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“I’m very, very sorry for BREXIT, thank you for letting me into your country!” is what James Rhodes was saying to the audience in that moment.

Shooting James Rhodes was part of a larger project: portraits of the heroes at Hamburg’s new landmark concert hall, The Elbphilharmonie. The idea for my book, Backstage, was born when the venue opened in early 2017. For me, the most captivating aspect about The Elbphilharmonie is the unique range of world class artists from very different musical genres.

James’s artistic concept, too, breaks the boundaries of the expected in unique and prototypical ways. He’s not only a great pianist and interpreter of various classical masterpieces, but he’s also an engaging entertainer and raconteur who makes classical music far more accessible to a broader audience.

— Peter Hundert, backstage-thebook.com

PHOTO: PETER HUNDERT

FEATURES

19 MUSIC AND HEALTH | Balance in Blindness – the Plasticity of Perception | VIVIEN FELLEGI

70 WE ARE ALL MUSIC’S CHILDREN | MJ BUELL

94 REARVIEW MIRROR | Bonnell’s bug – Inviting Criticism | ROBERT HARRIS

7 OPENER | If All the World’s a Stage ... | DAVID PERLMAN

10 Q & A | “Inhaling Music for All of My Life” – James Rhodes | PAUL ENNIS

12 ART OF SONG | Mezzo Rising – Beste Kalender | LYDIA PEROVIĆ

16 LOOKING FORWARD | Making Room for the New at Gimeno’s TSO | DAVID JAEGER

TO BE RELEASED ON MARCH 27, 2020

ATMACLASSIQUE.COM
DISCOVERIES:
RECORDINGS REVIEWED
22 Editor’s Corner | DAVID OLDS
25 Classical & Beyond | PAUL ENNIS
28 Early Music | MATTHEW WHITFIELD
32 Choral Scene | BRIAN CHANG
35 Music Theatre | JENNIFER PARR
38 Jazz Notes | STEVE WALLACE
40 Bandstand | JACK MACQUARRIE
56 Normally Clubs, Mostly Jazz | COLIN STORY

LISTINGS
50 A | Concerts in the GTA
51 B | Concerts Beyond the GTA
54 C | Music Theatre
61 D | In the Clubs (Mostly Jazz)
62 E | The ETCeteras

SPECIAL SECTION
IN THIS ISSUE | pg 43
SUMMER MUSIC EDUCATION
Summer music-making for all ages and abilities – the big picture.

UPCOMING SPECIAL SECTIONS
IN MAY 2020 | THE CANARY
PAGES All things choral in southern Ontario.
two pm this past February 8 was a Saturday afternoon, and my concert companion and I had barely had time to settle into our Roy Thomson Hall balcony seats with our beer and popcorn before the lights, already dim, dipped even more, and a fractional moment of quiet rippled across the cheerful din of the place, the way a passing cloud wiping the face of the sun high above a summer lake evokes a moment’s hush.

(You can always tell it’s February in Toronto when people like me distract themselves from a task at hand by starting to talk, out of nowhere, about the summer.)

Where was I? Ah yes. February 8, about four minutes past 2pm, in the balcony level of Toronto’s most imposing cultural hall of mirrors. The momentary hush that descended on the room when the lights flickered is turning into a ripple of applause as our conductor for the day, Jack Everly, strides briskly onto the stage.

If it’s less of a ripple of applause than one might reliably expect at that moment in the concert ritual, it’s certainly not because the crowd is smaller than usual – the place is, as far as I can tell from where I am sitting, pretty much its usual respectably crowded self. And it’s not because the audience is already settling morosely into an appropriate frame of mind for something portentous – there’s a palpable buzz and hum in the air. Mostly it’s less of a ripple than one might have expected, because the logistics of applause are complicated with a beer in one hand and popcorn in the other.

Toronto Symphony Orchestra members already seated on stage do their usual decorous bit to salute the maestro as he enters – they tap their bows carefully on their instruments; stamp their feet in a refined (and of course rhythmic) way; there are smiles all round.

Everly strides to the front of the stage, all affable business, picks up a microphone that just happens to be there, and invites us all to have a good time, cheer for our heroes if we feel like it, laugh or cry if we want to, and applaud or not as the mood strikes. And then, all business, he turns to the orchestra, all attention. The lights take a deeper dive, a deeper hush descends. He raises his baton … and the movie begins.

Calling it a “movie” in these splendid surrounds is, I readily concede, not the most formal way of addressing it. Film With Orchestra is how it’s titled on the cover of the TSO program book I picked up on my way out of the hall (I had a hand free by then).

Mind you, that’s not what it’s called inside the program. On subsequent closer inspection, on the page with the official production credits for the highly successful road show, it is styled A Symphonic Night at the Movies which neatly captures the middle-brow appeal of the thing: neither film as art nor “a flick at the bioscope,” as I would have called it as a nine-year-old child in 1962 (in another country) ten years after this particular movie was made.

Whatever one calls it, film with orchestra has become, for a whole bunch of reasons, a hybrid genre that is much in vogue. The TSO, for example, does four of them a year in its own season. Three of them, this season (two Star Wars movies and Home Alone, which has become a perennial Christmas holiday offering), are branded showcases for the astonishing film score output of composer John Williams. The fourth generally digs into film classics: last year it was, if I remember, Casablanca. Today it is 1952’s Singin’ In the Rain, starring Gene Kelly, Donald O’Connor and Debbie Reynolds.

I understand the appeal. For movie fans it’s a chance to get under the hood of an aspect of movie-making normally hidden from view. For millions of people, for whom orchestral scores, consciously or unconsciously, are intrinsic to the way we are programmed daily as to what to feel and think, it’s a revelation to see how the all-too-familiar sounds are made: a bit like actually seeing milk come from a cow rather than from a carton on a shelf. I like to think there are favourable statistics out there concerning how many people who came primarily for the novelty of seeing a favourite film in a new context discover the orchestra as something worth revisiting in its own right.

As for die-hard fans of the orchestra, it’s a chance to spend time in the hall, indulging a passion, without any of the usual self-appointed distractions of having to instruct less enthused patrons in the etiquette of cultural palaces – a chance to let our hair down, so to speak.

