano; Stephanie Titchew, mezzo; Christopher Enns, tenor; Geoffrey Sirett, baritone. The Music Gallery, 197 John St. 416-204-1080. $20/30(adv).


- **SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 6**

- **Sep 06 4:00:** Harbourfront Centre. Summer Music in the Garden: Silk and Bamboo. Chinese music from the Qing Dynasty to the recent era. Silk String Trio (Wen Zhao, pipa, lute; Zwen Qin, guzheng/zhither; Di Zhang, yangqin/dulcimer). 235 Queens Quay W. 416-973-4000. Free.

- **Sep 06 7:00:** Kabir Centre for Arts and Culture. Best of India, Best of Jazz. Fusion of jazz and Indian classical/pop. Ernie Watts, saxophone/flute; Jon Weber, piano; Ritt Henn, bass; Jomy George, percussion. L. Subramaniam and Ambi Subramaniam, violon; and others. George Weston Recital Hall, 5040 Yonge St. 1-855-985-2787. $30-$90.

**FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 4**


**SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 5**

- **Sep 05 1:30:** Bloor-Yorkville BIA. Summer Music in the Park with the Akim Trio. Village of Yorkville Park, 115 Cumberland St. 416-928-3553. Free. Weather permitting.

- **Sep 05 2:00:** Contact Contemporary Music. Intersection: New Music Marathon. A day of performance and interactive installations. Oswald: Spectre for 1000 violins; other works. Music in the Barns, string ensemble; John Oswald, conductor; The Element Choir; Christine Duncan, director; Tatsuya Nakamura, percussion; Flowers of Hell, shoegaze orchestra; and others. Yonge-Dundas Square, 1 Dundas St. E. 416-902-7010. Free.

- **Sep 05 8:00:** Music Gallery/Bicycle Opera Project. Shadow Box. Works by Thornborrow, Burge, Héstman, Rolle, Bury, and others. Larissa Konjuk, soprano; Stephanie Titchew, mezzo; Christopher Enns, tenor; Geoffrey Sirett, baritone. The Music Gallery, 197 John St. 416-204-1080. $20/30(adv).


**MONDAY SEPTEMBER 7**

- **Sep 07 1:30:** Bloor-Yorkville BIA. Summer Music in the Park with the Donald Quinn Trio. Village of Yorkville Park, 115 Cumberland St.
### Thursday September 8
- **12:00 noon:** University of Toronto. Labour Day Carillon Recital. Hour-long outdoor event, rain or shine. Roy Lee and Margaret Pan, carillonneurs. Soldiers’ Tower, University of Toronto, 7 Hart House Circle. 416-978-3485. Free. Seating provided. The Memorial Room inside the Soldiers’ Tower will be open to visitors.

### Friday September 9
- **09:11:00:** Gordon Murray Presents. Piano Popcorn. Featuring classics, opera, operetta, musicals, ragtime, pop, international and other genres. Gordon Murray, piano. Trinity-St. Paul’s United Church (Toronto), 56 Queen St. E. 416-583-0331 x236. Free; donations welcome.

### Saturday September 10

### Sunday September 11
- **10:00:** Noonday Organ Recitals. Maddox, organ. 1585 Yonge St. 416-922-1167. Free.

### Monday September 12

### Tuesday September 13
- **15:12:00:** Noon: Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts, Brock University. Imagining The City Festival. Pop Up Performance. Colin Maier, oboe and other instruments; Alexander Sebastian, accordion. 15 Artists’ Common, St. Catharines. 905-688-5550 x3817. Free community event. Also Sep 15,17,19.

### Wednesday September 14
- **16:07:** Tafelmusik. The Human Passions. Versacini: Ouverture No 5 in G; Arias from Vivaldi’s Il Farnace and Handel’s Giulio Cesare. Ariodante, and Rinaldo; Vivaldi: Bassoon Concerto in F RV485; Bach: Violin Concerto in d; Concerto for harpsichord in d (transcr. by Rodolfo Richter). Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra; Rodolfo Richter, conductor and guest director; Mireille Lebel, mezzo; Dominic Tesori, solo bassoon. St. Paul’s Centre, Jeanne Lamon Hall, 427 Bloor St. W. 416-964-6337. $38 and up; $30 and up(sr); $15-$81(af). Also Sep 10,13,16,20, start times vary.

### Thursday September 15
- **16:00 noon:** Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts, Brock University. Imagining The City Festival. Pop Up Performance. Colin Maier; oboe and other instruments; Alexander Sebastian, accordion. 15 Artists’ Common, St. Catharines. 905-688-5550 x3817. Free community event. Also Sep 15,16,18.

### Friday September 16
- **17:12:** Noon: Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts, Brock University. Imagining The City Festival. Pop Up Performance. Colin Maier; oboe and other instruments; Alexander Sebastian, accordion. 15 Artists’ Common, St. Catharines. 905-688-5550 x3817. Free community event. Also Sep 15,17,19.

### Saturday September 17
- **12:12:** Noon: Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts, Brock University. Imagining The City Festival. Pop Up Performance. Colin Maier; oboe and other instruments; Alexander Sebastian, accordion. 15 Artists’ Common, St. Catharines. 905-688-5550 x3817. Free community event. Also Sep 15,16,18.

### Sunday September 18
- **12:12:** Noon: Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts, Brock University. Imagining The City Festival. Pop Up Performance. Colin Maier; oboe and other instruments; Alexander Sebastian, accordion. 15 Artists’ Common, St. Catharines. 905-688-5550 x3817. Free community event. Also Sep 15,16,18.

### Monday September 19

### Tuesday September 20
- **15:12:00:** Noon: Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts, Brock University. Imagining The City Festival. Pop Up Performance. Colin Maier; oboe and other instruments; Alexander Sebastian, accordion. 15 Artists’ Common, St. Catharines. 905-688-5550 x3817. Free community event. Also Sep 15,16,18.

### Wednesday September 21
- **16:07:** Tafelmusik. The Human Passions. Versacini: Ouverture No 5 in G; Arias from Vivaldi’s Il Farnace and Handel’s Giulio Cesare. Ariodante, and Rinaldo; Vivaldi: Bassoon Concerto in F RV485; Bach: Violin Concerto in d; Concerto for harpsichord in d (transcr. by Rodolfo Richter). Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra; Rodolfo Richter, conductor and guest director; Mireille Lebel, mezzo; Dominic Tesori, solo bassoon. St. Paul’s Centre, Jeanne Lamon Hall, 427 Bloor St. W. 416-964-6337. $38 and up; $30 and up(sr); $15-$81(af). Also Sep 16,19,20, start times vary.

### Thursday September 22
- **17:12:** Noon: Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts, Brock University. Imagining The City Festival. Pop Up Performance. Colin Maier; oboe and other instruments; Alexander Sebastian, accordion. 15 Artists’ Common, St. Catharines. 905-688-5550 x3817. Free community event. Also Sep 15,16,18.
A. Concerts in the GTA

905-688-5550 x3817. Free community event. Also Sep 15,16,17.


• Sep 18 7:00: Soundstreams Salon 21. Music and Poetry. Explore the connections between poetry and music through the lens of poet Federico García Lorca, including four short new works performed by Kristinza Szabó. Gardiner Museum, 111 Queen’s Park. 416-504-1282. Free; PWYC. Reserved seating and gal- lery preludes available.

• Sep 18 7:30-: 918 Bathurst Centre for Culture, Arts, Media & Education. Suspended Mountain Music. Coulman: Rocky Mountain Suite (premiere). Fanfarones double wind quintet. 918 Bathurst Centre, 918 Bathurst St. 416-538-0868. $20; $20 (sr/st); or PWYC; quintet. 918 Bathurst Centre, 918 Bathurst St. 416-538-0868. $25; $20 (sr/st); or PWYC; quintet.

• Sep 19 8:00: Tafelmusik. The Human Passions. Veracini: Ouverture No 6 in g; Arias from Vivaldi’s Il Farnace and Handel’s Giulio Cesare, Ariodante, and Rinaldo; Vivaldi: Bassoon Concerto in F RV485; Bach: Violin Concerto in d; Concerto for harpsichord in d (transcr. by Rodolfo Richter). Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra; Rodolfo Richter, violinist and guest director; Mireille Lebel, mezzo; Dominic Teresi, solo bassoon. Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, Jeanne Lamon Hall, 427 Bloor St. W. 416-964-6337. $38 and up; $30 and up (sr); $15-$81(st). Also Sep 16,17,18,20, start times vary.

Saturday September 19

• Sep 17 7:00: Canadian Music Centre. ATENT NEW MUSIC ENSEMBLE. Tsurumoto: Cursor 5; Fauré: Violin Sonata No.1 in A, 4th mvt; and others. Fiona Jane Wood, piano; Leslie Ting, violin; Hikori Tsurumoto, clarinet. 20 St. Joseph St. 416-861-6001 x201. $15.

• Sep 17 7:00: Toronto Tabla Ensemble. Chhandam Youth Dance Company. Legacy: In Honour of Pandit Chitresh Das. Harbourfront Centre, 235 Queens W. 416-793-4000. $25; $20 (sr/st); Brigantine Room.

• Sep 18 8:00: Acoustic Harvest. Garnett Rogers, singer-songwriter. St. Nicholas Anglican Church, 1512 Kingston Rd. 416-264-2235. $25/621 (adv).

• Sep 18 8:00: Continuum. At the Seams. Canadian compositions by former Léger Prize contenders and awarding of 2015 prize to Thierry Tidrow. World premières by Harman, Ristic, and Hall; Shaw: solo piano work. Carol Lynn Fujino, violin; Paul Widmer; cello; Anne Thompson, flute; Anthony Thompson, clarinet; Gregory Oh, piano; Ryan Scott, percussion; Brian Current, conductor. Harbourfront Centre Theatre, 231 Queens W. 416-824-4945. $35; $25 (sr/arts workers); $15(st). 7:15: pre-concert chat.

• Sep 18 8:00: Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts. Classic Album’s Live Series: The Beatles’ “Help.” Live re-creation of the complete Beatles’ classic album. Chris Frazer (John Lennon); Michael Brady (Ringo Starr); Scott MacFarlane (Paul McCartney); Paul Martin (George Harrison). 130 Navy St., Oakville. 905-815-2021. $65.

• Sep 18 8:00: Tafelmusik. The Human Passions. Veracini: Ouverture No 6 in g; Arias from Vivaldi’s Il Farnace and Handel’s Giulio Cesare, Ariodante, and Rinaldo; Vivaldi: Bassoon Concerto in F RV485; Bach: Violin Concerto in d; Concerto for harpsichord in d (transcr. by Rodolfo Richter). Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra; Rodolfo Richter, violinist and guest director; Mireille Lebel, mezzo; Dominic Teresi, solo bassoon. Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, Jeanne Lamon Hall, 427 Bloor St. W. 416-964-6337. $38 and up; $30 and up (sr); $15-$81 (st). Also Sep 16,17,18,20, start times vary.

Sunday September 20

• Sep 20 1:00: After Hours Big Band. In Concert. Flying Home; It Had Better Be Tonight; Just a Gigolo/Ain’t Got Nobody; No Scuffle Shuffle; Summer Samba; and other selections. Lion and Firkin, 1091 Gorham St., Newmarket. 905-851-0050 or 905-888-8460. Free.

• Sep 20 2:00: Canadian Music Centre. Bach to Bop - Kye Marshall and Don Thompson. Jazz and performance of original works by Kye Marshall, Kye Marshall, cello; Don Thompson, piano. 20 St. Joseph St. 416-961-6601 x201. $20; $15 (adv); $10 (CMC Members/Arts Workers).


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Canadian Visionaries I Beaumont/Sitariski

Schafer, Glück & more

Sept 20, 3pm Walter Hall rebeaumoont.com

• Sep 20 3:00: Shrinking Planet Productions. Canadian Visionaries I. Works by Schafer (premiere), Glick, Buczynski, Coulthard, and Pentland. Dr. Rëa Beaumont, piano; guest artist Stephen Sitarski, violin. Walter Hall’s Centre, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park. 647-955-5723. $35; $30 (adv); $25 (st).


• Sep 20 3:30: Tafelmusik. The Human Passions. Veracini: Ouverture No 6 in g; Arias from Vivaldi’s Il Farnace and Handel’s Giulio Cesare, Ariodante, and Rinaldo; Vivaldi: Bassoon Concerto in F RV485; Bach: Violin Concerto in d; Concerto for harpsichord in d (transcr. by Rodolfo Richter). Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra; Rodolfo Richter, violinist and guest director; Mireille Lebel, mezzo; Dominic Teresi, solo bassoon. Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, Jeanne Lamon Hall, 427 Bloor St. W. 416-964-6337. $38 and up; $30 and up (sr); $15-$81 (st). Also Sep 16,17,18,20, start times vary.

Sunday Sept 20, 3:00

WINDERMERE STRING QUARTET

on period instruments

The Haydn Effect

Haydn “Rider”

Beethoven Op. 127

Jadin Op. 1#1

Sunday Sept 20, 3:00

photo: Melissa Sung

AT THE SEAMS

Celebrating the Jules Léger Prize

September 19, 8PM

Harbourfront Centre Theatre, 231 Queens Quay West

Pre-concert chat: 7:15pm

$15 / $25 / $15

Jules Léger Prize-winning work by Thierry Tidrow

World Premieres by Chris Paul Harman, André Ristic & Alec Hall

continuummusic.org

September 18, 2015

Handel & Vivaldi
Sunday, September 20 at 7:30 pm
Trinity College Chapel, U of T
For tickets, call 416-408-0208 or visit music.utoronto.ca

Thursday September 24
• Sep 24 12:00 noon: Wilfrid Laurier University Faculty of Music. Music at Noon Concert Series. Maureen Forrester, mezzo; Dominic Corriveau, piano: Chenyi Yu, soprano. Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, 509 Dundas St. E. 416-700-5914. $20; $15(sr); $10(st/arts workers).

Monday September 21
• Sep 27 7:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Opening Night: Itzhak Perlman. Dukas: The Sorcerer’s Apprentice; Grieg: Suite No.1 from Peer Gynt; Bruch: Violin Concerto No.2.

Tuesday September 22
• Sep 22 12:00 noon: Canadian Opera Company. Vocal Series: Meet the Young Artists. Incoming young artists of the 2015/2016 COC Ensemble Studio. Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. 416-363-3821. Free. Admission on a first-come, first-served basis. Late seating not available.

The Music Gallery
345 Sorauren Ave. 416-822-9781. $20; $15(sr); $10(st). Post-show reception.

Friday September 25

Toronto Symphony Orchestra
• Sep 25 & 26: TSO presents Beethoven. Symphony 5. Jonathan Crow, violin; Joseph Johnson, cello; Peter Oundjian, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-599-3375. $33.75-$148. Pre-concert chat with Rick Phillips. Also Sep 26(8:00); 27(mat, George Weston Recital Hall).

Itzhak Perlman, violin; Peter Oundjian, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-599-3375. $33.75-$148. Pre-concert chat with Rick Phillips. Also Sep 26(8:00); 27(mat, George Weston Recital Hall).

Seven Deadly Sins
by Weill & Brecht
Sept 25 & 26
thefriendsofgravity.org

• Sep 25 8:00: Friends of Gravitiy. The Seven Deadly Sins. Music by Kurt Weill, text by Bertolt Brecht. Cabaret band and silent film projections. Stephanie Conn, vocals; Scott Gabriel, music director; Branko Džinović, accordion; Max Christie, clarinet; Scott Good, trombone. St. Bartholomew’s Anglican Church, 509 Dundas St. E. 416-700-5914. $25/$20(st). Also Sep 26. Tickets available in advance or at door.

The FriendsofGravity.org
• Sep 25 8:00: Gallery 345. The Art of the Piano. Chenyi Yu. Debut. Works by Bach, Paradisi, Beethoven, Ravel and Andriasso. 345 Sorauren Ave. 416-822-9781. $20; $15(sr); $10(st/arts workers).

• Sep 25 8:00: Music Gallery. In the Sea and The Visit. Improvised music with Middle Eastern and Persian influences. The Visit: Raphael Weinroth-Browne, cello; Heather Sita Black, vocals; In the Sea: Josh Zubot, violin; Tristan Honsinger, cello; Nicolas Caloia, double bass. The Music Gallery, 197 John St. 416-204-1080.

The Musicians In Ordinary for the Lutes and Voices
7:30PM September 25, 2015 | Madden Auditorium, Carr Hall, St. Michael’s College, 100 St. Joseph Street
~ Music from the Anne Boleyn Songbook ~
Motets and Chansons by Josquin and his contemporaries from a book once in the possession of a young Anne Boleyn, with contemporary dances from France for lute
Tickets $30 / $20 students and seniors

7:30PM September 28, 2015 | St. Basil’s Church, St. Michael’s College, 50 St. Joseph Street at Bay
~ Charpentier Te Deum ~
With music by Muffat and others
St. Michael’s Schola Cantorum directed by Dr. Michael O’Connor; orchestra led by Christopher Verrette
Admission free, donations welcome

The Wholenote.com
**Mooredale Concerts**

**Legendary Piano Variations Stewart Goodyear**

3:15pm Sunday September 27

Bach - Goldberg
Beethoven - Diabelli

Walter Hall, UofT

Tickets $40, under 30 $20
SUBSCRIBE & save 47%

416-922-3714 x103

www.mooredaleconcerts.com
### A. Concerts in the GTA

#### September 30

- **Oct 03 1:30:** Shen Yun: Shen Yun Symphony Orchestra. Rimsky-Korsakov: Scheherazade. Sarasate: Zigeunerweisen; and traditional works. Milan Nachev, conductor; Astrid Martig, concertmaster; Haolan Deng, soprano; Xiaochun Qi, erhu. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4255. $29-$109.
- **Oct 03 4:30:** Beach United Church. Jane Burnett and Friends. 140 Wineva Ave. 416-691-9082. Freewill offering.
- **Oct 03 7:30:** Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Prokofiev Symphony 7. Shostakovich: Suite for Various Orchestra; Gershwin: Piano Concerto in F; Prokofiev: Symphony No. 5. Kirill Gerstein, piano; James Gaffigan, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375. $33.75-$107. Also Oct 1(3:00).
- **Oct 03 7:30:** University of Toronto Faculty of Music at Midday Ensemble. Michael Church, Night on Fire; Gillingham: While the Dew is Still on the Roses; Markowski: City Trees; Grainger: Irish Tune; Grainger: Country Gardens; Tull: Sketches on a Tudor Psalm. Gillian MacKay, conductor. MacMillan Theatre, Edward Johnson Building, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-408-0208. $30; $20(sr); $10(st).
- **Oct 03 8:** Tafelmusik. Musik Mania. Zelenka: Hypochondria; Geminiani: Concerto grosso La Follia; Vivaldi: Concerto “Il mondo al rovescio”; Telemann: Orchestral Suite La Bizarre; and Bach: Brandenburg Concerto No.4. Cecilia Bernardini, violin. Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, Jeanne Lamon Hall, 427 Bloor St. W. 416-964-6337. $37 and up; $30 and up(s); $15-$81(st). Also Oct 12,4,6.(George Weston Recital Hall), start times and prices vary.

#### October 4

- **Oct 04 2:00:** Canadian Music Competition. Autumn Leaves: Music in the Country. Repertoire TBA. Artūras Mikšyskienė, piano; Emma Meirenkenen; violin; Sarah Ning, piano; Alexander Ning, piano; Catherine Zhou, piano; and others. Joshua Creek Heritage Art Centre, 1086 Burnhamthorpe Rd. E., Oakville. 905-338-7558. $25; $10(s). 
- **Oct 04 2:00:** Marylake Shrine. Songs to Our Mother Mary. Coro San Marco; Peskile String Quartet; soloists. Marylake Shrine, 13700 Keele St., King City. 905-833-5568. $15; $10(s). 
- **Oct 04 3:30:** Tafelmusik. Musik Mania. Zelenka: Hypochondria; Geminiani: Concerto grosso La Follia; Vivaldi: Concerto “Il mondo al rovescio”; Telemann: Orchestral Suite La Bizarre; and Bach: Brandenburg Concerto No.4. Cecilia Bernardini, violin. Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, Jeanne Lamon Hall, 427 Bloor St. W. 416-964-6337. $37 and up; $30 and up(s); $15-$81(st). Also Oct 12,4,6.(George Weston Recital Hall), start times and prices vary.
- **Oct 04 4:00:** Church of St. Mary Magdalene. Elgar’s Vesper Voluntaries. Andrew Adair, organ. Church of St. Mary Magdalene (Toronto), 477 Manning Ave. 416-543-7995. Free.
- **Oct 05 4:00:** Nocturnes in the City. Kripa Nageshwar; soprano and William Shookhoff, piano. Works by Dvořák and Kabářová. St. Wenceslaus Church, 496 Gladstone Ave. 416-481-7284. $25; $15(s). 
- **Oct 05 8:** Esprit Orchestra. Con Brio. Di Castris: Lineage; Widmann: Con Brio; Daniel: Sinfonia Concertante - Mehetapja Meeli Unistus (The Husband Killer’s Dream); Adés: Dances from Powder Her Face. Alex Pauk, conductor. Koerner Hall, Telus Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. $45 and up. 7:15 Pre-concert talk.

#### October 7

- **Oct 07 6:** The Cathedral Church of St. James. Cantatas in the Cathedral. Bach: Cantata, BWV5 and organ works. Julia Mor, soprano; Laura McAlpine, alto; Andrew Walker, tenor; David Roth, bass; Michael Bloss, organ. Cathedral Church of St. James, 65 Church St. 416-364-7865. PWYC. All donations go directly to the artists.
- **Oct 07 7:30:** University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Wind Ensemble. Copland: An Outdoor Overture; Saint-Saëns: Occident and Orient; Schuman: New England Triptych; Holst: First Suite in E-Flat; Forsyth: Wheel; Reynold: O Magnum Mysterium. Tony Gomes, conductor. MacMillan Theatre, Edward Johnson Building, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-408-0208. $30; $20(s); $10(st). 
B. Concerts Beyond the GTA


Wednesday September 2
- Sep 02 12:00 noon: Midday Music with Shigeru. Moedman family: Marie-Caroline Bourque, violin; Jeffrey Moedman, piano. Moedman children: Jonathan, Clara, and Paul, violin and piano. Hi-Way Pentecostal Church, 50 Anne St. N., Barrie. 705-726-1181. $5; free(student).

