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6th Annual TIFF Tips

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Claude Vivier (Canada)
*Siddhartha (1976)
Colin McPhee (Canada)
Tabuh-Tabuhan (1936)
Alex Pauk – conductor

Sunday November 19, 2017
Emergence

Daniel Bjarnason (Iceland)
Emergence (2011)
Marc-André Dalbavie (France)
Concerto for Violin and Orchestra (1996)*
Douglas Schmidt (Canada)
Just a stranger here myself... (2014)***
Ana Sokolovic (Canada)
Ringelspiel (2013)
Alex Pauk – conductor
Véronique Mathieu – violin

Sunday February 11, 2018
Plug In

Eugene Astapov (Canada)
Hear My Voice (2017)***
Unsuk Chin (Korea)
Mannequin (2015)*
Tan Dun (China)
Passacaglia: Secret of Wind and Birds (2015)*
José Evangelista (Canada)
Symphonie minute (1994)
Matthew Ricketts (Canada)
Lilt (2018)**
Alex Pauk – conductor
Jennifer Nichols – choreographer/dancer

Sunday April 15, 2018
Taiko Plus!

Chris Paul Harman (Canada)
New Work (2018)**
Maki Ishii (Japan)
Mono-Prism (1976)*
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PHOTO: MONICA CORDIVIOLA

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Something in the Water? Weird, eh?

Sometimes it’s something in the water. Sometimes it’s something in the air. Sometimes you just scratch your head and say “weird, eh?”

**The case of John Blow**

Not exactly a household word in musical circles, John Blow (who is reasonable to assume was born sometime not too long before his baptismal date of 23 February 1649, was an English Baroque composer and organist whose most enduring musical claim to fame was that he was a teacher of Henry Purcell, who was born on September 10, 1659. Purcell, in contrast to Blow was, right up until the beginning of the 20th century, if not a household name, the most widely recognized English-born composer. (Blow’s other claim to fame, I suppose, is that he outlived Purcell, who died in 1695, by 13 years.)

Purcell’s name has certainly featured regularly in this magazine over the 22 years and a bit we have been in business. But as of the end of January 2002, Blow’s name, to the best of my knowledge, had never appeared in our listings or anywhere else in the magazine.

And then all of a sudden, there he was! Twice. In both cases in the context of concerts featuring the music of Blow and Purcell. Two concerts titled, roughly, “Music of John Blow and Henry Purcell.”

Same date (March 2, 2002), same time, and within one block of each other, on Bloor St. W., at Trinity–St. Paul’s and Church of the Redeemer respectively.

**Weird, eh?**

Sometimes coincidences like these can be easily explained by significant anniversaries. Take the case of Glenn Gould, for example, who was born in September 25, 1932; all years ending in a two or a seven respectively.

On Bloor St. W., at Trinity-St. Paul’s and Church of the Redeemer, on Bloor St. W., at Trinity–St. Paul’s and Church of the Redeemer, the following:

- The Glenn Gould School at the Royal Conservatory cannot name the musical instrument that Glenn Gould played.
- Miller’s Tales

Nowhere near as seismically weird as the case of John Blow, but interesting nonetheless, is the following:

A month ago I received an enthusiastic message from Stuart Broomer, a longtime regular reviewer of jazz recordings for this magazine, asking if we had seen a copy of Mark Miller’s latest book. (With at least a dozen books to his name and countless articles, Miller is very likely Canada’s leading jazz writer, photographer and journalist. Safe to say, he is at this moment in time probably better known than drummer Claude Ranger, the subject of this latest book (although I am sure Miller would be only too happy if his book helped to redress that fact.) Broomer’s cogent review of Miller’s book appears in this issue.

Meanwhile, independent of the above development, contributor Ori Dagan submitted a story for the issue on the second annual Kensington Market Jazz Festival, headed up with a short quote from, you guessed it, none other than Mark Miller, taken not from one of Miller’s books but, this being the century we live in, from a recent Facebook post by Miller, musing on the implications, mostly positive, of this year’s TD Toronto Jazz Festival’s decision to refocus its operations on a single neighbourhood, in this case the once-and (perhaps)-future Village of Yorkville.

At risk of stealing Dagan’s thunder, the Miller quote seized on for the KMJF story bears repeating. Musing on how festivals, driven by commercial imperatives, find themselves drifting further and further away, musically, from why they started in the first place, Miller says “I’ve always thought that if the "jazz festival" model no longer works the way it once did, then change the model — not the music.”

**Changing the Model**

In the arts, it’s not only festivals that find themselves driven by commercial imperatives further and further from their roots, philosophically and geographically. As people with means flee the suburbs for gentrified city cores, property values and rents skyrocket and the working urban poor (most musicians and cultural workers I know among them) find ourselves struggling to hang on in the neighbourhoods where up till now we have managed to both live and work.

Sadly, vibrant urban culture is, almost by definition, a noisy messy thing, requiring constant negotiation between those who need to make noise and those who expect the same right to peace and quiet in the downtown as they enjoyed in the suburbs they have forsaken.

Readers have seen me railing in this space against those seeking or inhabiting public office indulging in the rhetoric of phrases like “making Toronto into a real music city.” As I have said before, and will doubtless say again, the problem is that if one buys into that formula one is rejecting the idea that we already are a real music city. We do not need more mega-sized venues and spectacles, all driven by what Mark Miller calls “commercial imperatives” and all taking place in ring-fenced isolation from our neighbourhoods.

So, as you get back into the post-summer humdrum of urban living, do your bit! Scour our listings for the small stuff as well as the large. Support your local small-scale nodes of music and culture and art, as well as the large. Make music where you live, and continue to fight for the right to live where you make music.

To the betterment of all. 

publisher@thewholenote.com

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**Upcoming Dates & Deadlines**

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PERFECTION, and in particular, the pursuit of perfection in the performing arts, can be an infectious thing. An artist who has attained a high standard of perfection cannot tolerate anything less than that standard in their ongoing work.

Thus it was with pianist, composer and media artist Glenn Gould, whose obsession with and ability to achieve perfection in his recordings is well documented.

I experienced this on a personal level during our work together, making broadcasts on CBC Radio during the last eight years of his life. His approach to making radio paralleled his philosophy as a recording artist: every last detail would be determined by him as the creator of an artistic act.

Gould and I met early in 1974, when I was producing with CBC Radio’s national network music department. This was the same music department through which Gould’s very first broadcasts were heard in the 1950s, before he signed as a recording artist with Columbia Masterworks. And it was through CBC Radio that Gould also honed his skills as a radio artist. He related so completely as an artist to the medium of radio, that his many radio documentaries were, essentially, his symphonies.

Prior to 1974, Gould had already begun to plan a series of CBC Radio broadcasts to celebrate the centennial that year of the birth of a composer he admired every bit as much as J.S. Bach or Richard Strauss: Arnold Schoenberg. Gould told me that these three composers were his avatars, and this was precisely the word he used. These were the three composers whose complex counterpoint most fascinated him, and whose music satisfied his need for a convincing musical, intellectual and spiritual discourse. The celebration of Schoenberg’s centennial was of enormous importance to Gould, and he managed to convince the senior managers of CBC Radio music to devote ten one-hour-long broadcasts on the national network to mark the occasion.

The programs, naturally, would be planned, written and hosted by Gould, and much to my surprise, he approached me to serve as his producer. And so it was through an exploration of Schoenberg and his music that I came to encounter the workings of Gould’s very particular and ever so precise mind.

“Perfection was the focus of everything we did,” audio engineer Lorne Tulk, Gould’s lifelong friend, told me. It was Tulk who spent countless hours with Gould after his recording sessions, reviewing takes and marking the musical scores with him, to show where the edits would be made. Gould once proudly showed me one of these resulting “paper edits” with its detailed markings. It was a Mozart sonata, and he was eager to show me where a certain passage had been “regenerated” by Lorne and inserted into the edited master, every time that particular passage appeared. Regeneration was, to the world of analogue recording, what cloning is in the digital world.

The point was, once Gould had determined that a key ingredient of an edited performance was perfect, nothing less than that perfect representation would be allowed to stand.

Likewise, in making Gould’s radio broadcasts, every detail was scripted, including his and his co-host’s supposed personal opinions and observations. For example, there was this brief exchange in episode nine of the Schoenberg series:

Ken Haslam: Oh, wait a minute, Glenn, John Cage studied with Arnold Schoenberg?

Glenn Gould: Of course he did. I assumed you knew that, Ken.

Ken Haslam: No, I didn’t. That’s the most unlikely bit of casting, yet!

Such was a moment of scripted spontaneity in Glenn Gould’s wondrous world of radio. As a broadcasting collaborator, he was always inventive, provocative and stimulating, and as a friend he was delightful and considerate, if occasionally demanding, such as when his late night phone calls came at inconvenient moments.

The 85th anniversary of Gould’s birth is being marked in a great variety of ways. Perhaps the most notable of these is the release, by SONY Classical, of a new multi-disc album titled GLENN GOULD, The Goldberg Variations, The Complete Unreleased Recording Sessions, June 1955. As the title indicates, the album documents Gould’s complete takes of Bach’s Goldberg Variations from those famous recording sessions, which took place between 10 and 16 June 1955. It was the 22-year-old Gould’s debut recording for Columbia Masterworks, and took place in Columbia’s 30th Street Studio in New York.

In the extensive album booklet, writer Robert Russ calls the new release, “...the chance to attend the birth of a legendary album and gain an insight into the analogue recording process.” The booklet documents every aspect of the recording, from the background story leading to Gould’s signing his original contract, to his choice of the piano, to technical matters such as the qualities and limitations of recording to analogue tape. There’s a discussion of how the recording team dealt with Gould’s singing along with his playing, as well as a detailed transcript of the spoken exchanges between pianist and producer, associated with every recorded take. There’s also an interview with the late Howard Scott, the producer of the recording, in which Scott, among other things, comments on the advisability of such a release.

I asked Lorne Tulk what he felt of the decision to release these unedited sessions, given the constant striving for perfection in their work together. Lorne was unconcerned and of the view that Gould wouldn’t have objected. Ray Roberts, the man who served as Gould’s aide in all practical, non-artistic matters, responded to the same question somewhat differently.

“There are two sides to that particular coin,” Ray told me.

It’s a question that can never be answered definitively, but the speculation may continue a good long time, adding to the fascinating Gould legacy.
2017 - 2018 SEASON

Strings

Oct. 19 Quatuor Mosaïques
Nov. 16 Škampa Quartet
Dec. 7 Gryphon Trio
Jan. 11 Brentano Quartet with soprano Dawn Upshaw
Feb. 1 St. Lawrence Quartet
Feb. 22 Apollon Musagète Quartet
Mar. 15 Penderecki Quartet
Apr. 12 Schumann Quartet

Piano

Nov. 7 Benjamin Grosvenor
Nov. 28 Philip Chiu
Jan. 23 Stephen Hough
Feb. 6 Alexei Lubimov
Mar. 27 Dénes Várjon

Subscriptions still available.
Single tickets on sale September 5th.
All concerts at 8 pm.
The WholeNote’s sixth annual guide to the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) takes a look at 20 of the films in TIFF’s 42nd edition, in which music plays a notable role. After sleuthing through the credits of many of the 255 features in the program and previewing 14 of them, what follows represents a cross-section of titles that music lovers with a taste for cinema can use as a guide.

Long Time Running: As Jennifer Baichwal said at the TIFF Canadian films’ press conference earlier this month, when she and Nicholas de Pencier made the seminal doc Manufactured Landscapes they never imagined they would ever film a rock tour. But filming The Tragically Hip’s final tour proved to be an intense and emotional experience for them. When it was announced last year that singer Gord Downie had been diagnosed with terminal brain cancer, it seemed as though the 30-year career of that quintessential Canadian band was over, but Downie convinced his bandmates to go on tour. Long Time Running captures the exhilarating result.

Singular Performers: There is a handful of music documentaries this year that focus on singular performers of popular music. Programmer Thom Powers describes Lili Fini Zanuck’s Eric Clapton: A Life in 12 Bars (the title couldn’t be more apt) as “an intimate, revealing musical odyssey” about the blues-influenced guitar virtuoso. Powers writes that Sophie Fiennes’ Grace Jones: Bloodlight and Bami, filmed over the course of a decade, “offers a stylish and unconventional look at the Jamaican-born model, singer, and new wave icon.” Sammy Davis, Jr. was a dancer, singer, impressionist and actor of unparalleled charisma who, according to Powers, “began dazzling audiences at age three and never stopped until his death at 64.” Sam Pollard’s Sammy Davis Jr.: I’ve Gotta Be Me shows how he “broke racial barriers and defied societal norms around interracial romance, religion and political affiliation but paid a heavy price. If you’ve never beheld Davis in action,” Powers writes, “prepare to gasp in awe and delight.”

Child of Arc: French director Bruno Dumont calls his bizarre new film, Jeannette, the Childhood of Joan of Arc, a cinematographic opera since it takes the writings of Charles Péguy (1873–1914) with his socialist world view and fervent Catholicism and sets them to music arranged by French composer/performer Igorrr (whom Dumont describes as “an experimental electro multi-instrumentalist who can switch in a second from Scarlatti to heavy metal.”) The focus is on Joan’s spiritual questioning and political awareness, first as a winsome eight-year-old (Lise Leplat Prudhomme), then as a mature thirteen-year-old (Jeanne Voisin). It’s often surreal, sometimes blasphemous but overwhelmingly devotional as Dumont manages to have his satirical cake and (reverently) eat it too. Not to be missed: a nun played by twins (Aline and Elise Charles) singing evocatively and dancing awkwardly about her love for the Holy Spirit. Dumont was so impressed by the twins’ musical talent that he asked them to compose most of the songs in the film. As to Dumont’s own musical taste: “After Fauré come Brel and the Rolling Stones, and then I can skip on until Igorrr.”

Lanthimos: There is no more rigorous filmmaker working today than Yorgos Lanthimos. Always compelling, sometimes outrageous, in The Killing of a Sacred Deer – an unsettling, gripping homage to Greek tragedy in which a 16-year-old boy (Barry Keoghan) whose father died on the operating table takes revenge on a cardiac surgeon (Colin Farrell), with dire consequences – he again creates a singular universe with its own internal logic. Everything in the film, from the most mundane to the most crucially relevant, is spoken in a flat, matter-of-fact, otherworldly tone. Which only adds to impact of the horror as Lanthimos deliciously explores his premise and doubles down on his attack on the hypocrisy and smugness of the bourgeoisie.

The majority of the music on the atmospherically striking soundtrack was sourced by Lanthimos himself. Following the sepulchrual opening chorus of Schubert’s Stabat Mater D983 the film plunges into the unearthly tones of Guildaullina’s Rejoice! (for violin and cello). Other Guildaullina works used include the evocative bayan (Russian accordion) pieces, Sonata “Et Expecto” the ominous De Profundis and Fachwerk for Bayan, Percussion and String Orchestra.

Past the midway point, Ligeti joins in with large excerpts of his early Cello Concerto and the second movement (Lento e Deserto) of his Piano Concerto, both of which reinforce the ominous events unfolding onscreen. Greek composer Jani Christiou’s atonal orchestral work Enantiomorpha also supports the director’s vision. Herr, unser herrscher from Bach’s St. John Passion plays its special part as does the Waterboys’ catchy How Long Will I Love You. Rarely has a soundtrack of sourced classical music been as integral to a film’s mood as this one.

The Day After: By contrast, the only music in Hong Sangsoo’s perfectly crafted little gem about male-female relationships, The Day...
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DENIS MATSUEV
Piano

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Prokofiev Piano Concerto No. 2 | Denis Matsuev, piano
Scriabin Symphony No. 3, op 43 “The Divine Poem”

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ROHAN DE SILVA
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Argentine-Brazilian border — a projection, we come to learn, of a image of cascading waters at the spectacular Iguazu Falls on the disquieting soundtrack plays enigmatically over the film’s opening momentum of vintage Herrmann with spacious gasps of silence. This and-cold shiver that characterizes [the film] sets in from the first, touched on the film’s music component in praise for its star, the trans singer/actress, Daniela Vega. Guy Lodge Gloria pay homage to myself then.” says Guadagnino. “I wanted to

dances to the Psychedelic Furs’ Moroder’s set in the 1980s so a lot of period Italian pop music (including Giorgio Departure of his Beloved Brother on guitar and piano. The movie is

the movie. In addition, Chalamet performs Bach’s Capriccio on the Departure of his Beloved Brother on guitar and piano. The movie is set in the 1980s so a lot of period Italian pop music (including Giorgio Moroder’s Lay Lady Lay) can be heard on the radio and Hammer dances to the Psychedelic Furs’ Love My Way. “It’s kind of autobiographical, because I remember listening to that song when I was 17 and being completely affected by it,” says Guadagnino. “I wanted to pay homage to myself then.”

High praise for Vega: A Fantastic Woman, Sebastián Lelio’s follow-up to his fondly remembered Gloria, has already generated high praise for its star, the trans singer/actress, Daniela Vega. Guy Lodge touched on the film’s music component in Variety: “The light hot-and-cold shiver that characterizes [the film] sets in from the first, head-turning notes of the score, a stunning, string-based creation by British electronic musician Matthew Herbert that blends the icy momentum of vintage Herrmann with spacious gaps of silence. This disquieting soundtrack plays enigmatically over the film’s opening image of cascading waters at the spectacular Iguazu Falls on the Argentine-Brazilian border — a projection, we come to learn, of a romantic vacation that will never take place.

“Music, too, is ingeniously used to define her [Vega] from either side of the looking-glass: Lelio pulls off a daringly literal song cue in Aretha Franklin’s (You Make Me Feel Like) A Natural Woman at a point when his protagonist most requires such blunt self-assertion, while the character’s own high, ethereal rendition of Handel’s Ombra mai fu later on amounts to an act of regenerative grace.”

Herbert also composed the score for Lelio’s other film in the festival, Disobedience, adapted from Naomi Alderman’s novel about a woman (Rachel Weisz) who returns home to her orthodox Jewish community in London and rekindles a romance with her cousin’s wife (Rachel McAdams).

Seven Suggestions: A new film by François Girard, the director of Thirty Two Short Films about Glenn Gould and The Red Violin, always gets our attention. We’re giving a special look to Hochelaga, Terre des Âmes, not only because of its ambitious subject matter (the history of Montreal spanning 750 years) but because the soundtrack is credited to minimalist avatar Terry Riley and his guitarist son Gyan.

Kim Nguyen, whose powerful earlier film, the Oscar-nominated War Witch still resonates, has filled the soundtrack of his new film, Eye on Juliet, with music by Timber Timbre, the masters of reverb, spooky synths and evocative vocals that seem to come from a deep emotional space. With the exception of one or two songs from their previous albums, they wrote new music specifically for Eye on Juliet, described by programmer Steve Gravestock as a “distinctive romance set in a time of surveillance, terrorism and prejudice.”

Writer/director Sadaf Foroughi uses excerpts from the classical music canon on the soundtrack of her first feature AVA, about a 16-year-old upper-middle class girl in Tehran whose stifling relationship with her parents fuels her rebelliousness. Boccherini’s charming Minuetto from String Quintet in E Major, OP.11, No.5 is one of the most famous examples of Baroque gentility. Vitali’s Chaconne in G Minor contains some of the most divine Baroque violin music ever written. And Purcell’s The Cold Song from his opera King Arthur is a truly chilling work. It will be interesting to see how Foroughi works them into her film.

According to Fat Cat Records, Montreal-based Olivier Alary (who wrote the score to Carlos and Jason Sanchez’s psychological thriller A Worthy Companion) “explores the grey areas between noise and musicality and likes to blur the boundaries between what is acoustical and what is generated electronically.”

Toronto-based Ingrid Veninger turns her lens on the friendship between two young teenage girls in Porcupine Like, which has a soundtrack consisting entirely of 17 tune-worthy songs by Carlin Nicholson and Michael O’Brien most of which are performed by their retro indie band Zeus.

Canadian film programmer Magali Simard describes Black Cop as having a free form jazz feel and a number of songs that stand out. On his website, composer Dillon Baldaserro describes his style as a “combination of acoustic, orchestral and electronic elements to create an emotional and thematic soundscape that first and foremost communicate a feeling and a narrative.”

Maggie Lee (in Variety) calls Moully Surya’s Martina the Murderer in Four Acts “the first Satay Western.” She singles out Zeke Khaseli and Yudhi Arfani “for their exceptional score, which grasps the spirit of Morricone then reinvents it with original Indonesian elements, such as the soulful folk songs in Sumba dialect that the bandits sing or their use of local instruments.”

And By Reputation: Other films that look promising based in part on the name recognition of their composers include:

Kings, soundtrack by the team of Nick Cave and Warren Ellis, is the first film in English (starring Halle Berry and Daniel Craig) by Deniz Gamze Ergüven following his acclaimed Mustang;

Lady Bird, soundtrack by Jon Brion (who’s worked with Paul Thomas Anderson, David O. Russell and Charlie Kaufman), is Greta Gerwig’s highly anticipated directorial debut;

Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri, soundtrack by Carter Burwell (who’s scored all but one of the Coen brothers’ films and all but one of Spike Jonze’s films), is Martin McDonagh’s eagerly awaited follow-up to In Bruges and Seven Psychopaths.

We’ll give the last word, for now, to Burwell: “There’s just too much music in movies,” he says. “Almost always more than I think there should be. It’s either lack of confidence on the part of filmmakers or a tradition of scoring things. It’s always better to have less than to have more.”

The Toronto International Film Festival runs from September 7 to 17. Check tiff.net for further information.

Paul Ennis is the managing editor of The WholeNote.
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2017/2018
A Farewell Season
Larry Beckwith
Artistic Director

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Virgil’s classic tale of love and honour told from old and new perspectives in this acclaimed double bill.

THE PEASANT CANTATA / ALL THE DIAMONDS
8, 9 & 10 February 2018, 8:00 p.m.
10 February 2018, 2:00 p.m.
Enoch Turner Schoolhouse
A double bill to warm the soul: Bach’s rustic cantata paired with a cabaret performance of torch songs, lieder and madrigals.

THE LAST CHACONNE: A CELEBRATION
12 May 2018, 8:00 p.m.
St. Lawrence Centre for the Performing Arts
A star-studded farewell performance featuring a mixed program of Handel, Purcell, Rolfe, Daniel, Ho and a new commission from Andrew Downing.

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The “jazz festival” model has long been under threat from the pressure of commercial imperatives that require it to be ever bigger and ever broader in scope. I’ve always thought that if the “jazz festival” model no longer works the way it once did, then change the model — not the music.

The above words are jazz writer/photographer Mark Miller’s, in a recent Facebook post. In the post he’s talking about the TD Toronto Jazz Festival on the conclusion of its first year in and around Yorkville Village. But in many ways, he could just as easily have been talking about the motivation for the Kensington Market Jazz Festival, which mounts its second version September 15, 16 and 17.

Before I start explaining why, I must make it crystal clear that, as one of the founding producers of KMJF, I am completely biased in my judgment, and am quite willing to admit that fact face-to-face, September 15, 16, 17 when I see you in the Market, enjoying the multitude of local musicians booked by Molly Johnson, Genevieve Marentette and yours truly.

The festival is the brainchild of Order of Canada Officer Molly Johnson, awarded for her work as singer, songwriter, broadcaster and philanthropist. KMJF, which turns two this month, simultaneously celebrates a diverse musical field of Toronto artists, and, through its concentrated presentation of over 250 musicians in 20 Kensington Market locations, a treasured Toronto neighbourhood.

A particularly important note to point to anyone planning to attend is that the festival accepts CASH ONLY at the door. There are no online tickets or advance reservations – you need to arrive early to ensure seating!

“If you want to show your support you have to show up! We like to keep things simple,” jokes Johnson, herself a child of the Market, but also a Torontonian known worldwide for her husky, instantly recognizable tone which cuts right through the listener’s ear with raw grit and soulful truth.

As talented as she is, Johnson has never been seduced by the frivolities of fame and has used her success to benefit those in need throughout her career. As a philanthropist she is best known for creating Kumbaya, an annual concert series and live telethon on Muchmusic benefitting HIV and AIDS research, for which she raised over $1 million. Kumbaya featured scores of Canadian bands such as The Tragically Hip, Barenaked Ladies, Leslie Sp. Treeo and Rush, donating their time for this worthy and important cause. The telethons ran annually from 1993 to 1996, at a time when AIDS was far more taboo than today.

“Compared to Kumbaya, Kensington Market Jazz Festival is a piece of cake. I mean, that was live TV with rock stars, it was a wild ride. This is jazz being played indoors and everything shutting down at 11pm. Way more civilized,” she quips.

Authentic might be a better word than civilized. Here’s what some of the participating musicians have had to say about the inaugural Kensington Market Jazz Festival:

Long live the Kensington Market Jazz Festival. It’s an honour to be part of this initiative. Toronto needs more live music!
— Jane Bunnett, O.C., Recording Artist

KMJF is Toronto’s new jazz festival...it has it all and the location just feels right...it feels authentic...the level of music is superb and it was evident that it was more than the sum of its parts in that what I felt walking around after my gig was something like the early Yorkville days....
— Marc Jordan, Singer-Songwriter

On Saturday night especially it was balmy and walking up and down Augusta between GREAT music venues I thought how it felt a little like Frenchman street in New Orleans.
— Alex Pangman, Vocalist

This was the festival Toronto has been waiting for. The fact that it was contained and neighbourhood-based and everything was happening within a few- blocks radius gave it a unified feeling. It also felt like our community was truly represented and honoured.
— David Restivo, Pianist

Thanks so much for bringing exactly what we needed to this scene!! — Chris Butcher, Trombonist, Heavyweights Brass Band
curate a three-concert series. The idea: seasoned jazz veterans and young poets/rappers/free-stylists together. The result... a bridge between generations and artistic hearts and minds... a dream come true for both musicians and audience...and a living demonstration of the creative fire that unites us.

— George Koller, Bassist/Curator

So that is how KMJF was born: three working musicians in an office, with help from priceless friends such as social media guru Céline Peterson of Social Legacy, Jim Welter of Yamaha Music Canada who generously supplies backline to all ten venues on Augusta, and patron saint of the festival (and bona fide jazz lover) Tom Mihalik of Tom’s Place, who again this year will be taking out a dozen racks of suits to house a Yamaha grand piano for the duration of the festival.

One thing we’ve already learned over the course of this first year, is that, paradoxically, if you want to become a fixture, you have to keep moving!

This year KMJF is adding a new series to the festivities: Curated Busking, bringing music to the neighbourhood, putting it in people’s faces – their ears – in hopes of promoting the great talent in this city. For example at 4 Life Natural Foods you will hear acoustic performances by a cappella trios The Ault Sisters and The Willows, for a Pay-What-You-Can donation. KMJF supplies the bucket and promotes the buskers on print materials and through social media streams. Select venues such as Poetry Jazz Café, an intimate space of 40, will be live-streaming performances by artists such as Laila Biali and Elizabeth Shepherd. Other notable series will include a “jazz under 20” venue at the St. Stephen’s Youth Arcade Studio and a fundraiser for the Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada featuring nearly 20 vocal artists, from promising up-and-comers Alex Samaras and Joanna Majoko to soulful veterans Sharon Lee Williams and Shawne Jackson.

This year KMJF has chosen Eric St-Laurent as a guest curator, at Lola on Kensington Avenue. Says St-Laurent of the musicians he has chosen for closing night of the festival, Sunday September 17: “The Sunday lineup at Lola’s is about improvisation in world traditions outside of North America. In a way, jazz is as old as the world itself. Come to Lola’s and let us show you what we mean by that. Donné Roberts’ guitar playing is pure unadulterated joy – liquid happiness. Flutist Anh Phung is simply one of the strongest new voices in Canadian music. Catch her now in an intimate setting before fame hits. Selçuk Suna masterfully brings traditional Turkish music and jazz together, demonstrating once more the profound unity of all improvisational dialects.”

The evening will conclude with a performance by power group Eric St-Laurent Trio featuring original compositions and eclectic covers by the guitarist with bassist Jordan O’Connor and percussionist Michel DeQuevedo.

On a personal but related note, this issue marks ten years since I wrote my first piece for The WholeNote. What a difference a decade makes: just 86,648 little hours ... Re-reading my first published piece, I found myself reflecting on the fact that I’ve been shining the spotlight on members of a jazz community, many of whom I have met in the wee small hours of a jam session, or in small venues, or been able to bump into on the street.

Writing for The WholeNote has always been a great experience, regardless of how stressful it has been to get my piece in on time. Those in my inner circle have been supportive of my “WholeNote time of the month,” during the crunch when deadlines loom (none ever crunchier than as of this writing!)

Writing for The WholeNote has always been about spreading the good news of a city where it is possible for music to be part of daily life, year round.

Working for KMJF is starting to feel a lot like that. This year’s festival takes place on the last weekend of summer: September 15, 16, 17. Full schedule at kensingtonjazz.com.

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

Update, September 11, 2017, 3pm: this article has been updated to remove opinions incorrectly attributed to the author
CUT-THROAT CLASSIC:  
MOZART IN THE JUNGLE

LYDIA PEROVIĆ

These days, stories about classical music are almost completely absent from television programming – which is why it’s all the more astonishing that an American series with protagonists who are musicians, and plots revolving around their work as musicians, has been, since its modest debut in 2014, gaining prominence. By Season 3, Amazon.com’s online-only TV series *Mozart in the Jungle* has accumulated several awards, a growing following – and critical acclaim nearing consensus.

New charismatic music director takes over the reins at a large New York City orchestra. Board of directors gears up for a rebranding but the mandate is at stake. Young musician joins a music section full of veterans set in their ways. The old music director is not quite ready to disappear into the background. He is, in fact, about to get into a messy affair with the orchestra’s CEO. Meanwhile, opening nights. Fundraising events. Tour. Lock-out. Drugs, prescription and other. Sex. Rivalry and comradeship. Big chances and hard blows. And music: a lot of it, in almost every scene.

I am of course talking about an Amazon Original series *Mozart in the Jungle*, a Golden Globe-winning show which shines the light on the lives of professional musicians as no other TV show has.

Classical music and television – still the most powerful of all media – have completely parted ways in Canada and the US over the last decade. For Ontarians, the only chance of coming across any opera and classical music on TV is the public francophone TFO channel, which occasionally interviews artists and transmits recorded performances. The effects of the total withdrawal of the national public broadcaster CBC TV from covering art music, literature, visual arts and dance is for the sociologists of the future to measure and for us to bear. (Papers are not doing much better: our largest dailies’ coverage of classical music is occasional at best.)

Classical musicians are permanently absent from TV fiction as well. Could the Looney Tunes cartoons have been the last time that classical music was present in broad TV mainstream? Which is why it’s all the more astonishing that an American series with protagonists who are musicians and plots revolving around their work as musicians has been, since its modest debut in 2014, gaining prominence, awards, a growing following, and, by Season 3, critical acclaim nearing consensus.

Real-life musicians who’ve appeared in cameos include Joshua Bell, Emanuel Ax, Gustavo Dudamel, Lang Lang and Alan Gilbert. With season 4 in the works, the list is likely to grow. It’s hard to believe that the series has not come out of the traditional TV: it’s an Amazon.com production (the online retailer is also a TV production company) and, like shows on Netflix, can be watched online only – by episode, or entire seasons. It’s a new and fast-growing model of TV financing and consumption; and yet the old – classical music – seems to have found a place in it.

The show’s creators – Roman Coppola, Jason Schwartzman, Will Graham and Paul Weitz – originally based it on oboist Blaire Tindall’s 2005 memoir, *Mozart in the Jungle: Sex, Drugs, and Classical Music*, but the show, centred on a charismatic young conductor, an established older conductor, an administrator of a large NYC orchestra and a handful of musicians, quickly acquired a life – and wacky plots – of its own. After a bumpy first season that was no stranger to stereotypes,
implausible plotting, iffy gender politics (men are the creators, women are administrators or young artists in need of mentoring), a sitcom-like take on the working life and even a ghost of Mozart speaking in a posh British accent, the show proceeded to improve at a steady pace. Season 3 has persuaded its most obdurate critics. The principals are now complex individuals, stories are well-researched, careers take more than one miraculous performance, women too are creators.

So, if you still don’t have the habit of looking for TV online and have missed the first three seasons entirely, now is a good time to catch up before Season 4 is released early this December.

Season 3, its best so far, is also when the only Canadian in the show’s permanent writer-producer pool joined in.

Multi-talented screenwriter and actor Susan Coyne is probably best known across North America as the co-creator of the 2003-06 Canadian TV series *Slings and Arrows*, a dramedy about theatre artists working at a Shakespearean festival much like Stratford and, should you poll the local TV critics, one of the best things ever to appear on TV. *Slings* accomplished what few TV creations dare try: it took a piece of highbrow culture – Shakespeare’s plays – and turned it into compelling television without dumbing any of it down. A corner of high culture, often accessible only to those who’d studied it and who tended to belong to the leisured classes, became the setting for a TV story about personal and professional intrigues of the working men and women who happen to be artists. Sounds familiar? *Mozart in the Jungle* is aiming exactly in that direction.