So I was expecting to have fun, and would have, even without the popcorn and beer. What I wasn’t expecting was the way this particular film in this context has stayed with me for the past few weeks, taking on an aesthetic shape and colour: posing questions...
(and suggesting answers) about the relationships we cannot afford to take for granted in regard to the continually evolving relationship between artists and audiences.

Part of the reason it was so interesting is the pivotal moment in the history of film that is at one and the same time the reason for the film’s existence and it’s own major storyline - the advent of the talking picture. Stars of the silent screen died off, metaphorically, in droves; new stars were born; actors who could actually act, singers who could actually sing, and dancers who could actually dance were suddenly able to bring prodigious live performance skills to a mass audience. Studios acquired orchestras where previously movie houses had theatre organs or player pianos. Sound stages on an immense scale came into existence.

Memorably, February 8 in the RTH balcony, I found the inner story of the film being played out all over again, in a crazed, Escher-like version of itself: as though the fun-house mirrored twists and turns of Roy Thomson Hall’s intentionally disorienting lobbies and levels had been transported into the auditorium itself.

There was one moment, for example, where I found myself watching the TSO live on the RTH stage (with a pull-down movie screen most of them could not see above their heads), making beautifully synchronized music for an orchestra on the screen, reduced once again to silent-movie puppetry by technology’s latest twist and turn; while, to top it all off, on that screen an auditorium of people sat watching their orchestra accompanying the same stars that our orchestra was. Layers within layers.

There was a more fundamental moment for me, though, well into the movie’s second half. (Yes, there was an intermission to top up on popcorn and beer.) It came during one of the film’s memorable songs – not one of the obvious ones, like the title song, that had dozens of audience members happily singing along, but “Would You” a lovely gentle waltz, masterfully positioned at the film’s moment of denouement, ricocheting from bathos to pathos, in a lovely arc: 

He holds her in his arms,
would you, would you?
He tells her of her charms,
would you, would you?

I suddenly became aware that the person seated next to me was singing, completely comfortably and absorbed entirely in the moment. Not “singing along,” just singing. Not an audience member “joining in.” Nor aware, even for an instant, that she herself had an audience. Just feeling permitted.

And here’s the point: she would not have had that permission either in a movie theatre or in a concert hall. It was a gifted moment, arising from a uniquely oddball set of circumstances: the live audience watching the live orchestra brought the people on the silver screen to life in a way that film alone cannot. The privacy of the typical film-watching experience kept other audience members at bay, in a way that the typical concert environment does not.

It’s an alchemy we all, artists and presenters alike, need to seek.

After all, if, as the bard says, “all the world’s a stage,” then what’s an audience?

Three days later: Tuesday February 11, at the COC
“Oh, it’s a starry night!” my opera companion, delighted, turns to me and says, very quietly, as the Hansel and Gretel overture starts and the mysterious-looking panelled stage curtain we have been eyeing for the past ten minutes or so, speculation as to how its panels will part and divide, reveals what is behind it. Like lighting the person in the row right in front of us spins around. Her “SSSSHHHHH!!!” can be heard at least 15 rows back. Our slightly sheepish discomfort lasts all of the three minutes it takes for the same individual to take things to the next level by whacking the elbow of the person next to them with a rolled up program, for encroaching over the midline of the seat arm.

Thirteen years ago, approximately
In the selfsame balcony at Roy Thomson Hall. It is a performance of Bach’s St. John Passion. One of it’s great chorales “O grosse Lieb” has just commenced and someone, I would guess in his 80s, deep in the moment and alone with the music starts, quietly, to do what Bach instructs – to sing along. Someone turns to chastise ...

David Perlman can be reached at publisher@thewholenote.com
MAURICE RAVEL’S *L’HEURE ESPAGNOLE*
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Since the 2008/2009 season when his star began its rise, celebrated pianist, author and media personality James Rhodes has released seven chart-topping classical albums, written four books and appeared in and made several television programs for British broadcasting.

According to his website, Bach, Beethoven and Chopin offered comfort for the “suffering that dogged his childhood and early adult life.” Classical music offered “solace” and was key to his survival.

Now in his mid-40s, Rhodes’ unfettered passion for classical music is at the core of his approach to concertizing; he communicates directly with audiences, interweaving anecdotes of composers’ lives with his own experiences as they relate to the music being performed.

March 5, 2020, in Koerner Hall, the Glenn Gould Foundation is presenting Rhodes’ Canadian debut, in an all-Beethoven recital, as part of the Foundation’s “continuing commitment to celebrating excellence and exploring the indelible impact of the arts on the human condition.”

The following Q & A took place via email in early February.

**WN:** Your love of Glenn Gould is well known so it’s appropriate that the Glenn Gould Foundation is presenting your March 5 Toronto debut. You said in *Geeking Glenn Gould*, your 2017 BBC documentary, that when you were “a kid,” Gould was really your best friend, “during a time that was very bleak and he made things feel so much better and so much more exciting.” Please elaborate on that friendship and on how classical music saved your life then.

**JR:** There were a lot of bad things happening when I was a kid. Things that shouldn’t happen to any child but, sadly, happen to far too many. When a child is raped it shatters their idea of trust. By some miracle (and I don’t use the word lightly), I discovered classical music at around that time and it was the only thing I could trust. It is that weird, schizophrbic thing of living most of my life in a dull monochrome, barely sleeping, bleeding from weird places, twitching all the time and unable to talk properly, and then listening to this incredible music and having a multicoloured, transcendental escape at my disposal. And of course you cannot experience classical music without Gould. He was such a revolutionary, the very opposite of the safe, academic performers that were so commonplace. He embodied the thrill of music for me. He did things with a piano that I would literally dream about doing.

**How does Glenn Gould inspire you?**

He reminds me of Beethoven, who wrote that immortal line, “There will be many emperors and princes. There will only ever be one Beethoven.” He [Gould] just didn’t give a fuck. He was the closest thing classical music had to a rock star. He believed in playing music in a way that no one had the bravery or insight to play it. I mean listen to his cadenza to the last movement of Beethoven’s first piano concerto. Or the prelude of the fifth partita. Or the *Meistersinger Overture*. Man alive, the guy just punched you in the face and didn’t even apologize. This is what music-making should be about.
What was the first piece of Bach’s that changed your life?
The *Chaconne in D Minor* from his Violin Partita No.2. A musical cathedral that he built to the memory of his dead wife. I love the fact that it keeps trying to end. But he always has one more thing to add. Like saying goodbye to the woman you love. Leaving the hospital room. And then returning to say that ‘one more thing.’ For me it was a kind of key to my mini, seven-year-old fucked-up soul that just fit right and made everything seem shinier.

