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Musicians make their instruments alive but not necessarily themselves. It is often a challenge to capture them as the artists they really are. Elisa Citterio seemed to understand that and invited me to photograph the company in unusual spaces, like outside a coffee shop in the Canary District and inside this Cafe Balzac at the Distillery. It loosened everyone up. After seeing the wonderful production of The Leipzig-Damascus Coffee House at Koerner Hall, it all made sense to me. I appreciate her naturalness, elegant simplicity and beauty which I hoped to capture in her portrait.

— Cylla von Tiedemann

ON OUR COVER

Musicians make their instruments alive but not necessarily themselves. It is often a challenge to capture them as the artists they really are. Elisa Citterio seemed to understand that and invited me to photograph the company in unusual spaces, like outside a coffee shop in the Canary District and inside this Cafe Balzac at the Distillery. It loosened everyone up. After seeing the wonderful production of The Leipzig-Damascus Coffee House at Koerner Hall, it all made sense to me. I appreciate her naturalness, elegant simplicity and beauty which I hoped to capture in her portrait.

— Cylla von Tiedemann
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Summer music-making for all ages and abilities – the big picture.

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Something in the Water

ack in the day, I remember a particular WholeNote cover, of maple leaves floating downstream – their autumn leaves of red and gold, you might say – and floating among them four or five standard black and white artist headshots of established and rising singers, Canadians all!

“Something in the Water?” the headline asked, as Jean Stilwell, Stephanie Piercey, Richard Margison, Russell Braun and Measha Brueggergosman sailed gently down the stream.

It was October 2000, and the cover story, by WholeNote founding publisher, Allan Pulker, was about the seemingly neverending stream of Canadian singers on the world stage. Among his prescient examples: Brueggergosman, Isabel Bayrakdarian, James Westman, Barbara Hannigan ... “Soprano Adrienne Pieczonka,” he says at some moment, “recently made her La Scala debut, drawing not a ripple of attention here.”

“I could go on and on,” he concludes, “but the point is clear: this country has produced in recent years a significant number of singers who are among the best in the world. As someone (from the Met and therefore definitely an expert, eh?) ‘Why are so many great singers coming from Canada these days? Is it something in the water?’”

That was then. This story is about something in the air.

I sensed it at a Toronto Consort concert, “Love Remixed,” in early February listening to James Rolfe’s spellbinding 2011 composition Breathe which sets words by 12th-century composer Hildegard von Bingen and accomplished contemporary Canadian librettist Anna Chatterton to music for period instruments.

“Medieval music in the right hands,” Rolfe says in his program note, “comes alive, as fresh and relevant to our modern ears as the day it was created ... with its clarity of expression and purity of line ... a living and breathing organism.” He goes on to say that his “great fortune” in getting to work with ensembles such as Toronto Consort has been “to experience just how much early musicians love their music ... they have access to many shades of just intonation, with its pure intervals which resonate in our bodies and souls.”

I sensed the same thing again a couple of nights ago, in the bizarrely appropriate setting of the atrium, at the Royal Ontario Museum, that links the ROM’s old and new buildings. Surrounded by dino-saur skeletons, Opera Atelier showcased the latest iteration, titled The Angel Speaks, of a work by violinist Edwin Huizinga and dancer Tyler Gledhill which marries the vocabulary of Baroque music and ballet with a compelling contemporary syntax and sensibility. Commissioned originally by the Royal Chapel at Versailles, where Opera Atelier is now a regular visitor, the work is evolving, literally and figuratively, by leaps and bounds. Let’s see, with fresh wind in its sails, where it travels next.

And, once again, the topic of old meeting new so that each can inform the other hung in the air when I sat recently to talk to Tafelmusik’s Elisa Citterio a couple of weeks ago about her vision for the ensemble, a season-and-a-half into her appointment as the orchestra’s artistic director. That story comes next in this issue (if you’re reading this in print, that is).

Jessye Norman’s Visit Revisited

Highlight of the gala concert, Wednesday February 20 at the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, to celebrate Jessye Norman’s acceptance of the 20th Glenn Gould Prize was when Norman herself, at the close of it all, supported vocally by her chosen protégé, jazz singer Cécile McLorin Salvant, sang the Bernstein/Sondheim song “Somewhere” from West Side Story, with a quiet flame, even more so in contrast to the star-studded operatic highlight reel that preceded it. The words “There’s a place for us” as hard-won manifesto took on a meaning richer and deeper than the song’s creators could ever have imagined. As to whether there was a dry eye in the house, I couldn’t really see at that moment, for some reason.

It was, however, Norman’s presence at an exhausting range of other activities during the ten-day visit that will resonate most deeply; none more so than the three-hour masterclass she gave to young singers at the U of T’s Walter Hall, in front of a packed audience. (You can read Paul Ennis’ blog account of the event on our website.) And the moment that summed it up, for WholeNote reader Carol Ann Davidson was when Norman, “in response to a question about singers being vocally categorized, swiftly responded: ‘Do not allow someone else to place your voice. Know your voice and where it is most comfortable. You are a singer, not a category.’”

Even “singer,” as a category, does not do justice to Norman’s life and work.

Unpicking the “seamstress” story

Speaking of categorization, I must thank another reader, Peter Feldman, for calling me to account in regard to something I wrote last issue in my Jessye Norman story where I described Norman’s participation in the White House ceremony awarding “Alabama seamstress Rosa Parks” the Congressional Medal of Honor.

“Re: Rosa Parks,” Feldman wrote, “I think you’ll find that Rosa Parks was much, much more than just a ‘seamstress’. [She] was a seasoned freedom fighter who had grown up in a family that supported Marcus Garvey, and who married an activist for the Scottsboro boys. She joined the Montgomery chapter of the NAACP in 1943, becoming branch secretary. She spent the next decade pushing for voter registration, seeking justice for black victims of white brutality and sexual violence, supporting wrongfully accused black men, and pressing for desegregation of schools and public spaces. Committed to both the power of organized nonviolent direct action and the moral right of self defence, she called Malcolm X her personal hero.”

A healthy reminder.

publisher@thewholenote.com

Upcoming Dates & Deadlines for our April 2019 edition

Free Event Listings Deadline
Midnight, Friday March 8, 2019
Display Ad Reservations Deadline
8pm Friday March 15
Advertising Materials Due
8pm Monday March 18
Classifieds Deadline
8pm Saturday March 23
Publication Date
Tuesday March 26 (online)
Thursday March 28 (print edition)

Volume 24 No 7 “APRIL” will list events April 1 through May 7, 2019
WholeNote Media Inc. accepts no responsibility or liability for claims made for any product or service reported on or advertised in this issue

Printed in Canada
Couto Printing & Publishing Services

Circulation Statement
FEBRUARY 2019
30,000 printed & distributed Canadian Publication Product
Sales Agreement 1263846
ISSN 14888–8785 WHOLENOTE
Publications Mail Agreement
#40026682

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

COUTO PRINTING & PUBLISHING SERVICES

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It’s not always a good idea, sitting down for only your second chat with someone, to start off by reminding them of exactly what they told you the first time round, especially if, as in this case, 18 hectic months have elapsed between conversations. But this time it worked out just fine.

“In May 2017, the last time we talked,” I reminded Elisa Citterio, Tafelmusik’s music director, “you told me that you were hoping for life here to be, perhaps more busy, but less crazy, than before, and I’d like to come back to that. But you also said something very interesting about repertoire, and this is where I’d like to start. You said ‘We can’t live and die by one hundred years of [Baroque] repertoire. We are strings, two oboes, bassoon and continuo, so there are limits to the core repertoire available, and so it’s important for an orchestra like Tafelmusik to touch different periods, to educate the ear. Period playing can lead to illuminating performances of a much wider range of music – Haydn, Schumann, Brahms, Verdi. Period playing can strip away the denseness of the 19th-century sound. You get to listen for different things.’

“In May 2017, we had squeezed in a hastily arranged interview in The WholeNote office three months before she officially took the Tafelmusik reins for a first season that was already significantly cut
and dried in terms of repertoire. This time we were poring over the
details of a 2019/20 season, about to be announced, that will, for
better or for worse, be seen as well and truly hers.

“When I took on this role” she said, “I left La Scala Theatre where I
had been playing for many, many years, all kinds of repertoire; at the
same time, I was playing a lot of Baroque music with other ensembles.
So my whole life has been divided between different repertoire,
and in my personal experience I can say absolutely that each piece of
the picture connects to another one. I can’t say that playing Brahms
and Wagner made coming back to Baroque music easier or more diffi-
cult. But I have to say I am curious to see how it would be, in the
other direction, if musicians in conservatories were trained from early
music forward, instead of the other way around.”

Her own training, she freely admits, was not the way she would like
things to be. “Like most musicians,” she says, “I did things in reverse.
I was trained to play caprices from the 18th and 19th century, and
concertos of the 19th and 20th century, before going back in time to
Mozart and eventually Bach. So it was a lot of jumping around and
more focused on technical issues than on musical essentials.” It was
only when she started Baroque violin, she says, “that she started to
connect things musically, because of the way Baroque violin prac-
tice was intrinsically connected to imitation of the human voice – to
pronunciation, to consonants and vowels, to syntax. Musicians playing
violins, cornettos, had to try to imitate the voice, so this changes
fundamentally the way one approaches technique.”

Going back to these roots, as far back as madrigals, she says, began
to influence her modern playing in profound ways, day after day and
step by step. It wasn’t a magic formula or shortcut though. Finding
her way back to classical and Romantic repertoire took a lot of study
all over again. But the changes in her playing were fundamental.
“Out of it all,” she says, “what I trusted, what I still trust, is that a
Baroque orchestra has a sort of mission; it is unlike modern orchestras
approaching Baroque repertoire, where the results might sound nice,
but there is still something missing, because they simply don’t have
the right instruments. Some things are fundamental to Baroque music
that can only be achieved with gut strings and with historical wind
instruments based on the voice.”

And just because there’s an argument to be made that a modern
orchestra can’t travel back in time, it doesn’t mean that the reverse
argument applies. After all, modern orchestras used gut strings right
up to the time when, grishly fact, world wars saw the end to a reliable
supply of gut strings, with the commodity commandeered for sutures.
“So, Wagner was writing for orchestras using gut strings,” she says.
“And at La Scala we played operas at historically accurate pitch ... I feel
that if Tafelmusik does not take what we do to the limit, the edge of
where we can go, not as a novelty, but consistently, with a process to
arrive there, it would be a pity. I think we can really give something
new for this music. We are not the first, I am not saying that. But we
are one of the few. I have played with orchestras around the world and
I can say that Tafelmusik can do great and huge work on this kind of
music. But step by step.”

Just as finding her way back to classical and Romantic repertoire
took a lot of study all over again for Citterio, the coming season’s
excursion into the 19th century is not going to be a picnic for the
orchestra. “It will be work,” she says, “and we will workshop for it.
But Tafelmusik musicians are well informed, so that is a big start. We
will concentrate only on the repertoire we are going to play in the
coming season, but it is still a lot. For example, the way to shift among
positions on the violin alters over the years. In Vivaldi a shift should
leave a note as cleanly as possible. In the Romantic repertoire I am
trying to connect the voice with a portamento going up and down;
also rubato is quite different in the different periods; and the strokes
are different; and we have many different kinds of accents that we
have to know how to read, because earlier an accent had a different
meaning. So this workshop will be really to understand how to work
on these technical issues together. And also how to deal with these
busy scores, because Tchaikovsky and Brahms wrote a lot on their
scores! If you look at a Castello or Fontana score, then at Brahms, the
world has changed totally, from nothing to everything.”
Small Steps and Giant Leaps

Citterio is describing methodically what she calls “small steps” the ensemble will be taking to prepare for the “mission” ahead, but from an audience point of view, 2019/20, styled “Old Meets New” in their brochure, looks like more of a giant leap. Old Meets New head on is more like it, starting from the very first concert of the season in which Tafelmusik tackles a string symphony by the teenaged Felix Mendelssohn, as well as the Scherzo from his A Midsummer Night’s Dream, arranged by Citterio’s composer brother, Carlo Citterio, en route to tackling the music of Tchaikovsky (his Serenade for string orchestra) for the very first time.

The program will also feature a world premiere by Canadian composer Andrew Balfour, as the brochure says, “in keeping with our season theme of the new informing the old, and the old informing the new.”

It’s a lot to unpack, starting with the notion of Tafelmusik commissioning no fewer than six new works over the course of a single season, four of them by Canadian composers. (In addition to Balfour, the season will also include premieres from James Rolfe, Guido Morini, Cecilia Livingston, Grégoire Jeay, and Vittorio Ghelmi.)

“It’s just a first example of trying to start the process of realizing my vision of what this orchestra can be,” Citterio says. “I want to support new composers, including strongly believing in including new commissions. We must remember that this ‘new thing’ is actually very old, because one thing about Baroque music is that, for the players and for the audience, it was almost all newly composed – all music was like a premiere. So how else do we get the same feeling today as players? Or as audiences? There are many composers who can write for our instruments with a style that is really compatible, or sometimes with some new influences. I played a lot of great music when I was in Italy, just written for our instruments, sometimes in Baroque style, sometimes in a later style, and the audience just loved it. There’s nothing wrong with someone who wants to write for gut strings because they love the sound! Or for harpsichord. I mean, piano is a wonderful instrument, but we still have the harpsichord as a living instrument, or the viola da gamba … I played one time this concerto grosso written by an Italian composer, a premiere, and it was written for harpsichord, two violins, viola, gamba and two recorders, and it was amazing; there was an obvious influence from Corelli’s Concerto grosso, but there were other subtle nuances from Romantic or later repertoire. The harpsichord, gamba and recorders all had solos, and the mix was stunning and the audience loved it, because it was written for the voices of the instruments. That was 15 years ago and at that time I thought we must give space to composers.”

So they are trying to choose composers who already have a sense of Tafelmusik’s instruments, or really want to find out. And the process of outreach into the wider music for sources to assist them in finding composers has been a valuable exercise it its own right – Soundstreams, for example, led them to Cecilia Livingston. “Best of all, I am really looking forward it, because it will be a surprise for me too, as a player,” Citterio says. “And that is very Baroque.”

As important as the fact of there being new commissions, will be the contexts in which they will be presented. In the season’s ninth program, for example, Quebec flutist Grégoire Jeay’s new work will be designed to lead directly into Citterio’s own arrangement for orchestra (“I am still working on it!” she says) of Bach’s Goldberg Variations.

“But you talked earlier about the power of period playing to cut through the complexity of someone like Tchaikovsky,” I say. So isn’t setting the Goldberg for orchestra the opposite of that – taking something pure and muddying it? I remember, last time we talked you called that kind of thick sound minestrone Wagneriana, and we decided the best English translation was “Wagnerian pea soup?”

She laughs. “Yes I remember. But this is not the same thing. The rearrangement of music from many instruments to few and few to many is a very old idea, and common in Baroque. Bach, for example, arranged violin sonatas for lute and for harpsichord. Or another example, in our fifth program, for example, we are going to hear opera music arranged for eight winds. And all these arrangements, the Bach and the Harmonie, were done at the time, so the idea of the Goldberg orchestral arrangement is not so novel. On our tour out west, an all-Bach program, we included a couple of arrangements of variations and I have in the past already recorded a version of the Goldberg for string quartet and harpsichord. More than that, I would say with Bach the music is beyond the specific instruments. It is just so pure in its harmony and counterpoint.”

That fifth program Citterio is referring to, by the way, is titled “Gone with the Winds,” calling to life a popular form of ensemble in Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven’s day. Hits from the latest operas were arranged for groups of wind musicians called Harmonie who performed in the homes of the rich, and in spas, pubs and pleasure gardens for the public, “the juke box of the 18th century.” Commissioned composer Cecilia Livingston, whose current major project is a full-length opera with TorQ Percussion Quartet and Toronto’s Opera 5 should fit right in!

But Will They Follow?

Baroque arrangement of Mendelssohn and Tchaikovsky and the interpolation of commissioned new works are about as far forward as Tafel will travel in time. In the 2019/20 season anyway. But the “Old Meets New” season moniker gets a vigorous workout in a host of other ways.

There is yet another themed program, titled The Indigo Project, from the endlessly inventive and curious mind of Alison Mackay, this time in collaboration with father/daughter duo of Suba and Cecilia Livingston.
Farruquito
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Tickets start at only $50
Flamenco dancer Farruquito, “heir to one of the most renowned flamenco dynasties in Spain” (The New York Times), is joined on stage by some of the finest flamenco singers and guitarists on the scene.

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Principal Trumpet Andrew McCandless presents Bramwell Tovey’s Songs of the Paradise Saloon, and songs originally for voice by Bernstein, de Falla, and others. He is joined by pianist Sonya Sim.

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FRIDAY, APRIL 5, 8PM KOERNER HALL
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Virtuoso fiddler Roby Lakatos is a scorching player and a musician of extraordinary stylistic versatility. Born into the legendary family of Roma violinists, Lakatos’s fiery playing covers classical, jazz, and Hungarian folk music.

Taylor Academy Showcase Concert
SATURDAY, MARCH 9, 4:30PM MAZZOLENI CONCERT HALL
Free (tickets required)
The Phil and Eli Taylor Performance Academy for Young Artists presents concerts by leading young classical musicians in Canada. Hear the stars of tomorrow!

The Glenn Gould School Chamber Competition Finals
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3, 7PM KOERNER HALL
Free tickets for this concert will be available starting Wed. Mar. 27, 2019
Hear the talented ensembles of The Glenn Gould School compete for prizes and performance opportunities. Presented in honour of R.S. Williams & Sons Company Ltd

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SATURDAY, APRIL 6, 3PM KOERNER HALL
Tickets start at only $45
The “breathtaking” choir is “totally disciplined voices tempered by a singular sense of ease and consistency” (Washington Post). They have delighted music lovers for six centuries with their purity of tone, charm, and crowd-pleasing repertoire.
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Trichy Sankaran, tracing the significance of the introduction into 17th-century Europe of *Indigofera tinctoria*, the indigo dye that provided both the royal blue of the Bourbon courts and the colour of the cotton fabric worn by the common folk, known as denim. Ancient history with profound contemporary implications.

Other programs dig into the centuries before Baroque in the same way the Mendelssohn/Tchaikovsky program pushes past it. Or introduce us to a composer (Antonio Lotti) whose direct influence on composers like Bach and Handel was evidently as profound as history’s silence where Lotti is concerned … the list goes on.

Engaging as it all promises to be, the jury is out on whether Tafelmusik’s audience will follow where the orchestra under Citterio clearly wants to go. And it’s clear that Tchaikovsky is not the end of the road. Citterio herself agrees that only time will tell. But she knows what she thinks about it: “I truly hope audiences will be happily surprised by it all. I think I am getting to know them better. I understand it will take time. And that some come to Tafelmusik only to hear Baroque music, I know it is only one story, but I like it: It was after we did Mozart’s Symphony No.40, which everyone does, and everyone knows. It’s everywhere. And where probably every audience member expects to hear it a certain way. So we tried to clear the score, to give it a transparency, taking advantage of our instruments, dynamic, articulation, pronunciation even (in German, of course). And one member of the audience who goes to the TSO all the time and likes that kind of style more for this kind of classical and Romantic repertoire came to me and said ‘today I discovered a new Mozart, and I don’t want to stop. I could hear each instrument and detail.’ I was so happy to have feedback like that.”

“So right at the beginning you said you were hoping for ‘busier perhaps, but less crazy,’ I say, to bring it full circle. “Crazy busy!” she replies, with a smile. Not crazy the way Italy was, where there are great talents but not, shall we say, well organized as a team. Yes I am busier than I should be, I have a baby but everything is organized, and well organized, so busier is definitely easier.”

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

Beecroft, of course, is herself one of the pioneers of electronic music.

Her creative life closely mirrors the appearance and development of what was, in the mid-20th century, the newest musical medium. Given that she was also a prolific broadcaster and a maker of radio documentaries about contemporary composers of her day, it should be no surprise that she decided, in 1977, to embark on this landmark series of interviews with her fellow electronic music pioneers.

The list of the composers included in Beecroft’s book is comprehensive, reading like a who’s who of early electronic music. Among the 23 interviews, prominent names such as Luciano Berio, John Cage, Pierre Schaeffer, Karlheinz Stockhausen and Iannis Xenakis jump out of the group. Max Matthews, the so-called “father of computer music” is there. Each interview is framed with a carefully drawn profile of her subject, intricately and accurately placing each into historical context.

The 400-plus-page book also contains an extensive preface, in which Beecroft introduces the overall subject of the relationship between music and technology, which is broadly relevant to her topic. She also details highlights of her own career, creating historical markers in the process, that show her creative work in parallel with her interview subjects. She describes herself as, “the second of five offspring of a father who was an inventor, Julian Beecroft (1907–2007) and one of his main interests was acoustics and sound, which he began investigating when he was very young.” She touches on her early composition lessons with John Weinzweig (1913–2006), interspersed with her other career activities, including her work with CBC Television in the 1950s, a time when TV was the newest of the broadcast media. It was also a period of her life when she travelled extensively, to both the United States and to Europe, meeting numerous composers, conductors and performers in the process. These acquaintances helped her in the development of the many phases of her career: composer, broadcaster and arts administrator (this latter role as co-director – with Robert Aitken – of Toronto’s New Music Concerts, from 1971 to 1989). And a great many of these colleagues found their way into her collection of interviews.

Beecroft writes: “It was inevitable that I would join those questioning the present and future value of this new technology to music, this fascinating interaction between the fields of science and the humanities. And so, in 1977, I began my investigations into exploring music’s relationship to technology through the voices of some of the world’s foremost creative musical minds.” She concludes her preface with the notion: “It is generally agreed that the field of electronic music began in Paris, France, in the studios of the French Radio, then experiments in this new domain were being conducted at Columbia University in New York, and at the West German Radio in Cologne. Accordingly, I have ordered my collection of interviews in the same manner, beginning in France, and then moving to the United States and Germany, then followed with important work by Luciano Berio (1925–2003) and Bruno Maderna (1920–1973) at the Italian Radio in Milan, and concluding this volume with the interviews in Canada.” At the same time, she notes: “All these activities were mushrooming around the same period of time, in the years immediately following...
World War II, so the order is essentially inconsequential.”

Beecroft began organizing her enterprise in 1977, in a series of letters to her intended subjects in Europe. She told me she was confident in positive responses from the composers since she was known to them, and that they trusted her knowledge of the subject. She was by this time acknowledged not only as a composer, but as a highly skilled broadcaster, and she had easy access to all her subjects. She told me that Iannis Xenakis (1922–2001), for example, said: “One thing I like about you is your determination.” Her travels took her first to Cologne, Berlin, Köthen, then Paris, London, and Utrecht. Additional interviews were scheduled in the United States, and back home in her Toronto studio, when possible.

The results of all these interviews were highly rewarding, and revealed great amounts of both historical and personal details. Beecroft’s subjects opened up to her highly focused line of questioning, delving into the recent past, to a time when they were all drawn to the artistic and technical challenges of this new musical medium. In the very first interview, for example, with Pierre Schaeffer (1910–1995), inventor of the concept of musique concrète using recorded sounds, and who founded Le Club d’Essai in 1942 and the Groupe de Recherche Musicales in 1958 in Paris, it’s immediately clear that Schaeffer’s focus is primarily on research and engineering. He refers to clashes in methodology with Pierre Boulez (1925–2016), Karlheinz Stockhausen (1928–2007) and Iannis Xenakis, and confesses: “I hate dodecaphonic music, and I often say that the Austrians shot music with 12 bullets, they killed it for a long time.” This was a somewhat surprising revelation for me, but is typical of the sort of candid views Beecroft’s colleagues were willing to share with her.

In the Stockhausen interview, by contrast, we find the other side of the argument. “In Paris I became involved in the musique concrète that was at that time just beginning to develop. Boulez made me listen to a very few, very short studies, and immediately I was interested in trying myself to synthesize sound, and to get away from the treatment of recorded sound.” Stockhausen went on to mention his collaboration with Belgian composer Karel Goeyvaerts, who had suggested a technique of combining pure sine waves to synthesize timbres: “I have to say that the friendship with this Belgian composer, and the exchange of letters with him, was a very important reason why I made these first experiments, because we were both thinking that it would be a marvellous thing if we could synthesize timbres. The general idea of timbre composition was in the air from texts of Schoenberg.”

Goeyvaerts recalled in his interview: “I never thought that pure sine waves could be heard. And suddenly I found that they existed with an electronic generator, so I wrote to Stockhausen and said, now we can go ahead.” He added: “When Stockhausen made the Study No. 1 and when I made my piece in 1953, I must say we considered at last we could come to a pure structure.” It was also in this year that the term “electronic music” was coined by Dr. Herbert Eimert (1897–1972) at the studio of the Cologne Radio.

Historical turning points such as these appear often throughout Beecroft’s Conversations with Post World War II Pioneers of Electronic Music. But as important as such details are, the personal notes of the composers are possibly the more interesting aspect. An example is in the interview with American composer Otto Luening (1900–1996), who studied with composer and virtuoso pianist, Ferruccio Busoni (1866–1924), and was friends with composer Edgard Varèse (1883–1965). Luening said, of Busoni: “The essence of music, the inner core of music was to him still a mystery and he was like Schopenhauer in that, who I believe said somewhere if we knew the mystery and relationships of music, we would know the mystery and relationships of the whole universe.” And of Varèse, Luening said: “We immediately hit it off. Not only did I have great affection for him, and liked him very much personally, but we had this Busoni tie.” He mentioned the various stylistic groups of American composers current and pointed out: “Varèse and I were on this other line, we were really free wheelers, you know, and while we had a very strong aesthetic, it was not organized, there was no movement or anything, and we never wanted one. We used to talk together and so gradually we fell into a group of friends, that were very interesting and all kind of iconoclasts.”

These personal snapshots were entirely a part of Beecroft’s focus and plan for her project. In a letter to Stockhausen after the first edits were finished, she told him: “The publication is not intended to be a scholarly document on technical matters but an insight into the internal world of the composer and sociological forces that helped shape the person.” She projected to him that, “I am sure this modest document will help fill a void when it comes to musical matters in the latter half of this century.” The book is available through the Canadian Music Centre, 20 St. Joseph Street, Toronto, and can also be ordered online. The details can be found here: musiccentre.ca/node/155113.

Norma Beecroft continues to compose. Montreal composer-pianist Bruce Mather invited her to create a work for his Carrillo piano, an instrument with 96 notes to the octave, which is to say, it’s tuned in 16ths of tones. Beecroft’s new composition will have its world premiere on March 11 at 7:30 at the Salle de concert of the Conservatoire de musique de Montreal, 4750 avenue Henri-Julien. It’s a work for solo Carrillo piano with digital soundtracks. Beecroft wrote: “Written for my friend and colleague Bruce Mather, this piece posed challenges that I could not resist. Having worked in analogue studios for most of my career, I determined to try my hand at composing using digital software only. The Carrillo piano was another challenge, as the entire piano keyboard consists of only one octave of sound. Training my ears to hear the microtones was a new problem, as was a system of notation for the performer. Herewith – my modest attempt at combining the two elements!” She explains further that the work’s design, “finds its analogy in nature, with the opening and closing of a flower. The one octave is divided in half and opens up slowly to create ever-widening intervals. And the flower slowly ends its fragile existence in a retrograde movement.”

Also in Montreal in March, a special dramatic concert presentation titled “Between Composers: Correspondence of Norma Beecroft and Harry Somers, 1955–1960” will take place at the Tanna Schulich Hall of McGill University on March 22 at 7:30pm. Composer and McGill music professor Brian Cherney conceived the presentation, and he describes the idea:
There’s a great Alex Pauk story that filmmaker Don McKellar once told me, about the final stages in the production of McKellar’s 1998 feature film Last Night, for which Pauk and composer Alexina Louie, partners in life and in art, composed the score. (I can’t swear to when McKellar told me the story, except that, evidently, it must have been sometime after 1998.) Whenever it was, it’s had time to ripen with age and retelling, so I will trust all parties concerned to forgive the parts I am no longer getting quite right.
he way I remember it, Pauk and Louise contacted McKellar to say that the score was complete and ready for him to hear, and that an appointment “three sharp” was set for the given date and the appointed place. “Three sharp” was however not necessarily a musical term McKellar was familiar with, back in the day, so when he strolled up, Pauk was already pacing. “You’re late!” was the greeting, in a tone more stressed than McKellar thought the situation warranted.

McKellar wandered in, expecting to find himself with headphones on, listening to a tape or piano reduction or something “and then they open the door to the room, and there’s a whole symphony orchestra there, waiting to do their thing. It felt for a moment as if I must have died and gone to Hollywood.”

As implausible as that moment in time must have felt, on a larger scale the fact that Esprit, the orchestra in question, is still alive and ticking after 35 years, is almost as implausible; and a story worth telling in its own right.

**Esprit at 35**

In the middle of this significant anniversary year for Canada’s only full-sized orchestra completely devoted to performing and promoting new orchestral works, we could have chosen to approach this story in a few different ways:

There’s the way this season’s four main-stage Koerner Hall concerts (there’s still one to come, on March 24) reflect the philosophy (and formula) that has given the orchestra its remarkable consistency and astonishing staying power. “My programming is something I always take great care with and pride in,” Pauk says. “Making the programs so that they flow, so that it’s not all one thing, I mean if you did all hard-edged European music all the time, it wouldn’t go over well, so there’s an ebb and flow in a concert, variety…”

Or there was the orchestra’s decisive move from the cramped confines of the Jane Mallett Theatre (the stage used to look like an overloaded life raft for some of the larger works they performed there) to Koerner Hall (twice the capacity) in the very first year Koerner opened. “We’re both celebrating our tenth anniversaries there!” Alex Pauk says with a grin. “You could overpower the Jane Mallett fairly easily” I observe. “Your Xenakis certainly did, when was that, in 2006? I think that was actually the start of the renovations there … your knocking every bit of loose plaster off the walls with the sound.” He laughs. “We certainly did. But you know, we, the tenants had a lot of ideas for those renovations, for the hall itself. And what did we get? A renovated lobby.”

Or there’s the whole subject of what it takes to keep implausible enterprises afloat (a topic on which we agree to indulge in no more than a few seconds of mutual commiseration and admiration, and then move on).

**New Wave Reprise**

Of all the possible angles to take on the story, sitting in Esprit’s modest offices on Spadina Ave, with Pauk tapping his fingers on the table for emphasis as he talks, Esprit’s April 3 “New Wave Reprise,” a one-off event at Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, cuts right to the heart of what makes Esprit, and its founding conductor, tick, so we start right there.

The Orchestra’s own description of the event is fairly straightforward. It will start at 7pm with a keynote address by John Rea, and will feature world premiers by emerging Canadian composers (Eugene Astapov, Quinn Jacobs, Bekah Simms, Christina Volpini and Alison Yun-Fei Jiang). Eugene Astapov and Alison Yun-Fei Jiang (for one work) will also be the evening’s guest conductors.

“What’s the size of the ensemble for the event,” I ask.

“It’s a much smaller group,” Pauk replies. “Smaller winds, smaller strings, two percussion, harp, piano. So it’s all the orchestral sounds. What’s interesting is that these same composers, by and large, worked with us last year, for a slightly smaller group of instruments, and will, hopefully work with us again next year, at which time an even larger instrument group will be in play. It’s not to treat them as unable to deal with the orchestra. It’s to create a progression and maintain the relationship. It’s something we have done from the beginning with all the generations of composers we have worked with.”

He pauses, rummages for and reads from a piece of paper, a mission statement of some kind. “This kind of sums it up,” he says. “ ‘The intent, from the beginning of Esprit, has always been to identify, engage, nurture, expose, promote and sustain relationships with creative people.’ That’s been it, basically, from the start of Esprit as a professional organization, of the orchestra, of the kind of outreach we’ve done. But, except perhaps with our musicians, nowhere more importantly than in our relationship to composers and composing. And you do that by repeatedly commissioning composers’ work, and then reprising those commissioned works over the years. I mean if you trace the record over the years – John Rea, Chris Paul Harman, Jose Evangelista, Denis Gougeon, so many others. You seldom see their names just once. And we reach out constantly to new voices, and then bring them along, which is what this is about.”

Astonishing as it may seem, Pauk can lay claim to five distinct generations of composers with whom Esprit has maintained this kind of relationship. “Harry Freedman and Harry Somers, along with Murray Schafer, were the senior generation. I was always influenced by those senior composers because they had strong, clear, independent and remarkable voices, and so that’s what I’ve always looked for when I’ve programmed or commissioned.

Then there is my own generation. Alexina [Louie], and John Rea are examples. And then there’s the emerging generation represented by this event. And the next generation of high schoolers that this group of emerging composers will help bring along. Each benefitting from and contributing to the others in a kind of ongoing evolution.”

“So why New Wave Reprise as a title?” I ask (and then almost I hadn’t, because the New Wave Festival, launched in 2002 has gone
through all kinds of twists and turns over the years). Watching me start to glaze at what begat what and when, Pauk suggests instead that I reach out to Eugene Astapov, who is an alumnus of several of Esprit’s outreach programs, and features as one of the composers (and the main guest conductor) in the April 5 event.

Astapov’s own journey with Esprit started over a decade ago when he participated, as a Grade 11 student, in composition workshops the orchestra hosted at Earl Haig Secondary School (site of Claude Watson School of the Arts), and is a case study in the kind of relationship building Pauk was talking about earlier. “I was fascinated to the extent that I decided to pursue it as a career, thanks to the support of a long-time Esprit friend and collaborator Alan Torok – director of the music program at Earl Haig at the time,” Astapov says.

A year later he began studying at the Eastman School of Music, but stayed in touch with Torok who subsequently re-introduced him to Pauk. As it happened, Esprit was engaged in preparations to host their annual New Wave Festival and commissioned Astapov for it. “It turned out to be a 12-minute work for piano and orchestra, only my second orchestral commission after the Vancouver Symphony. Thinking back now, even though the piece may not have been my strongest, I now realize how it fit like a puzzle with the subsequent works I composed and how the early experience with Esprit helped my understanding of the inner workings of a symphony orchestra.”

After graduate studies at Juilliard, Astapov returned to Toronto for further studies at the doctoral level at the very point in time that Pauk and Esprit were reviving their collaboration with Earl Haig – what was eventually to become the educational outreach program known as Creative Sparks. “In 2015 I joined the community outreach team and was invited to return to Earl Haig as the composition instructor helping students compose new pieces for small orchestra, to be played by Esprit in concert at the end of the school year! As part of this project and example to the students at Earl Haig, Alex extended a commission to me to be performed at the Creative Sparks final concert.”

Once again it was a pivotal commission, due to its use of a pre-recorded element – something he had not done before. “The piece was successful and was picked up by the Vancouver Symphony who performed it the following season,” he says.

It’s a continuing relationship at this point with ongoing opportunities for experimentation: music incorporating electronics; a Creative Sparks commission to compose a work for soprano and string orchestra; the opportunity to conduct that work; conducting unleashing a new passion. “It helped me open and alter my compositional mind and ears in ways that I had never realized was possible: deeper understanding of time signatures and tempi, orchestra- tion techniques that help performers learn music quicker … The list goes on.”

April 5 sees the latest installment in the Astapov/Esprit story. And it’s highly likely it won’t be the last. Which is something that wave after wave of other composers, senior, established, and emerging, can attest to.

John Rea, keynote speaker at the event, was the first composer Esprit ever commissioned. His working title for the address, Pauk informs me, is “Dialogue of the Wind and the Sea – Composers talking to Composers.”

“In other words, making waves” says Pauk. And he should know.©

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Beat by Beat | On Opera

Claude Vivier’s 
Kopernikus
A Hopeful Homecoming

SOPHIE BISSON

Claude Vivier’s opera Kopernikus was commissioned in 1978 by the University of Montreal’s Music Faculty. Supported by the Canada Council, Vivier received a fee of $7,000 (approximately $22,000 in 2019 dollars), which allowed him to focus entirely on composition. Finished in May 1979, Vivier dedicated Kopernikus to “my maître and friend,” Gilles Tremblay. Kopernikus was premiered a year later, on May 8, 1980 at the Théâtre du Monumet National in Montreal.

Since its premiere Kopernikus has travelled extensively, making it the most restaged Canadian opera in Canadian history with over 55 performances. Ranking in second place is the opera Louis Riel (1967), with under 30 performances. However, whereas Louis Riel was performed only once outside of Canada, Kopernikus, mostly unknown at home, is highly celebrated in Europe with almost yearly performances. Canadian restagings have been sporadic: Montreal in 1986 by friends of Vivier via the Événements du neuf; Vancouver in 1990 via the Vancouver New Music Society; the large-scale tour de force of Thom Sokoloski and Autumn Leaf Performance that led to performances in several European and Canadian cities in 2000 and 2001; and the most recent iteration, a 2017 Banff Centre production coming to Toronto in April via Against the Grain Theatre.

“Now one is a prophet in their own land” is a not unfamiliar expression in Canadian arts and, considering Vivier’s profound relationship with religion and all things mystical, the expression is fitting; however, it is not much of an explanation for why Kopernikus is seldomly restaged here. In my search for answers I turned to many Canadian articles and reviews about Kopernikus in the press over the past 20 years. Although producers and directors praise Kopernikus as a genius work of art, both the critics and the public generally express discontent over three recurring themes: the genre (the opera is not really an opera), the plot (there is no plot to follow, so how do you stage nothingness?), and its incomprehensible language.

Thinking back to my own experience with Kopernikus at the Toronto premiere in June 2001, I wish I had been better prepared to receive Vivier’s work. When the performance ended, I was mesmerized, my head filled with complex sounds, syllables and meanings that took weeks to process. I also remember vividly the complete disconnect between various members of the audience; at the end of the performance the man sitting next to me was on his feet madly clapping and hailing bravos at the performers. Since I have this wonderful opportunity to write about Kopernikus before the next set of performances, I hope I can not only help bridge that disconnect but also acknowledge and normalize the uneasiness that can come from it.

Pushing the boundaries

Although Vivier himself declared Kopernikus an opera, both seasoned critics and the public alike seem more comfortable with labelling it musical theatre (there are no arias) or oratorio (the theme is religious and the staging is minimal). Vivier, however, was insistent in calling this work an opera. In remarks prepared for the 1979 premiere, quoted here from Bob Gilmore’s 2014 book, Claude Vivier: A Composer’s Life, Vivier defends his categorization when he states that “opera, as a form of expression of the soul and of human history, cannot die. The human being will always need to represent his/her fantasies, dreams, fears, and hopes.” In a later interview, with Angèle Dagenais in Le Devoir, March 3, 1980, when asked why he wrote an opera, a genre that is sometimes considered passé, he responded that “l’opéra permet la représentation d’états excessifs, et d’une dimension fantastiste inconnue du théâtre.” Clearly, Vivier did not conceive Kopernikus as either a work of musical theatre or as an oratorio.

Vivier does push the boundaries of the operatic genre but not, as some believe, as a rejection of the old masters. Vivier was an avowed fan of Mozart; Agni, the main character in Kopernikus, undertakes a journey not unlike the main characters in Mozart’s Die Zauberflöte. This expansion of boundaries is simply a composer evolving into his own mature style, finding new ways to disrupt expectations, and creating new roles and sounds for melody. In fact, and this could be the topic of an entirely different article, the style of melodic writing that draws breath in Kopernikus ultimately serves as a stepping stone for several of Vivier’s later works.

In scanning reviews, it also became apparent to me that part of Vivier’s contextualization of Kopernikus in the score of the opera was misunderstood in translation. Vivier wrote: “Il n’y a pas à proprement parler d’histoire, mais une suite de scènes...” The first part, “il n’y a pas à proprement parler d’histoire” has been translated, interpreted, and served to the public as “there is no actual story,” which is a mistranslation. ‘À proprement dit’ or ‘à proprement parler’ is one of those very common, and confusing, Francophone expressions. Add a negative in front of it and a language barrier is erected. As a native Francophone, however, I understand that Vivier is saying that Kopernikus is not a story in the traditional sense, rather than that there is no narrative. Granted, Vivier’s opera is devoid of villains or...
external conflict and this, perhaps, adds to the confusion. However, Agni, the central figure in Kopernikus undergoes a series of initiations that ultimately lead her to reach her final and purest spirit state, her dematerialization. The story is inherent in the series of scenes, in her ritualistic journey, where she encounters historical and mythical beings (her mother, Lewis Carroll, Mozart, the Queen of the Night, Tristan, Isolde and Copernicus) who accompany her from one world to the next.

