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The 3D documentary CUNNINGHAM, directed by Alla Kovgan, with cinematography by Mko Malkhasyan, premieres this month at TIFF. The image on our cover features dancers Ashley Chen and Melissa Toogood in Summerspace, which was first performed in 1958: choreographed by Merce Cunningham to music by Morton Feldman, with pointillist costumes and decor by Robert Rauschenberg.

“...because of the evocative nature of the music.”

ON OUR COVER

PHOTO: MKO MALKHASYAN

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ON OUR COVER

PHOTO: MKO MALKHASYAN

“...because of the evocative nature of the music.”

ON OUR COVER

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ON OUR COVER

PHOTO: MKO MALKHASYAN

“...because of the evocative nature of the music.”
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UPCOMING IN OCTOBER

The Blue Pages Directory of Music Makers 2019/2020
Deadline for submissions: SEPTEMBER 9!
contact: karen@thewholenote.com
“LUDWIG Has Just Reached 40,000!”

The Ludwig of the title above is not a reference to Wittgenstein or van Beethoven. (Nor is it a reference to Ludwig Van Toronto, the online blog, once called Musical Toronto, that is an indispensable and entertaining part of the fabric of media and social media support for classical music in this town.)

When our listings editor John Sharpe came over to my desk a few days ago to say LUDWIG had reached the 40,000 mark, he was referring to the fact that he had just approved for publication the 40,000th entry to be processed in the listings database, code name LUDWIG, that has been, for nine years, the engine room of one of the key services that the The WholeNote provides for the music community in these parts. That’s not to say 40,000 is some kind of magic number in terms of the total number of listings we’ve published, in print and online, in our 24 seasons of documenting live music in our town – something around double that would probably be closer to the mark. But it ain’t nothin’ neither.

The acronym, by the way, stands for “Listings Utility Database for WholeNote Information Gathering” and we even, for a little while ran cute ads in the magazine (featuring grumpy pictures of Beethoven, of course) informing readers that if they wanted to access music by a specific genre or geographic zone they were interested in, or by keyword for that matter, they could go online and ASK LUDWIG. You can still do those things, of course, but on the website, if that’s what you’re trying to do, it now simply says JUST ASK.

“So what is that momentous 40,000th listing for?” I hear the regular followers of this Opener both asking. Well, it just happens to be a performance at 1pm on Sunday October 6, at Mazzoleni Concert Hall in the Royal Conservatory, titled “There’s a Lady on Stage”; hosted by pianist/vocalist David Ramsden accompanying not one but three accomplished “ladies” – namely vocalists Lori Yates, Tabby Johnson and Theresa Tova, with free tickets available starting Monday September 30. (The original Quiet Please! There’s a Lady on Stage, some may remember, was a project Ramsden launched in the 80s at the Cameron House (where the title of the show definitely made sense) with some of Canada’s most talented female vocalists.)

“My loyal readers both ask. No good reason except that it feels good to me that this milestone listing happens to be for a grassroots, free concert, in one of our more intimate halls, reflecting a commitment on behalf of that particular presenter to program creatively, and on our part, faithfully to record what’s actually happening in a live music scene where the work of people for whom music is serious fun is a more important criterion for inclusion in what we list than the “seriousness” by whatever criteria we define it, of the music itself.

Robert Harris, in his Rearview Mirror column in this issue, on page 76, is perhaps talking about something similar when he muses, hopefully, on a world of classical music “augmented by new consciousnesses, expanded to include elements of styles that already have their audiences, thereby liberating classical music from its depeding dependence on repertoire that, every year, departs further and further from the concerns of the modern world…”

May the next 40,000 listings in this magazine continue to evolve to reflect that change!

So another season (our 25th) is off and running, so here’s wishing us all luck, and it’s great to have you back. And speaking of running, I should mention that Brian Chang our regular choral columnist and passionate advocate for community arts is doing some running of a different kind, as a parliamentary candidate for the federal riding of Toronto Centre. (Thank you Menaka Swaminathan for stepping into the breach in his absence.)

The question of support for funding for the arts is always a topic around election time at all levels of government, but too often as a kind of siloed separate thing, with support for culture and support for community concerns running the risk of becoming polarized opposites, and candidates or party score points for their support of one by pooh-poohing concerns for the other.

More to the point this time round, in my opinion, might be to support individuals running for office who recognize that most arts workers in our society are no less marginalized than many other workers – dealing with the same issues, especially in our cities – housing insecurity; a healthcare system with too many rotten planks in areas of greatest vulnerability. (Read Lydia Perovic’s “Mysterious Barricades and Systemic Barriers” on page 40 in this issue for more on this.) Many of us are becoming increasingly unable to afford to participate as consumers in the industries, cultural and otherwise, that by our labours we help to build and maintain, or to dwell within the towns and cities where we ply our trades.

Maybe this time round, we should keep score of how many times our candidates (of all political stripes) talk about “the middle class”, and take away a point every time they do, for automatically assuming that that includes you and me. In each and every riding may the best mensch win.
Once again, it’s time for The WholeNote’s annual guide to films of the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) in which music plays an important role. This year, circumstances prevented me from viewing more than a few movies in advance so the current guide is based on track record, subject matter and gleanings from across the Internet. Out of the 245 features from 83 countries and regions that make up the festival’s 44th edition, I’ve focused on 25, beginning with a handful of documentaries directly linked to music.

Directly Musical Documentaries

TIFF opens with the world premiere of Daniel Roher’s *Once Were Brothers: Robbie Robertson and The Band*, inspired by Robertson’s revealing autobiography, *Testimony* (2016). The book is a well-written page-turner, filled with surprises and musical insights, painting a vivid picture of Toronto’s music scene in the 1950s and 1960s before Robertson et al made their name backing up Bob Dylan and transformed into The Band. The movie promises even more, blending rare archival footage and photography with iconic songs and appearances by Martin Scorsese, Bruce Springsteen, Dylan, Robertson, Eric Clapton, Peter Gabriel, David Geffen, Rick Danko, Van Morrison, Ronnie Hawkins, Taj Mahal, Iann Wenner and Dominique Robertson – a host of built-in star power, much of which will likely be present at the première. (And if you do take this one in, consider also checking out the TIFF screening of *The Last Waltz* (the nominal conclusion of the book), which will feature a live appearance by Scorsese and Robertson.)

Another Springsteen appearance: he shares the director credit with longtime collaborator Thom Zimney in *Western Stars*, a filmic record of his latest album. “It’s largely performance, but there is a framing to it,” TIFF co-head Cameron Bailey said [quoted by indiewire.com]. “It’s very filmic, which is what attracted me. The album and the film are both about this fading Western movie B-level star who’s looking back on his life and the decisions he’s made. That narrative and that character shape all the songs. In between the songs, you’ve got Bruce really talking about this character he invented, the story he wrote for the character, and how it reflects back on his own life as he ages and other kinds of narratives he’s had in his previous albums.”

Alla Kovgan’s *Cunningham* is said to be an eye-popping, entertaining 3D documentary about Merce Cunningham, the legendary American choreographer who died in 2009 at age 90. The film features 14 dances that were originally created by Cunningham between 1942 and 1972 – including 1942’s *Totem Ancestor* (his first collaboration with composer/life partner John Cage), 1958’s *Summerspace* (where Robert Rauschenberg’s pointillist costumes and decor – see our cover photo – create a camouflage effect to Morton Feldman’s music) and 1968’s *Rainforest* (in which Andy Warhol’s silver pillows wander around the stage; music by David Tudor). The film also mixes in archival material – some never before seen – touching on Cunningham’s early years, rehearsals, tours and “chance dance” technique, with his wry wit emerging in anecdotes.

With his latest film, *David Foster: Off the Record*, Canadian director Barry Avrich mixes rare archival footage, interviews and unprecedented access to the Victoria, BC-born musician, producer, songwriter and composer who has helped sell more than a half-billion records and won 16 Grammy Awards and whose collaborators include Chicago, Barbra Streisand and Andrea Bocelli. Among others, he’s discovered and/or worked with Celine Dion, Michael Bublé and Josh Groban, many of whom (and more) are featured in the doc.

As part of TIFF’s Special Events programming, triple-platinum artists The Lumineers bring their talents to Toronto with *III*, a visual...
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Feb. 27  Schumann Quartett
Mar. 19  Pavel Haas Quartet
Apr. 16  Quatuor Ébène

PIANO

Oct. 22  Piano 6 Gala
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Mar. 31  Benjamin Grosvenor

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Music-Themed Movies (Including Two Musicals)

Cameron Bailey writes in his program note for Red Fields, “From award-winning dramatic filmmaker Keren Yedaya (Or, Jaffa) comes a complete surprise: her first musical. Adapting Hillel Mittelpunkt’s rock opera Mami, Yedaya fast-forwards this story of a gas station cashier from its original 1980s setting to the present day. Gorgeous traditional music shares the soundtrack with pulsing electronic beats, while inventive dance numbers lift this wild fantasia into La La Land territory.”

Programmer Diana Sanchez on Lina from Lima: “At once a delightful renovation of the musical comedy and a timely examination of the realities of migrant labour, the inventive debut fiction feature from Chilean director María Paz González tackles weighty themes with a light touch and a saucy sense of humour . . . Most remarkable are the moments when Lina’s humble surroundings transform into soundstages upon which she bursts into songs that fuse Peruvian folk music with music-video tropes and, in one of the film’s most dazzling sequences, a miniature version of a Busby Berkeley extravaganza.”

François Girard’s The Song of Names, from the book by Norman Lebrecht (slippedisc.com), is the director’s latest sweeping historical drama, about a man searching for his childhood best friend – a Polish violin prodigy orphaned in the Holocaust – who vanished decades before on the night of his first public performance. Clive Owen and Tim Roth star in Girard’s return to a music-themed film (after 32 Short Films About Glenn Gould and The Violin).

The Audition, Ina Weisse’s follow-up to her acclaimed film, The Architect, focuses on a violin teacher in a music high school in Germany who favours one of her students over her own son. “What fascinates me is the process of how music is created,” Weisse told cinemEurope.org. “The husband of [star] Nina Hoss’ character is a violin maker, so this will be an opportunity to show how sounds evolve.

Featuring the German-based Kuss String Quartett.

Renee Zellweger plays Judy Garland in English theatre director Rupert Goold’s Judy, an adaptation of Peter Quilter’s successful musical End of the Rainbow, which chronicles the final months of Garland’s life in London before her death in 1969. As she prepares for her five-week sold-out concert run, Garland battles with management, charms musicians, reminisces with friends and adoring fans and begins a whirlwind romance with Mickey Deans, her soon-to-be fifth husband. According to Vanity Fair, Garland’s daughter Liza Minnelli wrote on Facebook in June that “I have never met nor spoken to Renée Zellweger . . . I don’t know how these stories get started, but I do not approve nor sanction the upcoming film ... in any way.”

Australian director Unjoo Moon makes her feature film debut with I Am Woman, the story of Helen Reddy who, in 1966, landed in New York with her three-year-old daughter, a suitcase and $230 in her pocket. Within weeks she was broke. Within five years she was one of the biggest superstars of her time, the first ever Australian Grammy Award winner and an icon of the 1970s feminist movement. She wrote the anthem, I Am Woman, a rallying cry for a generation of women to fight for change. Tilda Cobham-Hervey plays Reddy and Danielle Macdonald plays her friend, legendary New York-based Australian rock journalist and club owner Lillian Roxon.

With their significant others away on the battlefields of Afghanistan, a group of British women form a choir and discover the infectious joy of music in Military Wives, directed by Peter Cattaneo (The Full Monty) and inspired by true events.

Riz Ahmed (The Night Of) and Olivia Cooke star in Sound of Metal, the directorial debut of Darius Marder. According to Variety, the story follows a drummer (Ahmed), whose life and relationship with his bandmate girlfriend are turned upside-down when he unexpectedly begins to lose his hearing and he must go to great lengths to recapture the woman and the music he loves. A large number of the cast has been drawn from the deaf community.

In Coky Giedroyc’s How To Build a Girl, based on the semi-autobiographical novel by Caitlin Moran (who shares the screenplay credit), Beanie Feldstein plays a 16-year-old aspiring music critic who lands in London in the 1990s and succeeds despite the boys’ club culture of the day.
Seamless Soundtracks/Notably Musical

Antonio Banderas won Best Actor at Cannes this year for his role as a film director who reflects on the choices he’s made as his life comes crashing down around him in Pedro Almodóvar’s warmly received semi-autobiographical fable, *Pain and Glory*. Composer Alberto Iglesias, who has scored every Almodóvar film since *The Flower of My Secret* (1995), won the Cannes Soundtrack Award for his score which has been described as intense, emotional, highly inspired and moving, with echoes of impressionism imbued with melancholy.

Peter Bradshaw wrote in The Guardian last May of Céline Sciamma’s *Portrait of a Lady on Fire*, the film that would ultimately win Cannes’ Best Scenario Prize: “I was on the edge of my seat. *Portrait of a Lady on Fire* has something of Alfred Hitchcock – actually two specific Hitchcocks: *Rebecca*, with a young woman arriving at a mysterious house, haunted by the past, and also Hitchcock’s *Vertigo*, with its all-important male gaze, [which] Sciamma flips to a female gaze.” Sciamma’s film takes place in 1770, so Vivaldi for one plays a part in the score. But Para One (Jean-Baptiste de Laubier), who has worked on each of Sciamma’s films beginning with *Water Lilies*, contributed a poignant, indelible moment of great emotional power heard at the 78-minute mark. In a recent interview he said that they thought a lot about the rhythms and dances of 18th-century music, specifically in Brittany, the film’s setting. But they also talked about Ligeti and the modernity of the film. “So [Sciamma] went back to listen to Ligeti for three days and came back with a frantic pace; it was a great inspiration. We found the tempo.”

Senegalese filmmaker Mati Diop’s haunting debut feature, *Atlantics*, won Cannes’ Grand Prize for the story of marginalized young lovers in Senegal desperately seeking a better life. Cinezik called Berlin-based electronic music artist Fatima Al Qadiri’s score “captivating” and published part of a recent interview with the composer. “The most important [thing] in my music is the melody. This is my obsession. The repetition of melodic lines in my music gives the feeling of a meditation . . . the director wanted minimalism, with very little musical information, not to overwhelm the characters.”

A symbiotic relationship between two families, one rich, the other poor, is at the root of *Parasite*. Bong Joon-ho’s socially conscious thriller that won the Palme d’Or at Cannes this year. Called ingenious and unpredictable and a twist-laden black comedy, its musical component by Jung Jae-il consists mostly of a solo piano melody playing against cello, guitars and orchestral strings with an original song with lyrics by the filmmaker performed by Choi Woo-shik, an actor in the film.

Bradley Warren wrote in The Playlist about *Bacurau*, the film that shared the Cannes Jury Prize with *Les Misérables*; “For his third feature film, Brazilian filmmaker Kleiber Mendonça Filho splits directorial duties with Juliano Dornelles, the production designer on his first two features. It’s a logical progression for a body of work known for rich soundscapes and vivid images, but it’s also a game changer for his style. ... *Bacurau* is the duo’s most political work yet ... it’s also their most playful effort to date. ... Music may not be as foundational to the plot of *Bacurau* as was the case with *Aquarius*, but its use still manages to stir the soul.” Mendonça Filho, quoted in the film’s presskit, described their approach: “The greatest challenge for the music in the movie is knowing when to shut up, which often happens with me. When you embrace the genre with all its narrative twists and turns, it’s better to have music. And when it all comes together, it’s very beautiful.”

Ladj Ly’s Cannes Jury Prize–winning debut feature, *Les Misérables*, ingeniously weaves the thematic threads of Victor Hugo’s masterpiece into an explosive contemporary narrative spotlighting France as a place of seismic political and social change. According to cinezik.org, the score by Canadian rock band Pink Noise (founded by Toronto-based Mark Sauner) is made up of consistent, unchangeable, undifferentiated electronic tablecloths that serve to maintain the film’s tension.

Terrence Malick’s *A Hidden Life*, according to Justin Chang of the LA *Times*, tells the story of an Austrian peasant farmer who was imprisoned and...
executed in 1943 for refusing to fight for the Nazis. The film’s composer James Newton Howard said (in the film’s press notes) that scoring the film was a highly collaborative process, which began with Malick sending him a series of short clips from the film without any sound or music. “I wrote very loosely to picture, but we were able to establish the key thematic material and sonic identity of the score ... One of the early ideas Terry brought to me, was to incorporate sounds he had captured during production such as church bells from the villages, cow and sheep bells, the saw mill, sounds from the prison, and scythes in the fields,” said Howard. “I took many of those sounds and processed them into musical elements that are woven throughout the score. We chose to work mostly by scene by scene where I would write something that he would react to, and then he would often mould the edit to what I had done.” The score focuses on the emotional journeys and crises of conscience of the characters with a solo violin throughout the film, embodying the connection between the two main characters, performed by none other than violinist James Ehnes.

Two Teasers

According to TIFF senior programmer Steve Gravestock, Louise Archambault’s And the Birds Rained Down features one of the most beautiful musical moments of the year, when Rémy Girard, as an ailing musician living in the Quebec countryside, is coaxed into performing at a nearby club and delivers a soulful and heartbreaking rendition of Time (from Raindogs), one of Tom Waits best tunes.

And Jessica Kiang wrote about The Whistlers in Variety: “Corneliu Porumboiu goes large with the soundtrack, smashing into and out of scenes on abrupt, bombastic tracks, which often mimic the [film’s] whistling motif in the vibrato of an opera singer’s voice, or the exaggeratedly rolled ‘r’s and hissed ‘s’-es of Ute Lemper’s Mack the Knife, sung in the original German.”

Music in Film, 8th Annual TIFF TIPS continues on page 78.

The Toronto International Film Festival runs from September 5 to 15. Please check tiff.net for further information.

Paul Ennis is the managing editor of The WholeNote.
outstanding duos, the Montreal partnership of clarinetist Lori Freedman and bassist Nic Caloia and the Amsterdam team of violist Ig Henneman and saxophonist-clarinetist Ab Baars, then the duos join to explore connections long forged through the Canadian band Queen Mab and Henneman’s sextet, creating the quartet (and anagram) NAIL.

Another international duo, saxophonist Ingrid Laubrock and drummer Tom Rainey, expands to a rarely heard trio – suggested by Karen Ng – with cellist Hank Roberts (September 13). In other duo formations the great Chicago drummer Hamid Drake appears with a regular associate, percussionist Adam Rudolph (September 13), and then (on another day) with Breton piper Erwan Keravec (September 15).

Piper? Yes, Keravec improvises on Scottish bagpipes, creating complex, noise-rich polyphony that suggests factory and cathedral as well as the instrument’s primal roots, and he’s just one of the solo improvisers applying novel approaches to unlikely instruments, sharing a double bill (September 14) with John Kameel Farah playing pipe organ and electronics.

More? One triple bill (September 13) presents three soloists: Guelph-resident Ben Grossman finds new sounds in the antique hurdy-gurdy; Nova Scotian chik white turns the humble jaw harp into an intensely expressive (and sometimes “prepared”) instrument; Susan Alcorn plays pedal-steel guitar, extending her roots in country and western to work of soaring beauty and grace.

Scott Thomson explains the explosion: “It’s important to present these artists as soloists because that’s the context in which we have heard them play so compellingly. It just worked out that they all reached the top of our ‘would-love-to-present’ list this year, and that they play instruments that one seldom or never hears at anything called a ‘jazz festival.’”

No one, however, is likely to take the challenge of solo performance further than American composer, multi-instrumentalist, dancer and vocalist Jen Shyu, presenting her Nine Doors (September 14), a moving tale in which a young woman travels through space and time meeting spirit guides. Along the way, Shyu sings in eight languages, while playing piano and various strings and percussion from Korea, Japan and Taiwan.

The Guelph Jazz Festival plays September 12–15. For information go to guelphjazzfestival.com

Stuart Broomer writes frequently on music (mostly improvised) and is the author of Time and Anthony Braxton. His column “Ezz-thetics” appears regularly at pointsofdeparture.org
In His Own Words

Walter Homburger,

January 22, 1924 – July 25, 2019

BY DAVID PERLMAN

I wonder whether you or one of your colleagues can help?” WholeNote reader Anita Kern wrote to me, on July 15 this year. “I had a copy made long ago of a tape of The Great Gathering. It was in 1987 – the Toronto Symphony and LOTS of major performers. The ‘fête’ for Homburger. Sadly, I can’t seem to find it now – possibly I gave it away to a music-teacher fan in Belgium!

Sadly, too, the TV station discarded its tape. Such an important concert! It’s incomprehensible. I wonder whether you have a copy, or anyone you know.”

Ten days later, on July 25 came the announcement that Walter Homburger had died.

A great gathering it must have been indeed! It took place at Roy Thomson Hall on March 9 1987, to honour Homburger, musical impresario and administrator, on the occasion of his retirement, after 25 years, as managing director of the TSO. A typed list of the performers on the program, along with the TSO itself, speaks volumes: Ozawa, Yo-Yo Ma; Stern, Rampal, Zuckerman; Perahia; Forrester; Iseler, the Mendelssohns; Midori; Lortie; Slava.

Meanwhile I went digging back through our own archives for this: Walter Homburger in his own words, interviewed via an email exchange, in February 2004. (I forget what I asked to get the ball rolling.)

Homburger: I created the International Artists Concert Agency in 1947, presenting concerts and recitals by international and Canadian artists mainly in Massey Hall. Among the many greats were Artur Rubinstein, Fritz Kreisler, Vladimir Horowitz, Slava Rostropovich, Luciano Pavarotti, Joan Sutherland, Leonyte Price, Glenn Gould, etc. In 1945, I [had] discovered Glenn Gould at a Kiwanis Festival and managed his concert career for 20 years until his retirement from active concertizing. Among the other artists I managed were Victor Braun, Jan Rubeš, Louis Lortie, Donald Bell, Rohan de Saram, and Alfred Brendel on his first two North American tours. In 1987 I made a co-presentation arrangement with the TSO.

I became the manager of the National Ballet from 1951 (its inception) to 1955. In 1962, I became the managing director of the Toronto Symphony and managed that organization for 25 years until my retirement in 1987. Since 1993, I have managed the career of violinist James Ehnes worldwide, who had won the Women’s Musical Club of Toronto Career Development Competition. My next project is the presentation of an all-Beethoven recital on April 13 [2004] at the George Weston Recital Hall with James Ehnes and Louis Lortie playing the “Spring” and “Kreutzer” Sonatas for Violin and Piano as well as the “Les Adieux” Sonata for solo piano.

David Perlman: There are three areas I want to ask further about. First, regarding spotting Glenn Gould in 1945 at a Kiwanis festival; that would have made him 13 and you, at 21, not that much older! I read another account somewhere which said you “spotted” him performing the Beethoven 4th with the Toronto Symphony orchestra at age 14. My question is whether you played a part in getting him from Kiwanis to TSO in such short order. I’m also a bit in awe, in part that you recognized his artistry, but even more that, young as you were, you could see clearly your own role in nurturing it. Was piano your own instrument? And were music and the business of music already your milieu?

Second, I want to ask about your association with the TSO. You managed it for 25 years, up to 1987, and then came forward, along with Bob Rae, to provide helmsmanship again during the sticky transition of the past couple of years [early 2000s]. In what ways are the challenges ahead of them now most different from those during your time at the helm?

Third, the year you decided to “come out of retirement” and take on the management of James Ehnes, 1993, was also the year that
you were involved, as an interviewee, in the film *32 Short Films About Glenn Gould*. Does the coincidence have any particular significance or was it just one of those things?

**WH:** I don’t recall whether I was responsible for the 1946 TSO engagement for Glenn. However I presented him in a recital at the Eaton Auditorium – I believe in the fall of 1947. I have no musical training – but in my early teens I did get some piano lessons and was exposed to classical recordings, concerts, and opera on radio – such as from La Scala in Milan.

Like everyone I react favourably or otherwise to music or musicians whom I hear – so when I first heard Glenn it affected me deeply. At that time, I was thinking of establishing a company to present concerts in Toronto, and it occurred to me that if I wanted to present an artist in Toronto who was managed not by a New York agency – which was the norm in those days – I would have to trace the management. By the same token, I assumed that if Glenn was as wonderful as I thought, potential presenters throughout the world would soon find out where he was managed and contact me. Fortunately, this happened.

For as long as I can remember, it was always a balancing act to keep the TSO in financial shape every year. Perhaps it is more difficult today because the percentage of support from governments has not kept pace with the ever-increasing costs of operating a not-for-profit arts institution.

It was just a coincidence that the Glenn Gould film and the beginning of my management of James Ehnes happened around the same time. You are the first one who pointed it out to me!

**DP:** A couple more questions: I saw a list of photos autographed to you, now at the [US] National Archives: along with the classical greats Karel Ančerl, Marian Anderson, Leonard Bernstein, Maria Callas, Kathleen Ferrier, Tito Gobbi, Marilyn Horne, Vladimir Horowitz, Birgit Nilsson, Itzhak Perlman, Leontyne Price, Artur Rubinstein and Herbert von Karajan are also names like Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington and Mahalia Jackson. Was jazz a particular love of yours along with classical? And you said earlier that “like everyone” you react favourably or otherwise to music or musicians. But not everyone can spot a winner. What is it that you hear in James Ehnes and Louis Lortie, for instance - the two artists you are presenting here in April - that made you say, “Yes, they are worth MY commitment.”?

**WH:** My philosophy was and is to present the best artists of the day whose performances would be enjoyed by a large audience – they could be classical or jazz as you can see. I just brought anyone who was considered tops. As far as Ehnes and Lortie are concerned, they are simply two of the finest classical artists this country has produced, and it is a unique opportunity to hear both of them play solo and combine their talents.

Anita Kern, by the way, found her copy of *The Great Gathering* and made me a copy of it (for research purposes only, of course). It sits on my desk, waiting for the right moment. I suspect what I will find, when I view it, is that it will be, triumphantly, as Walter Homburger himself was, all about the music.

David Perlman can be reached at publisher@thewholenote.com
Neil Crory’s Legacy of Support

DAVID JAEGER

uch has already been penned in celebration of the remarkable career of the late Neil Crory (1950–2019). The tributes often focus on Crory’s enthusiasm for and support of classical singers in Canada. And indeed Crory’s influence in the musical community was far reaching.

Surprisingly little has been mentioned thus far, though, about his strong support of Canadian composition. But in fact, Crory had a keen interest in the development of Canadian composers. Through his activities as a member of the national radio music department of CBC Radio, he initiated numerous commissions and creative projects for CBC Radio music programs. The program I created for CBC Radio Two, Two New Hours (1978–2007), was fortunate to be the place where many of Crory’s projects were aired, enabling our listeners to witness the exuberant programming that was the hallmark of his creativity.

Some of our most ambitious Two New Hours productions, in the cause of original Canadian music, benefited from Crory’s participation. An example of this: Glenn Buhr’s large-scale work, Cathedral Songs, commissioned as an expression of musical community building, to celebrate the newly opened Canadian Broadcasting Centre in Toronto and to be performed in-the-round in the Barbara Frum Atrium, by the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Nexus, the Toronto Children’s Choir, and the Hannaford Street Silver Band. In March of 1995, these forces duly assembled for a concert titled “Cathedral Songs,” in which the eponymous composition by Glenn Buhr had its premiere. As the CBC Radio Music liaison with the Toronto Symphony, Crory made sure that the TSO was at the centre of it all. The Atrium’s 700 seats were full, and the concert was broadcast live-to-air, serving an audience of thousands of listeners across Canada. The concert, the broadcast, Buhr’s new work and all the other pieces performed in that broadcast made a statement: Canadians creating together and aspiring for excellence can achieve greatness by harnessing the creative juices of a community. Alec Frame, vice president of CBC Radio at the time told me, “I wish that concert could have gone on forever!”

Another example: Crory was involved with commissioning the late Harry Freedman’s (1922–2005) major composition, Borealis, in 1997, which combined the forces of the TSO, the Danish National Radio Choir, the Swedish Radio Choir, the Elmer Iseler Singers and the Toronto Children’s Chorus, all under the direction of conductor Jukka-Pekka Saraste and deployed surrounding the audience, from the ground floor up into the various levels of balconies, ringing the ten-story Barbara Frum Atrium. The occasion in this case was our collaboration with the “Northern Encounters Circumpolar Festival of the Arts,” organized by Soundstreams Canada. The effect of the music was stunning. Freedman himself considered it one of his finest achievements in writing for large-scale musical forces, calling it “A summation.”

Chris Paul Harman (b. 1970) was one of the Canadian composers that Crory commissioned several times. Harman was, at age 19, the youngest Grand Prize winner in the history of the CBC/Radio-Canada Council National Competition for Young Composers (1973–2003). Crory was a close follower of all the various CBC/Radio-Canada music competitions, and he was impressed by the promise of this talented emerging composer. “Neil’s commissions, especially those for the St. Lawrence String Quartet (SLSQ) and for the CBC Radio National Competition for Young Performers would have lasting impact on my career,” Harman told me. The SLSQ went on to commission a second quartet from Harman, and played both works in Canada, the US and abroad. Later, Harman’s Globus Hystericus, commissioned for the Young Performers’ competition, was subsequently taken up by several pianists including Christina Petrowska Quilico, (who recorded it for Centrediscs), as well as Stephen Clarke and Simon Docking, among others.

Hong Kong-born Chan Ka Nin (b.1949) was another Canadian composer for whom Crory had a special affinity, and he commissioned several of Chan’s works. Chan told me, “As I was starting out to teach...”
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FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25, 8PM
PRELUDE RECITAL 7PM
KOERNER HALL
Tickets start at only $40

The Glenn Gould School Fall Opera: Jonathan Dove’s Siren Song
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1 & SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 7:30PM
MAZZOLENI CONCERT HALL
Tickets start at only $55
The gifted students from The Glenn Gould School’s vocal program present their annual fall opera. Peter Tiefenbach returns as Music Director for the production. Part of the Price Opera Program.

Tania Miller conducts the Royal Conservatory Orchestra
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 8PM
PRELUDE RECITAL AT 6:15PM
PRE-CONCERT TALK AT 7:15PM
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David Ramsden’s “There’s a Lady on Stage”
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6, 1PM
MAZZOLENI CONCERT HALL
Free tickets will be available starting Mon. Sept. 30.
David Ramsden, pianist, vocalist, and presenter of the original Quiet Please There’s a Lady on Stage concerts at the Cameron House in the 1980s, accompanies a starry lineup of Lori Yates, Tabby Johnson and Theresa Tova. Generously supported by Dorothy Cohen Shoichet.

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at the University of Toronto after my graduation, Neil commissioned me to write Among Friends in 1989 for the Amici Ensemble. The piece won the Juno Award for Best Classical Composition in 1994, and has since been performed numerous times. I am not exaggerating to say that Neil and the CBC were instrumental in launching my career. I always remember him to be a gentle person with thoughtful insights.” Among Friends, and other works that Crory commissioned Chan to compose for the Amici Ensemble, were recorded in Glenn Gould Studio and released on a CBC Records CD titled Majestic Flair. Copies of that CD are available through the Canadian Music Centre.

Later on, Chan was among the group of Canadian composers Crory commissioned to write preludes and fugues in honour of a very special Glenn Gould anniversary. Crory wrote: “In searching for a manner in which CBC Radio Two could pay tribute to pianist Glenn Gould on what would have been his 75th birthday (September 25, 2007,) I was reminded of the means by which composers throughout history have honoured the memory of Johann Sebastian Bach – the composer most associated with Glenn Gould. Composers from Robert Schumann, Franz Liszt and Max Reger to Hanns Eisler, Walter Piston and Nino Rota have all celebrated Bach’s genius with works based upon the letters of his name: B-A-C-H (Note: in German, B equals B flat; and H equals B natural.) In this spirit, CBC Radio 2 commissioned 11 composers, from coast to coast, each to write a prelude and fugue for piano based upon the available letters in Glenn Gould’s name (G-E-G-D). I think that you will be pleasantly surprised by the range and diversity of approaches that our composers have taken in realizing their individual commissions.”

