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Not Your Standard Story

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Eve Egoyan
Taking Up Space

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— Thompson Egbo-Egbo

ON OUR COVER

"The photo was taken at Paul Hahn & Co. by Jeremy Elliott. It’s a piano store in Rosedale that has been my second home for years, and a place that I’ve gone to practice, rehearse with the band and just hang out. The piano they put in the front window is always a flagship instrument – this one was a 1916 New York Steinway & Sons Model A, rebuilt by the craftsmen and technicians in the Paul Hahn workshop. The ability to play incredible pianos whenever I visit is a great source of inspiration and gets my creative juices flowing.”

— Thompson Egbo-Egbo

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UPCOMING SPECIAL SECTIONS
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All things choral in Southern Ontario

In June 2018: The Green Pages
Summer Music Guide
A Feather in the Glenn Gould Foundation Cap?

For once, I had this Opener figured out days in advance, thanks to a snippet of news that came my way relating to Estonian Music Week, which kicks off May 24 and will offer concerts and workshops in a bunch of different musical genres and eight different Toronto venues, from Lee’s Palace to Koerner Hall, all timed to coincide with the 100th anniversary of Estonia’s independence. But that’s May’s news. The detail that caught my eye right now, and much more in keeping with this month’s topic, was an initiative to the tune of around two million Canadian dollars, titled “An Instrument for Every Child,” designed to put a musical instrument in the hands of every Estonian child who wants to play one, with no limitations in terms of musical styles.

But just a couple of hours before going to press with this issue of TheWholeNote, word came through to us from the Glenn Gould Foundation, of the death of Venezuelan visionary educator, Dr. José Antonio Abreu, founder of El Sistema, a transformative program of intensive free music education and orchestral training, starting in early childhood. “Abreu was a visionary figure, who recognized the power of music to transform the lives of children suffering the ravages of poverty and the host of social ills that goes with it” reads the statement posted on the Glenn Gould Foundation website. “From that realization, and by sheer force of will, he built the movement that came to be known as El Sistema, beginning with a mere 11 young people in 1975, but ultimately [spreading] to more than 25 countries worldwide, adapting and accommodating itself to the social and economic context of each.”

I’d already been planning, cleverly, to link this new Estonian initiative to the topic of Abreu, El Sistema and the GGF because April is, as it happens, announcement time for the Glenn Gould Prize for the arts. This year’s distinguished jury is heading to town shortly that would truly be a feather in the Glenn Gould Foundation cap. But how much better when the Prize is bestowed on someone of around two million Canadian dollars, titled “An Instrument for Every Child,” designed to put a musical instrument in the hands of every Estonian child who wants to play one, with no limitations in terms of musical styles.


Somewhere along the way, I think either just before or just after the award to Leonard Cohen, it was announced that henceforth the prize would be known as the Glenn Gould Prize for the arts, rather than strictly for music. And around the same time as the change to “Prize for the Arts” was announced, it was also announced that the Prize would be awarded every two years instead of every three.

One more piece of history: since 1993, the year Oscar Peterson won, there has been a second award, called the City of Toronto Protégé Prize, awarded to some person, or in one case organization, of the Laureate’s own choosing, generally announced at the prize-giving ceremony sometime during the year after the announcement of the main award. Abreu selected Gustavo Dudamel as protégé in his year. Yo-Yo Ma selected a true protégé, future fellow Silk Road Project core company member, pipa player Wu Man for his. She remains to this point the only woman among the 20 honorees to date.

Growing up: Of all the laureates so far, Abreu was for me the one that best reflected what prizes like this should really be for, and the direction that I hope this year’s jury will take in their deliberations. I understand why for the first couple of decades of its existence a prize like this is as much intent on building its own pedigree via the credentials of its chosen laureates as the other way round. The Prize had to prove its importance by choosing widely known laureates, who then, usually, return the favour by the graciousness and alacrity with which they acknowledge the importance of the award.

But how much better when the Prize is bestowed on someone of towering importance to art and life whom we don’t already know. Abreu was one such person for me: I will always be grateful that the Prize brought his life-changing work to my attention. Going further, it is highly unlikely that El Sistema would have found fertile soil in Toronto and elsewhere in Canada were it not for the prominence given to the movement the year he won, there has been a second award, called the City of Toronto Protégé Prize, awarded to some person, or in one case organization, of the Laureate’s own choosing, generally announced at the prize-giving ceremony sometime during the year after the announcement of the main award. Abreu selected Gustavo Dudamel as protégé in his year. Yo-Yo Ma selected a true protégé, future fellow Silk Road Project core company member, pipa player Wu Man for his. She remains to this point the only woman among the 20 honorees to date.

As for the matter of the gender of the laureates, it’s an issue that gets thornier with every passing cycle. Each time a man is chosen, the Prize brings into the limelight a person (of any gender) who stands to benefit more from having their work brought into focus by the Prize, the Prizes like this are as much intent on building its own pedigree via the credentials of its chosen laureates as the other way round. The Prize had to prove its importance by choosing widely known laureates, who then, usually, return the favour by the graciousness and alacrity with which they acknowledge the importance of the award.

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The April 13 announcement will take the Prize to a whole new level if it brings into the limelight a person (of any gender) who stands to benefit more from having their work brought into focus by the Prize, than the Prize merely basking in the laureate’s reflected glory. Now that would truly be a feather in the Glenn Gould Foundation cap.

For Openers | David Perlman
I t is a Sunday morning, March 18, 2018, and jazz pianist Thompson Egbo-Egbo and I have made time for a fairly leisurely chat in The WholeNote offices at 720 Bathurst Street. Sunday is a lot quieter in the office than the rest of the week these days, as assorted heavy machinery takes a sabbatical from the nearly completed sacred task, right under our windows, of levelling all the buildings on the city block that was Honest Ed’s empire.

Egbo-Egbo will be at Koerner Hall twice this coming April (once onstage and once backstage). The onstage Koerner appearance is April 11 at 7:30pm, the 14th Annual Jazz Lives gala/fundraiser for Friends of Koerner Hall. The backstage appearance is April 20 8:30pm slot – a VIP “sight-and-sound” a few days earlier for a few lucky fans. Billed as a celebration of Nat ‘King’ Cole’s centenary, 14 songs will have been performed by the Parker/Thompson/Earl/Hall/Semeniuk ensemble, with Egbo-Egbo’s band Ekaya, in an evening featuring new arrangements of late 50s/60s Jazz Epistles original compositions woven in with Ibrahim’s classic catalogue.

“I am looking forward to that show,” Egbo-Egbo says. “If you can get a ticket,” I reply. (It has been sold out for months.) “Secret is, I will be watching from backstage,” he says. “They will be doing a little VIP reception after, they always do a little VIP thing, and my trio will be playing that reception. I had a choice of which to play and that was the one I chose. I have never seen him live and it will be great for the guys to get the chance to just watch and enjoy. I remember back in the day when IAJE (International Association for Jazz Education) was in town, I got to watch Ed Thigpen play with Russ Malone and Benny Green, with Oscar Peterson onstage and I was volunteering, opening the doors for those guys. So it’s going to be exciting.”

Meanwhile, the Thompson Egbo-Egbo Trio (Jeff Halischuk on drums and Randall Hall on bass are the other two) will have put in a fair bit of practice – four March Tuesdays at The Rex, in the 6:30pm-8:30pm slot. Repertoire for the gigs revolves around their trio’s first album – A New Standard, it’s called. It was recorded as an indie project a year or so ago and is now being re-released by Entertainment One Music – a first step of another leg of Egbo-Egbo’s musical journey.

One of the great things about the residency at The Rex, he says, is settling in. “Settling into the music, settling in with the same players. Similar to the time we’ve spent at Poetry Jazz Cafe in Kensington Market, it’s like paid rehearsal time. You get to work through the music. For me there’s a freedom in knowing that in this setting I’m allowed to make a few mistakes in order to find stuff. And that will make what we do next, next record, next evolution or whatever, that much better. Ideally we are trying to shed our skin of stuff to find whatever the next butterfly is.”

“Why A New Standard?” I ask about the album name.

“Partly it’s about picking repertoire,” he says. “You know, you go to Humber, or whatever music institution, and they give you the standards and you’ve got to learn these tunes; and then you get out in the real world and realize there’s all these other tunes. I mean, you sit at the piano in a piano bar and you’d better be able to at least fake Piano Man so that after the first 30 seconds, when they usually stop listening, it still sounds like the same song. So part of it was that. Realizing that there are new ‘standards’ being set all the time that you have to know. The old guard has to meet the new guard, and out of that you have to create your own standards, so to speak.”

He carries on: “Another part of it is to do with the realities of life for a gigging musician, when you’re finding yourself in a different space musically all the time – a little bit of jazz and little bit of pop depending on where you are from moment to moment. It’s easy to buy in to a kind of disdain for music that’s three minutes, or 2:40, that sort of stuff. But I found myself thinking about the old jazz records – if you listen to some of the old records, that’s all they were. Size of the cylinder, one head, one solo head out. Which is not far from where the pop space is for music.”

“So is there a danger of finding yourself betwixt and between?” I ask. His response is a shrug. “Some people will call it jazz, some people won’t; most of the jazz people won’t call it jazz, and the people who aren’t jazz will call it jazz. Whatever … The way I see it, if someone turns the radio on for the music that’s there, can we be there? It may not be a pop tune but can I present it in a way that’s there? It may not be a 12-minute song? Can I get it compact to match the way it’s being absorbed? Six minutes or so, that was my thought process. Let’s just try and present the music a little differently, you know? We all listen to all kinds of music which does that.”

Egbo-Egbo, Halischuk and Hall all went through the Humber jazz program, at the college’s Lakeshore campus in the city’s west end. But the story of their working together has more twists and turns than you can imagine. It was a project a year or so ago and is now being re-released by Entertainment One Music – a first step of another leg of Egbo-Egbo’s musical journey.
not intersect musically at the time. "Jeff was in the A Band," Egbo-Egbo explains. "Which band you were in was quite competitive for some people. I have to say it wasn’t for me, not because it couldn’t have been, but just because it wasn’t on my radar at the time. I just thought, ‘Oh, some people got picked to play in that band.’"

His drummer at Humber was Syl Juhas but “he met the door lady at some venue we were playing and they hit it off, ended up moving to Germany.” After that he played with many drummers, then one day needed someone to sub on a particular gig. “Saw Jeff on Facebook and went ‘Hmm, I wonder if he would play with me.’ Reached out, he said ‘Yeah sure, I’d love to.’”

Something clicked, he says. “For me, Jeff really played the way I heard the music, the way I envisioned drums being played on everything I do, so at that point it became ‘How often can I get him to play with me?’ And I was fortunate because it stuck. He really elevated what we were doing. I think it’s interesting that ten years before we hadn’t really played together. But there’s always relationships along the way in music that never happened before; that’s the way things go sometimes.”

Bassist Randall Hall had been at Humber a full decade before Egbo-Egbo. “Randall was one of those guys who had done Humber and never finished it. Music was great at the time, there was a lot of playing to be had. Then, as luck has it, he came back to finish his studies right at the end of my time. We ended up playing together and sticking around. He’s been there since very early on playing with me and it’s worked out really well.”

The old guard has to meet the new guard, and out of that you have to create your own standards, so to speak.

“Did you also gig all the way through Humber?” I ask. “Yes,” he says. “It’s interesting, the different philosophies people bring to it. I didn’t have the same supports some people had – that’s neither good nor bad, just a fact. It meant I didn’t interact as much with other students as I could have, or should have, maybe. All those gigs, four, five, sometimes six nights a week … Also, to be honest, I mean I grew up downtown and didn’t want to be out at campus when I didn’t need to be. So I was jetting a lot. On the one hand I had a tough go financially figuring it out. On the other hand, I was very fortunate that I had private scholarships to pay for my time at Humber.”

When Egbo-Egbo talks about growing up downtown, he’s talking specifically about Regent Park, on Toronto’s inner-city east side, the child of parents who immigrated here from Nigeria when he was four years old. The inner city east side is still his home base. He sits on the board of Dixon Hall Music School, where he got his own musical start – that’s how he met entertainment lawyer Chris Taylor, who now heads up Entertainment One Music. It’s also how he met Mitchell Cohen of Daniels Corporation, who has followed Egbo-Egbo’s progress for years and helped finance the production of the new album.

“Somewhere, I can’t remember exactly where,” I say, “you’re quoted as saying something like ‘Before you can talk about making best choices, you have to have choices to make.’”

“‘There’s an easy version of that,” he says. “You grow up, you see bad things happening around you. You choose to join in or you choose something else, if there’s something else to choose. But I don’t go with painting me as some kind of a hero. I’d love to say I was smart enough to recognize the opportunities afforded to me. People look at you and say ‘Wow, look at you, you did so well.’ But truthfully, why shouldn’t I have? Lots of people from Regent Park did well. You just mostly hear about the ones who don’t.’ I was surrounded by a lot of opportunities, so much opportunity. I was not a rich kid but from an early age, because of music, I grew up like a rich kid. Looking back, it seems almost impossible that I would miss the road I took. Take the time to unpack it, there was a whole community of people who invested in me like a thoroughbred. ‘I have always had support and help for what I am doing; even now 2307_Features.indd   9
0x0   2018-03-26   12:29 AM
I remind myself that I have always had a community. If you don’t have one, you’d better figure it out, for music or anything else.”

For Egbo-Egbo, “anything else” now includes a recent decision to add a career in commercial real estate to his toolkit. “It was an interesting choice” he says. “I had no background or knowledge in real estate. But I asked myself ‘Do I go back and do an MBA or go into law?’ I’d done eight years of school, didn’t want to remove myself from the workforce. I’d met people in that sector through my music so at the minimum I would have people who care about what I do to answer questions for me.”

“What’s ironic and beautiful over the last year and a half since I started out,” he tells me, “is that the music has been subsidizing my real estate career. The income I used to look down on has actually helped me survive the transition. My first deals have come directly from my music network. I tell myself I am going into real estate to help me take care of music and monetarily it’s been the other way around. It’s so interesting how it all connects. No matter what I have done so far, music always takes care of me. Financially, emotionally, mentally. One way or another.”

“So how do you think you can find a balance?” I ask.

“Not so much a question of balance as alternating binges,” he says. “When I first started I was so busy I was not really practising. So I worried about making sure the music was continuing. I look at it this way. If you’re doing things musically that you don’t want to be doing, in order to do the things that you do want to be doing musically, then do something else with the time you spent on the musical part you don’t like. I am a performer, not into teaching, and it’s getting to where I don’t have to worry only about taking care of myself. My parents are getting older; as immigrants they don’t have the work history, pensions, and whatnot; at some point you have the responsibility to help out. They made the sacrifices for you. Roles switch as life changes.

“They made the sacrifices for you. Roles switch as life changes. “It’s like starting a new conversation with myself,” he says. “I still want to do music, still want to write, never have done anything other than music. Maybe real estate will help inform the musical choices I get to make in ways I can’t imagine. Maybe it will give me the resources to make music a ‘best choice’ for other people the way it has for me.”

We look out the window at the heavy machinery sitting silent on the Honest Ed’s site, a small oasis of possibility in an impossibly overheated downtown real estate market.

“Life in the inner city can be isolating, but it’s not actually isolated,” he says, as if in conversation with himself. “Downtown there is always somewhere close by you can go. Where you can be with people. We have to find ways to build that closeness in parts of our city where isolation is the fact.”

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**IN WITH THE NEW**

**Taking Up Musical Space:**

**EVE EGOYAN**

**WENDALYN BARTLEY**

Over 20 years ago, the Toronto-based pianist and extraordinary interpreter of contemporary music Eve Egoyan was introduced to the music of the Spanish-German composer Maria de Alvear through a recording given to her by composer Martin Arnold, the current artistic director of Array Music. After talking recently with Egoyan about her upcoming performance of de Alvear’s monumental diptych De Puro Amor and En Amor Duro, I think it’s fair to say that that moment in time was a meeting with destiny for Egoyan.
I jumped into the performance with a lot of trepidation as I thought everyone would leave after the first half.”

What surprised her was not only did people stay, but she had an experience of feeling the presence of the audience in a totally new way. “I found it extremely moving to be with my audience for that long in that sound language. I felt people listening, and was very excited by that – that feeling of shared listening. Of course the experience of shared listening is always happening when you are performing, but because of the level of comfort everyone was feeling within the language over that period of time, I was aware of their presence in a new way. I felt so transported by that and honoured that they were with me. It felt really unique, expansive, and quite extraordinary. We were all being transported at the same time.”

She went on to explain how works with a long duration create a welcoming space for such listening. “When you are playing standard repertoire, people have a sense of history with that work. They are already prepared to hear a certain language. But when you’re playing a piece by a contemporary composer whose language is unknown, there is a certain adjustment period for the listener. The longer duration pieces allow time for that adjustment period. The listener can then be more present and go deeper into the sound language. It’s also a more profound experience for me as a performer, to feel people experiencing the art in a totally different way rather than having a more surface experience.”

After listening to the recording, she contacted the composer and in return received two scores in the mail. Those scores were De Puro Amor and Amor Duro, composed in 1991, which Egoyan proceeded to learn and subsequently perform at the Music Gallery in 1996, while the Music Gallery was still located at 179 Richmond St. W.

Events will have come full circle with the upcoming performance of these two pieces on April 14, also with the Music Gallery, but this time at the St. George-the-Martyr location that was the Music Gallery’s home performing base for the past 16 years. The current performance is also the launch of Egoyan’s CD recordings of these works, adding to her extensive list of album releases. Earlier in the evening, writer Mary Dickie will be interviewing former Music Gallery artistic director Jim Montgomery about the years (1991-2000) at the 179 Richmond St. W. venue, during which time Egoyan initially performed these works.

That initial performance of de Alvear’s music was “a seminal moment,” Egoyan told me in our interview. The unique feature of both these works is their long duration: De Puro Amor being one hour in length and Amor Duro 50 minutes. “This was early in my performing career, and I had never performed anything before of that duration.

Both of de Alvear’s pieces on the program are composed using a type of loose proportional notation. The pitches are pre-determined by the composer, but the durations are approximate and time is determined by the distance between the notes on the printed page. There are very few markings of dynamics or phrasing. This approach allows the performer to be very present in real time. “It gives me space to listen and make decisions based on how the piano sounds in the space and I can adjust the dynamics and pedalling in real time based on what I’m hearing,” said Egoyan. “The rules are more open and generous, so everyone can create. It’s not improvisation though, because the inherent structure and form is already there, but the composer is trusting her interpreter to draw the audience into real time. Both harmony and register are of the utmost importance, and through that window everyone is guided into an experience of the piece.”
After such a profound experience performing de Alvear’s pieces, Egoyan had a desire to perform more such works, and thus began a long association between the two artists. De Alvear wrote specific works for Egoyan, including two piano concertos (Clear Energy, 2006) and Sky Music (2009), as well as the solo piano work Asking (2001). The friendship and collaboration is so strong that de Alvear invited her to attend the presentation of the Spanish National Award for Music in composition presented by the King and Queen of Spain in June 2016.

**Long works, long term relationships:** Another outcome of her connection with de Alvear was to seek out and perform long duration works by other composers. A week after the Toronto performance, Egoyan will travel to Victoria and offer a unique listening experience for a week of performances. A week after the Toronto performance, Egoyan will travel to Victoria and offer a unique listening experience for a week of performances. In the course of our conversation, Egoyan told me more about these long term relationships. “When people write for me, it’s like having them dress me, they are creating clothing for me. There is a feeling of intimacy – I know them and they know me. I slip into that world and there is a sense of trust and openness when I play music by people I really know. Interpreting is a strange thing for me – I’m giving myself, there is a sense of trust and openness when I play music by people I really know.”

In describing de Alvear’s character, Egoyan stated: “She herself is a force, an unbelievable presence that blew us out of the water. You could say that her music aggressively asserts itself by its duration, but it’s not aggressive music.”

**Solo for Duet to get Luminato debut**

Egoyan’s latest project, *Solo for Duet: works for augmented piano and images*, will receive its premiere at this season’s Luminato Festival on June 19 and 20. The project takes her love of creating intimacy between piano and audience to a whole new level. It combines six piano works by six different composers and presents them as a theatrical production, combining choreographed movements, speaking, singing, images and unspoken narrative. In choosing the repertoire, Egoyan has intentionally created a gender-balanced program with works by distinguished artists David Rokeyb, Michael Snow, John Oswald, Nicole Lizée, Linda Catlin Smith, and Duet, a new piece for disklavier she has composed for herself. The disklavier is capable of producing both acoustic piano sounds as well as sampled and digitally altered sounds. “Duet explores the space between what a piano can do and what I wish a piano could do. It’s a conversation between the piano and its dream self. The virtual piano can do infinite sustain, tremolo, change pitch and reveal harmonic overtones.” By performing on a disklavier, Egoyan and her collaborators transform the piano into a visual instrument, combining sampled sound, film and interactive images, and drawing inspiration from the films of David Lynch, a Shakespearean sonnet, technical glitches and more.

Egoyan acknowledges that creating and preparing to perform this program has been very challenging for her. “I’m going from being extremely intimate in my performances to more extroverted than I’ve ever been before. I’m also revealing my own creative voice, which I’ve never done publicly except for some improvisation.” By combining theatrical, musical and visual elements, she seeks to create “a unique hybrid, alternating sections of multi-sensory intensity with periods of delicacy and stillness. This will draw the audience in close to listen and then expand outwards with the addition of visuals and theatrical elements.”

Directed by Joanna McIntyre, following its Luminato debut the piece is scheduled to tour throughout Canada in the fall of 2018 and Australia the following May.

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

Known as the dean of Canadian choral conductors and called a Canadian choral visionary, Elmer Iseler (1927–1998) will be celebrated in a concert titled “Joyful Sounds, a Tribute to Elmer Iseler, 1927–1998 – Twenty Years Later” on April 14 at 7:30pm at Eglinton St. George’s United Church. Lydia Adams will lead the Elmer Iseler Singers in a program of Canadian choral classics, plus the world premiere of a major new work, commissioned to honour the 20th anniversary of his passing. And I will be part of it too.

Iseler helped to found the Festival Singers of Toronto in 1954, and conducted them until 1978. In 1968 they became the Festival Singers of Canada, and also the professional core of the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir, which Iseler had conducted since 1964. The high standard of performance that Iseler achieved drew notice from no less a celebrity than composer Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971), who recorded a number of his works with the Festival Singers of Canada in the early 1960s.

Iseler was a champion of Canadian music, and throughout his career he commissioned and performed numerous works by Canadian composers. By the time he founded the Elmer Iseler Singers in 1979, the commissioning of original Canadian works had become a cornerstone of Iseler’s artistic mindset. The Elmer Iseler Singers Choral Series of published choral works contained hundreds of works, 90 per cent of them by Canadian composers. Iseler’s spirit of embracing Canadian choral music inspired Lydia Adams, the current artistic director of the choir, and Jessie Iseler, Elmer’s widow and the choir’s general manager, to shape the April 14 tribute program with Canadian music to celebrate Iseler’s legacy. For all those reasons, when they invited me to host the event I did not hesitate to accept.

The premiere of a major new work by British Columbia composer Imant Raminsh (b. 1943) headlines the tribute concert. Raminsh told me that a number of years ago Lydia Adams had approached him to discuss the creation of a major new work to celebrate both the legacy of Elmer Iseler, as well as the occasion of Canada’s 150th year. Thanks to a private donation from Elizabeth DeBoer and Ross Redfern, the Elmer Iseler Singers were able to commission the large-scale work, titled The Beauty of Dissonance, the Beauty of Strength, which runs over 40 minutes, in eight movements. Raminsh took two years to gather poetry from all the regions of Canada; he told me that he and Iseler shared a love for the Canadian landscape, and this shared passion informed the design of the new work. The two men had met in the 1960s at the University of Toronto. Iseler saw the score to Raminsh’s Ave verum corpus, liked it and took it into his repertoire, the first of several Raminsh works he championed.

The title of the new work comes from its central movement, which uses a poem by Montreal poet Arthur James Marshall Smith (1902–1980) called The Lonely Land, a depiction of the Canadian Shield inspired by a 1926 Group of Seven exhibition. Raminsh shared with me that he grew up the son of a forester, whom he described as, “an amateur painter of some accomplishment.” His father was fond of the approach of the Group of Seven landscape painters, and Raminsh recalls that the many paintings by his father adorning his family’s home showed a strong affinity with this style.
This early exposure to landscape painting left a deep impression on Raminsh. His concept for this new work was to reflect the many regions of Canada, which led him to poets such as Newfoundland’s Agnes Walsh (b. 1950); Milton Acorn (1923–1986) of P.E.I.; Quebecer Anne Hébert (1916–2000); Barbara Klar (b. 1966) from Saskatoon; Frederick George Scott (1861–1944), known as the Poet of the Laurentians; English-born Vancouverite, Marjorie Pickthall (1883–1922); and Mohawk-English writer and stage performer, Pauline Johnson (1861–1913). The work’s eight movements are highly contrasting in mood and temperament, appropriate to the range of the poetry. The choir is accompanied by an instrumental ensemble that includes flutist Robert Aitken and clarinetist James Campbell.

So what was it about Elmer Iseler that made him unique among choral conductors? In preparation for the upcoming concert, I asked a number of current and past members of his choirs for their insights and memories.

Current artistic director Lydia Adams remembers how after returning from England, studying at the Royal College of Music and the National Opera Studio, and having learned so much from Sir David Willcocks (1919–2015), “it was more than interesting to find myself working with Elmer and his marvellous choir. As the pianist for the Elmer Iseler Singers, I was able to watch, listen and discover how he was able to make magic with sound, and I watched as he crafted the sound to reflect the music. Everything was always connected to the text and the music reflecting that text. Nothing was ever sung in an ordinary manner. Every musical moment had a purpose and a musical and emotional intent. Elmer lived in a rarified space of creating magic with sound, and he inspired so many of us to do the same. How fortunate we were!”

Robert Missen, who sang in all of Iseler’s professional choirs and who serves as the Elmer Iseler Singers’ artist representative, also commented on Iseler’s craftsmanship. “His rehearsal techniques were second to none, his ear unerring,” he writes. “On the road he would nimbly make adjustments to turn unfamiliar venues into as congenial a choral acoustic as possible. A consummate showman, he created programs that appealed to a broad range of audiences. He would always include a huge proportion of Canadian works, including popular folksong arrangements such as Song for the Mira.” By the time of his death in 1998, writes Missen, Iseler had garnered high praise from some of the world’s most distinguished choral eminences, including Britain’s Sir David Willcocks, Estonia’s Tõnu Kaljuste and America’s Robert Shaw and Margaret Hillis. “Canada is a major force on the contemporary international choral scene thanks in no small part to Elmer Iseler.”

Maggie McCoy, a student of Iseler and now the director of marketing for the Ottawa Choral Society, remembers Iseler’s talent as a teacher. “Elmer Iseler was possibly the most important influence on, not just my musical education, but on my entire way of seeing the world,” she says. “He was a kindly but challenging teacher who taught his students to seek beauty...in music, in literature, in art, in the heavens, and most importantly, in the small miracles of the natural world. I don’t really know who I would have become if I had not met him as a young person. He opened my eyes and my mind.”

Stephen Powell, a tenor in the Elmer Iseler Singers from 1991 to 2005, says this: “Interpretively, Elmer was a man of the big phrase, and by phrase I don’t mean notes simply linked together, but rather an overarching musical concept encompassing the entire musical content. ‘No two notes,’ he said, ‘should ever sound the same.’ Powell recalls how in the spring of 1997, shortly after his return from brain surgery, “Elmer was rehearsing with us Healey Willan’s short motet Who is she that ascendeth? which begins with three 4/4 bars scored for double soprano and alto. As he worked on this section repeating it several times, I realized that every beat in every bar was laden with purpose and meaning. The master was back.

“For me, Elmer was one of the greats and I’m glad to have worked with him so closely. Beneath his musical proficiency there was passion, warmth, commitment and meaning, all providing a musical outlook which I could relate to strongly and which influences me to this day.”

Jean Stilwell sang in the Festival Singers under Iseler, along with
Elmer Iseler’s own adaptation of the plainchant, Srul Irving Glick, Ruth Watson Henderson and Healey Willan, and Elmer Iseler, 1927–1998” also includes music by Canadian composers creating. We miss him.”

And finally, Carol and Brad Ratzlaff both sang for Iseler, and both also became choral conductors. Carol Ratzlaff remembers: “Brad and I spent the first years of our marriage in EIS with Elmer conducting, 1985 to 1988. These years were a gift which we still treasure. They were busy touring years and offered rich musical experiences which were diverse and challenging. Elmer has had a profound effect on our music-making at every level. His steadfast commitment to and belief in the choral art as an essential part of life has unceasingly inspired us.”

And, perhaps most importantly, there was the precursor to them all: Miles Davis’ 1970 release Bitches Brew, a jazz-rock album that would eventually garner seminal status in the world of improvised music.

“I remember all too clearly that, when he passed into heaven far too soon 20 years ago, that great man’s spirit renewed that flame in me as a conductor. Suddenly everything that I did in music became that much more in earnest and that much more committed. Long may it inflame the singers and conductors of tomorrow to remember and preserve his legacy.”

“Everything was always connected to the text and the music reflecting that text. Nothing was ever sung in an ordinary manner. Every musical moment had a purpose and a musical and emotional intent. Elmer lived in a rarified space of creating magic with sound.”

In the United States in the 1970s, the concept of the musical bitch was big. There was the Rolling Stones’ recording Bitch from 1971; David Bowie’s Queen Bitch from later that year; and Elton John’s The Bitch Is Back in 1974. And, perhaps most importantly, there was the precursor to them all: Miles Davis’ 1970 release Bitches Brew, a jazz-rock album that would eventually garner seminal status in the world of improvised music.

According to musicologist Gary Tomlinson, Davis’ album title referred to the skill of the musicians themselves – best-of-the-best improvisers, brought together for the recording. And though 1970 was coincidentally the same year that Jo Freeman published her feminist BITCH Manifesto (seminal itself, in other circles), the album’s connection to “bitch” as a gendered term was supposedly just that – coincidental.

These words have weight, though – and as they go in and out of vogue, the connotations they carry change in the process. So when violinist Aline Homzy submitted an application to this year’s TD Toronto Jazz Festival Discovery Series for a project called “The Smith Sessions presents: Bitches Brew,” she had a lot of musical and linguistic history to reckon with. And when her application was selected, with a concert of the same name slotted for this April 28 at the Canadian Music Centre’s Chalmers House in Toronto, she knew it would be a starting point for something new.

“Bitches Brew” is a quadruple-bill show, featuring four different women-led ensembles. With groups fronted by Homzy, flutist Anh Phung, bassist Emma Smith and drummer/percussionist Magdelys Savigne, the concert is Homzy’s 21st-century take on what it means to equate “bitch” with musical talent, and on how our community thinks about musical artistry today. Same name, new vibe – in a very good way.
“Toronto needs this”

The project comes to Toronto via Edinburgh, from a concert series of the same name run by bassist Emma Smith. On her website, Smith writes that her Bitches Brew sessions are a response “to the eternal assumption that the only woman in the band must be the singer” – a way of highlighting local Edinburgh talent while confronting stereotypes that women often face in improvised music. After playing on one of Smith’s sessions in August 2017, Homzy started to talk with Smith about bringing the series to Canada. When the applications opened for the 2018 TD Toronto Jazz Festival Discovery Series – a concert series that gives Jazz Fest branding and support to innovative local projects – the timing felt right.

On April 28, Homzy and Smith will play a violin/bass duo, featuring some of Smith’s compositions; flutist Anh Phung will improvise with bassist Alan Mackie, in their duo project HaiRbraIN; Magdelys Savigne will lead a trio project, singing and playing percussion alongside Elizabeth Rodriguez (violin and vocals) and Danae Olano (piano); and Homzy will bring her own band, Aline Homzy’s étoile magique, where she’ll be joined by Chris Pruden (piano), Daniel Fortin (bass) and Thom Gill (guitar).

At her Toronto apartment last week, Homzy spoke about how for her, this project came out of a feeling of something lacking in the local jazz ecosystem – and about wanting to bring it to light.

“I told Emma, ‘We have to do this in Toronto. Toronto needs this,’” she says. “Normalizing the roles of women in bandleader positions. As a student, I felt like that was not at all present in school. I don’t think there’s a single full-time woman professor at U of T [in Jazz Studies]; I think there are only a couple at Humber. It’s important for the community for students – women students – to see that it’s possible. And also to provide role models for younger people as well, however they identify … it’s important for them to have a diverse roster of people who are successfully doing what they do, and who are really good at it.”

Having gender-diverse leadership is important for any industry, but it can be particularly crucial in fields like the performing arts,
where so much of what happens onstage is guided by performers’ offset social relationships. In a 2013 article for NewMusicBox, Ellen McSweeney talks about how women performers often pay a hidden “liability tax” when they come off as too self-promoting, assertive, or success-oriented. And in an ensemble situation, where performers rely on having both a supportive fan base and a network of collaborators to survive, being seen as unlikable can carry a high cost.

“I’m doing ‘bitch’ in quotations right now, because I understand it’s a swear word as well,” says Homzy when she explains the project. “But for us, it’s reclaiming that word – especially as a woman leader, when women often get called that name for being too bossy.”

It’s a mentality that impacts how women musicians operate within jazz culture – and one that extends to the way that they perform. In his book Swingin’ the Dream, Lewis Erenberg writes about how during the 1940s, women musicians were often seen as temporary, annoying replacements for the men who went to war – and that the prevailing opinion was that they should either act like “good girls” or “play like men.” Seventy-five years later, Homzy still encounters that attitude at large.

“I think one reason why a lot of women don’t show up to jam sessions is because you feel like you really have to prove yourself,” she says. “Everyone feels intimidated by that situation, but as a woman, it’s like – doubly that. And some people – some guys – will see a woman come in and on purpose count in the hardest tune, really fast, because they want to see you fail. It’s really discouraging to witness.

“It becomes about [whether] you’re able to, we say, ‘Hang with the guys,’” she continues. “If you can ‘keep up’ then it’s like you’re considered ‘ok’ in the guys’ books. I think that some women take that position: ‘I’m like one of the guys.’ And I think it’s really dangerous. I’ve been in that situation too, where I’ve been like ‘I feel like the guys are accepting me.’ You soon realize that there are sometimes ulterior motives for that, which are quite disturbing.”

Homzy says that it’s a particularly big problem for younger women artists who are early-career or still in school, because it can make it difficult for them to realize their worth. “It took a lot of work for me to realize that wanting to be in the ‘boys club’ was a really toxic way to tune, really fast, because they completely missed the point.”

Still, Homzy is dedicated to lifting up the work of women creators. Not because there’s anything inherently distinctive about their music – far from it – but because there’s a lot of valid experience and perspective there. And when her music doesn’t represent the demographics of our communities, that perspective, and the power and beauty that go along with it, is something we miss out on.