The producers called Coyne before the work on the third season had begun, “out of the blue, but the next thing I knew I was flying to LA,” she explains when we meet to talk about her work on the show. *Slings and Arrows* is well known in TV and performing arts circles, and somebody must have connected the dots between it and *MITJ*. She had never been to LA before. “I found a very creative, slightly chaotic but wonderfully free-flowing kind of situation that I liked a lot; it’s not what I expected of LA television industry; it was more like working in the theatre.” She started as a writer but became a producer on the season – which is also a writing job. “Producers write all the time, work on all episodes, shaping stories, rewriting, tweaking scenes, and we’re to some extent involved in conversations about creative problems: you’re sometimes consulted about casting, for example,” she says.

This isn’t Coyne’s first time writing about an orchestra; some years ago, she was asked to develop a Canadian show about a fledgling orchestra, but it didn’t make the production stage. “What we came up with was really good, but times being what they were, we couldn’t take it forward in Canada, and then both of us writers got busy with other projects. So, I have done some research into orchestras and I know how difficult it is to tell the story of an entire ensemble, plus the people backstage running the show. I think that telling a story through a small family of musicians, all of whom have their own issues, is the way to go about it. *MITJ* really honoured what’s unique about musicians, the physicality of the job, the fact that it’s like being an athlete.” And just like *Slings*, *MITJ* doesn’t make fun of people for doing what they do – they see being an oboist or a conductor or a composer as an absolutely worthwhile thing to do. “The show makes fun of them for their egos, and their neuroses. But they take it for granted that what they do matters.”
Rapid Fire:

SUSAN COYNE, writer

(Mozart in the Jungle)

Writing the show is a collective process, not unlike playing in an orchestra. The producers get together to sketch out the whole season before each individual episode is written. Any newly introduced narrative thread needs to be resolved by the last episode. “If there is an orchestra strike at the beginning of the season, it would have to be resolved by the end. We knew Rodrigo would be starting a youth orchestra, and that Gloria and Thomas’ relationship would become important. We knew that they were all going to Venice and that Rodrigo was going to conduct a recluse opera singer. Then you figure out, in broad detail, what is going to happen in each episode. Then, you make sure that every main character has enough to do in each episode, and break it all down into finer and finer detail before you start to write an outline. Then you go and write it. And rewrite it, and rewrite it, and rewrite it. Some bits get taken from one episode to another episode. It’s a strange, organic process. There are bits of scenes that I’ve written in every episode, and a lot of the writers can say the same. Then you get rewritten yourself. You get your name on one of the episodes, but it’s probably a mosh pit of your stuff and other people’s stuff. Finally, the showrunner looks at each episode and makes sure that it all feels like the same show and not like something written in different voices.”

Coyne’s name appears in the credits of the “Creative Solutions for Creative Lives” episode, in which the former music director of the orchestra turned composer (Malcolm McDowell) discovers electronic music, and “Avventura Romantica,” in which the young protagonist Hailey (Lola Kirke) assembles a small orchestra and tries conducting herself – a piece composed for the show by NYC-based composer Missy Mazzoli. The storyline with Hailey stumbling into conducting then realizing that she really wants to do it, Coyne says, was an important one to tell, and will continue in Season 4. “In theatre, everybody has their own voice and everybody is their own artist, but what’s fascinating about the orchestras is that everyone there is highly trained as a soloist whose job upon joining the orchestra is to blend in. And I can see how that can be stressful; I can also see how making something bigger than yourself can be wonderful.” It’s additionally interesting, she says, if the musician grappling with these questions is a young woman, since the external and internal obstacles to the conducting profession in that case multiply.

A repository of charisma and artistic madness in Season 1, the new music director Rodrigo (played by Gael García Bernal) has by now grown into a conflicted human being, Coyne says it’s a natural process: finding new layers to characters and surprising yourself is part of the job. “The fun of it is to put the characters in challenging situations and see what they’re made of. “It’s true that the Rodrigo character is magical in some way, but we’re discovering that he has his own disappointments and yearnings, and is wondering what his true destiny is, and whether it’s enough just to be an artist. Some of this came from Gael who said at one point, ‘It’s time for this guy to grow up.’”

Coyne played the piano as a child and while her university degrees are in history and theatre, music was always part of her life. “Now, thanks to the show, she listens to classical music even more. “And I think there comes a time in your life when you need to be listening to more complex music and having more interesting conversations about it,” she says. She is most likely to be found listening to Bach, Mozart, Beethoven and choral music of all kinds. “My kids sang in a church choir and I loved all the masses they sang in – those things really thrill me.” She’d like to introduce more Romantics and modern music to her listening habits. Opera is always around. “In How Are You?, a short film about an end of a marriage that she made with Martha Burns in 2008, an aria from Verdi’s La Forza del Destino is sung in an Annex living room by the protagonist’s operatic alter ego (look for the film, 18 minutes of hilarity, sadness and opera, on Vimeo.com). “Only opera can express certain things,” says Coyne.

“Why has classical music disappeared from the TV medium, and what are the reasons?” “Was ‘going back looking at those Leonard Bernstein intro-to-music shows the other day... He was amazing. Shows like that don’t exist anymore,” she agrees. While a number of conductors have embraced different causes and are active in their societies – Dudamel, on whom the MITJ’s Rodrigo was loosely based, is one of them; Daniel Barenboim is another – the luck connection of the Bernstein kind (between a public broadcaster and a great communicator whose goal is to make music education more widely accessible) doesn’t come easily.

“The idea of art music being popular – somehow we’ve lost that thread. It’s perceived to be elitist, despite what every orchestra in the world is doing.”

“A beautiful space for music.”

Comedy – harder than Shakespeare.

“Girls or Sex and the City?”

“Girls.”

“Girls or Sex and the City?”

“Next.”

“La Traviata or Rigoletto?”

“La Traviata.”

“I love the latter.”

“Breaking Bad or Better Call Saul?”

“Next.”

“Girls or Sex and the City?”

“Girls.”

“British TV or American TV?”

“Dudamel, Los Angeles Phil, Los Angeles Opera, L.A.”

“Did you say British TV...I just love the casting in British TV, which usually has an interesting range of real people, not glossy versions of people. Also, on British TV, the rest of the world exists.”

Mozart in the Jungle returns on Amazon.com on December 8, 2017, and can be watched online at www.primevideo.com.

Lydia Perovic is an arts journalist in Toronto. She can be reached at artofsong@thewholenote.com.

The Wholenote Company
Ensemble Made In Canada with Scott St. John
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2017 2PM
MAZZOLENI CONCERT HALL
Free Culture Days Event (ticket required)
This piano quartet is known for their "dramatic, nuanced, and, where appropriate, playful performances." (The WholeNote) Angela Park (piano), Elissa Lee (violin), Sharon Wei (viola), and Rachel Mercer (cello) are joined by violin/violist Scott St. John in quintets by Mahler, Suk, and Dvorák.
Generously supported by Dorothy Cohen Shoichet

A Song for All Seasons
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2017 2PM
MAZZOLENI CONCERT HALL
Tickets: $25
Soprano Erin Wall explores all four seasons in a myriad of languages and shares the afternoon with Glenn Gould School alumnus, tenor Asitha Tennekoon, known for "his silky, emotional presence on stage – both vocally and dramatically." (The Globe and Mail)
Generously supported by J. Hans Kluge

Adi Braun: Moderne Frau
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2017 7:30PM
TEMERTY THEATRE
Tickets start at only $25
Jazz vocalist Adi Braun, and her ensemble, present a program celebrating the spirit of the new and independent women that emerged during the Weimar Republic, which defined a new culture in Berlin. This is a CD launch concert of Ms. Braun’s newest disc, Adi Braun – Moderne Frau.
Generously supported by Diana & Philip Weinstein

Gábor Takács-Nagy conducts the Royal Conservatory Orchestra
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2017 8PM
PRELUDE RECITAL 6:45PM
PRE-CONCERT TALK 7:15PM
KOERNER HALL
Tickets start at only $25
Hungarian Maestro Gábor Takács-Nagy leads the Royal Conservatory Orchestra (RCO) in a program of works by Mendelssohn, Liszt, and Tchaikovsky.
Part of the Temerty Orchestral Program

Khachaturian Trio
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2017 8PM
PRE-CONCERT TALK 7PM
KOERNER HALL
Tickets start at only $35
Critics have praised this Armenian ensemble’s virtuoso performances, subtle sense of style, warm sound, and deep musicality. Armine Grigoryan (piano), Karen Shahgaldyan (violin), and Karen Kocharyan (cello) will perform works by Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninov, Khachaturian, and Arno Babadjanian.
Generously supported by David G. Broadhurst, The Armenian Community Centre and Hamazkayin Cultural Association

Joaquin Valdepeñas Conducts
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2017 7:30PM
MAZZOLENI CONCERT HALL
Tickets: $15
Toronto Symphony Orchestra Principal Clarinet and Royal Conservatory Orchestra Resident Conductor Joaquin Valdepeñas conducts Glenn Gould School students in a program of chamber works, including a Mozart serenade and Arnold Schoenberg: Chamber Symphony No. 1 in E Major, op. 9.
On October 11, 2017 at 8pm (or shortly thereafter), on the stage of the hall named after her distinguished predecessor, Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra’s new music director will take that sharply drawn—breath characteristic of leading a period ensemble from the first violin. And with the downbeat that follows, as the first notes of Giuseppe Battista Fontana’s Sonata XIV for two violins, dulcian and continuo float out into Jeanne Lamon Hall, it will be safe to say that Brescia—born Elisa Citterio, only the second music director in Tafelmusik’s illustrious 33—year history, will be well and truly at home. It won’t be Citterio’s first appearance with Tafelmusik. That took place, in the self—same hall, from November 5 to November 8, 2015, in a program titled “Baroque Masters” and featuring works by Corelli, Fasch, J.S. Bach, Locatelli and Vivaldi (his Concerto for two violins and two oboes in F).

It won’t even be her first official appearance as the orchestra’s anointed music director. That will have taken place three weeks previously, from September 21 to 24 at Koerner Hall and September 26 at the George Weston Hall. But for Tafelmusik as an organization, October 11, 2017 will be the culmination of a five—year process that started in the orchestra room in the basement at Trinity—St. Paul’s in October 2012, when Jeanne Lamon advised her orchestral colleagues of her intention to step down as music director. And for Citterio it will be a defining moment—her first opportunity to present herself to Tafelmusik’s audiences in all her musical capacities: who she is (virtuoso soloist, orchestral leader, team player and imaginative curator) and, both literally and metaphorically, where she is coming from.

In a blog post still available for reading on Tafelmusik’s website, violinist Julia Wedman wryly recalls Lamon’s October 2012 announce—ment of her intention to retire from the position she had held for 33 years: “For the first time ever in an orchestra meeting,” Wedman says, “the room was completely silent.” Tears and prosecco flowed. And then the search was on, with Wedman as one of two musicians on an 11—person search committee spearheaded by veteran arts headhunters Margaret Genovese and Dory Vanderhoof.

In her blog post, Wedman reflects on the positive aspects of the ensuing two—year process for the musicians themselves: “I saw how the orchestra grew and changed as we worked with each wonderful guest director,” she wrote. “I saw how our feelings of despair over the news of Jeanne’s retirement changed to acceptance and support for her new lifestyle and our new relationship with her. It was wonderful to have such a long process. We needed it. We became more flexible as a group, we became more open to new ideas, we became less reliant on Jeanne and more self—sufficient as a group.”

Remarkably, given the thoroughness of the process, Citterio only emerged as a contender in November 2015, and, even at that late date, as much a matter of luck as good management. “We had a concert in November 2015 with no director,” Wedman explains. “We also happened to have just hired a new violist from Italy, Stefano Marocchi. I remember talking to him one day backstage before a performance at Koerner Hall, describing all of the things I thought Tafelmusik was looking for in a new music director. The name that came first and foremost to his mind was a name we hadn’t heard before—Elisa Citterio.” Wedman recalls being struck by Citterio’s virtuosity as a soloist, her “super—efficient rehearsal style, and her high level of attention to detail,” and “the way the music grew and changed every day, coming to life in different ways in each concert. … The moment I will never forget that week was about three minutes into the first concert. The orchestra was feeling stressed (first—concert jitters) and I looked up at Elisa—she had a big beautiful smile on her face that said to me, ‘This is exactly the place I am supposed to be right now. I love this!’”

Plans to have her back at Trinity—St. Paul’s in February 2016 for an all—Mozart program didn’t come to fruition, so it wasn’t until September 2016 in last season’s season—opening concert series at Koerner Hall that what turned out to be the decisive second date took place. “This time she and her partner Mirko brought their two—month—old daughter Olivia,” Wedman writes. “Elisa was playing the very first concerts after her first child was born! We were stunned that in the face of utter exhaustion, [she] still brought the same boundless energy and joy for the music with her. The rehearsals were organized and efficient, her ideas and cues were clear, creative and easy to follow, and I don’t think I heard one out—of—tune note from her during the entire rehearsal period and concerts! … Many of us remarked how fresh Handel’s Water Music (a piece we have played many times) felt under her direction.”

Sitting in the balcony for that September 22, 2016 season opener, and of course with benefit of hindsight, I can distinctly recall the feeling that what was happening between conductor and orchestra on the stage that night might be more than a one—night stand. In fact, if there was anything to criticize from an audience member’s point of view, it was that the musical conversation unfolding on the stage was all about them, rather than directed at us—like overhearing an intensely intimate conversation from the next booth over!

From that point on things moved quickly, as these things go. An offer was made by phone call to Italy, around the turn of the year. “I was home, nursing Olivia, four months old by then,” Citterio
Join us as we celebrate our 45th Anniversary Season with music from the sumptuous Renaissance courts, to exotic and strange medieval music and illuminations, to the world’s first masterpiece of opera – this is a season not to be missed!

RENAISSANCE SPLENDOURS  Nov 17 & 18, 2017
NAVIDAD: A SPANISH CHRISTMAS  Dec 8, 9, & 10
ILLUMINATIONS  Mar 2 & 3, 2018
FANTASTICUS  Apr 13 & 14
MONTEVERDI’S ORFEO  May 25, 26, & 27

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recalls, in a hastily arranged interview in The WholeNote offices back in May 2017. “Sometimes life-changing news comes at such normal moments. I remember thinking, just ten minutes ago I had a walk in the village, went to the supermarket! For me it was a feeling that this was taking on something huge at a time when things have just changed anyway. But maybe it’s a chance for things to be more busy but less crazy. I think the biggest change and really different is the responsibility for things not only on stage.”

How long did it actually take her to decide to come? “I waited one month to give news to my family,” she says with a smile. But clearly the opportunity to take on a role that will enable her to express and explore a fully rounded musicality beyond that of virtuoso and orchestral violinist had enormous appeal.

And so it is that October 11 to 14, audiences will have the first opportunity to witness Citterio’s multifaceted musicianship, close up and personal, in a program that is entirely of her choosing. “I didn’t plan the whole season,” she says, “because planning started before my appointment; mostly just some suggestions for the first program and the second one and the fourth.”

Of the three programs she mentions, this is clearly the one she is most invested in. “I want to give something of my background, so including Fontana and Marini, both from that background, is very natural. Landscapes around Brescia have changed over the years, but relatively not so much. There are lots of places with historical ruins that were already ruins in Marini and Fontana’s time. And we have caves with prehistoric art which could have been familiar to them... I can’t explain in words what I feel playing this music. It is somehow so familiar to me, and not because I have played it so often or heard it.”

And this sense of connection extends beyond the music itself. “My violin, for example,” she says. “It is a Marcello Villa instrument made in 2005; but it is inspired by Gio Paolo Maggini’s instruments – a 16th-century luthier from Brescia, and contemporary of Fontana. In fact, they even died in the same plague in 1630. So when I play this music with this instrument I imagine I can create the same sound the composer heard. It is not logical but it is how I imagine it. I would like to give this to the Toronto audience.”

Looking beyond Citterio the curator/programmer to Citterio the orchestral leader and team player, it’s worth noting the care with which the October 11 program as designed brings individual focus to different players and sections within the ensemble: from bassoonist Dominic Teresi, whose passion for the Fontana dulcian sonatas predates Citterio’s arrival on the Tafelmusik scene; to the sharing out of the violin solos among the ensemble; to the Vivaldi C Major Concerto for two oboes which gives an opportunity for the ensemble’s oboists, John Abberger and Marco Cera, to shine.

And as violin soloist, Citterio’s own moment in the spotlight will be “Autumn” from Vivaldi’s Four Seasons (she will be playing “Summer” in the opening concert in September, and each of the other two movements at concerts in January and February 2018). It’s a deft touch, especially in a year when the complete box set of Tafelmusik’s recordings has been released, featuring Jeanne Lamon in the same work, making for fascinating comparisons as the season unfolds.

Deep emotional through-line of the October concert notwithstanding, it would be a mistake to see Citterio as a die-hard Baroque traditionalist wedded to a hundred years of repertoire no matter how obscure. “I am not planning this repertoire all the time - we are strings, two oboes, a bassoon and continuo so there are limits to the repertoire available; also our audiences expect the great works (and can enjoy new takes on great works as much as new works). Myself, I can’t pretend to play well all music from Monteverdi to contemporary but for an orchestra like Tafelmusik it is important to touch different periods. We also have to educate the ear. Period playing can lead to illuminating performances of a much wider range of music – Haydn, Schumann, Brahms, Verdi.”

“Nineteenth-century orchestral sound is so opulent and dense,” she continues. “Strip away the huge sound and you can listen for different things. With gut strings and period instruments there is a defined sound for each string and each instrument. In Italian we call this huge sound minestrone Wagneriana. How would you say that in English?” We settle on “Wagnerian pea soup” as a culinary alternative. “It does not have to be like that,” she says.

This October 11, almost exactly five years from the day Jeanne Lamon announced to her shaken orchestra that she was stepping down, her successor comes home to the hall that has been the company’s home base for its whole history. It would be folly in these fluid musical times to predict for any new music director a 33-year sojourn. But the stars do seem to be auspicious for Citterio’s stay here to be a fruitful new chapter for both her and Tafelmusik.  

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Tafelmusik on the steps of Trinity-St. Paul’s, 1981:
Front Row (L-R): Susan Graves (seated), Kenneth Solway, Ivars Taurins, Charlotte Nediger, Alison Mackay

Photo by Bruce Zinger
THE PRESENT AND FUTURE KING
Toronto’s organ aficionados
MATTHEW WHITFIELD

The pipe organ, labelled the “King of Instruments” by none other than Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, is an instrument that flies under the radar of many classical music lovers. Despite its apparent obscurity, the organ has a devoted group of followers and aficionados who regularly present concerts highlighting some of Toronto’s best instruments.

One such presenter is Organix, run by Gordon Mansell, who is also organist and director of music at Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church in Toronto’s West End. A longtime supporter of the organ and its finest players, Organix will receive the National Award of Excellence from the Royal Canadian College of Organists at a special gala recital on September 22 at Timothy Eaton Memorial Church. This commemorative performance will feature Italian organist Mario Ciferri and will be followed by a masterclass the next morning, featuring three young players and a variety of repertoire.

In anticipation of these events, we asked Organix’s Gordon Mansell, TEMC principal organist Stephen Boda and director of music Elaine Choi for their thoughts on the organ, its status in Toronto’s contemporary musical topography and its possible role in the future of classical music.

Gordon Mansell, president and artistic director of Organix Concerts

WN: Your concert on September 22 is a significant one, with Organix Concerts receiving the National Award of Excellence from the RCCO. Why this performer on this instrument for this occasion?

GM: Yes, it is quite an honour for me to be recognized by my colleagues and peers for having attempted to widen the general audience for organ music. I have placed a priority in producing concerts with a high entertainment factor.

The difference between the organ and many other instruments is that an organist must very quickly adapt to each concert venue, the instrument and the uniqueness of the acoustics. Pianists enjoy a standard of 88 keys and, for the most part, size of the instrument. There is predictability inherent to the piano and almost all other instruments, the personal instrument the performer owns and plays all the time. With the organ, there is a critical factor of matching the organist with the appropriate instrument, based on repertoire expected.

As for Mario Ciferri, I know him to perform grand Romantic music as well as Baroque, ideal for showcasing to the world the newly refurbished and expanded organ at Timothy Eaton Memorial Church. Happily, TEMC agreed to collaborate with me to help make this happen.

WN: The second day of events with Mario Ciferri features a masterclass with three students, each playing a range of repertoire. How does this fit with some people’s perception that the pipe organ is an instrument in rapid decline?

GM: I would say that the apparent decline may be somewhat localized to parts of our own continent. Here in Toronto we have many
young students who are pursuing careers as organists and educators, and several have gone on to gain professional standing and significant church positions. Coupled with studies privately and at the university level, Organix is a vital part in ensuring the future as each becomes an alumnus of the festival and is an ambassador of it and of the industry itself. I expect that these same emerging artists will take on an important role as advocates for the promotion of the organ in many different ways, some of which we cannot fully appreciate at this time.

WN: Organix recently diversified, presenting weekly afternoon recitals in addition to your Festival series. Why do you see the organ as something worth investing in? And where do electronic organs fit into Organix’s future?

GM: It is important to invest in the organ, because there is such a significant catalogue of music written for it as a solo instrument and as a collaborator for ensembles and orchestras. With continued interest, particularly from young musicians and enthusiasts, there is a market that should be generously nurtured and supported.

Most of Toronto’s pipe organs are in the downtown core, and there is a large population beyond that has yet to hear a great concert of organ music. Digital organs become a viable alternative and the preferred instrument beyond downtown. The benefits of digital organs are many, but in particular, the repertoire for the instrument continues to live and thrive on the best digital examples. With this added exposure outside of the downtown core, Organix will continue to promote professional organists, organs and organ repertoire to many first-time concert goers. It is not an either/or situation between digital and pipe – it is a collaboration that will keep our industry alive.

Elaine Choi, director of music and Stephen Boda, principal organist at Timothy Eaton Memorial Church

WN: I notice that in addition to partnering with Organix TEMC has recently partnered with other churches “on-the-Hill” for various performances such as the Durufle Requiem.

EC: TEMC’s music team enjoys collaborating with other ensembles and organizations. These collaborations enable us to broaden our repertoire and reach out to a bigger audience.

SB: We’re really looking forward to hosting Mario Ciferri this year as part of the Organix series. We have an organ-loving congregation and look for every opportunity to feature the instrument in concert. We are grateful to Gordon Mansell for organizing this event and also the masterclass, which features young organists from Toronto.

WN: At a time when many see the pipe organ (and churches themselves) in rapid decline, what is the importance of fostering young talent and interest through events such as this masterclass?

SB: I think it’s very important to continue introducing young people to the organ; it is such a fascinating instrument and deserves to be shared and cherished. International artists such as Mario Ciferri coming to town give young artists new perspectives, and we are looking forward to it.

WN: A new antiphonal division was recently added to your already significantly sized pipe organ. With a music program already featuring a variety of instruments and ensembles, what role do you see the refurbished and enhanced organ taking in the future of your music program?

SB: The organ already has a fantastic sound and adding more pipes (we added 1000 new pipes, which brings us to a total of 7000) makes the instrument even more grand and musical. It also greatly widens the musical possibilities. Since the new pipes are located in the back of the church, it gives a surround-sound feel when the organ is played all together and the possibility to alternate or create solo/accompaniment textures from across the room. As a musician, it is incredible that we are able to add to our instrument and we are very thankful for the donations that made this possible!

EC: We are already seeing a change in our Sunday services. The antiphonal division certainly helps with supporting congregation and their hymn singing. We are finding more opportunities to explore and utilize the new division – the potential is endless!

Matthew Whitfield is a Toronto-based harpsichordist and organist.
St. Michael’s Concerts

2017 – 2018 Concert Season

Tuesday, Sept. 26 | 7:30 p.m.
Sistine Chapel Choir
Maestro Direttore: Massimo Palombella

Friday, Oct. 13 | 7:00 p.m.
Founder’s Day Concert
With Glowing Hearts
150 Years of Canadian Sacred Music
St. Michael’s Choir School

Tuesday, Oct. 24 | 7:00 p.m.
Duo Voce Humana
Franck Besingrand, organ
Marie-Noëlle Cros, soprano

Friday, Nov. 24 | 7:00 p.m.
Organ Spectacular
Favourites by the Cathedral Organists:
John Paul Farahat,
Christopher Ku, Paul Jenkins,
William O’Meara, Manuel Piazza

Sunday, Dec. 17 | 3:00 p.m.
Advent Lessons and Carols
St. Michael’s Choir School

Tuesday, Feb. 27 | 7:00 p.m.
Vesuvius Ensemble
“Passio” – The Mater Dolorosa in Popular Tradition
Music from Southern Italy
Francesco Pellegrino
Marco Cera
Lucas Harris

Friday, June 15 | 7:00 p.m.
The Glory of Chant
Gregorian chant with improvisations by
Charles Tournemire,
transcribed from recordings made in 1930 at the
Cathedral Schola Cantorum
William O’Meara, organ

Saturday, Apr. 14 | 7:30 p.m.
Messiah (Part II & III)
G. F. Handel
Cathedral Schola Cantorum Men & Boys
Baroque Orchestra
Meredith Hall, soprano
Richard Whitall, alto
Simon Honeyman, alto
Michael Colvin, tenor
Joel Allison, bass
Conductor: Peter Mahon

Friday, May 11 | 7:00 p.m.
Spring Concert
St. Michael’s Choir School

Friday, May 11 | 7:00 p.m.
The Glory of Chant
Gregorian chant with
improvisations by
Charles Tournemire,
transcribed from recordings
made in 1930 at the
Cathedral Schola Cantorum
William O’Meara, organ

Suggested donation for each concert is $25.00
A tax receipt will be issued early in the new year if your total donation for the current year is $25.00 or more

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On September 25, 2017, Glenn Gould would have been 85. To mark the occasion, the TSO is presenting a tribute concert to him on September 22 and 23 with two works of great significance to his biographical and musical legacy.

**Siegfried Idyll**

In July 1982, just weeks before suffering the stroke that led to his premature death on October 4, 1982, Gould began recording Wagner’s *Siegfried Idyll* in its chamber version for 13 instruments. It was released by Sony on a CD that also included Gould’s own piano transcriptions of other Wagner works, but it was Gould’s role as conductor (of *Siegfried Idyll*) that caught people’s attention. The recording was stunning in its transparency, rigorous in its controlled Romanticism and finely balanced as a large chamber work. The orchestral version of this piece is one of the programmatic keys to the TSO tribute this month. Remarkably, four members of the current TSO participated in the Gould recording, among them associate concertmaster Mark Skazinetsky. He graciously took the time to fill WholeNote readers in on the nuts and bolts of that historic occasion.

**WN:** What are your memories of the recording sessions of *Siegfried Idyll*?

**MS:** First of all was the fact that I was going to work with GLENN GOULD himself! It was a hot summer day and he came dressed in a heavy coat, wearing gloves, kind of looking a little strange, but when he started to talk he struck me as being a very kind and friendly, respectful person.

**WN:** How much rehearsal time was there?

**MS:** We didn’t have much rehearsal time but everyone could sense something very special and unique was happening and that made the rehearsal more effective.

**WN:** Do you recall Glenn Gould’s approach? Any specific instructions?

**MS:** Glenn Gould’s approach was very unique. At first we thought that all the tempi were very slow, or slower than we expected. But as we were getting deeper into the music it started to make more and more sense. His interpretation of this piece was so sincere and deeply...
felt that it “infected” us very much. He was asking for very long lines and phrases and that made the whole piece like one big painting. The end result was amazing!!

Brahms Concerto No.1

Glenn Gould was 22 when he first recorded Bach’s Goldberg Variations for Columbia Masterworks in 1955. Jan Lisiecki is now 22 and a graduate of the Glenn Gould School of the Royal Conservatory. His fourth recording for Deutsche Grammophon, Chopin Works for Piano and Orchestra, was released last March. For his part in the TSO Gould tribute, Lisiecki will play Brahms’ Piano Concerto No.1 in D Minor, Op.15, the same work that prompted Leonard Bernstein to address the audience in Carnegie Hall on the evening of April 6, 1962, when Gould played it with the New York Philharmonic. Bernstein said that he could not agree with Gould’s “remarkably broad tempi and frequent dynamic departures” but that “Mr. Gould is so valid and serious an artist that I must take seriously anything he conceives in good faith.”

I asked Lisiecki about his relationship with Gould and what he thought about Bernstein’s pre-performance words.

WN: What was the first moment you became aware of Glenn Gould?

JL: I cannot even describe a particular moment when I became aware of Glenn Gould. He seems to have been a part of my musical life from the very start, and is inseparable from it in my view.

WN: How has he been important to you?

JL: There are many inspirational aspects about Mr. Gould. For one, I love his answers to interviews. They were different, insightful and fun. I also like his approach to making music, and adhering to the principle that if there’s nothing new to say, then there’s no point in performing or recording it. He was also never afraid to break with the tradition, and as a result, completely changed the way the entire world performs or records it. He was also never afraid to break with the notion of celebrating Canada’s sesquicentennial. The overwhelming artistic success of TSM was an affirmation of the high level of talent our country has produced. The total audience of 15,000 was a 20-percent increase over last year and included several sellouts and attendances before Gould and the New York Philharmonic performed Brahms’ First Piano Concerto?

WN: What do you think of Bernstein’s famous words to the audience before the Brahms concerto was performed? Was it the end result was amazing!!

JL: I actually think these words could have been spoken at many other concerts, and that it is frankly not a surprise that a conductor and soloist don’t get along. After all, each musician is very individual, and when you add in someone’s personality (their amenability and openness, or lack thereof), musical disagreements do occur.

WN: How long have you been playing the concerto?

JL: This concerto is actually very new to me, and I performed it for the first time in Warsaw only on August 12. My “debut” with this work was a full immersion, too, with live broadcast on radio, YouTube and TV recording.

WN: What is your approach to it?

JL: I’m not sure how I can answer this question in words. I invite the audience to listen and assess for themselves. :-)

WN: Have you played much Brahms in concert?

JL: I have included Brahms in my recitals before, but my closer association is with Schumann. In fact, I recorded one of Schumann’s last works for the piano, his Introduction and Concerto Allegro Op.134 for Piano and Orchestra, which inspired Brahms when writing this concerto.

I’m reasonably certain that TSO conductor Peter Oundjian will address the Roy Thomson Hall audience before the Brahms concerto is performed. And I’m also confident that Lisiecki will have a few words to say at its conclusion. The prospect fills me with great anticipation.

Mooredale Concerts Season Opener

Again this summer my musical life in Toronto was bound up in the Toronto Summer Music Festival, the first under artistic director Jonathan Crow. This year – the festival’s 12th edition – was primarily a celebration of chamber music performed almost entirely by Canadian-born or Canadian-resident musicians. It was a roster driven by the notion of celebrating Canada’s sesquicentennial. The overwhelming artistic success of TSM was an affirmation of the high level of talent our country has produced. The total audience of 15,000 was a 20-percent increase over last year and included several sellouts and...
many near sellouts in both Koerner and Walter Halls. I was fortunate to take in 15 concerts, three masterclasses, two open rehearsals, two “Conversations” and two “Kids Concerts,” less than half of what the extensive program offered. Visit www.thewholenote.com for my TSM concert reports.

Two of the sold-out programs, “The TSO Chamber Solists” and the “Tribute to Anton Kuerti,” had a direct connection to Mooredale Concerts (of which Kuerti is artistic director emeritus). The TSO players, under the leadership of TSO concertmaster Jonathan Crow, will open Mooredale’s new season on September 24 at Walter Hall.

Crow will be joined by Teng Li, principal viola; Joseph Johnson, principal cello; Jeffrey Beecher, principal bass; Michael Sweeney, principal bassoon; Neil Deland, principal horn; and Miles Jaques, clarinet.

Their diverse program features the Françaix String Trio, Nielsen’s Serenata in vano, CNW69, Till Eulenspiegel’s Merry Pranks, Op. 28, by Richard Strauss and Beethoven’s Septet in E-flat Major, Op. 20. The Nielsen is a quintet for clarinet, bassoon, horn, cello and double bass; the quintet arrangement of the Strauss uses similar instrumentation with the violin replacing the cello.

Crow was gracious enough to answer several questions about the TSO Chamber Solists (TSOCS) and the program of the Mooredale recital.

WN: What was the impetus behind the origin of the TSO Chamber Solists?

JC: There are a couple of different reasons behind the TSOCS, but foremost for us is a chance to present TSO players in a more intimate setting, as we generally only get to interact with our audiences in a very large space. There is something very special about a chamber music setting that allows audiences to get to know their favourite musicians more as individuals, and also allows us to have a little more creativity in our own interpretations. There is also so much great chamber music repertoire that we want to play, and having the chance to do it with a regular group of TSO players only helps us to feel more connected when we get back to the orchestra!

WN: How many concerts do you do over the course of the year?

