Teng Li
No Second Fiddle

Andrew Burashko’s Artful Times

Legacies: Bley & Boulez Remembered

Teng Li, viola
**A BLOCKBUSTER FEBRUARY AT Tafelmusik**

**BEETHOVEN SYMPHONY AT KOERNER HALL**

9th

Feb 4-7
KOERNER HALL AT THE TELUS CENTRE (KH)

RUBY HUGHES | SOPRANO
MARY-ELLEN NESI | MEZZO-SOPRANO
COLIN BALZER | TENOR
SIMON TISCHLER | BARITONE

TAFELMUSIK BAROQUE ORCHESTRA AND CHAMBER CHOIR

**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 first half of the programme features the Tafelmusik Chamber Choir in Rheinberger’s *Abendlied*, Brahms’ *Warum ist das Licht gegeben*, and *Valediction*, a NEW Tafelmusik choral commission, all directed by Ivars Taurins.

These performances will be recorded for release on the Tafelmusik Media label, completing our full cycle of Beethoven symphony recordings with Maestro Weil.

**THE BEST OF MOZART**

Feb 25-28
TRINITY-ST. PAUL’S CENTRE, JEANNE LAMON HALL (TSP)

TAFELMUSIK BAROQUE ORCHESTRA

“Music is my life and my life is music”
— W. A. MOZART

Join Tafelmusik for some of Mozart’s most beloved orchestral works, including the charming *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*, the dramatic Symphony no. 40 in G Minor, and the glorious Sinfonia concertante for violin and viola.

KH: 416.408.0208
TSP: 416.964.6337
tafelmusik.org

SEASON PRESENTING SPONSOR
Sun Life Financial
MUST-SEE
FEBRUARY
CONCERTS

The Year of the Monkey: A Chinese New Year Celebration
Sat, Feb 13 at 7:30pm
Long Yu, conductor
Maxim Vengerov, violin
Wang Yi, Peking Opera soloist
Mark Rowsell “Dashan”, host
Li Huanzhi: *Spring Festival Overture*
Prokofiev: Selections from *Romeo and Juliet*
Various: Selections from Peking Opera
He Zhanhao & Chen Gang: *Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto*

Brahms Violin Concerto
Wed, Feb 17 at 8:00pm
Thu, Feb 18 at 8:00pm
Fabien Gabel, conductor
Baiba Skride, violin
Simon Bertrand: *Rideau et Fanfares*
Brahms: Violin Concerto
Franck: Symphony in D Minor

Schumann Symphony 4
Thu, Feb 25 at 8:00pm
Sat, Feb 27 at 8:00pm
Louis Langrée, conductor
Marc-André Hamelin, piano
Beethoven: *Leonore Overture No. 2*
Mendelssohn: *Piano Concerto No. 1*
Schumann: *Symphony No. 4*

GET GREAT SEATS FROM ONLY $33.75

ROY THOMSON HALL | 416.593.4828 | TSO.CA
HANNAFORD STREET SILVER BAND PRESENTS

German Brass

Sunday February 21st, 2016, 3:00 PM
Jane Mallett Theatre

Direct from the Berlin Philharmonic, Horn Virtuoso Fergus McWilliam makes his HSSB debut with the buoyant Strauss First Horn Concerto. James Gourlay will lead the brass in a shimmering performance of the Grand March from Tannhauser and the Overture from Die Fledermaus. The Hannaford Youth Band joins the HSSB on stage to bring the concert to a rousing finish.
FEATURES
6. OPENER | Judging the Book by Its Cover | DAVID PERLMAN
8. No Second Fiddle: Teng Li | MJ BUELL
8. The Artful Times of Andrew Burashko | PAUL ENNIS
49. WE ARE ALL MUSIC’S CHILDREN | Teng Li | MJ BUELL
68. Paul Bley: A Modern Jazz Piano Master | KEN WAXMAN
70. CBC RADIO TWO: A Point to Prove | Pierre Boulez | DAVID JAEGGER

BEAT BY BEAT
11. Jazz Stories | ORI DAGAN
13. Art of Song | HANS DE GROOT
14. On Opera | CHRISTOPHER HOILE
16. Classical & Beyond | PAUL ENNIS
20. In with the New | WENDALYN BARTLEY
21. Early Music | DAVID PODGORSKI
23. Choral Scene | BRIAN CHANG
25. Bandstand | JACK MacQUARRIE
26. World View | ANDREW TIMAR
44. Mainly Clubs, Mostly Jazz | BOB BEN

LISTINGS
28. A | Concerts in the GTA
40. B | Concerts Beyond the GTA
42. D | In the Clubs (Mostly Jazz)
46. E | The ETCeteras

DISCOVERIES: RECORDINGS REVIEWED
50. Editor’s Corner | DAVID OLDS
52. Strings Attached | TERRY ROBBINS
54. Keyed In | ALEX BARAN
56. Vocal
58. Early Music and Period Performance
59. Classical & Beyond
60. Modern & Contemporary
62 Jazz & Improvised
65. Pot Pourri
65. Something in the Air | KEN WAXMAN
67. Old Wine, New Bottles | BRUCE SURTEES

MORE
6. Contact Information & Deadlines
7. Index of Advertisers
48. Classified Ads

COVER PHOTOGRAPH: BO HUANG
M y early pleasure at our playfully shiny December/January cover was, sad to say, more than slightly diluted by receiving a gentle note from Against the Grain artistic director Joel Ivany shortly after we sent him a link to the online flip-through edition of the magazine inquiring as to whether we might be able to change the title on the cover “because the people in the photo were in fact Meher Pavri and Joshua Wales, not, as we had stated, Miriam Khalil and Stephen Hegedus.”

To clarify: Meher, Joshua, Stephen and Miriam were all four involved in the Against the Grain production of the Messiah to which the cover, admittedly obliquely, referred. But unless they were all switched at birth (in which case we missed a GREAT story), Joshua Wales is NOT Stephen Hegedus; and Meher Pavri is NOT Miriam Khalil.

To clarify even further: Hegedus and Khalil were two of the the four soloists (bass-baritone and soprano, respectively) in the rollicking ATG Messiah which once again sold out its Harbourfront run; Wales and Pavri (tenor and soprano, respectively) were members of the chorus in the same show. (All are rising presences on our increasingly adventurous home-grown opera scene.)

One might be tempted to theorize that, given the number of projectiles flying around in the cover photo, the soloists demanded stunt doubles for the shoot, and that the nostrils of tenors are less susceptible to injury from flying French fries than those of bass-baritones.

But a sincere apology to all concerned is probably the wiser course, and will leave me some room to talk about this issue’s cover! So, sorry again, Joshua, Meher, Stephen and Miriam – and on we go!

THANKS TO THIS MONTH’S CONTRIBUTORS

Beat Columnists

Upcoming Dates & Deadlines
Free Event Listings Deadline
6pm Saturday, February 20

Display Ad Reservations Deadline
6pm Monday, February 15

Classifieds Deadline
6pm Saturday, February 20

Advertising Materials Due
6pm Thursday, February 18

Publication Date
Wednesday February 24 (Online)
Friday February 26 (Print)

Volume 21 No 6 covers
March 1 - April 7, 2016

WholeNote Media Inc. accepts no responsibility or liability for claims made for any product or service reported on or advertised in this issue.

Printed in Canada
Couto Printing & Publishing Services

Circulation Statement
February 2016: 30,000 printed & distributed
Canadian Publication Product Sales Agreement 1263846
ISSN 14888-8785 WHOLENOTE Publications Mail Agreement #40026682

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to: WholeNote Media Inc.
Centre for Social Innovation
503-720 Bathurst Street
Toronto ON M5S 2R4

FOR OPENERS | DAVID PERLMAN

This issue’s cover: It would be interesting to count the references to the subject of this issue’s cover photograph, violist Teng Li.

MJ Buell takes up Li’s story on page 8 (and continues it in Music’s Children on page 49). But I also counted passing references in at least three other places in the issue (four if you include this one!). First of these references, as a matter of fact, is in the other story commencing on page 8, Paul Ennis' in-depth interview with Art of Time artistic director Andrew Burashko, in whose series Li will appear, for the first time this coming April. (Burashko is also referenced on this month’s cover.)

Our third cover reference is to “Legacies”: those of two musical masters, both of whom died early in this new year – both remembered in this issue. Modern jazz piano master Paul Bley is celebrated by columnist Ken Waxman on page 68. Waxman’s own regular CD column in the issue is in many ways testimony to Bley’s influence. David Jaeger weaves his encomium to Boulez into his ongoing memoir of the golden years of CBC Radio that now occupies the inside back pages of the magazine (this month on page 70).

And a roundabout eulogy to a third “B” also finds its way into our pages – perhaps for the first time. David Olds, in his Editor’s Corner on page 50, finds himself engaging with David Bowie’s death.

Tributes to, and gatherings for, Boulez and Bley are coming together, slowly. Bowie’s passing generated a firestorm. A Choir! Choir! Choir! singalong/gathering at the AGO drew over 500 people within 25 minutes of being announced – an astounding range of people – all ages shapes and sizes – the all-ages children of Facebook seeking out live music to mourn life lost. Now there’s a message of hope.

Exploring the Book by Its Cover

O M Y early pleasure at our playfully shiny December/January cover was, sad to say, more than slightly diluted by receiving a gentle note from Against the Grain artistic director Joel Ivany shortly after we sent him a link to the online flip-through edition of the magazine inquiring as to whether we might be able to change the title on the cover “because the people in the photo were in fact Meher Pavri and Joshua Wales, not, as we had stated, Miriam Khalil and Stephen Hegedus.”

To clarify: Meher, Joshua, Stephen and Miriam were all four involved in the Against the Grain production of the Messiah to which the cover, admittedly obliquely, referred. But unless they were all switched at birth (in which case we missed a GREAT story), Joshua Wales is NOT Stephen Hegedus; and Meher Pavri is NOT Miriam Khalil.

To clarify even further: Hegedus and Khalil were two of the four soloists (bass-baritone and soprano, respectively) in the rollicking ATG Messiah which once again sold out its Harbourfront run; Wales and Pavri (tenor and soprano, respectively) were members of the chorus in the same show. (All are rising presences on our increasingly adventurous home-grown opera scene.)

One might be tempted to theorize that, given the number of projectiles flying around in the cover photo, the soloists demanded stunt doubles for the shoot, and that the nostrils of tenors are less susceptible to injury from flying French fries than those of bass-baritones.

But a sincere apology to all concerned is probably the wiser course, and will leave me some room to talk about this issue’s cover! So, sorry again, Joshua, Meher, Stephen and Miriam – and on we go!
Claude Watson Secondary Arts Program,
Earl Haig Secondary School 100 Princess Avenue, North York, ON
claudewatson.ca | (416) 395-3210 x20137
Other Claude Watson Programs: DANCE | VISUAL ARTS | DRAMA | FILM

Piano Night | January 28, 4:30pm
Ruth Watson Room,
Earl Haig Secondary School

Choral Night | April 18, 7pm
Grace Church-on-the-Hill

Symphony-Band Night | May 3, 7:30pm
Cringan Hall, Earl Haig Secondary School

Tickets and info 416-395-3210 x 20141
claudewatson.ca

For more information visit www.earlhaig.ca
View our YouTube channel
Like us on Facebook

Don’t Ever Stop Music Is for Life
The Blue Pages
The Canary Pages
The Green Pages Guide To Summer Music

Musical guides online, all the time
thewholenote.com/resources
No Second Fiddle: Teng Li

A brave little girl is wakened on a sweaty night in Nanjing by her father around 10pm. They ride double on his bike to the train station, about an hour through the city. They get on a midnight train and she sleeps a little – maybe on a luggage pile, or on some newspapers on the floor under a seat. They arrive in Shanghai at 6am and have a little breakfast. She has an 8am violin lesson. Then they travel all the way home again. And they do this every weekend.

Young Teng Li devoted much of her childhood to the violin. She was not yet a teenager when an important instructor at the Beijing Central Conservatory, who also taught viola, complained about the calibre of viola students in general and demanded that she switch because he wanted “the best.” It was a bigger instrument, the articulation more difficult, the sound projection different. Li accepted the challenge and so began her viscerally bonded instrument that sings with an almost human voice.

At 16, speaking very little English, she auditioned for, and earned a place at, the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia. Her new teacher, the renowned Michael Tree, offered this new challenge: he said he had no worries about her playing, but that she must also become “the best human being she could. She was embarking on a journey during which competition and being “the best” can push aside the physical and mental health of young artists, and the isolation of rigorous practice and study can turn out emotional and social misfits. Tree’s admonition hit the right note, and resonated – what she understood was that if you are not a good person it will show in your music.

Li was still a student when she was invited by Peter Oundjian to audition for the first viola chair of the TSO. She returned to play Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony under Oundjian’s direction and found herself hooked on the symphony. At the start of the 2004/05 season, she became the TSO’s youngest player at the age of 21 and the orchestra’s first chair viola, a position she retains today.

She rose to this new challenge with the same combination of grit and grace that saw her through the earlier ones: the sheer volume of her childhood to the violin. She was not yet a teenager when an important instructor at the Beijing Central Conservatory, who also taught viola, complained about the calibre of viola students in general and demanded that she switch because he wanted “the best.” It was a bigger instrument, the articulation more difficult, the sound projection different. Li accepted the challenge and so began her viscerally bonded instrument that sings with an almost human voice.

At 16, speaking very little English, she auditioned for, and earned a place at, the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia. Her new teacher, the renowned Michael Tree, offered this new challenge: he said he had no worries about her playing, but that she must also become “the best human being she could. She was embarking on a journey during which competition and being “the best” can push aside the physical and mental health of young artists, and the isolation of rigorous practice and study can turn out emotional and social misfits. Tree’s admonition hit the right note, and resonated – what she understood was that if you are not a good person it will show in your music.

Li was still a student when she was invited by Peter Oundjian to audition for the first viola chair of the TSO. She returned to play Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony under Oundjian’s direction and found herself hooked on the symphony. At the start of the 2004/05 season, she became the TSO’s youngest player at the age of 21 and the orchestra’s first chair viola, a position she retains today.

She rose to this new challenge with the same combination of grit and grace that saw her through the earlier ones: the sheer volume of repertoire; the numbers of rehearsals and engagements; earning the trust of the other players whom she is quick to credit for helping her learn on the job. The outcome has, according to all accounts, been an extraordinary collection of chamber works by Jongen, Ullmann, Feldman, and Feldman. She teaches at the University of Toronto Faculty of Music and the International Music Camp in Canmore, Canada. She has an 8am violin lesson. Then they travel all the way home again. And they do this every weekend.

Young Teng Li devoted much of her childhood to the violin. She was not yet a teenager when an important instructor at the Beijing Central Conservatory, who also taught viola, complained about the calibre of viola students in general and demanded that she switch because he wanted “the best.” It was a bigger instrument, the articulation more difficult, the sound projection different. Li accepted the challenge and so began her viscerally bonded instrument that sings with an almost human voice.

At 16, speaking very little English, she auditioned for, and earned a place at, the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia. Her new teacher, the renowned Michael Tree, offered this new challenge: he said he had no worries about her playing, but that she must also become “the best human being she could. She was embarking on a journey during which competition and being “the best” can push aside the physical and mental health of young artists, and the isolation of rigorous practice and study can turn out emotional and social misfits. Tree’s admonition hit the right note, and resonated – what she understood was that if you are not a good person it will show in your music.

Li was still a student when she was invited by Peter Oundjian to audition for the first viola chair of the TSO. She returned to play Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony under Oundjian’s direction and found herself hooked on the symphony. At the start of the 2004/05 season, she became the TSO’s youngest player at the age of 21 and the orchestra’s first chair viola, a position she retains today.

The Artful Times of Andrew Burashko

The Artful Times Ensemble has been a fixture on Toronto’s cultural landscape for many years, committed to redefining the experience of music performance and exploring the juxtaposition of high art and popular culture. I’ve long been fascinated by founder and artistic director Andrew Burashko’s programming acumen and his ability to attract a coterie of top-notch musicians to perform with him. Two days before Art of Time’s 15th Season, Pepper Canadian Tour began with a concert at the Sony Centre, January 21, I spoke to Burashko on the phone about the origins of Art of Time and Burashko’s own musical training. Perhaps fittingly for a conversation about the Art of Time, our chat proceeded chronologically.

Burashko had a typical classical music training for a serious young piano student. At nine and a half, he began studying with Marina Geringas “the best teacher in the city for young, gifted kids – she produced a lot of professional pianists” – in 1975, about two years after he and his family arrived in Canada from Russia via Israel.

“She gave me an incredible physical foundation,” he says. “I was being groomed to be a concert pianist.” ... His break came when he attracted the attention of Walter Homburger and Andrew Davis. “I was 17; I made my debut with the Toronto Symphony. I performed with them well into my career. I think I did ten seasons with them. Ten different concerti. I was supposed to go to Manhattan School of Music to study with Nina Svetlanova. Because my whole life I was made to practise, I guess I rebelled as I was finishing high school. And I quit music [pause]. So I spent a year at U of T doing sciences and then towards the end of that year, Roman Borys, who was the cellist of the Gryphon Trio, talked me into going to Banff – I hadn’t touched the piano in a year – as a duo. Which I did, to the chamber music program. It was my first time in Banff and there I met a lot of people who are friends to this day. As well as one of my most important mentors, Marek Jablonski.”

While in Banff, he realized that his “heart was in music, but I wanted to do it in my terms.” That meant going to Vancouver to study with Lee Kum-Sing for two years. (One of the people Burashko had met in Banff was Jamie Parker and Parker and his brother Jackie had studied with Lee.) Then Jablonski came to Toronto in 1987 and Burashko followed him to what is now the Glenn Gould School. “Those were the four most formative years of my life,” he said, “because I had at least one lesson a week with Marek and I played every month with Leon Fleisher.”

I reacted positively to Burashko’s comment about his link to Fleisher (I am a great admirer of Fleisher’s work); Burashko responded in kind: “You know, most of my ideas about pianism and interpretation come from Fleisher ... He is incredible. Truly.”

After those four years with Jablonski, Burashko studied with Bella Davidovich in New York for two more. “And things began to happen for me.” He worked with new music groups, chamber music groups like Amici, even toured with the Gryphon Trio before Jamie Parker joined. And taught. Which he considers a crucial part of his life until recently.

Classical music ... has the potential to speak to anyone if they’re exposed to it just at the right time at the right place in the right way.

Turning points: A key part of the Burashko narrative involves modern dancer Peggy Baker, who returned to Canada from New York in 1991. “Working with her I gained access to a whole other world. The world of the theatre, really. Where things are, for lack of a better word, a helluva lot more theatrical than in a concert hall. Lighting is important. Staging. All those things. And creating a dramatic environment. And also, after all those years I got to know a lot of incredible...”
people like Karen Kain, James Kudelka, Margie Gillis.”

Then comes a surprisingly candid admission: “I guess that, along with the fact that it was a real grind and struggle in the classical music world, I never got to the point where I could dictate my terms. So if ever an orchestra called that I hadn’t worked with before and asked me ‘Do you know, whatever, Rach 2?’ I would say yes. Between traveling and working I was at the piano all the time cramming, some years learning three or four new concerti a year. And it’s no fun playing stuff for the first time, all the time. It’s a huge pressure. Blah-blah-blah-blah. So all those things kind of converged. And the main thing was that I was disheartened by the fact that all the classical audiences were so old and nobody was really doing anything about turning people on to classical music. I always believed, as I still do, that it was incredibly compelling and exciting and has the potential to speak to anyone if they’re exposed to it just at the right time at the right place in the right way. And so that’s how Art of Time began.

“The general idea – I’m oversimplifying – was to create programs which would also include the involvement of either actors or dancers. Because of Peggy I had access to the dance world. I had many friends, still do, who are actors. So actors, dancers, pop musicians, jazz musicians – with the idea that they would hopefully attract their audience and once they were in the theatre then they would be disarmed by the familiar and open to the unfamiliar. And that’s how it began and it’s evolved from there.”

Disarmed by the familiar and open to the unfamiliar. Juxtaposition as the catalyst for gaining and growing an audience. And doing it on his terms.

The impetus for his first concert production came from an agent he shared with Scott St. John. St. John was running a series at the time called “Millennium” but he “got sick of doing it.” The agent asked if Burashko would be interested in starting something in its stead. He’d been dreaming of doing something like that for years, even tried to organize similar projects but unable to follow through because of lack of time or know-how. “Even in the first few years of Art of Time, I was so busy with my own career it was completely haphazard. I invested my own money in it. I would write grants. I would just basically have enough money to rent the Glenn Gould Studio three nights a year and present three different chamber music programs. And by then I had really long-standing musical partnerships with Steven Dann and Joel Quarrington and Amanda Forsyth, Pinchas Zukerman. It’s such a small world. I knew all these people, they were my friends, colleagues. And they were excited about doing something new and different. And musicians are always excited or drawn to working with other good musicians.”

The concert he produced in 1998, “a very eclectic program of Russian music – from Glinka to Schnittke,” is one he’s presented frequently since. “It was Stravinsky, Glinka, this big sprawling, cheesy, beautiful kind of bel canto mini-concerto for piano and string quintet, the Schnittke quintet and Prokofiev Overture on Hebrew Themes. And I opened with a Brodsky poem. I’m also a very big fan of Joseph
That “First Season” (1999/2000) consisted of just three one-nighters. “Then for the next few years, I just kept going. There was no infrastructure. I would get on the phone, I would invite people. There was nothing, other than to pay the players and to rent the hall. And that’s how it continued until about 2005. Slowly it was growing, mainly through the arts community. I was becoming more and more daring with the programs and I was just aware that it would never grow if I kept doing it on the sidelines, growing by the seat of my pants, it would never go anywhere.

“In 2005 we moved to Harbourfront and started doing four shows of two-nighters. It was basically, I don’t want to say whim, I went on some sort of belief that wasn’t backed by anything in the physical world. That first year our budget was about $60,000. Today it’s over a million dollars.”

Pointing to him that Art of Time is such an evocative name, since the concept of time is so central to what is arguably the core of music. He immediately agrees and expands the thought: “The most noticeable and important fingerprint, for lack of a better word, the most important quality, of a musician or the first thing I notice about a musician, is their sense of time.” But the name also works on another level, he quickly says. And again Leon Fleisher’s name re-enters the conversation.

“Fleisher used to talk about compositions as these elaborate structures or cathedrals built out of time. They were time structures. So on one conversation.

That concert never left him; and knowing that the charts for that music existed defined the repertoire for February’s show. Most of the arrangements for the upcoming concert are from the late 1980s and are very dense and busy. Burashko wanted to dilute the “assault-on-the-senses” effect a little bit by adding numbers like Bobby Brown Goes Down and Don’t Eat the Yellow Snow. And Stephen Clarke and Gregory Oh, the two keyboardists in the show (Burashko is conducting), wanted to do Zappa’s four-hands piece, Ruth Is Sleeping (so astonishingly contemporary, it sounds like it could have been written today).

“T”I’m trying to turn people on to all this music,” Burashko said, explaining his decision not replicate the Boudreau program. “We have such a diverse audience and we’ve developed all this trust just based on previous experience, not necessarily knowing what to expect, so I wanted to add a few of Zappa’s lighter fare tunes.”

Burashko says that his programming has become increasingly more daring over the years. His “War of the Worlds” program began with a tribute to Bernard Herrmann, who collaborated with Orson Welles on radio, and ended as a theatre piece with a few musicians when Burashko realized that there was very little music (and none by Herrmann) in the original radio broadcast. “I Send You This Cadmium Red” blended Gavin Bryars’ music with John Berger’s words and images. “Magic and Loss: A Tribute to Lou Reed” was, in his words, amazing. “It was seminal in a way, because the essence of Lou Reed is rock’n’ roll and simplicity and attitude. To dress it up in fancy clothes would be to just miss the point and destroy the music. I can’t think of anything farther from classical music."

The current Beatles project, Sgt. Pepper, also crosses no genres. Admitting he’s a Beatles nut, Burashko says that the important thing is to approach the project with great reverence, while retaining the spirit and feel of the original, which is pop music and rock ‘n’ roll. There’s nothing classical about this show other than the involvement of classical musicians (along with the pop musicians) and the classical composers who wrote the arrangements. Sgt. Pepper is far and away Art of Time’s most popular show. It’s been mounted three separate times. And Burashko completed a “great, gruelling” 13-concert, 18-day tour of the show through the Eastern United States in November. A tour of the American midwest is set for September 2016. “That music just connects on such a deep level with people.”

Next, I ask about the Schulhoff show, coming up April 1 and 2. I’m a fan of Schulhoff’s diverse sonic palette, I say. Again Burashko agrees. Schulhoff, he says, was very eclectic; the upcoming concert is a repeat of one of Art of Time put on in 2005, with the addition of Martha Burns performing the aptly named Sonata Erotica for female voice solo. Violinist Stephen Sitarski, cellist Thomas Wiebe, flutist Susan Hoeppner and Burashko on the piano all return from the original cast ten years ago, joined by such local superstars as violinist Teng Li, alto saxophonist Wallace Halladay and others in Schulhoff’s Hot Sonate for Alto Sax & Piano, Concertino for Viola, Flute & Double Bass, Five Jazz Études for Piano and String Sextet.

Burashko wanted to bring it back because “it’s such amazing music” (there’s that word again!). The first time he played any Schulhoff was on a [Robert Aitken-led] New Music Concerts program in 1993,
On an excruciatingly cold January afternoon Gene DiNovi welcomes me into his home and provides warm smiles and a pair of slippers. He leads me up the stairs, through the kitchen, proudly showing me family photos and art pieces he has collected through the years. We finally reach “the museum,” a spacious room busily adorned with framed photos and autographed posters, shelves full of sheet music and a grand piano.

Now 87-years young, DiNovi has been in show business for seven decades and has hundreds of stories to share: We talk about his new gig at The Old Mill on the first Tuesday of every month; on his triumphant career as pianist, arranger, songwriter and musical director; on working with Peggy Lee, Tony Bennett, Lena Horne and Carmen McRae; sitting in with Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker; recording with Lester Young and Benny Goodman; his native Brooklyn; a stint in Los Angeles; moving to Toronto. But how did he get into this music in the first place? He takes a moment, stares ahead, and smiles as he remembers his first musical inspiration: “I heard a record of ‘The World is Waiting for the Sunrise’ which is a Canadian tune actually, by Ernest Seitz and Gene Lockhart. It was Mel Powell and His Orchestra – Melvin Epstein from the Bronx, who became Mel Powell. My brother Victor used to take me to the Paramount Theatre on a Saturday, or the Strand, or the Loew’s State Theatre. But I heard Mel there. Mel recorded that song a number of times with Benny. On this particular side he plays a solo which had three or four horns on it: Billy Butterfield on trumpet, George Berg on tenor, Lou McCarthey on trombone and of course Benny on clarinet, Kansas Fields on drums, who I played with later. So I heard this piano

Marie-Josée Lord & Quartango: TANGOPÉRA

MARCH 3

The sparkling soprano and accomplished quartet revisit operatic classics with the bewitching rhythms of the tango.

FirstOntario PAC.ca
Box Office: 905-688-0722

St. Catharines

Cameron Carpenter

MARCH 30

The show-stopping Juilliard grad and Grammy nominee performs a diverse repertoire on his custom-built International Touring Organ.
solo, and it is, to me, the greatest piano solo I ever heard in my life. Mel Powell was very different from me – incredibly gifted guy. At 16-years-old he had it all together. He could play like Teddy, he could play like Tatum, he could play like everybody. Once I heard that record, that was it … and I’m still trying to do it,” he laughs. “I still get chills when I hear it!”

As for diving into the music:
“…the reason I got the start was, my brother would decorate houses in Brooklyn, and this guy, Frank Izzo, who was a very eclectic guy said, I don’t have enough money to pay you, can you wait? And my brother said, give my kid brother piano lessons. To this day I can’t really say if it was a good deal or not,” he chuckles.

Living in Brooklyn meant being a subway ride away from the seminal musicians of the day. “I used to hang out on 52nd Street, where you could stand in the doorway and listen to Art Tatum. You go to the next one, you listen to Billie Holiday. You go to the next one, you could listen to Red Norvo. There were six, seven, eight clubs. You could hear all of this on a summer night.”

At the age of 15 – 15 and a half, to be precise – he found himself on stage with Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker, a life-changing moment.

“This was at the Spotlight, in 1945. There was still a curfew in New York City because of the war. They would start playing at four in the afternoon. I would get a ginger ale and just sit there. By that time I was on the street so much the owners and the musicians knew who I was. Dizzy had heard me at one of the other clubs … eventually he was like an older brother to me.”

By his late teens, DiNovi became a fixture on the modern jazz scene, but before long he needed a change.

“You got to remember, this was the beginning of the bebop period, which was a terrible period from the narcotics point of view,” DiNovi recounts. “And I never understood it – why the hell do you want to do that? For me, the music was enough … Working at Birdland a couple of years later on, I turned around and realized that everyone on the bandstand was a junkie but me. And I said, wow – I have got to get away from this – where can I go to play the music I love without being around this – so I ended up with Peggy Lee, the first singer I played for. Can you believe it? Never a note out of tune. Never a note out of time. She was one of the great natural musicians.”

DiNovi spent many years as a treasured accompanist and musical director to some of the greatest vocalists of the day: Tony Bennett, Carmen McRae, Mel Tormé, and most notably Lena Horne, with whom he worked from 1955 to 1963, and occasionally after that.

**Composing and arranging:** Studying with Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco launched DiNovi on another arc in his career – composing and arranging. “He trained me, he trained André Previn, Nelson Riddle, Mancini, John Williams, Marty Paich, a generation of film composers. A lovable man, an Italian Jew who had to get out of there fast when Mussolini hooked up with the other guy. He ended up in Beverly Hills where he taught all these people. Can you imagine? You walk in and Villa-Lobos is in there or Segovia is there going over the fingering, you know? (laughs) It was heavyweight stuff!”

Living in Los Angeles, DiNovi started to gain respect as an arranger and musical director and worked on six specials for Gene Kelly. But the times they were a-changin’: “Things really dried up because this was a period where you could replace 65 guys with two synthesizers.”

DiNovi pauses to ask me if I want to hear one of his tunes that Carmen McRae recorded, and how can I decline? It’s titled “Boy, Do I Have a Surprise for You” (lyrics by Spence Maxwell) from the 1968 album, *Portrait of Carmen* on Rhino Atlantic. To the ears of this McRae fan, she never sounded better than on this majestic recording, which DiNovi also arranged and conducted.

After a memorable engagement with McRae at the Colonial Tavern for a week in 1971, DiNovi tells me, he soon found himself back in Toronto accompanying two other MacRaes – Meredith MacRae for two weeks, followed by two weeks with her mother, Sheila MacRae.

“So I lived at the Royal York Hotel for six weeks for the lowest rate in the 20th century! It was a couple of hundred bucks for the six weeks (laughs). … So I said hey, I like it here in Toronto! It looks like New York in 1945. In L.A. you had to drive 50 miles just to have a cup of coffee with somebody. I liked the New York feel of Toronto.”

These days DiNovi still maintains an admirable performance schedule, appearing with clarinetist James Campbell, guitarist Andrew Scott and bassist Dave Young, to name a few. And at the end of our interview he melts my heart as he gracefully tickles the 88:

“There are three tunes always on my piano: Strayhorn’s ‘Lush Life,’ Harold Arlen’s ‘Last Night When We Were Young’ and ‘The Bad and the Beautiful’ by David Raksin – those three, you’re gonna go in the swamp if you don’t play them every week.”

To experience the magic of Gene DiNovi’s playing up close and personal, and to hear some of his famous stories, do not miss the opportunity on the first Tuesday of every month at The Old Mill’s Home Smith Bar from 7:30 to 10:30pm.

**Stylianou JPEC-Bound:** Some 70 years after DiNovi sat in with Gillespie and Parker, it isn’t uncommon for Toronto-based jazz artists to leave the nest and head towards the Big Apple. Vocalist Melissa Stylianou, formerly a fixture at the Rex Hotel Jazz & Blues Bar, where she started out as a waitress and ended up a headliner, is a fine example. About the decision to relocate, she says:

“…it was the magic and Improvised Music program at the Banff Centre in 2003, and many of the faculty and other musicians I met happened to

**Jazz Notes continues on page 42**
**It Takes Five To Quartango**

**HANS DE GROOT**

On March 3, a concert, with the title “Tangopéra” will be given jointly by Marie-Josée Lord and the quartet Quartango at Partridge Hall in the brand new FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre in St. Catharines. Going by the tracks on their 2014 Tangopéra CD, the concert will feature music ranging from Puccini and Bizet to Gershwin and Weill, alongside pioneers of tango such as Ángel Villoldo, Carlos Gardel and, of course, Astor Piazzolla. Half the tracks on the CD feature the tango and milonga-based, hard-driving instrumental rhythms of Quartango. Lord, backed by the quartet, sings in the others, putting a remarkable spin on repertoire much of which the audience will have heard many times, but, safe to say, not like this!

Something similar happened to Lord herself when she first encountered the Montreal-based group: “When I first heard Quartango’s version of the aria ‘Quando men vo,’ from Puccini’s La Bohème,” she says in the liner notes to the record, “I was startled, because I couldn’t quite place it, even though I’d sung the original version countless times.”

Lord is a distinguished soprano, who was born in Haiti, adopted at the age of six by two Canadians working in Haiti at the time, and grew up in Lévis, Quebec. She made her operatic debut in 2003 with the Opéra de Québec in the role of Liù in Puccini’s Turandot, and has performed several important roles with the Opéra de Montréal (Mimi in Puccini’s La Bohème, the title role in his Suor Angelica and Neddà in Leoncavallo’s I Pagliacci). At the time of a memorable Koerner Hall recital in Toronto in October 2012, she talked to Trish Crawford of the Toronto Star (October 25, 2012) about her childhood years in a nutrition centre in Haiti (“I was in bad shape. Most of the children were orphans. There we could have a meal and education.”); about how overhearing a conservatory singing lesson changed her musical direction after years of piano and violin study (“I heard a lyric class and was fascinated by the production, how to build opera and all the rehearsals”); and about her return to Haiti in 2011. (“I wanted to close the circle. I had questions about my background. ... I am proud of my people.”)