In addition to Chan, Crory chose composers Kati Agocs, Malcolm Forsyth, Gary Kulesha, Andrew Paul Macdonald, Diana McIntosh, Jocelyn Morlock, André Ristic and Ana Sokolović, to write for a top-flight group of pianists, together with pianist-composers Stewart Goodyear and Heather Schmidt who recorded their own pieces. The resulting CD is also available on the CMC’s Centrediscs label, titled So You Want To Write A Fugue, a title shared with one of Gould’s own compositions.

Gould also led Crory to Toronto composer Alexina Louie. In 1982, when Louie was in the midst of composing a string orchestra work for the Faculty of Music of McGill University, she received the news of the Gould’s premature death. Louie’s response took the form of an outpouring of grief expressed through the music as she completed the work. The heartfelt homage to Gould touched Crory deeply, so much so that thereafter he sought out Louie whenever her works were performed by the TSO. They became friends, and in 1999, Crory commissioned Louie to compose the Gouldberg Fanfares, to be performed at the Glenn Gould Prize ceremony for Yo-Yo Ma. Crory also brought CBC Radio in as a co-commissioner, together with the TSO, of Louie’s 2008 Pursuit, a concerto for string quartet and orchestra written for the Tokyo String Quartet.

Louie told me that Crory was an enthusiastic adviser for her whenever she was casting singers for her opera projects. For example, he strongly suggested she cast the rising young tenor, Lawrence Williford in two of her television operas, Burnt Toast (2004) and Mulroney: the Opera (2011.) She remembers visiting him as he was in failing health, and that upon leaving his apartment he handed her a pencil, asking her to autograph the concrete inside the front door. She noticed the wall was filled thick with such autographs.

This past summer, at the premiere of her Summer Music, a quintet commissioned by Toronto Summer Music, Louie wrote that the work is, “Dedicated to the memory of my friend, Neil Crory who, as a CBC Music Producer, tirelessly promoted and supported the careers of so many singers, instrumentalists and composers with selfless devotion.” In light of the depth and impact of his work, and to celebrate his extraordinary life and career, a group of Crory’s friends and colleagues have organized a Neil Crory Tribute Concert, scheduled for Friday, October 11, 2019 at Jeanné Lamon Hall, Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre.

Participating artists will include Phillip Addis, Isabel Bayrakdarian, Isaiah Bell, Benjamin Butterfield, Tracy Dahl, Nathalie Paulin, Brett Polegato, Jean Silivelli, Krzyszta Szabó, Daniel Taylor, Erin Wall and Monica Whicher, along with CBC Radio-Canada personalities Ben Heppner, Eric Friesen, and Françoise Davoine. Fittingly, the concert will be recorded by CBC Radio Music for future broadcast. Tickets and information are available at tafelmusik.org/cropy.

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

In the Spirit of GLENN GOULD (1932–1982)

Returning to the topic of Glenn Gould, the ongoing annual observance of September 25 as Gould’s birthday, will bring with it some announcements by the Glenn Gould Foundation. On this day, the Glenn Gould Foundation will officially open the nomination process for the Thirteenth Glenn Gould Prize, defined by the Foundation as “an international symbol of creative excellence awarded to an individual for a unique lifetime contribution that has enriched the human condition through the arts.” As always, members of the public from anywhere in the world will be invited to submit the name of an artist they passionately believe deserves to become the next Glenn Gould Prize Laureate. Nomination forms are at glenn Gould.ca.

The Foundation will also offer two presentations to mark the occasion, by renowned professor of political philosophy, Joshua Cohen. On September 25 at 6:30 pm, Cohen will speak on the theme, “Gould’s Variations and the Human Qualities that Foster Remarkable Creativity” at the Al Green Theatre, Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre. And on September 26, at 6:30, he will speak at the Isabel Bader Theatre, University of Toronto, on the topic, “Central Park: A Design for Democracy.” Tickets for both presentations are also available online at glenn Gould.ca.
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New Season, New Shows, New Experiments

BY JENNIFER PARR

It’s been a wonderful summer of musical theatre highlights: the TSO’s brilliant “Modern Broadway” pops concert starring the electric Jeremy Jordan; the return of The Lion King to the Princess of Wales, where families could introduce their children to the joys of musicals via the still amazing puppetry of Julie Taymor; Nicole Brooks’ wonderfully positive a cappella retelling of the Salem witch trials in Obeah Opera at Luminato; Jake Epstein’s Boy Falls From The Sky at the Toronto Fringe; and Reprint: three brand new short musicals inspired by articles in The Globe and Mail archives. And now the new fall season is ready to begin.

Erin Shields’ Nuanced Piaf/Dietrich Book

September brings an exciting new production to the CAA Theatre that draws on well-known musical material but gives it a new and thrilling twist. Piaf/Dietrich: A Legendary Affair, as the title indicates, is about two of the most legendary performers of the 20th century: France’s petite passionate songbird Edith Piaf and Germany—by—way—of—Hollywood’s cool and aloof femme fatale Marlene Dietrich. There have been many shows written about Piaf, and not enough about Dietrich, but they haven’t been seen together until now. It turns out that the two stars were friends (and perhaps more than friends) for the last few years of Piaf’s life, meeting for the first time in the washroom of a New York theatre where Piaf had just given a less—than—successful concert in 1960. This rich possibility for a theatrical undertaking was discovered and developed by German playwrights Daniel Grosse Boymann and Thomas Kahry, beginning in 2009 as a reading of letters and writings from and about the two stars accompanied by matching songs. In 2014, a hugely successful full production (in German) called Spatz und Engel (The Sparrow and the Angel) opened in Vienna and played for six seasons while other productions followed throughout Europe.

For its debut in North America last year, it was felt that something more than a direct translation was needed, so award—winning playwright Erin Shields was asked to take on the task of creating the first English—language version, adapting the original by way of a literal translation from Sam Madwar. As soon as I saw Shields’ name attached to this show, I knew I wanted to find out more about her involvement and how the show might have developed from its European version. I have known Erin since I invited her to take part years ago in the New Ideas Festival (of which I was then artistic director) and was impressed by her adaptation of classic fairy tales. Since then she has gone from strength to strength, becoming one of Canada’s most highly regarded playwrights, from winning the Governor General’s Award in 2011 for If We Were Birds, to skewering the sexism of the television industry with Falling in Love Again and Lill Marlene, all performed by the stars and all integrated into the telling of the story.

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Breaking that down into more detail, she explained that making the language more natural than the literal translation was one of her tasks, but on a deeper level there were two bigger cultural and dramatic issues to address. “The biggest thing the original playwrights realized,” she told me, “was that Marlene Dietrich is extremely famous in Germany, so there were a lot of things taken for granted in the script about who she is. In North America, although we know Dietrich from her movies, we don’t know much more about her. We have to teach people who she is, whereas with Edith Piaf we have a bit more of a sense of her life, particularly in Montreal. Equally important,” Shields continued, “the show is about female friendship and because it was written by two guys there were some missing elements.” She made it her goal to deepen the depiction of the friendship between the two legendary figures, yet to not shy away from the conflicts that arose from their completely opposite backgrounds and public personas. This led, again, to making sure the audience would understand how different the two are. “Piaf’s track has always been very clear,” Shields says. “She has a real Hollywood storybook tragic arc to her life. She has a compulsive artistic drive: she sings and brings people to tears, and then she gets addicted to all this stuff to maintain her self and keep performing, and ends up dying young. Marlene’s story is very different. It doesn’t have the same trajectory as Piaf’s; they are working in opposite ways. While Piaf is tearing herself apart, Dietrich is trying to maintain a very composed, manicured, beautiful, iconic version of herself while she rails against age and becoming less important in the world. I am trying to bring out her story more, and to make sure that the audience sees how important Piaf and Dietrich are to each other as foils, how they provoke each other, but also ultimately how they love and support each other in a way that no one else can, partly because they both lived this life of fame which is so alien to most of us.” Of course, this isn’t only a play, but a musical, and the show includes 20 songs including La Vie En Rose, Non, Je Ne Regrette Rien, Falling in Love Again and Lill Marlene, all performed by the stars and all integrated into the telling of the story.

While Shields has had experience with musicals before – she performed in shows in high school and recently took part as a book writer in The Musical Stage Company’s Reframed – she had never written or adapted the book for a full scale musical. The rehearsal process in Montreal with the expert cast and creative team was full of revelations. “The director Gordon Greenberg (who also directs the Toronto production) really has an intuition for musical theatre. He is on his feet all the time and the show lives in his body as he is directing, so he would have thoughts, suggestions or provocations all the time on the fly – searching for clarity in the storytelling. Watching him and music director Jonathan Monroe and the actors navigate and negotiate the elements of the show, I learned that the text isn’t always
the most important thing in terms of character or story. In some ways, spoken scenes have to be slightly more perfunctory; each still has to have an action and the actors have to ‘do things to one another’, but at the same time the function of some scenes is simply to get us from one song to another, and the songs should function as story moments themselves. For example, working with a performer like Louise Pitre, whose whole body becomes overwhelmed with emotion when she is singing – grounded in that same visceral quality that Edith Piaf has – made me realize the effect her singing would have on an audience and that I could cut bits out of the script and rely a bit more, instead, on the music for the emotional journey of the play. The emotional heart of a musical really is the music.”

This is a particularly interesting journey for Shields to have experienced. “As a playwright I would say I am more of an auditory creator than a visual creator which is why I always love when I start working with a director, because directors are all visual. I always hear the play in my head, the voices and rhythms of the characters, the totality of the play whether that incorporates music or not.”

Something else always important to Shields as she crafts her plays is (often dark) humour, and while she hopes that Piaf/Dietrich will make “questions bubble up in the audience about fame and the cost of sacrificing oneself for art’, she also insists that the show is “funny, too. There is a lot to enjoy and have fun with.”

When I asked if she might consider writing the book for a new musical now that she has adapted the book for this one, she said, “Absolutely!” and already has several projects on the go, giving us even more to look forward to. Piaf/Dietrich plays at the CAA Theatre from September 17 to December 8.

**Two contrasting Canadian Premieres**

Toward the end of September are two intriguing, contrasting Canadian premieres: The first, *Girl From The North Country*, written and directed by Conor Mcpherson (The Weir, Seascape), is a look back at small town America at the height of the Depression, as seen through the eyes of this Irish playwright; “of the people” and infused with the passionate and political songs of American icon Bob Dylan. Described as a “powerful new show full of hope and heartbreak,” *Girl* is coming to Toronto for a strictly limited run from September 28 to November 24 at the Royal Alexandra Theatre after acclaimed sold-out runs at both the Old Vic in London’s West End and at the Public Theatre in New York. For fans of both McPherson and/or Dylan this should be fascinating to see. (mirvish.com)

The second, a call to the present and cry to the future, is *Resonance*, a new creation by (Seoul-born, but Canadian resident) choreographer and director Hanna Kiel. Inspired by the peaceful protests in 2016 that led to the ousting of South Korea’s former corrupt president, Park Geun-Hye, Kiel is fusing an original rock music score by JUNO Award-winning Greg Harrison with passionate new choreography for 12 dancers to explore this evolution of social outcry into direct but peaceful action. September 26 to 28, at the Saints Cyril and Methody Macedonian-Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Church in Toronto (brownpapertickets.com).

**MUSIC THEATRE QUICK PICKS**

- **SEP 7, 2PM AND 8PM ONLY:** Miz/Saigon, Broadway Concert Series Inc. Toronto Centre for the Arts (ticketmaster.ca). A rare chance to see some of our top Canadian musical theatre stars including George Masswohl (*Come From Away*) and Ma-Anne Dionisio (*Next to Normal, Miss Saigon*) singing hits from *Les Mis* and *Miss Saigon*.

- **SEP 16, 7:30PM:** The PAL Kitchen Party. One show only, Stratford Festival Theatre (stratfordfestival.ca). Support the Stratford Performing Arts Lodge by attending this one-night-only concert, a mix of songs and stories with a Newfoundland theme, performed by members of the Stratford Festival Company (and some special guests including George Masswohl and Greg Hawco) directed and hosted by company member and “Newfoundland’s own” Brad Hodder.

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.
Food of Love
An Introduction to Contractual Expectations

MATTHEW WHITFIELD

Allow me to digress before I even start. Everyday life is comprised of innumerable contracts: spoken and unspoken; written and unwritten; casual and formal. In their most severe forms these contracts appear as proper written agreements between parties, in the case of business transactions or employment contracts, where the stakes are high, sums of money higher still, and the dissolution of which is often an involved and prolonged matter. At the other end of the spectrum are informal agreements, the least formal of these being nothing more than unexpressed or assumed expectations, time-tested arrangements that typically need no room for second thought.

This latter category of contract, though far less cut-and-dried than the former, can nonetheless lead to intense disappointment when one party does not uphold their end of the assumed bargain. Imagine, dear reader, that you are at your favourite burger shop ordering your (increasingly expensive) favourite burger. You order it exactly so, and so it is served, to all appearances as promised; but upon biting into it, you are shocked to discover that one of your desired toppings has been omitted or, worse, that an expressly forbidden item has been included against your known wishes. Admittedly a manifestly first world problem, but regardless of its lack of impact on anyone in the global network except yourself, you are nonetheless disappointed out of all proportion to the life-spanning insignificance of the aforementioned burger.

Why? Because during the ordering process we justifiably expected the transaction to be an instance of a well-established relationship between ourselves and the proprietors and staff of this theoretical burger joint: if I don’t give you my hard-earned $11.50, I don’t get the burger I love; so if you don’t give me what you know I love then the manager gets called to account, or at the very least to the counter.

A small-scale instance, admittedly, of the extent to which you, dear reader, or I, experience a disproportionately acute sense of disappointment at the falling through of a simple social contract: an understood even if unspoken agreement, shipwrecked by a foiled expectation. Every facet of our lives is determined in some way by such agreements, whether ordering takeout, taking public transit, or receiving notice that “We’ve updated our Terms and Conditions... click HERE to accept.” And accept we usually must, especially when the contract at issue is over trivial things like burgers, or transit, or hydro...

But what do we do when an organization that delivers an essential service, like music, makes a move that similarly defies our expectations?

Tafelmusik Tackles Tchaikovsky

Period-instrument performance in North America is, for the most part, a contented and self-contained corner of the Classical Music multiverse: a specialized field full of treatises and correspondence, from which are gleaned kernels of information as to how previous generations (read: 1600-1750 AD) performed their music. This September, Tafelmusik breaks that mould by presenting “Tafelmusik Meets Tchaikovsky,” the orchestra’s first public experience playing music of the late-Romantic era. Presented in chronological progression alongside the music of Mendelssohn and a world premiere by Canadian composer Andrew Balfour, this is a blatant, willful, and potentially exciting severance of the unspoken contract which Tafelmusik has shared with its audience for decades.

There were, of course, hints of such a progression in past seasons, with Mozart and Beethoven appearing on concert programs, as well as progression within the Historically Informed Performance movement itself. To prepare for such a departure from their standard programming, the orchestra is working with Kate Bennett Wadsworth, a cellist and specialist in 19th-century performance practice, who will lead the orchestra in an intensive workshop to help the string players prepare for the Tchaikovsky Serenade for Strings. Here are Wadsworth’s own words regarding the move towards historically-informed Romanticism, a micro-manifesto in itself:

“The Romantics have left us almost endless source material to learn from: treatises, memoirs, personal correspondence, concert reviews, and – most exciting and bewildering of all – early recordings. We can hear Tchaikovsky’s voice on a wax cylinder, we can hear the playing and singing of his close colleagues, and we can even hear a handful of aural recordings by Mendelssohn’s protege, the violinist Joseph Joachim. The sounds on these recordings can answer our questions, but they can also blast through our beautiful theories and send us scurrying back to the written sources with fresh questions...

“It is an open secret that our musical ancestors had much more artistic freedom than today’s classical musicians. Our increasing reverence for the composer’s creative process tricked us into giving up more and more of our own creativity as performers, leading to an increasingly literal interpretation of the notes on the page. While the period-instrument movement has reclaimed a lot of the performer’s creative scope within 18th-century music (and earlier), we are only just getting to know the artistic freedoms enjoyed by the Romantics. Putting these old freedoms back into circulation does indeed require courage and mutual trust: we have to step out of our own comfort zones and take liberties we were never allowed to take in our classical training.

“For example, we all learned as music students that we can make the music leap off the page by subtly varying the dynamics and sound colours according to our own feelings. The Romantics did this as well, but they also had the advantage of a multilayered, elastic use of time. The tempo of the music can vary as our heartbeat varies, or as the pace of a storyteller varies, increasing with excitement and decreasing with calm, grandeur, or emphasis. On a smaller scale, the written rhythms are only a rough guide to a whole world of rhythmic nuance. Notation itself is a distortion of the music, and a great performer is someone who [according to Marion Bruce Ranken, a student of Joseph...
Joachim: “tries through close observance of the shadow to get in touch with the real thing that has cast the shadow.”

Tafelmusik is fortunate to have an extended loyal group of listeners who, over the years, have accompanied them on artistic adventures and through such innovative creations as the Mackay multimedia productions of seasons past. With their season theme of “The new informing the old, and the old informing the new,” this year’s programming will undoubtedly further stretch expectations and rewrite the unexpressed agreements that come to define the relationships between performers and their audiences, especially for a group seen to be highly specialized and aesthetically streamlined for an exceedingly specific variety of music. This outward growth can only be a positive facet of the orchestra’s future, mirroring the sentiment of Robert Heinlein’s famous quote, “specialization is for insects.”

Bachordion
What do you get when you combine J.S. Bach, an accordion, and, for example, an oboe? It will take a trip to Cobourg to find out. On September 29, Les Amis Concerts presents “Postcards Old and New,” featuring accordionist Joseph Petrić with oboist Colin Maier. While this may seem an unusual and unconventional combination of instruments, the repertoire is far from strange, with international highlights from across the centuries: J.S. Bach’s Trio Sonatas Nos. 1 and 6, plus a solo Bach prelude to be played by Petrić; solo oboe works TBD by Colin Maier; Lutosławski’s Dance Preludes (arranged with the blessing of the composer from the original version for clarinet and strings); Ravel’s Cinq melodies populaires grecques (originally for voice and piano); and Bartók’s Roumanian Dances. It all fits nicely with Bach’s own propensity for arrangements.

In a column discussing the creation and dissolution of expectations, this concert serves to both build and deconstruct simultaneously. The music is highly regular, comprised of material written by stablwart figures of the Western tradition, but is presented through an apparently idiosyncratic and surprising pair of interpreters. How the accordion/oboe duo will arrange and play such works is part of the intrigue and this concert is highly recommended for anyone within earshot of Cobourg.

The pervasive presence of contractual agreements, assumptions and arrangements in daily life applies to our art as well. Expectations are a fundamental component of the concert experience, which is why John Cage’s deliberate and explicit subversion of expectation will inevitably evoke different reactions than Beethoven or Tchaikovsky. This concert season I therefore encourage you, dear reader, to check your expectations at the door, or at least take inventory of them so you are aware of your predispositions and prejudices before the lights dim. Have questions or concerns as the new season starts up? Contact your local customer service representative at earlymusic@thewholenote.com.

EARLY MUSIC QUICK PICKS

SEP 20, 8PM: SweetWater Music Festival. “Opening Gala: Everything Old Is New Again.” Historic Leith Church, 419134 Tom Thomson Lane, Leith. It must be something in the water... George Frederic Handel was born in 1685, the same year as Bach and Scarlatti, and he wrote some pretty good tunes, too! Don’t miss this survey of Handel’s instrumental and vocal works, featuring top-notch performers including Daniel Taylor, Adrian Butterfield and more.

SEP 30, 7:30PM: University of St. Michael’s College. “The Lord Is My Light - A Concert for Michaelmas.” St. Basil’s Church, 50 St. Joseph Street. The feast of St. Michael the Archangel (Michaelmas) is a significant festival in Christianity, as it has been for centuries. With works by Schütz, Tunder and other composers of the early German Baroque, St. Michael’s Schola Cantorum and Consort will undoubtedly put on a magnificent show in honour of their institution’s patron saint.

Matthew Whitfield is a Toronto-based harpsichordist and organist.

The Toronto Consort

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At the Musical Edge

September has arrived and with it comes a new season of new music performances. The boundaries and edges of what I cover in this column are continually expanding, offering up a diverse array of perspectives and sounds. One of the contributing voices to this sonic smorgasbord is the Thin Edge New Music Collective (TENMC). It was founded in 2011 by co-artistic directors pianist Cheryl Duvall and violinist Ilana Waniuk, and includes an additional 15 performers listed on their website as part of the larger collective.

Their new season begins early this year with a mini three-day festival running from September 20 to 22, comprised of three performances at the Music Gallery, 918 Bathurst, and a live-streamed workshop held at the Canadian Music Centre. The title of this festival is ONGAKU – a Japanese word meaning “music,” and true to its name, the performances will present a spectrum of compositions by both Japanese and Canadian composers. I spoke with Cheryl Duvall about what audiences can expect to hear during this three-day feast.

Duvall and Waniuk originally met while students at Wilfred Laurier University and became very involved with performing contemporary music and working with the various student composers studying there. That’s where they met composer Daryl Jamieson who moved to Japan a decade ago, and in the intervening years, the three artists have been organizing various cultural exchanges between the two countries. In September 2018, Duvall and Waniuk travelled to Japan to perform a series of solos and duos with electronics from the repertoire they had built up since the beginning of TENMC. They presented pieces by Kaija Saariaho, Linda Catlin Smith, Kotoka Suzuki, and Brian Harman, as well as music by young Tokyo composers Yuka Shibuya and Takahiro Kuroda. This year’s ONGAKU festival in Toronto is a continuation of that cultural exchange.

The first concert on September 20 will be an evening of chamber works featuring guest Japanese artists Miyama McQueen-Tokita who plays bass koto, Ko Ishikawa who performs on the sho, and Akiko Nakayama, a visual artist who performs alive painting using different types of liquids to create images inspired by the music and projected during the performance. The evening will include world premieres by Japanese composers Hiroki Tsurumoto, Takeo Hoshiya and Yuka Shibuya as well as works by Toru Takemitsu, Miya Masaoka, and the Canadian premiere of Malika Kishino’s _Qualia_ for bass koto and ten-channel electronics.

On the afternoon of September 21, the free workshop, at the CMC’s Chalmers House, will be an opportunity to meet with some of the performers and composers. Ishikawa and McQueen-Tokita will demonstrate their respective instruments – the sho and bass koto, and talk about the challenges in composing for them, followed by a panel discussion amongst the various Japanese and Canadian composers whose works are part of the festival. The evening concert, back at 918 Bathurst, will feature members of TENMC performing works by Jo Kondo and Yoshiaki Inishi; improvisations by McQueen-Tokita; and an improvisation set featuring Ishikawa on shō, Ami Yamasaki’s experimental vocals and Nakayama’s alive painting.

The festival will conclude on September 22 at 918 Bathurst, with Canadian premieres of works by Yuka Shibuya and Toshia Watanabe, along with world premieres of two large-scale multimedia works by Daryl Jamieson and Juliet Palmer. Jamieson’s work is titled _Utamakura 5: Mount Kamakura_. The word _utamakura_ refers to the practice of using place names in Japanese poetry to honour and recognize specific locations with spiritual significance. Over time, many Japanese composers, poets and playwrights have reused these place names in their works. Jamieson’s piece focuses on Mount Kamakura, just south of Tokyo, a location that has been associated with the sounds of lumber being harvested, grass being cut, and birdsong. This new work is a reflection on both the ancient and contemporary associations with Kamakura and will include references to a Shinto shrine located in the area. The work is scored for piano, cello, violin, flute, clarinet, percussion, bass koto, electronics and video, and will include soundscape recordings from the area. The other large-scale multimedia work on this program is _Ukiyo, floating world_, created by Urbanvessel’s artistic director and Toronto-based composer Juliet Palmer. The work arose from a recent research trip to the beaches of Ojika-jima in Japan where large amounts of ocean garbage wash up. Palmer, along with Urbanvessel members interdisciplinary artist and designer Sonja Rainey and percussionist Germaine Liu, created improvisations with elements of this floating debris for the new work, which is essentially a dialogue between the live musicians and video footage of these floating-world improvisations. Performers include Aki Takahashi on shamisen and voice, McQueen-Tokita (bass koto), percussion (Liu), violin (Waniuk) and piano (Duvall).

I asked Duvall about TENMC’s interest in exploring contemporary Japanese music. She said that what draws her is the “beautiful balance in the music, in particular how the instruments are balanced against each other. Rhythms are complicated but don’t sound that way, rather there is a sense of floating and of pureness. Often there is a counterpoint, a passing of one voice to another creating a beautiful line in the music.” She mentioned also that the legendary Japanese composer Jo Kondo was a huge inspiration to many of the Japanese composers she has met, and his legacy lives on in their music. As in Toronto, there is a
supportive community for contemporary music culture in Japan, but in comparing the two countries, she stated that audiences there are not that accustomed to hearing music by Canadian composers; in fact, there is more of a European influence in Japanese contemporary music since many young composers go to countries such as Germany and the UK to study. This opportunity for exchange between the artists of Canada and Japan will no doubt foster more opportunities for creative interaction with audiences as well.

Back in 2016, TENMC produced a remarkable event titled “Balancing on the Edge” that combined contemporary music with contemporary circus arts. The well-attended run of this production at Harbourfront spoke to the ways modern humanity is precariously balanced on the edge of survival and evolution. This challenging production that included a total of 40 artists will now see a new incarnation, with TENMC undertaking the development of four new works, all to be created collaboratively between the circus performers, musicians, composers and choreographers, and due for final production in June 2021. The first work for this future production, Study in Exile: Home is not a place on the map, featuring First Nations dancer Amy Hull, has already been workshopped and performed in 2018. Another recent performance from this past July that demonstrates TENMC’s love of interactivity and movement included Triptych, a new work by composer Peter Hatch, which saw the musical performers walking, talking, and creating exaggerated movements.

In their upcoming seasons over the next three years, TENMC’s vision is to create space for more diverse voices, working with composers from under-represented groups. In February of 2020, the Japanese theme continues, with a concert of solos and duos by Dai Fujikura in a concert co-presented by Arraymusic and the University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Their concert in March 2020 will present five world premieres by emerging Canadian composers, while in June 2020, a newly commissioned long-form piano quartet by Linda Catlin Smith will be performed. In September 2016, TENMC performed Morton Feldman’s final work, Piano, Violin, Viola, Cello, which has a duration of 75 minutes, and this experience of playing longer duration works is the inspiration behind the Smith commission. During Duvall and Waniuk’s time at Wilfred Laurier, Smith was an important mentor to them, and has given them guidance over the ensuing years. Now they are able to work with her, and appropriately, Smith has important ties to Feldman’s music. Two other works on that program include a premiere by Canadian composer Alex Sang and Iranian Nasim Khorassani. Stay tuned as the Thin Edge collective continues to grow and evolve.

Contemporary Orchestral Music
On September 19 and 21, the TSO brings together two dynamic musicians who both perform and conduct. Soprano Barbara Hannigan returns to conduct classical works by Beethoven, Haydn and a Dutilleux nocturne featuring John Storgards on violin. Storgards in turn conducts a work by Sibelius and British composer Brett Dean’s And once I played Ophelia, with Hannigan as soloist. Dean was the featured composer during the TSO’s New Creations Festival in 2016, while Hannigan appeared as a soloist in both the 2015 and 2016 iterations of the same festival.

On October 6, Esprit Orchestra launches its new season with a concert titled “I Hit My Head and Everything Changed,” which is also the title of a newly commissioned work by Brian Harman that includes video art projections by Moira Ness. This concert will also be the venue for the presentation of the 2019 Canada Council Molson Prize in the Arts to composer Alexina Louie, whose 1989 composition, Love Songs for a Small Planet, for chamber choir, harp, percussion and string orchestra, will be performed. Works by English composer Thomas Adès and Danish composer Hans Abrahamsen will complete the program.

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For complete 2019-2020 season listings visit music.utoronto.ca. Tickets: 416-408-0208 | Follow @UofTMusic

Photo credit: U of T Opera’s La finta giardiniera by Richard Lu
As summer fades into fall, it’s time for one last lingering look at Toronto Summer Music’s 2019 season. I was fortunate to attend 16 events this year, nine mainstage concerts, five edifying TSM Connect sessions, one Shuffle Hour solo recital (excerpts from violinist Jennifer Koh’s Shared Madness project) and one reGENERATION concert. [See my two Concert Reports on thewholenote.com.] Several of the mainstage concerts were among the ten that were sold-out. Spontaneous standing ovations were the rule – Jonathan Crow and Philip Chiu’s recital on July 29 garnered two: the first following the singular beauty, roiling intensity and dynamic contrasts of Franck’s Sonata for Violin and Piano in A Major; the second after John Corigliano’s Sonata for Violin and Piano, which Crow called “youthful, exciting, with lots of notes, fun to play.”

The 33 Academy fellows and the 42 artist mentors entertained a record 16,000 audience members, of whom a score or so sat on the Koerner Hall stage (a TSM first!) for Angela Hewitt’s idiosyncratic, wildly well-received traversal of Bach’s Goldberg Variations. The recital was preceded by a conversation between Eric Friesen and the award-winning author of Do Not Say We Have Nothing, Madeleine Thien. Thien wrote her Scotiabank Giller Prize winner while listening to Glenn Gould’s recordings (mostly the 1955 version) of the Goldbergs 10,000 times over the five years it took her to complete the novel. She was walking beside rail tracks in Berlin listening to music on headphones in shuffle mode when Gould’s 1955 recording began to play. It had been years since she’d heard it and it “cracked her open,” she said. So began her purposeful routine. Hewitt’s performance on July 30 was the first time Thien had heard the piece live.

TSM’s irrepressible artistic director, Jonathan Crow, was the fulcrum of the festival, essential to its success and well deserving of the accolades he received. He and several of this year’s mentors will return to their main gig as members of the TSO – more on that later – but his next local appearance is an unexpected one, delightful as it promises to be.

**George Enescu Festival**

On September 7 in Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, Crow and pianist Coral Solomon will inaugurate Toronto’s part in the George Enescu Festival. “We actually centred all three recitals mainly around pieces we loved,” Solomon said via email. “We also wanted to lightly centre these as a tribute to George Enescu who was one of the most remarkable musicians of 20th century Europe. An internationally acclaimed violinist, pianist, conductor, and composer who often advocated for new music and composers, as well as being an inspiring pedagogue and mentor to many prominent young musicians. We will follow his tradition and include some pieces that are not too often performed but that we are really passionate about, and hope the audience will fall in love with them as well!”

The festival began in Bucharest in 1958, three years after Enescu’s death; it’s been held every two years since then, with concerts throughout Romania and the world, including Canada for the first time this September. (Coincidentally, Charles Richard-Hamelin, a TSM mentor in 2019 will give two recitals in Romania as part of this year’s festival.) The programs for the three Toronto recitals sparkle on paper, with exciting and varied works spread over three venues. Crow and Solomon (who is the artistic director of the Canadian branch of the festival) fill their program with late-19th- and early-20th-century fireworks representative of Enescu’s legacy. Ravel’s Sonata in G Major was premiered by Ravel at the piano and Enescu on the violin in 1927; Vășcă’s “flery” Sonata for solo violin No.3 was...
dedicated to Enescu in 1923; Bartók’s Romanian Dances; Brahms’ Sonata No.3 for Violin and Piano; and Enescu’s Toccata from Piano Suite Op.10 and Impromptu Concertant.

RCM faculty members, pianist Michael Berkovsky; violist Barry Shiffman with violinists Conrad Chow and Nuné Melik and cellist David Hetherington settle in for the second concert (at Eglinton St. George’s United Church) featuring Enescu’s Sérénade lointaine, for violin, cello and piano; selections from Ilan Rechtman’s “very engaging” Jazzicals for Piano Trio and Paul Schenfield’s Cafe Music; plus Brahms “epic” Piano Quintet in F Minor, Op.34. “In the mission of promoting young talent, this concert will also showcase a young rising star, Bill Vu from the Taylor Academy of the Royal Conservatory of Music, in a performance of a short and sweet highly virtuosic Toccata by Paul Constantinescu,” Solomon said.