JC: Personally? Too many to count! The TSOCS does four concerts a year at RTH before TSO shows, and perhaps three or four more touring concerts every season. The schedules of all the players are too complicated to allow for much more than this unfortunately.

WN: How was the upcoming Mooredale recital conceived? Did it begin with the Beethoven Septet and move outward from there?

JC: We like to mix well-known chamber works with other wonderful but lesser known works, and one of the goals of the TSOCS is to feature all the parts of the orchestra, not just the string section! The Beethoven Septet is one of the great works of all time for strings and winds and was an obvious choice for this show, after which we looked at other works that would complement the Beethoven to fill out the program. For this concert we focused on works that would...
be composed in the same style as the Septet – fun, upbeat music that doesn’t take itself too seriously!

WN: *How would you characterize the Francaix String Trio?*

JC: This piece always makes me think of a champagne cork popping out – it’s such a light and bubbly piece! Extremely fun to play, and very enjoyable for audiences.

WN: *The Serenata in vano, CNW69 by Carl Nielsen is new to me. Can you tell us something about it?*

JC: The TSOCS did this work a few years back at RTH – Nielsen himself referred to it as “a humorous trifle.” In his words: “First the gentlemen play in a somewhat chivalric and showy manner to lure the fair one out onto the balcony, but she does not appear. Then they play in a slightly languorous strain (Poco adagio), but that hasn’t any effect either. Since they have played in vain (in vano), they don’t care a straw and shuffle off home to the strains of the little final march, which they play for their own amusement.”

WN: *Are you playing the quintet version of Till Eulenspiegel? Such a joyful piece. Do you recall the first time you ever heard it? Or played it?*

JC: Yes! This is an amazing arrangement of one of the great orchestra pieces of all time! I first did it at the Montreal Chamber Music Festival probably about 15 years ago. It’s a virtuosic showpiece for the five players and has all the excitement of the orchestral version, but the intimacy of a chamber ensemble – everything we aim for with the TSOCS!

WN: *What is your approach to Beethoven’s Septet?*

JC: We tend to think of Beethoven as a very serious composer, but sometimes I think we miss some of the humour and lightness in his compositions. This piece is truly a serenade, and we like to think of it as something perhaps a little lighter than many of the Beethoven symphonies that we play so much. In a way I think it presents a different side of Beethoven – a side of a composer who wasn’t yet deaf and didn’t yet have any idea about the loss that would inflect so many of his later works.

Paul Ennis is the managing editor of The WholeNote.
Welcome back to another season of auditory excavation and resistance. For isn’t that what diving deep and creating new expressions using sound is all about? During the upcoming X Avant Festival produced by the Music Gallery – which takes resistance as its theme – this is definitely what will be occurring. Using this theme as a lens for this month’s column, I will be taking an overall survey of what you can expect both in the upcoming season and also during the month of September.

The Music Gallery

The big news at this hotbed place of sonic experimentation this fall is their change of venue. Due to renovations both at their usual home at St. George the Martyr church and in the neighbouring church lot, the Music Gallery’s programming will be happening at a variety of different venues for the foreseeable future. In my conversation with artistic director David Dacks about what sort of impact this change in venue will have, he noted that the Gallery’s Departure Series has already been creating programming in different venues for the last few years. The goal of this series is to make sure that the MG isn’t just identified with one place and to highlight their role as a presenter.

For the fall of 2017, the Gallery’s programming will be happening at 918 Bathurst, a not-for-profit arts and culture centre located in the heart of Toronto’s Annex neighbourhood. Dacks mentioned that this location is actually closer to where many of the gallery’s patrons live, and this new location will provide opportunities for audience outreach in a more residential area of the city. And so it is fitting that the first show of the season on October 11 at 918 Bathurst will be a concert in the Departures Series with a performance by Man Forever aka Kid Millions touring a new album, Play What They Want. Joining the bill on that night will be Toronto-based percussionist, performer and composer Germaine Liu and her ensemble, along with Luyos MC/Reilla. Expect an evening of indie rock, water-based music, electronic soundscapes, traditional chant and frequency art.

While changing location could pose a potential hazard for audience attendance, Dacks isn’t too worried. Last year was the MG’s biggest year to date where attendance was up by 40 percent, with seven sold-out concerts within the year. Each of those seven events was a partnership, thereby boosting audience numbers and reaching out to new communities. As I mentioned above, “Resistance” is the theme of this year’s X Avant Festival running from October 11 to 15. “It’s the thing to do right now, for obvious reasons, and more artists are exploring ideas that fit into this theme,” Dacks said.

One of the festival concerts will feature the music of composer James Tenney, who lived and taught in Toronto from 1976 to 2000 and had an important influence on many local composers during his time here. The program will include Pika-Don, which Tenney composed in 1991, a piece that features the voices of many local artists, including my own, which was a surprise to me when Dacks mentioned it. Rusty memory! Preceding the concert will be a panel discussion on questions such as what it means to be a socially conscious composer now as opposed to 20 to 30 years ago, and what audiences expect from socially conscious music in the concert hall. The festival is also hosting another Deep Listening workshop led by Anne Bourne, taking place at the Tranzac Main Hall. In last year’s festival, Deep Listening pioneer Pauline Oliveros was a featured guest, and her sold-out concert was the last time she appeared in Toronto shortly before her passing in November.

And of course the Music Gallery will continue its tradition of co-presenting with various partners. One such concert to note coming up on October 22 is the New Music Concerts’ season opener. It will be an opportunity to hear Tel Aviv’s Meitar Ensemble, whose membership comprises quite an array of virtuoso performers specializing in...
contemporary music.

**Indie Opera**

Toronto is becoming known as a major centre for contemporary indie opera. In the recent summer issue, I wrote about one such opera, *Sweat*, performed by the Bicycle Opera Project. I had an opportunity to experience the performance of this work of “resistance” this past summer and one of the highlights for me was the ensemble singing, which composer Juliet Palmer spoke about in our interview. The stage dynamics between the a cappella singers intermixed with their interlocking rhythms made for a stunning and compelling performance. The mere fact of giving such a prominent role to an ensemble of singers breaks operatic traditions while laying new ground for a different approach to this older art form.

*Sweat* was originally workedshopped by Tapestry Opera, a major player in the current indie-opera scene, who are starting their season early this year with a performance of *Bandits in the Valley*. This opera is set in 1860s Toronto, and will be performed at Todmorden Mills, located, appropriately enough, in the Don River Valley. The story brings together a local bandit group with a troupe of traveling Gilbert and Sullivan singers who conspire to steal a mysterious object from a wealthy home situated in the valley. This story is reviving part of Toronto’s history by highlighting the fact that the valley was a haven for smugglers and bandits during the late 1800s. The work was composed by Benton Roark with libretto by Julie Tepperman, and features six performers moving throughout the various locations at the Todmorden site while singing and playing a variety of instruments. It will be an intimate setting with limited space, so audiences must reserve tickets. The good news is that the performances are free and run throughout the month of September.

**Gallery 345 with Arraymusic**

Gallery 345, located at 345 Sorauren Avenue, is another hotspot of performances spanning many genres. This month sees them partnering with Arraymusic on September 19 to present Montreal’s Quatuor Bozzini performing Cassandra Miller’s Jules Léger Prize-winning piece *About Bach*. Miller began this work as a solo piece for viola specifically for violist Pemi Paull. She focused in on Paull’s musicality, first creating a transcription of his performance of Bach’s *Partita No. 2*. She then added her own harmonies to create something akin to a chorale, while setting up a process that takes the musical materials through a meandering journey. This version for string quartet is the result of many years of working with Quatuor Bozzini. The evening will also include a performance of Bryn Harrison’s new *Piano Quintet* by English piano virtuoso and experimental music champion Philip Thomas.

**Toronto Symphony**

Later in September, the TSO will be performing two newly commissioned works by Canadian composers. First of all, on September 22 and 23, their “Tribute to Glenn Gould” concert will include the
world premiere of Kelly-Marie Murphy’s Curiosity, Genius, and the Search for Petula Clark, a work that the composer wrote based on the impact that Gould had on her creative life. The evening will begin with a performance of Wihtikōw, composed by Yannick Plamondon, another in the series of “Sesquies” that have been occurring all year. A few days later, Alexina Louie’s Triple Concerto will have its world premiere. This piece was co-commissioned by the TSO, the Montreal Symphony and the National Arts Centre Orchestra, and will feature the concertmasters of all three orchestras. The Sesquie for that evening is Hyacinth, by composer Rolf Boon. I will be writing more about Murphy and Louie in upcoming issues this season, so stay tuned to hear more about these pieces as well as what is currently, and coming up, on the composing plates of these two dynamic and innovative creators.

Wendalyn Bartley is a Toronto-based composer and electro-vocal sound artist. sounddreaming@gmail.com.
The pianist and Lalla’s accompanist in other songs on the program, Tanya Paradowski, happens to be their niece. “We’ve been rehearsing up at their cottage, with the sounds of vibraphone over the lake… I can’t imagine what the neighbours must think.

“Because there is so much repetition on just a few notes, the focus goes to the text,” she says of the inner mechanism of the cycle. “Just like in the recitative of an opera, it’s now about the words, and the emotion behind the words. And the accompanying instrumental part is very repetitive, so you instinctively listen to the words to find out what’s going on. So, over top of this unconventionally textured background (quite an unusual mix of instruments!), you get just words. And they happen to be on notes. I think this is a brilliant way that Cerrone is highlighting the directness of Tao Lin’s text.”

It was actually composer Cecilia Livingston who first recommended Cerrone among a few other composers to Lalla (the two women have known each other from high school). Livingston’s own songs, too, Penelope, Kalypso and Parting, are going to be in the recital. Livingston’s website lists an impressive number of commissions, collaborations and fellowships – including a recent research fellowship at King’s College in London with one of the most interesting Verdian thinkers today, Roger Parker – but also an array of publications and papers both academic and journalistic, including her U of T PhD thesis on “the musical sublime in 20th-century opera, with a particular focus on the connections between the sublime, the grotesque, minimalism and musical silence.” There are also audio files of her work, including a good number of songs. I was eager to ask this vast and curious creative mind about her work.

In which art song features prominently, it turns out. “I just finished a commission for the Canadian Art Song Project, which reminded me that art song is one of my favourite things to write, period! It calls for this very strange close reading: scrutiny of a text combined with a huge, bird’s-eye view of its emotional terrain,” Livingston says. “Northrop Frye wrote about this, and he titled his book from Blake: The Double Vision – seeing a text both for what it is, and for what it can be in the imagination. And then also – for a composer – in the musical imagination, in the ear.”

Her three songs in the Imperfect recital explore a style that she describes as “somewhere between art song and torch song. Penelope and Kalypso are both portraits of Homer’s characters, of women who are waiting; both songs have weird, dark middle sections: one is sort-of-aleatoric and one isn’t, and I can see I was working out different solutions.” With Kalypso, Livingston was looking for a new way to write for coloratura soprano and ended up thinking about scat singing and the Harold Arlen songs she loves, like Stormy Weather. “I think
Duncan [McFarlane]'s lyrics for Kalypso are one of the most extraordinary texts I've ever worked with: beautiful, intricate layers of language; so much that the music can shade and shadow and shape."

A pianist by training, Livingston composes by singing as she writes: “It helps me build on the natural prosody of the language and makes sure the vocal line is comfortable; that there’s time for breath, that it’s well supported musically, that it sits comfortably in the tessitura, etc. – even when it’s challenging.” The process of finding a text that will lead to a song is more intuitive, harder to pin down. “I’m looking for something that catches my inner ear: an image, mood, the sound of a phrase. When I come across that, I can sort of hear the music for it, and then I know I can work with it. I don’t hear actual music yet, but I can hear the intensification that music can bring. Which sounds slightly bizarre; it’s probably easier to say I get a particular feeling in the pit of my stomach.”

She doesn’t entirely buy the argument that simple, unambitious or bad poetry makes better (because easier) text to set to music. “Look at the riches of Alice Goodman’s libretti, or the ways that Britten illuminated all sorts of texts. If a writer savours language – its sounds and its meanings – then I’m interested.”

Among the larger projects on Livingston’s agenda, there’s a full-length opera in the works for TorQ Percussion Quartet and Opera 5, with the world premiere in Toronto scheduled for the 2018/19 season and a European premiere in 2020. “I’ve admired TorQ Percussion Quartet’s musicianship since we met in 2008, and I wanted to write an opera with them, the moment I saw their incredible performance of John Luther Adams’ Strange and Sacred Noise,” says Livingston. “They have a dramatic physicality to their performances that is perfect for contemporary opera. And Opera 5 produced her first chamber opera: “We built the kind of really supportive friendship that I wish all young composers could have.”

And what does her music feel like to a singer? Let’s let Lindsay Lalla have the last word: “I adore how lyrical and melodic Cecilia’s songs are. I feel that they were written like mini operas, with so much emotion to explore in one piece... One of her musical instructions in the Kalypso (over the introductory coloratura) says: “Ella Fitzgerald-meets-Chopin, vocalise-meets-scat.” As a singer, I fell in love with her just from that.”

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by Donizetti, starring Sondra Radvanovsky in the title role. With this opera Radvanovsky, who recently became a Canadian citizen, completes Donizetti’s so-called Three Queens Trilogy, although Donizetti never intended them as such. Anticipation is especially high among longtime operagoers since the last time the COC presented the opera back in 1984 it starred Dame Joan Sutherland in the title role with Richard Bonynge conducting. Joining Radvanovsky are Eric Owens as Henry VIII, Keri Alkema as Jane Seymour and Bruce Sledge as Lord Percy. Stephen Lawless will direct this third part of his unified production originally created for Dallas Opera. Corrado Rovaris will conduct.

Opera Atelier’s season features two revivals – Mozart’s *The Marriage of Figaro* running October 26 to November 4 and Monteverdi’s *The Return of Ulysses* running April 19-28. In the first, American Douglas Williams makes his OA debut in the title role with Mireille Asselin as Susanna, Stephen Hegedus as the Count, Peggy Kriha Dye as the Countess and Mireille Lebel as Cherubino. In the second, Krešimir Špicer returns to sing the title role joined by Mireille Lebel as Penelope, Carla Huhtanen as Fortuna, Christopher Enns as Telemaco, Stephen Hegedus as Neptune and Meghan Lindsay as Minerva. Both productions will be directed as usual by Marshall Pynkoski with David Fallis conducting the Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra.

Tapestry Opera has an exciting season beginning with a brand new opera playing weekends in September with free admission. That opera is *Bandits in the Valley* by Benton Roark to a libretto by Julie Tepperman. Set in 1860s Toronto, it follows a group of thieves through Todmorden Mills who are aided by a travelling Gilbert and Sullivan troupe. The work features Keith Klassen, Jennifer Taverner, Jacques Arsénault, Alex Dobson, Sara Schabas and Stephanie Titchew.

The season continues with the return of “Tapestry Briefs: Winter Shorts,” showcasing four new short operas from November 30 to December 3. As part of the “Tap:Ex” series of experimental works, Tapestry presents *Forbidden* from February 8 to 11, a collaboration between Iranian-Canadian composer Afarin Mansouri and
spoken-word artist Donna Michelle St. Bernard in an exploration of what is forbidden and why it is tempting.

**Toronto Operetta Theatre** has three fully-staged revivals on offer. First, to celebrate Canada’s sesquicentennial, TOT revives *The Widow* (1882) by Calixa Lavallée (1842-91), composer of Canada’s national anthem, with Julie Nesrallah in the title role. Running from December 28, 2017 to January 7, 2018 is Leonard Bernstein’s *Candide* (1956), last staged by TOT in 2007. Tonatiuh Abrego sings the title role with Vania Chan as his beloved Cunegonde. The final offering is Offenbach’s *La Belle Hélène* (1864), a parody of the events leading to the Trojan War running April 25 to 29, starring Beste Kalender, Adam Fisher and Stuart Graham.

**Toronto Masque:** For fans of Toronto Masque Theatre this will be a bitter-sweet season since artistic director Larry Beckwith has decided that it will be the company’s last. The first of the TMT’s three mainstage shows will be a revival of Purcell’s *Dido and Aeneas* (1687) paired with Canadian James Rolfe’s piece *Aeneas and Dido* (2007). Playing on October 20 and 21, the operas star Kristzina Szabó, Alexander Dobson, Andrea Ludwig and Jacqueline Woodley.

From February 8 to 10, TMT presents a staged version of J.S. Bach’s *Peasant Cantata* (1742), followed by “All the Diamonds,” a cabaret of torch songs, lieder and madrigals featuring Patricia O’Callaghan and Giles Tomkins. TMT’s final show, “The Last Chaconne: A Celebration,” plays only on May 12 when a star-studded collection of singers and musicians celebrate the achievements of the company.

**Tarragon and Canadian Stage:** Theatre companies in Toronto have ventured into the realm of opera before, but it is unusual to have two such companies do so in the same year. This season the Tarragon Theatre presents the opera *Mr. Shi and His Lover* by Toronto’s Njo Kong Kie to a libretto by Wong Teng Chi from November 7 to December 17. The opera, based on the story behind the play and film *M. Butterfly*, had its world premiere in Macau in 2013 and its acclaimed Toronto premiere last year at SummerWorks. It is performed in Mandarin with English surtitles and stars Jordan Cheng and Derek Kwok. The composer conducts an ensemble of piano, marimba and Chinese percussion.

Canadian Stage, which previously presented the Canadian premiere of Philippe Boesmans’ opera *Julie* in 2015, this season presents the world premiere of *The Overcoat* by James Rolfe to a libretto by Morris Panych, based on the 1842 story of the same name by Nikolai Gogol. Panych and Wendy Gorling had previously created a wildly successful version of *The Overcoat* as an extended wordless physical theatre piece. This new *Overcoat* will thus represent a complete re-imagination of how to present Gogol’s story. The Canadian Stage production, running March 29 to April 14, is a co-production with Tapestry Opera and Vancouver Opera and is one of the dozen or so must-sees of what is already shaping up to be a very attractive opera season.

Christopher Hoile is a Toronto-based writer on opera and theatre. He can be contacted at opera@thewholenote.com.
Baroque Music for HIPsters

MATTHEW WHITFIELD

Nothing can polarize a room of musically minded people faster than an expression of opinion on Historically Informed Performance (HIP). Wikipedia, the go-to source for information on all things from humdingers to hemiolas, defines Historically Informed Performance as “an approach to the performance of classical music which aims to be faithful to the approach, manner and style of the era in which a work was originally conceived.” Like sideburns, Pez dispensers, and many other “hip” things, Historically Informed Performance began in the 1950s with a small but devoted, cult-like following and has since been associated with some of the 20th century’s classical music luminaries including Nikolaus Harnoncourt, Ton Koopman and John Eliot Gardiner.

Traditionally, HIP has been closely connected with (and most successfully applied to) early music, specifically music from the Baroque era (1600-1750, approximately). This often involves tools such as period instruments, various tunings and temperaments, and a number of other variables that performers take into consideration. The majority of this information has been gleaned over the past few decades from various historical treatises written by composers that are now as famous, if not more so, for their theoretical writings as for the musical works they composed. Notable treatises include those by musicians such as Johann Quantz, C.P.E. Bach and Johann Mattheson.

Enter Norrington

As the HIP movement grew throughout the latter half of the 20th century, its scope similarly expanded to include music by Beethoven, Brahms, and even Mahler (culminating in British conductor Roger Norrington’s anti-vibrato crusade which resulted in tendentious performances and recordings of a number of Mahler’s symphonies. These non-vibrato performances are interesting much in the same way that a circular-breathing saxophonist is interesting – at once fascinating and impressive, but also somewhat unnatural). Some of these experiments in performance practice, like Norrington’s Mahler, were greater in theory than in application, such as the idea to perform Beethoven’s symphonies with strict adherence to his metronome markings. This was in stark contrast to the über-Romantic interpretations of past maestros such as Furtwängler and Klemperer, and could become a bit frenetic when Beethoven’s metronomic suggestions had an entire orchestra flooring the gas pedal!

Given its history, it’s understandable that HIP is a rather controversial topic among musicians, scholars and audiences – especially when discussing mainstream composers such as Bach, Handel or Vivaldi – and like any theory, it cannot be applied with a one-size-fits-all mentality. (As a Canadian HIP-trained harpsichordist and organist, I can’t help but think of Glenn Gould’s Bach performances which, despite the theoretical issues of the appropriateness of performing Bach on the piano, are so unique, effective and timeless.) Part of the joy of being a musician in a city as diverse as Toronto is being able to hear the variety of interpretations and open-minded approaches taken towards similar repertoire, especially when Messiah season is in full swing! Having the opportunity to absorb multiple performances of a well-known piece interpreted by different ensembles in different ways can be an eye- and ear-opening experience, and we are extremely fortunate to have the opportunity to witness so many high-calibre concerts and players throughout the year.

September can be a slow month for the arts scene as musicians return from summer residencies and rehearsals resume after time...
away. Fortunately for early music lovers, there are a variety of concerts to choose from this month; here are a few highlights, organized by composer:

**J.S. Bach**

Top of most people’s list of Baroque composers is J.S. Bach, also known (to fans of P.D.Q. Bach creator Peter Schickele) as “Big Daddy” Bach. On September 13, Toronto Symphony Orchestra cellist Roberta Janzen performs cello suites by Bach and Kodály as part of the new ClassyAF concert series. This performance, part of a larger program that aims to bring classical music out of the concert hall, takes place at the Dakota Tavern on Ossington Avenue. The movement in recent years to present high-quality performers and performances in alternative venues such as pubs, clubs and taverns is a great way to welcome new audiences to music that is often stereotyped as outdated and stuffy. It’s also a chance to take in some great tunes with a drink in hand (a double bourbon on the rocks, preferably) amidst a refreshing change of scenery.

For those seeking a more traditional concert experience, Rosedale Presbyterian’s Recitals at Rosedale presents “My Good Fortune: The Music of J.S. Bach” on October 1. The program’s two cantatas, one secular (Schweigt stille, better known as the ‘Coffee Cantata’) and one sacred (Cantata 84, Ich bin vergnügt mit meinem Glücke) as well as a motet (Lobet den Herrn) will be led by music director Christopher Dawes and feature a roster of well-known soloists including soprano Gillian Keith, bass-baritone Daniel Lichti and tenor Lenard Whiting.

**G.F. Handel**

To many early music aficionados, Handel’s genius is surpassed only by Bach. Often grouped along with Domenico Scarlatti and Rameau into what John Eliot Gardiner calls “the Class of ‘85,” Handel and Bach are certainly connected in some interesting ways, not least of which is the fact that both men were surgically mistreated by the same eye doctor. Bach died soon after his operation while Handel lived for nine years, increasingly blind, having derived no benefit from his treatment.

On a more positive note, Tafelmusik’s first full season under their new music director Elisa Citterio begins this September. Season-opening concerts can set the tone for the entire year, and this looks to be a dynamic and energetic program. With concerti by Handel and Corelli, a suite by Rameau, and a Vivaldi violin concerto featuring Citterio as soloist, we await these performances (September 21 to 24 and 26) with eager anticipation.

**Gottfried Finger**

In a world full of concerts featuring oft-performed works by well-known composers, it’s important to point out the occasional deviation from the norm. On October 6, the Baroque chamber ensemble I FURIOSI presents “Introduction to the Body” which, according to their website, lauds “the various naughty and not-so-naughty bits” of the human anatomy. I FURIOSI, in addition to their engaging and often amusing titles and programming, are expert players and will perform works by Couperin, Handel and others, including the Moravian composer Gottfried Finger.

Finger was born in 1655 or 1656 and died in August 1730. He was a viol virtuoso and worked as a composer for the court of James II in London, where he was known as Godfrey Finger. He wrote a number of sonatas, operas, and suites for a variety of instrumental combinations. There are few recordings of Finger’s music, but the Echo du Danube disc of the Sonate pro diversi instrumentis, Op. 1 on the Accent label is worth rooting around for.

**October Outlook**

Looking ahead, there are a number of exciting and important events on the horizon this October, as well as a stimulating opportunity for young professionals interested in working with some of Toronto’s best early music specialists. The deadline for applying to the Tafelmusik Winter Institute, a weeklong intensive which focuses on Baroque orchestral music, is October 11; this year’s participants will look at suites from the French Baroque by Lully, Rameau and others. For more information on this worthwhile program, visit the Tafelmusik website.

To keep up to date on everything early music in Toronto or to share your comments and questions, visit thewholenote.com or email me at earlymusic@thewholenote.com.

Matthew Whitfield is a Toronto-based harpsichordist and organist.
Beat by Beat | Choral Scene

Musical Lamps to Light the Way

BRIAN CHANG

Peace, my heart, let the time for the parting be sweet.

Canadian composer Matthew Emery’s musical setting “Peace, my heart” uses a poem by legendary Bengali poet and musician, Rabindranath Tagore. Emery’s composition is spartan and focused, somehow enabling deep mourning and peaceful contemplation to coexist within a single shape. Reflecting on the tumultuous state of current affairs, it’s going to be good to be able to get back to making collective music. The summer of presidential-inflamed white supremacy, the threat of nuclear war, the homophobic hatred in Chechnya, the loss of democracy in Venezuela, the imprisonment of elected officials in Hong Kong – there is a great heaviness throughout the world. The weight of recent events sits deeply in the minds, hearts, and souls of many people. As artists and enjoyers of music, our personal and communal healing often takes place in the context of music and to that we can turn our minds, hearts, and souls for healing. There is much good music ahead.

That Choir

At the beginning of August I lost an old friend who was only 31. Many of my memories with him were music related; we went through the same music program in high school. I can picture him vividly with flute in hand; I can picture him attempting clarinet; I can remember our conversations about Polish music. Music is all around us, and indeed, healing, if we allow it. At the back of the commemoration card, his family chose the poem “Do not stand at my grave and weep” by Mary Elizabeth Frye.

That Choir will feature Eleanor Daley’s iconic setting of Frye’s poem, In Remembrance, part of her Requiem in their first concert of the season, “That Choir Remembers.” That Choir has been busy, making itself one of Toronto’s busiest and most dynamic. Recently featured in Ramin Djawadi’s “Game of Thrones Live!” concert and “Hans Zimmer Live,” both at the Air Canada Centre, the choir is proving itself able to rise to a wide range of big occasions. These two events have been among the most amazing performances of live music I have ever, and will probably ever, witness.

This year, That Choir enters its tenth season under the direction of Craig Pike. Stay tuned for guest appearances as new concerts are announced.

Sistine Chapel Choir comes to St. Michael’s

The oldest operating choir in the world, the Sistine Chapel Choir, is coming to Toronto. Its official name, Cappella Musicale Pontificia Sistina, describes its purpose – created for the Pope to serve in the Sistine Chapel. For centuries, the music and the ensemble were fiercely guarded and protected by the Church. The choir visits North America with several stops in the United States and Canada; on September 26, St. Michael’s Cathedral Basilica will host them, a fitting celebration to launch an ambitious series of concerts in the recently renovated Cathedral.

This choir is very rarely heard except by those who are lucky enough to visit Vatican City during liturgy. It is for this choir that great Renaissance composers like Gregorio Allegri and Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina wrote music intended to be sung in the Sistine Chapel itself. In the context of a growing fascination with Renaissance and early music, the Sistine Chapel Choir offers something unique. A direct descendant of the tradition, the choir also boasts access to the historical archives of music at the Vatican. In 2015, the choir released its...
first-ever recording, *Cantate Domino*, with performances directly from source materials and recorded in situ. The source in question, a 1661 version of the Allegri *Misere*, is especially haunting in its simplicity and the absence of the storied high C. Their second recording featured Palestrina and was reviewed by *The WholeNote*’s own Michael Schwartz.

St. Michael’s Choir School has quite a season of its own ahead, ambitious even by the standards of this storied choir program. Of note is the splitting of Handel’s *Messiah* into two performances, one for the Christmas season and another for the Easter season. The Choir School does not often perform Handel and Jennens’ masterpiece, and Peter Mahon, senior choir director, looks forward to teaching this music to another generation. Part 1 will be featured in Massey Hall in a contemporary interpretation featuring the 160 voices of the senior choir. In April, Parts 2 and 3 will be presented in a much smaller performance, with Mahon leading an early music interpretation with Baroque instruments and pitch. Alumni and early music specialists Simon Honeyman and Richard Whittall will be featured alto soloists for the performances along with Joel Allison, bass.

St. Michael’s Cathedral music programming is also turning to a new ticketing model, one with no ticket sales. Suggested donations are now the norm for this season. “Anyone can come and may pay only as they are able”, says William O’Meara, St. Michael’s Cathedral organist. “We all hope it welcomes those who may not be able to afford to go to regular concert series in the city.” This admirable choice will bring peace and music to many people who would otherwise not be able to afford the experience.

(And as an aside, St. Michael’s Choir School’s junior choir director, Maria Conkey, also takes on a new role this year, as artistic director of Young Voices Toronto, heading into its 31st season. Stay tuned for more news as Conkey takes the reins.)

Canadian Children’s Opera Company

Speaking of storied children’s and youth choirs, the Canadian Children’s Opera Company (CCOC) heads into its 50th anniversary season under music director Teri Dunn, also a choral instructor at St. Michael’s Choir School! The renowned Ben Heppner will host the CCOC’s October 26 gala concert at the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, which will feature performances by Richard Margison, Krisztina Szabó, Simone Osborne and Andrew Haji and a chorus made up of company alumni, many of whom have gone on to notable musical careers. Former music and artistic directors John Tuttle and Ann Cooper Gay will also conduct.

Their 50th anniversary season will also include the world premiere of *The Monkey King* with music by Alice Ping Yee Ho and libretto by Marjorie Chan. This beloved Chinese folk tale will be brought to life by Sacred Music Concert at St. Michael’s Cathedral

COURTESY OF ST. MICHAEL’S CATHEDRAL

Robert Cooper, C.M.
Artistic Director
Edward Moroney
Accompanist

Expect something different

Orpheus Choir of Toronto

Of Toronto

2017-18 Season

Crossroads

Last Light Above the World

November 5, 2017  3:30pm

Welcome Christmas!

December 15, 2017  7:30pm

Nordic Light

February 24, 2018  7:30pm

This Thirsty Land

April 29, 2018  3:00pm

Canada Remembers

Experience the Toronto premiere of Ontario composer Allan Bevan’s *Last Light Above the World: A War Litany*, a stirring tribute to the passion and sacrifice of armed conflict. Woven with David Lang’s riveting National Anthems, this concert is a moving commemoration of the courage of ‘those who serve’.

Welcome Christmas!

Expect high-energy chart-toppers from the Bob DiAngelis Big Band and acclaimed jazz pianist John Sherwood, alongside Nils Lindberg’s hypnotic Christmas Cantata, as we invigorate your senses and celebrate the joy of the Yuletide season.

Nordic Light

Explore the majesty of the aurora borealis with the Canadian premiere of Nordic Light Symphony by renowned Latvian composer Šēens. Join the Orpheus Choir, That Choir, and Šēens for this spectacular, multi-media, multi-sensory experience.

This Thirsty Land

Enjoy the combined voices of Orpheus and the award-winning DaCapo Chamber Choir in the Toronto premiere of Leonard Enns’ *This Thirsty Land*, a tribute to our intense relationship to water and its power on our lives.

www.orpheuschoirtoronto.com
the CCOC in May 2018 as the CCOC under artistic director Dean Burry continues its pursuit of artistic, educational and cultural excellence.

**TSO Doing Its Part**

The Toronto Symphony Orchestra has several big choral works planned this season, featuring the Toronto Children’s Chorus and the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir. September 27, 28 and 30, Brahms’ *A German Requiem* will be performed, including soprano Erin Wall and baritone Russell Braun. Just over a month later, the Toronto premiere of *Afghanistan: Requiem for a Generation* will be performed by the massed power of the Toronto Children’s Chorus, the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir and Measha Bruggergosman. Victoria Symphony Orchestra music director Tania Miller takes the podium, guiding the words of Suzanne Steele, Canada’s war poet, and set to music by Canadian composer Jeffrey Ryan.

I bow to you and hold up my lamp to light you on your way.

As musicians around the region return home to start the new season, I will be there, diligently sitting in rehearsal, seeking that elusive balance of emotion and contemplation through music, and hopefully bringing peace to a few others along the way. Make sure to come out to as many performances as you can – audiences are an essential part of the musical process. See you out there and don’t forget to say hi!

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

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**PAX CHRISTI CHORALE’S 2017–18 SEASON**

**Romantic Masters**

The passion of Bruckner, Brahms, and Beethoven

Sunday, October 29 2017, 3:00 p.m.

**Gloria**

The joie de vivre of the season

Saturday, December 16 2017, 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, December 17 2017, 3:00 p.m.

**Die Schöpfung**

Haydn’s *The Creation* illuminated by live video

Saturday, April 28 2018, 7:30 p.m.