As for Quartango itself, the quartet was formed an astonishing 30 years ago. The group consists of four musicians: René Gosselin, double bass, Stéphane Aubin, piano, Antoine Bareil, violin, and Jonathan Goldman, bandoneon (an instrument operated by a bellows, akin to the accordion).

In the aforementioned interview with The Star’s Crawford about her hopes for that October 28, 2012, Koerner recital, Lord talks about wanting to “invite the audience into my lyric world.” There’s no doubt that her collaboration with Quartango over the past five years has significantly expanded the boundaries of that “lyric world.” In the CD liner notes Lord talks about the group’s “love of risk-taking and the unexpected” and their ability to take “well-known melodies and blend them into ... unique hybrids of tango, opera, popular song, jazz, classical and many other genres. Today, when I sing the original version of the ‘Habanera’ from Carmen,” says Lord, “I almost feel as if it’s missing something.”

Far from “missing something,” the audience at “Tangopéra” on March 3, hearing these unique treatments of familiar repertoire, will likely feel just the opposite – that something has been quite unexpectedly gained.
Giovanni; he sang Schubert and Welsh songs. More recently he has become famous for his renditions of the heavier Wagnerian roles (the Dutchman, Wotan, Hans Sachs). In contrast, Hvorostovsky is essentially a high lyrical baritone, especially known for his interpretations of Russian song, of Tchaikovsky’s Eugene Onegin and of the baritone parts in many of Verdi’s operas (La Traviata, Simon Boccanegra, Don Carlo, Un ballo in maschera). Since Terfel will be singing at Koerner Hall on April 24, audiences will have a good chance to compare the two singers. Last summer Hvorostovsky announced that he was suffering from brain cancer and would have to take the summer off to receive medical treatment. He added, however, that he would be back in the fall to sing the role of the Count di Luna in Verdi’s Il Trovatore at the Met, and that he would fulfill all subsequent engagements. So far he has been as good as his word. On February 21, he will perform songs by Glinka, Rimsky-Korsakov, Tchaikovsky and Strauss.

Tapestry Opera, as its name suggests, specializes in contemporary opera. Many will remember the production of M’dea Undone by John Harris and Marjorie Chan in April 2015. On February 5 and 6, their sixth annual “Songbook” event showcases 36 years of Tapestry’s original repertoire, in the hands of emerging singers and pianists in Tapestry’s New Opera 101 program. Rising Canadian mezzo, Wallis Giunta, and conductor/pianist, Jordan de Souza, will anchor “Songbook VI” at the Ernest Balmer Studio.

Benjamin Butterfield sings Schubert. On February 29, Butterfield and pianist, Stephen Philcox will perform Schubert’s Die schöne Müllerin at Walter Hall. I have heard Butterfield in the past (with Tafelmusik and with the TSO) but never in this repertoire, so I am very much looking forward to the recital.

Lunchtime concerts at the Four Seasons Centre: Bass Robert Pomakow joins the Gryphon Trio in “Classics Reimagined” on Feb 2; Christopher Purves, baritone, and Liz Upchurch, piano, perform in “The Art of Song” on Feb 9; COC Ensemble Studio singers perform highlights from Mozart’s The Marriage of Figaro on Feb 10; Josef Wagner, bass-baritone with Rachel Andrist, piano, performs Schubert’s Winterreise on Feb 11; Doug MacNaughton, baritone and guitar, performs in “Light and Shadow” on Feb 16.

Vocal Quick Picks: Theatre Passe Muraille presents “Chelsea Hotel: The Songs of Leonard Cohen” from Feb 3 to 21; Faye Kellerstein and Noreen Horowitz’s “The Ladies of Broadway” offers selections from Oklahoma!, The King and I, Fiddler on the Roof, My Fair Lady and The Sound of Music at the Miles Nadal JCC, Feb 4; Alan Cumming sings “Sappy Songs” (by Billy Joel, Stephen Sondheim, Rufus Wainwright, Miley Cyrus and others) at the Winter Garden Theatre, Feb 6; “One Sunday” recreates a Sunday “from the Canadian African community of the 1960s” through song, script and piano, performed by Tiki Mercury-Clarke at the Neighbourhood Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Feb 7; mezzo Emily D’Angelo (who recently won first prize in the COC Centre Stage competition for a classical voice) specialises role of Ariodante. Canadian soprano Jane Archibald makes her role debut as Ginevra, Ariodante’s wronged fiancée. Armenian mezzo-soprano Varduli Abrahamyan makes her Canadian debut as Pollinosa, the jealous rival of Ariodante. Young Canadian coloratura soprano Ambrur Braid is Ginevra’s friend and unwitting betrayer, Dalinda. Canadian tenor Owen McCausland is Ariodante’s vengeful brother, Lurcanio, and French bass Frédéric Lis makes his Canadian debut as Ginevra’s father, the King of Scotland. Johannes Debus will conduct his first Handel opera. Ariodante has seven performances from October 16 to November 4, 2016.

Running in repertory with Norma will be the company premiere of Handel’s Ariodante (1735), one of several operas by Handel based on Ludovico Ariosto’s Renaissance epic Orlando Furioso (1532). This will be the sixth opera by Handel the COC has staged and the third since 2012. After falling into obscurity in the 19th century, Ariodante was revived in the 1970s and is now regarded as one of Handel’s greatest operas. The COC production is co-produced with Festival d’Aix-en-Provence, Dutch National Opera, Amsterdam and Lyric Opera of Chicago, and is directed by Richard Jones, who directed The Queen of Spades here in 2002. British mezzo-soprano Alice Coote, last seen here in 2014 as Dejanira in Handel’s Hercules, returns in the trouers role of Ariodante. Canadian soprano Jane Archibald makes her role debut as Ginevra, Ariodante’s wronged fiancée. Armenian mezzo-soprano Varduli Abrahamyan makes her Canadian debut as Pollinosa, the jealous rival of Ariodante. Young Canadian coloratura soprano Ambrur Braid is Ginevra’s friend and unwitting betrayer, Dalinda. Canadian tenor Owen McCausland is Ariodante’s vengeful brother, Lurcanio, and French bass Frédéric Lis makes his Canadian debut as Ginevra’s father, the King of Scotland. Johannes Debus will conduct his first Handel opera. Ariodante has seven performances from October 16 to November 4, 2016.

Mozart and Wagner: The winter season pairs two familiar COC productions – Mozart’s The Magic Flute, last seen in 2011, and Wagner’s Götterdämmerung last seen in 2006. The Magic Flute will be staged by young Canadian director Ashlie Corcoran based on the original direction by Diane Paulus. Québécois early music specialist Bernard Labadie, music director of Les Violons du Roy, will make his COC debut as the conductor. Canadian tenors Andrew Haji and Owen McCausland alternate in the role of Tamino, Russian Elena Tsallagova and Canadian Kirsten MacKinnon alternate in the role of Tamino’s beloved Pamina, and Canadian baritones Joshua Hopkins and Phillip Addis alternate as the bird-catcher Papageno. American Kathryn Levek and Canadian Ambrur Braid share the coloratura soprano role of the Queen of the Night, while Croatian bass Goran Juric, in his Canadian debut, and American bass Matt Boehler share the role of

In repertory with Mozart’s lighthearted opera is Wagner’s doom-laden *Götterdämmerung*, the fourth opera of Wagner’s *Ring Cycle*, that concludes the action begun in *Das Rheingold* and carried on through *Die Walküre* and *Siegfried*. The charismatic American soprano Christine Goerke, who stunned audiences here with her effortless Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre* in 2015, returns to complete the valkyrie’s fateful journey in *Götterdämmerung*. Austrian tenor Andreas Schager makes his COC debut as Brünnhilde’s beloved Siegfried. German baritone Martin Gantner is Siegfried’s rival Gunther. Estonian Ain Anger makes his Canadian debut as Gunther’s evil half-brother, Hagen. Ileana Montalbetti is their sister Gutrune and Canadian bass Robert Pomakov is the dwarf Alberich. The original director, Tim Albery, takes the helm and Johannes Debus conducts his first *Götterdämmerung*. The opera runs for seven performances from February 2 to 25, 2017.

**Somers’ Riel and Puccini’s Tosca:** The spring season opens with what will surely be the opera event of the year – the revival of Harry Somers’ *Louis Riel* in a new production directed by Canadian Peter Hinton and conducted by Johannes Debus. Somers wrote the opera for Canada’s centennial in 1967 and now the COC is reviving it as a co-production with the National Arts Centre in Ottawa for Canada’s sesquicentennial in 2017.

The opera, with a libretto in English, French, Latin and Cree by Mavor Moore and Jacques Langlois, focuses on the Manitoba Métis schoolteacher Louis Riel (1844–85), who led the Red River Rebellion of 1869–70 and the North-West Rebellion of 1884–85. It is a story that serves as a nexus for tensions in Canada among the English, French and First Nations. Led by Riel, the Francophone Métis prevented the newly appointed Anglphone, William McDougall, from entering the huge territory acquired by the newly formed Canadian government. Riel set up his own provisional government and negotiated directly with the Canadian government to establish Manitoba as a province. With the arrival of Canadian troops, Riel was formally
exiled from Canada but returned to lead the unsuccessful North-West Rebellion of the Métis in what would become Saskatchewan, where he was tried for high treason and executed.

Singing the title role is COC favourite Russell Braun. The all-Canadian principals include baritone James Westman as Sir John A. Macdonald; soprano Simone Osborne as Marguerite, Riel’s wife; mezzo-soprano Allyson McHardy as Julie, Riel’s mother and confidante; tenor Michael Colvin as Thomas Scott, the Orangeman executed on orders from Riel; and bass John Relyea as Bishop Taché, the cleric who helped the government betray Riel. The COC gave Louis Riel its world premiere in Toronto in 1967 and later performed it in Montreal. The COC revived it in 1975 and took it to the National Arts Centre in Ottawa and to the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., where the Washington Star described it as “one of the most imaginative and powerful scores to have been written in this century.” The opera runs for seven performances from April 20 to May 13, 2017.

Moving from the unfamiliar to the familiar, the COC closes the 16/17 season with Puccini’s ever-popular Tosca (1900), last seen in 2012. This will be the second revival of the production designed by Kevin Knight and directed by Paul Curran. In 2012, Canadian soprano Adrienne Pieczonka sang the title role. This time because of its extended run, she will share it with American soprano Keri Alkema. Returning to the COC is renowned Mexican tenor Ramón Vargas making his role debut as Tosca’s lover, Cavaradossi, a role he shares with Italian tenor Andrea Carè. German bass-baritone Markus Marquardt makes his Canadian debut as the tyrannical Scarpia. The production runs for 12 performances from April 30 to May 20. Canadian conductor Keri-Lynn Wilson will make her COC debut at the podium.

Also good news at the season announcement was that the contract of popular COC music director Johannes Debus has been extended through the 2020/21 season. The revival of Somers’ Louis Riel seems to mark a new commitment to Canadian opera after this season’s staging of Barbara Monk Feldman’s Pyramus and Thisbe. The staying power of operas from the past can only be marked through revivals and the COC is the only company in Canada big enough to revive a large-scale opera like Louis Riel.

Also, the COC showed a new interest in fostering Canadian directing talent with the selection of Ashlie Corcoran and Peter Hinton. The late COC General Director Richard Bradshaw did much in this area by pairing a wide range of Canadian film and stage directors with operas. This led to such successes as Robert Lepage’s Dialogues of the Carmelites and Kevin Knight’s production and direction of The Turn of the Screw. We’ll see how Corcoran and Hinton do with Somers’ Tales of Hoffmann.

The only negative note is that the number of performances will shrink to 53 in 2016/17 from 55 in 2015/16, thus continuing their gradual decrease from a high of 70 in 2009/10 season.

Turning to the current season: Turning to the present, two COC productions will be playing in February. From February 2 to 14 is François Girard’s acclaimed production of Wagner’s Siegfried. German tenor Stefan Vinke sings the title role while the amazing soprano Christine Goerke returns as Brünnhilde in this, the third opera in Wagner’s Ring Cycle. They are joined by Wolfgang Ablinger-Sperrhake as the dwarf, Mime, Alan Held as Wotan and Phillip Ens as the dragon, Fafner. Johannes Debus conducts.

Running in repertory with Siegfried is Mozart’s The Marriage of Figaro from February 4 to 27 in a production from the Salzburg Festival directed by Claus Guth. Josef Wagner stars in the title role with Jane Archibald as Susanna, Erin Wall as the Countess, Russell Braun as the Count and Emily Fons as Cherubino. Johannes Debus conducts. The COC Ensemble Studio takes over the principal roles on February 22.

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

Beat by Beat | Classical & Beyond

Frang and Skride
In Local Debuts

PAUL ENNIS

Two brilliant young European violinists make their local debuts in February. In winning the 2001 Queen Elizabeth Competition, Latvian violinist Baiba Skride joined such luminaries as Oistrakh, Kogan, Laredo and Repin in the fiddling firmament. The Guardian recently called Skride “a passionate heart-on-sleeve player.” Now 34, she will appear with the TSO in Brahms’ richly sonorous Violin Concerto, February 17 and 18.

According to BBC Music Magazine, the 29-year-old Norwegian, Vilde Frang, “has the knack of breathing life into every note.” Frang will give a recital at Koerner Hall, March 2, with Michail Lifits on piano. Her program begins with Schubert’s Fantasy in C Major for Violin and Piano D934, another masterpiece from the last year of the composer’s life, and moves through Lutoslawski’s Partita, commissioned by Pinchas Zukerman in 1985, before concluding with Faure’s ever-popular Violin Sonata No.1. Frang began her musical education at four, played Sarasate’s Carmen Fantasy with the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Mariss Jansons, when she was barely 13, and was thrust into the limelight when she was named Credit Suisse Young Artist of the Year in 2012. A recording contract and worldwide touring were the result.

It’s illuminating to hear both violinists talking about inspiration and interpretation in interviews readily available in cyberspace. Skride told Tobias Fischer (on Tokaji.com April 20, 2006) that interpretation “means giving my opinion to the audience, while at the same time respecting what the composer might have wanted. It’s a combination of my personal beliefs and the composer’s probable intent.” Her interpretive process, she continued, is “almost always emotional. Of course, there are certain things you have to know about and naturally you do get your facts straight while preparing. But 99 percent is intuition, absolutely.” Her approach to performing live is “simply giving everything you have in that very moment.”

In a YouTube video biography made shortly after her Credit Suisse honour, while soaring on her violin in rehearsal for Bruch’s Violin Concerto No.1 with Jakub Hrůša and the Philharmonia Orchestra, Frang spoke of the importance she places on trusting her instincts, how it’s crucial to take in things and let yourself be inspired. “Inspiration is really the most important thing,” she said. “I use my instrument as a tool [to transform inspiration]. Whether you hear Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, a wonderful horn solo or the sound of the sea, it’s something you can actually work with.”

Later that year, on August 1, 2012, Frang spoke with Laurie Niles of violinist.com about what brought her to the violin. “My father is a double bass player, and my sister is also a double bass player – my mother isn’t a musician, actually. But I watched my sister play in youth orchestras, when I was small, and obviously I thought I was the next one in line, in the double basses family! To me it was a natural thing, but then my father made this argument: our family had a Volkswagen, which was a very tiny car. He said, ‘Can you imagine, when we go on holiday, with three double basses? There is no chance the whole family will get space in the car!’

“So he made me a smaller instrument. It was made of cardboard – there were no strings on it. So I could put my Little Twin Star stickers on it, and Hello Kitty stickers – but the fact that it didn’t make any sound – I found this to be very frustrating! I had to ‘play’ on it for almost a year until I finally got a violin which was alive, which made sound.

“I remember the moment I got the violin that was real, that was really living and alive – I’ve never practised so inspired in all my life, as if I did the first couple of days with that violin! I was in seventh heaven, I was so happy.”
Niles asked Frang, who began with the Suzuki method, how she connected with Anne-Sophie Mutter (See my November 2014 column in The WholeNote for more on Mutter and her foundation): “I first played for Anne-Sophie Mutter when I was 11-years-old,” she said. “After that, she asked me to keep her updated, and she followed my development. I kept sending her recordings and tapes of my playing, and letters about how I was doing. It was obviously a very inspirational thing for me, because I knew that she was always there watching, somewhere. When I was 15, she invited me to Munich to audition for her again, and then I was taken into her foundation, her Freundeskreis Stiftung, or Circle of Friends Foundation, and I was also given this Vuillaume instrument.

“Ms. Mutter has also been a great, great mentor to me over all these years. I did a tour with her in 2008, and we played in Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center in Washington. I played the Bach Double with her. Of course, I learned a lot from this experience, not only playing for her, but playing with her. I think the most important was that she encouraged me to always trust my own instincts and follow my own voice. That is her top priority, and that’s the message she wanted to give, which I think is a wonderful thing.

“But more than any other musician I know, she is extremely focused on exploring the musical score, in order to get as close as possible to the composer. Many people might consider her to be very free, but actually she has the most authentic and strictest approach that I know of. I think that is why she allows herself to have that amount of freedom. The more you know the piece and the better you know the score, the more freedom you actually have yourself.”

Hamelin past and future. Marc-André Hamelin’s Music Toronto recital on January 5 had a blissful component running through it from Liszt’s Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude to the Schubert Sonata in B-flat D960 and the well-chosen encore, Messiaen’s Prelude “The Dove.” For me, this emotional line reached its apex with the sublime second movement of the Schubert which had a profundity that reminded me of the last three Beethoven sonatas. There was a serenity to Hamelin’s playing that was more pronounced than when he played at Koerner Hall the previous March. At times he seemed to slow the music just enough that you could feel it palpably.

During the conversation I had with him in November (see my article in the December 2015-January 2016 issue of The WholeNote), Hamelin described his relationship with Mendelssohn’s Piano Concerto No.1, which he will perform with the TSO on February 25 and 27. “I learned it very early,” he told me. “I remember the first time I played it was with Skrowaczewski and the Montreal Symphony. I believe it was somewhere like 1990 or ’91. It’s certainly not the deepest piece ever written but it shows consummate craftsmanship. And it’s also very entertaining for audiences. And in some ways quite touching.” Louis Langrée, famous for his stewardship of the Mostly Mozart Festival, his career blossoming as music director of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, will conduct.

Tickets $20, Seniors and Students $17
Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, 427 Bloor Street West
Box Office 416-282-6636 | www.associates-tso.org
Quick Picks
Feb 4 The last time I heard the Annex Quartet, they showed their sensitive musicianship supporting Jan Lisiecki in the chamber versions of Beethoven’s Piano Concertos Nos. 2 and 4. Their solid Music Toronto recital includes string quartets by Janáček, R. Murray Schafer and Mendelssohn. Feb 18 The irrepresible St. Lawrence String Quartet makes its annual visit to Music Toronto with works by Haydn, Samuel Adams and Schumann. Mar 1 The distinguished British pianist Steven Osborne performs two Schubert Impromptus D935 (fresh from his sparkling new Schubert CD) and a selection of Debussy and Rachmaninoff, in his Music Toronto return.

Feb 5 Conductor Eric Paetkau’s contagious energy and musicianship guide the eclectic group of 27 in Finzi’s bucolic A Severn Rhapsody and a trio of French works including Dubois’ Cavatine for Horn featuring the TSO’s Gabe Radford. The dynamic Nadina Mackie Jackson is the bassoon soloist in the world premiere of Paul Frehner’s Apollo X.

Feb 11 An ingenious piece of animation, The Triplets of Belleville is filled with cultural references that fly by with terrific panache, Sylvain Chomet’s 2003 film has rightly become a classic. Composer Benoît Charest leads Le Terrible Orchestre de Belleville in the live performance of his infectious, original score for the film (rooted in 1930s vaudeville/jazz) accompanying this special screening at Roy Thomson Hall.

Feb 12 Cellist Rachel Mercer follows up her well-received CD of Bach’s unaccompanied cello suites with an exciting concert of music for solo cello at Gallery 345, beginning with one of those Bach suites. Mercer then moves from Cassadó’s early 20th century suite to contemporary pieces by Andrew Downing and the world premiere of Darren Sigemund’s Solo Suite.

Feb 13 Celebrate the Year of the Monkey with the TSO as the great violinist Maxim Vengerov is the soloist in the Butterfly Lovers Concerto. Long Yu, artistic director of the China Philharmonic Orchestra and music director of the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra, conducts. Feb 22 The Associates of the TSO present works by Françaix, Janáček and Brahms for various combinations of flute, oboe, horn, bassoon and two clarinets. Mar 2 Seven soloists from the TSO’s ranks (including the ubiquitous Teng Li) showcase their talents when the TSO presents music by Paganini, Vivaldi and Haydn (his elegant and tuneful Sinfonia Concertante in B-flat Major for the unusual combination of soloists, violin, cello, oboe and bassoon).

Feb 17 The hip, Brooklyn-based orchestral collective, The Knights, make their Koerner Hall debut, joined by violinist Gil Shaham, whose warm playing should illuminate Prokofiev’s Violin Concerto No.2, in all its angularity and dark beauty. Feb 26 Koerner Hall gives us the rare gift of hearing violinist Christian Tetzlaff, his sister, cellist Tanja Tetzlaff and pianist Lars Vogt performing piano trio by Schumann, Dvorák and Brahms. Richard Haskell praised them in these pages last September for their “conducive music-making in the three Brahms piano trios.” Andras Schiff’s monumental Feb 28 recital in Koerner Hall is sold out. Those lucky enough to have tickets (myself included) can look forward to a program memorable for its inclusion of the final piano sonatas by Haydn, Beethoven, Mozart and Schubert. Mar 4 Much-in-demand (especially since she received the Avery Fisher Career Grant in 2008) Canadian violinist, Karen Gomyo, teams up with well-regarded cellist, Christian Poltéra, and talented young Finnish pianist, Juho Pohjonen, to perform trios and sonatas by

Music for Good Friday
Requiem by Johannes Brahms
• Gisele Kulak & Jordan Scholl, soloists

Alto Rhapsody by Johannes Brahms
• Laura Pudewell, soloist

Cantata #78 (Jesus, By Thy Cross and Passion) by Johann Sebastian Bach
• Alison Campbell, Claudia Lemcke, Charles Davidson, Jordan Scholl, soloists

REQUIEM: In a Time of Sorrow
Metropolitan Festival Choir and Orchestra
March 25, 7:30 p.m.

Admission: $30/10 for ages 18 and under
Tickets: metunited.org or 416-363-0331 ext. 26
Metropolitan United Church | 56 Queen St. E (at Church Street)
Haydn, Janáček and Dvořák. All four of these events are presented by the Royal Conservatory.

Feb 19 The charming Trio Arkel (TSO members violist Teng Li and cellist Winona Zelenka, COC concertmaster Marie Bérard) move into their new venue, Jeanne Lamon Hall at Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, with a program including Gubaidulina’s exhilarating String Trio, Kodály’s Serenade for Two Violins and Viola and Beethoven’s glorious Quintet for Strings, Op.29 “The Storm.” Joining them for this and a repeat concert in London, Feb 29, presented by the UWO Don Wright Faculty of Music, will be violinist Scott St. John and violinist Sharon Wei.

Feb 20 Also in London, Jeffery Concerts presents the award-winning cellist Yegor Dyachkov and longtime chamber music partner, pianist Jean Saulnier, in works by Brahms, Schumann and Janáček.

Feb 23 Charles Richard-Hamelin, who finished second in last year’s prestigious Chopin competition in Warsaw, will give a COC free noon-hour concert of a selection of Chopin’s last piano works at the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre. Based on his thrilling performance of Chopin’s Sonata No.3 at Mazzoleni Hall on January 15, I urge you not to miss it.


Paul Ennis is the managing editor of The WholeNote.
Despite chilly temperatures outside, the accumulation of new music events occurring in both Toronto and the main cities of southern Ontario, in February and early March, can be likened to a pot of water coming to a vigorously rolling boil. Bookending the dates covered by this issue are two major new music festivals—the University of Toronto’s New Music Festival (January 30 to February 7) and the Toronto Symphony’s New Creations Festival, opening March 5 and concluding on March 16. Since these festivals straddle the listings period, let’s begin with them, for those readers ready to jump in early in February and for those who are planning well ahead for March.

**U of T New Music Festival:** As was previously mentioned in the December-January issue of *The WholeNote*, the highlight of this year’s U of T New Music Festival is the opportunities it presents to experience the music of Canadian composer Allan Gordon Bell from Calgary, as well as one concert featuring music of his former students. A key aspect of Bell’s compositional approach is the way he maps his listening experiences of the Canadian soundscape to the acoustic world of instruments, whether that be orchestra, string quartet, opera or jazz ensembles.

It also has a fine crop of workshops, master classes and guest lectures, so I suggest perusing the listings and the festival website for the full scope of what is to be experienced. (The Land’s End Ensemble will also be performing a concert of works by Allan Bell and Omar Daniel on February 5 at Western University in London.)

**New Creations:** Jumping ahead into March, it’s not too early to take a peek into the upcoming New Creations Festival. This year’s featured guest is Australian composer, violist and conductor, Brett Dean, who is currently artist-in-residence with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. Dean spent a good part of his career in Europe playing viola for 14 years in the Berlin Philharmonic, eventually turning to composition as he approached the age of 40. One of his signature works—his Viola Concerto—will be performed by the composer at the opening concert on March 5. Festivalgoers will hear two additional orchestral works composed by Dean, along with a piece by fellow Australian Anthony Pateras. Local DJ legend Skratch Bastid, who appeared last May at the 21C festival, will be performing, along with the Alfara String Quartet in a commissioned work by Kevin Lau; Bastid has also been commissioned to create a Festival Remix for the final concert on March 12. The festival will also offer a world premiere collaboration between composer Paul Fehren and filmmaker Peter Mettler, a collaboration by Australian James Ledger that pays tribute to Anton Webern and John Lennon, and a piece by Jonny Greenwood of the iconic English rock group, Radiohead. A more in-depth look at some of these artists and concerts will appear in the March issue.

**Pick of the Crop:** February offers a broad scope for aficionados of new music no matter what your stylistic preferences may be.

These early weeks of 2016 have seen the passing of several iconic performers, such as Toronto’s own Joe Macerollo and Héctor del Curto from Argentina, playing compositions by several Canadian composers. R. Murray Schafer’s work, *La Testa d’Adriana* for soprano and accordion, for one example, features the spectacle of only the head of Adriana sitting on a table as she sings in interaction with the accordionist.

**Going Home Star:** The Royal Winnipeg Ballet along with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra is making a visit to the Sony Centre on February 5 and 6 to perform a new work entitled *Going Home Star – Truth and Reconciliation*, ballet, written by Joseph Boyden based on stories that emerged during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission tour of indigenous communities.

Contradictory as it may seem to use the European art forms of ballet and orchestra to tell these stories, the creative team has worked to bring aspects of indigenous culture into the overall mix in order to push the boundaries of the form. With a score composed by Christos Hatzis, the music includes the powerhouse vocals of Tanya Tagaq as well as the Northern Cree Singers. Tagaq’s experimentalist approach to traditional Inuit throat singing combines the influences of electronic and industrial music to create an unforgettable experience. (Looking ahead to May, Tagaq will be one of the featured artists of the upcoming 21C festival—but more on that in a couple of issues’ time.)

**Roundup:** The Music Gallery presents their second Emergents concert of the season on February 5 with saxophone improvisations by Linsey Wellman and a song cycle by composer Lisa Conway, based on myths from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. The literary theme continues the next evening on February 6 with Spectrum Music’s concert featuring works by members of their composer collective based on modern literary gems, including one work by Brad Cheesman inspired by the novel *Infinite Jest*, written by the acclaimed American author David Foster Wallace. On February 12, the Thin Edge New Music Collective performs a series of premieres by both Canadian and international composers at the Array Space. And on March 6, they will be performing in a pop-up afternoon concert there. Now in their fifth year, Thin Edge is currently in the midst of their ensemble-in-residence stint at Arraymusic, which will continue into next season as well.

The Array Space is flourishing as a home for improvisers, with several opportunities in February for fans of this scene to check it out, including Audiopollination on February 13, *coxisDance* on February 20, and various Toronto improvisers appearing on February 16, 19 and 28. In this vein, I want to also mention two Improv Soirées at York University on February 11 and March 3.

**Mixed repertoire:** A sure sign of the flourishing new music scene is the increasing appearance of new music within concerts of more standard classical repertoire and there are several examples of this in February. The group of 27 chamber orchestra performs the world premiere of Paul Fehren’s bassoon concerto, *Apollo X* on February 5. The Junction Trio will perform new works by Ron Korb on February 21 and by Stephanie Martin on March 6. Music Toronto performs a work by Schafer on February 4 and music by Oskar Morawetz can be heard performed by Adam Sherkin on March 3.
Wendalyn Bartley is a Toronto-based composer and electro-vocal artist. sounddreaming@gmail.com.

**Beat by Beat | Early Music**

**Who Says It’s Too Late for Early?**

DAVID PODGORSKI

**D** are one ask if there will come a time in music history when the historically informed performance practice advocated by the early music movement becomes no longer necessary? Devotees of capital-C classical music may well wonder why the early music revival is so preoccupied with bringing back minor composers from the 17th and 18th centuries, but stops, officially, with the death of Bach in 1750.

It’s a worthwhile question to ask: were there, after all, treatises on musical practice, like those beloved by the early music movement, written well into the 19th century, and the instruments of a Romantic-era orchestra were no more significantly different from those of their predecessors as they are from an orchestra of today.

**Fans of Tafelmusik**, for example, might once in a while dare to whisper, given the group’s near-canonic range of orchestral literature, that the group should take on more conventionally classical repertoire for a symphony orchestra. And indeed, they sometimes do. This month, as an example, Tafelmusik is giving the concertgoing public the opportunity to hear an early music take on the Classical and Romantic eras. Hopefully they will both bend the ears of a few traditionalists with a rare foray into 19th century repertoire that features works by Brahms, Beethoven and Rheinberger, and will offer a fresh take on the works in question for hard core classicists more accustomed to hearing the same repertoire kicked to death by over-large orchestras in unforgivingly large halls. If there’s an early music group in Toronto that’s qualified to take on Romantic repertoire, Tafelmusik is it – the group cut its teeth on Haydn and Mozart in the early ’90s, making it the most forward-leaning ensemble on the Toronto early music scene.

Tafelmusik’s concert, on February 4 through 7 at Koerner Hall, features German conductor Bruno Weil, who has been leading the group through the Beethoven piano concertos and symphonies since 1996, and is now back to complete the cycle with a performance of the Ninth Symphony. While it’s easy to dismiss Beethoven’s Ninth as the warhorse of orchestral concert programs (who can’t hum the Ode to Joy?), it’s not often that one gets to hear it done by a period ensemble on classical instruments. From a performance practice
Mira Glodeanu returns to lead Tafelmusik February 25 to 28

The Ninth is also the gateway to the 19th century, and the choral works chosen to accompany it in this program complement Beethoven’s final symphony perfectly. Brahms’s chromatic, fugal Warum ist das Licht gegeben and Rheinberger’s beautifully imitative Abendlied are both delightful to listen to and entirely appropriate for an early music group – Brahms’ well-known penchant for trying to compose in the style of Bach is quite evident here, and the Rheinberger sounds like a Palestrina motet updated for a 19th-century audience.

Well is also a fine conductor with the unique ability to straddle both early music and modern territory deftly. Having him back to conduct the Ninth in order to complete the Beethoven cycle celebrates a particularly successful artistic collaboration between the conductor and the orchestra. Who knows? Maybe we will see Well next year conducting Tafelmusik in a Schubert or Brahms symphony.

If you miss this particular orchestral extravaganza, you might still want to catch Tafelmusik’s other concert later this month. Like the earlier concert, it features the group doing orchestral repertoire that stretches hard-line early music definitions; this time Mozart, not Beethoven, is the evening’s dedicatee. The Romanian violinist Mira Glodeanu will return to lead the group in a concert of Mozart’s greatest hits – including Eine kleine Nachtmusik, Symphony No. 40 and his Sinfonia Concertante. It should be a worthwhile evening for similar reasons to the Beethoven concert – like Well, Glodeanu is a gifted musician with an ear for Classical repertoire, and it will be interesting to see what kind of performance she can pull out of the ensemble. And once more, it’s a chance to hear an early music take on some orchestral standards by a group that will do a first-class job. Maybe that’s why Tafelmusik keeps getting mistaken for the TSO. You can catch Tafelmusik doing Mozart at their more usual venue, Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, February 25 to 28.

The Way of the Consort: It’s been 16 years since the Toronto Consort released their medieval album The Way of the Pilgrim, and if you’ve never heard the disc before, you’ll get a chance to hear it in concert February 12 and 13. The Consort is re-releasing the album this month on the Toronto-based independent label Marquis records, and celebrating the occasion with a concert/CD-release party at Trinity-St. Paul’s on February 12 and 13 at 8 pm. The Way of the Pilgrim features songs from the 12th and 13th centuries, from Spain, France and Germany, sung by crusaders, travellers, and yes, pilgrims to the Holy Land. The Way of the Pilgrim became something of a seminal album after its release in 2000, and it ranks as one of the best recordings of medieval music by a Canadian group, so it’s good to see that the Consort is giving the disc some publicity as well as a live performance.

Scaramella pardessus: The social conventions around what is considered appropriate behaviour often seem confusing to outsiders or succeeding generations. In the ultra-conservative conformity of 18th-century France, it was apparently considered unladylike behaviour for a woman to hold a violin on her shoulder, or worse, under her chin. The elegant solution the French came up with was the pardessus de viole, a miniature version of the viola da gamba that could play music in the same register as the violin while being held daintily in the lap. On March 5 at 8pm in the Victoria College Chapel Scaramella pays tribute to this eccentric instrument with a concert of French music composed just for the pardessus de viole. Montreal-based gambist Méliansand Corriveau joins New York harpsichordist Eric Milnes and Toronto’s own Sielle Morton for a concert of French 18th-century music. An excellent chance to hear a rare instrument played by a virtuoso, so be sure to check it out.

