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San Francisco-based Christopher Felver is an award-winning photographer and filmmaker, perhaps best-known for his portraits of American cultural and arts luminaries – in particular people associated with beat literature.

“Terry Riley has been inspiring and collaborating with many artists for years. One such artist, the poet Michael McClure, introduced us around the time the picture was made. It all happened in his studio in Berkeley one morning very early. Amy McClure has told me of his passion for practicing many hours everyday so when I arrived it was no surprise to see him behind his piano finishing up a new composition before heading to his ranch in the Sierras with his wife.”

– Chris Felver

FEATURES

7 OPENER | This Time I’ve Got Nothing (So Thank Goodness for Our Columnists) | DAVID PERLMAN

8 FEATURE | University of Toronto Faculty of Music Reaches 100 | DAVID PERLMAN

12 MUSIC AND FILM | The Yellow Ticket | PAUL ENNIS

14 FEATURE | New Year New Music | DAVID JAEGGER

18 ON OUR COVER | In With the New - Timeless Terry Riley; Sea change at 21C | WENDE BARTLEY

78 MUSIC AND HEALTH | Recollectiv’s Restorative Mission | VIVIEN FELLEGI

80 WE ARE ALL MUSIC’S CHILDREN | December / January’s Child | MJ BUELL

99 REARVIEW MIRROR | TSO: Crises Weathered, Challenges Ahead | ROBERT HARRIS

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BEAT BY BEAT

22 Choral Scene | BRIAN CHANG
26 Classical & Beyond | PAUL ENNIS
30 Art of Song | LYDIA PEROVIC
32 Jazz Notes | STEVE WALLACE
34 Music Theatre | JENNIFER PARR
37 On Opera | CHRISTOPHER HOILE
39 Early Music | MATTHEW WHITFIELD
42 World View | ANDREW TIMAR
44 Bandstand | JACK MACQUARRIE
72 Mainly Clubs, Mostly Jazz | COLIN STORY

DISCOVERIES: RECORDINGS REVIEWED

81 Editor’s Corner | DAVID OLDS
83 Strings Attached | TERRY ROBBINS
85 Keyed In | ALEX BARAN
87 Vocal
88 Classical and Beyond
90 Modern and Contemporary
91 Jazz and Improvised Music
95 Pot Pourri
96 Something in the Air | KEN WAXMAN
97 Old Wine, New Bottles | BRUCE SURTEES

LISTINGS

46 A | Concerts in the GTA
66 B | Concerts Beyond the GTA
70 C | Music Theatre
73 D | In the Clubs (Mostly Jazz)
75 E | The ETCeteras

MORE

6 Contact Information
7 Upcoming dates and deadlines
77 Classified Ads
This Time I’ve Got Nothing
(So Thank Goodness for Our Columnists)

When is a trumpet like a motorcycle in a dressage ceremony?
Jack MacQuarrie has the answer in Bandstand.

And whose songs will Danika Lorèn be singing in Toronto’s inaugur-
ual songSLAM January 16 at Walter Hall – an event that threatens
to singe the eyebrows off that often sober-sided venue?
Lydia Perović reveals all in Art of Song.

As of the date of writing this (November 26 2018) how many times
has conductor Johannes Debus conducted Messiah?
Brian Chang has the handle on that in Choral Scene.

Pianists can be a handful. Which one is quoted in this month’s
magazine as saying “If I were only to play Saint-Saëns for the rest of
my life, I think I’ll stop playing the piano”? And how many pianists
in a handful, anyway?
You can find out in Paul Ennis’ Classical and Beyond.

What instrument (or should that be implement?) will Marco Cera
wield in addition to his usual oboe in Tafelmusik’s Harlequin Salon
commencing January 16?
Matthew Whitfield explains in Early Music.

And what is it about the three CD sets from Mosaic Records that
Steve Wallace is thinking of buying for himself for Christmas, if
no-one else does, that makes them a bargain at $354 (U.S.)?
Read Jazz Notes if you dare.

You may well never have wondered what Bernice means
to singer Robin Dann. And how many Danns can safely fit in
one column anyway?
Colin Story answers that one in Mainly Clubs.

Come January, Rose is arose in Rose and Jenny Parr can hardly wait.
There’s pepper for the soul in Music Theatre, guaranteed.

How many Brünnhildes does it take to change an Elektra?
According to Chris Hoile in On Opera we are about to find out.

And what under the sun are a dizi, yangqin, zamba, chacarera
and kamanche?
And which of them does Andrew Timar (World View) try to use
in Scrabble?

From all of us at The WholeNote to all of our readers, our best
wishes for this thing called the holiday season. Don’t look for a new
issue in print at the beginning of January. In case you haven’t noticed,
this is (for the 24th consecutive time, actually) a combined December/
January issue.

You can however expect to hear from us in all our other media,
digital and social, including HalfTones, our mid-month e-letter. And
you’ll see us in print again at the end of January.

publisher@thewholenote.com

Upcoming Dates & Deadlines for our February 2019 edition

Free Event Listings Deadline
Midnight, Tuesday January 8, 2019
Display Ad Reservations Deadline
6pm Tuesday January 15
Advertising Materials Due
6pm Thursday January 17
Classifieds Deadline
6 pm Friday January 25
Publication Date
Tuesday January 29 (online)
Thursday January 31 (print edition)

Volume 24 No 5 “FEBRUARY” will list events February 1 through
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Our host is Robin Elliott, Professor of Musicology and Jean A. Chalmers Chair of Canadian Music at the University of Toronto Faculty of Music. We (WholeNote managing editor Paul Ennis and I) are sitting in Elliott’s office on the western flank of the Edward Johnson Building (the faculty’s home base since 1962) overlooking Philosopher’s Walk, a meandering path which, at least in theory, connects the U of T Faculty of Music to the Royal Conservatory of Music, a couple of hundred metres (or yards as the Faculty’s founders would have called them) to the north. Reason for our visit is to find out more about the Faculty’s proclamation of 2018/19 as its 100th anniversary.

"Aha!" says Elliott. “Good question. A hundred years from the date of the first faculty council meeting. In June 1918, the U of T actually decided to set up a faculty of music. Prior to that there had been music degrees awarded at the university, dating back to the middle of the 19th century, but those were offered by examination only, there was no instruction in music given in the University of Toronto. So I guess it’s the 100th anniversary of music instruction in the university.”

And the specific impetus for the decision? “Post-World War One?” Elliott replies, although it sounds more like a question than an answer. “Restructuring of cultural life in Canada, I suppose, and at the university? There was a number of mostly British organists around that had an interest in setting up shop at U of T, so they met together with the university president, over at University College – June 1918.”

There were no courses offered by the new faculty, at the start and for a good while after that. “What they offered were set lectures that may or may not have been helpful in writing the exams for getting a degree. But gradually in the course of the 1930s and 40s it shifted towards a more familiar kind of course-based instruction. You could take a course rather than just attend lectures. Smaller groups. And you registered at the university rather than just paying a fee.”

Composer and teacher John Beckwith has spent a large part of his working life associated with the U of T Faculty of Music, including attending as a student in the years between the two World Wars, a subject he addressed in a series of two lectures at Walter Hall, bracketing the Faculty’s 75th anniversary in 1993, and subsequently gathered into a small book called *Music at Toronto: A Personal Account.*

“Taking a bachelor’s degree in music at Toronto in the 30s and 40s was as thoroughly English an experience as could be found anywhere in Canadian university life of the period,” Beckwith writes. “Thursdays you went in threes and fours to Healey Willan, who blew pipe smoke at you, told witty anecdotes about English notables of the turn of the century and called you ‘old man.’ Mondays you went in similar small convoys to Leo Smith, who stroked his white pencil-line moustache, caressed the piano keys, and called you ‘dear boy’.”
Elliott laughs, appreciatively. “There were only three people in the faculty for decades” he says. “Ernest MacMillan, who was the dean from 1926 to 1952, and those two: Healey Willan and Leo Smith. Smith was actually a cellist and composer, Willan an organist and composer, teaching these small classes and that was it; just the three of them running shop for no more than 40 or 50 students till after the [Second World] War.”

Just as the end of WWI provided some kind of spark for the founding of the Faculty; WWII changed it forever. “From 1945 all the way to 1962 there were a lot of returning soldiers, a huge influx of military getting their education, in music as in other things. Along with growth of music in schools this sparked an expansion over the course of 15 to 20 years up to 500 students,” Elliott says, along with a corresponding growth in the number of faculty staff, and, as important, in the variety of their musical backgrounds.

“Starting in 1946: Arnold Walter, who was a Czech musician after whom Walter Hall was named came on board, initially to set up opera, and eventually became director of the Faculty. Director, not Dean.”

A slight pause, as though he is wondering how far to allow the conversation to stray up Philosopher’s Walk towards the Royal Conservatory. Then: “Between the Conservatory and the Faculty,” Elliott says, “there’s a whole very complicated administrative history. For a while the Royal Conservatory was the umbrella organization at U of T and underneath that was the Faculty of Music here and the School of Music there. Boyd Neel was Dean of the Conservatory, a kind of referee between the two. Finally, in the 80s they went their own way, as a self-standing institution.”

“With no referee?” we ask. He laughs. “With no referee. Peter Simon running shop over there and Don McLean running shop over here ... although we share a lot of faculty members, especially among people teaching instrumental lessons.”

Another pause.
“One of the things we were joking about on the way over,” we tell Elliott, “is that it should be possible to map the history of a venerable institution like this one, by looking at the roles played in that history by the individuals the institution chooses to name its buildings and rooms after. Edward Johnson, Ernest MacMillan, Arnold Walter, Herman Geiger-Torel, Barker Fairley…”

“Ah yes, we shouldn’t forget Barker Fairley! He was, of course, a professor of German and a keen amateur painter. In the Barker Fairley Room there are all these portraits, or ‘faces’ as he liked to call them, of musicians in Toronto, in the 50s and early 60s. I think they are really lovely. Yes, he’s the outlier… the only one who was not a musician.”

We go back to the top of the list: “So, first, why is it the Edward Johnson Building? Obviously he was a famous tenor, director of the Met Opera during the Second World War. Came back to the Toronto area after retiring from the Met. He was on the U of T board of governors as well as on the board of directors of the Royal Conservatory. And his daughter was married to a former premier of Ontario, George Drew. So he was politically well-connected, powerful in the administration. One can draw conclusions. Certainly there are those who think that they should have named the building after Ernest MacMillan and the opera theatre after Johnson, not the other way round. Johnson obviously deserved some recognition for what he helped to set up, in terms of plans for the new building and he died in 1959 while the building didn’t open till 1962, so he didn’t live to see it. He laid the groundwork and clearly deserved some recognition, but maybe not that much.”

MacMillan’s contribution, on the other hand, was fundamental. “Beyond dispute, really. Dean from 1926 all the way to 1952; we have the MacMillan Theatre, the MacMillan Singers, so that’s something,” Elliott says. Several of MacMillan’s works are being, or have already been, featured in this centennial concert season: “In the first orchestra concert they played his Fanfare for a Centennial, and the overture to England: An Ode which was a big choral and orchestral piece written in prison camp in Berlin in 1918 and earned him a doctorate from Oxford. And we’ll have more of his music in a choral concert later in the season.”

Next on the list, Arnold Walter, whose arrival in 1946 signalled a big change. “He was neither British nor Canadian, the first central European to arrive on faculty, although along with him came Herman Geiger-Torel (the next room on your list!). Geiger-Torel was an opera director, also from Central Europe. Being Jewish he fled from Nazi German occupation, to South America first, then came north in 1948, courtesy Niki Goldschmidt.”

Between the three of them, Elliott explains, they were instrumental in setting up opera here between 1946 and 1948. “The direct result was our Opera Division which initially gave performances at the Hart House Theatre, officially opened the MacMillan Theatre in 1964 with a production of Benjamin Britten’s Albert Herring, and faithfully stages two productions a season, year in, year out.”

As the shadows lengthen across Philosopher’s Walk outside Elliott’s office window, we examine lists of eminent alumni and prominent faculty, and look at the concerts in the season brochure specially marked with a 100th anniversary symbol. The picture that emerges, paradoxically, is of a season that looks very much like last year’s or the year before that.

“Is it fair to say if you’d reached this milestone last year, we could have used last season’s listings to tell the same story?” “Exactly,” he replies. “That is exactly what the Dean had in mind. It’s a year that says here are the things we’re doing, but as a portrait of what we always do. Not a ‘drop everything to celebrate’ thing – more like ‘It’s a hundred years, that’s nice but we have students to teach.’”

Business as usual: students to teach (900 of them, now, by 240 full-time and part-time staff); two opera productions a year to stage; music created by U of T-affiliated composers to nurture and perform (“All the way from Healey Willan to our current students”); concerts to present, by faculty performers and students, ranging from 18 and 19 years old in large ensembles to Phil Nimmons, 95 years old and still teaching; a tradition of chamber ensembles in residence to maintain, going back to the Orford String Quartet, here from 1968 to 1991; a pioneering electronic music studio, launched in 1956, to relaunch, completely refurbished, in time for its own 60th anniversary this coming spring; groundbreaking work in musicology and ethnomusicology, and now music and health, to build on.

“And for you particularly?” we ask Elliott. “As Director of the Institute for Music in Canada, our work as a custodian of things Canadian,” he replies. “Our rare book room, papers of important musical figures – Kasemets, Beckwith, Nimmons
... For a long time, this was the main university for musical education in Canada, our graduates from the forties, fifties and sixties spread out across the map from Memorial University to Victoria. It’s an evolving legacy.”

The hand-written sign on the door of the Barker Fairley Room, just a few steps away from the MacMillan Theatre, says that the room will be the location for the pre-concert chat for that evening’s Opera Division performance of Street Scene, Kurt Weill’s self-described “American Opera.” We wait outside for conductor Uri Mayer to finish a class with five or six of his students.

Except for the 14 paintings clustered on its north and east walls, it could be just another classroom (it even served as a faculty lunch room in the 80s). But the faces in those 14 paintings leap out from the walls, most of the people they portray rendered in the act of making music. It would have been a fine point of departure for this story; but it works just as well as a point of departure from it.

All the paintings in the collection were done between 1957 and 1964, the years when plans were firming up for the Faculty to vacate its premises at University and College, the site today of the Ontario Power Building. At the very moment Fairley was laying down pencil lines that still show through these oil-on-masonite works, some draftsman was laying down the lines in the blueprint that would become this room. Many of the people portrayed are still with us. Some of their names are well-known. Some, like flutist Robert Aitken, will even appear in concerts in this very building before the next issue of this magazine comes out.

Next to Aitken on the wall, clarinetist Ezra Schabas has walked many miles, in many roles, up and down the meandering path between the Faculty and the Royal Conservatory, since this painting was done. And fittingly it was Ezra Schabas and his wife Ann who in 1990 made the donation that ensured the existence of the Barker Fairley Room as a repository for her father’s paintings, which for close to 30 years prior to that had been scattered here and there throughout the Edward Johnson Building.

This particular 100-year history delights in the details. 

David Perlman can be reached at publisher@thewholenote.com.

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When I see the interiors of the film, I smell the apartment of my great-grandmother [who emigrated from Odessa]... It’s a magic, rare, strange, mysterious, fascinating little item. It’s like photos of my great-grandparents come to life.

— Alicia Svigals

Svigals, the renowned klezmer violinist/vocalist/composer is referring to *The Yellow Ticket*, a silent film made 100 years ago which will be screened at FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre in St. Catharines on February 7. But this is no mere revival of a rare artifact. “The Yellow Ticket” is a multimedia event featuring a fascinating 1918 silent film, *The Yellow Ticket* (aka *The Devil’s Pawn*). Svigals’ original score breathes new life into the film as it is performed live by the violinist along with virtuoso Toronto pianist, Marilyn Lerner.

Considered by many to be the world’s foremost klezmer fiddler, Svigals is a founder of the Klezmatics and a driving force behind the klezmer music revival. The film, directed by Victor Janson and Eugen Illès, was a very early production of the legendary German film company UFA-Pagu, and made near the end of WWI on the eve of the Russian Revolution. Starring a young Pola Negri (later to become a femme fatale of the silent era in Hollywood), *The Yellow Ticket* tells the story of a young Jewish woman from a Polish shtetl who is constrained by antisemitic restrictions to lead a double life in a brothel while attempting to study medicine in Tsarist Russia. The first film to explore antisemitism in Tsarist Russia, *The Yellow Ticket* (which was restored in 2013), includes precious footage of the former Jewish quarter of Warsaw and the people who once lived there.

Remarkable for its time, *The Yellow Ticket* addresses ethnic and religious discrimination, human trafficking and poverty in startlingly progressive terms. Its clear-eyed denunciation of antisemitism caused the Nazis to condemn Negri in the years to come.

According to Michal Oleszczycyk of rogerebert.com, Pola Negri (née Apolonia Chałupiec), the only Polish actress ever to become a major Hollywood star, lived a life as exciting as the movies she graced with her presence. Born in the small Polish town of Lipno in 1894 (while the country was still under a triple occupation by its neighbours), she climbed her way up: first to the theatre stages of Warsaw and then to the budding movie business. After a successful crossover to the much more sophisticated German film industry – and a happy pairing with its finest director, Ernst Lubitsch – she starred in the international smash-hit, *Madame Dubarry* (1919). It was Lubitsch’s ticket to Hollywood – as well as Negri’s.

“I believe this accompaniment to *The Yellow Ticket* is one of the most powerful I have heard. It evokes not only a sense of the contemporary context of the culture in which the film took place, but our awareness of what was done to it afterwards. The sound of piano, violin and the human voice evoke passion, energy and a profound sense of mourning, bridging the historical distance between us and this film as eloquently as does Pola Negri’s extraordinary face.”

- University of Chicago film scholar Tom Gunning

FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre is only one stop along a whirlwind tour of Southern Ontario. Svigals and Lerner will also be accompanying the film in Burlington on February 8 and in Oakville, February 16. In between, on February 9, the “queen of klezmer” gives a recital at the Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts in Kingston.

*Paul Ennis is the managing editor of The WholeNote.*
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Visit www.glenngould.ca for details.
January has earned a reputation as new music festival month, and members of the new music community have much to anticipate in this particular new year. Since the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra (WSO) launched its annual, and still ongoing, New Music Festival in 1992, the festival format has been embraced enthusiastically around Canada as an effective way to present contemporary music of all types to a wide range of listeners.

For those eager to join me and book flights to Winnipeg for a late January new music getaway, the 2019 WSO New Music Festival (WNMF) runs from January 25 to February 1, 2019 and features Latvian composer Pēteris Vasks as the Distinguished Guest Composer.

The late Larry Lake, host of the CBC Radio 2 network new music series, *Two New Hours* (1978–2007) called the WSO’s festival, “The greatest new music party in the Universe!” It has become the WSO’s signature event, and a fixture on the annual new music calendar. I will have more on the WSO’s 2019 festival a bit later in this article.

For Toronto audiences, a great deal has changed in the shape of the contemporary music calendar in recent years. We’re now fortunate to have two overlapping January festivals, both in the Bloor and University neighbourhood. One of them is the Royal Conservatory of Music’s (RCM) 21C Music Festival, which has been moved to January, from later in the spring, to promote greater student involvement. But the most steadfast of these annual festivals in Toronto has been the New Music Festival presented by the University of Toronto Faculty of Music, now in its 20th year. The 2019 edition runs from January 16 to 27.

Thanks to a generous endowment from Roger D. Moore, the U of T Faculty of Music invites an internationally celebrated composer to its annual festival. This coming year, the Roger D. Moore Distinguished Visitor in Composition is the Japanese composer Toshio Hosokawa (b. 1955), the latest in a long list of internationally recognized composers to be invited as visitors to the U of T festival.

I asked Moore for a comment on the cumulative effect of his enabling the festival to bring so many famous composers from around the world, year after year. True to form, he thought it might be more meaningful to ask a composer from the Faculty of Music to share their observations, and recently retired professor of composition, Chan Ka Nin was willing to oblige: “The list of Roger D. Moore Distinguished Visitors in Composition reflects a who’s who in the current field of new music” he said. “It brings prestige to the university and at the same time inspires the composition students, as well as other students and the general public. Being on the list of the Roger D. Moore Distinguished Visitors in Composition is also an honour for the guest composers. Roger will be forever remembered as a generous and compassionate man who helps and inspires others with his keen interests in the music of his time. He is a Canadian treasure, a saviour in the Canadian music scene.”

**Toshio Hosokawa**: Hosokawa has become one of Japan’s most important composers, following Toru Takemitsu (1930–1996) and Maki Ishii (1936–2003). Like the works of Takemitsu and Ishii, Hosokawa’s music blends traditional Japanese and European classical approaches. In fact, Hosokawa divides his time between these two worlds, keeping residences in both Nagano, Japan and in Mainz, Germany. During the 11 days of the U of T New Music Festival, dozens of Hosokawa’s works will be performed, including an operatic double bill on January 17. That evening, in Walter Hall at 7:30, Hosokawa’s psychodramatic setting of Poe’s *The Raven* will be sung by noted mezzo soprano Krisztina Szabó. This will be followed by its companion piece, *The Maiden from the Sea* (Putari Shizuka) a one-act opera based on a Nôh play depicting the tale of a young woman lost at sea who becomes embodied by a 12th-century courtesan, Lady Shizuka. Toronto soprano Xin Wang will be heard in the lead, together with the remarkable female Noh singer/dancer, Ryoko Aoki, from Japan. The opera is sung in both Japanese and English.
Then, on January 25 at 8pm in Walter Hall, Toronto’s New Music Concerts, directed by Robert Aitken, will present a concert of Hosokawa’s music, together with works by his teacher, the late Klaus Huber (1924–2017) and his protégé, Misato Mochizuki (b. 1969), who will also attend the festival. Aitken’s New Music Concerts Ensemble is one of a long roster of Toronto’s finest musicians engaged to perform Hosokawa’s music during this visit, including the Gryphon Trio, pianists Stephanie Chua and Stephen Clarke, flutist Camille Watts, violinist Véronique Matthieu, guitarist Rob MacDonald and a new wind quintet made up of TSO wind players. Sax soloist Wallace Halladay and Esprit Orchestra under Alex Pauk will give the North American premiere of Hosokawa’s Concerto for Saxophone and Orchestra on January 20 in Koerner Hall in a display of cooperation between U of T’s festival and the RCM’s 21C Music Festival.

Karen Kieser Prize: Another important feature of the U of T festival is the annual presentation of the only prizes available exclusively to U of T graduate composers: The Karen Kieser Prize in Canadian Music and the Ann H. Atkinson Prize in Electroacoustic Composition. The current winning works will be performed on January 22 at 7:30 in Walter Hall.

Karen Kieser was deputy head of CBC Radio Music from 1982 to 1986, and then head of music from 1986 to 1992. She held three degrees from the Faculty of Music of the University of Toronto: a Bachelor of Music and a Master of Music, both in piano performance, and a Master of Music in Musicology. She could have had a career as a concert pianist, but she chose broadcasting as her life’s work, serving as a gifted CBC host, producer, executive producer, and eventually as a leader in CBC’s senior management. Friends and colleagues endowed the Karen Kieser Prize in Canadian Music upon her death in 2002, too soon at age 53. It is a tribute to her life, her work and her passionate devotion to the cause of Canadian music and musicians.

For the first time in its 16-year history, this year the Kieser Prize will be shared by two composers, both women: Rebekah Cummings and Bekah Simms. Simms’ microlattice is a quartet for bass clarinet, double bass, piano and percussion. In her note on the work, Simms says, “With a density as low as 0.9 kg/m3 (0.00561 lb/ft3), metallic microlattice is currently one of the lightest structures known to science. It is made from an alloy of nickel and phosphorus. This piece attempts to create a sort of musical alloy from two opposing but influential forces: rhythmic, repetitive music with pointillist, random recurrence. Inspired by the unique structure, this piece also attempts to create an alloy of the strong, metallic and loud, and the crystalline and light. Like its titular influence, the piece is also small in scope, making use of a limited amount of musical material both melodically and rhythmically. After its initial performance, it’s only been performed once more (in July 2018 in Banff, AB) so I very much look forward to presenting it to a wider audience at the Karen Kieser concert this coming January.”

Cummings’ Fearless is a trio for flute, percussion and electronics. In her note, Cummings says: “I’ve always had vivid dreams, and recently I’ve been using them as springboards for composition. Fearless was inspired by a profoundly impactful dream I had many years ago while struggling with anxiety, in which I rediscovered my true name: Fearless. Rather than following the details of the dream’s storyline, this piece broadly portrays its theme – a transformation from fearful to fearless through reconnection with an inherent, original identity. For me, fearlessness is more about childlike confidence than defiant boldness. I remember being small, believing I could do anything (even fly...
and walk on water?!, never assuming the worst about myself, others, or life circumstances. I tried to musically depict this return to childlikeness through a melodic/rhythmic playfulness emerging, not without struggle, from a more mournful setting."

The winner of the 2019 Ann H. Atkinson Prize in Electroacoustic Composition will be determined in early December, and the winning composition will be performed on the Karen Kieser Prize concert, along with chamber works by Hosokawa. (The 2018 Atkinson Prize winner was August Murphy-King for his work, *Simul* for viola, bassoon, piano and electronics, a work I found to be elegant and finely balanced."

Meanwhile … the previous week, American composer Terry Riley will be celebrated in three concerts at the RCM’s 21C Music Festival, including a concert on January 18, “Terry Riley: Live at 85!” Riley’s visit is dealt with at more length in “In with the New” elsewhere in the current edition of *The WholeNote*. But I do have a personal Terry Riley story to share, from 1993, when my CBC Radio Two network series, *Two New Hours* co-produced the *Encounters* series in Glenn Gould Studio (GGS), together with Soundstreams Canada. Kieser, the director of GGS at the time, had challenged Soundstreams artistic director Lawrence Cherney and me to come up with a marketable contemporary music series that would attract audiences to GGS. We quickly responded with Encounters, initially, a series of minimalist music. Terry Riley was one of the invited minimalist composers. Riley improvised on a nine-foot Steinway modified with his so-called Rosary tuning. It was a 16-tone-to-the-octave tuning, and it took three tunings to get the Steinway to hold its pitch; and three tunings to get it back to tempered pitch afterwards. (The piano tuner’s bill was $1,200 for those services.) The Arraymusic Ensemble participated too, in Riley’s *Cactus Rosary*, which they had commissioned. The late Michael J Baker conducted.

Back to Winnipeg: And finally, as I promised at the outset of this story, there’s the impending trip to Winnipeg for the 2019 edition of the WSO’s New Music Festival. The 27th WNMF will embrace a variety of themes, including ice, metal, the new intersecting the old, and a spirit of collaboration. The opening event, on January 25, “Glacial Time,” takes place in a custom-designed ice amphitheatre situated in The Forks on the frozen Assiniboine River. A collaboration with architect Peter Hargraves (Warming Huts), this newly created space will capture the essence of WNMF as a cultural oasis within the heart of the extreme Manitoba winter. Norwegian artist and multi-instrumentalist Terje Isungset comes to Winnipeg to present a suite of his original music, featuring himself, vocalist Maria Skranes, and WSO musicians performing on Isungset’s ice instruments, freshly carved for the occasion of this performance. WSO resident conductor Julian Pellicano and percussionist Victoria Sparks will lead the University of Manitoba Percussion Ensemble in the Canadian première of *Inulksuit*, an expansive work by Pulitzer Prize-winning Alaskan composer John Luther Adams that continues his explorations in merging music, nature, and landscape.

Animals as Leaders

The January 26 concert welcomes back Bramwell Tovey, the WNMF founding music director who started it all. Tovey will conduct a program featuring San Francisco composer John Adams’ monumental work, *Harmonielehre*, together with music by three prominent Canadian composers: Jocelyn Morlock, Kelly-Marie Murphy and Harry Stafylakis.

On January 30, the WSO’s newest music director, Daniel Raiskin takes the podium in his first full WNMF program. A noted advocate of contemporary music, Maestro Raiskin is joined by his longtime collaborator, Latvian composer Pēteris Vasks, who serves as this year’s WNMF Distinguished Guest Composer. WSO concertmaster Gwen Hoebig will perform Vasks’ meditative *Lonely Angel* and the Winnipeg Singers join the orchestra for his *Dona Nobis Pacem*, offering two pathos-laden aspects of Vasks’ musical vision. The WSO will also give the world première of a new work, *A Child’s Dream of Toys*, by Canadian composer Vivian Fung, as well as Michael Daugherty’s fierce *Raise the Roof*. Finally, WNMF doubles down on its collaboration with contemporary progressive metal pioneers Animals As Leaders, who join the WSO for the band’s orchestral debut, featuring a symphonic suite of some of their best known works arranged by WSO Composer-in-Residence (and relentless metalhead) Harry Stafylakis.

Consider an alternative winter destination, and join me in Winnipeg for my annual January pilgrimage of musical discovery at the WNMF!

David Jaeger is a composer, producer and broadcaster based in Toronto.
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Change is not the only measure of a new music festival’s success, as witnessed by the eagerly anticipated visit to this year’s 21C of Terry Riley (now 85 years of age), an individual who for more than 60 years has helped define the course of new music.

The 21C Festival, produced by the Royal Conservatory of Music, is now in its sixth year and is, by definition, committed to presenting new sounds and ideas. That being said, opening up the flyer for this year’s 21C Music Festival was like a breath of fresh air. I couldn’t help but compare it to last year’s experience – a gasp of disbelief, even despair, when I realized that there was barely a female face to be seen or name to be read. Not so this year. The gasp this time round was more of delight, surprise and yes, relief. Finally! There is definitely a huge sea change occurring this year and for that reason alone, all the more incentive to attend and listen to what is percolating with creative innovators in music. Not only are there a significant number of works and premieres by women, but also by culturally diverse composers as well.

Another key change is the move to a January timeslot from the previous one in May, with this year’s festival happening January 16 to 20, dovetailing with the U of T New Music Festival, a short stroll away, which runs from January 16 to 27.

Change is, however, not the only measure of a new music festival’s success, as witnessed by the eagerly anticipated visit to this year’s festival of Terry Riley (now 85 years of age), an individual who for more than 60 years has helped define the course of new music.

Riley’s music has had a significant influence not only on contemporary classical composers but also on rock composers such as Lou Reed and Peter Townsend. His attitudes and approaches to music making have contributed to the radical sea change in compositional ideas and practices that began in the 1960s. He was a key player in
the experimental traditions that originated in the USA which filtered across the border.

In Toronto, it was the Arraymusic Ensemble that picked up on these currents, making it a priority in their programming to feature composers who were part of that scene, including people like Morton Feldman, Christian Wolff, Steve Reich, Jim Tenney and of course, Riley himself. I had a chance to talk with Robert Stevenson, former Arraymusic Ensemble member and artistic director about his memories and experiences working with Riley and his music.

One of the big festivals that occurred throughout the 1980s in the USA, he told me, was called New Music America and in 1990 it had travelled to Montreal as New Music Across America. That year the festival organizers partnered with Arraymusic to commission a work from Riley titled Cactus Rosary. (The piece appears on Array’s New World CD released in 1993.)

Stevenson remembers well the collaborative process involved in the creation of Cactus Rosary. “Most composers in the Western art music tradition aren’t strong in collaborating. It’s not part of the tradition and you’re not trained in that when you study composition. Rather, you’re learning how to tell people what to do. When we got the score for Cactus Rosary there was hardly anything on the page. ‘Where is the music?’ we wondered. There were a few notes, some pitches, no metre. Some of the notes were whole notes, others filled in but no stems. There were no rhythmic details, no dynamics, and no explanation of the tuning system, which was in just intonation (rather than the standard equal temperament). All we had that indicated the tuning was a DX7 synthesizer patch. Once Riley began to work with us, though, you began to realize that what was on the page was there to be fleshed out. A lot of what we did is not in the score.”

Stevenson gave the example of the vocal part he performed that was more like speak-singing a text. “I started reading and he said: ‘Can you change the harmonic content by changing your throat shape? Can you move the pitch around?’ There’s a delay line on the voice so we should set that up.’ Everything happened collaboratively in a very subtle yet determined kind of way. It was never, ‘This is what I want.’ He was clear about what he didn’t want and gave us instructions that would lead us in a direction to what he would like without having to say anything. It’s a different approach to composition. There’s not a blueprint but an invitation to a process.”

Using just intonation tuning is an important aspect of Riley’s work. Stevenson described the difference that it made for Cactus Rosary. “At the first rehearsals the acoustic piano had yet to be tuned to just intonation, so all we had was the DX7 patch. The ensemble was tuning itself to the DX sound but with the acoustic piano in equal temperament, everything was quite chaotic. When the piano was finally tuned it was extraordinary what happened to the music. Suddenly there was this resonating thing happening – the tuning was in the air.”

The staging of the piece was also a change from the usual. “There was an old-style wingback chair that conductor Michael Baker sat in facing the audience. He played two peyote rattles which Riley acquired specifically for the piece from a Wichita tribe member who made them himself. Baker made occasional hand gestures to signal when to move to a new section, but otherwise he played these rattles, coming in and out of the piece, often when the texture was less dense. From an audience point of view, you got the sense that you were watching someone’s aural meditation being made manifest, an internal experience being made external.”

Array took the piece on tour when they visited Europe spanning the years 1993 to 95. “That’s when the piece really started to take shape,” Stevenson said, “and the duration shifted from 33 minutes to close to 50. It became more expansive and we developed the trance meditative aspect. Tour organizers in Europe didn’t want Array to come and play European music, they wanted music they didn’t have a chance to hear. They went nuts over things like the Claude Vivier music we played and with the Riley piece, we were a big hit. People went crazy and were trancing out. They didn’t have many people in Europe who were authentically connected to the music who could play it.”

At the time in Toronto, there weren’t other groups performing his music, except his classic hit In C, which was much more of a communal experience for open instrumentation. Stevenson himself
played that piece several times, often with people from Array, and once at a concert by New Music Concerts at The Copa, a massive dance club in Yorkville whose heyday was in the 1980s. In C appealed to some performers because of its collaborative nature, and it was devoid of the extreme demands made by composers like Boulez and Stockhausen, for example. With any number of ways to play it and the outcome undetermined, players could relax and enjoy the moment. “This type of process was very new to people at the time.”

Stevenson concluded our conversation by saying that “Riley had a light touch. Nothing was too serious or worth breaking a sweat about. That’s why it was easy to collaborate with him. He wasn’t stuck on an idea but rather always asked, ‘What do you want to do?’ He was always confident that things would be accomplished and I never got the idea that he was dissatisfied with how the process was going.”

The January 18 21C concert celebrates Riley: On the first half of the evening, Tracy Silverman on electric violin perform excerpts from Riley’s Palmian Chord Ryddle and Sri Camel, both arranged by Silverman. On the second half of the evening, Terry and his son Gyan will perform five of his works including Mongolian Winds and Ebony Horn, along with selections from Salome Dances for Peace.

This year’s 21C

Surrounding that January 18 Riley celebration concert, there is much else to enjoy in this edition of 21C.

The opening concert on January 16 features the Toronto Symphony Orchestra conducted by Tania Miller and Simon Rivard. Since there will be no New Creations Festival at the TSO this year, this is one way for them to continue to support the work of contemporary composers.

Their 21C concert features two world premieres – one by Emilie Lebel (who has been appointed the TSO’s new affiliate composer) and the other by Stewart Goodyear. (Goodyear will also be performing in a full concert of his own works on January 17, including Variations on Hallelujah and other takes on various pop and rock songs.) Other composers featured in the TSO concert are Dorothy Chang, Dinuk Wijeratne, Jocelyn Morlock and Terry Riley.

Other Toronto-based presenters offering programs at this year’s 21C include Continuum with an all-female program featuring compositions by Cassandra Miller, Monica Pearce, Linda Smith, Carolyn Chen, Unsuk Chin and Kati Agócs. On the weekend, the performing ensembles of Cinq à Sept and So Percussion (both on January 19) as well as the Glenn Gould School New Music Ensemble (January 20) will be performing entire programs of new compositions, again featuring an abundance of works by women. Check the listings for a full rundown of all the composers you can hear.

Esprit bridge to U of T

As mentioned previously, the U of T’s Contemporary Music Festival picks up where 21C leaves off. On January 20 there will be an Esprit Orchestra concert which, fittingly, closes one festival and opens the other with works by Claude Vivier, Toshio Hosokawa, Alison Yun-Fei and Christopher Goddard. The two festivals are partnering to present the North American premiere of Hosokawa’s Concerto for Saxophone and Orchestra, performed by Wallace Halladay. Hosokawa is Japan’s pre-eminent living composer, creating his musical language from the relationship between Western avant-garde art and traditional Japanese culture. His music is strongly connected to the aesthetic and spiritual roots of the Japanese arts and he values the expression of beauty that originates from transience.

Hosokawa, who is this year’s Roger D. Moore Distinguished Visitor in Composition at the U of T Festival, will also be offering composition masterclasses on January 21 and 22, and his music will be presented in a concert by faculty artists on January 21, in a concert of Percussion and Electronics on January 23 and as featured composer for the New Music Concerts performance on January 25.

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

IN THE WITH THE NEW
QUICK PICKS

DEC 11, 7:30PM: Gallery 345. PAPER: New Compositions and Improvisations by Nahre Sol, a pianist and composer who creates music that combines a unique blend of improvisation, traditional Western form and harmony, jazz harmony and minimalism. She teams up with clarinetist Brad Cherwin for this free concert.

DEC 14, 8PM: Music Gallery, Rejuvenated Frequencies. A showcase of music curated by Obuxum featuring groundbreaking music by women of colour, music that is “progressive and healing all at once.” Performers include VHVL from Harlem with her thumping beats and bright melodies, Toronto-based YourHomeNaomi with roots in spoken word, and Korean-born, Toronto-based classically trained pianist Korea Town Acid whose DJ sets create an avant-garde journey.

JAN 17, 7:30PM: Canadian Music Centre. A mixed-genre evening of jazz-inflected works by Alex Samaras, one of Canada’s leading jazz vocalists, and Norman Symonds, a leading figure in the third-stream movement in Canada that combines jazz and classical forms. The concert will include works by the CMC’s 2018 Toronto Emerging Composer Award-winner Cecilia Livingston, who specializes in music for voice and opera.

JAN 29, 7:30PM: Tapestry Opera presents Hook Up at Theatre Passe Muraille. This opera by composer Chris Thornborrow, libretto by Julie Tepperman, raises questions of consent, shame and power in the lives of young adults navigating uncharted waters on their own. Content warning: Contains explicit language and discussion of sexual violence. Runs to February 9.

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Toronto Symphony Orchestra CEO Matthew Loden and I are chatting about the beloved cultural phenomenon that is Messiah in Toronto. Sitting in his office overlooking Roy Thomson Hall, I can see the iconic webbing of the edifice, a physical nest that cradles the music hall. In a few weeks, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and guests, under the baton of Johannes Debus, will present a major six-performance run of Handel and Jennens' masterpiece. (Full disclosure: as regular readers of this column know, I sing in the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir and will be on stage for these performances.)

“We live in a very disjointed and fractured time right now. I think that the human condition is to long for a kind of togetherness, to find your place with people,” says Loden, speaking about the need for a space for an event like Messiah. “Increasingly, we keep finding ways to disintegrate relationships. When you have a moment where you can come together collectively and still have an individual experience while feeling the music coming off the stage with a couple thousand other people – that is really powerful.” With these TSO performances alone, 15,000 people will experience the majesty of the most iconic of Toronto classical-music traditions.

“People are moved to tears not just because of the artistic nature of what they’re listening to,” Loden continues, “but because they are doing it with other people, live. It’s raw talent from 150-plus people on stage. There’s a kind of magic that happens when you get everybody together to be a part of that.”

Johannes Debus leads the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir with soloists Claire de Sévigné (soprano), Allyson McHardy (mezzo-soprano), Andrew Haji (tenor), and Tyler Duncan (baritone). Surprisingly, over his significant career, Debus has never conducted the entire work. “This is my first time conducting it,” he tells me in a phone call from his home in Berlin. “But when I was in my early teens, I sang it. This was one of the strong, long-lasting musical impressions I have from my childhood. Afterwards, I made my mother buy the John Eliot Gardiner, Monteverdi Choir recording. It’s a dream come true for myself to be able to conduct this piece.”

Debus is a fixture in the classical world in Toronto, serving as the music director for the Canadian Opera Company (COC), a post he has held for almost a decade. In that capacity he isn’t often on the stage, though, in Toronto, and this marks only his second time with the TSO. He is mindful that the music lovers of Toronto are very particular about their Messiahs. “[Conducting] might come with certain expectations,” he says. “On the other hand, you can rely on the experience of the musicians and hopefully bring something new. Not to reinvent the wheel but to inspire us all and bring all forces together. Make it an event that nourishes us and prepares us for the Christmas Day. In the case of Messiah, like every other masterpiece, you discover something new every time. Like a statue, you turn it around and look at it from the back or the side. You discover new angles. That’s what makes music so brave – you perform it in the moment and it can be new every time.”