Admittedly, the bare staging that typically accompanies Kopernikus can also be taken as a lack of narrative direction. It is, however, very much in line with Agni’s journey towards the purest of spiritual forms. Vivier explicitly left behind paragraphs of texts explaining each scene of the opera so that creative staging decisions could be left to the directors. Perhaps an unusual choice, but an explanation can be found in Vivier’s own words, again quoted from Gilmore’s book, when he states that he loves many operas of the standard repertory but “I rarely go see them because I usually don’t like the staging.”

Although Vivier kept out of staging decisions, he very much injected traces of himself throughout the staging of Kopernikus: the opera is scored for seven singers and seven instrumentalists (the number seven makes several appearances in other works and Vivier’s birthday is April 14); and in iconography Agni, the Hindu God of fire, is represented by a ram (Vivier’s astrological sign is Aries, a fire sign).

Fascinated with languages (he could speak at least five fluently), Vivier is perhaps the only composer to use an invented language throughout his entire compositional career, beginning with his first vocal work, Ojikawa (1968), and ending with his last, Glaubst du an die Unsterblichkeit der Seele (Do you believe in the soul’s immortality). In 2000, as part of the Holland Festival, Vivier’s Opéra-fleuve en deux parties received eight performances in Amsterdam, marking the world premiere of Rêves d’un Marco Polo. The production was subsequently revived, also in Amsterdam, in 2004, recorded by the Asko/Schoenberg Ensemble and released on DVD in 2006. Perhaps, we too, can soon have a premiere of Vivier’s Opéra-fleuve en deux parties and discover Rêves d’un Marco Polo.

Looking ahead

In one of his last letters, Vivier wrote to Montreal conductor Philippe Dourguin and laid out his outline for a second opera. His “opéra fleuve” on the explorer Marco Polo was to consist of seven parts and use previously composed materials. Conductor Reinhart de Leeuw (Asko/Schoenberg Ensemble) and director Pierre Audi (Nederlandse Opera) reconstituted Vivier’s opera in the 1990s. Because their version was different than what Vivier originally lays out in his letter, the opera was renamed Opéra-fleuve en deux parties, with Kopernikus as part one and Rêves d’un Marco Polo as part two. Part two ends with Vivier’s final composition, the very much discussed Glaubst du an die Unsterblichkeit der Seele (Do you believe in the soul’s immortality). In 2000, as part of the Holland Festival, Vivier’s Opéra-fleuve en deux parties received eight performances in Amsterdam, marking the world premiere of Rêves d’un Marco Polo. The production was subsequently revived, also in Amsterdam, in 2004, recorded by the Asko/Schoenberg Ensemble and released on DVD in 2006. Perhaps, we too, can soon have a premiere of Vivier’s Opéra-fleuve en deux parties and discover Rêves d’un Marco Polo.
discovering our own Canadian works. a leading opera collective to guide us in towards a new era of (re)
surrounds the production, does indeed give much to hope for: hope.
antly, hope." His passion for the opera, and the stellar team that
for AtG to move towards shaking things up in the unexplored world
repertoire. Her doctoral research focuses on Canadian opera.

Sophie Bisson is a PhD student in musicology at York University
and an opera singer who is passionate about Canadian
opening night in 1979: "... Let things go and just listen to the sound."
As synchronicity would have it, I was introduced to McKiver in
a local restaurant, in early February, by Jumbies’ artistic director
Ruth Howard, just before Soundstreams presented a performance
of Steve Reich’s Different Trains, also a work for string quartet and
pre-recorded tape. (My concert report of that evening can be viewed
on the WholeNote website). Little did I realize at the time McKiver’s
upcoming connection to what we were about to hear that night.

Wanting to find out more about the project, I spoke recently on
the phone with McKiver who was just ending a residency at the
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In much the same way that Reich created his work from the speech
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viewing Indigenous elders from their community—the Lac Seul
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studying for an undergraduate degree in viola performance at York
University where music has been a major influence and inspiration, particularly while

McKiver’s work will also be for string quartet and is their response to
Different Trains, and is their response to
and performers.
the interview. During the 1930s, the Lac Seul First Nation community was flooded causing the loss of their entire land base. The cause of this flooding was a hydro dam project which the community was not told of and almost overnight, up to 40 feet of water appeared, destroying people’s homes and livelihoods. It was an apocalyptic moment, McIver said, that continues to have an ongoing impact on the community.

While Jumblies and Soundstreams are based in Toronto, McIver has been given the opportunity and flexibility to work from their own land base. “This is so integral to being an Indigenous composer, to still live on my ancestral homelands and to be able to share this work.”

They’ll be providing excerpts from the interview tapes as well as Skyping in to dialogue with Jumblies’ community groups in Toronto. “There will be a long discussion process throughout the creation of the work,” McIver said. “People won’t just be meeting the voices of my elders through the format of a string quartet, but the community will be able to listen to a 20-minute story rather than just a three-minute excerpt used in the string quartet. This way they can become acquainted with the stories and teachings that are being shared with me in multiple ways.” Working with these stories has profound meaning for McIver and navigating the transition point between the recorded stories and the string quartet form is challenging. McIver seeks to “honour the stories that have been shared with me and this process is giving me a moment to deeply reflect on the teachings that I have been gifted. An important part of the process for me is to find a way where I can amplify these voices in a manner that is respectful.”

A work-in-progress performance is planned for May 2019 with the premiere performance scheduled for November 2019. Additional plans include a potential tour to Sioux Lookout as well as possible inclusion of interdisciplinary elements arising from the overall process. As well, there will be a companion choral piece composed by Melody’s mother, Beverley McIver, using the same themes and source material to be performed by the Gather Round Singers, Jumblies’ mixed-ability, mixed-age community choir.

History of Bathurst Street Sounds
The History of Bathurst Street Sounds is another community-based partnership project, bringing together the Music Gallery, A Different Booklist, 918 Bathurst and Myseum of Toronto. On March 24, people can learn about the history of Bathurst Street soundscapes during a panel discussion and photo gallery launch at A Different Booklist to be followed by a parade to 918 Bathurst St. for an exhibition of Bathurst St. music archives. The history of music on Bathurst St. largely centres around various clubs, shops and the prominent Western Indian community historically located on Bathurst around Bloor. The extensive cluster of influential clubs in the Bathurst area included The Trane Studio, Lee’s Palace, the Annex Wreckroom/Coda, and even Sneaky Dee’s, originally located across from Honest Ed’s. Clothing stores such as Too Black Guys helped supply the apparel for many golden-age hip-hop videos, and even Honest Ed’s was once a destination for record buyers before its tenant Sonic Boom moved elsewhere. Various calypso mas ensembles were associated with spots in the area and the bookstore A Different Booklist has hosted a variety of Afrocentric cultural activities over the years. With all the changes happening in the neighbourhood and with the reconstruction of the Bloor/Bathurst intersection and much of Markham St, this event offers a rare opportunity to listen in to soundworlds both past and present.

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example. Currently, they provide opportunities for the larger Toronto minimalism, field recordings and elements of acoustic ecology, for the pursuit of a hybrid sound, combining gamelan, electroacoustics, this concert demonstrates. One of ECCG’s distinctive characteristics is Tremblay and Estelle Lemire from Quebec; as well as Peter Hatch and Ade Suparman and Burhan Sukarma from West Java, Indonesia; Gilles concert on March 7 featuring music by master musician-composers Gamelan. The ECCG will be celebrating 35 years of commissioning, gamelan instruments in Toronto – the Evergreen Club Contemporary Orchestra, conducted by Boris Brott, who played a key role at various stages of the work’s gestation, both in terms of his mentorship of Tara-Louise Montour, the work’s solo violinist, and in suggesting that Croall consider composing the music for the project. The texts that Croall consider composing the music for the project. The texts

 Barbara Croall

On March 31, a newly commissioned oratorio, Mziuwe… (Everywhere…), by Odawa First Nation composer and musician Barbara Croall, will be premiered by the Pax Christi Chorale and sung in Ojibwe Odawa with surtitles. In October 2018, I had the great honour of attending another one of Croall’s premieres in Montreal – Saia’atokenhkti: Honouring Saint Kateri. I attended two performances of this work – the first at the Kahnawake Catholic Church located on Kahnawake Mohawk Territory, and the second at St. Jean Baptiste Church in Montreal. The music was performed by the McGill Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Boris Brott, who played a key role at various stages of the work’s gestation, both in terms of his mentorship of Tara-Louise Montour, the work’s solo violinist, and in suggesting that Croall consider composing the music for the project. The texts (by Darren Bonaparte) were spoken in Mohawk by a member of the Kahnawake community. The piece also included traditional Mohawk music sung by community members. The work told the story of Kateri Tekakwitha, 17th-century Mohawk young woman who converted to Catholicism after a traumatic exodus from her traditional homelands in upstate New York due to her villages being razed by fire. She ended up with the Jesuit mission on the south shore of the St. Lawrence River and was believed to have extraordinary healing abilities. She was eventually canonized as a saint.

To create that work, Croall spoke at length with elders from Kahnawake and Kanasatake, as well as elders in her own community, particularly about their Catholic faith and how they understand that in light of the church’s treatment of Indigenous people in residential schools. In an interview she gave before the performance, she spoke about how these elders understand their Christian faith as being different from the European form, and in their mind they have transformed Catholicism into a matriarchal belief system, blending Mary with the traditional corn goddess.

In this latest commissioned work, Mziuwe… (Everywhere…), Croall will be performing on cedar flute and voice along with Rod Nettagog, an Ojibwe (Makwa Dodem/Bear Clan) performer from the Henvey Inlet First Nation who also performed in Croall’s orchestral work Midveve’g’n (Sound of the Drum). Other performers include Krizstina Szabó, mezzo soprano; Justin Welsh, baritone; and the Toronto Mozart Players. Croall has recently been appointed artist-in-residence and cultural consultant by the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony.

IN WITH THE NEW QUICK PICKS

MAR 16, 8PM: Array Space, Arraymusic. The latest in the Rat-drifting series curated by Martin Arnold features artist and improviser Juliana Pivato. This performance will include various experiments on popular song.

MAR 19, 7:30PM: Canadian Music Centre. Pianist R. Andrew Lee performs Ann Southam’s Soundings for New Piano.

MAR 24, 8PM: Esprit Orchestra’s “Grand Slam!” concert features Trompe l’oeil, a world premiere by Canadian Christopher Thornborrow; Japanese composer Maki Ishii’s Afro-Concerto; and Unsuk Chin’s (Korea) Cello Concerto.

Jana Luksts

MAR 29, 8PM: Music Gallery. The latest concert in the Emergents Series with pianist Jana Luksts and the ensemble Happenstance who will present recital projects shaped around reimagining how classical music can sound, transforming the chamber music format into something new.

APR 5 7:30: Esprit Orchestra’s “Grand Slam!” concert features Trompe l’oeil, a world premiere by Canadian Christopher Thornborrow; Japanese composer Maki Ishii’s Afro-Concerto; and Unsuk Chin’s (Korea) Cello Concerto.

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

Ade Suparman

in Indonesian community life with every town having its own gamelan and local musical traditions. The word gamelan refers to an orchestra of mainly percussion instruments crafted of metal arranged in rows on the floor including gongs hung from carved wooden racks. Other instruments include voice, a wind instrument called the suling and solo string-based instruments.

Canadian composer Colin McPhee (1900–1964) is well known for being the first Western composer to study the music of Bali and Java, and his associations with American composers Henry Cowell and Lou Harrison for example, helped to usher in what became known as world music. Despite current sensitivities about cultural appropriation, this phenomenon of bringing non-Western influences into Western concert music has had far-reaching impact.

In 1983, composer Jon Siddall, with the assistance of Lou Harrison, established Canada’s first ensemble performing on Indonesian gamelan instruments in Toronto – the Evergreen Club Contemporary Gamelan. The ECCG will be celebrating 35 years of commissioning, performing and recording contemporary music for gamelan with a concert on March 7 featuring music by master musician-composers Ade Suparman and Burhan Sukarma from West Java, Indonesia; Gilles Tremblay and Estelle Lemire from Quebec; as well as Peter Hatch and Bill Parsons from BC and Ontario. Playing on a group of instruments indigenous to West Java known as a gamelan degung playing in the Sundanese style, this pioneering Canadian ensemble has made a significant mark on the global gamelan scene and is committed to including Indonesian musicians and their music in their repertoire, as this concert demonstrates. One of ECCG’s distinctive characteristics is the pursuit of a hybrid sound, combining gamelan, electroacoustics, minimalism, field recordings and elements of acoustic ecology, for example. Currently, they provide opportunities for the larger Toronto community to play their instruments at an ongoing meetup that happens on the second Sunday of the month at Arraymusic.
Beat by Beat | Classical & Beyond

Chamber Cornucopia Makes for an Early Spring

PAUL ENNIS

On March 17, Christian Blackshaw, now 70, brings a selection of works from his acclaimed Complete Mozart Sonata Series, performed and recorded at London’s Wigmore Hall, to Walter Hall. Hailed as “magical,” “captivating,” and “masterful,” the fourth volume of the series was named as one of the Best Classical Recordings of 2015 by The New York Times. Blackshaw’s all-Mozart program for Mooredale Concerts will include Sonata No.11 in A Major, K331 and Sonata No.14 in C Minor, K457.

In a 2013 interview with Gramophone after his year-long Wigmore Hall series, Blackshaw spoke of Mozart as a particular passion. “It was a sort of penny-dropping moment discovering Mozart,” he said. “I think I’m a frustrated singer and to me the sonatas can be construed as being mini-operas. I find his whole being informed by the voice and the vocal line.” In the interview he rejected a characterization of Mozart’s music as being “restrained.” “There have got to be elements of joie de vivre,” he responded. His own ultimate goal in performance is a state of “slow, calm release” where he can reach “a sense of communion.” And does he find music more conducive to communion than words? “Yes,” he said instantly. “There’s no small talk [in music].”

COC Noon-hour Concerts

Born in Siberia to a family of medical PhDs, Nuné Melik started playing the violin at the age of six; her first solo performance with orchestra took place a year later at the Kazan Symphony Hall. A prizewinner of numerous competitions and audience awards, she has performed across the globe, including the Stern Auditorium and Weill Recital Hall in Carnegie Hall and our own Glenn Gould Studio. In 2010, as an umbrella for her exploration of new repertoire, Melik founded the Hidden Treasure International Project, comprising research, performance and lectures of rarely heard music. By way of performances and lectures she also advocates for and promotes the music of the Caucasus, her heritage. Together with her longtime collaborator, pianist Michel-Alexandre Broekaert, in October 2017 she launched Hidden Treasure, a CD featuring unknown works by Armenian composers with Melik’s own original program notes; CBC radio called it a “love letter to Armenia.” A multi-talented artist who speaks five languages, Melik produced and directed a documentary last year about Armenian composer Arno Babadjian. She has published books of poetry in Russian, which were translated into Armenian by the Writer’s Union of Armenia in 2016. Together with her CD, a book of French and English poetry was simultaneously released in October 2017.

COC presents Nuné Melik’s “Hidden Treasures – Armenian music unearthed” on March 12, with collaborative pianist Michel-Alexandre Broekaert, a free concert in the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre of the Four Seasons Centre.

The Castalian String Quartet, founded in 2011 and based in London, England, was a finalist in the 2016 Banff Competition won by the Rolston String Quartet. Last year they were named the winner of the first Merito String Quartet Award/Valentin Erben Prize which includes €20,000 for professional development, along with a further €25,000 towards sound recordings and a commission. The award came as a complete surprise to the quartet since there was no application process or competition for it; instead a secret jury

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Concerto for Two Violins in D minor BWV 1043, J S Bach
Jonathan Crow, concertmaster, Toronto Symphony Orchestra
Andrew Wan, concertmaster, Orchestre symphonique de Montréal
Requiem, W A Mozart
Kendra Dyck, soprano
Jennifer Routhier, mezzo soprano
River Guard, tenor
Michael Robert-Broder, bass-baritone
David Bowser, conductor
Toronto Mozart Players
Pax Christi Chamber Choir

Toronto Mozart Players
Her comprehensive April 4 recital in the Music in the Afternoon series of the Women's Musical Club of Toronto begins with Busoni’s soaring arrangement of Bach’s iconic *Chaconne from Partita No. 2 for violin, BWV 1004*, taps into Schubert’s fountain of lyricism, the Impromtu Op.142, No. 1. Haydn moves on to Mozart’s haunting *Rondo in A Minor*, K511 and Liszt’s virtuosic Hungarian Rhapsody No.12; then concludes with Beethoven’s notoriously difficult *Sonata No.29 in B-flat Major, Op.106 “Hammerklavier.”* In Walter Hall; just a few weeks after a performance in London’s Wigmore Hall.

**Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society**

Janina Fialkowska’s March 11 recital for the Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society, marking her 37th year of performing for KWCMS, features an ambitious, well-packed program that begins with Mozart’s beloved *Sonata in A Major, K310*. An impromptu by Germaine Tailleferre; a nocturne by Fauré; an intermezzo by Poulenc; two pieces by Debussy; and Ravel’s *Sonatine* – a selection of music by French composers, reminiscent of a French program by Fialkowska’s teacher, Arthur Rubinstein – lead into three mazurkas, a nocturne (Op.55, No.2), scherzo (No.3) and ballade (No.4) by Chopin (the composer with whom she is most identified) performed in Fialkowska’s inimitable style.

Later in the month, clarinetist James Campbell joins the Pendereckii String Quartet for Brahms’ splendid *Clarinet Quintet*. Dvořák’s *Quartet No.10 in E-flat Major, Op.51*, “Slavonic” is the other major work on the March 20 program.

Timothy Steeves steps away from his usual role as pianist with Duo Concertante for a recital of four adventurous Haydn sonatas on April 1, his second all-Haydn recital for the KWCMS.

**Music Toronto**

Danny Driver’s March 5 recital was the subject of my conversation in our February issue with the Hyperion Records artist, who “may be the best pianist you’ve never heard.” Works by CPE Bach, Schumann, Saariaho, Ravel and Madtner will be performed by this uncompromising artist who demands a lot of himself: “When I feel I have come close [to achieving what I set out to achieve artistically], it’s an intensely rewarding experience.”

The following week on March 14, the Lafayette String Quartet – artists-in-residence at the University of Victoria since 1991 – who have spent more than 30 years together with no changes in personnel – partners with the Saguenay (formed in 1989 as the Alcan) String Quartet to perform three string octets. Join them in this rare opportunity to hear Niels Gade’s *String Octet in F Major, Op.17*, Russian-Canadian Airat Ichmouratov’s *String Octet in G Minor, Op.56*, “The Letter” and Mendelssohn’s deservedly famous *Octet in E-flat Major, Op.20*.

The Saguenay String Quartet) and the Lafayette have played together many times, a reflection of their special musical bond and creative friendship.

**CLASSICAL AND BEYOND QUICK PICKS**

- **MAR 8, 8PM AND 9, 2:30 & 8PM:** Critically acclaimed violinist Nikki Chooi is the soloist in Vivaldi’s indispensable The Four Seasons with the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. Nicolas Ellis, who was recently named artistic partner to Yannick Nézet-Séguin and the Orchestre Métropolitain for the 2018/19 and 2019/20 seasons, leads the KWS in Beethoven’s essential Symphony No.6 “Pastoral.”

- **MAR 9, 7:30 AND 10, 3PM:** Gemma New leads the Toronto Symphony Orchestra in Shostakovich’s kinetic Symphony No.5; Kelly Zimba, flute, and Heidi Van Hoesen Gorton, harp, take charge of Mozart’s Concerto for Flute and Harp K299/297f, the first work Mozart ever wrote for that combination of soloists.
MAR 10, 2:30PM: Bradley Thachuk leads the Niagara Symphony Orchestra and TSO concertmaster Jonathan Crow in Sibelius’ richly Romantic Violin Concerto Op.47. Sibelius’ satisfying Symphony No.3 completes the nod to the great Finnish composer.

MAR 16, 7:30PM: Gemma New conducts the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra in a heavenly program featuring Debussy’s hypnotic Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun and his impressionistic Nocturnes. Holst’s riveting The Planets completes the exciting evening.

MAR 20, 2:30PM: Georgian Music brings the Lafayette and Saguenay String Quartets to Barrie for a repeat of their Music Toronto program of March 14 headed by Mendelssohn’s youthful masterwork, his Octet in E-flat Major, Op.20.

MAR 23, 7:30PM: Barrie Concerts presents the Penderecki String Quartet in an evening of Dvořák’s chamber music. Included are the composer’s String Quartet No.10 “Slavonic” and, aided by pianist Benjamin Smith, both of his piano quintets, the second of which (Op.81) is one of the masterpieces of the form.

MAR 23, 7:30PM: The Oakville Chamber Orchestra celebrates their 35th anniversary with a performance of Bach’s Six Brandenburg Concertos, an invigorating choice of music for such an auspicious occasion.

MAR 27 AND 28, 8PM: Gunther Herbig, TSO music director from 1989 to 1994, conducts two pillars of the 19th-century repertoire: Schubert’s moving Symphony No. 8 “Unfinished” and Bruckner’s Symphony No. 9, the fourth movement of which the composer left unfinished on the day he died, leaving only the first three movements complete.

MAR 30, 7PM: Mandle Cheung continues to realize his conducting dream, leading his orchestra in Tchaikovsky’s Piano Concerto No.1 (Kevin Ahfat is the soloist) and Mahler’s titanic Symphony No.1.

MAR 30, 8PM: The Canadian Sinfonietta, with guest violist Rivka Golani, mark the onset of spring with the world premiere of David Jaeger’s Raven Concerto for viola and chamber orchestra, Copland’s lovely Appalachian Spring, Britten’s Lachrymae Op.48a for viola and strings and Elgar’s Serenade for Strings. Tak Ng Lai conducts.

MAR 30, 8PM AND 31, 2PM: The Oakville Symphony celebrates the musical friendship between Brahms (Symphony No.2) and Dvořák (Violin Concerto). Leslie Ashworth is the violin soloist; Robert De Clara, music director since 1997, conducts.

APR 7, 1PM: Gramophone magazine called American-born Marina Piccinini “the Heifetz of the flute.” Find out why at the RCM free (ticket required) concert at Mazzoleni Hall; with Benjamin Smith, piano.

APR 7, 3PM: RCM presents the justly celebrated American pianist Richard Goode in an all-Beethoven recital that includes the “Pastoral,” “Moonlight” and “Les adieux” sonatas, and selections from the Op.119 Bagatelles, all topped off by the master’s final sonata, the celestial Op.111.

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Andrew Timar

World music: a sometimes contentious term that entered the lexicon twice, 25 years and two continents apart.

Too few sources reflect that the term “world music” was first used around 1962 in US academia as an inclusive catchall for what they are up to, and talking with some of the instructors.

ensembles today, and the direction they may be headed, by looking at sides: academics, presenters, labels and performers.

The 1962 US world music ensemble course bug took a few years to infect schools north of the border. But after a rocky initial startup period, it slowly spread across Canada, mostly in the decades bracketing the new millennium. Although it should be said that York University was probably the site where world music ensemble credit courses were first launched in this country by its Music Department founding chair, R. Sterling Beckwith, as early as the 1969/1970 academic year.

Fifty years later, world music courses are no longer the exotic music school outliers they were initially seen to be by many. They have become mainstays at some of the largest Ontario universities and colleges, offering practising professional musicians teaching opportunities, while introducing thousands of students to a wide diversity of approaches to making music – far beyond what classical and jazz programs can offer. I would argue that they prepare students to open their minds via practical experience, potentially allowing them to meet the challenges of cultural diversity in our increasingly multicultural urban and internet spaces.

York U’s Department of Music’s pioneering commitment to global music doesn’t show signs of slowing down, with nine concerts alone in its March World Music Festival and an advertised “20-plus international cultures represented.” It’s followed closely by early April concerts by the University of Waterloo Balinese Gamelan and University of Toronto’s World Music Ensembles.

So, What’s In a Name?

Judging from the liberal use of the term “world music” at these universities, all appears to be well with this 20th-century term and learning approach. Looking deeper however the tag is facing increasingly frequent challenges from voices on all sides: academics, presenters, labels and performers.

So let’s take the pulse of three Ontario university world music ensembles today, and the direction they may be headed, by looking at what they are up to, and talking with some of the instructors.

York University’s World Music Festival, March 14 and 15: report from the front lines

Produced by Prof. Sherry Johnson, York U’s mid-March World Music Festival, according to the Music Department website “...[is a] global sonic tour ... of York’s world music program.” All the concerts are at the Tribute Communities Recital Hall, Acolade East Building, York U.

March 14 at 11am the festival launches with the Cuban Ensemble directed by Rick Lazar and Anthony Michelli. Lazar also directs the Escola de Samba later the same day. The festival also includes West African Drumming: Ghana directed by respected master drummer Kwasi Dunyo, West African Drumming: Mande directed by Anna Melnikoff, and Caribbean Music Ensemble directed by Lindy Burgess, all on March 14. Then on March 15, Charles Hong directs the Korean Drum Ensemble, Sherry Johnson the Celtic Ensemble, and Kim Chow-Morris conducts the Chinese Classical Orchestra. It then wraps, March 15, with an evening concert by the Balkan Music Ensemble directed by Irene Markoff. (Please refer to our listings for exact times for all concerts.)

Rick Lazar: Escola de Samba and Cuban Ensemble director

I contacted Lazar about his world music teaching practice. He emailed a very detailed report on his teaching approach and on the music his students are presenting.

Lazar has had extensive experience teaching various ensembles at Humber College (1995 to 2003) and since 2003 at York University. Make no mistake; he’s no ordinary sessional instructor. His knowledge of and passion for world drums makes him a first-call drummer for a diverse array of artists. Voted Percussionist of the Year five times by Jazz Report magazine for his work with many bands and headliners, his popular Toronto groups Montuno Police and Samba Squad (celebrating its 20th anniversary this year) have both released multiple albums.

At York, “I teach two ensembles: Escola de Samba and Cuban music, each divided into two classes,” he began. “My classes are mostly made of non-music majors. While most of the class time is devoted to getting these often untrained students to gel into a group, I also provide notes on the history of the music [giving students essential cultural context] – and test them on it too.”

“The Escola de Samba classes feature hands-on percussion: all the students have to play a standard samba instrument including the surdo (bass drum), caixa (snare drums), agogo (bells), tamborim and ganzas (metal shakers). These classes may have up to 30 participants. [As for genres in our repertoire] this year we’re covering samba, samba reggae, and axé another popular music genre from Bahia, Northeast Brazil.

“My teaching strategy is to simplify rhythmic patterns for the lead instruments as none of the students are drummers and can’t play the typical patterns up to speed. For example, while the students won’t be able to master the tamborim carreteiro (“ride” technique) in a single term they can learn idiomatic fanfares and rhythmic patterns.

“For the March 14 concert, one class is doing a samba reggae dance feature [since dance is integral to the genre]. Songs we’ll be doing this year are É Batana (samba), Enquanto Gente Batuka in the pagoda genre, a subgenre of samba, and Embala Eu in samba de roda, an older Afro-Brazilian dance type.

“In the Cuban Music ensembles I teach a section of first and second year undergrads plus a section of senior-level students. Both perform Cuban folkloric music with drums, dance and songs. Most of the rhythms only have six to eight drum parts, so the class must also learn the dances and the songs which go with them. The Cuban class is a little harder than the Escola de Samba as it takes time to get a decent
Alan Hetherington directing the Latin American Ensemble, drummer K wasi Dunyo, Steel Pan Ensemble director Joe Cullen, and University of Toronto. Directing their groups are Ghanaian master its World Music Ensembles at Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, trying their hand playing the instruments.

Made Suparta, the Balinese gamelan will perform a mix of contemporary and traditional Balinese repertoire from all the countries I mentioned including Bali. After the free concert the audience is invited to try their hand at playing the instruments.

Irene Markoff, Balkan Music Ensemble director I asked the ethnomusicologist, musician, conductor and veteran York U. lecturer and ensemble instructor about her geographically inclusive course:

“We cover music from the Balkans (Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Greece, Albania),” Markoff wrote, “as well as Azerbaijan and Turkey (a better part of the Balkans were a part of the Ottoman Empire for almost 500 years). We also perform Kurdish music from Iran, music of the Roma, and a little repertoire from Iran, as I often have Iranian students in my ensemble.

“This year there’s a Greek student in the class who helps with Greek pronunciation and also two Iranian students who help with Farsi pronunciation. I transcribe and arrange music for the ensemble according to the instruments the students play and sometimes teach vocal music by rote as that is the way the repertoire would be taught in the village context.

“For the World Music Festival concert we will perform repertoire from all the countries I mentioned including Edertez by Goran Bregovic, based on a popular traditional folk song of the Balkan Romani.’

Markoff sees the debate about terminology this way: “I don’t have a problem with the term ‘world music’ as it has been used and accepted by ethnomusicologists and universities for many years now. In a general sense world music means music of the world’s cultures.

“Also, there is a lot of hybridity happening in countries such as Turkey these days. Folk music ensembles seen on national TV and elsewhere include Western instruments such as acoustic/electric guitars and electric bass guitars, adding harmony to a music that was essentially monophonic [and modal]. … What do we call that music then?

As for other candidates for an accepted term, Markoff notes: “Finding a general cover term is problematic … You may be aware that in the past other terms used were ‘primitive,’ ‘non-Western,’ ‘ethnic’ and ‘folk.’ Some have suggested ‘roots’ and ‘local.’ I don’t believe that any of those are appropriate overall terms.”

University Of Waterloo Balinese Gamelan Ensemble

April 3, the UW Balinese Gamelan and the Grebel Community Gamelan perform at the Humanities Theatre, University of Waterloo. Ethnomusicologist Maisie Sum introduced world music ensembles at UW in Waterloo ON in 2013 with a Balinese gamelan semarang dana course.

Directed by Sum and featuring Grebel artist-in-residence I Dewa Made Suparta, the Balinese gamelan will perform a mix of contemporary and traditional Balinese repertoire. As they did last year, they may include Balinese dance in the concert, a near-essential performative ingredient in Bali. After the free concert the audience is invited to try their hand playing the instruments.

University of Toronto’s World Music Ensembles Concert

April 6 at 2:30pm, University of Toronto Faculty of Music presents its World Music Ensembles at Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto. Directing their groups are Ghanaian master drummer Kwasi Dunyo, Steel Pan Ensemble director Joe Cullen, and Alan Hetherington directing the Latin American Ensemble.

While I was unable to reach these instructors before press time, this...
Beat by Beat | Music Theatre

Seeking Hope
And Human Connection

JENNIFER PARR

Toronto musical theatre fans have been eagerly waiting for the advent of Benj Pasek and Justin Paul’s 2017 Tony Award-winning musical Dear Evan Hansen, and now the waiting is almost over. Previews begin at the Royal Alexandra Theatre on March 5, with the official opening later this month. Not only is this the very first international production of the massive hit, but following an eight-month casting tour across the country, the cast led by Robert Markus is almost entirely Canadian (with almost every province represented) making this a great showcase for Canadian musical theatre talent.

On top of that, this is a “sit down” production that can run as long as there is a demand for tickets; and there is a great demand, the run having already been extended to June 30.

There is something about this show that connects with audiences as well as critics in such a strong way that Dear Evan Hansen won the top musical theatre Tony Awards in 2017 (Best Book, Best Score, and Best Musical), over the gloriously life-affirming Come From Away.

Why has there been such a strong reaction?

Perhaps it is because it is so unexpected that a musical could be written about bullying, loneliness, and suicide and yet, with its unique groundbreaking recipe of authentic characters, popular score and uncannily modern use of social media, also manage to be upbeat and positive, taking the audience through a sometimes painful, cathartic journey to a place of hope and human connection.

Pasek and Paul are now famous for their award-winning lyrics for the movie La La Land and songs for The Greatest Showman, but when they were still young students in college (University of Michigan) they started talking about something that had happened at Pasek’s high school that, as they discussed it, would turn into the unlikely inspiration for musical creation. Over one summer a student had passed away, and although he had been almost anonymous at the school, because of his death, became a celebrated figure with everyone looking for a way to be connected to him. Talking about how this need to be part of a collective mourning process seemed to be something that wasn’t exclusive to that event but also belonged to other tragic events as well, such as school shootings, or 9/11, they decided to create a musical around a similar event, not ever expecting it to be a hit.

Perhaps it is because it is so unexpected that a musical could be written about bullying, loneliness, and suicide and yet, with its unique groundbreaking recipe of authentic characters, popular score and uncannily modern use of social media, also manage to be upbeat and positive, taking the audience through a sometimes painful, cathartic journey to a place of hope and human connection.

The musical’s creators have talked in interviews about how audience members approach the actors saying that they “are, or know Evan Hansen” or the other characters, and are grateful for this chance to be able to talk about difficult social and personal issues with their friends and families. While there are cynical and mocking elements to the story, for example, looking at how quickly people can jump onto the bandwagon of popularity, the composer/lyricists credit working with book-writer Steven Levenson with the emerging discovery of how to make the show both funny and uplifting as well.

Dear Evan Hansen doesn’t stand alone in its ambitious

 Judith R. Cohen

needlessly, I think) shamed term ‘world music'? It sure doesn’t have the marketing zip of ‘world.’” Cohen concludes.

So what’s the future of culturally diverse music teaching and performance in Ontario music education?

Irene Markoff is encouraged: “York U [Department of Music] is now trying to find ways to draw more music majors to the world music ensembles, which is a good sign. ... I believe that any Ontario music university student who has a desire to teach at the public or high school level should be required to take a few world music ensemble classes when offered. That would prepare them to meet the challenges of cultural diversity in the classroom.”

Rick Lazar adds: “I hope culturally diverse teaching and performance continue to develop as they give students exposure to different cultures, while providing personal enjoyment... I have many East Asian students who love my courses. They come from a completely different culture [from the Brazilian and Cuban ones I teach] so they have to learn how to hear, move and play to an internal pulse ... and to hear their individual part as part of the larger whole.”

Mark Duggan gets the last word among these contributors in our discussion: “The reality is that we have to start referring to specific styles of music or specific regions with their proper names, the names that the creators and purveyors of those traditions use. I think the next step is to stop exoticizing non-Western musics and put them on equal footing with privileged traditions. Like integration in a multicultural society, that means giving them equal space in music schools, or perhaps creating schools that specialize in one or more non-Western traditions without including any European classical perspectives.”

At the same time as we reach toward increasing diversity, entrenched attitudes remain in music education – as in other reaches of our society – which marginalize certain musics, particularly non-Eurocentric ones, such as Indigenous voices. What music is “ours”? And what place should so-called “other” musics have in our music education today?

These are bracing, far-reaching questions.

Footnote:

Regular readers of this column over the years will know that this is not the first time I have delved into aspects of these topics. My September 2018 column Reboasting the Beat: Thoughts on the “World Music” Tag explored the implications of the 1962 and 1987 disparate points of entry for the “world music” tag. For more on the spread of world music as a discipline in Canada, see my March 2016 column, York Music’s World Class Role. And for more insights into the Waterloo Balinese Gamelan Ensemble, see my April 2014 conversation with ethnomusicologist Maisie Sum in Smartphone Serendipity, Not The Only Way.  

Andrew Timar is a Toronto musician and music writer. He can be contacted at worldmusic@thewholenote.com.
contemporary storytelling. Looking at the current music theatre landscape there seems to be an increasing appetite for musicals with stories about today, about complex, dark issues that are difficult to talk about otherwise.

Pasek and Paul credit this at least in part to their generation growing up during the renaissance of the movie musical (Beauty and the Beast, The Little Mermaid, etc.) and the resulting expectation that characters in movies or onstage will express themselves and their emotions through music. The expected music then becomes a way to go beyond the spoken word to what lies beneath, and so to create a deeper, more profound experience for the audience.

In Toronto last month, Tapestry New Opera premiered Hook Up, a new musical/opera hybrid about campus rape by Julie Tepperman and Chris Thornborrow. It struck a profound chord with audiences, combining the authenticity of a very real contemporary setting and characters with humour and compassion to bring a discussion of a very sensitive topic into the shared space of the theatre. Sting’s The Last Ship, which is making its North American debut of a revised script, at the Princess of Wales Theatre until March 24, does something similar, though on a different scale, using wonderful pop- and folk-inspired music to explore the darker side of government interference and industrial privatization, giving life to a community’s desperation at the threatened closure of its shipyard, and also to the resurgent strength of that community as hope is found in banding together against the threat.

Parade
Both recent and older musicals that deal with difficult issues are also being revived more and more frequently, in full productions and in concert format. One of the darker shows inspired by real-life events, Jason Robert Brown and Alfred Uhry’s 1998 Tony Award-winning musical, Parade, is one of these, although the true story can be difficult to handle, even filtered through the medium of the stage. Based on the real false arrest, 1913 trial and eventual lynching of Jewish factory manager Leo Frank in Atlanta, Georgia. Parade was revived here in 2011 by The Musical Stage Company and is being performed again this month as a professional staged concert reading by Toronto Musical Concerts on March 21 and 22.

Speaking to TMC’s artistic producer, Christopher Wilson, about why he feels this is an important show to revive, I couldn’t help but see another reason why there is a resurgent hunger for musicals that deal with difficult topics: the world we are living in now is fraught with political and social extremes, and we need a way to comprehend and find a way to deal with those issues. As Wilson says about this show: “Though Parade is set in 1913, a (post-Civil War) era fraught with immense racial tension and religious intolerance, it is both shocking and disconcerting how prevalent that same systemic antisemitism, divisiveness and violence exists in our world’s current political and
The Lightning Thief

Even on the lighter side of music theatre these days, serious issues of identity and social belonging find their place. In Soulpepper’s world premiere in February of Sarah Wilson and Mike Ross’ new musical Rose (based on Gertrude Stein’s children’s book The World Is Round), a brightly coloured symbolic and light-hearted world is anchored on a nine-year-old girl’s desperate need to understand “who, what, where and why” she is; and the power of those questions makes her journey a profound one for the audience.

As Wilson said to me about Parade, it is important to keep works like this alive in the repertoire to “continue to promote discourse and awareness of difficult and important issues.” Toronto’s Musical Stage Company is a great champion of works of this type, with last season’s Toronto premiere of Fun Home based on Alison Bechdel’s autobiographical graphic novel dealing with issues of gender identity and family dysfunction; and coming up in April, Brian Yorkey and Tom Kitt’s Next to Normal, which explores issues of mental health and the impact of a bipolar parent on her family.

The subject of Parade

Jennifer Parr is a Toronto-based director, dramaturge, fight director, and acting coach, brought up from a young age on a rich mix of musicals, Shakespeare, and new Canadian plays.

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“I always aim for a connectivity between the human and non-human aspects of life as intertwined,” explains Barbara Croall in a written project description of Miziwe... given to The WholeNote. In it she describes the work’s “expansive use of vocal and instrumental techniques and expressive/meaningful breathing in various ways [to] extend beyond merely human notions of sound, to include sounds that we hear in nature.” Some of those sounds include one of Croall’s signature instruments, the pipigwan, a traditional cedar, wooden flute. Bowser is particularly enamoured with the timbre of the flute, a depth of sound not easily matched in similar instruments. Miziwe... includes Croall on the pipigwan as well as a vocalist.

Oratorio as an art form requires a major assembly of musical forces including vocalists and instrumentalists, and Pax Christi Chorale – an advanced 100-voice ensemble, particularly known for its focus on oratorios – fits the bill. Joining them will be mezzo-soprano Krisztina Szabő, baritone Justin Welsh, singer and dancer Rod Nettagog and the Toronto Mozart Players, particularly known for its annual Toronto Mozart Master Class Series, which for 2018/2019 featured soprano Nathalie Paulin and first prize-winner Jennifer Routhier, and of which Bowser is also the artistic director.