Pisendel: Sometimes you can judge someone by the company he keeps. We might not appreciate the music of Johann Georg Pisendel very much today, but the Dresden composer and orchestra leader was a colleague and friend to a galaxy of talent in 18th century Germany and Italy, including Bach, Vivaldi, Telemann, Zelenka, JG Graun – you get the idea. Although Pisendel was more of a bandleader and violinist than a composer – he left us with just a handful of violin concertos, orchestral works and sonatas – he had the good fortune to be a musician in a city where culture counted for a lot. His employer, Augustus the Strong, may well rank as the most extravagant man in history, and spent lavishly on cultural events ranging from court balls, Venetian-inspired masquerades, and animal-tossing contests (?) in order to entertain a wide succession of mistresses, to a court orchestra, directed by Pisendel and paid for by Augustus, which was one of the finest, and largest, in Europe. On February 28 at 2 pm at Gallery 345, my group, Rezonance, presents a concert of some of the finest music of the late Baroque, all dedicated to a man who was one of the greatest conductors of his day. If I may be permitted to blow my own (modern) horn for a moment, Rezonance is an energetic ensemble that features up-and-coming talent in the city playing insightful and interesting concert programs. If you’re interested in an informal, fun concert of chamber music, this concert promises to be both informative and entertaining.

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

BRIAN CHANG

“Ballet cuts right to the heart of what’s most beautiful, physically in humanity and what’s most beautiful in story. We are taking a very European form and introducing it to a First Nations experience.” - Joseph Boyden

A remarkable moment in history arrived on December 15, 2015, when the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada presented its final report on the dark history of Indian Residential Schools. Beginning in 2008 the TRC has gathered testimony from 6,000 survivors of, and witnesses to, a 120-year legacy of institutional racism, neglect and destruction. The report makes 94 specific calls to action to help create a better future and to acknowledge and repair the damages of the past and present. The Royal Winnipeg Ballet’s production of Going Home Star – Truth and Reconciliation, which is being presented in Toronto at the Sony Centre for three performances on February 5 and 6, can be seen as a swift response to this call for action.

With the support of the TRC of Canada, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet commissioned a story by author Joseph Boyden to be set to music by composer Christos Hatzis and choreographed by Mark Godden for the RWB’s 75th anniversary. In this story, Boyden, the Giller Award-winning author of Through Black Spruce, brings together Annie, a “young, urban First Nations woman adrift in a contemporary life of youthful excess,” and Gordon, “a homeless First Nations man who escaped the Residential School system [... who] possesses the magic and power of the trickster.” Accompanying the RWB is the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra. Vocal music is provided by the incredible Tanya Tagaq, Steve Wood and the Northern Cree Singers, with Tagaq’s voice as an ancestral presence, powering Annie’s story and her reconnection to history. The power of voices joined in song is also there in the show, with the Pow Wow of the Northern Cree Singers bringing the final scene of the first act to its culmination.

The show’s composer, two-time JUNO Award recipient Christos Hatzis, is no stranger to working with Aboriginal peoples, having spent considerable time producing music inspired by the Inuit. Hatzis, is no stranger to working with Aboriginal peoples, having spent considerable time producing music inspired by the Inuit, and her reconnection to history. The power of voices joined in song is also there in the show, with the Pow Wow of the Northern Cree Singers bringing the final scene of the first act to its culmination, with wild drumming creating the sound of a train. The music is truly invigorating.

The show’s composer, two-time JUNO Award recipient Christos Hatzis, is no stranger to working with Aboriginal peoples, having spent considerable time producing music inspired by the Inuit, including the award-winning radio documentary Footprints in the Sand. During the year he spent working on the music for Going Home Star, he developed anxiety and was briefly hospitalized as he came to terms with the difficult stories that inform the work. It is no light undertaking. As Boyden says “[It’s] a way to allow Canadians to begin to understand something of such huge pain [and] … to absorb not just the pain and the anger but the beauty as well.”

It’s a thought mirrored in the TRC report itself: “Residential schools were a systematic, government-sponsored attempt to destroy Aboriginal cultures and languages and to assimilate Aboriginal peoples so that they no longer existed as distinct peoples … Across the globe, the arts have provided a creative pathway to breaking silences, transforming conflicts, and mending the damaged relationships of violence, oppression, and exclusion.” I will be in the audience for Going Home Star – Truth and Reconciliation, and I hope you will be too.

Klang der Ewigkeit: I am a big fan of cross-disciplinary music collaborations, so I’m very excited to see the Orpheus Choir/Chorus Niagara presentation of the Canadian premiere of German filmmaker Bastian Cleve’s 2005 film, Klang der Ewigkeit (Sound of Eternity), a multimedia presentation of the Bach Mass in B Minor. Consisting of 27 short episodes inspired by the 27 movements of the mass, Cleve’s scenescapes were filmed across the globe from Germany to Morocco, India to the United States. Originally created for Helmuth Rilling at the Bach Oregon Festival, the setting was controversial since the B Minor Mass is beloved by many and thought to be perfect in its existing form. But crossing the lines between music and visual art is not new. Another current example, The Decades Project, unites the Orpheus Choir/Chorus with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and the Art Gallery of Ontario in an exploration of the ways in which visual art has inspired music and music has inspired visual art. Earlier this year the presentation of Claude Debussy’s La Mer accompanied an impressionist painting by
Armand Guillaumin at the AGO.

The Orpheus Choir, along with Chorus Niagara, performs Klang der Ewigkeit with the Talisker Players on March 5 at FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre in St. Catharines and on March 6 at Metropolitan United Church in Toronto.

In the (not very) bleak midwinter: There is so much happening in choral music the first weekend of February, you’ll be hard-pressed to choose:

Tafelmusik’s epic journey to record every Beethoven symphony comes to a head with the most thrilling of them all – Beethoven’s Symphony No.9. As Beethoven’s last symphonic work, and largely his most popular, Tafelmusik’s Choir and Orchestra will fill Koerner Hall with unforgettable music in four performances beginning February 4.

On February 6, the Toronto Mass Choir, under director Karen Burke, will be presenting a concert in collaboration with the Toronto Jazz Orchestra at Bloor Street United Church at 7:30pm. (And if you miss Mass Choir then, you can catch them later in the month when, along with York University, they will be hosting “Power Up,” a gospel music workshop. With workshops ranging from Introduction to Steelpan to Choir 101 to instrument coaching to dance, this three-day intensive event runs February 19 to 21, finishing with a concert at Islington Evangel Centre. With live instruments and well over 100 singers, the Toronto Mass Choir will definitely raise the roof.)

Also on February 6, the Mississauga Festival Choir presents its annual “Festival of Friends.” Ten years on, this concert has raised $25,000 for local charities, this year’s beneficiary being Alzheimer’s Niagara. Six choirs will be featured including the very well-known Cawthra Park Secondary School Boys in B & Chamber Choir, the Mississauga Festival Chamber Choir, the Mississauga Festival Youth Choir, the Mississauga Choral Society Chorus and the Queensmen Male Chorus. Singing en masse and separately, highlights include Timothy Corlis’ Gloria (Missa Pax), Eric Whittacre’s Water Night and Stephen Hatfield’s Jubula Jesu.

February 7 is even more jam-packed. At 7pm the Victoria College Choir and the Toronto School of Theology Choir present a free performance of Vivaldi’s Gloria in B minor in the Victoria College Chapel. Earlier in the day, at 2:30, VOICEBOX: Opera in Concert presents Salieri’s Falstaff at the Jane Mallett Theatre, with the VOICEBOX Opera in Concert Chorus ably supporting a fine cast of soloists. Half an hour later, at 3pm, at Grace Church-on-the-Hill, the U of T Faculty of Music’s New Music Festival presents a “Choral Contemporary Showcase Concert” featuring the U of T Men’s Chorus and Women’s Chamber Choir with Hilary Apfelstadt, Elaine Choi and Tracy Wong conducting. And at 4pm, the Toronto Children’s Chorus is presenting a free outreach concert at St. Paul’s Basilica on Power St., featuring their Chorale Choir and Youth Choir; Elise Bradley and Matthew Otto conduct.

Also of note: Speaking of the Toronto Children’s Chorus, the TCC Chamber Choir will be going on tour in Boston and New York City in early March, performing with Coro Allegro and the Boston City Singers in Cambridge, singing in the Choirs of America Nationals and performing at Stern Auditorium in Carnegie Hall. Before they go, they’ll be warming up in a concert titled “Poles Apart,” February 27 at Yorkminster Park Baptist Church.

The following day, February 28 at 4pm, and right across the road at Christ Church Deer Park, the Toronto Classical Singers and the Talisker Players Orchestra present “Fauré’s Requiem and Durufle’s Requiem, along with other music these popular pieces have inspired. Later that same day at 7.30pm, the Schola Cantorum Choir and the Theatre of Early Music Orchestra present choralises from a variety of popular masterworks including Bach’s St. Matthew Passion, St. John Passion and Handel’s Messiah and Israel In Egypt in the Trinity College Chapel at the University of Toronto.

This being a leap year, there’s an extra day in February, and what better way to celebrate it than with the massive 200-voice Bach Children’s Chorus, as part of Roy Thomson Hall’s free noon-hour concerts. These concerts feature the grand organ and are a lovely break from a day’s work.

And on into March, right at the beginning of the month, the Kaleid Choral Festival takes place in Kitchener. Under the leadership of Jennifer Moir, this two-day festival for young voices culminates in a performance on March 3 in St. Peter’s Lutheran Church, Kitchener. Artist-in-residence of the festival, Rajaton, will be performing as well. This small Finnish a cappella group produces music unlike any other heard in Canada.

Follow Brian on Twitter @bfchang Send info/media/tips to choralscene@thewholenote.com

Expect Something Different!

Orpheus Choir
Making a Scene!

2015-2016

SOUND OF ETERNITY BACH MASS IN B MINOR

Sunday March 6, 2016 4:30 p.m.
Metropolitan United Church, 56 Queen St E.

Rediscover Bach’s majestic Mass in B Minor with German filmmaker Bastian Clevé’s dramatic film Sound of Eternity, a lush visual interpretation of Bach’s masterpiece. Mirroring the grand emotional span of the Mass, Clevé’s 27 short episodes move from alpine mountains to glaciers to peaceful valleys and pulsating metropolitan cities. A Canadian premiere, this breath-taking choral and cinematic tour-de-force offers a powerful meditation on the circle of life.

Anita Krause, mezzo • Geoff Sirett, baritone • Jennifer Krabbe, soprano • Charles Sy, tenor
Orpheus Choir • Chorus Niagara • The Talisker Players

Tickets: $35; $30 senior; $10 student
www.orpheuschoirtoronto.com
Johnny Cowell Ninety and Still Counting!

Jack MacQuarrie

For most of us the arrival of January heralds the beginning of a new year or the departure from an old year. For some it marks the beginning of a new decade in their lives. A few days ago I had the pleasure of attending the birthday party for one such person. It was trumpeter Johnny Cowell’s 90th birthday party. Johnny and Joan, his wife of 60-plus years, were the very special guests.

Johnny has been a prominent part of the Toronto music scene for 70 years. His trumpet playing in Toronto started at age 15 when he travelled from his home town of Tillsonburg, Ontario, and began playing in the Toronto Symphony Band. However, there was a war on, and as soon as he was old enough, he enlisted in the navy. Within weeks of his enlistment, Johnny was the trumpet soloist in the band of HMCS Naden, the principal Canadian Navy base in Esquimalt, B.C.

As we chatted at his birthday party, I started to wonder if our paths might have crossed on more than one occasion over the years. After all, our birthdays are less than a month apart and we both started playing in bands at an early age. Actually Johnny started when, at age five, he was given a used trumpet by his uncle. I didn’t start until I was 13. I lived in a larger community than Tillsonburg and, in addition to adult bands, we had a boys’ band. His first band experience was with the Tillsonburg Citizens’ Band.

A few months ago I mentioned in this column how small-town summer-band tattoos were a significant part of a band member’s life. I had played in many such tattoos in Southwestern Ontario. As we chatted, it turned out Johnny had not only played in many of the same tattoos, he had played trumpet solos in these events. As for music festivals, such as those in Waterloo or the Stratford Music Festival with Professor Thiele, the answer was the same. We had both been at them.

As teenagers playing in community bands at the same tattoos and festivals, we never met. Even though we both joined the navy at the same age and at about the same time, our paths never crossed there. It was only years later that, in a musical situation reminiscent of our teenage years, we met, playing once again in a marching band. It may seem hard to believe today, but in the early 1960s the Toronto Argonauts had their own professional marching band which performed fancy routines on the field at all home games. Some may have thought that this was below one’s dignity or not in keeping with professional musical standards. However, why not get well paid to go to see the hometown team play football? So that is where we met.

While Johnny is best known for his trumpet virtuosity, he has won considerable acclaim as a writer and arranger. In fact, on more than one occasion he turned down lucrative offers which might have brought him fame by writing for stage productions or getting involved in the Nashville scene. However, the trumpet, his all-abiding first musical love, second only to that for his wife Joan and their family, always won out. Offers which would inevitably have separated him from his trumpet were declined.

Even though he elected to stay home and play trumpet, Johnny certainly did not turn his back on writing. I couldn’t hope to count how many of his tunes could be heard on the radio in the 60s. His 1956 ballad Walk Hand in Hand could be heard on every radio station in those days. His writing wasn’t limited to that genre. He has been equally at home writing for trumpet and brass ensembles. Playing a few selections from the Johnny Cowell CDs in my collection, I am amazed at the broad gamut of his trumpet works. At one end of the spectrum there is his dazzling Roller Coaster, and on the other end, his Concerto in E Minor for Trumpet and Symphony Orchestra. While he is officially retired, he still practises on his trumpet regularly and is expecting to be a guest soon with the Hannaford Junior Band playing his composition Roller Coaster with members of that group.

As I sat down for a brief chat with Johnny and 94-year-old Eddie Graf, who is still playing and writing arrangements, I was humbled to say the least.

A weekend of special programs: The weekend of February 27 and 28 stands out as a special one for aficionados of the music of wind ensembles. First, on Saturday we have the Silverthorn Symphonic Winds continuing their 2015/2016 season with a program called “Musician’s Choice,” where those planning the program have consulted band members to determine what music they would like to perform. They have chosen a broad spectrum from Howard Cable’s The Banks of Newfoundland to Shostakovitch’s Festive Overture. Within that spectrum they take their audience all the way from Percy Grainger’s Irish Tune from County Derry to Norman Dello Joio’s Satric Dances and Steven Reineke’s The Witch and the Saint. This latter number is a tone poem depicting the lives of twin sisters Helena and Sibylla, born in Germany in 1588 at a time when twin children were considered a very evil omen. As the story unfolds, instruments and Sibylla, born in Germany in 1588 at a time when twin children were considered a very evil omen. As the story unfolds, instruments

thehwolenote.com
Elsewhere in the band world

**February 4** and **March 3.** The Encore Symphonic Concert Band presents their monthly noon-hour concert of “Classics and Jazz,” with John Edward Liddle conducting at Wilmar Heights Centre.

**February 5** at 7:30, as part of the U of T Faculty of Music New Music Festival, you can hear Rosario’s *Concerto for Marimba* performed by Danielle Sum.

**February 7** at 3pm at Knox Presbyterian Church in Waterloo (and repeated on **February 21** at 3pm at Grandview Baptist Church in Kitchener) the Wellington Wind Symphony offers “Remembering” with works by Brahms, Erwazen, Woelffen and Alford. Also on the program will be Morawetz’s *In Memoriam for Martin Luther King, Jr.*

**February 21** at 3pm The Hannaford Street Silver Band will present “German Brass” with Fergus McWilliam, French horn, and James Gourlay, conductor.

**February 23** at 7:30 The Metropolitan Silver Band will present “Jubilee Order of Good Cheer,” a blend of classics, marches, sacred, popular and contemporary works at Jubilee United Church.

For details on all these consult The WholeNote concert listings.

**Calling all brass:** For a number of years, the Canadian Band Association, Ontario has held Community Band Weekends sponsored by a number of community bands in various communities across the province. This year there is a new twist. For the first time, CBA-Ontario will host a Community Brass Band Weekend from Friday evening February 19 to Sunday, February 21. Hosted by the Oshawa Civic Band, the event should not only offer a meeting ground for dedicated brass band devotees but introduce brass players from concert bands to the style and repertoire of the All Brass culture. All musical events will take place at Trulls Road Free Methodist Church, 2301 Trulls Road S., Courtice. Details on registration were spotty at time of writing; consult cba-ontario.ca/cbw-registration for updates.

We have another new all-brass band to report on. The York Region Brass began rehearsals in Newmarket a few months ago and are inviting brass players to join them. They rehearse on Wednesday evenings and would particularly welcome cornet, trombone and tuba players. If you play a brass instrument and are interested in exploring that genre contact Peter Hussey by email at pnhussey@rogers.com.

**Another special musical event:** Although it has nothing whatsoever to do with band music, I can’t end without reporting on a recent outstanding musical event in Toronto. The Amadeus Choir, the Elmer Iseler Singers and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Bernard Labadie, performed a special “semi-staged” version of Mozart’s *Requiem* K626. The combined choirs, soloists and conductor, all performing the entire work from memory, gave this monumental work new meaning. Through movements and gestures, conceived by stage director Joel Ivany, choir members and soloists conveyed the concept of loss and redemption that is the heart of the requiem mass. To set the mood for the choral work, as a prelude, the TSO Chamber Solists performed the Largetto movement from Mozart’s *Clarinet Quintet In A Major,* K581.

Jack MacQuarrie plays several brass instruments and has performed in many community ensembles. He can be contacted at bandstand@thewholenote.com.

### Beat by Beat | World View

**Rich Hybrid Motherlode**

**ANDREW TIMAR**

It’s February. It’s still dark before you arise, and cold, with nary a sign of green outside. February is also Black History Month and all over Toronto politicians, schools and cultural organizations are marking it in various ways.

On its events page, the Music Gallery’s David Dacks writes that from its earliest days the MG “has welcomed adventurous Afro-diasporic sounds [such] as free jazz, the science fact/fiction of Sun Ra’s Arkestra and the advanced musical theories of George Lewis. This commitment has intensified over the past several years with events with saxophone titan Matana Roberts, jazz elder Henry Grimes, mbira innovator Evelyn Mukwedeya, and ‘world music 2.0’ theorist DJ/rupture.”

For Black History Month 2016, the MG presents a two-part event which pushes these explorations further.

**Val-Inc: body and spirit:** the first of these starts at 5pm Saturday, February 20, with a free panel discussion called “The New Black: Challenging Musical Tropes” with Val-Inc and Witch Prophet, two “Black artists who create stereotype-challenging music” on the panel, along with moderator Alanna Stuart (Bonjay, CBC), Garvia Bailey (JazzFM) and Amanda Parris (CBC). They plan to delve into ways in which awareness can be raised around “under-represented facets of Afro-diasporic cultural expression, specifically within Black Canadian culture.”

Putting these concerns to the musical test that same evening at 8pm, will be a concert titled “Val-Inc + Witch Prophet.” Val-Inc is Val Jeanty, once a member of Norah Jones’ band. Her music was described by the *New York Times* as blending “traditional-sounding music from Haiti with synthesized sounds and instruments to develop a genre she calls ‘Afro-Electronica.’” Her audiovisual installations have showcased at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Whitney Museum, Museum of Modern Art and in European galleries.

Val-Inc’s own characterization of her music is more inclusive; she describes it as evoking “the musical esoteric realms of the creative subconscious by incorporating African Haitian musical traditions into the present and beyond, combining acoustics with electronics and the archaic with the postmodern.”

Just how does she do that? I called her in New York City to find out.

I asked first about the accuracy of a media depiction I had read of her music as “Big Apple Vodou.” “I grew up in Port-au-Prince, Haiti,” she responded, “attending Catholic schools as well as practising Vodou within my family, learning to drum [in that context] when I was five years of age.”

So how does this joint spiritual and musical practice influence how she sees the relationship between sound, music and spirituality? “In Vodou there’s no separation between sound, sounds and prayers to the ancestors, as in the case of Guédé, in the spiritual realm,” she explains. [Fête Guédé, the Festival of the Dead, is celebrated on November 2, All Souls’ Day]. “It’s something that has to be experienced. I practise it to sustain life … not in order to produce a commercial music product.”

And her drumming practice since childhood and its echoes in her electronics? “There’s not a conscious connection between Vodou drum patterns and my electronics, but [rather a path I find] through improv. I trust the spirit to help me via the looper [digital looping station].”

In one track I listened to (“V-iPod #222” on Soundcloud) it’s hard to tell if the track features a machine or an acoustic tabla. “Whatever it is, it sounds convincing,” I say to her. “I played that on the Roland HandSonic HPD-20, a kind of
drumpad, a digital hand percussion device. With practice (and understanding of hand drumming) you can transfer your personal energy into the machine. In the end such tools are just tools, carrying the spirit. Bypass skin colour, distance, language and what you’re left with is spirit,” she concludes.

“The spiritual in music ... is speaking to the soul ... I’m not trying to connect the spirit to music — but rather it’s trying to do me — it’s doing the work! [Let’s not forget that] everyone around the world has a spirit.”

In our chat, Val-Inc’s all-embracing universalist vision came clearly into focus for me: spirit transcending perceived human distinctions such as skin colour, race, geographical origin, religious affiliation and other potentially divisive cultural factors. Makes sense to me.

Pura Fé highlights African-Native American music: 

Jim Merod, in his 1995 essay Jazz as a Cultural Archive, proposed that jazz is not only a reflection of North American culture but also serves as an archive of that culture. The work of singer, guitarist, songwriter, activist and teacher Pura Fé extends that notion to other vernacular music genres, presenting a rich fabric woven of many cultural strands and colours, so that it is near-impossible to unravel them all: namely the role of indigenous peoples in African-Native American contact, cohabitation, cultural sharing and performance practice.

It is something which occurred in multiple intimate and sometimes complicated and layered ways, arising from shared histories over several hundred years and reflected in various features of the music their descendants created and made today.

I spoke to Fé via Skype, one frigid January afternoon (she now makes Northern Saskatchewan her home), to discuss her upcoming Friday, February 26, concert at the Music Gallery. Long active in transcultural music making and touring in Europe, her album Follow Your Heart’s Desire won the 2006 l’Académie Charles-Cros Award for Best World Album.

During the course of our conversation Fé’s expansive knowledge and passion about indigenous influences on the blues, jazz, country, rock, gospel and other vernacular American musics was infectious. It’s an intensely personal subject for her. She traces the roots of her family and personal musical culture to indigenous North Carolina Tuscarora, Tutelo, as well as Corsican ancestors, the latter via Puerto Rico. (Her name given by her father means “Pure Faith” in Spanish.)

“My mother’s side we’ve got eight generations of Tuscarora singers. While my mother was a gifted Wagnerian soprano it was difficult to make a career as a woman of colour in classical music in her generation. She also performed in several of Duke Ellington’s Sacred Concerts and my grandmother sang gospel.” Growing up in New York City, sampling her parents’ Native music record collection and participation in Pow Wows gave her the sense of identity she sought as a teen. “I found myself the day I was able to reconnect with my indigenous roots.

“People generally aren’t very aware of it yet, but Native peoples have played a major role in the development of American music, whether it’s jazz, blues or rock ‘n’ roll,” observes Fé. “This includes a typical blues rhythm, the shuffle, a rhythmic feel which is much like certain Native drumming.”

In Fé’s own intense bluesy and other times jazzy singing, she makes an eloquent case for the close and productive relationship between the African and indigenous people of the American South, a union that gave birth to a rich new culture blending religion, dance, food and music. “Many of their grandchildren became influential musicians,” she says, “like Charley Patton (Choctaw) and Scrappin Blackwell (Cherokee). We can continue the roll call with Duke Ellington, Thelonious Monk, Charlie Parker, Don Cherry, Miles Davis, Jim Pepper and Don Pullen in jazz. Let’s add Little Richard, Jimi Hendrix, Tina Turner, Link Wray and Jesse Ed Davis for good measure.”

Early in her career singing with rock bands in NYC, her role models — in addition to her mother and grandmother — were the leading female singers of the previous generation: Joni Mitchell, Buffy Sainte-Marie and Aretha Franklin. Fé was “drawn by their spirit and style.”

All this is the rich hybrid motherloade extensively mined by Fé. Aiming to explore the bluesy voice of Native Americans as well as their self-determination, in 1987 she formed the singing trio Ulali with Soni Moreno and Jennifer Kreisberg, a project which continues as a quartet. Seven albums followed. Her latest, Sacred Seed (2015) for Nueva Onda Records, captures those multi-faceted influences, featuring her multi-tracked voice with a backup studio band consisting of guitar, banjo, piano, percussion and cello. The tracks resound with references to the Tuscarora Nation whose musical traditions she carries with indelible ardour.

At her February 26 Music Gallery concert, however, Fé will present her music more intimately with just her voice, accompanying herself “with guitar, drum and a loop station which gives me the choral background I crave.” Her repertoire will focus on her Sacred Seed list: her own songs like “Idle No More,” plus jazz classics like Duke Ellington’s “In a Sentimental Mood.” Roots blues legend Taj Mahal glowingly summed up Fé’s music: “With her voice soaring, foot stomping, this beautiful songbird transcends time and brings the message of our Ancestors who have sown this beautiful seed [through her] powerful music.”

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

The WholeNote listings are arranged in four sections:

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

B. BEYOND THE GTA covers many areas of Southern Ontario outside Toronto and the GTA. Starts on page 40.

C. MUSIC THEATRE covers a wide range of music types: from opera, operetta and musicals, to non-traditional performance types where words and music are in some fashion equal partners in the drama. This section appears on thewholenote.com. PLEASE NOTE: due to space constraints this issue’s Music Theatre listings appear online only.

D. IN THE CLUBS (MOSTLY JAZZ) is organized alphabetically by club. Starts on page 42.

E. THE ETCETERAS is for galas, fundraisers, competitions, screenings, lectures, symposia, masterclasses, workshops, singalongs and other music-related events (except performances) which may be of interest to our readers. Starts on page 46.

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

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

LISTINGS DEADLINE. The next issue covers the period from March 1 to April 7, 2016. All listings must be received by Midnight Monday February 8.

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

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

---

IN THIS ISSUE: Ajax, Aurora, Brampton, Burlington, Etobicoke, King Township, Markham, Mississauga, Newmarket, North York, Oakville, Richmond Hill, Scarborough.

---

Monday February 1

- 12:30: York University Department of Music. Music @ Midday: Classical Instrumental Concert. Tribute Communities Recital Hall, Accadie East Building, YU, 4700 Keele St. 647-459-0701, Free.

- 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; Happy Schmitt; Listener 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(st); $10(st).

Tuesday February 2


---

A. Concerts in the GTA

- 1:00: Cathedral Church of St. James. Midday Organ Series. Thomas Fitches, organ. 65 Church St. 416-364-7855. Free.

- 8:30: Canadian Opera Company. Siegfried. Wagner. Christine Goerke, soprano (Brunnhilde); Stefan Vinke, tenor (Siegfried); and others; François Girard, director; Johannes Debuss, conductor. Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. 416-363-8231, $60-$445, $22(under 30). Also Feb 5, 11, 14(mat).


- 7:30: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. New Music Festival: Land’s End Ensemble. Allan Gordon Bell: Field Notes; Phénomènes; Trials of Gravity and Grace; Omar Daniel; Trio; Toronto premiere; Raydon Tse: Starscape. James Campbell, clarinet. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-408-0208. Free.

- 8:00: Factory Theatre. One Night Only: The Greatest Musical Never Written. Two-act improvised musical comedy dictated by audience suggestions. 125 Bathurst St. 416-504-9971, $32.40-$60.65. Also Feb 3, 4, 5, 6(mat/ eve), 7(mat), 9, 10, 11, 13(mat/eve), 14(mat).

---

Wednesday February 3


- 7:00: 3 in the 6ix. Experficient #1 of 3: Dumpy, Bridge. Piano trio in c; Bloch: Three Nocturnes; Prokofiev: Sonata No.3 in a, Op.28; Dvořák: Trio No.4 “Dumky” Op.90; Joan Blackman, violin; Marlena Turecki, cello; Talisa Blackman, piano. Runnymede United Church, 432 Runnymede Rd. 416-578-6993. $25-$20(adv); $15(st); $5(under 18).


- 7:30: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. New Music Festival: gamUT Contemporary Music Ensemble. Works by Allan Gordon Bell and others. Wallace Halladay, conductor; Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-408-0208. Free.


LISZT: PILGRIMAGE

Friday February 5


LISZT: PILGRIMAGE

Friday February 5


Music Toronto

Annex Quartet

February 4 at 8 pm


Music Toronto

Annex Quartet

February 4 at 8 pm


Music Toronto

Annex Quartet

February 4 at 8 pm


Music Toronto

Annex Quartet

February 4 at 8 pm


Music Toronto

Annex Quartet

February 4 at 8 pm


Music Toronto

Annex Quartet

February 4 at 8 pm


Music Toronto

Annex Quartet

February 4 at 8 pm


Music Toronto

Annex Quartet

February 4 at 8 pm


Music Toronto

Annex Quartet

February 4 at 8 pm


Music Toronto

Annex Quartet

February 4 at 8 pm


Music Toronto

Annex Quartet

February 4 at 8 pm


Music Toronto

Annex Quartet

February 4 at 8 pm


Music Toronto

Annex Quartet

February 4 at 8 pm

A. Concerts in the GTA

416-593-4828. $20.50-$32.75. Also 2:00.


Saturday February 6, 2016  8 pm

Puccini Gianni Schicchi

TRYPHTHC
CONCERT & OPERA

PLUS... Smetana Die Moldau

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

P.C. Ho Theatre 5183 Sheppard Avenue East, Scarborough

cathedralbluffs.com | 416.879.5566

B. Music at St. Andrew’s

7:30: Music at St. Andrew’s. This Little Light: Mardi Gras at St Andrew’s. Ken Whiteley and Friends. St. Andrew’s Church, 171 Town Centre Blvd., Markham. 905-305-7469. $15-$35.


8:00: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. New Music Festival: Jazz Faculty with Special Guests. Improvisational and new music. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-408-0208. Free.


8:00: Corporation of Massey Hall and Roy Thomson Hall/less Border. Alan Cumming Sings Sappy Songs. See 3pm.

8:00: Gallery 345. Trio d’Argento. Works by Haydn, Jacques Bondon, Saint-Saëns, Kuhlau, F. Schmitt and Miguel del Aguila. Sibyle Marquardt, flute; Peter Stoll, clarinets and sax; Anna Ronai, piano. 345 Sorauren Ave. 416-822-9781. $20 ($15; sr/st).

8:00: Kindred Spirits Orchestra. Pictures at an Exhibition. Mussorgsky: Pictures at an Exhibition; Beethoven: Piano Concerto No. 2 in f-flat, Op.19; Dukas: The Sorcerer’s Apprentice (symphonic poem). Kristian Alexander, conductor; Antonio de Wolfe, piano; Alex Petrenko, host. Flato Markham Theatre, 171 Town Centre Blvd., Markham. 905-303-7469. $15-$35.


8:00: Royal Conservatory. Music Mic: Bluebird North. Blair Packham, host.


8:00: Small World Music. World on a String. Small World Music Centre, Artscape Youngplace, 180 Shaw St. 416-536-5439. $20.


8:00: Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and Chamber Choir. Beethoven 9th Symphony. Koerner Hall. See Feb 4; Also Feb 7(mat).

8:00: Tapestry Opera. Songbook VI. Wal- lis Giunta, mezzo; emerging artists from Tapestry’s New Opera 101 program; Jordan de Souza, conductor-in-residence. Ernest Balmer Studio (315), Distillery Dis- trict, 9 Trinity St. 416-537-6006 x243. $25. Also Feb. 5.
Thursday February 11


12:10: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. New Music Festival: Choral Contempory Showcase Concert. Allan Gordon Bell: new work (premiere); O’ 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.

12:30: University of Toronto Outreach - Live Music in U of T's University Community Recital Hall, Accolade East Building. Live Music in U of T's University Community Recital Hall, Accolade East Building, 4700 Keele St. 647-459-0701. Free. Performers and observers welcome.

Friday February 12


3:30: Junction Trio. A Love Letter from Messiaen. Messiaen: Poèmes pour M. works by Schumann, Korngold, Mahler, Fauré and Guillain. Guest: Emily O’Angelo, mezzo; Rashaan Allwood, piano; Junction Trio (Jamie Thompson, flute; Ivana Popovic, violin; Raphael Weinroth-Browne, cello). St. Anne’s Anglican Church, 270 Gladstone Ave. 416-536-3160. PWYC. Refreshments.


7:30: Living Arts Centre. Alejandro Ríbera. Living Arts Centre, CRC Theatre, 4141 Living Arts Centre Dr., Mississauga. 905-306-6000. PWYC.


8:00: Kingston Road Village Concert Series. A Cappella. Countermarsure, Kingston Road United Church, 975 Kingston Rd. 416-699-6091. $20. $10(st); free(child).

8:00: Living Arts Centre. Chantal Kreviazuk and Raine Maida. Living Arts Centre, Hammerson Hall, 4141 Living Arts Dr., Mississauga. 905-306-6000. $45-$65.

8:00: Royal Conservatory. Royal Conservatory Orchestra. Rims’-Korsakov:

FROM THE HEART
February 12, 2016
Heliconian Club 7:30pm
35 Hazelton Ave, Toronto


PERFORMERS
Brett Polegato BARITONE
Joseph Phillips bass, Timothy Phelan GUITAR
Eybler Quartet
Alissin Noksy VIOLIN, Julia Wedman VIOLIN
Patrick Jordan VIOLA, Margaret Gay CELLO

TICKETS CALL 416 778 5911
A. Concerts in the GTA


● 8:00: Thin Edge New Music Collective. Premières V. New works by Tereziekowsk, Livingston, E. Hall, Nickel, Hui-Hsin Huie.