Wednesday September 9

Friday September 11
- Sep 11 7:00: All-Canadian Jazz Festival. Friday Night Concert in the Park: Union Duke. Memorial Park, 56 Queen St., Port Hope. 1-855-713-9310. Free.
- Sep 11 8:00: All-Canadian Jazz Festival. Friday Night Concert in the Park: Shukara SAIda. Memorial Park, 56 Queen St., Port Hope. 1-855-713-9310. Free.
- Sep 11 8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. Tenors. Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. Daniel Bartholomew-Poyser, conductor. Centre in the Square, 101 Queen St. N., Kitchener. 519-745-4711. $19 and up. Also Sep 11.

Saturday September 12

Sunday September 13
- Sep 13 12:30: All-Canadian Jazz Festival. Saturday in the Park: TD Young Jazz Showcase. Memorial Park, 56 Queen St., Port Hope. 1-855-713-9310. $20; $25 after Aug 31; $10(student). Valid ID needed for student rate.
- Sep 13 1:30: All-Canadian Jazz Festival. Saturday in the Park: Big Rude Jake. Memorial Park, 56 Queen St., Port Hope. 1-855-713-9310. $20; $25 after Aug 31; $10(student). Valid ID needed for student rate.

Friday September 18
- Sep 18 8:00: Association of Canadian Women Composers. Earth Music Concert. Music by 12 ACWC Composers. Works by Westerlies, Dave, little, Young, Weaver, Skerry, Pettigrew, Berry, Braden, Bender, Bordignon, Gimlin and Walker. Rebecca Campbell, vocals; Valerie Nunn, alto; Gord Burnett, baritone; Tilly Koyman, clari-net; Gayle Young, amanarth; Laurier Singers; Lee Willingham, conductor; and others. Conrad Grebel University College, 140 Westmount Rd. N., Waterloo. 519-576-1068. $5; free(student).

Saturday September 19
Elmer Iseler Singers in Concert

Performance Arts Pavilion, 3358 County Rd. 21, Haliburton. 705-457-3272. $30; $10(st).

Tuesday September 29

Tickets: theisabel.ca 613.533.2424 $24.25 to $44 / students 1/2 price

Mahler: Symphony No.4: Elgar: Violin Concerto
Alexis Hatch, violin, Julian Kuerti, conductor.
390 King St. W., Kingston. 613-533-2424, 245; $33(st).

Sunday October 4

Oct 04 7:00: Wilfrid Laurier University Faculty of Music - Sing for Justice 10th Anniversary Concert. WLU Choirs and community choral singers. St. Matthews Lutheran Church, 54 Benton St., Kingston. 519-884-1970 x4439. Entry by donation.


Oct 04 7:30: Cuckoo’s Nest Folk Club. NUA. New trio performing traditional music and original compositions drawn from Irish and Scottish traditions. James Law, fiddle; Graeme McCullivray, guitar; Jacob McCauley, bodhrán, Chaucer’s Pub, 122 Carling St., London.

120 Diner

120 Church St. 416-792-7725 120diner.com (full schedule)
Every Thursday 7-11pm Lisa Pardicelli’s Girls’ Night Out jazz jam with Peter Hill (piano), Ross MacIntyre (bass), PWYC.

Alleycatz

2409 Yonge St. 416-481-6685 alleycatz.ca
All shows: $5 unless otherwise indicated. Call for cover charge info.

Annette Studios

566 Annette St. 647-880-8378 annettesudios.com
Every Monday 9:30pm Jazz Jam w/ Jared Gold

Artword Arbar

15 Colborne St., Hamilton. 905-543-8512 artword.net (full schedule)
September 13 6:30 p.m. It’s What It Is. Doug Murphy (guitar), Tim Kulakovsky (guitar), Alanah Gunn (bass), Brian Roepean (drums), September 18 8:00 p.m. Rainy Day Trio (keys, voice), Doug Silka (guitar), Steve Foster (drums) September 24 6:00 p.m. Edmonton Quartet (voice) with Bob Shields (guitar), Clark Johnston (bass) PWYC.

Blakbird, The

812b Bloor St. West 416-347-7225 theblakbird.com (full schedule)
September 25 African DJelly.

Bloom

2315 Bloor St. W. 416-767-3131 bloomrestaurant.com
All shows: PWYC.

September 24 7:00 p.m. Alison Young (sax) Trio with Jeff McLeod (keys), Ross MacIntyre (bass) PWYC.

Castro’s Lounge

2116 Queen St. 416-619-8272 castrosounge.com (full schedule)
All shows: No cover/PWYC.

Every Wednesday 7:00 p.m. The Mediterranean Stars.

The Isabel

Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts, 201 King Street West, 519-685-0075.

JANE BUNNETT + MAQUEQUE CUBAN RHAPSODY

Tuesday Sept 29 @ 7:30 PM

Tickets: theisabel.ca 613.533.2424 $24.25 to $44 / students 1/2 price

Sunday, September 27


Tuesday, September 29

7:30 90: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. Beethoven Marathon. Music from King Stephen; Piano Concerto No.2 in E-Flat; Piano Concerto No. 5 in E-Flat. Stewart Goodyear, piano; Edwin Outwater, conductor; Centre in the Square, 101 Queen St. N., Kitchener. 519-745-4711. $19 and up. Also 2:30, Sept 25 8pm.

Monday, September 28


Sunday, September 20


Artword Arbar

924 College St. 416-792-4497 dominiononorqueen.com (full schedule)
All shows: PWYC.

September 17 9:00 pm John-Swayne Swingtet: Wayne Nakamura (guitar), Abbe Sholzberg (bass), John Farrell (guitar).

Fat City Blues

890 College St. 416-545-8282

C'est What

67 Front St. E (416) 867-9499 cestwhat.com (full schedule)

Chalkers Pub, Billiards & Bistro

244 Marlie Ave. 416-789-2531 chalkerspub.com (full schedule)

Theatre on Queen

500 Queen St. E 416-368-6893 dominiononqueen.com (full schedule)
Call for cover charge info.

Emmet Ray, The

924 College St. 416-792-4447 themetray.com (full schedule)
All shows: No cover/PWYC

September 3 9:00 pm John-Swayne Swingtet: Wayne Nakamura (guitar), Abbe Sholzberg (bass), John Farrell (guitar).

Fat City Blues

890 College St. 416-545-8282

Garage @ CSI Annex, The

720 Bathurst St. 416-619-4621

Livefromtheannex.com

September 1 ‘Live From the Annex’ monthly Cabaret $15 (adv).

Gate 403

403 Roncesvalles Ave. 416-588-2830 gate403.com (full schedule)
All shows: PWYC.

September 5 9:00 pm Howard Willett Blues Duo; 9:00 pm Kristin Lindell Jazz Band. September 2 9:00 pm Julem Fauls Blues Night. September 3 5:00 pm Amber Leigh Jazz Trio; 8:00 pm Jack Boland Quartet.

In the Clubs (Mostly Jazz)
Jazz jams can be a beautiful thing. To my mind, if a jazz jam is working as it should (as, for example, it does every Tuesday at The Rex), everyone involved should be primarily interested in three things: making good music, respecting each other, and above all, having fun. To me, fun is the launching point for everything. If you don’t have fun playing your instrument, you won’t have fun practising it. If you don’t have fun practising or playing, no one will have fun listening. Look at Oscar Peterson’s face. Was he having fun? I rest my case.

But unfortunately, and this is no big secret, some jazz jams can foster an unfortunate atmosphere of tension, intimidation, and competitiveness, which destroys the fun and undermines the spirit of the music. Artists of all sorts should absolutely care about the quality and integrity of their art. But at the end of the day, it is just art. When petty concerns of quality and integrity eclipse art’s purpose (whatever it is), that, to me, is tragic.

Luckily, the active jazz jams I am fortunate to regularly attend in this city evade these troubles. Generally they are welcoming and accepting of instrumentalists of all levels and walks of life – instrumentalists being the key word here; there has always been a sort of self-imposed segregation between vocalists and instrumentalists. And for reasons I don’t have the space or time to discuss here, it can be difficult for a vocalist to find a jam where they are welcomed and not underestimated or relegated to the sidelines.

Lisa Particelli was acutely aware of this, as most jazz singers are, when, more than a decade ago, she founded GNO: Girls’ Night Out (where gentlemen are welcome, too). GNO Jazz began its ten-plus-year run at The Cabbage Patch, a now-defunct pub that was located on Parliament St., where the Flying Beaver Pubaret existed until property damage forced that venue to close this past summer.

Although GNO has recently included a house band complete with piano, bass and drums, when it started on Parliament in January 2005, the house band consisted only of Richard Whitehouse on piano. When, more than a decade ago, she founded GNO: Girls’ Night Out (defunct), Dominion on Queen (currently closed for renovations), and many more, before settling on Chalkers Pub on Marlee, seven years ago.

Chalkers: It was during GNO’s run at Chalkers that Lisa Particelli was able to establish a scholarship fund to encourage and help young vocalists achieve their artistic and professional goals. Chalkers was also, during this time, a venue that hosted jazz greats like Oliver Jones, Jason Marsalis and Sheila Jordan – whom I had the great pleasure of meeting when I ushered for two of her concerts there. (In addition to being a genuine and adventurous performer, she is one of the sweetest, most infectiously charming people I’ve ever spoken with.)

The aforementioned Oliver Jones, incidentally, is indirectly responsible for the Chalkers piano. If you have seen, heard, or had the good fortune to play the wonderful piano on the Chalkers Pub stage, you have Oliver Jones, Don Thompson and Lisa Particelli to thank: “Oliver Jones’ attendance at my jam helped me to convince the former Chalkers owner that we needed a real piano,” Particelli explained. “We first got a Yamaha upright and later Don Thompson helped choose a Shigeru Kawai grand from Merriam Music which we all were sad to [say] goodbye to since leaving Chalkers after July 1st.”

In addition to all these wonderful things that happened to, because of, and around GNO over the last seven years at Chalkers Pub, Chalkers was where I discovered GNO. I came into it fairly late, both in the jam’s history and on any given Wednesday night, but when I got there, in addition to a great house band (Peter Hill, Ross MacIntyre and Louis Botos Sr., who is the granddaddy of the incredible Botos habitsgastropub.com (full schedule)

Harlem Restaurant
67 Richmond St. E. 416-368-1920
harlemrestaurant.com (full schedule)
All shows: 7:30-11pm (unless otherwise noted). Call for cover charge info.
Hirut Cafe and Restaurant
2050 Danforth Ave. 416-551-7560
Home Smith Bar – See Old Mill, The

A Sondheim Jazz Project
2261 Dundas St. W. 416-531-6604
hughssroom.com
All shows: 8:30pm (unless otherwise noted).
September 15 10am Toronto Ravel $15. September 17 Mike Peters (of The Alarm & Big Country) $30(adv)/$32.50(door). September 18 A Man called Wrycraft presents Share the Land – A Live Concert Tribute to The Guess Who $25(adv)/$30(door). September 19 Rita Chirielli $30(adv)/$32.50(door).

thewholenote.com

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family), I saw wonderful and important things happening: I saw people going up on stage with – or despite – performance anxiety; I saw professors and professionals mingling with students and novices, and perhaps most importantly, I saw an audience offering unconditional support to whomever was on stage.

Since GNO left Chalkers Pub after the very last Wednesday jam on Canada Day this year, GNO has been on hiatus. But at the end of July, during her monthly session at Morgans on the Danforth (on the last Sunday of every month, 2 to 5 pm) Particelli finally announced that GNO would be returning weekly, this time on Tuesdays from 7 to 11 pm, at 120 Diner on Church (Ori Dagan can be thanked for that booking). Unfortunately, there will be no longer be a drummer in the house band – and Louis Sr.’s services will be missed – but aside from that, everything will be the same. The same great bassist, the same great pianist. The same great vibes. And the same amazing community.

Particelli is excited about it, as we all are. “We look forward to seeing everyone in September,” she said.

Laura Swankey is the kind of singer who will offer up variations so tastefully you could swear they were in the published melody. I first encountered her last fall when she attended a monthly jam at Habits Gastropub hosted by drummer Harrison Vetro. When I went on stage, somebody called Stella by Starlight, somebody else counted it in, and we were off. Swankey began “The song of the robin sings…” and before the end of the head, I was a fan.

Since then, I’ve attended a bunch of her shows, and found that in addition to playing straight ahead gigs – in which she will play a mix of standards and originals – she also performs “free music” (the quotation marks are there because all music, free music included, has parameters, and I am a little skeptical of the notion that free music is all that separate from other music). At gigs where she joins and is joined on stage by people like Emily Denison (trumpet), Christine Duncan (voice), Andrew Furlong (bass) and others, music is played that I, to be frank, don’t fully understand. But I like it. Patterns do emerge, and my brain, being conditioned and steeped in tonal music, tries to make tonal sense of it; but ultimately, that isn’t the point.

At one such show, though, Swankey surprised me with a wonderful rendition of Smile; she sang it slowly, sleepily, over a drone created by the guitar, with the trumpet playing a challenging counterline. It was one of the most engaging live performances I’ve seen in this city. A description on paper would not do it justice. You’ll have to go and check her out in the clubs.

And luckily, this month, you can! Swankey will be performing a few days this month. On Saturday, September 12 at the CMC (Canadian Music Centre), she will be participating in the one-year-anniversary celebration of OPUS:TESTING, a bi-monthly composition workshop that started in June 2014. Swankey describes the event: “Six break-out groups from different disciplines [will come] together for the day to create some kind of improvisation art presentation.” The presentation is happening between 6 and 7 pm.

The next evening, she’ll be playing more straight ahead music at Gate 403 with Connor Walsh on bass and Leonard Patterson on drums - a chordless trio, in which the horn is a voice.

And finally, on September 16, Swankey will be appearing with The Wind and the Water, an a cappella quartet which will be performing music by Rachel Cardiello, as part of the Dead Dad’s Club premiere. The group also includes Aimee Butler, Belinda Corpuz and Danielle Knibbe. “These three women are fantastic musicians and I love singing and creating with them,” Swankey said. Details are forthcoming on The Wind and the Water's Facebook page.

These gigs will be coming on the heels of Swankey’s return from Banff, where she worked with Billy Hart, Ingrid Jensen, Vijay Iyer, Tyshawn Sorey and many more. I think we can be confident that the “amazing and life-changing” experiences she had in Banff will be reflected in her September gigs.

I have always enjoyed the types of singers who use their voices with...
the same improvisational spirit as any good horn player – Anita O’Day, Sarah Vaughan, and company. Swanley is in that company. She, like many singers, (including the aforementioned Sheila Jordan, who was studied with Lennie Tristano) studied with at least one instrumentalist; during her time at U of T, she studied with saxophonist, Toronto jazz scene fixture and shuffle Demone Mike Murley. Swanley describes those lessons as “Amazing! I felt very connected to him as a person and the way he taught me and approaches his playing. Mike is a very lyrical and soulful player.”

One more gig I need to mention. Sadly, I won’t be present at either of the two listed performances – at the Jazz Bistro September 28 and the KW Jazz Room September 19 – of saxophonist and arranger Bobby Hsu’s A Sondheim Jazz Project. But I feel the need to convince as many people as possible to go in my place. In addition to the fantastic musicianship of the band, and the tremendous voice of Alex Samaras, Hsu is doing something important with this group.

It’s a given that a lot of jazz standards have their origins in Broadway musicals (many of which failed, despite the success of the songs that later rose from the ashes). What Hsu’s group is doing, in bringing songs into the jazz world (from a composer whose work is not nearly present enough in it), is a natural extension of the tradition we all already knew existed. A Sondheim Jazz Project does it with dedication and love, and it’s very entertaining.

I cannot wait to see you all in the clubs this fall.
Beat by Beat | Jazz Stories

Bill Beard: Shooting for Pleasure

ORI DAGAN

Researching the subject of this month’s column, I found myself on the website of the late Herman Leonard, jazz photography master and pioneer, whose work provides a crystal clear window to the smoke-filled Greenwich Village of jazz’s golden age. To name a few examples, Leonard’s soulful stills of Ellington, Parker, Davis and Holiday provide definitive glimpses into each artist’s personality, one magical moment at a time. Google him and you will discover a remarkable career in which this man immortalized everyone from Art Blakey to Zoot Sims. Herman Leonard’s priceless prints are collector’s items that sell for top dollar, which is cool considering that some were shot for free in exchange for the price of admission.

Which brings me to my interview with Bill Beard, local shutterbug with a real good eye and a heart to match. His knees are not so good – as we sit to speak at a local Timmy’s he is readying himself for surgery, or playing an instrument and you want to capture their uniqueness. You photograph them. Everyone has their own special way of singing special things they do on stage, so you have to watch for a while, then so once you have the right equipment you can get past that. It’s also very important to know the person you’re photographing and the special things they do on stage, so you have to watch for a while, then you photograph them. Everyone has their own special way of singing or playing an instrument and you want to capture their uniqueness.

“Terry Clarke (drums) and Steve Wallace (bass).

A Month of Jazz Masters

- Sunday, September 13, 4:00 PM
  Jazz Vespers with the Mark Eisenman Quartet
  Mark Eisenman (piano), with Mike Murley (saxophone), Barry Elmes (drums) and Pat Collins (bass).

- Sunday, September 20, 4:00 PM
  Jazz Vespers with the Diana Panton Trio
  Diana Panton (vocals) with Reg Schwager (guitar) and Neil Swainson (bass).

- Sunday, September 27, 4:00 PM
  Jazz Vespers with the Roberto Occhipinti Quartet
  Roberto Occhipinti (bass) with Hilario Duran (piano), Luis Denis (saxophone), and Mark Kelso (drums)

- Sunday, October 4, 4:00 PM
  Jazz Vespers with the Bernie Senensky Quartet
  Bernie Senensky (piano) with Bill McBirnie (flute), Terry Clarke (drums) and Steve Wallace (bass).

Featuring some of Toronto’s best jazz musicians with a brief reflection by Jazz Vespers Clergy

- September 20, 4:30 pm
  A TRIBUTE TO ART BLAKEY by Brian Barlow (percussion), Alex Brown (trumpet), Robi Botos (piano), Scott Alexander (bass), Brian Barlow (drums)

- October 4, 4:30 pm
  AMANDA TOSSOFF QUARTET
  Chris Gale (saxophone), Jon Maharaj (bass), Brian Barlow (drums), Amanda Tossoff (piano)

Admission is free; donations are welcome.

St. Philip’s Anglican Church
25 St. Phillips Road (near Royal York + Dixon)
416-247-5181 • stphilips.net • free will offering

September 1 - Oct 7, 2015
The biggest thing is to watch. It’s like when you go out to do street photography. You don’t just get off the streetcar and start shooting. You always take the time to look around. It’s the same with jazz musicians. Certain bass players will play the bass a certain way, same with horn players and so on. So you’re always kind of waiting for them to do that thing that they do. You want to get that picture that captures their energy.”

**Red Hot Ramble** was the first band that inspired Beard, so they hold a special place in his heart – and a lot of space on his hard drive.

“They’re the most fun band I have ever photographed. They’re always having fun on stage. And they’re great people. I know them all now. They’re joking around when they play, and the music is so high energy, it’s contagious fun.”

The band’s drummer and one of its founding members, Glenn Anderson, sings Beard’s praises:

“Upon retiring, Bill took every opportunity he could, in every venue possible, to photograph Red Hot Ramble. We are a five-piece band, and Bill soon became our unofficial “sixth Rambler,” even traveling with the band to hone his photography skills. Over the past four years, it has been interesting and exciting to compare the parables in the evolution and growth of both Red Hot Ramble as a band and our friend Bill Beard as a photographer.”

Check out Red Hot Ramble’s monthly gig at The Rex Hotel on a Sunday afternoon from 3:30 to 6:30 and it will be difficult for you not to smile all the way home. Oozing charm with every note, Roberta Hunt plays double duty on piano and vocals, while swingin’ firecracker Alison Young on saxophones is an active volcano of fiery soul. Along with the solid-as-a-rock Anderson on drums, the band is made all the more red hot by trombonist Jamie Stager and co-founding bassist Jack Zorawski. I asked leading lady Hunt how the band got started:

“Red Hot Ramble was conceived by Jack Zorawski and Glenn Anderson. They imagined the sound of Alison Young and me engaging forces long before Alison and I had even met! They wanted to build on their love of traditional New Orleans jazz and blues by adding a saucier, bolder and funkier angle. Turns out their idea was a keeper! New Orleans music is about groove and ensemble playing while leaving room for individuals to share the spotlight. RHR truly is the sum of all parts, kinda like a spicy gumbo of music!”

**Pangman:** Another artist that Beard loves to photograph is vocalist Alex Pangman, who, fresh off a national tour, plays a few groovy gigs this month, from Rimouski to Gravenhurst, and a few Toronto stops too, including the Reservoir on September 10.

“I started photographing Alex with JAZZ.FM and later branched out to also photograph her when she sings with her husband Colonel Tom. She’s such a nice lady and so photogenic on stage. Always wears great outfits. And I love her music.”

Pangman is a great admirer of Beard as well: “It has been really interesting to watch Bill’s photographic style develop around his ardent appreciation of jazz music, musicians and imagery. More than that, he understands that live music is best. I fully believe he’s in the audience as much to enjoy the music as for the images. He’s there to make a visual record of live shows. We could send his images out in a spacecraft or time capsule so they could see what jazz looked like in Toronto in 2015.”

Indeed, you’ll always find Beard taking a moment to contribute to the tip jar in between framing his shots.