“I realized, after so many years: I’d been doing these things, playing or writing-wise – not specifically because I wanted to please other musicians, but because I’d been influenced by that [oppression],” she says. “And now, I’m writing music in a way that is influenced by those experiences. We’ve experienced different challenges; I think that makes a lot of women’s music sound unique and different.”

That 2017 New York Times article references the same thing.

“There’s nothing to suggest that these... musicians expressed themselves in any particular way because of their gender,” it reads, “but what we know is that until recently they might not have been in a position to stand up onstage alone, addressing the audience with generosity and informality, empowering the room.” As Homzy seems to attest, that’s its own rare and powerful thing – and an experience that, without question, is worth seeking.

“The Smith Sessions presents: Bitches Brevu,” featuring Aline Homzy, Emma Smith, Anh Phung and Magdelys Savigne, will be presented on April 28 at the Canadian Music Centre’s Chalmers House in Toronto, as part of the 2018 TD Toronto Jazz Festival Discovery Series. The event will also be livestreamed by the Canadian Music Centre, at https://livestream.com/accounts/13330169/events/8050734.

Sara Constant is a flutist and music writer based in Toronto, and is digital media editor at The WholeNote. She can be reached at editorial@thewholenote.com.
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It happens every time after the *Hallelujah Chorus* in Handel’s *Messiah*. There are always audience members in tears – profoundly affected by the art and majesty of the music.

There are not many other major works that have this effect, and probably none that are so beloved in Toronto. St. Michael’s Choir School performs Parts II and III of *Messiah* for Easter 2018, having performed Part I during Christmastime 2017.

There’s a long European choral history of all-male choirs, commonly known as boy’s and men’s choirs. They’re a common feature in many churches and boys’ schools in Europe, for example in the Anglican tradition in the UK. They are not common in Canada, but a handful of Canadian boys’ and men’s choirs still exist. Few, anywhere, have such a storied history as St. Michael’s Choir School in downtown Toronto. Adjacent to the head of the Archdiocese of Toronto – St. Michael’s Cathedral Basilica – St. Mike’s Choir School has been generating high-quality musicians since 1937.

Peter Mahon, interim choir head at St. Mike’s, sat down with me over the March break to talk through their upcoming *Messiah* performance. I’m no stranger to *Messiah* myself, as a singer with the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir whose annual performances in Roy Thomson Hall with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra draw well over 8000 patrons over a week-long run. Mahon is also no stranger to the work as a singer: a veteran countertenor, he sings in the alto section of Tafelmusik Chamber Choir, whose own annual *Messiah* run reaches about 5000 patrons and includes the incomparable “Sing-Along Messiah” at Massey Hall.

*Messiah* is a big work, both technically challenging and requiring a high level of artistry. So, perhaps not surprisingly, as far as Mahon knows, the work has never been performed by the school. “It’s very easy in a place like St. Michael’s Choir School to only focus on what you do well,” says Mahon. “These guys have to basically do a performance every week, preparing for a mass; four or five pieces of music, and the older boys, at least two pieces of chant. You can focus on that mass preparation, and there’s loads of work to do.” Mahon relishes the challenge of introducing this beloved Toronto tradition to the choristers of St. Mike’s. “It’s nice to have a change of pace. I think they’re finding it very refreshing.”

The first half of *Messiah*, performed by the school this past Christmas, has six chorales that are conventionally performed. Parts II and III have about double that amount depending on cuts or additions. Unlike the Christmas performance, which numbered over 160 choristers, this time Mahon has assembled a smaller set of students, around 60, to present the work. The boys had to audition to perform in this concert. Any wrangling of children aged 10 to 17 is inherently challenging and Mahon appreciates that for this concert the boys want to be there, rather than have to be there.

Andrew Walker, an alumnus of the St. Michael’s Choir school program, returns as one of the two tenor leads at the core of the tenor section. Other Tafelmusik professionals joining in are Richard Whittall and Simon Honeyman on countertenor/alto; Paul Jeffrey, joining Walker on tenor; and Joel Allison and Keith Lam on bass. All of them are joined by the all-boy treble line on soprano. Whittall and Honeyman share the alto solos and Michael Colvin joins as tenor soloist. The only female-identified voice will be Meredith Hall as soprano soloist.

“I had never done Messiah before I did it with St. James Cathedral,” says Walker, joining me at a café before a Toronto Mendelssohn Choir rehearsal. He was introduced to the piece after leaving St. Mike’s. “We never did a major work or oratorio while I was there. It was always about providing music for the Cathedral. Even when we did our major concerts for Christmas or the spring or fall, it was pretty much always motets.”

Walker reflects on the power of being able to perform a work like Messiah: “I think it’s incredibly difficult to know what it really feels like until you have done it. In Grade 5, I was in intermediate choir. It’s the first year you start providing the music at the cathedral. But in Grade 5, to learn this music ... Messiah is a great piece of repertoire to sink your teeth into, but it’s a big work to take on as one of the first pieces of music in just the first ten years of your life. It’s exceptional. It’s a good challenge and a testament to the teaching staff, Peter, Teri (Dunn), and Maria (Conkey).”

Mahon has added another challenge for the choir in this Messiah, by emphasizing Baroque interpretation and aspects of Baroque singing style: spacing between notes to give the music lightness and energy;
more articulation on specific notes and less on others, to drive musical phrasing; and dynamic phrasing that tapers off at the end, appropriate to the fugal counterpoint common at the time.

“They aren’t doing badly on the Baroque interpretation – but it all takes some getting used to,” Mahon says. They are used to Palestrina and songs like that, he explains, but the great sweeping sounds of Renaissance music are dissimilar to the technical precision and nuanced phrasing of equal length notes that he is asking for here. After all, these choristers are being asked to acquire a cultural feeling for Baroque music that usually takes years to master.

The fact that these boys are singing with an orchestra is already in itself exciting,” says Walker. “That a 13-year-old boy is being introduced to Baroque and period music is really something, and part of the mandate of the school. I think if you’re educating a new generation of singers, knowing about Baroque pitch is important.”

As a guide to matters of interpretation, Mahon has referred the boys to the Tafelmusik recording of Messiah, a close match to what he’s looking for. “It takes a little longer to teach them the music,” he says. “Getting them to do the style and actually understanding how to sing a Baroque phrase rather than a Renaissance phrase is quite hard.” It helps that Mahon himself led the larger contingent of choristers in the Christmastime 2017 performance of Part I so they are not entirely new to the art he’s looking for.

The boys are talented and excited, ready to delve into the work. They have been rehearsing since January. “It’s quite something,” says Mahon. “They’re so motivated, they know the music. In the fall, they auditioned with For Unto Us a Child is Born. This time around they auditioned with All We Like Sheep.” Walker is impressed to hear that the boys auditioned on that chorale: many singers consider the vocal runs in All We Like Sheep amongst the hardest sections of music in the entire score.

Walker reminisces about his time being back at St. Mike’s and what he would have felt like getting a work like Messiah to perform and having to audition. “I switched from being a treble in about Grade 8,” he says. “You are still a red jacket at that point. You get your blue jacket when you enter high school. At age 13, that these boys are actively wanting to sing this piece, and on top of that, can, is an incredible idea. It bodes well for the future of the choral scene in Toronto. What an honour it is to sing with a group of musicians and create this art together. The music lends itself to excellence, and to a really good show, to creating something magical. There are some moments in the piece that are life changing, and I don’t use that term lightly. What an amazing moment; how magical and momentous it is.”

St. Michael’s Choir School presents Handel’s Messiah Parts II and III with conductor Peter Mahon; Meredith Hall (soprano); Richard Whittall and Simon Honeyman (alto); Michael Colvin and Andrew Walker (tenor); Joel Allison and Keith Lam (bass); and a Baroque orchestra, on Saturday, April 14 at 7:30pm at St. Michael’s Cathedral, Toronto.

Follow Brian on Twitter @bfchang. Send info/media/tips to choralscene@thewholenote.com.
Beatrice Rana at Koerner Perlman and Barber on Screen

PAUL ENNIS

Gramophone’s 2017 Young Artist of the Year, 25-year-old Italian-born pianist Beatrice Rana, makes her Koerner Hall debut April 8. I remember fondly her Toronto Summer Music concert in 2014, where she brought the Walter Hall audience instantly to its feet with a heartwarming, technically gripping performance of Prokofiev’s Sonata No.6. Her career was clearly on the rise then; it continues on its upward path. I recently had an email Q&A exchange with her.

WN: What are your first memories of playing the piano?

BR: I began studying piano when I was four, but before that I have some little memories of me trying to repeat the melodies of cartoons four hands with my father. I also remember my parents taking me out for concerts on Friday nights; it was always a very special feeling.

Your parents are professional pianists and your younger sister plays the cello. Please describe the musical atmosphere in your home growing up.

I would say that music is really part of our daily life, as much as drinking water or eating lunch. The house could be pretty noisy at times (!), but it was absolutely wonderful to grow up in a family that really understood and supported our musical choice.

Who was the first composer you fell in love with as a child?
The first musical challenges when I was a child were some pieces by Mozart and Schumann, but the composer that was giving me the biggest sense of accomplishment was Bach, and I ended up playing a lot of his music. I still have a very special relationship with Bach’s music, even though I constantly fall in love with so many other composers.

Who were the first musicians you fell in love with?
Martha Argerich and Glenn Gould.

Do you have any piano idols?
I wish I could have listened live to Horowitz and [Arturo] Benedetti Michelangeli.

How life-changing was winning the Silver Medal and Audience Award at the Cliburn piano competition in 2013?
It was absolutely a shock – a good shock of course! The first big change in my musical career came with [winning] the Montreal competition in 2011, but after the Cliburn I really reached what I was looking for, which is having the chance to be a concert pianist.

The thing is that you don’t know what it really means to be a concert pianist until you become one: it’s an amazing life, full of travel, people, different cultures, but sometimes it can be tiring.

I’d like to focus on your upcoming Koerner Hall recital on April 8. What is it about Schumann’s music that speaks to you in general? And what about Blumenstück and the Symphonic Etudes in particular?
I always loved Schumann, probably also because of my close relationship to Bach with whom there are many connections.

Blumenstück and Symphonic Etudes really reflect Schumann’s aesthetic with his two opposite personalities: on one hand there is Blumenstück, which represents Eusebius with his poetic, intimate and dubitative approach to life; on the other, the Symphonic Etudes are Florestan, incredibly extroverted and brilliant, inspired also by the bigger sonorities of an orchestra.

What fascinates you about Ravel’s Miroirs?
The choice of Miroirs is connected to the choice of the piano as a symphonic instrument. Ravel was an incredible orchestrator and two pieces of the Miroirs were in fact orchestrated. What strikes me the most in this music is the imagination and plasticity of sound, which is able to recreate vividly either the hysteric movement of a butterfly in the night or a ship moving on the ocean and struggling with the storms.

What are some of the challenges of Stravinsky’s The Firebird?
Again, the piano is imitating an orchestra but this time the process is the opposite: The Firebird was originally written for the orchestra, and [Guido] Agosti – an incredible pianist of the last century – wrote this amazing transcription. The main challenge is of course to recreate the different sounds that such a big orchestra can reach, but on the other side, the advantage is the freedom with the interpretive choices that it’s impossible to have with an orchestra.

What do you find most rewarding and most challenging in your professional life?
It is very fascinating to travel so much and get to know so many audiences: every country is completely different, because of its culture and its musical traditions. Still, being able to communicate with all of them through music is a real privilege, and sharing moments of such authenticity on so many different stages is just incredible.

Alison Chernick’s Itzhak
“When you finally get the sound [of the violin], you are really getting something out of yourself,” the young Itzhak Perlman says in black and white footage from Israeli television in 1974, during Alison Chernick’s new documentary Itzhak. “The more you have in your heart, the more you have to give,” he explains, having noted that to get a sound out of a piano you merely have to strike a key. The Israeli-born Perlman has given an enormous amount over his long professional career; and he’s been in the public eye since his appearance...
in 1958 as a 13-year-old on *The Ed Sullivan Show* playing an excerpt from Mendelssohn's *Violin Concerto*. *Itzhak* is a congenial portrait of the living legend, from the child crippled by polio to the 70-year-old musical icon travelling out to the CitiField pitcher’s mound in his motorized wheelchair to play the *Star-Spangled Banner* in the home of the New York Mets.

With the aid of old video, photographs and home movies we get a sense of what drove the young violinist to succeed. More recent footage records the love and devotion of his wife Toby and the importance to him of their family and Jewish heritage. His physical challenges are constant, his triumph over them as a performer, teacher, husband and father implicit throughout.

But it’s the singularity of his musical life and the joy he brings to it that is the raison d’être of Chernick’s film. Where does she lead us from the baseball diamond? To a rehearsal of Tchaikovsky’s *Piano Trio* Op.50 with cellist Mischa Maisky and pianist Evgeny Kissin. Then the star-spangled musical trio takes a break in Perlman’s New York City kitchen where the host animates the eating of takeout Chinese food with a hoary old Russian-Jewish joke.

Richard Strauss’ *Violin Sonata*, Bruch and Wieniawski *Violin Concertos*, Brahms, Respighi and Ravel, Bach, Mozart and Schubert all resonate on the soundtrack. Marian Anderson’s singing of the spiritual *Crucifixion* has a special place in Perlman’s iconography. As his playing of klezmer music with The Klezmatics does in ours. And what is the most requested piece of music in his repertoire? The theme from Steven Spielberg’s *Schindler’s List* by John Williams.

You can watch how Perlman evokes the beauty of a phrase and marvel at the way he brings out the colour of a melody when *Itzhak* plays at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema April 6 to 12, followed by a run at the Mt. Pleasant Theatre beginning April 13.

**H. Paul Moon’s *Absolute Beauty***

Recently I celebrated what would have been the 108th birthday of American composer Samuel Barber by watching *Absolute Beauty*, a comprehensive portrait of a man who wrote some of the most beautiful music of the 20th century. H. Paul Moon’s documentary has just now become available via internet streaming or purchase, having made the rounds of film festivals over the last several months. I found Moon’s assemblage of Barber scholars, musicians, personal reminiscences, film footage and photographs so touching that I immediately put on two of my personal Barber favourites: his *Violin Concerto* with its lovely first two movements; and his evocative *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* for soprano and orchestra, the setting of James Agee’s clear-eyed nostalgic picture of family life from the point of view of a five-year-old boy. I had just learned that Agee and Barber were the same age and that Agee’s text spoke directly to Barber’s own.
youthful memories.

Moon took the film’s title from Leonard Bernstein: “I’ve always associated Sam’s music in my mind with Plato – I think, in terms of what Plato called the Absolutes, he’s a Platonic composer… the concept that there is an absolute truth and an absolute beauty and the absolute rightness of things… that all Sam’s music has tried to form one version or another of absolute beauty.”

The documentary begins with the transfixing melancholy of Dover Beach Op.3, written for baritone and string quartet (from the poem by Matthew Arnold) when Barber was 21 and still a student at the Curtis Institute. “Barber found the profound essence of the poem in very small motives,” Thomas Hampson says. The film moves through Barber’s compositional output from the Cello Concerto, Symphony No.1, the justly famous Adagio for Strings, the Piano Sonata (written for Horowitz, a frequent visitor to Barber’s Mt. Kisco home), Hermit Songs (and his collaboration with Leontyne Price) et al, ending with his 1966 opera Antony and Cleopatra and its misplaced stage direction by Franco Zeffirelli that blinded the critics to its musical qualities. Conductor Leonard Slatkin, one of Absolute Beauty’s roster of talking heads, says that he was enchanted listening to the opera on the radio when he was 22.

Barber wrote very little after those negative reviews and spent the last years of his life without his longtime partner Gian Carlo Menotti. Unable to afford Capricorn, their country home with its sylvan setting, Barber moved back to New York City where a Fifth Avenue apartment was of little consolation. He left us with a legacy of blissful melancholy as Absolute Beauty’s moving soundtrack depicts.

Absolute Beauty is available for purchase through Amazon and for rental at watch.samuelbarberfilm.com and at https://vimeo.com/156522774.
Bruckner’s immense Symphony No. 8 May 2 and 3 (RTH), May 6 (Montreal) and May 8 (Ottawa).

QUICK PICKS

Apr 6: The indefatigable Stewart Goodyear joins Nurhan Arman and Toronto Sinfonia for Vinzenz Lacher’s chamber version (originally for piano and string quintet) of Beethoven’s masterful Piano Concerto No. 5 “Emperor.” Also in Barrie Apr 7. Later in the month Goodyear joins the estimable Trio Arkel (COC concertmaster Marie Bérard, TSO principal violist Teng Li and associate principal cellist Winona Zelenka) and Silk Road Ensemble bassist Jeffrey Beecher for a performance of Schubert’s sublime Trout Quintet Apr 27. Music by Schoenberg, Boccherini and Barrière complete the program.

Apr 8: Syrinx Concerts presents three internationally known musicians who happen to be on the faculty of the Schulich School of Music at McGill University – Ilya Poletaev, piano; Axel Strauss, violin; and Vegor Dyachkov, cello – performing music by Beethoven, Ravel and Oesterle.

Apr 12: Music Toronto presents the German-based Schumann Quartet, proteges of the Alban Berg Quartet and winners of the BBC Music Magazine Newcomer Award 2016 in a program of Haydn, Shostakovich and Schumann.

Apr 14: WholeNote Early Music columnist Matthew Whitfield is the organist in “The Wagner Effect” presented by Abendmusik at St. John’s Norway. (Apr 21 Whitfield plays harpsichord and organ in Bach’s The Musical Offering with Molly Evans-Stocks and Jimin Shin, violinists, another Abendmusik presentation.)

Apr 21: Cathedral Bluffs Symphony Orchestra’s Annual Fundraising Concert features two young soloists, cellist Alik Volkov in Tchaikovsky’s charming Variations on a Rococo Theme and pianist Lauren Esch in Grieg’s enduring Piano Concerto.

Apr 22: Pocket Concerts has decided it’s time to tackle Late Beethoven. Shane Kim and Katya Poplyansky, violins, and Amy Laing, cello, join co-director Rory McLeod, viola, in a performance of String Quartet No. 12 Op. 127.

Apr 22: Nocturnes in the City presents pianist Karolina Kubálek (Antonín Kubálek’s daughter) performing music by Mozart, Rachmaninoff, Chopin and Ravel.

Apr 26: The dean of Canadian pianists, Robert Silverman (soon to turn 80), gives an all-Chopin recital at Gallery 345. The program is repeated Apr 28 in the Music Room of the Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society.

Apr 27: Soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian joins Amici to celebrate the ensemble’s 30th anniversary in a program of works by Respighi, Dohnányi and much Bernstein.

Apr 28: Charismatic French cellist Gautier Capuçon and his long-time duo partner Jerome Ducros grace the Koerner Hall stage with a selection of Fauré, Brahms and Rachmaninoff plus French and Russian short pieces from their latest CD Intuition.

May 3 to 6: Tafelmusik, with guest conductor Bruno Weil at the podium, takes a fresh approach to Beethoven, dipping into two classics from his fertile middle period. Music director emerita Jeanne Lamon is the concertmaster for the evening. Current music director Elisa Citterio is busy as the soloist in the Violin Concerto, which opens a strong program that ends with the Pastoral Symphony.

May 4: Festival of the Sound artistic director James Campbell gets ready for summer with music for clarinet, piano and cello in various combinations by Beethoven, Ravel, Fauré, Saint-Saëns and Brahms, at the Aurora Cultural Centre.

Paul Ennis is the managing editor of The WholeNote.
versimplyfying a complex subject, I believe that all music is essentially hybrid, reflecting the diversity and the hybridity of our own music-loving species. What fuels the hybridizing impulse when staying with the tried and true often seems the safer musical choice?

The continual process propelling the evolution of musical culture can be witnessed in seemingly small things. I’ve seen it sparked by casual jams and offstage exchanges between musicians from different cultures, for example. Such explorations have also occasionally been instigated by adventurous composers eager to incorporate new sounds or cultural sound-views in their scores and recording projects. I see this kind of cultural transmutation as a hallmark of the healthiest scenes, those which will continue to thrive among future music creators, interpreters and audiences.

Relevant to this discussion is the evolving notion of transculturalism. Simply put, it is “involving, encompassing, or combining elements of more than one culture.” The idea of the transcultural society was developed by the German cultural philosopher Wolfgang Welsch. In Transculturality – the Puzzling Form of Cultures Today (1999) he asserts that the notion of transculturality takes into account “the internal complexities and constant variations characteristic of every culture, as well as recognizing the degree to which cultures are becoming inseparably linked with one another.” According to Welsch, cultures today are no longer homogenous and monolithic but rather have multiple intersections and interdependencies which exhibit network characteristics.

A number of Toronto musicians and music groups have creatively embraced the practices of cultural hybridity and transculturality (with or without using that tag), putting the social reality we experience every day on centre stage.

For this month’s column I’ve sought out music creators and presenters among us who seek to combine instruments, melodies and modes, musical forms, song lyrics, performance genres and practices, presenting concerts mixing two or more musical cultures. Here are just a few I’ve found.

**KUNÉ – Canada’s Global Orchestra**

Launched last year as The New Canadian Global Music Orchestra by the RCM’s Mervon Mehta, and recently rebranded as the more mellifluous-sounding KUNÉ (“together” in Esperanto), this Toronto world music supergroup could be transcultural music’s poster family. (I wrote extensively on KUNÉ’s origin story in my May 2017 column in The WholeNote (NCGMO Explores the Power of the Collective) and recommend a visit there for those who would like to know more about this ambitious project.)

Directed by David Buchbinder, KUNÉ releases its debut album in concert on April 7 in its Koerner Hall home. As I mention in my review of the album elsewhere in this issue, it is a milestone in the group’s “journey to create a band that looks and sounds like Canada today.”

After intermission David Buchbinder is joined by Grammy Award-nominated Cuban piano master Hilario Durán along with their band Odessa/Havana. They skillfully mash up the worlds of klezmer and Latin music, creating new lyrical and swinging transcultural music along the way.

**Kiran Ahluwalia’s “LOVEfest: Welcome the Stranger”**

Two-time JUNO Award-winning singer and songwriter Kiran Ahluwalia’s concert “LOVEfest: Welcome the Stranger” is a case study in transcultural performance. The production tours eight North American cities in April. Its sole Toronto stop is on April 14 at the Harbourfront Centre Theatre, part of Small World Music’s 16th Annual Asian Music Series which runs April 6 to May 25.

Born in India, raised in Canada and currently living in New York City, Ahluwalia makes songs deeply rooted in Indian and Pakistani classical music and ghazal traditions. Her songs and arrangements draw from her rich South Asian heritage but they are also heavily influenced by African desert blues and American jazz. In these disparate elements we can trace Ahluwalia’s own multicontinental life journey, witnessing how she has morphed musical influences from each into a sweet sounding emblem of transculturality.

Tagged as “an eclectic celebration of love and diversity through music and dance,” LOVefest includes sacred and secular performers from both Muslim and Sikh traditions. In an impromptu text chat with me, Ahluwalia pointed out with concern that these “two communities are currently experiencing an alarming rise in hate crimes.” It’s an issue evidently front of mind. The April tour supports her new album Bismillah (Seven) which explores the faces of cultural intolerance. Says Ahluwalia, “It is a theme close to my personal experience. My story is that of an immigrant born in India and raised in Canada. As an immigrant child the hardships we faced were touted as temporary – the effects were permanent.”

Onstage, Ahluwalia is supported by her crack five-piece band on electric guitar, electric bass, tabla, accordion and voice. Affirming cultural diversity, she welcomes to the show Souad Massi (Algeria), the most successful female singer-songwriters in the Arabic-speaking world today. Massi’s lyrics are about creativity and tolerance, and the common human yearning for freedom.

Adding cultural layers and spiritual dimensions to the concert, the Bhai Kabal Singh trio of tabla, two harmoniums and three voices performs songs in their Sikh temple kirtan tradition. Then Egyptian dancer Yasser Darwish renders the tanoura, a colourful whirling Dervish dance featuring multicoloured skirts that symbolically demonstrate core values of Sufi spiritual belief, such as unconditional forgiveness.

Now for an exclusive insider tip just for WholeNote readers. In our recent text exchange Ahluwalia hinted she and Massi may be singing a cover of a song by a renowned world music diva. After some prompting, she revealed they’re working on Gracias a la Vida, the song made famous by Mercedes Sosa, the late Argentinian giant of Latin American song. It’s a telling choice. Written in 1966 by Violeta Parra, a founder of Nueva Canción Chilena, the song stands as a defiant, life-affirming response to political injustice while unblinkingly reflecting on the bittersweet nature of life’s joy and sadness.

To a generation of Chileans Gracias a la Vida became an anthem uniting people in times of trouble. For audiences on both sides of the world’s longest peaceful border, LOVEfest’s program aims to demonstrate, employing elements from diverse global cultures, what it feels like to “welcome the stranger” though heartfelt music and dance.

“LOVEfest: Welcome the Stranger” also plays April 12 at the Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts and April 13 at FirstOntario Performing Centre for the Performing Arts and April 13 at FirstOntario Performing
Arts Centre in St. Catharines.

**Ensemble Constantinople “Under the Senegalese Musical Sky”**
April 13 the Aga Khan Museum presents “Under the Senegalese Musical Sky,” featuring the Montreal-based Ensemble Constantinople directed by Kiya Tabassian, and guest Senegalese musician Ablaye Cissoko. Inspired by the ancient city illuminating East and West, Ensemble Constantinople was conceived as a forum for encounters and cross-fertilization. In its two-decade career it has explored many musical genres and historical periods, from medieval manuscripts to contemporary aesthetics, from Mediterranean Europe to Eastern traditions.

Last fall the Aga Khan Museum inaugurated a series of performances titled “Conversation Nation,” linked thematically to its HERE exhibition. Using Ensemble Constantinople as the house band, four musical pairings, each with a different national focus and guest musician, were programmed. The series launched in October 2017 with “Under the Syrian Musical Sky.”

The scene shifts to Senegal April 13, with the master kora player, vocalist and composer Cissoko. Born into a Mandingo griot (troubadour/historian) family, Cissoko has developed an international concert and recording career playing music characterized as “at the confluence of African music and jazz.”

Ensemble Constantinople has worked with Cissoko since 2014, forging innovative encounters between Mandinka and Persian classical music, set within a transnational world music aesthetic. Their 2015 collaborative album Jardins migrateurs (Itinerant Gardens) garnered critical plaudits for “conveying a sense of effortless invention grounded in unassuming technical mastery.” We can expect another masterclass in gentle transcultural music from this quartet on April 13.

**Taiko Plus! Esprit Orchestra with guest group Nagata Shachu**

Although I’ve followed the trailblazing Esprit Orchestra since its inception, I rarely get a chance to write about its music in this column. Why? As Canada’s only full-sized professional orchestra devoted to performing new orchestral music, it usually falls outside my world music beat. Not this month.

On April 15, the 65-member Esprit Orchestra, under the direction of Alex Pauk, assays the transcultural embedded at the core of contemporary orchestral music in its Koerner Hall concert. The work in question is Japanese composer Maki Ishii’s Mono-Prism (1976), scored for orchestra and a group of seven taiko drummers. Under the direction of Toronto’s Kiyoshi Nagata, members of his veteran taiko group Nagata Shachu perform those demanding drum parts.

I caught up with Esprit conductor Alex Pauk on the phone recently. “This isn’t the first Ishii work with non-orchestral percussion we’ve played. In a past season we performed his Afro-Concerto (1982) which uses African drums. The earlier Mono-Prism had its roots in Ishii’s extended studies with Ondekoza, the founding group of the modern taiko movement.”

**Mono-Prism**, the first work for orchestra and taiko, was premiered in 1976 by conductor Seiji Ozawa at the Tanglewood Music Festival, with Ondekoza playing the taiko parts. Its compelling energy.

**ON STAGE**

**AT THE AGA KHAN MUSEUM**

In *Under the Senegalese Musical Sky*, Montreal ensemble Constantinople and griot Ablaye Cissoko create rich new music by uniting the traditions of the Mandinka Kingdom and the Persian Empire.

**FRIDAY, APRIL 13, 8:30 PM**

$40, $36 Friends

Includes same-day Museum admission

Tickets at agakhanmuseum.org

A co-presentation with

**CONSTANTINOPE**

**AGA KHAN MUSEUM**
rhythmic vitality, clouds of sound from the pen of a skilled orchestrator, and its East-meets-West subtext, won a favourable reception. Its heart-skipping finale still excites audiences today.

I should mention that the Esprit Orchestra has embraced transcultural music making before. In 2013 it hosted Toronto’s Evergreen Club Contemporary Gamelan, jointly performing two works by Canadian composers. (As usual I want to flag my 35-year membership in ECCG – yes, I was on that stage and yes, I’m still having fun doing so!)

As a bonus that night Esprit added a dance performance by Balinese dancer Evie Suyadnyani. Intrepid classical music blogger Leslie Barzca recognized the transculturality that night, exclaiming, “My head is still buzzing in a good way from this exquisitely intercultural experience.”

**Gamelan in Concert**

Finally, speaking of the Evergreen Club Contemporary Gamelan, the pioneer Canadian world music octet has built a 35-year career making music which regularly crosses cultural stereotypes and boundaries. The group has embraced not only the West Javanese music indigenous to its gamelan degung (set of instruments) but many other global genres as well. ECCG has collaborated in concerts and recordings with an enormous variety of music-makers, including Baroque and contemporary orchestras, string quartets, violin soloists, choirs, NEXUS, opera and world music singers, turntable duo INSIDEaMIND, rapper Abdominal, and the leading Sundanese songwriter of his generation, Nano S.

On April 21 the Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia in Toronto presents “Gamelan in Concert” at its Jarvis Street hall. Doesn’t sound particularly transcultural? What if I told you that three types of gamelan from three distinct cultures are represented?

In addition to playing its Sundanese degung, ECCG hosts Javanese musician and scholar Sutrisno Hartana as its artist-in-residence. He’ll be developing new works in a series of workshops with ECCG, exploring common ground between Sundanese, Javanese and Western instruments and performance practices.

Kayonan Balinese Gamelan Orchestra represents Bali, the third culture in the concert. Founded in 2011 by dancer/choreographer and gamelan musician Kelko Ninomiya, Kayonan is Toronto’s first gong kebyar (orchestra). She has actively promoted the awareness and appreciation of Balinese gamelan music and dance in Toronto through performances, demonstrations, workshops and weekly courses ever since.

During the break between the first and second halves of the concert, the Consulate has considerably arranged Indonesian snacks for anyone in the audience who feels peckish. After a feast of mixed gamelan music and dance, what better than a plate of gado-gado piled high with sticks of sate and pink krupuk to feel truly transcultural on Jarvis Street? 🍜

Andrew Timar is a Toronto musician and music writer. He can be contacted at worldmusic@thewholenote.com.
as a one-man play but with the collaboration of Pite as director and then choreographer it developed into something much more. The show interweaves play text (mostly through voiceover) with dance in a way that allows the creators and performers to go beyond the literal into the metaphorical and imaginary to explore the ideas and emotions in great depth. It has been described as a “harrowing representation of trauma and suffering” but is also heralded by almost everyone who has seen it as phenomenally powerful and inventive, particularly in its combination of dance and theatre. Almost a signature piece for Canadian Stage as an example of this type of cross-genre collaborative creation, it is also a cousin to another show in the Canadian Stage season: The Overcoat: A Musical Tailoring, which opens with previews on March 27.

The world premiere of the new opera musical version of Gogol’s short story by director and librettist Morris Panych with a score by James Rolfe and movement choreography by Wendy Gorling promises to be an exciting event, and particularly fascinating for anyone who saw Panych and Gorling’s original famously physical theatre “silent movie” style production of The Overcoat which wowed audiences here and around the world.

Also opening March 27 is the Toronto run of the touring production of An American in Paris, presented by Mirvish Productions at the Princess of Wales Theatre. A more traditional musical offering, the draw for me is to see how the newly expanded and darker book by Craig Lucas will work with Christopher Wheeldon’s Tony Award-winning choreography, and how both will compare to the beloved Gene Kelly film.

Mirvish Productions is also presenting another Tony Award-winning musical, the Musical Stage Company’s new production of Fun Home, coming to the intimate CAA (formerly Panasonic) Theatre April 13 to May 6; the first time that a local musical production has been part of the Off-Mirvish Program.

On a much smaller scale than the shows I have been talking about above, Fun Home tackles issues much bigger than the size of its cast in a show described as both heartbreaking and fiercely funny. Adapted from Alison Bechdel’s best-selling semi-autobiographical 2006 graphic novel, it tells the story of Alison, a 43 year-old lesbian cartoonist, struggling to untangle her complex relationship with her deceased father. Moving between past and present, and connecting directly with the audience, Alison relives an unusual childhood growing up in a funeral home, her sexual awakening, unanswerable questions about her father’s secret life and eventual suicide and the effect that has on her family.

Adapted by Lisa Kron, and with a 70s-inflected score by Jeaine Tesori, the production of Fun Home will be brought to life by the Musical Stage Company’s usual brilliant creative home team of director Robert McQueen, music director Reza Jacobs and choreographer Stephanie Graham. The dynamite cast includes Stratford stars Cynthia Dale and Evan Buliung as Alison’s parents Helen and Bruce Bechdel, with Laura Condlln as Alison at 43, the narrator who holds the show together; Hannah Levinson as Small Alison (age 10), and as Medium Alison (age 19, university student), Toronto native Sara Farb.

As Toronto audiences may remember, Farb was one of two young Janes in the musical Jane Eyre that had its world premiere at the Royal Alex back in 1996. In a 2015 interview for In the Greenroom, she talked about her thoughts a few years earlier of getting out of the theatre business because “what [she] offered was too astray from the norm [of] musical theatre” and yet over the last five years at Stratford and in Toronto, she has developed into a powerful presence, most notably recently as the powerful goth-like Mary Tudor in The Last Wife (Stratford and Toronto) and The Virgin Trials, and her enigmatically sardonic Bob Dylan in the Musical Stage Company’s most recent Uncovered concert: Dylan and Springsteen – a fascinating segue to exploring the role of Medium Alison, a character discovering and coming to celebrate that she is a lesbian, and the effect that has on her family. You can hear Farb singing one of the signature songs of Fun Home, “Changing My Major” on Youtube in a promotional video shot at Toronto’s Metro Reference Library.

As you will hear in this song, Jeaine Tesori’s score has that almost indescribable quality of sounding like real people singing – just that one step beyond talking – before soaring into melody, that can pull the audience immediately into the story. Interestingly, the story itself, centering on a daughter trying to come to terms with the death of her father and their earlier troubled relationship, irresistibly brings to mind Britta Johnson’s Life After which opened the Musical Stage Company’s season in September. Did they plan it that way?

