MAY 2019
CONCERT LISTINGS
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INSIDE: 17th ANNUAL
CANARY PAGES
CHORAL DIRECTORY

ART OF SONG
The Right Kind of Crazy
Vocal Mentor, Liz Upchurch

PLANTING NOT PAVING
Faith-Arts Centres
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CHOIR! CHOIR! CHOIR! is a fun, inclusive, no-commitment choir who meet two evenings a week at Clinton's Tavern in Toronto. Led by Nobu Adilman and guitarist Daveed Goldman (AKA “DaBu”) they also tour, fundraise and generally make music to express both collective grief and celebration. When the choir invited the public to come and sing The Beatles’ Here Comes the Sun to launch The Canadian Cancer Society’s Daffodil Campaign, The WholeNote’s Kevin King was there: “A fantastic event and experience to be there photographing it; surrounded by so many smiling faces and joyous voices. The sun itself had been a bit shy that day but these singers managed to bring the sunshine with them!”

An additional photo of the CHOIR! CHOIR! CHOIR! event appears on the cover of our Canary Pages (page C1). A recording of the event can be found on the C!C!C! Facebook page.

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Summer music festivals, series and events in Ontario and beyond, from June to September.
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From Where I Sat, Jazz Lives

From where I sat, in row D of the first balcony at Koerner Hall, this past April 10, 2019, jazz definitely lives.

Just like the program in my hand said it did. “Jazz Lives 2019: a Tribute to Jazz.FM91 past, present and future” was the event’s full title. It was the 15th such consecutive event giving faithful followers of the listener-supported radio station a chance to show that indeed they still do support it, in spite of recent upheavals as painful as any in the station’s storied history since its birth as CJRT-FM at the Ryerson Institute of Technology (now Ryerson University) in 1949 (that’s 70 years ago, people!). How long ago was that? Well, the IRT in CJRT’s call sign stood for Journalism, Radio, and Technology, which were three of Ryerson’s cutting edge educational mandates.

By all accounts it’s been a rough spell, and most of the people in the audience had a pretty good idea of what’s been going on. With a new board of directors in place, and a boatload of station personalities bouncing on and off the stage (some of them after being notably absent during the past half year) what was particularly encouraging was a classy absence of gloating – a sense of quiet determination to get on with things. And a really strange sense of intimacy between the audience in the hall and the people on stage – strange, that is, until one realizes that radio is still probably the most intimate of media. For all I know the guy next to me shouting “we love you Brad” to the host of “Afternoon Drive with Brad Barker” was listening to Barker with his shirt on for the very first time.

That’s because radio doesn’t require you to put on a face to meet it, and it meets you, exactly halfway no matter where you are.

A fine time was had by all, not least because the musicians who came to the party treated us to two very swinging sets. Come to think of it, from the youngest members of the JazzFM91 youth band who kicked things off to the oldest of the household names on stage, we were probably looking at an age range pretty damn close to the entire duration of the station’s storied history.

May the beat go on.

Where I sat, in row D of the first balcony at Koerner Hall, this past April 10, 2019, I was definitely a supported listener.

At some moment during the proceedings I looked down at the little silver-coloured plaque on the arm of my seat. It informed me that my particular bum-in-seat was being supported in thanks to a donation in honour of “George Ullmann, music lover and music entrepreneur, on his 80th birthday.”

Once back home, I googled the aforementioned Mr. Ullmann and found that, after graduating with a B.MUS (Toronto) in 1967 and an MA (Toronto) two years later, he had gone on to head up Boosey & Hawkes’ Canadian operations from the late 1970s till they closed their operations at the end of 1994 (with scores by such notable composers as Talivaldis Kenins, Violet Archer, John Weinzwieg, Healey Willan and many others among their holdings). At which point the entrepreneurial Mr. Ullmann established Counterpoint Musical Service, which helped bridge the gap left by Boosey & Hawkes’ exit, and who went on to serve on the boards of various music industry and service organizations, SOCAN among them.

One could do worse than to have “music lover and musical entrepreneur” as an epitaph.

From where I sit right now, thumbing through the page proofs of this issue, finally ready to go to press, the music lovers around me give reason for hope:

- the hundreds in our cover photograph joining Choir!Choir!Choir! to sing Here Comes the Sun into the drizzle and mist (see On Our Cover, page 5);
- the more-than-hundred choirs taking the time to announce their presence to prospective choristers in this year’s 17th Annual Canary Pages Choral Directory, inside this issue;
- the writers of the astonishing range of stories in the issue, all so different and yet all reflective, one way or another, of how much music matters; the astonishing people we are lucky enough to get to write about, to whom music matters as much as it does to us;
- and, of course, you.

We are lucky.
Not a lot of people know that Liz Upchurch, the head of the COC Ensemble Studio and a key figure in operatic training in our country, started her career as an art song buff. The Royal Academy of Music graduate and London-born pianist who studied with Roger Vignoles first came to Canada for a lieder course led by Martin Isepp in Banff, where she met Mary Morrison, Michael McMahon and John Hess, who all had extensive opera experience. “At the time I had just started to lose my sight,” she remembers. “I have a retinal disease which started to manifest seriously around that time... it had been a difficult year. I’d just been given an okay by the specialist to go for the summer.”
The two kept in touch over the years, but when Szeto inquired too early about trying out for the Ensemble Studio, she got an honest answer. “Jenny, she said. ‘You’re not ready. I needed to wait a few more years. She is always honest with her advice. And I auditioned when I was ready.’ Upchurch is known for keeping an eye on young artists – when you start to lose your vision, you’re seeing in two dimensions, the whole up-down thing is confusing. He said, ‘I’ll take you on walks at the end of the course.’ And he got me over a couple of fears that I had.” Banff was also the place where Upchurch met her future wife, theatre director Jennifer Tarver, who was then assisting Rhoda Levine. But that was to come later. “Then John on that hike said, ‘Look, I do this course in the winter, it’s called Dramatic Integration, for Canadian singers doing contemporary music. I can’t really explain the course, it’s a bit crazy, but I think you might be the right kind of crazy to do it.’”

Two things were immediately evident, Hess tells me when I ask him about the experience. “Liz was a beautiful pianist. Superb sound, great fingers, deeply musical and a superb ensemble player. The other thing was a wicked sense of humour.” She was also, he writes, a dramatic sight to see while playing. “She was already beginning to have vision issues and she would often play with a tissue draped over one side of her glasses.” She accepted this unknown disease in stride, almost in an off-hand manner. “This was vintage Liz. She had an unabated appetite for the beauty of the Rockies and even with her physical challenges she was undaunted in getting to the top of whatever mountain she could.”

Young pianist Jennifer Szeto, now Montreal-based former Ensemble Studio member and Adler Fellow, also remembers that sense of humour and the cheek. They met by accident, when Szeto played an audition for a friend whose regular pianist cancelled. “It’s a story which Liz likes to tell in a completely different way. But we met at that COSI audition for a friend whose regular pianist cancelled. “It’s a story which Liz remembers that sense of humour she could.”

Challenges she was undaunted in getting to the top of whatever mountain that thing that makes you different.”

Upchurch is celebrating her 20 years with the COC with a noon concert, “Some of My Favourite Things,” on May 7 at the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre (RBA), and the program will be back-to-back-to-back art song. “I did a double first at the RAM in solo and chamber music, but I always played for singers, for their classes and recitals, and was kind of crazy for singers. There’s nothing as amazing as the written words set to music – the human voice. Human voices send me.”

Back in Banff, John Hess, in particular, became a fast friend, and opened further doors into opera – and hiking. “John would always lead these hikes. I couldn’t do the hikes with other singers and pianists – when you start to lose your vision, you’re seeing in two dimensions, the whole up-down thing is confusing. He said, ‘I’ll take you on walks at the end of the course.’ And he got me over a couple of fears that I had.” Banff was also the place where Upchurch met her future wife, theatre director Jennifer Tarver, who was then assisting Rhoda Levine. But that was to come later. “Then John on that hike said, ‘Look, I do this course in the winter, it’s called Dramatic Integration, for Canadian singers doing contemporary music. I can’t really explain the course, it’s a bit crazy, but I think you might be the right kind of crazy to do it.’”

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The two kept in touch over the years, but when Szeto inquired too early about trying out for the Ensemble Studio, she got an honest answer. “Jenny, she said. ‘You’re not ready. I needed to wait a few more years. She is always honest with her advice. And I auditioned when I was ready.’ Upchurch is known for keeping an eye on young musical talent across the country, and Szeto confirms it. “She likes to keep tabs. She likes to keep a good pulse on everything. I think that’s what makes her so good at her job: she has a remarkable eye for talent. She is a fabulous teacher and mentor, but really has an eye for spotting that thing that makes you different.”
By the time the first round of taped submissions for the Ensemble Studio auditions arrives, Upchurch will have heard a good number of applicants already. She spends a chunk of her year travelling to vocal programs and festivals. “By the end of a summer, I’ve heard between 50 and 80 Canadian singers from undergraduate level up, and several pianists. That allows me not just to hear young people with a lot of potential and watch them and be at the significant point to guide them over the next few steps, but also to interact with their teachers and people that they are with. So: there are no real surprises, honestly. The talented people rise. It’s important to have that big radar.”

What is she looking for in the 130-plus submissions that they get? “Extraordinariness. Beauty. People with amazing sense of message: communicators. You can have a wonderful voice and not know how to communicate. You’ve got to sort of have it all and then you’ve got to really want it. It has to be a calling. It’s a very hard discipline, singing.

What about the training program, developed over the years, at the COC that she now heads up? “I have a small army, basically,” she says. Because it’s a large art form, it can be broken down and taught in separate ways. “You’ll do movement in one room, you do German diction over here, you have a vocal session here, you have coaching over there, everything is silo’d in boxes. For the singers who’re trying to put it all together, if there wasn’t a unified language, they are starting to ping pong.” She is first and foremost a pianist and she plays for all the trainers that she brings in, which means that she can see first-hand whether this trainer is a good fit for that particular group of singers. “It took me a long time to find this team. I have people like Wendy Nielsen, and Tom Diamond, and Jennifer Swan whom I met in Italy ten years ago, who’s an expert on breathing and physicality. It’s taken years to develop a sort of language, an understanding, a philosophy, and a method – a repeatable method. Sometimes we have four trainers in the room. We’re very good at sharing who needs to go when in the room, who needs to talk. The teamwork is essential. They also teach them separately.”

The new Studio members are always introduced to the audience of the noon-hour concert series as a group, but they say farewell individually, in the Les Adieux concerts. Near the end the repertoire is often ambitious. “They sometimes want to do big song cycles, and we created space for them in the series for that. I’ve already spoken to the incoming studio members about their Les Adieux concert. For a Schubert concert like Samuel Chan just did, that is two years’ work.”

“The song aspect has been elevated during Liz’s tenure with the Ensemble and that’s been a fantastic thing,” says Wendy Nielsen, the head vocal consultant at the Ensemble Studio and the head of voice at U of T. The two women did a recital together in 2011 in the RBA and after meeting as teachers at the Ensemble Studio, Nielsen invited Upchurch to come to her own summer program in St. Andrews in New Brunswick. What is Upchurch after in a young singer? “She’s primarily focused on helping them to develop their artistry,” says Nielsen. “Obviously voice matters, that’s their instrument, but she has a real ability to bring out the artist inside them.” And if that includes singers or pianists who also compose, like Danika Lorèn and Stéphane Mayer, she will find ways to bring forward their original work. “She is very respectful of what each ensemble member needs, and aware...”
that they all need something different. One of her strengths is that she meets someone where they are. The recipe is not the same for each person. While providing training, the program allows for a lot of growth in different directions.”

When I ask Upchurch what composers she favours personally, she takes the Romantic lane. “Brahms was my first love – and Schumann. I get Schumann. I was obsessed with the letters, with the relationship, with how he wrote, how he changed from improvising to seeing text for the first time, that whole thing. The Brahms-Mendelssohn-Schumann-Wolf axis was a major love affair for me. All of the piano trios, Brahms piano trios, Brahms cello sonatas, violin sonatas, how violin sonatas bleed into art song – all that.” But Brahms and Schumann won’t be on the program on May 7, giving way to some contemporary music, as is only right. Schubert, though – “a god of writing for text” – will make an appearance, with An die Musik.

It was hard reducing her favourite things to an hour-long concert, she says. “I was really stuck – and I’m never stuck. It gelled about a month ago when I really knew exactly who I could have. I decided it should be about the Studio – the first year Simona Genga and Anna-Sophie Neher, who are friends, will do duets and rep that they love. The COC orchestra concertmaster, Marie Bérard, will play the violin solo in Strauss’ Morgen, with Genga singing. “Among the songs by living composers, the Ana Sokolović cycle Dawn Always Begins in the Bones will be well represented, as will Derek Holman’s The Four Seasons. “It’s an incredible set, which I’ve already recorded with Lance [Wiliford]. The Fair Daffodils is a true gem – Anna-Sophie will sing it.”

Upchurch also composes. “Monica Whicher and I used to perform this song that I wrote, but this time it will be with a violin since Marie is there. It’s a lullaby for my son, who’s now nine, and who I have to go collect right after our interview. He’s never fallen asleep to it, not once in nine years,” she tut-tuts.

Lydia Perović is an arts journalist in Toronto. Send her your art-of-song news to artofsong@thewholenote.com.
Faith-Arts Centres
Creating Healthy Hybrids

Kendra Fry

It’s March 25, 2019 as I write this here at Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre for Faith, Justice and the Arts. That puts us right in the middle of Lent (the lead-up to Easter celebrations). We just struck St. Matthew’s Passion for Tafelmusik (which occurred on the same day as our meditative Compline service) and then headed straight into the University of Toronto’s student concerts. By the end of the week we’ll be onto Trio Arkel. And that’s just the sanctuary, one of ten available spaces in this large urban church.

Church. A place of faith. First and foremost, Trinity-St. Paul’s is that: a United Church, built 130 years ago for the gathering of a congregation of Christian worship. However, the intervening decades have seen this definition of its purpose adjust, with usage patterns and the will of the congregation, into something far more inclusive. Inclusive of different worship forms and inclusive of community in the broadest sense. On any given day you will see seniors exercising, children arriving for daycare, dance and music lessons, language classes and 12-step groups meeting, and professional arts organizations performing. It is a messy mélange of all the best things of community. And more and more T-SP (along with others) is serving as a model for faith buildings across Canada.

So, dear readers of The WholeNote magazine, why does this matter to you? Because the new models being built in these faith communities are providing new spaces for the arts and allowing for broad spectrum partnerships that could deepen our community’s relationship to the arts.

In 2013, Alan Brown of WolfBrown in the United States released a paper that talked about the increasing desire to create art rather than just witness it - to participate. He broke arts participation down into five “modalities”: inventive, interpretive, curatorial, observational and ambient (WolfBrown, A Fresh Look at Arts Participation, 2013). He argued that we deepen our relationship with the arts when we engage at all of these levels, acting as both practitioner and patron.

Our new hybrid faith-arts, community-centre spaces offer the opportunity to be inventive and observational in one venue, without the excessive costs of a full-scale theatre to hinder these explorations. The best centres create a dynamic in which audiences are allowed to feel a sense of ownership and the comfort of a home away from home. Unlike many large-scale recital halls, these are not “high art” places, even when the art being produced in them often is. The intimate scale of the work at Trinity-St. Paul’s, for example, can best be seen post-show in the lobby where artists pass through on the way to retrieve their things. There is a natural collapsing of distance, an ability to imagine oneself as being fully a part of the success of that venture, a part of a journey of art creation.

What We Know (and Don’t Know) About Canadian Arts Audiences
In a 2013 blog on the culturedays.ca website, titled What We Know (and Don’t Know) About Canadian Arts Audiences, Shannon Litzenberger quotes a National Endowment for the Arts (US) Periodic Survey of Public Participation in the Arts as saying “we are rapidly introducing new or blended forms ... expanding beyond purpose-built arts facilities, moving into bookstores, community centres, schools, places of worship and especially the home.” These models aren’t particularly new; who hasn’t heard of the infamous Trinity Sessions by the Cowboy Junkies at Holy Trinity Anglican, after all? What is new, however, is that aging congregations, and the weight of often historical buildings, are putting the model of faith buildings as multi-disciplinary hubs under threat. Regeneration Works (a project of the National Trust for Canada and Faith & the Common Good) estimates that 9000 faith buildings will close in Canada in the next ten years. How many of these buildings currently house rehearsals, workshops or performances?

There is an opportunity here, to preserve these unique architectural spaces, creating new venues for the arts that can work in collaboration with community activation. Many models are being developed around Canada, but here are just a couple to consider.

After the congregation at Dominion-Chalmers United Church in Ottawa had shrunk to a point where it couldn’t maintain the building,
Carleton University offered to purchase it. The new arts and education centre (yet to be named) will still house the faith community, but will also have Carleton University’s department of music, the Ottawa Symphony Orchestra, Ottawa Children’s Theatre and other amateur and professional practitioners. This can only strengthen the learning environment and provide a built-in future audience. Carleton is invested in this concept of a hybrid culture, creating a more nuanced educational experience that will also involve adult learner lecture series. Check out more on the project at https://carleton.ca/dcuc.

Meanwhile, in Montreal, St. Jax Anglican Church has just announced a partnership with La Monastère as the resident circus company. La Monastère describes themselves as a cabaret circus, interested in creating fully immersive events in St. Jax’s sanctuary in which the seating has been removed to allow for large-scale public gatherings and events. With a bar, full lighting and sound system and the gorgeous architecture of the church, the venue is proving to be divine (excuse the pun) for La Monastère. The sense of height and daring inherent in the circus arts seems to be enhanced by the curved architectural features of this Anglican church, creating a

experience that is both intimate and death-defying. The Anglican congregation continues to worship there and the team at St. Jax is looking to expand its mission by bringing more co-users into its community hub embrace. As they curate their own particular hub they are considering a gym (possibly circus-based), co-working and café spaces, as viable options that would enhance their mission.

While both of these models have favoured the church remaining resident, on the East Coast there are models in which arts groups have fully purchased the faith building, creating wholly new venues centred on the arts. These include the Highland Arts Theatre Centre in Sydney, Nova Scotia and the Indian River Music Festival, in Prince Edward Island. The Indian River Music Festival has expanded its programming to encompass the entire summer, with musicians of all different genres from across Canada, including, this summer, Polaris Prize winner, Jeremy Dutcher. As well, a sensitive glass addition to the historically designated site allows room for audiences to gather pre- and post-show, without damaging the historic structure.

Regeneration Works continues to work on models like these across the country, inspired by what has been created and looking to the future of hybrid faith-arts centres. In Winnipeg and Kingston, mighty Vancouver and tiny little whistle-stop Kingsbridge, communities are embracing these civic assets and asking them to reoccupy a place in the broader public life. If you’re interested in seeing more models that are being tested, head on over to www.faithcommongood.org/places_of_faith to learn more; or consider joining us for a workshop in Kingston on June 1 at the Spire of Sydenham, another fantastic “arts in a faith building” project. Also feel free to join us on social media, and keep an eye out for our upcoming survey of how faith buildings are serving the broader not-for-profit community. We look forward to hearing about co-use projects from all over Canada via this two-year study.

As I finish writing this, a toddler has just chased the resident cat down the hallway and Dancing with Parkinsons is setting up for their weekly therapy/dance class/community gathering. In the sanctuary, a few tourists have come off the street and asked to pray, and rather unusually, the space was available. Someone tunes the piano for tonight while they pray. I cannot help but feel that this is a glorious use for this old place of sanctuary.

Kendra Fry is the general manager of Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre for Faith, Justice and the Arts and an associate of Regeneration Works: Places of Faith, a project of the National Trust for Canada and Faith & the Common Good. She is passionate about building places where communities can grow and thrive.
Lesage connected romantically, and were married in 1998. In 1999, Sokolović was named Grand Prize winner in the CBC/Radio-Canada National Competition for Young Composers, for which I served as CBC’s coordinator. The work with which she won is titled, *Géométrie sentimentale*. It’s a work in which the thematic material is seen from three different angles: “music through different geometries,” as her program note states. It was through her success at the competition that I first met Sokolović, and since that time we have collaborated on numerous occasions.

*Géométrie sentimentale* had been commissioned in 1997 by the Ensemble contemporaine de Montréal (ECM+), a large chamber ensemble created in 1988 and led by its founder and artistic director, the Montreal conductor, Véronique Lacroix. Lacroix had also been in the audience for that same SMCQ concert in 1995 and had heard Sokolović’s *Ambient V*. Like many others, Lacroix, too, was struck by the distinctive voice she heard in the work. Over time, and at last count, she has commissioned four works from Sokolović. The most recent of these commissions is the violin concerto, *Evta*.

Sokolović told me she based the concerto on ideas that surfaced in conversations with her soloist, the Montreal-born, but now Toronto-based violin virtuoso, Andréa Tyniec. Two areas of interest that Tyniec expressed were Gypsy violin music and yoga. Sokolović wrote, “*Evta* means ‘seven’ in the Serbian Roma language. Each of the seven movements of the concerto is inspired by the colours of the chakras and is associated with one of the notes of the scale: C/red, D/orange, E/yellow, F/green, G/blue, A/indigo and B/violet.” She further mentions, “The work is strongly influenced by Gypsy violin music played in the Balkans.” Tyniec told me: “Working with Ana on *Evta* after performing so many of her violin works during the past years, both solo and chamber, has been a real artistic highlight for me in my career. Playing *Evta* is a personal experience since some of its themes and structures are drawn from conversations Ana and I had years ago. *Evta* is also a wonderful challenge for any soloist, to be at once a prominent voice leading the narrative and still remaining a part of the bigger textures of the work. There is such joy in being able to both stand out, be oneself and belong.”

I remember the first time I heard Ana Sokolović’s music: I was in Paris, participating as CBC Radio’s delegate at the International Rostrum of Composers (IRC) in 1996. My Radio-Canada colleague, Laurent Major, had chosen to present a work for violin duo, *Ambient V*, composed in 1995 by Montreal composer Sokolović (b. 1968) who had come to Canada from her native Serbia in 1992. I recall thinking that this was a distinctly fresh musical voice. There were elements of Serbian folk music, minimalism, as well as choreographed movement by the two players. It all added up to a memorable impression of music that was playful, yet highly focused and purposeful.

I certainly was not the only person to be impressed by *Ambient V*. Another young Montreal composer, Jean Lesage (b. 1958), heard the work and recommended it to a colleague who was designing a program for the Société de musique contemporaine du Québec (SMCQ). The piece was programmed on the SMCQ concert, recorded for broadcast on Radio-Canada, and subsequently chosen as the Radio-Canada submission to the IRC. *Ambient V* is available on a recording on the SNE label called *Nouvelle Musique Montréalaise II* through the Canadian Music Centre. Incidentally, Sokolović and Lesage connected romantically, and were married in 1998. In 1999, Sokolović was named Grand Prize winner in the CBC/Radio-Canada National Competition for Young Composers, for which I served as CBC’s coordinator. The work with which she won is titled, *Géométrie sentimentale*. It’s a work in which the thematic material is seen from three different angles: “music through different geometries,” as her program note states. It was through her success at the competition that I first met Sokolović, and since that time we have collaborated on numerous occasions.

*Géométrie sentimentale* had been commissioned in 1997 by the Ensemble contemporaine de Montréal (ECM+), a large chamber ensemble created in 1988 and led by its founder and artistic director, the Montreal conductor, Véronique Lacroix. Lacroix had also been in the audience for that same SMCQ concert in 1995 and had heard Sokolović’s *Ambient V*. Like many others, Lacroix, too, was struck by the distinctive voice she heard in the work. Over time, and at last count, she has commissioned four works from Sokolović. The most recent of these commissions is the violin concerto, *Evta*.

Sokolović told me she based the concerto on ideas that surfaced in conversations with her soloist, the Montreal-born, but now Toronto-based violin virtuoso, Andréa Tyniec. Two areas of interest that Tyniec expressed were Gypsy violin music and yoga. Sokolović wrote, “*Evta* means ‘seven’ in the Serbian Roma language. Each of the seven movements of the concerto is inspired by the colours of the chakras and is associated with one of the notes of the scale: C/red, D/orange, E/yellow, F/green, G/blue, A/indigo and B/violet.” She further mentions, “The work is strongly influenced by Gypsy violin music played in the Balkans.” Tyniec told me: “Working with Ana on *Evta* after performing so many of her violin works during the past years, both solo and chamber, has been a real artistic highlight for me in my career. Playing *Evta* is a personal experience since some of its themes and structures are drawn from conversations Ana and I had years ago. *Evta* is also a wonderful challenge for any soloist, to be at once a prominent voice leading the narrative and still remaining a part of the bigger textures of the work. There is such joy in being able to both stand out, be oneself and belong.”
The concerto was premiered by Tyniec and ECM+, conducted by Lacroix at the 2017 World Music Days in Vancouver, sponsored by the International Society of Contemporary Music and Music on Main. I attended that performance. In my review of it for The WholeNote, I observed that Tyniec’s solo violin was an astounding traveller through the seven movements, flashing virtuosity in so many ways, one lost count. The thread of this fascinating composition never lost clarity as it swept through its intricate and surprising courses. It was a riveting experience to witness the unfolding of this exciting, highly original work.

“To be at once a prominent voice leading the narrative and still remaining a part of the bigger textures of the work ... there is such joy in being able to both stand out, be oneself and belong.”
— Violinist Andréa Tyniec

Toronto audiences will at last get their chance to hear Tyniec perform Sokolović’s Evta on May 26 at 8pm when New Music Concerts (NMC) presents the work as part of their season’s final concert at Betty Oliphant Theatre. NMC artistic director Robert Aitken will conduct the NMC ensemble in a concert that also includes music by two rising young Canadian composers, Samuel Andreyev (b. 1981) and Matthias McIntire (b. 1986).

Evta is also available on a newly released CD on the ATMA label titled Sirènes (ATMA ACD2 2762.) The recording contains four major works by Sokolović, including the title track, Sirènes, a work for six female voices, written for Queen of Puddings Music Theatre (QOP) in 2000. In 2010 Sokolović wrote another, more ambitious work for six female voices for QOP, a 55-minute one-act opera in Serbian called Svadba (Wedding), arguably her greatest success to date.

In her note to the opera, Sokolović wrote: “When Queen of Puddings Music Theatre (1995–2013) approached me to write an opera for six female voices, I took the opportunity to explore the theme of a wedding, particularly the evening before the ceremony, during which the bride-to-be and her friends devote themselves to private ancient rituals. The text is based on original Serbian poetry but given a new context, adapting it to our contemporary culture, and the music is derived from traditional folklore.” Sokolović has told me that when she arrived in Canada as a student, she saw herself as a member of an international contemporary music community, and she tried to avoid any limitation to her music that might result from emphasizing her Serbian roots. However, she learned that, rather than being limiting, expressing her musical roots in a contemporary context enabled her to strengthen her voice as a composer.

Svadba has had 20 productions to date. John Hess, the co-founder (along with Dáirine Ni Mheadhra) of QOP told me, “I think it is easily the most performed Canadian opera ever. Our enchantment with Ana had a lot to do with her imaginative vocal writing and the unique exploratory quality of much of that. Her roots in Serbian traditional music and her ability to use that as a compelling ingredient of her work without becoming gratuitous or sentimental was important to us. Finally, her strong dramatic instinct left us with a body of works for the singing stage that continue to be performed.”

Sokolović’s proven success as an opera composer has led to a commission for a new mainstage opera from the Canadian Opera Company (COC). The Old Fools is an opera that Sokolović is creating with British librettist Paul Bentley. The two-act opera was inspired by a poem by English poet Philip Larkin, focusing on the fear of aging and death. In announcing the commission, COC general director Alexander Neef said: “One of the things I enjoy most about Ana’s works is that they are stories that tap into shared human experience, while simultaneously challenging our perceptions of what that is.” The Old Fools is currently in development, even as the exact production date has yet to be announced.

David Jaeger is a composer, producer and broadcaster based in Toronto.
Good ballet is a feast for the senses, whether classical or contemporary in style. Music, movement and design create a symbolic display or depict character and story, with dancers moving through space delineated by the choreographer’s specific interweaving of physical steps and musical phrases, offset by the physical design of set, costumes and lighting. But conveying inner stories is not typically the art form’s long suite.

Having no words is usually an integral part of the definition of ballet; yet, recently, choreographers have been getting closer to finding a way to articulate thoughts and feelings that demand words as their medium of expression. Balletic adaptations of Shakespeare’s later, more complex plays are a case in point. Kevin O’Day’s Hamlet is extraordinarily effective at communicating Hamlet’s intellectual and spiritual torment. Christopher Wheeldon’s The Winter’s Tale is magical in how clearly the complexity of Leontes’ jealousy is conveyed.

The Eifman Ballet of St. Petersburg, coming to Toronto this month, has become internationally renowned for full-length ballets of great psychological depth; ballets that require not only a choreographer able to meld music and movement in ways that will invoke a powerful, detailed response in audiences, but also dancers able to embody his creations. Around the world, audiences have responded with great applause dubbing the company “unique” in their approach.

This week I had the exciting opportunity to speak with Boris Eifman, the founding artistic director and choreographer of the Eifman Ballet as the company prepares to begin a new North American tour in Toronto with Eifman’s latest production, the already acclaimed: Tchaikovsky. PRO et CONTRA.

What makes the company unique, Eifman says, is that in every ballet he choreographs, they “are really trying to reflect on the interior world of the characters, showing the emotions and feelings of that inner world through the language of dance and movement.” While grounded in the strong traditions of classical Russian ballet that emphasize having a clear storyline, emotional content and strong acting, they have taken those elements into the present, utilizing new contemporary choreography, modern design and cutting-edge technology. Founded by Eifman in 1977 as the Leningrad New Ballet, the company recently celebrated
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MAADA’OOKII SONGLINES
June 23, 8pm
Harbourfront Centre, Lakeside

A massive choral event with 200 singers from 11 diverse choirs, 4 soloists, and an Indigenous ensemble braiding their songs, styles, voices and cultures, set against Toronto’s breathtaking waterfront.

Composer
Cris Derksen

Directors
Tim Albery, Michael Mori

Choirs
Bruised Ears Choir, Canadian Arabic Orchestra Choir, Coro San Marco, Darbazi, Faith Chorale, Oakville Choir, Vesnivka, Yip’s Children and Youth Choir with City Choir, Common Thread Community Chorus, and The Element Choir

Soloists
Bryden Gwiss Kiwenzie, Jennifer Kreisberg, Alanna Stuart, Maryem Hassan Tollar
its 40th anniversary, and boasts a dedicated ensemble of phenomenally talented dancers who are also very skilful actors. "In fact they are unique," says their director, because "their acting and dancing skills are equal." He credits these abilities and their "wonderful personalities" for constantly inspiring him in the creative process.

When it comes to the company’s individual ballets, inspiration can come from different directions. Eifman says: "When I was doing Mozart’s Requiem it was the music that came first. When I did Anna Karenina, it was definitely the story and the great novel by Tolstoy. For this ballet, Tchaikovsky, PRO et CONTRA, he says, it is in equal parts the music and the story of the tormented life of the great composer. "Basically," he says, "it is like a deathbed confession. What I am trying to do is show the secret or mystery of the life of this absolutely unique human being who, in spite of leading an incredibly difficult life, was yet able to create the phenomenal music that we all love."

Interestingly, the phrase "mystery of life" also occurs in the title of an earlier Eifman ballet about the composer: Tchaikovsky: The Mystery of Life and Death. I asked him about the connection. "They are completely different works from different times," he says. "When the first production came out in 1993, it caused a great scandal because the ballet explored Tchaikovsky’s homosexuality; and because of the social climate in Russia at the time it was felt that the great composer - who is of course an icon for every Russian - was being defamed. There were demonstrations, protests against the theatre, and I even received death threats."

"Now we are in a different time, when homosexuality is not unknown or taboo to the extent it was 25 years ago," he says. "The new ballet [created in 2016] Tchaikovsky, PRO et CONTRA is a completely different production that raises many different questions about Tchaikovsky’s difficult life and the effect it had on his artistic creations, even while drawing on some of the same biographical facts."

He explains: "Tchaikovsky [1840-1893] was a very religious person but, of course, at that time, especially in Russia, to be a homosexual and to be religious was not supposed to be possible, as being a homosexual was considered to be one of the greatest sins. That is why all his life he was torn between God and the Devil, so much so that it was like a split in his personality; and that is a main focus of this production."

The idea of the split personality is given tangible form in the ballet. "Tchaikovsky is two characters in this production; one is Tchaikovsky the composer, and the other is his alter ego. One is always trying to move up to meet God, and the other trying to move down to meet the Devil."

Watching the official trailers for the ballet on YouTube, one can see that concept being echoed literally in the choreography. Tchaikovsky and his double usually move vertically, often one lifting or lowering the other, while the rest of the company swirls around them dancing on the horizontal plane, enacting scenarios from Tchaikovsky’s life, or fantastic visions where his real life and artistic creations intertwine.

This led to one of my big questions for the choreographer. Given that Tchaikovsky composed some of the world’s most dearly loved ballet scores for works that are considered to be archetypal classical ballets, most notably Swan Lake, The Nutcracker and Sleeping Beauty, I wondered if we would hear any of this music in the new ballet, or see any images from or snippets of the original Petipa choreography woven into the new story.

I was surprised by his answer: the music from the ballet scores is not used at all. While all written by Tchaikovsky, the music is taken from six different symphonic works (including Symphony No.5 in E Minor and the Serenade for Strings in C Major). On the other hand, images reminiscent of Tchaikovsky’s ballets Swan Lake and The Nutcracker, and his operas Eugene Onegin and The Queen of Spades are incorporated into the all-new choreography. “The main focus is to find out and understand what provoked the particular pieces that we all know by heart and think we understand. What was behind these creations? Why did he create these and not something different?”

(For those who don’t want to know, beware! There are spoilers coming up.)

In what appears to be a long vision of his life flashing before his eyes, Tchaikovsky’s Double merges into von Rothbart, Drosselmeyer and Onegin. Visions of his disastrous marriage to his student Antonina Milyukova (who is said to have reminded him of Tatiana in Onegin) overlap with images of swans from Swan Lake. At one point, the stage is suddenly filled by a swarm of mice seemingly escaped from The Nutcracker. At another, a table is surrounded by ferocious card players from The Queen of Spades, and Tchaikovsky’s unloved patroness Nadezhda von Meck appears as his nemesis in the guise of Carabosse, the evil fairy from Sleeping Beauty.

In many ways this ballet could be viewed as the culmination of Eifman’s lifelong admiration for Tchaikovsky’s brilliant music, even though he has created six previous ballets using various music by the composer including The Idiot (1980), Tchaikovsky: The Mystery of Life and Death (1993), Red Giselle (1997), Musagete (2004), Anna Karenina (2005), and Onegin (2009). “What is it about the composer’s music that you respond so strongly to?” I asked. “The emotional quality of the music is important” he says, “but most of all the music is very plastic (tangible), very theatrical; primarily it is the music’s strong dramatic energy that touches me the most and provokes me to create new works.” As for calling it a “culmination” he sounds a cautionary note, joking that he “has a lot of work to do as there is still a lot of music to be used.”

I ask if he has found that audiences in Canada or North America respond differently to his ballets than audiences at home in Russia. “The audience reaction is very, very similar,” he says. “I believe there are a lot of people here who know and understand ballet; and they give the company great feedback, so that we are always very happy to come and bring our new productions.”

Tchaikovsky, PRO et CONTRA plays at Toronto’s Sony Centre for three performances only, May 9 to 11 at 8pm, with pre-show talks by dance writer Deirdre Kelly before each performance at 7pm.

Jennifer Parr is a Toronto-based director, dramaturge, fight director, and acting coach, brought up from a young age on a rich mix of musicals, Shakespeare, and new Canadian plays.
Syrinx Concerts Toronto hasn’t always been called that (it was Chrylark for its first two seasons, in 2002 and 2003) but it still does what it has done with remarkable consistency for the better part of a decade and a half – namely present four to five annual chamber concerts with an identifiably unique character, performed by a roster of top-flight musicians who ply their musical trade, regularly or occasionally, in Toronto. One of the two concerts Syrinx will present over the course of the coming four or five weeks, May 26 at Heliconian Hall, is definitely typical of what Syrinx does; the second, June 6, is definitely not.

Observably, a longstanding concert series with an identifiably unique character doesn’t get to be that way without some stubborn and creative individual of strong character holding it all together. And in Syrinx’s case, Dorothy Sandler-Glick is that someone.

Sandler-Glick, Syrinx’s founding artistic director, is both excited and a little bit anxious contemplating the month ahead, and it’s not the May 26 concert that is the source of her anxiety. After all, Heliconian Hall on Hazelton Ave. has been Syrinx’s home for every concert of their history; and the accomplished Moncton-born Quatuor Arthur-LeBlanc, Laval University quartet-in-residence since 2005, are Syrinx regulars who know and appreciate the deeply attentive listening that characterizes a Syrinx recital.
They also know the time-honoured Syrinx concert formula: main works drawn from the standard classical chamber repertoire; always a piece by a Canadian composer; and, as often as not, an opportunity, in at least one work on the program, to collaborate with another musician from Sandler-Glick’s always renewing circle of musical associates. For their April 2014 visit it was Dohnányi’s Piano Quintet with one of Sandler Glick’s favourite Toronto-based collaborative pianists, Gregory Oh. This time it is Schumann’s Piano Quintet in E-flat, Op. 44 with rising Israeli pianist, Ishay Shaer.

And it is with the introduction of Shaer to this story that an explanation of Sandler-Glick’s state of mind starts to become clear, because hard on the heels of Shaer’s May 26 guest appearance with the LeBlancs, his June 6 solo piano recital will take Syrinx, for the first time in their history, out of the cozy confines of their Heliconian Hall home into unfamiliar surroundings – MazZOleni Concert Hall at the Royal Conservatory of Music.

It’s a short journey – just a few blocks – but it’s a major departure. It’s also, Sandler-Glick says, a risk worth taking. “We’ve promoted or presented Ishay a few times already,” she says, “and I’ve just seen his evolution. You could say I’ve become somewhat of a groupie. I’ve gone to Holland to hear him, this last time was a Brahms festival in the Hague. And I also went to Paris to hear him do a solo concert. Over the years I’ve kept track of him and been in touch, and have read reviews that have been just superb. Last year I heard him at Bristol and it was just top of the mark. So I thought ‘I have to do something more for him.’ And this is the best thing I can do. I can’t get him into Koerner Hall. I don’t have the wherewithal for that, either the money or, as important, the audience.”

Even MazZOleni, at double the capacity of Heliconian, is no cinch, in terms of drawing an audience. Does double the capacity mean double the cost? I ask. “I wish!” she says, ruefully, and itemizes all the areas where the increases are exponential. So she will invite people, vigorously, beyond her faithful subscriber base and, with luck and good management, draw on the relationships she has started building with two other salon series, both home-based, one, with a following of 80 to 100, the other with 40 or 45. “I used to worry about the question of attendance. Even now, I don’t have the wherewithal for that, either the money or, as important, the audience.”

Out of context, one could take the comment as dismissive of Syrinx’s curatorial role, is Sandler-Glick’s own lifelong passion for the piano, starting at age four, studying under Alberto Guerrero at the RCM, continuing in Paris where she gave recitals and taught while studying herself, then upon her return performing professionally with orchestras and in solo and chamber music recitals, live and for CBC radio, premiering many new works by Canadian composers along the way. And, from the latter half of the 1990s, maintaining a vigorous teaching career, both at the RCM and privately. “I had to get a real job after Srul and I separated,” she says. “Now I only teach my grandchildren, which is a bit of a mixed bag.”

Even now, MazZOleni is in its second year, the second concert hall, and the experiment is, she says, “fun. It’s a short journey – just a few blocks – but it’s a major departure. I don’t have the wherewithal for that, either the money or, as important, the audience.”

You won’t ever find her name among the pianists in her own series though: “I was never a very happy performer” she says. “Not as a soloist nor even as a chamber player.” One could surmise that part of what she brings to her relationship with musicians, and to forwarding the musical aspirations of “top of the mark” performers like Ishay Shaer, stems from her own understanding of just what it takes to get, and stay there. “As for the rest of my musical and pianistic journey, it has taken a recent and happy turn. “It was after I turned 80, I told myself I wanted to do a concert again,” she says. And did, late last year. At the Schubert House in Vienna, no less, after a trial run at home salon in Toronto. I wasn’t there, but if the concert went as planned it included a Mozart sonata, three Schubert Impromptus a Brahms Capriccio and Ballade and Schubert’s Sonata in A Minor for Arpeggione and Piano.

And, of course, a Canadian work: Sonata for flute and piano by, who else, Srul Irving Glick. 

David Perlman can be reached at publisher@thewholenote.com

This part of the work is what makes me a dictator, and I love it. And many of the artists who come to us appreciate it too.
The dictionary defines a conflagration as an extensive fire that destroys a great deal of land or property. (The recent Notre Dame fire in Paris on April 15 can be considered such an event.) It is also the very word that the beloved Toronto-born poet and novelist Gwendolyn MacEwen (1941–1987) used, metaphorically, to describe Nikola Tesla, the Serbian-American inventor and electrical engineer who brought us alternating current (AC) – the electricity system we use every day. In the last paragraph of the opening section of Tesla, MacEwen’s verse-play for radio, she states: “He set the entire earth in electrical vibration with a generator that spouted lightning that rivalled the fiery artillery of the heavens...Tesla was a conflagration.”

Tesla was one of two MacEwen verse-plays that were commissioned by and broadcast on CBC’s Anthology program in the early to mid-1960s. The Tesla piece explores Tesla’s achievements and his AC current that was used in the hydroelectric plant at Niagara Falls, the first of its kind. It also covers the highly controversial “War of Currents” he was engaged in with Edison and his direct-current (DC) system to determine which system would power the world. Tesla won. The second was Terror and Erebus, the names of the two ships used in the Franklin expedition to discover the Northwest Passage. Franklin’s Arctic expedition, had a less auspicious outcome: the two ships became icebound for three years, and despite several attempts to find them, the entire crew eventually died. Only the Inuit knew where they were.

TIO at Array: May 26 at the Array Space, the Toronto Improvisers Orchestra (TIO) will present a performance of both of these radio verse-plays, featuring actors Rod Campbell and Randi Helmers with an original score by composer Eugene Martynec for the Tesla piece, in an event that promises to be something of a conflagration of mixed art forms. Using the wireless technology that Tesla himself foresaw, I had a Skype conversation with TIO members Martynec and Campbell to hear more about the TIO in general and about this upcoming performance which is part of a series of events that the TIO has initiated to celebrate great artists and improvisers from Toronto.

The orchestra itself is the inspiration of Martynec who started it up about seven years ago after returning from a three-year stay in London UK where he played several times with the well-seasoned London Improvisers Orchestra. One of the hallmarks of that ensemble is the use of conduction cues, a series of hand signals used by a conductor to guide the musicians through an improvisational performance. These were originally designed by American cornet player and composer Butch Morris and have become a standard system used by many improvising ensembles in Europe and North America.

Currently, the TIO performs twice a month – at the Tranzac Club and the Array Space – and is a very musician-centric ensemble. These gatherings consist of a one-hour rehearsal beforehand to warm up and go over the cues, and then the actual improvisational performance begins. “The hand signals are there to help us out, not to tell people what to do” Martynec explains. The basic guidelines are that players are asked not to play in their usual genre (jazz, classical, blues, etc), melodies are to be atonal only and extended techniques on one’s instrument are highly encouraged.
Listening is key to making the music work, and for improvisers this includes not playing too much or louder than everyone else, enhancing what is happening, and knowing when to stop. Sometimes doing nothing at all can be the most appropriate contribution to the whole. There is a core of about six to eight players; for special events, such as this one in May, the orchestra grows to about 18 players.

Instrumentation varies according to who participates, but usually consists of trumpet, piano, classical guitar, zheng (Chinese zither), flute, banjo, soprano sax, electric guitar and Martynec’s unique and custom-made laptop instrument that emulates an old Atari computer. He has designed several digitally based instruments that can be accessed through different types of controllers and mouse gestures.

For the Tesla piece, as I mentioned above, Martynec has created a score, which may seem contradictory for an improvisational ensemble. Martynec, though, describes the score as “a series of cues that are constrained improvisations.” Campbell will be conducting it and although the musicians will have seen the score before arriving, they will not have read the radio scripts and so it will truly be an improvisatory interaction. One aspect Martynec wants to include is the electronic sounds created when one unplugs a guitar from an amplifier, for example. These sounds are at 60 Hz, the frequency of alternating current (AC) and is also requesting players tune to 60 Hz if possible, which is between B flat and B. The plan is to create a drone-like effect at one point during the Tesla performance. There will be no score for Terror and Erebos, and players will be asked to be ready to play sounds that reflect the ideas of ice and the North. Of course for Tesla, other encouraged sounds will be electronic and crackling in nature. Interestingly, in the original CBC production of Tesla, MacEwen had an instruction in the script that stated: “Wherever sound effects are indicated in the play, I have assumed these would be electronic. Oskar Sala’s Five Improvisations on Magnetic Tape would be an ideal record, although not necessarily the sole possibility.” Apparently, that’s not what was used in the end, and Campbell said when he listened to the archival recording, there were a lot of oscillator-like sounds used.

To conclude our conversation, I asked both Campbell and Martynec why they are drawn to improvisation. Campbell said he enjoys both listening to and playing improvised music and feels it is a natural thing for musicians to want to engage in. He is particularly curious about where it can go and especially those occasions when everyone stops at the same moment. “How did that happen?” they both exclaimed in chorus. Martynec enjoys the conversation that occurs along with the surprises, and due to the nature of his digital instrument, it’s the only situation he can play in, he said. They also both spoke about how sometimes things can go wrong, but that’s okay because it’s improvised music. For example, Campbell said, “The conductor can give a cue to a player, and then it goes somewhere different. It’s not wrong but different enough that everyone will then switch to accompany that person. It takes its own direction and eventually things work out.”

No doubt there will be plenty of surprises, and alternating currents, taking place during the performance of these two legendary radio verse-plays by MacEwen, whom author Michael Ondaatje referred to as “the last great bardic poet” since all her readings were done by memory.

IN WITH THE NEW QUICK PICKS

- MAY 2, 8PM: Spectrum Music presents Coding Chaos with compositions inspired by the Creators archetype, with a pre-concert chat with software artist Ryan Kelin at 7:30. New compositions exploring artificial intelligence and a deeper look into the digital world by Spectrum composers Mason Victoria, Chelsea McBride, Jackson Welchner, Suzy Wilde with guest composers Nebyu Yohannes and Harrison Argatto.

