COVER STORY
Mini-Festival
Raven Chacon

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Raven Chacon is a composer, performer and installation artist from Fort Defiance, Navajo Nation, here in Toronto for an April mini-festival co-presented by Arraymusic, the Music Gallery and Native Women in the Arts. The image behind his photo is a detail from his score for American Ledger (no.1), recently performed by the NOW Society Ensemble from Vancouver as part of an exhibition called SOUNDINGS at Agnes Etherington Art Centre at Queen’s University, Kingston, where a vinyl transfer graphic from the score also appears on the outside of Harrison Le-Caine Hall. SOUNDINGS is affiliated with The Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts’ concurrent Ka’tarohkwi Festival of Indigenous Arts.

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TaxiCabaret: hopeful hoax

Blame WholeNote colleague M.J. Buell and this month’s edition of We Are All Music’s Children (p. 68) for sending me skittering down memory lane here, rather than sticking to the present. It’s occasionally an excellent adventure to go dippin’ back into our archive, as Buell’s column admirably illustrates.

In my case I went scooting back through the online archive all the way to our very first April issue, hoping for some words of 24-year-old editorial wisdom I could riff on this time round. Only to find that the issue in question had no editorial in it, the Publisher’s Podium in question being taken up instead by two aggrieved letters to the editor: one by recording engineer Frank Lockwood; the other by the late Richard Truhlar (known to many for his work for the Canadian Music Centre’s Centrediscs). Both letters scolded a third reader (a certain Mr. Thomas Varese) for daring to suggest, in a previous letter, that “the performing of contemporary Canadian classical music is almost non-existent in Toronto compared to Montreal.” Truhlar pointed out that in fact he had “counted 28 concert performances in the March 1996 listings of Pulse [as WholeNote in its infancy was called] that included 20th-century and contemporary Canadian music.”

So, no joy there, but instead an unexpected little ripple of pleasure at the issue in question’s cover story, titled “TaxiCabaret: Hope or Hoax?” – one of the few unabashedly silly pieces of writing I can recall in these pages. Specially lovely to see is the members of the music community who bought into the hoax – that a group of Toronto singers were setting up a company called TaxiCabaret, a singing cab service. “Everyone knows these are tough times,” comments TaxiCabaret spokesperson Alan Gasser. “We figured if we took government’s advice and got real jobs, there’d be that much more to go around for artists with less portable gifts. I mean you can’t play a viola while you’re driving – at least not very well.”

I found myself laughing out loud happily five or six times reading the piece, just at the fun of it all, realizing, with a start as I did so, how little I’ve been able to do of that in the wake of the past week’s particular horror of people being slaughtered at prayer in two mosques in a city called Christchurch.

Looking through the listings in this issue, I am also struck by how much music there is that refers to itself as music for Holy Week. And I find myself remembering a marvellous homily given by organist/composer Paul Halley at least 12 or 15 years ago at a Sunday service at St. John’s Church in Elora during the Elora Festival. It was a talk filled with laughter and grace, the gist of it being how odd it is to encounter people who, caught in the act of attending a religious service, feel it necessary to explain that “they are only there for the music.” “But of course,” one might reply.

Halley ended by quoting the visionary/mystic, Kabir. The passage he quoted was this:

Have you heard the music that no fingers enter into?
Far inside the house
entangled music –
What is the sense of leaving your house?
Suppose you scrub your ethical skin until it shines,
but inside there is no music –
then what?

We take it for granted that our celebration of music is a peaceful act.
Back in November 2018, I wrote about a conversation I had with David Schotzko, Arraymusic’s new artistic director. One of the things he told me about at the time was his plan to continue Arraymusic’s community-based focus through co-productions as well as the presenting of mini-festivals that highlight the music of specific composers.

On the weekend of April 12 to 14, one such co-produced mini-festival will come to fruition, bringing together Arraymusic, the Music Gallery and Native Women in the Arts to present the music of Raven Chacon.

I had a chance to speak with Chacon about the music we’ll be hearing during the festival as well as acquaint myself with some of his other artistic projects and his thinking about music and composition. What I discovered was an intriguing body of work that was coming from a unique perspective: one that not so much pushed against established new music norms, but rather one that originated from a different place, a different mind.

Before we began our conversation, Chacon handed me a large-sized postcard with an image from Canyon de Chelly on the front, with recording grooves, playable on a turntable, imprinted upon the cardboard paper. It was a field recording he had made in 1999 from the Canyon de Chelly, located in the state of Arizona, east of the Grand Canyon – a visually stunning place close to the Navajo Nation home where he grew up. Later in our conversation he spoke about this recording: “It was made in a quiet place at a quiet time of day. In the studio, I turned the volume up to the max. It’s not about the pristine anthropological capturing or listening to this place. It’s about letting this place scream. Speak and scream,” he said.

Even though we were sitting in a Toronto café for our conversation, I felt the presence of this other space as we spoke about his chamber music compositions, noise-based pieces, score notations, installations, films and his various collaborations.

The mini-festival begins on April 12 with a concert of Chacon’s chamber music performed by the Array Ensemble. One piece on the program will be his solo cello work Quiver, commissioned by Michelle Kesler in 2018 and one of a three-part series of pieces connected to hunting. This hunting series began with his piece Taagó Deza [Three Points], three songs for singing cellist commissioned by Dawn Avery in 2007. During that piece, the performer sounds like an animal being chased while having to sing and play simultaneously. Invisible Arc for solo cello, written in 2017, is inspired by a traditional Navajo hunting song and reflects the process of waiting for the animal as a prayer for the life of the animal about to be killed. Quiver, Chacon explains, is about conflicting actions, much like what happens when one tries to rub one’s stomach in a circular motion while patting the head. During the hunt, the conflict comes in the trading of one life for another, the need to hunt and kill an animal so one can survive. One instance of this occurs musically when the cellist is asked to perform circular bowing in one direction while drumming with their fingers on the bow.

Other works on Friday night’s concert include Lats’ aadah, for solo violin (2004), a word which means the number 11 in Navajo; Naakishchiin Ana’i, for flute and marimba (2004) which includes a lot of silence during the piece; and a newly commissioned work titled (Bury Me) Where The Lightning [Will] Never Find Me for violin, cello, clarinet and percussion. In this piece, he is experimenting with zigzag forms within melodies, rhythmic patterns, timbral shapes and tempo accelerations; it is a continuation of a previous work, Atsiniltlishiye, from 2003.
The Saturday concert will feature four works that are part of Chacon’s ongoing project For Zitkála-Šá. Each piece in this series is written for a specific performer, and during the festival, we will hear the pieces he created for Cheryl L’Hirondelle, a Toronto-based singer of Cree descent; Suzanne Kite, a Lakota composer and performer currently based in Montreal; Laura Ortman, a White Mountain Apache violinist and improvisor from New York City; and Carmina Escobar, a Mestiza experimental vocalist and composer living in Los Angeles. Chacon originally wanted to write a large symphonic-like work about Zitkála-Šá whom he discovered while researching to find out who might have been the first recognized Native composer. Zitkála-Šá was a Dakota woman who was an activist and writer of fiction and non-fiction, including political op-eds and essays. Chacon told me. She was also a composer and violinist, co-composing The Sun Dance Opera in 1913 with William F. Hanson. It is hard to know precisely what her contributions were to the creative process, Chacon says, but he speculates that she played or sang melodies that Hanson transcribed. “The more I researched her life, the more I realized she was a polarizing and controversial figure, even today, with how she had to navigate herself as a Native woman in the early 20th century. I abandoned the idea of writing about her and instead decided to write a series of solo pieces using graphic scores for 13 contemporary Indigenous women composers.” Besides the four pieces we will hear on the April 13 concert, pieces for two other local composers – Barbara Croall and Ange Loft – are part of the ongoing project, as well as plans for a lecture series and a book. During the second half of Saturday’s concert, Chacon will perform with the trio c._RL (Allison Cameron, Nicole Rampersaud and Germaine Liu), whom I also wrote about back in November.

Sunday’s concert will begin with an opening set by Anishinaabe-Irish (Nipissing First Nation) saxophonist Olivia Shortt, followed by Chacon performing an electronic noise set. The main instrument he will use is a pair of hyper-directional speakers that will beam sound on audience members. The sounds being played back are field recordings he made at Standing Rock during the Dakota Access [oil] Pipeline protests.

Chacon’s ideas about music and composition are intriguing and inspiring. “I’m always trying to think of what I’m defining as music. For me it shifts. Sometimes there is a clear difference between music and sound art. Music is something that doesn’t ever need to be explained or spoken about, it’s already doing that. It doesn’t need to be justified. The more I think about music, the less I’m confident that it requires sound.” That seems contradictory, so I asked him to elaborate, and he spoke about time, positions in time and about how the events that arise in time are more important than the actual sound. He painted a picture of how a performance could be likened to the situation of he and I sitting in the café, engaging in actions along a timeline.

“We are syncing up,” he said, “because we are consciously connecting, or placing ourselves in the context of this space together. I think what’s interesting is how the events that you do and the events that I do might align or not align. Within such a situation, artifacts will arise – artifacts such as sound or moving image, a meditation or prayer or some other experience we don’t know how to define. When I say artifacts I mean the leftovers of the real-time experience which might not be the main guts of the thing.” Most of the chamber
works we will hear in the first concert on Friday night are pieces coming from this point of view, works “that are primarily written for the people who are playing them and nobody else. The audience just happens to be there,” he said. With the solo works, there is a feedback loop built into the piece. “In Quiver, for example, this happens a lot, with the performer interacting silently with the audience. Dynamics are written on the rests to show how the performer might interact, to indicate the intensity of the way they manage that feedback loop.”

In the course of our conversation, we also spoke about a work composed for the Kronos Quartet as part of their Fifty for the Future project (something Toronto audiences were introduced to in 2016 when Kronos performed during the 2tC Festival). In Chacon’s Kronos piece, The Journey of the Horizontal People (2016), he worked with the idea of a future creation story, “an alternate universe creation story” with people dispersing from a place to find other people like them in order to survive. “This could be related to the need to create diversity in philosophy, world view, or genetics,” he explained. “The music is written in such a way that the players will get lost, even the virtuosic players of Kronos. For example, at one point, the first violinist is asked to speed up, the cellist to slow down, the second violinist to stay at the original tempo, and the viola to speed up immensely.” Another aspect of the piece, he says, is that it stipulates that a woman must be in the quartet, as she is the one called upon to realign the other performers when they get lost. “And if no woman is in the quartet?” I asked. “Two options are possible: the eldest person in the quartet takes on that role, but more preferable would be for the man who most identifies as a woman. If more than one woman is in the quartet, the oldest one is chosen.” In this way, the matriarchal worldview found in many native traditions becomes an integral aspect of the piece, but as Chacon adds, “This should reflect everyone’s worldview.”

Another significant aspect of Chacon’s creative work has been his involvement in Postcommodity, a collective of Native American artists that began in 2007 and with whom he worked from 2009 to 2018. Much of Postcommodity’s work is installation-based with sound being one of the main mediums used. One of Chacon’s favourite pieces with the collective, he says, is the four-act opera The Ears Between Worlds Are Always Speaking, from 2017, a site-specific work using LRADs (Long Range Acoustic Devices) to project hyper-directional sound upon the ruins of Aristotle’s Lyceum in Greece. Each day, the installation performed music from Greece and the Southwestern United States, with a libretto both spoken and sung that told stories of long-walk migrations. Another collaboration is a performance art film created with Postcommodity member Cristobal Martinez that tells the story of two characters searching for the mythological cities of gold which the conquistadors believed were in New Mexico. The piece has been showing this past winter at the Agnes Etherington Art Centre in Kingston as part of an exhibition titled Soundings that explores the question of how a score can be a call, and tool, for decolonization.

Currently, Chacon is feeling the pull back to composing chamber music, finishing pieces already started or developing ideas he has been working on for a while. One major project due to be performed this November is Sweet Land, an opera with American composer Du Yun. They will be working with Yuval Sharon, the artistic director of The Industry, a company dedicated to new and experimental opera located in Los Angeles. The opera is an alternate history of the United States focusing on encounters such as ships arriving on a shore, railroads cutting through the country, and feasts or welcoming that turned out one way or the other. The opera will be telling of these encounters and contacts between Indigenous people and others to visit. Overall, the weekend of April 12 to 14 provides an excellent opportunity to hear a body of work that combines many refreshing ideas and creative strategies from someone relatively new to local audiences. I for one look forward to having a unique experience of engagement with the musical imaginings of Raven Chacon.

Raven Chacon: Mini-Festival takes place at 918 Bathurst Street, Friday to Sunday April 12 to 14.

Wendalyn Bartley is a Toronto-based composer and electro-vocal sound artist. sounddreaming@gmail.com.
It was a simple invitation on the surface but highly unusual and intriguing at the same time:

Violist Esme Allen-Creighton and pianist Anyssa Neumann invite you to an evening of music and poetry featuring works by Robert Schumann, Dmitri Shostakovich and Paul Hindemith. Poetry will reflect on each musical selection, applying a natural lens to ask “If this song were a forest, what would it be like?” Tickets are $10. All proceeds will go to the Nature Conservancy of Canada.

The concert will take place in the Heliconian Hall (under their generous sponsorship) on April 25, three days after Earth Day. A series of emails with Allen-Creighton illuminated the commitment behind the unique endeavour and shed light on the duo’s unique views:

“Both Anyssa and I have focused much of our careers on the intersection between music and other art forms. I’ve produced concerts combining music with poetry, theatre scripts, oral history recordings and original narrative. Anyssa, for her part, has taken a scholarly interest in music and film, and has presented this fall at TIFF on Ingmar Bergman’s use of classical music in film.”

When the UN’s IPCC report on climate change was released last year, Allen-Creighton says, they began envisioning a collaboration “that would integrate music and poetry to illuminate the perils facing our planet.” Forest Bathing was born as a result.

Allen-Creighton has written poems to introduce each of the seven movements they will perform. The poems, she explains, illustrate the dramatic content of the music which follows: each poem is conceived...
as a different “forest” – framing the emotional content of the music that follows.

Three movements of Schumann’s Marchenbilder (Fairy Tale Pictures) form the Romantic Forest, a forest of memory, of longing. “It verges on the unreal dreamscape. In the second piece [Schumann’s third movement], stormy, wild sections reflect the turbulence of nature and how it might react to pressure. The final movement explores the fragility of nature.”

The accompanying poem reads:
The forest shivers as I whistle through
Her lonesome chambers
Last grasp sticks harder
Sap and bark grit strong
Woodpecker heart
Throbbing faster

Shostakovich’s Viola Sonata, his final composition, inspires the Urban Forest, a dystopian possible future. “Here [Moderato] nature has been ravaged by industry and war. Ghosts and refugees roam bleak landscapes. The centre [Allegretto] satirizes the political system that allowed this catastrophe. A final piece [Adagio] forms a lament.”

Hindemith’s Viola Sonata, written in 1919, is, as Allen-Creighton describes it, “the Forest of Possibility, on the brink. It contrasts our most uplifting experiences in nature with grotesque deterioration. Emotionally it cycles through hope and fear, ultimately landing on resolve and generosity.” (The Hindemith is played with no break between its movements so there will only be one poem to introduce it.)

Raised in Sacramento and based in London UK, American pianist Anyssa Neumann has been praised for the “clarity, charm, and equipoise” of her performances, which span solo and collaborative repertoire from the Baroque to the 21st century. She has released two recordings, with a third scheduled for release in spring 2019. Her solo debut album of works by Bach, Beethoven, Messiaen and Prokofiev was featured on David Dubal’s radio program The Piano Matters.

Praised for her “unbridled lyricism, robust sound and free-flowing legato” violist Esme Allen-Creighton is passionately committed to reaching audiences through interdisciplinary productions. During her four years in Philadelphia with the Serafin Quartet she wrote numerous dramatic scripts interwoven with classical repertoire for series in non-traditional venues such as cafés, bars and comedy clubs. She has published and presented on how to engage audiences through these non-traditional means. Her doctoral thesis for the Université de Montréal explored the idea of interactive, non-traditional concert programming for string quartets.

How did the fledgling duo meet?

“Anyssa and I were introduced in 2014 by my partner at the time who had studied musicology with Anyssa at Oxford. We had both been accepted to the Prussia Cove music festival and thought it might be fun to perform together, however ended up attending at different times. We struck up a musical/philosophical pen-pal relationship though, admiring each other’s musical work, but also each other’s writing. I used some of Anyssa’s research in my history classes while teaching at the University of Delaware. Anyssa was especially moved by my writing on Schumann in a Schmopera article about giving up a precious instrument on loan to me through a quartet position. Most importantly, we connected through shared political beliefs, advocacy and protest around women’s rights, the environment, poverty and education. We’ve been in touch ever since, but not until this past fall did we manage to organize a concert together. This will be our first duo performance.”

And a world premiere to boot!

Esme Allen-Creighton (viola) and Anyssa Neumann (piano) perform Forest Bathing on April 25 at 7:30pm in Heliconian Hall. All proceeds to the Nature Conservancy of Canada.

Paul Ennis is the managing editor of The WholeNote.
Mozetich says that Fleck’s story is similar to those of scores of CBC Radio listeners he’s heard from. The so-called “driveway experience” is even mentioned in the CD’s liner notes.

Early in the film, Mozetich remarks, “The music I write has this kind of spatial quality to it: distance and landscape.” On his website, he also applies the term postmodern Romanticism to his style. These are characteristics that have helped to make his music immediately appealing, so much so that he has become the most frequently broadcast Canadian classical composer. But it had not always been the case.

Prior to 1980, Mozetich had been struggling to conform with the aggressively modernist approach embraced by his young composer colleagues. In fact, in 1978, the year I created the CBC FM Radio network contemporary music series, Two New Hours, I chose an emphatically modernist Mozetich work, his Disturbances for solo viola – a piece we had recorded for broadcast on Two New Hours – as one of the CBC Radio submissions to the International Rostrum of Composers (IRC) in Paris. The IRC is a contemporary music meet-up sponsored by public broadcasters from some 35 countries, and organized by the International Music Council. It has been running with the participation of public broadcasters since 1954. Mozetich’s dramatically dissonant Disturbances was broadcast in several counties as a result of its presentation by our CBC delegation in 1978. He might have used this opportunity to advance his reputation as one of the emerging new voices in advanced contemporary composition. But he didn’t.

At a crucial point in Fleck’s film, I recount how a work I commissioned in 1979 for CBC Radio supported Mozetich’s decision to change his artistic direction. On the heels of his presentation at the IRC, Mozetich and I began a series of frank discussions in which he questioned the modernist approach. He complained that he was fed up with musical modernism and declared his intention to do something about it. We offered him a commission for Two New Hours to prove his point. The work he created, a delightfully tonal and exuberant composition titled Dance of the Blind, did more than offer a new approach. It was, for Mozetich, a watershed composition that strikingly displayed his new Romantic, accessible style, redefining his artistic voice. Accordionist Joseph Petric was the featured soloist in the work. “He had a lot of courage to do that,” Petric remarks in the film, “because it wasn’t a very popular style. And yet he’s become, in time, the most performed composer in the country.”

Dance of the Blind was recorded and broadcast on Two New Hours in 1980. “After the national network broadcast,” Mozetich said, “there was no turning back.” It didn’t take long before many more commissions were offered. In 1981, the Canadian Electronic Ensemble (CEE), the live electronic music group I co-founded in 1971, commissioned him to compose a work called In the Garden. In the process of our working together on the composition with Mozetich, he shared some rather candid thoughts about his working process. He confessed that, as his bedtime reading material, he would bring the great Romantic orchestral scores. He read Dvořák, Mahler, Rachmaninoff and Tchaikovsky avidly. “You can learn a lot from those guys,” he remarked. He responded to our commission with a virtuosic display for electronic keyboards. The CEE members decided to digitally sequence the entire score, for both ease and accuracy of performance. The work became a core composition in the CEE’s repertoire, and was performed frequently on tour.

In 1984 the Music Gallery in Toronto invited Mozetich to prepare a retrospective concert of his music. It was a mixture of music from the early 1970s, and three works in his new postmodern Romantic style. We recorded the concert for broadcast on Two New Hours. Listeners to the broadcast were struck by the individuality of the music. It was another significant watershed moment, one that many people noticed. A 15-year-old Chris Paul Harman, a loyal Two New Hours listener even as a teenager, and now one of our leading Affairs of the Heart: Violin Concerto (1997)
contemporary composers, and a professor of composition at the Schulich School of Music at McGill University, listened and was impressed. Harman remembered the program: “The first sounds I heard consisted of abrasive scratch tones played by a string quintet; these eventually gave way to vigorously bowed passages outlining clustered pitch collections, in turn leading to a plaintive modal chant and finally, an austere dissonant chorale. When finished, the work was identified as Serenata del nostro tempo (1973) by Marjan Mozetich. There followed an interview in which Marjan explained how he had eschewed such sensibilities to embrace a lighter and more whimsical style in works such as Fantasia... sul un linguaggio perduto (1981). I was absolutely intrigued. How does one reinvent one’s self in such a manner? Is one such ‘self’ more authentic than another ‘self?”’

In the course of producing that concert recording and broadcast, I had mentioned to Mozetich that his quartet, Fantasia... sul un linguaggio perduto (…on a lost language), might work well in an adaptation for string orchestra. He subsequently did just that, and his string orchestra adaptation has become one of his most performed works. Not too many years later, in 1989, CBC Records accepted my proposal to make a CD of Mozetich’s music on their Musica Viva sub-label. The CD, titled Procession, included the Amadeus Ensemble, a string ensemble led by Moshe Hammer, joined by guest soloists Joseph Petric, accordion, and harpist Erica Goodman. The recording included several important pieces in Mozetich’s developing style, such as Dance of the Blind, the string orchestra version of Fantasia... sul un linguaggio perduto, and his 1981 work for harp and strings, El Dorado.

It was this latter work which revealed the special feeling that Mozetich had for the harp. As Mozetich told me: “It all started with El Dorado and my friendship with harpist Erica Goodman. It was with this work that it all gelled with me and the harp. Over the years Erica commissioned three other works with harp which have all been recorded. I think it is the unique resonance and visual allure of the harp that attracted me to it. Subsequently I wrote four quintessential harp pieces, Songs of Nymphs, that are performed by numerous harpists around the world. To date I’ve written seven works with significant harp parts.” One of those harp pieces, The Passion of Angels, actually includes two harps: Mozetich wrote the work in 1995 on a commission from CBC Radio Music, for the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra and harp soloists Nora Bumanis and Julia Shaw.

Mozetich moved to the Kingston, Ontario area in 1990, initially to find the solitude he needed to compose. The move was just what he needed, and many of his most successful scores come from the post-1990 period. In 1992, he wrote the imposed Canadian work for the Banff International String Quartet Composition, supported again by a commission from CBC Radio Music. The quartet, Lament in the Trampled Garden helped the St. Lawrence String Quartet win not only the Banff competition overall, but also the award for the best performance of the imposed work that year. In Fleck’s film, Barry Shiffman, one of the founding members of the St. Lawrence says: “After winning the competition we went on to share that piece that he wrote in concerts all over the world.”

All the repertoire on the CD, Affairs of the Heart, was composed during this period. Besides the violin concerto that gives the CD its title, there is the double harp concerto, The Passion of Angels, and a set of short pieces for string orchestra, Postcards from the Sky, composed in 1996. Vancouver producer Karen Wilson, who was managing the CBC Radio Orchestra at the time, had met Mozetich while serving on an arts council jury. They hit it off, became friends, and when that fateful broadcast of Affairs of the Heart created scores of “driveway experiences” and CBC switchboards lit up all over the country, she knew she would have to quickly get a proposal together for the CBC Records selection committee. The recording with the radio orchestra under Mario Bernardi, and soloists Juliette Kang, Nora Burmanis and Julia Shaw, went flawlessly, and by the summer of 2000, the CDs were being scooped up by the truckload by thousands of consumers who couldn’t get enough Mozetich into their listening lives. Randy Barnard, who was the managing director of CBC Records at the time, said: “A Canadian composition outpacing core repertoire was a rarity, never mind becoming a bestseller in the catalogue.” The original CBC Records CD has been out of stock for years, but it’s now available as Centrediscs catalogue number CD-CMCCD 21815. For ordering information, see: cmccanada.org/shop/CD-CMCCD-21815.

Mozetich has made an impact in the Kingston community since settling there almost 20 years ago. In the film, Glen Fast, the conductor emeritus of the Kingston Symphony notes: “I think Kingston knows they’re lucky to have him here, in this position as a composer, as a real music maker, as a substantial composer with his own voice.” Mozetich also taught as an adjunct professor of composition at Queens University most of those years. He retired from that position last June. John Burge, who, along with his teaching at Queens, is also in charge of the Queen’s Faculty Artists Series, commented in the film: “I know that if I can find a way to integrate Mozetich’s music into the concerts that we put on in Kingston it’ll make everyone happy. And I can tell you, that if we present a concert that has Marjan’s music programmed, there will be people that will come because they just want to hear Marjan’s music. They just want to see him walk up onstage and talk about his music.”

As for hearing live performances of Mozetich’s music this month, the Niagara Symphony Orchestra and music director Bradley Thachuck will perform his Postcards from the Sky on Saturday, April 27 at 7:30pm and Sunday, April 28 at 2:30pm in the recital hall in the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre in St. Catharines.

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

He had a lot of courage to do that,” accordionist Joseph Petric remarks in the film, “because it wasn’t a very popular style. And yet he’s become, in time, the most performed composer in the country.”
Marina Piccinini
SUN., APR. 7, 1PM
MAZZOLENI CONCERT HALL
Free (ticket required)
Flutist Marina Piccinini, hailed by Gramophone as “the Heifetz of the flute,” is joined by pianist Benjamin Smith in this performance of works by Aaron Copland, Bach, Strauss, Aaron Jay Kernis, and Elliott Carter. Generously supported by Dorothy Cohen Shoichet

Richard Goode
SUN., APR. 7, 3PM
KOERNER HALL,
Tickets start at only $50
“It is virtually impossible to walk away from one of Mr. Goode’s recitals without the sense of having gained some new insight, subtle or otherwise, into the works he played or about pianism itself.” (The New York Times) Goode will perform an all Ludwig van Beethoven program. Presented in memory of Robert Calvin

Rebanks Family Fellowship Concert
WED., APR. 10, 7:30PM / MAZZOLENI CONCERT HALL
Free tickets for this concert will be available starting Wed. Apr. 3
Hear artists on the cusp of major careers. This concert features solo and chamber works performed by Rebanks Fellows currently enrolled in the one-year Rebanks Family Fellowship and International Performance Residency Program at The Glenn Gould School. Presented with the generous support of the Rebanks Family and THE W. GARFIELD WESTON FOUNDATION

Academy Chamber Orchestra
SUN., APR. 28, 7PM
KOERNER HALL
Free tickets for this concert will be available starting Mon. Apr. 22, 2019
String students from The Phil and Eli Taylor Performance Academy for Young Artists come together as the Academy Chamber Orchestra to perform this special concert.

Luca Pisaroni and Thomas Hampson: No Tenors Allowed
TUES., APR. 30, 8PM
PRE-CONCERT TALK 7PM
KOERNER HALL
Tickets start at only $55
Italian bass-baritone Luca Pisaroni returns to Koerner Hall, this time with his father-in-law, famed American baritone Thomas Hampson, for a light and fun evening of operatic arias and Broadway songs. Presented in memory of Gary Miles

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Every year for almost two decades, the surest sign of spring at The WholeNote has been the steady stream of canaries, with early birds starting to arrive at our office just before March break, to latecomers, just under the wire, straggling in just before our mid-April deadline for the May issue. (Somewhere between 140 and 150 of them by the time it’s done.)

These “canaries,” as faithful WholeNote readers know, are not the avian kind, but rather the individual short profiles (120 words or so) submitted by Ontario choirs for inclusion in our annual Canary Pages—the name we give to our annual directory of Ontario choirs.

The directory, now in its 18th year, always appears in print in our May magazine and remains online as a resource, year round, on our website. It’s an extraordinarily eclectic read, because any choir active in our region can join, amateur or professional or a mix of both, auditioned or not, geared to the social or spiritual pleasures of regular meeting to sing, or to the focused pursuit of excellence in public performance. Its main purpose is to talk about the opportunities for singing that exist in our region, at all ages and levels of skill.

For me this directory affirms the way music making contributes to a sense of community and how it affirms the human need (stronger than all the digital isolationism society tempts us with), to come together for the purpose of participating in the making and sharing of live music.

Every spring, without fail, the canaries flock to The WholeNote, and every spring, without fail, as the canaries arrive, someone on our team (usually me) says “One of these years we should try to do the same thing for orchestras, because orchestras fulfil the same role as choirs do.”

And every spring, because by then it’s too late to get organized to do it properly, we say “Yes we should, so maybe next year.”

This year, at that moment, I decide instead to reach out to Katherine Carleton, executive director of Orchestras Canada. The last time we talked must have been even longer ago than I thought, because at that time their offices were on College Street, just west of Bathurst, ten minutes’ walk from The WholeNote office. This time, by contrast, we find ourselves chatting by phone, two area codes apart: Orchestras Canada, she tells me, relocated its headquarters to Peterborough in 2014.

“Was the 2014 move from downtown Toronto to Peterborough a case of Orchestras Canada following you there, or you following it?” I ask. “It followed me,” she says. “One of those cases of family members reaching a time of life where they needed one of us closer to home.”

Carleton, who has been executive director of Orchestras Canada since 2005, grew up in Peterborough, and made her way to Orchestras Canada via, among other things, a stint as a granting officer in the music section of the Ontario Arts Council in the early 1990s, “a time when there was adequate funding and a strong feeling that the health of orchestras was vital to healthy cultural life. Large or small, they were all of interest to us,” she says.

“So, has the change in location from College and Bathurst to Peterborough also changed your perception of the role of the organization?” I ask. “I mean, is it possible for a national arts service organization to thrive outside of the 18 blocks of downtown Toronto that we all know the world pivots around?” (Her laugh, in response, has at least a couple of my co-workers turning their heads, wondering what I could have said, on the topic of arts service organizations, funny enough to elicit that response.)

“No, and for a couple of reasons,” she says. “First is that the organization, and this includes my predecessors, as well as in my time here, has always thought nationally, which means being equally available to all our members. OC has 130 member orchestras, none in the territories, but member orchestras in every Canadian province. These days we should be able to operate from anywhere where there’s high-speed internet. Is my life as a concertgoer more challenging now, from a mindset of ‘gosh it’s easy to get to Roy Thomson Hall or Jeanne Lamon, or Koerner because it’s on my way home’? Sure. But
in terms of OC as an organization, no. As I said, the focus has always been on orchestras nationally, reinforced by a board of directors that is recruited from across the country. Especially for all the conversations we’re engaging in these days, everything we do is carefully curated so we have representation from orchestras of all sizes and types, and from all parts of the country.”

Of Orchestras Canada’s current 130 members, 65 are in Ontario, with 39 of those being outside of the GTA. And of those 39, two, the Peterborough Symphony and the Kawartha Youth Orchestra, are right in Carleton’s back yard. “Does being up close and personal with their particular challenges as small-town orchestras put a different slant on things?” I ask.

“No, and I’ll tell you why,” she says. “But before I do, I need to out myself, as a performing member of the Peterborough Symphony (clarinet and bass clarinet). ‘When asked to serve, I do so.’ That kind of thing. And I also teach a number of the members of both the Kawartha Youth Orchestra and their Junior Youth Orchestra, privately. So my sense of them is definitely up close and personal. But as for how being here impacts on my slant on things, it really truly doesn’t. As I mentioned, my insights and attitudes go right back to my Arts Council days, at a time when there was a strong feeling that orchestras were vital to community health right across the province, whether small budget or major institutions. And Orchestras Canada has always cared and understood the same thing. These are things I have pursued right through my own life, so it’s hard to separate where the organization stands from where I do in regard to them – whether the organization is responding to me as executive director or where it’s simply that in taking this job I found exactly the right work for me. The Venn diagram in this case is truly a circle.”

“I did some digging into your website before calling you,” I say, “and a couple of things really jumped out at me. One was the information on the site the upcoming OC conference in Ottawa, June 12 to 14, which I’d like to come back to, because the title of the conference dovetails with my main reason for getting in touch. The other is the changes I noticed to the way the member orchestra directory on the OC site is organized.”

The directory in question has gone through some really interesting changes since I last looked at it as carefully as I did while preparing for this interview. It’s deceptively simple: a five-column spreadsheet: name of member; province; membership type; annual revenues; and, last, a column headed simply “Go to Website.”

“I remember, back in the day, that the column called ‘annual revenues’ used to be something way more complex” I say. “As I recall, you used to classify orchestras by type – regional, community, large, middle-sized, small – things like that. And I remember trying to persuade you that you should partner with us on a directory something like the ones we do, where the members submit short profiles about who they are and what they do.”

“Yes” she says, “I remember that, and thinking long and hard about it. But we went a different direction, putting the onus on members...
to keep their own information up to date on their websites.” As for the change from describing orchestras as ‘community’ or ‘regional’ to grouping them by annual revenues, she explains, the beginning of that shift goes back to project funding they got from the Ontario Arts Council. (“I’m not going to even try to put a year on it,” she says.) The money was given, in the terminology of the day, to study “the situation, interests and needs of smaller budget orchestras” in Ontario. “We started out, perhaps naively in retrospect, calling them community orchestras, and put together a research plan that involved travelling around to five or six parts of the province – and having regional meetings with folks from these orchestras.”

It was an extraordinarily rich series of conversations, she says: What became abundantly clear was that there were more differences among orchestras with “small budgets” (revenues from $0 to $600,000 a year), than there were among orchestras with “large budgets” (revenues from $650,000 to $33 million). “There was every shade of music making in that $0 to $600,000 range” she says, “from orchestras where only the conductor gets an honorarium through to fully professional ensembles with very short seasons, but all fitting within that so-called ‘small budget’ space we had preemptively defined as ‘community orchestras.’”

It became clear, from this exercise, that trying to define the concept of a “community orchestra” based on budget ran the risk of making the designation so amorphous as not to be useful, or else trying to refine it further, to those groups with very little professional participation, with the danger that “community orchestra” would become almost a pejorative term – “taken as symptomatic of volunteer bumbling rather than ‘we are darned proud of being called that’.”

The new way of designating orchestras in the directory, purely by annual revenue, removes a layer of artistic value judgment from the equation.

Viewed in this light, the Orchestras Canada member directory in its current form becomes a much more nuanced resource, amenable to searching and sorting in all kinds of ways; and with orchestras rising to the challenge of keeping their own websites up to date, (something that, from my perusal of the 65 Ontario orchestras in the directory, the vast majority are managing to do) it makes for fascinating reading.

Removal of “community orchestra” as a loaded label from the Orchestras Canada member directory is an improvement there, but the word “community” itself remains fundamental to what Orchestras Canada is about. The word may have ceased to be useful in describing what orchestras are, but that creates, if anything, an even greater responsibility for OC and the constituency it serves to dig even more deeply into what the term “community” is useful for in talking about.

Removal of “community orchestra” as a loaded label from the Orchestras Canada member directory is an improvement there, but the word “community” itself remains fundamental to what Orchestras Canada is about.
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This Harp Can Sing, and Does!

LYDIA PEROVIĆ

A harp can sing; this we’ve learned from Judy Loman and her extraordinary career. The now-retired principal harp with the TSO has several harp-centric world premieres to her name by the composers like R. Murray Schafer, Kelly-Marie Murphy, Glenn Buhr and John Weinzweig, and has often accompanied voice in art song recital, notably on records with Lois Marshall in Folk Songs from the British Isles, Eleanor James in Schafer’s Tanzlied and Monica Whicher in Lullabies and Carols for Christmas. On April 14, she will be reuniting with Whicher in song and trying something entirely different: a selection of Mahler and Strauss arranged by Loman for the harp.