Debus is aware of other interpretations of Messiah. He mentions Sir Andrew Davis’ 2016 recording, for one, but promises something a little more literal. “In the beginning we’re dealing with prophecy, birth, and then redemption, like chapters. It’s like a novel, three big parts,” says Debus. “If we manage to bring out a distinctiveness in character and expression of all those aspects, I will be very pleased and happy.”

The dramatic edge of Messiah can easily be lost faced with the technicality of the music. For a master musical storyteller like Debus, it is at the core. Handel’s music uses the assembled text in an emotive fashion that creates a thread of luscious descriptiveness in his music. There is the venomous roar of choir in “He Trusted in God,” remarking in great force the words “wars too great to be resisted.”

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anger and frustration. “And with his stripes” plainly invokes the whip marks covering Jesus’ body. The playfulness and athleticism of “All we like sheep” finishes with the introspective acknowledgement of the faithful’s iniquity. The solos carry this emotional energy as well. The emotional tenor sings “Thy rebuke has broken his heart,” a call from the deepest depths of despair, for help. The mezzo-soprano maintains a humble supplication with “He was despised.” All of this is underpinned by the orchestra. Handel’s music carries many emotional messages over a short period of time.

“It’s part of Handel’s success in general, that he can unfold and have this incredible impact on your emotional soul, your emotional centre,” says Debus. “It can really shake you and elevate you, make you weak and so on. Among the great dramatists and operatists, Handel knew how to set the mood and his talent for writing ear-worm-like melodies.”

“As a composer of Italian opera, Handel was always drawn to the ideal of theatrical, operatic writing. In terms of drama, we will work to apply that here.” Brining to life the dramatic solos is a quartet of Canadian talent who have all worked with Debus before: in fact De Sivigné, McHardy and Haji have all been members of the Ensemble Studio, a key part of Debus’ programming direction at the COC.

Matthew Loden is particularly keen on this set of soloists as well, knowing that three of them have been members of the COC Ensemble Studio. “[This performance] represents a very strong partnership with the COC,” he says, “with Johannes on the podium and three of four of soloists connected to the Ensemble Studio. The fact that there are these remarkable development opportunities for these professional singers on their way into the world, and that the TSO can be one of the stops on their trajectory, is really fulfilling. And Canadians really appreciate when they can celebrate their homegrown talent.”

The Ensemble Studio is part of a musical ecosystem encompassing the University of Toronto, Royal Conservatory of Music, and the COC, incubating, supporting and celebrating new generations of talent. Through performances such as these on the biggest symphonic stage in Canada, the TSO becomes part of that ecosystem.

Messiah is a core programmatic element of the first half of every TSO season. “We do Messiah every year is because one of the roles we play in Toronto is to gather people together into a space that allows them to feel like they are part of something that is bigger than themselves. Bigger than they are individually,” shares Loden. “There’s a ceremony around getting together with friends and family and other musicians on an annual basis that allows people to both reflect and look forward. Messiah is a perfect opportunity for that kind of gathering.”

Messiah isn’t part of any regular subscription package on offer from the TSO. Annually, ever seat sold is an add-on to a subscription, a create-your-own subscription package, or individual concert sale. Sure-fire Messiah sales are important to the TSO when balanced against new works or unfamiliar ones to audiences. Loden acknowledges that these are concerts that sell and sell out. “Whenever we open the phone lines and the next season goes on sale, Messiah is often at the top of people’s list. It tells us that this is something that is working,” says Loden. “Messiah is a highlight and focal point from a financial standpoint, but also within the rhythm of the season. I think if people want to come and be proud of being in this great city, being Canadians and experience this monumental piece of music that has withstood the test of time; to do it in this concert hall, it’s a very special thing; and I think that’s why people keep coming back.”

“The images we get through Handel’s music – with all its weaknesses, the compassion, empathy, glory, exuberance – with all these aspects, you can find them concentrated in this theatre called Messiah. I hope that many people will come to these concerts,” Debus says, adding “and that there won’t be any snowstorms.”

**CHORAL SCENE QUICK PICKS**

**MESSIAH IS EVERYWHERE**

From the November edition of HalfTones, The WholeNote’s mid-month digital newsletter (subscribe online!): Messiah is near-synonymous with choral community-building: with festivity, with meaningful memories of classical music, with standing and singing along. Something about Messiah, and the way it unites community initiatives with musical professionals, gives it a special place in the city and scene’s musical fabric.

Just an example - this year’s Messiah for the City (Dec 22) presented by Toronto Beach Chorale in partnership with St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, features singers from the Toronto Beach Chorale, MCS Chorus Mississauga and the Georgetown Bach Chorale, and players from the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Founded by the late Jack Layton, “Messiah for the City” is a project dedicated to providing seasonal concert opportunities to people who otherwise might not have access to such events. Tickets are distributed by United Way and its partner agencies.

And then all over the map, and in order of appearance (details in our listings):

- **DEC 1, 4PM**: Pax Christi Chorale’s special Children’s Messiah performance for children and families; Church of St Mary Magdalene, Toronto.
- **DEC 4-6, 8PM**: Soundstreams’ Electric Messiah IV at the Drake Underground, Toronto.
NOT THE MESSIAH
Just a sampling ...


DEC 7, 7:30PM: Surinder Mundra. “A Choral Christmas from Across Europe.”

DEC 7, 8PM: Exultate Chamber Singers. “Winter’s Night with You.”

DEC 8, 2PM: “Annual City Carol Sing.” Alex Pangman & Her Alleycats; Hogtown Brass Quintet; Yorkminster Park Baptist Church Choir; VIVA! Youth Singers of Toronto; That Choir; Hedgerow Singers; Kevin Frankish, host; and others.

DEC 8, 7:30PM: Forte – Toronto Gay Men’s Chorus. “All Is Calm, All Is Bright.”

DEC 9, 2PM: Duly Noted. “Toronto vs. Everybody.” All a cappella music celebrating Toronto.

DEC 11, 7:30PM: City Choir. “Cakes & Ale.”


JAN 13, 3PM: Vesnivka Choir: Ukrainian Christmas Concert. With Toronto Ukrainian Male Chamber Choir and a folk instrumental ensemble.

JAN 13, 7:30PM: The Royal Conservatory of Music presents “We shall overcome: a celebration of Dr Martin Luther King Jr.” Damien Sneed and the Toronto Mass Choir: A Child’s Christmas in Wales.

JAN 16, 7:30PM: Oratorio Society of Canada: A Celebration of Winter Words.

FEB 2, 2PM & 7PM: Amadeus Choir of Greater Toronto. “Songs from a Celtic Heart.”
**Winter Words**

SUN., JAN. 27, 2019 2PM
MAZZOLENI CONCERT HALL
Tickets: $30

Mezzo-soprano Lucia Cervoni, whose “impressive palette of mezzo colours” (whatsonstage) joins Canadian tenor Michael Colvin, whom Opera News calls “one of the most beautiful lyric tenors,” for work by Britten, Mahler, and others. Generously supported by J. Hans Kluge

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**Joaquin Valdepeñas Conducts**

MON., DEC. 10, 2018 7:30PM
MAZZOLENI CONCERT HALL
Tickets: $20

Toronto Symphony Orchestra Principal Clarinet and Royal Conservatory Orchestra Resident Conductor Joaquin Valdepeñas conducts Glenn Gould School students in a program of chamber works.

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**The King’s Singers: Gold 50**

SUN., DEC. 16, 2018 3PM KOERNER HALL
Tickets start at only $45

This holiday season performance will feature seasonal songs alongside some of the ensemble’s favourite repertoire.

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**Nicola Benedetti with Alexei Grynyuk**

FRI., JAN. 25, 2019 8PM KOERNER HALL
Tickets start at only $40

Benedetti and her longtime collaborator, Alexei Grynyuk, will perform works by Bach, Prokofiev, and Strauss, and the Canadian premiere of a new solo violin piece by Wynton Marsalis, written specially for her.

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**The Glenn Gould School Concerto Competition Finals**

WED., JAN. 30, 2019 10AM KOERNER HALL
Free tickets for this concert will be available starting Wed. Jan. 23, 2019

Hear the talented solo performers of The Glenn Gould School compete for the opportunity to perform a concerto with the Royal Conservatory Orchestra during the 2019-20 concert season.

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**Academy Chamber Orchestra**

SAT., DEC. 15, 2018 7:30PM
KOERNER HALL
Free tickets for this concert will be available starting Fri. Dec. 7, 2018

String students from The Phil and Eli Taylor Performance Academy for Young Artists come together as the Academy Chamber Orchestra to perform Samuel Barber’s Adagio for Strings, Franz Schubert’s Allegro from String Quartet No. 14 Death and the Maiden, and songs arranged by Serouj Kradjian.

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**TICKETS & SUBSCRIPTIONS ON SALE NOW! 416.408.0208 RCMUSIC.COM/PERFORMANCE**
Justyna Gabzdyl: After graduating from the Fryderyk Chopin Academy (now University) of Music in Warsaw in 2005, Polish-born pianist, Justyna Gabzdyl, continued her studies at the École Normale de Musique Alfred Cortot in Paris before earning a doctorate at Université de Montréal in 2012. Now 36 and based in Canada, Gabzdyl will be performing in Walter Hall in a U of T Faculty of Music recital on January 24; works by Szymanowski and Gershwin will be featured. She spoke to La Scena Musicale for their February/March 2018 issue and detailed her fondness for Szymanowski.

“I find his music incredibly stimulating to the imagination,” she said. “His style is unique, characterized by a beautiful, sensual tone. His huge sensibility to colour and sound is impressionistic. At the same time, the ecstatic climaxes make his style closer to expressionism.”

Szymanowski often travelled to Italy, Sicily, North Africa and France – destinations with which Gabzdyl is familiar, having lived in France, and visited the Maghreb numerous times.

“Countries that are culturally different from our own arouse our curiosity,” she said. “They open us to new smells, tastes, landscapes, lifestyles…I think all these factors affect our emotions and inspire us. In this case, travelling in the composer’s footsteps helped me to understand his intentions and galvanized my enthusiasm.”

Studying in Canada influenced her in several ways. She was introduced to a musical perspective that stressed the architecture of a piece. “In Poland, there is generally more interest in the progress of the music’s ‘character.’ This focus is quite typical of Slavic schools,” she said. Gabzdyl was also influenced by the French technique of jeu perlé (passages played quickly, lightly and clearly) which she uses in Chopin and Szymanowski. And she thinks that music interpretation is somehow influenced by the spirit of the nation. “Moving to Canada improved my positive thinking. I became more relaxed. I find Canadians more jovial. Polish people have a tendency to be melancholic.”

Hugo Kitano, 22, is a double major at Stanford (music and computer science) and an international prizewinner. His COC free noon-hour recital January 31 is comprised of Beethoven’s penultimate piano Sonata No.30, Op.110 and Chopin’s resplendent Polonaise-Fantaisie Op.61. Kitano has worked extensively with John Perry who also finds time to visit the Glenn Gould School on a regular basis as a faculty member.

Charles Richard-Hamelin’s star is still rising; the honeymoon from his Warsaw Chopin Competition honours in 2015 has evolved into a major concert schedule that brings him to Koerner Hall on February 3. Two C-Major works by Schumann, the Arabesque Op.17 and the Fantasy Op.16 precede a performance of Chopin’s Four Ballades. The 29-year-old pianist gave an insightful interview to Bachtrack on September 30, 2016 that showed the same maturity beyond his years that his piano playing already reflected.

In answer to a question about his relationship to the score: “The more we play a work, the less we leave the score. But it is not because we play by heart that we must not have it in mind anymore. For Chopin, it’s complicated because the editions are very contradictory, there is not really a reference edition. Finally, the most important thing is to read between the lines: if we just scrupulously execute what is written on the score, we fall into academism. There is a lot of
unspoken music, such as rubato. In Chopin, for example, we sometimes find ornaments formed by several quick notes: obviously, he did not expect that we play them identically. You have to know how to distance yourself from the score; for it to be alive.”

**On how his repertoire has changed since the Warsaw win:** “Before the contest, I could choose to play what I wanted. But the audience did not want to hear me: I had a few concerts in Canada and Quebec but I never played abroad. Now, this is largely the case because the Chopin Competition is a showcase for the international scene. Playing what you want is good, yet you have to be engaged to play on a stage. That said, I was already very happy: I made a humble living, but I made a living.”

**And on Chopin becoming a label that’s hard to get rid of:** “Indeed, I have many commitments in Japan, but for Chopin! There are worse labels to have. If I were only to play Saint-Saëns for the rest of my life, I think I’ll stop playing the piano. Fortunately, we do not get tired of Chopin so quickly. I had to play three or four hours of music, while he wrote 12 or 13. And then, some programmers show more openness and let me build recital programs around Chopin, with other composers who accompany him well, by contrast or similarity.”

**Juho Pohjonen:** The celebrated Finnish pianist, 37-year-old Juho Pohjonen, is another “fast-rising star” (*The Guardian*). His impressive NYC recital debut in 2004, while he was still a student at the Sibelius Academy, was praised by *The New York Times* as “formidable” and
“breathtaking.” Lately his association with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center has brought him more attention for “his effortless brilliance.” All of which only adds to my anticipation for his Music Toronto recital on February 5. His program pairs two suites by Rameau from his Nouvelles suites de pièces de clavecin with late works by Mozart (Rondo in A Minor K511) and Beethoven (Sonata No.28 in A Major, Op.101).

Younggun Kim: Fifth in this handful of talented young pianists, South Korean-born, Toronto-based, U of T Faculty member Younggun Kim will show off his dazzling technical prowess in a recital in Walter Hall on February 7. The demanding program moves from the Bach-Busoni Chaconne to Godowsky’s fiendishly difficult Studies on Chopin’s Etudes and Ravel’s jaw-dropping La Valse.

Two String Quartets

Heath: When the Heath Quartet made their memorable Toronto debut in January 2017, their second violinist had just left the ensemble to spend more time with her family. Nonetheless, their dynamism and exuberance were evident even with a last-minute replacement. Now, with a new violinist in place, they make a welcome return to Walter Hall early next February.

When I spoke to first violinist Ollie Heath two years ago I asked how he constructs a program. “Nearly always we begin a concert with a piece from earlier in the repertoire,” Heath said. “The simpler, cleaner textures and conversational aspects of these pieces is a good way of bringing everyone ‘into the room,’ and introducing the possibilities of what a string quartet can do. The second work is often more complex – more demanding on both listener and player. We then fill the second half with a more generously sized work – from one of the Romantic, nationalist composers or one of the big Beethoven quartets.”

Sure enough, the paradigm still stands. For their Mooredale Concerts recital on February 3, they begin with Mozart’s Quartet K465 “Dissonance,” its nickname owing to the harmonic boldness of the slow introduction to its first movement. The most famous and last of the six quartets Mozart dedicated to “my dear friend Haydn,” will undoubtedly introduce the possibilities of what a string quartet can do.

The quartet is devoting this concert season to all three of Benjamin Britten’s quartets. We get to hear his first, commissioned in 1941 by the famous American patroness, Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, who had previously commissioned Bartók’s Fifth Quartet (1934) and Schoenberg’s Fourth (1936). The emotional centre of the work, the long Andante Calmo third movement, is filled with melancholy beauty. The afternoon concert concludes with Beethoven’s iconic String Quartet No.9, Op.59 No.3, one of the biggest of Beethoven’s quartets.

Van Kuijk: Despite its Dutch-sounding name, the Van Kuijk Quartet, founded by Nicolas Van Kuijk in 2012, is French. Its growing international reputation was kindled by winning First Prize in the 2015 Wigmore Hall Competition and First Prize and Audience Award at the Trondheim International Chamber Competition; and its members have been named BBC New Generation Artists until 2017. Their Music Toronto concert on January 31, curiously enough, follows a similar programming concept as that of the Heath, beginning with Haydn’s celebrated late Quartet in D Major, Op.76, No.5, written at the height of his fame. Ligeti’s Quartet No.1 “Metamorphoses

Two violinists

Benedetti: The enthraling Scottish violinist, Nicola Benedetti, makes her second visit to Toronto this season with her Koerner Hall recital on January 25. Her TSO engagement last September, playing Prokofiev’s Violin Concerto No.2, broadened into a visit to Sistema Toronto that was chronicled by David Perlmans onthewholenote.com in October. In Koerner Hall, she’ll be performing with Kiev-born pianist Alexei Grynyuk, a regular chamber music partner with Benedetti in the Benedetti, Elschenbroich, Grynyuk Trio. In 1942, Prokofiev found himself in far-off Central Asia working on the score for Eisenstein’s classic film Ivan the Terrible. For a change of pace he began to compose a sonata for flute and piano which was premiered in Moscow the following year to a lukewarm response. David Oistrakh suggested that Prokofiev turn it into a violin sonata, which he did, saying that he wanted to write it in a “gentle, flowing classical style.” That Violin Sonata Op.2, with all its wit, lyricism, expressiveness and mood changes, is a centrepiece of a recital that begins with Bach’s unalloyed solo masterwork, the Chaconne from Partita No.2, and includes a Wytton Marsals premiere and Richard Strauss’ surprisingly seductive Violin Sonata Op.18.

Pouliot: Twentysomething Canadian violinist Blake Pouliot won the 2018 Women’s Musical Club of Toronto Career Development Award, an honour that followed his Grand Prize win at the 2016 Orchestre Symphonique de Montreal (OSM) Manulife Competition. His recent Debussy-Ravel Analekta CD was praised by WholeNote Strings Attached columnist Terry Robbins as “an outstanding recording debut.” Robbins noted that “Pouliot plays with strength, clarity, warmth, faultless intonation and a fine sense of phrase… [drawing] a gorgeous tone from the 1729 Guarneri del Gesù violin on loan from the
Canada Council for the Arts.” With Hsin-I Huang at the piano, Pouliot gives a free (ticket required) concert in RCM’s Mazzoleni Hall Sunday afternoon, February 3. Don’t miss the opportunity to experience this star on the rise in an appealing program of Mozart (K379), Janáček, Sarasate and Chausson (the divine Poème).

CLASSICAL & BEYOND QUICK PICKS

➤ DEC 8, 8PM: Violinist Alexandre Da Costa, who divides his time between Montreal and Australia, brings his Stradivarius 1701 to the Glenn Gould Studio stage when he joins Nurhan Arman and Sinfonia Toronto in “The Eight Seasons,” featuring Vivaldi’s The Four Seasons and Piazzolla’s The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires.

➤ DEC 16, 8PM: The Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society celebrates Beethoven’s 248th birthday with a compelling program that includes the Kreutzer Sonata, Eyeglass Duo and Archduke Trio. Angela Park, piano, Yehonatan Berick, violin, and Rachel Mercer, cello, make it happen as the AYR Trio.

➤ JAN 10 AND 12, 8PM; JAN 13, 3PM: Intrepid Mississauga-born violinist, Leila Josefowicz, joins the TSO for a performance of Stravinsky’s Violin Concerto, the composer’s particular take on the Baroque era. David Robertson, American-born conductor of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, leads the orchestra in Sibelius’ grandly romantic Symphony No.2 and Kurt Weill’s evergreen Suite from the Threepenny Opera.

➤ JAN 12, 3PM: Musical inheritance is the theme of the Windermere String Quartet’s upcoming concert, “Keeping It in the Family.” The period-instrument ensemble’s program opens with a J.S. Bach fugue arranged by W.A. Mozart, followed by a divertimento by Leopold Mozart, Wolfgang’s father. Guest artist, traverso player Alison Melville, is featured in J.S. Bach’s son, Johann Christian’s Quartet No.1 for flute and strings; W.A. Mozart’s final string quartet, the masterful String Quartet No.23 in F Major, K590, concludes the Sunday afternoon recital.

➤ JAN 15, 12PM: Osvaldo Golijov’s haunting Dreams and Prayers of Isaac the Blind heads a program of chamber music (that also includes works by Villa-Lobos and Piazzolla) performed by artists of the COC and National Ballet Orchestras, in this free noon-hour concert in the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre of the Four Seasons Centre.

➤ JAN 27, 3PM: Pittsburgh-based guest violist, David Harding, and talented pianist, Todd Yaniv, join Trio Arkel members, Marie Béارد and Winona Zelenka for “the melodies just surged upon me.” The Trio chose this quote by Dvořák because it directly refers to his Piano Quartet No.2 in E-flat Major Op.87, the centrepiece of their Sunday afternoon concert, which also features music by Schubert and Röntgen.

➤ JAN 28, 7:30PM: TSO principal cellist, Joseph Johnson, and chamber musician supreme, Philip Chiu, join forces for a U of T Faculty of Music recital featuring music by Beethoven, Britten and Chopin.

➤ JAN 31 AND FEB 2, 8PM: After hors d’oeuvres of Wagner’s The Ride of the Valkyries and Berg’s Three Pieces for Orchestra, Sir Andrew Davis and the TSO settle in for the main course: Act I of Wagner’s Die Walküre, with Lise Davidsen, soprano; Simon O’Neill, tenor; and Brindley Sherratt, bass.

Paul Ennis is the managing editor of The WholeNote

CCC Music Festival

CCC Toronto Piano & Violin Competition 2019

February 21–28, 2019
(Application Deadline: Monday, January 21, 2019)

Gala Concert & Award Ceremony

April 14, 2019 at 2:00 pm
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www.ccppianocompetitions.org

thewholenote.com December 2018 / January 2019 29
songSLAM Celebrates Singer and Song

LYDIA PEROVIĆ

Competition is not unusual in classical music. Every few months, young voices and pianists are competing somewhere in the world – in standard repertoire by composers from the past. No new songs get commissioned especially for the Queen Elisabeth Competition in Belgium, or the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World, or the Operalia. For new works by living artists one goes to poetry slams and literary death matches, where poets and novelists turn their writing into a performance and the audience, to a greater or lesser degree inebriated, decides the winner. We can go to competitions in old music – and watch them civilly and in silence – or competitions in new writing, spoken without music, where a certain degree of audience responsiveness and noise is in fact encouraged.

Those were the choices, that is, until spring 2017 and the inaugural songSLAM concert before a standing-room-only crowd in New York City. It's when soprano Martha Guth and pianist Erika Switzer decided to give a spin to this new and (fair to say) populist format for presenting new art song creations. The two musicians, while pursuing independent careers, have, in their spare time, also been running Sparks & Wiry Cries, an organization and online magazine dedicated to the “preservation and the advancement of art song.” The new-song-competition format became popular almost overnight: after the NYC songSLAM, two new cities, Minneapolis and Ann Arbor, immediately wanted their own. There will be seven songSLAMS in three countries this season, says Guth via email from NYC when I get in touch with her to ask about the upcoming Toronto slam.

Scheduled for January 16 at the more formal Walter Hall at the University of Toronto, the Toronto songSLAM will otherwise remain true to the established slam practices: drinks (cocktails will be served 30 minutes before the 7pm start time, says Guth), all songs by living composers, and performers from all career levels – students, young professionals and established musicians from Toronto and Montreal. She could not confirm the final list of participants, as the 12 accepted composer-performer teams and five alternates were still being notified at the time of the interview, but at least two young singers have already shared on Twitter their excitement ahead of the concert – sopranos Sara Schabas and Danika Lorèn (who will be singing her own songs accompanied by Darren Creech on the piano).

“We created the songSLAM in order to get audiences excited and invested in the creation of new music,” says Guth, “and to build a sense of collaboration and interaction between composers and performers in each city where events are held. This social event has so far exceeded all of our expectations everywhere it has happened. The audiences have been incredibly enthusiastic, and the musicians taking part have told us that even if they didn’t place in the competition, they loved taking part because of the community-building aspects. For us too, it is an amazing way to hear up-and-coming talent.” Ever on the lookout for new and exciting art songs, the pair have commissioned new music from some of their favourites from the slams, some of which will be performed in the 2019 songSLAM festival in NYC.

To put together song slams in different cities, partnership with a local organization is key. For the Toronto event, Sparks & Wiry Cries partnered with Women on the Verge, aka the sopranos Elizabeth McDonald, Emily Martin and Kathryn Tremills, the performing trio on a mission to tell the stories of women’s lives through song. The University of Toronto’s Voice Studies Program is the second Toronto partner that made the slam possible. After the Canadian edition, slams in Chicago, Denver and Ljubljana (Slovenia) are in the works, the latter scheduled to be televised on Slovenian TV.

Toronto-based tenor Jonathan Russell MacArthur and pianist Darren Creech took part in the first slam in NYC last year. The two musicians met while working on a production workshop with FAWN Chamber Creative, and “definitely clicked, being two queer boys who live in Toronto,” says MacArthur in an email when I ask about the experience. “There was always something to talk about.” When he heard of the competition and proposed a collaboration to Creech, the young pianist didn’t need much persuading. They agreed to do a piece by Wally Gunn, MacArthur’s Aussie friend who lived in the NYC borough of Queens. “Wally wanted to tell a story of Captain Moonlite – a gay Australian bushranger and outlaw – so he wrote that piece for us.” Once in NYC, they stayed with Gunn and rehearsed in Brooklyn. Their performance now lives on YouTube. “We had a great time.”

But first, December. The year is not over yet.

Just the other day I received an email from Happenstance’s clarinetist Brad Cherwin describing their next concert – or shall I call it experiment. As soprano Adanya Dunn is out and about travelling and auditioning, Happenstance will this time present themselves as a duo. “Alice” Nahre Sol (piano and composition) and Cherwin himself. On December 11 at Gallery 345, free admission, they will present PAPER, an exploration of that mundane yet essential material through music and visual art.

How is that going to work? “Expect a 30-minute performance piece, incorporating all new music by Alice and improvisations by both of us, alongside projections and painting. It’s going to be our first attempt at wrestling with the concert form. We’re pushing ourselves out of the standard recital paradigm.” The visuals will not be narrative but abstract, to match the music, he says. They won’t be incidental but fundamentally connected to the sound. In other words, we have to come and see what they have concocted. (To check out some of Cherwin’s art – he does all the visuals for the Happenstance programs – head over to Instagram, his account is public.) Meanwhile this fall, Nahre Sol has started a fellowship at the RCM in partnership with the 21C Music Festival, and Happenstance has received some TAC funding for the new season. The 2019 concerts will be announced on December 11, and the odd detail remains to be worked out, but Cherwin can confirm North American premieres of works by Wolfgang Rihm and Pascal Dusapin for soprano, clarinet and piano, as well as a world premiere of a new trio by Nahre Sol.

Meanwhile, across town, in the Amsterdam Bicycle Club on the Esplanade, Against the Grain Theatre, known for messing with traditional operatic repertoire to great effect, will launch its record label.
and its first release on December 7. *Ayre*, Osvaldo Golijov’s 2004 song cycle for soprano and chamber ensemble that uses Sephardic, Arabic, Hebrew and Sardinian folk material, has been recorded in a live concert by the AtG’s founding member, Lebanese-Canadian soprano Miriam Khalil. Songs from the disc will be performed at the launch, which will be an art song recital that keeps all the informality of an AtG Opera Pub. And did I mention cocktails, which seem to be the recurring theme of this end-of-year column?

**A few song-themed tips for the gifting season**

For the new music eccentric in your life, consider the recently released CD of songs by Andrew Staniland to the poetry of Robin Richardson, *Go By Contraries*. SongSLAM’s Martha Guth and baritone Tyler Duncan lend their voices, with Erika Switzer at the piano. For the early music jester, get Sallazzo Ensemble’s debut album *Parle qui veut: Moralizing Songs of the Middle Ages* (Linn Records). And for those few people in your life who still read books (not a huge number of us are still kicking about), look for Robert Harris’ *Song of a Nation*, on the eventful life of the composer of Canada’s national anthem, Calixa Lavallée.

**ART OF SONG QUICK PICKS**

- **DEC 22 AND 23, 8PM:** Heliconian Hall. The Istituto Italiano di Cultura di Toronto presents the Vesuvius Ensemble’s “Christmas in Southern Italy.” Francesco Pellegrino and the lads of Vesuvius see the year off with their traditional December concert of secular Southern Italian songs around Christmas themes. Pellegrino, Marco Cera and Lucas Harris are joined by Romina di Gasbarro at the guest vocals and Tommaso Sollazzo on the bagpipes. Knowing Vesuvius, I expect some high quality arrangements of Italian pop songs as well – at least in the encores.

- **JAN 26 AND 27, 7:30PM:** Trinity College Chapel, U of T. Cor Unum Ensemble and Sub Rosa Ensemble bring to the fore the little-known works by women composers from the 16th and 17th centuries.

- **JAN 27, 2PM:** The Royal Conservatory of Music. Mazzoleni Songmasters Series: “Winter Words.” Mezzo Lucia Cervoni and tenor Michael Colvin sing Britten, Mahler and assorted other music around the broad theme of winter.

- **FEB 3, 7:30PM:** Vocalis: The Song Narrative Project, curated by Stephen Philcox and Laura Tucker. The Extension Room, 30 Eastern Ave. Meet University of Toronto Faculty of Music’s outstanding master’s and doctoral students in concert. Free admission.

What stood out for you this year? Send me your highlights to artofsong@thewholenote.com. Wishing you a merry and song-filled end of the year.

_Lydia Perović is an arts journalist in Toronto. Send her your art-of-song news to artofsong@thewholenote.com._
Give Yourself A Jazzy Little Christmas

With Christmas fast approaching – where did the year go? – an overview of gifts any jazz lover would love to receive. And remember, sometimes to get what you really want, you have to buy it yourself.

**Books** – First, two with a Canadian perspective:

*Claude Ranger: Canadian Jazz Legend* – Mark Miller, 2017. Available from indigo.ca in e-book, paperback, and hardcover formats. Not exactly hot off the press, Miller’s latest release was reviewed by Stuart Broomer in the September 2017 issue of *The WholeNote*. But like all good jazz books it has a lasting relevancy. It tells the story of one of Canada’s greatest and most enigmatic jazz artists while attempting to explore the mystery of his eventual unravelling. Ranger, presumed dead, has been officially listed as a missing person for 14 years. Mark Miller is a first-rate writer, but an even better researcher, and the tale he weaves here makes for a compelling read. Readers should look forward to Miller’s forthcoming work in progress, a book on another of our great originals, guitarist Sonny Greenwich.

*Live at the Cellar* – Marian Iago, UBC Press. A very recent and welcome addition to books on Canadian jazz, this was released in October. Iago, a Halifax-born saxophonist who now teaches at the University of Edinburgh, examines the development of Canadian jazz through the lens of an iconic club on Canada’s opposite coast: The Cellar in Vancouver, during the hot-house period of the late 1950s and early 1960s. It abounds with rare photographs, musical analysis and anecdotes about, and from, many notables who were there, including Jerry Fuller, Fraser MacPherson, Terry Clarke, P.J. Perry and Don Thompson, who wrote the foreword. It’s a handsome and interesting book; I’m about halfway through and thoroughly enjoying it.

*Playing Changes: Jazz for the New Century* – Nate Chinen, Paragon. Hardcover, 288 pages, August 14, 2018. Chinen has covered jazz for 20 years in *The New York Times*, *Jazz Times* and elsewhere. His wittily titled, double-entendre-titled book – warm, richly detailed and incisive – offers a look at the state of jazz right now and highlights the important changes – technological, practical, ideological – that contemporary musicians have negotiated in the new century. It’s a kind of jazz version of Alvin Toffler’s *Future Shock* and is informative reading for those who are attempting to understand the torturous and ever-shifting changes of the current jazz landscape. I’m not sure yet that I agree with everything Chinen has to say, but he offers a convincing and refreshing rebuttal to any notions that jazz is irrelevant, or even close to being dead.

*50 Years at the Village Vanguard: Thad Jones, Mel Lewis and the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra* – Dave Lisk and Eric Allen. Hardcover, 328 pages. A sumptuous, coffee table-style book which celebrates and documents the history of one of the greatest large ensembles in jazz history, covering the noted founders but also the band’s survival and development well past their deaths. It contains scores of rare photographs, musical commentary, interviews with key members past and present, and a complete discography of the band’s massive output. People wax about the “jazz tradition” all the time, but the story of this great band in its natural habitat is the jazz tradition, continuing before our very eyes.

*Sophisticated Giant: The Life and Legacy of Dexter Gordon* – Maxine Gordon. October 30, 2018. University of California Press. Hardcover, 296 pages. Available in stores and online. I haven’t read this book yet but judging from reviews, it looks promising. A close-up look at the life and music of one of the great individualists and innovators in jazz history, written by the woman who is not only his widow, but an accomplished jazz writer in her own right.

**CDs** – Too many to list, but here are a few I’ve enjoyed of late:

*An Evening of Indigos* – Bill Kirchner, Jazzheads, 2015. This beautiful 2-CD set is the entirety of a 2014 concert soprano saxophonist Kirchner gave in the Jazz Performance Space of The New School in New York City, where he has taught for over 25 years. He is joined by Carlton Holmes on piano, Holli Ross on vocals and bassist/singer Jim Ferguson in varying combinations. As the title suggests, the program is reflective in nature, though not monochromatically so – a mixture of some fine originals and choice standards, all performed with a start-ling, almost vulnerable intimacy. This is something of a musical banquet which repays repeated listening. Those who wish to know more about Bill Kirchner may read a piece I wrote about him at wallacebass.com.

*Both Directions at Once: The Lost Album* – John Coltrane. Recorded March 6, 1963. Released June 29, 2018 by Impulse! Records. Not much needs to be said here, this is a fascinating discovery of an entire session by Coltrane’s classic quartet at their peak and as such belongs in any jazz fan’s collection.

*Three from Mosaic Records* – The superb mail-order CD-reissue company has three recent, essential historic releases, available at mosaicrecords.com. They may seem pricey at first glance, but given
the rarity of the music and the as-always—superb production values, these are actually a bargain:

The Savory Collection: 1935-40 – 6 CDs, $99 US. Bill Savory was a recording engineer in NYC whose day job was editing transcription recordings for overseas consumption. By night he took to recording the blazing jazz being played in various clubs such as The Famous Door, the Onyx and others. His collection of tapes languished unknown for years until recently when they were discovered, curated and partially issued as downloadable files by jazz scholar and saxophonist Loren Schoenberg. Mosaic has gathered more of them and issued them on CD for the first time. The quality of both the music and sound is staggering; featuring the Count Basie Orchestra, Fats Waller, Coleman Hawkins, the John Kirby Sextet and many others.

Classic Brunswick & Columbia Teddy Wilson Sessions: 1934-42 – 7 CDs, $119 US. A cornucopia of great music from the most artistic swing pianist of them all, leading a stunning array of star-studded groups. Much of it is seeing the light of day for the first time in decades. So this is not to be missed.

Classic 1936-47 Count Basie & Lester Young Studio Sessions – 8 CDs, $116 US. This set features Basie and Young, both together and separately, during their respective primes. Many fans will already have some of this music in their collections, but probably not all of it; and thanks to Mosaic’s superb mastering, it’s never sounded this good. Desert island music.

DVDs – Neither of these are particularly new, but are of such high quality that even fans who have already seen them would like to have them to watch over and over again.

I Called Him Morgan – Directed, produced and written by Kasper Collins. Released 2016, available at amazon.ca and other sites. This documentary tells the complex and cautionary tale of the relationship between star trumpeter Lee Morgan and his common-law wife Helen, who rescued him from severe heroin addiction, nurtured him back to health and oversaw the most successful years of his career, only to shoot him dead on the bandstand at Slug’s in February, 1972. The story is told so well that even those who could never otherwise forgive Helen Morgan for the murder are forced to view her with compassion and to admit that she paid sorely for the crime; and that if left to his own devices, Lee Morgan would have died long before he did at her hand.

The Jazz Loft According to Eugene W. Smith – Directed by Sara Fishko. Released September, 2016; available at amazon.com. For my money, this is the best jazz documentary ever made. Fishko and her team did a phenomenal job of editing a mountain of raw material into a linear and cohesive story, which tells two tales. Firstly, that of Eugene W. Smith, the Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer who virtually created the photo-essay genre while at Life magazine, and who took some of the most famous black and white photographs of the 20th century. In the mid-50s he began to unravel under the pressure of his own obsessiveness with his work, leaving his wife and children and taking a loft in an abandoned, rat-infested building located in New York’s flower district, where he lived between 1957 and 1965. While there he took over 40,000 photographs and secretly recorded 4,000 hours of the jazz played in the all-night jam sessions that were held in the building for years. These form the soundtrack for the movie, a kind of rare insider’s view into an underground scene only a city like New York could produce. Zoot Sims, Pepper Adams and Bob Brookmeyer were among the “frequent fliers” and Sims in particular receives a lot of attention. There are jazz tales from other denizens of the building such as drummer Ronnie Free, who arrived from the South an innocent with much promise but got hooked on heroin and barely survived. And there’s a stunning sequence between composer/arranger Hall Overton, who had a studio in the building, and Thelonious Monk, preparing the music for Monk’s Town Hall concert featuring a ten-piece band which rehearsed in the building. This doc makes a fascinating peak period in jazz history come alive. I could watch it every day, but I’d never get anything done.

I’d like to add to this jazz Christmas list my best wishes to WholeNote readers everywhere for a safe and joyous holiday and a Happy New Year.
Looking Forward
To a New Year’s Rose

JENNIFER PARR

In the new year, one of the most exciting shows coming up is the world premiere by Soulpepper Theatre Company of Rose, a new musical inspired by Gertrude Stein’s first children’s book, The World Is Round. Yes, that Gertrude Stein, who wrote “A Rose is a Rose is a Rose.” A real Rose, a little girl neighbour of Stein’s, had inspired her to write the story, and when author Margaret Wise Brown (Goodnight Moon) approached Stein on behalf of new publisher Young Scott Books in 1938 to see if she might be interested in writing a children’s book for them, she sent this manuscript. With clean-cut yet whimsical illustrations by Clement Hurd (also of Goodnight Moon) to give a tangible reality to the whimsical yet deeply philosophical story of a young girl trying to make sense of her world, the book became a classic that was reprinted several times, although it isn’t as well known today.

As soon as I heard about the project to turn this unique child’s story into a musical I wanted to know more and reached out to Soulpepper to get in touch with the creators, well-known composer and music director Mike Ross (music and book) and writer/actor Sarah Wilson (lyrics and book).

What follows is an absorbing conversation I had with Wilson, leaving me even more intrigued than before about the show itself.

WN: How or why did Gertrude Stein’s rare children’s book The World Is Round become the inspiration or starting point for your new musical?

SW: Mike and I had talked about making something together, specifically adapting something for all ages, but we hadn’t found the right thing yet. We had a couple of false starts on other projects before I came across an excerpt from The World Is Round online and was drawn enough to it that I ordered it. I thought it was weird and wonderful and musical and so I showed it to Mike, who agreed.

You have worked together before at Soulpepper, but what brought you together to create this piece?

Yes, we were part of the first Academy, so we’ve known each other a long time now. A really great thing about Soulpepper is that you kind of swim around one another for years and get to know each other and find creative partnerships in a really organic way. So we’d acted in shows together and we’re good friends, but it wasn’t until years later that we started batting ideas around to create something.

Rose is listed on the Soulpepper website as a “project ImagiNation commission.” Can you tell me about this program and how Rose will fit with its mandate?

It’s a commissioning project for new Canadian work. Practically, it means that we get resources (time, space, people, money) to create and workshop, and potentially a full production. The support let us do the concert two years ago, which was invaluable, and has let us be ambitious. We’re free to write a bigger show for more performers, hire a choreographer so we can have full production numbers, test material out both in-house and publicly…it gives you practical support to dream.

Have you stuck closely to the story of Rose in the book, and her journey to understand and feel comfortable in the world, or have you made changes/additions to make it more contemporary or Canadian?

Anybody familiar with the book will certainly recognize it as the source, but we’ve created a more active, accessible narrative. It’s based on the book, but expanded. Rose is set in a little mountain town that’s familiar but not naturalistic, so it’s got that kind of fairy-tale quality.

We don’t specifically reference Canada, but there’s a lot of maple flavour. Some loggers. Some plaid. A certain kind of small-town snow-globe feel that I associate with home.

The style of Gertrude Stein’s writing in the book can seem too adult as it is so abstract and without much punctuation, and yet it also sounds – when read aloud – very like the way a child tells stories to other children. Have you kept this style of the text in your book and lyrics?

We’ve used Stein’s text in many ways in Rose. Some of the more typical Stein poetry – the stream of consciousness, fantastic rhythmic stuff is how Rose thinks to herself, her brain chatter when she’s all alone. She’s isn’t outgoing, she knows she’s different somehow from other kids, but she’s got an incredibly rich inner life and that kind of runaway-train kid-think is best expressed by Stein. Other characters express themselves differently. There’s a town full of people who love Rose, but don’t think like her or talk like her. Some are more straightforward, like Rose’s best friend Willie, so while his text and lyrics aren’t direct pulls from the book, they use bits of Stein, an idea or a phrase as a jumping-off point. Other characters have their own eccentricities and rhythms.