After playing Montreal on September 21, violinist Alexandru Tomescu and bandoneon master Omar Massa repeat their program on September 22 in the Glenn Gould Studio. It’s a classical potpourri of Bach, Beethoven, Handel, Massenet, Kreisler, Enescu and Porumbescu miniatures before intermission “related to Enescu’s inspirations from Romanian and other European cultures” and “some of the finest works by the jazz giant, Astor Piazzolla,” in the second half. Tomescu’s Strad – he won the right to play it by winning a competition in his native Romania – will doubtless shine.

Toronto Symphony Season Begins

The TSO’s season-opening concerts, September 19 and 21, will showcase the unique talents of the guest artists – Canadian soprano/conductor Barbara Hannigan and Finnish violinist/conductor John Storgård. Hannigan, the supernova of contemporary song, who just happens to be enamoured of Haydn, will conduct Beethoven’s Egmont Overture, Haydn’s Symphony No.96 “Miracle” and Dutilleux’s Sur le même accord for violin and orchestra, with Storgård as soloist. Then Storgård takes the baton for Hannigan to sing Bret Dean’s And once I played Ophelia for soprano and string orchestra before leading the entire orchestra in Sibelius’ Symphony No.3.

Dean’s work uses Shakespeare’s original lines from Hamlet to present Ophelia’s thoughts, as well as what other characters say to and about her, delivered from her own perspective. The libretto is by Matthew Jocelyn, formerly artistic director of Canadian Stage. Interestingly, when Hannigan was in Toronto in March 2015 to take part in the New Creations Festival and give a lecture at U of T, she performed Hans Abrahamsen’s let me tell you, the text of which (by Paul Griffiths) consists entirely of Ophelia’s words in Hamlet. On September 20, Hannigan returns to U of T to give a masterclass on one of her signature roles, Ligeti’s Mysteries of the Macabre, which she called her “party piece” back in 2015. “I felt that Ligeti’s music was so strong that I could exist inside it,” she said. “I felt I could become myself.” The soloist will be Maeve Palmer, who sang Stravinsky’s The Nightingale’s Soliloquy in Hannigan’s 2017 masterclass at the Glenn Gould School, as a Rebanks fellow.

Immediately after the September 20 masterclass in Walter Hall ends at 3pm, Hannigan and Dean will sit down for an hour-long conversation, also in Walter Hall.

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Ever-popular conductor Donald Runnicles returns to the TSO on September 27, 28 and 29 leading the orchestra in Brahms’ bucolic Symphony No.3 and two works by Richard Strauss. TSO principal oboist, Sarah Jeffrey, brings her singing tone to Strauss’ charming Concerto in D Major for Oboe and Small Orchestra before Runnicles illuminates the climactic radiance of Strauss’ early tone poem Death and Transfiguration. Jeffrey was also a mentor at TSM2019. Weeks later, I still vividly recall the lovely interplay between her oboe and Crow’s violin in Schoenberg/Riehn’s stripped-down chamber version of Mahler’s Das Lied von der Erde played by an all-star band of virtuosos.

Last June 28, 29 and 30, Gustavo Gimeno conducted the TSO for the first time as music director to be – his five-year contract begins with the 2020/21 season – and the result was an exhilarating evening the night I was there, a scene that reportedly repeated itself on the other nights as well. It was a love-fest of music making highlighted by the visceral virtuosity of Stravinsky’s The Firebird. Gimeno returns to the RTH podium on October 9, 10 and 12 and I look forward to listening for the orchestral balance and sense of musical architecture that Gimeno evinced then in a quite different program featuring the remarkable 26-year-old pianist, Beatrice Rana, who will bring her fearless expressiveness to that bravura staple of the repertoire, Prokofiev’s Piano Concerto No.3.

Gimeno follows with Tchaikovsky’s The Tempest Fantasy-Overture and Ravel’s Daphnis et Chloé Suite No.2. After the concert, the audience is invited to stay for a chat with the personable Spaniard whose intelligence and charm were evident after the June concerts when he, concertmaster Jonathan Crow and TSO chief executive officer, Matthew Loden held a lively conversation onstage.

U of T Music Events
The new season of Thursdays at Noon free concerts begins in a big way in Walter Hall on September 12 with a performance by the venerable Gryphon Trio. The following week, September 19, Aiyn Huang and TorQ Percussion perform works by Michael Oesterle, Peter Edwards and more. Violinist Erika Raum and pianist Lydia Wong complete the month’s Thursday midday concerts with Székely’s Sonata for Solo Violin, Op.1 and Bartók’s Violin Sonata No.2.

On September 30, fresh from mentoring at TSM, pianist Steven Philcox joins fellow U of T faculty member, soprano Nathalie Paulin, to present a program inspired by Messiaen’s Chants de Terre et de Ciel (1938), a deeply personal song cycle celebrating the birth of Messiaen’s son in 1937. Quartet-in-residence, the Calidore String Quartet, puts its youthful virtuosity on display as it gets an early jump on Beethoven’s 250th birth-year celebrations with a program of the composer’s Op.74 “Harp,” Op.18, No.4 and Op.131 String Quartets.
CLASSICAL AND BEYOND QUICK PICKS

SEP 9, 5:30PM: Leaf Music presents an album release concert for Duo Kalysta’s latest recording Origins. The harp (Emily Belvedere) and flute (Lara Deutch) twosome, collaborators since 2012, perform Debussy’s haunting Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune and Morlock’s Vespertine I & II at Burdock Music Hall (free admission).

SEP 13 TO 15 AND 20 TO 22: The Prince Edward County Chamber Music Festival, with its distinctive and appealing program, takes over Picton’s St. Mary Magdalene Anglican Church for two weekends. The A-list lineup includes the New Orford String Quartet; Jon Kimura Parker and Jamie Parker, pianist-brothers; the Gryphon Trio; soloists from Les Violons du Roy; soprano Julie Nesrallah and pianist Robert Kortgaard; and Charles Richard-Hamelin. Details at pecrmusicfestival.com.

SEP 14, 6PM: DISCoveries contributor Adam Sherkin launches The Piano Has Fallen on Your Head at Rainhard Brewery.

SEP 15, 4PM: Visiting cellist Kate Bennett Wadsworth takes time away from her Tafelmusik commitments to perform Bach’s Suite No.5 in C in the Toronto Music Garden.

SEP 28, 8PM: Confluence Concerts celebrates the music of pianist-composer Clara Schumann with performers Christopher Bagan, Alison Beckwith, Patricia O’Callaghan, Angela Park and Ellie Sievers, all hosted by the engaging Tom Allen. At St. Thomas’s Anglican Church, Toronto.

OCT 3, 1:30PM: The Women’s Musical Club of Toronto’s 122nd season opens with the effervescent Montreal-based Trio Fibonacci in a diverse program anchored by Beethoven’s sparkling Piano Trio Op.70 No.1 “Ghost” – its nickname derived from its eerie-sounding slow movement.

Paul Ennis is the managing editor of The WholeNote.
Beat by Beat | World View

Polaris Milestones On an Indigenous Path

ANDREW TIMAR

A

ccording to The WholeNote’s “Previous Issues” searchable database, this marks the ninth year I’m writing this column. According to a back-of-the-envelope tally, I’ve written about 80 of these explorations of the seemingly inexhaustible globally conscious music communities in the GTA. Occasionally, I’ve even ventured off-continent following the touring activities of our musicians.

No matter how often I do it, however, writing about the launch of the pre-fall concert season amid our typical Southern Ontario August heat and humidity always feels oddly dysynchronous.

One way to bridge this musical inter-seasonality is to select some of the musicians whose careers I’ve touched on here in past Septembers over the years, trace their 2019 summers, and see where they land this September. The fact they’re all recent Polaris Music Prize recipients, and all Indigenous artists, provides us with another interesting lens.

Polaris Music Prize

The Polaris Music Prize is arguably a Canadian music industry bellwether. It is annually given to the “best full-length Canadian album based on artistic merit, regardless of genre, sales, or record label.” Founded in 2006 by Steve Jordan, a former Canadian music industry A&R executive, it was endowed with an inclusive-sounding mission statement: “A select panel of [Canadian] music critics judge and award the Prize without regard to musical genre or commercial popularity.” Polaris’ aim differs from other awards which recognize album and digital title sales and/or streaming, radio airplay, touring and social media engagement.

Mission statement notwithstanding, a review of Polaris winners for the first eight years reveals its juries chose artists reflecting commercial album production within relatively mainstream popular music genres. These include indie rock (Final Fantasy/Owen Pallett, Patrick Watson, Arcade Fire, etc), pop (Dan Snaith/Caribou), post-rock (Godspeed You! Black Emperor), electronic/hip-hop (Kaytranada), as well as hardcore punk. Given those genres, until a few years ago Polaris awarders would not have found their way into this column.

In recent years however, Indigenous voices have come to the fore with Polaris juries, bringing their awards and their artistic achievements to the attention of the general public and to this column. While A Tribe Called Red’s album Nation II Nation – their electronic dance music, dubbed powwow-step, imbued with powerful elements of First Nations music – was short-listed in 2013; it didn’t win best album. But Indigenous sounds, however, did finally sweep into the Polaris award backyard in downtown Toronto the following year.

Tanya Tagaq’s 2014 Win

On September 22, 2014 avant-garde Inuk vocalist Tanya Tagaq gave a jaw-dropping, dramatic ten-minute Polaris concert performance with drummer Jean Martin and violinist Jesse Zubot, along with, for the first time, the 44-voice improvising Element Choir conducted by

Christine Duncan. “...It was as if an intense Arctic wind had blown into downtown Toronto’s The Carlu [venue]...” I wrote, reporting for The WholeNote. To cap off the evening, Tagaq was awarded the Prize for her brilliant, overtly political album Animism.

“Her win marks a significant milestone” I wrote in my WholeNote report. “For the first time it was awarded to an Indigenous musician. ...a complex and heady mix of confrontation and reconciliation, of social and political issues [with] musical genres... hinting at the potential transcultural power of the healing force of sound.”

In the Polaris Spotlight in 2015 and Beyond

Tagaq’s 2014 award seemed to have opened some kind of Polaris door for Indigenous Canadian musicians. The following year, the Piapot Cree-born singer-songwriter, composer, educator and social activist Buffy Sainte-Marie won the Prize for her firebrand statement, Power in the Blood; her 15th studio release. This fearless veteran of the music business, 74-years-old at the time, has been writing and singing songs of love, war, religion and Indigenous resistance for over half a century.

In 2017 the Polaris jury awarded the $50,000 Polaris Music Prize to the Colombian Canadian singer-songwriter Lido Pimienta for her album La Papessa. Identifying as Afro-Colombian with Indigenous Wayuu heritage on her mother’s side, her music incorporates musical influences from those sources, as well as synthpop and electronic music genres. I also covered that Polaris gala evening for The WholeNote, and wrote: “In addition to her acrobatic voice, the sound of the tambura (Colombian bass drum), snare drum, electronics and a four-piece horn section dominated the music.” There wasn’t a single guitar or piano on stage; a rarity in the Polaris world.

Also significant that year, four of the ten short-listed albums directly reflected current Indigenous realities. A Tribe Called Red, Tanya Tagaq and Lido Pimienta were joined by Gord Downie’s Secret Path, a moving concept album about Chanie Wenjack, the Anishinaabe boy who tragically died after escaping from a residential school.

Then in 2018, singer, pianist and composer Jeremy Dutcher captured the Prize with his moving freshman album Wolastoqiyik Lintuwakonawa. Dutcher, a Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) member of the Tobique First Nation in New Brunswick, studied music and anthropology at Dalhousie University. He also trained as an operatic tenor, surely the first Polaris winner to do so. He later expanded his professional repertoire to include the traditional singing style and songs...
of his Wolastoqiyik community. His unique album reflects all those musical, linguistic and historically informed threads, reclaiming the past with an authenticity and emotional core that resonates with audiences.

In his Polaris acceptance speech, Dutcher declared, “Canada, you are in the midst of an Indigenous renaissance,” placing his work within a larger, growing Indigenous presence in the Canadian theatre, music, visual arts, dance and cinema scenes. With an eagle feather in his hand – holding an eagle feather honours the Creator and invites them to take notice – he continued, “What you see on the stage tonight is the future. ... Are you ready to hear the truths that need to be told?”

Dutcher concluded his 2018 speech with a mission statement, an insight and a heartfelt invitation. “I do this work to honour those who have gone before and to lay the footprints for those yet to come. This is all part of a continuum of Indigenous excellence – and you are here to witness it. I welcome you.”

The Summer of 2019

The laying of footprints continues apace. Over the 2019 summer, Tagaq, Pimienta and Dutcher kept busy touring. Tagaq, having relocated to Toronto since her win, has been on tour with both her music and her award-winning genre-bending literary debut Split Tooth (2018) which masterfully mashes up fiction, memoir, Inuit myth and poetry. Her coming-of-age story is not unlike her music in the richly layered texture of its narratives. In July, Tagaq appeared several times at the Riddu Riddu Festival at the Centre for Northern Peoples in Northern Norway, along with Buffy Sainte-Marie, Jeremy Dutcher and other global Indigenous acts.

Pimienta’s self-described “work of theatre, work of performance” We Are in a Non-relationship Relationship premiered earlier this year at Toronto’s Museum of Contemporary Art. The cross-disciplinary work illustrated her versatility across a variety of performance genres integrating music, storytelling and visual elements, portrayed on three screens above a living room-like set. She’s ambitiously expanding her career in new theatrical directions, “exploring the politics of gender, race, motherhood, identity and the construct of the Canadian landscape in the Latin American diaspora and vernacular.”

Pimienta also took her music on tour this summer to Montréal’s Suoni per il Popolo, Toronto’s Koerner Hall, Folk on the Rocks in Yellowknife, Pickathon 2019 in Oregon, USA, SummerStage in New York City’s Central Park and headlined the Dawson City Music Festival.

The positive reception of Jeremy Dutcher’s Polaris win has provided a discernible lift to his career in radio plays, print coverage, record sales and live concerts. In The WholeNote’s summer issue, I wrote about Dutcher’s August concert at the rural Westben in Campbellford ON., an event that also featured an Anishinaabe BBQ for concert-goers. He also appeared at summer festivals in Toronto (Luminato), San Francisco, Montreal, CanSo NS, Moncton NB, Woody Point NL, and Rees, Germany.

And in September – and early October

September 24, Tanya Tagaq and her band take the National Arts Centre stage in Ottawa along with Kalaallit (Greenlandic Inuk) Laakkuluk Williamson Bathory, in a concert evocatively titled “Voices Rising.” A frequent Tagaq on-stage collaborator, Bathory is a performance artist, actor, and storyteller, a specialist in uaajeerneq, a Greenlandic mask dance.

Jeremy Dutcher’s tour dates include the World Music Festival in Chicago on September 18 and 19, the National Arts Centre Ottawa on September 25 and Centre in the Square in Kitchener on September 27 and 28. He continues with dates at FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, St. Catharines on September 25 and Centre in the Square in Kitchener on September 27 and 28. He continues with dates at FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, St. Catharines on September 25 and Burton Cummings Theatre, Winnipeg on October 9.

October 18 The Music Gallery presents “Lido Pimienta: Road to Miss Colombia, plus OKAN” at its home Toronto hall as part of its annual X avant concerts. Pimienta presents songs from Miss Colombia, her La Papessa follow-up album, exploring Pimienta’s relationship to the culture of her birth. Performing with horns, winds and choir, the performance showcases her new songs arranged by Halifax-based composer Robert Drisdelle.

And the 2019 Polaris Music Award?

For one thing, Indigenous musicians remain contenders. The short list includes the Indigenous West Coast hip-hop duo Snotty Nose Rez Kids, nominated for their strong third album Tralpine. Haisla rappers Darren “Young D” Metz and Quinton “Yung Trybez” Nyce incorporate themes from the Kitimat BC reservation, where they grew up, in their album’s dense lyrics, mixing it with trap (a style of hip-hop music developed in the Southern USA): a style the duo call “Indigenous Trap.”

Inuk singer, filmmaker and activist Elissipie, born in Salluit in Quebec’s far north, is also on the short list. Her The Ballad of the Runaway Girl is by turns moody, melodic, richly layered and skillfully arranged throughout.

Of course there are eight other, non-Indigenous, nominees too. But no matter which one wins on September 16, the 2019 edition of the Polaris Music Prize clearly reflects, as Jeremy Dutcher astutely observed, the “continuum of Indigenous excellence” that the Prize itself, since 2014 at least, has contributed to.

WORLD VIEW QUICK PICKS

SEP 7: Aga Khan Museum, in partnership with Raag Mala Society of Canada,
presents “Stree Shakti: Celebrating Women in Music,” featuring Arati Ankalikar-Tikekar at the Museum. Ankalikar-Tikekar, an award-winning Hindustani music vocalist, accompanied by harmonium and tabla, performs raagas associated with female deities and her own compositions.

> SEP 28: Aga Khan Museum presents Madagascar’s supergroup Toko Telo in its auditorium. Toko Telo features the soulful vocals of Malagasy diva Monika Njava and guitarists D’Gary (the fingerpicking master) and Joël Rabesolo, inspired by the rich inter-cultural music traditions of the island’s southwest.

> SEP 19 TO 28: Small World Music Society (SMWMS) presents its 18th Annual Small World Music Festival in Toronto. Here are just three of the concerts to look forward to:

> SEP 19: HanggaQ from China and Mongolia takes the stage at the Revival Bar. Beijing-based HanggaQ convincingly mashes up rock and Mongolian music; the resulting mix can be heard on some of the world’s biggest festival stages;

> SEP 26: Lula Music & Arts Centre in association with SMWMS present “Women in Percussion Festival” opening night at Lula Lounge, headlining Adriana Portela. A leading figure in the samba-reggae movement, Portela was the first woman to lead a samba-reggae ensemble, and has played percussion with many leading Brazilian groups. Also on the bill is Brazilian-Canadian percussionist and vocalist Aline Morales with her new horn and drum project, Aline Morales & Vulvas.

> SEP 28: MRG Concerts in association with SMWMS present Tinariwen at the Danforth Music Hall. Formed 40 years ago, this Malian band is closely associated with the electric-guitar-driven desert blues sound and with their powerful songs about issues facing their Tuareg people.

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

Celebrate with us. The Choir will be joined by the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, all under the baton of David Fallis, for a program that spans the three centuries in which the Choir has sung: Fauré’s *Requiem*; Stravinsky’s *Symphony of Psalms*; and Andrew Balfour’s *Mamihcimowin*, a TMC commission.

Sunday, October 20 at 3:30 pm  Koerner Hall

The TMC 2019|20 season continues with four engaging concerts under amazing guest conductors from Canada, the US and the UK.

**FESTIVAL OF CAROLS**
DAVID FALLIS / CONDUCTOR
December 3 & 4 at 7:30 pm
Yorkminster Park Baptist Church
TMC’s annual celebration of joyous music for the season—this year with the Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra.

**ROMANTICS AND NEW ROMANTICS – A FREE TMC concert**
JOHN WILLIAM TROTTER / GUEST CONDUCTOR
February 22 at 3:00 pm
Yorkminster Park Baptist Church
Enjoy lush choral music by the great Romantics—Mendelssohn and Brahms—and by the generation of new Romantics, including Lauridsen and Ešenvalds.

**GREAT POETS IN MUSIC**
JEAN-SÉBASTIEN VALLÉE / GUEST CONDUCTOR
May 30 at 7:30 pm
St. Andrew’s Church
The power of words set to music. From the poetry of Shakespeare set to music by Vaughan Williams and Rutter, up to the words of Robert Frost set by Randall Thompson and Eric Whitacre.

**SACRED MUSIC FOR A SACRED SPACE**
GREGORY BATSLEER / GUEST CONDUCTOR
April 8 & Good Friday, April 10 at 7:30 pm
St. Anne’s Church
Experience some of the glorious music of the British cathedral tradition—from motets by Thomas Tallis and William Byrd up to contemporary works by John Tavener, James MacMillan and Eric Whitacre.

Tickets start at $35 with $20 VoxTix for patrons 30 and under. Purchase TMC concert tickets through *RCM TICKETS* at 416-408-0208 or online through www.tmchoir.org.
is important. Choristers likely need to be able to commit to weekly rehearsals, make personal time to learn music, and set dates aside for performances. And depending on the choir, additional commitments may be expected for various workshops, sectional, and choir retreats.

**Behind the Concerts**

Meanwhile, in these months prior to the start of the new music season, the choral scene is bustling with preparation, a lot of it unobserved by audiences and often even by choristers. Music needs to be selected, artists contacted, auditions arranged, venues booked, funding organized, and year-round administrative duties maintained. As the artistic team of The Annex Singers told me, music selection, for example, must sometimes be done as much as a year in advance.

The music community as an art is unlike the music entertainment industry. It is a labour of love, a conscientious drive to keep music as an art form alive. It is not easy. All three choirs mentioned here are led by women, all of them sharing the same determination; a determination to bring diversity to Toronto's choral scene and to make choral music accessible to a large number of people.

I asked how specific works are selected for a music season. Cheryll Chung, artistic director of Cantabile, answered, “I usually have a running list of pieces that I want to perform. I’m always on the lookout for new repertoire – always researching, especially music written by living composers, and female composers who are local.”

The music director of Jubilate, Isabel Bernaus, makes all programming decisions for their three-concert season, although she “usually consults with an informal program advisory group of choir members. Concert themes and individual works are outlined the previous January (in preparation for the arts council grant applications.)”

Similarly, Maria Case, artistic director of The Annex Singers, creates the program for each concert well in advance, adding that the concerts usually centre on a theme.

With respect to collaborations with guest artists and/or ensembles, Jubilate makes their selections “depending on the music and program needs.” One example: inviting “a Spanish dance company to collaborate on a program of classical Spanish and flamenco music. [...] The selection of collaborators is often dependent on the professional and personal connections of the music director (or, occasionally, of one of the choir members.)”

In a like manner, The Annex Singers “match the instrument, style, and area of interest of [their] guest performers to the particular program.” They mentioned a tribute performance to Shakespeare where they welcomed guest harpsichordist, Cynthia Hiebert. They also “see supporting young artists as part of [their] responsibility within the choral community.”

As someone who previously worked behind the scenes in a choral organization, I am aware of how essential funding is to the advancement and scope of choirs. I asked if these choirs receive funding from any additional stakeholders outside of their members. As might be expected, their answers differed.

Chung shared that Cantabile hasn’t been successful with all of their grant applications, “except for the one [they] applied for with [their] composer-in-residence Laura Sgroi. It was a commissioning grant awarded by the Ontario Arts Council (OAC). [They therefore] rely solely on ticket sales and donations.”

The artistic team of The Annex Singers answered, “We receive advertising revenues from local business owners and merchants in the community who promote their services in our concert programs and provide donations to our raffles and silent auction throughout the concert season. We also receive financial support from donors within and outside of the choir. Our audiences are aware of the costs of running a choir, and have proved loyal, responsive and generous to our fundraising campaigns. However, most of our revenue comes from membership fees and ticket sales.”

The Jubilate Singers have “the support of multi-year grants from the Toronto Arts Council. In some years [they] have been fortunate to receive a grant from the OAC. In addition, individual donors give some funding, and some businesses advertise in [their] programs.” I asked why arts funding is important to Jubilate. They answered, “Arts
funding helps with expenses, especially for paying the honoraria to the music director and accompanist, as well as venue rental for rehearsals and concerts. This kind of funding also shows that the community at large respects our contribution and recognizes the importance of music in the life of the community."

Why should there be an interest in investing in choirs? And why should people in the community care to expand the choral scene? For a community choir like The Jubilate Singers, it’s because they “[occupy] a special niche, performing an eclectic range of world music that reflects the diversity of the greater Toronto region. ... A small donation to a choir can make a big impact on the ability of that choir to present interesting and/or unusual music [...].” More generally, community choirs represent the ideal of amateur musicians who rehearse and perform for the love of singing. Whatever polish a choir may lack is made up for by the energy and dedication that its members bring to the music.”

Chung adds a similar sentiment, “I think people want to give back to the arts and support living musicians. Generally they see the value of live music and enjoy the diversity of our concerts.”

As for the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir, I spoke briefly with a chorister I know, Chantelle Whiteside, who has been a TMC member, and is lamenting that, as TMC gets ready to celebrate their 125th anniversary, she won’t be able to make the commitment of time she knows she would have to, to be part of what promises to be a special year.

“Being a part of Mendelssohn has been the most rewarding thing,” she says. “It’s a community, ... meeting new friends who become your closest friends.” Many choral groups require a fee from members to survive; however, the experience earned and lasting relationships formed are ultimately priceless.

To inquire about any of the specific choirs mentioned above, please contact:

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Jubilate Singers

To the Hands
The Singers’ 40th year starts with a wonderful concert befitting the fall season, featuring Caroline Shaw’s moving work, To the Hands.
Nov 17, 3:30 pm | St. John’s Church, Elora

Singers Messiah
Handel’s moving masterpiece performed in a unique way, with Elora Singers as soloists.
Dec 8, 7:30 pm | St. Joseph’s Church, Fergus

Festival of Carols
A candlelit seasonal favourite, featuring traditional songs and new works.
Dec 17 & 18, 5 & 7:30 pm | St. John’s Church, Elora

Soup & Song: Early Bach Cantatas
Come early for a wonderful lunch! Featuring Bach’s Nach dir Herr verlanget mich and Weinen, klagen, sorgen, zagen.
Feb 8, 12:30 pm & 2 pm | St. John’s Church, Elora

The Elora Singers & Elmer Iseler Singers: Double Choir
The beautiful voices of two choirs, each celebrating their 40th year, joined as one. Featuring Ockeghem’s incredible 36-voice motet, Mendelssohn, Brahms and more.
April 25, 7:30 pm | Basilica of Our Lady, Guelph

Order tickets online or by phone today! www.elorasingers.ca | 519-846-0331

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Elora Singers

Mark Vuorinen, conductor

2019/2020 Choral Concert Series

The Elora Singers’ 40th year starts with a wonderful concert befitting the fall season, featuring Caroline Shaw’s moving work, To the Hands.
Nov 17, 3:30 pm | St. John’s Church, Elora

Singers Messiah
Handel’s moving masterpiece performed in a unique way, with Elora Singers as soloists.
Dec 8, 7:30 pm | St. Joseph’s Church, Fergus

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The Jubilate Singers

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Jubilate Singers – info@jubilatesingers.ca; 416-223-7690
Cantabile Chamber Singers – cantablechambersingers@gmail.com; 416-509-8122
The Annex Singers – joedinger@gmail.com; 416-458-4434
The Toronto Mendelssohn Choir – admin@tmchoir.org; 416-538-0422

Or to delve into the myriad other opportunities out there, check out the current WholeNote Canary Pages under “Who’s Who?” at thewholenote.com.
It’s never too soon or too late!

**CHORAL SCENE QUICK PICKS**

- **SEP 28, 4PM:** Bringing a Spanish and Latin flair to the St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, the Toronto Operetta Theatre presents “Viva La Zarzuela.” Let the vocal talents of tenor Romulo Delgado and sopranos Ana Persijn Alarcon, Cristina Pisani and Olivia Maldonado, under the direction of Guillermo Silva-Marin transport you to Latin America and Spain.

- **SEP 29, 4PM:** The Elmer Iseler Singers celebrate 40 years of the Festival of the Sound including the Toronto premiere of Eric Robertson’s *The Sound – A Musical Evocation of Georgian Bay*. James Campbell and the Penderecki String Quartet are among the guest artists performing at Eglinton-St. George’s United Church.

- **OCT 5 AND 6, 7:30PM:** Enjoy the familiar, “I like to be in America!” with Leonard Bernstein’s *West Side Story* in concert presented by Chorus Niagara and the Niagara Symphony Orchestra. Robert Markus, fresh from his recent performance as Evan Hansen in *Dear Evan Hansen*, takes the lead role as Tony; soprano Meher Parni performs Maria. Tickets can be bought online and performances will take place at FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, St. Catharines.

Menaka Swaminathan is a writer and chorister, currently based in Toronto. She can be reached via choralscene@thewholenote.com

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**Elmer Iseler Singers**

Lydia Adams, Conductor

Sun. Sept. 29, 2019 @ 4:00pm

Eglinton St. George’s United Church

*Sounds of the Festival Parry Sound comes to Toronto*

**Toronto Premiere of Eric Robertson’s**

*The Sound: A musical evocation of Georgian Bay*

2:00pm Prelude concert and refreshments

416-217-0537 elmerisellersingers.com

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**Beat by Beat | Bandstand**

A

s I sit down to write this September column (the beginning of my 14th year), it’s the usual dilemma. Should I start with the events of the summer about to end, or the fall just over the horizon? And what about summers past? I think I’ll start there.

In case you haven’t been around to notice, outdoor concerts have changed. Having worked for many years as master of ceremonies at a variety of summer band concerts, I remember well concerts every Sunday, sponsored by Toronto’s Parks and Recreation Department at the Beaches Bandstand and in High Park, with concerts during the week at Allan Gardens and St. James Park.

My own summers usually ended, back then, operating the “world’s first” outdoor stereo sound system on the main bandshell at the CNE. My first season there was working with the late Sir Vivian Dunn and the Band of the Royal Marines, Plymouth Division. On another occasion, the National Band on New Zealand was featured. During the times when the featured band was not performing on the main bandshell, there were concerts on the CNE’s north bandstand by various bands from local Army and Navy Reserve units.

It has probably been some years since there have been such events with major feature bands at any outdoor facility in the Toronto area. However, community bands all over the province have been performing at a wide range of performance venues ranging from such large dedicated facilities as the Millennium Bandstand in Unionville (built in 2000) or the Rotary Aqua Theatre in Orillia’s Couchiching Park (built in 1948), to grassy areas in public parks. In the cases of the more formal bandstands, most usually have some limited seating and lots of space for audience members to bring their own seats.

Lest I start to sound too nostalgic, I should point out that while the more informal concerts on grassy lawns may be pleasant for audience members, they are not necessarily so for band members. Other than bad weather, problems can include uneven terrain for members to place chairs and music stands, bright sun in their eyes, winds to blow the music off their stands and the logistics of getting large instruments to and from the parking area to the performance site.

Just as there is much less formality in the venues, so too there is now a wide range of the delivery of the music, the dress of band members and conductors, and the means of announcing the music and soloists. During this past summer I have seen attire ranging from bands with everyone wearing rather formal uniforms with shirt, tie and band blazer to groups with shorts and a wide variety of tops.

As for audiences, times have also changed. Cell phones scattered throughout the audience are common as is the eating of treats. The photograph with this column is a case in point: the Encore Symphonic Concert Band at the Millennium Bandstand in Unionville, in garb that does not really match their prestigious name. And at least one audience member trying hard to let the music distract him from his ice cream.

Summer repertoire has evolved as well. Years ago, bands always played at least one march by Alford or Sousa. Of all of the concerts this summer, where I either played or listened, there was not a single march. All of which brings up a favourite topic of mine: repertoire. Should it be purely based on the preferences of the conductor, the skills and interests of band members, or what they hope will appeal to their audiences on a given day? Two recent concerts were a case.
JACK MACQUARIE

in point: as is popular these days one was thematic, with the title: “Music of the Cinema, Popcorn Not Included.” The other concert did not have a specific title, but was made up either of Beethoven music or music inspired by Beethoven. After the latter of these concerts, I asked a man how he liked the program. His reply: “Why would a band play Beethoven at an outdoor concert?” When asked what he would prefer, he stated that it should be obvious: “A band outdoors should be playing Sousa marches.” All of which brings up that recurring theme: “You can please some of the people some of the time, but you will never please all of the people all of the time.”