“The nice thing about it is that I don’t usually work for money...I just find that I come in – I cruise in – I’m one with the artist and I just shoot what I feel in the moment. There’s no preconceived idea about what I’m going to get, because then there’s a pressure that comes along with that. I like it to happen naturally. I’ve had years of corporate pressure. Now that I’m retired it’s nice to go in, watch them, shoot, and give the photos away to them. It’s my way of giving back. They’re giving me so much entertainment.”

Ori Dagan is a Toronto-based jazz musician, writer and educator who can be reached at oridagan.com.
up by something Lester Young suggested to him decades earlier: “Just a little tinkedy-boom for me, Arch, and we’ll go straight ahead, no fuss, no muss.”

In 1983, Archie hired me to play bass in the quartet he co-led with vibraphonist Frank Wright, with the redoubtable pianist Wray Downes aboard. Playing in this group was a large part of my musical education. Not only was I by far the youngest member – I was used to that – but in this case, I was also the only white member. There was never any friction, no overt or serious lecturing on racial issues from these veterans. However, their stories taught me that there were real racial barriers in Toronto of the kind I had previously (and naively) thought were restricted to the Jim Crow practices of the U.S.A. Archie had a sense of humour about this, as in the following story: He and I often backed up the great pianist Ray Bryant at the Montreal Bistro. Among my most prized photographs is one of me flanked by Ray and Archie. Just before Jim McBurnie pressed the button, Archie said “You’re the cream in the Oreo, Steve-o!” The resulting laughter is all over our faces in the photo.

I have very fond memories of playing in the Alleyne-Wright quartet and being accepted in it despite my young years. Because of Archie’s belief in classy presentation, we were surely the only group to play George’s in full tuxedos. I learned a great deal from Archie, not so much about the nuts and bolts of music, but more to do with comportment and the jazz history and traditions of Toronto, which he had absorbed so much of first-hand. He took joy not just in music-making, but in the personalities and stories of musicians, their eccentricities and individuality. He regaled me with tales about playing with such classic artists as Billie Holiday, Ben Webster and Lester Young: that they taught him not just about being professional, but about being a human being, about giving the music soul.

I well remember a special gig the quartet played for Ontario Lieutenant-Governor Lincoln Alexander at an event held to honour Prince Philip. It was very private, by invitation only, and both men got a lot of entertainment from it. Archie was greeted with great satisfaction and pride by Archie and his many friends and colleagues.

I regret that I didn’t see more of Archie in the last few years or in the days and weeks before he passed. But I’m happy to have known him so well, very grateful to have shared so many musical experiences with him and to have learned so much from them. I know I speak for many Toronto musicians when I say that I’ll miss Archie a lot and also in saying a big thank you to him for leaving the city’s jazz scene a much better place for his presence in it.

for the first time, Clarke remarked that Archie’s splashing ride cymbal, taste and simplicity reminded him of Billy Higgins – high praise indeed. Archie and I also did a very memorable tour of Ireland and Spain with Montreal-based pianist Oliver Jones in the fall of 1989, the beginning of which we barely survived. Archie and I flew together to Heathrow Airport, where we were to catch a connecting flight to Cork, home of the Guinness Jazz Festival. That very day the British Isles and the North Atlantic were ravaged by one of the worst storms to hit that area in the 20th century, with untold damage caused by ferocious high winds and lashing rain. Out of this chaos we eventually caught an Aer Lingus flight which attempted unsuccessfully to land at Cork and Shannon. I’ve never been as certain of my imminent death as during that flight. The plane was being tossed around like a soda cracker just above the rolling sea, which seemed sure to swallow us up whole. Finally the pilot managed a miraculous landing at Dublin Airport, to the most heartfelt and relieved ovation I’ve ever heard.

That was just the beginning of our adventures, however. We still had to get to Cork, and we had no idea where our instruments were. We found Oliver, and with the alto saxophonist Herb Geller in tow, they shared a rocky car ride to Cork with us. Fortunately we had a few days off to recover and eventually my bass and Archie’s drums showed up on the tarmac in Cork, but not his priceless K-Zildjian cymbals. They’d evidently been stolen and I felt terrible that such a huge and irreplaceable part of his sound had been taken so unjustly. Some local drummers lent Archie good cymbals for the rest of the tour and eventually he bought himself some new ones, never missing a beat. That was Archie all over, aware of the past but always looking ahead. I’ll long remember his ironic and good-humoured variation of the old Irish greeting – “Top of the mornin’, mothers!” Or something like that anyway.

In the years since, Archie and I played together less often and saw a little less of each other. Our relationship remained intact though; he was the type who kept his friends. He became more involved with his special projects, including the Evolution of Jazz Ensemble, which did a great deal to spread the awareness of jazz and Canadian black history in schools. He also formed Kollage, a band in which he gave many young musicians the opportunity to learn from his vast experience by playing under his direction. This passion for mentoring young musicians led to the establishment of the Archie Alleyne Scholarship Fund in 2003, to recognize and encourage excellent young black jazz students in Canada.

Archie Alleyne was an old-school musician who came up the hard way, self-taught and on the bandstand. He valued both classroom-oriented musical education as well as a more reality/experience-based approach – the AASF and Kollage allowed him to offer the best of both worlds. In late 2011, his vast contributions to this country’s society and culture were recognized with Canada’s highest civilian honour when he was named a Member of the Order of Canada. This was greeted with great satisfaction and pride by Archie and his many friends and colleagues.

Toronto bassist Steve Wallace writes a blog called “Steve Wallace - jazz, baseball, life and other ephemera” which can be accessed at wallacebass.com. Aside from the topics mentioned, he sometimes writes about movies and food.

Archie Alleyne
MUSIC THEATRE covers a wide range of music types: from opera, operetta and musicals to non-traditional performance types where words and music are in some fashion equal partners in the drama.

These listings have been sorted alphabetically BY PRESENTER. Some information here is also included in our GTA and Beyond The GTA listings sections, but readers whose primary interest is MUSIC THEATRE should start their search with this section.

This section is still in development. We welcome your comments and suggestions at publisher@thewholenote.com.

**Friends of Gravity.** The Seven Deadly Sins. Music by Kurt Weill, text by Bertolt Brecht. Cabaret band and silent film projections. Stephanie Conn, vocals; Scott Gabriel, music director; Branko Džinović, accordion; Max Christie, clarinet; Scott Good, trombone. St. Bartholomew’s Anglican Church, 509 Dundas St. E. 416-700-5914. $25/$20(st). (end run).

**Shoestring Opera Choir.** For more information contact the ETCeteras at: the ET Ceteras, 1-800-567-1600. For information and to book an audition: 519-821-8574; guuelphyouthsingers.com. The program includes: Stephen Currie, music director; Branko Džinović, accordion; Max Christie, clarinet; Scott Good, trombone. St. George’s United Church, 662 Guelph Line, Burlington. $20. Weekdays evenings from 7:15 to 9:30. St. Christopher’s Church, 662 Guelph Line, Burlington. Please contact director Gary Fisher at 905-632-2085 or glfisher63@pc.gc.ca. Auditions for openings in the strings, winds, brass and percussion sections for the upcoming 2015/16 season. Auditions held on Saturday September 12. Sadler House, 75 George St. Peterborough. For more information and to book an audition time: 705-772-0015; thekyo.org.

**The Strings Attached Orchestra Young Composers Initiative 2016**

How does an unknown young composer get a break and get their music performed in public?

Conductor Ric Giorgi and The Strings Attached Orchestra have one answer. The SAO, a community orchestra of talented adult amateur musicians based in the Toronto area, recently announced a competition to encourage young composers across Canada to compose a work for string orchestra or any combination of three or more orchestral string instruments (violin, viola, cello and string bass).

The Young Composer Initiative 2016 has been established to give young Canadian composers, up to and including the age of 16 as of June 5, 2016, the opportunity to have their music played by the SAO’s final concert of the season, June 5, 2016. Composers must be Canadian citizens or landed immigrants.

Each entrant must make every compositional decision and actually write the notes of any work submitted but their teachers may serve as mentors and assist in the technological and logistical aspects of preparing and sending submissions. Teachers may not edit or arrange the works submitted. Works must be less than five minutes in length. Entrants may submit only one entry to SAO’s YCI 2016. All submissions are due by February 28, 2016. Entries will be judged by a five-person panel headed by music director Giorgi and composer-in-residence Charles Heller.

And how do composers compose music? Tchaikovsky joked that he composed “sitting down.” Haydn said: “Musical ideas pursue me to the point of torture. I cannot get rid of them.” Whether you write at a desk, on a laptop in bed or on your phone during dinner, this is your chance to share your work with a live audience.

Detailed submission information and complete contest rules and regulations can be found on the SAO website: stringsattachedorchestra.com/yci-2016/. Email inquiries should be directed to: yci2016@stringsattachedorchestra.com.

**Auditions**

- **Burlington Civic Chorale Singers.** Choristers in the area are invited to audition. For over 21 years the choir has performed a wide selection of music that has included classical, baroque, opera, folksongs, Broadway and vocal jazz. As we start another new and exciting season, we invite you to share your singing talents with us. Rehearsals begin in September and are held Tuesday evenings from 7:15 to 9:30. St. Christopher’s Church, 662 Guelph Line, Burlington. Please contact director Gary Fisher at 905-632-2085 or glfisher63@gmail.com; burlingtoncivicchorale.ca.

- **Guelph Youth Singers.** Children and youth between the ages of six and eighteen who love to sing are invited to audition. For more information and to book an audition: 519-821-8574; admin@guelphyouthsingers.com; guelplyouthsingers.com.

**Competition**


**Festivals, Fairs, Festivities**

- **Sep 01 - 27:** Tues, Wed, Fri & Sat.

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c. Music Theatre

E. The ETCeteras

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**Competition**


**Festivals, Fairs, Festivities**

- **Sep 01 - 27:** Tues, Wed, Fri & Sat.
Yiddish, Hebrew and English. Singer David Wall and pianist Marilyn Lerner lead our holiday music selections. Winchevsky Centre, 585 Cranbrooke Ave. 416-789-5502; winchevskycentre.org $50 (adults); $20 (children aged 3-12); $25 (unwaged/students aged 13-24). Advanced reservations recommended.

Tours

● Sep 09 6:30: Heritage Toronto. Music on the Yonge St. Strip. Discover the music history of Toronto’s Yonge Street, beginning in the 1950s. Visit the sites of famous clubs like The Colonial, Friar, and Le Coq D’Or, and concert venues such as Massey Hall and the Eaton Auditorium. Hear stories about Oscar Peterson, Ronnie Hawkins, Glenn Gould and many more. Leader: music journalist Nichola Jennings. Length: approx. 1 1⁄2 hours; flat; cultural, historical, architectural; difficulty: flat pavement, busy street. Note: This is an exterior tour only. Location details available upon registration. To register: heritageto.com Free.

Workshops

● Sep 09 8:00: Singing OPEN. Online Rehearsal. Toronto’s LGBTQ+ choir. 519 Community Centre Ballroom, 519 Church St. singingout.com
● Sep 09 7:15-10:00pm: Etobicoke Centennial Choir. Come Sing With Us. Come out to sing with the choir during this open rehearsal, meet the conductor and choralists and find out what the ECC has to offer.

Singing With Orpheus!

Robert Cooper, Artistic Director

Seeking a vibrant and welcoming choral community?

Want to sing with an outstanding choral conductor?

Looking for a choral experience with a difference?

Rehearsals: 7 p.m. Tuesdays at Yorkminster Park Baptist Church 1585 Yonge Street

Interested? For auditions contact: Helen Coxon at orpheuschoir@sympatico.ca or call 416-420-9660

Humber Valley United Church, 76 Anglesley Blvd. 416-622-6923; etobicokecentennialchoir.ca


● Sep 14 19: COBA Collective of Black Artists. Open House. Try out any of our classes from either the Children’s Dance and Drumming or Open Dance Class programs at no charge. Children’s classes: Fri 4:30-7:30 and Sat 9:00am-4:30; Open Dance classes: Mon to Thurs from 6:30-7:30. 585 Dundas St. E. #130. 416-658-3111; info@cobainc.com $20 per session.

● Sep 22 7:30-9:00: Toronto Concert Band. Open Rehearsal. Adult musicians from across Toronto are invited to sit in with the band as it kicks off rehearsals for Concert Season #2. Amateur community players, post-secondary students and professionals who want to play in the community are all welcome. Lambton Kingsway Junior Middle School, 525 Prince Edward Dr. Please register: 416-479-2941; torontoconcertband.com

AUDITIONS & OPPORTUNITIES

AUDITIONS FOR TENORS & BASSES! The VOCA Chorus of Toronto, a dynamic and welcoming community choir is looking for TENORS and BASSES for their upcoming season. Rehearsals are Mondays, 7:30 - 9:30 pm at Eastminster United Church (Chester subway). For more info, and to set up an audition, contact Artistic Director Jenny Crober at www.vocachoirs.ca (using the ‘Contact Us’ tab) or 416-463-8225.

BASS OR TENOR SOLOIST / SECTION LEADER NEEDED for St. John’s United Church in downtown Oakville beginning September 2015. Commitment is Thursday evenings 7:30-9:00 pm and Sundays 9:30-1:30am with occasional additional sessions. Pay is per call. Submit applications to musicsearchstjohns@hotmail.com

THE CELTIC FIDDLE ORCHESTRA OF SOUTHERN ONTARIO is looking for additional musicians: violin, viola, cello, bass and flute. We practice twice a month on Sunday afternoon at the QECCC in Oakville. Please contact Byron Grant at 905-469-1417 or email cfoso.exec@gmail.com

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Mary Lou Fallis

Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre

MARY LOU FALLIS

The WholeNote is having a 20th anniversary concert and party for their readers and supporters on Friday September 25. And last spring I was asked by publisher David Perlman if I would co-host the grand occasion with him.

“Sure, that sounds like fun. Where will it be?”

“Trinity-St. Paul’s”

“Oh, of course,” said I. “Perfect.”

Practically everyone in town knows TSP at 427 Bloor St. W. (or Trinity-St. Paul’s United Church and Centre for Faith, Justice and the Arts to give it its full name). It is the home stage of the internationally known baroque orchestra, Tafelmusik and of the stellar early music ensemble, Toronto Consort. The building is also home to a vibrant United Church Congregation with a strong community history since 1875 and impressive social justice bona fides. The 120-strong Viva! Youth Singers rehearse and present their concert season there.

There is a regular salsa lesson dance group – the most diverse bunch of people assembled anywhere in the city – that keeps everyone in the building dancing in the halls. The Mirvish organization and lots of other companies and agents use the hall for important auditions. Sometimes there is a group of young auditionees warming up vocally in the front hall or doing last-minute yoga stretches, hoping to quell the nerves.

With the advent of the new stage, Soundstreams and the Toronto Symphony have used the sanctuary cum theatre/stage for smaller concerts. There are poetry readings, AA groups, play readings, ballet classes, kids’ music theatre and a Shakespearean acting company for teenagers. There are often important all-candidates meetings during elections and big press conferences. The last one with a lot of buzz was for Omar Khadr before his release from Guantanamo. The Annex Singers are the neighbourhood seniors’ choir; they rehearse with gusto every Thursday afternoon. My personal favourite is the Morris Dance troupe which has met in the gym weekly for decades. So goofy with the white costumes and the little bells and their very earnest approach to the historical significance of their art.

Full disclosure: Trinity-St. Paul’s is my home church and I have attended it since babyhood. My teaching studio is there and I live just around the corner. My paternal grandfather was the minister in the 1930s and my maternal grandmother, Jennie Bouck, was the church organist.

(When I was ten I used to turn pages for her postlude after church.)

My dad was chair of the church board, my other grandfather, church treasurer; great-grandfather had a huge women’s Bible class. Toronto Consort’s David Fallis is my first cousin. Our family was, and still is, involved there.

This venerable old spot has always had a central place in the city’s musical life. The sanctuary itself was kind of overwhelming to children, full of dark wood and, as I remember, very formal and large. It had a huge pulpit and choir, and back then, a hell-raising preacher, Dr. Crossly Hunter, who scared me to death. I sang my first solo from the left balcony when I was nine and my grandmother played the organ from way down below. She seemed so far away. A seminal experience and I can still remember the words!

“Little boy Jesus plays with me,
Down on the sands where the seas run high,
Where’er the wind blows there run we,
Little boy Jesus and I.”

Such history in this place! The sanctuary could hold more than 1000 people and was mostly full when Trinity Methodist Church was the largest Protestant congregation in North America in the 1920s and 30s. The master of music at Upper Canada College, John Linn, was the choir leader. Sir Ernest MacMillan, TSO conductor and eminence grise, gave the opening recital on the new Casavant organ in 1936. I hasten to add I wasn’t there, but my mother, who was soprano soloist that night, said it was a city-wide occasion – the mayor and several civic bigwigs were in attendance.

Some of the choir soloists over the years have had national and international careers and provided the congregation with fond memories of high watermark performances on a Sunday morning: Mary Morrison, Lois Marshall, Jon Vickers, Margo MacKinnon, Adrienne Pieczonka, Jane Archibald, Charlotte Burrage, Iain MacNeil and Justin Walsh, to name a few. Ms. Pieczonka blew the roof off one Sunday. There were some
very surprised parishioners who knew nothing of her world status, nor that she and her partner attend often with their daughter. Jane Archibald has gone on to be the lyric coloratura of her generation, singing in every major opera house in the world.

Trinity-St. Paul’s has undergone at least two major renovations during the last 60 to 70 years. The chancel and choir are now on a large stage at the front, with a moveable organ and a beautiful, donated Steinway grand piano on it. All sorts of concerts take place there. The walls are no longer dark. A handsome pine now surrounds the congregants/audience and all the stained glass remains. There is neither an elevated pulpit nor huge throne-like chairs at the front, reflecting a timely and less hierarchical approach to theology and life.

The walls of the sanctuary are in the round but don’t reach out to the walls like they did before, making for a more intimate feeling.

The old hard pews have all gone to good homes and the new seating is both fixed, flexible and much more comfortable. The other day I saw two very long Trinity-St. Paul’s pews in the cafe of the Centre for Social Innovation building! I have one small one in my kitchen.

So the ambiance at TSP is much less penitential than it was – much lighter and even joyous. Hallways now surround the smaller sanctuary area allowing space for offices and meeting rooms. The old memorial room is now a well-used mirrored dance studio. The old chapel – built in 1965 – is a multi-purpose room for meetings, seminars, smaller church services and rehearsal space.

In the breaks from my teaching over the years, I’ve snuck into marvellous Tafelmusik rehearsals, an Opera Atelier sitzprobe for The Marriage of Figaro, an Emma Krkby spectacular. I’ve listened to a great St. Matthew Passion conducted by Helmuth Rilling in front of an overflow crowd. A presentation of Benjamin Britten’s Noye’s Fludde, with participants as young as four in the animal chorus of singers and dancers, was a thundering success. Brad Ratzlaff conducted an astounding, sold-out, four-performance run to celebrate Trinity-St. Paul’s 125th anniversary.

Some highlights from this past season included a lecture by Paul Martin on Aboriginal education, a moving liturgical dance performed by members of the L’Arche Community, a stellar reading of the Dickens’ A Christmas Carol with RH Thompson et al. and an exciting and colourful performance by the Toronto Consort of the reconstructed Play of Daniel, translated by David Fallis and performed by a huge cast of singers, dancers, and instrumentalists. Truly stunning and a huge event for the worldwide community of musicologists.

It is, as they say, a happening place! If you hang about for a day or so, when the building is open (seven days a week, ten hours a day) you will see and hear musicians of all stripes, rehearsing and performing. Many of them are the movers and shakers of Toronto’s vast music scene.

And so, this is the perfect spot for the 20th anniversary celebration of The WholeNote and its faithful service to the music community. See you there!

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**MUSICAL LIFE: TO THE WHOLENOTE**

To The WholeNote magazine, ...

**How I met my teacher**

As I sat thinking what I had accomplished on my clarinet, I realized I was just spinning my wheels – not going anywhere. I was playing in my comfort zone and in my tempo zone. I was 81 years of age and wanted to improve. But how? I had no idea”

One day as I was reading The WholeNote magazine – the best source of what’s happening in the local music scene – I spotted an advertisement for music lessons on clarinet, saxophone and flute. The teacher’s name is Michele Jacot. “Well,” I said to myself, “why not – let’s talk” and we did. I have had other teachers over the many years, but none – and I mean none – were more knowledgeable than Michele Jacot.

She explained her method of teaching and what she expected of me. Her teaching aids were hung on her studio walls. There wasn’t a question that she could not answer. I knew then that Michele was going to be my clarinet teacher for life – not sure how long that was going to be; Michele didn’t know the answer either.

I had finally stumped her.

Well time flies and a year has gone by under the guidance of Michele. I recall a time when I was really having trouble and frustration in my lessons, she said something to me that I will never forget. “Sol,” she said, “I’m on your side.” I knew I had the right teacher.

It was my lucky day when I decided to take clarinet lessons from Michele. I wish to give a huge thanks to The WholeNote magazine. You made it all happen. Thank you. °°°

**Sol Robins**

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Mary McGeer is artistic director of the Talisker Players chamber music concert series. She’s also general manager and principal violist of the larger flexibly sized Talisker Players Choral Music Orchestra dedicated to collaborating with choirs. McGeer also freelances with diverse ensembles in and around Toronto, from baroque to new music. Principal violist of the Huronia Symphony from 1998 to 2010 and a member of the Phoenix String Quartet for ten years, she is also a teacher and chamber music coach.

The Talisker orchestra came first, arising out of a one-off gig in 1995 where McGeer assembled a chamber orchestra to perform with a choir. Today the ensemble is an accordion-pleated marvel that shrinks and grows according to the needs of the repertoire. It’s made up of fine working musicians who have a shared appreciation for music that has words.

Talisker Players chamber music concerts, “Where Words and Music Meet,” came a bit later. Their four-concert series of chamber performances celebrates its 20th anniversary this year at Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre (as does The WholeNote). Talisker’s themed concerts of works for voice and chamber ensemble are usually narrated by the photo and the context reflect both an early hood photo being taken – she was barely two. But always an engaging blend of vocal and instrumental music, poetry, and theatre.