Lyrically, I’ve also used a pretty simple vocabulary. Stein has a famous quote where she says “I like words of one syllable” and although this wasn’t a conscious choice initially, I’ve found that what we’re trying to do is best served by simple language. Big ideas in little words, and sometimes arranged in unusual ways.

Can you tell me about the process of tackling this material and adapting it into a musical that could appeal to all ages and yet still have the flavour and philosophy of Gertrude Stein’s original story?

Flavour is a good word to describe it. I love the energy and strange sense of Stein’s work, but we didn’t want to make an avant-garde musical. Rose is different than anything I’ve seen, but it’s not abstract, it’s not remote. You don’t require knowledge of Stein or a degree in literature or anything like that to enjoy it.

We both really responded to this story of a nine-year-old girl trying to figure out who she is, asking big questions that sometimes she’s not even sure she understands. Nine is such an important age. It’s so young, but it’s also a time that your mind starts to really zoom in and out on the world. You’re grappling with everyday things, but underneath that there are much larger questions lurking. And they’re questions that can last a lifetime.

Our Rose is warm and big-hearted and really funny. I guess in writing it I check in a lot with my own taste and sensibilities. I love challenging, off-centre work, but not in a cerebral way. I find it exciting, and so it’s a process of trying to...
wrangle that energy and marry that to our own ideas and desires to create something new. When I see a show, I want heart and brains and humour. And I want to feel welcome. I want to feel people trying to express something that’s difficult to talk about. And I think that’s what we’ve done.

What sort of balance is there between spoken dialogue and song? Is there a special way words and music work together on this show that is different from or similar to other shows you have created or worked on?

It’s not a sung-through show – there are spoken scenes as well as songs. There’s a ton of variety in Rose. In some ways it’s a very traditional story, beginning with “Once upon a time,” but then from there, we go everywhere.

Has the three-year development process, including the concert presentation in 2016 given you any surprises in rehearsal or in front of its first audiences? Has the show changed during the process from what you thought it would be?

We started this process very open-minded. We didn’t have an end goal of what we thought it would or should be, but it’s been amazing to see it grow. Sometimes we find files of writing or MP3s from years ago and it’s so neat to see how it’s evolved.

The concert was especially useful. Since then, the major part of our process has been book work, which then necessitates a lot of song rewriting, so there’s a ton of new material since then. But it was very encouraging in that I could see that even though there was a lot of work to do, there was a strong heartbeat.
Will the designs by Lorenzo Savoini for the show be inspired or influenced by the book’s famous Clement Hurd illustrations?  
Yes! They’re such beautiful illustrations, so that influence is absolutely there. Lorenzo’s created a gorgeous container for our story to unfold, and that container is that terrific pink of the pages of The World Is Round. Both the illustrations and Lorenzo’s design live in that sweet spot between childlike and sophisticated. The first time I saw Hurd’s drawings they struck me as both unlike anything I’d ever seen and at the same time totally familiar. The design lives in that space, too.

Mike and I have handed Lorenzo, our costume designer Alexandra Lord and our director Gregory Prest a ton of challenges, and what I’ve seen so far has been so inventive and enchanting. I think it’ll be a real pleasure to spend time in the world they’re creating.

If you had to sum up the show in one sentence for prospective audience members what would you say?  
This is a grown-up show for kids and a kids show for grow-ups – it’s beautiful, funny and unusual and you’ll leave humming.

That’s kind of a cheat sentence, but there it is.

(For a first taste and glimpse of the musical go to the Soulpepper YouTube channel to hear the song A Name Means a Lot performed by Hailey Gillis. Rose opens at Soulpepper on January 17 and has already been extended to February 24.)

Looking Back (And Immediately Ahead)

Fantasticks: For one night only, on October 30, Tom Jones and Harvey Schmidt’s sweet-yet-tart chamber musical The Fantasticks came back to life in a delightful semi-staged concert at the Stratford Festival as part of the Forum series. I know the music well, but had never seen the show live – although it is famous as being the longest-ever running musical off-Broadway. It was fascinating to see this version which was true to the original but subtly revised for 21st-century sensibilities, including changing the two fathers of the original to two mothers. In the role of El Gallo, the mysterious character who acts as narrator and mastermind of the plot, TV star and former Stratford company member Eric McCormack led the cast with great warmth and style.

Red Sky: Another highlight of the season so far for me was Red Sky Performance’s most recent dance theatre creation, Trace, which premiered at Canadian Stage in early November sweeping audiences to their feet. A powerful and inspiring envisioning of Anishinaabe sky stories, this production is, in my opinion, the best yet from Red Sky. All the elements: Jera Wolfe’s athletic sculptural choreography, the atmospheric music of Elliot Britton and projections by Marcella Grimaux, are reaching for new heights and attaining new levels of artistry through their combination in the service of specific, yet universal, storytelling.

Coming up in December: All the usual seasonal favourites including Ross Petty’s annual pantom (this year The Wizard of Oz), the National Ballet’s Nutcracker, and many versions of A Christmas Carol are on tap. On December 8, there is also a first public workshop of a new family-oriented musical version of Jack & the Beanstalk by classically trained Canadian composer William Lavigne. Inspired by the traditional musicals of Gershwin, Bernstein and Rogers and Hammerstein, Lavigne says that he really wants to “present a new theatre piece that is musically accessible and suitable for all ages to enjoy, based on a story that is relatable to everyone.” Benoit Boutet, Gabrielle Prata, and Adi Braun lead the cast in this first public outing of the in-development Jack & the Beanstalk at the Royal Conservatory’s Témerty Theatre.

Vanessa Sears is YPT’s Mary Poppins

Jak Barradell is Neleus/Northbrook/ Von Hussler in YPT’s Mary Poppins

MUSIC THEATRE QUICK PICKS

DEC 1 TO JAN 6: Young People’s Theatre, Mary Poppins. As the sequel to the original movie takes over cinemas, two productions of the recent stage version of Mary Poppins (book revised by Julian Fellows) are playing in time for the holidays. YPT’s shortened version, ideal for young children, this year directed by well-known performer Thom Allison, has excellent word of mouth.

DEC 1, ONWARDS: Mirvish Productions. Come from Away. If you haven’t seen it yet, treat yourself and loved ones to this ridiculously good and truly heartwarming Canadian musical soon transferring from the Royal Alex to the Elgin Theatre and with a run extended to at least June 2019.

DEC 5 TO 16: Civic Light Opera Company. Scrooge, the Musical. Music, lyrics and book by Leslie Bricusse. As a longtime fan of Leslie Bricusse’s lyrics for Victor/Victoria I am very intrigued by this version of A Christmas Carol.

DEC 8 TO 30: National Ballet of Canada. The Nutcracker. One of the best introductions to the ballet for children, and for many families an annual outing; possibly more popular than ever now that a new film version has just appeared.


JAN 4 TO 27: The Simón and Garfunkel Story. This immersive concert-style presentation of a biographical walk-through of the musical partnership, with large-scale screen projections and a full band, is said to be a must-see for fans and should be a good fit for the intimate CAA Theatre.

JAN 29 TO FEB 8: Tapestry Opera. Hook Up. Another exciting world premiere from Tapestry, this time dealing with the very current issue of consent in a university setting. With a young cast of classically trained singer/actors, a contemporary book by Julie Tepperman and score by Chris Thornborrow, word is that Hook Up is part opera/part musical.

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.
Some Old, Some New
Some Tried & True

CHRISTOPHER HOILE

The end of the old year and beginning of the new features a mix of old and new operas and old operas rejigged to be like new. There never used to be so much variety at this time of year, but it’s a challenge operagoers will gladly have to get used to.

Elektra: The production on the largest scale in these two months is the Canadian Opera Company’s remount of Richard Strauss’ Elektra running for seven performances from January 26 to February 22. This will be the second revival of the imaginative production directed by James Robinson since its debut in 1996. It is especially noteworthy that this production stars two former COC Brünnhildes. Christine Goerke, the COC’s most recent Brünnhilde, sings the title role and Susan Bullock, the Brünnhilde for the COC’s first ever Ring Cycle in 2006, sings Elektra’s hated mother Klytämnestra. Bullock previously sang the role of Elektra when the COC last presented the opera in 2007. Soprano Erin Wall sings Elektra’s sister Chrysothemis, baritone William Schwinghammer sings Elektra’s avenging brother Orest and COC favourite, tenor Michael Schade, sings Klytämnestra’s lover Aegisth. Johannes Debus conducts the score of this opera that inhabits the same rich, violent sound world as its immediate predecessor by Strauss, Salome, and is a real showpiece for the orchestra.

WOW Factor: Though they are largely unseen by the general public, the COC has steadily been developing a repertory of operas for children that it tours to schools all around the province. Lately, the COC has taken to giving the public a look at these charming works. Its newest is WOW Factor - A Cinderella Story with music by Gioacchino Rossini from his Cinderella opera La Cenerentola (1817) adapted by Stéphane Mayer with a new English libretto by Joel Ivany, artistic director of Against the Grain Theatre. Ivany is well-known for his ability to write new librettos to existing music as he has done for AtG’s Mozart series of Figaro’s Wedding (2015), Uncle John (2014) and A Little Too Cosy (2015). One can tell that La Cenerentola has undergone quite a lot of musical adaptation since the original runs about 148 minutes whereas WOW Factor runs only 50 minutes.

Rossini’s opera has no Fairy Godmother and neither does Ivany’s adaptation. In his updated version the hit singing show WOW Factor arrives at Cindy’s school. Students jump at the chance to compete for the top prize – especially with pop sensation Lil’ Charm rumoured to be there. Shy Cindy dreams of sharing her talents with the world but friends become mean girls when she steps into the spotlight. The question is can Cindy, driven by her desire to sing, and with a bit of help from a reluctant pop star and his sidekick, overcome her fears to find her own unique voice? The roles are sung by members of the Canadian Opera Company Ensemble Studio and before each performance, young audience members can take part in interactive activities related to the opera. The recommended age is from 5 to 12 years old. Performances at 11am and 2pm take place on both December 1 and 2 in the Imperial Oil Opera Theatre and tickets are free for children under 12. The 11am performance on December 2 is designated as a relaxed performance and people of all abilities are welcome.

TOT’s Fledermaus: Meanwhile, as it has done for more than 30 years, Toronto Operetta Theatre continues its service of helping Torontonians bridge the old and new years with operetta as it has done for more than 30 years. This year it revives its production of Johann Strauss, Jr.’s Die Fledermaus for five performances from December 28, 2018, to January 2, 2019. Die Fledermaus, the peak of the Golden Age operetta, which has become over time intimately associated with New Year’s Eve in Europe and abroad, stars Lara Ciekiewicz, who previous was a stunning Sylvia Varescu in Kálmán’s The Gypsy Princess in 2011. Also in the cast are tenor Adam Fisher, who sang Paris in TOT’s La Belle Hélène earlier this year, Caitlin Wood as Adele and TOT favourite Elizabeth Beeler as Prince Orlovsky. Derek Bate conducts and Guillermo Silva-Marín not only directs but plays the role of Frosch, the jailer.
Silva-Marin’s re-imagination of the role of Frosch is one of his best ideas in this Die Fledermaus, last seen in 2010. Typically, the role is played by a comedian who does a long spoken routine in Act 3 before the singing recommences. Silva-Marin avoids this general slump in the action by making Frosch a would-be opera singer who gets into a competition with the tenor he has locked up in the cells. This not only keeps the music going but is far funnier than any spoken-word routine I’ve seen.

**Hamilton and Kitchener:**
Since the demise of Opera Ontario in 2014, symphonies in the two cities served, Hamilton and Kitchener, have begun including opera in their programming. In Hamilton the Brott Festival Orchestra has mounted a fully staged opera for several years during the Festival’s summer run. The Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony has also begun adding opera to its schedule due to popular demand. On January 11 and 12 it will perform Bizet’s Carmen in concert with mezzo soprano Lucia Cervoni in the title role and tenor Ernesto Ramirez as Don José. The cast will also feature baritone Chad Louwerse; the Opera Laurier Chorus, tenor Alexander Dobson; sopranos Midori Marsh, Claire de Sévigné and tenor Ernesto Ramirez as Don José. The cast will also feature baritone Chad Louwerse; the Opera Laurier Chorus, tenor Alexander Dobson; sopranos Midori Marsh, Claire de Sévigné and tenor Ernesto Ramirez as Don José. The cast will also feature baritone Chad Louwerse; the Opera Laurier Chorus, tenor Alexander Dobson; sopranos Midori Marsh, Claire de Sévigné and tenor Ernesto Ramirez as Don José.

**Hosokawa’s Raven and Maiden from the Sea:** Those interested in contemporary opera should know that renowned Japanese composer Toshio Hosokawa is in residence at the University of Toronto Faculty of Music this season. The faculty is staging several concerts to celebrate Hosokawa’s work, one of which is devoted to two of the seven operas he has written. The program is made up of Hosokawa’s setting of The Raven as a monodrama from 2012 and Futari Shizuka (The Maiden from the Sea) from 2017.

Hosokawa wrote The Raven, based on Edgar Allen Poe’s 1845 poem, for Swedish mezzo-soprano Charlotte Hellekant after he had heard her sing in his opera Matsukaze (2011). Hosokawa has noted the similarities in theme between The Raven and Japanese Noh drama in which creatures of nature play an important part. While all the roles in Noh are traditionally played by men, Hosokawa has said that having a mezzo-soprano interpret the part of the narrator who mourns her lost love purposely reverses the tradition in order to broaden the theme to feelings of loss in general.

Futari Shizuka (which literally means “The Two Shizukas”) was conceived as a companion to The Raven. It is based on a Noh drama attributed to Zeami Motokiyo (1363-1443) about the departed spirit of Shizuka Gozen, or Lady Shizuka, who possesses the body and soul of a young beautiful girl. Hosokawa’s librettist Oriza Hirata has updated the action to the present by making the girl a refugee who has made it to the Mediterranean Sea, and sings of her sorrow for wars and hateful disputes. Soprano Xin Wang will sing the role of the young girl. Ryoko Aoki, a Noh singer and dancer, will be the spirit of Lady Shizuka, the role she created in 2017. The double bill takes place in Walter Hall of the Edward Johnson Building at the University of Toronto on January 17 only.

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Beat by Beat | Early Music

Christmas Music Across Europe

MATTHEW WHITFIELD

National identity and culture play a profound and vital role in the artistic self-perception of a country’s performers and composers. Looking back on the Renaissance and Baroque eras, it is clear that unique combinations of pedagogy, performance practice, politics and technique led to the development of identifiable national schools, particularly in France, Germany, Italy and England. These schools are where we see the development of such localized phenomena as the polyphony of Tudor England, the chorale-based compositions of Lutheran Germany, and the development of Italian operatic and dramatic forms.

The annual arrival of Christmas brings with it a host of music from across Europe, connected through various forms of Christianity, but unique in individual flavours and styles. Last month we were introduced to the villancicos navideños, an ebullient form of proto-popular Christmas music native to Spain; this December and January we are fortunate to hear a wide range of music from other cultural hotspots, performed by some of our city’s finest ensembles.

Jubilance and Joy

No name is more synonymous with the German Baroque than Johann Sebastian Bach, whose choral compositions combined Lutheran theology with divinely inspired music. Bach’s Christmas Oratorio is a classic Christmas composition from the Baroque era, compiled and composed between 1733 and 1734 to celebrate the Christmas season in Leipzig. Although considered a single, free-standing work (catalogued as BWV 248) this “oratorio” is a series of six individual cantatas that were performed during the time between Christmas and Epiphany and divided between the Thomaskirche and Nikolaikirche. Monumental in scope and brilliant in its musical expression of Bach’s beliefs and theology, the Christmas Oratorio is, along with the Passions, the closest Bach came to writing a dramatic work. The Toronto Classical Singers tackle this incredible work on December 9, bringing a touch of variety to an oratorio scene saturated with performances of Handel’s Messiah!

About 100 years before Bach was born, Michael Praetorius was pioneering new musical forms in the Lutheran tradition, developing and incorporating Protestant hymnody into freely composed pieces, such as the chorale fantasies for organ. Praetorius was prolific, his voluminous output showing the influence of Italian composers and his younger contemporary Heinrich Schütz. His works include the nine volume Musae Sioniae (composed between 1605 and 1610), a collection comprised of more than 1200 chorale and song arrangements, and Terpsichore, a compendium of more than 300 instrumental dances, which is both his most widely known work and his sole surviving secular work. Now known almost exclusively for his harmonization of Es ist ein Ros entsprungen, made famous in the Carols for Choirs collection, a broader overview of Praetorius’s music will be on display December 14 to 16 with The Toronto Consort’s Praetorius Christmas Vespers, a reproduction of a Christmas Vespers as it might have sounded in the early 17th century. It is worth remembering that there were many generations of composers who paved the path for the great composers of the late baroque, and the chance to hear the unique sounds of these earlier soundsmiths is certainly valuable and rewarding.

350 Years of François Couperin

François Couperin (1668 - 1733), known by his contemporaries as Couperin le Grand (Couperin the Great), was born into one of the most renowned musical families in Europe, the French equivalent of the German Bachs. Couperin was a prolific and influential composer, receiving a 20-year royal publishing privilege in 1713 and subsequently issuing numerous volumes of keyboard and chamber music including his most famous book, L’Art de toucher le clavecin. Unlike other Baroque composers whose works were lost and later revived, Couperin’s have remained in the repertory; Johannes Brahms performed Couperin’s music in public and contributed to the first complete edition of Couperin’s Pièces de clavecin by Friedrich Chrysander in the 1880s; Richard Strauss orchestrated a number of Couperin’s harpsichord pieces; and Maurice Ravel memorialized his fellow French composer in his Le Tombeau de Couperin.

On December 15, Ensemble Masques visits the University Club of Toronto Library to celebrate the 350th anniversary of Couperin’s birth with a commemorative concert featuring the music of Couperin, Lully and Corelli. While the inclusion of an Italian in this French-themed performance is, made famous in the Carols for Choirs collection, a broader overview of Praetorius’s music will be on display December 14 to 16 with The Toronto Consort’s Praetorius Christmas Vespers, a reproduction of a Christmas Vespers as it might have sounded in the early 17th century. It is worth remembering that there were many generations of composers who paved the path for the great composers of the late baroque, and the chance to hear the unique sounds of these earlier soundsmiths is certainly valuable and rewarding.

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concert might seem strange, Corelli was tremendously influential to Couperin. Couperin himself acknowledged this debt to Corelli, introducing Corelli’s trio sonata form to France through his grand trio sonata Le Parnasse, ou L’Apothéose de Corelli (Parnassus, or the Apotheosis of Corelli), in which he blended the Italian and French styles of music in a set of pieces which he called Les Goûts réunis (styles reunited).

With selections from Couperin’s Concerts Royaux, Pièces de Clavecin, and Nouveaux Concerts et Pièces de Violes, this concert will provide an overview of the great composer’s works, expertly interpreted by harpsichordist Olivier Fortin, violinist Kathleen Kajioka and gambist Mélisande Corriveau.

**England’s Golden Age**

Despite the challenging and potentially lethal political situations that occurred during the reigns of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I, the composers of Tudor England created some of the most sublime choral music ever written. Whether Catholic or Protestant, in English or in Latin, the music of William Byrd, Thomas Tallis, Orlando Gibbons and their contemporaries underwent a well-deserved revival in the 20th century and continues to be popular in churches and concert halls across the globe.

Pax Christi Chorale, an ensemble known for their performances of large-scale dramatic oratorios, lend their voices to some smaller-scale, a cappella masterpieces from the English Renaissance on December 16. With Byrd’s Mass for Five Voices and anthems by Tallis, Weekes and Gibbons, this exploration of Tudor polyphony will undoubtedly be beautiful and, depending on the size and finesse of the ensemble, likely more aligned with the massed-choir sound of King’s College, Cambridge than the streamlined timbres of the Tallis Scholars.

**A Little Italy**

Tafelmusik’s exploration of multimedia concert experiences has led to some magnificent performances, including Safe Haven and J.S. Bach: The Circle of Creation. The latest in this series of innovative programming is The Harlequin Salon – created, scripted and illustrated by oboist Marco Cera – which explores music of the Italian Baroque through the character of Pier Leone Ghezzi: caricaturist, painter, and host of some of 18th-century Rome’s most popular salon parties. What makes the character of Ghezzi particularly fascinating is that he was a real person (he lived from 1674 to 1755, primarily in Rome), an Italian painter who was probably the world’s first professional caricaturist. Ghezzi was an enthusiastic music lover, holding exclusive musical salons at his
palazzo for the Roman intellectual and artistic elite. (His most well-known portrait is the famous caricature of Antonio Vivaldi, with long, curly hair and a protruding, crooked nose.)

Cera, who plays the role of Ghezzi in *The Harlequin Salon*, is an artist as well; he studied figurative art at Liceo Artistico Citta’ di Valdago in Italy before joining Tafelmusik in 2000. *The Harlequin Salon*’s recreation of one of Ghezzi’s famous salon evenings will undoubtedly be entertaining, giving audiences a chance to travel back in time and imagine what happens (and what music results) when these famous characters from the past cross paths. Famous guests at this salon include composer Antonio Vivaldi, 24-year-old opera diva Faustina Bordoni, and cello virtuoso Giovanni Bononcini. These guests and their music will be performed by Tafelmusik’s music director Elisa Citterio, guest soprano Roberta Invernizzi and Tafelmusik cellist Christina Mahler, making this new concert a don’t-miss event, January 16 to 20.

**Two Melting Pots**

Now in their third full season, Cor Unum Ensemble is one of Toronto’s newest early music ensembles, an orchestra and chorus comprised of emerging professionals interested in vocal and instrumental collaboration within the early music repertoire. On December 8 and 9, Cor Unum presents “Merry & Bright,” a collection of seasonal music from across Europe, followed by “Sub Rosa” on January 26 and 27. Sub Rosa, a collaboration between Cor Unum and the Sub Rosa Ensemble, explores 16th- and 17th-century repertoire written for and by cloistered nuns who, although often highly trained, are rarely considered in the context of music history. These nuns used singing and composition to communicate their identity and their devotion beyond the convent walls, developing their social and financial independence, and their music will be used to explore the important role played by women in the early Baroque musical scene.

“Centuries of Souls,” presented by Confluence on January 26, promises to be one of January’s most interesting concerts. Featuring Opus8 singing Ockeghem’s famous Requiem mass, Matthew Larkin playing Messiaen organ works, and Schola Magdalena singing Hildegard, this performance stretches across five centuries of musical history. Messiaen and Hildegard are, although separated by a great temporal distance, closely connected through their mysticism. Hildegard experienced visions and expressed them through tune and text, while Messiaen expressed the mysteries of his devoutly held Catholic beliefs through strikingly original works for the organ. With this eclectic mixture of medieval and modern, Centuries of Souls will undoubtedly be an extraordinary experience for all in attendance.

Amidst all the seasonal hustle and bustle, I encourage you to explore the vibrant musical offerings that are on display this December and January. Whether you prefer Handel’s *Messiah*, Tafelmusik’s *The Harlequin Salon*, a traditional Festival of Lessons and Carols, or any of the other listings in this double issue of *The WholeNote*, the richness and depth of Toronto’s classical music scene ensures that everyone has something to look forward to this holiday season. Happy Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Festivus and New Year – see you in 2019.

**EARLY MUSIC QUICK PICKS**

**THE MESSIAH EDITION**

- **DEC 8, 7:30PM:** Grand Philharmonic Choir. “Handel Messiah.” Centre in the Square, 101 Queen St. N., Kitchener. A large-scale, symphonic Messiah with choir and symphony orchestra for maximum impact!
- **DEC 15, 7:30PM:** Chorus Niagara. *Handel Messiah*. FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, 250 St. Paul St., St. Catharines. For those further down the QEW, this Messiah features an excellent choir and the superb Talisker Players.
- **DEC 18 to 21, 7:30PM:** Tafelmusik. *Handel Messiah*. Koerner Hall, Telus Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. The quintessential Messiah experience for early music aficionados – sit and enjoy the show or participate in the Sing-Along Messiah at 2pm in Roy Thomson Hall on December 22!

Matthew Whitfield is a Toronto-based harpsichordist and organist.
**Beat by Beat | World View**

**Tip of the Seasonal Iceberg**

**ANDREW TIMAR**

At times in this column I have gone deep into a particular world music theme, presenter, musician, ensemble, audience or school. For example, last month in this column I explored in some detail the 150-year lineage of Chinese music performance in Canada, then pulled a tighter focus on the world of Chinese Orchestras active in the GTA today. Concerts by two of those ensembles bookend the two-month-plus period I’m covering here.

At other times I’ve painted our region’s worldly music pulse with a broad brush. For this December-January–early February column I’ve chosen the latter approach, surveying the seasonal tapestry of our region’s astonishingly diverse music scenes. So, consider this column the tip of the GTA winter season’s live music iceberg.

**Toronto Chinese Orchestra “Scenic Sojourn: A Night of Chinese Music”**

**December 1:** The Toronto Chinese Orchestra is the oldest such continually operating regional orchestra. It’s presenting a concert on December 1 at North York’s Yorkminster Citadel titled “Scenic Sojourn: A Night of Chinese Music” with Matthew Poon conducting. Angela Xu is the yangqin (Chinese hammered dulcimer) soloist, while Charlotte Liu is featured on the dizi (Chinese transverse flute).

**On the program is music by both Chinese and Canadian composers chosen to underscore the concert’s geographic and seasonal themes. They paint portraits of village life in Jiangsu, scenic views of mountain ranges in Taiwan and Kyrgyzstan, as well as evoking the prototypical Canadian winter chill. Works include Whiteout by Matthew van Driel and Reincarnation Suite by Marko Koumoulas, both early-career Toronto composers. IMHO the performance of these works signals a healthy active engagement with the broader non-Chinese Canadian music community. Composers Hua Wu (Taiwanese Folk Song Rhapsody), Xiamyu Jiang, arr. Chunmin Zhang (Touring Gusu), and He Huang (Tian Shan Poetry) present Chinese approaches to orchestral writing. Rounding out the evening, a performance by the TCO’s Toronto Youth Chinese Orchestra ensures essential interpretive orchestral skills are passed on to the younger generation.

**Payadora: “Tango and Argentine Folk Music”**

**December 2:** The warm and intimate Gallery 345 hosts the tango-centric Toronto quartet Payadora in concert. “Tango and Argentine Folk Music” is the aptly concise title of its committed tribute to the tango repertoire and ethos. Payadora regulars, violinist Rebekah Wolkstein, Drew Jurecka, bandoneon, pianist Robert Horvath and bassist Joseph Phillips are joined by guest vocalist Elbio Fernandez in a program drawn partly from the roots of the Buenos Aires’ early 20th-century tango heyday.

The group typically plays scores which favour instrumental tangos designed for listening in a concert setting rather than those intended for couple dancing. The evening concludes with Astor Piazzolla’s well-known, trend-setting nuevo tango compositions of the second half of the 20th century.

In my May 1, 2017 review of a Payadora concert in The WholeNote, I wrote that in addition to tango they “also performed two Argentinian vernacular dance music genres. The zamba is set in a slow 3/4 meter – or is it in 6/8? – while yet another couples’ dance, the chacarera, also plays on similar hemiola syncopation.”

Audiences at the December 2 concert can certainly expect similar rhythmically compelling folkloric renditions. Founded in 2013, with its playful and virtuoso approach to the musically accessible tango repertoire, we can see why Payadora has, in a few years, garnered a healthy regional fan base.

**Christmas musical themes**

Every year at this time I look at music traditions of those who celebrate Christmas in its many guises. For those who don’t, it may be time for Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Solstice or just simply “The Holidays.” This year is no exception.

I’ve assembled a few picks from the many seasonal musical offerings that highlight diversities in our region.

**December 5:** The Toronto Choral Society, Geoffrey Butler conductor, presents “Navidad Nuestra (Our Christmas)” at Koerner Hall. The concert features two of the best-known works of popular Argentine composer Ariel Ramírez (b. 1921). The 150-voice TCS choir is joined by the Latin ensemble (and past collaborator) Cassava, led by Rodrigo Chavez, with tenor soloist Ernesto Cárdenas.

Ramírez’s Navidad Nuestra for choir and Andean instruments is a “folk drama of the Nativity” based on Hispanic-American traditions. His earlier Misa Criolla (1964), a Creole Catholic mass in a South American hybrid mixture of Iberian and Indigenous musical genres, swiftly became a big hit among international choirs and on LP. A pioneering mass written in a regional Indigenous dialect, Misa Criolla’s bright, optimistic sound exuded an unpretentious spirituality, in tune with the changing times in which it was produced.

Founded in 1845, the TCS is the city’s oldest and largest community choir and it is impressive to see them tackle these Ramírez scores again. Feliz navidad!

**December 8:** Celtic-themed music appears alive and well, particularly during the holiday season. Here’s just one concert example at the eastern end of our own “fertile crescent,” the Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts presents “The Kingston Connection: A Celtic Christmas with Kelli Trottier” at its beautiful Kingston Ontario hall.

A member of the North America Fiddlers’ Hall of Fame, Kingston fiddler, step dancer and vocalist Trottier’s musical vocabulary is steeped in her deep Scottish and French roots, reflected in her ten albums. Trottier and her backup musicians present an album of Canadian and Celtic Christmas songs and fiddle music.

Chris McKhool brings his Holidays of the Global Village with Chris McKhool and Friends to the Kingston Road United Church, December 9. Then he puts on his Sultans of String hat for a whirlwind six-city Beyond the GTA tour from December 12 to 18 with a stop in Markham on December 13 in between.

**December 9 at 2pm:** “Holidays of the Global Village with Chris McKhool and Friends” plays at the Kingston Road United Church. Kid-friendly Canadian violinist, guitarist and singer-songwriter McKhool is bringing two armloads of world music friends to help him fete the “multicultural mosaic of our country.” Inclusive songs about “Bodhi Day (Buddhist), Carnival (Quebec), Chanukah, Chinese New Year, Christmas, Diwali, Halloween, Kwanzaa (Pan-African), Native Traditions, Ramadan and Winter Solstice” will ring out in the church. Assisting McKhool with his ecumenical vision are Toronto-based musicians Aviva Chernick, Shannon Thunderbird, Maryem and Ernie...
December 20: in keeping with the Celtic theme – and at the southern end of our fertile crescent – The Gallery Players of Niagara present “Glissandi & Guy Bannerman: A Celtic Solstice” at Silver Spire United Church, St. Catharines. Guy Bannerman provides the Celtic-themed narration with the Glissandi trio playing the soulful music of Ireland, Wales and the Scottish Highlands. The program is repeated December 21 even further south at Grace United Church, Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Congratulations! We’ve made it to the New Year
January 8, 12pm: Kamancello plays on the Canadian Opera Company’s World Music Series at the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre. Kamancello is an innovative bowed string duo with Shahriyar Jamshidi on kamanche (Persian spike-fiddle) and Raphael Weinroth-Browne on cello. Theirs is an East-mets-West artistic partnership that “blurs musical genre conventions and cultural boundaries with their highly evocative improvised performances,” ranging in tone from soulful to incendiary.

January 20, 4pm: Folk Under the Clock presents Harry Manx at the Market Hall Performing Arts Centre, Peterborough. Manx is a veteran of the Canadian music fusion scene who has released 11 albums and garnered multiple industry awards by successfully merging Hindustani classical music with acoustic blues. It’s all propelled by the hybrid sitar-guitar he plays: the mohan veena. His ability to gracefully wed the blues with the classical Indian ragas is unparalleled. It’s an unusual musical mix that has led him to be labelled the “Mysticssippi Blues Man.” Manx and Steve Marriner (vocals, harmonica, guitar) will play a musical mix that has led him to be labelled the “Mysticssippi Blues Man.” Manx and Steve Marriner (vocals, harmonica, guitar) will play

Payadora Tango Ensemble
February 2: The Lemon Bucket Orkestra and Aline Morales perform at the Royal Conservatory of Music’s Koerner Hall. I’ve written appreciatively about both the Orkestra and Morales numerous times in this column. The quotes, “Adventurous, multicultural and amazing!” (The Wall Street Journal), and “Toronto’s guerilla-punk-Balkan-folk-brass band that started on the streets of Toronto” (their website) about sum up the Orkestra. And we know Morales as the Toronto-based Brazilian singer, percussionist, bandleader and member of KUNÉ: Canada’s Global Orchestra. It’s bound to be a good time.

Also on February 2: Alliance Française Toronto and Batuki Music Society present Les Frères Cissoko Bannaya Family from Senegal, part of their Musique du monde series at 8pm. Les Frères Cissoko’s illustrious Malinke (aka Mandika) musical lineage stretches back several centuries in West Africa, along with their primary instrument, the kora. The kora (21-string long-necked harp lute) was traditionally played by a griot (aka jali, or jeli) who combines the bardic roles of a historian, storyteller, praise singer, poet and musician. As a main repository of regional oral tradition the griot therefore has often been an influential advisor to the West African ruling classes. Malinke oral tradition recounts that Jali Mady Fouloung Cissoko, one of the three Cissoko brothers’ ancestors, a griot in the Kaabu Empire (1537–1867), was responsible for the development of the kora, launching a family tradition still in force today.

Senior brother Noumoucounda has taken his family’s practice considerably further afield however, embracing international vernacular music genres. Formerly with Positive Black Soul, among the first hip-hop groups based in Dakar, Senegal (founded in 1989), he has played with Youssou N’Dour, Ki-Mani Marley (son of Bob Marley) and others, earning him the colourful sobriquets “the hip-hop griot,” and “the Jimi Hendrix of the kora.”

Finally, welcome the Year of the Pig (Boar)!
February 5, 12pm: The Canadian Opera Company celebrates the Chinese New Year featuring the Toronto Chinese Orchestra Chamber Players (TCO-CP) at the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre.

Led by erhu virtuosa Patty Chan, TCO-CP forms the professional core of the Toronto Chinese Orchestra. Marking the Chinese New Year they perform a mix of Chinese music plus contemporary works by Canadian and international composers.

TCO-CP members are established Toronto musicians and music teachers. Their repertoire embraces not only demanding Chinese works, but also contemporary scores by Canadian and international composers. This demonstration of transcultural musical solidarity is a marvellous way to bring in the year of the – carefree, honest, trusting, sincere, brave and wealthy – boar (aka pig).

Andrew Timar is a Toronto musician and music writer. He can be contacted at worldmusic@thewholenote.com
Marches and Bugles on My Mind

JACK MACQUARRIE

Throughout the year 2017 the programming focus for community musical groups was Canada’s sesquicentennial, with concert repertoire focused on almost any music which might have some connection to the development of Canada during the previous 150 years. By the end of that year, most bands had pretty well exhausted their library assets for music sesquicentennial connections. Then came 2018 with no similar focus in the first part of the year, except the perennial question about repertoire for concert bands: “Who are we trying to please, the audiences, band members, the conductor etc.?”

There were the usual budding composers waiting to be heard and, always, old-time favourites which might attract the largest audiences to help swell the band’s precarious coffers.

The 11th day

Towards the end of 2018, though, many groups turned their attention to another significant anniversary in the year: November 11 of this year, commemorating the 100th anniversary of the signing of the Armistice to end the First World War.

Having spent some time in the Navy, it was only natural for me to gravitate towards a November 10 Navy band concert commemorating that occasion: the combined bands of the naval reserve divisions of HMCS York (Toronto) and HMCS Star (Hamilton) in the Cathedral Church of St. James, Toronto.

The program for this concert was one of the most appropriate that I have ever experienced. Every number was either music that might have been performed during that wartime period or was written to commemorate a significant event of the war. Since the WWI battle most commemorated by Canadians is the Battle of Vimy Ridge, it was fitting that the opening number was Thomas Bidgood’s march Vimy Ridge.

Much of the program was divided between such works as Songs From the Great War, Boys of the Old Brigade and Abide With Me and major orchestral pieces by composers who were at their prime during the period of WWI. These included three composers who were British-born: Ralph Vaughan Williams, Edward Elgar and Gustav Holst.

There were also some other top-quality marches, which rarely get their due these days. Although community bands, in general, had their origins in town bands – which traditionally played in parades – many community bands nowadays have never played in a parade. In fact, with some bands, marches are considered somewhat beneath their origins in town bands – which traditionally played in parades – their due these days. Although community bands, in general, had their origins in town bands – which traditionally played in parades – their due these days. Although community bands, in general, had their origins in town bands – which traditionally played in parades – their due these days.

On the Quarterdeck were both written to commemorate the Battle of Jutland in 1916. The Vanished Army was dedicated to the first 100,000 British soldiers lost in WWI, and Voice of the Guns was to honour the regiments of the Royal Artillery in the British army.

Alford and Dunn

The name Kenneth Alford was actually a pseudonym for Major Fredrick Joseph Ricketts, bandmaster of a Royal Marine Band. This was common practice because, in those days, members of the British Armed Forces were not permitted to earn any income other that their regular military pay. Some years after Ricketts left the Royal Marines his position was filled by Major F. Vivian Dunn, bandmaster of the Royal Marines Portsmouth Division.

When the Canadian National Exhibition first opened after WWI, the featured band on the main bandshell was that Royal Marine Band from Portsmouth with Major Dunn conducting. As a student with a very rewarding summer job, I was in charge of operating the sound system on the Main Bandshell. When I first introduced myself to Major Dunn, his first question was “Can you read music?” When I answered in the affirmative, before each of the two daily concerts Dunn would spend a few minutes with me, going over the scores to ensure that there would be proper microphone pickup. Shortly after, Dunn became Lt. Col. Sir Vivian Dunn KCVO OBE FRSA, principal director of music Royal Marines. After he left the Royal Marines, Dunn became conductor of a number of top orchestras in Britain.

For a couple of years ago of a CD containing Vimy Ridge, the remedy was at hand so I played it, only to find that the very next number on that CD just happened to have been written by none other than Major F.

The combined bands of the naval reserve divisions of HMCS York (Toronto) and HMCS Star (Hamilton) in the Cathedral Church of St. James, Toronto

Vivian Dunn: The Captain General, written in 1949 shortly after his stint at the CNE. (The honorific “Captain General,” by the way, is the title bestowed on the ceremonial head of the British Royal Marines. This particular march was written to mark the occasion in 1949 when then Captain General, none other than His Majesty King George VI dined with Royal Marine officers at the Savoy Hotel in London. Since then the appointment has been held by HRH The Duke of Edinburgh and, since May 14, 2018, Prince Harry.

Bugler’s Holidays

The evening before writing this column I attended a concert in London by the Plumbing Factory Brass Band under Henry Meredith, very curious to hear the three tubas performing Leroy Anderson’s famous Bugler’s Holiday. My reactions were mixed. As for technique, the performance by the three tubists of the band was excellent. As for personal enjoyment, I would still prefer to hear the staccato components of this music with the crisp attack of a trumpet rather than the broad tonal base of a tuba. It was also, as usual, a great example of the theatrical imagination that “Doctor Hank” Meredith brings to his programming.

One selection on the program tied in well with my comments earlier about marches: Le père la victoire (Father of Victory), written by French composer Louis-Gaston Ganne (1862-1923) during the Napoleonic Wars. Ganne was a leading composer and conductor at
that time. His Marche Lorraine written in 1892 for national gymnastic games became a battle song for the Free French during WWII.

Still on the topic of bugles, though, the recent Armistice ceremonies have triggered one of my occasional grumbles, namely the butchering of bugle calls. In the week prior to, and on Armistice Day itself, I heard many “bugle calls,” but none played on a bugle. They were all played on trumpets. A trumpet has the same pitch as a bugle, but certainly does not sound like a bugle. A proper bugle has a unique mellow tone which cannot be simulated by a trumpet. A proper bugle has a unique mellow tone which cannot be simulated by a trumpet. This may sound a bit strange to some people, but to me it does not work. To me, using a trumpet to substitute for a bugle is akin to using a motorcycle to substitute for a horse in a dressage ceremony. Proper bugles are not that expensive. Why can’t each military unit (and similar organization) obtain just one bugle to be used on such occasions?

Shifting into Christmas mode

Now that Armistice ceremonies are over for another 11 months, most bands are shifting into Christmas mode, a shift that brings them into close alignment (and in many cases joint concerts) with some of our top community choirs. There is a natural continuum between bands and choirs: from the pure pleasure of the process to the thrill of performing to high levels of professionalism.

There will be several such joint concerts in the coming weeks. Look for them in the listings and in the Band Quick Picks below.