- MAY 3, 8PM: The Music Gallery. In this final Engercent concert of the season, the experimental music theatre group Din of Shadows will present their newest project Material Mythology with a team of performers, composers, dancers and visual artists. The piece speculates about the hidden meanings and mythologies behind everyday actions, objects and spaces.

- MAY 9, 12PM: Canadian Opera Company presents “Between Sound and Silence,” in their chamber music series, featuring Movement by German composer Helmut Lachenmann. Performed by the Glenn Gould School New Music Ensemble directed by Brian Current. Free.

- MAY 10, 7:30PM: Upper Canada Choristers mark their 25th anniversary with the world premiere of Teasdale Love Songs by Canadian composer Stephen Chatman, a song cycle in six movements set to the poetry of Sara Teasdale. The evening includes Five Hebrew Love Songs by American composer Eric Whitacre and performances by the Cantemos Latin Ensemble performing the music of Venezuelan composer César Alejandro Carrillo.

- MAY 10, 8PM: Continuum Contemporary Music presents RADIOfanik filled with music from various new genres including Sub-Club Drone, Indie Crossover and Gen-X Jams. Canadian works on the program include a new commission by Maxime Corbeil-Perron, two by Nicole Lizée including the world premiere of her Marsh Chapel Experiment and Doubt Is a Distance by James O’Callaghan. Pieces by Israeli composer Yair Klartag, Danish composer Simon Steen-Andersen and Polish composer Jagoda Szymtka complete the program. The Continuum Ensemble will be joined by Rob MacDonald on electric guitar.

- MAY 26, 8PM: New Music Concerts presents “Indecence,” their last concert of the season, featuring works by three Canadian composers: Matthias McIntire’s Cathedral Grove (and the Gray Jay) for solo violin with electronics; Samuel Andreyev’s Indecent Notation for soprano and ensemble; and Ana Sokolović’s Evića for solo violin and ensemble. Violin soloists Matthias McIntire and Andrea Tyniec will join the New Music Concerts Ensemble directed by Robert Aitken.

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

Toronto Improvisers Orchestra at Array Space with Christine Duncan and the Element Choir
Founded in 1994 by pianist Janina Fialkowska, Piano Six and Piano Plus brought live classical music events – mostly solo performers – to under-serviced parts of Canada until 2010. Over a period of 16 years, Fialkowska’s efforts reached over 100,000 people directly – and tens of thousands indirectly – through over 430 events across Canada. In addition to Fialkowska, the other original members of the powerhouse ensemble were Angela Cheng, Marc-André Hamelin, Angela Hewitt, André Laplante and Jon Kimura Parker.

At each destination, a musician would collaborate with local presenters, schools and volunteers to provide multiple experiences directly with audiences, through concerts, workshops, masterclasses and Q&A sessions.

The initiative was launched in February 1995 with concerts in Toronto (broadcast on CBC) and Quebec City. Although the program concentrated on individual rather than ensemble visits, the pianists occasionally appeared together – at the Festival international de Lanaudière in 1999 and the 2000 Ottawa Chamber Music Festival, for example.

In 2017, pianist Daniel Wnukowski resurrected the original Piano Six model and relaunched it as Piano Six – New Generation. The new ensemble consists of Marika Bournaki, David Jalbert, Angela Park, Ian Parker and Anastasia Rizikov. Using many technological advances including web 2.0, social media and video streaming, Wnukowski has shifted the model to focus on the next generation of Canadians, especially post-millennials. Five colleagues joined the board having only met via Skype and Facetime.

Piano Six – New Generation will begin its first season of touring this month, starting with Wnukowski visiting Rainy River and Fort Frances in Ontario on May 6 and 8 respectively, and Fort Nelson BC on May 9 and 10, in a program he calls Piano through the Ages (Handel, Mozart, Chopin and Morawetz). Park and her program, Scenes from Nature (Chopin, Ravel, Burge, Beethoven, Liszt and Debussy), travel to Fort St. John BC (May 13 and 14) and Slave Lake in Alberta (May 16 and 17).

Then, on May 25, Bravo Niagara! will present a special Piano Six Gala Concert at St. Mark’s Anglican Church in Niagara-on-the-Lake featuring Bournaki, Jalbert, Park, Parker, Wnukowski and special guest Godwin Friesen.

Wnukowski told me that the goal of the gala concert is “to leave audiences awed and inspired by the solo, four and six hands repertoire – with performances that range from scintillating to formidable. We are aiming through the May 25th concert to generate awareness about our cross-Canada tours and to garner enthusiasm and support for next year’s tour,” he said.

“The idea behind this particular concert program is to showcase the individual personalities of each pianist. First, we commissioned jazz composer Darren Sigesmund to write a short work involving all six pianists,” he said. “And each pianist was then asked to submit a short solo piece as well as suggestions for four-hand/two-piano repertoire.”

To Wnukowski’s surprise, every pianist submitted a French work as their choice of a solo work! Bournaki submitted Poulenc’s Trois novelettes; Jalbert chose Fauré’s Nocturne No.6; Park picked Ravel’s Mirroirs No.3, Une barque sur l’océan; and Friesen selected Debussy’s Clair de lune. “This was an interesting coincidence,” Wnukowski said, “as the harmonic progressions of Impressionism have long been considered a catalyst to the development of the jazz idiom.”

Ian Parker and Wnukowski also decided to jump onto the jazz bandwagon and contributed several jazz works to provide the program with better form. [Parker chose Gershwin’s Three Preludes and Wnukowski picked Bill Evans’ sublime Peace Piece; together they will play Gershwin’s Rhapsody in Blue for their four-hands/two-piano selection.]

The French/Jazz theme has at this point taken on a life of its own, “offering a fine balance between bombastic and artful, introspective”
NIKOLAJ LUND

Symphonies 1 & 3
Prize winner of the 2017 Liszt International Piano Competition
be performed by six pianists including Alexander Ullman, First
piano music ever written, Liszt's remarkable reproductions will
Bourgie (June 11 to 15). Among the most technically demanding
Franz Liszt's astonishing transcriptions of Beethoven's nine
mores ambitious programming stroke, the Festival will present
Ehnes and Armstrong's remarkable discography. 'And in an even
of Onyx Classics "a compelling addition to
24
Song (artistic director of Orford Music and Mooredale Concerts)

Wnukowski said, "The program ends on a whirling tone with ecstatic,
two-piano arrangements of Bernstein's West Side Story, followed
by Darren Sigesmund's commissioned work for 12 hands on two
pianos. We spend a great deal of time curating our programs in order
to immerse our audiences in an extrasensory experience," he adds,
"providing commentaries between pieces, pulling the music apart
and suggesting why certain components generate specific emotional
responses within listeners."

For Wnukowski, having the concert in the Niagara region is
extremely meaningful; he spent his early childhood in Niagara Falls
where his mother owned a children's clothing shop. "There is a great
deal of sentiment for me in having the first Piano Six Gala Concert
where my most precious childhood memories were formed," he said.

The Montreal Chamber Music Festival: Ludwig van Beethoven was
born mid-December of 1770, likely on December 15 or 16 – his
baptism was recorded as December 17 – so 2020 marks the 250th
anniversary of his birth. Beethoven's music is always in the air, but
there have been serious rumblings of ambitious celebrations to
come in recent weeks, in programming by the TSO and Mooredale
Concerts. So too the recent announcement that the Montreal Chamber
Music Festival's 24th anniversary season – June 7 to 16, 2019 – will
be the first of a three-year project to celebrate Beethoven, with the
master composer's 250th birthday coinciding with the Festival's 25th
anniversary. "Unlike any programming Montreal has ever heard,"
according to founder and artistic director Denis Brott, each of the
2019, 2020 and 2021 "Beethoven Chez Nous!" festivals will feature
"significant cycles of complete works by Beethoven. Not only is
Beethoven perhaps the greatest classical composer of all time, he also
wrote the most chamber music, perfected the string quartet form, and
single-handedly transitioned classical music from the classical to the
Romantic era."

Two complete surveys highlight the 2019 program: 2019 Grammy
Award-winner James Ehnes, with longtime pianistic partner Andrew
Armstrong, will perform Beethoven's ten sonatas for violin and piano
over three evenings (June 13 to 15). Gramophone magazine, in an Editor's Choice review, called the duo's recording
of Sonatas 6 & 9 for Onyx Classics "a compelling addition to
Ehnes and Armstrong's remarkable discography." And in an even
more ambitious programming stroke, the Festival will present
Franz Liszt's astonishing transcriptions of Beethoven's nine
symphonies over a span of five late-afternoon concerts at Salle
Bourgie (June 11 to 15). Among the most technically demanding
piano music ever written, Liszt's remarkable reproductions will
be performed by six pianists including Alexander Ullman, First
Prize winner of the 2017 Liszt International Piano Competition
(Symphonies 1 & 3); Vancouver's Jocelyn Lai (Symphonies 2 & 6);
Juilliard alumnus Carlos Avila (Symphonies 8 & 7); Conservatoire
de musique de Montréal faculty member, Richard Raymond
(Symphonies 4 & 5); and the virtuoso David Jalbert and Wonny
Song (artistic director of Orford Music and Mooredale Concerts)
in a two-piano version of the Ninth Symphony. The 5pm concerts
include a complimentary glass of wine!

Another festival highlight: a new series of five free noon-hour
concerts (June 11 to 15 at Salle Bourgie) spotlights emerging artists
under 30: pianist Alexander Ullman; cellists Cameron Crozman and
Bruno Tobon; and violinists Christina Boney, Byungchan Lee and
Emmanuel Vukovich. Tobon opens the series with a program devoted
to cello duets (artistic director Denis Brott is the other cellist); British
pianist Ullman's June 12 hour includes late Liszt and two dynamic
suites (Tchaikovsky's The Nutcracker arranged by Pletnev; Stravinsky's
The Firebird); Lee's program on June 13 moves from Bach to Kreisler
to Prokofiev, and Ryan to Hermann in music for a combination of
violinists including Martin Beaver, Heemin Choi and Amy Hills;
the June 14 concert headlined by Boney and Vukovich also features
violinists Hills and Carissa Klopoushak and cellist Crozman in music
by Ysaÿe. Honegger and Ernst's Last Rose of Summer; Crozman and
violinist Lee bring their solo and collaborative skills to the June 15
program which ranges from Bach to Ysaÿe and Casado to Glère and
Handel-Halvorsen.

Eager to get a start on the summer festival season? There are plenty
of reasons to start in June as spring winds down. Beethoven Chez
Nous beckons.

Toronto Symphony Orchestra: The TSO's season intensifies this
month as the 2018/2019 season moves toward June and the next
visit of music director-elect, Gustavo Gimeno. On the heels of Kerem
Hasan's Beethoven's Symphony No. 3 "Eroica" the TSO turns to
another English guest conductor, 33-year-old Nicholas Collon, to
lead the orchestra May 11 and 12 in Beethoven's fateful icon, the
kinetic Symphony No.5. Born in London, Collon trained as a violinist,
pianist and organist, and studied as Organ Scholar at Clare College,
Cambridge. He is founder and principal conductor of the ground-
breaking Aurora Orchestra, chief conductor and artistic advisor of the
Residentie Orkest in The Hague, and principal guest conductor of the
Guerzenich Orchester in Cologne. Israeli-born, New York resident and
Juilliard grad, 43-year-old Shai Wosner is the soloist in Mozart's ever-
popular Piano Concerto No.21 K467.

A month after their stirring performance of Mahler's Symphony
No.2 "Resurrection," under guest conductor Matthew Halls, on May 15
and 16, the TSO takes on the composer's Symphony No.7, a work of
contrasting moods, from darkness to light, an orchestral chiaroscuro,
under the baton of interim artistic director, Sir Andrew Davis. The
elegant Louis Lortie is the soloist in Franck's exuberant SYMPHONIC
Variations for Piano and Orchestra. A week later, May 24 and 25,
Lortie and Davis return with a program of showpieces – Rossini's
familiar Overture to William Tell, Saint-Saëns' late-Romantic master-
work, Piano Concerto No.4 and Respighi's electric crowd pleaser,
Pines of Rome.

Known for what The New York Times calls "his penetrating intellec-
tual engagement," pianist Jeremy Denk, winner of the MacArthur
"Genius" Fellowship, has concocted an all-Mozart program which
he will lead on May 29, May 30 and June 1. Included are the Piano
Concerto No.14 (generally considered the first of the composer's

Jeremy Denk
mature works in that genre) and the magisterial Piano Concerto No. 25 (separated in the evening by the darkly melancholic and ethereally beautiful Rondo for Solo Piano K511).

Formerly principal clarinet with the Berlin Philharmonic, German-born conductor Karl-Heinz Steffens makes his TSO debut, June 5, 6 and 8, in Brahms’ inspired Symphony No.4. Earlier in the evening he and the orchestra are joined by Jan Lisiecki, the rapidly rising former wunderkind, in Mendelssohn’s infectious Piano Concerto No.1 (a version of which you can find on Lisiecki’s most recent Deutsche Grammophon CD).

CLASSICAL AND BEYOND QUICK PICKS

► MAY 11, 7:30PM: The Georgian Bay Symphony and TSO concertmaster Jonathan Crow perform Sibelius’ lush Violin Concerto at the Regional Auditorium in Owen Sound.

► MAY 11, 7:30PM: Gemma New leads the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra in Mahler’s Symphony No.5. According to Sir Simon Rattle: “Of all Mahler’s symphonies, this is the one most rooted in Viennese rhythms. This makes it much tougher to play. You don’t play what you see in the score. You have to play what it means.”

► MAY 12, 1PM: Bravo Niagara! Festival of the Arts presents pianist Jamie Parker, hornist Brian Mangrum and violinist Boson Mo in a sparkling program that ranges from solo piano (a Debussy Book Two Prelude and Brahms’ quintessentially Romantic Intermezzo Op.118, No.21, piano and horn (Schumann’s Adagio and Allegro Op.70) piano and violin (Franch’s glorious Sonata in A Major) to all three instruments (Brahms Trio for Violin, Horn and Piano in E-flat Major). Stratus Vineyards, Niagara-on-the-Lake.

► MAY 12, 2PM AND MAY 13, 7:30PM: Canzona Chamber Players present Richard Strauss’ early Serenade Op.7 for 13 Winds and Mozart’s great Serenade K361 “Gran Partita.”

► MAY 12, 5PM: Nocturnes in the City presents Montreal-based Duo Ventapane (Martin Karlicek, piano, Mana Shiharshi, violin) in works by Martinů, Janáček, Dvořák and others at St. Wenceslaus Church, 486 Gladstone Ave.


► MAY 24 AND MAY 25, 8PM: Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society presents cellist Cameron Crozman and pianist Philip Chiu performing music by Bach, Debussy, Franck, and Mendelssohn on May 24. The following evening, Jeffery Concerts presents the same program at Wolf Performance Hall, London.

► MAY 25, 8PM: Gallery 345 presents James Giles in an ambitious program in their Art of the Piano series. Giles, who is based at Northwestern University in Chicago, follows a selection of Brahms’ Waltzes Op.39 and Schubert’s final sonata (D960) with miniatures from the piano’s golden age by Godowsky, Levitsk, Rasenthal, Friedman and Paderewski.

Paul Ennis is the managing editor of The WholeNote.
Stretching the Boundaries of Creation

JENNIFER PARR

Toronto's music theatre scene in April was notable for two plays which had music playing a thematically essential role, as I previewed in my last column.

Under the Stairs at Young People's Theatre was a fun, theatrically imaginative tale of children sorting out the world in which the characters in the "real world" all sang, and those hiding "under the stairs" spoke, though often in a mix of prose and poetic language. What became very interesting was when the characters overlapped, particularly at the end when the children who had been hiding emerge to reunite the family, even taking in a stray "lost boy" in a subconscious tribute to Peter Pan.

In Lorena Gale's Angélique, music played a different role, underlying and accenting almost the entirety of the action with a spare but thematically attuned percussion score composed and played by acclaimed ensemble Sixtrum. The play is shockingly relevant and revelatory. I had no idea previously that there was legal slavery in Quebec in 1734; and the horrors of that reality, and its seemingly acceptable entrenchment in society, were powerfully shown in director Mike Payette's staging. There are several scenes where the music truly took centre stage: the vigorous washing of the sheets, and the wonderful dance scene where the rather rigid Quebecois step dancing is juxtaposed with the more sinuous and supple African dancing of Angélique also pointed to the fact that this would be great material for a serious musical or operatic adaptation.

The Brothers Size

This month another play that uses music as an integral storytelling tool is The Brothers Size, the second in a trilogy of plays by Tarell Alvin McCane, the writer of the unpublished semi-autobiographical play that Barry Jenkins transformed into the Academy Award-winning film Moonlight.

Set in the Deep South of Louisiana this is an explosive contemporary story of the return from prison of the fun-loving Osoosi to live with his serious older brother Ogun (named for the Yoruba god of hard work), but it is also a poetic tale interwoven and imbued with the power of African Yoruba mythology and music. As Osoosi's former prison mate Erege (named for the Yoruba trickster god) arrives to turn their lives upside down, the play interweaves the dreaming and waking lives of these three "brothers" using music as the medium of transfer and emotion. Masterminding the music for this production, which has been described as a family drama in which the whole community is involved, is Waleed Abdulhamid, who has worked with composer Kit Soden and librettist David Storen. Their collaboration has resulted in a score that is both epic and intimate, capturing the essence of African storytelling through music.

Fawn's Pandora

Also coming up in May is Pandora, a new opera/ballet created by indie company Fawn, inspired by the Greek myth of the girl who unleashes all the evils into the world from a sealed jar (or box) that has been entrusted to her, only closing it in time to keep hope inside.

Intrigued about Fawn and their new take on this classic tale, I contacted the creative team - founding artistic director and stage director of Pandora, Amanda Smith, choreographer and dancer Jennifer Nichols, and librettist David James Brock – to learn more.

WN: Fawn is a relatively new company on the opera/music theatre scene. Can you tell me about how you founded Fawn and what your goals with the company are?

AS: I founded Fawn because I wanted to be able to create the kind of work I specifically was interested in and in the way I was interested in creating it. Of course, these interests have changed over time as Fawn has grown to include new company members and collaborators. We've been active in the new music and indie opera scene for about six years.

Where did the name Fawn come from, and how does it fit with your company mandate?

AS: I always wanted the company to be about developing new content and investigating the possibilities of what the new classical music sound can be in Canada. I loved the idea of a fawn being born, testing its environment, exploring and eventually growing to be a beautiful animal. To get there, it requires nurturing, and the same can be said about the creative process.

How did the new Pandora project come about?

AS: Three years ago, Fawn put out an open call for submissions, from which we selected the works of six composers for a performance in our Synesthesia series that was intending to bring together music and movement. With these works, I created a narrative path for choreographer Jennifer Nichols and I to develop into a dance-theatre piece. Since Fawn has a rather different audience, including a lot of young people and those who don’t typically patronize opera and classical music, I wanted to give them the opportunity to have input. So, at the Synesthesia performance, we asked our audience to select the three composers featured in the show that they most wanted us to work with, and they chose Joseph Glaser, Kit Soden and David Storen. Our three selected composers were then asked to write a 20-minute opera-ballet that we would then produce, and to participate in a one-week devised creation workshop with our team to provide them with the seeds of inspiration for their work. We workedshopped the music last summer and it was decided by the team that we would like them to be presented as one piece, thus allowing it to be one experience for the audience. To accomplish this, the composers and our librettist, David James Brock, created a through-line between all three pieces, which I think has been very effective.

Jennifer and David, what is it like working with Amanda and Fawn?

How is it the same or different from other projects or companies you have worked with?

JN: The experiences I’ve had working with Fawn have emphasized a fully collaborative approach to new work, with all artistic contributors sharing ideas from the beginning of the process, rather than inserting their work into an already formed production structure. There are benefits to a variety of different processes, but I find this allows for growth that is organic, rather than pre-conceived. The work takes shape via the contribution of all, and is guided along the way by Amanda. It makes for a very balanced work.

In the very first stage of this process, Synesthesia IV, I also worked very closely with Amanda in the studio, just the two of us. We dissected and discussed all of the movement as it was created, a
director and choreographer working intimately together as the work took shape.

I’m very excited to apply a similar approach to working with David on Pandora. He and I first worked together on the Canadian Art Song Project’s staged production of Sewing the Earthworm.

DJB: FAWN is asking some pretty big questions about what it means to create new opera. What stories are we telling? Who is telling them? And how can something as labour-intensive as opera be developed and performed in a way that maybe opens things up a bit? Amanda’s organic connection with artists and artistic forms that aren’t often part of opera (I’m particularly thinking of her connection to electronic music) has really opened up the possibility of not just how opera is made, but who it’s made for.

Can you talk about the specific development of Pandora for each of you and how your part of the creative process overlapped with the other members of the creative team?

JN: As I write this, I am still in the beginning stages of my biggest creative process, movement-wise. The next month in studio will be where the choreography takes shape; however, the conceptual and research process began over a year ago in our devised workshop. There was a great deal of table discussion, improvisation and workshopping with an invited audience which informed the composition and libretti and choreographic structure. My job now is to flesh out the layers of movement that support both of these and focus on character development.

DJB: When I first met everyone there wasn’t a story, yet. We would find it together. But once we all got together in a room, and I think this goes for any new creative relationship, we had to learn each other’s approach (or unlearn whatever approaches we might have come in with). Informed by that first week of exploring ideas, I went away and started writing a piece with each composer. About a year later, when we needed to find a vehicle to carry them all, I added the Pandora framing with interlude text (which the composers then also set). It was really important that even though this was being created with three composers, that this became one show written by the four of us: Pandora.

As you move into the final stage of rehearsals for the performances in May, is there any more you can tell me about how each of the different elements: music, libretto and dance, come together to tell your new take on the classical story of Pandora?

DJB: Pandora, the mythical character, often gets a raw deal – I mean being blamed for all the world’s evils is a lot to lay on one woman. I liked the idea that we could take some of the heat off her and share some of the blame. So, in this retelling, though Pandora exists, we have this new character written specifically for tenor Jonathan MacArthur who also opens the jar (as we all probably would have) and is subjected to the myriad things that escape. Without giving away too much, things don’t go so well for him.

JN: I think our interpretation of the classical story of Pandora is such that not only is she not entirely to blame for “releasing and bringing into existence the evils of the world,” she is actually the presence that subsequently ensures a balance of hope and despair. She is vulnerable yet strong, and perhaps her damned curiosity is representative of mankind’s curiosity in general. Music, text and choreography come together to impose limits on her through separate, unique narratives, yet her presence is consistent and timeless. In mythology, Pandora is known as the first “human woman” (and the one who just stands and cares about the words, restrict) movement. So it was important to me that Jennifer was a character integral to the stories, not something “added” later, or a reflection of an emotion, or simply part of the spectacle. Each of the composers was onboard with this, so you’ll see that in each of the pieces, filtered through each of their unique musical sensibilities.

Though my part in the creation is largely done, I am excited to see how Amanda and Jennifer interpret the movement written into the scenes.

The text drives the motivation of the choreography and the music shapes it.

DJB: Unique to Pandora’s creation for me was that dance was much more up front for me than it has ever been, and it really does inspire much of the text (and subsequently the scores). I knew Jennifer Nichols was going to be a part of this, both as choreographer and dancer, so I wrote very much with her in mind. Jennifer truly understands and cares about the words, and in writing something I knew she’d be a part of, I tried to create Pandora’s dramatic beats so that they’d demand (and in some cases, restrict) movement. So it was important to me in Pandora that Jennifer was a character integral to the stories, not something “added” later, or a reflection of an emotion, or simply part of the spectacle. Each of the composers was onboard with this, so you’ll see that in each of the pieces, filtered through each of their unique musical sensibilities.

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

Pandora plays at Geary Lane (360 Geary Avenue) May 23 to 25.

www.pomegranateopera.com
The Canadian Opera Company’s production of Puccini’s La Bohème continues to May 22 and its production of Verdi’s Otello to May 21. Yet, May is not simply devoted to revivals of standard repertoire. The month also sees the premiere of a brand new Canadian opera from Tapestry Opera and the revival of two operas by American composer Dominick Argento who died on February 20 this year.

Argento wrote works in many genres but is best known for his operas, of which he wrote 13, and his dramatic song cycles that he termed “monodramas.” His best known operas are Postcard from Morocco (1971), Miss Havisham’s Fire (1977, rev. 1995) and The Aspern Papers (1988). Postcard from Morocco was last staged in Toronto by the University of Toronto Opera Division in 2015, but Argento’s other works have seldom been seen or heard in Ontario.

Opera by Request, Toronto’s opera-in-concert company where the singers choose the repertoire, will be presenting a double-bill of Miss Havisham’s Wedding Night (1981) and one of Argento’s monodramas, A Water Bird Talk (1977). Miss Havisham’s Wedding Night focuses on the famous character in Dickens’ novel Great Expectations (1861) who was jilted on her wedding night and now, 50 years later, still replays the events in her mind. It is a prequel to another opera by Argento about the same character in Miss Havisham’s Fire. A Water Bird Talk is inspired by Chekhov’s one-person play On the Harmful Effects of Tobacco (1886). In Argento the gentleman lecturer does not deliver a talk about tobacco but about water birds, yet as in Chekhov’s play, the lecturer can’t refrain from mentioning illustrative points drawn from his private life.

The singer behind the selection of OBR’s double bill is soprano Brianna Desantis. In April Desantis provided me with a detailed account of how she was drawn to these works and how they function as a double bill. She writes: “I came across Miss Havisham’s Wedding Night when looking for a piece for my opera literature class. Being an avid reader, I first went to opera adaptations of literature. I came across Argento’s Miss Havisham’s Fire and Wedding Night and saw that we had a copy of the score and CD in the library at Western. I took a listen and loved it. I read Great Expectations as a child and was always attracted to Miss Havisham’s character – why was she like that? Argento’s work gives us a glimpse into her psyche.

“I decided to perform a small excerpt of the monodrama in a recital and loved it so much that I thought I should learn the whole piece one day. I believe we [Shookhoff and I] met sometime about a year ago and discussed doing Miss Havisham’s Wedding Night with Opera by Request. We thought of programming it with its frequently paired piece, Argento’s Water Bird Talk, because they both discuss the ins and outs of relationships, specifically, marriages.

“Since then, we have found ourselves a baritone [Parker Clement] to sing the role of the Lecturer, and I will be singing Miss Havisham. This project is special because it shines a light on gender disparity in madness, specifically in Miss Havisham’s Wedding Night, which is basically one long mad scene written in the vein of Lucia di Lammermoor. The opera provides a commentary on madness during the 19th century, where madness was often viewed as the irrational ‘female’ reaction to the rationality of the ‘male.’ We seek to highlight this gender disparity and offer a different perspective on what madness involves – way the audience can decide. While the music may be unfamiliar, the message the operas seek to send is one that will resonate with many.

The double bill, titled "Til Death Do Us Part? – A Dominick Argento Commemoration," will have one performance in Toronto on May 3 at the College St. United Church with William Shookhoff as pianist and music director and Claire Harris on keyboard. The program will then be repeated in Windsor on May 4 at the Paulin Memorial Presbyterian Church.

**Shanawdithit:** A commemoration of another sort is the purpose behind Tapestry Opera’s second new opera of the season after its highly popular presentation of Hook Up by Chris Thornborrow earlier this year. This is the world premiere of Shanawdithit by Newfoundland composer Dean Burry to a libretto by Algonquin playwright Yvette Nolan. Its title is the name of a woman (1801-29) encountered by a white settler William Cormack in 1829 in Newfoundland and thought to be the last member of the Beothuk Nation. Cormack took Shanawdithit to St. John’s where she created ten drawings that are the only first-person account of the life of the Beothuk.

In March, Tapestry Opera artistic director Michael Hidetoshi Mori provided me with invaluable information about the creation and importance of the opera which Burry and Nolan have been working on for the past three and a half years. Mori states: “This project came about a few years after a conversation between Dean Burry and Yvette Nolan about the subject of Shanawdithit for an opera.

“Yvette was very keen on finding a way to tell the story without relying on the texts of Cormack and other settler historians. The challenge with Shanawdithit was that there are no Beothuk Elders, there was little Indigenous documentation of the Beothuk, and even if there were surviving bloodlines, they had been mostly absorbed into the Mi’kmag almost 200 years ago.

“Yvette turned to the ten drawings Shanawdithit did in her last year of life as one of the only first-person accounts of Beothuk life and Shanawdithit’s perspective. She proposed we work with the ten drawings and five to ten Indigenous artists to interpret them, with the intent of retelling the last days of Shanawdithit and questioning the prevailing dominant settler scholarship and history.

“Yvette, Dean and I met, and we proposed an unconventional approach to creation. Yvette would write the libretto, with elasticity for collaborative artist input, and with specific vessels for where the
drawings would come to life, with a dominant point of view from a collaborating artist. The artists would meet with Yvette and depending on their discipline, also Dean and myself, to reflect on the drawings and work through their thoughts and what was possible within a musical-dramatic-narrative and design framework.  

“Dean would compose soundscapes, not music, to start. Drawing on his shared familiarity with the same lakes, land, rivers and weather that Shanawdithit grew up and lived in, he would experiment with capturing those sounds rather than risk imitating or appropriating ‘Indigenous’ music sounds or stereotypes.

“Five of our seven performers are also Indigenous performers (all of the named characters portrayed as Indigenous are Indigenous performers), Asitha Tennekoon plays Peyton and Clarence Frazer plays Cormack. Every step of the way the Indigenous performers were active participants in shaping and responding to the story and its potential treatment (e.g. engaging in the conversation of whether Cormack was a hero, a villain, or just out of his ken).

“Chronologically this meant that instead of Yvette completing a final libretto and sharing it with Dean for him to take over, as is most often the case, in-depth meetings with all of the collaborators following the first draft libretto led to changes in the libretto. New art commissions based on the artists’ interpretations had to have their directions finalized before Dean would compose that section. All in all, the process was complex and instead of hierarchical, it was collaborative and organic.”

In response to the question whether anyone saw a difficulty in having a non-Indigenous person compose the music, Mori writes, “Reconciliation on the truth and reconciliation website begins with the text ‘Reconciliation is an ongoing journey, one that will take a collective effort to find a new way forward.’ Many First Nations colleagues have stressed that the necessary dialogue is two-way. Indeed our history of violence and injustice against First Nations is also our history.

“That said, this is not another settler artist explaining what happened. The key to the success of Shanawdithit is in its welcoming Indigenous voices to shape and lead the work in creation and performance. This is meant to be a contrast to previous artistic works, histories and academic publications that ignored Indigenous voices and placed a positivist settler perspective on history. This work challenges that one-sided historical perspective.

“Considering the collaborative and facilitation role of composition in how Dean is approaching Shanawdithit, it should be understandable why the team is not completely Indigenous. It is Indigenous led and as a result many will see the piece as a true coming together of settler and Indigenous arts and artists, where the Indigenous voices are privileged. In working in opera we can explore a story that requires Indigenous voices and leadership, which will have the story and its retelling reach a different and new public through the mixing audiences of opera, multimedia theatre and Indigenous arts in Toronto and St. John’s.”

Shanawdithit will be performed at the Imperial Oil Opera Theatre in Toronto May 16, 18, 21, 22, 23 and 25 with Marion Newman in the title role and Clarence Frazer as William Cormack. The cast also includes Asitha Tennekoon, Rebecca Cuddy, Deanthia Edmunds, Evan Korbut and Arla Evans. Michael Hidetoshi Mori and Yvette Nolan co-direct. Michelle Olson is the choreographer and Rosemary Thomson is the music director. On June 21 the opera, a co-production with Opera on the Avalon, will be performed at the St. John’s Arts and Culture Centre.

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

John Abberger’s Bach Fest at Four

MATTHEW WHITFIELD

For the past three years, the Toronto Bach Festival has presented a three-day intensive series of concerts, recitals, and lecture presentations focusing on Johann Sebastian Bach, his world, and his works. Increasing in size and scale each year, the festival attracts magnificent performers and interpreters. This year it runs from May 24 to 26 and includes ensemble performances of Bach’s Fifth Brandenburg Concerto and his Lutheran Masses, as well as solo performances by harpsichordist Luc Beauséjour and cellist Elinor Frey, and a lecture on Bach and the French Style featuring renowned musicologist Ellen Exner. With such a full and fulfilling roster of events, Bach aficionados have much to look forward to.

The Toronto Bach Festival is led by founding artistic director and renowned early music specialist John Abberger, perhaps most immediately recognizable as the principal oboist of the Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, who will be at the helm for both the Brandenburg Concerto and Lutheran Mass concerts. In preparation for this year’s festival, Abberger shared his thoughts on Bach, the master’s works, and how the Toronto Bach Festival provides a unique perspective in the interpretation of this timeless music:

WN: Toronto is a city full of classical music of all types, including strong proponents of Early Music. What led you to establish the Toronto Bach Festival in such a culturally dense arts scene?

JA: First of all, despite the high name recognition that Bach enjoys, and despite the fact that everyone knows he wrote truly great music, a good 70 percent of his music is seldom performed. This is because many major musical organizations have a broader mandate to perform music from a huge repertory and cannot program more than a few works by Bach in the course of their regular offerings. A Bach festival provides an obvious context for performing lots of Bach, and while the Toronto Bach Festival may occasionally perform works by other composers (whose works illuminate our understanding of Bach’s achievements, or works that show his influence on later composers), our mandate is to perform Bach, and to explore as many of his works as possible, the well-known and the less well-known. Consider the wealth of amazing music contained in the over 200 cantatas: in my 30 years with Tafelmusik we have performed a complete cantata on only a small handful of occasions.

Second, I am interested in applying the performance practice research findings of the last 30 years that indicate that Bach habitually used a much smaller vocal group when he performed his choral works. Apart from age-old Victorian assumptions about large choirs performing Bach, many musical organizations are structurally set up to use these larger choirs, such as the Mendelssohn Choir at the Toronto Symphony. I find performing Bach’s vocal works in the way we do (with one or two singers to each part) to be artistically compelling, and I think our audiences deserve an opportunity to hear these great works performed this way.

Third, many cities (large and small) have a regular Bach festival. A city with such a strong and vibrant cultural landscape surely deserves to have a festival devoted to one of the greatest composers of all time. Look at the wonderful success of the Toronto International Film Festival. Wouldn’t it be great if we had a Bach festival that is a cultural destination to celebrate here in Toronto?

This year’s festival features an eclectic mix of Bach’s secular and sacred music. Is there an organizing principle or underlying idea that permeates your concerts and programming?

Absolutely! From day one, a guiding principle for the programming has been that the three main genres in which Bach worked, choral, keyboard and instrumental, should be represented at each festival. This is why we will always have a keyboard recital, generally alternating between harpsichord and organ. Another important artistic mandate is to perform cantatas each year. With so many to choose from, we won’t run out for quite a few years! The instrumental works comprise works for solo instruments (violin, cello and flute) as well as chamber and orchestral music. I strive each year to find a nice balance with the great diversity of genres in which Bach worked.

Why Bach?

It’s difficult to overstate the influence of Bach and his music on the musical landscape of the ensuing 250 years of Western European musical culture. None of the great achievements of Mozart, Beethoven and Brahms would have been possible without the path-breaking creations of Bach. But what we really want to celebrate is the uncanny ability of Bach’s music to reach into our souls and speak to us. Many writers and musicians speak of the timeless beauty and transformative power of his music. I believe these qualities have the ability to transcend cultural boundaries and create a bond of shared community among audience and performers alike.

But Wait, There’s More...

...More Bach, that is! Abberger joins his Tafelmusik Orchestra and Choir compatriots in an exciting concert featuring J.S. Bach’s Magnificat and Jan Dismas Zelenka’s extraordinary Missa Divi Xaveri at Koerner Hall on May 9-12. The Magnificat is one of Bach’s best-known small-scale choral works, shorter in duration than the double cantatas but enormously wide-ranging in style and expression. Jan Dismas Zelenka, likely a new name to many concertgoers, is a perfect pairing for Bach, as his pieces are characterized by a very daring compositional structure with a highly spirited harmonic invention and complex counterpoint, providing a musical experience that is simultaneously thrilling and uplifting.

Zelenka (1679-1745) was a Czech composer who was raised in
Central Bohemia, educated in Prague and Vienna, and spent his professional life in Dresden. His works are often virtuosic and difficult to perform yet fresh and surprising, with sudden changes of harmony and rhythm; an accomplished violone player, Zelenka’s writing for bass instruments is far more demanding than that of other composers of his era, writing fast-moving continuo parts with driving, complicated rhythms. A prolific and well-travelled musician, he wrote complex fugues, ornate operatic arias, galant-style dances, baroque recitatives, Palestrina-like chorales and virtuosic concertos. Zelenka’s musical language is closest to Bach’s, especially in its richness of contrapuntal harmonies and ingenious usage of fugal themes. Nevertheless, Zelenka’s language is idiosyncratic in its unexpectedness of contrapuntal harmonies and ingenious usage of fugal themes. Sometimes considered Bach’s Catholic counterpart, Bach held Zelenka in high esteem, and the two composers knew each other, as evidenced by a letter from C.P.E. Bach to the Bach biographer Johann Nikolaus Forkel. According to this document, Bach was trusted enough by Zelenka for his eldest son Wilhelm Friedemann to copy out the “Amen” from Zelenka’s Magnificat to use in Leipzig’s Thomaskirche, where J. S. Bach was cantor. In addition to composing, Zelenka was a teacher, instructing a number of the most prominent musicians of his time, including Johann Joachim Quantz; his close friends included renowned composers such as Georg Philipp Telemann and Johann Georg Pisendel.

Why, then, do we not know more works by this extraordinary composer? Zelenka never married and had no children, and his compositions and musical estate were purchased from his beneficiaries by the Electress of Saxony/Queen of Poland, Maria Josepha of Austria after his death. These were considered valuable court possessions and were kept under lock and key for a century, only being rediscovered in the Dresden archives in the late 19th century. Interest in Zelenka’s music has continued to grow since the 1950s and his works have become much more widely known and recorded since then. It is wonderful to see Tafelmusik presenting Zelenka in live performance, making this a don’t-miss concert that will illuminate, inform, and inspire anyone with an interest in early music.

Musical Women Who Persisted
Here’s a challenge for you: name five female composers of Western art music from the years 1100 to 1900. If you came up empty, the Toronto Chamber Choir has just the concert for you on May 24: A Voice of Her Own – Musical Women Who Persisted focuses on female composers and their works from the last nine centuries, enhanced with a multimedia presentation to both elucidate and entertain. With music by Hildegard of Bingen, Maddalena Casulana, Barbara Strozzi, Fanny

Mendelssohn, Clara Schumann and more, there will be much to learn about the various stereotypes, societal constructs, and utter indifference that prevented the free expression of creativity among female composers. Featuring conductor Lucas Harris, organist Stephanie Martin and narrator Katherine Larson, this performance will not only be musically excellent, but also edifying for those who take the time to make themselves aware of what life was like for the female creatives of the past and, perhaps, the present as well.

Speaking of female composers, Stephanie Martin is a musician who wears many hats: composer; conductor; organist and teacher and a fixture of Toronto’s musical scene. In addition to the Toronto Chamber Choir, Martin also makes an appearance with I Furiosi Baroque Ensemble this May 17 as composer of I Furiosi: The Opera, a pastiche Baroque opera with music by Handel, Purcell and Martin, and libretto by Craig Martin. What can we expect from an I Furiosi opera? You’ll have to see it to find out!

Drop me a line if you have any questions on what’s happening this month, or want some more info on why Zelenka might be the best composer you’ve never heard of: earlymusic@thewholenote.com

EARLY MUSIC QUICK PICKS

> MAY 4, 5PM: Toronto Consort. “Night Games.” Trinity–St. Paul’s Centre, 427 Bloor Street West. With so much early music being obsessed with religious propriety, it’s nice to let your wig down once in a while. Check out this irresistible evening of madrigal comedy with the Toronto Consort and triple-threat director/actor/dancer Marie-Nathalie Lacoursière.

> MAY 5, 3PM: Windermere String Quartet. “Alpha and Omega.” St. Olave’s Anglican Church, 360 Windermere Avenue. Hear three quartets by the masters of the genre: Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven – the pinnacles of Viennese quartet writing – and rediscover how ingenious these composers can be with only four instruments… no orchestra required!

> JUN 2, 3PM: Rosewood Consort. “Love, Loss, and Passion: A Musical Tour of Renaissance Europe.” Grace Lutheran Church, 1107 Main Street W., Hamilton. Take a trip down the QEW and take in stunning music by des Prez, Willaert, Palestrina, and more, pinnacles of the 16th-century polyphonists.

Matthew Whitfield is a Toronto-based harpsichordist and organist.
Beat by Beat | Jazz Notes

Youth Will Be Served, Won’t They?

STEVE WALLACE

B

assist Michel Donato moved to Toronto from Montreal in the mid-70s and though he was here a relatively short time, perhaps six or seven years, he became an integral part of the Toronto jazz scene. He certainly had a huge impact on my development as a bassist in a number of ways: his powerful playing provided a model and inspiration; he began giving me work subbing for him; and he took me under his wing as a mentor. One of the best pieces of advice he ever gave me was that if I wanted to become a good jazz player, I had to play every day. Not just practise and study on my own, but play. With other musicians, preferably some who were better than me. I took it to heart and spent a lot of time as an aspiring musician playing daily “sessions” as we called them, which were arranged much like gigs but with no audience or money involved. (Thejadewags out there will note that these conditions sound a lot like some real jazz gigs, but never mind.)

Michel’s advice was true then and, as jazz education has expanded and evolved in the intervening years, is just as true now. Any post-secondary jazz program must stress performance and provide students with a lot of group-playing opportunities, not just in classroom ensembles, but in actual performances – i.e. in front of an audience, which heightens the whole experience by providing both pressure and inspiration. There’s nothing like playing in front of a listening audience to make musicians, young or otherwise, focus and play their best, and everything else – individual practise, study, learning about theory and harmony, repertoire development, listening to records, etc. – should run through live playing.

Live performance is certainly stressed in the jazz program at U of T where I’ve become increasingly involved as a teacher, and I assume it’s similar at the three other local schools offering jazz programs – Humber College, York University and Hamilton’s Mohawk College. I hope so, anyway. At U of T, each of the numerous small jazz ensembles, which meet once a week, must do three live performances during the year – one at Upper Jazz, the makeshift concert hall in the music building at 90 Wellesley St., and two at The Rex on Monday evenings. Three performances over two semesters may not seem like that much, but remember there are a lot of jazz ensembles to fit in, and each student likely plays in more than one, so it works out to a fair amount of playing for each. Three for each band feels about right.

In terms of my small jazz ensembles over the last three years, I’ve had a unique window into these performances because I don’t just coach the bands, I play bass in them as well, so I’m wearing two hats. (The opportunity of playing with me is somehow seen as a draw – go figure.) It’s interesting to experience the difference between performing in Upper Jazz and at The Rex. The concerts in Upper Jazz are attended by fellow students, members of the public and some teachers, so they’re real performances and the students certainly raise their game for them. But they’re on school grounds so somehow feel safer – invariably the students get up more for playing at The Rex as it’s a more public venue and a real jazz club. And while there is no cover (something I feel could be rethought) for the student concerts, people are there spending money on food and drink, plus the students receive some pay from the proceeds of the tip jar, which brings a small stamp of professionalism and realism to the proceedings – attendance is generally good and people are fairly generous, so the students walk away with some money for a 40-minute set. Along with the all-important complimentary jug or two of draft beer provided to each ensemble – yes, this is part of jazz education too. But above all, my ensembles always play better at The Rex, only in part because we generally play there later in the year – but mostly because the students realize they’re playing on the same stage as the professionals have over many years. It’s palpable and stretches them.

Of course the jazz students also take a lot of initiative in creating playing situations for themselves. There’s always a lot of jamming going on at the school at all hours and I’m constantly seeing posters advertising performances at venues like the Tranzac, The Emmet Ray, the 120 Diner, The Rex, the Cavern, Alchemy, The Dakota Tavern, Burdock and others.

Due pay: As key as live playing is to the musical growth of young jazz players, getting paid for performances is equally important to the development of professionalism. Or, to put it more bluntly: to hell with internship, and the sooner, the better. Fortunately, there are signs that this is happening, as there are initiatives afoot to ensure that young people are getting work opportunities, being paid, and paid fairly. Some of these have come from policy at U of T itself. At any school performance, jazz students who are skilled at sound design, usually two of them, are paid to do the sound and this includes year-end recitals, of which there are many. Also at these recitals, a student is hired to “do the door” – greeting people, making sure that they get seating and a program, and that everything runs smoothly. I’m not privy to how much the students are paid for these services, but to hear them tell it, it’s generous, fair and they’re very glad of it. It fosters professionalism and more importantly, it helps them get by. Apart from how busy they are with school, a big challenge to being a student is keeping the wolf from the door, just as it is for professional jazz musicians. And the jazz program at U of T has a good record of hiring graduates as part-time teachers and of creating employment opportunities for them in other ways. For example, a position of social media co-ordinator was created for next year and a recent graduate, Jenna-Marie Pinard, as skilled with the Internet as she is at singing, has been hired.

JPEC: The Jazz Performance and Education Centre (JPEC), has always made the inclusion of opportunities for young jazz players a priority of their mandate, and deserve credit for this. Apart from their many jazz education outreach programs, student groups have always been featured prior to regular JPEC concerts, often playing in the lobby of the venue, and have always been paid for this. The idea is not only to provide young people a chance to ply their trade, but to create a young jazz audience by doing so. Yes, young players go out to hear veteran musicians, I see them all the time in numbers at gigs I do. But they really come out to hear their peers, it’s the way it works, and they represent the future of jazz – not only as players, but as an audience.