There’s going to be much else on the program, ranging from the Elizabethan era to Britten and spanning multiple countries, but the Mahler and Strauss songs re-tailored for the harp are the most exciting challenge, explains the 82-year-old harp virtuoso when I meet her at her midtown west-end home. I take a peek at the program that they are preparing, and much of the Strauss set is one lavish melancholy hit after another. The languid, soft “Ruhe, meine Seele” (Rest, My Soul) opens the set, followed by the bright melancholy of “Allerseelen” (All Souls’ Day) and sombre “Morgen!” (Tomorrow).

Then, a change of mood for the finale. The playful “Heimliche Aufforderung” (The Lover’s Pledge) and the altogether brighter and vast “Zueignung” (Devotion) complete the Strauss set.

The upbeat “Frühlingsmorgen” (Spring Morning) with its fluttery ornaments opens the Mahler set, which proceeds to the deceptively simple and short, but devastating in effect, “Phantasie” and finishes with the highly dramatic song of farewell “Nicht wiederschen!” from the cycle Des Knaben Wunderhorn.

That, in addition to the Ravel and Britten sets, three Italian songs from the Baroque and classical periods, and the Elizabethan-era sequence that includes the gloriously melismatic “Chloris Sigh’d” and a song attributed to Anne Boleyn. The harp will also sing on its own in a nocturne by Marcel Tournier (d. 1951).
The couple raised three daughters and a son and remained together until Umbrico’s death in 2007. Both Loman and Umbrico frequently played pieces by living Canadian composers, and over the decades Loman built up a remarkable recorded legacy in harp repertoire with the emphasis on the 20th century. The first harp concerto written specifically for her was the 1957 Concerto for Harp and Chamber Orchestra by John Weinzweig, a piece which she now describes as “perhaps a little dry.” (Readers of CanLit and chroniclers of Canadian literary modernism will have noticed the recent and well-deserved surge of interest in the novels of Helen Weinzweig, the composer’s wife, due in large part to the NYRB Classics reissue of Basic Black with Pearls in 2018.) Loman’s encounter with Murray Schafer was more fortuitous. She approached him after the TSO performed a piece by Schafer inside U of T’s Convocation Hall and suggested he consider creating something for the harp. “I mentioned to him that I’ve been talking with Toru Takemitsu about a possible harp piece for which the harpist would wear bracelets with bells, and I think this was what fired up his imagination,” remembers Loman. Soon after, Schafer dropped by her house with the score for The Crown of Ariadne, the now legendary six-movement segment of Schafer’s opera cycle Patria, which he set for the harp with an assortment of percussive instruments and prepared tape. Loman premiered it, recorded it, won a JUNO for it and most recently awed in it in an all-Schafer Soundstream production appropriately called Odditorium. In the darkened Crow’s Theatre, Loman alone on stage performed Ariadne Awakens and the dances. When I tell her that her performance created a religious experience for this atheist, she laughs and offers a more-down-to-earth comment: “It’s a very difficult piece, and I sometimes make the odd mistake, but I was so well prepared for that, I don’t think I made any during that run.”

Following Ariadne, Schafer went on to compose six other works for the harp, all of which were finally gathered on the same disc in 2016, Ariadne’s Legacy. Loman plays in five of the seven in addition to The Crown of Ariadne (1979), the 1986 Theseus for harp and string quartet, the 1987 Harp Concerto with the TSO under Andrew Davis, the 1997 Wild Bird with Jacques Israelievitch on violin and the 2004 Tänzlied with Schafer’s wife, mezzo Eleanor James.

Even with such a career behind her, the national treasure that is Judy Loman is not anywhere near the end of her bucket list. Her hearing is not 100 percent today but when did a little reduced hearing ever prevent great musicians from doing anything? “I’m 82 and not sure how long I’ll be able to play, so I’m busy getting into pieces that I haven’t yet done and really want to do,” she says.

More religious experiences brought to us by Loman at the harp to look forward to then.

**ART OF SONG QUICK PICKS**

- APR 5 AND 6, 8PM: Confluence Concerts presents an all-Purcell program at Heliconian Hall, “Tis Nature’s Voice: Henry Purcell Reimagined.” Larry Beckwith, Anna Atkinson, Andrew Downing, Patricia O’Callaghan, Drew Jurecka and Suba Sankaran, among others, $20-$30, with the pre-concert chat on each night starting at 7:15pm.

- APR 14, 3PM: The new edition of the Off-Centre Music Salon (which takes place not at all in a salon but at Trinity-St Paul’s Centre on Bloor West) presents “To the Letter: An Epistolary Celebration,” a showcase of composers who have been known for their prolific and skillful letter writing. Soprano Allison Angelo, mezzo Andrea Ludwig, tenor Ernesto Ramirez, baritone Giles Tomkins and Kathryn Tremills at the piano appear in a program of Chopin, Brahms, Debussy and Mozart. Tickets not cheap at $40-$50, though there are deep discounts for young adults.

- MAY 1, 6:30PM: Tongue in Cheek Productions’ latest is titled “Democracy in Action” and I’m told will involve “integrated online polls available to the audience throughout the concert”. My guess is as good as yours. Pianist Trevor Chartrand will accompany a cappella quartet: mezzos Kristina Szabó and Julie Nerrallah; sopranos Natalya Gennadi and Teiya Kasahara; tenors Asitha Tennekoon and Romulo Delgado; baritones Alexander Hajek and Stephen Hegedus. Lula Lounge, $35 ($25 arts workers); seating is a mix of dinner tables and theatre seating.

- Finally some folk and pop content in the picks this month. Gordon Lightfoot is touring Ontario in April, including, among others, Richmond Hill (APR 3), Barrie (APR 8), St Catharines (APR 11 AND 12) and Mississauga (APR 15 AND 16). Ticket prices vary.

**Art of Time Ensemble**

**Doghouse Roses - The Words & Music of STEVE EARLE**

Andrew Burashko’s inventive and dazzling arrangements combine Toronto’s most accomplished and vibrant chamber orchestra with a variety of the country’s best singer-songwriters: Tom Wilson (Junkhouse. Blackie and the Rodeo Kings), Andy Maize (Skydiggers), Susie Ungerleder (Oh Susanna), and Gregory Hoskins help honour the prolific music and storytelling of the one and only, Steve Earle.

- And on APR 27, 7:30PM: Music at Metropolitan presents L’Aigle noir: The Music of Barbara,” the songs of the late French singer-songwriter in a cabaret-style tribute by Charles Davidson (singer-actor) and Jesse Corrigan (accordion). Metropolitan United Church, 56 Queen St. E. $20.

Lydia Perović is an arts journalist in Toronto. Send her your art-of-song news to artofsong@thewholenote.com.
Mahler’s Resurrection
Bursting the Bounds Of Symphonic Form

PAUL ENNIS

In the summer of 2016 I was given a package of Mahler DVDs produced and directed by Jason Starr, a prolific maker of dozens of video and films, from classical music and modern dance performances to documentary profiles of artists and cultural issues. He began his Mahler odyssey in 2003 with a splendid deconstruction of what Mahler himself called “a musical poem that travels through all the stages of evolution.” I wrote about What the Universe Tells Me: Unravelling the Mysteries of Mahler’s Third Symphony – Starr’s impressive 60-minute film – in the September 2016 issue of WholeNote in conjunction with the TSO’s performance of the symphony then.

Having noticed the TSO’s upcoming performance of Mahler’s Symphony No.2 “Resurrection” on April 17, 18 and 20, I decided to take another look at Of Love, Death and Beyond, Starr’s 2011 exploration of that monumental work. The combination of an all-star orchestra and chorus conducted by Neeme Järvi, with narration by Thomas Hampson and talking Mahlerian heads led by Henry-Louis de La Grange, produced a rich tapestry of insight and background, some of which I thought I would share to illuminate what has become a cornerstone of the symphonic repertoire.

When Mahler began working on his second symphony in 1888, he was “a 27-year-old itinerant conductor and virtually unknown as a composer.” By the time of its premiere in December 1895, Mahler’s conducting star was burning brightly, although the negative reception of his first symphony still lingered. Mahler believed that there must be something cosmic about a symphony; it should be as inexhaustible as the world. With the “Resurrection” Symphony, he burst the confines of symphonic form with a massive instrumental and choral cohort that outdid Beethoven. Haunted by death throughout his life – he lost several family members...
to early death – the symphony was a means to explore his own ideas of death and the purpose of life. (Early on in the symphony, Mahler picks up the hero’s theme from his Symphony No.1 and shockingly kills that hero right away, burying him with funeral-march references and Dies Irae allusions. Waves of struggle alternate with periods of serenity – the role of love always a factor for Mahler.)

After this 1888 start on the symphony, five years passed before Mahler returned to work on it. But during those years his conducting experience had grown, and a key relationship blossomed with the eminent conductor Hans von Bülow after Mahler’s appointment to the Hamburg State Opera. He settled on the edge of an Austrian lake in 1893 and finished the second, third and fourth movements. (It would, however, take von Bülow’s memorial service in 1894 to unleash Mahler’s creativity and act as a catalyst to compose the choral movement that would complete the work.)

The Andante Moderato second movement is mysterious and threatening in tone, but not without considerable charm, as happiness alternates with melancholy memory. The spooky and sardonic third movement is a parody of the Biblical fish sermon with a mocking tone that leads into music riven by despair. The basis of the fourth movement (Primal Light) is a child-like woman’s voice (sung by a mezzo-soprano) with text from one of Mahler’s favourite literary sources, the poems of Des Knaben Wunderhorn. There is compassion and simplicity in the voice of the child who is driven by a desire to enter heaven and be reborn into eternal blessed life.

The fifth and final movement opens with a reference to the third movement before we are treated to a series of tableaux that expand the bounds of the concert hall with two off-stage bands and otherworldly horns. The notes of the Dies Irae musical reference of the first movement is reversed, a sign that personal rebirth is on its way. A visceral percussion build followed by a march made up of popular music announces the struggle between the Dies Irae and resurrection motifs which morph into an apocalyptic tension. Then, after barely audible offstage brass, mass hysteria leads into celestial calm and an omnipotent feeling of love takes over. The chorus enters (everyone partakes of the resurrection) in one of the most sublime moments in all of music. Mahler’s own text leaves out much of the original religious content, replacing it with spirituality. Ultimately, a new life is unleashed. There had never been a symphonic movement of such scope and dramatic impact. It still generates a genuinely palpable feel-good climax.

Mahler’s Massive Cohort
To illustrate the instrumental scope in personnel alone, this is what Mahler called for: four flutes (all doubling piccolo), four oboes (two doubling English horn), four clarinets (one doubling bass clarinet and another doubling E-flat clarinet) plus E-flat clarinet, four bassoons (two doubling contrabassoon), ten horns, ten trumpets, four trombones, tuba, timpani (two players), cymbals, triangle, military drum,
Students Rule
As spring blossoms fill our senses, it’s time to partake in the fruits of another year’s worth of musical training. Nine Sparrows Arts Foundation presents “Rising Stars” of the U of T Faculty of Music on April 2 and of the Glenn Gould School on April 30 and May 7. Admission is free for these 12:10pm recitals at Yorkminster Park Baptist Church in midtown Toronto. The Royal Conservatory presents the Glenn Gould School Chamber Music Competition Finals in Koerner Hall at 7pm on April 3. Tickets are required (but free) and can be reserved a week in advance. At noon on April 9, the COC presents “Rachmaninoff—Go-Round,” a free concert featuring GGS piano students playing selections from Six Moments musicaux, Op. 16 in the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre of the Four Seasons Centre. In the same location, on April 10 at noon, the COC presents a free concert featuring the winner of the GGS Chamber Music Competition. On the same day at 7:30pm in Mazzoleni Hall, RCM presents the final Rebanks Family Fellowship concert of the season (free; ticket required). The future is ours to see.

CLASSICAL AND BEYOND QUICK PICKS
▶ APR 7, 2PM: The Gallery Players of Niagara present the Gryphon Trio at 25 years young! Fresh from winning their latest JUNO, the venerable trio’s program includes works by Haydn, Brahms and Wijeratne. FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, St. Catharines.
▶ APR 7, 3PM: RCM presents the justly celebrated American pianist Richard Goode in an all-Beethoven recital topped off by the master’s final sonata, the celestial Op. 110. Goode will also give two masterclasses in Mazzoleni Hall, to which the public is welcome, on April 5 at 2pm and April 6 at 2:30pm.
▶ APR 7, 7:30PM: Gallery 245 presents pianist/scholar/author Jarred Dunn in a recital comprised of a selection of Chopin pieces along with Beethoven’s penultimate sonata, Op. 110. Featured on the 2018 CBC Top 30 Under 30 list, Dunn has been highly praised by piano stalwarts Seymour Bernstein and David Dubal.
▶ APR 14, 2PM: Chamber Music Hamilton presents the luminous Calidore String Quartet in a superbly constructed program of Haydn’s String Quartet in F Major Op. 17, No. 2, Beethoven’s String Quartet Op. 137 and two pieces by Pulitzer Prize-winner Caroline Shaw (whose Taxidermy was one of the revelations of the recent 21C Music Festival performance by Sō Percussion).
▶ APR 14, 3:15PM: Mooredale Concerts presents the New Orford String Quartet whose impeccable musicianship will be on display in an all-Beethoven program featuring a quartet from each of the composer’s early (Op. 18, No. 4), middle (Op. 74) and late (Op. 130) periods.
▶ APR 18, 8PM: Music Toronto presents the Ariel Quartet (winner of the prestigious Cleveland Quartet Award in 2014) in a program they call “Neue Bahnen (New Paths).” The title comes from Schumann’s famous article from 1855 heralding a new era with the arrival of the then-unknown Brahms. The program highlights the special relationship Schumann and Brahms shared, and looks back to Beethoven and forward to Webern.

Sonata for Unaccompanied Cello, D Bowser
Concerto for Two Violins in D minor BWV 1043, J S Bach
Jonathan Crow, concertmaster, Toronto Symphony Orchestra
Andrew Won, 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

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APR. 1-16, 2019

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Paul Ennis is the managing editor of The WholeNote.
The boundaries of music theatre in Toronto continue to be stretched in all directions from Opera Atelier’s The Angel Speaks, the brilliant “modern meets Baroque” extrapolation by composer Edwin Huizinga, choreographer Tyler Gledhill, and director Marshall Pynkoski, from Purcell’s The Blessed Exposition of the Virgin Mary, to the changing nature of what we know as the traditional stage musical into the most effective platform for exploring and dealing with some of society’s darker and more difficult issues in such shows as Parade, Next to Normal, and Dear Evan Hansen. While the latter two have not yet opened as I write, Toronto Musical Concerts just presented a two-day run of a semi-staged concert reading of Jason Robert Brown’s Parade. Based on real events – false accusation, mistrial, and eventual lynching of Jewish factory manager Leo Frank in 1913 Georgia – this is dark material. Despite this, or perhaps because of it, the theatre was packed for a strong rendition of this powerful work anchored by outstanding, magnetic performances from Eric Craig and Ma-Anne Dionisio as Leo and Lucille Frank. The content is so relevant to the evils faced by contemporary society, and the audience attention was so rapt, that I wouldn’t be surprised to hear of a full production happening somewhere soon.

Another direction of the current redefining of music theatre being explored by an increasing number of companies is the move from purely text-based shows to plays where music is not only an important but an integral element of powerful theatrical storytelling. This is resulting in some fascinating and unique hybrids.

Toronto’s Factory Theatre is hosting, in the latter part of its season, two productions from other Canadian companies that are experimenting in this way: Bears and Angélique. When I asked Factory’s artistic director, Nina Lee Aquino, about the choosing of these two multidisciplinary shows, particularly if their incorporation of music as an integral element of storytelling was instrumental in her choice, she said:

“Not directly on purpose, but ... how the Canadian experience is presented on our stages is just as important as the who and the why. All the productions in our past seasons have had amazing, different, and unique containers of telling the Canadian story. It is necessary to be able to look at something in different ways, from different lenses and perspectives. It reminds us (and our audiences) to keep witnessing and listening to stories in prismatic ways. That’s one of the more meaningful ways to learn from one another and become better human beings to each other.”

Bears (an Alberta Aboriginal Performing Arts and Punctuate! Theatre co-production) which just finished its run on March 17, is unique in that it began with playwright Matthew Mackenzie exploring his newly discovered Indigenous heritage and wanting there to be a movement vocabulary along with his words to create the specific world and language of the play. From the beginning he worked with choreographer Monica Dottor as his co-creator to invent the show’s physical language, then brought on board composer and sound designer Noor Dean Musani to develop a musical vocabulary to meld the two together. The result is an amazingly effective myth-turned-music theatre experience. With humour as an important element, the words, music and movement align to immerse us in a mythic yet completely modern wake-up call to recognize our ties to the earth and the need to save it from the inroads of industry and climate change.

Next in the season, Factory partners with Obsidian Theatre to present the Toronto premiere of Lorena Gale’s award-winning musical play Angélique in a new production from Montreal’s Black Theatre Workshop and Tableau D’Hôte Theatre that incorporates a live musical score throughout. Like Parade, Angélique is based on real events and another case of false accusations and miscarriage of justice. The location this time, though, is Montreal in 1734, where an enslaved Black woman, Marie Joseph Angélique, was accused and convicted of setting fire to the city although there was very little evidence against her.

I asked director Mike Payette why he feels this play written in 1998 is an important one to share with audiences now. He responded passionately about its contemporary relevance:

“Angélique is an urgent play that speaks to the immediate and historical systemic nature of oppression and racism within our country, but more importantly, as this is not a history lesson on slavery, it is about the life of a woman who is forced into an environment of abuse and servitude, unrelenting in her condemnation of slavery, and ultimately tortured and killed for something we will never know she did. This is a play that looks at the visceral qualities of us as human beings; the monsters that we have inside all of us and the questioning of whether we act on these monstrous thoughts. Angélique says at one point: ‘And though I am wretched, I am not wicked.’ I find this to be a compelling distinction of the human experience. In the pursuit of dialogue and understanding, Lorena Gale urges us to find the inherent and universal qualities of both the oppressed and the privileged; all this through a highly theatrical and contemporary experience.”

Music is central to the language of the play and particularly this production. As the director explains:

“I wouldn’t call Angélique a musical theatre play, but it is indeed, musical. The score, composed by award-winning Sixtrum Percussion Ensemble, has myriad influences, from Afrocentric to European to popular, seamlessly heightening tension and giving breath when we need it most. The drum is central to this play, it is one of the last words spoken, and it becomes the instrument that is universal because it represents not only the rage of fire, but the swelling of a heart beat.

The score is unique to this production. From my understanding,
You may laugh, cry, cheer, or thumb your nose, but nothing is too gauche for this season’s grand finale! Join The Toronto Consort and Montreal’s master commedia dell’arte director, actor, and dancer, Marie-Nathalie Lacoursière, for an irreverent evening of madrigal comedy. Featuring works by 16th-century composers Orazio Vecchi and Adriano Banchieri, and a colourful array of singers, players, dancers, and actors, nothing is off-topic, and no one is safe during this old-school musical roast!

Generously Supported by Vivian E. Pilar

Sixtrum Percussion Ensemble

although the script calls for dance and musicality, this is the first time the play has offered the music to be a character in and of itself. The musicians are ultimately always present, we allow ourselves to be swept by how they complement the action of the play, and ultimately it is but one of the elements of the production that makes it an exceptionally alive and aural experience.”

Under the Stairs at YPT

This fascinating concept of the music becoming “a character in and of itself” or having a very specific role, coincidentally is also true of the world premiere this month at Young People’s Theatre (YPT) of acclaimed British playwright Kevin Dyer’s Under the Stairs.

Innovative, poignant, and funny, the play tells the story of Timmy, a boy who tries to escape the throwing of plates and noise of his parents arguing by going into the cupboard under the stairs only to find that there are other children there, too. When Timmy’s parents disappear, he enlists the help of the other children to find them. Together they uncover surprising secrets that could repair the turmoil in Tim’s house. In the words of the playwright, “This is a story that is sung; a contemporary mash-up of free verse, prose and delicious music.”

YPT’s artistic director Allen MacInnis explained the unique roles of music and spoken text that the playwright imagined:

“YPT has produced two other new works by Kevin Dyer (The Monster Under the Bed and Minotaur). When he proposed this play, one of its many intriguing features was his idea that the turmoil in Timmy’s home should be expressed entirely in singing while the quiet of the cupboard under the stairs to which Timmy retreats should be expressed in talking, no music. When we asked if he planned to write the music, Kevin said ‘heavens no … but I think I know what it sounds like.’ This set us on a journey to find a Canadian music theatre composer who could capture what Kevin heard in his head. We asked a number of people to set to music some of Kevin’s poetic, rhythmic dialogue from sung sections of the first draft of the script. Having heard them all, the composer Kevin chose was Reza Jacobs. We couldn’t have been more pleased to bring these two great artists together.”
**The Bigger Picture Exploring Art’s Contexts**

**MATTHEW WHITFIELD**

Art cannot exist in a vacuum, independent, immune, and untouched by the innumerable facets and fluctuations of the world, for all art is created at a specific time and in a specific place. The artist, without exception, exists in a society with its own concerns, issues and goals, and it is these chronic yet changing problems that play a large part in the creation of new works. Whether due to war, famine, personal poverty, or forced relocation, each piece of music that we perform or listen to has its own context and purpose. We must wonder if much of the art that we now consider great would have been created at all, had it not been for the struggles that come with living in such an imperfect world.

Perhaps the most poignant and radical example of this social-artistic reactivity was in the 20th century, when the abominations and mass destruction of World War II necessitated the creation of a new aesthetic to reflect the forever-changed and irreparably damaged global community. Artists of all types were forced to flee their respective countries and seek refuge elsewhere, many coming to North America to escape the dangers of the European continent. Stravinsky, Schoenberg and Hindemith are only a few of the significant composers who relocated to the United States, a career move that, far from being planned, was forced by external factors.

While some musicians went less far afield, choosing to flee their homelands in favour of another European state, others involved themselves in the defense of their country by picking up arms, sometimes with tragic results. Jehan Alain, the French organist and composer, was killed in battle, and Olivier Messiaen was captured by the Germans and held as a prisoner of war. Messiaen wrote his *Quatuor pour la fin du temps* while in German captivity and it was first performed by his fellow prisoners; it has come to be recognized as one of his most important works.

The deconstruction of music’s essential components through serialism was a significant and reactive measure to the postwar world, a highly ordered approach to composition that served as a juxtaposition to external chaos and is one of the most recognized movements of the postwar musical aesthetic. Renowned serial composer and conductor Pierre Boulez was perhaps the most outspoken advocate of music as a social and political vehicle, giving such memorable quotes as, “I assert that any musician who has not experienced – I do not say understood, but, in all exactness, experienced - the necessity for the dodecaphonic language is USELESS. For his whole work is irrelevant to the needs of his epoch ... All the art of the past must be destroyed.” For artists who witnessed the destruction of their national histories and cultures with their own eyes, such sentiments likely seemed far less radical than they now appear.

Although the discussion of serialism might seem strikingly modern within the context of an early music column, the sociopolitical catastrophes that precipitated serialism’s formation are not at all new. The Thirty Years’ War, for example, lasted from 1618 to 1648 and was one of the most destructive conflicts in human history resulting in eight million fatalities, not only from military engagements but also from violence, famine and plague. Conflict between the Catholics and Protestants created an unstable social environment, which resulted in a myriad of responses from composers and performers, including Heinrich Schütz. As Kapellmeister to the Elector of Saxony, Schütz had to provide music not only for standard liturgical ceremonies but also for special occasions, which was complicated by reduced performing forces as the war progressed. In fact, members of his church ensemble dropped one by one so that from 1632 to 1639 the number of members...
diminished by 29 people. Other composers were forced to flee the violence and disease or lose their positions as courts were eliminated or relocated, events that were to repeat themselves three centuries later as Europe’s nations once again took up arms against each other.

Dido and Belinda
Although the current political climate is far less devastating than in either the early 17th or 20th centuries, contemporary issues continue to affect the way we perform and perceive art. By changing the lens through which we view it, old music can be reinvented and presented in a new way. One method of doing so is through de-contextualization, reapplying an ancient work to tell a new and immediately relevant story. On May 4 and 5, Cor Unum Ensemble attempts to do just this in their collaboration with OperaQ, focusing on Henry Purcell’s Dido and Aeneas, re-labelled and reworked as Dido and Belinda. According to Cor Unum’s press release, “Dido and Belinda offers a new perspective on Purcell’s beloved opera, Dido and Aeneas. With the addition of narration from the point of view of Dido’s closest confidante, Belinda, this staged production will emphasize many of the themes already found in the original libretto: the shame surrounding feminine sexuality, the blindness of male privilege and the societal pressure to conform to gender roles.”

An additional circumvention of tradition includes the casting of reversed-gender roles, with this performance featuring countertenor Ryan McDonald as Dido, Camille Rogers as Aeneas and Rebecca Genge as Belinda. While this may seem like a radical departure from Purcell’s original intention and scoring, this novel interpretation should maintain the integrity of the musical score as well as increasing its dramatic poignancy through a contemporary reimagining.

Purcell Reimagined
Before Cor Unum and OperaQ combine to tackle Dido, Purcell’s music gets reconstructed by Confluence on April 5 and 6. “’Tis Nature’s Voice: Henry Purcell Reimagined” features arrangements of vocal works by Purcell performed by an extended roster including Anne Atkinson, Larry Beckwith, Andrew Downing, Drew Jurecka, John Millard, Patricia O’Callaghan, Gregory Oh, Alex Samaras and Suba Sankaran. The most renowned arrangements of Purcell’s songs, which run from the simple to the sublime and everything in between.

Strangers in Strange Lands
Renowned for both their musical finesse and social awareness through novel multimedia presentations, Tafelmusik goes small-scale on April 10 with Strangers in Strange Lands, part of their Close Encounters chamber series. Presented in smaller venues across the city, these concerts are a wonderful opportunity to get an up-close look at the performers that make Tafelmusik the ensemble it is; this session features Marco Cera, Julia Wedman, and Andrew Downing.
Patrick G. Jordan, Allen Whear and Charlotte Nediger as they explore music in the galant style.

The galant style was short-lived, bridging the Baroque era with the classical, but it nonetheless featured some fine musicians and their works: C.P.E. and J.C. Bach, Quantz, Hasse, Sammartini, Tartini, Alberti and early Mozart are all exemplars of galant style, which simplified the contrapuntal density of the Baroque and introduced more melody-driven features. Even Haydn was influenced by this melody-based movement, reportedly commenting, “If you want to know whether a melody is really beautiful, sing it without accompaniment.” With such fine musicians performing such delightful repertoire, beautiful melodies will undoubtedly abound, both with and without accompaniment!

No matter how charming or innocuous a piece of music may seem, there is inevitably a story behind it. Whether written during or because of war, as a lifeline during a period of personal hardship, or as part of an application for a position or promotion, it is remiss of us to extract our art from its historical context. While it may be overly idealistic to apply to all works, the hearing of certain pieces such as Britten’s War Requiem, Penderecki’s Threnody or Howells’ Hymnus Paradisi can serve as reminders of historical and personal landmarks. It is also possible, as we see this month, to adapt and reinterpret old music in new ways, increasing its relevance to the modern audience member.

Regardless of whether you prefer old music or new, I encourage you to listen with open ears and an informed mind. Get in touch if you have any questions or want some more context on what’s happening this month: earlymusic@thewholenote.com.

EARLY MUSIC QUICK PICKS

- **APR 6, 8PM**: Scaramella presents “Red Priest” at Victoria College Chapel, 91 Charles St. W. Despite being one of Italy’s greatest Baroque composers, Antonio Vivaldi’s vocal music is still underperformed. Don’t miss this opportunity to hear a selection of his mini-masterpiece chamber cantatas featuring countertenor Daniel Cabena.
- **APR 7, 8PM**: Rezonance Baroque Ensemble presents “Harpsichord Explosion” at St. Barnabas Anglican Church, 361 Danforth Ave. Two words: Harpsichord. Explosion. Have you ever seen a harpsichord explode? Neither have I.
- **MAY 4, 7:30PM**: Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts presents “Baroque and Beyond: Bach and His World.” 390 King Street West, Kingston. Conceived, scripted and programmed by Alison Mackay, this multimedia presentation is sure to entertain and inform, and features works by one of the greatest musical minds in history.

Matthew Whitfield is a Toronto-based harpsichordist and organist.
**VOCA in Action**

**Discovering the Story at The Heart of a Song**

**BRIAN CHANG**

Fall workshop: Once in the fall and once in the spring, the artistic director Jenny Crober brings in an artist to work with the VOCA Chorus of Toronto in an intensive workshop. Matthew Emery was the clinician for the fall, working on his song *Still Colours, Velvet Shoes*. At the very end Crober asked, “Do you mind if we take a little peek at Sing your Song? Would you mind telling them something about who you’ve dedicated this to and why?” Emery agreed and spent the time explaining his reason for writing this song — to honour one of his musical mentors, Ken Fleet, when Fleet retired from Amabile. (Fleet has been living with dementia for many years now.)

“I first met Ken Fleet as a young singer in the Amabile Choirs of London, Canada,” Emery shared by email with *The WholeNote*. “My first memory of him was thinking ‘Wow he is so tall, will I ever be that tall?’ (Fleet stood six feet five inches. Those who have met Emery in person can attest that yes, he did get to be almost as tall).

“I was a young boy in Grade 4 or 5 at the time,” Emery continues. “It was his presence and influence from singing with Amabile that led me to attend Medway High School where Ken taught music for nearly 30 years. Ken was one of the early mentors I had in composition. He was always encouraging me to write. He also introduced me to the music of Stephen Chatman who I later studied with at UBC.”

The story was impactful for the choir. Crober is reminded “when you look out at the choristers and you see their faces soften; some tears in the eyes. It’s obvious when you hear Matthew speak, the fondness he has for Ken.” That fondness is felt by Crober too, who studied music with Fleet at Western University. “We were at Western together,” she shared. “He was three years ahead of me. And everyone knew who he was, partly because he was very tall, but he was a gentle giant. An extraordinarily lovely human being, a wonderful person.”

“The refrain used in this song is built on the text ‘sing your song’ which is taken from a short documentary about Ken,” shares Emery. “His wish in life was that no matter what ‘just sing your song’ — a beautiful image to be yourself and to be proud of who you are.” For Crober, that message “means get to the heart of it, right now. Get right into it. Don’t waste time. Just do it. In a gentle and supportive way.” The choir has loved learning and singing the song.

“The song uses a verse-chorus type framework to increase its accessibility,” shares Emery. “Ken worked with musicians of all levels, so I wanted to honour that philosophy in some way. There are phrases where the voices enter in canon, a metaphor for life. After the contrapuntal middle passage, the voices join in unity on the text ‘come home, come home.’ This is intentional, to suggest that through grief, strife – anything – music is our refuge.”

“The song has to be very active, very positive, very buoyant,” says Crober. “It really is bubbly. But not flip. There’s nothing flippanant or trivial about it … It’s jubilant and tender at the same time. It’s a really lovely piece.”

Emery put significant thought into creating this outcome. “I wanted to create a poignant work,” he said. “The meaning is deeply felt, but kept light-hearted with the syncopated melodies and pulsing piano gestures. To me, I am reminded of the lessons Ken taught me about life and the values he passed on when I hear the song. He was always full of joy and generosity. I tried to capture his genuine full spirit in the work.”

“The notion that music can bring us ‘home’ – a perfect image to end a concert celebrating a beloved conductor and mentor to thousands of singers.”

**Upcoming concert:** The signature work of VOCA’s upcoming April 27 concert is the Paul Winter *Missa Gaia/Earth Mass*. “It has been a while since we last did the *Missa Gaia/Earth Mass*,” says Crober. “We did it in 2012, when the East York Choir first became the VOCA Chorus of Toronto. This was the first performance of the choir under our new name.” Crober didn’t revisit the piece until two years ago when she had to step in at the last minute to conduct it for the Achill Choral Society in Orangeville. She admits, “I had kind of forgotten how much I loved the piece.”
revisiting is the reason for the “II” added to the concert title – “Earth, Seas & Sky.”

Joining the choir is vocalist Alana Bridgewater who has done the Missa Gaia on several occasions. “I’ve known about her a long time so it’s just a joy to finally be able to work with her,” says Crober. “We’re also doing three pieces by Paul Halley: Freedom Trilogy, Sound Over All Waters and The Rain Is Over and Gone. Alana will be really featured in some of these as well. There’s a moment in the third movement of the Missa Gaia, for example, the Beatitudes. It starts off slow and contemplative and by the end it’s a rocking gospel choir. Alana’s a powerhouse.”

Sprin g workshop: At the end of March, the choir had its spring workshop with Andrew Balfour. (The choir has been learning his piece Ambe for their upcoming concert.) “The first time I heard the piece we were at Podium 2018 in Newfoundland,” says Crober. “It was being performed by Chronos Vocal Ensemble from Edmonton. It was so hypnotic and driving and compelling and powerful and beautifully sung. The minute it was done, I marked in my program ‘Do this!’” Crober approached Balfour later during that conference. She booked him for the VOCA spring clinic this year, so the choir would have a chance to workshop the song directly with Balfour.

Going through the experience of Balfour’s thought process and listening to him give life and meaning to the music he’s written was important. Recently, the Indigenous Performing Arts Alliance (IPAA), of which Balfour is a part, released a statement on Indigenous Musical Sovereignty. The statement is an invitation to participate in the full experience of the music created by Indigenous peoples while simultaneously acknowledging that much of what has passed for Indigenous music or Indigenous themes by outsiders has been traumatizing. The statement asks hard questions of presenters who seek to perform Indigenous music: “to non-Indigenous composers who seek to tell ‘Indigenous-inspired’ works: be honest with yourself and ask why you feel compelled to tell this story and whether you are the right person to do so.”

The statement acknowledges that there is a place for non-Indigenous musicians in partnership, but there is an added weight and depth of responsibility that Indigenous creators have to their communities. To do this work well, the IPAA says, “We seek to hold ourselves to the highest ethical standards of Indigenous community engagement, and request that our collaborators in the Canadian music community work to the same level of accountability.”

For Crober, through the opportunity to learn directly from Balfour, the choir will have a better chance to bring life to his musical offering while respecting its Indigenous nature.

See all of this in action in “Earth, Sea & Sky II” presented by VOCA Chorus of Toronto under artistic director Jenny Crober featuring guest vocalist Alana Bridgewater and the Toronto Classical Singers.
artists Alana Bridgewater (vocalist); Colleen Allen (saxophone); Shawn Grenke (organ); Roberto Occhipinti (bass); Mark Kelso (drums); and Juan Carlos Medrano (percussion). April 27, 7:30pm. Eastminster United Church, Toronto.

**CHORAL SCENE QUICK PICKS**

- **APR 17, 18 AND 20, 8PM:** The Toronto Symphony Orchestra is joined by the Amadeus Choir and the Elmer Iseler Singers for the superlative Mahler Symphony No. 2 “Resurrection.” A stunning masterpiece of choral music caps off this transformative symphony. Under the baton of Spanish conductor Juanjo Mena, the iconic organ of Roy Thomson Hall shall shake thee to thy bones with the full force and power of orchestra and choirs blended together in a way that only Mahler could. With three options to catch these performances, do it! Roy Thomson Hall, Toronto.

- **APR 19, 7:30PM:** The Grand Philharmonic Choir performs Bach’s St. Matthew Passion joined by the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestra and a stellar line up of soloists: Isaiah Bell, Daniel Okulitch, Esteli Gomez and Allyson McHardy. Centre in the Square, Kitchener.

- **APR 27, 4PM:** Reaching Out Through Music presents “Spring Breezes.” ROTM provides free music education to children in the St. James Town community. Their hallmark is the Choral Program run by Cheryl Chung. Their Spring fundraising concert features Asitha Tennekoon. With a varied programme, this event will help ensure that the program can continue to provide accessible music education for future generations. Grace Church, Toronto, 383 Jarvis St.

**ANNUNCMENT**

**THE AMADEUS CHOIR OF GREATER TORONTO APPOINTS KATHLEEN ALLAN AS ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AND CONDUCTOR**

Following 35 years under the leadership of Lydia Adams, the Amadeus Choir will welcome Kathleen Allan in the 2019-20 season.