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**Metropolitan United Church**

**MUSIC AT METROPOLITAN**

**2017 | 18 SEASON**

**SUNDAY, NOV. 19, 1:30PM**
Jazz Standards of the Seventeenth Century
Musicians on the Edge with Rezonance Baroque Ensemble

**SUNDAY, DEC. 10, 1:30PM**
Deck the Halls: Downtown Carol Sing with the Metropolitan Silver Band
Sing favourite carols with the Metropolitan Silver Band and organ.

**SUNDAY, DEC. 17, 7PM**
Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols with the Metropolitan Choirs
Freewill offering

**GOOD FRIDAY, MAR. 30, 7:30PM**
Mass in B Minor
by Johann Sebastian Bach
The Metropolitan Festival Choir, Orchestra, and soloists

**SUNDAY, APR. 22, 1:30PM**
Marg and Jim Norquay Celebration Concert: Mystery of the Unfinished Concerto
Musicians on the Edge and Rezonance Baroque Ensemble

**SATURDAY, MAY 26, 7:30PM**
Show Tunes for 200
A multimedia journey through music for the theatre from 1818 to today featuring tenor Charles Davidson and others.

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**theholenote.com**
Miigis

In this year of celebrating Canada’s 150th birthday, how perfect is it to have a new creation by Red Sky Performance taking up residence at Fort York. Red Sky, based in Toronto, is Canada’s leading company of contemporary Indigenous performance in dance, theatre, music and media.

On September 15 and 16 they are bringing to life the world premiere of Miigis, a fusion of contemporary Indigenous dance and powerful original music, with concept and direction by artistic director Sandra Laronde, choreography by associate artist Jera Wolfe, and design by Julia Tribe, exploring the catalysts, trade routes, and stories of a journey from the Atlantic coast to the Great Lakes and the “seven prophecies marked by miigis.”

The seven prophecies (or seven fires prophecy) are at the heart of the belief of the Anishinaabe people, prophecies that follow seven epochs (and predicting an eighth) in the life of the people of Turtle Island (North America) following the migration of the people from the East Coast into the interior of the continent and encompassing the arrival of the Europeans and the effects of the meeting of the two cultures. The miigis in different tellings of the prophecies are either: both the cowrie shells that mark the various lands where the migrating people should stay and settle, and the prophets that guided them.

Fascinated with Laronde’s choice of this as the heart of the new piece, I asked her a few key questions about the inception of Miigis and her production choices (her responses have been edited for length).

**WN:** Can you tell me more about the choice of the seven prophecies of miigis as the subject matter for the new work? What is it about the prophecy that you want to communicate through the piece and that you think is important for audiences to learn about/experience now?

**SL:** Miigis is akin to the holy grail for the Anishinaabe people. We followed it from the Atlantic Coast to the Great Lakes. I’m interested in the third fire prophecy given to us which was “to move westward until you come to a place where food grows on the water.” I’m interested in what happened along the travel and water routes, what got exchanged, what happened. The food that “grows on water” is known as manoomin or wild rice which the Anishinaabe are renowned for harvesting. Its harvest life cycle is part of the structure of the Miigis production.

Our seven fires prophecy includes an eighth fire, where society could choose to go down either a dark path or a bright path, and we are in this eighth fire now. All of the warnings are here – now – especially with regard to the environment, nature, and the loss of many species. The question is can we turn this around? Can the dominant culture move beyond a “take, take mentality”?

**WN:** Why did you choose Fort York as the location for the world premiere, and how will this location set off the work you will be creating?

**SL:** We are fortunate to have wonderful partners involved in Miigis, and it is co-commissioned by the City of Toronto, The Bentway Conservancy and Fort York Historic Site. This location is perfect because the Gardiner Expressway was the natural shoreline of Lake Ontario, one of the five Great Lakes. Garrison Creek runs along Fort York which is where the Anishinaabe used its waterways. Of course, Fort York has a lot of history before it became known as a fort, as Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee shared this land that is now known as Toronto. Toronto is a Haudensaunee word that means “where trees grow in the water.” That speaks to quite a beautiful image of Toronto, and its natural beauty.

Fort York has a lot of big open spaces and it has quite a good feel there. Ironically, while creating a high Indigenous content with Miigis, we would hear cannonballs being fired off on a daily basis, and young men and women marching around outside in colonial vestsments. At first, it was quite startling to hear cannonballs firing a few times a day. It’s ironic that we have something very colonial happening all around us while we are inside the Blue Barracks creating a work that goes right back to our origin story and our seven fire prophecies. It’s strangely appropriate somehow as we are giving Indigenous voice back to this tract of land.

It’s ideal to be at the Bentway and Fort York because this work has approximately 18 to 20 dancers, both contemporary and traditional, and six live musicians, so a lot of people are involved. We need the space for this outdoor spectacle experience of original live music and dance. The music is extraordinary, rich, Indigenous and surprising. It’s a big ambitious piece in many ways.

**WN:** Will the piece take place in one place or move about the fort? How do you see this affecting both the creation of the piece and the reaction of the audience?

**SL:** We will have a procession from The Bentway area into Fort York, and we will perform outside on a low-rise stage. We all want the feeling of the performance being accessible to audiences. Miigis is a piece to be performed outdoors amidst nature and the Toronto cityscape. This land allows our production to move distances, to cover ground, and to involve a lot of artists involved in the process, including traditional dancers and singers.

I would love audiences to take away images, moments, and knowledge nuggets that swim around in their heads and hearts for years to come, to feel the urgency of what Miigis is about, to experience the Indigenous artistry, and to have a rich sonic experience of Indigenous music. We are very excited to reveal this new terrain of dance and live performance.
music that immerses audiences in the power of nature and Indigenous prophecy right here in downtown Toronto.

Miigis plays for two performances only, September 15 and 16, with a third music-only concert on September 17. Performances are free.

Life After
The other centrepiece of the September season is Life After, a new Canadian musical by Britta Johnson, first seen and widely acclaimed at the Toronto Fringe in 2016, workshopped again last April, and in rehearsal now for its debut at Canadian Stage September 23 to October 22 (at the Berkeley Street Theatre). In a three-way co-production with the Musical Stage Company and Yonge Street Theatricals. A funny and frank story of love, loss and vivid imagination, Life After follows 16-year-old Alice, left to navigate life after her father, a superstar self-help guru, dies in a car accident. The audience is plunged into Alice’s overactive inner world as she tries to decipher the events that led to that fateful day.

Unusually for a musical, the composer is also the writer of both book and lyrics, and the story is one she says she has been writing since her teens as it draws in part on her own experience of losing her father when she was young.

Reviews of the original Fringe production speak of how moving but also how funny Life After is, calling Johnson’s work revolutionizing and comparing her to Sondheim. In a recent blogpost, director Robert McQueen (who also directed the original Fringe production) wrote that he “can’t wait to get Life After back into the theatre and to invite audiences to hear the unique voice of this truly gifted musical theatre artist.”

Joining McQueen at CanStage is a top-notch creative team and cast featuring emerging star Ellen Denny, Dan Chameroy, Rielle Braid, Tracy Michalidis, Kelsey Verzotti and Trish Lindström; leading the ensemble are Neema Bickersteth, Barbara Fulton, and Johnson’s sister Anika Johnson (who also is the production’s dramaturg).

The production is also marking a number of firsts. Britta Johnson is the inaugural artist chosen to be part of the Musical Stage Company’s new Crescendo series which gives the chosen composer a three-year residency with a commitment to produce three of her new musicals in development over that time. This is also the first Canadian musical to be programmed at Canadian Stage under artistic and general director Matthew Jocelyn. Jocelyn, whose family origins trace back to Johnson’s hometown Stratford, Ontario, caught some of her early student productions and was immediately struck by the mature, insightful voice in her work, both as librettist and as a composer: “Life After is a searingly beautiful piece of music theatre that we are honoured to have opening our 30th anniversary season,” says Jocelyn.

We are in an exciting era of musical theatre development in Toronto with a growing proliferation of new musical incubators as well as more companies featuring music theatre of various kinds in their seasons. Canadian Stage stands out as breaking new ground in this regard with fully 10 out of 15 productions in their new season featuring music as an integral element of the production. I will be writing more on that next month.

Not Too Late
If you are still feeling the draw of summer days in small-town Ontario, head out to Stratford to see their strong production of Damon Runyon’s classic Guys and Dolls featuring Steve Ross’ perfect Nicely-Nicely Johnson at the Festival Theatre (until Oct 29) or grab the chance to see brilliant Canadian actor Michael Therriault (Golem in the ill-fated LOTR musical) starring in the 1930s musical Me and My Girl at the Shaw Festival in Niagara-on-the-Lake (until Oct 15).

Or for something more modern, watch Cirque du Soleil explode into the Port Lands with Volta, their new show about blazing your own trail (Sept 7 to Oct 29).

Toronto-based “lifelong theatre person” Jennifer (Jenny) Parr works as a director, fight director, stage manager and coach, and is equally crazy about movies and musicals.
Polyphonic Ground and Labyrinth Ontario
Global Music, Ontario Soil

ANDREW TIMAR

In my summer 2017 column I examined the formation and first season of the New Canadian Global Music Orchestra – the Royal Conservatory’s supergroup celebrating cultural diversity and pluralism – and its search for a common language here in Toronto, Canada.

Now, with fall subtly nipping at our heels, two new initiatives aiming to address issues of interest to students, practitioners and audiences of globally sensitive music, are poised to set projects in motion. On the one hand, Polyphonic Ground aspires to bring under a big tent a group of individual “live music presenters committed to building and sustaining Toronto as a global music city.” On the other hand, Labyrinth Musical Workshop Ontario is a non-profit “dedicated to promoting the study and appreciation of modal music traditions of Asia, Africa and Europe.” Both publicly launch in September.

Polyphonic Ground
Kayla McGee, Small World Music’s managing director, serves as Polyphonic Ground’s community lead. In a mid-August interview she told me why Polyphonic Ground was an obvious next step in the evolution of our region’s global music community. “We at Small World saw there was no real infrastructure for live music presenters, no shared platforms to allow us to work and grow together.” Small World couldn’t do it alone. But barriers to setting up such infrastructure became abundantly clear to McGee when she served with Ontario’s Live Music Working Group, an industry association promoting live Canadian music.

Polyphonic Ground’s activities, McGee explains, will include collaborative programming, fundraising, addressing resource issues and professional development such as presenter panels and surveys. “We also want to stress to audiences that the music we collectively present is for the culturally curious and not just for members of a specific group. Many of us are looking for ways to break out of genre and confirmed audience silos – to cross-pollinate audiences.”

That Small World had identified a real need became instantly clear when they put the word out about Polyphonic Ground; 12 small-to-medium-sized organizations responded to the call for “a new initiative to strengthen Toronto’s culturally diverse music industry.” It’s an impressive list: Ashkenaz Foundation, Lula Music and Arts Centre, Batukr Music Society, Good Kind Productions, Link Music Lab, MonstrARTity Creative Community, Music Africa, Revolutions Per Minute, Uma Nota Culture, World Fiddle Day Toronto, iNative and Small World Music Society, the initiative’s catalyst.

I have featured the activities of many of its members individually in this column over the years. Under the Polyphonic Ground banner these presenters could constitute a significant cultural voice. Taken as a whole the numbers are impressive. Collectively they employ 40 people in their operations and present some 300 concerts each year, to an estimated audience of over 300,000.

The press release announcing Polyphonic Ground’s formation – Hear Toronto. Where the World Lives. – sets out its mission systematically: to provide points of connection for artists and audiences; to strengthen industry practices and be a united voice to govern- ment, business and industry; to encourage exchange and discovery through a monthly double-bill performance series and professional development initiatives for diverse artistic leaders. The release also acknowledges funding by the Ontario Media Development Corporation, MusicOntario, Music Canada Live, City of Toronto and Cultural Pluralism in the Arts Movement Ontario (CPAMO). So at some level the collective has already begun making its case.

Polyphonic Ground serves up the first in its series of monthly double-bill concerts at Revival Bar, 783 College Street. As planned, for each concert, two partner organizations will pair in collaborative programs geared to transcultural musical discovery. The September 14 inaugural concert is spearheaded by Ashkenaz Foundation and Small World Music Society in co-presentation with three groups: Turkwaz (Toronto), GROOZ (Montreal) and Sandcatchers (Brooklyn). Transcultural the evening certainly will be, featuring the Balkan voices of the seasoned JUNO-nominated Turkwaz trio, the Middle Eastern-meets-Appalachian fusion of Sandcatchers, and GROOZ’s spirited Algerian-Québécois septet. (This inaugural concert also celebrates the launch of the 16th annual Small World Music Festival, running September 14 to 17, “bringing Toronto music from around the world and around the corner.”) Further double-bill Polyphonic Ground musical juxtapositions are scheduled for October 12, November 9 and December 14, with different Polyphonic Ground member organizations presenting. I’ll be eagerly following these concerts.

I’ll also be following with interest Polyphonic Ground’s other
meaningful initiatives beyond the concert hall. These include access to training and leadership and bolstering professional development opportunities within the music industry. Already announced is its Diversity and Live Music Panel series, supported by Ontario government and industry players; the Developing Diverse Leaders program “with the goal of empowering young talent through mentorship,” as well as its Best Practice Workshops. The titles may not be as catchy as “Middle Eastern-meets-Appalachian fusion” but the need is real.

**Labyrinth Musical Workshop Ontario**

While Polyphonic Ground is presenter-driven, Labyrinth Musical Workshop Ontario focuses on the education of a new generation of musicians and also audiences. Its stated mission and mandate is also distinctly different: “dedicated to promoting the study and appreciation of modal music traditions of Asia, Africa, and Europe.”

Founded in 2017 by two Toronto-based musicians, Persian tar player and teacher Araz Salek and keyboardist, composer and sound designer Jonathan Adjemian, LMWO takes its cues directly from the successful Labyrinth Musical Workshop founded in 2002 at Houdetsi, Crete by leading world musician and educator Ross Daly and running annually since. That successful model has inspired similar workshops in Spain and Italy, establishing an international Labyrinth network.

In a recent telephone interview Salek framed the core reason for establishing Labyrinth Ontario as a belief “in encouraging the study of modal musical traditions in their specific details. [We believe in] embracing the diversity of musical traditions and audiences in the GTA rather than smoothing out particularities of tuning, rhythm or phrasing to cater to an assumed common ground. Our ultimate hope is to see the GTA become a global hub for the study and performance of these traditions, providing institutional support to the many world-class musicians already living here and encouraging a new generation of performers.”

Having begun his music career in Iran, Salek has been active as a tar player and leader in Toronto for about a decade in both Persian ensembles as well as in more eclectic music circles. He has taught and performed at the Labyrinth Musical Workshop in Houdetsi since 2011. Labyrinth Ontario will hold its first annual Toronto training intensive in May 2018. On offer will be a series of three week-long seminars in instrumental technique and in regional modal theory systems. Topics will cover aspects of Afghan, Arab, Azeri, Bulgarian, Greek, Iranian, Kurdish, and Turkish music. Confirmed faculty includes Bassam Bishara (CAN, oud), Ross Daly (Greece, modal music composition), Imamyar Hasanov (USA, Azeri kamancha), Pedram Khavarzamini (CAN, tombak), Ali Akbar Moradi (Iran, Kurdish tanbur), Araz Salek (CAN, tar) and Kelly Thoma (Greece, Cretan lyra). In addition to the workshops, faculty and their students will give concerts each week and moderated panel discussions will be open to the public.

Friday September 15, Labyrinth Ontario holds its Launch Event and Fundraiser at 918 Bathurst Centre for Culture, Arts, Media and Education in order to celebrate its upcoming 2018 programming. The concert features performances by oud player and faculty member Bassam Bishara, Bulgarian and Balkan vocal and instrumental ensemble Meden Glas and Iranian Modal Music Ensemble of Toronto. Then a quartet co-led by faculty members tombak master Pedram Khavarzamini and artistic director Araz Salek on tar takes the stage, capped by a set by DJ Cheba Khadijah of Souk Sessions, known for his “Arab techno for the people.”

New Canadian Global Music Orchestra, Polyphonic Ground and Labyrinth Ontario all launched this year. They are all ambitious adventures in imagining new ground on which global music can grow in Ontario soil, in our Ontario souls. They also address, albeit in very different ways, challenges of bridging musical cultures and expanding global musics’ musician and audience base while maintaining the music’s quality.

We’ll keep eyes – and ears – open for just how they engage with all their necessary Toronto region stake-holders consisting of learners, creators, presenters, audiences and funders alike.

Andrew Timar is a Toronto musician and music writer. He can be contacted at worldmusic@thewholenote.com.
Summer? What Summer?  
JACK MACQUARRIE

As I sit down to put pen to paper (sit down to the keyboard; this is 2017!), and muse on where to start for this September issue, after our two-month hiatus, one question seems to be: What was significant in the summer in the band world? The answer which keeps coming up is just another question: What day was summer on this year? What with cancelled concerts and rained-out festivals I’m going to have to dig back all the way to June for some of my highlights.

Three of the Best

In the June column I mentioned that I was looking forward to attending the final concert of the season of the Wychwood Clarinet Choir. I certainly was not disappointed. In particular, the arrangement of Calixa Lavallée’s Bridal Rose Overture by Richard Moore and Roy Greaves surpassed my expectations. In a previous column I had also mentioned that I hoped to meet Wynne Krangle, the clarinet player from Whitehorse who rehearses with the choir over the internet. There she was in the choir, and we managed to have a brief chat after the concert.

Another concert I mentioned in the June issue as one I hoped to attend was that of the Strings Attached Orchestra. Here again the concert exceeded my expectations. The orchestra has developed their Young Composers Initiative (YCI) where they “hope to encourage the writing of contemporary works for strings by composers 16 years of age and younger.” In this concert they performed Viaggio delle Farfalle by Damiano Perrella, a 16-year-old Grade 11 student from Port Credit Secondary School. In simple terms, one might say that it is inspired by nature exhales in tones nature’s most tender secrets without copying it. He thinks, he feels, he speaks through nature.” This young composer did just that.

The third musical event of the summer which stands out in my memory was by the Resa’s Pieces Concert Band. Not only were they joined for some numbers by Resa’s choir and strings, but they had a featured alphorn solo by none other than Dan Kapp of New Horizons fame. This was Dan’s arrangement for band of Ballad for Alphorn and Frustrated Percussionist by composer Dennis Armitage. He was aided by his wife Lisa who, as the frustrated percussionist, displayed her virtuosity on the triangle, cow bell, slide whistle, police whistle, bird call etc. Having never heard of this composer, I checked and learned that he was born in England, but lived most of his life in Switzerland. Hence the interest in the alphorn. We have learned that Dan and Lisa will be performing this work in Lindsay on October 28 with piano and organ accompaniment. Hopefully, we’ll have details of that event in time for the October issue.

Other

For those concerts which were not cancelled because of weather conditions, the common theme was the Canada 150/sesquicentennial. For most that meant a major component of the programs had to be Canadian content. In most of the programs this Canadian content was largely by lesser-known contemporary Canadians. As a form of memorial, almost every concert that I was aware of featured something by Howard Cable. Unfortunately I saw little, if any, 19th-century or early 20th-century Canadian works. Although there are several fine concert band arrangements of his work, the only work by Calixa Lavallée in any concert program which came to my attention was O Canada (other than, as mentioned, Calixa Lavallée’s Bridal Rose Overture at Wychwood).

Trivia

To lighten things up for the coming musical season it might be time for a bit of trivia. In the spring I had the pleasure of attending a fun-raising trivia night for the Amadeus Choir. Based on the popular Trivial Pursuit, attendees formed teams around tables and provided team answers to questions posed. Each team had to choose a team name. There were prizes for correct answers, but there was also a prize for the best team name. The name which struck the chord with me was “La Triviata.”

Anyone who plays a musical instrument knows only too well that one of the perils on the learning curve is learning the meaning of the multitude of stylistic markings which lie beneath the notes on any score telling us how that bit should be played. During a recent rehearsal, while sight reading a new work, I realized that I had never seen a warning of an impending awkward, difficult or tricky passage. Ergo, it is time to add to the lexicon. How about Jp or Justo pretendo as a recognized warning for such situations?

Hail (and Farewell?)

On a recent TV news broadcast there was a brief showing of US
President Trump arriving at some ceremonial function. He was greeted by a military band in full dress regalia with ceremonial trumpeters at the fore. After suitable trumpet flourishes and fanfare, the president stepped down to the tune of the traditional Hall to the Chief. Having heard of a controversy about this particular music, I dug into some notes which I had made some years ago. The first question might be why this music, written by an Englishman? Based on Sir Walter Scott’s Lady of the Lake. It seems that Chester Arthur, US President in the late 1880s questioned why important ceremonial occasions would require music by anyone but an American composer. Based on 1812 by James Sanderson who added words from Scottish Gaelic melody, music, written by an Englishman? Based on a question might be why this music, written by an Englishman? Based on Sir Walter Scott’s Lady of the Lake. It seems that Chester Arthur, US President in the late 1880s questioned why important ceremonial occasions would require music by anyone but an American composer. Based on this, a call went out for an American composition. While there may have been other submissions, John Philip Sousa submitted his new Presidential Polonaise. It never caught on, and Hall to the Chief is still the choice. But with his emphasis on buy American, will the current president reconsider? Several renditions of Presidential Polonaise are available on YouTube.

**Coming**

The Toronto New Horizons bands will be starting back soon with their annual Instrument Exploration Workshop to be held Friday, September 8 at 7:30pm at the Long and McQuade store on Bloor Street. As in the past, this will be an excellent opportunity for anyone, considering taking up music or getting back after an absence, to consider which instrument might appeal to them. Just a few years ago the first New Horizons band was formed in Toronto with modest hopes. This year there will be a second beginner band bringing the total number of NH bands in Toronto to ten. Classes begin September 11.

On Tuesday, October 10, Silverthorn Symphonic Winds presents the first concert of their season in the series, 59 Minute Soiree. Wilmar Heights Event Centre – Concert Hall, 963 Pharmacy Ave, Toronto (just north of Eglinton). These informal musical entertainments feature a variety of lighter music.

The Hanford Youth Band is preparing for an interesting season including a concert with the West Humber Steel Band in their “Rising Stars Brass and Steel” concert in the new year. For anyone interested in joining this great band, auditions are Saturday, September 16. Applications may be submitted online.

The York Regional Brass are preparing for another season of brass band music. They are looking for new members and would welcome inquiries. They rehearse in Aurora on Wednesday evenings. If interested, contact Peter Hussey at pnhussey@rogers.com.

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

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The WholeNote listings are arranged in five 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 54.

**C. MUSIC THEATRE** covers a wide range of music types: from opera, operetta and musicals, to non-traditional performance types where words and music are in some fashion equal partners in the drama. Starts on page 55.

**D. IN THE CLUBS (MOSTLY JAZZ)** is organized alphabetically by club. Starts on page 56.

**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 59.

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

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

**LISTINGS DEADLINE.** The next issue covers the period from October 1 to November 7, 2017. All listings must be received by Midnight Friday September 8.

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

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

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### A. Concerts in the GTA

#### Monday September 1

- 8:00: Contact Contemporary Music. Intersection. Jam Factory, 2 Matilda St. 416-902-7010. $15-$20. Also at Yonge Dundas Square (Sep 2, 2pm-10pm); Allan Gardens (Sep 4, 1pm-4pm).

#### Saturday September 2


### B. BANDITS IN THE VALLEY

#### TAPESTRYOPERA.COM

- **SEPT 2 - 30, 2017**

#### Saturday September 2

- 12:00 noon: Tapestry Opera. Bandits in the Valley. See Sep 2. Also 1:30, 3:30; Sep 10, 16, 23, 24, 30.

#### Sunday September 3

- 12:00 noon: Tapestry Opera. Bandits in the Valley. See Sep 2. Also Sep 9, 10, 16, 23, 24, 30.

- 1:30: Tapestry Opera. Bandits in the Valley. See Sep 2. Also Sep 9, 10, 16, 23, 24, 30.

- 3:30: Tapestry Opera. Bandits in the Valley. See Sep 2. Also Sep 9, 10, 16, 23, 24, 30.

#### Monday September 4


### Wednesday September 6

- 6:00: ClassyAF. Hogtown Brass Quintet. Ira Zingralf, trumpet; Tristan Tye, trumpet; Jason Austin, horn; Paul Tarusso, trombone; Ian Feenstra, tuba. Dakota Tavern, 249 Ossington Ave. 416-850-4579. $20/$15(adv).

### Thursday September 7


- 6:00: ClassyAF. Four Seasons of Buenos Aires. Piazzolla: Four Seasons. Jane Street Trio: Rebecca MacLeod, violin; Sarah Steeves, cello; Talia Blackman, piano. La Revolution, 2848 Dundas St. W. 416-766-0746. $20/$15(adv).


- 12:00 noon: Tapestry Opera. Bandits in the Valley. See Sep 2. Also 1:30, 3:30; Sep 16, 23, 24, 30.

- 12:00 noon: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. World of Music: Mysterious Barnacles. A cross-Canada concert in honour of World Suicide Prevention Day. Lorna MacDonald, soprano; Sarah Harland, soprano; Monica Whicher, soprano; Russell Braun, baritone; Judy Loman, harp; Carolyne Lahaie, piano; Tracy Wong, conductor. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-408-0208, Free.

- 1:30: Tapestry Opera. Bandits in the Valley. See Sep 2. Also 3:30; Sep 16, 23, 24, 30.

- 2:00: Craig Visser and Emily Shaw Guitar Duo. Guitar Concert. Works by Giuliani, Assad, Chopin, and Craig Visser. St. Barnabas Anglican Church, 361 Danforth Ave. 416-463-1344. $20; $10(sr/st).


- 4:00: Church of St. Mary Magdalene (Toronto). Organ Fireworks. Andrew Adair,
organ. 477 Manning Ave. 416-531-7955. Free.

Tuesday September 12
- 6:00: ClassyAF. TSO Cellist Roberta Janzen. Kodaly and Bach cello suites. Dakota Tavern, 249 Ossington Ave. 416-850-4579. $20/$15(adv).

Wednesday September 13
- 12:15: Hope United Church. Music @ 12 Concert Series. Elyssian Duo: Dylan Rook Maddix, trumpet; James Renwic...t; and others. Revival Bar, 738 College St. 416-335-7888. $20/$15(adv).
- 6:00: ClassyAF. TSO Cellist Roberta Janzen. Kodaly and Bach cello suites. Dakota Tavern, 249 Ossington Ave. 416-850-4579. $20/$15(adv).

Thursday September 14
- 1:00: Miles Nadal JCC. Leonard Cohen and Bob Dylan: The Two Jewish Folk Poets. Terry Lim, flutes; Darren Creech, piano. 345 Sorauren Ave. 416-822-9781. $25; $10(st). Cash only.
- 8:00: Small World Music. Hong Sung Hyun’s Chobeobi. Sung Hyun Hong, Jang-gu, sorì; Sung Eun Cha, sogeuem; Pyung Eun Lee, gayagume; Seonghyeon Kang, Korean percussion; Tae Jeong Kim, Korean percussion; Hyun’s Chobeolbi. Small World Music Centre, Artscape Youngplace, 180 Shaw St. 416-536-5439. $30/$20(adv).

Friday September 15
- 7:00: Kensington Market Jazz Festival. Micah Barnes and Jackie Richardson. Handlebar, 1585 Augusta Ave. 647-748-7433. $25. Festival runs Sep 15-17 at various venues.

Saturday September 16
- 12:00 noon: Tapestry Opera. Bandits in the Valley. See Sep 2. Also 1:30; 3:30; Sep 23, 24, 30.
- 1:30: Tapestry Opera. Bandits in the Valley. See Sep 2. Also 3:30; Sep 23, 24, 30.
- 8:00: Kensington Market Jazz Festival. Elizabeth Shepherd. Poetry Jazz Cafe, 224 Augusta Ave. 416-599-5299. $25. Festival runs Sep 15-17 at various venues.

Soley Ensemble
Mystical Sufi Music & Dance
Saturday September 16
Smallworldmusic.com

Search:
Date:
Go

Just Ask
Listings online. Any time.

www.thewholenote.com
Friday September 22

**6:00: Dinner and a Song, Al Lerman. Stone Cottage Pub, 3750 Kingston Rd., Scarborough. 416-265-7392. $40(includes meal); $20(concert only).**

**A JOYOUS WELCOME**

**SEP 21–24**

KOEHRER HALL
tafelmusik.org

**Friday September 22**

**6:00: Dinner and a Song, Al Lerman. Stone Cottage Pub, 3750 Kingston Rd., Scarborough. 416-265-7392. $40(includes meal); $20(concert only).**

**A JOYOUS WELCOME**

**SEP 21–24**

KOEHRER HALL
tafelmusik.org

**JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTRE ORCHESTRA WITH WYNTON MARSALIS**

**WED SEP 20 • 8 PM**

**FOR TICKETS CALL 416-872-4255 OR VISIT MASSEYHALL.COM**

**Wednesday September 20**


**7:00: Roman Timofeef. Piano Recital. Bach: Partita No. 2; Schubert: 3 Impromptus; Chopin: 4 Ballades. Heliconian Hall, 25 Hazelton Ave. 226-236-0381. $25; $15(sr/st). Also Sep 8(Kingston).**

**Thursday September 21**

**8:00: Massay Hall. Jazz at Lincoln Centre Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-1255. $59.50-$149.50.**


**Sunday September 17**


**12:30: Tapestry Opera. Bandits in the Valley. See Sep 2. Also Sep 3; 30; Sep 24, 30.**

**1:30: Tapestry Opera. Bandits in the Valley. See Sep 2. Also Sep 3; 30; Sep 24, 30.**

**2:00: Dewi Sant Welsh United Church. Homecoming Inekeend Concert. Toronto Welsh Male Voice Choir; Merched Dewi (church’s women’s choir). 33 Melrose Ave. 416-485-7583. $25.**

**3:30: Tapestry Opera. Bandits in the Valley. See Sep 2. Also Sep 24, 30.**


**6:00: Gallery 545. Imperfect Art Song Recital. Works by Cerrone, Livingston, R. Strauss and Stravinsky. Lindsay Lalla, sopran; Tanya Paradowski, piano; Brian Farrow, percussion; Sue Farrow, clarinet. 345 Sorauren Ave. 416-822-9781. $25; $15(st).**


**7:30: Koichi Inoue. Brampton Chamber Music Concert Series. Hannah Simes, flute; Sonya Sim and Ashlyn Chou, piano. St. Paul’s United Church (Brampton), 30 Main St. S, Brampton. 904-450-9220. PWYC.**

**7:30: Live at West Plains! Trumpet in My Ear. Hall: original works. George Hall and Iris Rodrigues, vocals; Brahim Goldhammer, vocals; Robert Brownlie, narrator. West Plains United Church, 549 Plains Rd. W., Burlington. 905-329-4871. $15. Doors at 7pm. Wheelchair accessible.**

**8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. A Tribute to Glenn Gould. Livingston: Sesiue for Canada’s 150th; Murphy: Curiosity, Genius, and the.**

**9:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. A Tribute to Glenn Gould. Livingston: Sesiue for Canada’s 150th; Murphy: Curiosity, Genius, and the Search for Petula Clark; Wagner: Siegfried Idyll; Brahms: Piano Concerto No. 1. Jan Lisiecki, piano, Colm Feore, host;**

**9:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. A Tribute to Glenn Gould. Livingston: Sesiue for Canada’s 150th; Murphy: Curiosity, Genius, and the Search for Petula Clark; Wagner: Siegfried Idyll; Brahms: Piano Concerto No. 1. Jan Lisiecki, piano, Colm Feore, host;**
Peter Oundjian, conductor; Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-596-3873. From $34.75. Also Sep 21(7:30pm).

- 8:00: Tafelmusik. A Joyous Welcome. See Sep 21. Also Sep 24(mat), 26(George Weston Recital Hall).
- 8:00: Toronto Operaette Theatre. Operettres. Viennese Operetta and other works. Michael Barrett, Adam Fisher and Thomas Sigwald, tenors; Christian Koch, piano, conductor. St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 27 Front St. E. 416-366-7723. $29-$49. Also Sep 22(eve), 24(eve).

Sunday September 24

- 12:00 noon: Tapestry Opera. Bandits in the Valley. See Sep 2. Also 1:30; 3:30; Sep 30.
- 1:30: Tapestry Opera. Bandits in the Valley. See Sep 2. Also 3:30; Sep 30.

  
  SUN SEP 24 • 2 PM
  
  Presented by Royal Canadian Military Institute & Roy Thomson Hall

  FOR TICKETS CALL
  416-872-1255
  OR VISIT
  ROYTHOMSONHALL.COM

- 3:00: Toronto Operaette Theatre. Operettres. Viennese Operetta and other works. Michael Barrett, Adam Fisher and Thomas Sigwald, tenors; Christian Koch, piano, conductor. St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 27 Front St.

E. 416-366-7723. $29-$49. Also Sep 22(eve), 23(eve).

Tuesday September 26

- 12:10: Nine Sparrows Arts Foundation/Yorkminster Park Baptist Church. Lunchtime Chamber Music: Jessica Tse, Clarinet; Robert Wilson, Violin; John Mooredale, Violin. Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, 1585 Yonge St. 416-241-1298. Free; donations welcomed.