BANDSTAND QUICK PICKS

- DEC 2, 3PM: The York University Wind Symphony directed by Bill Thomas present a concert of various classical works at Tribute Communities Recital Hall, York University.
- DEC 3, 7:30PM: Resa’s Pieces, all three ensembles in “Holiday Concert” at York Mills Collegiate.
- DEC 7, 8PM: Etobicoke Community Concert Band “Classic Christmas” with Jean Augustine, reader; Andrew Scott, guest MC. Etobicoke Collegiate Auditorium.

For application information, visit torontosummermusic.com

T ORONTO SUMMER MUSIC
COMMUNITY ACADEMY

July 29-August 3

Attention adult amateur musicians! Join the artists of the Toronto Summer Music Festival for a week of music making and fun.

Choose from four programs:

Chamber Music
Piano Masterclass
Chamber Choir
Bass Workshop with Joel Quarrington

For application information, visit torontosummermusic.com

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 66.

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 70.

D. IN THE CLUBS (MOSTLY JAZZ) is organized alphabetically by club. Starts on page 73.

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 75.

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 February 1 to March 7, 2018. All listings must be received by 11:59pm, Tuesday January 16.

LISTINGS. Listings in The WholeNote are not organized alphabetically. 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.
7:30: York Chamber Ensemble. Christ- 
amas in the Age of Elegance. Handel: Hafn Concerto; Corelli: Christmas Concerto; Handel: Messiah (excerpts); Rutter: A Candlelight Carol and Christmas Lullaby; sing-along. Chris- 

Sunday December 2nd 

7:00: Kindred Spirits Orchestra. Allegria: Symphonic Anniversary Concert. Bartok: Romanian Folk Dances; Enescu: Romanian Rhapsody No. 2; Op. 11; Vivaldi: Winter (from The Four Seasons); Grieg: Piano Concerto in a, Op.16; Kirculescu: Musical moment for piano and orchestra; Alexandru Burca, piano; Alex- 

5:00: Mooredale Concerts. Music and Truf- fal: Messiah (excerpts); Rutter: A Candlelight Carols and Tradicious. Handel: Harp 

6:00: Royal Conservatory of Music. 

Established. Religious service followed at 5pm by A tribute to Nat King Cole and Cole Por- 

7:00: Piano Recital. Yang Lin, viola; Wonny Song, piano. Walter Music for voice, strings, winds, piano and percussion. Works by Scar- 

1:00am: Canadian Opera Company. Opera for Young Audiences: WOW Factor - A Cinderella Story. Music by Gioachino Rossini, libretto by Joel Ivan, musical adaptation by Ste- 

SUNDAY DECEMBER 2ND, 1 PM FALL SALON CONCERT 

Mark Fewer, Joseph Johnson and Friends. Kodaly Duo; Jean, Jazzy set. Reception to follow. $20 admission includes CD | Under 16 free. Limited seating. 93 Greenville Street. Reservations: events@thesoundpost.com 

the soundpost.com 

info@thesoundpost.com 

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info@thesoundpost.com
A. Concerts in the GTA

Arts Guild and Pan-Christ Steel-Pan Band. St. Olave’s Anglican Church, 360 Windermere Ave. 416-769-5686. Contributions appreciated. Also 4pm Choral Evensong.
● 7:00: Burlington Performing Arts Centre. John McDermott Christmas. Guests: Dala. Burlington Performing Arts Centre, Community Studio Theatre, 440 Locust St., Burlington. 905-681-6000. $89.50; $84.50 (members).

● 7:00: Echo Chamber Toronto. Transfigured Night: An Evening of Chamber Music and Contemporary Ballet. Beethoven: String Quintet Op.18 No.1; Schoenberg: Second String Quartet “Entrückung”; Verklärte Nacht (Transfigured Night); Hindemith: Gottes Tod. Lauren Ebenwell, viola; Aaron Schnebel and Sheila Jaffe, violin; Theresa Rudolph and Keith Hamm, viola; and others. Artscape Sandbox, 301 Adelaide St. W. 4:67-809-040. $25-$40. Also Dec 1.

● 7:00: Runnymede United Church. A Reading of Charles Dickens’ A Christmas Carol. Choirs of Royal York Road and Runnymede United; Jeff Douglas, Robin Duke, Mary Lou Falls, Barbara Gordon, Anwar Knight, Nancy Paik and William Webster; readers. 432 Runnymede Rd. 416-767-6729. $20. All proceeds in support of The Stop Community Food Centre. Refreshments for everyone in Memorial Hall will follow.

● 7:00: St. Thomas’s Anglican Church. Advent Carol. Matthew Larkin, music director. St. Thomas’s Anglican Church (Toronto), 383 Huron St. 416-979-2323. Free.

● 7:30: Gallery 345. Payadora. Tango and Argentinian folk music. Rebekah Wolvist, violin; Drew Jurecka, bandoneón; Robert Horvath, piano; Joe Phillips, bass; Elbio Fernandez, vocals. 345 Sorauren Ave. 416-822-9781 or info@gallery345.com. $25; $15/st. Cash only. Tickets available online at Eventbrite.ca.

● 7:30: Toronto Beach Chorale. Great Joy. J.S.Bach Cantata 147; Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben; Buxtehude Magnificat, music by Hassler; Bruckner; Reger and Rachmaninov; and carols. Virginia Hatfield, soprano; Lillian Brooks, mezzo-soprano; Charles Davidson, tenor; Ryan Mollot, bass; Marvin Fick, conductor. Kingston Road United Church, 975 Kingston Rd. 416-869-6634. $12.50-$25.00.


● 8:00: New Music Concerts. Celebrating Michael Koerner: Michael Koerner’s Choice.

Carter: Rigmarole; Stravinsky: Octet; Ives: selection of songs; Schaefer: String Quartet No.6 “Parting Wild Horse’s Mane”; Milhaud: La création du monde. Ben Hepner, tenor; John Hess, piano; David Hetherington, cello; Max Christie, bass clarinet; Accordes String Quartet; Jonathan Krehm and Evonne Tan, tai chi chuan performers; New Music Concerts Ensemble; Robert Altknecht, director. Betty Oliphant Theatre, 404 Jarvis St. 416-961-9594. $35; $25/st; $15/arts workers; $10/st. 7:15pm: pre-concert talk.

Monday December 3


● 7:30: Choralema. Joy of Christmas. Susan Ryman, soprano; Alexsa Ball, flute; Damon Richard, percussion; Robert Richardson, conductor; Lona Richardson, accompaniment. Thornhill United Church, 25 Elgin St., Thornhill. 905-791-8186. $10 donation and free will offering. In aid of Thornhill Christmas Assistance Program.

● 7:30: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Guitar Orchestra. Jeffrey McFadden, director; Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-408-0208. Free.

Tuesday December 4


● 8:00: Civic Theatres Toronto. Jazz at the George: Dianne Reeves - Christmas Time Is Here. Holiday music. Toronto Centre for the Arts, 5040 Yonge St., North York. 1-855-985-2787. $47-$90.

● 8:00: Corporation of Massey Hall and Roy Thomson Hall. Chris Betti, Trumpet. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4255. $69.75-$139.75.

Wednesday December 5

● 8:00: Soundstreams. Electric Messiah IV. Handel’s great masterpiece with inspirations from jazz, gospel, blues, hip hop and of course, classical. Jonathan MacArthur, tenor; Avis Chernick, vocals; Alex Sararis, banjo, jazz-singer; Adam Scime, music director; Christopher Bagaski, analog and electric harpsichord; Jeff McLeod, electric organ; Joel Schwartz, electric guitar; SkiwPitchSound, turntablism and resident DJ Lybido, dancer. The Drake Underground, 150 Queen St. W. 416-504-1282. $25/$20 (adv). Also Dec 5, 6.

● 12:30: Organix Concerts/All Saints Kingsway. Kingsway Organ Concert Series. Aaron James, organ. All Saints Kingsway Anglican Church, 2650 Bloor St. W. 416-571-3880. Freewill offering. 45-minute concert.

Details and Tickets at nathaniellettchorale.org

THE NATHANIEL DETT CHORALE

20 YEARS CONNECTING THROUGH AFROCENTRIC MUSIC

AN INDIGO CHRISTMAS... Black Virgin... Great Joy

Wednesday December 5, 2018 | 7:30pm

Sandra Faire and Ivan Fecan Theatre
York University | 4700 Keele Street, Toronto

www.NewMusicConcerts.com
Dec 6 at 8pm
GRYPHON TRIO

Musical Masterpieces from around the World

December 6 at 8pm
GRYPHON TRIO

6:00: Music Toronto. Gryphon Trio. Behr: Bytown Waters (Toronto premiere); Brahms: Piano Trio in C Op.87; and works by Mozart, Silovestrov and Part. Jane Mallett, St. Lawrence Centre, University of Toronto; $45, $25.

6:00: Soundstreams. Electric Messiah IV. Handel's great masterpiece with improvisations from jazz, gospel, blues, hip hop and of course, classical. Jonathan MacArthur, tenor; Aviva Chernick, vocals; Alex Samaras, baritone, jazz-singer; Adam Scime, music director; Christopher Bagan, analog and electric harpsichord; Jeff Meocald, electric organ; Joel Schwartz, electric guitar; SlowPitchSound, turntablist and resident DJ Lyldio, dancer: The Drake Underground, 1150 Queen St. W. 416-504-1282. $25/$30(adv). Also Dec 4, 5.

7:30: Saturday December 7


7:30: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Home Alone in Concert. See Dec 6. Also Dec 8(2/00 & 7/30).

8:00: University of Toronto College of Music. University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Roidout: Jubilee; De Falla: Siete canciones populares españolas; Glazunov: Violin Concerto No.1 In A Op.82; Tchaikovsky: Symphony No.3 In Op.13 “Winter Dreams”. Gená van Oosten, mezzo; Julia Mirzoeva, violon; Uri Meyer, conductor. MacMillan Theatre, Edward Johnson Building, 80 Queen's Park. 416-408-0208. $30; $20(sr); $10(st). Also 12.15.


Friday December 7

12:00 noon: University Settlement Music & Arts School. End of Term Student Concert. St. George the Martyr Church, 30 Stephanie St. 416-698-3444 x243. Free. donations welcome. Charitable Tax receipts available for all donations over $20.00. Also Dec 8(11am; 130pm).


9:05-681-6000. $85.50, $84.50 (members); $35(18 and under). Also Dec 8(2/30 & 7/30).


7:30: Toronto Mendelssohn Choir. Festival of Carols. Stephanie Martin, An Earthly Tree; Alban Berg: Es ist ein Reis entsprungen; Mendelssohn: Ave Maria; Maria durch ein Dornwald ging (arr. Stefan Clasa); and audience sing-along of popular Christmas carols. Toronto Mendelssohn Choir; Canadian Staff Band of the Salvation Army; Toronto Youth Choir; Howard Dyck, guest conductor. York-

Thursday December 6

5:00: Northern District Public Library. YC Lee in Solo Recital @ OrchardViewers Fall 2018. Art Song & Opera. YC Lee, tenor; Ann Sublett, piano. Room 224, 40 Orchard View Blvd. 416-393-7810. Free. Seating is limited, arrive early.

7:30: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. PianoFest. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen's Park. 416-408-0208. Free. Also Dec 8(6pm) & 9(8:30pm).


9:05-681-6000. $85.50, $84.50 (members); $35(18 and under). Also Dec 8(2/30 & 7/30).


8:00: Harbourfront Centre. Asheq: Rit- ual Music to Cure a Lover. See Dec 5. Also Dec 8(7pm; 8/4pm & 7/30).


8:00: Upper Canada Choristers/Cantemors Latin Ensemble. Christmas Cheer! Works by Britten, Rutter, Courtney, Zépedes, Velasco and others. Valerie Abels, narrator; Christian Sharpe, bassoon; Con Creta, li, piano, Laurie Evans Fraser, conductor. Grace Church on-the-Hill, 300 Lonsdale Rd. 416-256-0510. $25; Free(teen/chil acc. by adult).
A. Concerts in the GTA

will be taken for the Churches on-the-Hill Food Bank.

3:30: Burlington Performing Arts Centre. The Nutcracker. Music by Tchaikovsky. National Ballet Theatre of Odessa. Burlington Performing Arts Centre, Community Studio Theatre, 440 Locust St., Burlington. 905-681-6000. $69.50; $64.50 (members); $35.18 (under and under). Also Dec 7(7:30); 8(2:30).

3:30: Village Voices. Rejoice! Ave Maria; Helvey: O Lux Beatissima; Thompson: Alleluia; plus old and new holiday favourites. Village Voices Community Choir; Village Voices Chamber Choir; Okasa Vignan, conductor; Joan Andrews, guest conductor; Robert Graham, piano. Markham Missionary Church, 5435 Major Mackenzie Dr. E., Markham. 905-471-4464. $25; $20(sr); $10(ut); free (under 12). Also 7:30 pm.

4:00: Harbourfront Centre. Asheq; Ritual Music to Cure a Lover. See Dec 5. Also Dec 1(7:30).

4:00: Oakville Choir for Children and Youth. Community Carol Concert. Guest: Lianne Tan, organ. St. John’s United Church (Oakville), 262 Randall St., Oakville. 905-337-7104. $25; $20(sr); $15(under 13). Also 1:30 pm.

4:00: Weston Silver Band. Yule Sing! Sing-along. Timothy Eaton Memorial Church’s Choir School and Sanctuary Choir. Timothy Eaton Memorial Church, 230 St. Clair Ave. W. 905-681-2744. $15; $45(family: 2 adults plus children).

4:30: Church of the Holy Trinity. The Christmas Story. See Dec 7. Also Dec 9(4:30); 14(7:30); 15(4:30); 16(4:30); 21(7:30); 22(4:30); 23(4:30 to 7:30).

7:00: Harbourfront Centre. Asheq; Ritual Music to Cure a Lover. See Dec 5.

7:00: National Ballet of Canada. The Nutcracker. See 2pm. Also Dec 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 27, 28, 29, 30. Times vary.

7:00: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. PianoFest. Walter Hall; Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-408-0208. Free. Also Dec 6(7:00) & 9(2:30).p.m.

7:30: Bach Children’s Chorus and Bach Chamber Youth Choir. Mystical Light. 180 voices perform seasonal music. Chasing the Northern Lights; I Want to Stare at My Phone with You; Petit Papa Noel; Gordon Lightfoot: Song for a Winter’s Night. Eleanor Daley, piano; Charissa Bagan, artistic director; James Pinhorn, conductor (Bach Chamber Youth Choir). Toronto Centre for the Arts, 5040 Yonge St., North York. 1-855-985-2787. $35 and $40.

7:30: Burlington Performing Arts Centre. The Nutcracker. Music by Tchaikovsky. National Ballet Theatre of Odessa. Burlington Performing Arts Centre, Community Studio Theatre, 440 Locust St., Burlington. 905-681-6000. $69.50; $64.50 (members); $35.18 (under and under). Also Dec 7(7:30); 8(2:30).


7:30: Forte. – Toronto Gay Men’s Chorus. All Is Calm, All Is Bright. Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, 470 Bloor St. W. forte.eventbrite.ca with promo code FORTE or fortechorus.com. $30; $25(online).

7:30: MCS Chorus Mississauga. G. F. Handel. Messiah. MCS Chorus Chamber Choir; Jennifer Knabbe, soprano; Jillian Yemen, alto; Charles Davidson, tenor; Matthew Cassils, bass; MCS Chorus Orchestra. First United Church (Mississauga), 15 Lakeshore Rd. W. Mississauga. 905-278-7059. $25; $15(under 18).


7:30: Village Voices. Rejoice! Ave Maria;
Helvey; O Lux Beatissima; Thompson: Alleluia; plus old and new holiday favourites. Village Voices Community Choir; Village Voices Chamber Choir; Oksana Vigin, conductor; Joan Andrews, guest conductor; Robert Graham, piano. Markham Missionary Church, 5439 Major Mackenzie Dr. E., Markham. 905-471-4464. $25; $20(sr); $10(st); free(under 12). Also 2:30 pm.

- 7:30: VOCA Chorus of Toronto. Winter songs. Works by Quartet, Enyard, Evesdale, Crober (premiere), Siret and others. Saskatchewan Tomkins, violin; nycelharpa; Stefán Ólafsson, organ; Brian St. John; D. A. Robertson, conductor. The Music Gallery, 918 Bathurst St. $25/$22(adv.).

- 8:00: Acoustic Harvest/Live Music East. A Christmas Carol. John Huston (Charles Dickens) with the Madrigals. St. Paul’s United Church (Scarborough). 200 McIntosh St. Scarborough. lillian.wauthier@gmail.com. $25/$22(adv.).

- 8:00: Gallery 345. The Art of the Piano: Hilario Durán. 345 Sorauren Ave. 416-822-9781. $35; $30(st); Cash only.


- 8:00: Richmond Hill Philharmonic Orchestra. Holiday Caravan. Rimsky-Korsakov: Sheherazade; Tchairovsky: Capriccio Espagnol. St. Andrew’s Anglican Church, 1847 Bayview Ave. 416-536-3160. $15; Free(child under 12).

- 8:00: Royal Conservatory of Music. Quiet Please. There’s a Lady on Stage: Storm Large. Richmond Hill. 905-787-8811. $25; $24(sr/ct). Also 2:00.

- 8:00: Royal Conservatory of Music. Singing Christmas with The Madrigals. St. Paul’s United Church (Scarborough). 200 McIntosh St. Scarborough. lillian.wauthier@gmail.com. $25/$22(adv.).

- 8:00: University of St. Michael’s College. Winter Concert Series. Celebrate: Holidays of the Global Village with Chris McKno and Friends. Guests: Aviva Chernick, Shanon Thunderbird, Maryem and Eirene Tobar; Kevin Laliberté, Drew Biriston; and Donna Roberts. Kingston Road United Church, 975 Kingston Rd. 416-699-6091. $22/$20(adv); free(under 19).

- 8:00: Virginia’s Favourite Accompanist; Harvey Patterson, conductor. Metropolitan United Church (Toronto). $43; $36.50(sr); $24.50(16-24); $12(under 16).


- 9:00: Symphony Orchestra of the Bay. The Snowman; Glazunov: Violin Concerto in a. 416-239-5821. $20; Free(child under 10).

- Deck the Halls: Downtown Carol Sing with the Metropolitan Silver Band. Metropolitan United Church (Toronto), 56 Queen St. E. 416-363-0331 x26. Free; donations welcome.

- 11:30: Oakville Symphony. A Family Christmas. Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts, 100 Lakeshore Rd. East. $27; $23(sr); $14(child/st). Also 4:30.

- 12:00: Porgi amor Chamber Concerts. YC Lee in Solo Recital @ College St. United Church. 975 Kingston Rd. 416-699-6091. $15; Free(child under 12).


- 3:00: Christmas Traditions continues at Roy Thomson Hall. DECEMBER 9, 2018


- 3:00: Symphony on the Bay. Christmas Delights. Jennifer Highton: Blue Cathedral; Cécile Chaminade: Concertino for Flute and Orchestra Op.107; Rimsky-Korsakov: Christmas Eve Suite; Vaughan Williams: Fantasia on Greensleeves; Anderson: A Christmas Festival. Sara Traficante, flute; Shelley Hanson, guest conductor. Burlington Performing Arts Centre, 440 Locust St. Burlington. 905-681-6000 or 905-320-5773 or burlingtonca.ca/tickets. $43; $36.50(sr); $24.50(16-24); $12(under 16).

- 3:30: St. Anne’s Anglican Church. St. Anne’s Community Cantata. Choir of St. Anne’s; Toronto Beach Chorale. 270 Gladstone Ave. 416-536-3160. $15; Free(child under 12). Proceeds to Oasis Food Bank and the Four Winds.

- 3:30: Amadeus Choir of Greater Toronto. Rejoice and Sing. Holiday concert featuring seasonal music. By货币政策, Daisy, Cable, Willcockis and Rutter. Mary Lou Fallis, soprano; Trillium Brass Quintet; Lydia Adams, conductor; Joan Andrews, conductor; Shawn Grenke, conductor and piano. Eglinton St. George’s United Church, 35 Lytton Blvd. 416-446-1088. $45, $35(s); $25(under 50).

- 4:00: Cathedral Church of St. James.
A. Concerts in the GTA


Ian Sadler, organ. 65 Church St. 416-365-7865. Free. Donations welcome.


• 4:30: Church of the Holy Trinity. The Christmas Story. See Dec 7. Also Dec 14(7:30); 15(4:30); 16(4:30); 21(7:30); 22(4:30); 23(4:30). See Dec 7. Also Dec 14(7:30); Christmas Story. Transcending Tradition.

• 5:30: Silverthorn Symphonic Winds. A Family Christmas. Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts, 130 Navy St., Oakville. 905-815-2021. $27; $25(con)/$22(st). Also 15 $20/st. Also Dec 9. Also Dec 16.

• 6:30: Hannaford Street Silver Band. Christmas Cheer. Ben Heppner, host and tenor soloist; Elmer Iseler Singers; Lydia Adams, conductor (Elmer Iseler Singers). Metropolitan United Church (Toronto), 56 Queen St. E. 416-366-7723 or 1-800-708-6754 or hssb.ca. $45.

• 7:30: Swing Down, Sweet Chariot. Nahre Sol, piano; Brad Cherwin, clarinet. Hannaford Street Silver Band. Christmas Cheer. Ben Heppner, host and tenor soloist; Elmer Iseler Singers; Lydia Adams, conductor (Elmer Iseler Singers). Metropolitan United Church (Toronto), 56 Queen St. E. 416-366-7723 or 1-800-708-6754 or hssb.ca. $45.


Monday December 10


• 9:00: Jubilation and Joy. The Most Intellectual Composer Tells the Most Joyful Story. The WholeNote. 416-408-0208. $20.

Tuesday December 11


For more information, please visit: www.wholenote.com

HANNAFORD STREET SILVER BAND PRESENTS

Christmas Cheer

Ben Heppner
Host and Tenor Soloist

The Elmer Iseler Singers
Lydia Adams, Artistic Director

Tuesday, December 11th, 2018 - 7:30 PM
Metropolitan United Church, 56 Queen St E.

Tickets available online at www.hssb.ca
By Phone: 416.366.7723 or 1.800.708.6754

B-Xalted!
DEC 11, 8 PM
Handel’s Messiah

52 | December 1, 2018 – February 7, 2019
**December 12**

- **Yorkminster Park Baptist Church.** Noonhour Organ Recital. Stefani Bedin, organ. 1585 Yonge St. 416-922-1167.

- **St. Elizabeth Scotia Cantorum Choir.** Christmas Concert. Featuring Hungarian St. Elizabeth Scotia Cantorum adult and children's choirs. Rutter: Magnificat (excerpts); Vaughan Williams: Fantasia on Christmas Themes. The Piano Hall, 157 Main St., Georgetown. 905-873-9909. $50. Also Dec 15. 12:00 noon.

- **Toronto Symphony Orchestra.** TSO Holiday Pops. See Dec 11. Also Dec 13, 15.

- **Royal Conservatory of Music.** Applausable Excuse; Bach/Homzy: Violin Concerto; Davis: D'Hora: Berlin: Cheek to Cheek; Davis: Pentuplism. Ron Davis, keyboards; Kevin Barrett, guitarist; Mike Downes, bass; Aline Homzy, violin; Kim Chalovich, chorographic. 918 Bathurst Centre for Culture, Arts, Media and Education, 918 Bathurst St. 416-347-6765 or bemusednetwork.com. $30/$25 adv; $20 sr/st. 7pm Pre-concert meal & drinks.


- **Toronto Symphony Orchestra.** TSO Holiday Pops. See Dec 11. Also Dec 13, 15.

- **Thursday December 13**

- **Kenわず.* 8:00. Toronto Symphony Orchestra. TSO Holiday Pops. See Dec 11. Also Dec 13, 15.

- **Burlington Performing Arts Centre.** A Next Generation Leathly Christmas. Burlington Performing Arts Centre, Community Studio Theatre, 440 Locust St., Burlington. 905-681-6000. $69.50; $64.50 (members); $35 (18 and under). Times vary.


- **Toronto Symphony Orchestra.** 8:00. Rod Davis and SymphRONica. SymphRONica & The Tap Dancers Reunite! Audible Explore; Bach/Homzy: Violin Concerto; Davis: D’Hora: Berlin: Cheek to Cheek; Davis: Pentuplism. Ron Davis, keyboards; Kevin Barrett, guitarist; Mike Downes, bass; Aline Homzy, violin; Kim Chalovich, chorographic. 918 Bathurst Centre for Culture, Arts, Media and Education, 918 Bathurst St. 416-347-6765 or bemusednetwork.com. $30/$25 adv; $20 sr/st. 7pm Pre-concert meal & drinks.

- **Toronto Symphony Orchestra.** 8:00. Christmas in the City: Christmas favourites including various Sleigh Rides; Handel: selections from Messiah; Anderson: Bugler’s Holiday; and more. Charlene Pauls, soprano; Matthew Jones, conductor. Humber Valley United Church, 76 Anglesley Blvd., Etobicoke. 416-229-5665. $30, $25 sr/st; $15 (st/under 30). Also Dec 13, 15.

- **Toronto Symphony Orchestra.** 8:00. Etobicoke Philharmonic Orchestra. Christmas in the City. Christmas favourites including various Sleigh Rides; Handel: selections from Messiah; Anderson: Bugler’s Holiday; and more. Charlene Pauls, soprano; Matthew Jones, conductor. Humber Valley United Church, 76 Anglesley Blvd., Etobicoke. 416-229-5665. $30, $25 sr/st; $15 (st/under 30).

- **Toronto Symphony Orchestra.** 8:00. Toronto Symphony Orchestra. TSO Holiday Pops. See Dec 11. Also Dec 15.

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- **Toronto Symphony Orchestra.** 8:00. Toronto Symphony Orchestra. TSO Holiday Pops. See Dec 11. Also Dec 15.

10:00: Church of the Holy Trinity. The Christmas Story. See Dec 7. Also Dec 16(4:30); 21(7:30); 22(4:30); 23(4:30 & 7:30).

7:00: National Ballet of Canada. The Nutcracker. See Dec 8. Also Dec 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 27, 28, 29, 30. Times vary.


Saturday December 15


2:00: National Ballet of Canada. The Nutcracker. See Dec 8. Also Dec 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 27, 28, 29, 30. Times vary.

2:00: Toronto Children’s Chorus, Alumni Choir and Youth Choir. A Chorus Christmas: Have Yourself an After Hours Christmas.
pre-concert talk; intermission discussion with Michael Berkovsky.

- 8:00: Mississauga Symphony Orchestra. Highlights from The Messiah: Angela Yoo, soprano; Lillian Brooks, mezzo; Zachary Rioux, tenor; Christopher Dunham, baritone; Mississauga Festival Chamber Choir; Denis Mastronamoco, music director and conductor. Living Arts Centre, Hammerson Hall, 4141 Living Arts Dr., Mississauga. 905-306-6000. $40-$65.

- 8:00: Toronto Consort. Praetorius Christmas Vespers. A Christmas Vespers as it might have sounded in the early 17th century. Toronto Chamber Choir. Trinity-St. Paul's Centre, 427 Bloor St. W. 416-964-6337. From $29. Also Dec 14-16 (3pm).

- 8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. 750 Holiday Pops. See Dec 11.

- 8:00: Voices Chamber Choir. The Mystery of Christmas: Willian: The Mystery of Bethlehem. Ron Cheung, conductor; John Stephen, tenor; Christopher Dunham, baritone; Paolo Busato, conductor. Columbus Centre, 3319 or borealisbigband@gmail.com. $20; $15(sr/st); free(under 13).

Sunday December 16

- 1:00: National Ballet of Canada. The Nutcracker. See Dec 8. Also Dec 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 27, 28, 29, 30. Times vary.

- 2:00: Borealis Big Band. A Big Band Family Christmas Concert. Some seasonal favourites along with jazz charts by Brubeck, Lopez, Toomie, Steve Wonder and others. Gerd Shephard, conductor. Newmarket Old Town Hall, 460 Botsford St., Newmarket. 905-717-3319 or borealisbigband@gmail.com. $20; $10(child).

- 3:00: Canzona Chamber Players. Island Concert: Brahms Messiaen. St. Andrew by-the-Lake Anglican Church, Cibola Ave., Toronto Island. 416-822-0613. $30. Brunch at 12:30pm. $20. Also Dec 14(7:30pm), St. George the Martyr Church.

- 2:00: Festival Wind Orchestra. A Fireside Christmas. Big Band Showcase; Mary Poppins Medley; Argentum; Gypsy Dance from Carmen; Seasonal favourites and a Christmas carol sing-a-long. Leah Erlich, alto saxophone. Isabel Bader Theatre, 93 Charles St. W. festivalwindorchestra.com/tickets $20; $15(sr/st); free(under 13).


- 3:00: Greater Toronto Philharmonic Orchestra. Christmas @ Columbus Centre. Korsakow: Christmas Eve Suite; Reed: Greensleeves; Bellini: Overture from Norma; Trad: Carol of the Bells, O Holy Night and others. Holly Chuplin, soprano; Michael Giuda, tenor; Paolo Busato, conductor. Columbus Centre, 901 Lawrence Ave. W. 647-238-0015. $30; $25(sr); $18(st/child).


- 3:00: Royal Conservatory of Music. Classical Concerts Series: The King’s Singers: Gold 50. John David: Born on a New Day (arr. Peter Knight, adapted Philip Lawson); Traditional: Veni, veni Emmanuel (arr. Philip Lawson); Gaudette (arr. Brian Kay); Willaert: Ave virgo sponsa Dei - Inviolata est; Chilcott: The Shepherd’s Carol; and other works. Koerner Hall, Telus Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. $45-$95.


- 4:00: Eglington St. George’s United Church. Christmas Day Concert. Holst: Christmas Day; Henderson: Peaceful, the Wondrous Night; and other works. Eglington St. George’s United Church Choir; Audience Carols and Chamber.
CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT
SUN., DEC. 16, 4:30pm
NINE LESSONS & CAROLS
SUN., DEC. 23, 4:30pm
Yorkminster Park
Baptist Church
Yorkminsterpark.com

AROUND THE GTA

SUNDAY, 16 DECEMBER 2018 | 7:30PM
OUR LADY OF SORROWS CHURCH
3055 Bloor St W (1/2 block west of Royal York subway)

$30 General Admission $25 Seniors & Students
www.victoriascholars.ca
thewholenote.com

Welcome Christmas

The VICTORIA SCHOLARS
MEN'S CHORAL ENSEMBLE

A. Concerts in the GTA

Orchestra; Krista Rhodes, piano; Andrew Adsair, organ; John Brownell, percussion;
Shawn Grenke, conductor; Emily Taub, VOX Choir Conductor. 35 Lytton Blvd. 416-481-1141
esguinit.com. $35; $25(st).

METROPOLITAN UNITED CHURCH
Annual Candlelight
Service of Lessons and Carols
SUN., DECEMBER 16, 7PM

CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT
SUN., DEC. 16, 4:30pm
NINE LESSONS & CAROLS
SUN., DEC. 23, 4:30pm
Yorkminster Park
Baptist Church
Yorkminsterpark.com


8:00: Tafelmusik. Carol Concert. St. Andrew’s Church (Toronto), 73 Simcoe St. 416-766-5211. PWYC. Suggested: $30; $20(sr); $10(st).

Monday December 17


8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Messiah. Handel: Messiah. Claire de Sévigné, soprano; Alyson McHardy, mezzo; Andrew Haji, tenor; Tyler Duncan, baritone; Toronto Mendelssohn Choir; Johannes Debus, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375. $40-$125. Also Dec 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23(mat).

Tuesday December 18

1:00: Cathedral Church of St. James. Music at Midday. Imre Oláh, organ. 65 Church St., Toronto. 416-365-7865. Free. Donations welcome.


7:30: Orpheus Choir of Toronto. A Child’s Christmas in Wales. Geraint Wyn Davies, narrator; Robert Cooper, artistic director; Edward Moroney, accompanist. Eglinton St. George’s United Church, 35 Lytton Blvd. 416-530-4428. $45; $35(sr); $20(under 30).

Wednesday December 19


Monday December 17


8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Messiah. Handel: Messiah. Claire de Sévigné, soprano; Alyson McHardy, mezzo; Andrew Haji, tenor; Tyler Duncan, baritone; Toronto Mendelssohn Choir; Johannes Debus, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375. $40-$125. Also Dec 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23(mat).

Tuesday December 18

1:00: Cathedral Church of St. James. Music at Midday. Imre Oláh, organ. 65 Church St., Toronto. 416-365-7865. Free. Donations welcome.


7:30: Orpheus Choir of Toronto. A Child’s Christmas in Wales. Geraint Wyn Davies, narrator; Robert Cooper, artistic director; Edward Moroney, accompanist. Eglinton St. George’s United Church, 35 Lytton Blvd. 416-530-4428. $45; $35(sr); $20(under 30).

Wednesday December 19


The Heart's Obsession, Christmas Concert. Tania Cianculli, soprano; Eugenia Dermentzis, mezzo; Trevor Chartrand, piano; Andrea Rebello, chorale conductor; Erika Nielsen, cello; and others. Jalington United Church, 25 Burnhamthorpe Rd. wisharts.ca. $25; free(child). Proceeds to Eric’s Rise. Reception to follow.

0:7:00: The Heart’s Obsession, Christmas Concert. Tania Cianculli, soprano; Eugenia Dermentzis, mezzo; Trevor Chartrand, piano; Andrea Rebello, chorale conductor; Erika Nielsen, cello; and others. Jalington United Church, 25 Burnhamthorpe Rd. wisharts.ca. $25; free(child). Proceeds to Eric’s Rise. Reception to follow.

Tafelmusik. Handel Messiah. Sherezade Panthaki, soprano; Krizstina Szabó, mezzo; Charles Daniels, tenor; Drew Santini, baritone; Tafelmusik Chamber Choir; Ivars Taurins, conductor. Koerner Hall, Telus Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. $36 and up. Also Dec 19, 20, 21. Non-perishable food donations accepted at all performances.

8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Messiah. See Dec 17. Also Dec 19, 20(7:30), 22, 23.
● 12:30: Organica Concerts/All Saints Kingsway, Kingsway Organ Concert Series. Christmas performances. Gordon Manseill, organ; Emily Canning, soprano; Michael Barth, trumpet. All Saints Kingsway Anglican Church, 2850 Bloor St. W. 416-571-3680. Freewill offering. 45-minute concert.


● 7:00: National Ballet of Canada. The Nutcracker. See Dec 8. Also Dec 20, 21, 22, 23, 29, 30. Times vary.


● 8:00: Burlington Performing Arts Centre. The Andy Kim Christmas. Guests: Ron Sexsmith, Sarah Lean and others. Burlington Performing Arts Centre, Community Studio Theatre, 440 Locust St., Burlington. 905-681-6000. $64.50-$89.50. Proceeds to BPA’s Golden Ticket program which provides complimentary access to underserved schools and students.

● 8:00: Roy Thomson Hall. Natalie MacMaster and Donnell Leahy: A Celtic Family Christmas. THU DEC 20 @ 8 PM

● 8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Messiah. See Dec 17. Also Dec 21, 22, 23.

Thursday December 20

● 7:00: National Ballet of Canada. The Nutcracker. See Dec 8. Also Dec 20, 21, 22, 23, 29, 30. Times vary.


● 8:00: Burlington Performing Arts Centre. The Andy Kim Christmas. Guests: Ron Sexsmith, Sarah Lean and others. Burlington Performing Arts Centre, Community Studio Theatre, 440 Locust St., Burlington. 905-681-6000. $64.50-$89.50. Proceeds to BPA’s Golden Ticket program which provides complimentary access to underserved schools and students.

● 8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Messiah. See Dec 17. Also Dec 21, 22, 23.

Friday December 21

● 7:00: National Ballet of Canada. The Nutcracker. See Dec 8. Also Dec 20, 21, 22, 23, 29, 30. Times vary.

● 7:30: Church of the Holy Trinity. The Christmas Story. See Dec 7. Also Dec 23(4:30 pm) & 7:30 pm.


Saturday December 22

● 2:00: Toronto International Ballet Theatre & Bolshoi Ballet. The Nutcracker. Featuring Anastasia Stashkevich and Vyacheslav Lopatin of the Bolshoi Ballet. Sony Centre for the Performing Arts, 1 Front St. E. 1-855-872-7669. $67-$142. Also 7pm.

● 2:00: Tafelmusik. Sing-Along Messiah. Handel: Messiah. Sherezade Panthaki, soprano; Kristina Szabó, mezzo; Charles Daniels, tenor; Drew Santini, baritone; Tafelmusik Chamber Choir; Mr. Handel, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4255.

The Vocal Program of
Cardinal Carter Academy for the Arts
presents
A Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols

Wednesday December 19th 2018 @ 7:30pm
St. Francis of Assisi Church
72 Mansfield Avenue, Toronto
(South of College St., off Grace St.)
GENERAL ADMISSION $20

Tonia Ciacciulli
presents
The Heart’s Obsession Christmas Concert
TUESDAY DECEMBER 18, 7PM
Uplifting and family-friendly holiday music with guest soloists and a children’s chorus.
Islington United Church
Proceeds to Eric’s Rise
A. Concerts in the GTA

- **1:00 pm**: National Ballet of Canada. The Nutcracker. See Dec 8. Also Dec 27(1pm & 5:30pm); 28(2pm & 7pm); 29(2pm & 7pm); 30(1pm & 5:30pm).
- **3:00 pm**: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Messiah. See Dec 17. Also Dec 22.
- **7:00 pm**: National Ballet of Canada. The Nutcracker. See Dec 8. Also Dec 23(7:30pm); 24(2pm & 7pm); 29(2pm & 7pm); 30(1pm & 5:30pm).
- **8:00 pm**: National Ballet of Canada. The Nutcracker. See Dec 8. Also Dec 23(7:30pm); 24(2pm & 7pm); 29(2pm & 7pm); 30(1pm & 5:30pm).

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Sunday December 23

- **1:00 pm**: National Ballet of Canada. The Nutcracker. See Dec 8. Also Dec 27(1pm & 5:30pm); 28(2pm & 7pm); 29(2pm & 7pm); 30(1pm & 5:30pm).
- **3:00 pm**: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Messiah. See Dec 17.
- **9:30 pm**: Church of the Holy Trinity. The Christmas Story. See Dec 7. Also Dec 23(7:30pm).
- **1:00 am**: National Ballet of Canada. The Nutcracker. See Dec 8. Also Dec 27(1pm & 5:30pm); 28(2pm & 7pm); 29(2pm & 7pm); 30(1pm & 5:30pm).
- **5:30 pm**: Church of the Holy Trinity. The Christmas Story. See Dec 7.
- **7:30 pm**: Church of the Holy Trinity. The Christmas Story. See Dec 7.
- **8:00 pm**: Istituto Italiano di Cultura di Toronto. Vesuvius Ensemble: Christmas in Southern Italy. Guest: Tommaso Sollazzo. Heliconian Hall, 79 Victoria St., Aurora. 416-410-0880. $25/person; $15/stu. Also 3:30 pm and Dec 14, 8 pm, Richmond Hill.

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Monday December 24

- **5:00 pm**: Metropolitan United Church. Christmas at Queen. Nativity pageant on the front steps. Metropolitan United Church (Toronto), 56 Queen St. E. 416-363-0331 x26. Free; donations welcome.
- **7:00 pm**: St. Andrew’s Church (Toronto). Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols. St. Andrew’s Choir; Dan Bickle, organ. 73 Simcoe St. 416-926-5980. $45. Also Dec 29, 30(3pm), 31, Jan 2.
- **8:00 pm**: Metropolitan United Church. Christmas at Queen. Nativity pageant on our front steps.
- **11:00 pm**: Metropolitan United Church. Christmas at Queen. Nativity pageant on our front steps.
- **11:00 pm**: Metropolitan United Church. Christmas at Queen. Nativity pageant on our front steps.

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Tuesday December 25

- **1:00 pm**: National Ballet of Canada. The Nutcracker. See Dec 8. Also Dec 23(7:30pm); 29(2pm & 7pm); 30(1pm & 5:30pm).
- **2:00 pm**: Canzona Chamber Players. Island Concert: Clarinet Quintets. Osaba Koczo, violin; Catherine Cossey, violin; Rory McLeod, viola; Robin Howe, cello; Jonathan Krehm, clarinet. St. Andrew’s Choir; the Lake Anglican Church, Cibola Ave. Toronto Island. 416-822-0616. $30. Brunch at 12:30pm $20. Also Jan 27(3:00 pm, St. George the Martyr Church).
- **5:30 pm**: National Ballet of Canada. The Nutcracker. See Dec 8. Also Dec 28(7:00pm); 29(2pm & 7pm); 30(1pm & 5:30pm).

