Old Is New

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In the New Year

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Beethoven’s remarkable final symphony is a celebration of the human spirit culminating in the legendary and exhilarating “Ode to Joy.” This Tafelmusik presentation heralds the return of German conductor and long-term friend, Bruno Weil.

The programme also features our Chamber Choir in Rheinberger’s Abendlied, Brahms’ Warum ist das Licht gegeben, and a NEW Tafelmusik choral commission, directed by Ivars Taurins.

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Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre,
Jeanne Lamon Hall (TSP)

Vivaldi’s concert collection L’estro armonico (Harmonic fancy) took 18th-century Europe by storm: works of astonishing creativity and energy, they excited musicians, composers, and audiences alike.

Romanian violinist Mira Glodeanu makes her Tafelmusik debut as guest director and soloist in a programme that features several of Vivaldi’s groundbreaking concertos, as well as works inspired by Vivaldi’s “fancy,” including Giovanni Antonio Guido’s Scherzi armonici, depicting the four seasons.

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Karina Gauvin, soprano (Canada)
Krisztina Szabó, mezzo soprano (Canada)
Stefano La Colla, tenor (Italy)
Lucio Gallo, baritone (Italy)

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La bohème
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Imre Kollár, conductor (Budapest)
Katarzyna Dondalska, soprano (Berlin–Warsaw)
Franz Gürtelschmied, tenor (Vienna)
Featuring dancers from Hungarian National Ballet &
International Champion Ballroom Dancers

January 1, 2016 at 2:30 pm
Roy Thomson Hall

TICKETS: 416.872.4255
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On Ear lids — The Absence Thereof

“Our ears are constantly on the alert” says the voice, as the camera cuts away from the sunstreaked interior of the dilapidated Ontario barn. “This adventure with Murray Schafer made me sharply aware that while we may have eyelids we have no earlids. The deaf alone know a world of total silence and isolation.”

The voice belongs to Yehudi Menuhin (whose 100th birthday will be celebrated at Koerner Hall January 28), narrating one particular segment of *The Quiver of Life*, part one of the eight-part documentary series, *The Music of Man*, filmed and broadcast in the late 1970s. It is an episode that has stuck in my mind ever since I first saw it, in 1978. In it, Schafer walks Menuhin through the fields and woods of Schafer’s farm, alternately talking and stopping to listen:

“This is what I would call a hi-fi soundscape in which the signal to noise ratio is very favourable,” Schafer says. “There are very few noises here and therefore every sound that is around us can be heard at a great distance...The city by contrast is really a very low-fi soundscape — that is to say there are so many noises that it is very hard to determine what the signals are. It’s very confusing. Here...if we stand here we can hear sounds from all around us, at a very great distance.”

A few moments further on, the two of them are seated at opposite ends of a rough-hewn seesaw, in the middle of the barn, providing the motive power for a giant sound sculpture created, Schafer says, expressly for Menuhin’s visit. Their mutual glee in that moment is unforgettable, their laughter inextricably interwoven with the endless complexities of tone and overtone generated by Schafer’s great mud sound machine.

What had sent me scurrying off to YouTube to find *The Quiver of Life* was the coincidence of hearing the same “earlids” phrase spoken twice, by two different people. On back-to-back days, Monday November 7 and Tuesday November 8.

Schafer himself spoke the words on the Monday. On the Tuesday, they were spoken at the Palmerston Library Theatre, just before leading her audience out on a blindfolded “sound walk” in the rain, by Jessica Thompson whose resume describes her as an assistant professor in Hybrid Practice at the University of Waterloo, and whose passion is investigating “spatial and social conditions within urban environments through interactive art-works situated at the intersection of sound, performance and mobile technologies.” Thompson knew she was quoting Schafer and can doubtlessly trace in detail the connections (and disconnects) between her own work and his.

The Monday event at Gallery 345 was a concert-gala in Schafer’s honour, hosted by New Music Concerts – a benefit to raise funds for the re-release by CentreDiscs of a 1978 recording of a Schafer opera called *Loving/Toi* completed in 1965. The Tuesday event at the Palmerston library was the third of four in a series of events called New Music 101, presented by the Toronto New Music Alliance (and hosted by me), designed to take new music into new places – in this case into the Toronto Public Library system.

This particular little essay comes to no grand conclusions. But at this particular time of year where the low-fi din of piped so-called “seasonal music” makes most of us wish we had earlids, it’s worth thinking about the idea that the difference between sound and noise (the one being musical and the other not) resides as much in the phrase “seasonal music” makes most of us wish we had earlids, it’s worth thinking about the idea that the difference between sound and noise (the one being musical and the other not) resides as much in the freshness of the listening we bring to things, as in the things we listen to. We wish you in the new year an infinite capacity for delight.

publisher@thewholenote.com
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**The Toronto Consort Presents**

**Christmas**

*at the Monastery of Santa Cruz*

With guest-director and lutenist Žak Ozmo

The Toronto Consort, guest-directed by the early music specialist and lutenist Žak Ozmo, brings you a Christmas program full of ravishingly beautiful villancicos and wild Brazilian-influenced dances, found in the Monastery’s unique archives.

**Friday, December 11, 8pm**
**Saturday, December 12, 8pm**
**Sunday, December 13, 3:30pm**

Tickets $27 – $64
Box Office 416-964-6337 | TorontoConsort.org
Handel’s Messiah:
It Looks Like We Have A Keeper!

For Relief of the Prisoners in several Gaols, and for the Support of Mercer’s Hospital in Stephen’s-street, and of the Charitable Infirmary on the Inns Quay, on Monday the 12th of April, will be performed at the Musick Hall on Fishamble-street, Mr. Handel’s new Grand Oratorio call’d the MESSIAH, in which the Gentlemen of the Choirs of both Cathedrals will assist, with some Concertos on the Organ, by Mr. Handel."

Thus ran the advertisement (The Dublin Journal, 23-27 March 1742) for the first performances of what came to be the most beloved piece of music in England and, eventually, Canada. Rehearsals, each of them reviewed in the papers, attracted overflow crowds, and the opening performance was even pushed back a day to allow an extra public rehearsal. In order to seat as many listeners as possible, the event organizers requested that the ladies dispense with their hooped skirts and the gentlemen be enjoined to leave their swords at home.

From the first, audiences and critics were charmed. “On Tuesday last (13 April) Mr. Handel’s Sacred Grand Oratorio, The Messiah, was performed at the New Musick-Hall in Fishamble Street, the best judges allowed it to be the most finished piece of Musick. Words are wanting to express the exquisite Delight it afforded to the admiring, crowded Audience. The Sublime, the Grand, and the Tender, adapted to the most elevated, majestick and moving Words, conspired to transport and charm the ravished Heart and Ear.”

In the intervening 273 years, little has changed: Messiah continues to work its charms on thousands of music lovers, in Canada and in many countries around the world.

Although Handel’s Dublin performing forces were exceedingly modest in size, it wasn’t long until enormous choirs and orchestras took on this remarkable work. Of its evolution into a lumbering warhorse, the most perspicacious critic was surely George Bernard Shaw. In a 1913 magazine article he argued his case:

“Handel is not a mere composer in England: he is an institution. What is more, he is a sacred institution. When his Messiah is performed, the audience stands up, as if in church, while the Hallelujah chorus is being sung...Every three years there is a Handel Festival, at which his oratorios are performed by four thousand executants from all the choirs in England. The effect is horrible; and everybody declares it sublime.”

Happily, those days of unwarranted excess are largely behind us. Nowadays, especially during the month of December – strange thing, that, handel intended Messiah to be performed during the Easter season – it is possible to hear a great number of performances, some with very economical forces, others with large choirs and orchestras, albeit mostly displaying the transparency and agility we have come to expect.

This year, once again, WholeNote readers will have ample opportunity to hear Handel’s iconic masterpiece. A quick perusal of GTA and southwestern Ontario listings yielded about 30 different productions, many of them offering multiple performances. In Toronto, you can hear historically informed performances by Tafelmusik; Against the Grain’s staged version has been generating a lot of attention recently; and the venerable Toronto Mendelssohn Choir and Toronto Symphony Orchestra under Sir Andrew Davis will do a series of performances at Roy Thomson Hall. Indeed, the TMC/TSO reading will be recorded for commercial release by Chandos. Incidentally, the last time TMC/TSO recorded it was at Kitchener’s Centre in the Square back in 1986. During one particularly fraught session, soprano Kathleen Battle stormed out of the hall, taking refuge in her hotel room. It took all of Andrew’s charm and seductive wiles to persuade the diva to return and complete the session. If, during this year’s performances, you see the maestro crossing his fingers, you’ll know why!

My own experience of conducting Messiah goes back half a century. Before that, aged 10 or 11, I first heard it performed live in a small town in Manitoba and I thought it was the most beautiful thing I had ever heard. Mind you, I was quite familiar with the music even then. The annual live CBC broadcast from Massey Hall with Sir Ernest MacMillan conducting was de rigueur listening in our farmhouse. And most years, our local church choir would attempt the Hallelujah Chorus. The best part was waiting to see which overwrought tenor or bass would come in early during the big general pause close to the end! We were rarely disappointed.

Messiah holds great personal significance for me. My very first date with the beautiful young woman who would later become my wife was a performance of Messiah. We were both ushers at the Civic Auditorium in Winnipeg, and during the performance we sat on the steps in the balcony. Lois Marshall was the soprano soloist.

Over the years I’ve conducted about 120 performances, most of them in Canada, but also a few in Europe and one memorable one in China, more about which later. There are conductors who dread the notion of directing yet another Messiah, but I am not among them. For me, each new performance of this glorious music is an eagerly anticipated event, an opportunity to discover another layer of meaning in this inexhaustible work.

Things go wrong from time to time in Messiah performances. Somebody faints or is sick on stage, soloists show up late or not at all (yep, that’s happened to me). One soloist inadvertently locked himself in a church washroom, delaying the start of the performance by a few minutes until we could extricate him. An image that will forever remain in my memory is of three soloists and me struggling to do up our tenor who somehow managed to get his zipper stuck. The expectant audience was treated to some spontaneous offstage hilarity as we dealt with this little existential crisis.

And then there was the Hammond organ incident. It was one of my first Messiah performances. We were in a small rural Manitoba church, said sanctuary having been adorned with a Hammond electric organ (remember those?). Well, we got through Part One without incident. Then, in Part Two, where things start to get really serious, there was a short circuit in the accused instrument, and the rhumba rhythm kicked in. It was surely the first time such a decidedly secular element had been heard in that place of worship. My organist’s frantic

Messiah in the GTA

- Dec 04 8:00: Emer Iseler Singers. Handel’s Messiah. Lydia Adams, conductor. Metropolitan United Church (Toronto).
- Dec 06 7:00: Toronto Beach Chorale. G.F. Handel: Messiah in the Beach. Kingston Road United Church.
- Dec 07 7:30: University of St. Michael’s College. A Baroque Concert for Advent. Handel: Foundling Hospital Anthem; also works by Geminiani. With Musicians in Ordinary, St. Basil’s Church, University of St. Michael’s College.
- Dec 07 8:00: Soundstreams. Ear Candy: Electric Messiah. Drake Hotel. Also Dec 8.
- Dec 12 4:00: Church of St. Mary Magdalene. Children’s Messiah. Pax Christi Chorale. Church of St. Mary Magdalene (Toronto).
- Dec 15 8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Messiah. Handel (orchestration, Andrew Davis). Andrew Davis, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall. Also Dec 16,18,19(8:00),20(2:00).
- Dec 16 7:30: Tafelmusik. Handel Messiah. Ivins Tarroins, director. Koerner Hall. Also Dec 17,19. Also Dec 20(Sing-along).
- Dec 18 8:00: Massey Hall/Against the Grain Theatre. ACS Messiah. Handel. Topher Mokrzewski, conductor. Harbourfront Centre. Also Dec 17(8:00),19(2:00).
- Dec 17 8:00: Living Arts Centre. Ballet Creole: Soulful Messiah.
- Dec 18 7:30: Humber Valley United Church. The Magic of Christmas. M. Wilber: musical...
ministrations were to no avail. The Spanish dance continued. “He was despised” with rhumba accompaniment is, shall we say, unique! By this time the audience was rolling on the floor. Finally, we had to shut the instrument down and continue with the piano which, mercifully, was to hand. I concluded this was divine wrath visited upon a parish that would sully its place of worship with a Hammond!

Only once have I had to fire a soloist the day before the concert, an alto who just wasn’t up to Handel’s demands. Enter Catherine Robbin at the very last minute, visibly pregnant with her first child. It was the first of many times we worked together, and of course she sang like an angel. There was one Messiah where Ben Heppner and Daniel Taylor graced the same stage. Their duet “O death, where is thy sting?” is the only time Canada’s leading Heldentenor and countertenor have ever sung together. It was pure gold! In April 2014 I conducted a Messiah performance in Waterloo with the Nota Bene Baroque Players & Singers. It was a deeply personal moment for my tenor soloist, Michael Schade. His father, already quite ill and confined to a wheelchair, was able to attend. Hans Schade passed away a month or so later. And shortly after that, Michael’s mother, Liesl, died quite unexpectedly.

That Messiah was the last time they heard their illustrious son. But of all my Messiah experiences, there is one that stands out from all the rest. In 1999 I was invited to participate in an international arts festival in Kunming, China. (In 2012 and 2013 I would return to that festival in Kunming, China. In 2012 and 2013 I would return to that event.)

Miao Villagers sing Messiah, 2012

arrangements; Handel: Messiah (excerpts).
- Dec 19 7:30: Musikay. Messiah. St. John’s United Church, Oakville.
- Dec 19 8:00: Mississauga Symphony Orchestra. Highlights from Messiah. Jennifer Tung, chorale director. Living Arts Centre, Hammerson Hall.
- Dec 20 7:00: Tafelmusik. Sing-along Messiah. Ivars Taurins, director. Massey Hall.
- Dec 20 3:00: St. Anne’s Anglican Church. Christmas Cantate. Rutter: Magnificat (excerpts); Handel: Messiah (excerpts); Christmas carols arr. by Sir David Willcocks, Derek Holman, Paul Halley and John Rutter. Messiah beyond the GTA.
- Dec 04 2:30: Queen’s University School of Music. Messiah Sing-along. Grand Lobby, Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts, Kingston.
- Dec 13 3:00: Bach Elgar Choir of Hamilton. Bach Elgar Sing-Along Messiah. Melrose United Church, Hamilton. Scores available to borrow or buy. Rehearsal on Dec 8(7:15) with ticket.
- Dec 13 3:00: Peterborough Singers. Handel’s Messiah. George Street United Church, Peterborough. Also Dec 14(7:30).
- Dec 20 3:00: Grand River Chorus. Handel’s Messiah. St. Pius Catholic Church, Brantford.

MESSIAH continues on page 84
Music is an essential part of Christmas and with that time of year fast approaching, I thought I’d offer a look at some records that might enhance our enjoyment of the season. These are all personal favourites; most, but not all, are jazz-oriented. Hopefully there’s something here for all tastes, from the religious to the secular, for those who like their Christmas music straight and those who like it, well...not so straight. To organize things a bit, I’ve arranged the selections into four loose categories:

**JAZZ INSTRUMENTAL**

Three Suites – Duke Ellington. One of the three suites is Ellington’s adaption of a holiday staple, The Nutcracker, to his unique musical world. While he and Billy Strayhorn remain quite true to the original, the highly individual voices of such Ellington veterans as Johnny Hodges, Paul Gonsalves, Harry Carney, Ray Nance and Lawrence Brown cast Tchaikovsky’s score in an entirely new light, to say the least. The majestic swing of the Overture is especially thrilling; as far as I’m concerned the Christmas season hasn’t begun till I’ve heard it. As an added bonus the other suites are Grieg’s Peer Gynt and Suite Thursday by Ellington and Strayhorn, after John Steinbeck’s novel Sweet Thursday.

A Charlie Brown Christmas – Vince Guaraldi. A delightful essential for the inner kid in all of us. Linus and Lucy, Christmas Time Is Here and other favourites from the timeless cartoon are all here, but the strongest track is still the jazz treatment of O Tannenbaum by Guaraldi and his trio-mates Monty Budwig and Collin Bailey.

Christmas Cookin’ – Jimmy Smith. From 1964, this features Smith’s funky and high-octane organ in a program of festive songs with a powerful brass ensemble of New York’s finest, arranged by Al Cohn and Billy Byers. It’s one of the more ebullient and hard-swinging jazz Christmas albums, as you’d expect with Kenny Burrell, Art Davis and Grady Tate in the rhythm section.

Have Yourself a Soulful Little Christmas – Kenny Burrell. Duke Ellington’s favourite guitarist acquires himself gracefully in this 1966 album with a large band directed and arranged by Richard Evans. Originally on Cadet, it was reissued as a CD by Verve a few years ago.

Merry Ole Soul – Duke Pearson. This beautifully recorded 1969 Blue Note is one of the most crisp and fresh-sounding of Christmas albums, but is unfortunately hard to find. Pearson was an incisive, light-toned pianist who also functioned as an in-house arranger, composer and producer for the label and here he presents a marvellous integrated program with a very cohesive trio using his favourite bassist and drummer – Bob Cranshaw and Mickey Roker. There are some uncommon tunes and a highlight is their surprisingly unhurried and lyrical treatment of Sleigh Ride, with the leader alternating between celeste and piano on the melody, and some interesting open vamps that are quite reminiscent of Ahmad Jamal’s classic 1950s trio.

Holiday Soul – Bobby Timmons. Another great festive trio record, with the iconic hard-bop pianist, bassist Butch Warren and Walter Perkins on drums and percussion. It’s almost impossible to find, because as far as I know it’s never been issued on CD, but it turns up occasionally in used vinyl bins. If you see it, buy it – it’s worth having for Perkins’ deft handling of sleigh bells alone and it grooves from start to finish.

Paul Desmond & The Modern Jazz Quartet. Not a Christmas album per se, but a fortuitous recording of the MJQ’s Christmas Day concert at Town Hall in 1971 – an annual affair, but with Desmond sitting in after the intermission that year. Greensleeves is the only piece with any Yuletide connotation, but the musical interplay between Desmond and the MJQ, playing together for the first and only time, feels like the birth of something special.

Big Band Christmas – Rob McConnell & The Boss Brass. Some wonderful McConnell arrangements, by turns zesty and sensitive, beautifully performed by his great band. A highlight is a heartfelt version of Johnny Mandel’s A Christmas Love Song. Also priceless is the cover photo of Rob dressed as Santa Claus.

And...Fans of big-band jazz might also enjoy A Merry Christmas! by Stan Kenton and five Christmas albums by the USAF’s first-rate big band, The Airmen Of Note – Noel, Santa Claus Is Comin’ To Town, Christmas Time Is Here, A Holiday Note From Home and Cool Yule. Half of the first and third and all of the second comprise charts by the brilliant Mike Crotty, one of jazz arranging’s best-kept secrets because he spent 26 years in the military. He now lives in Arizona and works as a freelance composer-arranger. These are available for listening at rewindplay.com/airmenofnote/sounds/sounds.htm.

**VOCAL**

Christmas Songs by Sinatra. Recorded during Sinatra’s early association with Columbia and musical director Axel Stordahl, it’s just his third album as a leader. The CD reissue expands the ten-inch, 1948 LP with bonus tracks from both before and after the original sessions. His better-known A Jolly Christmas on Capitol from 1957 is also very good, but I prefer the freshness and restraint of the earlier record.

12 Songs of Christmas – Etta James. Although the repertoire is firmly seasonal, this 1998 effort is about as close to a pure jazz record as the powerhouse R&B singer ever came. This is largely due to the excellent band of stalwarts including Red Holloway, George Bohannon, Cedar Walton, John Clayton and the immortal Billy Higgins.

A Swinging’ Christmas – Tony Bennett and The Count Basie Orchestra. I first heard this in a record store while Christmas shopping a few years ago and enjoyed it so much I bought it right on the spot. From 2008, well after Basie’s death, but otherwise there’s nothing not to like about it. Bennett, the band, the charts and the soloists all sound terrific and it swings effortlessly. Sold.

Ella Wishes You a Swinging Christmas. This one is relentlessly upbeat and some of Frank De Vol’s writing veers toward the schlocky, but who cares? It’s ELLA and she’s infectious and irresistible, particularly on Let It Snow, where the warmth and purity of her voice bring an unfettered joy.

Christmas with Dino – Dean Martin. I wasn’t expecting much from this one, but it’s a very solid merging of two Martin albums – A Winter Romance, done for Capitol in 1959 and The Dean Martin Christmas Album, done for Reprise in 1966. There are some interesting seasonal repertoire choices here, such as I’ve Got My Love To Keep Me Warm, A
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Marshmallow World and Baby, It’s Cold Outside. Often forgotten over the years amid all the entertainer hats he wore and the endless booze jokes was the fact that Dean Martin was a very good and personable singer.

The Very Best of Bing Crosby Christmas – One can hardly do Christmas without Bing, and this is a fairly complete Decca compilation from 1942 to 1955, with a nice mixture of carols and standards including, of course, White Christmas.

A Christmas Album – Barbra Streisand. I’m not entirely a fan of all things “Bra,” but this 1967 record, tastefully arranged by Marty Paich and Ray Ellis, is very good and her renditions of Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas and The Christmas Song are among the best I’ve heard.

Christmas – The Singers Unlimited. Mostly traditional carols sung with immaculate pitch and ingenious harmonies furnished by Gene Puerling, the group’s leader and arranger.

COLLECTIONS

Jingle Bell Swing – An imaginative and eclectic Columbia jazz compilation with some rare Christmas oddities, including Black Xmas (To Whom It May Concern) with Miles Davis and Bob Dorough, Art Carney reciting ‘Twas the Night Before Christmas in tempo with percussion, a kind of early jazz-rap. A trenchant, hard-swinging version of Rudolph The Red-Nosed Reindeer by alto saxophonist Pony Poindexter, a duet by Chick Corea and Herbie Hancock on Deck the Halls, Lambert, Hendricks & Ross singing Deck Us All With Boston Charlie and a 1965 re-record of Claude Thornhill’s classic Snowfall by The Glenn Miller Orchestra directed by Tex Beneke, which fooled me – I thought it was Thornhill’s band when I first heard it. There are other goodies too – Peggy Lee and Benny Goodman, Carmen McRae, Russell Malone, Mel Torme and two tracks by Louis Prima.

Louis Armstrong & Friends – The Christmas Collection. Another good 20th Century Masters mix, with six tracks by Louis – some with Benny Carter’s underappreciated 40s band – including Christmas Night In Harlem, Zat You, Santa Claus? and Christmas In New Orleans. You’ll also get to hear Satchmo’s take on White Christmas, Ellington’s band jamming on Jingle Bells, Lionel Hampton’s version of Merry Christmas, Baby with a vocal by Sonny Burke, and, best of all, Dinah Washington singing Silent Night, a religious experience if ever I’ve heard one.

MISCELLANEOUS

The Messiah – Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and Chamber Choir, directed by Ivars Taurins. There are countless recorded versions of this masterpiece, but this live performance from Toronto’s Koerner Hall in 2012, with soloists Karina Gauvin, Robin Blaze, Rufus Müller and Brett Polegato, is my favourite. This is how Handel intended this oratorio to sound.

James Taylor at Christmas – A lovely recent addition to the genre, with great singing, classy musicians, smart arrangements and some different song choices – Go Tell It On the Mountain, Joni Mitchell’s River, In the Bleak Midwinter, Some Children See Him, Who Comes This Night?, plus an ingenious reworking of Jingle Bells in half-time, fat-back funk-killer. All brought to a fitting close with a soulful reading of Auld Lang Syne which captures the song’s very essence.

The Bells of Dublin – The Chieftains. The greatest of Irish traditional bands with various vocal guests including Jackson Browne, Elvis Costello and the McGarrigle sisters. It’s a classic – traditional, yet unconventional, and best of all, it sounds like Christmas. Browne’s The Rebel Jesus is a highlight, showing a side of Christ that’s forgotten – he was a firebrand, no cream-puff.

Finally, some favourite single-track strays which may not be in any collections but are likely available on YouTube or as downloads: Fairytale of New York by The Pogues; God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen by the MJQ; the priceless 1946 version of Jingle Bells by Vic Dickenson and Leo Watson; Jo Stafford’s rendition of Baby, It’s Cold Outside by Ray Charles and Betty Carter; not to mention Brother Ray’s cosmic reading of Winter Wonderland. And lastly, the little-known White Wine In the Sun by Australia’s Tim Minchin, an oddly deadpan/sentimental Christmas song that touches me – it’s wryly naive, whimsical yet wise, funny and heartbreaking all at once.

To all music lovers, Mazel Tov and a merry, swinging Christmas.

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.

St. Philip’s Anglican Church

- Sunday, December 6, 4:00 pm | Jazz Vespers Tribute to Frank Sinatra with Alex Samaras (vocals), Colleen Allen (saxophone), Scott Alexander (bass), Gary Williamson (piano) and Brian Barlow (drums)
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James Taylor at Christmas

The Very Best of Bing Crosby Christmas

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Marc-André Hamelin had just come in from a walk when he answered his phone. I had called him mid-November in advance of his Music Toronto recital next January 5. “It’s my first concert of the year, actually,” he said. I opened our conversation by congratulating him on his recent inclusion in the Gramophone magazine Hall of Fame, a group of 25 pianists that ranges from legends like Rachmaninoff, Richter, Rubinstein, Horowitz, Michelangeli, Gould and Lipatti to contemporaries such as Argerich, Pollini, Perahia, Uchida, Hough and Schiff. I asked whether he feels a kinship with any particular pianist, living or dead.

“I grew up listening to the great pianists of the past, historical recordings,” he answered, before moving into an explanation of his influences in a nutshell. “If there’s any heritage to what I do, any sort of influence or maybe source for a lot of what I have done, you’d have to look for it there. However, this is what I was exposed to at the very beginning due to my dad and those were his listening preferences. But later on I became much more aware and much more respectful of the written note. So I think that what I do today is sort of a happy mix of the two. Or let’s say a judicious use of all these elements, of both of these aspects.”

Not since Glenn Gould has a Canadian pianist had such a global impact as Marc-André Hamelin. Just as Gould’s interpretation of Bach revolutionized the way we heard his music, Hamelin made musical sense of late 19th and early 20th century pianist-composer romantic music so fiendishly difficult it had seemed lost until he unearthed it. As the years passed, Hamelin’s repertoire has broadened to embrace more traditional repertoire.

I wanted to know what considerations went into programming the January concert, which consists of a late Mozart sonata (K576), Liszt’s Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude and Venezia e Napoli and Schubert’s last sonata (D960). “Well,” he said, seizing on the sonata. “The Schubert B flat is an easy one. I could play it in every single concert till the day I die. I wouldn’t be unhappy.”

I reminded him of a 2009 interview with Clavier Companion where he spoke about having played the sonata already in public for nine or ten years, yet still found wonderful things in it. He had said that the piece was so fresh he doubted he would ever tire of it, even if he could include it in all of his recitals. “That’s true,” he laughed. “I’m glad things haven’t changed, because it just shows you the power of that particular work.”

When I tried to get him to account for his attraction to it, he was surprisingly forthright. “It’s one of those pieces with which I’d rather have it remain a mystery. Because the more words you try to put to it, the more difficult it becomes to know exactly what it is that attracts me to it so much. I feel exactly the same way about the last three Beethoven sonatas. Which I’ve played quite a bit as well.”

Not only that, I reminded him, but he had performed Schubert’s glorious final sonata in his Koerner Hall recital earlier this year in March, persuasively venturing into the Schubertian sound world using an unfinishing romantic approach. “Aha! Not only that,” he repeated. “But I also played it many years ago in, I think, Walter Hall, to inaugurate a new piano. So it will be my third performance of it in Toronto. I hope people won’t get sick of my performance.” But then his memory deepened: “Oh, I also played it in North York. That, as you can imagine, was quite a few years ago. I remember because Tamara Bernstein reviewed it very favourably.” It was the one time he played the George Weston Recital Hall.

I told him I was curious about what drew him to certain pieces, and he was careful to give a balanced response: “If I say that I’m attracted to involved harmonies and dense textures, I don’t want to exclude the fact that I like very simple textures and simple harmonies as well. I’m attracted equally to something like the music of Franck or Busoni, or something like that, which can be really rather thorny and harmonically involved, but I also love the pieces from the collection of On the Overgrown Path of Janáček which have very few notes indeed but still express worlds of emotions. So basically, I guess it amounts to what is expressed and not necessarily how it is expressed. Human emotions have been the same throughout man’s history; it’s only the ways of expressing it – the language, musically speaking, I mean – that has changed and of course, evolved a great deal.”

Later, listening to the Janáček on his 2014 Hyperion recording of it, I was struck by the emotional richness his playing conveys. For the most part, the music may be simple and subdued but there are sudden bursts of power that he unleashes in a storm of notes in Our Evenings, the first movement. Moving along the path, as it were, a brooding Slavic interlude mixes moods and colours in They chattered like swallows, lingering tantalizingly. The quiet contemplative beauty of Good night leads into the dark, angular world of Unutterable anguish before reaching the sublime essence of melodic purity with In Tears.

I asked how Hamelin goes about learning a new piece. He answered by detailing what he doesn’t do, that is, use recordings. He prefers to go directly to “what the composer is asking,” which is the score. Imperfect as that may be as a vehicle for their thoughts, he believes it’s the only way composers have of communicating their pieces.

“I won’t necessarily interpret everything that’s on the page. I will try to rationalize: If, for example, there’s a miscalculation or if they didn’t express exactly what they wanted. I’m a composer myself and that has enabled me, and I’m sure, other composer-interpreters could say the same thing. It has enabled me to feel a little closer to the creators of the works I perform because I know a little bit more how they felt at the moment of creation and what the task is of trying to notate your intangible thoughts into a system of notation that is open to interpretation.”

When I asked whether Hamelin finds thinking about a piece away from the piano to be a valuable learning tool, I was hoping to strike a chord, but the answer was far more detailed than I could have imagined. And remarkably timely:

“Absolutely. I experienced it just a few minutes ago when I was taking a walk before you called. I was thinking about something that I’m working on right now. And because I’m not busy producing the sound at the piano I can think about the music in a more pure way. And I can get a little more effectively to the essence of the music. And plenty of things will suggest themselves – little emphases – I mean, a counterpoint will just put out for example, tempi will be a little bit more right if I’m just thinking purely about the music. Architectural things will become clearer. Textural things will become clearer. A whole host of practice can be done away from the piano. That’s generally not something that is really well known.”
“Most parents think that once their kids have accomplished their two hours at the piano that’s it, they don’t have to do anything else. But thinking about the music is at least as valuable as practising at your instrument. Because after all, you’re doing this not to impress the populace, you’re doing this to learn how to communicate a message. And you have to know what message to communicate. You have to have something to say.”

I started to ask about Hamelin’s close relationship with his father but before I could finish my question Hamelin interrupted to say, “You know, he actually died 20 years ago today, as a parenthesis, November 17, ’95.” Hamelin agreed that he was lucky to have had a father like that, who, although a pharmacist by profession, was a gifted amateur pianist, whose talent as his son quickly put it, “came out of absolutely nowhere because his parents weren’t musical.”

I had read somewhere that his father was his first teacher. “In a sense,” he said. “My first official teacher was a local lady who I had for four years after which my dad enrolled me in Vincent d’Indy School. But essentially I have started to list my dad as one of my teachers simply because he oversaw a lot of my development. I could always talk to him and ask him things. And he offered suggestions. When he didn’t like what he heard, he said so.”

Hamelin agreed that his father, with his penchant for composer-pianists, and his recordings, which he played all the time, had a considerable influence on his musical taste as a child. It was hard to get recordings and sheet music in those days when “Canada was still a little bit of a cultural desert.” He told me that at the time his father was very intrigued by Leopold Godowsky’s music but it was very difficult to get, almost nothing was available, “and now it’s all available with a few clicks because it’s on IMSLP [imslp.org].”

From listening to his father’s record collection Hamelin “definitely got a sense, predominantly, of a great and sometimes excessive interpretive freedom.” “You know,” he added, “at the time, musicology wasn’t really the science that it is today. Back then true respect for the printed note still had a long way to come. So I grew up with the sentiment that one could do with the music as one pleased [he laughs], which isn’t too good if you’re playing things like Beethoven or Bach or Chopin or Mozart. But later on [after he emigrated to the U.S. in 1980 to study with Harvey Wedeen at Temple University] playing with other people and also with my teacher’s influence, I got to respect the printed score a lot more. And also the fact that I write music myself gets me to appreciate a lot more the toil and trouble composers go through.”

Charles Ives’ first teacher was his father. Among other exercises, he would play a song on the piano and have his young son sing it in a totally different key. So I found it fascinating that Hamelin, with his
own special father-son relationship, would have chosen Ives’ *Concord Sonata* as the first LP he bought “with his own pennies,” as he once put it. It was John Kirkpatrick’s second recording of the piece, recorded in 1968. Hamelin bought it in 1975. He gave me a typically detailed answer to my question of how he chose to buy that particular LP:

“I really started to be intrigued by contemporary music. A few years earlier my dad had gotten a subscription to the *Piano Quarterly* and it featured reviews of scores at the beginning. And they reproduced the first page of almost everything. So there was everything from beginners’ pieces to the most advanced avant-garde scores. And those, the latter, really made an impression on me, you know, the ways of notation. And he also subscribed to *Clavier* magazine. In October ’74 there was an Ives special issue because it was the centenary of his birth. And there were a lot of articles and there was a discussion of the *Concord Sonata*, among other things. And it really intrigued me. At the same time I saw that a local record store had the Kirkpatrick recording, so I picked it up. $7.98. I still remember.

Tenth of June, 1975. I remember it because it’s the only year I ever knew, the ways of notation. And he also subscribed to *Clavier* magazine. In October ’74 there was an Ives special issue because it was the centenary of his birth. And there were a lot of articles and there was a discussion of the *Concord Sonata*, among other things. And it really intrigued me. At the same time I saw that a local record store had the Kirkpatrick recording, so I picked it up. $7.98. I still remember. Tenth of June, 1975. I remember it because it’s the only year I ever kept a diary.”

He bought a lot of contemporary recordings after that – Stockhausen, Cage, Boulez, Xenakis – everything he could lay his hands on. “A lot of bargain records.” And “Oh my God, yes,” he answered when I asked if he was still buying records. He elaborated:

“You know, I shop a lot second-hand because first of all, regular record shops are dying and I don’t like the fact that one can’t browse online really, physically. So I much prefer second-hand shops and I buy vinyl at least as much as CDs these days. This is beside the fact that vinyl with young people has made a resurgence. But also because there are tons of things still to be found. And I’m not only talking classical music. I mean I can buy anything from classical music to comedy records to improvisation to noise to electronic music to all kinds of things.”

When I asked if there is anything in particular he listened to for pleasure, he replied that there is so much in his collection to catch up on that he almost never listens to a recording twice. And he added something he deemed very important: “I was once asked who my pianistic heroes are and I had to answer: the score. Because as much as we have fantastic recordings, tons of fantastic recordings throughout history, throughout the 20th century, the score is still my ideal.”

Trying to get a sense of the immensity of his collection I asked how extensive it was. Again, his answer took me by surprise. “It’s hard to quantify. The only thing I can quantify right now with any certainty is that I’m waiting for some funds to convert a garage into a sizable music room. And my sheet music collection right now is in 97 clear plastic bins. So that gives you an idea.”

Of course, with over 70 CDs of his own to his credit, I was curious as to how he chose what to record. Hamelin volunteered that from the beginning of their association over 20 years ago, Hyperion has always been very open to what he wanted to do. “Of course, they were a little cautious at the beginning as far as more standard repertoire because I really wasn’t known for that, even though I have been playing standard repertoire all the time,” he said. “It’s just that my recorded repertoire was very maverick-y up to when I started with them. But gradually, I’m very happy to say, that they were willing to give me more freedom as far as standard repertoire. And that really started with the Haydn recordings that they let me do [recorded in December 2005; released in March 2007]. I had to do a little bit of persuading, but it’s really paid off,” he added.

I had just recently listened to his *Haydn Sonatas Vol. 3* and felt compelled to tell him that I found it to be totally seductive and smooth. I said that it reminded me of sipping a local wine in Beaune at lunch, which made him laugh. Because it was so elegant and supple. Which made him laugh even more and thank me.

Among his own compositions on his *Etudes CD* is Cathy’s Variations, written for and about his domestic partner, Cathy Fuller, a classical music host for WCRB FM 99.5 in Boston. I found the theme to be very sweet and the experience of listening to it, coupled with a personal history of having heard Hamelin in concert several times during the last 20 years, compelled me to say that he seemed more relaxed in concert over the last several years. “Join the club,” he immediately interjected. “A lot of people have said that. Which couldn’t please me more. She’s an extraordinary person. She’s also trained as a pianist. A remarkable musician.”

Coming from a man who is a remarkable musician himself, that’s more than a compliment to the woman he complements. In his liner notes to *Cathy’s Variations*, Hamelin wrote that the piece is “purely the work of a man in love…inspired by…my true soulmate, who fascinates me more with each passing day.”

Marc-André Hamelin appears in recital for Music Toronto at the Jane Mallett Theatre, St. Lawrence Centre, on January 5, 2016. Among his own compositions on his *Etudes CD* is Cathy’s Variations, written for and about his domestic partner, Cathy Fuller, a classical music host for WCRB FM 99.5 in Boston. I found the theme to be very sweet and the experience of listening to it, coupled with a personal history of having heard Hamelin in concert several times during the last 20 years, compelled me to say that he seemed more relaxed in concert over the last several years. “Join the club,” he immediately interjected. “A lot of people have said that. Which couldn’t please me more. She’s an extraordinary person. She’s also trained as a pianist. A remarkable musician.”