● 8:00: Toronto Consort. Way of the Pilgrim. Pilgrim songs, crusaders' laments, and dances from Spain, France and Germany. Trinity-St. Paul's Centre, Jeanne Lamon Hall, 427 Bloor St. W. 416-964-6337. $24-$64; $22-$52(sr/adv); $10(st/20 and under). 7:00: pre-concert talk. Also Feb 13.

Saturday February 13

● 2:00: King Music Collective. All About Love. Home of Michelle Mele and Luciano Tauro, 15785 8th Concession, King Township. 416-408-0208. $20/$18(adv). Includes beverage and snacks.

● 2:30: Gallery 345. The Art of the Piano: Bruce Vogt. Sonatas by Haydn and Beethoven. 345 Sorauren Ave. 416-822-9781. $25; $20(s/r/arts workers); $10(st).

● 3:00: Yorkminster Park Baptist Church Choir: Music to Warm a Winter Day. Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, 1558 Yonge St. 416-922-1167. $20. Fundraising event for the Choir’s upcoming trip to St. Paul’s in London.

● 7:30: Canadian Opera Company. The Marriage of Figaro. See Feb 4. Also Feb 17, 19, 21, 23, 25 and 27. Start times vary.


The way of the PILGRIM

February 12 & 13, 2016
Trinity St-Paul’s Centre
Call 416-964-6337
TorontoConsort.org

Love at the OPERA

SATURDAY FEB 13, 2016 8PM
HAMMERSON HALL
Famous love themed arias and overtures from the world of opera, featuring soloists and full orchestra.
LIVING ARTS CENTRE - HAMMERSON HALL - MISSISSAUGA. TICKETS START AT $49. TO PURCHASE, CALL 905-306-6000 OR VISIT MISSISSAUGASYMPHONY.CA

English Art Songs that haven’t been performed for years
Bloor Street United Church
February 13, 8:00 pm
Maryna Yakhontova

● 8:00: Bloor Street United Church. In Concert. Rarely performed English art songs. Marina Yakhontova, voice; Brian Stevens, piano. 300 Bloor St. W. 416-886-9392. Free will offering.

● 8:00: Jazz Performance and Education Centre. Everything I Love. Melissa Stylianou Trio (Melissa Stylianou, vocals; Jamie Reynolds, piano; John MacLeod, trumpet). Toronto Centre for the Arts, 5040 Yonge St., North York. 416-461-7744. $30; $20(st).

● 8:00: Mississauga Symphony Orchestra. Love at the Opera. Love-themed arias and overtures. Hammerson Hall, Living Arts Centre, 4141 Living Arts Dr., Mississauga. 905-615-4405. $50-$65; $45-$58.50(sr); $30(youth); $20(child).


The Musicians In Ordinary’s Shakespeare Anniversary Series

Shakespeare’s Lives of Girls & Women
www.musiciansinordinary.ca

Sun. 14th Feb. at 4 p.m. Choral EvenSong with Schola Ecclesiia
followed at 5 by refreshments and: CHARLES WOOD 150
Clem Carelse directs the choir devoted to authentic performance of church music; and looks at Charles Wood (1866-1926), the distinguished Irish composer of Anglican music; as well as some colleagues and students featured in this EvenSong: Healey Willan, C.V. Stanford and Ralph Vaughan Williams. St Olave’s Church
Bloor and Windermere 416-769-5686 stolavesc.ca

- 4:00: Cathedral Church of St. James. Twilight Organ Series. Ian Sadler, organ. 65 Church St. 416-364-7856. Free.

- 7:00: Acoustic Harvest. Showcase at the Winterfolk Festival. Jane Lewis; Jason LaPrade; Katherine Wheatley; Rosalie peppard; Lotus wittt. Black Swan, 154 Danforth Avenue, 2nd Floor. 416-409-0537. $20/$15(ad). 7:30.

Tuesday February 16

- 1:00: Cathedral Church of St. James. Mid-day Organ Series. Stephen Frisketic, organ. 65 Church St. 416-364-7865. Free.
- 8:00: Mark Segger. In Concert. Mark Segger; drums and Toronto improvisers, TBA. Array Space, 155 Walnut Ave. 416-532-3019. $10 or PWYC.

Wednesday February 17

- 7:30: Canadian Opera Company. The Marriage of Figaro. See Feb 4. Also Feb 19, 21, 23, 25 and 27. Start times vary.

Gil Shaham and The Knights

WED, FEB 17, 8PM KOERNER HALL

Generously supported by David G. Broadhurst

TICKETS ON SALE NOW: 416.408.0208 WWW.PERFORMANCE.RCMUSIC.CA

- 8:00: Royal Conservatory. Chamber Music: Gil Shaham and The Knights. Works by J-F. Rebel, P. I. Tchaikovsky, B. Brahms, E. Grieg.

Harbourfront Centre, 154 Danforth Avenue, 2nd Floor . 416-469-5151. $40; $10 student tickets; age 18 to 35 – pay your age.

Thursday February 18


Friday February 19


Monday February 15

SKYLIGHT SERIES
CORKIN GALLERY

ST. LAWRENCE QUARTET

KOERNER HALL

WED., FEB. 17, 8PM

Music TORONTO

TICKETS ON SALE NOW: 416.408.0208 WWW.PERFORMANCE.RCMUSIC.CA

- 8:00: Music Toronto. St. Lawrence Quartet. Haydn: Quartet in g, Op.20, No.3; Samuel Adams: String Quintet in 5 Movements (2013), composed for the St. Lawrence Quartet; Schumann: String Quartet in A, Op.41, No.3. Jane Mallett Theatre, St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 27 Front St. E. 416-366-7173. $55, $50, $10 student tickets; age 18 to 35 – pay your age.
A. Concerts in the GTA

Free or PWYC.


● 8:00: CoeXisDance. Duet Series. Array Space, 155 Walnut Ave. 416-532-3019. $10.

● 8:00: Gallery 345. The Art of the Piano: Alejandro Vela – Noche Azul. Brahms: Intermezzi in E Flat Op.117 No.1; Rachmaninov: 6 Selections; Leccia: Noche Azul; La Compara; Córdoba; Gitanerías; Malagueña; Ginasiera: Danzas Argentinas; Radiohead: Let Down; Exit Music (For a Film); You (arr. O’ Riley). 345 Sorauren Ave. 416-822-9781. $25; $20(sr/arts workers); $10(st)

● 8:00: Gordon Murray Presents. Piano Solo. Rachmaninoff: Piano Concerto No.2 - 1st Movement; Rombberg: I Bring A Love Song, You Will Remember Vienna (from Viennese Nights); Sieczynski: Vienna, City of My Dreams (all arr. G. Murray); other works. Gordon Murray, piano. Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, 427 Bloor St W. 416-631-4300. $15; $10(st). Concert is in chapel.

● 8:00: Guitar Society of Toronto. Pavel Steidl. Works by Bach, Paganini, Sor and Steidl. Heliconian Hall, 55 Hazelton Ave. 416-964-8288. $30; $25(st).

● 8:00: Music Gallery. Val-Inc and Witch Prophet. The New Black: Challenging Musical Tropes. 197 John St. 416-204-1090. $15/$13(adv); $10(members). Free panel discussion at 5:00.

● 8:00: Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts. Comedy Series: Bowser and Blue. 130 Navy St., Oakville. 905-815-2021. $45.


Saturday February 20

● 2:00: Royal Conservatory. Sweet Honey In The Rock. A cappella family concert and music mix: southern, blues, folk, gospel, jazz, pop and world music. Koerner Hall, Telus Centre, 273 Bloor St W. 416-408-0208. $25-$35. Also 8:00. American Sign Language interpretation.


● 7:00: Amadeus Choir of Greater Toronto. Love Notes. A celebration of love with jazz favourites, Sharon Smith, vocals; and others. Jubilee United Church, 40 Underhill Dr. 416-446-0188. $15; $10(st).

● 7:00: Andrew Clark. A Woman's Love and Life. Schumann: Frauenliebe und Leben; songs by Mahler, Barber, Kerngold, Charles and others. Emily Diangelo, mezzo; Rashaan Allwood; piano. Heron Park Baptist Church, 4280 Lawrence Ave E., Scarborough. 416-284-1741. Donation - PWYC.


● 7:30: Oakville Chamber Orchestra. Vivaldi for Freaky Instruments. Vivaldi: Concerto for Soprano Recorder in C; Purcell: The Fairy Queen, Suite No.1; Vivaldi: Concerto for Viola d’Amore in d; Telemann: Suite “La Musette”; Vivaldi: Concerto for Lute in D; Allison Melville, Thomas Georgi, Benjamin Stein, soloists. St. John’s United Church (Oakville), 622 Randall St., Oakville. 905-483-6787. $30; $25(st); $20(st). Also Feb 16 (St. Simon’s Anglican Church).


● 7:30: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. From Mozart to Rachmaninoff. Mozart: Overture to The Magic Flute, K620; Rachmaninoff: Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini; Berlioz: Le carnaval; Debussy: Prélude à l’apres-midi d’un faune; Bizet: Suite from Carmen. Pavel Kolesnikov, piano; Earl Lee, RBC Resident Conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375. $33.75-$107. Also Feb 21 (3:00).

● 8:00: Acoustic Harvest. A Special Tribute to Rosemary Phelan with CD re-release. Eve Goldberg; Allison Lupton; Jane Lewis; Allison Melville; Andrew Clarke, pianist; Christine Duncan, singer; Sarah Smith, vocals; and others. 24 Spadina Rd. 416-922-2014. $15; $10(st)."
Friday February 22
Carl Nielsen, Jean Françaix, Leoš Janáček

WINDSOR STRING QUARTET
The Great Outdoors
with Joe Phillips, bass
Mozart, Onslow, Rival
Saturday Feb 21, 3:00


• 3:30: Junction Trio. Celebrating the Year of the Monkey. Guest: Ron Korfb, flute; Junction Trio (Jaimie Thompson, flute; Ivana Popovic, violin; Raphael Weinzweig-Browne, cello). St. Anne’s Anglican Church, 270 Gladstone Ave. 416-536-3160. PWYC. Refreshments.

• 4:00: Cathedral Church of St. James. Twilight Organ Series. David Briggs, organ. 65 Church St. 416-364-7855. Free.


• 7:30: Toronto Mass Choir. Powerpina Finale Concert. Islington Evangelical Church, 49 Queen’s Plate Drive. 905-794-1139. $10; $5(st).

Monday February 22


Tuesday February 23

• 7:30: Associates of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Winds of the 20th Century. Nielsen, Wind Quintet; Françaix, Sextour; Janáček; Mládí (“Youth”) Suite for Wind Sextet. Leonie Wall, flute; Sarah Jeffrey, oboe; Joseph Orlowski, clarinet; Amy Zoloto, bass clarinet; Gabriel Radford, horn; Samuel Banks, bassoon. Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, 427 Bloor St. W. 416-282-6836. $20; $17(st/nt).


• 12:30: York University Department of Music. Jazz @ Midnight: Jazz Jam featuring Chris Potter. Martin Family Lounge, Accademia East Building, YU, 4700 Keele St. 467-659-7071. Free.

• 7:30: Canadian Opera Company. The Marriage of Figaro. See Feb 4. Also Feb 27. Start times vary.


• 7:30: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. U of T Jazz Orchestra. Gordon Foote, director. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-978-0492. $20; $10(st).

• 8:00: Living Arts Centre. Bruce Cockburn. Living Arts Centre, Hammermill Hall, 4141 Living Arts Dr., Mississauga. 905-306-6000. $40-$45.

• 8:00: Off Centre Music Salon/Music Gallery. Tea for Two. Christine Duncan, vocals; Lucy Fitz Gibson, soprano; Alex Lukashesky, folk artist; Ryan MacEvoy McCullough, piano; Chris Donnelly, piano. Music Gallery, 197 John St. 416-466-1870. $25; $20(arts); $15(st); $12(members).

• 8:00: Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts. World Artists Series: The Wallers. 130 Navy St., Oakville. 905-815-2021. $40.

• 8:00: Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and Chamber Choir. The Best of Mozart. Eine kleine Nachtmusik; Symphony No. 40 in G; Sinfonia Concertante and others. Guest: Elsa Citterio, violin/conductor; Stefano Marcocci, viola. Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, Jeanne Lamon Hall, 427 Bloor St. W. 416-964-6337. $38 and up; $30 and up(st); $15-$81(35 and under). Also Feb 26, 27 and 28(mat).
A. Concerts in the GTA

- **8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Schumann Symphony 4, Beethoven: Leonore Overture No.2; Mendelssohn: Piano Concerto No.1; Schumann: Symphony No.4.** Marc-André Hamelin, piano; Louis Langrée, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375. $33.75-$148.00. Also Feb 27.

**Friday February 26**


- **8:00: Sine Nomine Ensemble for Medieval Music.** Incendium amoris. Music from a mystical manuscript. St. Thomas’s Anglican Church (Toronto), 383 Huron St. 416-978-8879. $20/$15.

- **8:00: Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and Chamber Choir.** The Best of Mozart. See Feb 25; Also Feb 27 and 28(mat).

- **8:00: Royal Conservatory. Chamber Music: Christian Tetzlaff, Tanja Tetzlaff and Lars Vogt.** Schumann: Piano Trio No.2; Dvořák: Piano Trio No.2; Dvořák: Piano Trio No.1. Christian Tetzlaff, violin; Tanja Tetzlaff, cello; and others. Ben Ball Quartet (Ben Ball, drums; Bryden Baird, trumpet; Jae Chung, Bass; and others). Ben Ball Quartet (Ben Ball, drums; Bryden Baird, trumpet; Jae Chung, bass; Derek Gray, drums; Ravi Naimpally, tabla; Ted Quinlan, guitar. Toronto Centre for the Arts, 5040 Yonge St., North York. 416-401-6774. $35; $20(st).

- **8:00: Royal Conservatory.** Christian Tetzlaff, Tanja Tetzlaff and Lars Vogt. FRI., FEB. 26, 8PM KOERNER HALL

**Saturday February 27**

- **4:00: Toronto Children’s Chorus.** Poles Apart. N.Y. and Boston tour repertoire, including music from the Arctic Circle. Training Choirs, Boys’ Choir and Main Choir. Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, 1585 Yonge St. 416-932-6666 x231. $25; $20(art); $10(ch).

- **4:30: Canadian Opera Company.** The Marriage of Figaro. See Feb 4.

- **7:00: Gallery 345. Bell Ball Quartet: 401 Towards London CD Release Concert.** Music inspired by the late artist Jack Chambers. Music from the Arctic Circle. Training Choirs; Boys’ Choir and Main Choir. Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, 1585 Yonge St. 416-932-6666 x231. $25; $20(art); $10(ch).

**Sunday March 6**

- **8:00: Alliance Francaise de Toronto.** Impressions de France. Caroline Léonardelli, harp; Julie Nesrallah, mezzo. 24 Spadina Rd. 416-922-2014. $15; $10(art/st/members).

- **6:00: Jazz Performance and Education Centre.** Justin Gray’s Synthesis. Justin Gray, bass; Derek Gray, drums; Ravi Naimpally, tabla; Ted Quinlan, guitar. Toronto Centre for the Arts, 5040 Yonge St., North York. 416-401-6774. $35; $20(st).

- **8:00: NYCO North York Concert Orchestra.** Colder Than Canada. Sibelius; Finlandia; Grieg-Peer Gynt Suite No.1; Vivadí: Winter from The Four Seasons. Phillip Coonce, violin; Rafael Luiz, conductor. Yorkminster Citadel, 1 Lord Seaton Rd., North York. 416-628-8195. $25; $20(art); $10(st).

- **8:00: Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts.** Dan Cooper Concert Series: Bruce Cockburn. 130 Navy St., Oakville. 905-815-2021. $25.

- **8:00: Oriana Women’s Choir.** In Praise of Music: The Connection Between Life and Song. Telfer: Of Things Eternal; Barnes: Madrigals; Fauré: Messe Basse; Holst: Two East ern Pictures; and works by Conte, Vaughan Williams, Elgar and others. Grace Church on-the-Hill, 300 Lonsdale Rd. 416-978-8849. $25; $20(art/under 35); $10(st).

- **8:00: Royal Conservatory.** Joan Baez. Koerner Hall, Telus Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. From $60. SOLD OUT.

- **8:00: Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and Chamber Choir.** The Best of Mozart. See Feb 25; Also Feb 28(mat).
● 8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Schumann Symphony 4. Beethoven: Leonore Overture No.2; Mendelssohn: Piano Concerto No.1; Schumann: Symphony No.4. Marc-André Hamelin, piano; Louis Langrée, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-596-5375. $33.75-$148.00. Also Feb 26.

**Sunday February 28**

● 2:00: Gallery 345. Rezolution Baroque Ensemble: Dedicated. Works by Vivaldi, Telemann, Pisendel and others. 345 Sorauren Ave. 416-779-5689. $20; $10(st).


● 2:00: Toronto City Opera. L’Esprit d’Amore. See Feb 26. Also Mar 3, 5.

● 2:00: Toronto Improvisors Orchestra/Arraymusic. Open Concert. Array Space, 155 Walnut Ave. Free or PWYC. All musicians invited to participate.

● 3:00: Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts. World Artists Series: Russ Woodbridge and his Tribute to the Benny Goodman Sextet. 130 Navy St., Oakville. 905-815-2021. $45.

● 3:00: Opera by Request. A Mystery Musical Experience. Lindsay MacIntyre and Peggy Evans, sopranos; Vilma Vitois, Marcia Whitehead and Lisa Spain, mezzos; Taylor White, Mark Reaney, Stephen McClare, Michel Corbeil and Charles Davidson, tenors; Gene Wu, Peter Wiens, and Sung Chung, baritones; William Shoekhoff, conductor and piano. College Street United Church, 452 College St. 416-455-2395. $20.


● 3:30: Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and Chamber Choir. The Best of Mozart. See Feb 25.

● 4:00: Cathedral Church of St. James. Twilight Organ Series. David Briggs, organ. 65 Church St. 416-364-7865. Free.

● 4:00: Oakville Symphony Orchestra. Young People’s Concert. St. Matthew’s Catholic Church, 1150 Monks Passage, Oakville. 905-815-2021. $12; $6(st/child).


● 4:00: Toronto Classical Singers. Fauré’s Requiem and Durufle’s Requiem, and the 20th Century Work It Inspired. Sheila Dietrich, soprano; Christina Campsall, mezzo; Bruce Kelly, baritone; Talisker Players Orchestra; Jurgen Petrenko, conductor. Christ Church Deer Park, 1570 Yonge St. 416-443-1490. $30; $20(ad); $10(st).

● 4:00: University Settlement Music & Arts School. Chamber Program Student Concert. End of term concert. St. George the Martyr Church, 197 John St. 416-596-3444 x243. PWYC.

● 7:00: St. Giles Kingsway Presbyterian Church. All Jazzed Up: Casual Jazz Concert. Suite for cello; Bottig; Jazz piano trio; Piazzola: Grand Tango; works by Attila Fias. Andras Weber, cello; Attila Fias Jazz Piano Trio (Attila Fias, piano; Richard Brisco, drums; Pat Kilbridge, bass). 15 Lambeth Rd. 416-233-8591. $25/$20(adj). Reception to follow.


**Monday February 29**

● 12:00 noon: Canadian Opera Company. Chamber Music Series: Beauty of Baroque. Featuring chamber music from England,
Women’s Musical Club of Toronto

Music in the Afternoon

Thursday March 3


Centre, 963 Pharmacy Ave., Scarborough. 416-346-3910. $10. Included coffee and snacks.

Michael Robert Broder (Don Pasquale); Dion Mazerolle (Dr. Malatesta); Anne Marie Ramos (Norina); and others; Geoffrey Butler, artistic director; Renee Saleskis, stage director. Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, 10288 Yonge St., Richmond Hill. 905-787-8031, $40 - $60. $10 (gala package). With superlatives. Also Mar 5.

7:30: Toronto City Opera. L’Elais d’Amore. See Feb 26, also Mar 5.

8:00: York University Department of Music. Improv Soiree. An evening of improvisation in a participatory “open mike” set-up, hosted by the improv studies of Casey Sokol. Sterling Beckwith Studio, 235 Accolade East Building, 4700 Keele St. 647-459-0701. Free. Performers and observers welcome.

Friday March 4


7:30: Heliconian Hall. All Aboard on a Musical Tour of Norway, Australia, Estonia, Spain, Greece and Russia. Grieg; Songs; Schubert; Dilettre; Works by Part, Mompou, Theodorakis. Paula Arciniega, mezzo; Louise Morley, Ruth Kazdan, Suzanne Yeo, piano; Rita Greer, clarinet; Jane Blackstone, voice/piano; Velma Ko, violin. 35 Hazelton Ave. 416-922-3618. $25; free (child).

7:30: Opera by Request. La Traviata. Verdi. Allison Arends, soprano (Violetta); Ryan Harper, tenor (Alfredo); Andrew Tees, baritone ( Germont); soloists and chorus of U of T Scarborough Concert Choir (Lenard Whiting, conductor); William Shookhoff, conductor and piano. Trinity Presbyterian Church York Mills, 2737 Bayview Ave. 416-455-2365. $20.

7:30: Toronto City Opera. Die Fledermaus. See Feb 25. Also Mar 6(mat).

7:30: York University Department of Music. Number Competition Concert. Tribute Communities Recital Hall, Accolade East Building, 4700 Keele St. 416-736-5888. $15; $10 (sr/st).

8:00: North Toronto Players. Chelsea Moor Castle. Book and Lyrics by Barb Schef- fner and Michael Harms. Music by W.S. Gil- bert. Selections from Pirates of Penzance, The Mikado, HMS Pinafore, The Gondoliers and Iolanthe. Justin Ralph, tenor; Laurie Hurst, mezzo; Barb Scheffner, soprano; Alison Boudreau, soprano; Julius Fulop, bass. Jubilee United Church, 40 Underhill Dr. 416-481-8667. $25, $22 (sr/st); $15 (children under 14). Also on Mar 5 (Thu - 7pm); 6 (mat); 11 (ewe); 12 (mat and eve); 13 (mat).

8:00: Royal Conservatory. Chamber Music: Karen Gomyo, Christian Poltéra and Juho Pohjonen. Daedalus string quartet.

Saturday March 5

3:00: Annnex Singers Chamber Chior. Cam- erata. Chamber works by Byd, Victoria, Mor- ley, Chatman, Gjilo and The Beatles. Guest:
Mark Chambers, cello; Maria Case, conductor. St. Andrew’s United Church (Bloor St.), 117 Bloor St. E. 416-968-7747. $25; $20(sr); $15(under 20); free(12 and under). Also 7:30. 4:30: Beach United Church. Jazz and Reflection: Gospel Jazz - Down By The River. Jake Hicken Trio. 40 Winova Ave. 416-681-3802. Free will offering.

7:00: North Toronto Players. Chelsea Moor Castle. See Mar 4 (eve); Also Mar 6 (mat); 11 (eve); 12 (mat and eve); 15 (mat).


8:00: Alliance Francaise de Toronto. Through the song: From Felix Leclerc to Francis Cabrel. Welcome Soledi (Giscombe, vocals); Bernard Dionne, piano; Philippe Lafary, guitar; mandolin; Paddy Morgan, percussion. 24 Spadina Rd. 416-922-2014. $15; $10(sr/st/members).

8:00: Jazz Performance and Education Centre. Jazz N’ Pizzazz: Jane Fair Rosemary Galloway Quintet. Jane Fair; saxophone; Rosemary Galloway, bass; Nancy Walker, piano; Lina Allemano, trumpet; Nick Fraser, drums. Toronto Centre for the Arts, 5040 Yonge St., North York. 416-461-7744. $30; $20(st).

8:00: Roy Thomson Hall/Massay Hall. Matt Andersen. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4255. $29.50-$39.50.

8:00: Royal Conservatory. TD Jazz: Brian Blade and The Fellowship Band. Koerner Hall, Telus Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. $40-$80.

8:00: Scaramella. Délites de la solitude. Méliandre Corrinouve, pédérassé; Joélle Morlan, basse de viole; Éric Milnes, clavecin. Victoria College Chapel, 91 Charles St. W. 416-760-8610. $30; $25(sr); $20(st).

8:00: Somewhere There/Arryamus. Triple CD Release Party. Array Space, 155 Walnut Ave. 416-532-3019. $10 or PWYC.

8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Fragile Absolute. Gyorgy Kurtag: The Answered Unanswered Question; Brett Dean: Viola Concerto; Anthony Pateras: Fragile Absolute; Kevin Lau: Concerto Grosso for Orchestra, String Quartet, and Turntables (world premiere/TSO commission). Aurora Quartet, string quartet; Skratich Bastad, turntables & effects; Peter Grendian, conductor and host; Brett Dean, conductor and viola. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-898-3375. $33.75-$148.00.

Sunday March 6

2:00: North Toronto Players. Chelsea Moor Castle. See Mar 4 (mat); Also Mar 11 (mat); 12 (mat and mat); 15 (mat).

2:00: Pickering Community Band. Here Comes Spring. Barry Sears, vocalist.

Jubilatesingers.ca

Pianists: 4 hands
Lisa Tahara
Narmina Efendiyeva
Sunday March 6, 3pm
Heliconian Hall
SyrinxConcerts.ca


Saturday March 5, 7:30 pm
St. Simon-the-Apostle Church


3:30: Jubilee Trio. Evensong with Schola Magadalena. Works by Orlando di Lasso, Hildegard of Bingen and Stephanie Martin. Guests: Schola Magdalena; Jubilee Trio (Jamie Thompson, flute; Ivana Popovic, violin; Raphael Reiner, cello). St. Anne’s Anglican Church, 270 Gladstone Ave. 416-536-3160. PWYC. Refreshments.

4:00: Cathedral Church of St. James. Twilight Organ Series. Ian Sadler, organ. 65 Church St. 416-364-7865. Free.

4:00: Church of St. Mary Magdalene. Devotions. 401 College St. 416-595-9086. Free.


6:30: Repeating collection.

Younicos York. 4 Hands for Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue in C minor BWV 846, 1st movement. Jennifer Krabbe, soprano; Charles Sy, tenor; Andrew Adair, organ. Church of St. Mary Magdalene (Toronto), 477 Manning Ave. 416-531-7955. Free.


9:30: Orpheus Choir of Toronto. Sound of Eternity. Bach: Mass in B; Bastian Clevé: Sound of Eternity (film) (Canadian premiere). Anita Krause, mezzo; Geoff Sirett, baritone; Jennifer Krabbe, soprano; Charles Sy, tenor; Orpheus Choir; Choral Magics; Talisker Players. Metropolitan United Church (Toronto), 56 Queen St. E. 416-530-4428. $35; $30(sr); $20(st).
A. Concerts in the GTA

$10(st). Also Mar 5 (See Section B. Beyond GTA, Chorus Niagara).

8:00: TeoMia. My Piano Stories. Original piano works. Miles: Agony and Ecstasy; Sarasbanada; Cathedral. TeoMia. piano. Music Gallery, 197 John St. 647-877-2607. $20; $15(st).

8:00: Somewhere There/Armymusic. Somewhere There Presents ... Jeffrey Roberts. Jeffrey Roberts, quolin. Array Space, 155 Walnut Ave. 416-522-3019. Price not available.

Monday March 7


Friday March 5

12:30: Don Wright Faculty of Music. Friday at 12:30. Canadian works by Omar Danil, Allan Gordon Bell and more. Land’s End Ensemble. Von Kuster Hall, Music Building, Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767. Free.

Wednesday March 3

12:00 noon: Midday Music with Shigeru. A Concert of Hymns. Includes multi-media. Cheryl Graham, piano. Hi-Way Pentecostal Church, 50 Anne St. N., Barrie. 705-726-1181. $5; free(st).


8:00: Don Wright Faculty of Music. String Quartet. Elisa Lee, violin; Benjamin Bowman, violin; Sharon Wei, viola; Blair Lofgren, cello. Von Kuster Hall, Music Building, Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767. Free.

Wednesday April 6


Thursday February 2


8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society. GIA (Composers and Improvisers Association). Selections by student composers. WLU Faculty of Music: Trio (flute/bassoon/piano); The Fact Pack: voice/trumpet; voxel: saxophone/tenor saxophone. WLU Faculty of Music: Trio (flute/bassoon/piano); The Fact Pack: voice/trumpet; voxel: saxophone/tenor saxophone. Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society, 57 Young St. W., Waterloo. 519-886-1673. $15; $10(st).

Friday February 5


12:00 noon: Midday Music with Shigeru. A Concert of Hymns. Includes multi-media. Cheryl Graham, piano. Hi-Way Pentecostal Church, 50 Anne St. N., Barrie. 705-726-1181. $5; free(st).

2:00: Don Wright Faculty of Music. Falstaff. Unheard Facets of a Classic. Don Wright Faculty of Music, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767. Free.


8:00: Don Wright Faculty of Music. Falstaff. See Feb 5. Also Feb 7. 705-742-7469. $28.50-$39.50; $15(st). Pre-concert talk.

Thursday February 4

Tuesday February 9


12:30: Don Wright Faculty of Music. Wind Ensemble. Selections by student composers. Don Wright Faculty of Music, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767. Free.

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

Monday March 7

2:00: Don Wright Faculty of Music. Falstaff. See Feb 5. Also Feb 7. 705-742-7469. $28.50-$39.50; $15(st). Pre-concert talk.

Sunday February 7


8:00: Don Wright Faculty of Music. Falstaff. Verdi. Opera based on William Shakespeare’s comedy The Merry Wives of Windsor. Paul Davenport Theatre, Talbot College, Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767. Free.

Monday May 8

Sunday February 8

2:00: Don Wright Faculty of Music. Symphony Concert. Don Wright Faculty of Music, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767. Free.


8:00: Don Wright Faculty of Music. Character music. Western University Jazz Ensemble. Paul Davenport Theatre, Talbot College, Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767. Free.

12:30: McMaster School of the Arts. School of the Arts. Lunchtime Concert Series. McMaster University, 1280 Main St. W., Hamilton. 905-525-9140 x27038 or x27671. $20; $15(sr); free(st). Also Feb 7.

Saturday April 6


Wednesday February 10

12:30: Don Wright Faculty of Music. Symphony Band Concert: In Light and Darkness. Paul Davenport Theatre, Talbot College, Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767. Free.


12:30: McMaster School of the Arts. School of the Arts. Lunchtime Concert Series. Hamilton Schola Cantorum. Convocation Hall, UH213, McMaster University, 1280 Main St. W., Hamilton. 905-525-9140 x27038 or x27671. $20; $15(sr); $5(st).

Friday February 12

3:00: McMaster School of the Arts. School of the Arts. Lunchtime Concert Series. Hamilton Schola Cantorum. Convocation Hall, UH213, McMaster University, 1280 Main St. W., Hamilton. 905-525-9140 x27038 or x27671. $20; $15(sr); $5(st).

Saturday February 13


2:00: Gallery Players of Niagara. From the wholenote.com...
Monday February 15

2:00: Kawartha Concerts. Earth, Seas and Air. Original works. Chris McKnoh, viol/instrument/voice. Market Hall Performing Arts Centre, 140 Charlotte St., Peterborough. 705-878-6625. $15; $5(youth/child). Also Feb 15(Lindsay).

Wednesday February 17

12:00 noon: Music at St. Andrew's. Sarah Svendsen, organ. St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church (Barnie), 47 Owen St., Barrie. 705-726-1181. $25; free(st).

Thursday February 18


Friday February 19

9:00:81: Bravo Niagara Festival of the Arts. Intimately Classical. Works by Bach, De Falla, Granados, The Beatles and others. Míloš Karadagchi, guitar. Historic Niagara District Court House, 26 Queen St., Niagara-on-the-Lake. 289-889-9177. $60; $125(VIP). VIP ticket includes premium seating, post-concert Meet and Greet and CD signing plus reception.


Saturday February 20


8:00: Jeffery Concerts. Yegor Dyachkov and Jean Saulnier. Cello and Piano Duo. Works by Brahms, Schumann, and Janáček. Wolf Performance Hall, 251 Dundas St., London. 519-672-8800. $35; $30(st). (at)

Sunday February 21


5:00: NUMUS Concerts. Jason White, piano. Ronx: De Profundis; R.E. Smith: World of Plenty (Canadian premiere); new work by Colin Labadie (world premiere); and other works. Jazz Room, Huetner Hotel, 59 King St. N., Waterloo. 519-898-3662. $15; $10(sr/arts worker); $5(st). (at)

Tuesday February 22

12:00 noon: Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts, Brock University. RBC Foundation: Music@Noon. Faculty Recital: Erika Reiman, pianist. Cairns Hall, FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, 250 St. Paul St., St. Catharines. 905-688-5550. Free. (at)


12:30: School of the Arts. Matthew Coley. Works for marimba, cimbalom, hammer dulcimer and glass. Convocation Hall, UH23, McMaster University, 1280 Main St. W., Hamilton. 905-525-9140 ext. 27038. $20; $15(adv); $5(st).


7:30: FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre. Bruce Cookson, mando-cello, mandola and Air.تضلت Orchestra. Daniel and Alford; Morawetz: In Memoriam for Martin Luther King. John Bell Martin-Martin, cellist; Daniel Warren, conductor. Grandview Baptist Church, 250 Old Dickey Hwy., Kitchener. 519-569-4999. $15; $10(st). (at)

8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Festival. Joseph Ferretti and Elaine Lau, piano. Schubert: Fantasie in F; Silvestrov: Three Bagatelles, Op.3; Chopin: Ballade No.4 in F; Dutilleul: Sonates, L'enchanteur; Ondulations–Ravel, Ma mère l'Oye; Ravel (arr. L. Garban)–La Valse. KWCMS Music Room, 57 Young St. W., Waterloo. 519-888-1673. $25; $15(st).