JPEC has expanded this with a recent initiative at the Aga Khan Museum, its preferred concert venue – a Student Concert Series at the Museum’s Diwan Restaurant. As part of a pilot program, four different trios consisting of saxophone, guitar, and bass – it’s not a large space – have been organized from the four jazz schools and will be performing in this intimate setting. The trios are properly paid and also receive free meals and paid parking. As an incentive to attract audiences, attendees are given free admission to the museum’s permanent collection as well as to special exhibitions. This resulted in a 90-percent-capacity audience for the first concert in Diwan. JPEC
JPEC takes its student concert series to the Aga Khan Museum’s Diwan Restaurant

High calibre concerts: To return to the importance of performance values in jazz education, a closing word about some I’ve attended a lot in recent weeks: the end-of-year jazz recitals by third-year, fourth-year and master’s students at U of T. These are held in Upper Jazz at 90 Wellesley during April and early May. I’ve been present at some as an adjudicator grading the performances, but just as often I attend just to hear the music, especially if the leader is a student of mine. According to how far along the student is, there is an increased emphasis on composing/arranging as well as instrumental (or vocal) performance, so these concerts often involve either original music you’re not going to hear elsewhere, or arrangements of familiar material which are often fresh and highly imaginative. Between last year and this year I’ve been to about 30 of these, with more to come, and the music has never been less than good, and most often well beyond that. There are some fairly advanced players involved and the leaders put a lot of thought and preparation into forming their bands and offering a cohesive and broad-ranging program of music, and it shows. Many of the concerts I’ve heard have been inspired, compelling, sometimes technically brilliant and always emotionally rewarding. Along with parents, fellow students and teachers, I’m beginning to notice members of the jazz listening public turning up regularly as part of the attentive audiences at these concerts, which is very heartening. These fine young players are often at their best in this pressure-packed crucible and are beginning to make names for themselves, which bodes well for the future.

Having been at jazz for a long time now, I’ve witnessed the huge shrinkage in the jazz scene as I once knew it, not to mention of the music business in general, and it’s been hard not to get too downcast about it. In fact, for a long time I have been discouraged about it, mourning the loss of the “good old days.” But hearing the musical conviction and imagination displayed in these recitals has me convinced that there are good new days ahead, as Pollyanna-ish as that may sound. These young players have me almost in danger of feeling optimistic, in spite of myself.

“There is nothing to keeping a band together. You simply have to have a gimmick, and the gimmick I use is to pay them money.” – Duke Ellington

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JAZZ NOTES QUICK PICKS

- MAY 8 AND 9, 9:30PM: The Rex Hotel, 194 Queen St. W. The Kirk MacDonald Quartet. One of Canada’s most accomplished jazz musicians, backed by a stellar trio of Brian Dickinson, Neil Swainson and Barry Romberg.
- MAY 9, 7:30PM: The Homesmith Bar, 9 Old Mill Rd. The Worst Pop Band Ever. Chris Gale (tenor), Matt Newton (piano), Drew Birston (bass), Tim Shia (Drums). A lively quartet made up of some of Toronto’s best players.
- MAY 18 AND 25, 7PM: The Rex Hotel, 194 Queen St. W. Triple Bari Ensemble. As advertised, three baritone saxophonists – Alec Trent, Alex Manoukas and Conrad Gluch – backed by a rhythm section. Manoukas, in particular, is a brilliant player.
- MAY 24, 7:30PM: The Homesmith Bar, 9 Old Mill Rd. The Warren Commission. Drummer Ted Warren leads a marvellous band with Mike Malone (trumpet). Ted Quinlan (guitar), Pat Collins (bass), and special guest Melissa Stylianou, now based in NYC.
- MAY 27, 8:30PM: The Rex Hotel, 194 Queen St. W. John MacLeod’s Rex Hotel Orchestra. Toronto’s premier big band in their natural habitat, always worth hearing.

Toronto bassist Steve Wallace writes a blog called “Steve Wallace jazz, baseball, life and other ephemera” which can be accessed at wallacebass.com. Aside from the topics mentioned, he sometimes writes about movies and food.
Vocal Powerhouse
Sing! The Toronto Vocal Arts Festival

BRIAN CHANG

In March, Suba Sankaran and Dylan Bell led a choral workshop as part of the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir’s Singsation Saturday program. In the church basement of Calvin Presbyterian Church, the duo led about 100 people in exploring their voices. No sheet music, no instruments. Nothing but the power of the a cappella, human voice.

Sankaran and Bell are partners in music and life and perform under the name FreePlay Duo. Together, they have spearheaded and led the annual Sing! Toronto Vocal Arts Festival for nine years. We exchanged questions and answers by email. “Our musical goals are to excite, to inspire, to teach, to entertain, and most importantly, to demonstrate that the human voice has infinite possibilities,” they wrote.

“The human voice is an amazing instrument,” they continued. “And group singing is such an amazing feeling of community. You might ask yourself, why do you need to sing? The answer is very simple: people have always needed to sing together.

It’s part of who we are as human beings, it’s a natural impulse, and it shows us that we can work together in large numbers, in harmony.”

Sankaran and Bell have curated a festival that demands participation and offers experience, providing a host of opportunities to sing, listen or both. For those who want to get into the thick of things, “the Mass Choir event is a unique opportunity created by SING! to reach out to the community, give them a voice, an opportunity to work with a professional singer, performer and educator, and the chance to strut their stuff on stage,” they say. Kurt Sampson who is leading the mass choir performance is known for his work in Cadence, a Toronto-based a cappella quartet. Sampson is the anchoring bass in that ensemble and his athletic vocal percussion is part of their signature sound. Participants who choose to perform in the mass choir event will have much to look forward to. “Once you register, you will be given the music (ahead of time), and then on Sunday, May 26 – the day of the event - you will be guided by Kurt... He will conduct workshops, get in-depth with the mass choir songs, provide micro-clinics with some of the local ensembles who opt to also have a performance spot that evening, and then all will culminate in a concert that features some participating vocal ensembles, the mass choir singers, as well as a performance by Cadence. You do not have to be part of a choir to enjoy this experience. If you are a singer who wants to find a choir in the moment, this is your chance!”

This type of opportunity to participate is a hallmark of the Sing! experience. In an interview last year with The WholeNote, Sankaran shared her love of being able to travel and network with a cappella singers around the world, a vibrant community all over the world focused on the human voice. But a Toronto staycation has much to offer too. “There are a few generations of people who have come up as singers,” Sankaran says. “We really are an a cappella family. One example is Debbie Fleming – founder of award-winning group, Hampton Avenue, who has been singing in the business and has been an advocate for a cappella for several decades.” Fleming will be the recipient of the Slait Music SING! Toronto Legacy Award this year.

“As well, many collegiate a cappella groups have been formed over the past few decades and have paved a path. Wibi A Cappella from York University (where both Dylan and I cut our teeth as conductors, arrangers and composers) is an example of the longest running, independent collegiate a cappella groups in Canada.” Wibi, who will
perform as part of Art Battle during the festival, celebrated their 30th anniversary in 2018!

Sankaran and Bell hope people are challenged by the breadth [of musical experiences] being presented. There is a huge range of international performing artists: Mzansi from South Africa presenting their Nelson Mandela tribute, Vocal Sampling from Cuba, The Swingles from the UK, and Jo Wallfisch (UK/US). “With this in mind, we hope to open not just voices, and ears, but minds and hearts as well. We tend to aim high with this festival, and so we hope to maintain our standards by bringing the best of the best that a cappella has to offer from around the world, and especially continue to feature our local treasures.”

Freeplay, featuring Sankaran and Bell, are themselves one such local treasure. They will perform as opening act for Vocal Sampling. “They are an amazing a cappella sextet from Cuba,” Sankaran and Bell write, “emulating the sounds of a hot Cuban orchestra, without an instrument in sight. They have been our heroes for such a long time and we’re so honoured to share the stage with them, for both workshops and a concert on Sunday, June 2 at Lula Lounge.”

Bell and Sankaran hope also to delve more deeply into multi-disciplinary shows, like this festival’s Songs and Stories of Migration, that bring different art forms together but also provoke thought and really in-depth chances for complex conversations carried through the medium of musical storytelling in a wide range of forms and styles. Toronto’s own Pressgang Mutiny, who sing sea shanties are one such group. Shanties are often associated with a fantastical history of what life at sea was like in the days of pirates. But for sailors and passengers throughout history, boats of cargo and people have been meeting places for cultures, stories, commerce, and also war. These nautical meeting places have a history and Pressgang Mutiny breathe life into these shanties, minus the swashbuckling.

A cappella vocal music also opens doors into diverse cultures. You’ll hear the sounds of the Eastern Mediterranean instantly when Turkwaz takes the stage. This quartet of women explores the sounds and myriad stories of Greece, Turkey, the Balkans and more, the evocative takes the stage. This quartet of women explores the sounds and hear the sounds of the Eastern Mediterranean instantly when Turkwaz.

Another musical arts festival runs over the last week of May. Jewish Music Week presents the ninth year of guests, local and international, featuring a host of fantastic music influenced, created and/or performed by Jewish artists, with significant highlights for aficionados of vocal and choral music.

JEWISH MUSIC WEEK, MAY 26 TO JUNE 2

May 28, 8:30PM: Sing! Songs & Stories of Migration featuring a host of artists and histories. Ariel Balei with Persian folklore; Pressgang Mutiny with sea shanties; Turkwaz with Arabic, Greek and Turkish heritage; Sage Tyrtle blending stories and fairy tales; Joanna Wallfisch with looped storytelling; and Dan Yashinsky and his extra-ordinary tales of travels. A new feature on the docket for Sing! and bound to excite your heart and ears. Hugh’s Room Live, Toronto.

JUN 1, 8PM: SoundCrowd: Dance Party! Why should dance parties only be reserved for instruments? Scott Pietrangelo leads this a cappella powerhouse of a choir with 70 voices strong. The Opera House, Toronto.

JUN 2, 7:30PM: Sing! Cuban Fantasies with Vocal Sampling and Freeplay. Steamy music highly likely, tropical heat not guaranteed. Lula Lounge, Toronto.

SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF SING! THE TORONTO VOCAL ARTS FESTIVAL, MAY 24 TO JUNE 2

May 24, 8:30PM: Sing! Mandela Celebration with Mzansi. A musical celebration of Nelson Mandela with a cross-cutting extravaganza of sounds and styles. Young People’s Theatre, Toronto.

May 26, 7:30PM: The Mass Choir comes together under Kurt Sampson of Cadence. Come for the concert or join in the choir itself earlier in the day. This will be a signature festival event. Young People’s Theatre, Toronto.

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May 2019
Polyphonic and Modal Musical Mastery
Usher in the Spring

ANDREW TIMAR

Spring is a season of renewal. As the last of the dirty snow melts away, grass greens around us, tree buds begin to plump and birds return to song, we’re reminded that the season is connected to some of humanity’s deepest values and hopes.

That optimism is reflected in major cyclical religious holidays celebrated round the world – Holi, Nowruz, Passover and Easter – each of which possesses an extensive song list. While these spring-launch festivals will have taken place by the time you read this, there still remains the balance of the season to explore in music the many sacred and profane rites of spring associated with the vernal equinox. Please use this column as your guide to some of its rich abundance in our Greater Toronto Area communities.

In this issue I’ll be exploring ethnic pluralism, aka cultural diversity as performed in music, in three stories. First is a preview of the second season of Labyrinth Ontario, modal music’s Toronto outpost, then a segue to the Toronto leg of the Canadian tour of a choir from the Republic of Georgia, finally arriving, in my Quick Picks, at the smorgasbord of musical offerings this season.

Labyrinth Musical Workshop Ontario
Speaking of renewal, Labyrinth Music Workshop Ontario, an organization “dedicated to promoting the study and enjoyment of global traditions of modal music,” is launching its second season of workshops, capped by a concert.

In its inaugural season, the full range of spirit of an extended modal family was reflected in Labyrinth’s remarkably ambitious lineup featuring nine week-long workshops, twelve concerts, plus two panel discussions. Eleven masters of Greek, Turkish, Bulgarian, Iranian, Azerbaijani, Arabic, Kurdish and Afghani music traditions gave lessons and performed. Historically these musical cultures have interacted variously in and between their homelands, but last year’s Toronto concerts reflected an intensified interaction perhaps only possible on the ground here today.

Ethnomusicologist Rob Simms, a Labyrinth Ontario board member, provided an overview on the site’s blog. “Labyrinth’s inaugural season offered attendees an immense wealth of practical insights into the technique and craft of modal music, inspiring performances, and valuable lore and wisdom regarding the larger context of contemporary modal cultures, straight from the source of some of the most important representative artists.

While there was much great music making going on, I was particularly struck by the reminder that true mastery goes beyond playing to knowing what really matters on a deeper cultural, aesthetic, and ultimately spiritual level with this music—and being it, living it. … Toronto’s Danforth and Chester neighbourhood is quite likely the modal musical centre of the planet for the month of May!”

Ross Daly, a musician of international influence and founder in 1982 of the original Labyrinth centre in Crete – after which Labyrinth Ontario is modelled— was on hand for the duration of last year’s events. An eloquent spokesman for contemporary modal music, Daly offered thought-provoking perspectives at the panel discussions on many aspects of his long, inspiring career. He spoke to the relationship of individuals to tradition, building a repertoire, the balance of study and intuitive creativity, aesthetic preferences, the dynamics of audiences, the effect of recordings on learning and performing, and on the role of “cultural outsiders.” These are all issues very pertinent to Canadian musicians in this scene too.

Labyrinth Ontario June 2019 Workshops
Daly again plays a central role in this year’s Labyrinth activities. June 3 to 7 he will blend lecture, demonstration, performance and hands-on composition in his workshop, drawing on his decades of study of modal traditions. A modal heads-up: while the workshop is suitable for performers and composers of all levels and backgrounds, an “instrument capable of playing quarter-tones” is recommended. All workshops will be held at Eastminster United Church, 310 Danforth Ave., Toronto.

Running concurrently, Cretan lyra virtuosa Kelly Thoma leads a workshop on her instrument covering technique and repertoire, serving as an introduction to Cretan music and to her compositional and performance practice. Award-winning Bulgarian diva Tzvetanka Varimezova brings her decades of experience as a choir director and solo vocalist to cover vocal techniques and several styles of Bulgarian song in her class.

The following week on June 10 to 14, Araz Salek (tar) and Hamidreza Khalatbari (kamanche) jointly offer an Introduction to Iranian Music covering the fundamentals of Iranian modal music, while tombak virtuoso Pedram Khavarzamini teaches Percussion Cycles drawing on his deep intercultural study of cyclic rhythmic patterns in his workshop.
Labyrinth Ontario’s concert
Saturday June 8, Labyrinth Ontario presents Modal Music Summit at Eastminster United Church, the concert tying together various threads explored by workshop leaders, including Ross Daly, the group This Tale of Ours (Daley, Thoma, Salek and Khravarzamini), plus vocalist Varimezova.

I spoke recently with Labyrinth’s artistic director, Araz Salek, about the organization’s first year. One of the healthiest aspects of the inaugural concerts was the mixed audiences, he told me. “They were not just drawn from the music’s community of origin, but also attended by Torontonians eager for something new. That’s in the core missions of Labyrinth: to encourage audiences to experience and then enjoy musics beyond what they listen to day to day. We believe audiences can develop a taste and ear for modal music traditions. We can learn to appreciate musics other than those we’ve grown up with.”

Why is that important? “Because that experience ultimately enriches our lives. Many of us look forward to exploring cuisines we didn’t grow up with, eventually developing a taste for diverse food and drink: why not music?”

Salek cautions against easy solutions, however. “Musicians from modal traditions often aim to make their music palatable to a broad international audience. All too often this results in reducing its essential characteristics to the lowest common denominator that the music shares with Western models. That’s the opposite of what we’re trying to do at Labyrinth. We encourage musicians, their students and our audiences to reach for what’s essential in each musical tradition, and to develop it. Getting rid of microtones, modality and shoehorning melodies and performance practices into a Western framework, compromises the cultural voice of the individual culture represented.”

Cultural bridges are crucial, Salek reminds us, “but it takes good will, time and considerable effort to build a sturdy and elegant bridge that accommodates both sides without compromise.” This insight is useful for musicians to keep in mind when embarking on transcultural musical collaborations.

Didgori Ensemble in Canada
Didgori Ensemble is an award-winning six-voice choir from the Republic of Georgia performing the country’s unique polyphonic choral repertoire. Since 2004, they have toured Russia, UK, France, Switzerland, Poland, the Czech Republic, Latvia, Uzbekistan, Turkey and Israel. Late in May into mid-June their Canadian tour promises to be a huge moment for Georgian music in Canada, an opportunity that happens perhaps once in a lifetime. How uncommon is this? The only time a choir from Georgia toured Canada previously was in the 1970s.

Co-sponsored by a consortium of Toronto, Edmonton, Winnipeg and Quebecois producers, Didgori’s tour kicks off with a concert and workshop at the Edmonton International Choral Festival. The Winnipeg Singers then present them in Manitoba before they travel to Toronto, followed by dates in Kingston and Quebec.

Declared by UNESCO in 2001 as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, the millennial-old Georgian polyphonic singing tradition, with its close harmonies and un-tempered scales, is a visceral experience. It features three-part singing in a variety of regionally based styles, ranging from melismatic lyrical singing and drones, to relaxed urban songs, to exploding “crunchy” counterpoint, reflecting the old, diverse and complex Georgian social and physical landscape.

The Didgori singers are acknowledged masters of a variety of Georgian musical styles. They are dedicated to the traditions of their ancestors through the mastery and popularization of Georgian polyphonic folk songs and liturgical chants. Didgori’s very name honours the 1121 battle that helped reunite Georgia and usher in a period of growth in arts and culture.

Didgori Ensemble in Toronto: concert and workshops
Friday June 7, three Toronto arts organizations – MusiCamp, Clay & Paper Theatre and Folk Camp Canada – present Didgori Ensemble at Jeanne Lamon Hall, Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre.

On June 8, Didgori gives a public Georgian choral workshop from 5 to 7pm at the St. Vladimir Institute, 620 Spadina Ave. Then on Sunday, June 9, MusiCamp holds a five-hour Georgian choral workshop with Didgori at the MusiCamp Studio, 11 Cobourg Ave. from 11am to 3pm.
to 4pm. Limited to 12 participants, this intensive mentoring experience with six experts of traditional Georgian choral repertoire is the closest Torontonians can get to this music short of a very, very long plane ride to Tbilisi. For more information about registration check MusicCamp’s website.

Monday June 10. Didgori drives east for a 12:15pm concert at St. George’s Cathedral, 270 King St. E, Kingston, Ontario, before travelling to dates in Quebec.

**WORLD VIEW QUICK PICKS**

- **MAY 1, 5:30PM:** the Canadian Opera Company presents Stomp the Floor with the sibling-fuelled Métis Fiddler Quartet at the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre, Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, as part of its noon hour *World Music Series*. The concert is free, but note that a "no late seating" is strictly observed.

- **MAY 2, 7PM:** North York Central Library/University of Toronto Faculty of Music offers Toronto audiences the rarely heard Music of Rajasthan with vocalist Abhishek Iyer, harmonium player Sushant Anatharam and Tanmay Sharma on tabla, at the North York Central Library. The event is free but registration is required.

- **MAY 2, 8PM:** the popular sitarist Anoushka Shankar and party perform at Koerner Hall, Telus Centre in a concert produced by the Royal Conservatory of Music.

- **MAY 3 AND 4, 8PM; MAY 5, 3PM:** Esmeralda Enrique Spanish Dance Company stages its latest show *Impulso* at the Fleck Dance Theatre, Harbourfront Centre. The production features works by choreographers Esmeralda Enrique and José Maldonado. Guitarists Caroline Planté and Benjamin Barrile, vocalists Manuel Soto and Marcos Marin, are joined by percussionist Derek Gray to provide the energizing dance music.

- **MAY 4, 7PM:** Singing Together 2019 presents *A Celebration of Cultural Diversity*, a "multicultural choral concert with seven choirs from different ethnic backgrounds," at St. Paschal Baylon Church, Thornhill. Groups include the Chinese Canadian Choir of Toronto (Cantonese); Coro San Marco (Italian); Joyful Singers (Korean); Nayiri Armenian Choir of Toronto (Armenian); Noor Children’s Choir (Armenian); Toronto Taiwanese Choir (Mandarin), plus the guest Filipino Choral Group.

- **MAY 4, 6:30PM:** the Mississauga Festival Choir, joined by guest world music ensemble Autorickshaw, offers songs from South Africa, South Asia and Canada’s far north in a concert titled *Building Bridges* at the Living Arts Centre, Mississauga.

- **MAY 5, 1PM:** the Royal Conservatory of Music presents the illustrious Toronto vocal quartet Turkwaz at the Mazzoleni Concert Hall, Royal Conservatory, Maryem Hassan Tollar draws on her Arabic language heritage. Jayne Brown and Sophia Gregorian bring their experience with Greek music and Brenna MacCrimmon adds her expertise in Turkish song repertoire to the mix.

- **MAY 12, 3PM:** Echo Women’s Choir performs a Mother’s Day Concert: Thanks to Life, A Celebration of Songs from the Americas at the Church of the Holy Trinity. The repertoire includes Calixto Alvarez’s Cuban Suite and Violeta Parra’s *Gracias a la Vida* (arr. B. Whitila). Guest singer-songwriter Amanda Martinez joins veteran Echo conductors Becca Whitila and Alan Gasser.

- **MAY 17, 8PM:** Small World Music Society presents Anindo Chatterjee & Guests, a North-meets-South-Indian percussion summit at the Small World Music Centre, Arcatape Youngplace. Tabla master Pandit Anindo Chatterjee headlines, joined by Gowrishankar Balachandran (mrdangam), Ramana Indrakumar (ghatam), Shirshendu Mukherjee (vocalist), Hardeep Chana (harmonium), and local tabla maestro Ravi Naimpally.

- **MAY 25, 3PM:** the Kyiv Chamber Choir conducted by Mykola Hobydych sings a program titled *Sounds of Ukraine* at the Koerner Hall, Telus Centre.

- **MAY 26, 7PM:** Jewish Music Week in Toronto presents Nomadica: Music of the Gypsies, Arabs and Jews featuring David Buchbinder on trumpet and vocalist Roula Said at Lula Lounge.

- **MAY 28, 12PM:** the Canadian Opera Company presents Celebrate Japan! in its *World Music Series*. Nagata Sachu, directed by Kiyoshi Nagata, will make the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre ring with festive percussion-centric sounds.

- **JUN 2, 7:30PM:** Sing! The Toronto Vocal Arts Festival continues with Cuban Fantasies with Vocal Sampling and Freplay at Lula Lounge.

Andrew Timar is a Toronto musician and music writer. He can be contacted at worldmusic@thewholenote.com.

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**Beat by Beat | Bandstand**

**Anniversary Time for Waterloo and Wychwood**

**JACK MACQUARRIE**

In my previous column I mentioned some anniversaries on the horizon. One of these will be a May 5 celebration by the Waterloo Concert Band of the 100th anniversary of the arrival in town of “Professor” Thiele, as he was known, by performing his newly discovered *Festival Overture*. This will be at Knox Presbyterian Church, 50 Erb St. W., Waterloo. Since mentioning the event last issue, I have been overwhelmed by information about Thiele from a variety of sources. From one friend I received a copy of a 130-page university thesis on Thiele’s life; work and contributions to Waterloo; and writer Pauline Finch, who plays piccolo and flute with the Waterloo Concert Band and others, provided far more information on Thiele than I could ever have discovered on my own.

Charles Frederick Thiele did not study or teach at any prestigious music school. He was largely self-taught and earned his renown through natural talent and experience. The title “Professor” (always in quotation marks) was an informal mark of respect often given to popular concert and show-hand conductors during the 19th and early 20th centuries. It did not have any real academic connotations, but might well, in his case, equate to an honorary doctorate today. Thiele was a self-employed freelance like many in his day – holding multiple positions, often several at one time. As celebrated as he became in Canadian music during first half of the 20th century, he wasn’t a hometown boy either. When he arrived in Waterloo 100 years ago on April 1, 1919, hired to direct the Waterloo Musical Society Band, he was nearly 35, having been born in the Lower East Side neighbourhood of New York City to impoverished German immigrant parents. Despite their only son’s early aptitude for music, they were too destitute to provide him with lessons. However, the boy in question was also gifted with disciplined ambition, hints of a true leader’s charisma, and a shrewd instinct for business opportunities – qualities that served him well in his parallel careers as composer, entertainer, impresario and industrialist.

Well before the turn of the 20th century, and still in his teens, Thiele made his first money as a street photographer. With his earnings he was able to acquire a cornet. By 19, he’d married his 17-year-old girlfriend Louise (an accomplished singer, actress and instrumentalist in her own right). By his early 20s, he was finally able to afford regular...
cornet lessons and quickly made up for lost time, soon progressing to the rank of a steadily employed freelance musician, learning on the job, playing with numerous professional bands in parades, political rallies, lodges, social clubs, sports events, festivals, circuses, silent films, and just about any occasion where paid live music was required.

After answering the band’s advertisement in early 1919, he travelled to Waterloo (which had only 5,000 people at the time) to meet his potential employers in person. He landed the job at a salary of $1,200 a year, roughly equivalent to $15,706 in 2019, supplementing this part-time income by teaching and freelancing, and wasting no time imprinting his legendary creative energy on his new hometown. As early as 1921, he’d founded the Waterloo Music Company as a sheet music mail-order business in a spare room of his house. The business began as a profitable service to silent movie houses throughout Canada; by the time “talkies” put an end to demand, less than a decade later, Thiele already had Plan B figured out – providing educational music for schools.

Thiele was actually the Waterloo band’s ninth bandmaster, but because he served in the post for 32 years, even some locals assumed he had founded the band. When radio came along just before the Depression, Thiele managed to have the Waterloo Musical Society Band chosen to play the first live band concert in Canadian broadcast history.

Worthy of further investigation, I also learned that Thiele was instrumental in the introduction of the Ontario “Band Tax Law” in 1937 which enabled many smaller Ontario town bands to survive during and after the Great Depression. I had never heard of such a law before, but, continuing to dig, discovered that somewhat earlier, in 1921, the State of Iowa had enacted the Iowa Band Law, municipalities in the state to fund town bands. In fact, in 1923, composer Karl King wrote a fine march titled (there are at least two versions of it on YouTube) to commemorate the law’s passage.

**Wychwood**

The other previously mentioned May anniversary (May 26) belongs to the Wychwood Clarinet Choir. The choir’s musical director Michele Jacot responded to my inquiry about the concert with this: “Yes, it will be our tenth! A special show complete with cake and bubbly afterward. We are going to raise a glass to the first ten (if I may toot our own horn for a moment, very successful) seasons. The team is amazing. All I do is wave my arms around until the music stops and then turn around and bow.”

The selections for this show are a “best of” from those first ten seasons, featuring works by their “composers’ collective” and core group of talented arrangers. They have tried to include something by all of the members in that talent hub. Included will be Fen Watkin’s *Anne of Green Gables Medley*; Selections from Canteloube’s *Chants d’Auvergne* (arr. Moore); and a stellar arrangement of Gershwin’s *An American in Paris* by Roy Greaves.

As a prelude to the concert, on May 4, St. John’s Music, Toronto invites interested parties to take part in a Wychwood Clarinet Choir Michele Jacot and Roy Greaves with “Oscar” at their last concert when the theme was “A Night at the Oscars”
performance and reading session between 10 am and 12 noon. Anyone interested should contact Ben McGillis at 416-785-5000.

Newmarket

Many bands tend to suffer from a lack of advanced planning, but not the Newmarket Citizen’s Band who have already initiated the planning process for their 150th anniversary in 2022. The band’s executive has started the process of identifying several projects intended to commemorate this very important milestone in their history, and to illustrate to the broader community, the band’s contributions to the cultural and social life of the residents of Newmarket and the surrounding area over the years. But circle May 1 2022 on your busy calendars for the launch at the Newmarket Old Town Hall of an exhibit of the band’s history!

Orangerville Community Band

It was very pleasing recently to receive an email message from Bernie Lynch of the Orangerville Community Band, who tells me the column has given him much pleasure for several years and goes on to say: “As a member of a band which is in its 12th year, I am asking for the opportunity to inform readers about our next concert on May 11, at 7pm, titled “A Celebration of Crooners, Canaries and Chorales,” including and other Irish selections, selections from and more. It all happens at Orangerville District Secondary School, 22 Faulkner St.(back entrance), Orangerville.”

North York

On Saturday, May 11 at 7:30, the North York Concert Band’s Spring Bouquet, 2019 Gala Concert sounds entertaining! It will take place at the Al Green Theatre, Miles Nadal JCC; and under the direction of John Liddle, the band will present a variety of hits, some classic concert band repertoire and two special features. The first of these, is, a technical trombone solo, mixing the raw ragtime feel of the 20s with a laid-back rhythm of an early blues. Principal trombonist, Martin Hubel, will be there, we are informed, with “a trombone and a toilet plunger.” The other special feature is a new band commission by William R. Wilcox, titled inspired, they tell us, by the famous march. (In golf, a bogey is, of course, “one over par.”)

UCCB

It is a bit too early to report on the plans for this year of the Uxbridge Community Concert Band. This a summertime band which usually begins rehearsals in May. Since last December, Conductor Stefan Brunette has been dealing with a serious health crisis. Now on the mend, he and his committee are making plans which will include two standby assistant conductors to step in if needed. There are about 60 people on the band list, so they should be up and running soon, so stay tuned.

Other Recent Events

Before closing I feel compelled to report on three very different musical events which I had the pleasure of attending a week before I began this column. While none had anything to do with concert bands or their music, they all left lasting musical impressions.

The first event, in Uxbridge, was one of the most unusual concerts in my memory. It was officially titled “Chiaroscuro,” meaning “from light to dark into light.” The featured work was by Greek-born Canadian composer Christos Hatzis, a professor of composition at the University of Toronto. It was a work for choir, percussion, electronic audio effects and bass clarinet. The featured guest performer, on bass clarinet, was Jeff Reilly, senior CBC Radio producer of music production for the Canadian and British repertoire. Glenn Gould Studio, 250 Front St.W.

The second event was a violin recital by Duncan McDougall. I first heard him perform as a child old-time fiddler at a summer event in a park in Uxbridge. This time it was a “Violin Recital” with selections from such as Mozart’s, Saint-Saëns’, Mendelssohn’s and other works by Bach and Paganini. This Grade 11 high school student performed the entire program from memory with amazing stage presence. Now serving as co-concertmaster of the Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra, Duncan will be attending Morningside Music Bridge at the New England Conservatory this coming summer. He’s one to keep an eye on.

The third event was a performance at Roy Thomson Hall of Gustav Mahler’s by the TSO, Amadeus Choir and The Elmer Iseler Singers. Going from a solo recital one evening to this massive work two days later was quite an experience. How often does one see no fewer than eight French horns in one orchestra? To top it all off, Juanjo Mena, who was supposed to conduct the three performances of this work, was suddenly taken ill. Matthew Halls stepped in at the last minute and made it look as though he had prepared for weeks. His athletic conducting style made him one of the stars.

BANDSTAND QUICK PICKS

MAY 3, 7:30PM: Scarborough Concert Band. Spring Concert. Keith Bohleender, conductor; Wilmar Heights Centre, 963 Pharmacy Ave., Scarborough.

MAY 5, 11AM: Mississauga Big Band Jazz Ensemble. MBBJE Live big band recording with guest vocalists Whitney Ross-Barris, Sam Broverman, Glenn Chipkar, Suzanne McKenney, Denise Leslie. 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.


MAY 26, 1:30PM: Music at Metroplitan the Metropolitan Silver Band. Metropolitan United Church, 56 Queen St. E.

MAY 26, 2PM: The Mississauga Big Band Jazz Ensemble. “Jazz at the Legion.” Port Credit Legion, 35 Front St. N., Port Credit.

JUN 1, 7:30PM: The Barrie Concert Band presents “150 Years – Let’s Celebrate!” featuring Mark Tetrault on tuba; Peter Volsey, music director; and former conductors of the Barrie Concert Band. Collier Street United Church, 112 Collier St., Barrie.

JUN 2, 3:30PM: The North Toronto Community Band. will have their “Spring Rhythms” with marches, classics, show tunes, big band and more. Danny Wilks, conductor; Phil Coonce, violin; Sharon Smith, vocalist. Tribute Communities Recital Hall, Accolade East Building, York University, 4700 Keele St.

JUN 2, 7PM: Strings Attached Orchestra. will have their “Family & Friends Annual Year End Concert.” Isabel Bader Theatre, 93 Charles St. W.

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

As a parting gift David Olds and his musical friends will celebrate in song his 20 years as general manager of New Music Concerts. Tickets ($60, two for $100) include free food and drinks, with proceeds to benefit NMC. Call 416.961.9594 for reservations.
Welcome to The Canary Pages - The WholeNote’s 17th annual directory of Ontario choirs. We hope you’ll enjoy browsing these pages where choirs introduce themselves, in their own words. There’s so much to sing about! Are you new to the region, maybe a lapsed chorister looking to sing again, a chorister on the hunt for new challenges? Are you secretly thinking of joining a choir for the very first time? This is the perfect place to start your search. There are choirs that have been around for decades, and groups new to the scene. There are choruses of hundreds of voices, small chamber ensembles, children’s and youth choirs, auditioned choirs and those open to all, for every level of skill and commitment. Whether you want to sing or listen, there’s a whole rich world of choral music just waiting for you to discover and enjoy. And you can view the directory online, any time, at www.thewholenote.com/canary.

THE 2019 CANARY PAGES TEAM
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A Cappella York
Formerly the Upper Canada Chordsmen Chorus, A Cappella York is now a mixed chorus – men and women. Experience the joy of singing four-part a cappella harmony in the company of your newest friends while supporting our local community through various artistic and musical events. We sing in the “barbershop” style and are totally dedicated to pursuing excellence in entertaining our audiences. We are based in Newmarket and Sharon, Ontario, serving York Region and surrounding communities. Guests are welcome at weekly rehearsals. As a chorus member you will also enjoy membership in the Barbershop Harmony Society (an international organization) and its Ontario District. Opportunities for performing, quartetting, workshops and competitions abound.
RENÉ FRAPPIER
416-526-3142
info@uccchorus.com
www.uccchorus.com

Achill Choral Society
Now in its 36th season, ACHILL is a mixed, auditioned, 75-voice community choir established in 1982. ACHILL concerts are performed twice yearly in the surrounding communities of Orangeville, Alliston, Caledon and Bolton. Auditions take place in September and in January. Rehearsals are held each Wednesday at 7pm at St. John’s Anglican Church (6km east of Orangeville on Hwy 9). Tenors and Basses are encouraged to audition. ACHILL has flourished under the expert leadership of our musical conductor, Mr. Shawn Grenke, who has also been accompanist to several of Canada’s leading professional choirs, including the Elmer Iseler Singers and the Amadeus Choir.
For more information, contact us at info@achill.ca or visit our website www.achill.ca
LINDA PUNSTEL
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All Saints Kingsway Choir
All Saints Kingsway Choir provides musical leadership at weekly Sunday morning Eucharists, Festival Evensongs, community outreach projects and concerts year-round. The choir is made up of paid section leads and volunteer participants and welcomes new singers throughout the year. Recent performances include Benjamin Britten’s A Ceremony of Carols, Gabriel Fauré’s Requiem, festal celebrations with the drumming ensemble Beyond Sound Empijah, the Michael Occhipinti Jazz Quartet, Maurice Duruflé’s Requiem and Samuel Coleridge-Taylor’s The Atonement, both with the Nathaniel Dett Chorale. Jazz Vespers and lunchtime organ recitals round out the regular musical offerings. New members are always welcome to the Music at All Saints Kingsway family. Come and be a part of a fantastic choral and instrumental creative community.
**Amadeus Choir of Greater Toronto**

The Amadeus Choir, following 35 years under the leadership of Lydia Adams, welcomes Kathleen Allan as artistic director and conductor in the 2019/20 season. The choir performs diverse programmes featuring Canadian and international composers through a self-produced concert series, guest performances and special events at various venues in Toronto and beyond.

The Amadeus Choir actively engages in educational and community outreach through choral workshops for students, music educators, composers and conductors. Regular rehearsals are held on Tuesday nights in the Don Mills and Lawrence area. The choir’s membership comprises singers from across the GTA. Annual auditions for all voice parts are held in May and June. Please call or email the choir office for more information.

MEGHAN MCCRACKEN  
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info@amadeuschoir.com  
www.amadeuschoir.com

**The Annex Singers**

The Annex Singers is a spirited 60-voice auditioned choir with an eclectic repertoire spanning seven centuries. Under the dynamic and creative leadership of artistic director Maria Case, the choir performs three concerts annually, collaborating with a wide array of professional soloists and ensembles. Recently performed large-scale works include Fauré’s *Requiem*, Poulenc’s *Gloria*, and Mozart’s *Great Mass in C minor*. The Annex Chamber Singers, a smaller ensemble drawn from the main choir, is dedicated to presenting gems from the chamber repertoire.

We provide ongoing professional development to all choir members and encourage young singers with a sponsorship program. Rehearsals are held Monday evenings at St. Thomas’s Anglican Church, 383 Huron Street. Please visit our website to arrange your audition.

JOANNE EIDINGER  
416-458-4434  
joeidinger@gmail.com  
www.annexsingers.com

**Bach Children’s Chorus**

Bach Children’s Chorus is an award-winning organization of three performance-oriented trek mixed-voice choirs (ages 7-16), one mixed-voice choir (Bach Chamber Youth Choir – see separate listing), and two Preparatory Choirs for children aged 4-7.

BCC members experience a positive and focused learning environment as they explore a broad range of musical styles. BCC proudly continues to set the highest standards of musical literacy and education for community choirs across Canada with private vocal coaching, sight-singing groups, and a choral-focused theory curriculum.

BCC rehearses once per week in Scarborough, performs as a Company-in-Residence at the Toronto Centre for the Arts and appears regularly at Toronto events. Each choir participates in retreats, festivals, workshops and concerts with other choirs and conductors.

JANE GREENWOOD  
416-431-0790  
jane@bachchildrenschorus.ca  
www.bachchildrenschorus.ca

**Bach Elgar Choir**

The Bach Elgar Choir is Hamilton’s renowned concert choir. The ensemble performed its first concert in 1905 and has become essential to musical life in the region. The BEC has several firsts to its credit, including the North American premiere of Verdi’s *Requiem* and the Canadian premiere of Mahler’s “Symphony No. 2.” The BEC’s concert season features works for choir and orchestra, its cherished annual presentation of Handel’s *Messiah*, as well as programs of diverse vocal repertoire from opera to pops. We feature the very best Canadian talent in its soloists, and work together with top orchestras including the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra.

Now entering its 114th year, the Bach Elgar Choir invites interested singers from all sections to join us under the leadership of our dedicated artistic director Alexander Cann.

ALEXANDER CANN  
905-319-1251  
duffl@sympatico.ca  
www.bachelgar.com

**Bel Canto Singers**

BCS is an auditioned community choir. Members share a love of choral singing. We welcome and enjoy the challenges of a widely-varied repertoire including Broadway, folk songs, spirituals, opera music and yes, rock. Rehearsals are Tuesday evenings at Scar-borough Bluffs United Church, 3739 Kingston Rd. Scarborough. We sing concerts in early December and early May at the same venue. We also perform at senior’s residences, and we support the Kids Help Phone. This is our 26th year.

Friendships and fun are woven through all of our activities. We hold workshops twice a year for improving our singing skills and social events such as our annual banquet for fun. BCS is a non-profit, financed by ticket sales and annual memberships.

Our director, Leanne Piller, is a highly respected professional. Come sing with us!

EDWIN PERRIN  
416-265-7586  
laurad@sympatico.ca  
www.belcantosingers.ca
Canadian Bandurist Capella

The Canadian Bandurist Capella is one of the premiere bandura ensembles in North America. The group showcases powerful male voices combined with the rich sound of the bandura - the national instrument of Ukraine. The Capella is committed to advancing and exploring new possibilities with choral-bandura music, while honouring the instrument’s deep history.

Founded in 2001, the Canadian Bandurist Capella has grown to become a considerable force within the Ukrainian Community in Ontario. The group unites the talents of some 40 volunteer singers and instrumentalists who work together to further their common mission. As a not-for-profit group, the Capella depends on the support of the community and generous individuals to continue its work.

IVAN DUSANOWSKYJ
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president@banduristy.com
www.banduristy.com

Canadian Celtic Choir

The Canadian Celtic Choir is a London-based SATB choir of more than 50 voices that has built a solid reputation as one of the most in-demand choirs in SW Ontario. Founded in 1996, we have been led by conductor William “Bill” Zadorsky and accompanied by Jean Willadsen on piano since 2010. Our vocal coach, alternate conductor and emcee is Paul Grambo. Our repertoire features songs primarily from Ireland, Scotland, England, Wales, and the Canadian Maritimes. In 2015, we won the Most Popular Classical Choir at the Forest City London Music Awards. Also, we have received the Mayor’s Award from the City of London for our cultural contributions to the city. Our two most recent CDs are: *A Celtic Noel* (2013), and *Celtic Inspiration* (2014) and are available for purchase from our website. The Choir is touring Ireland in July 2020.

IAN DAVIES
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celtichoir@iandavies.com
www.celtichoir.ca

Canadian Children’s Opera Company

Now over 50 years old, the CCOC consists of six choruses for ages 3-19 and is the only permanent children's opera company in Canada to regularly commission and produce operas for children. Opera is simply storytelling with music, and those are two things that kids and youth love! A unique experience, the CCOC offers members unparalleled performance opportunities and life skills through age-appropriate vocal and dramatic training. Members regularly perform with the Canadian Opera Company and other major professional arts organizations. Rehearsals are week-ends after school in the downtown area. Auditions are held April to June and occasionally during the year. A non-auditioned in- and after-school workshop program was launched in 2008 as part of the OPERATION KIDS outreach arm of the CCOC.

KEN HALL
416-366-0467
info@canadianchildrensopera.com
www.canadianchildrensopera.com

Canadian Men’s Chorus

The Canadian Men’s Chorus under artistic director Greg Rainville is a premier men’s chamber ensemble in Toronto, performing works from the classical repertoire and many other genres. The CMC is noted for its exquisite blend, exciting and varied performances and the ability to take the audience on an emotional journey. Currently in its 9th season, the CMC is preparing for an exciting 10th anniversary season with three concerts in 2019/20. Over the past 9 seasons, the CMC has commissioned and premiered over 45 new Canadian works for men’s voices by noted composers such as Stephanie Martin, Mark Sirett, Laura Sgroi, Scott Christian, Matthew Emery and more. The CMC welcomes experienced male singers to join the camaraderie and fine singing by contacting Greg at grainville@canadianmenschorus.ca for an audition.

GREG RAINVILLE, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
416-573-5993
grainville@canadianmenschorus.ca
www.canadianmenschorus.ca

Cantabile Chamber Singers

Led by artistic director and founder Cheryll Chung since 2006, the Cantabile Chamber Singers (CCS) performs an eclectic mix of choral music that spans 6 centuries and premiers works of Canadian and international composers through a self-produced Toronto concert series, guest performances and special projects with local orchestras, festivals and choirs. CCS is known for its informed interpretation, audience engagement and innovative programming. Performing and commissioning new Canadian music is part of our mandate, with over 50 new works premiered since 2006. Contact us for an audition or to submit a newly written a cappella choral work.

Check out our recordings on iTunes and YouTube, find us on Facebook & follow us on Twitter @CantabileTO. Auditions are held throughout the year, as needed - for tenors, basses and sopranos.

CHERYLL CHUNG
416-509-8122
cantablechambersingers@gmail.com
www.cantablechambersingers.com

Cantabile Choirs of Kingston

Since 1996, the Cantabile Choirs of Kingston, under composer/conductor Mark Sirett, have become known for concerts featuring non-traditional staging and joyful repertoire sung with skill and enthusiasm by Cantabile’s 300 singers.


HOLLIE STEWART
613-549-0099
info@cantabilechoirs.ca
www.cantabilechoirs.ca

The Cellar Singers

The Cellar Singers is a 40-voice mixed choir based in Orillia. For over 50 years, the choir has delighted audiences in Simcoe and Muskoka with choral masterpieces grand and intimate. Under the direction of gifted choral specialist Mitchell Pady, the choir presents four main concerts each season. Rehearsals are open to all and are held Wednesday evenings, 7:15pm, at St. James’ Anglican Church, Orillia. Visit us at www.thecellar singers.com; Facebook.com/TheCellarSingers or Twitter/cschoir.

For more information, contact us at info@thecellar singers.com or at 905-515-3356

KATE WARD
905-515-3356
info@thecellar singers.com
www.thecellar singers.com

Choralairs of North York

The Choralairs are a non-profit, charitable 50-member, four-part adult choir who sing a variety of popular songs, Broadway, seasonal tunes and folk songs. We rehearse from September to June on Tuesday evenings at Edithvale Community Centre on Finch Ave West and have performed 8 concerts per season for seniors in the GTA for over 50 years. Directed by our talented team of Peter Ness as conductor and Asher Farber on keyboard, the choir requires no auditions - just a love of singing and the ability to carry a tune! All are welcome at our annual public concert on Sunday, June 2, 2019 at 2-3pm at B’nai Torah Synagogue, 465 Patricia Ave in Toronto.

ELAINE ROSE
905-731-8416
elainemrose@yahoo.ca; choralairs@gmail.com
www.choralairschoir.com

Choraliscamerata

Choraliscamerata is one of Niagara’s premier choral groups, ambitious in its scope and creative in its productions. Now in its 13th season, the 50-person SATB chamber choir performs throughout the Niagara region, working with talented soloists and professional musicians to perform a wide variety of works, from perennial favourites like Handel’s Messiah and Vivaldi’s Gloria, to operatic works like Gilbert and Sullivan’s Trial by Jury. Learn more about Choraliscamerata’s 2019/20 season at www.choraliscamerata.com

JOANNE GEORGE
905-646-9225; 905-934-2415
choraliscamerata@gmail.com
www.choraliscamerata.com
Chorus Hamilton

Chorus Hamilton is a registered charitable arts organization and is one of Hamilton’s finest choral ensembles. Founded in 1968 to participate in the opening of Mohawk College, Fennell Campus, the choir is now a 70-member choral society. The ensemble performs a large variety of music, from chamber music to the greatest large-scale works in the choral repertoire, with orchestral accompaniment and the best Canadian soloists. Auditions are held in September and January and the choir gathers Tuesday evenings at Mohawk College to rehearse. Chorus Hamilton invites interested singers from all sections to come and join us under the leadership of artistic director David Holler and accompanist Erika Reiman. Please visit our website for concert listings and more information.
JOAN STICKWOOD
905-318-9381
chorushamilton@yahoo.ca
www.chorushamilton.ca

Chorus Niagara

Chorus Niagara, the Power of 100, is a passionate group of singers of diverse ages and walks of life. As the Niagara region’s premier auditioned symphonic choir for the past 57 years, Chorus Niagara performs classic choral masterpieces, innovative new modern, and seldom-heard works, providing a showcase for emerging Canadian talent. Chorus Niagara attracts singers of all ages through its Chorus Niagara Children’s Choir (CNCC), Side-by-Side High School Chorale (SXS) and Robert Cooper Choral Scholars program (RCCS). Concerts are performed in the beautiful Partridge Hall in the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre in downtown St. Catharines. View our flash mob with over 52 million views on YouTube.