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Marc-André Hamelin appears in recital for Music Toronto at the Jane Mallet Theatre, St. Lawrence Centre, on January 5, 2016. The following month he returns to perform Mendelssohn’s Piano Concerto No.1 with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, February 25 and 27 at Roy Thomson Hall.

Paul Ennis is the managing editor of *The WholeNote.*
This holiday season, choose old-school LPs over iTunes gift certificates. The reason? #VinylRevival. It’s the old thing. It’s the new thing. And for the record: if you need cash, dig out those old LPs – they could be worth something. To get your money’s worth, check out a store called Good Music Toronto, recently relocated from its Queen Street location downstairs from Black Market Vintage Clothing to new premises at 1611 Dundas West, at Brock, just steps away from Lula Lounge.

“I’ve been selling records in Toronto for ten years – eight as manager of Vortex Records and two as owner of Good Music [ilikegoodmusic.com],” says Lincoln Stewart, who prides himself on giving the fairest prices in town (half of what he sells the record for) for quality vinyl. “I have been a music lover my whole life and got into the business when the owner of Vortex asked me to work for him. Seven years prior I’d been the manager of his video store, Art & Trash.”

What about this business has changed in the past few years? I asked him.

“Certainly an increase in sales! Vortex has been in business since the ’70s and was one of the few Toronto stores to survive the drought of the ’90s/00s and come out the other side. Also, young people are buying vinyl again, which is very nice to see. I’ve also seen a drastic increase in prices, which is bad. Gone are the days when we could sell Fleetwood Mac and Dark Side of the Moon for $5. I find that disappointing because I’m a music lover first and a businessman second. Our motto sums us up nicely: Quality records bought and sold. Fair price in and out. Because we guarantee everything that we sell, we try not to carry records with audible marks on them. Our records play clean. If one doesn’t, bring it back for a full refund. I also photograph most everything that’s interesting and put it on instagram.com/goodmusicpopup.

Just one thing about Good Music Toronto – while they have a great jazz selection, they do not currently buy or sell classical music. Thankfully there’s Amoroso Records (amorosomusic.com) at 4 St. Patrick Street, across the street from the Rex Hotel, which specializes in classical as well as jazz, rock and rarities. This family-run business is co-owned by sisters Anne Lai and Jacqueline Lai. Says Jacqueline:

“I decided to take a break from the bank, so I started working for a friend of mine at Second Vinyl. The year was 2000 and that was until 2004. Then, reality came in and I had to go back to the bank, so from 2004 to 2008 I worked for CIBC. At the beginning of 2008 I had had it, and I asked my family for help, and this is how Amoroso formed. In the beginning, vinyl hadn’t quite come back yet. I have to admit, now we are in our eighth year, and only in the last two years, vinyl did come back. But, the problem that we have is that people are very selective. People want only certain things. For example, in the rock section, people want Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd, Neil Young, those are all sellable. Everyone comes in wanting just that and nothing else. In classical, only violin, cello, solo piano, nothing else. So I’m right here doing my best to introduce people to different music.”

There are some great finds in this store and Jackie, as she is affectionately known, is a real gem in her support of the local music scene, always accepting flyers from musicians and eager to know about your next gig.

Music lovers in the Annex still miss Sonic Boom (sonicboommusic.com) but the new location at 215 Spadina Avenue is a cool destination for the Hogtown vinyl lover. As well as being Canada’s largest independent record store, Sonic Boom is open 10am to midnight, 364 days a year. Says store manager Christopher Dufton:
“The vinyl format has been important to Sonic Boom for 15 years now. It’s been within the last five years that we’ve experienced some real growth in the amount of people making vinyl their choice of format. We’ve seen a steady growth in new and used vinyl sales of about 30 percent year to year over the last several years.”

Why are consumers buying more vinyl?
“Buying and listening to music on vinyl is a more complete experience than buying and listening to music on MP3. Buying music on vinyl requires a trip to your local record store, a place of excitement and discovery. You have the opportunity to interact with other fans of music and are surrounded by the physical media and the beautiful art that’s included in a record. Taking that record home and putting it on your turntable provides an experience that the click of music cannot. There are many local bands and artists releasing music on vinyl. A few examples are Born Ruffians, Grounders, Fresh Snow, New Fries and Mimico, which all released new albums on vinyl this year.”

Parkdale peeps should take note of a cool new place on Queen West called Parkdale Platters (instagram.com/parkdaleplatters), which opened in January of 2015. “When I was younger I always wanted to own a record shop but after years of working other jobs I lost sight of that prospect,” says Parkdale Platters owner Chris Gibson. “Then I began coming across lots of records and the thought of having a record store re-emerged.”

Gibson notes that “In the past few years record buyers wanted records that previously were not as sought after – records that people already had or weren’t interested in. Also, people have a wider range of interests in genres. While selling records at a rather low price, we stock the store to be inclusive.”

Kensington Market’s Paradise Bound (paradisebound.ca) sells both rare records and antique Japanese art. “Me and my highly personalized, knowledgeable service. Little shop – only ever me in there,” proprietor G. Coyote says. “I got into it because working for other men in corporate settings was choking my soul and I love vinyl. So, I bought a lot of records cheap over a few years and opened in 2000.” Like Paradise Bound on Facebook to save 15 percent off your next in-store purchase!

Over in the Beaches, discover Discovery (discoveryrecords.com) at 1140 Queen East in Leslieville. “I really thought it was just a lark but from day one it paid the bills,” says Jim Levitt, owner of Discovery. “We attempt to stock a wider variety of music…not just rock, jazz and blues but also C&W, classical, spoken word, comedy, easy listening…etc., etc. We also list our entire LP selection on our website.”

I wish I could do more than just mention others as well; there are literally scores of sources for vinyl in Toronto, all worth looking up. Kops Records now has three locations, two for She Said Boom! (separately owned) plus Vortex at Yonge and Eglinton, L’Atelier Grigorian in Yorkville, June Records in Little Italy, Grasshopper Records at Dundas and Ossington and Rotate This on Queen West.

Star jazz singer Alex Pangman – just named Best Female Vocalist in the NOW Magazine Readers Poll – is a fellow vinyl collector. When “Canada’s Sweetheart of Swing” released what some view as her magnum opus 33 (2011), featuring songs that were famous in 1933, she was 33 years of age. Needless to say, she couldn’t resist releasing the album additionally in vinyl, at 33 1/3 RPM:

“People that love vinyl get so excited when you have it! Like really excited…An LP is a beautiful thing! Records are objects you want to own and take the time to listen to carefully and read the liner notes. I feel that in the digital age, music is becoming invisible, and especially this music, it has a groove...(pauses)...literally!” she laughs in our over-the-phone interview. Her talent is itself a gift that’s difficult not to admire; those who know and love Alex’s music also know the obstacles she has overcome with her health. Born with cystic fibrosis, she is a two-time double lung transplant recipient and an organ donation advocate. It would make her holiday season to know that WholeNote readers are giving the gift of life: beadonor.ca.

Speaking of gifts, another great idea: the Royal Conservatory’s music appreciation classes. From Music Theory 101 to Outside the Box Baroque, this is your chance to Meet the Mendelssohns and The Great Conductors. You can even learn How Jazz Works and much more with these courses which range in price from $99 to $375. For more information or to register, call 416-408-2825 or visit rcmusic.ca/musicappreciation.

So, here’s wishing everyone a wonderful holiday season that’s full of music appreciation, be it by supporting live music, your local treasures or hopefully a mix of both!

Ori Dagan is a Toronto-based jazz musician, writer and educator who can be reached at oridagan.com.
Straddling The Old And The New

CHRISTOPHER HOILE

This December and January, there are far more operatic offerings than is usually the case. The largest-scale production will be the Canadian Opera Company’s revival of Wagner’s Siegfried beginning January 23, but that production is preceded by works of a wide variety of musical styles.

FAWN: The first of these is the world premiere of l’homme et le ciel by much-in-demand composer Adam Scime playing on December 3 and 4 at The Music Gallery. It is produced by FAWN Chamber Creative, a company dedicated to bringing new, affordable Canadian chamber opera to Toronto. The libretto by Ian Koiter is based on the Greek text The Shepherd of Hermas from the second century. The story concerns a former slave named Hermas, once owned by a woman named Rhoda, who begins to fall in love with her when they meet again even though Hermas has married. Over a period of 20 days Hermas receives five visions in which Rhoda appears as his heavenly accuser and tells him to pray for forgiveness. In the fifth vision a messenger appears disguised as a shepherd who delivers ten ethical precepts on how to live a Christian life. In Koiter’s version the sacred is a mirror of the profane and Hermas comes to see that his visions derive from repressed sexual impulses.

The 45-minute-long opera, written for a six-piece ensemble and live electronics, will be conducted by the composer. Baritone Alex Dobson sings Hermas, soprano Larissa Konikuq is Rhoda and soprano Adanya Dunn is The Messenger. Stage director Amanda Smith states: “This event will not only be for avid operagoers but for anyone with a hint of musical adventure and curiosity.”

Against the Grain: Following this world premiere is a new look at one of the most inescapable musical features of the Christmas season – Handel’s Messiah. This is a revival of Against the Grain Theatre’s highly acclaimed production of the oratorio in 2013. What places this Messiah in the opera category is that it is fully staged, costumed, choreographed and artfully lit. The cast has memorized their parts to eliminate the need for music stands and choral folders and to allow AtG’s artistic director Joel Ivany and choreographer Jennifer Nichols to use movement to bring out the meaning of the oratorio.

As Ivany explained in correspondence: “What I’ve found by working on pieces that are not traditionally staged is a new form. It lives more in the world of ballet and contemporary dance. In dance, what you normally have is the mix of music with the movement of the body. The music enhances what the body is doing and, similarly, the movement by the dancers enhances the music.” Exposure to dance caused Ivany to ask: “What if we placed more specific movement in opera and song? Can gesture by a singer cause the same stirring as the movement of a dancer?” Of Messiah in particular, Ivany says, “This work is about peace and striving for good. For this production, I believe that having movement can help accomplish this by enhancing the music with the visual.”

Since the movement and choreography in this production will differ significantly from that in 2013, AtG’s 2015 Messiah is essentially a new show. Ivany says that he and Nichols have striven to create more of a narrative this time. The notion is: “We’re all on a journey. We can pinpoint where it began, and we know that there are several stops along the way before we arrive at our final, unknown destination. AtG’s Messiah highlights, in a somewhat abstract way, some of those ‘stops’ along our life journey.”

As for the soloists, they “do play specific roles, meaning they are each the same ‘person’ throughout the entire production. However, who that person is, is another question. I think they represent all of us – four different people, four different personalities and four different ranges of music and emotion.”

Messiah will be the largest-scale production AtG has ever mounted, and this time the Corporation of Roy Thomson Hall and Massey Hall is partnering with AtG. Music director Topher Mokrzewski will conduct an 18-piece orchestra and a 16-member chorus. The soloists will be soprano Miriam Khalil, mezzo-soprano Andrea Ludwig, tenor Owen McCausland and bass-baritone Stephen Hegedus. AtG’s Messiah runs from December 16 to 19.

TMT’s Mummers’ Masque: Opening just a day after Messiah, is another work that looks at an old tradition in a new way. This is The Mummers’ Masque by Dean Burry presented by Toronto Masque Theatre, December 17 to 19. TMT gave The Mummers’ Masque its world premiere in 2009 and is bringing it back because of its great success. Burry was born in Newfoundland, the one province in Canada where mumming, brought over by the province’s first English and Irish settlers, has remained a living folk tradition at Christmastime.

In the piece Burry weaves together three different versions of mummering. The oldest is that of mummers’ plays with stock characters, as Burry informed me in conversation, rather like an English folk version of commedia dell’arte. The plays always feature a hero, often St. George, and a villain, usually called the Turkish Knight – a memory of when the Ottoman Empire had made great incursions into Europe. Sometimes there would be a Princess, but the character who always appeared was the quack Doctor. In the plays, either the Hero or the Knight is killed in battle and the Doctor, through various outrageous cures, brings the dead man back to life. Though the plays are comic, the theme of death and resurrection is what ties them to the winter solstice and to celebrations of Christmas and New Year.

Mummering, or mumming, which derives from the German word for “disguise,” presently survives in Newfoundland as a form of “adult Halloween,” as Burry calls it, where people go from door-to-door in homemade costumes, usually cross-dressed, while playing instruments, singing and dancing. The people of the house give their strange
visitors food and drink and try to guess their identities. The third tradition Burry uses is that found in the parts of Newfoundland settled by the Irish. This involves the mummers carrying a dead wren – nowadays just a likeness of one – and asking for money to bury it. Wren Day is December 26 and it is theorized that the wren represents the death of the old year, with December 25 as its last day.

Musically, Burry’s task as a composer was to blend his own modern classical idiom with the folk idiom of Newfoundland while allowing for audience participation in the singing of hymns and carols. Burry says that the greatest challenge was finding musicians who would be comfortable in both classical and folk traditions, especially in the case of the flutist, Ian Harper, who has to play the flute, the penny whistle and the uilleann pipes.

The opera also contains the only known classical case of the flutist, Ian Harper, who has to play the Newfoundland ugly stick, a homemade instrument made of a mop handle, a rubber boot and bottle caps nailed to the handle.

In The Mummer’s Masque, Carla Huhtanen will sing St. George. Marion Newman will be the Rival Knight and the Dragon. Christopher Mayell will be Princess Zebra and Giles Tomkins will be Father Christmas. There will also be step dancers and a children’s choir. Larry Beckwith will conduct the five-member band from the violin and Derek Boyes is the stage director.

TOT’s Student Prince: The main production for Toronto Operetta Theatre always straddles the old and new year. This season the operetta will be The Student Prince by Sigmund Romberg from 1924 playing December 27, 28, 31, January 2 and 3. The Student Prince was the longest-running work of music theatre in the 1920s with hits like Golden Days, Deep in My Heart, Dear and the tenor aria Overhead.

the Moon is Beaming. Since 1974 the operetta has been performed annually in the original English in its nominal setting at the University of Heidelberg. This will be the operetta’s third staging by the TOT – the first in 1989, the second in 2001/02.

The story uses one of the main plot clichés of operetta, the disguised aristocrat who falls in love with a commoner, but here the focus is not on the particulars of the plot but rather the universal feelings of nostalgia and regret for past deeds. Tenor Ernesto Ramirez sings Prince Karl Franz, who as a student falls in love with the local barmaid Kathie, soprano Jennifer Taverner. Tenor Stefan Fehr and baritone Curtis Sullivan are also in the cast. COC resident conductor Derek Bate is at the podium and TOT general director Guillermo Silva-Marin is the stage director.

COC’s Siegfried: The COC begins its winter season with a remount of its highly acclaimed production of Richard Wagner’s Siegfried by François Girard. The production debuted in 2005 and was last seen as part of the COC’s complete Ring Cycle in 2006. German tenor Stefan Vinke, one of the finest Siegfrieds in the world, makes his Canadian debut in the title role. Returning in the role of the warrior maiden Brünnhilde, after universal acclaim as Brünnhilde in Die Walküre earlier this year, will be American soprano Christine Goerke. Austrian Wolfgang Ablinger-Sperrhacke makes his Canadian debut as the sly dwarf Mime who raises Siegfried for malign purposes. British baritone Christopher Purves makes his COC debut as Mime’s evil brother Alberich. The COC has informed us that American contralto Meredith Arwady, who sang the role of Death in the 2011 COC production of Stravinsky’s The Nightingale and Other Short Fables, will sing the role of Erda. American bass-baritone Alan Held sings Wotan, known in this opera as The Wanderer. Canadian bass Phillip Ens reprises the role as the dragon Fafner, who guards a golden hoard. COC music director Johannes Debus conducts his first Siegfried. Siegfried is sung in German with English surtitles and runs January 23, 27, 30, February 2, 5, 11, 14.

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

**WENDALYN BARTLEY**

Over the past year in Toronto’s new music scene, composers working within the spectral and post-spectral composition aesthetic have been making their voices heard. First of all, in March we heard the music of Britain’s George Benjamin, the featured composer at the TSO’s New Creations Festival, followed by the music of guest composer Kaija Saariaho from Finland at the 2c Music Festival in May.

Philippe Leroux: And now in the early days of December, another major figure is coming to town – Philippe Leroux. Although originally from France, Leroux now calls Montréal home, thanks to his permanent teaching position at McGill University. His influence on the compositional aesthetics in North America is growing fast, with many students being drawn to working with him.

WholeNote readers may not be that familiar with Leroux, but three concerts planned for December 6 and 8 can change that unfamiliarity into an opportunity to dive deeply into the creative oeuvre of this remarkable composer. First, on December 6, New Music Concerts is performing two of his chamber works: AAA for seven instruments and Ailes for baritone and 15 instruments. And December 8 is a double concert day with the performance of his piece Total SOLo for 28 instruments as part of the COC’s free noon-hour concert series, followed by five of his works at a special concert at the Music Gallery. Leroux is this year’s Michael and Sonja Koerner Distinguished Visitor in Composition at the U of T Faculty of Music. It’s interesting to note that both concerts on December 8 will be performed by advanced student musicians: artists of the Glenn Gould School New Music Ensemble conducted by Brian Current (the COC event) and doctoral students from U of T’s gamUT Contemporary Music Ensemble, conducted by Wallace Halladay (Music Gallery concert). Not surprisingly, both Current and Halladay have been personally influenced either by their studies or performance experiences with Leroux’s music.

I got together with Halladay to find out more about that relationship and discovered the passionate commitment Halladay has for Leroux’s music. In answer to my question as to how they met, Halladay told me how he went out on a limb and contacted the composer, still living in France at the time, when he discovered that Leroux was coming to the Université de Montréal as a visiting guest artist. He had been a fan of Leroux, within a contemporary trend in European music, and wanted an opportunity to talk with him. He followed up that meeting by organizing a concert in Toronto of Leroux’s music in 2011, hiring local professional musicians.

What he discovered was a composer who was completely committed to working generously with musicians, helping them to interpret the score; and musicians, in response, absolutely stimulated by the interaction. This type of communication is, in part, what has led to Leroux’s appeal to different ensembles – performers just love working with him, resulting in many commissions. If you’d like to experience this firsthand, the public are welcome to attend a talk at the Faculty of Music on December 7 (5:30 to 7pm) as Leroux works with performers in preparation for the December 8 concert.

For Halladay, the excitement comes from the challenge of the scores, which often call for a wide range of sounds not always translatable into standard notation. This is why the communication between composer and performer is so important. Leroux is always learning and listening carefully to the sounds being made by the performers, open to how they could be notated, or other possible ways to achieve what he is imagining.

In my conversation with Leroux, he amplified this idea: “I compose to create a relationship with the listener as well as with the musicians. I write a page or two, and then try to listen as if I was the first listener. I always try to listen to my music as a normal listener, not as a composer.”

No doubt this refined approach to listening is one of the results of the years Leroux spent working at IRCAM, a research centre for sound and electroacoustic music in Paris. This research allowed him to become completely immersed in the complex nature of sound itself, and understand all the variables that make up a given sound. This knowledge of the full spectrum of the sound and how it can be used to define the compositional structure is what defines the spectral school of composition, which originated in France in the 1970s with the work of Gérard Grisey and Tristan Murail.

As someone influenced by this aesthetic, Leroux continues the tradition in his own way. During my conversation with him, he spoke about how his starting place is with sounds he finds both interesting and beautiful, sounds that have the biggest potential for development and variation, whether that be in their harmonic colour or their trajectory of movement. After the computer-based analysis of these sounds, he may come up with as many as 400 different chords, each possibility of movement. After the computer-based analysis of these sounds, he may come up with as many as 400 different chords, each one created by the different pitch components – the spectrum – of the...
different sounds. He takes up to three weeks to just play those chords over and over on a piano or synthesizer, many of which will have microtunings. Finally, through an intuitive process, he selects up to ten chords to use as his structure in any given composition.

Halladay elaborates on the importance of the spectral approach to composition. Working with timbre or using extended techniques on traditional instruments “is not unique to the spectralists, but what is different is they are using timbre for the structural organization of music.” This approach contrasts with the majority of compositional strategies where melody and harmony are the mainstays of organization, even if the music itself is pushing boundaries as in minimalism, post-serialism, chance procedures, the use of extra-musical ideas, or the fusion of different musical traditions. With spectral composition, “the process opens a window to all the elements that make up a sound, especially those aspects beyond the audible range” Halladay says.

University of Toronto’s New Music Festival. As Halladay emphasized during our talk, the educational aspect of presenting Leroux’s music is important, introducing unfamiliar music to students who would otherwise never be exposed to it. They are always impressed with “how good the music is.” So it is fitting that U of T’s New Music Festival follows up this experience with Leroux’s work early in the new year with over a week of concerts running from January 30 to February 7, centred around the music of Canadian composer Allan Gordon Bell. One of the highlights of the festival will the performance, February 2, by Calgary’s Land’s End Ensemble of Bell’s work Field Notes, a JUNO award-winning work inspired by the prairie landscape. On February 1, the Gryphon Trio will perform works by Bell’s former students – Carmen Braden, Heather Schmidt, Kelly-Marie Murphy and Vincent Ho. The final concert of the festival on February 7 will premiere a newly commissioned choral work from Bell at the Contemporary Showcase Concert. During the festival, various student ensembles – including the Wind Ensemble, the Symphony...
Orchestra and the gamUT Contemporary Music Ensemble – will also be performing a wide range of works by Bell and others including an electroacoustic concert.

**Music and Dance.** One aspect of Leroux’s music that I didn’t mention above is his fascination with the ideas of movement and gesture in his music, whether that be physical movements made by performers, or metaphorical gestures realized through sounds that imitate a real gesture created by a human body. For example, to compose one of his pieces, he worked with data generated from a Bluetooth pen with a camera inside. An old musical manuscript was rewritten with this pen, which was tracking the speed or the thickness of the lines. This information was used as material for the piece. Other ways of exploring the relationship between sound and movement are highlighted in several other upcoming concerts.

For the opening concert of the Music Gallery’s Emergents series on December 10, curator and percussionist Germaine Liu has created a multidisciplinary ensemble to explore the unique space of the Gallery’s church sanctuary. Inspired by the collaboration of John Cage and Merce Cunningham, members of the ensemble will perform, compose and choreograph a series of new pieces that seek to blend the two disciplines of dance and music into an interdependent relationship.

Similarly, four improvising musicians, a painter and a dancer will explore the possibilities of interdisciplinary improvisation and communication in the NUMUS concert on December 13 in Kitchener-Waterloo. And on February 5 and 6, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, in Toronto as part of their Ontario tour, will perform Mark Gooden’s choreography which was inspired by the stories of Residential School survivors, with music by Christos Hatzis and a performance by Tanya Tagaq.

**Additional Concerts**

**Jan 11:** Various composers’ works will be performed by Pamela Stickney on the theremin, an early electronic music instrument, at Gallery 345. The evening will also include improvisations and a demonstration of the instrument.

**Jan 14:** Audiences will have a great opportunity to hear the brilliant and dynamic JACK Quartet in a concert co-presented by Music Toronto and New Music Concerts. This high-voltage quartet will perform works by John Luther Adams, John Zorn, Iannis Xenakis and an arrangement of a work by medieval composer Rodericus.

**Jan 20:** A celebration of American composer Nancy Van de Vate’s 85th birthday with a series of mini-operas at Walter Hall.

Wendalyn Bartley is a Toronto-based composer and electro-vocal sound artist. sounddreaming@gmail.com.

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**Beat by Beat | Classical & Beyond**

**Daniel Hope’s Menuhin Tribute**

**PAUL ENNIS**

Daniel Hope has built a substantial international career as an acclaimed violin soloist, chamber musician and music festival curator. A champion of contemporary music and an advocate of the classical canon, his musical curiosity cannot be pigeon-holed. He was the violinist with the legendary Beaux Arts Trio for six years and is currently associate artistic director of the Savannah Music Festival. He is a prolific writer (with three German-language books to his credit) who has devoted much of his time over the last 15 years to the study and preservation of music by composers murdered by the Nazis. He has worked with the brilliant, Oscar-winning German actor, Klaus Maria Brandauer, on projects combining music and the spoken word, including a look at Stravinsky’s A Soldier’s Tale through the prism of war and peace.

Hope’s father, author Christopher Hope, was an outspoken critic of apartheid. Those beliefs forced the whole family to leave South Africa in 1974 when Daniel was six months old. They moved to London, where his mother took a job as Yehudi Menuhin’s secretary, later becoming his manager.

January 28 Hope returns to Koerner Hall for his third Toronto concert in 16 months following memorable appearances September 30, 2014 as soloist in Max Richter’s Vivaldi’s Four Seasons Recomposed, and April 8, 2015 when his singing tone contributed greatly to the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center’s performance of Mahler and Brahms piano quartets. His upcoming recital “Yehudi Menuhin @ 100” with pianist Sebastian Knauer is a tribute to the man in whose house he grew up and with whom he performed many times during Menuhin’s last ten years.

The program consists of music dear to Menuhin’s heart. He and Glenn Gould famously recorded J.S. Bach’s Violin Sonata No. 4 in C Minor, BWV 1017. The next piece on the program, George Enescu’s Impromptu concertant reflects the fact that Menuhin studied with Enescu from the age of 11, a mentorship that led to the two becoming lifelong friends. Menuhin speaks about him on YouTube: “Enescu will always be my guiding light as a man, as a musician.” Menuhin also had great affection for the next piece on the program, Mendelssohn’s Sonata in F Major, which Menuhin was instrumental in publishing for the first time in 1953.

The Walton Violin Sonata was commissioned by Menuhin in the late 1940s. It’s followed by Ravel’s “Kaddisch” from Deux mélodies hébraïques. Hearing Menuhin play it on YouTube from a recording he made when he was 20 is a very moving experience. He lets the music speak for itself; his playing is serene yet paradoxically forceful. Bartók’s Romanian Folk Dances, which conclude the program, acknowledge Menuhin’s devotion to the Hungarian composer (Menuhin commissioned the Sonata for Solo Violin from Bartók). All in all, a splendid way to evoke Menuhin’s spirit.

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Hope and Menuhin: I spoke briefly with Hope backstage after his Soundstreams concert last year and he told me a little about growing up in Yehudi Menuhin’s house and what an extraordinary influence it was on his life, how it was absolutely incredible in so many ways.

“That it happened completely by accident, that was the thing. My parents are not musicians at all; they have no musical training. But we were kind of thrown into this musical environment and then Menuhin himself, of course, but also the people who came to that house, who played with him, who came to work with him. The amalgamation of musical styles in that house was something out of this world. You would have on the same day Rostropovich and Ravi Shankar. Or Wilhelm Kempff and Oscar Peterson.

“So you had great, great music, the essence of music. And as a result, it took me until I was 10 or 11 to actually realize there were different categories of music. I didn’t understand that. I heard amazing music and this music amazed my ears. And the fact that it happened to be Indian music or it happened to be a Beethoven sonata didn’t make a difference to me. It was just fascinating.”

When Hope was four he announced that he was going to become a violinist. I asked how he came to that decision. “It came about,” he said, “because of absorption. It was hearing the violin, it was seeing the violin. There were violins everywhere; there were real violins, there were images of violins. He had the most incredible collection of Paganini original concert posters. He had sketches and drawings of Paganini everywhere. Hundreds of them. So, wherever you looked you saw an image of a violin or a violinist.

“Plus you had him always with a violin, you had violinists who came in there. So I heard this sound all the time so it wasn’t perhaps so much of a surprise when I announced that this is what I wanted to do but it did throw my parents slightly a curve because they didn’t really know how to deal with that. And it was out of the question to go to my mom’s boss.

“Because I could have said the next day, ‘I want to be a fireman or an astronaut or something.’ So … four-year-old child, whatever. So they decided instead to find a teacher who lived around the corner. And that was the next bit of great luck. This lady happened to be one of the great, great pedagogues of children. We didn’t know that. We just asked a few people who said, ‘This lady’s pretty good with kids.’ Sheila Nelson was a groundbreaking teacher. And she was the one who made this happen actually.

“Menuhin, much later in life, took a real interest, but only when I was 16 or something. So I had to make my way and I had to learn how to practise and meet the teachers that defined the way I played and the way I worked. And it was through my last teacher, Zakhar Bron, the great, great teacher, that Menuhin became quite interested because [Bron] had great success with Maxim Vengerov and Vadim Repin, at the time, 15-, 16-year-old kids. And I think he was curious to see what I was doing. And that’s when I went to play for him when I was 16 and it was a mixture of shock and delight because I was the little kid who always ran around the house, who was very close to him (he was like a family member to us). Suddenly it changed and we became kind of teacher-student, mentor, colleague.”

That was the beginning of 60 concerts Hope performed with him. “Starting from that moment on, until his death, his last concert. That was a period of about ten years; going on the road with him, studying with him, then playing in the evening, playing the concerts. That was the ultimate because you could learn so much in a lesson but nothing actually prepares you for that moment when you go out and play, when you perform.

“And do the great concerts with him, you know, the Elgar, and the Bartóks – the things that he had, you know, he’d met the composers and he’d worked with them – was just incredible.”

Hope’s January 28 concert precedes the international release of his new CD, My Tribute To Yehudi Menuhin, by just a few days. There are many parallels between its contents and the program of the Koerner Hall recital. The CD includes Mendelssohn’s Violin Concerto in D Minor which Menuhin resurrected after one of the composers’ relatives presented it to him in 1951. There are works by Bartók and Enescu. There is an homage, Unfinished Journey, by Bechara El-Khoury, written ten years after Menuhin’s death. There are three tributes to Menuhin, by John Tavener, Steve Reich and Hans Werner Henze, part of the Compassion project that Menuhin undertook with violinist Edna Michell.
Quick Picks

Dec 2 The Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society presents pianist Alexander Tselyakov and the Canadian Sinfonia Chamber Musicians in Hummel’s Piano Quintet Op.87 and an intimate setting of Chopin’s Piano Concerto No.2. Dec 9 Duo Concertante’s pianist Timothy Steeves goes it alone in a performance of four diverse Haydn sonatas. Dec 16 K-WCMS celebrates Beethoven’s birthday with the Penderecki String Quartet’s program of two of the composer’s most riveting quartets, Op.59 No.3 and Op.132. Jan 27 Mozart’s birthday is acknowledged in a diverting program by Trio+ that includes the piano Sonata K457, two trios (K502 and K542) and the poignant Sonata for violin and piano K304, reputedly Albert Einstein’s favourite piece to play. Jan 30 André Laplante studied with Yvonne Hubert in Montreal and no doubt had the same experience as all of Hubert’s students; she would sit on her student’s right and, with her left hand, play all the right-hand passages flawlessly. Laplante’s K-WCMS program consists of crowd-pleasing jewels by Schubert, Ravel, Liszt and Chopin.

Dec 10 The iconic Gryphon Trio begins the third decade of its annual Music Toronto association with a program that includes an early Beethoven trio (Op.1 No.3), a world premiere by Vincent Ho (Gryphon Realms) and Arno Babajanian’s Piano Trio in F-Sharp Minor. Jan 14 The compelling JACK Quartet brings their contemporary focus to works by John Luther Adams, John Zorn and Iannis Xenakis.

Feb 4 Music Toronto’s season continues with the Toronto-based Annex Quartet, whose program includes Janáček’s powerful “Kreutzer Sonata”, R. Murray Schafer’s Quartet No.5 “Rosalind” and Mendelssohn’s Quartet No.2.

Jan 17 A period ensemble that plays on gut strings with classical bows, the London Haydn Quartet brings a quintessential classical program to Moordale Concerts’ first event of the new year. Their performance of the same program – Mozart’s sublime Clarinet Quintet in A Major, K581 (with guest clarinetist Eric Hoeprich), Haydn’s String Quartet in Bb Major, Op. 50, No.1, and Beethoven’s String Quartet in D Major, Op. 18, No. 3 – was called “revelatory” by the New York Times last year. The review went on to praise “the earthy, warm sounds of the gut strings [that] blended beautifully throughout” and the “myriad details of shading and contrast, and beautifully calibrated phrasing.”

Jan 18 Pianist Christina Petrowska-Quilico heads a stellar group of chamber musicians in this Associates of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra concert with the intriguing title “Colours in Music: Composers with Synaesthesia.” The sensation of experiencing sounds as colours manifests itself in a wide-ranging program of works by Liszt, Ellington, Sibelius and Caravassilis.

Jan 16, 17 The TSO’s “Mozart @ 260” features a representative sampling of the great composer’s creative output: the overture and two arias from Don Giovanni, his “Jeunehomme” piano concerto (with French pianist Alexandre Tharaud) and his final symphony, all conducted by Bernard Labadie. Jan 27, 28 The musical treasure that is Barbara Hannigan returns to the TSO in a performance of Dutilleux’s Correspondances. Hannigan and Dutilleux had a very close artistic relationship which the singer touched upon in CBC RADIO 2’s This Is My Music recently. Peter Oundjian also leads the orchestra in Berlioz’s ever-fresh Symphonie fantastique, which will share the stage with Richard Strauss’ buoyant Horn Concerto No.1 on Jan 30. The TSO’s principal horn, golden-toned Neil Deland, is the soloist.

Jan 30 Winner of the 1998 Tchaikovsky Competition, 40-year-old Russian pianist Denis Matsuev puts his poetic and virtuosic talent on display in a program that begins with Schumann’s Kinderszenen and Kreisleriana before concluding with Rachmaninov’s Etudes-Tableaux Op.3, 6 and 9 and Sonata No.2. As we go to press the Koerner Hall concert is almost sold out. Act quickly.

Daniel Hope performs “Menuhin @ 100” at Koerner Hall, January 28.

Paul Ennis is the managing editor of The WholeNote.
Beat by Beat | World View

Lost And Found
ANDREW TIMAR

Here, patrolling The WholeNote world music beat, most months bring a consistent flow of concerts to preview. There’s always too much going on in the GTA to include more than just a sampling in this column for my trusting WholeNote readers. In the extent of its exclusions, this December-January column is no exception.

However, as my deadline rushed ever closer, it initially seemed that something unusual was taking place, namely a large hole in the January World View concert listings. Just as I thought I would have to leave out the first month of 2016 entirely, an announcement surfaced for a late January concert of newly discovered Yiddish music from WWII – with a most intriguing backstory. While that concert is well into 2016 (Happy Lunar New Year, dear reader?!), it is as good a place to start as any.

Lost Yiddish Songs of the USSR: January 27, Svetlana Dvoretsky/Show One Productions present “Yiddish Glory: The Lost Songs of Life and Fate” at the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts. A mixed ensemble of outstanding Russian, Jewish and Canadian musicians premiere Yiddish songs discovered in Ukraine. Their creation, collection, banning and recent discovery tell a story of resistance and reclamation, describing a wide historical and musicological sweep.

Our compelling story begins during the turbulent late days of World War II when leading Soviet linguists and ethnomusicologists including the eminent Moisei Beregovsky collected and notated the songs of Jewish refugees, Jewish soldiers in the Red Army and Holocaust survivors in Ukraine. Their extensive collection documented these survivors’ defiance of the Third Reich in song. Our narrative takes a dark turn when in 1949 the Soviet government arrested Beregovsky and his colleagues, confiscating and hiding the documents. Researchers had long considered them lost. We pick up the story a few years ago, in the holdings of the Ukrainian National Library in Kiev. Enter Anna Shternshis, associate professor of Yiddish and Diaspora Studies at the University of Toronto. When she opened the sealed boxes she found a trove of thousands of hand-notated Yiddish songs which had lain unheard for nearly 70 years, until now.

Shternshis worked closely with Psoy Korolenko, the Russian poet, philologist, “avant-bard” singer/songwriter and renowned klezmer performer, to produce performing versions of these songs. Selections will receive their world premiere in “Yiddish Glory: The Lost Songs of Life and Fate” performed by Korolenko, the virtuoso Russian trio Loyko, plus Canadian vocalists including the JUNO Award-winning singer Sophie Milman. Accordionist extraordinaire Alexander Sevastian, award-winning trumpeter David Buchbinder and clarinetist/conductor Shalom Bard round out the international cast. A recording of this music is being produced by Shternshis and Dan Rosenberg.

Going Home Star. February 5 and 6 another musically powered story of suffering, resistance and the ultimate reassertion of personal and cultural identity is being performed, this time at the Sony Centre for the Performing Arts. The critically acclaimed ballet Going Home Star – Truth and Reconciliation has a story by Joseph Boyden, score by Christos Hatzis and choreography by Mark Godden. It explores the
The ballet’s richly textured, cumulatively powerful music is not just the work of the Canadian veteran composer Hatzis, enthusiastically performed by the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, but also enfolds important contributions of indigenous voices whose communities have been directly and profoundly affected by the Indian residential schools and their aftermath. They include Cree actor Tina Keeper, the boundary-breaking Inuk vocalist Tanya Tagaq, who won last year’s Polaris Prize, pow-wow stars Northern Cree Singers, as well as songs by Steve Wood (Mistikwaskihk Napesis).

I’ve had a chance to listen to the impressive, recently released 2-CD recording of Going Home Star – Truth and Reconciliation. It comes chockablock with Hatzis’ signature inclusions of music in multiple vernacular music genres, as well as acoustic and electronic soundscapes diffused from the studio-produced digital audio track, in addition to the symphonic core. I found the contribution of North American indigenous voices, however, to be the key to the work’s ethical and aesthetic fabric. These voices are essential texts in the story centred on the suffering imposed on children in Canada’s infamous Indian residential schools. While the narrative contains much pain, loss and suffering, the ballet ends with the possibility of personal and intercultural redemption and reconciliation. It’s an important story for all of us to understand. Witnessing this production is, in my estimation, a fitting way to start a new year.