When did you begin to play the piano?
Play, in the loosest sense of the word, when I was a kid. But I didn’t get my first proper teacher until I was 14, and then I stopped for ten years, aged 18, and restarted at 28. I wouldn’t recommend that.

According to your website you had no formal academic musical education or dedicated mentoring until age 14 when you studied for four years under Colin Stone. Then, in your early 30s, you had a brief tutelage with Edoardo Strabbioli in Verona. Was that the extent of your training?
Yep. But I like to think that dreaming, breathing, thinking about, listening, talking and inhaling music for all of my life was training too.

That’s the magic trick with music. You can be at your most desperate and abandoned and suddenly there is a hand reaching out from 300 years ago giving you a hug and telling you it’s all going to be ok.

Who were your musical heroes in your youth?
Sokolov, Gilels, Bernstein, Ashkenazy.

I love the story you told Tom Power on CBC’s *q* about the time a dozen years ago when you were in a locked psychiatric ward and not allowed anything, but a friend smuggled in an iPod filled with Gould and Bach and you heard Bach’s transcription of the slow movement of Marcello’s oboe concerto. “Something this profoundly beautiful – the fact that this exists in the world – means that it’s not necessarily a completely hostile place,” you said. It’s an example of the extraordinary power of music. There’s nothing like it. Please expand.

Nah. Listen to the piece and it’s easy to get. That’s the magic trick with music. You can be at your most desperate and abandoned and suddenly there is a hand reaching out from 300 years ago giving you a hug and telling you it’s all going to be ok. And that piece is a perfect example.

When did you first fall in love with Beethoven?
As a very young boy, listening to the *Emperor Concerto*. Holy shit what a piece to fall in love with! It’s everything my tiny, geeky little mind adored – virtuosity, thrills, beauty and lots of big fucking drums.

How did you choose the pieces for your Toronto recital?
I wanted to find three sonatas that told a bit of a story and covered the basic arc of his life.

You recorded all three sonatas [No.15 in D Minor, Op.28 “Pastoral”; No.27 in F Minor, Op.90; No.21 in C Major, Op.53 “Waldstein”] seven to ten years ago. Please describe your relationship with each of the sonatas and how your approach to them has evolved over the years.

You know I think it was Arrau (or maybe Bolet) who said something really brave – along the lines of ‘LVB wrote the sonata and moved onto the next one. I’ve been studying these sonatas for 30, 40, 50 years. I know them inside out. Have performed, memorized,
March 2020

BESTE KALENDER MEZZO RISING

The year 2020 is coming up roses for mezzo-soprano Beste Kalender, who grew up in Turkey and moved to Canada at the age of 22 to pursue two great interests – post-graduate research in the psychology of musical cognition, and professional singing. One of those is now clearly taking over, and the current year is marked by gigs that she finds particularly meaningful. “I hope I won’t be just a singer who sings pretty music and has no other interests,” she says when we meet in the RCM cafe, deserted for the long weekend. Our voices are ringing in the empty space but the security guy on duty doesn’t seem to mind us being there. “I’d like to be able to engage with larger issues and causes. And have my own distinct voice. This year feels like I do.”

Did you have any particular heroes who contributed to your understanding of Beethoven?

Gould, obviously. Also Teodor Currentzis, [chief conductor of the SWR Symphony Orchestra Stuttgart and artistic director of the ensemble musicAeterna and of the musicAeterna Chamber Choir] He’s the greatest living conductor (don’t even try to argue with me about that). Sokolov too – he makes the sonatas sound as if you’re hearing them for the first time.

Talking to the audience and contextualizing the music you’re about to play, why you chose it and what it means to you, was very prescient when you began doing it more than a decade ago. Now it’s part of the zeitgeist. How did it come about?

I don’t think it’s that common sadly. I wish more musicians would do it. Imagine hearing Zimerman discussing Schubert for a few minutes before playing D960! I’d die of joy. I would always choose to introduce a piece for a couple of minutes before playing it and then turn the lights off and let people disappear with the music, instead of having the audience reading program notes about sonata form in Beethoven’s Vienna while I’m playing the bloody thing. There are so many things in classical music that are considered a blasphemy. So many unspoken rules. Sometimes you feel like you’re going to church instead of a recital. This music is so immortal and has sadly been appropriated by a certain group of people for their enjoyment only. It’s desperate. Classical music is not high art. It’s not something you must understand in order to ‘appreciate it’ (whatever that means). It is simply a connection with a part of ourselves that is too easily lost in this age of always-on, super-fast distraction.

The Glenn Gould Foundation presents “In Conversation with James Rhodes” on Wednesday March 4 at 7:30pm, in the Isabel Bader Theatre.

The Glenn Gould Foundation presents James Rhodes: “The Beethoven Revolution” on Thursday March 5 at 8pm, in Koerner Hall.

Paul Ennis is the managing editor of The WholeNote.
Unlike most of the group, he survived, but he had a breakdown, was moved between military hospitals, and ended his life in a Paris asylum in 1935 a broken man. “This concert is about celebrating Komitas, and it’s about celebrating peace and always working to keep it”, says Kalender. “I’ve listened to a lot of Armenian music alongside my Armenian friends at the Conservatory in Istanbul, and loved it. Our musical traditions share so much.”

Istanbul is a diverse city which easily breeds cosmopolitans, and the Turkish-Canadian mezzo is one of them. She grew up in a liberal family and, parallel to attending the Music Conservatory, also went to Boğaziçi University, founded as Robert’s College in 1863, the then only American-run university overseas. “I would go to the European side of Istanbul for the psychology classes in the morning and cross the Bosphorus Strait to the Anatolian side of Istanbul for the classes at the Conservatory in the afternoon,” she says of her youthful, pre-Canada years. “It was busy and fun.” She came to Canada to work on a PhD, on an invitation from the University of Toronto. The research-heavy master’s degree she completed fast, but getting into the Glenn Gould School made her put a pause on the PhD, although she enjoyed the work. She would spend a lot of time in the soundproof booths of the U of T’s Mississauga campus, she explains, researching complex and simple meters and how people who speak different languages perceive metre and tonal structures differently. It was a mix of linguistics, music and psychology that she can see herself returning to later in life. But singing kept interfering.