ROBERT COOPER, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
DIANA MACDOREY, MANAGING DIRECTOR
905-934-5575
cnadmin@becon.org
www.chorusniagara.org

Chorus York

Chorus York is an amateur performance community choir based in Richmond Hill. We perform three to four concerts per year and sing a variety of choral music, from Bach to Broadway. We are diverse in age and culture, but we all share a love of fine choral music. Recent concerts include “Top Hats & Tunes,” “Encore,” a program of Broadway hits, “Romantic Melodies,” a program of love songs for Valentine’s Day, and to come in May, “Classics in the Spring,” a performing arts program. Our choir, consisting of professional members and skilled volunteers, performs a rich treasury of sacred choral music and hymnody at the 10am Sunday liturgy. The choir also performs at other special events, feast days, Evensongs and concerts throughout the year. Rehearsals take place on Thursday evenings from 6:45pm to 8:45pm and offer an opportunity to develop musicianship through vocal instruction, while being part of an open and welcoming community. In addition, we present “Jazz Vespers,” a popular, informal service held bi-monthly from September to June and featuring some of the city’s finest jazz musicians. For more information contact Matthew Otto, director of music.
MATTHEW OTTO
4169205211
motto@chorusyork.ca
www.chorusyork.ca

Christ Church Deer Park

Continuing its long tradition of musical excellence, Christ Church Deer Park boasts an innovative music program. Our choir, consisting of professional members and skilled volunteers, performs a rich treasury of sacred choral music and hymnody at the 10am Sunday liturgy. The choir also performs at other special events, feast days, Evensongs and concerts throughout the year. Rehearsals take place on Thursday evenings from 6:45pm to 8:45pm and offer an opportunity to develop musicianship through vocal instruction, while being part of an open and welcoming community. In addition, we present “Jazz Vespers,” a popular, informal service held bi-monthly from September to June and featuring some of the city’s finest jazz musicians. For more information contact Matthew Otto, director of music.
MATTHEW OTTO
4169205211
motto@christchurchdeerpark.org
www.thereselfspeakere.org

Church of St. Mary Magdalene

Steeped in musical heritage and assisted by a generous acoustic, the Church of St. Mary Magdalene offers a music program strongly rooted in the tradition established by Healey Willan. Every Sunday, at the 11am Solemn Mass, the Gallery Choir sings a mass and motet from the west gallery, while the Ritual Choir sings the Gregorian propers from the east end. Both choirs rehearse on Thursdays. At the 9:30am Sung Mass, the SMM Singers sing a motet and lead congregational singing. Membership is informal: rehearsals are at 9:00am directly before the service; regular attendance is not mandatory. One Sunday per month at 4:30pm, the meditative Solemn Evensong and Benediction is sung, preceded by an organ recital at 4pm.
For information, please contact the director of music, Andrew Adair.
ANDREW ADAIR
416-531-7955

City Choir

Launched in 2010, City Choir is an exciting non-auditioned SATB choir. Our five well-known directors have worked with us since then—Waleed Abdulhamid, John Millard, Patricia O’Callaghan, Greg Oh, and Suba Sankaran.
Open to all who love to sing, we perform music of many styles, as well as original compositions. Based on pay-what-you-can, we meet at 188 Carlton St. on Tuesday nights from September to June. Vocal techniques are taught.
There are two main concerts and two cabaret nights, as well as other events. Solo performances welcome. We have sung at the Tranzac Club, the Drake Underground, the Aga Khan Museum, the Luminato Festival, and in the SING! a Cappella
Festival. We are returning to Luminato and SING! festivals in 2019.

**Cummer Avenue United Church Choir**

Cummer Avenue United Church Choir consists of a group of volunteer singers supported by a number of professional section leaders. The choir provides strong and vibrant musical leadership in worship each Sunday, 12 months of the year. A wide range of musical styles are included in the repertoire, and in addition to full choir anthems, various ensembles and solos are presented by members of the choir. On selected Sundays, the choir presents extra choral music such as traditional carols at Christmas and a cantata at Easter. Rehearsals are held Thursday evenings from early fall to early spring and on Sunday mornings all year. Due to extensive renovations of our church site, we are temporarily worshipping with the congregation of Willowdale/Emmanuel United Church just a few blocks south at 349 Kenneth Ave.

**DaCapo Chamber Choir**

The 24-voice DaCapo Chamber Choir was founded in 1998 in Kitchener-Waterloo under the direction of Leonard Enns. The mission of the choir is to identify, study, rehearse and present outstanding choral chamber works of the past 100 years and to champion music of Canadian and local composers. In November 2018, the choir released its newest CD, NewWorks, with selections received through the first 10 years of its national choral composition competition. The 2019/20 season marks the end of a 3-season exploration of themes related to the global refugee crisis: 17/18 Displacement, 18/19 Resettlement, selected Sundays, the choir presents extra choral music of Canadian and local composers. In November 2018, the choir released its newest CD, NewWorks, with selections received through the first 10 years of its national choral composition competition. The 2019/20 season marks the end of a 3-season exploration of themes related to the global refugee crisis: 17/18 Displacement, 18/19 Resettlement, 19/20 Renewal. Guest artists will include harpist Angela Schwartzkopf (November), mezzo-soprano Jennifer Enns-Modolo (March), and pianist Catherine Robertson (May).

**Duly Noted**

Duly Noted is a Toronto-based a cappella ensemble, singing everything from madrigals to Shawn Mendes. We are currently 8 women strong but have had up to 12 members. One primary mandate is to support charities while sharing our love of singing. To date we have raised over $10,000 for local GTA charities. Find out more about us and when we are performing at www.dulynotedtoronto.com

JENNIFER KIRNER
416-629-7554
dulynotedto@gmail.com
www.dulynotedtoronto.com

**Durham Girls’ Choir**

Girls from across Durham region come together in this active, fun, performing choir. Our Junior and Senior ensembles provide girls aged 7 through 18 an opportunity to sing together, build team spirit and participate in a variety of public performances. Through weekly rehearsals, our members build leadership skills, further their musical education and create lasting friendships. Registration for our 2019/20 season is now open, and young singers of all talent levels are encouraged to join us as we share the joy of music with our Durham Region community. Visit our website to hear us perform, read what alumni say about the choir and see photos from our many events throughout the year. We hope you will join us!

**ECHO WOMEN’S CHOIR**

Celebrating its 28th year, Echo is a 60-voice, non-auditioned community choir open to women from all walks of life. Echo rehearses each Tuesday night at the Church of the Holy Trinity, Toronto (beside the Eaton Centre), performs at city-wide grassroots events, and holds fall and spring concerts. Co-led by Becca Whitla and Alan Gasser, Echo aims to build a strong, varied and vibrant culture and community through song. Repertoire includes music from world-wide village singing traditions and newly-commisioned music. Echo aims to keep membership fees, concert tickets affordable to all. To join Echo, register on our website. Spring concert: “Gracias a la Vida (Thanks to Life): A Celebration of Songs from the Americas, with special guest Amanda Martinez, May 12, 3pm at Holy Trinity.

**Elmer Iseler Singers**

Elmer Iseler Singers is a 20-voice professional chamber choir based in Toronto and founded in 1979. Directed by the acclaimed Lydia Adams, the Singers are known for tonal beauty and interpretive range, and valued for their contributions to masterclasses and workshops with schools and community choirs. Their unique “Get Music! Educational Outreach Initiative” mentors conductors, music educators and students. EIS has 15 recorded CDs featuring Canadian music. EIS with TSO was 2019 Grammy-nominated and JUNO awarded for a collaborative CD. Touring in Canada is a major part of the Elmer Iseler Singers’ activities, offering both concerts and workshops to Canadian audiences. Weekly rehearsals are on Mondays and Tuesdays in preparation for our Toronto Series. Open auditions are held in May.

**The Elora Singers**

With 2019 marking its 39th year, The Elora Singers (TES) has established itself as one of Canada’s leading professional chamber choirs. Under artistic director Mark Vuorinen, the 25-singer ensemble fulfills a rich mandate with its year-round activities. TES presents its own winter concert series serving Elora and surrounding communities. TES is also involved in education programs, community programs and health & wellness programs throughout the year.

Each July TES serves as the resident choir for the annual Elora Festival with an intense performance schedule of solo work, collaborative efforts, and education and outreach programs. TES is JUNO- and Grammy-nominated, with a dozen recordings on the NAXOS label.

**Encore!**

Encore! (formerly the YRDSB Staff Singers) is a non-auditioned, 60-voice SATB community choir based in Aurora. The core of the group has been making music together for 31 years, but new members are always warmly welcomed. Singers hail from Thornhill in the southern part of York Region to Barrie in the north. The choir rehearses Thursday evenings at Dr. G. W. Williams Secondary School in Aurora from September to May. We perform two concerts annually in December and in the spring. Our repertoire includes a wide range of musical styles which appeal to singers and audiences alike. Most concerts include collaborations with instrumentalists. Join us May 5 for “Summer of ’69: Voices of a Generation’ - a tribute to Woodstock!

**Eotbiceko Centennial Choir**

Eotbiceko Centennial Choir (ECC) is an inclusive, community-based SATB choir in its 53rd season. We aspire to enrich the community through vibrant and diverse performances, ranging from choral masterpieces to contemporary compositions and popular music. ECC is a welcoming choir that offers singers a challenging but supportive choral music experience, facilitated by our professional music director, accompanist and vocal section leads.

Our 2019/20 season begins December 7 with Vivaldi’s Gloria. On April 4, 2020, we perform Cherubini’s Requiem Mass in C minor, along with works by Brahms, Vaughan-Williams and others. On June 6,
“Musica Borealis” will highlight diverse vocal music from northern climes. Rehearsals are Tuesday evenings. New singers are always welcome. Open rehearsals are held in early September and January.

CAROLINE CORKUM
416-518-5297
info@etobokecentennialchoir.ca
www.etobokecentennialchoir.ca

\* Exultate Chamber Singers

Exultate Chamber Singers is an auditioned group of 30 skilled singers who enjoy performing a variety of choral repertoire, both a cappella and accompanied, including many works by Canadian composers. Now in its 39th season, the choir is under the direction of artistic director Mark Ramsay and continues its tradition of presenting four concerts per season. In addition, the choir commissions new works, collaborates with guest artists, and supports aspiring young music professionals with singing and conducting opportunities. Rehearsals take place on Tuesdays from 5:45-7:45pm at St. Thomas’s Anglican Church, 383 Huron St. For audition information, please contact exultate@exultate.net.

VIVIAN MOENS
416-971-9229
exultate@exultate.net
www.exultate.net

\* Fanshawe Chorus London

Fanshawe Chorus London has built a world-class reputation since its inception at Fanshawe College in 1969 by performing the finest in classical choral-orchestral music. As an elite auditioned community choir conducted by artistic director David Holler, the chorus provides college-level training for adult singers and gives emerging vocal soloists the opportunity to perform professionally with orchestra. The chorus has won the prestigious Ontario Lieutenant-Governor’s Award twice and was selected to sing at Ottawa’s National Arts Centre Canada Day celebrations during the 2010 visit of HRM Queen Elizabeth II. Winner of London’s Classical Vocal Group of the Year in 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2017, Fanshawe Chorus London offers talented adult singers an inclusive welcoming community committed to “Making Hearts Sing.”

APRIL VOTH
519-433-9650
generalmanager@choruslondon.com
www.choruslondon.com

\* Georgetown Choral Society

GCS, with some 80 amateur singers, has been delighting audiences since its formation in 1971. Our rehearsal and performance home is the Christian Reformed Church in Georgetown, Ontario. Our choral director, Christopher Dawes, is a freelance professional musician and is among Canada’s leading church musicians, concert organists and choral accompanists. He performs across a wide spectrum of the Toronto music scene and occupies a range of musical leadership positions. GCS is a registered charity performing a variety of musical genres, including classical, pop and folk, and from sacred to secular, at a level normally associated with professional groups. It has performed at Toronto’s Roy Thomson Hall, the Ford Centre in North York and the Mississauga Living Arts Centre. It has also performed in Holland and Ireland.

LAURENT THIBAULT
905-877-7795
thibault@coyeco.ca
www.georgetownchoral.ca

\* The Georgian Bay Children’s Choir

Now in its 32nd season, the Georgian Bay Child¬ren’s Choir welcomes singers ages 5 through 20 from the Southern Georgian Bay Region of Ontario into its multi level choral music program. It has performed at Toronto’s Roy Thomson Hall, the Ford Centre in North York and the Mississauga Living Arts Centre. It has also performed in Holland and Ireland.

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LAURENT THIBAULT
905-877-7795
thibault@coyeco.ca
www.georgetownchoral.ca

\* Harbourfront Chorus

Did you know that Choral singing improves health and happiness? You are invited to join Harbourfront Chorus, a non-auditioned community choir. We perform a wide range of music that spans from early Renaissance music to contemporary popular songs. Rehearsals run Tuesdays from 7:45pm to 9:15pm at the Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre, located at the south-east corner of Queens Quay W. and Bathurst St. Our season runs September through May. The 2019/20 season begins Tuesday, September 10.

CATHERINE NETHERSOLSE
416-458-2530
harbourfrontchorus@gmail.com
www.facebook.com/harbourfrontchorus

\* Harbourtown Sound

An award-winning, volunteer-based auditioned men’s chorus, offering a wide range of a cappella music - barbershop, inspirational, jazz, pop, soft rock - all designed to both bring back fond memories and to create memorable new ones.

Representing the Hamilton chapter of the Ontario District of the Barbershop Harmony Society, we have been entertaining at home and abroad since 2003. As a not-for-profit community group, we promote a love of singing and an appreciation for choral music.

Under the direction of Jordan Travis, we are always
eager to support our community by volunteering to perform at district events as well as presenting our own concerts at the Burlington Performing Arts Centre several times a year. Learn more about our professional a cappella chorus of amateur singers on our website.

**SANDY BELL**
519-822-6153
president@harbourtownsound.ca
www.harbourtownsound.ca

### The Harmony Singers
Under conductor Harvey Patterson, this dynamic 35-voice women's chorus memorizes, stages and performs a sparkling repertoire of pop, show, folk, jazz and light classical music. Our accompanist is the renowned pianist Bruce Harvey. The group proudly presents “A Song to Remember” on May 26 in Humber Valley United Church. Special guest is vocalist Asia Rosa, winner of the 2019 scholarship.

**RON CHEUNG**
416-519-0528
rkmcheung@yahoo.ca
www.healeywillansingers.com

### Hillcrest Village Choir
Since 2003, this SATB teaching choir has enabled amateur singers to improve their singing technique and performance skills in full choir, small group and solo settings. In an open and engaging atmosphere, members enjoy an eclectic repertoire that evolves with the interests of the membership. The director/conductor, Ben D’Cunha, trains members in vocal technique, sight-reading, theory and improvisation, and writes the arrangements for the choir. Rehearsals are held September to June on Tuesdays, 7pm to 9pm, with sectionals on Mondays, 7pm to 9pm.

**HARVEY PATTERSON**
416-239-5821
thecmonysingers@ca.inter.net
www.harmonysingers.ca

### The Healey Willan Singers
The Healey Willan Singers was originally formed as a youth choir to celebrate Dr. Willan’s 125th anniversary in 2003. Since 2007, the choir has reinvented itself into a women's ensemble and has become one of the finest women’s ensembles in the city. Rehearsals run from September to April on Saturday mornings from 10:15am to 12:30pm. This coming season, the choir will present our annual Christmas concert in December and at the end of April with “Women and Songs V,” our biennial celebration of women's composers and poets. The choir performs repertoire from Gregorian chants to contemporary new works, especially music by women and Canadian composers. Auditions are held throughout the year. Rehearsals and concerts are held at the Church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, 151 Glenlake Avenue in Toronto’s west end.

**PETER SULLIVAN**
705-739-7281
petersullivan71@gmail.com
www.kingedwardchoir.ca

### Jubilate Singers
The Jubilate Singers is a mixed-voice community choir of about 30–35 voices with both a non-auditioned main choir and an auditioned chamber choir. We sing choral music from the Renaissance to the present, in original languages and reflecting the cultural diversity of Toronto. We perform three concerts a year, plus community concerts at seniors’ residences and community centres. Our 2019/20 season features Navidad Nuestra by Ariel Ramirez in an all-Latin American program, a concert themed “Seas,” and a concert “Of Love and Nature.” We rehearse Tuesday nights near Yonge and Lawrence. Interested singers are encouraged to sit in on a rehearsal; auditions for the chamber choir are available. A welcoming, friendly experience, and music you won’t hear anywhere else.

**PAULINE MCKENZIE**
416-223-7690
paulinemckenzie@rogers.com
www.jubilatesingers.ca

### King Edward Choir
Founded in 1952 by Jean Dobson, Barrie’s King Edward Choir began as a ladies’ choir, named after the school in which they practised. Today it is a group of 50 dedicated musicians encompassing all voices, under the leadership of artistic director, Oliver Balaburski. We strive to present a repertoire that is broad and engaging to both chorister and audience; recent years have seen performances of works by Britten, Mozart, Bernstein, Freedman, Rutter, Handel and Dvorák, with offerings of Renaissance motets, Spirituals, folk songs and show tunes. King Edward Choir frequently collaborates with other artists and groups, and enjoys community sing-outs. Rehearsals for our three annual performances take place Monday nights. Open auditions occur each September, but new members are welcome any time!

**PETER SULLIVAN**
705-739-7281
petersullivan71@gmail.com
www.kingedwardchoir.ca

### Hart House Chorus
The Hart House Chorus is a 50-voice choir auditioned from musically talented students, faculty, and alumni of the University of Toronto. Since its inception in 1972, as a reincarnation of the long-standing men’s Glee Club, the Chorus has maintained a reputation for the highest standard of performance locally, nationally, and abroad. In 1993 the Chorus was a finalist in the Large Choir category of the CBC Radio Competition for Amateur Choirs, and in 2002 it was featured in the University of Toronto’s first reading of Charles Dickens’ “A Christmas Carol.” In addition to other engagements, the Chorus performs twice annually in the Great Hall at Hart House. The aim of the Hart House Chorus is to provide talented musicians with the opportunity to pursue excellence in music in a friendly, focused environment.

**AMY CHEN**
647-859-9631
hhchorus@gmail.com
www.hhchorus.wissite.ca/harthousechorus

### Islington United Church Choirs
The extensive and active music program at Islington, under the direction of Jason Locke and assisted by many talented and committed musicians including two music associates, includes the Junior (grades 1-6), Youth (grades 7-12), and Senior choirs, along with two handbell choirs, chimes, string and brass ensembles. Supported by a magnificent Schoenstein organ and grand piano, music rings through the Modern Gothic sanctuary for two morning services each Sunday and numerous special services, events and concerts. The accomplished Senior choir, with 25-30 talented singers enriched by section leaders, is attentive to musical detail and expressiveness to enhance worship, singing Renaissance to the 21st century, a cappella to orchestral accompaniment, spirituals to Bach cantatas.

**JASON LOCKE, MINISTER OF MUSIC**
416-239-1131 x226
jason@islingtonunited.org
www.islingtonunited.org

### Incontra Vocal Ensemble
Incontra Vocal Ensemble is a choral-arts collective of like minded conductors, composers, vocal pedagogues, professional-level singers, and emerging artists. Entering its sixth season, Incontra (Latin for “encounter”) is transforming itself to now offer professional development opportunities for its members, showcasing their artistry as singers, conductors and composers through high-level musical collaborations. Pushing the boundaries of traditional, Western choral music, Incontra is committed to innovative and diverse choral repertoire from across the globe; alongside authentic interpretation and exceptional vocalism. Through its programs and performances, Incontra offers a profoundly unique choral ‘encounter’ for its members and audiences.

**MATTHEW OTTO**
647-241-3623
matthew.otto@gmail.com
www.incontravocalesensemble.com

### Hillcrest Village Choir
Incontra Vocal Ensemble and Hillcrest Village Choirs are both organizations with the interests of the membership. The director/conductor, Ben D’Cunha, trains members in vocal technique, sight-reading, theory and improvisation, and writes the arrangements for the choir. Rehearsals are held September to June on Tuesdays, 7pm to 9pm, with sectionals on Mondays, 7pm to 9pm. Concerts: January 25 and June 20, 2020.

**BEN D’CUNHA**
647-688-7765
hillcrestvillagechoir@gmail.com

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**JASON LOCKE, MINISTER OF MUSIC**
416-239-1131 x226
jason@islingtonunited.org
www.islingtonunited.org

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**PAULINE MCKENZIE**
416-223-7690
paulinemckenzie@rogers.com
www.jubilatesingers.ca

### King Edward Choir
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**PETER SULLIVAN**
705-739-7281
petersullivan71@gmail.com
www.kingedwardchoir.ca

### The Harmony Singers
Under conductor Harvey Patterson, this dynamic 35-voice women’s chorus memorizes, stages and performs a sparkling repertoire of pop, show, folk, jazz and light classical music. Our accompanist is the renowned pianist Bruce Harvey. The group proudly presents “A Song to Remember” on May 26 in Humber Valley United Church. Special guest is vocalist Asia Rosa, winner of the 2019 scholarship.

**RON CHEUNG**
416-519-0528
rkmcheung@yahoo.ca
www.healeywillansingers.com

### Hillcrest Village Choir
Since 2003, this SATB teaching choir has enabled amateur singers to improve their singing technique and performance skills in full choir, small group and solo settings. In an open and engaging atmosphere, members enjoy an eclectic repertoire that evolves with the interests of the membership. The director/conductor, Ben D’Cunha, trains members in vocal technique, sight-reading, theory and improvisation, and writes the arrangements for the choir. Rehearsals are held September to June on Tuesdays, 7pm to 9pm, with sectionals on Mondays, 7pm to 9pm. Concerts: January 25 and June 20, 2020.

**HARVEY PATTERSON**
416-239-5821
thecmonysingers@ca.inter.net
www.harmonysingers.ca

### The Healey Willan Singers
The Healey Willan Singers was originally formed as a youth choir to celebrate Dr. Willan’s 125th anniversary in 2005. Since 2007, the choir has reinvented itself into a women's ensemble and has become one of the finest women's ensembles in the city. Rehearsals run from September to April on Saturday mornings from 10:15am to 12:30pm. This coming season, the
Kingsway Children’s Choir & Drum Ensemble/Kingsway Chamber Singers

Discover the joy of choral singing at the Kingsway Conservatory of Music! Venturing outside the bounds of traditional choir training, the Kingsway Children’s Choir & Drum Ensemble is a unique, liberating choral experience for children aged 7 and up. Directed by a professional music educator with extensive choral conducting experience, the choir explores vast repertoire spanning world music, folk songs and classic choral works. Weekly rehearsals are an invigorating musical work-out encompassing voice and body warm-ups, vocal technique, singing skills and drum circle. For more experienced singers, the Kingsway Chamber Singers offers an enriched, multi-part choral experience. Throughout a 30-week season, both choirs take their music to a variety of stages, including festivals, recitals, and corporate and community events.

SHARON OF BURLACOFF
416-234-0121
sharokcm@bellnet.ca
www.kingswayconservatory.ca

Lawrence Park Community Church Choir

LPCCC sings at weekly Sunday worship services, September to June, and rehearses Thursday evenings. Consisting of 25 members, including professional section leaders, the choir also presents special seasonal musical offerings. John Rutter’s Requiem was performed on April 19. On May 10, our “Fridays@8” Concert Series presents Missa Gaia (Earth Mass) by the Paul Winter Consort with the LPCCC, instrumental ensemble and special guests, members of Vox Youth Choir.

The choir has commissioned anthems from composers including Bob Chilcott, Ruth Watson Henderson and Paul Halley and has recorded several CDs. The Lawrence Park Handbell Ringers rehearse Tuesday afternoons from September to May and are directed by Mark Toews.

MARK TOEWS
416-489-1551 x28; 416-515-8326
mark@lawrenceparkchurch.ca
www.lawrenceparkchurch.ca

Lirit Women’s Chamber Choir

Founded by soprano and conductor, Renée Bouthot, Lirit Women’s Chamber Choir is a Toronto-based ensemble and multi-generational, member-managed adult choral organization under professional leadership, dedicated to engaging audiences by providing a liberating choral experience for the contemporary - both for accompanied and unaccompanied voices.

MELANIE VAN DEN BORRE
519-914-5769
marketing@londonpromusica.ca
www.londonpromusica.ca

London Pro Musica Choir

London Pro Musica is an auditioned, mixed-voice choir based in London, Ontario, Canada. LPMC is an inclusive and multi-generational, member-managed adult choral organization under professional leadership, dedicated to engaging audiences by providing a high degree of musicianship to the community with a high degree of musicianship to the community. We perform an extensive range of classical music - from the medieval to the contemporary - both for accompanied and unaccompanied voices.

STEVE WINFIELD
705-722-0271
steve.winfield@sympatico.ca
www.masterworksofoakville.ca
www.mcschorus.ca

Lyrica Chamber Choir of Barrie

Founded in 2000 by the late Natalyia Gurin and directed since 2005 by Steve Winfield, Lyrica Chamber Choir of Barrie strives to present eclectic and evocative programs of excellent choral chamber music. The 40 singers of Lyrica demonstrate a strong desire to present artistically varied choral programs with a high degree of musicianship to the community of Barrie and surrounding area. Recent highlights include performances of Marc-Antoine Charpentier’s Messe de Minuit pour Noël, Benjnim Britten’s Ceremony of Carols, Ola Gjeilo’s Dark Night of the Soul and Josef Rheinberger’s Missa in G “St. Crucis” Op. 151. Professional soloists and instrumentalists regularly join Lyrica for performances. Our accompanist, Brent Mayhew, enhances the choir’s performances.

SANDY
905-278-7059
info@mcschorus.ca
www.mcschorus.ca

MCS Chorus

MCS Chorus, a chamber choir of 35 auditioned voices, is Mississauga’s only adult choral organization committed to the choral classical repertoire. Masterworks is an extraordinary community group - with a chorus of over 100 voices and a commitment to performing the most challenging choral works. Masterworks exists with the enthusiasm of its choristers and orchestra players, which is the hallmark of its performances.

CHARLES DEMUYNCK
905-399-9732
info@masterworksofoakville.ca
www.masterworksofoakville.ca

Masterworks of Oakville Chorus & Orchestra

We are a community-based group, dedicated to performing the great works of the Western Classical tradition, particularly sacred works for choir and orchestra. We have a strong commitment to artistic excellence and are proud to preserve and continue a great musical tradition. Masterworks is an extraordinary community group – with a chorus of over 100 voices and a commitment to performing the most challenging choral works. Masterworks exists with the enthusiasm of its choristers and orchestra players, which is the hallmark of its performances.

SANDY
905-278-7059
info@mcschorus.ca
www.mcschorus.ca
**The Nathaniel Dett Chorale**

The Nathaniel Dett Chorale is a 21-voice SATB professional choir based in Toronto, dedicated to performing Afrocentric music of all genres, including classical, spiritual, gospel, jazz, folk and blues. Founded by artistic director Dr. Brainerd Byliden-Taylor in 1998, the NDC is Canada’s premier performer of Afrocentric composers and a touchstone for the education of audiences and communities regarding the full spectrum of Afrocentric choral music. The mission of the NDC is to build bridges of understanding, appreciation and acceptance between communities of people through the medium of music. The Chorale has a three-concert season in Toronto, tours extensively each season and has released several CDs and DVDs. The Nathaniel Dett Chorale is artist-in-residence at the Harriet Tubman Institute for Research.

**D. BRAINERD BLYDEN-TAYLOR**
416-712-7740
info@nathanieldetchorale.org
www.nathanieldetchorale.org

**Oakville Choir for Children & Youth**

For 25 years, Oakville Choir has provided exceptional music education and leadership training to young people. We believe that providing a fun, safe and educational space for youth to express themselves encourages them to find their voice and use it as a force for good in this world. Currently, we offer a collaborative and comprehensive choral music education program to nearly 300 young people, exploring a wide range of repertoire, diverse musical programming, and high standards of performance. We are proud of the choral collaborations that we have

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**The Metropolitan United Church Choirs**

The auditioned 32-member Metropolitan United Church Choir has eight lead singers, rehearses Thursday evenings and sings on Sunday mornings and special occasions, September through June. Repertoire is Medieval through 21st-century. Singers must have sight-singing ability. A waiting list exists; contact our director in late spring or early fall to join. The Festival Choir adds 10 to 15 singers to the core choir and rehearses Sunday afternoons for six weeks prior to Good Friday. Past concerts have featured Bach, Mozart, Fauré, Durufle, Gilles and others. The Metropolitan Sparklers (ages 4 to 6), Choristers (7 to 11), Great Heart Ensemble (vocal and instrumental, ages 12 and up) and Metropolitan Handbells are groups open to all.

**JENNY JOHNSTON**
416-986-5537
info@metunited.org
www.metunited.org

**Mississauga Festival Choir**

With over 150 singers, Mississauga Festival Choir is the largest and most spirited community choir in our city. Our mission is to enrich lives through music by way of performance, education and outreach, while valuing excellence in choral music. Under the leadership of David Ambrose, MFC also host three subsidiary choirs: Mississauga Festival Chamber Choir, an auditioned group which explores intimate and challenging works; Resonance, a non-auditioned choir for youth and young adults aged 15-28 directed by Bob Anderson (resonance.mfchoir.com), and Raising Voices - an intergenerational choir of music lovers to provide the therapeutic value of music to people with Alzheimer's and dementia and their caregivers.

**JENNY JOHNSTON**
416-986-5537
info@mississaquafestivalchoir.com
www.mfchoir.com

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**Mississauga Festival Chamber Choir**

Mississauga Festival Chamber Choir (MFCC) was formed in 2008 as a smaller branch of the large ensemble, Mississauga Festival Choir (MFC). This 26-voice, auditioned choir delights audiences with intimate and challenging works of music, their most recent being The Wound in the Water by Kim Andre Arnesen with string orchestra. MFCC performs an annual concert, as well as various performances throughout the season, serving as an ambassador for MFC. They reach out to the community in a variety of venues from the Port Credit Library to Hammerson Hall. All experienced choral singers are now welcome to audition, as it is no longer a requirement to sing with MFC to be part of Mississauga Festival Chamber Choir.

**JENNY JOHNSTON**
416-986-5537
choiradmin@mfchoir.com
www.mfchoir.com

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**Mississauga Community Choir**


**DEANNA DI LELLO**
416-924-6211 x250
music@mnjcc.org
www.mnjcc.org

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**Mississauga Specialty Choirs**

8 weeks devoted to different genres: Broadway (fall), pop (winter), and folk (spring). Enjoy diverse repertoire, vocal technique, and train your ear to harmony. Leave each rehearsal with a song in your heart. No experience or audition required. Join any or all. Meets Thursday evenings, 7:00-8:30pm.

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**Oakville House Choir Society**

Founded in 1984, the 80-member Oakville House Choir specializes in the large-scale masterpieces of the choral repertoire. This is one of the few Toronto choirs where amateur singers perform regularly with a professional orchestra (the Toronto Sinfonietta). The choir has a diverse membership of Ryerson University students, alumni, faculty and staff, as well as singers from outside the university; it is led by its founding music director, Matthew Jaskiewicz. Rehearsals begin in early September and take place on Monday evenings on the Ryerson campus. We give our main concerts at the end of November and April, often at Calvin Presbyterian Church. For more details, please visit our website. Experienced choristers are invited to contact us by email for information about openings.

**MATTHEW JASKIEWICZ**
416-578-2546
oakhamhousechoir1@gmail.com
www.oakhamchoir.ca
created with other arts and community organizations, both locally and internationally through our touring program. We continue to focus on empowering all youth to use their voice to lead, connect, learn, and build confidence in our community.

KATHERINE HAMILTON
905-337-7104
info@oakvillechildrenschoir.org
www.oakvillechoir.org

• Oasis Vocal Jazz

Oasis Vocal Jazz, Toronto’s longest-running close harmony ensemble, has been making a unique contribution to the city’s artistic life since 1985. Influenced by pioneers Lambert, Hendricks and Ross and inspired by modern-day masters of the genre such as New York Voices, Take 6 and Toronto’s own Cadence, we enjoy sharing our love of vocal jazz with a wide range of audiences. Whether performing in community or corporate events and charitable fundraisers, or putting on our own concerts backed by some of the city’s top jazz instrumentalists, we have always valued both the pursuit of musical excellence and the joy of making music with each other. We are always looking for new voices to add to our blend. For more information, contact us. Why not become a fan of our Facebook page?

ALAN GOTLIB
416-500-7104
info@oasisvocaljazz.com
www.oasisvocaljazz.com

• Oriana Women’s Choir

Oriana Women’s Choir is an auditioned ensemble of 30-40 amateur female singers who perform at a high artistic standard. With artistic director Mitchell Pady, Oriana explores the possibilities in choral music for the female voice, collaborating with diverse artists to push the boundaries of typical expectations for women’s choirs. We foster the creation of Canadian choral music, regularly commissioning works from Canadian composers for women’s voices. In rehearsal we are focused but friendly, and maintain an inclusive, respectful and supportive environment. Oriana presents a three-concert series every year, and tours regularly. We welcome potential new singers to attend a rehearsal prior to scheduling an audition. Rehearsals are on Tuesdays, 7:30-10pm in the Sheppard-Yonge corridor.

CHOIR MANAGER
416-346-7918
info@orianachoir.com
www.orianachoir.com

• Pax Christi Chorale

Pax Christi Chorale

Pax Christi Chorale is a welcoming group of women committed to excellence in performing culturally diverse and musically sophisticated repertoire spanning the Renaissance to the 21st-century. The choir delivers stirring performances with great polish and total conviction.

Under the leadership of artistic director David Bowser, the award-winning choir aspires to build on its strengths and accomplishments to achieve new levels of performance and audience engagement. Collaborations with outstanding guest artists and partners give audiences and performers a deep appreciation for choral masterworks and new Canadian music.

The Pax Christi Chamber Choir placed first in its category in Choral Canada’s 2017 national competition for amateur choirs. We champion great choral music among a diverse community. We have an inclusive philosophy and welcome audience members, choristers, from all backgrounds and walks of life.

HELEN NESTOR
647-345-7743
info@paxchristichorale.org
www.paxchristichorale.org

• Penthelia Singers

Penthelia Singers

Penthelia Singers has earned a reputation for presenting high quality, innovative concerts of choral repertoire in a multitude of styles and languages. A vibrant ensemble of women, we are committed to excellence in performing culturally diverse and musically sophisticated repertoire spanning the Renaissance to the 21st-century. The choir seeks opportunities to collaborate with special guest artists such as Suba Sankaran (world music), Raigeele Alorut (Inuit throat singing) and Steve Mancuso (Brazilian capoeira) to workshop different styles of music, as well as work with many talented instrumentalists who support our performances. Penthelia Singers is a welcoming group of women committed to high standards of music-making, diversity, community outreach and enjoyment through the learning process.

ALICE MALACH
416-579-7464
alice_malach@hotmail.com
www.penthelia.com

• Orpheus Choir of Toronto

Orpheus’ vision is to celebrate the transformational power of choral music as an agent of social change and a passionate medium of artistic expression. The 65-voice choir, under artistic director Robert Cooper, champions the new and unusual in choral performance, commissioning and introducing new works and performing overlooked masterpieces. Working frequently with living composers and singing a wide range of repertoire styles in concerts with high production values, Orpheus has introduced audiences to many fascinating and accessible works from the current generation of leading composers. Orpheus supports young emerging vocal talent through its highly respected Sidgwick Scholars Program and Vocal Apprentice Program for high school singers. We welcome enthusiastic singers for an “expect something different” experience.

LISA GRIFFITHS, MANAGING DIRECTOR
416-530-4428
info@orpheuschoirtoronto.com
www.orpheuschoirtoronto.com

• Peterborough Singers

Peterborough Singers

The Peterborough Singers was founded in 1993 under the energetic and creative leadership of founder and music director Sydney Birrell. We are an auditioned 100-voice choir of adults and youth which attracts members and audience from Peterborough, the Kawarthas, Northumberland and locations along the lakeshore. We generally perform four concerts per year: a Yuletide concert, Handel’s Messiah, an oratorio, and one concert dedicated to music outside the box of regular classical programming. Rehearsals are held Wednesday evenings from September to the beginning of May at Murray Street Baptist Church in Peterborough. Auditions take place in May and September.

PEG MCCracken, BUSINESS MANAGER
705-745-1820
singers@peterboroughsingers.com
www.peterboroughsingers.com
Resonance

Founded in 2016, Resonance is the newest member to the Mississauga Festival Choir family directed by award-winning conductor, Bob Anderson. Resonance is a non-auditioned choir for youth and young adults ages 15 to 28. Each season they have performed their own concert, as well as collaborating in concerts with several choirs and ensembles around the Greater Toronto Area. Their most recent performances were with the Toronto Symphony, the Mississauga Symphony, A Few Good Men, and the Elmer Isler Singers. For information visit their website.

JENNY JOHNSTON
416-986-5537
choiradmin@mfchoir.com
www.resonance.mfchoir.com

Schola Magdalena

Schola Magdalena is a six-voice ensemble singing medieval polyphony, chant, and new music for women’s voices. Ensemble-in-residence at the Church of St. Mary Magdalene, Toronto, we have recorded two CDs (available on iTunes) and have toured from Chicago to Chicoutimi, from Waterloo to Waupoos. We perform one or two afternoon concerts per month at Toronto seniors’ residences, where we are always much appreciated. If you love to sing and are looking for a happy, relaxed choir that is still serious about music, you are warmly invited to drop in to any Wednesday rehearsal or to contact us (by email, preferably) for more information.

CATHY
647-202-1800
societyofingers@gmail.com
www.societyofingers.ca

Serenata Singers

Serenata Singers is a 60-voice, four-part community seniors’ choir. This fall we begin our 44th year, under the guidance of our accomplished choral director, Ms. Leanne Piller. Serenata’s repertoire covers a wide range of music, including classical, show tunes, pop, folk and Canadiana. Rehearsals are held on Wednesday mornings from September to May at Wilmar Heights Centre, 963 Pharmacy Ave., Scarborough. During the year, we sing at seniors’ residences and the season crescendos with two concerts held in the spring. The choir welcomes new members in every vocal range. An informal, non-threatening voice screening process is performed by our choral director to properly place voices and maintain our performance standards.

LOIS
loiebruce@gmail.com

Shevchenko Choir

The Shevchenko Choir is an integral part of the Shevchenko Musical Ensemble with the Toronto Mandolin Orchestra. Although its roots lie in the Ukrainian community, through more than our 65-year history, we have evolved into a multicultural choir whose repertoire reflects the diversity of our society, including folk songs, classical and original works. Currently, the choir presents its own choral concert each year; performs 2-3 times at Seniors Residences; and appears with the Toronto Mandolin Orchestra, including instrumental and vocal soloists, as part of the full Ensemble. A non-audition choir, its rehearsals are held Sunday mornings (10:00-12:30am) at Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codess Ave.

Our highly talented conductor, Alexander Veprinskyy, blends the choir and orchestra into a unique musical ensemble.

ALEXANDER VEPRINSKY
905-763-7516
veprinskyy9@hotmail.com
shevchenkomusic.com

Society of Singers

The Society of Singers is a non-auditioned SATB choir that rehearses Wednesdays from 1-3pm at Blythwood Road Church (80 Blythwood Rd.). Under the direction of Peter Ness, we sing a wide repertoire of music ranging from classical and gospel hymns to traditional ballads to show tunes to swing numbers. We perform one or two afternoon concerts per month at Toronto seniors’ residences, where we are always much appreciated. If you love to sing and are looking for a happy, relaxed choir that is still serious about music, you are warmly invited to drop in to any Wednesday rehearsal or to contact us (by email, preferably) for more information.

CATHY
647-202-1800
societyofingers@gmail.com
www.societyofingers.ca

SoundCrowd

SoundCrowd, Toronto’s first large-scale a cappella ensemble, made its concert debut alongside former Barenaked Ladies frontman Steven Page on Danforth Music Hall in November of 2016. Under the direction of founder and artistic director Scott Pietrangelo, they have since performed at notable public venues around the GTA (Princess of Wales Theatre, The Opera House, Jane Mallett Theatre, Richmond Hill Centre for the Arts), hosted sold-out concerts, created viral YouTube videos, performed at Carnegie Hall with choirs from around the world led by Deke Sharon (Pitch Perfect, The Sing Off), and have shared the stage with such notable artists as DCappella, Cadence, Lorraine Segata, Countermeasure, Retrocity and cast members from the original Toronto production of “Les Miserables”.

SCOTT PIETRANGELO
647-970-1397
scottpietrangelo@gmail.com
www.soundcrowd.ca

Spiritus Ensemble

Spiritus Ensemble is a semi-professional choral-instrumental ensemble of 18 voices plus an orchestra of varying size that performs mainly the liturgical music of J.S. Bach and other liturgically-conceived music. We perform four or five times a season in Kitchener-Waterloo, sometimes in concert and sometimes in a Bach Vespers format. Rehearsals take place on the two or three Saturday mornings preceding each performance. Performances are on Sundays at 4pm. The principal works for the 2019/20 season will be Bach’s Cantatas 76, 116, the St John Passion and Handel’s Messiah.

KENNETH HULL
519-579-8335
krhull@uwwaterloo.ca
www.spiritusensemble.com

St. Clement’s Eglinton

The thriving, growing and inclusive church of St. Clement’s, Yonge/Eglinton is recruiting new members for its three choirs. Our robed choir of 22 sings at our 11am service and rehearses on Thursday evenings. This choir is led by six professional singers and explores the treasures of the Anglican choral repertoire across six centuries of music. We have sung in English, Latin, German, Norwegian, Welsh and Russian and recent performances have included double-choir motets by Tomkins and a number of pieces specially commissioned by St. Clement’s, or written for us. We work hard but have a lot of fun. The standard is exacting but we don’t audition – we’d prefer you to give us a try and see how we find each other! St. Clement’s also has a pick-up choir at its 9am service and a Youth Choir that rehearses on Thursday afternoons.

DANIEL WEBB
416-483-6664
dwebb@stclements-church.org
www.stclements-church.org

St. James Cathedral Parish Choir

If you enjoy singing a wide range of motets that span five centuries - from the sublime offerings of Byrd, Palestrina, and Tallis to the composers of today via Healey Willan, John Rutter, Saint-Saëns, and Charles Gound - there is no better remedy for your craving than the exhilarating membership of a cathedral choir of like-minded volunteers with an appetite for musical challenges and artistic companionship. This social group of singers rehearses each Thursday from 7 to 8pm, and comprises sopranos, altos, tenors, and basses. Director of music Robert Bussakiewicz welcomes enquiries from those who might like to join the ranks, or those who simply want to give singing a try in a relaxed rehearsal setting. The choir sings at the 9am Cathedral Eucharist each week. We warmly welcome all genders and ages.

JESSIE-ANN BAINES
416-364-7865
music@stjamescathedral.ca
www.stjamescathedral.ca/music

St. James Town Children’s Choir

The St. James Town Children’s Choir, founded in 2007, welcomes children from grades 3 to 8 from St. James Town and surrounding neighborhoods. The choir’s artistic directors over the years have many years working with children’s choirs, many of them music specialists from the RCM and Toronto District...
School Board. Over the years, the choir has sung with professional choirs, at sports events, in long-term care facilities, in schools and community events, and has collaborated with professional musicians (e.g. Ensemble Vivant, Suba Sankaran). The repertoire is secular, diverse, inclusive, fun and musically enriching. Music literacy and performance opportunities are a priority.

Choirs are welcomed for September 2019. Information is available on our website and questions may be directed to ed.rotm@gmail.com, or 416-421-8518.

VIRGINIA EVOY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
416-421-8518
ed.rotm@gmail.com
www.reachingoutthroughmusic.org

St. Michael’s Choir School

St. Michael’s Choir School was founded in 1937, with the purpose of providing sacred music for services at St. Michael’s Cathedral Basilica. St. Michael’s Choir School is an all-boys school from grades 3 through 12 located in downtown Toronto. Comprised of between 250-300 students, St. Michael’s Choir School is a centre for musical and academic excellence. It is one of only six choir schools in the world affiliated with the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music in Rome. Each student attending the Choir School is accepted on the basis of a vocal audition and sings in at least one of the school’s choirs. Each St. Michael’s Choir School student is trained in music theory, vocal and instrumental music. In addition to weekly Masses and numerous annual concerts, SMCS choirs tour regularly and perform at various local events.

WANDA THORNE
416-397-6367
thorne@smcs.on.ca
www.smcs.on.ca

St. Olave’s Anglican Church Choir

The Choir at St. Olave’s Anglican Church sings music for Communion, Morning Prayer, and Evensong services in the English choral tradition (Berkeley, Byrd, Elgar, Howells, Leighton, Stanford, Willian). While our focus is on British and Canadian composers, we also sing motets by Palestrina and Victoria, and choral music from the 18th to 21st century. Rehearsals are on Thursdays, 7:30-9pm and Sundays at 9:30am for the 10:30am service. Evensongs are sung by our Choir or visiting Choirs approximately once a month. We are an auditioned Choir made up of volunteers and paid leads, and have a passion for what we do.

JOHN STEPHENSON, DIRECTOR OF MUSIC
416-768-5686
music@stolaves.ca
www.stolaves.ca

Tafelmusik Chamber Choir

The Tafelmusik Chamber Choir, specializing in baroque and classical performance practice, was formed in 1981 to complement the Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra. Under the direction of Ivars Taurins, the Chamber Choir has become one of the most respected in the world, and was nominated for a 2013 JUNO Award. Tafelmusik’s annual performances of Messiah and “Sing-Alongs” have become an established part of Toronto’s holiday tradition.

TAFELMUSIK
416-964-9562
info@tafelmusik.org
www.tafelmusik.org

Tempus Choral Society

Tempus Choral Society is a very welcoming, 100-voice SATB un-auditioned community choir based in Oakville, led by director Brian Turnbull. Our repertoire encompasses contemporary, Broadway, Great American Songbook, gospel, classical and jazz. This year, we celebrate our 20th anniversary. We love to travel and to reach out to our community. Tempus has sung Handel’s Messiah at Lincoln Center, performed Vaughan Williams’ Dona Nobis Pacem at Carnegie Hall, as part of an international choir of auditioned singers. In 2015, Tempus4Us (our 60-voice children’s choir) and Tempus Jazz Choir were formed, with help from an Ontario Trillium Foundation grant. After our 2018 European singing tour, we are headed to the Baltics in 2020. New members are heartily welcomed in September and January: please visit our website.