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Wednesday January 2

- **8:00 pm**: Toronto Operaetta Theatre. Die Fledermaus. See Dec 28. Also Jan 2.
- **2:30 pm**: Atlantic Gat Concert Productions. Salute to Vienna New Year’s Concert. Waltzes, polkas and operetta excerpts. Hego Gustavia Tjinn, soprano; Gergely Boncser, tenor; Opera Poppallast St. Pölten; Strauss Symphony of Canada; Alastair Willis, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4255. Starting at $85. Also Dec 30 (Hamilton).

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Thursday December 27

- **1:00 pm**: National Ballet of Canada. The Nutcracker. See Dec 8. Also Dec 23(7:30pm); 28(2pm & 7pm); 29(2pm & 7pm); 30(1pm & 5:30pm).
- **7:00 pm**: Attila Glazt Concert Productions. Bravissimo! Opera’s Greatest Hits. Selections from Turandot, La traviata, Rigoletto, Magic Flute and other operas. Seri Gosh, soprano; Ekaterina Kudryavtseva, soprano; Gergely Boncser; tenor; Johannes Kamm-lker; baritone; Opera Canada Symphony and Chorus; Michelangelo Mazza, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4255. Starting at $55.
- **7:30 pm**: Free Times Cafe. 60’s Folk Revival - Where Have All The Folk Songs Gone? Dinner and Show. 320 College St. 416-967-1078. $110. Live music audience singalong tribute to the songs of the 1960’s Folk Revival.
- **8:00 pm**: Toronto Operaetta Theatre. Die Fledermaus. See Dec 28. Also Jan 2.
alone and being lonely. After the holiday season, many of us long to be alone. Come experience solitude with I Furioso. Works by Epiphany Tea and an illustrated talk by Andrew Adair, Organ Music for Epiphany, 65 Church St. 416-364-7865. Free. Donations welcome.

**Saturday January 5, 8pm**

**ALL BY MYSELF**

**Church of the Redeemer**

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

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

4:00: Novi Singers Toronto. Christ is Born. Toronto Sinfonietta; Hadala Jazz Quartet; Radošć - Joy Polish Song and Dance Ensemble. Our Lady of Sorrows Church, 3055 Bloor St. W., Etobicoke. 647-447-6581. $25; free(child under 12).

4:00: St. Olave's Church. Choral Evensong for Epiphany. St. Olave's Anglican Church, 360 Windermere Ave. 416-769-5686 or stolave@sympatico.ca. St. Olave's Anglican Church, 360 Windermere Ave. 416-769-5686 or stolave@sympatico.ca. Free.


**Sunday January 6**


**Tuesday January 8**


**Thursday January 10**

6:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. The Canadian Sinfonietta. condo (cash only).

**Friday January 11**

**Saturday January 12**

**New Year’s Concert 2019**

An East-Meets-West Concert of Favourite Classics

**Saturday January 5, 2019, 7:30p.m.**

George Weston Recital Hall, Toronto Centre for the Arts, 5040 Yonge St.

**TORONTO FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA**

Conductor: Xin Cao Li (Principal Conductor of China National Symphony Orchestra)

Piano: Li Sijing Bella Ye

Violin: Boesom Mo

Host: Kemin Zhang

**TORONTO FESTIVAL CHINESE ENSEMBLE**

Music by:

Tchaikovsky, Strauss, Suppé, Gershwin, Liszt, Yangqiao Wang, etc.

**Tickets:** $88 (VIP include 1 free CD), $50, $45, $40, $35, $30

**Box Office:** Toronto Centre for the Arts (416) 500-7008

**www.canadaticketbox.com**

Enquiry: Li Delun Music Foundation (416) 790-7962, info@lidelun.org
College St. United Church, 452 College St. 416-455-2365. $20. In concert with piano accompaniment.

- 8:00: Scaramella. The Singing Cello. Virtuoso cello music by Italian Baroque composers Giuseppe Maria Dall’Abaco and Antonio Vivaldi. Elnor Frey, Baroque cello; Joëlle Morton, G violine; Lucas Harris, archlute. Victoria College Chapel, 91 Charles St. W. 416-760-8810. $30, $25(sr); $20(st); free(14 and under).

- 8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Sibelius Symphony 2. Weil: Suite from The Three-tenors Opera; Straubins: Violin Concerto; Sibelius: Symphony No.2. Leila Josefowicz, violin; David Robertson, conductor. Royal Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375. $34.75-$148. Also Jan 10, Jan 13(mat), at George Weston Recital Hall.

Sunday January 13

- 3:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Sibelius Symphony 2. Weil: Suite from The Three-tenors Opera; Straubins: Violin Concerto; Sibelius: Symphony No.2. Leila Josefowicz, violin; David Robertson, conductor. George Weston Recital Hall, 5040 Yonge St. 416-765-1967. $65-$210. Also at Roy Thomson Hall on Jan 10, 12.

Saturday January 19


7:30: Opera by Request. Monodot’s The Telephone and Donizetti’s Rita. Mark Towstego, baritone (Ben); Tsu-Ching Yu, soprano (Lucy and Rita); Avery Krishman, tenor (Beppe); Larry Titzer, baritone (Gasparo); William Shookhoff, music director and pianist. College St. United Church, 452 College St. 416-455-2365. $20. Semi-staged with piano accompaniment.

8:00: SoundCrowd. On Broadway. A capella Broadway hits. Bloor Street United Church, 300 Bloor St. W. 416-924-7439. $25.

8:00: Acoustic Harvest. Pre-Winterfolk Showcase. St. Paul's United Church (Scarborough), 200 McIntosh St., Scarborough.illian. wauhther@gmail.com. $25/$22(adult).

8:00: Royal Conservatory of Music. 21C Music Festival Series: 21C Percussion: Amid the Noise. Vijay Iyer: Torque; Caroline Shaw: Radiation and Bassano. Mary Ann Archer, piccolo; Frank Archer, piano. Heliconian Hall, 35 Hazelton Ave. 416-462-9488. $25; $20(sr); $10(st). Cash only.

8:00: Tafelmusik. The Harlequin Salon. See Jan 16. Also Jan 20(3:30).

8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Mozart with Zukerman. See Jan 16.
**Concerts in the GTA**

- **8:00** Esprit Orchestra. New Music Festival/21C Music Festival: Constellations. Hosokawa: Concerto for Saxophone and Orchestra; Jiang: River Memory; Vivier: Orion; Godard: Les tringles des sistres tin-taient; Wallace Halladay: saxophone; Alex Paul, conductor; Keenert Hall, Telus Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. Starting at $20. 7:15 pm pre-concert chat.

**FACULTY ARTISTS**

**MON JAN 21 at 7:30 pm**

Tickets: music.utoronto.ca

**Monday January 21**

- **7:30** University of Toronto Faculty of Music. New Music Festival: Faculty Artists Present Music by Toshio Hosokawa. Roger D. Moore Distinguished Visitor in Composition. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-408-0208. $30; $20(sr); $10(st); free(UofT st). Pre-concert talk(6:30pm).


- **1:00:** Cathedral Church of St. James. Music at Midday, Thomas Gonder; organ. 65 Church St. 416-364-7865. Free. Donations welcome.

- **7:30** University of Toronto Faculty of Music. New Music Festival: FACULTY ARTISTS. Works by Toshio Hosokawa; and other works. Ste-phen Aitken, director. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-408-0208. Free.

**Tuesday January 22**


**Wednesday January 23**

- **12:00 noon:** University of Toronto Faculty of Music. New Music Festival: Percussion and Electronics Concert. Works by Toshio Hosokawa; Ōrjan Sandred and Eliot Britton. Jonny Axelsson, percussion; Fredrik Söhngen, oboe. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-408-0208. Free.

**Thursday January 24**


- **7:30** University of Toronto Faculty of Music. New Music Festival: Compos- ing Chamber Music Class Concert. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-408-0208. Free.

**Friday January 25**

- **1:00** University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Music @ Midday; Aria with Me. Young singers from the studios of Stephanie Bogle, Norma Burrowes and Karen Rymal. Trib-ute Communities Recital Hall, Accolade East Building, YU, 4700 Keele St. 416-736-2100 x20054. Free.

- **7:30** Triomphe. Piano Recital. Works by Alfred Schnittke, Yoshina Mochizuki; Klaus Huber: Alavere; Stephen Sitarski, violin; New Music Concerts Ensemble; Robert Aitken, director. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-408-0208. Free.

**Friday, January 25**

- **7:30** Triomphe. Piano Recital. Works by Alfred Schnittke, Yoshina Mochizuki; Klaus Huber: Alavere; Stephen Sitarski, violin; New Music Concerts Ensemble; Robert Aitken, director. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-408-0208. Free.
Sub Rosa
Jan 26 & 27 7:30pm
Trinity College Chapel
corunumensemble.com

Winter Words
Featuring Lucia Cervoni and Michael Colvin
SUNDAY JANUARY 27, 2PM
MAZZOLENI CONCERT HALL

TICKETS ON SALE NOW! 416.408.0238
www.rcmusic.com/performance

Sunday January 27


Monday January 28

2:00. Canada's National Varsity Concert. City Concert: Clarinet Quintets. Csaba Koczó, violin; Catherine Coeby, violin; Rory McLeod, viola; Robin Howe, cello; Jonathan Kreheim, clarinet. St. Andrew by-the-Lake Anglican Church, Cobble Ave., Toronto Island. 416-822-5810. $30. Brunch at 12:30pm. $20. Also Dec 27 (2pm: St. Andrew by-the-lake Church).

Tuesday January 29


Wednesday January 30


A. Concerts in the GTA

Thursday January 31


12:30: Canadian Opera Company. Elektra. See Jan 31. Also Feb 8.

12:30: St. Anne’s Music & Drama Society. The Pirates of Penzance. See Jan 26. Also Feb 2, 3(2pm); 3(2pm). Free.

1:30: Tapestry Opera. Hook Up. See Jan 29. Also Feb 2, 3(2pm); 3(2pm).

7:30: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Jazz Composers Concert. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-978-3750. Free.


8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Sir Andrew Davis Conducts Wagner. Berg: Three Pieces for Orchestra; Wagner: Act I of Die Walküre. Lise Davidsen, soprano; Shawn Grienke, piano; Lydia Adams, conductor and others. JUBILEE United Church, 40 Underhill Dr, Toronto. 416-978-3750. Free. Also 7pm. Complimentary snacks, cash bar, games, and silent auction.

January 31 at 8pm

VAN KUIJK K QUARTET

Friday February 1


1:30: St. Anne’s Music & Drama Society. The Pirates of Penzance. See Jan 26. Also Feb 2(2pm); 3(2pm).

1:30: Tapestry Opera. Hook Up. See Jan 29. Also Feb 2, 3(2pm); 3(2pm).

2:00: Amadeus Choir of Greater Toronto. Songs from a Celtic Heart. Annual fundraising event featuring Celtic love songs. Octava Vocal Ensemble; Tom Leighton, guitar and vocals; Anne Lederman, fiddler; Shawn Grienke, piano; Lydia Adams, conductor and others. JUBILEE United Church, 40 Underhill Dr. 416-446-0188. $50; $40(sr); $25(st). $5 discount on tickets purchased before Jan 15. Also 7pm. Complimentary snacks, cash bar, games, and silent auction.

Saturday February 2

2:00: St. Anne’s Music & Drama Society. The Pirates of Penzance. See Jan 26. Also Feb 3(2pm).

2:00: Amadeus Choir of Greater Toronto. Songs from a Celtic Heart. Annual fundraising event featuring Celtic love songs. Octava Vocal Ensemble; Tom Leighton, guitar and vocals; Anne Lederman, fiddler; Shawn Grienke, piano; Lydia Adams, conductor and others. JUBILEE United Church, 40 Underhill Dr. 416-446-0188. $50; $40(sr); $25(st). $5 discount on tickets purchased before Jan 15. Also 2pm. Complimentary snacks, cash bar, games, and silent auction.


Mazzoleni Concert Hall, Royal Conservatory, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-2028. $20.

7:30: Tapestry Opera. Hook Up. See Jan 29. Also Feb 2(2pm); 3(2pm).

7:30: Toronto Welsh Male Voice Choir. The Valentine’s Dinner & Show. Venise Kousie, vocalist. The Grand Luxe, 3125 Bayview Ave. 487-389-8084. $75(dinner/concert); $30(concert only).

7:30: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. U of T Wind Ensemble: Light and Shadow. Mackey; Aurora Awakes; Sekhon: Double Percussion Concerto; Etzady: Anahita; Hindemith: Symphonic Metamorphosis of Themes by Carl Maria von Weber. Strings of the U of T Symphony Orchestra; Aiyun Huang and Beverley Johnston, percussion; Gillian Mackay, conductor. MacMillan Theatre, Edward Johnson Building, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-408-0208. $30; $20(sr); $10(st); free(Uni st).

8:00: Cathedral Bluffs Symphony Orchestra. Tangor Reperations from the height of Buenos Aires’ Tango tradition to Eastern European folk music and improvisation. Horvath: Orchestre for Piano; Piazzolla: Four Seasons. Payadora Tango Ensemble; Robert Horvath, piano. PC: Ho Theatre, Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto, 5183 Sheppard Ave. E., Scarborough. 416-879-5566. $35-$45(sr/st); $30-$45(sr/st); free(under 12); 7:15; Pre-concert talk. cathedralbluffs.com.


8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Sir Andrew Davis Conducts Wagner. Berg: Three Pieces for Orchestra; Wagner: Act I of Die Walküre. Lise Davidsen, soprano; Simon O’Neill, tenor; Brindley Sherratt, bass; Sir Andrew Davis, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375. $34.75-$148. Also Feb 2.

Saturday February 2

7:00: Amadeus Choir of Greater Toronto. Songs from a Celtic Heart. Annual fundraising event featuring Celtic love songs. Octava Vocal Ensemble; Tom Leighton, guitar and vocals; Anne Lederman, fiddler; Shawn Grienke, piano; Lydia Adams, conductor and others. JUBILEE United Church, 40 Underhill Dr. 416-446-0188. $50; $40(sr); $25(st). $5 discount on tickets purchased before Jan 15. Also 7pm. Complimentary snacks, cash bar, games, and silent auction.


8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Sir Andrew Davis Conducts Wagner. Berg: Three Pieces for Orchestra; Wagner: Act I of
Saturday February 2, 2018  8 pm
TANGO!
a collaboration featuring guest artists
PAPYODA TANGO ENSEMBLE

One of Toronto’s most vibrant and sought-after acts, Papyoda performs an expansive repertoire that draws from the height of Buenos Aires’ Tango tradition, as well as eclectic backgrounds in Classical, Jazz, Latin, Eastern European folk music, and improvisation.

ROBERT HORVATH  Tangos for Orchestra
PIAZZOLLA  The Four Seasons (arr. Carlos Franzetti)

TICKETS: from $35 ($30 student/senior; children under 12 are free)
ORDER ONLINE cathedralluffs.com  BY PHONE 416.879.5566
P.C. Ho Theatre 5183 Sheppard Ave East
(1 block east of Markham Rd, Scarborough)

with CHRISTOPHER BAGAN, harpsichord
FEB 3, 7:30 PM
CORKIN GALLERY, DISTILLERY DISTRICT

Saturday February 2, 2018  8 pm
TANGO!
a collaboration featuring guest artists
PAPYODA TANGO ENSEMBLE

One of Toronto’s most vibrant and sought-after acts, Papyoda performs an expansive repertoire that draws from the height of Buenos Aires’ Tango tradition, as well as eclectic backgrounds in Classical, Jazz, Latin, Eastern European folk music, and improvisation.

ROBERT HORVATH  Tangos for Orchestra
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TICKETS: from $35 ($30 student/senior; children under 12 are free)
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P.C. Ho Theatre 5183 Sheppard Ave East
(1 block east of Markham Rd, Scarborough)

cathedralluffs.com | 416.879.5566
CONCERTS IN THE GTA

February 5 at 8pm
JUHO PÖH JÖNEN


**Wednesday February 6**

- 12:00 noon: **Canadian Opera Company**, Jazz Series: Dream. Joanna Majoko Quartet, Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre, Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. 416-363-8231. $52; $10(st).

- 7:30: **University of Toronto Faculty of Music**. Jazz: U of T Tzitz. Terry Promane, director. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen's Park. 416-408-0208. $40; $25(sr); $10(st).

**Thursday February 7**


- 7:30: **University of Toronto Faculty of Music**. Opera. Hook Up. See Jan 29. University of Toronto, St. George Campus. 416-978-5356. $10(st).

**Friday February 8**

- 8:00: **Mississauga Symphony Orchestra**. La Bohème. Music by Puccini. Romulo Delgado, tenor (Rodolfo); Shantelle Przybylo, soprano (Mimi); Denis Mastromonaco, music director; David Ambrose, stage director. Living Arts Centre, Hammerman Hall, 4141 Living Arts Dr., Mississauga. 905-306-6000. $50-$95. Also Feb 9.

**Saturday December 1**

- 2:00: **ChoralWorks Chamber Choir**. Messiah. Chamber orchestra and soloists; Brian Rae, conductor. New Life Church, 28 Tracey Ln., Collingwood. 705-888-4454. $35/$30(ad); $15(12 and under). Also Nov 30(7:00pm).

- 2:00: **Don Wright Faculty of Music**. Western University Symphony Orchestra. Paul Davenport Theatre, Talbot College, Western University, 151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3167. Free.

**Sunday December 2**

- 2:30: **Choralis Camerata**. A Festival of Christmas Choral Treasures. Bach: Christmas Oratorio selections. Central United Church (Welland), 12 Young St., Welland. 905-645-9225. $20; $25(ad); $10(st). Also Dec 1(7:30pm), St. Catharines.

**Monday December 3**


- 8:00: **Don Wright Faculty of Music**. Contemporary Music Series. Von Kuster Hall, Music Building, Western University, 115 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767. Free.

**Tuesday December 4**

- 12:30: **Don Wright Faculty of Music**. Electric-acoustic Music Compositions Concert. 225 Broadway Ave., **Juneau Jeanne Lamon Hall, Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre**. 416-973-6500 or 1-877-883-5777. $25. Also Nov 25(7pm - Bolton); Dec 1(3pm - Alliston).

**Wednesday December 5**

- 3:00: **La Jeunesse Youth Orchestra**. Home for the Holidays! Port Hope United Church, 34 South St., Port Hope. 1-888-466-5596. $25; $15(st); free(under 12).

- 3:00: **Western Concerts**. The Little Drummer. Jordan Womat, drums; Western Festival Chorus; Western Youth & Teen Choruses; Donna Bennett and Brian Finley, directors. Northminster United Church, 300 Sunset Blvd, Peterborough. 705-653-5508 or 1-877-883-5777. $25. Also Nov 24(10:00am, Campbellford), Nov 25(Campbellford), Dec 2(Norwood).

- 7:00: **Guelph Youth Singers**. Snow Squall. Harcourt Memorial United Church, 87 Dean Ave., Guelph. 519-763-3000. $25; $20(sr/st); $5(eve/60).

**Thursday December 6**

- 7:30: **Choralis Camerata**. A Festival of Christmas Choral Treasures. Bach: Christmas Oratorio selections. Knox Presbyterian Church (Alliston), 250 King St. S., Alliston. 519-942-1010, $25(10-17); $15(child). Also Nov 25(7pm - Bolton); Dec 2(3pm - Orangeville).

- 7:30: **Western Concerts**. The Little Drummer. Jordan Womat, drums; Western Festival Chorus; Western Youth & Teen Choruses; Donna Bennett and Brian Finley, directors. Norwood United Church, 4264 Hwy 7, Norwood. 705-653-5508 or 1-877-883-5777. $25. Also Nov 24(10pm, Campbellford), Nov 25(Campbellford), Dec 1(Peterborough).

- 5:00: **St. George’s Cathedral**. An Advent Candlelight Procession with Carols. Works by Bach, Powell, Byer, Hasler, and others. St. George’s Cathedral (Kingston), 270 King St. E., Kingston. 613-548-4617. Free. Will receive an email with a confirmation of your registration.

**December 7**

- 7:30: **Festivals in the GTA**.
Paul Davenport Theatre, Talbot College, Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767.


1:30: Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts/PeaceQuest. Celebration: Yolanda Bruno, Violin. Szczesiulska. Celebration and works by Poulenc, Schnittke, Enescu and Ravel. Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts, 390 King St. W., Kingston. 613-533-2424. $39; $32(faculty/staff); $16/st.


Wednesday December 5

12:15: St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church (Kitchener). Wednesday Noon-Hour Concert. Emily Grignon, soprano; Douglas Haas, pianist and organist. Brent Mayhew, piano; Tost String Quartet; Adam Kuciaik, baritone; Steve Winfield, conductor. Burton Avenue United Church, 37 Burton Ave., Barrie. 705-722-0271. $20; $16(st/yr). Also 2pm.

12:00: Niagara Symphony Orchestra. Under the Mistretto. Christine Cornish Smith, vocals; Joey DeBenedetto, vocals; Bradley Thachuk, conductor. Partridge Hall, FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, 250 St. Paul St. St. Catharines. 905-688-0722. $29; $19(st); $8(arts workers); $5(arts worker, high school st).

12:00: Niagara Symphony Orchestra. Under the Mistretto. Christine Cornish Smith, vocals; Joey DeBenedetto, vocals; Bradley Thachuk, conductor. Partridge Hall, FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, 250 St. Paul St., St. Catharines. 905-688-0722. $29; $19(st); $8(arts workers); $5(arts worker, high school st).


Saturday December 8

2:00: Lyrica Chamber Choir. In Terra Pax. Finiz: In Terra Pax; works by Jelgo, Rutter and Arnensen. Brent Mayhew, piano; Tost String Quartet; Adam Kuciaik, baritone; Steve Winfield, conductor. Burton Avenue United Church, 37 Burton Ave., Barrie. 705-722-0271. $20; $16(st/yr). Also 7:30.

2:00: Nippissing University. Lithuanian Strings and Sing-along. St. Thomas’ Church, 99 Ontario St., St. Catharines. 905-688-5601 x542. Freewill offering. Proceeds to Christmas Mass Care.

Thursday December 6


Friday December 7


Tuesday December 11

12:15: St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church (Kitchener). Wednesday Noon-Hour Concert. Cambridge Girls’ Choir; Peter West conductor. 54 Queen St. N., Kitchener. 226-647-1290. Free. Low-cost lunches available in the foyer from 11:30am or bring your own.

2:00: Regent Theatre. Sultans of String. Guest: Rebecca Campbell. Regent Theatre (Picton). 224 Main St. Picton. 613-476-8416 or therengenttheatre.org. $34.

Friday December 14


2:00: Dufferin Concert Singers/New Tecumseth Singers. Handel’s Messiah. Wat erloo Chamber Players Orchestra, Broadway Pentecostal Tabernacle, 567 Main Street W., Orangeville. 705-455-5490. $20; Free (child under 16). Also Dec 16 (3 pm, Alliston).


2:00: Dufferin Concert Singers/New Tecumseth Singers. Handel’s Messiah. Wat erloo Chamber Players Orchestra, Broadway Pentecostal Tabernacle, 567 Main Street W., Orangeville. 705-455-5490. $20; Free (child under 16). Also Dec 16 (3 pm, Alliston).


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Concerts Beyond the GTA

Association. Sultans of String. Guest: Rebecca Campbell, Amanda Martínez, Donné Roberts, Ken Whiteley. J. M. Ennis Auditorium, 240 Throld Rd., Welland. 905-788-1648 or wellandportobelloconcert.org/per-
formances. $35-$15(st).

8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. Yule tide Spectacular. Grand Philharmonic Choir & Children’s Choir; Carousel Dance Company; Miles Nadjabeghi, host, narrator; vocalist; Glynis Ranney, host, narrator; vocal-
ist; KWS Assistant Conductor. Centre in the Square, 101 Queen St. N., Kitchener. 519-745-4711 or 1-888-745-4717; $32-$93. Also Dec 14(8:00); 15(8:00); 16-20(8:00).

8:00: Orchestra GreyBruce/Saugeen County Chorus. Messiah, Soprano: Shannon McCracken; Countertenor: Daniel Taylor; Tenor: Benjamin Butterfield; Baritone: Geoffrey Sirett; Organist: Ian Sadler; Trumpet: Paul Otway. Barrie. 705-726-1181; $10; free(st).

5:00: Sultans of String. Guest: Rebecca Campbell & Kellylee Evans. National Arts Centre Studio Theatre, 1Elgin St., Ottawa. 613-947-7000 or nac-cna./ en/event/19145. $45.75. Azrieli Studio.

Wednesday December 19

12:00 noon: Music at St. Andrews. Sarah Svendsen, Organ and Rita Arenz, Horn. St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church (Bar-
rie), 47 Owen St., Barrie. 705-726-1181; $10; free(st).

12:00: St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church (Kitchener). Wednesday Noon-Hour Con-
certs. Renaissance School of the Arts Flute Choir; Wendy Wagler, conductor. 54 Queen St. N., Kitchener. 226-647-1290. Free. Low-cost lunches available in the foyer from 11:30 am or bring your own.

5:00: Elora Singers. Festival of Car-
s. St. John’s Anglican Church (Elora), 36 Henderson St., Elora. 519-846-0331. $43. Also Dec 18(5pm) & 19(7:30pm; 19(5pm).

7:30: Elora Singers. Festival of Car-
s. St. John’s Anglican Church (Elora), 36 Henderson St., Elora. 519-846-0331. $43. Also Dec 18(5pm) & 19(7:30pm; 19(5pm).

Thur ursday December 20

12:15: St. George’s Cathedral. Advent Con-

4:00: Gallery Players of Niagara. Glis-
sand & Guy Bannerman - A Celtic Solstice. Guy Bannerman, narrator; Deborah Braun, harp; David Braun, violin; Douglas Miller, flute; Nick Braun, percussion. Silver Sire United Church, 366 St. Paul St., St. Catharines. 905-468-1525. $35; $36(sr); $14(st/arts worker); $80(family). Also Dec 21, 7:30 pm.

Friday December 21

7:30: Gallery Players of Niagara. Glis-
sand & Guy Bannerman - A Celtic Solstice. Guy Bannerman, narrator; Deborah Braun, harp; David Braun, violin; Douglas Miller, flute; Nick Braun, percussion. Grace United Church, Niagara-on-the-Lake. 905-468-1525. $35; $36(sr); $14(st/arts worker); $80(family). Also Dec 20, 4 pm.

Saturday December 22

7:30: Guelph Chamber Choir. Messiah. Handel. Meredith Halch, soprano; Jennifer Enns-Modo, alto; Colin Ainsworth, tenor; Bruce Kelly, bass; Musica Viva Orchestra on period instruments; Gerald Neufeld, guest conductor. River Run Centre, 35 Woolwich St., Guelph. 519-763-3000. $40(4 for $35); $10(under $30); $5(under 14).


8:00: Night Kitchen Too. In Concert. Invited musicians, poets and spoken word artists. Pinnacle Playhouse, 5720 Forgets Road, Ayr. 1-866-609-1795. $35-$60. Also Dec 31(dinner/concert package) $70 (dinner 6 pm). Limited availability.

Wednesday January 2

12:00 noon: Midday Music with Shigeru. Michael Adamson, Violin and Philip Adamson, Piano. Hi-Way Pentecostal Church, 50 Anne St. N., Barrie. 705-726-1181. $10; free(st).

Thursday January 10

**Sunday January 12**

- 12:00 noon: Don Wright Faculty of Music. Mozart: Violin Sonata No.7 in C. KWCMS Music Room, 57 Young St., Waterloo. 519-886-1673. $35; $20(sr).

**Saturday January 12**

- 8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. Con: Robin Esprey, conductor. Location: Centre in the Square, 101 Queen St. N., Kitchener. 519-745-4711 or 1-888-745-4717. $31-$90. Also Jan 19.

**Monday January 13**


**Friday January 18**

- 12:30: Don Wright Faculty of Music. Fri: Works by Rachmaninoff, Ravel and Dvořák. Pinnacle Playhouse, 256 Pinnacle St., Barrie. 705-726-1181. $65.

**Thursday January 17**

- 12:00 noon: Music at St. Andrews. Chrisopher Davies, Organ. St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church (Barrie), 47 Owen St., Barrie. 705-726-1811. $10 (free).dtd.

**Saturday January 19**

- 8:00: Don Wright Faculty of Music. Early Music Studio. Featuring Tafelmusik members Patricia Ahern, violin and Felix Deak, cella. Von Kuster Hall, Music Building, Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3777. Free.

**Tuesday January 22**

- 7:15: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. Con: Edward de Souza. Location: Centre in the Square, 101 Queen St. N., Kitchener. 519-745-4711 or 1-888-745-4717. $36.50. Also Jan 19.

**Wednesday January 23**

- 7:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. K.W. Glee. Steve Lehmann, KW Glee producer and music director; Armanda Kind, KW Glee artistic director; Trevor Walger, conductor. Centre in the Square, 101 Queen St. N., Kitchener. 519-745-4711 or 1-888-745-4717. $36.50. Also Jan 19.

**Sunday January 20**

This document contains a variety of musical events and performances in various locations. Key events include:

- **Concerts Beyond the GTA**:
  - Event locations such as London, Hamilton, and other cities.
  - Features artists like Amy Ley, Paul Davenport, and Theodore Baerg.

- **Saturday January 26**:
  - Multiple events at various locations.

- **Wednesday January 30**:
  - Multiple events including classical concerts and recitals.

- **Friday February 1**:
  - Events like Midday Music with Shipper and Mt. Royal University's Marching Band.

- **C. Music Theatre**:
  - Listings for music theatre performances.

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


● Opera by Request. Hansel and Gretel. Music by Engelbert Humperdinck, libretto by Adelheid Wette. College St. United Church, 452 College St. 416-455-2365. $20. Semi-staged with piano accommodation. Jan 18, 7:30pm. Also Jan 17, 2pm. Woodbridge.

● Opera by Request. Menotti's The Tele- phone and Donizetti's Rita. College St. United Church, 452 College St. 416-455-2365. $20. Semi-staged with piano accommodation. Jan 19, 7:30pm.

● Opera by Request, Don Giovanni. Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, libretto by Lorenzo Da Ponte. St. Matthews United Church, 25 Holloway St., 519-745-4711 or 1-888-745-4717. $36.50. Also Jan 12. Semi-staged with piano accompaniment. Jan 20, 7pm. Also Jan 18, 7pm. Woodbridge.


● Randolph Academy. 9 to 5, the Musical. Music and lyrics by Dolly Parton, book by Patricia Resnick, based on the film, Annex Theatre, 730 Bathurst St. 416-924-2243. $22. Opens Nov 27, 8pm. Runs to Dec 1. Tues-Sat(8pm), Sat(2pm).


● St. Anne's Music and Drama Society. The July 22 – AUGUST 26, 2019 | HALIBURTON, ON, CANADA

Advanced Professional Training & Networking | Fully Staged Opera Productions | Masterclasses | Auditions with International Artist Agents

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TICKETS & ADMINISTRATION | 1-855-455-5533

Highlands Opera Studio

Valerie Kuinka
Richard Margison
General Director
Artistic Director

BMO Financial Group
Pirates of Penzance. Music by Arthur Sullivan, libretto by W.S. Gilbert. St. Anne’s Parish Hall, 651 Dufferin St. 416-922-4415. $30; $25(sr/st). Opens Jan 25, 7:30pm. Runs to Feb 3. Thurs/Fri/Sat/7:30pm, Sat/Sun(2pm). Also Jan 26(7:30pm).


Theatre Aurora. The Drowsy Chaperone. Music and lyrics by Lisa Lambert and Greg Morrison, book by Bob Martin and Don McKellar. Theatre Aurora, 150 Henderson Dr., Aurora. 905-727-3669. $25, $23(sr/st); $15(box office); $10(st at box office). Opens Nov 29, 8pm. Runs to Dec 8. Thurs/Sat-Sat(8pm), Sun(2pm).


C. Music Theatre

Studio Theatre, 1430 Trafalgar Rd., Oakville. 905-815-4049. $25. Opens Nov 29, 7:30pm. Runs to Dec 9. Tues-Sat(7:30pm), Sat/Sun(2pm). Note: no mat Dec 2.

Toronto Operetta Theatre. Die Fledermäuse. Music by Johann Strauss, St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 27 Front St. E. 416-366-7723. $1-1:00-708-6754. $45. Opens Dec 28, 8pm. Runs to Jan 2. Days and times vary, visit torontooperetta.ca.


University of Toronto Faculty of Music. New Music Festival: Opera Double Bill – The Raven’s Drunken Hallucinations from the Sea (Futari Shizuka). Music by Toshio Hosokawa. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-408-0208. $30, $20(st); $10(st); free(UofT st). Jan 17, 7:30pm.

University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Elf the Musical. Music and lyrics by Robert B. Sherman, with George Stiles and Anthony Drewe, book by Julian Fellowes. Young People’s Theatre, 165 Front St. E. 416-408-0208. $20, Dec 8, 3pm.


Beat the Beat | Mainly Clubs, Mostly Jazz!

December Feast, January Famine?

COLIN STORY

The holiday season in Toronto – which begins, at least in some major retail stores, as early as November 1 – carries with it different meanings for different people. For some, of course, it is still primarily a religious occasion; for others, it is a chance to spend at least one morning drinking excessive amounts of rum and eggnog before having a recuperative nap on a disappointed family member’s couch. What tends to remain constant in our shared experience of December and early January is a celebration of community and a desire to enjoy, at least briefly, a sensation of abundance and plenty.

For live music fans in Southern Ontario, this will not be difficult to achieve. December is one of the most exciting months of the year to hit the town and take in a show. This is true whether you enjoy the great canon of Christmas songs (they’re fun, and they’re basically just standards) or not (they’re “fun,” and they’re basically just standards); the true gift that December brings us is the sheer volume of excellent and unusual programming, much of which is not explicitly holiday-themed. So, while there will be plenty of opportunities to hear songs about inclement weather, precocious reindeer, and bearded patriarchal wizards who watch you while you sleep, there will also be an ample supply of non-holiday music to check out in a wide variety of venues.

The Bistro: To begin, there are, of course, some really top-notch holiday shows taking place in December. On Saturday December 22, the pianists Robi Botos and Hilario Duran perform holiday classics, standards and more at Jazz Bistro, in what has become an annual tradition. It is rare enough to hear two pianists perform together, and rarer still to hear two pianists of Botos and Durán’s calibre in a club setting. Other holiday offerings from Jazz Bistro include Sam Broverman’s A Jewish Boy’s Christmas album release show, on Sunday December 16, and the Robert Scott Trio playing music from A Charlie Brown Christmas, on Tuesday December 18. Outside of the GTA, The Woodhouse performs at The Jazz Room in Waterloo with the help of singer Barbra Lica, who has joined the band in previous years for their annual run of holiday shows.

Bernice: Another notable holiday event: Bernice, the dreamy, synth indie project led by singer Robin Dann, will play at Lula Lounge on December 16 as part of Venus Fest’s Winter Market, which celebrates women and non-binary artists and entrepreneurs. The market runs throughout the day, with performances from Bernice and the group Kith & Kin to be followed by winter bingo, hosted by the singer Alex Samaras.

The Rex: The Rex’s December lineup is perhaps its most exciting since June, when it hosted the co-curated TD Toronto Jazz Festival concert series, due in no small part to the fact that some of the same artists are back, including the pianist Geoffrey Keezer and the duo, Paris Monster. Keezer – an alumnus of bands led by Benny Golson, Ray Brown and Art Blakey, in the final iteration of the fabled Jazz Messengers group – is both virtuosic and communicative, and has tremendous access to the jazz piano tradition. His performance, which takes place on Sunday December 16, will feature the singer Gillian Margot, who sung on Keezer’s recent trio album On My Way To You, and the drummer Jon Wikan, a longtime Keezer collaborator.

When Paris Monster played at The Rex in June, their performance became one of the most talked-about breakout shows of the whole jazz festival, in part because of how surprising it was that such a full band sound could be produced by just two people. The duo consists of Josh Dion, who simultaneously plays drums, keyboards, and sings,
The Rex will also be hosting a different two-night residency, on December 19 and 20, as Kirk MacDonald, one of Canada’s pre-eminent saxophonists, celebrates the release of his album Generations, his 15th as a bandleader. Generations features MacDonald’s contemporaries Neil Swainson and André White, as well as the American pianist Harold Mabern, who, at 82-years-old, is one of jazz’s prominent elder statesmen, and the clarinetist Virginia MacDonald, who, at 23, represents the next generation of jazz between figuratively and literally. (Kirk MacDonald is her father.) Virginia MacDonald, who is becoming an important presence on the Toronto jazz scene in her own right, will also be playing at The Rex on December 18, one evening before joining her father for his two-night stint. She is joined by the bassist Dan Fortin and, keeping the family theme intact, by the siblings Lucas Dann and Nico Dann, a pianist and drummer (respectively) who share a sister in Robin Dann, the aforementioned singer in the group Bernice.

**Burdock:** While December is typically one of the best months of the year in which to see live music, January is one of the worst, for a variety of reasons. There is usually an expectation that people don’t go out as much, both for reasons financial (it’s time to start paying down that credit card) and calorics (those resolutions won’t keep themselves). The success of Burdock’s annual Piano Fest, however, has given both artists and audiences a reason to get back into the swing of things following the holidays. Taking place from January 21 to 28, this eight-day festival sees the temporary installation of a baby grand piano in Burdock’s Music Hall and, traditionally, double bills featuring complementary acts. Past performers include Joanna Majoko, Chelsea Bennett, Michelle Willis, Jeremy Dutcher and Tim Baker, amongst many others. While the full schedule has not yet been released, check out Burdock’s website for full listings when they become available.

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**MAINLY CLUBS, MOSTLY JAZZ QUICK PICKS**

- **DEC 18, 9:30PM:** Virginia MacDonald, The Rex. The night before she joins her father Kirk MacDonald on the same stage for his album release show, clarinetist Virginia MacDonald leads her own accomplished quartet at The Rex.
- **DEC 16, 8PM:** Venus Fest presents Bernice with Kith & Kin, Lula Lounge. As part of Venus Fest’s Winter Market, watch Kith & Kin perform before a very special holiday set by Bernice; followed by bingo.
- **DEC 22, 9PM:** Robi Botos and Hilario Durán, Jazz Bistro. Leading pianists Robi Botos and Hilario Durán present a holiday-themed show in a rare configuration.
- **JAN 2170 28:** Various performers, Burdock Piano Fest. Burdock Music Hall. Burdock presents its fourth-annual Piano Fest, featuring a variety of performers in complementary double bills that make good use of a beautiful (and well-tuned) baby grand piano.

Colin Story is a jazz guitarist, writer and teacher based in Toronto. He can be reached at www.colinstory.com, on Instagram and on Twitter.
D. In the Clubs (Mostly Jazz)

Jazz Jam. Every Sun. 4:30pm New Orleans Connection All Star Band; 10pm Sunday Jam with Bill Hedefine. Every Wed. 10pm Action Sound Band w/ Leo Valvasorri.

Hirit Cafe and Restaurant
2050 Danforth Ave. 416-551-7560
hirit.ca
Every Sunday 3pm Hirit Sundays Open Mic. First and Third Tuesday 8pm Fingerstyle Guitar Association.

Dec 7 8pm Marty Harris & Jazz Quartet. Dec 13 8pm Uptown Jazz Swing Band.
Dec 14 8:30pm Jazz of the Americas w/ Don Nadurik and Friends. Dec 15 8pm Andrea Kuznick presents; Holiday Spirit Cabaret.

Dec 20 8pm John Findlay Holiday Jazz & Blues & Originals. Dec 22 8pm Bruce Cassidy Jazz Trio. Dec 28 8pm Hirit Hoot Pre-New Year’s Eve Comedy. Jan 10 8pm Bright Lit, Big City. Jan 11 8:30pm Jazz of the Americas w/ Don Nadurik and friends. Jan 23 8pm Hirit Hoot Comedy.

Home Smith Bar – See Old Mill, The

Hugh’s Room
2261 Dundas St. W 416 533-5483
hughesroom.com
All shows at 8:30pm unless otherwise noted. See website for individual show prices. Dec 1 Carlos del Junco. Dec 3 7:30pm The Cherry Tree Band + Friends Fundraiser. Dec 4 China Crisis. Dec 5 Dr. Draw.

The T om Nagy Christmas Experience
Woodhouse + Barbra Lica.

Dec 15
Dec 8
Joni NehRita
Dec 7
Dec 1

Indicated. Attendees must be 19+. Cover kwjazzroom.com (full schedule)
Waterloo. 226-476-1565

11, 12, 13

Jan 6
Jan 10,
Jan 20

indicated. Attendees must be 19+. Cover mezzettarestaurant.com (full schedule)

7pm
8:30pm
8pm

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Jan 10,
Jan 20

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7pm
8:30pm
8pm

The T om Nagy Christmas Experience
Woodhouse + Barbra Lica.
to Grammy Award-winning artists and musicians who continue to pen inspired lyrics and songs capable of moving a nation, if not the world. Q&A hosted by Mervon Mehta, Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema, 506 Bloor St. W. Tickets are $17 each (Members: $12/110/ Free). Tickets at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema box office or at hotdocsincinema.ca.