She got her first big break in 2015 at the Calgary Opera, where she was scheduled to sing Mercedes in Carmen. The mezzo who sung Carmen fell ill with flu just as the run opened, and Kalender had to jump in on short notice. “I said to myself: if you enjoy this and if it works out, then you’re leaving academe. I had the best time ever on stage. So I thought, okay, let’s try this seriously, let’s go for it.”

By that time, she was also married. She had met her Lebanese husband at U of T, where he was working on a master’s degree in Engineering. Between Arabic, Turkish and English, what language do they speak at home? She responds that the linguistic barrier probably made them work more on the relationship: “That’s how our marriage...”
has been a success these eight and a half years. Certain things get lost in translation – which is not always bad. But we keep working on figuring out the between-the-lines – the unsaid in the said. That took some time.”

Kalender will be spending March in Alberta while preparing for the role of the Old Lady in the Joel Ivany-directed Candide at the Edmonton Opera. (“I will actually be singing the line I am so easily assimilated,” she laughs.) Back in Toronto in April, rehearsals, with the same director, begin in a very different project: Against the Grain Theatre’s final version of the Kevin Lau-composed Bound, the story of four characters in a brush with law enforcement and the arbitrary rules at border crossings. Kalender’s character is based on a true story of a professional Middle Eastern woman being asked and refusing to remove her hijab at the point of entry into France. “Border crossings is a topic we don’t talk a lot about in Canada,” she says, “and when I saw an earlier version of Bound I was grateful that these guys decided to tackle it.” Kalender became a Canadian citizen last February, and before that travelled on her Turkish passport as a Canadian permanent resident, which sometimes made things complicated. One year, on her way from Canada to Moscow via Zurich Airport for a singing gig, she was taken out of the queue and held at the airport because the airline staff in charge were not able, or willing, to verify that she did not require a work visa for Russia. When eight hours later they finally realized their mistake – thanks to a network of frantic phone calls between Turkish and Russian consular offices across two continents – she was allowed to board the next available plane to Moscow. She landed in the Russian capital at 4am, and went straight to rehearsals on little or no sleep.

The character she will play in Bound is held at a border for a different reason, but she and Kalander have one thing in common: their faith. Kalender is a Sufi Muslim who decided early in life that they were going to be a woman to put on a scarf or not, to wear hijabs in places like parliament and school was forbidden by law,” she says.

(An aside: I pause here to remind the reader that Turkey’s path to secularization commenced after the demise of the Ottoman Empire and the end of the First World War, under Turkey’s first republican president Kemal Ataturk, and was at times more top-down than it was productive.)

“But in my school, Boğaziçi University,” Kalender continues, “our professors didn’t occupy themselves with how you look. So some people would wear a hat over their scarf, for example – and the administration didn’t police clothing. But in other state universities, this rule was enforced. In today’s Turkey, it’s a matter of free choice. You can wear a hijab in school if you wish.”

“In my opinion,” she says, “to order a woman to put on a scarf or to take off the scarf, they are the same thing. It means forcing your opinion on them. And it’s generally men who decide this – while I’m happy for women to be able to decide that for themselves. If it’s the government deciding for you, or members of your family, it’s coercion.” Kalender tried a hijab on for the very first time only last year – in preparation for the role in Bound. “I had a relative who wears a hijab visit me recently in Canada. One day we were talking and I told her about this role, and asked her to show me the different ways of doing a hijab. She said, ‘Beste I thought you were against it,’ and I told her, well yes, I don’t think my religion is about that. I am a religious person – but not a conservative person. I really believe in Sufism. I believe that we are all one, and that our differences are only as deep as putting on a label. I don’t believe that I necessarily need a hijab, but if that’s how you feel most comfortable, then why should I try to decide that on your behalf?”

There is a lot of the Ottoman Empire in Western European opera – Ottomans held a place of fascination and fear for centuries – and I ask her what she thinks about the increased sensitivity around cultural representation in opera. She’s already sung a Floria aria from Rossini’s II Turco in Italia at a private concert, she tells me, and had fun with it, but hasn’t yet managed to see an entire traditional production of Mozart’s Die Entführung aus dem Serail. The rewritten

Wajdi Mouawad production at the COC from a few years back she did enjoy. “The COC took a risk, decided to adopt this new angle, and good on them. I had heard the buzz about it, that there was namaz [Islamic prayer] on stage, and all those changes in the production, and I went in and was glad that someone took this approach.” The original Entführung is fiction of course, and when it comes to the life in the Pasha’s harem not exactly accurate. “In Mozart’s opera, the ladies are in control, but in real life, they would not have been,” Kalender says. Mothers would have probably have had more influence on viziers than their harem favourites. As for the stereotypical Turco character in other operas? “When you create a character, you should endow them with a variety of features – they can’t be there just for fun and ridiculing. Something to keep in mind when reviving productions.”

In Mouawad’s production, namaz is performed in Arabic. Would Ottomans have worshipped in Arabic? “Yes,” she says, and puts my pedantry to rest. “There were several languages in circulation in the Ottoman Empire, with Arabic and Farsi particularly influential. With the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the coming of Ataturk and the Turkish Republic, the official language was reformed and unified. Up to that point we were using Arabic letters; after Ataturk, we switched to Latin letters. If someone spoke to me in Ottoman today, I would not understand them.” How is the empire looked upon in today’s Turkey? Is it being fantasized about? “Yes. Certain political groups still talk about it. But I think what reigned interest in Ottomans more than anything else is this hugely popular TV show that went on for years. Magnificent Century – a quality, historically informed soap opera set in the court of Suleiman the Magnificent.” I tell her I knew about it even before Elif Batuman wrote a long piece on it in The New Yorker because the show was extremely popular in all the Slav countries in the Balkans – countries that were colonized by the Ottomans, some for several centuries. The mistrust of all things Ottoman/Turkish and the legends of heroes who fought for liberation from the empire were inbuilt in all the national poetics in the region – but this TV show, when it was on, emptied the streets. It was something akin to mania, I tell her. “It was a good show! And wasn’t Suleiman’s main woman of East European origin?”