KATHY DIXON, MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR
416-200-1731
members@tempuschoralsociety.com
www.tempuschoralsociety.com

That Choir

That Choir is one of Toronto’s most exciting a cappella ensembles, combining high-calibre performance with storytelling through choral music. Founded in 2008 by artistic director Craig Pike, That Choir now draws together close to twenty auditioned singers with diverse backgrounds in culture, work and study. Recent appearances include the “City Carol Sing” at Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, sharing the stage with Sir Christopher Plummer and Louise Pitre as a featured performer at the Shakespeare Globe Centre of Canada’s 25th Anniversary Gala at Casa Loma, featured performances in Barrie and Alliston, Ontario, and feature choir with international touring concerts: “Game of Thrones Live Concert Experience”, “Hans Zimmer Live on Tour 2017” (both at the Air Canada Centre), and “The Legend of Zelda” at the Sony Centre.

CRAIG PIKE
416-419-1756
info@thatchoir.com
www.thatchoir.com

Toronto Beach Chorale

Toronto Beach Chorale (artistic director, Mervin W. Fick) is an auditioned SATB choir of up to 65 voices. Singers share a passion for great classical choral music, a strong commitment to sharing the gift of music, and engaging their community in quality musical experiences. TBC invites professional musicians, soloists, actors and arts organizations to join in 3-4 concerts per season. TBC organizes and participates in “Messiah for the City” - free concert for the United Way charities - and in many local community events. TBC’s Choral Scholars Program offers subsidy and training to singers aged 19 to 24. Rehearsals are Wednesdays, 7-9:30pm, September to May in the Beach area. Auditions are held in September and January. The ability to read music and choral experience are assets.

DAVID GARDE
416-699-6634
torontobeachchorale@gmail.com
www.torontobeachchorale.com
The Toronto Choral Society (TCS) was founded in 1845, to foster a positive musical environment that enables members to learn and develop both musical ability and choral repertoire. The TCS aims to be an integral part of the community of Toronto, presenting important works from the traditional choral repertoire and exploring the music of the many cultures that make up our community.

The TCS has performed our last two Christmas Concerts to sold out audiences at Koerner Hall. The TCS rehearsals take place on Wednesday nights 7:30-9:30pm at Eastminster United Church, 310 Danforth Ave.

Our season (both rehearsals and performance) begins in September and continues until May, performing a minimum of 3 concerts a year. If you would like more information please go to our website.

[Website Link]

Toronto Classical Singers

Toronto Classical Singers is the only choir in the country dedicated exclusively to the great choral/ orchestral repertoire. Now in its 28th season, the organization continues to celebrate and contribute to the glorious tradition of choral music with performances of Handel, Schubert and Vaughan-Williams over 2019/20. Known for its unique musical point-of-view and its diverse and high-quality programming, the choir features lesser-known and rarely performed pieces as well as the beloved vocal/orchestral repertoire. Led by founding conductor and artistic director Jurgen Petrenko, the choir has established a long-standing partnership with Talisker Players who accompany the choir in their presentations of the great choral masterpieces.

Auditions are in early September. Please visit our website to learn more about us.

[Website Link]

Toronto Mass Choir

The Toronto Mass Choir is a Juno award-winning Gospel Choir made up of singers representing a cross-section of cultures and evangelical churches from across the GTA. The Toronto Mass Choir incorporates contemporary gospel, traditional gospel and Caribbean music influences and released 12 albums including their most recent release, “By Special Request.”

Led by artistic director, Karen Burke, TMC travels extensively both in Canada and internationally, performing original and beloved Gospel favourites in guest performances and several self-produced concerts. The Toronto Mass Choir also actively engages in educational and community outreach. Regular rehearsals are held on Friday nights and auditions are held periodically. Please email the choir office for more information.

KAREN BURKE
905-794-1139
info@tmchoir.org
www.tmchoir.org

Toronto Beaches Children’s and Youth Chorus

TBCYC, founded in 2006 by artistic director Bronwen Low with drama instructor, Joanne Mitchell, has grown from a membership of 30 to over 150 children and youth (JK and up) from all over Scarborough and Toronto’s East End.

TBCYC welcomes all, regardless of ability, offering a high quality musical and dramatic experience within a supportive, fun atmosphere. Each year, TBCYC choristers are involved in concerts and events throughout the city. In the spring, they perform a fully staged musical production at a professional theatre. The 2019 show is “Shrek Jr., the Musical.”

Past touring highlights include singing in Nashville at the Grand Ole Opry and in the 2016 DCINY festival performance at Carnegie Hall. This July, they will perform at the Kennedy Center as part of the Serenade Choral Festival in Washington, D.C.

BONWEN LOW
416-698-9864
info@tbcyc.com
www.tbcyc.com

Toronto Chamber Choir

Building on 50 years of concert performances, the Toronto Chamber Choir of around 40 skilled singers has held a prominent place in Canada’s early music scene since 1968. It specializes in renaissance and baroque repertoire, collaborating regularly with Toronto’s rich pool of period instrumentalists, but also with forays into other periods. Four concerts per season - two Saturday evening concerts and two Sunday afternoon “Kaffeemusik” presentations - explore the cultural context of our repertoire through narration, often with a special guest expert. Rehearsals are Wednesday evenings at St. Patrick’s Parish Hall with occasional Saturday “retreats.” Auditions for new volunteer members are held anytime by arrangement with the director, while auditions for our Toronto Chamber Consort section lead program are held in May.

LUCAS HARRIS
416-763-1695
lucas.harrislive.ca
www.torontochamberchoir.ca

Toronto Children’s Chorus

The award-winning Toronto Children’s Chorus marks its 42nd season, and its 13th under artistic director Elise Bradley, this 2019/20 season. The chorus comprises a family of choirs: KinderNotes for children aged 3 to 6 (no audition required), four Training Choirs, Main Choir (four ensembles) and Toronto Youth Choir (aged 16 to 30). More than 400 choristers develop skills in vocal technique, sight-singing and music theory each year. Main Choir offers masterclasses and exceptional performance and recording opportunities, including with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. The TCC offers KinderNotes and Training Choir programs in North York and Midtown. The Main Choir and Toronto Youth Choir rehearse at the Midtown location.

BONNIE O’SULLIVAN

Toronto Mendelssohn Choir

The Toronto Mendelssohn Choir celebrates its 125th anniversary with a gala concert in October under interim conductor David Fallis. The TMC has long been recognized for its grand symphonic sound, and for the clarity and precision of its interpretation of some of the greatest sacred and secular music ever composed. The 120-voice choir includes a professional core, auditioned volunteers, and apprentices (aged 17 to 22). The TMC performs over 20 concerts annually, including major choral works, “Festival of Carols”, and “Sacred Music for a Sacred Space” on Good Friday. It also performs regularly with the TSO, including annual performances of Messiah. The TMC is currently conducting an international search for a new artistic director - only the 8th in the organization’s 125-year history.

ADMINISTRATOR
416-598-0422
admin@tmchoir.org
www.tmchoir.org

Toronto Classical Singers

The Toronto Classical Singers is a chance to refresh vocal skills and study inspiring works of choral literature in the intimacy of a chamber vocal ensemble. Spend a week singing and rehearsing with acclaimed choral conductor, virtuoso recorder player and composer, Matthias Maute. Aside from daily choir rehearsals, you’ll also have the opportunity to enjoy sectional with various vocal coaches. Repertoire: Mozart’s Great Mass in C minor (excerpts); Aho’s By The Word Of The Lord.

Dates: July 29 to August 3. Must be over 18 years old. Tuition includes daily lunch and a ticket to all TSM Festival Concerts July 29 to August 3. Cost: $700 plus HST. Apply now on our website link.

JENNIFER MAJOR
647-430-5699 x111
jennifer@torontosummermusic.com
www.torontosummermusic.com/community-academy

Toronto Summer Music Chamber Choir

The Chamber Choir is a chance to refresh vocal skills and study inspiring works of choral literature in the intimacy of a chamber vocal ensemble. Spend a week singing and rehearsing with acclaimed choral conductor, virtuoso recorder player and composer, Matthias Maute. Aside from daily choir rehearsals, you’ll also have the opportunity to enjoy sectional with various vocal coaches.

Repertoire: Mozart’s Great Mass in C minor (excerpts); Aho’s By The Word Of The Lord.

Dates: July 29 to August 3. Must be over 18 years old. Tuition includes daily lunch and a ticket to all TSM Festival Concerts July 29 to August 3. Cost: $700 plus HST. Apply now on our website link.

JENNIFER MAJOR
647-430-5699 x111
jennifer@torontosummermusic.com
www.torontosummermusic.com/community-academy

Toronto Welsh Male Voice Choir

The Toronto Welsh Male Voice Choir (TWMC) was established in 1995 when its founding member and first president, Gwyn Roberts, gathered together a group of like-minded individuals of Welsh heritage, who sought to kindle the spirit of traditional Welsh male voice singing in their adopted country. The
TWMVC proudly draws on the great Welsh tradition of singing hymns and songs; born of the mountains and valleys of Wales. At the same time, it emphasizes a multicultural context in its broad repertoire, which also includes spirituals; operatic arias, Canadian folk songs as well as Broadway show tunes and contemporary music. Our blend of traditional and contemporary music, all sung off book in accordance with tradition, appeals to a broad audience. We are always looking for new members to join our choir!

**ALAN SADEGURSKY**
647-389-8084
alansadegursky@yahoo.ca
www.welshchoir.ca

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**Upper Canada Choristers**

The Upper Canada Choristers is a mixed-voice community choir with a diverse membership that interweaves fun with the commitment to musical excellence and vibrant community service. Performances feature collaborations with international choirs, local children’s choirs, and professional instrumentalists and singers. Cantemos is an auditioned a cappella latin ensemble within UCC. Led by artistic director Laurie Evan Fraser, the choirs perform three diverse choral programs annually. Weekly rehearsals for the Main Choir are Monday evenings from 7:30pm to 9:30pm at Grace Church on-the-Hill, 300 Lonsdale Rd. Cantemos rehearses on Saturday mornings from 10:30am to 12:30pm at 2 Romar Cres. The choirs sing up to 20 concerts annually in a variety of community venues.

**LAURIE EVAN FRASER**
416-256-0510
info@uppercanadachoristers.org
www.uppercanadachoristers.org

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**Uxbridge Chamber Choir**

The Uxbridge Chamber Choir is an amateur SATB choir under the direction of founding conductor Tom Baker. Since 1983, the choir has brought unique performances of the great choral masterpieces, from the Renaissance to modernity, to the rural community of Uxbridge and the surrounding area. Together our enthusiastic singers develop and express their musical talents, often collaborating with local professional vocalists and instrumentalists. Recent performances include Tedesco’s Romancero Gitano, Beethoven’s Mass in C, Gjeilo’s Sunrise Mass, Mozart’s Requiem, Monteverdi’s Vespers, Bach’s St. John Passion and Bernstein’s Chichester Psalms, Faure’s Requiem and Durufle’s Requiem.

Membership is by a non-threatening screening process at the first rehearsal. Rehearsals are Monday nights, September to May in Uxbridge.

**MARG CUNNINGHAM**
905-642-2096
uxbridgechamberchoir@gmail.com
www.uxbridgechamberchoir.ca

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**Vesnivka Choir**

Vesnivka Choir was established in 1965 by founding artistic director Halyna Kvitka Kondratchi. This award-winning women’s ensemble has delighted audiences around the world with its rich repertoire of Ukrainian liturgical, classical, contemporary and traditional folk music. The choir’s regular concert season comprises three major concerts, one of which is its ever-popular annual Christmas concert. Vesnivka, together with its partner the Toronto Ukrainian Male Chamber Choir (TUMCC), are often accompanied by professional soloists and chamber ensembles of area musicians. Vesnivka also sings at Christmas and Easter Liturgies. Singers are welcome; rehearsals on Tuesdays, 7:30pm to 9:30pm (4 Bellwoods Ave., Toronto). Male singers are welcome to join TUMCC; rehearsals on Mondays, 7:30pm to 9pm (2445 Bloor St. W., Toronto).

**NYKOLA PARZEI**
416-246-9880
nykola@vesnivka.com
www.vesnivka.com

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**Victoria College Choir**

The Victoria College Choir has been a fixture of the Vic community since the move to Toronto from Cobourg in 1892. Though it has seen many different forms and incarnations over the past century, musical life at Vic has been consistently dominated by the choir. The present Vic Chorus was established in 1991 as a non-audition, community-wide chamber choir open to students, faculty, alumni, and staff. Our concerts are held regularly in the gothic setting of the Victoria College Chapel. Often involving various guest artists, these concerts present a wide range of choral musical selections, from classical to contemporary, global, operetta and more! We rehearse in the Goldring Student Building at Victoria College on Tuesdays starting at 5:15pm.

**TAYLOR SULLIVAN**
416-883-4521
t.sullivan.vicchorus@gmail.com
www.vicchorus.com

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**Victoria Scholars Men’s Choral Ensemble**

A past winner of the Canada Council Healey Willan Grand Prize, CBC Radio National Competition for Amateur Choors, and one of Canada’s finest male choral ensembles, the Victoria Scholars treat audiences to a wide range of music, from Medieval plainchant and works from the baroque, renaissance and romantic eras through to contemporary and newly commissioned works from some of Canada’s best-known composers. Along with an annual three-concert series in Toronto, the Scholars have toured nationally and internationally, performing regularly with international vocal soloists, and have released five acclaimed recordings, including most recently in January 2016, Songs of Low. If you are an experienced musician with excellent sight reading abilities and would like to join us for the upcoming season, please contact us today.

**JERZY CICHOCKI**
416-761-7776
info@victoriacholars.ca
www.victoriacholars.ca

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**Village Voices**

Village Voices, a diverse, mixed-voice 70-voice community choir based in Markham, entered its 30th season in September 2018. Directed by Oksana Vignan, the choir presents two major concerts annually and sings at seniors’ residences and special community events, performing repertoire from the classics to contemporary music. Village Voices has collaborated with other Ontario choirs and as guest artists of instrumental ensembles such as the Markham Concert Band and the Kindred Spirits Orchestra. The choir’s musical skills are honed regularly through special workshops with outstanding choral musicians. “Joy of Singing” (May 4, 2019) is Village Voices’ 30th anniversary concert and features an eclectic repertoire, from the swing of “Moonlight” to the tenderness of “The Ground,” by Ola Gjeilo.

**ELLEN DOWSWELL**
905-763-4172
info@villagevoiceschoir.com
www.villagevoices.ca
Thank you for taking a gander at this year’s Canaries! If you are looking for a specific group of songbirds, visit our directory online, at thewholenote.com/canary where you can do more browsing, read these profiles and easily follow the links they contain to these choir’s own websites.
Adi Braun's fifth recording and current touring show Moderne Frau is a collection of Weimar cabaret songs from between the two world wars, when women were famously performers, but significantly also becoming cabaret owners and managers. “Clearly Braun’s redemptive gods are Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill and she makes every gesture count meaningfully on this disc, where biting satire and burlesque meet outrageously colourful art song.” (Raul Da Gama, in The WholeNote (Nov 2017). Anne-Katherine Dionne wins a copy of the CD.

Christina Petrowska Quilico's 2018 recording Global Sirens features works by 15 women composers, from the United States, Canada, Russia, South Africa, Germany, Italy, Australia, and France, written between the mid-1900s and the present. Traditional, impressionist, 12-tone, minimalist, folk, ragtime and romantic, these mostly neglected treasures for the piano are “only a fraction of the scope and breadth of works that have been rarely played or forgotten.” [Fleur de Son] Lynda Moon wins a copy of this CD.

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.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR WINNERS!

A few readers managed to correctly identify of all six of last month’s mystery children!

WholeNote reader Trina Wasilewski wins a pair of tickets to Hell’s Fury, The Hollywood Songbook. Presented by Soundstreams in partnership with Luminato this new opera features baritone Russell Braun and pianist Serouj Kradjian, with staging by Tim Albery and design by Michael Levine. Hear the wonderful, neglected songs of exile by Hanns Eisler, an Austrian, Jewish, Marxist composer who fled to Hollywood in 1938, only to be deported a decade later, an early casualty of the McCarthy era (Harbourfront Centre Theatre, June 19 to 23).

Gregory Millar wins a pair of tickets to hear Christina Petrowska Quilico with the Kindred Spirits Orchestra, in a concert that includes “Canadian Mozart” André Mathieu’s long-lost Piano Concerto No.4, written in 1947 when the composer was just 18 years old; also Hindemith’s Symphonic Metamorphosis, and Prokofiev’s Symphony No.2, Op 40. This concert will be given at the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts on May 11, conducted by Kristian Alexander, and also on June 29 at the CBC Glenn Gould Studio conducted by Jiří Petrdlík.

Adi Braun’s fifth recording and current touring show Moderne Frau is a collection of Weimar cabaret songs from between the two world wars, when women were famously performers, but significantly also becoming cabaret owners and managers. “Clearly Braun’s redemptive gods are Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill and she makes every gesture count meaningfully on this disc, where biting satire and burlesque meet outrageously colourful art song.” (Raul Da Gama, in The WholeNote (Nov 2017). Anne-Katherine Dionne wins a copy of the CD.

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THE WHOLENOTE

MJ BUELL

If you’re a new reader, a word of explanation is in order.
In our regular photo contest, We Are ALL Music’s Children, readers identify members of the music community from a childhood photo, for an opportunity to win tickets and recordings.

April’s Children were

Baritone Russell Braun and his sister singer and composer Adi Braun;
Pianist Christina Petrowska Quilico;
Mezzo-soprano Krizstina Szabó;
Tenor Colin Ainsworth;
Violist, educator and arts administrator Douglas McNabney

A new, equally challenging contest will appear next month.

Russell Braun and Adi Braun
Christina Petrowska Quilico
Krizstina Szabó
Colin Ainsworth
Douglas McNabney

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR WINNERS!
A. Concerts in the GTA

Wednesday May 1

- 12:30: Organixx Concerts/All Saints Kingsway. Kingsway Organ Concert Series. Andrew Adair, organ. All Saints Kingsway Anglican Church, 6930 Bloor St. W. 416-571-3880 or organixxconcerts.ca. Freewill offering. 45-minute concert.
- 8:00: Royal Conservatory of Music. Peter Serkin. Mozart: Adagio K540; Piano Sonata K570; Bach: Goldberg Variations. Peter Serkin, piano. Koerner Hall, Telus Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. $120. 7pm - Pre-concert talk. SOLD OUT.

Thursday May 2


Women’s Musical Club of Toronto

Music in the Afternoon

May 2, 2019 | 1:30 PM

Rolston String Quartet

416-923-7052

wmct.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.13 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, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-923-7052 or wmct.on.ca. $45.
- 7:00: North York Central Library/University of Toronto Faculty of Music. The Magic of Rajasthan. Abhishok Iyer, singer; Sushant Anantharam, harmonium; Tanmay Sharma, tabla. North York Central Library. 5120 Yonge St. 416-395-5639. Free. Registration required.
May 4

● 2:00: Toronto Consort. Night Games. An irreverent evening of madrigal comedy. Works by Vecchi and Banchieri. Marie-Nathalie Lacoursière, director/actor/dancer; Katharine Hill, artistic director/pianist/soor; Michele DeBoer, soprano; Kirk Elliott, mandolin/violin/accordion/bladder pipes; Ben Grossman, колоссне/hurdy-gurdy/percussion; and others. Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, 427 Bloor St. W. 416-364-6357. $15-$87. Also May 4; 5:30(p.m).

May 5 - May 7

● 7:30: Canadian Opera Company. Otello. Music by Giuseppe Verdi, libretto by Arrigo Boito. Russell Thomas, tenor (Otello); Gerald Finley, baritone (Iago); Tamara Wilson, soprano (Desdemona); Andrew Haji, tenor (Casio); Carolyn Sproule, mezzo (Emilia); Owen McCausland, tenor (Roderigo); Onay Köse, bass (Lodovico); Johannes Debus, conductor; David Alden, stage director. Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. 416-363-8231. $35-$225. Runs Apr 27-May 21. Start times vary.

● 7:30: Opera by Request. Missis Havisimson’s Wedding Night and Waterbird Talk. Music by Dominick Argento. Brianna DeSantis, soprano (Missis Havisimson); Parker Clement, baritone (The Lecturer); Claire Harris, keyboard director; William Shookoff, pianist/music director. College St. United Church, 452 College St. 416-455-2365. $20. Also May 4(Windsor), 7pm.


● 7:30: TO Live! Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix™ in Concert. Movie screening of the live orchestral performance. Sony Centre for the Performing Arts, 1 Front St. E. 1-855-948-9000. $30 (with table). Also May 4-6.

Saturday May 4


● 2:30: Music4Life Ensemble. Music for a Cure. Forest Brook Community Church, 60 Kearney Dr., Ajax. 416-409-2274. $15; $10(children); $10 (child 12 and under); $5(Music4Life Supporter – $35 goes to orchestra); $25(Music4Life Supporter – $10 goes to orchestra). Concert benefit for Cystic Fibrosis Canada. Free reception post-concert.

● 2:30: Village Voices. Joy of Singing: 30th Anniversary Concert. Hoagy Carmichael, A Choral Portrait; Moonglow; River of Judea; The Ground; Afternoon on a Hill; and other works. Village Voices Chamber Choir; Village Voices Community Choir; Oksana Vignan, conductor; Robert Graham, piano. Markham Missionary Church, 5459 Major Mackenzie Dr. E., Markham. 905-471-4446 or info@villagevoiceschoir.com. $25; $20(children); $10 (child under 12).


● 4:30: Canadian Opera Company. La Bohème. See May 2. Also May 5(Mon), 7:30(p.m.), 9(lpm), 11(p.m.), 11(lpm), 22(l.p.m.).


● 7:00: Gallery 345. Magistrera on Tour 2019. Eight. Brahms: Sextet; Therion: String Quartet; Susie; New commission. Guests: Jutta Puchhammer, viola; Pablo Mejia-Veglia, cello. 345 Sorauren Ave. 416-822-9781 or Eventbrite.ca. $25; $20(children); $15. Cash only at the door.

● 7:00: Singing Together 2019. A Celebration of Cultural Diversity. Multicultural choral concert with 7 choirs from different ethnic backgrounds. Chinese Canadian Choir of Toronto (Cantonese); Coro San Marco (Italian); Joyful Singers (Korean); Nayiri Armenian Choir of Toronto (Armenian); Noor Children’s Choir (Armenian); Toronto Taiwanese Choir (Mandarin); Guest: Filipino Choral Group. St. Paschal Baylon Church, 92 Steeles Ave. W., Thornhill. 416-389-6063 or 416-769-1954. $20.

● 7:30: Bel Canto Singers & Ruckus Choir. Royal Game of Thrones. Music: Mozart; Mass in C; Beethoven: Hallelujah; Handel: Zadok the Priest; Wonder: Don’t She Lovely; Beatles: Ob la di Ob la da; and others. Scarborough Bluffs United Church, 3739 Kingston Rd., Scarborough. 416-737-1475. $20; $5(child under 12). Cash only at the door. Wheelchair accessible.

● 2:30: Toronto Consort. Night Games. Works by Vecchi and Banchieri. Marie-Nathalie Lacoursière, director/actor/dancer; Katharine Hill, artistic director/pianist/soor; Michele DeBoer, soprano; Kirk Elliott, mandolin/violin/accordion/bladder pipes; Ben Grossman, колоссне/hurdy-gurdy/percussion; and others. Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, 427 Bloor St. W. 416-364-6357. $15-$87. Also May 4; 5:30(p.m.).


NIGHT GAMES

MAY 3 & 4 at 8pm | May 5 at 3:30pm

Tickets starting at $29!
TorontoConsort.org

May 1 - June 2, 2019

AT A GLANCE

● 7:30: Tempus Choral Society. A Musical Celebration. Tempus4U Children’s Choir; Tempus Jazz Choir; Brian L. Turnbull, music director; Jane Wamsley, accompanist. Clearview Christian Reformed Church, 2300 Sheridan Garden Dr., Oakville. 416-867-6704 or tickets@tempuschoralsociety.com. $20. Also May 4(5pm).

● 2:00: Toronto Consort. Night Games. An irreverent evening of madrigal comedy. Works by Vecchi and Banchieri. Marie-Nathalie Lacoursière, director/actor/dancer; Katharine Hill, artistic director/pianist/soor; Michele DeBoer, soprano; Kirk Elliott, mandolin/violin/accordion/bladder pipes; Ben Grossman, колоссне/hurdy-gurdy/percussion; and others. Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, 427 Bloor St. W. 416-364-6357. $15-$87. Also May 4; 5:30(p.m.).

May 1 - June 2, 2019

THE WHOLE NOTE
Williams. FirstOntario Arts Centre, 1010 Main St., Milton. 905-875-5399. $28; $22(student/child).

● 7:30: Mississauga Festival Choir: Building Bridges. Music from South Africa, South Asia, and the Americas. St. John's Anglican Cathedral. Guests: Autorkishaw, Hassam Hall, Liv- ing Arts Centre, 4141 Living Arts Dr., Mississauga. 905-306-6000 or livingsartcentre.ca. $37; $32(senior); $17(under 12).


● 7:30: Tallis Choir: Light Divine. Works by Elgar, J.S. Bach, Lassus, Gregorian chant and Byzantine chant. Peter Mahon, con- ductor. St. Patrick’s Church, 131 McCaul St. 416-286-9783 or tallischoir.com. $30; $25(senior); $10(student).


● 8:00: Academy Concert Series. A Poe Cabaret. Dancers, for dancer, harp and string quartet, Caplet: Contante fantastica; Debussey: String Quartet. Tom Allen, narrator; Lori Gemmell, harp; Sheila Jaffé, violin; Bethany Bergman, violin; Emily Eng, viola; Kerri McConnigle, cello. Eastmin- ster United Church, 310 Danforth Ave. 416-629-3716. $20; $14(senior); $15(under 18). Reception following concert. Also May 26.

● 8:00: Esmeralda Enrique Spanish Dance Company. Impulse. El Sonido de mi Alma (Taranta); Torontontero (Tango); Gar- nata (Granaina); El Camino (Alegrias); A mis padres (Rondel); and other works. Esmer- alda Enrique and José Maldonado, choreog- raphers; Caroline Planté, Benjamin Barrile, guitars; Manuel Soto, Marcos Marin, vocal- ists; Derek Gray, percussion. Fleck Dance Theatre, Harbourfront Centre, 235 Queens Quay W. 416-973-4000. $34-$48; $28-$34(senior); $15-$25(under 18). Wheelchair accessible. Also May 3-15 (3:30pm).

Sunday May 5

● 11:00am: Mississauga Big Band Jazz Ensemble. MBJE Live Big Band Recording with Guest Vocalist. Whitney Ross-Bar- ris, Sam Broomer, Glenn Chipkar, Suzanne McKenzie, Denise Leslie, vocalists. Port Credit Legion, 35 Front St. N., Port Credit. 905-270-4737. Free.


● 2:00: Canadian Opera Company. La bohème. See May 2. Also May 17(3:00pm), 11(2:00pm), 11(7:30pm), 21(7:30pm). Wheelchair accessible. Also May 3-15 (3:00pm).


FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, 235 Queen Street West, Hamilton, ON. 905-383-8000. $34-$48; $28-$34(senior); $15($15(under 18)). Wheelchair accessible. Also May 2-15.

9:05-884-7922. $55(family); $25; $20(senior); $15(under 18). Free parking.

● 8:00: Tempos Choral Society. A Musical Celebration. Tempus4Us Children’s Choir; Tempus Jazz Choir; Brian L. Turnbull, music director; Jane Wamsley, accompani- list. Clearview Christian Reformed Church, 2300 Sheridan Garden Dr. Oakville. 416-874-5376. Last tickets at tempuschorsociety.com. $20. Also May 9 (5:00pm).

● 8:00: Toronto Consort. Night Games. An evening of madrigal comedy. Works by Vecchi and Banchieri. Marie-Nath- alie Lacoursière, director/actor/dancer; Kath- erine Hill, artistic director/gamba/soprano; Michele DeBoer, soprano; Kiri Elliott, mandolin/violin/accordion/bladder pipes; Ben Grossman, colascione/hurdy-gurdy/percussion; and others. Trinity-St. Paul’s Church, 427 Bloor St. W. 416-969-6337. $15-$84. Also May 3, 4 (8:00pm).

● 8:00: Scarborough Philharmonic Orches- tra. Classic Film Music and New Animated Shorts. Williams: Suite from Star Wars; Man- cini: Theme from The Pink Panther (arr. Cal- vini Guaster); Prokofiev: Lieutenant Kije Suite No.1 Op.36; Krenzfeld: Violin Concerto O.P. No. 35; and new works by Samuel Bisson, Bruno Degazio, Ronald Royer, and Sergio Kofman to accompany short films by top Sheridan College students. Aaron Schweivel, violin; Ronald Royer; conductor. Salvation Army Scarborough Citadel, 2201 Lawrence Ave. E., Scarborough. spaoo@spao.ca or spaoo.ca. $35(senior); $15(students/children under 10). Free parking.

● 8:00: Encore Chorus. Summer of ’69: Voices of a Generation. De Lawrence, con- ductor. George Vandikas, piano. Bethel Com- munity Christian Reformed Church, 353 Davis Dr., Newmarket. 905-722-6554. $18($15(sr/ st)).

● 8:00: Esmeralda Enrique Spanish Dance Company. Impulse. El Sonido de mi Alma (Taranta); Torontontero (Tango); Gar- nata (Granaina); El Camino (Alegrias); A mis padres (Rondel); and other works. Esmer- alda Enrique and José Maldonado, choreog- raphers; Caroline Planté, Benjamin Barrile, guitars; Manuel Soto, Marcos Marin, vocal- ists; Derek Gray, percussion. Fleck Dance Theatre, Harbourfront Centre, 235 Queens Quay W. 416-973-4000. $34-$48; $28-$34(senior); $15-$25(under 18). Wheelchair accessible. Also May 3-15 (3:30pm).

Alpha & Omega

Haydn Op. 0 Mozart K. 387 Beethoven Op. 135

Sunday May 5, 3pm


Marie-Nathalie Lacoursière, director/actor/ dancer; Katherine Hill, artistic director/ gamba/soprano; Michele DeBoer, soprano; Kiri Elliott, mandolin/violin/accordion/bladder pipes; Ben Grossman, colascione/hurdy-gurdy/percussion; and others. Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, 427 Bloor St. W. 416-969-6337. $15-$84. Also May 3, 4 (8:00pm).

● 4:00: Church of St. Mary Magdalene. Organ Fireworks. Andrew Adair, organ. Church of St. Mary Magdalene (Toronto), 477 Manning Ave. 416-533-7665. Free.


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piano. Church of the Holy Trinity. 19 Trinity Sq. 416-598-4521x223. PWYC ($10 suggested).


Tuesday May 7


7:30: Canadian Opera Company. La bohème. See May 2. Also May 11(2pm), 11(7:30pm), 22(7:30pm).


8:00: Art of Time Ensemble: Best of Words and Music. Excerpts from 2 Pianos, 4 Hands, poetry by Margaret Atwood set to original music, scenes from Shakespeare’s Much Ado About Nothing, and other works. Isabel Bayrakdarian, soprano; Sarah Sloan, singer; Martha Burns, actor; Rick Roberts, actor; Jonathan Crow, violin; Ted Dykstra, piano; Richard Greenblatt, piano. Harbourfront Centre Theatre, 235 Queens Quay W. 416-973-4000. $25-$64, $45(tax under 50). Also May 10, 11.

8:00: Tafelmusik. Bach-Magnificat. Bach: Magnificat; Zelerinka: Missa Divi Xaverii; Jana Miller, soprano; Meg Bragle, mezzo-soprano; Colin Ainsworth, tenor; Tafelmusichamber Choir; Ivars Taurins, conductor. Koerner Hall, Telus Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. $36 and up. Also May 10, 11(12mat).

8:00: Show One Productions/TD Live. Eifman Ballet. Tchaikovsky. PRO et CONTRA. Sony Centre for the Performing Arts, 1 Front St. E. 1-855-872-7669. $62-$168.50. Pre-show talk 7pm. Also May 10, 11.

8:00: Ara Arkayelyan, Armenia Meets Cuba at Jazz Bistro. Guest: Hilarion Dourian, piano; Ara Arkayelyan, saxophone/keyboards; Madiana Torosyan, kanun; Armen Matoysyan, dulk/pku; Joaquin Nunez Hidalgo, drums and others. Jazz Bistro, 251 Victoria St. 416-363-5299. $35.

Friday May 10


7:30: Living Arts Centre. Shawn Matthews Superstar! RBC Theatre, Living Arts Centre, 4414 Living Arts Dr. Mississauga. 905-306-6000. $40-$60, $80.95-$100.95 (dinner & show package).

7:30: Upper Canada Choristers. 25th Anniversary Concert: How Can I Keep from Singing? On the theme of love. Stephen Chatman: Teasdale Love Songs (world premiere); Eric Whitacre: Five Hebrew Love Songs; Laurie Evan Fraser: Blessing-Bendicion; a cappella arrangements of Beatles songs; and other works. Children of Maurice Cody Junior School, Richmond Hill. 905-306-6000. $40-$60, $80.95-$100.95 (dinner & show package).

Lunchtime Concerts Pay-what-you-can

May 6 - Alice Lee & Todd Yaniw
May 13 - Daniel Arthur Trio
May 20 - Penny Johnson
May 27 - Anthony D’Alessandro Trio feat. Chase Sanborn

Church of the Holy Trinity

www.musicmondays.ca

The whole note
### A. Concerts in the GTA

**Public School (Carole Snow, conductor); Cantemos Latin ensemble; Hye Won Cecilia Lee, piano; Laurie Evan Fraser, conductor. Metropolitan United Church (Toronto), 56 Queen St. E. 416-256-0510. $25; free (child/teens accompanied by an adult).**

8:00: *Art of Time Ensemble. Best of Words and Music. Excerpts from 2 Hands, 4 Hands, poetry by Margaret Atwood set to original music, scenes from Shakespeare's Much Ado About Nothing, and other works. Isabell Bayrakdarian, soprano; Sarah Sloan, singer; Martha Burns, actor; Rick Roberts, actor; Jonathan Crow, violist; Ted Dykstra, piano; Richard Greenblatt, piano. Harbourfront Centre Theatre, 235 Queens Quay W. 416-973-4000. $25; free (child/teens).***

**St. E. 416-256-0510. $25; free (child/teens).***

**Artistic Director: Brian Mallory; Pittsburgh New Music Festival; Continuum Ensemble; Rob Macdonald, electric guitar. 918 Bathurst Centre/The Director; Show One Productions/TO Live.**

- **Bach Children’s Chorus and Bach Chamber Youth Choir.**

8:00: *Show One Productions/TO Live. Elfman Ballet. Tchaikovsky. PRO et CONTRA.*

- **7:30: Shadowland. Canadian Men’s Chorus & Friends.***

**Canadian Opera Company. La bohème. See May 2. Also May 11(7:30pm), 12(7:30pm).***

**7:30: Kindred Spirits Orchestra. Metamorphosis. Hindemith: Symphonic Metamorphosis; Mathieu: Piano Concerto No. 4; Prokofiev: Symphony No. 2 Op. 40.***

**Note:** For more information, visit the websites provided or contact the venues directly.

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**Newcomers’ Guide to the GTA: Music**

- **FRIDAYS@8 PRESENTS**
  - **Missa Gaia Earth Mass Created by Paul Winter**
  - **Friday, May 10, 2019 at 8 pm**
  - **The Choir of Lawrence Park Community Church**
  - **www.lawrenceparkchurch.ca**
  - **Eleanor Daley, Pianist; Sarah Slean, Singer; Amadeus Choir of Greater Toronto; Leslie Fagan, Soprano; Catherine Wyn-Rogers, Mezzo; Andrew Hajj, Tenor; Alexander Dobson, Baritone; Lydia Adams, Conductor.**

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**Korean Canadian Chamber Concerts & Friends. Souvenirs: Music Inspired by Travels. Tchaikovsky: Souvenir de Florence; Dvořák: American Quintet.***

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**York Chamber Ensemble.**

- **The Age of Elegance and Romanticism.***

**Barbara Dickson, Cellist. May 11, 7:30 pm**

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**BACH CHILDREN’S CHOIR & BACH CHAMBER YOUTH CHOIR**

**BACH CHILDREN’S CHOIRS & BACH CHAMBER YOUTH CHOIR**

Sharing our love of making music.

**Charissa Bagan, Artistic Director; James Pinhorn, BCYC Conductor; Eleanor Daley, Pianist.**

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**BON Voyageurs!**

A celebration of spirited music inspired by brave voyagers and magical journeys, featuring songs of the Acadians and contemporary French-Canadian artists.

**Saturday May 11, 7:30pm**

**Toronto Centre for the Arts, 5040 Yonge St (north of Sheppard)**

$25 – $40 at the box office or Ticketmaster at 1-855.985.2787

**Bachchildrenschora.ca**

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**JUNIOR SINGERS**

- **7:30: York Chamber Ensemble. The Age of Elegance and Romanticism.***

**Schubert: Symphony No.3; Mass in G; Fauré: Pavane; Ellegie. York Festival Chorus; Barbara J. Dickson, M. Michael Beres, conductor.**

**Theatre Toronto, 79 Victoria St., Toronto. 416-465-2001. $30; $20(st)/$10(child).***

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**THE AGE OF ELEGANCE AND ROMANTICISM**

**Barbara Dickson, cellist. May 11, 7:30 pm**

**Yorkchamberensemble.ca**

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**Korean Canadian Chamber Concerts & Friends. Souvenirs: Music Inspired by Travels. Tchaikovsky: Souvenir de Florence; Dvořák: American Quintet.***

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**York Chamber Ensemble.**

- **THE AGE OF ELEGANCE AND ROMANTICISM.***

**Barbara Dickson, cellist. May 11, 7:30 pm**

**Yorkchamberensemble.ca**
$10 (child under 10)

6:00: Acoustic Harvest. Eileen McGann. St. Paul’s United Church (Scarborough), 200 McIntosh St., Scarborough. illianavanhuert@gmail.com. $25/$22 (adv).

6:00: Acoustic Harvest-Live Music East. Eileen McGann. St. Paul’s United Church (Scarborough), 200 McIntosh St., Scarborough. 416-729-7564 or acousticharvest.ca. $25/$22 (adv). Wheelchair accessible.

6:00: Ambience Singers. Annual Charity Concert. Guest: Bob DeAngelis; Danny McEl- lain, conductor. Living Arts Centre, 4141 Living Arts Dr., Mississauga. 905-306-6000. $37.50; $18.75 (child 12 and under). Proceeds to Caring and Sharing of Peel.

6:00: Art of Time Ensemble. Best of Words and Music. Excerpts from 2 Pianos, 4 Hands, poetry by Margaret Atwood set to original music, scenes from Shakespeare’s Much Ado About Nothing, and other works. Isla- bel Bayrakdarian, soprano; Sarah Steen, singer; Mark Runtu, actor; Rick Roberts, actor; Jonathan Crow, violin, Ted Dykstra, piano; Richard Greenblatt, piano. Harbour-front Centre Theatre, 235 Queens Quay W. 416-973-4000. $25-$64; $19 (student under 30). Also May 10.

6:00: Ontario Pops Orchestra. A Present for Mom: The Best of Ontario Pops. Magic of Harry Potter; Best of the Beatles; Williams: Star Wars Through the Years; Mozart: Sin- fonia Concertante KV297b (Mvt 1).互助 Valley United Church, 76 Aylsley Blvd., Etobicoke. 647-913-6072. $22; $5 (child).

7:00: Royal Conservatory of Music. Song- Bird North. Temerty Theatre, Telus Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. $35.

8:00: Show One Productions LTD Live. Eif- man Ballet. Tchacikovsky, PRÉ et CONTRA. Sony Centre for the Performing Arts, 1 Front St. E. 1-855-872-7669. $62.75-$166.50. Pre- show talk 7:30. Also May 9.

8:00: Tafelmusik. Bach Magnificat. Bach: Magnificat; Zelenka: Missa Dixi Kaveiri. Jan Miller, soprano; Meg Bragle, mezzo-soprano; Colin Ainsworth, tenor; Tafelmusik Chamber Choir; Ivars Taurins, conductor. Koerner Hall, Telus Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. $38 and up. Also May 10.

8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Beethoven Symphony 5: Elgar: Serenade for Strings; Mozart: Piano Concerto No. 21, K467; Beethoven: Symphony No. 5. Shai Wosner, piano; Nicholas Colton, conductor. George Wes- ton Recital Hall, 5040 Yonge St. 416-596-3375. $28.75-$100.50. Also May 11 (Roy Thomson Hall).

8:00: Tafelmusik. Bach Magnificat. Bach: Magnificat; Zelenka: Missa Dixi Kaveiri. Jan Miller, soprano; Meg Bragle, mezzo-soprano; Colin Ainsworth, tenor; Tafelmusik Chamber Choir; Ivars Taurins, conductor. Koerner Hall, Telus Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. $38 and up. Also May 10, 11.


6:00: Canadian Sinfonietta. Young Art- ist Concert: Celebrates Mother’s Day. Saint- Saens: Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso; Cello Concerto No. 1 (Mvt 1); Mozart: Violin Concerto No. 4 (Mvt 1); Handel: E pur posso in un giorno from Giulio Cesare; Beethoven: Sym- phony No. 3 (Mvt 1). Featuring the winners of the Canadian Sinfonietta Young Artist Competition and the Unionville Music Academy Competition: Emmanuel Sievers, violin; Dun- can McDougall, Sophie Caplin, and Eugene Yo, cellist; Members of the Canadian Sinfoni- etta Youth Orchestra, Markham People’s Community Church, 22 Eina Park Dr.; Mark- ham: canadiansinfonietta.yapsody.com. $40; $35 (sr); $20 (student).

6:00: Nocturnes in the City. Chamber Music Recital. Works by Martinů, Janáček, Dvořák, and others. Duo Ventapene (Martin Karlícek, piano; Mana Shiharshi, violin). St. Wenceslaus Church, 486 Gladstone Ave. 416-481-7294. $25.


10th anniversary concert season

Saturday, May 11, 2019, 3 pm

RICHMOND HILL CENTRE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

MATHIEU

Symphony No. 2

905.787.8811

10268 Yonge Rd.

RICHMOND HILL

KINDRED SPIRITS ORCHESTRA

10th anniversary concert season

Saturday, May 11, 2019, 3 pm

RICHMOND HILL CENTRE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

HINDEMITH

Symphonic Metamorphosis

MATHIEU

Piano concerto no. 4

SYMPHONY NO. 2

Kristin Alexander

905.787.8811

10268 Yonge Rd.

RICHMOND HILL

KINDRED SPIRITS ORCHESTRA

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RICHMOND HILL CENTRE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

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RICHMOND HILL

KINDRED SPIRITS ORCHESTRA

10th anniversary concert season

Saturday, May 11, 2019, 3 pm

RICHMOND HILL CENTRE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

HINDEMITH

Symphonic Metamorphosis

MATHIEU

Piano concerto no. 4

SYMPHONY NO. 2

Kris
Wednesday May 15

12:30: Organix Concerts/All Saints Kingsway. Kingsway Organ Concert Series. Mark Himmelman, organ. All Saints Kingsway Anglican Church, 2850 Bloor St. W. 416-571-3880 or organixconcerts.ca. Free will offering, 15-minute concert.


7:30: Canadian Opera Company. Otello. See May 3. Also May 18 (4:30pm), 21 (7:30pm).

7:30: Free Times Cafe. 60’s Folk Revival: Where Have All the Folk Songs Gone? 320 College St. 416-967-1075. $15 (cash at the door). Dinner reservations recommended.

7:30: Gallery 345. Nella Fantasia: Iris Rodrigo, soprano; Guests: Andrea Allini, clarinet; Bram Goldhamer, piano. 345 Sorauren Ave. 416-822-9781 or info@gallery345.com. $30; $20 (student). Cash only at the door.

7:30: Orpheus Choir of Toronto. Orpheus By Request. Works selected by audience via online voting. Howard Dyck, narrator; Orpheus Chamber Ensemble; Robert Cooper, artistic director; Edward Moroney, accompanist. Grace Church on-the-Hill, 300 Lonsdale Rd. 416-530-4425. $45; $35 (student); $20 (under 30).

7:30: Toronto Children’s Chorus. True Colours. Toronto Youth Chorus; surprise guests. Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, 477 Bloor St. W. 416-932-6886 x231. $25; $20 (student); $10 (child).


6:00: Harbourfront Chorus. Spring Concert: Exploring New Places. Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre, 627 Queen’s Quay West. 416-458-2350 or harbourfrontchorus@gmail.com. Free.

8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Mahler Symphony 7. Chan Ka Nin: My Most Beautiful, Wonderful, Terrific, Amazing, Fantastic, Magnificent Homeland; Sesquie for Canada’s 150th; Franck: Symphonic Variations for Piano and Orchestra; Mahler: Symphony No.7. Louis Lortie, piano; Sir Andrew Davis, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375. $34.75-$148. Also May 15.

Saturday May 18

4:30: Canadian Opera Company. Otello. See May 3. Also May 21 (7:30pm).

The Toronto Choral Society presents 2 French Requiem Wednesday May 15 at 7:30 PM

Advance Tickets $25 TorontoChoralSociety.org

Gabriel Fauré: Requiem
Maurice Durufle: Requiem

12:10: Music at St. Andrew’s. Noon-time Recital. Bill Bridges: Jazz standards and arrangements. Tanya Wills, vocalist; Bill Bridges, guitar; Jordan Klapman, piano; Ron Johnston, bass. St. Andrew’s Church (Toronto), 73 Simcoe St. 416-593-5600 x231. Free.

7:00: Gallery 345. unQuartet String Trio. Meghan Chen, violin; Nelson Moreno, violin; Cherry Y Cello. Guest: Peter Lutok, bassoon. 345 Sorauren Ave. 416-822-9781 or eventbrite.ca. $25; $10 (student). Cash only at the door.


8:00: Dr. Vedrana Subotic. Piano Concert. Chopin: Ballade No.3 in A-flat Op.47; Mozart Variations. Music by Bach. Penny Zolla, and Say. 345 Sorauren Ave. 416-822-9781 or eventbrite.ca. $25; $10 (student). Cash only at the door.

Tuesday May 21


Sunday May 19


3:00: Gallery 345. Jazz for Two: Dusan Ducic. Works by Gershwin, Bopping, Kapustin, Piazzolla, and Say. 345 Sorauren Ave. 416-822-9781 or eventbrite.ca. $25; $15 (student). Cash only at the door.