Originally from St. John’s, NL, Ms. Allan is in high demand as a conductor, composer, and soprano soloist. A recipient of the Sir Ernest MacMillan Prize in Choral Conducting, she is the Artistic Director of Canzona, Winnipeg’s professional Baroque Choir; and brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in both early and contemporary repertoire.

The Amadeus Choir will hold auditions for all voice parts in May, 2019. For more information, email us at info@amadeuschoir.com or call our office at 416-446-0188

*Sacred Music for a Sacred Space*

Experience two rich choral traditions — French subtlety and the mystical traditions of Eastern Europe and Russia — in a contemplative program by the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir, conducted by David Fallis.

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All in the visual and acoustic splendour of St. Anne’s — the “Group of Seven” church.

**Tickets**

$35, $55 & $60
$20 VoxTix for patrons 30 & under

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The Ponies Among The Operatic Warhorses!

CHRISTOPHER HOILE

In most years, April is the month with the single highest concentration of opera presentations in Toronto and environs. In past years there have often been so many examples of opera from all periods that the month’s offerings could form a survey of the genre. This month, for unknown reasons, there is a high concentration of operatic warhorses which will certainly please those who primarily enjoy familiar works. Yet, two companies are presenting works out of the ordinary to help spice up a month heavy on household-name composers.

Idomeneo and Atelier
The first on offer is a remount of Opera Atelier’s stunning production of Mozart’s Idomeneo (1780), first seen in 2008. Famed soprano Measha Brueggergosman made her Mozart operatic debut and her debut with Opera Atelier in this production. Now she returns to OA to sing the role of Elettra again. The cast includes tenor Colin Ainsworth in the title role, mezzo-soprano Wallis Giunta as Idamante and soprano Meghan Lindsay as Ilia. David Fallis conducts the Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and Marshall Pynkoski directs.

Because the Mirvish production of the hit musical Come From Away has taken over OA’s traditional venue, the Elgin Theatre, Idomeneo will be performed in the Ed Mirvish Theatre, a block or so north of the Elgin. Audiences will have to decide whether performing in an auditorium with 700 more seats than the Elgin has any effect on the acoustics. The opera runs from April 4 to 13.

Opera by Request
Opening next is familiar Mozart on a smaller scale in the form of his Così fan tutte in concert only on April 5 by Opera by Request. Deena Nicklefork sings Fiordiligi, Erin Armstrong is Dorabella, Conlan Gassi is Ferrando, Anthony Rodrigues is Guglielmo, Danie Friesen is Despina and John Holland is the cynical Don Alfonso. Claire Harris is the pianist and music director.

Vera Causa
In April even the new company Vera Causa Opera, which presented the world premiere of Dylan Langan’s Dracula last month and will present a selection of arias from Canadian operas in June, has chosen a work from the standard repertory for April. This is Donizetti’s L’Elisir d’amore from 1832 that the company, as per its mandate, will present in three cities in Southern Ontario. Allison Walmsley will sing Adina, James Smith will be Nemorino, Jorge Trabanco will be Belcore, Michaela Chiste is Giannetta and Camilo Rodriguez-Cuadrado is the wily Dr. Dulcamara. Dylan Langan conducts the Vera Causa Opera Chorus and Orchestra and is also the stage director. The production opens in Cambridge on April 5, moves to Waterloo on April 6 and finishes its run in Guelph on April 7.

Opéra Belcanto
Filling out the crammed first week of April, running April 4 and 6 at the Richmond Hill Centre, is the blockbuster opera Carmen presented by Opéra Belcanto of York. Míla Ionkova sings the title role, Stanislas Vitort is Don José, Michele Pearson is Micaela and Andrew Anderson is Escamillo. David Varjabed conducts the Opéra Belcanto of York Chorus and Orchestra and Edward Franko, co-artistic director of TrypTych Concert and Opera which has now moved to Kenora, will direct.

Caird’s La Bohème at COC
In mid-April the spring season of the Canadian Opera Company opens with Puccini’s La Bohème, the opera that vies with Carmen as the world’s most popular. The production (which runs from April 17 to May 22) directed by John Caird was first seen in Toronto in 2013. It features Angel Blue as Mimi, Atalla Ayan as Rodolfo, Andriana Churchman as Musetta, Lucas Meachem as Marcello, Brandon Cedel as Colline and Phillip Addis as Schaunard. On May 5, 11 matinee and 22 the cast is Miriam Khalil as Mimi, Joshua Guerrero as Rodolfo, Danika Lorèn as Musetta, Andrzej Filotyczuk as Marcello, Onay Köse as Colline and Joel Allison as Schaunard. Fans of the opera may wish to see both casts. The conductor will be Paolo Carignani.

The COC follows La Bohème with yet another work from the standard repertory, Verdi’s Rigoletto, but one not seen in Toronto since 2010.

The production will be directed by David Alden, creator of such other COC productions as The Flying Dutchman, Rigoletto and Lucia di Lammermoor. Alden’s production is most notable for relocating the action from the Renaissance to around the time of the opera’s premiere in 1851. The COC fields its first African-American Otello in the person of Russell Thomas. Canadian Gerald Finley is Iago, Tamara Wilson is Desdemona, Andrew Haji is Cassio and Carolyn Sproule is Emilia. COC Music Director Johannes Debus conducts the opera that runs from April 27 to May 21.
TOT goes tried and true
This year even Toronto Operetta Theatre finishes its season with the tried and true – in this case Franz Lehár’s *The Merry Widow* (1905), the greatest of all Silver Age operettas. The opera runs April 24 to 28 and features Lucia Cesaroni in the title role, Michael Nyby as Count Danilo, Daniela Agostino as Valencienne and Gregory Finney as Baron Zeta. Larry Beckwith conducts the TOT Ensemble and Guillermo Silva-Marin directs.

And finally ... something new
Despite this plethora of familiar works, April does offer one new opera and one important but seldom-seen opera. The new opera is *Shakespeare’s Criminal* by Dustin Peters to a libretto by Sky Gilbert. Orpheus Productions will give the chamber piece three workshop performances at Factory Theatre from April 26 to 28.

The magic realist work, set in the present, plays with the notion that Shakespeare was gay, a view some hold since many of Shakespeare’s sonnets are addressed to a young man. Other sonnets are addressed to an unknown woman whom critics have dubbed the “Dark Lady of the Sonnets.” In *Shakespeare’s Criminal*, an older male poet named Shakespeare is unable to admit that he is homosexual. Instead he hides his attraction for men in the eloquent language of the sonnets for which he is much esteemed. He meets a beautiful young HIV-positive man to whom he finds himself attracted, but whom he resists. Enter a wild, fierce voyeur who urges the older poet to fall in love with the young man and bed him. The woman is so persuasive that it seems the older closeted poet will succumb, but at the last moment he cannot bring himself to risk his reputation. In revenge, the woman turns the old poet into a tree – a gender-reversed image of what the river god Peneus does in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* to his daughter Daphne to preserve her chastity.

Dustin Peters is a Toronto-based composer whose works range from concert and chamber music to film scores and pieces for voice and dance. Sky Gilbert is an award-winning writer, director, filmmaker and professor. His many critically acclaimed plays have been performed in theatres worldwide. Guernica will publish his investigation of Shakespeare’s rhetoric, *Shakespeare: Beyond Science*, later this year.

The opera features mezzo-soprano Marion Newman, baritone Dion Mazerolle and actor Nathaniel Bacon. The structure of *Shakespeare’s Criminal* is inspired by musicologist Ellen T. Harris’s notion that male composers were able to ground the emotional core of their operas through the wild female voice (something which eventually led to the tragic Romantic heroines of Verdi and Puccini). Presented operain-concert style, *Shakespeare’s Criminal* raises many questions including, “Why do gay men often gravitate towards friendships with women and vice versa?” Peters is music director of the accompanying string quartet and Gilbert directs.
Christopher Hoile is a Toronto-based writer on opera and

And something seldom seen
The important seldom-seen opera in April is Against the Grain Theatre’s production of Kopernikus: Ritusel de la Mort (1980), the only opera by Québécois composer Claude Vivier (1948-83). This will be the first performance of the opera in Toronto since a touring Banff Centre production visited in 2001. In 2017 the present AtG production also had its premiere at Banff. Of what may be the most performed Canadian opera outside Canada, director Joel Ivany says, “I think this could be Canada’s greatest opera ever written. Vivier was unique, he was an innovator and a true artist.”

Ivany related in a conversation in March that he first heard of Kopernikus when he read that famed director Peter Sellars included it on his wish list of operas he’d like to direct. Sellars indeed went on to direct the American premiere of the opera in 2016 at the Ojai Festival in California. Ivany began working on it as a project for Canada 150 at the Banff Centre. While AtG is well known for its productions of Mozart’s operas with new English librettos written by Ivany, Ivany mentions that AtG has also presented operas with their librettos unaltered such as its open-air production of Debussy’s Pelléas et Mélisande in 2014.

That will be the case with Kopernikus. Set in two acts for seven singers, it challenges the norms of classical opera with its innovative use of compositional and technical devices to create a vivid meditation on self-transcendence. It unfolds through a series of obscure trials, inspired by Mozart’s Magic Flute, but played as an enchanted ritual. Canadian mezzo-soprano Danielle MacMillan conducts her role as Agni, the central character who travels to an unknown space suspended in time wherein she meets the fragmented embodiment of many ecstatic characters, such as Tristan and Isolde, Copernicus, Lewis Caroll and Mozart. Singing these roles are mezzo-soprano Kristzina Szabó, bass Alain Coulombe, baritone Dion Mazeron, sopranos Nathalie Paulin and Jonelle Sills and baritone Bruno Roy. Joining the singers on stage are dancers Anisa Tejpar and William Yong who will realize Matjash Mrozewski’s choreography.

Ivany has taken an innovative twist on orchestration by incorporating members of the orchestra into the onstage roles of the ensemble. AtG music director Topher Mokrzewski conducts the dispersed ensemble. The production will be presented at Theatre Passe Muraille on April 4, 5, 6, 11, 12 and 13, 2019.

Lucia Cesaroni is The Merry Widow

Performing Scholars Amidst Small World’s Asian Music Series

A ndrew Timar

After a long, dreary, weary winter, spring is finally deigning to show us some sun. Yet springtime signs are still meagre. In the midtown city park across the street the trees remain starkly bare. On the bright side, a few brave bird chirps can occasionally be heard. It’s surely a harbinger of kinder weather to come when we can venture out of doors to hear human as well as nature’s music.

Written while still firmly in the grip of winter, my column last month, World Music Goes to School explored the commitment of several Ontario universities to global music education. The focus was on world music ensemble courses as seen through the perspectives of several current teaching and performing practitioners.

Performing Scholars: Annette Sanger and James Kippen

We did not hear however from Annette Sanger and James Kippen, veteran University of Toronto ethnomusicologists, musician-educators and partners in life. And that’s because I found out only recently that, by the time this issue is well and truly launched, the university’s Faculty of Music will have honoured them with a rare two-day symposium and concert on March 29 and 30, in celebration of their distinguished university careers.

An expert on tabla performance and the life and music of communities of hereditary drummers in North India, Kippen has authored several books and numerous articles on the subject. He began his career at the Faculty of Music in January 1990 where he has taught and mentored several generations of students. He’s also been active in several musical groups in our town.

Sanger received her PhD for her research on the music and dance in Balinese society. That background served the GTA well, as she is a pioneer of Balinese music performance here. Commencing teaching in 1990 at the university’s Scarborough Campus, within a few years she arranged to have the university purchase a complete Balinese gamelan, inaugurating the Semar pegulingan gamelan ensemble course in the fall of 1993. That launched the first Balinese ensemble and course in Canada west of Montreal, an ensemble she led for a remarkable 25 years. Later she formed the performing ensemble Seka Rat Nadi – more of which further on.

Outside academia, Sanger served Toronto’s larger music community in many roles. Just two examples: from 1990 to 2000 she was the director of the Music & Arts School at the University Settlement House, the first community-based social service centre in Toronto. For several years she also reviewed CDs for The WholeNote.

Titled “Constant Flame: A concert honoring the retirements of Professors Annette Sanger and James Kippen,” the March 29 event features a performance by Seka Rat Nadi with Sanger, Kippen plus Toronto musicians Albert Wong and John Carnes. Seka Rat Nadi is the name of the group consisting of four Balinese gender (metalophone instruments), a quartet traditionally called a gender wayang. In addition, several guest musicians will perform Hindustani classical and other music.

The symposium is called “The Performing Scholar,” reflecting the interlocking twin aspects of Kippen and Sanger’s careers. (It also rather accurately describes the lifelong work of most of the musician-educators I interviewed for my March 2019 column.)

By the time most of you read this, the symposium honouring our two performing scholars will have probably taken place. But I couldn’t leave you, dear reader, hanging like that. I asked them what

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they intend to do now that they’ve officially retired.

“We plan to return to Bali to learn more gendèr repertoire including more unusual regional styles that are fast becoming eclipsed by inevitable standardization,” replied Sanger. “As well, we will go to India where Jim will continue to work on his research into the history of the tabla. As always, we are open to doing occasional performances and demonstrations in and around Toronto.”

It’s clear they don’t intend to hang up their performing scholar hats anytime soon.

Small World Music Society’s Asian Music Series

Toronto’s oldest and largest presenter of culturally diverse music, Small World Music Society celebrates springtime with the 17th annual edition of its Asian Music Series. Marking Asian and South Asia Heritage Month, throughout April and May, 11 concerts, a film screening, plus a talk will be held at the intimate Small World Music Centre (SWMC) in downtown Toronto, as well as at grander venues across the GTA.

I asked SWM’s founding director Alan Davis about his long-standing relationships with his programming partners. “We’ve always embraced partnerships as a way to get Small World’s message out to as many people as possible,” he replied. “This is increasingly true in recent years, as more and more larger presenters embrace diversity and cross paths with artists who are part of our musical ecosystem.”

Davis is confident that with SWM’s hard-won reputation for community outreach and deep connections, they can bring value to their partners by connecting them to audiences that they may not otherwise intersect with. “This speaks to both audience taste and geography. [For example]… audiences going to the Markham Theatre will be aware of events at the Rose Theatre in Brampton, Koerner Hall and the Small World Centre downtown, and a wide variety of presentations from traditional to modern. Collectively, the hope is … audience-building and community intersection. ‘Cause that’s how we all succeed!”

Let’s explore a few of the concerts in this year’s Asian Music Series.

Mahmood Schricker – thoughtful sadness of the electric setar: April 4 the Series launches at the SWMC with the music of Mahmood Schricker, the Toronto musician-producer of electronic music for film and commercials. An electric setar (Persian long lute) performer, Schricker’s concert is a release of his new instrumental album El Muerte, inspired by the Persian dastgah (tonal modal system), the delicate strumming of the setar, international dub and techno, all supported by electronics and drum machine sounds. Nima Dehghani’s videos provide a backdrop for Schricker’s live music, reflecting moods of “thoughtful sadness…” onto the screen.

Bageshree Vaze – Global Bollywood: April 5 at 7pm, SWM in association with The Rose presents “Bageshree Vaze: Global Bollywood” at the Rose Theatre, Brampton. The show is a celebration of the widely popular music and dance featured in the globe’s biggest film industry. Starring Indo-Canadian GTA resident vocalist and dancer Bageshree Vaze, the concert is a tribute to the songs, instrumentals and extravagant dance numbers that have propelled Bollywood to international fame. Featuring a cast of Toronto musicians and dancers, Global Bollywood is also choreographed and directed by the multi-talented Vaze.

Qais Essar and Fazelyar Brothers – Afghani instrumental: April 11 at 8pm, SWM and the Tawoos Initiative co-present Qais Essar x Fazelyar Brothers at SWMC. Qais Essar is a GTA-based Afghan composer, instrumentalist and producer, a specialist on the rubab (a.k.a. rabab), a short-necked Afghani lute. He has toured extensively visiting international stages, releasing two LPs, five EPs plus a live album. Essar contributed original music to feature films such as the Golden Globe and Oscar-nominated film The Breathe/inner (2017) and earned a Canadian Screen Award for Best Original Song for his work The Crown Sleeps. He will be playing selections from his recently released EP I am Afghan, Afghani is a Currency, Vol. III. The concert also features the Afghani-Canadian duo Fazelyar Brothers, consisting of tabla player Haris Fazelyar and Wares Fazelyar a rubab student of Essar.

Dang Show – Iranian musical hybridity: Both April 12 and 13 concerts at the SWMC by the Dang Show sold out well in advance. Dang
Show is a popular Iranian four-piece band which regularly sells out Tehran venues. The band has also composed and recorded soundtracks for over ten major Iranian movie releases. Its unusual name in Farsi evokes, in the words of the band, “mountainous vocals as well as velvety textures, jazz saxophone, medieval counterpoints, rock rhythms, [a sound which is] lush, rich and brassy like the best Balkan bands. Dang Show could be defined as a fusion of Persian classical and jazz.”

With an instrumentation of piano, saxophone, Persian vocals and percussion, Dang Show’s ambitious goal is to satisfy traditional Iranian classical music aficionados as well as those primarily interested in pop-flavoured music. In 2018 Dang Show was awarded Best Fusion Album for Mad O Nay in Iran. No wonder both their SWMC shows are sold out.

Amjad Ali Khan – sarod master: April 13 at 8pm, The Rose in association with SWMS present Amjad Ali Khan, with his sons Amaan Ali Bangash and Ayaan Ali Bangash at the Rose Theatre, Brampton. The multiple award-winning veteran sarod (a.k.a. sarode) master and composer, Amjad Ali Khan, was born into a renowned Indian classical musical family and has toured internationally since the 1960s. Over the course of his distinguished career he has garnered numerous international accolades.

The sixth generation exponent of the Senia-Barash gharana (a North Indian music lineage), Khan is at heart a classicist with a populist’s need to “communicate with the listener who finds Indian classical music remote,” as he once put it. You can expect khayal (the Hindustani classical music genre) musicianship at its finest in his recital.

Anda Union – Mongolian fusion revival: April 17 at 8pm, SWM and Flato Markham Theatre explore Northern Asian culture in their presentation of the Mongolian fusion group Anda Union at the Flato Markham Theatre in Markham. Hailing from Hohhot, the capital of the Inner Mongolia in northern China, the versatile nine-piece band has deep cultural roots in the vast grasslands where many of their families still live. Its mission: to rework the region’s music, filled with ancestral stories of nomadic customs and beliefs. The band brings together tribal and musical traditions from all over Inner Mongolia playing a wide variety of Indigenous instruments and vocal throat singing styles.

Its 2018 set at the London UK Songlines Encounters Festival was dubbed “a rousing masterclass in folk revivalism,” by The Guardian.

Qawwali – demystified and performed: April 18 at 8pm, SWM’s executive director Umair Jaffar gives a free talk titled “Demystifying Qawwali” at the SWMC. He notes that “Qawwali is the most popular Sufi devotional music from South Asia and, in recent years, has gained increased attention from worldwide audiences. Despite its popularity, upbeat rhythm and emotional appeal, qawwals’ origins and lyrics are shrouded in mystery.” Jaffar explains the genre, exploring its history, and demystifies the hidden messages in its poetry.

April 19, the series moves to the Aga Khan Museum with “Hamza Akram Qawwal and Brothers.” The 26-year-old singer Hamza Akram’s music is deeply rooted in the Pakistani Sufi devotional tradition. The group is becoming known in the subcontinent, across Europe, Middle East and North America. Akram and his brothers are the 26th generation of their musical lineage, the Qawwal Bachon ka Delhi Gharana, and are dedicated to sharing qawwali with the world. Their performance is part of the Aga Khan Museum’s 2018/19 Performing Arts season titled “The Other Side of Fear,” featuring artists who seek to transcend fear through music, dance and spoken word.

Anoushka Shankar – continuing a legacy of transcultural collaborations: The Asian Music Series continues well into May, but the last concert we will look at in this column takes place early that month. May 2, the Royal Conservatory of Music and SWM co-host sitar virtuosa and composer Anoushka Shankar and party on the Koerner Hall stage. Being groomed by her illustrious father from an early age, she has developed into one of South Asia’s most celebrated instrumentalists. In March 2019, Shankar released her latest Deutsche Grammophone album, Reflections, a retrospective of her career so far, focusing on musical collaborations.

I last saw her live at Koerner Hall almost ten years ago with her father Ravi, who was a still musically vibrant 89 at the time. She has, since his death in 2012, taken his musical legacy into several new territories, crossing classical and vernacular, South Asian and Euro-American. Audiences at her concert can expect more transcultural musical dialogues while she demonstrates the versatility of her sitar across musical genres.

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R.I.P. Ed Bickert, And Other Matters

STEVE WALLACE

As all Canadian jazz fans know, guitarist Ed Bickert passed away on February 28 at the age of 86. A bit of time has elapsed by now and his death has been marked by numerous eulogies in the jazz and mainstream press, both here and abroad. I wrote a remembrance of him on my blogsite on March 6 which some WholeNote readers have probably read. For those who haven’t and are interested, it’s available here: wallacebass.com/so-long-ed—a-remembrance/

Despite all this coverage, it’s only right that Ed should be remembered in the jazz column of this publication; he was that important and his death is a huge loss that is still reverberating, just as his magically voiced chords once did. Judging by the many comments left after my post about Ed, the scores of emails I have received, not to mention perfect strangers who have come up to me in clubs to share their memories and stories of Ed and how much they admired him as a person and musician, he will not soon be forgotten, if ever. He withdrew from playing in late 2000, yet the huge body of work he left behind, both live and on recordings from the mid-50s on, made a lasting impact on both musicians and fans. As he would have put it, he was an “Ed-biquitous” presence on the Toronto jazz scene; with Phil Nimmons, on the CBC; with Rob McConnell (in duo, small groups and with The Boss Brass); with Moe Koffman, his own groups, the Barry Elmes Quintet, the Mike Murley Trio; accompanying countless US jazz luminaries here and abroad; and much more. He was a true original and Toronto jazz fans knew how great he was for years, but word began to leak out south of the border by the early 70s. I was at Bourbon St. as a young jazz fan the first night he played there with Paul Desmond, the first of several such engagements. I clearly remember the altoist’s head swivelling slowly toward Ed as he played some of those penetrating, glow-in-the-dark chords which so often punctuated his solos like little gems. Desmond’s jaw dropped ever so slightly—he was a subtle man, not given to overt gestures—and he grinned and shook his head slowly with his eyes closed. The thought bubble over his head would have read “Oh, my God, this guy is a jewel.”

Indeed he was, and we know the rest. Desmond admired Ed’s playing so much he took him to New York to record Pure Desmond, one of the finest albums of his career and one which brought him out of retirement. Such was the inspiration of playing with Ed; and the impact of this belated showcasing of Ed’s playing with such a star, universally well-received, boosted the standing of Canadian jazz and musicians almost overnight. Before long, Canadian players such as Don Thompson, Bernie Senensky, Dave Young and Terry Clarke were being celebrated and recognized by Americans. Without saying much, Ed kept the bar high and led by example through his understated but powerful playing. Quiet though he was, his inspiration of, and influence on, several generations of Canadian jazz musicians cannot be overstated, and continues to this day. His playing was inimitable, yet the let’s-keep-it-real musical values he projected became an integral part of the jazz aesthetic around these parts even well after he retired. Such was the inspiration of playing with Ed; and the lasting impact on both musicians and fans. As he would have put it, he was an “Ed-biquitous” presence on the Toronto jazz mosaic. Mezzetta is worth going to for the food alone, which consists of mezzes—the Middle Eastern version of tapas—a choice of 40 small dishes priced at five dollars each which offers a wide variety of flavours and textures for vegetarians and meat-eaters alike. I’ve probably had everything on the menu over the years and it’s all authentic, delicious and very consistent in

Mezzetta
Ed Bickert was a jazz institution and I want to touch on several others which crossed my mind lately. One is Mezzetta, the excellent Middle Eastern restaurant on St. Clair Ave. W. which has featured live jazz on Wednesday evenings since soon after opening in 1991. One night a week may not seem like much, but the café is small and primarily a restaurant, yet is also a wonderful place to play partly because of its tininess. Its commitment to presenting jazz in a respectful and uncompromising way has been steadfast for over 25 years, making it an integral part of the Toronto jazz mosaic. Mezzetta is worth going to for the food alone, which consists of mezzes—the Middle Eastern version of tapas—a choice of 40 small dishes priced at five dollars each which offers a wide variety of flavours and textures for vegetarians and meat-eaters alike. I’ve probably had everything on the menu over the years and it’s all authentic, delicious and very consistent in
quality. Like the food, the presentation of music at Mezzetta is living proof that small is good, small works. Owner Safa Nemati is a very cultured and congenial man who always treats the musicians fairly, introducing the groups – generally duos featuring a guitarist, as there is no piano – with a polite but firm insistence that people listen, and they do. The ten-dollar cover charge all goes to the musicians; nobody gets rich playing there but that’s not the point. I’ve always left there feeling musically fulfilled because Mezzetta’s intimacy, natural acoustics and warm atmosphere encourage audiences to listen intently, which in turn brings out the best in musicians. And that’s all we want, really. It’s real, a small oasis of culture, high-minded yet modest, not unlike Ed Bickert.

I played at Mezzetta on March 13 with Mike Murley and Reg Schwager. It was originally booked as a duo, but at the last minute Mike asked me to come along to fill out the trio, and that he’d take care of paying me himself. It would serve as a kind of live, paid rehearsal for an upcoming concert and recording we would be doing a few days later with pianist Renee Rosnes as a guest. It was a very special evening for a number of reasons, chief among them being that Ed Bickert seemed to be in the room with us. My piece on him had been out for about a week and the room was packed with his fans, many of whom came over to me to talk about him or share a memory. Mike spoke about him briefly before we started, mentioning that Mezzetta was Ed’s favourite place to play in Toronto, which says a lot. And we played I’ll Never Stop Loving You as a tribute to him, inspired by his beautiful 1985 recording of it. With the people sitting so near and listening so closely, there was an effortless and silent communion between the audience and the band which was as close to a religious experience as I can imagine coming to.

Ellington Society
Another longstanding jazz institution is The Duke Ellington Society, chapters of which have existed in major cities worldwide for decades, celebrating and promoting knowledge of the most imperishable genius jazz has produced. The Toronto DES will be presenting its annual concert on April 27 at Walter Hall in the Edward Johnson Building; further details in the Quick Picks section that follows. This year’s concert features a big band led by, and arranged for, by drummer Brian Barlow, featuring vocals by the estimable Sophia Perlman. I’ve played on quite a few of these concerts over the years in groups ranging from trios to quintets to big bands, including one led by Ron Collier and an another one by Barlow some years ago. They’re always rewarding; partly, of course, because they offer the chance to play music by Ellington and Billy Strayhorn, but mostly for reasons similar to the ones mentioned in connection to Mezzetta: the audience wants to be there, values the music and they listen. The concert I played with Brian Barlow’s big band revealed a side of him I didn’t realize until then: what a fine and imaginative arranger he is. He clearly loves and knows Ellington’s music and his charts managed to bring out new things in the maestro’s music: no small achievement.

Renee Rosnes
Finally, a few words about another great Canadian musician who, much like Ed Bickert, has raised the bar and inspired so many jazz players in this country: Renee Rosnes. Being a major star out of New York and internationally for many years now, Renee hardly needs the likes of me to pump up her tires, but nevertheless, I’m going to. The aforementioned project with Renee joining the Mike Murley trio as a guest consisted of a March 16 Jazz In The Kitchen concert, followed the next day by a marathon recording session in the same venue, namely the home of Patti and John Loach in the Beaches. Much thanks to both of them for generously hosting this event and to John for his superb and easygoing engineering.

As for Renee, well, we’ve known each other for about 35 years now and this was the first time we’d played together, which came as a small mutual shock. All I can say is that finally playing with her was the fulfillment of a long-held wish and she was everything I expected and hoped for, and more. Simply put, she’s a joy to play with and to be around. She fits into the trio’s dynamic effortlessly, plus she doesn’t seem to have any ego whatsoever. With her, it’s all music all the time and she can play anything with anybody, anytime. And as we discovered on the recording, she’s a two-take gal: she plays great on the first take, and really great on the second. If I had to pick someone to offer as a model to a young aspiring jazz musician, male or female, it would be Renee Rosnes. They might as well aim high.

Oddly enough, as if to underscore all this, the last tune we recorded was a trio version of I’ll Never Stop Loving You featuring Reg Schwager, as a tribute to Ed Bickert. Mike Murley’s cell rang right after we’d finished it and it was Ed’s daughter Lindsey calling. They chatted for a moment and Mike told her we’d just finished the recording and Lindsey asked Mike to tell Renee that Ed once told her that Renee was one of his favourite people. Being Ed’s daughter, we knew Lindsey meant it, and nobody was about to argue.

Jazz Notes Quick Picks

- **APR 13, 8PM:** Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society presents the Dave Young Trio. Music of Duke Ellington. KWCMS Music Room, 57 Young St. W., Waterloo. 519-569-1809. $35, $20(students). The dean of Canadian jazz bassists leads a trio performing Ellington music. My guess would be Robi Botos on piano and Terry Clarke on drums, but whoever is playing with Young, this is sure to be well worth hearing.

- **APR 14, 4:30:** Christ Church Deer Park. Jazz Vespers. Rob Pitch, guitar; Neil Swainson, bass. 1570 Yonge St. 416-820-5211. Freewill offering. Religious service. Two of Toronto’s best veteran players who have a special chemistry through a long history of playing together.

- **APR 27, 7PM:** Toronto Duke Ellington Society’s “Annual Concert.” Ellington: Suites (excerpts). Sophia Perlman, vocalist; The Brian Barlow Big Band. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-239-2683. $35. Limited availability. This was already discussed in the article. Enough said – be there or be square.

- **APR 28, 2PM:** Visual and Performing Arts Newmarket presents the Drew Jurecka Trio. Jazz trio with violin, piano and bass. Newmarket Theatre, 505 Pickering Cres., Newmarket. 905-853-5122. $30; $25(seniors); $10(students). Drew Jurecka is listed here as a violinist and he’s a brilliant one. But he’s also one of Toronto’s most talented and rangy multi-instrumentalists, playing clarinet, alto saxophone and singing. He’s also stylistically encyclopedic, especially on violin, ranging from trad/swing to contemporary. Whatever mode he’s in this evening, the music will be rewarding.

Toronto bassist Steve Wallace writes a blog called “Steve Wallace Jazz, baseball, life and other ephemera” which can be accessed at Wallace-bass.com. Aside from the topics mentioned, he sometimes writes about movies and food.
As the Seasons Turn

JACK MACQUARRIE

As this past winter dragged on interminably I started finding myself singing to myself Spring Will be a Little Late This Year, and began to ask fellow musicians to play the tune, only to learn that I could not find anyone who had ever even heard of such a song, which was very popular some years ago. Such is progress! Finally, one day after the vernal equinox, a cheery robin said hello to me from a tree in the back yard. Had spring arrived? Yes, but only for a day. The snow and ice were back. So: what will the bands be doing this spring when it really arrives?

Anniversaries

Wee Big Band: It turns out that there are some spring programs on the horizon, but there are also a number of anniversaries. In fact, I have already had the pleasure of attending the first of these a couple of weeks ago when Jim Galloway’s Wee Big Band celebrated their 40th anniversary with a special performance at The Garage at the Centre for Social Innovation, 720 Bathurst Street. This was presented by the Ken Page Memorial Trust and WholeNote Media Inc.

Formed in 1979 as a repertory band specializing in the music of the great bands of the swing era, Jim Galloway’s Wee Big Band, with Rosemary Galloway on bass, continued until Jim passed away in December 2014.

In the recent concert almost all of the selections were arranged by Martin Loomer, the current guitarist and leader. On a number of occasions Martin mentioned, with fond memories, the performances of saxophonist Gord Evans who had been a member of the band until he passed away a few years ago. The first thing that I did when I arrived home after the concert was to play a recording of Gord playing Sammy Nestico’s Lonely Street on alto sax. That is my favourite number on a CD recorded about 20 years ago by a group that I was in. On looking over the list of members, at least six others beside Gord are no longer with us.

Wychwood: Another anniversary coming soon is that of the Wychwood Clarinet Choir. On Sunday, May 26 they will be celebrating their tenth year of concerts. Founded and led by clarinetist Michele Jacot, they now have over 200 pieces in their music library and over half of those are their own contributions through their “Composers’ Collective.” Over the years the choir had a wonderful relationship with Howard Cable who became their “Composer and Conductor Laureate.” Howard had never heard of the choir when they first contacted him to ask him to conduct his two previous compositions for clarinet choir. He was so impressed that he wrote a brand new three-movement work, the Wychwood Suite, for the choir with Michele Jacot as soloist. Howard continued to work with the choir and arrange other works for them until he passed. The choir now presents three main concerts per season with a solid and growing audience base. Special kudos should go out to Roy Greaves, one of the founding members and arranger extraordinaire. On checking their last program, of the 11 selections performed six were arranged by Roy.

Waterloo: Another anniversary of a very different sort takes place when the Waterloo Concert Band performs on May 5 at Knox Presbyterian Church in uptown Waterloo. Rather than an anniversary of the band’s founding, this will celebrate the upcoming centenary of the arrival in Waterloo of Charles Frederick “Professor” Thiele. So far I have not been able to find much information about Thiele before his arrival in Waterloo. I do remember well the name though: from my days playing in a boys’ band eons ago. At that time boys’ bands and adult bands regularly went to tattoos and many other events where they were adjudicated by “Professor” Thiele. I hope to learn more about this man soon.

A newly discovered manuscript of a previously unknown composition by “The Professor” couldn’t have come along at a more opportune time for the Waterloo Concert Band. The discovery of an undated work called Festival Overture gave a natural impetus for programming this into the concert celebrating the anniversary of Thiele’s arrival in Waterloo. The band’s director, Trevor Wagler, now has the task of transforming the fragile paper artifact into individual parts, adapted to the keys and clefs that today’s musicians use.

An accomplished digital transcriber, as well as a busy freelance French horn player and co-owner of Waterloo’s Renaissance School of the Arts, Wagler estimates that it will take about 20 hours to complete the task. The photograph shows Wagler at an oversized vertical computer screen in his office as he gently converts the yellowed sheets, each covered with dense but precise handwritten notes, into the individual parts.

As Wagler explains: “We’ve been including a lot of Thiele’s music in our repertoire during the past few seasons because more and more is coming to light, and so much of it is of very good quality. We couldn’t let this year go by without doing something special to celebrate the huge presence he had.”

Other Bands

Richmond Hill: In the good news department, we have just heard from a band that we hadn’t heard from directly before. Connie Learn, president of the Newmarket Citizens Band, put us in touch with Joan Sax of the Richmond Hill Concert Band (RHCB). Joan told us about RHCB’s new York Region Band Concert Series taking place this summer. This series has been tentatively called “Sundays at the Amphitheatre,” until the band finds a naming sponsor for it. The series is aimed at an audience of families, and will be held at the amphitheatre in Richmond Green Park, at Elgin Mills Road and Leslie Street in Richmond Hill.

The series will consist of five concerts, on Sundays from July 14 to August 11 inclusive, beginning at 1 pm as follows: July 14, Aurora Concert Band; July 21, Richmond Hill Concert Band; July 28, Markham Concert Band; August 4, Thornhill Community Band; and August 11, Newmarket Citizens Band. The concert series is supported by the Town of Richmond Hill’s Cultural Grant, and a yet-to-be-named sponsor. They are also partnering with the Richmond Hill Food Bank to collect food for this worthy Richmond Hill organization.

The Richmond Hill Concert Band, formed in 2010, is a charitable organization that provides musical service and cultural support to their community, and education for band members. They perform annually at Richmond Hill’s Canada Day celebration, and in the Richmond Hill Summer Park Series. In addition to their public concerts, the band also performs concerts at seniors residences and hospitals.