Other echoes of the Musical Stage Company appear in the first
previews of the Stratford Festival’s musicals this month. Dan Chameroy, who was so good as the motivational speaker father in Life After, shakes things up in the Tim Curry-associated starring role of Frank N. Furter in The Rocky Horror Show at the Avon Theatre, and Daren A. Herbert, who was so charismatic and effective as Onegin’s Dances this summer in Calgary and Edmonton with a Toronto engage-
ment (of only five performances so far) in February 2019 at the Ed Mirvish Theatre under the Mirvish umbrella. Excitingly, the cast is all Canadian, featuring musical veterans Richard Clarkin and Jonathan Whittaker as the two fathers, and the creative team is top shelf, led by director Randy Johnson (A Night with Janis Joplin), choreographer Tracey Flye (Mirvish Productions, Ross Petty Productions), music director Mark Camilleri (Mirvish, Dancap) and writers Dick Clement and Ian La Frenais (best known for their films The Commitments and Across the Universe, as well as their one previous stage musical Billy which starred Michael Crawford). Tickets go on sale on Ticketmaster on March 26.

**QUICK PICKS**

**Ongoing:** The wonderfully life-affirming Canadian musical Come From Away continues its run at the Royal Alexandra Theatre, now extended to October 2018.

**Apr 10 to 12:** “On Broadway”: A rare chance to see Canadian (born in Iran but brought up in Brampton) Ramtin Karimloo, star of Broadway and London’s West End and a brilliant Jean Valjean in the recent remount of Les Misérables in Toronto and New York, in a concert of Broadway favourites with Stephanie J. Block (Wicked) and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra conducted by Steven Reineke at Roy Thomson Hall.

**Apr 21 and 22:** “Broadway Reimagined.” Sarah Slean brings her unique Canadian pop sensibility to a program of Broadway classics with the Mike Janzen (jazz) Trio and the Niagara Symphony Orchestra.

**Apr 26 to May 6:** Picnic in the Cemetery, a multimedia performance/concert presented by Canadian Stage and created by Toronto composer Njo Kong Kie with the Macau-based Folga Gaang Project. Described as a combination of the whimsical and the macabre, Picnic (which previously played at the Edinburgh Festival) was originally inspired in part by the composer having lived near the Mount Pleasant Cemetery.

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.

**Breaking news** this week as we prepare to go to print has it that the new musical Jukebox Hero, being created around songs from classic rock band Foreigner’s hit list, will follow up its debut performances this summer in Calgary and Edmonton with a Toronto engagement (of only five performances so far) in February 2019 at the Ed Mirvish Theatre under the Mirvish umbrella. Excitingly, the cast is all Canadian, featuring musical veterans Richard Clarkin and Jonathan Whittaker as the two fathers, and the creative team is top shelf, led by director Randy Johnson (A Night with Janis Joplin), choreographer Tracey Flye (Mirvish Productions, Ross Petty Productions), music director Mark Camilleri (Mirvish, Dancap) and writers Dick Clement and Ian La Frenais (best known for their films The Commitments and Across the Universe, as well as their one previous stage musical Billy which starred Michael Crawford). Tickets go on sale on Ticketmaster on March 26.

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1791 – The Magic Flute by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Those seeking to add Mozart to their April lineup will have to travel to Windsor to see a new, young opera company there perform this classic. The company’s name is Abridged Opera and in their mission statement they call themselves “an indie opera company designed to bring a taste of this grand art form to a community that has limited access. They condense classic operatic works without compromising the opera’s integrity.” The singers have not been determined but the stage director will be Tracey Atin. April 14 and 15.

1830 – Anna Bolena by Gaetano Donizetti. With this opera the COC completes Donizetti’s so-called Three Queens trilogy of operas about Tudor monarchs, all starring superstar soprano and recent Canadian citizen Sondra Radvanovsky. In 2010 she sang the title role in Maria Stuarda and in 2014 she sang Elisabetta (Queen Elizabeth I) in Roberto Devereux. Now she sings the title role of the doomed Anne Boleyn, which Toronto audiences last heard back in 1984 sung by no less than the great Joan Sutherland. Eric Owens sings the role of Enrico VIII, Keri Alkema is his new love-interest Giovanna Seymour, Bruce Sledge sings Lord Percy and Allyson McHardy is Anna’s devoted page Smeton. Corrado Rovaris is again the conductor and Stephen Lawless, as with the previous two Three Queens instalments, is the stage director. April 28 to May 26.

1835 – Lucia di Lammermoor by Gaetano Donizetti. Opera Belcanto of York is also performing Donizetti this month in Richmond Hill. Alicja Wysocka sings the title role, Berg Karazian is Edgardo, David Babayants is Enrico and Henry Irwin is Raimondo. Edward Franko is the stage director and David Varjabed conducts the Opera Belcanto of York Chorus and Orchestra. April 19 and 22.

1843 – Don Pasquale by Gaetano Donizetti. Those seeking Donizetti in a lighter vein should look for Opera by Request’s concert performance of one of the composer’s best-known comic operas not seen at the COC since 1994. Bass-baritone Mikhail Shemet sings the title role, soprano Grace Quinsey sings Norina, the wife who tries to tame the gruff Pasquale, and tenor Fabian Arciniegas sings Ernesto, the young man who loves Norina. Claire Harris is the music director and indefatigable pianist. April 21.

1848 – Lohengrin by Richard Wagner. Opera by Request can also help those suffering from Wagner withdrawal. OBR is presenting Lohengrin, a standard repertory work that the COC last staged back in 1983. Lenard Whiting sings the title role of the mysterious knight, Vanessa Lanch is Elsa, goaded into asking a forbidden question, Jillian Yemen is the scheming Ortrud, Andrew Tees is Telramund and Steven Henriksen is King Heinrich. William Shookhoff is the music director and indefatigable pianist. April 13.

1859 – Orphée by Christoph Willibald Gluck as revised by Hector Berlioz. Toronto’s enterprising Against the Grain Theatre has collaborated with the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, Opera Columbus and New York’s Company XIV to create a new version of Orphée et Eurydice, the 1762 opera by Gluck, revised by Berlioz in 1859. Opera Atelier presented Berlioz’s version straight in 2015. Against the Grain has different plans. It says, “In 2018, we think this would become an electronic, baroque-burlesque descent into hell. While staying true to the original score … and honouring the traditions of Baroque opera, this new production pushes the boundaries of operatic presentation through an orchestra that mixes acoustic and electronic instruments, features captivating choreography from burlesque dancers, aerial artistry and a global virtual chorus.” The global virtual chorus is made up of videos from 100 people who answered AtG’s request by singing their choral parts in the score which were then electronically mixed.

Korean countertenor Siman Chung sings the title role. Canadian soprano Mireille Asselin is his love Eurydice and American aerialist Vanessa Lanch is Elsa, goaded into asking a forbidden question, Jillian Yemen is the scheming Ortrud, Andrew Tees is Telramund and Steven Henriksen is King Heinrich. William Shookhoff is the music director and indefatigable pianist. April 13.

1979 – The Magic Flute by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Those seeking to add Mozart to their April lineup will have to travel to Windsor to see a new, young opera company there perform this classic. The company’s name is Abridged Opera and in their mission statement they call themselves “an indie opera company designed to bring a taste of this grand art form to a community that has limited access. They condense classic operatic works without compromising the opera’s integrity.” The singers have not been determined but the stage director will be Tracey Atin. April 14 and 15.

1830 – Anna Bolena by Gaetano Donizetti. With this opera the COC completes Donizetti’s so-called Three Queens trilogy of operas about Tudor monarchs, all starring superstar soprano and recent Canadian citizen Sondra Radvanovsky. In 2010 she sang the title role in Maria Stuarda and in 2014 she sang Elisabetta (Queen Elizabeth I) in Roberto Devereux. Now she sings the title role of the doomed Anne Boleyn, which Toronto audiences last heard back in 1984 sung by no less than the great Joan Sutherland. Eric Owens sings the role of Enrico VIII, Keri Alkema is his new love-interest Giovanna Seymour, Bruce Sledge sings Lord Percy and Allyson McHardy is Anna’s devoted page Smeton. Corrado Rovaris is again the conductor and Stephen Lawless, as with the previous two Three Queens instalments, is the stage director. April 28 to May 26.

1835 – Lucia di Lammermoor by Gaetano Donizetti. Opera Belcanto of York is also performing Donizetti this month in Richmond Hill. Alicja Wysocka sings the title role, Berg Karazian is Edgardo, David Babayants is Enrico and Henry Irwin is Raimondo. Edward Franko is the stage director and David Varjabed conducts the Opera Belcanto of York Chorus and Orchestra. April 19 and 22.

1843 – Don Pasquale by Gaetano Donizetti. Those seeking Donizetti in a lighter vein should look for Opera by Request’s concert performance of one of the composer’s best-known comic operas not seen at the COC since 1994. Bass-baritone Mikhail Shemet sings the title role, soprano Grace Quinsey sings Norina, the wife who tries to tame the gruff Pasquale, and tenor Fabian Arciniegas sings Ernesto, the young man who loves Norina. Claire Harris is the music director and pianist. April 21.

1848 – Lohengrin by Richard Wagner. Opera by Request can also
and soprano Marcy Richardson portrays Amour. Tophër Mokrzewski conducts an ensemble of 11 musicians, including electric guitar and synthesizer, and Joel Ivany directs. As a side note, the artistic director of co-producer Opera Columbus is none other than Opera Atelier favourite Peggy Kriha Dye, who sang Eurydice for OA in 2015. April 26 to 28.

1864 – La Belle Hélène by Jacques Offenbach. Toronto Opera Theatre concludes its 2017/18 season with the company premiere of Offenbach’s famous satirical Trojan War operetta. The COC last presented the work in 1983. Bestel Kalender sings the title role, while seasoned operagoers can easily construct their own festival.

1904 – Madama Butterfly by Giacomo Puccini. The fourth Opera by Request concert presentation this month is a staple of standard repertory. Deena Nicklefork sings Cio-Cio San, Will Ford is the faithless Pinkerton, Keith O’Brien is the American consul Sharpless and Madison Arsenault is Cio-Cio San’s faithful servant Suzuki. William Shookhoff is the pianist and music director. April 27.

2009 – The Nightingale and Other Short Fables including Le Rossignol (1914) by Igor Stravinsky and Renard (composed 1916; premiere 1922) by Igor Stravinsky. The COC concludes its 2017/18 season with a revival of Robert Lepage’s unique take on two short operas by Stravinsky mixed with the composer’s settings of Russian folksongs. The production that premiered to huge acclaim in 2009 is most notable for placing the orchestra and chorus on stage and filling the pit with water for Vietnamese water puppets and other effects. The cast and conductor are completely different from those in 2009. This time Jane Archibald will sing the Nightingale, Owen McCausland will be the Tailor, and Johnproject Van Horn will be the Emperor and Johannes Debus will conduct. April 13 to May 19.

2018 – The Overcoat by James Rolfe. The first half of April will allow audiences to see the most recent Canadian opera to be fully staged in Toronto. This opera is an attempt to convert the wildly popular wordless 1997 physical theatre piece by Morris Panych and Wendy Gorling into an opera. The original piece told the story by Nikolai Gogol through movement to selections of music by Shostakovich. It told of Akaky Akakievich Bashmachkin, a government clerk who becomes obsessed with the notion that he must have a new overcoat to secure a promotion.

While the look of the opera will be the same as the theatre piece, Panych, who is also the stage director, has had to write a libretto. This has been set by James Rolfe, one of Canada’s most successful and prolific opera composers. In the 13-member cast, Geoffrey Sirett will sing Akaky, Peter McGillivray will be both the Tailor and the Head of Akaky’s Department and Andrea Ludwig will be Akaky’s Landlady. Leslie Dala conducts this co-production of Tapestry Opera, Vancouver Opera and Canadian Stage. March 29 to April 14.

2018 – Opera Peep Show. For a sampling of all sorts of opera, four indie opera companies have banded together to create a pay-as-you-go show at the Campbell House Museum. Four rooms of the 1822 downtown mansion are devoted to each company. Liedervolke presents an assortment of some of the most famous scenes in opera. Essential Opera presents favourites from its past seasons. re:Naissance presents three dramatic scenes combining texts from Shakespeare with music by John Dowland and his contemporaries. And Urbanvessel presents the interactive performance Boots about a young woman’s relationship with her footwear. April 28 to 30.

From all of these offerings this April, new operagoers can acquire a wide background in the genre, while seasoned opera goers can easily construct their own festival.

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

Beat by Beat | Art of Song

Ga-Ga for Who?

Lydia Perović

Quick, how many Gounod fans have you encountered in your life? Before meeting pianist Steven Kettlewell, the man behind the Castle Frank House of Melody’s new concert offering, “Ga-Ga for Gounod” (April 7 at St. Andrew’s United on Bloor St. E.), my answer would have been scarcely any. Composer of very Catholic operas and of the overplayed Ave Maria? Not a lot to be excited about there. When the early listing for the Gounod song recital arrived in this magazine’s inbox, I found myself intrigued. Of course he would have composed songs, as most of his peers did, but what were they like – how much unlike his arias, how Catholic, how Romantic, how French? Most of French 19th-century song before Debussy and Ravel remains little performed, with one notable exception, Berlioz’s masterwork Les nuits d’été.

Charles Gounod (1818–1893) is certainly best known for his operas, says Kettlewell when we meet in his apartment in a charming mid-rise, a short walk up the hill from behind the Castle Frank subway station. Some of Gounod’s better-known arias will be in the program—two from Roméo et Juliette and three from Faust. The motley selection of Gounod songs in the program contain several in the English language, to poetry by Tennyson, Wordsworth and Shelley. Was he an ardent English poetry reader? “He lived in England for a period of time. During the war of 1870 between France and Prussia, Gounod moved his family to England. His wife returned after the Paris Commune was defeated, but Gounod ended up staying another four years. He met there a certain Georgina Weldon, an eccentric battleaxe of many causes... One of her pet causes became Gounod.”

Gounod’s English-language songs sound very “English regional composer of the Victorian era,” says Kettlewell. “Even a bit like Arthur Sullivan. And some of the poetry is very sentimental.” One of the poems in the program is The Worker (1872), written by the then-in-demand lyricist Frederick Weatherly, also known for Danny Boy and Roses of Picardy. It could be taken for a social—realist song about the harsh conditions of a worker’s life were it not for the Catholic resolution, with angels arriving to take his soul to the higher plane of the afterlife for a well-deserved reward.

Gounod’s French songs, on the other hand, are very much salon songs, says Kettlewell. “He’s a lyric composer who knows how to compose for the voice, and that comes across in songs as well.” Thematically, they involve “lovely, simple poetry, simple emotion. ‘I love you,’ or ‘It’s a beautiful spring day,’ or ‘A beautiful night’. Soprano Cara Adams is going to sing one called Boire à l’ombre, which has more meat to it than some of his other songs. Years ago I bought a collection of 15 duets by Gounod for soprano or mezzo and baritone, and here I’m including a selection.” Adams and two other sopranos, Patricia Haldane and Lorna Young, with mezzo Martha Spence and baritone Michael Fitzgerald, make up the soloist roster. Kettlewell mans the piano.

It was a heady operatic century for France, the 19th, and the program will show some of its range. We’ll hear some arias from Bizet’s Carmen, but also the more obscure Benjamin Godard and Fromental Halévy. And one song by Fanny Mendelssohn. What’s the connection there? “She met him while they were in Rome – where
Gounod won the Prix de Rome. She wrote a letter to her brother in which she describes him as ‘charming.’ She extolled to him the virtues of modern German music at the time, and also Bach. Later, on his way back to France via Vienna, Gounod visited them in Weimar for a few days and got to know the brother Felix as well.

On his return to Paris after the extended stay in Rome, Gounod seemed to be in no rush to become an opera composer. “What you’d normally do as a young composer is try to hook up with a librettist and start composing, maybe a short opera, in the hope that the director of Opéra Lyrique would see it and give you a commission. He instead took a job as a church organist. He was that for a few years. He wrote masses and choral pieces and didn’t try hard to get invited to salons and meet librettists, schmooze, get to know people.” He also got a job writing music for schoolkids.

It was Pauline Viardot who jump-started his career, says Kettlewell. “He had met her in Rome. Then in Paris, when they met again, she remembered him. Ah, le prêtre voluptueux! She asked him if he was writing any operas and promised to set him up with Émile Augier. She had just had a big hit at the Opera Garnier, they wanted her to come back next year, and she said to Gounod that she would if he composed that opera for her. And that was Sapho, his first.” It wasn’t a great success then and the intervening centuries did not re-evaluate it. The thoroughly heterosexual Sapho takes her own life over a man, and there’s even a ballet added to the story in a later version. What survives of the first Viardot-Gounod collaboration is the aria O ma lyre immortelle, which is still heard in concerts and which will be sung by Lorna Young in this program.

A lot of the operatic works of that time underwent rewrites and recycling, extensions and cuts, demanded by opera house directors, star singers or the state censor. “The second version of Gounod’s Faust, with recitatives instead of spoken dialogue, was much more successful than the first one,” says Kettlewell and hands me a book that’s been lying on his coffee table. “I’m reading this right now, Second Empire Opera: The Théâtre Lyrique Paris, 1851-1870 by T.J. Walsh, it’s hilarious. It’s about Théâtre Lyrique, the house that wasn’t subsidized by the government, unlike Opéra de Paris. [There are] a lot of composers in this book that we’ve never heard of, operas we’ve never heard of. The Lyrique would put on an opera and if it wasn’t very successful, they’d put a work on that was successful last year but rejig it for this year’s use. The stuff popular with the audience would push other works aside. They had to make money off opera.”

The works commissioned by the state-subsidized Opéra de Paris were always under the eye of the censor. Even Sapho was sent back for an edit because in one scene there was a hint of a sexual bargain between two minor characters. “All the while, the subscribers had the right to go back stage and flirt with the ballerinas. Viardot once said something to the effect that ‘what we were doing onstage was no worse than what was happening in the wings during the performance.’ The pestering of the ballerinas was part of the subscription package.

The censors also kept a close eye on anything that might cause political unrest. “They didn’t want people getting excited at the opera house and then running out to the streets and rioting … which was a French tradition.” Gounod’s own opera on Ivan the Terrible never saw light of day because there was never a good time to show regicide and assassination attempts onstage. While Gounod was writing it, Napoleon III was nearly assassinated on his way to the opera with his wife: somebody threw a bomb under their carriage. Gounod’s opera plot, coincidence would have it, also contained an assassination attempt. “People began saying to him, you’ll never get this on stage, start something else.” So he did. He relinquished the libretto to Bizet and moved on to other matters.

An example: the opera Cinq-Mars, which Gounod created for Opéra-Comique, and which was revived only in 2017 in a German opera house and recorded by Palazzetto Bru Zane as part of their lavishly designed French Romanticism series. (Kettlewell of course owns the CD.) When I tell him that Opéra-Comique is reviving Gounod’s second opera, La nonne sanglante, in June this year and that I have a ticket, since one of my favourite conductors is on the podium, the conversation veers into the phenomenon of...
nunsploitation (nun + exploitation), known to us from genre movies but already familiar to 19th-century operagoers. Rossini’s Le Comte Ory is still probably the best known of the type. “Meyerbeer’s Robert le diable also has some of that with the dance of the ghosts of nuns who rise from their tombs,” Kettlewell says.

As to the question of how Gounod fits in with the idea we have of French Romanticism: “I’d always offer some other names first in that context – certainly Berlioz – but with Gounod, there’s always a bit of restraint there, I think,” he says. He also mentions the then-star Meyerbeer as a more typical exponent. “What operas by Meyerbeer I’ve heard, I liked a lot. You sometimes wonder why some things fall out of fashion… and Meyerbeer has.” His Le Huguenois has seen some revival success in Belgium, France and Germany in the last few years. “Yes, and I just got a DVD of Margherita d’Anjou… and Robert le diable was done at the Covent Garden recently.”

Of all of Gounod, what would be his top five that everybody should hear? “Remember the Alfred Hitchcock Presents series? The opening credits music? That’s Gounod, the Funeral March of a Marionette, and he wrote it to poke fun at a British music critic.” Also on that list, the Jewel Song from Faust and Je veux vivre from Roméo et Juliette. “O ma lyre immortelle from Sapho is beautiful, as is the one from Cinq-Mars that we’re including in the program, Nuit resplendissante,” he says.

“And, of course, the Ave Maria.”

Ga-Ga for Gounod takes place inside the modernist concrete beauty that is St. Andrew’s United Church, 117 Bloor St. E., on April 7 at 7:30pm. Tickets $20 in advance (triciahaldane@gmail.com to arrange an e-transfer) or $25 at the door, cash only. There will be a salon party after, directions to the location to be given from the stage.

Lydia Perović is an arts journalist in Toronto. Send her your art-of-song news at artofsong@thewholenote.com.
**Better by the Dozen**

One of the relatively recent instruments for which old music is regularly arranged is the modern classical guitar, designed in the 19th century after earlier classical models. Although not in existence during Bach’s time, a great deal of J.S. Bach’s music has been transcribed for the modern guitar, including preludes, fugues, sonatas, partitas, cello and orchestral suites, as well as lute, keyboard and ensemble music by other Baroque composers. One of the most interesting facets of these arrangements is the constant accommodation and adaptation being made by the transcriber and performer, particularly in fugues, where it is nearly impossible for all three or four voices to be as distinctly present on a guitar as they would be on a keyboard. This adjustment creates another arranging/transcribing hybrid, for Bach’s original counterpoint must be compromised to be played, often resulting in a work that is familiar yet new when heard in performance.

While many of us are acquainted with the classical guitar, April brings a supersized surprise to fans of the instrument. On April 15, the Quebec-based ensemble Forestare makes their Toronto debut in Mooredale Concerts’ 2017/18 season finale. What makes this program unusually interesting is the instrumental makeup of Forestare, consisting of 12 guitars and two basses. According to their media release, “Since its 2002 inception, Forestare has participated in the creation of 50 original works and adapted nearly another 100 for its unique configuration – as a result creating the largest repertoire for guitar orchestra in the world.”

For their April Toronto debut, Forestare’s program is comprised entirely of arrangements made by David Pilon (also Forestare’s conductor), David Ratelle and Jürg Kindle, taken from their Baroque album. Works including Lully’s *Le bourgeois gentilhomme*, Vivaldi’s *Trio Sonata (La folia)* and numerous works by Bach, including *Brandenburg Concerto No. 3*, ensure a mixture of familiar earworms and less-familiar discoveries. This concert presents a rare and unique opportunity to experience something that is, for many of us, entirely new: well-known works transcribed for an extraordinary and novel combination of instruments.

**Looking Ahead**

**Scaramella, April 7:** In addition to the new and exciting debut of the Forestare guitar orchestra, Toronto hosts a number of other worthwhile early music events this month, including Scaramella’s “Boccherini and Friends,” a survey of Boccherini’s music in the context of his contemporaries, on April 7. With works by Boccherini, Michael Haydn (brother of Franz Josef), Leopold Mozart (father of Wolfgang) and Johann Georg Albrechtsberger, this dip into the late 18th century features those who were lost in the transition between the Baroque and Classical periods, as popular tastes shifted and changed, and many worthwhile and successful composers faded into premature obscurity. According to the late-18th-century author Jean-Baptiste Cartier, “If God wanted to speak to men through music, He would do it with the works of Haydn, but if He wanted to listen to music, He would choose Boccherini,” But don’t take Cartier’s word for it – check out this concert and decide for yourself.

**Music @ Met, April 22:** Last month’s issue of *The WholeNote* featured an interview with Dr. Patricia Wright, Metropolitan United Church’s Minister of Music. In her interview Dr. Wright explained that for decades Metropolitan United has hosted a successful and ongoing series of concerts, recently rebranded as the Music at Metropolitan (Music @ Met) program. The next performance in the Music @ Met calendar features Musicians on the Edge and Rezonance Baroque.
Ensemble in “Mystery of the Unfinished Concerto” on April 22. With music by Corelli, Vivaldi and others, as well as new compositions created on the spot, this presentation continues Rezonance’s exploration of partimenti and Baroque improvisational technique, in both the context of written and unwritten music.

Cantemus, May 5 and 6: Looking ahead to early May, Cantemus Singers present what should be a sublime concert of works from the early Tudor period on May 5 and 6. Although written in social, political, and religious conditions that were decidedly less than ideal, the music produced by such composers as Tallis, Sheppard and Mundy overcame the limitations of their time and began the progression towards what is now considered the English Cathedral style of music. With a rich historical background full of fascinating tales and anecdotes, this performance is ideal for fans of Renaissance music and history buffs alike.

As winter departs, the days grow longer, and the mercury rises, take advantage of a beautiful spring evening or two and explore a concert. If nothing in this month’s column strikes an interest, explore this magazine for hundreds more shows, recitals and presentations – all happening within the area – and find the music that’s right for you. Your feedback is always welcome: send me a note at earlymusic@thewholenote.com or say “Hi” in person; either way, don’t let April showers keep you indoors.

Matthew Whitfield is a Toronto-based harpsichordist and organist.

Beat by Beat | Choral Scene

Music and Storytelling

BRIAN CHANG

Emotion is at the core of every musical performance and storytelling is at the heart of emotion. Sometimes the stories can be esoteric, sometimes they are obvious, sometimes they challenge us to find them. There is an extra dimension that conductors put into their concerts when programming songs that tell a story to evoke certain feelings. Take in a well-constructed choral concert this month and see the part that musical storytelling plays. I’ve highlighted a few below.

“I’ll Be Your Refuge”

“Music has a way of softening the edges around a message, of getting at its true emotional core, and of transmitting that to a broad range of people.” says Annabelle Chvostek, JUNO-nominated singer-songwriter and artist-in-residence for Echo Women’s Choir. She continues: “Having music carry ideas can make things feel less preachy or didactic. It’s just giving it from the heart.” Chvostek is answering some of my questions by email. I’ve asked her about her experiences creating and adapting her solo music for Echo Women’s Choir.

“I’ll Be Your Refuge” is Chvostek’s feature song that gives the Echo Women’s Choir spring concert its title. This isn’t Chvostek’s first time writing or arranging music for Echo. She has adapted her songs Black Hole and Firewalker for them, amongst others. But “this year is the first time I am actually presenting a song that is a choral song first. I’ll Be Your Refuge is a song I want to be singing, but it is so much more poignant to do it with the intent and attention of these women supporting its delivery. And it was a magical process to have room for four vocal parts to carry it instead of my one.”

The story she’s telling here is one that is deeply personal for her. Her partner is a former refugee and Chvostek is sharing a story of acceptance, belonging and open arms. “Observing the global refugee crisis of the last few years has been powerful. Some of the most moving news moments for me have been around [refugees], including watching Canadian families and communities respond to the crisis with openness and generosity,” she continues. “And frustratingly, some people respond with fear.” Echo is sharing this music to move beyond fear.

Echo is unlike any other choir in the city that I’ve met. It is a gathering of female-identified voices rooted in a compassion and drive for social justice. Their concerts are community gatherings centred around music, much of which is uniquely arranged for Echo by Alan Gasser. Becca Whitta and Gasser are co-directors with Chvostek. They want you to think and be challenged by their music and storytelling. There is deep thoughtfulness behind the music they program and the issues they want you to confront.

Dene singer Leela Gilday comes to Toronto as the choir’s special guest. Based out of Yellowknife, Gilday shares stories and describes
herself as having “a sense of humour as well as a sense of social justice and an ironic appreciation of human folly.” Her music and stories will be welcomed by the choir.

“Music is one way we can express the things that we hope will contribute to a fairer, more just society,” says Chvostek. “One that cultivates joy within all its diversity of expression. Music can actually get at things in a way that words alone can’t.”

Echo Women’s Choir presents “I’ll be Your Refuge” with special guest Leela Gilday and co-directors Becca Whitla, Alan Gasser and Annabelle Chvostek, Sunday April 29 at 3pm, at Church of the Holy Trinity, Toronto.

**Now the Guns Have Stopped**

For the Oakham House Choir upcoming concert “Better is Peace than Always War,” artistic director Matthew Jaskiewicz has paired Karl Jenkins’ *The Armed Man* and Gabriel Fauré’s *Requiem*. Two distinct works, they are companion pieces in their ability to channel a message of peace in the form of a mass. The concert’s title comes from the opening words of the 12th and final movement of Jenkins’ piece.
The Armed Man is popular amongst community choirs for its universal message of peace and its musical accessibility. The work includes poetry by Rudyard Kipling, Jonathan Swift and Sankichi Toge, a Japanese survivor of the Hiroshima bombing by the USA. The hymn *L'homme arme*, for which the work is named, is based on an ancient tune. The hymn tells us “the armed man should be feared,” a warning against those who carry and use weapons.

Paired with *The Armed Man*, Iaskiewicz has chosen the Fauré *Requiem*. A beloved staple of French music and the requiem canon, this is a mass for the dead. Put into the context of a call for peace, this requiem performance will not be used for actual commemoration. Audiences will instead be challenged to think about the areas of the world plagued by conflict at this very moment. And as we approach the centenary of the end of World War I, it serves to remind us of past conflicts as well. This concert commemorates the end of the First World War and is a collaboration with the European Union consulates in Toronto. Members of the armed forces from the Scottish Regiment Haller’s Army (Blue Army) will be in attendance.

Oakham House Choir Society presents “Better is Peace Than Always War” on April 28, 7:30pm, at Metropolitan United Church, Toronto.

“Let there be light!”

Pax Christi Chorale is joined by the Toronto Mozart Players for a presentation of Haydn’s masterpiece oratorio: *Die Schöpfung (The Creation)*. “The Creation represents the highest form of oratorio,” shares David Bowser, artistic director of Pax Christi, via email. “It was written with love for the listener. Haydn paints colourful and vivid musical depictions of darkness and light, water and weather, plants, birds, animals and people, all framed in grand angelic choruses.”

Bowser is presenting the work in its original German because the “text is closer to today’s spoken German, and gives the music a more buoyant phrasing and crisper articulation. It should be underlined that neither Haydn nor van Swieten, who wrote both versions, spoke English with any fluency and the settings are clumsy,” he says. Many a chorister has frowned when confronted with the awkward English of “And to th’ ethereal vaults resound” or “achieved” in three syllables. The original German allows the choir to move beyond such awkwardness.

Pax Christi is joined for this concert by Sandy Rossignol, a video artist. Bowser explains the creative process and the reasoning behind the inclusion of this added dimension to the music. “Often audiences are buried in their programs reading along with the text,” he says. “And they are not as connected with the performers. A video of images compiled and manipulated by Sandy will serve as abstract surtitles to assist the audience in following the German text. The music is so visual that Sandy was immediately inspired. He is also incorporating themes of science, equality, diversity and conservation to bring modern relevance to the performance.”

Rossignol’s live visual accompaniment promises to give the concert a unique visual storytelling dimension.

Pax Christi Chorale presents *Die Schöpfung (The Creation)* with the Toronto Mozart Players, Danika Loren (soprano), Charles Sy (tenor), Oliver Laquerre (bass-baritone), and live video performance by Sandy Rossignol on April 28 at 7:30pm, at Grace Church on-the-Hill, Toronto.

**QUICK PICKS**

**Apr 6: Exultate Chamber Singers** presents “We Sing and Play!” As noted in last month’s Choral Scene, Dr Hilary Apfelstadt is retiring from the University of Toronto and as artistic director of Exultate. She brings the Toronto Winds to her final concert with Exultate, which features the premiere of *Resurgam* by Canadian composer Matthew Emery, the choir’s composer-in-residence. Emery has blended Renaissance polyphony with contemporary compositional techniques to create a work for an interesting pairing: voice and small wind ensemble.

St. Thomas’s Anglican Church, Toronto.

**Apr 28 and 29: DaCapo Chamber Choir** of Toronto present *This Thirsty Land*. Joined by instrumentalists, the choirs present the local premiere of DaCapo artistic director Bowser is presenting the work in its original German because the “text is closer to today’s spoken German, and gives the music a more buoyant phrasing and crisper articulation. It should be underlined that neither Haydn nor van Swieten, who wrote both versions, spoke English with any fluency and the settings are clumsy,” he says. Many a chorister has frowned when confronted with the awkward English of “And to th’ ethereal vaults resound” or “achieved” in three syllables. The original German allows the choir to move beyond such awkwardness.

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**Apr 28 and 29: DaCapo Chamber Choir** of Toronto present *This Thirsty Land*. Joined by instrumentalists, the choirs present the local premiere of DaCapo artistic director

**with Adleisia**

Oriana is delighted to share the stage with Montreal Women’s Chamber choir Adleisia

**Sunday, May 6, 2018 ~ 2 pm**

Grace Church on-the-Hill

300 Lonsdale Road, Toronto

**Tickets available at www.orianachoir.com or Hart House Tickets at 416-978-8849**

Oriana Women’s Choir gratefully acknowledges the financial assistance of

www.orianachoir.com info@orianachoir.com

thewholenote.com
Leonard Enns’ work *This Thirsty Land*, recently commissioned and premiered by the University of Guelph. Other smaller works include Toronto-based composer Hussein Janmohamed’s *Sun on Water* and Norwegian Trond Kverno’s *Ave Maris Stella*. April 28, 8pm at St. John’s Lutheran, Waterloo, and April 29, 3:30pm at St. Anne’s Anglican Church, Toronto.

**Apr 29: Amadeus Choir of Greater Toronto** presents “I Saw Eternity.” Artistic director Lydia Adams conducts the choir’s final concert of the season featuring music by Eric Whitacre, Eleanor Daley, Hussein Janmohamed, Stephen Chatman and more. The inspiration for the concert comes from Henry Vaughan’s poem *The World*, which opens with the lines: “I saw eternity the other night.” Leonard Enns’ and Stephen Chatman’s settings of *The World* are presented along with other spacious works including Ola Gjeilo’s *Serenity* and Eric Whitacre’s *Water Night*. Eglington St. George’s United Church, Toronto.

**May 5: Mississauga Festival Choirs** present “Generations,” with the Mississauga Festival Choir, the Mississauga Festival Chamber Choir, their youth choir, Resonance, and their intergenerational choir Raising Voices. The signature work of the evening will be John Rutter’s *Mass of the Children*. Living Arts Centre, Mississauga.

**May 6: St. Anne’s Anglican Choir** presents “A Hubert Parry Tribute.” The Junction Trio joins a larger orchestra and the St. Anne’s Choir under music director John-Luke Addison. The concert commemorates 100 years since the death of Sir Charles Hubert Hastings Parry. Royal music aficionados will know him for his coronation anthem *I was Glad*, which was written for the coronation of King Edward VII in 1902. The famous Anglican hymn *Repton*, a staple of congregations around the world was set to music by Parry. St. Anne’s Anglican Church, Toronto.