Mary McGeer doesn’t remember her childhood photo being taken – she was barely two. But the photo and the context reflect both an early interest in literature and an environment that nurtured it.

McGeer grew up in Arvida, Quebec, in the Saguenay Valley. After high school she went to McGill University where she studied history and political science, later completing a diploma in performance at Université Laval. She studied viola in Toronto and New York.

Your absolute earliest specific memory of hearing music? The records my parents played: there were children’s records (Burl Ives...) also opera, and lots of Broadway. I still know all the words to several Broadway musicals. Opera – not so much.

Were there other musicians in your childhood family? No – they’re pretty much all scientists.

How did hearing music figure in your childhood life? Radio and records at home, music at school and in church, but not much live performance. Occasionally we would hear touring performers in recital.

First memories of making music? Student recitals – also the annual Jeunesse Musicales competitions, always nerve-racking.

Did you sing as a child? No, other than hymns in church.

What was your first instrument, and why? Piano. There were very few teachers of other instruments in that rather remote area at the time.

What do you remember about a first music teacher? Mme. Partous – I still have a vivid picture of her. She was a fine musician and gave her students an excellent grounding in theory and history, as well as technique.

Your first experiences of creating music with other people? There was not much opportunity in that part of the world. The closest would be accompanying my church choir.

What do you remember about your first times performing for an audience? I was always nervous about performing – possibly in part because I tended to be a crammer in preparation. As a youngster, I always preferred sight-reading – or fooling around on the instrument – to serious practice. That did change later on.

What do you think are the roots of your later appetite for staged works and multi-disciplinary performance – the words-and-music aspect of what Talisker does? It would be my life as a bookworm, probably. Also, a lifelong interest in vocal music, and the joy of accompanying it, whether it’s choirs or solo singers.

Did you remember when you began to think of yourself as a career musician? Not really, it sort of snuck up on me... .

You are invited to read an expanded version of this interview online at thewholenote.com.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR WINNERS! HERE’S WHAT THEY WON

Renovated Rhymes (Oct 27 and 28, at 8pm) is Talisker Players’ first concert of the 2015/16 season, at Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre. Mary McGeer says it’s a fun program inspired by playful wordsmiths like Ogden Nash and Dennis Lee, and featuring tenor James McLennan and baritone Doug MacNaughton – both terrific singers who are also great comic actors. Ross Manson is the evening’s actor/reader. There is a pre-concert talk at 7:30pm. For all the intriguing and entertaining program details visit taliskerplayers.ca.

WholeNote readers Bastien Woolf and Gwynn Arsenaульт each win a pair of tickets.

Music’s Children gratefully acknowledges Thom, Kay and Peter.
The Future of Canadian Music, Back Then

DAVID JAEGER

Forty years ago, in late 1975, John Peter Lee Roberts, who had been in charge of CBC Radio Music since 1964, left that position, leaving behind an impressive legacy of programming leadership. In his 11 years as Radio Music head, Roberts had commissioned 160 new works by Canadian composers. Among these was R. Murray Schafer’s Apocalypsis, now well known from its revival in this year’s Luminato Festival. Originally commissioned as a 60-minute choral work for the Elmer Iseler Singers, the work that Schafer delivered was twice that length and much more complex and ambitious, incorporating 12 choirs, soloists, sound poets, orchestra, electronics and even mime artists.

This commission gave Schafer an opportunity to proclaim his artistic vision to the nation via network radio, and to the world, through international program exchanges with public broadcasters in other countries. It was perhaps the most grandiose of those numerous commissions, but it shared the same objective as those offered to a wide range of Canadian composers, from Violet Archer, Norma Beecroft and Jacques Hétu to Ann Southam, Harry Somers and John Weinzweig. This was a way for the CBC to fulfill the objective, as defined by the Broadcasting Act, to “encourage the development of Canadian expression by providing a wide range of programming that reflects Canadian attitudes, opinions, ideas and artistic creativity.”

Roberts, and those leaders of the Radio Music department who preceded him, held the authority and responsibility to grant commissions to those Canadian composers they felt would best fill the needs of programming. The CBC Archives show that they commissioned hundreds of new works in a wide range of genres and styles between 1938 and 1975, many of them, such as Somers’ Gloria (1962), becoming popular enough to be designated “Canadian Classics.”

The impact of these commissions was significant, firstly on the lives and careers of the composers who received them – not only did they provide income and national broadcasts on the network – but furthermore as expressions of Canadian musical styles and new directions in composition in this country.

Ironically, by the time Schafer’s Apocalypsis was given its premiere in 1980, John Roberts had moved on in his career, becoming director general of the Canadian Music Centre. Following his departure, authority and responsibility for commissioning original music was passed to the program makers themselves. The argument was that if this content was intended to enhance programming, then the program makers themselves should have the opportunity to make programs with established composers such as Schafer, Somers and Weinzweig. Clearly any production that commissions new works declares its vision of the future. To do so with the younger generation of creative artists was to start a new chapter in our cultural life.

Here are three examples: In 1978, the 30-year-old composer Marjan Mozetich complained that he was fed up with musical modernism and declared his intention to do something about it. We offered him a commission for Two New Hours to prove his point. The work he created, a delightfully tonal and exuberant composition titled Dance of the Blind, did more than offer a new approach. It was, for Mozetich, a watershed composition that strikingly displayed a new romantic, accessible style that defined his artistic voice. Mozetich said that the opportunity to write this piece for the CBC gave him the chance to clearly define where he wanted to go with his music. “There was no turning back,” he said, after the work was broadcast on the national network. Mozetich added: “If an artist wished to highlight an aspect of their work, this was the moment to do it!”

A young Vancouver-born composer named Alexina Louie had spent the 1970s in Los Angeles, first studying composition and then teaching and trying to find work writing music. But she found few opportunities in Los Angeles for either commissions or performances, and in 1980 she returned to Canada, settling in Toronto. Within months of her return she was offered a CBC commission to compose a work for accordionist Joseph Macerollo, harpist Erica Goodman and percussionist Beverley Johnston. The successful premiere and broadcast of her composition Refuge gave her confidence that she could make a career as a professional composer. It also plugged her into three of the most active performers in the Canadian new music community. “I became a professional in L.A.,” she said. “But returning to Canada provided a whirlwind of opportunity to develop my creativity.”

Brian Cherney was entering mid-career as a composer when Two New Hours was created. He accepted a commission for his String Trio, a work that also set him on a new artistic direction. “I knew the piece had to be damn good and interesting but it sort of developed more sophistication and complexity as it went along in the creative process,” Brian said. “I think that one could say that the commission itself made me feel that I had to be as creative and imaginative as possible, so I tried to be just that. I should say that all of my CBC commissions inspired me to write what I consider to be my best pieces – the String Trio, the Third String Quartet, Illuminations, La Princesse lointaine.”

Forty years ago, when Sunter succeeded Roberts at CBC Radio Music, CBC Radio Music had positioned itself at the very centre of an astonishing creative storm. The musical legacy that remains from that period is a rich one. These examples should encourage current instigators of commissioning projects to see that their investment in new works shapes the future of music.

David Jaeger is a composer, producer and broadcaster based in Toronto.
WITH THE LATE Labour Day this year at times it has seemed happily like an endless summer. Unfortunately, with the opening of the CNE I am reminded it’s time to get my nose back to the grindstone and tell you about some of the most interesting discs to come my way over the past three months.

First up is a first-class documentary about Canada’s contemporary diva Barbara Hannigan, last seen in these parts as the featured soloist in works by George Benjamin and Hans Abrahamsen at last spring’s New Creations Festival hosted by the TSO. Barbara Hannigan – Concert & Documentary (Accentus Music ACC 20327) was filmed in August 2014 at the Lucerne Festival where Hannigan was artiste étoile, singing, conducting and giving masterclasses. The DVD includes concert footage with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra featuring an overture by Rossini, three Mozart arias, Ligeti’s surprisingly traditional Concert Românesc, Faure’s Pelléas et Mélisande and Hannigan’s signature piece, Mysteries of the Macabre also by Ligeti.

Hannigan is certainly not the first singer to turn to conducting, but I’m not aware of any in the modern era that have undertaken to do both at once. We get insights into the development of this dual career and the particular challenges it offers in the candid documentary I’m a creative animal – Barbara Hannigan directed by Barbara Seiler. We get intimate glimpses of the artist as an accomplished chef (she travels with her own kitchen knives), going for daily runs with pop music in her ear buds, on horseback and in yoga class, but first and foremost as a diligent and dedicated musician with an incredible breadth of vision and accomplishment.

We hear Hannigan in her own words discussing growing up in rural Nova Scotia, her studies at the University of Toronto where her mentor (Mary Morrison, although unnamed in the documentary) opened her eyes and ears to the world of contemporary music, the trials and tribulations of living out of suitcases, the dangers of being revered as a “superhuman” and her aspirations for the future. We also hear from members of the Mahler Chamber Orchestra about working under her direction and from her vocal coach about fine tuning and maintenance of Hannigan’s superb vocal instrument. This 45-minute portrait is a stunning look at a stunning artist and consummate musician. Not to be missed. Concert note: Barbara Hannigan returns to the stage at Roy Thomson Hall in the dual role of soloist and conductor in music of Nono, Haydn, Mozart, Ligeti and Stravinsky with the TSO on October 7 and 8.

In the tradition of full disclosure I will say that Canadian pianist and musicologist Dr. Réa Beaumont is a colleague whom I often encounter through the activities of the Toronto New Music Alliance (with which I am affiliated in my position as general manager of New Music Concerts) and who is an occasional contributor to WholeNote’s DISCoveries section. As a matter of fact you can find her impressions of the new Gryphon Trio compact disc further on in these pages.

That being said I want to tell you about A Conversation Piece. a CD that was released late last year by Beaumont’s Shrinking Planet Productions (reabeaumont.com) featuring works by R. Murray Schafer, Jean Coulthard, John Weinzieg and Maurice Ravel. Of particular interest to me is the first track, Beaumont’s own Shattered Ice, which combines compositional prowess with her concern for the environment in an ominous work depicting the fragile ecosystem of the Canadian Arctic and the dangers posed by human intrusion.

The first movement of John Weinzweig’s 1950 Suite for Piano No.2 gives the disc its title. This dialogue between the two hands is followed by a sombre lullaby and a brief, lively and angular toccata. Coulthard’s contemplative Threnody is followed by Polytonality, Schafer’s first published work, a sort of homage to Poulenc. Netscapes (2000) is one of Weinzweig’s very last works, evidently inspired by the experience of browsing the Internet and discovering a number of melodic fragments, which are juxtaposed in the composer’s distinctive wry style.

The second half of the disc is devoted to Ravel’s five-movement Miroirs (1905), an extended work which heralded the French Impressionist movement. It is a perfect companion piece for the selected Canadian repertoire, with its poetic and visual images transferred to the keyboard. Beaumont’s touch is well suited to the delicate textures and the intricate passages as well as the quirky rhythms that surface in the Ravel and Weinzweig selections. The program is well balanced and the sound is immaculate thanks to the production by David Jaeger and the team at Glenn Gould Studio.

It is always a treat to discover a new Canadian ensemble and this summer I was introduced to the Clearwater String Quartet through its recording of music by Michael Matthews (Ravello Records RR7910 ravello-records.com). This is not to say that Clearwater is recently formed, but simply that I had not been exposed to their accomplished playing before. Comprised of the principal string players of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra they have been performing as a quartet for more than a decade and have a busy schedule as the in-house ensemble for the Winnipeg Chamber Music Society. Matthews is also an integral part of the Winnipeg music scene, having been a founding director of Groundswell, the contemporary music organization which resulted from an amalgamation of the city’s new music groups back in 1991. He recently retired Professor Emeritus from the Faculty of Music at the University of Manitoba and also served as Composer-In-Residence with the Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra from 2002 to 2004.

In the extended (six-page) essay by Max Fleischman in the accompanying booklet we are told that Matthews is a voracious reader and a listener whose compositions reflect this. He goes on to say that “judged against the prevailing 21st-century aesthetic this literateness tars Matthews as deeply conservative in his ethos and art. In particular, his music finds itself at odds both with the rancorous anti-intellectual streak in North American culture and with its sense of ‘cool.’ This music is serious. It is complicated. It is human, and speaks in the miraculous and improbable language that Europe has been working on since Gregorian times... This music is earnest. It demands (and deserves!) multiple hearings. And it is sober, speaking the language of Holocaust, totalitarianism and uncertainty, and speaking it like a native, or at least like the literate child of witnesses and survivors.” With this emphasis on conservatism and heritage we might expect to hear liturgical-based melodies along the lines of those “Jewish” compositions of Srul Irving Glick, but make no mistake, it is the intellectual rigour of Western art and philosophy that is the focus, and the music is more reminiscent of the Second Viennese School and Shostakovich. That is to say “good old-fashioned new music.”

Matthews, who was born in Gander in 1950, seems to have come to the string quartet fairly late in his career. Although his earliest acknowledged compositions date back to the early 1970s, he didn’t write his first quartet until 1999, since which time there have been three more, plus a set of miniatures for the medium. The disc includes String Quartet No.3 (2008, revised 2013), a work in four contrasting movements lasting more than half an hour, the eleven Miniatures (2002) and String Quartet No.2 (2003) with its brooding, extended last movement and echoes of Bartók’s night music. These are all very strong works immaculately played by some of Canada’s finest string players, Gwen Hoenig and Karl Stobbe (violins), Daniel Scholz (viola) and Yuri Hooker (cello). I hope we hear more from them soon.
I almost gave the next disc to Toronto’s star recorder player Alison Melville to review, but upon listening I found I could not bear to give it up. Never fear though, Alison will be on duty next month to tell us about two more concerto recordings featuring the extraordinary Michala Petri. On Double Triple Koppel – Concertos by Anders Koppel (Dacapo 6.22663(3)) Petri is joined by the composer’s son Benjamin Koppel in the Concerto for Recorder, Saxophone and Orchestra (2010) and Koppel teams up with Eugene Hye-Knudsen and Tine Rehling for the Triple Concerto for Mezzo Saxophone, Cello, Harp and Orchestra (2009). I was immediately drawn to the unusual instrumentation of both works, and especially the use of saxophone.

The first time I am aware of having heard saxophone in an orchestral context goes back to a recording of Kabalevsky’s Cello Concerto No.2 featuring Daniel Shafran almost four decades ago. About halfway through the piece there is an incredible moment when, seemingly out of nowhere, a saxophone takes over the solo cello line in a cadenza-like flourish. It takes a moment to realize that the new texture is in fact no longer the cello, but rather an alto sax. It was a minor epiphany for me.

Likewise the first time I heard the recorder in a contemporary orchestral context. The occasion was coming across an RCA disc, Moon Child’s Dream, in the CJRT library back in 1992. That featured Michala Petri in the title work by Thomas Koppel, brother and uncle of the Koppels mentioned above, plus pieces by Holmboe, Christiansen and Toronto’s own Gary Kulesha. I was hooked by the juxtaposition and integration of the shrill timbre of the baroque wind instrument and the Koppel’s music, which falls firmly into the neo-Romantic camp. Likewise the first time I heard the recorder in a contemporary orchestral context. The occasion was coming across an RCA disc, Moon Child’s Dream, in the CJRT library back in 1992. That featured Michala Petri in the title work by Thomas Koppel, brother and uncle of the Koppels mentioned above, plus pieces by Holmboe, Christiansen and Toronto’s own Gary Kulesha. I was hooked by the juxtaposition and integration of the shrill timbre of the baroque wind instrument and the electric bass playing of Owen Veber of Dalannah Gail Bowen’s smoky, bluesy vocals and the electric bass playing of Owen Veber of Dalannah Gail Bowen’s smoky, bluesy vocals

The two concertos presented here are dramatic, lyrical works with plenty of rhythm drive juxtaposed with extended passages of dream-like calm, especially in the Triple Concerto. Not to be confused with the mezzo saxophone in F produced in the late 1920s by the CG Conn company which rapidly fell into disuse, the instrument employed here is a modern one manufactured by Danish maker Peter Jessen, tuned in G, placing it midway between the E-flat alto and B-flat soprano saxophone. Jazzer Joe Lovano has made extensive use of the mezzo, but this is evidently its orchestral debut. The range and timbre of this saxophone make it a well-matched partner for the cello but from the very first notes there are surprises in store. The cello enters with strident notes in its highest register sounding more like a Chinese erhu than the mellow baritone we normally expect. The harp adds a busy pointillist texture over which the sax and cello soar during the extended cadenza of the Moderato that concludes the work.

Koppel’s music, which falls firmly into the neo-Romantic camp with extended melodies and tonal harmonies but always with a modern sensibility, is more innovative in its instrumentation than in its compositional form. The way he combines instruments is truly unusual and extremely well handled. Even after repeated listening I am surprised to realize which instruments are creating the sounds and how well he blurs the lines between even such disparate voices as the recorder and the saxophone. Well worth investigating for yourself.

In Brief: Over the long summer there was of course a plethora of other offerings that held my attention. Orbit – Music for Solo Cello (Pentatone PTC 1586) is a 3-CD compilation comprising material originally released over the past decade by Montreal-based Matt Haimovitz on his own Oxingale label. Even for an aficionado such as myself nearly four hours of nothing but the sound of a single cello in repertoire drawn from a single time period (1945-2014) might get to be a bit “much of a muchness,” but I must say that my attention did not wane. From the opening title track, not to my ear sounding anything like other compositions by Philip Glass that I have heard, through such diverse composers as Berio, Golijov, Sokolovic, Ligeti, Carter, Sciarrino, Tremblay, Machover and Rorem the contrasts made for very effective programming and a compelling listening experience. The uncompromising but varied voices of these composers was juxtaposed occasionally with more popular fare – Haimovitz’s own transcription of Jimi Hendrix’s iconic version of the Star Spangled Banner and Luna Pearl Woolf’s take on Lennon-McCartney’s Helter Shelter – but even within the “serious” repertoire there was an amazing breadth of style and genre. Haimovitz proved himself up to all the challenges. This is an incredible testament to the accomplishment of a great musician, and an outstanding compendium of music of our time.

Bret Higgins’ Atlas Revolt provided much-needed respite during a stop-and-go drive up Highway 400 on the long August weekend. Double bassist Higgins has been active on the Toronto scene in a variety of genres, as a founding member of the eclectic Beyond the Pale among many other credits. His latest project is an instrumental combo with Aleksandar Gajic (violin), Robbie Grunwald (keyboards), Tom Juhás (guitar) and Joshua Van Tassel (percussion) which encompasses world, Latin and pop influences in a mostly jazz context. The disc, released on John Zorn’s Tzadik label (TZ 7813 tzadik.com), is comprised of ten Higgins original tracks in a variety of styles. I was enjoying it so much that I didn’t notice it was on repeat play until the third time through the disc. It made sitting in traffic almost worthwhile.

Another bass-centric disc in rotation on my player this summer is Been Around a While featuring Vancouver-based blues duo Dalannah and Owen (Quest QST-000 questrecords.ca). This sparse offering consists solely of Dalannah Gail Bowen’s smoky, bluesy vocals and the electric bass playing of Owen Veber and except for occasional overdubbing of additional bass lines (or more likely “looping” in this day and age) that’s all we hear. And it’s enough. There’s nothing fancy here, just the blues

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New this month to the Listening Room

Double Triple Koppel
Danish composer Anders Koppel’s musical collaboration with his son, saxophonist Benjamin Koppel, forms the background for these two concerts with quite unique soloist configuration.

Drew Henderson
Classical Guitarist

Available for performances & teaching

Read a review of his latest CD “Nocturne” in this issue of WholeNote

Please visit: www.classicalguitarist.ca
Stripped down to its essentials. About half of the songs are originals, including the title track, plus effective covers of Billy Eckstine, Marvin Gaye, Son House and the duo’s reworking of Robert Johnson’s “Come On In My Kitchen.”

Coffee Creek is the first full-length release by the young Toronto bluegrass band Slocan Ramblers (slocanramblers.com). Mentored by Chris Coole of Foggy Highton Boys fame who also produced this disc, the group shows a virtuosity and command of the genre that belies their youth (and geography). The formation is fairly standard – banjo (Frank Evans), mandolin (Adrian Gross), guitar (Darryl Poulsen) and double bass (Alistair Whitehead) – with the vocal duties shared and the balance about equal between original instrumentals and traditional bluegrass songs. The band’s website testifies to a busy touring schedule, both across the country and south of the border, but unfortunately it seems we won’t get to hear them live in Toronto in the immediate future. Readers in Ottawa can catch them on October 24 at Spirit of Rasputin’s Folk Club at Westboro Masonic Hall.

Of course my summer was not spent entirely in front of loud-speakers attached to mechanical (or electronic) reproduction devices. There was a generous share of backyard music-making with friends and I attended a number of live music shows. The one that had the most impact on me was at the Summerworks festival, a “musical” unlike any other I’ve seen. Written and created by Adam Paolozza and Gregory Oh, Melancholia: The Music of Scott Walker drew on five decades of music recorded, and for the most part written, by the former Walker Brother, best known to members of my generation for the 60s hit “The Sun Ain’t Gonna Shine Anymore.” I must confess that I was unaware of Walker’s creative development in the intervening years. I was actually surprised to hear that there even was such a person as my understanding was that no member of the Walker Brothers was actually named Walker. But it seems that the baritone “brother,” born Noel Scott Engel, adopted the name when he went out on his own in the 1970s. The music that followed was a far cry from the pop ballads that had brought the boy band fame, which for a time rivaled that of the Beatles. Evidently he was profoundly influenced by the music of Jacques Brel and some of his earlier solo work reflects this, including an album of covers of Brel’s work. Walker is also well versed in classical music and has given producers such instructions as “I hear Sibelius here” and “I’m thinking of Delius for this.” His credits to David Bowie who professes to have been deeply influenced by the music of Jacques Brel and some of his earlier solo work reflects this, including an album of covers of Brel’s work. Walker is also well versed in classical music and has given producers such instructions as “I hear Sibelius here” and “I’m thinking of Delius for this.” His distinctive, low plaintive voice would not change much, the music itself did. There’s a glowing, expansive opening to the Franck, especially in the piano chords as the momentum builds, and real passion in the Allegro second movement. The famous canon in the fourth movement is a pure delight. Ehnes is in his element with the big tone and strong, controlled bowing you need for the long, sustained violin phrases in this work.