Monday May 20


Friday May 17

12:10: Music at St. Andrew’s. Noon-time Recital. Bill Bridges: Jazz standards and arrangements. Tanya Wills, vocalist; Bill Bridges, guitar; Jordan Klapman, piano; Ron Johnston, bass. St. Andrew’s Church (Toronto), 73 Simcoe St. 416-593-5600 x231. Free.

A. Concerts in the GTA

Thursday May 16


9:10: Swing Toronto. Swing Dance with Faith Amour & the Savoy Band. When I Get Low, I Get High; Cheek to Cheek; Dream a Little Dream of Me and others. Faith Amour, vocals; Aleksandar Vasiljikih, keyboard; John Collin, drums; Christopher Francisco, bass; Gabriel Kerekes, reeds. Dovercourt House, 805 Dovercourt Rd. 416-503-3195. $10.

Saturday May 18


8:00: Gallery 345. Uggy Beauties. 345 Sorauren Ave. 416-822-9781 or eventbrite.ca. $25; $10 (student). Cash only at the door.

8:00: Rakestar Arkestra. Sung Ra. Element Choir; Christine Duncan, director. Tranzac Club, 292 Brunswick Ave. 1-800-838-3006. $15; $10 (student).


9:10: Swing Toronto. Swing Dance with Faith Amour & the Savoy Band. When I Get Low, I Get High; Cheek to Cheek; Dream a Little Dream of Me and others. Faith Amour, vocals; Aleksandar Vasiljikih, keyboard; John Collin, drums; Christopher Francisco, bass; Gabriel Kerekes, reeds. Dovercourt House, 805 Dovercourt Rd. 416-503-3195. $10.

Sunday May 19


3:00: Gallery 345. Jazz for Two: Dusan Ducic. Works by Gershwin, Bopping, Kapustin, Piazzolla, and Say. 345 Sorauren Ave. 416-822-9781 or eventbrite.ca. $25; $15 (student). Cash only at the door.

Monday May 20


Tuesday May 21

- **7:30:** Canadian Opera Company. Otello. See May 3.

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**Wednesday May 22**
- **8:00:** Toronto Bach Festival. Opening Concert; Brandenburg Five. Bach: Tritt auf die Glaubensbahn BWV1041; Brandenburg Concerto No.5 BWV1052; Concerto in a Minor BWV1050; Concerto in a for violin BWV1041; Du wahrer Gott und Davids Sohn

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**Thursday May 23**
- **5:00:** People for Education. Telling Tales Out of School. A gala benefit to support People for Education. Elvira Kurt, host; Sofia Kay, singer/songwriter; Sharon and Bram; and other performers. Streetcar Crowsnest, 345 Carlaw Ave. 416-534-0100. $125; $100 (per ticket, two or more).
- **7:00:** Ukrainian Art Song Project. Concerts in a Theme. Olesya Verzole, soprano; Andrea Ludwig, mezzo; Taras Chmil, tenor; Robert Kortgaard, piano. Gallery 345, 345 Sorauren Ave. 416-822-9781 or ukrainianartsong.ca. $35; $20(St).
- **8:00:** Ron Davis and SymphRONica. SymphRONica & The Instrumental Music Liberation Front! Music by David Gill, Downes and others. Ron Davis, piano; Kevin Barrett, guitar; Mike Downes, bass; Aline Homzy, violin; Raphael Weinroth-Browne, cello. 918 Bathurst Centre for Culture, Arts, Media and Education, 918 Bathurst St. 416-347-6765. $20/$25(Student/Senior). Food and drinks from 7pm.

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**Friday May 24**
- **8:00:** Toronto Bach Festival. Brandenburg Five. Bach: Tritt auf die Glaubensbahn BWV1041; Brandenburg Concerto No.5 BWV1052; Concerto in a for violin BWV1050; Concerto in a for violin BWV1041; Du wahrer Gott und Davids Sohn

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**Saturday May 25**
- **12:00 noon:** Tafelmusik. Fantasticus: Close Encounters Chamber Series. Patricia Ahern, violin; Chris Verrette, violin; Dominic Teresi, dulcian; Lucas Harris, lute; Charlotte Nediger, harpsichord. Church of the Holy Trinity, 19 Trinity Sq. 416-964-6337. $42. Also May 25. (Temerty Theatre).
- **7:30:** Canadian Opera Company. La bohème. See May 2.
- **7:30:** Toronto Choristers. 27th Annual Concert. Sir John A. Macdonald Collegiate Institute, 2300 Pharmacy Ave., Scarborough. torontochoristers.ca. $15.
- **8:00:** B-Xalted! Sing joyfully. Choir of writers, artists and arts workers. Mozart: Coronation Mass; Ave Verum Corpus; Bach: Sheep may safely graze; Haydn: Inannis et Venae Cur; Brahms: How Lovely Are Thy Dwelling; and other works. Dallas Chorley, soprano; Rebecca Gray, alto; Charles Davidson, tenor; David Walsh, tenor; Janaka Welihinda, bass; Andrew Adair, organ; Simon Walker, conductor. Church of St. Mary Magdalene (Toronto), 477 Manning Ave. 416-823-1233. $25; $15(unemployed).
- **8:30:** Fantasticus: Close Encounters Chamber Series. Patricia Ahern, violin; Chris Verrette, violin; Dominic Teresi, dulcian; Lucas Harris, lute; Charlotte Nediger, harpsichord. Church of the Holy Trinity, 19 Trinity Sq. 416-964-6337. $42. Also May 25. (Temerty Theatre).
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- **8:00:** Toronto Bach Festival. Opening Concert; Brandenburg Five. Bach: Tritt auf die Glaubensbahn BWV1041; Brandenburg Concerto No.5 BWV1052; Concerto in a for violin BWV1050; Concerto in a for violin BWV1041; Du wahrer Gott und Davids Sohn
A. Concerts in the GTA

BWV23. Hélène Brunet, soprano; Daniel Taylor, countertenor; Nick Vettmeyer, tenor; Joel Allison, bass; Luc Beauséjour, harpsichord; and other soloists; John Abberger, conductor. St. Barnabas Anglican Church, 361 Danforth Ave. 416-466-8241. $42; $37(sr); $15(30 and under). Festival runs May 24-26.

● 8:00: Alliance Française de Toronto. Pierre Guillard with Georgian Bay. 24 Spadina Rd. 416-922-2014 x37. $25; $20(sr/st); $12(members).

● 8:00: Exultate Chamber Singers. Words and Music. Tate: Emily Carr Suite; Walker: I Asked of God; Daley: Grandmother Moon. Mark Ramsay, artistic director. Guest: Emily Sanford, poet. St. Thomas's Anglican Church (Toronto), 383 Huron St. 416-971-9229. $25; $20(sr); $10(st).

● 8:00: Ton Beau String Quartet. Music, She Wrote. Sgroi: String Quartet No.2; Simms: Swallow/Breathe; Cummings: Chasing Beauty; Beethoven: Op.18 No.4. Bijan Sepanji and Jeremy Potts, violins; Alex McLeod, viola; Sarah Steeves, violoncello. Agricola Lutheran Church, 25 Old York Mills Rd. 647-525-3161. $30; $20(st/arts workers). Concert in memory of Rebekah Cummings.


Saturday May 25

● 2:00: Common Thread Community Chorus. Music, Community & Social Justice. CT Kids, and special guests Pat Humphries and Sandy O. of Emma's Revolution. Estonian House, 958 Broadview Ave. 647-345-7743 or eventbrite.ca/e/bach-and-the-french-style-luc-beausjour-solo-harpsichord-sat-may-25-6-30pm


● 7:00: Café e Cultura Toronto. Tribute to Tom Jobim. Jobim: Dindi; Caramuru: Cigarra (Cicada); Jobim: A correnteza (The River’s Current); Caramuru: Sapo-cururu (Cururu Frog); Jobim: Água de beber (Drinking Water); and other works. Fabio Caramuru, piano. eventbrite.ca/fabio-caramuru. $60; $30(st). Reception to follow: complimentary.
appetizers; drinks available for purchase.

• 7:15: Toronto Gilbert and Sullivan Society.
  Iolanthe. Operetta in concert. Audience members will be the chorus! St. Andrew's United Church (Bloor St.), T1, Bloor St E. 416-763-0832. $10. Refreshments included.


• 7:30: Oakville Chamber Orchestra. The Unity of Humanity. Williams: Three Pieces from Schindler's List; Menuhin: The Other (world premiere); Mendelssohn: Symphony No. 3 "Scottish". Arielle Silverberg, violin; Ariel Han: clarinet; John Sotos, piano; Will Bustin, drums; Harvey Patterson, conductor.


• 8:00: Cathedral Bluffs Symphony Orchestra. Subscription Concert 5. Favourites from ballets such as Swan Lake, Nutcracker, Romeo and Juliet, and other well-known masterpieces. YOU dance Apprentices of the National Ballet of Canada. P.C. Ho Theatre, Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto, 5183 Sheppard Ave. E., Scarborough. 416-879-5566. $35 ($30 student/senior; children under 12 are free). Pre-concert performance at 7:30pm: Musicians from St. Paul's L'Amoreaux Community Music Program.

• 8:00: Gallery 345. The Art of the Piano: James Giles. Works by Brahms, Schubert, Godovsky, Levitski, Rosenthal and others.

• 8:00: Mississauga Symphony Orchestra. The Resurrection. Mahler: Symphony No. 2 "Resurrection". Toronto Mendelssohn Choir. Living Arts Centre, Hammerson Hall, 4141 Living Arts Dr., Mississauga. 905-306-6000. $40-$65.

• 8:00: Oriana Women's Choir. Inspired: The Music of Jeff Enots. Jeff Enots' pieces hand-selected by the composer and other works. Calvin Presbyterian Church, 26 Delisle Ave. 416-526-6275. $25 ($20 under 12); $10 (students).

• 8:00: Scarborough Philharmonic Orchestras. East Meets West. Schubert: Quartet in Bb; Puccini: Crisantemi; Brunett: Quintet for Bassoon and String Quartet Op.2 No.4; Han: Lascio chio pianga from Rinaldo for soprano and string orchestra; Strauss: A Day We Were Young for women's choir and piano, and new music, arrangements, and commissions from members of the SPO community. SPO Women's Choir; Yiping Chao, soprano; Daniel Robinson, baritone; Larkin Hinder, bass; Ronald Royer, cellist; Mark Laidman, bass; David Seneda; The Watch. Young People's Theatre, 165 Front St. E. 416-694-8900. $30.

• 8:00: St. Jude's Celebration of the Arts. A Winchester Premiere. Mozart: Gloria from the Coronation Mass; Finzi: Let Us Garlands Bring song cycle; Ramin: Ubi Caritas; Vaughan Williams: Five Mystical Songs; Williams: O Praise the Lord. Kyle Guglielmo, baritone; St. Jude’s Choir; Simon Walker, director; Andrei Streliaev, organ/piano. St. Jude's Anglican Church, 165 William St., Oakville. 905-844-3972. $20. A preview of the musical selections from members of the SPO community.

• 9:00: Toronto Bach Festival. Late Night with Bach. Bach: Suite No.8 for Cello in D; Scott Edward Godin: Guided by voices; Isaiah Ceccarelli: With concord of sweet sounds. Elinor Frey, cello. The Black Swan, 54 Danforth Ave. 416-466-2841. $42; $37 (students) under 12 and under). Festival runs May 24-26.

• 10:00: Optionaria. Lowvill Live at Optionaria. Laura Gilles, vocals & guitar; Phil Marvy, bass; Will Bustin, drums; Joe Burke, lap steel. 2919 Dundas St. W. 416-604-2020. Free.


• 2:00: Mississauga Big Band Jazz Ensemble. Jazz at the Legion. Port Credit Legion, 35 Front St. N., Port Credit. 905-270-4757. PWYC.


Sunday May 26

• 1:00: Optionaria. Lowvill Live at Optionaria. Laura Gilles, vocals & guitar; Phil Marvy, bass; Will Bustin, drums; Joe Burke, lap steel. 2919 Dundas St. W. 416-604-2020. Free.


• 2:00: Mississauga Big Band Jazz Ensemble. Jazz at the Legion. Port Credit Legion, 35 Front St. N., Port Credit. 905-270-4757. PWYC.

A. Concerts in the GTA


3:30: Christ Church Deer Park. Jazz Whisperers: 20th Anniversary Celebrations. The Music of Miles Davis. Steve McDade, trumpet; Alex Dean, saxophone; Robi Botos, piano; Scott Alexander, bass; Brian Barlow, drums. 1570 Yonge St. 416-932-8071. Freemew offering. Religious service. Post-service wine and cheese reception.


7:30: New Music Concerts. Iridescence. McIntire: Cathedral Grove (and the Gray Jay); Ewen: Error and Erebus; Tesla (score by Andreyev). Matthias McIntire Notation; Sokolovic: Etva for solo violin and ensemble. Matthias McIntire, violin; Andriá Nýtko, violin; Mave Palmer, soprano; New Music Concerts Ensemble; Robert Aitken, director. Betty Oliphant Theatre, 404 Jarvis St. 416-961-6594. $35; $25(arts workers); $10(st). 7:15pm: pre-concert talk.

8:00: That Choir. The Moon’s Glow Once Lit. An evening of contemporary choral music specially chosen by members of the choir. Craig Pike, conductor. Trinity College Chapel, U of T, 6 Hoskin Ave. thatchoir.com. PWYC.

8:00: Toronto Improvisers Orchestra. Celebration of Gwendolyn MacEwen. MacEwen: Terror and Erebus; Tesla (score by Whitacre). www.NewMusicConcerts.com

LUTHERAN MASSES
Sun May 26 @ 3pm
TorontoBachFestival.org


3:30: Christ Church Deer Park. Jazz Whisperers: 20th Anniversary Celebrations. The Music of Miles Davis. Steve McDade, trumpet; Alex Dean, saxophone; Robi Botos, piano; Scott Alexander, bass; Brian Barlow, drums. 1570 Yonge St. 416-932-8071. Freemew offering. Religious service. Post-service wine and cheese reception.


7:30: New Music Concerts. Iridescence. McIntire: Cathedral Grove (and the Gray Jay); Ewen: Error and Erebus; Tesla (score by Andreyev). Matthias McIntire Notation; Sokolovic: Etva for solo violin and ensemble. Matthias McIntire, violin; Andriá Nýtko, violin; Mave Palmer, soprano; New Music Concerts Ensemble; Robert Aitken, director. Betty Oliphant Theatre, 404 Jarvis St. 416-961-6594. $35; $25(arts workers); $10(st). 7:15pm: pre-concert talk.

8:00: That Choir. The Moon’s Glow Once Lit. An evening of contemporary choral music specially chosen by members of the choir. Craig Pike, conductor. Trinity College Chapel, U of T, 6 Hoskin Ave. thatchoir.com. PWYC.

8:00: Toronto Improvisers Orchestra. Celebration of Gwendolyn MacEwen. MacEwen: Terror and Erebus; Tesla (score by Whitacre). www.NewMusicConcerts.com
Monday May 27


7:00: Opera Canada. Take Note! Emerging Artist Series. Mélanie Daisis, soprano; Ariana Maubou, mezzo; Noah Grove, baritone; Rachel Andrist, piano. Tulip Lounge, 1015 Mt. Pleasant Rd. 416-625-7501. $125; $100 (under 30); Tax receipt. Hors d’oeuvres, open bar. Limited seating. Street parking.


Tuesday May 28


10:00: Art Battle & SING! Festival. From Israel: Jazz Central. Shirayash, guitar; Noah Levin, drums; Joe Palma, trumpet; Simon Rivard, piano. Toronto, 73 Simcoe St. 416-593-5600 x231. Free. No late seating. Live on-air radio show.


1:30: torontochamber choir.ca. No late seating. Live on-air radio show.

Thursday May 30

12:00 noon: Jewish Music Week in Toronto. Toronto’s Stars Sing Jewish Disney. Artists from the Bravo Academy Performing for the Arts. Al Green Theatre, 750 Spadina Ave. 416-638-4492. $15/$10 (adv). Tickets at jwto.org or Eventbrite. $30; $15 (under 18). Tickets at stjohnsworleeventbrite.ca.

2:00: Jewish Music Week in Toronto. The Stephen Sondheim Hour. Tammy Everett, singer; Jeanne Wyse, piano. Al Green Theatre, 750 Spadina Ave. 416-638-4492. $15/$10 (adv). Tickets at sandwhoamburlee.eventbrite.ca.

6:00: Jewish Music Week in Toronto. Nofar Yacobi, Kati Szabo Kovari, soprano; Jesse Chevan, drums; Travis Pullman, bass. Bernard Bette Centre, 1003 Steeles Ave W. 416-638-4492. Free. Tickets required at twoshekelleventbrite.ca.


SING! The Toronto Vocal Arts Festival. A 45-minute concert. Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Denk Plays Mozart. Overture to Don Giovanni K527; Piano Concerto No.14 in E-flat K449; Rondo in a K511 (for solo piano); Piano Concerto No.25 in C K503. Jeremie Denk, leader and piano; Simon Rivard, RBC Resident Conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375. $34.75-$148. Also May 30, Jun 1.

Saturday June 1


2:00: Jewish Music Week in Toronto. Dir- ect from Israel: Jazz Central. Shai Jaschek, guitar; Rosa Lea Salamon, bass/vocals; Ben Friedkin, drums. Rex Hotel Jazz and Blues Bar, 194 Queen St. W. 416-633-4492. Free. Food and drink available for purchase.

7:30: Classical Context. Prehistoric Ligeti. Ligeti: String Quartet No.1; Metamorphoses Nocturnes; Ot Arany-dal; Sonata for Solo Cello; Musica Ricercata I & VIi; Cordes à vide. Quartor Despac; Elizabeth Lee, cello; Concerto in a, Matthew Counto, organ; Canadian Music Centre, 20 St. Joseph St. 416-961-6601. $20.


7:30: Music at the Toronto Oratory. Oratory Children’s Choir: Spring Concert. Works by Britten, Rutter, Mozart and others. Aaron James, director/compamist, Holy Family Roman Catholic Church, 1372 King St. W. 416-532-2879. Donations accepted.

8:00: New Music Concerts. Coffee House 345 (Revisited). Gallery 345, 345 Sorauren Ave. 416-961-9594. $60; $100 (tix). Includes complimentary snacks and bar. Proceeds to benefit New Music Concerts.

8:00: SING! The Toronto Vocal Arts Festival. SING! Retro-oke with Retrocity. C'est What, 67 Front St. E. 416-694-6900. $15.

8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Denk Plays Mozart. Overture to Don Giovanni K527; Piano Concerto No.14 in E-flat K449; Rondo in a K511 (for solo piano); Piano Concerto No.25 in C K503. Jeremie Denk, leader and piano; Simon Rivard, RBC Resident Conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375. $34.75-$148. Also May 30, Jun 1.

Jenna Simeonov, piano. St. John’s United Church (Oakville), 262 Randall St., Oakville. n/a. $40.


12:30: Cantemus Singers. Tanz und Springen/Dancing and Leaping. Franck: Bierlied; Lasso: Un jeune moine; Pange Lingua; Schütz: Tornate cari baci; Buxtehude: Missa Brevis for 5 voices. Michael Erdman, conductor; Church of the Holy Trinity, 19 Trinity Sq. 416-578-6602. $20; free(under 12). Also Jun 2(3pm).

12:30: Etoileicco Centennial Choir. After the Rain. Apostolov: After the Rain; Tanzen und Leaping. music by Byrd, Delibes, Fauré and others. Apostolov: After the Rain, Barefoot; Lauridsen: Les chansons des roses; and other works. Jensen: Blaze; flute; Peter Pinteric; clarinet; Steve Koh; violin; Yoon Woo Kim, cello; Evan Lambertson, cello; Amy Seuky Lee, piano; Gideon Gee-Bum Kim, artistic director/conductor. Quest: Daniel Ramjattan, guitar. Canadian Music Centre, 20 St. Joseph St. torontotessoni@hotmail.com. Donation.

8:00: Acoustic Harvest. Angelique France, St. Paul’s United Church (Scarborough), 200 McIntosh St., Scarborough. lillian.waithier@gmail.com. $25/$22(ad). 8:00: Canadian Sinfonietta. Wine and Cheese Concert. R. Strauss: Sonata in E-flat for Violin and Piano; Taneyev: Piano Quintet in G Op.30. Erika Crino, piano; Joyce Lai and Sherman, cello; Andrew Godfrey, violin. Donation.

8:00: North York Concert Orchestra/ JUBilate Singers/Hart House Chorus. Ode to Joy. Beethoven: Symphony No.9. Andrea Lett, soprano; Danielle MacMillan, mezzo; Michael Barrett, tenor; Bradley Christensen, baritone; Jubilate Singers; Hart House Chorus; Rafael Luz, conductor. Yorkminster Citadel. 1988 or brownpapertickets.com or nyco.ca. $30. Also May 29, 30.

9:00: Confluence. At the River. St. Thom as’s Anglican Church (Toronto), 385 Huron St. 416-410-4651. $30; $20(st). 7:15 pre-concert chat.

8:00: SING! The Toronto Vocal Arts Festival. Soundscapes: Dance Party. Opera House, Queen St. W. 416-604-6900. $30.

8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Denk Plays Mozart. Mozart: Overture to Don Giovanni K527; Piano Concerto No.14 in E-flat K449; Rondo in a K511 (for solo piano); Piano Concerto No.25 in C K503. Jeremy Denk, leader and piano; Simon Rivard, RBC Resident Conductor. Royal Thornton Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-588-3375. $34.75-$148. Also May 29, 30.


Jubilee Singers & North York Concert Orchestra with the Hart House Chorus

Music Mondays

Sunday June 2

12:15: Music Mondays. Acquired Taste Choir. Stephen Chatman: Remember; and

Saturday June 1

8 p.m. confluenceconcerts.ca

Confluence Concerts AT THE RIVER

Words and music inspired by an enduring image

Saturday, June 1


3:30: North Toronto Community Band. Spring Rhythms. Marches, classics, show tunes, big band and more. Danny Wilks, conductor; Phil Coonce, violin; Sharon Smith, vocalist. Tribute Communities Recital Hall, Acoladale East Building, 1450 Keele St. 416-736-5888. $20; $10(children 12 and under). Silent auction.

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

7:00: Strings Attached Orchestra. Family & Friends Annual Year End Concert. Isabel Bader Theatre, 93 Charles St. W. info@stringsattachedorchestra.com. $20.

7:30: Jewish Music Week in Toronto. Jerusalem Swing! The Manhattan Transfer; Simon Soro; Wendy Lands, singer; Canadian All-Star Swing Orchestra. Winter Garden Theatre, 189 Yonge St. 416-872-1212 or mirvish.com/ticketing. $40-$150.

7:30: North York Concert Orchestra/Jubi late Singers/Hart House Chorus. Ode to Joy. Beethoven: Symphony No.9. Andrea Lett, soprano; Danielle MacMillan, mezzo; Michael Barrett, tenor; Bradley Christensen, baritone; Jubilate Singers; Hart House Chorus; Rafael Luz, conductor. Church of St. Peter and St. Simon-the-Apostle, 525 Bloor St. E. 416-485-1988 or brownpapertickets.com or nyco.ca. $30; $25(st); $10(st). Also Jun 18(8pm), Yorkminster Citadel.


Monday June 3

Lunchtime Concerts

Pay-what-you-can

June 3 - Acquired Taste Choir
June 10 - James McLean & William Aide
June 17 - Andrew Sords
June 24 - Ilana Waldston

Church of the Holy Trinity

www.musicondaw.com

thewholenote.com

RESONANCE choir

The Mississauga Festival Choir’s youth and young adult choir.

OUR FOURTH ANNUAL SPRING CONCERT!
Saturday June 1, 2019 7:30 p.m.
First United Church: 151 Lakeshore Rd. West

TICKETS: mnfchoir.com

BEETHOVEN’S GLORIOUS 9TH SYMPHONY
Saturday June 1, 8 pm
Yorkminster Citadel
Sunday June 2, 7:30 pm
St. Simon-the-Apostle Church

Jubilee Singers & North York Concert Orchestra

with the Hart House Chorus

The Mississauga Festival Choir’s youth and young adult choir.

DANCE TO JOY

BETH DAVIS

Saturday June 1, 9 am
Yorkminster Citadel

Music Mondays

Sunday June 2

12:15: Music Mondays. Acquired Taste Choir. Stephen Chatman: Remember; and
other works. Church of the Holy Trinity, 19 Trinity Sq. 416-598-4521x223. PWYC ($10 suggested). Proceeds donated to a local charity.
● 8:00: Tafelmusik. Tafelmusik Baroque Summer Festival: Opening Night. Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and Chamber Choir; Ivars Taurins, choir director; Elisa Citterio; director. Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, 427 Bloor St. W. 416-964-6337. Free. Advanced general admission tickets will be available online for priority seating.

Tuesday June 4
● 4:45: Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre. MNjcc Suzuki End of Season Ensemble Concert. Al Green Theatre, Miles Nadal JCC, 750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211 x0 or MNjcc.org/choirconcert. $15. Also Jun 5.

Wednesday June 5
● 7:30: National Ballet of Canada. Physical Thinking. See Jun 1. Also Jun 6, 7.

Thursday June 6
● 12:00 noon: Roy Thomson Hall. Noon-Hour Concert Series: Here’s to Song! Oakville Choir for Children and Youth. 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4255. Free.

Friday June 7
● 7:30: Opera by Request. A Summer Feast. Purcell: If Music Be the Food of Love; Holby: Bon Appetit (complete with real chocolate cake); Berkeley: A Dinner Engagement. Meghan Syphon, mezzo; Lawrence Shirke, baritone; Gwendolyn Yearwood, soprano; Josh Clemenger and Francis Domingue, tenors; William Shoookoff, piano and conductor. College Street United Church, 452 College St. 416-455-3965. $20.

B. Concerts Beyond the GTA


Wednesday May 1
● 12:00 noon: Midday Music with Shipper. Chamber Music Concert. Winners from the Barrie Music Festival. H'way Pentecostal Church, 50 Anne St. N., Barrie. 705-726-1181. PWYC.
● 7:30: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. Sing Me a Song. Bach: Brandenburg Concerto No.6 in B-flat; Dvorák: Serenade for Winds in d; Brahms: Serenade No.2 in A. James Mason, conductor. First United Church (Waterloo). 250 St. W., Waterloo. 519-745-4711 or 1-888-745-4717. $36. Also May 3 (Guelph); 4 (Cambridge).

Thursday May 2
● 7:00: Magisteria Soloists. Eight! Brahms: String Sextet No.1 and works by Ferdinand Thiérier. Museum London Theatre, 421 Ridout St. N., London. 519-681-0333. $30; $25(sr); $15(st); $10(child).
● 7:30: FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre. Art of Time Ensemble. Doghouse Roses - The Words & Music of Steve Earle. Andy Maize, vocals; Susie Ungerlieder, vocals; Tom Wilson, vocals; Gregory Hoskins, vocals; Michael Ondaatje, reader; Rick Roberts, reader; Andrew Burashko, piano. 280 St. Paul St., St. Catharines. 905-688-0722, 575; $46(member); $25(st).

Friday May 3
● 8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. Sing Me a Song. Bach: Brandenburg Concerto No.6 in B-flat; Dvorák: Serenade for Winds in d; Brahms: Serenade No.2 in A. James Mason, conductor. New World Centre United Church, 87 Dean Ave., Guelph. 519-745-4711 or 1-888-745-4717. $36. Also May 4 (Waterloo); 5 (Cambridge).

Saturday May 4
● 10:00pm: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. Flowers Wake Up. KWS Musicians; Barbara Croual, storyteller. Waterloo Region Museum, 10 Huron Rd., Kitchener. 519-745-4711 or 1-888-745-4717. $15; $11(child). Also Apr 27 (Woolwich Memorial Centre); May 11 (Conrad Centre for the Performing Arts); 10pm: Pre-concert activities.
● 2:00: King Edward Chain. Messiah Plus! With chamber orchestra. Handel: Choruses. Uses from Messiah; Dvorák: Songs of Nature; Brahms: How Lovely is Thy Dwelling Place; Puccini: Requiem; Rachmaninoff: Ave Maria; Ghershwin: Medley. Oliver Balaburski, conductor. Collier Street United Church, 112 Collier St., Barrie. 705-733-7955. $25; $15(st); Also 7:30pm.

B. Music for Life Ensemble. Music for a Cure. Forest Brook Community Church, 60 Kearney Dr. Ajax. 647-409-2274. $15; $10(sr); $10(st); free (child 12 and under).

May 1 - June 2 2019 | 55

thewholenote.com
B. Concerts Beyond the GTA


7:00: Opera by Request. Miss Havişam's Wedding Night and Waterbird Talk. Music by Dominick Argento. Arianna DeSantis, soprano; Michael Sollars, baritone;具体信息缺失；Repeat at 8:00.

7:00: Maple Leaf Singers. 6:00 PM. Free. Snacks provided at intermission.

7:00: St. Lawrence Strings. 7:00 PM. $20/$15(adv); $15/$10(sr/adv); $10/$5(child).

7:00: Duo Premier. 7:00 PM. $25/$20(adv); $15/$10(sr/adv); $10/$5(child).

7:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society. Complete Mozart String Quintets 1-4. Mozart: String Quintet No.1 in B-flat; No.5 in D; and No.3. Lafayette Quartet; Yariv Aloni, viola. KCWS Music Room, 57 Young St. W., Waterlo. $19-86.67/Music $14. $25(st).
May 12(mat).

Sunday May 12

Tuesday May 15
- 12:00: noon. Music at St. Andrew’s. Organ Recital. Marilyn Reesor, organ. St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church (Barrie), 47 Owen St., Barrie. 705-726-1181. $10; free(st); $5(child).
- 8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society. In Concert. Selection of songs; Ann Southam: Rivers; Set II. Karen Reimer-Watts, piano & vocals; Vega Hingert-McDonald, violin & vocals. KWCMS Music Room, 57 Young St. W., Waterloo. 519-886-1673. Admission by donation; Receipts for $20 or more.

Thursday May 18
- 8:00: Sweetwater Music Festival. Sweet-Water Jazz III. Mark Fewer and Drew Jurecka, violins; Nathan Hiltz, guitarist; Joseph Phillips, double bass. Heartwood Hall, 3rd Ave. E., Owen Sound. 519-877-1400. $30/$25(adw with surcharge). Venue accessible only by stairs.

Saturday May 19
- 8:00: Night Theater Too. In Concert. Invited musicians, poets and spoken word artists. Pinnacle Playhouse, 256 Pinnacle St., Belleville. 613-295-9115 or 613-849-1796. $10.

Sunday May 19
- 2:30: Niagara Symphony Orchestra. A Wild Ride (On the Opera Train). Selections by Verdi, Puccini, Donizetti. Chorus Niagara, Robert Cooper, artistic director; Orchestra: Niagara Children’s Choir, Amanda Neil, artistic director; Bradley Thachuk, conductor. Partridge Hall, FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, 250 St. Paul St., St. Catharines. 905-688-0722. $69; $64(adw); $12(st/child); $33(30 and under); $20(work arts); $15(Eyeb0).

Tuesday May 21
B. Concerts Beyond the GTA

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

1. **Belleville Theatre Guild**
   - The Last Five Years. Music and lyrics by Jason Robert Brown. Pinacle Playhouse Theatre, 256 Pine St NE, Belleville. 613-976-1442. $25; $22(slr). 10:30am, 3:00pm. Runs to Jun 16. Wed-Sat(3:00pm), Sun(2:00pm).

2. **Brampton Music Theatre**

3. **Canadian Opera Company**

4. **Canadian Opera Company**

5. **Canadian Opera Company**

6. **Canadian Opera Company**

7. **Canadian Stage**

8. **Civic Light Opera Company**
   - Man of La Mancha. Music by Mitch Leigh, lyrics by Joe Darion, book by David Waksman. Zan Cultural Centre, 1650 Finch Ave W. 416-755-1717. $28. Opens Jun 5, 7:30pm. Runs to Jun 16. Wed(1:00pm), Thurs(4:00pm), Sun(2:00pm).

9. **Clarker Music Theatre**
   - At the Movies. Eden United Church, 3051 Battlefield Rd., Mississauga. 905-828-1933. $25. May 10. 7:30pm. Also May 11(2pm).

10. **Cor Unum Ensemble**
    - Diva & Belinda. OperaCrunchy, Trinity College Chapel, U of T. 416-371-6999. $20; $10(students). 4:00pm, 7:30pm. Also May 10(11:00am).

11. **Drayton Entertainment**

12. **Drayton Entertainment**

13. **Drayton Entertainment**

14. **Drayton Entertainment**

15. **Grand Theatre**
    - Cabaret. Music by John Kander, lyrics by Fred Ebb, book by John Kander and Fred Ebb. Civic Light Opera Company, 471 Richmond St., London. 519-672-8800. $50-$55. Opens Apr 9, 7:30pm. Runs to May 11. Tues-Thurs(7:30pm), Wed(1pm), Fri(3:30pm), Sat/Sun(2:00pm).

16. **Grand Theatre**
    - Mama Mia! Music and lyrics by Benny Anderson, Bjorn Ulvaeus, and some songs with Stig Anderson, book by Catherine Johnson. Grand Theatre, 471 Richmond St., London. 519-672-8800. $56-$68. Opens Apr 23, 7:30pm. Runs to May 12. Tues(7:30pm), Fri(3:30pm), Sat/Sun(2pm).

17. **Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company**
    - Kishnis ’n Grits. By Thom Allis and Míchík Barnès. Greenwin Theatre, Toronto Centre for the Arts, 5040 Yonge St, 416-932-9995. $28 and up. Opens May 21, 8pm. Runs to Jun 2. Mon-Thurs(5:30pm), Wed(1pm), Fri/Sat/Sun(1pm).

18. **I Fiori di Barocco Ensemble**

19. **Istituto Italiano di Cultura di Torino**

20. **Jewish Music Week in Toronto**

21. **Kempfent Community Players**
    - The Wedding Singer. Music by Matthew Sklar, lyrics by Chad Beguelin, book by Chad Beguelin and Tim Herlihy, based on the film. Ferndale Banquet Hall, 24 Ferndale Industrial Dr., Barrie. 705-739-4228. $25; $20(students). Opens May 6, 8pm. Runs to May 12. Wed-Sat(8:30pm), Sun(2:30pm).

22. **Lower Oxford Street Theatre**
Dominick Argento. College St. United Church, Music by Dominick Argento. Piano and conductor. College St. United Church, 452 College St. 416-455-2365. $20. May 3, 7:30pm. Also May 4(Indianapolis, 7pm).

Opera by Request. Miss Havisham’s Wedding Night and Waterbird Talk. Music by Dominick Argento. Piano and conductor. College St. United Church, 452 College St. 416-455-2365. $20. May 3, 7:30pm. Also May 4(Indianapolis, 7pm).

 opera by Request. Miss Havisham’s Wedding Night and Waterbird Talk. Music by Dominick Argento. Piano and conductor. College St. United Church, 452 College St. 416-455-2365. $20. May 3, 7:30pm. Also May 4(Indianapolis, 7pm).

Theatre Anacaster Chorus. Good Vibrations: Sounds of the 60s. Old Firehall Arts Centre, 334 Willow St. E. Ancaster. 905-304-7469. $26 ($26($26; $21(1)); $26($26; $21(1)). Opens May 24, 8pm. Runs to May 26, FriSat(8pm), SatSun(2pm).


Opera by Request. Nabucco. Music by Giuseppe Verdi, libretto by Temistocle Solera. William Shookoff, piano and conductor. Church St United Church, 1700 Madison Dr., Mississauga. 416-455-2365. $20. June 1, 7:30pm.

Opera by Request. A Summer Feast. William Shookoff, piano and conductor. College Street United Church, 452 College St. 416-455-2365. $20. June 1, 7:30pm.

Opera Canada. Take Note! Emerging Artist Series. Tulip Lounge, 1015 Mt. Pleasant Rd. 416-625-7510. $12; $10(under 30). May 27, 7pm.


Surinder S. Mundra. Musical Morsels & Afternoon Tea: A Most Elegant Mother’s Day Concert. St. George’s Anglican Church (Picking Village), 77 Randall Dr. Ajax. 905-683-7981. $30; $25(1); $15(2). May 12, 2:30pm.

Theatre Anacaster Chorus. Good Vibrations: Sounds of the 60s. Old Firehall Arts Centre, 334 Willow St. E. Ancaster. 905-304-7469. $26; $21; $26; $21. Opens May 24, 8pm. Runs to May 26, FriSat(8pm), SatSun(2pm).
It has been a long, wet, cold road that we, weary citizens of Southern Ontario, have trod since the end of December. As of the publication of this issue of The WholeNote, it will have been about six weeks since the official start of spring; as of the actual writing of this column, in mid-to-late April, we have yet to experience any consistent period of the kind of spring weather that could conceivably inspire hope, cheerfulness, or meteorological trust. (As I look out the window at the world into which I will eventually have to journey, I’m treated to a vision of Toronto at its gloomy worst, with bright umbrellas on rain-soaked sidewalks providing the only glimpse of colour.) But before we allow ourselves to give in to despair in this season of perpetual discomfort, and without resorting to flowery clichés about how all of this rain will be worthwhile, we should perhaps consider the various ways in which things are, in fact, getting better in May. The first: May will be the first month since August in which the sun will be setting after 8pm for the majority of the month, making the decision between going out to see a show and staying in to watch yet more Netflix easier. The second: May marks something of a beginning to the run-up to the TD Toronto Jazz Festival, which will be starting on June 21, and which will be covered in a variety of ways, as in previous years, by The WholeNote, both in print and online. The third: there will be a lot of great music happening.

The multi-night engagement, once a norm for clubs, is something of a rarity today. It is a tradition carried on by a few notable clubs, such as Manhattan’s venerable Blue Note, which, this May, will present funk saxophone legend Maceo Parker for no fewer than 12 performances over the course of six days. When we see a multi-night engagement in Toronto, however, it’s typically for a two-night run, which tends to happen regularly at The Rex, Jazz Bistro, and a few other venues. It is noteworthy, then, that Jazz Bistro will be hosting The North, a collaborative, international quartet made up of Toronto-based musicians Mike Murley (saxophone) and David Brash (piano), Sweden’s Johnny Åman (bass) and Denmark’s Anders Mogensen (drums), for three evenings near the end of May. Winning a 2018 JUNO Award for their self-titled album, the theme that binds this collective together is a shared cultural experience of living in “the north,” whether in Canada or Scandinavia. Most WholeNote readers will likely be familiar with Brash and Murley, both of whom are mature, technically accomplished players who tend to favour communication and big-picture group improvisation over individual instrumental athleticism, an outlook which seems to be shared by Åman and Mogensen. The North appears in Toronto as part of touring efforts that have led them throughout Europe, to Australia and to China; check them out at Jazz Bistro on May 23, 24 and 25.

Another multi-night engagement will be taking place at the end of May at The Rex, on May 30 and 31, as Teri Parker’s Free Spirits ensemble takes the stage in tribute to pianists Mary Lou Williams and Geri Allen. For those unfamiliar with these two seminal figures in the history of jazz piano, some context. Williams (1910-1981) was once a norm for clubs, is something of a rarity today. It is a tradition carried on by a few notable clubs, such as Manhattan’s venerable Blue Note, which, this May, will present funk saxophone legend Maceo Parker for no fewer than 12 performances over the course of six days. When we see a multi-night engagement in Toronto, however, it’s typically for a two-night run, which tends to happen regularly at The Rex, Jazz Bistro, and a few other venues. It is noteworthy, then, that Jazz Bistro will be hosting The North, a
Teri Parker at the Halifax Jazz Festival, 2017

Gillespie and Thelonious Monk. Williams was a major influence on Allen (1957–2017), who led the Mary Lou Williams Collective, in addition to her own groups, which regularly featured musicians such as Wallace Roney, Ron Carter, and Terri Lyne Carrington. In addition to Parker, the Free Spirits band consists of trumpeter Rebecca Hennessy, alto saxophonist Allison Au, bassist Lauren Falls, and drummer Sarah Thawer, who will be playing Williams and Allen compositions that span almost 100 years of jazz.

**Mother’s Day**: An important reminder for all readers: Mother’s Day is May 12. If you are reading this closer to the beginning of May, there is still ample time to organize a card, make some plans, and pick out some sort of gift. Unless your mother is particularly fond of flowers, chocolate and the like, try your best to avoid these trite avatars of affection; instead, consider giving her something that she might actually like, such as quality time with you. While my own mother has described spending long periods of time with me as “something of a chore,” she still enjoys my company in small doses, particularly when I put in the effort to actually make plans with her that she might enjoy. (How was I to remember, when I dragged her along to watch when I put in the effort to actually make plans with her that she might enjoy. (How was I to remember, when I dragged her along to watch the climbing documentary Free Solo, that she was afraid of heights, and would spend the following hour and a half in the movie theatre with her hands over her eyes, cursing at me?) In any case, the proposition at which I’m driving is that you, dear reader, consider taking the mother figure in your life to one of the fine shows happening on Mother’s Day weekend. Amongst the many possibilities, there are a few bona fide Mother’s Day performances happening, including (but not limited to) a Mother’s Day brunch at Lula Lounge, a Mother’s Day Jazz Brunch at Hugh’s Room, featuring a number of excellent singers, including Joanna Majoko, Mingjia Chen and Jocelyn Barth, and a Mother’s Day–themed evening performance by Fern Lindzon at Jazz Bistro, all happening on Sunday May 12. In any case, whatever you decide to do, just don’t take your mother to a movie that gives her motion sickness, especially not after taking her out to a two-hour tasting-menu meal. She will thank you.

**MAINLY CLUBS, MOSTLY JAZZ QUICK PICKS**

- **May 4, 2:30pm**: Pat LaBarbera Quartet, The Pilot. Internationally renowned saxophonist LaBarbera leads his quartet at The Pilot’s second-floor Stealth Lounge.
- **May 12, 7pm**: Mother’s Day with the Fern Lindzon Trio, Jazz Bistro. Pianist/vocalist Lindzon hosts a special Mother’s Day–themed evening at Jazz Bistro.
- **May 23 to May 25, 9pm**: The North, Jazz Bistro. The cross-border collective The North performs for three consecutive nights as part of their international tour, with David Brash, Mike Murley, Johnny Aman and Anders Mogensen.
- **May 30 and 31, 9:30pm**: Teri Parker’s Free Spirits, The Rex. Parker leads a new quintet for two nights at The Rex in tribute to pianists Geri Allen and Mary Lou Williams.

Colin Story is a jazz guitarist, writer and teacher based in Toronto. He can be reached at www.colinstory.com, on Instagram and on Twitter.

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**May 26 at 4:30pm** will feature the music of Miles Davis, with Steve McDade (trumpet), Alex Dean (saxophone), RobiBotos (piano), Scott Alexander (bass) & Brian Barlow (drums)

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Lunchtime Jersey Boys!
musicologist Margaret Cormier providing an insider’s look at the music. You’ll learn about what makes La Bohème one of the world’s most loved operas. Woodbridge Library, 150 Woodbridge Ave., Woodbridge. Advanced registration is recommended by calling the Woodbridge Library branch of the Vaughan Public Library at 905-653-7323.

- 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, 35 Hazelton Ave. 416-921-3618. heliconiansclub.org. Tickets $25, children under 12 free when accompanied by an adult.

- May 12 7:00: Canadian Opera Company. Staging Otello and Otello with the Stratford Festival. Explore the story of Otello as told through Shakespeare’s Otello and Verdi’s Otello in partnership with the Stratford Festival. Shakespeare scholar Jane Freeman investigates how Shakespeare, Verdi, and the artists performing each work employ the tools of their respective crafts to convey the human character. Learn how each genre’s unique qualities lend themselves to telling the world’s grandest narratives. Education Centre, Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. (at University Ave.). Reserve tickets in advance at coc.ca/OperAInsights or at 416-363-8231. Free.

- May 19 7:00: Classical Music Club Toronto. Verdi’s Otello. In conjunction with the Canadian Opera Company’s current production, our program will survey a number of audio and video recordings. For further information, visit classicalmusicclubtoronto.org or contact John Sharpe at 416-898-2549 or torontoshapro@yahoo.ca. Annual membership: $25(regular); $10(student). Free for first-time visitors. Donations accepted for refreshments.

- May 19 2:00: Toronto Opera Club. Johannnes Debus, Music Director; Canadian Opera Company, guest speaker. Edward John-Biggs, Faculty of Music, 80 Queens Park, Room 330. 416-924-3940. $10.


- May 27 10:00am: Jewish Music Week in Toronto. The Holocaust’s Impact on Music. In this compelling series, Eric Gertner examines the impact of the Nazis’ coming to power and the Holocaust on Jewish musicians and Jewish music. Beginning with 1933, Eric will take us through the changing musical decades to the present, when we witness for the first time in history a Grammy nomination for a Yiddish album. Columbia Centre, Carriari Room, 501 Lawrence Ave. W. 416-638-4492 Free admission.


- June 02 10:00am: CAMMAC Toronto Region. Reading for singers and instrumentalists of Dvorák’s Jakobin Motet. Alexandra Bourque, conductor. Christ Church Deer Park, 1570 Yonge St. 416-386-0258. $10; $6(members).

- June 03 10:00am: Labyrinth Ontario. Bulgarian Singing with Tsvetanka Varneva. Tsvetanka brings her decades of experience as a choir director, vocal teacher, and highly respected performer to teach solo and group styles of Bulgarian singing. The workshop covers specific vocal techniques and several styles of Bulgarian repertoire. Vocalists of any background are welcome. Students at all levels are welcome. Easternmost United Church, 310 Danforth Ave. Further information at labyrinthontario.com. Also Jun 4-7, $450.

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www.festivalclassica.com

LUMINATO
June 7 to 23
Toronto, ON

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Luminato 2019 takes place June 7 to 23, 2019 at various venues across the city and is jam-packed with the most exciting theatre, music, visual art, opera, dance, film and more from Canada and around the world. Spanning 17 days, the festival lineup features both paid and free indoor and outdoor events including a larger-than-life mirrored maze and massive choral event.

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www.luminatofestival.com

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June 7 to 16
2064 ave. de Marlowe, Montréal, QC, H4A 3L5

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May 25, 8pm: Assumption Hall, Windsor; May 26, 8pm: Paroisse Ste Anne Parish, Tecumseh; June 20, 8pm: Ingersoll Cheese Museum, Ingersoll; June 21, 8pm: Sanderson Centre, Brantford; June 23, 2pm: Queenston Heights, Niagara-on-the-Lake.

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Daily listings information (events June 1 through Sept 7) must be emailed to listings@thewholenote.com by MAY 8.