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

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**Die Schöpfung**

Franz Joseph Haydn

*The Creation*

Pax Christi Chorale with the
Toronto Mozart Players, Danika Lorèn,
Charles Sy, Olivier Laquerre and
video artist Sandy Rossignol

Saturday, April 28, 7:30 p.m.
Grace Church on-the-Hill,
300 Lonsdale Rd. Toronto

FOR TICKETS, VISIT
PAXCHRISTICHORALE.ORG
St. Patrick’s Day came and went between this issue of WholeNote and the last, so I thought it would be fun to acknowledge my Irish descent—the key word being descent, as in “into madness”—by taking a look at the grand legacy of Irish jazz piano. There have been many more fine Irish jazz pianists than many people realize and here they are, in chronological order:

Ellis Larkins – Larkins hailed from Baltimore, County Cork. He was something of a child prodigy, performing with local orchestras by the age of ten. After graduating from the distinguished Peabody Conservatory in his hometown, Larkins became the first jazz pianist to attend the famed Juilliard School of Music in Dublin and began his long career after graduation. Larkins had a gossamer touch resulting in a translucent sound, a deft harmonic sense and a sensitivity which made him a great accompanist, especially of singers. He spent many years as a vocal coach and was the regular pianist for a number of fine vocalists including Mabel Mercer, Sylvia Syms and the First Lady of Irish Song, Ella Fitzgerald. Along with his own natural reticence, this supportive role meant Larkins was one of the more overlooked Irish pianists, although musicians like Ruby Braff, with whom he often recorded in a duet, knew his true worth.

Harold McKinney – McKinney was born into a musical family in that hotbed of Irish jazz, Moughtown (pronounced “mow”), County Monaghan. One of his brothers, Bernard, played the euphonium and another, William, was a bassist. They bear no relation to the William McKinney who led the seminal Irish big band McKinney’s Flax Spinners. Harold McKinney might have achieved more notoriety had he left Moughtown for Dublin, as did many of the city’s younger pianists, but he preferred to remain there in the role of elder and mentor, for which he was much treasured.

Dave McKenna – McKenna was from the Aran Islands and eventually emigrated to Boston and later New York, where he was the favourite pianist of such American-Irish greats as Bobby Hackett and Zoot Sims. A huge, anvil-headed man with massive hands who looked like the captain of a whaling boat, he was the most two-fisted of Irish pianists.
pianists, developing a driving and very full style often displayed in solo outings. His two-listedness was often seen offstage as well, with a pint of Guinness in his left hand and a small one of Jameson’s in his right. He was also renowned for his almost limitless repertoire, often weaving seemingly disparate songs into long and ingeniously witty medleys.

**Tommy Flanagan** – Easily my favourite Irish pianist, Flanagan was part of the large wave of young musicians, many of them pianists, to emerge from Moughtown in the mid-1950s. His very fluent playing showed both the delicacy of Teddy Wilson and the toughness of Bud Powell, his two main influences. He was very much of the lace-curtain school of Irish jazz piano; there never was one who played with more lifting grace or elegance. Like Ellis Larkins, he was naturally standoffish and served a long apprenticeship as a sideman, including several stints as Ella Fitzgerald’s accompanist in the 1960s and 70s. He appeared on hundreds of records, including a couple of seminal ones in Irish history: *Giant’s Causeway Steps* with the great Ulster tenor John Coleraine, and *The Incredible Jazz Guitar of Wes Montgomery*, with Eire’s most celebrated celestist. Eventually in his fortieth, Flanagan lit out on his own as a leader with a long series of fine trio records. By the time he died in 2001 he was known as “The Poet of the Piano.”

**Armagh J. O’Malley** – Born Fritz Peterson, O’Malley eventually adopted a more Irish name taken from his home county in Ulster. He later emerged in the centrally located Shighetown with a fine trio, which exerted considerable influence on both the repertoire and rhythmic approach of the mid-1950’s Miles Davis quintet, bringing him lasting fame in spite of indifference from many critics. Despite virtuosic technique, he played with a very sparse, probingly style, often concentrating on the piano’s upper register, and displayed a brilliant knack for arranging unlikely pieces for piano trio, using ingenious vamps and interludes to fully integrate the bass and drums. He was one of the first jazz pianists to become a Steinway Artist and is still going strong. He will turn 88 this July, a special age for a pianist given the number of keys on the instrument.

**Wynton Kelly** – In contrast to Tommy Flanagan, Kelly developed a hard-swinging, funky, blues-infused style of great crag and spirit much more in keeping with the thatched-roof school of Irish jazz piano. He hailed from the large Dublin borough of Brooke Lynn and went on to form important associations with Miles Davis and Wes Montgomery, often in the company of his long standing trio of bassist Paul Chambers and drummer Jimmy Cobb, who hailed from the small port just south of Cork. He died far too young, but Kelly was the most joyous of Irish pianists. (For those not familiar with the designations lace-curtain and thatched-roof Irish, the former tend to be more urban and genteel, more prosperous and “of the quality” as the Irish would put it. Thatched-roof Irish are more lively, down to earth and working class, often dwelling in modest rural cottages. The following old joke may help drive the distinction home: What’s the difference between lace-curtain Irish and thatchedroof Irish? The lace-curtain Irish take the dishes out of the sink before they pee in it.)

**Roland Hanna** – Hanna is another of the fine pianists to emerge from the hyperactive Moughtown jazz scene. He had an eclectic modern approach and was one of the few players influenced both by bebop pianists and Erroll Garner. A great favourite of that noted jazz fan Queen Elizabeth II, he was knighted by her and thereafter known as Sir Roland Hanna, causing no small dismay among his more traditionalist fans, some of whom referred to him as “that poxy royalist bastard.” He survived a couple of knee-capping attempts but eventually won over his doubters by remaining true to his Irish musical roots of lyricism wed with inventiveness.

**McCoy Tyner** – Tyner came to prominence as a young man when he joined the classic 1960s quartet of renowned Ulster tenor John Coleraine. Tyner developed a rhythmically powerful attack using the 6/8 rhythms and triplets common to Irish jigs and reels, while exploring the modern applications of traditional Irish modality using Uilleann pipe modes and the quartal harmonies of the pentatonic scale. Apart from the Coleraine quartet he made many fine trio recordings as a leader.

**Chick O’Rea** – O’Rea began in his teens as a percussionist, playing the bodhran in traditional Irish groups. His inherent brilliance as a pianist soon took over, as did his more modern tendencies. He was one of the key Irish pianists in the fusion movement as leader and sideman and has shown a restless spirit in switching back and forth between both electric and acoustic bands and instruments. Indeed, (as he hashtags himself these days) has at times had difficulty deciding whether he wants to be a popular musician or an uncompromisingly creative one and this dichotomy shows in his music. His 1978 release *The Leprechaun* was an unabashed exploration of his Irish musical heritage.

**Joanne Brackeen** – Against all odds, Brackeen (née Joanne Grogan) managed to break through the more hidebound strictures of traditional Irish society, demonstrating the deeply matriarchal roots of the small island, all those priests notwithstanding. Early in her career she accompanied the noted Irish tenors Stan Getts and Joe Henderson before establishing herself as a leader. Her style can be a little on the challenging and explosive side, but her inventiveness could also be very lyrical and melodic. She often performed with the Irish rhythm team of bassist Cecil McBee and drummer Aloysius Foster.

**Todd O’Hammer** – O’Hammer is a stalwart of modern Irish bebop, both as an active sideman and as a leader of his own trios. He has performed with such veterans as Charlie Rouse, Johnny Griffin, Art Farmer, and George Coleman, and regularly accompanied the singer Annie Ross. His playing is steeped in the jazz tradition but he continues to look forward, always sounding fresh.

**Rossan O’Sportiello** – At just 43, O’Sportiello is the most recent arrival on this list, and yet he is something of a stylistic throwback, often performing in a mainstream/swing style of catholic breadth. He is a dynamic virtuoso in the tradition of Art Tatum and Teddy Wilson, also showing a fondness for such pianists as Ralph Sutton, Barry Harris and the aforementioned Dave McKenna. He has built a solid international reputation working with many fine jazz artists as well as through his own recordings. Toronto fans may know him from his sparkling performances at the last few Ken Page Memorial Trust All-Star fundraiser concerts at the Old Mill.

So there you have them, the great Irish jazz pianists. To all music fans, slainte, and a belated Happy St. Patrick’s Day!

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

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**Jazz Vespers Clergy**

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

**Sunday, April 8 at 4:30pm**

Tribute to Bix Beiderbecke,
Andrew McAnsh (trumpet)

**Sunday, April 22 at 4:30pm**

Amanda Tosoff Quartet

Christ Church Deer Park, 1570 Yonge St. (north of St. Clair at Heath St.)

416-920-5211

416-920-5211

[www.theresilifehere.org](http://www.theresilifehere.org)
Continuity and Change

JACK MACQUARRIE

ooking out my window, Old Man Winter is still with us, but according to my calendar, spring has officially arrived. However, the fact is that this is the time of year when community bands frequently experience transition, if not evolution. Organizations, just like humans, age, and have growing pains or other disruptions which require timely attention. With the passage of time every band will have changes in membership, leadership, sponsorship, rehearsal locations and performance venues. Similarly, some new groups will arise while a few may not survive another season. In some cases, if a group prospers and grows, much of the administrative workload must be delegated to a broader crew. So it is with that in mind that I decided to see how some such transitions are in progress this spring. If you are a member of a musical group and have not survived another season, in some of the problems of some sort of transition, be patient. Your day will come.

New Horizons

Currently the most dramatic of these is New Horizons Band of Toronto. When Dan Kapp first started the New Horizons Band of Toronto, little did he know how many adults were looking for places to learn and play music. They started their first year with only 25 people of varying degrees of musical experience, and a small executive of five people. Through Kapp’s dedication, expertise and enthusiasm for music, the program has grown to seven concert bands and two jazz bands, with six music directors, as well as a number of other New Horizons Bands in surrounding communities.

I remember well their very first concert in the Glenn Gould Studio. When I first heard that this startup amateur band, with many who had never played a concert in their lives, was scheduled to present their very first offering in this prestigious venue, I questioned the sanity of leader Dan Kapp. As would be the case with any such startup group, a few vacancies had to be filled with ringers. In retrospect I can now say that I am proud to have been one of those ringers. How did it go over? To my surprise the hall was packed.

Almost immediately the year-end showcase concerts became a major goal to work for. The next performance step other than full band concerts was the establishment of small ensembles which provide an excellent practice mode for developing musical skills, particularly the skill of listening to the other members of the group. Soon came the Chamber Sweets program, which features ensembles from all band levels playing in concert for family and friends. These have become great social gatherings around the GTA, particularly at holiday times, and include a large array of tasty treats in addition to the music, hence the name.

As is the case with any organization, growth comes with its challenges. One man, now with nine bands and six music directors, can’t be expected to assume the multitude of responsibilities. To ensure their future success, last year the entire association was registered as a not-for-profit organization and established a formal board of directors. Randy Kligerman, one of the original band members, was named as president and Dave Barnes, another early member, as secretary. Soon after, Donna Dupuy, conductor of the most senior band, was contracted to be head of education for NH Bands in Toronto.

Next year they are planning to offer sectional masterclasses to members, thereby providing further support to enhance their learning and playing experience. This appears to be the first time that this type of program will be well be offered in a community band environment. As the numbers grew they required larger, reliable rehearsal space; they were fortunate to get a long-term commitment for the use of the Salvation Army Hall in Toronto at Dovercourt Rd. and Bloor St. W. in central Toronto. They have been able to lease space to store their equipment and hold practice five days per week. They would never be able to run such a program without this help.

As for Kapp, director since the band’s inception, he is moving on. During a vacation trip to Nova Scotia last summer he and his wife Lisa fell in love with the town of Wolfville. They purchased a home there and will be moving this summer. Consequently, he announced his retirement from New Horizons Band of Toronto, as he and Lisa prepare for their big move. I understand that their reputation precedes them, as the New Horizons Band and local theatre/music groups in Wolfville have already been in contact with them. They may well be busier than ever. As they leave, their legacy will continue, as NHB Toronto starts preparing for next year’s registration. Toronto’s loss will be Wolfville’s gain.

For those not familiar with New Horizons, the Toronto band is a member of a much larger group, New Horizons International Music Association. (Their website is newhorizonsmusic.org.) Roy Ernst, a professor at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, founded the New Horizons movement in 1991, emphasizing entry and reentry points to music-making for older adults. His motto of “Your best is good enough – no auditions required” has inspired over 6000 people in approximately 200 bands across North America to get involved with music.

New president Kligerman says: “I felt very lucky to have met Dan seven years ago, as the band has been a truly enriching part of my life.” Three years ago Kligerman became a member of the NHMA board, so that he could “further help spread the word of this amazing opportunity to learn music, to anyone looking to enrich their lives through music.”

Having not had much contact with the Toronto New Horizons groups for some time, I decided to visit the most senior group with which I have had contact over the years and also to visit their jazz
band. After I introduced myself to the jazz band’s director Patricia Wheeler, I was invited to sit in. Since they did not have a bass trombone in their group and I had one in the car, I was soon holding my own at the bottom of the band. I was very impressed at how Wheeler helped instill the concepts of the jazz idiom into those new to that type of music. After that rehearsal I stayed to listen to the newest of the many groups. This was a woodwind choir with a difference; it consisted of three flutes, four clarinets and one bass clarinet but augmented by piano, bass and drums, similar to their jazz band. The key was to make a different form of music.

My next visit, a few days later, was to the rehearsal of the concert band. Still with several members of that original band, which began seven years ago, the band is now under the direction of Donna Dupay. Here again, band members don’t just sit down and play the notes from the printed page. They are challenged to get comfortable with the finer aspects of the harmonies and rhythms to produce a distinctive quality performance.

Shortly before it was time to wind up that rehearsal there was a visit by Wheeler and her husband Bill Condon. In a brief ceremony Condon was there to present the surprise gift of a euphonium to the NH bands. My timing couldn’t have been better: a rehearsal, the most senior band, the president, two conductors and a generous friend of the band. What better instrument to receive as a gift? When prospective members attend a session to learn about band instruments, more often than not the euphonium is the one instrument they have never heard of. After this brief ceremony I was granted the honour of being the first to make sound on this euphonium. With great flair, the band members heard a B-flat major chord on their new instrument.

Anyone interested in learning more about New Horizons Band of Toronto can contact them at newhorizonstoronto.ca. Remember their motto: “It’s never too late!” Or you can contact Randy Kligerman directly, at randy@jaragroup.org.

Other news

Although I wrote quite a bit about Johnny Cowell last month, I would be remiss if I didn’t mention the recent Celebration of the Life of Johnny Cowell, which took place on March 12 at Scarborough Bluffs United Church. With friend and colleague Stuart Laughton acting as MC, we heard not only reminiscences from many, but an amazing musical program. There were recordings of Johnny’s performances, as well as a wide spectrum of live performances of his compositions, from the song Walk Hand in Hand to a number of works for trumpet. The most stirring moment for me was a flugelhorn solo by Jens Lindemann, who came to Toronto specially for the occasion. Normally, the tune Amazing Grace is close to the top of my dislike list, but Lindemann’s rendition was so emotional that I was speechless. I have never heard that number or the flugelhorn sound so wonderful.

From time to time we hear of unusual instruments arriving on the local scene. A couple of years ago it was Jeff Densham with his subcontrabass flute from the Netherlands. He first saw such an instrument when a visitor from overseas played one with the Flute Street ensemble. Now, Nancy Nourse, director of Flute Street, is showing off her new contr’alto flute, also from the Netherlands. In her words: “It has such a rich, flutey baritone voice, capable of reaching well past the tenor range into the mezzo-soprano.”

This instrument’s very first outing with Flute Street will be on April 6 in Reston, VA in the Washington DC area, at the First International Low Flutes Festival (lowflutesfestival.org). Flute Street is one of a number of invited ensembles, amidst groups from Hungary, USA, England and Japan. Then on Sunday, April 15 at 7:30pm, Flute Street will present the same program, including a special contr’alto flute feature, at Christ Church Deer Park in Toronto.

Speaking of new groups, Borealis Big Band, mentioned last month, has risen to local stardom, in a recent edition of snapd Aurora. For those interested visit https://aurora.snapd.com/events/view/1118828.}

Jack MacQuarrie plays several brass instruments and has performed in many community ensembles. He can be contacted at bandstand@thewholenote.com.
The WholeNote listings are arranged in 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 57.

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 60.

D. IN THE CLUBS (MOSTLY JAZZ) is organized alphabetically by club. Starts on page 61.

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 62.

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 May 1 to June 7, 2018. All listings must be received by 11:59pm, Sunday April 8.

LISTINGS can be sent by email to listings@thewholenote.com or by using the online form on our website. 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 search for concerts by the zones on this map: thewholenote.com.
Sibelius Symphony 5

April 5, 7 & 8
Sir Andrew Davis, conductor Ray Chen, violin

TSO.CA

8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Sibelius Symphony 5. Mendelssohn: The Fair Melusina Overture; Bruch: Violin Concerto No.1; Stenhammar: Internazionale from Sängerei; Sibelius: Symphony No.5. Ray Chen, violin; Sir Andrew Davis, conductor; Ray Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4255. $34.75-$148.00. 8:45pm Free pre-concert performance by The TSO Chamber Soloists. Also Apr 7 (7:30pm); 8 (3pm George Weston Recital Hall).

Friday April 6

12:10: Music at St. Andrew’s. Noontime Recital. Works by Mozart and Rachmaninoff, Emily Chiang and Young-Ah Bang, piano 4-hands. St. Andrew’s Church (Toronto), 73 Simcoe St. 416-593-5600 x231. Free.

7:00: Canadian Stage/Tapestry Opera. The Overcoat: A Musical Tailoring. See Apr 1. Also Apr 6 (7pm), 7 (7:30pm), 14.

Saturday April 7


7:00: Opera by Request. Handel’s Orlando, In Concert. Kinga Lizon, mezzo (Orlando); Vanja Chan, soprano (Angelica); Daniela Agostino, mezzo (Dorinda); Shannon Hallwell-McDonald, mezzo (Medoro); and others; William Shookhoff, music director and piano. College St. United Church, 452 College St. 416-455-2365. $20. 7:00: Singing Out. Make Your Own Kind of Music: An Evening Cabaret. 519 Community Music: An Evening Cabaret. 519 Community Centre, 519 Church St. 416-392-8742. $20; $15(adv); Also 9:30pm. Proceeds benefit St. Andrew’s Church (Toronto), 383 Huron St. 416-971-9286. $25; $10(st). Free.


8:00: Exultate Chamber Singers. We Sing and Play! Guests: Toronto Winds; Hilary Apfelstadt, conductor; St. Thomas’s Anglican Church (Toronto), 393 Huron St. 416-971-9229. $25; $20(ad); $10(st).

8:00: Gallery 345. Le Trace de Satyr: An evening of classical songs and jazz improvisation. Songs by Rameau, Fauré, Poulenc, Debussy, Satie, Messiaen, Barbara, Gainsbourg and Artur H. Marilyn Lerner, piano; Patricia O’Callaghan, vocals; Andrew Downey, bass. 345 Sorauren Ave. 416-822-9781. $25; $10(st). Cash only.

8:00: Music Gallery. Ensembles III. The Music of Ken Aldcroft. Karen Nq, saxophone; and others. Music Gallery at 918 Bathurst, 918 Bathurst St. 416-204-1080. $12; $8(members).


Sunday April 8 3pm
Hannaford Street Silver Band
Dutch Treats
Joe Alessi, Trombone Soloist
Johan de Meij, Conductor
SUN.APR.8 • 3-00 PM
JANE MALLERT THEATRE
www.hssba.ca

3:00: Hannaford Street Silver Band. Dutch Treats. Joe Alessi, trombone; Johan de Meij, conductor. Jane Mallett Theatre, St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 27 Front St. E. 416-369-7233. $45.
3:00: Syrinx Concerts Toronto. Ilya Poletaev, piano, Axel Strauss, violin and Yegor Dyachkov, cello.

SyrinxConcerts.ca

3:00: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Percussion Ensembles: Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-408-0208. Free.

Tuesday April 10
2:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. On Broadway. Selections from: Carousel, Funny Girl, The King and I, Gypsy and others. Stephanie J. Block and Ramin Karimloo, vocalists; Steven Reineke, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4255. $30.75-$107.00. Also Apr 11(2pm & 8pm), 12(8pm).

Wednesday April 11
8:00: Tafelmusik. Bach B Minor Mass. Dorothee Mields, soprano; Laura Podwelski, mezzo; Charles Daniels, tenor; Tyler Dun- can, baritone; Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and Chamber Choir; Ivans Taurins, director. George Weston Recital Hall, 5040 Yonge St. 1-855-885-2876. 815-715. pm pre-concert chat. Also Apr 7, 8(3:30pm).
8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. On Broadway. Selections from: Funny Girl, The King and I, Gypsy and others. Stephanie J. Block and Ramin Karimloo, vocalists; Steven Reineke, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4255. $30.75-$107.00. Also Apr 12(2pm & 8pm), 13(8pm).
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Saturday April 7 8pm
St. John’s University Church, 375 University Ave. 416-971-4933 x220. Free.
8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. On Broadway. Selections from: Carousel, Funny Girl, The King and I, Gypsy and others. Stephanie J. Block and Ramin Karimloo, vocalists; Steven Reineke, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4255. $30.75-$107.00. Also Apr 12(2pm & 8pm), 13(8pm).
April 12 at 8pm

SCUMMANN QUARTET


Thursday April 12

APRIL 12, 2018 | 1:30 PM

SYLVIA SCHWARTZ

April 12 at 8pm

ROY THOMSON HALL, TORONTO

FRI APR 13 • 12 PM

FREE

ROYTHOMSONHALL.COM


Friday, April 13, 2018

THE NIGHTINGALE AND OTHER SHORT FABLES STRAVINSKY

- 8:00: Glenn Gould Foundation. Alma Deutscher. Thirteen-year-old prodigy makes Canadian debut. Deutscher: Cinderella Opera (selections); other original compositions and an improvisation. Alma Deutscher, violin, piano and composer; guest singers. Koerner Hall, Telus Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. $25 and up.
- 8:00: Sony Centre For The Performing Arts. An Evening with 2CELLOS. Sony Centre for the Performing Arts, 1 Front St. E. 1-855-872-7669 or 416-916-7878. $69-$189.

Saturday April 13

- 8:00: On Saturday night in C Op.53; Bach (arr. Busoni): Chaconne in d BWV1004; Scriabin: Sonata No.2 in g-sharp Op.19; Lizt: Concert Paraphrase on Rigoleto. 22 Church St. Aurora. 905-713-1818. $40/$35(adv).

FRI APR 13

COCCA

APRIL 13 – 19

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SCHUMANN QUARTET


Friday, April 13, 2018

THE NIGHTINGALE AND OTHER SHORT FABLES STRAVINSKY

- 8:00: Glenn Gould Foundation. Alma Deutscher. Thirteen-year-old prodigy makes Canadian debut. Deutscher: Cinderella Opera (selections); other original compositions and an improvisation. Alma Deutscher, violin, piano and composer; guest singers. Koerner Hall, Telus Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. $25 and up.
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Sat. April 14, 2018
7:30 pm
Eglinton St. George’s
United Church

Elmer Iseler Singers
Lydia Adams, Conductor
and Artistic Director

A Tribute to Elmer Iseler
(1927-1998)
20 years later

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A. Concerts in the GTA

Nürnberg: Wolf: Selections from Mönike -
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On Stage

AT THE AGA KHAN MUSEUM

Under the Senegalese Musical Sky
FRIDAY, APRIL 13, 8:30PM
agakhanmuseum.org

• 8:00: Toronto Consort. Quicksilver Pre-
sents Fantasticus. Works by Buxtehude, Ber-
tali, Weckmann and Schmelzer. Guests:
Quicksilver Ensemble. Trinity-St. Paul’s Cen-
tre, Jeanne Lamon Hall, 427 Bloor St. W. 416-
964-2337 $15-$69. Also Apr 14.

• 4:00: Toronto Children’s Chorus. Fire,
Choir and Desire. Works by Raminsh, Dubra,
Brahms and others. TCC’s touring choir.
Church of the Redeemer, 162 Bloor St. W. 416-
932-8666 x231. $25; $20 (sr/st); $10 (child).

• 4:30: Canadian Opera Company. The Night-
ingale and Other Short Fables. See Apr 13.
Also Apr 22, May 1, 2, 10 (4:30pm), 13 (2pm),
19 (4:30pm).

• 7:00: Kemi Lo. LGBTQ Classical Showcase.
Tchaikovsky: Serenade for Strings (selected
movts.); Barber: Adagio for Strings; Britten:
Simple Symphony; Corelli: Concerto Grosso
in g. Victoria College Chapel, 91 Charles St. W.
647-825-3857. $15; $10 (sr/st).

• 7:30: St. Michael’s Choir School. Messiah
(Part II & III). Handel. Meredith Hall, sop-
rano; Richard Whitall, alto; Simon Honey-
man, alto; Michael Colvin, tenor; Joel Allison,
bass; Cathedral Schola Cantorum Choir; Men
& Boys; Baroque orchestra; Peter Mahon,
conductor. St. Michael’s Cathedral Basil-
ica, 65 Bond St. 416-397-6367 x6036. $25

G. F. HANDEL
featuring

PART I & II

G. F. HANDEL
featuring

ST MICHAEL’S
CHOIR SCHOOL
SATURDAY, APRIL 14
7:30 P.M.

www.elmeriseleringers.com
suggested donation.

● 7:30: Elmer Iseler Singers. Joyful Sounds: A Tribute to Elmer Iseler - Twenty Years Later. Featuring video projections from Elmer Iseler’s career, assembled by Toronto video technician Edward Mock. R mishall; World premiere; and favourite choral works of Dr. Elmer Iseler: Robert Artken, flute; James Campbell, clarinet; Lydia Adams, conductor; David Jaeger, host and producer. Eglinton St. George’s United Church, 35 Lytton Blvd. 416-217-0537. $40; $35(sr); $15(st).

7:30: Toronto Symphony Orchestra.
All Beethoven: Beethoven: Egmont Overture; Violin Romances Nos.1 & 2; Coriolan Overture; Symphony No.5. Blake Pouliot, violin; Earl Lee, RBC resident conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4255. $34.75-$107.00. Also Apr 15(3pm).

● 6:00: Canadian Stage/Stageplay Opera. The Overcoat. A Musical Tailoring. See Apr 1.

● 8:00: Kiran Ahluwalia. Lovefest! Welcome the Stranger. Kiran Ahluwalia, vocalist; Bhai Kabul Singh, vocalis, Saska Masai, singer and songwriter; Ab Gheit Whirling Der- eines, Egyptian; Happenstance Centre Theatre, 235 Queens Quay W. 416-673-4000. $59-$69. Also Apr 12 (Oakville).


12:10: Alliance Française de Toronto. Sounds of Senegal. Elage Mbye, drummer and songwriter; 24 Spadina Rd. 416-922-2014 x877. $10(under 12); $10(member).


2:00: Canzona Chamber Players. In Concert. Works by Beethoven, Liszt and Carter. Vadim Serebryan, piano. St. Andrew by-the-Lake Anglican Church, Cibola Ave., Toronto Island. 416-822-0613. $25; $45(brunch & concert). Also Apr 16(7:30pm), St. George the Martyr Anglican Church.

2:00: Royal Conservatory of Music. Mazzo- leoni Masters: Dianne Werner, Rachman- inov; Corelli Variations; Sonata for piano and cello. Dianne Werner, piano; André Des, cello. Mozomellini Concert Hall, Telus Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. $25.


Monday April 16


Tuesday April 17


12:10: Nine Sparrows Arts Founda- tion/Yorkminster Park Baptist Church.
Wednesday April 18

**12:00 noon: Toronto Symphony Orchestra.**

**7:30: NoonTime Chamber Music.**
Lunchtime Chamber Music: Rising Stars Show. 416-408-0208. $45-$100. Koerner Hall, Telus Centre, 273 Bloor St. W.

**7:30: Canadian Opera Company.**

**12:00 noon: Toronto Symphony Orchestra.**

**Thursday April 19**

**12:00 noon: Canadian Opera Company.**

**7:30: NoonTime Chamber Music.**
Lunchtime Chamber Music: Rising Stars Show. 416-408-0208. $45-$100. Koerner Hall, Telus Centre, 273 Bloor St. W.

**7:30: Canadian Opera Company.**

**12:00 noon: Toronto Symphony Orchestra.**

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with pianist **Lauren Esch**

**TCHAIKOVSKY**

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with cellist **Alik Volkov**

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**Annual Fundraising Concert & Silent Auction**

**Saturday April 21, 2018  8 pm**

**Silent Auction opens at 7 pm**

Join us for the Annual Fundraising Concert & Silent Auction—enjoy an evening of great music and the chance to bid on an amazing selection of silent auction items!

**TICKETS:** $35 at the door / $30 in advance

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**Cathedral Bluffs**

**www.cathedralbluffs.com**
Zacharias, violin; Patrick Jordan, viola; Mar- garet Gay, violoncello. Temerty Theatre, 272 Bloor St. W. 416-964-6337. $45. Also Apr 25 (11am, Heliconian Hall).

4:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Young People’s Concert: The Animated Orchestra. Bizet: Carmen - Suite No.1, No.1a (Aragonaise); Rossini: Excerpt from William Tell Overture; Traditional: Mister Sun (sing-along); Bizet: Carmen - Suite No.1, No.5 (Les Toréadors); Smith: The Animated Orchestra. Greg Smith, narrator and composer; Dina Gilbert, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4255. $20.00–$33.75. Also Apr 25 (11am, Heliconian Hall).

4:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Young People’s Concert: The Animated Orchestra. Bizet: Carmen - Suite No.1, No.1a (Aragonaise); Rossini: Excerpt from William Tell Overture; Traditional: Mister Sun (sing-along); Bizet: Carmen - Suite No.1, No.5 (Les Toréadors); Smith: The Animated Orchestra. Greg Smith, narrator and composer; Dina Gilbert, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4255. $20.00–$33.75. Also Apr 22 (2pm).

5:00: Oakville Choir for Children and Youth. A Few Good Men, A Few Good Men in Training, and Friends. First United Church (Port Credit), 151 Lakeshore Rd W., Mississauga. 905-337-7104. $25; $20(sr/st); $15(under 13). Also Apr 28 (4:30pm).


4:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Young People’s Concert: The Animated Orchestra. Bizet: Carmen - Suite No.1, No.1a (Aragonaise); Rossini: Excerpt from William Tell Overture; Traditional: Mister Sun (sing-along); Bizet: Carmen - Suite No.1, No.5 (Les Toréadors); Smith: The Animated Orchestra. Greg Smith, narrator and composer; Dina Gilbert, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4255. $20.00–$33.75. Also Apr 22 (2pm).

7:00: Church of St. Andrew, Scarborough. Passion and Talent at Annual Spring Concert. Katrina Cherys Martinez, soprano and piano; Winston Hurlock, tenor; Marie English-Critchlow, alto; Marcus Walker, keyboard, drums and music director. 2335 Victoria Park Ave., Scarborough. 416-671-6192. $25; $15(st). Complimentary post-concert refreshments.

7:30: Mantua Festival. Verdi: La traviata. Royal Conservatory Orchestra. John Edward Liddle, Music with a nautical or rain theme, and Broadway shows. John Edward Liddle, conductor. 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4255. $20.00–$33.75. Also Apr 22 (2pm).

8:00: Toronto Opera. In Concert: Don Pasquale. Donizetti. In concert with piano accompaniment. Mikhail Shemet, bass-baritone (Don Pasquale); Austin Larusson, baritone (Dr. Malatesta); Grace Quinsey, soprano (Norina); Fabian Arincinegas, tenor (Ernesto); Claire Harris, piano and music director. College Street United Church, 452 College St. 416-455-2965. $20.00–$33.75. Also Apr 22 (4:30pm).

7:00: Opera by Request. Don Pasquale. Donizetti. In concert with piano accompaniment. Mikhail Shemet, bass-baritone (Don Pasquale); Austin Larusson, baritone (Dr. Malatesta); Grace Quinsey, soprano (Norina); Fabian Arincinegas, tenor (Ernesto); Claire Harris, piano and music director. College Street United Church, 452 College St. 416-455-2965. $20.00–$33.75. Also Apr 22 (4:30pm).

**Gerald Finley with Julius Drake**

**SUNDAY, APRIL 22, 2018 3PM**

**PRE-CONCERT TALK 2PM KOERNER HALL**

**TICKETS ON SALE NOW! 416.408.0208**

**WWW.ROMUSIC.COM/PERFORMANCE**

- **3:00**: Royal Conservatory of Music Vocal Concerts: Gerald Finley with Julius Drake. Works by Schubert, Rachmaninoff, Tchaikovsky and Beethoven; a selection of favourite folk songs. Gerald Finley, baritone; Julius Drake, piano, Koerner Hall, Telus Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. $40-$95.

- **2:00**: pre-concert talk with Rick Phillips.


- **3:00**: York Symphony Orchestra. Russian Champions. Borodin: In the Steppes of Central Asia; Shostakovich: Piano Concerto No.2; Rimsky-Korsakov: Scheherazade. Vivian Chen, piano. Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, 10269 Yonge St., Richmond Hill. 905-787-8811. $30; $25(sr); $15(st). Also Apr 21 (eve, Aurora).

- **3:00**: Cathedral Church of St. James. Organ Recital. Manuel Piazza, organ.

- **3:00**: St. Olave’s Anglican Church. The Best of Canadiana. Choral Evensong for St. George’s Eve, followed by works by Mitchell and Young, prose by L. M. Montgomery, poetry by Pickthall and Kogawa, and other works. St. Olave’s Arts Guild and guests. 360 Windermere Ave. 416-769-5686. Free. Donations welcomed. 5:00: St. Olavé’s Arts Guild presentation. St. George’s Eve to follow.


**Monday April 23**


- **7:30**: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Felix Galimir Chamber Music Award Concert. Features this year’s prize-winning ensembles. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-408-0208. PWYC.

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**THE BEST OF CANADIANA**

St. Olave’s Arts Guild and guests with music by Joni Mitchell and Neil Young; prose by L.M. Montgomery; poetry by Pickthall and Kogawa; and an exploration of Toronto’s history – as we continue our year-long celebration of Canada 150

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**THE ASSOCIATES OF THE TORONTO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

**Monday, April 23, 2018, 7:30 p.m.**

**TASTE OF DARK CHOCOLATE**

Franz Schubert
String Quintet in C major, Op. 163, D 956

Johannes Brahms
String Sextet No. 1 in B flat major Op. 18

**Tickets $22, Seniors & Students $20**

**Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre**

**427 Bloor St. W.**

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** Met United Church **

**MUSICIANS ON THE EDGE AND REZONANCE BAROQUE ENSEMBLE**

**Mystery of the Unfinished Concerto**

**SUNDAY APRIL 22, 1:30PM**

**ANNUAL MARG AND JIM NORQUAY MEMORIAL CONCERT**

Improvised playing in the style of Baroque and Galant court musicians; works by Corelli, Vivaldi, Telemann and others.