What unifies this particular oratorio is the essence of shared spirit. These are not sacred or religious texts or stories, though. “I never use ceremonial or sacred material in my music,” writes Croall. “Most often, the basis of a piece of music I create will be a song of my own – often influenced or inspired by sounds I hear in my time spent outdoors within nature in remote areas... this reflects my own personal need to feel interconnected with the rhythms and flow of life within nature.” The oratorio evokes and shares in the message Croall has composed, focusing on the “manidoo” – “the spirit essence, mystery, spiritual energy and life force, ... a continuity of life of all forms that can be known as ‘spirit’.”

Bowser treasures the composition he’s been entrusted and the larger context it both comes from and participates in. “Barbara wanted to create something that was more unifying and more uplifting and hopeful. And the common element is the sense of spirit that we all
Croall has been generously present in the rehearsal process, making herself available in the teaching and the learning. “Barbara is coming to all the rehearsals, teaching us Odawa,” says Bowser. “She’s telling us about the stories and the characters and the imagery and the traditional practices and ways.”

In this process of breathing Miziwe... itself to life, the very joining of all these musical forces together starts to embody the notion of Croall’s “spirit” and her hope for the work – that in the coming together, Pax Christi Chorale and Miziwe... will “uplift” us all.

On March 31 at 3pm, Pax Christi Chorale presents Miziwe... a world-premier oratorio composed by Barbara Croall. Featuring Kristztina Szabó, Justin Welsh, Rod Netttagog, Barbara Croall, and the Toronto Mozart Players conducted by David Bounser. Performed in Ojibwe, Odawa with surtitles at Koerner Hall, Toronto.

CHORAL SCENE QUICK PICKS

- **MAR 8, 7:30PM:** Orpheus Choir of Toronto presents “Raising Her Voice: Celebrating the Choral Art,” in celebration of International Women’s Day. Artistic director Bob Cooper has partnered with Diaspora Dialogues to commission four new musical compositions, enhancing the female contribution to choral music in Canada. Diaspora Dialogues is an intercultural bridge that supports a community of diverse writers with multiple programs. In this exchange, Diaspora Dialogue authors Yaya Yao, Priscilla Uppal, Shadi Eskandani, and Phoebe Wang were paired with composers Katerina Gimon, Christine Donkin, Anika-France Forget and Tawnie Olson, respectively, for four new commissions by Orpheus. Grace Church on-the-Hill, Toronto.

- **MAR 9, 7:30PM:** The University of Toronto Faculty of Music presents Handel’s oratorio Israel in Egypt. The concert features Daniel Weller and Jeanne Lamon at the helm of the U of T Theatre of Early Music Choir, Schola Cantorum, and Baroque instrumentalists, Collegium Musicum. Joining them will be members of Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and tenor Charles Daniels. Handel’s oratorios, of which there are many, are often dominated by Messiah. This is a chance to see some of his other great work. In the expert hands of a period interpretation, you can be sure of a fantastic period performance of Handel’s work. St Patrick’s Church, Toronto.

- **MAR 21 TO 23, 7:30PM & MAR 24, 3:30PM:** Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and Chamber Choir, five soloists and members of the Toronto Children’s Chorus all meet to present the Bach St. Matthew Passion. Last year, Tafelmusik presented the Mass in B Minor to great acclaim. Baritone Tyler Duncan, featured last year, returns to sing in the St Matthew Passion under maestro Massaki Suzuki. Suzuki is one of the most renowned interpreters of Bach’s works and has never conducted Tafelmusik. This is one not to miss. With several performances to choose from, early music and Bach

Pax Christi Chorale

have together. It’s a story that ends with some sense of resolution. It’s so interesting to me that in so much oratorio there’s a moral. Here, it’s really about finding a connection. There’s no sense of imposed morality. It’s observation and the sense that we’re all connected through all these elements, and risk, and danger, and opportunity, and release and forgiveness.”

In her writing, Croall describes the work as “focusing toward the light ... to always consider hope and continuity as the neverending thread of life.” In her approach, Croall’s generosity of spirit reaches beyond just her musical composition. The work of bringing the work to life in a meaningful way with each musician requires more than just a few reads through vocal lines in rehearsal. Something more was required for this particular project, and Bowser and the choir have had to adjust.

To help facilitate this, Croall has welcomed the choir into the world she has created. “The whole choir went out to Crawford Lake in November,” shares Bowser. “[Barbara] did a lot of talking about the traditional, historical, and also modern practices of different First Nations.” The choir was responsive to the learning, and Bowser was pleased: “It’s really exciting to see people opening their eyes and their ears and their hearts.”

“It’s a full relationship we’re engaging in,” says Bowser. In scale and scope, oratorio is to the choral music tradition what opera is to music theatre. Pax Christi, Bowser and Croall have all risen to the challenge of building a full relationship as the one way to ensure the best chance of success – guiding the work to a truer performance where artists, direction and composer align.
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fans should hurry and get tickets. Carry a friend while you’re at it! Jeanne Lamon Hall, Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, Toronto.

MAR 22, 7:30PM: Cantabile Chamber Singers present “Social Justice,” a program that conductor Cheryl Chung calls “an eclectic mix of contemporary works that speak to justice and equity in the world.” The works to be performed include a premiere of Unheard: Voice of the Children, for mixed media and choir by Laura Sproul. Other great Canadians featured include Matthew Emery and Saman Shahi. All the works touch on issues such as the environment, the #MeToo movement as well as serenity, eternity, and hope,” shares Chung. Church of the Redeemer, Toronto.

MAR 30, 4PM: Exultate Chamber

Singers present “When We Were Young.” Artistic director Mark Ramsay has gathered the Chorus Niagara Children’s Choir and their artistic director, Amanda Nelli, in this celebration of joy and youth.” Featuring John Rutter’s Mass of the Children with its blending of William Blake poetry and different mass traditions. Other music includes music from Timothy Corlis, Eríks Ešenvalds, Eric Whitacre and more. St. Thomas’s Anglican Church, Toronto.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 19

Wednesday, April 17

Good Friday, April 19

7:30 pm

St. Anne’s Anglican Church
270 Gladstone Ave
Exploring the Master’s Works

MATTHEW WHITFIELD

The Baroque era was a time of international cultural exchange and groundbreaking creativity. Composers from across Europe brought music from the last vestiges of Renaissance modality to the systematic hierarchy of tones and semitones as defined by functional harmony. If there is one composer whose name is synonymous with the Baroque era and its developments, it is most likely Johann Sebastian Bach. Bach was an inherently paradoxical figure, practical yet prickly, pious yet prideful, conservative yet radically progressive, a musical visionary with one foot in the past. We need look no further than the B-Minor Mass to see Bach’s equal comfort in the old modal style and a new, highly chromatic tonal system, evident in the contrast between the Credo fugue, based on cantus-firmus models of earlier times, and the comparatively shocking Crucifixus. The latter is an extended exploration of semitone relationships and enharmonic modulation masquerading as a ground-bass cantus firmus, using harmonic techniques that would not become frequently and fluently exercised until almost a century later.

The reasons for Bach’s powerful presence in the Western music canon are too many to number; the sheer intensity of his skill has captivated generations of composers, students and performers, from Mozart and Beethoven to Mendelssohn, Schumann, Brahms and Mahler. This impact on those who followed him, coupled with Bach’s ability to blend the cerebral with the spiritual in a way unsurpassed by his peers or successors, has led to Bach’s place in the musical cosmos being like a musical black hole, on a scale perhaps only equalled by Beethoven, dividing all of musical history into before and after. All that came before led to this apotheosis of ingenuity; all that comes after is a successor, related in some way to this progenitor of revolutionized compositional ability. (A recent online post describing Handel as “a more religious Bach,” a premier example of musicological perfidy if there ever was one!)

Defence of Bach’s placement among the greats in the pantheon of musical history, is superfluous and unnecessary. The preceding paragraphs simply attempt to illustrate just how significant the contributions of this one composer are. To look at Bach’s music from another perspective, we can ask ourselves why Glenn Gould’s 1955 recording of the Goldberg Variations is one of the bestselling Classical albums of all time. (Before this recording, after all, the Goldbergs were considered museum pieces, old stuck-up essays in variation form that were unworthy of public performance.) The answer, most likely, is that, in the hands of someone who truly understands its intricacies and is able to express them, Bach’s music is the ideal repertoire to perform, challenging the interpreter and the listener and creating an atmosphere that borders on the sublime. No two live performances of the same work are ever identical, but this is all the more so with Bach, whose music is conducive to elastic and creative interpretations; a performer can adopt and adapt, making them endlessly subjective – and thereby communicative – experiences for an audience.

**Tafelmusik’s Matthäus-Passion**

In case this extended preamble wasn’t a sufficiently obvious lead-in, March is full of Bach’s music, performed across Southern Ontario by a variety of ensembles. On March 21 to 24 in Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, Tafelmusik presents a much-anticipated performance of the Matthäus-Passion (St Matthew Passion), led by Japanese conductor Masaaki Suzuki. Suzuki is a Japanese organist, harpsichordist and conductor, and the founder and musical director of the Bach Collegium Japan, with which he is recording the complete choral works of Johann Sebastian Bach. To give a brief overview of Suzuki’s output to date, Bach Collegium Japan completed their 55-volume series of Bach’s church cantatas in 2013, the secular cantatas in 2018, as well as all of Bach’s Lutheran Masses, motets, and large choral works. Suzuki is also recording Bach’s concertos, orchestral suites and solo works for harpsichord and organ, as well as guest conducting with ensembles around the globe.

The St. Matthew Passion is a monumental work for vocal soloists, two choirs, and two orchestras, and Bach’s largest single piece of music, running almost three hours in an average performance. Containing some of Bach’s most beautiful and exquisitely crafted material, the St Matthew Passion was first performed on Good Friday 1727 at the St. Thomas Church (Thomaskirche) in Leipzig. One of the challenges of performing this work involves the distribution of forces within the performing space; how does one ensure that the division of the large choir and orchestra into two distinct parts is clear and apparent, particularly in such essentially antiphonal movements as the opening “Kommt, ihr Töchter, helft mir klagen”? In Bach’s time St. Thomas Church had two organ lofts: the large organ loft that was used throughout the year for musicians performing in Sunday services, and the small organ loft, situated at the opposite side of the sanctuary, that was used additionally in the grand services for Christmas and Easter. The St. Matthew Passion was...
composed so that a single work could be performed from both organ
lofts at the same time: Chorus and orchestra I would occupy the large
organ loft, and Chorus and orchestra II performed from the small
organ loft. In a space lacking these vehicles for spatial separation, it
will be fascinating to see how the dynamism of Bach’s score is realized
onstage in this don’t-miss performance of Tafelmusik’s 40th-anniver-
sary season.

**OCO’s Brandenburgs**

A short drive away in Oakville, the Oakville Chamber Orchestra
celebrates their 35th anniversary with a complete performance of
Bach’s *Brandenburg Concertos*. Regarded as some of the best orches-
tral compositions of the Baroque era, this collection of six instru-
mental works was presented by Bach to Christian Ludwig, Margrave
of Brandenburg-Schwedt, in 1721. While Bach took the opportunity to
revise the concerto before presenting the scores to the margrave, each
copied in his own hand rather than by a copyist, the material itself
was likely not freshly composed, but rather selected from concertos
he had composed over a number of years while at Köthen, and
possibly extending back to his employment at Weimar.

After their gifting to the margrave, the *Brandenburgs* had a rather
unfortunate history: because King Frederick William I of Prussia was
not a significant patron of the arts, Christian Ludwig lacked the musi-
cians in his Berlin ensemble to perform the concertos. The full score
was left unused in the Margrave’s library until his death in 1734.
when it was sold. The autograph manuscript of the concertos was only
rediscovered in the archives of Brandenburg in 1849 and published
in the following year. While Bach undoubtedly led performances of
the original movements as Kapellmeister at Köthen, he never heard a
performance of the *Brandenburg Concertos* as we now know them.

Fortunately, such opportunities are not lost on the modern concert-
goer, though it is a rare treat to be able to hear all six works in one
performance. Each concerto has a unique character and body of
soloists, the fifth concerto perhaps the most renowned for its extra-
ordinary harpsichord part. (It seems very likely that Bach, considered
a great organ and harpsichord virtuoso, was the harpsichord soloist
at the premiere of an earlier version in Köthen). Modern interpreta-
tions of these pieces range from one-to-a-part chamber ensembles of
period instruments to pared-down symphony orchestras on modern

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Rezonance Baroque Ensemble

instruments; regardless of the forces involved, these masterpieces are essential listening for fans of early music and worth exploring by anyone who appreciates Bach’s instrumental works.

Rezonance’s Bach Tradition

Known now as a brilliant composer of vocal and instrumental works, Bach was more renowned in his time as an improviser, keyboard virtuoso and organ consultant. (Whenever he tried a new organ, Bach’s practice was to start off by playing with all the stops pulled out, with every rank of pipes sounding at once. In this way, he said, he could see what kind of “lungs” an instrument had.) Bach famously displayed his skill at extemporization in front of King Frederick II of Prussia at Potsdam in May 1747, when the king played a theme for Bach and challenged him to improvise a fugue based on his theme. Bach obliged, playing a three-part fugue on one of Frederick’s fortepianos, before reworking the King’s theme into the Musical Offering.

On April 6, Rezonance Baroque Ensemble and Musicians on the Edge explore Bach’s improvisatory skill through their concert “The Bach Family and the Improvising Tradition” at Metropolitan United Church. The Bach family was an impressively gifted family, producing generations of musicians of the highest calibre, and it will undoubtedly be a compelling experience as the audience is introduced to the largely lost art of extemporization. There may even be a fugue or two, made up on the spot!

While this month’s column is devoted to one of the greatest composers in the history of Western music, there are many other great composers represented within the pages of this magazine who you are encouraged to explore. As we slowly thaw after another Canadian winter and the days grow longer, it is the perfect time to get outside, go to concerts, and see what the world looks like underneath all that snow and ice! In the meantime, contact me with any questions or comments at earlymusic@thewholenote.com.

EARLY MUSIC QUICK PICKS

► MAR 9, 7:30 PM: Theatre of Early Music. “Israel in Egypt.” St. Patrick’s Church, 131 McCaul Street. Not only was Handel born in 1685, the same year as Bach – he wrote some pretty good tunes too! Don’t miss this extraordinary oratorio full of dramatic story and magnificent music.

► MAR 17, 4PM: Hart House Singers. “Handel and Mozart.” Great Hall, Hart House. Two of music’s great dramatic composers come together for a concert featuring Handel’s extraordinary Zadok The Priest and Mozart’s Vespers. (Yes, Mozart has connections to Bach as well.)

► MAR 27, 7:30 PM: Julliard415. “Baroque and Beyond: Bach and Vivaldi.” Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts, 390 King Street West, Kingston. Violinist Rachel Podger and the Julliard415 Baroque ensemble visit Canada to perform works by two masters of chamber music. (Bach was quite familiar with Vivaldi’s output and even transcribed a number of concerti for the organ.) Ideal music for an absolutely stellar concert hall.

Matthew Whitfield is a Toronto-based harpsichordist and organist.

Beat by Beat | Jazz Notes

I turned 62 last August and have been a jazz bassist for 46 years now and counting, so aging has been on my mind some for a while. It’s so bewildering on so many levels. On the one hand I’m amazed I’ve made it this far and feel the accumulated mileage, at least in my body. On the other hand, I often feel as though I’m just getting started and that, while I don’t quite have the stamina and energy I used to, I know much more now and can think my way around the music better than ever. But maybe that’s just my aging brain rationalizing, and there’s the rub: is jazz mostly a young person’s game or is there still room for those approaching their dotage, like me? Is the music primarily physical or mental? Obviously it’s both, but playing an instrument as large and demanding as the bass has me wondering occasionally how long I can keep up, physically speaking.

I recently had an epiphany which made me realize that because of its openness and constantly evolving nature, but also its considerable history, jazz is music for all ages and for all seasons. Jazz constantly puts you in the moment, so being involved with it at any age – whether as a player or a fan or a student – can act as a kind of anti-aging renewal of the mind, even if the body is showing signs of creeping rust. Before coming to this eye-opening experience though, I’d like to relate a favourite story on the subject, one involving none other than our ageless jazz wonders, Phil Nimmons.

About 15 years ago my oldest (that is to say longest-standing) friend Robert Allair told me that a colleague of his had been to hear Phil Nimmons play with his quartet (which I was in) at the Montreal Bistro, and commented that he was amazed not only by Phil’s music but at the infectious energy and enthusiasm he put out. Robert asked, “Yeah, but do you realize how old Phil Nimmons is?” (He was a mere pup of 80 at the time.) And the colleague answered, “You know, when somebody is having that much fun, it’s hard to tell how old they are.”

The simple and profound truth of this observation delighted me then and has stayed with me ever since. It resurfaced in an unexpected way during the epiphany I mentioned earlier, which came from a lecture I gave on February 11 to a seniors’ jazz appreciation course, a part of the Academy for Lifelong Learning program which has taken place the last 25 years at Knox College, the center of theological studies at U of T. (The irony of delivering a lecture on the “devil’s music” in such a setting was not lost on me.) The class, which meets every two weeks, is run by a charming and savvy gentleman named Colin Gordon, a long time and knowledgeable jazz fan. Members of the class are asked to make presentations and

Phil Nimmons
every once in a while they bring in a special guest. Mike Murley gave a lecture on Lester Young last October which was a resounding success, and he recommended me to Colin, who asked me some months ago to give a two-hour talk on a jazz subject of my choice. With some guidance from Colin, I decided to present an informal lecture on the role of the bass in jazz, how it has developed and changed over time, and some of the pioneers who helped move this process forward.

Colin suggested I bring along my bass so I could play and demonstrate some musical points directly, which I thought was a good idea. And to further avoid the monotony of my droning voice, I decided to pick some recorded examples of key bass innovators and present them in a more or less chronological sequence. These selections represented the bulk of my preparation along with a few notes, which I ended up mostly ignoring. I also resolved to weave the story of my own development as a bass player into the narrative to make the whole presentation more personal and less academic.

Hurling toward senior citizenship myself, I was not concerned about the age of the 30 or so class members – they were largely in their late 60s, 70s or early 80s, about the same as many stalwart jazz fans on the local scene. I was a little concerned that what I had to say might be too dry or detailed for them and maybe too boring, but I needn’t have worried. To cut to the chase, after about five minutes it was clear from their faces – smiling, eager, engaged, loving the musical examples – that they were enjoying what I was presenting and I relaxed and started to wing it a bit.

I’d like to say their pleasure had to do with my insight or scintillating delivery, but no, it was mostly on them. They were bright, humorous, curious and eager to learn about something they were tillating delivery, but no, it was mostly on them. They were bright, curious and eager to learn about something they were 

It was all very satisfying and afterward there were some takeaways I turned over in my mind. I love presentations that combine education with entertainment, and it was nice to watch these folks learn new things while also having fun. I’ve often thought that the keys to keeping your mind and outlook fresh are spending time with younger people, and learning new stuff. Teaching is just learning turned inside out and teaching younger students as I have recently has demonstrated this; their energy and enthusiasm rub off. But this was a little different; I felt the same inspiring feedback from folks who were my age or older. It occurred to me that jazz is not a trendy flavour-of-the-month music, but one which you can savour for your whole life. It’s not a race, there is no finish line and I felt my angst about aging fade. I also love the term “Lifelong Learning.” The minute you think you have nothing more to learn, your life may as well be over.

I was also struck by this paradox in the age-defying process of teaching/learning: that the very exhilaration of imparting information to a receptive audience is in itself exhausting – it lifts you up while wearing you out. Old and young.

It also occurred to me that the “new stuff” you may teach or learn doesn’t have to be contemporary to be relevant. If you discover a record or a song or any other piece of information that is interesting to you, its age doesn’t matter because if you’re experiencing it for the first time, it’s new to you, and that’s all that really matters. Learning about things from the distant past can lead just about anywhere and sometimes can offer a new and illuminating window from which to assess the often inscrutably chaotic present.

As a case in point, the first music track I played for the class was an off-script illustration of the brilliant-yet-obscure New Orleans bassist Sidney Brown, from 1927 with the Sam Morgan Jazz Band. I only vaguely knew of Brown and I’d like to say that this discovery was the product of my in-depth research for this lecture, but no. As is so often true, this nugget of new-old information came randomly from the invaluable musical grapevine: my friend Bill Kirchner sent a YouTube clip of Brown with Morgan which demonstrated Brown’s fluid and driving 4/4 bass lines, years ahead of the accepted notion that early jazz bass playing was all thumping primitive two-beat. This was back-to-the-future modern and after 40-plus years of study and listening it forced me to reconsider my preconceptions about the past and I decided to include this in my survey to the class. Thus do we all learn, by ad-hoc sharing.

An Aging Bassist’s Timeout

True to form, schlepping around a bass offered a dose of reality which almost counteracted all of this rosiness about the class and the youth-restoring mental benefits of learning. Namely, getting a bass into Knox College, built in 1828. I’m pretty sure the architects didn’t exactly anticipate anyone having to get a bass through its front doors. You know how there’s never a cop or a cab around when you need one? Well, picture this: there I was with a knapsack and the
bass slung on my back to enter this Hogwarts, which proved next to impossible. For one thing, the doors are about 25 feet from St. George Street so nobody noticed my plight and for another, they’re really narrow, heavy as lead and begin to close on you immediately, even if you don’t happen to be carrying a large heavy log on your back. With nobody to help I got trapped and, inwardly laughing while inventing scathing new combinations of swear words and worrying that the weight of the door would crush my bass, I wrenched my shoulder in the ensuing and undignified lather. It was even worse on the way out and the result was a tight knot of pain which has been slow to dissipate, unlike me. The good news is that playing the bass seems to help it rather than hurt it. Go figure.

One more story which illustrates the anti-aging effects of music and learning about it, albeit a bittersweet one. About ten years ago when my mother’s cancer became terminal, the family decided for various reasons she should spend her remaining time at my place. It was tough, but being around my mom in her last days was a great gift. She was very passionate about music, mostly classical piano and ballet music. My clearest and dearest memories of those days are about hearing music with her. One day we were listening to a bunch of her beloved Chopin played by Vladimir Ashkenazy. Among his many compositions, I’d forgotten about the macabre Funeral March, and in a surreal moment as its famous grave theme started, my wife Anna leapt for the fast-forward button. My mother, a gamer to the end, just chuckled and said, “Now, there’s some appropriate music.” One day while listening to her favourite Tchaikovsky ballet music, I decided to play her the Ellington/Strayhorn version of The Nutcracker Suite. I wasn’t sure she’d like it, but about a minute in she raved, “Oh my goodness, this is wonderful. I can recognize the music, but they’re making it dance in a new way, with their own colours. This really goes!”

Yes, Mom, it sure does. And that’s what discovery about music does for us: when least expected, it makes us GO.

JAZZ NOTES QUICK PICKS


Down Memory Lane
With Murray Ginsberg

JACK MACQUARRIE

A few weeks ago, when I first learned of the passing of trombonist Murray Ginsberg, I considered the possibility of writing an obituary. Although I had met Murray on a few occasions some years ago, I didn’t feel that I knew him well enough to do justice to such a project. I decided to do some research and come up with a more knowledgeable account of his contributions to Canadian music over his 70-plus years of performing.

Born in Toronto on October 4, 1922, his family history is worthy of a book by itself. In one of the stories which I have received there is an account of how his parents got to Canada. Murray was the son of immigrant parents from Russia and Lithuania. Were it not for a strange quirk of fate, the Murray Ginsberg story would never have happened. In 1912, having made their way across Russia and Europe, his parents worked their way through Holland and eventually arrived in Liverpool. There they boarded a ship headed for North America and a new life. Along with 300 other immigrants, they were simply placed in the hold of the ship for the trip. However, the ship was overbooked and they were ordered off. They had to wait for another one. As for that quirk of fate, the ship which they were forced from was the Titanic. We all know what happened to that ship.

Murray first discovered the trombone in the late 1930s. In January 1937, at the age of 14, he had his first formal lesson with Harry Hawe, then principal trombonist with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra under Sir Ernest MacMillan. More about his amazing musical career later. As his health failed in his mid-80s, Murray moved to the Veteran’s Wing of Sunnybrook Hospital. In more recent years his dementia gradually worsened. Surrounded by his family, Murray left us as Blue Skies was being sung to him on October 18, 2018 at age 96.

Now for more about Murray’s musical life. Not that long after his first trombone lessons at age 14, he became serious about music. Within two years he was playing professionally, even though he was still a student at Toronto’s Central Technical School. Then, on

Michael Davidson (vibraphone) and Rob Fortin (bass)

Military Orchestra, February 1943
August 20, 1942, at age 19, Murray joined the army, and was soon playing in Canadian Army Bands to entertain the troops in Europe. After the war, he was back in Toronto, pursuing an amazingly varied musical career. He played under diverse conductors, performed on weekly variety shows, and was the house trombonist for CBC’s The Music Makers. At some point he joined the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and continued with the TSO position for almost two decades. Elsewhere, he played under many conductors in a wide range of musical performances from highly classical to “low down jazz.” As one person remarked: “He played classical music by day and jazz by night, with The Murray Ginsberg Orchestra.” For many years he was the Toronto Musicians Association’s business representative and later wrote a book called They Loved to Play in 1998. I have been told that, when Murray was in a singing mood, his favourite song was When the Saints Go Marching In. As someone said after his passing: “Look out heaven – you just got one more Saint who’s marching in.”

Now for a couple of my own personal reminiscences: one of Murray’s key memories was about his first trombone lessons with Harry Hawe at the age of 14. Some years later, in the late 1940s, Harry Hawe was my trombone teacher. I remember well Harry telling me how proud he was of a couple of his students in particular. Murray and Teddy Roderman, the apples of his eye, both spent years in the Toronto Symphony. The last time I saw Teddy Roderman, I happened to bump into him on the street. At that time his health was failing and he was going South with his sailboat. As for Murray, I don’t remember where or when we last met, but I do remember receiving a copy of his book shortly after it was published.

Well, a few days ago, on one of the days when Mother Nature decided to bless us with a stay-at-home white day, I was poking around through my book collection when out popped They Loved to Play subtitled Memories of the Golden Age in Canadian Music. There, on the inner title page in Murray’s handwriting were the words: “To Jack MacQuarrie, December 16, 1999. From one trombone player to another, all the best for the future.”

Truth be told, I don’t recall any of the details about that meeting. Shortly after rediscovering Murray’s book I came across the May 1994 edition of The International Musician, the monthly journal of the American Federation of Musicians. That was where Murray wrote his regular column Canadian Scene. Here again a memory was re-ignited. His lead story was that the 1994 JUNO Award had gone to the Rankin Family, and that the big event on the horizon was the 100th anniversary of the opening of Massey hall on June 14. That means that we will celebrate Massey Hall’s 125th birthday with the building closed, anticipating how it will look after its major renovations.

A few other glimpses into the 272-page treasure trove of anecdotes contained in The Golden Age in Canadian Music. One of the first to catch my eye was about Eddie Graf and his wife Bernice (Bunny). You may remember I wrote a bit about Bunny’s birthday party in my column in the October 2018 issue of The WholeNote. Well, in Murray’s book I learned that, when Eddie Graf married Bernice O’Donnell at 9am on New Year’s Day 1945, Murray was their Best Man. They had chosen to be married “at the earliest hour on the first day of a new year when the promise of a long life filled with joy and happiness was strongest.” That was the case until Eddie passed away a few years ago.

Earlier I mentioned two of Harry Hawe’s protégés, Murray and Teddy Roderman. There they are in his book, together in a photo, two teenagers, playing side by side in a group called The Modernaires at the Masonic Temple at Yonge and Davenport in Toronto. It was 1942. Murray was 19 and Teddy was 17.

One of the most hilarious of the anecdotes in the book is about orchestra leader Luigi Romanelli. For many years Romanelli’s orchestra was the feature in the Crystal Ballroom of the King Edward Hotel in Toronto. In this particular event Romanelli and his orchestra were booked to provide the music for the introduction of new model cars by General Motors in Oshawa. As was the custom, this was a major event, with politicians, corporate executives and entertainment personalities all dressed in their finest formal attire.

The orchestra was onstage behind the curtain. When the house lights dimmed, the orchestra struck up a fanfare with Romanelli dressed in full formal attire with his long-tailed coat almost touching the stage. As the roll-up curtain began to rise it caught his coattail and wound it up with the curtain. Soon, much to the amusement of all of the dignitaries, he was dancing by his coattail a few feet above the stage.

Recent Events

With the almost unending bad weather, my attendance at concerts so far has been limited, but early in February I did manage to get to the Oshawa Civic Band’s “Polished Brass” concert. Unfortunately the terrible driving conditions kept many people away, but those who braved the ice and slick roads were treated to quite a variety of music. Except for selections from Mary Poppins and the Phantom of the Opera, the works were unfamiliar to me. That said, music director Rita Arendz led us through a fine evening of challenging music in the traditional all-brass band style. The Naval Band of HMCS York took their small ensembles to the Naval Club of Toronto again this year, but freezing rain and ice pellets kept me at home 60 kilometres away. I have heard that they provided one of their usual fine varied concerts.

**Bandstand Quick Picks**

- **MAR 3, 2PM:** The Markham Concert Band will offer “Let’s Dance! Waltzes and Swing” including Big Band Polka, El Bimbo, Flunky Jim and Waltzes from Der Rosenkavalier. Flato Markham Theatre, 171 Town Centre Blvd., Markham.
- **MAR 3, 3:30PM:** The Wychwood Clarinet Choir will have “CC at the Oscars” with Gershwin’s An American in Paris; Mozart’s Adagio from Gran Partita; Bernstein’s Tonight from West Side Story; Arlen’s Somewhere Over the Rainbow; and Loeve’s I Could Have Danced All Night. Michele Jacot, conductor. Church of St. Michael and All Angels, 611 St. Clair Ave. W., Toronto.
- **MAR 31, 2PM:** Rossa’s Pieces Concert Band, reaching out well beyond their usual Toronto locale, travels to St. Catharines for a Sunday concert. We have no details about repertoire yet.

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

Friday March 1

- 10:00am: Canadian Children's Opera Company. The Snow Queen. Harbourfront Centre. 255 Queens Quay W. 416-973-4000; $35; $25(sr); $20(st); $15(children, under 13); free(under 5). School preview performance Feb 28(10am, 1pm); Also Mar 1(7:30pm), Mar 2(2pm, 7:30pm), Mar 3(2pm).
- 7:00: Canadian Music Centre/Istituto Italiano di Cultura. In Memoriam Silvio Palmieri. Palmiieri: Tu N; Ubeltelli: Deseo; Beric: Sequenza; Jaegle: Dopre, Presto, Sici- liano; Ubeltelli: Quartetto 2; Silva Mando- lini, violin; Cobalt String Quartet; Francis P. Ubeltelli, composer. Canadian Music Centre, 20 St. Joseph St. 416-361-6601 x201. Free. Box office musiccentreforce.com/ ticket/a/sections_a0FIP000000sMt0UAM.
- 7:00: Music at St. Andrew’s. Go in Back to New Orleans: Mardi Gras 2019. The Tevin- Klapman All Stars (Patrick Tevin, trumpet; Jordan Klapman, piano/vocals; Tom Kub- leks, reeds, Paul Neufeld, sousaphone; Dan Douglas, trombone). St. Andrew’s Church (Toronto), 73 Simcoe St. 416-593-5600 x231 or standrewstoronto.org. $20-$25.
- 7:00: Organsich Concerts/Canadian Interna- tional Organ Competition/St. Michael’s Cathedral Basilica. In Concert. Alcée Chriss, organ. St. Michael’s Cathedral Basilica, 65 Bond St. 416-571-3880 or organis- concerts.ca. Freewill offering ($25 suggested).
- 7:30: Canadian Children’s Opera Company. The Snow Queen. See Mar 1. Also Mar 2(2pm, 7:30pm), 3(2pm).
- 7:30: Elmer Iseler Singers. Eis Present The Vancouver Chamber-Choir: Music from Sea to Sea - The Farewell Tour. Works by Brit- ten, MacMillan, Gjoel, Washburn, Elmer Ise- ler Singers; Vancouver Chamber Choir, 35 Lytton St. George’s United Church, 310 Danforth Ave. 416-485-3859. $30; $25(sr); $20(st); free(under 13).
- 7:30: Opera York. Don Giovanni. Music by Mozart. Geoffrey Butler, music director; Penny Cookson, stage director. Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, 100B Yonge St., Richmond Hill. 905-787-8811. $25-$110. Also Mar 3(2pm).
- 8:00: Gallery 345. Payadas: Tango and Argentine Folk Music. Rebekah Wolkstein, violin; Drew Jurceka, bandleader; Robert Horvitz, piano; Joseph Phillips, double bass. 345 Sorauren Ave. 416-822-9785 or info@gal- levy345.com. $30; $15(st). Cash only at the door.

Saturday March 2

- 11:00am: University Settlement Music & Arts School. Student Concerts. St. George the Martyr Church, 30 Stephanie St. 416-598-3444 x24/5. Free. Also 1pm.
- 1:00: University Settlement Music & Arts School. Student Concerts. St. George the Martyr Church, 30 Stephanie St. 416-598-3444 x24/5. Free. Also 11am.
- 2:00: Canadian Children’s Opera Company. The Snow Queen. See Mar 1. Also Mar 2(7:30pm), 3(2pm).
- 2:00: National Ballet of Canada. Apollo: & Night & The Sea Above, The Sky Below & Paquita. See Mar 1. Also Mar 2(7:30pm, 30pm), 3(2pm), 20(7:30pm), 21(2pm & 7:30pm), 22(7:30pm).
- 7:30: Canadian Children’s Opera Company. The Snow Queen. See Mar 1. Also Mar 3(2pm).
- 7:30: DAM Concert Opera. Le Comte Ory. Music by Rossini. Carter Wood, sop- rano; Marjorie Maltais, mezzo; Maria Souls, mezzo; Asitha Tennekoen, tenor; Dan Mao- zelle, baritone; Clarence Frazer, bari- tone; director François Racine, stage dir- ector/host/narrator; Nicole Bellamy, music director/piano. Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, 427 Bloor St. W. 1-800-838-3006 or brown- paperickets.com. $30, $25(sr/st).
- 1:00: Jubilate Singers. Home. Eastminster United Church, 310 Danforth Ave. 416-485-1988. $25; $20(sr); $15(st); free(under 13).
- 7:30: Kishan Chouhan & Jelena Cingara. Au printemps, de l’hiver: A Classical Music Concert. Tajcevic: Seven Balkan Dances for clarinet trio; Stravinsky: Three Pieces for solo clarinet; Vaughan-Williams: Six Studies from Opera, operetta and musicals; other music-related events (except performances) which may be of interest to our readers.

Starts on page 56.

B. IN THE CLUBS (MOSTLY JAZZ)

is organized alphabetically by club.

Starts on page 56.

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

D. 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 April 1 to May 7, 2018. All listings must be received by 11:50pm, Friday March 8.

LISTINGS can be sent by email to listings@thewholenote.com or by using the online form on our website. We do not receive listings by phone, but you can call 416-232-2232 x27 for further information.

LISTINGS ZONE MAP. Visit our website to search for concerts by the zones on this map: thewholenote.com.
• 10:00 Royal Conservatory of Music.  
  Paddideh Arrag mixed Ensemble and Friends.  
  Muzalezi Chamber Concert, Royal Conservatory,  
  273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. Free (ticket required).
• 12:30 York University Department of Music.  
  Music at Midday: Singing Our Songs.  
  Tribute Communities Recital Hall, Accadie East Building, YU, 4700 Keele St.  
• 5:30 Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre.  
  MJyc: Suzuki Alumni Showcase.  
  Collaborative performances from both alumni and faculty.  
  Al Green Theatre, 750 Spadina Ave.  
  416-924-6211 x0 or gretchena@mnjcc.org.  
  Free.
• 7:30 Bach Children’s Choruses and Bach Chamber Youth Choir.  
  Beauty-Conounding. Senior performing both members.  
  Beach United Church, 140 Wineva Ave.  
  416-431-0790. $20 (st).
Concerts in the GTA

A.

Saturday March 9

1:00: Danie Friisien, Blitzkrieg Cabaret. See Mar 2. Also Mar 16, 23, 30.

2:00: National Ballet of Canada. Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland. See Mar 8. Also Mar 9(7:30pm), 10(2pm & 7:30pm), 12(7:30pm), 13(7:30pm), 14(7:30pm), 15(7:30pm), 16(2pm & 7:30pm), 17(2pm).


Thursday March 7


Friday March 8


7:30: National Ballet of Canada. Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland. See Mar 8. Also Mar 9(2pm & 7:30pm), 10(2pm & 7:30pm), 12(7:30pm), 13(7:30pm), 14(7:30pm), 15(7:30pm), 16(2pm & 7:30pm), 17(2pm).

7:30: Orpheus Choir of Toronto. Raising Her Voice. Works by Olson, Donkin, Gimom, Forget and other female composers. Orpheus Chamber Ensemble; Robert Cooper, artistic director; Edward Moroney, accompanist. Grace Church on-the-Hill, 300 Lonsdale Rd. 416-530-4428. $45; $35; (sr); $20(university student). Free (under 30).

7:30: Toronto Hellenician Club. Famous Queens, Heroines and Fallen Women. Handel: Arrival of the Queen of Sheba for flute quintet (arr. Wye); Monteverdi: Disprezzata Regina from Coronation of Poppea; Tchai- kovsky: Ave Maria; Haydn: Beneath the Whispering Pines; Mozart: Ave Verum; Bach: Stabat Mater and Other Neapolitan Mansions. Members of St. Michael’s Choir Society, David Pomerleau, conductor; Robert Ruggiero, artistic director; Edward Moroney, accompanist. Grace Church on-the-Hill, 300 Lonsdale Rd. 416-530-4428. $45; $35; (sr); $20(university student). Free (under 30).

7:30: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. In Concert. Metropolitan United Church (Toronto), 56 Queen St. E. 416-363-0331 x26. $20, $10(18 and under).


7:30: National Ballet of Canada. Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland. See Mar 8. Also Mar 10(2pm & 7:30pm), 12(7:30pm), 13(7:30pm), 14(7:30pm), 15(7:30pm), 16(2pm & 7:30pm), 17(2pm).

7:30: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Maestro Gennadi Rozhdestvensky. Beethoven: Symphony No. 4. Toronto Symphony Orchestra, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. $35(under 30); $30(under 30 accompanied by a paying adult).


2:00: Canadian Opera Company. Tchaikovsky: Eugene Onegin. See Mar 9. Toronto Performing Arts Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. $35(under 30); $30(under 30 accompanied by a paying adult).

7:30: Music at Metropolitan. Pergolesi’s Stabat Mater and Other Neapolitan Masters. Leonardo Leo: Cello Concerto and other works. Ariel Harwood-Jones, soprano; Valeria Kondrashov, mezzo; Erika Nielsen, cello; Musicians on the Edge, Metropolitan United Church (Toronto), 56 Queen St. E. 416-363-0331 x26. $20, $10(18 and under).

Richardson-Schulte: G01 for Orchestra; Mozart: Concerto for Flute and Harp, K297c; Shostakovich: Symphony No.5. Kelly Zimba, harp; Heidi Van Hoesen Gorton, harp; Gemma New, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375. $30.75-$107.

7:30: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Thursday March 14.


8:00: St. Olaves’ Church. Medieval Songs from Northern Italy. Choral Evensong for the First Sunday in Lent. Katherine Hill, soprano and viola da gamba (5pm). St. Olaves’ Anglican Church, 380 Windermere Ave. 416-789-5866. Contributions appreciated. 4pm: Choral evensong followed by light refreshment. 5pm: Katherine Hill performs music from 13th and 14th century Florence and Crema.