TOSO CHAMBER SOLOISTS
3:15pm Sept 24

- 3:30: Tafelmusik. A Joyous Welcome. See Sep 21. Also Sep 26(eve; George Weston Recital Hall).
- 4:00: St. Olave’s Anglican Church. Choral Evensong for Michaelmas. Choir of St. Peter’s, Erindale. 360 Windermere Ave. 416-769-5566. Free. donations welcome. Religious service. Followed by Peach Tea in which Clement Carelse will speak on the influence of the Reformation on church music.
- 7:00: Christian Performance Art Centre. Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat. Lloyd Webber: Jacob & Sons, Go Go Go; Coke. Boon: Sesquie Episode IV “A New Hope”. Timothy Crouch, flute; Elizabeth Eccleston, oboe; Anthony Thompson, clarinet; Kevin Harris, bassoon; Curtis Vander Hyden, horn; Dakota Tavern, 249 Ossington Ave. 416-650-4579. $20/$15(ad).

Mooredale concerts.com

St. Michael’s Chapel Presents
SISTINE CHAPEL CHOIR
TUESDAY | SEPT 26 | 7:30 PM

More info at: st michael’scathedralsuch.com/concerts

SEP 26
GEORGE WESTON RECITAL HALL

Sun. 24th Sept at 4 p.m.

Choral Evensong
with St. Peter’s Choir, Erindale
followed by Peach Tea and

MUSIC OF THE REFORMATION

Clement Carelse

directs the choir for Evensong and presents an illustrated talk on the dramatic influence of the Reformation on the music of the Christian church, in the first of our special events marking the 500th anniversary of its launch in 1517.

St. Olave’s Church
Bloor and Windermere
416-769-5568
stolaves.ca

Wednesday September 27

- 12:30: Organix Concerts/All Saints Kingsway. Kingsway Organ Recital: Christopher Dawes, organ. All Saints Kingsway Anglican Church, 2850 Bloor St. W. 416-769-5524. Freewill donation.

416-382-9781. $25; $10(st). Cash only.

TOSO.CA

Sep 27–30
Erin Wall, soprano

Brahms German Requiem

Brahms German Requiem. Boon: Sesquie for Canada’s 150th; Louie: Triple Concerto; Brahms: German Requiem. Erin Wall,
A. Concerts in the GTA

soprano; Russell Braun, baritone; Jonathan Crow, violin; Yosuke Kawasaki, violin; Andrew Wan, violin; Toronto Mendelssohn Choir; Peter Oundjian, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375. From $34.75. Also Sep 28(3pm), 30(7:30pm).

Thursday September 28


Friday September 29

● 7:00: Roy Thomson Hall. Richard Claryderman, Piano. 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-1255. $53-$189.

Saturday September 30

● 12:00 noon: Tapestry Opera. Bandits in the Valley. See Sep 2. Also 1:30, 3:30.

Sunday October 1


Sunday October 8

● 2:00: Centre Music Salon. 23rd Annual Schubertiad: Schubert Manifold. Emily Kruze, violin; Inna Perkins, piano; Giles Tomkins, bass-baritone; Kathryn Tremills, piano; Monica Whitcher, soprano; Boris Zarankin, piano. Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, 427 Bloor St. W. 416-466-6323. $50; $40(st/adv); $15(13-25); $5(12 and under).

ANNA MAGDALENA KOKITS Coast to Coast Tour

A piano recital celebrating Austrian and Canadian music

Supporting works by:
Ludwig Van Beethoven | Manuela Kerer | Alexander von Zemlinksy | Vivian Fung | Ernst Toch | George Gershwin

September 30th, 7 pm
St. Andrew’s Church, 73 Simcoe Street, Toronto

anna.magdalena.kokits.com
Piano, Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, 1585 Yonge St, 416-241-1298. Free; donations welcomed.


8:00: Gallery 345. Ventus Machina Woodwind Quintet. CD Launch: In the Weeds. Jazz-inspired program featuring works by D’Rivera, Kutnowski, Tittlebaum and Bernstein. 345 Sorauren Ave. 416-822-9781. $25; $15(st). Cash only.

8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Music of John Williams. Fugue: Sesquie for Canada’s 150th; works by John Williams. Steven Reineke, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375. From $33.50. Also Oct 4(2pm) and 5(8pm).

60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375. From $33.50. Also Oct 3, 4, 5(all at 8pm).


8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Music of John Williams. Works by John Williams. Steven Reineke, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375. From $33.50. Also Oct 4(2pm) and 5(8pm).


8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Music of John Williams. Fugue: Sesquie for Canada’s 150th; works by John Williams. Steven Reineke, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375. From $33.50. Also Oct 4(2pm) and 5(8pm).


23rd Anniversary Season 2017/2018
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23rd ANNUAL SCHUBERTIAD:

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Lara St. John, violin
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R. STRAUSS
OCT 5 – 28

WOMEN’S MUSICAL CLUB OF TORONTO

LUDWIG and BÉLA

Friday, September 29th, 7:30 PM
Trinity St. Paul’s Centre, 427 Bloor St.W

SCHUBERT MANIFOLD

OFF CENTRE MUSİCsalon

Giles TOMKINS
Kathryn TREMILLS
Monica WHICHER
Boris ZARANKIN

TO ORDER TICKETS, please call 416.466.6323
offcentremusic.com

The Musicians In Ordinary for the Lutes and Voices

8:00PM September 29, 2017
St. Basil’s Church, St. Michael’s College
50 St. Joseph Street at Bay

~ A Mexican Mass ~
by Ignacio Jerusalem
St. Michael’s Schola Cantorum directed by Dr. Michael O’Connor; The Musicians in Ordinary orchestra led by Christopher Verrette

Free admission, donations welcome.
Call 416-926-7148 for more details.
**A. Concerts in the GTA**

**Friday October 6**
- **12:10: Music at St. Andrew’s. Noontime Recital.** TBA. St. Andrew’s Church (Toronto), 73 Simcoe St. 416-593-5600 x231. Free.

**Saturday October 7**
- **7:30: Toronto Symphony Orchestra.** Adzicoan. Braden: Sesquie for Canada’s 150th; Briton: Adzicoan; Neltin Na duct Tagoona, throat boxer; Farra Palmer, vocalist; Michel Munitobenue Bruyere, musician and dancer; Gary Kulehia, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375. From $40.60.

**Sunday October 8**
- **2:00: SweetWater Music Festival. Panorama: Sunday Matinee Finale.** Mozart: Concerto in A Major K488; Shostakovich: Concerto No.1 for piano, trumpet and strings. Kati Giesler, piano; Drew Jurecka, Edwin Huizinga and Mark Fewer, violins; Rory McLeod, viola; Amahl Arulandan, cello; Joseph Phillips, double bass; Guy Few, trumpet; John Novacek, piano. Heartwood Hall, 932 2nd Ave., E. Owen Sound. 519-371-2833. $35; $10(St).

**B. Beyond the GTA**

**Saturday September 2**
- **11:00am: City of St. Catharines. Music in the Square.** Casual performances of local musicians during the St. Catharines Farmers Market. Lineup TBA. Market Square (St. Catharines), 91 King St. St. Catharines. 905-688-5600. Free. Every Saturday from June to October.

**Saturday September 3**

**Saturday September 9**
- **11:00am: City of St. Catharines. Music in the Square.** Casual performances of local musicians during the St. Catharines Farmers Market. Lineup TBA. Market Square (St. Catharines), 91 King St. St. Catharines. 905-688-5600. Free. Every Saturday from June to October.

**Saturday September 16**
- **11:00am: City of St. Catharines. Music in the Square.** Casual performances of local musicians during the St. Catharines Farmers Market. Lineup TBA. Market Square (St. Catharines), 91 King St. St. Catharines. 905-688-5600. Free. Every Saturday from June to October.
October 6, 7:30pm
140 Westmount Rd. N. • Waterloo. 519-885-8220 • 1-84226. Free.
● 8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society. Trio d’Argento. Schmitt: Sonatine for flute, clarinet and piano; Alice Ping Yee Ho: The mysterious boot for flute, bass clarinet and piano; Saint-Saëns: Tarantella; La: Musica Universalis; Ibert: Deux interludes for flute, clarinet and piano; and other works. SBHille Marquardt, flute; Peter Stoll, clarinet; Todd Yaniv, piano. KWCMS Music Room, 57 Young St. W. • Waterloo. 519-886-1673. $40; $25(at).

Thursday October 5
● 7:00: Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts. Royal Conservatory Orchestra. Mendelssohn: Hebrides Overture; Liszt: Piano Concerto No.1; Tchaikovsky: Symphony No.4. Gábor Takács-Nagy, conductor; Leon Bernsdorf, piano. 390 King St. W. • Kingston. 613-533-2424. $35; $10(at).

Friday October 6
● 7:00: Magisterio Solists. Magisteria at the Museum: Italian Voyage. Verdi: String Quartet; and works by Donizetti, Respighi and Puccini. Guest: Sophie Louise Roland, soprano. Museum London Theatre, 421 Ridout St. N. • London. 519-661-0333. $30; $25(at); $15(st); $10(child).

Saturday October 7
● 11:00am: City of St. Catharines. Music in the Square. Casual performances of local musicians during the St. Catharines Farmers’ Market. Lineup TBD. Market Square (St. Catharines), 91 King St. • St. Catharines. 905-688-5600. Free. Every Saturday from June to October.

The wholenote
September 1, 2017 - October 7, 2017
55
In the Case of Lula Lounge “CLOSED FOR RENOVATION” Is a Hopeful Sign!

DAVID PERLMAN

Lula Lounge at 1587 Dundas W. in Toronto describes itself as a “music club, venue, bar, restaurant, community centre, ground zero to the exploding world music scene in Toronto ... home to Latin, salsa, jazz, reggae, indie, and more.” So when a place like that shuts up shop in the middle of summer, people notice.

We certainly did. So we decided to ask José Ortega, Lula co-founder and artistic director, what was up.

WholeNote: Can you say something about the reno — is it mainly cosmetic or also functional?

Ortega: It’s a facelift, for sure: it vastly improves the washrooms and installs a wheelchair accessible washroom on the main floor. The renos don’t also give us more room in the lobby area, which Lula patrons now can become really crowded on a busy night. But it’s more than just a facelift. Making Lula more accessible will let us serve client and communities better and more safely.

And in terms of your overall Lula mandate and your relationship with the surrounding community?

We do a lot of educational programming for youth and host many public meetings. The barrier free, universal washroom will make it easier for clients of all ages with mobility challenges to enjoy the music and activities presented here. Lula programming is done by the not-for-profit organization Lula Music and Arts Centre, which allowed us to get help from the City of Toronto Culture Build fund as well

In the Case of Lula Lounge “CLOSED FOR RENOVATION” Is a Hopeful Sign!
as from Enabling Accessibility, a national program. It’s encouraging because we see both the municipal and federal government stepping up to invest in cultural projects that serve diverse communities.

So what can we look forward to when you re-open September 9? This is the second stage (the first was removing the drop ceiling in 2015 to reveal the true height of the main room) of what we hope will be a multiphase project. Within the next couple of years, we’re hoping to open up an enlarged mezzanine area so that we can increase our capacity and can accommodate more music lovers in an even better, more beautiful venue!

I recognize what you say about encouraging support from the city’s Culture Build fund and the federal Enabling Accessibility program. But what kind of risk is undertaking something like this in a moment in time when local street level venues in the city seem to be under siege on many fronts?

That’s an interesting question. We want to make sure that as leaders at city hall put forth the idea of a music city, that they understand that our city of music includes salsa, reggae, samba, jazz, classical Indian, soca and many other genres. Toronto can be a leader in all of these areas, not just in pop and indie forms. The folks down at the city’s music office have been very open to hearing about this but we need to keep delivering this message.

I sometimes get the feeling that various topdown initiatives intent on “making us into a music city” take priority over initiatives to nurture the music city we already are.

We’ve been very involved with the efforts to look at the challenges facing Toronto music venues and have been working with the Toronto Music Office. TMAC and other venues to see explore how bylaws and enforcement of those bylaws can create almost impossible situations for responsible live music venue operators. We’ve also been working with Music Canada Live on their Regional Advisory Committee on Toronto Venue Health. We do see a need to recognize what grassroots venues contribute to the culture and economy of our city. It’s easy to take this stuff for granted but it takes a huge amount of energy, money and dedication to keep a music venue going.

So you’re hopeful?
We’ve been at this for 15 years and have learned by trial and error how to survive in this market with its challenges and benefits. We’re feeling like the model we’re working with is supporting our mandate and should allow us to present live music for many years to come.

I noticed, from another story we’re following, Lula’s name among the organizations signing up for the new Polyphonic Ground collective. What’s your take on that?

We’re part of the Polyphonic Ground collective, which is currently a pilot project led by Small World Music to see what potential exists for small presenters who are serving diverse audiences and artists, to work together to lobby for resources, share best practices and develop audiences together. We’ll see where it goes but it’s bringing to light some interesting issues about access within the music industry.

On October 13, we’ll be hosting the first of a Polyphonic Ground panel series, which Lula has helped to put together, alongside the City of Toronto, Music Canada Live, Music Canada and Music Ontario. The series builds on a panel talk that we organized back in May and will look and diversity and inequities in the music industry. Ideally the series of conversations will lead to some clear recommendations about how to ensure that the festivals, conferences, funding, etc., better reflect the makeup of Toronto. As I say, we’ll see where it goes.

D) In the Clubs (Mostly Jazz)

(sax), Chris Lamont (drums) $15. September 22 8pm Brad Cheseman (bass) CD Release with Robert Chapman (guitar), Kelly Jefferson (sax), Sam Kogen (piano), Marito Marques (drums), with guest Adrian Farrugia (piano) $10.

Bloom
2315 Bloor St. W. 416-767-1315 bloomrestaurant.com
All shows: 19+. Call for reservations. July 27 7pm Patricia Canio Trio $45 (including dinner).

Blue Goose Tavern, The
1 Blue Goose St. 416-255-2442 thebluegoostavern.com
September 24 4pm Blues jam with the BG Rhythm Section (returning from tour; on every Sunday henceforth).

Burdock
1184 Bloor St. W. 416-546-4033 burdockey.com (full schedule)
All shows: 8pm September 7 9pm John Millard, Tim Postgate & Andrew Downing $8 (advance)/$10 (door).

Cameron House, The
408 Queen St. W 416-703-0811 thecameron.com (full schedule)

Castro’s Lounge
2116 Queen St. E. 416-699-8272 castrolounge.com (full schedule)
All shows: No cover/PWYC

Cavern Bar, The
76 Church St. 416-971-4440 thecavernbar.ca (full schedule)

C’est What
67 Front St. E. (416) 867-9499 cestwhat.com (full schedule)
September 16, 30 3pm The Hot Five Jazzmakers.

De Sotos
1079 St. Clair Ave. W. 416-651-2109 desotos.ca (full schedule)
Every Sun 11am Sunday Live Jazz Brunch No cover.

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

September 7 9pm John-Wayne Swingtet: John Farrell (guitar), Abbey Sholzberg (bass), Wayne Nakamura (guitar), Alexander Tikhionov (clarinet).

Gate 403
403 Roncesvalles Ave. 416-588-2930 gate403.com
All shows: PWYC.

September 1 5pm Roberta Hunt Trio; 9pm The Pearl Motel.
September 2 5pm Glen Hornblast with Friends. September 3 5pm Grateful Sunday. September 4 7pm Mike and Jill Daley Jazz Duo. September 8 5pm Anika Miles; 9pm Sean Bellaviti Latin Jazz Trio.
September 9 5pm Bill Heffernan’s Saturday Night.

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

September 17th at 4:30pm Brian Barlow Trio
October 1st at 4:30pm Allison Au Quartet

Christ Church Deer Park, 1570 Yonge St. (north of St. Clair at Heath St.) 416-920-5211 416-920-5211
Admission is free; donations are welcome. www.thereslifehere.org
D. In the Clubs (Mostly Jazz)

Sessions; 9pm Julian Fauth Blues Quartet.
September 16 5pm Bill Hefner’s Saturday.
September 23 5pm Bill Hefner’s Saturday Sessions; 9pm Tiffany Hannah Jazz Band.
September 28 9pm The Penny Pressers.

Grossman’s Tavern
379 Spadina Ave. 416-977-7000 grossmanstavern.com (full schedule) All shows: no cover unless otherwise noted.

Harlem Restaurant
67 Richmond St. E. 416-368-1920 harlemrestaurant.com (full schedule) All shows: 7:30-11pm (unless otherwise noted). Call for cover charge info.

Hirut Café and Restaurant
2050 Danforth Ave. 416-551-7560
Every Sun 3pm Nicola Vaughan’s Hirut Sundays. September 5, 9, 16, 20, 23, 29.

Home Smith Bar – See Old Mill, The
Hugh’s Room
2261 Dundas St. W 416 533 5483 hughroom.com All shows: 6:30pm unless otherwise noted.

September 8 It’s Gonna Be A Beautiful Night: celebrating the music of Prince $25/ad ($30/door).
September 15 Ron Ng $25/ad ($35/door). September 20 Vardy $30/ad ($35/door).
September 21 Steve Strongman $25/ad ($30/door).
September 22 David Vest & The Willing Victims $25/ad ($30/door).
September 23 Jack de Keyzer $30/ad ($35/door).
September 26 Peter Asher & Albert Lee $40/ad ($45/door).
September 27 Dan Bern $25/ad ($30/door).
September 28 Matthew Byrne $20/ad ($25/door).
September 29 Arianna Gillis CD Launch $20/ad ($25/door).
September 30 Three Kings $35/ad ($38/door).

Jazz Bistro, The
295 Victoria St. 416-363-5299 jazzbistro.ca
Every Wed 6pm James Dunbar: September 1, 2, 9, 16, 23.
September 5 8:30pm Colin Hunter and the Anthony Terpstra Big Band Show. Mostly Frank $15.
September 12 8:30pm Colin Hunter and the Joe Sealy Quartet $15.
September 12 8pm Vaughan Misener Trio $15.
September 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30.

La Revolution
2848 Dundas St. W. 416-766-0746 lareve.webs.com
Every Tue 8pm Duets with Peter Mill and featured guests. Every Fri 7pm New Ventures. Every Sat 7:30pm Saturday Night Jazz (lineup TBA). Every Sun Solo piano Sundays (lineup TBA).

Local Gast, The
424 Parliament St. 416-916-9425

Local Pub, The
396 Roncesvalles Ave. 416-535-8225 localpub.ca (full schedule)

Lula Lounge
1585 Dundas St. W. 416-588-0307 lulalounge.com (full schedule)
September 7 8pm The 12th Annual Patsy Cline Birthday Show. September 20 8pm Sharon Jones.
September 15 10pm John Mayall & the Bluesbreakers.

Maison Du Jour
347 St. Laurent St. 416-206-8820 mdujour.ca (full schedule)
Every Thu 7:30pm Martin Loomer & His Orange Devils Orchestra $10.

N’awlins Jazz Bar & Dining
299 King St. W. 416-565-1958 nawlins.ca All shows: no cover/PWC.
Every Tue 6:30pm Stacie McGregor. Every Thu 8pm Nothin’ But the Blues w/ Joe Bowden (drums) and featured vocalists. Every Fri, Sat 8:30pm N’awlins All Star Band. Every Sun 7pm Brooke Blackburn.

Nice Bistro, The
117 Brock St. N., Whitby. 905-668-8839 nicebistro.com (full schedule)
June 14 San Murata $39.99 (dinner included).

Old Mill, The
21 Old Mill Rd. 416-236-2641

Pilot Tavern, The
22 Cumberland Ave. 416-923-5716 thepilot.ca
All shows: 3:30pm. No cover.
September 2 Allison Au (sax) Quartet with Jon Maharaj (bass), Amanda Tossoff (piano), Fabio Ragnelli (drums). September 9 Steve Holt (piano) Quartet with Kevin Turcotte (trumpet), Kiernan Oves (bass), Terry Clarke (drums). September 16 Frank Botto (drums) Quartet with Josef Botos (guitar), Matt Newton (piano), Attila Darvas (bass). September 23 Richard Underhill (sax) Quartet with Eric St. Laurent (guitar), John Meyer (bass), Chris Lamont (drums). September 30 Barry Elmes (drums) Quartet with Kelly Jefferson (sax), Ted Quinlan (guitar), Pat Collins (bass).

Poetry Jazz Café
22 Augusta Ave. 416-599-5299 poetryjazzcafe.com (full schedule)

Reposado Bar & Lounge
136 Ossington Ave. 416-532-6474 reposadobar.com (full schedule)

Reservoir Lounge, The
52 Wellington St. E. 416-955-0887 reservoirlounge.com (full schedule). All shows: 9:45pm Every Tue, Sat Tyler Yaraee and his Rhythm. Every Wed The Digs. Every Thu Stacey Kaniuk, Mary McKay, Every Fri Dee Dee and the Dirty Martins.

Rex Hotel Jazz & Blues Bar, The
194 Queen St. W. 416-586-2475 therex.ca (full schedule)
Call for cover charge info.
September 1 4pm Hogtown Synagogators; 6:30pm Hector Quartet; 9:45pm Alex Dean Quartet. September 2 12pm The Sinners Choir; 3:30pm Laura Hubert Band; 7:30pm Justin Bacchin; 9:45pm Jake ChinSholmes Blues.
September 3 11pm Cecelior Dixieland Jazz Band; 3:30pm Red Hot & Blue Dixieland Club Dixieland; 5pm Colin Story Quartet; 9:30pm Harry Vetro Quartet. September 4 6:30pm Peter Hill Quintet; 9:30pm Alec Trent’s Triple Bari Ensemble. September 5 6:30pm Nathan Hill’s Quest; 9:30pm Classic Rex Jazz Jam hosted by Chris Gale. September 6 6:30pm Alex Coleman’s A/C
Unit; 9:30pm New York's Jeremy Pelt with Johnny Griffin Quintet. September 7 6pm Toronto Undergraduate Jazz Festival; 9:45pm Columbus, Ohio's Tony Monaco Organ Trio. September 8 5pm Hogtown Syncopators; 6:30pm Hector Quartet; 9:45pm Columbus, Ohio's Tony Monaco Organ Trio. September 9 12pm The Sinners Choir; 3:30pm Neon Eagle; 7:30pm Justin Bacchus; 9:45pm Free man Dre. September 12 10pm Excelsior Dixieland Jazz Band; 3:30pm Red Hot Ramble; 7pm Colton Story Quartet; 9:30pm Alex Fourni- er's Trio. September 11 7:30pm University of Toronto Student Jazz Ensemble; 9:30pm John Cheeseman Big Band. September 12 7pm Nathan Hilz Sextet; 9:30pm New York & Van- couver's Hendrick Meurkens with Jeremy Price Quintet. September 20 6:30pm Laura Swaney & Star Triptych; 9:30pm New York & Vancouver's Hendrick Meurkens with Jeremy Price Quintet. September 21 6:30pm Kevin Quain; 9:45pm The Rex's Annual John Coltrane Tribute with the Pat Labarbera and Kirk MacDonald Quintet. September 22 4pm Hogtown Syncopators; 6:30pm Hector Quartet; 9:45pm Lorne Lofsky Quartet. September 16 12pm The Sinners Choir; 3:30pm Chris Hunt Tentet + 2,7;30pm Justin Bacchus; 9:45pm Raoul & The Bigger Time. September 17 12pm Excel- sior Dixieland Jazz Band; 3:30pm Dr. Nick & The Rollercoasters; 7pm Colton Story Quartet; 9:30pm Jonno Lightstone's Klezmology. September 18 6:30pm University of Toronto Student Jazz Ensemble; 9:30pm Josh Grossman- man TJO Big Band. September 19 6:30pm Nathan Hilz Sextet; 9:30pm New York & Van- couver's Hendrick Meurkens with Jeremy Price Quintet.

Galas and Fundraisers

• Sep 15 7:30-11:00. Labyrinth Ontario. Launch Event and Fundraiser: Performances by Bassam Bishara, Bulgarian/Balkan vocal and instrumental ensemble Meden Glas; and the Iranian Modal Music Ensemble of Toronto. Great Hall, 919 Bathurst St. Further information at labyrinthonline@gmail.com.


Lectures, Salons, Symposia


• Sep 24 2:00-5:00. Classical Music Club Toronto. Quatuor Mosaiques. Showcasing the artistry of one of the world’s foremost original instrument string quartets through CDs and video recordings. Annual membership: $25 (regular); $10 (sr/st). Free for first-time visitors. Donations accepted for refreshments. 416-888-2549.

• Sep 24 2:00. Toronto Opera Club. Guest Speaker: Wayne Gooding: “Arabella and the Right Man!”. Room 330, Faculty of Music, Edward Johnson Bldg, 80 Queen’s Park. $10. 416-924-3940.

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Canada in Words and Music: an intimate salon

Monday 25 September 7:30 p.m.


• Oct 12 7:30. University of Toronto Faculty of Music. From Public Stage to Private Par- lour: An Introduction to Rarely Performed Piano Works from Rossini’s “Years of Silence.”

Join pianist Enrico Eliisi for a lecture-recital highlighting the keyboard compositions of Rossini. Interspersed with several played examples and will end with a performance of selections from Péchés de vieillesse (Sins of Old Age). Walter Hall, 80 Queen’s Park. $40; $25 (sr/st): $10 (st). 416-408-0208.

Masterclasses


• Sep 29 10:00am-12:00noon. Organix Con- certs. Masterclass. Three organists perform large-scale works for Italian concert organist Mario Ciferri. Free; open to all. Timothy Eaton Memorial Church, 230 St. Clair Ave. W. In collaboration with TEMC, the Royal Can- adian College of Organists – Toronto Centre, and the Istituto Italiano di Cultura. For info call or text 416-571-3680 or tweet @organixconcerts or visit www.organixconcerts.ca.

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Six years ago, famed soprano Ambur Braid was lying on her back on the dressing room floor at Toronto’s Four Seasons Centre. She was already made up and attired in her regal black costume for her Canadian Opera Company public debut as the Queen of the Night in Mozart’s The Magic Flute. She was trying to ground herself on the hard surface, but was failing miserably. Her stomach was queasy, her heart was racing, and her mouth was bone dry. Worse than the physical symptoms was the terrifying thought that she’d forget her lines. “I can’t do this,” she told herself. “I’d rather get hit by a bus.”

Braid has no memory of how she survived that performance. But she knows it went well. “Thank goodness it always works out in the end,” she says.

Stage fright is nothing new for the Canadian singing sensation. She’s grappled with performance anxiety all her life. It’s worse prior to opening nights, and when her mentors are in the audience. “I get anxious because I don’t want to disappoint anyone – meeting their expectations matters a lot to me.” And even though her performances have earned rave reviews from critics, her fears have exacted a steep price. At times they’ve caused insomnia, weight loss, and even infections like bronchitis. “I get into a tizzy and that morphs into illness,” she says.

I spoke with three experts on stage fright about the subject: Toronto psychologist Kate Hays, who specializes in performance anxiety; Lisa Chisholm, preparation and performance coach at Master Performing; and Chase McMurren, MD, medical director and psychotherapist at the Al and Malka Green Artists’ Health Centre at the Toronto Western Hospital. If there’s one thing they all agree on, it’s that Braid is not alone.

Estimates of stage fright prevalence vary, says Hays, from 16% to 75%. Part of the difficulty of narrowing down these numbers comes from the fact that not everyone with stage fright chooses to speak up about it. According to Chisholm, artists are expected to be tough – which means that many people afflicted with stage fright suffer silently. “If you feel nervous you think you either haven’t practised enough or your character is weak,” says Hays.

The wide range could also stem from differences in definition. It’s normal for a musician to fear an audience’s judgment. The body’s fight-or-flight system gets ramped up in response to the anxiety, causing hearts to thump, irregular breathing, sweaty palms, and trembling. But while a bit of excitement can give an edge to a performance, an exaggerated response can be debilitating.

“It’s hard to play the cello with sweaty fingers or sing when you’re so tense you can’t breathe properly,” says Chisholm.

While anyone can get stage fright, perfectionists (people with unrealistically high standards) are especially prone to the condition, says McMurren. Many artists believe that self-criticism is beneficial. “They think they’ll get lazy if they’re kind to themselves.”

Braid herself identifies as a perfectionist. “I dwell on mistakes that last an eighth of a second,” she says. She feels this self-castigation is necessary to improve. “You need to never be satisfied – there’s always something more you have to know.”

But far from being helpful, this negative self-talk can be harmful, says McMurren. Many artists are so hard on themselves that they procrastinate, putting off practising indefinitely. Even if the piece is near-flawless, perfectionists berate themselves for a single error. In extreme cases, their unattainable expectations can lead to anxiety or depression.

Luckily, there is help for those afflicted with stage fright. Pop vocalist Kira May, who sings in the project Kira May, has grappled with social anxiety (fearing judgments from others). Stage fright was one of its manifestations. She began writing songs at age 12, but would only sing when she was alone in her bedroom. As she grew up, she continued singing on her own, turning to the technique of looping, (layering her own voice on top of itself) to avoid collaboration. Jamming with musicians would trigger her worst symptoms – a racing heart, restricted breathing, and shakiness. She worried about disappointing them. “What if I hit a wrong note and they never want to play with me again?” She was so afraid of failing that she put off getting gigs. But after meeting her partner, who thrived on playing publicly, she decided it was time to face her fears.

According to Chisholm, there are three broad areas underlying performance anxiety that can be targeted. Some revved up performers need to reign in their runaway physiology so they can regain their focus. They also need to hone their craft to feel adequately prepared. Finally, mental preparation can help performers handle whatever happens.

For Chisholm’s clients, boosting self-confidence is an important aspect of combatting stage fright – for which techniques for things like efficient practice are crucial. Instead of playing an entire piece over and over for hours, drilling in the mistakes, Chisholm encourages musicians to try concentrating on the troublesome sections, figuring
out where they mess up and why. “Am I sloppy? Are my two fingers going down at the same time at bar 3, making the A-sharp unclean?” Once you identify the problem, it’s easier to resolve it.

Varying the practice conditions also helps performers cope with the unknown, says McMurren. “The performance will likely be in a different context from the practice – if you don’t adapt you could be caught off guard,” he says. Rehearse on a new chair, perform standing up, or begin the score at a different place each time.

McMurren adds that it’s useful to rehearse performances mentally. “Imagine playing in front of an audience and them loving it,” he says. MRI scans have shown that practising positive guided imagery regularly boosts the growth of the hippocampus (an area associated with well-being). But musicians should visualize troubles as well as triumphs, says Hays. Imagine goofing up bar 156 and recovering from it at bar 157, she says. “It’s a way of handling the ‘what ifs’ that we all get into.”

First we have to dismantle the negative messages which weigh us down, McMurren explains. Cognitive behavior therapy, which debunks distorted thinking, can help replace punitive ideas with more compassionate ones. “Performers think if they’re not jerks to themselves they won’t make it,” he says. But in fact, a more accepting attitude towards oneself reduces anxiety. Recognizing that our worth extends beyond our art is also crucial, says McMurren. When artists find meaning in other areas of their lives, there’s less at stake during any given show.

Some musicians also take substances to cope with anxiety, McMurren continues. Alcohol can manage worry, while pot settles the nerves for some. But there are healthy alternatives. Deep breathing space,” she says. Her pooch, Walter, comes to her performances now and then. “It’s the most fun I’ve ever had onstage.”

Today, Braid knows how to cope on performance days. She works off nervous energy with squats and push-ups and by dancing to the overture. “It gets my breath moving and puts me into a positive head-space,” she says. Her pooch, Walter, comes to her performances now and then. “Having to focus on something else is nice.”

But while her Queen of the Night role will always be nerve-wracking, most of her work these days is enjoyable. “The show I’m in right now is a riot,” she says. “It’s the most fun I’ve ever had onstage.”

Vivien Fellegi is a former family physician now working as a freelance medical journalist.
If you’re reading The WholeNote for the first time “We Are All Music’s Children” is our monthly photo contest, now 13 years old. Here’s how it works. We publish the childhood photo of a member of the music community along with some fun clues and readers guess who it is for a chance to win prizes. In the following issue we publish a current adult photo of the same person, along with an interview about the music that shaped their early years. We announce our contest winners for the month and their prizes – usually concert tickets or recordings relating to the featured artist. We usually feature living artists, but occasionally also those unforgettably in living memory.

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IN THIS ISSUE
• we learn that his avatars were J.S. Bach, Richard Strauss, and Arnold Schoenberg;
• TSO associate concertmaster Mark Skazinetsky remembers the conductor of Siegfried Idyll;
• find his name in our concert listings for September 22 and 23; also September 24 – the day before his September birthday.