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The Toronto-based Canadian guitarist and dub maestro Scott Walker: 30 Century Man is probably best known as a performer as one half of the Henderson–Kolk Duo with Michael Kolk, whose Mosaic solo CD was reviewed in this column in March 2014. Nocturne – Guitar Music of the 19th Century is Henderson’s independent first solo release (classicalguitarist.ca). His playing puts me very much in mind of Kolk’s, which is saying a great deal: there’s the same outstanding technique with unerring accuracy and cleanliness; a clear, rich tone across the board; lovely dynamics; virtually no finger noise; and above all a beautiful sense of line and phrase.

Henderson has chosen a varied and interesting recital program. Giulio Regondi was a child prodigy in the early 1800s, and is represented here by his Nocturne “Reverie” Op.19 and Introduction et Caprice Op.23. Henderson plays an eight-string guitar on the CD, which enables him to include the usually-omitted bass notes in Les Soirées d’Automne Op.23 by Napoléon Coste, who often wrote for a seven-string guitar. Four Capricci from Luigi Legnani’s 36 Capricci per la Chitarra Op.20 and a simply dazzling performance of Paganini’s Grand Sonata in A Major round out a superb disc.

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Ehnes is in superb form throughout the disc, and Armstrong is his equal in every respect.

There’s another performance of the Franck Violin Sonata on a new CD featuring works by Lekeu, Franck and Boulanger from the Montreal violinist Frédéric Bednarz and pianist Natsuki Hiratsuka (Metis Islands Music MIM-0006).

Guillaume Lekeu and Lili Boulanger (Nadia’s younger sister) both died at the tragically young age of 24. Lekeu’s Sonata in G Major is a fine three-movement work, with its long violin lines and agitated piano in the outer movements somewhat reminiscent of the Franck, which was written just six years earlier. Bednarz’s beautiful sweetness of tone is evident right from the start.

Boulanger was always in fragile health, and her works often seem to display her awareness of her condition. Nocturne is a simply lovely and delightful piece, again perfectly suited to Bednarz’s sweet tone.

David Olds, DISCoveries Editor
discoveries@thewholenote.com

Strings Attached

TERRY ROBBINS

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The Franck Sonata is the centrepiece of the CD, and again it’s the tonal quality of the violin playing that makes the biggest impression. Hiratsuka gives perhaps a bit less weight to the piano part in the opening movement, and there seems to be less turbulence and urgency in the second movement than on the Ehnes/Armstrong CD, but this is still a strong, musical and highly enjoyable performance.

There have been several recordings of the very effective string trio transcription by violinist Dmitri Sitkovetsky of Bach's Goldberg Variations, and now the Bach / Gould Project, the debut CD by America’s Catalyst Quartet, gives us an equally effective and satisfying arrangement for string quartet (Azica ACD-71300).

It took the quartet members a year and a half to produce their own transcription, and it’s a quite stunning achievement, with a rich, warm sound right from the opening Arià and some beautifully judged phrasing and dynamics. The up-tempo sections don’t have quite the ferocity of Glenn Gould’s approach, but there is the same exuberance and sense of sheer joy that pervades Gould’s recordings.

The decision to include Glenn Gould’s String Quartet Op.1 was a smart one. Gould wrote the work in the mid-1950s while preparing for his debut recording of the Goldberg Variations, the work that marked the beginning and the end of his recording career; not surprisingly, perhaps, it is a rich, complex single-movement quartet highly reminiscent of early Schoenberg but – as the notes point out – showing the influence of German composers from Strauss and Wagner right back to Bach. What may be surprising is that it is full of truly idiomatic string writing, with a great deal of contrapuntal voicing (no surprise there!) that is handled with great skill. It’s so much more than just a competent work or an odd curiosity, and really deserves to be heard more frequently.

A short video about the Bach/Gould Project is available on the quartet’s website and on YouTube. Česko is another terrific string quartet CD, this time featuring the young – and all-female – British/Dutch ensemble the Ragazze Quartet in a program of works by the Czech composers Antonín Dvořák and Erwin Schulhoff (Channel Classics CCS SA 36815).

Schulhoff died of tuberculosis in Wülzburg concentration camp in 1942 at the age of 48. His String Quartet No.1 is a short but fascinating four-movement work from 1924, and very much a work of its time. Schulhoff’s real passion was for the jazz dance forms of the 1920s is reflected in his String Quartet No.1, a work for string quartet here by the Dutch composer Leonard Evers. The six pieces – Rag; Boston; Tango; Blues; Black Bottom; and Charleston – are short but entertaining.

The central work on this disc is Dvořák’s String Quartet No.13 in G Major Op.106, which has been in the quartet’s repertoire since their student days. It’s a glorious work, and their familiarity with and affection for the music is clear in the lovely sweeping start and the passion and dynamic range in their playing. In their booklet notes the players refer to Dvořák’s “beautiful singing melodies, warm harmonies and Czech passion.” Their performance here shows how well they have taken these qualities to heart.

There’s even more great string quartet playing on Mozart – The 6 String Quartets dedicated to Haydn, a 3CD box set featuring the Quatuor Cambini-Paris (naive AM239). The packaging adds “on period instruments” after the quartet’s name; since the ensemble was founded in 2007 the performers have been playing and recording on period instruments with gut strings and authentic bows, and if you ever needed any evidence of just how satisfying “historically informed” performances can be, here it is.

The six quartets themselves – numbers 14 through 19, and including the Spring, Hunt and Dissonance quartets – are simply sublime, and the warmth and sensitivity of the interpretations here display them in all their glory. The closeness of the recording means that some extraneous breathing noises are audible at times, but never to the point of distraction.

These are performances that come from the heart and speak to the soul; there wasn’t a single moment when I could imagine these works being played any other way. Add the absolutely terrific booklet notes and this is a set to treasure.

The terrific Jennifer Koh is back with Bach and Beyond Part 2 (Cedille CDR 90000 154), the second of a three-part series of recital programs that Koh initiated in 2009 to explore the history of solo violin works from Bach to the present day. Each recital features two of the Bach Sonatas & Partitas paired with solo compositions from the subsequent centuries.

Part 1 was reviewed in depth in this column in May 2013. This current issue pairs the Sonata No.1 in G Minor and the Partita No.1 in B Minor of Bach with the Sonata for Solo Violin by Béla Bartók and Frises, a work for solo violin and electronics written in 2011 by the Finnish composer Kaija Saariaho.

Koh, as always, is superb. Her intelligence and interpretation always match her outstanding technique.

The third and final program of the series will apparently pair the remaining two Bach works with Luciano Berio’s Sequenza VIII and the world premiere of John Harbison’s For Violin Alone.

The new Alina Ibragimova CD of the Six Sonatas for Solo Violin by Eugene Ysaÿe (Hyperion CD967993) is another simply outstanding solo disc. This is the fifth CD of these amazing works that I have received in the past four years or so, and Ibragimova’s is

Philip Glass: Violin Concerto No. 2 “The American Four Seasons” Gidon Kremer

Kremer returns to DG after more than a decade, his first solo concerto album in many years.

James Horner

Pas de Deux

Mari and Hàkon Samuelsen

The world premiere recording Pas de Deux by the late James Horner, written especially for the sister/brother team, Mari and Hàkon Samuelsen.

ZOFÓ – pianists Eva–Maria Zimmermann and Keisuke Nakagoshi – is at it again with an all–Terry Riley album that includes original compositions, arrangements and a commission.
probably the biggest name of the five. She always plays with fire and passion, and her technique is astonishing; nothing in these fiendishly difficult works seems to give her the slightest problem. It’s a truly marvellous disc.

**Montage**, a collection of Canadian works, is the latest CD from New Brunswick’s *Saint John String Quartet (SJSSQ005 sjssq.ca)*. Vancouver’s Anthony Genge (b.1952) is represented by his atmospheric and somewhat minimalist *String Quartet No.2*, and the late Eldon Rathburn by the brief *Subway Thoughts*.

There are three works by the New Brunswick-based Martin Kutnowski (b.1968): the strongly tonal and melodic six Selections from “Watercolours for Ten Fingers”; *Peter Emberley’s Dream*, built on a New Brunswick folk song; and *Five Argentinian Folk Pieces*, drawing on the composer’s native Argentinian heritage.

**Little Suite for String Quartet** by Talvaldis Kenins (1919-2008) is a solid piece; the *Fantasia on Themes of Beethoven* by Michael R. Miller (b.1932) is quite fascinating and intriguing; and the *Pastorale* by Richard Kidd (b.1954) is a lovely final track.

I have just one complaint: the gap between the works is ridiculously short – mostly less than three seconds. You can’t tell when one work has ended and the next one has begun, and the mood of one work doesn’t have a chance to subside before the new work arrives. One wonders why.

It’s always a pleasure to receive a new CD by the English cellist Steven Isserlis, and his latest recital disc with pianist Stephen Hough of *Cello Sonatas by Mendelssohn, Grieg and Hough* (Hyperion CDA68079) is no exception.

The Grieg is a lovely work that Isserlis says has always been popular with cellists, although not necessarily with music critics; the slow movement and the beautiful second themes from the two outer movements in particular are quintessential Grieg. Hough’s *Sonata for Cello and Piano Left Hand “Les Adieux”* is a quite remarkable work, not least for the range and fullness of the piano part. The Mendelssohn is the best-known sonata of the three, and the performance here is a pure delight.

The *Mendelssohn and Tchaikovsky Violin Concertos* are paired on the new CD from Arabella Steinbacher and the *Orchestre de la Suisse Romande* under Charles Dutoit (PentaTone PTC 5186 504). Steinbacher has a really lovely tone and plays with undeniable intelligence and great accuracy, but she seems to linger occasionally in the first movements of both concertos, almost to the point of losing momentum at times. There are some lovely moments in the Mendelssohn slow movement and a nice bounce to the finale. The Tchaikovsky has some really thoughtful playing with no sign of stress or strain, but again seems to be held back somewhat in places; the codas, though, always pick up the pace.

The always interesting Gidon Kremer is back with *New Seasons*, a CD featuring his own string ensemble the *Kremerata Baltica* in works by Philip Glass, Arvo Pärt, Giya Kancheli and Shigeru Umebayashi (Deutsche Grammophon 479.817). Kremer notes that he has always been interested in the subject of seasons in music, and feels that the composers here are all “saying something about a better world, creating new seasons that will remain valid forever.”

I’m not sure how much that relates to two of the works – Pärt’s *Estonian Lullaby* and Umebayashi’s *Yumeji’s Theme* from the 2000 movie *In the Mood for Love* are less than six minutes in combined length – but there’s no doubting the relevance of the main work here. Glass’s *Violin Concerto No.2 “The American Four Seasons”* is an attractive and accessible work in which the familiar repeated patterns and sequences, while still clearly Glass, seem to provide links to Vivaldi.

Kancheli’s *Ex contrario* is a hauntingly beautiful work in which Kremer and the ensemble are joined by solo cello, keyboard (sampler), bass guitar and performance CD; there’s a clear harpsichord sound, but nothing else from the latter three seems to stand out. Which is just the way it should be.

Violinist Sarah Plum and pianist Timothy Lovelace are the partners on *Béla Bartók Works for Violin and Piano Volume 1* (Blue Griffin Recording BGR379), which features the *Violin Sonata No.2*, the two *Rhapsodies*, and the *Romanian Folk Dances and Hungarian Folk Tunes*, the latter two works transcribed for violin and piano from the original piano works by Zoltán Székely and Joseph Szélgeti. There’s some fine playing here, but it seems a bit pedestrian at times, as if it needs more of a Hungarian bite to really take off. The *Rhapsody No.2* is the most successful of the five works.

The movie world was shocked by the sudden death of James Horner this past June. Known almost entirely for his numerous movie scores, Horner was classically trained, and *Pas de Deux*, the debut CD of Mari and Hakon Samuelsen, the Norwegian sister and brother violin and cello duo, marked Horner’s first work for the concert hall in over 30 years (*Mercury Classics 481 1487*).

The title work is a double concerto for violin, cello and orchestra written specifically for the Samuelsens, and it clearly shows the two musical worlds that Horner could inhabit. I’m not sure how much development of material there is, but it’s a sweeping, rich and sonorous work, with strong themes and some beautiful orchestration. Perhaps inevitably, the movie world seems to predominate, although there are hints of classical influence – some Tchaikovsky-like wind writing, some string passages reminiscent of Vaughan Williams; in particular, the opening of the middle movement sounds for all the world like Henryk Gorecki.

Mari Samuelsen goes solo in Arvo Pärt’s *Fratres* for violin, string orchestra and percussion, and her brother is joined by cellist Alisa Weilerstein in Giovanni Silloma’s *Violoncelles*. Vibrez! Paul Bateman’s arrangement of Ludowico Einaudi’s *Diventer complets the disc. I ruffled some feathers recently with my comments about Einaudi’s music, so let’s just say that this is the somewhat repetitive but oddly beguiling piece with the abrupt ending that you hear a great deal on Classical FM radio, and leave it at that.*

The *Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra* is conducted by Vasily Petrenko in *Pas de Deux*, and by Clark Rundell in the remaining three works. Performances by all concerned are excellent throughout.
Duo pianists are fascinating couplings and each is wonderfully unique. The dynamic choreography of duo pianism allows each partner to lead, follow or be submerged in the music they play. It's a breathtaking and elegant dance when done well.

Powerhouse Pianists II (American Modern Recordings AMR 1039) presents Stephen Gosling and Blair MacMillen in a program of American works highlighted by John Adams’ Hallelujah Junction and John Corigliano’s Chiaroscuro. Gosling/MacMillen play the Adams with a revivalist fervour evocative of traditional camp meetings. Chiaroscuro requires one of the two pianos to be tuned down a quartertone producing an arresting effect that Corigliano exploits in many ways. This is especially effective in the final movement titled Strobe.

The other real delight on this disc is Frederic Rzewski’s Winnisboro Cotton Mill Blues. Somewhat programmatic, it captures the pounding industrial din of a mill while introducing elements of an old work song that laments the burden of daily toil in such a setting. The latter half offers a seductive blues section that both pianists glide through with an easy swing before they let the composer conclude with the familiar rhythm of the mill.

Another piano duo with a recent recording on the shelves is Jean-Efflam Bavouzet and François-Frédéric Guy. Their performance of Transcriptions for Two Pianists (CHAN 10863) opens with Bartók’s Two Pictures transcribed by pianist/conductor Zoltán Kocsis. Kocsis knows that the voices excluded are as important as those that find their way to the keyboard. He understands the different economics of both palettes and so do the pianists. This makes for a terrific transcription. Two Pictures is a set of great contrast with In Full Flower strongly evoking the influence that Debussy had on Bartók. Village Dance delivers the powerful impulse of rustic folk rhythms that Bartók used often in other works.

Debussy’s Jeux follows in a transcription by Bavouzet. His liner note argues for the benefit of hearing Jeux presented by the relatively “neutral” colours of the piano. It’s a curious statement, especially since each of the ten movements is clear and sparkles and is anything but neutral.

Bavouzet and Guy face their biggest challenge with Stravinsky’s two piano score of The Rite of Spring. Completed and published a year before the orchestral version and subsequent ballet performance, this work demands everything a pianist can bring to the keyboard from the ethereally subtle to the brutally savage. It’s an explosive piece and a brilliant performance.

Composer Terry Riley has for years been an ambassador for Western musicians who find a strong attraction to a creative mélange of minimalism, eastern traditions, polyrhythms and generally “out there” edgy adventurism. His all-night improvisations in the mid-60s in Philadelphia are legendary. His many collaborations with the likes of Chet Baker, The Who, Philip Glass and the Kronos Quartet are equally so. It’s no surprise then, to find the piano duo (four hands) ZOFO recording an entire CD of his works. Eva Maria-Zimmermann and Keisuke Nakagoshi began their duo collaboration in 2009 and since then have issued four CDs. This latest, ZOFO plays Terry Riley (Sono Luminus DSL. 92189) reflects their appetite for the unconventional. To be sure, their few discs do cover some standard repertoire but there is a strong drive in this pair of San Francisco-based performers to find and play the most challenging music they can handle. The result is never short of pure excitement.

Jazzine, the opening track, suggests what might have happened had Gershwin reinterpreted Ravel’s deconstructionist La Valse. Simone’s Lullaby is remarkable for its hypnotic bell-like piano playing. G Song has the feel of a Bach fugue making new friends at a jazz/blues jam session, and Praying Mantis Rag is brilliantly light-hearted fun from start to finish.

A new piano duo on the scene is the Ukrainian-born, and now New York-based couple, Anna and Dmitri Shelest. Shelest Piano Duo have released their first recording TUTTI (Sorel Classics SC CD 002) with five substantial standard repertoire items. Among the disc’s highlights are Liszt’s own arrangement of his Les Préludes played with consistent brilliance and sensitivity through to its magnificent conclusion. Tchaikovsky’s Sixth Symphony Allegro is an impressive display of melody and countermelody beautifully balanced and phased. Ravel’s La Valse for four hands is rarely heard since the composer only arranged it for two pianos as well as solo piano. At his request, his friend Lucien Garban set it for piano four hands. The Shelests capture the chaos and complexity familiar in the orchestral version and bring it to a stunning finish. They conclude their CD with Henry Levine’s arrangement of Gershwin’s Rhapsody In Blue. This too, is usually heard as a solo or a two-piano performance and hearing this version is a novel treat.

Recent months have seen three pianists issue recordings of Grieg’s Lyric Pieces. Spanish pianist Javier Perianes (Edvard Grieg – Piano Concerto/Lyric Pieces, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Sakari Oramo, harmonia mundi HMC 902205) adds the Grieg piano concerto to his program making the disc a very attractive buy. The signature opening theme tells us immediately that we are listening to a performer with strong convictions at the keyboard. In his mid-20s, Perianes (about
the same age as Grieg when he wrote the concerto) takes a very slightly slower tempo with the piece than we normally hear. His collaboration with Finnish conductor Sakari Oramo produces a very balanced performance that never feels rushed despite the many passages of mounting energy.

After the powerful finale to the first movement, Perianes performs the following Adagio with a remarkable tenderness and tentative voice. The overall effect is one of fragility that leaves the beauty of the main theme lingering in the memory. In the final movement he recalls the thematic material with familiar phrasing and marches confidently toward the frenetic build-up that closes the concerto with its thunderous chords.

The disc then moves into a selection of just 12 of Grieg’s 66 Lyric Pieces. Written throughout his composing career, these span nearly four decades of his life. Perianes makes careful choices insofar as he wants to demonstrate the wide variations of character and mood these little pieces represent. And in contrast to the concerto, Perianes now plays from an entirely different place, one of intimacy, introspection and fantasy. His approach to the Lyric Pieces is steady and mature. He avoids overindulgence in any expressive technique. Still there is plenty of tastefully applied rubato and dynamic freedom to support the emotional program that Grieg indicates in his titles.

March of the Trolls is played at a noticeably faster speed than most often heard but this seems to emphasize the sinister nature of the imagery. The mid-section, by contrast, is played with exquisite touch and Perianes manages to somehow leave it suspended in the air. His performance of Nocturne is wonderfully Debussy-like, but his finest two pieces are Homesickness and At Your Feet. With careful dynamics and beautifully placed hesitations he conveys a palpable sense of longing to the listener. Perianes is a sensibly young artist who avoids the temptingly flashy in favour of fidelity to a composer’s intent.

British pianist Stephen Hough has also released a selection of Grieg – Lyric Pieces (Hyperion CDA68070), though considerably larger, numbering 27. Hough is twice the age of Perianes and so one immediately expects an interpretive approach that reflects both that experience and maturity. While these traits are certainly evident, what really emerges is the fact that Hough lives in a world of much wider dynamic energy where rubato and phrase end pull-backs are powerful devices that he uses most effectively. Erotikon demonstrates this best and shows that Hough’s boundaries for expressive devices are set at very generous distances. To Spring seems to disappear into an emotional void as he finishes the piece. Butterfly shows his remarkable and articulate dexterity. He plays Bell Ringing with a touch that never fully engages the percussive nature of the piano hammer, and thereby makes the strings speak with no audible beginning. His Little Bird characterization is brilliant for all its nervous energy. And his March of the Trolls is wild and threatening before it melts into the beauty of the mid-section theme. Here, as in many other instances, Hough is able to pull the main musical idea further forward, out of the surrounding harmonies, than most pianists care to do. It’s consistent with his assertive interpretive style and works very well.

Janina Fialkowska takes a very different approach in Grieg – Lyric Pieces (ATMA Classique ACD2 2696). One searches in vain for some Eastern philosophical term to describe her artistic posture. The effect is, however, one of perfect calm, where no statement is rushed and there is no need to say anything until the music is ready. Her expression at the keyboard hints at understatement and reservation yet never lacks in rubato or dynamic expression. She plays with a subtle containment that is entirely satisfying even if we never hear the piano rattle mechanically under a maniacal fortissimo. Her opening track Arietta reflects this standard as does Syfph, and she never wavers from it.

Norwegian Dance sustains an entrancing left-hand drone while her right hand, with complete independence, plays out the folk tune. Brooklet is an example of brilliant, articulate playing which she carries even further in Puck for a memorable impish, elfish effect. She underscores Grieg’s German musical education in At Your Feet, reminding us of how Brahmsian this piece can sound. Finally, her March of the Trolls is completely unlike either the Hough or Perianes version. Fialkowska takes the piece at a slower, more march-like pace. She also leaves plenty of breathing space around the beautiful central theme of the slow section. Fialkowska’s Lyric Pieces are very different and uniquely hers.