“The lady who designed tiaras for the show designed the tiara for my wedding,” Kalender says. “My big, fat Middle Eastern wedding! No, I don’t do things by halves.”

Lydia Perovic is an arts journalist in Toronto. Send her your art-of-song news to artofsong@thewholenote.com.

photo by Bob Gnatoski
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**Dang Thai Son**

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**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8, 2020 7:30PM MAZZOLENI CONCERT HALL**
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**John O’Conor and Beethoven**

**SUNDAY, MARCH 15, 2PM MAZZOLENI CONCERT HALL**
Tickets: $30
Beethoven specialist John O’Conor, John O’Conor, whose playing “has the kind of flawless touch that makes an audience gasp” (Washington Post), will perform the final three piano sonatas by Beethoven, considered the pinnacle of his works.

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237 BLOOR STREET WEST (BLOOR ST. & AVENUE RD.) TORONTO
MAKING ROOM FOR THE NEW AT GIMENO’S TSO

The Toronto Symphony Orchestra (TSO), made a bold and exciting statement about new music in announcing its 2020/2021 season, the first under new music director Gustavo Gimeno. On their website, maestro Gimeno is quoted as saying, “I believe that orchestral music is at its most exciting when we create contrasts and diversity. We bring together our most cherished musical masterpieces alongside less familiar but equally brilliant works by contemporary composers who are evolving orchestral music for new generations.” Gimeno’s perception that Toronto’s vibrancy and diversity are qualities on which he feels he can build his tenure as TSO music director is reason for Toronto’s music creators to take heart!

MOUSSA, CHIN, AND CROALL

Gimeno and his artistic team have expressed this initiative of blending the new with the old in several ways. For example, in his opening concert next season, Gimeno has programmed Crimson for large orchestra by Montreal-born composer and conductor Samy Moussa, along with Mahler’s Symphony No.1 and selections from Mozart’s La clemenza di Tito. Moussa has been appointed the TSO’s first annual artist in residence and as such he will both conduct the orchestra (a concert including his Violin Concerto, with the brilliant Canadian soloist Kerson Leong) and compose for it (his new Symphony No.2.) Other works by Moussa will also be heard in various contexts throughout the season.

I spoke to Moussa at his home in Berlin recently, and he told me he is “thrilled to take on this honour” of serving as the TSO’s first artist in residence. His Symphony No.2 is a work he was eager to propose to the TSO. It’s a work, he told me, “with a special ambition, a purely musical entity with a personal artistic goal.”

Another approach to blending new repertoire with the classics can be seen in the TSO’s celebration of Beethoven @250: interpolating...
contemporary works by Odawa First Nation composer Barbara Croall and by Korean-German composer, Unsuk Chin, both inspired by Beethoven.

“The Toronto Symphony’s efforts for new music are much to be lauded,” Chin told me. “It is a good thing if new works are being placed alongside key works from the orchestral canon, by placing them in a more ‘classical’ context one learns that there is no need to be afraid of contemporary music. My new work freely relates to the conversation books by Beethoven which he created when he increasingly struggled to communicate, due to his deafness. The loss of hearing frequently resulted in an inner rage and frustration which may have found its reflection in the extreme range of his musical language, the whole gamut of emotions from volcano-like eruptions to utmost serenity. It tells very profoundly and poignantly something indispensable about the human condition. Beethoven was, so to say, the first modernist composer: he constantly stretched the boundaries of musical language, and his quest for originality completely changed the course of music history. He is a composer for one’s whole life, someone whose music can be constantly rediscovered and redefined.”

In the case of Croall’s work, titled alternatively in German and Odawa, Innenohr/ Biinjii’ii Tawgaang (Inner Ear), she was invited to use Beethoven’s Second Symphony as a basis for inspiration. “I imagined Beethoven outdoors on one of his many excursions of ‘walking the music through his mind’” Croall writes, “when suddenly a winged insect flies into his ear and becomes the source of the idea (and new obsession) and cause of Beethoven’s reawakening – about how much the nature around him envelops him with creative inspiration, and is always there to also help him with his own healing from a childhood of trauma and the increasing loss of his hearing (which became clearly apparent while he embarked on composing his second symphony). This insect trapped inside his ear opens up his ‘gift’ of tapping into the nature around him – the sensations of winds in the branches of trees, the shape of the hilly landscape he is walking through the woods, the strident calls of birds and sounds of their wings beating, the dense fog after a rain, (und so weiter) – and to confront his own darkness and ‘monsters within’ that have been the underlying source of his frustration and torment.” Croall’s work was co-commissioned by the TSO with the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra.

Croall and Moussa will also both have compositions included in the TSO Chamber Soloists presentations, preceding selected concerts. In the case of Croall it’s her Lullaby for Pipigwan and String Quartet, and for Moussa it’s his Frammenti dolorosi et amorosi for voice and piano, on texts by Michelangelo.

Croall added, “I was really very surprised when approached about maestro Gustavo Gimeno programming my work. He has a special interest to understand new works by composers of many cultural backgrounds which is so exciting. He truly is committed to knowing more and more about what shapes the ideas of music that comes from this land. His own special ear for colour, gestural expression, and seeking to find the true heartbeat of a piece of music and its soulfulness makes him a unique conductor of this era.”

Throughout the 2020/2021 season, there are contemporary works of various styles and origins included in Gimeno’s programming. These include the Canadian premieres of Steve Reich’s Music for Ensemble and Orchestra, in collaboration with Soundstreams Canada; Danish composer Hans Abrahamsen’s Horn Concerto; Grammy Award-winning Jennifer Higdon’s Loco; and Wynton Marsalis’ Violin Concerto with soloist Nicola Benedetti. North American premieres include Unsuk Chin’s tribute to Beethoven, mentioned earlier, as well as Nadia Boulanger’s (1887–1979) rarely heard Allegro, and an example of imaginative contemporary scoring, Aqua Cinerea, by the rising young Spanish composer Francisco Coll.