- Feb 07 7:30: FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, Alicia Svigals: The Yellow Ticket. Live score for a screening of the 1918 silent film The Yellow Ticket featuring Pola Negri. Alicia Svigals, composer/violin; Marilyn Lerner, piano. 250 St. Paul St., St. Catharines. 905-688-0722. $35; $30/member; $25/stf.

Galas and Fundraisers

- Dec 02 12:00 noon: Toronto Children’s Chorus, Sing Loud! More than 300 choristers from the Toronto Children’s Chorus will perform seasonal carols during this free concert to thank TCC donors. Come and go as you please. All are welcome. Sherraton Centre Toronto Hotel, 123 Queen Street West. 416-932-8666 x231. torontochildrenschorus.com/specialappearances. Free concert, donations welcome.

- Dec 07 6:00: Amadeus Choir, Songs From a Celtic Heart Annual Fundraising Event. Jubilee United Church, 40 Underhill Dr. amadeuschoir.com. For tickets 416-446-0188. $20, $40, $25; $5 off on tickets purchased before Jan 15. Also at 7pm.

Lectures, Salons and Symposia

- Jan 21 10:00 & 4:30: Miles Nadal JCC, ACA Doc Pomus. A documentary about Brooklyn-born Jerome Felder who fell victim to polio, was born Jerome Felder who fell victim to polio and grew up to become songwriting Doc Pomus. He wrote countless classic hits including, One Night of Love and Roll With Me. The Beatles arrived in New York on February 7, 1964, opened North America’s doors to a wealth of British musical talent and officially launched what became known as The British Invasion. John Rowlands, who toured with The Beatles, The Rolling Stones and the Dave Clark Five, shares his personal stories and private collection of photographs he captured of these legendary bands. Miles Nadal JCC, 750 Spadina Ave. Admission: $5. Spaces limited. To register, call 416-924-6211 x0 or visit mnjcc.org.

- Dec 08 3:30: University of Toronto, Faculty of Music, METH Colloquia. Led by Max Katz, College of William and Mary. Faculty of Music, Room 130, 80 Queen’s Park. Free. Dec 07 10:00am: Istituto Italiano di Cultura, The Life and Adventures of Lorenzo Da Ponte. Dr. Sebastian Bazzichetto will explore the captivating life of this fascinating man with an even more fascinating and adventurous life. $20, $15/IC(st). Reservations are required: icT oronto@esteri.it.

- Dec 09 2:00: Toronto Public Library, Going Nuts Over The Nutcracker. In The Nutcracker, Clara, an army of mice, a brigade of toy soldiers, a Nutcracker prince and a Sugar Plum fairy all dance out their story to the sounds of Tchaikovsky’s famous score. Immerse yourself in the ballet’s story, dance, music, costumes and props and top things off by taking home a craft of your very own making. Program is intended for children ages 5-9. Register in person in the branch or by calling 416-395-5639 to register for this free program.

- Dec 27 7:00: Toronto Public Library, Music of the Ancients: Renaissance Music. Join students from the University of Toronto’s Early Music Studio for an evening of music from the late 1300s to the beginnings of the Baroque era. Delight in a fascinating world full of sacred and secular songs with dance, carols, madrigals, troubadours and courtenters! North York Central Library, 3120 Yonge St. Call 416-395-5639 to register for this free program.

- Jan 14 1:30: Miles Nadal JCC, That’s Entertainment! The Evolution of the Hollywood Musical. Film critic Adam Nayman will examine the roots, evolution and present status of the classic Hollywood musical, considering questions of aesthetics, social commentary, race and ethnicity, and changing musical forms. Films studied will include The Jazz Singer, Singin’ in the Rain, Cabaret and La La Land; influential directors such as Busby Berkeley and Vincente Minnelli; and major stars including Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, Bill Robinson, Judy Garland and Gene Kelly. Miles Nadal JCC, 750 Spadina Ave. Drop-in. $12. For more information, visit mnjcc.org.

- Jan 17 7:00: Canadian Opera Company. Opera Insights: Instrumental to Opera. The Orchestra Academy. New members of the COC Orchestra Academy are introduced. Through engaging discussion and spirited mini-performances, the Academy shares the daily challenges and rewards of being in the industry.

E. The ETCeteras

Competition


- Jan 16 7:00: University of Toronto & Sparks/Wiry Cries/Women on the Verge. SongSLAM, New Music Festival. SongSLAM is a unique opportunity for emerging classical music composer/performer teams to premiere new art songs and compete for cash prizes. For the first time in Canada, teams will present a new song for voice and piano in any language for the voting audience who will vote for their favourites. Walter Hall, Faculty of Music, University of Toronto 80 Queens Pk, womenontheverge.ca/sparks-wiry-cries-songslam for more info.

Film Screenings

- Jan 20 10:00 & 4:30: Miles Nadal JCC, ACA Doc Pomus. A documentary about Brooklyn-born Jerome Felder who fell victim to polio and grew up to become songwriting Doc Pomus. He wrote countless classic hits including, One Night of Love and Roll With Me. The Beatles arrived in New York on February 7, 1964, opened North America’s doors to a wealth of British musical talent and officially launched what became known as The British Invasion. John Rowlands, who toured with The Beatles, The Rolling Stones and the Dave Clark Five, shares his personal stories and private collection of photographs he captured of these legendary bands. Miles Nadal JCC, 750 Spadina Ave. Admission: $5. Spaces limited. To register, call 416-924-6211 x0 or visit mnjcc.org.

- Dec 08 10:00: Miles Nadal JCC, Beattie & The British Invasion. With celebrated rock & roll photographer John Rowlands. The Beatles arrive in New York on February 7, 1964, opened North America’s doors to a wealth of British musical talent and officially launched what became known as The British Invasion. John Rowlands, who toured with The Beatles, The Rolling Stones and the Dave Clark Five, shares his personal stories and private collection of photographs he captured of these legendary bands. Miles Nadal JCC, 750 Spadina Ave. Admission: $5. Spaces limited. To register, call 416-924-6211 x0 or visit mnjcc.org.

- Dec 08 3:30: University of Toronto, Faculty of Music, METH Colloquia. Led by Max Katz, College of William and Mary. Faculty of Music, Room 130, 80 Queen’s Park. Free.

- Dec 07 10:00am: Istituto Italiano di Cultura, The Life and Adventures of Lorenzo Da Ponte. Dr. Sebastian Bazzichetto will explore the captivating life of this fascinating man with an even more fascinating and adventurous life. $20, $15/IC(st). Reservations are required: icT oronto@esteri.it.

- Dec 09 2:00: Toronto Public Library, Going Nuts Over The Nutcracker. In The Nutcracker, Clara, an army of mice, a brigade of toy soldiers, a Nutcracker prince and a Sugar Plum fairy all dance out their story to the sounds of Tchaikovsky’s famous score. Immerse yourself in the ballet’s story, dance, music, costumes and props and top things off by taking home a craft of your very own making. Program is intended for children ages 5-9. Register in person in the branch or by calling 416-395-5639 to register for this free program.

- Dec 27 7:00: Toronto Public Library, Music of the Ancients: Renaissance Music. Join students from the University of Toronto’s Early Music Studio for an evening of music from the late 1300s to the beginnings of the Baroque era. Delight in a fascinating world full of sacred and secular songs with dance, carols, madrigals, troubadours and courtenters! North York Central Library, 3120 Yonge St. Call 416-395-5639 to register for this free program.

- Jan 14 1:30: Miles Nadal JCC, That’s Entertainment! The Evolution of the Hollywood Musical. Film critic Adam Nayman will examine the roots, evolution and present status of the classic Hollywood musical, considering questions of aesthetics, social commentary, race and ethnicity, and changing musical forms. Films studied will include The Jazz Singer, Singin’ in the Rain, Cabaret and La La Land; influential directors such as Busby Berkeley and Vincente Minnelli; and major stars including Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, Bill Robinson, Judy Garland and Gene Kelly. Miles Nadal JCC, 750 Spadina Ave. Drop-in. $12. For more information, visit mnjcc.org.

- Jan 17 7:00: Canadian Opera Company. Opera Insights: Instrumental to Opera. The Orchestra Academy. New members of the COC Orchestra Academy are introduced. Through engaging discussion and spirited mini-performances, the Academy shares the daily challenges and rewards of being in the industry.

- Jan 24 1:00: Miles Nadal JCC, Bring the Piano Starring Randy Vancourt. This Juno-nominated composer, writer, and performer presents a strange-but-true one-man musical comedy that follows a musician on his piano-lugging journeys. This delightful musical comedy highlights the adventures and outrageous experiences of the life of a travelling musician, appearing everywhere from the Yukon to the South Pole — well, almost — and stopping off along the way to become a dad. Miles Nadal JCC, 750 Spadina Ave. Admission: $5. To register, please call 416-924-6211 x0 or visit mnjcc.org.

- Jan 25 3:30: Don Wright Faculty of Music. Music Graduate Colloquium: Andrew Goldman, Andrew Goldman, Postdoctoral Scholar, Western University. “Using Neuroscience in Music Research: Critical Challenges and Contributions.” All Colloquium series events take place on selected Fridays in Talbot College 101. For FAQ, parking and other useful patron information visit music.uwo.ca/events/useful-information.html or contact Audrey Yardley-Jones, Graduate Program Assistant ayardley@uwo.ca 519-861-2111 ext. 85304. Admission is free, and all are welcome to attend.

- Jan 25-26 8:00: University of Toronto, DM/eX. The fifth annual Digital Media at the Crossroads returns to examine the future of content in digital media. DM/eX keynote speakers, panels and guests offer digital media students and professionals two days of wide-ranging, informative and provocative programming. Open to students, faculty and the general public. Faculty of Music, Walter
Western University, London. Admission is free, and all are welcome to attend.

**Feb 01 10:00: Don Wright Faculty of Music.** Voice Masterclass. Led by Brian Zeger. Mazzoleni Hall, 273 Bloor St. W. Free admission. All are welcome to attend. For further information visit rcmusic.ca. Also at 2:00.

**Dec 07 10:00: Royal Conservatory.** Piano Masterclass. Led by Leslie Kinton. Room 410, 273 Bloor St. W. Free admission. All are welcome to attend. For further information visit rcmusic.ca. Also at 2:00.

**Dec 07 5:00: Royal Conservatory.** Violin Masterclass. Led by Valerie Li. Mazzoleni Hall, 273 Bloor St. W. Free admission. All are welcome to attend. For further information visit rcmusic.ca.

**Dec 07 7:00: Royal Conservatory.** Cello Masterclass. Led by Andréis Diaz. Mazzoleni Hall, 273 Bloor St. W. Free admission. All are welcome to attend. For further information visit rcmusic.ca.

**Jan 18 11:00: Royal Conservatory Piano Masterclass.** Led by Ronan O’Hora. Room TBA, 273 Bloor St. W. Free admission. All are welcome to attend. For further information visit rcmusic.ca. Also at 2:30.

**Jan 21 10:00: University of Toronto.** Composition Masterclass with Toshi Hosokawa. Toshi Hosokawa and Roger D. Moore Distinguished Visitor in Composition conducts a composition masterclass at the U of T Faculty of Music. Presented by Norbert Palej. Walter Hall, 27 Queen’s Park. Free. Also on Jan 22.

**Jan 25 10:00: Royal Conservatory Cello Masterclass.** Led by Collin Carr. Mazzoleni Hall, 273 Bloor St. W. Free admission. All are welcome to attend. For further information visit rcmusic.ca. Also at 2:00.
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INSTRUCTION


Now that cannabis is legal, does my piano teacher still have to practice? (Piano student koan)

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MosePianoForAll.com
Recollectiv’s RESTORATIVE MISSION

VIVIEN FELLEGI

On a chilly fall Saturday at Toronto’s Tranzac Club, Recollectiv’s musicians with brain injuries and their care partners get ready for their regular hourly-long sanctuary from stress. Caregivers find their charges’ name tags and seat them in a sunlit room decorated with instruments. As they catch up, their loved ones sit sedately. One man with a dazzling smile seems to invite conversation, but only speaks in monosyllables. A woman with orange hair stares into space.

Today’s conductor, Danielle Flax, welcomes the group and, with a flourish of her arms, leads off *You are my Sunshine*. The participants perk up. They sit straighter. Some sing along to the golden oldies. Others just bob their heads to the beat. The woman with orange hair flips through her music book, while the man with the smile croons a love song to his wife. Music blurs the boundaries amongst the crowd, and their voices soar in unison.

Recollectiv’s founder, singer and entertainer, Ilana Waldston, is pleased every time she witnesses the magic of melodies. “When I see the smiles, I know some kind of therapy is benefitting them,” she says. These joyous moments don’t come readily to those with meandering minds. But music retains its charm long after clients have forgotten how to read. “Maybe the memories aren’t there, but the feelings can still transport you back to better times,” says Waldston.

The choir welcomes caregivers along with their loved ones. Waldston recognized the need for this forum when her mother, Shimona, the woman with orange hair, withdrew into dementia. As Shimona’s interests narrowed, her daughter took her to the symphony which Shimona still enjoyed. But when Shimona began to sing along with the soloists, Waldston realized she had to find a safe place where they could both indulge their passion for performance.

In the summer of 2017, Waldston heard a radio show about The 5th Dementia, a California-based band for musicians with cognitive deficits and their companions, and decided to spearhead a similar ensemble in Toronto. Her goal was for members to enjoy a meaningful activity in a barrier-free space. “I wanted both participants and caregivers to feel whole again,” she says. Recollectiv – which combines “recollect” and “collective” – debuted in March 2018.

Wound up by music, Danielle Flax is a whirlwind of energy. She bounces from one foot to another as she conducts, and her frizzy ponytail swings in tandem. Though this is her first time filling in for the absent Waldston, the seasoned singer is in her element. But while the 34-year-old Flax makes it look easy, she’s had to fight for her accomplishments. Almost a decade ago, surgery for a brain tumor compromised her memory, making her forget words. Even worse was the erasure of milestone moments, which made her self-conscious when her friends reminisced. “I’m the downer because I’ll go ‘I can’t remember that,’” she says.

Flax turned to songs for solace. Though she struggled to speak, she could still belt out pieces which predated her malady. “That reduced my anxiety,” she says. Even better, music revived happier times. Hearing a lullaby her mother had once hummed would whisk her back to the security of childhood.

Music’s ability to channel the past can help soothe patients with dementia, says neurologic music therapist, researcher and University of Toronto assistant professor, Corene Hurt-Thaut. Because familiar tunes and musical genres evoke strong emotions, they can transport us back to events associated with those sentiments. A tune chanted by their father, for instance, can conjure up the safe haven of their school days and reduce their anxiety. “They start talking about these positive memories and their whole mood changes,” says Hurt-Thaut.

Music can rekindle memories not just for events, but also for lyrics, says Hurt-Thaut. Clients who have forgotten their children’s names can still spout the words to their favourite songs. That’s because these are stored in different, more resistant parts of the brain than spoken language.

This multiplicity of vocalization pathways can be harnessed for patients with trouble talking (aphasia), says music therapist and neuroscientist Concetta Tomaino, executive director and co-founder of New York’s Institute for Music and Neurologic Function. Though aphasia patients struggle with oral expression, they can still sing lyrics. While singing and speaking are distinct abilities, their underlying brain circuits overlap in some of the smaller pathways that are spared following an injury to the primary speech centre. This means you can spark the speech circuits by igniting the closely linked musical ones.

Therapy for aphasia gradually grafts speech elements onto the intact musical ones, says Tomaino. Clients begin by singing songs with familiar lyrics. They tap their fingers to the beat, drawing out the words through the insistent rhythm. As they improve with repetition, the melody is gradually withdrawn and replaced by spoken words.
Eventually, clients develop robust new speech circuits. Music not only stirred Flax’s mind, it also helped process her pain. Flax’s memory troubles thwarted her dream to practise psychology, and she lost her direction. She became depressed, slept in until 2pm every day, and stopped socializing. “God had messed up my path to be a psychologist – I was angry,” she says.

Flax leaned on her old ally for relief. On a bad day she would listen to sad tunes and cry. “I could feel the feelings through the songs – that was very therapeutic,” she says. Producing a CD of her own compositions was cathartic and boosted her self-esteem. By last year, Flax was ready to rejoin a musical ensemble. She felt immediately at home at Recollectiv, and quickly began forging new friendships. “Making connections with others that have similar situations gives you a sense of community,” she says.

But though the group might vent to each other at break time, it is their shared communion with music that glues them together. Flax and volunteer Alan Gotlib often harmonize their voices when they’re close. “I get goosebumps when we’re riding the same wavelength,” she says. Besides restoring Flax’s sense of belonging, Recollectiv helped her recover a broken piece of herself. She has become a mentor for the group, sharing both her inspiring story and her artistry. “Helping others in this form of therapy is the missing puzzle piece of my life,” she says.

Though Flax’s response to the medicine of music isn’t unusual, it’s only recently that scientists are pinpointing how this works. Just listening to our favourite songs gives us a natural high, says neuroscientist Daniel Levitin, professor emeritus at McGill University, and author of This Is Your Brain on Music. That’s because it stimulates the same brain reward pathways as a chocolate binge, good sex or illicit drugs. As a familiar piece builds towards its climax, listeners eagerly anticipate its resolution, producing the feel-good substance dopamine as they thrill to the chase. Then, as the excitement peaks, they release endogenous opioids (the natural versions of drugs like heroin). Both brain chemicals flood our bodies with pleasure.

Music also helps us regulate our internal balance, says Levitin. We select fast-paced music to motivate us for a workout. As our brains absorb the rapid beat, the heart rate, blood pressure and arousal all increase. When we are anxious, however, we seek lower-pitched, slower songs which reduce stress hormones and calm our senses. Music can alter our moods as well as our physiology, says Levitin. If we’re feeling rejected, playing a mournful song can help us feel understood.

Making music together is an even better way to cheer up, says Levitin. This is a valuable tool to fight the depression that can complicate the slow slippage of cerebral function, adds Tomaino.

People suffering from depression tend to focus inwards on their problems, says Levitin. But when we’re trying to mesh our parts together in an ensemble, we have to tune in to our fellow musicians. “That pulls you out of yourself and breaks the cycle of self-consciousness,” says Levitin. The hormone oxytocin, commonly known as the “cuddle hormone,” is produced during these moments, cementing our feelings of trust and bonding.

Back at the Tranzac Club, Flax introduces Moon River, and Waldston’s mother begins shuffling her feet. Gotlib recognizes the movement as a signal that she wants to dance. He grabs her hand and they sway and spin in perfect symmetry. She starts singing “La, la-la.”

Shimona’s lifelong love of dance is one of the few remaining things that can rouse her from apathy, says Waldston. “She and my father tore up every dance floor they could find,” she says. Waldston imagines that a strong beat revives these special moments. “I see her eyes sparkle and she lights up.”

Shimona’s response isn’t an anomaly. Human beings are wired to react to rhythm, says University of Toronto alumnus Dana Swarbrick, MSc. candidate, Rehabilitation Sciences. “When a groovy song comes on, you can’t help but tap your toes,” she says. This reflex can serve Parkinson’s patients, Swarbrick explains. These clients have trouble walking due to degeneration in the brain region that initiates movement. But music can provide an alternate route to stimulate motion. When neurons in the brain’s sound processing centre detect music, they begin to fire in correspondence to the beat. These nerve cells then relay the rhythmic message to their counterparts in the motor area, which controls movement. Over time Parkinson’s patients incorporate these new patterns into their gait.

Another element of music, its vibrations, has been used to treat some brain disorders, says Amy Clements-Cortes, music therapist and assistant professor, University of Toronto Faculty of Music, who worked with U of T’s professor emeritus Lee Bartel to pioneer rhythmic sensory stimulation for Alzheimer’s patients. Neurons have to pulse in synchrony to transmit messages, says Clements-Cortes. One of the brain’s crucial frequencies, 40 hz (corresponding to a low E on the piano), is vital for communication amongst its segments.

In Alzheimer’s, dying nerve cells reduce the strength of the critical gamma range brain waves, interfering with neuronal messages and dulling thought. But sound can reboot these deficient brain signals from without. In a 2016 pilot study, Alzheimer’s patients sat on a medical-grade chair equipped with speakers emitting a 40 hz sound which was both heard and felt. After just six sessions, patients with mild to moderate Alzheimer’s were temporarily sharper and more alert and aware of their surroundings.

Music’s healing power extends to the caregivers as well as to the participants. Tomaino witnessed these benefits firsthand in The Unforgettables, a New York choir she helped create for clients with dementia and their significant others. The group offered caregivers the opportunity to socialize and to see their loved ones revive in the spotlight’s warm glow. On one occasion, a man with severe memory loss performed a long solo by rote. “For partners that’s a gift that’s really hard to put a value on,” says Tomaino.

Recollectiv is generating similar rewards. “The man with the smile, Bob Adolph, is gently tapping his wife’s hand in time to the beat. Rheba Adolph is thrilled at how well this first outing with the band has turned out. “It’s wonderful to watch him being so happy,” she says.

It hasn’t been easy to find activities where the couple can interact, since Bob Adolph has trouble talking. Once a professor of English literature, now words fail him and hamper his ability to communicate. But today’s songs have loaned him a new language that transcends the need for speech. “Aphasia is so isolating,” says his wife. “But music brings out feelings of closeness in both of us.”

Recollectiv sings its final song for the day. Gotlib thanks Shimona for the last dance and kisses her goodbye. Flax beams at the band. “Great job!” she tells them, clapping. Flax feels buoyed by her first stint as a conductor. “It gave me energy,” she says. But she’s even more stoked about the gift she’s bestowed on the group, including the Adolphs. “They looked like they were walking down the memory lane of love,” she says. “I love helping people connect.”

Adolph helps her husband out of his chair. The couple leave the room, still holding hands.

For more information about Recollectiv, visit recollectiv.ca. 

Vivien Fellegi is a former family physician now working as a freelance medical journalist.
Sir Andrew Davis is the Toronto Symphony Orchestra’s conductor laureate and was the orchestra’s music director from 1975-1988. He stepped in while the TSO’s music director search led to Peter Oundjian, and has been subsequently their regular and beloved guest. He was then named the TSO’s interim artistic director for 2018-2020 during the transition from Oundjian’s leadership to that of the newly appointed music director Gustavo Gimeno.

An organ scholar at King’s College, Cambridge, before taking up conducting, the young Andrew Davis had in fact been to Toronto in 1967 for an organ convention, and taken second prize in an improvisation competition at Grace Church on-the-Hill, long before May 1975 when he first conducted the TSO.

With a face familiar to generations of Canadians, and a Toronto laneway named in his honour, Sir Andrew has probably conducted all of the world’s major orchestras, opera companies and international festivals over the past 45 years. Today he is also a composer, opera companies and international festi-

vals over the past 45 years. Today he is also a composer, opera companies and international festi-

vals over the past 45 years. Today he is also

someone had stolen my bicycle. I remember
saying to my parents, “The godless have come
fast and stolen my bicycle!”

Suppose a friendly child asks what work you do? As a matter of fact, I have a story
where this happened to me. I was about to
conduct Last Night of the Proms in Royal
Albert Hall and was staying in a flat at an
apartment of a friend of mine. I went to go get
something to eat at a fish and chips restaur-
ant. They basically had lots of big tables and
benches. This mother and child came up to
sit next to me – the kid must have been 12 or
something – and he said, “What do you do?”
And I said, “I’m a musician.” And he said,
“Well, what do you play?” And I said, “I’m the
guy with the stick that conducts the orchestra
and tonight I’m conducting Last Night of the
Proms in Royal Albert Hall.” And the boy said,
“Well, you must not be very famous…” And I
laughed and said, “What makes you say that?”
And he said, “Well if you were famous you
wouldn’t be eating fish and chips!”

What would you say to young parents hoping their young children will grow up
to love music? I would say to them,
“Give them as much exposure to classical
music as you can, especially by taking them
to live concerts and opera performances. You
can’t start them too young.”

For Sir Andrew Davis’ full interview visit
thewholenote.com/musicschildren
Editor’s Corner

DAVID OLDS

I am always intrigued by the connections I find, especially in the seemingly separate realms of literature and music, when something I am reading or listening to relates directly to experiences in my everyday life. I don’t mean when I’m reading about something because it relates, but rather when in unrelated materials there turns up an unmistakably fortuitous reference to something that has just happened to me. I have been aware of this phenomenon for many years, but the first instance which made me really pay attention to this synchronicity was one morning at a friend’s cottage when there was a thump on the window and we found a northern flicker lying, we thought listlessly, on the deck. But moments later the bird shook itself and flew off. It was as if in a dream that I realized exactly this situation had been described in the Richard Powers novel I had been reading the evening before, right down to the breed of bird. Since then I have been aware, time and again, of how this, in itself, is, if not an everyday occurrence, at least something that happens regularly. (My wife Sharon says it could be because I read so much.)

At any rate, this month’s column is all about connections which might be construed as coincidences. The first relates directly to November’s column when I wrote about Wlad Marhaulets’ Concerto for Klezmer Clarinet. Until that time I had not heard of the dedicatee David Krakauer, despite his prominence in both the worlds of klezmer and classical music. My ears pricked up immediately when I received another disc this month which features him: Mathew Rosenblum – Lament/Witches’ Sabbath (New Focus Recordings FCR219 newfocusrecordings.com). Rosenblum is an American composer (b.1954) of Ukrainian heritage, and the title track is an in-depth exploration of his roots. The composer says the work is an in-depth exploration of his roots. The composer says the work “involves the rewriting of my personal and family history through instrumental sound (klezmer-tinged clarinet with orchestra) and the sound and texture of the voice (field recordings of Ukrainian laments; sung and spoken Ukrainian, Russian and Yiddish text by my grandmother). It is also about reconnecting with my high school friend and dear colleague, the amazing clarinetist/composer David Krakauer, for whom the piece was written. [...] It is a tribute to my grandmother, Bella Liss.” He goes on to mention that it is loosely based on the last movement of Berlioz’s Symphonie Fantastique and also references his grandmother’s superstitious sensibility, which he says is grounded in Eastern European Jewish culture. It is a particularly moving work, with the haunting Ukrainian laments as prominent as the solo clarinet, soaring above the orchestral textures provided by the Boston Modern Orchestra Project under the direction of Gil Rose.

It seems I can’t write this column without some mention of my day job at New Music Concerts. It was there that I was first exposed to the characteristic keening of Ukrainian lamentation when young Ukrainian-Canadian composer Anna Pilgorna wrote Weeping for our 2015 Ukrainian-Canadian Connection concert. For this piece the members of a sextet were provided recordings of traditional laments in order to better understand how to approach their instrumental parts, which were based on that tradition. This initial exposure made the laments included in Rosenblum’s work hauntingly familiar. I feel obliged to mention another coincidence related to my appreciation of Rosenblum’s disc. The second work is called Northern Flicker, which is something I had not remembered when I wrote my introduction. The world works in mysterious ways indeed. Northern Flicker is for a solo percussionist who mimics and extrapolates on the distinctive sounds of this woodpecker in the wild. Lisa Pegher holds our attention throughout the witty and inventive piece. Soprano Lindsay Kesselman and the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble under Kevin Noë then lead us through Falling, a dramatic work about the true tale of an Allegheny Airlines stewardess who was sucked out of a plane’s emergency exit and fell to her death in October, 1962. Based on a poem by James Dickey, the piece incorporates a recording of the poet’s recitation of his text which is then further expanded by the soprano. The composer’s use of microtonality – Falling is dedicated to the memory of Dean Drummond, composer and co-artistic director of Newband who championed the microtonal work of Harry Partch among others – adds to the otherworldly and at times eerie homage. This composer portrait disc concludes with the at times raucous – recalling that woodpecker again – Last Round for amplified string quartet (FLUX) and the six members of Mantra Percussion. Another welcome and effective offering from New Focus Recordings.

The next connection encompasses both literature and music again. My wife, a secular and mostly non-observant Jew, does however spend Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, each year contemplating and reading something that relates to her heritage. Most years it is a book of history or theory or at any rate non-fiction, but this year, with nothing more appropriate at hand, she took my suggestion to spend the day with a novel. The Last of the Just by André Schwarz-Bart, a French Jew of Polish extraction whose parents were killed by the Nazis, tells the story of the family of Rabbi Yom Tov Levy, the only survivor of a pogrom in 12th century England. As legend has it, God blessed Levy as one of the Lamed-Vov, the 36 Just Men of Jewish tradition, a blessing which extended to one Levy of each succeeding generation. The story takes place over the next 800 years, through the Spanish Inquisition, to expulsions from England, France, Portugal, Germany and Russia, and to the small Polish village of Zemyszk, where the Levys settle for two centuries in relative peace. It is in the 20th century that Ernie Levy, the title character, emerges in 1920s Germany, as Hitler’s sinister star is on the rise and the agonomies of Auschwitz loom on the horizon. Gilbert Higet, a Book-of-the-Month Club judge, called it, “the saddest novel I have ever read, almost as sad as history.” I don’t think Sharon thanks me for the recommendation.

It’s been 20 years since I last read the book – that time in the original French – but it has always stayed with me, and so it was with curiosity that I recently picked up a CD by a Black jazz musician with the same last name as the author. I didn’t really expect that it was anything other than a coincidence until I read the note inside and found that Jacques Schwarz-Bart is indeed the son of André. A bit of Googling turned up the information that during WWII Schwarz-Bart fought with the French resistance and was captured by and escaped the Germans. After the war he went to Paris to study at the Sorbonne, where he met and eventually married a woman from Guadeloupe named Simone, (who incidentally also went on to become a novelist and playwright).

The disc is called Hazan (enja yellowbird YEB-7789). A hazzan or chazzan is a Jewish musician or precentor who helps lead the congregation in songful prayer, in English often referred to as cantor.
The project, combining jazz with Jewish prayer chants, is meant as a tribute to Jacques’ father who died in 2006. “As soon as I started working on the arrangements, it became clear that these powerful ancient melodies lent themselves to impressionist harmonizations, and could be enhanced with infectious rhythms from the African diaspora.” He goes on to say “In The Morning Star my father describes a character who – just like me – is a jazz musician from Jewish and black descent. He refuses to be labelled half-Jewish and half-black and claims to be 200 percent: 100 percent Jewish and 100 percent black. I hope Hazzan will do justice to this conception of my Jewish identity as the blossoming fruit of universal cross pollination.” Thanks to the Toronto Public Library I am now immersed in that posthumous publication by Schwarz-Bart’s father and will shortly embark on a novel co-written by his mother and father (Un plat de porc aux bananes vertes).

My own exposure to Jewish ritual is limited to attendance at funerals, memorial prayers said and candelit for my in-laws, and participation in “second night Seder” dinners at the home of WholeNote publisher David Perlman. It was therefore a wonderful surprise to me to recognize one of the melodies from Hazzan as being Dayenu (“It would have been enough”), a song I myself have participated in during those Passover meals. The overall feel of the album is surprisingly upbeat and contagious. Schwarz-Bart has indeed managed to paint a “mystical and uplifting fresco” and his saxophone playing is truly cantorial. By the way, it is not only his Jewish heritage that has inspired him over the years. The product of a double diaspora, his quartet by what was available in the internment camp in Silesia always assumed that Messiaen, who had chosen the instruments for the cellist.

Next is a recording that features a work that has been a favourite for most of half a century – Messiaen’s Quatuor for the fin du temps – and once again there is a New Music Concerts connection. Recently, when we presented the Ensemble contemporain de Montréal, while the other musicians were out to dinner, Chloë Dominguez busied herself rehearsing the incredibly demanding cello part of the Quatuor which she would be performing with pianist Louise Bessette and other colleagues in Montreal in late November. I had a chance to chat with her after the concert and mentioned a new recording featuring clarinetist Raphael Sévère and Trio Messiaen (Mirare MIR 33.4 mirare.fr) and the fact that the liner notes intrigued me with the mention of a piece I had never heard of before. I had always assumed that Messiaen, who had chosen the instruments for his quartet by what was available in the internment camp in Silesia where he was imprisoned during the Second World War (piano, clarinet, violin and a cello with just three strings), had invented that instrumental combination. But it turns out that Paul Hindemith had written a quartet for the same forces some three years earlier in 1938. This was news to me, and to Dominguez, and I have spent some time working on the arrangements, it became clear that these powerful ancient melodies lent themselves to impressionist harmonizations, and could be enhanced with infectious rhythms from the African diaspora. I find the Adès, mostly light and powerful, mystical mix of sombreness and ecstasy.

With well over a dozen recordings of Bach’s Solo Cello Suites in my collection, plus transcriptions for 11 string “alto” guitar and for alto recorder (by Göran Söllscher and Marion Verbruggen respectively, both highly recommended), I find myself wondering, what does a new interpretation have to offer? This must be a daunting question for any young musician looking to make his mark in a world replete with existing renditions by virtually all of the greatest cellists of the past century, including Pablo Casals himself, who unearthed these masterworks that had languished in obscurity for nearly 200 years. One young man has answered the question by not tackling the canon in its entirety, but rather by selecting individual movements and juxtaposing them with contemporary works. On Echoes of Bach (Bright Shiny Things BSTC-0124 brightshiny.ninja) featuring Mike Block, an alumnus of Yo-Yo Ma’s Silk Road Project, we hear alternately the Prelude from the first suite, the Allemande from the second and the Courante from the third separated by the two very different movements of György Ligeti’s Sonata for Solo Cello in what is a brilliant stroke of programming. Later on we find movements from the other suites interspersed with music by Ahmed Adnan Saygun, a composer who pioneered Western classical music in Turkey; Giovanni Sollima, one of the composers associated with Silk Road (it’s worth checking out the YouTube video of this piece Citarrum!); and, strangely, Domenico Gabrielli, born a generation before Bach. Gabrielli was a virtuoso cellist and had the distinction of publishing the first works for solo cello and so has every right to be included here, but as the other non-Bach offerings are all contemporary the choice is somewhat surprising. Another surprise is the final track, the Sarabande from first suite played entirely without a bow. This seems quite a liberty to take, but I must say the pizzicato interpretation really works.

Mike Block is not only an accomplished cellist, but also an inventor. His “Block Strap” allows a cellist to harness the instrument to his or her body and play while standing, and even walking around. He has become quite adept at this, to the extent that even in this studio recording I get the impression from the occasion sound of footsteps that he is in motion. As one final nod to New Music Concerts I will mention that the first time I saw such a thing was when NMC presented Quatuor Molinari performing eight string quartets (at that time the complete cycle) of R. Murray Schafer at Glenn Gould Studio in 2003. For String Quartet No. 7 Julie Trudeau had to construct a sling for the instrument to facilitate the movements that Schafer required of the cellist.

We invite submissions. CDs and comments should be sent to: DISCoveries, WholeNote Media Inc., The Centre for Social Innovation, 503 – 720 Bathurst St. Toronto ON M5S 2R4.

David Olds, DISCoveries Editor

discoveries@thewholenote.com
There’s a lovely warmth and sensitivity to the opening of the Sonata in A Major Op. 30 No. 1. with Wan’s beautifully clear tone immediately making you feel that this is the start of something special – and so it proves to be. Richard-Hamelin is an outstanding partner, especially in the turbulent opening of the tempestuous Sonata in G Minor Op. 30 No. 2, a work in which Beethoven’s growing use of increasingly intense textures is evident.

A dazzling performance of the Sonata in G Major Op. 31 No. 3 completes a terrific CD that is the first volume in a projected series of the complete Beethoven violin sonatas. It promises to be a set to treasure and one – if this first volume is anything to go by – that will hold its own against any competition.

**Concert note:** Charles Richard-Hamelin performs music of Schumann and Chopin at Koerner Hall on February 3.

The Norwegian violinist Eldbjorg Hemsing is the soloist in three Czech works on Dvořák: Violin Concerto; Suk: Fantasy with the Antwerp Symphony Orchestra under Alan Buribayev (BIS-2246 bis.se).

Hemsing displays brilliance of tone in a performance of the Dvořák Violin Concerto in A Minor Op. 53 that is bright, energetic, rhythmic and full of life. It’s a work that still doesn’t have quite the prominence it deserves.

The violinist and composer Josef Suk was Dvořák’s son-in-law. His Fantasy in G Minor Op. 24 is the only concert work he wrote for his own instrument, and while quite different than the Dvořák in its episodic form is still clearly Czech through and through. Suk’s Liebeslied Op. 7 No. 1 is one of his best-known single pieces; the first of a suite of six piano pieces, it is heard here in a very effective transcription for violin and orchestra by Stephan Koncz.

Buribayev draws really strong support from the Antwerp Symphony Orchestra players on a highly enjoyable CD.

The Italian-American violinist Francesca Dego follows her hugely successful CD of violin concertos by Paganini and Wolf-Ferrari with Suite Italiane, a recital with her long-time collaborator the Italian pianist Francesca Leonardi of works by Ottorino Respighi, Igor Stravinsky and Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco (Deutsche Grammophon DG.481 7297 universalmusic.it).

Respighi was himself a fine violinist, and his Suite in B Minor Op. 110 from 1917 is a striking work, written when he was struggling to overcome the depression brought on by the loss of his mother the previous year. A strong opening movement is followed by a particularly lovely and melodic Andante espressivo middle movement. And what a tone Dego possesses! It’s lustrous, warm, rich and strong, and is more than balanced here by a lovely piano sound.

Stravinsky’s Suite Italiane from his ballet Pulcinella is the central work on the disc, with the dance elements nicely realized, the Tarantella Vivace in particular.

Castelnuovo-Tedesco is represented by four works. His Ballade Op. 107 was written for Tossy Spivakovski and premiered by him at Carnegie Hall in 1940, after which it seems to have been overlooked and forgotten until Dego recovered it for this recording earlier this year with the help of the composer’s granddaughter Diana Castelnuovo-Tedesco. It’s a lovely work that hopefully will stay in the repertoire. Three of Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s short operatic transcriptions complete the recital: the rather-Paganini-like Rosina and the playful and virtuosic Figaro from Rossini’s Il barbiere di Siviglia; and Violetta from Verdi’s La Traviata. All but the latter of the Castelnuovo-Tedesco works are world premiere recordings.

Georg Philipp Telemann was not only one of the most prolific composers in musical history but also one of the most cosmopolitan. Some idea of the wide range of national styles and idioms he incorporated in his music can be discerned from Telemann Sonatas for Violin and Harpsichord, a new CD featuring Baroque violinist Dorian Komonoff, Bandy and harpsichordist Paul Cienniwa (Whaling City Sound WCS 108 whalingcitysound.com).

The six sonatas from 1715 were written specifically for violin and harpsichord – no cello continuo here, as in some recordings – and although they all have the same slow/fast/slow/fast four-movement format they are wide-ranging in idiom and expression. In addition there is a world premiere recording of the unpublished Sonata in F-sharp Minor, a fascinating piece described by Bandy as “a strange convention-defying work” that “seems more an unfinished experiment than a polished piece of music.” His excellent and insightful booklet notes refer to these sonatas as truly distinct, each one unique, daring and extraordinary in its own way.

Bandy plays with a minimum of vibrato, which allows his excellent definition, clarity and agility to be displayed to best advantage. Cienniwa’s playing provides a stylish accompaniment, the harpsichord never too percussive or prominent.

**American Souvenirs** is the debut recording by the Chicago-based Blue Violet Duo of American violinist Kate Carter and Canadian pianist Louise Chan. Described as an album of jazz, blues and dance-influenced classical works from the mid-to-late 20th century, it features works by Norman Dello Joio, William Bolcom, John Adams and Paul Schoenfeld (bluevioletduo.com).

Dello Joio’s Variations and Capriccio from 1948 and Bolcom’s four-movement 1978 Second Sonata for Violin and Piano are really attractive works, the Bolcom offering a dreamy and surprisingly atonal violin line over a slow blues piano in the opening movement, a “Brutal, Fast” second movement and a finale In Memory of Joe Venuti. Adams’ three-movement Road Movies from 1995 is in his minimalist style but highly entertaining, with a Relaxed Groove opening movement and a terrific third movement. Schoenfeld’s 1990 Four Souvenirs for Violin and Piano are titled Samba, Tango, Tin Pan Alley and Square Dance, with Carter supplying some simply gorgeous violin playing in the Tango. Some virtuosic playing from both performers in the final Square Dance makes for a great ending to an immensely enjoyable CD.

The duo says that they love performing lesser-known works that are fun and playful yet virtuosic, and that those here are among their favourites by American composers. It’s abundantly clear that they are in their element here, fully at ease and seamlessly blending classical performance standards with the freer popular styles.