Thursday February 25


Friday February 26


Monday February 29


Wednesday March 2

12:00 noon: Midday Music with Shigeru. Japanese Flute and Silent Auction. Works by Gershwin, Peterson. Hi-Way Pentecostal Church, 50 Anne St. N., Barrie. 705-726-1181. $15; free(st). (at)


7:00: Kaleido Choral Festival. A Kalei-do-scope of Voices with Rajaton. Finnish a cappella group Rajaton with more than 300 high school students from the Kitchener/Water-loro region. St. Peter’s Lutheran Church, 49 Queen St. N., Kitchener. 519-584-5757. $25. Also Mar 3. See ad page 25.

Saturday February 27

2:00: Peterborough Singers. The Beatles. Rob Phillips, piano; Barry Haggarty, guitar; Andrew Affleck, bass guitar; Curtis Cronk-wright, drums; Steve McCracken, saxophone; Sydney Birrell, conductor. Calvary Pentecostal Church, 1421 Lansdowne St. W., Peter-borough. 705-745-1820. $30; $20(under 30); $10(st).

Due to space constraints, this month’s Music Theatre listings appear online only. Please visit thewholenote.com/MT for music theatre events not carried in our daily concert listings, as well as Quick Picks for daily listings of particular interest to followers of music theatre.
Cutting through the huge sound of the horns behind him, Martin Loomer plays the appropriate chords in the appropriate order on his electric guitar, laying down the time as authoritatively as any drummer. He wears a contagious grin and what looks to me like a bright orange jumpsuit. Which is super cool. If there’s anything I admire, it’s a loud outfit, and there are few outfits louder than a bright orange jumpsuit.

Martin Loomer’s Orange Devils have a monthly gig, on the second Monday of every month, at The Monarch Tavern. They play music by big bands of the 1930s and 40s, like those led by Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Fletcher Henderson and more, with skill and authenticity.

And who better to bring these charts to life than someone who makes his living as a music copyst? I first became aware of Loomer through the Orange Devils’ vocalist Rita di Ghent about three years ago – almost to the day – at the end of January 2013. Since then, I’ve chased down the Orange Devils, and Loomer himself, attended several of their gigs and bombarded him with questions, as you do with those more experienced in your field.

I guess I must have asked the maximum number of questions he could answer at a gig or on Facebook, because he eventually invited me and a friend to come to his house to talk about composing and arranging. We convened in his living room, me, my friend, Loomer, his wife Karen, their cats, and a tray of muffins and tea, and we talked about a lot: family, education, cartoons and video games and, even at points, music.

Once we migrated from the living room, Loomer showed us his score collection, which might be the largest number of scores I’ve ever seen in one room, music libraries included. This was a long while ago, but one thing I remember clearly is marvelling at how messy Duke Ellington’s hand-writing was. The Orange Devils combine Loomer’s encyclopedic knowledge of the repertoire with the expertise of those sharing the bandstand with him: people like John McLeod, William Carn, and Richard Whiteman (including, up until recently, the late Dr. Kira Payne who passed away on January 2: Payne doubled flawlessly both on alto and tenor saxophones, and as a musician and an accomplished M.D.; she is missed by the community). Go hear this band with no skepticism. Just go. I have no doubt you will like it.

**Turbo Street:** Another fairly large band – as distinct from a big band – I’d like to draw everyone’s attention to is *Turbo Street Funk*. If you don’t know them by name, you might recognize them from their busking days on major street corners around the downtown core, including Queen and Spadina, Bay and Bloom and so on. The band plays a combination of original tunes and pop standards, modern and otherwise, tightly arranged and performed by recent graduates of the big three music schools in the city. Turbo Street Funk will be bringing their outdoor dance party indoors on February 9 at Fat City Blues.

This, friends, is the month when the city begins to thaw. Or, it will be if there is any justice in the world. Come out and celebrate. With any luck, I’ll see you in the clubs.

*Bob Ben is The WholeNote’s jazz listings editor. He can be reached at jazz@thewholenote.com.*
February 4 5pm John-Wayne Swingtet: Wayne Nakamura (guitar), Abbey Sholzberg (bass). February 5 7pm The Rob Lee (bass) Session with Bobby Shaw (sax), Aidan Funston (guitar), Harold Camacho (drums); 8:30pm Nick Scott (guitar) Trio with Julian Anderson-Boyes (bass), Eric West (drums). February 8 7pm Julian Nalli (sax) Quintet with Leland Whitty (sax), Tyler Emind (guitar), James Hill (piano), Santino De Villa; 9:30 New City’s Adam Smale (guitar) Trio with Kieran Overs (bass), Vito Rezza (drums). February 11 9pm Bossa Tres: Victor Monsivais (guitar), Abbey Sholzberg (bass). February 18 9pm Vokurka’s Victorious Violin: Ed Vokurka (violin), John Fletcher (guitar), Abbey Sholzberg (bass). February 22 7:30pm Tyronn (bass) with Morgan Childs (drums), lineup TBA.

Jazz Bistro, The

251 Victoria St. E. 416-363-5299 jazzbistro.ca

February 4, 11, 18, 25 5pm Lala Blair Previews at Toronto Jazz Bistro – 3 night residency: Lala Blair (piano, voice), George Koller (bass), Ben Wittman (drums on Feb 4), Lauren Lewis (drums on Feb 11, 18). February 5 9pm Hansika $20. February 6 7pm (Sat/Sun) Thousand: Adam Smale (guitar), Kieran Overs (bass), Mark Kelso (drums on Feb 6). Vito Rezza (drums on Feb 7) $20(Sat)/$15(Sun). February 12, 13, 19 5pm The John Alcorn (voice) Quartet with Mark Eisen (piano), Steve Wallace (bass), Perry White (sax) $20. February 14 5pm Valentine’s Day with June Garber (voice) and the Mark Kieswetter (piano) Trio with George Koller (bass), Ben Riley (drums) $25 (includes dinner, drinks, and flowers). February 19, 20, 26 9pm Rich Brown (bass) & The Abeng with James Hill (keyboards), Luis Deniz (sax), Kevin Crotto (trombone), Ian Wright (drums) $20. February 21 7pm Daniel Nardi’s (voice) Espresso Manifesto with special guest Colleen Allen (sax) with Ron Davis (piano), Mike Downes (bass), Steve Heathcote (drums/percussion) $20. February 22 7pm Sounds of Italy – Jazz FM Piano Series with Rita Marcolini. February 25, 26, 27 8pm Warren Vache (cornet) with the Mark Eisen (piano) Trio with Steve Wallace (bass), Terry Clarke (drums) $20(Sat) /$25(Sat/Fri/Sat).

Jazz Room, The

Located at the Huetter Hotel, 595 King St. N., Toronto, 416-518-1665 jazzroom.ca (full schedule)


Joe Mama’s

317 King St. E. 416-504-6665 joemama.ca

Every Tue 6pm Jeff Eager. Every Wed 6pm Thomas Reynolds. Every Thurs 9pm Blackburn. Every Fri 10pm The Grind. Every Sat 10pm Shugga. Every Sun 6:30pm Organic: Nathan Hilts (guitar); Bernie Senensky (organ); Ryan Oliver (sax), Morgan Childs (drums).

KAMA

214 King St. E. 416-589-5626 kamajazz.com (full schedule)

Every Wed 5:30pm Jazz with the Kama House Band.

La Revolucion

284B Dundas St. W. 416-766-0746 restaurantlarevolucion.com (full schedule)

Jazz Fest, The

244 Parliament St. 416-961-5425

February 4 7pm Ron Davis’ (piano) Pocket Symphonica with Aline Hornzy (violin), Kevin Barrett (guitar), Mike Downes (bass), Roger Travassos (drums) $20(adv)/$25(door).

Manhattans Pizza Bistro & Music Club

1550 Dundas St. W. 416-588-3007 manhattans.ca (full schedule)

February 4 7pm Ron Davis’ (piano) Pocket Symphonica with Aline Hornzy (violin), Kevin Barrett (guitar), Mike Downes (bass), Roger Travassos (drums) $20(adv)/$25(door).


Mezzetta Restaurant

681 St. Clair Ave. W. 416-658-5687 mezzettarestaurant.com (full schedule)

All shows: 9pm, $10 (unless otherwise noted). February 5 Lorne Lovisky & Neil Swainson $10.

Monarch Tavern

12 Clinton St. 416-531-5833 themonarchtavern.com (full schedule)

February 7 7:30pm Martin 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.

Morgans on the Danforth

1282 Danforth Ave. 416-461-3020 mogansonthedanforth.com (full schedule)

All shows: 2pm. No cover.

February 28 Lisa Particelli’s Girls Night Out Jazz Jam.

Musideum

401 Richmond St. W. Main Floor 416-599-7323 musideum.ca (full schedule)

Nawlins Jazz Bar & Dining

299 King St. W. 416-595-1958 nawlins.ca

All shows: No cover/PWYC.

Every Tue 6:30pm Stacie McGregor. Every Wed 7pm Jim Heinerman Trio. Every Thurs 6pm Notch‘in The Blues w/ Joe Bowden (guitar) and featured vocalist. Every Sat 8:30pm Nawlins All Star Band. Every Sun 7pm Brooke Blackburn.

Nice Bistro, The

117 Brookit St. N., Whitby. 905-668-8839 nicebistro.com

Old Mill, The

The wholeNote.com
Galas and Fundraisers

- Feb 06 7:30: Queen's University School of Drama and Music. A Night in Vienna. Join the Queen's Orchestra and talented students, faculty and alumni from Queen's Music as we take a musical journey to Vienna. Concert-goers will have the opportunity to waltz the night away, or sit back and watch professional ballroom dancers float across the floor while listening to the wonderful music of Vienna. Produced by Bruce Kelly; directed by Gordon Craig. Grant Hall, Queen's Campus, 43 University Ave., Kingston. 613-533-2424; www.theisabel.ca @10 (floor with food); $490 (table of eight); $50 (balcony seating).
- Feb 17 7:00: Music Gallery. Music Gallery Fundraiser: 1976. Performances by Brigitte Bardot and Prince Nifty, a silent auction, 50/50s, new music trivia, and more. We're going to party like it's 1976, new music-style. 197 John St. 416-204-1080. @20.

Competitions

- Feb 02 10:00am: Royal Conservatory of Music. Glenn Gould School Concerto Competition Finals. Hear talented 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. 416-408-2030. Free (ticket required).
- Orchestra Toronto. Marta Hidy Concerto Competition 2016. This year's prize awarded $1,000 and an opportunity to perform at the Toronto Centre for the Arts. For full history of the competition and details of the competition prize, visit www.orchestratronto.ca. Deadline for mailing the application form and registration fee: February 1, 2016.

Festivals

- Feb 06 – 14 (Friday 7pm-1:30am; Saturday 1pm-1:30am; Sunday 7pm-11pm): Winterfolk. Fourteenth Annual Blues and Roots Festival. The best of urban, blues, rock, jazz, country, folk and roots music, emulating a multi-stage rural summer festival. More than 150 artists will be performing at four venues and five stages; included are special tribute events, an awards ceremony, community stages and various themed musical workshops. The Danforth: Black Swan Tavern, 154 Danforth Ave., 416-483-0537; Dora Keogh Irish Pub, 141 Danforth Ave., 416-778-1804; Terris 0, 185 Danforth Ave., 416-462-0033; Mambo Lounge, 120 Danforth Ave., 416-778-7004; www.winterfolk.ca. Paid and free concert stages.

Lectures, Salons, Symposia

- Feb 04 - Mar 10 10:00-12:00: Royal Conservatory of Music. All About the Piano: Estampes (Postcards). Explore music involving the piano from Buenos Aires, New York City, Paris, Vienna, Prague, Riga, St. Petersburg, Tallinn and Helsinki. Instructor: Peteris Zarins. 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-2825. @250.
- Feb 09 10:30: Oakville Opera Guild. My Life with Opera – a Personal Journey. Don Gillies, musician and former minister of Bloor Street United Church. Oakville Public Library Central Branch, 120 Navy St. Oakville. 905-827-5670; Oakville. Opera.Guild@outlook.com @10 (proceeds go towards our scholarship fund, to be awarded to a student attending the Faculty of Music at the U of T, and support our annual donation to the Canadian Opera Company.)
- Feb 09 7:00: North York Central Library. Learning to Love in Wagner’s Siegfried. The comic scherzo in Wagner’s epic Ring cycle is also opera’s strangest coming of age story. What’s a boy to do when he knows little about his background – and nothing about the opposite sex? Join Opera Canada editor Wayne Goodall as he introduces the Canadian Opera Company’s production of Wagner’s Siegfried. Auditorium, 5100 Yonge St. To register: 416-395-5639. Free.
- Feb 09 7:00: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Lecture by composer Lawrence Shragge. Louis Applebaum Distinguished Visitor in Film Composition. Shragge has written music for over 160 movies and television series as well as for theatre, dance, art installations and advertising. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Bldg, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-978-3744. Free.
- Feb 10 – Apr 06 10am-12noon: Royal Conservatory of Music. The Great Conductors. Explore the lives, careers, talents and music making of eight great conductors through film recordings, film footage of rehearsals and performances, and comparisons of the same works presented by different conductors. Instructor: Rick Phillips. 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-2825. @395.
- Feb 20 9:00am-2:00pm: Royal School of Church Music. A Quiet Day for Church Musicians. An opportunity for those who work in the ministry to reflect and focus on our Lenten mission, renewing us mentally and spiritually for the busy times ahead; includes a brief talk by Bishop Michael Bedford-Jones on the subject of making music in a church setting. St. John's Convict, 233 Cummer Ave. 416-694-3940. @30.

E. The ETCeteras


Screenings

- Feb 16 6:30: Istituto Italiano di Cultura. Screening of Verdi’s Otello (2000). Directed by Graham Vick; music director: Riccardo Muti; starring: Plácido Domingo (Otello); Leo Nucci (Iago); Barbara Frittoli (Desdemona); orchestral and chorus of Teatro alla Scala, Alliance Française Theatre, 24 Spadina Rd. http://www.ictoronto.esteri.it/IC_Toronto/Menu/Istituti/Free.

Tours

- Feb 07 10:00am: 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. 416-363-8231. $20; $15 (sr/st). Also Feb 21. Tickets will be available on the morning of the tour starting at 10:00am.

Workshops

- Feb 05 & 06 10:00am-5:00: Musikey. Professional Conducting Workshop. Grace Lutheran Church, 304 Spruce St. Oakville. To reserve: 905-825-9740; musikey.ca @50 – @150.
- Feb 13 10:00am-12:30: Musikey. Vocal Technique Workshop. For choral singers of all levels and singers at large. Grace Lutheran Church, 1107 Main St. W. Hamilton. To reserve: 905-825-9740; musikey.ca. @30.
- Feb 13 2:00-4:30: Musikey. Singing in Tunes Workshop. For choral singers with prior singing experience who want to improve their intonation as an individual and in a group setting. Grace Lutheran Church, 1107 Main St. W. Hamilton. To reserve: 905-825-9740; musikey.ca. @50.
- Feb 19 7:30: CAMMAC Recorder Players’ Society. Amateur recorder players are invited to take the playing of early music. Guest coach: Frank Nakashima. Mount Pleasant Road Baptist Church, 527 Mount Pleasant
Executive Director (50-60 hrs/month) - has overall responsibility for operations management, leading and supervising others in accomplishing the vision of the RCCO.

Administrative Assistant (20 hrs/wk) - provides administrative and clerical services, supporting efficient day-to-day operations.

Both positions require:
• experience with non-profit and/or business management;
• current technology skills;
• strong communication, organization and executive abilities;
• sound judgment, independent work habits and an eye for detail.

A background in or appreciation for the organ and/or organ music is desirable.

RCCO, Canada’s oldest musicians’ association, is a nationwide non-profit organization of professional and amateur organists, church musicians, choral conductors and others sharing an interest in the organ and its music. RCCO headquarters are located in midtown Toronto. Two salaried opportunities are currently available, to work with RCCO’s board of directors, staff and a membership base of 1,200 members.

Applications to:
Search Committee,
Royal Canadian College of Organists,
204 St. George Street,
Suite 202,
Toronto, ON M5R 2N5
or by email to info@rcco.ca

Deadline:
Midnight, March 31, 2016.

Full job descriptions available at www.rcco.ca
COUNTERPOINT COMMUNITY ORCHESTRA (www.ccorchestra.org) welcomes volunteer musicians for Monday evening rehearsals at the 519 Church Street Community Centre in downtown Toronto. No audition. We're especially looking for harp, trombone and string players. Email info@ccorchestra.org.

DO YOU LOVE TO SING? Are you looking for a choir that performs every type of sacred music, from Byrd to Britten, Howells to Hogan? The Anglican Church of St. John the Baptist seeks all voice types to enhance their Mass Choir. Services take place on Sundays at 10:30 AM in the Beaches, one of Toronto’s most active and artistic neighbourhoods. For more information, contact music@stjohnsnorway.com or (416) 302-2074

NORTH YORK CONCERT ORCHESTRA is interested in welcoming new players. We are a community orchestra which rehearses throughout the year on Weds. nights, York Mills Collegiate in Don Mills. There are four subscription concerts and several outreach projects. We are also looking for harp, pianist, percussion, & tuba (etc) players. Hearing from first violinists and string bass players. Please contact personnel@nyco.on.ca for further information

FLUTE LESSONS. Classical flute lessons for all ages and levels. Located near Davenport- Lansdowne. Contact Meghan at 416-226-5488, meghan@meghanconnor.com www.meghanconnor.com

PRIVATE VIOLIN LESSONS: All ages welcome! Beginner to professional. Lessons in English and Français; music studio in the Annex. info@andreatyniec.ca

PRIVATE VOICE/PIANO/THREORY/ EAR-TRAINING LESSONS/GROUP


PRIVATE VOICE/Piano/ THEORY LESSONS: Experienced, BFA Certified Teacher located at Christ Church Deer Park (Yonge & St. Clair). Prepares you or your child for RCM exams, competitions & auditions. Contact Jessika: jwhitakmusic@gmail.com (416) 214-2827.

WARMHEARTED PIANO TEACHER with stellar credentials, unfailing good humor, and buckets of patience. Royal Conservatory washouts and nervous learners especially welcome! The KSO is looking for its new Principal Pianist; sectional Violins, Violas, Cellos and Contrabasses. The KSO is an auditioned-based civic orchestra in Scarborough. We are currently looking to strengthen our tenor and bass sections. If you have ever wanted to participate in a group that values music, fun and fellowship, please consider joining us. Auditions will take place in the first two weeks of January 2016, during our regular Tuesday night practice. Website: www.belcantosingers.ca. Contact Elaine at 416-699-4585.

DO YOU DRIVE? Do you love The WholeNote? Share the love and earn a little money! Join The WholeNote's circulation team. 7 times a year. 6TA and well beyond. Interested? Contact: circulation@thewholenote.com

The Celtic Fiddle Orchestra of Southern Ontario is looking for additional musicians: violin, viola, cello, bass and flute. We practice Saturday evenings at the S19 Church Street Community Centre in downtown Toronto. No audition. We're especially looking for harp, trombone and strings players. Email info@ccorchestra.org.

Bel Canto Singers is a 50 voice SATB choir, under the direction of Linda Meyer. Repertoire includes classical, musical theatre, folk, jazz and pop tunes. Rehearsals are Tuesdays at St. Nicholas Anglican Church in Scarborough. We are currently looking to strengthen our tenor and bass sections. If you have ever wanted to participate in a group that values music, fun and fellowship, please consider joining us. Auditions will take place in the first two weeks of January 2016, during our regular Tuesday night practice. Website: www.belcantosingers.ca. Contact Elaine at 416-699-4585.

BEL CANTO SINGERS
DO YOU LOVE TO SING?

If you have ever wanted to participate in a choir, under the direction of Linda Meyer. Bel Canto Singers is a 50 voice SATB choir, under the direction of Linda Meyer. Repertoire includes classical, musical theatre, folk, jazz and pop tunes. Rehearsals are Tuesdays at St. Nicholas Anglican Church in Scarborough. We are currently looking to strengthen our tenor and bass sections. If you have ever wanted to participate in a group that values music, fun and fellowship, please consider joining us. Auditions will take place in the first two weeks of January 2016, during our regular Tuesday night practice. Website: www.belcantosingers.ca. Contact Elaine at 416-699-4585.

Bel Canto Singers is a 50 voice SATB choir, under the direction of Linda Meyer. Repertoire includes classical, musical theatre, folk, jazz and pop tunes. Rehearsals are Tuesdays at St. Nicholas Anglican Church in Scarborough. We are currently looking to strengthen our tenor and bass sections. If you have ever wanted to participate in a group that values music, fun and fellowship, please consider joining us. Auditions will take place in the first two weeks of January 2016, during our regular Tuesday night practice. Website: www.belcantosingers.ca. Contact Elaine at 416-699-4585.
Teng Li lives in Toronto’s King West neighbourhood with her loving husband, percussionist John Wong. She loves tasting amazing food, eating all sorts of dessert and drinking good wine and beer. Having learned to knit from YouTube videos a few years ago, she knits baby booties, scarves and hats. Her next projects are sweaters for her hubby and a friend.

She’s been working on those for a couple of years; one of these days they will be finished!

When you look at your childhood photo today?

I don’t remember taking this photo but it must have been in the summer – my parents’ old apartment in our hometown, Nanjing, China. Nanjing is known as one of China’s four “hotpots” because of its unbearable heat and humidity in the summer. My family didn’t own an air conditioner and I remember practising with streams of sweat going down my back and forehead. The fingerboard was often so wet, after a day of practising, my left fingers felt as though they had been soaked in water for a long time.

If you could travel back through time and meet the young person in that childhood photo?

I would tell young Teng, “All the hard work you are doing now will pay off later. The time you spend on music makes you have better connection with it. Don’t be too stressed, everything is going to work out.”

Other musicians in your childhood family?

My mother is a well-respected, retired school teacher, and my father is a tai chi master – among his many other abilities. He was a Beijing Opera singer so talented that he had a job with the provincial company at 18 and performed many major roles for foreign leaders. Unfortunately, he was forced out of the company because of the Cultural Revolution. He was sent to a coal mine away from home to work but continued to be interested in the arts. He performed at the mine as a performance host, singer and bamboo flute player, and at one of these performances he met my mother. He was the host, and she, a school-teacher reading a poem that she had written for the event. How romantic is that! My parents still live in Nanjing, China. When I performed in Beijing and Shanghai last December they came to see me perform. They have visited Toronto a couple of times and came to many concerts while they were here.

Earliest memories of hearing music?

My father used to play bamboo flute at home; I’m sure he played for me a lot when I was an infant. To this day, I still like the sound of the bamboo flute a lot – I even brought one of his flutes to Toronto. I remember my father and his brothers would get out instruments to play and sing together at the big Chinese New Year family gathering.

First recollections of making and hearing music?

Maybe because all of our parents went through the Cultural Revolution, and western music and traditional music were banned during that time, parents put their musical desire in their children, and hoped their musical dreams would be continued. On my floor of the apartment building, every kid my age played a musical instrument. Classical recordings were not easy to find. Going to a concert was the only way to learn what good playing was. I remember watching violin recitals, concerts and prizewinner concerts at a very young age. My parents took me to see other kids perform and I remember thinking: I wish I could play like that. On some of my Shanghai trips, after lessons, my father would take me to the Shanghai Conservatory to hear a student recital.

Do you remember when you began to think of yourself as a career musician?

I knew from a very young age that I was going to be a musician. My parents saw my talent very early on – on my second birthday I received a violin as a present. I started taking violin lessons at age five when I was big enough to hold that instrument ...

Please visit thewhelonenote.com to read the rest of this remarkable interview.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR WINNERS!

Trio Arkel presents String Tapestry on February 19 (Trinity-St.Paul’s Centre, Jeanne Lamon Hall). They are joined by Scott St. John, violin, and Sharon Wei, viola for music by Gubaidulina, Kodály and Beethoven. TICKETS! Abby Sears

The Toronto Symphony Orchestra’s March 2 concert (Roy Thomson Hall) features some of their own magnificent players as soloists: Sarah Jeffrey, oboe; Michael Sweeney, bassoon; Steven Woomert, trumpet; James Gardiner, trumpet; Jonathan Crow, violin; Joseph Johnson, cello; and Teng Li, viola. Tom Allen hosts and Peter Oundjian conducts. Teng Li will play Paganini’s Sonata per la Gran Viola. TICKETS! Jialiang Zhu

Amici Chamber Ensemble is joined by Teng Li, viola, and Cho-Liang Lin, violin, on April 24 (Mazzoleni Concert Hall, ROM) for “Illumination”: chamber music inspired by moonlight and stars by a world of composers. TICKETS!

George Fung

1939 is Teng Li’s debut CD. “This is a memorable disc. The recorded sound is clear and authentic, and Li’s own booklet notes, in English, French and Chinese, are persuasive in presenting these works as direct responses to their fraught times.” Pamela Margles, DISCoversies, September 2015. (Azica ACD-71301). A copy goes to Nancy Simpson

NEW CONTEST

Who is March’s child?

Circa 1981, at home in Tempe, Arizona, this early backline player already looks like he needs a longer instrument!

- Consorting in Canada since 2004 with as many as 16-20 strings attached.
- Sticks his neck out all over the musical map.

Know our Mystery Child’s name? WIN PRIZES!

Send your best guess by midnight on February 20.

musicschildren@thewholonenote.com
The column this month has been, even more than usual, a personal journey for me. A week ago when I should have begun, I found myself wondering what there was to write about. I had assigned the discs that were of most interest to me to other writers for a full treatment rather than glossing over them here. Of particular note were the Dutilleux recordings, and I must say that Elliot Wright’s appreciation of them later in these pages confirms that to have been the right decision. But it left me nearly empty-handed and I warned publisher David Perlman at The WholeNote’s early January gathering that there might not be an Editor’s Corner this month. So much has happened since then that it is hard to imagine that just one week has passed.

The first event was a kitchen party at my friends Michael and Mary’s house, an annual affair to welcome in the New Year with a wealth of pickin’ and grinnin’. In addition to the usual plethora of guitars in various tunings, fiddles, mandolins and octave mandolins, there were hand drums, harmonicas, a keyboard, an accordion and more than a dozen voices lifted joyously in song. It was a magical evening, as so often these gatherings can be. I took particular delight in the opportunity to play with the accordionist, who was adding myriad colours and rhythms to the mix. As I was leaving – earlier than was my wont due to the tail end, or so I thought, of a lingering chest cold – I mentioned my pleasure to Mary who told me to hang on and went her way on her own laurels (and the mixing skills were the graphic designer of the package (altdesign.ca) and had a box of discs on hand, and so I left the party knowing my journey had begun.

Leighton Life is a wonderfully eclectic recording that showcases the writing skills and musical dexterity (piano, synths, accordion, organ, jaw harp, whistle, trombone, percussion, bouzouki and bodhran) of Tom Leighton (tomleighton.ca). Not content to rest on his own laurels (and the mixing skills of producer Paul Mills), Leighton surrounds himself with a marvellous array of musical friends too plentiful to name, to create horn sections, string arrangements, cello solos and string band accompaniments as required. The opening track All Thumbs is a playful Penguin Café Orchestra-style minimalistic moto perpetuo with the ostinato provided by the ticking of a mechanical clock and a triangle (at least that’s my guess). A Summer Jig features the accordion in the lead role of a warm, lush instrumentation. A Letter Found is a haunting ballad with violin and cello in unison and harmony on the memorable melody over piano and accordion accompaniment. Hank Dances is a rhythmically propulsive swing tune with horns, extrapolated from music Leighton wrote for a production of Hank Williams, The Show He Never Gave by Maynard Collins. The 12 tracks included here – all instrumental – run the gamut from old timey, to R&B, Scottish traditional to The Hurdy-Gurdy which Leighton says was “written for the hurdy-gurdy ... by a non-player. Alas, it doesn’t play well on a hurdy-gurdy but conjures my image of the player.” Quite convincingly I might add. The album comes with a “Warning! Listening to instrumental music activates emotional, motor and creative areas of the brain!” It also includes the notice that all compositions are available as sheet music from the composer, so as spontaneous as much of the music feels, it is obviously conceived in its entirety by this wonderful musician. I look forward to having the opportunity to play with him again.

The next steps on the journey began just a block from Michael and Mary’s house, at the Dufferin bus stop at Davenport. A few minutes after I arrived at the stop another man carrying a guitar case came to wait alongside me. I asked if he was going out to play, or like me, coming home from doing so. He said he was coming from a friend’s house where they had been playing bluegrass music all evening. Long time readers of this column will know that I am enamoured of the “new grass” band Joy Kills Sorrow that was active from 2005 to 2014. I asked this guitarist if he was familiar with the band and he said no, but that he knew “the song.” Not knowing the song myself, I said “Oh?” “Yes,” he said, “it’s a great song by Bela Fleck.” And so my next quest began. It turns out that When Joy Kills Sorrow appeared on the 1999 CD The Bluegrass Sessions: Tales From The Acoustic Planet, Volume 2 (Warner Bros. 9-47732-2), where Fleck’s cronies from the 1987 album Drive reunite and are joined by legends Earl Scruggs, Vassar Clements and John Hartford and contemporary stars Vince Gill, Tim O’Brien and Ricky Skaggs, for a number of Fleck originals and several traditional and classic tunes. Since this CD is old news and only new to me I won’t dwell on it other than to say it’s been in heavy rotation on my player since it arrived last Wednesday from Amazon (HMV couldn’t locate the one copy their superstore’s computer said they had). Highlights of the disc are the above-mentioned Joy Kills Sorrow, an old Flatt & Scruggs tune Polka on the Banjo and a two-banjo arrangement of the Clarinet Polka by Fleck and Hartford. Having grown up with the George Barnes solo guitar take on the latter as the theme to the Max Ferguson Show and now hearing this banjo version, I found myself wondering why I hadn’t even heard it played on the clarinet. Hats off to YouTube, I didn’t have to look far ...

One disc that crossed my desk this month, an arrangement of Brian Eno’s Discreet Music performed by Toronto’s Contact ensemble, turned out to be a timely release, but not for the reasons one would hope. The news of David Bowie’s death last week brought many memories and realizations. Bowie’s chameleon-like career affected audiences and artists across the spectrum, me among them. I was not much aware of the glam rock era, but became drawn to Bowie at the time he started collaborating with Eno. Already a fan of Eno’s ambient approach to composition and sound, I was curious to see how he would interact with the “space oddity” that was Bowie.

In Francis Whately’s 2013 film David Bowie: Five Years, Eno says that Bowie was drawn to his “longest, slowest, quietest” work, Discreet Music, and that their projects grew out of this interest. This was at a time when Bowie was tired of the rock-star lifestyle that had brought him perilously close to death by overdose and misadventure in L.A. His subsequent move to Paris and then Berlin, where he undertook a Spartan low-profile existence, ultimately resulted in a trilogy of Bowie-Eno albums beginning with the 1977 Low (RCA LP CPL1-2030). In 1991 Rykodisc would reissue Low on compact disc (RCD 10142) with bonus tracks. Not being in the habit of replacing my vinyl collection with CDs, I was unaware of the extra material until I revisited the Low Symphony by Philip Glass (POINT Music 435 150-2), which was inspired by two tracks by Bowie and Eno and one by Bowie alone. I was confused when I was unable to find Some Are, one of the duo compositions, on my LP and eventually ended up downloading the missing title from iTunes last week ... Three music platforms later I now have the full picture!

But that picture was further enhanced by These Dreams of You (Europa Editions ISBN 978-1-60945-065-2), a 2012 novel by Steve
Erickson, which I found myself reading for the third time over the past few days (which may have set a record for frequency of rereading for me). Erickson, whose eight previous novels number among my favourites – a shout out to IowTi Taylor for turning me on to Arc d’X all those years ago! – frequently incorporates pop culture, particularly music and film, into his novels. Although These Dreams of You is nominally speculative and surreal, as are most of his books, the narrative strands are fairly linear, albeit many layered. The protagonists are a family of four in contemporary L.A. in danger of losing their house as a result of the economic crisis and the nefarious machinations of the banks. The father, Zan, has recently been let go from his position as professor of literature at the local university and is the sole DJ on a low-wattage radio station broadcasting without a license from a local Mexican restaurant in the Valley.

His wife, Viv, is a freelance photographer whose work is drying up and whose one claim to fame, stained glass butterfly art, has been co-opted by an infamous commercial artist. Their children are Parker, a 12-year-old whose namesake is Charlie Parker but whose musical interests favour gangsta rap, and Sheba, a precocious four-year-old orphan adopted from Ethiopia, who is seeing wired internally to a certain unnamed “red-headed British alien who wears dresses.” The not-so-veiled references to David Bowie continue as he permeates the story, in particular with tales of his time in Berlin with roommates The Professor (Eno?) and Jim (Iggy Pop?), which lead to the album Low. Erickson cleverly weaves his tales – another one including presidential hopeful Bobby Kennedy in the months leading up to his assassination, and a third, an aspiring 1970s author, who after being beaten and left for dead by German skinheads, wakes to find himself in 1919 Berlin with a paperback copy of a novel that will shape the literature of the coming century but won’t be published until 1922 – through three eras and three continents. The convolutions are eventually resolved, and although there are no particularly happy endings, it does make for a very compelling read. Part of the fun is identifying the myriad historical characters that are never actually named. A great read indeed, and a great tribute to David Bowie.

But back to Contact’s rendition of Discreet Music (Cantaloupe Music CA21114 cantaloupe.com). Eno’s original LP side was an electronic intertwining of some very simple melodic material according to some basic programming in Eno’s synthesizers. Four decades later Toronto percussionist and founding member of Contact Contemporary Music, Jerry Pergolesi, set out to make a live performance version of the iconic work. In the booklet notes he says:

“In keeping with the spirit of the original, my ‘arrangement’ consists of seven mutually compatible melodies (the result of Eno’s original two melodies being occasionally altered) and instructions that render the band itself into the looping apparatus that Eno describes as the ‘score’ for the original. The ‘arrangement’ sets parameters for the musicians to follow, while giving them some leeway to make decisions with regard to what they play and when. Once the performance starts, however, the resulting sound is out of anyone’s hands.” The members of Contact – Mary-Katherine Finch, cello; Sarah Fraser Raff, violin; Wallace Halladay, soprano sax; Rob MacDonald, guitar; Peter Pavlovsky, bass; Jerry Pergolesi, vibraphone; Allison Wiebe Benstead, piano; complemented here by Emma Zoe Elkinson, flute and Dean Kurtis-Pomeroy, gongs – perform with real conviction – tone and intonation are warm and consistent – and they manage to hold our attention throughout the hour-long take in which “nothing happens.” I can’t imagine what it is like to take part in such a static performance, but congratulations are due to all concerned for realizing a viable live presentation of an electronic classic.