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Canadian soprano Jane Archibald’s international career continues to flourish with recent and upcoming performances in leading roles at the Met, Opéra national de Paris, La Scala, Royal Opera House Covent Garden, and opera houses in Düsseldorf, Munich, Zürich, Santa Fe and Madrid, plus a tour with the English Concert as Armida in Handel’s Rinaldo. Here at home, Archibald is the Canadian Opera Company’s Artist in Residence for the coming season, featured in Mozart’s The Abduction from the Seraglio, Stravinsky’s The Nightingale and Other Short Fables and as Zdenka in the COC’s premiere production of Strauss’ Arabella, which opens at the Four Seasons Centre on October 5.

Primarily known for her interest in the Baroque and classical eras – her discography includes music of Charpentier, Vivaldi, Haydn and Mozart – Archibald has also been known to venture bravely into the 20th century, as witnessed by the latest release from the Seattle Symphony. Continuing its own commitment to the music of our time, and in particular modern French repertoire, following three recordings of works by Henri Dutilleux, Ludovic Morlot leads the orchestra in seminal pieces by Olivier Messiaen (SSM1016 seattlesymphony.org). A relatively early work, Poèmes pour Mi, dates from 1936. Originally written for soprano and piano, the work appeared in an orchestral version the following year and was Messiaen’s first vocal work to be orchestrated. It was dedicated to his first wife, violinist Claire Delbos; “Mi” (as in “do, re, mi”), corresponding to the highest string, E, on the violin, was his nickname for her. As with all of his vocal settings, the texts are by the composer. Archibald’s clear, pure soprano voice is particularly well suited to this deeply personal work that explores the spiritual aspects of marriage. It is rarely heard in its orchestral version, and in fact this recording is a first for my own extensive Messiaen collection.

The song cycle is nicely complemented by another pivotal vocal work, Trois Petites Liturgies de la Présence Divine from 1944, following Messiaen’s release from a German prison camp in Silesia where he composed the Quatuor pour la fin du temps. The Liturgies were written for high male voices (the Northwest Boychoir in this recording) and an orchestra featuring Messiaen’s signature sounds of obbligato ondes Martenot and piano, played here by Cynthia Millar and Michael Brown respectively. All involved perform with distinction under Morlot’s direction in this significant addition to both the orchestra’s and Messiaen’s discography.

Having just mentioned Messiaen’s Quatuor, I will use it to segue to the next disc that caught my attention over the summer, Composer-Critics of the New York Herald Tribune (Other Minds OM 1024-2 otherminds.org). The outer Chorale movements of Lou Harrison’s Suite for Cello and Harp (1949) put me in mind of the Louange à l’Eternité de Jésus for solo cello and piano in Messiaen’s iconic work, not in a derivative sense, but rather in their meditative sensibility. Harrison (1917-2003) is one of five composers featured on this intriguing disc, which includes program notes and an extensive essay by another pioneering figure of American art music, Charles Amirkhanian, and two articles by the Herald Tribune’s chief critic Virgil Thomson. The more-than-50-page booklet is an important artifact in its own right, not only giving context to the music, but painting an intriguing picture of a time quite unlike our own, when art music was treated seriously, and prominently, by mainstream media.

Thomson’s own witty Capital Capitals, on a text by the inimitable Gertrude Stein, is included along with works by novelist/composer Paul Bowles, Australian-born Peggy Glanville-Hicks and a man who arguably had the biggest influence on our basic understanding of the very nature of what constitutes music, John Cage. Thomson’s 1927 setting of the tongue-twisting text, which riff’s on CAPITAL LETTERS and CAPITAL LETTERS, is scored for four alternating male voices and piano. It is the earliest work presented, with Glanville-Hicks’ caggy Sonata for Piano and Percussion (1951-52) with its, perhaps inevitable, echoes of Bartók, the most recent. Bowles is represented by the tongue-in-cheek Music for a Force (1938) for clarinet, trumpet, percussion and piano, and Cage by the quietly haunting, and now iconic, String Quartet in Four Parts (1949-50) performed by the New Music String Quartet.

Upon first listening I did not realize the recordings were historic, as the sound is convincingly pristine. But they are all monophonic and were originally issued by Columbia Records between 1953 and 1955 on the Modern American Music Series. Reproduced under license from Sony, this Other Minds release is a welcome addition to my understanding of mid-century American music and culture. The booklet also includes the strikingly modern cover art from the four original LPs.

Although recorded in 2014, Rebelles Baroques (EMCCD7777, early-music.com) is the most recent recording of Montreal’s Arion Orchestre Baroque to come my way. Featuring music of Quantz and Telemann, it focuses on two composers who developed and perfected the goûts réunis style of the early-to-mid 18th century, integrating French and Italian approaches into German music. While simply referred to as rebels in the disc’s title, the booklet essay calls Georg Philipp Telemann and Johann Joachim (J.J.) Quantz “Delightful Rebels” (“Charmant Rebels” in Jacques-André Houle’s original French) which seems to incorporate both the elegance of the music and the fact that Quantz and Telemann had to fight against family prejudices to follow their chosen musical paths. Telemann was expected to become a clergyman like his father, while Quantz’s family trade was blacksmithing. Both overcame the odds to follow their own dreams and to our benefit the rest, as they say, is history.

Telemann (1681-1767) is the senior of the two, and his output spans virtually all musical genres. It seems most of his instrumental music dates from before 1740 and in the case of the three concertos included here, likely before 1721 for presentation in Frankfurt by the collegium musicum of the Frauenstein society of which he was the director. The first is a concerto grosso for strings and continuo featuring the whole group, with Alexander Weimann directing from the harpsichord. The second has the distinction of being the first concerto written for viola, and Jean-Louis Blouin shines in a surprisingly busy and ornately ornamented solo part. The third is a lovely flute concerto with an opening reminiscent of birds awakening at first light. Like all of the Telemann concertos included here, it is in four movements as in the earlier sonata di chiesa form, rather than the Italian-style three movements. All of the movements, including the stately Largo, are flowing and danceable.

Quantz (1697-1772) was, like Telemann, a multi-instrumentalist, but most prized for his flute playing. He was flute tutor and composer to Frederik the Great of Prussia, as of 1741 composing exclusively for the musical king (for whom Bach wrote the famed Musical Offering). He is represented by two (three-movement) concertos which bookend the disc, one for solo flute and one for two flutists, Arion stalwart Claire Guimond who is joined Alex Raine-Wright, a renowned soloist and regular member of Infusion Baroque and Flûte Alors. The two trade lines seamlessly and work in perfect harmony throughout, especially in the Presto finale which brings this engaging disc to a rousing close.

The next disc also comes out of Quebec, but that’s about where any resemblance ends. I first thought that Sea Songs & Shanties (ATMA ACD2 2749) was a departure for La Ne (la-nef.com) but I now realize
that in their more-than-two-and-a-half-decade history La Nef has encompassed a wealth of styles from “early music, the music of oral traditions, world music, experimental and contemporary approaches to musical creation.”

This current project is under the direction of eclectic singer Seán Dagher, himself as at home in an Irish pub as in many musical traditions from Medieval and Baroque through contemporary folk. Dagher tells us: “These songs did not start out as music to be heard. These were songs to sing, songs to help with the work, songs to pass the time. Their original functions influenced the way they are built […] as call and response songs; a whole crew can learn a song from one man in the first instants he’s singing it. They are sung rhythmically, so the hauling is most efficient. Or they are sung freely, as if to fill the long days and evenings spent together. These songs are spread by oral trading, creating many variants and variations.”

This tradition was brought home to me earlier this summer when I came upon a version of the song I had grown up believing was called Sloop John B. As I found out from Tom Lewis’ rendition of the original Nassau Bound, the Beach Boys “left out the [most interesting] parts.” That, in combination with re-visiting a disc I wrote about last year, by Chaim Tannenbaum, which includes a duet with Loudon Wainwright III on the traditional tune Paddy Doyle, primed the pump for my appreciation of this Irish-tinged maritime journey with La Nef.

The disc opens gently with Leave Her, Johnny, with sparse cittern accompaniment that gradually adds more voices, bass and flute and grows to a full finish replete with bosun’s whistle, wave sounds and seagull cries. As the disc progresses through drinking songs and laments, cautionary tales of press gangs and ship wrecks, welcoming tunes like Over the Hills and Far Away and Haul on the Bowline, we are drawn into the myriad moods of the seafarer. It’s at times Randy and rugged, so strap yourself to the mast and prepare for adventure. But be forewarned, like shades of the John B: “I hate to sail on this rotten tub: No grog allowed and rotten grub,” so pack a lunch!

I have written on several occasions in these pages about “my favourite band,” the newgrass-flavoured Joy Kills Sorrow, and lamented their demise. Since they disbanded a couple of years ago I have been on the lookout for a successor to comfort me. Although not as instrumentally virtuosic, over the summer I had the pleasure of hearing a group from Australia that went a long way towards filling that void: The MAE Trio, three young women of whose given names (Maggie, Anita and Elsie) provide the acronym of their trio’s name. When my wife and I saw them at the Burdock, they played violin, mandolin, guitar, banjo and cello between them, and produced some sweet high harmonies on mostly original material. One of the songs, Haul Away, is a quasi-sea shanty, but I don’t think that alone explains my infatuation – I left the gig humming the title track of their latest release Take Care, Take Cover (Creative Victoria Records) and am very glad to have taken a copy home with me.

Evidently this was their second trip to Canada (and second Burdock appearance) and although it may be a while before they return – throughout September and October these world travellers have shows in Ireland and various places in the UK – you can sample material, and buy the CD, on their website (themae trio.com).

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 enhanced reviews in the Listening Room with audio samples, upcoming performance details and direct links to performers, composers and record labels. David Olds, DISCoveries Editor discoveries@thewholenote.com

A merican violinist Rachel Barton Pine follows up her outstanding Testament issue of the complete Bach Solo Partitas & Sonatas with another wonderful 2CD set of solo violin works, this time Bel Canto Paganini: 24 Caprices and other Works for Solo Violin (Avie AV2374).

In her excellent booklet essay Pine quite rightly stresses the musicality of these remarkable pieces, and not just the technical aspects. Paganini was greatly admired by his operatic contemporaries, with Rossini, Verdi and Bellini all considering his compositions to be fully in the bel canto Italian vocal style, and Pine’s interpretations always stress the melodic content. There’s never a hint of anything but complete mastery of the technical issues either.

In addition to the 24 Caprices Op.1 three other Paganini solo works are here: the astonishing Introduction and Variations in G Major Op.38 on Puisiello’s “Nel cor più non mi sento;” the brief Duo mervelle Op.6 “Duet for One;” and the Caprice d’adieu Op.68. Pine’s playing leaves you simply breathless.

Finally, in acknowledgement of Paganini’s profound influence on her, Pine adds her own brilliant Introduction, Theme and Variations on “God Defend New Zealand” which she wrote in 2000 for the end of her first tour of New Zealand. If you didn’t know, you would swear it was by Paganini. It’s a dazzling end to a remarkable set.

The outstanding American-Korean violinist Esther Yoo follows up her terrific debut Deutsche Grammophon CD of the Sibelius and Glazunov concertos with another outstanding collaboration with Vladimir Ashkenazy and the Philharmonia Orchestra on the same label, this time featuring works for violin and orchestra by Tchaikovsky (481 5032).

It should come as no surprise, given Ashkenazy’s involvement, that all the performances here display a marked sensitivity and an innate empathy for the music. The Violin Concerto is the main work here, of course, and the measured, unhurried opening signals an approach...
that continues throughout the work, although there is never a lack of passion when needed.

The high performance standard is maintained throughout the remaining works on the disc. The two pieces from Swan Lake – the Pas de Deux from Act 1 and the Danse Russe from Act 3 – are both original violin solos from the ballet score, and not transcriptions or arrangements. The poignantly Sérenade mélancolique in B flat Minor, Op.26 was the composer’s first major work for violin and orchestra. The really lovely Valse-Scherzo Op.34 and the Glazunov orchestration of the Mélodie – the last of the three pieces that comprise Souvenir d’un lieu cher, Op.42 – complete another outstanding CD from these artists.

The Dutch violinist Simone Lamsma is the soloist on Shostakovich/Gubaidulina, her second CD on the Challenge Classics label and featuring the former’s Violin Concerto No.1 in A Minor, Op.77 and the latter’s In tempus praesens. The Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra is conducted by James Gaffigan in the Shostakovich and by Reinbert de Leeuw in the Gubaidulina (CC72681).

It's an impressive performance of the Shostakovich, a deeply personal work written a few years after the end of the Second World War but temporarily shelved when the composer was once again vilified by the Communist Party in 1948; it didn't receive its premiere until 1955. Lamsma is terrific throughout.

Sofia Gubaidulina’s In tempus praesens is her second violin concerto, an extended single-movement work written for Anne-Sophie Mutter in 2007. A work of extreme contrasts that demands great virtuosity from the soloist, it is scored for a large orchestra that does not include first or second violins, giving the soloist unchallenged freedom in the higher string register. Lamsma handles every challenge quite superbly.

The Shostakovich is a studio recording from 2016, while the Gubaidulina was recorded live in concert at the Royal Concertgebouw, Amsterdam in October 2011. The Netherlands orchestra provides excellent support in both instances.

**Gegenwelten (Contrasting Worlds)** is the debut CD from the German violinist Sarah Christian, accompanied by the Armenian pianist Lilit Grigoryan in a recital of works by Prokofiev and Schubert (Genuin GEN 17472).

If 27 seems to be a rather late age for a debut CD then in this particular case it was certainly worth the wait; there is a clear and undeniable maturity to both Christian’s playing and her interpretations of the Prokofiev Sonata No.1 in F Minor, Op.80 and the Schubert Fantasie in C Major, D934. The Prokofiev sonata has a dark, ominous opening movement, a strikingly strong second movement, an ethereal slow movement and a tense and desolate final Allegroissimo, all making for a memorable performance.

The Schubert Fantasie is ostensibly an extended single-movement work, but in fact consists of four loosely connected sections played without a break. Again, it’s a beautifully balanced performance, with a finely nuanced opening that sets the tone for everything that follows.

Both players are in tremendous form here, and the recorded sound is outstanding. In the publicity blur Christian says that “When playing, I really feel everything there is to feel.” That doesn’t always come through on a recording, but on this exemplary debut disc it most certainly does.

I didn’t see the first two volumes of the ongoing cycle of the complete Beethoven Sonatas for Fortepiano and Violin on period instruments, featuring violinist Susanna Ogata and Ian Watson on the fortepiano, but Volume 3 (CORO Connections COR16154) of the four-CD series certainly makes me wish that I had.

The works here are the three sonatas published in 1803 as Opus 30: No.6 in A Major; No.7 in C Minor; and No.8 in G Major. The fortepiano obviously lacks the power of a modern grand piano but more than compensates for this with its range of tonal colour and acoustic variation. Ogata uses gut strings and a period bow, with the resulting warmer sound perfectly complementing the keyboard and creating a sound world imbued with what The Strad magazine, in its review of Volume 2, called “a clarity rarely achieved.” There are some outstanding sets of the complete sonatas available with modern keyboard – the Ibragimova/Tiberghien and Duo Concertante issues, for instance – but if you still harbour any doubts about the effectiveness of performing these sonatas with fortepiano then this CD series should simply blow them away.

boyd meets girl sees the American cellist Laura Metcalf paired with her husband, the Australian guitarist Rupert Boyd, in a really terrific selection of pieces for cello and guitar (Sono Luminus DSL-92217).

The three-movement Reflexões No.6 by Bolivian composer Jaime Zenamon is a lovely work, full of rich and sonorous cello lines and some rapid guitar work, all beautifully handled by the duo. The Allegretto Comodo, the first movement of the Sonata for Cello and Guitar by the Brazilian composer Radames Gnattali, is the only other work written specifically for cello and guitar; it’s another terrific piece.

Apart from Ross Edwards’ beautiful Arafura Arioso, arranged especially for the duo by the Australian composer, all the other tracks on the CD are arrangements by Boyd and Metcalf. Fauré’s Pärtene Op.50, four of Bach’s Two-Part Inventions, Astor Piazzolla’s Café 1930 (originally for flute and guitar) and de Falla’s Siete Canciones Populares Españolas are all extremely effective in these arrangements, but none more so than the quite stunning and ethereal Spiegel im Spiegel by Arvo Pärt, played by Metcalf at the original violin pitch over Boyd’s beautifully controlled guitar work. The final track is the duo’s arrangement of Human Nature, the Steve Porcaro and John Bettis song from Michael Jackson’s 1982 Thriller album.

A warm and resonant recorded sound quality complements a superb CD that is an absolute delight from beginning to end.

Given the affinities between Benjamin Britten and his predecessor Henry Purcell it comes as no surprise to see their music paired on Chaconnes and Fantasias – Music of Britten and Purcell, the latest CD from the Emerson String Quartet, celebrating its 40th anniversary (Decca Gold Boo26509-02).

Purcell’s Chacony in G Minor appeared in the same manuscript as the Fantazias (Purcell’s spelling) and is played here in Britten’s performing edition. It’s a full-blooded performance, with quite heavy vibrato. The Fantazias Nos.6 in F Major, 8 in D Minor, 10 in E Minor and 11 in G Major are more idiomatic, with very little vibrato and the dissonant clashes clearly defined. In company with Britten’s music they sound decidedly modern.

Sandwiched in the middle of the Fantazias is a terrific performance of Britten’s String Quartet No.2 in C Major, Op.36 from 1945, the first performance of which took place in London on the exact 250th anniversary of Purcell’s death. Moreover, the Chacony final movement is modelled on Purcell’s own Chacony.

Another immensely satisfying performance, this time of Britten’s String Quartet No.3 in G Major, Op.94, a fascinating and highly personal work written in late 1975 just a year before his death, completes an outstanding disc.

Premiere recordings of two very accessible 21st-century Viola Concertos by Amanda Harberg and Max Wolpert are featured on a new Naxos CD in their American Classics series, with the American violist Brett Deubner accompanied by the Southern Arizona Symphony Orchestra under Linus
Phrygian Pick third movement Beaser combines the traditional thewholenote.com

Evening Prayer. September 2001. The RSNO performance under Serebrier is
Ground O, Evening Prayer, aptly described as demonstrating the melodic and
more than supports that view, with a soaring and strongly rhetorical
first movement described as a meditation on flight, a simply beautiful
Aría middle movement and an energetic and joyful finale.

Wolpert’s Viola Concerto No. 1, “Giants” reflects the composer’s fascination with ancient musical traditions and fable and legend as well as his extensive work in musical theatre. The three movements are Father Time, The Golden Harp and the Balkan-flavoured Dance of the Cloud Women.

Also on the disc is Harberg’s short Elegy from 2007, written for violin and piano and played here in the composer’s excellent arrangement for viola and string orchestra.

Deubner is clearly in his element with these very attractive works.

The American guitarist Eliot Fisk met the composer Robert Beaser in 1972 when they were both at Yale, and two of the works that resulted from their long friendship are featured on Robert Beaser Guitar Concerto, with Josep Serebrier conducting the Royal Scottish National Orchestra (LINN CKD528).

The concerto is an immediately attractive eclectic three-movement work; in the dazzling Phrygian Pick third movement Beaser combines the traditional Andalusian flamenco technique with American bluegrass style. Fisk’s performance is simply brilliant. It’s an outstanding concerto, and a significant addition to the guitar repertoire.

The solo guitar work Notes on a Southern Sky was influenced by the folk music of Latin America in general and Venezuela in particular. Again, the clarity, agility and tonal variation of Fisk’s playing are quite stunning.

Two orchestral works complete the disc: the superb tone poem Evening Prayer, aptly described as demonstrating the melodic and harmonic beauty which characterises Beaser’s style; and Ground O. Beaser’s own 2011 orchestration of a movement from an earlier work written within a month of the tragic events in New York in September 2001. The RSNO performance under Serebrier is outstanding, particularly in the Evening Prayer.

J.S. Bach’s two books of The Well-Tempered Clavier have influenced composers since their creation, with both Mozart and Beethoven scoring some of the pieces for string quartet. In the 2CD set J. S. Bach The Well-Tempered Clavier Book One For String Quartet Nicholas Kitchen, the first violin of the Boreromeo String Quartet, has finally fulfilled a long-held desire with his transcription of the music for string quartet (living archive LABSQ 101).

The process clearly produced some surprises and challenges for Kitchen and his fellow quartet members as they developed the project, but the end result is extremely satisfying, both musically and emotionally. Kitchen acknowledges that playing the 48 pieces brought the quartet into “a rarified listening-scape,” where the extreme demands on the players’ need to listen to each other resulted in “a clearer understanding of what is really the essence of musical meaning and spirit.”

Luckily, it has also resulted in an engrossing listening experience for all of us.

The English violinist Tamsin Waley-Cohen plays two solo pieces written by her younger sister Freya Waley-Cohen on Permutations (Signum Classics SIGCD496).

Permutations is a touring artwork project developed by the sisters and the architectural designers Andrew Skulina and Finbarr O’Dempsey, with Freya writing several different musical characters for both six-part violin consort and for solo violin. The performance setting is “a set of six chambers which spatially distribute the six recorded violin parts... but also give the listener the opportunity to change the acoustic properties and level of isolation for each part. Handing a certain level of artistic and creative power over to the listener was the guiding force in the creation of the artwork.”

For this recording Waley-Cohen decided to take back that power and present Permutations in perfectly balanced ensemble. The individual characters are clearly identifiable in the excellent stereo setup, and one can’t help but wonder what the effect of the original physical setting must be, given how effective and engaging the recorded version is.

While writing Permutations Waley-Cohen wrote two other works using some of its musical characters; one of them, Unwell for solo violin, is included here.

At less than 28 minutes this is not a substantial CD, but what it lacks in quantity it more than makes up for in quality. Tamsin Waley-Cohen’s playing is exemplary.

Take the A Train (Bridge Records 0488) is Volume 3 of the eclectic music of the 79-year-old American composer Paul Chihara, whose wide experience includes extensive work for movies and television.

The Gamin String Trio performs the String Trio from 1985, and Jerome Lowenthal is the soloist in the fascinating Bagatelles – Twice Seven Huiiku for Piano from 2010. The Girl from Yerevan is an attractive piece from 2014, played here by guitarist David Starobin, violinist Movses Pogosssian and violinist Paul Coletti.

The final work is a real knockout: the three-movement Ellington Fantasy performed by the Lark String Quartet. Duke Ellington’s I’m Beginning to See the Light is a great opener; the arrangement of Sophisticated Lady is quite stunning, and the CD’s title track provides a great jazzy ending to an excellent disc.

And finally, violinist Boris Abramov and cellist Carmine Miranda combine their talents on Mozart/Beethoven Violin and Cello Duets (Navona Records NV6118).

None of the music here is in its original form. Mozart’s Two Duos for Violin and Cello are arrangements of the Duos for Violin and Viola in G Major, K.423 and B flat Major, K.424, both written as a favour to Michael Haydn to complete a set of six duos he was writing for the Archbishop of Salzburg. The Beethoven work is an arrangement of the Three Duos for Clarinet and Bassoon, WoO27, a set of duets that were probably early works influenced by the Mozart duos but may possibly be spurious.

With their warm tone and nice phrasing Abramov and Miranda make a good case for these versions of the works, although the music itself doesn’t allow for a great deal of dynamic range.

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Stewart Goodyear’s newest recording, Ravel – Stewart Goodyear (Orchid Classics ORC 100061) is the product of a lifelong affection for Ravel’s music that began at age five. Goodyear admits that it has taken a long time to immerse himself in the composer’s works and reach a point where he was ready to begin recording his music. He plans, in fact, to record all of Ravel’s works for piano.

What Goodyear demonstrates at the keyboard is that he is willing to take his time playing this music. It’s not so much a slower pace than a willingness to open the breathing spaces much wider than many pianists do. These suspended moments of time cumulatively lift the music to an ethereal state where Ravel’s impressionistic figures, the arpeggios and chordal clusters, are perceived more as emotion than sound.

Goodyear also reveals an innate ability to home in on a melody. Ravel makes this fairly straightforward, sometimes just having it played in simple octaves. But Goodyear has a way of drawing the notes out of the swirling harmonies that sets them within easy reach of the ear. It’s a matter of touch – and Ravel’s keyboard language requires absolute mastery of the technique.

Scarbo, from Gaspard de la nuit, is the dark and somewhat manicical side of Ravel’s work. Here too, Goodyear proves his technical control is never outdone by the demands of the music.

If Goodyear’s intention to record all the Ravel piano works comes to fruition, there will be something wonderful to anticipate.

Jean-Willy Kunz is the first organist in residence of the Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal. His debut solo recording Jean-Willy Kunz au grand orgue Pierre-Béique (ATMA ACD2 2747) contains the requisite Toccatas along with some skillfully chosen works that make this recording thoroughly entertaining.

Among the standards in the list is the Toccatas from Widor’s Organ Symphony No.5. For the sake of acoustic clarity, Kunz takes this at a slightly slower pace than is often heard, so the piece comes across cleanly but still powerfully.

The CD’s highlight is Kunz’s own arrangement of Saint-Saëns Le Carnaval des animaux. The colouristic potential of this symmetrically planned concert instrument is exploited in each of the 15 movements. L’Éléphant, appropriately portrayed by the deepest register pedal pipes, will shake your speakers, while Le Coucou au fond des bois uses a small reed stop to sound the familiar two-note call.

It’s an excellent recording with perfect repertoire choices and brilliant playing.

Organist Erik Simmons has recorded seven CDs by American composer and organist Carson Cooman. The latest, Exordium – Music for Organ by Carson Cooman (Divine Art DDA 25154) is a wide selection of Cooman’s works designed to showcase the main organ of the Cathédral Notre-Dame de Saint-Omer in northern France. The recording uses the Hauptwerk system, which digitally records the instrument note by note, storing the data in a sound library from which a performance and recording can be made anywhere, rather than in the confines of the church. The authenticity of this recording technology is impressive, creating a final product that is indistinguishable from a recording made in the original venue.

The original organ in the cathedral dates from 1717 and underwent a major restoration in the mid-19th century. Its casework is renowned as one of the most beautiful in Europe.

Many of the works on this recording use the highly coloured smaller stops or combinations of them to demonstrate the intimacy of such a large instrument. Small solo reeds and flutes are richly coloured and beautifully carry the solo melodies.

By contrast, the big divisions set close to full organ are magnificent as shown in the opening track Exordium and again in the closing selection, a fantasy on Veni Creator Spiritus. Cooman’s works are skillfully written with a contemporary harmonic sensibility that always yields to the melody. Simmons understands this and faithfully brings this great Baroque instrument into the service of a 21st-century composer.

Duo Stephanie & Saar have taken a novel approach to their latest recording project Bach – The Art of the Fugue, BWV 1080 (New Focus Recordings FCR181). Taking advantage of their duo nature, they perform some selections as four hands, some as two pianos and the simpler two-voice canons as solos.

The sheer weight of the genius behind the music makes focusing on any other aspect of the performance nearly impossible. As one of Bach’s final utterances, unfinished at that, it reveals the ability of this composer to think about musical development forwards and backwards, inverted and expanded and contracted, and most often in some combination of these.

In this respect the work is very much like the Goldberg Variations, where a good performance quickly yields to the content of the music while the performer is lost to the larger presence of the art form. The Duo Stephanie & Saar (their first names) are highly disciplined and always turn their skills to the contrapuntal possibilities Bach has laid out in the score, regardless of whether it’s for two voices or four.

They keep expression to a polite minimum, revealing the beauty of the growing complexity in the larger fugues.

The two-disc set is one you know you’ll play many times, waiting to find newly revealed truths.

A new video release, Kit Armstrong performs Bach’s Goldberg Variations and its predecessors (Untitel 741608), is a must-watch for Goldberg fans. Armstrong performs live at the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam and plays a lengthy program that includes some stylistically related works by Byrd, Sweelinck and John Bull’s Thirty Variations on the theme “Walsingham.” It’s clear at this point that Armstrong is brilliant at his period ornamentation. His trills are fast and tirelessly perfect.

Once into the Bach Goldberg Variations, after the opening aria, there’s no doubt that Armstrong is going to play this his way - unhurriedly. The first variation comes as a surprise in its deliberate, more relaxed speed. But what emerges at the same time is Armstrong’s knack for boldly pulling out melodies from the left hand, especially where the hands cross over. It’s intriguing to hear lines more familiar in the background come to the fore this way.

Armstrong is also fairly free with his rubato and sometimes applies it only in one hand, while the other moves ahead hoping its partner will catch up. It’s a thoroughly pianistic approach that impresses the audience, whose attention never wavers for a moment.

The final aria is quiet and powerfully intense as Armstrong completes it pianissimo, with a lengthy ritard holding the crowd breathless until he rises from the keyboard.

Nicholas Susi has just released his first recording Scarlatti Now...
Scarlatti’s sonatas had invited future composers to think about the keyboard in ways he had already begun to explore. He describes the elements of Scarlatti’s keyboard style as “the wiry, the spastic, the risky” but he also admires them for their “variety, quirkiness and downright catchiness.”

Scarlatti’s runs, ubiquitous ornaments and often rapid-fire note repetitions are familiar elements of his writing. Susi finds these in the chatter of Figaro’s Cavatina from Rossini’s The Barber of Seville, the fluid writing of Ravel’s Une barque sur l’océan and Liszt’s transcription of Rossini’s La danza.

Susi is a gifted technician who executes the myriad ornaments in the sonatas with crispness and ease. The clarity of his playing is a delight to hear. His transitions to contemporary works by Berio and Sciarrino are not as difficult as they might promise in the track listing. He is an innovative musician and aggressive thinker with a gift for keyboard brilliance. With a freshly minted doctorate of music under his belt, he now needs to appear on a major label.

With Haydn – Piano Sonatas, Vol.6 (Chandos 1099.42), Jean Efflam-Bavouzet has now neared the halfway point in his project to record all the Haydn piano sonatas. Clearly not intent on doing this in chronological order, Bavouzet is programming his discs for artistic interest and balance.

This disc contains five sonatas, all in major keys. The earliest is the Sonata No.11 (Hob. XVI:2) from sometime around 1760. At this point, the keyboard sonata is still in its early evolutionary form and has far more in common with its Baroque harpsichord antecedents than anything that followed. The changes in Haydn’s works are subtle and occur slowly over many years. Bavouzet follows this early work with the latest one, Sonata No.43 (Hob.XVI:28) where the final movement provides the best contrast for showing how Haydn’s thinking became more complex.

Prior to this recording project, Bavouzet finished the complete cycle of the Beethoven sonatas. He describes his renewed appreciation of Haydn’s considerably shorter thematic ideas than those of Beethoven and points out the impact this had on his approach to the music. His touch is light and articulation is impeccable. Lightly pedaled, if at all, the voice parts are clear and the sparse harmonies are completely transparent.

Because Haydn gave almost no performance indications in his scores, Bavouzet takes great freedom in applying tempi and dynamics. His choices are carefully considered and a mark of both his artistry and scholarship. Like its predecessors, Volume 6 is consistently excellent throughout.

Pál Eide has chosen a perfect title for his recording Grey Clouds (CDKlassik cdk 1143). He contrasts the melancholy of twilight in works by Liszt and Debussy against even darker forebodings in the music of Stravinsky and Ravel. His playing is deeply personal and anything but grey.

Beginning with Liszt’s two similarly titled works La lugubre gondola, Eide sets a stage where the ambiguity of twilight becomes a surprisingly peaceful experience. He expands this through Debussy’s Reflets dans l’eau, La cathédrale engloutie and Claire de lune.

The contrast of threatening darkness comes from Ravel’s Gaspard de la nuit. Le gibet is especially haunting, with its repeating note emerging from Ravel’s clustered harmonies.

Eide moves his program back toward the twilight with Stravinsky’s Three Pieces from Petrouchka. His measured approach, if slower than most performances, gives both Danse russe and La semaine grasse an ominous weight. As if to place an “amen” at the end of his recording, Eide gives an exquisite performance of Liszt’s Consolation No.3.

It’s a thoughtful and effective program, beautifully played. Eide has made just two recordings but his abilities suggest he should do more.

Alexandre Kantorow looks knowingly from the cover of his new recording À la russe (BIS 2150) as if to invite listeners into the world of the Russian soul. Here, things are dimly lit, especially where Rachmaninoff is concerned. His Piano Sonata No.1 in D Minor Op.28 is a study in high dynamic contrast in the outer movements and deep introspection in the middle movement. Kantorow is obviously at home with this music and what he projects from the keyboard is powerfully seductive.

The tenderness of Kantorow’s performance of two excerpts from Tchaikovsky’s 18 Morceaux Op.72 would be difficult to match. It’s heartbreakingly hesitant and vulnerable. The composer’s Scherzo à la Russe is equally remarkable, though for different reasons. Here, Kantorow is virtuosic master of the great and the small. The power of his playing in the final measures echoes the dynamism and strength of his execution in the three excerpts of Stravinsky’s L’Oiseaux de Feu. This 1926 piano transcription is relentless in its technical demands. Undaunted, Kantorow delivers a blazing performance of the Danse infernale and the Finale.

Balkiev’s Islamey Op.18 concludes the disc with another virtuosic display of impossibly quick repetitions separated by stretches of languorous repose. Kantorow is a superb colourist who possesses a technique capable of anything these Russian composers have required. This super audio CD is pure pleasure from start to finish.