**Quick Picks**

**Dec 1:** Tanya Tagaq and her band share the stage with Owen Pallett and the guided improvising Element Choir directed by Christine Duncan, at Massey Hall and **Feb 5** West coast blues and raga guitarist, singer-songwriter Harry Manx appears in the “Folk Under the Clock” series at the Market Hall Performing Arts Centre in Peterborough.

For my “Quick Picks” of everything in between, please see the extended version of this column online at thewholenote.com/worldview.

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**Beat by Beat | Art of Song**

**Gauvin Returns**

**HANS DE GROOT**

As in preceding years, Attila Glatz Concert Productions bring two events to Roy Thomson Hall, a salute to Vienna (Strauss waltzes and melodies from operettas by Strauss and Lehár) on New Year’s Day, to be repeated in Hamilton at Hamilton Place on January 3, and on New Year’s Eve, Bravissimo!, a selection from the most popular operas by Rossini, Offenbach, Verdi and Puccini.

Care has always been taken to have both Canadian and non-Canadian singers in Bravissimo! This year both the tenor, Stefano La Colla, and the baritone, Lucio Gallo, are Italian, while the female singers are Canadian: Karina Gauvin, soprano, and Krisztina Szabó, mezzo. We have heard Szabó’s eloquent and powerful voice a number of times recently: in the dramatized version of Schubert’s *Die Schöne Müllerin* by Against the Grain Theatre and in the Canadian Opera Company’s triple bill of Monteverdi and Monk Feldman. Gauvin has performed in Toronto many times, with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, with Tafelmusik and in recital, but she has been away too long and the December 31 concert will be a good opportunity to catch up.

**Toronto Masque Theatre** presents “A Newfoundland Christmas Kitchen Party” on December 17, 18 and 19 at Enoch Turner Schoolhouse with music by Dean Burry. The singers are Carla Hultman, soprano, Marion Newman, mezzo, Christopher Mayell, tenor, and Giles Tomkins, baritone. Other performers are members of the Canadian Children’s Opera Company as well as two step dancers (Pierre Chartrand and Hannah Shira Naiman) and a jug band led by Larry Beckwith. This is a revival of The Mummers’ Masque, a work commissioned by the Toronto Masque Theatre and first performed on December 3, 2009.

**Looking back** On November 3, I attended the annual COC Ensemble Studio Competition, eight finalists chosen from a large number of contestants. The first prize (and the Audience Award) went to mezzo Emily D’Angelo, who gave a beautifully paced performance of *Contro un cor* from Rossini’s *The Barber of Seville.* She needed a chair to lean on as she was on crutches, having broken her foot, but she deftly turned the chair into part of her act. The second prize went to Lauren Eberwein, also a mezzo, who sang *Parto, parto* from Mozart’s *La Clemenza di Tito*; third to Bruno Roy, baritone, who performed *Hai già vinta la causa!*, the Count’s aria from Mozart’s *The Marriage of Figaro.* When there are prize-winners, there must also be those who receive no prizes, in this case including two especially fine performers: the baritone Zachary Read, who sang Valentini’s aria *Avant de quitter ces lieux* from Gounod’s *Faust,* and the soprano Eliza Johnson, who sang *Caro Nome* from Verdi’s *Rigoletto.***

**Other Events of Note (see listings for details):**

**Dec 2:** The Cathedral Church of St. James resumes its series “Cantatas in the Cathedral.” Soloists are Sheila Dietrich, soprano, Christina Stelmacovich, alto, Robert Bussiekiewicz, tenor, and David Roth, bass.

**Dec 3, 4, 5, 6:** Tafelmusik Baroque Opera and Chamber Choir, conducted by Ivars Taurins, present Bach’s *Christmas Oratorio.* Soloists are Jana Miller, soprano, Benno Schachkhter, countertenor, James Gilchrist, tenor, and Peter Harvey, baritone.

**Dec 6** Toronto Classical Singers present the same work, conducted by Jurgen Petrenko with Jennifer Taverner, soprano, Sandra Boyes, mezzo, Asitha Tennekoon, tenor, and James Baldwin, baritone. Yet another performance of the work by the Spiritus Ensemble takes place in Waterloo **Dec 13** with Sheila Dietrich, soprano, Jennifer Enns Modolo, mezzo, Steve Surian and Bud Roach, tenors, and Richard Hryztak, baritone.

**Dec 5** there is an Aradia Ensemble concert and CD launch of sacred music by Vivaldi; the singers are Hélène Brunet, soprano, and Vicky St. Pierre, contralto.

**Dec 5 and 6** there will be two performances by Pax Christi Chorale of Berlioz’s *L’enfance du Christ* with soloists Nathalie Paulin, soprano, Olivier Laquiere, baritone, Alain Coulombe, bass, Sean Clark, tenor, and Matthew Zadow, baritone.

**Also Dec 6** Eliska Latawiec sings Dvořák at St. Wenceslaus Church.

**Dec 12,** the Neapolitan Connection presents Allison Arends, Jennifer Mizi and Victoria Gydyov, sopranos, at Montgomery’s Inn. **Dec 15** Mooredale Concerts presents the extraordinary Calmus Ensemble in “Christmas Carols of the World.” **Dec 18,** at St. Andrew’s Church, another concert of Christmas carols features Allison Angelo and Xiin Wang, sopranos, as soloists; admission is by freewill offering in support of St. Andrew’s Syrian Refugee Sponsorship Fund.

**January** offers much vocal music of note, too much to do justice to in this small space. For details please see the extended version of this column online at thewholenote.com/artofsong.

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A Living Legacy
In Memory Of A Mentor And Friend
Sir David Willcocks (1919-2015)
LYDIA ADAMS

On Saturday, December 19 at 7:30pm, Yorkminster Park Baptist Church will ring out with the sounds of carols and Chanukah songs old and new as Toronto’s Amadeus Choir, along with the glorious voices of the Bach Children’s Chorus, joins with the Trillium Brass, composer and pianist Eleanor Daley and organist Shawn Gremke to celebrate the life of Sir David Willcocks, the great British choral director, who died in September.

This event is much more than simply a tribute to a great musician for me personally, as Sir David was a great mentor and friend to me.

Our connection goes back to 1976 during my student days at the Royal College of Music in London, where he was warm, generous, welcoming and encouraging to me. He gave the students at the RCM tremendous opportunity to perform on a professional level and, with his expectation of the highest standard, brought students to a higher level of performance than they could have expected, at a crucial time in our development. We could not have been in better hands.

I was fortunate enough to sing with and play for him for the five years I was in London. My very first performance with him was as a member of the Royal College of Music Chorus, for the memorial service for Benjamin Britten in Westminster Abbey, with Sir Peter Pears singing the lead role in Britten’s St. Nicholas Cantata; and my final performance with him was as a member of the Bach Choir, singing at the royal wedding of Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer.

In addition to recording sessions, there were many, many performances at the Royal Festival Hall, the Royal Albert Hall, King’s College Chapel in Cambridge, annual performances at Wormwood Scrubs prison and touring throughout England, Wales and Europe.

Along with his uncompromising standard of excellence, he was one of the kindest people I have ever met. For all his brilliance, he had a profound humility. He led by example in his meticulous rehearsal technique and in his way of working with people. He gave young singers such as the Amadeus Choir’s honorary patron, mezzo-soprano Catherine Wyn-Rogers, their very first major performance opportunities, and he kept up with and supported all our careers as we travelled forward.

He was extremely important in the life of our own great Canadian baritone, Gerald Finley, and had a profound effect on many choral musicians of Canada: Jean Ashworth Bartle, Robert Cooper, Elmer Iseler, Gerald Fagan and Peter Partridge, among many others.

Sir David succeeded Reginald Jacques as the musical director of the Bach Choir in 1960. With this magnificent group of 300 singers, he performed all the great choral repertoire and championed the works of British composers Vaughan Williams, Howells, Britten, Elgar and Tippett among many others. As a singer in the Bach Choir, I performed the Bach St. Matthew Passion with them each year and toured and recorded with the choir regularly.

I recall that we had just finished a recording of some of his famous Carols for Choirs, when we were told that it was the very first recording ever with a new technique, something called digital recording! We also recorded the Bach St. Matthew Passion (in English). Each year, the Bach Choir would perform a sold-out Christmas program at the Royal Albert Hall with the Phillip Jones Brass Ensemble and the massive organ of the Royal Albert Hall.

Composition competition: Another aspect of Sir David’s legacy will also be on display at our December 19 concert: As part of his association with the Bach Choir, he had started a composition competition for children to write a Christmas carol. The lucky winner had her or his carol arranged by Sir David himself for the 300-strong singers of the Bach Choir and the Philip Jones Brass Ensemble, and it was always a magical moment when the time came for the performance of that work. It was an amazing way to inspire young composers.

Sir David and the Bach Choir’s annual Christmas concerts at the Royal Albert Hall became the inspiration for the Amadeus Choir’s own seasonal competition, now in its 29th year. Through this competition the Amadeus Choir and the Bach Children’s Chorus with conductor Linda Beaupré have sung premieres of hundreds of carols and Chanukah songs, along with a number of winter solstice pieces.

This Amadeus Choir’s annual competition for composers has been an important stepping-off point for many of Canada’s finest composers for choirs, including Eleanor Daley, Mark Sirett, Matthew Emery, Scott Tresholm, Kunle Owubokiri, Malcolm Edwards and Sheldon Rose, among many others.

In the spirit of Canada, as we move forward this annual competition will take on a new focus, starting with the upcoming 30th anniversary: it will become more inclusive and welcoming of new works written in a spirit of diversity. It will also include an exciting additional component: a workshop with some of our finest composers here in Toronto, to assist young and amateur composers in building and honing their skills.

When Eleanor Daley’s arrangement of Antonia Dragomir’s Mary’s Lullaby is being sung by the Bach Children’s Chorus on December 19 in the wonderful space of Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, I will be smiling: in memory of a great musician and in pleasure at a moment that reflects his ongoing legacy. It is a legacy evidenced in the thousands of conductors, singers, instrumentalists and audience members throughout the world who have been inspired by his outstanding leadership and musicianship, as well as all his recordings, arrangements and original works.

Lydia Adams is conductor and artistic director of Amadeus Choir of Toronto and the Elmer Iseler Singers.
Emerging Conductors

Walter Mahabir greets me with a big hug and a huge smile on his face. We’re in the busy Coffee Pub at the Centre for Social Innovation Annex, the home of The WholeNote. We haven’t seen each other since Luminato’s staging of *Apocalypsis* where we sang in separate choirs that made up the monumental work. He’s the new assistant conductor of the Orpheus Choir and one of the reasons I’m focusing on emerging conductors this month. He’s younger than I am by a few years and represents the exact kind of fresh air in choral conducting that I’m looking for and that I respond to. He’s young and attractive, has a gentle yet firm approach and even broke into song uninhibited during our interview.

For him, choral music has been fully intertwined with his life from an early age. He’s a proud graduate of the musical halls of St Michael’s Choir School. He has a breadth of experience behind him as well. At York University he studied conducting under Lisette Canton. He’s sung tenor with the Cantabile Chamber Singers, the Canadian Men’s Chorus, the Nathaniel Dett Chorale and the Orpheus Choir.

Jennifer Min-Young Lee: The second individual in this month’s focus is Jennifer Min-Young Lee, the new associate conductor of the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir. As a child she was fully immersed in a hybrid youth leadership, skills-building and education program all revolving around music. Born and raised in South Korea, Jennifer spent many summer and winter breaks immersed in the World Vision Children’s Choir. In 1960, children who lost their parents in the Korean War were organized by World Vision into a choir to share love and hope while building their skills and experience. The legacy of this choir continues to this day. Lee explains that this was how she came to learn and interact with music. This intensive musical experience occupied her every break from school. With a master’s in choral conducting from the Eastman School of Music at the University of Rochester and an undergraduate degree in music and education from the University of Western Ontario, Jennifer has solid credentials and solid skills. She’s a powerhouse of a conductor and educator. She laughs nervously as she lists all her musical obligations. It’s a gentle way to express humility. She’s a full-time music teacher at Bur Oak Secondary School in York Region. She helms a vocal program of over 100 students as well as piano majors. Most of her students have never had any formal musical education. She takes them as they are and teaches them key skills as they grow and come to embrace the
creativity of music. Beyond teaching she has sung in the Exultate Chamber Singers (who also performed in *Apocalypsis*) and has served as apprentice conductor for Orchestra Toronto, all on top of her considerable experience in Rochester and London during her studies.

When we think of conductors, our ingrained expectation is someone akin to Leonard Bernstein or Peter Oundjian. While maestros like Bernstein were powerhouses, their vernacular and approach to music were far removed from the average person’s. Lee’s true skill lies not just in her profession, but her ability to teach and reach students without musical education. The fact that she has guided students who previously had no musical experience through years of successful music education is significant and incredibly valuable. These are the kinds of skills and teachings that make a difference in our communities.

Bur Oak is in the heart of a new development and in an area filled with newcomers, mostly from East Asia and South Asia. Many of her students had never had music offered in educational curricula until they came to Canada. These are kids who have no idea who Von Karajan or Bach are, and don’t know music beyond catchy YouTube vids. But these kids understand Lee, watching her conduct and teach. For many of them, singing in a choir is the first time they have ever learned to step back and be part of a greater whole. And some of these kids will one day grow up to lead ensembles of their own.

Every year at the end of January the Toronto Mendelssohn hosts one of a handful of choral conducting symposiums in North America. It is a weeklong intensive event that culminates in a free concert. Rarely does one get to see so many conductors with different styles in play at one time. Over the years, I’ve spent time cataloguing the various physicalities of these conductors. From “lego hands” to “stacking cups” to “the octopus” to “wings about to take flight” — there is no shortage of physical interpretations and expressions of music. The first performance I ever did of Handel’s *Messiah* with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra was under guest conductor Christopher Warren Green. At the end of *All we like sheep have gone astray* the music becomes suddenly sombre and slow after a much faster and energetic beginning. In the last few bars the maestro just held his hands up to the choir with pleading on his face and barely conducted as we sang “the iniquity of us all.” It was incredibly effective. Lee participated in the Choral Conductors Symposium a few years ago before returning to the Mendelssohn Choir in her new role as associate conductor.

Walter Mahabir speaks of his own inspirations on the podium. When I ask him questions about conducting influences he lists many noting Lissette Canton’s precise technicality, Robert Cooper’s balance, and Brainerd Blyden-Taylor’s emotion. Mahabir says he is learning from them all as he finds his own way. He explains that no matter what he does, he sees himself as an entertainer and he...
enjoys movement as a basketball player and dancer. The physicality of conducting suits his style very well.

Mahabir and I come from similar parts of the city, he from North Etobicoke and I from North Scarborough. These are parts of the city that are socially, economically and racially diverse and in many ways divergent. Transit is minimal, City Hall and Queen’s Park are far away, schools are in disrepair, parents are working multiple jobs, and arts programs are woefully underfunded if they exist at all. These places do not lack culture and community; they are in fact some of the most diverse in the entire country. However, music education is not always prevalent. Mahabir teaches a junior kids choir that was born out of the growth of musical programming offered by the Regent Park School of Music. And he teaches piano in the Jane and Finch neighbourhood. He’s committed to making it more than just a place for after-school hanging out and to turning it into a learning experience where the kids can grow creatively. And he loves it when he sees the energy and joy they get out of performing – of showing them that they can do it, and they can do it well. Mahabir exudes this energy as does Lee. Their respective students are very lucky indeed.

These two conductors have a breadth of education and experience behind them and ahead of them. Their careers are only better because they represent everything that music needs to be in the coming years – younger, bolder, and diverse.

It’s the most wonderful time of the year!

Choirs are on full display with their holiday offerings. It’s a wonderful time for music! Here’s a mix of fun and beautiful highlights:

Jennifer Min-Young Lee can be seen conducting selections at the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir presentation of “Festival of Carols” on December 9 at 7:30pm, Yorkminster Park Baptist Church. David Briggs will be featured on the impressive church organ and the Salvation Army Staff Band will be performing alongside the choir.

Walter Mahabir will be part of the Orpheus Choir presentation of “Welcome Christmas” on December 15 at 7:30pm, Yorkminster Park Baptist Church. They will be performing with the Hannaford Street Silver Band and the absolutely incredible Jackie Richardson.

Singing Out! presents “All I want for Christmas is you.” Toronto’s LGBTQ gender-diverse and voicing-diverse choir performs fun holiday selections on December 5 at 3pm and 7:30pm in the Jane Mallett Theatre. The choir always dances and I’ve been told there will be bells.

Univox presents the gospel cantata Great Joy by Joubert, McElroy and Red, featuring a five-piece band on December 9 and 11 at 8pm in the Al Green Theatre at the Miles Nadal JCC. The band will feature Chris Tsujich on piano who also helms his own “A Very Christ-erical Christmas Cabaret” at the ever-fabulous Buddies In Bad Times Theatre on December 12 and 13 at 7:30pm.

The Toronto Symphony Orchestra and the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir perform Sir Andrew Davis’ grand interpretation of Handel’s Messiah. This year is a special treat as it will be recorded live by Chandos. December 15, 16, 18, 19 and 20, various times, at Roy Thomson Hall.

The Oakville Children’s Choir and the Oakville Symphony Orchestra provide a fun pairing for holiday fun at 1:30pm and 4:30pm on December 13 at the Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts. These annual family fun concerts are audience participation and include some lovely highlights from John Williams’ Home Alone score.

The New Year!

January always provides a quieter month of respite for choristers with the exception of two notable events. One being the aforementioned Toronto Mendelssohn Choir Choral Conductors Symposium free concert on January 30 at 3pm at Yorkminster Park Baptist Church. Second, the Toronto Symphony’s Mozart festival featuring the Amadeus Choir in Mozart’s Requiem on January 21 and 23 at 8pm in Roy Thomson Hall. Special note: Philippe Sly, bass-baritone, is featured in the Requiem and he is one not to miss.

Please stay in touch! Feedback: choralscene@thewholenote.com or Twitter @thebfchang
Beat by Beat | Early Music

New Take On The Red Priest

DAVID PODGORSKI

For most non-musicians, the end of December is a welcome opportunity to take a break from the pressures of work, usually present year-round, and spend time with family and friends. This is sadly not the case if you happen to be a performing musician. While most of us are winding down for the holidays, it seems like Toronto early music groups are working harder in the next couple of months.

December and January are two busy months for early music groups in the city, and whether it’s Christmas repertoire or part of their regular programming, if you’re in the mood for a concert on any given week in the next couple of months, there will be an early music concert that will be well worth going out to hear.

It’s not often that I find myself in the position of trying to argue that Antonio Vivaldi is an underrated composer who needs to be given his due. But while Vivaldi still ranks as the great Italian orchestral composer of the 18th century, it’s rare to hear his opera music, and still rarer to hear his sacred vocal music performed in concert.

I’m happy to say that the Aradia Ensemble will be doing their part to give us a new take on the Red Priest with their recording of his sacred vocal music, which they’ll be celebrating with a CD launch concert at 7:30pm on December 5 at St. Anne’s Anglican Church (270 Gladstone Ave). Soloists Hélène Brunet and Vicki St. Pierre will join the group to sing in an all-Vivaldi program that includes his cantatas Beatus Vir, Cur Sagittas, Cur Tela, and Vos Aurae per Montes. Aradia has over 50 albums under its belt, many of them excellent, so it’s a bit of a shame that the group remains largely ignored by the Toronto concert-going public. This promises to be a solid concert of some rare music by a first-rate composer.

Not Ordinary: Another Toronto group that deserves a little more attention is the Musicians in Ordinary. Over the last few years, the group has been positively thriving as the ensemble-in-residence at St. Michael’s College, of the University of Toronto. In an age of cuts to culture and with symphony orchestras being forced to close their doors for lack of funding, it’s heartening to see that U of T is giving the group a regular performance space as well as some resources for larger-scale concerts. There is absolutely no group on the Toronto early music scene that performs as wide a range of repertoire as frequently as this one. Their concert next month is a great example of what the group can do when it’s scaled up. St. Michael’s Schola Cantorum will be joining the Musicians in Ordinary for a concert of English music by Handel and Geminiani. Violinist Chris Verrette will also be performing with the group in what promises to be a very enjoyable musical evening, December 7 at 7:30, at St. Basil’s Church, St. Michael’s College. The holiday season also promises a chance to get out and see some concerts, and it’s nice to see that there’s more than just Messiahs to get us all in the mood.

Cantemus Singers start the Christmas season off early at 7:30pm on December 5 with a concert of Christmas music from the courts of 16th-century Spain and Austria at the Church of the Holy Trinity. If you happen to be in Kingston, or if you’d prefer a choral concert that’s a little more conventional in its repertoire, you might want to consider checking out the Melos Choir, who will be doing a program of Advent and Christmas songs and readings featuring music by some Renaissance heavyweights – Schütz, Byrd, Praetorius and Victoria. It’s at St. George’s Church in Kingston on December 5 at 7:30.

The Oratory at Holy Family Church often puts on timely music and a well-researched repertoire. This month’s concert at 8pm on December 9 at the Oratory is no exception. They’ll be doing Advent music by Charpentier and Bach, as well as some baroque composers that I had to look up. Giovanni Rigatti was a 17th-century...
Venetian composer, while Nicolaus Bruhns was a Danish-German composer, organist and violinist, who was a student of Dietrich Buxtehude. Both these composers wrote music for Advent, and both of them would probably be better known if more of their work had survived to the present day. Have they been justifiably ignored, or are they neglected masters? Check out the concert and find out.

Zak Ozmo: As far as original ideas for Christmas concerts go, you can’t get much more creative – or exotic – than the Toronto Consort’s Christmas concert this year. On December 11, 12 and 13 at Trinity St-Paul’s Centre the group will present a concert of Christmas music from the monastery of Santa Cruz. Guest director and lutenist Zak Ozmo will lead the group in a program of Portuguese- and Brazilian-influenced music unearthed from the monastery’s archives. I’m especially looking forward to hearing this concert, as it’s a unique program from a musical tradition we don’t often get to hear much of in Toronto (Be honest, when was the last time you got a chance to go to a concert of Portuguese baroque music?) and this find could very well be a treasure trove of scores to add to the early music canon.

I Furiosi: After the holidays, I’m happy to say that the music scene in the city won’t be quieting down at all. The always-boisterous I Furiosi ensemble will be presenting a mixed concert of Luzzaschi, Charpentier and Purcell at 8pm on January 9 at Calvin Presbyterian Church. The band will be joined by soprano Merry-Anne Stuart and organist Stephanie Martin for a concert of songs about unrequited love, rejection, and futility.

Tafel welcomes Glodeanu: Finally, at the end of January, more Vivaldi. Tafelmusik will be honouring Vivaldi’s music in an all-Italian concert led by Romanian violinist Mira Glodeanu. Vivaldi’s L’estro armonico (“harmonic fancy”) is a series of 12 concertos published by Vivaldi that endure as the composer’s best-known work and was hugely influential on music in the 18th century. (J. S. Bach liked the concertos so much he transcribed six of them.) On January 20 at 7pm and on the following weekend, Tafelmusik will perform the second, fourth, and eleventh concerts from the work, along with chamber music and a concerto grosso by Locatelli as well as music by Vivaldi’s contemporary Giovanni Guido, who was so enamoured of The Four Seasons that he based his Scherzi Armonici on them. This promises to be an exceptional sampling of 18th-century Italian music and with Glodeanu making her debut with the ensemble from the first violin, the concert offers for Tafelmusik regulars another teasing view of how the ensemble plays with someone other than Jeanne Lamon leading from first violin.

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

The Toronto Consort
Presents
The Way of the Pilgrim
From travellers en route to a sacred shrine, to wandering scholars searching for the perfect teacher, we bring you pilgrim songs, crusaders’ laments and ecstatic dances from Spain, France and Germany.

Friday, February 12, 8pm
Saturday, February 13, 8pm
Tickets $24-$57
Box Office 416-964-6337
TorontoConsort.org
IN THIS ISSUE: Ajax, Aurora, Brampton, Burlington, Etobicoke, Georgetown, King Township, Markham, Milton, Mississauga, Newmarket, North York, Oakville, Oshawa, Richmond Hill, Scarborough, Thornhill, Whitby

A. Concerts in the GTA

The following musicals appear do not appear in the concert listings sections. Details for these musicals can be found in C, Music Theatre on page 57

MUSICAL THEATRE

- Drayton Entertainment. Irving Berlin's White Christmas. (Beyond GTA)
- Lower Ossington Theatre. Avenue Q. (GTA)
- Lower Ossington Theatre. Jesus Christ Superstar. (GTA)
- Mirvish Productions. Kinky Boots. (GTA)
- Mirvish Productions. Rodgers + Hammerstein's Cinderella. (GTA)
- Mirvish Productions. The Phantom of the Opera. (GTA)
- National Ballet of Canada. The Nutcracker. (GTA)
- Randolph Academy. The Addams Family. (GTA)
- Ross Petty Productions. Peter Pan in Wonderland. (GTA)
- Theatre Orangeville. The Gift of the Magi. (Beyond GTA)
- Young People's Theatre. Jacob Two-Two Meets the Hooded Fang. (GTA)

Tuesday December 1

- 12:10: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Tuesday Performance Class for Singers. Overtone. Deanna Reed, soprano; Christina Stelmacovich, alto; Robert Busiaikiewicz, tenor; David Roth, bass; David Briggs, organ. 65 Church St. 416-364-7865. PWYC. All donations go directly to the artists.

Wednesday December 2

- 6:00: Cathedral Church of St. James. Cantatas in the Cathedral. Bach: Cantata, BWV192 and organ works. Sheila Dietrich, soprano; Christina Stelmacovich, alto; Robert Busiaikiewicz, tenor; David Roth, bass; David Briggs, organ. 65 Church St. 416-364-7865. PWYC. All donations go directly to the artists.

LISTINGS ZONE MAP. Visit our website to see a detailed version of this map: thewholenote.com
Thursday December 3


12:10 University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Thursdays at Noon. Morawetz: Sonata for flute and piano; Sonata for trumpet and piano; Zuzmenko: Melancholy Waltz; Couthard: Fanfare Sonata for trumpet and piano; Baker: Elegy for flute and piano. Susan Hoeppner, flute; Gillian MacKay, trumpet; Lydia Wong, piano. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-978-0492. Free.


2:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. All Tchaikovsky. Tchaikovsky: Waltz and Polonaise from Eugene Onegin (Dec 2 and 3 only); Violin Concerto; Symphony No. 6 “Pathétique”. Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra (Dec 2 and 3 only); Jonathan Crow, violin; Peter Oundjian, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-596-3375. $33.75-$148; $29.50-$83.75(mat.). Also Dec 2 (3:00); 5:30.

5:00: FAWN Chamber Creative. L’homme et le ciel. New Canadian one-act chamber opera. Music by Adam Scime; libretto by Ian Koiter. Larissa Koniku, soprano (Rhoda); Adanya Dunn, soprano (Messer); Alex Dobson, baritone (Hermas). Music Gallery, 197 John St. 416-204-1080. $35; $25(mat-); $20(under 30). Also Dec 4.

*301. Suggested donation: $20; $5(child).

Dec 4-6, 11-13, 18-20; start times vary. Wheelchair accessible. Am. Sign Language interpretation at selected performances.


7:30: St. Clare’s Church. Christmas Concert. Arcadelt: Ave Maria; The Drummer Boy (trad.); Adolphe Adam: O Holy Night; Rutter: Candelight Carol; Petro Yan: Gesu Bambino. Choirs of St. Clare’s Church (directors Dr. Paul Jessen and Luigi Rizzo, directors); Choir of St. Matthew’s United Church (Dr. Paul Jessen, director); Columbus Centre Choir (Paul Busato, director). St. Clare’s Catholic Church, 1118 St Clair Ave. W. 416-690-0494. Free. Suggested donation to the Project of Hope for refugees.


8:00: Verbum Caro. Songs of Christmas Spanning a Millennium. Works by Hildegard, Bach, Handel, Schütz, Saint-Saëns and others. Paola Di Santo and Linda Foley, sopranos; Melanie Hartshorn-Walton, mezzo; Dr. Keith Hartshorn-Walton, piano. St. Peter’s Anglican Church (Toronto), 188 Carlton St. 416-890-1710. Freewill offering.

8:00: Art of Time Ensemble. To All A Good Night: A New Holiday Concert. Ellington: Nut-cracker Suite; works by Joni Mitchell, Mel Tormé, Tom Waits, John Lennon and others; Christmas classics. Jackie Richardson, Tom Wilson, David Wall, Liam Ticomb, Jessica Mitchell, singers; Art of Time Ensemble; and others. Harbourfront Centre Theatre, 235 Queens Quay W. 416-973-4000. $25-$59. Also Dec 4, 5.

*8:00: FAWN Chamber Creative. L’homme et le ciel. New Canadian one-act chamber opera. Music by Adam Scime; libretto by Ian Koiter. Larissa Koniku, soprano (Rhoda); Adanya Dunn, soprano (Messer); Alex Dobson, baritone (Hermas). Music Gallery, 197 John St. 416-204-1080. $35; $25(mat-); $20(under 30). Also Dec 4.

Friday December 4


7:30: Brampton Folk Club. A Brampton Folk Club Christmas. Triangles; Sally Campbell; Downtown Freddy Brown; John Stroud; Glenn McFarlane and Ray Whitmore. St. Paul’s United Church (Brampton), 30 Main St. S. Brampton. 416-237-3655. $15; $12(sen/st).


10:00: Elmer Iseler Singers. Handel’s Messiah. Lydia Adams, conductor; guest artists: The Amadeus Choir; Meredith Hall, soprano; Laura McAlpine, mezzo; Bud Roach, tenor; Matthew Zadow, baritone; Patricia Wright, organ; Robert Venables and Robert D’Vito, trumpets; and Orchestra. Metropolitan United Church (Toronto), 56 Queen St. E. 416-217-0537. $55; $50(sen/st); $20(st). Pre-concert dinner at the Albany Club, $60.

8:00: Exultate Chamber Singers. Stories of the Season: A Canadian Noël. Raminsh: Magnificat; and works by Anderson, Daley, Holman, Sirett, Willan, and others. Daniel Bickle, organ, St. Thomas Anglican Church (Toronto), 363 Huron St. 416-971-9229. $25.

8:00: FAWN Chamber Creative. L’homme et le ciel. New Canadian one-act chamber opera. Music by Adam Scime; libretto by Ian Koiter. Larissa Koniku, soprano (Rhoda); Adanya Dunn, soprano (Messer); Alex Dobson, baritone (Hermas). Music Gallery, 197 John St. 416-204-1080. $35; $25(mat-); $20(under 30). Also Dec 3.

8:00:教師 Gallery Hall. Accadela East Building. Piano: Teo Mike. CD release of “Open Minds”, Teo Mike, piano. 345 Sorauren Ave. 416-822-9781. $20; $10(st).


8:00 Tafelmusik. Bach Christmas Oratorio. See Dec 3; Also Dec 5, 6(mat).

8:00: Temps Choral Society. A Festive Noel Christmas Concert. Temps Choral Society; Temps Children’s Choir; Temps Jazz Choir. Clearview Christian Reformed Church, 2300 Sheridan Garden Dr., Oakville. 905-338-5202. $15. Also Dec 5(stpms).

8:00: Upper Canada Choristers/Cantemus Latin Ensemble. Wolcom Yole! Britten: Ceremo- ny of Carols; Rutter: Of a Rose; A lovely Rose (from his Magnificat); The Coventry Carol; Cherubini: Veni Jesu; Agius: Psalmus; Andrea: 0 magnum mysterium; other works. Performed a cappella by Cantemus. Laurie Evan Fraser, conductor; Cecilia Lee, piano. Guest: Emily Belvedere, harp. Grace Church on-the-Hill, 2000 Londondale Rd. 416-258-0510. $25; free(high school student).

Saturday December 5

12:00 noon: University Settlement Music.
A. Concerts in the GTA

& Arts School. End of Term Student Concert. St. George the Martyr Church, 197 John St. 416-598-3444 x243. Free. Donations accepted. Also at 2 pm.

1:00: Toronto Star. Christmas Concert. Mississauga Children’s Choir. The Cavern Bar, 76 Church St. 416-419-1756. Free, donations welcome. Also 3pm.


2:00: University Settlement Music & Arts School. End of Term Student Concert. St. George the Martyr Church, 197 John St. 416-598-3444 x243. Free. Donations accepted. Also at 12:00.

2:00: Yorkminster Park Baptist Church/ City. 7th Annual City Carol Sing, Choirs, Brass, Organ, Readings. Bach Children’s Chorus; That Choir; The Hedgerow Singers; Yorkminster Park Baptist Church Choir; Guests: Michael Colvin, tenor; Lori Gemmel, harp; True North Brass; SMCSAA Jubilee Choir. Massey Hall, 178 Victoria St. 416-872-4255. $20-$60. Also Dec 6.

3:00: Singing Out. All I Want for Christmas Is You. Jane Mallett Theatre, St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 27 Front St. E. 416-366-1656. $25; $20(st); $15(child). Also at 7:30.

3:00: Tempus Choral Society. A Festive Noel Christmas Concert. Tempus Choral Society; Tempus Children’s Choir; Tempus Jazz Choir. Clearview Christian Reformed Church, 2300 Sheridan Garden Dr., Oakville. 905-338-5202. $15. Also Dec 4(8pm).

3:00: Toronto Star. Christmas Concert. Mississauga Children’s Choir. The Cavern Bar, 76 Church St. 416-419-1756. Free, donations welcome. Also 1pm.

4:30: Church of the Holy Trinity. The Christmas Story. See Dec 4; Also Dec 6(11am), Dec 11,12(mat & eve),13,18,19(mat & eve),20(mat & eve). 50% off mat; 20% off eve.

5:00: Oakville Children’s Choir. Songs for a Winter Night. St. John’s United Church (3:00).

5:00: Massey Hall/St. Michael’s Choir School. A Toronto Christmas Tradition. Dr. Jerzy Goleccki, Maria Conkey, Jordan de Souza, and Terry Dunn, conductors; William O’Meara, accompanist; Guests: Michael Colvin, tenor; Lori Gemmel, harp; True North Brass; SMCSAA Jubilee Choir. Massey Hall, 270 Gladstone Ave. 647-960-6650. $35; $20(st); $15(child). Advance tickets only.

6:30: Aradia Baroque Ensemble. Sacred Music of Antonio Vivaldi. CD launch. Vivaldi: String Concerto RV115; Cur sagittas, cur tela RV637; Al Santo Sepolcro; Vos aurae per montes RV634; Beatus Vir RV795. Hélène Brunet, soprano; Vicki St. Pierre, contralto; Aradia Ensemble orchestra and choir; Kevin Mallon, conductor. St. Anne’s Anglican Church, 270 Gladstone Ave. 647-960-6650. $35; $20(st/under 30).

7:30: Cantemus Singers. Gloria in Excel-sis Deo. Christmas music of the Spanish and Austrian courts of the 16th century. Church of the Holy Trinity, 10 Trinity Sq. 416-578-6602. $20 free(child). Benefit concert in support of Community Centre 55’s Share-a-Christmas. Also Dec 6 at St. Aidan’s Anglican Church (3:00).


7:30: Ettorico Baroque Centennial Choir. Sacred Traditions 2015. Bernstein: Chichester Psalms; Poulenc: Quatre motets pour le temps de Noel; Patrocin: Six Noels Anciens; Susa: Carols and Lullabies of the Southwest. Carl Steinhauser, piano; Angela Schwarzkopf and Diana Wong, harps; Etienne Levesque, percussion; Anton Apostolov, guitar. Humb er Valley United Church, 76 Anglesea Blvd., Etobicoke. 416-769-9271. $25.


7:30: Pax Christi Choirs. Berlioz: L’enfance du Christ. Nathalie Paulin, soprano; Olivier Laquerre, baritone; Alain Coulombe, bass; Sean Clark, tenor; Matthew Zadow, baritone. Grace Church on-the-Hill, 300 Lonsdale Rd. 416-488-7884. $45; $40(sr); $25(st); $5(child). Also Dec 6(mat).

7:30: Cathedral Church of St. James.

7:30: Singing Out. All I Want for Christmas Is You. Jane Walsh. Toronto Centre for the Arts, 27 Front St. E. 416-836-1656; $25; (20); $15(child). Also 3:00.

7:30: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. All Tchaikovsky. Tchaikovsky: Waltz and Polonez from Eugene Onegin (Dec 2 and 3 only); Violin Concerto; Symphony No.6 “Pathétique.” Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra (Dec 2 and 3 only); Jonathan Crow, violin; Peter Oundjian, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375. $33.75-$148; $29.50-$83.75(mat.). Also Dec 5.

7:30: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Smetana: The Moldau; Rachmaninoff: Piano Concerto No.3 in d, Op.20; Lutoslawski: Concerto for Orchestra. Eugene Chan, piano; Uri Mayer; conductor; Françoise Koh, conductor. MacMillan Theatre, Edward Johnson Building, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-978-3425. $33.75-$148; $29.50-$83.75(mat.). Also Dec 2(8:00); 3(2:00).

8:00: Onstage Productions. Sounds of Christmas. Family-oriented celebration of the season. Fiato Markham Theatre, 171 Town Centre Blvd., Markham. 905-305-7469. $28. Also Dec 8.