Saturday March 9 – October 5, 2019
3:15: A Lakeside Offering. Kamloops. Canadian Opera Company. Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland. See Mar 8. Also Mar 13(7:30pm), 14(7:30pm), 15(7:30pm), 16(2pm) & 7:30pm), 17(2pm).

Wednesday March 13
12:00 noon: Canadian Opera Company. Opera Express: For Kids! Artists of the COC Ensemble Studio. Union Station (West Wing), 65 Front St. W. 416-363-6671. Free. No ticket required.

3:30: National Ballet of Canada. Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland. See Mar 8. Also Mar 13(7:30pm), 14(7:30pm), 15(7:30pm), 16(2pm) & 7:30pm), 17(2pm).

Thursday March 14


Sunday March 10

2:00: National Ballet of Canada. Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland. See Mar 8. Also Mar 10(2pm), 12(30pm), 15(7:30pm), 17(7:30pm), 18(7:30pm), 19(7:30pm), 20(7:30pm), 21(7:30pm).


6:00: Cathedral Bluffs Symphony Orchestra. Subscription Concert #4. Stravinsky: The Rite of Spring; Debussy: Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun; Erik Kreem: Waltz (Premiere). Estonian-Canadian composer also featuring Erik Neilsen in Leonardo Leo’s Cello Concerto in D major. Admission $20.
A March Break Event!

Pipes, Pedals & Pizza

Friday March 15, 2019

Ages 4-12 (accompanied by a parent) 10:00 am - Noon
Ages 13 and up: Noon - 3:00 pm
Free Pizza at Noon!!

Yorkminster Park Baptist Church
1585 Yonge Street (2 blocks north of St. Clair)

This FREE day is sponsored by the Toronto Chapter of The Royal Canadian College of Organists.

Special Event! Organ Kids
All to have an opportunity to build and play a 2 rank organ
Info: 416-789-1175

Bring your parent and grandparent, too... Listen to, Learn about and play the Pipe Organ! If you play the piano, bring a favourite piece to play on the organ! See and hear the pipes in the organ chamber.

Discover new ideas about sound and even play some keys (pedals) with your feet!

A. Concerts in the GTA

Kaleidoscope Family Series presents Peter & the Wolf
Quintoversy Woodwind Quintet

March 14, 2pm
auroraculturalcentre.ca
905 713-1818

- 2:00: Aurora Cultural Centre. Kaleidoscope Family Series: Peter and the Wolf. Quintoversy Woodwind Quintet. 22 Church St., Aurora. 905-713-1818. $15. Recommended for ages 4 and up.
- 7:30: Canadian Music Centre. CMC

1919 Centennial Recital. Ruehr: Viola Sonata; and other works. Ethan Finer, viola; James Parker, piano. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen's Park. 416-408-0208. Free.


March 16th 2019, 7pm

Featuring Odin String Quartet and Andrew McNash on Trumpet
Guest performance by Meden Glas (New Album Release)

March 14 at 8 pm
Lafayette and Saguenay Quartets

Music Toronto
Lawrence Park Community Church
2190 Bayview Ave, Toronto

March 16th 2019, 7pm

**SPRING CONCERT 2019**

**THURSDAY MARCH 14, 8PM**

**www.operaforall.ca**

- **8:00: Opera For All.** Spring Concert. Selections from popular operas. Verdi: Patria oppressa from Macbeth; Donizetti: Chorus from Don Pasquale; Bellini: Casta diva from Norma; Puccini: Flower Duet from Madama Butterfly; Verdi: Courtier’s Scene from Rigoletto; Mozart: Soave sia il vento from Cosi fan tutte. Opera For All Choir; Álvaro Lozano Gutiérrez, conductor. Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, 427 Bloor St. W. 416-819-9096. $20. Reception following.

**Friday March 15**

- **12:10: Music at St. Andrew’s. Non-time Recital.** Works by James Moerff and others. Christina Haldane, soprano; Ariana Chris, mezzo; Dann Mitten, bass. St. Andrew’s Church (Toronto), 73 Simcoe St. 416-593-5600 x231. Free.
- **3:00: York University Department of Music.** Time Chamber Music: Rising Stars Recital. Performance students from the UofT Faculty of Music. Walter Hall, Great Hall, Hart House, 7 Hart House Circle. 416-978-2452. Free. Donations to UofT Foodbank welcome.
- **4:00: York University Department of Music.** Jazz Festival: Jazz Combos. Roy Patterson, Lorrie Lofsky, Mark Eisenman, directors. Martin Family Lounge, Accolade East Building, YU, 4700 Keele St. 416-736-5888 x20054. Free.

**Saturday March 16**

- **1:00: Danie Friesen.** Blitzkrieg Cabaret. See Mar 2. Also Mar 23, 30.
- **2:00: National Ballet of Canada.** Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland. See Mar 8. Also Mar 16 (1:30pm), 17 (2pm).
- **7:00: Dawn Davi.** Sweet Apple Album Release. Odin String Quartet; Andrew McNab, trumpet. Guests: Meden Glas. Law-rence Park Community Church, 2710 Bayview Ave. 416-489-1551. $25; $20 (st).
- **7:30: Cantemus Singers.** The Virgin Queen. Morley and others: Triumphs of Ori-ana (selections); Byrd: Mass for Four Voices; and other works. Michael Erdman, con-ductor. Church of the Holy Trinity, 19 Trinity Sq. 416-578-6602. $20; free (under 12). Also Mar 17 (mat).
- **7:30: National Ballet of Canada.** Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland. See Mar 8. Also Mar 17 (2pm).
- **7:30: University of Toronto Faculty of Music.** U of T Opera: La finta giardiniera (The girl in gardener’s disguise). See Mar 15. Also Mar 17 (2:30).

**Sunday March 17**

- **2:00: National Ballet of Canada.** Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland. See Mar 8.
- **5:00: University of St. Michael’s College.** In the Midst of Life: A Concert for Lent. Pur-cell: Morley and Merbecke: Funeral Anthems; Purcell: Rejoice in the Lord Always; O Give Thanks; Fantasias for strings. University of St. Michael’s College Schola Cantorum and Consort; Chris Verrette, conductor; Michael O’Connor, director. St. Basil’s Church, Univer-sity of St. Michael’s College, 50 St. Joseph St. 416-926-7148. Free. Donations welcomed.

**Monday March 18**


**Tuesday March 19**

- **12:10: Nine Sparrows Arts Foundation/ Yorkminster Park Baptist Church. Lunch-time Chamber Music: Rising Stars Recital. Performance students from the UofT Faculty of Music. Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, 1585 Yonge St. 416-241-1298. Free, donations welcome.
- **7:00: University of Toronto Faculty of Music.** Student Composers Conductor. Wal-ter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-408-0208. Free.
- **7:30: Canadian Music Centre.** CMC Pre-sents: R. Andrew Lee, piano. Southam Soundings for New Piano. 20 St. Joseph St. 416-961-6601 x201. General: $20/$15 (adv); CMC Members/arts workers: $15/$12 (adv); Students: $15/$10 (adv).
- **8:00: York University Department of Music.** Jazz Festival: Jazz Combos. Artie Roth, Anthony Michelli, Kelly Jefferson, directors. Martin Family Lounge, Accolade East Building, YU, 4700 Keele St. 416-736-5888 x20054. Free.
- **9:00: The Local Pub.** Fred Speks & CaMp CoMbO. Fred Speks, saxophone/vocals; Alan Zemaitis, organ; and others. 396 Roncevaux Ave. 416-535-6255. PWYC.

**Wednesday March 20**

- **12:00 noon: Canadian Opera Company.** Jazz and World Music Series: Cultural
A. Concerts in the GTA


12:30: Organix Concerts/All Saints Kingsway. Kingsway Organ Concert Series. Michael Bross, organ. All Saints Kingsway Anglican Church, 2850 Bloor St. W. 416-571-3880 or organixconcerts.ca. Freemoney offering. 45-minute concert.


National Ballet of Canada. Apollo & Night & The Sea Above, The Sky Below & Paquita. See Mar 1. Also Mar 21(2pm & 7:30pm).


7:30: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Friday Folk Night: Delta Blues Guitar Summit. Coffeehouse-style folk music concert. Alfie Smith and Sean Pinchin, St. Paul's United Church (Brampton), 350 Main St. S., Brampton. 978-3750. $20; $10(st); free(UofT st).


7:30: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Family Lounge, Accolade East Building, YU, 4700 Keele St. 416-736-2100 x20054. Free.


10:00: National Ballet of Canada. Apollo & Night & The Sea Above, The Sky Below & Paquita. See Mar 1. Also Mar 21(7:30pm).


1:00: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Children (premiere). Choir and electronics. Ronsexo.ca/toronto-on info: 416-489-1551 ext. 28.

1:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back—in Concert. See Mar 20. Also Mar 22, 23.

2:00: National Ballet of Canada. Apollo & Night & The Sea Above, The Sky Below & Paquita. See Mar 1. Also Mar 21(7:30pm).


35th Anniversary Concert: J.S. Bach’s Complete Brandenburg Concertos. Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts, 130 Navy St., Oakville. 905-463-6787. $45. $39 (sr); $23 (ages 13-19); free (12 and under).


8:00: Acoustic Harvest. “Give Me Wood and I’ll Make It Sing for You.” Lecture, presentation and concert by guitar maker Grit Laskin. St. Paul’s United Church (Scarborough), 200 McIntosh St., Scarborough. lillian.waunder@gmail.com. 7/5/$22 (adv).


8:00: Mississauga Symphony Orchestra. Classical Greats: Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. Beethoven: Prometheus Overture; Mozart: Violin Concerto No.5; Haydn: Symphony No.104 “London.” Yu Kai Sun, violin; Denis Mamricononato, conductor; Living Arts Centre, Hammarsen Hall, 414 Living Arts Dr., Mississauga. 905-306-6000. $40-$95.

Saturday March 23

1:00: Danie Friesen. Blitzkrieg Cabaret. See Mar 2, also Mar 9.


7:00: Gallery 345. The Art of the Piano: Kristian Randalis. Guest: Winona Zelenka, cello. 345 Sorauren Ave. 416-823-9789 or online at eventbrite.ca. $25, $15 (sr/st). Cash only at the door.


8:00: Ontario Pops Orchestra. The British Isles: Traditional, Scottish the Brave, Traditional: Amazing Grace; The Best of The Beatles; Handel: Hornpipe from Water Music; Mozart: Vesperae Solennes de Confessore, K.339; Stravinsky: Symphony of Psalms (with two pianos); Lisette Danton, conductor. Tribute Communities Recital Hall, Accolade East Building, YU, 4700 Keele St. 416-736-5888. $15, $10 (sr/st). Free donations welcome.


8:00: Esprit Orchestra. The Art of the Piano: Kristian Randalis. Guest: Winona Zelenka, cello. 345 Sorauren Ave. 416-823-9789 or online at eventbrite.ca. $25, $15 (sr/st). Cash only at the door.

8:00: Acoustic Harvest. “Give Me Wood and I’ll Make It Sing for You.” Lecture, presentation and concert by guitar maker Grit Laskin. St. Paul’s United Church (Scarborough), 200 McIntosh St., Scarborough. lillian.waunder@gmail.com. 7/5/$22 (adv).


8:00: Mississauga Symphony Orchestra. Classical Greats: Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. Beethoven: Prometheus Overture; Mozart: Violin Concerto No.5; Haydn: Symphony No.104 “London.” Yu Kai Sun, violin; Denis Mamricononato, conductor; Living Arts Centre, Hammarsen Hall, 414 Living Arts Dr., Mississauga. 905-306-6000. $40-$95.

Sunday March 24

3:00: Kingston Road Village Concert Series: TorQ Percussion Quartet. Richard Burrows, Adam Campbell, Jamie Drake and Daniel Murphy, percussion. Kingston Road United Church, 575 Kingston Rd. 416-699-6091. $25 or $20 at torqpercussionconcert.eventbrite.com. 12:30pm: Percussion Workshop (see ETCetara).

3:00: York University Department of Music. York University Concert and Chamber Choirs. Mozart: Vesperae Solennes de Confessore, K.339; Stravinsky: Symphony of Psalms (with two pianos); Lisette Danton, conductor. Tribute Communities Recital Hall, Accolade East Building, YU, 4700 Keele St. 416-736-5888. $15, $10 (sr/st). Free donations welcome.

Tuesday March 26

12:00: Nine Sparrows Arts Foundation/ Yorkminster Park Baptist Church. Lunchtime Chamber Music: Rising Stars Recital. Students from the Glenn Gould School. Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, 1585 Yonge St. 416-241-1298. Free, donations welcome.

7:30: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. The Time of Drumming. U of T Percussion Ensemble; Ensemble BPM. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-408-0208. Free.

Wednesday March 27


**Concerts in the GTA**

**Friday March 29**

- **8:00:** Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Schubert and Bruckner. Schubert: Symphony No.8 “Unfinished”; Bruckner: Symphony No.9. Günter Herbig, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375. $34.75-$148. Also Mar 27.

**Saturday March 30**

- **1:00:** Danie Friesen. Blitzkrieg Cabaret. See Mar 2.
- **2:00:** Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Fred Penner. Fred Penner, vocalist; Mélanie Léonard, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375. $20-$33.75. Also Mar 30 (4pm & 8pm).
- **6:00:** Mandle Philharmonic. Mahler & Tchaikovsky. Mandle Philharmonic.SAT MARCH 30, 7PM WWW.MANDELPHIL.COM 7:00. Mandle Philharmonic, conductor Kevin Ahfat. Pianist

**Saturday, March 30, 2019 at 8 pm**

**Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts**

**R. STRAUSS**

*Don Juan* Tale Poem

**RACHMANINOFF**

Piano concerto No. 3

**SHOSTAKOVICH**

Symphony No. 6

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**KINDRED SPIRITS ORCHESTRA**

10th anniversary concert season

Saturday, March 30, 2019 at 8 pm

**Trinity St. Paul’s Centre, 427 Bloor St.W.**

Tickets $35/$20/$10 at door or online at brownpapertickets.com

**Trio Arkel**

*Into the Fire*

**Friday, March 29th, 2019, 7:30 p.m.**

**Guest Artists**

Monica Whitcher, soprano

Jethro Marks, violin

Sheila Jaffé, violin

**Into the Fire by Jake Heggie**

**Dvořák – American Quartet**

**Trinity St. Paul’s Centre, 427 Bloor St.W.**

Tickets $35/$20/$10 at door or online at brownpapertickets.com
Thanks to Dr. Suzuki Concert

Celebrating the Life and Teachings of Dr. Shinichi Suzuki
Saturday March 30, 7pm

canadian sinfonietta
Chamber Music for Everyone

- 7:30: Mississauga Festival Chamber Choir: Redemption Song: Music on the Theme of Forgiveness. Arnesen: The Wound in the Water. First United Church, 151 Lakeshore Rd. W. Mississauga. 416-866-5537. $35; $30(s/r). 150 Queen's Park. 416-408-0208. $30; $20(s/r); $10(st); free(UpToT st).
- 7:30: University of Toronto Faculty of Music: U of T Wind Symphony. William Prelude and Fugue from Royall Hall Suite: Raum: Sherwood Legend for horn solo; Bennett: Symphonic Songs for Band; McEe: Notez-art; Bernstein: Symphonic Dance Music from West Side Story: Christopher Gonzos, horn. MacMillan Theatre, Edward Johnson Building, 80 Queen's Park. 416-408-0208. $30; $20(s/r); $10(st); free(UpToT st).
- 7:30: York University Department of Music. York University Gospel Choir: Lisa Toussaint, director. Tribute Communities Recital Hall, Accolade East Building, YU, 4700 Keele St. 416-736-5888. $15; $10(s/r). 151 Glenlake Ave. 416-519-1153. $40; $35(s/r); $20(st).
- 8:00: Canadian Sinfonietta. Rivka Golani, violin. David Jaeger: Raven Concerto for Viola and Chamber Orchestra (world premiere); Copland: Appalachian Spring (chamber version); Britten: Lachrymae, Op.48a for Solo Viola and Piano; and others. Joaquin Valdepeñas, piano; Robert Cooper, music director. St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 27 Front St. E. 416-366-7723. $29; $50; $65. Also Mar 31 (2:30 pm). Sung in German with English Surtitles™.
- 8:00: Voices Chamber Choir. A Journey of Faith: Music from Ash Wednesday to Good Friday. Dubois: The Seven Last Words of Christ. Ron Ka Ming Cheung, conductor; John Stephenson, organ. St. Martin-in-the-Fields Anglican Church, 151 Glenlake Ave. 416-519-0528. $20; $15(s/r).

World Premiere

“Raven Concerto for Viola and Chamber Orchestra” by David Jaeger with Rivka Golani, viola

Saturday March 30, 8PM
canadiansinfonietta.com

THE CANADIAN CHILDREN’S OPERA COMPANY MARCH 31, 2PM NEWMARKET THEATRE Newtix.ca

- 2:30: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Earth Tones. Women’s Chorus; Men’s Chorus; Elaine Choi and Mark Ramsay, conductors. MacMillan Theatre, Edward Johnson Building, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-408-0208. $30; $20(s/r); $10(st); free(UpToT st).

Intrada BRASS

Darkness and Light
Barrington Venables trombone

SUNDAY, MARCH 31, 3PM
intradabrass.ca

- 3:00: Intrada Brass of Oakville. Darkness and Light. Peter Graham: Shine as the Light; and other works. Barrington Venables, trombone. St. Paul’s United Church (Oakville), 454 Rebecca St., Oakville. 905-827-0651. $15; $10(s/r); free(under 10).
- 3:00: York University Department of Music. York University Wind Symphony. William Thomas, director. Tribute Communities Recital Hall, Accolade East Building, YU, 4700 Keele St. 416-736-5888. $20; $15(s/r)...

Good Friday. Dubois: The Seven Last Words of Christ. Ron Ka Ming Cheung, conductor; John Stephenson, organ. St. Martin-in-the-Fields Anglican Church, 151 Glenlake Ave. 416-519-0528. $20; $15(s/r).
**Concerts in the GTA**

**Monday April 1**
- University of Toronto Faculty of Music. String Chamber Ensemble: Mark Fewer, director. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park, 416-408-0208. Free. By donation ($10 suggested).

**Tuesday April 2**
- Nine Sparrows Arts Foundation. Lunchtime Chamber Music: Rising Stars Recital. Students from the UofT Faculty of Music. Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, 1585 Yonge St. 416-922-1167. Free. All welcome.

**Wednesday April 3**

**Thursday April 4**

**Friday April 5**
- 11:00am. University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Felix Galimir Chamber Music Award Concert. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park, 416-408-0208. PWYC.
$73.25-$83.25(dinner/brunch & show package). Also Apr 2, 3, 4, 6, 12, 13, 14(2pm).

Music

A Spring Fling on Flute Street
Saturday April 6, 7:30pm
Church of St Peter and St Simon-the-Apostle

Flute Street presents

Saturday, April 6, 2019

TICKETS ON SALE NOW! 416.408.0208
www.rcmusic.com/performances

CONFLUENCE CONCERTS

TIS NATURE’S VOICE:
HENRY PURCELL REIMAGINED

Saturday April 6 • 7:30 pm
Grace Church on-the-Hill
www annexingers.com

$20(sr); $10(st); free(UofT students).

IMMORTAL MOZART
Saturday, April 6 • 7:30 pm
Grace Church on-the-Hill
www annexingers.com

$40-$50; $73.25-$83.25(dinner/brunch & show package). Also Apr 2, 3, 4, 6, 12, 13, 14(2pm).

FRIDAY, APRIL 5, 8PM
Roby Lakatos
Koerner Hall, Telus Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. $45-$90.

8:00 Against the Grain Theatre. Kopernikus. Vivier. Danielle MacMillan, mezzo (April); Kristinza Szabó, mezzo; Alain Cousseau, bass; Daon Mazerolle, baritone; Nathalie Paulin, soprano and others. Theatre Passe Muraille Mainstage, 16 Ryerson Ave. 647-387-8943. $25-$85. Also Apr 4, 6, 11, 12, 13.

8:00 Alliance Française Toronto. Yao (SLAM). Spadina Theatre, 24 Spadina Rd. 416-922-2014 x37; $25; $20(6r/t); $12(members).

8:00 TO Live. Brit Floyd. Live tribute to Pink Floyd with special retrospctive of The Wall. Sony Centre for the Performing Arts, 1 Front St. E. 1-855-872-7669. $55-$86.

SINFONY TORONTO
NURHAN ARMAN, Conductor

April 5 & 6 at 8:00 p.m.
Heliconian Hall
35 Hazelton Avenue, Toronto
Pre-concert talk 7:15 p.m.
confluenceconcerts.ca

April 6, 11am
Aurora Cultural Centre


7:30 Mississauga Big Band Jazz Ensemble. Best of Big Band Open Mic. Cooksville United Church, 2500 Missisauga Row. Mississauga. 905-270-4757. PWYC.

905 713-1818. $15. Recommended for toddlers and older.


7:30: Immortal Mozart. Mozart: Great Mass in c; Haydn: Te Deum; Elgar: Lux Aeterna; and other works. Tali\ser Players: Maria Case, artistic director. Grace Church on-the-Hill, 300 Lonsdale Rd. 416-458-4434. $30; $25(6r/t); free(12 and under).

7:30: Etobicoke Centennial Choir. After the Snow. Dow: Mass in D Op.66; Winter: Missa Gaia/Earth Mass. Gabrielle Turgeon, soprano; Colin Ainsworth, tenor (Idomeneo); Meghan Lindsay, soprano (Ilia); Oliver Laquerre, baritone (Arbace); Artists of Atelier Ballet; Choir of the University of Toronto Schola Cantorum; Chorus of the Choir of the Theatre of Early Music (Daniel Taylor; chorus master); Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra; David Fallis, conductor; Marshall Pynkoski, stage director; Jeanette LaJeunesse Zingg, choreographer. Ed Mirvish Theatre, 244 Victoria St. 416-703-3767 x222. From $39. Also Apr 4, 7, 12, 13, 14(2pm).


8:00: Annexe Singers. Immortal Mozart. Mozart: Great Mass in c; Haydn: Te Deum; Elgar: Lux Aeterna; and other works. Tal\ser Players: Maria Case, artistic director. Grace Church on-the-Hill, 300 Lonsdale Rd. 416-458-4434. $30; $25(6r/t); free(12 and under).

7:30: Etobicoke Centennial Choir. After the Snow. Dow: Mass in D Op.66; Winter: Missa Gaia/Earth Mass. Gabrielle Turgeon, soprano; Colin Ainsworth, tenor (Idomeneo); Meghan Lindsay, soprano (Ilia); Oliver Laquerre, baritone (Arbace); Artists of Atelier Ballet; Choir of the University of Toronto Schola Cantorum; Chorus of the Choir of the Theatre of Early Music (Daniel Taylor; chorus master); Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra; David Fallis, conductor; Marshall Pynkoski, stage director; Jeanette LaJeunesse Zingg, choreographer. Ed Mirvish Theatre, 244 Victoria St. 416-703-3767 x222. From $39. Also Apr 4, 7, 12, 13, 14(2pm).


7:30 Opera Atelier. Idomeneo. Music with W. A. Mozart. Libretto by Giambattista Varesco, Measha Brueggergosman, soprano (Elettra); Colin Ainsworth, tenor (Idomeneo); Wallis Giunta, mezzo (Damante); Meghan Lindsay, soprano (Ilia); Olivier Laquerre, baritone (Arbace); Artists of Atelier Ballet; Choir of the University of Toronto Schola Cantorum; Chorus of the Choir of the Theatre of Early Music (Daniel Taylor; chorus master); Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra; David Fallis, conductor; Marshall Pynkoski, stage director; Jeanette LaJeunesse Zingg, choreographer. Ed Mirvish Theatre, 244 Victoria St. 416-703-3767 x222. From $39. Also Apr 4, 7, 12, 13, 14(2pm).


8:00: Alliance Française Toronto. Yao (SLAM). Spadina Theatre, 24 Spadina Rd. 416-922-2014 x37; $25; $20(6r/t); $12(members).

8:00 TO Live. Brit Floyd. Live tribute to Pink Floyd with special retrospctive of The Wall. Sony Centre for the Performing Arts, 1 Front St. E. 1-855-872-7669. $55-$86.
A. Concerts in the GTA

Johnson Building, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-408-0208. $30; $20(sr); $10(st).
• 8:00: Acoustic Harvest. Rick Fines and Suzie Vinnick. St. Paul’s United Church (Scarborough), 200 McIntosh St., Scarborough. Lilianna Lee (gingmail.com). $25/$22(adult). 
• 8:00: Aghan Khan Museum. Two Rivers Ensemble with special guest Spiral Modes. Amir ElSaffar, trumpet and composer; and others. 71 Wynford Dr. 416-646-4677. $40; $30(sr); $20(st). 7:15 pre-concert chat. Also Apr 5. 

National Piano Trio
April 7, 1:30 p.m.
Kingston Road Village Concert Series

www.krnc.ca


B. Concerts Beyond the GTA

London 1151 Richmond St. N., London. Debra Christofferson, soprano; Jana Yoshikawa, alto sax; Mike Murphy, drums. 416-799-2233. $20; $10(st); free(under 15).

Metropolitan United Church
SATURDAY, APRIL 6 7:30PM
The Bach Family and the Improvising Tradition
Rezonance Baroque Ensemble & Musicians on the Edge

ADMISSION: $20/10 AGES 18 AND UNDER

For more info, contact Dr. Patricia Wright: patriciaw@mtoconservatory.org or 416-363-0311 ext. 26, 50 Queen Street East, Toronto www.mtoconservatory.org


Friday March 1

12:30: Don Wright Faculty of Music. Fridays at 12:30 Concert Series. Brianna DeSantis, soprano; Chad Louwerse, bass-baritone; Simone Lutti, piano. Vacker Hall, Music Building, Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767. Free.

7:00: The Loft Cinema. Young Miles - The Bird Years. A tribute to jazz legend Miles Davis. Brownman Ali, trumpet; Nick Morgan, alto sax; Adrean Farrugia, piano; Jesse Ditcho, upright bass; Tyler Goertzen, drums. 201 Division St., Cobourg. kenprie@gmail.com. $25/$15(st).


Saturday March 2

1:00: Don Wright Faculty of Music. London Music Scholarship Foundation Competition - Second and Final Rounds. Von Kuster Hall, Music Building, University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767. Free. Also 7:30pm.

7:00: Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts. Ensembles. Naughty but Nice - Soundtracks from Canada. Wolf, Seven Deadly Sins; and works by Christopher Mayo, Analia Llagbard and others. Elizabeth Shepherd.

Aivia Cherkovich, Robin Dinn, singer/songwriters. 390 King St. W., Kingston. 613-533-2424. $40-$58; $37-$55(faculty/staff); $19-$29(st).

7:30: Barrie Concert Band. Last Night at the Proms. Eiger: Pomp and Circumstance March No.1; Vaughan Williams: Folk Song Suite; Holst: Nimrod from Enigma Variations; and other works. King Edward Choir. Collier Street United Church, 112 Collier St., Barrie. 705-252-3484. $20; $10(st); free(5 and under).


7:30: Chorus Niagara. Music by David De (Lo) David. Music by Honegger; Chorus Niagara Children’s Choir; Chorus Niagara Side By Side High School Choirale; Chorus Niagara Chamber Ensemble. FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, 250 St. Paul St., St. Catharines. 1-855-515-0722 or 905-688-0722. $45, $34($4); $30(under 30); $20; $15(under 15).

7:30: Don Wright Faculty of Music. London Music Scholarship Foundation Competition - Second and Final Rounds. Von Kuster Hall, Music Building, University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767. Free. Also 1pm.

B. Concerts Beyond the GTA

Church, 49 Queen St. N., Kitchener. 519-578-5560 x250. $30; $14(st/under 30); $5(child/HS student).

- 7:30: Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts. Ensembles: Smetana Trio. Works by Rachmaninoff, Martinu and Smetana. 390 King St. W., Kingston. 613-533-2242. $45-$58; $37-$55(faculty/staff); $29-$32(st). 8:00 (sat).


- 7:30: First Student. First-Student. University. 1151 Richmond St. N., London. Paulies in Motion 2019: Dance Showcase. $45(sr); $20-$25(st); $10(child)/Classic- tions Band No. 37 (Boult); $10(EyeGO).

Friday March 8

- 12:30: Wolf Concerts. Friday at 11:45 a.m. $16-$24(faculty/staff); $10-$18(st). Also Mar 8(8pm).


Tuesday March 5

- 10:00: TWH Social. 1 King St. W., Kitchener. 519-475-4250 or eventbrite.ca/e/five-weeks-for-miles-week-2-birth-of-the-cool-post-bop-mortice-tickets-59595855500. $20.

Wednesday March 6


- 7:00: Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts. The Kartharitval Festival of Indigenous Arts: I Lost My Talk and Gisakaut- tu. I Lost My Talk; Estacio: Film score; Tapaq Qisakautu, National Arts Centre Orches- tra; Alexander Shelley, conductor; Monique Molica, narrator; Tanya Taqaq, vocalist; Chris- tine Duncan, improvisation leader. 390 King St. W., Kingston. 613-533-2242. $40-$56; $37-$55(faculty/staff) $19-$22(st).

- 7:30: Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra. Intimate & Immersive: Escape to Paradise. Lau: Prelude to Dawn; Fisher: Lune dans les nuages; Darmoo: Nainjevali, Evangelista: O carols. 50 Anne St. N., Kitchener. 519-475-4711 or 1-888-475-4717. $36-$95. Also Mar 9(30 pm) and 9(pm).

Monday March 4


- 8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society. Haydn: Windwood Wind Quintet: Six Bagatelles for Wind Quintet; Reia: Wind Quintet in F flat Op.88. Hindemith: Kleine Kammermusik für fünf Bläser. Advanced WLU music students: Jillian Carney, flute; Mark Pinder, oboe; Shirley Starbuck, clarinet; Jan Feng, bassoon; Isabelle Marcuccio, horn. KWCM Music Room, 57 Young St. W., Water- loo. 519-886-1673. $20; $10(st).


Saturday March 9

- 2:00: Don Wright Faculty of Music. Opera at Western: Spring Gala - Favourite Scenes from Opera and Musical Theatre. Paul Davenport Theatre, Talbot College, Western University, 151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-679-5872. $15($10 adv). Also Mar 9(2:30 pm) and 9(8pm).

B. Concerts Beyond the GTA

- **Sunday March 17**
  - **4:30** - Music at St. Thomas’ Sacred Music Sung by a Woman’s Vocal Ensemble. Fancine Nguyen-Savaria, chair. Matthieu Latrèville, organ. St. Thomas’ Anglican Church (Belleville), 201 Church St. Belleville. 613-968-6731 or cfuwbelleville.com. $5; free (under 2). 11am (ages 3-5); 130pm (ages 6-12).
  - **1:30** - CFUW Belleville and District. Opera Candy. The Gourmet Adventures of Hansel & Gretel. Jeanesses Musicales Canada; Cecile Muhir, soprano (Gretel); Charlotte Cagnin, mezzo; Guillaume Rodrige, actor and singer (Narrator); Carl Mattieu Neher, pianist. Belleville Public Library, Parrott Gallery, 254 pineapple Street, Belleville. 613-968-6731 or cfuwbelleville.com. $5; free (under 2). 11am (ages 3-5); 130pm (ages 6-12).
  - **8:00** - Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society. In Concert. Ethan Finler, viola; Jody Davenport, viola. KWCMS Music Room, 57 Young St. W., Kitchener. 519-745-4321 or eventbrite.ca/e/fees-five-weeks-for-mile-3-plugged-nickel-the-shorter-years-tickets-55973451099. $20.


- **Friday March 22**
  - **12:00 noon** - Music at St. Andrews. Organ Concert. Works by Bach and Mozart. Sarah Swenden, organ. St. Andrews Presbyterian Church (Barrie), 47 Owen St., Barrie. 705-726-1181. $10; free (students).
  - **12:30** - Don Wright Faculty of Music. Western University Percussion Ensemble. Paul Davenport Theatre, Talbot College, Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3871. Free. Also at 8pm.
  - **8:00** - Don Wright Faculty of Music. Western University Percussion Ensemble. Paul Davenport Theatre, Talbot College, Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3871. Free. Also at 12:30pm.
  - **8:00** - Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society. In Concert. Penderecki String Quartet. KWCMS Music Room, 57 Young St. W., Kitchener. 519-886-1673. $40; $25(st).


- **Saturday March 23**
  - **9:30** - Barrie Concerts. Sublime Dvorak. String Quartet No.10 “Slavonic”, Two Piano Quintets. Penderecki String Quartet; Benjamin Smith, piano. Haywas Pentecostal Church, 50 Anne St. N., Barrie. 705-726-1181. $85 or by subscription.
  - **1:30** - Island Bader Centre for the Performing Arts. The Ka’tarohkwi Festival of Indigenous Arts: Resound - See Monsters + The Extra-Terrestrial: In Concert - The Movie. Art Centre in the Square, 101 Queen St. N., Kingston. 613-533-2424 or 1-888-745-4717. $37-$95. Also Mar 22.


- **Monday March 25**
  - **8:00** - Don Wright Faculty of Music. Early Music Studio. Von Kuster Hall, Music Building, Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3871. Free.


- **Tuesday March 26**
  - **7:00** - Don Wright Faculty of Music. Music of Our Time: Concert of MMus Thesis Compositions. Von Kuster Hall, Music Building, Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3871. Free.


- **Wednesday March 27**
  - **7:00** - Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts. The Ka’otahkwi Festival of Indigenous Arts: Niisagiigichimi/Ganishkii/Ontariyowa: Linkited. Unidentified: and other works. Laura Drrittm, viola; Celmen Gob, dancer; dancer; Dara Rosale, dancer. 390 King St. W., Kingston. 613-533-2424. $39; $8-$20(faculty/staff). Free.


- **Thursday March 21**
Saturday March 30

- 7:00: Huronia Symphony Orchestra. A Night at the Opera. Mozart: Overture to Don Giovanni; Paganini/Papageno duet from The Magic Flute; Bazzini/legend of the Pearl Fishers; Salleri: Overture to Les Danaides; Puccini: La Bohème (sensations); Mélissa Davis, soprano; Aleksandra Balaburska, mezzo; Matthew Canns, tenor; Noah Grove, baritone; Olivier Bélanger, conductor. Collier Street United Church, 112 Collier St., Barrie. 705-721-4752. $25; $15(st). (end)

- 7:30: Georgian Bay Symphony. From Shostakovich to the New World. Shostakovich: Piano Concerto No.2; Dvořák: Symphony No.9. Vivian Chen, piano; François Koh, conductor. OSCO Regional Auditorium, 1550 8th St. E., Owen Sound. 519-372-0212. $29; $27(t). ($5(st)). (end)

- 7:30: Lyrica Chamber Choir. Wondrous Love. Reheister: Mass in G; and works by Faure, Rimsky-Korsakov, Lee Parker and Alice Berger and others. Ben Bolt-Martin, conductor. Works by Shostakovich. Ben Bolt-Martin, conductor. London. 519-661-3767. From 7:00: Night at the Opera. Mozart: Overture to Don Giovanni; Paganini/Papageno duet from The Magic Flute; Bazzini/legend of the Pearl Fishers; Salleri: Overture to Les Danaides; Puccini: La Bohème (sensations); Mélissa Davis, soprano; Aleksandra Balaburska, mezzo; Matthew Canns, tenor; Noah Grove, baritone; Olivier Bélanger, conductor. Collier Street United Church, 112 Collier St., Barrie. 705-721-4752. $25; $15(st). (end)

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Sunday March 31


- 6:00: Don Wright Faculty of Music. Contemporary Music Studio. Von Kuster Hall, Music Building, University Western, 151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767. Free.

Sunday April 7

- 2:00: Georgian Music. Six of Canada’s Leading Musicians. Mendelssohn: Piano Sext.; and other works. Elisie Lee, violin; Sharon Wei, viola; Douglas McNabney, viola; Blake Logfren, cello; Raphael McNabney, double bass; Angela Park, piano. Bethel Community Church, 128 St. Vincent Street, Barrie. 705-726-1811. $5.$6.

- 5:00: Menno Singers. Lamentation. Prayers, songs and hymns of lament. Knox Presbyterian Church (Elora), 51 Church St., Elora. 519-567-8751. Donations accepted. Religious service. Also Apr 9(Kitchener).

- 7:30: Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts. Baroque and Beyond: Claire Jones, Harp. Works by Handel, Bach, Piazzolla and others. 390 King St. W., Kingston. 613-533-2424. $40-$58; $37-$55(faculty/staff); $19-$29(t). (end)

C. Music Theatre

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


- Canadian Opera Company. The Snow Queen. Music by Matthew King, libretto by Andrew McKinnon. Harbourfront Centre, 255 Queens Quay W. 416-373-4000. $35; $25(ts). Opens Apr 2, 7:30pm. Runs to Apr 7. Thurs-Sat(7:30pm), Sun(2pm). Note: also extra show Mar 18.

- Civic Light Opera Company. Tell Me On A Sunday. Music by Andrew Lloyd Webber, lyrics by Don Black. Zon Cultural Centre, 1650 Finch Ave. E. 416-755-1717. $28. Opens Apr 3, 7pm. Runs to Apr 14, Wed(7pm), Thurs-Sat(8pm), Sun(2pm). (end)


- Don Wright Faculty of Music. Opera at Western: Spring Gala - Favourite scenes from Opera and Musical Theatre. Paul Davenport Theatre, Faculty of Music, 151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767. $15/10(ad). Opens Mar 8, 8pm. Also Mar 9(2pm).


Mar 10. Wed-Sun: 7:30pm, Sat/Sun: 2:30pm.
- **Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company.** Streisand x 3D. Conceived by Avery Saltzman. George Weston Recital Hall, Toronto Centre for the Arts, 5040 Yonge St. 416-329-9595. $95 and up. Apr 1, 7:30pm.

- **Huronia Symphony Orchestra.** A Night at the Opera. Collier Street United Church, 121 Collier St., Barrie. 705-721-4752. $25. (519) $5 (ch). Mar 30, 7pm.

**Lower Ossington Theatre.** Once On This Island. Music by Stevie Wonder, lyrics and book by Lynn Ahrens. Lower Ossington Theatre, 100A Ossington Ave. 1-888-324-6282. $54.99-54.99. Apr 3, 8pm. Mar 28, 8pm. Runs to Mar 30. Sat/Sun: 2pm (Special Matinee), and 7:30pm (Evening).

**Lower Ossington Theatre.** Million Dollar Quartet. Features music of Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins, and Elvis Presley. Lower Ossington Theatre, 100A Ossington Ave. 1-888-324-6282. $54.99-54.99. Apr 3, 8pm. Mar 28, 8pm. Runs to Mar 30. Sat/Sun: 2pm (Special Matinee), and 7:30pm (Evening).


**National Ballet of Canada.** Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland. Music by Joly Taltob, Christopher Wheeldon, choreography. Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. 416-345-9595. $40 and up. Apr 3, 7:30pm. Runs to Mar 17. Thurs-Sat: 7:30pm, Sat/Sun: 2pm. Note: only 2pm matinee on Mar 17.

**North Toronto Players.** The Gondoliers (or, the King of Rock and Roll). Music by Arthur Sullivan, lyrics by W. S. Gilbert, with Michael Harris and John Rickettardi. Papiermill Theatre, 67 Potter Rd. 416-481-4667. $29. Opens Apr 15, 8pm. Runs to Apr 24. Fri/Sat/Sun (8pm), Sun (2pm). Note: extra show Mar 23, 2pm.


**Opera For All.** Request by Handel’s Alcina. In collaboration with the Uxbridge Music School. 905-304-7469. $20; $18 (sr); $10 (st). Apr 13, 8pm. Runs to Apr 15. Thurs-Sat: 8pm, Sun: 2pm.


**Opera By Request.** Così fan tutte. Music by W. A. Mozart, libretto by Lorenzo da Ponte. Claire Harris, conductor and piano. College Street United Church, 452 College St. 416-445-2365. $20. Apr 5, 7pm.