It has been a month of losses in the musical arts. Canadian-born jazz icon, Paul Bley, and French father of avant-garde concert music, Pierre Boulez, are honoured elsewhere in these pages, although their passing garnered little attention in Toronto’s mainstream media. In contrast, much has been said about the death of David Bowie across all media and all platforms – including 24 continuous hours of programming on Much Music as I write this column – so I will not say much more here. He was a unique artist who constantly reinvented himself and touched more lives than most. His final offering Blackstar (ISO Records 88875173862) was released on his 69th birthday, two days before his death, and once again we are presented with a new man, seemingly from beyond the grave. Indeed one of the songs and videos is called Lazarus. I was lucky enough to purchase a copy of Blackstar before they all disappeared from the shelves (and online catalogues) but it will take me some time before I’m able to assimilate it. It’s a journey I am convinced is worth undertaking.

We welcome your feedback and invite submissions. CDs and comments should be sent to: DISCoveries, WholeNote Media Inc., The Centre for Social Innovation, 503 – 720 Bathurst St. Toronto ON M5S 2R4. We also encourage you to visit our website thewholenote.com where you can find added features including direct links to performers, composers and record labels, “buy buttons” for on-line shopping and additional, expanded and archival reviews.

David Olds, DISCoveries Editor
discoveries@thewholenote.com

You can find enhanced reviews of all discs below the yellow line in The WholeNote listening room.

Pianist RÉA BEAUMONT’s CD ‘A Conversation Piece’ “Beaumont’s touch is well-suited to the delicate textures and the intricate passages” Beaumont’s “compositional prowess” www.reabeaumont.com

See Daniela at Jazz Bistro Feb 21st, Mar 20th & Apr 17th.

Beethoven’s piano sonatas form an unparalleled canon. These 3 represent his Early, Middle and Late periods and are united in the key of C-minor.

Vivaldi’s legacy is steadily achieving greater and richly deserved recognition today with the help of collections such as this one abetted by the Aradia Ensemble.
Goodness only knows how many attempts at string quartets Johannes Brahms destroyed before he finally felt able to present a completed work to the world in 1873 – there may have been as many as 20 – but at least the three quartets we do have are real gems.

The two quartets Op.51, in C Minor and A Minor, were followed by the B-flat Major Op.67 in 1876, but with each of the three works being about 35 minutes in length it’s simply not possible to include more than two on a single CD. Still, as the song says, two out of three ain’t bad, especially when the performances are as beautiful as those on Brahms String Quartets Op.51, Nos.1&2 by the New Orford String Quartet (Bridge 9464).

Just about all of the Brahmsian qualities you would want to hear are present: these are warm, passionate, nuanced, beautifully judged and balanced performances, full of that almost autumnal, nostalgic introspection so typical of the composer and with a lovely dynamic range. Jonathan Crow and Andrew Wan play first and second violin respectively in the Op.51 No.1, changing places for the second quartet.

The warm and resonant recording quality should come as no surprise, given that the location was the Multimedia Room at McGill University’s Schulich School of Music in Montreal.

The outstanding Armenian brother and sister duo Sergey and Lusine Khachatryan are back with another superb violin and piano recital on My Armenia (naïve V5.414), dedicated to the 100th Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide.

The program of works by Komitas Vardapet, Eduard Bagdasaryan, Edvard Mirzoyan, Aram Khachaturian and Arno Babadjian gives both performers ample opportunity to shine. Lusine Khachatryan is excellent in the piano solos that account for almost half of the very generous running time of the CD – close to 80 minutes – but the disc really takes off in the duos, with Sergey’s impassioned, brilliant playing takiing the music to new heights and emotional depths.

There’s a lovely recorded sound and balance right from the opening two short-but-lovely duos by Vardapet before Lusine features in his Seven Folk Dances for Piano Solo. The three duos pieces at the centre of the CD – Bagdasaryan’s Rhapsody and Nocturne and Mirzoyan’s Introduction & Perpetuum mobile – are also the heart of the recital. The Rhapsody is a truly rhapsodic and beautiful piece, and the short Nocturne an absolute gem. The Mirzoyan work is a real showstopper, with a simply dazzling second half.

Khachaturian, probably the best-known of the composers on the disc, is represented by three short pieces, including the familiar Toccatina movement straight out of the same drawer as Prokofiev’s Seventh Piano Sonata. It’s another dazzler.

All in all, it’s wonderful playing and musicianship from a wonderfully gifted duo. This is music that is clearly deeply ingrained in their hearts and souls as well as in their fingers.

Regular readers will know how I feel about reviewing complete sets of the Bach unaccompanied solo works, be it the Sonatas & Partitas for violin or the Cello Suites: the sheer size, scope, depth and complexity of the music, together with the wide range of versions available, makes any in-depth review almost impossible. All you can really do is note the arrival and try to give some idea of the stylistic approach and overall effect.

The latest addition to the already lengthy list of available versions of the Bach Sonatas & Partitas for Solo Violin is a beautiful 2-CD set by Midori (Onyx 4123). Again, as with the recent Gil Shaham release, there is a clear sense of these wonderful works having been a constant in the performer’s life, together with a reluctance to create a permanent record of what is essentially only one in a continually developing and changing series of interpretations. “After thirty years on stage,” says Midori, “the time felt right for me to fully embrace these most daunting and invaluable compositions.”

The recordings were made in Cologne in August 2013 as a result of Midori’s Bach Project that marked the 30th anniversary of her 1982 debut with Zubin Mehta and the New York Philharmonic. Presumably made for broadcast on German radio – the booklet cover has WDR The Cologne Broadcasts as a sub-heading – the recorded sound is clean and clear, with a natural presence.

There is much to comment on here: the compactness of the chords in the G Minor Fugue; the brightness, speed and sense of pulse in the up-tempo dance movements in the Partitas; the lightness and ease of the multiple-stopping, without ever obscuring the line, the light and warmth in the tone, combined with a strength and richness.

It’s easy to see why violinists hesitate to commit performances of these works to disc: the more you play them and live with them, the more the challenges and possibilities, both technical and emotional, continue to grow and not diminish.

All we can do is sit back and enjoy the journey, albeit a different one each time, and feel grateful for the privilege.

Many of the same problems for a reviewer are presented by the Mystery Sonatas (also known as the Rosary Sonatas) of Heinrich Ignaz Franz von Biber, now available in a beautifully judged 2CD set by the outstanding period-performance violinist Rachel Podger (Channel Classics CCS SA 37315). David Miller, Marcin Świątkiewicz and Jonathan Manson supply the excellent continuo.

The sonatas depict the mysteries in the life of Jesus and the Virgin Mary. Anyone familiar with Biber’s descriptive piece Battalia will know how startlingly inventive he can be, but nothing prepares you for what he does in these 16 sonatas.

Scordatura (from the Italian word that gives us “discordant”) is a technique in which the strings of a string instrument are tuned differently from the usual arrangement. It’s not that uncommon, but in these sonatas Biber takes it to simply astonishing lengths, radically altering the violin’s normal GDAE tuning in all but the outer movements by retuning anything from one to all four of the strings by intervals as large as a fifth. Every tuning is different, and some –GGDD, DBF-flatD and BF-sharpBD, for instance – are simply eye-popping. The result is essentially a different instrument for each movement, with enormous possibilities for radically different chordal work and multiple-stopping.

These astonishing sonatas have long been a favourite with baroque specialists – a quick online search produced almost two dozen CD sets currently available – and while Podger is up against some stiff competition (including an outstanding set by Tafelmusik’s Julia Wedman) these are performances of works that stretch both the violin and the violinist to the limit that will hold their own against any.

When Hyperion released the Russian violinist Alina Ibragimova’s recording of the Bach Sonatas & Partitas in 2009, Gramophone magazine noted that “... her Bach comes as something of a revelation ... all
her style and technical refinement is at the service of an ingrained understanding of the music.” Add another six years, and it should come as no surprise that in her latest Hyperion release, Bach Violin Concertos with the string ensemble Arcangelo under their founder Jonathan Cohen (CD 68608). Ibragimova delivers terrific performances of consummate skill and style.

Arcangelo plays with a lute and harpsichord continuo, but it’s the lute that predominates in the balance here, giving the performances a soft, warm background that provides a perfect setting for Ibragimova’s sensitive interpretations. The booklet notes point out that this music comes from an age when the distinction between star soloist and ensemble player was more blurred than it is today, and Ibragimova really seems to have taken that to heart. Her imaginative playing is full of sensitive phrasing and dynamics, but is quite laid back, sounding more like a thread running through a tapestry than an out-front solo performance. Everything is light and spacious, and never heavy or routine.

The two standard solo concertos – in A Minor BWV1041 and E Major BWV1042, both of which were transcribed for keyboard by Bach – are here, but not the D Minor Double Concerto. Instead, we have three solo concertos that are described as “back-transcriptions,” being reconstructed solo versions of keyboard concertos that were themselves transcriptions of solo works. The Concerto in A Major BWV1055 is from Keyboard Concerto No.4; the Concerto in G Minor BWV1056 is from the transposed Keyboard Concerto No.5 in F Minor; and the Concerto in D Minor BWV1052 is from the Keyboard Concerto No.1.

The original A Major concerto may have been for oboe d’amore, and the original G Minor for violin or oboe; the D Minor, however, was described by no less an authority as Donald Tovey as “the greatest and most difficult violin concerto before the time of Beethoven.”

It makes a fine ending to an immensely satisfying CD.

However much you may know about the music of the English composer Cyril Scott, whose Lotus Land was transcribed and recorded several times by Heifetz in the 1920s and 1930s, you’re almost certainly not going to know either of the works on the CD Dawn and Twilight – The First and Last Violin Sonatas of Cyril Scott (Affetto AF150.4) unless you’ve already heard the CD; both works are world premiere recordings.

Scott, who died in 1970 at the age of 91, wrote close to 400 works in a wide range of genres but his music was largely neglected at his death, although there has been a resurgence of both interest and recordings since the turn of the century. He wrote four numbered violin sonatas, only the first of which is a youthful work: written in 1908, it was heavily revised and shortened in 1956. The revised version, along with the second and third sonatas from 1950 and 1955 respectively, was featured on a 2010 Naxos release, but Dawn and Twilight pairs the original version with the unpublished Sonata No.4, written in 1956, the same year as the revision of No.1, and provided in a photocopy of the original manuscript by the composer’s son Desmond Scott.

Violinist Andrew Kirkman and pianist Clipper Erickson are the performers here in works that are difficult to compare because, as Desmond Scott notes, there is a world of stylistic and other differences between them. Certainly the 1908 version of the First Sonata, almost a third longer than the revised version, shows a composer already leaving behind the influences of Debussy and Strauss and moving away from tonality and regular rhythm, and not surprisingly attracting a fair amount of comprehending attention from contemporary reviewers. To our ears it’s a stylish and finely crafted rhapsodic four-movement work, with a simply beautiful slow movement, and what the booklet notes call “a bravura disregard for the kind of formal control that informed its later revision.”

The Fourth Sonata, the direct contemporary of that revision, is another fine work that also shows the formal control and precise musical thought process of a mature composer then in his late 70s.

Kirkman and Erickson started performing the original No.1 in 2011, and gave a few concert performances of the unpublished No.4 before recording it for this release. There are times when Erickson seems to be playing with more emotional commitment and dynamic range than Kirkman, but overall these are fine performances of two works that fully deserve to be added to the standard repertoire of 20th-century violin sonatas.

There are two outstanding CDs this month featuring the works of American women composers. Patagón (Foghorn Classics CD2015) features the Alexander String Quartet in three works by Cindy Cox, now in her mid-50s and very active as a pianist as well as a composer.

Cox’s music here is quite fascinating, quite varied and not easy to describe. The composer Robert Carl, writing in Fanfare Magazine, said that “Cox writes music that demonstrates an extremely refined and imaginative sense of instrumental colour and texture … this is well wrought, imaginative, and not easily classifiable music.” It’s exactly that.

The Alexander String Quartet was formed in 1981, and performed and recorded Cox’s first string quartet, Columbia aspexit, after Hildegard von Bingen, some 20 years ago. It’s performed here along with the title work, Patagón, a five-movement work written in 2011 on commission from the Alexanders to celebrate their 30th anniversary and dedicated to them. Inspired by a trip to the Valdes peninsula nature preserve in southern Argentina, it employs some quite remarkable effects, including sliding harmonics, col legno (playing with the wood of the bow), sul ponticello (playing near the bridge), sul tasto (playing above the fingerboard) and overbowing, where the bow is pressed hard but slowly against the strings. Imagine these sounds and then look at the title of the third movement – Southern right whales and Magellanic penguins – and you will have some idea why these effects seem so perfectly suited to the music.

The quartet’s first violinist Zakarias Grafilo opens the CD with the short but lovely 1990 solo violin work Elegy, dedicated to the memory of Cox’s fellow compositional student Eric Heckard, who died in 1989 at the young age of 26.

The ASQ and Cox have been collaborating ever since that early recording of the Columbia quartet, and it’s hard to imagine more satisfying or better-informed performances of these lovely works. All of the works on Strum: Music for Strings, the first album dedicated solely to the music of the young African-American composer and violinist Jessie Montgomery (Azica ACD–71302) were written in the past three years, and they display a remarkable self-assurance and confidence together with a striking musical inventiveness and imagination.

Visit TheWholeNote.com/Listening
Starburst is a short work for string orchestra that plays on rapidly changing musical colours. Source Code for string quartet began life as sketched transcriptions of various sources from African American artists prominent during the peak of the Civil Rights era; it’s played here by the Catalyst Quartet. Break Away, a five-movement work for string quartet, was written for the PUBLIQuartet, who perform it here; born out of a series of improvisations the ensemble was working on while in residence at the Banff Centre, it requires the players to literally break away from the score and improvise, especially in the final movement.

Steven Osborne has no fear of intimacy. In his latest recording, Franz Schubert (Hyperion CDA68107) Osborne plays the Impromptus D935 and Three Piano Pieces D946, as if he were the composer. He adopts a modest posture, lingers in the shadows of the music and emerges only when Schubert coaxes him out. He is never rushed. Assured and playing at a relaxed pace, he maintains a strong sense of forward motion especially in the slower sections. He also has a sense for melodic lines and gives them wonderful clarity over Schubert’s accompanying harmonic pulse. Osborne makes the well-known Impromptus D935 seem new again. He seems to understand their true scale and never overplays them.

He uses the same approach to the Three Piano Pieces D946, where No.2 in E-Flat Major is substantially longer than the others and requires more attention to thematic development. He begins it softly and finishes it even more so. Magical. The Hüttenbrenner Variations D576 are playful and entertaining. Built on a short and simple idea, Schubert’s 14 iterations find an affectionate and capable performer in this pianist. The Steinway used in this recording is beautifully voiced and has the perfect colours for this repertoire.

Concert note: Osborne performs the Schubert Impromptus Nos.1 & 4 D935 in Toronto on Tuesday, March 1 as part of Music Toronto’s Piano Series, in the St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts.

Hélène Mercier and Louis Lortie are long-time piano partners who’ve played and recorded together since the 1980s. Whether playing four hands or two pianos, they always impress with a profoundly unified approach to the music. One simply can’t imagine a significant difference of interpretive opinion between them. Their newest CD, Rachmaninoff Piano Duets (Chandos CHAN 8082) is another example of this mature musical relationship where one cannot distinguish either of them from the other. Their keyboard techniques are identically matched and their sensibilities deeply shared.

Here the wide sweeps of Rachmaninoff’s musical imagination find their voice on the keyboards of two Fazioli grand pianos. The vocabulary is unmistakable and even surprisingly whole quotes from works like the Piano Concerto No.3 appear in the Suite No.2 Op.17 for Two Pianos. The Fantaisie (Tableaux), Op.5 opens the recording in a very dramatic way with Mercier and Lortie pulling the listener right to the edge of the seat with some very edgy playing.

This music is written to be big. While the first two repertoire items have plenty of familiar orchestral allusions, the real showstopper is Rachmaninoff’s transcription for two pianos of his Symphonic Dances Op.45. The versatility required here is remarkable. The first movement contains a musically threadbare middle section where the pianists obviously enjoy the contrast to the rest of the piece. The third movement is a long slow build to a truly blazing finish. On any decent sound system, this recording makes you tingle with the pianists’ energy. You can only imagine the effect Mercier and Lortie have in live performance.

We are given to appropriate wonder when we encounter child prodigies whose keyboard skills and musical maturity seem demonstrably beyond their years. Rarer still are those musicians who have lived into old age with their gift still largely undiminished by the decades. Their experience and insights give them a freedom not entirely available to the younger. I recall the documentary film of Vladimir Horowitz making his long-awaited return to Moscow to perform at the conservatory, watching him hunch over the piano and gliding through a Chopin valse as if he were only 20.

Another such elder pianist is David Wilde, who at age 80 is still performing, recording and teaching, as he has done all his life. On listening to Wilde plays Chopin Vol. III (Delphian DCD31459) one is immediately struck by the dexterity and power of this pianist. He is definitely in command, not only of the music’s demands but also of its content. It’s as if Chopin has surrendered licence to Wilde to reshape his phrases, alter his tempi and dynamics to reflect who this pianistic sage is.

Wilde’s performance of the Valse in D flat Major, Op.64 No.1 “Minute Waltz” is amazing for its speed. The Scherzo No.2 in B-Flat Minor, Op.31 is a monumental and powerful statement as is the “Military” Polonaise. All through this CD one is struck by the enormous expressive freedom that Wilde has at his disposal. It’s an inspiring recording.

Listening to Adolfo Barabino – Chopin Volume 4: London Symphony Orchestra; Lee Reynolds (Claudio CR 6021-2) it’s tempting to believe that this pianist has found that secret, internal place from which only Chopin can come. It’s a place of great fragility. Barabino’s own liner notes speak of delicacy, elegance, nuances and slender sound. His performance of the Berceuse Op.57 gives the impression that some of the notes are actually too shy to be played. The six Mazurkas are far more meditative than they are dancelike. Even with the London Symphony Orchestra his performance of the Piano Concerto No.2 is never very large and always seems ready to become ascetic at the next pianissimo. While the second movement is particularly beautiful for Barabino’s treatment of the main theme, the outer movements sparkle more like an aurora than fireworks. It’s altogether a remarkable interpretation. The Steinway he plays surrenders the loverliest of colours in the many passages of light touch.

This is his fourth volume in what is to be a complete recording of all of Chopin’s piano works. It’s a set worth collecting.

Another Bach Goldberg Variations BWV 988 (TwoPianists Records TP1039244) is competing for attention and its performance by Lori Sims offers good reasons for making this a valued addition to those
who collect Goldbergs.

Most importantly, Sims understands the architecture of the work and how Bach proceeds through his canons with ever-widening intervals. She addresses this and other structural complexities in her brief but very well-written liner notes. Also, Sims has committed to observing all the repeats and using the baroque practice of more elaborate ornamentation in them.

Finally, she has made this recording in live performance with an audience that, after a few initial coughs, quickly settles into an astonishingly silent awe at the beat unfolding before them, all 80 minutes of it. This changes the pace of things, because the performer needs to keep the harmonic core of the variations alive in the listener’s ear as the idea evolves through its often challenging forms.

Sims does a terrific job at holding Bach’s many threads together while still applying her own nuances to phrases, individualizing her ornaments, playing with a light clear touch and avoiding the sustain pedal altogether. The better you know the Goldberg Variations, the more you’ll appreciate this live performance. It’s an exciting document.

Another pianist who has recorded the Goldberg Variations live, albeit as a video, is Chinese-born Zhu Xiao Mei. She has also recorded Bach’s The Art of Fugue, but most recently the J. S. Bach Inventions and Sinfonias (Accentus Music ACC30350).

It’s familiar music to most keyboard players. The 15 Inventions and as many Sinfonius have been, as Bach intended, a staple in the keyboard study repertoire for centuries. Zhu is a performer, teacher and frequent jurist at major piano competitions. She offers a passionate argument in her liner notes for the higher regard that these pieces deserve. While dealing mostly with just two and three polyphonic voices, she nevertheless believes they contain an “extraordinary density of music.”

Zhu’s playing is sensitive, articulate and precise. It’s obvious she takes this music very seriously. She argues that Bach wanted players to learn how to play polyphonically and so, be able to highlight the dialogues between voices. She also believes Bach wanted young players to experiment with different approaches by varying tempos and phrasings. Her interpretations reflect this as they move gently and hypnotically.

As a result, the music is a demanding mix of romanticism, occasional moments of minimalism and plenty of modern form. Hough understands this form well and blends his lines with that distinctive French impressionistic drift that is as seductive as it is hypnotic. Hough understands this form well and blends his lines with superb fluidity.

His approach to Janáček is, by necessity, very different. While some programmatic the music is a demanding mix of romanticism, occasional moments of minimalism and plenty of modern form. Hough reflects the imagery beautifully in On the overgrown path – Book I. He captures the darkness of the Piano Sonata 1.X.1905, From the street, recalling the grim political events it marked as well as the
composer’s deep personal struggles. This recording is a mature and challenging project and is extraordinarily well done.

A new recording by young Italian pianist Alessio Bax. Scriabin, Mussorgsky (Signum Classics SIGCD362) brings yet another Scriabin piano sonata to the marketplace. The Sonata No.5 Op.23 is a considerably earlier work than its successor, with 16 years between them. The flowing impressionism of the 4th and 5th sonatas is only moderately evident in the slow movement of the 3rd sonata while the rest of the work is fairly classical in structure. Alessio Bax plays this work with a great deal of affection and his opening liner notes explain his fondness for the piece.

Bax is young, powerful and a capable interpreter with a natural instinct for drawing out the beauty of a melodic line. This is obvious in the Etude in C sharp Minor Op.2 No.1. The Prelude for the left hand alone, Op.9 No.1 is as beautiful as it is amazing to contemplate. One should like to see it in performance.

If we needed to be more impressed, we might reserve judgement until hearing Bax’s performance of Mussorgsky’s Pictures at an Exhibition, but the decision would be a foregone conclusion. Each of these little vignettes is superbly played. Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks and The Market Place sparkle with energy and the Great Gate of Kiev towers over the Pictures in pianistic grandeur.

Contemporary music has long used unconventional sound sources, among them the “prepared” piano. This usually involves some physical change in the mechanism or tuning of the instrument. Digital technology has, however, opened new opportunities to take this approach much further. The possibilities are limited only by imagination.

On Beyond 12 – Reinventing the Piano (MicroFest Records MF3) pianist Aron Kallay performs works commissioned from eight American composers. They were given two ground rules to follow in composing their works. First, retune the 88-note keyboard to represent just a single octave. Second, remap the keyboard so that high/low or left/right can be interchangeable and pitches can be in any order.

What has emerged is a body of works playable on a digitally conceived model that uses software to reconfigure a traditional digital keyboard to meet these requirements. The eight composers are mostly professional musicians and academics with a strong inclination for technology in their music writing.

It’s surprising to hear how much of this music has a strong tonal centre and uses familiar rhythmic patterns to drive it forward. Also intriguing is the way the ear quickly adjusts to the very small differences of pitch between adjacent notes. It’s as if the brain resets and quickly begins to make melodic and harmonic sense out of this unconventional music model. This is a truly fascinating disc and worth hearing for both pleasure and debate.

American harpsichordist Elaine Funaro has made a career of championing new music for the harpsichord. In 1996 she recorded Into The Millennium – The Harpsichord in the 20th Century (Gasparo GSCD-331). Twenty years later the recording is as exciting as it was when first committed to DAT in the beautiful and cavernous Duke University Chapel (North Carolina).

Two tracks deserve special mention. The Postlude of Dan Locklair’s dance suite The Breakers Pound will lift you right out of your seat. The raw energy coming from such a traditionally non-dynamic instrument is indescribable. It has the feel of Khachaturian’s Sabre Dance. Also, Tom Harris’ Jubilate Deo is extraordinary for the way it builds tension with increasing stacks of harmonies. It’s wonderful to see this older recording reissued.

Also among Elaine Funaro’s recently reissued recordings is Giovanni Benedetto Platti “il grande” Sonatas for Clavicembalo (Wildboar WLBR 9901). Here, the repertoire is material from the early 18th century. Funaro plays two modern instruments, a harpsichord and a fortepiano, copies of originals from that period. The fortepiano in particular, produces an unusual and pleasant timbre not often heard in recordings.

Funaro has audio and video samples of her work at funaroharpsichord.com.

VITALDI SACREMCUSC 4
In turbato mare irato
Andrea Mazzio; Chicks
Basso Continuo: Elena Steiner; Carla Messina; Maria Soulis
Soprano: Claire de Sévigné
Viotti: Alleluia, Exultate Tu Dominum
Violin: Javier Perianez
Hans de Groot

Vivaldi – Sacred Music
Claire de Sévigné; Maria Soulis; Aradia Ensemble; Kevin Mallon
Naxos 8.573324

Eugenia wants to marry the young nobleman Rinaldo but her father, Don Tritemio, insists that she marry the wealthy farmer Nardo, the philosopher, instead. Things end happily, of course: Eugenia marries Rinaldo and her maid Lesbina marries Nardo, while Don Tritemio makes do with Nardo’s niece Lena. The DVD gives us a live performance from the Teatro Comunale in Belluno, which took place in October 2012. The director, Carlo Torriani, makes a clear distinction between the more rounded characters like the young lovers and those who are conceived more farcically: the crusty father and especially the notary, who is affected by interminable bouts of sneezing. I suspect that it is the latter which will prove most difficult to take in subsequent rehearsals or reviews. The conductor, Fabrizio da Ros, presents the music with loving care and the work is well sung. I especially enjoyed the soprano Giorgia Cenciripi, who sings Lesbina.

Hans de Groot

Since 2004, Toronto’s Aradia Ensemble has returned every few years to record another offering of Vivaldi’s sacred music for voice and instrumental ensemble. With seven years since the third volume was released, this, the fourth, is most welcome. The majority of Vivaldi’s vocal music was written during his time as teacher and music director at the Ospedale della Pietà, which accounts for the wealth of repertoire for female soloists. And some of the young women there must have been extraordinary singers, as demonstrated in this recording by the gloriously dramatic performance of In turbato mare irato by soprano Claire de Sévigné. And though the motet Vestro principi divino is somewhat more warm and sedate, it ends with more demanding and athletic runs in the Alleluia. In this, and the very operatic motet Invicta, belleata, mezzo Maria Soulis is alternately reflective and valiant, with marvellous tonal quality. The crisp execution of In exitu Israel, Laudate Dominum
and Laetatus sum by the choral ensemble is splendid. To contrast her earlier motet, de Sévigné delivers O qui coeli terraeque serenitatis in all its sweetness of calm repose. The core of Aradia, its excellent instrumental ensemble led by Kevin Mallon, is, as always, impeccable in performance. Dianne Wells

Puccini – Turandot
Khudoley; Massi; Yu; Ryssov; Wiener Symphoniker; Paolo Carignani
C major 731408

Puccini – Turandot
Dessi; Malagnini; Canzian; Chikviladze; La Guardia; Teatro Carlo Felice; Donato Renzetti
Dynamic 33764

Puccini’s last, unfinished opera is arguably his greatest, certainly the most innovative, harmonically adventurous and a score of genius. It is also a grand opera well suited for lavish, extravagant productions. Fortunately, two marvellous video recordings have just arrived and both fulfill their promise. I state categorically that both are excellent in their own way and I do not prefer one to the other.

The newest is from the Bregenz Festival, July 2015 (bregenzerfestspiele.com). Not many may have heard of Bregenz, a sleepy old town at the Western end of Austria on the shores of Lake Constance (Bodensee), but their festival rivals Salzburg with the highest artistic standards. The giant open-air amphitheatre includes an incredible stage set (designed by M.A. Marelli) right in the lake with something like the Great Wall of China towering 100 feet forming the backdrop to a circular stage, a revolving cylinder accessed by ramps snaking around it like a Chinese dragon. Over this is a huge circular disc equipped with myriad LED crystals forming computer generated multi-coloured images to suit the mood of the moment. It really has to be seen to be believed and I must say it’s a lot more comfortable to see it on DVD in home comfort than being there freezing in the rain. (I’ve been in Vorarlberg and even in summer the weather is unpredictable.) The orchestra cannot be seen and nor can the conductor, the dynamic Paolo Carignani who gave Toronto a thrilling Tosca some time ago. The overall, somewhat modernized show is a sound and light extravaganza with dancers, pantomimes and circus acts to dazzle the eye, but the opera comes through musically superb with spacious acoustics and some top singing artists plus two choruses, not to mention the Wiener Symphoniker giving it orchestral support. Young Italian tenor Riccardo Massi (Prince Kalaf) copes well with the power and the high notes; he is best in show. Young up-and-coming Chinese soprano Guanqun Yu gives a heartrending performance as Liu, the little servant girl who sacrifices herself for love. For the pinnacle role of the Ice Princess expectations are high and Callas or Pavarotti as Calaf would have been, Mlada Khudoley, Russian dramatic soprano from the Mariinsky struggles heroically, suitably hateful most of the time, but relaxes beautifully to a glorious finale, an outburst of joy seldom witnessed in opera theatres.

We now enter Puccini territory, because the next production is from Genoa, the heart of Liguria, the region where Puccini and most of the cast comes from. The Opera House in Genoa is a grandiose affair and the stage is very large and very high in order to accommodate the monumental set, a multi-level Chinese palace with staircases on either side. Ingeniously the set can easily adapt, alternately being grandiose or intimate, using lighting effects giving it different moods and gorgeous colours. Yet it remains entirely traditional, just as Puccini envisaged it. Being an Italian production, it is done with the emphasis on the music and the quality of the singers, which is superb. The leading lady Daniela Dessi, one of the top sopranos in Italy today, is a sensitive, even anguished and entirely believable Turandot. The primo tenore Mario Malagnini, a compassionate and tender Kalaf with tremendous vocal power even in the high tessitura, makes a strong impression. The young Roberta Canzian steals some of Signora Dessi’s glory with her brave and impassioned, beautiful performance as Liu. Right down to the lowest choristers the singing is first class, but the three Chinese ministers deserve a special mention for their amusing, colourful and superbly choreographed trios that comment on the action with a rather cruel, even sadistic humour. And the one who controls it all is Donato Renzetti, an old hand in Italian opera who, with oriental rhythms and shimmering textures, makes everything come alive and throw with excitement. Janos Gardonyi

Verdi – Aida
Lewis; Sartori; Rachvelishvili; Gagnidze; Salminen; Colombara; Coro e Orchestra del Teatro alla Scala; Zubin Mehta
C major 732208

To revive Aida in 2015 at that holy temple of Italian opera, La Scala of Milan, puts much at stake. Times are difficult economically yet expectations are high, the audience sceptical, often giving great artists a rough time, (Carlos Kleiber once was booed in the pit!), but success for a young singer in La Scala could
make a career. That dream came true for young American soprano Kristin Lewis, who simply enchanted the audience in a heart-breaking, gloriously sung performance as Aida. She even burst into tears in the midst of final applause. The other young lady, the lead mezzo (Amneris), Anita Rachvelishvili (see The WholeNote November 2015 for my review of the Tsar’s Bride from Berlin), perhaps stole the show with “the authority of her performance and warm, burnished tone and sheer vocal power” (Kenneth Chalmers) and made a big impression. Fabio Satorí’s Radames was somewhat less convincing as a glorious hero and lover than in his subsequent misfortune, but he surely hit those high notes! George Gagnidze was an energetic, rather youthful Amonasro and Matti Salminen’s Ramphis, the high priest, a stately figure. But the great basso, nearly 70, was having serious difficulties with his voice. Conductor Zubin Mehta, quite dapper and almost 80, conducted without a score according to Italian tradition, with minimal movements, and gave a sensitive, solid, well-detailed reading to impressive sonic effect, his trademark.

The top credit however is for German director Peter Stein, who contrary to the usual grand-opera bombast, sees the opera more intimately, as a set of confrontations between a few individuals in unique settings, turning every stage set into a stunning work of art with glorious colours and strong geometry accentuated by backlighting and silhouettes. The designers Ferdinand Wögberauer (sets), Nana Cecchi (costumes) and Joachim Barth (lighting) created a thoroughly integrated, visually beautiful experience worthy of Verdi’s masterpiece.

Janos Gardonyi
Shostakovich – Suite on Poems by Michelangelo; Liszt – Petrarch Sonnets Dmitri Hvorostovsky; Ivari Ilja Ondine ODE 1277-2

Dmitri Hvorostovsky is a pure artist and a natural-born talent. Born and educated in Krasnoyarsk, Siberia, a place not renowned for being a fertile cultural ground (despite having also been the birthplace of the French novelist Andrei Makine), Hvorostovsky shot to international stardom after defeating Bryn Terfel in the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World competition in 1989. This success came on the heels of triumphs at the Toulouse Singing Competition in 1988 and the Glinka Competition in 1987. Since then, he has been present on all major opera and concert stages in the world – predominately in Verdi roles. He created an unforgettable portrayal of the Marquis de Posa in Don Carlo, but was equally acclaimed for Simon Boccanegra, Rigoletto, Un ballo in maschera and La Traviata. When he appeared for the first time in Tchaikovsky operas – The Queen of Spades, and especially, Eugene Onegin – critics proclaimed that he was born to sing those roles.