In anticipation of the centenary of Leonard Bernstein’s birth in 1918, Andrew Cooperstock has released Leonard Bernstein – Complete Solo Works for Piano (Bridge 948 SA/B). The two-disc set is a comprehensive collection of keyboard compositions and arrangements spanning Bernstein’s career. It contains the first recording of the complete Bridal Suite for piano four hands. Disc one presents all 29 of the Anniversaries he composed for his friends and family. The dedicatees include his daughter Nina, Serge and Nathalie Koussevitzky, Lukas Foss, Stephen Sondheim and many others. Cooperstock does a splendid job in capturing the deeply personal and affectionate tribute that each of these portraits.

Disc two contains the balance of the Bernstein piano repertoire.

For his first solo recording, Jean-Willy Kunz presents music by French composers paired with the great Toccata and Fugue by J. S. Bach.

DUO Stephanie & Saar’s third release on New Focus Recordings, The Art of Fugue, is the first ever complete piano duo recording of Johann Sebastian Bach’s enigmatic final work.
Lady of the Lake
Maureen Batt; Jon-Paul Décosse; Simon Docking
Leaf Music LM213 (leaf-music.ca)

Canadian soprano Maureen Batt performs with clear diction and memorable musical nuances in this fascinating release of two contrasting song cycle versions of Sir Walter Scott’s 19th-century epic poem Lady of the Lake. François Schubert’s song cycle is rooted in the familiar German Romantic style. Mostly scored for voice and piano, it is a treat to listen to and complete version here. The Halifax Camerata Singers conducted by Jeff Joudrey with pianist Lynette Wahlstrom create luscious harmonies in a tight ensemble performance of Coronach, Op. 52, No. 4, while the TTBB version of Bootgesang Op. 52, No. 3 is rollicking. Bass-baritone Jon-Paul Décosse sings with colour, while Batt’s soaring rendition of the original German-language version of the familiar Ave Maria is great. Pianist Simon Docking supports the voices with rhythm drive and melodic excitement.

Canadian composer Fiona Ryan writes in the liner notes that she composed her Lady of the Lake in a more operatic/theatrical fashion. The folk-song flavoured A Warrior’s Farewell features a perfect rendition and closing a capella section by Décosse. The three recurring Battle Cries sections are driven by dramatic sung lines, spoken word sections, bent pitches and driving contrapuntal piano writing. The highlight is the mordant new-music flavoured closing Reconciliation/Mémoire. Batt and Décosse sing the dramatic tricky vocal lines with precision and emotion.

Both Lady of the Lake cycles are well composed and held together by Batt’s shining voice.

Songbird
Layla Claire; Marie-Eve Scarfone
ATMA ACD2 2754

Canadian soprano Layla Claire’s impressive background includes concert performances with top international orchestras and roles in significant Handel and Mozart opera productions. She participated in the Metropolitan Opera’s Lindemann Young Artist Development Program, leading to return engagements. This disc demonstrates her recitalist side with 20 art songs in French, German and English. She has an attractive, agile voice with a light vibrato, sparkling top and rich middle-to-low register. Her choice of songs leans towards cheer, intimacy and (she writes) “music that I think is charming and cozy.” In impeccable collaboration with outstanding Quebec-based pianist Marie-Eve Scarfone, bright songs like the opening Viens! Les gazons sont verts! (Gounod), Chanson d’avril (Bizet) and Spring (Dominick Argento) communicate a definite sense of joy.

But there is more. In Gounod’s Sérénade, Claire’s vocal agility is remarkable. Her wide registral and dynamic range show in her recitalist side with 20 art songs in French, German and English. She has an attractive, agile voice with a light vibrato, sparkling top and rich middle-to-low register. Her choice of songs leans towards cheer, intimacy and (she writes) “music that I think is charming and cozy.” In impeccable collaboration with outstanding Quebec-based pianist Marie-Eve Scarfone, bright songs like the opening Viens! Les gazons sont verts! (Gounod), Chanson d’avril (Bizet) and Spring (Dominick Argento) communicate a definite sense of joy.

Visions
Véronique Gens; Münchner Rundfunkorchester; Hervé Niquet
Alpha Classics ALPHA 279 (alpha-classics.com)

There are many unique voices, but you know you are dealing with an extraordinary one when it is referred to as a category by the name of its owner — I am talking about the Falcon soprano. Cornélie Falcon, a 19th-century diva, possessed that voice, albeit for a tragically short time. She lost it, onstage, only five years into her career at the age of 23 while singing in Niedermeyer’s Stradella at the Palais Garnier in 1837. In her meteoric career, she was THE soprano of the Paris Opera, especially in Les Huguenots by Meyerbeer and La Juive by Halévy.

So what is a Falcon soprano? Well, it is a voice of surprisingly small range, just two and a half octaves, but it sits in a soprano’s golden spot. No burnished copper notes of lower register, no silvery flourishes on the improbably high top. Instead, it’s all pure, unadulterated, shiny and resonant gold. You can hear it easily in this recording, for Véronique Gens is the real McCoy. In this collection of outtakes from French Romantic operas, Gens traces the roles sung by Falcon and some later material from Bizet, Franck, Massenet and Saint-Saëns. Pause if you will, at track number three, the very melody by Niedermeyer that permanently broke Falcon’s voice at its second performance.
Wagner – Parsifal

German Romantic opera reached its pinnacle under Wagner. Once he found his stride, Singspiels and Italianate number operas would be side-tracked in German-speaking opera houses. Wagner melded mythical stories to seamless, powerful symphonic music in masterpieces including his iconic Ring Cycle. Then Parsifal. Wagner’s final opera, broke that mould, when it was premiered at the second Bayreuth Festival in 1882. The opera – an adaptation of Wolfram von Eschenbach’s 13th-century epic poem Parzival – caused a stir with its depiction of religious fervour, purity of caste and women as sexually depraved heathens. Reactions were confused at first but by 1887 they turned vehement. Still, Wagner remained adamant and, in an era increasingly bereft of sacred experience, he was emphatic in his belief that music dramas should fully absorb audiences in mystical truths.

The Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra’s performance of Parsifal, conducted by Iván Fischer is a considerably minimalist production directed by the Wagner expert and director of the Dutch National Opera, Pierre Audi. Produced for television and DVD in 2012, it may be short on the lavish density of Hans-Jürgen Syberberg’s acclaimed 1982 production. However, with a wooden strait-like framework depicting the castle that houses the suffering Amfortas drenched in his blood, and its preternatural stairway to heaven, an atmosphere of both horror and menace of this dismal story is well captured, Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine. The underlying threat and forgiveness contained on this brilliant opera can be an example of how powerful music can have impact.

Christian Wagner

New more than ever, as the U.S. experiences a déjà vu of hatred and is poised on the precipice – and the very contemporary Nachts captures the nearly Arctic, lonely intro- spective and unsettling disconsolate of Kaléko’s poetry. Sophisticated voicings and sonic clusters define this work, and McGuiness’ dynamic soprano is the alchem- ically accurate, well-paced and intriguing. We cannot fault the music either – Rossini himself frequently reused passages from this work in his later operas to great effect. So, in the end, yet another great work killed off by negative reviews. Listening to this recording truly has made me more aware of my respon- sibility as a music critic. My only regret for this unique recording is the relative medioc- rity of the assembled cast, with the notable exception of Margarita Gritskova in a splendid trouser role as the Emperor Otto the Great.

Robert Tomas

Donizetti – Rosmonda D’Inghilterra

Here is a fine example of how an opera can be presented effectively at relatively low cost with a dedi- cated, talented creative team, simple, minimalist sets evoking the milieu, atmospheric lighting, colours and non-intrusive direction relying on the natural movement of the actors. Director Paola Rota should be congratulated for bringing Donizetti’s forgotten opera after 171 years’ slumber into shining focus at the Bergamo Festival. The period is 12th-century England and the story is about an innocent young girl, Rosamunda Clifford, with whom Henry II fell in love, who in turn falls victim to the jealous rage of Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine. The underlying menace of this dismal story is well captured, and with Donizetti’s gorgeously melodic score it really hits home to an enthusiastic audience at Donizetti’s birthplace.

Jessel Pratt is one of the best bel canto sopranos today, and she is the star in the title role with her glorious, strong high notes and lovely legato singing. In the complex role of the scheming, murderous Queen, famous Italian soprano Eva Mei’s brilliant performance brings lots of excitement. In the lesser parts of Arturo the rejected lover and Clifford the angushed father, mezzo Raffaella Lupinacci and baritone Nicola Ullivieri are also very effective. The only weakness is the King, high tenor Darío Schmunck, who has some difficulty keeping up with the strain of high tessitura of this very demanding role.

My great delight and a major contributor to the success is young conductor Sebastiano Rolli. His innate grasp of the score (that he conducts from memory!), perfectly chosen tempi and deliciously accented pointing, are the mark of a great conductor in the making.

Jules Gardonyi

Rossini – Adelaide di Borgogna

Here is a rarity of rarities, an opera by Rossini not only recorded for the first time, but one dating back to 1817 and staged scarcely more than a dozen times. Since it disappeared from the repertory in 1825 (due in large part to the unfavourable reception of Roman critics – it was Rossini’s first opera written for Rome), there were only a few efforts to revive it. Why then history’s cold shoulder? Well, that is the $64,000 question. Yes, Rossini was young, only 25, when he wrote it, but this is not juvenilia. It came right on the heels of Armida (with whom it shared a librettist) and La Cenerentola, both well-loved and often-performed operas.

Adelaide di Borgogna is both centred on the events in medieval Italy (circa 950 AD) that led to extending the Holy Roman Empire from Germany into the Apennine Peninsula. The action is, unusual for an opera, historically accurate, well-paced and intriguing.

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Robert Tomas

Wagner – Parsifal

Marco-Burmester; Petrenko; Struckmann; Ventris; Lang; Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra; Iván Fischer

Challenge Classics CC72619

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Kundry leave indelible marks on both roles. The magnificent vocal colouring and shifting tonalities in the agony and ecstasy from Act I to Act III is convincingly Wagnerian. More important than that is the transition from agonizing sinful states to depictions of redemption and salvation. Here, in their complete transformation, every principal cast member shines. Anish Kapoor’s set design especially in Act II – where the backdrop of an orb of sorts seems to reflect the depth of the characters’ changing emotions through spectacular lighting by Jean Kalman – is absolutely magical. There are minor fluctuations of volume in the DVD sound, but these are minor irritants. The miraculous translation of the three-dimensional depth of the play onto the flat television screen is a major production triumph.

Raul da Gama

Schoenberg – Gurrelieder Soloists; chorus of the Dutch National Opera; Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra; Marc Albrecht Opus Arte DVD OA 1227 (also on Blu-ray)

▶ This is a video of an attempt to stage Schoenberg’s extraordinary cantata based on poetry by Jens Peter Jacobsen. It is not an opera and actions on the stage do not always match the libretto. The text is dreamy and melancholic, a Tristanesque tale of impossible love. I confess that over many years of listening, although totally absorbed, I have not mentally pictured or “seen” the events described by the singers and the orchestra. The score does its job and the goings on, the thoughts, events and emotions are unmistakable, but remain abstractions.

The great room of Gurre Castle is director Pierre Audi’s set for this production with various props to define a scene... a large bed, screens, panels, etc. The prominent curved metal staircase adds a vertical dimension and supports some of the action. A huge, rather formidable fish, perhaps representing a fantastic eel, passively enters into the room in Part Three during Klaus Narr’s pantomime-like scene that follows the rousing, exhilarating Wild Hunt.

King Waldemar is sung by tenor Burkhard Fritz, who is scheduled to sing Siegmund in Leipzig’s Ring Cycle early next year. Tove, his beloved, is soprano Emily Magee and the Wood Dove is contralto Anna Larsson. Bass-baritone Markus Marquardt is the Peasant and tenor Wolfgang Ablinger-Sperrhacke is Klaus Narr, the court jester. Actress Sunny Melles is the narrator who introduces the evening, settling the audience down for what’s to follow. She moves as an observer through the scenes, sometimes commenting and finally breaking into an unusually impassioned delivery of the sprechgesang exultation of the sun. Internationally renowned for her interpretations of Mahler, Larsson’s Wood Dove is outstanding and genuinely tragic as it should be, delivering the news of Tove’s murder and closing Part One. Incidentally, because she is acting it out, Larsson is completely caught up in the role as she was not in the very fine recent version conducted by Edward Gardner reviewed in March. The chorus is better than outstanding. Under Marc Albrecht, the orchestral balances, so brilliantly recorded, are dynamic and expansive, letting the brass sing out, most importantly in the awe-inspiring choral finale as the sun rises and the nocturnal fantasies are banished.

On first viewing, not knowing what to expect, the staging was something of a letdown. By the third playing, no longer expecting anything different, I was enrolled, appreciating this most unusual experience immensely. As noted above, the surround sound is awesome. All in all, quite an experience.

Bruce Surtees

Carlisle Floyd – Susannah Susan Hellman Spatafora; St. Petersburgh Opera Orchestra & Chorus; Mark Sforzini Naxos 2.110381

▶ In an interview included in this DVD, Carlisle Floyd describes the two major influences on the creation of his most-performed opera. As a young university professor in Florida, he witnessed what he calls “the destruction of innocence” by false accusations during the 1950s McCarthy era. The son of a Methodist minister in South Carolina, he had also experienced the mob hysteria of small-town revival meetings. “I personally found it very terrifying as a child to go to these meetings,” he says. “What offended me most was mass coercion – and it still does!” Floyd’s self-written libretto transfers the Apocrypha tale of Susannah and the Elders to “New Hope,” a small town in Appalachian Tennessee. Susannah’s folk-flavoured, often quite beautiful score amplifies a powerful drama – the innocent Susannah victimized by both the townspeople who believe her “pretty face must hide some evil” and the evangelical preacher, Olin Blitch, captivated by that same face.

Susannah has been performed hundreds of times since its 1955 premiere, but this is its first, very welcome, commercial DVD release. The St. Petersburg (Florida) Opera’s 2014 production is low budget yet highly effective, the single set doubling as Susannah’s house and the New Hope Church. Soprano Susan Hellman Spatafora is a feisty, radiant Susannah, baritone Todd Donovan a sturdy voiced Blitch, the revival-scene chorus truly “very terrifying,” while conductor Mark Sforzini revels in the music’s beauty and passion.

If you don’t already know this opera, you should – it’s unforgettable!

Michael Schulman

Gordon Getty – The Canterville Ghost Oper Leipzig; Gewandhausorchester; Matthias Foremny Pentatone PTC 5186 541

▶ “Stage and page have different needs,” writes composer Getty, son of billionaire Jean Paul, explaining in the CD’s booklet the alterations in his libretto when adapting Oscar Wilde’s novella. Wilde’s whimsical tale remains essentially intact, however, with the Otis family moving into an English manor haunted by the 300-year-old ghost of Sir Simon de Canterville, unable to find release in death.

Instead of being frightened, Mr. Otis offers the Ghost oil to lubricate his chains, Mrs. Otis gives him a tonic to quell his moaning, and the young Otis twins throw pillows at him, push a cream pie in his face and douse him with water.

Only 15-year-old Virginia hasn’t offended him. In the longest scene of the hour-long opera, the Ghost tells her, “You must weep with me for my sins... pray with me for my soul... and then... the Angel of Death will have mercy on me.” His skeleton is discovered the next day. The final scene takes place five years later at Sir Simon’s graveside, where Virginia, now married, sings a lovely duet with her husband, “Stay with me, beautiful,” the opera’s lyrical highlight.

The Canterville Ghost was premiered in Leipzig in 2015 by the performers on this disc. Bass-baritone Matthew Trevisan is the forceful but sympathetic Ghost, soprano Alexandra Hutton is all sweetness as Virginia, and Getty’s bright, witty score strongly supports the action.

This is a very stage-worthy and entertaining addition to the repertoire of one-act, English-language operas.

Michael Schulman
Oh my, this is an elegant recording! From the simple opening bars of Fioré’s G Major Cello Sonata, the highest calibre of music-making is established and doesn’t waver for the duration of the disc. There are three strands to the program: the complete sonatas for cello by the little-known cellist of the late 17th and early 18th century, Angelo Maria Fioré; a half-dozen arias by contemporaries of Fioré which feature cello obbligato lines; and two pieces from the same period for solo shawms.

The handsome CD booklet features a well-written, substantial essay by Elinor Frey on the early history of the cello, the life – such as we know it – of Fioré, and a detailed contextualization of the works on the program. The cello sonatas themselves are pleasant, have a great deal of variety and are clearly idiomatic to the instrument. Fioré was a few years younger than his celebrated contemporary Arcangelo Corelli, and his sonatas – at their best – share a drive and musical interest with Corelli’s early trio sonatas.

The arias are by Paolo Magni, Francesco Ballarotti and other rather obscure Italians of the mid-Baroque and have themes of – what else? – the raptures and torments of love. The highlight is Magni’s E caro il tormento soave il dolor featuring sophisticated and truly moving interplay between Suzie LeBlanc’s voice and Frey’s cello.

The performances throughout are well-conceived, leaving ample room for spontaneity and fancy. Kudos to Lorenzo Ghielmi and Esteban La Rotta for their warm and classy support.

Larry Beckwith

Kuniko, a profoundly brilliant virtuoso at home on both keyboard and percussion instruments. Still, even the fact that she has performed and recorded the music of Iannis Xenakis and Steve Reich could not have been sufficient for approaching these masterworks on Bach: Solo Works for Marimba.

Approaching the Prelude No.1 in C Major from the Well-Tempered Clavier, a work unequalled in the profligy of its inventiveness, sets the tone for this exquisitely sculpted music by Kuniko. The result is a fascinating opening, with its spirited dance-like passages and concise melody creating myriad resonances and perspectives for the cycles of Cello Suites and Violin Sonatas that follow. Here the mallets lead the ear, cherishing motivic snippets, highlighting arresting harmonic progressions with crystalline articulation. Kuniko’s enormous insight into Bach and her own limitless inventiveness make for muscular, exhilaratingly voiced and contrapuntally lucid performances of the solo works for cello and violin, in which harmony and counterpoint are implied through frequent spreading of component notes. A bedazzling set of discs, singing with innate beauty.

Raul da Gama

Bruckner 9
Chicago Symphony Orchestra; Riccardo Muti
CSO-Resound CSOR 9011701 (cso.org)

There is no lack of fine recordings of Bruckner’s Symphony No.9, a work left incomplete at the time of his death in 1896. Among American orchestras, the Chicago Symphony has long been renowned for its performances of Bruckner’s music, and it was the CSO who actually gave the North American premiere in 1904. So this latest recording featuring the CSO conducted by Riccardo Muti seems particularly fitting.

This is not Muti’s first foray into Bruckner – he has also recorded Symphonies Four and Seven – but from the forbidding opening measures of Symphony No.9, the orchestra displays a deep engagement with this monumental score. The first movement – 26 minutes in length – is majestic and dignified, with CSO’s outstanding sound displaying rich tonal colours and a full dynamic range. We could only have hoped for a little more prominence of the renowned CSO brass section, which at times seems too muted.

The strident Scherzo has a rightful mood of defiance, Muti approaching it with a suitable amount of intensity.

The third and final Adagio is all serenity, with Muti and the CSO invoking a true sense of nobility. Even without the final movement, Muti instills a satisfying sense of
conclusion that doesn’t leave the listener wanting for more.

This is an exemplary recording, one that can rightfully take its place alongside more established performances. An Italian-born conductor leading an American orchestra in music from the late Romantic period – proof indeed that fine music-making does indeed transcend international boundaries – highly recommended.

Richard Haskell

Mahler 5
Minnesota Orchestra; Osmo Vänskä
BIS BIS-2226 SACD (mnorch.org)

> The conductor Osmo Vänskä has an enviable reputation as an orchestra builder, having previously transformed the provincial Finnish orchestra of Lahti into a major player with his survey of the complete works of Sibelius in an acclaimed series of recordings on the BIS label. In 2003, Vänskä became the music director of the Minnesota Orchestra and turned his attention to well-regarded box sets of the complete Beethoven and Sibelius symphonies, also on BIS. The present recording is the first in a projected series of the complete Mahler symphonies, with Symphonies Six and Two due to arrive shortly.

I must admit I was initially a bit dubious about the project; a Mahler cycle is a pro forma bid for the big leagues and a potentially ruinous gamble from entities whose Mahler tradition is often negligible. I need not have worried. As Mahler was fond of saying, “Tradition is laziness.” This is a fresh-faced, supremely confident performance that cleans away many a cobweb from the customary overheated interpretations of this popular work. Vänskä lets the music flow naturally without resorting to dramatic excess at structural transitions, and his orchestra responds with admirable assurance and precision to his subtle tempo modifications. The refinement of the string section in particular is exemplary, allowing the delicate arc of the Adagietto movement to be stretched to a near-record duration of 13 minutes. Special praise is due to the experienced team from BIS for producing an exemplary, richly detailed studio recording in an age in which cheaply sutured “live” performances predominate.

Daniel Foley

Richard Strauss – Oboe Concerto; Wind Serenade; Wind Sonatina No.2
Alexei Ogrintchouk; Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra; Andris Nelsons
BIS BIX-2163 SACD bis.se

> Alexei Ogrintchouk, principal oboist of the venerable Concertgebouw Orchestra since 2005, headlines this new recording of two late works by Richard Strauss. Chief among them is the Oboe Concerto of 1945, which the composer was encouraged to write by the occupying American soldier and, by chance, professional oboist John de Lancie. Strauss, then in his 80s, was cool to the idea at first, but he liked to keep busy even as his cozy world collapsed about him. The resulting 25-minute, single-movement Concerto, while not technically difficult, is exceedingly prolix and taxes the endurance of the soloist to the utmost. Ogrintchouk, blessed with a tone both sweet and secure, is more than up to the task and receives outstandingly sensitive support from the orchestra and conductor Andris Nelsons in this recording nicely cobbled together from three live performances.

The disc also includes a performance of the composer’s skilful Serenade In E-flat Major, composed at the age of 18. While it is a minor work, its inclusion here does presage in a curious way the retrogressive, four-square melodic profile of his late style. Personally I was drawn to this recording by the presence of the Wind Sonatina of 1944–45. Subtitled “The Happy Workshop,” it is a companion work to the even stranger Sonatina of 1943, “From an Invalid’s Workshop.” Both are scored for an ensemble of 16 wind instruments, including rare assignments for the clarinet in C and basset horn. The moniker of “Sonatina” is truly droll, as the Second Sonatina is a symphonically conceived, multi-movement 40-minute work. Here the senescent Strauss revels in his expertise in the slippery art of sidestepping chromaticism. The performance, presumably captured under studio conditions, is simply glorious and is captured in pristine sound across a wide and detailed sonic spectrum. Ho boy is it good!

Daniel Foley

Schmidt – Symphony No.2; Strauss – Breathing by the Fireside
Wiener Philharmoniker; Semyon Bychkov
Sony Classical 88885355522

> After Mahler and Strauss, my favourite late Romantic among German and Austrian composers is Franz Schmidt (1874–1939). Virtuoso pianist, Vienna Court Opera Orchestra cellist, and distinguished teacher of several subjects at the Vienna Conservatory, Schmidt composed in every major genre. Of his four symphonies the Second (1913) is charming, grand and dark in turn. The Vienna Philharmonic under the masterful Semyon Bychkov shines in this Sony release, especially the strings from the first movement’s opening “bubbly stream” onwards. The brass section predominates later with horns that amaze; contrapuntal ingenuities and vivid contrasts of tone colour abound in woodwinds from the piccolo on down. Bychkov, the orchestra and the recording team achieve admirable pacing and balance, for example where everything gears down darkly till only soft tam-tam strokes are heard before the opening passage’s return.

I believe there are subtle allusions to composers with Vienna associations. In the second movement, an ingeniously themed and varied, the first chord references that of Brahms’ Haydn Variations in key, chord, and melody; the final fugato begins with the E-flat major two-note horn call of Bruckner’s Fourth Symphony (Bruckner was Schmidt’s counterpart teacher). Though ingrained in Viennese musical life, Schmidt became his own joyous and tragic compositional personality, and comments like “sounds like Richard Strauss” are tiresomely shallow. In any case the disc includes the interlude known as Dreaming by the Fireside from Strauss’s opera Intermezzo (1924), allowing comparison.

Roger Knox

Ives – Three Places in New England; Orchestral Set No.2; New England Holidays
Seattle Symphony; Ludovic Morlot
Seattle Symphony SSM1015 (seattlesymphony.org)

> This Naxos recording is the third in a series paying homage to the music of Charles Ives, recorded live by the Seattle Symphony conducted by Ludovic Morlot. The disc opens with the St. Gaudens in Boston
Common from Three Places in New England. Here, the ensemble invokes a moving and wistful mood as befits music honouring fallen Black soldiers in the Civil War. The raucous Putnam’s Camp is a true Fourth of July celebration while the mysterious Housatonic at Stockbridge is a personal and sensitive musical depiction of the mystical river flowing through New England.

More patriotism follows in the Orchestral Set No.2 and New England Holidays, where the orchestra’s exemplary winds and brass are heard to great advantage, particularly in the middle movement of the set, The Rockstrewn Hills Join in the People’s Outdoor Meeting. New England Holidays is a study in contrasts, from the icy New England landscape of Washington’s Birthday in February, to the reverential Thanksgiving where the orchestra is joined by the Seattle Symphony Chorale.

In all, this CD is a wonderful representation of Ives’ music, the well-selected program further enhanced by the SSO’s polished performance. As to whether or not a French-born conductor has an affinity towards American music, the answer is most decidedly “Oui!” Morlot may hail from Lyon, but American music, the answer is most decisively American. Interestingly he began like Stravinsky, by writing for the dance, a good way to make his music accessible to the public and become popular, so that’s unmistakably American. Interestingly he began like Stravinsky, by writing for the ballet, a good way to make his music accessible to the public and become popular, so miraculously he could achieve his own voice, a distinctive style that’s unmistakably American. Interestingly he began like Stravinsky, by writing for the ballet, a good way to make his music accessible to the public and become popular, so by the time he wrote a purely orchestral piece like Symphony No.3 right after the war in 1946, a joyful, optimistic work, it was instantly well received.

Despite an initial mixed reception at its 1936 premiere, Barber’s Symphony No.1 ultimately gained greater favour and was the first American symphonic piece to be presented at the Salzburg Festival. More stately than Thompson’s symphony, the piece is well constructed, with the orchestra deftly providing a suitably festive closing-out for this very unusual, interesting and entertaining program.

*Bruce Surtees*

**Copland – Symphony No.3; Three Latin American Sketches**

Detroit Symphony Orchestra; Leonard Slatkin

Naxos 8.559844

**Aaron Copland’s life encompassed nearly the entire 20th century.** During it he was exposed to a crossfire of many European modern influences, but miraculously he could still achieve his own voice, a distinctive style that’s unmistakably American. Interestingly he began like Stravinsky, by writing for the ballet, a good way to make his music accessible to the public and become popular, so by the time he wrote a purely orchestral piece like Symphony No.3 right after the war in 1946, a joyful, optimistic work, it was instantly well received.

The entire symphony is full of inspiration: the hymn-like quiet beginning, the rip-roaring Scherzo punctuated by whistles on the piccolo which is like a group of wild horses storming out of the paddock, and the peaceful third movement where we can feel the vast prairies and the overarching sky. This insinuates itself into the tremendous Fanfare for the Common Man that introduces the fourth movement, with those shimmering chords by the brass interrupted by thundering cannons. I am suddenly aware how this music has already become embedded into the soul and as conductor Jaap van Zweden aptly put it, “into the DNA of every American.”

Now this new recording with the gorgeous, spacious sound of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, a band very much underestimated and under one of the best American conductors, Leonard Slatkin, I like it even better than the previous benchmark issue with Bernstein. As an added bonus the Three Latin American Sketches with Mexican influences shows Copland’s lighter side and versatility.

*Janos Gardonyi*

Randall Thompson – Symphony No.2; Samuel Adams – Drift and Providence; Samuel Barber – Symphony No.1

National Orchestra Institute Philharmonic; James Ross

Naxos 8.559822

A trio of American composers – Randall Thompson, Samuel Adams and Samuel Barber – are featured on this Naxos American Classics CD, the second in a series of recordings performed by top conservatory students of Maryland’s National Orchestral Institute Philharmonic conducted by James Ross.

Despite being written during the Great Depression, Thompson’s Symphony No.2 from 1931 is anything but angst-ridden. The opening movement is lively and spirited, owing much to the jazz rhythms of the 1920s. The lush second movement Largo is warmly Romantic, while the third and fourth movements are marked by a mood of buoyant optimism, the strings melding perfectly with the stirring brass, particularly in the gregarious finale.

**Drift and Providence** by Adams is a musical voyage inspired by the Pacific Ocean. The 32-year-old composer explained that in creating the piece, he recorded sounds of the ocean, transformed them digitally, then transcribed them for instruments. With a sparing use of electronic media, the result is highly atmospheric music.

Despite an initial mixed reception at its 1936 premiere, Barber’s Symphony No.1 ultimately gained greater favour and was the first American symphonic piece to be presented at the Salzburg Festival. More stately than Thompson’s symphony, the piece is well constructed, with the orchestra deftly handling the four contrasting sections.

This is a fine recording – how appropriate that an orchestra of gifted young American musicians would perform music by American composers who had not yet reached the age of 35 – and do it well. Recommended.

*Richard Haskell*
MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY

Derek Charke – In Sonorous Falling Tones
Wired Ensemble; Mark Hopkins
Centrediscs CMCCD 23917
(musiccentre.ca)

This CD is unique in that all the music performed on it is by one composer, Derek Charke, who is also the flute soloist in three of the four works and a member of the ensemble in the fourth.

As a composer, Charke understands that building music around arresting melodic/rhythmic patterns which lead to/are followed by contrasting arresting melodic/rhythmic patterns produces results which are interesting and engaging. He seems to have access to an innumerable variety of patterns, from the driving pulsating opening of In Circles, the opening movement of In Sonorous Falling Tones, to the lyrical melody in Warning! Gustnadoes Ahead, the last track on the album – and lots more in between.

As a flutist his versatility is remarkable. Equally at home on the piccolo, the “regular” flute and the bass flute, he seamlessly blends conventional and extended techniques. Best of all, he puts his “pyro-technique” completely at the service of the artistic ends of the music, as in Lachrymose, where singing while producing multiphonics on the piccolo brings this elegiac work to a stirring climax.

The WIRED! Ensemble, which plays with Charke as soloist, in In Sonorous Falling Tones and Warning! Gustnadoes Ahead, and in which Charke plays as a member of the ensemble in What do the Birds Think?, is perfect, matching Charke’s energy and intensity at every step.

Bravissimo! This is contemporary music-making at its best. Good things are happening in Wolfville, Nova Scotia.

Allan Pulker

Jocelyn Morlock – Halcyon
Various Artists
Centrediscs CMCCD 23817
(musiccentre.ca)

With Halcyon, JUNO-nominated Canadian composer Jocelyn Morlock explores her compositional voice over seven substantial works from voice accompanied by piano to orchestra. Let’s give a listen.

Halcyon, warmly performed by cellist Ariel Barnes with Corey Hamm on piano, is a slow tonal elegy. It takes as its extra-musical theme the mythic tale of the kingfisher Halcyon. The composer tells us in the liner notes that the next work Vulpine, brought to life by violinst Nicholas Wright and Hamm, plays on the many characteristics associated with the fox.

With Shade, the cello is back, this time supported by Vern Griffiths on vibraphone. Morlock enigmatically remarks on the multiple meanings of shade, and “Hades, a disembodied spirit” in her liner.

Two song cycles follow. The three Involuntary Love Songs are sung by contemporary music specialist soprano Robyn Driedger-Klassen, the six Perruqueries by Driedger-Klassen and baritone Tyler Duncan, plus the stand-alone song Somewhere Along the Line by Driedger-Klassen. Erika Switzer provides the musical piano framework throughout. The amusing lyrics for the Perruqueries set – about wigs and the people who love them – were provided by the Canadian author Bill Richardson. After hearing Morlock’s offerings here, I’ll pay closer attention to the recent reemergence of Canadian art song.

The album wraps with Aeromancy, an airy, loose- limbed two-movement Iaconic – at times mysterious – duet concerto. Ariel Barnes and Joseph Elworthy spin emotive cello melodies, while the Vancouver Academy of Music Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Leslie Dala, provides pastel colours over a firm harmonic base.

Andrew Timar

Brian Current – Faster Still
Various Artists
Centrediscs CMCCD 24217
(musiccentre.ca)

This recording is a timely reminder of the significant work that Brian Current is doing as a composer and conductor, and the excellent performance standard of three of Toronto’s leading new music ensembles.

The CD opens with an attractive short scene from 2006 – Inventory, with soprano Patricia O’Callaghan as a shoe salesperson, letting her imagination wander. The clever text is by Anton Piatigorsky and the Soundstreams ensemble (conducted by Current) features fine playing by some of Toronto’s top players. O’Callaghan’s poignant and whimsical performance is a highlight of the disc.