**C. Music Theatre**

**120 Diner.** 120 Church St. 416-172-7725.

**Allecsay.** 2409 Yonge St. 416-481-6865

**Bayview.** 15 Colbourne St., Hamilton. 905-543-8512

**The Blue Goose Tavern.** 1 Blue Goose St. 416-255-2442

**D. In the Clubs (Mostly Jazz)**

- **Artword Arthar.** 2116 Queen St. E. 416-699-8272
castroloscounge.com (full schedule)

- **C'est What.** 67 Front St. E. 416-687-9499
cestwhat.com (full schedule)

- **Grossman’s Tavern.** 379 Spadina Ave. 416-977-7000

- **The Hot Five Jazzmakers.** 2116 Queen St. E. 416-699-8272
castroloscounge.com (full schedule)

- **We Have Nothing To Lose.**

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**2004-2019, thewholenote.com**
book by Terrence McNally. Theatre Aurora, 150 Henderson Dr, Aurora, 905-727-3669. $25; $23(st); $10(st). Opens Feb 28, 8pm. Runs to Mar 9. Thurs-Sat(8pm), Sun(2pm).

- Theatre Orangeville. Across The Pond - The British Invasion. Featuring Leisa Way and The Lonely Hearts Club Band. Orangeville Town Hall Opera House, 87 Broadway, Orangeville. 519-942-3423. $44; $22(st). Opens Feb 14, 8pm. Runs to Mar 3. Wed/ Sun(2pm), Thurs/Fri(8pm), Sat(1pm).


- VOICEBOX: Opera in Concert. The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny by Kurt Weill. St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, The 27 Front St. E. 416-386-7772. $29; $50; $45. Opens Mar 30, 8pm. Also Mar 31 (2:30pm).


The prospect of losing an hour of sleep due to the beginning of Daylight Saving Time – the clock change. I may remind you, will take place at 2am on Sunday March 10 – is a daunting one for musicians and music fans alike, many of whom are no strangers to that particular time of the night. Despite its official allegiance to the day that follows, 2am really does seem like the end of the evening that precedes it; suddenly finding oneself at 3am feels as though it is dangerously close to the following day, and to all of the duties and responsibilities that morning imposes upon us.

Daylight Saving Time, however, has one particularly pleasant feature, the effects of which will be felt immediately by the music-going community of Toronto: the sunset, which, since the winter solstice, has been depressingly early, will suddenly shift a full hour later, meaning that as of March 10, the sun will set at approximately 7:17pm – at least according to the dubious website I consulted during my extensive research – and will set progressively later as we settle into spring. The consequence of this happy change? Leaving one’s home in the early evening, so daunting when the sun sets on the frigid, ice-covered streets of Toronto at 4:40pm, will suddenly become much more appealing. Given the number of excellent shows happening in March, this is no small gift.

Joni Mitchell

The legendary singer Joni Mitchell, whose body of work touches upon folk, pop, jazz and many points in between, is a name that will likely be familiar to all Who?Note readers, not least because she has roots in Toronto; in her early 20s, she performed regularly in Yorkville at a time when the neighbourhood was better known for its folk clubs than for its boutique clothing stores. Mitchell, born in 1943, celebrated

James Taylor and Joni Mitchell at Joni 75: A Birthday Celebration

March 1–April 7, 2019 | 57

Beat by Beat | Mainly Clubs, Mostly Jazz!

D. In the Clubs (Mostly Jazz)
grossmanstavern.com (full schedule)
All shows: No cover (unless otherwise noted).
Every Sat 4-30pm The Happy Pals Dixieland 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 Valvassori.

Hirut Cafe and Restaurant
2050 Danforth Ave. 416-551-7560
hirut.ca
Every Sun 6pm Hirut Sundays Open Mic. First and Third Tuesday 8pm Fingerstyle Guitar Association.

Mar 2 8pm Mbaqanga. Mar 5 8pm Paul Novotny. Mar 7 8pm Uptown Jazz Swing Band. Mar 8 8:30pm Jazz of the Americas w/ Don Nadurisk. Mar 14 8pm Bright Lit Big City: Fiction, Poetry, Monologues w/ Carolyn Bennett, Jennifer McKinley, Edward Kay, Lisa de Nikoits, Rocco de Giacomo. Mar 19 8pm Paul Novotny. Mar 26 8pm Daniel Barnes & The Low Stress Trio. Mar 29 8pm Hirut Hoot Comedy Cabaret.

Home Smith Bar – See Old Mill, The
her 75th birthday on November 7 of last year; to commemorate the event, Decca Records organized a tribute concert, with artists such as James Taylor, Diana Krall, and Rufus Wainwright performing songs from Mitchell’s catalogue at The Music Center in Los Angeles. The recordings from this event will be released on March 8 as Joni 75: A Birthday Celebration.

Mitchell, of course, has had a profound influence on multiple generations of Canadian musicians, and it is no great surprise that March will see numerous Mitchell-themed concerts taking place at various venues in Toronto. At Hugh’s Room, singer Mia Sheard presents two consecutive nights (March 1 and 2) of “Songs Are Like Tattoos,” a tribute to Mitchell, featuring bassist Chris Gartner, pianist Tania Gill, drummer Ryan Granville-Martin, saxophonist Ernie Tollar, guitarist Joel Schwartz, and guest vocalists David Sereda, Marla and David Celia, Lori Cullen and Jennifer Foster. (Sheard has been performing a version of this show since 2008, when she put on her first Mitchell tribute.)

Also at Hugh’s Room, on March 25: “The Life and Music of Joni Mitchell,” a lecture and concert presented by musicologist Mike Daley, who will lead a discussion about Mitchell, as well as a performance with Jill Daley and Mia Sheard. Fittingly, given Mitchell’s contributions to jazz, and her collaborations with musicians such as Jaco Pastorius, Wayne Shorter and Pat Metheny, her work will also be represented at The Rex. On Wednesday March 20, jazz vocalist Aimée Butcher will lead “For the Roses III,” a tribute to Mitchell, accompanied by saxophonist Matt Woroshyl, guitarist Brandon Wall, keyboardist Jeff Visentin, bassist Jeff Deegan, and drummer Robin Claxton.

Women From Space Festival

While the abundance of Joni Mitchell tributes speaks to the enduring power of a singular artist’s living legacy, the inaugural Women From Space Festival – taking place from March 8 to March 11, in celebration of International Women’s Day – seeks to provide a platform for exciting new musical talent and fresh jazz interpretations of Joni Mitchell’s work.

In the Clubs (Mostly Jazz)

Jazz Bistro, The

251 Victoria St. 416-363-5299 jazzbistro.ca (full schedule)

Jazz Room, The

Located in the Huerther Hotel, 59 King St. N., Waterloo. 226-476-1565 kwijazzroom.com (full schedule) All shows 8:00-11:00pm unless otherwise indicated. Attendees must be 19+. Cover charge varies (generally $12-$25)

Lula Lounge

1585 Dundas St. W. 416-588-0307 lula.ca (full schedule) Every Fri 7:30pm Afterwork Global Party Series free before 8pm; Every Fri 8:30pm Havana Club Fridays $15; Every Sat 10:30pm Salsa Saturdays $15. Mar 3 6pm SHINE Concert 2019. Mar 5 6:30pm Alex Pangman and her Alleycats, Red Hot Rambler. Mar 7 7pm IMPRINTS w/ Hannah Georgas and Special Guests. Mar 10 5:30pm Mandy Lagan with Origins. Mar 17 12pm Lula’s Drag Brunch Extravaganza. Mar 21 6:30pm The Best Of R&B Soul Vol. 3. Mar 24 4pm Projeto Forrobodó. Mar 26 5:30pm Speaker 8am: Love Lessons. Mar 31 9:45am (morning show) and 1:45pm (afternoon show) 12th Annual MJMS Spring Recitals and Celebrations.

Manhattans Pizza Bistro & Music Club

951 Gordon St., Guelph 519-767-2440 manhattans.ca (full schedule) All shows: PWYC. Every Tue Open Stage hosted by Paul and Jamie.

Miy Cafe

876 Dundas St. W. 647-607-2032 maytoronto.com (full schedule) Every Wed & Sat 7pm to 10pm

Mezzetta Restaurant

618 St. Clair Ave. W. 416-588-5847 mezzettarestaurant.com (full schedule) Every Wed 9 & 10:15pm Wednesday Concert
newer musicians to showcase their craft and to develop their audience. One of the stated goals of the Women From Space Festival is to “celebrate women’s artistic voices and achievements and to draw attention to an underrepresentation of women in free improvisation and jazz.” Taking place at a different venue (Wenona Craft Beer Lodge, The Tranzac, Arraymusic, and Burdock Music Hall, which also features its own half-day run, the festival will feature 16 separate acts, each of which will play a half-hour set. Organized by festival co-founders Bea Labikova and Kayla Milmine, both of whom will also be performing, the festival will feature a number of names that will be familiar to WholeNote readers, including Laura Swankey, whose EP Once More: for solo voice and electronics was covered in The WholeNote EP Review, Mingjia Chen, whose debut EP Feel Seen, featuring the Tortoise Orchestra, was also covered in The WholeNote EP Review, and Christine Duncan, who will be performing with Swankey and guitarist Patrick O’Reilly to close out the festival on March 11 at Burdock. Duncan is a prominent figure within the creative music community; she performs regularly, teaches in the jazz program at the University of Toronto, and conducts the Element Choir, a unique, improvising ensemble that has collaborated with artists such as Tanya Tagaq, that has been featured on the soundtrack to the major motion picture The Witch, and that has sung, in a variety of different incarnations, at major festivals throughout the country. Beyond these professional accomplishments, Duncan remains a leading vocalist in her own right, and her set with Swankey and O’Reilly (with whom she’s previously collaborated) is likely to be a festival highlight.

On March 15, guitarist Nir Felder plays The Rex, joining the Montreal bassist Rémi-Jean LeBlanc’s band, which also features pianist Rafal Zaldivar and drummer Samuel Joly. Felder has made a name for himself over the past few years as an exciting new voice on the electric guitar, with credits on albums by artists such as David Weiss, Terri Lyne Carrington and Janeke Gwizdala, as well as his own much-lauded album Golden Age, released in 2014. Felder’s performance with LeBlanc’s band represents an ongoing collaboration, which included performances at the Montreal International Jazz Festival in summer 2018, the TD Ottawa Winter Jazz Festival in February of this year, and in Guelph and Kingston on March 16 and 17, respectively, following the quartet’s performance at The Rex. While LeBlanc is a strong upright bassist, the focus of this ensemble is on the intersection of rock and funk-inflected jazz.

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.

Mainly Clubs, Mostly Jazz Quick Picks

- MAR 1 AND 2, 8:30PM: Mia Sheard, Hugh’s Room. Singer Mia Sheard presents two nights of music in tribute to Joni Mitchell at Hugh’s Room, a show that Sheard has put on, in various iterations, since 2008.
- MAR 8 TO 11: Women From Space Festival, Various Venues. In celebration of International Women’s Day, the Women From Space Festival presents 16 acts over four venues, with an emphasis on improvised music.

Nir Felder

Nice Bistro, The
117 Brock St. N., Whitby. 905-688-8393

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

The Home Smith Bar: No reservations. No cover. $20 food/drink minimum. All shows: 7:30-10:30 unless otherwise listed.

Old Mill Toronto.

The Salt Bar & Lounge
224 Augusta Ave. 416-599-5299

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

Reservoir Lounge, The
52 Wellington St. E. 416-965-0857
reservoirlounge.com (full schedule).

excluSively Clubs, Mostly Jazz Quick Picks

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D.

In the Clubs (Mostly Jazz)

theπilot.ca

All shows: 5pm. No cover.


Poetry Jazz Cafe
224 Augusta Ave. 416-599-5299
poetryjazzcafe.com (full schedule)

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

Reservoir Lounge, The
52 Wellington St. E. 416-965-0857
reservoirlounge.com (full schedule).

Every Tue & Sat, 8:45pm Tyler Yarema and his Rhythm. Every Wed 9pm The Digs. Every Thurs 9:45pm Stacey Kanuk. Every Fri 9:45pm Dee Dee and the Dirty Martians.

Rex Hotel Jazz & Blues Bar, The
194 Queen St. W. 416-598-2475
therex.ca (full schedule)

Call for cover charge info.

Mar 1 4pm Hogtown Syncopators, 6:30pm Tetrahedron, 9:45pm Jake Chisholm. Mar 2 10pm The Sinners Choir, 3:30pm Swing Shift Big Band, 7:30pm Justin Bacchus, 9:45pm Kevin Breit’s FolkAlarm. Mar 3 10pm Excelsior Dixieland Jazz Band, 3:30pm Club Django, 7pm Wire Circus, 9:30pm Steve Young Quartet. Mar 4 6:30pm U of T Student Jazz Ensembles, 9:30pm Mike Malone & Writers Jazz Orchestra. Mar 5 6:30pm Sammy Jackson Duo, 9:30pm Classic Rex Jazz Jam. Mar 6 6:30pm Nathan Hiltz, 9:30pm Patrick Smith Quartet. Mar 7 6:30pm Kevin Quinn, 9:30pm Tony Malaby w/ Nick Fraser Quartet. Mar 8 4pm Hogtown Syncopators, 6:30pm Tetrahedron, 9:45pm BCM Organ Trio. Mar 9 7pm The Sinners Choir: 3:30pm TJ O Big Band, 7:30pm Justin Bacchus, 9:45pm Carin / Davidson Nine. Mar 10 12pm Excelsior Dixieland Jazz Band, 3:30pm Red Hot Ramble, 7pm Wire Circus, 9:45pm Carin / Davidson Nine. Mar 11 6:30pm U of T Student Jazz Ensembles, 9:30pm Sam Dickinson Quartet. Mar 12 6:30pm Sammy Jackson Duo, 9:30pm Michael Eckert’s Neo Eagle. Mar 13 6:30pm Nathan Hiltz, 9:30pm Jeremy Price Quartet. Mar 14 6:30pm Kevin Quinn, 9:30pm Kelcy Grant & Brian O’Kane Quintet. Mar 15 4pm Hogtown Syncopators, 6:30pm Tetrahedron, 9:45pm Nir Felder w/ Rémi-Jean LeBlanc. Mar 16 7pm The Sinners Choir, 3:30pm Jerome Goodvo, 7:30pm Justin Bacchus, 9:45pm Turcotte & O’Kane. Mar 17 12pm Excelsior Dixieland Jazz Band, 3:30pm Beverly Taft Quart, 7pm Wire Circus, 9:30pm Sophie Perman

Salsy Dog Bar & Grill, The
1980 Queen St. E. 416-849-5064
thesalsydog.ca (full schedule)

Every Tue 7-10pm. Jazz Night. Every Thu 8:30pm Karaoke. Every Fri 9-3pm Blues Jam - house band with weekly featured guest. Every Sat 3pm Salsy Dog Saturday Matinee.

Sauce on Danforth
1376 Danforth Ave. 416-483-7483
saucedanforth.com

All shows: No cover. Every Mon 8pm Gareth Perry’s Book Club. Every Tue 9pm Julian Faugh. Every Wed 9pm Paul Reddick & Friends. Every Thu 8pm Steve Hayes

Dinners, Lunches, Spots

The Whole Note
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March 1 – April 2, 2019
March 24 Victoria St 416 364-7571
theseconnor.com (full schedule)
All shows with $10 cover charge ($5 after 10pm arrival, free after 11pm arrival)
Mar 1 Julian Fauth and Dan Munro

E. The ETCeternas

For further information, visit elgincounty.ca/museum or call 519-631-1460 x193. All ages welcome! No admission fee.

Film Screenings

● Mar 25 7:00: The Gallery Players/FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre. Movie Night: A silent film with improvised sound score. Nosferatu (1922). Directed by F.W. Murnau. 94 min. Douglas Miller, flute; Eric Mahar, guitar; Penner Mackay, percussion; Joan Nicks, film historian. FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, Film House, 550 St. Paul St. St. Catharines. 6:45pm: pre-screen talk. For more information call 905-486-1525, or visit our website gallery-players.ca. $39; Senior $30(art), Student/Arts Worker $14(art), $80(family).

● Apr 02 6:30: Royal Conservatory of Music. Ravi Shankar: Between Two Worlds (2000). Directed by Mark Kidel. 90 min. Celebrating the life and career of one of India’s most revered musicians, Ravi Shankar. Following the star for two years of his life, this captivating documentary details the seven decades of innovative collaboration with Western musicians like George Harrison, John Coltrane, and Yehudi Menuhin. Featuring archival footage from performances filmed in the 1930s to the present day. QA hosted by Mervyn Mehta with star player Anwar Khurshid, member of KUNÉ – Canada’s Global Orchestra. Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema, 506 Bloor St. W. Tickets can be purchased at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema box office or at hotdocsboxoffice.ca. $17; 42(Members).

Galas and Fundraisers


● Mar 07 19:30: Melos. Venetian Carnaval Fundraiser. Join Melos in Baroque Venice for a rau-

ious evening of music, drama, food, drink and all-round revelry while helping to support Melos’ ongoing educational outreach and excellent period performance! Silent auction featuring art and music lessons, gift packages, and weekend getaways in Prince Edward County. Late Can-
adian Club, 1114 Italia Lane, Kingston. (Snow date Mar 2, in case of storm.) Transport available from downtown Kingston. Tickets $80 available at melos-earlymusic.org. Information from the website or by email at melos.kingston@gmail.com or by phone at 613-767-2045.

● Mar 02 7:00: VOCA Chorus of Toronto, 9th Annual Cabaret | Silent Auction. Great Hall, Slovenian House, 958 Broadway Ave. Jenny Croker, artistic director; Elizabeth Acker, accompanist. Huge variety of chorister acts; 50/50 draw; appetizers, cash bar; free parking. 416-931-8224. Tickets: $30.

● Mar 23 8:00: Beth Anne Cole. Concert & Fundraising Gala. CD Release: Call Down the Dew. Heliconian Hall, 35 Hazelton Ave. $30/$25(ad). Information from the website or by email at melos.kingston@gmail.com or by phone at 613-767-2045.

● Apr 03 7:00: Opera in Concert. Opera Salons: Viva Verdi. A tribute concert to Giu-

poperculato.com. Annual membership: $251(ann); $20(sen), $10(stu). Free for first-time visitors. Dona-
tions accepted for refreshments.

Lectures, Salons and Symposia

● Mar 12 7:30: Toronto Duke Ellington Society. General Meeting. “Essentially Ellington” is a video presentation by Jim Northover. Jim promises that there is absolutely no intellectual content whatsoever to this presenta-
tion, but the joy and excitement will more than make up for that. Montgomery’s Inn, 4709 Dundas St. W., Etobicoke.

INTERNATIONAL MUSIC FESTIVAL AND COMPETITION
May 24 - June 2, 2019 | Markham, Ontario

All ages and levels. Registration deadline: April 12, 2019

Piano, Voice, Guitar, Harp Strings, Woodwinds, Brass Conducting, Composition

JURORS
Christina Petrowska-Quilico (YorkU), Dr. Lynn Kuo Gary Kulesha (UofT), Dr. Jeffrey McFadden (UofT) Leslie Newman (UofT), Dr. Michael Berkovsky (RCM)
Kristian Alexander, Andrew Ascenzo, Andrea Ludwig
Dr. Teresa Suen-Campbell, Michael Fedyshyn

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CONCERTS


Mar 13 10:00am: Royal Canadian College for Organists Toronto Centre. Pedals, Pipes & Pizza. Ages 3-12 (10am-1pm). Ages 13-19 (12pm-3pm). Pizza and juice served at noon. Participants will learn about and play a pipe organ. They will even have the opportunity to build a small pipe organ with “Orgelkids”. Younger participants are welcome to bring their parents, grandparents or other care givers. Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, 1585 Yonge St. (2 blocks north of St. Clair, east side). 416-769-1715. Free.


Mar 23 8:00: Acoustic Harvest. “Give Me Wood and I’ll Make It Sing for You”. Lecture, presentation and concert by guitarist Grit Laskin. St. Paul’s United Church, 200 McIntosh St., Scarborough. For more information contact Lillian Wauthier at lillian.wauthier@gmail.com. $25 (S&G) $22 (adv).

Mar 23 8:00: Queen’s Colloquium Series. Melos and Queen’s University host Alpharabius, a musical ensemble dedicated to exploring the musical interactions of the rich cultures of the Mediterranean from the 9th to the 19th centuries. Joining them is new Kingston resident, and traditional Egyptian dancer, Angelina Thorne. Featuring renowned Arabic music historian, Dr. George Sawa, playing qanun; percussionist Suzanne Meyers-Sawa, and members of Sine Nomine Ensemble for Medieval Music on period instruments. Alpharabius will perform Euro- pean and Middle Eastern instruments from centuries of cultural exchange, and accompany traditional Egyptian bellydance by Ms Thorne. Co-sponsored by Melos Choir and Period Instruments, in preparation for their May 11 concert at the Bader. Dan School of Drama and Dance, Room 120, Harrison-LeCain Hall, 39 Bader Lane, Kingston. Contact meloskingston@gmail.com or phone 613-771-7245.

Mar 31 10:30am: Canadian Opera Company. 90-Minute Tour of Four of the Seasons Stage. Led by a trained docent, includes information and access to the Isadore and Rosalie Sharp City Room, the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre and R. Fraser Elliott Hall, as well as backstage areas such as the wig room and dressing rooms, the orchestra pit, and other spaces that only a stage door pass could unlock. Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. 416-563-8231. coca.ca. $20(adults); $15(st/sr). Also Mar 10. A tour is available in French on Mar 11.

WORKSHOPS

Mar 03 10:30am: Canadian Opera Company. 90-Minute Tour of Four of the Seasons Stage. Led by a trained docent, includes information and access to the Isadore and Rosalie Sharp City Room, the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre and R. Fraser Elliott Hall, as well as backstage areas such as the wig room and dressing rooms, the orchestra pit, and other spaces that only a stage door pass could unlock. Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. 416-563-8231. coca.ca. $20(adults); $15(st/sr). Also Mar 10. A tour is available in French on Mar 11.

Mar 13 10:00am: St. Lawrence Centre. 90-Minute workshop: “Reading for singers and instrumentalists of all the other vocal categories.” Two sessions. Mary Stewart, pianist and conductor. The International College of Organists. 363-8231. coc.ca. $20(adults); $15(st/sr). Also Mar 10. A tour is available in French on Mar 11.

Mar 14 1:00pm: Online Recital. Organelli Ensemble. St. John’s College; 117 Bloor St. W. For more information, visit torqpercussionworkshop.eventbrite.com. $20.

Mar 10 8:00pm: The Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Children’s Music Festival. Toronto Symphony Orchestra. 12:00 - We start exploring and learning how you can help make your instrument and you a real part of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra.

Mar 10 10:00am: Toronto Mendelssohn Choir. Singing Saturday Choral Workshop. Suba Sankaran and Dylan Bell of FreePlay will introduce participants to singing jazz, blues and South Indian melodies and rhythms. Camer Hall, Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, 1585 Yonge St. $10 fee includes refreshments. More info: tmchoir.org/singing-saturdays.

Mar 10 1:30pm: Toronto Gilbert and Sullivan Society. “When I first put this uniform on...” wrote William Gilbert in Patience – and he was a stickler for perfection in costuming. Learn how to costume a Gilbert and Sullivan operetta in an entertaining evening with the G&S Society. St. Andrew’s Church, 117 Bloor St. E. Parking below off Hayden. Non-members $5. Refreshments included.


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March’s Child

CHRISTINA MAHLER

MJ BUELL

Toronto April 17, 2018 … Two cherished and long-standing members of Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, Christina Mahler, principal cello since 1981, and Alison Mackay, principal double bass since 1979, have announced their decision to retire in June 2019 after the 2018/19 season. As key members of Tafelmusik’s continuo section, they have epitomized the orchestra’s heartbeat for almost four decades. …

This news, in a release from Tafelmusik, went on to quote Mahler’s personal explanation for her decision. “As instrumentalists, we are very similar to dancers and athletes in terms of the wear and tear of our profession exert on our bodies, and in recent years I began to realize that it was time for me to slow down and plan my retirement from the orchestra’s fast-paced schedule. … The future is very bright for Tafelmusik and I will always hold the orchestra and the audience very close to my heart. Although this represents the closing of a major chapter in my life, it is not the end of the book. I very much hope to be playing the cello in concerts for a long time to come.”

In 1981 after five years of study with Anner Bylsma in The Hague, Christina Mahler immigrated to Canada to serve as principal cellist of Tafelmusik Orchestra, a position she has held ever since. In addition to a lifelong passion for Baroque music, she plays chamber music of the 18th and 19th centuries – many recordings – including a number of concertos – on many labels, and students come from all over the world to study with her at Tafelmusik’s Summer and Winter Institutes, at the University of Toronto and in her private studio. Mahler lives in Riverdale, Toronto, with her partner Jeanne Lamon, and another beloved and constant friend – her 1769 Contreras cello. Considered one of the finest violin makers of Spain, José Contreras is often referred to as the “Stradivarius of Spain.”
When you look at your childhood photo today? Taken on a nice summer day in the garden by my father, it makes me think of the beautiful spot we grew up in, a house surrounded by a large garden with all sorts of fruit trees and flowers and three houses away from the forest.

Where were you born, and who were your parents? Nijmegen – I moved to Heelsum when I was three. Heelsum is a small village near Arnhem just north of the Rhine river in the East of Holland. I lived there until I was 18. My father, Arnold Mahler, was a chemical engineer, and my mother, Elizabeth van Hoogenhuyze, who studied the violin professionally, stayed at home to raise the family.

Who lived in your childhood home? My parents and four siblings, Veronica, Arthur, Helena and Maarten Michiel. I’m the middle child, the third of five. Our dog Rosie was an important part of our family.

Any of them musicians? My mother played quartets regularly at home with other amateurs. All my siblings played one or two instruments. Only one other sibling became a professional musician however.

Your absolute earliest musical memory? My earliest musical memories are singing songs at home. St. Nicholas songs in December, birthday songs, singing on trips in the car. I remember the first LP I got on my birthday, Boccherini’s Cello Concerto in B-flat.

Where did hearing music fit into your life as a child? At home we listened to the radio and we listened to records (LPs). My mother took us to quartet concerts.

Your very first recollection of making music yourself? There was a little singing in school. There was singing in summer camps – also choir pieces. I loved to sing with my siblings. My mother had chosen the cello for me and she decided that I should start at age nine. I was very much looking forward to it and would have liked to start sooner. In fact, she chose which instruments we would all play when we were babies! She said that she heard the last movement of Beethoven’s “Pastoral” Symphony when giving birth to me, so that piece has a special place in my heart!

A first music teacher? My first teacher was a very old man. I adored him. He taught me at home for one year. Then he became too old for the trip and I took the bus to his house. He died one or two years later. It was the first death I experienced.

Early musical collaborations? At least once a week at home we would all play together, often Baroque music. We would play at special events such as my grandfather’s birthday, a Christmas play, or the end of a school year. The first years of performing were easy and enjoyable for me. Then I remember clearly a moment – I had to play for a new teacher, when I was 13 or 14 – when I felt nervous for the first time. This was shocking and strange.

Do you remember when you began to think of yourself as a career musician? I met a professional cellist at a summer camp when I was ten. Meeting him made me realize that I wanted to have a career in music.

Did you ever think you would do something else? Never!

Where did you attend high school? Zetten. We had to cross the Rhine river on a little ferry to get to school. It was a 45-minute bike ride each way, ferry included. My high school didn’t have an official instrumental music program: our orchestra was made up of my mother and sister on violin, my brother on oboe, another girl on trumpet, my teacher on keyboard and me on cello! What must that have sounded like!

And right after high school? I went to study at the conservatory in Arnhem and later in The Hague.

What helped to form your appetite for early music? At home we played mostly early music.

Why did you come to Canada? Jeanne and I met in 1976 in Amsterdam – we were invited by Marion Verbruggen for a concert in Amsterdam. We wanted to work together in a permanent setting and Tafelmusik offered a wonderful and unique opportunity. We’ve never looked back!

And today...

How does teaching/mentoring fit into your current musical life? I very much like teaching and mentoring young musicians. I feel I have the wisdom of all these years of experience and I love being around young people.

Where does music fit into your “time off” – your life at home and among friends and extended family? Whenever I am working on pieces, I like to be busy with it in my mind and leave the space for that, by not listening to other interpretations or other pieces. In the summer at the cottage I really enjoy listening to a wide variety of music.

What would you say to people hoping young children in their family will grow up to love and make music? It is important to have music in the house. Play recordings if you don’t play yourself. Help the children gently with a bit of daily discipline to practise their instruments, because it is too hard for a child to practise without help.

If you were all ALONE (in the shower, driving) and could sing along with complete abandon to ANY recording, what would you choose? The jazzy L’Arpeggiata Purcell recording called Music for a While.

UPCOMING...

Performances you’re excited about? I am really looking forward to the St. Matthew Passion (March 21 to 24), Alison Mackay’s program Tales of Two Cities in Ottawa (March 26) and the Mozart and Haydn program with Jeanne Lamon April 25 to 28) – all upcoming programs with Tafelmusik.

New recordings or projects you are involved in? This is my last season as a core member of Tafelmusik. I need some time to make this transition. Some chamber music plans are in the works and other projects will grow.

A NEW CONTEST WILL APPEAR HERE IN OUR APRIL EDITION

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR WINNERS!

The Bach St. Matthew Passion includes Christina Mahler’s all-time favourite huge cello part. Based on advance ticket sales it’s an audience favourite too – by the time you read this you may find it’s sold out. But if you’re lucky and you hurry you might get a ticket. (Jeanne Lamon Hall, March 21 to 4).

TICKETS

“The Hunt: Mozart and Haydn.” Jeanne Lamon, Tafelmusik’s music director emerita, returns to lead this classical concert featuring Scott Wevers, horn soloist, in Mozart’s joyous Horn Concerto No.4. Four horns take the stage in Mozart’s Symphony No.25 and Haydn’s spirited “Hunt Symphony” (Apr 25 to 28, Jeanne Lamon Hall; Apr 30 at George Weston Recital Hall). A pair of tickets is awarded to RICHARD SMITH and to VOLKER MASEMANN.

“Bach Magnificat.” Ivars Taurins directs Zelenka’s Missa Divi Xaverii, ZWV12 and Bach’s Magnificat, BWV243, with Jana Miller, soprano; Meg Bragle, mezzo-soprano; Colin Ainsworth, tenor. (May 9 to 12 at Koerner Hall). A pair of tickets is awarded to MICHAEL HINGERT and to KWAN-WAH INGLIS.

RECORDINGS

Here are some of Christina Mahler’s favourite Tafelmusik recordings from over the years: Avision Concerti Grossi (CBC Records 1987); Haydn Creation (Sony classical,1995); Tafelmusik: A Baroque Feast [Analekta, 2002], with Mahler featured in the Vivaldi double concerto; Concerti Virtuosi [Analekta, 2005], with Mahler featured in the Leo cello concerto; ; Bach with Jeanne Lamon and Dan Taylor [Analekta 2011]; Bach Brandenburg Concertos (2012 re-release Tafelmusik Media). Some that are still available will be awarded to DEBORAH DAVIS, DAVID ARNOT-JOHNSON, and PAUL KAY.
Reflections on a Musical Residency

COLIN STORY

BACK FROM BANFF

It happened the day after I got back from Banff. My flight had arrived late the previous night, and I got back to my apartment around 11pm, after a lengthy wait in line for a taxi outside of Pearson International Airport in minus-20-degree weather, which I’d endured without the aid of toque, gloves or scarf, as I’d packed these items deep in my carry-on luggage. Imprudent though this decision might seem when viewed in retrospect, it made sense at the time: I hadn’t needed my woollen accessories on my last day in Banff thanks to a timely Chinook wind that raised the daytime temperature to a balmy two degrees.

After getting back to my apartment, making an abortive attempt to unpack, and falling asleep with every available blanket piled on top of my wind-bitten body, I awoke to further delights: frosted-over windows, an insufficient supply of drinkable coffee, and a refrigerator, empty but for an assortment of condiments, a few cans of beer, and a sad, desiccated apple, which in my haste to leave some four weeks earlier I’d evidently forgotten. The remedy to this dearth of comforts: I had to go to the grocery store.

And so it was in Whole Foods – coffee in one hand, avocado in the other – that I, upon making eye contact with a nearby man who was also perusing the produce section, smiled, nodded and said a brief “Hey.” To the man’s credit, his gently startled response of “Uhh... okay” probably had less to do with any rudeness on his part than it had to do with the fact that he, unlike me, had not just spent two weeks at the Banff Centre, where it was common practice, upon encountering a new face in the close quarters of an elevator, or at a dining-hall table, to smile, nod and say a brief “Hey.” This salutation, simple though it was, constituted a layered acknowledgment of a number of implicit statements related to the unique circumstances of being at the Centre, including (but not limited to): “It’s nice to see a friendly face” and, “Isn’t it wonderful to have access to such outstanding facilities?” and “Isn’t the divide between our day-to-day lives and the pampered, unstructured, logistically streamlined lives that we’re leading in our respective residencies so great as to make you feel simultaneously lucky, grateful and slightly embarrassed?” My fellow plant-fat enthusiast couldn’t have known.

He also likely wouldn’t have known that the Banff Centre – founded in 1933, current full name Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity – hosts
a number of programs throughout the year, from short-term summer workshops in disciplines such as dance, theatre, jazz and chamber music, to long-term practicums, in fields such as audio engineering, that run for the better part of a year. I was at the Centre to attend the Banff Musicians in Residence (BMiR) program, a self-directed residency that occurs annually in three separate five-week sessions throughout fall and winter. Successful residency applicants can stay for the full five weeks, although most tend to stay for three, at least in the sessions that I’ve attended. While I don’t know what internal criteria are at play in the selection process, a typical BMiR cohort will consist of approximately 25 Canadian and international musicians who specialize in a wide variety of different practices; this residency included artists such as Corey Gulkin, a singer-songwriter from Montreal, Mark Taylor, a composer from New York, and Rosa Guitar Trio, a classical ensemble from Australia.

Each week of a residency also features a guest faculty member, who hosts a master-class-style session in their studio, is available for one-on-one coachings, and who performs in the concert session that ends each residency week. These concerts tend to alternate between Rolston Recital Hall, a classical-style venue in which primarily acoustic music tends to be programmed, and The Club, the creatively named space in which jazz, pop, folk and other groove-oriented music tends to be programmed. (Blunt titular charms aside, one imagines that the Banff Centre must simply be waiting for the rightly named donor-partnership opportunity.) A BMiR session also sees the selection, through an application and interview process that takes place in advance of the residency, of an artistic associate, a resident who acts as concert curator, social convener and liaison between program participants and Banff Centre administrative staff. The artistic associate in my most recent session was Sophie Gledhill, an English cellist, who successfully wrangled our herd of a cohort with patience, humour and generosity.

At its core, a BMiR works by giving its participants the space, time and resources they need in order to do their unique artistic work, free (to a certain extent) of the stress and responsibility of their ordinary routines. Physically, the Centre resembles a small college campus, and being there mimics a kind of post-secondary experience: participants stay in one of several residence buildings, they have access to the gym, and they receive a Banff Centre ID card, which is loaded with funds on their flex-meal plan; funds they are free to spend at any of the on-campus restaurants (though not, it should be noted, on alcohol). Musicians are assigned a studio space, either in the Music and Sound building, or in one of the 28 huts located in nearby clusters. Equipment requests are processed about a month before the start of a new session. The Banff Centre has a robust inventory of gear, and will help to accommodate any unusual items needed in a given artist’s studio. As drummer Mackenzie Longpré puts it: “One of the most unique aspects of the Banff Centre is the seemingly limitless access to a large array of facilities and musical equipment. During my residency,
I felt like I could request and use whatever gear I wanted, and was never made to feel like I was overstepping my bounds.

Aside from overeating, staring at the romantic splendour of the mountains, and promising yourself that you’ll definitely, definitely go to the gym tomorrow morning, the point of attending the BMIR program is to work on a specific musical project. These projects can differ widely from participant to participant; a classical pianist might be preparing for a concerto that she’ll be performing with an orchestra in eight months’ time, while a singer-songwriter might be writing new material for an album that addresses itself to the themes of climate change and the Canadian landscape. The first BMIR session that I attended was in late 2016; I came to the Banff Centre with a band, to rehearse and develop material written in advance by the group’s leader, in order to prepare for a recording session in early 2017. I spent two weeks during that stay at the Centre, and my artistic goals were fairly straightforward: my job was to play the given material as well as I could, to experiment and develop strategies to expand upon the songs the group was working on, and to advance my own instrumental skills through individual practice. By contrast, I attended this year’s residency by myself, to compose and develop material for a forthcoming recording project. As I was preparing for my time in Banff, I imagined that it would feel more or less the same as my first time, and that my artistic trajectory would look fairly similar by the end of my stay. This assumption, as it turned out, was wrong.

Being provided with the space, time and resources to do my unique artistic work – free of the stress and responsibility of my ordinary routine – produced, in me, an unexpected feeling: an anxious dread …

Banff, I imagined that it would feel more or less the same as my first time, and that my artistic trajectory would look fairly similar by the end of my stay. This assumption, as it turned out, was wrong.

Being provided with the space, time and resources to do my unique artistic work – free of the stress and responsibility of my ordinary routine – produced, in me, an unexpected feeling: an anxious dread that if I wasn’t operating at peak efficiency, I would be squandering this precious opportunity. For as idyllic as a Banff Centre residency may be, it also represents a considerable personal investment of time: time away from family, away from work, away from the real world. The idea that I was not making the absolute most of my experience became increasingly debilitating; perhaps unsurprisingly, I became a bit sick at the end of my first week, and spent a day away from my studio, recuperating in my room.

The key to overcoming this anxiety, I was to find, was not round-the-clock access to excellent facilities, or picturesque views, or all-you-can-drink cafeteria coffee: it was the mutual support and encouragement of the musicians with whom I shared my residency. It is surprisingly difficult to be open and vulnerable, particularly with people you’ve only just met, but actively connecting to the BMIR community became the key to doing better, more fulfilling work. As Guilknie wrote to me after the residency, this peer support “was one of the most important parts of the residency. While everyone was working on a different project, we all realized we were experiencing similar ups and downs,” in going through the sometimes “extreme emotional process” of creating art.

The Banff Centre is a special place, and, as I walked home from the grocery store on that frigid morning, having just warmly greeted a man I did not know, I thought about the things I hadn’t been able to take back to Toronto with me: the world-class facilities, the crisp mountain air, the glamour of Australian accents at every coffee shop and bar in town. But I was reassured that work, even in the most ideal of settings, doesn’t suddenly become easier, and that what turned out to be the most important part of the experience – participating in the cultivation of a supportive community of artistic peers – was, in fact, something that I could bring home.

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.

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It may be cold and windy as you read this, and you may feel as though 2019 has just barely started, but don’t suppress that hopeful feeling – summer is travelling in our direction quickly! With longer days and liberated timetables come new opportunities to consider music-making in fresh new settings. If you’re contemplating summer music programs for yourself, your children or your whole family this year, our annual Focus on Summer Music Education is the place to start, and now is the time to flex your planning muscles.

Regardless of your level of skill, from amateur to professional, there are numerous choices for you to look over. The profiles below, presented by the programs themselves, illustrate an abundance of chances for you to sharpen your aptitudes, discover new ones, and make lifelong associations and friendships. There are programs designed for classical musicians and vocalists, with many opportunities for performance; others offer sessions in jazz, rock, music theatre, composition and even philosophy! There are, of course, programs for children and toddlers as well as programs for teachers, and everything from residential intensives in picturesque settings to day programs and courses nearer to home. Truly, there is something for everybody. But don’t delay – some of them fill up quickly!

You may have noticed that there were four programs profiled in our February issue. For your interest, and in case you missed them, they are:
• Domaine Forget International Music and Dance Academy
• Tafelmusik Baroque Summer Institute
• Tuckamore Festival Young Artist Program
• Vancouver Symphony Orchestral Institute

These were summer programs that had earlier deadlines. They’re not reprinted here, but you can find them online, where this directory will be maintained and updated online on an ongoing basis, year round – so check back at thewholenote.com/resources throughout the year for more.