Buried Treasure

At some time every summer, I morph into my occasional household alter ego, Johann Cluttermeister, and start digging through many boxes of “sometime I must get around to it” stuff. I uncovered a few musical gems. The first was an advertisement from the Stratford Festival of a few years back, for a performance of H.M.S. Pinafore. There he was, a sailor in the uniform of the United States Navy, embracing a sweet young lady. What, pray tell, was an American sailor doing in a story aboard a Royal Navy ship?

Then it was music for a lesser-known bugle call, The First Post. Most people are familiar with The Last Post, but how many have ever heard of The First Post? Having served many years ago in a large Royal Navy ship, which was the Admiral’s Flagship, I became acquainted with many bugle calls. We had a full Royal Marine Band with many buglers aboard. We heard a multitude of bugle calls every day to announce certain routines. The First Post was one of these. And there it was, the music for this little-known bugle call! Off to Google I went. I typed in The First Post and was treated to a succession of music for a lesser-known bugle call. Most people are familiar with The Last Post, but how many have ever heard of The First Post? Having served many years ago in a large Royal Navy ship, which was the Admiral’s Flagship, I became acquainted with many bugle calls. We had a full Royal Marine Band with many buglers aboard. We heard a multitude of bugle calls every day to announce certain routines. The First Post was one of these. And there it was, the music for this little-known bugle call! Off to Google I went. I typed in “bugle call The First Post.” Almost immediately, I heard this call played in its entirety as I followed it with the sheet of music in front of me, after which to my surprise and pleasure, I was treated to a succession of bugle calls.

Warning! Groaners ahead

Question: What’s musical and handy in a supermarket?
Answer: A Chopin Lizst.

Question: How do you get a million dollars playing jazz?
Answer: Start off with two million.

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In another box, out came a true gem: a well-worn small book of music, titled the Universal Band Primer. “The indispensable and VERY FIRST BOOK for all Young Bands” it proclaimed. Published by Hawkes & Son in 1912. Price: one shilling and sixpence. The first page covered the “Rudiments of Music” and consisted of a stave with boxes of “sometime I must get around to it” stuff. I uncovered a few musical gems. The first was an advertisement from the Stratford Festival of a few years back, for a performance of H.M.S. Pinafore. There he was, a sailor in the uniform of the United States Navy, embracing a sweet young lady. What, pray tell, was an American sailor doing in a story aboard a Royal Navy ship?

Then it was music for a lesser-known bugle call, The First Post. Most people are familiar with The Last Post, but how many have ever heard of The First Post? Having served many years ago in a large Royal Navy ship, which was the Admiral’s Flagship, I became acquainted with many bugle calls. We had a full Royal Marine Band with many buglers aboard. We heard a multitude of bugle calls every day to announce certain routines. The First Post was one of these. And there it was, the music for this little-known bugle call! Off to Google I went. I typed in “bugle call The First Post.” Almost immediately, I heard this call played in its entirety as I followed it with the sheet of music in front of me, after which to my surprise and pleasure, I was treated to a succession of bugle calls.
I can’t remember a year in which the Toronto jazz scene suffered so many momentous losses; it’s been absolutely dreadful and has left many of us reeling in grief and shock. Close on the heels of Ed Bickert dying in late February, Norma Thompson (wife of the brilliant multi-instrumentalist Don Thompson) and pianist Gary Williamson both passed over the Easter weekend. We had barely begun to absorb those losses when drummer John Sumner died in early June after suffering a massive stroke. And in late July came the news that Rochelle Koskie, long-time Toronto jazz fan and co-founder of JPEC, had died unexpectedly. I hate to keep using this space as a floating jazz obituary, but when in Rome, as it were. Each of them deserves remembrance and never so more now that they’re gone.

Don Thompson is a private and stoical man, so there was very little public marking of Norma’s death. Of respect I won’t say much except that Norma had been suffering from advanced Alzheimer’s for some years and Don had been looking after her with heroic dedication, hence his reduced presence in public recently. Norma was a lovely woman, kind and vivacious, and also a talented musician – she played the bagpipes and the drums. She’ll be missed by many of us who knew her for a long time and our hearts go out to Don, who will miss her most of all.

Gary Williamson died at 75 after a long struggle with cancer which had left him unable to play much in recent years. Perhaps for this reason, Gary’s passing didn’t attract a lot of public attention either, but it certainly did among his fellow musicians. In fact, Gary was a classic example of a “musician’s musician” – one capable of improvising extraordinary things on the piano which might have gone over the heads of many listeners, but regularly left his musician colleagues open-mouthed.

He was a brilliant man who had an unusual and interesting life. His gifts extended beyond music to the academic sphere, where he particularly excelled in sciences and math. He made the Ontario Scholar’s list and was in the Engineering Physics program at U of T when he decided he wanted to pursue music full-time, much to his parents’ chagrin. As a young man, he played around Toronto on all manner of gigs, jazz and otherwise, including a stint in the house band at the Victory Burlesque Theatre which he often looked back on with great affection.

Gary spent much of the mid-to-late 1960s on an extended tour with a showband covering most of Asia. It was adventurous to say the least, leaving him with many great stories and a lifelong interest in all things Oriental. He met his lovely wife Rose in Hong Kong and brought her home to Toronto, where they bought a house and raised two beautiful children, Ty, and Sue May.

He became a fixture on the Toronto jazz scene from the early 70s on, performing regularly at Bourbon Street, George’s Spaghetti House and many other clubs, as well as doing his share of jingles and other studio work. He was the pianist with Nimmons’ N’ Nine Plus Six during its heyday, and Gary and I often performed together with Phil Nimmons in his quartet and with trumpeter Sam Noto’s quintet among other groups. In recent years, he could be heard in many of bassist Dave Young’s bands. He was very active on the Local 149 TMA board and for a time edited its publication, Crescendo. He taught piano in the jazz program at U of T for many years and the list of fine young pianists who benefitted from his guidance is a long and distinguished one.

Pianistically, he had very few peers. His studies with Darwin Atkin left him with a thorough mastery of the instrument which he augmented with his own incisive intellect – especially when it came to harmony – and his wide-ranging and adventurous tastes in music and pianists. Gary had a natural feeling for blues and gospel and blended these with elements from older bebop masters like Bud Powell, Red Garland and Phineas Newborn, and more modern players such as Chick Corea, Herbie Hancock and Keith Jarrett to form a challenging and intense personal style with great scope and a very wide, swinging beat. His playing was invariably inventive and uncompromising – he came at you – and expected you to respond in kind. I always found playing with him immensely rewarding and being around him a lot of fun, largely due to his rich sense of humour and wit.

I wish Gary had cultivated himself more as a leader and made more recordings of his own – there’s only one, long unavailable – but it wasn’t in his nature to do so. For this reason, he’s much less well-known than he should be and his illness keeping him off the scene in recent years didn’t help. Simply put, he was one of the very best pianists I’ve ever heard or played with. Like many, I miss him a lot but am glad his suffering is at an end.

Though a vastly different character than Gary Williamson, John Sumner was similarly under-recognized by the jazz public, even locally. Part of this was due to his somewhat reserved and standoffish nature – at least until you got to know him – and like Gary, John’s declining health had kept him out of the public eye lately. Along with long-term hypertension, he began suffering from acute fibromyalgia in the last 15 years, which left him with constant muscle/joint pain and fatigue, hampering his mobility in recent years. He somehow managed to still play the drums well through all this, but as the condition worsened, he was less able to get out and play, which was sad for his friends to witness.

He had become virtually housebound, and when he suffered the stroke in late May, doctors told his wife Juanita that even if he recovered, his days of living at home were over. This was unthinkable to his many friends because John was a guy who loved to be at home surrounded by his incomparable library – many thousands of CDs, scores of jazz books, favourite films, DownBeat magazines dating back to the 50s and all sorts of other goodies.

In this sense, and this sense only, John’s death was a mercy; otherwise I’ve found it personally unsustainable. He was my closest jazz friend for 34 years, and even though I’d seen him almost gradually disappear before my very eyes in recent years, he’s loomed so large in my life that I simply can’t believe he’s gone.

I’m in the midst of writing a long memorial blog on John that may take the rest of my life, so I’ll confine my remarks to the musician side of him rather than the personal. He was a superbly musical drummer, not given to technical displays – he often eschewed solos or even exchanges of eights – but always listening, always knowing what to deliver and when. He valued swing, groove and sound, and understood the subtleties underlying them, the value of texture and...
Wilsonian Gems, French Connections

DAVID PERLMAN

Regular WholeNote opera columnist Christopher Hoile embarked on a year that includes an enviable amount of travel. Consequently, with all the world as his stage, his attention to the local stages that comprise our opera beat is going to be significantly compromised. So during his agreed semi-sabbatical, the opera patrol here at The WholeNote is going to be something of a team effort. So away we go, with what promises to be a season of operatic proportions, both onstage and off.

September Start at the COC

The first of the COC’s two fall operas, Puccini’s Turandot, gets under way September 28, with the second, Rusalka, a couple of weeks behind, usually an indication that the first of the two shows requires all hands on deck, more often than not because it is a new production. Under other circumstances, the cast that has been assembled for this production would be the story, but the name that jumps off the page for me is Robert Wilson, 77-year-old, Waco, Texas-born theatre artist extraordinaire.

Those of you who saw the Philip Glass/Robert Wilson Einstein on the Beach at Luminato 2012 will be aware of the extent to which Wilson, while no slouch at deploying scenic machinery on the grandest scale, is also capable of achieving the subtletest of effects, minimalist visual moments of excruciating beauty and power. So, given the split personality of opera-going audiences in Toronto we’re almost guaranteed a hung jury, with fans of the grand gesture and lots of moving parts feeling cheated, and others, count me in, who can’t wait to see what Wilson makes of little things. “If I go to the opera,” Wilson himself said recently, “I really want to hear the music. I close my eyes. So the challenge is to find how I can keep my eyes open? How what I see can help me to hear music better.”

The quote in question is from an interview Wilson did this past February, with OperaWire contributor, Polina Lyapustina, when this Teatro de Madrid/Lithuanian National Opera/Canadian Opera Company co-commission touched down in Lithuania, the second stop on its three-nation tour, having started out in Madrid. It’s an interesting read, dotted with Wilsonian gems. He recounts a conversation with Lady Gaga: “You know, Gaga, in the theatre the last second is the most important, and next is the first second. Sometimes, if you get the last second right, they will forgive you for everything you’ve done all night.” Then continues: “In making Turandot I always tried to figure what that last second is. And then, where we began. And then, how you would draw a line from the beginning to the end.”

And this: “A stage is unlike any other space. I hate naturalism. To be on stage is something artificial. And if you try to act naturally it seems artificial. But if you accept it as something artificial, it becomes more natural.” I can’t wait.

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.

David Perlman
Neef
The production also gives the opportunity for some early reflection on what the implications will be of Alexander Neef’s announced move, after ten years heading up the COC, to assume the position of General Director of Opéra National de Paris. From where I sit, looking at Turandot, it’s potentially really good news, looking at the calibre of casts he’s attracted and the international co-producing allegiances he’s been able to build. Having someone “on the other side” with a bedrock understanding that this is a good place to build bridges to can only be a good thing. It’s an offstage season story that will unfold very interestingly over time.

Opéra Atelier
With Atelier’s fall production, Don Giovanni, still a month away (October 31), their big news is also a “French connection” story, with Atelier founders and co-directors, Marshall Pynkoski and Jeannette Lajeunesse Zingg, having been invited to stage and choreograph Grétry’s opera Richard Coeur-de-lion, celebrating the 250th anniversary of the Royal Opera House at Versailles from October 10 to 13, 2019 at Château de Versailles. “This extraordinary event marks the ultimate recognition of Pynkoski and Lajeunesse Zingg’s interpretation of French Baroque repertoire – selected as the only non-French artists involved in this milestone anniversary of the most prestigious opera house in France,” said OAs press release about the event. And I wouldn’t change a word of it.

Opera by Request planning the entire Wagner Ring Cycle over the Ontario Family Day weekend this coming February (hmm, talk about dysfunctional families); Tapestry Opera embarking on their 40th season; Against the Grain Theatre completing its tenth ...

Let the good times roll.

David Perlman can be reached at publisher@thewholenote.com. Opera-related leads and news should be directed to opera@thewholenote.com.

Beat by Beat | Art of Song

Mysterious Barricades And Systemic Barriers
LYDIA PEROVIĆ

The Barricades
The Mysterious Barricades concert series came out of a tragedy: in 2015, the series co-founder and president, Edmonton-based mezzo-soprano Elizabeth Turnbull, lost her husband to suicide. “Beth and Chris and my husband Gord and I, and Russell Braun and Carolyn Maule and many others in this group – we were all friends mainly through University of Toronto Opera School,” explains Monica Whicher, Mysterious Barricades’ Toronto leader and presenter, when we meet in her lovely home to talk about this year’s event. “Chris wasn’t a musician professionally, but he was a music lover. We were each other’s families essentially, as you are when you’re young in school and away from your own family. We have been friends for at least 30 years when it happened.” Turnbull herself speaks eloquently about her loss and her partner’s struggle with depression and anxiety in the video on the Mysterious Barricades website. Nothing, however, prepares one for the devastation that is the loss of a loved one.

“Beth understood that a way for her toward healing would be music,” says Whicher. The mezzo invited her musician friends to join forces and create a consciousness-raising event, rolling out as a series in multiple cities across the country in the course of one day. Each year, the event takes place during World Suicide Prevention Week and includes guest speakers and representatives from mental health organizations. Each concert has its own presenter and programmer. There will be a Kitchener-Waterloo concert on September 10 at 7pm. And on September 14, Ottawa (12pm), Toronto (1pm), and London (2pm) will be the three Ontario cities participating in what is planned as a 17-hour sequence, coast-to-coast concerts which will also be streamed live.

The 1pm Toronto concert will be in the University of Toronto’s Walter Hall. From the very start, the Toronto Mysterious Barricades concert has been under the auspices of the University of Toronto, where Whicher and many other musicians involved happen to be teaching. Everybody is volunteering their time. “There’s space, there’s some generosity amidst of it all, and there is a student body who we feel can use the knowledge and shared experience,” says Whicher. This year’s keynote speaker is Dr. Andrea Levinson, psychiatrist-in-chief, Health and Wellness, University of Toronto. “Our goal is to make sure that everybody knows that there is help available. We will present these resources in between the music making. It’s easy when one is not struggling to let something in one ear and out the other; but when one is struggling or one’s loved one is, it becomes difficult to understand how to proceed in a crisis. The more we can put this info forward – the better.”

While much of the messaging of MB is directed toward the university population, students and instructors, the resources listed on the website for each city include information for the general population as well. Representatives from the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention, Canadian Mental Health Association and CAMH will also be there. “At university each year we’re encountering a group of people, and I was this person at one time, trying to do something that they love and trying to do it better. Whether this is music or anything
else. You are coming to a new level of critical process, and this is very difficult. You may need support.” If a student is struggling, there’s a confidential number to call and an email address, and this is easy to find in all student handbooks.

I ask her if there are perhaps plans to grow out of the university setting, move to a non-university-affiliated hall. She explains that given that most things are currently donated, including the access to Walter Hall, this would not be an easy transfer, but that they’d be open to it should the opportunity present itself. Thanks to the live-streaming – which is, let’s not forget, still extremely rare in Canadian performing arts – the concerts do get seen by a large swath of people who are not attending university or teaching in it.

And while Mysterious Barricades is not a day of advocacy for better funding or better insurance coverage for talk therapy, it is an invitation to look at the available resources, and to start a conversation around mental health. “I appreciate that it can be difficult,” says Whicher. “We want to deal with problems before they become a crisis. The understanding of what’s already available, and the availability – both of these need to be ramped up. Everybody comes to their help differently.

“When we program each year around an idea? “Yes – Beth initially asked and I think it’s a beautiful plan, that the music provide some space for contemplation. Now, of course, it may also create space for emotion. We want to have music that evokes shared experience and be contemplative... forward-looking... colourful... in a word: hopeful.”

“Music has been the thing that’s upheld me for as long as I can remember.” And that’s true for so many people.”

“Barriers” continues on page 55

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MOZART
DON GIOVANNI
Oct 31—Nov 9, 2019 | Ed Mirvish Theatre
Starring Colin Ainsworth, Gustav Andreassen,
Mireille Asselin, Stephen Hegedus, Carla Huhtanen,
Olivier Laquerre, Meghan Lindsay, Douglas Williams.

HANDEL
THE RESURRECTION
Apr 11—19, 2020 | Koerner Hall
Starring Isaiah Bell, Stephen Hegedus, Carla Huhtanen, Meghan Lindsay, Allyson McHardy
With Artists of Atelier Ballet and Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra

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Barriers continues on page 55
The WholeNote listings are arranged in five sections:

**A.** GTA (GREATER TORONTO AREA) covers all of Toronto plus Halton, Peel, York and Durham regions.

**B.** BEYOND THE GTA covers many areas of Southern Ontario outside Toronto and the GTA. Starts on page 47.

**C.** MUSIC THEATRE covers a wide range of music types: from opera, oratorio, and musicals, to non-traditional performance types where words and music are in some fashion equal partners in the drama. Starts on page 49.

**D.** IN THE CLUBS (MOSTLY JAZZ) is organized alphabetically by club. Starts on page 51.

**E.** THE ETCETERAS is for galas, fundraisers, competitions, screenings, lectures, symposia, masterclasses, workshops, singalongs and other music-related events (except performances) which may be of interest to our readers. Starts on page 52.

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

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

**LISTINGS DEADLINE.** The next issue covers the period from October 1 to November 7, 2019. All listings must be received by 11:59pm, Sunday September 8.

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

**LISTINGS ZONE MAP.** Visit our website to search for concerts by the zones on this map: thewholenote.com.
offering appreciated.

Thursday September 12


Saturday September 14

● 10:00am: Belmont Village Festival. Music & Arts Festival. My Son the Hurricane: Romeo Sex Fighter; Waterstreet Blues Band; Hugo Alley. Belmont Village, 663 Belmont Ave. West, Kitchener. belmontvillagefestival@gmail.com or ticketscene.ca. Free. All day, events run to 10pm.


Saturday September 21

● 8:00: Acoustic Harvest. Rant Maggie. Rant. St. Paul's United Church (Scarborough), 200 McIntosh St., Scarborough. lillian.wauthier@gmail.com. $25/$22(ad). Free.

Friday September 20


● 8:00: Tafelmusik. Tafelmusik Meets Tchaiykovsky: Tchaikovsky: Serenade for Strings; Mendelssohn: String Symphonies; Andrew Balfour: Pytor's Dream. Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra; Elisa Citterio, director. Koerner Hall, Telus Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0206. From $59. Also Sep 19, 21 & 22 at 3pm.

Sunday September 15


Tuesday September 17


Wednesday September 18


● 7:30: York Region Chamber Music. Charm of Finches Flute Quintet. Laura Chambers, Tristan Dunne, Terry Lim, America Lyon and Katherine Watson. Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, 10268 Yonge St., Richmond Hill. 905-787-8811. $25. CANCELLED.

Thursday September 19

● 12:10: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Thursdays at Noon: Percussionist Ayun Huang and TorQ Percussion Quartet. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen's Park. 416-978-3750. Free.

● 10:00: Canadian Opera Company. Vocal Series: Meet the Young Artists. A program of arias featuring Members of the COC.
Concerts in the GTA

- 8:00: Tafelmusik. Tafelmusik Meets Tchai-kovskiy. Tchaikovsky: Serenade for Strings; Mendelssohn: String Symphonies; Andrew Balltour; Pyotr’s Dream. Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra; Elisa Citterio, director. Koerner Hall, Telus Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. From $30. Also Sep 19, 20 & 22(303pm).

- 8:00: Thin Edge New Music Collective. Ongaku! Concert 2. Works by Kondo, Inishik and Tokita. Guests: No Ishikawa, Armi Yamasaki, Akiko Nakayama, 918 Bathurst Centre for Culture, Arts, Media and Education, 918 Bathurst St. 647-456-7597. $20; $15(sr/ st/art); $50(festival pass); $35(festival pass sr/st/arts).

- 8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Dynamic Duo: Hanningin & Storgärds. Beethoven: Overture to Egmont; Dutilleux: Sur le même accord, for Violin and Orchestra; Haydn: Symphony No. 96 “Miracle”; Brett Dean: And once I played Ophelia, for String Orchestra and Piano (Canadian Première); Schelkis: Symphony No. 3. John Storgärds, conductor and violin; Barbara Hanningin: conductor and soprano. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375. $35-$138. Also Sep 19.

Sunday September 22

- 2:00: Renee Bouthot and Ana Cervantes. Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l’air surréaliste. Music by French and Mexican Composers

Monday September 23

- 7:00: Tradicjios. George Enescu Festival. Alexandru Tomescu, violin; Omar Massa, bandoneon. Massenet: “Thaïs” Meditation; Beethoven: Rondo; Enescu: The Fiddler; Poulenc: Oboe Concerto; Beck-xavie; Ballad; Piazzolla: Libertango. Glenn Gould Studio, 250 Front St. W. 416-506-9402. $35 and up. Tickets and Passes are now available: enescufestival.ca.

- 8:00: Thin Edge New Music Collective. Ongaku! Concert 3. Works by Shibuya, Watanabe, Jamieson and Palmer. Guest: Urbanvessel, 918 Bathurst Centre for Culture, Arts, Media and Education, 918 Bathurst St. 647-456-7597. $20; $15(sr/art); $50(festival pass); $35(festival pass sr/st/arts).

Tuesday September 24


Friday September 27


- 7:30: Northern Lights Chorus. TNL: Live! Fairview Library Theatre, 35 Fairview Mall Dr. 905-259-5976 or info@northernlightschorus.com. $40(premium rush); $30(general rush); $10(art); free(3 and under).

“Chant-Inspired Organ Masterworks” featuring David Simon Organist

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Next Event “Phantoms of the Organ” Friday, Oct. 25th, 8:00 p.m.
Holy Trinity Anglican Church
Tania Miller conducts the Royal Conservatory Orchestra
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 8PM
Prelude Recital at 6:15pm
Pre-concert Talk at 7:15pm
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9:00: Scarborough Philharmonic Orchestra. A Chamber Music Potpourri. Schumann: Caprice à la Béloire; Schumann: Sonata in G (1st movt); Chopin: Etude Op.25 No.11; Schu- bert: Trio in B-flat D747; Haydn: Quartet No.1 in B-flat and others. St. Paul’s L’Amoreaux Anglican Church, 3333 Finch Ave. E., Scar- borough. sp.ca or SPOGreatMusic. $30; $20(sr); $10(st with id/musician); $10(child under 10).
9:00: Small World Music Society. Rhiathom Sarkar (India) & Rakae Jamel (Pakistan); Rhi- tom Sarkar; Hindustani slide guitar; Rakae Jamel, sitar. Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. 416-363-8231. $35-$225. Runs Sep 28-Oct 27.

Saturday September 28

7:00: Toronto Operetta Theatre. Viva La Zarzuela. Music of Latin America and Spain. Romulo Delgado, tenor; Ana Persijn Alar- con, soprano; Cristina Pisani, soprano; Olivia Maldonado, soprano; Guillermo Silva-Marin, tenor; Narmina Afandyieva, music director/ piano; Henry Ingram, host. St. Lawrence Cen- tre for the Arts, 27 Front St. E. 416-363-8231. $45. Also Oct 3.

TWO ARTISTS: BOB KAPILOW & ANWAR KHURSHID

4:30: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Conductor: Walter Hall. Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-408-0208. $40; $25(s); $10(st). U of T students admitted free with a valid TCard, space permitting.

SUN 29 SEP AT 4PM

Choral Evensong
St. Peter’s Chapel, Eindraad
plus Peach Tea and talk
SIR DAVID WILLCOCKS
CENTENARY
Clement Carlisle

SAT SEP 28 @ 7:30 PM
musictoronto.ca

WHAT MAKES IT GREAT?:
Beethoven Symphony No. 7
with Rob Kapilow & the UTSO

SEPT 28 – OCT 27
416-363-8231 | coca.ca

7:30: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Chamber Music Concert Series. Nath- alie Paulin, soprano; Steven Philcox, piano. 416-408-0208. $40; $25(s); $10(st). U of T students admitted free with a valid TCard, space permitting.

R. Strauss: Concerto in D, for Oboe and Small Orchestra; R. Strauss: Death and Transfiguration. Sarah Jeffrey, oboe; Donald Runnicles, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375. $35-$148. Also Sep 27 & 29.

Sunday September 29

4:00: Burlington Performing Arts Centre. Sultans of String Featuring the Burlington Symphony & Anwar Khurshid & Shannon Thambert. Chris MacDoid, vio- lin; Kevin Laliberte, guitar; Drew Birston, bass; Chedey Leon, percussion, Eddie Paton, guitar. 440 Locust St., Burlington. 905-681-6000. $39.50/$34.50.(members).
4:00: Elmer Iseler Singers. Sounds of the Festival: Piano Sound Comes to Toronto. Rob- ertson: The Sound - A Musical Evection of Georgian Bay and others. Penderecki String Quartet; James Campbell, clarinet; Colin Fox, narrator; Suzanne Shulman, flute; Beverly Johnson, percussion. Eglinton St. George’s United Church, 55 Lyton Blvd. 416-217-0537. $45; $40(sr); $25(under 30). 2pm: Prelude Concert.

Monday September 30

7:30: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Chamber Music Concert Series. Nath- alie Paulin, soprano; Anwar Khurshid, piano. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building. University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-408-0208. $40; $25(s); $10(st). U of T students admitted free with a valid TCard, space permitting.

Tuesday October 1


Wednesday October 2

7:30: Fall for Dance North. Program I. Meridian Hall (formerly Sony Centre), 1 Front St. E. 1-855-872-7669. $15. Also Oct 3.

Thursday October 3


SUN 29 SEP AT 4PM

Choral Evensong
St. Peter’s Choir, Eindraad

plus Peach Tea and talk
SIR DAVID WILLCOCKS
CENTENARY
Clement Carlisle

SAT SEP 28 @ 7:30 PM
musictoronto.ca

WHAT MAKES IT GREAT?:
Beethoven Symphony No. 7
with Rob Kapilow & the UTSO

SEPT 28 – OCT 27
416-363-8231 | coca.ca

7:30: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. What Makes It Great? Series: Beethoven - Symphony No.7. U of T Symphony Orchestra; Rob Kapilow, conductor. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-408-0208. $40; $25(s); $10(st). U of T students admitted free with a valid TCard, space permitting.
8:00: Confluence Concerts. Celebrating Clara Schumann. Commemorating the 200th anniversary of the birth of pianist and com- poser Clara Schumann. Music by Clara Schu- mann. Tom Allen, host; Christopher Bagan, Alison Beckwith, Patricia O’Callaghan, Angela Park and Ellie Sievers. St. Thomas’s Anglican Church (Toronto), 360 Huron St. 416-410-4581. $30; $25(s); $20(under 15). 7:15pm: pre-concert chat with Larry Beck- with and special guests.
8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Romantic Brahms. Brahms: Symphony No.3; R. Strauss: Death from and Transfiguration; S. Bruckner: Symphony No.6.

A. Concerts in the GTA

Tri: Rachmaninoff: Vocalise; Marie-Pierre Brasset: L’amoureux; Beethoven: Piano Trio Op.70 No.1 “Ghost”. Trio Fibonacci (Julie-Anne Derome, violin; Gabriel Prymn, cello; Steven Massicotte, piano). Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park, 416-923-7052 or wmcn.ca. $45.

7:30: Fall for Dance North. Program 1. Meridian Hall (formerly Sony Centre), 1 Front St. E. 1-655-672-7669. $15. Pre-show artist talk 6:30pm.

7:30: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Star Wars: Return of the Jedi - In Concert. Steven Reineke, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375. $72-$125.75. Also Oct 4(7:30pm), 5(12:30pm) & 7:30pm.

Friday October 4


7:30: Canadian Opera Company. Turandot. Music by Giacomo Puccini, completed by Franco Alfano, libretto by Giuseppe Adami and Renato Simoni. Tamara Wilson, soprano (Turandot - Sep 28, Oct 4, 9, 15, 19, 27); Marjorie Owens, soprano (Turandot - Oct 23, 25); Sergey Skorokhodov, tenor (Calaf - Sep 28, Oct 4, 9, 15, 17, 19, 27); Kamen Chanev, tenor (Calaf - Oct 23, 25); Liù Joyce El-Khoury, soprano (Liù - Sep 28, Oct 4, 9, 19, 27); Vanessa Vazquez, soprano (Liù - Oct 15, 17, 23, 25); Carlo Rizzi, conductor; Robert Wilson, stage director. Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. 416-867-8231. $35-$252. Runs Sep 29-Oct 27. Start times vary.

7:30: Canadian Opera Company. Turandot. Music by Giacomo Puccini, completed by Franco Alfano, libretto by Giuseppe Adami and Renato Simoni. Tamara Wilson, soprano (Turandot - Sep 28, Oct 4, 9, 15, 19, 27); Marjorie Owens, soprano (Turandot - Oct 23, 25); Sergey Skorokhodov, tenor (Calaf - Sep 28, Oct 4, 9, 15, 17, 19, 27); Kamen Chanev, tenor (Calaf - Oct 23, 25); Liù Joyce El-Khoury, soprano (Liù - Sep 28, Oct 4, 9, 19, 27); Vanessa Vazquez, soprano (Liù - Oct 15, 17, 23, 25); Carlo Rizzi, conductor; Robert Wilson, stage director. Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. 416-867-8231. $35-$252. Runs Sep 29-Oct 27. Start times vary.


7:30: Fall for Dance North. Program 2. Meridian Hall (formerly Sony Centre), 1 Front St. E. 1-855-872-7669. $15. Also Oct 5(7:30pm), 6(7:30pm), 7(3:00pm). Space permitting.

Saturday October 5

12:30: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Star Wars: Return of the Jedi - In Concert. Steven Reineke, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375. $72-$126.75. Also Oct 3(7:30pm), 5(12:30pm) & 7:30pm.

8:00: Small World Music Society. Ilia Staryneny Presents The Babylonia Suite. Paul Pacanowski, clarinet/flute; Amber Walton-Amar, cello; Jeremy Ledbetter, piano; Connor Walsh, bass; Ilia Staryneny, drums. Small World Music Centre, Artscape Youngplace, 180 Shaw St. 416-536-5439. $30/$20(adv).

Sunday October 6

1:00: Royal Conservatory. Sunday Inter-Judges Series: David Ramsden’s “There’s a Lady on Stage”. Lori Yates, Tabby Johnson and Theresa Tova, vocalists; David Ramsden, piano. Mazoleni Concert Hall, Telus Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. Free(ticket required). Tickets available a week prior to performance.

David Ramsden’s “There’s a Lady on Stage”

Lori Yates / Tabby Johnson / Theresa Tova

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6, 1PM
Mazzoleni Concert Hall

Free tickets will be available starting Mon. Sept. 30. 416.408.0208

www.rcmusic.com/performances
**HANDEL’S HEROINES**

**Power Anthems from the High Baroque**

**SUN OCT 6, 3PM**

Vania Chan, soprano
Resonance Baroque Ensemble
rhcentre.ca

**B. Concerts Beyond the GTA**


**Wednesday September 4**
- **12:00 noon:** Midday Music with Shigeru. Hymns of the Heart. Cheryl Graham, piano. Hi-Way Pentecostal Church, 50 Anne St. N., Barrie. 705-726-1181. $10; free(st).
- **12:00 noon:** Midday Music with Shigeru. Hymns of the Heart. Cheryl Graham, piano. Hi-Way Pentecostal Church, 50 Anne St. N., Barrie. 705-726-1181. $10; free(st).

**Friday September 6**

**Saturday September 7**
- **2:00:** Prince Edward County Chamber Music Festival. Brass in the Park Featuring True North Brass. Anthony Di Lorenzo: Five dance; Michael Kamen: Quarter; Bach: Aria from the Goldberg Variations; James McGrath: Trois Hymnes; Albigni: Adagio in g; and other works. Macaulay Heritage Park, 35 Church St., Picton. 613-533-2424 or queensu.ca/theisabel/tickets. $42-$59; $39-$56(faculty/staff). $19-$29(staff).