Uxbridge: It’s much too early to talk much about that remarkable summer band, the Uxbridge Community Concert Band (UCCB), but this year is different. Founder and leader Steffan Brunette appears to be on the road to recovery from a serious medical situation, and is already talking about rehearsals. As one member of the band’s executive put it: “He is planning to be well enough to run the band this summer, but may have some stand-ins for conductors in the beginning as he might not be strong enough to listen to us play wrong...
A. **B.**

**BEYOND THE GTA** covers many areas of Southern Ontario outside Toronto and the GTA. Starts on page 55.

**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 58.

**D. IN THE CLUBS (MOSTLY JAZZ)** is organized alphabetically by club. Starts on page 66.

**E. THE ETCETERAS** is for galas, fundraisers, competitions, screenings, lectures, symposia, masterclasses, workshops, singalongs and other music-related events (except performances) which may be of interest to our readers. Starts on page 63.

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

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

**LISTINGS DEADLINE.** The next issue covers the period from May 1 to June 7, 2018. All listings must be received by 11:50pm, Monday April 8.

**LISTINGS** can be sent by email to listings@thewholenote.com or by using the online form on our website. We do not receive listings by phone, but you can call 416-323-2232 x27 for further information.

**LISTINGS ZONE MAP.** Visit our website to search for concerts by the zones on this map: thewholenote.com.
Comunities Recital Hall, Accolade East Building, YU, 4700 Keele St. 416-736-2100 x2054. $15; $10 (sr/st).
7:00: Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts. The Legendary Gordon Lightfoot. In Concert. 10258 Yonge St., Richmond Hill. 905-757-8811. $10-$50.
7:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Best of Hollywood. Selections from film scores including Star Wars, Frozen, To Kill a Mockingbird, Out of Africa, jaws, Ben-Hur, Dr. Zhivago, The Wizard of Oz, The Magnificent Seven, The Godfather, Gone with the Wind, and more. Whitney Claire Kaufman, vocalist; with, Andrew Downing, Patricia O’Callaghan, Stephanie Clemons, Michele Pearson, soprano (Michaela); Andrew Anderson, baritone (Escamilo); Opera Belcanto of York Chorus and Orchestra; David Varjapied, conductor; Edward Franko, stage director. Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, 10258 Yonge St., Richmond Hill. operabelcanto@york.com/current_opera.html. $20-$45. Also Apr 6.
7:15: Motorcycle Quartet. 713-1818. $15. Recommended for toddlers and up.
7:30: Living Arts Centre. Sandra Shamas (The Big ‘What Now?’). See Apr 3. Also Apr 6, 12, 13, 14(2pm).
7:30: Opera Belcanto of York. Carmen. Music by Bizet. Mila Ionkova, soprano (Carmen); Stanislav Vitort, tenor (Don José); Michele Pearson, soprano (Michaela); Andrew Anderson, baritone (Escamilo); Opera Belcanto of York Chorus and Orchestra; David Varjapied, conductor; Edward Franko, stage director. Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, 10258 Yonge St., Richmond Hill. operabelcanto@york.com/current_opera.html. $20-$45. Also Apr 6.
8:00: Against the Grain Theatre. Kopernikus. Vivier: Danielle MacMillan, mezzo (April); Kristinza Szabó, mezzo; Alain Coulobe, bass; Don Mazerolle, baritone; Nathalie Paulin, soprano and others. Theatre Passe Muraille Mammasep, 16 Ryerson Ave. 467-587-9845. $25-$45. April 5, 6, 11, 12, 13.
8:00: TD Live. Fatoumata Diawara. Sony Centre for the Performing Arts, 1, Front St. E. 1-855-827-7669. $52-$72.
Concerts in the GTA

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@metunited.org or 416-363-0331 ext. 26.

Metropolitan United Church

A. 7:30: Annex Singers. Immortal Mozart. Mozart: Great Mass in c; Haydn: Te Deum; Elgar: Lux Aeterna; and other works. Talisker Players; Maria Case, artistic director. Grace Church-on-the-Hill, 300 Lonsdale Rd. 416-458-4434. $30; $25(sr/st); free(12 and under).


C. 7:30: Living Arts Centre. Sandra Shamas (The Big ‘What Now?’). See Apr 3. Also Apr 12, 13, 14(2pm).

D. 7:30: Music at Metropolitan. The Bach Family and the Improvising Tradition. Rezonance Baroque Ensemble; Musicians on the Edge. Metropolitan United Church (Toronto), 56 Queen St. E. 416-383-0331 x26. $20; $10(18 and under). 7:30: Opera Atelier. Idomeneo. Music by W.A. Mozart, libretro by Giambattista Varesco. Measha Brueggergosman, soprano (Elettra); Colin Ainsworth, tenor (Idomeneo); Wallassa Guanta, mezzo (Idamante); 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 Television and the Improvising Tradition (The Big “What Now?”). See Apr 3. Also Apr 11, 12, 13(4:30pm).

E. 7:30: Opera Belcanto of York. Carmen. Music by Bizet. Mila Ionkova, soprano (Carmen); Stainislas Vivot, tenor (Don Jose); Michele Pearson, soprano (Michaela); Andrew Anderson, baritone (Escamillo); Opera Belcanto of York Chorus and Orchestra; David Varjabed, conductor; Edward Franko, stage director. Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, 10268 Yonge St., Richmond Hill. operabelcantooffyork.com/current_opera.html. $20-$45. Also Apr 4.


H. 8:00: Acoustic Harvest. Rick Fines and Suzie Vinnick. St. Paul’s United Church (Scarborough), 200 McIntosh St., Scarborough. lillian.wauthier@gmail.com. $25/$22(ad). 8:00: Agha Khan Museum. Two Rivers Ensemble with special guest Spiral Modes. Amir ElSaffar, trumpet and composer; and others. 77 Wynford Dr. 416-846-4677. $40; $30(st/adv); $15(35/members of the museum). Includes same-day Museum admission (redeem at Ticket Desk).

I. 8:00: Against the Grain Theatre. Kopernikus. See Apr 4. Also Apr 11, 12, 13.


K. 8:00: Masterworks of Oakville Chorus & Orchestra. Rutter: Requiem. John Rutter: Requiem; Charles Demuyck: It Is What It Is; Ronald Royer: Psalm 98 - Song to the Lord a New Song (world premiere); Ronald Beckett: These Are Thy Glorious Works (world premiere of orchestral version). Sara Schabas, soprano; Alexander Bowie, baritone. St. Matthew’s Catholic Church, 150 Mono Passageway, Oakville. 905-899-5732. $30; $25(sr); $10(st); free(10 and under). Also Apr 7(3pm).

L. 8:00: Scaramella. Red Priest. Virtuoso chamber cantatas for counter-tenor, bassoon and continuo. Daniel Cabera, counter-tenor; Neil Chen, Baroque bassoon; Joëlle Morton, viola da gamba; Paul Jenkins, keyboard. Victoria College Chapel, 91 Charles St. W. 416-780-8610. $30; $25(sr); $20(st); free(14 and under).

M. 8:00: Scarborough Philharmonic Orchestra. A Choral Spectacular. Mendelssohn: Overture to Ruy Blas Op.95; Psalm No.42 Op.42; Schumann: Symphony No.4 in d Op.120; Beethoven: Hallelujah from Christ on the Mount of Olives Op.85; Brahms: Ihr hat nun Traurigkeit from A German Requiem Op.45; Wagner: Procession and Chorale (Wach’s! auff!) from Die Meistersinger; and Royer: Gloria. Toronto Choral Society (Geoffrey Butler, director); Anne Marie Ramos, soprano; Ronald Royer, conductor. Salvation Army Scarborough Citadel, 211 Lawrence Ave. E. Scarborough, spa.ca. $35; $30(sr); $15(st/summer); $10(child under 10). Free parking.

N. 8:00: Spectrum Music. Jests in Time! New music inspired by comedy. McBride; Reaview Mirror; Victoria: The Day When Robots Learn to Feel; Welchen: Pagliacci; Campbell: Little Fellow; Hansu: Are You Kidding?; and other works. Simone Baron, accordion; Odin String Quartet; Alex Pollard, dance. Spadina Theatre, Alliance Française de Toronto, 24 Spadina Rd. 416-567-8890. $20/$15(adv); $15/$10(ad). Pre-concert monologue by an emerging Toronto comedian.


Sunday April 7


1:30: Kingston Road Village Concert Series. National Piano Trio. Works by Tchaikovsky, skychr and Rachmaninoff. Heidi Wall, piano; Corey Gemmell, violin; Wolf Tormann, cello. Kingston Road United Church, 975 Kingston Road.
Monday April 8

9:00am: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Annual High School Choral Festival. Mark Ramsay, coordinator. MacMillan Theatre, Edward Johnson Building, 80 Queen's Park. 416-408-0208. Free. Ends at 4pm. Workshops from 9:00am to 11:00am and 1:00pm to 4:00pm.


Tuesday April 9


Wednesday April 10

12:00 noon: Tafelmusik. Strangers in Strange Lands: Close Encounters Chamber Series. Exploration of galant music. Marco Cera, oboe; Julia Wedman, violin; Patrick G. 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; Jeannette Lajeunesse Zingg, choreographer. Ed Mirvish Theatre, 244 Victoria St. 416-703-3767 x222. From $39. Also Apr 6, 12, 13, 14, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30.


Thursday April 11


12:10: Nick Maclean Quartet/Brownman All Jazz. Jazz Forum. Intimate and informal blend of music and conversation. Nick Maclean, piano; Brownman All, trumpet; Ben Duﬀ, bass; Tyler Goertzen, drums. Private address, Kingston. 416-589-2042. $25. Must be purchased in advance online at eventbrite.ca. Tickets limited. Address will be given out to ticket holders.


12:10: Nick Maclean Quartet/Brownman All Jazz. Jazz Forum. Intimate and informal blend of music and conversation. Nick Maclean, piano; Brownman All, trumpet; Ben Duﬀ, bass; Tyler Goertzen, drums. Private address, Kingston. 416-589-2042. $25. Must be purchased in advance online at eventbrite.ca. Tickets limited. Address will be given out to ticket holders.

Friday April 12


7:30: Living Arts Centre. Sandra Shamas (The Big “What Now?”). See Apr. 3. Also Apr 13, 14, 19, 20, 21, 22.

7:30: Opera Atelier. Idomeneo. Music by W.A. Mozart, libretto by Giambattista Varesco. Measha Brueggergosman, soprano (Elettra); Colin Ainsworth, tenor (Idomeneo); Wallis Giunta, mezzo (Idamante); 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; Jeannette Lajeunesse Zingg, choreographer. Ed Mirvish Theatre, 244 Victoria St. 416-703-3767 x222. From $39. Also Apr 4, 6, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30.


8:00: Against the Grain Theatre. Kopernikus. See Apr. 4. Also Apr 12, 13.

8:00: Small World Music Society. Qais Essar x Fazelbajr Brothers. Small World Music Centre, Artscape Youngplace, 180 Shaw St. 416-536-5439. $20.

April 1 – May 2, 2019 | 45
Silent Voices
Saturday, April 13 / 7:30PM
Church of the Redeemer
Tickets: torontochildrenschorus.com

Saturday April 13
10:00am: Oakville Symphony Orchestra. Young People’s Mini-Concert: Vernon’s Time Machine. Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts, 130 Navy St., Oakville. 905-844-6920 or oscar@oakville Symphony.ca. $20; $10(st).

11:00am: Oakville Symphony Orchestra. Young People’s Mini-Concert: Vernon’s Time Machine. See 10am.

4:30pm: Opera Atelier. Idomeneo. Music by W. A. Mozart, libretto by Giambattista Vær-esco. Measha Brueggergosman, soprano (Elettra); Colin Ainsworth, tenor (Idomeneo); Wallis Giunta, mezzo (Idamante); Meghan Lindsay, soprano (Ilia); Olivier Laquerre, baritone (Arbace); Artists of Atelier Ballet. Choir of the University of Toronto Schola Cantorum; orchestra of Spring Works. 8:00: Magic and Mystery: A Royal Celebration. Mozart: Coronation Mass; Handel: Corona-
tions Anthems. Clearview Christian Reformed Church, 2300 Sheridan Garden Dr., Oak-
ville. 416-293-1574. $30/$25(adv); $15(st); free(child 12 and under). Also Apr 14 (30pm Chartwell Baptist).

7:30: Porgianor Chamber Concerts/Col-
lege Street United. A SoloMessaProject. Handel: Messiah (complete solo arias & reci-
tatives). Y.C. Lee, tenor; Antonio De Wolfe, 
guests: Libe Caia, soprano; Austin Larussou, baritone; Alto soloist TBA. Col-
lege Street United Church, 452 College St. 416-929-3019. $20. Benefit for the homeless, 
community meals programs and outreach programs at CSU.

7:30: Toronto Children’s Chorus. Silent 
Voices. Works by Kuzmenko, Abu-Khader, Jahnamohed, Debussy, and others. Toronto 
Children's Chorus Main Choir. Church of the 
Redeemer, 162 Bloor St. W. 416-932-8666 x231. $25($30(st/child)); $10(child).

8:00: Against the Grain Theatre. Kopernikus. See Apr 4.

8:00: Alliance Francaise Toronto. Ste-
phane Wrembel Band: The Jazeera Experi-
ment. Spadina Theatre, 24 Spadina Rd. 416-
222-2014 x37. $30/25(adv); $25(sr/st); $20(adv sr/st); $17(members); $12(adv members).

8:00: Bravissimo/The Music Gallery/ 
Native Women In The Arts. Raven Chacon 
Mini-Festival. Chacon: For Zirkala-Ša (world premiere). Suzanne Kite, Laura Ortman, Car-
mina Escobar and Cheryl L’Hirondelle. The Music Gallery, 918 Bathurst St. 416-204-
1080. Night 1; 2: $20/$15(adv); $10(members); Night 3: $15/$10(adv); $10(members); $30(Festival pass); 7:30: doors open. Mini-festival runs Apr 12-14.

8:00: Rose Theatre. Anjali Ali Khan, with 
Amaan Ali Bangash and Aayaan Ali Bangash. 1 Theatre Ln., Brampton. 905-674-2600 or 
orosetheatre.ca. $10-$20.

8:00: Royal Conservatory of Music. Yuja 
Wang and Gautier Capuçon. Chopin: Cello Sonata in G op.65; Franck: Sonata in A for 
cello and piano; Chopin: Polonaise brillante in C op.3. Yuja Wang, piano; Violinier Capu-
con, cello. Koerner Hall, Telus Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-2028. $60-$120. SOLD OUT.

8:00: Small World Music Society. Dance 
Show. Small World Music Centre, Artscape 
Youplase, 160 Shaw St. 416-536-5439. $33. 
SOLD OUT.

8:00: The Meeting House Oakville. The 
Legendary Gordon Lightfoot in Concert. 2700 Bristol Cir., Oakville. 905-287-7000. 
$59-$110.

8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. 
Beethoven Eroica Symphony. Debsy.

SILENT AUCTION AT 8PM ON APRIL 13TH.

STEERING COMMITTEE

T.C. Ho Theatre
26 Delisle Ave. 647-238-0015 or gtpo.ca. $30; $25(sr); $15(st).

8:00: Cathedral Bluffs Symphony Orches-
tra. Annual Fundraising Concert and Silent 
Auction. Elgar: Pomp and Circumstance Marches 1 & 2; Saint-Saëns: Piano Con-
certo No.2; Tchaikovsky: Violin Concerto in D (mvt.1); Parry: Jerusalem. Diane Kim, violin; 
Artur Kopylov, piano; Norman Reintamm, conductor. P.C. Ho Theatre, Chinese Cultural 
Centre of Greater Toronto, 5183 Sheppard Ave E., Scarborough. 416-870-5566 or 
cathedralbluffs.com. $35/$30(adv). Silent auction at 7pm.

8:00: Against the Grain Theatre. Ste-
phane Wrembel Band: The Jazeera Experi-
ment. Spadina Theatre, 24 Spadina Rd. 416-
222-2014 x37. $30/25(adv); $25(sr/st); $20(adv sr/st); $17(members); $12(adv members).

8:00: Alliance Francaise Toronto. Ste-
phane Wrembel Band: The Jazeera Experi-
ment. Spadina Theatre, 24 Spadina Rd. 416-
222-2014 x37. $30/25(adv); $25(sr/st); $20(adv sr/st); $17(members); $12(adv members).
The Big “What Now?” See Apr 3.


● 2:00: Tafelmusik. Strangers in Strange Lands: Close Encounters Chamber Series. Exploration of galant music. Marco Cera, oboe; Julia Wedman, violin; Patrick G. Jordan, viola; Allen Wheat; cello Charlotte Nediger; harpsichord. Temerty Theatre, Telus Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-964-6337. $42. Also April 10 (at Church of the Holy Trinity).

● 3:00: Hannaford Street Silver Band. North Atlantic Drift. Don MacDonald, fiddle; Brian Taheny, guitar; Ross Griffiths, pipes; James Gourlay, conductor. Jane Mallett Theatre, St. Taheny, guitar; Ross Griffiths, pipes; James Gourlay, conductor. Jane Mallett Theatre, St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 27 Front St. E. 416-366-7723 or 1-800-708-6754. $12-$42. crown Anthems. Chartwell Baptist Church, 229 Chartwell Rd., Oakville. 289-351-1574. $30/$25(adv); $15(st); free(child 12 and under). Also Apr 13 (7:30pm Christian Reformed).

● 3:00: Off Centre Music Salon. To the Letter: An Epistolary Celebration. Works by Chopin, Brahms, Debussy, Mozart. Allison Angelo, soprano; Andrea Ludwig, mezzo; Ernesto Ramirez, tenor; Giles Tomkins, baritone; Kathryn Tremills, piano. Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, 427 Bloor St. W. 416-466-6323. $50; $40(sr); $15(young adult); $5(child).

● 3:00: Orchestra Toronto. Watershed: A Symphonic Exploration of Earth’s Waters. Donkin: Canoe Legends; Smetana: Vitava (The Moldau); Lyadov: The Enchanted Lake; Elledge (arr. Collier); The River Suite. Unity, voice and drums; Michael Newnham, conductor. George Weston Recital Hall, 5040 Yonge St. 1-888-985-3787. $45; $39(sr); $19(under 30).


MOOREDALECONCERTS.COM


The St Peter & St Simon’s Choir presents John Stainer’s The Crucifixion PALM SUNDAY, APRIL 14, 4:00 p.m. stpeterstsimon.ca


● 5:00: Eglinton St. George’s United Church. Triumph of the Spirit. Goodall: Requiem - Eternal Light; Glick: Triumph of the Spirit. Eglinton St. George’s United Church Choir and Chamber Orchestra; Krista Rhodes, piano; Andrew Adair, organ; Shawn Grenke, conductor. 35 Lytton Blvd. 416-481-1141 or esgunited.org. $35; $25(s).


Music at St. Thomas’s Church
383 Huron Street
Matthew Whitfield Director of Music
April 14 at 7 p.m. Palm Sunday St. Mark Passion by Charles Wood followed by Way of the Cross
April 15 at 8 p.m. Baroque Music by Candlelight Larry Beckwith leads an ensemble of singers and period instruments
Choral Services of Holy Week & Easter See details at stthomas.on.ca

Triumph of the Spirit SUNDAY, APRIL 14TH AT 4 P.M. ESG CHOIR & CHAMBER ORCHESTRA Featuring Howard Goodall’s Requiem: Eternal Light and Srul Irving Glick’s Triumph of the Spirit SHAWN GRENKE, CONDUCTOR KRISTA RHODES, PIANO ANDREW ADAIR, ORGAN ADULTS $35; STUDENTS $25 Eglinton St. George’s United Church Extending love· Serving others · Growing in faith 35 LYTTON BLVD. TORONTO 416.481.1141 www.esgunited.org

April 1 – May 7, 2019

To The Letter: An Epistolary Celebration OFF CENTRE MUSIC SALON APRIL 14, 2019 3:00 pm Trinity St. Paul’s Centre 427 Bloor Street West

To order tickets or subscriptions, please call 416.466.6323 or visit OFFCENTRE MUSIC.COM

thewholenote.com
Concerts in the GTA

Wednesday April 17


12:30: Organix Concerts. All Saints Kingsway. In Concert. The Dundas Trio (John Laing, organ; Lara Housez, soprano; Fernando Lima, counter-tenor). All Saints Kingsway Anglican Church, 2580 Bloor St. W. 416-571-3680 or organixconcerts.ca. Freewill offering. 45-minute concert.

7:30: Canadian Opera Company. La bohème. Music by Giacomo Puccini, libretto by Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa. Angel Blue/Miriam Khalil, sopranos ( Mimì); Atalla Ayan/Joshua Guerrero, tenors (Rodolfo); Andriana Chuchman/Danika Lorin, sopranos (Musetta); Lucas Meachem/Andrzej Filoczyk, tenors ( Marcello); Brandon Oedel/Erny Kое, baritones (Colline); Donato Di Stefano, bass (Benoit/Alcindoro); Phillip Addis/Joel Allison, baritones ( Schaunard); John Caird, stage director. Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. 416-383-8231. $35-$225. Runs Apr 17-May 22. Start times vary.

April 18 at 8 pm

ARIEL QUARTET

New York City’s ARIEL QUARTET makes its Canadian debut. The ARIEL QUARTET is in residence at Brooklyn College as part of the Arts and Humanities Society’s Performing Arts Series. The ARIEL QUARTET is also the recipient of the 2013 Avery Fisher Prize. The ARIEL QUARTET’s tour is supported by the Musical Instrument Foundation.

Thursday April 18

Boda, organ; Lark Popov, piano; Eric N. Robertson, conductor; Rev. Peter Holmes and Colleen Burns, narrators. Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, 1585 Yonge St. 416-241-1298. Free, donations welcome.

- **4:00: St. Paul’s Anglican Church (Uxbridge).** Bushtehude: Members Jesus Nostr, Cantorei Sine Nomine; Stuart Beaudoin, conductor/organ. 59 Toronto St. S., Uxbridge. 705-357-3299. $10 (free/child). Religious service.

- **7:30: Music at Metropolitan.** Pietà: Music and Poetry for Good Friday. Works by Johann Christoph Bach, Johann Michael Bach, Bushtehude, Taverner, Rachmaninoff and others. Metropolitan Festival Choir; Rezonance Baroque Ensemble and other players; Patricia Orr, poet; Patricia Wright, conductor. Metropolitan United Church (Toronto), 56 Queen St. E. 416-363-0331 x26, $20, $10 (under 18 and under).

- **7:30: Toronto Beach Chorale.** Requiem. Durufle; Requiem; Motets by Gounod, Fauré and Poulen; Guests: Jillian Yenen, mezzo; Jonathan Kirby, bass. Church of St. Aidan, 2423 Queen St. E. 416-690-5503 or bit.ly/TBDCurufle, $30/$25(adj); $15(7-18); $12.50(adj); free(under 7).

- **7:30: Toronto Mendelssohn Choir.** Sacred Music for a Sacred Space. Works by Messiaen, Poulen; Martin, Kodaly, Rachmaninoff and others. David Fallis, conductor; Ezra Burke, associate conductor. St. Anne’s Anglican Church, 270 Gladstone Ave. 416-408-2008. $35-$40; $30(Voxtix for 30 and under). Wheelchair accessible. Also Apr 17.


- **8:00: Marsyas Trio.** In the Theatre of Air. North America Tour 2019. Farrenc: Piano Trio in e Op.45; Beach: Pastoral & Caprice “The Water Sprites” Op.90; Tane: In the Theatre of Air; Muqarrab: Cantus Canta for alto flute, cello and piano. Marsyas Trio (Helen Vidovich, flute; Valerie Welbanks, cello; Olga Stezskho, piano). Array Space, 155 Walnut Ave. 416-532-3019. $20/18(adj); $15/12.50(st/adv).

- **8:30: Aga Khan Museum.** Hamza Akram Qawwal and Brothers. Qawwal (improvisational Sufi vocal tradition). 77 Wynford Dr. 416-646-4677. $50; $37.50(st/adv); $45(friends of the museum).

**Monday April 15**

- **11:00am: Humbercrest United Church.** Choral Concert. Schütz: The Seven Words of Christ on the Cross; Sanders: Re prophesies. Jennifer Krabbe, soprano; Jennifer Routhier, alto; River Guard, Jason Lamont, tenors; Alex Halliday, bass; Toronto Symphony Orches- tras String Quartet. 16 Baby Point Rd. 416-767-6192. Free. Freewill offering will be taken. Religious service.

- **4:00: Nine Sparrows Arts Foundation.** Good Friday Concert: Music and Readings for a Most Holy Day. John Johnson, saxophone; Beverley Johnston, percussion; Stephen Boda, organ; Lark Popov, piano; Eric N. Robertson, conductor; Rev. Peter Holmes and Colleen Burns, narrators. Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, 1585 Yonge St. 416-241-1298. Free, donations welcome.

- **6:00: Swing Out Music.** A Time for Love. The Songs of Tony Bennet. Joel Sheri- dan, vocalist; Attia Fias, piano. 120 Dinner, 120 Church St. 416-792-7725. PWYC ($10-$20 minimum).


- **7:30: Toronto Symphony Orchestra.** Mahler Resurrection Symphony. Mahler: Sym- phony No.2 “Resurrection”. Jodi Lee Harvey, soprano; Marie-Nicole Lemieux, contralto;
Concerts in the GTA

Amadeus Choir; Elmer Iseler Singers; Juanjo Mena, conductor; Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375. $30.75-$107.

Matt Chittick, tenor (Camille); Gregory Nyby, baritone (Count Danilo Danilovitsch); Free, donations welcome.

Baptist Church, 1585 Yonge St. 416-241-1298.

Yorkminster Park Foundation/Yorkminster Park Baptist Church.

No late seating.


Toronto Korean Presbyterian Church, 67 Scarsdale Rd., North York. 416-699-5798. $25/$20(adv); free(child 12 and under). Also Apr 25(1:30 pm).

8:00: Canada’s Ballet Jorgen. Coppelia: A Comedy with Love. Betty Oliphant Theatre, 404 Jarvis St. 416-961-4725. $35-$82. Also Apr 27(7:30).

8:00: Citadel + Company. Mirrors: A DanceWorks CoWorks Series Event. Created and performed by Paulina Derbez and Lucy Rupert. Music by J.S. Bach with original music by Paulina Derbez. The Citadel, 304 Parliament St. squaschourtcollective@gmail.com. $25. Also Apr 25 & 27.

8:00: Guitar Society of Toronto. Toronto Guitar Weekend: Competition Winner ShowCase Concert. Brent Crawford and Bokyeong Byun, guitars. St. Andrew’s Church (Toronto), 73 Simcoe St. 416-964-0238 or guitarsocietyoftoronto.com. $55/$30 adv); $25(st)/$20(st) adv).

8:00: Orpheus Productions. Shakespeare’s Criminal: A Chamber Opera. Music by Dustin Peters. Libretto by Sky Gilbert. Marion Newman, mezzo; Dion Mazzurile, baritone; and Nakoolan Bacon, actor. Factory Studio Theatre, 125 Bathurst St. 416-504-9971. $35; $25(st/arts workers). Also Apr 28(2pm).

8:00: Royal Conservatory of Music. András Keller Conducts the Royal Conservatory Orchestra. Shostakovitch: Piano Concerto No.2 in F Op.102; Tchaikovsky: The Rite of Spring. Linda Ruan, piano; András Keller, conductor. Koerner Hall, Telus Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-966-6341. $42 and up. Also Apr 26, 27, 28(mat); 30(at George Weston Recital Hall).

Friday April 26


7:30: Canadian Opera Company. La boheme. See Apr 17. Also Apr 28(2pm), May 27(3pm), 5(3pm), 7(7:30pm).


Toronto Korean Presbyterian Church, 67 Scarsdale Rd., North York. 416-699-5798. $25/$20(adv); free(child 12 and under). Also Apr 25(1:30 pm).

The whole note.com

Tuesday April 23


No late seating.

12:00 noon: Nine Sparrows Arts Foundation/Yorkminster Park Baptist Church. Lunchtime Chamber Music: Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, 1868 Yonge St. 416-241-1298. Free, donations welcome.

Wednesday April 24

8:00: Toronto Operaetta Theatre. The Merry Widow. Music by Franz Lehár. Lucia Cesarini, soprano (Anna Glawari); Michael Nyby, baritone (Count Danilo Danilovitsch); Matt Chitick, tenor (Camille); Gregory Finney, baritone (Baron Mirko Zeta); Daniela Agostino, soprano (Valencienne); Larry Beckett, music director; Guillermo Silva-Marín, stage director. St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 27 Front St. E. 416-366-7723. $55-$95. Also Apr 26, 27, 28(3pm).

Thursday April 25

12:00 noon: Canadian Opera Company. World Music Series: Silk Road Voyage. Lute Legends Ensemble (Wen Zhao, pipa; Lucas Harris, lute; Demetri Petasilakis, oud). Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre, Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. 416-363-8231. Free. First come, first served. No late seating.


Toronto Korean Presbyterian Church, 67 Scarsdale Rd., North York. 416-699-5798. $25/$20(adv); free(child 12 and under). Also Apr 26(7:30pm).


8:00: Citadel + Company. Mirrors: A DanceWorks CoWorks Series Event. Created and performed by Paulina Derbez and Lucy Rupert. Music by J.S. Bach with original music by Paulina Derbez. The Citadel, 304 Parliament St. squaschourtcollective@gmail.com. $25. Also Apr 26 & 27.

Friday April 26


7:30: Canadian Opera Company. La bohème. See Apr 17. Also Apr 28(2pm), May 27(3pm), 5(3pm), 7(7:30pm).


Toronto Korean Presbyterian Church, 67 Scarsdale Rd., North York. 416-699-5798. $25/$20(adv); free(child 12 and under). Also Apr 25(1:30 pm).

8:00: Canada’s Ballet Jorgen. Coppelia: A Comedy with Love. Betty Oliphant Theatre, 404 Jarvis St. 416-961-4725. $35-$82. Also Apr 27(7:30).

8:00: Citadel + Company. Mirrors: A DanceWorks CoWorks Series Event. Created and performed by Paulina Derbez and Lucy Rupert. Music by J.S. Bach with original music by Paulina Derbez. The Citadel, 304 Parliament St. squaschourtcollective@gmail.com. $25. Also Apr 25 & 27.

8:00: Guitar Society of Toronto. Toronto Guitar Weekend: Competition Winner ShowCase Concert. Brent Crawford and Bokyeong Byun, guitars. St. Andrew’s Church (Toronto), 73 Simcoe St. 416-964-0238 or guitarsocietyoftoronto.com. $55/$30 adv); $25(st)/$20(st) adv).

8:00: Orpheus Productions. Shakespeare’s Criminal: A Chamber Opera. Music by Dustin Peters. Libretto by Sky Gilbert. Marion Newman, mezzo; Dion Mazzurile, baritone; and Nakoolan Bacon, actor. Factory Studio Theatre, 125 Bathurst St. 416-504-9971. $35; $25(st/arts workers). Also Apr 28(2pm).

8:00: Royal Conservatory of Music. András Keller Conducts the Royal Conservatory Orchestra. Shostakovitch: Piano Concerto No.2 in F Op.102; Tchaikovsky: The Rite of Spring. Linda Ruan, piano; András Keller, conductor. Koerner Hall, Telus Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-966-6341. $42 and up. Also Apr 26, 27, 28(mat); 30(at George Weston Recital Hall).

Earth, Sea & Sky II

MISSA GAIA / EARTH MASS

Jenny Crober, Artistic Director
Elizabeth Acker, Accompanist

Alana Bridgewater, vocalist Colleen Allen, saxophone
Roberto Occhipinti, bass Mark Kelso, drums, percussion
Shawn grenke, organ Juan Carlos Medrano, percussion

Saturday, April 27, 2019 7:30 pm
Eastmain United Church,
310 Danforth Avenue (Chester subway), Toronto
$30 Gen. Adm. $25 Seniors $15 Students; Under 30
416-947-8187; www.vocathesaurous.ca

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Sings favourites by Donizetti and Bizet, Gershwin songs and more!

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thewholenote.com
Cesaroni, soprano (Anna Glawari); Michael Nyby, baritone (Count Danilo Danilovich); Matt Chittick, tenor (Camille); Gregory Finney, baritone (Baron Mirko Zeta); Daniela Agosino, soprano (Valenciennes); Larry Beckwith, music director; Guillermo Silva-Marin, stage director. St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 27 Front St. E. 416-366-7723. $35-$95. Also Apr 24, 27, 28(3pm).

Saturday April 27

• 7:00 Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Young People’s Concert: Let’s Dance! Daniel Bartholomew-Poyser, conductor; Matt Chittick, tenor (Camille); Gregory Finney, baritone (Baron Mirko Zeta); Daniela Agosino, soprano (Valenciennes); Larry Beckwith, music director; Guillermo Silva-Marin, stage director. St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 27 Front St. E. 416-366-7723. $35-$95. Also Apr 24, 27, 28(3pm).

OTELLO

Verdi

APRIL 27 – MAY 21

Finley, baritone (Iago); Tamara Wilson, soprano (Desdemona); Andrew Haji, tenor (Casiano); Carolyn Sproule, mezzo (Emilia); Owen McCauley, tenor (Roderigo); Donay Kose, bajo (Lodovico); Johannes Debus, conductor; David Alden, stage director. Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. 416-368-8231. $35-$225. Runs Apr 27-May 21. Start times vary.

• 7:30 Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Young People’s Concert: Let’s Dance! Daniel Bartholomew-Poyser, conductor; Matt Chittick, tenor (Camille); Gregory Finney, baritone (Baron Mirko Zeta); Daniela Agosino, soprano (Valenciennes); Larry Beckwith, music director; Guillermo Silva-Marin, stage director. St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 27 Front St. E. 416-366-7723. $35-$95. Also Apr 24, 27, 28(3pm).

From Tragedy to Comedy. Mozart: Requiem. Magic flute (excerpts). Oakham House Choir; Novi Singers Toronto; Toronto Sinfonietta; Matthew Jaskiewicz, conductor. Knox Presbyterian Church, 630 Spadina Ave. 416-660-5551. $30/$25(adv); $15(st); free(12 and under). Also Apr 26.


• 7:30 Canadian Opera Company. Otello. Music by Giuseppe Verdi, libretto by Arrigo Boito. Russell Thomas, tenor (Otello); Gerald

Monday April 28

• 7:30: Classical Music Conservatory. Music for a Cause: Benefit Concert for the Canadian Cancer Society. Sonya Harper Nyby, soprano; Ruza Florence McIntyre, vocals and violin; Bryn Allen, guitar and vibraphone; Matt Woroshyl, saxophone; and others. Roncesvalles United Church, 240 Roncesvalles Ave. 416-537-6995. PWYC ($20 suggested; $10/st/child). All proceeds to the Canadian Cancer Society.

• 2:00: Toronto Opera Players. In concert. Bowes: Sonata for Unaccompanied Cello; Bach: Concerto for Two Violins in d BWV1043; Mozart: Requiem. Jonathan Crow, violin; Andrew Wan, violin; Pax Christi Chamber Choir; Kenda Dyck, soprano; Jennifer Routhier, mezzo; River Guard, tenor; Michael Robert-Brader, bass-baritone; David Boswell, conductor. Church of the Redeemer, 162 Bloor St. W. 416-419-7532.

Tickets
$20/$10
416-363-0331 x26
www.metunited.ca

The Merry Widow. Music by Franz Lehár. Lucia Cesaroni, soprano (Anna Glawari); Michael Nyby, baritone (Count Danilo Danilovich); Matt Chittick, tenor (Camille); Gregory Finney, baritone (Baron Mirko Zeta); Daniela Agosino, soprano (Valenciennes); Larry Beckwith, music director; Guillermo Silva-Marin, stage director. St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 27 Front St. E. 416-366-7723. $35-$95. Also Apr 24, 26, 28(3pm).

• 9:00 Alliance Française Toronto. Sala-
mater Gnawa. Spadina Theatre, 24 Spadina Rd. 416-922-2014 x37. $30/$25(adv); $25/($15/st; $20 adv/st). [17(st)/members]; $12(adv members). Also May 2(7:30pm).
A. Concerts in the GTA

mozartproject.ca. $35; $15(st).