Karim Said – Echoes From An Empire (Opus Arte OA CD9029D) has programmed his first recording with a remarkable purpose in mind: to survey the music that was written during the protracted demise of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and explore its message about the passage of the old and the advent of the new. To that end he performs works spanning the years 1903 to 1927 from Berg, Webern, Janáček, Enescu, Bartók and Schoenberg. Now 27, he shows a remarkable understanding of the music of this period and what its composers were doing in this era of profound transition.

He plays as if he were a seer of some kind. The sonatas by Berg and Janáček are fine examples of this, especially the second movement of the Janáček, titled Death. The transcendence of this is powerful and reaches far beyond the mere notes and the composer’s other markings. Similarly, his performance of Bartók’s Three Rondos on Slovak Folk Tunes seems so perfect a cultural iteration that Said’s birthplace, Amman, Jordan, seems a universe distant.

Enescu’s Suite No. 2 in D Op. 10 is a remarkably beautiful composition in its richness of form and melody. Said plays the opening Toccata with all the majesty its tempo marking designates. The following Sarabande is performed with such a delicate touch that the sounds of the instrument seem pure velvet. The closing Bouree is an energized finale that sparkles with virtuosity. We need to hear more from this young pianist. His touring schedule leaves him little time for recording. But record more he certainly must.

The decision to record the Liszt B Minor Sonata may say more about a performer than the actual performance. Hearing the final product, however, seals the judgment. On Liszt piano music (Orpheus OR 3906-1828) young (mid-20s) Spanish superstar Félix Ardanaz presents this Everest of the piano repertoire in a way that allows one to forget about its technical demands and focus instead on both the emotional and intellectual brilliance Liszt wrote into it. With three of its six themes presented in the first 18 measures alone, Ardanaz identifies and presents the ideas with the clarity needed to help the listener follow Liszt’s plan through the ensuing half hour of playing.

So much of this performance is astonishing, but little more so than Liszt’s treatment of one of his opening ideas as a fugal subject midway through the work, followed by a seemingly impossible rit mo mosso direction. Ardanaz delivers this effortlessly. No subtlety escapes him, whether a brief tender Adagio or an explosive passage whose power falls under his complete control.

Ardanaz also includes both Mazeppa and Mephisto Waltz in his program. Astonishing throughout, this is definitely a “must-have” disc.

Before the awe over Félix Ardanaz begins to settle, it’s worth briefly mentioning his recording of French harpsichord repertoire on The French Harpsichord (Orpheus OR3906-1811). The transition between instruments is clearly the issue here and not much rationale is offered either in print or online as to why he does this. Very few pianists undertake such a bold recording choice but nothing seems beyond his reach. Ardanaz clearly understands
According to the draconian laws of medieval France a servant girl was condemned to death for stealing a silver fork from her employers. She is rescued just in the nick of time however because, as it turns out, a magpie was the real culprit. The opera written by the 25-year-old Rossini is full of melodioic invention, intense dramatic situations and opportunities for the voices of some seven principals. First performed in 1817 it has remained in the repertoire ever since.

This new live recording from Germany’s Wildbad festival fits in nicely with Naxos’ project of the complete 39 operas of Rossini and for this I personally thanked Klaus Heymann, founder and CEO of Naxos at the time of his Toronto visit. From the ominous rattle of the kettle drums of the famous belfry in the magpie’s nest. The tenor, Ferdinand von Bothmer, is a fine performance by singers and orchestra. The soprano aria, the Song to the Moon, is an especially lovely and mellow Rusalka has held the stage and that largely because of the soprano aria, the Song to the Moon. I have, however, good memories of a production of The Jacobin by the Welsh National Opera. Alfred was new to me as it will be to many. It presents a semi-historical account of the Anglo-Saxon resistance to the Danes (invasion) it was premiered, in a Czech translation, at Olomous. The performance on these CDs was recorded live in September 2014. It is the first performance to use the original German libretto.

Of Dvořák’s operas only Růžeka has held the stage and that largely because of the soprano aria, the Song to the Moon. I have, however, good memories of a production of The Jacobin by the Welsh National Opera. Alfred was new to me as it will be to many. It presents a semi-historical account of the Anglo-Saxon resistance to the Danes (invasion) it was premiered, in a Czech translation, at Olomous. The performance on these CDs was recorded live in September 2014. It is the first performance to use the original German libretto.

The performance of Handel’s keyboard music with a second instalment, Handel Keyboard Suites 2 (NAXOS 8.573397). Fisher brings a balanced sensibility to this performance, having decided clearly where he will draw the line at expressive keyboard techniques. Having been written for the harpsichord, no dynamics would have been contemplated by the composer, but Fisher introduces them with subtlety and respect. The result is very satisfying. His freedom with tempi and crisp ornamental figures adds even more to the richness of the music. Handel might have been very pleased to hear this approach. Suite No.7 in G Minor contains an especially lovely and mellow Andante as well as a couple of fast movements delightful for their articulation. The fugue in the second movement of Suite No.8 is far more full-sounding on the piano than it ever could be on the harpsichord. Fisher’s performance is refreshing and his future releases worth following.
hanging in a basket suspended high in the air.  

Adrienne Pieczonka sings Strauss; Wagner  
Adrienne Pieczonka; Brian Zeger  
Delos DE 3474

The songs by Richard Strauss, some of the most beloved solo vocal compositions in the repertoire (next to Mahler’s), come with an almost insurmountable caveat: They have been recorded sublimely by Elisabeth Schwarzkopf with Gerald Moore on piano. Those reference recordings are still capable of defeating any artist and Pieczonka must acknowledge their supremacy. So rather than dwell on comparisons, let’s judge this recording on its own merits.

First things first, Pieczonka is one of the best Wagnerian singers of our era. She proves that with Wesendonck-Lieder, a poetic account of Wagner’s infidelity to his wife Minna. As for the rest of the album, there are two forces conspiring against Pieczonka’s rendition of Strauss: the awkward, excessively close milking by Anton Kwiatkowski in the CBC’s Glenn Gould Studio; and the hesitant, almost withdrawn piano playing of Brian Zeger. As if refusing to be an equal partner, Zeger hides behind and blends with Pieczonka’s voice. This voice, opulent and beautiful, works best when coaxed and engaged by an equal partner, be it orchestra or piano solo. Here it sounds unusually shy and reluctant. That is too bad, because we now deserve a new reference recording and Pieczonka definitely has the talent to create such a disc.

Charles Heller – Tramway Lider  
Charles Heller; Bram Goldhammer Independent (ecanthuspress.com)

Riding transit at rush hour or late at night is rarely fun (save the rare times one encounters live music and dancing on a subway car). A sea of weary, sallow faces (is it the lighting?) can certainly make one feel equally grey and tired but it must have been far more grim during the Great Depression in Toronto. One streetcar conductor, Shimen Nepom, member of a far-left group known as the Proletarian Poets, decided to mine his oftentimes frigid and tedious journey by turning his experiences into a set of Yiddish poems entitled Tramway Lider (Streetcar Songs), published in 1940 by the Toronto Labour League. Seventy years later, composer Charles Heller learned of Nepom through Gerry Kane, a columnist with the Canadian Jewish News who remembered meeting Nepom when he was a young boy riding the streetcar with his father. Heller then researched the poems, set them to music and now performs them eloquently, yet characteristically on this recording, accompanied by pianist Bram Goldhammer and cellist Rachel Pomedli. The music evokes the clattering tracks, the ringing bells, the bitter winds, but best of all, the poignant stories of the great variety of people who rode the College streetcar back then.

Purcell – Dido & Aeneas  
Rachel Lloyd; Robert Davies; Elin Manahan Thomas; Armonico Consort; Christopher Monks  
Signum Classics SIGCD417

This new recording of Dido and Aeneas could be described as lean. The orchestra consists of five string players (one to a part with the double bass doubling the cello line) and one theorbo. The chorus consists of eight singers, two to a part. (I am going by the booklet which comes with the CD. There appear to be some uncredited wind players in the Overture as well as guitars in the First Act Chaconne). By contrast the performance conducted by Nicholas McGegan (Harmonia Mundi) has an orchestra of 22 players and a choir of 33 voices. The performance conducted by Emanuelle Haim (Virgin) has a smaller choir (14) but an even larger orchestra (26).

There is a reason for the small forces used here: the earliest performance of the work that can be documented was at Josias Priest’s School for Gentlemen in 1689. It has generally been assumed that that was the first performance of the work. In 1992, however, two musicologists published an article in which they suggested that the school performance would have been a revival and that the first performance, possibly at court, would have used larger forces.

Many readers will be mainly concerned with the quality of the mezzo-soprano who sings Dido. There are several great
performing with his sister cellist Tanja Tetzlaff since their childhood in Hamburg, while pianist Lars Vogt has been a longtime musical partner for both. The result is some of the most decisive music-making in three of Brahms’ chamber works which have not always received the recognition they undoubtedly deserve.

The Piano Trios Op 8, 87 and 101 occupied much of the composer’s time during the 1880s. As he mentioned to a friend, at the time, “there was no further point in attempting an opera or a marriage.” The earliest of the trios had actually been composed in 1854 when he was all of 21, but Brahms spent considerable time revising it in 1889. Hence, the music is less that of a young composer still feeling his way than one who was looking back at 30 years of creativity. From the opening measures, it’s very clear that these performers enjoy playing with each other and do it with a strong sense of self-assurance. The broad sweeping lines in the opening Allegro and again in the Finale show a distinct elegance of phrasing while the second movement Scherzo is all lightness and grace.

The second and third trios are very much the music of the mature composer, surely Brahms at his finest. And not surprisingly, the three musicians have no difficulty in capturing the myriad of shifting moods contained within – majestic, restless, elegiac and buoyant. To perform Brahms well is frequently a challenge but the combination of the two Tetzlaffs and Vogt bring it off effortlessly. The highlight for me is surely the finale to the Piano Trio No.3. How deftly the three handle the syncopated rhythms and dynamic contrasts before bringing the movement – and the disc – to a triumphant conclusion.

Well done, all three – this recording is bound to be a benchmark.

Richard Haskell

Prosper Mercurio, who first performed the Piano Trio No.1 in Turin in 1875, is said to have been critical of Brahms’ handling of the thirty-two notes in the first movement. This Sixth instalment of their outstanding series of Mahler symphonies presents one of the finest recordings ever of the Ninth Symphony. The performance of the first movement, virtually a symphony in itself, is revelatory. It perfectly depicts Alban Berg’s description of this movement: “It expresses an extraordinary love of this earth, for Nature; the longing to live on it in peace, to enjoy it completely, to the very heart of one’s being, before death comes, as irresistibly it does.”

The second movement, an archly ironic Ländler, is nattily performed with a curiously bourgeois restraint (the disruptive timpani strokes are barely audible), though all hell breaks out in the contrapuntal near-panic of the subsequent Rondo-Burleske. Time stands still in the intense longing and eventual serene acceptance of the Finale. Rarely have I heard such an exquisite balance within and between the sections of the orchestra; such unanimity of tone can only have been achieved with intensive sectional rehearsals, a luxury most orchestras have long abandoned. The orchestra is equally well served by Jared Sacks and Hein Dekker’s outstanding recording and production. At a relatively swift 75 minutes the work fits on a single disc in a hybrid SACD format. Not to be missed!

Daniel Foley

Busoni the Visionary III – Piano Music

Jeni Slotchiver

Centaur CRC 3396

This CD continues American pianist Jeni Slotchiver’s Busoni the Visionary series. Her wonderful playing and program notes challenge the image of Ferruccio Busoni (1866-1924) as a chilly intellectual composer of contradictory, strange works. We have instead a well-rounded Busoni: piano virtuoso; extraordinary composer; key figure in modern music. Included is Busoni’s piano transcription of Bach’s “St. Anne” Prelude and Triple Fugue for Organ. But the Fantasia nach Johann Sebastian Bach (1909) shows innovative re-thinking of possibilities in Bach chorales, while Nuit de Noël (1908) imitates actual bells with their dissonant overtones. Slotchiver plays both with intimacy and fine gradations of touch.

Busoni’s style evolved rapidly. Of the late works Ten Variations on a Prelude of Chopin (1922) is most accessible and varied, with shifts in tonal centre that create kaleidoscopic effects. Slotchiver is virtuosic in the middle and ending variations, and equally capable of projecting abrupt mood changes in one variation or quirky waltz style in another. She captures the mystic opening in Prelude et Etude (en Arpèges) of 1923, then conquers the étude’s wild arpeggios and acrobatic hand-crossing. In Toccata (1929) she emphasizes motifs from his operas, including the contemporaneous Doktor Faust. With a road map the listener can sort out this rich assemblage. Relax and remember: Busoni’s music does not resolve the contradictions encompassed by his genius (Italian and German, 19th century and modern, concertizing pianist and exploring composer), but plays with them masterfully.

Roger Knox

Brahms – The Piano Trios

Christian Tetzlaff; Tanja Tetzlaff; Lars Vogt

Ondine ODE 1271-2D

This two-disc set of the three Brahms piano trios is very much a “family and friends” affair. Violinist Christian Tetzlaff has been

Larry Beckwith

Jeni Slotchiver

Busoni the Visionary III – Piano Music

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Richard Haskell

Roger Knox

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Richard Haskell
Walton – Symphony No.2; Cello Concerto
Paul Watkins; BBC Symphony Orchestra; Edward Gardner
Chandos CHSA 5153

“When you play Walton make big gestures,” Gregor Piatigorsky told the soloist I accompanied in the Walton Viola Concerto. The great cellist, tall and impressive in a white summer suit, was giving a string master-class at Santa Barbara’s Music Academy of the West. Only later did I learn that Piatigorsky himself had commissioned Walton’s Cello Concerto and premiered it with the BBC Symphony! This CD’s expressive performance by cellist Paul Watkins and the Edward Gardner-led BBC players captures the work’s engaging spirit. Many cellists can sound expressive generically, but Watkins’ cello is expressive of particular melodic and harmonic beauties from the lyrical first movement. In the tricky scherzo notable are the soloist’s impeccable bowing, intonation and ensemble playing. Both Watkins and Gardner pull through many mood changes in the last movement’s theme and improvisations convincingly.

The passion and commitment of conductor and orchestra also show in Walton’s Symphony No.2 (1960). In the opening movement strings display virtuosity while maintaining the most prominent motif’s yearning quality. The slow movement has touchingly played woodwind and horn solos, with mysterious trills and tremolos in the background held in balance by Gardner. The closing Passacaglia’s recurring 12-tone line is not confining; dramatic moments abound and the whole ensemble shines in an exciting Fugato-Coda. In Improvisations on an Impromptu by Benjamin Britten (1969), less inspired and more schematic than the other works, the BBC-ers realize Walton’s craftsmanship and imaginative orchestration well. Highly recommended.

Roger Knox

surprisingly, this is her first solo disc.

At its heart is Hindemith’s third Sonata for Viola and Piano. Like most of the works here, it was written in 1939, as the horrors of World War II were being unleashed on the world. Li’s impassioned performance, with pianist Meng-Chieh Liu, underlines the expressive force of Hindemith’s dazzling work.

Gideon Klein was just 20 when he wrote his audacious Duo for Violin and Viola. Li is well-matched by violinist Benjamin Bowman in a shattering evocation of Klein’s despair. An extraordinary work – in an unforgettable performance.

Viktor Ullmann’s situation was as dire as Klein’s in 1939. But his Five Love Songs, like Joseph Jongen’s luminous Concertino for Violin and Piano, are infused with hope, if bittersweet, longing. Arranged for viola and piano by Liu, Ullmann’s songs, though fleeting and unmoored without their texts, find an eloquent poetic voice here.

Moon Reflected in Er-Quan takes us to Li’s native China with this tender elegy composed by the blind itinerant Yanjun Hua. Li manages to evoke the distinctive sound of the erhu in this moving arrangement for solo viola.

This is a memorable disc. The recorded sound is clear and authentic, and Li’s own booklet notes, in English, French and Chinese, are persuasive in presenting these works as direct responses to their fraught times.

Pamela Margles

Class Houses for Marimba – Music by Ann Southam
Taktus
Centrediscs CMCCD 21415

► It was with great pleasure that I listened to Taktus (percussionists Greg Harrison and Jonny Smith) playing Glass Houses for Marimba. It was difficult not to compare this version to the piano pieces, which I have recorded; however, music should be experienced in the different interpretations so I enjoyed this CD.

In these performances temp and articulation vary from the piano in interesting ways. No.5 by the marimbas clocks in at 5 minutes 21 seconds in comparison to the piano’s 8 minutes 28 seconds. The marimbas play this Glass House in a slower tempo and make it more meditative, rather than the virtuosic piano version. I like that their version is quite different from the piano, although I do prefer No.5 with all its repeats, faster and with an edge. Glass House No.1 as heard here is twice as long as the piano version, although the tempi were comparable (more repeats were added). The shorter version is closer to the original score but the transcription from piano to marimba results in different tonal colours and phrasing.

I do think it is important to have different performances and interpretations. How boring music would be if everyone played the same way. I like the contrasting dynamics in No.7, which is almost three minutes slower than the original. Again, different sounds emerge from different instruments and this highlights the unique quality of this music. No.8 is wicked for the piano – there.

MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY

1939 (Jongen/Ullmann/Hindemith/Hua/ Klein)
Teng Li; Meng-Chieh Liu; Benjamin Bowman
Azica ACD-71301

► Since Teng Li moved here to join the Toronto Symphony Orchestra as principal viola, she has become a much-valued presence on the Toronto concert scene in her own right. But,
is a 33-note drone which the pianist must memorize in order to focus on the right hand melodies. Needless to say I relished hearing two people perform this difficult piece with such relaxed ease and expertise. My favourite Glass House in this CD was the performance by Taktus of No.9 because it accentuated the colours and delicate nuances of the marimbas. The playing throughout the CD was impeccable and articulate.

Christina Petrowska Quilico

Editor’s Note: Centrediscs will be re-issuing Christina Petrowska Quilico’s piano recording of Ann Southam’s complete Glass Houses as a 2-CD set in the coming months.

Elements Eternal
Julie Nesrallah; Gryphon Trio
Naxos 8.57353

► The Gryphon Trio, comprised of Annealle Patipatanakoon (violin), Roman Borys (cello) and Jamie Parker (piano), has just released a new album Elements Eternal. It features four very different works they recently commissioned from some of Canada’s finest composers writing today.

The CD opens with Brian Current’s These Begin to Catch Fire (2012), which suggests patterns of light reflecting on the water at Lake Muskoka. The intensity of this mesmerizing composition is heightened through a series of complex polyrhythms in the piano part, played flawlessly by Parker.

Andrew Staniland’s Solstice Songs (2011) highlights the importance of the celestial seasons in this compelling instrumental work written in three sections. The ensemble effectively communicates the wide scope of moods that range from an ethereal nocturnal atmosphere to an exciting perpetual motion finale.

In his song cycle Letters to the Immortal Beloved (2012) James K. Wright uses as its text Beethoven’s famous love letters written 200 years ago. Wright’s deeply moving composition, exquisitely sung by mezzo-soprano Julie Nesrallah, seamlessly weaves Beethoven’s own Andante favori into the third movement in further tribute to the composer.

Centennials (2012) by Michael Oesterle celebrates the centenary of the birth of three individuals born in 1912: chef Julia Child, composer Conlon Nancarrow and painter Jackson Pollock. Their contrasting personalities are captured perfectly and the Trio’s skills are particularly evident in the final movement with its extreme fluctuations of temperament that the production team has recorded with balance and clarity. An excellent CD.

Réa Beaumont

Isadora Sings
Vivienne Spiteri
isadorArt isi O3 (isadorart.qc.ca)

► The harpsichord is an instrument of opposites. Of ancient origins, it lives on through recent trends of recreation. Sounding with pointillistic attacks of sharp precision, it can unfold with a rich and flexible resonance and tone. Thick blocks of complex sounds contrast with clear, transparent layers of register and texture. Although known for its role in early music performance, these qualities provide a rich sonic palette for today’s composers. Isadora Sings reveals these colours through a series of evocative and dynamic pieces. Vivienne Spiteri and her collaborators pair the harpsichord with electronics, blending them into unique sound fields, extending the instrument beyond its usual capabilities.

Of note is Cinéma, mode d’emploi by Pierre Derochers which, through live sampling, creates a thrilling layering of dense, frenzied activity. Also, in Hope Lee’s Tangram, added bass clarinet (played by Lori Freedman) supplements the vastness of the electronics, as well as complementing the harpsichord in its ritual-like meditations and ecstatic outbursts.

Most interesting is the title track, a collaboration between Spiteri and composer Kent Olafsson, which uses an array of rarely heard extended techniques. Hand muting, pitch bending, strumming, plucking, even rubbing the strings to excite harmonics, are echoed in the electronics, creating a vast, spacious world of sound. Shadow and light of varying intensities come into focus, from obscure faintness to blinding opaqueness. An imaginative and unique exploration for the curious listener.

While the pieces can feel a bit lengthy, the artists’ vision provides rich sonic rewards for the willing ear.

Wesley Shen

Sassicaia
François Houle; Jane Hayes
Redshift Records TK438 (redshiftmusic.org)

Zarabandeo
François Houle; Jane Hayes
Afterday AA1501 (francoishoule.ca)

► The versatile Vancouver-based duo Sea and Sky consists of clarinetist François Houle and pianist Jane Hayes. They have released a pair of CDs: Sassicaia features current Canadian compositions, many of them commissioned by the duo; the other, Zarabandeo, is a collection of pieces in, for want of a better word, Latin style. Both collections are compelling, and both demonstrate the considerable interpretive strengths of this seasoned ensemble. Releasing them together makes sense. It lends a weight to the enterprise that might be missing if one or the other had come out alone. They are set against one another by contrast, not similarity.