**Sunday September 8**
- **7:30:** Cuckoo's Nest Folk Club. Friends of Fiddler’s Green. Chaucer’s Pub, 122 Carling St., London. 519-319-5847. $25/$20(adv).
- **7:30:** Kitchener Public Library. Mysterious Baricades: Concert for World Suicide Prevention Day. 85 Queen St. N., Kitchener. mysteriobaricades.org. Free.

**Wednesday September 11**

**Friday September 13**
- **7:30:** Prince Edward County Chamber Music Festival. Opening Concert. Uriel Van Chtehue: Les Veuves; Beethoven: String Quartet No.10 in E-flat Op.74 “Harp”; Mozart: String Quintet No.3 in C (viola) K315. New Orleans String Quartet and Alyssia Friedman, viola; St. Mary Magdalene Anglican Church, 335 Main St., Picton. 613-393-3798. $38; $15(st); $5(16 and under).

**Saturday September 14**
- **10:00:** Music at St. Andrews. Keiko Kueper, organ. St. Andrews Presbyterian Church (Barrie), 47 Owen St., Barrie. 705-726-1181. $10; free(st).
- **7:00:** Magicfesta Solists. Travels Through Europe. Schubert: Trio Movement; Castelnuovo-Tedesco: Sonata for Violin & Viola; Turina: La Oración de Torero for string quartet; Enescu: A Babe for string trio; Penderecki: Clarinet Quartet. Guest: Peter Shackleton, clarinet. Museum London Theatre, 421 Ridout St. N., London. 519-661-0333. $30; $25(st); $15(st); $10(child under 10).

**Sunday September 15**
- **3:00:** Prince Edward County Chamber Music Festival. Gryphon Trio. Haydn: Piano Trio in g HobXV:1; Brahms: Piano Trio No.2 Op.65. Jon Kimura Parker and Jamie Parker, pianos. St. Mary Magdalene Anglican Church, 335 Main St., Picton. 613-393-3798. $38; $15(st); $5(16 and under).

**Wednesday September 18**
- **12:00 noon:** Music at St. Andrews. Keiko Kueper, organ. St. Andrews Presbyterian Church (Barrie), 47 Owen St., Barrie. 705-726-1181. $10; free(st).

**Thursday September 19**
- **7:00:** MagiSterra Solists. Travels Through Europe. Schubert: Trio Movement; Castelnuovo-Tedesco: Sonata for Violin & Viola; Turina: La Oración de Torero for string quartet; Enescu: A Babe for string trio; Penderecki: Clarinet Quartet. Guest: Peter Shackleton, clarinet. Museum London Theatre, 421 Ridout St. N., London. 519-661-0333. $30; $25(st); $15(st); $10(child under 10).

**Friday September 20**
- **12:30:** Don Wright Faculty of Music. Fridays at 12:30 Concert Series. Faculty members perform. V. Kuster Hall, Music Building, Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767. Free.
- **7:30:** Prince Edward County Chamber Music Festival. Solists from Les Violons du Roy. Tellemann: Sonata in g TWV42:g7; Bach: Trio Sonata in G BWV1039; Bach: Selection from Two and Three-Part Inventions BWV772-801; Purcell: Three-Part Fantasia; Uriel Vanchette: String Trio; Véronique Vychytil, violin; Isaac Chalk, viola; Benoît Loisel, cello; Mélisande McNabney, harpsichord; St. Mary Magdalene Anglican Church, 335 Main St., Picton. 613-393-3798. $38; $15(st); $5(16 and under).
- **8:00:** SweetWater Music Festival. Opening Gala: Everything Old Is New Again. Works by Handel including: Trio for flute, Violin and Continuo Op.2 No.2 in g HWV386; Duet: Scherzo and Allegro in g; Rinaldo HWV37; Duet: Se il cor ti perde, from Tolomeo HWV25; Trio Sonata Op.2 No.9 in e HWV394 for 2 violins and continuo; Trio Sonata Op.2 No.8 in g HWV393 for 2 violins and continuo; and other works. Daniel Taylor, countertenor; Ellen McAteer, soprano; Adrian Butterfield and Mark Fewer, violins; Rachel Brown, flute; Kenneth Slowik, harpsichord. Historic Leith Church, 41934 Thomas Lane, Leith. 519-477-1403. $55; $15(st); $5(16 and under).
- **8:00:** SweetWater Music Festival. Opening Gala: Everything Old Is New Again. Works by Handel including: Trio for flute, Violin and Continuo Op.2 No.2 in g HWV386; Duet: Scherzo and Allegro in g; Rinaldo HWV37; Duet: Se il cor ti perde, from Tolomeo HWV25; Trio Sonata Op.2 No.9 in e HWV394 for 2 violins and continuo; Trio Sonata Op.2 No.8 in g HWV393 for 2 violins and continuo; and other works. Daniel Taylor, countertenor; Ellen McAteer, soprano; Adrian Butterfield and Mark Fewer, violins; Rachel Brown, flute; Kenneth Slowik, harpsichord. Historic Leith Church, 41934 Thomas Lane, Leith. 519-477-1403. $55; $15(st); $5(16 and under).
Enjoy world-class performances by the scenic shores of Georgian Bay.

sweetwatermusicfestival.ca
Works by Rachmaninoff, Franck, Ravel, Debussy and Lefévre. Alain Lefévre, piano. 390 King St. W., Kingston. 613-533-2442 or queensu.ca/theisabel/tickets. $42-$59; $39-$56(faculty/staff); $19-$29(st). Open from Mon 7 to Sun 7.

- 2:30 Niagara Symphony Orchestra. West Side Story. In Concert. Bernstein: West Side Story. Robert Markus (Tony); Mehry Pavei (Maria); Kaylee Harwood (Anita); Sayer Roberts (Riff); Charlotte Knight (Rosalia); Chorus Niagara; Robert Cooper; chorus director: Bradley Thachuk, conductor. FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, 250 St. Paul St., St. Catharines. 905-688-0722 or 1-855-515-0722. $69; $64(sr); $43(st and up); $20 (art students); $12(st/child); $5(eyeGO). Also Oct 5(1:30pm).

- 7:30 Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts. From Moscow to Montreal.

Monday October 7

- 7:30, 8:30, 9:30pm. With Pulcinella Academy. Deirdre Sullivan and the Canadian Opera Company Orchestra, conducted by Norbert Barnewitz. Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W., Toronto. 416-363-8000. $25-$60; $15(st). Also Oct 6(8pm).


Music and lyrics by Bob Dylan, book by Conor McPherson. Royal Alexandra Theatre, 260 King St. W. 416-872-1212. $39 and up. Opens Sep 17, 7pm. Runs to Oct 20. Tues-Sat(8pm), Wed(1:30pm), Sat/Sun(2pm).

Music by Giacomo Puccini, libretto by Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa. William Shookhoff, music director/pianist. College St. United Church, 128 St. Vincent Street, Barrie, 705-728-1181. $65/$110(series); $25(st for series).

- 7:30pm. "The Band's Visit. Music and lyrics by David Yazbek, book by Itamar Moses, based on the film. Mirvish Theatre, 244 Victoria St. 416-722-1212. $40 and up. Opens Sep 17, 7pm. Runs to Oct 20. Tues-Sat(8pm), Wed(1:30pm), Sat/Sun(2pm).


- 7:30pm. "OperOttawa. Gala. First Baptist Church, 140 Laurier Ave. W., Ottawa. 613-562-0352. $25. $20(st). Oct 7, 7pm.

Music by Elton John, lyrics and book by Lee Hall. Royal Alexandra Theatre, 260 King St. W. 416-872-1212. $39 and up. Opens Sep 17, 7pm. Runs to Oct 20. Tues-Sat(8pm), Wed(1:30pm), Sat/Sun(2pm).


Music by Giacomo Puccini, libretto by Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa. William Shookhoff, music director/pianist. College St. United Church, 128 St. Vincent Street, Barrie, 705-728-1181. $65/$110(series); $25(st for series).


TUJF, KMJF & Guelph
The Jazz Fests Continue

COLIN STORY

And we’re back. After The WholeNote’s typical aestival hiatus – and our packed-to-the-margins summer issue, which featured information on a wide assortment of excellent festivals in the Greater Toronto Area – I’m happy to be writing this column for you again, doing my best to provide a preview of some of the most interesting musical events that will be occurring around town each month. It has been exactly 12 months since I first took over this column, and the timing seems appropriate; though it has been a few years since I finished grad school, September still feels like the spiritual beginning of the upcoming year. Though we know that the month brings with it waning heat, it also heralds the promise of much to come: the return of musical friends from sweaty summer touring; the reinstatement of all of your favorite regular gigs, artist-curated concert series, and post-secondary-student nights at The Rex; scarves. It is, in short, one of the most exciting times of the year to be a jazz fan in Toronto.

To begin: there are quite a few notable festivals taking place in September. To run any festival in Toronto is a difficult, labour-intensive process; earlier this year, I wrote about the TD Toronto Jazz Festival’s shift to Yorkville, and the many challenges that artistic director Josh Grossman deals with on a regular basis in order to keep an established, decades-old, major-Canadian-banking-institution-sponsored festival ticking. The prospect of establishing a new festival – of working with local communities, of soliciting sponsor partnerships, of booking venues and talent and vendors and making sure that guests are happy and artists are hydrated and, oh my god, did no one think that we might need porta-potties?! – is a daunting undertaking indeed. But that is exactly what the Toronto Undergraduate Jazz Festival (TUJF) have done.

Beat by Beat | Mainly Clubs, Mostly Jazz!

The TUJF, which began in 2015 in the Distillery District, with 26 distinct undergraduate bands performing over the course of three days, has grown into a five-day affair, from September 3 to September 7. The bulk of the programming will take place on September 6 and 7 in Mel Lastman Square, with a kick-off performance by the Robi Botos Trio at Hugh’s Room on September 3, and two days on September 4 and 5 at The Frog, a pub owned by the Firkin Group, located a convenient seven-minute walk from the Square. The TUJF will feature performances and master classes by a variety of local and not-so-local groups, including the aforementioned Robi Botos Trio, the Pat LaBarbera Quartet and Donny McCaslin.

While the TUJF has emulated, to a certain degree, the large, primarily outdoor format of traditional Canadian jazz festivals, the KMJF has chosen a different approach. Taking place, as the name suggests, in Kensington Market, the KMJF does not have an expansive communal space like Mel Lastman Square to transform into festival grounds. Instead, under the guidance of the unsinkable Molly Johnson, they have opted for a more grassroots approach, working directly with pre-existing venues and other businesses throughout the Market to create a network of unique performance spaces. Last year, acts played at traditional venues, such as Poetry Jazz Café and Supermarket, at which it is possible to hear live music throughout the year; at Café Pamenar and Koi Koi Saké Bar, at which it is not typically possible to hear live music, but at which one can imagine performances taking place; at the men’s clothing store Tom’s Place, at which, presumably, no one has ever expected to hear live music. (Far from being an outlier, Tom’s Place – and eponymous Tom’s Place owner, Tom Mihalik – is a major festival sponsor. Mihalik is referred to as “the festival’s patron saint” on the KMJF website. In 2018, the clothing store provided the location for the “Yamaha Grand Piano Room,” which, considering the complications of moving a grand piano anywhere, let alone into a retail space in a busy neighbourhood in downtown Toronto, should be proof enough of Mihalik’s commitment to the festival’s artistic cause.) Performers for this year’s festival, taking place from September 13 to 15, include Chelsea McBride’s Socialist Night School, Jozsef Botos, Ethan Ardelli and Virginia MacDonald, to name but five of the well-over-100 established local musicians who will perform in more than 30 venues around this iconic market neighbourhood.

Outside of the Greater Toronto Area, the Guelph Jazz Festival (GJF) will celebrate its 25th birthday this year, continuing to fulfil its stated mission of inviting “listeners to be inspired by and engaged with creative music,” from September 11 to 15. As this mission statement suggests, the focus of the GJF is on creative, improvised music that falls outside of either mainstream modern or neo-traditionalist jazz styles; this year’s festival will include performances by Jen Shyu, Malcolm Goldstein and Rainer Wiens, the Brodie West Quintet and Ingrid Laubrock, Tom Rainey and Hank Roberts. As in past years, the GJF will also partner with Guelph University’s International Institute for Critical Studies in Improvisation to convene a colloquium on improvisation and its social contexts. Some of this year’s presentations will include Jesse Stewart’s “Different Drums: Unorthodox and Unusual Percussion Instruments,” Niel Scobie and Alyssa Woods’ “Finding the Groove: A Workshop on Hip-hop Turntablism and Improvisation,” and Lee Blalock’s “Instr/Augmented Bodies: A Performative Artist Talk About Hybrid Bodies, Modes of Communication, and Modified Behaviours.” 2019 will also mark

Chelsea McBride’s Socialist Night School

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<tr>
<th>Jazz Vespers</th>
<th>Featuring some of Toronto’s best jazz musicians with a brief reflection by Jazz Vespers Clergy</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sun, Sept. 15 at 4:30pm</td>
<td>Happy Birthday Cannonball Adderley with Jo...</td>
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<td>Sun, Oct. 13 at 4:30pm</td>
<td>Tribute to Ray Brown with Dave Young (bass)</td>
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<td>Christ Church Deer Park, 1570 Yonge St. (north of St. Clair at Heath St.)</td>
<td>Admission is free; donations are welcome</td>
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THESE ARE THE WHOLENOTE'S MOSTLY JAZZ CLUBS

themethenote.com
a year of new artistic leadership for the GF, with Scott Thomson assuming the role of artistic and general director, and Karen Ng taking on the role of assistant artistic and general director.

There are also a number of excellent non-festival performances happening in September. Head to Burdock on September 12 to catch saxophonist Matt Langan, on September 19 to hear TuneTown (Kelly Jefferson, Artie Roth, Ernesto Cervini), and on the 21st to hear Mingjia Chen and Claire Lee. At The Rex, check out the rest of Monday nights with University of Toronto Jazz Program students, Humber College’s Annual Back-to-School Faculty Jam on September 19, and a full schedule of great music for the rest of the month.

MAINLY CLUBS, MOSTLY JAZZ QUICK PICKS

- **SEP 3 TO 7:** Toronto Undergraduate Jazz Festival, various venues. The best of Toronto’s undergraduate bands playing alongside established local and international artists, including saxophonists Pat LaBarbera and Donny McCaslin. tujazz.com

- **SEP 11 TO 15:** Guelph Jazz Festival, various venues (Guelph). Canada’s most important creative/improvised music festival, complete with top Canadian and international performers and a colossium co-presented with Guelph University. guelphjazzfestival.com

- **SEP 13 TO 15:** Kensington Market Jazz Festival, various venues. The fourth annual installment of this exciting new festival, which sees traditional and non-traditional Market venues come together to create a network of performance spaces. kensingtonjazz.org

- **MONDAYS, 6:30PM:** University of Toronto Jazz Ensembles, The Rex. Catch up-and-coming students from the U of T Jazz’s undergrad and grad programs performing in the comfortable confines of The Rex, in September and on most Mondays throughout the school year. therex.ca

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

Monarch Tavern
12 Clinton St. 416-531-5833 themonarchtavern.com (full schedule)
Sep 9 8pm Belleville St. 7pm.
Sep 10 8pm
Sept 11 8pm
Sept 17 8pm
Sept 19 8pm
Sept 21 8pm
Sept 22 8pm
Sept 26 8pm

Bruce Cassidy
Hannah Bar-

2019 Queen St. W. 416-595-2479 therex.com (full schedule)
Call for cover charge info.
Sep 11 8pm Dixieland: Louisiana Havana, 3:30pm Club Django, 7pm EBOO Trio, 9:30pm Dib Dotos Groups, 2pm U of T Jazz Ensembles, 9:30pm Hannah Barstow Trio.
Sep 3 6:30pm El Blotto Twangueiros, 9:30pm Chris Gale hosts the Classic Rex Jam. Sep 4 8:30pm Clock Radio: Michael Davidson / Dan Fortin, 9:30pm Daniel Easty Group.
Sep 5 6:30pm Kevin Quain, 9:45pm Joelm Frahan / Turboprop. Sep 6 6pm Hogtown Synкопators, 6:30pm Jenna Marie R&B, 9:45pm Joelm Frahan / Turboprop. Sep 7 8pm Adam & Adam's REMNANTS: 3:00pm Hubbert, 7pm Justin Bacchus, 9:45pm Mike Murray Quartet.
Sep 9 12pm Dixieland: Louisiana Havana, 3:30pm Red Hot Ramble, 7pm EBOO Trio, 9:30pm Conor Gains. Sep 6 9:30pm U of T Jazz Ensembles, 9:30pm Adam Teixeira Quartet. Sep 12 6:30pm Kevin Quain, 9:30pm Way North. Sep 13 4pm Hogtown Synкопators, 6:30pm Jenna Marie R&B, 9:45pm Dave Young / Terry Promane Octet. Sep 14 12pm Adam & Adam's REMNANTS, 3:00pm Swing Shift Big Band, 7pm Zena Kepelers, 9:45pm Dave Young Quintet.
Sep 15 12pm Dixieland: Louisiana Havana, 3:30pm LMC w/ Sherwood, 7pm EBOO Trio, 9:30pm Julian Anderson-Bowes. Sep 16 8pm U of T Jazz Ensembles, 9:30pm Adam Teixeira Quartet. Sep 17 6:30pm El Blotto Twangueiros, 9:30pm Annual Back to School Humber College Faculty Jam. Sep 18 6:30pm Michael Davidson Quartet, 9:30pm Jeremy Pelt / Johnny Griffth Quartet.
Sep 19 6:30pm Kevin Quain, 9:30pm Jeremy Pelt / Johnny Griffth Quartet. Sep 20 4pm Hogtown Synкопators, 6:30pm BogoGalao Squad, 9:45pm Remi-LeBlanc Group.
Sep 21 12pm Adam & Adam's REMNANTS, 3:00pm Jerome Godbo Autumn Solstice, 7pm Neen Eagle, 9:45pm The Music of John Leonno w/ Michael Ochiphinti. Sep 22 12pm Dixieland: Louisiana Havana, 3:30pm Dr. Nick & The Rolleroasters, 7pm EBOO Trio, 9:30pm Victoria Yeh's Spirit Awakens. Sep 23 6:30pm U of T Jazz Ensembles, 9:30pm Chris Hunt Tenter + 2. Sep 24 6:30pm El Blotto Twangueiros, 9:30pm Chris Gale hosts the Classic Rex Jam. Sep 25 6:30pm Michael Davidson Group, 9:30pm Alan Heth- ergrin's Mixture Funa. Sep 26 2pm Kevin Quain, 9:30pm Gabriel Palatici Trio. Sep 27 4pm Hogtown Synкопators, 6:30pm BogoGalao Squad, 9:45pm Chuck Jackson's Big Bad Blues Band.

22 Cumberland Ave. 416-825-5716 thepilot.ca
All shows: 2:30pm. No cover.

Pilot Tavern, The
22 Cumberland Ave. 416-825-5716 thepilot.ca
All shows: 2:30pm. No cover.

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

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

Reservoir, The
52 Wellington St. E. 416-955-0887
reservoiroounge.com (full schedule).

Salty Dog Bar & Grill, The
1980 Queen St. E. 416-849-5064 thesaltysdog.ca (full schedule)
Every Thu 7-10pm Jazz Night. Every Thu 8pm Karaoke. Every Fri 8:30pm Blues Jam - house band with weekly featured guest. Every Sat 5pm Salty Dog Saturday Matinee.

Sauce on Danforth
1376 Danforth Ave. 647-748-1376 saucendonforth.com
All shows: No cover.

Combinations
● Sep 02: Queen's University. Bader and Oventron Canadian Cello Competition. Applications accepted until Sep 2. Further information at getaccepted.com/thesabel.
● Dec 01: Toronto Mozart Violin Competition. Application deadline: Dec 1 but applications are being accepted now. Further information at mozartproject.ca.

Film Screenings
● Sep 25 6:30: Cameron Tingley. Life As We Know It. Humorou shorts films about modern society set to a dynamic musical score. Riverdale Public Library, 370 Broadway Ave. 416-469-3035. Free.

Gala’s and Fundraisers
● Sep 19 7:00: Mississauga Symphony Orchestra. 44th Annual Giant Used Book Sale. All proceeds from this sale go to the Mississauga Symphony. Over 60,000 items in excel lent condition at bargain prices: Adult and children's fiction and non-fiction, music sheet, scores and books, vinyl, CDs, DVDs, puzzles and games. Sheridan Cen ter, 2253 Erin Mills Pkwy, Mississauga. Also Sep 20 (10am), 21 (10am), 22 (11am). Cash only.

Lectures, Salons and Symposia
● Sep 16 4:30: The International Resource Centre for Performing Artists. An up-close and personal conversation with Barbara Hannigan, soprano, conductor and director. Equilibrium Program for young professional singers and conductors. Heliconian Hall, 53 Hazelton Ave. Have questions for Bar bara? Send them to barbara@ircpa.net. Have questions for Barbara? Send them to barbara@ircpa.net.

Queen of Soul; Aretha Franklin. An informa tive talk by musicologist Dr. Mike Daley about life of American soul and gospel singer Aretha Franklin. Musical video examples will be included. North York Central Library Auditorium, 5120 Yonge St. 416-395-5639. Free. Registration required.

The Senator Winebar
249 Victoria St. 416 364-7177 thesenator.com (full schedule)

Tranzac
292 Brunswick Ave. 416-923-3173 tranzac.org (full schedule)
3-4 shows daily, various styles, in three different performance spaces. Mostly PWYC.
Room E2008 (violin). Taylor Centre for the Performing Arts, Mount Royal University, 4825 Mt. Royal Gate SW, Calgary. 403-299-0140. Free.

- Sep 10 12:10: University of Toronto, Faculty of Music. Voice Studies Performance Class. Includes panel discussions and master classes with special guests and performances by Voice Studies students. Visit music.utoronto.ca for details. Walter Hall, University of Toronto Faculty of Music, 80 Queens Park. 416-978-3750. Free. Also Sep 19, 24, Oct 1.
- Sep 20 10:00-3:00: University of Toronto, Faculty of Music. Master Class with Barbara Hannigan. Ligeti’s Mysteries of the Macabre with the Contemporary Music Ensemble and Maeve Palmer, soprano. Walter Hall, University of Toronto Faculty of Music, 80 Queens Park. 416-978-3750. Free.
- Sep 20 3:00-4:00: University of Toronto, Faculty of Music. In Conversation with Barbara Hannigan and Brett Dean. Q&A with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra’s Visiting Artists. Walter Hall, University of Toronto Faculty of Music, 80 Queens Park. 416-978-3750. Free.
- Sep 30 12:00: University of Toronto, Faculty of Music. Master Class with Tamara Wilson. Faculty of Music. Taylor Centre for the monthly event for dancers and dance lovers. Room ED2008 (violin), Taylor Centre for the Arts.
- Sep 24 2:00: University of Toronto, Faculty of Music. Tamara Wilson: Riki Turoff Master Class in Voice. Faculty of Music.

Sing-alongs, Jams, Circles

- Sep 02 7:00: Synergy Dance Lab. A new monthly event for dancers and dance lovers. Jen Gillmor will host an open creative movement jam with her live music offerings. At 8:15pm the space will be opened to the public to enjoy watching as various dancers will improvise performances with Jen at the musical helm. One or more dancers will be the pre-programmed special guests each month while other dancers from the jam are encouraged to take the stage for this low-pressure, spontaneous and supportive performance opportunity. Everyone is welcome. No experience necessary. Come enjoy the synergy of improvised music and dance. Array Space, 155 Walnut Ave. 416-532-3019. For further information: Jen Gillmor at gillmor-jennifer@gmail.com or 416-899-3342. Also Oct 7, $12.
- Sep 22 2:00: CAMMAC Toronto Region. Reading for Singers and Instrumentalists of Bach’s Magnificat. Lydia Adams, conductor. Christ Church Deer Park, 1570 Yonge St. 416-781-4745. $10; $6(members).
- Sep 28 10:30am: Toronto Mendelssohn Choir. Singasation Saturday Choral Workshop. As part of TMC’s 125th-anniversary celebrations, conductor David Fallis will lead participants through some of the great choral works commissioned by the TMC. Cameron Hall, Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, 1585 Yonge St. More information at tmchoir.org/singsation-saturdays. $10 fee includes refreshments.

Workshops

- Sep 21 11:00am: Thin Edge Music Collective. Workshop. Guest artists Ko Ishikawa and Miyama McQueen-Tokita will discuss the intricacies of writing for the traditional Japanese string instruments sho and bass koto. Includes a panel discussion with composers Daryl Jamieson, Hiroki Tsurumoto, Yuka Shibuya, and Takeo Hoshiya. Canadian Music Centre, 20 St. Joseph St. 416-961-6601. Free.
- Sep 29 2:00: CAMMAC Toronto Region. Reading for Singers and Instrumentalists of Bach’s Magnificat. Lydia Adams, conductor. Christ Church Deer Park, 1570 Yonge St. 416-781-4745. $10; $6(members).
- Sep 28 10:30am: Toronto Mendelssohn Choir. Singasation Saturday Choral Workshop. As part of TMC’s 125th-anniversary celebrations, conductor David Fallis will lead participants through some of the great choral works commissioned by the TMC. Cameron Hall, Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, 1585 Yonge St. More information at tmchoir.org/singsation-saturdays. $10 fee includes refreshments.

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The Barriers

So you need talk therapy and live in Ontario and are not wealthy? A quick primer based on personal experience.

Talk to your GP — many will know psychotherapists who are covered by OHIP and can give you their contact information. This will not guarantee anything, unfortunately, as OHIP-covered psychotherapists tend to have long waiting lists. The current Ontario government has embarked on a reform of mental health care which, as part of the new negotiated contract with physicians, stipulates that a psychiatrist cannot bill the Ontario Ministry of Health unlimited number of hours anymore, but can bill 24 hours a patient a year instead. The change would save money for the Ontario government (and this is probably the primary motive) but would also, ideally, open up some of those waiting lists. When I asked my then-GP (who has since left Canada) for therapy leads three years ago, she gave me contact info for two psychotherapists who never even bothered returning my phone calls — I expect due to the length of their already existing waiting lists.

A debate has been taking place among mental healthcare providers in the province even since the proposed changes have been announced. A star psychotherapist, Dr. Norman Doidge, author of the internationally acclaimed The Brain That Changes Itself, contributed an op-ed to The Globe and Mail in which he argued that the reduction of fully billable hours would effectively mean abandoning the most vulnerable patients in need of intense, multiple-times-a-week care. Others, like some of the physicians featured in Dr. Matt Strauss’ recent National Post piece have argued that the proposed cuts to hours will be the only way for a good number of people, currently excluded due to where in Ontario they live, whether they’re new Canadians or old, or how much they earn, from access to mental healthcare. Would the only way to increase access to psychotherapy while not taking it away from existing patients be to expand the list of registered psychotherapists who could bill OHIP (currently only MDs can)? This does not seem likely under the current government which primarily seems to be interested in short-term cost cutting.

OHIP-covered therapy therefore, you soon learn, is not available to a lot of us. You may get yourself on the waiting list, but what about right now? The other possibility is to have a job that comes with health benefits which also have excellent provisions for psychotherapy. And even if you are lucky to have a job that gives you additional health insurance, most health plans will have fairly low mental healthcare claims limits. I currently have a part-time job unrelated to writing, which has insurance (freelancers and precariat of any kind have no additional health insurance unless they individually pay into it — but that’s a topic for another article). This insurance has reasonably ample provisions for dental care, for example, but limits the amount you can spend on psychotherapy to $700 a year (about five or six hours!).

Meaning that every two months you can see somebody for an hour. Otherwise, you must pay out of pocket. I once had an initial session with a non-MD psychoanalyst and it cost more than $200. There was no second session; there was no way I could afford to continue.

Certain large hospitals, like Women’s College, offer support, therapy and treatment groups, but a quick check on their website reveals that the proposed cuts to hours will be the only way to access psychotherapy while not taking it away from existing patients and that even some of the groups, like the CBT (Cognitive Behavioral Therapy) one, are not accepting referrals anymore due to high demand. (The Day Treatment Program group seems to be still open.)

And so, many of us must press on without mental health care. There’s a federal election coming up, but the provincial one is not before 2022. Meanwhile, perhaps we could all think about how the quality of our lives or our loved ones’ could be improved by bringing down the systemic barriers preventing access to psychotherapy, and get in touch with our MPPs and politely ask them if they see that as a society we have a problem, and what their plan to address it is.
Who are September’s Children?

SEPTEMBER’S CHILDREN are pianists Daniel Wnukowski, Marika Bournaki, David Jalbert, Angela Park, Ian Parker and Anastasia Rizikov.

And the reason there are SIX of them?

Some readers will recall the original Piano Six initiative which was launched by Janina Filakowska in 1994 with Angela Cheng, Marc-André Hamelin, Angela Hewitt, André Laplante and Jon Kimura Parker, and continued from 2004 through 2010 as Piano Plus. They brought affordable high-calibre performances to upwards of 200 small-town and rural communities reaching thousands of Canadians who might otherwise never have experienced the passion and magic of concerts, workshops, masterclasses and up-close in-person Q & A sessions with musicians who have international careers but who are fellow Canadians.

Piano Six New Generation’s artistic director, Daniel Wnukowski, grew up in Niagara Falls and fell in love with the piano at the age of three. He was just a teenager when he attended a free Piano Six masterclass given by Filakowska. It was a lasting experience that eventually inspired him to relaunch the initiative with Bournaki, Jalbert, Park, Parker and Rizikov. In the spring of this year, Wnukowski and Park began a first season of touring with visits to Rainy River and Fort Frances in Ontario; Fort Nelson and Fort St.John in British Columbia; and Slave Lake in Alberta. May also included a special Bravo Niagara! Piano Six Gala Concert with performances by Bournaki, Jalbert, Park, Parker, Wnukowski and special guest, pianist Godwin Friesen, in a program which included solos by each pianist, Symphonic Dances from Bernstein’s West Side Story, and the world premiere of a new work for six pianists by Toronto’s Darren Sigesmund.

Piano Six New Generation will give a gala performance in October at Music Toronto. Expect to hear some familiar music and some performances unlike any you have heard before, from this group of highly accomplished Canadian pianists with a deep desire to share, as they prepare to launch their fall and winter touring schedule.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR WINNERS!

RICHARD SMITH, HOWARD LEVINE, and SONI SIN-HOU correctly identified all six pianists and their ensemble - PIANO SIX NEW GENERATION. A pair of tickets awaits each of our winning readers for the much anticipated Music Toronto – Piano Six Gala on Tuesday October 22 at the Jane Mallet Theatre, St Lawrence Centre for the Arts. The audience will be treated to an all-hands-on-deck voyage of music for one and two pianos, and up to 12 hands!

Photo circa 1983, in Brescia, Italy

After bravely crossing the ocean with her baby daughter and husband for a 2017 launch what adventures she continues to have! This September she’ll dare to lead a Romantic and New adventure following charts provided by her friends Felix, Peter, Andrew, and her brother Carlo.

October will transport her (and us) to Vienna, returning to some Baroque roots.

Know our Mystery Child’s name? WIN PRIZES!

Send your best guess by September 21 to musicschildren@thewholenote.com

Previous artist profiles and full-length interviews can be read at thewholenote.com/musicschildren.

Or — you can view them in their original magazine format by visiting our online back issues https://kiosk.thewholenote.com
In the summer issue we published Alex Baran’s final column, which is sad news indeed for me and has made my job as assignment editor a bit more onerous. But as far as I know, there is no grave understory to his announced retirement. It was simply time to move on and focus on other things. During the past decade he contributed a variety of reviews to The WholeNote – his first pair appeared in December 2009 – but for the past four years he has focused on keyboard recordings under his own Keyed In masthead.