8:00: Tafelmusik. Bach Christmas Oratorio. See Dec 3. Also Dec 6(mat).

Sunday December 6

1:30: Music at Metropolitan. Deck the Halls. Downtown Carol Sing. Metropolitan Silver Band; Matthew Whitfield, organ. Metropolitan United Church (Toronto), 56 Queen St. E. 416-363-0331. Free, donations welcome. All donations to Metropolitan’s Syrian Refugee Family.

2:00: Pickering Community Band. Christmas Concert. D. McDonald; A Concert Band Christmas (premiere). Guests: Alejandra Balon, vocals; Ron Korb, world flutes. Forest Brook Community Church, 80 Kearney Dr., Ajax. 905-427-5442. $15, $10(sr/under 18).


3:00: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Choral Celebration Concert. Shelley Marwood: These Fragile Snowflakes; Dale Warland: Nativity Suite for Choir, Harp and Flute; Pinkham: Christmas Cantata, MacMillan Singers; Men’s Chorus; Women’s Chorus; and brass choir. MacMillan Theatre, Edward Johnson Building, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-978-0492. $30; $20(sr); $10(st); 2:00; pre-concert performance by Young Voices Toronto (Zimfira Poloz).

3:00: Cantemus Singers. Gloria in Excelsis Deo. Christmas music of the Spanish and Austrian courts of the 16th century. St. Aidan’s Anglican Church (Toronto), 70 Silver Birch Ave. 416-578-6602. $20; free(child). Benefit concert in support of Community Centre 55’s Share-a-Christmas. Also Dec 5 at Church of the Holy Trinity (7:30).


3:00: Massey Hall/ St. Michael’s Choir School. A Toronto Christmas Tradition. Dr. Jerry Chichocki, Maria Conkey, Jordan de Souza, and Terry Dunn, conductors; William O’Meara, accompanist; Guests: Michael Colvin, tenor; Loren Gemmell, harp; True North Brass; SMCSAA Jubilee Choir. Massey Hall, 178 Victoria St. 416-672-4255. $20-$60. Also Dec 5.


3:00: Orchestra Toronto. The Music of Youth. Featuring the Long & McQuade Instrument Petting Zoo. Prokofiev; Peter and the Wolf; Rimsky-Korsakov: Christmas Eve Suite (selections); Reinecke: Flute Concerto in D, Op.283. Stephanie Morin, flute; Tom Allen, narrator: George Weston Recital Hall, 5040 Yonge St. 1-855-985-2787. $40; $37(sr); $15(child/10(Toupie 14-29). 2:15; Pre-concert chat.

Sheila Jaffé
violin
Peter Longworth
piano
Mozart, Szymanowski
Franck , Claude Vivier
Sunday Dec. 6, 3pm
Heliconian Hall
SyrinxConcerts.ca


Metropolitan United Church invites you to
Deck the Halls
DOWNTOWN CAROL SING
with the Metropolitan Silver Band and Matthew Whitfield, organist
Sunday, Dec. 6 1:30 pm
Admission free with donations toward Metropolitan’s Syrian Refugee Family
56 Queen Street E.

Gloria in Excelsis Deo
Christmas Music of the 16th Century Habsburg Courts in Spain & Austria
**BERLIoz**

**L’ENFANCE DU CHRIST**

Dec 5, 7:30p.m
Dec. 6, 3:00p.m

PaxChristiChorale.org

- **3:00: Pax Christi Chorale.** Berlioz: L’Enfance du Christ. Nathalie Paulin, soprano; Olivier Larguier, baritone; Alain Colinou, bass; Sean Clark, tenor; Mathieu Zadow, baritone. Grace Church on-the-Hill, 30 Lonsdale Rd. 416-488-7884. $45; $40(sr); $25(st); $10(child). Also Dec 5(eve).
- **3:00: Royal Conservatory.** Invesco Piano Concerts. Jan Lisiecki, piano. Koerner Hall, Telus Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. SOLD OUT. BOX Rush. Tickets will be available.
- **3:30: Tafelmusik.** Bach Christmas Oratorio. See Dec 3.
- **4:00: Cathedral Church of St. James.** Twilight Organ Series. David Briggs, organ. 65 Church St. 416-364-7865. Free.
- **4:00: Church of St. Mary Magdelene.** O Antiphon Preludes. Works by Nuno Muhly, Andrew Adair, organ. Church of St. Mary Magdelene (Toronto), 477 Manning Ave. 416-531-7955.
- **4:00: St. Philip’s Anglican Church.** Jessica Vespers Tribute to Frank Sinatra. Alex Samaras, vocals; Colleen Allen, saxophone; Scott Alexander, bass; Gary Williamson, piano; Brian Barlow, drums. 25 St Phillips Rd., Etobicoke. 416-247-5181. Free. Willow offering.
- **4:00: Toronto Classical Singers.** Bach: Christmas Oratorio. Jennifer Taverner, soprano; Sandra Boyes, mezzo; Asitha Tennekoon, tenor; James Baldwin, baritone; Tallisker Players Orchestra; Julian Petrenko, conductor. Church of Christ Deer Park, 1570 Yonge St. 416-443-1490. $20; $25(child).
- **4:30: Church of the Holy Trinity.** The Christmas Story. See Dec 4; Also Dec 12(mat & eve), 13,16,19(mat & eve),20(mat & eve).
- **5:00: Noturnes in the City.** Vocal recital. Works by Bach, Dvorak, Smetana and Masaryk. Eliska Latawiec, soprano; Ross Ingles, piano. St. Wenceslaus Church, 496 Gladstone Ave. 416-481-2794. $25; $15(st).
- **5:00: Salvation Army.** Gift of Christmas.
Wednesday December 9


2:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Cirque de la Symphonie: Holiday Hits. Cirque de la Symphonie; Etoibeko School of the Arts Holiday Chorus; Steven Reineke, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375. $42.25-$107; $34.75-$83.75(mat.). Also Dec 9 (2:00 and 8:00).


8:00: Univox Choir. Great Joy! Joubert, McElroy and Red; Great Joy; and other works. Chris Tsujichu, piano; Ryan Luchuck, bass; Alejandro Céspedes, percussion; Kevin Mendes, drums; Dallas Bergen, artistic director; Lucas Marchand, band director. Al Green Theatre, 750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211. $25, $20(st/r, adv). Also Dec 11.


Thursday December 10


8:00: Music Gallery. Emergents I: Collidescopes. David Baldry, trumpet; Aline Homzy, violin; Chris Pruden, piano; Raphael Ritter, percussion; Paige Kobe and Nicholas Risica, dancer. 197 John St. 416-204-1080. @. $8 (members).

8:00: York University Department of Music/Arrarymusic. York Electro-Acoustic Orchestra. Guests: Rick Sacks and others; Doug Nant, director. Arraryspace, 155 Walnut Ave. 416-532-3019. $8. Concert will be live streamed.

Friday December 11


7:30: Church of the Holy Trinity. The Christmas Story: See Dec 4; Also Dec 12(mat & eve),13,18,19(mat & eve),20(mat & eve). Free.


8:00: Etoibeko Philharmonic Orchestra. Holiday Splendour. Tchaikovsky: Nutcracker Suite; other works. Humber Valley United Church, 76 Angleysde Blvd., Etoibeko.

December 10 at 8 pm

8:00: Music Toronto. Gryphon Trio. Vincent Ho: new work; Arno Babajanian: Piano Trio in F-sharp. Jane Mallett Theatre, St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 27 Front St. E. 416-366-7723. $55, $50, $10(st); age 18 to 35: pay your age.

Music TORONTO GRYPHON TRIO

December 11 at 9 pm

8:00: Toronto Consort. Christmas at the Monastery of Santa Cruz. A Christmas program of villancicos and Brazilian-influenced dances, found in the Monastery’s archives. Zak Ozmo, lute and guest director. Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, 427 Bloor St. W. 416-964-6337. $27-$64, $22-$58(st); $10(st) and under. 7:00-pre-concert talk. Also Dec 12, 13(mat).

8:00: Univox Choir. Great Joy! Joubert, McElroy and Red; Great Joy; and other works. Chris Tsujichu, piano; Ryan Luchuck, bass; Alejandro Céspedes, percussion; Kevin Mendes, drums; Dallas Bergen, artistic director. Maundy Thursday Recital, 8:00. The Monastery of Santa Cruz, 50 St. Joseph St. 416-962-7110. Free. 7:30-Pre-concert chat. Free-will donations accepted toward St. Basil’s music program.

The TORONTO CONSORT

December 11, 12 & 13, 2015

Trinity St-Paul’s Centre

Call 416-964-6337

TorontoConsort.org

Monday December 4

8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Cirque de la Symphonie: Holiday Hits. Cirque de la Symphonie; Etoibeko School of the Arts Holiday Chorus; Steven Reineke, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375. $42.25-$107; $34.75-$83.75(mat.). Also Dec 9 (2:00 and 8:00).

7:30: York University Department of Music. Piano Fest. Students from U of T’s piano area. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park Circle. 416-408-0208. Free.

8:00: Hoover Party. Hoover Party Digital Release. Karen Ng and Brodie West, saxophones; Matthew A. Dunn, tape and effects; Amelia Ehrhardt, dance and Victoria Cheong, live remix; and others. Array Space, 155 Walnut Ave. 416-532-3019. Free.

8:00: Montage Music. Holiday Concert. Classical, Celtic and jazz music with a holiday theme. Melanie Cosly, soprano; Lew Mele, bass; Laura Nashman, flute; Bill Bridges, guitar; Jordan Klapman, piano; Sharlene Wallace, harp; Greg Millar, piano, Heliconian Hall, 35 Hazelton Ave. 416-924-8180. @.


8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Cirque de la Symphonie: Holiday Hits. Cirque de la Symphonie; Etoibeko School of the Arts Holiday Chorus; Steven Reineke, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375. $42.25-$107; $34.75-$83.75(mat.). Also Dec 9 (8:00 and 9:00).


11:00: Toronto Consort. Christmas at the Monastery of Santa Cruz. A Christmas program of villancicos and Brazilian-influenced dances, found in the Monastery’s archives. Zak Ozmo, lute and guest director. Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, 427 Bloor St. W. 416-964-6337. $27-$64, $22-$58(st); $10(st) and under. 7:00-pre-concert talk. Also Dec 12, 13(mat).

11:00: Univox Choir. Great Joy! Joubert, McElroy and Red: Great Joy; and other works. Chris Tsujichu, piano; Ryan Luchuck, bass; Alejandro Céspedes, percussion; Kevin Mendes, drums; Dallas Bergen, artistic director. Maundy Thursday Recital, 8:00. The Monastery of Santa Cruz, 50 St. Joseph St. 416-962-7110. Free. 7:30-Pre-concert chat. Free-will donations accepted toward St. Basil’s music program.
Snow Angel
Sarah Quartel’s Snow Angel, Ola Gjeilo’s Ubi Caritas,
arrangements by our artistic director ... & more

Jenny Crober, Artistic Director
Elizabeth Acker, Accompanist
Sybil Shanahan, cello  Kevin Barrett, guitar
Ray Dillard, percussion

Saturday, December 12, 2015 * 7:30 pm
Eastminster United Church
310 Danforth Ave., Toronto
Gen. Adm. $25 Sr. $20 St. $10
www.vocachorus.ca; 416-967-8487

Early Music - New Light
Toronto Chamber Choir

Saturday Dec 12 at 8 pm
Christmas in Dresden
Voices, strings, organ, and
Toronto’s favourite “pluck band”
combine forces to offer festive
music from Dresden in the time of
Heinrich Schütz and Michael Praetorius.

with special guests:
The Toronto Continuo Collective,
led by Lucas Harris & Boris Medicky

Calvin Presbyterian Church,
26 Dellite Ave
1 block north of Yonge & St Clair
(416) 763-1695
toronto chamberschoir.ca

Cathedral Bluffs
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Norman Reintamm
Artistic Director/Principal Conductor

Saturday Dec. 12 8 pm
A CHRISTMAS FIESTA!
Celebrating the Christmas season with a trip around the world with 2015 JUNO Award-nominees Sultans of String. Original world music, inspired classics and seasonal favourites.

PLUS... TCHAIKOVSKY Excerpts from The Nutcracker

SUBSCRIPTION CONCERT 2 | TICKETS: REGULAR - $34 adult | $29 senior/student
PREMIUM – $54 adult | $44 senior/student (under age 12, free)
P.C. HoTheatre | 5183 Sheppard Avenue East, Scarborough
cathedralbluffs.com | 416.879.5566
Poulenc, Victoria and Stopford. Guest: Julia Seager-Scott, harp; Maria Case, conductor and artistic director. Grace Church on-the-Hill, 300 Lonsdale Rd. 416-968-7747. $25;$20 (sr); $15 (st); free (child).

● 7:30: Bach Children’s Chorus/Bach Children’s Choral Academy. Across the Frozen Night. Linda Beaupré, conductor; Eleanor Daley, piano. Toronto Centre for the Arts, 5040 Yonge St., North York. 855-985-2787. $40; $35 (sr/st); free (child).

● 7:30: Chris Tsujuchi. A Very Christ-erical Christmas Cabaret. A night of music, riffing, comedy, raillery, Glee, and choreography. Chris Puorden, keyboard; Kevin Wong, vocals; Jon Butash, bass; Leah Canalli, vocals; Steve John Dale, guitar; and others. Buddies In Bad Times Theatre, 12 Alexander St. 416-975-8555. $25. Also on Dec 13.

● 7:30: Church of the Holy Trinity. The Christmas Story. See Dec 4. Also Dec 13, 19, 18 (mat & eve), 20 (mat & eve).


● 7:30: St. Paul’s Anglican Church. Christmas with Ron Korb. Ron Korb, flutes; Chris Donnelly, piano; Alex Cheung, violin and cello. 227 Church St., Newmarket. 905-853-7285. $25.

● 7:30: Village Voices. Messiah. Handel. Rebecca Whelan, soprano; Laura McAlpine, mezzo; Anthony Buratto, baritone; Jason Martel, bass-baritone; Gerald Loo, organ; Talisker Players; Joan Andrews, conductor. Markham Missionary Church, 5438 Major Mackenzie Dr. E., Markham. 905-978-4769. $35-$15.

● 8:00: Toronto Chamber Choir. Christmas in Dresden. Festive music from Dresden in the time of Heinrich Schütz and Michael Praetorius. Guests: Toronto Continuo Collective. Calvin Presbyterian Church, 26 Delisle Ave. 416-763-1417. $30; $25 (sr/st); $12.50 (under 10). 7:15: Opening Notes.

● 8:00: Toronto Consort. Christmas at the Monastery of Santa Cruz. A Christmas program of villancicos and Brazilian-influenced dances, found in the Monastery’s archives. Zak Ozmto, lute and guest director. Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, Jeanne Lamon Hall, 472 Bloor St. W. 416-584-6337. $27-$34; $22-$58 (sr/st); $10 (st); 7:00: pre-concert talk. Also Dec 11, 13 (mat).

Sunday December 13


● 1:30: Oakville Symphony Orchestra. Family Christmas Concert. New and favourite music of the season. Oakville Choral Society. Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts, 130 Navy St., Oakville. 905-815-2021. $25; $21 (sr/st); $13 (st). Also 4:00.

● 2:00: Flato Markham Theatre. A Swingin’ Christmas. Toronto All Star Big Band, TABB 5. 171 Town Centre Blvd., Markham. 905-305-7409. $39; $33 (groups of 20 or more).


● 3:00: Blessed Trinity Church Choir. Christmas Traditions Concert. Works by Tallis, Willcocks, Rutter, Handel and Willan. Blessed Trinity Choir, Children’s Choir, and Youth Choir; soloists from the Blessed Trinity Music Ministry; Michael Shuck, organ; Caela Stoake-Min, soprano; Goody Cabral, conductor; John Holland, conductor. Blessed Trinity Church, 3220 Bayview Ave. 416-969-3498. $10; $40 (family).

● 3:00: Harmony Singers. We Wish You The Merriest Christmas favourite. Harvey Patterson, conductor; Bruce Harvey, piano. Guest: Militza Boljevic, vocals. Humble Valley United Church, 76 Anglesey Blvd., Etoilecoke. 416-975-3036. $20; $15 (st).


● 3:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. A Christmas Circus. Artists from Cirque de la Symphonie; Cawlter Park Chamber Choir; Tom Allen, narrator; Earl Lee, RBC Resident Conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375. $25.50-$68.25; $20-$39 (child).

Village Voices MESSIAH
DIREC TED BY JOAN ANDREWS

Guest Artists
Rebecca Whelan, soprano
Laura McAlpine, mezzo-soprano
Asitha Tennekoon, tenor
Jesse Clark, bass/baritone
Gerald Loo, organist
The Talisker Players

Sat, Dec 12, 2015 at 7:30 pm
Markham Missionary Church
5438 Major Mackenzie Drive East, Markham

Adult $35 Senior $30 Student $20 Child under 12 FREE
For tickets call (905) 763-4172 or at the door www.villagevoices.ca
CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13, 4:30 PM
A traditional candlelight carol concert presentation.

FREE ADMISSION FOR BOTH EVENTS | Doors open at 3:30 pm.

Yorkminster Park Baptist Church
1585 Yonge Street | (416) 922-1167 | YorkminsterPark.com

THAT CHOIR CAROLS

with a reading of Dylan Thomas’ A Child’s Christmas in Wales by Jim Mezon

GJEILO
RAMINSH.
WHITACRE
LAURIDSEN
WILLAN
PENTATONIX

SUNDAY, DEC. 13, 2015 | 8pm
Metropolitan United Church
56 Queen St. East, Toronto

TICKETS: $25 | $15 | $5
www.thatchoir.com
info@thatchoir.com
#choirsarecool

WELCOME CHRISTMAS
December 15, 2015

Come celebrate an ESG Christmas with Choirs, Choir, Brass and Organ. Works by Rutter, Ruth Watson Henderson, Daley, Willan, Whitacre and more...

Guest Narrator:
Michael Kramer of 96.3 FM
Featuring
The Trillium Brass
Eglinton St. George’s Choir
Adair, organist;
Krista Rhodes, piano
Shawn Grenke, conductor.
Tickets $35

Eglinton St. George’s United Church
35 Lytton Blvd. Toronto 416-481-1141

www.esgunited.org

Expect Something Different!

ELENOR CHORUS

HANNAFORD STREET SILVER BAND

1:30: Eglinton St. George’s Choir
Adair, organist;
Krista Rhodes, piano
Shawn Grenke, conductor.
Tickets $35

SUNDAY DECEMBER 13TH
4:00 P.M.
A Rhapsody of Christmas

2015-2016 CONCERT SERIES

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4:00 P.M.
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Shawn Grenke, conductor.
Tickets $35

Eglinton St. George’s United Church
35 Lytton Blvd. Toronto 416-481-1141

www.esgunited.org

Expect Something Different!
mezzo; Andrew Staples, tenor; John Reylea, bass-baritone; Toronto Mendelssohn Choir; Sir Andrew Davis, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375. $38.75-$107(eve); $38.75-$111.25(mat). Also Dec 16, 18, 19, 20 (3:00).

● 8:00: Burdock, Liam Titcomb, Yule Molzan, drums; Ben Whitley, bass; John Spence, keyboard, 1184 Bloor St. W. 416-546-4033. $15/$13(ad).

Wednesday December 16


● 7:30: Tafelmusik. Handel Messiah. See Dec 16; Also Dec 18, 19, 20 (3:00).

Thursday December 17


● 7:30: Canadian Music Centre/Guitar Society of Toronto. Baroque: Music by Purcell, Handel, Bach, Vivaldi, Corelli and others. See Dec 10; Also Dec 16 (mat).

Friday December 18

● 7:30: Tafelmusik. Handel Messiah. See Dec 16; Also Dec 19.

● 8:00: Canadian Brass. In Concert. Holiday Season concert. Flato Markham Theatre, 171 Town Centre Blvd., Markham. 905-305-7469. $65-$74.

● 8:00: Georgetown Bach Chorale. Christmas and All That Jazz. Kristina Nojd, vocalist; Andrew's Syrian Refugee Sponsorship Fund.

THE TORONTO CHORAL SOCIETY presents selections from Christmas Oratorio by Johann Sebastian Bach, conducted by Geoffrey Butler, Wednesday December 16, 2015, 7:30 pm. Eastminster United Church, 310 Danforth Avenue. Tickets $20 in advance. www.torontochoralsociety.org
The Mummer's Masque
A Newfoundland Christmas Kitchen Party

● 8:00: Toronto Masque Theatre. Mummer's Masque. See Dec 17; Also Dec 19.
● 8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Messiah. See Dec 15; Also Dec 19, 20 (3:00).

Saturday December 19

● 1:00: Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts. Wandering Christmas Carollers. Groups of 4 or 8 singers combining Brock University student singers and members of Avanti Chamber Singers. Various locations downtown, TBA, St. Catharines. 905-688-5550. Free. Also Dec 12.

A Chorus Christmas: Across the Universe

December 19, 2015
2:00 pm | Roy Thomson Hall
$35.50 - $45.50
torontochildrenschorus.com

● 2:00: Toronto Children's Chorus. A Chorus Christmas: Across the Universe. Fantasia on Christmas Carols for Treble Voices and Baritone; other works. Toronto Children's Chorus; Alumni Choir; Stan Klebanoff, trumpet; TSO Chamber Solists; Russell Braun, baritone. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4255. $35.50-$45.50.

Amadeus Choir

The Season of Joy
SAT. DEC. 19, 2015
7:30PM
Yorkminster Park Baptist Church

416.446.0188
www.amadeuschoir.com

● 7:30: Amadeus Choir. The Season of Joy. Handel: Hallelujah Chorus; Carol Tribute to Sir David Wilcox; new carols from Amadeus songwriting competition. Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, 1585 Yonge St. 416-446-0188. $40; $30(sr); $25(under 30); students free at door with ID.

● 7:30: Musikay. Messiah. St. John's United

MOSO Holiday

HIGHLIGHTS from MESSIAH

SATURDAY DEC 19, 2015 8PM
HAMMERSON HALL

HANDEL
Highlights From Messiah

FEATURED GUESTS
MSO Chorus and soloists
Jennifer Tung, Chorusmaster
Prott & Whitney Canada

LIVING ARTS CENTRE - HAMMERSON HALL - MISSISSAUGA. TICKETS START AT $48. TO PURCHASE, CALL 905-306-6000. OR VISIT: MISSISSAUGASYMPHONY.CA

DENIS MASTROMONACO
MUSIC DIRECTOR & CONDUCTOR

A. Concerts in the GTA

Tyler Wagler, Jazz bassist. Home of Ron Greidanus, 157 Main St. S., Georgetown. 905-877-6569. $45(adv only). Also Dec 19, 20.

● 8:00: Massey Hall/Against the Grain Theatre. AtG's Messiah. See Dec 16; Also Dec 19(mat).

● 8:00: Toronto Masque Theatre. Mummer's Masque. See Dec 17; Also Dec 19.

● 8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Messiah. See Dec 15; Also Dec 19, 20 (3:00).

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Sun. Dec. 20, 3pm & 7pm
Amahl and the Night Visitors & other seasonal favourites 
refresments | cash bar
nostringstheatre.com

Sunday December 20

SING-ALONG MESSIAH
Dec 20
416.872.4255
tafelmusik.org
Tafelmusik

● 2:00: Tafelmusik. Sing-along Messiah. Joanne Lunn, soprano; Mary-Ellen Nesi, mezzo; Rufus Müller, tenor; Nathaniel Watson, baritone; Ivans Taurins, director. Massey Hall, 178 Victoria St. 416-872-4255. $30.


St. 416-551-2093. $25; $20(sr/st); $15(under 12). Also 3:00.

● 7:30: Church of the Holy Trinity. The Christmas Story. See Dec 4. Also Dec 21(3:00), Jan 23(3:00).

● 7:30: Karpov Ballet. The Nutcracker. Flato Markham Theatre, 171 Town Centre Blvd., Markham. 905-305-7469. $39. Also 3:30pm; Dec 21(7:30); 1(3:00).

● 8:00: Georgtown Bach Chorale. Christmas and All That Jazz. Kristina Jordz, vocal; Tyler Wagler, Jazz bassist. Home of Ron Greidanus, 157 Main St. S., Georgtown. 905-877-6583. $45(adj only). Also Dec 18, 19.

Monday December 21

● 7:30: Karpov Ballet. The Nutcracker. Flato Markham Theatre, 171 Town Centre Blvd., Markham. 905-305-7469. $39. Also 3:30pm; Dec 21(7:30).

Tuesday December 22


● 7:00: North York Central Library. Latin Jazz Quartet. University of Toronto Faculty of Music students. 5120 Yonge St. 416-395-5539. Freewill donate.

Thursday December 31

● 7:00: Attala Glatz Concert Productions/ Roy Thomson Hall. Bravissimo! Opera's Greatest Hits. New Year's Eve celebration. Puccini: "Nessun dorma" from Turandot; Bizet: “L'amus est un oiseau rebelle” from Carmen; Massenet: “Méditation” from Thais; Puccini: Te Deum from Tosca; and others. Karina Gauvin, soprano; Kristinza Szabo, mezzo; Stefania Meola, tenor; Lucio Gallo, baritone; Opera Canada Symphony; Opera Canada Chorus; Marco Guidarini, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4255. $55-$155.

● 8:00: Toronto Operetta Theatre. The Student Prince. Sigmund Romberg, Ernesto Ramirez, tenor; Jennifer Taverner, soprano; Stefan Fehr, tenor; Curtis Sullivan, baritone; Derek Dake, conductor; Guillermo Silva-Marin, stage director. Jane Mallet Theatre, St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 27 Front St. E. 416-366-7723. $49-$95. Also Dec 28(8:00), 29(1:00), Jan 2(3:00), 3(3:00).


Sunday December 27

● 7:00: Toronto Opera Theatre. The Secret Garden. Sondra Radvanovsky, mezzo; David Daniels, tenor; Bruce Kauffman, tenor; Carlo Agnati, baritone; Opera Canada Symphony; Opera Canada Chorus; Marco Guidarini, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4255. $55-$155.

● 8:00: Toronto Operetta Theatre. The Student Prince. See Dec 21(3:00); Also Jan 2(3:00), 3(3:00).

Friday January 1

● 2:00: Musicians in Ordinary. Opus 1's.

The Musicians In Ordinary For The Lutes and Voices

2PM January 1 and 8PM January 2, 2016 Heliconian Hall, 35 Hazelton Avenue

~ A New Year’s Day Concert ~
Music for the first of the year from Opus 1’s Vivaldi, Corelli and others
Hallie Fishel, soprano; John Edwards, theorbo, Christopher Verrette & Patricia Ahern, Baroque vienla; Laura Jones, Baroque cello, and Bosky Medicky, harpsichord

Tickets $30, students & seniors $20 at the door
A. Concerts in the GTA

First compositions by Handel, Vivaldi and other Baroque era composers. Hallie Fishel, soprano; John Edwards, lute; Christopher Verrette and Patricia Ahern, violins; Borys Medicky, keyboards. Heliconian Hall, 35 Hazelton Ave. 416-535-9956. $30; $20(sr/st). Also Jan 2(eve).

**Saturday January 2**
- 3:00: Toronto Operetta Theatre. The Student Prince. See Dec 27(3:00); Also Jan 3.
- 8:00: Musicians in Ordinary. Opus 1s. First compositions by Handel, Vivaldi and other Baroque era composers. Hallie Fishel, soprano; John Edwards, lute; Christopher Verrette and Patricia Ahern, violins; Borys Medicky, keyboards. Heliconian Hall, 35 Hazelton Ave. 416-535-9956. $30; $20(sr/st). Also Jan 1(mat).

**Sunday January 3**
- 3:00: Toronto Operetta Theatre. The Student Prince. See Dec 27(3:00).
- 4:00: Cathedral Church of St. James. Twilight Organ Series. Thomas Fitches, organ. 65 Church St. 416-364-7865. Free.

**Tuesday January 5**
- 6:00: Music Toronto. Marc-André Hamelin. Mozart: Piano Sonata No.18 in D, K576; Liszt: Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude; Liszt: Venezia e Napoli; Schubert: Piano Sonata No.21, D960. Marc-André Hamelin. Jane Mallett Theatre, St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 27 Front St. E. 416-366-7723. $55, $50; $10(st); age 18 to 35: pay your age.

**Wednesday January 6**
- 10:00am: Phil and Eli Taylor Performance Academy for Young Artists. Taylor Academy Showcase Series. Mazzoleni Concert Hall, Royal Conservatory, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. Free.

**Thursday January 7**

**Friday January 8**

**Saturday January 9**
- 1:30: Toronto Operetta Theatre. The Student Prince. See Dec 27(3:00).
- 4:00: Cathedral Church of St. James. Twilight Organ Series. Thomas Fitches, organ. 65 Church St. 416-364-7865. Free.

**Saturday January 9, 2016 8pm**
Calvin Presbyterian Church

‘NOON AT MET’
Free concerts at 12:15 pm
Jan 7 Andrew Ager, organist
Jan 14 Matthew Whitfield, organist
Jan 21 John Paul Farahat, organist
Jan 28 Rashaan Allwood, organist
Feb 4 Manuel Piazza, organist

Metropolitan United Church
56 Queen Street E., Toronto
416-363-0331 (ext. 26)
www.metunited.org

**Saturday January 9 - 2016**
**Flute Concert**
- 3:00: Syrinx Concerts Toronto. In Concert. Works by Schubert, Brahms and Peter Tiefenbach. James Campbell, clarinet; Leo Erice, piano; Leslie Fagan, soprano. Heliconian Hall,

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#### ticketmaster.ca, 1-855-985-2787 | bemusednetwork.com/events

#### 416-733-9388

**$88 (VIP), $68, $48 $39, $33, $28 | TCA box office 416-733-9388
ticketmaster.ca, 1-855-985-2787 | bemusednetwork.com/events

**Info Li Delun Music Foundation 416-490-7962 info@lidelun.org

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**Music TORONTO**

**MARC-ANDRÉ HAMELIN**

January 5 at 8 pm

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**Winner, 2015 International Leopold Bellan Violin Competition, Paris

Winner, 2015 International Chopin Piano Competition, Warsaw

Winner, China Li Delun Conducting Competition, Qingdao

Winner, 2015 International Leopold Bellan Violin Competition, Paris

Winner, 2015 International Chopin Piano Competition, Warsaw

Yuhe Li, violin

Winner, 2015 International Leopold Bellan Violin Competition, Paris

**Tickets**
- $88 (VIP), $68, $48 $39, $33, $28 | TCA box office 416-733-9388
ticketmaster.ca, 1-855-985-2787 | bemusednetwork.com/events

**Info Li Delun Music Foundation 416-490-7962 info@lidelun.org**

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**0208. Free.**

**416-363-0331 x26. Free.**

**Toronto Operetta Theatre**

**The Student Prince**

**December 1 2015 - February 7, 2016**

**Toronto Festiva Orchestra, with**

**Huan Jing**, conductor

Winner, China Li Delun Conducting Competition, Qingdao

**Yike Tony Yang**, piano

Winner, 2015 International Chopin Piano Competition, Warsaw

"Lunch and snack friendly."**
Thursday January 14


Music TORONTO

JACK Quartet

Co-produced with New Music Consorts

Friday January 15


Saturday January 16


8:00: Art of Time Ensemble. Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band. Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. Sony Centre for the Performing Arts, 1 Front St. E. 1-855-872-7669. $45.00 - $85.00.

Sunday January 17


A. Concerts in the GTA


- 3:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Mozart: Jupiter Symphony. Mozart: Overture to Don Giovanni, K271. Madamina, il catalogo e questo “and “Un Rêve” (piano solos); Elling Orchestra


Wednesday January 20

- 12:00 noon: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Student Composers Concert. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen's Park. 416-408-0208. Free.

Thursday January 21


Music Toronto

- 8:00: Music Toronto. Andriana Chuchman Soprano

January 21 at 8 pm


- 8:00: Tafelmusik. Vivaldi: L'estro Armonico. See Jan 20(7pm); Also Jan 22, 23, 24(3:30).
Great Artist Music Series presents
Stewart Goodyear, piano

Friday, January 22, 8pm
auroraculturalcentre.ca
905 713-1818
22 Church St., Aurora. 905-713-1818. $34; $28(4sr/st).


Sunday January 24

• 1:00: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Concerto Competition Finals. Selecting of solists for the UTSO concerts in the 2016-2017 season. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson University of Toronto, 80 Queen's Park. 416-408-0208. Free.

• 2:00: Quartetto Bravo. In Concert. Works for string trio and clarinet by Mozart, Schubert and others. Terry Storr, clarinet; Daniel Kushner, violin; Baird Knechtel, viola; John Trembath, cello. All Saints Kingsway Anglican Church, 2850 Bloor St. W. 416-242-2131. $25, $15(st/sr).

• 2:00: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Opera Student Composer Collective: The Machine Stops. A science fiction dystopia based on the short story by E.M. Forster. Michael Patrick Albano, director; James Bolter and others. Terry Storr, clarinet; Dan Sevastian, accordion; Shalom Bard, clarinet; David Buchbinder, trumpet; and others.

Saturday January 23


• 2:00: Volcano Theatre/Progress. Century Song. See Jan 20; Also Jan 23(2:00 and 8:30).

Tuesday January 26


Wednesday January 27

• 6:30: Canadian Opera Company. See Jan 23; Also Jan 30(mat), Feb 2, 5, 11, 14(mat).

• 8:00: Svetlana Dvoretsky/Show One Productions. Yiddish Glory: The Lost Songs of Life and Fate. Poyk Korelitz, vocals; Shifrin Milman, vocals; Esty Rosenberg, vocals; Loyko Trio, violins/guitar; Alexander Sevastian, accordion; Shalom Bard, clarinet; David Buchbinder, trumpet; and others.
A. Concerts in the GTA

Toronto Symphony Orchestra

9:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Symphonie Fantastique. Sibelius: “The Swan of Tuonela” from Lemminkäinen Suite (Jan. 27 and 28 only); Dutilleux: Correspondences; Berlioz: Symphonie fantastique. Barbara Hannigan, soprano; Peter Oundjian, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375. $33.75-$148. Also Jan 28.

5:00: Ensemble Polaris. Santa’s Gone Home! Featuring festive- and post-festive music old and new. St. Bartholomew’s Anglican Church, 509 Dundas St. E. 416-588-4301. $25; $15(stsr/unwaged); $10 (child).

Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre.


THURSDAY, JANUARY 28, 8PM KOERNER HALL

Generously supported by Helen Sinclair & Paul Cantor

TICKETS ON SALE NOW: 416-408-0208 WWW.PERFORMANCE.RCMUSIC.CA

Monday January 27

5:00: Toronto Mendelssohn Choir. TMC Choral Conductors’ Symposium Concert. Conductors from the Choral Conductors’ Symposium; Michael Bross, organ; James Bourne, piano; Elora Festival Singers. York University Faculty of Music, York University Department of Music, 4700 Keele St. 416-598-0422. Free.

Saturday January 30


Thursday January 28


Saturday January 30

The John Sheard presents A Night of Beatles Classics with David Celilia and Mia Sheard.

Santa’s Gone Home!

Ensemble Polaris’s traditional mid-winter concert, featuring festive- and post-festive music old and new.

Wednesday January 27, 8pm

St. Bartholomew’s Anglican Church, 509 Dundas St. E., Toronto

Sunday January 31, 3pm

Heliconian Hall, 35 Hazelton Ave., Toronto

ADVANCE TICKETS

$25 | $15 stsr/unwaged | $10 kids available at bemusednetwork.com

Info 416-588-4301 ensemblepolaris.com

Sunday, Jan. 29, 8pm

auroraculturalcentre.ca 905 713-1818

• 7:30: St. Anne’s Music and Drama Society. Iolanthe. See Jan 29; Also Jan 31, Feb 4, 5, 6, 7. Start times vary.

• 7:30: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Symphonie Fantastique. R. Strauss: Horn Concerto No.1; Berlioz: Symphonie fantastique. Neil Deland, horn; Peter Oundjian, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-596-3375. $33.75-$105.

• 7:30: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. New Music Festival: Wind Ensemble. Bell: Vision Quest; S. Alarcon: Duende; Florence Nightingale, Hildegard of Bingen, others. Nathalie Paulin, soprano; Lucas Harris, theorbo/lute; Emily Eng, violin; Kerri McGonigle, cello. 2850 Bloor St. W. 416-629-3716. $20 (sr); $10 (st).


• 8:00: Oakville Symphony Orchestra. Mozart: Horn Concerto No.5; Gershwin: Piano Concerto. Guests: Joseph Peleg, violin; Mauro Bertoli, piano. Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts, 130 Navy St., Oakville. 905-815-2021. $54; $49 (sr); $26 (st/child). Also Jan 31 (mat).


• 8:00: St. Jude’s Church. Celebration of the Arts: In Praise of Holier Women. Chant and polyphonic pieces in honour of Saint Cecilia, Marguerite Bourgeoys, Julian of Norwich, Florence Nightingale, Hildegard of Bingen, and other female figures. Schola Magdalenae; Stephanie Martin, director; St. Jude’s Anglican Church, 160 William St., Oakville. 905-844-3972. $30.


• 8:30: Peggy Baker Dance Projects. Phase Space. See Jan 22. Also Jan 31 (start times vary).

Sunday January 31

• 2:00: All Saints Kingsway Anglican Church. Trio Bravo Plus. Music for clarinet quartet and string trio by Mozart, Dohnányi and Schubert. Terry Storr; clarinet; Dani-el Kushner, violin; Baird Knechtel, viola and John Trembath, cello. 2850 Bloor St. W. 416-242-2131. $20.