There are two excellent cello and piano recital CDs this month: Beethoven Sonatas Op. 102 with cellist Natasha Brofsky and pianist Seth Knopp (independent store.cdbaby.com/cd/natashabrofsky and sethknopp); and Brahms Cello Sonatas with the husband-and-wife Fischer Duo of cellist Norman Fischer and pianist Jeanné Kierman (Centaur CRC 3648 arkimusic.com).
Brofsky and Knopp were both members of the Peabody Trio for nearly two decades and clearly have an innate understanding of these sonatas, having played and taught them for many years. Brofsky, currently on the cello faculty at Juilliard, plays with assured technique and a warm, even tone in the two works, the Sonatas Op.102 No.1 in C Major and Op.102 No.2 in D Major. These sonatas, the duo says, have challenged them to use their utmost imagination in colour and expression. At 36 minutes it’s a fairly brief CD, but none the less satisfying for that.

The Fischer Duo CD features the two cello sonatas by Brahms – the E Minor Sonata Op.38 and the F Major Sonata Op.99, works the performers have been playing for nearly five decades. Again, the understanding and familiarity with both the works and each other make for truly satisfying performances. Fischer says that the exemplary recorded sound made the performances sound “exactly the way I imagine the music.” Two Songs for Alto, Cello and Piano Op.91 complete the disc, the duo being joined by their daughter, the mezzo-soprano Abigail Fischer in sensitive performances.

The Polish composer and violin virtuoso Karol Józef Lipiński was a direct contemporary of Paganini, and good enough to not only play with the great Italian but also to be bequeathed one of his eight violins – an Amati – when Paganini died. In his compositions, however, while incorporating the technical innovations of Paganini and the other 19th-century virtuosi, his musical philosophy showed a preference for the less purely virtuosic approach of Spohr and the French school exemplified by Viotti.

Lipiński String Trios Op.8 and Op.12 (Naxos 8.573776 naxos.com) features Voytek Proniewicz (primo violin), Adam Roszkowski (violin) and Jan Roszkowski (cello) in first-class performances of two works that, according to Lipiński’s biographer, were possibly written for Lipiński’s daughter, the mezzo-soprano Abigail Fischer, in sensitive performances.

Mendelssohn String Quartets Vol.1, presumably the start of a projected complete series, features Britain’s Doric String Quartet in superb performances of the quartets No.1 in E-flat Major Op.12, No.5 in E-flat Major Op.44 No.3 and No.6 in F Minor Op.80 (Chandos CHAN 20122(2) chandos.net). The playing is always clear and balanced, with dazzling agility in the numerous typically Mendelssohnian scherzo-like passages, and with terrific dynamics. The bustling dramatic start to the grief- and despair-ridden Op.80 quartet sets the tone for the whole work. It’s an outstanding start to the series, and the remaining quartets should be well worth waiting for.

The Op.12 quartet is also included on Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy String Quartets Vol.2, the latest release in the ongoing complete series by Germany’s Minguet Quartett (cpo 777 931-2 arkivmusic.com). Also included are the early String Quartet in E-flat Major, the 14-year-old composer’s first attempt in the genre, and the Four Pieces for String Quartet Op.81, published posthumously as String Quartet No.7 but actually four movements ranging from 1827 to 1847 that are not connected, although two of them may possibly have been intended for an eighth quartet.

There’s fine playing here too, with tempos in the String Quartet No.1, Op.12 very close to those on the Doric CD, but the recording seems to have been made in a livelier acoustic space. Some listeners may well prefer this, but I found the Doric discs to have a cleaner and clearer sound, with the dynamic range more clearly nuanced and effective.

On From the River Flow the Stars the Daedalus Quartet plays string quartets by the American composer Brian Buch (MSR Classics 1681 msrd.com). Buch says that he often composes music in collections or books comprised of individual pieces, and extracts from five such books are included here. From the River Flow the Stars Nos.6, Acanthus Leaves No.6 and Landscapes No.1 are all three-movement works; Maze of Infinite Forms No.1 is in two movements, and Life and Opinions No.7, the central work on the CD, in five.

They are all interesting and inventive pieces that create contrasting atmospheres, although their relative brevity – 12 of the 16 movements are under four minutes in length – may perhaps contribute to their not always leaving a strong impression. The Daedalus Quartet is known for its work with and support of contemporary American composers, and it’s difficult to imagine these works receiving more sympathetic performances.
mellow sound. or lady bug on its back. The overall effect of all this is a soft and very brass strings to sound sympathetic vibrations somewhat like a viola metal strings. This modern copy, however, uses a set of unplucked close the work.

But in the Concerto No.4, premiered in 1875 with the composer at the keyboard, the music is replete with richly complex ideas spread over an orchestral canvas barely capable of containing those. Lortie reveals in conquering every technical challenge the composer sets, and soars with the orchestra in each moment of climax. This recording is powerfully inspired and Lortie’s performance is the kind that makes you run out into the street, grab the first person you see and drag them back in to experience it.

To his current handful of recordings Evgeni Bozhanov adds his latest CD, Shostakovich: Mozart – Piano Concertos, Kammerorchester des Bayerischen RSO; Radoslaw Szulc (Profile Edition Hänssler haensslerprofil.de). The two concertos are completely unlike each other, and hearing the young Bulgarian pianist confirms the impression that he has a remarkable gift for complete and authentic engagement in his repertoire. Bozhanov’s performance of Mozart’s Concerto No.17 in G Major KV.453 is in every way a perfection of achievement. His sense of balance, clarity and partnership with the orchestral ensemble are all flawless. He never claims more than the moderate role that Mozart gave the piano part in the work.

The Shostakovich Concerto No.1 in C Minor Op.35 is, by contrast, a riot of brilliant ideas from the fertile mind of a 26-year-old composer. The 1933 composition has humour, pathos, melancholy, satire and all the energetic hope of youth. Bozhanov performs it as if it were written specifically for him, and every member of the audience at the live performance seems to believe that as well. Noteworthy is the depth of his playing in the second movement (Lento). There is no doubt about the depth of the sadness that underlies the simple ideas in this movement. It provides a stunning contrast to the outer ones that open and close the work.

Louis Lortie brings another stellar recording to his lengthy discography with this new CD Saint-Saëns – Piano Concertos 1, 2 & 4; BBC Philharmonic: Edward Gardner (Chandos CHAN 20031 chandos.net). The three concertos are separated by roughly a decade each. Despite the accumulation of experience and artistic growth, the inherent genius in Saint-Saëns’ writing is undeniable in all of them. But in the Concerto No.4, premiered in 1875 with the composer at the keyboard, the music is replete with richly complex ideas spread over an orchestral canvas barely capable of containing those. Lortie reveals in conquering every technical challenge the composer sets, and soars with the orchestra in each moment of climax. This recording is powerfully inspired and Lortie’s performance is the kind that makes you run out into the street, grab the first person you see and drag them back in to experience it.

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Alex Baran

Wolfgang Rübsam has made his reputation chiefly as an organist but is also widely recognized as a fine pianist and harpsichordist. In his new recording Bach – Goldberg Variations (Naxos 8.573921 naxos.com) he plays a lute-harpichord. It’s a Baroque keyboard instrument built like a harpsichord, using its mechanical action principles, but strung with gut rather than metal strings. This modern copy, however, uses a set of unplucked brass strings to sound sympathetic vibrations somewhat like a vielle d’amore. The resonating body of the instrument looks like a giant lute or lady bug on its back. The overall effect of all this is a soft and very mellow sound. Rübsam excels at ornamentation in this work and takes every tasteful opportunity to inject turns and grace notes. But the most distinguishing feature of this performance is its extraordinarily slow speed. Hearing the variations at a fraction of the tempo most other interpreters take is an exercise in patience that is rewarded with new insights into this very familiar material. The nature of the instrument may have a great deal to do with Rübsam’s tempo choice but whatever the reason, this unique Goldberg deserves attention.

Stefan Chaplikov’s new CD Clementi – Keyboard Sonatas (Naxos 8.573712 naxos.com) samples the work of this 18th/19th-century composer with five sonatas from Op.25 to Op.46 that span a period of 30 years. Clementi’s writing is a good example of a composer reluctant to emerge from the structured discipline of the late Baroque and early Classical into a style where the invitation for emotional display was open to all but held suspect by some. Ever careful, Clementi used his left-hand keyboard-writing to provide both harmonic foundation and rhythmic drive to his works. It’s a part of his vocabulary that changed very little over his lifetime. In the right hand, however, there is a subtle evolution that’s heard in the length and shape of melodic phrases. Chaplikov exploits these and guides the ear to suggestions of bolder passing notes and freer rubato.

Despite his conservatism, Clementi’s writing is masterful for its precision and technical requirements. Chaplikov’s keyboard technique is utter perfection and delivers clear articulation of Clementi’s rapid-fire melodies as they tear across the keyboard.

Jean-Philippe Système appears as soloist on a new recording with Orchestre Métropolitain under Alain Trudel: André Mathieu – Piano Concerto 4; Rachmaninov Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini (ATMA ADC2 2768 atmaclassique.com). The Mathieu concerto has a fascinating history that rivals the story behind his Concerto No.3 (Concerto de Québec) also recently recorded by Système. The Concerto No.4 was virtually unknown and deemed lost owing to the composer’s rather relaxed approach to keeping his own scores. While the original score used in a 1950 Montreal performance has never been found, a recording of that concert made on 78 rpm discs found its way into Système’s hands in 2005. He and composer/conductor Gilles Bellemare have reconstructed it based on the 1950 recorded performance. In its reconstructed form it stands as a large-scale work built along formal lines and expresses Mathieu’s strong modern Romantic language. The purely aural process of transcription from the old recording is hard to imagine but the result has been breathtaking.

Système also performs the Rachmaninov Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini Op.43, delivering a performance with the orchestra that is as highly charged as the manic violinist himself.

Minju Choi, born in South Korea and raised in America, has lived for many years in Europe and admits to a strong cosmopolitan outlook that shapes her life and music. Her new CD Boundless – American Works for Solo Piano (Navona Records NV6192 navonarecords.com) features the work of three American composers. Among them, Gabriela Lena Frank most closely reflects this cosmopolitan view with her piece Sonata Andina No.1. It incorporates Andean folk music and is dedicated to the idea that different cultures can coexist without one subjugating the other.

Philip Lasser’s sonata for piano Les hiboux blancs (The White Owls) is only as programmatic as its title. Lasser has strong convictions about the absolutism of music and allowing it to speak for itself. While he writes about his structure and technical approach, he remains silent on meaning.
Ching-Chu Hu presents a vivid contrast with his piece Pulse that deals with issues of the heart and a range of human emotions. The three composers share a language that is largely tonal and combines a wonderfully creative inclination for rhythmic interest with clever tune-smithing.

Hando Nahkur’s fifth solo album is his first completely devoted to the piano music of Franz Liszt Lisztomania Vol.1 (HN Productions handonahkur.com discography). This recording promises further volumes of Liszt but begins by offering a couple of transcriptions of Schubert lieders, Erlkönig and Auf dem Wasen zu singen, in addition to larger works. Nahkur is consistently amazing in his ability to blend both the technical and interpretive demands of this repertoire. Après une lecture du Dante is perhaps the most difficult piece in the program but it comes across with an unencumbered directness and a conceptual maturity required by the subject matter. The contrasting thematic ideas of heaven/hell are as demanding as the work’s closing passages of rapid chromatic octaves. The way he embraces all this shows how secure Nahkur is with Liszt – one of his favourite composers – and it bodes well for future volumes.

It’s unusual to find a brilliantly gifted performer of Nahkur’s calibre still producing on his own independent label. How long before a major label signs him?

Jonas Vitau’s third major recording is an impressive double disc set Debussy – Jeunes années (Mirare MIR 392 mirare.fr). It’s mostly piano solo but includes some songs for soprano and tenor, as well as a gorgeous performance of Debussy’s Fantaisie pour piano et orchestra. Vitau, in his late 30s, has impressive credentials and artistic pedigree. His playing is flawless and obviously informed by a deep intellectual inquiry that searches for meaningful content in every note he plays. He’s a thinker and a very effective communicator. He lifts Debussy out of the purely impressionist mould and interprets him in broader terms. While there’s lots of requisite legato playing of beautiful long lines, there’s also an unmistakable new sharpness to staccatos, lifts and phrase separations. Vitau somehow manages to harness a rhythmic energy in Debussy’s music that is often missed in other performances. Listen for this throughout the Suite Bergamasque, Mazurka and Images oubliées. The 2-CD set is an impressive early addition to a very promising discography.

Michael Adcock has released a new disc Keyboard Transcriptions (Centaur CRC3534 arkivmusic.com) presenting works by Prokofiev, Gershwin/Wild, Bizet/Horowitz, Schumann/Liszt and Saint-Saëns/Godowsky. It’s a rich program with plenty of drama and brilliance. Prokofiev’s own piano version of his Romeo and Juliet Op.75 ballet is one of the two major pieces on the recording. It’s big, bold and unapologetic. The piano Adcock uses for the performance is a Steinberg concert grand with a powerful bright sound ideally suited for Prokofiev’s angular music. Adcock performs the suite splendidly with all the energy you’d expect from a full orchestra. The beautifully sinister Montagues and Capulets is especially effective with its evil bass line and foreboding melody.

The other major work on the CD is Earl Wild’s Seven Virtuoso Études on tunes by George Gershwin. These are the real highlight of this recording. Wild was an extraordinary performer and gifted composer/arranger, and the Études demonstrate his genius for invention and virtuosity. Adcock plays these with an easy conviction that makes them seem like a natural fit for his impressive ability and fluid style. While each one is memorable, I Got Rhythm stands out for its intelligence and complexity.

Hubert Rutkowski is a Chopin specialist and his latest disc Chopin on Pleyel 1847 (Piano Classics PCL 10129 piano-classics.com) adds to the growing number of performances using period instruments to capture the sound and feel that composers associated with their work. Chopin owned a Pleyel and regularly performed on one in public. The Pleyel that Rutkowski uses in this recording dates from 1847 and while it was built just a couple of years before Chopin died, there’s no suggestion that he ever played this particular instrument.

Modern pianos have evolved dramatically from their early forms, based on the development of technology and materials, as well as an artistic imperative for richness of sound and simple raw power. Rutkowski’s playing is wonderfully light and song-like. He takes advantage of the Pleyel’s slightly delayed dampering system and the more direct feel of keyboard contact with the strings. The piano’s voice is a softer one owing to the lower tension of the strings that are supported by a composite frame using iron cross bars. Rutkowski quickly captures the sound of Chopin’s era but more importantly, revives the music with an authentic voice that is intriguingly fresh.
Impermanence
Lorelei Ensemble
Sono Luminus DSL-92226
(sonoluminus.nativedsd.com)

Impermanence is an album on a mission. The liner notes offer a lengthy essay by Beth Willer, artistic director of the nine-voice Boston-based women’s vocal group, Lorelei Ensemble. She mentions the migration of peoples, pilgrimage, the essential impermanence of existence, and the function of music “as a container of meaning,” among other topics.

Examining the old-juxtaposed-with-the-new–repertoire approach of this album, it can be grouped into four categories, beginning with the 12th-century song Portum in ultimo. Among the earliest of works in polyphonic notation, it’s preserved in a book meant for pilgrims travelling along the Camino de Santiago de Compostela.

The much larger second group consists of 15th-century motets by Guillaume Du Fay, the renowned Franco-Flemish composer, 15th-century motets by Guillaume Du Fay, the other, an alumnus of La Maitrise des petits chanteurs de Québec. It is clear that something in the musical education of these singers taught them exceptional phrasing technique in performance. For this is exactly what makes this recording of pure Gregorian chant alternating with Palestreina’s polyphonic settings remarkable.

Palestrina composed in what Monteverdi referred to as “prima pratica,” a “stile antico” of pure counterpoint in deference to an earlier era. Palestreina’s elegant curves of sound and long-breathed melody never detract from the original character of Gregorian chant on which his compositions are based. He imbued the melodies with vitality by incorporating rhythmic irregularities and clean sonorities with a few well-prepared dissonances to reflect textual nuance. He was the master of creating polyphonic textures that have distinct clarity. Therefore, his a cappella motets have a similar requirement of singers performing Gregorian chant: precision intonation and sensitivity to textual phrasing throughout – both of which are evident in Quartom’s performance, in addition to their exquisitely beautiful tone.

Dianne Wells

Renaissance Quartom
ATMA ACD2 2769 (atmaclassique.com)

Recorded at St. Esprit Church in Montreal, this CD celebrates Quartom’s tenth anniversary, bitterly sweet perhaps, with the replacement of founding tenor Gaetan Sauvageau by the accomplished Antonio Figueroa. I was interested to see that the three other members, baritones Benoit Le Blanc, Julien Patenaude, and bass-baritone Philippe Martel, were all members of children’s choirs in their earlier years, two with Les Petits Chanteurs du Mont-Royal and the other, an alumnus of La Maitrise des petits chanteurs de Québec. It is clear that something in the musical education of these singers taught them exceptional phrasing technique in performance. For this is exactly what makes this recording of pure Gregorian chant alternating with Palestreina’s polyphonic settings remarkable.

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Dianne Wells

Mahler – Das Lied von der Erde
Magdalena Kožená; Stuart Skelton;
Bayerischen RSO; Sir Simon Rattle
BR Klassik 900172 (br-klassik.de)

Gustav Mahler began work on his “Symphony for Tenor, Alto (or Baritone) and Orchestra” in 1907, a year marked by a series of personal and professional tragedies.

Around that time he was given an anthology of Chinese Tang dynasty poetry translated from French to German by Hans Bethge. Captivated by the melancholy tone of these poems that so well captured his sense of resignation, he sought out early recordings on wax cylinders of authentic Chinese music and, philosophically by nature, also immersed himself in Buddhist literature.

Choosing several poems from this volume he created what he covertly regarded as his ninth symphony the following summer.

The present recording is assembled from live performances conducted by Sir Simon Rattle in January of 2018, his second and unquestionably his finest recording of this work. I normally prefer a darker-voiced contralto (or baritone) in this song cycle, however Magdalena Kožená’s beautiful mezzo-soprano upper register and sensitive tonal inflections eventually won me over. Even more impressive to my mind is the heroic tenor of the Australian Stuart Skelton, whose powerful voice rides effortlessly over performance coalesce here on this 2018 recording to shine a light on music that otherwise would run the risk of being relegated to the footnotes of music history.

Here, the first ever recording of Nicandro e Fileno, Paolo Lorenzani’s (1640-1712) pastoral opera for six singers that was initially performed, in Italian, in 1681 before Louis XIV at the palace of Fontainebleau, is brought to life by an aggregation of thoughtful scholars, practitioners and performers. And while there is no doubt that the ensemble, under the skillful direction of conductor and Boreades founder Francis Colpron, is dedicated to the period piece accuracy of this music, these sides are not dusty and this music is not ossified. Rather, new life has been imbued across all three acts, and the once-forgotten Italian-style opera comes alive on this beautifully captured and rendered ATMA Classique recording. The music, along with its unpacking of the still-relevant and universal themes of love, along with its trials and tribulations, brings escape to general music fans and early music enthusiasts alike in these troubled times. A detailed accompanying booklet capturing extensive historical notes and the opera’s libretto is a welcome addition.

Andrew Scott

Andrew Timar
Fauré; Duruflé – Requiem  
Julie Boulianne; Philippe Sly; Choeur de l’Eglise St. Andrew and St. Paul; Jean-Sebastien Vallée  
ATMA ACD2 2779 (atmaclassique.com)

The Requiem Masses by Fauré and Duruflé prove a nice pairing on this CD. Each composed three different versions of the choral Requiem, scored for chamber or full orchestra, or with organ accompaniment as chosen and lovingly performed by Jean-Sebastien Vallée on this recording. Both composers, eschewing the operatic 19th-century Requiem settings of Berlioz and Verdi, chose instead to focus on images of rest and peace. In both masses, the highly dramatic sections of Dies irae are omitted while the uplifting Pie Jesu is retained. Both composed Libera me for baritone soloist, and in this performance, Philippe Sly so beautifully intones the humble plea, never once diminishing the powerful timbre of his voice. Fauré composed his melodies using the Hellenic principles of clarity, balance and serenity and Duruflé, writing 60 years later, based his on the Gregorian melodies for the Mass of the Dead, imbuing them with rhythmic variation and harmonic enhancement. The pace with which the Choir of the Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul is directed on this album allows for a deeply reverent quality throughout. In the Duruflé Pie Jesu, the interweaving of mezzo-soprano Julie Boulianne with Elinor Frey’s ad libitum cello results in a beautifully warm and inviting entreaty, while it is interesting to hear Les Petits Chanteurs du Mont-Royal sing Fauré’s Pie Jesu in perfect unison, rather than performed by the traditional solo treble.

Daniel Foley

Fauré; Duruflé – Requiem  
Julie Boulianne; Philippe Sly; Choeur de l’Eglise St. Andrew and St. Paul; Jean-Sebastien Vallée  
ATMA ACD2 2779 (atmaclassique.com)

Frank Martin – Mass for Double Choir  
Westminster Choir; Joe Miller  
Independent wcc1809 (naxosdirect.com)

Why isn’t the music of Frank Martin better known? Born in 1890 into a fervently Christian family – his father was a Calvinist minister – this Swiss-born composer reached maturity at a time when many composers were experimenting with new means of expression such as serialism and atonality. Nevertheless, while Martin did adopt certain contemporary styles, most of his music remained firmly rooted in the past. Written in 1922, the Mass was Martin’s only unaccompanied choral work and today it is regarded as among the greatest a cappella works of the 20th century. An intimately personal creation, Martin kept it under cover for nearly 40 years and it wasn’t until 1963 that it was first published and performed.

Not surprisingly, the Westminster Choir does it full justice. The work opens with simple flowing lines not dissimilar to those of Gregorian chant. Yet very soon, the score leaves medieval Europe and joins the 20th century with lush impressionistic harmonies. Indeed, the five-movement mass is a study in contrasts from the introspective Kyrie to the solid Gloria and the mysterious Agnus Dei. Throughout, the choir provides a sensitive and profound performance – music written as a true testament to a composer’s deep Christian faith.

An added bonus on this disc is the inclusion of four short choral pieces by Edward Bairstow, Joel Phillips, Anders Öhrwall and Bernat Vivancos, all of which round out a most satisfying recording. For lovers of choral music this CD is a must – beautiful music exquisitely sung – we can’t ask for more.

Richard Haskell

CLASSICAL AND BEYOND

Czerny – Piano Trios  
Sun-Young Shin; Benjamin Hayek; Samuel Gingher  
Naxos 8.573848 (naxos.com)

This disc provides additional recognition for the chamber music of Carl Czerny (1791-1857). The Deux Trios brillants, Op.211 (1830) illustrate my sense that the Beethoven-taught Czerny has a more Romantic side that I prefer, and a more classical side that I do not. My first exposure to the Czerny chamber revival was an energetic,
Beethoven-ish recording by Anton Kuerti and St. Lawrence String Quartet members of the composer’s Piano Quartet. In that spirit, on this disc I love the second trio of Op. 211 in A Major, where virtuosity serves expressive ends, harmony demonstrates the advances of the early-Romantic era, and there is the sense of power and growth. The third movement surprises in its Bolero rhythm, adding vitality and contrast. The first trio in C major shows Czerny’s classically precise writing for piano in a high register. But the material I find prim, exhibiting a music-box effect sometimes.

The *Trois Sonatines faciles et brillantes*, Op.104 (1827) for advanced students, illustrate the older tradition of piano as leader, violin and cello as accompanists, with opportunities for improvisation. Again, my inner Romantic leads me to prefer the final A-Minor Sonatina to those in G and C Major. I respect the articulation throughout of Samuel Gingher, supported by colleagues Sun-Young Shin, violin, and Benjamin Hayek, cello. Playing on modern instruments their style leans Classical or Romantic as appropriate, but is never mechanical.

*Roger Knox*

**Schubert – Octet in F Major, D.803**

OSM Chamber Soloists

*Analekta AN 2 8799 (analekta.com)*

Schubert’s largest chamber work, the *Octet*, was composed in 1844, during a deeply creative period in his life that also gave birth to two other major chamber works – the string quartets *Death and the Maiden* and *Rosamunde*. Although they share similar combinations of splendour and elegance, the *Octet* seems to be both more ceremonial in form and more optimistic in nature and, as such, a relevant choice for OSM Chamber Soloists’ second album. Having released their recording of Beethoven’s *Septet in E-flat major* in January 2018, the OSM Chamber Soloists chose the work that was inspired by Beethoven’s *Septet* as their next project. These two classic gems have many parallels, including instrumentation, the number of movements, key relationships and general character. Structured in six strong movements, the *Octet* features many of Schubert’s signature marks such as prominent dotted rhythms, dramatic momentum and sumptuous melodies. The fourth movement, *Andante – variations*, is especially captivating with its sublime transitions between the variations.

The OSM Chamber Soloists (comprising members of the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal) is a splendid ensemble. Each instrumentalist has a distinct character of their own but the synergy of the ensemble, the osmosis of the musical ideas, is extraordinarily. I have been a fan of the violinist Andrew Wan for quite some time and his playing and leadership on this album is exceptionally strong. The rest of the ensemble is just as impressive. Olivier Thouin (violin), Victor Fournelle-Blain (viola), Brian Manker (cello), Ali Kian Yazdianfar (double bass), Todd Cope (clarinet), Stéphane Lévesque (bassoon) and John Zirbel (horn) have collectively created a colourful aural portrait of a unique work.

*Ivana Popovic*

**Clarinet Quintets**

Mark Lieb; Phoenix Ensemble

*Novona Records nv6193 (novonarecords.com)*

Lyricism may not be the first quality one associates with the music of Elliott Carter, yet always amidst his conflicting rhythms there are long melodically pure lines to be sung. Carter’s *Clarinet Quintet* (2007), offers plenty of the former, but an especially good amount of the latter as well. The performance on this recent release by members of the Phoenix Ensemble (including founder and clarinetist Mark Lieb) rises to the task of finding the way to sing the lines within the exciting demands of Carter’s rhythms. The more contrapuntal playing is virtuosic and seemingly effortless. Lieb has a ready access to the entire range of his instrument, and his rapid articulation is crisp and sure. The quartet playing is even better, or perhaps it’s safer to say theirs is the more friendly material. Oddly, in this late work, the composer assigned great swatches of sustained notes to the wind player, setting off the more interesting material played by the strings.

The same could not be said of Johannes Brahms’ towering late chamber work, the *Quintet Op.115 for Clarinet and Strings*. All players share in the glory of this final outpouring of the old man’s soul. This disc’s pairing with the Carter quintet is an odd one, so little do the two works have in common beyond instrumentation. The quartet here is still excellent, all in all; the ensemble is good. Their decision to examine the work with slower than conventional tempi in the outer movements is not a success, but I do love the style of the string playing, which is reminiscent of mid-century movie score melodrama.

An excellent rendering of Carter’s *Esprit Rude/Esprit Doux*, for flute and clarinet, is included between the larger works.

*Max Christie*

**Mahler – Symphony No.5**

Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra; Daniel Harding

*Harmonia Mundi HMM902366 (smarturl.it/n67kz)*

Mahler’s Fifth Symphony has proved itself to be one of his most often performed works, musically challenging yet accessible enough for even student orchestras to perform with aplomb. Scored for a relatively normal-sized orchestra and relatively Apollonian in comparison to his more Dionysian and oftentimes programmatic earlier symphonies, it marks a progression towards an exclusively instrumental and often elaborately contrapuntal approach characteristic of his middle period symphonies.

Daniel Harding, a protégé of eminent Mahlerians Simon Rattle and Claudio Abbado, leads a revelatory performance of this work with the superb Swedish Radio Orchestra, an ensemble he has directed since 2007 and to whom he is contracted through 2023. The esprit-de-corps he has established with the ensemble is palpable in this sumptuous and expertly edited recording, captured in all its glory by a crack audio team from Teldec Studio Berlin. It is sadly rare these days to come across a proper studio recording of this quality. No nuance goes unnoticed in this finely wrought and vigorous production.

Harding’s interpretation is eminently idiomatic and the orchestra is quick to respond to his beck and call. As an example among many wonderful moments I was struck by his handling of the exuberant *Rondo-Finale*, in which the many tempo changes are elegantly transitioned by establishing a long line that drives towards the conclusion, surmounting the sectional stopping and starting that often mars lesser performances. The celebrated Adagietto movement for strings and harp is equally effective; it is languorously timed at 10 minutes and 30 seconds yet never feels outweighed, as the string section’s vibrato is carefully restrained to something resembling a period performance. A truly admirable achievement for all concerned!

*Daniel Foley*
Toshio Hosokawa – Orchestral Works 3
Basque National Orchestra; Jun Markl
Naxos 8.573733 (naxos.com)

► Multiple award-winning Japanese contemporary classical composer Toshio Hosokawa (b.1955) has built an illustrious career rooted in both his Japanese birthplace and in European, particularly German, musical culture. Those bicultural influences, drawing on Schubertian lyricism and Webernian tone colouring, are seamlessly integrated with intrinsically Japanese musical, theatrical, aesthetic and spiritual elements.

Hosokawa has stated his philosophical goal was to give “musical expression to the notion of a beauty that has grown from transience. … We hear the individual notes and appreciate at the same time the process of how the notes are born and die: a sound landscape of continual ‘becoming’ that is animated in itself.”

His orchestral triptych Meditation, Nach dem Sturm, and Klage forms the heart of this album. It is Hosokawa’s personal and theatrical – in some places near cinematic – response to the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami. While Meditation mourns the many victims of that tragedy, Nach dem Sturm invokes oceanic turbulent darkness. I find Klage the most moving and musically convincing. Based on a poem and fragments of letters by Austrian poet Georg Trakl (1887–1914), Klage rages against human life taken by the ocean. Haunting images in the lyrics – a shattered body, lamenting dark voices, a lonely boat sinking in stormy seas under “unblinking dreams”, a “shattered body, lamenting dark voices, a lonely boat sinking in stormy seas under ‘unblinking dreams’” – are reflected in the music.

Hosokawa masterfully unleashes the full power of the contemporary symphony orchestra in Klage. It’s underscored by the emotional power of the female voice, here eloquently rendered by mezzo-soprano Mihoko Fujimura, which serves as the work’s consoling mother figure.

Andrew Timar

Concert Notes: Toshio Hosokawa is the Roger D. Moore Distinguished Visiting Composer during the University of Toronto Faculty of Music’s New Music Festival this January. His works are featured throughout the festival, culminating with New Music Concerts’ Portrait of Toshio Hosokawa on January 25 at Walter Hall. Hosokawa is also featured in the RCMP’s 21C Festival with U of T Opera presenting a double bill of his The Raven featuring Kristinna Szabo, mezzo-soprano, and The Maiden from the Sea (Futari Shizuka) featuring Xin Wang, soprano and Ryoko Aoki, Noh singer/dancer, also in Walter Hall on January 17. On January 20 Esprit Orchestra presents the Canadian premiere of Hosokawa’s Concerto for Saxophone (with Wallace Halladay as soloist) at Koerner Hall.

Global Sirens
Christina Petrowska Quilico
Fleur de Son FDSS8046 (naxosdirect.com)

► The last Classical & Beyond beat column I wrote for The WholeNote (October 2013 issue) was titled “Let’s Hear It for the Women!” Now, five years later, I am pleased to be reviewing Global Sirens, released last month by the exceptional (and exceptionally busy) Canadian pianist and educator, Christina Petrowska Quilico, and featuring works by 15 women composers, some known, most essentially neglected. Several were born around the turn of the last century; a few are still composing today.

As the title suggests, the 15 composers – I’m about to give them their due and name them all – hail from all over the globe: Germany (Ilse Fromm-Michaels, Else Schmitz-Gohr, Lotte Backes, Barbara Heller, Susanne Erding); France (Lili Boulanger, Cécile Chaminade, Germaine Tailleferre); Italy (Ada Gentile); Canada (Larysa Kuzmenko); USA (Merideth Monk, Adaline Shepherd); Australasia (Peggy Glanville-Hicks); South Africa (Priaulx Rainer); and Russia (Sophie-Carmen Eckhardt-Gramatté, who lived in Winnipeg the last 20 years of her life). Some had fathers who forbade or discouraged their musical pursuits; others were expected to give up composing once married. And because her husband was Jewish, the Nazis banned performances of works by Fromm-Michaels.

Petrowska Quilico covers a lot of ground over the CD’s 19 tracks, from Chaminade’s rich and romantic Meditation and Schmitz-Gohr’s lovely Elegie for the Left Hand to Backes’ jazzy, Debussyesque Slow and Kuzmenko’s haunting and evocative Mysterious Summer Night. And then there’s Shepherd’s delightful Wireless Rag, yup, an honest-to-goodness rag.

Let’s hear it for Christina Petrowska Quilico, champion of women composers!

Sharna Searle

Frank Horvat – For Those Who Died Trying
Mivos Quartet
ATMA AC2D 2788 (atmaclassique.com)

► It is impossible to escape Frank Horvat’s mystical hypothesis that music is somehow part of all human DNA. It is also a testament to the genius of Horvat that he is able to craft this into each segment of this unique 35-movement string quartet so that each so comes poignantly alive with the personality of 35 Thai environmentalists and human rights warriors who died in the act of defending the truth. The magical experience magnifies exponentially as one is struck by the fact that the inspiration for all of this is, further, inspired by a visual essay created by photographer Luke Duggleby titled For Those Who Died Trying.

Both Horvat and Duggleby have been transformed by the senseless murders of the 35 Human Rights Defenders (HRDs). The portraits of the HRDs made by the photographer are starkly unglamorous images of lifeless portraits of the HRDs made by the photographer Luke Duggleby titled For Those Who Died Trying. The Passenger, a unique string ensemble, responds brilliantly to this music. There’s a strong sense, in each of the 35 sections, of the quartet functioning like actors in some powerful tragedy. Each musician, solo and in ensemble, controls his forces with an unfailing sense of the right emphasis and the right moment together to deliver performances of affecting power.

Raul da Gama

Weinberg – Symphony No.13; Serenade for Orchestra
Siberian State Symphony Orchestra; Vladimir Lande
Naxos 8.573879 (naxos.com)

► Starkly contrasting works by Mieczyslaw Weinberg fill this disc of world-premiere recordings, part of Naxos’ projected 17-CD compilation of Weinberg’s orchestral music conducted by Vladimir Lande. The 13th of Weinberg’s 22 symphonies, dating from 1976, is dedicated to the memory of his mother, killed in the Holocaust along with his father and sister. (In 1939, after Germany invaded, the 19-year-old Weinberg fled from Poland to live in the USSR.)

Weinberg’s sombre Symphony No.13 begins with a downcast melody for strings that seems to wander, as if lost in a fog, for more than three minutes. Scored for a large orchestra (triple woodwinds, six horns), the one-movement, 30-minute Symphony contains other such long, gloomy, sparsely textured passages, separated by agitated, anguished tutti climaxes. It closes as bleakly as it begins, with a few plucked harp notes quietly fading away. Significantly, Weinberg quotes from the opera he considered his finest creation, The Passenger, set mostly...
in wartime Auschwitz. This symphony, so similar in mood and intensity to a grief-laden adagio by Shostakovich (Weinberg’s friend and stylistic inspiration), is a truly haunting, powerful statement of personal pain and heartbreaking loss.

Nothing could be more different than the four-movement, 18-minute Serenade (1952) – bright, cheerful, playful, with comforting dance-like melodies. The finale is even titled Allegro giocoso – nothing giocoso, of course, in the Symphony.

Conductor Lande is clearly committed to Weinberg’s music, these vibrant performances helping to make this CD utterly unforgettable.

Michael Schulman

Morton Feldman – For John Cage
Aisha Orazbayeva; Mark Knoop
all that dust ADT 1

Matthew Shlomowitz – Avant Muzak
Asamisimasa; Håkon Stene
all that dust ADT 2

Séverine Ballon – Inconnaissance
Séverine Ballon
all that dust ADT 3

The new label all that dust (allthatdust.com) has been established by the outstanding pedigree of its founders – composers, performers, instrument-builders and forthright musical creators and innovators – who have cut their teeth on the most demanding concert halls across the world of contemporary music. Now from founders, soprano Juliet Fraser, Newton Armstrong and Mark Knoop come these three of the first five releases on their exciting imprint. The tongue-in-cheek title of this label, All That Dust, and the bold statements of the music under review, will probably not be lost on the listener.

Morton Feldman’s For John Cage – literally the premiere release, which also features label co-founder and pianist Mark Knoop, together with brilliant violinist Aisha Orazbayeva – heralds something of a reborn American avant-garde, primarily concerned with the sensual qualities of sounds themselves, rather than the shaping and ordering of those sounds. Always typical of this tendency, Feldman’s sound-world here consists of small, soft and un hurried musical gestures which emphasise the physical detail of instrumental timbre. The work in question seems a conscious attempt at formalizing a disorientation of memory. The effect is of a hallucinatory stasis, not dissimilar to the canvases of Mark Rothko, where little happens – very beautifully.

Matthew Shlomowitz’s music is characterized by its bizarre theatricality and biting irony couched in subversive and surreal quantum miniatures. The disc begins with four segments titled Popular Contexts 7: Public Domain Music, all of which are almost immediately recognizable since the segments are reminiscent of elevator and mall music upon which they are based. The next five segments feature variations with similar public-music settings, this time featuring the percussionist Håkon Stene who augments Asamisimasa, a kind of Lewis Caroll-like equivalent of a jazz quintet. Avant Muzak – five sketches regarding tempi and locale – brings this entertainingly satirical disc to a close.

The effect of Séverine Ballon’s musical odyssey Inconnaissance is best elaborated as a masterpiece of music whose microscopic elements of tone, pitch and tempi are conflations of musical ideas miraculously welded together: new, alert and alive. Ballon’s transparent, lyrical cello resides miraculously welded together: new, alert and alive. Ballon’s transparent, lyrical cello resides

Hands and Lips of Wind
Diagnesis Duo (diagenesisduo.com)

That Barnes turns out to be decidedly bel canto with an ability for breathtaking coloratura and that Bewerse draws from her instrument every possible sound short of a human voice is the seductively beckoning cherry on the proverbial cake.

The two settings of Mischa Salkind-Pearl’s profoundly ethereal Hands and Lips of Wind are intensely dramatic. This work, together with con mortuis In lingua mortua, Stephen Lewis’s powerfully elegiac piece, and a fresh arrangement of the constantly shifting Travels by Adam Scott Neal were commissioned by the duo. The album also includes the viscerally sprung Nine Settings of Lorine Niedecker, a series of miniatures by Harrison Birtwistle; all of which is music made in the realm of heaven.

Bewerse is not the only one who pushes the envelope, vaulting and diving up and down the registers of the cello – no easy task given its tuning in perfect Fifths an octave beneath the viola and an octave above the contrabass – but swathed in the leading melisma and daring coloratura of Barnes, the duo sculpts this diabolically complex music with impossible precision. It is music seemingly in the twilight of tonality but it is utterly seductive, with the cerebral clarity and the stunning instinctiveness with which both musicians approach the five gems in this repertoire.

Raul da Gama

Meaning To Tell Ya
Molly Johnson
Universal Music Canada/Belle Productions
BMM101 (mollyjohnson.com)

As a master storyteller, Johnson mixes in playfulness, memorable melodic hooks and great grooves, along with many things to ponder. The aptly named Stop, a life-affirming antidote to despair, is simply stunning. Co-writers Johnson, Klein and David Baerwald deserve a place in the Songwriters’ Hall of Fame for this one.

The Gil Scott-Heron tune, Lady Day and John Coltrane, will get you up dancing and singing, and will “wash your troubles away.” Toronto composer Steve MacKinnon also deserves special mention for his collaborative efforts on the title tune and Better Than This.

Meaning To Tell Ya has many important things to say. And we’re listenin’.

Barry Livingston

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Mandy Lagan – Origins

The Joni Book

My Lagen Origins

The Window

Cécile McLorin Salvant

Justin Time JTR 8614-2 (justin-time.com)

Starting Here, Starting Now

Cornelia Luna

Independent (cornelialuna.com)

Fearless and Kind

Way North

Independent WN002 (waynorthband.com)

The Island of Form

Ethan Ardelli (ethanardelli.com)

The Island of Form, a new album from Toronto-based drummer Ethan Ardelli, is remarkable for a number of reasons. The first: despite the fact

Februe forward several decades, and Mandy Lagan has released a sparkling tribute to her muse, titled The Joni Book, featuring a roster of Canada’s finest jazz artists. She couldn’t ask

for a better or more simpatico group of musicians than Kevin Turcotte, Jim Vivian, Ted Quinlan, Dave Restivo, Andrew Downing and Blair Mackay.

Lagan rises to the challenge of honouring Mitchell’s legacy, while making these tunes her own. She has lived with this material a long time, and accordingly, wraps her voice around the layers of lyrical meaning and shading embedded in these great songs.