As with Terry Robbins’ Strings Attached, Alex’s column simplified my editorial duties by enabling me to ship out any and all applicable discs to him and leave sorting out their relevance to his discretion. It always amazed me how Alex could write about a dozen discs each month and make them all sound individual, finding positive aspects to each performer’s approach and describing them in terms as nuanced as the recordings he was writing about.

Although my WholeNote relationship with Alex goes back a decade, my professional association with him dates back to the early 1990s when I was a music programmer at CJRT-FM where he was an on-air host and later program director. I worked closely with him writing scripts for CJRT Concert and selecting recordings for Music for Midday for five years at which still consider to be, New Music Concerts and The WholeNote notwithstanding, the best job I’ve ever had (and the only one that generated a pension thanks to its affiliation with Ryerson University).

So that being said, I will miss Alex’s insights and his diligence. For the moment you will find the Keyed In banner maintained, with a number of writers contributing their own insights, both seasoned and new writers, and some new voices in this issue. I’m very pleased that outstanding young Toronto pianist, Adam Sherkin, has taken on three discs in his WholeNote debut, and I think you’ll agree he is an excellent addition to our team. Welcome Adam!

To keep this “all about me” as is my wont, I’ll mention that some of the highlights of my career at CJRT included selecting the music for Peter Keigh’s Music before 1800, working with engineer William van Ree to record the live performances that aired on CJRT Concert and selecting recordings for Music for Midday, a 30-minute piano suite whose opening movement was held throughout the 72-minute performance by this exciting young pianist, a result of his choice of repertoire, his mastery of wine and roses” however. Occasionally my penchant for contemporary music would land me in hot water for programming music of the sort. It was this sort of jigsaw-puzzle placement of pieces within The Kernis Project: Debussy (Sono Luminus 3666 naxosdirect.com). I told him that seemed strange because we were reviewing his Liszt CD in the coming issue. He explained that although recorded at Glenn Gould Studio in 2017, Centaur had some problems with the release and it was delayed nearly two years.

Born in China, Cai studied at the Shanghai Conservatory where he was a top prizewinner of the National Competition in 1998. The following year, his family immigrated to Canada where he began studies at the Royal Conservatory in Toronto with Anton Kuerti. Cai later earned his bachelor of music degree under full scholarship at the New England Conservatory in Boston. Since his debut with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra in Chopin’s Piano Concerto No.1 – a performance for which the Toronto Star praised his “…subtle sense of rubato to a judicious choice of tempi…” – he has gone on to perform concerti by Bartók, Beethoven, Chopin, Liszt, Gershwin, Grieg, Mozart, Prokofiev, Rachmaninoff, Saint-Saëns, Schumann and Tchaikovsky, with numerous orchestras across North America and in Shanghai.

I’m sure that delay in the release of this disc was very frustrating to Cai, but as far as I’m concerned it was worth the wait. Opening with the brilliant Toccatina in C, Op.7 where the interlocking lines are skillfully brought out, the disc continues with the extended Humoreske in B-flat Major, Op.20 with its contrasting, though mostly delicate movements. The one exception is the boisterous Sehr lebhaft in which Cai shines and is obviously having a great time. The gently rolling Arabeske in C Major, Op.18 provided an oasis of repose before the stately opening chords of Carnaval Op.9 brought back the flood of memories mentioned above. Subtitled Scènes mignonnes sur quatre notes (tender scenes on four notes), the 20 brief movements are musical cryptograms centred on the notes A, E-flat, C and B represented in German as EsCH (with Es pronounced S). Asch is the name of the town where Ernestine von Fricken, Schumann’s then fiancée was born, and also are letters which appear in the composer’s own name Robert Alexander Schumann. The sequence of letters also appears in the German word faszching, meaning carnival, hence the title of the work. There are many more encryptions in the collection, but none of this is really necessary for enjoyment of the wonderfully playful, charming and, at times, dramatic work.

While I tend to avoid solo piano recitals and recordings because, as I may have said before, eventually to my ears it all seems like “just so much banging,” that was certainly not the case in this instance. My attention was held throughout the 72-minute performance by this exciting young pianist, a result of his choice of repertoire, his mastery of technique and his inherent musicality. Makes me wish I had listened to his Liszt disc before sending it off to Roger.

I see that I’ve pretty much used up my allotment of words for the month already, but there is another disc that I’ve been enjoying and wanted to mention. The Kernis Project: Debussy (Sono Luminus DSL-92233 sono-luminous.squarespace.com) is the culmination of
Kerns to write a third, which he subtitled “River” and completed in 2015. The American composer (b.1960) says it “is a significant departure from my earlier two quartets, which looked to the distant past for form and inspiration. Instead, this new work dispenses with classical structure and influences almost completely, touching continually on processes of change and flux.” That being said, it is an extended work lasting more than 35 minutes and showing the influence of both Beethoven’s Op.131, particularly in the sombre Cavatina fourth movement, and Bartók’s String Quartet No.4, with “night music” aspects in both the second movement Flow/Surge and third Mirrored Surface – Flux – Reflections, and from which it takes its five-movement form.

I have mentioned the overlap of literature and music in my life, and I was intrigued to read in the program note to this quartet that it was influenced by two books that had both had a profound effect on me: Jean-Christophe by Romain Rolland, and My Struggle (actually a series of six books) by Karl Ove Knausgaard. First read at an age when “3/4 of the [Roland] book would’ve been incomprehensible to me,” Kerns says that the central image of the Rhine River and “its inexorable flow” were indelibly etched in his memory. “While the Romanticism of the book does not have any parallel in the music at all, its intense emotions do, and the River and its continual movement became central to the conceptualization of my work.” Regarding My Struggle, Kerns says it was “vitally influential for my musical processes… The book sets forward the trajectory of one man’s life, the flow of the quotidian along with meditations on the psychological underpinnings of the center of existence.” As with Schumann’s Carnaval, knowledge of the backstory is not essential to enjoyment of the work. I listened to this compelling piece a number of times before I read the liner notes and discovered the serendipitous connection to my own life interests.

The companion piece is a beautifully nuanced performance of one of my favourite pieces of music, Debussy’s String Quartet in G Minor Op.10. As an amateur cellist I’m proud of the fact that I’ve advanced of my favourite pieces of music, Debussy’s String Quartet in G Minor Op.10. As an amateur cellist I’m proud of the fact that I’ve advanced...
Artists (ICAC 5156 naxos.com).

It features outstanding performances of the Shostakovich Violin Concerto No.1 in A Minor Op.77 and Franz Waxman’s Carmen-Fantasie with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin under Alan Buribayev. Hattori is dazzling in the Waxman and is quite superb in a commanding performance of the Shostakovich. She has a sumptuous tone, flawless technique, emotional depth and physical strength, and wrings every drop of emotion from this deeply personal work.

Hattori has been active mostly in Japan and Asia, although she is making inroads in Europe this year. She is clearly one to watch.

duo 526, the pairing of Canadian violinist Kerry DuWors and Japanese pianist Futaba Niekawa, is in fine form on Duo Fantasy, a CD featuring works by Heitor Villa-Lobos, Arnold Bax and William Bolcom (Navona NV6231 navonarecords.com).

Villa-Lobos’ Sonata Fantasia No.2 was completed in 1914 although not published until the early 1950s. It’s a lovely work that reflects many of the musical influences of the period.

The English Bax is represented by the substantial four-movement Violin Sonata No.2, completed in 1915 and revised in 1920. It’s another very attractive and compelling work, full of contrast and with much writing of great beauty.

Bolcom’s Duo Fantasy from 1973 is exactly what you would expect from this wonderfully eclectic American musician – a kaleidoscope of popular styles leading to a quite unexpected ending.

DuWors plays with a commanding combination of strength, sweetness and brightness, fully supported by Nickawa’s rich, expansive piano playing.

On Hindemith Complete Works for Violin & Piano violinist Roman Mints and pianist Alexander Kobrin give quite superb performances of the four violin sonatas – in E-flat Op.11 No.1 and in D Op.11 No.2 (1918), in E (1935) and in C (1938) – together with the Trauermusik from 1936, the Meditation from the ballet Nobilissima Visione (1938) and the Sonata for Viola d’amore and Piano. “Kleine Sonate” Op.25 No.2 from 1922 (Quartz QTZ 2132 quartzmusic.com)

Mints in particular plays with tremendous strength, power and brilliance in music that clearly has special meaning for him. The Sonata in D was “the first window into contemporary music” for the 13-year-old Mints; later Hindemith was his “window into Romantic music” and the composer continues to hold a special place in Mints’ heart. It’s certainly difficult to imagine better performances of these fascinating works.

There’s more terrific Hindemith playing on Hindemith Sonatas for Viola Solo by the Spanish violist Jesus Rodolfo (IBS Classical IBS52019 naxosdirect.com)

The three numbered Sonatas for Viola Solo – Op.11 No.5 (1919), Op.25 No.1 (1922) and Op.31 No.4 (1924) – together with the Sonata for Viola Solo from 1937 are challenging and extremely difficult works by a
composer who was himself a world-class violist. They are often strident and dissonant, but there is more than enough lyrical and tonal writing to make them compelling listening.

Rodolfo plays with a deep, rich tone and a commanding technique in performances that hold you from beginning to end.

On Edge of Youth, her first recording for the Sono Luminus label, violinist Janet Sung presents a program of works that she feels were significant in her development of a more mature musical voice (DSL-92230 sono-luminus.squarespace.com).

Two 20th-century masterpieces – George Enescu’s astonishingly original Impressions d’enfance Op.28 and Benjamin Britten’s early Suite for Violin and Piano Op.6 – are paired with three recent compositions: Missy Mazzoli’s Dissolve, O My Heart (2011) and Gabriel Prokofiev’s Sleeveless Scherzo (2007), both for solo violin; and Dan Visconti’s Rave-Up for violin and piano (2012). William Wolfram is the excellent pianist in the duo pieces.

Sung’s technique and musicianship are quite superb, hardly surprising for someone who studied with both Josef Gingold and Dorothy DeLay.

Four violin sonatas from the middle of Mozart’s canon are featured on Mozart sonates pour piano et violon, with violinist Mi-Sa Yang and pianist Jonas Vitaud (Mirare MIR420 mirare.fr). The two Sonatas in E Minor K304 and D Major K306 are from the six sonatas finished in Paris in 1778 and known as the Palatine Sonatas, while the two Sonatas in G Major K379 and E-flat Major K380 are also from a set of six, the Viennese sonatas of 1781.

There’s a lovely balance here, with a clear, resonant sound. Yang’s tone is warm and sensitive with a judicious use of vibrato, and there is equally fine playing from Vitaud. The two Palatine sonatas feature particularly strong playing, with excellent articulation and intelligent nuance.

The CD doesn’t appear to be intended as part of an ongoing series, but as a one-off with almost 80 minutes of music it’s certainly a very worthwhile release.

Fini Henriques Works for Violin and Piano features 21 short pieces plus two multi-movement collections from the period 1899–1923 by a composer who was one of the most popular Danish musical figures of his time. Violinist Johannes Soe Hansen and pianist Christina Bjørkoe are the performers on Denmark’s national record label (Dacapo 8.262151 naxos.com).

Henriques enjoyed a stellar career as a virtuoso violinist, and clearly knew how to write for his instrument. He was at his most effective with short recital pieces, the excellent booklet notes describing him as “almost unrivalled in his ability to compose small pieces with a sharp characterisation – works with charm and warm-heartedness.” And they are exactly that – lovely works, light but never trivial, and beautifully played and recorded on an absolutely delightful CD.

Joseph Haydn String Quartets Op.71 is the excellent new CD from Scotland’s Maxwell Quartet (LINN CKD 602 naxosdirect.com). The quartet’s perceptive booklet notes make it clear that they have a strong affinity for Haydn’s quartets, and it really shows in warm, sympathetic performances of the quartets No.1 in B-flat Major, No.2 in D Major and No.3 in E-flat Major. Each quartet is followed by a “Scottish epilogue” – Gaelic folk and fiddle tunes by the likes of James Scott Skinner and Niel Gow, arranged by the quartet members and with one written by Maxwell violinist George Smith. It’s an extremely effective addition, fully supporting the ensemble’s view that “just like Haydn’s quartets, this is music that is capable of speaking to everyone.” All in all, a lovely CD.

The three string quartets of the Czech composer Karel Kovarovic (1862–1920) were never published, the source material for the world premiere recordings of The Complete String Quartets by the Czech Stamic Quartet being the manuscripts in the National Museum – Czech Museum of Music in Prague (Supraphon SU 4267-2 supraphon.com).

There is much to remind you of Smetana and Dvořák here, so consequently much to enjoy, from the 17-year-old composer’s Quartet No.1 in D Major from 1879, through the substantial Quartet No.2 in A Minor from 1887 (dedicated to Dvořák and admired by him) to the unfinished Quartet No.3 in G Major from 1894 – there is no fourth movement and the third remains incomplete but performable. The Stamic Quartet was formed in 1985 – the second violin and viola are original members – and is clearly in its element here on a generous (at over 80 minutes) and beautifully played and recorded CD.

Poland’s Atma Quartet chose relatively brief but engrossing works by three 20th-century Polish composers for their debut CD, Penderecki Szymanowski Panufnik String Quartets (CD Accord ACD 252-2 naxosdirect.com).

Karl Szymanowski’s Quartet No.2 Op.56, written in 1927 for a Philadelphia competition (it lost out to quartets by Bartók and Casella) was actually the first he completed. Its three movements total less than 18 minutes, but it’s a very attractive work amply demonstrating the composer’s distinctive style and sound.

Andrzej Panufnik’s Quartet No.3 Paper-Cuts from 1990 is even shorter at less than 11 minutes despite having five sections which explore various aspects of string playing. Krzysztof Penderecki’s Quartet No.3 Leaves of an Unwritten Diary is a single-movement but episodic work lasting 18 minutes.

The performances of these fascinating works are top-notch on a very impressive debut album.

Classical guitarist Raphael Feuillâtre, the winner of the 2018 Guitar Foundation of America Competition, is simply outstanding in a recital of transcriptions and original works on the Naxos Laureate Series (8.571427 naxos.com).

The transcriptions are of works by Ariel Ramirez, Rameau, Scriabin and Rachmaninov; with Feuillâtre’s own transcription of the Granados 8 Valses poéticos particularly dazzling, while the original works are by Agustín Barrios Mangoré, Heitor Villa-Lobos and – a particularly virtuosic showpiece – Miguel Llobet Solés’ Variations on a Theme of Sor, Op.15.

Feuillâtre’s playing is technically superb – clean, sensitive and nuanced, and with a sense of style and phrase to match the virtuosity. There’s a complete absence of left-hand noise in the resonant recording, engineered and produced by the always reliable Norbert Kraft and Bonnie Silver in Florida.
Beethoven & Liszt Piano Concerti No.1
Jae-Hyuck Cho; Royal Scottish National Orchestra; Adrien Perruchon
Sony Classical S80403C (amazon.com)

The most recent collaboration on disc between pianist Jae-Hyuck Cho and conductor Adrien Perruchon directing the Royal Scottish National Orchestra offers first piano concertos by both Liszt and Beethoven. This recording exhibits poise, candour and marked esteem for the well-worn music at hand.

Cho approaches Beethoven’s youthful first piano concerto with a Haydn-esque profile, achieving this with his own earnest brand of pianism, both tactile and circumspect. The lighter side of Beethoven’s early period is revealed here, as is the German composer’s debt to neoclassical attributes such as a Mozartian savvy for crafting melodic lines. Cho’s faithful – at times predictable – reading of the score contains just enough bravura to affirm that we are experiencing a concert.

With conductor Perruchon’s background as both percussionist and bassoonist, one hears vividly planned orchestra arrangements, laser-precise and metrically refined. This kind of rhythmic cultivation is what Leon Fleisher so often refers to as performative “irresistibility,” and Perruchon’s orchestra and Cho’s keyboard both seem to have it in ample measure. Crisp and carefully wrought woodwind lines squat through the textures in classical and Romantic scoring alike, with Perruchon’s prizing of oboe and bassoon parts enhancing this effect.

With affectionate, palpable exchange between soloist and conductor, especially in the Liszt concerto, this disc is also aided by a notably high standard of audio recording. Producer Michael Fine and engineer Jin Choi are to be applauded for such a balanced and crystalline achievement.

Adrian Sherkin

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Sheng Cai
ATMA ACD2 2783 (atmaclassique.com)

Sheng Cai is a Canadian pianist with a growing international reputation. The playing on this disc is remarkable. In Franz Liszt’s 12 Transcendental Études (1852), what stand out are clear voicing, fine control of dynamics and a sense of expressive freedom. For example, in Paysage (No.3) pacing is flexible and there are several grades of softness. Ricordanza (No.9) opens with comparable expressiveness in movement and dynamics but on an expanding scale, meeting this longer work’s more dramatic and extreme demands. In other words, Cai is fully up to the Études’ diverse challenges! We haven’t yet considered that he successfully matches such technical demands as the fearsome leaps in Mazeppa (No.4), the colouristic intricacies of Feux follets (No.5), or the tremendous approaching storm tremolos in Chasse-neige (No.12). Throughout the disc, effective groupings of pedalled notes and precise phrase cut-offs are among the ways this pianist has avoided the blinking and noisiness I have heard in some well-known artists’ Liszt renderings.

Through the artist we meet the composer, and I have enjoyed Liszt’s humour in the characterization of the Eroica (No. 7) and the composer’s artistry with what seem like painters’ brush strokes in Waldesrauschen (Forest Murmurs), one of the Two Concert Études (1862–63) also included on this recording. Do not fear for lack of variety among all of these études, no two are alike and Cai makes the listening experience a distinct pleasure.

Roger Knox

Donna Voce (Fanny Mendelssohn; Amy Beach; Clara Schumann; Cecile Chaminade; Lili Boulanger; Chia-Yu Hsu)
Anna Shelest
Sorel Classics n/a (sorelmusic.org)

It is unfortunate that to record an entire album featuring beautiful and stylistically diverse music from a well-chosen program of women composers is still, in 2019, an inherently political statement, but here we are. Unlike both piano playing and pedagogy which have long been gendered activities coded as “safe” or “acceptable” entrees into the music business for women, historically composition was seen as the realm of men. Upon occasion, as featured on the recording, some who are related to better known male figures (i.e. Fanny Mendelssohn’s brother Felix and Clara Schumann’s husband Robert) were allowed to “dabble” in the form, but not encouraged, nor taken particularly seriously.

Anna Shelest, a Ukraine-born pianist who graduated from Juilliard and who currently lives in New York City, is a wonderfully expressive and talented musician who unites these composers, some of whom are separated by multiple centuries, with her deft touch and clear lyricism on this Sorel Classics release. Partially, this is exploration of lost histories, in the sense that some of this music has not been given its rightful place in canon of Western art music due, undoubtedly, to antiquated views on what constituted “acceptable” activities for married women (in the case of American composer Amy Beach); patriarchially established family responsibilities that curtailed artistic practice and output (Clara Schumann) and outright sexism masquerading as musical criticism (Cécile Chaminade) who was undermined in a New York Post review of her 1908 Carnegie Hall recital that stated, in part, “on the whole this concert confirmed the conviction held by many that while women may someday vote, they will never learn to compose anything worthwhile,” this recording is no mere historical exercise.

Through Shelest’s clear musicality and performance prowess, Donna Voce is an extremely musical and satisfying contemporary classical release that will hopefully (and deservedly) present this collection of music, as well as Shelest’s many talents, to a wide audience of listeners around the world.

Andrew Scott

Artur Schnabel – Complete Works for Solo Piano
Jenny Lin
Steinway & Sons 30074 (steinway.com)

Some wonders will never cease, as evidenced by the latest Steinway & Sons disc of Artur Schnabel’s Complete Works for Solo Piano with pianist Jenny Lin. That’s right: Artur Schnabel, composer. Amongst the great 20th-century pianists, Schnabel was the first to record the entire cycle of Beethoven sonatas, a practice now well-entrenched – and a yardstick still attained – by numerous keyboardists on a regular basis. But the legacy of Schnabel’s pianism remains sacrosanct, as does his pedagogical lineage. So then, how well-perceived is his compositional output? Not well, it would seem. Consequently, Steinway & Sons and intrepid pianist Jenny Lin “aim to correct this imbalance of perception.”

Andrew Scott
A new double album presents Schnabel’s works in chronological order, an edifying curatorial decision and one that reveals the breadth of his compositional development, starting with the Three Fantasy Pieces of 1897 – written when the composer was just 16 years old – and ending in 1947 with seven austere, Webern-like miniatures. It is in the early pieces that we glimpse a refined era of waltzes and foxtrots, elegantly wrought with an audible fondness for the Austro-Hungarian imperial ballroom. Schnabel’s Dance Suite of 1920/21 is beguiling in its invitational charm and expressivity; quirky and yet intriguing in a slightly mangled mode. How delighted his audiences might have been, after hearing him stride through late Beethoven piano sonatas in recital, to finish the evening with encores of the pianist-composer’s own! The Sonata of 1923 probes a darker, dissonant world. Shadowy spectres of Charles Ives seem to rush in at the resolute opening. Now far off from waltzes-of-old, Schnabel’s oeuvre can proclaim a newfound dimension.

Meglioranza’s latest disc of Schubert – Die Schöne Müllerin by Thomas Meglioranza, Reiko Uchida is of paramount importance as Meglioranza’s personal preference for this cycle was an early keyboard sound. After much research and deliberation the final choice was a Zierer, a Viennese fortepiano from 1829 that had a “rustic twang” and a lovely, crisp and non-intrusive tone.

Schubert – Die Schöne Müllerin
Thomas Meglioranza, Reiko Uchida
Independent 004 (meglioranza.com)

Meglioranza is a young American baritone with an impressive background of recitals, oratorio singing, even opera, and together with California pianist Reiko Uchida has formed a duo mainly for lieder recitals. To date they have issued three recordings with considerable success and international acclaim. This new disc of Die Schöne Müllerin is their fourth recording and comes with a recommendation from the legendary Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau praising their “healthy and beautiful sounding way of performing these difficult songs”.

The selection of the piano was of paramount importance as Meglioranza’s personal preference for this cycle was an early keyboard sound. After much research and deliberation the final choice was a Zierer, a German, Jew, Communist, American, activist, modernist and eminent teacher, composer Stefan Wolpe and his impressive catalogue of works should probably be better known today. Volume Eight from Bridge Records’ projected complete recordings forms the most recent release to date, featuring Wolpe’s music for two pianos.

This disc runs the gamut of styles, presenting Wolpe’s stern and structured March and Variations and Two Studies on Basic Rows, (both from the 1930s). These works are punctuated by the Ballet Suite in Two Movements: The Man from Midian, (1942) which is filled with rousing populist gestures and extramusical inspiration. These two extremes of Wolpe’s art – aptly represented and admirably executed by pianists Steven Beck and Susan Grace of Quattro Mani – lend themselves well to the dual keyboard medium.

The most arresting and remarkable work on the record, Two Studies on Basic Rows, is delivered with analytical focus and an informed musical intelligence. The complexity of the Passacaglia, (the final track on the album), is so well conceived that the brightness and fury at the heart of Wolpe’s art can distinctly shine through.

Stefan Wolpe Volume 8 – Music for Two Pianos
Quattro Mani
Bridge Records 9516 (bridgerecords.com)

Donizetti – Il Castello di Kenilworth
Pratt; Remigio; Anduaga; Pop; Orchestra/Coro Donizetti Opera; Riccardo Frizza
Dynamic 37834 (naxosdirect.com)

A double rarity: an all-but-forgotten opera and a non-updated production – the Tudor-era costumes actually reflect the period of the opera’s events. Andrea Leone Totolla’s libretto, derived from Walter Scott’s novel Kenilworth, pits the Earl of Leicester’s love for his secret wife, Amelia, against his ambition to gain the throne by exploiting Queen Elizabeth’s love for him. When Elizabeth arrives at his castle, Leicester has his squire, Warney, confine Amelia in a remote room. Warney professes his love for Amelia; spurned, he plots her death.

Leicester’s and Warney’s separate schemes begin to unravel when Amelia manages to escape and encounters Elizabeth (favouring the confrontation of Mary and Elizabeth in Maria Stuarda). All four
Sasha Cooke; Kelly Markgraf; Fry Street Quartet
Laura Kaminsky – As One
Riccardo Frizza.

are energized, too; bravo to conductor Anduago (Leicester) and Stefan Pop (Warney).
by sopranos Jessica Pratt (Elizabeth) and rhythmically energized score, ably sung
watching is Donizetti’s melody-drenched,
features a bare-bones set, minimal props
Festival in Bergamo, Donizetti’s home town,
his marriage.
Amelia leads him to confess his deception
murder attempt is foiled; Leicester’s love for
this one eventually ends happily. Warney’s
and unlike Donizetti’s other Tudor operas,
Scott’s novel, in which Warney kills Amelia,
principals, together, then express their anguish at the sudden turn of events. Unlike Scott’s novel, in which Warney kills Amelia, and unlike Donizetti’s other Tudor operas, this one eventually ends happily. Warney’s murder attempt is foiled: Leicester’s love for Amelia leads him to confess his deception to Elizabeth; she forgives him and blesses his marriage.
This production from the 2018 Donizetti Festival in Bergamo, Donizetti’s home town, features a bare-bones set, minimal props and no scenic backdrops, all on a postage-stamp-sized stage. What makes it very worth watching is Donizetti’s melody-drenched, rhythmically energized score, ably sung by sopranos Jessica Pratt (Elizabeth) and Carmela Remigio (Amelia), and tenors Xabier Anduago (Leicester) and Stefan Pop (Warney). The Donizetti Opera Chorus and Orchestra are energized, too; brave to conductor Riccardo Frizza.

Michael Schulman
Laura Kaminsky – As One
Sasha Cooke; Kelly Markgraf; Fry Street Quartet
Bright Shiny Things BSTC-0127
(quickshiny.ninja)

In the five years since As One was premiered, it has been performed, apparently, more frequently than any other new opera in North America (though it has yet to reach Toronto). No surprise there, judging by this recording. For one thing, it’s timely, following the journey of a young woman, Hannah, as she transitions from male to female. It’s concise, just 75 minutes long. The cast is minimal – two singers, a string quartet and a conductor. The music is alluring, if unprovocative, ranging from lyrical to sharp-edged, and the libretto is at once poetic and hard-hitting.
The role of Hannah is split between Hannah before, a baritone, and Hannah after, a mezzo-soprano. Both sing throughout, an inspired twist which allows composer Laura Kaminsky and librettists Kimberly Reed (whose real-life story this is) and Mark Campbell to present Hannah’s transition as an ongoing process.
This recording, the first of the complete opera, assembles the terrific musicians from the original production. Kelly Markgraf is endearingly open-hearted as Hannah before, and Sasha Cooke makes a powerfully convincing Hannah after. The Fry Street Quartet responds with irresistible immediacy to Hannah’s fraught challenges. Conductor Steven Osgood effectively balances Hannah’s hard-won moments of tranquility with dramatic urgency.
As One is a deeply moving tale of one rather extraordinary transgender woman’s complicated path to self-discovery, yet its appeal is universal. It will surely resonate profoundly with anyone who has ever grappled with who they are and where they belong.

Pamela Manges
Vireo: The Spiritual Biography of a Witch’s Accuser – An opera by Lisa Bielawa
Various Artists; Lisa Bielawa
Orange Mountain Music OMM7017
(orangemountainmusic.com)

Composer Lisa Bielawa conceived the idea of the young teenage heroine Vireo, who is lost in the world of visionaries, witch hunters, psychiatrists and artists in her auditory and visual hallucinations. Set to the libretto by Erik Ehn, the 12-episode, over-two-hour opera directed by Charles Otte was originally made for television and online viewing. There is no stage here – sets include forests, indoors, a monastery, and even the Alcatraz Prison. The singers and musicians share the action locations equally, all shot by a single camera as the opera weaves almost cryptically from 16th-century France witchcraft all the way to the present day.

Bielawa’s dense score includes tension-building interval repetitions, nods to minimalism, descending chromatic lines, percussion effects, piano chords and even touches of familiar children’s songs. The Kronos Quartet sets the opening musical stage with violin solo to full quartet to the San Francisco Girls Chorus singing to the clear, beautiful voice of Rowen Sabala as Vireo. Sabala was herself still a teenager performing in this production and her work is amazing, from her troubled gyrations and twitch, interchanges between her mother (Maria Lazarova), Doctor Gregory Purnhagen), teenage cohort Caroline (Emma McKenzie), and real/imaginary witches. Though too numerous to mention, all the singers and musicians perform and look convincing. Highlights include piano clumps as the Doctor moves his scary, lengthy medicinal needle towards Vireo; the piccolo making bird sounds sets the stage as the action moves back in time in Beginner: The Core Song segment, though distressing, breaks into humour as a hilarious horn bounces in response of a cow while the others grab a grilled meal. Up to nine identical frames at once visually build the girls’ tensions in Boarding School. Sharp bright and dark lighting, atonal music, and hurdy-gurdy solo in Alcatraz build tension and grief. Orchestra members dressed in lab coats and characters in circus costumes fuel the busy Circus, featuring a successful stereotypical Queen-of-Sweden operatic performance by Deborah Voigt until the calming final solo departure of Vireo into the forest in My Name is Vireo.
The libretto is shown on the DVD yet the clear CD production makes understanding words with music manageable. Whether one watches the DVD film or listens to the CD, the detailed intense magic of music, sound, and visuals are uniquely compelling, troubling and entertaining! Everyone involved in the production and performances deserves a standing ovation.

Tiina Kiik

What we’re listening to this month:

Beethoven String Quartets, Op.18, nos. 4-6
Eybler Quartet
“The Eybler Quartet treat every moment as if the ink were still wet on the page, such is the intoxicating freshness of their delivery.” – The Scotsman

Hindemith: Complete Works for Violin & Piano
Roman Mints, violin; Alexander Kobrin, piano
The “fascinating and technically brilliant” (The New York Times) Russian violinist explores Hindemith’s Works for Violin and Viola d’Amore

Liszt – 12 Études d’exécution transcendante
Sheng Cai
For his debut album at ATMA Classique, Sheng Cai tackles Franz Liszt’s Études d’exécution transcendante, pieces that represent a pinnacle of the piano repertoire.
### CLASSICAL AND BEYOND

**Johann Sebastian Bach – The Trio Sonata Project**

*Tripla Concordia*

**Arcana A114 (naxosdirect.com)**

- What would Bach think? It’s the question with which the recorder virtuoso Walter van Hauwe began his proverbial quest to re-imagine Bach’s sonatas and a partita as if they were written for his instrument. Van Hauwe also takes comfort from the fact that Bach’s contemporary, the composer and writer, Johann Mattheson deemed “the elaboration of an idea” by another composer “does not harm the original inventor” and, one must assume, his original inventions as well.

It is with this in mind that one must approach this wonderfully irreverent music, which is still Bach, but with an ironic twist in articulation and dynamics. While the keyboard remains ubiquitous throughout this repertoire, the viola da gamba has been replaced by a violoncello and both have been embellished by recorders. Most notably, Bach’s basso continuo is replaced, quite ingeniously, by the contrapuntal lines of the bass recorder.

As if by magic, Bach’s original trio sonatas – the C Minor BWV1029, G Major BWV1030 (a27), F Major BWV1028, D Minor BWV527 and the Partita in D Minor BWV997 – are reborn in subtle shifts in colour as the music moves from one key to another. It is a refreshingly forthright and decidedly wide-awake performance on bright-sounding instruments by Tripla Concordia. Tempo tend to be wonderfully brisk and bright changes in the dynamics let the leading recorders do the work with verve, in crisp and buoyant style and vivid articulation.