To join The WholeNote Focus on Summer Music Education online please contact karen@thewholenote.com or call 416-323-2232 x26.

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● CAMMAC Music Centre
Lake MacDonald, 85 Chemin Cammac, Harrington, QC
June 24 to August 12
Contact: Julie Roy
819-687-3938
communications@cammac.ca
www.cammac.ca
Deadline: May 1
Cost: $775 - $2,000
Residential program

This is a family music camp for amateur musicians aged 5 to 99 years. Children under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult participant. The program consists of 7 independent week-long sessions, each with a different musical theme, from Early Music to Classical to Jazz; Chamber music to Choral music; traditional to Celtic to other world music. Professional musicians, carefully chosen for their positive attitude and their excellent pedagogy, will coach, conduct, teach and encourage all participants to improve their musical level. Amateurs of all levels are welcome, and all have the life-changing opportunity of making music with other amateurs in a supportive atmosphere, and a stunningly beautiful natural environment situated on the banks of Lake MacDonald in the Laurentians.

● Camp musical Tutti
Bishop’s University, 2800 Rue College, Sherbrooke, QC
July 6 to 13
Contact: Esfir Dyachkov
514-486-8727
info@camptutti.com
www.camptutti.com
Cost: $75 (Registration), $620 (Educational Program), $520 (Food and Lodging)
Residential and day programs
Camp Hours: 8:45am to 9pm (8:45am to 5:30pm for very young campers)

Camp musical Tutti takes place in the picturesque Eastern Townships. Our goal is to encourage students to love making music. We run residential and day camps, and we offer a flex-stay program. Partial scholarships are available. As a non-profit organization, we will present our annual benefit concert, featuring 3 pianists and 1 cellist, all winners of prestigious international competitions, on April 16 at Bourgie Hall, 1339 Sherbrooke St. West, Montreal H3G 1G2. We welcome participants of all ages (children/adults), all levels and all instruments. We teach in English, French and Russian. Courses include choir, masterclasses, individual lessons, chamber music, orchestra, theatre, art, swimming and other recreational activities. We end with a gala concert open to the public.
● **Canadian Opera Company Summer Opera Camps and Summer Opera Immersion**

Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, Toronto, ON
July 2 to 27
**Contact:** COC Box Office
416-363-8231
education@coc.ca
www.learn.coc.ca

**Deadline:** Until Full
**Cost:** $300 - $360 (depending on age)
**Camp Hours:** 9am to 3:30 or 4pm (depending on age)

▲ The Canadian Opera Company’s Summer Opera Camps offer children entering grades 1-8 an immersive operatic experience. Participants will playfully explore opera as both creators and performers, while developing their skills in a fun, yet intensive, week-long camp. Weekly activities include story creation, singing, composing, acting, improvisation, and costume, props and set design. The Summer Opera Immersion, for students in grades 9-12+, runs from July 22-27. Participants will work with professional artists to create and design their own opera, nurture performance skills, and experience every element of an opera come together in a final performance for family and friends. Ideal for any arts-loving teen.

All levels of experience welcome.

● **Canadian Operatic Arts Academy (COAA) and Accademia Europea Dell’Opera (AEDO)**

London, Canada and Lucca, Italy
May 1 to 28, July 1 to August 11
**Contact:** Carmen Speccht and Brianna DeSantis
519-661-2111 x80047
cooa@uwo.ca
www.music.uwo.ca/outreach/coaa-aedo

**Deadline:** Until full – contact for details
**Cost:** Various – see website for details (housing included for AEDO only)

▲ Two opera intensives from the Don Wright Faculty of Music at Western University: COAA is an elite international program that provides singers, pianists and directors with the skills to obtain, realize and sustain a prolific and rewarding career in the operatic profession. AEDO, in Lucca, Italy, presents the ultimate European opera experience for singers, pianists, directors and instrumentalists with four fully-staged operas*: Handel’s Ariodante, Mozart’s La Clemenza di Tito, Puccini’s Gianni Schicchi & Suor Angelica, and Puccini’s La Bohème. Audition required. *Final repertoire selection to be confirmed upon completion of auditions. General director: Sophie Louise Roland. Artistic director: Simone Luti.

● **Creative Strings Workshop**

Jumblies Theatre, 132 Fort York Blvd., Toronto, ON
May 18 to 19
**Contact:** Christian Howes / Victoria Yeh
416-799-0737
chris@christianhowes.com
www.christianhowes.com/creative-strings-workshop-toronto

**Deadline:** May 15
**Cost:** $500
**Camp Hours:** 10am to 6pm (Sat & Sun)

▲ This intensive weekend conference will include masterclasses, group lessons, and chamber music coaching for performers and teachers on bowed strings seeking transformative growth and professional development. A 3-hour intro session option is also available. The Creative Strings Workshop will focus on Creative Musicianship–Free Improvisation, Arranging, Composition, Modal, Harmonic, and Rhythmic internalization, Contemporary styles, and more! Students, professional performers and teachers are welcome, including advanced jazz players and those with no improvisation training.

● **Folk Camp**

678 Lakeshore Rd., Grafton, ON
August
**Contact:** Folk Camp Canada
647-505-4242
folkcanada@gmail.com
www.folkcamp.ca

**Deadline:** Early Bird - March 2019
**Cost:** $800 (early bird)

▲ Folk Camp is a family-friendly, week-long program of traditional music, song, dance, and craft workshops. Our camp offers the chance to live in community with fellow folk, learning & embracing village ways, exploring and sharing traditional skills, all in the beautiful rural setting of southern Ontario. This summer, join us for classes in European Folk Ensemble, Balfolk Dance, Introduction to Button Accordion, Ukrainian Polyphonic Singing, Finnish Kantele, Bulgarian Singing, Georgian Polyphony, & so much more!

● **Great Lakes International Summer Music Institute**

Sault Ste. Marie, ON
July 21 to August 3
**Contact:** Frank Deresti
705-206-1845
frank.deresti@algomau.ca
www.algomau.ca/music-institute

**Deadline:** May 30
**Cost:** $2,000

▲ We are a 2 week summer program catering to advanced string, piano and voice students in late high school or university. Through a holis-
tic and collaborative approach, our intensive program aims to provide students with a transformative experience that will positively impact their futures as musicians and as inspired leaders in their fields. Students will arrive playing at a high level on their instruments, and will leave with a wealth of new knowledge, skills, perspective and inspiration. Students will receive lessons from highly-skilled faculty as well as collaborating in daily chamber music rehearsals, performing in masterclasses and recitals, attending workshops and presentations on various topics, attending faculty concerts, and exploring Lake Superior Park and other local attractions.

- **International Symposium on the Philosophy of Music Education**

  Don Wright Faculty of Music, Western University, London, ON

  June 5 to 8

  Contact: Patrick Schmidt  
  (519) 661-2111 x85339  

  Deadline: Until full – contact for details

  Cost: Early bird (by March 20): $275 non-students, $95 students. Regular prices: $300 non-students, $120 students

  Day program

  - This international symposium will bring together a diverse array of international philosophers, scholars, teachers, teacher educators, and performers interested in engaging in philosophical research regarding music education. The symposium seeks to encourage and stimulate discussions on a wide range of topics related to philosophy of music education from international and interdisciplinary perspectives. This includes in particular research concerned with intersections of philosophy of music education and music education policy, or comparative and international music education. Conference chair: Patrick Schmidt. Pre-conference workshop for doctoral students June 3 to 5. See website for more details.

- **Interprovincial Music Camp**

  Camp Manitou, McKellar, ON

  August 18 to 23, August 24 to September 1

  Contact: Anne Fleming-Read  
  416-488-3316  
  anne@campimc.ca  
  www.campimc.ca

  Cost: $875.00 - $998.00

  Residential program

  - IMC offers programs for orchestra, band, rock, jazz, choir, musical theatre, songwriting and sound engineering. The camp has been providing young musicians with exceptional musical training and unforgettable summer-camp experiences since 1961. Campers fine-tune skills as musicians, develop friendships and forge a lifelong love of music while enjoying the setting of one of Canada’s finest camp facilities. The IMC experience includes housing, meals, classes, sectionals, large and small ensembles, faculty concerts, recreational activities and evening programs. Each session, IMC concludes with performances for family and friends. Our faculty includes Canada’s finest performers and educators. For more information, visit www.campIMC.ca. IMC – the highlight of a young musician’s summer!

- **JVL Summer School for Performing Arts International “Music in the Summer” Festival**

  Geneva Park on Lake Couchiching, Orillia, ON

  June 27 to July 7

  Contact: Jacob Lakirovich  
  416-735-7499

  jvl@musicinthesummer.com  
  www_music_in_the_summer_com

  Deadline: May 1

  Cost: $2,635

  Residential program

  - This festival will feature a full program of masterclasses, concerts and competitions. The programs of the school encompass private lessons with internationally-renowned teachers, masterclasses and workshops, chamber music classes, orchestral and ensemble classes, solo performances with the Academy orchestras, and solo and chamber music recitals, as well as special seminars for Ear Training, Composition and Theory of Music. Participation in the festival is incredibly valuable for musicians of all ages and levels. The extensive musical training they will receive during this period will inevitably have a great impact on their personal growth as musicians and as individuals, and it is evident that students have benefited from these tremendous learning opportunities in the past 17 years.

- **Kincardine Summer Music Festival**

  Based in a public school in Kincardine, ON, on Lake Huron

  August 11 to 16

  Contact: Deborah Schnarr  
  519-396-9716

  info@ksmf.ca  
  www.ksmf.ca

  Deadline: August 8

  Cost: $180 - $200

  Camp Hours: 9am to 3:50pm

  - Daytime music classes August 12 to 16 are for everyone from beginners to experienced players. Last year half the students were adults! Beginner, junior and senior levels of strings, bands, orchestra, fiddle, guitar and vocal programs. Senior strings and band members create the Festival Orchestra. Have fun, meet new friends and include your family! Fees run $180 to $200 and include tickets to the August Evening Concert Series August 12 to 16. Secure online registration. Discounts and scholarships available.

  Celebrating its 28th anniversary, KSMF is renowned for consistently excellent programming, presenting fabulous live concerts featuring brilliant vocalists and instrumentalists. Jazz, blues, world and classical music and more! Music and the beach - what could be better?

- **Kingsway Conservatory Summer Music 2019**

  Kingsway Conservatory of Music, 2848 Bloor Street W., Toronto, ON

  July 1 to August 16 (weekly programs)

  Contact: Sharon Burlacoff  
  416-234-0121

  info@kingswayconservatory.ca

  www.kingswayconservatory.ca

  Deadline: Until full – contact for details

  - This international symposium will bring together a diverse array of international philosophers, scholars, teachers, teacher educators, and performers interested in engaging in philosophical research regarding music education. The symposium seeks to encourage and stimulate discussions on a wide range of topics related to philosophy of music education from international and interdisciplinary perspectives. This includes in particular research concerned with intersections of philosophy of music education and music education policy, or comparative and international music education. Conference chair: Patrick Schmidt. Pre-conference workshop for doctoral students June 3 to 5. See website for more details.
**Kodály Certification Programs (Level I, II and III)**

Don Wright Faculty of Music, Western University, London, ON
July 1 to 12
Contact: Cathy Benedict
519-661-2043
cbenedi3@uwo.ca
www.music.uwo.ca/outreach/music-education/kodaly-certification-program
Deadline: Until full – contact for details
Cost: $795
Day Program

- In this intensive program, participants will strengthen their musicianship and pedagogical skills, with content grounded in a contemporary understanding of the philosophy inspired by Zoltán Kodály. Participants will engage in musically educative opportunities through singing, reading, writing, moving and creating to build skills and knowledge to assist in classroom music teaching and learning. Level I is appropriate for experienced teachers, emerging teachers and graduate students. Level II is open to those who have successfully completed a KSC or OAKE certified Kodály Level I course. Level III is open to those who have successfully completed a KSC or OAKE certified Kodály Level I and Level II course. The Kodály Society of Canada certifies candidates who successfully complete Level III.

**Lake Field Music Camp**

Lakefield College School, Lakefield, ON
August 11 to 18
Contact: Andrew Wolf
647-692-3463
info@lakefieldmusic.ca
www.lakefieldmusic.ca
Deadline: June 30
Cost: $1,499 - $1,499
Residential program

- Lake Field Music camp brings together adult amateur musicians of all ages with intermediate to advanced skills in a friendly and supportive environment. The one-week program focuses on classical and jazz with a sampling of world and popular music. Participants build their own program from more than 50 workshops, technique and masterclasses, choirs and instrumental ensembles coached by 20 experienced instructors specializing in vocals, strings, woodwinds, brass, piano, guitar, bass and percussion. Classes for beginners are also offered for those wanting to try something new. Evening concerts provide performance opportunities and a chance to hear the instructors. The beautiful waterfront campus includes a performance theatre, onsite accommodations and meal plan. Day program also available.

**Making Waves**

Church of the Holy Trinity, 10 Trinity Square, Toronto, ON
May to November
Anny Fyreagle
416-738-8829
TDotCircleSinging@gmail.com
www.facebook.com/torontocirclesinging
Deadline: May 26
Cost: $1,499
Residential program

- Making Waves is a musical improvisation skill building program for Circlesinging. Making stuff up can be intimidating if you are a professional or amateur. This 9-session program, taught by Anny Fyreagle over 5 months which includes 4 masterclasses with Judi Vinar, David Worm, Joey Blake and Rhiannon of Gimme5 with Bobby McFerrin, will build confidence in your musical palette, where to draw your inspiration from and how to make choices. If you are a musician, songwriter, producer or just want to learn how to build songs in community or on your own, Making Waves will give you the skills to confidently join in the river of song. We end giving our song to the moment in a final concert.

**Music at Port Milford**

Prince Edward County, ON
July 21 to August 18
Contact: Meg Hill
914-439-5039
director@musicatportmilford.org
www.musicatportmilford.org
Rolling Admissions
Cost: $855 - $957/week, financial aid available
Residential program

- 2019 marks Music at Port Milford’s 33rd year of bringing internationally renowned artist faculty and students with a passion for chamber music together to create an inspiring summer music experience. Throughout July and August, this experience is proudly shared with Prince Edward County, as the students and faculty bring the highest calibre of chamber music to Ontario. 2019 Faculty Artists include Quatuor Saguenay (formerly Alcan), Adrian Fung, Min-Jeong Koh, Tokai Quartet, pianists Andrea Botticelli and Allison Gagnon, select members of Canadian Opera Company, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Faculty from the Phil and Eli Taylor Performance Academy, and Royal Conservatory of Music.

The Wholenote

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**Music Niagara Performance Academy**

St. Mark’s Anglican Church, Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON  
July 20 to July 28

**Contact:** Barbara Worthy
905-468-0092/5566  
bworthy@musicniagara.org
www.musicniagara.org

**Deadline:** June 15
**Cost:** $990 + HST  
Residential program

- Music Niagara’s Performance Academy is a 9-day program offering a unique blend of individual lessons, masterclasses, chamber music, interactive workshops, and public performances, for gifted young musicians age 12-18; to improve, complement and enhance musical performance and stage presence.
  
- Masterclasses: open lessons, and solo/group chamber music instruction with acclaimed faculty and festival artists;
- Workshops: public presentation, vocal skills, body language and performance presentation style;
- Drama: from Shakespeare to improvisation, scenes, games, text and activities;
- Period Dance: body movement and fitness, dancing to the music you play;
- Alexander Technique: relieve physical stress, improve performance strength

Students are also guaranteed up to four public performances.

**Niagara Symphony Summer Music Camp**

Ridley College, St. Catharines, ON  
July 1 to 12, July 15 - 26

**Contact:** Brody Smith  
905-687-4993 x223
summercamp@niagarasymphony.org  
www.niagarasymphony.org

**Deadline:** July 1
**Cost:** $990 - $329  
Camp Hours: 9am to 3:30pm

- Enriched music education, a range of classes for children aged 18 months to 18 years. Instrument, Choral and Early Years programmes offered for beginners and experienced players taught by experienced musicians and music educators. Extended Care available, recreation and music appreciation activities round out the day. Two, 2-week sessions to choose from: July 1 to 12, and July 15 to 26. Bursaries available. For serious advanced students of music, the Academy @ SMC offers a 4-week intensive with theory, repertoire development and audition prep, ideal for those considering post-secondary studies in music. Contact summercamp@niagarasymphony.org or 905-687-4993 x223 with questions. Something for all at SMC’19!

**Orchestra North Owen Sound**

Harmony Centre, Owen Sound, ON  
July 15 to 20

**Contact:** Sebastian Ostertag  
416-993-3172
clmire2@uwo.ca  
www.orchestranorth.com

**Deadline:** June 30
**Cost:** $199 – $329

- Orchestra North Owen Sound boasts a renowned faculty of nationally acclaimed musicians specializing in diverse musical styles that will inspire musicians of all ages and abilities. 2019 Programs include: Beginner Strings (half-day): A fun and engaging introduction to string playing and orchestra (ages 5-10); Orchestral Winds & Strings (full-day): An intensive training program for musicians eager to develop their technique and refine their musicianship skills (ages 10+); Orchestra North Academy (residency): A mentorship program for musicians currently enrolled in or recently completed post-secondary education to train and perform with our professional faculty. Academy players receive honorariums upon completion of the program. Financial assistance is available for all programs.

**Stratford Summer Music Vocal Academy**

The Avondale, 194 Avondale Ave, Stratford, ON  
August 14 to 21

**Contact:** Lana Mau  
510-271-2101 x3
info@stratfordsummermusic.ca

**Deadline:** Friday, March 29
**Cost:** $1,200 for vocalists, full scholarship for pianists  
Day program

- The Vocal Academy returns to Stratford Summer Music for a fifth year and will offer intensive training in professional preparation (opera, oratorio, art song) and in performance skills for six to eight graduate, post-graduate, and early professional-level singers, and for two pianists pursuing a career in vocal accompaniment. Participants will receive daily individual sessions with the internationally recognized faculty, and will take part in Master Classes which will be open to the public. The program will culminate in a Finale concert with all participants.

  New this year: the opportunity to work on vocal chamber music with visiting professional string players. 2019 Faculty - Phillip Addis, voice; Emily Hamper, vocal coach; Roger Honeywell, acting; Erin Wall, voice; Others TBA.

**Summer Music**

Saugeen Shores, ON  
July 22 to 26

**Contact:** Kimberly Lake  
519-797-3241
southamptonsummermusic@gmail.com
www.summermusic.com

**Deadline:** July 22 2019
**Cost:** $250

- Students of all ages can enrol at Summer Music in beautiful Saugeen Shores on Lake Huron. Our camp has been operating for 30 years. Summer Music is a day camp teaching band instruments to students age
12 through adult who have had a year of instruction already. We also offer beginner classes to young children in half day courses; there is a jazz component for more experienced players. Our instructors are all highly qualified professionals from our area and from farther afield.

**Toronto Summer Music Community Academy**

Edward Johnson Building, Faculty of Music, University of Toronto, ON
July 29 to August 3
Contact: Jennifer Mak
647-430-5699 x111
jennifer@torontosummermusic.com
www.torontosummermusic.com

**Deadline:** Rolling Applications (April 26 for the Chamber Music Program)

**Cost:** $750 for the Chamber Choir; $950 for the Chamber Music Program, Piano Masterclass, and Bass Workshop

**Camp Hours:** 9am to 5pm, with evening concerts and events

> If you’re an advanced amateur musician looking to connect with other musicians, join the TSM Community Academy, where you can spend a fun week making music with our Festival artists! Participants enjoy access to all mainstage TSM Festival Concerts, lectures, events (July 29 to August 3), as well as the opportunity to perform onstage at Walter Hall.

**Ukrainian Art Song Summer Institute**

RCM TELUS Centre for Performance and Learning, 273 Bloor Street West, Toronto, ON
August 12 to 18
Contact: Lessia Tkach/Marianna Zaparyniuk
416-483-4987
si@ukrainianartsong.ca
www.ukrainianartsong.ca

**Deadline:** Open until full. Program limited to 8 participants.

**Cost:** $800.00

**Camp Hours:** 9:30am to 6pm (Assigned rehearsals in the evening)

> Ukrainian Art Song Summer Institute 2019, held at the Royal Conservatory’s TELUS Centre for Performance and Learning, offers eight professional/emerging artists the unique opportunity to develop their classical singing skills while exploring a new repertoire of Ukrainian art songs. Participants will benefit from a week of collaborative masterclasses, teaching materials, and generous, one-on-one coaching by an inspiring and knowledgeable faculty. They will learn how to express an art song, no matter what form or language. The week will end with a public showcase concert at the Temerty Theatre. Faculty members include artistic director Pavlo Hunka (British bass-baritone), Albert Krywolt (piano), Robert Kortgaard (piano) and Dr. Melanie Turgeon (choral director). Accommodation is available.

**Westben Performer-Composer Residency Program**

Campbellford, ON
July 8 to 13
Contact: Ben Finley
705-653-5508
westbenperformercomposers@gmail.com
www.westben.ca/prc

**Deadline:** March 15, 2019

**Cost:** $0

**Residential program**

> The Performer-Composer Residency at the Westben Centre for Connection & Creativity is an intergenerational and international gathering of creative risk-takers whose practice involves some combination of performance and composition. It is an intensive, week long collaborative environment, with peer-led workshops culminating in a final perfor-

**Western University Summer Band Camp**

Don Wright Faculty of Music, Western University, London, ON
July 22 to 26
Contact: Kevin Watson
519-661-2111 x85896
kwatso54@uwo.ca
www.music.uwo.ca/outreach/summer-band.html

**Deadline:** July 15 or Until Instrument Slots are Filled

**Cost:** $250 ($221.24 + $28.76 HST) - includes lunch

**Camp Hours:** 8:30am to 4:30pm

> Offering students entering grades 8 to 11 a musically engaging experience on the beautiful Western University campus, including a final concert presented in the Paul Davenport Theatre. In addition to performing in a concert band, students will be able to choose from other elective musical experiences, including sound painting and jazz ensemble. Because this is primarily a band camp, every student must participate on a wind or percussion instrument (see website for instrument list). Students may participate in the elective Jazz Ensemble on piano or guitar. Oboists are also welcome to audit Western’s four-day Oboe Intensive (taking place the same week) at no additional charge. See website for full details. Conductors: Kevin Watson, Colleen Richardson.
Ratatamace! is one of the exclamations that the percussionist is called upon to ejaculate during Chantier la pomme (to flirt/to seduce) for snare drum. This is the first of eight short pedagogical exercises in the collection Pommes by Robert Lemay recently recorded by Ryan Scott and released by the Canadian Music Centre’s digital arm Centrettacks (CMCCT 1219).

musiccentre.ca). The digital EP is the result of an ongoing collaboration between the Sudbury-based composer and one of Toronto’s leading percussion soloists. Pommes is a series of études for solo percussion instruments, four for snare drum, one for temple blocks, one for toms, one for tam-tam and one for bass drum. The title refers to the percussion sound POM, but also to the apple (the fruit). Each piece has a title that includes the word “apple” in French (pomme). Only the exuberant first includes vocalizations by the performer, but all require dexterity, precision and control. One might wonder whether a solo percussionist using just one (non-pitched) instrument for each exercise could sustain interest over the cumulative duration of roughly 20 minutes. I’m pleased to say that it is indeed possible, and in fact the result is quite entertaining. Of particular note are the delicacy of Tomber dans les pommes (to pass out) for temple blocks, the deep gong’s resonance of La grosse pomme (The Big Apple) for bass drum, which juxtaposes the low rumble and “pomming” of the skin of the drum with rhythmic patterns of rim shots. All in all, an exuberant adventure leading me to believe, as I have always suspected, that being a drummer must be a lot of fun!

Sticking with a theme, John Psathas – Percussion Project Vol.1 (navonarecords.com) is the culmination of another composer/percussionist collaboration that began in 2013 when Omar Carmenates arranged Psathas’ piano and gamelan piece Waiting: Still for percussion trio. Psathas is a Greek-New Zealand composer and in the past five years a number of his chamber works have been arranged for percussion ensemble by Carmenates, an American, who directs this project and is the featured soloist in a number of the works. There are 10 members of the nameless percussion ensemble involved throughout the disc, so there is no question of monophony in this instance – just about every sound imaginable from a percussion instrument turns up somewhere on the disc. But a few of the pieces employ fewer, similar instruments such as Musico scored for two players, Carmenates on vibraphone and a different partner on marimba in each of the three movements: Soledad, Chía and El Dorado.

The disc begins with the full ensemble work Coryphas which started out in life as a traditional piano trio. It opens with a gentle ostinato of mallet instruments overlaid by a lovely vibraphone melody. This eventually gives way to a raucous section where unpitched instruments come to the fore before gradually subsiding into a calm finale with toms and tam-tam and the intensity of the deep gong’s resonance of Pomme d’Adam (Adam’s apple) for another vibraphone (Sacks), and only the third (Schotzko) plays on a variety of unpitched instruments from the percussionist’s “kitchen.” In the Tremblay all three percussionists, although in very different ways. In the Boulez, one player is assigned the rare xylorimba throughout (Scott), another vibraphone (Sacks), and only the third (Schotzko) plays on a variety of instruments from the percussionist’s “kitchen.” In the Tremblay all three have extensive set-ups. It should be quite a sight.

And speaking of New Music Concerts as I am wont to do – I’ve been general manager there for the past 20 years – I am writing this the morning after a stunning performance at Gallery 345 by young German pianist Moritz Ernst. The evening was NMC’s annual benefit concert, in this instance a recital that included music of Sandeep Bhagwati (who was in attendance and gave an insightful introduction to his complex work Music of Crossings with examples provided by the pianist), Karlheinz Stockhausen, Michael Edward Edgerton (a piece written for Ernst), Miklós Maros and Arthur Lourie.

In 2016 Ernst’s recording of the complete Solo Piano Works of Arthur Lourie was released by Capriccio (CDs C5281 naxos.com). Lourie played an important role in the earliest stages of the organization of Soviet music after the 1917 Revolution but later went into exile, failing to return from an official visit to Berlin in 1921. His works were thereafter banned in the USSR. His music reflects his close connections with contemporary writers and artists associated with the Futurist movement. In 1922 he settled in Paris where he maintained a close relationship with Igor Stravinsky, and then fled to the USA in 1940 when the Germans occupied the city. He settled in New York and wrote some film scores but gained almost no performances for his more serious works.

Lourie wrote extensively for the piano, as these three discs attest, but although he lived until 1966, in the last 25 years of his life after fleeing Europe he did not compose any solo keyboard works. The collection includes his early Soviet period (in which his interests included Futurism, somewhat experimental forms, micro- and expanded tonality, and even some work with 12-tone techniques, repetition with minor variations. The work is multilayered in the extreme with different voices rising out of the murky textures, often to beautiful effect. Drum Dances, commissioned by Dame Evelyn Glennie for drum kit and piano, features Justin Alexander in the starring role, with the piano accompaniment here transcribed for mallet instruments and a variety of other pitched and non-pitched beaters. Psathas says he was “greatly inspired by the drumming of Dave Weckl, the very different piano styles of Keith Jarrett and Chick Corea, and the enormous energy in the music of guitarist like Steve Vai.” There is great energy and great beauty in these dances, and all throughout this disc.

John Psathas: Percussion Project is a good reminder that the modern percussion arsenal is vast and varied, and that although studies may begin with intriguing exercises like those devised by Robert Lemay as mentioned above, this merely scratches the surface of a wild and wonderful world that can include anything that can be struck, bowed or beaten, sometimes including the kitchen sink. A good example of this will be seen at New Music Concerts’ April 28 presentation “Luminaries,” a tribute to two masters of 20th-century composition who passed away in recent years, Pierre Boulez and Gilles Tremblay. Ryan Scott will be one of three percussionists involved in the concert along with Rick Sacks and David Schotzko. Both Boulez’s Le Marteau sans maître (with mezzo Patricia Green) and Tremblay’s piano concerto Envoi (with soloist Louise Bessette) are scored for three percussionists, although in very different ways. In the Boulez, one player is assigned the rare xylorimba throughout (Scott), another vibraphone (Sacks), and only the third (Schotzko) plays on a variety of instruments from the percussionist’s “kitchen.” In the Tremblay all three have extensive set-ups. It should be quite a sight.
albeit not in the Schoenbergian manner) and the output of his two decades-long residency in France. Despite the long association with Stravinsky, Lourié’s piano writing does not involve the percussive aspects so prominent in that of his compatriot. It is much more subdued and gentle, tinged by the Impressionist sensibilities so prominent in his adopted land. Nocturne, the work that Ernst performed here in Toronto, with its quiet left-hand clusters gradually building and then receding under the right-hand musings, is a prime example. Written in 1928, it is one of the last solo pieces Lourié would compose. Two short final solo works complete his piano oeuvre, the little Berceuse de la chevrette (1936) and the Phoenix Park Nocturne (1938), “to the memory of James Joyce.”

An exception to the chronological order of the first two CDs, the third disc of the set concludes with a 1917 setting of an “absurdes dramollete” for piano and speaker entitled Der Irrtum der Frau Tod (Death’s Mistake), a half-hour-long monodrama by Velimir Chlebnikov. For this dramatic recitation Ernst is joined by Oskar Ansell. Although narrated in German, there is a full translation in the accompanying booklet. Ansell is also featured on CD2 in the peculiar Nash Marsh (Our March) from 1918 which is a strangely lifting “march” in 3/4 time.

This collection is an important addition to the discography, and to the awareness of an innovative and once-influential composer whose legacy virtually disappeared after falling out of favour with the Soviet regime. Congratulations to Moritz Ernst for embracing lesser-known repertoire. His discography also includes music of Walter Braunfels, Viktor Ullmann, Norbert von Hanningenheim and Sir Malcolm Arnold. Also Joseph Haydn! As Ernst explains in an interview with composer Moritz Eggert in the notes for Volume One of a projected 11CD edition of the complete solo piano works of Haydn (Perfect Noise PN 1701), the keyboard music of Haydn remains surprisingly under-recorded with the exception of a very few sonatas.

Thanks also to Ernst for gracing a very appreciative audience at Gallery 345 with his insights and extraordinary skill.

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

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**What we’re listening to this month:**

- Horror Vacui and Musicum Umbrarum, from 2011 by the Canadian composer Scott Godin (b.1970), take their inspiration from works by the early 20th-century Swiss painter Adolf Wölfli, who spent much of his later years in psychiatric care and therapy. The brief Obrecht Motetten III, from 1980 by the English composer Michael Finnissy (b.1946), looks anew at the polyphony of the Flemish Renaissance composer Jacob Obrecht.

- The central work on the CD is the towering Sonata for Viola Solo by György Ligeti. A relatively late work from 1991–94 it has a fascinating and original construction: a first movement played entirely on the low C string; a second of frantic double stops; a third movement of torment and struggle; a muted perpetual motion fourth; a fifth mostly in parallel seconds and sevenths; and a Chaconne chromađque to finish. Paull meets every challenge with ease and authority.

- The final track is one that makes you look twice at the track listings to make sure you read it correctly – the Adagietto from Mahler’s Fifth Symphony, written as a love song to his then-new wife Alma. It’s an intriguing possibility, but the reality is even more intriguing, the piece being played entirely pizzicato as performed (and notated for Paull) by Ljova, the Russian violist Lev Zhurbin. It’s really quite beautiful, and a lovely ending to an outstanding debut CD.

Links between past and present are central to another solo recital, as the subtext suggests. The subtext of Serenades & Sonatas for Flute and Harp (Metis Islands Records MI-008; metis-islands.com), written as a love song to his then-new wife Alma. It’s an intriguing possibility, but the reality is even more intriguing, the piece being played entirely pizzicato as performed (and notated for Paull) by Ljova, the Russian violist Lev Zhurbin. It’s really quite beautiful, and a lovely ending to an outstanding debut CD.

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**STRINGS ATTACHED**

**TERRY ROBBINS**

On Musicum Umbrarum, his debut solo album, the Canadian violist Pemi Paull presents five solo works that he feels show the interplay between past and present – “how the past speaks to the present and how the present responds.” (Metis Islands Records MI-008; metis-islands.com).

George Enescu’s Menetrier is actually the opening movement of his Impressions d’enfance for violin and piano; adapted here by Paull, it provides a great start to the CD. The Two Wölfli Sketches – Horror Vacui and Musicum Umbrarum, from 2011 by the Canadian composer Scott Godin (b.1970), take their inspiration from works by the early 20th-century Swiss painter Adolf Wölfli, who spent much of his later years in psychiatric care and therapy. The brief Obrecht Motetten III, from 1980 by the English composer Michael Finnissy (b.1946), looks anew at the polyphony of the Flemish Renaissance composer Jacob Obrecht.

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Links between past and present are central to another solo recital, as
The lyrical charm so typical of the composer. ending with a dazzling final variation.

short pieces from the first collection and two from the second are made in the Czech Republic in September 2009, but are listed on deMaine’s website as a projected release on the Sono Luminus label.

The soloist, an original member of the Ehnes Quartet, is principal cello of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, having held the same position with the Detroit Symphony for over a decade, as well as a stint as guest principal cellist for the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. His playing in both concertos – No.1 in C Major and No.2 in D Major – is strong and vibrant, with great agility and touch, especially in the long and often virtuosic first movement of the D-Major work.

Both works were written for cellists in the Esterhazy court orchestra, the C Major in the early 1760s (although not known to us until the discovery of a copy of the score in 1961) and the D Major some 20 years later for the cellist Antonin Kraft, a player noted for his singing tone, expressive phrasing and an explosive technique, especially in the cello’s upper register. Qualities, indeed, displayed here by deMaine. The excellent and idiomatic cadenzas are by the soloist.

I’m not sure whether or not this is a re-issue: the recordings were made in the Czech Republic in September 2009, but are listed on deMaine’s website as a projected release on the Sono Luminus label with a release date that is earlier than the recording dates. There’s no mention of this current Leaf Music issue.

This is certainly a good month for cellists. The French cellist Raphaël Pidoux is the stellar soloist on Jean-Louis Duport Concertos pour Violoncelle, with the Stradivaria – Ensemble Baroque de Nantes under Daniel Cuiller (Mirare MIR394; mirare.fr).

The Duport brothers – Jean-Louis (1749–1819) and Jean-Pierre (1741–1818) – were both brilliant cello virtuosos in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Jean-Pierre eventually pursued a career in the Prussian court, leaving Jean-Louis to take over his position in Paris where he eventually became more celebrated than his older brother. Sensing the dangers of the coming French Revolution in 1789, Jean-Louis followed his brother to Prussia, returning to Paris in 1806 where, despite being well-received and teaching at the Conservatoire, he never fully re-established himself. He remains little-known as a composer, although his Essay on the fingering of the violoncello and on the conduct of the bow; completed in 1806, was a seminal treatise on cello technique.

Duport’s were the first French cello concertos; six are extant, of which three are presented here: No.1 in A Major; No.4 in E Minor; and No.5 in D Major. The first concerto predates 1789; the other two were apparently written while he was in Prussia. They are played here “according to the composer’s wishes” with a string orchestra, horns and oboes being added for Nos. 4 and 5. All follow the same pattern, with a substantial and well-developed opening movement, a short slow movement and a virtuosic rondo finale.

These are really attractive works that bridge the gap between the late classical and early Romantic periods, their fast scales and arpeggios in thirds, sixths and octaves from the lowest to highest registers offering proof that the cello was already in a highly developed state as a solo instrument.

Pidoux plays a 1680 Giovredo Cappa cello with a William Dodd bow from 1790/95, handling the technical challenges with grace and ease and always displaying a warm, bright tone. The idiomatic support from the Stradivaria ensemble is of the highest quality on an extremely satisfying CD.

violinist Movses Pogossian follows up his 2017 release of the Bach Solo Sonatas and Partitas with Inspired by Bach (New Focus Recordings FCR206 newfocusrecordings.com), a CD that features three new works that he feels “follow in the inescapable shadow of Bach’s music for unaccompanied violin... connecting the listener with Bach and extending the legacy of the unaccompanied string works.” The connection with Bach may be a bit tenuous at times, but they certainly do fulfill the latter aim.

Kaija Saariaho’s four-movement Frises starts with the final D of the Bach D-Minor Chaconne, and each of the movements is focused on one historical ostinato-variation form – passacaglia or chaconne, for instance. In a concert setting, prepared sound materials are triggered by the soloist during the performance, together with real-time processing of the violin sound. Not here, though: Pogossian recorded the violin part alone, with Jean-Baptiste Barrière adding the electronics afterwards. It’s a tough here, though: Pogossian recorded the violin part alone, with Jean-Baptiste Barrière adding the electronics afterwards. It’s a tough

Gautrin is the really impressive debut CD from Canadian cellist Cameron Crozman, ably accompanied by pianist Philip Chiu (ATMA Classique ACD2 2787; atmaclassique.com/en). Having studied at the Paris Conservatoire for six years Crozman says it was inevitable that his first album would be filled with French music, and the multi-faceted program here includes Debussy’s Cello Sonata from 1915 and works that the soloist feels emerged from the new wave that Debussy created.

The delightful Cello Sonata by Francis Poulenc really deserves to be heard more often; completed in 1948, its four movements are full of the lyrical charm so typical of the composer.

In the early 1930s Charles Koechlin set 20 Breton folksongs for cello and piano, the first two of the three sets being published in 1934 as Chansons bretonnes sur des thèmes de l’ancien Folklore Op.115; four short pieces from the first collection and two from the second are heard here.

Jean Françaix’s Variations de concert date from 1950, the ten brief variations displaying a wide range of mood, style and tempo, and ending with a dazzling final variation.

The Louange à l’éternité de Jésus, the fifth movement from Olivier Messiaen’s astonishing Quatuor pour le fin du Temps completes the disc. A calm, soaring and meditative cello melodic line over quiet piano chords, it perhaps loses some of its effectiveness outside of the context of the complete work, but nevertheless is a beautiful ending to a highly commendable CD.

There’s more outstanding cello playing on Haydn Cello Concertos Nos. 1 & 2 with the American cellist Robert deMaine and the Moravian Philharmonic Orchestra under Joel Eric Suben on Nova Scotia’s Leaf Music label (LM 222; leaf-music.ca).

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The performers – who vary from track to track – are Megan Holland, Roberta Arruda and David Felberg (violins); Kimberley Fredenburgh (viola); Joel Beckstiel, Lisa Collins and David Schepps (cellos); and Mark Tatun (bass).

The works are difficult to describe, although not difficult to listen to; Lombardi says that he likes to explore self-similar and recursive patterns. They’re modernistic with some strong melodic lines, taut rhythms, dissonance, motivic structure and some interesting textures and harmonies. Overall they’re strongly individual pieces, well-written and extremely well-played.

It’s been five years since we saw a CD from the Canadian guitarist Warren Nicholson (his Latin American Guitar Favourites issued in September 2013 but he’s back with Spanish Miniatures, a selection mostly of works by Fernando Sor, Francisco Tárrega and Isaac Albéniz (Independent WAN Records WANC60918; warrennicolsonsonguitarist.com).

Federico Moreno Torroba’s Madroños opens the disc, followed by four Studies and two Lessons selected from Fernando Sor’s Op.6, 35-44 and 60 works. Tárrega is represented by six works: his Preludes Nos.1 and 2; Lagrima; Maria; Adelita; and the famous Recuerzos de la Alhambra with its constant right hand tremolo.

Mallorca, Asturias and the Tango from España are the Albéniz selections, and the CD ends with two items from more recent but lesser-known composers: Waltz No.1 by Bartolomé Calatayud (1882-1973); and Canción y Danza No.1 by Antonio Ruiz-Pipo (1934-1997).

The playing is again technically accomplished, clean and thoughtful. The only reservation I have – and one I had about his previous release as well – is that there is a tendency for the playing to come across as a bit too measured and carefully considered at times, with the result (in the Recuerzos in particular) that it can sound a bit pedestrian and fail to fully engage the listener.

Still, there’s fine playing overall and much to admire here in a well-produced and nicely-presented CD.