It is truly a group effort, though, and all the musicians delve into both familiar (My Old Man, All I Want) and less familiar material (Conversation) with dedication and zeal. Everyone contributes to the inventive arrangements, ranging from the playful interplay on Help Me (featuring an outstanding trumpet solo by Turcotte), to the masterful textural arc they craft on Song for Sharon.

Somewhere, at her home in Los Angeles, Joni Mitchell is smiling.

Barry Livingston

Flash forward several decades, and Mandy Lagan when she was a music student at Mohawk College. She already displayed considerable musical talent at that time, while possessing a keen interest in the music of legendary singer/songwriter Joni Mitchell. After hearing Mitchell’s recording Court and Spark when she was a teenager, Lagan was “forever changed.”

With the release of her debut CD, gifted vocalist and actress Cornelia Luna has joined forces with multiple-award-winning pianist/producer/arranger, Bill King, and created a fresh, contemporary re-imagining of nine tunes which have been key in defining Barbra Streisand’s style and taste. King refers to the recording as “The Streisand Project,” which emanated from a memorable, creative encounter that King had in 1976 with iconic arranger Peter Matz (who was well-known as the favoured Streisand arranger throughout her early career). Upon re-connecting with the perfect artist for this project, uber-talented Broadway performer Luna (whom King initially met when she was 19), the recording was propelled into being.

King serves as producer/arranger/pianist here and bassist Dave Young and drummer Mark Kelso complete the Bill King Trio. Noted guest artists include vocalist Gavin Hope (duetting with Luna in Any Moment Now by Marvin Hamlish), saxophonist Mike Murley and trumpeter William Sperandeo. The strong opener is Harold Arlen’s When the Sun Comes Out. Luna’s sumptuous contralto and her emotional vocabulary create a web of intimacy and warmth on this lovely and swinging take.

Another highlight is Stephen Sondheim’s Loving You from his hit show Passion. This is a triumph for both Luna and King. Her vocal instrument is sheer perfection, and King’s piano work is masterful. Gotta Move – Matz’s 1963 “Eleven O’Clock Number” – is also magic. This Barbra-defining classic has been perfectly contemporized as well as expertly and dynamically performed. Murley and Sperandeo soar, swing, bob and weave through King’s fine arrangement, and the versatile Luna is as skilled in rendering a ballad, as she is in presenting a thrilling, full-throttle performance.

Lesley Mitchell-Clarke

Fearless and Kind, the second album from roots-jazz quartet Way North, is a project that showcases the collaborative spirit of a group that functions as a collective, in terms of leadership, compositional contributions and improvisational style. Way North features trumpeter Rebecca Hennessy and bassist Michael Herring (both based in Toronto), saxophonist Petr Cancura (based in Ottawa), and New York drummer Richie Brashay. Recorded following a tour, Fearless and Kind is an intelligent, feel-good release in all of the right ways. By placing the emphasis on interactivity and humour, Way North has managed to produce an album that deftly combines the energy of a live show with the focus and specificity of the studio environment.

Fearless and Kind kicks off with the Cancura-penned Boll Weevil, a bouncy New Orleans-inspired song that sees the band playing around with brass band tradition without succumbing to the imitative clichés that often accompany modern performances of this music. Hennessy’s Lagoon is a loping, dreamy affair, featuring a mature, lyrical performance from the trumpeter herself, and a strong solo from Herring (Lagoon also appears on the album Two Calls, released by Hennessy’s FOG Brass Band). Later on, Cancura’s solo on King Porter Stomp marks one of the album’s energetic high points. It is notable that Way North is a chordless quartet, with no piano, guitar or other traditional comping instrument; but such is the strength of the individual players and the group dynamic that no harmonic absence is registered in the first place.

Colin Story

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Colin Story

The Island of Form

Ethan Ardelli (ethanardelli.com)

The Island of Form, a new album from Toronto-based drummer Ethan Ardelli, is remarkable for a number of reasons. The first: despite the fact

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that Ardelli has been a prominent member of the Canadian jazz community for the past ten years, this is his debut bandleader album. The second: The Island of Form was recorded in New York by engineer James Farber, who has worked on albums by such jazz luminaries as Michael Brecker, Joe Lovano and Brad Mehldau, and was mastered by Greg Frisell, Aretha Franklin and the Ramones. The third: it’s really good.

In addition to Ardelli, who composed all of the eight songs, The Island of Form features Luis Deniz on alto saxophone, Chris Donnelly on piano and Devon Henderson on bass. The album begins with the Afro-Cuban-tinged Agua, which builds intently before dissolving into a drum breakdown that precedes Deniz’s confident solo. Thanks for Something, which starts with a duet between Ardelli and Deniz, contains a driving, percussive contribution from Donnelly over the song’s vamp; Henderson takes a beautiful solo on Shangri-La Pearl. 5:55 AM, the album’s shortest track, is mostly drum solo, and serves as a fun, fiery feature for the bandleader.

All four band members are technically gifted players, and Ardelli’s album has many feats of compelling musical athleticism, but The Island of Form privileges tone, texture and melodicism, even during its wilder moments. Overall: an excellent debut.

Colin Story

SymphRONica UpR0Nt
Ron Davis
Really Records RR 18001 (rondavismusic.com)

> A unique fusion of a jazz quartet and a string quartet, Ron Davis’ SymphRONica is truly an ensemble like no other. Energetic, virtuosic, charming, worldly – the music on this album has flare and style. Although most compositions have a predominantly jazz feel, it is the cross-over of styles that makes this music excitingly unpredictable and fresh. The elements of classical, jazz, Brazilian, Hungarian, Italian, klezmer, Latin and Québécois, meet and part throughout the album in an easygoing fashion, but it is the strong ensemble that makes it all come together.

Composer and pianist Ron Davis is the brain and the driving force behind this project and one can feel his carefully crafted influence in each tune. UpR0Nt is a collection of six original compositions of Ron Davis alongside tunes by Mike Downes (a double bass player and a producer of this album), Louis Simão, Paolo Conte, Jack Pepper, Samuel Lerner and Miles Davis. A lovely Drew Bourée opens the album in a simple, understated way, not giving away the virtuosity and drive of WhirlyCurl that comes soon after or surprise vocals by Daniela Nardi in the arrangement of Conte’s Nina. My favourite numbers on this album, Sushagraha and Chance, both have cool, catchy tunes and are fine examples of the fusion of styles.
Jovicevic lived in Toronto from 2006 to 2009, while receiving her MA in composition at York University, recording with local players and sampling different musical currents to use in her own work. However this CD, while proficient musically doesn’t settle on a consistent genre.

With an unusual lineup (violin, viola, cello, bassoon, percussion and her own saxophones, bass clarinet, spacecadrum and vocals), the seven tracks bounce among animated string-oriented tremolo showcases, Balkan-tinged vocal laments, spacey voice, string and reed elaboration, plus instrumental virtuosity that zips, from near-atonal to near-smooth jazz.

Ram Run through the Veins, the CD’s lengthiest track, defines the conundrum in miniature. Beginning as an exercise in free-form saxophone squeals and whistles, backed by a sardonic march conveyed by splash cymbals, it settles down to become a quasi-ballad with triple-stropping strings and breathy English vocalizing accompanied by a bassoon obligato. Other tracks such as Speak Loud My Inner Child show off Jovicevic’s unaccompanied saxophone prowess. Still others like Rising Barefoot Ballad and Silver Winds of a Thousand Petals create close-knit harmonies which express such intense emotionalism that either could be part of the formal Romantic canon.

Flow Vertical is a top-flight demonstration of what Jovicevic can do as a composer and performer. But settling on one consistent narrative would better define her ideas.

Ken Waxman

You Have Options
François Houle; Alexander Hawkins; Harris Eisenstadt
Songlines SGL1628-2 (songlines.com)

Lacy’s Art. There’s a rich, warm woodiness to Houle’s clarinet and it’s admirably matched with Hawkins’ liquid keyboard and Eisenstadt’s subtly propulsive drumming. Houle’s edgy Run Riot and Eisenstadt’s You Have Options. I Have a Lawyer will momentarily break the spell, but it’s the group’s reflective depths that define the CD: Houle’s gently spiralling, impassioned lines on The Pits; the group’s insistently coiling phrases on the modal Prayer and the very light, traditional blues of Advice.

The group’s breadth is evidenced by a free interpretation of Charles Ives’ Largo, while Andrew Hill’s Dusk, sometimes serene, sometimes gently animated, provides a fitting conclusion, from Houle’s a cappella introduction to its shimmering conclusion.

Stuart Broomer

Contemporary Chaos Practices
Ingrid Laubrock
Intakt 314 (intaktrec.ch)

While third stream (the merger of jazz and classical music) is rarely heard of these days, it’s far more developed than in its 1950s heyday. Saxophonist/composer Ingrid Laubrock here presents two pieces integrating written and improvised passages for a 34-piece orchestra and four featured soloists: Laubrock herself, guitarist Mary Halvorson, trumpeter Nate Wooley and pianist Kris Davis, among the most distinguished international improvisers of a generation now in its late-30s and 40s. The orchestra of New York freelancers negotiates the complex scores – Eric Wubbel’s conducts the written passages, Taylor Ho Bynum (like most of the soloists a close associate of Anthony Braxton) conducts the improvised – with a necessary combination of precision, energy and vision.

Inspired by the models and methods of Ligeti, Xenakis and Braxton, Laubrock develops new synergies with her mixed palette. The first two movements of the title work erupt with the overlapping energies of soloists (most notably Halvorson’s very electronic guitar) and ensemble, while the third and fourth expand the breadth of the orchestral dimension. The single-movement Vagolieri (Outlaw) adds eight voices and mixes light and sombre elements as it develops a dialogue between notated and improvised orchestral passages, at times creating an almost concerto-like setting for Davis’ prominent piano.

Along with other recent works like Christopher Fox’s Topophony (with John Butcher and Axel Dörner) and Roscoe Mitchell’s Ride the Wind (with the Montreal-Toronto Art Orchestra), this represents a significant new development in the integration of scored and improvised music.

Stuart Broomer

Miki
Miki Yamanaka; Bill Stewart; Steve Nelson; Orlando le Fleming
Cellar Live CL020718 (cellarlive.com)

Miki is the debut recording from the Kobe-born, New York-based pianist Miki Yamanaka. Recorded in New York and released on Vancouver’s Cellar Live Records, Miki features eight originals – all written by Yamanaka, most with food-related titles – and two covers, For All We Know and Monk’s...
Dream. Joining Yamanaka are drummer Bill Stewart, vibraphonist Steve Nelson, and bassist Orlando le Fleming, all three of whom are veterans of the New York jazz scene, both as bandleaders and sidemen.

Miki begins with Mr. Pancake, a swinging, medium-up song, with a concise, intelligent bass solo, playful trading between Yamanaka and Nelson, and a strong drum solo over a vamp that follows the final statement of the melody. Monk’s Dream starts with an evocative, tastefully Monk-ish solo piano section before the band enters with an arrangement that juxtaposes sections of 3/4 with the song’s typical 4/4 feel. Stuffed Cabbage, performed in trio format with Stewart and le Fleming, is a gooey, straight-eighths composition that gives plenty of room to all involved to stretch out, and A Fake Hero is anchored by tight melodic playing from Yamanaka and Nelson over propulsive rhythm section shots. For All We Know, played as a ballad and arranged as a duet with Nelson, is treated with sensitive, communicative maturity, and stands out as one of the album’s highlights. Overall, Miki is a success, both on the merits of Yamanaka’s playing and on the compelling group dynamic that she has cultivated.

Colin Story

Vol. II
Onze Heures Onze Orchestra
Onze Heures Onze ONZ 027
(onzeheuresonze.com)

> Skilled in notated as well as improvised music, the 14-piece Paris-based Onze Heures Onze Orchestra (OHOO) takes themes from 20th- and 21st-century compositions and bends them into stimulatingly expressive tracks. Since two percussionists are part of the collective, a forceful rock-like beat adds to the thematic dislocations.

No component overpowers the others, however, which is why for instance From Crippled Symmetry uses Morton Feldman’s creation as basis for a lusty big-band swing piece driven by Magic Malik’s muscular flute, Alexandre Herer’s piano clipping and dramatic eloquence from one of the alto saxophonists. Just as dynamic, but spared from novelty, Conlon Nancarrow’s Study for Player Piano No. 20 throbs as patterns bounce between piano and Stéphan Caracci’s ringing vibes, as graceful brass and burly percussion give it more orchestral shape than the original.

Europeans aren’t neglected either. Two tracks inspired by Olivier Messiaen boom-erang among marching band riffs, electric rock and mellow horn motifs, with one featuring a dissected piano solo and the other now titled Kung Fu 37. Not surprisingly though, the most expressive arrangement is Densite 11.11 inspired by Edgar Varèse. Expanding the original’s lofty intent, the OHOO harmonizes whining trombone, growling trumpet, rolls from both drummers and panned kinetics from vibes and piano into a unique recasting.

Unlike efforts to jazz up the classics or elevate improvisation, Vol. II creates a durable synthesis of contemporary sounds that should attract those from every part of the musical spectrum.

Ken Waxman

POT POURRI

Felix Anima
Jeff Bird
Independent (Jeffbird.com)

> Canadian multi-instrumentalist Jeff Bird, familiar to many as the harmonica player for the Cowboy Junkies, describes his interpretations of the music of Hildegard von Bingen (1098-1179) as “Man plays 800-year-old music on the harmonica.” And so he does, with passion, clear musical understanding and respect on eight of her sacred chants. Bird also supports his harmonica playing with many other instruments like shruti box and lap steel, with special guest pianist Witold Grabowiecki on two tracks.

This is such a rewarding magical listening experience. Bird’s perfect breath control on harmonica emulates the original vocal lines throughout all his contemplative arrangements. The opening solo Lovingly Inclined Towards All is amazing from the start, with nice use of drone and musical touches maintaining von Bingen’s original stylistic aspects. Noble Rupert is given a reflective performance on harmonica and shruti box, as a low drone note supports the lead harmonica lines featuring dynamic held note swells. The Third Flies Everywhere is an intense harmonica/piano duet tour de force as the resonating very low piano notes contrast a detached piano melody, with the harmonica introduction adding new colour. A mid-piece solo piano leads to duet melodic conversations and an inspiring reflective harmonica line against more florid piano movement.

Bird’s decades-long passion for von Bingen’s music has enabled him to create a new brilliant sound mix of medieval and modern arrangements for instrumentations that all just work perfectly to the final harmonica closing fade.

Tiiina Kiik

Songs without Words – Torchesongs
Transformed
Les Délices
Navona Records NV6195
(navonarecords.com)

> A unique programming scenario highlights this second release by Les Délices, a Baroque instrumental trio founded in 2009 by Baroque oboist Debra Nagy, with members Mélisande Corriveau on viola da gamba and pardessus de viole, and Eric Milnes on harpsichord. Here the trio performs 17th- and 18th-century vocal airs and 20th-century jazz standards and torch songs, creating mindset-altering music.

As no published solo music existed for Baroque woodwinds prior to 1700, vocal songs were adapted for instruments. Les Délices chose French love songs from some of the greatest 17th-century songwriters. Highlights include Marin Marais’ Prelude in A Minor featuring intricate ornamentations and trills, clear phrasing and clear harpsichord accompanying cadences. Nice melodic and ornamental interplay between harpsichord and oboe makes for a straightforward Baroque rendition of Jean-Baptiste de Bouss’ Pourquoy, doux rossignol. Strong ensemble playing keeps the listener’s attention throughout a slow and heart-breaking rendition of Jean-Philippe Rameau’s Tristes apprets.

The big surprise here are the contemporary songs. For example, the Patsy Cline/Willie Nelson classic Crazy is true to the original, with the almost-country-band rhythmic harpsichord and viola da gamba supporting the wailing oboe melody. John Lennon and Paul McCartney’s Michelle highlights an upbeat pop harpsichord with a sing-along oboe melody. The closing Joseph Kosma/Johnny Mercer Autumn Leaves features almost percussive harpsichord chords with an almost walking bass viola da gamba background, highlighted by an oboe lead complete with solo improvisation.

This is successful risk-taking music!

Tiiina Kiik

Dreamers
Magos Herrera; Brooklyn Rider
Sony Masterworks 190758907123
(brooklynrider.com)

> In a context where the term “dreamers” is being misused to characterize immigrants as being motivated by some kind of imaginary land grab or cultural
Something in the Air
Multiple Sonic Pleasures
Available from Multi-Disc Sets

KEN WAXMAN

When inspiration refuses to be limited by the single disc format, enterprising musicians record multi-CDs in order to showcase more aspects of their work. Such collections are released throughout the year, but it’s usually the holiday season when music fans have the time and inclination for extended listening. Here’s a sampling of some of this year’s most accomplished multiple-CD sets from the exploratory side of creative music.

A thriving but little-celebrated slice of the international jazz scene is in Hungary, and the appropriately titled Essays–Esszek (Adyton/Hunnia Records HRCD 1726 hunniarecords.com) offers improvisational dissertations in three configurations by two major Magyar improvisers, multi-reedist István Grencsó and keyboardist Barnabás Dukay. CD1, Waiting has Grencsó moving among saxophones, clarinets and flute, while Dukay sticks to piano, with both joined by associate Steven Kovács Tickmayer playing piano, samplers and electronics. CD2, Ritual Music, matches Grencsó’s soprano and tenor saxophones with Dukay playing church pipe organ. CD3, Two Visions Heard, is a live session from a Budapest club where Grencsó’s soprano and alto saxophones and bass clarinet and Dukay’s piano are joined by percussionist Aurél Holló. Ignoring the ecclesiastical canon on CD2, Dukay uses the dual keyboard vibrations as tersely as he plays piano. Here he downplays glissandi and cascades for minimal layering and slow-moving tone affiliations, allowing Grencsó to change interpretations from emotional tenor-saxophone storytelling to buzzing soprano sax lines that hiss as if propelled from a bagpipe blowstick and chanter. Tickmayer’s electronics create the continuum on Waiting, allowing more flow between the piano of Dukay, who is an academic, and the reed collection of Grencsó, who has been a major Hungarian jazzman since the late 1970s.

Tracks such as Bud and Blossom point out subtle differences in approaches. On the first, while the pianist plinks and stops high-pitched notes in a serious manner, as if Arthur Rubinstein were playing a toy piano, the tenor saxophonist’s basso blowing mixed with circular breathing suggest a marriage between Archie Shepp and Evan Parker. Both players bond quickly though, which sets up the following Blossom as a restrained intermezzo. As echoing tones hang in the air, Grencsó’s modrate bass clarinet flutters extend the exposition leisurely, as Dukay’s piano responses are speedier and expressive – with electronic samples providing the perfect ostinato.

In the freer club setting, prodded by Holló’s minimalist percussion, the pianist and reedist play at greater lengths, especially during the nearly 44-minute Part 1. As Grencsó restrains his output to minimalist shading, Dukay’s hesitant soundboard stops amplify powerfully to meet the saxophonist’s relaxed asides. Cold, isolated keyboard notes magnify to sweeps, allowing the narrative to quickly turn percussive as reed split tones are introduced. Still it’s the saxophonist’s mellow sluches that propel the narrative. Finally an unexpected change of pace in the penultimate minutes has Holló’s vibe-like clatters torquing the sequence as the piano explores with the reedist. Here the saxophonist projects unbroken cadences with innumerable theme variations. Wrapping up the track with cultured tones, a final unsettling reed quack posits the concept that high-quality improvising doesn’t have to be solemn.

Another first-rate improviser who is the opposite of solemn is French bassist Joëlle Léandre Strings Garden (Fundacja Stuchaj FSR 103/2018 stuchaj.org) consists of three CDs featuring her duos with violinist/violist Théo Ceccaldi, cellist Gaspar Claus or fellow bassist Bernard Santacruz. Playing it straight, Léandre only lets loose with gurgles, whimpers and mumbles on Leaves, the CD with Claus, alongside instrumentally pressurized spiccato lines in contrast to the cellist’s pointed timbres. Throbbing and stopping, his pizzicato twangs and her popping shudders unite to work up to a crescendo of rugged tones which overlap into double counterpoint. Leaf No.5 is the most invigorating duet with staccato sweeps from both evolving to storytelling along with the set’s most jazz-like groove. An instance of differing double bass POVs, Trees, with Santacruz, finds both players dragging extended techniques from their respective string sets. Back and forth with jumps, buzzes and pulls, they manage to agree on a similar tone maturity by the climax, showcasing velocity and angularity without losing the underlying rhythm. Expressing herself with shrill multiphonics to counter Ceccaldi’s tendency towards impressionist sweeps on Flowers, the bassist’s low-toned scrubs add requisite fissure so the fiddler’s recital-like formula starts to splinter responsively. By the climactic Flower No.8, Ceccaldi’s paced twangs join the bassist in breaking the interface, first into sul tasto scrubs and latterly into wood-slamming pops and tremolo strands. The finale on Flower No.9 of stinging bow strokes echoes off tightly wound strings allows this suite to refer to the violinist’s Romantic-era roots without compromising the adventurous modernism implicit in both partners’ playing.

Advanced modernism could also be used describe to Pillars (Firehouse 12 Records FH12—01-02-028 firehouse12records.com), a three-CD exploration by New York drummer/composer Tyshawn Sorey. Conceived of as a triptych, each of the 75-minute-plus discs deals with a
multiplicity of moods ranging from the melodic to the abstract and from nearly static drones to emphatically flowing free jazz. No cynosure composer, Sorey’s elaboration of the material is established by its interpretation by the ensemble of bassists Mark Helias, Carl Testa and Zach Rowden; guitarists Todd Neufeld and Joe Morris; trumpeter Stephen Haynes and trombonist Ben Gerstein plus Sorey. Inchoate or intense inventions are expanded throughout, as the band divides into smaller groups, and as multi-instrumentation adds textures from more brass, percussion, melodica, Tibetan horn and electronics.

Divided into several sequences, Pillars I, for instance, evolves into ritual-like percussion pumping, encompassing a three-and-a-half-minute drum roll and overlapping patterns that are intermezzos rather than solos. Mostly concerned with the timbres available from massed strings, brass grace notes and flutter tonguing are secondary to the piece’s flow, with the theme splintering into micro-motions as sledgehammer-like percussion thumps and bizarrely oscillating electronics underline it. In sharp contrast, the concluding Pillars III fluctuates between a minimalistic composition and full-out jazz improv, as assertive brass extensions gradually replace the microtonal string drone. As timbres vacillate among sonorous brass, low-pitched percussion power and distant signal-processing, guitar licks come to the forefront. Concussive idophone rolls are unexpectedly succeeded by guitar strategies that could be straight out of a swing session only to vanish when trumpet and trombone snarls and shakes suggest hard bop, with blasting brass and guitarist’s slurred fingerling alternating alongside drum rolls for a free jazz-like position. Eventually the jagged guitar spits and guitar flanges are subsumed by rugged, reductionist electronics. Finally, a drum roll completes the section, while subtly linking it to Pillars I’s introduction.

Sorey’s multi-disc sessions demonstrate another facet of his talent; so does Voices Fall from the Sky (Centering 1015/1016/1017 aumfidelity.com) for William Parker. Known as an exceptional bassist and bandleader, Parker is also a poet and songwriter, and as multi-instrumentation adds textures from more brass, percussion, melodica, Tibetan horn and electronics. Finally, a drum roll completes the section, while subtly linking it to Pillars I’s introduction.

One of the truly great violinists of the last century was Henryk Szeryng, an artist who is usually overlooked in discussions when today’s pundits gather. Decca has issued Henryk Szeryng Complete Philips, Mercury and Deutsche Grammophon Recordings (DG 4834194, 44 CDs, deccaclassics.com).

Szeryng’s life story is fascinating and unique. He was born on September 22, 1918 in Żelazowa Wola, the birthplace of Chopin near Warsaw. Through his parents he knew Ignacy Jan Paderewski and Bronisław Huberman. When he was five, his mother began teaching him piano and harmony but at seven he was drawn to the violin, taking lessons from a former assistant of the great Leopold Auer. When Huberman heard the nine-year-old play he wanted him to advance his studies with Willy Hess, Carl Flesch or Jacques Thibaud. He studied with Hess in Berlin for a time but found him to be old-fashioned and switched to Thibaud. A significant moment, for as Szeryng stated, “Everything I know violinistically speaking I learned from him.” Continuing with Thibaud at the Paris Conservatory, he graduated with a first prize in 1937. He also studied composition with Nadia Boulanger from 1933 to 1937. He had already made his solo debut in 1933 playing the Brahms Violin Concerto with the Warsaw Philharmonic under George Georgescu. Following the outbreak of WWII, Szeryng, fluent in seven languages, accepted the post of liaison and interpreter of the Polish Government in Exile. On a mission to Mexico in 1941 seeking a home for 4,000 Polish refugees, he was so moved by the positive reception that he decided to become a permanent resident of Mexico in 1942.

Soraya M. Khan is usually overlooked in discussions when today’s pundits gather. Decca has issued Henryk Szeryng Complete Philips, Mercury and Deutsche Grammophon Recordings (DG 4834194, 44 CDs, deccaclassics.com).
naturalized Mexican citizen, which he did in 1946. In 1943 he was asked to head the string department of the National University of Mexico, and he assumed that post in 1945.

Arthur Rubinstein, a fellow Jewish refugee from Poland, gave a recital in Mexico City in 1954, after which Szeryng visited him back-stage where Rubinstein invited him to his room to play for him. Szeryng played some unaccompanied J.S. Bach and deeply moved Rubinstein who recalled that the playing “reduced me to tears… Real music lovers want emotion… great moments… which Szeryng’s playing gives them.” Rubinstein and Szeryng played music together for the rest of their careers. Szeryng began concertizing around the world and his recordings were honoured with many coveted awards. In addition to many other honours he was made an Officer of the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres in Paris in 1963. In 1960 he was named Mexican Cultural Ambassador, an honour that he took very seriously. During a trip to Toronto some years later, he came to the Classical Record Shop accompanied by the PR person from Polygram, Lori Bruner, who made it clear that he should be addressed as Ambassador. We did, of course. Henryk Szeryng died on March 3, 1988 in Kassel, Germany.

The performances in this new collection include the Bach unaccompanied Sonatas and Partitas BWV1001 to 1006, the six sonatas with harpsichord, BWV1012 to 1019 with Helmut Walcha, three Brandenburgs 2,4 and 5 with Rampal (Flute), George Malcolm (harpsichord) and the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields and Neville Marriner. All sublime. He is soloist and conductor of Bach’s three violin concertos with the Collegium Musicum Winterthur. There are Beethoven’s Violin Concerto, Triple Concerto (Arrau and Starker) and the two Romances, Brahms’ Violin Concerto, Double Concerto (Starker, Haitink); 13 pieces by Fritz Kreisler and Vivaldi’s L'estro armonico and The Four Seasons in which he is both soloist and conductor. Other concertos include those of Mozart, Schumann, Mendelssohn, Sibelius, Prokofiev, Khachaturian, Tchaikovsky, Wieniawski, Szymanowski, Paganini, Lalo, Bartók and Saint-Saëns. There are four essential sets of four CDs: The complete Beethoven trios with Wilhelm Kempff and Pierre Fournier; the complete Beethoven sonatas for piano and violin with the impeccable Ingrid Haebler; the Mozart 16 great sonatas and Variations K359 & K560 for piano and violin, also with Haebler, and finally Mozart’s complete works for violin and orchestra with the New Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Sir Alexander Gibson. Add works by Handel, Schubert, de Falla and a host of encore-type pieces by a miscellany of composers including those by Sir Alexander Gibson. Add works by Handel, Schubert, de Falla and a host of encore-type pieces by a miscellany of composers including those by Sir Alexander Gibson.

Rudolf Nureyev’s choreography of three favourite ballets, Tchaikovsky’s Swan Lake and The Nutcracker plus Minkus’ Don Quixote, have been released in a boxed set of Blu-ray video discs by C-major. Nureyev (97104_3 Blu-ray video discs cmajor-entertainment.com). The Vienna State Opera Orchestra and the Vienna State Ballet are common threads and each ballet has its individual music director. The dancers for Swan Lake (recorded in 2012) are headed by Vladimir Shishov as Prince Siegfried, Olga Esina as Odette and Enò Peci as Rothbart, the Magician, with Dagmar Kronberger as the Queen, the Prince’s mother. The set – there’s only one – and costumes are by Luisa Spinatelli; the conductor, Alexander Ingram. Frankly, if I weren’t aware of the plot I would be lost.

Using Nureyev’s stage directions, the 2012 performance of The Nutcracker is another story. It is a delight from curtain-up and danced most exquisitely by Liudmila Konovalova as Clara and Vladimir Shishov as Drosselmeyer and the whole corps with specialty dances for the Arabian, Chinese, the Flutes, etc. Entirely satisfying, the performances are quite delightful, the costumes from whimsical to luxurious.

The third ballet in this box is Don Quixote (2016), set to the music of Ludwig Minkus orchestrated and adapted by John Lanchbery. The ballet by Marius Petipa has a prologue and three acts. Petipa was the co-deviser of the above Swan Lake. Once again drawing on Nureyev’s stage directions (Arrau and Starker) and the Spanish milieu was all he needed to create gorgeous solos, pas de deux and ensemble scenes. The sets, devised by the set and costume designer Nicholas Georgiadis, are minimal and clearly place the events. The conductor is Kevin Rhodes; Kamil Pavelka is Don Quixote, Christoph Wenzel is Sancho Panza, Maria Yakovleva is Kitri/Dulcineia. The sound and the Blu-ray video is state of the art.


This is a set of great music-making, all truly inspired performances as live festival performances always are. There is, in addition, music by a composer that is new to me: Alexander Tsfasman (1906–1971), a Soviet composer that is new to me: Alexander Tsfasman (1906–1971), a Soviet jazz pianist, composer, arranger and publisher. He flourished from the mid-1920s through to the 1940s. Tsfasman’s suite of Piano Concerto No.1, Double Concerto and Six Concertos for Piano and Orchestra, arranged by Alexander Tsfasman and later orchestrated and adapted by David DeWitt, are a world premiere recording.

The performances in this new collection include the Bach unaccompanied Sonatas and Partitas BWV1001 to 1006, the six sonatas with harpsichord, BWV1012 to 1019 with Helmut Walcha, three Brandenburgs 2,4 and 5 with Rampal (Flute), George Malcolm (harpsichord) and the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields and Neville Marriner. All sublime. He is soloist and conductor of Bach’s three violin concertos with the Collegium Musicum Winterthur. There are Beethoven’s Violin Concerto, Triple Concerto (Arrau and Starker) and the two Romances, Brahms’ Violin Concerto, Double Concerto (Starker, Haitink); 13 pieces by Fritz Kreisler and Vivaldi’s L’estro armonico and The Four Seasons in which he is both soloist and conductor. Other concertos include those of Mozart, Schumann, Mendelssohn, Sibelius, Prokofiev, Khachaturian, Tchaikovsky, Wieniawski, Szymanowski, Paganini, Lalo, Bartók and Saint-Saëns. There are four essential sets of four CDs: The complete Beethoven trios with Wilhelm Kempff and Pierre Fournier; the complete Beethoven sonatas for piano and violin with the impeccable Ingrid Haebler; the Mozart 16 great sonatas and Variations K359 & K560 for piano and violin, also with Haebler, and finally Mozart’s complete works for violin and orchestra with the New Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Sir Alexander Gibson. Add works by Handel, Schubert, de Falla and a host of encore-type pieces by a miscellany of composers including those from Central and South America, some familiar, some not. We have here a collection that, beyond the obligatory warhorses, reflects his eclectic repertoire. Well done, Ambassador.
It’s been less than two years since the then-chair of the board of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Richard Phillips, and eight of his senior colleagues, including Sonia Baxendale, stunningly and abruptly resigned from the organization one December afternoon. It remains a mystery to this day why they left.

Had this kind of thing happened at other similar organizations – the New York Philharmonic, or the Metropolitan Opera, let’s say – it would have been front-page news. Here, it barely caused a stir, and since then, Richard Phillips and Sonia Baxendale seem to have been more or less expunged from the history of the TSO. Which is a pity.

Because what’s interesting about Phillips and Baxendale is that without them, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra may well have gone bankrupt in the spring and summer of 2016. Today, as the TSO is finally achieving some desperately needed organizational stability, it’s hard to imagine how different things were not that long ago. But in March of 2016, after the now-you-see-him-now-you-don’t departure of short-lived TSO president and CEO Jeff Melanson, the TSO was within a few thousand dollars of insolvency. Senior financial officers were approaching department heads to inquire whether there was anything that could be sold to keep the organization afloat. In a situation streaked red with emergency, Phillips and especially Baxendale (who became the organization’s acting CEO, for an agreed six-month term, after Melanson’s departure) steered the TSO ship rockily but successfully to a small surplus in fiscal 2015/16. They accomplished this by applying the appraised value of a valuable TSO viola against the organization’s accumulated deficit (reducing that deficit by four million dollars), convincing the Toronto Symphony Foundation to double its annual contribution to the TSO, and one assumes, by writing some generous cheques of their own. For thanks, within eight months they had disappeared from the organization.

Perhaps Phillips’ and Baxendale’s departure was karma for the sin they had committed of hiring Jeff Melanson to be the orchestra’s president and chief executive officer in the first place. We shall never know the full extent of Melanson’s toxic influence on the TSO, but it can be effectively argued that the organization is just now recovering from it. Before Melanson, the Toronto Symphony had had one CEO for 12 years, Andrew Shaw. In contrast, there have been four changes of leadership since – four administrative regimes in four years. A year and a half of Melanson, six months of Phillips and Baxendale, two years of Gary Hanson as interim CEO, and now a few months of Matthew Loden, the TSO’s just recently appointed CEO.

It is a tribute to the TSO that it has not only survived these ongoing challenges, but has seemed to emerge from them with momentum. The latest annual report showed an operating surplus for fiscal 2017-18 of over two million dollars (although that surplus was buoyed by a $3.2 million grant from Canadian Heritage that will not be repeated next year). Matthew Loden, the new CEO, comes with a fine track record with the Philadelphia Orchestra. The appointment of a new Music Director, Gustavo Gimeno, was announced this fall, to replace the recently retired Peter Oundjian, although Gimeno won’t actually take over until the fall of 2020. Throughout all the organization’s troubles and travails, the staying power and continuity of the true heroes of the Toronto Symphony – Loie Fallis, vice-president of artistic planning and Roberta Smith, vice-president and chief of staff, can’t be over-estimated. I’m guessing that the organization’s outgoing and highly popular former music director should also be included on that list.

The TSO seems to have weathered the existential crises of the past five years, bending without breaking. All arts organizations these days, worldwide, are perched on very delicate financial precipices, the distance between success and catastrophe very short indeed. The real challenge for the Symphony is that the organizational turmoil of the past few years has prevented the orchestra from effectively redefining its artistic mandate and raison d’être in the post-Oundjian era. Andrew Davis has stepped in as the organization’s titular head as the TSO awaits Gimeno, but all of Oundjian’s signature programming initiatives of the past few years have been erased. There will be no Mozart Festival this year, no Decades projects, most of the past five years, bending without breaking. All arts organizations these days, worldwide, are perched on very delicate financial precipices, the distance between success and catastrophe very short indeed. The real challenge for the Symphony is that the organizational turmoil of the past few years has prevented the orchestra from effectively redefining its artistic mandate and raison d’être in the post-Oundjian era. Andrew Davis has stepped in as the organization’s titular head as the TSO awaits Gimeno, but all of Oundjian’s signature programming initiatives of the past few years have been erased. There will be no Mozart Festival this year, no Decades projects, most of the past five years, bending without breaking. All arts organizations these days, worldwide, are perched on very delicate financial precipices, the distance between success and catastrophe very short indeed. The real challenge for the Symphony is that the organizational turmoil of the past few years has prevented the orchestra from effectively redefining its artistic mandate and raison d’être in the post-Oundjian era. Andrew Davis has stepped in as the organization’s titular head as the TSO awaits Gimeno, but all of Oundjian’s signature programming initiatives of the past few years have been erased. There will be no Mozart Festival this year, no Decades projects, most
Hopefuly, the groundwork has been laid for that to change in the Gustavo Gimeno era. People clearly wish the symphony well and are excited and curious about the new music director. The TSO has already had to add an extra concert for Gimeno’s season-ending appearance with the orchestra this coming June, which is a good sign. Single ticket sales, which have eclipsed subscriptions as a source of TSO box office revenue, are also on the upswing. Another positive indicator. A financial plan for stability seems to be within the TSO’s reach, finally. And the current TSO board, led by chair Cathy Beck, extending her family’s long-standing dedication to the Toronto Symphony, looks set to provide a level of continuity to the organization as well.

But the biggest challenge to the Toronto Symphony remains to be addressed. When I spoke to Gary Hanson at the beginning of his tenure as interim president and CEO of the TSO, we talked about the upcoming challenge of replacing Oundjian as music director of the organization. Hanson reminded me that the question that the symphony needed to answer was not who the new conductor would be, but what. In other words, what kind of an organization did the TSO want to become? That used to be a relatively simple question for symphony orchestras in a secure, musical world. It isn’t anymore. Playing the classics beautifully isn’t enough. Or maybe it is. But what about attracting new audiences, reflecting the cultural diversity of the city in which the orchestra is housed, educating people about music, reaching out to other musical communities? It’s not at all obvious where an orchestra should be directing its attention these days. Gimeno is young, which is good, and consequently brings few musical expectations with him, which is also good. But it was clear when his appointment was announced in September that he has no idea yet what kind of a place Toronto is, having spent literally no more than a few days in the city up to that point as a guest conductor. But he’ll have two full years to figure that out, along with Matthew Loden, himself just a few months into his tenure.

And more power to them all! We need the TSO to be strong, and it hasn’t been able to be especially so in the last few years. Musicians, and orchestral musicians especially, are notoriously grumpy and dark about life, but music is not. Music is optimistic, bright, life-fulfilling. It is the path that its music creates for it that can give the TSO the hints it needs to secure its future. And we’ll all be the better for it.

Robert Harris is a writer and broadcaster on music in all its forms. He is the former classical music critic of the Globe and Mail and the author of the Stratford Lectures and Song of a Nation: The Untold Story of O Canada.

ONE READER’S RESPONSE

The November 2018 issue of The WholeNote ran an article by Robert Harris (“Wagner in the Age of #MeToo”), claiming that the #MeToo movement should spur us to consider Wagner’s Ring as being unacceptable to modern audiences because of its antisemitic message. As a Jewish Wagnerian, here is my response.

A few years ago I had the pleasure of meeting Gottfried Wagner, who, with his penetrating gaze and aquiline nose, conjured up the aura of his great-grandfather. He said emphatically: Wagner’s music is great art. The composer and his family were monsters, and we must respect the wishes of those who do not want to hear it publicly performed in Israel, a country he loved. He was also of the opinion that future generations of Israelis, no longer traumatized by firsthand experience of the Shoah, will be able to accept Wagner performances. These views are supported by Israeli music-lovers today.

Richard Wagner said a lot of contradictory and inflammatory things, but when it came to composing music he knew what he was doing. The idea that antisemitism is at the heart of the Ring is preposterous. Mime and Alberich are not Jews, they are dwarves, and they were dwarves when the story was composed in medieval Iceland, where no Jew was ever seen. But people certainly imagined they saw Jewish gestures in Wagner’s dwarves - Mahler complained of one particular performance that it was a “caricature of a caricature”. But that didn’t stop the Jew Mahler, or his colleague the Jew Schoenberg, from regarding Wagner’s scores as central to Western music. The Ring is not about an evil Jew, it is about what it takes to be oneself and overcome obstacles – overbearing parents (the gods), irrational fears (the giants), brash egotism (the runes on Wotan’s spear) and whatever else is clogging your subconscious mind.

If it were really true that the Ring is an antisemitic diatribe, and that art is to be judged on the morality of the artist, then why stop with Wagner? We still are left with the music of Chopin (who accused Jews of destroying Polish music) and the poetry of T. S. Eliot (who accused Jews of destroying Western culture). Dickens hated Jews too, and don’t get me started on The Merchant of Venice or Caryl Churchill’s play Seven Jewish Children, which despite being intended as an attack on Jews was performed in Toronto with the financial support of the City a few years ago.

Jews have lived with antisemitic garbage for 2000 years, much of it encouraged by the Church and the State. To claim that the Ring is antisemitic is a perversion of what the Ring and what antisemitism are all about. Antisemitism is alive and well today, both in the twisted minds of far-right thugs in the USA and in far-left politics in the UK and Canada. In the age of #MeToo we must certainly refuse to work with peddlers of hatred and harassment. But Richard Wagner is long dead and his work endures.

Charles Heller is an Associate Composer of the Canadian Music Centre. He is on the editorial board of the Journal of Synagogue Music, published by the Cantors Assembly, New York and is the author of What to Listen For in Jewish Music. His new book Shul-Going will be published in 2019.

A Jewish Defence of Wagner’s Ring

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