This album shows a different side to Hvorostovsky – that of a lieder singer. When Shostakovich set the poems of Michelangelo (in translation by Abram Efros) to music in 1974, he knew he was a dying man. A year earlier, in addition to a serious heart condition that he had lived with for most of his life, he was also diagnosed with terminal cancer. The music he composed is full of anger and resentment, expressing a battle he ultimately lost a year later. Chillingly, Hvorostovsky had himself been diagnosed with a brain tumour early in 2015, but has since returned to the stage. As you listen to the stark, ominous music on this disc, spare a kind thought for this great Russian baritone, whose struggle may be ongoing.

Robert Tomas

Weinberg – The Passenger
Breedt; Sacca; Kelessidi; Rucinski; Donева; Wiener Symphoniker; Teodor Currentzis ArtHouse Musik 109179

► This DVD’s booklet contains a lengthy encomium by Weinberg’s friend and muse, Shostakovich, calling The Passenger “a masterpiece, both in shape and style.” Unsurprisingly, as Shostakovich’s own “shape and style” pervade Weinberg’s compositions, including this one.

Mieczyslaw Weinberg (1919-1996), a Polish Jew who fled to the USSR in 1939, completed The Passenger in 1968. His memorial to Holocaust victims, among them his parents and sister, was never staged until 2010 at Austria’s Bregenz Festival, the production preserved here. It has since been performed many times in other countries.

The set is on two levels: above, a ship deck in 1960, where Lisa and her husband Walter are bound for Brazil; below, wartime Auschwitz, where Lisa had been an SS guard. On board, Lisa thinks she recognizes Martha, supposedly killed in Auschwitz. Shaken, she reveals her Nazi past to Walter – and to us, the audience, in the Auschwitz scenes where most of the opera unfolds. Here, extended passages of poignant lyricism are punctuated by brutal orchestral outbursts and the onstage brutality of the guards.

Did Martha really survive, or is the veiled, silent passenger an apparition of Lisa’s haunted conscience? In the opera’s epilogue, alone on stage, an unveiled Martha sings “… never forgive … never forget …” If not quite “a masterpiece,” with its well-sung, effective music and potent drama, The Passenger will surely wrench guts and jerk tears. A bonus documentary provides details about Weinberg and this unforgettable production.

Michael Schulman

Alice Ping Yee Ho – The Lesson of Da Ji
Toronto Masque Theatre; Larry Beckwith Naxos Centrediscs CMCD 22115

► In her music theatre work The Lesson of Da Ji, Hong Kong-born Toronto composer Alice Ping Yee Ho has struck a fine if not always easy balance between features of classical Beijing (Peking) opera and the European masque tradition, as interpreted in 21st century Canada.

It is no mean feat to present eight Canadian voices supported by the string sonorities of the Chinese zhongguan, erh, pipa and zheng. It is even more complex when all that is seamlessly meshed with the sonority of the European baroque lute, harpsichord, viola da gamba, violin and recorders, plus a percussion battery. Ho does just that admirably, presenting along the way a bracing new hybrid soundscape to enjoy.

Her skilfully orchestrated score hangs directly on Canadian playwright Marjorie Chan’s libretto. It tells the chilling tale of the famous concubine Da Ji of the Shang Dynasty (c.1600 to 1046 BCE), homing in on her illicit love affair with a musician and the bloody revenge enacted by the jealous King Zhou. It’s the sort of court drama common to both Chinese and Eurocentric opera traditions.

The composer once noted that “colours and tonality are two attractive resources to me: they form certain mental images that connect to audiences in a very basic way.” The Lesson of Da Ji follows that dictum, and her approach works to convey character, place, mood and imagery; even via the audio CD medium. My guess is that a video presentation – or better yet a live production where the multiple visual and choreographic elements are at work – would make for an even more involving evening of theatre.

Commissioned by the Toronto Masque Theatre in 2012, The Lesson of Da Ji immediately won critical acclaim, as well as the 2013 Dora Mavor Moore Award for Outstanding Original Opera. The release of the recording of this hour-long opera in two acts within just a couple of years of its premiere reflects the work’s enthusiastic initial reception. It may well also mark the beginning of its acceptance by a wider public in Canada, as well as in the composer’s country of birth.

Andrew Timar

EARLY MUSIC AND PERIOD PERFORMANCE

Chaconne – Voices of Eternity Ensemble Caprice; Matthias Mauve Analekta AN 2 9132
There is a difference between the chaconne and the passacaglia—or so textbooks tell us. In the chaconne a theme is repeated over and over again in the bass, while in the passacaglia the repeated theme does not need to be in the bass. Matthias Maute, in the booklet that comes with his recording, is inclined to play down the distinction, saying that the repetition of a harmonic motif is essential to both forms. One of the most famous of all chaconnes is that written by J. S. Bach for solo violin. Here it constitutes the final item on the recording, arranged (not altogether convincingly) for two recorders and cello. Many of the other items are earlier and they include works by Monteverdi, Landi and Falconieri. Among the most famous of chaconnes are the variations on the popular tune, *La Follia*, and this recording gives us two examples of such variations: by Falconieri (again) and by Vivaldi. There are two other kinds of music here: instrumental versions of seven 17th-century Czech folksongs (arranged by Maute) and seven very short, unaccompanied vocal chaconas by Maute. The latter are expressive and haunting. They are beautifully sung by the sopranos Dawn Bailey and Jana Miller and alto Maude Brunet. Elsewhere there are eight instrumentalists and the playing is of a high order. Warmly recommended.

**Hans de Groot**

**Las Cuidades de Oro – Baroque Music from the Spanish New World**

*L’Harmonie des Saisons; Eric Milnes ATMA ACD2 2702*

The importance of Spanish music of the 17th and 18th century has long been recognized, but it is only in recent years that we have been introduced to the riches that have been preserved in Latin American archives, in Colombia and Peru, in Chile and Guatemala, in Bolivia and Mexico. It is clear from the music on this recording that there were rich polyphonic traditions in Peru (in the San Antonio Abad Seminary in Cuzco, at the shrine dedicated to Our Lady of Candelaria in Copacabana and in the Cathedral at Lima) and in Bolivia (in the Cathedral of La Plata, now Sucre). Some of the composers featured were Spaniards whose careers developed in the New World, others were born in Latin America and one (Alonzo Torices) never left Spain, although some of his works have been preserved in the Guatemala City Cathedral archives. Most of the texted works on this recording are in Spanish but one is in Latin and one in Quechua, the official language of the Inca Empire.

The recording is carefully planned: the musical language shows a great deal of variety and the documentation is excellent. The rhythms are incisive and the standards of playing and singing are high. I particularly enjoyed the two duets sung by the sopranos Hélène Brunet and Elaine Lachica.

**Hans de Groot**

**Brahms – Double Concerto; Symphony No.4**

Pinchas Zukerman; Amanda Forsyth; National Arts Centre Orchestra

**Analekta AN 2 8782**

Pinchas Zukerman, who retired after 16 years at the helm of the NACO, has certainly left his mark on the Canadian musical scene. His promotion of musical training for young musicians surely will be his most lasting legacy, alongside the hundreds of concerts and live recordings he generated. A case in point is a new Analekta disc recorded live. The Double Concerto by Brahms is like one of those amazing perfect recipes from *The Joy of Cooking*. Get the right ingredients, follow the recipe exactly and presto: it works always. You need one virtuoso violinist (Zukerman fits the bill perfectly), one cellist who can keep up (Forsyth more than keeps up here!) and an orchestra that knows not to overstep. It helps that Zukerman and Forsyth pair up frequently for this piece and have a definite rapport, developed over their years of playing together. So this *Double Concerto* hits all the right buttons – it is unrestrained, powerful and tsunami-like in delivery, while shimmering with *sans pareil* melodic lines. There are virtuoso passages the likes of which Heifetz and Rostropovich made us expect from soloists. Real aural pleasure, if not breaking any new ground.

Alas, it is in the *Symphony No.4* that we understand why Zukerman will be remembered as a solo virtuoso, rather than a team player. His reading of the score seems muted and slowed down, as if he expects the orchestra will not to be able to keep up. The result is still Brahms, majestic, but somewhat leaden and heavy-footed, as if the will to live were slowly trickling out of the music. After 40 years of virtuosity, it may be the most honest pronouncement from Zukerman – he is a solo act.

**Robert Tomas**

**My Cup Runneth Over – Complete Piano Works of R. Nathaniel Dett**

Clipper Erickson (navonarecords.com)

While we have enjoyed many opportunities to hear the choral music of Nathaniel Dett (1882–1943), this is the first ever recording of the prolific composer’s complete piano works which encompass quite a range, both in period and style. Pianist Clipper Erickson, who completed his DMA at Temple University researching Dett’s work, raised funds for this recording project through a Kickstarter campaign. Recorded in Germany for Navona Records and distributed by Naxos, the disc provides an enjoyable and significant dose of music history for professional and layman alike.

Canadian-born Dett’s styles range here from popular dance music and jazz to spirituals, romanticism and impressionism, with rags and salon suites alongside works influenced by Liszt, Dvořák, Debussy and Grainger. And like some of the aforementioned influences, Dett had both education and talent to seamlessly incorporate folk idioms into art music. His piano pieces explore diverse themes: the love of nature (*Magnolia*), the Deep South (*In the Bottoms*), Rosicrucian philosophy (*Enchantment*), the poetry of Rabindranath Tagore (*Cinnamon Grove*) and scripture (*Eight Bible Vignettes*). Erickson, an accomplished pianist, performs with great sensitivity to these themes and an obvious admiration for the great composer. Kudos to Erickson for his initiative and to those who
Dutilleux – Symphony No.1; Deux Sonnets de Jean Cassou; Métaboles
Paul Armin Edelmann; Deutsche Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz;
Karl-Heinz Steffens
Capriccio CS5242

Dutilleux – Métaboles; L’arbre des songes;
Symphony No.2 «Le double»
Augustin Hadelich; Seattle Symphony;
Ludovic Morlot
Seattle Symphony SSM1007

Dutilleux – Tout un monde lointain
Emmanuelle Bertrand; Pascal Amoyel;
Luizerner Sinfonieorchester; James Gaffigan
harmonia mundi HMC 902209

Tired with the thesis-antithesis of theme A versus theme B, Dutilleux looked to nature in search of a more malleable symphonic form. There he saw that, given enough transformations, evolution could bridge unimaginable gaps between organisms (as that between, say, a primordial bacteria and a human being). Adapting this model to Métaboles, he steadily modifies his thematic material until it becomes unrecognizable – yet still inextricably linked through a kind of musical metabolism to the material which germinated it.

Two fine recordings of this piece appeared last year. The first, recorded by Karl-Heinz Steffens and the Deutsche Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz, is expansive, smoothing the kaleidoscope turn of Métaboles’ transformations. The next, recorded by Ludovic Morlot with the Seattle Symphony, is notable for its excellent mastering, which enhances the work’s already galactic compass. Taken together, these CDs present a kind of “métaboles” of Dutilleux’ entire career: the Rheinland-Pfalz disc contains his early works, including a rare vocal setting, while the Seattle recording features a brilliant performance of Dutilleux’s late violin concerto by Augustin Hadelich (entitled L’arbre des songes, it too draws inspiration from nature and has structural similarities with Métaboles).

Filling in the gaps is Emmanuelle Bertrand’s performance of the Baudelaire-inspired cello concerto, “Tout un monde lointain...” with the Luzerner Sinfonieorchester. The concerto is worth the price of admission alone – it is perhaps his greatest work, ably performed here – but the CD also includes some historical context with a recording of Debussy’s cello sonata. Sensibly enough, for though Dutilleux was scorned by the Paris establishment, he was one of its rightful heirs. The recordings appearing now on this important anniversary are the definitive proof.

Poulenc – Piano Concertos; Aubade
Louis Lortie; Hélène Mercier; BBC
Philharmonic; Edward Gardner
Chandos CHAN 10875

This sparkling CD includes Francis Poulenc’s works for piano and orchestra plus music for two pianists. I’ve loved Poulenc’s cheeky brews of popular and classical elements since a lightweight teenage attempt at his Sextet for Piano and Winds, when we had a mock waiter serve drinks during my first piano solo! Compositionally, Poulenc invites us to loosen up and accept new things, but performance is not easy. In the Concerto (1949) Lortie’s ensemble with orchestra is precise without compromising rhythmic life, and he dashes off the first movement’s lounge-piano flourishes without belabouring them. Originally written for a ballet, Aubade (1926) is quintessentially Poulenc. It is evocative of 1920s Paris, for piano with an orchestra stripped down to 18 instruments emphasizing winds and brass. Lortie plays the opening toccata with its challenging repeated chords immaculately, and manages the juxtaposed contrasting phrases well. The BBC Philharmonic’s winds shine in wonderfully bittersweet double-reed instrument passages and in several fine clarinet solos.

Lortie’s long-time duo-piano partner Hélène Mercier joins him in the two-piano Concerto in D Minor. They play the opening movement’s quasi-Balinese passages seamlessly. The Larghetto’s classical nostalgia and more modern sentiments come through effectively. In the dissonant final movement, double notes are crisp and chords balanced. Works for two pianists alone close the disc; in Poulenc’s four-hand Sonata and two short duo-piano pieces, Mercier and Lortie find opportunities for free dialogue and joyous music-making.

Leo Brouwer – Music for Bandurria and Guitar
Pedro Chamorro; Pedro Mateo González
Naxos 8.573363

Cuban composer Leo Brouwer (b.1939) is an astonishing sound creator in this new release featuring music for bandurria and guitar. Brouwer’s masterful use of music of divergent musical styles like Cuban rhythms, changing metres, contemporary new music atonal references, simple folk music and South American references from other composers are, when combined and layered, surprisingly athetically pleasing and challenging, yet never jolting.

Performers Pedro Mateo González on guitar and Pedro Chamorro on bandurria (a popular South American small lute dating from the 16th century) are stars both as soloists and as a duo. There is so much respect for the composer in their spirited performances. González is especially outstanding in capturing both the soul-wrenching slow lyricism in Variation 3, and the toe-tapping energetic and contrasting slower emotions in Variation 7 of Variaciones sobre un tema de Victor Jara, a work drawn from Chilean...
Behind Canadian composer Emily Doolittle’s music lies a passion for the relationship between music and nature, and specifically, bird and animal songs. Her recent album of chamber music, *all spring*, is a superb example of how she navigates this fundamental connection that has inspired generations of composers. This interest has led her to conduct research into bird-song and explore the aesthetics of whether animal songs can be considered music. As our world faces critical environmental choices, the question of how we relate to the forces of nature and all beings who live here is increasingly becoming a focus for many composers. How these concerns translate into music for acoustic instruments was uppermost in my awareness as I listened to Doolittle’s CD.

Her approach is to offer a distillation of the qualities of natural phenomena or personal experiences. In *four pieces about water* essential qualities of water are revealed, whereas in *all spring* the focus is on the characteristics of specific birds. Some of the ways Doolittle herself engages with nature – listening and hiking – are highlighted in her pieces *falling still* and *col*. The choices Doolittle makes to bring the listener into closer connection with nature works at subtle levels. It is less about recreating a sense of closer connection with nature works at subtle levels. It is less about recreating a sense of connection with nature, but rather creating a sonic experience to guide the listener into connection with the deeper layers of natural phenomena, an entry into the heart of nature.

**Tilina Kilk**

**all spring – Chamber Music of Emily Doolittle**

Seattle Chamber Players and friends Composers Concordance Records comcon0025 (emilydoolittle.com)

> Behind Canadian composer Emily Doolittle’s music lies a passion for the relationship between music and nature, and specifically, bird and animal songs. Her recent album of chamber music, *all spring*, is a superb example of how she navigates this fundamental connection that has inspired generations of composers. This interest has led her to conduct research into bird-song and explore the aesthetics of whether animal songs can be considered music. As our world faces critical environmental choices, the question of how we relate to the forces of nature and all beings who live here is increasingly becoming a focus for many composers. How these concerns translate into music for acoustic instruments was uppermost in my awareness as I listened to Doolittle’s CD.

Her approach is to offer a distillation of the qualities of natural phenomena or personal experiences. In *four pieces about water* essential qualities of water are revealed, whereas in *all spring* the focus is on the characteristics of specific birds. Some of the ways Doolittle herself engages with nature – listening and hiking – are highlighted in her pieces *falling still* and *col*. The choices Doolittle makes to bring the listener into closer connection with nature works at subtle levels. It is less about recreating a sense of closer connection with nature, but rather creating a sonic experience to guide the listener into connection with the deeper layers of natural phenomena, an entry into the heart of nature.

**Wendalyn Bartley**

**Sally Beamish – The Singing**

James Crabb; Håkan Hardenberger; Branford Marsalis; Royal Scottish National Orchestra; National Youth Orchestra of Scotland; Martyn Brabbins BIS 2156

> British composer Sally Beamish has called Scotland home since 1990 and describes her love of Scottish traditional music, landscape and history, along with an interest in jazz, as her inspirations. There are many, many styles and traditions that Beamish draws upon in her compositions, making this release of her works written between 2003 and 2012 intriguing, accessible and exciting listening. According to James Crabb, the British composer behind The Singing. From long mournful singing lines, bagpipe imitations and breathing bellows and winds, the accordion and orchestra create lush soundscapes. Saxophonist Branford Marsalis is equally lyrical and moving in *Under the Wing of the Rock*, a piece originally scored for solo viola and strings, and inspired by Celtic song and psalms. It’s back to downtown city living in the exciting *Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra* featuring soloist Håkan Hardenberger. The use of parts of scrapped cars and scaffolding pipes in the percussion section against the wailing trumpet in the third movement, creates a dramatic edgy, hard sound. Reckless for chamber orchestra is witty and light while the orchestra emulates atmospheric washes of land and sea in *A Cage of Doves*. Conducted by Martyn Brabbins, both the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and the National Youth Orchestra of Scotland, on the trumpet concerto, play with energetic precision and flair.

Beamish’s love and respect for her inspirations resonate throughout these intelligent works. Perfect music to warm up a cold winter’s day!

**Tilina Kilk**

**Bill Alves – Mystic Canyon; Music for Violin and Gamelan**

Susan Jensen; HMC American Gamelan MicroFest Records MF7 (microfestrecords.com)

> This sparkling album weaves together six works variously scored for harp, guitar and percussion by Pulitzer Prize- and Grammy-winning American composer John Luther Adams (b.1953), and his mentor Lou Harrison (1917-2003). The liner notes call Harrison “the Godfather of World Music,” and not without justification. His compositions from mid-career on are marked by the incorporation of elements of the musics of non-Western cultures, particularly those of South, Southeast and East Asia. For example, from the 1970s to the end of his life Harrison composed dozens of works for Sundanese, North and Southcentral Javanese types of gamelan (orchestra). Along the way he influenced several generations of musicians including Toronto’s Evergreen Club Contemporary Gamelan.

Calling it “American gamelan” Harrison also constructed several of his own DIY versions of gamelan prototypes with his partner William Colvig. They chose to tune each gamelan set in just intonation, eschewing both mainstream equal temperament and the Javanese/Sundanese indigenous theoretical tuning systems (of which he was also well aware). We hear a work Harrison
wrote for one of his American gamelans in the finale of this album. In Honor of the Divine Mr. Handel (1991), for concert harp and small Javanese gamelan in just intonation, is stylishly directed by composer and Harrison scholar Bill Alves. It manages a difficult and deft dual musical trick: it is not only a delightfully tuneful tribute to the baroque composer but also to the music of the Javanese gamelan.

Among today’s leading composers in the Western classical lineage, John Luther Adams is represented here by two suites, Five Athabaskan Dances and Five Yup’ik Dances, both from 1995. Like Harrison before him, Adams, in these works, pays respect to indigenous music-making. Commissioned for the Just Strings trio, the works drew on traditional songs of the Athabaskan people for the first set and on the songs of the Yup’ik of the Yukon-Kuskokwim delta for the second. Those songs were extensively reworked and rendered in the Pythagorean tuning by the composer, who remarked that he had “extended and transformed these ... melodies in many ways. In the process, they have become something else, somewhat far removed from Alaska Native music in sound and in context.”

In the skillful musical hands of the three Grammy Award-winning musicians of Just Strings, this melody-forward music of Adams and Harrison rings true clear across boundaries marked by culture, musical performance practice and genre.

Andrew Timar

Elliott Sharp – The Boreal Various Artists Starkland ST-222 (starkland.com)

▶ There is a sense of beautiful, orderly turmoil on Elliott Sharp’s The Boreal. Speaking first of the piece and then the whole album, the fullest appreciation of the music is, of course, to be had by following its schematics from Sharp’s score, which is exquisite in all its minimalist glory. This, as the composer points out, includes “hocketed grooves, difference tones and non-pitched materials generated by the use of alternate bows made from ballchain and metal springs.” The effect is quite masterful, pleasing to the ear, mostly due to the clarity of the gestures, and of course, the JACK Quartet’s brilliant interpretation of this written/improvised score. You learn immediately to appreciate, the combustible spontaneity, the treasurable fire, communicative flair and consummate craft of Sharp’s indelible inspiration.

Headlined by The Boreal, the recording also features some of Elliott Sharp’s other remarkable pieces – Oligosono from 2004, Proof Of Erdös from 2006, performed by Orchestra Carbon, with David Bloom as conductor, and On Corlear’s Hook from 2007 performed by the Janáček Philharmonic Orchestra with Peter Rundel conducting. The selection provides a peep into Sharp’s polymath-like artistry. The noteworthy Oligosono is a reference to the world of “little sounds” and what is even more remarkable is its transposition from the stringed instrument for which it was written, to the piano, and performed with wit and intuition by pianist Jenny Lin. Two hands here and a new generation of rhythm and harmonic overtones make this piece quite memorable. Proof Of Erdös is an erudite homage to the mathematician Pál Erdös. The tonal colours of On Corlear’s Hook are culled from Sharp’s ethereal palette and flawless artistry.

Raul da Gama

JAZZ AND IMPROVISED

A Love Supreme
John Coltrane
Impulse/Verve 80023727-02

▶ Few jazz recordings have the significance of A Love Supreme, the four-part suite that Coltrane recorded on December 9, 1964, with his classic quartet of pianist McCoy Tyner, bassist Jimmy Garrison and drummer Elvin Jones. With Miles Davis’ 1959 Kind of Blue, it virtually defines the concept LP in jazz. Inspired by a transformative experience that freed Coltrane of his addictions and turned his music into a spiritual mission, A Love Supreme is his most structured work, describing the progress through Acknowledgement, Resolution, and Pursuance to an ultimate Psalm. A definitive statement of the quartet, it was also a watershed between some of Coltrane’s most orderly work and the tumultuous free jazz that marked his last years.

For the 50th anniversary of its release, Verve has expanded on the previous deluxe edition of 2002 with two- and three-CD versions. For serious Coltrane listeners, the three-CD set, with extensive commentary and more new material, is the one to get. Some material seems superfluous, the mono dubs to which Coltrane listened adding nothing new, but the alternate takes and other versions (virtually the complete recordings) demonstrate the extent to which the released version is an image of order amidst rough seas. The day after the quartet recording, Coltrane set about recording the suite with a sextet that added tenor saxophonist Archie Shepp and bassist Art Davis. The set adds two sextet versions of Acknowledgement to those previously released. The music initially seems less successful, with Shepp adding a raucous, almost R & B flavour, but as one listens to the four takes, one appreciates the spirit of collective improvisation that Coltrane was exploring, with each version radically different than the one before, each growing in freedom and intensity.

Also included is Coltrane’s sole live performance of the work, recorded six months later at the Antibes jazz festival. This, too, is raw, more exploratory work, with the up-tempo Pursuance stretched from ten to 21 minutes in length. Listening to Coltrane’s further elaborations on A Love Supreme, reinforces the idea that the quartet studio recording captured a uniquely reflective (and structuralist) moment in Coltrane’s art, a gathering of one’s secure knowledge before launching again into the unknown.

Stuart Broomer

Spring
Susie Arioli
Spectra Musique SPECD-7854 (susiearioli.com)

▶ For this, her eighth studio album, Montreal-based singer Susie Arioli looked to Toronto and its roster of heavy-hitters in the jazz realm for support. Produced by Grammy Award-winner John Snyder and arranged by the legendary Don Thompson, Spring is about renewal and fresh starts. In other words, it’s a break-up album. A glance through the list of songs – Those Lonely, Lonely Nights, Me Myself and I, After You’ve Gone – tells the story. The clever illustrations by Arioli that accompanying each song title on the CD cover, literally paint a picture.

So, while lyrically this is an unhappy album, the music is anything but. There’s nary a ballad to be found. It’s upbeat and swingy with a bouncy horn section and Arioli’s deep, warm voice casually cataloguing a list of hurts. With Thompson’s vibraphone doubling Reg Schwager’s guitar, the cool 60s are evoked on a number of tunes including Mean to Me and I’m the Caring Kind. Arioli’s own compositions, of which there are four on the album, range in style from a country and western homage to the lure of the bottle on Can’t Say No, to a breezy bossa nova-style indictment of infidelity on Someone Else.

Arioli has a number of tour dates in 2016 in Quebec, with more to come. Check susiearioli.com.

Cathy Riches

Flying Without Wings
John Alcorn
Loach Engineering LE1001
(jazzinthekitchen.ca/product/flying-without-wings)

▶ This project was conceived and recorded by trumpeter/engineer/producer John Loach, and came about as a result of his
being inspired by a performance by leading Canadian jazz vocalist John Alcorn. During his show, Alcorn not only rendered gems from the Great American Songbook, but also deftly included anecdotes and fascinating factoids about each composer and composition. This idea of creating a total, composer-focused experience propelled Loach to produce this fine CD — which features talented musicians Mark Eisenman on piano, Reg Schwager on guitar, Steve Wallace on bass and the world-renowned cornetist Warren Vaché.

Throughout the 12 tracks (which include contributions from Irving Berlin, Cole Porter, the Gershwins and more), Alcorn’s rich baritone is expressive and infused with life experience. His intuitive understanding of a witty, ironic or devastatingly emotional lyric coupled with his intuitive communications with the other players are part and parcel of the contagious appeal of this charismatic and thoroughly gifted musical artist.

Standouts include Porter’s “A One of Those Things,” which cooks along with an irresistible percussive rhythm and features a masterful solo from Eisenman. Also of note is It’s Like Reaching for the Moon (Marqusee/Sherman/Lewis), featuring an intimate guitar/voice intro, which segues into trio perfection, as well as a stunner of a solo from Warren Vaché, who embraces the era of the composition while adding his own contemporary sensibilities.

Also of special note is a evocative arrangement of the rarely performed You’re My Thrill (Clare/Gorney), which conjures up a languid, sensual garden of delight. The CD closes with Harry Warren’s I Wish I Knew—a track filled with almost unbearable beauty and longing.

This exceptional CD—so full of heart—is aptly dedicated to the memory of the lovely Diane Alcorn.

Lesley Mitchell-Clarke

Pocket Symphronica
Ron Davis
Really Records REA-ED-5886
(rondavismusic.com)

With the release of his tenth recording, eclectic and skilled pianist/composer/producer Ron Davis has reaffirmed his position as one of the most tenacious and engaging musical artists in Canada. *Pocket Symphronica* embraces the wide range of Davis’ skills and taste (which includes explorations into the milieus of jazz, world, pop/dance and classical music). Comprised of 11 original compositions (and with Davis performing brilliantly on piano, Fender Rhodes and Hammond B3), this new project is a fresh distillation of his previous, innovative CD, *Symphronica* — a clever symphonic jazz recording which in turn led to the current chamber-sized, more portable version of the larger ensemble.

Davis has surrounded himself here with a stalwart group of collaborators, including arrangers Mike Downes, Jason Nett and Tanja Gill and co-producers Dennis Patterson, Mike Downes, Roger Travassos and Kevin Barrett. A breathtaking string quartet (including genius Andrew Downing on cello) and a first-call core band comprised of guitarist Barrett, bassist Downes and drummer/percussionist Travassos fully manifest Davis’ creative and stylistically diverse visions.

Included in the recording are Davis’ impressions of such far-flung motifs and artists as Lady Gaga (the ambitious *Fugue and Variations on Gaga and Poker Face*), funk (*Grauwuw* — featuring a few face-melters from Barrett), Middle Eastern/ Sephardic elements (the exciting and rhythmic *D’hora*) and a beautifully string laden and evocative take on the traditional Jewish Passover song, Chassul Siddur Pesach (featuring sumptuous cello work from George Meanwell).

Additional memorable tracks include the uptempo string/piano feature, *Presto* and the gentle, bossa-infused beauty of *Jeannamora*. This is a deeply satisfying CD, as well as a portrait of an artist at the peak of his creativity and technical facility.

Lesley Mitchell-Clarke

Discern
Artie Roth Quartet
Independent (artieron.com)

- Bassist Artie Roth’s latest offering, *Discern*, is a highly textured and interactive affair, combining a loose, open feel with remarkably precise and detailed arrangements. The mix of electronic sounds with acoustic instrumentation lends itself to approaches that are both highly varied and coherent. His writing is steeped in the harmonic and rhythmic language of contemporary jazz while retaining a strong melodicism.

The compromise blues establishes the tone of the recording with its majestic sound-scape and drummer Anthony Michelli’s Elvin Jones-inspired groove. Roth opens the soloing, elaborating on the lyricism of the melody and pouring the way for Mike Filice’s tenor sax. Filice’s understated opening lines and relaxed style gathers momentum as he fluidly weaves his way in and out of the tune’s harmony. Guitarist Geoff Young, equally adept in the language of modern jazz, makes use of a rich overridden tone to build into inspired double time lines. As well, Young’s sonic palette orchestrates the proceedings in ways that become increasingly apparent as the album unfolds.

The textural aspect of the CD comes into full fruition in *Still Hear*, dedicated to the late drummer Archie Alleyne, a long time cohort of Roth’s. Tenor saxophone and bass clarinet are overdubbed, meshing with Young’s atmospheric guitar colours. Frontline instruments converse and Michelli lets loose over Roth’s tenor bass figure. This is a beautifully played and produced recording that is a pleasure to listen to.

Ted Quinlan

Wait, There’s More
Heilig Manoeuvre
Independent HM 6015
(heiligman.com)

- The latest incarnation of bassist and composer Henry Heilig’s Heilig Manoeuvre continues the shift from the group’s earlier more electric sound to the decidedly mainstream bent of *Wait, There’s More*. The constant in the band’s evolution has been Heilig’s accessible, groove-oriented compositional style. The current group, including longtime Manteca cohort Charlie Cooley on drums, pianist Stacie McGregor and saxophonist Alison Young may be its most compelling lineup to date. Young, who has established herself as an important new player on the scene, brings a confident, fresh voice to the quartet’s blend of bebop, blues and funk. McGregor embraces a similar sensibility, occupying both frontline and rhythm section roles with aplomb.

*Wait, There’s More*, the opening tune, highlights Heilig’s and Cooley’s ease with classic Latin and swing feels. The drum/sax duet off the top of Young’s solo is a perfect setup for her soulful, swinging style. McGregor follows suit, complementing the sax solo with her own well-rooted sense of the tradition. Arrangements are the key here and solos are concise and to the point without feeling truncated. Wonky *Rhomboid* features bass and baritone saxophone over a seven-beat figure that slips momentarily into a fast swing, reminiscent of Mingus’ Fables Of Faubus. Young’s composition *Waltz For Harriet* showcases the composer’s command of nuance with a nod to Cannonball Adderley’s funky exuberance. Groove and fun are the order of the day in this highly satisfying outing.

Ted Quinlan

Paul Newman – Duo Compositions
Paul Newman; Karen Ng; Heather Segger
Independent (paulnewman1.bandcamp.com)

- Paul Newman has already proved his credentials at the existential end of the saxophone. Now he turns that angst and all of
Joining forces to extract as many undiscovered textures from their instruments as humanly possible, British alto and baritone saxophonist Simon Rose and German-prepared piano specialist Stefan Schultz come across less like mad scientists and more like dedicated epistemologists. Like researchers confronted with unexpected by-products from their experiments, they assiduously dissect the results for further trials. And like the Lone Ranger and Tonto riding in tandem, for every extended technique exposed by Rose, from tongue slapping to atonal smears, Schultz has an appropriate response or goad, plucking, stopping, pushing and sliding along his strings, and with implements such as bows, bells and mashers vibrating atop them.

A track like Magua for instance starts with gargantuan baritone sax textures exposed via bone-dry multiphonics, soon pleasantly liquefying to a jerky slap-tongue rhythm to affiliate with bell-like clangs from the piano’s speaking length. Or consider Schultz’s ring modulator-like reverberations which bring out the mellow underpinning of Rose’s back-and-forth snuffling on Bird Sommersaults. Additionally, harpsichord-like string stopping gets a tougher interface that vibrates the soundboard strings when sympathetic matched with low-pitched reed vibrations on Unstoppable. Rose’s split tones allow him to play reed strategies that are simultaneous mellow and richety or skyscraper high and copper mine low at the same time; while Schultz’s strategies create equivalent concurrent textures inside and outside the piano. Leviathan Blues is a fine demonstration of this. The pianist’s stretching the strings while percussively key slapping creates a rhythmic backbeat which expands to meet the saxophonist’s theme variations that likewise widen and become more dissonant as Rose plays. Altissimo reed agitation brings out equivalent kinetic key pupmuling, until a simple pedal push counter-texte calms the woodwind cyclone enough to move Rose to singular honks that finally meld with solidifying key vibrations.

By the time the last note sounds at the end of this CD’s 11th and final track, if the two haven’t exposed the sound textures from 10,000 things they’ve certainly come close to doing so. Ken Waxman

Mette Henriette
Mette Henriette
ECM 2460/2461 (ecmrecords.com)

Mette Henriette is a young Norwegian saxophonist and composer and this eponymous two-CD debut is a remarkable statement, whether considered for its skill, beauty or sheer reach. Recorded during 2013 and 2014, the music possesses sufficient breadth to escape any immediate classification, with materials and textures drawn from contemporary composed music, jazz and free improvisation. The two CDs are distinguished by their resources: the first features a trio with pianist Johan Lindvall and cellist Katrine Schiøtt; the second adds 11 minus Un including a jazz rhythm section and five more strings.