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Canadian pianist Jan Lisiecki’s recording career continues with his latest issue of Mendelssohn (Deutsche Grammophon DG 4836471; deutschegrammophon.com/en), the sixth time his name appears on this prestigious label. Lisiecki plays the Concerto No.1 in G Minor Op.25 and No.2 in D Minor Op.40 along with the Variations sérieuses, Op.54 and a couple of shorter pieces. His earlier recordings set expectations very high and he has no difficulty in exceeding them. At age 23, his towering technical ability and the blazing speed and accuracy of his playing promise to propel him for a good many years toward some still distant pinnacle. It would all be something of a meteoric flash were it not for his maturity.

The willingness and ability to forgo the energized brilliance of a youthful performance is the early mark of a musician with something to say, something worth hearing. Lisiecki’s fast playing is so impressive it’s a wonder the piano is mechanically capable of keeping up. But the middle movements of both concertos along with the more pensive sections of the Variations are the places where the artist becomes subsumed in the art. In the moments of pause and suspense, where so little seems to happen, so much is conveyed. Lisiecki shows how completely he is able to surrender to this music, to lift away from it and let it speak. It’s a beautiful recording that promises as much and more for what Lisiecki will still do.

Concert Note: Jan Lisiecki plays Mendelssohn’s Concerto No.1 in G Minor Op.25 with the TSO in Roy Thomson Hall, June 5, 6, and 8.

Bruce Levingston’s new CD Citizen (Sono Luminus DSL 9228; sonoluminus.com) finds its inspiration in his invitation to perform at the opening of the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum. Being his home state, it occasioned considerable reflection for him on the deep questions at the core of his community’s history and conscience. Two of the works are world premiere recordings from composers commissioned to write music for the same opening. They, along with the four others represented on the disc, speak with a remarkably similar voice. Levingston has programmed his recording to be this way – a reflection of the higher ideals the Civil Rights Museum enshrines.

The opening track is Nolan Gasser’s _An American Citizen_. It’s inspired by one of Marie Atkinson Hull’s portraits of Mississippi tenant farmers and sharecroppers. Gasser uses many recognizably American idioms to build a highly complex work that nevertheless offers immediate and sustained emotional access. A more contemplative work is David T. Little’s _Accumulation of Purpose_ inspired by the Freedom Riders, the civil rights activists who rode buses across the South in 1961. The final tracks go to Price Walden whose Sacred Spaces is a profoundly moving remembrance of the countless churches where African-Americans gathered and contributed to their sense of community. His arrangement of _Amazing Grace_ closes the recording. It’s a straightforward structure that uses some extraordinary harmonic transitions to make this iconic hymn even more meaningful in the context of the disc.

This recording by Bruce Levingston is far more than a simple CD. It’s a meditation on one of the central issues of our time and can only benefit from being heard and experienced in that way.

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thewholenote.com/listening

**The whole note.**
Cédric Tiberghien focuses on the closing years of one of the 19th century’s greatest musical figures in his latest recording Liszt – Années de pèlerinage, troisième année & other later works (Hyperion CDA68202; hyperion-records.co.uk). It begins with a handful of shorter works from the last five years of Liszt’s life. Tiberghien’s posture in these works is hard to describe but a valiant effort might yield something like “micro-playing.” The understated pianissimos seem to come from a distant instrument in another place. It’s a remarkable technique that can extract so small a whisper from such a powerful instrument. But Liszt is contemplating another world and Tiberghien transcendentally plays from there. The voice he creates at the keyboard speaks a language free to be atonal and arrhythmic as Liszt so daringly intends in the Bagatelle sans tonalité and the Fourth Mephisto Waltz. Contemplation of what lies beyond the threshold of mortality is nearly, but not entirely, without hope. The simple beauty of Wiegenlied and En rêve are sparingly applied to the dark certainties of La lugubre gondola II and Schlaflos! Frage und Antwort. Tiberghien’s playing in these late works may be the most beautiful you have ever heard. The Années predate this period and are freer of the later works’ darker contemplations. There is much grand-scale writing and brilliant pianistic conception in these pages and Tiberghien dominates with power and dexterity. His Les jeux d’eaux à la Villa d’Este is a breathtaking portrayal of Liszt’s fountains. And his interpretations of Angelus! and Sursum Corda are convincing evocations of their spiritual and liturgical roots.

Melisande McNabney’s new release Inspirations (Atma Classique ACD2 2780; atmaclassique.com/en) offers an intriguing twist on expectations of harpsichord repertoire. These works are transcriptions of music originally for lute. As such, they lack the conventional form that keyboard works devised for two hands ordinarily display. Instead, these reveal a kind of hybrid piece, principally adapted for keyboard but still revealing much of the lute’s character in the way brief solo thematic ideas alternate with great strum-like keyboard arpeggios. Even the lutenist’s finger plucking is recreated as clustered staccato patterns by the harpsichordist. It takes some careful listening but the ear begins to hear what the music might have sounded like as a lute piece. It sounds terribly difficult at times with endless cascades of keyboard notes that would have been easier on the lute. Still, 17th-century demands for repertoire for the popular emerging keyboard instrument made transcription a necessary composer’s skill. McNabney herself transcribed two works by Rameau, Tendre amour and Air de la Folié. On this recording, she performs on a 1981 instrument built by Keith Hill after an original by the builder Blanchet.

Hakan Toker’s latest recording is aptly titled Messing Around (Navona Records NV 6202; navonarecords.com). Yes, this is one of those lists of familiar tunes jazzed up by a talented and creative player. But wait, this inventive and, frankly, brilliant pianist takes the practice to a new level. Imagine Henry Mancini’s Moon River being reconceived as a Bach invention or a Satie Gnossienne as a Czardas; or how about Beethoven’s Für Elise as Elise’s Got The Blues? This is beyond simply clever, it’s genius. The Bach Toccata and Fugue in Blue, like the other tracks, shows Toker’s understanding of the original forms and his fluency with the modern ones that enables his fusion (or maybe it’s fission?) of ragtime, blues, jazz and seemingly any other musical style. It’s a little comic at first but very quickly becomes stunningly impressive. The disc includes Paul Desmond’s Take Five and Mozart’s Rondo alla turca rethought in the most entertaining ways.

Toker is the master of everything he plays, regardless of style or technical difficulty.

Andrée-Ann Deschenes is a California-based French-Canadian pianist. Her new 2CD set The Ovalle Project (aadapiano.com/the-ovalle-project) celebrates the music of Jayme Ovalle, a Brazilian composer of the first half of the 20th century. Ovalle wrote a modest body of works that include some songs, instrumental pieces and 24 compositions for piano. They are varied in style and length but generally conform to classical Western forms and tend toward character pieces and dances but also include several virtuosic works. Deschenes’ website describes her attraction to the music and its harmonic richness, density and chromaticism. She has spent some time searching for scores and assembling the manuscripts to be able to record the 24 piano pieces.

The most substantial items in the set are the three Legenda Op.19, 22 and 23. These are conceived on a larger scale than most of the other material. Massive chords and a wider dynamic make these stand out quite impressively. By contrast Album de Isolda Op.27 is simple and at times seems to have been written in the spirit of a Baroque exercise. Ovalle’s writing takes a few risks with tonality but only rarely. Rhythm is his principle tool and Deschenes uses this masterfully. She has a natural affinity for the Latin spirit of this music and Ovalle’s harmonic language. There’s a surprising amount of very satisfying variety in this program, aided significantly by Deschenes’ obviously passionate interest in Ovalle’s work.

The Eclectic Piano Music of Mario Castelnovo-Tedesco (Albany Records Troy 1732; albanyrecords.com) is David Witten’s new recording treating listeners to an exotic and luscious program of music not often heard. Despite the familiarity of Castelnovo-Tedesco’s name, his piano music is infrequently performed or recorded. Witten’s selection of works highlights the modal nature of Castelnovo-Tedesco’s writing and demonstrates his impressive ability for caricature and programmatic writing. The Seasons Op.33 is a wonderful example of how Witten works the subtle emotional elements used to portray the feel of each season. Similarly, Sonatina Zoologica Op.187 carries titles like Dragonflies, The Snail, Little Lizard and Ants that match the musical portraits the composer paints of the garden creatures. Witten plays the Sonatina beautifully, seizing every opportunity to exploit the composer’s picturesque devices. Witten’s liner notes offer an instructive reminder of the composer’s successful career as a Hollywood film composer and suddenly it all makes sense. This is music for the imagination as much as the ear.

On a higher level, however, Castelnovo-Tedesco writes Greeting Cards Op.170 in which he devised his own coding system to convert the alphabet into musical notes in order to compose tributes to musicians he admired. Three such pieces on this disc pay homage to Walter Gieseking, André Previn and Nicolas Slonimsky. Witten’s playing throughout this disc is consistently superb. He exhibits an abiding curiosity that drives him to explore the reaches of Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s language, and a musical intelligence that guarantees the highest fidelity to the composer’s intention.

Vadym Khloodenko has more than a half dozen recordings to his credit and now adds his new release Sergei Prokofiev Concertos No.1, 3 & 4 (Harmonia Mundi HMM907642; harmoniamundi.com). Having recorded Piano Concertos 2 and 5 on a previous disc, he completes the cycle with the remaining three. These three come from very different circumstances in Prokofiev’s life. The well-known story of Concerto No.1 in
D-flat Major, Op. 10 has Prokofiev as a 21-year-old pianist winning the Rubinstein Piano Competition performing it. It’s a short work played through without movement breaks. Kholodenko immediately captures the boldness and youthful optimism of this work with his opening statements of the main idea, and drives through the rest of the work with undiminished energy.

Concerto No.3 in C Major, Op.26 comes from nearly a decade later, after Prokofiev had left the Soviet Union. Kholodenko plays this in a way that reflects the more confident modernity the composer found in a new environment that encouraged some careful flirtation with atonality. Kholodenko maintains the sense of rhythmic drive that underscores the strong dance impulse of this music.

Concerto No.4 for the left hand in B Flat Major, Op.53 was written in 1931 for Paul Wittgenstein who disliked it and refused to play it. He was kinder to Ravel who also wrote him a similar work. It’s a very difficult piece that Kholodenko plays flawlessly.

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**VOCAL**

**JS Bach – Cantata BWV 21**
Bach Choir of Bethlehem; Greg Funfgeld
Analekta AN 2 9540 (analekta.com/en)

> Of all the musical commentaries on the biblical texts used in service – most importantly on the Gospel reading – the cantatas of Johann Sebastian Bach are not only the most famous, but are also as pious as they are magnificent. These are the works that foretold the choral masterpieces such as the mighty B-Minor Mass and arias on contemporary poetry; and Bach marks a transition from motet style on biblical and hymn text to operatic recitatives on the traditional happy ending, a gratuitous grand guignol bloodbath led by a mad Nero. Filmed in March 2016, staging that might have seemed over the top just three years ago approaches verisimilitude as our political machinations to have her son Nero named emperor of Rome. Generally regarded as Handel’s first great opera – there’s a treasure trove of arias – its ribald text has been inspiring radically contemporary stagings for the past 20 years, most notably by David McVicar. Theater an der Wien’s production is a highly entertaining combination of musical purity and Robert Carsen’s provocative staging. The Balthasar Neumann Ensemble plays period instruments and three of the eight roles are sung by counter-tenors. Meanwhile, there’s a steely sheen to the furnishings, an iMac adorns a desk, and the fine mezzo-soprano Patricia Bardon, who has sung many of Handel’s principal females, plays the title role, stalking the halls clad maidens. There’s some quickie desktop sex, a conspicuous issue of Vogue, onstage cameras and projections, staged news stories, a Mussolini-esque Claudio and, following the traditional happy ending, a gratuitous bloodbath led by a mad Nero. Filmed in March 2016, staging that might have seemed over the top just three years ago approaches verisimilitude as our political culture increasingly resembles ancient Rome in decline.

With a 30-year leap in Handel’s career, we come to his 1739 setting of John Dryden’s Ode for Saint Cecilia’s Day, here performed by Andree-Ann Deschenes, the fine mezzo-soprano Patricia Bardon, who has sung many of Handel’s principal females, plays the title role, stalking the halls clad maidens. There’s some quickie desktop sex, a conspicuous issue of Vogue, onstage cameras and projections, staged news stories, a Mussolini-esque Claudio and, following the traditional happy ending, a gratuitous bloodbath led by a mad Nero. Filmed in March 2016, staging that might have seemed over the top just three years ago approaches verisimilitude as our political culture increasingly resembles ancient Rome in decline.

**Handel – Agrippina**
Theater an der Wien; Patricia Bardon; Jake Arditti; Danielle de Niese; Filippo Mineccia; Balthasar Neumann Ensemble; Thomas Hengel Brock
Naxos 2.110579-80 (naxosdirect.com)

> These two recordings take very different approaches to two key works in Handel’s life, including choices between period and modern instrumentation. In 1709, in the early phase of Handel’s operatic career, he was approached in Venice by Cardinal Vincenzo Grimaldi to set Grimaldi’s satirical libretto based on Agrippina’s machinations to have her son Nero named emperor of Rome. Generally regarded as Handel’s first great opera – there’s a treasure trove of arias – its ribald text has been inspiring radically contemporary stagings for the past 20 years, most notably by David McVicar. Theater an der Wien’s production is a highly entertaining combination of musical purity and Robert Carsen’s provocative staging. The Balthasar Neumann Ensemble plays period instruments and three of the eight roles are sung by counter-tenors. Meanwhile, there’s a steely sheen to the furnishings, an iMac adorns a desk, and the fine mezzo-soprano Patricia Bardon, who has sung many of Handel’s principal females, plays the title role, stalking the halls clad maidens. There’s some quickie desktop sex, a conspicuous issue of Vogue, onstage cameras and projections, staged news stories, a Mussolini-esque Claudio and, following the traditional happy ending, a gratuitous bloodbath led by a mad Nero. Filmed in March 2016, staging that might have seemed over the top just three years ago approaches verisimilitude as our political culture increasingly resembles ancient Rome in decline.

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**Handel – Ode to St. Cecilia’s Day**
Bach Choir of Bethlehem; Greg Funfgeld
Analekta AN 2 9541 (analekta.com/en)

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What we’re listening to this month: thewholenote.com/listening
by the Bach Choir of Bethlehem and issued in commemoration of the choir’s 120th anniversary and Greg Funfgeld’s 35th as its conductor. The 88-voice choir

is a Pennsylvania institution along with its annual Bach Festival and Bach Festival Orchestra. It’s Handel on a relatively moderated but still grand scale, harkening back to 19th- and early 20th-century traditions. The orchestra is playing modern instruments, but there are only 27 of them, and that large choir provides depth and an impressive richness. Two fine Canadian singers appear as soloists, lending distinguished skills to the arias. Halifax-native, tenor Benjamin Butterfield, brings a brassy bravado to the drum and horn effusion of The trumpet’s loud clangor, while Edmonton-born Cassandra Lemoine’s refined soprano doveltains beautifully with Robin Kani’s flute on The soft complaining flute. Lemoine’s grace and clarity also highlight the full force of choir and orchestra in the sustained conclusion of As from the pow’r of sacred lays.

Stuart Broomer

In Meinem Himmel – The Mahler Song Cycles
Kindra Scharich; Alexander String Quartet
Foghorn Classics FCL 2019
(foghornclassics.com)

This project comes from San Francisco and it is an experiment by the renowned Alexander String Quartet to transcribe three of Mahler’s orchestral song cycles, Songs of a Wayfarer, Rückert-Lieder and Kindertotenlieder for string quartet in order to experience this repertoire in an intimate chamber music setting and perhaps enrich and enhance its emotional world. I had some misgivings, because nowadays there is a definite trend to different versions of the great works, by ambitious musicians, that could harm and distort the composer’s original intent.

To my mind, these are definitely orchestral songs and require the power and the colours of the full contingent of a symphony orchestra with Mahler’s unique orchestration for their musical and emotional impact. The sound of a string quartet is entirely different and hasn’t the pungent quality the wind instruments provide and it cannot possibly duplicate what Mahler had in mind, although the transcriber violinist Zakarias Grafilo, gave much thought and effort to preserve some of the aural colours and even the emotional innigkeiten of the original, yet it is not Mahler as I imagine Leonard Bernstein would say.

Nevertheless it’s a labour of love. Idiomatic and virtuoso string playing and the singing is simply gorgeous. Young American mezzo Kindra Scharich has a beautiful voice, total emotional commitment and musical imagination that certainly makes worthwhile listening. Her soulful, anguished tone when the rejected lover sings about the two beautiful blue eyes of his lost sweetheart (Die zwei blauen Augen) is simply heartbreaking and I just loved her voice so full of joy in exclaiming Heila! In GING heut morgen. An interesting experiment, but not quite Mahler.

John Harbison – Requiem
Soloists; Nashville Symphony Chorus and Orchestra; Giancarlo Guerrero
NAXOS 8.559841 (naxosdirect.com)

John Harbison’s Requiem captures the nature of death with both metaphysical and aesthetic sophisticated, firstly because of the authentic use of the Latin text in its scriptural context and secondly because of the utterly existential prescience of this choral performance. Despite the fact that the music eventually soars with the apposite release of Libera me, the shadowy solemnity of the preceding sequences makes the work both profoundly melancholic and breathtakingly beautiful. It is a monumental work – Harbison’s pièce de résistance – appropriate to the events of 9/11 which inspired it. Consequently the use of the Latin in the setting of a traditional requiem might commemorate a divine passion – such as in the Introit – yet the work commemorates abject human suffering.

The musicians of the Nashville Symphony and Chorus convey the gravitas of Harbison’s epic work with a powerful sense of both sorrow and spontaneity. Chorus director Tucker Biddlecombe’s inspired choices of male and female voices – the powerful and incisive (solo) singing of Jessica Rivera (soprano), Michael Martens (mezzo-soprano), Nicholas Phan (tenor) and Kelly Markgraf (baritone) – and the ensemble performances, bring a passionate, soaring intensity to the antiphons, responsories and sequences, to produce an absorbing and inexorable service. Giancarlo Guerrero fixes his sights on the sheer drama of the proverbial solemn high mass and shepherds a program that swirls with sinewy energy heavy with the atmosphere of foreboding before its ultimate – even joyful – release of the final In paradisum.

Raul da Gama

Damask Roses – Art Songs by Mozart; Dvorak and Quilter
Kira Braun; Peter Krochak
Independent (kirabraun soprano.com)

With Valentine’s Day approaching I enjoyed this love-themed CD, the latest in a series of varied art-song programs by Canadian duo Kira Braun and Peter Krochak. A relative (niece/first cousin) of famed Canadian father-and-son baritones Victor and Russell Braun, soprano Kira demonstrates her own high standard. Here there are three song groups by different composers: Mozart (18th century, in German), Dvořák (19th century, in Czech), and Roger Quilter (early 20th century, in English). The opening three Mozart songs demonstrate the duo’s fine ensemble and Braun’s excellent diction and tone, though I would have liked to have heard even more charm and colour in both voice and piano. By contrast, the interpretations of four selections from Quilter’s Seven Elizabethan Lyrics, Op.12 are especially appealing, including the title song, Damask Roses. Braun’s pure soprano is attractive and she brings both restraint and conviction to Weep You No More and also to Quilter’s earlier Love’s Philosophy from Three Songs, Op.3.

In both the Quilter lyrics and Dvořák’s Gypsy Songs, Op.55 there are songs in a higher range, that she is quite equal to, adopting a fiery demeanor in Set the Fiddle Scraping that Krochak matches with lively piano accompaniment. Their version of the well-known Songs My Mother Taught Me is appropriately affectionate; they bring out Dvořák’s contrasts and distinctive touches in this set, making it one I’m pleased to be able to return to.

Roger Knox

I Carry Your Heart
University of South Dakota Chamber Singers; David Holdhusen
Navona Records nv6203 (navonarecords.com)

South Dakota? Isn’t this midwestern state most famous for its beautifully rugged landscape, including Mount Rushmore? Nevertheless, in light of this fine recording titled I Carry Your Heart, featuring the University of South Dakota Chamber Singers under the direction of David Holdhusen, it seems that South Dakota also has a vibrant choral scene. The USD Chamber Singers is the
I Carry your Heart

Richard Haskell

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

Settling Up
Simone Morris
Debuting at #1 on iTunes’ jazz charts, “Settling Up,” is the stunning new original album of soulful, sultry jazz singer Simone Morris. Hear what warmth sounds like.

Volume 2
John MacMurchy’s Art of Breath
John MacMurchy leads ART OF BREATH, a group of Toronto-based jazz musicians on a musical journey that crosses borders and traditions - highly accessible, yet sophisticated.

Clock Radio
Michael Davidson & Dan Fortin
Clock Radio: the new duo album from vibraphonist Michael Davidson & bassist Dan Fortin, out now on Elastic Recordings

The Walls are Made of Song
Ladom Ensemble
Ladom Ensemble combines piano, cello, accordion, and percussion in a unique blend of chamber and world music that is passionate, sophisticated, and wild.

CLASSICAL AND BEYOND

Immortal and Beloved Gryphon Trio
Analekta AN 2 9522 (analekta.com/en)

Shorty after Beethoven’s death, three letters to “meine unsterbliche Geliebte” (my immortal beloved), dated July 6/7 (1812), were discovered among his effects. Speculation about her identity has since abounded, with numerous suggested candidates. A 1994 British movie, Immortal Beloved, even portrayed her, absurdly, as his sister-in-law! Recent attention has focused on Countess Josephine von Brunswick, the secret dedicatee of Beethoven’s piano piece Andante favori.

Carleton University professor James Wright (b.1959) has rearranged excerpts from the letters to compose a moving, memorable 15-minute cycle of three songs, Briefe an die unsterbliche Geliebte (Letters to the Immortal Beloved) (2012), quoting the opening of the Andante favori near the end of the third song. Canadian baritone David John Pike, accompanied by the Gryphon Trio, effectively expresses the hyper-emotional words of Beethoven’s desperate longing. These beautiful, heartfelt songs should be welcomed into the lieder repertoire, perhaps in a version for voice and piano alone.

Pike, accompanied by Gryphon pianist Jamie Parker, also contributes a sensitive performance of Beethoven’s song-cycle An die ferne Geliebte (To the Distant Beloved), another outpouring of longing for an absent lover.

Filling 40 of this CD’s 70 minutes is the Gryphon Trio’s exuberant 2008 recording of Beethoven’s Archduke Trio, needlessly reissued while still available on Analekta AN 2 9858. Surely, music not yet in the discographies of Wright, Pike or the Gryphon Trio would have been preferable.

Nonetheless, Wright’s fervent song cycle definitely deserves repeated hearings. Texts and translations are included.

Michael Schulman

Schubert – Symphonies 1 & 6
B’Rock Orchestra; René Jacobs
Pentatone PCT 5185 707 (naxosdirect.com)

This new recording of Schubert’s First and Sixth Symphonies is René Jacobs’ first foray into the music of this composer and it certainly promises to be an exciting new adventure. Thus far I have been acquainted with the Belgian maestro as a distinguished interpreter of Baroque repertoire, but as is usually the case with extra-ordinary musical minds, they soon branch into the classics or even the Romantics.

Schubert was the first love of my life and I grew up with the lush and graceful interpretations of German conductors, beautifully rendered with modern instrument orchestras. Little did I know that Schubert’s original scores were augmented by Brahms, so Jacobs’ principal aim is to restore authenticity with the original, leaner orchestrations with period instruments using the B’Rock Orchestra, a group of young enthusiastic and energetic players famous for their original approach to the classics.

Notwithstanding some critics’ complaints about harsh sounds, extreme dynamics and sonorities of period instruments, we are amply compensated with how even the First Symphony, written by a mere teenager, dashes forth with such verve, fire, joie de vivre, brilliance and humour at the hands of a professional ensemble.

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of these young players. The fourth movement especially, is a delight.

The Sixth, my favourite from the early period, referred to as the Little C Major (as opposed to the Great C Major) is definitely a masterpiece and comes off even better. Everything makes sense, the extremely fast tempo at the ritornello of the Scherzo and its heavenly Trio, that marvellous second movement with its sudden outbursts of sadness and anger, the delightful fourth that dances along like a ballet with its interesting modulations, and that surprising sudden visionary reference to the great Ninth at the very end. A vigorous, original and highly inspired performance!

Complete set to be completed by 2021, can’t wait!

Janos Gadyonyi

Brahms – Symphony No.4; Dvořák - Symphony No.9
Bamberger Symphoniker; Jakub Hrůša
Tudor Recording AGSACD 1744
(naxosdirect.com)

As I learned from the informative liner notes contained within this highly enjoyable and beautifully captured double CD – containing, what is no doubt, some of the finest and certainly best loved music of Johannes Brahms and Antonin Dvořák – both men, at different junctures in their lives, performed the role of torchbearer for one another. Dvořák, literally, was torchbearer at the funeral of the more senior Brahms, who had famously encouraged, mentored and recommended to publishers the compositions of Dvořák, who was then living and composing in Prague, anxious to be heard and appreciated on a more international level. Brahms, more famously, was stylistic torchbearer for a future generation of composers that include Dvořák, all whom found inspiration in the late German composer’s broad Romantic themes and melodic beauty.

The relationship between the two men is programmed here, with two of their most famous symphonies (Brahms’s Symphony No.4 and Dvořák’s Symphony No.9), presented under the masterful direction of Czech conductor Jakub Hrůša, working with the dynamic German Bamberg Symphony Orchestra. In addition to the shared appreciation that the composers had for one another, these two symphonies share key, aesthetic beauty and a grandness of gesture that Hrůša and orchestra develop fully, while simultaneously teasing out the subtle differences and exploring the individual intricacies of these two masterworks, which represent the last symphonies of the two composers.

The CD is bold in its programming and beautiful in its presentation of these popular symphonic works, offering another important telling and capture of these compositions for lovers of bold Western art music.

Andrew Scott

Migrations
National Youth Orchestra of Canada;
Jonathan Darlington
Independent NYOC2018CD (nyoc.org)

Richard Strauss commented at least once on how unusually polyphonic (many-voiced) his musical brain was. Indeed, in preparing Strauss’ extraordinary work Ein Heldenleben (A Hero’s Life) the 2018 National Youth Orchestra of Canada’s nearly 100 advanced musical brains have been suitably challenged! Expertly conducted by Jonathan Darlington, the tone poem’s long-range progression through myriad orchestral details is engrossing. Part way through the third of the composition’s six sections I realized that the performers were on a heroic path of their own with this confident performance. So, kudos to last summer’s conductor, faculty and young instrumentalists who brought this excellent recording, plus an ensuing performance tour of Germany and Scotland, to fruition.

Four works by accomplished Canadian composers follow on the disc. Evoking the natural world, Moontides by the well-recognized John Estacio is about to be connected to a forthcoming film about lunar tides. From the beginning, sweeping and brilliant orchestral colours and textures create a mysterious mood within the tonal, harmonic framework. Nature also is suggested in River Memory, a 2018 NYOC commission from emerging composer Alison Yin-Fei Jiang that is likewise imaginatively orchestrated with metamorphoses of timbre and expert percussion scoring. Here the pitch basis includes long pedal notes and intervallic patterns rather than chords. The NYO program traditionally includes choral singing; brief and effective a cappella choruses Lead Us Home (by Matthew Emery) and Terre-Nueve (by Marie-Claire Saindon) round off this remarkable disc.

Roger Knox

Impressively prolific by any measure, the celebrated German composer Wolfgang Rihm (b.1952) has amassed an immense catalogue of over 400 substantial works. Rihm’s early 1970s compositions employ elements of Schoenberg’s and Berg’s expressionist compositional language while also incorporating techniques of the subsequent composer generations. Despite being associated with the 1980s concert music movement dubbed New Simplicity and New Romanticism, Rihm’s musical aesthetic never seems to have strayed far from late Austro-German Romanticism and its expressionist love child. The three works on this CD for violin and orchestra – in essence violin concerti – spread over almost four decades, clearly reflect all those influences. Nevertheless, Rihm’s idiosyncratic voice emerges collectively from these works with introspective intensity.

Rihm was in his mid-20s when he made a splash in 1977 with the premiere of his brilliantly orchestrated first violin concerto Lichtzwang (Light-duress), titled and perhaps also thematically modelled after a book of poetry by the 20th-century German author Paul Celan. It’s Rihm’s latest and most lyrical violin concerto, Gedicht des Malers (Poem of the Painter 2012–14), however, that speaks most directly to me. Rihm explains the intended narrative; “the soloist virtually embodies the painter’s brush as it moves over the canvas sometimes faster and sometimes in more deliberate ways.” In all three works, violinist Tianwa Yang brilliantly imbues her virtuoso passages with passion and intimations of inner angst and emotion, effectively supported by the Rheinland-Pfalz State Philharmonic under Christoph-Mathias Mueller.

Andrew Timar

MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY

Wolfgang Rihm – Music for Violin and Orchestra Volume 1
Tianwa Yang; Deutsche Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz; Christoph-Mathias Mueller
Naxos 8.573812 (naxosdirect.com)
Stas Namin – Centuria S-Quark Symphony
London Symphony Orchestra; Lee Reynolds
Navona Records nv6200 (navonarecords.com)

> In his liner notes, Stas Namin refers to “clashes between individuals, societies, countries, ethnic groups – and ultimately the crash of civilization... the concept of my symphony came to me... as a kind of prophecy... reflecting the discord present in each person and consequently in each society.”

Namin (b. Anastas Mikoyan, 1951) is a Russian arts icon, a superstar rock band leader, songwriter, film and theatre producer-director, photographer, painter (including the CD’s cover image) and classical composer.

Despite Namin’s comments, there’s hardly any conflict or dissonance in his 47-minute, one-movement Symphony (2016). Instead, I counted more than a dozen brief episodes expressing ever-changing moods including nostalgia, playfulness, celebration, uncertainty and brash assertiveness, each colourfully scored, highlighting different instrumental combinations. One episode suggested to me a rustic square dance, another a comical circus procession. In fact, the entire symphony, highly theatrical and rhythmically energized, is essentially a brilliant ballet score begging to be choreographed, with episodes appropriate for solos, duos and ensembles.

Rather than illustrating current or futuristic discord, Namin’s engaging melodic mix of late-Romanticism and neo-classicism recalls music of the 1920s and 30s. Namin never sounds like anyone else, though – not even himself. He’s reminiscent of Mosolov’s dissonant section, a crescendo of pounding percussion that never sounds like anyone else, though – not even himself. Namin’s playing of late-Romanticism and neo-classicism is divided into four (unequal) parts.

The title cut is the most substantial work here at 19 minutes. It “is a reflection on the domestic life, delivered in three interconnected movements,” writes Montreal-based composer Basanta. “I imagined a daily universe in expansion, with unique sounds that come to life: discreet noises amplified, amalgamated rhythms, and unwanted sounds,” such as repeated cellphone interruptions. Furthermore, Basanta effectively exploits the interaction between human musicians, on percussion instruments, and enigmatic electronic sounds.

On hand the music on this album sets out to explore thresholds between temporal stability – in terms of regular pulse, rhythmic continuity, metre and groove – and instability. For the listener, the sonic journey here is equally full of the thrill of discovery and the mystery of the unknown.

Andrew Timar


Steve Reich – Drumming

Kuniko

> The celebrated mallet percussionist Kuniko is equally comfortable in sound worlds as diverse as Baroque, electronic and minimalist. Having performed Bach with as much ease as Xenakis she approached 2018 with a startling interpretation of Steve Reich’s Drumming, a work inspired by Ghanaian Ewe drummers. While Kuniko might have taken her mallets to vibraphone and marimba in the course of other musical challenges, this recording comes with particularly vexing challenges: how to overcome challenges of tone (relating to the metallic sound of the glockenspiels) and the fact that she overdues the parts of up to nine percussionists that Reich had in mind?

The obvious answer was to use her hyper-virtuosity on anything that can be struck with a mallet. And thus we are treated to music that develops from the stuttering first notes to a veritable cascade of melodic sounds redolent of a kind of tintinnabulation that virtually transforms a typically Afro-centric drumming into an extraordinary world of melodicism. Reich’s composition, Drumming, is divided into four (unequal) parts and Kuniko embellishes each with her percussive arsenal that also includes marimba, glockenspiels, piccolo and voices.

The result transforms what minimalist refuseniks might toss aside here as repetitious into a piece that Kuniko builds as if into a moving soundscape of broodingly percussive tumbling grooves that begin to ripple and glitter as she adds cascades of notes from the marimbas and piccolo, topped up by high-sprung pristine vocals towards the work’s conclusion.

Raul da Gama

Phill Niblock: Baobab

Quatuor Bozzini

QB 1924 (actuellecd.com)

> Montreal-based Quatuor Bozzini has released 28 CDs of contemporary music since their founding in 1999, covering disparate international composers from Aldo Clementi to John Cage along with a host of Canadians, and in the process becoming a preeminent string quartet in contemporary music circles. This recording of two works by American minimalist Phill Niblock testifies to their willingness to take on challenges to find new musical ground.

They play two similar pieces here, each recast from earlier orchestral versions, Disseminate (1998) and Baobab (2011). Niblock has reconceived them as works for five string quartets, the founding Bozzinis (cellist Isabelle and violist Stéphanie) along with violinists Clemens Merkel and Alissa Cheung over dubbing themselves to 20 instruments. They’re precisely notated, microtonal works, with long, even bow strokes themselves influencing the exact pitch. The result in each piece is a hive of sound, bow strokes determinedly disappearing until the massed quartets approach the constancy of a bank of
It’s an orchestra constructed in the recording process, creating works that are literally our experience of them. Each piece is both constantly changing and never changing; each achieves timelessness in a remarkably brief time, 22:18 for Disseminate, 23:11 for Baobab. Here our experience of pitch confounds notions of union and dissonance, as if the pieces are constantly between them, simultaneously moving towards and away. It’s like listening to long and failed orchestral tune-ups that are also a new kind of bliss, experiences to cherish.

Tim Brady – Music for Large Ensemble
Bradyworks Large Ensemble; Tim Brady
Starkland ST-230 (starkland.com)

With strident chords and single note triplets and arpeggios, Tim Brady’s guitar becomes a razor-edged ignition into the elegant rolling atmospheres of reeds, woodwinds, strings and rhythm section of his Bradyworks Large Ensemble. Somehow the loud and amplified intrusion is smoothed over and the respective instruments are no longer strange bedfellows, even as the music veers from the utterly thrilling turbulence of ideas – a glittering introduction, dark passagework, triumphant panfares by guitar, piano and electric piano, all of whom trade gigantic-sounding chords in the dark and foreboding Désir, the first part of the Concerto for electric guitar and large chamber ensemble.

Darkness and foreboding are familiar tone colours and atmospheric soundscapes throughout Eight Songs about: Symphony n°7, re-inking the palimpsests of Shostakovich’s work with all the glory and tension of the turbulent Soviet era, complete with principal players in the form of music sketched in the proverbial image and likeness of Josef Stalin (Bells), Shostakovich and his wife Nina Varzar (Exhaustion) the conductor Karl Eliasberg (August Ninth) and a number of incidental characters in the erstwhile Soviet landscape.

In his works Brady recasts intensely Sovietized themes of tension, fearfulness and bitterness, tempering these with the sound of soaring hope via heraldic, ascending motifs and bright harmonics. The result is a work of brilliant impetuosity. Played on the knife edge of the guitar, Brady combines a disturbing history with Douglas Smith’s poignant text through recitation and arias and instrumentation to great effect.

Cannibale
Dannielle Palardy Roger
Ambiances Magnétiques AM 241CD (actuellecd.com)

Few compositions can more fully embody the enduring spirit of Québécois musique actuelle – playful, anarchic, witty, frequently barbed – than composer/percussionist Dannielle Palardy Roger’s Cannibale. The 11-movement work calls on a special kind of musician: here the performers sing as well as play, improvise as well as interpret; four even compose individual movements. Palardy Roger’s frequent musical partner Joane Hétu, also a distinguished composer, provides focused dramatic narration as well as voice and alto saxophone.

The work’s special character is apparent from the beginning as Hétu intones “cannibale” repeatedly, a prayer, an invocation, a lover’s whisper. Each position is explored in depth as the work unfolds, Palardy Roger’s sustained tone and frame highlighting special episodes. Le sacrifice rituel, composed by percussionist Isaiah Ceccarelli, suggests the symbolic cannibalism of the mass with isolated percussion and Gregorian chant. Electric guitarist André Duchesne contributes the rocking La victoire du guerrier, while Alexandre St-Onge’s electronics drive his Sauvage, le côté party de la nécrophilie cannibale. Electronic musician Michel F Côté contributes Le gourmand épicurien, Palardy Roger’s ecstatic text animated by the voice, chewing sounds and clarinet of Elizabeth Lima, who elsewhere sounds the elegiac depths of Pitié Navire. At times, the brutalist roar of Ida Toninato’s baritone saxophone may represent the title character.

Cannibale is a rich alley in which genres from hard rock to free jazz to synth-pop and “traditional” electronic music are cannibalized with the same glee that the texts explore the modes of “Cannibale capitale brutal.”

Radiance – A celebration of spiritual transformation and new creation
Patricia Lazzara, flute
Independent (patriciaazzaraflutist.com)

Matthew Burtner’s multiple award-winning Alaskan-born composer, augmented computer instrument designer, and ecoacoustician, currently professor of composition and computer music at the University of Virginia. In his thought-provoking album Glacier Music, Burtner presents five compositions based on field recordings he made on various Alaskan glaciers, or which include the sounds of snow (the raw material of glaciers). These recordings are further transformed and edited by the composer in various novel ways.

Employing a musical ecoacoustics approach, he embeds environmental systems into musical and performative structures using new technologies. Burtner draws on techniques of sonification, acoustic ecology and soundscapes pioneered by Canadian composers R. Murray Schafer, Barry Truax, Hildegard Westerkamp, et al.

Three of the works here – Sound Cast of Matanaaska Glacier, Sonic Physiography of a Time-stretched Glacier, and Syntax of Snow – also feature scores for standard orchestral instruments of the Rivanna Quartet, Albemarle Ensemble and percussionists Brandon Bell and Trevor Saint, providing timbral, harmonic and textural counterpoint to the field recordings and synthesized sounds. We’re reminded by the composer that at the threshold of mountain and ocean, glaciers “are highly susceptible to global warming . . . [providing] an indicator of the health of the region in a time of rapid climate change.”

Burtner’s music on this album sits the environment at its core, aiming to decentralize standard human musical notions. It seems to be searching for more universal ecology-centered experiences, inspiring us to reflect on nature’s beauty in sound, and perhaps also to take action to protect it.

Glacier Music – Ecoacoustics of Matthew Burtner
Matthew Burtner
Ravello Records rr8001 (ravellorecords.com)

This, the ninth studio album by the distinguished American flutist, Patricia Lazzara, presents a fascinating program of contemporary compositions and arrangements for the flute by a collection of living American, Canadian, European and Japanese composers. The two Canadians are Toronto flutist and composer, Ron Korb, no stranger to these pages, and Uzbek-Canadian, now living in Toronto, Dmitry Varelas.

The first two tracks are works by Korb, Woodland Serenade and A Muse. The latter, unlike any other of Korb’s compositions that I have heard, is unaccompanied and offers both technically challenging passages and sections using extended technique which blend perfectly with the more conventional writing. Track three, Reflections of Radiance, by Varelas, for flute and alto flute played by Steve Markoff and cello played by Gerald Rau da Gama


Launched is a beautifully accomplished work, really a great addition to the flute ensemble repertoire. Track eight, Domingo Semenzato’s Divugando (choro) with guitarist, Darren O’Neile is played with just the right blend of vivacity and sadness to lift the notes off the page, so to speak.

A real surprise for me, and at first glance an incongruous part of a primarily contemporary program, is the Sicilienne by the Austrian composer and contemporary of Mozart, Maria Theresia von Paradis. This enchanting melody has a strangely contemporary feel to it though, and is actually a good fit. Many thanks to Patricia Lazzara for introducing us to some fine new repertoire by mostly not-well-known contemporary composers.