Faster Still, Strata and Shout, Sisyphus, Flock are three substantial instrumental works given superb performances here by the ensembles of Duo Concertante/Blue Engine String Quartet, Continuum Contemporary Music and New Music Concerts respectively. All three works are vital and intense and illustrate Current’s mastery of ensemble colour and aural imagery.

The Duet for Cellos, originally written in 2007 and revised in 2016, is an effective contrast in the middle of the program. Cellists Amahl Arulananand and Bryan Holt give a sensational performance of this short, compelling work. The final track Circus Songs is a bracing early piece for a mixed quintet that takes the listener on a wild ride and features great playing from all the performers. I especially loved pianist Stephen Clarke’s muscular “freak out” near the end.

It was a pleasure to get to know Current’s music better through this fine CD. He is a bold, uncompromising, highly skilled composer with much to say.

Larry Beckwith

Canadian Works for Oboe and Piano
Charles Hamann; Frédéric Lacroix
Centrediscs CMCCD 24117
(musiccentre.ca)

In 1993, 22-year-old prodigy Charles Hamann became principal oboe of the National Arts Centre Orchestra. Continuing in this role he is now internationally renowned: this two-disc Canadian sesquicentennial CD with University of Ottawa colleague Frédéric Lacroix shows why. Well-rounded tone and sensitive phrasing invite us into the uneasy lyricism of Jean Coutard’s Sonata for Oboe and Piano (1947) and her concise Shizen – Three Nature Sketches from Japan (1979). Pianist Lacroix shines in the inventive sonorities and harmonic colour of Alexina Louie’s Filligree (2012). Neglected composer Leslie Mann’s haunting Vocalise (1974) is riveting, as is Incantation (1977) by Jacques Hétu featuring Hamann’s breathtaking sustained tones. Amazingly, Oskar Morawetz’s bracing, dialogue-rich Three Fantasies for oboe and piano (1976) is played here for the first time!

JUNO Award-winning composer John Burge’s lively, beautifully-crafted Sonata Breve No.4 (2006) first attracted Hamann and Lacroix into this recording project, which also includes his whimsical solo oboe Twitter Études No.2 (2016). Gary Kulesha’s imaginative, commissioned Lyric Sonata for Oboe and Piano (2015) is lyrically unconventional, with quarter tones and multiphonics effectively melded into the slow movement which evokes a lonely landscape. The disc includes a Sonatine (2015) by Frédéric Lacroix, arrangements of Marjan Mozetich’s Calla Lilies and John Estacio’s Canzona, plus works by Charles Wilson, Monte Keene Pishny-Floyd and Victor Herbiet. For great stories about the recording’s creation see the Canadian Music Centre website and the program notes. Highly recommended for anyone who likes the oboe and 20th- and 21st-century music!

Roger Knox
Celebrating Canadian Women!
Laurel Swinden; Stephanie Mara
Independent LBSCD2017 (musiccentre.ca)

➤ Flutist and University of Guelph flute professor Laurel Swinden and pianist Stephanie Mara have teamed up to record this new CD of music by Canadian women, introducing composers and music new to many of us. Swinden’s playing is consistently first-class – great sound with flawless intonation and articulation. Mara is her equal all the way, playing like a soloist when that is required – and there are at times some devilishly difficult solos for the pianist – and stepping back when needed.

The program includes two sonatas, one by Québec composer and organist extraordinaire Rachel Laurin, the other by composer and pianist Heather Schmidt. Both sonatas, oddly enough, have cadenzas which are, in my opinion, some of the best writing in these pieces, and which Swinden plays with great confidence and verve.

I had the same response when hearing the opening of the Schmidt Sonata and the opening phrases of Alice Ho’s Suite for Flute and Piano: “What a composer!” Both bristle with excitement and virtuosity, demanding that the performer go to a stratospheric energy level. I was struck by how idiomatic Schmidt’s writing was for the flute. The second movement’s kaleidoscopic changes of mood are virtuosic feats of composition. While Swinden excels in this exciting and treacherously difficult music, she also shines in the more lyrical, like Jean Coulthard’s treacherously difficult music, she also shines.

The album is capped by the three works by Lutosławski for violin and piano. Recitativo e Arioso (1951) is early Lutosławski, imbued sometimes with an almost folk-like lyricism. Subito (1992), on the other hand, is among the composer’s last works, though in no way is it resigned. Rather, it is full of melodic playfulness with perhaps a musical tip of the hat to the Hungarian composer Béla Bartók.

Mathieu’s recital closes satisfyingly with the largest work here, Lutosławski’s five-movement Partita (1984). I understand it’s the work on the album most often included in contemporary violin recitals. In the virtuoso hands of Mathieu and Arakawa you can clearly hear why.

Andrew Timar

John Cage – The Works for Percussion 4: Works for Speaking Percussion
Bonnie Whiting
mode records mode 296 (CD and Blu-ray disc; moderecords.com)

➤ American new music and improvising percussionist Bonnie Whiting is carving out a career as a “speaking percussionist.” And what better repertoire to collect on her new album than the iconoclastic, prolific and influential American composer John Cage’s groundbreaking scores that require speaking or singing and percussion?

The main program falls into three Cagean periods. Two early career songs bookend a combination of two mid-1950s works for speaker and percussionist. Music for Two (By One), and a realization of Cage’s late period Music for . . . . . (1984-1987) for solo voice and percussion, follows. The album closes with a 2011 Allen Otte composition which incorporates several Cage works.

On the face of it, the two songs – The Wonderful Widow of Eighteen Springs (1942) and A Flower (1950) – seem the most conventional fare here: melody with piano accompaniment. While they are usually performed by a separate singer and pianist, Whiting performs the two parts together with ease and grace. It’s a performance ethos she traces to Cage’s openness to having some of his works combined and performed simultaneously.

The songs, however, are more non-conformist than they first appear. The instrumental parts are tapped and struck with fingers and hands on a closed piano. The voice is also severely restricted. While Cage’s 1930s composition teacher Arnold Schoenberg famously employed all 12 conventional semitones as a structural feature of his later compositions, Cage, on the other hand in The Wonderful Widow, uses three tones. A Flower’s vocal melody is constructed of four pitches with a fifth added only near the end. Were these songs at least partly a result of Cage rejecting
a dominant, demanding father figure?

In Whiting’s relaxed, naturalistic yet precise performances the songs feel almost lullaby-like, equally timeless and emblematic of the 20th-century avant-garde.

By the way, I recommend the Blu-ray version that comes with this release. The visual cues and energy in Whiting’s assured performances bring the Cage scores, particularly the two long percussion text scores, alive in full colour.

Andrew Timar

The Wreck of Former Boundaries
Elision Ensemble at 30
HCR/NMC HRC13CD (elision.org.au)

► Celebrating 30 years of engagement with complex and challenging aesthetics, Australia’s Elision ensemble has released The Wreck of Former Boundaries, a live recording featuring their 2016 Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival performances of the eponymous work by Aaron Cassidy, and How Forests Think, by Liza Lim.

In his bountiful 33-minute work, Cassidy writes remarkable musical situations for Elision’s consummately nimble cast. His diagonal consideration of instrumental colour facilitates their concentration on not just the notes, but continuous timbral flux expressed through diaphanously applied glissandi, pressure variance, embouchure tension and dynamic changes. In the liner notes, perhaps with benefit of hindsight, Cassidy describes the work as a double trumpet concerto, although elsewhere he calls it six stand-alone pieces that can be performed independently. It projects, however, as a fluid stream of restless, stratified solos and duos with infrequent, disjunct episodic interjections from the ensemble. Crispy, familiar electronics pursue contours of similar profile to the instrumental writing, prodigiously applied in the potent latter third of the work.

Lim’s How Forests Think reflects on anthropologist Eduardo Kohl’s nuanced idea of forest ecologies as intersecting communities and social networks (human and non-human). Musical identities share succentur attributes, supporting, absorbing and transferring them across the Chinese sheng and ensemble parts. Whereas Cassidy reveals in axiomatically winding materials through self-referential guides, Lim’s understory focuses on a different manner of complexity, nourished by outward-pointing substrata that creep and trail across the work. The result is polyreferential and broad, in vocabulary and scope, with deftly probed textures propagating a vital, bifurcating soundscape.

Paul Steenhuisen

Penderecki – Double Concerto; Piano Concerto; Trumpet Concerto
Jakub Haufa; Marcel Markowski; Szymon Nehring; Aleksander Kobus; Polish Sinfonia Juventus Orchestra; Krzysztof Penderecki
Dux Recording Producers DUX 1345

► What becomes of revolutionaries when, inevitably, with the passage of time, they become members of the establishment? Well, if you were Krzysztof Penderecki, you would be paying a tribute to the past. Now 84, the once-iconoclastic Polish composer, who stunned the musical world with his 1969 opera The Devils of Loudun and charmed it with the 1961, UNESCO-prize winning Threnody for the victims of Hiroshima, Penderecki today is more reflective and less innovative, but certainly not any less masterful.

Though the Double Concerto references Brahms in its form, the music is firmly in the Bartók corner. Powerful and sinewy melodic lines, especially those of the cello (originally scored for a viola) emanate freshness and the unmistakable delight of a newness of style. This is full-on, shivers-down-the-spine stuff, exciting, dangerous and hypnotic. The Piano Concerto and the Concertino for Trumpet are more standard expressions of this musical lion-in-winter, yet still bears his clear signature. All of the performers are very young, including this recently formed orchestra of Polish musicians under the age of 30. Their enthusiasm in performance is contagious, adding yet another dimension to this line CD. A must for Penderecki fans and a not-at-all-bad introduction to his works for those ten people in the world who do not know him yet.

Robert Tomas

Christine Jensen – Under the Influence Suite
Orchestre National de Jazz Montreal; Christine Jensen
Justin Time JTR 8957-2 (justin-time.com)

► Two-time JUNO-winner, saxophonist, composer and conductor Christine Jensen is one of the most gifted, creative and skilled inter-national musicians/composers of her generation. With her new five-part jazz suite and recording, Montreal-based Jensen has materialized nothing short of a musical triumph. A deeply personal project, this well-produced CD (which was commissioned by l’Orchestre national de jazz de Montréal) is an homage to Jensen’s significant musical influences – creative masters with whom she found a deep, soul connection and who have helped to shape her as an artist and as a human being. These jazz icons include the late Kenny Wheeler, the late Jan Jarczyk, the late John Coltrane, Lee Konitz (with whom Jensen studied extensively) and Wayne Shorter. Jensen (who conducts the ONJM) has also chosen to incorporate the lovely voice of Sienna Dahlen – which in timbre and tone is the perfect complement to the dynamic ONJM and also to the potent music itself (to which Dahlen contributed lyrics).

Among the superb sections of this cycle are Part I (For Kenny Wheeler), which begins with Ouverture – a spooky and disarming sequence that opens the door for Starbright, a stunning, breathtaking and heartbreaking opus that segues into an expressionistic and
free-flowing vocal and instrumental exploration, which then explodes into a cacophony of heart-pounding brass, a scorching piano solo by genius François Bourassa as well as gorgeous solos/rhythm section work from trumpeter Bill Mahar and drummer Kevin Warren. Also performed to perfection are the lilting, sassy and swinging Sweet Lee (For Lee Konitz) and both compositions written in tribute to Wayne Shorter: Anthem – a spiritual, non-linear, outside of space/time experience – and the joyous, dueling saxophones of Chant.

Lesley Mitchell-Clarke

**Second Act**
Alex Goodman
Lyte Records LR040 (lyterecords.com)

It seems that for much of Second Act, Alex Goodman maintains a sort of spectral presence as a guitarist, shadowing the pianist Eden Ladin or saxophonist and EWI player Matt Marantz with liquid single-note lines, creating a post-bop sensibility. But in each song Goodman does emerge briefly to punch the clock with short, stabbing solos that might end – as with Marantz’s saxophone in Heightened – in a kind of knotted entanglement with the melody before all but disappearing into the shadows of the music again. This, of course, puts the focus back on the compositional ability of Goodman and how his sinuous musical sounds when played in an ensemble setting.

It’s also refreshing when a disc turns up that hearkens back to unfettered swing the way Second Act does. In a sense it feels like listening to big band music without the large ensemble. This quintet is also augmented by the incredible vocalists Felicity Williams and Tiina Kilk.

**Ugly Beauty**
Kadi Vija; Lucas Dann
Texticalli

Kadi Vija and Lucas Dann – a Finnish musician who calls herself a “vocal instrumentalist” and a Canadian pianist of considerable pedigree – might seem like strange bedfellows but in the music of Thelonious Monk on Ugly Beauty, the very oddness of the partnership gives the album’s title a distinctly Monkish meaning. The album takes its name from the only waltz among Monk’s compositions and it is appropriately kicked off by a relatively rarely played version of “I Wish.” As Long As We Remain features some of Thelonious Monk’s compositions with Monk on alto saxophone and piano, the atonal sound of the saxophone on Acrobat all make for high art and high entertainment. And when the two meet – as they do in Second Act – memorability is assured.

Raul da Gama

**Music for Solo Tenor Saxophone**
Paul Newman
Somewhere There
(paulnewman1.bandcamp.com)

Local musician/composer Paul Newman performs his tasteful, thoughtful compositions with care, musicality and colour here. Both works are three tracks each, and explore sound quality, phrasing and mostly gentle melodic movement using contemporary musical tools.

Full Circle is immediately attention-grabbing with its opening lengthy bent tones alternating with long silent spaces, allowing the listener time to reflect on the sound. The work leads to a steady almost slow walking pace with clear tones magically performed. The slightly faster second movement takes on a two-instrument conversational feel between high and low tones. The atonal sound of the third section features faster interval leaps and extended technique. Excitement builds with the short staccato repeated notes and melodies ending with minimalist flavoured long tones.

In As Long As We Remain (for Ken Aldcroft and Braz King), Newman illustrates more of his contemporary, experimental musical side. The work also opens with longer lyrical notes and phrases, leading to a section of high and low tricky pitch jumps. Especially exciting is the final movement. Fluctuating colours, timbres and similar jumps make for a more atonal listening experience, ending with a glorious, loooong held tone.

This solo music experience is so gratifying due to Newman’s confident compositional ability and performance virtuosity, along with a clean production that captures all his musical subtleties. This is brilliant reflective experimental music driving along a mainstream highway of sound.

Tiina Kilk

Raul da Gama

**Copy Cat Coo Coo**
Fran Jaré
Superfran Records FJ0157

Fran Jaré wears a number of hats on her new recording – producer, pianist, organist, composer and vocalist. Having made strong inroads into the genres of R&B, pop and rock (notably as the lead vocalist for the popular Vancouver ensemble Soultrax), Jaré has journeyed back into jazz with some very (dare I say it?) groovy results. The tight, cool and satisfying ensemble is bound together not only by talent and love of music, but also by a jazz-peddled gene pool (the executive producer is Jaré’s husband, Brian Disterheft, and features both her JUNO-winning bassist daughter, Brandi Disterheft, and her Grammy-winning sister, Angie Jaré). Additional JUNO-winning instrumentalists include Olaf DeShield on guitar and electric bass, Tom Keenlyside on sax and flute, Buff Allen on drums, Brad Turner on trumpet and also famed percussionist Portinho.

The well-chosen material is primarily a mash-up of Jaré’s original compositions, written over a period of time and culled from previous recordings and musical situations – including Soultrax and incarnations of the Fran Jaré Trio/Quartet/Quintet. A deep bow to the incredible Stevie Wonder who is also included with Jaré’s slow, smooth and funky take on I Wish. She also pays tribute to the late great, Oliver Nelson with the buoyant Step Right Up. The title track is an infectious, soulful romp, perfectly underscored and punctuated by Jaré’s considerable organ/piano chops and the fine soloing and ensemble playing.

On Yeah! Together Again, Jaré’s smoky vocal sound brings to mind Joe Stafford and Julie London in perfect synthesis with Jaré’s own sensual, unique, film noir-infused voice. Her charming scat singing is not only completely musical, but delivered with joy and accuracy. A fine recording!

Lesley Mitchell-Clarke

The haunting compositions supply this duo’s usual range of ear-worm music – dancing melodies, chopped rhythms and gorgeous harmonies – with the added element of unusual textures.
Vigorously backed by slap bass and drum rolls, the tunes demonstrate theophonist’s reed vaulting doubles the trombonist’s gutbucket whinnies. Thomas Lehn, shares a bill with a solo bass recital by Helias. September 16 as part of a double bill with Montreal-Vancouver quartet BluRay and jazz much be added.

Gerry Hemingway

Gerry Hemingway and fellow American, drummer at the GJF , major European improvisers will be on hand as well.


That said, this material is less accessible to the Monk newcomer: there are multiple takes and false starts, two edits of the same take, and a 14-minute rehearsal with Monk repeatedly trying to get Taylor to play an awkward drum pattern. There are numerous Riverside recordings available that are much more welcoming.

Stuart Broomer


suggest how Anderson’s rollicking brass ensemble operates. Moran’s targeted keyboard musings help showcase BDB’s other skills as the four dynamically invest Bungle Low and Tone L. with subtle colouration, balancing among individual timbral elaboration, as they take turns shadowing each others’ advances. Solidly walking or subtly vibrating throughout, Different Cities confirms how Helias sounds on his own, with the bassist given space to thrust an opulent section of arco expressions on multiple strings into the mix, finally engaging in a dialogue with the trombonist’s vocalized cries. BDB’s ability to disguise itself as a carefree jump band is given full reign on the set’s two extended live tracks as well as At Another Time. Not only does the last allow Anderson to showcase every manner of smeared and slurred tailgate tones, but Hemingway moves upfront with a spectacular display of cymbal clanks and paradiddles, reminiscent of drum masters from pioneers like Baby Dodds to the most modern stylists.

A saxophonist undeniably in tune with modern sound experiments is London-based John Butcher, who has partnered Hemingway in the past. He won’t do so at the GJF, although two other instances of his musicianship are featured. On September 15, he’ll perform with Lehn and New York pianist Matthew Shipp at the Co-operators Hall on a bill with Vancouver cellist Peggy Lee’s Film in Music. Then on September 16 at the Guelph Little Theatre, Butcher and TIM members, bassist Torsten Müller and drummer Dylan van der Schyff perform as the Way Out Northwest trio, sharing the stage with Quebec guitarist René Lussier’s MEUH.

An expanded variant of Butcher’s interactive and interpretative talent is Anemone – A Wing Dissolved in Light (NoBusiness Records NBLP 105 nobusinessrecords.com), where the saxophonist is part of the band Anemone joined by bassist Clayton Thomas and drummer Paul Lovens, pianist Frédéric Blondy and trumpeter Peter Evans. Challenging Evans’ ability to attain Maynard Ferguson-like skyscraping notes, Butcher may begin his exposition with emotional cries, but moderates the interaction to harsh slurs and stuttering signs, also connecting to Blondy’s distinctive key jabbing. Meanwhile, Thomas’ string buzzes, and the metal clangs and Mylar echoes from Lovens comfortably carpet the narratives’ bottoms. Une Aile Dissoute dans la Lumière (Part II) is a more deliberate showcase as the final sequence breaks free from Part I’s swirling cacophony. Brief reductionist solos that include a single stopped piano key, an oboe-like sour reed blat and a wooden drum plop, are emphasized.

Something in the Air

New Excitement at the Guelph Jazz Festival

KEN WAXMAN

After a couple of quiet years the annual Guelph Festival (GJF), September 13 to 17, is newly energized and asserting its role as one of Canada’s most consistent showcases of adventurous music. Another reason for this year’s buzz is that besides the outstanding Canadian and American musicians consistently featured at the GJF, major European improvisers will be on hand as well.

Probably the band members most equipped to show off their individual and cumulative talents in different settings are trombonist Ray Anderson and bassist Mark Helias, who both live near New York City, and fellow American, drummer Gerry Hemingway who lives and teaches in Luzern, Switzerland. Together they make up BassDrumBone (BDB), which celebrates its 40th anniversary on September 16 as part of a double bill with Montreal-Vancouver quartet MendFlam at the Co-operators Hall of the River Run Centre. On September 15 Anderson’s Pocket Brass Band will be the closing act at the Market Square Stage. Then, on September 17 at the Guelph Youth Music Centre, Hemingway, in duet with German synthesizer player Thomas Lehn, shares a bill with a solo bass recital by Helias.

The two-CD set, The Long Road (Auricle Records AUR 16/17 gerryhemingway.com), offers 13 examples of BassDrumBone’s cooperative talent, mostly as a trio, but like a roast improved with seasoning, adding either tenor saxophonist Joe Lovano or pianist Jason Moran on some tracks. Lovano’s expositions, which function with explosive power on BluRay and Bluish, confirm the rhythmic sides of BDB as the saxophonist’s reed vaulting doubles the trombonist’s gutbucket whinnies. Vigorously backed by slap bass and drum rolls, the tunes demonstrate how to swing heartily without abandoning technical skills, and also
Finally, hollow reverberations from the drummer, hunt-and-peck keyboard patterns and even to-the-colours bugle-like peeps from the trumpeter combine into a languid exit. Still, a sharp whistle from the saxophonist and a hard chord from the pianist as the coda reference the dissonance that preceded the calm.

A pianist who can be tranquil or turbulent in turn is Matthew Shipp, who besides playing with Butcher and Lehn gives his own solo concert at the Co-operators Hall, September 16. Shipp is as potent a stylist in a group setting as he is a soloist, as is shown on This Is Beautiful Because We Are Beautiful People (ESP-Disk ESP 5011 espdisk.com), where the pianist, longtime confere bassist William Parker, plus Polish saxophonist Mat Walerian, make up the Toxic trio. Anything but toxic in the usual sense, the CD’s five selections are unique, since to engage Parker’s playing of the shakuhachi as well as bass and Walerian’s use of alto saxophone, flute, and bass and soprano clarinet, Shipp debuts on organ as well as piano. The multi-keyboard is only brought out on the final Peace And Respect but like church pewls now used in a bistro, it’s removed from the tinge of the chapel. Instead, the organ’s polyphonic upsurge comes in and out of focus to reflect and redefine Walerian’s harsh bass clarinet slurs and Parker’s thumping bass thwacks. Shipp reverts to piano cadences to regularize the track’s processional ending. The four tracks preceding this allow the pianist, longtime confrere bassist William Parker, plus deep-in-the-throat snorts and guffaws from both horn players, sonic unity is paramount. A track like Orange Butterflies, for instance, may set up opposing flute peeps and brass snorts as if they’re going to recall the unpleasant meeting of Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf, but these untrammeled tremolos actually create resonant tones that bond the two in lockstep unity. Another strategy, summarily demonstrated on After Assistance, is how one horn produces a solid continuum upon which the other is free to improvise, with the two subsequently switching roles with the coordinated skill of paired ballroom dancers. Bowie’s prestidigitation are most aptly demonstrated on A Space Rontoto, when slide motions are used to taper his usual gutbucket action into a mere sound thread as if strained through a sieve. Meanwhile Lake’s wobbling, lowing and fluttering multiphonic variations on Zakl don’t preclude him cycling back to its theme in tandem with Bowie at the finale.

Ken Waxman
Naxos was launched in 1987, when CDs were just four years new and the major labels were busy digitally recording new performances and remastering acclaimed recordings from their archives. New recordings from the major companies retailed for $20 in Canada. Naxos introduced CDs to retail for about the price of an LP, for which we at The Classical Record Shop were agreeable to allot some space. The Naxos representative insisted on a display dedicated to their product alone, apart from the composer or artist section. Soon customers began asking for the Naxos rack and it was not uncommon to see persons make a beeline for the Naxos display. “What’s new on Naxos?” became an often-heard inquiry. Naxos continues to grow, utilizing today’s (and tomorrow’s) technology to best deliver their performances everywhere. A few years ago, I interviewed the man behind Naxos, Klaus Heymann. When speaking of future developments the one word that did not appear to be in his vocabulary was “if.” Nothing he spoke of was ever if, but when. In the ensuing years many of his prognostications have already come to pass, not the least of which is the revolution in dissemination of the printed word and digital platforms for music.

To celebrate their 30 years of producing a continuous stream of standard and non-standard repertoire in addition to works by lesser-known composers, always in state of the art sound, Naxos has assembled the Anniversary Collection (8.50293). Appropriately containing 30 CDs selected from the 9,000 titles in the company’s archives, The Anniversary Collection offers a selection of performances by prominent artists and others who may not spring to mind immediately but who are informed masters of their repertoire.

Good news for collectors who already own the usual basic repertoire – you will discover many new delights without unnecessary duplications. Here are a few in no particular order: Chopin and Liszt piano concertos; Dvořák and Elgar cello concertos; Tchaikovsky Manfred Symphony and Violin Concerto; three Spanish guitar concertos; Glière Symphony No.3; Grieg Peer Gynt Suites; Handel Water and Fireworks Music; Daugherty Metropolis Symphony; Barber of Seville highlights... and many more well-chosen discs including Vivaldi’s Four Seasons, Naxos’s bestselling recording in the catalogue. It dates from 1987 with Japanese violinist Takako Nishizaki and Capella Istropolitana from Bratislava. There is a complete table of contents at arviku.com.

Following the success of Elgar Remastered, the collection of forgotten and priceless recordings conducted by Elgar derived from test pressings sent to Elgar by HMV and never released (SOMMCD261–4, 4CDs), SOMM has issued a follow up, Elgar Rediscovered (SOMMCD 264), an anthology of forgotten recordings. As before, the transfers and restorations were performed by Lani Spahr. The CD opens with the Elegy for String Orchestra, Op.58 recorded by the BBC Symphony in Abbey Road Studio 1 on April 11, 1933. Test pressings were sent to Elgar, who wrote back that “The records have come and are very good.” However, HMV did not issue them as Elgar had elsewhere expressed the wish to re-record. A new recording with the London Philharmonic Orchestra was issued by HMV and the premiere version remained unissued until now. A very good case is made for preferring this earlier performance, which is a variant of the published one. This original has a real verve, an ebull and flow and vitality missing in the LPO version. The Coronation March, Op.65, commissioned for the coronation of George V, is played by Landon Ronald conducting the LPO. It is followed, appropriately, by The Coronation March and Hymn composed by Elgar’s contemporary Edward German, who was also commissioned for the occasion.

Grandly celebratory, they were both recorded on March 7, 1935 in London’s Kingsway Hall. The premiere recording of the Violin Concerto, Op.61 was made in April 1916 in a 15-minute truncated version by Albert Sammons, with orchestra conducted by Henry Wood. Thanks to the quality of the original and the technology employed, the violin sound is clear and present with the orchestra not far behind. Also included are some items that must have been popular 78s at the time including Kyrie from Gerontius; Fringes of the Fleet; The Pipes of Pan; Where Corals Lie from Sea Pictures; and others, performed by Alfredo Campoli, Fred Austin, The Black Diamonds Band, John Barbirolli, et al. A genuine curiosity is a private recording of May Graffon playing the Sonatina that her uncle Edward wrote for her in 1889 to encourage the eight-year-old to practise. In this 1960 recording she plays from her 1889 original score, which differs from the published version. The final recording on this unusual collection is Salut d’Amour. Op.12 played to perfection, without the layers of emotion not fashionable, by Albert Sammons with Gerald Moore, recorded in 1940.

Another offering from SOMM, Kathleen Ferrier Remembered (SOMMCD 264) contains a selection of Hieder by Schubert and Brahms, Wolf and Mahler together with songs by Stanford, Rubbra, Jacobson and Parry. The 26 tracks were recorded for broadcast by the BBC between November 1947 and September 1952. The accompanists are Frederick Stone, Gerald Moore and Bruno Walter. These are moments to be treasured and some are heartbreakingly beautiful. For example, an Uralicht from Des Knaben Wunderhorn accompanied by Frederick Stone. Relevatory are four songs by Schubert and Brahms from September 1951 in which she is accompanied by Bruno Walter, who held her in the highest regard. Following her death on October 5, 1953, Walter wrote: “The greatest thing in music in my life has been to have known Kathleen Ferrier and Gustav Mahler — in that order.” Her voice sits perfectly on the six British songs that are among the 19 previously unpublished recordings.

Volume 5 of the Michael Gielen Edition is devoted to the music of Bartók and Stravinsky. Although his name has appeared on other labels over the years, Gielen’s most consistent recordings have come from SWR (Südwestrundfunk), who recorded the orchestras of Baden-Baden and Freiburg, Saarbrucken and Stuttgart (SWR9023CD, 6CDs). Collectors who have heard the performances in the four earlier volumes and elsewhere will need no endorsement for Volume 5. Once again we are treated to exemplary and individual recordings directed by a figure who had earlier been avoided by the record companies for his out-of-the-mainstream repertoire and individual interpretations, deeming them non-commercial. Thanks to SWR, who recorded his performances over the years with their orchestras, we can enjoy and appreciate those performances. Some of the tracks on volume five, as before, have been available on a few labels but not with the meticulous attention paid to the smallest details in order to extract the most out of the originals. Technically, the recordings are very convincing, the instruments are heard in place and the illusion is of hearing an orchestra rather than the recording of one.

The Bartók scores are: Suit from The Wooden Prince; Concerto for Orchestra; Four Orchestral Pieces, Op.12; Violin Concerto No.1; Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta; Dance Suite Sz.77; Piano Concerto No.2 and The Miraculous Mandarin. The Stravinsky entries are Pylcine, Apollon musagète, Scherzo à la russe, Le roi des étôles, Canticum Sacrum, Agon, Requiem Canticles, Aldous Huxley In Memoriam, Symphony in Three Movements, Symphony in C and Symphony of Psalms.
THE ELIXIR OF LOVE

GAETANO DONIZETTI

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René Barbera and Susannah Biller in The Elixir of Love (Opera Theatre of St. Louis, 2014), photo: Ken Howard
Mark Miller has a well-earned reputation as Canada’s foremost writer on jazz, whether as the Globe & Mail’s critic for a quarter century before his retirement from journalism or for the ten books he’s previously published on the music, many of them specifically devoted to its Canadian dimension. With his biography of drummer Claude Ranger, however, he’s done something quite new, a full-length biography of a Canadian musician that gives us a more intimate glimpse into jazz in this country than has previously been revealed.

Ranger might seem like an unlikely choice: he certainly never achieved celebrity like Diana Krall or Oscar Peterson, or international status as a significant innovator like Paul Bley or Kenny Wheeler. However, while he largely laboured in the trenches, Ranger responded singularly to the allure of jazz.

Miller’s familiarity with each of Canada’s distinctive jazz centres (and several generations of their musicians) gives rare immediacy and authenticity to the westward path of Ranger’s career. Born in Montreal in 1941, he followed a trail from beating on pots and pans to playing in Montreal showbars, then on to the city’s jazz scene, then Toronto, eventually ending up in Vancouver where, in 2000, he disappeared. And not in the sense of retired from the scene, preferring sunny days on the beach or playing with the grandkids: No, Ranger literally disappeared: an RCMP investigation launched in 2001 is still open.

Ranger was a romantic figure, a man devoted — both selflessly and selfishly, it would seem — to jazz as art and necessary self-expression. From the mid-60s on he was devoted to the fresh possibilities of a changing music, fuelled by the examples of John Coltrane and Miles Davis and their respective drummers, Elvin Jones and Tony Williams. Working whatever Montreal gigs that might come along, Ranger first cultivated associations with like-minded musicians, initially bassist Michel Donato and saxophonist Brian Barley, eventually becoming the mentor for some 25 years to younger musicians who felt the same irresistible pull toward jazz in its more liberating forms. Despite that, he stayed in the limiting world of Canadian jazz, held back by what Miller calls his “demons and dependencies,” as much his creative insecurity about being a white Canadian who finds himself in black American music as, say, alcohol. I only saw Ranger once when he was playing in the kind of company to which he might have aspired — with Sonny Rollins and Donato at a Toronto benefit in 1974 — and he was clearly a drummer of rare skill, energy, invention and intensity.

Part of the effectiveness of Miller’s chronicle comes out in his sense of the telling detail, whether it’s the semiotics of the perpetual smoking cigarette with hanging ash drooping from the left corner of Ranger’s mouth, or another kind of detail, the resume writer’s, recounting musicians’ memories of rigorous rehearsals and the scant and sparsely attended performances that followed. Those lists are life-blood for many who play jazz in Canada: they make illuminating reading for anyone interested in the music, and a cautionary tale for anyone contemplating a career in it.

In Miller’s larger tale, Ranger hasn’t disappeared at all. He’s alive not just in the memories of the young musicians whose lives he touched, but in their music, whether it’s rooted in the rehearsals, the charts he laboured over, the lessons he gave for a pack of smokes and a six-pack, the exercises he wrote out, the drums he rebuilt, or, above all, that fierce, unbending loyalty to the music. As Miller notes, Ranger inspired and assisted Dylan van der Schyff and Nick Fraser, today the finest Canadian drummers of a generation that benefits from a far more internationalized scene.

Stuart Broomer
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