For The Green Pages contact Karen Ages at 416-323-2232 x26 or karen@thewholenote.com – print edition deadline: MAY 10
Editor’s Corner
DAVID OLDS

I must confess that German-Canadian cellist Johannes Moser was more or less unknown to me until the arrival of his recording of the Lutosławski and Dutilleux Cello Concertos with the Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin under Thomas Sondergard (Pentatone PTC 5186 689 pentatonenmusic.com). That’s the trouble with having someone like Terry Robbins as delegate for most of the string recordings that cross my desk. Checking my archive I was surprised to note that Terry has reviewed two of Moser’s discs since we instigated the Strings Attached column back in 2011. Fortunately for me, he has such a backlog of titles at the moment that I have no qualms about cherry picking for my own purposes – two months in a row – a few discs that would otherwise have gone to him.

You may recall from my column last month that Witold Lutosławski (1913-1994) is one of my favourite composers, I had the great pleasure and privilege of meeting that fine gentleman in October 1993 when he conducted the New Music Concerts Ensemble with soloists Fujiko Imajishi, violin, and soprano Valdine Anderson. We did not know it at the time, but that concert would turn out to be the last he ever gave; he died of cancer less than four months later. The recording of that concert was released independently and later reissued by Naxos (naxos.com).

By the way, the photo of Lutosławski that graces that album cover is by André Leduc, who you may remember from last month’s issue. André and I also had the opportunity to meet Henri Dutilleux (1916-2013) when he was the guest of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and the University of Toronto back in 1988. The TSO performance of three of Dutilleux’s large orchestral works under the direction of Jukka-Pekka Saraste was released the following year (Finlandia Records 3984-2 23524-2).

I sometimes wonder why it takes me so long to write this column. Often it is because of side trips such as this down memory lane, revisiting treasured recordings that slow me down.

So, back to Johannes Moser: it was an easy decision to keep this fabulous new CD for myself. His biography makes a point of saying that he was born into a musical family in 1979 with dual German and Canadian citizenship. I was not able to find anything more about his Canadian heritage initially, but Tourism Saskatchewan provides the information that “Moser is the son of Saskatchewan musical royalty; [his] mother is Saskatchewan-born soprano Edith Wiens.” He began playing the cello at eight. Ten years later, he was studying with the renowned Lithuanian cellist David Geringas, a pupil of Rostropovich, who won the Gold Medal at the Tchaikovsky Competition in 1970.

In 2002, Moser himself received that same honour. He is enjoying an electricly international career, performing with top orchestras around the world – the Berlin, Vienna, New York, Los Angeles and Israel Philharmonics to name a few – and has recently formed a trio with violinist Vadim Gluzman and pianist Evgeny Sudbin.

Moser’s performance on this new disc is superb. The Lutosławski concerto begins quietly, with an opening motive like a heartbeat that is intermittently interrupted by scurrying sounds above and below the pitch of the pulse. The interruptions gradually become more insistent and ugly. Much of the disc gives this same impression and at times I found myself wondering where such anger was coming from. Even Saariaho’s Sept papiillons (Seven Butterflies) more often resembles the buzzing of angry bees than the floating grace of its namesakes. For all that, there is a compelling power to this music that drew me in and held my attention. And there are moments of respite, for instance in the middle movement of Salonen’s knock, breathe, shine, where for an instant I thought the eerie sound coming from the cello was actually a theremin. But even with that I found that I could not listen to the whole disc at one sitting, despite the inclusion of a “palette cleanser” in the form of what may well be the first piece ever written for solo cello, Chiacona by Giuseppe Colombi (1635-1694).

Mystery Variations was a set of 31 pieces that were commissioned on behalf of Finnish cellist Anssi Karttunen, in which each composer describes as “a vision of the death of an organism”; in music this vision is “violent and ugly.” Much of the disc gives this same impression and at times I found myself wondering where such anger was coming from. Even Saariaho’s Sept papiillons (Seven Butterflies) more often resembles the buzzing of angry bees than the floating grace of its namesakes. For all that, there is a compelling power to this music that drew me in and held my attention. And there are moments of respite, for instance in the middle movement of Salonen’s knock, breathe, shine, where for an instant I thought the eerie sound coming from the cello was actually a theremin. But even with that I found that I could not listen to the whole disc at one sitting, despite the inclusion of a “palette cleanser” in the form of what may well be the first piece ever written for solo cello, Chiacona by Giuseppe Colombi (1635-1694).

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Bernd Alois Zimmermann (1918-1970) was already dead by his own hand when I first discovered his music in my formative years, but what a revelation that music was. From a piece for solo cello, to electronic compositions, works for large orchestra and the thought-to-be “un-performable opera” (due to its complexity and the sheer size of the resources required) Die Soldaten, I was blown away by everything I heard. Other than the early Sonata for Viola Solo performed by Rivka Golani and the late Four Short Studies for solo cello performed by Siegfried Palm, both under the auspices of New Music Concerts, I don’t believe I have ever heard Zimmermann’s music live. I take heart from a new Ondine release which confirms that his oeuvre is still in favour, at least in some parts of the world. Recent recordings of the Violin Concerto (1950), Photoptosis (1968) and Die Soldaten Vocal Symphony (1957-1966) are here performed by violinist Leila Josefowicz, vocal soloists, and the Finnish RSO under the direction of Hannu Lintu (ODE 1325-2 naxos-direct.com). It is the middle of these works that I would suggest as an introduction to this extremely forward-looking German composer. From the opening bars of Photoptosis (Incidence of Light) for large orchestra, which seem to emerge from some primordial ooze, the music grows in intensity through sharper and richer textures. Out of this dense stew arise quotations from familiar iconic works – Beethoven’s Ninth, Scriabin’s Poem of Ecstasy and Tchaikovsky’s The Nutcracker – and the tension recedes, only to build relentlessly again to an explosive finale.

During the years Zimmermann was working on his opera, he was also preparing a concert version roughly one third the length of the two-hour original. Calling for soprano, alto, contralto, tenor, baritone and bass soloists, and interspersing instrumental sections among the operatic scenes, the Vocal Symphony provides a precis of the extravagantly dramatic work. The opera was originally broadcast on radio in 1963 and received its first full staging in 1965 by the Cologne Opera under Michael Gielen. Since that time it has enjoyed several productions in each of the subsequent decades, most often in Europe, but also Britain, the USA and in 2016, Buenos Aires. In Zimmermann’s centenary year, Die Soldaten enjoyed productions in Nuremberg, Madrid and Cologne. I have a feeling that recordings are as close as Toronto audiences are likely to get to the opera in the foreseeable future.

And to bring it full circle, I will mention one more of my “brushes with greatness,” this time not in my formative years, but in those of the artist. During my time as a music programmer at CJRT-FM in the early 1990s, I had the opportunity to meet Leila Josefowicz as a child prodigy on her first press junket. I’m not sure if that was before or after her Carnegie Hall debut in 1994, but I expect it was in conjunction with the Philips release of her Tchaikovsky and Sibelius concertos the following year. She was born in Mississauga in 1977; her parents relocated to Los Angeles when she was three, and then moved to Philadelphia a decade later so that she could attend the Curtis Institute of Music. And the rest, as they say, is history. She is enjoying a significant international career, with well over a dozen recordings on such labels as Warner, Nonesuch, DG and Hyperion, with repertoire from Beethoven and Brahms to John Adams, and now Zimmermann. The craggy Violin Concerto is the earliest work on this disc, but its intensity, postmodernism, and its extremes of tonality, belie its origins. Josefowicz rises to all of the challenges and is obviously not daunted by “difficult music.” When I was doing my program Transfigured Night at CKLN-FM in the 1980s, I used to present a Difficult Listening Hour – sit bolt upright in that straight-backed chair (with a nod to Laurie Anderson) – and any of these pieces would have (and likely did) find a home there. Not for the faint of heart.

Shameless self-promotion: After 20 years as general manager of New Music Concerts I will be stepping down at the end of this season. As a parting gift to the organization, I am hosting a fundraiser on behalf of NMC, “Coffee House 345 Revisited” (aka Gallery 345 on Sorauren), on Thursday May 30. I will be bringing my eclectic repertoire, 6- and 12-string guitars and a few musical friends along for the ride. It’s a benefit so the tickets are a little pricey – $60 each or two for $100 – but that includes complimentary snacks and drinks, and a charitable receipt for the CRA allowable portion. I hope you will join me. For reservations call 416-961-9594.

We invite submissions. CDs, DVDs 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
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On her latest Chandos CD Tasmin Little plays Clara Schumann, Dame Ethel Smyth & Amy Beach (CHAN 20030 chandos.net), the outstanding English violinist is accompanied by her longtime recital partner John Lenehan. All three women composers were encouraged by their families in their early musical endeavours but experienced far less support, if not outright opposition, when it came to pursuing professional careers. Beach’s Violin Sonata Op.34 from 1896 is a full-blooded work with sweeping melodies and rich harmonies in the German Romantic tradition; music critics in Berlin noted its indebtedness to Robert Schumann and Brahms. It draws big, strong playing from both performers.

Clara Schumann’s compositional activity declined – by choice – after her marriage to Robert, and the Drei Romanzen Op.22 from 1853 was her final chamber work. Originally described as being for piano and violin these lovely pieces again feature flowing melodies for the violin over quite demanding passage work for the pianist.

Ethel Smyth’s Violin Sonata Op.7 from 1887 also shows a strong Germanic influence, hardly surprising given that ten years earlier the then-19-year-old composer had moved to Leipzig to study and had spent the subsequent decade on the continent, being encouraged by both Clara Schumann and Brahms. Two lovely short pieces by Beach – Romance Op.23 and Invocation Op.55 – complete a terrific CD. Little has announced her decision to retire from the concert stage in 2020 when she turns 55. Presumably – and hopefully – it won’t include an end to her outstanding series of superb CDs.

Clara Schumann’s Three Romances Op.22 appear again on another recital of works by women composers, this time as the opening tracks on ELLES, featuring the Canadian duo of violinist Marina Thibeault and pianist Marie‐Ève Scarfone (ATMA Classique ACD2 2772 atmaclassique.com/En). There’s no word on the transcription source (a viola version was published in 2010) for this or the following work on the CD, the Trois pièces pour violoncelle et piano by Nadia Boulanger. Written in Boulanger’s mid-20s, some seven years before she gave up composition to concentrate on teaching, the piano again features prominently in three brief movements, two of which were transcriptions of organ improvisations.

A very brief setting of a Goethe poem by Fanny Hensel, Mendelssohn’s highly talented sister, precedes the two major works on the disc: Rebecca Clarke’s Sonata for Viola and Piano from 1919; and the Sonata Pastorale for solo viola by the American violinist Lillian Fuchs. A professional violinist, Clarke left a wealth of viola works that finally seem to be attracting the amount of recording attention they richly deserve. Written in New York, her sonata is redolent of contemporary French music.

In all the viola and piano works, Thibeault plays with a pure tone and a smooth melodic line, ably supported by Scarfone; there are times, perhaps, when a stronger attack could be used. That, however, is exactly what we get in the two unaccompanied works that follow.

Fuchs wrote little in a long life (both she and Clarke made it into their 90s) but the three-movement Sonate is a simply terrific work that brings the best playing on the CD from Thibeault.

Another solo work that began as a piece for cello, young Canadian composer Anna Pidgorna’s The Child, Bringer of Light from 2012, ends the CD. Its eight continuous sections use a variety of techniques to great effect and once again show just how talented a player Thibeault is.

There’s a really lovely set of the Brahms Three Sonatas for Violin and Piano featuring the duo of violinist Wen‐Lei Gu and pianist Catherine Kautsky (Centaur CRC 3684 naxosdirect.com). Both performers are on the music faculty at Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin.

The opening bars of the Sonata No.1 in G Major Op.78 always seem to set the tone for all three works, and it’s clear from the outset here that we are in excellent hands. From the autumnal feel of the first sonata through the warmth of the Sonata No.2 in A Major Op.100 to the passion and restlessness of the Sonata No.3 in D Minor Op.108 the playing here is all you could ask for, with warmth, sensitivity, passion when needed and an ever‐present sense of innate musicality.

If you collect different performances of these lovely sonatas then this will make a strong and welcome addition to your CDs; if you’re just looking for one set then this one has a great deal to offer and will certainly not disappoint you.

The Australian violinist Elizabeth Holowell studied Viennese string performance practice during the 1780 to 1820s in her post-graduate work – studies which had a major influence on The Grand Duo, her recording of the Schubert Complete Sonatas for Violin and Piano with Erin Helyard at the fortepiano (Centaur CRC 3665 naxosdirect.com).

The result is an attempt to recreate as far as possible what a contemporary performance of the music would have sounded like. The violin here is without modern fittings and has gut strings; the bow is described as a pre-Tourte transitional model. More significantly, the fortepiano is a new copy of a contemporary Viennese model by Conrad Graf that has six pedals that provide a variety of special tonal effects, including one for Turkish or janissary bells and drums.

Holowell says that interpretation of the notation of these works led to reassessments of tempo, dynamics, phrasing, bowing and articulation. The recording levels also reflect the fact that the three 1816 sonatas – in D Major D94, A Minor D85 and G Minor D508 – were published as sonatas “with violin accompaniment,” The Sonata in A Major D574, known as The Grand Duo completes the CD.

The results are, at times, quite startling. It’s part Historically Informed Performance, part early Romantic in style: vibrato comes and goes; there’s portamento and elasticity in tempo and phrasing; and very occasional pitch issues with the gut strings. Above all, the fortepiano sound varies a good deal, including adding crashing bells and drums to the occasional chord. It’s intriguing and always more than merely interesting, but it will probably come down to a matter of personal taste as to whether you feel that this approach really enhances the music and your understanding of it, or merely serves as a historical demonstration.

Either way, it’s not your standard Schubert recital!

There are two quite superb guitar CDs from Naxos this month, both beautifully recorded at St. Paul’s Church in Newmarket, Ontario with the ever-reliable Norbert Krauf as producer, engineer and editor. At the Naxos retail price they are both simply must-buys for any lover of the classical guitar.

The debut CD by Serbian guitarist Vojin Kocic (born 1990) follows his win at the 2017 Heinsberg International Guitar Competition in
Campanas del and with impeccable technique, the fast tremolo in the homages to Haydn, Toulouse-Lautrec and the guitar itself.

Involves tuning down the two lower strings and three temporary fields. In particular, the guitar’s chording ability means that the Sarabande and a warm resonance that allows the implied harmonies to sound through. In particular, the guitar’s chording ability means that the multiple stopping – always a stumbling block for violinists – ceases to be a problem. It makes the Sarabande and, in particular, the monumental Chaconne (with its quadruple stops) smoother, calmer and – appropriately – more stately. Add beautifully shaped phrasing that displays musicianship to match the impeccable technique and you have a performance that will stand comparison with any.

The standard never drops in the other three works on the CD. The Introduction et Caprice Op.23 is a dazzling work by Giulio Regondi, the 19th-century prodigy whose music fell into oblivion before being republished in 1981. Manuel Ponce wrote his Diferencias sobre la folia de España y Fuga for Segovia in 1930; it’s one of the more challenging works in the standard repertoire.

Marek Pasieczny’s Phosphenes (After Sylvius Leopold Weiss) was commissioned by the International Guitar Festival as a set piece for their Guitar Masters 2016 competition in Warsaw. It’s a fairly short but tough work that shows Kocić equally comfortable in the contemporary field.

The Chilean guitarist José Antonio Escobar (born 1973) is the soloist on the second CD, Guitar Music of Eduardo Sáinz de la Maza (8.573456 naxos.com). The composer’s life spanned most of the 20th century, and the works here are mostly from the period 1961 to 1973.

The main work on the CD is the lovely Platero y yo (Platero and I), a suite of eight scenes from the 138 prose-poems of the same name by the Spanish poet Juan Ramón Jiménez that illustrate tales of the donkey Platero and his owner. It’s a work full of tenderness and colour. Ten shorter works that still serve to illustrate the composer’s technical and expressive breadth fill out the CD, including a delightful Habanera that involves tuning down the two lower strings and three Homemajes – homages to Haydn, Toulouse-Lautrec and the guitar itself.

Again, the playing here is clean, warm, resonant and full of colour, and with impeccable technique, the fast tremolo in the Campanas del Alba (The Bells of Dawn) being particularly brilliant.

The music of Lithuanian composer Romuald Twardowski (b.1930) is presented on Violin Concerto, featuring the New York-based Polish violinist Kinga Augustyn with Poland’s Toruń Symphony Orchestra under Mariusz Smolij (Naxos 8.579031 naxos.com). Twardowski’s music is described as blending tradition and modernity with what the composer calls “a clarity of expression,” and the works here are all highly accessible and finely crafted.

Three pieces – the brilliant Spanish Fantasia from 1984, Niggunim “Melodies of the Hasidim” from 1991 and Capriccio in Blue “George Gershwin in memoriam” from 1979 – were originally for violin and piano and later orchestrated by the composer. The respective influences – Andalusian music, Polish/Ukrainian Jewish melodies, and jazz – are captured effectively and give the soloist ample opportunity to display a range of styles.

The major work is the quite lovely 2006 Violin Concerto, a mainstream work with a challenging cadenza. The Serenade for string orchestra from 2003, another lovely work with a lush Andante movement, completes the CD. Augustyn’s playing is clear, warm and assured, untroubled in the technically challenging passages and with a flowing line in the many melodic sections. Orchestral support and recorded sound are both excellent.

Li-Wei Qin is the cello soloist on Russian Cello Concertos with the Czech Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra Pardubice under Michael Halász (Naxos 8.573860 naxos.com). It’s a somewhat misleading title, given that of the seven works on the CD only one – Glazunov’s Concerto ballata in C Major Op.108, written in 1931 after he had left Russia – is anything like a true concerto, although admittedly Tchaikovsky’s Variations on a Rococo Theme in A Major Op.33, heard here in the usual revised and rearranged version by the composer’s colleague Wilhelm Fitzenhagen, does come close.


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

Vienna and the West
Gernot Wolfgang
VIENNA AND THE WEST (groove-oriented chamber music vol.4) acknowledges Gernot Wolfgang’s deep Austrian musical roots, filtered through more than 20 years of California living.

Both Sides
Marc Jordan
A newly minted collection of chilled out romantic contemporary jazz arrangements of popular songs!

This Could Be the One
Karin Plato
“reserved melancholy...absolutely impeccable production...wide-open space in the sound” – Stuart Derdeyn, The Vancouver Sun “voice that seems to caress each note” – Dianna Donovan, Voices in Jazz

Domestic Tranquility
13go
Living Colour’s Guitarist, Vernon Reid, offers his production skills and playing on 13go’s debut album. It is an ambitious record with great playing.
Kirill Gerstein’s new recording of the Busoni Piano Concerto (Myrios Classics, MYR024, naxosdirect.com) is a mammoth production in every way. The Piano Concerto in C Major Op.39 is a five-movement work that takes more than 70 minutes to perform and calls for a large male chorus that sings extensively through the final movement. Premiered in late 1904, it displays a breadth of conceptual and orchestration stylistically similar to later Mahler symphonies and Rachmaninoff piano concertos. And while it predates the modern cinema by many decades, the music has a grand sweep of musical ideas for both the piano and the orchestra that conjures up epic films on big screens.

Busoni has made the piano very much an equal partner with the orchestra in this work rather than having the two engage in a contest of wills. Some of the critical writing about the concerto sees the work as the final iteration of this late-Romantic form, the end of one era rather than the beginning of a new one. But there is so much forward-looking writing in the concerto that grounds for the counter argument are very strong. Busoni’s own personal evolution toward modernism and experiments with keyboard tonality are further evidence of his contribution to music in a time of profound transition.

This disc was recorded live at Symphony Hall in Boston. Gerstein’s output of sheer pianistic energy for the duration of this enormous work is amazing. For many, this Busoni concerto will be new material, and because of its superb performance, should be eagerly acquired.

Boris Gilgut’s new Naxos release Liszt Études d’exécution transcendante (8.573981, naxos.com) expands his impressive and growing discography for the label.

A good many musical scribes have opined on the way that Liszt’s work, in the hands of the finest performers, forges a powerful single expression in which the components are indistinguishable. Composer, performer and instrument become a unified artistic force. Gilgut plays Liszt? Or Liszt plays Gilgut? Such ambiguity can only arise because of the brilliance of this performance. There is both total surrender and total control. Ambiguity and contradiction, the powerful drivers of the highest artistic experience, are everywhere in this recording. And this recording of the Études could serve as an example of peerless performance but No. 4, “Mazeppa” stands out for its captivating rhythm as well as the three harmonic suspensions in the middle section that add a brief contemplative moment to the maelstrom.

The Études alone would be enough to fill a disc but Gilgut also adds Liszt’s Paraphrase de concert sur Rigoletto and the second of the 3 Études de concert, S144/R2b. The Verdi Paraphrase is an example of the distance that any of Liszt’s paraphrases lie from their original material. With only the melody intact, Gilgut wraps the composer’s harmonic and ornamental creation around the operatic excerpt in a way that reimagines it as wholly new.

Andrey Gugnin has also recorded the Liszt Études d’exécution transcendante (Piano Classics, PCL10158, naxosdirect.com). This award-winning, festival-conquering young pianist plays with a towering technique. More poignant, however, is the affinity he displays for Liszt’s writing. From the very outset of the Études he plays with the single-minded conviction that the piano is no longer just a piano. Gugnin, like Liszt, is seemingly unburdened by any limitations that he or the instrument might have. Herein lies the transcendental nature of this music. The pianist’s extraordinary technique moves the music beyond conventional levels of comprehension to a richer understanding of what the sounds can actually convey. Having transcended the physical challenges of the music, Gugnin brings a mysticism to his playing that matches the composer’s, note for note. It’s the perfect pairing of master and disciple with the tantalizing promise that the student may even surpass his mentor.

Gugnin’s entire performance blazes with energy – yet his ability to retreat into the quiet moments of Paysage and Harmonies du soir is as impressive as his explosive eruptions of Lisztian genius. Feux follets displays a beautifully sustained and controlled line that runs through the piece, with unassumingly determination providing the backdrop for Liszt’s main ideas.

This performance is the rare combination of youthful athleticism and an unnatural early maturity.

Anne-Catherine Bucher is among the latest to record the Johann Sebastian Bach Goldberg Variations (Naxos 8.551405, naxos.com). The peculiar challenges of the Variations seem to place them among the peaks that many keyboard artists want to conquer at least once in their performance lifetime. Considering the illustrious performance history of the work and the height at which that bar has been set, the undertaking can be a career risk. In this recording, however, there is no such hazard.

Bucher, an organist and harpsichordist, performs on a modern instrument by builder Matthias Griewisch. The two-manual harpsichord (cembalo) is a replica of a 1745 instrument from the workshop of Flemish builder Johann Daniel Dulcken. With three choirs of strings and at least one buff stop, the instrument offers a variety of individual and combined sounds along with opportunities to solo a voice on a separate manual with a different sound. This is something Bucher does first in Variation 7 and many times subsequently with wonderful effect. Bucher also has a profound grasp of the larger progressive structure Bach uses through the 30 variations. She makes this obvious both in her playing and in her concise liner notes.

The Goldberg Variations are, like any piece of music, a window into the soul of the performer. Choice of instrument, tempi, phrasings, etc. all say something about the player sitting at the keyboard. While
Bucher’s recording is scholarly and informed, it rises quickly to gratifying levels of inspired creativity that have a lasting emotional impact. It’s a performance of thought and substance.

Ronald Brautigam has a new recording of the Mendelssohn Piano Concertos (BIS, BIS-2264, naxosdirect.com) in which he performs on a modern fortepiano, a copy of Pleyel Op.1555 from 1830 which is still preserved in the Paris Museum of Music. The instrument’s sound is an immediate clue to the period project in which Die Kölner Akademie also performs with period orchestral instruments, historical seating plan and critical editions of scores.

Brautigam’s instrument is remarkable. While it has the characteristically short resonance of all fortepianos, it is 24.4cm (8 ft.) long and offers plenty of power against the volume of the orchestra. Equally impressive is the quick keyboard response to the extremely fast passages. The Presto movement of the Concerto No.1 is an example of this amazing key action technology from 1830. It’s unlikely that Pleyel had yet developed his own double escapement action to match his competitor Erard who’d invented it just a decade earlier. But Pleyel’s hammers and actions were known to be lighter and very responsive to the need for speed and repetition. Additionally, Brautigam’s modern copy also holds its tuning remarkably well for all the rigour that Mendelssohn’s score imposes on it. The upper register in particular is beautifully pitched and voiced.

In addition to the two Mendelssohn concertos, the disc also includes his Rondo Brillant in E-flat Major, Op.29, Capriccio Brillant in B Minor, Op.22 and Serenade and Allegro Gioioso, Op.43.

Leininger is a trained organist and harpsichordist. His recognized specialization in early music has attracted invitations for him to compose missing passages, many of them extensive, in fragmentary works by Handel and Vivaldi. On this disc, his performance of Mozart’s Sonatas K331 and 332, and Beethoven’s Sonata Op.2, No.1 demonstrates not only how such works could have sounded to their composers and audiences, but how differently phrasings, speeds and dynamics must have been understood. These period instruments respond differently to touch, produce different colours and offer a musical experience unlike what we know today.

Leininger knows his instrument extremely well. He uses the lighter, simpler mechanical action to shape the tone of his notes with great effect. His playing style uses the well-documented freedoms of tempo and ornamentation that are common for the repertoire period. An intriguing feature of this recording is the brief prelude that Leininger improvises before each of the sonatas. The production is well informed, and intelligently and beautifully played.

In 2010 Andras Schiff acquired a stunning walnut Brodman fortepiano built in Vienna ca. 1820. Brodman was one of Vienna’s finest builders whose instruments were, not surprisingly, owned by the Austrian Royal Family. The last Austrian Emperor took this one into Swiss exile with him in 1910. One of Brodman’s young apprentices named Bösendorfer in time took over the business and made it the familiar name we know today. This instrument underwent some restoration in 1965 and has been on loan to the Beethoven Haus in Bonn since Schiff took ownership. Schiff brought the instrument to London for a recital at Wigmore Hall in early 2015 where he performed a program of three Schubert Sonatas. The following year he used it to record this disc Franz Schubert Sonatas and Impromptus, (ECM, ECM 2535/36, ecmrecords.com) in the Kammermusikaal at the Beethoven Haus back in Bonn.

Schiff’s fortepiano exhibits all the mechanical and tonal characteristics of its period: very brief open resonance, comparatively little overall power, and a unique tonal colouring that makes this recording a real gem. Each of the high, middle and low registers has its own quality. Additional mechanisms create a gentle bassoon-like buzz in the bass and a general dampening of the strings in play. But the most striking feature is the intense intimacy, the true smallness of sound that Schiff is able to create from the keyboard. Whether for historical reasons or out of pure curiosity, this recording is a must-have.

**VOCAL**

Rennen Laments
RenMen Renaissance Men; Eric Christopher Perry
Navona Records nv6210 (navonarecords.com)

Rennen, short for the Renaissance Men, have teamed with Navona Records to release RenMen Laments, a beautiful reimagining of the music of such composers as Pablo Casals and Darius Milhaud, along with the ensemble’s continued relationship with the great contemporary American choral composer Daniel E. Gawthrop, that easily evokes an otherworldly ethereal beauty in celebration of the adult male voice. Beautifully recorded at the Westminster Presbyterian church in Buffalo, New York the ten-piece vocal group, formed in 2014, offers up another fine collection of music that demonstrates why they are a welcome addition to the already busy choral music scene in Boston, and a satisfying collection of new work for choral music fans worldwide.

On Laments, the group is authentically and expertly able to bring a Renaissance vocal approach and sensibility to the wide swathe of music presented here, leaping countries of origin, historical timelines and style. Finding artistic simpatico with American composers Gawthrop and the fellow Massachusetts-based musician Patricia Van Ness, the RenMen have worked, and succeeded, at bringing what some may view as a historically antiquated music into cultural relevance for 21st-century audiences. With this victory, coupled with what I hope is the widespread dissemination power of a new record company and a busy calendar of public concert engagements in 2019, the group holds the promise to help Renaissance music have its own renaissance in the foreseeable future. Laments is a highly recommended recording for enthusiasts of vocal music, choral work and the Renaissance more generally.

Andrew Scott

Pauline Garcia Viardot – Le Dernier Sorcier
Soloists; Manhattan Girls Chorus; Trudie Styler
Bridge Records 9515 (bridgerecords.com)

The French/Spanish mezzo-soprano, composer, and pedagogue Pauline Garcia Viardot composed Le Dernier Sorcier (The Last Sorcerer) in collaboration with her partner, Russian novelist/librettist Ivan Turgenev. After its 1867 premiere, the
The whole note.com

Orchestra of the Royal Opera House;
Gyula Orendt; Peter Hoare; Samuel Boden;
Stéphane Degout; Barbara Hannigan;
Violence
George Benjamin – Lessons in Love and
recording to lift one’s spirits!
Myra Huang supports all the superb singers
accompanyment marching, waltz and lyrical
operas of the day, with such classic sounds
along. The music is so very in the style of the
quasi-cliché opera merits dancing and singing
sung moments.
This entertaining, funny, toe-tapping,
quasi-cliché opera merits dancing and singing
along. The music is so very in the style of the
operas of the day, with such classic sounds
as alternating loud and soft volumes, piano
accompaniment marching, waltz and lyrical
lines, vocals soaring high and low. Pianist
Myra Huang supports all the superb singers
with clear playing.

Totally unexpected fun makes this a
recording to lift one’s spirits!

Tiina Kilk

George Benjamin – Lessons in Love and
Violence
Stéphane Degout; Barbara Hannigan;
Gyula Orendt; Peter Hoare; Samuel Boden;
Orchestra of the Royal Opera House;
George Benjamin
Opus Arte OA 1221 D (naxosdirect.com)

It’s been four years since the
Toronto Symphony
Orchestra began its 2019/2020 season with
“Dynamic Duo: Hannigan & Storgårds” on
September 19 and 21. Both Barbara Hannigan
and John Storgårds are featured in double
roles, soprano/ conductor and violinist/ conductor respectively.

Richard Thompson – The Mask in the
Mirror, A Chamber Opera
SANAA Opera Project; Stephen Tucker
Navona Records nv6209 (navonarecords.com)

Richard Thompson’s haunting opera in
three acts The Mask in the Mirror tells
the story of the ill-fated marriage
between the African-American
writer Paul Laurence Dunbar and the lighter-
skinned Alice Ruth Moore. Thompson tells
the story of the lovers with minute and tragic
detail, allowing his singers plenty of space
to explore the tension of this extraordinary
relationship, which unfolds in the context of
racism in 19th-century America as well as in
terms of the psychological drama surrounding
two lovers ill-equipped to distinguish
between sexual desire and the loftier ideals of
their fraught relationship.
Cameo Humes’ Dunbar is truly inspired
and the character unfolds through his
sonorous tenor which is wielded with enor-
mous power to unlock the vivid metaphor of
the mask in the mirror. Angela Owens’ Moore
is equally spectacular. She describes Moore’s
less successful but nevertheless equally strong
character with dramatic thrust. Together with
other incidental characters – all exceptionally
developed by Thompson – and the superbly
moody orchestral performance, The Mask in
the Mirror is powerful and heady, as well as
appropriately literary.
The score remains relatively spare
throughout yet provides enough detail to tell
the complex story. Thompson demonstrates a
masterly control of dramatic pace, ratcheting
up tension slowly but surely so that the final
dénouement reaches a devastating climax,
aided by performances – led by the dark-hued
timbre of Humes’ Dunbar – which vividly
project the complicated nature of the drama.

Raul da Gama

Perpetual Twilight
Choral Scholars of University College
Dublin; Desmond Earley
Signum Classics SIGCD558
(signumrecords.com)

While Ireland has long been
renowned for its outstanding
literary tradition, it is perhaps
less well known for its contribu-
tion to choral music. Nevertheless, if this CD Perpetual
Twilight, featuring the Choral Scholars of
University College Dublin under the direction of
Desmond Earley, is any indication, it would
appear that the current Irish choral scene is a
very vibrant one indeed.
The 28-member chamber choir was
founded by Earley in 1999, and since then,
numerous tours to various parts of Europe
and the United States have earned the
ensemble international acclaim. From the
opening track Dúlamán, a lively traditional
working song from Northern Ireland, it’s
evident that the disc is infused with a strong
Irish flavour – and what a warm and mellow
sound the ensemble produces! Tenors –
rarely aves in many vocal ensembles – appear
to be a major component of the Choral
Scholars, resulting in a well-balanced blend
of vocal ranges.
The thoughtfully chosen program – an
attractive mix of traditional folk songs with
newly commissioned pieces – includes
the well-known My Love is like a Red Red
Rose and Danny Boy in addition to the
less familiar Maid of Calmure and Bò na
Leathadhairce, the latter arranged by the
conductor. Earley is also a composer, and
works such as the uplifting Body of the Moon
and Strings in the Earth and Air, are testa-
ment to his creative talents.

Original manuscript of this two-act chamber
opera, scored for solo voices, treble chorus
and piano, was held in a private col-
clection until the Harvard University Houghton
Library recently acquired it and allowed this
world premiere recording.
The libretto tells the story of Krakamichke,
(bass-baritone Eric Owens), a once powerful
sorcerer who has fallen on hard times after
upsetting the lives of the fairies, (sung
brightly by the Manhattan Girls Chorus), who
live in the forest. The love story is between
his daughter Stella (soprano Camille Zamora)
and the lovelorn Prince Lelio (mezzo-soprano
Adriana Zabala). Other characters round out
the story. The great thing is that though sung
in French (with liner notes both in French
and English translation), actress Trudie Styler
as the narrator recites in English between
sung moments.
This entertaining, funny, toe-tapping,
quasi-cliché opera merits dancing and singing
along. The music is so very in the style of the
quasi-cliché opera merits dancing and singing
sung moments.

Barbara Hannigan, who

Written on
opera
George Benjamin's
performance of

Body of the Moon

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conductor. Earley is also a composer, and
works such as the uplifting Body of the Moon
and Strings in the Earth and Air, are testa-
ment to his creative talents.
Throughout, the 13-member instrumental ensemble – including a bodhrán, a tin whistle and a harp – provide a solid and sensitive accompaniment. For lovers of the Irish folk tradition, Perpetual Twilight is a delight – joyful singing from the land of Joyce and Beckett – come/gohairdeas!

Richard Haskell

**CLASSICAL AND BEYOND**

**Johann Nepomuk Hummel – Flute Sonatas**
Dorothea Seel; Christoph Hammer
Hanssler Classics HC18103 (naxosdirect.com)

Dorothea Seel is both a flutist and a musicologist, whose area of research is the playing techniques and sound aesthetics of 19th-century flutes. She has presented her research in her dissertation, Der Diskurs um den Klang der Flöte im 19. Jahrhundert (The Discourse about the Sound of the Flute in the 19th Century), published earlier this year by Kunstuniversität Graz, for which she has received the Award of Excellence from the Austrian government.

Her collaborator on this recording, Christoph Hammer, also a specialist in the music and instruments of the 19th century, is according to the liner notes, “also committed to the revival of less-well-known composers and the research and editing of their works.”

What I heard listening to this recording was something of a shock; it revealed an entirely different sound aesthetic from that with which I am familiar and, I would say, have come to expect, listening to recordings of music for the flute. As the liner notes explain, Seel’s research led her to “forgotten playing techniques... many of which would meet with the disapproval of modern-day exponents.” When I left behind my expectations, however, Hummel’s music took on an almost exotic quality, revealing the forgotten zeitgeist of a world long gone.

So, while I am not about to abandon my Boehm flute for an early 19th-century Viennese Ziegler instrument of the type played by Seel on this recording, I am extremely grateful for her work and her ability to translate her research into practice.

Allan Pulker

**Mendelssohn: Symphony No.1; Piano Concerto No.2**
Kristian Bezuidenhout; Freiburger Barockorchester; Pablo Heras-Casado
Harmonia mundi HMM 902369 (smarturl.it/xx389d)

When I left behind my expectations, however, Mendelssohn’s music took on an almost exotic quality, revealing the forgotten zeitgeist of a world long gone.

The dominating C Minor stormy mood returns Allegro con fuoco piu stretto in the fourth movement with interesting contrapuntal episodes but ending the symphony triumphantly in a major key.

The Piano Concerto No.2 In D Minor was regrettably completely overshadowed by Mendelssohn’s popular, irresistible first foray into the genre. However, South African Kristian Bezuidenhout’s agile brilliance yet gentle touch on the Fortepiano Érard (Paris 1837) plus a highly precise and exciting period instrument accompaniment, makes this concerto truly shine.

As the recording progressed I found myself falling in love with Mendelssohn over and over again. And that energetically driven, passionate rendition of the Fair Melusina Overture tops it all. I haven’t heard it played as beautifully since Sir Thomas Beecham.

Janos Gardonyi

**The Rossini Project Volume 1 – The Young Rossini**
Orchestra della Svizzeria Italiana; Markus Poschner
Concerto Classics CD 2112 (naxosdirect.com)

This brand new issue belongs to a series initiated by young conductor Markus Heras-Casado’s Diving Into German Romanticism and what better way to start than Mendelssohn? Mendelssohn was probably one of the most gifted musicians that ever lived and was capable of composing a symphony for full orchestra at the age of 12!

Perpetual Twilight is a delight – joyful singing from the land of Joyce and Beckett – come/gohairdeas!

Allan Pulker

Janos Gardonyi

**Rachmaninoff – The Isle of the Dead; Symphony No.1**
LPO Live LPO 0111 (lpo.org.uk/recordings-and-gifts)

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Janos Gardonyi

Rachmaninoff’s First Symphony hasn’t had an easy time. Conductor Glazunov was drunk and made it a dismal failure at its premiere in 1897 and the
discouraged young composer locked the score away vowing never to perform it again. The original score was never found, but miraculously the orchestral parts were discovered in 1944 and it was performed once more in 1945 in Moscow.

This new performance comes from a recent concert in London conducted by Vladimir Jurowsky and what a concert it has must been! The audience went wild and the critics were raving and I imagine Rachmaninoff must have been very pleased and the symphony vindicated. Royal Philharmonic Society 2018 award winner Jurowsky’s name may not be too familiar, but he is one of the most sought after conductors and has a tremendous worldwide reputation that’s well proven here.

None of this music will come to you easily, in fact it requires several hearings and total concentration to appreciate Jurowsky’s “hypnotic drive,” especially in The Isle of the Dead’s sinister 5/8 ostinato undulating motion representing Charon the oarsman rowing a boat towards the other shore. It brought an “eerie chill” to the Festival Hall, one critic remarked.

The Symphony itself was a triumph. Rachmaninoff is the connecting tissue in Russian music between Tchaikovsky and Shostakovich and here you can see why. It has youthful excitement, intense passion and a tremendous emotional depth Jurowsky brings out to the utmost. The last movement Allegro tremendus emotional depth Jurowsky brings youthful excitement, intense passion and a Russian music between Tchaikovsky and one critic remarked.

The recordings took place in three different locations, the orchestra may well have had a few interchangeable players, and the 1949 Kalmus version of the Firebird score was edited, possibly to suit the size of the orchestra. The playing is uneven, especially as regards intonation, and microphone placement brings the wind soloists uncomfortably close, but the performances are careful and loving; in fact it’s just nice to hear a scrappy, not-quite-perfect recording of any of this material, which might make it more period-authentic than anything else.

Andrew Timar

Concert note: The Toronto Symphony Orchestra begins its 2019/2020 season with “Dynamic Duo: Hannigan & Storgårds” on September 19 and 21. Both Barbara Hannigan and John Storgårds are featured in double roles, soprano/conductor and violinist/conductor respectively.

New and contemporary:

20th Century French Flute Concertos
Ransom Wilson; BBC Concert Orchestra;
Perry So
Nimbus Alliance NI 6375
(naxosdirect.com)

The 1940s was an especially busy decade for the prolific American composer, pianist, author and inventor George Antheil (1900-1959). With the spectre of WWII looming in the USA, in 1941 he and the actress Hedy Lamarr set out to develop a code-based radio guidance system for torpedoes. He also continued to turn out scores for Hollywood features (his catalogue lists 30), while his 1945 autobiography Bad Boy of Music - referring to the international avant-garde reputation he attracted in the 1920s – became a best-seller. As well, Antheil continued to compose for the concert stage, completing several symphonies, a violin concerto and other works in the 1940s.

This second Chandos album of his symphonic output by the BBC Philharmonic and its chief guest conductor, John Storgård, delights listeners with outstanding performances of two of those symphonies plus three shorter orchestral works. Symphony No.3 “American” (completed 1946) is cinematic in its conservative harmonic language and highly episodic block treatment of themes.

In parts, an Aaron Copland-esque American populism is jump-cut with syncopated jazzy sections and a marked stylistic eclecticism; Antheil leans strongly on the musical legacies of Sibelius, Mahler and Prokofiev. The work concludes with a triumphant finale.

MAX CHRISTIE

George Antheil – Symphonies 3 & 6
BBC Philharmonic; John Storgårds
Chandos CHAN 10982
(naxosdirect.com)

Pity the ballet orchestra musician; so much great music gets borne away from their pit by the changing tides of dance fashion. The 20th century is littered with scores from the early moderns that were introduced as dance accompaniment and became, instead, great works for the symphony stage. Hardly anyone stages Stravinsky’s The Rite of Spring anymore, and almost all of Ravel’s works are similarly banished from the standard ballet repertoire.

The Park Avenue Chamber Symphony, under conductor David Bernard, has recorded three modern masterworks: Aaron Copland’s Appalachian Spring Suite, Ravel’s Daphnis and Chloe Suite No.2, and Stravinsky’s Firebird Suite. With time and space, one could discuss the ways ballet scenarios changed from the mythic to the mundane as reflected in the selected works, but better to leave that to dance critics. These are, above all, wondrous works that orchestral players love to sink their chops into, and symphonic audience members love them as much.

All three are now period pieces of early- to mid-20th-century French and American music. Don’t tell me Stravinsky was neither; he wrote for the tastes of his audience, and The Firebird often sounds a lot like Ravel. And of course, Copland was deeply influenced by Nadia Boulanger.

The recordings took place in three different locations, the orchestra may well have had a few interchangeable players, and the 1949 Kalmus version of the Firebird score was edited, possibly to suit the size of the orchestra. The playing is uneven, especially as regards intonation, and microphone placement brings the wind soloists uncomfortably close, but the performances are careful and loving; in fact it’s just nice to hear a scrappy, not-quite-perfect recording of any of this material, which might make it more period-authentic than anything else.

Janos Gardonyi

Symphonic Dances – Copland; Ravel;
Stravinsky
Park Avenue Chamber Symphony; David Bernard
Recursive Classics (naxosdirect.com)

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Symphony No.6 (completed 1949-50) is overall a more sombre and artistically ambitious work. The influences of Shostakovich, and in parts Ives, permeate Antheil’s patriotic portrait of American life in music in a manner both touching in its heart-on-sleeve Romantic lyricism, and evocative of the vernacular regionalisms and dynamism of post-war USA.

Andrew Timar

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New and contemporary:

20th Century French Flute Concertos
Ransom Wilson; BBC Concert Orchestra;
Perry So
Nimbus Alliance NI 6375
(naxosdirect.com)

No nation’s composers have contributed more to the flute repertoire than those of France. From the Baroque era to the present, French composers have excelled as weavers of iridescent, gossamer musical tapestries, employing as a favourite filament the diaphanous sound of the flute. On this CD, American flutist Ransom Wilson, conductor Perry So and the BBC Concert Orchestra present three rarely recorded, captivating works by Jean Françaix (1912-1997), Jean Rivier (1896-1987) and Jean-Michel Damase (1928-2013), plus a repertoire staple by Jacques Ibert (1890-1962).

In the opening Moderato of Françaix’s Impromptu for Flute and Strings (1983), the flute dances sprightly filigrees over the strings’ waltz beat. Two sweeter dreamy movements, Largo and Andante poétique, containing echoes of Poulenc (I’ve always thought of Françaix as “Poulenc-lite”), frame a playful Scherando. It’s an irresistibly charming piece!

The Allegro moderato of Rivier’s Concerto for Flute and Strings (1956) alternates wistful and animated passages for the flute, followed by the central Lento sensibile, in which the flute seems to wander in a subterranean labyrinth, before emerging into the light and sprinting to the finish line in the Molto vioce.

The three connected movements of Damase’s Sérénade for Flute and Strings, Op.36 (1956), all marked Très large, encompass mystery, joy, angst-filled disquiet and a...
pair of hauntingly beautiful melodies. Even with its gentle, non-virtuosic ending, it should have become “standard rep” by now.

A warm-hearted performance of Ibert’s familiar, audience-pleasing Flute Concerto (1953) ends this extremely enjoyable, extremely recommendable CD.

Michael Schulman

Ana Sokolović – Sirènes
Ensemble contemporain de Montréal; Véronique Lacroix; Ensemble vocal Queen of Puddings Music Theatre; Dâirine Ni Mheadhrá
ATMA ACD2 2762 (atmaclassique.com)

► 2019 JUNO Classical Composer of the Year
Ana Sokolović composes with her highly identifiable tonal/atonal soundscapes in four works here. Sirènes/Sirens (2000) is performed perfectly by six female voices of Queen of Puddings Music Theatre Vocal Ensemble. Inspired by ancient Balkan voices of the Sirens legend, high-pitched female voices, quasi-wobbly, humorous yet haunting vocal effects, shrieks, quieter moments, and driving vocal rhythms are intense. The five-movement Tanzer Lieder (2005) is set to five German, French and English poems by Austrian poet Francisco Tanzer. A slightly more operatic work, soprano Florie V aliquette embraces Sokolović’s trade-mark loud high pitches and dramatic held notes above such instrumental accompaniment as reflective flute/piccolo, piano and cello plucks. Mezzo-soprano Krisztina Szabó shines especially in her colourful lower pitches in the five-movement/language Pesma (1996-2007) above the ECM+ instrumentalists under the direction of Véronique Lacroix.

The title of the violin concerto Evta (2017) means “seven” in Serbian Roma. Seven joined movements are inspired by chakra colours and associated with each note of the scale as Sokolović now explores her characteristic sounds with only instruments. The ECM+ ensemble, with soloist Andrêa Tyniec, performs with technical and musical greatness, executing more rapid ascending lines, held notes, pizzicatos and plucks, touches of Gypsy-flavoured sounds and the occasional more tonal sections in this less intense composition.

One can only imagine how gratifying it must be to successfully perform and compose such complex contemporary works. Yes it is intense, but worth the time to listen to and understand Sokolović!