KUZMENKO, LIZÉE, AND LEBEL

In addition to the works by Moussa and Croall to be performed during the TSO’s upcoming season, there are more Canadian composers featured in Gimeno’s programming. Larysa Kuzmenko’s Behold the Night for children’s choir and orchestra is an earlier TSO commission, and is included in a concert with Gustave Holst’s The
Planets. Kuzmenko told me, “I am honoured that maestro Gimeno chose to feature my music in his first season. It is clear from the season that he has a strong commitment to new Canadian music. I believe he will be a great advocate for Canadian composers.”

Montreal-based Nicole Lizée’s Zeiss After Dark is a TSO co-commission with the National Arts Centre Orchestra (NACO) and will be presented when the NACO visits in the spring of 2021. Commenting on the program, which includes the Shostakovich Ninth Symphony and a new work by Philip Glass, Lizée told me, “I’m excited to be included as part of NACO’s program as the invited orchestra as well as being a part of Gustavo Gimeno’s inaugural season with the TSO. I appreciate that my work is being performed alongside that of two important composers by an orchestra that has made Canadian music a large part of their initiatives.”

Emilie LeBel has been the TSO affiliate composer since September 2018. “During the first week of my new position, I met Gustavo as he was announced as the incoming music director,” she says. “I am thrilled that my contract as affiliate composer has been extended to a third year. As Gustavo steps into his new role, I have the opportunity to see all the excitement and hard work that has gone on behind the scenes take fruition! My role as affiliate composer encompasses a new orchestral commission each year, plus I have an active role in the artistic administration team, and as a mentor in specific education and outreach projects.”

“I am currently working on a new 15-minute work, which is my third TSO commission. It will be conducted on the Masterworks Series by John Storgårds in January 2021. I am blessed to have benefitted from learning under Sir Andrew Davis, and several guest conductors these past two years. It has been a time of immense learning and artistic growth. I am excited to broaden my horizons under Gustavo this year, as I observe rehearsals and study scores. I look forward to learning from a new perspective, and to exploring how this will support me while immersed in the creation of this new piece.”

“It is important that the affiliate composer position play an active role in nurturing and supporting new Canadian work. Lebel says, “I am looking forward to our third year of ‘Explore the Score’, offering the opportunity for composers to hear their orchestral works be read by a professional orchestra, and also receive mentorship on the many facets of a career in composition. Expanding on this opportunity, we have created a new program this year, NextGen, to support emerging talent, bridging the gap between attending a score-reading session and a professional commission.”

**SCIME, SIMMS, AND TSE**

The NextGen program invites three composers each year to receive mentorship from the affiliate composer, and write a five-minute work for the orchestra that will be premiered on the TSO’s Masterworks Series. “After two years of planning, I am thrilled to see this program come together” LeBel says, “and to be supporting the work of three Canadian composers selected by Gustavo: Adam Scime, Bekah Simms and Roydon Tse. These two annual programs will offer support to promising composers, and ensure a strong future for Canadian music.”

The commissions for Scime, Simms and Tse are included in three Remembrance Day concerts, early in November. “It is definitely a huge honour to be named one of the first composers for Gustavo to commission for the TSO,” Tse told me. “Not only is it a tremendous privilege to write for the players, I am pretty excited for the opportunity to get to know Gustavo more through this opportunity. I know that Gustavo is very serious about the next generation of Canadian composers, and I feel honoured that he has taken the time to listen to my music and chosen me for this commission. Artistically speaking, there is a lot that I want to do and try for the TSO. This being Gustavo’s first season at the TSO, there is a certain weight of responsibility that is unlike other commissions. I have written quite a few works for orchestra before but there’s always something else I would like to try like new timbres, textures and harmonies. There is a new sound that I want to achieve from the orchestra which I am still working on, so I think this commission has been instrumental in helping me think deeper about orchestration and sound. The piece will be rooted in the theme of Remembrance which I am excited to be tackling in the coming months.”

Tse’s sentiments were echoed by the other NextGen composers. “Since a young age I have attended TSO concerts, Scime wrote, “and remember wondering what it would be like to be a part of such an incredible collection of musicians and artists who get to make wonderful music of the highest quality for a living. I am very proud and excited to now be a part of this music-making process with the orchestra as a composer. It will be an honour to work with the new director, Gustavo Gimeno, and the TSO musicians in a professional artistic capacity and to hear these world-class musicians interpret my music. Working with an orchestra of this calibre is a hallmark of any composer’s career – and I am especially thrilled that this project also happens to be with my hometown band.”

Simms enthusiastically agreed: “I’m excited by Maestro Gimeno’s intensity and his excitement for new music; my music is often roiling intensity and his excitement for new music; my music is often roiling and full of details, so I think he can really bring out the important features of my work. He has an edge and flair to his conducting that I’m really looking forward to see. I’m extremely delighted and honoured to work with my ‘home’ orchestra! My musical language is often most effective with large, expansive instrumental forces, so I’m delighted to be working with as fine an ensemble as the Toronto Symphony.”

**David Jaeger is a composer, producer and broadcaster based in Toronto.**
Violinist Susanna McCleary shimmers in a silver top as she strides over the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre stage, one hand balanced lightly on the back of her mother, Dorothy de Val. McCleary leads the pair in a rousing rendition of the klezmer piece *Hora Marasinei*, her brow furrowed in concentration as her bow darts and dances over her violin. De Val replicates her rhythms on the piano, and mother and daughter sway in synchrony.

After their opening act, pianist Michael Arnowitt grabs his white cane and heads into the spotlight. As his nimble fingers plunge into a series of Bach selections, Arnowitt is mesmerized by the music, punctuating the accents with sharp tosses of his head. The final, plaintive note quivers for an eternity in the hush of the room.

This performance on October 15 last year, “An Evening in the Key of B: A Benefit Concert,” was a fundraiser for the non-profit organization BALANCE for Blind Adults (balancefba.org), which helps visually impaired clients regain their independence.

The two musicians resonate with the relevance of this mission – both are blind, and both have had to overcome challenges springing from this state. But their loss of eyesight has also garnered them gifts, sharpening their other senses to make up for this deficit. And these finely tuned faculties of hearing and touch have, in turn, moulded their artistry.