TICKETS ON SALE NOW: 416-408-0208 WWW.PERFORMANCE.RCMUSIC.CA

David Geringas
SUNDAY, JANUARY 31, 2PM
MAZZOLENI CONCERT HALL
Works by Copland, Bach, Penderecki, Kancheli, Copener and Senderovas.

LOCATION:
51

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Location: Eastminster United Church 310 Danforth Avenue

Featuring:
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Lucas Harris, theorbo/lute
Emily Eng, violin
Kerri McGonigle, cello

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SCHOLA MAGDALENA
Directed by Stephanie Martin

Sat Jan 30, 8pm – St. Jude’s Anglican Church
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In Praise of Holier Women

Schola Magdalenae

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Soaring over a Ground Bass

January 30 @ 8pm

Artistic Director
Laura Schatz

Matinées at 2 pm: Jan. 30, 31, Feb. 6, 7
Evening at 7:30 pm: Jan 29, 30, Feb. 4, 5
St. Anne’s Parish Hall
651 Dufferin Street, Toronto
Call 416-922-4415 for tickets
www.saintanne.ca

Musical Director
Brian Farrow

Gilbert & Sullivan’s
Iolanthe
A. Concerts in the GTA

Bach, Penderecki, Kancheli and more: Mazzeno Concert Hall, Royal Conservatory, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. $25.

2:00: St. Anne’s Music and Drama Society. Jolante. See Jan 29; Also Feb 4, 5, 6, 7. Start times vary.


1:00: Cathedral of St. James. Midday Organ Series. Thomas Fitches, organ. 65 Church St. 416-364-7865. Free.


7:30: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. New Music Festival: Land’s End Ensemble. Allan Gordon Bell: Field Notes; Phenomenes: Trails of Gravity and Grace; Omar Daniel: Trio (Toronto premiere); Roy Dobson: Truncate. James Campbell, clarinet; Richard Walter, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-408-0208. Free.

Wednesday February 3


Monday February 1

7:30: University of Toronto Faculty of Music/Dennis Patrick. New Music Festival: Gryphon Trio. Works by students of Allan Gordon Bell. Carmen Braden: Candle Ice; Heather Schmidt: Lunar Reflections; Kelly-Marie Murphy: In a World of Distance and Motion; Vincent Ho: new work. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-408-0208. $40; $25(sr); $10(st).

Tuesday February 2


1:00: Cathedral of St. James. Midday Organ Series. Thomas Fitches, organ. 65 Church St. 416-364-7865. Free.


7:30: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. New Music Festival: Land’s End Ensemble. Allan Gordon Bell: Field Notes; Phenomenes: Trails of Gravity and Grace; Omar Daniel: Trio (Toronto premiere); Roy Dobson: Truncate. James Campbell, clarinet; Richard Walter, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-408-0208. Free.

Thursday February 4


12:00 noon: Canadian Opera Company. Chamber Music Series: Chamber Explorations. Students from the Glenn Gould School. Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. 416-363-8231. Free. First come, first served; Concertgoers are encouraged to arrive early as late seating is not available.


12:10: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. New Music Festival: Thursday at Noon. Jarikagawa/Blumberg collaboration; Cecilia String Quartet Student Composition Competition: winning work; Levasseur: new work; and others. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-408-0208. Free.

1:00: Miles Nadal JCC. The Ladies of Broadway. Songs from Oklahoma, The King and I, Fiddler on the Roof, My Fair Lady and The Sound of Music. Faye Kellerstein and Norine Horowitz, vocals. 750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211 x155. $4.00 (drop-in).
by Christos Hadzis; choreography by Mark Gooden. Tina Keeper, Cree actor; Tanya Tagaq; Inuk throat singer; Northern Cree Singers; Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra. Sony Centre for the Performing Arts, 1Front St. E. 1-855-872-7669. $54.24-$115.26. Also Feb 6 at 8:00.

7:30: St. Anne’s Music and Drama Society. Jolantie. See Jan 28; Also Feb 6, 7. Start times vary.

7:30: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. New Music Festival: Wind Symphony. Bell: From Chaos to the Birth of a Dancing Star; Daugherty: Bizarre; Rosario: Concerto for Marimba (with Danielle Sun); Ling: Rhapsody (winner of 2015 Wind Composition Award); Bourgeois: Serenade; Maslanka: Testament. Jeffrey Reynolds, conductor. MacMillan Theatre, Edward Johnson Building, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-408-0208. $20; $10(st).

8:00: Cathedral Bluffs Symphony Orchestra. Tryptych Concert and Opera. Puccini: Gianni Schicchi; Smetana: Die Moldau. Norman Reintamm, conductor; P.C. Ho Theatre, Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto, 5103 Sheppard Ave. E., Scarborough. 416-879-5566. Regular: $34; $29 (sr/st); Premium: $54; $44 (sr/st); Free (under 12).


8:00: Mississauga Festival Choir. Festival of Friends Choral Festival. Numerous local choirs in solo and massed repertoire. Eden United Church, 3051 Battleford Rd., Mississauga. 905-824-5574. $25; $15(st); $10 (children under 10).

8:00: Tafelmusik. Beethoven 9th Symphony. See Feb 4. Also Feb 7.


Saturday February 6

2:00: St. Anne’s Music and Drama Society. Jolantie. See Jan 29; Also Feb 7. Start times vary.

THE CONSORIT

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Saturday February 6, 2016 8 pm

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SUBSCRIPTION CONCERT 3 | TICKETS: REGULAR – $34 adult $29 senior/student
PREMIUM – $54 adult $44 senior/student (under age 12, free)

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Festi

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Kristian Alexander | Music Director

Saturday, February 6, 2016
Flato Markham Theatre, 8 pm

PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION

MUSORGSKY Pictures at an Exhibition (arr. by Maurice Ravel)

BEECHER Piano concerto No. 2

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Norman Reintamm
Artistic Director/Principal Conductor

Saturday February 6

2:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Science @ the Symphony. Amir Safavi, violin; Heidi Breier; Sean Lee Ying, Donna Francis, Ontario Science Centre, hosts; Evan Mitchell, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-593-4829. $20.50-$38.75. Also 4:00.

4:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Science @ the Symphony. Amir Safavi, violin; Heidi Breier; Sean Lee Ying, Donna Francis, Ontario Science Centre, hosts; Evan Mitchell, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-593-4829. $20.50-$38.75. Also 2:00.

7:30: Music at St. Andrew’s. This Little Light: Mardi Gras at St Andrew’s. Ken Whiteley and Friends. St. Andrew’s Church, 73 Simcoe St. 416-593-5600 x231. $25.

A. Concerts in the GTA

Tuesday December 1


Wednesday December 2

● 6:00: Don Wright Faculty of Music. Welcome Yule! St. Cecilia Singers; Western University Singers; Von Kuster Hall Music Building, Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767. Free.


● 6:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society. Anderson-Takayama piano with Canadian Sinfonietta Chamber Musicians. Hummel: Piano Quintet in E-flat, Op.87; Chopin: Barcarolle; Ballade No.4; Piano Concerto No.2 in f with quintet. Joyce Lai, Alain Bouvier, pin: Barcarolle; Ballade No.4; Piano Concerto Canadian Sinfonietta Chamber Musicians Society.$15; $10(st). 


B. Concerts Beyond the GTA


A. Concerts in the GTA

Tuesday December 1

● 5:30: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. New Music Festival: Contemporary Showcase Concert. Allan Gordon Bell new work (premiere); 0 Virtus Sapientiae (arr. Parker); and other works. Men’s Chorus and Women’s Chamber Choir; Hilary Apfelstadt, Elaine Choi and Tracy Wong, conductors. Grace Church on-the-Hill, 300 Lonsdale Rd. 416-408-0208. PWYC.


Thursday December 3


● 3:00: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. New Music Festival: Contemporary Showcase Concert. Allan Gordon Bell new work (premiere); 0 Virtus Sapientiae (arr. Parker); and other works. Men’s Chorus and Women’s Chamber Choir; Hilary Apfelstadt, Elaine Choi and Tracy Wong, conductors. Grace Church on-the-Hill, 300 Lonsdale Rd. 416-408-0208. PWYC.

● 5:30: University of Toronto of Faculty of Music. New Music Festival: Contemporary Showcase Concert. Allan Gordon Bell new work (premiere); 0 Virtus Sapientiae (arr. Parker); and other works. Men’s Chorus and Women’s Chamber Choir; Hilary Apfelstadt, Elaine Choi and Tracy Wong, conductors. Grace Church on-the-Hill, 300 Lonsdale Rd. 416-408-0208. PWYC.

● 3:00: Tim FitzGerald, bass. KWCMS Music Room, No.2 in f with quintet. Joyce Lai, Alain Bouvier, pin: Barcarolle; Ballade No.4; Piano Concerto Canadian Sinfonietta Chamber Musicians Society.$15; $10(st).

Monday December 7

● 8:00: Don Wright Faculty of Music. Contemporary Music Studio Concert: Von Kuster Hall Music Building, Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767. Free.

Tuesday December 8

● 10:00am: Don Wright Faculty of Music. Western Performers! Concert Series: Holiday Sing-Along. Don Wright Faculty of Music. Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767. Free.

Tuesday December 8

● 12:00: Queen’s University School of Music. Student Chamber Ensembles in Recital. Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts, 390 King St. W., Kingston. 613-533-2424. Free.

● 7:30: Queen’s University School of Music. Messiah Sing-along. Grand Lobby, Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts, 390 King St. W., Kingston. 613-533-2424. Free.


● 7:30: Melos Choir and Period Instrument Ensemble. A Star in the East. Advent and Christmas carols and chants from the 12th to 18th century including works by Byrd, Schütz, Victoria, Praetorius, others, accompanied by readings from 15th to 17th century poetry. St. George’s Cathedral (Kingston), 270 King St. E., Kingston. 613-767-7245. $15; $25.


● 8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society. Piano-Shaw Guitar Duo. Mangoré: Ulu Limosa por el Amor de Dios; Palry: Prelude, Fugue and Allegro; BWV998; Sergio Assad: Six selections from Natsu no niwa Suite; Nobuo: Cecio Nordestino Suites; Legnan: Fantasy, Op.19; and other works. KWCMS Music Room, 57 Young St. W., Waterloo. 519-886-1873. $20; $10(st).

● 2:30: University of Guelph Choirs. A Downtown Celebration. Works by Britten, Elgar, Gibbons, Goodall, Morley and others. Betty Mascher, piano; Gerald Manning, organ; Marta McCarthy, conductor. St. George’s Anglican Church (Guelph), 99 Woolwich St., Guelph. 519-824-4120 x29915. $15; $10(st); Optional: Wear your favourite hat, “fascinator”, bowtie or kilt!

Sunday December 6


● 12:00 noon: City of St. Catharines. Cive Christmas Carol Concert. Laura Secord Secondary School Concert Choir; Holy Cross Catholic Secondary School Concert Choir; St. Catharines Civic Brass Ensemble; Peter M. Partridge, choirs conductor; Ross R. Streten, producer and organist. St. Thomas’ Church, 99 Ontario St. St. Catharines. 905-688-3191.

The whole note.com
B. Concerts Beyond the GTA

Freewill collection to Community Care.

- **12:00 noon:** Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts. MusicRoom, Piano and Guitar Students’ Recital. FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, 250 St Paul St., St. Catharines. 905-688-5550. Free.
- **12:30:** Don Wright Faculty of Music. Electronic Music Compositions Concert, Paul Davies Theatre, Talbot College, Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767. Free.

**Saturday December 12**

- **1:00:** Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts. Winter Christmas Carolers. Groups of 4 or 8 singers combining Brock University student singers and members of Avanti Chamber Singers. Various locations downtown, TBA, St. Catharines. 905-688-5550. Free. Also Dec 19.
- **2:00:** King Edward Choir. Amahil and the Night Visitors. Christmas Community Choir. Street United Church, 112 Collier St., Barrie. 705-305-6770. $25; $15(under 14). Also at 7:30.
- **7:30:** Chorus Niagara. Neelô! Bravura Baritones; Chorus Niagara Children’s Choir; XHS School Choir. Chorus Niagara Festival Brussel. FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, 250 St Paul St., St. Catharines. $42; $33(under 10); $11(under 4); $5(under 4 High School). Also 7:30 (Orangeville).
- **8:00:** Jubilate Singers. Christmas New Season. Carol-sing and other traditional favourites. 705-305-6797. $25; $10(under 10). Also Dec 14 (Flint). Finally the Brantford Salvation Army Band.

**Wednesday December 8**

- **3:00:** Recital. Incidental. Haydn: Sonata in B-flat, HobXVI:12; Sonata in A-flat, HobXVI:14; Sonata in c-sharp, HobXVI:36; Sonata in c, HobXVI:50. Timothy Steeves, piano. KWCS Music Room, 57 Young St W., Waterloo. 519-883-1673. $30; $25(child). All ages welcome. Also Dec 15.
- **3:00:** Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society. In Recital. Haydn: Sonata in B-flat, HobXVI:12; Sonata in A-flat, HobXVI:14; Sonata in c-sharp, HobXVI:36; Sonata in c, HobXVI:50. Timothy Steeves, piano. KWCS Music Room, 57 Young St W., Waterloo. 519-883-1673. $30; $25(child). All ages welcome. Also Dec 15.
- **4:00:** Spiritus Ensemble. Bach Christmas Oratorio. Parts 1-3. Guests: Shevchenko; Sophie; soprano; Jennifer Enns Modolo, mezzo-soprano; Mark Mclvor, tenor; Alexander Dobson, baritone; Kitchener Waterloo Symphony Orchestra; Mark Vournios, conductor. Centre in the Square, 101 Queen St. N., Kitchener. 519-578-1570. $30; $25(student). Also Dec 19 (Kitchener). Also Dec 19 (Kitchener).

**Wednesday December 9**

- **12:30:** Senodner Centre for the Performing Arts. Jesse Cooper. Guitar. 519-689-5900. 519-758-8090. $50; $20(under 10); $5(under 5). Also Dec 16.

**Thursday December 10**


**Friday December 11**

- **3:00:** Gallery Players of Niagara. Christmas Trifles. Carols and music from the British Isles. Guy Bannerman, narrator; Glissandi: Douglas Miller, flute; Deborah Braun, harp; David Braun, violin. Grace United Church (Niagara-on-the-Lake), 222 Victoria St., Niagara-on-the-Lake. 905-468-1525. $5-$34. Also Dec 13 (mat, St. Catharines).
- **7:30:** Kingston Jazz Ensemble. A Jazz Musician’s Christmas. Cookes’-Portsmouth United Church, 200 Norman Rogers Dr, Kingston. 613-767-8228. $25; $20(under 10); $15(st and military). Refreshments served at intermission.

**Saturday December 12**

- **1:00:** Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts. Winter Christmas Carolers. Groups of 4 or 8 singers combining Brock University student singers and members of Avanti Chamber Singers. Various locations downtown, TBA, St. Catharines. 905-688-5550. Free. Also Dec 19.
- **2:00:** King Edward Choir. Amahil and the Night Visitors. Christmas Community Choir. Street United Church, 112 Collier St., Barrie. 705-305-6770. $25; $15(under 14). Also at 7:30.
- **7:30:** Chorus Niagara. Neelô! Bravura Baritones; Chorus Niagara Children’s Choir; XHS School Choir. Chorus Niagara Festival Brussel. FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, 250 St Paul St., St. Catharines. $42; $33(under 10); $11(under 4); $5(under 4 High School). Also 7:30 (Orangeville).
- **8:00:** Jubilate Singers. Christmas New Season. Carol-sing and other traditional favourites. 705-305-6797. $25; $10(under 10). Also Dec 14 (Flint). Finally the Brantford Salvation Army Band.

**Tuesday December 15**

Ensemble, Richard Crossman, MC. First Grantham United Church, 415 Linwell Rd, St. Catharines. 905-941-6916. $20/$17(ad); $30(reserved).

3:00: Guelph Chamber Choir. Handel’s Messiah. Musica Viva Orchestra (period instruments); Meredith Hall, soprano; Jennifer Enns-Modolo, alto; Bud Roach, tenor; Geoffrey Siret, bass; Gerald Neufeld, conductor. River Run Centre, 55 Woolwich St., Guelph. 519-763-3000. $35; $10(st/under 30); $5(eegeo).

7:30: Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra. Home for the Holidays with the Canadian Brass. Popular holiday hits. Canadian Brass; Scott Terrell, conductor. Hamilton Place, 10 MacNab St. S., Hamilton. 905-526-7765. $25-$47; $25-$64(sr); $17(under 35); $10(child).

**Sunday December 20**

5:00: Grand River Chorus. Handel’s Messiah. Virginia Hatfield, soprano; Peter Mahon, countertenor; Charles Sy, tenor; Andrew Mahon, bass-baritone; Grand River Baroque Orchestra, St. Paul Roman Catholic Church, 9 Waverly St., Brantford. 519-489-4444. $25; $15(youth).


8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society. In Recital: Students of the St. Jacobs Conservatory of Music. KWCMS Music Room, 57 Young St. W., Waterloo. 519-888-1673. $5.

**Sunday January 3**

2:30: Attila Glatz Concert Productions. Salute to Vienna. Strauss waltzes; music from Die Fledermaus and Merry Widow. Kataryzna Dondalska, soprano; Franz Gürtel- schmiedt, tenor; members of the Hungarian National Ballet; Strauss Symphony of Canada; Imre Kollar, conductor; and others. Hamilton Place, 10 MacNab St. S., Hamilton. 905-546-4040. $39.50-$94.50. Also Jan 1 (Toronto). Viennese Apple Strudel & Café Reception (Hamilton only).

**Wednesday January 6**


**Friday January 8**

12:00: Don Wright Faculty of Music. Fridays @ 12:30 Concert Series: Aaron Hodgson, trumpet. Celebrating 20 years of trumpeting with a concert of old and new favourites. Von Kuster Hall, Music Building, Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767. Free.

**Tuesday January 12**

7:00: Don Wright Faculty of Music. Magnificent Movie Music! Beethoven Goes to Hollywood. Dr. Rachel Franklin. Von Kuster Hall, Music Building, Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767. Free.

**Wednesday January 13**


7:00: Don Wright Faculty of Music. Magnificent Movie Music! Five of the Great Masterpieces! Movie Scores. Dr. Rachel Frank- lin. Von Kuster Hall, Music Building, Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767. Free.

8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society. Music by Women Composers Past and Present. Works by Clara Schumann; Kaija Saariaho; Elizabeth Jacquet de la Guerre; Heather Schmidt; Louise Farr; Igor Stravinsky; Veronique Mathieu, violin; Stephanie Chu, piano. KWCMS Music Room, 57 Young St. W., Waterloo. 519-888-1673. $25; $15(st).

**Friday January 15**

12:00: Don Wright Faculty of Music. Fridays @ 12:30 Concert Series: Patricia Green, Sharon Wei and Rachel Franklin. Odes and love songs by Bolcom, Reutter and Eben. Von Kuster Hall, Music Building, Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767. Free.

8:00: McMaster School of the Arts. True North Brass. Convocation Hall, UH213, McMaster University, 1280 Main St. W., Hamilton. 905-525-9140 x27038. $20; $15(sr); $5(st).

**Saturday January 16**

7:30: Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra. An Evening at the Opera. Opera arias and overtures. Daniel Lipton, conductor. Hamilton Place, 10 MacNab St. S., Hamilton. 905-526-7765. $25-$67; $25-$64(sr); $17(under 35); $10(child). 8:00: pre-concert talk.


8:00: Bravo Niagara! Festival of the Arts. Dominic Mancuso Group. Historic Niagara District Court House, 26 Queen St, Niagara-on-the-Lake. 289-868-9177. $89.86. .

**Sunday January 17**


8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society. The Antero Winds. Bernstein: Over- ture to Candide; Schubert: Quintet in B-flat (from String Trio, D471); Ludwig Thulile: Six- tet for piano and winds. Queen James Welch, piano. KWCMS Music Room, 57 Young St. W., Waterloo. 519-888-1673. $35; $20(st).

**Tuesday January 19**

12:30: McMaster School of the Arts. In Concert. Ten White, trumpet; Mike Polci, trombone. Convocation Hall, UH213, McMaster University, 1280 Main St. W., Hamilton. 905-525-9140 x27038. $20; $15(sr); $5(st).


8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society. Paul Martelli, Classical Gui- tar. Bach: Adagio BWV974; Sonata BWV1001 (complete); Gerald Vesper: Pop Brazil- ian Etudes Nos.3 and 7; Paolo Bellinati: Rosto Colada; Sérgio Assad: Remembrance; Cateret; and others. KWCMS Music Room, 57 Young St. W., Waterloo. 519-888-1673. $30; $20(st).

**Friday January 22**

12:30: Don Wright Faculty of Music. Fridays @ 12:30 Concert Series: Paolo Mar- telli, guitar. Bach arrangements and Brazilian guitar music on an 11-stringed guitar. Von Kuster Hall, Music Building, Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767. Free.

**Saturday January 23**


8:30: Barrie Concerts. In Concert. From Opera to Broadway and from Rossini to Gershwin. Rich Ridenour, piano; Brandon Read, trumpet. Hi-Way Pentecostal Church, 50 Anne St. N., Barrie. 705-726-1181. $5 free(st).

**Sunday January 24**

2:30: Isabel Bader Centre for the Per- forming Arts. No Tenors Allowed. Opera,
opera and music theatre arias and duets for two baritones and a piano. Bruce Kelly; Dina Namier; Matthew Zadow, visiting baritone. 390 King St. W., Kingston. 613-533-2424. $10-$30.

3:00: Don Wright Faculty of Music. Faculty Concert Series. Schubert: Piano Quintet; Dvorak: Terzetto; Schubert: Trout Quintet. Von Kuster Hall, Music Building, Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767. Free. Donation welcomed. Wheelchair accessible. Reception to follow.

Wednesday January 27

8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society. Trio Plus: Mozart’s Birthday. Mozart: Trio in B-flat, K502; Trio in E, K524; Piano Sonata in c, K457; Violin Sonata in e, K304. Yusuke Kawasaki, violin; Wolfram Kove- sel, cello; Vadim Serebryany, piano. KW CMS Music Room, 57 Young St. W., Waterloo. 519-886-1673. $35; $20(st).

Thursday January 28

8:00: Don Wright Faculty of Music. Fred Patterson Piano Competition Winner: Bryce Lansdell, 2011 award recipient. Von Kuster Hall, Music Building, Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767. Free.

Friday January 29


8:00: Don Wright Faculty of Music. Fred Patterson Piano Competition. Round One. Von Kuster Hall, Music Building, Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767. Free.

8:00: Don Wright Faculty of Music. Faculty Concert Series. Schubert: Quartet with Leopoldo Erice, piano. WLU Faculty of Music: Trio (flute/bassoon/piano); Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society. Piano Quintet; and works by Beethoven and Schubert. Grace United Church (Barrie). 350 Grove St. E., Barrie. 705-726-1181. $65.

3:00: Don Wright Faculty of Music. Faculty Concert Series. Exploration of Beethoven’s sonatas. Leslie Kinton, piano. Von Kuster Hall, Music Building, Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767. Free.


Music Theatre

MUSIC THEATRE covers a wide range of music types: from opera, operaette 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 also is 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.

Lower Ossington Theatre

A Night in Vienna. Barrie Johnson. 165 Front St. E. 416-862-2222. $12-$42. Runs to Dec 20; start times vary.

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Beyond the GTA


C. Music Theatre


Peggy Baker Dance Projects. Phase Space. Betty Oliphant Dance, 404 Jarvis St. 1-800-838-3006 peggybakerdance.com. $28; $23(s/t)/CADFT. Pre-show chat with Peggy Baker 30 minutes prior to each performance. Runs Jan 22-24,27-31; start times vary.


D. In the Clubs (Mostly Jazz)

120 Diner
120 Church St. 416-792-7725 120diner.com (full schedule)


Alleycatz
2409 Yonge St. 416-481-6865 alleycatz.ca.

All shows: 9pm unless otherwise indicated. Call for cover charge info.


Annette Studios
566 Annette St. 416-880-8378 annettestudios.com

Every Mon 9:30pm Jazz Jam w/ Jared Golden. Suggested donation $10/$8(s/t).

Artwork Arbat
15 Colbourne St., Hamilton. 905-543-8512 artwork.net (full schedule)

December 2 8pm Matthew Pullicino (drums), Olivia Brown, (bass), & more. $5/PWYC.

December 9 8pm A Charlie Brown Christmas with the Aaron Zakwich Trio. $10.

December 12 8pm Brad Cheeseman (bass) Trio with Robert Chapman (guitar), Adam Fielding (drums) $10.

Blackbird, The
112 Bloor St. West 647-344-7252 theblackbird (full schedule)

Bloom
2315 Bloor St. W. 416-767-1315 bloomrestaurant.com

All shows: 19+. Call for reservations.

Blue Goose Tavern, The
1 Blue Goose St. 416-255-2442 thebluegoestavern.com

Every Sun 4pm Blues at the Goose with the Big Groove Rhythm Section and special guests.

C’est What
67 Front St. E. 416-867-9499 cestwhat.com (full schedule)

December 5 3pm The Boxcar Boys. December 12 3pm The Hot Five Jazzmakers.

Chalkers Pub, Billiards & Bistro
247 Marlely Ave. 416-789-2531 chalkerspub.com (full schedule)

De Sotos
1078 St. Clair Ave. W. 416-651-2109 desotos.ca (full schedule)

Every Sun 11am-2pm Sunday Live Jazz Brunch hosted by Anthony Abbattangeli No cover.

Dominion on Queen
500 Queen St. E. 416-368-6833 dominionqueen.com (full schedule) Call for cover charge info.

Emmet Ray, The
924 College St. 416-792-4497 theemmetray.com (full schedule) All shows: No cover/PWYC

Fat City Blues
890 College St. 416-345-8282

Garage @ CSI Annex, The
720 Bathurst St. 416-619-4621 livemetheannex.com

December 1 Live From the Annex’s monthly Cabaret $15(ad).

Gate 403
403 Roncesvalles Ave. 416-588-2930 gate403.com

All shows: PWYC.

December 1 5pm Howard Willett Blues Duo.

December 2 5pm Lisa Angela: Sultant of Soul; 9pm Julian Fauth Blues Night. December 3 5pm Joanne Morra & The France St. Jazz Ensemble; 9pm Darcy Worrow Band.

December 4 5pm Evan Desaulniers Jazz Trio; 9pm Fraser Melvin Blues Band. December 5 5pm Bill Heffernan and His Friends; 9pm Melissa Boyce Jazz & Blues Band.

December 6 5pm Rob Thaller & Joanna Reynolds Jazz Duo; 9pm Simone Morris Jazz Trio. December 7 5pm Mike and Jill Dalley Jazz Duo; 9pm Bruce Chapman Blues Duo. December 8 5pm Thom Mason Jazz Trio; 9pm Kristin Lindell Jazz Band. December 9 8pm Michelle Rumble with Bill McCusker; 9pm Fouth Blues Jubilee Night. December 10 5pm Heather Luckhart: Blues/Roots/Jazz Band; 9pm Kevin Laliberté Jazz & Flamenco Trio. December 11 5pm Jazz Forge; 9pm Denielle Bassels Jazz Band.

December 12 5pm Bill Heffernan and His Friends; 9pm Donné Roberts Band. December 13 5pm Six Points Jazz Orchestra; 9pm Ilios Starynnis Jazz. December 14 5pm Chris Wallace Jazz Quartet; 9pm Chris Staig Trio. December 15 5pm Sarah Kennedy and Matt Pines Jazz Duo; 9pm The Ault Sisters. December 16 5pm Concord Jazz Quintet; 9pm Julian Fauth Blues Night. December 17 5pm Firm Fan Trio; 9pm Annie Bonsignore Jazz Duo or Trio. December 18 5pm Denise Leslie Jazz Band; 9pm Tiffany Hanus Jazz Band. December 19 5pm Bill Heffernan and His Friends. December 20 5pm Jeff Taylor and the SLT; 9pm Hello Darlings. December 21 5pm Rod Davis Blues Duo. December 22 5pm Claire Lee Jazz Trio; 9pm K.C. Bowler: The Cooling Agents. December 23 5pm Amber Leigh Jazz Trio; 9pm Julian Fauth Blues Night. December 27 5pm Cheryl White Rhythym & Blues Band; 9pm The Grace San Andres Group. December 28 5pm Kalya Ramu Jazz Band. December 29 5pm Abbey Sholzberg
Happy Hours
At Grossman’s

BOB BEN

Until this autumn, I’d never been to Grossman’s Tavern for a show. Sure, I’d wandered in a few times in the middle of the day, and heard a song or two if a band happened to be playing. But I’d never made plans with people to go to Grossman’s and make a night of it.

A few weeks ago, on a Sunday, I was wandering in Chinatown and I walked into Grossman’s to find a band packing up their stuff. I asked the musician who seemed the least in a hurry whether there would be more music tonight. He said another band, hosting a blues jam, would be starting in an hour.

So, for an hour I sat alone in Grossman’s, looking around, inadvertently eavesdropping, and sending copy-and-pasted text messages to anyone I thought might be interested: “blues @ grossman’s? bring your ax.” Grossman’s is, like most establishments in Chinatown, completely unpretentious. The sign above the Spadina Avenue entrance is unassuming and easy to miss. The dimly lit room is decorated with posters and photos depicting performers who have played at Grossman’s, and little else. The food is standard pub fare, with no fancy additions or inventive names. The prices are downright affordable. I believe the menu states the total after tax. (I swear they’re not paying me to write this.)

Brian Cober led the 10pm National Blues Jam from the guitar, although the drummer, whose full name I never got, also seemed to have a great deal of sway. The bass player appeared to be a guest. Cober shouted form at the other members of the band, indicating stop time, dynamic shifts and chord changes. Of course, blues tunes generally draw on established conventions, so there was no danger of a train wreck. Had I not been watching, I would have assumed that this group had been playing together for years.

Of those I texted, two showed up. At peak hours, it seemed everyone was a regular but us three. They all knew the protocol, the repertoire and the people. We, huddled in the corner as a little pocket of blues jam novices, played it by ear. One of the two people I drew was a trombonist, and once he saw a bari sax player go up without being called, he did the same (after speaking to a member of the house band at intermission, of course). When I was called up to join the band on the drums, they called tunes I’d never heard before. I know jazz standards; I do not know blues standards. But again, with fairly simple arrangements, so there was no danger of a train wreck. Had I not been watching, I would have assumed that this group had been playing together for years.

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D. In the Clubs (Mostly Jazz)
One of my friends told me afterwards that they had a Dixieland jam on Saturdays, and that it was poppin’. So, I went; and, oh my goodness, it popped so much. I have rarely seen so many people in a jazz club – and never for a weekly thing. Residency gigs and the like are often, too often, sparsely attended. This jam, on the other hand, was full almost to the point of being a fire hazard. Usually, when I see a jazz club that full, it’s for a trendy band that attracts people of one age group almost exclusively. But here, there were quite literally toddlers and octogenarians on the same dance floor. The best thing about the jam was its overwhelming and palpable positivity. Nobody was isolated from anyone. Everyone danced together. Unprompted, folks introduced themselves to me. One woman was putting her index finger on people’s heads and spinning them like tops.

The band was authentic, as far as I could tell. I’m not a Dixieland scholar – which made it a little intimidating when I was called up. Patrick Tevlin, the leader of the house band, the Happy Pals, asked me quite abruptly before I came on stage: “You ever play old style?” I gave him the shortest honest answer that I could: “I can.” I was fairly sure that he thought of the Happy Pals as a big, ever-expanding family. The jam culminated in a parade of musicians – with the house rhythm section still on the stage, playing the changes to When The Saints Go Marching In, the horn players – guests included – marched in a circle around the venue. People moved out of the way as they cheered and sang along.

The Happy Pals Dixieland Jazz Jam has been happening at Grossman’s every Saturday for more than 45 years, and shows no signs of slowing down or stopping – certainly not this month. So come on down! Bring an instrument! Just...don’t expect to find a seat.

Bob Ben is The WholeNote’s jazz listings editor. He can be reached at jazz@thewholenote.com.

**In the Clubs (Mostly Jazz)**

- **Season $22.50(ad)/$25(do)/**
- **December 17 China Crisis $27.50(ad)/$30(do)/**
- **December 18 Foggy Iglo Boys Christmas $22.50(ad)/$25(do)/**
- **December 20 1pm The Ault Sisters Celebrate the Season – Matinee Performance $20(ad)/$22.50(do)/**
- **December 23 Have a Merry Christmas $25(ad)/$30(do)/**
- **December 27 Don Ross $32.50(ad)/$35(do)/**
- **December 30 Suzie Vinnick $22.50(ad)/$25(do)/**
- **December 31 9pm New Year’s Eve with the Jeanine MacKie Band**

### Jazz Room, The

Located in the Huerter Hotel, 59 King St. N., Waterlooo, 226-476-1565
kwjazzroom.com (full schedule)
All shows: 3:30pm-11:30pm unless otherwise indicated. Attendees must be 19.
- **December 4 3:30pm Nick Fraser (piano)**
- **December 10 6pm The Nathan Hiltz Trio**
- **December 12 6pm Randy Lyght (sax)**
- **December 15 9pm Bob Benedetti (bass)**
- **December 19 9pm Hilario Duran and Robo Botos $20**
- **December 20 11:30am The Canadian Men’s Chorus**
- **December 31 11pm New Year’s Eve with the Jeanine MacKie Band**

### Joe Mama’s

- **317 King St. W. 416-340-6469**
- **Joe Mama**
- **Every Thu 6pm Jeff Eager**
- **Every Wed 6pm Thomas Reynolds & Geoff Torrn.**

### Music Jam

- **9pm Blackburn**
- **Every Fri 10pm The Grind**
- **Every Sat 10pm Shugga**
- **Every Sun 6:30pm Organik: Nathan Hilz (guitar)**
- **Every Sun 6:30pm Janz Mark (drums)**

### Musideum

- **401 Richmond St. W. Main Floor 416-599-7232**
- **musideum.com (full schedule)**
- **December 1 5pm Chrysselle Marchler’s SOA $20**
- **December 4 8pm Coleman Tinsley $20**
- **December 5 8pm Rose Stella $20.**
- **December 17 8pm Steve Koven $20.**

### KAMA

- **214 King St. W. 416-599-5262**
- **kamaindia.com (full schedule)**
- **All shows: 5pm-6pm.**

### La Revolution

- **2848 Dundas St. W. 416-766-0746**
- **restaurantlarevolucion.com (full schedule)**

### Local Gast, The

- **424 Parliament St. 416-961-9425**

### Lula Lounge

- **1585 Dundas St. W. 416-588-0307**
- **lula.ca (full schedule)**

### Manhattan’s Pizza Bistro & Music Club

- **951 Gordon St., Guelph 519-767-2440**
- **manhattans.ca (full schedule)**
- **All shows: PWYC.**

### Monarch Tavern

- **12 Clinton St. 416-531-5833**
- **themonarchtavern.com (full schedule)**
- **December 14 7:30pm Marton Loomer & His Orange Devils Orchestra $10.**

### Monarchs Pub

- **At the Eaton Chelsea Hotel**
- **33 Gerrard St. W. 416-585-4352**
- **monarchspub.ca (full schedule)**
- **Wednesday shows: 7pm, Thursday shows: 8pm. All shows: No cover.**

### Morgan’s on the Danforth

- **1282 Danforth Ave. 416-461-3020**
- **morgansonthedianforth.com (full schedule)**
- **All shows: 2pm-5pm. No cover.**

### Ms. Justice

- **21 Old Mill Rd. 416-236-2641**
- **oldmilltoronto.com**
- **The Home Smith Bar: No reservations. No cover. $20 food/drink minimum. All shows: 7:30pm-10:30pm**

### Ms. Justice’s Blues Jam w/ guest vocalists

- **December 3 4pm Tessa Giller (piano)**
- **December 4 4pm The Dominos (piano)**
- **December 5 4pm The Savages (piano)**

### Nice Bistro, The

- **117 Brock St. N., Whitby. 905-668-8839**
- **nicebistro.com (full schedule)**

### Old Mill, The

- **555 Dundas St. E. 647-748-0555**
- **paintboxbistro.ca (Full schedule)**
- **December 9, 23 Lazersusan. December 16, 30 Conrad Gayle.**

### Only Cafe, The

- **972 Danforth Ave. 416-463-7843**
- **theonlycafe.com (full schedule)**
- **All shows: 8pm unless otherwise indicated. December 5, 23 Lazersusan. December 6, 30 Conrad Gayle.**

### Paintbox Bistro

- **22 Cumberland Ave. 416-923-5716**
- **theplot.ca (Full schedule)**
- **December 5 10:30pm The Plot (piano)**
- **December 6 10:30pm The Plot (piano)**
- **December 7 10:30pm The Plot (piano)**

### Poetry Café

- **224 Augusta Ave. 416-599-5299**
- **poetrycafe.ca (full schedule)**
- **All shows: 5pm**
Galas and Fundraisers

- Dec 06 2:00: Elmer Iseler Singers. Sherry and Shortbread. Join us and relax in elegant and gracious surroundings, participate in the silent auction and enjoy music of the holiday season. Albany Club, 91 King St. E. For details: 416-217-0537.

Competitions

- Feb 02 10:00am: Royal Conservatory of Music, Glenn Gould School Concerto Competition Finals. Solo performers compete for the opportunity to perform a concerto with the Royal Conservatory Orchestra during the 2016-17 season. Koerner Hall, Telus Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. Free (ticket required).