B. Luminaries Icons of the 20th Century

Gilles Tremblay
April 28 | Oliphant Theatre
www.NewMusicConcerts.com

- 8:00: New Music Concerts. Luminaries. Tremblay: Envoi for solo piano and ensemble; Boulez: Le Marteau sans maître with voice and six instruments. Louise Bessette, solo piano; Patricia Green, mezzo; New Music Concert Ensemble: Robert Atkin, director (Tremblay); Brian Current, director (Boulez). Betty Oliphant Theatre, 404 Jarvis St. 416-961-9594. $15; $25(sr); $10(st). 7:30pm pre-concert talk.

Luca Pisaroni and Thomas Hampson: No Tenors Allowed
TUESDAY APRIL 30, 8PM
KOERNER HALL

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

- 8:00: Royal Conservatory of Music. Luca Pisaroni and Thomas Hampson: No Tenors Allowed. Some Enchanted Evening and works by Mozart, Verdi, Rossini, Lehár, Webber, Rodgers, Bernstein, and others. Koerner Hall, Telus Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. $55-$115. Pre-concert talk at 7pm.

Pierre Boulez
April 28 | Oliphant Theatre
www.NewMusicConcerts.com

- 8:00: Guest Concert Series at the Royal Conservatory of Music. Tafelmusik, the Hunt: Mozart & Haydn. See Apr 25. Also Apr 30 (George Weston Recital Hall).

C. Tafelmusik
April 30, 2019
George Weston Recital Hall, Toronto Centre for the Arts

tafelmusik.org

- 8:00: Tafelmusik. The Hunt: Mozart & Haydn. See Apr 25 for details. George Weston Recital Hall, 5040 Yonge St. 1-855-985-2787. $39 and up. Also at Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre on Apr 25, 26, 27, 28(mat).

Wednesday May 1

- 12:30: Organix Concerts/All Saints Kingsway. Kingsway Organ Concert Series. Andrew Adair, organ. All Saints Kingsway Anglican Church, 2850 Bloor St. W. 416-517-3680 or organixconcerts.ca. Freewill offering. 45-minute concert.
- 8:00: Royal Conservatory of Music. Murray Perahia, piano. Koerner Hall, Telus Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. $120. Pre-concert talk at 7pm.

Thursday May 2


WOMEN’S MUSICAL CLUB OF TORONTO

MAY 2, 2019 | 1.30 PM

MUSIC IN THE AFTERNOON

416-923-7052
wmtc.on.ca

- 1:30: Women’s Musical Club of Toronto. Music in the Afternoon: Rolston String Quartet. Mozart: String Quartet No.19 in C K465; R. Murray Schafer: String Quartet No.2; Beethoven: String Quartet No.53 in B-flat Op.130. Rolston String Quartet (Luri Lee, violin; Emily Kruspe, violin; Hezekiah Leung, viola; Jonathan Lo, cello). Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto,

5:30: Cor Unum Ensemble. Dido & Belinda. Opera? Ryan Patrick McDonald, conductor (Dido); Camille Rogers, mezzo (Aeneas); Rebecca Genge, soprano (Belinda); Cor Unum Ensemble; Ruth Denton, conductor. Trinity College Chapel, U of T, 6 Hoskin Ave. 416-371-0999 or corunumensemble.com. $20; $10(st/ arts workers). Also May 5.


7:30: St. Matthew’s Anglican Church, Islington. Saturday Night at the Movies. Thomas Gonder, organ, 3962 Bloor St. W., Etobicoke. 416-231-4014 or saintmatts.ca. $10.

A. Concerts in the GTA

with live symphony orchestra. Sony Centre for the Performing Arts, 1 Front St. E. 1-855-872-7669. $55-$811. Also May 2.

- 8:00: Chorus York. Classics in the Spring. Vivaldi; Glory, and works by Tallis, Byrd, and others. Swanapo, soprano; Kiera Braun, soprano; Stéphane Potvin; conductor; Richard Hansen, organ. St. Matthew's United Church, 333 Crosby Ave. Richmond Hill. 905-884-7922. $55(family); $25($0); $15($0); free($0); 10% off. Sunday following concert. Also May 5.

- 8:00: Esmeralda Enrique Spanish Dance Company. Impulso. El Sonido de mi Alma (Taranta); Trenton: Toros (Taranta); Gar- nata (Granain); El Camino (Alegrias); A mis padres (Rondalla); and other works. Esmer- alda Enrique and José Maldonado, choreo- graphers; Caroline Planté, Benjamin Barrille, guitars; Manuel Soto, Marcos Marin, vocalists; Derek Gray, percussion. Fleck Dance Theatre, Harbourfront Centre, 235 Queens Quay W. 416-973-4000. $34-$48; $28-$34($0). Wheelchair accessible. Also May 3(8pm), 5(3pm).

Sunday May 5


- 2:00: Canadian Opera Company. La bohème. See Apr 17. Also May 7(7:30pm).


- 8:00: Scarborough Philharmonic Orch- estras. Classic Film Music. Prokofiev: Lieutenant Kijé Suite Op. 60; Korngold: Violin Concerto in D Op.32; Mancini: Theme from The Pink Pan- ter. (Claire Custer); and works by Samuel Bissone; Bruno Degazio; Ronald Royer, and Sergei Komfan. Aaron Schwebel, viol- in; Ronald Royer, conductor. Salvation Army Scarborough Citadel, 2021 Lawrence Ave. E., Scarborough. spo.ca. $35; $30($0); $15($0); musician; $10($0; child under 10). Free parking.

- 8:00: Tempus Choral Society. A Musical Celebration. Tempus4Us Children’s Choir; Tempus4Us Jazz Choir; Brian L. Turnbull, music director; Jane Wansers, accompa- nist. Clearview Christian Reformed Church, 2300 Sheridan Garden Dr. Oakville. $47-967- 6704 or tickets@tempsuchoralsociety.com. $20. Also May 3(10pm).


Saturday, May 4, 7:30 pm

- 12:00 noon: Canadian Opera Company. Vocal Series: A Few of My Favourite Things. Artists of the COC; Liz Upchurch, piano.
Concerts Beyond the GTA


Monday April 1

6:00: Don Wright Faculty of Music. Contemporary Music Studio. Vn. 73; Vns. 13. 3:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society. GSO at the Basilica. Beethoven: Mass in C. Lida Skwarek, soprano; Pascale Spinnler, mezzo; Ryan Downey, tenor; Zachary Reade, bass; University of Guelph Symphonic Choir and others. Basilia of Our Lady Immaculate, 28 Norfolk St., Guelph. 7:93-300-00. $2; free with new subscription to 2019/20 season.

Tuesday April 2


Wednesday April 3

12:00 noon: Midday Music with Sheguer. Chamber Music Concert. Brahms: Sonata No. 1; Beethoven: Kreutzer Sonata. Vivian Kukiel; viola; Chris Au; piano. Hiawent Pentecostal Church, 50 Anne St. N., Barrie. 7:67-721-1811. $10; free(st).

Thursday April 4

6:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society. EMiC+. 533-2424. $35-$58; $37-$55(faculty/staff); $19-$29(st).

Friday April 5


Satuday April 6


Love (or Lelix d’amore). By Gaetano Donizetti. Cambridge Centre for the Arts, 80 Dickson St., Cambridge. vcopera.ca. $15. Also Apr 6(2/Tue), 7/2(Guelph).

Sunday April 7

2:00: Cambridge Symphony Orchestra. Last Night at the Proms. Knox’s Galt Presbyterian Church, Talbot College, Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 5:61-376-37. Free. Try out the instruments after the concert.

2:00: Don Wright Faculty of Music. Contemporary Music Studio. Vn. 73; Vns. 13. 3:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society. GSO at the Basilica. Beethoven: Mass in C. Lida Skwarek, soprano; Pascale Spinnler, mezzo; Ryan Downey, tenor; Zachary Reade, bass; University of Guelph Symphonic Choir and others. Basilia of Our Lady Immaculate, 28 Norfolk St., Guelph. 7:93-300-00. $2; free with new subscription to 2019/20 season.


7:00: Versa Causa Opera. The Elixir of Love (or Lelix d’amore). By Gaetano Donizetti. Knox Presbyterian Church (Waterloo), 50 Erb St. W., Waterloo. vcopera.ca. $15. Also Apr 5(Cambridge), 7/2(Tue), Guelph. 7:00-9:00. $25($20 more); $20($under 30); $15($under 14).


3:00: Old Church Theatre. Nick Maclean Quartet with Brownian All. Nick Maclean, piano; Brownian All, trumpet; Nick Arsenault, bass; Norbert Botos, drums. 400 Front St. W., Toronto. 6:48-941-41. $30/$25(dlad); Also Apr 5(Kitchener). 7/14(Toronto).

7:30: Peterborough Symphony Orchestra. Oh, To Be In England! Vaughan Williams: The Lark Ascending; Symphony No.3 “Pastoral”; Britten: Gloria animae Suite. Proveb Tsang, violin; Melody Thomas, soprano. Place-Show Performance Centre, 20 George St. N., Peterborough. 7:04-742-4581. $20-$40. $19($29 and under); 8:00pm: “Meet the Maestro” pre-concert chat.


8:00: Empire Theatre. The Legendary Gordon Lightfoot in Concert. 321 Front St., Belleville. 613-969-0999. $85-$110. Also Apr 5.


Karen Schuessler Singers. Let Me Fly Rachmaninoff: All Night Vigil (selections); Eksel Saw de Weeld. Witness, Hold on and other spirituals. SATB choir. Wesley-Knox United Church, 91 Askin St., London. 5:45- 8855. $22; $10(st); $10(under 14).

8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. Classical and Beyond. Laura Grogan: We’re Not Done Drumming: Mozart; Sinfonia Concertante; Haydn: Symphony No.101 in D “The Clock”. Rebecca Thomas, poet/narrator; James Mason, oboe; Ross Edwards, clari- net; Ian Hopkin, bassoon; Katherine Robertson, horn; Joseph Swensen, conductor. Centre in the Square, 101 Queen St. N., Kitchener. 7:94-475-11 or 1-888-747-4117. $19-$85. Also Apr 6.

9:00: Nick Maclean Quartet. Nick Maclean Quartet with Brownian All. Nick Maclean, piano; Brownian All, trumpet; Nick Arsenault, bass; Norbert Botos, drums. The Boathouse, 57 Jubilee Dr., Kitchener. 416- 389-2643. $15($10 adv list). Email nickmacleanquartet@gmail.com for adv list. Also Apr 6(Trenton), 7/1(Toronto).

12:00 noon: Western. The Cello Fella: Free, donations welcome.

7:30: Canadian Opera Company. La bohème. See Apr 7.

8:00: Toronto Symphony Orches- trava. Queens of Soul. Shanya Steele, vocalist; Jeff Tyzik, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. W. 416-598-3575. $43.25-$107. Also May 8(Man), 8(eve).

8:00: Guelph Chamber Choir. Choral Masterpieces: Music for Double Choir and Organ. Love (or Lelix d’amore). By Gaetano Doni- zetti. Knox Presbyterian Church (Waterloo), 50 Erb St. W., Waterloo. vcopera.ca. $15. Also Apr 5(Cambridge), 7(2/Tue), Guelph.

9:00: Guelph Symphony Orchestra. La bohème. See Apr 7.

B. Concerts Beyond the GTA

Thursday April 11
- 7:00: Windsor Symphony Orchestra. Haydn’s The Hocció. Robert Franz, conductor. Capitol Theatre (Windsor), 17 University Ave. W. Windsor. 519-973-1238 x2. $35.
- 8:00: FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre. The Legendary Gordon Lightfoot in Concert. 250 St. Paul St., St. Catharines. 905-688-0722 or 1-855-515-0722. $109; $94 (Hot Ticket members). Also Apr 12.

Friday April 12
- 8:00: FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre. The Legendary Gordon Lightfoot in Concert. 250 St. Paul St., St. Catharines. 905-688-0722 or 1-855-515-0722. $109; $94 (Hot Ticket members). Also Apr 11.
- 8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. The Force Is with Us: The Music of John Williams. Selections from the hit movies of John Williams. Bradley Thachuk, conductor. Partridge Hall, FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, 250 St. Paul St., St. Catharines. 905-688-0722. $60; $64 (sr); $12 (child); $33 (student and under); $20 (arts worker); $5 (EyeGO). Also Apr 14 (mat).
- 8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. North Bay Symphony. Symphonies Fantasticque: Ravel: Don Quichotte à Dulcinée; Fazil: Jerusalem; Berlioz: Symphonie fantas-tique. Daniel Licht, bass-baritone. Capitol Centre, 150 Main St. E., North Bay. 705-474-2477 or 1-888-834-4747. $30-$45; $15 (sr); $12 (child). Free (child 12 and under with purchase of adult or student ticket).
- 7:30: Windsor Symphony Orchestra. Farewell Symphony. Leonard Slatkin. Ravel: Ma Mère l’Oye; Rossini: Marguerite; Dukas: Villanelle for Horn and Orchestra; Beethoven: Symphony No.6; Ravel: Daphnis et Chloe; Dukas: Villanelle for Horn and Orchestra; Berlioz: Symphonie Fantas-tique. Bradley Thachuk, conductor. Partridge Hall, FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, 250 St. Paul St., St. Catharines. 905-688-0722. $60; $64 (sr); $12 (child); $33 (student and under); $20 (arts worker); $5 (EyeGO). Also Apr 14 (mat).

Saturday April 13
- 3:00: At the First Chamber Players. Music of Canadian Women. Archer: Four duos for violin and cello; Cuthaith: Sonata for violin and cello; Cummings: Our Strength; Our Song; Feldman: Pour un nuage violet, Ho: Kagura Fantasy; Morlock: Serpentine Paths; and other works. Mercer Duo. First Unitarian Church, Hamilton, 170 Dundurn St. S., Hamilton. 519-399-5125. $20; $15 (sr); $5 (st).

Sunday April 14
- 5:00: Calidore Quartet. Kitchener, Sunday, April 14, 2pm Art Gallery of Hamilton. www.5ATTHEFIRST.COM
- 3:00: Westben. Schubert to a Tea. Songs in piano music of Schubert. Marjorie Mal-tais, mezzo; Don Mazzerele, baritone; Brian Finley, piano. Clock Tower Cultural Centre, 36 Front St. S., Campbellford. 705-653-5508. $35. Includes tea and treats.
- 3:00: Whispering River Music. Soulfire Series: Song of Destiny. Mozart: Symphony No.40 in K550 and works by Brahms, Wu, and Morehead. Whispering River Orchestra; Riverongs Festival Choir; Mary-StreetCen- tre, 24 Mary St., Parry Sound. 705-896-0736 or whisperingrivermusic.com. $20 or PWYC.

Tuesday April 16
- 7:30: Isabel Bader Centre for the Per-forming Arts. Seven Deadly Sins: Naughty but Nice - Soundstreams Canada. Elizabeth Shepherd, vocals; Aviva Chernick, vocals; Robin Dann, vocals; Christopher Mayo, com-poser; Analia Liagdar, composer; 300 King St. W., Kingston. 613-533-2424. $40-$45; $37-$35 (faculty/staff); $19-$29 (st).
- 12:00 noon: Music at St. Andrew’s. Marty Smyth, Organ; St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church (Barrie), 47 Denv St., Barrie. 705-726-1180. $10, free (sr).
- 8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society. Robert Grcura, Classical Gui-tar. Castelnuovo-Tedesco: Capriccio diabolico Op.50; Bach: Violin Sonata No.2 BWV1002; Mertz: Elegy; Barrios: Florida; Valse

Wednesday April 17
Friday, April 26, 7:30 p.m.
Basilica of Our Lady Immaculate Church - Guelph

Nicholas Capozzoli with Organix Festival Brass Ensemble

In Collaboration with Basilica of Our Lady Immaculate Church
**Concerts Beyond the GTA**

Saturday May 4

- **10:00am:** Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. Flowers Wake Up. KWS Musicians; Barbara Croll, storyteller. Waterloo Region Museum, 10 Huron Rd., Kitchener. 519-745-4711 or 1-888-745-4717. $36. Also May 1(Waterloo); Apr 27(Woodstock Memorial Centre); May 11(Conrad Centre for the Performing Arts), Pre-concert activities at 10am.

- **2:00:** King Edward Choir. Messiah Plus! With chamber orchestra. Handel. Choruses from Messiah. Credo: Songs of Nature; Brahms: How Lovely Is Thy Dwelling Place; Puccini: Requiem; Rachmaninoff: Ave Maria; Gershwin: Medley. Oliver Babalurski, conductor. Collar Street United Church, 112 Coller St., Barrie. 705-733-7955. $25; $15(st); Also 2pm.

- **7:30:** Menno Singers. Celebration, Meditation. de Boer. Lobogesang (Hymn of Praise). Menonite Mass Choir; Waterloom Chamber Players. St. Peter’s Lutheran Church, 49 Queen St. N., Kitchener. 519-576-8751. Pricing TBD.

- **7:30:** Peterborough Singers. Belshazzar’s Feast & Faure’s Requiem. Walton: Belshazzar’s Feast; Faure: Requiem. Agnes Zsi- lavcsics, soprano; Andrew Tees, baritone; Ian Saether, organ. Emmanuel United Church (Peterborough), 534 George St. N., Peterborough. 705-748-1820. $30; $20(30 and under); $10(st).


- **8:00:** Bill Culp Productions. The Carpenters. We’ve Only Just Begun. Rainy Days and Mondays, Top of the World and other songs. Bruce Tournay and Loralee McGuirl, a Sunday celebration; Elgar: Cello Concerto; Beethoven: Symphony No.5. Rafeal Hoekman, soloist. Fraser Auditorium, 935 Ramsey Lake Rd., Sudbury. 705-673-1280. $44; $20(Amped Uplift - 21 and under).

Sunday May 5

- **2:00:** Waterloo Concert Band. Centennial Celebration - C.F. Thiele. Theatre. Festival Favourite and works by his contemporaries. Trevor Wagler, conductor. Knox Presbyterian Church, 226 Aberdeen Ave., Waterloo. 519-573-4989. $10(st 13-17); $5(child). Also May 4(Kitchener), Welland, May 5(Ailsonton), with string quartet.

**Theatre**

- **7:00:** Opera by Request. Miss Havisham’s Wedding Night and Waterbird Talk. Music by Dominic Argento. Brianna DeSantis, soprano (Miss Havisham); Parker Clement, baritone (The Lecturer); Claire Harris, keyboard; William Shookhoff, pianist/music director. Paulin Memorial Presbyterian Church, 112 Collier St., Barrie. 705-733-7955. $25; $15(st); Also 3:00.

- **8:00:** Classical Music Theatre. Mamma Mia! Music and libretto by Claude Vi Coleman. Theatre Passe M Casual Mainspace, 16 Ryerson Ave., 613-567-8945. $25-$35. Opens Apr 4, 8pm. Runs Apr 13, Thurs-Sat(8pm). Also May 4, 7:30pm. Also May 5.


**Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company**

Strieiss and X. Conceived by Avery Saltzman, George Weston Recital Hall, Toronto Centre for the Arts, 5040 Yonge St. 416-932-9995. $95 and up. Apr 7, 7:30pm.

**Heliconian Club**

A Night at the Opera. Operatic solos, transcriptions and new works. Works by Bizet, Puccini, Dvořák and Skarecky. Heliconian Hall, 35 Hazelton Ave. 416-922-3618. 8:30 (free under 12). Apr 26, 7:30pm.

**Lower Ossington Theatre**

9 to 5. The Musical. Music and lyrics by Dolly Parton, book by Patricia Resnick, based on the film. Lower Ossington Theatre, 100A Ossington Ave. 1-888-324-6282. $59.50-$69.50. Opens Mar 14, 7:30pm. Runs to May 26, Thurs-Sat (7:30pm), Sat/Sun (3:30pm).

**Lower Ossington Theatre**


**Scarborough Music Theatre**


**Shaw Festival**


**St. Paul’s United Church**


**Stratford Festival**


**Stratford Festival**


**Theatre Aquarius**


**Toronto Operetta Theatre**

The Merry Widow. Music by Franz Lehár, libretto by Viktor Leon and Leo Stein. Larry Beckwith, music director. St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 27 Front St. E. 416-316-7723. $55-$95. Opens Apr 24, 8pm. Runs to Apr 28. Wed/Fri/Sat (8pm), Sun (3pm).

**Vera Causa Opera**

The Elixir of Love (or L’elisir d’amore). By Gaetano Donizetti. Cambridge Centre for the Arts, 60 Dickson St., Cambridge. vocopera.ca. 815, Apr 5, 7pm. Also Apr 6 (Waterloo), 7pm, Guelph.

**Vera Causa Opera**

The Elixir of Love (or L’elisir d’amore). By Gaetano Donizetti. Knox Presbyterian Church (Waterloo), 50 Erb St. W. vocopera.ca. 815, Apr 6, 7pm. Also Apr 5 (Cambridge), 7pm, Guelph.

**Vera Causa Opera**

The Elixir of Love (or L’elisir d’amore). By Gaetano Donizetti. Harcourt Memorial United Church, 87 Dean Ave., Guelph. vocopera.ca. 815. Apr 7, 2pm. Also Apr 7 (Cambridge). 67 (Waterloo).

**VOICEBOX**


**Waves Theatre**


**Windsor Light Musical Theatre**


**Windsor Light Musical Theatre**

Hair-spray. Music by Marc Shaiman, lyrics by Scott Wittman and Marc Shaiman, book by Mark O’Donnell and Thomas Meehan, based on the film. St. Clair College Centre for the Arts: Chrysler Theatre, 201 Riverside Dr. W., Windsor. 519-974-6593. $36; $31 (sr/st). Opens May 3, 8pm. Runs to May 12, Fr/Sat (8pm), Sun (2pm).

**Young People’s Theatre**

Over the past month, Toronto lost two of its most creative, sophisticated guitarists: Ed Bickert (1932-2019) and Justin Haynes (1973-2019). Though 40 years apart in age, both exemplified a dedication to the craft of jazz guitar, a broad knowledge of the ever-evolving history of improvisational music, and a deep commitment to expanding and reshaping the role of the guitar in a wide variety of conventional and unconventional settings.

Growing up in Ottawa, Justin Haynes studied with Roddy Elias before moving to Toronto in the late 1990s, where he quickly established himself as a creative, boundary-pushing musician, collaborating regularly with Jean Martin, Nick Fraser, Christine Duncan and many other members of Toronto’s vital jazz/improvising music community. A prolific recording artist, he appeared on over 25 albums (currently available through his website), toured regularly, and performed consistently throughout Toronto. Haynes was the 2012 artist-in-residence at Calgary’s National Music Centre. For those who wish to attend, there will be a remembrance service at the TRANZAC on April 19; there is also a GoFundMe page, on which visitors may donate money to benefit Haynes’ son.

Ed Bickert, an active member of the Toronto music community since his move to the city in the mid-1950s, was a consummate musician, and a major influence on guitarists who came after him, both in Toronto and throughout the world. Recording and touring with a range of artists, including Moe Koffman, Phil Nimmons, Rob McConnell, Rosemary Clooney and Paul Desmond, Bickert was a tasteful, precise player, whose rhythmic and harmonic command of the guitar was such that even his simplest phrases could immediately capture a listener’s attention. His most memorable performances were often in small ensembles. For those who wish to attend, there will be a remembrance service at the TRANZAC on April 19; there is also a GoFundMe page, on which visitors may donate money to benefit Haynes’ son. Lorne Lofsky

It is not always common to see Lofsky leading his own ensemble, so his two-night stint at The Rex represents a valuable opportunity to hear him in his element.

The Rex will also host a number of other notable guitarists, including both the established and the new. First, the new: Alex Goodman – a graduate of both the University of Toronto and Manhattan School of Music’s jazz programs, and now a New York resident – brings his quartet to town on April 6. Accompanying Goodman are three of New York’s top young jazz musicians: saxophonist Ben van Gelder, bassist Martin Nevin, and drummer Jimmy MacBride. Nir Felder, another young guitarist (and Fender-style guitar proponent) based in the United States, joins Toronto’s Tetrahedron for two nights of music on April 9 and 10. Tetrahedron – typically a chordless trio, made up of saxophonist Luis Deniz, electric bassist Rich Brown, and drummer Ernesto Cervini – is a natural pairing.
for Felder, who shares their penchant for groove, melodicism, and a decidedly electric aesthetic that touches on jazz, rock and R&B.

Second, the established: on April 14, bassist Dave Young, who performed and recorded, at various points, with Hickert, Lofsky and Peterson, amongst myriad other jazz luminaries, brings his quartet to The Rex. He is joined by trumpeter Kevin Turcotte, drummer Terry Clarke and guitarist Reg Schwager. Schwager, a first-call player for many of Canada’s top jazz singers, has an incredible command of the idiomatic language of classic jazz, and plays with a warm, round tone. Performing later in the month with the Barry Romberg Group, guitarist Geoff Young – who, as a faculty member at the University of Toronto’s jazz program, has taught many of Toronto’s most exciting young guitarists – is a dynamic, multifaceted guitarist, a thrilling improver, and, like Hickert, a dedicated Fender player, whose biting, rock-tinted tone works to complement the sweeping lyricism of his phrasing.

Elsewhere

April will see some other notable guitar performances at venues outside of The Rex. On April 17, Virginia and Kirk MacDonald Quartet plays at the Old Mill’s Home Smith Bar. Virginia – an increasingly busy clarinetist, band leader, and the daughter of Toronto jazz scene mainstay Kirk – has collaborated with her father before, on the recent album Generations, featuring pianist Harold Mabern. The MacDonalts are joined at the Home Smith Bar by bassist Neil Swainson and guitarist Lucian Gray. Gray is a burgeoning master of the guitar stylings of Wes Montgomery, amongst other foundational figures, but his unique gift is his ability to make this classic sound new, vital and immediately exciting. In another part of town, and at a different end of the guitar-style spectrum, Luan Phung can be found on most Sunday afternoons playing trio at Poetry Jazz Café in Kensington Market. Aesthetically, Phung’s playing can be located in the school of modern jazz guitar, and is, at times, reminiscent of players such as Kurt Rosenwinkel and Ben Monder. But his deft touch, strong harmonic sensibility and searching improvisational tendencies mark a developing style all his own.

D. In the Clubs (Mostly Jazz)

MAINLY CLUBS, MOSTLY JAZZ QUICKPICKS

- APR 4 AND 5, 9:30PM/9:45PM: Lorne Lofsky, The Rex. Lorne Lofsky appears with his stellar quartet for two nights of communicative jazz at The Rex.
- APR 17: Virginia and Kirk MacDonald Quartet, Home Smith Bar. Father/daughter duo Virginia and Kirk MacDonald lead their quartet at The Home Smith Bar; with bassist Neil Swainson and exciting young guitarist Lucian Gray.
- MOST SUNDAYS, 4:30 TO 7:30: Luan Phung, Poetry Jazz Café. Hear burgeoning modern jazz guitarist Luan Phung at an intimate, communicative trio setting in Kensington Market’s Poetry Jazz Café.

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

Apr 3 7pm Lisa Parcette’s Girls Night Out Jazz Jam. Apr 4 8:30pm Ben O’Dunia. Apr 5 9pm Amy McConnell / William Sperandei Quintet. Apr 6 9pm Amy McConnell / William Sperandei Quartet. Apr 7 7pm Jim Bettas. Apr 11 5pm Low Overhead. Apr 12 7:30pm Charles Di Raimondo. Apr 13 8:30pm Charles Di Raimondo. Apr 14 7pm Linda Covelito’s Tribute to Eve Cassidy. Apr 17 8pm Whiteway Wednesday. Apr 18 5pm Dan McCarthy Quartet. Apr 20 6pm Carmen Spada Trio feat. Jerry Weldon. Apr 23 8pm The Willows. Apr 24 7pm Janet Whiteway and Friends. Apr 25 7:30pm Whitney Ross-Barris. Apr 26 8pm Ilana Waldston and the Jazz n’ Laugh Band. Apr 27 7pm Ilana Waldston and the Jazz n’ Laugh Band. Apr 28 7pm Adi Braun.

Jazz Room, The
Located in the Hether Hotel, 59 King St. N, Waterlo. 226-476-0555
jazzroom.com (full schedule)
All shows: 8:30-11:30pm unless otherwise indicated. Attendees must be 19+. Cover charge varies (generally $12-$25)
Apr 4 8pm Alysha Brilla. Apr 5 7pm Jerry Kaplanek Quartet. Apr 6 8pm Rebecca Hennessy and FOG Brass Band. Apr 12 7pm John Zadro Quartet. Apr 13 7pm Kevin Breit and the Sisters Euclid. Apr 19 7pm Carmen Spada Trio feat. Jerry Weldon. Apr 20 8pm The Willows. Apr 26 8pm Fern Lindzon. Apr 27 7pm Igor Wilcoc Quartet.

Lula Lounge
1565 Dundas St. W. 416-588-0307
lulacanada.ca (full schedule)
Every Fri 7:30pm Afterwork Global Party Series free before 9pm; Every Fri 8:30pm Havana Club Fridays @15; Every Sat 10:30pm Salsa Saturdays @15.
Apr 3 7:30pm Of Glitches and Machines. Apr 4 6:30pm Three Holy Thursdays in Hell: Circles in Concert. Apr 7 7-9:45am, 1:45pm & 2:15pm MJMS Spring Recitals and Celebrations. 6:30pm 12th Annual Benefit for Bernie. Apr 11 6:30pm Three Holy Thursdays in Hell: Circles in Concert. Apr 14 5:45pm & 12pm MJMS Spring Recitals and Celebrations.
Apr 17 6:30pm The Big Sing. Apr 18 6:30pm

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

Sunday, April 14 at 4:30pm
Rob Pitch (guitar), Neil Swainson (bass)

Sunday, April 28 at 4:30pm
 Tribute to Art Blakey
With the Brian Barlow Quintet

COMING SOON
Our 20th Anniversary celebrations.

Christ Church Deer Park, 1570 Yonge St. (north of St. Clair at Heath St.) Admission is free; donations are welcome. 416-920-5211 www.thereselfhere.org

Dress in your favourite 70s outfit and dance the night away Studio 54 style. All proceeds to support the budget for future productions of Shakespeare's Criminal. Factory Studio, 125 Bathurst St. $80. Visit shakespeare-scriminal.brownpaperickets.com.

Apr 29:30: Classical Music Conservatory. Music for a Cause: Benefit Concert for the Canadian Cancer Society. Sonya Harper Nyby, soprano; Rzza Florence McIntyre, vocals and violin; Bryan Allen, guitar and vibraphone; Matt Woroshy, saxophone; and others. Roncesvalles United Church, 240 Roncesvalles Ave. 416-537-5995. PWYC ($20 suggested) $10(sr/ct/child). All proceeds to the Canadian Cancer Society.

May 4 2:30: Music4Life Ensemble. Music for a Cure. Forest Brook Community Church, 60 Kearsney Dr. Aja/J, $15; $10(sr); $10(st); free(child 12 and under); $50(Music4Life Supporter - $35 goes to orchestra); $25(Music4Life Supporter - $10 goes to orchestra). Concert benefit for Cystic Fibrosis Canada. Free post-concert reception.

Lectures, Salons and Symposia

Apr 9 7:30: Toronto Duke Ellington Society. General Meeting. A presentation titled “Oscar Peterson Plays Duke Ellington” by Allan Jones. Montgomery’s Inn, 4700 Dundas St. W., Etobicoke. For further information, visit torontodukeellingtonsociety.com or call 416-239-2683. Membership is $35 (single) or $50 (couple). First visit is free.


Film Screenings

Apr 02 6:30: Royal Conservatory of Music. Ravi Shankar: Between Two Worlds (2001). 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 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 Bryan Allen, guitar and vibraphone; Matt Woroshy, saxophone; and others. Roncesvalles United Church, 240 Roncesvalles Ave. 416-537-5995. PWYC ($20 suggested) $10(sr/ct/child). All proceeds to the Canadian Cancer Society.

April 25 7:00: Canadian Opera Company. Opera Insights: Inside the Music of Verdi’s Otello. Join musicologist Matthew Timmers as he guides participants through the musical score and a variety of interpretations. Discover how Verdi sets the mood for his characters.

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● Apr 26 4:30: Canadian Opera Company. Exploring Opera. Families with children of all ages are welcome to explore an opera in the COC’s 2018/19 season through accessible music and drama activities. This one-hour workshop focuses on La bohème by Puccini. No previous experience with opera or the performing arts is required. Education Centre, Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. (at University Ave.). For more information and to reserve tickets, visit coc.ca/EO. Free.

● Apr 27 10:00am: Guitar Society of Toronto. So You Want to Play in a Band: A History of Women’s Contributions to Guitar Orchestras in Europe and North America. Mariette Stephenson will discuss the societal impact of large guitar ensembles and their promotion of women in music (from the Baroque era to the present day) including the involvement of female composers and music directors. St. Andrew’s Church, 73 Simcoe St. www.guitar-societyoftoronto.com. 416-964-8298. $20; $10(st).

● Apr 27 2:00: Guitar Society of Toronto. Celebrating Ida Presti’s Artistry as Solo Performer and Composer. Dr. Candace Moodwray will discuss characteristics of legendary guitarist Ida Presti’s skill and style as a performer, and the ways in which those traits are manifested in her solo compositions. St. Andrew’s Church, 73 Simcoe St. guitar-societyoftoronto.com. 416-964-8298. $20; $10(st).

● May 07 7:30: The Heliconian Club. The Joy of Singing. Presented by Stephanie Bogle. In this interactive lecture, Stephanie will talk about her career in Europe, and then get people to participate in some vocal exercises and talk about vocal technique, style and health. Heliconian Hall, 55 Hazelton Ave. 416-922-3618. heliconianclub.org. Tickets $25, children under 12 free when accompanied by an adult.

Master Class

● Apr 28 1:00: Guitar Society of Toronto. Master Class with Berta Rojas. St. Andrew’s Church, 73 Simcoe St. guitar-societyoftoronto.com. 416-964-8298. $20; $10(st).

Sing-alongs, Jams, Classes

● Apr 08 7:00: Canadian Opera Company. Opera Insights: Sing-along Opera Choruses. Warm up those vocal cords for an opera sing-along! Led by Sandra Horst, the COC’s Price Family Chorus Master, learn some of opera’s most familiar choruses and perform them together from start to finish. No musical experience necessary. Richard Bradshaw Theatre, Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. (at University Ave.). Reserve tickets at coc.ca/opernights or by calling 416-363-8231. Free.


Tours

● Apr 07 10:30am: Canadian Opera Company. 30-Minute Tour of the Four Seasons Centre. Led by a trained docent. Includes information and access to the Iсадore and Rosalie Sharp City Room, the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre and R. Fraser Elliott Hall, as well as backstage areas such as the rig rooms and dressing rooms, the orchestra pit, and other spaces that only a stage door pass could unlock. Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. 416-363-8231. coc.ca. $20(adults); $15(st/pt).

● Apr 14, May 5. A tour is available in French on Apr 26.

Workshops


● Apr 29 2:00: CAMMAC Toronto Region. Reading for singers and instrumentalists of Rossini’s Stabat Mater: Daniel Norman, conductor; Christ Church Deer Park, 1570 Yonge St. 416-605-2793. $10; $5(members).

● May 04 10:30am: Toronto Mendelssohn Choir. Singalong Saturday Choral Workshop. Presented by Dr. Rachel Rensink-Hoff of Avanti Singers and Brock University who will lead participants through some great Kyrie-Gloria pairings from early masses of Palestrina and Byrd through to contemporary settings. Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, Cameron Hall, 1585 Yonge St. Information at tmcchor.org/singalong-saturdays. $10 fee includes refreshments.


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continued from page 41
notes for two full hours!” Their theme for the 27th season is: “Inspired by Bach,” and they have a new website: uxbridgecb.webs.com.

Big Band Scene
Aside from my remarks earlier about Jim Galloway’s Wee Big Band, we have some other news from the big band scene. We have just been informed by Lawrence Moule, of the After Hours Big Band, about a unique concert to take place Saturday evening, April 13, at the Aurora Cultural Centre. Music students from Sir William Mulock Secondary School in Newmarket will be presenting their first-ever public concert, a jazz program in collaboration with the After Hours Big Band. As Lawrence states: “The idea here is that an established band is helping to encourage youthful players, and possibly pointing the way toward future opportunities.” Aurora’s Town Council is studying plans to redevelop a portion of the town’s core into an entertainment and cultural complex, with the working title of “Library Square.” Plans include a new professional concert venue with 250 seats.