**For more information, contact Dr. Patricia Wright at patriciaw@metunited.org or 416-363-0331 ext. 26. 56 Queen Street East, Toronto • www.metunited.org**
Church, 2850 Bloor St. W. 416-571-3880. Freewill offering. 45-minute concert.


Thursday April 26


2:00: Northern District Public Library. Orchestra Directors. Amina Holloway, cello. Room 224, 40 Orchard View Blvd. 416-393- 7610. Free.


7:30: Cathedral Church of St. James. Ser-enade to Music. Vaughan Williams: Serenade to Music; Overture to The Wasps; Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis; Mass in g; and Sacred Motets. Choir of St. James Cathedral; David Briggs, organ. 65 Church St. 416-364- 7865. $35/$30(adv); $25/st($20(adv). 7pm - pre-concert talk by David Briggs.

8:00: Let There Be Music Community Choir. Spring Concert: Songs That Entertain. Salvation Army Temple (Rexdale), 2152 Kipling Ave. 416-745-0352. $15.

8:00: Royal Conservatory of Music. Cham- ber Music Series: Amici Chamber Ensemble 30th Anniversary with Isabel Bayrakdarian and Friends. Works by Respighi, Dohnányi and Bernstein; and other works. Joaquin Valdepeñas, clarinet; David Hetherington, cello; Serouj Kradjian, piano. Koerner Hall, Telus Centre, 275 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. $35-$85.

8:00: Toronto Opera Theatre. The Beautiful Helen. Music by Jacques Offenbach. Beste Kalender, mezzo; Adam Fisher, tenor; Stuart Graham, baritone; Peter Tiefenbach, conductor; Guiliover Silva-Marín, stage director; and others. St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 27 Front St. E. 416-366-7723. $49-$95. Also Apr 28(8pm); Apr 29(3pm).

Friday April 27


7:30: Opera Atelier. The Return of Ullyses. See Apr 19. Also Apr 28(4:30pm).

7:30: Opera by Request. Madame Butterfly. Puccini. In concert with piano accompani- ment. Deena Nickleforkan, soprano (Cio-Cio-San); Will Ford, tenor (Pinkerton); Keith O’Brien, baritone (Sharpless); Madi- son Arenault, mezzo (Suzy); Colin F rotten, tenor (Goro); William Shookhoff, piano and music director; and others. College Street United Church, 452 College St. 416-455- 2385. $20.


7:30: Toronto Opera Theatre. The Beautiful Helen. Music by Jacques Offenbach. Beste Kalender, mezzo; Adam Fisher, tenor; Stuart Graham, baritone; Peter Tiefenbach, conductor; Guiliover Silva-Marín, stage director; and others. St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 27 Front St. E. 416-366-7723. $49-$95. Also Apr 28(8pm); Apr 29(3pm).

Saturday April 28

2:00: Royal Conservatory of Music. Cham- ber Music Series: Amici Chamber Ensemble 30th Anniversary with Isabel Bayrakdarian and Friends. Works by Respighi, Dohnányi and Bernstein; and other works. Joaquin Valdepeñas, clarinet; David Hetherington, cello; Serouj Kradjian, piano. Koerner Hall, Telus Centre, 275 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. $35-$85.

8:00: Toronto Opera Theatre. The Beautiful Helen. Music by Jacques Offenbach. Beste Kalender, mezzo; Adam Fisher, tenor; Stuart Graham, baritone; Peter Tiefenbach, conductor; Guiliover Silva-Marín, stage director; and others. St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 27 Front St. E. 416-366-7723. $49-$95. Also Apr 28(8pm); Apr 29(3pm).
Pax Christi Chorale April 28

Laquerre, bass-baritone; Toronto Mozart Players. Grace Church on-the-Hill, 300 Lonsdale Rd. boxoffice@paxchristichorale.org. $45; $40(sr); $25(st).


Pax Christi Chorale

Die Schöpfung

PAXCHRISTICHALORE.ORG

Laquerre, bass-baritone; Toronto Mozart Players. Grace Church on-the-Hill, 300 Lonsdale Rd. boxoffice@paxchristichorale.org. $45; $40(sr); $25(st).


8:00: Canadian Sinfonietta. Lai Crino Duo Recital. Willian: Sonata No.1; Brahms: Violin Sonata No.1; Michael Pepa: Introduction and Allegro for violin and piano in C. Joyce Lai, violin; Erika L’abeille sur la fleur; Schubert: Fantasy for violin and piano in C. Seicho-No-Ie Toronto, 7:30pm. $45. Also Apr 29(3pm).

4:00: Canadian Sinfonietta. Lai Crino Duo Recital. Willian: Sonata No.1; Brahms: Violin Sonata No.1; Michael Pepa: Introduction and Allegro for violin and piano in C. Seicho-No-Ie Toronto, 7:30pm. $45. Also Apr 29(3pm).


7:30: Pax Christi Chorale. The Royal Conservatory of Music presented by the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir. Bach: Mass in B minor (1996 version), with members of the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir; Richard Suart, baritone (Pangloss); Members of the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir; Bramwell Tovey, conductor. Koerner Hall, Telus Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. $40-$85. Also Apr 29(3pm).

7:30: Toronto Opera. The Beautiful Helen. Music by Jacques Offenbach. Beste Kalender, mezzo; Adam Fisher, tenor; Stuart Graham, baritone; Peter Tiefenbach, conductor; Guillermo Silva-Marin, stage director; and others. St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 21 Front St. E. 416-366-7723. $49-$95. Also Apr 27(2pm), Apr 29(3pm).


8:00: Toronto Opera. The Beautiful Helen. Music by Jacques Offenbach. Beste Kalender, mezzo; Adam Fisher, tenor; Stuart Graham, baritone; Peter Tiefenbach, conductor; Guillermo Silva-Marin, stage director; and others. St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 21 Front St. E. 416-366-7723. $49-$95. Also Apr 27(2pm), Apr 29(3pm).

7:30: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Bernstein’s Candide (1993 concert version). Tracy Dahl, soprano (Cunegonde); Judith Forst, mezzo (The Old Lady); Nicholas Phan, tenor (Candide); Richard Suart, baritone (Pangloss & others); Members of the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir; Bramwell Tovey, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4255. $34.75-$8148.00. Also Apr 26.

Sunday April 29


54 | April 1 - May 7, 2018

www.wholenote.com
Tuesday May 1


● 7:30: Canadian Opera Company: The Nightingale and Other Short Fables. See Apr 13. Also May 2, 10, 12(4:30pm), 13(2pm), 19(4:30pm).

Wednesday May 2


● 7:30: Canadian Opera Company: The Nightingale and Other Short Fables. See Apr 13. Also May 10, 12(4:30pm), 13(2pm), 19(4:30pm).

● 8:00: Gallery 345. Magisterra Solistas. String Chamber Works. Verdi: Quartet in e; Bruckner: Quintet in F; Annette-Barbara Vogel, violin; Mikela Witjes, violin; Jordan Clayton, violin; Matt Antal, viola; Ethan Fiber, viola; Joel Tangerd, cello. 345 Sorauren Ave. 416-822-9781. $25; 10(5). Cash only.

May 2 & 3

Peter Oundjian, conductor Leonard Fleisher, piano

May 2: Mozarteum Chamber Orchestra & Bruckner. Mozart: Piano Concerto No.12 in A, K414; Bruckner: Symphony No.8 in c (ed. Hawkshaw) (Canadian premiere). Leon Fleisher, piano; Peter Oundjian, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4255. $34.75–$148.00. Also May 2(8pm), 6(2:30pm, Montreal), 7(8pm, Ottawa).

May 3: Canadian Opera Centre. CMC Presents: Charm of Finches. Rose Bolton; To the Birds and Animals of the World; Hetu: Serenade (arr. Sean King); Eko Mimients: Infinite Blue Heights; Utberelli: In Limine Coelorum; Charke: Raga Terah. Laura Chambers; Tristan Durie; Terry Lim; Amelia Lyon; Katherine Watson. 20 St. Joseph St. 416-891-6601. $20/$15(adv); $10(st); $15/$12(adv)/CMC members/arts workers).

7:00: Toronto Children’s Chorus. Vocal Academy Recital. TCC’s Vocal Academy members showcase their skills following a year of study with Dr. Darryl Edwards. Calvin Presbyterian Church, 26 Delisle Ave. 416-932-6666 x231. Donations accepted.

7:30: Canadian Opera Company. Anna Bolena. See Apr 28. Also May 5, 8, 11, 16, 20(2pm), 24, 26.

I SAW ETERNITY
APRIL 29
amadeuschoir.com

● 4:00: Amadeus Choir of Greater Toronto. I Saw Eternity. Works by Whitacre, Daley, Jamshiedeh, Chatman, Gjeilo and others. Naomi Barron, cellos; Lydia Adams and Joan Andrews, conductors; Shawn Grenke, conductor and piano. Elgin St. George’s United Church, 55 Lytton Blvd. 416-446-0188. $40; $30(5r); $20(under 30).


● 7:00: Royal Conservatory of Music/Small World Music. World Music: Crosscurrents (Zakir Hussain and Dave Holland). Zakir Hussain, tabla; Dave Holland, bass; Chris Potter, saxophone; Shankar Mahadevan, vocals; Louis Banks, piano; and others. Koerner Hall, Telus Centre, 278 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. $50–$110.

● 8:00: Mississauga Symphony Orchestra. Symphonic Fairy Tales. Suk: Pohádka; Rimsky-Korsakov: Scheherazade. Denis Mastromonaco, conductor; Corey Gemmell, violin. Hammonson Hall, Living Arts Centre, 4141 Living Arts Dr., Mississauga. 905-306-6000. $40–$65; 336–$58(5r); $30(youth); $25(15 and under); $100(family).

● 8:00: Music Gallery. Not the Music Featuring Joe McPhee • Mercury Dust. Music Gallery at 918 Bathurst, 918 Bathurst St. 416-204-1080. $20/$15(adv); $10(members).
A. Concerts in the GTA

• 8:00: Tafelmusik. Beethoven Pastoral Symphony. Beethoven: Concerto for violin in D Op.61; Symphony No.6 in F Op.68 “Pastoral.” Bruno Weil, guest director; Elisa Citriero, violin soloist; Jeanne Lamon, concertmaster; Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra. Koerner Hall, Telus Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. $26-$103. 7pm; pre-concert talkback. Post-concert talkback after the show. Also May 4, 5, 6,30pm.

Friday May 4


Saturday May 5

• 1:30: Oakville Choir for Children and Youth. Journeys in Song. Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts, 130 Navy St., Oakville. 905-337-7804. $25; $20 (sr); $15 (under 13). Also 1:30pm.


• 7:30: Canadian Opera Company. Anna Bolena. See Apr 28. Also May 8, 11, 16, 20 (2pm), 24, 26.

• 7:30: Cantemus Singers. Songs for Young Elizabeth. Fayfack: O Lux beata Trinitas; Sondheim: In a pace in idipsum; Tallis: Lamentations of Jeremiah; Blessed are those that are undefiled; Mundy: O Lord, The Maker of All things; and works by Cornyn. Trinity College Chapel, U of T, 7, 6 Hoskin Ave. 416-578-6602. $20; free(under 12). Also May 6 (mat, church of the Holy Trinity).


• 7:30: Mississauga Festival Youth Choir. Generations. Rutter: Mass of the Children. Mississauga Festival Choir; Mississauga Festival Youth Choir; Resonance; Raising Voices; orchestra. Hammerson Hall, Living Arts Centre, 4141 Living Arts Dr., Mississauga. 905-306-6000. $15; $10 (child 12 and under).

Opus 8

What is our life?

May 5, 7:30pm, Church of St Martin-in-the-Fields. Opus 8 brings you the existential choral ponderings of Howells, Britten, Whitacre, Gombert, Gibbons, and more.

Entry is pay-what-you-can-afford. Join us for a free post-concert reception.

Partho Sarothy, sarod; Vidushi Shruti Sadliyar, vocalist. Glenn Gould Studio, 250 Front St. W. 416-276-5166 or 647-521-3816. $40; $25(member); $10(st).

Saturday May 5


• 8:00: Tafelmusik. Beethoven Pastoral Symphony. See May 3. Also May 5, 6 (3:30pm).


North by Northeast

A luminous evening of contemporary choral music

Saturday, May 5, 7:30 pm

www.annexsingers.ca

Tickets: Toronto Centre for the Arts Box Office (in person) & Ticketmaster (phone & online)

B. Concerts Beyond the GTA

Tuesday April 3

12:00 noon: Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts, Brock University. ABC Foundation Music@Noon. Piano and guitar students from the Department of Music. Cairns Hall, FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, 250 St. Paul St., St. Catharines. 905-688-0722. Free.


B. Concerts Beyond the GTA

Monday May 7


Wedneday April 4

12:00 noon: Midday Music with Shigeru. John Danielson and Bear Creek Students. Hi-Way Pentecostal Church, 50 Anne St. N., Barrie. 705-726-1181. $10; free(st).

7:30: Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts, Brock University. The University String Orchestra. George Cleland, conductor. Cairns Hall, FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, 250 St. Paul St., St. Catharines. 905-688-0722. $12; $8(child); $5(eyeGo); free(Brock students).

8:00: Don Wright Faculty of Music. Western University Symphonic Band: Song and Dance. Paul Davenport Theatre, Talbot.

The entire MFC family of choirs!

Saturday, May 5

7:30PM

St. Andrew’s Church

Tickets $25

ADVANCE TICKETS & GROUP DISCOUNTS

standrewstoronto.org
Monday April 8

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

Friday April 13

7:00: Chorus Niagara. Treble in Niagara. Treble Festival Concert. Children’s choir from Niagara and the GTA; Dr. Rolf Dilworth, guest conductor; FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, 250 St. Paul St., St. Catharines, 905-688-0722; $20; free(under 12).


7:00: Vera Causa Opera. The Italian Girl in Algiers. Rossini; Anelli, libretto. Katerina Utochkina (Isabella); Kimberely-Rose Pefhany (Elvira); Grace Quinsey (Zulma); David Boan (Lindoro); Domenico Sanfilippo (Mustafa); and others. Centre in the Square, 50 Anne St. N., 705-726-1181. Free.

7:00: Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts. Genus of John Coltrane. Rimi Boldsuc Jazz Ensemble, 300 King St. W., Kingston. 613-543-2242. $25; $15(students/artists). Also Apr 14 (7:30pm).

7:00: Barche Concerts. Sinfonia Toronto & Stewart Goodyear. Dvořák: Serenade; Beethoven: Piano Concerto No.5 "The Emperor". Stewart Goodyear, piano; Niranjan Arman, conductor. Hay-Huntington Chapel, 50 Anne St. N., Barrie. 705-726-1181. $35; $25(students). Also Apr 6 (7:30pm).

7:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. Cirque de la Symphonie. Evan Mitchell, conductor. Centre in the Square, 101 Queen St. N., Kitchener. 519-745-4711 or 1-888-745-4717. $19-$82. Also Apr 14 (8:00pm).

8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. Bénédicte Plays Barber: Adèes: Three Studies from Couperin; Barber: Violin Concerto; Schubert: Symphony No.5 in C "The Great". Bénédicte Laziuère, violin; Caz Snow, conductor. Centre in the Square, 101 Queen St. N., Kitchener. 519-745-4711 or 1-888-745-4717. $19-$82, Also Apr 14 (7:30pm, Alliston).


8:00: Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra. Bartók: The Miraculous Mandarin, Sz. 81; Elgar: Cello Concerto Op.85. Lucy Zhang, violin; Ian Le, cello; Robert Dvorkin, Piano. Canadian Opera Centre, 100 King St. W., Toronto. 416-368-0200. $105; $95(students). Also Apr 15 (7:30pm).


2:00: St. Ann’s. Concerts Spring 2018. The Canadian Consort. St. Ann’s at St. Mark’s, 250 King St. W., Toronto. 416-368-0200. $105; $95(students). Also Apr 15 (7:00pm).


4:00: Folk Under the Clock. Double Bill: James Keelaghan & Tony McManus. Market Hall Performing Arts Centre, 140 Charlotte St., Peterborough, 705-748-1146 and 705-742-9425, $37.50; $25(students).

6:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. Bénédicte Plays Prokofiev: Concerto No.2; Schubert: Symphony No.5 in G. 3:00: Organ Recital. Works by Bach, Buxtehude, Caen and Sinclair. Trinity Lutheran Church, 23 Church St., New Hamburg, 519-262-1610. Free will offering. Refreshments provided.


10:30am: TunesTots. Sound the Horn! Michael Rosenberger, French horn; John Butler, piano. St. George’s Anglican Church (St. Catharines), 33 Church St., St. Catharines. n/v. $10/8(adult/child). Free(under 8). Also Apr 15 (10:30am).

12:00 noon: Music at St. Andrews. Four Hands. Two Feet. Works by Ravel, Von and Bédard. Simon Irving, organ; Janice Beninger, piano. St. Andrews Presbyterian Church (Barrie), 47 Owen St., Barrie. 705-726-1181. $10; Free.(student).

12:15: St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church (Kitchener). Wednesday Noon-Hour Concerts Spring 2018. Wendy Wagner, flute; Beth Ann de Souza, piano. 54 Queen St. N., Kitchener. 226-647-1290. Free. 11:30: Lunch available in the foyer or BYO.

4:00: Folk Under the Clock. Double Bill: James Keelaghan & Tony McManus. Market Hall Performing Arts Centre, 140 Charlotte St., Peterborough, 705-748-1146 and 705-742-9425, $37.50; $25(students).

6:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. Bénédicte Plays Barber: Adèes: Three Studies from Couperin; Barber: Violin Concerto; Schubert: Symphony No.5 in C "The Great". Bénédicte Laziuère, violin; Caz Snow, conductor. Centre in the Square, 101 Queen St. N., Kitchener. 519-745-4711 or 1-888-745-4717. $19-$82, Also Apr 14 (7:30pm, Alliston).


Englandton April 10

6:00: Don Wright Faculty of Music. Electroacoustic Music Compositions Concert. Paul Davenport Theatre, Talbot College, Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767. Free.

Wednesday April 11

12:15: St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church (Kitchener). Wednesday Noon-Hour Concerts Spring 2018. Wendy Wagner, flute; Beth Ann de Souza, piano. 54 Queen St. N., Kitchener. 226-647-1290. Free. 11:30: Lunch available in the foyer or BYO.

10:30am: TunesTots. Sound the Horn! Michael Rosenberger, French horn; John Butler, piano. St. George’s Anglican Church (St. Catharines), 33 Church St., St. Catharines. n/v. $10/8(adult/child). Free(under 8). Also Apr 15 (10:30am).
clarinet; Ida Kavafian and Erin Keefe, violins; Yura Lee, viola; Nicholas Caneilikas, cello. Wolf Performance Hall, 251 Dundas St., London. 519-672-8800. $40.

Saturday April 21

• 7:30: Grand Philharmonic Choir Chamber Singers. Earth Sea Sky: Enns; Ten Thousand Rivers of Oil: Ramin; In the wind of the enterprise (excerpts); Vask: Plainscapes; Gara; Kasar me la Gaji; Lang: Earth T each Me. St. John's Anglican Church, 39 Aberdeen Rd., London. 519-757-5290 or 1-888-757-5290. $15/$13(adv); $10(st). Also Apr 27 (London, St. Catharines).

Wednesday May 2

• 12:00 noon: Midday Music with Shipera. Participants of the Barrie Music Festival. Hi-Way Pentecostal Church, 50 Anne St. N., Barrie. 705-726-1181. $10; free(st).
• 12:15: St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church (Kitchener). Wednesday Noon-Hour Concerts Spring 2018. Andrew Fu, piano. 54 Queen St. N., Kitchener. 226-647-1290. Free. 11:30: Lunch available in the foyer or BYO.

Thursday May 3

• 7:30: Artwork: 60s Folk Revival: Where Have All the Folk Songs Gone? Sue and Dwight, folk roots duo; Michelle Rumble, guitar and vocals; Tony Laviola, bass. 15 Colborne St., Hamilton. 416-543-8512. $5. Reservations Required. Songsheets provided for audience singing-along.

Friday May 4

• 8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. The Great Human Odyssey in Concert. Darren Fung, composer and conductor; Dr. Niebe Thompson, filmmaker and narrator; Rock-way Mennonite Collegiate Choir. Centre in the Square, 101 Queen St. N., Kitchener. 519-745-4711 or 1-888-745-4717. $19-$86. Also May 5.

Saturday May 5

• 8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. Royal Philharmonic: Royal Fireworks. Royal Fireworks: No Strings Attached. Haydn: London Trio No.1; Mozart: Serenade No.12 in C; Gounod: Little Symphony for Wind Instruments; Handel: Music for the Royal Fireworks. Ian Hopkin, conductor. Central Presbyterian Church (Cambridge), 7 Queens Sq., Cambridge. 519-745-4711 or 1-888-745-4717. $36. Also Apr 25 (Waterloo), 27 (Guelph).

Sunday April 22

• 2:30: Georgian Music. Penderecki String Quartet and Stephaime Lemanil, Piano. Works by Wolf and Verdier; Widor: Fantasia No.9 in E-flat, Grace United Church (Barrie), 350 Grove St. E., Barrie. 705-726-1181. $5.
• 7:30: Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts. The Schoolyard Carmen. Shorestarring Opera. 350 King St. W., Kingston. 613-523-2424. $38(e)/$33($33/arts/child). Recommended for Grades 1-6.

Wednesday April 25

• 12:15: St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church (Kitchener). Wednesday Noon-Hour Concerts Spring 2018. Penny Johnson, piano. 54 Queen St. N., Kitchener. 226-647-2920. Free. 11:30: Lunch available in the foyer or BYO.
• 7:30: Plumbing Factory Brass Band. Quod-libs: Miscellaneous Melodic Mixtures. Bagley; National Emblem; Mozart: March of the Priests (from The Magic Flute); Salvation Army festival march ‘The Canadian’; Meacham: American Patrol; Aubrey: overture to The Bronze Horse; Meredith: Riding the Range, and other works. Henry Meredith, conductor. Byron United Church, 403 Boler Rd., London. 519-471-1250 or 519-659-3600. $15/$13(adv); $10(st). Refreshments and conversation to follow.

Friday April 27

• 8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. The Royal Fireworks: No Strings Attached. Haydn: London Trio No.1; Mozart: Serenade No.12 in C; Gounod: Little Symphony for Wind Instruments; Handel: Music for the Royal Fireworks. Ian Hopkin, conductor. First United Church (Waterloo), 18 William St. W., Water- loo. 519-893-1011 or 1-888-745-4717. $36. Also Apr 27 (Guelph), 28 (Cambridge).

Saturday April 28

• 4:30: Lake Morena. Live at the Church of St. Thomas in the Traditional. St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church (Kitchener). 7 Queens Sq., Cambridge. 519-745-4711 or 1-888-745-4717. $36. Also Apr 25 (Waterloo), 27 (Guelph).

April 11–May 7, 2018

9
These music theatre listings contain a wide range of music theatre types including opera, operaetta, musicals and other performance genres where music and drama combine. Listings in this section are sorted alphabetically by presenter.


- **Brampton Music Theatre.** Beauty and the Beast. Music by Alan Menken, lyrics by Howard Ashman and Tim Rice, book by Linda Woolverton. Rose Theatre, 1 Theatre Lane, Brampton. 905-874-2800. $35; $29(under 21); $15(5-12). Opens Mar 29, 7:30pm. Runs to Apr 7. Thurs-Sat(7:30pm).

- **Canadian Opera Company.** The Nightingale. Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. 416-363-8231. $35-$225. Opens Apr 7, 7:30pm. $25/20(adv). Apr 7, 7:30pm. $15(st), Also 2:30pm.

- **Canadian Stage.** The Great Human Odyssey in Concert. Darren Fung, composer and conductor; Dr. Niobe Thompson, filmmaker and narrator; Rockway Menonite Collegiate Choir. Centre in the Square, 101 Queen St. N., Kitchener. 519-745-4711 or 1-888-745-4717. $10-$58. Also May 4.

- **Concerts Beyond the GTA.**

  - **M. Music Theatre.**

  - **D. Concerts Beyond the GTA.**

  - **C. Music Theatre.**

  - **Mirvish/Musical Stage Co.** Fun Home. Music by Jeanine Tesori, lyrics and book by Lisa Kron, based on the graphic novel by Alison Bechdel. CAA Theatre, 651 Yonge St. 416-872-1212. $29-$40. Opens Apr 24, 7:30pm. Runs to May 27. Tues-Sat(7:30pm), Wed/Sat/Sun(2pm), Sat(2pm).

  - **Music Theatre Mississauga.** Encore Series Gala. Meadowvale Theatre, 3156 Mississauga Rd. 905-615-4720. $40. Apr 28, 7:30pm.

  - **Musical Theatre Productions.** The Light in the Flats. Music and lyrics by Adam Guettel, book by Ken Ludwig. Mirvish. 1-888-496-1600. $45; $39(st). Opens Apr 13, 8pm. Runs to May 6. Tues-Sat(8pm), Sat(2pm), Sun(2pm).

In concert with piano accompaniment. Claire Harris, piano and music director. College Street United Church, 452 College St. 416-455-2365. $20. Apr 21, 7:30pm.

- **Opera by Request.** Madama Butterfly. Music and lyrics by Giacomo Puccini. Based on the operettas by Giuseppe Fianchini and Giuseppe Giacosa. In concert with piano accompanied. William Shookhoff, piano and music director. College Street United Church, 452 College St. 416-455-2365. $20. Apr 21, 7:30pm.

- **Orchestra Toronto/Operetta.** A Night at the Opera. Puccini: Gianni Schicchi (in concert). George Weston Recital Hall, 404 Yonge St. 709-733-0545. $45; $39(st); $10(under 21). 2:15pm: pre-concert chat. Apr 22, 3:30pm.


- **Toronto Symphony Orchestra.** Mozart & Bruckner. Mozart: Piano Concerto No.12 in A, K414; Bruckner: Symphony No.8 in c (ed. Hawkesaw) (Canadian premiere). Leon Fleisher, piano; Peter Oundjian, conductor. National Arts Centre, 3 Elgin St., Ottawa. 613-947-7000. $34.75-$148.00. Also May 28(2pm), 6(2:30pm, Montreal).

- St. Anne’s Anglican Church. Jesus Christ Superstar (in concert). Music by Andrew Lloyd Webber, lyrics by Tim Rice. St. Anne’s Anglican Church, 270 Ave. 416-536-3160. $20; $15(sr/st); Free (ch). Apr 15, 3:30 pm.

- Theatre Arianus. Million Dollar Quartet. Features music of Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins, and Elvis Presley. Theatre Arianus, 190 King William St, Hamilton. 905-527-2529. $40 and up. Opens Apr 18, 8 pm. Runs to May 12. Thurs-Sat (8:30 pm); Sun/Thu (7 pm).

- Theatre Sheridan. Crazy for You. Music by George Gershwin. Lib by Ira Gershvin, book by Ken Ludwig, Macdonald-Heaslip Hall, 1430 Trafalgar Rd, Oakville. 905-815-4049. $25. Opens Apr 10, 7:30 pm. Runs to Apr 22. Tues-Thu (7:30 pm); Fri-Sat (8 pm); Sat/ Sun (7 pm). Note: no show Apr 15.

- Theatre Sheridan. If/Then. Music by Tom Kitt, lyrics by Brian Yorkey. Studio Theatre, 1430 Trafalgar Rd, Oakville. 905-815-4049. $25. Opens Apr 12, 7:30 pm. Runs to Dec 9. Tues-Sat (7:30 pm); Sat/Sun (2:00 pm). Note: no show Apr 15.


- Toronto Operaeretta Theatre. The Beautiful Helen. Music by Jacques Offenbach, libretto by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy. Bests Kelvin, mezzo; Adam Fisher, tenor; David Adam Fisher, baritone. St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 27 Front St E. 416-622-9212. $49-$95. Opens Apr 27, 8 pm. Runs to Apr 29. Fri/Sat (8 pm); Sun(3pm).

- Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Bernstein’s Candide (1993 concert version). Bramwell Tovey, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4555. $34-$75-$148. April 26(268), 8 pm.

- University of Toronto Faculty of Music. From the 19th Century. Works by Dohnányi, Delius, Vaughan Williams and others. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-408-0208. $20; $10(st). Apr 3, 5 pm.

- Vera Causa Opera. The Italian Girl in Algiers. Music by Gioacchino Rossini, libretto by Angelo Anelli. Cambridge Centre for the Arts, 60 Dickson St, Cambridge. 519-740-4831. $17.5. Apr 6, 7 pm. Also Apr 7 (Waterloo).

- Vera Causa Opera. The Italian Girl in Algiers. Music by Gioacchino Rossini, libretto by Angelo Anelli. Knox Presbyterian Church (Waterloo), 50 Erb St W, Waterloo. 519-886-4155. $15. Apr 7, 7 pm. Also Apr 6 (Cambridge).


- Windsor Light Music Theatre. Singin’ in the Rain. Music by Nacio Herb Brown, lyrics by Arthur Freed, book by Adolph Green and Betty Comden. St. Clair College Centre for the Arts: Chrysler Theatre, 201 Riverside Dr. W. Windsor. 519-974-6555. St63(sr/st); $65(ch). Opens May 4, 8 pm. Runs to May 13. Fri/Sat(7:30 pm); Sun(2:00 pm).

As we work towards listing club events with our main listings in an integrated searchable format, some listings here are less complete than they were previously. Please visit the website addresses provided for specific venues or use the phone number provided for more detailed information. We apologize for this temporary inconvenience.

D. In the Clubs (Mostly Jazz)

120 Diner
120 Church St. 416-792-7725 120diner.com (full schedule)
All shows: PWYC ($10-$20 suggested)

Alleycatz
2409 Yonge St. 416-481-6885 alleycatz.ca
All shows: $9 unless otherwise indicated. Call for cover change info.
Every Mon 8:30pm Salsa Night with DJ Romantico with free lessons. Every Tue Bachata Night with DJ FR Biochun with free lessons. Every Wed 7pm Midtown Blues Jam hosted by Andrew “Voodoo” Walters. Every Thurs 7:30pm Claudia Lopez Jazz Duo.
Apr 5 Stepping Out with Tasha Blues Jazz Soul. Apr 6 Red Velvet. Apr 7, 2, 5 May Lady Kane.

Artword Arbar
15 Colborne St., Hamilton. 905-543-8512 artword.net (full schedule)
All shows at 8 pm unless otherwise noted.

The Blue Goose Tavern
1 Blue Goose St. 416-255-2442 thebluegoosepub.com (full schedule)

Bloom
2315 Bloo St. W. 416-767-3125 bloomrestaurant.com

C’est What
67 Front St. E. 416-876-3499 cestwhat.com (full schedule)
All concerts are PWYC unless otherwise noted.
Apr 7 & May 5 7pm Thelonious Hank. Apr 7 7pm Chris & Nicole 19 – 12 pm 10pm Ambre McLean. Apr 10 10pm Metronome Chomsky 19 – Apr 13 7pm The Hot Five Jazmazmers; 9pm Bring Your Own Vinyl Party Free 10 Apr 15 7pm Pop Goes the World. James Clark Institute, The Beat Club 19 – Apr 21 7pm The Bowser Boys 19 – 7pm Jamie Reaume & Charlotte McGilchrist split EP release 19 – Apr 23 7pm Danney Webster / Hugh Wilson 10 – Apr 28 7pm The Hot Five Jazmazmers. Apr 29 7pm Owen Davies and Zoubi Arros 10 19 – May 4 10pm Surefire Sweat Suggested contribut 10 19.

Emmet Ray, The
924 College St. 416-792-4437 thememetary.com (full schedule)
All shows: No cover/PWYC
Apr 7 11pm The Time Travel Show.
Apr 8 10pm Douglas Carter & the Brothers. Apr 9 9pm Boogaloo Banzai. Apr 9 9pm Chelsea McBride Jazz Trio. Apr 10 9pm Bruce Chapman Blues Trio; 9pm Robert Lee Trio. Apr 12 9pm Nick Arsenau Jazz Trio. Apr 13 9pm Sam Broverman & Friends. Apr 16 9pm Mike and dale Jazz Trio.

Grossman’s Tavern
379 Spadina Ave. 416-977-7000 grossmantavern.com (full schedule)
All shows: PWYC

Hirut Cafe and Restaurant
2050 Danforth Ave. 416-551-7560
Every Sun Ethnicu Etyo-Jazz Ensemble Residency (call for details).
Apr 3 & 17 8pm Finger Style Guitar Association PWYC. Apr 5 8pm Franklin Ave Jazz Swingers PWYC. Apr 13 8:30pm E-Jazz and Latin Jazz w/ Don Nadurski. Apr 26 8pm The Daniels Barnes Low Stress Trio. PWYC suggested $10. Apr 27 8pm Hirut Hoot 60th Anniversary Cabaret Show. $5. Apr 30 8pm The Tequila Mockingbirds Community Sing-along. Free.

Home Smith Bar – See Old Mill, The Hugh’s Room
2261 Dundas St. W 416 533 5483 hughesroom.com
All shows at 8:30 pm unless otherwise noted.

The whole note.com
April 11 – May 2, 2018
In the Clubs ( Mostly Jazz)

Miss Higgins (CD Release) $30/$25(adv).
Apr 20 Stephen Fearing $35/$30(adv).
Apr 21 NRP (Ritchie-Parrish-Ritchie) $30/$25(adv).
Apr 22 Levon Helm - 5th Anniversary Celebration $45/$40(adv).
Apr 22 Russell Davis $35/$25(adv).
May 4 Rawlings Cross $35/$30(adv).
May 5 Southville - The Music of STAX $45/$40(adv).

Jazz Bistro, The

251 Victoria St. W. 416-363-5299 jazzbistro.ca (full schedule)
Apr 28 7:30pm Last Weekend Jazz Party w/ Faith Amour & Friends - Spring Edition. $15.

Jazz Room, The

Located in the Huetter Hotel, 95 King St. N., Waterloo. 226-478-1655 kwajazzroom.com/fullscheme
All shows: 9:30pm unless otherwise indicated. Attendees must be 19+. No cover/PWYC.
Apr 6 Dan Faubel $18; $10 (under 30).
Apr 7 Sophia Perlman Quartet. Apr 13 Andryk Tikhonov $16; $10 (under 30).
Apr 14 Rebecca Hennessey FOG Brass Band $18; $10 (under 30).
Apr 19 7:00 Jazz FM Fundraiser.
Apr 20 Alysia Brylla and the Brilliant Dollar Band $30; $15 (under 30).
Apr 20 3:30pm Elena Kapeleris $15; $10 (under 30).
Apr 21 Steve Turner (7:30pm)

Monarch Tavern

12 Clinton St. W. 416-531-5333 themonarchtavern.ca (full schedule)
Every Tues 7pm Vinyl Night $5; Every Thu 10pm Monarch Karaoke $5.
Every Tue 6:30pm Punny Drinks - Poetry & Music.
Apr 9 7:00pm Martin Loomer & His Orange Devils Orchestra.
Apr 27 7pm Incase We Crash. May 8 5:30pm Spectre Hearts Album Release Party.