McCleary and Arnowitt join the ranks of a long line of blind and brilliant musicians, including soul music pioneer Ray Charles, rocker Stevie Wonder and opera singer Andrea Bocelli. The sheer number of such performers has long caused music connoisseurs to wonder if there is a special relationship between vision loss and musicality.
This affiliation has now been thoroughly documented. One of the first researchers to link the two qualities was Adam Ockelford, professor of music at England’s Roehampton University. Ockelford found that an astonishing 40 percent of the blind children in his studies had perfect pitch, (compared to only one in 10,000 people in the regular population). This capacity springs from the youngsters’ lifelong reliance on auditory data to make sense of their world, says Ockelford. Right from birth, the blind children paid more attention to everyday noises than their sighted peers, and their attunement to aural input reinforced their sensitivity to sound.

Ockelford’s theory of brain adaptation has been validated by a host of evidence. The hearing of blind people surpasses that of the sighted in several modalities - they are better at discriminating between different pitches, localizing sounds in space, and processing speech. Their sense of touch is also more refined and they’re able to detect finer-grained differences in the feel of objects.

The brain's ability to compensate for visual loss with enhanced perception in other domains, is adaptive, says McGill University’s research associate Patrice Voss. If you’re born without vision, or you lose it early in life (when the brain is especially mouldable), the sight-processing centre in the brain (the visual cortex), does not receive input from the eyes. In response to these absent signals, the unused visual cortex gets repurposed to process sound and touch stimuli instead.

Anatomical changes accompany this transformation. Imaging studies have shown that the visual cortex is thicker than normal among those who become blind early in life. This growth results from new pathways springing from the sound and touch processing centres, connecting these to the transformed visual cortex, reorganized to interpret signals from the ears and skin.

While amplified sound sensitivity is more prominent amongst those who are born blind or lose their sight early on, recent research shows that the brain can adjust to vision loss at any stage in life. In one study, mice were blinded temporarily after being shut in the dark. Afterwards, researchers played tones of varying frequencies and measured the electrical activity of cells in their brains’ sound processing centre (auditory cortex). After just one week of light deprivation, these cells fired faster and more powerfully, enabling the blind mice to detect quieter noises and distinguish between pitches much better than the sighted mice.

Lead researcher Hey-Kyoung Lee, professor of neuroscience at Baltimore’s Johns Hopkins University, attributes these impressive results to strengthened connections between nerve cells carrying sound data from the environment and those neurons which translate the signals into conscious sound experience in the auditory cortex. These alterations dial up the volume of external sound to increase its impact in the brain, says Lee, who was surprised by the extent of the animals’ adaptation. “We didn’t expect that level of change... (it) was pretty amazing.”

Violinist McCleary illustrates this plasticity of perception. She was born with Leber’s congenital amaurosis, which damages the light-sensing tissue in the eyes (the retina). But the fiddler makes up in her hearing what she lacks in vision. She can detect noises at lower volumes than her sighted friends. “If someone’s phone’s going off I can hear that better than anyone else,” she says. McCleary also has perfect pitch, which enables her to transform everyday noises, from a beeping microwave to a fork hitting the table, into musical notes.

An astonishing 40 percent of the blind children in [Adam Ockelford's] studies had perfect pitch (compared to only one in 10,000 people in the regular population).

Those without sight depend on their acoustic acumen for survival, says Voss. Their supranormal ability to map space using sound helps them get around. “They can’t rely on sight to cross the street, and need to (depend) ... on hearing to recognize where traffic is,” he says. The same faculty is also critical for conversing, says registered psychotherapist and neurologic music therapist Amy Di Nino, who runs her own business, ADD Music Wellness (addmusicwellness.com), in Cambridge, Ontario. The timbre of a particular voice identifies the speaker, while qualities such as tone, rhythm, and pitch convey nuances of meaning. In the absence of visual cues like body language, the blind draw on their listening skills to intuit emotions in others - a rapid pace of speech can signal anxiety, while loudness can convey anger, for example.

McCleary has always depended on her heightened hearing to make sense of her world. The sound of a television in a familiar house guides her to the living room, while a squeaky noise signals the washroom door in her home. She’s also adept at extracting information from voices, and readily picks up on her mother’s feelings. “If she freaks out about something...she changes to a high voice,” says her daughter.

McCleary’s exceptional ear ultimately led to her career as a violinist. The musician showed an affinity for tunes right from infancy. “(Music) was a way in,” says her mother, a pianist and music professor, who calmed her daughter with soothing Renaissance polyphony. “She was
attentive, she wouldn’t fuss or cry when music was going on.”

For as far back as she can remember, McCleary yearned to play an instrument. But teachers at her school for the blind in England, who favoured the partially sighted students, underestimated her talent and discouraged her from learning the violin. “(They) … didn’t think I could do anything,” says McCleary.

But this injustice only made her try harder. “They had a false view of me – I (was) forced to prove (them) wrong,” says McCleary. Her mother ignored the staff’s pessimism and found a private music teacher who taught her daughter the Suzuki method of learning by ear. Buoyed by his encouragement, McCleary logged up to four hours of practice a day, progressing rapidly and making her debut at church when she was only 11. Her auditory acuity helped her internalize different rhythms and master diverse musical styles, including classical violin, traditional fiddling, klezmer and Celtic. After earning a bachelor’s degree in music from McMaster University, she began performing regularly at family events, nursing homes and English country dances.

McCleary’s determination is typical of those who lose their vision early in life, says Di Nino, who has taught at the W. Ross Macdonald School for the Blind in Brantford, Ontario. These students are pros at tackling obstacles. “(When) you’re in a sighted world and you’re not visual, almost everything you do is a bit of a challenge,” she says. Di Nino has witnessed an extraordinary drive amongst her pupils, which has propelled them past hurdles. “Constantly needing to be on top of your game…create(s) a strong resilience,” says Di Nino. This toughness is a useful asset for aspiring musicians facing relentless competition and critique.

McCleary’s investment in music has paid off both personally and professionally. Because of her visual impairment, she has few distractions to enjoy during her down time, and feels at loose ends when she has nothing concrete on her agenda. Music fills the gaps when she has nothing concrete on her agenda. After earning a bachelor’s degree in music from McMaster University, she began performing regularly at family events, nursing homes and English country dances.

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McCleary’s investment in music has paid off both personally and professionally. Because of her visual impairment, she has few distractions to enjoy during her down time, and feels at loose ends when she has nothing concrete on her agenda. Music fills the gaps during these moments. “It…gets the day going, (and) makes the time go fast,” says McCleary.