- Orchestras Toronto, Marts Hidy Concerto Competition 2016. This year’s prize awarded to a percussionist. For Canadian virtuosos aged 23 and younger. Prize includes a scholarship of $1,000 and an opportunity to perform as a soloist with Orchestras Toronto at its December 2016 youth-oriented concert at the Toronto Centre for the Arts. For full history and registration form: www.orchestra-toronto.ca Deadline for mailing the application form and registration fee: February 1 2016.

Lectures, Salons, Symposia

- Jan 12, Jan 29: Oakville Opera Guild. Jan 12 1:30: Rusalka, Dvořák’s great opera. Lecture by John Holland, musician and president of the Canadian Institute for Czech music (Oakville Public Library Central Branch, 120 Navy St. Oakville). Jan 29 8:00: Puccini’s Myth/ Adventure, Turandot. Lecture by Iain Scott, noted opera translator and opera tour guide. Please contact for location details. 905-827-5678; Oakville.Opera.Guild@gmail.com

- Jan 26, Jan 28; Feb 2: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Jan 19 10:30am: Barbara Hannigan, Show and Share: Living and Surviving as a Singing Artist. Barbara Hannigan, the John R. Stratton Visitor in Music, is known worldwide as a soprano of vital expressive force directed by exceptional technique, as well as a conductor and champion of new music. (Walter Hall), Jan 26 7:00: Michael Colgrass, Wilma and Clifford Smith Visitor in Music. Michael Colgrass is a composer, jazz percussionist and Pulitzer Prize winner for Music. He is an associate composer of the Canadian Music Centre in Toronto. (Room 330). Jan 27 7:00: Geiger-Torelli Lecture Series: Atom Eganoy – How Far Is Too Far? Film and stage director, Atom Eganoy, discusses his directorial interpretation in selected opera productions. (Walter Hall), Jan 28 3:30: Kenneth H. Peacock Lecture, Scott Burnham. Scott Burnham, noted opera lecturer and opera tour guide.

- March 1 12:00: The ETCeteras. Please contact for location details. 416-971-3456; thewholenote.com

- March 8 8:00: The ETCeteras. Please contact for location details. 416-971-3456; thewholenote.com

- March 11 12:00: The ETCeteras. Please contact for location details. 416-971-3456; thewholenote.com

- March 15 8:00: The ETCeteras. Please contact for location details. 416-971-3456; thewholenote.com

- March 16 12:00: The ETCeteras. Please contact for location details. 416-971-3456; thewholenote.com

- March 17 8:00: The ETCeteras. Please contact for location details. 416-971-3456; thewholenote.com
professor of musicology and music theory at Princeton University, an expert on tonal theory history, problems of analysis and criticism, and 18th- and 19th-century music and culture. (Room 130); Feb 02 12:10: Composers’ Forum. With Allan Gordon Bell, New Music Festival. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Blvd., 80 Queen’s Park. 416-978-3744. Free.

• Jan 24, Jan 31: Toronto Opera Club. Jan 24 2:00: The True Tests in Life. Guest speaker: Johannes Debus, music director of the Canadian Opera Company, discusses Wagner’s Siegfried; Jan 31 2:00: Guest speaker; baritone Russell Braun, in conversation with Wayne Gooding. Editor of Opera Canada magazine. Room 330, Edward Johnson Blvd. Faculty of Music, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-924-3940. $10.

Master Classes

• Dec 1; Jan 19, 21, 26: University of Toronto Faculty of Music Master Classes.
• Dec 7: Jan 10: Don Wright Faculty of Music. Dec 07 5:30: Violin Master Class. With Vasile Beluska, Bowling Green State University (Studio 242, Music Building). Jan 30 11:00am: Master Class with Canadian pianist Jimmy Brière (von Kuster Hall, Music Building), Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-672-7672.


Screenings

• Jan 24 4:00 & 7:30: Toronto Jewish Film Society / The Embassy of Sweden, Ottawa. Simon and the Oaks. The friendship of two young boys, one Swedish-born with mystical musical tendencies, another a German-Jewish refugee, changes both their lives forever. Guest speaker: critic Adam Nayman. Reel 22, 750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211 x606. $15; $10 (young adults 18-35).

Spoken Word, Performance Art

• Dec 04-06, 11-13, 18-20: Church of the Holy Trinity. The Christmas Story. Professional musicians and a volunteer cast present this charming hour-long Nativity play, matinees and evening performances; please see website for exact times. 19 Trinity Square. 416-598-4521 x301; www.thechristmasstory.ca. Suggested donation: $20 adults; $5 children.

Tour

• Feb 07 10:30am: Canadian Opera Company. Tour The Four Seasons Centre. 90-minute tour for the general public led by trained docents; backstage access. Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. 416-896-8231. $20 ($15/sr. & st). Also Feb 21. Tickets will also be available online from February 10 at 10am.

Workshops

• Dec 04 7:30: CAMMAC Recorder Players’ Society. Amateur recorder players are invited to join in the playing of early music. Guest coach Avery MacLean. Mount Pleasant Road Baptist Church, 527 Mount Pleasant Rd. 416-597-0485 or cammac.ca $20 (non-members). Refreshments included. 
• Dec 05 2:00-4:30: Musikay. How to Handle Messiah. An exploration of the performance practices of baroque music and a discussion on different interpretations of Handel’s masterpiece. Grace Lutheran Church, 304 Spence St. Oakville. To reserve: 905-825-9740; musikay.ca $30.
• Jan 16 10:00am-12:30 & 2:00-4:30: Musikay. Conducting for Choristers. 10:00: Level 1, beginner; 2:00: Level 2, intermediate. Grace Lutheran Church, 304 Spence St. Oakville. To reserve: 905-825-9740; musikay.ca $30 each session.
• Jan 20 3:10: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Barbara Hannigan, Dare to Compare. Barbara Hannigan, the John R. Straton Visitor in Music, presents an interactive session with composers, singers, pianists and instrumentalists from the contemporary music ensemble. Room 230, Edward Johnson Blvd., 80 Queen’s Park. 416-978-3744. Free.
• Jan 24 2:00: CAMMAC Toronto Region. Reading of Vivaldi’s Gloria for singers and instrumentalists. Daniel Rubinoff, conductor; Christ Church Deer Park, 1570 Yonge St. 905-871-0671. $10; $6 (members).

Musician and war

Another event that diverted my attention away from the upcoming seasonal musical tide came in the form of an offer to join and play with the local New Horizons Band in a performance at a local Salvation Army facility. With the title “A Night to Remember,” it was similar to a performance given by this band last year. Readings from letters during WWII and other material from the time were interspersed with appropriate musical selections to convey some of the many feelings of those so seriously affected by such conflicts. The letters from the soldier were all from One Family’s War. The Wartime Letters of Clarence Bourassa, 1940-1944, a collection of letters written by Private Clarence O. Bourassa, of the South Saskatchewan Regiment, to his wife, Hazel.

Interestingly, in a couple of his letters he mentions that he has been able to play, on a few occasions, with Salvation Army bands somewhere in France. Those mentions of Private Bourassa seeking out opportunities to play music, while so close to the battlefield, led me to wonder about the whole topic of musicians at war. How often did they hear music by military entertainment groups, local musicians, or even get to play in groups somewhere?

In this context an interesting document has come my way – Toronto author Joanne Culley’s recent book, Love in the Air: Second World War Letters. This book includes historical background, photos and dramatized scenes inspired by 600 letters exchanged by her parents during the Second World War. Her father, Harry, served overseas as a musician, playing clarinet and saxophone in Royal Canadian Air Force dance and concert bands. Prior to going overseas, Harry was playing at a YMCA Victory Drive dance in Ottawa where he met Helen, who was a volunteer hostess. They dated for close to a year and became engaged just before he was sent to England. Joanne discovered that the letters were not just declarations of love, but a detailed description of what was happening on both sides of the Atlantic.

Harry Culley endured bombings in London, the overall scarcity of food, and the exhaustion of travelling by trains, buses and army trucks with irregular schedules to perform in concerts, parades and dances. However, he and the other band members knew that their music was keeping up the morale of soldiers and civilians alike. Unlike the book about Private Bourassa which only contains the letters which he wrote home, this volume contains the rarely seen both sides of a
correspondence. Harry carried Helen's letters all around during his travels, even though his bandmates kept bugging him to toss them. He said that he couldn’t, when all of their love was wrapped up in those words. For more information on this book, go to joanneculley.com.

Personally, when I enlisted in the navy, I left my trombone behind and didn’t have any opportunity to play until after I was released. Shortly after the war I did go to sea in some large ships which had bands aboard. One of these, HMS Sheffield, had a very fine Royal Marine band aboard. When we were called to action stations all band members became members of gun crews. They did not sit idly by.

**Three stories:** On the topic of musicians in war time, three very different stories come to mind. The first is that of the famous guitarist Django Reinhardt. He was a gypsy of Belgian birth, and under Hitler’s orders gypsies were destined to be sent to the Nazi death camps. However, when the Nazis occupied France, off-duty officers went to places where Reinhardt performed. They were so impressed with his music that they managed to see that he was spared. After the war he was still a star in the Quintet of the Hot Club of France.

Another man with a strange wartime connection was famous composer and playwright Noël Coward. It wasn’t until many years after the war, and only with the permission of the highest authorities, that he revealed that he had been a spy working for the famous spy master Sir William Stephenson who was code-named Intrepid.

Among other activities, it has been reported that, at times, he played piano in cocktail bars in neutral countries where he was in a position to eavesdrop on conversations of German officers. Author Stephen Koch’s recent book *The Playboy Was a Spy* describes some of Coward’s wartime activities.

The third story is that of Stephen H. Michell, a former trombone player with the Royal Regiment of Canada. He went overseas, under Hitler’s orders gypsies were destined to be sent to the Nazi death camps. However, when the Nazis occupied France, off-duty officers went to places where Reinhardt performed. They were so impressed with his music that they managed to see that he was spared. After the war he was still a star in the Quintet of the Hot Club of France.

Another man with a strange wartime connection was famous composer and playwright Noël Coward. It wasn’t until many years after the war, and only with the permission of the highest authorities, that he revealed that he had been a spy working for the famous spy master Sir William Stephenson who was code-named Intrepid.

Among other activities, it has been reported that, at times, he played piano in cocktail bars in neutral countries where he was in a position to eavesdrop on conversations of German officers. Author Stephen Koch’s recent book *The Playboy Was a Spy* describes some of Coward’s wartime activities.

The third story is that of Stephen H. Michell, a former trombone player with the Royal Regiment of Canada. He went overseas, not as a musician, but as a regular member of the regiment. At the Dieppe raid in 1942 the Royal Regiment landed on the beach at Puys. Of the 554 members of the regiment on that raid only 65 made it back to England. Michell was one of the 264 who were taken prisoners. The rest were killed. I knew that Michell had written the march, *Men of Dieppe*, but wasn’t sure of the details of how and when it was composed. During the intermission at the recent concert by the Toronto Concert Band, I was speaking with Bill Mighton, a former conductor of the Royal Regiment Band who happened to be sitting across from me in the audience. He told me that, during his three years as a prisoner, Michell worked over some themes that kept coming back in his head. When released he had with him a few notes of these melodies. On his return to Canada he took those melodies and from them composed *Men of Dieppe*, a very fine march worthy of inclusion in any band’s repertoire.

**Gord Evans.** It with deep sadness that I have to report on the passing of Gord Evans, one of the finest, most tasteful saxophone players I have ever known. He passed at the age of 96, after spending some years in the Veterans Wing of Sunnybrook Hospital. When I learned of this, I immediately felt that I had to play a CD with Gord playing the solo on Sammy Nestico’s *Lonely Street*. It brought back memories of the years when I had the privilege of playing in a big band where Gord was the lead alto sax player.

**Concerts coming:** All that being said, there are holiday performances that we have learned of:

**Dec 2:** The Plumbing Factory Brass Band presents the “Semiannual Convention of the Plumbers Union and Its Delegations” as reported in last month’s issue.

**Dec 3 and Jan 7:** The Encore Symphonic Concert Band presents “In Concert: Classics and Jazz” with John Edward Liddle, conductor.

**Dec 6:** Pickering Community Band’s “Christmas Concert” with guests Alejandra Ballon, vocals; and Ron Korb, world flutes.

**Dec 7:** Resa’s Pieces “Annual Holiday Concert” includes their strings, concert band and singers.

**Dec 13:** The Wychwood Clarinet Choir presents “Clarinet Bells Ring,” a lively afternoon of festive tunes featuring Victor Herbert’s *March of the Toys*, Leroy Anderson’s *Christmas Festival*, and Sleigh Ride. This last number should never be performed without the well-known horse whinny, which will be done on a clarinet. There will also be a preview movement of Gustav Holst’s *St. Paul’s Suite* arranged by Roy Greaves. Artistic director and clarinet soloist is Michele Jacot. Jack MacQuarrie plays several brass instruments and has performed in many community ensembles. He can be contacted at bandstand@thewholenote.com.

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December’s Child

Joel Ivany

The photo was taken in Bala, Ontario, at the vacation home/cottage of my great Uncle Gogo and Auntie Lean.

Joel Ivany was born in Penticton, BC. His family moved around a lot – to Kelowna, and after that Toronto, Montréal, Ottawa. He is one of four children – he has an older sister and a younger sister and brother – and remembers watching and hearing musicals with them: The Sound of Music, Oliver!, Mary Poppins and Babes in Toyland. Both of his parents, ordained ministers, worked with the Salvation Army, and Ivany’s early musical experiences included playing the cornet and eventually the tuba, going to music camps in the summer, and singing in choirs all the way through high school.

The first opera he remembers watching was a video of La Bohème, with Luciano Pavarotti, which took up three whole high school classes. The teenaged Ivany may not have felt much connection at the time, but it’s interesting how that opera re-emerged when, as a young director, hungry to make stories with music resound that opera re-emerged when, as a young director, hungry to make stories with music resound. Ivany began to reimagine operas with his present-day company, Against the Grain Theatre.

Ivany has also directed for the Canadian Opera Company Ensemble, Minnesota Opera, the Aventa Ensemble, the Canadian Children’s Opera Company, the Centre for Opera Studies in Italy, the U of T Opera Division, Wilfrid Laurier University, Music Niagara, Opera Nuova, Western University, the Royal Conservatory of Music, the Banff Centre and Vancouver Opera. Today Ivany and Against the Grain continue to adapt and innovate, bringing operas with new librettos to courtyards, bars, wedding halls and other non-traditional venues. Last season #UncleJohn, inspired by Mozart’s Don Giovanni was presented in Toronto at the Great Hall (and then at the Ottawa International Chamber Festival), followed by a double-bill mashup “Death and Desire” – Schubert’s Die schöne Müllerin and Messiaen’s Harawi featuring Stephen Hegedus and Kristztina Szabó, presented in a Toronto west-end gallery.

Against the Grain Theatre first shook up (or stirred) Handel’s Messiah in 2013 at a rock and roll hall called the Opera House, with a show that “walked the line between edgy and faithful.” It was all Handel all the time, but no tuxedos, no music stands, and a lot of surprises. Building on that creative and critical success, their 2015 Messiah will be costumed and barefoot, newly choreographed, and performed in a theatre – Harbourfront Centre – in partnership with Massey/Roy Thomson Hall.

In another departure from the conventional, Ivany will direct a semi-staged Mozart Requiem for the Toronto Symphony in January, conducted by Bernard Labadie. This project was workshopped last spring at the Canadian Stage Company with support from the TSO.

Think you don’t ever need to see another production of Carmen? You might want to reconsider in time to get a ticket for Ivany’s mainstage directing debut with the Canadian Opera Company – April 12 to May 15, conducted by Paolo Carignani. Doubtless the mezzo will still die at the end, but your journey at her side may be a ride like no other to date. Meanwhile let’s begin imagining Against The Grain’s #ALittleTooCozy which is the third of their Mozart updates. Ivany’s new English libretto of Così fan tutte reimagined as “a reality TV dating show” was workshopped last summer at The Banff Centre. Coming to Toronto in spring 2016. To an as-yet undisclosed Toronto venue…

You are invited to read Joel Ivany’s interview about his childhood music and theatre experiences and influences @thewholenote.com.
Editor’s Corner

DAVID OLDS

You might think that the upcoming holiday hiatus would result in a backlog of new material after the fact, and generally speaking that is indeed what happens. But this month I find my desk already agog (sorry, that’s a misuse of the word, but one I woke up to this morning as I faced the mounting pile of CDs – perhaps it is who am agog) with a wealth of offerings all worthy of note. I will endeavour to be brief...

Atop the pile is a recent arrival that reminds me why I was drawn to contemporary music, string quartets in particular, in my formative years. PubliQuartet’s eponymous debut release on Concert Artists Guild Records (CAG115 publiquartet.com) grabbed me right from its percussive opening chords. Howie Kenty is not a composer I was previously aware of, but his brief An Impetuous Old Friend seemed just that – rambunctious and familiar, without seeming derivative. As a matter of fact I don’t know any of the composers whose work is included here, although I do find touchstones in their music. Jessie Montgomery is a NYC violinist, composer and music educator. I find many of the extended techniques she uses in Break Away reminiscent of the aboriginal sounds that Peter Sculthorpe incorporated into his string quartet writing. The program note however cites hip-hop and electronica as influences. Eugene Birman’s String Quartet, a 12-minute single movement “experiment in voicing and containing energy,” comes across as a meditation, perhaps with echoes of George Crumb’s darker moments. In contrast David Biedenbender’s Surface Tension is all rhythmic drive and percussion.

One of PQ’s initiatives is a series titled Mind The Gap in which the group tries “to generate an interest in new music and keep traditional classical music relevant to modern audiences...and to blur the lines between performer and composer; intertwining compositions from seemingly disparate genres.” Two examples of this technique are included, Bird In Paris, juxtaposing Debussy with Charlie Parker and Epistrophy, in which Stravinsky’s Three Pieces for String Quartet are very effectively overlaid with themes by iconic jazz pianist Thelonious Monk. While I am not usually a fan of such hybrids, I found this a convincing exception to the rule and found myself smiling at the two worlds collided and coalesced.

Toronto Symphony principal trombonist Gordon Wolfe (gord-wolfe.com) has just released his debut solo CD, Reflections, with pianist Vanessa May-lok Lee, and it is a dandy. Wolfe presents a nicely balanced program of lyrical and idiomatic compositions, drawing on international repertoire – by Jacques Castérède, Paul Hindemith and Stjepan Šulek interspersed with Canadian works – that has influenced his own development. Gary Kulesha says, “I made a deliberate attempt to write music that played against the perceived traditional role of the solo instrument, with the Trombone Sonata (2013) being aerial and lyrical. The trombone’s music soars and sings, and never becomes march-like or stentorian.” Elizabeth Raum’s Fantasy, written as a Christmas present for her husband Richard in 1981, is a delightful, gentle and melodious offering. The penultimate piece – Concertino for Trombone and Piano “Devil or Angel” – was written expressly for this project by Wolfe’s mentor Ian McDougall whom he calls “my favourite trombonist on the planet.” The (mostly) playful piece is in three descriptively titled movements – Cherub vs. Imp; Guardian; Old Nick – which as you might expect gives Wolfe a chance to show off the contrasting aspects of his instrument and his mastery of it.

On Reflections, Wolfe makes a compelling case for the trombone as versatile tenor voice. Without venturing into extended techniques or bizarre effects we are presented with a lyrical portrait of a classical instrument that is all too often treated as a buffoon. Lee’s sensitive and well-balanced support adds to the success of the argument. Recorded in the Royal Conservatory’s Mazzoleni Hall, the sound is everything you would hope for, intimate yet full.

Speaking of maiden voyages, Jeremy Bell, who has shared violin duties with Jerzy Kaplanek in Kitchener-Waterloo’s Penderecki String Quartet since 1999, has just released his own first solo disc, Edward Grieg – Complete Sonatas for Violin and Piano (Chestnut Hall Music chestnutallmusic.com). Of course when I say solo I do not mean unaccompanied and for this project Bell is in fine company with pianist Shoshana Telner who is an equal partner in this virtuosic romantic repertoire. Of course Grieg is known as a nationalist composer and there are a lot of Norwegian folk influences evident in the music. As Bell tells us in his lucid program note, the Sonata No. 1 in F Major, where violin and piano imitate Hardanger fiddling, was the first time that the composer introduced a purely national element. The second sonata, written two years later in 1867, takes
the nationalism further and then there is a gap of 20 years before the Sonata No. 3 in C Minor. This latter with, in Grieg’s words, “it’s wider horizons” is the one most often heard in the concert hall, but it is the charming and “naïve” first sonata that is my favourite. In all three, presented here in the order 2, 3, 1 – for me saving the best for last – Bell and Telner are obviously in their element, capturing the contrasting moods and meeting the various technical demands with aplomb.

This is an outstanding first release and my only question is what took Bell so long? Some two decades ago he was a prize-winner in the Eckhardt-Gramatté National Music Competition and since then has appeared in a variety of solo roles. I suppose participating in 25 recordings under other auspices, being a member of an internationally renowned full-time quartet, his teaching duties at Wilfrid Laurier University and seven seasons as director of NUMUS are reasons enough. At any rate this is a very welcome debut. Oh, and in the note he sent along with the disc Bell assured me that this does not presage a separation from the Penderecki Quartet to which he remains devoted.

Once upon a time some musical friend or another, well versed in 17th- to 19th-century repertoire, challenged me to name an Italian composer whose surname did not end in the letter “i.” My interest in 20th-century music gave me perhaps an unfair advantage as I immediately came up with Berio, Nono, Dallapiccola, Malipiero and Maderna. As it turns out, this latter could have counted twice because his family name was Grossato and it was only later that he adopted his mother’s maiden name.

Bruno Maderna (1920–1973), who participated in the 1949 international congress on dodecaphony in Milan, is best known as one of the forces behind the summer music courses at Darmstadt, that hotbed of post-war, post-serial composition. Only recently has an earlier and very significant work come to light. Maderna’s Requiem was written after his release from Dachau, having been taken prisoner by the SS for his activities as an Italian partisan. “At that moment it was only possible to write a requiem and then to die,” he later said. By July 1946 he had accomplished the former and avoided the latter. The hour-long work for four vocal soloists, choir and orchestra was championed by American composer and critic Virgil Thomson but ultimately never performed in Maderna’s lifetime. Shortly after completing the work Maderna lost interest in his earlier style as he got more and more engaged with contemporary trends. The score ended up lost on a shelf in the New York State’s Purchase College Library and was only rediscovered and published in 2009.

Capriccio (C5231) has just released the world premiere recording of Requiem using a broadcast performance by Deutschelandradio Kultur from 2013 featuring the MDR-Rundfunkchor, Leipzig and the Robert-Schumann Philharmonie directed by Frank Beermann. The vocal soloists are Diana Tomsche, Kathrin Göring, Bernhard Berchtold and Renatus Mészár. Composed in Maderna’s early 20s it shows obvious influences of the iconic works in the genre by Berlioz and Verdi, but more interesting to my ears are the shadows of Bartók, Hindemith and Stravinsky. The use of three pianos in the huge orchestral forces adds to the percussive effect and is also reminiscent of Carmina Burana which Carl Orff had composed a decade earlier. All of these influences aside, it is a strikingly original work and a great testament to the importance of this remarkable prodigy.

If the CD set 2015 is any indication, under the direction of Michael Francis this year’s edition of the National Youth Orchestra of Canada (nyoc.org) lived up to the very high reputation developed over its 55-year history. And it’s no wonder, considering the incredibly talented faculty which nurtures the finest young players drawn from across Canada. There are some 40 top-rank, performing musicians/teachers involved, many of whom hold principal positions in professional orchestras, including such luminaries as Marie Bérard (concertmaster Canadian Opera Company), Sarah Jeffrey (principal oboe Toronto Symphony), both alumni of NYO Canada, Stephen Sitarski (concertmaster Hamilton Philharmonic and Esprit Orchestra) and renowned chamber musicians like Mark Fewer and the Gryphon Trio to name just a few. Auditioned from 500 applicants, 90 to 100 musicians between the ages of 16 and 28 receive tuition-free instruction (plus a stipend) which includes a two-week chamber program, three to four weeks of orchestral training, plus a wealth of career development, repertoire analysis and injury prevention information. This is followed by a national or international tour – 2016 will see them perform in Kitchener-Waterloo, Toronto, Montreal and Lisbon, Portugal – and a recording.

2015, recorded at the Schulich School of Music at McGill University, includes two staples – I’m tempted to say stables since these are war horses – of the orchestral repertoire. Holst’s The Planets and Rachmaninov’s Symphonic Dances. Both receive fully inspired and polished performances which bodes well for the health of orchestral institutions in Canada’s future. But more important, for the overall health of Canadian music, is the fact that the young musicians get to work with living composers who have crafted works especially for them. Emilie Cecilia LeBel (b.1979), whose position with the orchestra is funded jointly by RBC and the SOCAN Foundation, composed a very atmospheric work, monograph on bird’s eye views, giving them experience with music that is not melodically based but rather concerned with colours and textures. Alfredo Santa Ana (b.1980), commissioned with the assistance of the Canada Council, created Ocoso (dusk), a more traditional orchestral essay full of rich harmonies and dramatic turns. All in all, a very satisfying release.

It was the realization of a lifelong dream to spend ten nearly nightless days in Iceland several summers ago, and so I was intrigued when two very different Icelandic projects came my way this past month. As with Emilie LeBel’s piece mentioned above, composer Anna Thorvaldsdottir created a very atmospheric work for ICE, the International Contemporary Ensemble which is active in both Chicago and New York. In the Light of Air (DSL-92102 sono-luminous.com) is an extended suite with evocative movement titles Luminance, Serenity, Existence and Remembrance which are connected by Transitions to form a seamless flow for the nearly 40-minute duration of the work. (Somewhat confusingly the CD also contains a piece entitled Transitions for cello and electronics which seems to be a separate work altogether.) Scored for viola, cello, harp, percussion and electronics, In the Light of Air gradually unfolds as we journey through unfamiliar sounds and textures, both instrumental, with many extended techniques, and electronic. There is a visceral low rumbling throughout much of the piece and although there are many “events” along the way, nothing ever really seems to happen. But this is not meant as a criticism. Much like the stark and seemingly barren landscape of Iceland, the closer you look the more you see, or in this case hear. There is wealth of detail for the patient listener.

The other project is a vision of what the music of the Vikings – settlers of Iceland – might have sounded like. Midgard (BR939 bigroundrecords.com), the latest release from Quebec’s medieval and world music band La Mandragore, “imagines the music the Vikings had they had the time and leisure to notate it. Playing folk instruments from the Mediterranean and Scandinavian regions, and singing songs and tales in Swedish, Norwegian, Old Norse and French,” the ensemble presents what it calls “an authentic and eclectic collection of Viking-inspired music.” The title is the Norse
Speaking of eclectic, I’m not sure anything better suits that description than Black Market featuring Erin Cooper Gay and Contraband (erincoopergay.com). It is a stunning release on which Cooper Gay’s pure, crystalline soprano voice is featured in convincing renditions of Renaissance settings by John Dowland, José Marin, Tarquinio Merula and Claudio Monteverdi accompanied by period instruments, juxtaposed with clever arrangements by Drew Jurecka of contemporary songs by Jill Barber, Radiohead, Kishi Bashi and Punch Brothers. Somehow Cooper Gay and her cohorts – whose instruments range from harpsichord and lute and all manner of violin family instruments, French horn and clarinets, to qanun (Middle Eastern zither) and Juno (Roland synthesizer) – make what might have seemed like oil and water, into a very palatable mixture indeed. Compelling listening!

The next disc came in a couple of months ago, but I decided to save it for December as I felt it would make a perfect stocking stuffer for the little ones. I Believe in Little Things is the latest from jazz singer Diana Panton (dianapanton.com) who in this instance presents her own take on some great songs written for young people. The spare and gentle arrangements feature Reg Schwager on guitar, Don Thompson on bass, piano and vibes and some memorable cello solos by Coenraad Bloemendal. Sesame Street’s Joe Raposo is amply represented – although I’m sorry Bein’ Green is not found here – including the title track, Imagination, Sing and Everybody Sleeps among others. Another Sesame Street standard, The Rainbow Connection, and the Disney classic, When You Wish Upon a Star, are among the most familiar tunes and highlights for me. Panton’s own Sleep is a Precious Thing leads to Richard and Robert Sherman’s Hushabye Mountain with an extended cello intro. The disc concludes with Stephen Foster’s Slumber My Darling. A perfect good night!

Last issue I talked about symphonic works with organ recorded in the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal’s new home and mentioned that the current resident organist is Jean-Willy Kunz. This month I find him in another capacity as harpsichordist on André Gagnon Baroque (ATMA ACD2 2719). Gagnon, the popular Québec pianist and composer, wrote a couple of quasi-baroque suites for piano and orchestra – Mes quatre saisons and Les Turluteries – back in 1969 and 1972 respectively that were great successes when released by Columbia Records. Some four decades later Gagnon has revisited the clever works and given the solo duties to the harpsichord. Kunz shines in these playfully convincing pastiches and the Orchestre symphonique de la Vallée-du-Haut-Saint-Laurent under Daniel Constantineau’s direction embraces the project with enthusiasm. Although producing a larger sound than period orchestras, they capture the spirit of the music and play with surprising lightness.

The latter-day Four Seasons takes iconic music from Québec by Pierre Ferland, Félix Leclerc, Claude Léveillé and Gilles Vigneault – you guessed, Winter begins with the classic Mon Pays – all reworked à la Vivaldi. Les Turluteries takes inspiration from songs written or sung by Mary Travers – better known as La Bolduc – in two suites in the style of Bach and Handel. Tongue in cheek, or respectful homage – more likely a bit of both – the project comes off in flying colours. It really is a hoot!

Of course for the real thing it’s hard to beat Toronto’s own Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra. They have just released two sampler CDs on Tafelmusik Media which combine recent recordings from Humbercrest United and the Banff Centre with previously released material from CBC Records. Best of German Baroque (TMK1028CD) is actually comprised only of music by JS Bach, but I guess it does indeed not get any better than that. We are presented with various instrumental movements in new arrangements by Alison Mackay along with the full Brandenburg Concerto No.3 with a new cadenza by Julia Wedman. Jeanne Lamon and Aisslinn Nosky are the featured soloists in movements from a sonata and a concerto for two violins, and Ivars Taurins leads the Tafelmusik Chamber Choir in the Gloria in Excelsis Deo BWV191. Best of French Baroque (TMK 1029CD) takes a different approach, presenting suites by Marin Marais and hybrid musical genre that blends light and hybrid musical genre that blends classical-era composers.

Le comble de la distinction
David Jalbert

Ekanayaka’s deeply autobiographical piano compositions introduce a novel and hybrid musical genre that blends Sri Lankan melodies with the language of classical-era composers.

The 24 Etudes by Chopin have been with me all my life. This book contains poems about and performances of a baker’s dozen – includes CD

Evju’s ‘Piano Concerto’ is based on incomplete fragments by Grieg of a proposed second piano concerto, creating a beautiful companion concerto full of noble passion.

David Olds, DISCoveries Editor
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**Keyed In**

**ALEX BARAN**

The 2015 International Chopin Piano Competition boasted Canada’s Charles Richard-Hamelin as the second-place prizewinner, the first time a Canadian had won a prize in that prestigious event. His May 2015 recording was timed perfectly for this victory.

Charles Richard-Hamelin – Chopin (Analekta AN 2 9122) presents a very powerful player who can push the instrument right to its limits without losing or distorting the sound. It’s clear that Richard-Hamelin understands the colouristic capabilities of the piano. He is able to recede to the softest pianissimos and able to shape notes through the mechanics of the keyboard.

He is also very comfortable using wide variations in tempo without interrupting the flow of the musical idea. This is evident in the Largo of the Sonata No.3 in B minor, Op.58 where one encounters the impressive interpretive depth of this player after being dazzled by his performance of the preceding Scherzo.

The disc also includes the Polonaise-Fantasie in A-Flat Major Op.61 and two Nocturnes from Op.62 played with an especially haunting beauty.

The Canadian International Organ Competition is a fairly new horse race as these things go. Launched in 2008 it has brought considerable visibility and prestige to the performance discipline. The 2014 Grand Laureate is celebrated on David Baskeyfield – Concours international d’orgue du Canada (ATMA Classique ACD2 2719).

Familiar composers line the program notes: Willan, MacMillan, Howells and Vienne. But organists know that they always share the spotlight with the actual instrument they play as much as the music itself. In this case, it’s one of Canada’s largest organs, the Casavant Opus 550 at St. Paul’s Bloor Street, Toronto. Originally built in 1914 and restored in 1955, it has had many enhancements over the years.

It’s a versatile instrument with an enormous orchestral palette.

Baskeyfield is an impressive performer and notable for his skillful registrations. His choice of tonal colours is masterful. He is English-trained and completely at home with Howells, Hollins and Willan. He also does a terrific job with the works of the French school, Vienne’s Nuits, Saint-Saëns’ Prélude et Fugue en si majeur. But the disc’s real gem is the Willan Introduction, Passacaglia and Fugue. The disc is a fabulous recording and an important document for this historic instrument now more than a century old.

Another fortepiano recording has recently worked its way to the shelves and will be a treasure to many. Christoph Berner plays an 1817 Streicher on Ludwig van Beethoven Lieder & Bagatellen (harmonia mundi HMC 902217). The instrument is in remarkable condition. It’s clear, wonderfully tuned and voiced. Its tone is consistent throughout and surprisingly resonant in the upper register.

Each of the six Bagatelles Op.126 is a joy to hear on this fortepiano. Berner’s playing is clean and lightly pedalled. The best feature of this performance is that he understands what these little pieces are and so doesn’t fall prey to overthinking them.

As terrific as the Bagatelles are, the other half of the disc is the real surprise. Tenor Werner Gura, whose clear, light voice is well-suited to this repertoire, sings a number of Beethoven songs and one short cycle in a performance that is heart-stopping. He’s a very dramatic singer with great control over straight tone and vibrato. He connects directly to the poets’ emotions and shapes phrasing and dynamics to powerful effect.

Two tracks in particular are profoundly moving: Zärtliche Liebe WoO 123 and the cycle An die ferne Geliebte Op. 98. The combination of Gura’s interpretation accompanied by this extraordinary instrument make this disc a valuable find for those who enjoy authentic performance practice.

Pianist Pier Paolo Vincenzi has undertaken an ambitious project with his recording of the Complete variations on a Waltz by Diabelli by 51 composers (Brilliant Classics 2CD 94836) on which he also performs the Beethoven 33 Variations on a waltz by Diabelli Op.120. The compilation of the works by the 51 composers who responded to Diabelli’s 1819 variation challenge is rich for its variety. Among the contributors are familiar composers like Hummel, Czerny, Liszt and Schubert. The others are of lesser historical standing and include a few dabbling aristocrats. Vincenzi, however, treats each variation as though it were, in fact, a masterpiece.

Whether he’s ripping through Liszt’s arpeggiated hurricane or pecking through Baron von Lannoy’s 45-second effort, Vincenzi creates a fascinating snapshot of 51 early 19th-century psychomusical profiles. But when he performs the Beethoven variants, he changes his interpretive posture significantly. No longer dealing with 51 different iterations, he now probes the depths of a single creative mind. What Beethoven can say uniquely in 33 different ways is obvious on the page but only the performer can really convey that. He never loses sight of Diabelli’s thematic kernel. Whether dealing with Beethoven’s fugal architecture or delighting in his Mozart impersonation, he keeps the central idea from being lost in the Byzantine workings of Beethoven’s mind.

The producer of this recording has chosen to record the piano dry with absolutely no acoustic space around the instrument at all. The ear does adjust to this and the Steinway D, despite its size, quickly becomes a very intimate instrument.

The recording of Grieg: Evju – Piano Concertos (Grand Piano GP689) offers a performance of Grieg’s familiar work but based on subsequent changes to the manuscript made by the composer and his friend Percy Grainger. The casual listener may not detect the revisions but they are occasionally evident in the piano part where familiar chordal structures appear to have been changed.

The recording is remarkably clear. The Prague Radio Symphony under Canadian Kerry Stratton is not especially large but always sounds full and balanced. Pianist Carl Petersson performs beautifully and seems especially committed to this revised edition.

The other work on the disc is a concerto based on a thematic fragment by Grieg. It’s a bit of an oddity but warrants several hearings before moving into the concerto that Helge Evju has crafted from it. Although in five movements, the work’s performance time is only 20 minutes. It contains many strong allusions to the A-Minor concerto. This work is said to have been one of Rachmaninov’s favourites and curiously, one also hears a few passages that are obviously reminiscent of his piano concertos.

Overall it’s a wonderful and unusual recording. The orchestra and pianist are excellent.

It’s unusual to find the complete piano works of Manuel de Falla recorded on a single disc. The feature of this disc is the ability to follow the evolution of the composer’s work chronologically from 1896 to 1935. A few of these works had remained unknown or unpublished until much later in the twentieth century.

Pianist Juan Carlos Rodriguez captures de Falla’s Spanish view of the world around him on Manuel de Falla – Complete Piano Music
Franz Liszt’s Mephisto Waltz has another reincarnation on Waltzing Mephisto... by the Danube (Estonian Record Productions ERP 8115) with pianist Hando Nahkur. The title track is brilliantly played with remarkable clarity through all the maniacal passages. The approach is disciplined and calculated but not lacking in any of the incendiary energy needed for this piece.