N’awlins Bar & Dining

299 King St. W. 416-595-1958 nawlins.ca
All shows: no cover/PWYC.
Every Tue 6:30pm Stacie MacGregor. Every Wed 7pm The Jim Heinen Trio. Every Thu 8pm Nothin’ But the Blues with Joe Bowdon. Every Fri & Sat 8:30pm Nawllins All Star Band. Every Sun 7pm Brooke Blackburn.

Nice Bistro, The

117 Brock St. N., Whitby. 905-666-8839 nicebistro.com (full schedule)

Old Mill, The

21 Old Mill Rd. 416-236-2641 oldmilltoronto.com
The Home Smith Bar: No reservations. No cover. $20 food/drink minimum. All shows: 1:30-10:30pm
Every Tues, Thu, Fri, and Sat.
Apr 13 3:00pm Concert and Conversation with Gene DiNovi. Apr 5 Mickey Chabon Quartet.
Apr 7 Shannon Smith Trio. Apr 12 Suzi & Doug Trio. Apr 13 Bernie Senyshyn Quartet.
Apr 14 Brian Blain’s Second Saturdays Blues Campfire. Apr 19 Brenda Lewis Trio.
Apr 20 Lj Folk. Apr 21 The Heilig Menouereu. Apr 26 Brian Barlow Trio.
Apr 26 Shannon Butcher Trio. Apr 28 Roy Patterson Trio. Mai 1f In Concert and Conversation.
May 3 Beverly Taft Trio. May 4 Canadian Jazz Quartet & Friends.
May 5 Steven Cole Quartet.

Only Cafe, The

972 Danforth Ave. 416-463-7843 theonlycafe.com (full schedule)
All shows: 8pm unless otherwise indicated.

Pilot Tavern, The

22 Cumberland Ave. 416-823-5716 thepilot.ca
All shows: 3pm. No cover.
Every Sat 3pm Saturday Jazz.
Apr 7 Frank Botos Quartet. Apr 14 Mike Allen Quartet. Apr 21 Jeff King Quartet.

256 Dundas St. W. 416-607-2032 maytcounty.com (full schedule)

Mezzetta Restaurant

618 St. Clair Ave. W. 416-655-5667 mezzettaarestaurant.com (full schedule)
All shows: 9pm, $8 (unless otherwise noted). Every Wed 9 & 10:15pm Wednesday Concert Series. Cover $10. Apr 11 Rebecca Enkis, vocals; Mike Allen, guitar.
Apr 18 David O’Connell, guitar; Dan Fortin, bass. May 25 Joel Sheridan, vocals, Eric St. Laurent, guitar.

194 Queen St. W. 416-595-2475 theorer.ca (full schedule)
Call for cover charge info.
Every Mon 6:30pm University of Toronto Student Jazz Ensembles. Every Tue 6:30pm Morgan Chilido. Every Wed 6:30pm Chris Wallace’s Many Names. Every Thu 6:30pm Jane Hoffman Quartet. Every Fri 4pm Hogtown Syncopators. 6:30pm James Brown Trio. Every Sat 12noon The Sinners Choir. Every Sun 12noon Excelsior Dixieland Jazz. 7pm Sounds of Brazil.
Apr 1 9:30pm Philleo Lemen Trio.
Apr 9 9:30pm Humber College Brazilian Jazz Ensemble. Apr 9 9:30pm Classic Rex Jazz Jam. Apr 9 4:30pm Virginia MacDonald.
May 5-6 9:45pm Lorne Lofsky Quartet. Apr 7 7pm Teri Parker Trio; 9:45pm Kelley & Kelly. Apr 9 9:30pm Aaron Irwin. Apr 9 9:30pm Humber College Jazz Orchestra.
Apr 10 9:30pm Progger. Apr 11 9:30pm Darryl Orr.
Apr 12-13 9:45pm Martin Eisenman Quartet.
Apr 14 9:30pm The Swing Shift Big Band; 7pm Parker/Abbot Duo; 9:45pm Dave Young Quartet. Apr 15 9:30pm Jazzamboka.
Apr 16 9:30pm Robert Black Quartet (CD Release).
Apr 17-18 9:30pm Manuel Valera Trio. Apr 19 9:30pm Eric St. Laurent. Apr 20 9:45pm Luis Deniz Quartet. Apr 21 7pm Teri Parker Trio.

273 Bloor St. W. 416-598-2475 194Queen.ca (full schedule)

Billy Bishop’s 100th Anniversary Celebration $50/$35 (under 30).

Sauce on Danforth

1376 Danforth Ave. 416-923-8137 saucedonfartom.com (full schedule)
Every Thu 7-10pm Jazz Night. Every Thu 9:30pm Karaoke. Every Fri 9:30pm Blues Jam - house band with weekly featured guest.

The Senator WinBar

249 Victoria St. W. 416-364-7171 thesenator.ca
All shows with $10 cover charge.

Tranzac

292 Brunswick Ave. 416-923-8137 tranzac.org (full schedule)
3-4 shows daily, various styles, in four different performance spaces. Mostly PWYC.
Every Mon 10pm Open Mic Mondays.
Every Tue 8pm Annex Ukelele Jam. Every Thu 7-10pm Bluegrass Thursdays Every Sun 7pm The Rhythmically Syncopated Social Hour Jazz Jam.

Galası ve Fundraiser

Apr 07 11:00am: La Jeunesse Youth Orchestra. Fundraising Event. Enjoy delicious soups donated by local restaurants while you listen to an orchestra rehearsal. Silent auction. $20. For more information visit our website at ljyo.ca or call 1-866-460-5936.
Apr 07 7.00pm: Sistema Toronto. Red Vin- il Gala. Come together as a community to celebrate over food, drink, and amazing performances and raise vital funds for Sistema Toronto as we work toward welcoming more students into our program. The Speak Club, 600 King St. W. $75. www.eventbrite.com/e/l- the-red-violin-2018-tickets-42538445291.
Fundraiser to support JAZZ FM91’s youth educa- tion programs.
Apr 12 6:00: Canadian Opera Company. Fine Wine Auction. Bid on rare vintages at both the live and silent auction. Stephen Ranger will lead the live auction which features an impressive array of exquisite and rare wine from prominent collections. Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. 416-383-8231. $100.
Apr 22 11:30: Classical Music Conservatory. Music For A Cause: Benefit Con- cert for SickKids. Teiya Kasahara, soprano; Eain McKay, violin; Hannah Bussière; Arkose (Erik Ross, Torrie Seager and Rob Mac- Donald); and others. Renosville United Church, 214 Wright Ave. 416-537-5995. PWYC. $20/80(adults) suggested. All proceeds to SickKids Hospital.
Apr 26 9:00am: Room 217 Foundation. Voices That Care. A musical evening to benefit Room 217 Care Through Music. Dan Hill, Jill Barker, Murray McAulie, Sylvia Tyson, Ezra Jor- dan and special guests. Glenn Gould Studio, 250 Front St. W. 705-652-2499 or 647-985-0217. 7:15pm doors and cocktail reception.

Lectures, Salons and Symposia

Apr 04 7:00: Canadian Opera Company, Trapping the Queen. Join eminent musi- cologist Wayne Goudie for an engaging exploration of Anna Bolena in anticipation of
of the upcoming COC production. The court of Henry VIII is in tumult as the king tires of his second wife, Anne Boleyn, who must now bear him a healthy son. Don Mills Branch, Toronto Public Library, 888 Lawrence Ave. E. Please register by calling 416-395-5710.


- Apr 14 10:30: Toronto Chapter of the Duke Ellington Society (TDES). Monthly Meeting. Montgomery’s Inn, corner of Dundas St. W. and Islington Ave. Membership fee is $35 single or $50 per couple with one free initial visit. Anyone interested in Ellington’s music and his contributions to the art of jazz is welcome. 416-453-5342.

- Apr 17 12:00: Tafelmusik. The Listening Club: Blurring the Boundaries. A lecture on innovative early music composers who “sit outside the box.” Musicologist Hanne Frenck and violinist Patrick Jordan are the moderators. Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, The Chapel, 427 Bloor St. W. 416-964-6337. $25.


- May 02 7:30: Toronto Opera Society. Guest speaker: David Fallis. The First Great Opera: Monteverdi’s Orfeo. Room 330, Faculty of Music, Edward Johnson Bldg, 80 Queen’s Park Cr. W. 416-914-3940. $10.

- May 06 5:00: Nocturnes in the City. 100 Years of Famous Czech Operas. Audio-visual presentation. Ian Scott, opera educator. Restaurant Praha, Masaryktown, 450 Scarborough Golf Club Rd. 416-481-7294. $25; $15(st).


- Apr 29 2:00: Classical Music Club Toronto. Bernstein: Candide. Based on the writings of Voltaire, this musical by Leonard Bernstein tells the story of an innocent youth and his adventures in the Old and New World. A selection of recordings (both audio and video) will be presented. For information and location contact John Sharpe: 416-898-2548. Annual membership: $25(regular); $10(2/er). Free for first-time visitors. Donations accepted for refreshments.

- Apr 30 7:00: Canadian Opera Company. Anna Bolena: The Power of Clothing in the Court of Henry VIII. Join Alexandra Kim, former Historic Royal Palaces Curator at Kensington Palace, as she unpacks the role Tudor court costume played in changing Anne Boleyn’s fortunes, as seen in the COC’s new production of Anna Bolena. Education Centre, Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. (at University Ave.). Free. Reserve tickets at 416-383-8231.


- Apr 22 1:00: Cantus. Canadian Opera Company. Opera Chorus Sing-Along. Warm up those pipes and join the COC’s Chorus Master Sandra Horst as she guides participants through a sing-along of favourite opera choruses by Mozart and Donizetti, and shares what it takes to be an opera chorister. Open to all levels of experience and musical ability. Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre, Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. (at University Ave.). Free. Reserve tickets at 416-383-8231.


- Apr 22 2:00: CAMMAC Toronto Region. Reading for Singers and Instrumentalists. Vivid día Gloria and Haydn: Little Organ Mass. David Weaver, conductor. Christ Church Deer Park, 1570 Yonge St. 416-551-9382. $10; $6 (members).


- April 08 10:30: Canadian Opera Company. 90-Minute Tour of the Four Seasons Centre. Led by a trained docent. Includes information and access to the Isadore and Rosalie Sharp City Room, the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre and R. Fraser Elliott Hall, as well as backstage areas such as the wig rooms and dressing rooms, the orchestra pit, and other spaces that only a stage door pass could unlock. Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. 416-363-8231. $20(adults), $15(st/ut). Also Apr 15, 22, 29.

Worksshops


- Apr 22 2:00: CAMMAC Toronto Region. Reading for Singers and Instrumentalists. Vivid día Gloria and Haydn: Little Organ Mass. David Weaver, conductor. Christ Church Deer Park, 1570 Yonge St. 416-551-9382. $10; $6 (members).


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- Apr 07 4:30: Toronto Silent Film Festival. Sensational Seekers (1927). Featured screen, composer, pianist, Royal Cinema, 606 College St. $15.

- Apr 24 6:30: Royal Conservatory of Music. Song of Lahore (2015). Meet and discover the cultural heritage of Pakistan’s classical musicians. After telling in obscurity for years, an innovative album leads Sachal Studios to international acclaim and a triumphant concert with Wynon Marsalis and his orchestra at Jazz at Lincoln Center. Toronto-based musicians Anwar Kurshid (sitar), Luis Denis (saxophone), and Matias Recharte (percussion) will join for the post-screening performance and Q&A. $17. Hot Docs members: $12, $10(st/ut), free(child). Tickets can be pur- chased at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema box office, 506 Bloor St. W. or online at www.hotdocsincineama.ca.

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Kiyoshi Nagata lives in Scarborough, but spends most of his time in Richmond Hill. As the artistic director of the taiko drum ensemble Nagata Shachu, formed in 1998. Rooted in the folk-drumming traditions of Japan, the ensemble makes innovative and exciting music that continues to create a new voice for the taiko. These physically demanding, spirited performances feature diverse repertoire for taiko (including the three-stringed shamisen, gongs, cymbals, shakers and wood blocks).

Born and raised in Richmond Hill, ON, Nagata’s father worked in the auto fleet department of Ontario Hydro and his mother was a secretary/bookkeeper. He says that his parents always listened to Japanese enka music (a popular traditional/ballad style) but his father also liked Nat King Cole and Benny Goodman. He attended Bayview Secondary School in Richmond Hill, graduated in political science from U of T and then moved to Toronto to further his taiko training.

Nagata has taught a credit course in taiko at the U of T’s Faculty of Music. Kiyoshi loves drinking sake, red wine and craft beer which are rare, his favourite things to do are walking along Toronto Islands, or catch a small independent movie with his girlfriend.

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Universities and community taiko groups to conduct workshops and present lectures. He composes and performs taiko music for dance, theatre, film and radio, and collaborates with artists from all genres of music including traditional Japanese instrumentalists.

**About your childhood photo?** This was definitely taken at Halloween. I guess I was a banjo-playing Mountie! I never played the banjo but it was probably the very first instrument that I ever owned. The photo reminds me of a very happy childhood with loving parents. Coming from a working-class family, we didn’t have much, but we had a lot of fun.

**First memories of hearing music?** My parents had one of those large furniture phonograph consoles that I played records on. I do specifically remember listening to 78 rpm records of Old MacDonald, and Raindrops Keep Falling on my Head. My grandmother played the three-stringed shamisen and my mother and three sisters did Japanese dance with it.

**Your first recollection of making music?** I remember clearly: the first time I made music was playing the taiko drum at age 12 at the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre. I learned a simple song called Don Doko Bayashi which was a simple four-bar pattern repeated over and over again. It was exhilarating. Later I played tenor sax in the school band where the main objective was to be unified and sound as one. This was a very appealing concept for me. When I started learning taiko I became obsessed with the philosophy of working together to create something new, exciting and in the moment.

**Do you remember when you first performed for an audience?** My very first performance was at Toronto’s Nathan Phillips Square in 1982 where the Japanese community held its annual Obon Festival.

**What helped to form your appetite for making music?** I was always aware of making music together without the need of care of my mother, or in downtown Toronto with his musician girlfriend. Besides living and breathing taiko music. Kiyoshi religiously goes to the gym each morning to work out, clear his head and prepare for each day. During the school year, he teaches taiko drumming at U of T’s Faculty of Music. Kiyoshi loves drinking sake, red wine and craft beer which are rare, his favourite things to do are walking along Toronto Islands, or catch a small independent movie with his girlfriend.

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New Worlds/Nouveaux Mondes; Canada’s National Arts Centre Orchestra; Alexander Shelley (Analekta AN 2 8873 analekta.com).

It took a while to identify what sounded familiar in Ana Sokolović’s Golden slumbers kiss your eyes..., but eventually I realized it reminded me of that mid-20th century pillar of choral/orchestral repertoire, Carl Orff’s Carmina Burana. Reading the program notes revealed another parallel to that great work – this too is based on secular, vernacular texts, in this case primarily folk songs in French, English, Italian, German, Ladino and the composer’s native Serbian. The likeness to Carmina Burana is mostly one of scale – vocal soloist, multiple choirs, orchestral forces with prominent percussion – but there are a couple of movements that are particularly Orffian, including Mie mama mata mata with its alternating lines between the choirs, and later an anguished counter-tenor solo reminiscent of the dying swan of Orff’s masterpiece.

Conceived as a tribute to NACO (now CNACO)’s founding conductor and later, music director Mario Bernardi, it is a celebration of Canada’s multiculturalism and pays tribute to Bernardi’s Italian heritage in two of the seven movements. Although the texts are from folk songs they are surprisingly transformed in this presentation, sometimes to the point of non-recognition. À la claire fontaine begins with a haunting solo by counter-tenor David DQ Lee, eventually joined by dark chanting from the chorus more reminiscent of a satanic ritual than the coureur de bois chanson learned at French immersion camp. I was also reminded of some of the more dramatic scenes from Harry Somers’ Louis Riel and the movement Durme, durme, a Serbian lullaby, reminded me of that opera’s Kuyas. I don’t mean to say that this is in any way a derivative work. Sokolović has a unique voice and it is more a reflection of my own way of relating to new things, always happy to find touchstones.

Canada’s National Arts Centre Orchestra, better known for “viewing the past through rose coloured glasses” in recent decades, is marching bravely into the 21st century under Alexander Shelley, who succeeded Pinchas Zukerman as music director in 2015. I’m pleased to note that in the most recent addition, Sokolović’s stunning work is paired with Dvořák’s New World Symphony. I think it is very effective programming, and any questions I had about whether this classical-size orchestra numbering 60–some players would be sufficient to do justice to this staple of the Romantic repertoire were allayed by listening to the performance on this beautifully recorded disc.

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What we’re listening to this month:

Dmitri Shostakovich composed his Violin Sonata, Op.134 in 1968 and it was premiered by its dedicatee David Oistrakh with Sviatoslav Richter in the spring of the following year. In 1975, the year of the composer’s death, a Melodiya/Angel LP recording of that performance and the premiere of the String Quartet No.13, Op.138 was released in North America, and for...
some months held pride of place in this avid young collector’s library. So it was with great interest that I received a new recording of the sonata featuring two young Russians, Sergei Dogadin and Nikolai Tokarev (Naxos 8.573753 naxos.com). Dogadin has won ten international violin competitions including the Tchaikovsky (2011) and the Joseph Joachim International (2015), so his credentials are impeccable. While his colleague’s accolades are perhaps not so quite so prestigious, Tokarev nevertheless has been recognized with awards in Switzerland and Germany since completing his piano studies in 2007. Together they capture the essence of Shostakovich’s late sonata in a riveting performance. The disc also features the first complete recording of Shostakovich’s 24 Preludes, Op.34 in transcription for violin and piano: 19 by Dmitry Tsiganov (some from 1937 and some from 1963) praised by Shostakovich as sounding more idiomatic in this guise than even the piano originals; and five by composer/pianist Lera Auerbach to complete the set in 2000. These youthful and sometimes exuberant short pieces – 35 minutes in all – provide a welcome contrast to the darkness of the sonata, which is not to say that they are all bright and sunny. The preludes, which date from 1932–33, run the gamut of emotion and at times hint at the hard times to come in the composer’s life. While not supplanting the Oistrakh/Richter, this new recording will also occupy a treasured spot in my library.

Having taken the plunge into art song above, I will say that one of my favourite vocal cycles is Winterreise, that classic of the genre by Franz Schubert. One of the discs to cross my desk recently is a new version with the piano part transcribed for string quartet by cellist Richard King of the Copenhagen Quartet which is featured with bass-baritone Johan Reuter (Danacord DACOCD 759 danacord.dk). Reuter, who has been a soloist with the Royal Danish Opera for the past two decades, is touted as “one of the most in-demand classical singers of his generation” in the introductory program note in this tri-lingual booklet by violinist Sara Billich. In it she describes how the Elias approached the charming Quartet No.3 in A Major, one of the first works they played together, and how different it was to encounter the Quartet No.2 in F Major sometime later. “The enthusiasm of the first movement can easily turn into anxiety if you push it a bit too far. In the slow movement the texture is sometimes so bare that to convey its tenderness you have to sustain it with great fervour. The capacious Scherzo is bristling with rhythmic pitfalls [...] while the Finale is an endless explosion of joy!” Hard to resist such a description and even harder to ignore the music it describes. The performance was recorded live at Potton Hall, UK in May 2016 and the excitement is palpable.

Further on in these pages you will read reviews of new discs from David Buchbinder’s OdessaHavana and KUNE, Canada’s Global Orchestra, noting that both groups are featured in performance at Koerner Hall on April 7. I have also received – from restaurateur Oğuz Kologlu, proprietor of Café 808 – a CD by Toronto-based Turkish clarinetist and saxophonist Selcuk Suna (selcuksona.com), who will be...
performing with KÜNÉ. The disc, Turkish Standards/Non Standard, is quite eclectic. From the lush but breakneck moto perpetuo opening track Hiccu Mandira it progresses through some smooth jazz (but still with busy, virtuosic melody lines), touches of funk and evocations of Turkish clubs replete with belly dance rhythms. The core band consists of familiairs Eric St. Laurent, Tyler Emond, Todd Pentney and Max Senitt and is complemented by a number of guest artists from the Turkish community. I’m a bit frustrated by the lack of detailed information on the disc or on Suna’s website – for instance I tried to find out about the vocalist Dia, but the only hits I got online were for a South Korean Kpop girl group whom I’m pretty sure this is not. Nevertheless the disc kept me grooving in my chair.

The last disc I will mention takes me even further afield and I don’t even know what section I would have put it in – Contemporary? Improvised? Pot Pourri? – if I wasn’t covering it here. Food Foragers came to us from Unit Records in Switzerland (unitrecords.com). The press release says this is the first Duo release of Mark Lotz (flutes and effects) and squeakologist Alan Purves. “Music that sparkles with imagination and is free from conventions.” It certainly is that. One might ask exactly what a squeakologist is. A partial answer is in the list of the instruments Purves employs: toy accordion; DADA bells; balaphon, sruti boxes; toy horns; klaxon; tin whistle; brim bram; and one of my favourites, toy pigs. Although Lotz’s arsenal is more traditional, he also pushes the envelope, focusing on the extreme end of the flute family: bass flute headjoint; bass flute tongue slaps; concert flute body; prepared flute; bamboo flute; piccolo and even PVC contrabass flute. As for the music, I simply don’t know how to describe it. From melodic flute lines floating over kalimba-like ostinati in Abu in the Sky, to rhythmic grunting in Hog Time, deep heartbeat-like pulsations in the meditative Echoes Of A Life Hereafter and the playful piccolo/toy accordion duet Piepkuiten, to mention just the first four tracks, there’s never a dull moment. Some of the influences listed include traditional songs from Mali, Chick Corea’s Children’s Songs and Sir Ernest Shackleton’s Antarctic Expedition (1914-17). After a truly wondrous journey a final highlight is the concluding I’m So Sorry Blues, a standard 12-bar riff pairing the contrabass with tin whistles. Intriguing! ☠

There are two Beethoven string quartet issues this month, featuring works from both ends of the canon. The Miró Quartet, now in its 24th year and with two original members still playing, gives an excellent performance of the remarkable String Quartet No.14 in C-sharp Minor, Op.131, part of its ongoing series of the complete cycle (Miró Quartet Media MQM 2909 2 miroquartet.com). It’s a deeply satisfying recording, but in an extremely competitive field not necessarily one which challenges your perceptions of the music or forces you to re-evaluate them.

That, however, is exactly what Toronto’s Eybler Quartet does with its simply stunning CD of Beethoven’s first efforts in the genre, the String Quartets Op.18 Nos.1-3, on instruments appropriate to the period (Coro Connections COR16164 eyblerquartet.com). In his perceptive booklet essay violinist Patrick Jordan notes that the Eybler’s emphasis on pre-Beethoven repertoire meant that they approached the early Beethoven quartets as “new music,” with the aim of re-learning how to play them to Beethoven’s exact specifications. This entailed not only sorting out issues with the various sources but also – and most importantly – deciding to adhere to Beethoven’s tempo markings, which at times are excessively fast or slow and have long been the subject of animated discussion, though rarely followed.

The results, particularly with the faster movements, are quite astonishing, from the brisk opening of the F Major Op.18 No.1 through to the dazzling Presto finale of the D Major Op.18 No.3. Technical virtuosity doesn’t begin to do justice to the playing here – there’s jaw-dropping agility, clarity and accuracy in the playing, allied with terrific dynamics and nuance, outstanding ensemble work, a lovely warm tone with a judicial use of vibrato and an unerring sense of period style.

I doubt if you’ve heard these works sound like this before – it’s absolutely essential listening. Volume 2 with Op.18 Nos.4-6 is apparently in preparation. I can hardly wait!
with a particularly lovely third movement. Tim Brady’s Journal (String Quartet No.2) was written in 2013, 33 years after Brady’s previous work in the genre. Inspired simply by “the opportunity to write music for such amazing players,” it has seven sections played without pause, the composer likening this to turning pages in a diary or journal. It’s a tougher work than the other two, with a cinematic feel to the music at times, but is another very strong and extremely well-written composition.

The NOSQ’s playing throughout is exemplary in what can be viewed as definitive performances.

String Quartet No.5, “In Search of La vita nuova” (2004) deals with the composer’s long-standing relationship with Italy. String Quartet No.6, “Addio” (2009) deals with the string quartet as a metaphor for family, and how families are eventually broken apart through distance, time and loss. Both works were written in Northern Italy, and are about what Danielpour calls “letting go.”

String Quartet No.7, “Psalms of Solace” (2014) is about a “search for the Divine.” The last movement features a soprano part written specifically for Hila Plitman, the excellent soloist here.

All three works are very much in a late-20th-century style, strongly tonal and very accessible, and with some truly beautiful writing and lovely textures.

The American string quintet Sybarite5 was formed in 2006, since when it has commissioned, premiered and promoted over 60 new works. Its new CD Outliers (Bright Shiny Things BSTC-0121 sybarite5.org) debuted at No.1 in the Billboard Traditional Classical Album charts in February.

There was no booklet with the digi-pak we received and no information on any of the composers or the 13 works, virtually all from the period 2012 to 2015 and all quite short; the brief information on the cover says that “each track has been carefully selected to demonstrate a decade of musical growth and the relationships developed between Sybarite5 and these accomplished American composers.” Those represented here are: Jessica Meyer; Shawn Conley; Eric Byers; Dan Visconti; Andy Akho; Mohammed Fairouz; Kenji Bunch; Daniel Bernard Roumain; Michi Wiancko; and Lev “Ljova” Zhurbin. It’s a fascinating selection of solid and appealing compositions with nothing too challenging aurally.

The Italian violinist Francesca Dego signed with Deutsche Grammophon in 2012, and following her debut albums of the Paganini Caprices and the complete Beethoven Violin Sonatas the label has released her first orchestral CD, Paganini/Wolf-Ferrari Violin Concertos with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra conducted by Dego’s husband Daniele Rustioni (DG 481681). It’s quite outstanding.

If you’re going to play Paganini’s Concerto No.1 in D Major Op.6 then you need not only impeccable technique so that the sheer difficulty is never the focus of the performance but also musical sensitivity and intelligence to make any criticisms about empty virtuosity redundant. Dego has all these qualities in abundance and is clearly well aware of the operatic vocal nature of the music; Paganini was a close friend of Rossini, and his concertos make much more sense when heard with the contemporary Italian opera style in mind.

The Violin Concerto in D Major Op.26 of Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari is little known and seldom performed. It’s a late work, completed in 1944 a few years before the composer’s death and written for the American violinist Guilã Bustabo, who revised a subsequent edition after the original copies were destroyed in an Allied bombing raid. Dego correctly likens it to “an Italian opera for violin” – albeit opera from an earlier period than Wolf-Ferrari’s – in which respect it shares much with the Paganini. A long but very attractive four-movement work, it has much to recommend it.

Dego is absolutely superb in both works, but particularly in the lengthy first movement of the Paganini; Rustioni draws excellent support from the CBSO. The Wolf-Ferrari was recorded live in Birmingham in March 2017 at its UK premiere, the lengthy applause well deserved.

Contemporary American composers are featured on two new CDs. The husband-and-wife team of violinist Nicholas DiEugenio and pianist Mimi Solomon are the performers on Into the Silence, a tribute to the late Steven Stucky (who taught at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY from 1980 to 2014) and the three generations of composers associated with Cornell (New Focus Recordings FCR 188 newfocusrecordings.com).

Stucky’s 2013 Sonata for Violin and Piano is surrounded by works by two of his students: 2013’s . . . in dulce tonos, by Jesse Jones; and 2014’s Plush Earth in Four Pieces by Tonia Ko. Stucky himself studied at Cornell with Robert Palmer, who founded the doctoral composition program and taught there from 1943 until 1980. Palmer’s excellent Sonata for Violin and Piano from 1956 closes the CD.

The Ithaca “sound” is described as “a blend of east coast modernism with neo-romantic and neo-classical sensibilities, with a rich sense of colour,” an accurate description of these premiere recordings. DiEugenio and Solomon were Ithaca neighbours of Stucky, who introduced them to Palmer’s music and supported this project prior to his death in 2016.

Notes to Loved Ones features music for strings and piano by Peter Dayton (Navona Records NV1413 navonarecords.com).

The brief but lovely Fantasy for Viola and Piano is followed by Morceaux des Noces for String Quartet, another work with a quite beautiful sound.

The Sonata “Los Dedicatorias” for Violin and Piano reflects Dayton’s relationship with the art and family of Peruvian painter Peter Dayton makes his PARMA Digital debut on Navona Records with NOTES TO LOVED ONES, an album of works for piano and strings. thewholenote.com/listening

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Fernando de Szyszlo. Variations for String Quartet, a tougher and darker work, resulted from an exchange program with the Royal Academy of Music in London, the virtuosic violin cadenza inspired by the program leader, violinist Peter Sheppard-Skerrved.

An abrasive and edgy two-movement Sonata for Violoncello and Piano (the second movement marked “Stark, Percussive”) ends an interesting and provocative Navona debut CD.

Yang Guo (viola), Sarah Jane Thomas (violin), Lavena Johanson (cello) and Michael Sheppard (piano) are the soloists.

For some reason, three CDs received this month are way past their initial release date. Two of them are from the Brilliant Classics label (brilliantclassics.com), both Complete Works for Violin and Piano – one by the Polish composer Karol Szymanowski (2 CDs 95979) and the other by his contemporary, the Czech composer Erwin Schulhoff, who died in a concentration camp in 1942 at the age of 48 (95324). The performers on both are the Portuguese duo of violinist Bruno Monteiro and pianist João Paulo Santos.

Critical opinion of Monteiro’s playing was mixed when the Schulhoff CD was released in 2016, with opinions ranging from praising his golden tone and interpretations to Gramophone magazine’s noting his “effortful and sometimes insecure” playing. Personal taste probably played a large part: Monteiro’s often slow and wide vibrato does tend to make the intonation sound suspect at times, and his tone in the highest register can sometimes sound tight and thin.

There are moments in the Sonata for Solo Violin that seem a bit tentative. Still, there is much to enjoy here. In particular, the piano playing in the Suite and the Sonatas Nos. 1 & 2 is outstanding, with a rich, resonant sound and an excellent balance with the violin.

The Szymanowski set fares much better, especially CD2 with Mythes Op.30 opening the disc and the Nocturne and Tarantella Op.28 providing a strong finish. The Sonata in D Minor Op.9, the Romance in D Major, the Three Capriccios of Paganini Op.40 and the lullaby La Berceuse Op.52 are the other original works in the set, with the remaining five tracks either transcriptions by the composer’s compatriot, the violinist Pawel Kochanski, or – in two cases – joint compositions by them.

The third latecomer is Forestare Baroque, a program of works by Bach, Vivaldi and Jean Baptiste Lully arranged for guitar ensemble and performed by the Montreal group Forestare with their 12 guitars, two contrabasses and – in the Lully – percussion (2xHDFO1043 forestare.com).

The works are Bach’s Brandenburg Concerto No.3 and Fantasia on Komm, heiliger Geist, Vivaldi’s Sonata Op.1 No.12, “La Folia” and the Concerto for Two Violins and Cello Op.3 No.2, and Lully’s suite Le Bourgeois gentilhomme. The Vivaldi concerto was arranged by the Swiss guitarist Jürg Kindle, the other works by Forestare’s music director Dave Pilon and guitarist David Ratelle.

Recorded in l’Église St-Augustin in Mirabel, the sound is full and warm throughout a thoroughly enjoyable disc.

Concert note: Mooredale Concerts presents Forestare’s Toronto debut on April 15 at Walter Hall.

Stewart Goodyear’s new CD For Glenn Gould (Sono Luminus DSL92220 sonoluminus.com) is an expression of Goodyear’s deep admiration of Gould’s music and his peculiar take on just about everything. The disc includes a generous amount of Bach, some Sweelinck, Gibbons, Brahms and Alban Berg. The pieces represent a selection of works that Gould chose for his debuts in Montreal and Washington. Far from being an imitation of Gould’s keyboard style, Goodyear’s recording seeks to recognize the genius behind the programming, by which Gould included works that bore some relationship to each other.

The striking feature of Goodyear’s playing is the authenticity and stylistic confidence he brings to each piece. From the early Baroque through Bach, Brahms and Berg, Goodyear plays with a keen ear for clarity, whether structural or melodic. The Bach Sinfonia No.8 in F Major, BWV 794 is an excellent example of this. His technique is crisp, incisive yet fluid.

The two Brahms Intermezzi, Op.118, No.2 and Op.119, No.3 come from what Goodyear believes was Gould’s best recording. In it, Gould reveals himself as the salon artist looking for the most intimate expression of his music. The recording studio became the ultimate refuge for Gould’s flight from the public stage. Accordingly, Goodyear admits that his studio time with this disc was largely intended to recreate that intimacy. Like Gould, Goodyear is careful with his tempi and always lets the forward movement of a phrase govern the amount of hesitation and drama he applies.

For Glenn Gould is a unique, creative project, and played brilliantly.

Yevgeny Sudbin has an impressive performance CV that includes nearly every major European orchestra. His newest recording Rachmaninov – Piano Concertos 2 & 3; BBC Symphony Orchestra; Sakari Oramo (BIS 2338 SACD bis.se) offers a truly exciting performance of these two repertoire stalwarts. The orchestra is, as expected, reliably superb. Sudbin, for his part, brings some new ideas to these two familiar works. With the Concerto No.2 Sudbin

Musical Images for Piano
John McEnroe
Performed with a delicacy both melancholic and nostalgic, Mark John McEnroe focuses on the introspective, letting the listener’s memories give the music its own unique life.

Femmes
Marie-Josée Lord
On her new album Femmes, Marie-Josée Lord passionately embodies heroines of operas by Puccini, Verdi, and Massenet.
introduces several brief tempo pullbacks in unusual places, very subtle but arresting nevertheless to all who know these pieces well. He plays a few passages in the second movement with a speed more daring than is usually heard, but his unerring musicianship makes these small unconventional moments entirely convincing.

Sudbin makes an immediate impression of technical brilliance in the Concerto No. 9. He skillfully navigates the opening movement, replete with high emotional contrasts. The second builds on this energy and Sudbin rides it right into the Finale where he and the orchestra build to a spectacular conclusion that is hard to describe. Anyone who loves these Rachmaninov concertos must have this disc.