Meanwhile, existing concerts are held at the Cultural Centre (the former Church Street School, where Lester B. Pearson taught). It’s a professional venue but its concert hall, called Brevik Hall, is quite small. The organizers hope that this could be a model for future events at Library Square, once that development affords an expanded showcase for arts and culture in Aurora. Talented young local performers will be able to join forces with veterans to produce musical entertainment that will be unique to Aurora.

The After Hours Big Band got its start when some members of the Newmarket Citizens Band wanted to get together to play “big band music.” Those people stayed behind after the regular concert rehearsal. Now, years later, this group, still mostly members of the concert band, have rehearsals on a different night at a different location.

I recently had unusual unplanned visit with another big band. I had been invited to visit a rehearsal of the York Region Brass Band. When I arrived at the venue, I was stunned to see a couple of saxophones. As it turned out I had been given the wrong date. I was just in time for a regular rehearsal of the Borealis Band of Aurora. Since I knew a few of the members of the band, I stayed until after intermission, and enjoyed a bit more big band music.

Murray Ginsberg
Shortly after last month’s column about Murray Ginsberg, I received a lovely message from Barby Ginsberg, Murray’s youngest daughter. Along with her thanks about comments in that column, she was very curious about where I had obtained some of my information. In particular, she said that someone would have had to be at his funeral to have known, as I wrote, that “someone said after his passing: ‘Look out heaven – you just got one more Saint who’s marching in.’... That someone was me! That was how I ended my eulogy!” (Unfortunately, at this juncture, I can’t recall my exact sources.)

BANDSTAND QUICK PICKS

> APR 6, 7PM: The Mississauga Big Band Jazz Ensemble will present “Best of Big Band Open Mic.” Cooksville United Church, 2500 Mimosa Row, Mississauga.
> APR 28, 2PM: The Mississauga Big Band Jazz Ensemble will present “Jazz at the Legion.” Port Credit Legion, 35 Front St. N., Port Credit.
> MAY 5, 3PM: The Weston Silver Band will have their “Afternoon at the Proms” with Canadian and British repertoire. Glenn Gould Studio, 250 Front St. W.

Jack MacQuarrie plays several brass instruments and has performed in many community ensembles. He can be contacted at bandstand@thewholenote.com.
There is a buzz in the air at Toronto’s Kensington Gardens seniors home, as a pair of virtuoso violinists tune up their instruments in the chapel. The residents are gathering in neat rows next door in the Multipurpose Room lit by blinding white fluorescent beams. Some shuffle in, bony hands clutching hefty walkers. Others, slumped forward in their wheelchairs, are pushed by staff. Near the front, a nervous senior wrings her hands and chuckles. “Oh my goodness. It’s so exciting to have the kids – it’s such a warm atmosphere,” she says. In the back, a man with translucent skin and a rich baritone voice is getting into the mood, snapping his fingers and crooning a love song to anyone who’ll listen.

Rebekah Wolkstein and Drew Jurecka stride in, introduce themselves, and plunge deep into Dvořák’s Humoresque. Jurecka half-closes his eyes as he taps the beat with his feet. Wolkstein wrinkles her forehead as she meshes her part with his. The violin bows whizz in perfect synchrony, connected by an invisible skein of sound.

Sparked by the players’ youthful vitality, the residents are jolted to attention. Some sit a bit straighter, a new glow in their gaze. Others start to sway. The nervous woman’s eyes are riveted on the artists, and she starts bobbing her head to their beat. A young girl wraps her arms around the waist of a loved one, and the two rock back and forth in tandem.

Wolkstein and Jurecka have performed at illustrious concert halls across Ontario and beyond: Toronto’s St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, Ottawa’s National Arts Centre, London’s Aeolian Hall. But this afternoon, away from the red carpet, the plush seats and glitzy curtains, the duo is equally at home in this downtown Toronto long-term care residence. “I like these intimate concerts the most,” says Wolkstein. “When you look out, you can tell you’re bringing so much joy to these people who are really isolated.”

This is, in fact, their mission. Jurecka and Wolkstein have been sent here by the Concerts in Care (CIC) program run by the Health Arts Society of Ontario (HASO), who bring the thrill of high-quality concerts to seniors sequestered in longterm care (www.concertsincareontario.com). HASO selects classical and jazz musicians from the province’s elite arts organizations, including the Canadian Opera Company, the Toronto Symphony and Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra. Supported by corporations such as Azrieli Foundation, BMO Financial Group, government agencies, private sponsors, and modest fees from the homes, the group has presented almost 1200 concerts for 61,500 seniors in Ottawa, Pembroke, Sudbury and the GTA.

Concerts in Care started more than a decade ago. It’s the brainchild of Canadian retired insurance executive David Lemon, who founded the Health Arts Society of British Columbia in 2006. Watching a close elderly friend wither away in a nursing home left a deep impression on the philanthropist. “She had a huge amount of time on her hands, with nothing to do,” says Lemon. As dementia robbed her ability to communicate, loved ones stopped visiting, and she languished in loneliness.

By the end of her life she was cooped up in a room without mementos, separated only by plastic curtains from three confused roommates whose cries woke her up at night. Lemon was devastated by these insults to her dignity. “We as a society are not doing a good job giving full respect to these people,” he says.

After her death, it gradually dawned on the lifelong music lover that he could make a dent in their despair. Drawing on his network of musicians as well as his own success running an insurance business, he hit on the notion of bringing top-notch concerts to seniors facilities. While these places had long hosted amateur entertainers, Lemon felt that residents deserved more. “It’s so wrong to think that’s good enough for our frail elders,” he says. “They’re entitled to the same quality as we are.”

Since the first Concerts in Care recital comforted clients at a rehab hospital in Vancouver, six more sister societies, each one autonomous but bound by the same values, have emerged across Canada. The Health Arts Society of Ontario (HASO), was established in 2011. Together these groups have regaled the elderly across most of Canada. The shows provide more than just first-class entertainment for shut-ins. They also help to ease the pain of estrangement which pervades many seniors homes.

“It can be very lonely even in a large institution,” says Health Arts Society of Ontario executive director Debra Chandler. While some gregarious seniors welcome the opportunity to befriend others in their building, many yearn for their old social life and have trouble adjusting to their new reality. Some will barricade themselves in their rooms, seeking comfort from a few familiar belongings. “Whatever facility they are in can feel like a prison,” says Chandler.

And there’s little to fill the vacuum left by these losses. “They might
get a movie or a bingo game once a week if they’re lucky,” says Jeanne Lamon, artistic director of HASO. “There isn’t much to stimulate their minds.”

York University researcher Ami Rokach studies the problem of loneliness. The clinical psychologist says there are 1.4 million elderly Canadians who suffer significantly from the condition. “That’s a public health crisis.” The cumulative loss of loved ones with increasing age, as well as a decline in mobility can both lead to social isolation. Elders deposited in seniors facilities, rarely visited by relatives steeped in the “me first” Western culture, often feel abandoned.

Persistent loneliness can become toxic. “People begin to think they’re alone because they’re inferior and unlovable,” says Rokach. Patients who feel worthless often neglect their health, worsening any pre-existing medical problems. As well, the chronic stress of alienation wears down the mind and body, triggering depression, elevated blood pressure, lowered immunity, and even a shortened lifespan.

The live concerts at least partially redress the sting of rejection. “People at the top of their game are coming to play just for them – that means they care,” says Rokach.

Musicians are chosen for their kindness as well as their capability, says Lamon. Once a potential performer has aced the audition, Lamon usually attends their first concert and evaluates their capacity to relate to residents. “I look at how the musicians talk to the audience – I can sense whether they’re in their own world, or reaching out to them,” she says. Performers are expected to supplement the pieces with stories. A Tafelmusik ensemble, for instance, might provide historical context by describing the instruments used during the Renaissance. Players sometimes share personal anecdotes. On one occasion, a young man introduced Liszt’s Spanish Rhapsody by describing the Spanish woman who had taught him the dance steps in the piece. “This makes people feel like they know him a little bit – and turns the concert into a social experience,” says Chandler.

Wolkstein has a special kinship with seniors. After her grandfather moved to a nursing home following a series of strokes, she visited him regularly. Since he had trouble talking, they couldn’t communicate through language, so the violinist reached out to him through their shared medium of music. When she played familiar songs, he would start conducting with his good hand, often moved to tears, says Wolkstein. “It was the best way we had to connect to him.”

Wolkstein draws on this well of compassion to make her listeners feel welcome. “There’s this warm space we create for people to come out of their rooms and enjoy something together,” she says. While she sticks to the program during her formal recitals, Wolkstein sometimes invites personalized requests during her gigs with Concerts in Care.

“That means so much to people when you can play the exact piece they want to hear,” she says.

Jurecka also makes an effort to bring the most vulnerable residents back to happier times when they attended shows with loved ones.

The shared enjoyment also yokes audience members together, says Awosanya. “They look at each other, nod in agreement, and sometimes even reach out to hold hands.” Afterwards, some residents continue socializing, trading reminiscences sparked by the songs.

Chandler has heard similar testimonials from caregivers. At one Ottawa long-term care residence, a nurse began to cry after a musician performed for a client with dementia. “He’s been catatonic for years,” she told Chandler. “I’ve never heard him humming, but he’s humming today.”

At Kensington Gardens, the musicians wrap up the concert with a rousing, toe-tapping tango. The audience erupts into applause, one man shouting “Bravo, bravo” over and over. The duo bow and bid the crowd a wonderful afternoon.

It seems they’ve already made the residents’ day. The nervous lady seems calmer now, her hands still. “I think it’s amazing how good this is for people,” she says. Back in his room on the fifth floor, the man with the beautiful baritone seems to think it’s an open mike day and spontaneously belts out A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square in perfect harmony with the instrumentalists.

The performers don’t mind when audience members crash the show. “We’re trained to deal with distractions,” says Wolkstein. Besides, their enthusiasm shows that they’re having fun. The singer knew all the words to the song and seemed to be shocked by his solo, says Wolkstein. “It’s wonderful that we can bring this gift to people who enjoy the music that we love,” she says.

While musicians have always recognized the therapeutic potential of pieces, research is finally validating these beliefs. Listening to our favourite tunes releases pleasurable chemicals, including dopamine and opioids, which elevate the mood and reduce stress, says neuroscientist Daniel Levitin, professor emeritus at McGill University, who details these effects in his book, This is Your Brain on Music. Songs also keep us company. “If you’re depressed or feeling disconnected, it can be uplifting to listen to sad music and realize that you’re not alone – the composers have felt the same way,” says Levitin.

Live concerts are especially invigorating. In one recent study, Levitin showed that the brainwaves of people listening to the same music simultaneously began to coordinate with each other. He speculates that we secrete small amounts of oxytocin, the “cuddle hormone,” in these situations, stimulating a sense of trust and bonding.

Music’s ability to rekindle memories can also boost our spirits, says Levitin. Familiar tunes can evoke strong sentiments which transport us back to good times associated with these experiences. These soothing recollections can dispel some of the loneliness, he says.

Care staff have also witnessed the transformations wrought by tunes. “People leave the concerts in better spirits, smiling and dancing back to their rooms,” says Abiola Awosanya, programs manager at longterm care home Cedarvale Terrace. The music can take residents back to happier times when they attended shows with loved ones. The shared enjoyment also yokes audience members together, says Awosanya. “They look at each other, nod in agreement, and sometimes even reach out to hold hands.” Afterwards, some residents continue socializing, trading reminiscences sparked by the songs.

Vivien Fellegi is a former family physician now working as a freelance medical journalist.

Wolkstein and Jurecka perform together in two quartets. Payadora Tango Ensemble (www.payadora.com) plays Argentine tango and folk music as well as the musicians’ own compositions (Sunday, May 5 at Jazz Bistro 7pm), while The Venuti String Quartet (www.venutistringquartet.com) performs classical, jazz, contemporary and world music (Sunday, May 12 Mother’s Day matinee at West Toronto Baptist Church).
NEW CONTEST
Let’s check back in on a few of APRIL’S MYSTERY CHILDREN

Siblings: operatic baritone and singer/songwrite. Him: Cosi fan tutte at COC in Feb 2019. Upcoming with Soundstreams’ Hell’s Fury in June! His sister; currently in Germany touring her show MODERNE FRAU. Catch this musical tribute to the women of 1920’s Berlin when she returns at The Jazz Bistro, April 28.

Versatile pianist with a special affinity for music of the 20th and 21st centuries, and a true “Friend of Canadian Music.” Upcoming with Kindred Spirits Orchestra, May 11 and June 29, performing André Mathieu’s Fourth Piano Concerto.

Mezzo soprano, equally at home in any outfit. If you missed Barbara Croall’s Miziwe …(Everywhere…) with Pax Christie you can hear her upcoming in Against the Grain Theatre’s Kopernikus, April 4 to 13.

A high tenor with astounding diction. In Idomeneo with Opera Atelier, April 4 to 13; Bach’s Magnificat with Tafelmusik in May, and Beethoven’s Mass in C, May 25, with the Bach-Elgar Choir (Hamilton).

Think you know who they all are? WIN PRIZES!
Send your best guess by April 20 to musicschildren@thewholenote.com

Previous artist profiles and full-length interviews can be read at thewholenote.com/musicschildren. Or — you can view them in their original magazine format by visiting our online back issues https://kiosk.thewholenote.com

WE ARE ALL MUSIC’S CHILDREN

SOME OF APRIL’S CHILDREN

MJ BUellan

It’s kind of amazing, but that was nearly 15 years ago, and here we are in April 2019. Since then in almost every issue we’ve tempted readers to identify a member of the music community from a childhood photo with a chance to win concert tickets and/or recordings. We follow up with a profile that looks at music in that artist’s childhood, and announce the contest winners.

Where we all win is in better understanding the many things that can make a difference in their early years if people are to have musical lives. Some simple examples follow.

In April 2006, conductor David Fallis talked about Lloyd Bradshaw, the choirmaster of St. George’s United Church Boy Choristers. “Through him I became a founding member of the Canadian Children’s Opera Chorus, and had such fun in the O’Keefe Centre in La Bohème, Carmen, Turandot etc. A very outgoing charismatic musician, great with kids and youth, he was the first to suggest I should consider conducting.”

In April 2010, pianist Serouj Kradjan described his earliest musical memory: “… my father ceremoniously taking the vinyl disc out of its sleeve, putting it on the disc player, the sound of the needle falling and suddenly, music filling the room. My excitement related to this process had no boundaries.”

In April 2012, conductor Lydia Adams said, “CBC was a musical lifeline to us in Cape Breton, as well as in most parts of the country, I suspect. We listened to everything: Elmer Iseler conducting Handel’s Messiah each Christmas; the Christmas Eve service from King’s College, Cambridge, with David Willcocks conducting; the marvellous voices of Lois Marshall and Maureen Forrester, people I later knew and worked with …”

In April 2016, soprano Mireille Asselin said, “My own strongest memory is my father picking me up and dancing me around our living room to the Temptations: “I’ve got sunshine on a cloudy day. When it’s cold outside I’ve got the month of May …”

Robert Aitken, Nova Scotia, circa 1935
some of my favourite memories are from road trips taken with my dear friend André Leduc. We met in the lobby of Jane Mallett Theatre at the intermission of an Esprit Orchestra concert sometime in the mid-1980s. I was already well versed in the 20th-century canon, and was quickly drawn to the outgoing personality of this musical naiif whose curiosity about the subject seemed boundless. I told him about my radio show Transfigured Night on CKLN-FM and he told me about his work as a commercial photographer. We became fast friends and later travelling companions.

Our journeys most often have contemporary music at their heart – Montreal for the founding of the Canadian Electroacoustic Community, Ottawa for QuartetFest, Montreal again (and again) for a number of festivals and conventions – although our trip to Quebec City and on up the north shore to Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré and beyond to see the arrival of the snowy geese, was strictly a pleasure outing as I recall. But there is always an aspect of modern art involved too, with gallery visits an integral part of our adventures. One memorable trip around the turn of the new millennium combined these two shared loves in a most wonderful way. The timing of our visit to Montreal on that occasion coincided with a retrospective tribute at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts to Jean-Paul Riopelle who had died earlier that year, and a concert by Quatuor Molinari featuring one of our shared favourites of the genre, Lutosławski’s String Quartet.

An unintended highlight of that trip was meeting the artist who was the namesake of the quartet, Guido Molinari and spending time in his studio. This was at the instigation of founding first violinist Olga Ranzenhofer who, charmed by my friend, encouraged us to “give Guido a call” when she found out our interest in contemporary visual art. We did, and found him to be a most amiable host, generous with his time so long as we were willing to wait while he put a few more brush strokes on “before the paint dries.” That is when André took the photo seen here of Molinari at his work bench. On many of our trips, and during two decades as photographer for New Music Concerts before retiring, André captured some of the most significant musical voices of our time. You can find his book of Canadian composer portraits, Composers In My Lens, at musiccentre.ca/node/144800.

I believe it is safe to say that the Molinari String Quartet is the most active chamber ensemble in Canada devoted almost exclusively to the performance and propagation of contemporary music. They have just released their 13th disc on the ATMA label, as well as having contributed to portrait recordings of Jim Hiscott and Otto Joachim over the years. In addition, the Molinaris have been a prime factor in the development of the genre by hosting, since 2002, a biennial international string quartet competition for composers under the age of 40. Three of their ATMA discs have been devoted to early laureates of the competition.

Their most recent release, following discs of music by international luminaries Gubaidulina, Kurtág and Schnittke, features four works written between 1988 and 1996 by American John Zorn (ATMA ADC2 2774 atmaclassicus.com). The disc begins with what has become Zorn’s most frequently performed work, Cat O’ Nine Tails, a pastiche often reminiscent of a Roadrunner cartoon. In one movement, it is constructed of many brief fragments, in the words of Ranzenhofer: “By turns sparkling or gritty, virtuosic improvisations, musical allusions, harmonic sequences and sonic mash-ups – all these components freely combine in this dazzling, disconcerting and droll work.” Zorn himself suggests that the next work, The Dead Man, is “like the soundtrack of a sordid and sadomasochistic film set in a gloomy New York or Tokyo basement.” Although divided into 13 movements, again they are brief fragments ranging from 20 to 90 seconds, juxtaposing wild mood swings.

The final two works are much darker. Momento Mori is presented as an emotional autobiography composed in 1990 and is dedicated to Zorn’s longtime collaborator Ikue Mori. At 27 minutes it is by far the most substantial work on offer here. While it too juxtaposes a plethora of moods, from meditative repose to extraordinary tension, there is none of the comic flamboyance of the preceding tracks. The final work, Kol Nidre, was written “in a single 30-minute burst of inspiration” according to Zorn, and Ranzenhofer says it “uses music stripped of all impure sonorities to reveal a world of inner peace.” For its seven-minute duration we are drawn into an almost medieval stasis of entirely tonal, gentle unison melody more suggestive of Arvo Pärt, or Shostakovich in his more contemplative moments, than the Zorn of the earlier works. Throughout the disc the Molinaris are superb, finding just the right balance between abrasive exuberance, virtuosic hilarity, quiet desperation and haunting beauty as required.

One of my “trips of a lifetime” on which André did not accompany me, was a ten-day visit to Iceland in 2012 with my wife Sharon at the invitation of New Music Concerts’ colleague Robert Atken and his late wife Marion. Of course there was music and art involved – Bob seems to know every composer and musician on the island and is also an aficionado of modern art – but also museums. Iceland seems to have a museum for everything, including expected topics like Vikings, glaciers, volcanoes and whales, but some surprising off-beat subjects as well, like punk music, herring and penises (Icelandic Phallological Museum) – we did not visit that one. It was an amazing trip in the last days of June and early July, with the sun barely disappearing below the horizon for an hour each night. Although we did not circumnavigate the island, we did travel to many of the (incredible) landmarks including Snæfellsjökull, a 700,000-year-old glacier-capped stratovolcano which was the starting point of The Journey to the Centre of the Earth in Jules Verne’s novel; Thingvellir National Park, home of Althing, the world’s first parliament which was convened there in 930 and continued on that site until 1798, and is also the meeting point of
the North American and European tectonic plates which are gradually moving apart at a rate of a millimetre or two per year; a number of unbelievable waterfalls, various hot springs and geysers and the black sand beaches of Vik. Most striking was the stark, treeless landscape and the barren hillsides dotted with Iceland's miniature horses and endless sheep. And why am I telling you all this? I believe that trip gave me the background to truly appreciate the starkness of the next disc.

Icelandic-born cellist Sæunn Thorsteinsdóttir has just released Vernacular (Sono Luminus DSL-92229 saeunn.com/vernacular) which includes world premières of solo works written for her by three of the current generation of Icelandic composers, and a contemporary classic by senior composer Hallíldóttir SIGURJÓNSSON (b.1941). Composer Hallgrimsson is a cellist in his own right (and incidentally was in the trio ICE with Robert Aitken and composer/pianist Thorell Sigurbjörnsson during the 1970s). He composed Solitaire for solo cello in 1969 and it was his first published work, later revising it to its current form two decades later. Thorsteinsdóttir says that from the first time she played the work she felt a connection “not only to the music, but also beyond the music.” The idiomatic writing is like “playing [with Hallgrimsson’s] hands... getting to know a fellow musician in this physical way is satisfying and humbling at the same time.” After the extremes of the first three pieces on the disc, Solitaire is a welcome relief. A five-movement work, it opens with Oration employing simultaneous left-hand pizzicato beneath a disc, Solitaire the same time.” After the extremes of the first three pieces on the disc, Solitaire is a welcome relief. A five-movement work, it opens with Oration employing simultaneous left-hand pizzicato beneath a

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Serenade is played entirely without the bow employing simultaneous left-hand pizzicato beneath a

which is a lively and energetic Jig. This performance makes clear why Solitaire is regarded as a seminal and significant exploration of “the sound world... available to the contemporary cellist,” at least as perceived in 1969.

As mentioned, the recent works on this recording explore more extreme notions. The disc begins with Páll Ragnar Pálsson (b.1977), a rock musician who has recently come to the world of art music. He composed Quake in 2018 his solo work at the International Rostrum of Composers in Budapest, which is a direct outgrowth of that project. This is

which combines solo cello with quiet natural sounds from a field recording made at night in an Icelandic fjord by Magnus Bergsson. The entire piece takes place in barely audible gestures with only a rare pizzicato pop rising above the field. Hallárdís Smárald (b.1989) contributes a three-movement work simply titled O. Thorsteinsdóttir tells us that “In Iceland, darkness in the winter months has created a need for light and warmth for centuries, and candles continue to be a source for both. This piece explores the meaning and associations with the intimacy, warmth, and the wild yet contained energy of the light of the candle and its effect on the darkness surrounding it.” As effective as this depiction is, it only makes me the more content to have visited Iceland during the days of the midnight sun.

This month’s final disc also contains new works for solo cello, but with a very different premise. Guided by Voices – New Music for Baroque Cello (Analekta AN 2 9162 analekta.com/en/) features works written for Elinor Frey. Frey, an accomplished cellist comfortable in the music of all eras but particularly known for her early music acumen, says: “When modern composers write a new piece for ‘Baroque’ cello it becomes an instrument of today, helping to expand the sound worlds of both the cello and new music audiences.” The breadth of vision and diversity of voices represented here certainly support this. Scott Edward Godin’s piece, which gives the album its title, “draws inspiration from the life and oeuvre of Saint Hildegard of Bingen, […] and exploits the obsessiveness found within recurring melodic units of Hildegard’s music, deconstructing these units before reconstructing them in a new musical framework.” Those familiar with Hildegard’s long, sustained melodies may be surprised by the level of activity in Godin’s creation, but strains of her melodies do perk through the busyness.

Minerva, says composer Lisa Streich “imagines a goddess who, almost like an octopus, helps with or stands for many things at once – a goddess of everything. She reminds me of the human being of the future, a human fully endowed with equal rights, who, according to Global Gender Gap Reports, should exist in 217 years.” Frey dedicates her project to Maxime McKinley with gratitude for his “humour and kindness.” McKinley’s own contribution, Cortile di Pilato, was inspired by a courtyard in Bologna surrounded by the Basilica of Santo Stefano, a complex of four churches built on a foundation begun in the fifth century that was itself built on a temple dedicated to the Egyptian goddess Isis. He says: “I was interested in the ‘copresence’ of different epochs in the same place that create a thread among many centuries. This pleased me, particularly when writing a piece for Baroque cello and harpsichord.” For this performance Frey is joined by Melisande McNabney.

Like the McKinley, Linda Catlin Smith’s Ricercar was commissioned with the support of Toronto philanthropist, the late Daniel Cooper. It is perhaps the most “Baroque” of the pieces on offer here; played with little or no vibrato, the melody gently unfolds and grows. But gradually it expands through other sound worlds as the melody is supported by double and triple stops that produce some close harmonies, some wide interval jumps and, toward the middle of the piece, a driving rhythmic pulse. This eventually gives way to a quiet section before building dramatically again and receding once more. Ken Ueno says Chimera “is a kind of meta-suite in five movements, one that traverses time. Starting with a contemporary recasting of a prelude, the following movements gradually approach a ghost of the Baroque.” Frey seems at home in all the realms this journey presents her with, be it just intonation, microtonality, haptic virtuosity or stasis. It is our good fortune to accompany her.

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
strInGS
ATTACHED

TERRY ROBBINS

Ascent is the first solo album by the 26-year-old American violist Matthew Lipman, and also marks his debut on the Cedille Records label (CDR 90000 184 cedillerecords.org). He is accompanied by his regular duo partner, American pianist Henry Kramer. The creative process behind the CD started when Lipman asked American composer Clarice Assad to write a fantasy piece for viola and piano in memory of his mother. Lipman chose the Ascent title to describe the album’s music and “the upward movement that happens throughout life and after.”

The opening track is the Phantasy for Viola and Piano Op.54 from 1914 by the English composer York Bowen. It’s a simply gorgeous work which perfectly showcases the warmth, lightness and agility of Lipman’s playing as well as the top-notch contribution from Kramer. The standard never drops throughout the world premiere recording of Assad’s two-part Metamorfose or Robert Schumann’s four Märchenbilder Op.113.

Fuga libre by the Irish violinist and composer Garth Knox is the only solo viola work on the CD. Written in 2008 for the Tokyo International Viola Competition, it uses some really interesting effects, including quite fascinating harmonic glissandi.

Shostakovich’s very brief (at 1:56) Impromptu for Viola and Piano Op.33, written in 1931 but not discovered until 2017, is another world premiere recording. Lipman having managed to obtain a pre-publication transcript of the score from the DSCH Publishing House. A viola arrangement of Franz Waxman’s virtuoso Carmen Fantasie brings an outstanding CD to a close, Lipman’s flawless technique, beautiful tone and consummate musicianship making for viola playing as fine as any you will hear.

It’s difficult to think of a more exciting duo than violinist Alina Ibragimova and her long-time pianist partner Cédric Tiberghien. Their 3-CD live recital set of the complete Beethoven violin sonatas contained some electrifying performances, and they bring the same level of playing to their latest CD, Vierne & Franck: Violin Sonatas, a recital of works that pay homage in their own ways to 19th-century musical thinking, their fairly dense textures and serious nature being qualities that would be rejected in post-WWI Paris (Hyperion CDA68204 hyperion-records.co.uk).

The Poème élégiaque Op.12 by Eugène Ysaÿe opens the CD – and what an opening it is! Published in the violin version in 1893 and the first of Ysaÿe’s nine Poèmes for string instruments and orchestra, it was inspired by the death and funeral scenes from Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet and employs scordatura tuning for darker colour, the low G string being tuned down to F. It’s a rhapsodic, passionate work that perfectly showcases this duo’s strengths: tone, nuance, intelligence, passion, commitment, and flawless technical assurance.

César Franck’s Violin Sonata In A Major was written in 1886 as a wedding present for Ysaÿe, it’s been popular for so long that hearing it again is like revisiting an old and treasured friend, and the visit here is a truly lovely one. The connections between the works on the disc continue with Louis Vierne’s outstanding Violin Sonata in G Minor Op.23. Vierne was a pupil of Franck, and this sonata was written at Ysaÿe’s request and premiered by him in 1908. It’s a sweeping work much in the style of the Franck, and deserves to be much better known.

The brief Nocturne from 1911 by the 18-year-old Lili Boulanger, Nadia’s younger sister, acts as a light dessert after the richness that has preceded it, and ends a CD of music-making of the highest order.

Whenever there’s another CD from the always wonderful Steven Isserlis in the new releases, you just know you’re in for something special, and so it proves yet again with Shostakovich & Kabalevsky Cello Sonatas. Isserlis is joined by his recital partner of over 30 years, pianist Olli Mustonen (Hyperion CDA68239 hyperion-records.co.uk).

The Shostakovich Sonata in D Minor Op.40, written in 1934 when the composer was in his late 20s, sets the tone for the whole CD, Isserlis displaying his usual full-blooded and passionate, yet always sensitive and musically intelligent playing, especially in the opening movement and the fiendish and demonic second. Mustonen is his equal in every respect.

Kabalevsky’s Ballade in C Major Op.15 is an early work from 1912 when the composer was only 21: it is essentially in two halves, Prokofiev referring to it as “similar in form to a sonata in two movements.”

There’s no doubting the strength and quality of Kabalevsky’s Sonata in B-flat major Op.71, written for Rostropovich in 1962. Isserlis notes that this is a work that should really be heard more often, and his performance here makes an even stronger case.

Three short works round out the CD. Shostakovich’s brief (at 2:31) Moderato was only published in 1986 after being discovered in a Moscow archive alongside the manuscript of the Cello Sonata. It’s believed to be from the same period, but its real provenance remains unknown. Prokofiev’s Adagio – Cinderella and the Prince is a 1944 arrangement of a section from his ballet Cinderella. Kabalevsky’s Rondo in memory of Prokofiev Op.79 was the third of three test-piece Rondos he wrote for the Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow – one for piano in 1958, one for violin in 1962 and this one in 1965. It’s quite substantial, with more than a hint of Prokofiev’s music, especially the wispy “wind-in-the-graveyard” effect from the first violin sonata.

In his usual outstanding booklet notes Isserlis includes his customary exact timing references to salient points in the works, adding an extra touch of class to a simply outstanding CD.

In his introductory booklet notes to Bach: The Cello Suites (Hyperion CDA68261 hyperion-records.co.uk) the German cellist Alban Gerhardt reveals that, like so many others, he was reluctant to even try recording these challenging works before turning 50 – which he does this coming May. He is also aware that any recording can never be a final word.

For some time Gerhardt studied Baroque performance practice, but felt his attempts to assimilate historically informed techniques didn’t work for him, his playing sounding “neither authentic nor musically very interesting. I came to realize that just turning off the vibrato and using a sound which barely touched the surface of the string actually had very little to do with historical performance and didn’t sit well with me as a musician.”

He consequently uses vibrato “with great care and control” and aims for “a seemingly effortless articulation with as much depth to the sound as possible.” Add Gerhardt’s 1710 Matteo Gofriller cello and the results are simply beautiful. It’s a set that easily holds its own in a very competitive field.

With the BIS Super Audio CD Tan Dun: Fire Ritual – Violin Concertos we enter the distinctive sound world of the Chinese composer Tan Dun, now in his early 60s. The Norwegian violinist Eldbjorg Hemsing has been collaborating with the composer since 2010, a relationship which resulted in the creation of both of the works on the CD: the
violin concertos Rhapsody and Fantasia and Fire Ritual. Tan Dun conducts the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra (BIS-2406 bis.se).

An early version of the Rhapsody and Fantasia was originally written over a decade ago, but the work is heard here in the 2018 revision for Hemsing. The two movements, each of three parts, have their roots in ancient Peking opera melody, Tan Dun having been a conductor of a travelling Peking Opera troupe in his teens.

Fire Ritual was written for Hemsing and premiered by her in Oslo in September 2018. Subtitled A music ritual for the Victims of War, it unfolds from – and stays centred on – the single note D, using its status as “Re” on the solfège scale as a prefix meaning “again,” as in the Renewal, Resurrection, Return and Rebirth of souls who were lost in wars.

Both concertos have a similar sound, with little Western melodic (or harmonic, for that matter) material, prominent percussion sections (four players with at least 20 mainly Chinese percussion instruments) and a distinctly Chinese flavour to the solo violin writing. Hemsing is outstanding in what must be considered definitive performances.

Formed in 2002 for a concert tour of Taiwan, the Formosa Quartet celebrates its members’ Taiwanese heritage on From Hungary to Taiwan, a project that pairs treatments of folk music from the two countries and explores their similarities (Bridge Records 9519 bridgerecords.com).

Dana Wilson’s Hungarian Folk Songs was commissioned by the quartet as “a sort of entrée” into Béla Bartók’s quartets. Wilson says that he tried to capture key aspects of the traditional music itself and not just write his own music inspired by it, and he certainly succeeded. The Formosa Quartet perfectly captures his remarkable folk music effects and nuances.

In Song Recollections, another work written for the group, Chinese composer Lei Liang studies Taiwan’s art, songs and people. His settings of five songs from four native tribes are mostly quiet and atmospheric, with a distinctly Chinese feel.

Béla Bartók’s String Quartet No.4 from 1928, constructed as a five-movement symmetrical arch with the Night Music slow movement at its heart, is the major work on the CD.

Another Formosa Quartet commission, Wei-Chieh Lin’s Four Taiwanese Folk Songs from 2017 ends the disc. These clearly popular and much-loved melodies, two of them written in the 1930s, are given lush, Romantic treatment, and draw rich, warm and evocative playing from the quartet.

A bonus track, Spring Breeze, is available only through an online link; it turns out to be the first of Five – not Four – Taiwanese Folk Songs, so its omission from the CD is a bit odd. Still, it’s a gorgeous piece, and you can watch the quartet performing the complete set on YouTube. It’s well worth watching, and well worth a listen.

The Juilliard String Quartet has been around since 1946, and although founding first violinist Robert Mann lasted for an astonishing 51 years and two subsequent members for over 40 years each, the ensemble has had a total of 17 members during its existence. The 2017 lineup (first violin Joseph Lin having been a conductor of a travelling Peking Opera troupe in his teens.

Fire Ritual was written for Hemsing and premiered by her in Oslo in September 2018. Subtitled A music ritual for the Victims of War, it unfolds from – and stays centred on – the single note D, using its status as “Re” on the solfège scale as a prefix meaning “again,” as in the Renewal, Resurrection, Return and Rebirth of souls who were lost in wars.

Both concertos have a similar sound, with little Western melodic (or harmonic, for that matter) material, prominent percussion sections (four players with at least 20 mainly Chinese percussion instruments) and a distinctly Chinese flavour to the solo violin writing. Hemsing is outstanding in what must be considered definitive performances.

Formed in 2002 for a concert tour of Taiwan, the Formosa Quartet celebrates its members’ Taiwanese heritage on From Hungary to Taiwan, a project that pairs treatments of folk music from the two countries and explores their similarities (Bridge Records 9519 bridgerecords.com).

Dana Wilson’s Hungarian Folk Songs was commissioned by the quartet as “a sort of entrée” into Béla Bartók’s quartets. Wilson says that he tried to capture key aspects of the traditional music itself and not just write his own music inspired by it, and he certainly succeeded. The Formosa Quartet perfectly captures his remarkable folk music effects and nuances.

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The quartet’s longstanding commitment to both the classic repertoire and new contemporary works is fully evident here. A suitably tense and energetic performance of Beethoven’s String Quartet In F Minor Op.95 “Serioso” opens the disc, and the centrepiece is Mario

Davidovsky’s Fragments, String Quartet No.6 from 2016, written on a commission for the Juilliard. Davidovsky explains that the title refers to broken and scattered parts that, “moved and processed by some creative force, can aggregate to become something.” It certainly gives you a good idea of what the quite brief work sounds like as it moves from a fairly abrasive start to a more integrated ending.