**Raul da Gama**

**Platti – Flute Sonatas, Op.3**

*Alexa Raine-Wright*

*Leaf Music LM224 (leaf-music.ca)*

- There are five outstanding musicians whose contributions to this wonderful recording all deserve recognition. First and foremost, of course, is the Baroque/rococo composer, Giovanni Benedetto Platti (1697–1763), whose six Opus 3 flute sonatas have not, until recently at least, been part of the standard flute repertoire, unlike those by some of his better-known contemporaries. The obscurity of these works, as this recording demonstrates, is due not to any defects but rather to the unavailability of the printed music. The fecundity of Platti’s musical imagination, from joie de vivre to pathos to artfully crafted lyricism is evident throughout the CD.

Then there is, of course, the soloist, Baroque flutist Alexa Raine-Wright, whose playing is full of vivacity, explosive phrasing, breathtaking virtuosity, definite and confident articulation and all-round sensitivity to the voice of the composer. You know from the first seconds of track one that her first priorities are to be musical, that is, to play the phrases, the musical sentences, so that their meaning can be heard, and to be more than just a soloist but also part of the ensemble.

Her team (Camille Paquette-Roy, Baroque cello, Rona Nadler, harpsichord, Sylvain Bergeron, archlute and Baroque guitar) are worthy collaborators, who, while always keeping a rock-solid steady tempo, seem also able to allow space for rhapsodic freedom to the flute. Worth mentioning too are the several truly exquisite duo moments for flute and cello, as in the first movement of Sonata 4 and the second movement of Sonata 5.

Bravissimi to our musical colleagues in Montreal.

**Allan Pulker**

**Mozart – The Three Last Symphonies**

*Ensemble Appassionato; Mathieu Herzog*

**Naive V 9457 (naxosdirect.com)**

- A contemporary pace of living, especially in the metropolis, must include small pleasures in the form of art. Mozart’s music might be one of those necessary delights in the lives of many. Although there are countless recordings of his works, it is exciting to discover new aspects of Mozart’s music and this recording undoubtedly brings some new thoughts and sounds. I loved the spirited energy and the clear sound on this recording as well as the candour of the interpretations. Playfulness is interwoven with drama and expressed through resonant simplicity of sound – a perfect formula for bringing out the essence of Mozart’s music.

What attracted French conductor Mathieu Herzog to this triptych is the fact that there is a certain mystery surrounding these symphonies – all three were written in the summer of 1788, when things were not looking too bright in Mozart’s life. There is no evidence to suggest any of them were ever performed during the composer’s lifetime and Mozart never again returned to this genre. No.39 and No.41 are warm, expansive and buoyant and No.40 is unusually dark and melancholic. There is a common thread though – all three are powerful masterpieces.

Ensemble Appassionato, founded by Herzog and comprised of leading French musicians, is on fire here – both bows and sparks are flying and the joy of the performance is thrilling. This recording is worth hearing, not because it might be perfect but because it just might surprise you.

**Ivana Popovic**

**Berlioz – Symphonie fantastique; Tempest Fantasy**

*Toronto Symphony Orchestra; Sir Andrew Davis*

**Chandos CHSA 5239 (tso.ca/watch-listen)**

- Do we really need another Symphonie fantastique? Not an unreasonable question. Many more than a few decades ago when the question was asked by a neophyte record producer, “How do you know what to record?,” the experienced answer was “Look through the Schwann Record Catalog, find the most recorded work and make another one.” That proved to be sage advice then.

There are countless recordings of the Symphonie fantastique available now, some outstanding performances and some sonic spectacles. As far as performance is concerned, this new one is high in the outstanding category. The entire string section is splendid, “singing” immaculately together. The winds are a joy, from serene to bustling. The brass is burnished and the percussion can have fearful presence and power.

Davis’ beat is steady, without being carried away emotionally, and ever true to the score, observing every nuance. I enjoyed it cerebrally as well as viscerally. Sonically, this is what audiophiles dream of. From piccolos to the lowest notes in the basses and thumping bass drum, to articulate strings and winds this is nirvana.

Equally impressing is the Tempest Fantasy with the orchestra and the Mendelssohn Choir in this Berlioz 14-minute showpiece in four parts: Prologue, The Tempest, Action and Dénouement. Those who know their Berlioz will recognize quotations from Lelio: the return to life, the sequel to the Symphonie fantastique.

If one were buying a Fantastique this could very well be it. It stands up to repeated hearings for, as I listened for some passages to critique, there were plenty of positives but no negatives that I heard. This disc creates a gorgeous reality in an acoustic better than any seat in Roy Thomson Hall where these recordings were made on September 20-22, 2018.

**Bruce Surtees**
Antonín Dvořák – Piano Quartets Nos.1 & 2
Dvořák Piano Quartet
Supraphon SU 4257-2 (naxosdirect.com)

Czech composer Antonín Dvořák’s music, presented here in a piano quartet form, is beautifully brought to life in this capture on Supraphon Records. Featuring the somewhat unusual instrumentation of piano, violin, viola and cello (inspired by both the public’s interest in his work at the time and by Dvořák’s hero Brahms’ employment of the same musical aggregation), the Dvořák Piano Quartet, a current ensemble based in the Czech Republic, performs this music in a thoughtful, and at times playful manner, bringing out, as great classical music and performance will do, the range of human emotion and expression.

A violinist and violist himself, Dvořák’s writing here places a premium on string virtuosity and the accomplished string performers, Stepán Pražák, Petr Verner and Jan Žďánský, are more than up for the masterful task. While Dvořák is certainly known for his dramatic scope and the power of his fulsome symphonic works, the masterful task. While Dvořák is certainly known for his dramatic scope and the power of his fulsome symphonic works, the power of his fulsome symphonic works, the intimacy of the chamber group context heard here brings out the range of his grand musicianship and empowers listeners towards a quiet reflection of his beautiful musical ideas. This is easy, lyrical music best listened to intently, that combines the beauty of the Western art music tradition in which Dvořák worked so well, with the native folk music instrumentation of piano, violin, viola and cello (inspired by both the public’s interest in his work at the time and by Dvořák’s hero Brahms’ employment of the same musical aggregation), the Dvořák Piano Quartet, a current ensemble based in the Czech Republic, performs this music in a thoughtful, and at times playful manner, bringing out, as great classical music and performance will do, the range of human emotion and expression.

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Andrew Scott

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

Platti: Flute Sonatas, Op. 3
Alexa Raine-Wright
Debut solo recording from Baroque flautist Alexa Raine-Wright brings to light a collection of rarely heard works by Giovanni Benedetto Platti, available on Leaf Music.

André Mathieu: Musique de chambre
A.Tyniec, M. Djokic, J.-P. Sylvestre, E. Miasbakhova, C. Dominguez
This release includes the recording of two unpublished pieces by Mathieu as well as his Trio of and Quintet, and works for violin and piano.

Bolton, Godin, Oesterle
Music in the Barns
Formed in Toronto, Music in the Barns releases its debut highlighting the fertile Canadian new music scene from the last two decades.

Dove Songs
David Liptak
A collection of chamber works, featuring the cycle, “Dove Songs,” written for soprano Tony Arnold with pianist Alison D’Amato. Liptak writes music that is expressively rich and poignantly lyrical.
Russian experience and bring forward an expressive range of both sorrow and joy that demonstrates to listeners what truly great performances of wonderful music are capable of conveying.

Andrew Scott

Bruckner – Symphony No.6
Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin;
Robin Ticciati
Linn Records CKD 620 (naxosdirect.com)

Bruckner – Symphonies Nos.6 & 9
Gewandhausorchester; Andris Nelsons
Deutsche Grammophon 483 6859
(deutschegrammophon.com)

> Throughout much of the century following his death, Anton Bruckner’s name was routinely paired with that of Gustav Mahler. After all, the external similarities seemed obvious: both were Austrian, both wrote vast symphonies and both needed many years of proselytizing from dedicated interpreters before their music was truly appreciated. Bruckner found his true musical calling when he heard his teacher Otto Kitzler conduct Wagner’s Tannhäuser in Linz. The revelation marked the character of Bruckner’s symphonies, taking a cue from everything Wagner did to break virtually every theoretical rule and create a new music drama.

Bruckner’s epiphany resulted in a series of truly original scores, including the Symphony in D Minor (1863–64), which he later designated No.0, three masses between 1864 and 1868 and his acknowledged Symphonies of considerable density from No. 1 (1865–66) to No. 5 (1875–76).

The Symphony No. 6 in A Major performed by the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin conducted here by Robin Ticciati proves to be a lighter, more congenial work than its predecessors – especially No. 5, say the equivalent of Beethoven’s Eighth or Brahms’ Second. Still, far from being flippant, the majestic and deeply profound slow movement, for example, has a depth and eloquence that almost demands an attitude of reverence. Ticciati handles the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester with serene confidence, and both orchestra and conductor revel in the symphony’s joyous climaxes. And there are plenty of moments in the slow movement that afford real poetry.

Andris Nelsons posits – and rightly so – that you could not have Bruckner without Wagner. His December 2018, live recording complements the Bruckner Symphonies 6 and 9 with Wagner’s Siegfried Idyll – a work of flawless delicacy – and the deeply reflective Parsifal Prelude Act I. The shorter Wagner pieces that preface each of the two discs appear to have been astutely selected for their lyricism and profound beauty and serve to put one in a meditative space in which prepares one for the respective Bruckner symphonies.

Nelsons’ brilliant performance of the Sixth with the Gewandhausorchester ends in the pure splendour of praise and – especially in the sombre Adagio and the mercurial Scherzo – is a benchmark performance of the symphony; the devotional, awestruck intensity of the work is effectively captured by the recording.

Symphony No.9 is the musical summation of Bruckner’s life, with all of its struggles. It is a monumental work despite being incomplete, and is sometimes said to have a mystical quality, like that of Beethoven’s Ninth. Nelsons’ depth of insight makes for a deeply moving and humbling experience in this incomparable live recording. It is a gaunt, craggy, unforgiving affair, doubtless much as Bruckner intended it should be: a magnificent, chastening and ultimately uplifting musical event.

Raul da Gama

Bruch – Double Concerto for Clarinet, Viola and Orchestra
Giovanni Punzi; Eva Katrine Dalsgaard; Tanja Zapolski; Copenhagen Phil; Vincenzo Milletari
Brilliant Classics 95673 (naxosdirect.com)

> An interesting new issue presents two of de Falla’s stage works as noted above. I have a sentimental attachment to El amor brujo (Love the Magician). It was the very first thing I ever saw in an opera house at age nine, but it was the ballet version. De Falla adapted the score a few times; the ballet from 1929 is the most often played. This performance however is the original 1915 version, the most complete and original conception performed by a small dedicated group of instrumentalists well suited for a work of this nature.

El amor brujo is actually a one-act zarzuela telling the story of a Roma woman who is haunted by the ghost of her former faithless lover, her struggle to exorcise it and finally be able to love again. It’s a journey from darkness to light, from a night of sorcery and terror to the splendour of a new dawn, with de Falla’s atmospheric, colourful score imbued in Andalusian folk idiom with dances that express the mood of each segment. The vocal lines are either spoken or sung authoritatively by the cantaora, a full-throated flamenco singer, Esperenza Fernandez. Most famous of the dances is the Ritual Fire Dance but all the others, especially the gentle, rollicking Dance of True Love are equally impressive; and the final apotheosis with all bells ringing is simply glorious.

The second work, El retablo de Maese Pedro (Master Peter’s Puppet Show) is somewhat less characteristic. It is a mini-opera based on a chapter of Cervantes’ novel, Don Quixote, and inspired by the age of Charlemagne. The music with “incisive Spanish rhythms and acerbic harmonies” is all skillfully fused with the French impressionism of Debussy and Ravel, de Falla’s main influences. The performances are intense and very authentic.

Janos Gardonyi

Max Christie
MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY

André Mathieu – Musique de chambre
Marc Djokic; Andréa Tyniec; Elvira Mischenko; Chloé Dominguez; Jean-Philippe Sylvestre
ATMA ACD2 2784 (atmaclassique.com)

► The turbulent life of the pianist and composer André Mathieu (1929–68) began in triumph and ended in tragedy. This son of professional musicians was hailed as “the Mozart of Québec” at his Parisian debut in 1936 but ultimately faded into a haze of alcoholism and obscurity, succumbing to a heart attack at the age of 39. It is perhaps not surprising that Mathieu’s resolutely post-Romantic style, heavily influenced by Scriabin and Debussy and profoundly melodic and episodic by nature, was disdained in the new music circles of the 1960s. It is largely due to the advocacy of the Québécois pianist-composer Alain Lefèvre, a champion of Mathieu’s piano concertos, that his reputation has been restored in our post-modern era.

The album features Mathieu’s eight chamber works from the middle of the 20th century, the era of his finest compositions. It includes a selection of compact duets for violin and piano featuring pianist Jean-Philippe Sylvestre with violinists Mark Djokic and Andréa Tyniec alternating as soloists. Tyniec (who dazzled Toronto recently with Jean-Philippe Sylvestre and Andreja Misbakhova; Chloé Dominguez; Jean-Marc Djokic; Andréa Tyniec; Elvira Mischenko; and Andreas Misbakhova; and Elvira Mischenko; and Andreas M...
human cry as brilliantly expressed by the string ensemble.

Godin’s work, all that is solid melts into the air, is more ephemeral and calls for a more nuanced performance, one which Music in the Barns delivers in spades. Breathing their way into the composition that spans over 150 years of humanity, the ensemble traverses a work bookended by the visceral world of Charles Baudelaire and the beguiling near-rhapsodic reverie inspired by the spare Daydream Mechanics with transcendent splendour.

The disc comes to an end with Oesterle’s Intermède a sonority of rare resonance in the brief three well-established American composers. Among the varied American composers, including the eight varied pieces of The Wanderer and the two-CD set, The Drifter. Here she shares a disc with that work of concentration-camp genius, Messiaen’s, Quatuor pour la fin du temps. They’re performed by the English ensemble Apartment House, and share the instrumentation of violin, cello, clarinet and piano.

This is the second recording of Smith’s Among the Tarnished Stars (1998), following the Toronto ensemble The Burdocks. Apartment House stretches the piece to 28 minutes, making the most of Smith’s subtle sonic exploration, from the opening’s ascending arpeggios through an almost accordion-like blend of clarinet and strings to some wonderfully resonant ensemble clusters that ring out into the emptiness of space.

The resonance and harmony make Among an ideal companion for Quatuor, a piece that transcends the grim circumstances of its composition and initial performance. Apartment House doesn’t do anything to contort the work into a post-modern aesthetic, but they do give its gestural elements new life in a rendering that never struggles to add overt emotional content to Messiaen’s materials. Clarinetist Heather Roche, however, does succeed in finding a sonority of rare resonance in the brief Internêde.

Perhaps what’s most interesting about the CD is the way in which the two works live side by side, the proximity emphasizing the celestial spirit that informs Smith’s work.

Stuart Broomer

Olivier Messiaen; Linda Catlin Smith Apartment House Another Timbre at143 (anothertimbre.com)

Spring Forward: Music for Clarinet and String Quartet David Shifrin; Miró; Dover; Jasper String Quartets Delos DE 3528 (delosmusic.com)

► Since 1981, David Shifrin, former principal clarinet of the Cleveland Orchestra, has served as artistic director of Chamber Music Northwest, the Oregon organization that commissioned these works by three well-established American composers.

In Spring Forward (2014) by Peter Schickele (aka P.D.Q. Bach), Shifrin performs with the Miró Quartet. The 22-minute, five-movement piece, typical of Schickele’s gently rocking, listener-friendly charm, evokes warm memories of springs past, including A Perfect Picnic (the last movement), fondly recalled by Schickele as one he shared with his wife at sunset by the Hudson River.

Richard Danielpour’s 18-minute Clarinet Quintet (2015) is subtitled The Last Jew in Hamadan. Danielpour’s father was born in Hamadan, the Iranian city traditionally known as the burial place of the biblical Queen Esther. Danielpour writes that the first movement, Agitato, con energia, with its bouncy mix of klezmer and the Middle East, derives from vivid childhood memories of visiting Iran with his parents. The following Adagietto e triste is a meditative lament for Iran’s mostly vanished Jewish community under the ayatollahs. Shifrin is joined by the Dover Quartet, recent performers at Toronto Summer Music.

Finally, Shifrin and the Jasper Quartet perform the 18-minute Perpetual Chaconne (2012) by Aaron Jay Kernis. Kernis writes that the piece “maps an emotional journey from mournful lyricism to increasingly abstract, harsh gestures and back.” It’s all rather bleak, lacking Kernis’s usual tendency to sentimentality. A bit of sentiment would have helped, much as it enhanced the pieces by Schickele and Danielpour.

Michael Schulman

A Tribute to Danny Granados Fidelis String Quartet and Friends; Danny Granados Delos DE 3562 (delosmusic.com)

► Member and subsequent CFO of the Houston Symphony Orchestra, Danny Granados (1964-2018) was a brilliant clarinetist. As he writes in the liner notes, three works were recorded by him with the Fidelis String Quartet and three other musicians in 2011 after a conversation about Brahms’ beginnings, and all artists’ struggles and setbacks. After his death from cancer, the other players released the recording in 2019.

The Fidelis String Quartet is a tight ensemble with great musicality. Granados fits in so well that his unique colourful clarinet playing never overwhelms the quartet as it blends with the strings. Brahms’ Clarinet Quintet in B Minor, Op.115 is a challenging work to play. Of note is the opening Allegro movement as Granados plays the moving clarinet melodies with luscious tones, subtle colour changes and slight rubato touches as it converges with the string lines. More clear string and poignant low-pitched clarinet conversations in the second Adagio movement.

Osvaldo Golijov’s Lullaby and Doina, from the 2001 film The Man Who Cried, offers a welcome abrupt change with its plucked strings opening, quasi klezmer intense clarinet doina, higher pitched strings, flute and bass, and a fast toe-tapping closing. Piazzolla fans should enjoy the four tango selections. Highlight is pianist Pablo Zinger’s arrangement of Liberingo. A piano solo leads to a breathtaking legato clarinet cadenza based on its familiar tune developing into a fast instrumental rendition.

Timeless performances make this a moving musical memorial tribute to Danny Granados.

Tina Kilk

Chesapeake – The Music of David Sampson American Brass Quintet Summit Records DCD 639 (summitrecords.com)

This CD, writes American composer David Sampson (b.1951), “came from my long-held desire to write for the members of the American Brass Quintet as individuals and close friends, amplifying their unique talents and sequencing the pieces to stand as an extended composition.” What I found particularly fascinating was Sampson’s varied sonic mix of one or two brass instruments plus electronics or percussion and piano in the first four pieces, each in three or four movements.

The opening, Breakaway, for two trumpets and electronics, presents echoes of Copland’s Fanfare for the Common Man and propulsive jazzy riffs that surround a darkly funereal cortege. In Powell Trio for trombone (the quintet’s Michael Powell), marimba and piano, two snappy, nervously syncopated movements, Flow and Edies, bubble around Stillwater, the quietly mysterious middle movement. Three Sides for trumpet/ flugelhorn, vibraphone and piano begins with cheery repeated staccato brass notes over a rumbling accompaniment, followed by a slow
Harry Partch – Sonata Dementia
PARTCH
Bridge Records BRIDGE 9525
(bridgerecords.com)

> Harry Partch (1901-1974) was a paradigmatic California outsider composer, embra-
ing the pitches and rhythms of world music – Ancient Greece, Japan and Af-
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tition. A romantic figure who constructed metal- tone guitars as a depression-era hobo, he gained a significant audience when Columbia Records recorded him in the 1960s. His home-made instruments emphasized bending string tones and hyper resonant percussion, some made from the refuse of radiation experiments.

The ensemble PARTCH is as true to the letter and spirit of Partch’s music as his own groups, and John Schneider’s intoned vocals even sound like Partch. The group has been recording landmarks and unheard works alike and supplementing them with Partch’s own archival recordings. The opening Ulysses at the Edge of the World immediately suggests the breadth of Partch’s inspira-
tions: originally composed for jazz trumpeter Chet Baker, it combines bass marimba, tuned bamboo drums, trumpet and baritone saxophone, and ends with a joke about wanderers (i.e., Ulysses, Baker, Partch) being arrested. Twelve Intrusions (1950) is a song cycle, alive with intoned vocals, elastic pitches, and a concluding chant transcribed from a recording of the New Mexico Isleta tribe. Windsong is a collage-like film score, while Sonata Dementia includes a Scherzo Schizophrenia, indicative of Partch’s multi-
directional wit.

The CD concludes with Partch’s own 19.12 recording of Barstow, the brilliant setting of hobo inscriptions here faster (and funnier) than the later Columbia recording.

Stuart Broomer

Michael Schulman

South of the Circle
Siggi String Quartet
Sono Luminus DSL-92232
(sonoluminus.com)

> While it should come as no surprise that contem-
porary Icelandic music should have – like music else-
where across the globe – come of age, the sheer scope and breadth of its soundscape is, nevertheless, quite breath-
taking. Riding the crest of a new wave created by Björk, Atlí Heimir Sveinsson and Johann Johannsson is the dazzling Siggi String quartet founded by violinist and composer Una Sveinbjarnardóttir, whose work Opacity forms one of the five pillars of the quartet’s 2019 recording South of the Circle.

This follow-up to Philip Glass: Piano Works, the 2017 recording that the quartet shared with celebrated pianist and countryman Vikingur Ólafsson, is both sparkling and deeply reflective. The quartet’s interpretation of Sveinbjarnardóttir’s composition and those of three other Icelanders is marked by the poignancy of their playing. The music becomes part of a natural landscape that mixes beauty and danger. Whether evoc-
ative of freezing nights or long rainy days, each track takes us to a place – often wildly exhilarating – with trusted and inspiring musical friends.

Such warmth comes at no expense to either classical elegance or avant-garde subversion. Throughout the quartet creates a compelling sound-bed for four voices of contrasting character. Although best expressed in the long inventions of the solos contained in Opacity, the virtuosic playing of the quartet is also expressed in their sculpting of the music of Daniel Bjarnason’s Stillshok, Valgeir Sigurðsson’s Nebraska, Mamiko Dis Ragnarsdóttir’s Fair Flowers and Haukur Tómasson’s Sermonia.

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1970 album, *Pieces of a Man*. Nina Simone’s *Sea Line Woman* is given an elegant and sophisticated treatment. Nowosad’s *The Water Protectors* is dedicated to the Standing Rock Sioux and other Indigenous people while *Never Forget What They Did to Fred Hampton* is a sharp reminder of the young Black Panther activist’s murder and cover-up. Curtis Nowosad combines socially conscious history with assured jazz performances.

**Ted Parkinson**

**Migrations**

Jacques Kuba Séguin
Odd Sound ODS-17
(jacqueskubaseguin.com)

► Released in June on his own label, ODD SOUND Records, *Migrations* is the newest album from the Montreal-based trumpeter Jacques Kuba Séguin. A regular in the Montreal jazz and creative music community, Séguin tours regularly, including a 2016 stint in Poland, Lithuania, and Germany, and has worked as the host of the *Symphonie en bleu* radio show, for ICI Musique classique. In addition to Séguin, who is solely responsible for the album’s compositions and arrangements, *Migrations* features pianist Jean-Michel Pilc, tenor saxophonist Yannick Rieu, vibraphonist Olivier Salazar, bassist Adrian Veaday and drummer Kevin Warren. The medium-tempo *Symphonie* starts things off, and gives Séguin plenty of room to exercise his warm, burnished sound; it also contains beautiful moments from Pilc, Salazar and Rieu. Pilc – who, since becoming a faculty member at McGill, is appearing on more and more Montreal-based projects – tends to always be excellent and his work on *Migrations* is no exception; his playing on *Origine*, the album’s second track, is particularly satisfying. *Première neige* (*You’re Not Alone*), one of *Migrations*’ most introspective tunes, is beautiful, and Séguin takes the opportunity to showcase the expressive, lyrical side of his playing. *I Remember Marie in April*, a clear album highlight, begins with stellar playing from Warren, who negotiates the tune’s syncopated shots with aplomb and keeps things interesting throughout the solos. Overall, *Migrations* is a thoroughly engaging album, with strong individual playing deployed in the structure of a cohesive group spirit.

**Colin Story**

**Five of Us**

Michael Vlatkovich; 5 Winds
pfMENTUM PFM CD 130 (pfmentum.com)

► Gathering four of Toronto’s most accomplished horn players to collaborate on his 5 Winds Suite and other compositions, American trombonist Michael Vlatkovich recorded this disc at Array Space, producing sounds that recall both a disciplined concert band and a freeform improvising ensemble.

Dividing the presentation so that the higher-pitched trumpets of Lina Allemano and Nicole Rampersaud are contrapuntally stacked against darker timbres from David Mott’s and Peter Lutek’s saxophones, the trombonist challenges or harmonizes with each group in turn, howling slurs when called for and shrilling flutter tones when necessary. Working through call-and-response sections as well as individual solo spots, the craggy arrangements are particularly notable on the suite. Sophisticatedly layered to highlight individual voices, a climax of sorts arrives with Part 5: *Five*. Mott’s baritone saxophone sighs move from melodious harmony to screaming intensity as the muted brass tones bolster the background. Although top-of-range cries and slurs dominate, dissonance never upsets forward motion.

Similar strategies underline the other sequences. On the introductory *Please Help Me I’m Blowing Bubbles*, for instance, Vlatkovich’s airy slides harmonize with descending reed amplifications. Later, after the five experiments with variants of split tones, slurs and shakes, the concluding *For The Protection of Yourself and Others You’ll Need to Wear Your Space Suit* is bouncy and boisterous but balanced despite shuddering capillary brassiness and reed glossolalia. Four of the five musicians may come from a different country, but exemplary improvising within craggy arrangements knows no boundaries.

**Ken Waxman**

**Somewhere**

Peter Eldridge; Kenny Werner
Rosebud Music (petereldridge.com)

► Consummate vocalist, composer and lyricist, Peter Eldridge has joined forces with arguably one of the finest jazz pianist/composers of his (or any other) generation, Kenny Werner, to co-produce a contemporary album of breathtaking beauty. The project boasts not only some fine original tunes, but also a sprinkling of some much loved popular standards – all rendered with fine rhythm section work by Werner on piano, Matt Aronoff on bass and Yoron Israel on drums. Eldridge’s rich, nuanced vocals and sumptuous orchestral arrangements (skillfully arranged for The Fantastical String Orchestra by Werner and conductor/cellist Eugene Friesen) make this a formidable CD.

Things kick off with the Eddie Arnold hit, *You Don’t Know Me*. Eldridge’s silky baritone takes command of this gorgeous standard, which is lusciously wrapped in acoustic strings and supported by the supple spine of Werner’s inspired piano work. Another outstanding selection is *That Which Can’t Be Explained*, with music and lyrics by Eldridge. This sensitive ballad has a lovely, poetic lyric and a pleasingly complex melodic line. Eldridge effortlessly takes the listener along for the ride on a deep emotional journey… this is a hit song in search of a hit Broadway show! Additionally, the Bernstein/Sondheim title track/medley is a major stunner, and begins with a haunting a cappella voice, followed by solo piano, which gently enfold Eldridge throughout. A brilliant orchestral segue leads to the second part of the medley, *A Time for Love*, which features exquisite harp and string section work, and of course Johnny Mandel’s incomparable melody.

Without question, the artistry of Eldridge and Werner make *Somewhere* one of the most exceptional recordings that I have had the privilege to experience this year.

**Lesley Mitchell-Clarke**

**Along for the Ride**

The Pete McGuinness Jazz Orchestra
Summit Records DCD 747 (summitrecords.com)

► With the release of his third big-band CD, multiple Grammy-nominated composer, arranger, producer, trombonist and vocalist Pete McGuinness has certainly grabbed the golden ring. This is a fine recording featuring tasty standards, beautifully-constructed original compositions, inspired and contemporary arrangements by McGuinness and skilled performances by some of New York City’s most gifted musicians. All arrangements here are by McGuinness, and the recording kicks off with the Charles Strouse depression-era hit *Put on a Happy Face*. The track is the perfect, snappy, up-tempo opener, with a beautifully recorded big band sound (no easy task) and a buoyant and facile tenor solo from Tom Christensen.

The creative take on the late Michel Legrand’s *You Must Believe in Spring* is a
total delight. McGuiness scats over melodic lines, and also performs the lyric with great emotion and perfect intonation, while pianist Mike Holober propels this gorgeous tune and arrangement through and around all of its beautiful changes. Of special note is Aftermath. With a moving brass choir opening, this original has its origins in an assignment once given to McGuiness by Bob Brookmeyer at the BMI Jazz Composers’ Workshop. Essentially an expanded tone poem about the loss of McGuiness’s close friend, this contemporary piece features Dave Pietro’s incredible (and indelible) soprano solo, which morphs into a wall of pain, grief and frustration (as well as other fine-tuned emotional states).

An additional standout is the McGuiness composition, Point of Departure – a dynamic arrangement that displays a full-throttle, big band sound – just as it should be – with Rob Middleton shining on tenor, as does Bill Mobley on trumpet.

Lesley Mitchell-Clarke

Crepuscule in Nickelsdorf
Evan Parker; Matthew Wright; Trance Map–
Intakt CD329 (intaktrec.ch)

► In the 1970s, English saxophonist Evan Parker began developing and combining a series of extended techniques, including circular breathing, false fingerings, harmonics and multiphonics, eventually creating sustained improvisations that could simultaneously suggest flocks of birds and keyboard washes by Terry Riley. Eventually he combined these processes with multi-tracking and electronic musicians, further mutating and extending the materials. Between 2008 and 2011, Parker worked with composer/sampling artist/turntablist Matthew Wright to construct a piece using materials from Parker’s collection of recordings, resulting in Trance Map. In 2017, the original materials became the basis for the group heard here, Trance Map*, which adds bassist Adam Linson, turntablhist John Coxon and Ashley Wales, all three employing electronics.

This performance from the Austrian festival Konfrontationen 2017 is as complex and engaging a performance as one may hear from the world of improvised music, a maze of sound in which different sounds come to the fore, most frequently Parker’s soprano but the others as well, whether foregrounding the ambient bass rumble of heavy amplification or the subtle harmonics of Linson’s bass.

At the beginning, there’s a passage of bird song in the foreground, a literal trace of the natural world floats into the soprano’s mechanical world. Then the mirror worlds of Crepuscule unfold, combine and shift: saxophone and bass, bird chirp and insect song, oscillator blip and needle scratch, tease and confound the ear, mutating into and beyond one another’s identities.

Stuart Broomer

Voyage and Homecoming
George Lewis; Roscoe Mitchell
RogueArt ROG 0086 (roguart.com)

► A mostly trio session featuring only two musicians, this CD is defined that way because Voyager, its more-than-25-minute centrepiece, features close interaction among veteran improvisers, trombonist George Lewis and saxophonist Roscoe Mitchell, and an acoustic Disklavier piano programmed by Lewis’ interactive Voyager software.

Reacting to the sounds generated by the borra players, the piano’s initial-ready introduction soon develops splintered and syncopated cadenzas and clusters which, during the sequence development, accompanies first the trombonist’s expansive pumps and then the alto saxophonist’s bluesy extended line. Obviously never outpacing the humans, the piano accompaniment moves from dynamic glissandi to jolts and jumps, making common cause with Mitchell’s thin reed snarls and Lewis’ plunger blats. The polyphonic climax arrives as the three sound layers intersect at top volume, but with individual contributions very audible.

While the concluding Homecoming is a classic duet between trombone and soprano saxophone, Qunata, the debut track, has Mitchell’s soprano saxophone carving out a place for its shrill peeps and gaunt trills from the concentrated synthesized samples and inflated granular warbles produced by Lewis’ laptop. Working up to a textural program that could be the soundtrack for a film on cosmic exploration, the track ends with a programmed voice repeating “unable to continue.” That sly electroacoustic joke doesn’t characterize a disc that auspiciously presents the originality of the tune – and by extension Lewis’ conception of it – are confirmed when the ending lacks a conventional pattern completion. Twenty years on, the disc’s vigour and intensity still echo.