Dirk Herten is a pianist who marches to the beat of a different metronome. His latest recording Johannes Brahms – Opp. 76, 79, 116–119 (White Records white-records.com) introduces an approach to Brahms not often heard. Herten puts his music into a freely modern context. His principal tool is to slow down works that are usually played at considerably faster tempi. And while he does this with several pieces, the most dramatic effect is on the Rhapsodie Op.119. The reduction in speed takes much of the traditional turmoil out of the music. The boiling Romantic cauldron is reduced to a simmer. This suddenly puts the music into a stricter rhythm, forcing the ear to listen for new things, and this is how Herten makes his point with Brahms. The usual dramatic changes in speed are curtailed and Brahms’ bold key changes and harmonic wanderings suddenly become more noticeable.

The Steinway D that Herten plays is very closely miked and possibly with a heightened intimacy that will make this Brahms repertoire a specially voiced for this session. In any case, he plays the instrument lighter touch to perfection.

Lika Bibileishvili has been playing piano since age four. Her debut recording Prokofiev, Ravel, Sibelius, Bartók (Farao Classics Bi08099 farao-classics.de) introduces a powerful and versatile pianist who takes her vocation very seriously. Now 30, she is a fireball of energy that approaches Prokofiev and Bartók piano sonatas fearlessly. Prokofiev’s Sonata No. 6 Op. 82 is a work of considerable variety in which the outer movements, especially the finale, are extremely demanding. The two inner movements are much more wistful and humourous. Throughout this piece, Bibileishvili never falters or surrenders control of the material. She combines an inherent sense of the composer’s melodic purpose with the raw power that he demands be used at the keyboard.

This same energy fuels Bibileishvili’s playing of Bartók’s Sonata for Piano Sz.80. Somewhat less bombastic than the Prokofiev and more elemental, it demands a different contemporary sensibility that she demonstrates convincingly. Here, Bibileishvili focuses intensely on Bartók’s smaller-scale ideas, as if to turn the work in on itself. Her playing is astonishingly good and conveys impressively concentrated this pianist-as-spectre appears in Ravel’s Gaspard de la nuit, where Scarbo lives up to its devilish reputation for difficulty. Ondine, by contrast, flows and shimmers beautifully and shows Bibileishvili’s lighter touch to perfection.

The Sibelius 13 Pieces for Piano Op.76 (of which Bibileishvili selected ten) adds another dimension to her debut recording. Sounding deceptively simple, some very challenging keyboard work combines with Sibelius’ gift for melody to give this extraordinary pianist a chance to prove that she’s as adept with beauty and frivolity as she is with fire and brimstone.

Ralph van Raat has an extraordinary keyboard technique. He is powerful, articulate and capable of extended physical demands bordering on the impossible. His latest recording Stravinsky – Rite of Spring; Debussy – La Mer (arr. for solo piano) (Naxos 8.573576 naxos.com) is demonstrable proof of this.

It’s sufficiently awe-inspiring to hear a performance of Stravinsky’s official piano duet version without imagining the work further condensed into a score for solo piano. Still, such a score exists and van Raat has now recorded it. Pianist Vladimir Leyetchkiss transcribed the duo into a solo version in 1985. It’s every bit as dense and rhythmically maniacal as the orchestral score. The familiar passages of the sacrificial dances aptly capture what Stravinsky first conceived at the keyboard before he orchestrated the ballet. In addition to the work’s elements of savagery, van Raat portrays beautifully those fewer moments of calmer, mystical darkness that occur in both Introductions as well as the Mystic Circles of the Young Girls.

The solo transcription of La Mer is a wonderful example of how such a work can be more than a mere reduction of the orchestral parts. Debussy originally set out to avoid imitative seascapes and instead chose to write music capturing the essential emotions of the sea experience. This 1938 solo version is by Lucien Garban, a director with Debussy’s publishing firm Durand. Garban uses the composer’s

What we’re listening to this month: thewholenote.com/listening

Bruckner: Les 9 symphonies
Orchestre Métropolitain of Montreal, Yannick Nézet-Séguin
With the release of a sumptuous boxed set of 10 discs, Yannick Nézet-Séguin completes a 10 year project to record the complete Bruckner symphonies.

Sky Glow
Chris Platt Trio
Sky Glow by Chris Platt brings fluent melodies, understated rhythms, and harmonic complexity that is a modern continuation of the classic guitar trio.

Near Me
LJ Folk
NEAR ME - L J FOLK features The Look of Love duet with Emilie-Claire Barlow. Available Everywhere

Live in Concert – Tribute to Rick Wilkins
Ensemble Vivant
Lush chamber music featuring jazz guests Mike Murley, Brian Barlow and Guido Basso. Arrangements and original music from Bach, to Chaplin, Gershwin and Piazzolla
choices for orchestral colouration as a guide for his rewrite of the score. Van Raat instinctively draws out the heavily arpeggiated effects of massive oceanic movement and masterfully depicts what Debussy achieved so brilliantly in his orchestral score.

Nicolas Horvath plays Cosima Liszt’s 1881 Érard in his latest recording: Erik Satie – Complete Piano Works 2 (Grand Piano GP762 grandpianorecords.com). In doing so, Horvath provides an example of how Satie would have heard his music in the late 19th century. This particular instrument is in surprisingly good playing condition and delivers tremendous power in the lower range.

The main work on the disc is Le Fils des étoiles, incidental music to a drama in three acts. The three preludes are brief and each is followed by a more substantial Autre musique in which Satie explores, invents and generally does the kind of thing that earned him a reputation for being unconventional. Horvath is quite comfortable with this music. He himself is a strong promoter of contemporary music and has commissioned more than a hundred works. His familiarity with modern keyboard language makes him adept at working with Satie’s material, since the composer was among the earliest to toy with minimalism, atonality and other new approaches.

The recording is a serious, weighty examination of Satie’s work by a highly capable and credible pianist. There’s nothing casual about this – it’s an all-or-nothing performance.

When Naxos proposed to William Bolcom that they record the entire body of his piano works, he countered with the suggestion to record only those pieces not already available on disc. After agreeing on the project, they approached four pianists – Constantine Finehouse, Estela Olevsky, Ursula Oppens and Christopher Taylor – to collaborate in recording this three-disc set: William Bolcom – Piano Music (Naxos 8.559832-34 naxos.com).

The repertoire includes unrecorded material from Bolcom’s teen years right up to 2012. There’s tremendous variety in this program, reflecting the broad creative expression that has marked Bolcom’s career. The works are neither arranged chronologically nor given in any large block to a single pianist. Instead they’re laid out as an intellectual progress that’s as entertaining as it is stimulating. It’s a credit to the four performers that their interpretive approaches are so similar, allowing Bolcom to appear consistently as a composer whose language is bold and clear. Equally comfortable with swinging rags as with contemporary forms, Bolcom emerges from this recording project as a rich creative spirit capable of both profound iteration and light-hearted humour.

Musical Images for Piano (Navona NV6144 navonarecords.com) is a two-disc set of works by Australian composer Mark John McEnroe, performed by pianist Yoko Hagino. The set is subtitled “Reflections & Recollections Vol. 1 & 2” and is written in an introspective mood. McEnroe’s style shows, at least in these works, the strong influence of Debussy and Satie. In his liner notes, McEnroe describes a desire to capture the increasingly reflective moments that occur in later life. He draws further similarities between Monet’s inspiring gardens and his own as a stimulus for this collection.

The French impressionist style is a perfect vehicle for what McEnroe sets out to achieve. Serenity is the immediate feeling conveyed in this music, although the composer also ventures very effectively into dark corners for variety and balance. This well-planned tension and release is occasionally punctuated by touches of humour with pieces like A Fish with the Blues. Jazzy harmonies recur through the set, giving an eclectic sound to McEnroe’s voice.

He writes with a strong affinity for melodic line and this feature has attracted a number of orchestrations of his piano works, resulting in subsequent recordings by several European orchestras.

VOCAL

Femmes (Verdi; Puccini; Massenet)
Marie-Josée Lord; Orchestre symphonique de Laval; Alain Trudel
ATMA ACD2 2758 (atmaclassique.com)

Canada is a frustratingly large place. Despite having sung professionally since the early 2000s, Marie-Josée Lord did not conquer the country until 2012, when her first recording (from 2010) was nominated for the JUNO award in the best classical vocal album category. Personal disclosure here: I was one of the judges, voting, albeit unsuccessfully, for that album. To say that Lord’s voice stunned me would be an understatement. She has proved to be an elusive singer – appearing mostly in Quebec, and not gracing operatic stages frequently enough. In addition, Lord holds a deep conviction that she must be a popular singer – in her concerts and on record – mixing Quebec chanson, spirituals and classical pieces. That is why her new album is such a rare gift: a full CD of operatic performance. And what a performance it is! As her voice matures, she relies more on vibrato. What may have been lost in agility is more than compensated for in power and range. She can easily become one of Verdi’s heroines – I would give my proverbial eye tooth to see her on stage as Violetta! The music of Massenet and Puccini, especially as gracefully presented here by Maestro Trudel, suits her well too.

Her self-titled debut CD became a best-seller – over 30,000 copies sold, which in the world of classical music is massive. This one has a potential of beating that record – and bringing an extraordinary performer to full triumph over the Great White North.

Robert Tomas

Schnittke – Psalms of Repentance; Pärt – Magnificat & Nunc Dimittis
Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir; Kaspars Putnins
Bis BIS-2292 (bis.se)

In the final years of his life Alfred Schnittke became increasingly interested in religious music and in the relationship between his music and the Russian orthodox tradition, both religious and musical. The Psalms of Repentance, which date from 1988, consist of 11 penitential psalms followed by a final wordless humming movement. Some movements are intensely dramatic; others are more lyrical. It is to the latter kind that I found myself especially drawn.

The Russian poems which Schnittke set are anonymous; they date from the 16th century. The central narrative event to which the work alludes is the murder of the youngest sons of Grand Prince Vladimir by their brother in 1015, but many of the psalms are penitential in a more general way.

The Schnittke work is complemented by two shorter works by Arvo Pärt, both in Latin: the Magnificat (1989) and the Nunc Dimittis (2003). Both are very moving. The very fine Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir has performed in Toronto several times and many readers will have heard the choir in concert. The choir was founded in 1981
by its first conductor Tõnu Kaljuste and has, since 2014, been led by Latvian conductor Kaspars Putnins.

**Hans de Groot**

**Kim André Arnesen – Infinity: Choral Works**

Kantorei; Joel Rinsema

Naxos 8.573788 (naxos.com)

Kantorei, a greatly admired ensemble with international tours, workshops and major commissions to its credit, is an elite choir based in Denver, Colorado and led by artistic director Joel Rinsema. This recording of compositions from the past eight years by Norwegian composer Kim André Arnesen (b.1980) places it in the front ranks. Rich, clear tone, balance and expressiveness characterize recordings of these religious and meditative pieces, four of which are commissions by Kantorei and Rinsema.

Some Arnesen works show the influence of composers like Morten Lauridsen and Eric Whitacre, with long-sustained tones, division of the chorus’ sections and high clusters of soprano voices that produce radiant effects. Of these, I found the adventurous title work Infinity and the Holocaust-inspired Even When He is Silent especially moving. The lullabies Dormi Jesu and Cradle Hymn (the latter of which was sung for President Obama in the White House) are among the more appealing simpler works. Here babies and parents could perhaps provide the most authoritative reviews! When simplicity ventures into harmonic cliché, though, my inner music theory cop is triggered, as in The Gift I’ll Leave You.

In its mastery of textures and vocal registers, Arnesen’s compositional craft is remarkable. The choice of works and the disc’s overall smooth sound also suggest its potential for meditation; in any case I found myself taking long, even breaths. This serene and attractive disc is recommended for both secular and religious listeners.

**Roger Knox**

**The Path to Paradise**

The Trinity Choir; Daniel Taylor

Sony Classical 19075801822 (theatreofearlymusic.com)

The Trinity Choir was founded in 2015 by countertenor and conductor Daniel Taylor. It is a chamber choir (with, on this recording, 32 singers); they sing a cappella. The centre of their repertoire is the 16th century (Thomas Tallis, John Sheppard, Orlando di Lasso, William Byrd, Nicolas Gombert) but they make a point of also including more modern works. This recording includes the Missereve of the 17th-century composer Gregorio Allegri (much the most familiar work on this disc) and Arvo Pärt’s Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis (which coincidentally appear on the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir’s 2017 Schnittke/Pärt release, also recently reviewed by me for The WholeNote).

Most of the singers are young and at the beginning of their career, although several, like the soprano Ellen McAteer and bass-baritone Joel Allison, are beginning to make a name for themselves through their participation in other choirs. The singing is very fine throughout. I was particularly taken with Gombert’s Media Vita with its long melodic lines.

**Hans de Groot**

**Crazy Girl Crazy**

Barbara Hannigan; LUDWIG Orchestra

Alpha Classics ALPHA 293 (alpha-classics.com)

As internationally celebrated Canadian soprano and conductor Barbara Hannigan said in a 2015 CBC radio interview: “I love taking risks as a performer…” Her risk-taking paid unexpected dividends when her Crazy Girl Crazy CD was awarded the 2018 GRAMMY for Best Classical Solo Vocal Album.

In fact, Hannigan went well beyond the solo vocalist category. She not only sang but also conducted the Amsterdam-based LUDWIG Orchestra. She even had a hand in the newly minted orchestral arrangement of songs from Gershwin’s 1930 musical Crazy Girl Grazy in collaboration with Bill Elliott. Sequenza III (1965) for female voice serves as the album’s spectacular curtain-raiser. Originally composed for the legendary American diva Cathy Berberian by Luciano Berio, Hannigan puts her own vocal and intellectual stamp on this vocal tour de force. Berio opened the door to multiple renderings of his score, noting, “In Sequenza III I tried to assimilate many aspects of everyday vocal life, including trivial ones, without losing intermediate levels or indeed normal singing… Sequenza III can also be considered as a dramatic essay whose story [explores] the relationship between the soloist and her own voice.” I think the composer would be chuffed with Hannigan’s powerfully idiosyncratic interpretation and advocacy of this seminal work.

The core of Crazy Girl Crazy is however centred on Hannigan’s long-term love affair with Alban Berg’s opera Lulu, the lead character of which she has portrayed onstage to great acclaim. It is represented here by Berg’s masterful symphonic-scale Lulu Suite, given an emotionally powerful performance by LUDWIG Orchestra under Hannigan’s direction.

The album closes with Girl Crazy Suite, the Elliott/Hannigan re-orchestration of Gershwin’s original songs, but re-contextualized in light of Berg’s orchestral sound world.

As a long-term fan of the music on this disc, I found it a very satisfying listen. It’s also satisfying to know that in Hannigan this repertoire has a convincing advocate able to convey it with passion and intellectual rigour to future generations.

**Andrew Timar**

**CLASSICAL AND BEYOND**

**Haydn – Symphonies 26 & 86; Mozart – Violin Concerto No.3**

Aisslinn Nosky; Handel and Haydn Society; Harry Christophers

Coro COR16158 (naxos.com)

*As a dramatic essay whose story [explores] the relationship between the soloist and her own voice." I think the composer would be chuffed with Hannigan’s powerfully idiosyncratic interpretation and advocacy of this seminal work. The core of Crazy Girl Crazy is however centred on Hannigan’s long-term love affair with Alban Berg’s opera Lulu, the lead character of which she has portrayed onstage to great acclaim. It is represented here by Berg’s masterful symphonic-scale Lulu Suite, given an emotionally powerful performance by LUDWIG Orchestra under Hannigan’s direction. The album closes with Girl Crazy Suite, the Elliott/Hannigan re-orchestration of Gershwin’s original songs, but re-contextualized in light of Berg’s orchestral sound world. As a long-term fan of the music on this disc, I found it a very satisfying listen. It’s also satisfying to know that in Hannigan this repertoire has a convincing advocate able to convey it with passion and intellectual rigour to future generations.**
Tchaikovsky – Pathétique
Park Avenue Chamber Symphony; David Bernard
Recursive Classics RC2059912
(chambersymphony.com)

► Tchaikovsky’s great Symphony No.6 being performed by a chamber ensemble? I admit I had my doubts as to whether this New York-based group numbering roughly 50 members could do full justice to the composer’s symphonic swan song. Admittedly, the Park Avenue Chamber Symphony under the direction of conductor David Bernard has earned an enviable reputation since its formation in 1999, and its three First Prizes in the American Prize Competition in Orchestra or Performance (2011, 2012, 2013) and an extensive tour to the People’s Republic of China should be ample evidence of its musical heft.

Rest assured – the PACS may not have the numbers usually associated with orchestras who perform this daunting repertoire, but it delivers a thoroughly convincing performance. Following the lugubrious opening measures, the Allegro non troppo of the first movement is spirited and elegant, the well-balanced phrasing clearly articulated, featuring a deft interplay between woodwinds and strings.

The second movement “waltz” (in 5/4 time) is all grace and charm, while the brisk third movement march provides a perfect showcase for the ensemble’s stirring brass section before the anguished and despairing finale.

My only quibble is the occasional lack of the luxuriant sound found in other recordings, due to the PACS’ smaller string section. And at times, the brass section – as ebullient as it is – tends to overshadow the strings. Yet neither of these minor faults detracts from an otherwise fine performance. While this may not be a touchstone recording of the Sixth Symphony, it has a certain energy and style all its own and is a worthy companion to existing performances by much larger orchestras. Recommended.

Richard Haskell

Bruckner – Les 9 Symphonies
Orchestre Métropolitain; Yannick Nézet-Séguin
ATMA ACD2 2451 (atmaclassique.com)

► This box of ten CDs comprising Les 9 Symphonies sports a gold trim that gives it a rather deluxe look and manages to fit quite a bit of detail in its Spartan-looking 24-page booklet. Significantly, for an Anton Bruckner box, it lists the version and premiere details, which are critical as Bruckner was known to be a sort of serial reviser of his symphonic work. For dyed-in-the-wool fans – and aficionados of classical music – version is, indeed, everything and would explain idiosyncrasies of the opuses performed. Important also is to note that these magnificent versions are an enormous decade-long quest by Yannick Nézet-Séguin and Orchestre Métropolitain de Montréal to put down on record the complete symphonic work of a composer as consumed by spiritual all its own and is a worthy companion to the luxuriant sound found in other recordings.

The booklet notes may not explain why certain Bruckner versions of these symphonies were chosen above others and one might question – as Bruckner is said to have – Franz Schalk’s 1894 version of Symphony No. 5 in B-flat Major WAB 105, which is reported to have 15 to 20 minutes of music cut from it (the composer certainly disagreed with the cuts). Still, what seems to have motivated Nézet-Séguin is certainly the mission to capture the depth of Bruckner’s mysticism and joyful recreation of the composer’s “cathedrals of sound.” This would also explain why Symphony No. 7 in E Minor WAB 107 is a version premiered by the legendary Arthur Nikisch and why Symphony No. 1 in C Minor WAB 101 is taken from Hans Richter’s version premiered on December 13, 1891 (which is what Bruckner seems to have approved for performance on May 9, 1868). If the determination to capture Bruckner at his most intense was the driving force behind Nézet-Séguin’s quest to complete his Bruckner cycle then he has certainly succeeded beyond belief and this box is comprehensive proof. It bears mention that at various points in time complete recordings of the symphonies have been released and reviews of Nos. 2 to 4 and 6 to 9 have also been featured within these pages, which leaves us with Nos. 1 and 5. Symphony No. 1 in C Minor establishes many of Bruckner’s most distinctive characteristics, from the sense of scale to the organ-like washes of orchestral sound and the construction of long expanses from short repeated phrases. The electrifying performance with theleonine power of the Orchestre Métropolitain de Montréal in full throttle is shaped with fantastic conviction by Nézet-Séguin. His speeds are sometimes quite leisurely, but this only increases the symphony’s sense of scale and magnitude. This “Vienna Version” is a terrific achievement.

The Symphony No. 5 in B-flat Major is the first of Bruckner’s mature symphonies to survive in a single version and was his most monumental, being both longer and more finely worked out than its predecessors. It has a sense of solemnity not found in earlier symphonies, with a dramatic sense of conflict generated by the suggestion that passion is always being kept in check. What’s especially impressive about Nézet-Séguin’s performance is the way momentum is always maintained, even in the tricky last movement, where he sails through the unmannered eloquence and power that are the hallmarks of this great performance from the beginning. The devotional, awestruck intensity of the final movement is effectively captured in this recording. Indeed this and the other performances in this box almost certainly comprise the defining recordings of Nézet-Séguin’s career.

Raul da Gama

Kodály – Concerto for Orchestra
Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra; JoAnn Falletta
Naxos 8.573838 (naxos.com)

► These days, when symphony orchestras are going bankrupt all over America, the nearby Buffalo Philharmonic is flourishing. This is the second recording that came to my attention by JoAnn Falletta, their music director, recorded at Kleinhans Music Hall, with fabulous acoustics and designed by one of the forefathers of modern architecture, Eliel Saarinen.

Zoltan Kodály’s best and most popular orchestral works are played with such gusto, enthusiasm and flair that one wonders if Falletta has some Hungarian blood in her veins. Folk music of Hungary is unique in Europe as the Magyar tribes came from the east in the ninth century, their music and rhythms more in common with the Mongols. The two dance pieces Dances of Galánta and Dances of Maroszékek are skillfully composed, colourful collections of folk tunes, sometimes melancholic or driven to a frenzy, which often demonstrate a rhythmic pulse found in Mongolian dances (said Lang Lan), not to mention Hungary having been invaded by the Mongols in the 13th century.

Kodály’s Concerto for Orchestra (1940) was commissioned by and written for the 50th anniversary of the Chicago Symphony. Although less well-known than its counterpart by Bartók, it is a fascinating mixture of high-stopping folk dance and Baroque passacaglia, echoing the concerto-grosso style. Sparklingly performed by the Philharmonic’s superb instrumentalists, conducted with surgical precision by Falletta and rendered in spectacular sound, I was thoroughly enchanted.

The enchantment continues with “The Peacock” Variations (1939), a “very virtuoso showcase of scintillating effects” based on a folk song that became a rallying tune of the fight for freedom in the 1848 uprising of Hungary against the Habsburg oppression. Superb recording, highly recommended.

Janos Gardonyi
MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY

Stravinsky – Rite of Spring: Ligeti – Mysteries of the Macabre; Berg – Three Fragments from Wozzeck; Webern – Six Pieces for Orchestra
Barbara Hannigan; London Symphony Orchestra; Sir Simon Rattle
LSO Live LSO3028 (lsoc.co.uk)

Some will want this album for the major work, the Stravinsky, while others will want to hear how the LSO will sound under their new music director, recently returned from Berlin. Still others, a lot of others, will want to hear what Barbara Hannigan is up to, particularly the outrageous Mysteries of the Macabre, which is a specialty of hers and has been recorded and videoed several times.

Hannigan is astonishingly versatile, a brilliant soprano singing what sopranos sing, in addition to works by 20th- and 21st-century composers, and is developing as a conductor (often while singing!). (There is, by the way, a revealing and fascinating documentary on another DVD, Barbara Hannigan Concert and Documentary from Lucerne (Accentus ACC 20327) published in 2014. In it she explains what Ligeti’s Mysteries of the Macabre is all about. She is the chief of the secret police who is crazy, paranoid and hysterical, who cannot speak real words and gives orders to her squad, the orchestra, in indecipherable code. A crazy but serious piece, especially coming straight after the genuinely searching Webern pieces in a performance that puts the likes of, say, a Boulez to shame.

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Dennett asserts that religions – “ideas to die for and kill for, even if it doesn’t make sense” – have, like biological organisms, evolved by natural selection.

Dennett’s books drew me to this music. If, in turn, listeners are led to read Breaking the Spell, Johnson’s composition will have helped increase their understanding of why people believe as they do.

Michael Schulan

The Make Project
Veryan Weston
Barnyard Records BR0344 (barnyardrecords.com)

I have read, with pleasure, books by secular-humanist philosopher Daniel Dennett on evolution (Darwin’s Dangerous Idea), religion (Breaking the Spell) and consciousness (From Bacteria to Bach and Back). So I was curious to hear this 73-minute, eight-movement work by American composer Scott Johnson (b.1952), using as musical materials the pitches and rhythms of Dennett’s spoken words, recorded at a talk about Breaking the Spell and in interviews with the composer.

Johnson calls his technique, used in this and previous compositions, “speech melody,” adding that Mind Out of Matter contains “musical references ranging from Baroque recitative to retro funk grooves.”

Dennett’s speaking style is conversational and Johnson’s instrumental score is conversational, too, lacking extended melodies or dramatic climaxes. Johnson repeats some of Dennett’s words and phrases many times, usually clearly heard but occasionally submerged under the colourful, ambulating music, mixing elements of classical, rock and jazz. It’s performed by Alarm Will Sound, 17 players on strings, winds, brass and percussion, including alto sax and electric guitar, conducted by Alan Pierson. In one movement, the musicians contribute a chanted chorus.

Scott Johnson – Mind Out of Matter
Alarm Will Sound; Alan Pierson
Tzadik TZ 4021 (alarmwillsound.com)

Alice Ping Yee Ho – The Mysterious Boot
Susan Hoeppner; Winona Zelenka; Lydia Wong
Centrediscs CMCCD 25018 (musiccentre.ca)

Prolific Toronto-based composer Alice Ping Yee Ho adds to her extensive discography with these five works for flute, plus cello and/or piano, brilliantly performed by three superb Toronto musicians: flutist Susan Hoeppner, cellist Winona Zelenka and pianist Lydia Wong.

Ho’s compositions often reflect her Chinese ancestry (she was born in Hong Kong in 1960). Asian Impression for flute, cello and electronic tape “evokes,” writes Ho, “sounds of Asian instruments and ancient tunes.” More “ancient” echoes appear in two works for all three players, but here they’re Greco-Roman. Seirei is the mythical songstress whose hypnotic melodies fatally lured sailors onto reefs. Ho gives the instruments roles: flute/alto flute (Seirei), cello (sailor), piano (sea), creating a turbulent tone-poe scenario. In The Mysterious Boot (subtitled Cothurmus, the boot worn by actors in tragic plays), the musicians employ many unconventional techniques, seeming to offer quirky, hypermodern commentary on an archaic drama.

Ho describes Coeur à Coeur for flute and piano “as an imaginary conversation between two voices...confessing their feelings to each other.” By turns lyrical, passionate, playful, ruminative and vehement, the flute emerges as the dominant voice. Suite for Flute and Piano (1992) is an early Ho composition (the other four date from 2014 to 2017). It’s an attractive, French-sounding piece, suggesting that Ho hadn’t yet found her own dominant stylistic voice, a voice that sings loud and clear in the recent works on this highly entertaining disc.

Michael Schulan

Scott Johnson – Mind Out of Matter
Alarm Will Sound; Alan Pierson
Tzadik TZ 4021 (alarmwillsound.com)

Alice Ping Yee Ho – The Mysterious Boot
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The concert from January 15, 2015 opens with the Webern pieces in a performance that puts the likes of, say, a Boulez to shame. (There is, by the way, a revealing and fascinating documentary on another DVD, Barbara Hannigan Concert and Documentary from Lucerne (Accentus ACC 20327) published in 2014. In it she explains what Ligeti’s Mysteries of the Macabre is all about. She is the chief of the secret police who is crazy, paranoid and hysterical, who cannot speak real words and gives orders to her squad, the orchestra, in indecipherable code. A crazy but serious piece, especially coming straight after the genuinely searching Webern pieces in a performance that puts the likes of, say, a Boulez to shame.

The concert from January 15, 2015 opens with the Webern pieces in a performance that puts the likes of, say, a Boulez to shame. Finally to Le Sacre. The playing is measured, powerful and incisive throughout with accents and attacks quite audible, even in the ferocious but controlled tuttis. Both audio and video are most impressive and considering the repertoire, this Blu-ray disc packaged with a regular DVD is enthusiastically recommended.

Bruce Surtees

Alice Ping Yee Ho – The Mysterious Boot
Susan Hoeppner; Winona Zelenka; Lydia Wong
Centrediscs CMCCD 25018 (musiccentre.ca)

The whole note.com
various combinations of choir, sextet and soloists with expanding meaning and a series of luminous textures. It’s brilliant work that combines genres and techniques to create its own world.

**Stuart Broomer**

**Music for Six Musicians: Hommage à Olivier Messiaen**  
Steve Swell  
Silkheart SHCD 161 (silkheart.se)

> Taking the post-modern concept of saluting favoured musicians without recreating their work, trombonist Steve Swell convened a sextet of New York improvisers to play five of his compositions expanding on the work of French composer Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992). Extrapolating Messiaen’s complex harmonies, rhythms and melodies to the 21st century, this 76-minute suite manages to replicate orchestral verisimilitude with violinist Jason Kao Hwang, cellist Tomas Ulrich, alto saxophonist Rob Brown, keyboardist Robert Boston and drummer Jim Pugliese. Boston’s ecclesiastical organ fills the perfect environment for a sly takeoff on Messiaen’s *Quartet for the End of Time*, titled *Sextet for the End of Democracy*. Quiet but sardonic like the 1941 classic, this piece features appropriate aviary cackles from the strings and plunger variables by Swell. Contrasting melodic cello and astringent reed timbres contribute to the juddering swing as the tune climaxes with swelling organ pulsations. Comparable transformations advance the other tracks, with the polyphonic and nearly atonal final *Exit the Labyrinth* filled with squeaking strings and blasey horns reaching a passionate crescendo; and *Joy and the Remarkable Behavior of Time* outright jazz, matching drum shuffles and pseudo-tailgate trombone with cascading piano chording.

Tellingly it’s the nearly 25-minute *Opening* track which sets up compositional tropes from the dynamic to the compliant, with as many dual contrapuntal challenges and pseudo-romantic tutti outbursts as solos that measure technique against inspiration. More than a *Hommage*, the performance demonstrates how considered inspiration can create a work as memorable as its antecedent(s).

**Ken Waxman**

**JAZZ AND IMPROVISED**

**Sky Glow**  
Chris Platt Trio  
Independent (chrisplattmusic.ca)

> Released internationally in March 2018, guitarist Chris Platt’s debut album is a tight, well-crafted collection of seven original compositions, performed in guitar trio format. Joining Platt are bassist Phill Albert and drummer Robin Claxton, both of whom, like Platt, are graduates of the University of Toronto’s Jazz Studies program. Both Albert and Claxton provide intelligent, engaging support throughout, with compelling solo moments of their own. *Sky Glow* has firm roots in the guitar trio tradition. The album is anchored by Platt’s lonesome archtop tone, and for good reason: his sound is warm and expressive, and synthesizes some of the most pleasant qualities of electric and acoustic guitar playing. The guitar is strongly present in both channels, and is generally foregrounded, allowing the finer details of articulation to be heard throughout the album. While this might become overwhelming with a different player, Platt is sensitive enough that the choice works well. The overall effect, as on the straight-eighths, bossa-tinged title track, is that the deep texture of the guitar provides the backdrop against which the action of the music takes place, even during moments of double-time single-note soloing.

Beyond the title track, notable selections include the contemplative, 3/4 *I Like The Sad Ones*, the raucous *Platter* and the beautiful *When You’re Not Here*, a solo piece whose pairing of harmonic sophistication and hollow-body warmth succinctly distills *Sky Glow*’s charming ethos.

**Colin Story**

**Sometime Ago**  
Jim Vivian; John Abercrombie; Ian Froman; Mike Murley  
Cornerstone Records (cornerstonerecords.com)

> John Abercrombie, who passed away at 72 in 2017, was one of the finest jazz guitarists of his generation. He possessed a consummate lyricism and harmonic subtlety that could stand comparison with the guitarist who initially influenced him, like Jim Hall, while his thumb picking, derived from Wes Montgomery, added a warm, personal sound. This session, led by bassist Jim Vivian, was recorded in Toronto in 2016 following a series of performances at Jazz Bistro. Five of the tracks are trio performances with drummer Ian Froman; three tracks add tenor saxophonist Mike Murley.

It’s eminently listenable music, low-key modern jazz that possesses depths and details that reward close attention. Abercrombie, Vivian and Froman weave complex webs of subtly inflected lines, often on jazz standards. The set opens with *Everything I Love*, a relatively obscure Cole Porter song favoured by jazz musicians – including Bill Evans, whose interactive trio conception informs this group, with Vivian and Froman busy in a positive way. Dave Brubeck’s *In Your Own Sweet Way* gets a similar, slightly abstracted treatment, while Miles Davis’ *Nardis* builds from its spare and slightly exotic melody to inspired scalar improvisation.

Vivian comes to the fore on some imaginative repertoire choices, like *Petty Harbour Bait Skiff*, a song commemorating a nautical disaster from his native Newfoundland, and the Argentinian Sergio Mihanovich’s limpidly beautiful title track. Mike Murley fits in perfectly on the dancing four-way improvisation of Abercrombie’s *Another Ralph’s* and Vivian’s tuneful *Stellarium*.

**Stuart Broomer**

**Orbit**  
Avi Granite 6  
Pet Mantis Records PM102 (petmantisrecords.com)

> Avi Granite 6 is a small combo comprising guitarist Granite, together with an extraordinary assemblage of reeds, trumpet, trombone, bass and drums. But Peter Lutek, Jim Lewis, Tom Richards, Neal Davis and Ted Warren are hardly an average backing band for the guitarist. The sextet comes together to offer a gorgeous evocation of Granite’s music on *Orbit*, which is full of enigmatic depths, expectations, anger, hope, doubt and affirmation amid what seems like a moody atmosphere encountered through a shattered mirror by moonlight.

Despite all of the extreme emotion, Granite’s music as heard on *Like a Magazine* can be meditative, with long, glistening runs on the guitar and saxophone. The guitarist can also be quite rambunctious, plucking and rattling the strings on the broadly grinning *Knocking on the Door*, or downright mysterious as on *Over and Out/Ancient Walkie Talkie*, with his leaping, parabolic lines punctuated with jabbing octaves.

The music of *Orbit* has, by its composer’s admission, been incubating for a decade, some of which was spent in a great personal
crisis. Coming through has meant everything to Granite and this is reflected not only in the CD’s quieter, more contemplative moments, but also in the jagged, bittersweet works such as Undo Process and When the View Became the Way. Together, these 11 pieces represent the work of a thoughtful composer with exceptional resourcefulness and imagination.

**Raul da Gama**

**Octet Vol. 2**

**Dave Young/Terry Promane Octet**

**Modica Music** (daveyoung.ca)

Following the success of their first album, **Octet Vol. 1**, the Dave Young/Terry Promane Octet is back with **Vol. 2**, a collection of ten songs arranged by group co-leaders Young (bass) and Promane (trombone). A standard bearer for the Canadian large ensemble tradition of Phil Nimmons and Rob McConnell, the DYTP 8 features some of Toronto’s most prominent and well-established musicians, including Kevin Turcotte (trumpet/flugelhorn), Vern Dorge (alto saxophone), Mike Murley (tenor saxophone), Perry White (baritone saxophone), Dave Restivo (piano) and Terry Clarke (drums), all of whom deliver memorable, top-tier performances.