A passionate and powerful performance of Bartók’s String Quartet No.2 ends the CD. It’s a work with a distinct post-Romantic feel, and no hint of the Night Music of the later quartets – more an indication of where the composer has come from than where he is going.

The playing throughout is of the exceptionally high standard we have come to expect from this ensemble.

Charles Richard-Hamelin’s recent recording Chopin: Concertos Nos. 1 & 2 (Analekta, AN 29146, analekta.com) is an exhilarating encounter with these two items of standard repertoire. There is a freshness in this performance that owes everything to its collaborators. Kent Nagano and the OSM are deeply aware of how much Chopin has vested in the piano’s role. Their ability to morph into something purely ethereal for the slow movement of Concerto No.2 is magical. The balance and unity across the ensemble, in this and similar passages, support the piano exquisitely. So much of the piano part in this movement is in simple octaves, albeit often very ornamented and fast. Richard-Hamelin performs it with absolute fluidity, as if it were an extended keyboard recitative. The time signature seems to dissolve, leaving only a hint of anything resembling a beat as the soloist and orchestra flow toward some distant ending.

The essence of dance that is inherent in Chopin’s writing saves the pianist from a conflictual role with the orchestra. The two are instead a pair of dancers elevating the solo instrument above the ensemble. While historical criticism of these works has focused on Chopin’s weak orchestral writing, Hamelin and Nagano have delivered such a transcendent experience that the criticism seems somehow lost if not irrelevant in the overwhelming beauty of this performance.

The wholeNote.com
Maria João Pires appears in a new collaboration with the London Symphony Orchestra under Bernard Haitink, Beethoven Piano Concerto No. 2, Triple Concerto (LSO www.lsolive.lso.co.uk).

Despite the numbering, the piano concerto is actually Beethoven’s first and much of it recalls Mozart, especially in the opening movement. But the young Beethoven is unmistakably present in the piano writing where his unique keyboard figurations are now recognized as familiar vocabulary. It’s a careful and measured performance that reveals the caution with which Beethoven wrote it. No angry rebel here, just an explorer testing the waters for the journey to come.

All this presents a considerable challenge to the performers because listeners tend to have an expectation of what Beethoven should sound like and aren’t usually prepared to hear something so Mozartian and Haydnesque. Haitink keeps the orchestra firmly in classical territory, helped by reduced instrumentation. Pires follows suit technically and stylistically but exploits every opportunity to remind us of the voice she is interpreting. The slow movement, despite its delicacy, carries an intensity that can only be Beethoven, even if it’s the young version. The final movement, however, leaves nothing to doubt. Pires plays with the lightness, clarity and impeccable phrasing that have made her career.

While the Triple Concerto offers more substance, here in a reissue featuring Gordan Nikolitch (violin), Tim Hugh (cello) and Lars Vogt (piano), the piano part was written for Beethoven’s patron and pupil, the Archduke Rudolph, and so doesn’t have quite the virtuosity of its string partners. Still, Vogt shapes every keyboard utterance into a masterful line. The recording is, in every way, a classic.

Jeri-Mae G. Astolfi is a Canadian pianist working principally in the US as a performer and teacher. Her new CD, Ed Martin – Journeys (Ravello Records, RR7995, www.ravellorecords.com) demonstrates her interest and commitment to contemporary piano music. She plays three works by one of her contemporaries, American composer Ed Martin who wrote two of them specifically for her.

The major piece on the recording is the title work Journey. Laid out in 11 sections, it charts the progress of life through a range of experiences that Martin uses as his program. Astolfi’s performance of Journey makes its impact through the startling contrasts between agitated movements with titles like Vexed, Obsession and Manic and the more serene sections with names like Soul, Lament and Transcend. One of the intriguing characteristics of Martin’s music is that he doesn’t shy away from long fermatas or extended rests. Silence and decay are an effective part of his vocabulary. Astolfi surrenders completely to this language producing a performance so intense that it seems more like channeling than playing. Her entanglement with the essence of this music is absolute.

Two other works, Shtirling Sky and Three Pieces for Piano, while shorter, are equally effective programmatic expressions. Martin is a composer who sees and feels things tangibly in his music and Astolfi is a ready interpreter with an undeniable affinity for his writing.

Inga Fiolia’s new disc Glinka – Complete Piano Works Vol.2, Dances (Grand Piano, GP 282 www.grandpianorecords.com) follows her first volume that focused on Glinka’s variations compositions. The 23 tracks are predictably brief though some are arranged in longer sets of quadrilles and contredanses. Glinka’s place in Russian music history acknowledges his contribution to a national style that began to set Russian composers free from their cultural debt to the French, German and Italian influences of the 18th and 19th centuries. This contribution is not particularly obvious in this music, designed as it was to accompany light-hearted times in the parlours and salons of Russian society.

Fiolia is a natural performer for this genre. Something about the dance form, regardless of its origin or style, seems to draw from her a fluid response that sways with the music. Her keyboard technique makes an instant impression. She has a touch that in rapid repeats throws the hammer against the strings in a way that must challenge the double escapement action that makes it possible. She relies less on pedalling than many pianists and the result is a highly articulated clarity that respects the inner harmonies of Glinka’s writing.

Pianist Gloria Cheng played a major role in the creation of Garlands for Steven Stucky, (Bridge, Bridge 9509, www.bridgerecords.com). She led the call for invitations to write short works of tribute in memory of the American composer who died in 2016. Over his lifetime, he wrote well over a hundred works in nearly every form and won dozens of awards. Cheng included some of Stucky’s piano music on a Grammy Award-winning 2008 recording.

The 32 compositions Cheng compiled for this tribute are very personal musical statements from Stucky’s colleagues, friends and composition students. They’re each accompanied by brief anecdotes and dedications to Stucky’s memory. What emerges from these tributes is the picture of a person who was not only a gifted and skilled composer but even more, someone remembered for his kindness and humanity. Stucky’s ability to build close rapport with anyone he met opened countless opportunities for creative collaboration, instruction and deep personal friendships. In his work with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and other orchestras, Stucky made a point of getting to know each musician personally. This direct openness accounts for much of the affection the LA Philharmonic and Essa-Pekka Salonen had for Stucky and his music. It seems fitting that Salonen’s tribute Iscrizione is the disc’s opening track.

This recording is a remarkable collection of utterances by composers old and young; ultimately, it will bring Stucky’s work to a wider audience.

Katarzyna Musial’s new recording My Spanish Heart (Dux, Dux 1448, www.dux.pl) is beautifully planned with repertoire that leaves no doubt about where her cultural affections lie. “A Canadian pianist with Polish roots,” as her agent describes her, Musial is undeniably at home with this repertoire. Whether playing Albéniz, Granados, Turina, Mompou or de Falla, she takes to the idiomatic rhythms like a flamenco dancer, delivering characteristic Spanish melodic snaps as if her keyboard had castanets.

The Danzas gitanas Op.55 by Turina are especially impressive for the atmosphere of seductive mystery in which Musial wraps them. But the tracks of Manuel de Falla’s own piano transcriptions of his ballet music, The Three-Cornered Hat and Love the Magician are the most impressively played. In these, Musial combines the piano’s best percussive and legato qualities to deliver a full range of orchestral effects. The entire CD is an energized performance of music for which she has a fiery passion.

Michael McHale and Tom Poster appear as the two pianists in Cliff Eidelman – Symphony for Orchestra & Two Pianos and A Night in the Gallery, (EN001, www.cliff-eidelman.com). Eidelman is an American composer and conductor with a lengthy and impressive career, most of it writing for film. His relatively few ventures into the world of large-scale orchestral forms include a
symphonic tone poem, ballet music and similar works.

McHale and Poster perform neither as soloists nor as players fully integrated into the ensemble. Eidelman has, unusually, created a flexible role for the two pianists that lies somewhere between the concerto form and a fantasy featuring the keyboards, perhaps akin to Saint-Saëns Carnival of the Animals. The two pianists do appear convincingly as full-scale soloists in the second movement’s cadenza. For the balance of the work, however, they emerge from and retreat back into, the ensemble at the composer’s will.

As a highly skilled orchestrator, Eidelman’s mastery of colour and subtle shading is superb. He describes finding the inspiration for the Symphony in the reflection of water and writes in a way that uses the pianos to enhance the emotional image of its various characters, whether still, flowing or turbulent. It’s easy to hear why his film scores like Star Trek VI and Christopher Columbus have been so successful.

The disc’s second work is Eidelman’s Night in the Gallery for orchestra and piano. Here pianist Michael McHale becomes part of the composer’s palette for recreating the impressions he experienced on viewing specific paintings by acknowledged masters.

Nadia Shpachenko’s latest release The Poetry of Places (Reference Recordings, FR 730, www.referencercordings.com) is a collection of original and highly imaginative works for piano, assorted instruments and effects. The concept for the recording project is an exploration of the relationship between music and its space. Shpachenko writes briefly about her experiences of space on performance, including the performers and the audience. Her curiosity has led to commissions from eight composers to write specifically about their impressions of spaces and places as represented by architecture.

The variety of this repertoire is remarkable. Shpachenko performs a veritable tour of structures ancient and modern, producing extraordinary colours and textures from her Steinway D. Her composers sometimes add a second piano, voice, a toy piano, percussion and electronics to build their works. The subjects include Ireland’s 5,000-year-old Newgrange, Aaron Copland’s home in upstate New York, Bangladesh’s National Assembly, a small cottage on an island in rural New York state, the American Visionary Art Museum and a couple of architectural projects by Frank Gehry.

Each composer provides a few notes on the subject of the commission and it’s immediately striking how much common ground they share with Shpachenko on this abstract challenge. The strong affinity between the principal performer and the composers has produced a thoroughly engaging disc.

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

**VOCAL**

**Handel – Dixit Dominus; Bach & Schütz – Motets**

**Ottawa Bach Choir; Lisette Canton**

ATMA ACD2 2790 (atmaclassique.com/En)

The Ottawa Bach Choir and Ensemble Caprice join forces in this recording for thrilling performances of Baroque masters Handel, Bach and Schütz. From the outset of Dixit Dominus, the quick pace and precision with which the chorus deftly moves through Handel’s ever-running and cascading phrases is awe-inspiring. Daniel Taylor guests for the alto aria Virgam virtutis in which the interplay between his golden voice and the continuo instruments is sublime. Soprano Kathleen Radke maintains a wonderfully relaxed vocal line through the execution of elaborate lines in Tecum principium in die virtutis and later she and Kayla Ruiz create enchanting chemistry in the soaring duet De torrente in via bibet.

Looking back almost a century, next on the recording are rarely heard Passion Motets from Heinrich Schütz’s Cantiones Sacrae. Heavily influenced by Italian madrigals of the time, Lisette Canton coaxes the full anguish of the thematic material from the choir in emphasizing dissonances and highly expressive rhetoric. The recording ends with homage to the choir’s eponym. In Bach’s Komm, Jesu, komm, excellent recording technique and choice of venue shine through, with a lovely resonance from the start and an erudite interchange captured in the dialogue of a choir divided into two sections by the composer.

Dianne Wells

**New Works**

**Da Capo Chamber Choir**

**Independent DC 003-18**

(dacapochamberchoir.ca)

Waterloo-based DaCapo Chamber Choir is celebrating its 20th anniversary with this release featuring Canadian choral works by six established and four
emerging composers, set to words ranging from Shakespeare to D.H. Lawrence. Recorded in four sessions over a two-year period, each work was a choir premiere, with all but James Rolfe’s composition featured in DaCapo’s annual, national composition competition.

Choral lovers will rejoice (and perhaps sing along) to these diverse works. Of the established composers, Benjamin Bolden’s *Harvest* features classic choral counterpoint with slightly atonal sounds interspersed with tonal sections. Jeff Enns’ *Le Pont Mirabeau* has higher-pitched Romantic harmonies to stress the words. Rolfe’s *Shadows* is a to-be-expected well-written piece with dramatic word-painting rhythms at “autumn deepens” and atonality on “distress,” and a vibrant unexpected high-pitched tenor solo (sung by Brian Black) at the dramatic highpoint. Emerging composer David Archer’s *In Sweet Music* is a slow work with classic choral qualities (swells and lyricism) with a touch of minimalism at the repeated “fall asleep” end part. Works by Christine Donkin, Don Macdonald, Sheldon Rose, Matthew Emery, Nicholas Ryan Kelly and Patrick Murray complete the recording.

Conducted by founding artistic director Leonard Enns, the choir sings with both technical and musical acumen. Each vocal section is strong, knowledgeable and unafraid to sing both new and established choral sounds with perfect balance and articulation. Canadian choral music shines thanks to DaCapo!

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**CLASSICAL AND BEYOND**

**Alberto Nepomuceno – Symphony in G Minor**

*Minas Gerais Philharmonic Orchestra; Fabio Mechetti*

*Naxos 8.574067 (naxosdirect.com)*

> As the music of the entire recording including, of course, *Symphony in G Minor* suggests, Alberto Nepomuceno’s map of Brazil was his glorious harmony book. The 1893 symphony predates (but only by a few years) what came to be a movement for creating an authentically Brazilian music, with less influence of European culture. In this sense, the folklore of the colourful north-eastern Brazil from where Nepomuceno came was the major font of inspiration for his music.

This is not always obvious in the program at hand as we can hear in the music a struggle for Nepomuceno to pull away from his European training before drawing deeply from his northeastern Brazilian roots. His mind, newly opened to the sounds of his childhood in Recife, triggered perhaps by the influence of the French impressionists, becomes evident first in *Série Brasileira* (1891). It is a colourful, mysterious work and by the time we get to the fourth movement *Batuque* the full effect of northeastern Brazil is heard in the lyrically rhythmic infusion produced by the strings of the Minas Gerais Philharmonic Orchestra.

The mysterious splendour of *O Garatuja – Prelude* (1904) reverberates with the mesmeric swirling of African slave dances that Nepomuceno incorporated into his music. The full grandeur of the composer’s work is uncovered in the celebrated *Symphony in G Minor* where maestro Fabio Mechetti draws from the Minas Gerais Philharmonic Orchestra its fullest, winning combination of expressive power and voluptuousness yet.

*Raul da Gama*

**Florence Beatrice Price – Symphonies**

*Fort Smith Symphony Orchestra; John Jeter*

*Naxos 8.559827 (naxosdirect.com)*

> Florence Beatrice Price (née Smith) was an African-American composer born in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1887. Her father was a dentist and her mother a music teacher. She received her solid musical education from her mother because the city’s best-known tutors, uniformly and unapologetically white, refused to teach a person of colour. Her mother taught her well. So well that she gave her first piano performance when she was eight and aged 11 had her first published work.

Her mother wanted her to further her studies after graduating as valedictorian from high school, and as this was next to impossible in the South, she was enrolled in the New England Conservatory. There she was tutored in all the musical disciplines under the care of a faculty that included George Whitefield Chadwick. During that time her compositions included a string trio and a symphony. In 1906 she graduated with a diploma in organ and a teaching certificate.

She returned to Little Rock and began teaching in segregated academies in Arkansas and Georgia. She married attorney Thomas Jewell Price and moved back to Little Rock. Following a lynching in 1927 and amid general unease, the family moved to Chicago where Florence was to flourish and become a recognized member of the musical community. In 1932, her *Symphony in E Minor* won the first prize of $500 in the Rodman Wanamaker Competition sponsored by the National Federation of Music Clubs. The work attracted the interest of conductor Frederick Stock who led his Chicago Symphony Orchestra in the premiere public performance, the first time a major American orchestra had ever performed any piece written by an African-American woman.

Her symphonies are in the usual four movements. *Symphony No.1* dates from 1932 and calls to mind the symphonic music of the era, most evoked being Dvořák, Edward MacDowell, Horatio Parker and George Whitefield Chadwick whose music I continue to enjoy. The first movement is a mighty statement running over 16 minutes. The grand second is an attractive largo of 12 minutes duration. In the third movement where one might normally expect to hear a scherzo, we are treated to a *Juba Dance*, based on the antebellum slave style, complex body percussion (foot stomping and chest patting) and syncopated melodies. The boisterous fourth movement is an appropriate closing.

The Fourth Symphony is similarly constructed with an *Andante cantabile* second movement à la Dvořák. The third movement is again a *Juba Dance* and the final movement, a mighty *Scherzo*. I am very interested in hearing more of Florence Price.

*Bruce Surtees*

**Respighi – Roman Trilogy**

*Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra; JoAnn Falletta*

*Naxos 8.574013 (naxos.com)*

> I have never forgotten as a child first hearing *The Fountains of Rome* at a concert conducted by a short, wiry and agile Italian, Francesco Molinari-Pradelli, who made me fall in love with the piece instantly. Over the years I found that the *Fountains* is by far the best of the trilogy, *Pines* a close second and *Festivals* a distant third, but generally recordings tended to establish a certain routine interpretation and sound that became an expected norm.

However, this brilliant new recording by JoAnn Falletta, who now emerges as a star conductor and favourite of Naxos, will surprise you. She is American, original and unorthodox, and picks *Festivals* to play first (!), turning it into a monumental sound spectacle and making the most of Respighi’s adventurous harmonies and orchestration. Just listen to *Circenses* where the music is so graphic as it describes vividly ferocious lions devouring Christian martyrs and *Ottobrata* with its sweet mandolin solo and far away horn calls evoking my beloved countryside around Rome.

The disc gives us surprise after delightful surprise as Falletta, revelling in the rich score, brings out voices I have never heard before. Like a gorgeous sound painting of night on the Gianicolo Hill with the noble silhouettes of pines and a nightingale singing.
She is so totally engrossed that the music simply doesn’t want to end. But where she really strikes home is Pines of the Via Appia, a tremendous tour de force depicting an ancient Roman army emerging from distant haze marching towards us, and the music just builds and builds. A gradual crescendo exploding in glorious fortississimo without ever becoming bombastic or over-powering. Brava!

Janos Gardonyi

MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY

Invitation – Trios for Clarinet, Violin and Piano
Christine Carter; Duo Concertante
Marquis Classics MAR 81489 (marquisclassics.com)

Having to declare an interest in the subject of a disc review is an unalloyed pleasure when said conflict involves praising the work of a former student. Together with Tim Steeves and Nancy Dahn (Duo Concertante), clarinetist Christine Carter has released Invitation, an album of trios for clarinet, violin and piano. Alongside the witty and spirited Suite by Darius Milhaud is Aram Khachaturian’s almost emo Trio; Tango, a chestnut by Canadian Patrick Cardy (1953–2005); and last of all, Francis Poulenc’s L’invitation au château.

The latter is new material to me, as I’m sure it will be to many listeners. It’s a curiosity, beautiful raw material that Poulenc never got around to turning into a suite, unlike his colleague Milhaud. Both composers wrote the music on this disc as integral backdrops for plays by Jean Anouilh, but where Milhaud sifted his score down to four movements, the Poulenc remains in its original form of 16 musical installments, some extremely short, others stretching to between one and two minutes in length.

Nothing detracts from the pleasure of listening to the performances on this disc. The Khachaturian stands out as particularly compelling, but no doubt others will find their own favourites. Tasteful style, courteous and elegant musicianship, and technical ease are featured throughout by all three performers. One supposes, or hopes, this won’t be their last such collaboration.

The liner notes are helpful, packing a good deal of information into an interview format.

Max Christie

Excess
Lori Freedman
Collection QB CQB 1923 (actuellecd.com)

On Excess, distinguished Montreal-based clarinetist Lori Freedman presses the boundaries of contemporary musical discourse, challenging the clarinet’s, the individual composer’s and her own expressive depths. Pressing a point, she focuses on bass and contrabass clarinet, perhaps the most vocal of orchestral instruments, with every pitch ready to bend and break, a spray of overtones seemingly ever at the ready. Oh, yes, she challenges the listener as well.

The program is bracketed by its most radical and expansive adventures. British composer Richard Barrett’s Interference requires the performer to sing over a four-octave range and play a kick-drum as well as turn in a virtuosic explosion of wild burling lines from the contrabass clarinet. It’s shamanic work, an invocation of spirits, a depth of expression that tests the limits of performance. At the opposite end of the CD, there’s French composer Raphaël Cendo’s Décombres, a work of “saturation” that fills the sound space with roaring contrabass clarinet and abrasive electronics.

In between, Freedman reaches back to Brian Ferneyhough’s daunting Time and Motion Study I (1977) and explores three recent pieces. Freedman worked closely with Vancouverite Paul Steenhuisen on Libratory on Fire and Paolo Perezzani on Thymos, the former mixing vocal sounds with bass clarinet, the latter the sonic potential of the contrabass, elephants and all. It’s her own Withwhatbecomes that’s most remarkable: almost unvoiced, it’s filled with the quietest, most fleeting, evanescent sounds, more challenging in its own way than anything else here.

Stuart Broomer

Simon Martin – Musique d’art
Quatuor Bozzini; Pierre-Alexandre Maranda
QB CQB 1922 (actuellecd.com)

Simon Martin is a younger Quebecois composer whose work is intimately connected with music’s relationship to materiality. His earlier work Hommage à Leduc, Borduaes et Riopelle focused on specific works of three great painters, setting each segment with a small group of like instruments: a saxophone quartet, a trio of classical guitars and the string quartet. Quatuor Bozzini. Here the quartet turns to a more ambitious Martin work. Musique d’art is similarly concerned with meaning, with relationships among music, sound and noise and the philosophical and material status of the musical work, its title a play on the expression “objet d’art.” It’s a work of substantial scale, over an hour in length, and also great sonic mass. Quatuor Bozzini is extended to a string quintet here with the presence of double bassist Pierre-Alexandre Maranda. In some of the work’s five movements, his is the central voice. The first part moves from silence to a consonant drone that’s gradually engulfed in a gathering dissonance only to return to silence. Maranda’s role comes to the fore in the second part, his harsh, low-register bowing suggesting grinding tools. At another point, his savage, whipping glissandi feel as much

four players dealing with 11 instruments between them (flutes, clarinets, recorders, cello, some also playing percussion). The performers produce eerily beguiling songs and dances. Tonality is a ghost of its former self, pale-to-vanishing. Stump-Linslham is more concerned with finding voices to utter her thoughts that no one has heard yet, colours and consonants fresh from a fine-tuned imagination. Movement is mostly ordered but gradual, although some movements pop and spark with sudden furtive gestures. Nowhere is the dance faster than a lively funeral march. Fantastic indeed, and beautiful; and terrifying.

Opening the disc are eight short movements for solo contrabass clarinet, which seems to be having its moment in new music. Usige Beatha is an exploration in sound of the variety of flavours found in good peated scotch. My unmixed love of single-malt scotch whiskey is not matched by my feelings for the contrabass clarinet. I certainly admire the playing ability of Heinz-Peter Linslham, who is featured on most of the disc, and his mastery of the double-length bass. There’s a mad take on The Teddy Bears’ Picnic as well; I leave the listener to find it.

Max Christie
like a side effect of industry as a musical technique. The final movement alternates groups of sustained harmonics to develop a state that’s simultaneously tense and suspended, gradually creating a sense of timelessness. A kind of stable mystery. *Musique d’art* can only grow in significance.

**Stuart Broomer**

**Samuel Andreyev – Music with no Edges**

*Kairos 0015025KAI (kairos-music.com)*

> Before you even read the booklet notes that speak of a late work of Marcel Duchamp in relation to Samuel Andreyev’s sublime modernist composition, you realize – in the rhythm and stroke of reeds, strings and percussion – that the Canadian composer now living in France is a visualist musician. It is clear from the very first few bars of *Verifications* (2012). Then rilling through the booklet as you might be tempted to do, the discovery of his scores reveals more of his method. Of the three scores depicted, only one is on staved paper; another is on a black sheet and the third is on graph paper. The notes are meticulously written, ramrod straight. But clearly Andreyev does not mean for them to sound that way.

This is, after all, *Music with no Edges*. Fingerflops holding bow and mallets are meant to be extensions of paint brushes, perhaps just as pursed lips on piccolos and other reeds become extensions of musicians’ emboldened with emotion. Andreyev seems to write not only with a pencil but with his nerve endings as well.

**Raul da Gama**

**Concert note:** New Music Concerts presents the North American premiere of Andreyev’s cantata *Iridescent Notation* (2017) featuring soprano Maeve Palmer at Betty Oliphant Theatre on May 26.

**Giya Kancheli – Sunny Night**
Frédéric Bednarz; Jonathan Goldman; Natsuki Hiratsuka

*Metis Islands 2019 MI-0009 (metis-islands.com)*

> I get particular satisfaction from listening to an album rendered stylishly by gifted Canadian musicians. A good example is *Sunny Night*, a collection of 17 miniatures originally scored for the cinema and theatre by Giya Kancheli (b.1935) recorded at McGill University in Montreal by the duo of Frédéric Bednarz (violin) and Natsuki Hiratsuka (piano).

The well-known Georgian composer Kancheli, currently living in Belgium, is an unabashed romantic when it comes to composing music. “Music, like life itself, is inconceivable without romanticism. Romanticism is a high dream of the past, present, and future – a force of invincible beauty which towers above, and conquers the forces of ignorance, bigotry, violence and evil,” states Kancheli in the liner notes.

The highlights on *Sunny Night* are the two works for violin, piano and bandoneon (Jonathan Goldman), an instrument closely associated with the tango. *Earth, This Is Your Son* for the trio is episodic and dramatic, dominated by minor key tonalities. At just over five minutes it is also the most substantial work on the album. It’s more a concert piece than incidental music.

Not only unapologetically melody-driven, romantic and tonal – often gently drawing on early 20th-century vernacular genres such as the tango – the musical language on *Sunny Night* also seeks to capture a single mood befitting the music’s original theatrical function. In that it succeeds admirably, though sometimes the effect verges on overt sentiment. There are times however when that is just what’s needed.

**Andrew Timar**

**Reiko Füting – Distant Song**

*Ensemble Vocal & Instrumental New Focus Recordings FCR216 (newfocusrecordings.com)*

> Composer Reiko Füting (Germany b.1970), a faculty member of the Manhattan School of Music, offers an intriguing study of a juxtaposition of ancient and modern practice. The first two pieces on *Distant Song*, performed by AuditivoKáal Dresden and Art D’Echo are als ein licht/extensio and in allem Fremden/wie der Tag/wie das Licht, based on works by Heinrich Schütz. The motet *Verleih Uns Frieden Gnädiglich* is framed by dynamic percussion, spoken word and lush, dissonant vocalizations meant to illustrate, in the composer’s own words, a “continuing compositional interest in time and space.”

Meant as an epilogue to the first two pieces, *eternal return* (Passacaglia) features the Byrne:Kozar:Duo, in an alarmingly engaging duet for soprano and trumpet using text from Nietzsche’s *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Next is *mo(n)*u*ment* for *C*, on the 2015 attack on Charlie Hebdo in which the ensemble loadbang reiterates “Je suis,” “Ich bin” and “I Am.” Dutch ensemble Oerknal performs Weg Lied der Schwäne, a “swan song” on the subject of euthanasia based on Arcadelt’s renaissance madrigal, *Il bianco e dolce cigno*. The same ensemble backs vocal quartet Damask in *versinkend, versingend, verklingend* which recalls Debussy’s *La cathédrale engloutie* and quotes the 15th-century German folk song *Gesegn dich Laub*.

In listening to Füting’s compositions, it becomes clear that while focusing on contemporary issues, he brilliantly incorporates musical fragments of memory which bridge present and past.

**Dianne Wells**

**Empty Words by John Cage**

*Varispeed Gold Bolus GBR035 (goldbolus.com/empty)*

> Long before John Cage created *Empty Words*, he was already encouraging the performer of his music to “let go of his feelings, his taste, his automatism, his sense of universal, not attaching himself to this or that, leaving by his performance no traces, providing by his actions no interruption to the fluency of nature.” In their recording of this epic vocal piece the quintet Varispeed, together with ten supporting musicians, seem to have absorbed Cage’s radiant words as they plough through the shard-like composition completely absorbing its incandescence into their hearts and minds – as Cage would have it – to create a deeply committed and meticulously prepared performance, produced with magical results.

Cage’s monumentally challenging work calls for invention over and above that precise quality that the composer built into his work. On *Empty Words* – literally words stripped of meaning – the ensemble uses male and female human voices propelled on a collision course with acoustic (woodwinds, strings, percussion and piano), electronic boards and prepared (glass) instruments. The result turns Cage’s effect of splintering and pointillist sound into an exploitation of a wide range of
sonorities, some bright, some bell-like, others more delicate and subdued. Rhythmic motifs and patterns recur, producing an incantatory and hypnotic quality.

Vartis’s experience as improvers makes their presence felt in this tactile articulation of Cage’s driving rhythms and percussive “ungrooves” with uncommon perfection and patterns recur, producing an incantory and delicate and subdued. Rhythmic motifs and sonorities, some bright, some bell-like, others substantial and swinging.

Rhythmic motifs and sonorities, some bright, some bell-like, others substantial and swinging. Despite her jazz ingénue status, Tauro is already a fully realized pianist, songwriter and performer. Her debut CD is a clever juxtaposition of interesting, standards, and Tauro’s original, irresistible compositions. With a musical pedigree that goes back generations, Tauro has a wealth of musical technique, as well as a recognizable and appealing vocal sound – alternately soft as velvet and sharp as a razor. On her debut recording, Tauro has put together a talented ensemble, led by electric, brilliant and intuitive producer/composer George Koller on bass and A-list jazz players Ted Quinlan on guitar, Davide DiRenzo on drums, Perry White on tenor saxophone and Colleen Allen on soprano sax, clarinet and flute.

The CD kicks off with Tauro’s original tune, Dancin’ On My Own. Interesting chord changes, superb musicianship and a no-nonsense lyric make this track a standout (including Perry White’s Hank Mobley-esque solo). Another excellent choice by Tauro is her version of 1937’s Someday My Prince Will Come. Tauro’s pitch-pure soprano sails over the lyric, imbuing it with a contemporary emotional edge, while her piano work is both substantial and swinging.

Without question, Cara Valente is sung with skill and precision in luscious Portuguese. Tauro’s deep, innate rhythmic feel, as well as her vocal timbre and fluidity are nothing short of breathtaking – bringing to mind the late Elis Regina. The CD’s bilingual closer, One Note Samba, is a triumph. Despite her jazz ingénue status, Tauro is already a fully realized pianist, songwriter and vocalist, and it will be fascinating to see what’s next for this talented artist!

Lesley Mitchell Clarke

Late Bloomer
Fuat Tuaç
Independent (fuattuac.com)

With the release of his debut CD, Turkish/Canadian vocalist, Fuat Tuaç has presented an intriguing, multicultural jazz recording, comprised of freshly arranged, under-trodden standards and Tuaç’s original title track. He is joined here by a superb group of musicians, including Paul Shrofel on piano, Dave Watts on bass, Richard Irwin on drums and Dave Turner on saxophone. Tuaç is equally comfortable singing in English, French, Turkish, Portuguese and Italian – easily capturing the lyrical essences of each language.

Manha de Carnaval (A Day In the Life of a Fool) is a standout. The rich, rhythmic arrangement is enhanced by Turner’s warm, mellifluous alto lines, which soon metamorphose into a gymnastic and powerful solo; Tuaç’s acoustic, unvarnished, exotic sound is beautifully complemented in this Luis Bonfa classic. Another highlight is Ellington’s Caravan. Profound, throbbing bass lines from Watts and Eastern rhythmic patterns succinctly executed by Irwin define this interpretation, as Tuaç seamlessly segues the lyric and Massage into a supercharged and powerful solo.

Two additional highlights include a vigorous and contemporary rendition of Chick Corea’s Spain, in which Shrofel’s luminous musicianship and Irwin’s inventive, Iberian and rock steady propulsion are featured; and also the cinematic Rendez-vous vers huit heures (Draht), which is an elegantly performed possible movie theme in search of a black and white French film classic. Tuaç is reminiscent of the late Charles Aznavour here... musical, mysterious, evocative and très sensual!

Lesley Mitchell-Clarke

Lotus Blossom
Dave Young
Modica Music (daveyoung.ca)

Lotus Blossom is a fine disc that was recorded immediately after One Way Up, the acclaimed previous album by Dave Young and his band. I enjoy hearing these top Canadian jazz artists in fine form, interacting and supporting each other with spontaneity and precision. At the centre is distinguished acoustic bassist Dave Young, whose playing I would not label a harmonic and rhythmic foundation because from high-up thumb position to the lowest bass tones his style is so melodic. In Dexter Gordon’s Fried Bananas, his solo is richly lyrical, followed by the fluent playing of guitarist Reg Schwager. Terry Clarke accompanies with a wet cymbal wash preceding his own dry turn on the theme. On the jazz waltz title track, Young’s plaintive bass and Clarke’s cross-rhythms are affecting for me while pianist Renee Rosnes displays a mastery of touch and tone, creating a pensive, languorous mood in dragging the tune’s return. The tasty interplay between Schwager and her on Modinha, along with Clarke’s playful drumming and Young’s convincing solo, make this track a highlight.

By contrast to Rosnes, pianist Bernie Senensky’s energetic style on Bolivia and I Thought About You is chord-rich, with blazing riffs and hard swinging in the latter that evoke Oscar Peterson (who Dave Young played with regularly). Finally, trumpeter Kevin Turcotte and tenor saxophonist Perry White join in with able two-part counterpoint on Softly as in a Morning Sunrise. Highly recommended.

Roger Knox

Sudoku pour Pygmées
Jean Derome
Ambiances Magnetiques AM 242 CD (actuellecd.com)

Composer, saxophonist and flutist Jean Derome has been a central voice in Quebec’s musique actuelle movement for decades, along the way creating works that fuse improvisation with larger structural forms. Here he leads his quartet Les Dangeres Zhoms and nine other musicians in a cross-country retrospective of works commissioned by Canada’s landmark mixed-method contemporary ensembles.

The title track, originally performed by Halifax’s Upstream in 2010, uses the idea of the Sudoku puzzle to create polyphonic canons of pentatonic scales in a way that suggests Pygmy vocal music. It’s a scintillating work, leavening its complexity with sonic transparency and some brilliant reed soloists, most notably Derome on baritone saxophone and André Leroux on tenor. 7 dames (pour c<15>) – originally performed by Toronto’s Hemispheres in 1989, demonstrates Derome’s longstanding interest in creating hybrid works, juxtaposing popular and serious genres that mingle Bernard Falaise’s rock-inspired electric guitar with abstract harmonies.

The concluding 5 pensées (pour le caou-chouc dur), composed for Vancouver’s Hard Rubber Orchestra in 2001, encompasses...
a range of moods and inspirations and highlights some of the group’s strongest voices. The playful second *pensée*, suggests Thelonious Monk’s work, with Lori Freedman’s bass clarinet approaching comic speech, while the third invokes Duke Ellington’s sacred music, with a pensive, reflective lead provided by trombonist Scott Thomson. The concluding *Pensée* matches a rapid hoedown with anarchic collective improvisation, literally an ultimate stylistic collision, and the ideal conclusion for this boundary-blurring set of works.  

**Stuart Broome**

**Going to Market**  
**JVS’s Boogaloo Squad**  
**Flatcar FCR-009 (jvsboogalo.com)**

*In 2015, Toronto-based keyboardist Joel Visentin got together with fresh, younger talents, guitarist Adam Beer-Colacino and drummer Jeff Halischuk, to form JVS’s Boogaloo Squad. Their long-awaited debut album has finally reached eager audiences and is a soulful, funky kick in the pants that will get anyone hopping and tapping their foot on the dreariest and coldest of winter days. Visentin’s riffs and solos on the unique and instantly distinguishable Hammond B3 organ are the powerhouse and driving force behind the music. All pieces except for one are original works by Visentin. Slacktivation starts off the record with a great groove and catchy beat provided by Beer-Colacino and Halischuk respectively. As we move through pieces such as Fashionably Lazy, Forty Filth and Different Times, it is apparent that the fluidity and cohesion between musicians is fantastic and that the talent concentrated within this group is immense. The collective has been mentioned as having a “vintage yet modern sound” and that is clearly showcased by the timeless sound of the B3 throughout the pieces. Yet, modernity comes into play when paired with the sultry riffs of Beer-Colacino and Halischuck’s contemporary beats. A personal favourite is Squadzilla, which has a true funkiness and energetic quality to it with a smooth hint of tenor saxophone contributed by Kelly Jefferson.