Ken Waxman

POT POURRI

Canadian Hits: Unplugged
Saint John String Quartet
Leaf Music LM227 (leaf-music.ca)

► Here is another innovative recording by the New Brunswick-based St. John String Quartet, one that recasts well-known Canadian songs in adept string arrangements by Rebecca Pellett. These songs are familiar to us with vocals plus the reverberant long-decaying tones of guitars, bass, pedalized piano and added studio production. So it is an arranger’s challenge to create satisfying textures with only four bowed instruments! Lots of pizzicato is one way to sustain the background, as in the arrangement of Francis by Béatrice Martin (Coeur de pirate). Evoking the simple group vocal sound of Stan Rogers’ Northwest Passage is another way. Percussive effects on the string instruments add equivalent interest and authenticity to Knocking at the Door (Arkels) and the heavy slog of Spring to Come (Digging Roots).

Gary Peacock (b. 1935) at the height of their mature mutual powers. This Lugano-recorded set is particularly notable since concentration is on the pianist’s infrequently exposed compositions.

A lively run-through of Mazatlán begins the showcase, as nuanced keyboard strategies pulsate and pause with unexpected sonic detours while a sinewy tandem dialogue is established with Peacock. Meanwhile Motian’s shattered clanks help juice Bley’s unexpected bursts of low-pitched emphasis and swelling timbres which recap the head. Not known for funkiness, Bley still invests Told You So with a tranch of walking blues even as he fragments the narrative with bent notes and expansive tonal quivers. The selections also encompass a relaxed, impressionistic and balanced variant of I Loves You, Porgy, taken at a moderate tempo. As well, the bassist’s subtly low-pitched string swipes and pulls alternate with vigorous, lightning-quick patterning when playing his own Moor.

Trio skills are best expressed on the Ornette Coleman-composed title track, With the pianist’s swift glissandi changing the exposition’s speed and pitch nearly every bar, the performance intensifies once drum rim shots and rattles combine with bass thwacks to emphasize the melody. Yet even as the trio collectively descends the scale to hit a groove, the originality of the tune – and by extension Bley’s conception of it – are confirmed when the ending lacks a conventional pattern completion. Twenty years on, the disc’s vigour and intensity still echo.

Ken Waxman
In A Landscape
California Guitar Trio; Montreal Guitar Trio
Independent (mg3.ca)

Among small chamber groups, the combination of two, three or even four guitars is not all that uncommon. So what about six guitars? Surely a guitar sextet is a little out of the ordinary, yet that’s what we have here on this disc. titled In A Landscape, featuring the combined forces of the California and Montreal Guitar Trios. While both ensembles have long-established reputations in their own right, the decision to perform together as a single group evolved from a chance meeting at an Oregon music conference ten years ago and since then, they haven’t looked back.

Just as the combination of six guitars may be a little unusual, so is the music they present on this recording. Indeed, the musicians have always shared a determination to “push the boundaries” with respect to repertoire, and this philosophy is evident in the all-too-brief 40-minute program.

Opening with the rhythmic New Horizons by MGT member Glenn Lèvesque, it’s clear that these musicians enjoy playing together - what a warm and satisfying sound they produce! Flashy virtuosity for its own sake is decidedly absent - instead what we hear is sensitive and well-crafted interplay among the performers. Furthermore, the eclectic program is a remarkable study in contrasts. Arrangements of Radiohead’s Weird Fishes and David Bowie’s Space Oddity with vocals by ensemble members are juxtaposed with the moody and mysterious title track by John Cage (as arranged by Sébastien Dufour) while the mercurial Magneto - composed by Dufour - is an infectious essay in Latino brilliance. For such a comparatively short program, In A Landscape covers a lot of ground, and does so with solid musicianship - mixed with some good-natured humour - throughout. This CD is an attractive landscape indeed, one that leaves the listener wanting more.

Richard Haskell

A New Day
Gordon Sheard and Sinal Aberto
Independent GSM003 (gordonsheard.ca)

As a self-described “Brazilian music freak,” it’s no surprise that Toronto jazz musician, educator and ethnomusicologist, Gord Sheard, has a group dedicated to playing Brazilian style music, Sinal Aberto. The name translates as “open signal” or “green light” and is a play on a Chico Buarque album called Sinal Fechado (closed signal/red light) made during an oppressive political time in Brazil (of which they’ve had many). So artistic freedom is the overarching sensibility for Sinal Aberto, and it shows in this beautiful collection of songs.

With a level of musicianship you’d expect from the top players in the country – Mark Kelso on drums and George Koller on bass, Sheard on piano – the band deftly blends jazz and Brazilian sounds (plus a few R&B and Afro-Caribbean elements) for a sound all their own. A New Day is mostly original songs written by Sheard with lyrics by Rio de Janeiro-native Luanda Jones, who features prominently on the album as the singer, too.

The album opens on a hopeful note with Samba de Primavera which, fittingly, speaks of being free and open to new experiences. (All of the songs are sung in Portuguese and many of them are helpfully translated to English in the CD booklet.) I love the energy and Jones’ virtuosic vocal gymnastics on Forrocatu, which combines Northern Brazilian forro and maracatu rhythms at top speed and is somewhat reminiscent, to these ears anyway, of the great composer, Hermeto Pascoal. The beautiful and poetic title song, Mais um Dia, is another standout track. Bossa nova fans won’t be disappointed as the band has imaginatively covered a couple of classics, including a soul-tinged version of my favourite, Dindi.

The album is available from CD Baby: store.

cdbaby.com/cd/gordonsheardsinalaberto.

Cathy Riches

Spinning in the Wheel
Projeto Arcomusical National Sawdust Tracks NS-028 (nationalsawdust.org)

Projeto Arcomusical is “a world music sextet reimagining the Afro-Brazilian berimbau through unique and powerful chamber music.” Spinning in the Wheel is the second album by this Decalb, Illinois-based sextet co-founded by American composers, percussionists and berimbau-ists Gregory Beyer and Alexis C. Lamb.

A member of the musical bow family found around the world, the Brazilian berimbau is an essential accompaniment of caopeira, the Afro-Brazilian martial art combining elements of dance, acrobatics and instrumental and vocal music. At first glance a simple instrument, the berimbau has at least six distinct parts. It includes a wooden bow and steel string, a beater to strike the string with, a small stone or coin pressed against the string to change the pitch, a gourd-like shell secured to the berimbau amplifying/modulating the string in conjunction with the...
player’s body, and a small rattle held in the stick hand. Using all these sound modifiers the berimbau is capable of a large range of expression, especially when several musicians are involved. Arcomusical’s six berimbau allow the production of an extended number of tones making possible extended-range melodies, harmonies and spatial effects. In only a few years it has toured widely and commissioned over 30 new scores.

Chief among them is Roda (2016) by American composer Elliot Cole. An engaging and impressive four-movement, 20-minute work, it’s the most substantial musical statement on Spinning in the Wheel.

I was initially drawn to the novelty of Arcomusical’s instrumentation, but after just a few minutes of listening to Spinning in the Wheel I found its music clearly conceived and passionately performed.

Andrew Timar

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Something in the Air

Adapting Poetry to Jazz and Vice Versa

KEN WAXMAN

Although the sentiment conjured up by the phrase, “poetry and jazz,” is one of scruffy beatniks intoning verse to the accompaniment of a stoned bongo player, the intersection of poetry and improvised music has a longer history. As far back as the 1920s poets like Langston Hughes integrated jazz energy into their work and subsequent interaction involved whole groups of literary and musical types, with notable instances in San Francisco, Liverpool and Vancouver up until the present day. Some of the discs here extend the idea of sounds complementing words, while others work on the more difficult task of integrating both elements.

A particularly fascinating instance of this is Readings Gileya Revisited (Leo CD LR 856 leorecords.com). On it, Russian-born, Cologne-based pianist Simon Nabatov has created musical settings for poems from members of the Gilby group, a Russian Futurist movement that thrived just before, and for a time, after the Russian Revolution.

The pianist’s associates are Germans, reedist Frank Gratkowski and electronics master, Marcus Schmickler, American drummer Gerry Hemingway and most importantly, Dutch vocalist Jaap Blonk. While Schmickler’s skills are used sparingly, as on the penultimate track where granular synthesis and processing deconstruct a sample of one of the original Futurist’s recitations, and then are superseded by resounding pattering from the drummer. In another instance, on A Kiss in the Frost oscillated aviary echoes share space with Blonk’s double-tracked theatrical recitation of a Futurist poem, completed by reed buzzes and piano patterns. But the nub of creativity is most thoroughly expressed in the ways in which Blonk’s phrases plus piano-reed-and-percussion sounds interact as equals. For instance the gargles and yells that express the budding of phrases plus piano-reed-and-percussion sounds interact as equals. For instance the gargles and yells that express the budding of phrases plus piano-reed-and-percussion sounds interact as equals.

A more difficult stanza interpretation is expressed on Pneuma’s Who Has Seen the Wind? (Songlines SGL 1629 – songlines.com). Not only does Montreal-based vocalist Ayelet Rose Gottlieb personalize the often-translated (by herself) words of Japanese, Iranian and English poets, but her only accompaniment is the three clarinets of Vancouver’s François Houle and Americans, James Falzone and Michael Winograd. With one clarinetist usually playing chalumeau for continuum, Gottlieb confidently cycles through moods ranging from wistful to lighthearted, with her lyric soprano harmonized and used as much as an instrument as the woodwinds.

This is particularly obvious on the suite of brief Japanese poems where emotion is expressed by melodic warbling linked to coloratura clarinet peeps and trills. In the same way, the impressionistic title track, from a poem by Christina Rossetti, harmonizes the clarinets in a near-baroque manner. The melded timbres flutter up the scale, but not enough to detract from the poem’s gentle imagery. In contrast James Joyce’s Alone brings out emphasized melisma as Gottlieb swallows the lyrics with low tones as the clarinets move upwards. Trembling/Light is an erotic poem, but that may be masked as the response to her vocalization is thumping tongue stopping and echoes from the bass clarinet.

Finally Neither You Nor I/Conversation with Ona, which she composed after the death of a close friend, is no dirge but a defiant
celebration where the melody moves via bird-like trills and tongue slaps from the clarinets, until voice and reeds join for a jocular up-tempo final stanza. There are suggestions of spiritual singing from Pneuma and an equivalent instance of turning ecclesiastical words and music into a secular form on Why Don’t You Listen? (Dark Tree DT (RS) 11 darktree-records.com) by Horace Tapscott; Pan Afrikan Peoples Arkestra and the Great Voice of UGMAA. Los Angeles-based pianist Tapscott’s nonet expresses its characteristic message on this 73-minute concert, not only through his highly rhythmic arrangements utilizing three double basses and three percussionists, but through songs performed by the 12-member UGMAA. In its vocal blends the choir, whose initials mean Union of God’s Musicians and Artists Ascension, bring the sound of a sophisticated gospel ensemble to the selections. But divergence occurs since the word-poetry isn’t on sacred texts, but instead, variously salutes a Nigerian musician known for his struggle against dictatorship (Fela Kuti); provides an object lesson of the accomplishments of jazz heroes (Why Don’t You Listen?) and praises the mother continent itself (Little Africa). The most accomplished achievement is the second tune, where singing over a captivating rhythmic groove, the voices invest the listing of innovators with the same sincerity a church choir would bring to the scriptures, emotionally extending the words with melisma and hocketing, as boisterous, sinewy solos from the pianist, saxophonist Michael Session and drummer Donald Dean are interspaced like extra voices. When choir director Dwight Tribble ends the extended track with near-R&B testifying, the spiritual link between improvised music and Black empowerment is complete. Tapscott’s worldly arrangements, which combine exploratory sounds and grounded beats, characterize the non-vocal parts of the disc, with the slippery blats of trombonist Phil Ranelin and Session’s soaring slurs particularly impassioned.

Adding another twist to this theme is Bay area clarinetist Ben Goldberg’s Good Day for Cloud Fishing (Pyroclastic PRO 5 pyroclasticrocords.com). Here Goldberg, trumpeter Ron Miles and guitarist Nels Cline improve on Goldberg’s compositions inspired by Dean Young’s verse. Present at the recording session, Young wrote new poems influenced by the music. A set of entry and exit poems are included in the package. Designed as three separate art pieces, it’s fascinating to try to work out linkages. Overall, the exit poems seem to reflect the sounds more directly than the music reflects the verse that inspired it. For instance, the clash and clatter of distorted guitar licks, Reed flutters and trumpet growls lead Young to mix musical and literal metaphors on Section 8 instead of the string of plaints on the Sub Club Punch Card that is its entry poem. Or the herky- jerky guitar clinches which underscore the high-pitched trumpet and low-pitched contra-alto clarinet blowing in ambulatory reflection on Dandelion Brainstem winnows to coloratura Reed smears and string pizzikas by the finale, though the mournful imagery of the exit poem Corpse Pose further extends the metaphor. Putting aside the search, you can appreciate Young’s turn of phrase on 24 poems. Fittingly as well, compositions and interpretations stand as notable music on their own and are carefully modulated to build on each player’s skills. With tracks varying from boisterous near-oom pah pah instances of almost pre-modern swing with string licks that could come from a ukulele harmonized with trumpet smears (Phantom Pains/Crow Hop) to experiments which meld clarinet glissandi and gliding guitar distortions into a stretched but not broken narrative on Surprised Again By Rain/How’d You Get Here there’s no questioning the music’s power. After all, doesn’t this double artistic expression properly define each of these sessions? ☞

When Seiji Ozawa took over the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1973, his was not a new name to Toronto concertgoers as he had been music director of the Toronto Symphony from 1965 to 1969. I warmly remember one of his very first concerts here in which he conducted the Fauré Ballade Op.19 for piano and orchestra with his wife, pianist Kyoko Edo wearing a kimono. Rather charming. In Boston, although he had studied and worked with Charles Munch, Ozawa began turning the Boston Symphony from a French orchestra under Munch and Monteux, into a heavier-sounding German orchestra. Members of the orchestra were not happy at all about this and expressed their displeasure openly. In fact, the orchestra’s internationally recognized and esteemed concertmaster assistant conductor, Joseph Silverstein eventually resigned in protest. DG has gathered all their Ozawa recordings, mainly with the Boston Symphony, also the Berlin Philharmonic and the San Francisco Symphony. Seiji Ozawa Complete Recordings on Deutsche Grammophon (DG 4836484, 50 CDs deutschegraommophon.com) is the result.

The repertoire is varied and colourful across the orchestral spectrum from Bartók to Ambroise Thomas. Collectors may be relieved to know there are no Beethoven symphonies, no complete Brahms cycle, no Mozart nor Rachmaninoff symphonies nor a complete Tchaikovsky. I’m thinking that these are staples already in one’s collection. What is here is illuminated performances of selected concertos featuring soloists Anne-Sophie Mutter, Christoph Eschenbach, Itzhak Perlman, Kristyan Zimerman, Joseph Silverstein, Rostropovich, Yundi Li and Gidon Kremer, together with first-desk soloists from the orchestra. Orchestral favorites from the repertoire that enjoy standing ovation performances include Symphonie fantastique, Brahms First and Second Symphonies, Mahler’s First Symphony, Gaité Parisienne, a dozen popular favourites by Ravel including a ravishing Daphnis et Chloé with the Tanglewood Festival Chorus, Pictures at an Exhibition and Respighi’s Roman trilogy, an opulent Scheherazade and lots of Tchaikovsky including the Fourth and Fifth Symphonies. There are also Prokofiev’s complete symphonies, his Romeo and Juliet and more. And there is one complete opera! Offenbach’s Les Contes d’Hoffmann recorded in Paris in 1986 with the Orchestre National de France. This effervescent, never-a-dull-moment, performance stars Plácido Domingo as Hoffmann; Edita Gruberova as Olympia, Antonia and Guilietta. James Morris is Miracle, Christa Ludwig is heard as the voice of Olympia. Not every one of the 50 CDs contains a definitive performance of the work therein and some miss the mark entirely. This glowing collection happily defines the often-used term, Music for Pleasure, and as such is a great success and should keep giving joy to the listener. I had intended only to sample the sound of a first CD release of the February 6, 1961 performance of Mozart’s Le Nozze di Figaro.

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Old Wine, New Bottles

Fine Old Recordings Re-Released

BRUCE SURTEES
conducted by Carlo Maria Giulini with the Philharmonia Orchestra and Chorus recorded in performance by the BBC in London’s Royal Festival Hall (ICA CLASSICS, ICAC 5157, 2 CDs naxosdirect.com). Time passed and I had listened to every last note on the two CDs, totally immersed in the genius of Mozart — his ineffable genius. Where did it come from? The soloists in this were, as Count Almaviva, Ernest Blanc; the countess was Elisabeth Schwarzkopf and Susanna was Elisabeth Söderström. Figaro was Fernando Corena and Teresa Berganza was Cherubino.

Fascinating and informative liner notes describe the evolution of Giulini’s Figaro and an appreciation of the rest of the cast that includes Edda Vincenzi, Georgio Tadeo, Hugues Cuénod, Heather Harper and Piero Cappuccilli. This is a very special performance, a must for a Mozart lover, cleanly preserved in mono. Incidentally, there is a set of CDs from Walhall with substantially the same cast recorded live in 1971. It originated in the Royal Albert Hall. It does not display the brio of the RFH performance. Nor the fine recording.

Another new release from ICA is a 3-CD boxed set of first CD releases of some interesting works conducted in typical flamboyant style by Sir Thomas Beecham (ICA ICAC 5168, 3 CDs naxosdirect.com). Briefly, for the benefit of those readers who don’t know the name, Thomas Beecham (1879–1961) was recognized and respected worldwide as a very special conductor and a wit. He first appeared on the podium in 1903 conducting London’s Queen’s Hall Orchestra. He was knighted in 1916. He was highly esteemed for his Richard Strauss, Mozart, Sibelius and Haydn, and championed and edited Delius. All his many recordings were best sellers everywhere. His concerts often included shorter works which he called “Lollipops” and his one-liner witticisms are still quoted. Regard each of the three discs as a concert. CD1 opens with Chabrier’s Guenodline Overture, then Franck’s Le Chasseur Maudit; Gretry’s ballet Zémire et Azor and the G-Minor Symphony by Lalo. The second disc has only three works; Etienne-Nicolas Méhul’s Second Symphony; Saint-Saëns ballet music from Samson et Dalila including the Bucchanale and finally Delius’ North Country Sketches. CD3 has the Balakirev First Symphony and Richard Strauss’ Ballet Suite from Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme. These are all BBC recordings made between 1952 and 1959 in various venues for later use and foreign broadcasts. The two orchestras heard on these recordings are the BBC Symphony and the Royal Philharmonic, the orchestra founded in 1946 by the affluent Beecham because he could not return to the London Philharmonic where he reigned before WW2. If you don’t know some of the works in the package, this may be an ideal way to expand your musical horizons.

A few years ago, SOMM released six CDs of previously unissued recordings of Edward Elgar in astounding new restorations by Lani Spahr. Spahr was given access to Elgar’s private library of test pressings that had been sent to the composer by HMV for approval. Whether he approved them or not, they remained in Elgar’s possession and are now archived by the Elgar Society. There were two sets issued, Elgar Remastered on four discs (SOMMCD 261-4) followed by Elgar Rediscovered on two discs (SOMMCD 0167). Included was Elgar conducting his two symphonies and cello concerto, all heard, thanks to Mr. Spahr, in genuine stereo played by Beatrice Harrison with Elgar conducting. Two fascinating collections, the 2-CD set being the more desirable.

Spahr follows up with more Elgar on Elgar from America Vol.1 (SOMM ARIADNE 5005 naxosdirect.com). Arturo Toscanini is heard in a previously unreleased performance of the Enigma Variations live from an NBC Symphony concert on November 5, 1949. There are already other Toscanini Enigmas in the catalogue, from June 3, 1935 with the BBC symphony and also with the NBC. New to the catalogue is this 1949 performance and the sound is surprisingly vivid and articulate. The performance is interesting and devoid of any sentimentality in the Nimrod variations (played today to respect a death). Two valuable performances with the New York Philharmonic also occupy this disc, the Cello Concerto conducted by Sir John Barbirolli played with flair by Gregor Piatigorsky (1940) and Falstaff, a Symphonic Study in C Minor conducted by Artur Rodzinski (1943). Altogether, a satisfying release.

Ferenc Fricsay conducts Rossini, Strauss, Kodály, Ravel, Honegger, Zimmermann (SWR CLASSIC, 19070CD, mono naxosdirect.com). New recordings, well, unpublished ones, conducted by Ferenc Fricsay are always a source of pleasure for his admirers. Most recent is the complete evening’s concert with the Südfunk Sinfonie-Orchester, Stuttgart, in the Villa Berg, from October 10, 1955. The audience (and now us) was treated to a program of enjoyable light classics. The evening started off with Rossini’s overture to the seldom-heard, The Journey to Reims followed by Richard Strauss’ Burleske, for piano and orchestra played by Margrit Weber. Kodály’s Dances from Galánta were followed by Bernd Alois Zimmermann’s Caboclo from his ballet suite Alagoana. Weber returned for Honegger’s Concertino for Piano and Orchestra. A high-spirited performance of Ravel’s Boléro was the rousing finale to the evening’s program. That orchestra and other radio orchestras of the day and since are brilliant ensembles, being at least the equal of the “philharmonics.” The audience in this live recording is unheard and the dynamic sound is excellent.
back in my broadcasting days, I was interviewing a British journalist – this must have been 15 years ago – about the projected demise of classical music.

I said, as I introduced the interview, that the eradication of classical music had been confidently predicted since recording was invented in the late-19th century, but that, although the last rites had been pronounced and the funeral arrangements made, the patient stubbornly refused to die. Then, after my “hello”, he responded with words guaranteed to stop the heart of every broadcaster on earth, trust me. “I’m afraid there’s an error in your introduction.” I gulped, swore to myself, and gamely said “How so?” “Well,” he went on, “you said the demise of classical music has been predicted since the beginning of the 20th century. The first instance I could find of such a statement was 1741!” (That was the year of Messiah, by the way).

I was reminded of this exchange this August while reading accounts of the annual meeting of the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians, basically an umbrella group pressing for musicians’ rights in the classical field. The usual litany of problems - funding, reduced government support, aging audiences, lack of demographic diversity, labour troubles. And to be fair, those problems are all too real. The economics of classical music, especially at the level of large organizations, are an actuarial definition of hell. Enormous fixed costs with no easy possibility of reducing them – you can’t just eliminate the second violins from a Mozart symphony. Fixed costs that are increasing. A very real limit to how far ticket prices can rise to meet those increased costs without depressing the potential number of buyers, so that higher prices, bizarrely, result in lower revenue. An art form that only finds success with an endless succession of greatest hits programs, thus reducing the ability to attract new audiences not familiar with the established repertoire. And a current audience that, barring great advances in cryogenics, will all be dead in ten years or so. How can this enterprise possibly survive?

But it does, and in some cases, even thrives. Umberto Eco, the famed Italian author, once told a Davos world economic forum audience that some things were never going to be replaced by new technology. His example? The spoon. The spoon will never disappear, he said, because nothing else does what it does as efficiently or as effectively. That’s classical music, to me – it provides an emotional, spiritual and aesthetic experience that cannot be replicated, really, by anything else.

That’s not to say that classical music (such a terrible adjective, but it’s ours) is destined to live forever, without any effort taken to husband its resources carefully and provide for its future. It can die. What will keep it alive is not just great performances (although nothing can substitute for them), but a willingness even in these troubled times, I would say, especially in these troubled times, to strike out with boldness and originality in programming, repertoire and presentation to keep the art form vital.

The good news is that the audience problems that cause so many sleepless nights for so many artistic administrators may well solve themselves, as the traditional boundaries between musical genres break down. This, in fact, may well be the most significant development in music over the past 50 years. Classical players now have experience in jazz, pop performers know their opera, world music is blurring all sorts of musical lines. Contemporary musicians of all kinds are comfortable in wide areas of musical style and expertise. This is great news for the classics, because “classical” music, a minority musical niche, can only benefit from this expansion.

I said earlier that classical music was irreplaceable, but I didn’t say why. Classical music is like Umberto Eco’s spoon because it takes music seriously; it is a perfectly suited means of delving deep into music’s full range of techniques, meanings, emotion and power, rather than, as popular music does, happily skimming the surface in the worlds of entertainment and immediate pleasure – not that there is anything wrong with either of these – for the commercial rewards there. Depth doesn’t necessarily sell, but that doesn’t mean that it doesn’t attract. The fact that the classical gene – the gene for depth – is now being carried by young musicians who know their classics but are comfortable and excited by other forms of music does not mean a contraction of classical music, or a horrible death-spiral of crossover hybrids, whirring into meaninglessness and irrelevance. It means the opposite. It means that the world of classical music will be augmented by new consciousnesses, expanded to include elements of styles that already have their audiences, thereby liberating classical music from its depleting dependencies, both in terms of audience and repertoire. That’s not to say that my ideal classical institutions wouldn’t include the classics – after all, they’re what got us here in the first place. But the classics can be presented in so many more inviting concertgoing styles than the typical symphony program set in a granite-like unalterability for over a hundred, otherwise changing, years. Nothing forbids orchestras or chamber groups from being a little more imaginative in their programming and presentation. Or even a lot more. Everybody is ready for something new – even the old-guard audiences that terrify precarious mainstream institutions into inertia. The proof of that is everywhere around us – in groups like the highly lauded Against the Grain Theatre, Opera Atelier and the new Talemusik, under Elisa Citterio, to name just a few. Even the Toronto Symphony, going through their own rebuild these days (a la the Blue Jays), have done well with their ventures out of the tried and true in the past few years. Many classical institutions are stuck in an artistic Stockholm syndrome, stuck immobile by a fear of disturbing the delicate balance that allows them to survive. But disturb it they must – with care, certainly, and intelligence, and taste, but with courage in the end, and a belief in the value of what they have the good privilege to serve up to the world.

The listings in the magazine in your very hands at the moment – or scrollable on your screen – prove the immense ongoing interest in classical music. The precarious nature of the business has not stopped thousands of young people, if not hundreds of thousands, from entering institutions of musical learning annually, declaring their love of the art form by showing a willingness to dedicate their lives to it. Talent is not the problem in the musical world these days. New ideas are. And willingness, both by the venerable institutions that are the art form’s custodians and the audiences that have traditionally supported them, to help midwife the new world of the classics that is straining to be born.

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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with the participation, live and recorded, of
Marie Bérard, Russell Braun, Françoise Davoine, Johannes Debus, Howard Dyck,
Judith Forst, Eric Friesen, Gerald Finley, Emily Hamper, Robert Harris, Ben Heppner,
Joanne Kolomyjec, Robert Kortgaard, Jeanne Lamon, Rosemarie Landry, Joseph
Macerollo, Marshall Pynkoski, Stephen Ralls, Peter Tiefenbach,
Edith Wiens, Lawrence Wiliford, Alumni of Stratford Summer
Music Vocal Academy and past and present musicians of
Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, the Canadian Opera
Company Orchestra & the Toronto Symphony Orchestra.

Tickets are general admission - please call
(416) 964-6337 or visit tafelmusik.org/crory
White Lie: The Making of a Soundtrack

White Lie is a gripping new psychodrama, by Toronto-based co-directors Yonah Lewis and Calvin Thomas, that oozes unease as it follows a university student on her duplicitous route to crowd-funded dollars by pretending to be suffering from melanoma. It’s the duo’s fourth feature and second to be invited to TIFF (Amy George, their 2011 debut, was the first). Marked by nuanced, naturalistic acting (Kacey Rohl, Amber Anderson, Martin Donovan) and set off by striking cinematography, its mood is buttressed by a quietly disturbing score.

The film’s large musical component (by Yonah’s brother, Lev Lewis) is strikingly judicious: it doesn’t overwhelm and the filmmakers know when to remove it entirely. I was curious about the working relationship among Thomas and the Lewis brothers vis-a-vis filmmakers know when to remove it entirely. I was curious about the working relationship among Thomas and the Lewis brothers vis-a-vis what the music eventually became. We ended up gravitating to more strings and piano than originally discussed, but still incorporating that jagged, jarring feeling of the distorted guitars and loose percussion.”

I then contacted Lev Lewis about how he had approached writing the score, indicating that I was impressed with the depth of the recurrent cello line, the inherent pull between the jazzy foreground walking bass and the tension drip of the synths and background percussion, the way that the music gently adds to the web of deceit.

“When we were cutting in, using Logic and an Apogee ONE for guitars. We used this temp music for about six weeks until picture was locked and I moved onto writing the score full time. I spent about two-three weeks composing to picture and then another three weeks or so recording. Most of the recording was done out of Victory Social Club in a small office with Lucas Prokaziuk engineering. We recorded guitars and live synths there, finding the right sounds and tweaking the cues.

“We had three great string players (two violins, one cello) come in for a whirlwind day where we recorded something like 19 cues in maybe four hours, and a drummer to play the kit. I performed the piano and just banged on the percussion until we got the sounds we were looking for. Working with live synths was probably the biggest learning curve for me as it was my first time, but also quite fun, especially interesting to realize how alive they are.

Writing a score for such a psychologically damaged character immediately gives you a lot of options, some of them interesting, some of them obvious. I had recently heard a record by Chris Corsano and Bill Orcutt which is made up of these interlocking guitar-drum runs. Really rough and abrasive but fully integrated. I incorporated (or stole) that idea and placed it overtop a more conventional horror movie melody played on piano and cello. This came together pretty quickly and became the main theme.”

And, finally, this from Calvin Thomas:

“Having the score come together really solidified the tone of the film. It made her more fascinating, more cunning, more complicated. And ultimately that’s what we were striving for: the audience should leave the theatre feeling deeply unsettled by the character they’ve been following through every scene, and conflicted by their own attachment to her.”

White Lie plays the Toronto International Film Festival September 7 and 13. Consult tiff.net for more information.

Paul Ennis
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### Sunday October 6, 2019

**I Hit My Head and Everything Changed**

- **Thomas Adès** (England)
  - Overture to "The Tempest" op. 22a (2004)
- **Brian Harman** (Canada)
  - *I Hit My Head and Everything Changed* (2019)**
- **Alexina Louie** (Canada)

**Alex Pauk**, Founding Music Director and Conductor

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### Sunday December 1, 2019

**Sustain**

- **Andrew Norman** (U.S.A)
  - *Sustain* (2018)*
- **Adam Scime** (Canada)
  - *Afterglow* (2019)**
- **José Evangelista** (Canada)
  - *Accelerando* (2016)

**Thomas Adès** (England)


**Brian Harman** (Canada)

- *I Hit My Head and Everything Changed* (2019)**

**Alexina Louie** (Canada)


**Moira Ness**—artist

- *Left, alone* (2015)**

**Avan Yu**—piano

- The Elmer Iseler Singers—chamber choir

### Wednesday February 26, 2020

**Electric & Eclectic**

- **John Adams** (U.S.A)
  - *Son of Chamber Symphony* (2007)
- **James O’Callaghan** (Canada)
  - *Not non-other* (2020)**
- **Alfred Schnittke** (Russia)
  - *Concerto Grosso No.1* (1977)

**Hans Abrahamsen** (Denmark)

- *Left, alone* (2015)**

**Marie Bérard**—violin

**Stephen Clarke**—harpsichord/prepared piano

**Stephen Sitarski**—violin

**James O’Callaghan**—electronics

**Moira Ness**—artist

- *I Hit My Head and Everything Changed* (2019)**

**Alexina Louie** (Canada)


### Sunday March 22, 2020

**Taiko Returns**

- **Barbara Croall** (Canada)
  - *Mijidwewinan (Messages)* (2008)
- **Christopher Goddard** (Canada)
  - *Piano Concerto* (2020)**
- **Eugene Astapov** (Canada)
  - *A Still Life* (2020)**
- **Maki Ishii** (Japan)
  - *Mono-Prism* (1976)

**Shannon Mercer**—soprano

**Nagata Shachu—taiko drumming group**

**Eugene Astapov**—conductor

**Christopher Goddard**—piano

**Barbara Croall**—Anishinaabeke Performance (vocals/traditional flute)

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