For the uninitiated, the DYTP 8 functions more like a big band than it does as a traditional combo-style group. Listeners can expect to hear clear melodic statements, thoughtfully voiced horn backgrounds, and punchy rhythm section playing, all of which are present on the Promane-arranged Oh, What A Beautiful Morning, the album’s first track. Young’s evocative arrangement of Duke Ellington’s Sound of Love is another winning moment, as is the Murley original Can’t You See, a bouncy, medium-up-tempo bebop tune that features solos from Young, Promane and Murley, in addition to athletic contributions from the whole band, with special mention to drummer Clarke on Promane’s solo.

Highly recommended both to large-ensemble aficionados and newcomers to the genre, **Octet Vol. 2** is engaging from start to finish, with a strong performance from an experienced band that sounds bigger than its size.

**Colin Story**

**Out of Silence**

**François Carrier; Michel Lambert**

**FMR Records** FMRCD455 (francoiscarrier.com)

Two of Canada’s foremost jazz artists, saxophonist François Carrier and drummer Michel Lambert, have come together to create and record a spontaneous, symbiotic expression of skilled, improvisational, musical possibilities. All of the pieces on this remarkable project are improvised creations of Carrier and Lambert, who by travelling along the tones and beats of mankind’s most elemental musical impulses have morphed into inter-dimensional space/time travellers – soaring seamlessly between conscious and subconscious thought, in and around their own memories and egos, through deep emotional subtext, cultural precepts and to the very soul itself.

This CD was beautifully recorded as a live concert at Ryan’s Bar in London, UK, and Carrier wears several hats here: producer, sound designer and artist. There are seven odysseys on the recording – and each one is evocative and stirring in its own nuanced way, with its own dual-narrative. The opening salvo is the title track – crisp, arrogant, and at the same time, strangely melancholic – like a lost youth from West Side Story questioning every boundary. This is an urban landscape, and Lambert’s intricate and skilled brushwork, propels the action, while Carrier is the virtual voice in the Gotham-like wilderness. Ancient DNA engraves vibrate into this reality, with the addition of Carrier’s Chinese oboe. As the piece progresses, perspective and overview – both musically and emotionally – begin to percolate and coalesce: eventually, a new perspective is birthed by Lambert, whose playing feels as though it could be the sacred heartbeat of Mother Earth herself.

Out of Silence (both the track and the disc as a whole) is brave, audacious and sometimes uncomfortably exposing – but it is also joyous and freeing at a deeply profound level. Only two artists at the peak of their talent, insight and skill could produce a project of such gravitas and complexity.

**Lesley Mitchell-Clarke**

**The River**

**John Roney; Tevet Sela**

**Effendi Records** FND149 (effendirecords.com)

“it’s all kind of going in a big cultural pot.” Those are some of the essence-capturing words Montreal-based jazz pianist John Roney uses to describe The River, his collaborative project with Israeli-born, Montreal-based, alto saxophonist Tevet Sela, in a September 2017 YouTube video introducing the project, which was released the following month. The “it’s” he refers to is the amalgam of their diverse musical influences permeating – or perhaps more apt, flowing through – The River: Middle Eastern, klezmer, classical chamber music and North African rhythms.

The album is a most engaging collaboration. Roney and Sela are highly skilled and innovative players and composers, this is apparent from The River’s ten original tracks. After listening to the entire CD several times (it warrants an uninterrupted session), these are some of the words that came to mind: lyrical, poignant, probing, driving, intimate, hypnotic, expansive, compelling, moving and mellifluous.

From the CD’s cover art to each evocatively named composition – in addition to the title track are such monikers as Watershed, Always Too Far, Gentle Shifts, Dream in Blue, Closer Horizon, Calm Flat Sea – Sela and Roney have created a singular musical journey that does indeed flow with a river’s momentum.

I conclude, as I began, with some words by Roney from the YouTube video: “The river is really a metaphor for the overwhelming power of inspiration, improvisation and really being spontaneous in the moment, and allowing the music to carry you forward.” May your spirit be inspired and buoyed up by The River.

**Sharna Searle**

**Concert Notes:** The Tevet Sela Quartet performs May 4 at The Rex (Toronto) and May 5 at The Jazz Room (Waterloo).

**Dr. Quixotic’s Traveling Exotics**

**Jon Irabagon Quartet with Tim Hagans**

**Irabagbag Records** 010 (jonirabagon.com)

“Saxophonist Jon Irabagon rose to prominence in Mostly Other People Do the Killing, the eclectic, ironic, virtuosic band that has redefined the parameters of jazz with post-modern pastiche since 2003. His current projects stretch from the modern mainstream to solo soprano concerts. This quartet is rooted in post-bop (the 60s Jazz Messengers and tenor saxophonists Wayne Shorter and Joe Henderson: riffs, vamps, ostinatos, modes) but has its own approach, with a breadth that extends comfortably forward.

Irabagon sticks to his tenor here, and his big sound and hard-edged authority are apparent from his introduction to The Demon Barber of Fleet Week (the CD has a medicine/freak show theme), focusing the coiled energy of a working band, recorded while on tour in Buenos Aires. Pianist Luis Perdomo, bassist Yasushi Nakamura and drummer Rudy Royston all exude the same intense command of a complex language.

Veteran trumpeter Tim Hagans (he first recorded in 1974) joins the group on several tracks, a restrained complement to the leader’s bristle. He’s at his finest on Pretty Like...
Near Me
LJ Folk
Independent NMLJF-FSM-18 (ljfolk.com)

A New Standard
Thompson Egbo-Egbo
eOne Entertainment EMC-CD-16 (egbo.ca)

Holly Cole
Universal Music Canada O256726398 (hollycole.com)
Concert Note: Joe McPhee is part of a program of improvised music at the Music Gallery, 918 Bathurst St. on April 29.

POT POURRI

Conversation of the Birds
David Buchbinder's OdessaHavana
Independent MFR CD003
(odesshahavana.com)

David Buchbinder’s release “Conversation of the Birds” forays into the countryside of fantasy while still staying on course for the musical realms between the Baltic and Cuba, where he befriends much more than fine feathered friends in the forests outside Odessa and Havana. If one has been an admirer of the trumpeter and his extraordinary group, one can now be persuaded to go travelling with him and his posse that includes drummer Mark Kelso, violinist/violist Aleksandar Gajic,.extraordinary pianist Hilario Duran and the ineffably beautiful vocals of Maryem Hassan Tollar – you can hear a sense of freedom in her voice as she remembers the elegance of the proverbial bridesmaid in La Galana, while the elegance of the band sends her spirits soaring during another visit to Iberia in Bembe Andaluz.

Throughout the visceral excitement of this music the listener is transported to a rarefied realm, all but becoming a part of the vivid, natural landscape – one that mixes beauty and danger, and conjures the exotic locales in the keening ululations of Tollar as well as in the congas, bongos, chekere and darbuka. All of the musicians are completely attuned to Buchbinder’s unique vision and artistry. Saxophonist John Johnson, Flamenco guitarist Benjamin Barrile and percussionists Joaquin Hidalgo and Raquy Danziger deliver hugely powerful performances evocative of steamy Cuban and Turkish afternoons as well as freezing Baltic nights on this inspiring musical journey.

Raul da Gama

Concert note: OdessaHavana shares the bill with KUNÉ – Canada’s Global Orchestra at Koerner Hall on April 7.

KUNÉ – Canada’s Global Orchestra
KUNÉ
The Royal Conservatory 8088909562 (rcmusic.com/performance/KUNE)

Launched last year as the New Canadian Global Music Orchestra, the Toronto ensemble self-described as “Canada’s Global Orchestra” has recently been gifted with a new change. Rebranded KUNÉ, it has produced an ambitious eponymous debut album as its calling card. KUNÉ means “together” in Esperanto, the most widely spoken constructed language in the world. With one of its core tenets being “to foster harmony between people from different countries,” it’s an apt language with which to succinctly express the raison d’etre of this multicultural musical group.

The ensemble consists of 13 virtuoso Canadian resident musicians each with deep roots in a different country’s music and language, plus Métis fiddler and singer Alyssa Delhaere-Sawchuk. Under the skilled artistic direction of the JUNO Award-winning trumpeter, composer and “cultural inventor” David Buchbinder, this album is the first permanent record of KUNÉ’s “journey to create a band that looks and sounds like Canada today.”

The opening track features Delhaere-Sawchuk’s suite We Met in Tkaronto. Located the band’s project firmly on native land, the track twigs us to the multi-border-crossing musical journey ahead. Delhaere-Sawchuk’s confident fiddling at first welcomes the listener to what sounds like familiar Celtic territory. It’s only when the kora, sitar and other world instruments enter that we realize that this album aims to add layer to multicultural musical layer.

To detail the vast range of musical and cultural influences, instruments and music genres traversed in the album’s 14 tracks is impossible to do succinctly – let alone to adequately assess the artistic and cultural resonances generated. I won’t hesitate however to state that repeated listening will gradually reveal plenty of music to explore for the globally curious sonic traveller. They will find both musical riches and a worldview-affirming transcultural harmony.

Andrew Timar

Concert note: KUNÉ shares the bill with David Buchbinder’s OdessaHavana at Koerner Hall on April 7.

Near East
Near East Trio (Ravi Naimpally; Demetri Petsalakis; Ernie Tollar)
Independent NE001 (nearasteetro.com)

This excellent album is like an elegant railway system linking jazz, folk, Hindustani, Mediterranean and Middle Eastern music, which all seem to come together in an elegant 21st-century conservatoire. But to describe it as such might also give the impression of overcooking when in fact it is a masterpiece of subtlety. Ernie Tollar’s reeds and woodwinds are an exotic take on the lineage of the cool spacey music of an Indian durbar and the moist echo of a Turkish bath. The exotic atmospherics come from the flute, albeit in a less than conventional setting, even as Tollar summons breathy woody tones from the instrument. These float benignly over the sound of Demetri Petsalakis’ lutes, which in turn add a rich harmonic foundation to the music.

Meanwhile the regal rumble of Ravi Naimpally’s tabla makes for a hypnotic trance-like beat. The surprises when they come on songs such as Cairo and Muzafir are effective but discreet: a gamelan-like riff is played as pizzicato harmonies; a delicate curlicue of a bass drum line underpins what sounds like a Gaelic lament played on the flute; and a close-knit ensemble passage on Muzafir develops from a single phrase. That said, there are moments throughout when the trio loosens just enough to let the individual instrumental personality through, as when a soaring ney flute emerges imparting a mystical tinge, or a lyra solo arises from the relentless cycles conjuring the otherworldliness of this music.

Raul da Gama

This City
Heavyweights Brass Band
Lulaworld Records
(heavyweightsbrassband.com)

The uplifting, toe-tapping, impressive playing of the Heavyweights Brass Band in their third release has the band live up to its name with great, diverse musical sounds. The five members – John Pittman (trumpet), Chris Butcher (trombone), Paul Metcalfe (tenor saxophone), Tom Richards (tuba/keyboard/trombone) and Lowell Whitty (drums/percussion) – are each brilliant in any role from soloist, to backup support, to improvisers, to astute group musicians, to composer/arrangers. This time they travelled to New Orleans to record in the city of their inspiration, collaborating with special guests from both there and Toronto.

The eight tracks blast with wide-ranging styles and influences. Richards’ Two Foot Ticket is an intriguing mix of low tuba lead line contrasted by higher pitched horns sections and a smart solo by guest guitarist Kevin Brett. I love guest Roger Lewis’ Roger’s Intro, with its wailing baritone sax leading into Metcalfe’s get-up-and-boogie funky dance tune Dance Out On The Corner. There’s a refreshing, almost laid-back yet fun feel in the Metcalfe arrangement of Stevie Wonder’s hit Tell Me Something Good. Another change of pace is guest vocalist Jackie Richardson soaring through Pittman’s at times almost
folk music arrangement of Steve Earle’s This City.

Great to hear the Heavyweights evolving both in the to-be-expected brass band funk/Latin/jazz/R&B tradition and taking on the challenges of covers, different styles and working with special guests. All of which makes for dancing and listening hurrahs.

Tony Montague, music journalist for the Georgia Straight and ROOTS, wrote, “Zimbamoto is the most exciting band playing African music to emerge on the West Coast for too many years.” Based on the evidence on Tambai, I have to agree.

Led by lead singer, mbira, and marimba player Kurai Mubaiwa, his band Zimbamoto’s sound and energy firmly rooted in the exhilarating traditional and contemporary melodies and rhythms of Zimbabwe and surrounds. Having played the mbira since childhood in his native Zimbabwe, Mubaiwa has in the last 20 years established himself as a leading mbira/marimba musician and teacher. He has toured internationally with musicians like Cesária Évora, Chiwoniso Maraire and Vusi Mahlasela. His group Zimbamoto sings in Shona and plays with an Afrobeat sensibility. The band’s drive is firmly anchored by Curtis Andrews’ deeply West African informed and tonally-inflected drum kit playing. Vancouver guitarist Mark Campbell, bassist Greg Valou and percussionist/singer Navaro Franco round out this adept band.

The lyrics of this exhilarating ten-song album explore Mubaiwa’s experiences growing up in Zimbabwe. I love the moments when a song switches to cut time, as on the outstanding track Asita Multi. Other beautiful musical moments of note: harmonically textured and contrapuntal vocal response choruses, striking reggae moments, and every time a countermelody or vocal response choruses, striking reggae harmonically textured and contrapuntal vocal response choruses, striking reggae moments, and every time a countermelody or vocal response choruses, striking reggae harmonically textured and contrapuntal vocal response choruses, striking reggae moments, and every time a countermelody or vocal response choruses, striking reggae harmonically textured and contrapuntal vocal response choruses.

Ivana Popovic

The closest link to the classic(al) duo concept is piano duo Pétrôle’s Créations raffinées pour deux pianos [Refined Pieces for Two Pianos] (Pépin & Plume P&P 005 pepinetplume.com). The stated aim of French pianists Nathalie Darche and Carine Llobet (the former known as a jazz player and the latter specializing in chamber music) is to renew the duo piano repertoire by playing pieces by younger jazz composers. Tilts in varied directions enliven the interpretations. This is most obvious on Les pensées offshore d’Arthur, the first and longest piece. Relaxed romanticism, the adagio sequences are only slightly transformed by quick jazz-like modulations at the end. The reverse is evident on Pétrôle Interlude, mostly concerned with vibrating the darkest parts of the instruments’ action and soundboard. Tremolo torque spreads the interpretation so that it’s mesmerizing as well as kinetic, with echoes created by four hands punching at once. These are the CD’s parameters; the players’ high level of coordination allows them to slide nearly effortlessly from neo-classical, almost sugary passages that match crystalline fingering with front-parlour-like sentimentality, to bright, modernist sequences, where theme depiction is both lively and agitated. Overlapping cadenzas constantly move the melody delineation and tone decoration from one instrument to the other.

Meanwhile, tremolo syncopation and overlapping piano percussiveness are taken to extremes without swing on Music in Eight Octaves (Immediata IMMO 11 anthonypateras.com), by two Australians performing as the duo 176. Chris Abrahams is a member of The Necks trio, and Anthony Pateras is involved with electroacoustic and multi-disciplinary projects. If the preceding disc could be compared to a volume of tasteful poetry, then this one is a novel, with colourful melodrama on every page. One super-fast and aggressive 50-minute track, Music in Eight Octaves is the result of the two recording four takes in each octave of the piano, which Pateras then multi-tracked and superimposed over each other. Overwrought and almost opaque textures call to mind Conlon Nancarrow player piano studies and George Antheil’s original Ballet Mécanique for synchronized player pianos. Besides the sinewy speed of this performance, which rattles through pan-tonality and double...
An obsessive perfectionist, he polished these works into gleaming gems. As a composer who also played piano, he seems to have written for the instrument idiomatically and this is heard in everything, most especially on Ragtime from “Divertissement”.

Ensemble Vivant parleys with the familiarity of old friends, yet their playing always retains a sense of gracious etiquette associated with the noble chamber ballroom for which this music was intended. Nothing is forced, exaggerated or overly mannered; tempos, ensemble and balance all seem effortlessly right. The string sound is lucid, while the trumpet, flugelhorn and saxophone add great warmth and swing. These are, in sum, sincere and poised accounts, a fitting tribute to the musical character of Rick Wilkins.

**Tribute to Rick Wilkins**

**Ensemble Vivant with Guido Basso; Brian Barlow; Mike Murley**

**Opening Day (ensemblevivant.com)**

Ensemble Vivant is just the chamber group you would want when you need music to sound symphonic. And when you add the husky seduction of Guido Basso’s horn, the cool eloquence of Mike Murley’s tenor saxophone, the rumbling majesty of Jim Vivian’s bass and the percussion colouring of Brian Barlow, what you get is absolute magic.

This is exactly the case with Ensemble Vivant’s live Tribute to Rick Wilkins, a fitting homage to the prodigious composer, arranger, conductor and tenor saxophonist. He was a pillar of such legendary bands as the Canadian Brass and the orchestra of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (among many others), and onetime music director of CBS, Los Angeles – credentials surely deserving of the rhapsodic homage accorded the 81-year-old by the Ensemble here.

This is chaste and faultless Wilkins-arranged repertoire ranging from Kern and Gershwin to J.S. Bach and Ernesto Lecouna, presented on DVD (directed by Darryl Lahteenmaa) and on CD (captured with muted serenity by Chad Irshick). Led by pianist and artistic director Catherine Wilson and comprising violinist Corey Gemmell, violist Norman Hathaway and cellist Sybil Shanahan, the music (recorded at Grace Church on-the-Hill in Toronto) sheds fresh light on Wilkins’ work.

Counterpoint, higher pitches suggest marimba timbres. Transitions in the piece are only obvious when both pianists cease playing in either the higher- or lower-pitched keys, leaving some breathing room, which quickly upsurges again to almost unyielding friction.

Consistently pulse-quickening, the effects mash together Cecil Taylor-like kinetics and Oscar Peterson-like comprehension so that the combination of tempo changes and thickened discord becomes exhausting as well as exhilarating. Following its own logic, the session never climaxes; it just stops.

The next two CDs were recorded in concert: To Pianos (Clean Feed CF 448 CD cleanfeedrecords.com) with Paris-based Eve Risser and her Slovenian associate Kaja Draksler; and Octopus (Pyroclastic Records PR 03 krisdavis.net), featuring Canadian Kris Davis and American Craig Taborn. Interestingly enough the eight tracks on the first disc and six on the other are split between compositions and improvisations, except for a (different) Carla Bley tune on each, and Davis and Taborn also assaying Sun Ra’s Love in Outer Space. By contrast, the Risser-Draksler duo begins the concert in inner space, with ringing bell-like reflections, then diffuses the program in double counterpart with ambulatory or more settled creations. Among the improvisations, To Pianists is notable for inner-string plucks and e-bow vibrations which play up the instruments’ percussiveness; inchoate drones and wood-echoing thumps almost turn the piano into 88 tuned drums. Unlike the inconclusive scene-setting of that track however, To Women’s key rattling and stopped strings, filtered through changing tempos, moves a hushed interaction from still to swinging. The duo’s playful mash-up of Bley’s Walking Woman and Batterie, with swelling variations on the theme(s), adds a springy sheen to the proceedings. Detours into funereal pacing and key slapping affect some other tunes, but To You, the concert encore, finds the two synthesizing their balanced approach. This moderated, meditative piece is both expressive and energetic, with sympathy as well as strength in evidence.

Davis and Taborn work through material recorded at three concerts, ranging from the equivalent of Risser/Draksler’s supportive phrase-making to Abrahams/Pateras’ keyboard fluctuations, and a mid-course involving as many instances of adaptation as advances. Prone to Bill Evans-like meditations elsewhere, they demonstrate on tracks like the Davis-composed Ossining and Chatterbox their capacity for popping and plucking sequences where, by the tunes’ completion,
Old Wine, New Bottles
Fine Old Recordings Re-Released

BRUCE SURTEES

In 2009, to celebrate their 111th year of making recordings, DG issued 111 years of Deutsche Grammophon in two collector’s boxes of 55 and 56 CDs containing landmark recordings from the earliest days to the (then) present. Issued as limited editions, they are still to be had... at a price! Since then they have produced more “111” collections: sets featuring the violin and the piano, as well as 11 Great Videos (a 13DVD set) – all a boon to the enquiring minds of countless collectors. The latest, 111 - The Conductors (DG 4797477, 40 CDs) offers outstanding performances from 40 maestros recorded by DG who were part of the classical music scene since the 1930s. There is absolutely no padding in this collection; each performance was critically praised in the initial release, very often becoming the recommended performance in its repertoire. Here are some: Daphnis and Chloe, etc. (Abbadato); Saint-Saëns Third Symphony, etc. (Barenboim); Mahler First and Second Symphonies (Bernstein); Bruckner Eighth Symphony (Böhm); Stravinsky Symphony of Psalms, Schoenberg (Boulez); Mendelssohn Fourth, etc. (Fritz Busch, 1950); Prokofiev Third Symphony, etc. (Chailly); Messiaen Turangalîla-Symphony (Y. and J. Loriod; Chung); Brahms Fourth Symphony, Kodály (de Sabata); music of Revueltas, Ginastera, etc. (Gustavo Dudamel); Johann Strauss works (Fricasay); Brahms First, Schubert Eighth (Furtwängler, 1952); Beethoven Fourth and Sixth (Gardiner), Bruckner Ninth (Giulini); Mozart Violin Concertos Three, Four and Five (Gidon Kremer, Harnoncourt), Sibelius tone poems (Neeme Järvi); Mozart “Jupiter,” Schubert “Unfinished” (Jochum); Beethoven Ninth, etc. (Karajan 1962); Beethoven Symphonies Five and Seven (Carlos Kleiber); Dvořák Symphonies Eight and Nine (Kubelik).

Know that this is not a list of the best of the best, selected from the 40 CDs, but the exact contents of the first 21 discs, conductors A to K! These honoured performances with the finest orchestras, Berlin, Vienna, Boston, Leningrad, London and others, all in the best sound, are beyond any serious criticism. The other 19 include Lehmann, Leitner, Levine, Maazel, Markевич, Mravinsky, Andris Nelsons, Ozawa, Nézet-Séguin, Rattle, Steinberg, Previn, Sinopoli, Thielemann, Minkowski, Schuricht ... and the list goes on. An irresistible collection all around. See the complete track listing at deutschegrammophon.com/en/cat/4797477.

Deutsche Grammophon also offers special editions of selected conductors’ recordings, including Karl Böhm’s acclaimed interpretations in Karl Böhm: Great Recordings 1953-1972 (4797021, 17 CDs). Böhm was of the old school of conductors, in the best sense of that appellation. He conducted with a firm beat and, as far as I’ve seen or heard, was not inclined to romanticize. Included is a cross section of powerful performances, mostly with the Berlin Philharmonic with whom he had a close working relationship over the years: Beethoven, Symphonies 3, 5, 7 and the Missa Solemnis; Brahms Symphonies 1 and 2; Haydn The Seasons; lots of Mozart; Mahler Kindertotenlieder and Four Räckert Lieder (Fischer-Dieskau); and lots of Richard Strauss. Just as one would expect. Also of interest is a 40-minute rehearsal followed by the complete performance of Schubert’s Ninth Symphony (Berlin, 1963).

As an aside, consider Böhm’s business-like tempi in Wagner’s Ring as heard in the 1966/67 live recordings from Bayreuth issued a few years ago, re-mastered on Decca (4782367, 14 CDs). It has been argued that Böhm’s faster-than-usual, objective tempi are a downside, but listening with a different attitude can lead to a different appreciation. Incidentally, Birgit Nilsson fans may know that of all her recordings including the Solti, she considered this to be her finest Brunnhilde.

It is a fact of life that in the performing arts, fame can be and often is short-lived for instrumentalists, vocalists and conductors alike. Appian Recordings has gone to a lot of search and research to issue a 2CD set of pianist Leff Pouishnoff – The Complete 78-rpm and selected Saga LP recordings (APR2002 apprecordings.co.uk). I’m sure that some aficionados recognize the name but I did not. Leff Pouishnoff (1891-1959) was born in Odessa, the birthplace of so many famous names in the classical hierarchy. The parents of George Gershwin and Bob Dylan also migrated from Odessa. Pouishnoff studied composition at the St. Petersburg Conservatory with Rimsky-Korsakov, Ladov and Glazunov, graduating in 1910 with a Gold Medal. In 1911 he toured with violinist Leopold Auer. The Russian Revolution forced him into exile and he went to Persia, where he became the first pianist ever to tour that country. He went to Paris but soon moved to London where he did rather well, giving five recitals in Wigmore Hall during February and March 1921 playing Bach, Rachmaninov and Scriabin to great acclaim.

From 1921 on, one can almost track the course of his life via his recordings. He played at the Proms in 1922 and recorded four sides for Columbia that are to be heard on the first disc of this release. Six more sides in 1923. He made his North American debut in 1923, then back at the 1923 Proms, returning to tour the United States in 1924. It was in the 1920s he earned a reputation as a Chopin player and in 1926 gave a week of Chopin recitals in Wigmore Hall. So successful were they that he repeated the series in 1927.

In May 1926, the dawn of electric recordings, Pouishnoff set down the Rosamunde Ballet music of Schubert and Glazunov’s Polka. In March 1928 for the Schubert centenary, he recorded the sonata in G Major “Fantasie” op.78 “that displays all of Pouishnoff’s best qualities, the luminous tone, elegance and suave control.” Heard here on CD1, it does. He made his last recordings for Columbia in February and March 1929. During the Second World War he continued playing and gave concerts for the troops but in truth, his halcyon days were back in the 1920s.

After the war, it seemed that his repertoire was out of favour, to be replaced by such heavies as Artur Schnabel and Wilhelm Backhaus playing more substantial works from the Austro-German school. He returned to the studio in mid-1948, this time for HMV where he recorded five Chopin sides. In 1958 Saga Records brought him back for some Chopin and the longer Theme and Variations by Glazunov and much more. Leff Pouishnoff died in June 1959, followed less than three weeks later by his wife, who chose to die. All his 78s are here and some Saga items although there is a mystery, detailed in the booklet, concerning the whereabouts of the missing Saga tapes. Along with the Schubert Sonatas, which runs 31 minutes, and the Glazunov Theme and Variations at 18 minutes, there are 33 charming short pieces by the masters, masterfully delivered. Very pleasant listening. The two-disc set is priced as one.

Decca and DG are reissuing some outstanding analog recordings in new remastered editions on Blu-ray audio discs. I should say audio disc, singular, as there is the complete Karajan Ring Cycle on one disc, and a complete Salome with Nilsson sounding shockingly real on one disc. Now we have the five Beethoven Piano Concertos from Vladimir Ashkenazy with Georg Solti and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra on a single Blu-ray disc packaged with three newly remastered regular CDs. These acknowledged performances and recordings enjoy a new reality, particularly on the Blu-ray edition (Decca 4832579, 3 CDs & 1 Blu-ray disc).
Taylor Academy Orchestra
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 11, 7:30PM
MAZZOLENI CONCERT HALL
Free tickets can be reserved starting Mon., Apr. 4.
String students from The Phil and Eli Taylor Performance Academy for Young Artists come together as the Academy Chamber Orchestra to perform this special concert.

Beatrice Rana
SUNDAY, APRIL 8, 3PM / PRE-CONCERT TALK 2PM / KOERNER HALL
Tickets start at only $30
Italian pianist Beatrice Rana won three major awards in 2017: Edison Klassiek Award as “Discovery of the Year,” the BBC Music Magazine’s “Newcomer of the Year” Award, and the Gramophone “Young Artist of the Year” Award. Hear her perform works by Schumann, Ravel, and Stravinsky.
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Gerald Finley with Julius Drake
SUNDAY, APRIL 22, 3PM
KOERNER HALL
Tickets start at only $40
Having received multiple Gramophone Awards together, Canadian baritone Gerald Finley and British pianist Julius Drake return to Koerner Hall to perform works by Schubert, Rachmaninov, Beethoven, as well as American and English folk songs.
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Dianne Werner
SUNDAY, APRIL 15, 2018 2PM
MAZZOLENI CONCERT HALL
Tickets: $25
Dianne Werner is an exceptional soloist, accompanist, and chamber musician acclaimed for her lyrical and poetic style. One of Canada’s pre-eminent cultural ambassadors, she will be joined by Andres Diaz to perform Rachmaninoff’s Corelli Variations and sonata for piano and cello.

Johannes Debus conducts the Royal Conservatory Orchestra
FRIDAY, APRIL 20, 8PM / PRELUDE RECITAL 6:45PM
KOERNER HALL
Tickets start at only $25
Canadian Opera Company Music Director, Johannes Debus, will conduct the Glenn Gould School’s Royal Conservatory Orchestra, in a special concert of works by Hector Berlioz, Francis Poulenc, and Leonard Bernstein’s “Symphonic Dances” from West Side Story.
Part of the Temerty Orchestral Program

Rolston String Quartet with Robert McDonald
SUN., APR. 8, 2PM MAZZOLENI CONCERT HALL
Free tickets can be reserved starting Mon., April 2.
Canada’s Rolston String Quartet, comprised of alumni of The Glenn Gould School, captured the musical world’s attention by winning the 2016 Banff International String Quartet Competition. They will perform Debussy’s String Quartet and will be joined by pianist Robert McDonald for Schumann’s Piano Quintet in E flat Major, op. 44.
Generously supported by Dorothy Cohen Shoichet
They were as opulent and upfront as the Imperial Room at the Royal York Hotel, which frequently hosted internationally famous stars such as Ella Fitzgerald; or they were as grotty and out-of-the-way as the Subway Room of the Spadina Hotel on King Street, where CODA magazine’s Bill Smith presented avant-garde improvisers in the early 1980s. Some like George’s Spaghetti House on Dundas Street E. operated for 38 years until 1994; others like Queen Street’s Matt Muldoon’s lasted barely a year in 1978. But what these clubs and about 75 other music spots did over the years was provide a place for Toronto’s jazz musicians to play, where fans knew they could go to see their favourite music.

Notes in the Night: The History of Toronto Jazz Clubs Since 1946, on show at The Market Gallery until June 23, offers an audiovisual history of that phenomenon. To present a three-dimensional view of the scene, the exhibit includes more than 200 items on its walls, on standalone panels and in display cases. Not only are there rare photographs of the clubs and performers in their heydays, but also ephemera that take in club menus and table cards, match boxes, LP covers, tickets, advertisements and wall posters. Highlighting 19 major venues, one wall includes a poster of a kilt-wearing saxophonist Jim Galloway advertising an upcoming gig with pianist Doug Riley at the Montreal Bistro. In one display case is a vintage photo of Moe Koffman playing two saxophones at once during a performance at George’s; in another, pianist/singer Jay McShann leads Galloway’s Wee Big Band through its paces at the Montreal Bistro. A 1982 portrait shows drummer Art Blakey in front of Basin Street’s sparkling tinsel backdrop; and a 1960 photo from the House of Hambourg finds a band of young Toronto jazzers trying to impersonate New York junkies in a local version of the play The Connection. Another wall displays a 1966 Toronto Telegram photo shoot of the mock-picketing of the Savarin Tavern by local reed players demanding to be included in The Boss Brass. There’s also an evocative late-night photo of the Queen streetcar moving past the illuminated Town Tavern sign.

Besides a continuous slideshow projecting 80 images otherwise not seen in the exhibition, are two audiovisual presentations: one monitor shows Toronto Jazz, Don Owen’s 1963 film classic, featuring performances by guitarist Lenny Breau’s trio and saxophonist Don (D.T.) Thompson’s quintet; another monitor captures musicians Don Vickery, Molly Johnson and Archie Alleyne discussing aspects of their careers on the local jazz scene.

Toronto’s club explosion happened after 1946 when new Liquor Licensing Board of Ontario dining lounge rules allowed live music venues to sell liquor, explains Ralph Coram, guest curator for the Market Gallery show. “Pent-up demand after wartime austerity and later the building of the subway system facilitated the growth of burgeoning nightlife districts downtown.” All the clubs were in an area bordered by Bathurst and Sherbourne, Dupont to Front, often in rundown but historically important buildings. The majority of clubs allowed patrons and players of all backgrounds to mingle. So for almost every photo of well-dressed patrons drinking at tiny night-club tables with a band in the background, there are shots of intense fans raptly gazing at the improvisation of among others, pianists Ray Bryant or Lennie Tristano. Most jazz clubs were set up and managed by hoteliers or restaurateurs who had an established operation that could be granted a liquor licence, notes Coram. “The pure music places tended to be the unlicensed after-hours clubs whose patrons
Bernstein’s Candide

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were attuned to jazz and who appreciated a casual or bohemian atmosphere, as a reaction against the social and cultural mores of Toronto the Good,” he adds. Toronto’s original so-called music room was the House of Hambourg which operated from 1948 to 1963 in four locations near Bloor and Bay.

Some clubs specialized in Dixieland, others in modern jazz. But the ones which lasted the longest, such as George’s, Bourbon Street/Basin Street, the Colonial and the Town Tavern offered all sorts of fare. “Many of the owners were music fans and they became even more so if the place made money,” notes Coram. “Some even booked hard-core jazz bands as a prestige or loss-leader venture.” Still, in some cases the lowering of the drinking age to 18 in 1971 led some to start featuring rock music. One show-side-light also traces the activities of several jazz entrepreneurs active at the time, such as Dave Caplan. A tailor, not a club owner, during a career that lasted from the late 1950s to the mid-1980s, he booked jazz at locations that included Club Norman, East 89th, St. Regis Hotel and Meyer’s Deli. One photo shows a snappily dressed Caplan greeting patrons at the St. Regis.

“The pure music places tended to be … a reaction against the social and cultural mores of Toronto the Good.”
— Ralph Coram

The exhibit was the result of four years of research which involved combing though voluminous paper and photographic files in university, library, government and private archives. Coram explains that “I’m old enough to have been to some of these places like the Colonial, and Bourbon Street. The experiences there always stuck with me and I wanted to bring them back to public consciousness through visual history.

“While this exhibition shows that jazz heritage is a large part of Toronto’s reputation as Music City, the debate in this city around the continuing demise of live music venues is something the jazz community has been dealing with for decades. There’s never been a shortage of local jazz musicians, just a shortage of places for them to play. The jazz community was also right at the centre of some of the social issues of the day, including the struggle to overcome racism, to include Canadian musical content in shows and to participate in urban revitalization.”

Notes in the Night continues until June 23. Located on the second floor of the St. Lawrence Market, 95 Front St. E., the gallery is open Tuesday to Thursday: 10am to 4pm; Friday: 10am to 6pm; Saturday: 9am to 4pm. Closed Sundays, Mondays. toronto.ca/marketgallery

Ken Waxman, a regular contributor to DISCoveries, also writes the Something in the Air column.

This Thirsty Land
April 29, 2018 3:30pm
St Anne’s Anglican Church, 270 Gladstone Ave, Toronto

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