Tiina Kilk

Concert note: Andrêa Tyniec is featured in the Toronto premiere of Ana Sokolović’s Evta with the New Music Concerts Ensemble on May 26 at Betty Oliphant Theatre.

Sweet Apple
Dawn Davi
Independent (dawndavi.com)

► These subtly musical performances are a telling document of pianist Dawn Davi’s compelling, life-affirming compositional gift. The nine pieces on her second album Sweet Apple are also sufficiently exceptional to stand out in what is becoming a rather crowded field of young musicians who feel compelled to express themselves. Certainly the expressive way in which Davi’s music suggests quiet humanity also gives us a fine example of the self-effacing poetry that appears to be the hallmark of her style.

Her use of synthesizer and sustaining pedal give this music a degree of harmonic blurring which in turn – when listened to in consonance with the brass and strings that are added to these songs – also conveys the ethereal effect that she intends us to hear in her music. Davi takes a decidedly elegiac view of life in the expressive music of this disc. In doing so she offers a performance of mellowness and beauty. On Eyes of a Tree (for instance) she coaxes the strings into gentle harmonic enjoiners to her stoic melody which she essentially plays pianissimo, but with exquisite dynamics throughout.

This is typical of Davi’s eloquence and her ability to create a hauntingly beautiful soundscape evocative of a bard contemplating the natural world and the glories that lie within it. With Sweet Apple, clearly Davi has succeeded in celebrating the mysteries of life with music of exceptional stoicism and beauty.

Raul da Gama

Sergio Cervetti – Parallel Realms: XXI Century Works for Orchestra
Moravian Philharmonic Orchestra; Petr Vronský
Navona Records nv6217 (navonarecords.com)

► The Uruguayan-American composer Sergio Cervetti has long enjoyed a celebrated career as composer and educator (a former professor at the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University), and has clearly cultivated an impressive work ethic in his life, creating and releasing challenging and provocative new music at an impressive rate. Realized here by the Moravian Philharmonic Orchestra under the skillful direction of conductor Petr Vronský and captured beautifully in the sonically satisfying Reduta Hall in the Czech Republic, Parallel Realms is comprised of three single-movement symphonic works, Et in Arcadia ego, Consolumentum and Plexus, in which Cervetti uses religious and scientific themes to musically confront childhood memories that have remained with him throughout his life.

The selections contained on this 2019 recording combine new music with a reimagining of a 1970 semi-graphic score (Plexus) that thread together the composer’s desire to bridge the deeply religious and spiritual with the metaphysical. Vacillating between the tumultuous swirl of the orchestra and quiet minimalism, Cervetti uses the ensemble to its fullest, finding beauty in opposite extremes of the group’s dynamic range. Clearly this is modern music, but anchored as it is to the strong narrative of biography and religious themes (as captured in the accompanying liner notes), the recording presents here as timeless, capable of tapping into universal human emotions and feelings.

The eighth Cervetti recording to be released on the Navona Records label, Parallel Realms comes recommended for fans of symphonic music who hope to be challenged in their listening and satisfied in their quest for exciting and beautiful new music.

Andrew Scott

Frédéric D’Haene – Music with Silent Aitake’s Reigakusha Gagaku Ensemble; Ensemble Modern; Kasper De Roo
The Uruguayan-American composer Sergio Cervetti – Parallel Realms (ravellorecords.com)

► Frédéric D’Haene is a Belgian avant-garde composer who studied with several renowned European and American composers. But it was his 1986 discovery of gagaku (court music of Japan) which dramatically changed the direction of his musical worldview. D’Haene’s study of gagaku – a musical genre a world apart from his own – and its incorporation in his scores, ultimately resulted in what the composer calls “paradoxophony” or “paradoxical coexistence.” This transcultural approach has informed his compositions ever since.

Music with Silent Aitake’s – performed by the esteemed Reigakusha ensemble joined by the premier group Ensemble Modern, both conducted by Kasper De Roo – is a banner example of that approach. Scored for gagaku and chamber orchestra, the five-part work exemplifies D’Haene’s ideal of the coexistence of Western and Japanese instrumental worlds. The liner notes underscore the composer’s key aim: pluralism. It’s an aesthetic and social vision of coexistence which does not favour
Greek Wind Quintets
Aeolos Woodwind Quintet
Naxos 8.579037 (naxos.com)

Beneath the Tide – A Collection of Concertos
Soloists; Croatian Chamber Orchestra;
Miran Vaupotic
Navona Records nv6216
(navonarecords.com)

Carl Vollrath – Souls in Transitions
Summa Trio
Navona Records nv6212
(navonarecords.com)

Don’t be misled by the CD’s title or the accompanying notes that liken its contents to “ocean currents… uncovering what was previously hidden.” Rather than exposing murky, below-the-surface secrets, all five pieces, by four Americans and one Taiwanese composer, display immediately accessible clarity of expression. Nor is this disc “a collection of concertos,” as stated on its cover. Although all the works are scored for instrumental soloists and chamber orchestra, only three are genuine concertos and are so titled.

Restless dissonances in the outer movements of Michael G. Cunningham’s 15-minute Clarinet Concerto Op. 186 bracket the middle movement’s brooding lyricism. Virtuoso runs from bottom to top of the clarinet’s range help make this a brilliant showpiece for the instrument.

Rain Worthington’s ten-minute In Passages for violin and string orchestra is a sustained, moody beauty, imbued with Middle Eastern melodic melismas and glissandi. It would make a superb slow movement for a full-length violin concerto.

In her 15-minute Guitar Concerto No. 1, subtitled Remembrance of Hometown, Ssu-Yu Huang draws upon musical traditions of her Chinese forebears to create an impressionistic series of atmospheric brush paintings in sound.

At just under six minutes, Bruce Reiprich’s Lullaby features a long-lined violin solo, more intense than gently calming. Perhaps it just needs another title.

The CD concludes with Beth Mehocic’s cheerful 18-minute Piano Concerto, music that suggested, to me at least, playful leprechauns, the final Allegretto a rousing Irish jig. An entertaining end to an entertaining disc.

Michael Schulman

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Michael Schulman

Feedback: Write your thoughts about this review. Do you agree with the author’s assessment of the music? Why or why not? Is there anything you would like to add or clarify about the CDs you reviewed? Please share your comments below.

— Paul: “I agree with the author’s assessment of the music. The pieces are well-crafted and展现杭州的美丽。
Kang and the cor anglais of Charles Huang as we traverse the interior landscape of Salathe’s vivid imagination. Along the way we are also joined by cello, piano, celesta, harp and guitar to explore the mysterious depths and wondrous heights of birds in their wondrous habitat.

We find ourselves coming under the spell of a composer who is a master of mood and atmosphere and who has the ability to coordinate colour and structure to a rare degree. The bird repertoire - Mandarin Ducks and Imaginary Birds of the Frozen North – swirls amid equally atmospheric pieces such as The Heart that Loves But Once and The Wood Between the Worlds as well as Expecting the Spring Breeze (composed by Teng Yu-Hsien and arranged by Salathe).

The sometimes diabolical difficulty of this music is expertly navigated by Kang and Huang as well as by the other musicians. Each piece is given a lively reading and is played with buoyant, aristocratic grace and almost insolent virtuosity. Equally important is the fact that a delightfully spare atmosphere is maintained throughout.

Julius Eastman – Femenine

The Heart that Loves But Once

and Imaginary Birds of the Frozen North

and Expecting the Spring Breeze (1978)

are the works of this austere work with idyllic, lyrical beauty, but an early slight smear in the strings foreshadows surprising rich and complex polyphrases. The radiant folk-like finale features colourful orchestration including tinkling percussion; it’s a lot of fun leading to a boisterous close.

Roger Knox

Another highlight, Mysteries of the Horizon (After Four René Magritte Surrealist Paintings) by Nigel Clarke features the virtuoso Belgium cornet player Harmen Vanhoorne. Part 1, The Menaced Assassin, begins with a solo cornet playing a short fanfare and then works into a back-and-forth duel with the wind ensemble containing several angular and sophisticated harmonies and rhythms.

Kit Turnbull’s three-movement Everything starts from a dot (based on a quote from Kandinsky) and a second piece by Alarcón, Symphony No. 2 for Wind Orchestra, are the additional works on this engaging CD.

Ted Parkinson

Julius Eastman (1940-1990) is as fascinating to read about as he is to listen to. This performance of his breathtaking, hour-long work, Femenine takes us to one of the most eloquent members of the 20th-century avant-garde. The performance of this austere work by the ensemble Apartment House is replete with all the virtues that Eastman embodied: unfailing clarity, innate elegance, an unerring sense of proportion, a finely honed mastery of style, melodic finesse and unobtrusive grasp of harmonic rhythm, not to mention a matchless sense of aural geometry.

The work is layered with subtle colours. Each layer – with each hypnotic and intensifying repeat – is daubed with minutely thickening textured music that seems to ebb and flow like a gentle tide that swells steadily from silence before gently building into a soft whoosh of the keyboard, vibraphone, violin, cello and two flutes. Throughout, the uniquely Eastman-like tension between harmonically loaded melody and the essentially neutral, often near-static nature of the metre, has its sense of symmetry quietly disturbed by minute figures played by each instrument as the players recreate the composer’s prevailing tonal palette through appropriately lean, but always beautifully focused, orchestration.

The result proves well worth seeking out. Eastman’s was a diverse style with firm roots in John Cage-like stasis; but there is more heart-on-sleeve Romantic post-avant-gardism than one would expect. Either way the music has an emotional power that Apartment House articulates ever so eloquently.

Raul da Gama

Alexander Moyzes – Symphonies Nos. 9 and 10

We hear string orchestras in concert halls, backing pop artists and even in the supermarket. Alternatively, we may only have heard concert bands at high school performances or marching in parades. The Minnesota-based University of St. Thomas Symphonic Wind Ensemble (Matthew George, conductor) is a highly skilled ensemble of brass, woodwind and percussion that presents a welcome change in timbre and material. They have a long history of commissioning works and this is their seventh album in that series.

One of the album’s highlights is the opening B-Side Concerto – For Rock Band and Wind Ensemble by Spanish composer Luis Serrano Alarcon. This 16-minute work showcases both the wind orchestra and the rock band and contains great rhythmic riffing sections, some odd metre segments and excellent wailing guitar solos. It is a tour de force which manages to incorporate the rock band within the wind ensemble so their distinctive sounds blend to achieve an edgy and exciting effect.

Another highlight, Mysteries of the Horizon (After Four René Magritte Surrealist Paintings) by Nigel Clarke features the virtuoso Belgium cornet player Harmen Vanhoorne. Part 1, The Menaced Assassin, begins with a solo cornet playing a short fanfare and then works into a back-and-forth duel with the wind ensemble containing several angular and sophisticated harmonies and rhythms.

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Ted Parkinson

Gernot Wolfgang – Vienna and the West, Groove-Oriented Chamber Music, Vol. 4

If you are searching for a fresh and distinct fusion of styles, something classically based yet different, this is the album you might want to consider. Gernot Wolfgang, an Austrian-born composer now based in Los Angeles, masters
an idiosyncratic fusion of the elements of the Second Viennese School with contemporary jazz in this selection of chamber music pieces featuring various combinations of instruments. In a way, these pieces take inventory of the stylistic as well as geographical influences on Wolfgang’s compositional style. Music on this album has a firm and clear classical music foundation but what makes it interesting is the interweaving of the rhythmical jazz grooves, occasional country western music motives (especially in strings) and the cinematic quality of some sections.

Passage to Vienna for piano trio, the second piece on the album, is a story told in fragments, and exemplifies why this unique fusion works so well. It opens with a beautifully flowing, seductive melody in the piano and repeated unison in the strings. Groovy rhythms precede a jazzy violin solo, done with flair and style. We are then transported to Vienna at the turn of the century, and non-linearity takes over along with strong cinematic colours. The mood shifts back to America toward the end and the opening theme comes back but this time it is coloured with dissonance. Another jazzy opening theme comes back but this time it is placed in the strings. Groovy rhythms in the piano bring this piece to a conclusion. The textures are engaging and atmospheric and a strong cast simply divine.

All the compositions on this album are engaging and atmospheric and a strong cast of musicians adds individual flavours to Wolfgang’s music.

Ivana Popovic

JAZZ AND IMPROVISED

All There Is
Sheila Soares
Independent (sheilasoaresmusic.com)

Gifted vocalist and composer Sheila Soares’ new recording is one of the freshest, most engaging and thoroughly musical CDs to be released this year. Although Soares is no unseasoned debutante, her debut offering is rife with new, intriguing, genre-blasting original material and fine musicianship. Deftly produced by talented guitarist Eric St-Laurent, Soares’ excellent collaborators also include Jeff McLeod on piano and organ, Jordan O’Connor on acoustic bass and Chris Wallace on drums.

At first blush, there is an obvious sonic similarity between the vocal timbre of Soares and the late Blossom Dearie; however, Dearie (with her quirky, narcissistic performances) never came near Soares’ interpretive sensitivity and jaunty songwriting style. It may be that good tunesmiths (such as Soares) are just “born” when the creative stars align, and they can enter our consciousness at any point along their journey – it’s inevitable... and as Soares says, “Music is like breathing to me.”

Highlights include the lovely title track, as well as the stunning Les Fraises Sur La Lune (Strawberries on the Moon), which displays Soares’ skilled, pitch-pure vocal instrument and considerable ability to swing. The romantic Constellation boasts not only beautiful chord changes, but also a lifting melody and a gentle, rhythmic jazz sensibility that make this gorgeous track a total standout. Jazz has many faces and expressions, and happily for all of us, Soares will no doubt be delighting us with her jazz eclecticism and irresistible perspective for a very long time to come.

Lesley Mitchell-Clarke

Both Sides
Marc Jordan
Linus 270389 (marcjordan.com)

Listing all of Marc Jordan’s songwriting credits, awards and accolades would take up the whole word count of this review, so let me simply say that the man knows his way around a song. And since this album is mostly covers – only two of the tracks are originals – his mighty interpretative skills are a key component here. The other key component of Both Sides is Lou Pomanti, who produced, arranged and orchestrated all the tracks. These two men are at the top of their games and we are the beneficiaries.

The album is rich with instrumentation courtesy of the Prague Symphony Orchestra and guest appearances by international heavies like Randy Brecker and Tommy Emmanuel, and local luminaries like Kevin Breit and Larnell Lewis. Although he covers a couple of standards from the Great American Songbook, it’s the reinterpretations of classic folk/rock songs that are standouts for me. In particular, Lou Reed’s Walk on the Wild Side shines with its many layers and gorgeous woodwinds, courtesy of Toronto’s own, John Johnson. Although the soft, groovy treatment of the tune is antithetical to its subject matter, it works. Beautifully. Jordan’s thoughtful handling of the title tune also caused me to hear these familiar lyrics with fresh ears and I was struck by how mature Joni Mitchell’s writing was for one so young. (She was in her early 20s when she wrote Both Sides Now.)

Overall, the album reflects a full-grown artist of ten years of work with her quintet, which includes herself, clarinetist James Danderfer, pianist Chris Gestrin, bassist Laurence Mollerup and drummer Joe Poole. This Could Be The One also features three special guests: blues musician Jim Byrnes, singer Rebecca Shoichet and trombonist Rod Murray. Recorded live off the floor by Sheldon Zaharko in Vancouver at Warehouse Studio, the album has a warm, inviting vibe, emulating, to a certain degree, the experience of hearing acoustic jazz from a good seat in a well-appointed venue.

This Could Be The One is largely made up of Plato’s original material, with a few re-arranged exceptions: the Lennon/McCartney-penned I’m Just Seen A Face, Hank Williams’ I’m So Lonesome I Could Cry, and the ubiquitous Heart And Soul. Byrnes joins Plato on What Came Before, Plato’s loping, 3/4 ode to empathy; though they represent different vocal traditions, the two singers’ voices blend well, with Byrnes’ big, woolly voice complementing Plato’s controlled clarity. Shoichet and Plato sing together on Sorrow, another Plato original, a bittersweet, straight-eighths song that serves as the album’s final entry.

With an overall mood that tends toward the calm and communicative, even during its more bombastic moments, This Could Be The One is a worthy addition to the canon of modern Canadian vocal jazz.

Colin Story

Concert notes: Marc Jordan will be appearing in a number of venues around Ontario this month: May 2, in Ottawa (Meridian Theatre); 4, in Kingston (Grand Theatre); 5, in Collingwood (Gayety Theatre); 6, in Owen Sound (Roxy Theatre); 8, in Peterborough (Market Hall); 9, in Guelph (River Run Centre); 10, in Oshawa (Regent Theatre); and on June 22 in Hamilton (Artsfest).
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80

 Sight

► Guitarist and poet, Toronto-born, Nova Scotia resident Arthur Bull enjoys a compound musical identity. He has been a part of the Canadian improvising community for decades, developing a personal idiom that draws in equal parts from the extended techniques of free improvisation and the slide and finger-style traditions of blues and folk idioms. These two CDs, from Spring 2018, present Bull in radically different, if equally radical settings.

The Surruralists is essentially a duo of Bull and electric bassist Éric Normand, though guests sometimes contribute to a music that’s at once timeless and timely. The two (sometimes subtly, sometimes not) merge free improvisation with folk singing, mixing French and English traditions to craft a primal music in which country tunes and proto-rhythm ‘n’ blues collide with flashes of an unearthly sound art. Bull’s raw baritone and slide guitar drive Jack o’ Diamond and Frankie (and Johnny), while his gift for epigram emerges on the spoken Skidmarks: “I couldn’t count how many ways the woodpecker could divide the beat.” Normand adds weird electronic burbles to condition familiar themes, and he’s eloquent on the dirge La courtisane brûlée, with Bull adding plaintive harmonica and Ben Grossman a funereal vielle à roue (nurdy-gurdy).

Among Bull’s international associations is one formed in 2002 with drummer Roger Turner, a charter member of the British school of free improvisation. Turner’s sometimes machine-like approach can be traced directly to an early appreciation of the brilliant precision of Dave Tough, the drummer who propelled the rise of Chicago jazz over 90 years ago. Anyone who imagines free improvisation to be somehow vague in its contours simply hasn’t heard Roger Turner. In 2018 Bull and Turner expanded their duo with the addition of trombonist Scott Thomson for a tour (as Monicker) that stretched from Southern Ontario to Nova Scotia. No blow-by-blow description could do justice to Spine: the music is mercurial, each of the CD’s six tracks a continuum of shifting, permutating relationships and voices, much of it conducted at incredible speed, from Thomson’s burbling register leaps and runs, squeezed through a metal mute, to Turner’s high-pitched clatter. Bull’s voices range from long, wandering bass glissandi to high-speed flurries of metallic scattershot, liable to be confused with some of Thomson and Turner’s own voicings; but the very determination with which the three proceed soon destroys any identikit game of “he said, he said” with a conclusive “When was that?” It’s a high-water mark in Canadian free improvisation.

Stuart Broomer

Walk Don’t Run Jonathan Bauer Slammin Media (jonathanbauermusic.com)

► Prolific Alberta-born trumpeter and composer, Jonathan Bauer, harkens back commendably to the past while adding a modern, unique touch on his long-awaited debut album. Coming from playing with the Grammy-Award-winning New Orleans Jazz Orchestra, Bauer’s immense talent and skills are apparent on this album, with sultry and smooth riffs throughout the pieces and each track written by him. A perfect musical balance is achieved with support from saxophonist Alexander Geedles, pianist Ryan Hanseler, bassist Alex Dyring and drummer Gerald Watkins. Each musician is given several opportunities to showcase their talent through solos, and instruments blend together for a New Orleans-flavoured, foot-tapping jazz journey.

The album is said to “celebrate the past while looking to the future,” showcasing Bauer’s influences, among them Art Blakey and Roy Hargrove. Tracks such as Chattin’, Precious Moments and We Need to Do Better transport the listener back to the era of jazz greats and classics while pieces like Ella and Violet showcase a more contemporary sound. The record as a whole is a beautiful contrast, bringing to light Bauer’s desire to hark back to the past while reaching into the future by adding a modernistic touch to some pieces.

This gem of an album is suitable for aficionados of both classical and newer jazz, with tracks that suit the tastes of both. The talented Canadian bandleader has released a debut record that has truly been worth the wait.

Kati Kiliaspea

Sun of Goldfinger David Torn ECM 2613 773 1919 (ecmrecords.com)

► David Torn has had an extensive career as guitarist, film composer and record producer, ranging from work with the Nordic-cool saxophonist Jan Garbarek to projects with David Bowie. Torn has also worked extensively with alto saxophonist Tim Berne, whose heated New York free jazz may seem at odds with some of Torn’s abstract cool. In this latest work, however, the association makes perfect sense.

Torn is a master of looping, constructing artificial orchestras with compound ostinati, orchestral chords and percussion. There are three long works here, ranging from 22:10 to 23:55. The opening and closing pieces, Eye Meddle and Soften the Blow, began as trio improvisations with Berne and drummer Ches Smith (the three now performing as Sun of Goldfinger), with Smith and Torn both making extensive use of electronics while still playing percussion and guitar. Torn has then taken the materials into the studio, editing, mixing and multiplying the improvisations. Ultimately, they’re layered assemblages, the looping expanding and cooling Berne’s role, merging his micro-variations with literal repetition. The music retains its expressionist quality while becoming increasingly trance-like, creating musical worlds at once akin to those of Ornette Coleman and Terry Riley.

The work grows more allusive in the central piece, Spartan, Before It Hit, a Torn composition that supplements the trio with a string quartet, two more guitarists and keyboard player Craig Taborn. Sometimes creating thin washes of sound, it clarifies and broadens Torn’s textures while retaining their fundamental mystery.

Stuart Broomer

Quintet John Heward Mode/Avant 19 (moderecords.com)

► A fitting memorial for Montreal visual artist John Heward (1934-2018), who was as proficient in free music as in painting and sculpture, this 2014 77-minute improvisation shows how his sensitive and sophisticated approach applied proper percussion accents without bluster. Veteran American improvisers, bassist Barre Phillips and alto/soprano saxophonist Joe McPhee plus locals, bass clarinetist Lori Freedman and pianist Dana Reason are
Witness
Kirk Knuffke; Steven Herring
Steeplechase SCCD 31859
(steeplechase.dk)

Unsurprisingly Herring axes the declarative nuances of Iago’s Credo and Questo Amor with studied formalism. But his creativity isn’t solipsistic. Goldberg’s stentorian puffs and Knuffke’s capillary peeps match operatic choruses on the former. Meanwhile the amorous exposition on the latter owes as much to plunger brass notes and seductive piano chords as to ebullient vocalizing. Witness, A City Called Heaven and other traditional religious songs fare as well. However, mellow horn parts and broad melodic sweeps from the pianist on Witness, as well as carefully modulated vamps from all the instrumentalists, produce subtle swing on both tunes, leaving the emotion to Herring. The baritone’s parlando serves him appropriately when Knuffke’s musical setting of Carl Sandburg’s Subway is transformed into song. But the recitation is mated with the cornetist’s passionate grace notes to reach its goal. In fact, the only miscue is Sun Ra’s The Satellites are Spinning. While clarinet snarls and cornet blats enliven it, the vocalist’s theatrical declarations miss its sardonic and humorous aspects. Witness works wonderfully as long as the musical alterations remain down to earth.

Ken Waxman

POT POURRI

Paul Green – A Bissel Rhythm
Paul Green & Two Worlds
Big Round Records br8955
(bigroundrecords.com)

I was more than a bissel (Yiddish for “little”) tickled to see A Bissel Rhythm on the list of available CDs for review this month. For starters, an unabashed lover of Yiddish, the title alone put a smile on my face. And it stayed there as I made my way through clarinetist Paul Green’s lively and engaging exploration of that most natural of fusions: the coming together of the distinct, yet equally soul-stirring styles of Jewish music and jazz.

While this is Green’s second recorded foray into the world of Jewish/jazz fusion, it is his first as composer. Green and his aptly named band, Two Worlds, perform his eight original tracks with tremendous skill, warmth and verve: it is clear they are having a lot of fun, too!

In A Bissel Rhythm, a standard jazz structure collides with a freilach; a New Orleans funeral meets a klezmer doina; the Jewish mishberach scale snakes its way around a blues. And it all works! From the joyful and virtuosic title track, and the poignant sweetness of Zoey’s Chossid (perhaps the only time a beloved pet has been memorialized with a jazz-infused Hasidic dance), to the sly, funky ramble of Doina and Ramble, and the waltz/ballad-like Joe’s Hurra, the album does more than simply pay homage to the two musical genres it celebrates: it wraps them in a bissel (Yiddish for “little”) tickled to see A Bissel Rhythm on the list of available CDs for review this month. For starters, an unabashed lover of Yiddish, the title alone put a smile on my face. And it stayed there as I made my way through clarinetist Paul Green’s lively and engaging exploration of that most natural of fusions: the coming together of the distinct, yet equally soul-stirring styles of Jewish music and jazz.

Sharna Searle
musical heritage with modern jazz, fusion and classical musics. Zaldivar is joined on Consecration by electric bassist Rémi-Jean LeBlanc, upright bassist David Gagné, vocalist Mireille Boliy, percussionist/vocalist Amado Dedéu Jr., conguero Eugenio Osorio and drummer Michel Medrano.

Consecration begins with A Rock con Leche, which effectively sets the pace for the album that follows: after an evocative introduction of chanting and far-off, reverb-soaked whistling, it quickly shifts into a hard-driving groove, with drums and percussion providing a strong pulse under Zaldivar’s synth solo. Afro-Cuban Warriors follows a similar trajectory, as an insistent choir of voices introduces the thundery piano and leaves weaving throughout the rest of the piece. When I Think of You and Simple Talking both feature Boliy singing wordless melodies, and are amongst Consecration’s gentler pieces, as is Rezos, which features Zaldivar alone at the piano.

Consecration is an intriguing, creative album that recalls the work of musicians such as Michel Camilo and Luciana Souza, but it stands uniquely on its own, in no small part due to Zaldivar’s unique approach to integrating a multiplicity of voices into his compositions.

Colin Story

A Good Thing
Blue Standard
Big Time Records BTRCD-007
(downinthewall.com)

It does not take much to become entranced by this disarmingly natural and eloquent performance by the duo that calls itself Blue Standard. Both vocalist Raoul Bhaneja and pianist Jesse Whiteley bring out the music’s inherent drama with deeply felt emotion (in the case of the vocals) and deft touch (in the case of the pianist) together indulging each other’s lyrical and story-telling instincts to the full. Bhaneja brings elan, intelligence and passionate engagement to these performances throughout A Good Thing. For his part, Whiteley is an immaculate accompanist, showing a particularly clean set of fingers in the dashing virtuosity of every song on the disc.

Bhaneja’s enunciation of the lyrics is funded by a deep understanding of the characters in the stories told in song. He expresses the myriad of emotions behind the phrases in each song with clarity and precision so that each imagistic speculation is based as much on intuition as on reason. This naturally ensures that the lyrics are imbued with both musical conviction and beauty of tone. Meanwhile, Whiteley too, sniffs out all of the music’s detail, expressing each in a manner thoroughly deserving of his virtuosic attention. The result is an energizing and colouristic invocation of the piano’s full melodic and harmonic potential by someone who participates equally in the creativity of this session. For this reason even an old song, like LOVE for instance, sounds as if it were newly minted.

Raul da Gama
Domestic Tranquility
13go
Independent (13gomusic.com)

The album’s title comes from the Preamble to the US Constitution which is an ambitious document tying together several political and philosophical imperatives. This album is also ambitious and brings together musicians from Canada (Aubrey Dayle, drummer and composer), Kim Ratcliffe (guitarist, miscellaneous strings and composer), Uganda (Ian de Souza, bass), and the USA (Vernon Reid, guitar on selected tracks).

Although the group’s CDBaby page describes the album as “guitar fusion music,” the first few songs demonstrate more varied sounds and textures. Boogie Down 1 is exactly what the title advertises, a solid groove with some nicely phased guitar lines and simple melodies that create and release tension. How Much Longer is faster, more intense and with some wicked guitar from both Ratcliffe and Reid and more complex drumming. Pointe-Claire is a softer and more lyrical homage to the town where Dayle grew up and Eleanor Rigby is a solid cover that combines tasteful playing with a very laid-back sense of time.

The other tracks include some spoken word segments ending with Boogie Down 2, which is very ska-influenced, and There’s Three Little Girls at the Window, a whimsical Ratcliffe composition with mandolin as the primary instrument, which is calming and definitively tranquil. The album has a nice pacing, contrasting edgy fusion pieces with softer, more introspective works, which encourages a sustained listening experience.

Ted Parkinson

Something in the Air
Inventive Improvisational Inspirations Are Infinite

KEN WAXMAN

As difficult as the idea of creating sophisticated improvisational music may sometimes seem, even more fraught with challenges is finding the inspiration behind any improvisation. Creation may be singular or involve ensembles of varying size, while the influence or incentive for the work may result from examining a work of art, an historical action, a physical or spatial location or even a realized sonic concept. Each of these notable discs defines inspirations in a unique fashion.

Take American violinist Jason Kao Hwang’s Blood (True Sound Recordings Tsi jasonkaohwang.com). His eight-member Burning Bridge ensemble mixes Eastern (pipa and erhu) and Western (three brass, double bass and drums) instruments on five of Hwang’s polychromatic compositions which make their points by twisting varied musical strands, but without trading efficiency for exoticism. Although reflecting on trauma inflicted on his mother in China and his associates in the Vietnam War, Blood isn’t agitprop. Instead, melancholy and aggression are portrayed through sounds. For instance, on the title track, stop-time counterpoint from Steve Swell’s trombone projecting from a bellicose march driven by Andrew Drury’s drums cedes space to delicate textures from Wang Guowei’s erhu and Sun Li’s pipa. Although the concluding Declarations references and resolves the CD with a peaceful overlay consisting of chromatic pipa strums plus pedal-point modulations from Swell and tubist Joseph Daley, theatrical woe is balanced by sophisticated virtuosity. Giving the Asian instruments parts that unselfconsciously swing, some of Hwang’s other tunes skip and soar with lively inferences. The two-part Surge for example, finds string parts swirling around Taylor Ho Bynum’s graceful, kinetic cornet, and if Hwang’s violin solo impresses with calculated spiccato then so do Li’s crunching strums with a blues
Concerned with the realization of musical concepts, rather than reflecting tangible actions or emotions, is \textit{Façons} (Microcités 014 tourdebras.com), a two-CD set where the 20-odd members of Rimouski, Quebec-based GGRIL interpret free music tropes created specifically for the ensemble. Describing exactly his aim, Organon, by Montreal’s Isaiah Ceccarelli, aims to transform the orchestra into a gigantic pipe organ, and the inflated cresendo which introduces the piece does just that with a collection of tremolo polyrhythms and polytones making distinctive sonic colours judder every which way. As the organ-like collection of tremolo polyrhythms and polytones making inflated crescendo which introduces the piece does just that with a aims to transform the orchestra into a gigantic pipe organ, and the inflated cresendo which introduces the piece does just that with a.

Shrinking the personnel down to one and the inspiration to description, is Lisbon-based cellist Ulrich Mitzlaff’s Sonic Miniatures about Edvard Munch’s “The Scream” (Creative Sources CS 531 CD creativesources.com). During ten brief tracks, Mitzlaff’s cello figuratively examines the famous Norwegian painting from every perspective, using extended techniques to make each diminutive track distinctive. The most significant is \textit{Miniature #5}, a multi-hued sketch in itself. Beginning with the sound of the bow clattering on the ground, it evolves to resonating pizzicato plucks advanced one at a time in ascending pitches, until aggregate stops vibrate all strings with below-the-bridge drags, and then suddenly fade to one concluding twang. Shaded differently, \textit{Miniature #9} is almost as dramatic, with speedy spiccato shuffles shading the melody as it moves at a frenetic pace, only to end with lulling timbres. Also displaying col legno pops, chamber music-like formalism, sul ponticello echoes, distinctive low pitches and strongly focused stops, the cellist doesn’t echo the message of Munch’s painting as much as create a distinctive art work of his own.

Original methods of using spatial considerations inspire two other sessions. \textit{Songs of the Wild Cave} (RogueArt ROG 0084 roguart.com) was recorded in the dark and silence of a Paleolithic cave in southwestern France by Americans, saxophonist Larry Ochs and drummer Gerald Cleaver. The other CD was recorded in the Chihuahuan Desert in West Texas by American alto saxophonist Joe McPhee and tenor saxophonist John Butcher, far removed from GGRIL. Named for the massive brick sculptures constructed in the desert by a reclusive American sculptor, the improvisations on \textit{At the Hill of James Magee} (Trost TR174 CD trost.at) were created as much in the desert air as inside the rock-shale structures.

On \textit{Songs of the Wild Cave} though, shadowy haze masking prehistoric cave paintings and stone walls dripping moisture become part of the program as Ochs and Cleaver first tentatively and then sonorously pierce the oppressive quiet with contemporary noises. Fully acclimatized, midway through the program with a track literally titled \textit{Deeper}, Ochs’ combination of glossolalia, horn shreds, reed bites and dyspeptic tones breech the opaque air to such an extent that reed cries could bring out ghosts of more than Albert Ayler. Meanwhile the drummer complements these saxophone spurtst with cymbal smacks, wood pops and rebounding patterns. Adapting to the cave’s spatial qualities, by \textit{Ringing It In}, the saxophonist’s harsh narrow vibrations and squealing split tones seem to be figuratively digging through the murk and the clay-encrusted walls. Dispersing the cavern’s chill, the drummer performs a similar feat, warming the air with subtle tambourine and maracas-like shakings and bass-drum smacks. As the improvisations thicken on the penultimate \textit{Rooted in Clay}, a quasi-melody, never previously heard in these primeval surroundings is constructed out of repeated breaths, slurs and vocalized cries, and moulded linearly with bell ringing and rattling strokes. When wide honks and inflated multiphonics bounce off the earth and rocks during the final extended \textit{Light from the Shadows}, it appears as if the title’s promise is fulfilled; Cleaver’s subsequent near-bebob rhythm, decorated with intermittent saxophone peeps, confirms the sound illumination.

Inventively displaying meditations on a comparable structural challenge on \textit{At the Hill of James Magee}, at least McPhee and Butcher had the advantage of defining their art above ground. At the same time, the opportunity to produce sounds within and outside 40-foot high edifices, made of shale with iron doors and encompassing shattered glass, rust, flowers and textile shards, is as daring as it is unique. Turning acoustics to advantage, natural amplification makes saxophone strategy stand out even more. On \textit{Mind Shift} for instance, the width of a pit is marked with circular breathing, that while touching the saxophone’s highest reaches, also relaxes into a melodic theme. Oddly, the echoes on Butcher’s \textit{Paradise Overcast}, more than the previous improvisation, reflect a near-bottomless pit, as his darkened slurs and key percussion are coordinated into a rhythmic smear. Otherwise using vamps and asides to emphasize tonal differences between their horns, the duo’s most profound application of this spatial inspiration is the almost 21-minute introductory Sometimes Yes, Sometimes No. Apparently convening from opposite angles of the structures, ghostly reed tones connect in concentric circles of growls and buzzes that inflate as they deepen. The alto saxophonist’s moderated tone and the tenor saxophonist’s harsh overflowing fragment in a climactic intermezzo after which watery but lyrical timbres predominate. Individual textural variations appear before a protracted pause with a finale that balances McPhee’s narrowed tweets with dampened snarls from Butcher.

Whether rooted in cerebral hypothesis or a physical object, fascinating improvisations can have many sources. These CDs show some of the ways this happens.
Old Wine, New Bottles

Fine Old Recordings Re-Released

BRUCE SURTEES

Wilhelm Kempff – The Complete Schubert Recordings On Deutsche Grammophon (deutschegrammophon.com, 9 CDs + 1 Blu-ray audio disc). Wilhelm Kempff was born in Jüterbog, Germany in 1895. He grew up in Potsdam where his father was the organist at the St. Nicolai Church. His grandfather was also an organist and his brother the director of church music at the University of Erlangen. Wilhelm’s first teacher was his father; then, when he was nine, he went to the Berlin Hochschule für Musik where one of his piano teachers was Karl Heinrich Barth with whom Arthur Rubinstein also studied. His teacher for composition was Robert Kahn. Kempff would write two symphonies, piano concertos, violin concertos, four operas, chamber music and choral works. In 1914 he continued his studies at the Viktoria Gymnasium in Potsdam after which he returned to Berlin to finish his training. In 1917 he won both the Mendelssohn prizes. By 1918 he was already recognized as one of the leading pianists of his time, especially noted as a Beethoven interpreter. His first major recital was in 1917 playing predominantly major works including Beethoven’s Hammerklavier Sonata and Brahms Variations on a theme of Paganini. From 1924 to 1929 he was director of music at the Hochschule für Musik in Stuttgart. From then on he devoted himself to concert appearances throughout the world. He was so well received in Japan that, as it is said, they named an island for him, Kempu-san. His first recital there was in 1936, returning frequently until 1979. Kempff made his first London appearance in 1951 and his New York debut in 1964. He gave his last public performance in Paris in 1981, retiring for health reasons (Parkinson’s disease), dying in Positano in 1991.

In 1934/1935 Kempff made his first Schubert recordings. With the exception of a 1935 recording of Liszt’s cute arrangement of Schubert’s Ständchen D889, here only on CD, his complete Schubert recordings from DG are also contained on the single Blu-Ray audio disc in immaculate sound. Included are every one of the piano sonatas plus these no lesser works: six Moments Musicaux, D780; four Impromptus D899; four Impromptus D935: “Wanderer” Fantasy in C major D760; Three Piano Pieces D464; Andante in A Major D604; Allegretto in C Minor D915; Scherzo in B-flat Major D593 No.1, and finally his last Schubert recording for DG: from August 1970, 13 Variations on a Theme in A Minor by Anselm Halévynbrenner D576.

From the very first sonata to be heard in this welcome assembly of Kempff performances, it is clear that this pianist was a natural Schubertian who understood and projected the composer’s thoughts beyond the printed score.

A new CD from SWR Classic contains an in-concert recording of a piano recital from the 1952 Schwetzinger Festival with Wilhelm Kempff playing in the Schwetzinger Schloss (SWR 19412). The program consists of short pieces by Rameau, Couperin, Handel, Beethoven and Schubert’s Piano Sonata, D845. Poetic repertoire and pleasingly charming.

Bridge Records has reissued an album produced in association with the Musical Heritage Society for the Walter Fund Prize for Young

Concert Artists first published in 1989 recorded at the SUNY Purchase Recital Hall. The artists involved are cellist Marcy Rosen and pianist Susan Walters playing Cello Sonatas of Richard Strauss and Edvard Grieg (Bridge CD 9512 bridgerecords.com).

Marcy Rosen has a high profile among concertgoers in the United States, Canada, England, Italy, France and The Netherlands. She was born in Phoenix, Arizona and her teachers include Marcus Adeney, Felix Galimir and Sándor Végh. She has collaborated with a who’s who of luminaries including Leon Fleisher, Richard Goode, Mitsuko Uchida, Isaac Stern, Robert Mann, Sándor Végh, Kim Kashkashian and the list goes on. She is currently Professor of Cello at the Aaron Copeland School of Music at Queens College.

Susan Walters studied piano at the Curtis Institute and the Mannes College of Music. She joined the New York City Ballet as a solo pianist in 1997 and has performed many important piano solos with the company. She performs outside the ballet with renowned artists including Midori, Mendelssohn Quartet, Orpheus Chamber Ensemble and with members of the New York Philharmonic. She works regularly with Jacques d’Amboise at the National Dance Institute. Walters is on the faculty at the Mannes College of Music in NYC. She is to be heard on recordings from the major studios including Bis, DG, Sony, Philips, Koch and others.

Together these two are a superlative chamber music team. Rosen is in perfect command of her instrument. Her playing has a beautiful singing quality and Walters’ piano is sensitive to it. Together their music making flows spontaneously. With such harmonious playing our attention is on the music, not the players. Such a pleasure. Some credit must go to the engineers who perfectly balanced the two instruments.

Back in the days of 78 rpm discs the pieces that took only one or two sides were the backbone of the industry. Recordings in the classical field of an overture, a waltz, an intermezzo, etc. were all safe bets to release just about anywhere. In Europe, Electrola was the company and their recordings were issued worldwide on HMV and their affiliates. In April 1935 Electrola made their first studio recording with the Saxon State Orchestra (Staatkapelle Dresden) conducted by their recently appointed (in 1933), 38-year-old conductor, Karl Böhm. Those two recordings of ballet music from Undine and the Clog Dance from Zar und Zimmermann, in remarkably fine sound, are included in a 2CD set of recordings from 1935 and 1938-39 of Overtures and Entertaining Concert Pieces (Profil PH18035 naxosdirect.com) all recorded in the Semperoper in Dresden. There are 24 tracks including overtures to Die Fledermaus; The Marriage of Figaro; The Abduction from the Seraglio; Leonore 3; Egmont; Der Freischütz; Aida (prelude); Oberon; Donna Diana and The Bartered Bride. Other pieces include the Interlude Music from A Thousand and One Nights; Eine Kleine Nachtmusik; two Hungarian Dances by Brahms; the Rókoczy March; the Emperor Waltz and other lollipops including a truncated version of Capriccio Italian. Dazzling would be the right word to rate the sound on these transfers. Not one quibble about the performances.
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More and more these days, I do my music listening on YouTube. YouTube, rather than CDs, or iTunes, or the radio, or live concerts. And I’m not alone.

YouTube, although intended as a video platform, has become the prime music-listening service on the planet. With 300 million daily users, 400 hours of content uploaded to the site every minute, and an enormous wealth of archival material hidden in its nooks and crannies, subterranean depths and byways, YouTube, without meaning to, has become the most important music-listening service the world has ever known. While music companies, tech entrepreneurs and record labels were viciously jockeying for position for two decades to determine what format would replace the CD and reap its multi-billion dollar profits, YouTube just snuck into predominance – a position it will never relinquish. It is just too rich as a music service to ever be challenged.

For me, what makes YouTube so delicious is the wealth of unexpected and one-of-a-kind treasures it contains. Because it is a crowd-sourced platform, with literally millions of people worldwide contributing content to its astonishing archive, basically anything that’s ever been recorded – from film, TV, radio, recordings, cell phones, piano rolls, 45s, 78s, you name it – has been uploaded by someone somewhere to YouTube. That means with the touch of a few keystrokes, you can access piano rolls of Scriabine playing his own music, and Scott Joplin, and Mahler (an amazing performance of the entire first movement of the Fifth Symphony). You can watch and listen to close to 100 years of the most famous performers and performances in the world. A TV feed of an impossibly young Pavarotti singing La Traviata live from La Scala – check. Dozens of videos of the greatest conductor ever placed on the earth, Carlos Kleiber, dancing his way into the heart of the music of everyone from Strauss, Jr. to Weber to Brahms – check. The single greatest performance (to my ear) of Pergolesi’s Stabat Mater performed by Christophe Roussel and Les Talens Lyriques, not available anywhere else – check. The ability to quickly compare a dozen performances of Brahms’s enigmatic Opp. 117 and 118 late works, simply and effectively – check. Documentaries of Glenn Gould from European television unknown to us here – check. An absolutely riveting hour of Murray Perahia discussing Bach for Israeli television – check. Masterclasses from everyone from Andras Schiff to Joyce DiDonato to Scharzkopf to Leon Fleisher – check. And on and on. Whatever your taste, whatever your musical interest, whatever your curiosity, YouTube can endlessly satisfy it.

And that’s just in the world of classical music. When it comes to pop, or Broadway, or jazz, or any other world music, YouTube is as valuable a service, if not more so. Not to mention the thousands of really fine instructional videos available on the service – all for free – did I mention that? I taught myself the chords and voicings for the opening of John Coltrane’s Giant Steps the other night thanks to a fine YouTube instructor. I can honestly say that some of the most moving and illuminating musical experiences of my life have been occasioned by a YouTube video.

Of course, the service is not perfect. It’s owned by Google, so who knows to what nefarious purpose my viewing and listening history is put (although what someone thinks they can sell me because I listened to Marguerite Long and Ravel perform the premiere recording of his G-Major Piano Concerto is beyond me)? The quality of the sound is often weak, even terrible. The cataloguing system is nonexistent, because each uploader gets to call his or her entry what they choose. (If you want a uniquely 21st-century exercise in total frustration, try refinding a YouTube video you once saw and loved, but can’t now remember how it was titled.) Because it was never intended to be a music-delivery system, noone at YouTube seems to have given much thought how to make it a better one – except for the billion-hit pop videos that make the channel a ton of money.

But it’s precisely the bumbling, unintended, poorly organized, haphazard nature of the service that I love. Wandering through YouTube is like wandering through an amazing maze of a great musical city, with corners and alleyways and treasures beckoning you from every quarter. You may start down an intended path, but you won’t stay there for long. And that’s because, even though it’s only 20 years old, the Internet has gone through many distinct phases in its journey from light to darkness. We’re deep in the dark Web today, with fake news and hate-filled belchings eroding the central foundations of this astounding information device. But it was...
only just a few years ago that the Web was a place of enlightenment and human development, unparalleled in human history. This is the Web of Wikipedia, still an astounding free, crowd-created source of knowledge. And it’s the YouTube created in that spirit that I value, the YouTube motivated by a simple and sincere desire to share things that are loved. To me, it’s the rare recording that someone has uploaded (that has 612 hits) because they wanted others to hear it, or the lovingly created analysis of a Bach fugue that someone has laboured over that make YouTube so special and wonderful, such a beacon of hope in an increasingly hopeless world.

YouTube, without meaning to, has become the most important music-listening service the world has ever known. [...] I can honestly say that some of the most moving and illuminating musical experiences of my life have been occasioned by a YouTube video.

And that’s why the question of copyright has so little relevance in the world of YouTube sharing. It’s a topic for another time, but copyright and music are, or should be, mortal enemies. That’s because the essence of music is to be shared – the very nature of its production, waves freely transmitted through the natural air, proclaims that truth. Music is about connecting people, and copyright is about disconnecting them, denying people valued and valuable experiences through force of law. All you have to do is revel in the intense joy of a YouTube discovery to realize how irrelevant copyright is to your experience and the discussion about the economics of music in the 21st century. Yes, of course, musicians have to be paid, but the notion that you or I might be denied the deeply powerful experience of watching and listening to Kleiber conduct Beethoven 7 because some uploader doesn’t have the rights to the material truly makes me recoil in disgust. Music was made to be heard. Anything that furthers that goal is divine; anything that hinders it is demonic.

And by that measure, YouTube is divine. Long may it, and the millions of its fans, and the sharing values we represent, prosper.

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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