The title track on the Canadian collection is by Bruce Mather, who has named a number of works for impressive wines. His pointillist and microtonal piece is both grave terroir and heady bouquet. It is a contemplative, mysterious centerpiece to the disc. Owen Underhill’s Duotone features pointillism and microtones as well, and also the captivating clarinet double tones that Houle demonstrates with mastery.

Less effective to me is the headbanger by Keith Hamel entitled Cyclone. Intended to depict the energy of the weather event, its heavy base and static quality forced my ear into shelter. As unfortunate an inclusion as that piece is, the meditation that begins immediately following in Paul Dolden’s Eternal Return of a Ritual Form serves as balm that quickly turns to hallucinogenic drug. Dolden spins a basic repetitive formula into nervouservishness. Cleverly constructed as a kind of manicual passacaglia, the 17-minute piece keeps the listener wondering “what next?” When a free improv section gives way to a drum solo, before one can think “OH NO!” it heads on into mad variation X. A gradual disintegration should lead to a calm coda, but instead, everything is all insect buzz and numb desolation. Quite a trip.

The opening track of the other disc provides the title. Not your parents’ sara bene, Zarabandeo is by Mexican composer Arturo Marquez. Following this tuneful and romantic rondo form are two effective short works by Cuban clarinetist/composer Paquito D’Rivera. Featured also are works by Argentinians Carlos Guastavino and the tango master Astor Piazzolla. In Ravel’s Pièce en forme de Habanera Houle shows a nice touch, though here he doesn’t meet the style spiced up by Houle, though here he doesn’t meet the style standard set by the remarkable Jane Hayes, whose work on this second album is full of character and verve. Houle includes two takes of Piazzolla’s haunting nocturne Oblivion (he emulates many jazzers here and gives us two interesting improvised intros to the piece). I don’t agree that Two Majorcan Pieces qualifies for inclusion. For me the rest of the collection is utterly charming and substantial enough without Joseph Horovitz’ ersatz Spannishment. Houle lets his sound go in playing this material, allowing his jazz chops to take some focus away from his tone. No one
else will likely quibble with that and I can just suffer my envy of his slap tongue in silence.

Max Christie

**Piano and Erhu Project Volume 2**
Nicole Ge Li; Corey Hamm
Redshift Records TK440 redshiftrecords.org

In the February 2015 issue of *The WholeNote* I weighed in on the satisfying premiere album by the Vancouver Piano and Erhu Project (PEP). With the prompt release of *PEP, Volume 2* the transcultural duo of pianist Corey Hamm and erhu virtuoso Nicole Ge Li have further raised the bar. The album offers substantial rewards for listeners. Among them: nine well-crafted compositions in the Western art music tradition for this not-quite-yet standard instrumental pairing by nine composers with strong Canadian ties.

The album’s repertoire exhibits several high points including Keith Hamel’s emotion-packed, elegiac *Homage to Liu Wenjin*, nominated for Composition of the Year at the 2015 Western Canadian Music Awards. The other contributing composers are represented with works rich with glints of virtuosity, humour, nostalgia and dreamscape.

It is *Who Made the Inch of Grass* composed by Aaron Gervais which haunted me the most, however, prompting repeated pleasurable listening. Gervais explores the erhu’s richly lyrical voice in his Debussy-daubed work, which in several passages is also subtly favoured with Messiaen-like choral harmonies in the piano.

The duo’s musically nuanced playing, combined with repertoire freshly commissioned in 2013 and 2014 – attractively captured in this recording – has caught the attention of critical ears. The album earned a nomination for Classical Recording of the Year at the 2015 Western Canadian Music Awards. Given the rewards on display here and PEP’s ever-growing repertoire and reputation, in what musical directions will Volume 3 take us?

Andrew Timar

**Louis Babin – Saint-Exupéry: De Coeur, De Sable et D’Étoiles**
Moravian Philharmonic Orchestra; Petr Vronsky
Les Productions Louis Babin ODL-LB-002 (louisbabin.com)

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry is perhaps best remembered today as the creator of the famous children’s book *Le Petit Prince*. Yet he was not only an acclaimed French author of several important works and laureate of high French literary awards, but also a French Air Force pilot who lost his life during a reconnaissance mission in 1944. What a noble character to honour in music, and that’s exactly what Québec-born composer Louis Babin has undertaken here. The CD opens with *Saint Exupéry: de coeur, de sable et d’étoiles*, a three-movement work named for Saint Exupéry’s novel from 1939. The music pays homage not only to the author but to his whole life. *Vol de vie*, the first movement, is suitably bold and heroic, featuring an appealing array of tonal colours treated by the Moravian Philharmonic with great panache.

The second movement, *Les adieux au Petit Prince* is moody and mysterious, making effective use of percussion, while *La marche des Hommes* with its stirring brass sections, is pure cinematography.

*Couleurs* for string orchestra is a poignant reflection on the trials of adolescence while the *Suite du promeneur* is a musical depiction of life’s passage on earth. Also scored for strings, the suite comprises four miniature movements, each a study in contrasts, from the wistfulness of *Le Curieux* to the steadfast defiance of *La morale de cette*. Despite its French roots, this music seems to have a Scandinavian feel to it, the sprightly rhythms and angular lines akin to those of Dag Wåren or Carl Nielsen. The warm and resonant sound from the Moravian strings further enhances a solid performance.

The premise behind this CD is an intriguing one and it’s resulted in some fine music by a composer we should be hearing more from – bravo to Babin and the musicians from Moravia.

Richard Haskell

**Xeniakis: IX – Pleiades; Rebonds**
Kuniko
Linn Records CKD 495

The music of iconoclast modern composer Iannis Xenakis has by now been mostly released on disc. There are a few firsts, though, in these two new discs. Stéphanos Thomopoulos, a Greek pianist now living in France who did a doctorate on Xenakis’ piano music, has delved into the archives to dig out some early pieces completed while the composer was studying composition in the years 1949-52: *Six chansons pour piano*, and *Trois pièces inédites*. There is very little “Xeniakis” in these pieces, but they are interesting and quite well written for the piano. The collection is eclectic, not traditional but not avant-garde. Thomopoulos adds the early trio, *Zyja*, for soprano, flute and piano, to his exploration of Xenakis’ juvenilia. This has been recorded before, and is quite a substantial work, a rather strange mixture of simple modal melodies, virtuosic flurries, low clusters and mathematical (Fibonacci) ostinato patterns. There is nothing here to be heard of Xenakis’ groundbreaking works *Metastaseis* and *Pithoprakta*, even though they appeared just a few years later. On the rest of the disc...
Michael Hersch is Robi Botos, the Two of his earliest associates demonstrate for her debut CD, on the contrary, has composed an endlessly hours. While this seems like an impossible tion. Scored for cello and horn, the piece forms. The music of that are comprised of increasingly expansive have shifted to compositions for smaller forces words. In recent years however, the composer an impressive catalogue of large ensemble this early success, many orchestras began to Concordia American first prize in the able success from an a composer who has Rebonds... of Xenakis' important works for percus- sion, Plesiades and Rebound. They have both been recorded before, but never has Plesiades, a 40-minute opus for six percussionists, been done by one player! (It is multi-tracked, of course.) The label, Linn Records, is connected to the high-end audio company based in Scotland. This hybrid disc lets you listen in pristine surround sound (requiring SACD capacity) or in stereo. If you get the chance, listen to the surround version: it is amazing – the intricate layers of rhythms and instruments coming at you from all round. Kuniko is a fine percussionist, and she clearly has taken much care with this recording. I especially enjoyed the sound of her Sixxens, metallic instruments specially fabricated for this piece. In concert, the sound can be quite harsh, but here we get all the details, the sound a cross between Indonesian gamelan and Harry Partch microtonal percussion. The disc closes with the solo work, Rebounds, for drums and woodblocks. She plays well, the one surprise being the substitution of a marimba-like instrument for the woodblocks. James Harley

Michael Hersch – Last Autumn Jamie Hersch; Daniel Gaisford Innova 907 (michaelhersch.com)

Michael Hersch is a composer who has experienced considerable success from an early age. He won first prize in the Concordia American Composers Awards, one of the youngest composers to be awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in music, and a Rome Prize recipient, all in his 20s. Due to this early success, many orchestras began to regularly commission Hersch which led to an impressive catalogue of large ensemble words. In recent years however, the composer has shifted to compositions for smaller forces that are comprised of increasingly expansive forms. The music of Last Autumn is no exception. Scored for cello and horn, the piece consists of 4 movements lasting nearly two hours. While this seems like an impossible instrumental combination to maintain a level of interest necessary over two hours, Hersch, on the contrary, has composed an endlessly impressive collection of moods and textures for the two instruments. Inspired by classical dance forms and the poetry of W.G. Sebald, each movement occupies a unique sound world ranging from the pungent and monumental to the beautifully stagnant and fragile. Many of the movements are violent entry- ways into small forms with unified gestures. Various solo interludes are wonderful examples of how the composer is able to successfully transfer the essence of the chosen poetry into impressive sonic journeys. Much of the music in the piece is violent and extreme while maintaining a mysterious clarity. The careful interplay between the horn and cello begins to fashion a connective tissue that stabilizes the miniature sound worlds throughout each movement. Perhaps the most impressive writing is for the cello, a feature of the piece that is undoubtedly aided by the fact that the cellist is the composer’s brother, Jamie Hersch. This impressive set of miniatures is an ideal listening experience for those seeking truly novel sonic experiments within a modernist approach. Adam Scime

JAZZ AND IMPROVISED MUSIC

Movin’ Forward Robi Botos A440 Entertainment A440 010 (robibotos.com)

Robi Botos, the highly respected jazz piano player, has released a fourth CD as leader. Since arriving in Canada in 1998 from his native Hungary he has become one of the most in-demand piano players in Toronto for both recordings and live gigs. His mentoring by the great Oscar Peterson shows in his prodigious but not overly showy technique. Movin’ Forward is mostly originals — with the exception of Close to You by Bacharach/David and the standard Softly as in a Morning Sunrise — and, like his mentor, Botos’ songwriting style is melodic and swinging. There are influences of funk and Eastern European music and some tracks edge over into modern, but the style is mostly mainstream and accessible. The album opens with the New Orleans-style EurOrleans then goes more hard-driving with CapTAIN KirkLAND, a tribute to Kenny Kirkland, a friend of Jeff “Tain” Watts who is featured on the track. Botos’ bandmates for Movin’ Forward are among the American jazz elite — in addition to Watts on drums, Robert Leslie Hurst III is on bass and Seamus Blake plays saxes and EWI. These multiple Grammy Award-winning players bring authority and facility to the tracks as they are given ample room to stretch, both on the lovely ballads such as Violet (a tribute to Botos’ wife) and the hard-driving Heisenberg which I can only assume is a tribute to the TV drama Breaking Bad. Which shows that inspiration can come from just about anywhere. Cathy Riches

Touchstone Ariel Pocock Justin Time JTR 8592-2 (arielpocock.com)

For her debut CD, young, fresh and talented keyboardist/vocalist/composer/arranger Ariel Pocock has assembled a team of skilled colleagues – beginning with veteran Producer Matt Pierson, who, during his tenure at Warner Bros. Records, discovered and successfully produced an array of today’s top jazz luminaries, including Joshua Redman and Brad Mehldau. Pocock’s instrumental colleagues include some of our finest contemporary jazz artists, including Larry Grenadier on bass, Julian Lage on guitar, Eric Harland on drums and percussion and Seamus Blake on tenor saxophone. Indeed, Pierson and Pocock’s indisputable and intuitive good taste has informed every track of this fine opening salvo. Like many emerging artists, Pocock feels free to incorporate a plethora of musical styles, and although firmly rooted in jazz, she seems to reject categorization – freely drawing upon the musical influences of Cuban and Brazilian folk music, standards from The Great American Songbook, iconic jazz composers such as Keith Jarrett and Thelonious Monk, and the contributions of meta-genre pop artists Tom Waits, Randy Newman and James Taylor.

Whether Pocock is scat singing, rendering a powerful lyric or exercising her considerable keyboard chops, her innate melody shines through. There is so much “right” about this recording, that it is a challenge to distill it into comments about just a few of the exceptional tracks… but clear triumphs include Bob Dorough’s Devil May Care, Randy Newman’s Real Emotional Girl, Charles Mingus’ Ugly Beauty/Still We Dream and Kate Bush’s Mother Stands for Comfort. No doubt, this auspicious debut bodes well for Pocock’s forthcoming long and relevant artistic career. Lesley Mitchell-Clarke

No U Turn Bobby Bradford & John Carter Quintet Dark Tree DT (RS) 05 (darktree-records.com)

Two of his earliest associates demonstrate how thoroughly Ornette Coleman’s concepts of freedom had penetrated the music’s lingua franca, in this 1975 never-before-released concert from Pasadena. Profoundly analytical, yet with an animated pulse, cornetist Bobby
The Elephant’s Journey
Lama + Joachim Badenhorst
Clean Feed CF 332 CD (cleanfeed-records.com)

Expressing themselves on a CD that is surprisingly calm as well as cutting edge are the members of the Lama group, who also extend the band’s internationalism with this memorable set. Consisting of trumpeter Susana Santos Silva from Porto, Portugal, plus Portuguese bassist Gonçalo Almeida and Montreal-born drummer Greg Smith, both of whom live in Rotterdam; the trio’s guest on The Elephant’s Journey is Belgian clarinetist Joachim Badenhorst. Instead of adding unnecessary weight to the musical pachyderm’s load, Badenhorst joins Silva in creating resilient acoustic timbres which are buoyant enough to coordinate nicely with the other instruments’ electronically enhanced structures.

Like the use of an animal trainer’s hook, arrangements on the eight tracks here adeptly direct the themes so that their singularity is apparent with little pressure added to the load of the titular cameldil. Case in point is The Gorky’s Sky, where Almeida’s string slaps, surmounting harmonized group precision, make the reedist’s Dolphy-like tremolo dissonance appear to come from within an ensemble larger than a quartet. Smith’s percussion prowess gets a workout within an ensemble larger than a quartet. The music’s surface is changing the course of the instrument before dying in a car accident at 25 in 1961. As well as an homage to lost genius, it marks the beginnings of the kind of fully interactive trio music that Peacock, Copland and Byron realize here.

Stuart Broome

Now This
Gary Peacock Trio
ECM 2428

Gary Peacock may be best known today as a longstanding member of Keith Jarrett’s Standards Trio, but the bassist, now 80, has one of the most varied and distinguished résumés in jazz. In his long career, he’s complemented everything from the concentrated lyricism of Miles Davis, Bill Evans and Paul Bley to the torrential expressiveness of Albert Ayler; he’s also one of the best swing era combos. At the same time, although Silva’s chirping hockets often create enough unusual obliagents to the spider web-like patterning of Badenhorst’s timbres, additional experimentation isn’t neglected either. Smith’s composition Murkami – the other tunes are all by Almeida – finds the clarinetist expressing a sour, bansuri-like squeak before the combination of lustrous trumpet extensions and positioned bass strokes surmount the dissonance with meditative calm.

Featuring textures that are both quixotic and pointed, the concluding Don Quixote includes understated electronic loops, contreto reed slurs, string pressures that move crab-like across the bass face, Smith’s tabla-like drone and Silva’s melodious brass accents. By the time the track finishes, it
There are lots of tasty delights for the ear in this new release from one of Canada’s favourite ensembles. Featuring the music of five Canadian composers, the stylistic differences of each work challenge Quartetto Gelato to pull out all the stops and prove yet again that the group can perform anything presented to them with perfection.

The current members are all musically gifted and brilliant technicians. Founding violinist/tenor Peter De Sotto, accordionist Alexander Sebastien, oboist/multi-instrumentalist Colin Maier and cellist Liza McLellan play with mutual musical respect and appreciation to detail. Cellist Lydia Munchinsky and percussionists Mark Inneo and Kevan McKenzie are welcome special guests on the tracks where they play.

The satisfying more traditional lush classical sound of Rebecca Pellett’s Una storia d’amore is chamber music at its best. In contrast, Maier’s banjo pickings support De Sotto’s happy singing in Howard Cable’s On The Crounest Trail. A driving rhythmic feel and dance groove highlight Hilario Duran’s Latin-flavoured Aventura Afrocubana Suite. The appealing underlying improvisational sentiment of Michael Occhipinti’s music makes his Sirocco and Ballu Di Gelato an intriguing listening experience. The ensemble shines in Josoy Abramovich’s Gypsy Fantasy with more great vocal work by de Sotto and Sebastien’s accordion finesse. More awe-inspiring zippy accordion music shines on Charles T. Cozens’ Celtic Dances.

Gelato fans should be thrilled with this new musical flavour from the always-entertaining Canadian concert stage stars!

Ken Waxman

POT POURRI

All Original – 100% Canadian Quartetto Gelato QGP1 Records QGP1-010 (quartettogelato.com)

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One World Jesse Cook eOne COH-CD-5812 (jessecook.com)

Virtuosic, globally inspired guitarist/composer/producer Jesse Cook is known for his stellar, cross-cultural musical motifs and collaborations. His previous JUNO-nominated recording projects have sampled the sonic landscapes of such far-flung locations as Cairo, Colombia and Lafayette, Georgia. On his ninth CD, One World, the usually peripatetic, Paris-born and Toronto-raised Cook has chosen to stay in his own back yard, while still incorporating into his compositions a tasty ethno-smorgasbord, which includes sitars and violins, as well as powerful techno bass sequences and other well-placed and masterfully engineered technology.

Cook’s considerable skill as a highly trained classical, flamenco and jazz guitarist is evident throughout this fine, well-produced recording and on each composition he metaphorically crosses the Bosphorus – weaving Eastern and Western musicality and instrumentation into a joyous celebration of alpha wave stimulation and artistic globalism. In describing his project, Cook has said, “The idea is that there really is just one world. If you pull your focus back far enough, you start to see all music as being branches of the same tree…”

Standouts include Shake – a pulsing and virile flamenco, infused with raga-like rhythmic patterns and dynamic percussion; the wild and trippy sub-continent techno journey of Bombay Slam and Taxi Brazil, which conjures up cinematic images of a heady cab ride through Rio. Also of note is the mysterious and sensuous Steampunk Rickshaw and the Iberian-infused Beneath Your Skin. The closing track, Breath, features Cook’s pure, warm, crystalline solo acoustic guitar, leaving the listener refreshed and restored – the perfect end to this multi-sensory journey through vibrant and delightful musical exotica. Lesley Mitchell-Clarke

Night Swimming Gyrophilia Forward Music Group FMG051 (gyrophilia.org)

In their first studio-produced release, Halifax-based band Gyrophilia grooves in many tempos and musical moods in original compositions by five members of the seven-piece ensemble. From jazzy swinging tunes like Cake Walk to the klezmer/world music influences of Insomniac’s Dream and RitiB, producer Joshua Van Tassell has captured the band’s upbeat spontaneous off-stage sound that has drawn big crowds to their live shows. The happy music played by the effervescent musicians is toe-tapping fun!

The producer uses his superb listening ear to create subtle instrument balances, and to add atmospheric electronic sound effects. From the guitar reverb in Boo Doo Down to the washes of electronic sound in the dark mysterious bass opening of RitiB, a new band sound evolves. The slower Deep Water is especially successful with these effects. A gorgeous opening violin solo line is supported by a wash of wind-like sounds to create a sitting-outside-by-the-lake effect that the other instruments evoke as the work progresses.

All the players are great, with special mention to trumpeter Matt Myer in the opening wah-wah section of Long Shadows, and double bassist Adam Fine, both in his solos and his backing lines in each track. Though running around 40 minutes, this short yet sweet and bopping Gyrophilia release showcases a great tight creative band developing into an even greater one.

Lesley Mitchell-Clarke

Heartsstrings Xuefei Yang Decca 8888182

The renowned Chinese-born guitarist Xuefei Yang released her latest album Heartsstrings with Universal Music in June 2015. Nineteen pieces ranging from Chinese folk melody to jazz hits and Spanish guitar classics have been included in her first album for the Decca label.

The whole disc seems like a collage as Yang chooses not to follow a certain topic or theme to connect the pieces. This, to some degree, coincides with the cultural characteristics of the Canadian mosaic. All of the pieces, although drawn from various cultural backgrounds, are lovely, delicate and easy on the ear. Some talk about love affairs (e.g. Tackettus’s Secret Love and Elgar’s Salut d’Amour) while others depict natural and mental landscapes.

Yang, with her outstanding technique and her “East-meets-West” experience, gives an indubitably charming performance in Piazzolla’s jazz-styled Milonga del Angel and popular Spanish guitar pieces. However, the most attractive selection on the album is her transcription and interpretation of Fisherman’s Song at Eventide, a piece of traditional Chinese music. Widely popular in North China, Fisherman’s Song is a three-piece part played on a guzheng, a Chinese plucked zither. It depicts a sunset scene with a fisherman going back home after a tiring but fruitful day. The guzheng player imitates fisherman’s songs and the sound of waves, and builds up a jovial and warm atmosphere. In the process of transcribing it into a guitar piece, Yang makes utmost efforts to sustain the Oriental elements as well as to respect characteristics of the classical guitar. It is a challenging attempt and happily she finds a subtle balance between the two instruments.

Having previously recorded albums of Bach and Britten, on this disc Yang has chosen to explore her own cultural roots, managing to bring different narratives and styles together with great success.

Daisy Meng Li

the-wholenote.com
As the Guelph Jazz Festival (GJF) settles into maturity, dependable musical choices and the vagaries of touring mean that a few of the performers at this year’s bash, September 16 to 20, are featured in more than one ensemble. The happy end result is that the audience gets to sample some musicians’ skills in more than one challenging setting.