The disc also includes Schumann’s Kinderszenen. Op.15 from which the dangerously familiar Träumerei is played with gratifying freshness. Nahkur also manages the same feat with the Schumann/Liszt Widmung S.566 where he keeps the apogees of the main idea suspended with satisfying length before the descent to their phrase endings.

Arabesques on An der schönen blauen Donau is a 1900 paraphrase by Adolf Schulz-Evler of the well-known Strauss waltz. It’s rarely heard and is very Lisztian even to the point of sounding a bit like La Campanella for a few measures. It demands a lot from the pianist but Nahkur plays it with impressive ease.

Occasionally composers will write music so perfectly that all the colour, dynamics and nuances seem to be built in. While this doesn’t make it easier to perform it does create the pitfall of over interpretation. Wise performers recognize this and learn to surf the wave. Carlo Grante does this beautifully in Ravel. Mirrors: Pavane pour une infante défunte, Gaspard de la nuit (Music & Arts CD-1289).

In the Miroirs set, La vallée des cloches is especially lovely for Grante’s superb touch and tonal manipulation. The Bösendorfer Imperial responds with bell-like sonority.

Curious, however, is Grante’s opening of the Pavane pour une infante défunte. He observes the staccato in the lower treble very sharply as marked in the piano score. This is unusual and quite arresting because some publishers show sustained pedal through these opening bars to more closely approximate Ravel’s actual orchestration where these short eighths are played pizzicato in the strings while horns and bassoon hold longer supporting phrases. What’s really interesting is that Ravel’s own 1922 piano roll recording of this does neither. Ravel plays it slightly sustained (pedalled) and not nearly as short as Grante. Once past the opening idea, however, Grante moves into the sustained legato that makes this piece flow so beautifully to its ending.

The three piano poems that comprise Gaspard de la nuit are superb. Ondine moves liquidly as it should, Le Gibet rings under the same bell-like touch of the early La vallée des cloches and Scarbo is suitably menacing.

Reconstructions from fragments appeal to our curiosity by suggesting to us what might have been. It’s what drives people like Melani Mestre to record the recent addition to Hyperion’s Romantic Piano Concerto series Albeniz; Granados – Piano Concertos (CDA67918). A pianist, composer, conductor and academic, he has constructed a concerto from two fragments of a Piano Concerto in C Minor ‘Patético’ by Granados. Speculatively dated around 1910, there is no evidence to indicate whether this was intended as a single-movement work or something of larger scale but Mestre believes the latter.

For the middle and final movements he has used two other Granados solo piano works and adapted them for piano and orchestra. These are much more colourfully orchestrated than the first movement with plenty of percussion effects to highlight their Spanish and dance-like feel. Mestre is a skilled orchestrator and has plenty of fun playing his own adaptations. Some will argue about the validity of such efforts, but those who undertake them skillfully produce intriguing works that fuel many entertaining debates.

The Albeniz Concierto fantástico, Op.78 is a mid-career work and is decidedly un-Spanish in its feel. Still, it’s truly beautiful and not often performed or recorded. Admirers generally cite its middle movement as the gem and rightly so. The Reverie et Scherzo opens with a lovely piano line against a backdrop of broad orchestral harmonies. The final movement’s closing pages have some enchanting waltz-like episodes where Mestre’s hesitations are seductively placed to enhance the dance-like feel.

Pianist Angelina Gadeliya cites a profound, spiritual affinity for the music of Alfred Schnittke. Born in Soviet Georgia and trained in Ukraine, she now lives in the U.S. Her enduring commitment to Schnittke’s music was deepened by an encounter with the composer’s wife and biographer a year after his death in 1998. Schnittke and his Ghosts (Labor Records Lab 7093) is an expression of that experience. Gadeliya plays two of his works and adds others to reflect the impact on Schnittke of influences including his time in...
Strings Attached

Terry Robbins

When you listen to the simply astonishing opening track of Shiksa, the new CD from violinist Lara St. John and pianist/composer Matt Herskowitz on St. John’s own Ancalagon label (ANC 143 larastjohn.com/ancalagon) you could be forgiven for thinking that the rest of the CD couldn’t possibly match up – but you would be wrong!

The Czardashtian Rhapsody is Martin Kennedy’s fiendishly difficult take on the traditional Czardas, with hints of Liszt’s Hungarian Rhapsody No.2 thrown in for good measure. It’s stunning, but there’s much more to come in this program of predominantly Middle Eastern and Eastern European music. All 14 tracks are based on traditional material and feature creative arrangements by Milica Paranovic, John Kameel Farah, Yuri Boguinia, Serouj Kradjian, David Ludwig, Gene Pritsker, John Psathas, Michael P. Atkinson and the two performers themselves. Herskowitz’s Nagilara, his own take on Hava Nagila, is another showstopper, as is St. John’s Ottenian Hora, a dazzling display of what she calls “a bunch of improvised Romanian violin tricks, twists and turns.”

These are all much more than just mere showpieces though, and in many instances they clearly have personal resonance for both the composers and performers. What is truly remarkable is the way in which St. John effortlessly and completely captures the sound, style, mood and flavour of these evocative works; Shiksa may be a Yiddish term for a non-Jewish woman, but there’s no hint here of St. John’s being an outsider or anything other than totally and genuinely immersed in this music – you get the feeling that she’s playing these pieces from the inside out. The recorded sound, especially for the piano, is superb – hardly surprising, given that the recording was made in the beautiful acoustics of Le Domaine Forget de Charlevoix in Saint-Irénée, Québec.

I’ve noted before that it’s almost impossible to do comparative reviews of Bach’s unaccompanied violin and cello works; all you can do is look at the performer’s approach and the creative process and report on the result. Luckily, cellist Matt Haimovitz has virtually done this for us in his new 2-CD set of J. S. Bach: The Cello Suites According to Anna Magdalena (Pentatone Oxingale Series PTC 5186 555). In the extensive booklet essay Haimovitz details his journey so far with these wonderful and challenging works, starting with his hearing the legendary 1930s Casals recordings when he was nine, having a teacher at the time who had been a pupil of Casals and who required Haimovitz to play two movements of Bach each day as part of his regular practice routine, and having the privilege in his mid-teens of playing the Goffriller cello used by Casals.

The year 2000 saw Haimovitz perform all six suites in Germany, relying primarily on the Bärenreiter edition and the manuscript copy by Anna Magdalena Bach, the composer’s wife – Bach’s original manuscript has never been found. On his return, he launched the new Oxingale Records label with a 3-CD set of the suites, only to find that within a few years he could no longer agree with his interpretations. Since then he has turned increasingly to the Anna Magdalena manuscript, which he feels is closest in spirit to the original and provides many keys to the playing style and interpretation. He discusses these in detail in the essay.

The performances here, needless to say, are an absolute delight. The cello used is a Matteo Goffriller made in Venice in 1710, with a cello piccolo by the 18th-century maker Georg Nicol. Köllmer used for the Suite V; the bow is a baroque replica made by David Hawthorne. Tuning is A=415 and not the current A=440, so the suites are all down
a semi-tone from present-day pitch.

Haimovitz says that "with humility, and no small dose of courage, I continue on my journey with Bach and _The Cello Suites_, studying the gospel according to Anna Magdalena." I just hope he continues to take us along with him.

Following her solo recital disc and CDs of the Dvořák, Elgar and Carter cello concertos the latest CD from American Alisa Weilerstein – Rachmaninov & Chopin: Cello Sonatas (Decca 478 8416) with the New York-based Israeli pianist Inon Barnatan shows just how much she has to offer in the chamber music field. From the opening bars of the Rachmaninov _Cello Sonata in G Minor, Op.19_ it’s clear that this is going to be gloriously expansive playing from both performers. Barnatan is simply superb at the keyboard, with a beautifully judged use of legato in the long, flowing Rachmaninov phrases, and Weilerstein displays the qualities so often mentioned in reviews of her playing: technique, passion and intensity. It’s a captivating and engaging performance.

The high standard continues through the _Vocalise, Op. 34 No.14_ to the Chopin _Cello Sonata in G Minor, Op.65_, written mostly during the composer’s last summer on his lover George Sand’s estate in Nohant. The first movement in particular clearly gave Chopin a great deal of trouble and was dropped for the premiere performance. It’s a strong, turbulent work very similar in mood to the Rachmaninov, and the two make an ideal pairing here.

The sonata was dedicated to the French cellist Auguste Franchomme, who gave the first (albeit truncated) performance in 1848 in Chopin’s final public concert. It was Franchomme who arranged the _Étude in C-Sharp Minor, Op.25 No.7_ for cello and piano, one of two shorter Chopin works on the CD. The _Introduction & Polonaise Brillante in C Major, Op.3_ dates mostly from Chopin’s youth – the _Introduction_ was added later for Franchomme – and provides a lovely end to a truly beautiful CD.

The Sibelius & Nielsen Violin Concertos make an excellent and natural pairing on the new 2-CD set from Latvian violinist Baiba Skrīde, with Finland’s Tampere Philharmonic Orchestra under Santtu-Matias Rouvali (Orfeo C 896 152 A). Both composers were born in 1865; both were violinists; both became the leader of their respective country’s Nationalist musical movement; and the concertos were written within a few years of each other in the first decade of the 20th century.

Skrīde is terrific in the Sibelius, with her rather fast and somewhat narrow vibrato providing a steely edge to the lush tone and phrasing and giving the work a real Nordic feel. The _Two Serenades for Violin and Orchestra Op.69_ complete the first disc; written in 1912–13, they are not heard all that often and are a welcome addition here.

The Nielsen concerto is a lovely work that should really be more widely known; indeed, Nielsen’s music in general has never quite gained the recognition outside of his native Denmark that it deserves. In this case it may be the length and shape of the work that’s to blame: it’s almost 40 minutes long, and although ostensibly in four movements is actually in two sections, with the brief first and third “movements” – the latter the only slow movement – acting more as introductions for each half. Also, the simply glorious theme that appears after the brief flourish at the beginning of the work never reappears, and nothing else quite matches it. The performance here is outstanding, though.

Although leaving the group within eight years of its inception in 1992 the Brentano String Quartet’s founding cellist, Michael Kannen, continued his association with the ensemble, joining them on second cello in numerous performances of Schubert’s _String Quintet in C Major D956_ over the years, always harbouring the hope that he would be able to record it with them one day. In September 2014 his wish came true in a quite exquisite way when the Brentano Quartet decided to make a live recording of the work at Amherst College in Massachusetts. An interactive weekend was built around three performances over three days, and the result was the new CD _Schubert Quintet Live!_ (Azica ACD-71304).

The booklet notes include fascinating reflections on the recording challenges by Alan Bise, the producer and mix engineer for the project, as well as reflections on the performances by Kannen and violinist Mark Steinberg. Bise says that any minor blemishes had to be left in where fixing them would spoil the musical feel of a section, but he notes that “the energy and spirit represented here are almost impossible to capture in a closed recording session without an audience.” Other than the applause at the end there is very little to signify the physical presence of an audience, but the energy and spirit that Bise noted, and that they helped to create, clearly make a major contribution to the emotional effect of the music. It is indeed a wonderful performance of one of the greatest works in the chamber music repertoire.

The outstanding Hyperion series _The Romantic Cello Concerto_ reaches Volume 7 with works by the German composer and cellist Wilhelm Fitzhagen (1848-1890), featuring cellist Alban Gerhardt and the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin under Stefan Blunier (CDA68063). Fitzhagen was apparently mostly self-taught as a composer, but his two concertos for his instrument are solid, competent and attractive works very much in the German style of the period. The _Concerto No.1 in B Minor, Op.2_ and the _Concerto No.2 in A Minor, Op.4 “ Fantastique”_ are both early works, from 1870 and 1871 respectively, round about the time that Fitzhagen became professor of cello at the Imperial Conservatoire in Moscow. The _First Concerto_ is a short work in three movements played without a break; a dazzling and challenging cadenza at the end of the first movement leads into a very brief (just over three minutes) but lyrical and simply beautiful Andante. The Second Concerto is also quite short, but again displays Fitzhagen’s fluently melodic style.

The central track on the CD is Tchaikovsky’s _Variations on a Rococo Theme Op.33_ from 1877. On moving to Moscow Fitzhagen had quickly established himself as a cellist and soon came to know Tchaikovsky, who dedicated the _Variations_ to Fitzhagen and sent him the manuscript for his comments. The cellist went a good deal further, making cuts and tempo changes, adding his own passages and changing the order of three of the variations. Somewhat reluctantly, Tchaikovsky let the radically altered version stand, and it is the work for which Fitzhagen is most remembered.

Fitzhagen’s _Ballade – Concertstücks Op.10_, a single-movement work which is longer than the _First Concerto_, and _Resignation – Ein geistliches Lied ohne Worte Op.8_, a very brief but simply lovely piece, round out the CD.

Alban Gerhardt has been the soloist on five of the seven releases in this terrific series that never fails to delight and impress, and he is once again in his element with this music.

Shades & Contrasts is a quite stunning debut CD from the Norwegian guitarist Christina Sandsengen (Odradek ODRCD326 odradek-records.com). Standard works by Albeniz, Tárrega, Aguado and Agustín Barrios Mangoré are mixed with contemporary works by Sven Lundestad, Carlo Domeniconi and Egberto Gismonti in a varied and highly impressive recital. These are outstanding performances, delivered with a flawless technique and sumptuous
The English composer Nigel Clarke (b.1960) is featured on Music for Thirteen Solo Strings, a new CD from Toccata Classics with the 13-member string ensemble Longbow under the direction of violinist Peter Sheppard Skærved (TOCC 0325). Clarke and Skærved have enjoyed a close collaboration for almost 30 years. Their shared interest in music for divided strings (as opposed to string ensembles working in sections) led to Parnassus for Thirteen Solo Strings in 1986. It’s music that sounds a bit chaotic at first, but soon bears out Skærved’s observation that the frictional interchange between adjacent players playing contrary but related material can produce a sort of ensemble “fire-making” that generates a good deal of instrumental energy; there’s energy here in abundance.

The other four works on the CD are all from the past three years, two of them the result of an artistic collaboration with Dover Arts Development in Clarke’s home county of Kent and two of them tributes to Edith Cavell, the English nurse shot by the Germans in the First World War. Dogger, Fisher, German Bight, Humber, Thames, Dover, Wight, for Speaker, Thirteen Solo Strings and Sound Design is described as a diptych, Clarke’s music being preceded by a lengthy poem sketching Dover’s history written and delivered by Skærved’s wife, the Danish writer Malene Skærved. The title will have immediate meaning for anyone who has ever listened to the Shipping Forecast on BBC Radio; the seven names are of the sea areas from off the eastern coast of England, around the southeast corner and along the south coast past Dover. The music has clear – and self-confessed – references to sea music, including Britten’s Four Interludes from Peter Grimes and Debussy’s La Mer. The Navy Hymn (Eternal father, strong to save) emerges from the chaos of a storm to guide the piece to a serene and mostly tonal ending. Pulp and Rags, also linked to a Malene Skærved poem (not quoted), was inspired by the machinery in Buckland Paper Mill, an old mill near Dover that closed in 2000 after 230 years.

The Scarlet Flower for Flugel Horn and Thirteen Solo Strings features soloist Sébastien Rousseau in a work written as a memorial to Edith Cavell, the opening horn solo later being reworked for solo muted violin as Epitaph for Edith Cavell, with Skærved closes an intriguing disc.

The New Goldberg Variations, a CD from the Australian duo of composer/pianist Joe Chindamo and violinist Zoe Black (Alfie Records ALFi5002) is described as “J. S. Bach’s original and complete Goldberg Variations with a newly composed counterpart for violin.” The violin part was written by Chindamo at Black’s request, and Chindamo says that the only self-imposed rule was that he would not alter a single note Bach wrote, and that he would adhere to Bach’s language and aesthetic.

The first Variation offers a continuous violin line as opposed to an occasional commentary; and from then on there’s a tendency for the violin to become the primary listening focus, although it does assume a background role quite often. One thing is clear – any misgivings you may have about the project are certainly not the result of any lack of quality in the writing or playing of the violin part; both are done with consummate skill. It’s all beautifully played, with a clean, bright and warm violin sound, and plenty of thoughtful keyboard work which, ironically, made me want to hear what Chindamo would do with the original Goldberg Variations on his own.

Purists may well object – imagine listening to Glenn Gould’s recordings and then saying “Yeah – I think I’ll write a violin part…” – but it is well-written, sympathetic and imaginative. However – and here’s the rub – it really is a different, collaborative work now, not merely an added commentary on the original; indeed, the CD cover shows Bach – Chindamo as the joint composing credits. It certainly makes for highly enjoyable listening, but whether or not it will ever be accepted as a bona fide concert work is open to question – and an interesting one at that.

**VOCAL**

Mozart – Davide Penitente
Académie équestre de Versailles; Bartabas; Mozartwoche Salzburg; Les Musiciens du Louvre; Marc Minkowski
Cmajor 7331608

Mozart’s Davide Penitente dates from 1785. It is a reworking of the Mass in C Minor, K.427, but with two newly composed arias for the soprano and the tenor who had sung in the premiere of The Abduction from the Seraglio. The practice of staging works which were never meant to be staged is now quite common but there is a difference here: the soloists, the instrumentalists and the choir (all very good) perform the work as an oratorio, while the acting is done by horses and their riders, who move rhythmically to Mozart’s music as choreographed by Bartabas. There are 12 horses, fine-looking animals. They all have names and receive equal billing with the musicians. A nice touch that. The soloists are soprano Christiane Karg, mezzo Marianne Crebassa and tenor Stanislas de Barbeyrac. There is an error in the booklet which states that both the arias Lungi le cure ingrate and Tra l’oscure ombre funeste are performed by the mezzo. She sings the first aria but it is the soprano who performs the second. This version of Davide Penitente was first performed in the Felsenreitschule in Salzburg in January of this year. It was a great success. I imagine that if I had been present in Salzburg last January, I might well have been swept up in the excitement. Just seeing the DVD was a bizarre experience however, and if I want to hear the work again I am likely to go back to the CD in which it is performed by La Petite Bande, conducted by Sigiswald Kuijken (on Deutsche Harmonia Mundi).

**Concert Note:**

The Toronto Symphony Orchestra presents Mozart’s Requiem (completed by Robert D. Levin) in a semi-staged version featuring Lydia Teuscher, soprano; Alisson Mclardy, mezzo; Frédéric Antoun, tenor; Philippe Sly, bass-baritone; with the Amadeus Choir and Elmer Iseler Singers at Roy Thomson Hall on January 21, 22 and 23.

Brahms – Ein Deutsches Requiem
Kühmeier; Finley; Netherlands Radio Choir; Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra; Mariss Jansons
RCO Live RCO 15003

**Concert Note:**

Although Requiem, a funeral mass, is most commonly associated with Mozart (who died before finishing his own setting) most versions of Requiem were rarely written in the shadow of a musician’s impending death. True, Verdi composed his relatively late in life at 60, but he lived for another 27 years. In fact, most composers were very young when they took on this heavy subject. Berlioz, Bruckner, Cherubini, Delius, Duruflé, Dvořák, Fauré, Michael Haydn and Reger all composed either Roman Catholic or Protestant requiems. Ein Deutsches Requiem stands out because of its superb choral writing, incomparable soprano aria Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit and the moving baritone solo parts in the third and sixth movements. Brahms, only 23 when he started crafting the work, resumed composition after his mother’s death. Encouraged by
This remarkable recording of Denmark’s beloved “national opera” is a superlative tribute marking the 150th anniversary of the birth of composer Carl Nielsen (1865-1931). Nielsen’s second opera, Maskarade, received its Copenhagen premiere in 1906, at a time when the composer was employed as a second violinst in the Royal Danish Theatre. Quite unlike the dramatic symphonies of his maturity, this is music of lightness and charm, immediately accessible and immensely enjoyable. The opera’s contrived comedy of mistaken identities serves as mere scaffolding for a libretto that revels in a peculiarly Danish sense of the absurd. Niels Jørgen Riis plays Leander, forced into a marriage he truly desires is Leonora herself. Johann Reuter plays Leander’s servant Henrik, who also has his eye on Leonora’s servant, Pernille (Ditte Højgaard Andersen). The conductor Michael Schønwandt is a magisterial proponent of the score, a work he committed to memory at the age of ten. The studio-quality SACD recording is greatly enhanced by the superb acoustics of the new Danish Royal Koncerthuset. The orchestra, chorus and the cast drawn from the Royal Danish Opera are uniformly excellent throughout. A full libretto is provided; the English translation is identical to that of the newly edited score provided by the Carl Nielsen Project of the Music Department of the Royal Danish Library, freely available as a PDF download at bit.ly/sXzvUO courtesy of the Danish Centre for Music Publication.

Daniel Foley

Widor; Vierne – Messes pour choeurs et orgues
Les Petits Chanteurs du Mont-Royal; Les Chantres Musiciens; Gilbert Patenaude; Vincent Boucher; Jonathan Oldengarm
ATMA ACD2 2718

Charles-Marie Widor (1844-1937) and Louis Vierne (1870-1937) were, respectively, organists at Saint-Sulpice Church and Notre Dame Cathedral. The recent Paris terrorist killings occurred not far from the churches where these works originated. During those dreadful days I felt particularly uplifted by this disc, for both the emotional resonances of the two great masses (along with six motets) and the youth and promise of the singers. There is freshness and confidence in the singing of both boys’ and young mens’ choirs of Mont-Royal led by Patenaude, that is complemented wonderfully by Boucher’s great organ and Oldengarm’s small organ near the choir. On disc we cannot fully sense the spatial separation of the great organ from the rest in Montréal’s St. Joseph’s Oratory, yet the dynamic and timbral contrasts in the magnificently resonant acoustical space are effective indeed!
Vierne’s Solemn Mass in C-Sharp Minor (the track list wrongly states F-Sharp Minor) opens with a Kyrie that felt a little stiff, but ended impressively. In the Sanctus, the affecting opening call in each of the choir’s four sections followed by the whole choir, the impassioned and even raw singing of the “Pleni sunt,” and captivating organ registration throughout were highlights. In Widor’s Mass for Two Choirs the excellent trebles of the Petits Chanteurs are heard to advantage in the Kyrie. In the Gloria there are interesting crossrhythms and other challenges, but the ensemble on the recording remains amazingly tight throughout.

Roger Knox

Mendelssohn – String Quartets Op.44 Nos.1&2
Cecilia String Quartet
Analekta AN 2 9844

Having played these two quartets many times over the years and listening to them, one way or another, countless more times, I am still amazed at the enchanting influence Mendelssohn’s quartets hold over string players and their audiences. His penchant for combining beautiful melodies with the intricate underlying textures seems especially suited to the Cecilia Quartet, who bring out a weaving of the voices in the most enticing manner. Sonorous, youthfully energetic, refined and exuberant at the same time – all are characteristics of this recording, but what I was most impressed with was the element of subtle understatement that Cecilia Quartet mastered throughout. This ensemble did not put the emphasis on the most obvious elements of Mendelssohn’s music (though they are, of course, undeniable) but rather integrated it with the delicate texturing of phrasing and enunciation.

The three quartets opus 44 were written within a year (1837-1838), at the most prosperous time of Mendelssohn’s life. The newly married composer began working on them on his honeymoon and the opening of the Concert in E Minor, Op.44 No.1 carries through the buoyancy and generosity of happiness discovered. Two middle movements are more classical in nature, while the finale brings out the spirited dance elements.

Mendelssohn was the master of combining a sense of urgency with melancholy and such is the opening of the Concert in E Minor, Op.44 No.2 in contrast to the sentimentality of the third movement. Cecilia Quartet is particularly adept at highlighting the nimbleness of the Scherzo with their impressive bow technique but they certainly don’t lack power in the final movement.

Recommended to all the admirers of notes ingenious and pleasing.

Ivana Popovic

Concert Note: The Cecilia String Quartet is off on a European junkett in January with concerts in Switzerland, Norway and the United Kingdom, but returns to Toronto to perform the winning work of the String Quartet Composition Competition at the University of Toronto New Music Festival at Walter Hall on February 4.

Liszt Inspections
Marino Formenti
Kairos 0013292KAI

The magician of the keyboard, Franz Liszt started early and lived a long life playing, composing and experimenting. His son-in-law Wagner already blew apart traditional harmonies with Tristan, but Liszt introduced atonality for the first time (see Faust Symphony, first movement). Atonality of course later became the cornerstone of the Second Viennese School of Schoenberg, Webern and Berg and also the
starting point of Italian pianist and conductor Mario Formenti’s remarkable journey: Liszt Inspections.

Formenti selects over a dozen of Liszt’s less familiar pieces, played so sensitively that those alone would make this an attractive set to have, but that’s not his purpose at all. Instead he looks into various aspects (he calls it Vocabulary) of music common to both Liszt and a number of avant-garde composers and builds a well-argued thesis unearthing and proving these relationships. Each of the Liszt compositions illustrates one point of the Vocabulary (e.g. constructivism, sound, minimalism, death, remembering-forgoing, elimination of the metre, silence and more) and by this process he achieves two things: 1) proving Liszt’s genius and his vision into the future and 2) bringing a number of contemporary pieces into focus, highlighting them so the average listener who’d otherwise willfully reject new music is enticed to listen. I am willing to bet that the next time any of these composers’ music is played he will do so with interest. There are at least a dozen composers, like Adams, Berio, Kurtág, Ligeti, Rihm, Stockhausen etc., each with his own unique style that up to now I had considered so much noise and hogwash. In the shining light of Liszt these begin to shine as well. Nice achievement for Signor Formenti.

**Janos Gardonyi**

**Brahms – Violin Sonatas; Schumann – Romances; FAE Sonata**

Isabelle Faust; Alexander Melnikov

harmonia mundi HMC902219

► Isabelle Faust has become famous for her performances on a gut-strung 1799 Strad that in almost every case have become models of period performance practice successfully extended into works of the mid-19th century. To today’s ears, her return to the more intimate, late romantic values could sound reticent with her unusually delicate, lean tone, very simple and deeply penetrating. Her recent Schumann piano trio recordings are shining examples of her persuasive approach, with its chaste, almost textured tone. She had earlier recorded Brahms First Violin Sonata (HMC901081) and this new disc once again features the like-minded approach of Alexander Melnikov playing his own 1875 Bösendorfer which can hardly be mistaken for the more recent instrument to which we have become attuned. The employment of this earlier practice versus the more viscerally robust esthetic of today’s Brahms is illuminating. Here Brahms is speaking rather than being spoken about. Melnikov has a rare affinity to perform Brahms and he and Faust are of one mind. The Schumann pieces are wonderfully poetic, leaving no doubt that they have the exact measure of this gentle, tragic composer.

The unusual F.A.E. Sonata is a four-movement work written in 1853 by Albert Dietrich, Schumann and Brahms for violinist Joseph Joachim to identify the composer of each movement. He had no trouble doing so. The flawless sound places the listener about five rows back, at which point the two instruments are correctly balanced. This very successful album is most enthusiastically recommended.

**Bruce Surtees**

**Saint-Saëns – Complete Violin Concertos**

Andrew Wan; Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal; Kent Nagano

Analekta AN 28770

► Even though Camille Saint-Saëns was an exceptionally prolific composer, it seems that his temperament was especially suited to the form of the solo concerto, allowing him to blend virtuosity (which he held in high regard) with the weight of his musical ideas. He also had a special fondness for the violin, especially after meeting Pablo de Sarasate (the 19th century violin superstar) to whom he dedicated his first and third violin concertos. It comes as no surprise that Andrew Wan, another violin superstar (though from an entirely different era) and one of the youngest concertmasters of a major symphony, has performed and recorded Saint-Saëns’ complete violin concertos with the Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal, the very orchestra he leads. This certainly has an advantage point – the soloist and the orchestra have an astonishing rapport on this recording.

Captured here are live recordings from a series of concerts held at Maison symphonique de Montréal in November 2014. It is no small accomplishment to be able to perform all three concertos, as they are not only technically demanding but also ask of the soloist to be both versatile and flexible in their interpretation. Andrew Wan stands up to this task easily and fiercely – while technically superb in the live performances, he captures his audiences even more with his passion and the constant changes of sound colour.

The first two concertos have been unfairly neglected on the concert stage – they are every bit as exciting and expressive as the third one – but this recording just may change that.

**Ivana Popovic**

**Rachmaninov Variations**

Daniil Trifonov; Philadelphia Orchestra; Yannick Nézet-Séguin

Deutsche Grammophon 4794970

► How appropriate that a pianist by the name of Daniil Trifonov would record a disc of music by Sergei Rachmaninov plus a composition of his own titled Rachmaniana. To be honest, I was unfamiliar with his name, but it seems this 24-year-old already has more than a few feathers in his cap. Not only has he been the recipient of numerous prizes, including first prize in the prestigious Arthur Rubinstein competition, but he is making a worldwide name for himself. In this recording – his sixth – he has teamed up with Canadian conducting superstar Yannick Nézet-Séguin and the Philadelphia Orchestra, resulting in a fusion of two great artists.

There are innumerable recordings of the Rachmaninov Paganini Variations, but this is surely one of the finest. Trifonov’s flawless technique is matched throughout by the Philadelphia Orchestra’s full-bodied and robust sound. The variations literally fly by the listener in rapid succession, each a musical microcosm, notwithstanding the poetic and familiar No. 18 which is treated with the heartfelt lyricism it so deserves. Both soloist and orchestra make ease of the enormous technical demands presented in the variations leading to the tumultuous finale, doing so with a sense of strong self-assurance.

Rachmaninov’s Variations on a Theme by Chopin Op.22 are based on the familiar Prelude Op.28 No.20. Trifonov approaches the music with great sensitivity, deftly capturing the kaleidoscopic moods of the 22 movements. His own set of variations, Rachmaniana, was written out of homemade necessity for his native Russia while temporarily residing in the U.S. While there is much originality within the score, the style also draws from Rachmaninov’s own musical idiom – the work opens in a quietly introspective manner, but the finale is a burst of technical exuberance.

The familiar Variations on a Theme of Corelli predate the Paganini Variations by only three years. Despite the myriad of moods conveyed within, Trifonov creates a unified whole, demonstrating intelligence and an innate musicality for this most demanding repertoire. While a Russian artist performing Russian music doesn’t always guarantee a stellar performance, in this case it did – this recording is bound to be a benchmark.

**Richard Haskell**

**Satie; Poulenc – Le comble de la distinction**

David Jaibert

ATMA ACD2 2683

► Francis Poulenc (1899-1963), composer and pianist, was a man of many contradictions, perpetually...
When you open the back cover of this book of poems, you find a CD tucked into a plastic sleeve. It contains a collection of live recordings spanning 30 years by one of Canada’s premier pianists and teachers, William Aide. The sound quality is variable, but the performances all dazzle – from his incisive Chopin and colourful Schumann to two luminous Debussy pieces. But it’s the poems that are the main attraction here. Aide is that rare musician who uses words as expressively as music. His irresistible search for grace has universal appeal. For music lovers there’s the way he invokes composers like Schubert, Chopin, Schumann, and – surprisingly – Massenet, whose Elegy inspired Aide to become a pianist.

Here is how he begins To an Old Executor:

“Skip the need to dig the sod
Buy a flowering linden tree
And sentimental as can be
Commit to Schubert, not to God.”

Some of Aide’s most affecting poems are tributes to people who changed his life, like his first piano teacher Miss Myrtle McGrath, who taught him the Elegy, his later teacher the Chilean master Alberto Guerrero, who taught so many of Canada’s finest pianists (see John Beckwith’s excellent biography), his fellow student Glenn Gould, and his own student Peter Vonek, whose death from AIDS left him bereft.

Aide has long been recognized as a significant voice in Canadian music. With four fine books (one a gutsy memoir) under his belt, he is unquestionably a voice that matters in Canadian literature as well.

Pamela Margles

MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY

Going Home Star – Truth and Reconciliation
(music by Christos Hatzis)
Tanya Tagaq; Steve Wood and The Northern Cree Singers; Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra; Tadeusz Biernacki
Centrediscs CMCCD 22015

► The richly textured, eclectic cinematic score by veteran Toronto composer Christos Hatzis furnished for the ballet Going Home Star – Truth and Reconciliation for the Royal Winnipeg Ballet was premiered in October 2014 to considerable audience and critical acclaim. This impressive work is a superimposition of at least three culturally defined layers.

Hatzis directly quotes and echoes sections of iconic 20th-century European ballets Rite of Spring, Swan Lake and Prokofiev’s Romeo and Juliet. In addition Christian liturgical chorales, medieval chant and dance music by Jean-Baptiste Lully are all skillfully reworked in Hatzis’ characteristic tonal-centric style. To this he adds elements in multiple vernacular music genres, as well as acoustic and electronic soundscapes, diffused from the studio-produced digital audio track.

Another significant layer of this 2-CD musical journey is the contribution of North American Indigenous voices. They are essential texts in this narrative centred on the suffering imposed on children in Canada’s infamous Indian residential schools – with musical detours into the early contact between Europeans and First Nation peoples – ending with the possibility of personal and intercultural redemption and reconciliation.

Based on a story by Joseph Boyden, the ballet score is given a human voice by the extraordinary Polaris Prize-winning Inuk singer Tanya Tagaq in the last scene’s Morning Song, eloquently performed by the Cree singer Steve Wood and through the pow-wow energy of the Northern Cree Singers infusing a visceral power into several scenes.

Is Going Home Star “the most important dance mounted by the Royal Winnipeg Ballet in its illustrious 75 year history,” as described by one CBC TV commentator? Hatzis’ cumulatively moving, highly eclectic score compels me to see Mark Godden’s choreography and to find out how this important national story plays out on stage. I invite my fellow Canadians to join me on this journey during the RWB’s upcoming 2016 national tour.

Daniel Foley

Massenet’s Elegy
William Aide
Oberon Press 978 0 7780 1429 4
(oberonpress.ca)

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Andrew Timar

Concert Notes: Tanya Tagaq and Owen Pallett perform at Massey Hall on December 1. The Royal Winnipeg Ballet’s tour of Going Home Star comes to Toronto at the Sony Centre on February 5 and 6 after stops in Ottawa (January 28 to 30), Kingston (February 2), London (February 3) and Burlington (February 4).

Allison Cameron – A Gossamer Bit
Contact Contemporary Music
Redshift Records TK445 (redshiftmusic.org)

► This distinctive 2015 CD with four new pieces by the ever-wonderful contemporary composer Allison Cameron is sure to garner her much positive attention among the cognoscenti. A Gossamer Bit, produced as what is rightfully described as a palimpsest, is a stimulating though very different program. Here Cameron presents pieces that represent myriad aspects not only of music – as in 3rds, 4ths & 5ths – but also great flights of the imagination – as in the song, Gossamer Bit, which is a dazzling overlay on Charles Ives and which, in turn is an eloquent sojourn across manipulated pitches and dramatic quarter-tones.

In Memoriam Robert Ashley shapes the relentless octaves of Ashley’s music overlapping the directions to that composer’s In Memoriam Esteban Gomez with great melodic cogency. D.I.Y. Fly combines written and improvised sections and finds a wider dynamic and colouristic scope using just this composerly device.
SOUNDSNATURE

As a result of the thewholenote.com

In 1977, composer Shapiro is a series of pieces performed by cello innovator Madeleine Shapiro combining the sounds of the cello with electronic sources to bridge the gap between the listener and the heart of the natural world. The disc includes compositions by Morton Subotnick, Judith Shatin, Matthew Burtner, Tom Williams and Gayle Young.

Although it may seem an oxymoron to use electronic means to bring us into a closer relationship with nature, it is precisely through using the microphone that we can enhance our experience with the soundscape. This is particularly evident in the works by Judith Shatin, Matthew Burtner and Gayle Young. Shatin’s For the Birds consists of four movements, each one using recordings of different types of birds found in the Yellowstone region. These visceral and intimate recordings are heard in both their original and digitally transformed states. Burtner’s Fragments from Cold takes us into the parallel terrains of outer snow and inner breath, creating the silent stillness of a skier gliding along the snow.

Young’s Avalon Shores features soundscape recordings of waves along the stony shorelines of Newfoundland’s Avalon Peninsula. Shapiro becomes improviser in this work, following the course of the waves, highlighting patterns and responding through timbral variations. I found this an evocative partnership, returning to listen several times. Shapiro is a dynamic performer, and her passion for the environment is evident in this recording as she brings to life her deep reverence for the nonhuman worlds.

Wendalyn Bartley

Duó Lisus (Lidia Muñoz; Jesús Núñez)
FonoSax FONOSAX001 (duolisus.wix.com)
Polish composer Melissa Lauren
The first time I heard Ursula Oppens
Arguably, Ursula and I were both students of Lhevinne at the Juilliard School in New York. Throughout, the quartet and Salajczyk never use extended instrumental techniques. For Rzewski’s piano duo work Four Hands, pianist Jerome Lowenthal, a Juilliard faculty member, joins Oppens. Their touch on the piano is so unified that it sounds like one pianist. It is a quirky piece with lovely moments and this work deserves more performances. However, this duo piano team would be difficult to improve on.

Excellent performances. Highly recommended CD.

JAZZ AND IMPROVISED MUSIC

Clear Day
Emilie-Claire Barlow; ECB Band; Metropole Orkest; Jules Buckley
eOne eCD-CD5841 (emilieclairebarlow.com)

Arguably, multiple-award-winning jazz vocalist, Emilie-Claire Barlow, is one of the finest singer/musicians that Canada has ever produced. Blessed with an impressive musical genome, Barlow has consistently challenged herself, all the while continuing to mature into the impressive and accomplished artist that she is today. With her 11th recording, Barlow has partnered her stunning voice and arranging skills with the world-renowned Metropole Orkest conducted by Jules Buckley.