Henriette does not immediately reveal herself on the first CD as Lindvall and Schiøtt develop elongated textures that are at once rich and spare, aloof and full of suggestion. There’s a profound state of attentiveness in this music: neither specifically contemplative nor serene, it seems poised to accept revelation. The opening track, So, may suggest something of Arvo Pärt, while later episodes are at times more evanescent still, touching on the whispers and transparency of George Crumb’s Night Music. Henriette’s tenor saxophone is often limited here to long tones and brief phrases, her interest focused on sonority, overtones and the literal sound of air and moisture in the horn.

That role expands, along with the range of compositions, on the second CD, with Henriette’s wellspring of lyricism coming immediately to the fore on the beautiful passe’, before the music moves on to darker realms, including the foreboding circus of Lat & Lonet. As a saxophonist, she has a tremendous expressive range. Her timbral focus can suggest tenor sounds as distinct as Stan Getz, Jan Garbarek and Gato Barbieri (the latter in w/Idheart, a brooding noise fest that invokes the early Jazz Composers Orchestra), while a willingness to explore multiphonics and sheer air suggests affinities with free improvisers. Mette Henriette’s reach is impressive, her grasp even more so.

Stuart Brooner

Ask The Ages
Sonny Sharrock
M.O.D. Technologies MOD0016 (mod-technologies.com)

Many creative musicians have struggled to find a supportive audience, and that was certainly the case with guitarist Sonny Sharrock. He emerged in the late 1960s as a school of one, playing free jazz with the raw power of electric blues and the sonic edge of rock guitar, bringing a signal force to recordings like Pharoah Sanders’ Tauhild and Miles Davis’ Jack Johnson. Over the following years Sharrock was in and out of music, until forming an association with bassist/producer Bill Laswell. The fruits of that association included the explosive band Last Exit and this CD from 1991, Sharrock’s last recording as a leader before his death in 1994.

Sharrock has ideal partners here, including saxophonist Sanders, drummer Elvin Jones and the younger bassist Charnett Moffett, all of them sharing a vision of music possessing palpable spiritual power. The music is often anhemic with a sonic density rare in jazz (thanks to Laswell’s production) and an emotional power seldom approached in jazz fusion. There’s a perfect balance between Sanders’ apocalyptic rant and Sharrock’s own wild inventiveness, from the skittering electric chatter of Promises Kept to the illuminated eloquence of Who Does She Hope to Be?, his ringing, sustained sound the closest a guitarist will likely ever get to the spirit of John Coltrane.

The match of the four musicians on each of Sharrock’s six compositions is uncanny, achieving its greatest power on Many Mansions, Sanders wailing above Jones’ thunderous drumming while Sharrock and Moffett generate a pulsing wall of sound.

Stuart Brooner
Musicologist and pianist Tom Gordon, professor emeritus of the School of Music at Memorial University in St. John’s, NL, has long been fascinated by the sacred music performed by the Inuit Moravians of Northern Labrador. Unlike other Christian denominations, Moravian missionaries not only placed a high value on personal piety and missions, but also particularly encouraged the place of music in worship. Digging to understand this music’s history, Gordon sifted through hundreds of manuscripts in Moravian church archives along the Labrador coast.

What emerged was a rich musical practice with roots back to the 1770s and 1780s when European Moravian missionaries founded settlements in Northern Labrador at Nain, then Okak and Arvertok, the first (of many more) Christian missions to the Inuit in what is now Canada. They came to preach Christianity and one of their prime tools – and legacies – was music.

Quite rapidly the music imported from Europe evolved, in the words of Gordon, as an “expressive practice re-imagined to reflect the spirituality and aesthetic preferences of Inuit musicians.” It was music heard almost exclusively within the modest clapboard walls of Labrador Moravian churches. There it remained, almost unknown to the outside world, until now.

From these communities’ extensive repertoire of brass music, congregational singing and choral music, Gordon has chosen 16 tracks of solo sacred arias and duets, reconstructing them from church manuscripts. The result is the impressively documented and performed CD Pillowikput Inuit (Behold, the People), true not only to the letter of the source manuscripts but also to the Inuit spirit of its performers and tradition-keepers. The music chosen celebrates key annual liturgical events like Christmas and Easter, as well as the community celebrations of Married People’s Day and Church Festival Day.

Featuring the classically trained Inuk soprano Deantha Edmunds and Moravian Inuit music expert Karrie Obed, both singing in Inuktitut, the repertoire includes music by two leading European composers of their day, Handel and Haydn. As expected, songs by lesser-tier yet fascinating Moravian composers such as Johann Daniel Grimn (1719–1760), the American John Antes (1740–1811) and the English clergyman Christian Ignatius Latrobe (1758–1836) are also well represented. Organ, wind and string instrumental accompaniment, and the Innismara Vocal Ensemble from St. John’s provide suitable period support throughout.

What is unique in these performances? It’s not so much the repertoire or the conventional instrumental forces employed. It is rather the deeply heartfelt renditions of these European songs in Inuktitut representing a hybrid Inuit performance practice dating back over 225 years in Canada’s North that I find so moving. It seems to me Pillowikput Inuit represents the tip of the iceberg of the rich Inuit musical heritage the rest of us in the South are just beginning to discover, and enjoy.

Andrew Timar

Rebirth of a Nation (DJ Spooky)
Kronos Quartet
Cantaloupe CA21110

If ever there was a potent time to release this masterfully crafted new soundtrack to the D.W. Griffith classic, Birth of a Nation, it would be now during the tumultuous rebuilding of post-George W. Bush America by its extraordinary protagonist Barak Obama. Oblique parallel lines could be drawn through the similarities of situation, except that the country is not fighting a civil war to – among other things – end slavery. However a sharply divided people and flare-ups of discrimination along racial lines, unpopular wars and a dramatic decline in civility towards the presidency might be a likely background for such a soundtrack to what Spooky, the irreverent composer, aka Paul D. Miller, calls Rebirth of a Nation.

The Kronos Quartet seem to be a perfect fit for this musical adventure and the quartet seems to come to terms with DJ Spooky’s mindset as if they were one and the same brain. Their transcendent musicianship, a result of great empathy between the players, provides not just memorable accompaniment to the dramaturgy of Griffith’s visuals but also discreet, seductive and eloquent continuo for Spooky’s own musical instruments, which remain stark and dominant throughout the unfolding visuals. Yes, visuals! The soundtrack is accompanied by a wonderfully produced DVD so it is possible to hear the music work in conjunction with the original silent moving picture as well. I also like Spooky’s laser-bright instrumentation.

Raul da Gama

Something in the Air
Advanced Jazz’s Fountain of Youth

KEN WAXMAN

One common shibboleth of mid-20th century creative music was that “jazz was a young man’s art.” Putting aside the sexism implicit in the statement, the idea denied jazz musicians the sort of late career acclaim that notated music masters like Pablo Casals and Vladimir Horowitz enjoyed. Times have more than changed. Expanded from the Baby Boomer cliche that “50 is the new 30” and its upwards affiliations, career longevity is now taken for granted that “70 is the new 50.”

One example, now 80 and usually found in a solo or duo context. But Ghost Tones (A side 0001 a-siderecord-ords.com), created when he was a mere 75, is a more ambitious project. The 17-track CD reconstitutes the compositions/arrangements of jazz theorist George Russell (1923-2009) written for combos or big bands. Blake plays solo acoustic or electric piano framed by interjections from horns, strings, electronics and even a second piano. Like a curator who situates artifacts in modern settings, Blake’s conceptions are both contemporary and faithful to the originals. The Ballad of Hix Blewitt for instance, receives a tripartite setting with Rachel Massey’s violin sounding impressionistic sweetness; Dave “Knife” Fabris’ steel guitar reverberating with country music melancholy; and both setting off Blake’s melody variations. A similar transformation affects You Are My Sunshine which begins and ends with steel-guitar twanging, but is defined by a middle section of dissonant improvisations between Fabris and Blake. Jack’s Blues, in contrast, features Ryan Dugre’s tough guitar chording atop a brass choir, as blues-tinted piano lines weave in and out of the narration like a taxi in heavy traffic, finally introducing blues sensibility in the penultimate moments. The futuristic Stratusphunk is a solo piano feature that invests the theme with call-and-response patterning, yet retains the tune’s linear status. Still, the paramount indication of Blake’s skill appears on the forbiddingly titled Vertical Form VI and the theatrical Lonely Place. On the first, a sense of underlying swing is brought forward with tympani rat tets, trombone blats and Blake trading riffs with electric pianist Eric Lane. Lonely Place’s emotional lonesomeness is expressed as Aaron Hartley’s plunger trombone echoes and Doug Pet’s free-flowing tenor saxophone lines are superseded by Blake’s precise and icy harmonies.

thewholenote.com
Another session honouring a departed improviser, but one who was around to participate in this, his final session, is Free Form Improvisation Ensemble 2013 (Improvising Beings at Improvising-beings.com). To be honest, while the hiccupping snares emanating from French-Moroccan tenor saxophonist Abdelhai Bennani (1950–2015) are interesting as he meanders through these two CDs of linked abstract improvisations, (as is the low-key drumming of Chris Henderson), the focus lies elsewhere. Like famous actors who make cameo appearances in small films, Bennani’s timbral strategy is cushioned or enhanced due to the contributions of American expatriates, pianist Burton Greene, now 78, and Alan Silva, now 76, who plays orchestral synthesizer. Some of Silva’s electronic double-bass approximations give a few of the 13 live improvisations a percussive rhythm that they otherwise lack. Elsewhere the oscillating sheets of sound the synthesizer produces wash over the other players like a cyclone-induced rainstorm. Silva’s blurriness processes cascade in such a way to encourage the saxophonist’s harsh interface. But more often than not, whether in tandem with Bennani or on his own, it’s Greene’s considered patterns which pierce Silva’s murky enveloping sounds like a nail through wood. Almost from the beginning, the pianist’s centipede-like reach sharpens the program as he moves along the keys and symbolically within the cracks between them. With oscillating ponderousness on one side and hesitant reed puffs and percussion clatter on the other, it’s Greene who emphasizes the rhythmic thrust at the end of CD1 to create a groove. On the second disc, as Greene varies his attack from impressionistic classicism to Thelonious Monk-like angularity, he brings out sympathetic low-pitched timbres from Silva which encourage the saxophonist’s wistful cries, and adds some levity via a lively cadenced solo in the middle. By the concluding minutes, Silva’s mass of processing reverts to bring the saxophonist into the foreground. Reading too much into Bennani’s restrained buzzes and puffs may be like those critics who portend the demise of writers by analyzing their final prose, but Bennani’s leeky, brittle tone does appear to be that of a man playing his own threnody. Luckily, the older but more nimble Silva, and especially Greene, are on hand to add palliative empathy.

Another improviser whose broad-minded edness and experimentation are not affected by age is saxophonist Joe McPhee, 76, who is recording and playing as prolifically now as he has since he started recording in the late 1960s. Ticonderoga (Clean Feed 345 CD cleanfeedrecords.com) finds him sharing space with a near-contemporary drummer, Charles Downs, 72, as well as pianist Jamie Saft and bassist Joe Morris, who are two or three decades younger. In this classic formation, McPhee glides between tenor and soprano, extruding textures weighty and coarse as lumber, but adding cunning avian-pitched trills from the smaller horn. Like the mortar that bonds bricks, Downs’ collection of clunks and raps builds a strong foundation able to support any embellished strategy. Similarly, tremolo pulses and bow-sourced sprails allow Morris to accompany and solo. Though like a tugboat alongside the ocean liner which is McPhee, Saft never abandons the background role. At the same time he uses calming harp-like string plucks and stops as frequently as keyboard tropes. With balladic tones transformed via altissimo screams into dagger-sharp notes as he plots an original path, the saxophonist’s skill is most obvious on Leaves of Certain and A Backward King. Like a mathematician scrawling numerous formulae on a blackboard, McPhee treats the first as a testing ground for exotic multichipics, stretching out an assembly line’s worth of reed textures to form variegated patterns. Finally, alongside Saft’s yearning glissandi he settles on dual tones created by shouting into his saxophone’s body tube as he masticates the reed. The result is a finale that satisfies with no letdown in excitement. Cheerful, buoyed by Saft’s guileless patterning, A Backward King initially highlights Saft exposing so many keyboard colours that he could be figuratively knitting a rainbow-dyed scarf. A subsequent processional piano statement presages McPhee’s shift from snarky stridency to gentle ballad variations, until the two swiftly reverse the process like a car backing up, and construct a new garment out of half-pucked sax blasts and half inside-piano plucks. Climatically though, Morris’ background patterning produces a pluck so dexterous and directional that it soothes the others into moderato attachment and then silence.

More than 40 years separate South African drummer Louis Moholo-Moholo, 75, and Italian pianist Livio Minnafa, 33. But during Born Free (Incipit Records 203 egeamusic.com) the South African-Italian duo produces enthralling episodes of cinched improvisations and compositions. The CD attains its creative zenith on Flying Flamingos. Operating like two halves of a single entity, each man’s measured tones slip into place like the bolt in a lock. Exhorted verbally and by Moholo-Moholo’s jouncing minimal drum patterns, Minnafa frames his narrative with rugged honky-tonk-like keyboard splashes, only to emphasize a sparkling easy swing in the tune’s centre. This responsive patterning is expressed throughout, as the two move through episodes of almost Disney-cartoon-like tenderness on a tune such as Angel Nemali; to the repressed ferocity of Foxtrot, where acute drum pummelling and choppy, high-pitched key clattering up the piece’s Charlie Chaplin-like waddle to sprinter’s speed. Like a racing car that accelerates to 160 mph from zero, the two demonstrate similar control on the introductory and closing variations on Canto General, with the pianist’s glissandi at warp speed on the first, and the drummer’s literal collection of bells and whistles prominent on the second. This package also includes a DVD with filmed episodes from the performances plus commentary from both players.

During his long career Moholo-Moholo has played in many duo situations including a memorable CD with Swiss pianist Irene Schweizer. Like the other innovators here, Schweizer, 74, divides her work between playing with younger musicians and her contemporaries. Welcome Back (Intakt 254 intaktrec.ch) is titled that way since it’s the second duo CD the pianist and Dutch drummer Han Bennink, 73, have recorded. The first was in 1995. Acting their age, the two breeze through 14 tracks with elan, excitement and empathy. Schweizer’s gracious variations on ditties like Meet Me Tonight in Dreamland are mocked by bomb dressing and whistles from Bennink, but eventually overcome his disruption when she adds a touch of strife. Meanwhile jazz classic Eronel is wrapped up in fewer than two minutes, with the pianist’s pumping percussiveness swinging the contorted line. Like a reveller trying on several masks at a costume party, Schweizer’s original meld of (Thelonious) Monkish angularity, South African highlife and earlier jazz forms are showcased on Kit 4, Ntyilo, Ntyilo and Rag, with the first shapeshifting to staccato hardness abetted by the drummer’s clattering; the second theatrical and respectful, plus ending with the sonic equivalent of a multi-hued sunset; and the last narrative swelling to Willie “The Lion” Smith-style finger-busting swing. She and Bennink confirm their seasoned status on Free for All, gliding over different styles with feather-light key pressure and brush strokes that sound like sand rubbed on the snare, before interlpecic leaps expose kinetic underpinnings. But the key track is Schweizer’s own Bleu Foncé. Like a detective series where the characters are known, but surprises appear in every episode, Schweizer’s variations on a traditional blues are true to the form, yet on top of Bennink’s condensed shuffle beat, she adds feints and emphasis to express her creative individuality. The conclusion, Bed to Borne from Born Free, is cinched: “Bennink is wasted on the young.” In the case of these improvisers though, when it comes to music at least, age is just a number. 

February 1, 2016 - March 7, 2016	thewholenote.com
S
ome years ago during the intermission feature on a recorded concert heard on the car radio, the conductor, a prominent figure, spoke about his meeting with Igor Stravinsky of whom he asked about interpreting Le Sacre du Printemps. “Do not interpret my music,” he was instructed, “just play what I wrote.” Who better to do that than the composer himself. Igor Stravinsky – The Complete Columbia Album Collection (Sony 502616, 56 CDs, a DVD and an informative 262-page hardbound book) contains every one of his own and supervised recordings made by American Columbia and RCA Victor. In 1991 Sony issued Igor Stravinsky: The Recorded Legacy on 22 CDs and it seemed this was to be the final chapter on the Columbia recordings. In the intervening years many changes have enabled Sony to add 34 new CDs. Included now are all 19 monaural recordings including the three RCA CDs with the RCA Symphony Orchestra and all the pre-stereo recordings with the New York Philharmonic, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Metropolitan Opera and soloists including Joseph Szigeti, Vronsky and Babin, Jean Cocteau, Peter Pears, Mitchell (later Mitch) Miller, Mary Simmons, Marilyn Horne, Marni Nixon, Jennie Tourel, Bernard Greenhouse, Vera Zorina and many, many others. Each of these recordings is a part of the Stravinsky legacy.

Stravinsky’s recording of Le Sacre du Printemps from April 1940 with the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York was the first Stravinsky work I owned. It became my reference performance and is the first disc in this new box. Listening to the 1960 recording of the 1947 version with the Columbia Symphony Orchestra (disc 22) is a different experience. After the back-in-time opening, The Augurs of Spring – The Dances of the Young Girls bursts forth unmistakably as ballet music and not simply a concert piece. Stravinsky’s propulsive beat and accents are maintained through Part One, percussion, but not confrontational nor blatantly aggressive, yet very potent. An interlude consisting of Spring – The Dances of the Young Girls is a different experience. After the back-in-time opening, the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announce the very first bars their security, their astonishment and sonorities announces that they are not simply four musicians playing but an entity: a perfect string quartet. The group first met in Sienna in 1942 and in 1945 they came together as the Nuovo Quartetto Italiano, later dropping the Nuovo. They toured extensively and in 1951 they played in Salzburg where they impressed Wilhelm Furtwängler. The conductor convinced them to play with a greater freedom of expression by running through a performance of the Brahms F Minor Quintet with Furtwängler himself at the piano. This was a critical turning point in their career following which they introduced new rhythmic freedoms to their innate classicism. In 1965 they began their long association with Philips recording the Debussy and Ravel quartets. Included in this collection of superlative performances are the complete quartets by Beethoven, Brahms, Mozart, Schumann and Webern together with quartets by Haydn, Schubert, Boccherini, Dvořák, etc. and the Brahms F Minor Quintet with Pollini in 1980. The Quartetto Italiano disbanded in 1987.

Find complete details of Quartetto Italiano – The Complete Decca, Philips and DG Recordings (Decca 47888.4) at arkivmusic.com/classical/album.jsp?album_id=2158595.

As the big-band era passed into history through the 1950s, new schools of jazz had already emerged, from bebop at one end of the spectrum to the cool school. Cool was characterized by easy tempos in arrangements that often had a “classical” feel as exemplified by Dave Brubeck, the Modern Jazz Quartet, Gerry Mulligan and others. Of interest were the various groups formed by Chico Hamilton.

Drummer Foreststorn “Chico” Hamilton (1921-2013), in his early musical career, had played with Charles Mingus, Illinois Jacquet, Dexter Gordon and others. Engagements with Ellington, Lionel Hampton, Nat King Cole, Billie Holiday and six years with Lena Horne attest to his proficiency and the inevitability of him forming his own groups.

After leaving the original Gerry Mulligan Quartet in 1953, Hamilton made his first recordings for Pacific Jazz as the Chico Hamilton Trio with bassist George Duvivier and guitarist Howard Roberts. So successful was that disc that in 1955 the Chico Hamilton Quintet was formed. “At the outset, I didn’t quite know what I wanted. I only knew that I wanted something new, a different and, if possible, exciting sound.” The quintet comprised cellist Fred Katz; Buddy Collette, flute, clarinet, alto and tenor sax; Jim Hall, guitar and Carson Smith, bass. In 1956 Paul Horn replaced Collette and John Pisano replaced Hall. Their arrangements of original and standard repertoire were all in-house and except for their ghastly versions of all the tunes from South Pacific, the performers communicate a joie de vivre as fresh as yesterday and totally satisfying. The 1955 to 1959 Quintet recordings are included in Chico Hamilton – The Complete Recordings Volume 1 together with the earlier trio sessions and others totaling 98 tracks (Enlightenment ENSCD9057, 5 CDs). Volume Two contains all 84 recordings by Hamilton’s various groups on assorted labels issued on ten LPs from 1959 to 1962 (Enlightenment ENSCD9058, 5 CDs). Fans of West Coast jazz will get much pleasure from these two sets, as will all those who derive pleasure from cool, chamber jazz. The transfers are exemplary.
Paul Bley: A Modern Jazz Piano Master

Ken Waxman

Paul Bley who died at 83 in early January was probably never bothered that he was usually described as Canada’s second-best-known jazz pianist; Oscar Peterson was the first. But Bley, who shared a Montreal birth with Peterson, and who similarly was honoured with induction into the Order of Canada in 2008 – albeit 30-plus years after Peterson – was for all intents and purposes a much more radical pianist than O.P.

Peterson, seven years Bley’s senior, was a flamboyant stylist who adapted Art Tatum’s all-encompassing swing era techniques to the structure of modern jazz during an almost incalculable number of performances from the late 1940s until his death in 2007. However Bley, represented on more than 100 discs during his career, cycled through a variety of keyboard strategies from the outgoing to the cerebral, eventually matching the atonality of off-centre techniques with straightforward, melodically measured motion. He was also one of the first serious improvisers to deal with the sonic possibilities that could be extracted from the then brand-new portable Moog synthesizer. Later, such better-known pianists as Keith Jarrett, The Bad Plus’ Ethan Iverson and Satoko Fujii developed their playing following the examples of Bley’s breakthroughs.

As a teenage boogie-woogie specialist “Buzzy” Bley, born in 1932, was gigging locally at 13 and briefly took over Peterson’s regular gig at Montreal’s Alberta Lounge in 1949, when the latter made his New York debut. The next year Bley moved south to study at New York’s Juilliard School of Music, and by the mid-1950s had not only recorded with alto saxophonist Charlie Parker, be-bop’s avatar, but made his first LP Introducing Paul Bley, on Debut records, in a trio with legendary modernists, bassist Charles Mingus and drummer Art Blakey. Bley, who had married pianist/composer Carla Bley – nee Karen Borg – was leading a conventional Modern Jazz Quartet-styled combo in Los Angeles in 1958, when he let his bassist Charlie Haden’s friends, alto saxophonist Ornette Coleman and pocket trumpeter Don Cherry, sit in. Coleman’s revolutionary restructuring of the then-accepted jazz basics – so that improvisations didn’t have to be based on the initial structure and where every player was free to contribute his variations to the tune – was a revelation to and influence on Bley.

Back in New York, Bley became a charter member of the so-called New Thing and the Jazz Composers Guild, alongside certified avant-gardists such as militant tenor saxophonist Archie Shepp, bandleader Sun Ra and pianist Cecil Taylor, among others. He expressed his newfound polytonal keyboard freedom on two 1960s LPs for the ESP label. One, Barrage, was with a quintet including drummer Milford Graves and the Sun Ra Arkestra’s alto saxophonist Marshall Allen, and included distinctive cover art work by Canadian visual artist Michael Snow. Closer, a session with bassist Steve Swallow and drummer Barry Altschul, was one of the multitude of trio discs Bley would make with a succession of bassists and drummers during the 1960s and 1970s. On it, Bley redefined the idea of interplay in the jazz trio in a method much different than Peterson’s traditional follow-the-leader approach. It was this conception of bluesy yet cerebral intensity that welcomed other players’ ideas at any time, which influenced Jarrett and many other keyboardists. Earlier, Bley and Swallow had been part of multi-reedist Jimmy Giuffre’s drummer-less trio, which played chided chamber jazz informed by folkly themes and European atonality. The band’s masterpiece was Free Fall (Columbia), and it and the trio’s other discs are generally acknowledged as the initial influence on ECM Records’ characteristic sound.

Meanwhile Closer could also describe Bley’s relationship with his favourite composers of the era. Except for the odd original, standard and Coleman covers, the majority of his repertoire – including certified jazz classics like Ida Lupino, And Now the Queen and Ictus – was composed by Carla Bley. After they separated, his next companion, singer/keyboards Annette Peacock, composed much of the material he played. As late as 1992 he recorded an entire disc consisting of Peacock material simply entitled Annette (hatOLOGY). His associates were bassist Gary Peacock and Viennese flugelhornist Franz Koglmann. Bley’s sparse piano ruminations that terminated when he was satisfied, not according to conventional structures, plus his low-key articulation also appealed to the growing European free music experimenters. Besides work with Koglmann and Swiss reedist Hans Koch, some of his best latter day sessions were with Europeans: Time Will Tell and Sankt Gerold Variations 1-12 recorded for ECM in the mid-1990s with British saxophonist Evan Parker and long-time American-in-France, bassist Barre Phillips; Chaos (Soul Note) with British drummer Tony Oxley and Italian bassist Furio di Castri; and Florida with Danish drummer Kresten Osgood.

Bley’s association with Annette Peacock was around the same time as he began experimenting with the Moog. Besides recording several discs showing off its parameters, he was the first improviser to adapt the analog keyboard synthesizer for live performances. After spending a couple of years working out strategies for multi-keyboard and patch chording, Bley abandoned the synth and returned to piano. After that he was usually recorded in classic piano trio or solo piano formats. The exquisite Play Blue (ECM), a meditative solo disc recorded in 2008 and released in 2014, is his final session as of this time.

Although Bley left the synthesizer for others to explore he didn’t give up on multimedia. With his wife, video artist Carol Goss who survives him, for a decade starting in 1974 he co-founded and ran Improvising Artists Inc. (IAI), which recorded 20 discs and some of the first music videos. Besides his own work, Bley and IAI put out discs by established improvisers such as Peacock, Giuffre, Ra and saxophonist Sam Rivers as well as younger discoveries. Jaco, IAI’s sixth release with Bley on electric piano and Bruce Ditmas on drums, was the studio recording debut of future jazz superstars, guitarist Pat Metheny and electric bassist Jaco Pastorius.

During the 1990s Bley also taught part-time at Boston’s New England Conservatory. Among his many students was Japanese pianist Satoko Fujii. Her first CD, Something about Water (Libra) from 1995, is a duo date with Bley. Similarly, although he hadn’t lived in Canada for about half a century, along with his other projects, Bley recorded a series of albums with several Canadians during the 1990s and aughts. They included such well-received efforts as Double Time with flutist Jane Bunnett; Outside In with guitarist Sonny Greenwich; Know Time with drummer Geordie McDonald and trumpeter Herbie Spanier; Touche with fellow expatriate Canadian, flugelhornist Kenny Wheeler; and Travelling Lights featuring saxophonist François Carrier and drummer Michel Lambert, all on Justin Time records.

No matter whether he played in duo or larger formations, Bley’s off-handed mastery, which combined narrative delicacy with rhythmic astrigency, was always completely original and instantly identifiable. What better epitaph than that can there be for an improvising musician?

Ken Waxman’s column Something in the Air is a regular feature of The WholeNote’s CD review section, DISCoveries.
Taylor Academy Showcase Concerts
SAT., FEB. 6, 4:30PM
MAZZOLENI CONCERT HALL
FREE (TICKET REQUIRED)
The Phil and Eli Taylor Performance Academy for Young Artists presents a concert by the leading young classical musicians in Canada. Hear the stars of tomorrow!

Gil Shaham and The Knights
WED., FEB. 17, 8PM KOERNER HALL
American violin master Shaham was named Musical America’s Instrumentalist of the Year in 2012. The Knights, a 30-piece orchestral collective from Brooklyn, NY, have “become one of Brooklyn’s sterling cultural products.” (The New Yorker) Together they perform works by Rebel, Prokofiev, Wagner, Dvořák, and Sufjan Stevens
Generously supported by David G. Broadhurst

Johannes Debus conducts the Royal Conservatory Orchestra and Edward Zhou (piano)
FRI., FEB. 12, 8PM KOERNER HALL
PRELUDE RECITAL AT 6:45PM
The Canadian Opera Company’s Music Director, Johannes Debus’s leads a program of Tchaikovsky’s Piano Concerto No. 1 with Edward Zhou and Rimsky-Korsakov’s Scheherazade.
Generously supported by Leslie & Anna Dan

Karen Gomyo, Christian Poltéra & Juho Pohjonen
FRI., MAR. 4, 2016 8PM KOERNER HALL
This trio of spectacular new-generation classical artists includes Canadian violinist Karen Gomyo, Swiss cellist Christian Poltéra, and Finnish pianist Juho Pohjonen in a program of works by Haydn, Janáček, and Dvořák.
Generously supported by David G. Broadhurst

TICKETS START AT ONLY $25! 416.408.0208 www.performance.rcmusic.ca
I was in my teens, growing up in a small Wisconsin town, when I first encountered the name Pierre Boulez. He was a promising emerging composer, and he was particularly impressed with Boulez’s 1954 composition, Le marteau sans maître. Having read this, I immediately visited my local record shop and ordered a copy of a recording of it with Boulez conducting, a Vox Turnabout LP (TV 34081S). It’s a record I still own, although it’s considerably worn out from the thousands of times I listened. This work made a strong impression on me then (I admit I tried to mimic the approach in my own juvenile compositions), and it still does today.

My first person-to-person meeting with Boulez was in 1975, when CBC Radio Music sent me to London to attend a BBC Radio symposium on the Broadcast Presentation of Contemporary Music. It seemed as though the BBC was planning a new initiative in this area, much like CBC, even if the resulting programs were still a few years away from launching. I was, at the time, producer of the program Music of Today on what was then called the CBC FM Network. Pierre Boulez was in his final year as music director of the BBC Symphony Orchestra and he was asked to give the keynote address at our symposium, which was attended by contemporary music producers from many national broadcasters around the world.

Boulez made many points about how he, having just served four years as the BBC’s chief conductor, saw the role of public broadcasters in developing contemporary music specifically, and classical music generally. But his main point was this: producers who design music broadcasts should always be didactic in making their programs. His point was simple and sensible — it boiled down to, “Know what you have to say and what point you have to prove, and then make your programs for the sake of proving that point.” He further argued that even if the focus of the broadcast were weak or ill-advised, a didactic approach would at least be more interesting and engaging than programs with no point at all.

For my own part, I was entirely in Boulez’s camp on this point. Having just completed ten programs on the life and music of Arnold Schoenberg with Glenn Gould the year before, I was already a convinced and committed didactic broadcaster. The opportunity to champion Schoenberg at the hands of Gould, perhaps his most compelling advocate, was a memorable and entirely convincing experience. Gould made no secret of his admiration of Schoenberg’s music and our ten programs on the topic were nothing if not didactic.

Two years later we began planning CBC Radio’s signature network contemporary music program, Two New Hours, and once we launched in 1978, Boulez’s music was prominently featured among our regular broadcasts of international concerts. And we also broadcast our own productions of his work from Canadian concerts. In 1979, when New Music Concerts staged the North American premiere of Messiaen’s Messe pour un condamné, and the solo piano work, Incises (1994/2001) and its relative, the large ensemble piece, Sur Incises (1996/2006).

With Boulez’s passing, we remember him as a brilliant yet complex artist. His talents were so numerous and so exceptional, it’s difficult to single out any one as his defining trait. Those of us who were with him for the 2002 Glenn Gould Prize presentation saw him as a gracious, warm and generous man, but there are just as many reported episodes where he was the “Pierre-of-the-sharp-tongue.” In a public interview, I held for the International Music Council in Vienna with Austrian composer Kurt Schwertsik in 2006, Schwertsik recalled the early days at the Darmstadt Summer Courses in the 1950s and 1960s. He said that Boulez would, “...arise late and leave early, leaving behind numerous cuts, bruises and other virtual injuries to the participants’ egos. It was then up to Bruno Maderna,” he continued, “to come after him and soothe and mend all that Boulez had inflicted.”

Boulez’s goal was to aim high to achieve goals of significance, and in so doing he left many behind. He was an artist who always had a point to prove, and he had no lack of confidence in his creative powers. Perhaps my most lasting memory of him is from an interview on CBC’s Arts National with the late Terry Campbell (1946–2004) in 1991, when Boulez was in Halifax for Scotia Festival. He remarked that “Once we come to recognize the brain as a muscle, the sooner we’ll realize that in its regular exercise over time, we can accomplish great things.”

Boulez was right, and he did achieve greatness, leaving us his rich legacy.

David Jaeger is a composer, producer and broadcaster based in Toronto.
The Toronto Consort

Presents

BEOWULF

featuring Benjamin Bagby

Medieval performer Benjamin Bagby (Sequentia) has taken the world by storm with his performances of one of the great epics of the European bardic tradition, the battle between the hero Beowulf and the monster Grendel. Don’t miss the chance to experience this teller of tales, in Toronto for the first time.

Friday, March 11, 8pm
Saturday March 12, 8pm

Tickets $24 – $57 | Box Office 416-964-6337
TorontoConsort.org

---

ROY THOMSON HALL

YUNDI

ORPHEUS CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
Pinchas Zukerman, violin

Sponsored by BLACKROCK

MAR 19
Chopin: Ballade No. 1 in G minor, Op. 23
Chopin: Ballade No. 2 in F Major, Op. 38
Chopin: Ballade No. 3 in A flat Major, Op. 47
Chopin: Ballade No. 4 in F minor, Op. 52
Chopin: 24 Preludes, Op. 28

MAR 20
J.C. Bach:
Mozart:
Beethoven:
H. Melzer:
Ravel:
Symphony in G minor, Op. 6, No. 6
Violin Concerto No. 3 in G Major, K.216
Romance for Violin and Orchestra No. 1 in G Major, Op. 40
Vision Machine (PREMIERE)
Le Tombeau de Couperin

FOR TICKETS CALL 416-872-4255 | OR VISIT ROYTHOMSON.COM
Carlo Ventre as Cavaradossi and Adrianne Pieczonka as Tosca in Tosca (COC, 2012), photo: Michael Cooper.