Take drummer Tomas Fujiwara for instance. On September 17 at Heritage Hall (HH), he’s one-third of the Thumbscrew band with guitarist Mary Halvorson and bassist Michael Formanek. Then on September 20 at the Guelph Little Theatre (GLT) he and Halvorson are part of cornetist Taylor Ho Bynum’s sextet. After All is Said, Fujiwara’s CD with The Hook Up (482 Music 482-1089) includes Halvorson and Formanek, plus tenor saxophonist/flutist Brian Settles and trumpeter Jonathan Finlayson. Displaying rare ability as a composer as well as a percussionist – all seven tunes are his – Fujiwara’s lines are ripe with self-conscious conviviality. At the same time, as a piece like Roaster’s Roast demonstrates, effervescent riffs don’t mask the tune’s rugged core, which his thrashing patterns and the guitarist’s intense vibrations supply. Similarly on Solar Wind, smooth horn harmonies back the drummer shaping Native Indian-like tom-tom beats to a jazz program. With themes usually passed from instrument to instrument throughout, there’s also space for Settles’ (Stan) Getzian flutter tones, hocketing leads from Finlayson and unique interludes from Halvorson that move chameleon-like from folksy strumming to obdurate power chords.

Additional instances of Halvorson’s skills are evident on Ghost Loop (Fortune 0010/010 for-tune.pl), except here, unlike Thumbscrew, she is joined by solid bassist John Hebert and drummer Ches Smith. Smith’s ingenious approach to percussion can be heard at the GJF though. On September 18 he’s part of saxophonist Darius Jones’ quartet at the GLT and at the same place the next night he works double duty in both Marc Ribot’s Ceramic Dog trio and the Bly de Blyant band. A live date from Poland, Ghost Loop (No.43) effectively demonstrates how much can be done with just three instruments, as themes encompassing the most pliable pastoral patterns or the most raucous battering ram-like authority, and much in-between, are elaborated. On Existential Tearnings (No.44) for instance the three could be mistaken for a heavy metal trio as Halvorson’s harsh twangs mirror Smith’s anvil-hard pump. Meantime following an expansive scene-setting intro from Hebert, the guitarist fashions a multi-hued tone exposition on the title tune as if she had 88 piano keys at her disposal. Expressing the band’s overall duality, the final Deformed Weight of Hands (No.28) is both blunt and balanced, with the guitarist relaxing into legato picking to temper Smith’s furious, but always controlled, rumbles.

Halvorson and Hebert are among the players who make up saxophonist Ingrid Laubrock’s Anti-House sextet on Roulette of the Cradle (Intakt CD 252 intaktrec.ch); the others are pianist Kris Davis, clarinetist Oscar Noriega and drummer Tom Rainey. The caretful dynamics that unite the players can be experienced in a fashion at the GJF when Davis’ Capricorn Climber band featuring Laubrock and Rainey plus bassist Trevor Dunn and violist Mat Maneri is at GLT September 17. Meandering like a country road, Laubrock’s most vigorous CD interface with Davis occurs on … and Light (for Izumi), which blends pointillist reed tinctures with hearty Chopinesque intimations from the pianist. Composed like the other tunes by the saxophonist, Silence… (for Monika) with Rainey’s reverberating bell pealing and unhurried strums and sweeps from Hebert could be confused with avant-garde jazz – that is until Halvorson’s sour clanks yank it into 2015. Davis’ solid comping that extends lines with the swiftness and regularity of a telegraph machine is angled leftwards to meet Laubrock’s emotional reed slurs on the title tune; while Face the Piper, Part 2 demonstrates how the guitarist’s jagged-edge approach transforms a composition from regularized swing. Still the CD’s defining track is From Farm Girl to Fabulous, Vol.II, where homespun inflections, suggested by Davis’ upright-piano-like woody plunks and mandolin-like strokes from the guitarist, accompany a reed transformation as Laubrock’s output begins simply and concludes with smirking urbane and gritty urban enunciation.

Sharing the double bill with Capricorn Climber is the sole GJF appearance of vibraphonist Jason Adasiewicz’s Sun Rooms trio. However From The Region (Delmark DE 5017 delmark.com)’s 11 tracks itemize why the full-barreled improvisations of Adasiewicz, drummer Mike Reed and bassist Ingebright Håker-Flaten mean the three are continually busy with their own groups as well as with North American and European stylists, some of whom are featured at the GJF. Considering Håker-Flaten’s string slapping is as percussive as the others’ output, Sun Rooms could be the practice studio of three drummers. With an instrumental bounce as forceful as any vibist since Lionel Hampton, Adasiewicz as composer/player adds the delicate sensibility of Milt Jackson and Gary Burton when needed. In fact, a trio of appealing tunes – The Song I Wrote for Tonight, Mae Flowers and Mr. PB – shows off this lyrical bent. Each succinctly melds rhythmic colours and emotional melodies, augmenting the results into a sway as gentle as a summer breeze. Stentorian swagger and strength characterize many of the other tracks though. The bassist’s rugged timing steadies the tunes, the drummer adds irregular and broken patterns to their exposition and Adasiewicz consistently seeks novel, raw but unifying tones to judder sympathetically alongside the others’ contributions.

While the majority of these GJF improvisers who often work together are young, a constantly innovative stylist like British saxophonist Evan Parker, 71, continues to operate as he has for the past half century: partnering with as many musicians as possible. His September 17 HH performance is with baritone saxophonist Colin Stetson, while he hosts trumpeter Peter Evans and electronics exponents Ikue Mori and Sam Pluta September 19 at the GLT. Suggesting how he will play during both concerts is Hello, I Must Be Going (Victo cd 128 victo.qc.ca). Another Canadian live concert, from last year’s Festival International de Musique Actuelle de Victoriaville, it’s a duo session, this time with guitarist Fred Frith, 66. Frith’s command of the electric guitar is such, though, that he adroitly presages some of the electronic patterns Mori and Pluta come up with, as well as being fully conversant with his instrument’s rhythmic and melodic tasks. Notably, when both players are in full improvisational flight, searching for novel timbres, it’s only Frith’s powerful strums that confirm that a guitar is being used. Otherwise he comes across like an actor inhabiting multiple roles in a one-man play. For instance, processed drones and clicks meet the saxophonist’s flutter-tongued slurs on the title track, while Frith’s resonating contributions to Particulaires come from what sounds like a mutant grafting of strings onto a combination of tabla and conga drum. On the concluding Je Me Souviens, unbridled sonic elation is attained, as Parker’s whirling pitch variations turn straight ahead as Frith responds with abbreviated spurts of
Rhythm through concentrated string pumping. *Red Thread* is the paramount instance of the duo’s work, however. As Parker’s crimped reed quacks accelerate to a protracted allotment of circular breathing, Frith mirrors the reed lines with electronically processed modular flanges as well as supplying a connective bass line. The climax has the saxophonist exchanging evocative tone for luminous tone vibrations as the guitarist complements Parker’s new narrative with rugged yet reassuring rubber band-like twangs.

The musical interconnections on these CDs set such a high standard that memorable GIG performances can be expected every day of the festival.

**Jazz, eh?**

**STUART BROOMER**

In his 20 years in Toronto, **Nick Fraser** has become first-choice drummer for numerous bandleaders ranging from the post-bop mainstream to free improvisation. He’s done it with aggressive musicality and consistently inventive drumming, combining drive and subtlety. He has also recorded his compositions with his own quartet and the collective Drumheller. His latest CD will introduce his talents to a far wider audience: *Too Many Continents* (*Clean Feed CF336, cleanfeed-records.com*) appears on the most active free jazz label in the world and presents Fraser at the heart of a trio with expatriate Canadian pianist Kris Davis and saxophonist Tony Malaby, two key figures in current NYC jazz activity. The opening title track achieves near telepathic interaction, the group moving synchronously from delicate opening figures through a co-ordinated tumult of sound in which each throws more and more complex bits into the mix, eventually reversing the movement to ebb gradually to silence. Episodes of extended free improvisation are separated by Fraser’s compositions, among which the moody, corrosive *Also* stands out.

Canada rarely sees a jazz project as ambitious as **Orchestre national de jazz de Montréal**’s presentation of pianist-composer Marianne Trudel’s *Dans la forêt de ma mémoire* (*ATMA Classique ACD2 2730, atmaclassique.com*), a six-part suite for the 16-member orchestra recorded live with singer Anne Schaefer and trumpeter Ingrid Jensen as featured soloists with Christine Jensen conducting. Trudel might be new to writing extended works for a large ensemble, but there’s nothing here to show it. The work has strong themes and rich harmonies presented with vibrant brass and reed textures that spring from the traditions of composer/orchestrators like Gil Evans and Maria Schneider. *Vent Solaire*, the second movement, has a magisterial quality, enhanced by a moment when Trudel’s piano tremolos merge with the winds, while *La vie commence ici* has charging lines that demonstrate the precision of the all-star ensemble. Trudel and Ingrid Jensen provide plenty of individual highlights, but there are effective solo spots from trombonist Jean-Nicolas Trotter and bassist Rémi-Jean LeBlanc.

The cry, the shout, the laugh and the mutter of the blues have been part of jazz since its beginnings, not all jazz admittedly, but much of it and much of the best of it. Those tones are front and centre in Michael Bates’ *Northern Spy* (*Stereooscopic 266-1, outsidesources.org*) on which the Vancouver-born, Brooklyn-based bassist leads a trio with saxophonist (and former Vancouverite) Michael Blake and drummer Jeremy “Bean” Clemons, the latter providing some rock-solid, minimalist backbeats. It’s as visceral and soulful as one might expect of music inspired by Blind Willie Johnson, Otis Redding and John Coltrane. It also invokes saxophonist Julius Hemphill’s edgy *Hard Blues*. As the trio’s lead voice, Blake turns in a consistently masterful performance, stretching bop and blues to upper register multiphonics and cries on *End of History*.

**Jerry Granelli** was a well-established drummer when he relocated to Halifax in 1987, and he’s been releasing adventurous CDs as a composer and conceptualist as well ever since. The latest is *What I Hear Now* (*Addo Records AJR030, addorecords.com*) by his trio + 3. The basic group is Granelli’s trio with bassist Simon Fisk and tenor and soprano saxophonist Dani Oore, expanded with younger Halligonians, alto saxophonist Andrew McKelvey and trombonist Andrew Jackson, and topped off by Halifax-native Mike Murray. The four-horn front line balances sonic breadth with spontaneity. *Mystery’s* serene voicings lead to airy overlays and echoes among the saxophones, while *Swamp’s* combination of a rapid horn line and the rhythm section’s slow back-beat inspires a certain funky bluster from all the horns.

There’s an infectious joy about **Oliver Gannon** and **Bill Coon**’s *Two Much More!* (*Cellar Live CL011815 cellarlive.com*), the elite Vancouver guitarists commemorating the decade-old launch of their project *Two Much Guitar!* with a studio session accompanied by bassist Darren Radtke and drummer Dave Robbins. Gannon is a propulsive swinger with a fuller, bright, hard-edged sound who generates continuous melodic flow; Coon is a subtler, more elusive musician, floating over the beat with a glassy, slightly muted sound, more focused on harmonic invention. What matters most, though, is their evident pleasure in one another’s musical company as they alternately lead and accompany in a program studded with masterful renditions of classic songs, many of them ballads like Billy Strayhorn’s *Chelsea Bridge*, Johnny Mandel’s *Emily* and Ellington’s *In a Sentimental Mood*, before closing with Bobby Timmons’ *Moanin’*.

Another Vancouver guitarist, **Tony Wilson**, presents a dark vision of the city with his 6tet on *A Day’s Life* (*Drip Audio DA01107, dripaudio.com*), a musical complement to his eponymous 2012 novella about the lives of the homeless and addicted living in the Downtown Eastside. The opening title track has Wilson in a relatively consonant mood, stringing out bluesy melody in a classic jazz style. It’s a little harbinger of the music’s expressive depths or looming terrors to come, whether springing from the leader or from the torrents of sound produced by trumpeter JP Carter’s added electronics. Wilson’s compositional vision is fleshed out throughout by an outstanding band, whether it’s drummer Skye Brooks on *The Long Walk* or the strings of cellist Peggy Lee, violinist Jesse Zubot and bassist Russell Scholberg, all contributing to the piquant sweetness of *Bobby Joe’s Theme*. 

*The WholeNote.com / Listening*

For more information Thom McKercher at thom@thewholenote.com
Old Wine, New Bottles
Fine Old Recordings Re-Released

BRUCE SURTEES

The summer hiatus provided a comfortable window to leisurely absorb the many reissues that have arrived since the June issue.

None has given greater continuing pleasure than a fascinating eight-CD set from Radio France – 80 Ans de Concerts Inédits (FRF020-27, mono and stereo) – of live performances spanning eight decades given by the Orchestre National de France. A series of distinguished conductors and many renowned soloists are heard in 31 works, all but a few derived from performances in the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. This orchestra was founded in 1934 in the midst of the Great Depression, angering many who viewed the expenditure at that time as ill-advised. In addition to artist profiles, the comprehensive booklet recounts the creation of the orchestra and details its history with its ups and downs over the years.

Record collectors will be pleased to know that there are no Beethoven or Brahms symphonies nor any warhorses that persons who assemble collections seem obliged to include. Each disc of the eight is a well-thought-out, eclectic concert of familiar or unfamiliar works that, curiously, hold the listener’s attention to the end. Some examples:

Disc 1, "The French Tradition," contains Debussy Nocturnes (Désiré-Émile Inghelbrecht); Lalo Le Roi d’Ys Overture (Paul Paray); Roussel Bacbus et Ariane Suite No.2 (Charles Munch); Poulenc Chansons villageoises (Roger Desormière with baritone Pierre Bernac) and Magnard Hymne à la justice (Manuel Rosenthal).

Disc 2, "Expansion of the repertoire in the 1950s," contains Coriolan Overture (Carl Schuricht); Mahler Songs of a Wayfarer (Carl Schuricht with the 32-year-old Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau from September 9, 1957 in Besançon, about the time we heard him sing this cycle in Massy Hall); Tiff Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche (Joseph Krips); Alban Berg Altenberglieder (Jsascha Horenstein with soprano Irma Kolassi); Ravel Deux Mélodies bébâtraques (Paul Kletzki with soprano Victoria de los Angeles); Stravinsky Firebird Suite (André Cluytens).

Discs 6 & 7, "Sublime Encounters," contain once-in-a-lifetime performances of four favourite concertos...OK, warhorses. From April 9, 1964 with Eugen Jochum conducting, Christian Ferras plays the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto with such dazzling virtuosity and daring that the audience bursts into spontaneous applause after the first movement. From 1969 Martha Argerich and Claudio Abbado imbue the Prokofiev Third Piano Concerto with fresh energy especially a “making-a-run-for-the-border” first movement. Then Eugene Ormandy and the unmistakable 1972 sonorities of Isaac Stern in the Brahms concerto and Charles Dutoit and Yo-Yo Ma bring the Dvořák to life in 1993.

There are many other inspired performances from the 22 conductors and 12 soloists, so please check complete details on the ArkivMusic site, arkivmusic.com/classical/album.jsp?album_id=1737327.

I continue to be very impressed by Radio France’s stereo sound that may be described as incandescent. This is noticeably different from the various Rundfunk productions that, to finish the analogy, sound fluorescent.

Edwin Fischer, the Swiss pianist, was born in 1886, studied at the Stern Conservatory in Berlin, a pupil of Martin Krause who also taught Claudio Arrau. Krause himself had been a pupil of Liszt. Fischer’s core repertoire centred around Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms and Schumann. He was one of the first to direct concerted works from the keyboard and formed his own chamber orchestra for that purpose. A consummate musician, he was held in the highest regard by his colleagues and public alike. He faded from the music scene after 1954 due to ill health and died in January 1960.

Apian has issued a three-CD set of his complete Mozart studio recordings for EMI made between 1933 and 1947 on Mozart Piano Concertos (APR 7303). Included are three concertos with his chamber orchestra; Nos.17, K453 and 20, K466 and the Rondo K382. Three concertos, Nos.22, K482; 24, K491 and 25, K503 are with Barbirolli, Collingwood and Josef Krips and together with two sonatas and several solo works total almost four hours of sublime music-making. His love and understanding of the composer is complete, his playing is self-effacing but never tentative. I’m sure that this has been said before, that here the performer gets out of the way and the music seems to be playing itself. An exhilarating performance of the Haydn Concerto hob XVII:11 made with Fischer conducting the Vienna Philharmonic is the icing on the cake.

Some might dismiss these performances because of their vintage but those who do will miss hearing the most elegant, civilized and persuasive insights into Mozart. The transfers by ex-EMI producer Bryan Crimp retain all the sparkle of the originals with a minimum of artifacts.

Footnote: Testament issued a CD of a 1964 recording of Fischer conducting from the keyboard of the third and fourth Beethoven concertos with the Philharmonia Orchestra (SBT 1169). Praga has remastered a 1951 EMI recording of the Beethoven fifth concerto with Furtwangler conducting the Philharmonia (Praga PRD/DSD 350074, hybrid CD/SACD). Truly magic moments in this performance include the soloist’s arched transition into the last movement in which Fischer’s intuitive hesitations suspend the calm before the storm.

As a longtime resident of Toronto I was exposed to the artistry of Stanley McCartney, the principal clarinet of the TSO and later the COC orchestra, as a chamber musician in Stratford and as a member of the Toronto Woodwind Quintet. From its inception in 1965 the Orford String Quartet (Andrew Dawes, Kenneth Perkins, Terence Helmer and Marcel Saint-Cyr) was recognized as exceptional and would soon enjoy an international reputation.

McCartney was regularly heard with the Orford Quartet and on the occasion of July 14, 1969, they played the Brahms Clarinet Quintet Op.115 that was recorded by the CBC. That performance together with their 1970 live reading of the Mozart Quintet in A Major, K581 is now available on a DOREMI CD (DHR-6612). Both performances are outstanding, winningly alert and decisively expressive. The long second movement of the Brahms, the Adagio, is extraordinarily moving and I don’t believe there is a finer, more sympathetic rendering. Brahms’ exquisite score and the oneness of the five musicians reward the listener with a plaintively beautiful experience (overly sentimental I know but that’s how it affects me, upon no matter how many hearings). In the equally introspective, more euphoric Mozart, the collective sound of clarinet and strings is again miraculous. I would rather that the undeniably well-deserved applause had not been included here. It jolts the listener back to earth.

It is for inspired performances as these that tape recordings were invented.
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self-worth, is hilarious in a delicious scenery-chewing performance from John Turturro, playing a Hollywood “star” with an overblown sense of others, supports the emotional changes unobtrusively. Meanwhile, (excerpts from nine works including the ubiquitous and unforced. The well-chosen soundtrack, heavy on Arvo Pärt variations from Strauss’ String Quartet No.8, Britten’s 3 Pieces for String Quartet and the first two variations from Strauss’ Don Quixote. Nick Cave’s Where the Wild Roses Grow is performed both by Cave and star Colin Farrell. In Youth, an octogenarian retired composer (a relaxed, witty and urbane Michael Caine) and his slightly younger film director pal (an energetic Harvey Keitel), meet for their annual reunion at a spectacular Swiss spa. Aphorisms roll off Caine’s tongue but despite his infectious levity, he’s a wounded man. A musician so famous he’s being offered a knighthood, he’s most at ease conducting a group of mooing cows with bells on, in an Alpine meadow. Violinist Viktoria Mullova and soprano Sumi Jo make a persuasive case for his Simple Song # 3 (which was actually written for the film by Pulitzer Prize-winner David Lang).

My Mother, the most entertaining film of Nanni Moretti’s storied career, moves effortlessly from a busy film set to serious family scenes but Moretti’s directorial skill makes the mood changes feel natural and unforced. The well-chosen soundtrack, heavy on Arvo Pärt (excerpts from nine works including the ubiquitous Für Alina) but also including Philip Glass, Leonard Cohen and Jarvis Cocker, among others, supports the emotional changes unobtrusively. Meanwhile, John Turturro, playing a Hollywood “star” with an overblown sense of self-worth, is hilarious in a delicious scenery-chewing performance that is worth the price of admission alone.

Advance word on Alexander Sokurov’s Francofonia calls it a remarkable visit to the Louvre in the dark days under the German Occupation during World War II. Sokurov’s poetic reflection on the museum’s cultural significance is evident as the director shares his genuine wonderment for the Louvre – just as he showed a similar admiration for the Hermitage in Russian Ark, that astounding visual essay shot in one uninterrupted take in which the use of music was a crucial component.

Two Icelandic films, Sparrows and Horizon, feature musical contributions by composers linked to the innovative Icelandic group, Sigur Rós. Kjartan Sveinsson, the band’s former keyboardist, composed three songs for Rúnar Rúnarsson’s Sparrows, which chronicles a father and son relationship during one summer in a remote, Icelandic fishing village: a magical and thematically poignant place to portray a story of change. Orri Páll Dýrason, Sigur Ros’ current drummer, shares the credit for Horizon’s ethereal score with Sigur Ros’ touring guitarist, Kjartan Holm. The subject of the documentary, artist Georg Gudni Hauksson, paved the way for a renaissance in Icelandic landscape painting. Director Fridrik Thor Fridriksdóttir considers Hauksson a kindred spirit and Viggo Mortensen, who makes an appearance, is also a fan.

Sunset Song, Terence Davies’ epic of hope, tragedy and love at the dawning of World War I follows a young woman’s tale of endurance against the hardships of rural Scottish life. From Britain’s greatest living auteur, Sunset Song stars Peter Mullan and Agyness Deyn, and if the director’s filmography is any indication it undoubtedly will include a well-chosen soundtrack.

The synopsis for Claude Lelouch’s Un plus une, having its world premiere at TIFF, is intriguing, especially its poster with a nod to Jean-Paul Belmondo. Charming, successful, Antoine (Jean Dujardin) could be the hero of one of those films he composes the music for. When he leaves for a job in India, he meets Anna (Elsa Zylberstein), a woman who isn’t like him at all, but who attracts him more than anything.

I’ve seen six of the 27 films previewed here and am looking forward to viewing the others (and many more) during TIFF 2015. Watch for reports on these and other discoveries in my Music and the Movies blog onthewholenote.com over the months to come. The Toronto International Film Festival runs from September 10 to 20. Check tiff.net for further information.

Paul Ennis is the managing editor of The WholeNote.
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