**Allan Pulker**

**Launch**
**Admiral Launch Duo**
**Albany Records TROY1752**
(albanyrecords.com)

Launch may be described as a way to introduce something new, which is precisely what the US-based Admiral Launch Duo is achieving with their uncanny/ intriguing instrumentation. Since their 2013 Fresh Inc Festival debut, saxophonist Jonathan Hulting-Cohen and harpist Jennifer R. Ellis have spent years working together. Their debut 10-composition release features wide-ranging stylistic commissions, transcriptions and premiere recordings.

Five Admiral commissions are included. Patrick O’Malley’s three-movement Thaumaturgy is a current day exploration of harp and sax effects. Amazing how the performers can match colours on two such diverse instruments in an arpeggiated ripple section, while the loud programmatic final meteor movement stuns with harp glissandos and high pitch sax notes. More wailing sax extreme high dramatics with mournful contrasts appear in Christine Delphine Hedden’s Amhhrán na Cásca, while dark low and high tones emulate emotional distress in Angélica Negron’s Still Here. Close atonal interchanges and tight playing are heard on Jasper Sussman’s _...nice box! “Oh So Square”_ and Natalie Moller’s nature-inspired starshine & moonfall.

The other works include changes of sonic pace. Highlights include traditional Romantic harmonies and melodies in the duo’s arrangement of Marcel Tournier’s _La Lettre du Jardinier_, and a contemplative lyrical harp part against sensitive saxophone phrasing and surprising flute-like tone fluttering on composer Ida Gotkovsky’s own arrangement of her _Eolienne_.

Musical common sense assumes that it just won’t work but like anything different, the Admiral Launch Duo’s talent, balance and sonic experimentation blossoms with repeated listening.

_Tiina Kilk_

**Crosswind**
**Tower Duo**
**Ravello Records rr8003**
(ravellorecords.com)

Crosswind _Tower Duo_ is a current day exploration of harp and saxophone instrument pairing (since 2007), _Crosswind_ is _Tower Duo’s_ debut album. It features eight of the duo’s favourite compositions by as many American and international composers. The album displays the duo’s mission: commissioning and performing new scores. Included is Scott Brickman’s epigrammatic _Epic Suite_ (2012), Charlie Wilmoot’s disruptive _Three Pieces_ (2013), Philip Sink’s _Places Never Painted_ (2012), inspired by the composer’s poem evoking the quiet beauty of the natural world, as well as Michael Rene Torres serves as the artistic director of the Columbus Ohio Discovery Ensemble (dedicated to the promotion and performance of contemporary concert music in Central Ohio), Both are active teaching their respective instruments at area universities.

Performing new repertoire for their unusual wind instrument pairing (since 2007), _Crosswind_ is _Tower Duo’s_ debut album. It features eight of the duo’s favourite compositions by as many American and international composers. The album displays the duo’s mission: commissioning and performing new scores. Included is Scott Brickman’s epigrammatic _Epic Suite_ (2012), Charlie Wilmoot’s disruptive _Three Pieces_ (2013), Philip Sink’s _Places Never Painted_ (2012), inspired by the composer’s poem evoking the quiet beauty of the natural world, as well as Michael Rene Torres’ four-part character study _Four Short Episodes_ (2011). The title track from 2013 by Hong Kong composer Chin Ting Chan (b.1986), written for the duo, is an album highlight. Full of extended techniques and reflecting Chan’s harmonically exact, rhythmically defined and structurally strict M.O., it pays close attention to instrumental timbre and colour, and two-voice polyphony. It’s also infused with a playfully dramatic, tonally exploratory mood.

This lightness of mood and unstrained virtuosity happily permeate this album, enjoyable to listeners far from the borders of the Buckeye State.

Andrew Timar

**One Night in Kensington**
**Laura Hubert**
Independent (laurahubert.com)

Toronto singer Laura Hubert would be familiar to many readers as the energetic vocalist of the popular JUNO Award-winning Canadian folk/rock band the Leslie Spit Treeo (1988-2000). Hubert continues her musical journey, singing jazz in this live recording from the Poetry Jazz Café in Toronto’s Kensington Market, supported by a superb jazz quartet comprised of pianist Peter Hill, guitarist Eric St-Laurent, bassist Steve Wallace and Davide DiRenzo on drums.

Hubert performs with an astounding, memorable sound. Her clear articulations of the storytelling lyrics are still present as she develops her expanding, still intense singing style in 13 contrasting cover tracks. The opening Mercer/Carmichael tune Lazy Bones is a great introduction to Hubert’s personal and at times idiosyncratic sound style, complete with swells, warble and growling vocal effects, and never over-the-top loud singing. A vocals/piano start leads to a full band rendition, with upbeat instrumental solos and background cymbal crashes nicely contrasting the vocal effects. The slower Ellington/Russell song I Didn’t Know About You has Hubert singing in a tenderly lush way, with dramatic held notes against standard jazz band backdrop sounds. The upbeat quasi cha-cha-cha tune Comes Love (Stey/Tobias/Brown) is another intense, unique rendition driven by a tight rhythmic groove.

Great musical interplay between Hubert and her band, extended colourful and exciting instrumental solos and clear production values, including the appreciative audience applause, complete this excellent live release from this musically evolving artist.

_Tiina Kilk_

**Settling Up**
**Simone Morris**
Independent (simonemorris.ca)

Toronto jazz vocalist Simone Morris’ debut album _Settling Up_ is an absolute treat to the listener, a pop of delicious and sultry goodness in an otherwise dull and dreary day. The album was born out of a longtime collaboration with guitarist Mike Freedman, who is featured as a co-writer on each track along with Morris. Freedman’s
mellow and fittingly soulful electric guitar licks, in combination with acclaimed pianist Adrean Farrugia’s delightful keyboard and piano riffs, add just the right amount of spirit to complement Morris’ soulful vocals.

Morris has described the album as “weaving a musical path that conveys diverse musical experience and background.” It is easy to fall into a pleasant hull and meander along this path with each piece offering a new stylistic experience that perfectly showcases her unique timbre and exceptionally varied musical background. From tracks such as Baby This Works and Man In the Corner, which delve into traditional jazz, to Don’t Come Crying To Me, an excellent, soft bossa nova, Morris’ artistic talents are made very apparent. With a very unique timbre, slightly Krall-esque but with an intriguing touch of spunk, she has succeeded in creating a captivating modern yet timeless quality within her music.

Not only do we receive an absolutely lovely and charming musical experience from this record, we are also able to catch a rare and intimate glimpse into Morris’ life experiences. Settling Up will delight jazz aficionados and newcomers alike.

Kati Killaspea

Volume 2
John MacMurchy’s Art of Breath
Flatcar FCR-007 (johnmacmurchy.com)

The brainchild of woodwind player John MacMurchy, Art of Breath is a collective of jazz musicians playing across genres and musical borders. Perhaps heartchild is a better term, because it’s apparent that a lot of feeling went into these songs, all but one composed and arranged by MacMurchy.

The album opens gently and beautifully with Calliope, which features singers Jocelyn Barth and Jessica Lalonde in harmony throughout and a lulling solo by Dan Ionescu on nylon-string guitar. We’re moved into breezy Brazilian territory on Meu Coracao Canta which features band member and Braziliophile, Alan Hetherington and Rio de Janeiro-native, Maninho Costa, on percussion. Listen for the clever interplay of cuica and voice near the end of the track.

We get jolted out of our daydream by the next few tracks which tackle tougher topics, like American politics, and the music gets more strident but no less superb. Bruce Cassidy’s masterful work on EVI – an electronic valve instrument, (an offshoot of the EWI) that came to prominence in the 70s and that’s quite a rarity these days – lends an urgent and interesting layer to Voice of America and the driving jazz number, WTF. Drummer Daniel Barnes, bassist Ross McIntyre and pianist Stacie McGregor keep it swinging on Slippery When Wet.

Both singers have gorgeous solo turns – Jocelyn Barth is exquisite and not overly sentimental on the Bobby Troup heartbreaker, February Brings the Rain, while Jessica Lalonde nails the vocally challenging Autumn Brown and Blue to close out the album.

Cathy Riches

Icterus
Stefan Hegerat
Independent (stefanhegerat.com)

The debut album from drummer/bandleader Stefan Hegerat, Icterus, was inspired in part by a trip to Germany, from which his mother’s family emigrated following World War I. The resulting collection of songs – all of which were composed and arranged by Hegerat – are connected by shared themes of “existentialism and belonging.” Joining Hegerat is Robert Grieve on electric guitar, Patrick O’Reilly, also on electric guitar and Mark Godfrey on electric bass.

Icterus, as the instrumentation may suggest, takes considerable influence from amplified electric music, and, though it is replete with improvisation, the prevailing stylistic tone is more rock than jazz. Schloss, the opening track, begins with a tightly executed staccato melody, played by both guitars and bass before the time dissolves into a section of group improvisation that showcases Grieve and O’Reilly’s complementary instrumental voices. Odd One Out, which showcases the group’s ability to explore wide dynamic ranges, begins with an ethereal guitar melody that grows patiently as it’s joined by the second guitar; when the rhythm section enters, the contrast between the rock-solid bass/drum parts and the spacey guitar parts neatly encapsulates the charm of Icterus. Raccoons, another high-light, builds slowly, eventually settling into one of the album’s most compelling sections, both for its deep groove and for the beautifully contrasting guitar tones used by Grieve and O’Reilly.

A worthwhile listen for fans of jazz, progressive rock and improvised music, Icterus is a mature and self-assured debut from a talented drummer with a clear compositional vision.

Colin Story

The Snowghost Sessions
Wayne Horvitz; Geoff Harper; Eric Eagle
Songlines SGL1627-2 (songlines.com)

Pliant/composer/producer Wayne Horvitz has been a prominent leader of the American avant-garde since his emergence in the 1980s in New York.

In the ensuing years, he has been an active performer, has produced albums for artists such as the World Saxophone Quartet and Bill Frisell, and has had compositions commissioned by Kronos Quartet, the Brooklyn Academy of Music and many others. The
Snowghost Sessions, released near the end of 2018 on Vancouver’s Songlines record label, is the result of a weeklong residency undertaken by Horvitz, upright bassist Geoff Harper, and drummer Eric Eagle at SnowGhost Studios in Whitefish, Montana in the spring of 2015.

The Snowghost Sessions marks Horvitz’s first trio record in a conventional keys/bass/drums format, and the album starts with The Pains, a pensive, eerie piece that sets the tone for the rest of the recording. Throughout Snowghost, Horvitz uses keyboards, live processing and triggered samples to expand the traditional sonic range of the acoustic piano trio. In some cases – such as the organ parts on Northampton – these electric additions work subtly, providing additional texture behind the grand piano. At other times, as on The Trees, the piano plays more of a supporting role to processed sounds; still further across the spectrum, on IMB, distorted, filtered keyboards rage over aggressive up-tempo swing. Through it all, Horvitz, Harper and Eagle are open and generous with one another, and Snowghost manages to be exploratory without ever meandering. Highly recommended.

Colin Story

Internal Combustion
Lawful Citizen
Independent (evanshay.com)

Character Study
Andrew Rathbun; Tim Hagans; Gary Versace; Jay Anderson; Bill Stewart
SteepleChase SCDD 31862 (andrewrathbun.com)

This could well sound as if it is tenor saxophonist Johnny Griffith’s Le carnival des animaux, except that The Lion, Camel & Child, his menagerie – unlike Saint-Saëns’ – is affectionately symbolic and celebrates the iconography of two animals and a child, albeit that it is also written with his musician friends in mind. The result is a vivacious program of music which unfolds in the characteristic manner of Griffith’s rollicking notes and elliptical phrases. When egged on by trumpeter Jeremy Pelt, however, the sound can emerge like a series of charmingly guttural Welsh-bound “gogs” that might seemingly recall the sound of his distant ancestors from another time.

Griffith’s repertoire is wholly homegrown and is centred in the jazz tradition, written for a quintet of musicians who parley with the familiarity of old friends, which indeed they are. The album leads off with the suite after which it is titled. The work’s opening is powerfully atmospheric – darkly lugubrious chords that are interpolated into one theme after the other built upon a kinetic restlessness that drives the whole suite until the fourth movement, its denouement, which resonates with characteristic vibrancy belying its title.

Throughout, Griffith’s tenor saxophone leads the charge, ringing in the changes in mood, structure and tempo. He is also joined in the musical adventure and with poetic melodicism by pianist Adrean Farruggia, and powerhouse rhythmic teamsters, bassist Jon Maharaj and drummer Ethan Ardelli.

Raul da Gama

Clock Radio
Michael Davidson; Dan Fortin
Elastic Recordings ER 001 (elasticrecordings.com)

Think of a duet featuring a vibraphone as one of the instruments in a jazz recording and the iconic ones with Gary Burton and Chick Corea jump to mind. So by association, vibraphonist Michael Davidson’s duet with bassist Dan Fortin is already in good company. However, it isn’t simply this fact that makes this a duo recording (albeit with a bassist) that merits curious, if not close listening; what matters much more is the fact
that, between Davidson and Fortin, the musicians marshal their forces with superb discipline, producing a wonderfully fresh sound which also manages to possess the requisite amount of mystery – essential for a work this spare in sound.

Clock Radio is a collection of musical impressions and memories of Davidson’s apprenticeship, in 2017, with the celebrated mallet percussionist David Friedman in Germany. Davidson strikes the sound bars with hard and soft mallets to bounce bright, orotund tone colours off his instrument. He invites Fortin into this soundworld. The bassist engages in the musical conversation with angular counterpoint that is characterized by the ink-dark rumble of his instrument.

The disc is dappled with – among others – elements from a suite-in-the-making titled Berlin; miniatures imbued with contrapuntal unison passages, as well as restless, scouring and brilliantly inventive features from one musician in response to the other. And the miraculous piece entitled zwei werden eins (Two Become One) makes vivid listening from a partnership we hope to hear much more from.

Raul da Gama

Concert note: Clock Radio will be launched March 23 at the Canadian Music Centre at 8pm.

Dream Libretto
Marilyn Crispell; Tanya Kalmanovitch;
Richard Teitelbaum
Leo Records CD LR 849 (leorecords.com)

A rare departure for American pianist Marilyn Crispell and Canadian violinist Tanya Kalmanovitch, who are usually involved with spiky improvisational work, this mostly sombre program instead deals with loss and regeneration reflected in a five-part Crispell composition for trio and seven duo improvisations.

Showcased, Memoria: For Pessia Malka is the pianist’s formal composition, and it evolves in different sequences to reflect the emotions she felt following the recent deaths of close relatives and friends. Crucially, Richard Teitelbaum’s wave-form processing is funeral parlour–like muttered, with the requisite sense of mourning really conveyed by brief violin sweeps that help amplify the pianist’s low–frequency threnody. Luckily when the final sequence is heard, Crispell has shaken off enough melancholy to enliven the coda with chiming piano chords.

Created without electronics, the seven equally brief improvisations are a requiem respite. Accelerating from the first four tracks which crisply outline how grief can lead to musical artistry, the pieces become livelier with, for instance, Kalmanovitch’s snapping spicato strings and Crispell stretching arpeggios into tremolo chords. By the time Stones Remain Still and Walked through to Sleep (the penultimate tracks) arrive, the mood has been elevated to become more stimulating. This is done with inner–piano string strums and keyboard surges alongside upward string swells from the violinist. Instructively though, the musical uplift reflected in these duos still maintains the solemn mood that is intensified in the final Stars Visible and Invisible which cannily reflects back on the initial suite.

Ken Waxman

Endangered Species
Alvin Curran
New World Records 80804-2
(newworldrecords.org)

American composer Alvin Curran is famed as a member of Musica Elettronica Viva, the pioneering improvising electro–acoustic ensemble. Yet in his 80th year he has revived his primary musical experiences, playing American Songbook standards. But since this is Curran and this is the 21st century, this two–CD set of classic tunes arrives with a twist. Besides his subtle piano improvisations that impressively re-imagine the tunes, he employs a Yamaha Disklavier. Resembling a grand piano, but actually a blend of acoustic keyboard, player piano and digital computer, the Disklavier allows him to append any number of previously recorded sounds to the tracks.

Take the nearly 17–minute rendition of Ain’t Misbehavin’. As Curran works his way through the familiar melody with aplomb, all manner of inharmonious and grating noises are interjected and then vanish, including whistles, yodels, bel canto arias, wolf calls, marching feet, erotic moans and duck calls. Incorporating these disruptions, he alters the melody at points to work in blues tonality and formal recital inferences, culminating in a thoroughly original re-creation.

Each of the 18 compositions goes through a similar transformation, whether it’s 1896’s Red River Valley or 1955’s Arrivederci Roma. While most include a humorous palimpsest of the original, only Arrivederci Roma with its sonic overlay of crying infants, street noises and snatches of Italian–language conversations, add a hint of seriousness to the familiar light–hearted melody, since Curran has lived and taught in Rome since the early 1960s.

Ken Waxman

The Newest Sound You Never Heard
Ran Blake; Jeanne Lee
a-side records 0005 (a-siderecords.com)

When singer Jeanne Lee and pianist Ran Blake released their 1961 debut, The Newest Sound Around, it introduced a new interpretive freedom to a broad range of songs. The duo extended traditional roles to a genuine improvised duet between voice and instrument, from Lee’s frequent a cappella rubatos and chromatic fantasies to Blake’s playful keyboard explosions, all of it held together by near–telepathic attention to one another’s sense of inspired detail. This two–CD set combines unreleased studio and concert performances recorded in Belgium in 1966 and 1967.

One can simply celebrate the breadth of their repertoire, extending from Ellington, Monk (his Misterioso here set to Gertrude Stein’s words) and Harold Arlen to Ornette Coleman, Ray Charles, Lennon–McCartney and Bob Dylan; however, it’s their unique handling of the material that distinguishes the results, stringing songs together in vast medleys, then trusting to the individual song to hold the performance together.

In part they play on the familiarity of their material, Lee’s rich, nuanced delivery of a single phrase conveying an entire song’s depth. The live disc initially reminds that Out of this World started with Arlen and Johnny Mercer, even if the greatest debt here is to John Coltrane. It then segues to a Out of this World in his Hands and Billie’s Blues. This is rare and fine material.

Stuart Broome

Harder on the Outside
Jon Lundbom & Big Five Chord
Independent HOT CUP 108 (jonlundbom.com)

The “vant jazz guitarist” Jon Lundbom has an eclectic and inventive history which includes studying jazz and classical guitar in Chicago and New York; playing in Bryan & the Haggards, a New York–based alternative Merle Haggard cover band; and releasing eight recordings with his own group, Jon Lundbom & Big Five Chord. I fell in love with the Haggard’s 2013 Merles Just Want to Have Fun featuring Eugene Chadbourne).

Harder on the Outside is intense,
aggressive, fun and solidly grooving. It is a combination of hardcore/alternative fusion with solid beats and free-form soloing. The “beats” come from a longer-term project between saxophonist Bryan Murray and Lundbom which is forthcoming, but Lundbom was inspired to record live versions of those songs with the Big Five Chord (Lundbom with Jon Irabagon on alto and soprano saxophones, Murray on tenor and baritone saxophones, Moppa Elliott on bass and Dan Monaghan on drums).

Two examples of this album’s range are: People Be Talking which features a 6/4 metre propelled by an eccentric bass and drum groove, melodic head, sputtering and energized tenor solo by Murray and then a reverbed, ethereal guitar solo from Lundbom. Prednisone is slower with a cautious, crawling melody played in fourths with the saxophones. Justin Wood (a guest “sixth man”) plays a lyric alto sax solo and then Lundbom finishes with a fuzzed-out guitar displaying very solid fusion chops. None of the tunes end with the traditional recap of the melody; the solo finishes and that’s it. The beats are seriously heavy and the playing is intense.

Ted Parkinson

Weighting
Gabriel Zucker
ESP-Disk ESP5027 (gabrielzucker.com)

► Gabriel Zucker is a New York-based composer and pianist who has been creating music which combines elements of contemporary composition, jazz improvisation and indie band music. He writes and performs for a band he calls The Delegation which has a revolving membership and recently toured Ontario. Weighting sounds similar to the music of The Delegation, but it is a specific project based on the novel The Flamethrowers by Rachel Kushner. The group comprises Zucker with Tyshawn Sorey (drums), Adam O’Farrill (trumpet) and Eric Trudel (saxophone).

Weighting contains sounds and motifs that unwind narratively in three parts: Soul, Appointments and Stones (each of which has two or three movements). The first movement of Part 1 – Would It Come Back to You? – begins with trumpet and saxophone playing lines that are part counterpoint, part call and response; they grow loud, then soft, interspersing flurries of notes with longer tones. The piano and drums enter after the piece is half over, filling out the sound with discordant clusters of notes and drum rolls and then all four players exchange several intense riffs until only the piano is left to calmly introduce the second movement, The Uselessness of Truth/Not to be Anything More. Soon Sorey joins with some bow-on-cymbal work and eventually Trudel plays primarily pads over a soft piano background.

Each of the movements contains contrasting composed sections and some improvised parts which maintain the sense of moving forward to the next idea. Zucker has carved out a unique vision with his music and Weighting is an engaging album.

Ted Parkinson

POT POURRI

Rupakarias
Nicolás Hernandez
Independent (nicolashernandez.com)

► Nick Hernandez is a beautiful guitarist who generally keeps a low profile. The Toronto-based musician is an accompanist to flamenco dancers and singers, as well as director of Esmeralda Enrique’s Spanish Dance Company, and for the last dozen or so years, his main gig has been accompanying another fine guitarist, Jesse Cook. Now he’s stepping into the spotlight somewhat with his second album in 13 years (time flies!), Rupakarias.

Filled with original compositions in traditional flamenco song styles like guajiras and tarantas, the album also has some non-traditional elements such as South Asian drumming, courtesy of Toronto tabla master Ravi Naimpally.

The title of the album is a portmanteau of two song styles – flamenco bulerias and the Indian classical tala, rupak. The song Rupakarias is an artful mashup of the two styles with tabla blending beautifully with the guitar and vice versa. The jaleos (calls) and palmas (hand claps) at the end give the song a traditional touch.

The gorgeous Mociones y Emociones is one of the more accessible songs on the album. Its Gipsy Kings-esque sound – a rumba style, which I think of as the pop music of the flamenco world due to the group bringing the style to prominence and global airplay back in the 80s – gives it a ring of familiarity. The fiery bulerias Recordando a Cesar, will get your heart started with percussionist Rosendo Chendy Leon Arocha’s cajon playing and palm.A driving the tempo. Dos Mundos is a bit of a departure with its searing electric guitar work, courtesy of Kevin Laliberté. Re Mi Sol is a sunny and evocative closer to this fine album.

Cathy Riches

The Walls are Made of Song
Ladom Ensemble
Independent (ladomensemble.com)

► The much-anticipated second release of local instrumental group Ladom Ensemble features tight, infectious, energetic and virtuosic performances by each member. Pianist/composer/arranger Pouya Hamidi, accordionist Michael Bridge, cellist Beth Silver and percussionist Adam Campbell play both as soloists and ensemble musicians in the wide-ranging musical genres performed.

The four classical arrangements for Ladom show respect for the original work while exploring new sounds in the transcriptions. Of note is the entertaining Brahm’s Hungarian Dance No.5 in G Minor featuring rapid accordion melody lines with tremolo bellowsing, and contrasting dramatic fast and slow sections. The first movement of Bach’s Keyboard Concerto No.7 in G Minor is an interesting approach with contrapuntal lines against more modern, almost party-like rhythms. The stylistically accurate East Coast Medley featuring the “fiddle” parts on cello, a straightforward rendition of Piazzolla’s Libertango, and an orchestral flavoured cover of Radiohead’s Weird Fishes/Arpeggi bring welcome sonic contrasts.

Vocalist Brenna MacCrimmon sings on two tracks. Her clear, beautiful vocals on the traditional Azeri Lullaby are supported by held notes to the final “falling asleep” cello pluck. Three original works are performed. Hamidi’s The Walls are Made of Song is a slower tonal soundscape with dramatic build and dynamic contrasts while his Gift is more a reflective almost mournful piece. Maziar Heidari’s Summer in Tehran features well placed short ideas.

Ladom Ensemble is an exciting, evolving group with musicality, technical acumen and an overwhelming sense of joy in playing.

Tiina Kiik

Risorgimento
Romina Di Gasbarro
Modica Music MM0022 (romina.ca)

► Multitalented Canadian vocalist/composer/instrumentalist Romina Di Gasbarro stretches her musicianship to the limits in her third CD release. She weaves together ancient and modern music such as folk, jazz, opera, art song and pop, in both Italian and English, to tell old-to-current cultural and political stories. Other than a
Something in the Air
Bending string section to
Exploratory Jazz Ends

KEN WAXMAN

Recording with a group of stringed instruments has always posed particular challenges for committed improvisers. Since the groupings of violin, viola, cello and the like are usually valued for their harmonic and melodic qualities, the challenge is to avoid a mawkish "& Strings" session, that buries innovation in schmaltz.

Luckily these discs impress by using string players not as backup or afterthought, but as an integral part of the creative process.

Take Brazilian tenor saxophonist Ivo Perelman for instance. As part of a seemingly endless series of discs that link his horn with other instruments, on Strings 1 (Leo Records CD LR 850 leorecords.com), the saxophonist creates a free music interpretation of high-art string quartet literature. Perelman, who played cello as a youth, takes that part, while the others fit traditional roles: violinists Mark Feldman and Jason Hwang plus violist Mat Maneri. During the nine-track, 74-minute program, the four subdivide frequently so that when one violinist concentrates on sul ponticello squeaks, the other paces a moderate theme; or the saxophonist’s yelps, peeps and growls are answered with contrapuntal viola sweeps. Throughout, the fluctuating sequences move from stop-time to fragmented to extended legato, with abstracted string scratching as much a part of the expositions’ evolution as Perelman’s multiphonic asides. Although all four are capable of creating elevated timbres – despite the fact that the string players sometimes approximate angry birds – uncomfortable shrillness is usually avoided, with the quartet confirming that moderate storytelling can encompass just enough jagged and jerking notes to enliven the tracks without derailing them into atonality. The extended fourth track, for example, which begins with dissonant pizzicato plucks from the string players and elaborated sibilant reed squeaks, courses into a narrative where Perelman’s caustic tones settle within circling string layering, so that no matter how many spiky reed detours are tried, by the finale the parallel improvising becomes a four-part coordinated theme.

American clarinetist Blaise Siwula is in somewhat the same situation, more theatrical and operatic in nature, with moving string interludes and plucked string sections leading to English/Italian lyrics driving the storyline. Radio-friendly pop song A Place in the Sun features vocal swells and upbeat rhythms. Taranta is a toe-tapping Italian flavoured tarantella-like song highlighted by held notes and detached rhythms. Dramatic English-language ballad-like Bedouin features Di Gasbarro’s enchanting vocals, modern key change modulations and instrumental solos, all supported brilliantly by bassist-producer Roberto Occhipinti.

Di Gasbarro sings with a clearly articulated rich quality in her native English and Italian languages. The recording features acclaimed Canadian instrumentalists too numerous to mention here whose performances add to the detailed artistic musical merits of Risorgimento.

Tiina Kilk
the tenor saxophonist’s heartrending solo is more pulpy than anything the individual strings play; and it’s the FAQ’s bent note refrain and string scrubbing, plus shrill notes dug out from the trumpet’s innards, that ensure the tune returns the head’s jolly march and away from mawkishness.

With a sextet consisting mostly of orchestral instruments and half the 16 tracks based on works of Claude Debussy, Montreal-based Cordâme has given itself a challenge that goes beyond instrumentalism. However on Debussy Impressions (Malasartes Mam 033 cordametrio.com), the composition and arrangements of bassist Jean Félix Mailloux, plus the playing of violinist Marie Neige Lavigne, cellist Sheila Hannigan, harpist Éveline Grégoire-Rousseau, pianist Guillaume Martineau and percussionist Mark Nelson, manage to use the French Impressionist composer’s concepts as a base to blend and broaden sounds on the 70-minute CD to much more than a Debussy homage or mimicry. While glissandi from the harp and the violin on a track such as Debussy au clair de lune may follow expected dancing expressionism, the seamless integration of a thumping bass line and piano syncopation introduce a jazz sensibility that buoy the piece. Similarly L’égypétiennne may include some faux-Middle Eastern motifs like its model, but downcast fiddle cadenzas are secondary to percussive rebounds from Nelson and sweeping piano patterns that almost push the piece into rock music territory.

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The greatest Brahms singers among her peers, but that was only until I heard her sing Strauss. Then she was the greatest Marschallin until I heard her do Mahler. Again I had to reassign her to another throne. But then I heard her sing Wagner and the same thing happened, and then recently I heard her incredible interpretation of the Old Lady in my operetta Candide. Then I had to give up. She is simply the best, and the best of all possible human beings.”

The first CD contains 15 arias from Bach’s Christmas Oratorio, St. Matthew Passion and Mass in B Minor and the final CD features Schumann’s, Liederkreis Op. 39, and Hugo Wolf’s Mignon-Lieder and Italienisches Liederbuch, accompanied by Erik Werba and Daniel Barenboim. In between, there is a treasure trove of outstanding performances reflecting her reliability to be present in the role.

A CD of Ludwig and Karl Böhm has arias from Nozze di Figaro and Così fan tutte that are so exquisite that I gave them an immediate encore. On the same disc are two arias from Tristan und Isolde and four from Rosenkavalier. Rounding out this program there are about 15 minutes of three interviews in German. There’s a very fine Alto Rhapsody with Böhm and the VPO and then her collaborations with Karajan including Abscheulicher from Fidelio and much Wagner with excerpts from The Ring. Karajan continues with works by Mahler, the three songs for soprano from Das Lied von der Erde, Kindertotenlieder and five Rückert Lieder. There is the Lux aeterna from the Verdi Requiem and an aria from Madama Butterfly. Revenanza! from Verdi’s Falstaff and two arias from Strauss’ Die Frau ohne Schatten. The selections with Bernstein begin with the final 15 minutes of Mahler’s Second Symphony from Urich and O glaube with Barbara Hendricks, the Westminster Choir and the New York Philharmonic. From Mahler’s Third Symphony she sings O Mensch! Gib Acht! From Bernstein’s First there is the Lamentation followed by the Love Theme from his music for the soundtrack of On the Waterfront. There are three songs from Candide including I Am Easily Assimilated (The Old Lady’s Tango) of which Bernstein wrote in his above quoted appreciation.

CDs is titled “Great Songs and Arias with Various Conductors.” Those conductors are Lorin Maazel, Ferdinand Leitner, Daniel Barenboim, Claudio Abbado, Georg Solti, Ricardo Chailly, Richard Bonynge, Colin Davis, Seiji Ozawa, István Kertész and Karajan. Composers range from Pergolesi to Orff in 19 great songs andarias. The last four discs are devoted to Schubert lieder. Winterreise D911 accompanied by James Levine was recorded in Vienna in 1986, and 29 assorted lieder accompanied by Irwin Gage were recorded in Vienna in 1973 and 74.

theholenote.com
In sum, the above entries and more should prove to be a gift to Ludwig’s admirers and others to whom the repertoire might appeal. Her mezzo voice illuminates the words, serious to the whimsical. Charming where called for.

Eight years ago Doremi issued Volume One of Tatiana Nikolayeva that includes Shostakovich’s 24 Preludes and Fugues, Op.87. Her version was the composer’s very favourite... He had written them for her.

Nikolayeva was an incredible musician and among her most admired specialties were her performances of Bach. She excelled in all classical styles, but for her Bach she is considered “a priestess,” similar to Rosalyn Tureck, with the exception that Tureck was devoted to Bach exclusively. Nikolayeva’s repertoire included all his compositions for the keyboard and many other Bach works which she transcribed for the piano. Volume 2 (DHR-8056-8, 3CDs naxosdirect.com) includes all 12 concertos, BWV1052 though BWV1065, for one, two, three and four keyboards heard in live concerts from December 11,13 and 14, 1975. She is accompanied by the Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra conducted by Saulius Sondeckis, an elite group with whom she often performed. These concertos were written for harpsichord, however the piano maintains the spirit and style admirably as is also clearly demonstrated by such authorities as Rosalyn Tureck and Glenn Gould. No doubt Bach himself, given the opportunity, would have embraced the use of piano, for as we know Bach transcribed many of his works for diverse instruments. Most of these piano concertos existed before as concertos for violin and were transcribed by Bach himself. Furthermore, Bach’s concerto for four keyboards is actually his transcription of a four-violin concerto by Vivaldi.

Bach is played throughout with profound authority and hearing these treated performances from long ago is such a pleasure. The crisp and faultless sound comes from Melodiya originals, not air-checks. There is a significant bonus. From the recital in Tokyo on April 22, 1988 are the Toccata and Fugue in D Minor, BWV565; the Partita No.2, BWV826; the Ricercar from The Musical Offering, BWV1079 and the Contrapunctus i and 9 from The Art of The Fugue, BWV1080. Different repertoire, same empathy.

“The From 1955 until early in 1960, Norma Beecroft and Harry Somers were involved in a romantic relationship. In the fall of 1959, Norma went to Rome to study composition with Goffredo Petrassi. While there, she also studied flute with Severino Gazzelloni, the renowned flutist for whom many composers such as Berio wrote important new works for flute. During the last months of 1959 and early 1960, Somers and Beecroft exchanged nearly 200 letters, providing considerable information about their evolving relationship, what music they were writing, varous compositional concerns, and the people they were meeting (in Toronto and in Rome). As well, Norma Beecroft’s letters describe her struggle to gain the confidence to study composition but also to finally reject a permanent ‘domestic’ relationship with Harry Somers, in other words, to devote herself entirely to composition. Thus the letters give us a fairly detailed portrait of that period in Canadian composition (of concert music): their compositional concerns, problems of financial support, thoughts about the state of the arts in Canada, and so on.

“In the concert being presented at McGill University on March 22, I have chosen significant excerpts from these letters and these will be read by two people, interspersed with music by each of the composers, chiefly, the String Quartet No.3 (1959) by Somers, dedicated to Norma Beecroft, written in the 1990s.”

Norma Beecroft will take part in both these Montreal events. Returning briefly to the topic of the history of electronic music, I’m happy to announce that on March 8, a 1977 vintage recording by the Canadian Electronic Ensemble (CEE) will be released on the Art과정 record label. The CEE is a performing ensemble that I helped to establish in the early 1970s, and which continues to function even now, nearly 50 years later. This vintage re-release is a remastered version of the debut album by the CEE, originally released on an LP on the Music Gallery Editions label. By coincidence, the music contained on the album was all composed and performed at roughly the same period of time as Beecroft was travelling the world recording her interviews. The CEE’s founding quartet of David Grimes, the late Larry Lake, David Jaeger (aka me) and James Montgomery are the performers, together with a guest appearance by the late pianist Karen Kieser. The album is available as both a CD and in digital formats on Bandcamp: thecee.bandcamp.com.

David Jaeger is a composer, producer and broadcaster based in Toronto.
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It used to be.

New music in the classical past was the St. Matthew Passion, the “Eroica” Symphony, Tristan and Isolde, the Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun, the symphonies of Gustav Mahler, the Rite of Spring.

It was, once upon a time, and even not that long ago.

Well into the 1930s and 40s, new music wasn’t something to be frightened of. New music was the Ravel Piano Concerto, Barber’s Adagio for Strings, Copland’s Appalachian Spring, the Bartok Concerto for Orchestra, Peter Grimes, even Lulu and Wozzeck.

But then came the absolute zero, icy, crystalline formulations of the post-WWII generation, of the Boulezes and Stockhausens of the world, with their serialism and pointillism and extreme dissonance, and centuries of Western musical discourse was annihilated within a few years. Music that had celebrated the human spirit in powerful, communicative tonal gestures was washed away in an instant, or so it seemed, by the new purist wave of dark musical star showers and ethereal musical starlight. Music had become anatomized, and the flayed, transparent body of new musical composition was exhibited in autopsied performance spaces all over Europe and North America.

Audiences blanched in horror. Or recoiled in incomprehension.

Or so the story goes. Truth to tell, of course, the music of serialist and post-serialist Europe was actually much more interesting and uplifting than imagined. At its best, this music carried with it an astonishing vitality and freshness, a testament to the infinite possibility of the new itself, a message of hope in the end. And being confronted with the complex reality of this art was a spiritual and musical challenge; learning to navigate one’s ear through the mazes of beauty and strangeness it presented was a valuable workout for the soul.

But it was difficult – it was meant to be difficult. It was music that was written as the ruins of Europe lay smouldering across half a continent, ruins that were even more damaging to the spirit of Europe than to its externalities. It was music that dared to take on the challenge of Theodor Adorno, who had famously asked how it was possible to make art after Auschwitz. Well, the post-war musical generation said, it is possible to make art – but it will sound like this, because the world looks like this. Tonality, the symbol of the world that had just rotted away to nothingness, had, they felt, rotted away along with it.

That was long ago, very long ago, but the fear of this music, and consequently of all that was new in music, lingered for many years after. For decades, despite the dizzying variety of styles in which composers were creating all sorts of musical worlds, the curse of “new” music – new defined as difficult, dissonant, and avant-garde – hung over audiences like a stinking, sulphurous, cloud. Consequently, audiences failed to notice something that might have attracted their interest – that a battle to regain something of the power of tonality had broken out within the musical avant-garde, a war between the disintegrating, acidic, centrifugality of dissonance and the cohesive binding centripetal power of the tonal. It was an aesthetic battle that consumed decades. But now, I’m beginning to think, the war is coming to an end.

And tonality has won.

It’s not your grandfather’s or your great-grandfather’s tonality, though. It’s not the key-centred, forward-moving, goal-oriented music of the 19th and early 20th centuries. It’s music that has simply overcome the fear of creating consonance, that’s not afraid to bask in thirds and sixths and octaves again, that’s harmonious, even – if one might dare to say so – beautiful. And, most importantly, it’s music whose form is comprehensible, whose unfolding in time matches the perceptual equipment of normal music lovers.

Of course, music like this has been written by men now in their 80s for years, by Philip Glass and Steve Reich and Arvo Pärt. But I’m referencing a different group of musicians, a brand-new generation of composers, many American, all in their 30s – writers like Missy Mazzoli, and Nico Muhly, and especially, Caroline Shaw (who I think is the greatest of them all). Our own Ana Sokolović can join that group. Along with them are Europeans, a bit older, who have negotiated their own way clear to a personal and engaging style, blending tonality and atonality – composers like the English George Benjamin.
or the Austrian Georg Friedrich Haas (who can make the unfolding of a simple overtone sequence an experience of sheer terror).

What’s fascinating about these new tonal composers is that they are writing music once again that is accessible yet multi-layered, “easy” to listen to but challenging as well, music that has communication with an audience as its primary concern, not the manipulation of new compositional materials and techniques. They are composers who are not afraid of the tonal nature of their material, as familiar as it may be, but who succeed in speaking the old musical words with a new musical syntax. They are also not afraid to take on the anguish and brutality emerging at the heart of the world they have inherited, using music to comment and reflect on the world in which they and their audiences live. They are recovering for musical art the political, social and moral parameters it always previously had. They are, unbelievably, but effectively, returning music to the family of all the other arts.

It’s been so long since we approached a work of contemporary music with the same expectation of meaning and pleasure with which we routinely approach contemporary film, or visual and conceptual art, or the novel, that we’ve almost forgotten how to do so. To think that we can just simply understand a work of musical art, however new and novel it may be – be moved by it, have it speak significantly to us – is almost beyond belief. We had almost given up hope of music attracting a public and maintaining a high degree of artistic excellence at the same time. But that seems to be what’s happening with this new generation of composers. Something vital and valuable is emerging from the confusion and darkness of decades past.

Music has had its fallow periods before. The period between the dissolution of the Baroque and the emergence of the classical style in the early 18th century was similarly filled with failed experiments, wrong turns, a search for communicative power. And then we got Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. We may not achieve such musical transcendence this time around, but we’re heading in the right direction. And it’s dearly to be celebrated.

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.
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