Barlow and Steve Webster act as producers here, and the eclectic program is comprised of material from the unlikely musical bedfellows of Pat Metheny, Coldplay, Brad Mehldau, David Bowie, Joni Mitchell, Canadian pianist/composer Gord Sheard and more. Described by Barlow herself as a “personal journey over the last four years,” this recording is a portrait of the artist as a mature woman poised at the full apex of her skill, talent, inspiration and power. Also included in this recording are arrangements featuring Barlow’s excellent band, with Reg Schwager on guitar, Jon Maharaj on bass, Chris Donnelly on piano, Larnell Lewis on drums and Kelly Jefferson on reeds.

The CD opens with the spacious and magical Amundsen by noted bassist/composer Shelly Berger, which seeks seamlessly into a dynamic and fresh arrangement of the near title-song, Burton Lane’s On a Clear Day. Other impressive tracks include a tender, string-laden take on Coldplay’s Fix You and a sensual, jazz-infused version of Paul Simon’s Feelin’ Groovy (replete with a masterful guitar solo from Schwager). Of special note is Barlow’s arrangement of Joni Mitchell’s I Don’t Know Where I Stand, sung here with the soaring, crystalline purity of her magnificent vocal instrument.

Lesley Mitchell-Clarke

Your Mess
Melissa Lauren
Independent ML2015 (mellissaalaurenmusic.ca)

Melissa Lauren is a prolific young songwriter and she has released her second album of (mostly) original songs in three years. Lauren collaborated on songwriting and production for Your Mess with Toronto bassist Mark Cashion. The album is about the chaos and heartbeat of life as we stumble our way through and despite such relatively serious themes the songs are mostly upbeat and playful.

The album opens with two songs – Room Is Too Small and Walk Behind Me – that have an air of the 50s and 60s about them as Lauren adds a bit of gutsiness to her delicate, pretty voice. The title track is given a sort of New Orleans style with swampy effect courtesy of guitarist Eric St-Laurent and Sly Juhas on drums. The album is sparingly produced with guitar, bass and drums in various combinations being the main accompaniment, but guitarist Nathan Hiltz breaks out the uke and gets strummy for the bouncy Houses which is all about being content with your current situation and which suits Lauren’s voice to a T. There is a sprinkling of covers on Your Mess and the band’s gorgeous slowed-down take on the Police tune Every Little Thing He Does Is Magic is a highlight.

Cathy Riches

Concert Note: Melissa Lauren will be performing a holiday show on December 10.
at 120 Diner, a relatively new jazz room on Church Street in Toronto.

What Goes On
Andrea Superstein
Cellar Live CL073015
(andreasuperstein.com)

- The young Montreal-born, Vancouver-based chanteuse faced a big challenge to improve on her stellar EP, Stars. With talent in spades, Andrea Superstein not only made great strides, but has slipped in a rather memorable sophomore album with What Goes On. Twice as long as Stars, this noirish album is replete with repertoire well-suited to her gorgeous, sultry and sensuous voice. If you want to know what exactly that means just listen to her take on Cole Porter’s I Love Paris. Not only do you get a sense of what it is to breathe in the melancholy and crowded loneliness of crepuscular Paris, but you will also get a wonderful sense of the dramatic tension that Superstein can bring to a song that has been done over and over again. And if you thought that no vocalist could ever bring anything new to a classic, think again.

Superstein sings in beautifully shaded dialogue with her accompanists, often slipping into blissfully exquisite murmurs and slanted whispers, singing seductively as she conveys a lover’s infatuation, a wounded partner and an ecstatic bride. Her vocal slurs punctuate clipped and long, loping lines. At her flippant best she can resemble a gazelle gone delightfully crazy as she catches the scent of rain. Her exuberant personality is wonderfully geared to maximize her story-telling ability as well the stylish declamation of poetry in song.

Kings County
Way North
(dangerherring.com/waynorth)

- Way North explores roots-based music in a highly contemporary framework. The quartet is a collective comprised of Toronto-based musicians, trumpeter Rebecca Hennessy and bassist Michael Herring along with Brooklynites Petr Cancura on saxophone and clarinet and Richie Barshay on the drums. The music is instantly inviting and infectious with a capacity for taking the listener to unexpected places. The often contrapuntal nature of both the writing and the improvising brings an earlier era of jazz to mind, specifically New Orleans, albeit a NOLA for the millennium. Rarely does a solo go on for too long without being joined by another voice or voices. At times the group improvisations sound as if they were composed, meshing seamlessly with the written parts.

Each of the group’s members has contributed compositions to the recording, resulting in a coherent and satisfying flow of tunes. Cancura’s Where the Willows Grow evolves from a slow march to a bass solo that becomes a duet with trumpet before being joined by the rest of the group. Treefology is a Michael Herring composition that combines counterpoint with unison melodies over a second-line groove. Trumpet and saxophone continue the theme, soloing together with remarkable unity of intent. Hennessy’s Kings County Sheriff is a five-beat figure with a tango-like feel. Her poignant flamencoish solo is met by Cancura’s sax solo which ranges effortlessly from an intense growl to modern chromaticism. The tune, like the rest of the album, reveals in the spirit of lively conversation.

Sitting, Waiting, Wasting Time
Ken McDonald Quartet
Independent (ken-mcdonald.ca)

- Bassist and composer Ken McDonald’s latest outing, Sitting, Waiting, Wasting Time, exemplifies the highly informed yet searching nature of much of the music being heard from a new generation of jazz musicians. Schooled in the tradition, they bring a host of their own influences to this ever-evolving music. McDonald’s quartet is a lean affair that takes full advantage of its pared-down instrumentation to create a group sound that is instantly relatable and identifiable. The seven self-penned compositions offer original twists on some classic jazz themes such as the blues and uptempo swing while venturing into calypso, Brazilian and Middle Eastern flavours.

Drummer Lowell Whitty and bassist McDonald form a highly adaptable and conversational rhythm section. The front line of saxophonist Paul Metcalfe and guitarist/oud player Demetri Petsalakis are well matched in their aggressive funkiness and bring both humour and risk-taking to the proceedings. Apocalypso, the opening tune, features an island groove and establishes the band’s sound in the angularity of the writing and the sense of space in the ensemble. Metcalfe’s tenor solo has a playful quality that is in sync with Whitty’s interactive drumming. Petsalakis, with his slightly overdriven guitar sound and fluid style, expresses himself in ways that are equally melodic and edgy. Moon features a haunting melody played by oud and soprano saxophone. The dynamic arrangement and unusual instrumentation take this recording into world music territory in a way that seems totally consistent with its openness of vision.
trombonist Samuel Blaser honours Jimmy Giuffre’s early 1960s trio with pianist Paul Bley and bassist Steve Swallow, by recording five of its tunes plus seven originals in restrained chamber-jazz style. But even as Blaser empathizes with the particular sound constructed by compositions Giuffre and Carla Bley wrote for the trio, he’s like a chair designer modernizing the ergonomic concepts of 50 years ago to 2015.

For a start he uses a quartet not a trio, and while there’s a sympathetic bassist in Drew Gress, his trombone and Gerald Cleaver’s drums replace Giuffre’s reeds. Most prominently, instead of using sparse acoustic piano inferences exclusively, keyboardist Russ Lossing emphasizes the textures from Fender Rhodes, Wurlitzer and mini-Moog. With Gress’ sympathetic string bumping and Cleaver’s dextrous patterning providing a taut rhythmic foundation, the others are free to bend melodies origami-like into novel shapes. For example, Bley’s Temporarily is souped-up with a stop-time arrangement; and Trudgin’, a Giuffre line, becomes more ambulatory in the Wurlitzer’s drenched glissandi plus staggers of umbra, featuring only piano and trombone, is as tranquil as anything Giuffre created. On the other hand two unaccompanied tracks showcase Blaser’s unalloyed instrumental command. And The First Snow is actually a pensive ballad built up from the Wurlitzer’s drenched glissandi plus staggered drum beats; while Umbra, featuring only piano and trombone, is as tranquil as anything Giuffre created. On the other hand two unaccompanied tracks showcase Blaser’s unalloyed instrumental command. And The First Snow is actually a pensive ballad built up from the Wurlitzer’s drenched glissandi plus staggered drum beats; while Umbra, featuring only piano and trombone, is as tranquil as anything Giuffre created.

Nardi recorded in Naples and Toronto with a mix of Italian and Canadian musicians. The other new aspect of Canto is the addition of producer Antonio Fresa who lends a fresh yet often retro sound to the tracks with his inventive arrangements. Wurlitzer, clarinet, trumpet and a string section all enrich the album and Nardi’s warm expressive voice.

On the opening track, Punto, the flute doubling the vibes evokes mid-century whimsy but there’s also a little Afro-Caribbean flavour stirred in. Surprising touches like these thread their way through the album – songs are reworked in French and English and there’s even a little Brazilian style added with a cool Bossa Nova treatment of Gira e Rigira and Vinicius De Moraes’ songwriter on Sensa Paura. The exceptional Canadians, Kevin Barrett, Mike Downes and Ron Davis (Nardi’s husband) come to the fore on Amami Ancora arranged by Downes and co-written by Nardi in emulation of the great song tradition of her heritage. View a video on The Making of Canto at danielanardi.com.

Cathy Riches

From My Life
Judith Lander
Independent (judithlander.com)

Vocalist, composer and pianist Judith Lander has achieved wide international acclaim as a consummate classical cabaret and theatrical performer. With the release of her debut recording (produced by Lander and bassist Tom Hazlett), she achieves a level of meaning that can only be reached through rich life experience and the intuitive use of a profound emotional vocabulary in symbiosis with fine musical compositions. Lander has wisely selected material here that not only wraps around her warm contralto perfectly but also reflects her career and pays tribute to some of the legendary theatre artists with whom she has worked, such as Jacques Brel and Lotte Lenya. Included in the collection are potent tunes by Stephen Sondheim, Stephen Schwartz, Kurt Weill, Brel, Michael Leonard, Lennon and McCartney and Lander herself.

Most beautifully rendered are Weill’s haunting September Song (rarely performed by a female perspective); a particularly lithe and graceful take on Sondheim’s title tune Anyone Can Whistle (arranged by the great Gene DiNovi) and Jacques Brel’s La Chanson des Vieux Amants, sung “en duo avec” Ghislain Aucoin. Weill’s My Ship is a true stunner, with a clever, fresh arrangement and first-rate trio work from Bruce Harvey on piano, Tom Hazlett on bass and Tom Jestadt on percussion. Also of note is Stephen Sondheim’s heart-rending ballad of longing and loss, I Remember (originally heard in the 1967 black-and-white television production of the musical Evening}

Ken Waxman

**Concert Note:** Samuel Blaser’s band plays at the Workers Arts & Heritage Centre 51 Stuart St. in Hamilton December 18.

**Artifacts**

Reed-Reid-Mitchell

482 Music 482-1093 (482.com)

- Deciding to honour earlier members of Chicago’s Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM) during the organization’s 50th anniversary year, flutist Nicole Mitchell, cellist Tomeka Reid and drummer Mike Reed — AACMers themselves — initiated this nonpareil program. Like musicians who miniature symphonic scores for chamber ensembles, the three dextrously reimagine pieces composed for larger, usually saxophone-oriented bands, so that the vibrant swing of the pieces is expressed alongside their exploratory natures.

- Cases in point are two tunes by drummer Steve McCall, B.K. and I’ll Be Right Here Waiting, which flow seamlessly into another; plus saxophonist Ed Wilkerson’s Light on the Path. During the first two, as the slaps and strums from Reid’s cello inhabit the double bass role and Reed contributes pointed rat-tat-tats, joyous benevolence is expressed in Mitchell’s measured but lighthearted flute cadenzas. Liveller still, Light on the Path mates a masterful shuffle beat with near-hues of timbres from the flutist. As Reid’s whimsical beats couple with Mitchell’s double and triple tonguing, the elasticity of the theme stretches enough so that it’s almost sonically diaphanous.

- Vocally intoning the title lyrics throughout while adding double-stopping string harmonies and judicious electronic wobbles, the trio’s variant of pianist Amina Claudine Myers’ Have Mercy on Us brings out the exotic as well as the ecclesiastical essence of the composition. Even Composition 298, a piece by the reputedly difficult, multi-instrumentalist Anthony Braxton, is transformed into a deft swinger; while pianist Muhul Richard Abrams’ Munkt Monk becomes an angular near-march. Together, skittering cello twangs, a harsh tongue-fluttering flute line and Reed’s perfectly timed drumbeats conjure up images of the hippest five- and drum corps that ever played, demystifying these AACM classics as they expand them.

- By manifestly remaining themselves while saluting older inspirations, Mitchell, Reid and Reed have created the perfect golden anniversary present for the AACM and the listener.

Ken Waxman

**POT POURRI**

**Canto**

Daniela Nardi; Espresso Manifesto eOne REA-CD-5826 (danielanardi.com)

- Toronto singer, Daniela Nardi continues the Espresso Manifesto project with this latest album, Canto. Espresso Manifesto originated with a collection of Paolo Conte songs (Via Con Me) released in 2012, which Nardi recorded in Umbria with mostly Italian personnel. Canto on the other hand is a celebration of Italian songwriters from a range of eras recorded in both Naples and Toronto with a mix of Italian
Finding Anyplace
Ozere
Independent (ozere.ca)

Finding Anyplace by the Canadian band Ozere is a gem of a CD that deftly combines elements of classical and various traditional and folk musics. Founded and led by classically trained violinist Jessica Deutsch in 2012, Ozere’s rich instrumental tone, interesting rhythms and inspired compositions create a music that feels profoundly comfortable and yet also very fresh and different. The core group of instruments is a new take on the quintessential classical string quartet, but here with violin, cello, mandolin and upright bass — the brainchild of Deutsch whose vision was to blend folk and art music. With the addition of vocals, guitar and some non-Western instruments we sometimes move into other musical realms, including Middle Eastern and even jazz. Of course, many bands cross these kinds of stylistic and cultural boundaries, yet not always with Ozere’s elegance and finesse.

All of the 11 tracks are composed by Deutsch and vocalist Emily Rockarts except two traditional songs — Waqfaring Stranger and MacArthur Road. Each track brings something new: for example, The Sun Ain’t Down and Song for Tina are mostly Celtic in style with attractive violin and mandolin parts; Anyplace is an instrumental number that begins in quasi-Middle Eastern style, then segues into something more jazzy and Celtic; and Waqfaring Stranger is a catchy Klezmer-influenced interpretation.

With its fine musicians, well-crafted songs and arrangements, and incredible variety, this is definitely a CD to recommend and a band to watch.  

Payadora Tango Ensemble
Independent (payadora.com)

Payadora’s musicians are each superstars in their own right. Pianist Tom King shines in his flourishies and gutsy glissandos. Violinist Rebekah Wolkstein plays sultry long tones and melodies with equal dynamism. Double bassist Joseph Phillips performs with a rich tone while holding the group together in a tight sense of pulse. And accordionist Branko Džinović flies over the keyboard with rapid colourful phrases and chord punches executed perfectly by the master of bellows control. Together they each remain as soloists yet with superb individual listening skills blend tightly as an ensemble. Superb production qualities add to this recording’s live sound.

A welcome diverse collection of tango music is represented here, each performed with detailed musical nuances. Highlights include the traditional El Choclo in an uplifting, rollicking rendition with jazzy undertones. The two Astor Piazzolla compositions are performed with his musical intentions in the forefront, complete with a dramatic finale in Retrato de Milton. Julian Plaza’s Payadora is the perfect showcase with its swelling dynamic shifts, a mournful accordion and violin opening section, and a joyous, toe-tapping, dance-tango section. Enjoy this timeless release!

Payadora Tango Ensemble; Levon Eskenian
ECM New Series ECM 2451

Komitas’ name is familiar to many local music-lovers, thanks to Isabel Bayrakdarian’s performances and CD of his songs. Soghomon Soghomonian (1869-1935), considered the founder of Armenian musical nationalism, took the religious name of Komitas upon his ordination as a priest in 1895. The priest-musician not only composed original works, but transcribed some 3,000 folk tunes, arranging many for piano, often indicating the folk instrument to be imitated by the pianist, such as the plucked-string tar, the double-reed zurna and duduk, and the tambuk drum. These annotations assisted Levon Eskenian, director of the Gurdjieff Ensemble, when arranging some of Komitas’ folk-derived pieces for his ten-member folk-instrument group. These, then, are arrangements of arrangements, rather than any original Komitas compositions.

This is a disc to be dipped into, rather than listened to all at once, as most of the 18 tracks, like most of Komitas’ songs, are slow and sad. Only three uptempo pieces interrupt the melancholy: the raucous Mankakan Noaq XII for reeds and drum; Lorua Gutanerg, a pogh (flute) solo; and Hoy, Nazan, a very pretty, gently flowing pogh-kanon (zither) duet. By far the longest track, over 11 minutes, is MsCHO Shoror, processional dance music for a traditional religious pilgrimage, now stately, now mournful, with the keening walls of zurnas and dudukus, and the haunting sound of the pogh.

While more uptempo pieces would have been welcome, this CD’s beautiful melodies and vivid, piquant instrumental timbres deliver genuine listening pleasure.

Michael Schulman

"Giving voice to the Italian corner of the Canadian Soul"
Peter Goddard/Toronto Star
CANTO - Album Out Now
www.espressomanifesto.com

Nielsen’s vivid comedy opera has enjoyed a natural status as Denmark’s national opera since its first performance at the Royal Danish Opera in 1906.

Latvian violinist Baiba Skride’s natural approach to her music making has allowed her to work with some of today’s most important conductors and orchestras.

An opera telling the tale of a legendary opera singer as she prepares for her Parisian comeback.

The popularity of tango music is no surprise. The diverse compositional strengths, wide-ranging musical sentiments and driving rhythms offer something for all listeners, regardless of their musical tastes. Toronto-based Payadora Tango Ensemble showcase their enormous respect for the style and their phenomenal performing talents in a jam-packed 12-tango release.


Tilina Kilk
Although most people associate big bands with swing-era dances and later, jazzier, manifestations such as Nimmons 'n' Nine and The Boss Brass, despite the dearth of venues and difficulties of keeping even a combo working steadily, musicians persist in utilizing large ensembles. Like muralists who prefer the magnitude of a large canvas, composers, arrangers and players appreciate the colours and breadth available using numerous, well-balanced instruments.

Case in point is Japanese pianist Satoko Fujii. Like a traveller who dons a new outfit when moving to a new locale, Fujii organizes a new big band. So Fujii, who recently relocated from New York to Berlin, debuts the 12-piece Orchestra Berlin on Ichigo Ichie (Libra Records 212 037 satokofujii.com), joining the large ensembles she already leads in New York, Tokyo and Nagoya. Although ABCD, the final track gives individuals solo space, including some dynamic string plucking and key-slapping vigour from Fujii, the disc's showpiece is the extensive, but subtle sound-melding highlighted in the title suite. Treating the orchestra as one multi-hued instrument, most of the skillfully arranged climaxes have the seven brass and reed players operating as one undulating whole. At the same time, two drummers – Michael Griener and Peter Orins – keep themes on course during transitions with surging white-cap-like rhythms, buoyed by bassist Jan Roder's robust walking. Brief, but zesty solos also appear like sophisticated scallops in the origami-like sound creation. For instance, Roder's harsh thumps face off with trumpeter Natsuki Tamura on Ichigo Ichie 3, with the trumpeter later backing up to race guitarist Kazuhisa Uchihashi's slurred fingering to a mountaintop-high plateau of interlocked timbres. Trombonist Matthias Müller's yearning, plunger-moans cut through the rumbling thunder-like tension from the other horns on Ichigo Ichie 1, while tenor saxophonist Gebhard Ullmann's metal-shaking glissandi reach raw quivering excitement on Ichigo Ichie 2, with his solo complemented by gravelly trumpet grunts. Instructively, that track starts out with the group swinging as confidently as any traditional big band. All-in-all, Fujii's pivotal talent coordinates radiant group motion plus stunning single showcases to create a challenging yet satisfying program.

Tellingly, drummer Orins plus trumpeter Christian Pruvost – both of whom play in a quartet with Fujii – are two of the dozen players who make up the Lille-based Circum Grand Orchestra. But its 12 (Circum Disc CD 1401 circum-disc.com) only resembles Orchestra Berlin in number not style. Just as sushi and pâté are wildly different concoctions, but both are food, so the CGO’s composer/leader, electric bassist Christoph Hache’s take on a big band differs from Fujii’s. Hache’s six tracks float rather than swing but avoid being lightweight characterized by anchoring the tunes with a rhythm section of piano, two guitars, two basses and two drummers. From the top, 12 constitutes a musical journey as a pre-recorded voice rhymes off itinerary stops. The pieces are also framed by their soloists. Graphie for instance slides awfully close to lounge music via Stefan Orins’ moderated piano licks plus wordless vocalizing from flugelhornist Christophe Motury. Even the subsequent tenor saxophone solo is so reminiscent of a lonesome night on a deserted street that it takes a rag-team effort from drummers Orins and Jean-Luc Landsweert to enliven the pace. On the other hand Padoc could be Peter and the Wolf re-imagined by Ozzy Osborne, as a buoyant flute and bass clarinet stop-time duet twirls into rugged melody characterized by wide flanges and distortions from guitarists Sébastien Beaumont and Ivan Cruz, thick tremolo keyboard strides and undulating, accelerating saxophone splashes.

Putting aside the toughness suggested by reef shrills, string reverb and percussion clobbering that underlines much of the music, the key to 12 is probably the title track. Like a model changing from an outfit of raw wool to one of sleek silk, the romantic continuum suggested by the graceful dual flugelhorn introduction is swiftly coloured with streaming counterpart from the reeds and rhythm section, before retreat to dual flute sonata-like patterns and climaxes that highlight both interpretations in symmetrical fashion.

It’s hard not to envision symmetry when dealing with Orkester Brez Meja/Orchestra Senza Confini (Dobialabel dobialabel.com). As the title indicates this 17-piece ensemble was spawned by merging the Italian Orchestra Senza Confini (OSC) with the Slovenian Orkester Brez Meja (OBM), as Slovenian drummer Zlatko Kaučič and Italian bassist Giovanni Maier share composing and conducting credits. Magari C’è the second and final track is skittishly volatile, notable for its consolidation of magisterial beats from drummers Marko Lasić and Vid Drazšler as well as crisscross alto saxophone riffs from Gianfranco Agresti and trumpeter Gabriele Cancelli’s carillon-like pealing. But in reality it’s an extended coda to Brezmejniki, the nearly 32-minute narrative that precedes it that defines the disc. As Brezmejniki moves in a rewarding chromatic fashion, like sophisticated surgeons during a difficult operation who allow appropriate anesthesia or incisions as necessary, the co-conductors add and subtract soloists. At points, one of the three tenor saxophonists erupts into a crescendo of honking tones; angled string strokes and jerky flutter tones arise from three double bassists; a cellist evokes contrapuntal challenges; and soothing harmonies result from Paolo Pascolo’s celestially pitched flute. Sometimes vocalist Elisa Ulian sounds distant gurgles; elsewhere, Adriatic-style scatting. Throughout, while certain rock music-like rhythms are heard, the sound perception is of looming storm clouds, conveyed by the ensemble resonating calculated accents and wrapped up by crunching bass and drum patterns that rein in and concentrate the horns into a time-suspended dynamic finale.

Kaučič’s and Maier’s project uses conduction, which is directing improvisation through gestures. Lawrence “Butch” Morris (1947-) originated the concept and Possible Universe (NBR SA Jazz 014 @distribu
tion.net), a newly released session from the Italian Sant’Anna Arresi Jazz Festival in 2010, confirms its skillful application. This eight-part suite by a 15-piece European-American band encompasses hushed impressimionism and hard-rocking with the same aplomb. Like a theatre director, Morris knows when to scene-set the proceedings with moderate polyphonic insouciance and when to have soloists let loose with dramatic emotions. Floating ensemble tones dominate Possible Universe part two for instance before giving way to a slurry Ben Webster-style tenor saxophone solo. Sump patterning from percussionists Hamid Drake and Chad Taylor maintains the linear theme on Possible Universe part four, even as kinetic plinks and jitters from guitarists Jean-Paul Bourelly and On Ka’a Davis threaten to rip it apart. Lumbering grace
is imparted as the ensemble members improvise in unison, with sophisticated dabs from Alan Silva’s synthesizer adding a contrapuntal continuum. Spectacularly, one curtain-call-like climax occurs on Possible Universe part seven. David Murray’s ocean-floor-deep bass clarinet smears create the consummate intermezzo between the entire band’s upwards-floating cresendo that precedes it and theme variations on the final track. At nearly 13 minutes, lengthier than anything that precedes it, Possible Universe part eight quivers with a semi-classical romanticism through affililated cadenzas from the guitars, double basses and Silva’s synth’s string setting, even as atonal splutters from Evan Parker’s tenor saxophone and an equivalent blues-based line from Murray’s tenor saxophone struggle for dominance against the two trumpeters and one trombonist’s brassy explosions. Following numberless theme variations at different pitches, volumes and speeds from nearly every player, the finale is a calming timbre consolidation.

However, the most unconventional use of a big band here is on Morph (Confront ccs 37 confrontrecordings.com). Swiss-born, Paris-based tenor saxophonist Bertrand Denzler’s composition for Paris’ ONCEIM ensemble is a hypnotic, structured drone that transforms the entire group into a solid mass of tremulous polyphony. Considering that the length of the piece – 29 minutes – is actually one numeral less than the total players – 30 – Denzler’s skill in uniting tones and suppressing bravado is unsurpassed. Simultaneously acoustic and electric, Morph is all of a piece, but like the finest wine additionally manages to hint at other sonic flavours from the brass, reeds, strings, percussion and electronics. Three-quarters of the way through, the pace speeds up infinitesimally but distinctively, adding more tinctures of sound. A single sonic flavours from the brass, reeds, strings, percussion and electrical keyboard string strum is heard in the penultimate minutes as the timbres align more closely, uniting into a murmur that’s lively, seductive and tranquilizing.

Hearing any of these sessions easily demonstrates that contemporary large group compositions and arrangements have long surpassed Moonlight Serenade or Take the A Train to plot and meet individual challenges.

On October 13, 2015 Toronto music lovers attended a recital by the distinguished young pianist, Benjamin Grosvenor, in a return engagement presented by Music Toronto in the Jane Mallet Theatre. After his debut there in February 2014 his self-effacing technique and insightful interpretations were, and still are, the subject of some conversation. This year’s program of Mendelssohn, Bach, Franck, Ravel and Liszt exceeded our highest expectations. The final item on the published program, a dazzling tarantella by Liszt, as they say, drove the audience wild. He returned to the keyboard and treated an expectant, hushed audience to one encore: Percy Grainger’s simple arrangement of Gershwin’s Love Walked In. Devastating! At the moment, Grosvenor has three Decca CDs which, while not exactly the same as being there, are the next best experience.

I mention these two concerts because Decca has issued a box of Stephen Kovacevich: The Complete Philips Recordings (4788662. 25 CDs). I hadn’t listened to his recordings for some time but, unexpectedly, here were very similar qualities latent in Grosvenor’s playing. Steven Kovacevich is one of the most revered pianists in the world, whose recordings on Philips are to be found on the shelves of music lovers around the globe. He was known as Stephen Bishop until 1975 when he adopted his mother’s name.

The first recording by the American pianist from Los Angeles, who went to London to study with Dame Myra Hess, was made in the Brent Town Hall, Wembley in February 1968 of Beethoven’s Diabelli Variations. Back to Wembley in August, Philips recorded the Brahms Handel Variations and other pieces. In December they recorded the Bartók Second Piano Concerto with Colin Davis and the BBC Symphony. They all returned the following April to record the Stravinsky Concerto for Piano and Wind Instruments. Davis proved to be the perfect conductor for Kovacevich. They were simpatico on the various aspects of interpretation as is self-evident in their many collaborations re-issued here; Bartók, Beethoven, Brahms, Mozart, Grieg and Schumann.

I would like to have more than nine CDs of Beethoven; the five concertos, the Diabelli Variations, eight sonatas and three sets of Bagatelles for, as these performances unfolded, they reignited an old passion for the composer.

The Brahms First Concerto is a favorite of Kovacevich which is obvious from his recording here. The second movement is tranquility and simplicity itself. I have never heard another performance come even close to its communication of elegance and acquiescence. Equally intuitive are the four Mozart concertos. The Schumann and Grieg concertos are outstanding, eschewing the empty, meaningless bravura of a mere technician.

This set is a reminder of the constant introspection and depth that Kovacevich conjures. Each and every work – solos, duets, trios and quintets by a variety of composers – is infused with a sense of fragrance and discovery of truthfulness as it resolves with not a single caveat. The performances carry their own authority making comparisons invidious. In so many cases one forgets that the piano is a percussion instrument. Check out the video preview of this set atyoutube.com/watch?v=EPGxJGB-iw.

Over 100 years have elapsed since Stravinsky’s ballet, Le Sacre du printemps, precipitated near riots at its Diaghilev Ballet premiere in Paris. And yet it is still the very first work that comes to mind at the
mention of Stravinsky, even though his style and compositions in different genres changed many times over his 88 years. DG has assembled a 30-CD cube set, Stravinsky Complete Edition (DG 4794650), containing, presumably, everything published.

The first dozen discs are devoted to the 19 stage works on which his fame mostly rests, beginning with The Firebird (1909/10), Petroushka (1910/11), Le Sacre (1911/13), The Nightingale (1908/09,1913/14) etc., through to The Flood, written for television in 1962. The list also includes The Rakes Progress (1951), an opera in three acts. Conductors include Boulez, Chailly, Abbado, Rozhdestvensky, Bernstein, Levine, Knussen, Nagano, Gardiner and Ashkenazy.

The six discs of orchestral music and concerted works include the Circus Polka for a young elephant, first performed by a ballet of elephants in the spring of 1942. With things being what they are, today it is performed without the elephants. The suites from Firebird and Petroushka are here as is the Ebony Concerto from 1945 written for the Woody Herman band. Altogether some 36 shorter, jaunty pieces make entertaining listening. Conductors are Boulez, Mackerras, Ashkenazy, Pletnev, Davies, Craft, Bernstein, Bychkov and Knussen, with Rafael Kubelik minding the elephants.

Three discs of choral music include the Symphony of Psalms and 15 other works including Threni and Mass for mixed chorus and double wind quintet, conducted by John Eliot Gardiner, Craft and Bernstein.

There are two more discs devoted to solo vocals and two each for chamber music and piano music. Two discs of historic recordings plus a bonus disc of Le Sacre for two pianos played by Martha Argerich and Daniel Barenboim recorded in April, 2014. Watch the video trailer at youtube.com/watch?v=KEkZGnUZZec.

So there it is...splendid performances of all he wrote occupying only 133 mm of shelf space.

I really had my doubts about a new collection, The History of Classical Music in 24 Hours (DG 7494648), claiming to be just that. When it was announced I expected a mish-mash of bleeding chunks of this period or that, that would really limit its appeal to one audience and revolt another. Today it arrived. It is a 3″ (73mm) box containing 24 CDs in 12 hinged double sleeves (called a “mint” in the trade) in chronological order, each devoted to one or two periods. Each mint is titled thusly: 1&2, Music of the Middle Ages/Music of the Renaissance; 7&8, A Trip to France/The Romantic Symphony; 11&12, The Virtuoso II/The Romantic Cello...and so on.

It’s funny that after a lifetime of listening to music in both concert and recorded contexts, some fresh experience will turn back the years and once again I become excited by something new or long forgotten. It is never too late to at least rethink certain eras or even artists when you hear them again or for the first time.

The symphonies and concertos included are complete, as are symphonic works like Finlandia and The Planets. There are complete song cycles by Wagner, Mahler and Richard Strauss; string quartets, and a stunning array of arias and duets. All performed by the finest musicians and artists.

The breadth of repertoire is enormous and the performances are taken from the DG catalogue in the latest mastering. In fact, there are more than 24 hours of music, closer to 30 hours. It comes to mind, that except for some complete operas, this package is a true basic repertoire performed by the world’s greatest artists. You can hear samples of every piece at historyofclassicalmusic24.com. Here is a unique basic library for you or a friend at three dollars or less per disc.

Howard Dyck is a Canadian broadcaster, conductor and music educator.
MESSIAH

CONDUCTED BY
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DECEMBER 15, 16, 18, 19, 20

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This Christmas, rediscover the magic of music with the TSO as Conductor Laureate Sir Andrew Davis leads a grand-scaled, must-see edition of Handel’s holiday classic at Roy Thomson Hall. Hallelujah!
Canadian composer Ann Southam’s Glass Houses, a collection of 15 pieces for solo piano, was composed for Christina Petrowska Quilico in 1981. Christina often played selected pieces from the collection in her recitals, many of which were broadcast on my CBC Radio Two series, Two New Hours. We found that the public response to these pieces on our broadcasts was always enthusiastic. Southam (1937–2010) was quick to point out the essential elements in these compositions. The first was the allusion in the title to the minimalism of Philip Glass, which had charmed her since the 1970s. But equally important was the sound of traditional East Coast Canadian fiddle music, which she had first encountered in the 1950s on the CBC Television show, Don Messer’s Jubilee. Southam found great affinities between these two disparate sources, both of which delighted her.

The recent release by the Canadian Music Centre’s Centrediscs record label of the complete set of these 15 pieces, as recorded by Petrowska Quilico, is symbolic, coming as it did on the fifth anniversary of the composer’s death. Christina and I produced the first group of recordings in Glenn Gould Studio late in 2010, shortly after Ann’s passing, and the second volume in 2013. Although the two volumes were at first released separately, we now have a freshly made package with all of the music together.

Christina and I have completed six volumes of Ann’s piano music thus far, with more to come. In 2005 we recorded the complete Rivers in two volumes, and then in 2009 we produced another two volumes of water-inspired pieces under the collective heading Pond Life. Although she was already in failing health during the last of these sessions, Ann’s enthusiasm for Christina’s playing was overwhelming. While we recorded, she would explode with exclamations of “Wow! Fantastic! Holy Cow!” and motion thumbs up through the studio glass after she especially liked. Later she wrote to Christina, “I’m still blown away by the way you play Glass Houses.”

I had first met Ann Southam in 1973, when she attended a concert of live electronic music presented by the Canadian Electronic Ensemble (CEE). This is the group that David Grimes, Larry Lake (1943–2013), Jim Montgomery and I had started in 1971 while we were graduate composers at the University of Toronto. Ann had already begun to assemble her own private electronic music studio in her home, and she had produced several electronic works, many of them as collaborations for modern dance, often with Toronto choreographer Patricia Bouthry. On this occasion, however, she seemed less than convinced of the viability of live performance with the primitive synthesizers that were then available. I was struck by two observations at the time: I recall she had very little to say after our concert, and I then noticed her driving off in her Porsche convertible. Clearly, she had access to resources. This impression was further supported two years later when she self-released her most ambitious work of electronic music, The Reprieve, a nearly 50-minute composition on her own label.

The members of the CEE took note of this and we eventually approached Ann with the offer of a commission to create a new work for the ensemble. The work that she responded with was a great surprise. The title, Natural Resources, or What to Do ‘Till the Power Comes On, gives a hint as to the nature of the work. Ann delivered a score, essentially a set of instructions, and a bag of commonly available hardware: bolts, wooden dowels, hooks, screws, rope thimbles, chain links, and so on. The score described the work as, “a sound game for four players” which “does not rely in any central way on sources of energy other than the players themselves.” The underlying message was that she was bidding farewell to electronic music.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s Ann’s focus shifted to creating works she called “made by hand for hands.” She embraced the physicality of instrumental performance and she formed close bonds with musicians who understood her new approach. Many of the works she wrote for pianist Christina Petrowska Quilico come from this time, as well as Retuning for violist Rivka Golani and Alternate Currents for percussionist Beverley Johnston. In an interview on Two New Hours she spoke with host Augusta LaPaix about “the connection between composing for soloists and other forms of work done by hand, such as weaving, that reflect the nature of traditional women’s work, which is repetitive, life-sustaining, requiring time and patience.” Her idea was developed further in 1993 when we at CBC Radio Music commissioned her string orchestra composition, Webster’s Spin, a work made entirely of interweaving patterns of melodic motifs. The work was the centrepiece of a CBC Records CD, a disc that also contained Southam’s solo piano composition, Remembering Schubert, performed by pianist Eve Egoyan.

I had suggested Eve to Ann when Ann and I were planning that CBC Records production. Once the two met they immediately formed a special bond, and Ann wrote several solo works for Eve, most notably Simple Lines of Inquiry. We recorded the 55-minute work for release on Centrediscs in 2009, and it was praised by New Yorker music critic Alex Ross, who placed the CD on his Top Ten for the year 2009. Eve and I recorded two more Centrediscs CDs of Southam’s piano music, Returnings in 2011 and 5 in 2013. The major work included in Returnings is Qualities of Consonance which CBC Radio Music and I had commissioned for presentation on Two New Hours. The score Ann created for this occasion bears the inscription, “For Eve Egoyan and David Jaeger with thanks.” Five posthumously discovered pieces intended for Eve form the contents of 5.

Looking back on Ann Southam from the perspective of having lost her five years ago, it occurs to me that Ann often produced her best work when she was involved in artistic collaborations. Whether it was a choreographer, a soloist or a music producer she was responding to, she seemed to find her strongest voice when she was in a creative conversation with a colleague. I must say that I and all those many other collaborators miss her dearly. Thankfully, we still have her music.

David Jaeger is a composer, producer and broadcaster based in Toronto.
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