In a music scene where pure funk and soul have been slightly pushed aside, this record is a true breath of fresh air.

**Kati Killaspea**

**Take the Neon Lights**  
**Steph Richards**  
**Birdwatcher Records 008 (birdwatcherrecords.com)**

*Accomplished quartet music played and composed by Canadian trumpeter/flugelhornist Steph Richards, who already excels in solo playing.*

Take the Neon Lights’ eight selections are melodic without neglecting timbral analysis, and moving without being shackled to a beat. Ably assisted by pianist James Carney, bassist Sam Minaie and drummer Andrew Munsey, New York-based Richards still experiments with singular diversions like mouth-piece oscillations, rapid capillary dot-dashes and evacuated plunger tones. But these dissonant rejoinders often now vibrate within passionate tone poems.

Internal body metal may be audible on Transitory (Gleams) for instance, but after subtle piano chords meet supple brass-tone outlines the result is a mellow chromatic showpiece. Featuring Carney’s keyboard shuffles and inner piano string plucks, Skull of Theatres extends the pianist’s mid-range voicing to meet Richards’ high-speed rubato trills plus plunger grows, so that together the two settle into unpretentious swing in the tune’s second sequence, allowing the lines to harden with more emphasis on bass and drums.

Richards’ experimental skills are highlighted on Brooklyn Machine, where she manages double counterpoint from both her horns – one with brassy thrusts and the other with crafty smears – in such a way that they seem to accompanying one another. Still, the well-constructed Stalked by Tall Buildings is the apex of the brass player’s art. The warm melody line is stretched, as elevated trumpet tones squeeze beauty from repeated tongue twists while dramatic piano flourishes and turbulent percussion pops maintain the melody’s ingenuous fluidity.

**Ken Waxman**

**Pacific**  
**Brad Turner**  
**Cellar Music CM090418 (cellarlive.com)**

*Released on Vancouver’s Cellar Music label, Pacific is a new album from trumpeter Brad Turner. Turner – who is also an accomplished pianist, drummer and, as attested to by Pacific’s liner notes, mixing engineer – is joined by organist/christopher Gestrin, drummer Joe Poole and the American tenor saxophonist John Gross, who appears on three of the album’s nine tracks, all of which are composed by Turner. Although he may not be a household name to all listeners, Gross has had a long and illustrious career in jazz, playing, since the 1960s, with artists such as Lionel Hampton, Warne Marsh and Toshiko Akiyoshi. Pacific begins with Not A Robot, a bouncy, medium-up song that showcases the group’s assured rhythmic sensibilities; it also eschews any choral comping, with Gestrin sticking to synth bass throughout, including in a dynamic trading section with Poole in the tune’s back half. Pacific’s title track is a satisfying, hard-swinging affair that gives plenty of room to all four musicians to stretch out notable two-CD set. Each of the soprano and tenor saxophonist’s six compositions cannily bolsters the intense textures created by his group Flux, which also features alto and C melody saxophonist David Binney, keyboardist and synthesizer player Matt Mitchell, and percussionists Kenny Wollesen and Nate Wood plus supplementary sound contributions.*

March Macabre for instance adds the rhythmic slides and stoms of a tap dancer, plus layered vibrations from five additional horns to fill out the sequences, as Nachoff’s soprano buzzes and percussion splashes elaborate the narration. Craftily ambiguous, marimba, glockenspiel and vibraphone echoes replicate textures of the designated instrument on Toy Piano Meditation, contrapuntally challenging Mitchell’s precise or clamorous patterns on standard piano. While both saxophonists’ criss-crossing tones animate that composition with twittering screeches and end it with a spectacular penetrating trill, linear storytelling is never disrupted. Cleverly arranged, the remainder of Nachoff’s compositions otherwise add subordinate motifs arising from a laboratory full of electronics or Mitchell’s lucid harpsichord plucks to straight-ahead blowing from the core quintet. Overall this combination shows how well-thought-out composing and improvising can be adventurously matched without losing the allure of professional, swinging creativity.

**Kati Killaspea**

**Path of Totality**  
**Quinsin Nachoff’s Flux**  
**Whirlwind Recordings WR 4733 (quinsin.com)**

*Partially recorded when he was artist-in-residence at Calgary’s National Centre, using the studio’s keyboards and synthesizers, Torontonian-turned-New Yorker Quinsin Nachoff takes full advantage of Canada’s artistic resources to produce this...*
in their respective solos. Gross’ solo, which begins as a duet with Poole, is a highlight, as is Poole’s own brief solo over the vamp that precedes the melody.

In Pacific’s liner notes, Phil Dwyer writes that the album is, perhaps, evocative of the Larry Young album Unity, and the comparison is apt. But the album is made special by the band’s commitment to its constituent voices, to Turner’s compositions, and to honouring the unique musical moments found throughout this compelling album.

Colin Story

No Hay Banda
The Counterfictionals
Good Music GMCD006 (counterfictionals.dk)

▶ Rarely, if at all, do industrial and fine art come together in a package so well thought out (from concept and presentation to imaginative musical execution), and in the sheer invention and hyper virtuosity of the performing Danish musicians) than on the Counterfictionals production entitled No Hay Banda.

No Hay Banda has been conceived of and directed by Kristoffer Rosing Schow, a multi-instrumentalist who plays everything from bass clarinet to invented instruments such as the hydrofonium, described here complete with diagram, how it works and, best of all, how ethereally beautiful it sounds. Speaking of which there is the not-so-small matter of the music itself. The ten songs, bring back to life key scenes in famously well-made and notoriously badly made films from David Lynch’s Mulholland Drive (Counterfictionals’ song: Club Silencio), Sergio Leone’s For a Few Dollars More (song: Lee Van Cleef) to Alan Parker’s Angel Heart (song: Looking for Johnny Favorite) and Lars von Trier’s Antichrist (song: The Three Beggars).

In each case, brilliant musicians get closer to the chilling, sardonic heart of the film – scenes depicted in the songs with immensely powerful performances combining cast-iron virtuoso discipline with heady imagination and sheer fantasy, all of which matches the originality of Rosing-Schow’s artistry and vision. Let neither the ironic band name nor the album title be lost in this magnificent mêlée of music either, for what could a name such as Counterfictionals suggest but No Hay Banda (There’s no band)?

Raul da Gama

Rosa Parks: Pure Love
Wadada Leo Smith
Tum CD 057 (tumrecords.com)

▶ Since 2012, trumpeter Wadada Leo Smith has created several powerfully elegiac suites: Ten Freedom Summers, Occupy the World, The Great Lakes and America’s National Parks. With Rosa Parks: Pure Love, he returns explicitly to the theme of the first, the African-American civil rights movement. Rosa Parks is an oratorio, with music and songs by Smith, employing his distinctive compositional method that focuses on contrasting durations and textures. Smith’s heterodox ensemble includes a string quartet, a trumpet quartet, drums, electronics, pipa and three singers.

From the dissonant fanfare, Smith has compounded his own idiom, at once intimate and multi-dimensional, in which strongly lyrical passages alternate with moody, atonal strings and sometimes harsh, flaring brass. Strong individual voices emerge out of the fissures opening in the collective sound: violinist Mona Tian, cellist Ashley Walters, drummer Pheeroan akLaff and Smith himself, soloing only in the penultimate movement. Smith has matched each song’s character, as well as range, to each singer’s voice: Karen Parks’ touch of gospel; Carmina Escobar’s hard-edged precision; and Min Xiao-Fen’s soaring command of the pipa. Each brings a special presence to Smith’s multicultural palette.

Embedded in the oratorio are excerpts of early recordings by Smith and close associates Anthony Braxton, Leroy Jenkins and Steve McCall, musicians who first played free music together 50 years ago, and who are, by extension, partners in Smith’s ongoing commemorations of the necessary struggles for freedom, reinforced in his concluding quotation from Martin Luther King.

POT POURRI

Vanishing
Fides Krucker; Tim Motzer
1k recordings 1K043 (1krecordings.com)

▶ For 35 years Toronto-based classically trained vocalist Fides Krucker has explored contemporary vocal practice on the highest level as a singer in contemporary opera, interdisciplinary and electroacoustic works, as well as in chamber music and orchestral settings. Her career has taken her to numerous international stages. She’s appeared on diverse albums and film and video productions.

The phrase I found on my search engine while looking for Krucker’s website is, “emotionally integrated voice.” And her performance on the six Vanishing tracks powerfully delivers just that. She projects a wide palette of emotions through her voice alone, employing vocal techniques that move comfortably between classical Western and extended voices, often without lyrics.

Krucker is superbly supported on Vanishing by Tim Motzer a veteran Philadelphia jazz/improvising guitarist with 80 albums to his credit. He is best known for his textural acoustic-electro guitar playing with contemporary jazz elements.

Moya
Ivan Mazuze
Losen Records LOS 209-2
(lossenrecords.no/release/moya)

▶ With his fourth album, Mozambique-born saxophonist and composer Ivan Mazuze, now based in Norway, continues his exploration of interrelations between traditional and contemporary music. The result is Moya, an elegant synthesis of the melodies and rhythms of African and Indian music with contemporary jazz elements. Mazuze is a polished and particularly sensitive saxophonist player. His musical language is both delicate and passionate, his expression clear and meaningful. This album also features a wonderful crew of musicians from around the globe, including Olga Konkova (on piano), who has a great synergy with Mazuze, and Bjorn Vidar Solli (on guitar), who delivers some truly impressive solos.

Moya opens with contemplative Rohingya. Inspired by the Rohingya people of Myanmar who were recently displaced from their homeland, this piece has a melancholy feel driven by a rhythmical tabla pulse. It flows naturally into Mantra, a lively tune featuring an alluring combo of vocal chanting and instrumental discourse. The most interesting track on the album for me is Lunde, inspired by Norwegian folk music and high-lighting cool vocals by Hanne Tveter. And there is Moya, the focal point of the album. It’s meaning in the Mozambican language is spirit/soul and it is immediately apparent that it holds special significance for Mazuze. The interplay between sax and piano captivates the listener with changing colours and meaningful dialogue.

This album has funky grooves, soulful melodies and, most importantly, a distinct and catchy sound. Highly recommended.

Ivana Popovic

Stuart Broomer

April 2019

thewholenote.com
utilizing looping, bowing, sampling, electronics and various prepared techniques, all richly displayed on Vanishing. The album is cinematic in scope. In its spontaneously composed sonic world each scene in the undefined – sometimes airy and melodically lush, sometimes unsettled – vocal storyline is created though the intimate musical dialogue between Krucker and Motzer.

My favourite track is the epic-length Density, which according to the liner notes, “Broods on the state of the world, gathers weight with each motif, steps the listener outside of civilized sound.” Some days taking a walk on the sonic wild side is what the doctor should order.

*Andrew Timar*

**In This Body**

Fides Krucker; Rob Clutton; Tania Gill; Germaine Liu

Independent FK-01-2018 (fideskrucker.com/productions/in-this-body)

- Anyone who knows the multi-dimensional and multi-disciplinary work of Fides Krucker is naturally going to wonder how much of the dance and – more importantly – the theatre that defines Krucker’s art this CD is going to capture. It is, after all merely audio. Fortunately, however, Krucker is a highly evocative vocalist and she spares nothing to imbue her music with atmosphere and even the nuanced auras of her often spiritual and always colourful work.

Even with the suggested stasis of the title, *In This Body*, one cannot help but imagine the body in motion. This is a work by Krucker, remember? True to form she creates a kind of series of one-woman operatic arias. Each is expressed in an inimitable manner which can only be associated by someone like Krucker. Her version of Leonard Cohen’s iconic piece Suzanne is turned from something almost impressionistic-Cohenesque into a work of extraordinary sensuality in an almost Nabokov-like (Lolita) manner. Another wildly sensual track – Striptease – follows this one.

But Krucker also rings in the changes of mood and emotion, structure and tempo with Mary Margaret O’Hara’s *Body’s In Trouble*, Leslie Feist’s *Let It Die*, k.d. lang’s *Haven’t It Been Funny and*, of course, the forlorn and classic song *Helpless* by Neil Young. Along the way, Krucker is magnificently aided by bassist Rob Clutton, pianist Tania Gill and percussionist Germaine Liu. Together the musicians propel Krucker into a rarefied artistic realm where she and her music truly belong.

*Raul da Gama*

**Talismā**

Mark Duggan

Independent (markduggan.com/talisma)

- Percussionist Mark Duggan demonstrates his wide-ranging abundant musical talent in this project rooted in the Brazilian styles of samba, bossa nova and choro. Be it as a composer of four tracks, arranger of six Brazilian classics, and lead and chamber performer throughout, with outstanding musicians Louis Simão, contrabass and accordion, and Marco Tulio, violão (Portuguese guitar), Duggan’s understanding of vibraphone intricacies, compositional form/style and listening skills create music for everyone to enjoy, regardless of one’s stylistic preferences.

The trio plays the covers with respect and intelligence. Astor Silva’s *Chorinho no Gafieira* opens the recording with an upbeat happy start, thought-out vibraphone lines, good instrumental balances, and a simple yet colourful middle section. Antonio Carlos Jobim’s *Triste* has slight dynamic modulations and clear phrasing with the violão chords and contrabass keeping the faster vibes part grounded to the final Jobim chord. Duggan’s compositions are great. In his *Above the Rain*, the hypnotic two-note-accordion start, with up-and-down melodic lines, is followed by vibraphone runs, which at times double and contrast the accordion chordal swells and staccato notes. *Irresoluto* is slightly more atonal yet rooted in rhythmic/melodic tradition, while *Shifting Sands* features a relaxing more traditional vibes melody with background bass groove, and instrumental dialogue throughout. Duggan’s firm grasp of the samba form in *Samba des Nues* is heard in its contrabass/violão rhythmic opening, florid lines and slower ending.

Perfect production values complete Duggan’s smart, nuance-abundant, Brazilian music-flavoured release.

*Tiina Kilik*

**The Art of the Vietnamese Zither – Đàn Tranh**

Tri Nguyen

ARC Music EUCD2826 (arcmusic.co.uk)

- This album features the subtly expressive Vietnamese plucked zither đàn tranh, which belongs to the widely distributed family of Asian long zithers. Its cousins are the Chinese zheng and qin, Japanese koto, Korean kayageum, as well as the çatkhan of the Khakass of southern Russian Siberia and the kacapi of the Sundanese of West Java, Indonesia.

Born into a family of literati in South Vietnam, Tri Nguyen began his music studies at an early age on the piano with French-trained teachers, eventually continuing them in Paris. His family however was strongly attached to its ancestral Vietnamese culture and also arranged đàn tranh lessons for Nguyen with the noted master Hai Bleu. Nguyen’s bi-cultural training positions him well to pursue his goal of taking traditional Vietnamese music to international audiences, combining Vietnamese musics with global genres and instruments. His approach has already garnered success: his 2015 debut album *Consonances* won the Global Music Award Gold Medal for world music.

In *The Art of Vietnamese Zither*, Nguyen draws on this bi-musicality, presenting the đàn tranh in a transcultural context. The closing tracks are up-tempo nods to a world-music style aimed at broad audience appeal in which he adds other Vietnamese instruments, the oud and darabuka (goblet drum).

The most impressive aspect of the album however is the suite presented in the first nine tracks. Effectively arranged for his đàn tranh and Western string quartet, they feature melodies borrowed and adapted from the six schools of traditional Vietnamese music he inherited from his master Bleu.

*Andrew Timar*
Something in the Air
Saluting Musical Forebears without Replication
KEN WAXMAN

French actress Simone Signoret titled her memoirs, Nostalgia Isn’t What It Used to Be, and the number of uninspiring salutes to earlier jazz heroes or heroines easily bears out this sentiment. However, when the right player selects the right material to record from a celebrated predecessor’s music and—most importantly—puts his or her own spin on it, the release becomes more than an exercise in nostalgia. Each of these sessions shows how this feat can be accomplished.

Ornette Coleman: Reflecting his influence on improvised music following his sudden arrival on the scene in the late 1950s, it’s no surprise that two of the sessions honour alto saxophonist Ornette Coleman (1930–2015). What is remarkable though is that neither group plays the same Coleman compositions. Plus each takes a diametrically opposite approach.

Italian drummer Tiziano Tononi & the Ornettians’ Forms and Sounds: Air Sculptures (Felmay fy 7058 felmay.it) features an 11-piece band which, besides nine compositions by Coleman, interprets Tononi’s The Air Sculptures Suite. It’s not just Tononi’s indomitable rhythms from drum set and other percussion that animate his CD, but how soloists preserve their identities although immersed in Coleman’s sounds. Tracks such as the Tononi-composed Fireworks in N.Y.C and Fort Worth Country Stomp interpret aspects of Coleman’s music without copying. The latter track, for instance, is a country blues played with Italian panache featuring sharp staccato slurs and snorts from alto saxophonist Piero Bottolo Bon, spurred by backbeat drumming; while Fireworks in N.Y.C is straightforward swing, tempered by trumpeter Alberto Mandarini’s brassy and graceful solo plus hearty bass clarinet glissandi from Francesco Chiapperrini. It climaxes with percussion outgrowths that are as African as American, highlighting Tononi’s cowbell and kalimba. This ingenuity remains with the Coleman compositions. The expected outlines of Peace for instance, are reconfigured when propelled by Tito Mangialajo’s walking bass line and penetrating twangs from Paolo Botti’s banjo (!). At breakneck tempo, Bottolo Bon’s high-pitched flute and Emanuele Parrini’s violin stops brighten the performance without losing the melody. Similarly Rushhour is played acoustically, but with a swelling sound reminiscent of Coleman’s electric band, and is led by Parrini’s sizzling double stops as Daniele Cavallanti’s bluesy tenor sax and the drummer drive everyone forward. Cavallanti brings the same intensity to Law Years paired with brassy upsurges from Mirko Cisilino’s trumpet. The lineup on Una Muy Bonita with Mangialajo and Silvia Bolognesi both playing bass plus Bottolo Bon and Chiapperrini on alto saxophones, allows soloists to reconfigure Coleman with elevated tremolos or flutter tonguing as the dual basses propel the narrative.

There are only six players on trumpeter Chris Pasin’s Ornettiquette (Planet Arts 301820 planetarts.org), but two of them, vibist/pianist Karl Berger and vocalist Ingrid Sertso worked with Coleman. Beside five Coleman tunes interpreted are two by Pasin and one by Albert Ayler.

Mostly concentrating on Coleman’s earlier works, Pasin’s take on Ornettiquette is low key but inventive. For instance, as Karl Berger’s vibes elaborate Japé’s theme, the band plays up its blues underpinnings at the same time as Pasin’s clarion blasts are pitched Maynard Ferguson-like high. Michael Bisio’s slap bass adds rhythmic emphasis and the finale is a timbral battle between Pasin and alto saxophonist Adam Siegel’s supersonic slurs. Ingrid Sertso’s scatting in tandem with vibraphone clangs and burbling horns almost transforms When Will the Blues Leave into jittery bebop. But her recitation of the title and response of “never” reasserts solemnity. Pasin’s OCDC, saluting Coleman and his trumpet Don Cherry is more linear than the dedicantes’ compositions. Plus the trumpeter’s quirky configuration of Cherry’s role is original. Walking bass and drummer Harvey Sorgen’s positioned whacks hold the bottom so that the horns can improvise freely.

Someone who never stinted on the improvisational or melodic content of his own compositions was Canadian-born, London-based trumpeter Kenny Wheeler (1930–2014). Fellow Canadian, trumpeter Ingrid Jensen and American tenor saxophonist/clarinetist Steve Treseler lead a seven-piece band on Invisible Sounds for Kenny Wheeler (Whirlwind Recordings WR 4729 whirlwindrecordings.com) playing nine Wheeler tunes that are audible, not invisible. Bookended by a studio and a live version of Foxy Trot, which in its live incarnation tosses along courtesy of Jon Wikan’s crisp drumming and an array of arpeggios spilling from Geoffrey Keezer’s piano, the set emphasizes Wheeler’s versatility. Expressive ballads like Where Do We Go from Here are buoyed by mellow saxophone swoops and upward puffs from the trumpet, as piano chording brings out its swing underpinning. Meanwhile, Old Time is an out-and-out funk tune with a stop-time narrative, shuffle beat, slurs and sniffs from the tenor saxophonist and acrobatic pitches from Jensen’s open horn. Still the most characteristic interpretation is of Wheeler’s best known tune, Everybody’s Song but My Own. A minor key lament, its essence is reflected in harmonic horn melding, slippery tremolos from Keezer and Jensen’s supple mid-range pitch slides.

Another composer who has a Canadian connection via her late ex-husband is 83-year-old Carla Bley. The 12 tunes played by Finns, pianist Iro Haarla and bassist Ulf Krokflors plus American drummer Barry Altschul on Around Again—The Music of Carla Bley (TUM CD 054 tumrecords.com) come mostly from her creative beginnings in the 1960s, coincidentally a time when the drummer was a member of Paul Bley’s bands that first played this music. Expressing the compositions’ inflections, performances are almost uniformly unhurried and dampened with percussion accents, double bass stops and focused on piano-led themes played respectfully. That way motion and melody are exposed at the same time. The exposition on Batterie, for instance, picks up sonic colours from keyboard jumps and is extended with low-pitched bass-string stops and indirect percussion clatters, and then slyly redirected to the head. Squirming and swaying, Haarla uses kinetic glissandi to turn the title track into a fantasia that gives the bassist enough space for plump pumps. Appropriately and subversively, both And Now; the Queen and Ida Lupino are spun out in processionial fashion, with the latter balancing Krokflors’ heated string stabs and Haarla’s cooler key manipulation; and the former cleanly sweeping up tempo with double bass prods that lead to unstoppable forward motion, soon intensified with variable and emphasized voicing from the keyboard. The only track to feature a drum solo that...
Fine Old Recordings Re-Released

Old Wine, New Bottles

BRUCE SURTEES

Universal Music, owner of DG, Decca, Phillips and others has been reissuing existing sets and creating new ones for re-release together with everything on an included single Blu-ray disc. Early releases included the complete Solti Ring Cycle, soon followed by the complete Karajan Ring from Berlin. Then the Complete Beethoven Symphonies under Karajan from 1962. Just to hand are the Complete Symphonies of Anton Bruckner played by the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra (Decca 4834660, 10 CDs plus one Blu-ray disc).

These are the versions plus the Te Deum in distinguished performances with Bernard Haitink conducting issued by Phillips, recorded between 1963 and 1972. The Te Deum dates from September 1966 with soprano Elly Ameling, contralto Anna Reynolds, tenor Horst Hoffmann, bass Guus Hoekman and the Netherlands Radio Choir. Bruckner collectors like to know what performing version is employed, so for them No.1 uses the Linz 1866; No.2 the Haas 1938; No.3 the second version 1877; No.4 the 1878 with the 1880 finale; No.6 original 1881 version; No.8 the Haas 1939 and No.9 the original 1894 edition. At the time of these recordings Phillips’ producer Jaap van Ginneken did not care to employ the then-latest noise reduction circuits. Instead, if I recall correctly, he increased the level of high frequencies’ overall volume where the hiss lay, taking it back down on replay. That he was correct is amply demonstrated by these discs that display natural dynamics, a wide frequency response and are free of any sonic manipulations. As usual, Haitink is predictably professional and without editorializing allows the music to speak for itself.

We always have the greatest expectations of any new film from biographer Bruno Monsaingeon. His 2017 biography of Mstislav Rostropovich, The Indomitable Bow, has just been released by Naxos on both DVD and Blu-ray video (Naxos 2.110583 DVD). Rostropovich is visited over the span of his life, first as a baby in his father’s cello case. His adult years include playing with Prokofiev and Shostakovich and standing by them when they were totally banned. Prokofiev introduces him to Sviatoslav Richter with whom he developed a long association.

Conductor Gennady Rozhdestvensky tells of Rostropovich’s first visit to Prague where he played the Dvořák concerto conducted by Václav Talich, “That was the great breakthrough which launched him onto the international scene. He became famous worldwide.” As Rostropovich states, “In that system going abroad was like a breath of fresh air, a great privilege. I was the third musician, after Gilels and Oistrakh, to go to America. It was amazing! From that point on, I was a ‘somebody.’” There were later political dictates from Moscow that stood in his path and also blocked soprano Galina Vishneskaya, his wife. His Russian citizenship was revoked but later reinstated through the intercession of his friend Yehudi Menuhin.

There is so much more here to learn and enjoy. Rich with interviews and great music, this video is not to be missed. There are bonus in-concert tracks: The Rocco Variations, variation VII through the end (Paris, Ozawa, 1986). Beethoven’s Archduke Trio with Wilhelm Kempff and Yehudi Menuhin (Paris, 1974) and the Sarabande from the Bach Cello Suite No.2 (1969). Also, there are 40 minutes of unique conversations with Olga Rostropovich, Elena Rostropovich, Natalia and Igor Solzhenitsyn elaborating on the extraordinary, poignant friendship and bond between Rostropovich and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn.

In this 150th anniversary year of the death of Hector Berlioz (1803-1869) the flood of new issues and even more re-issues is about to flow. One such is a live performance from 1953, the 150th anniversary of Berlioz’ birth, of The Damnation of Faust conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargent (Cameo Classics, CC9108, 2CDs). Intriguing, as two names rarely mentioned in the same sentence are Berlioz and Sargent. This is an English-language production.
performance using a singing translation by Paul England. Berlioz composed this Dramatic Legend as he called it, for three soloists, Faust, Marguerite and Mephistopheles, to be performed in a concert setting. Faust is sung by the ubiquitous tenor of the day, Richard Lewis; Marguerite is Australian mezzo-soprano Joan Hammond; and Mephistopheles is the great Polish bass Marian Nowakowski. The three fit their roles convincingly. A fourth character, a student named Brander, sung by bass-baritone Hervey Alan seems to have nothing to do with the plot.

I was most interested in hearing Joan Hammond as I was quite a fan and had not heard her for years. She was still in fine voice here, aged 41, but ten years later an operation affected her hearing and she retired to Australia. In addition to the Berlioz there is a live performance of Dvořák’s Te Deum from 1954 (the 50th anniversary of the composer’s death) also recorded in Royal Festival Hall. The soloists are Elizabeth Schwarzkopf and baritone Bruce Boyce. In this performance Sargent conducts the BBC Symphony and Choral Society. Ah, Schwarzkopf.

One of the most deserving artists resurrected from the archives that I had not heard in a long time is the late Greek pianist Vasso Devetzis. Born in 1927 in Thessalonica, her outstanding talents were recognized at a young age, giving her first recital aged seven. Her international career began in Paris playing the Schumann Piano Concerto under Albert Wolff. In the Soviet Union where she remained for several years in the 1960s and 70s she was associated with classical music superstars David Oistrakh, Rostropovich and Rudolf Barshai with whom she performed and recorded extensively in a repertoire including Haydn, Mozart, Shostakovich, Beethoven, Bach, Fauré and others. Back in France she was a close friend of fellow Greeks Maria Callas and Mikis Theodorakis. Devetzis died in 1987.

Devetzis’s keyboard artistry is a harmonious combination of style, control, transparency and touch. To elaborate somewhat, she demonstrates a most sympathetic affinity with the unique style of the each composer. Her control is manifested by a magic blend of energy and purity. Her level of performance transparency and clarity is reminiscent of Glenn Gould (without mannerism or arrogance) and Dinu Lipatti. She is providing us with a personal measure of humour and communication. Her touch has a rare versatility, the ability to transform her instrument into an organ, a harp, a clavichord or a mandolin. In addition, with captivating lightness she can almost make the piano a non-percussive instrument. In summary, a delightful treat for the listener.

Volume 1 of the Doremi projected Vasso Devetzis / Rudolf Barshai collection (DHR-8063/4 naxosdirect.com) presents the six solo keyboard concertos, BWV1052 to BWV1058 with the Moscow Chamber Orchestra. In addition there are works for solo keyboard: Partita No.1 in B flat Major BWV825; Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue BWV903; French Suite No.6 in E major BWV817 and the Prelude and Fugue No.5 BWV830 from The Well-Tempered Clavier.

Volume 2 (DHR-8069) is all Haydn, with the same cast playing the Concerto in D Major Op.21, (Hob. XII:11) in addition to four solo piano sonatas: C Major, Hob.XVI:15; F Major Hob.XVI:123; D Major, Hob.XVI:51 and A-flat Major, Hob.XVI:46.

The series is off to an exuberant start with the remarkable synergy between all concerned. There is lots of Mozart promised for the coming months.

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the always uncertain future of our orchestras. And that’s where the upcoming June 12 to 14 Orchestras Canada conference at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, titled Designing the 21st Century Orchestra: Embedding Canadian Orchestras in Canadian Communities, promises to be rather useful.

The notion of “embedding orchestras in communities” is catchy, but not if it becomes a lazy catch-all. It is ultimately only useful as a starting point for minutely specific exploration of what the two-way chemistry that needs to exist between communities and their orchestras actually consists of. Carleton thrives on this kind of detailed delving, fascinated by what it can uncover.

“I’ll give you an example,” she says. “One of the fascinating conversations we have been involved with lately – quite amazing to me actually – led to becoming aware, among smaller groups with volunteer musicians, of the competition among these orchestras for the finest volunteer musicians. The clear sense from these players is that if the orchestra is not giving them the opportunity to play the repertoire that they want to in a setting that is congenial for their artistic goals and standards, musicians will go orchestra shopping; so when orchestras like that are asking the question What is our definition of the community we serve? the musicians themselves are going to be very high on that list, because if the entire trombone section walks, and we can’t attract trombones, then what do we do?”

“So what are some of the other good questions, like that one, then?” I ask.

“The question of where excellence fits in,” she says, “that’s a good one. Poor old Beethoven, you know. He often comes in for a bit of a beating in conversations like this. A bit ironic, really. We’ll be sitting around a table and someone will sometimes say, ‘Is our purpose to play Beethoven better every time that the group has the honour of engaging with that music?’ And sometimes it may simply be fine to say YES. That is our job, that is our role, that is our goal as an organization. But maybe there are times where it needs to be a ‘Yes, ... and’ as the improvisers say. Or maybe a ‘Yes ... until’ as in ‘Yes, until it becomes so highly prioritized, in some cases, that volunteer musicians are no longer welcome.’”

“And more?” I ask.

“Perhaps most important, because orchestras are complex contrapositions, with lots of people with strong opinions, who are the people involved in these conversations about which way forward? What are the differing perspectives that are coming to the table? The musicians, highly trained and with very specific skills: how are they involved? Board and staff. Volunteers? Is there a living conversation at the place?”

A pause … and then. “This is not dull work,” she says. 
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For the past month or so, I’ve been involved in a wonderful and fascinating writing endeavour, the results of which have been published online by The WholeNote as well as other arts publications (The Dance Current and Opera Canada magazine). The Emerging Arts Critics project, begun by the National Ballet of Canada, now expanded to include the Toronto Symphony and the Canadian Opera Company, selects eight promising arts critics, all people in their 20s, and provides them with reviewing assignments, professional mentoring, and guaranteed publication in major journals. The WholeNote is the venue of choice for TSO reviews, which have already appeared online. I was asked, and was delighted, to be the mentoring individual for the symphony reviewers.

What was stunning about this project was not only that someone recognized that arts reviewing was a discipline that needed mentoring, expertise and development, but that such support would be given to an enterprise which has virtually disappeared from the day-to-day lives of most North Americans. I don’t have definitive figures, but I’m guessing there were more than 100 classical music reviewers employed by Canadian and American newspapers 20 years ago. Today there are probably no more than a dozen left, and it seems half of them work for The New York Times. Here in Toronto, as I know well, having worked as the classical reviewer for The Globe and Mail until just a couple of years ago, the National Post has done away with all classical reviews, The Star employs the redoubtable JohnTerauds on a freelance basis, and The Globe’s musical offerings are almost exclusively devoted to opera. That leaves in the city publications like WholeNote, the website Ludwig Van Toronto and assorted (and very fine) individual bloggers and websites such as OperaRamblings, Schmopera and Barcza’s Blog.

But individual bloggers are no substitute for reviews in a major metropolitan daily, for reasons that are not immediately obvious. It’s not about the quality of the writing. There’s probably more good writing about classical music today in the world than ever before. And it has nothing, or less than you might think, to do with maintaining the health of the the classical performing scene in the city and region, which seems to me to be exploding with vitality these days, reviews or no reviews. I remember, with great pleasure, actually, one Canadian Opera Company publicist sheepishly admitting to me that my reviews of her company’s productions had no impact on her box office at all, positive or negative.

She was embarrassed to tell me, but I wasn’t the least bit surprised. Because my feeling always has been that my reviews aren’t and shouldn’t be for the people already going to the classical events. Just do the math. A sold-out run of a seven-performance COC production results in about 14,000 patrons in the Four Seasons Centre. About 7500 for three sold-out Roy Thomson Hall TSO concerts. The Globe and Mail’s daily circulation is about 300,000; the Greater Toronto Area has a population of 6.4 million. A remarkably small percentage of Torontonians in general, and Globe readers in particular, are interested in attending classical music events.

So why devote precious space to a review of them? Because reviews of art events are not just for the people who go to them. They are for everyone. They are for all the citizens of a healthy society concerned about their communal life. They are for everyone because they offer an opportunity for a society to train a critical lens on itself. Going to a concert is not just another hobby, like joining a bridge club or a ballroom dancing class. It is a public expression of fundamental values, central to a society, even if hidden beneath a polished and slightly off-putting surface of formally attired men and women playing music written, mostly, centuries ago.

The key to discovering the real purpose of a “critical” review is tied up in the history of the word itself. Our word critical comes from the Greek kritikos and the Latin criticus, meaning one who judges, one who discerns. Not one who constantly finds fault, by the way, as the word has degenerated to mean, but one who looks inside, evaluates, reveals. And we’ve kept a vestige of that original classical meaning of the word to this day when we talk about something being a critical feature of an enterprise or situation, meaning a component that is uniquely and vitally significant (as something being a critical feature of an enterprise or situation, the essence, the tipping point, the hidden heart of the work and the world.

The work and the world. That’s the other secret of arts, and especially music, reviewing, that newspaper editors counting clicks...
to digital articles spectacularly fail to understand. It’s not just the artistic world that the critic investigates – it’s the whole world. And that’s because music is such a deeply social, deeply communal activity. The move from a discussion of music to a discussion of society is impossible to avoid. That’s what a music critic does when they’re at their best – intercut and interweave musical and cultural perspectives so that the discussion of one becomes the discussion of the other. Arts reviews can then be places where a society questions and interrogates the things it believes in, the things it values. That’s why reviews are for everyone, because they illuminate issues in which everyone has a stake.

Or at least they should. That’s what I was trying to tell the young critics I was mentoring in the Emerging Arts Critics program. In the end, once they’ve mastered the elusive language with which we describe music, once they’ve figured out the structure and pacing of an 800-word review, once they’ve learned to navigate the boundaries between personal and impersonal judgments, they’re left with the task of creating a draft set of values for their readers to absorb, debate, reject, or accept. Should a performer like Barbara Hannigan be more important than the music she performs or the other way around? What can a Brahms concerto teach us about the relative value of the individual and society in our lives? What happens when a cynical, cold composer (like Dmitri Shostakovich) is performed by a radiantly intensely human performer (like Alisa Weilerstein)? Whose character should prevail? (A life issue as well as a musical issue)

Those are the kinds of questions musical reviewers should tackle, I believe – questions that begin with notes and phrases and dynamics and expand to fill the longing space we all have for value in our personal lives.

It seems that the venues for addressing these kinds of critical questions are shrinking today. We are instead inundated, drowning, gasping for breath in a Twitterverse full of the other form of criticism – disparaging, negative, demoralizing. But we can’t and won’t stay there forever. I’m sitting here, hoping against hope, that the talents and skills that our Emerging Arts Critics are learning will once again, someday, be useful to us all.

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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