Music also gives her solace. During tough times McCleary turns to her violin for comfort. “It … helps to relieve the stress,” she says. Practising and performing with her mother is also rewarding. “When we play together, and it goes well, it makes me feel good,” says McCleary.

Like McCleary, pianist Michael Arnowitt has also battled vision loss and benefitted from it. He was born with retinitis pigmentosa, a condition which causes cells in the retina to degenerate gradually. Endowed with perfect pitch and brought up in a home filled with music, Arnowitt naturally gravitated to the medium. He astonished his first piano teacher at their initial encounter, when the five-year-old boy ploughed through an entire volume of pieces at one go. “It was some sign of prodigy talent,” he says.

He was hooked from that moment on, developing an almost mystical convergence between himself and his chosen instrument. “There’s this magical, quicker connection …the thought can become a sound,” he says. His sound was praised by critics ever since his debut as a solo pianist at age 12. Later, his gift won him a seat at the prestigious Juilliard School in New York City. But Arnowitt was ill at ease in the fast pace and competitive atmosphere of NYC and relocated to the bucolic rural town of Montpelier in his early 20s. “Vermont gave a lot of freedom to create musical events and musical styles … without … the New York Times to say ‘You suck,’” says Arnowitt. He began collaborating with a variety of artists, developing multimedia shows combining piano music with spoken commentary, live painting and even food.

Just as Arnowitt’s creativity and career were taking off, his failing eyesight forced him to make adjustments. When night blindness obscured the backstage area, Arnowitt positioned stagehands in the wings to guide him back there at the end of his concerts. Then his narrowing tunnel vision compromised his reading ability and he had to magnify his sheet music and increase the illumination onstage to enable him to play. After his vision closed off entirely a decade ago, he turned to a computer program to articulate new pieces. Playing one note at a time, the system tells you its placement in the measure, pitch, length, etc. While Arnowitt is grateful for the software, which allows him to keep learning, he’s frustrated by the tediousness of the

continues to page 92
Gender Fluidity in Music and Dance

WENDALYN BARTLEY

Peggy Baker Dance Projects: Collaborations between choreographers and composers have played a significant part in the creation of some of the most loved pieces of contemporary music. The classic example is, of course, the partnership between composer Igor Stravinsky and Serge Diaghilev, director of the Ballets Russes that resulted in the scores for The Firebird, Petrushka and The Rite of Spring. Among the first of the contemporary dance companies to form in Toronto were Toronto Dance Theatre in 1968 and Dancemakers in 1974, and both companies quickly began to work with contemporary composers, many of them local. One of the early company members of Dancemakers was Peggy Baker, and in 1990 she went on to establish Peggy Baker Dance Projects. Over the years, she has received much praise for her collaborative partnerships with composers such as Michael J. Baker, John Kameel Farah, Ahmed Hassan and Ann Southam as well as with performers Andrew Burashko, Shauna Rolston, Henry Kucharzyk and the Array Ensemble, among many others. Over the last five years, contemporary vocalist innovator and music creator Fides Krucker has collaborated on all of Baker’s new works, bringing to their collaboration her expertise in the creation of non-verbal human sound textures and her commitment to an emotionally integrated vocal practice.

Baker’s latest work, her body as words, will be performed March 19 to 29 at the Theatre Centre. For this piece, Baker has drawn together a unique intergenerational ensemble of dancers and composer/musicians who have taken up the challenge of addressing questions of female and gender identity. I invited one of the composer/musician members of the ensemble, Anne Bourne, who herself has collaborated on past projects with Baker, to have a conversation with me about her contribution to the piece as a composer and how her distinctive performance style of combining vocal toning while playing the cello will contribute to the overall musical score.

In choreographic notes that Bourne shared with me, Baker describes the ideas that provide the context for the music: “In this adventurous piece. “From my earliest creations,” Baker writes, “a pervasive, underlying subtext of my work has been the embodiment of varied, authentic and relevant images of women.” Coming of age during the second wave of feminism, her ideas of female identity were formed largely through reading Simone de Beauvoir, Betty Friedan, and other key authors of that generation, so she was shocked to discover in early 2019 that the translation of Beauvoir’s The Second Sex was incomplete, and that the translation by H.M. Parshley was heavily influenced by his own personal views. When she discovered the unabridged 2009 translation by Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier, “I was knocked over by the power of de Beauvoir’s philosophical text and the epic proportions of her proposals.” She found herself reassessing her own life from the point of view of an older woman now caught up in the collective process.

Another key influence in the work is Baker’s fascination with mythic stories. “As a child, I was haunted by Grimm’s fairytales in which girls were required to endure terrible trials in order to save their brothers and fathers from imprisonment or death. By such stories have young girls been initiated into the web of patriarchal societies.” In her body as words, these images of femininity are brought into sharp contrast with spoken text excerpts from The Second Sex in which de Beauvoir deconstructs these damaging stereotypes.

Contemplating the questions Baker’s notes posed regarding female identity in this current time and place, Bourne asked “What is it we all share?” and with that question comes her answer: “The sound of the earth we all walk on, and the weather that troubles us.” During our conversation, she elaborated further on what this might sound like.

“I want to make sounds that hold the space or open the space almost as if they were light. The cello tones may be at times lyrical, and at times transparent.” She envisions improvising using a cycle of tones that are closely voiced, as well as experimenting with difference tones, which are sounds that arise acoustically on their own due to the combination of other tones sounding simultaneously. She describes these difference tones as sounds that “emerge almost like a response to what you are sending into the space.” She will improvise a sonic environment, with cello and voice, listening to the underlying pulses, and articulating the dancers’ gestures. She is also considering using specific tonalities to differentiate between various combinations of dancers or scenes and is also imagining the possibility of incorporating the sounds of a windstorm. When she imagines female identity, she thinks of it like “an arc of a storm that moves in and out of a quiet space but has a powerful range.”

Bourne emphasized, during our conversation, that much of what will become the piece is yet to unfold through the rehearsal process and the collaboration with the two other composer/vocalists Ganavya Doraiswamy and Fides Krucker, each of whom will bring their own unique vocal approach and way of improvising to the performance. Her interest in creating a shared space through sound also defines her views on the nature of collaboration. The potential is there, she says, “to honestly express our experience of being in relationship to each other. Rather than defending our positions, trust that you can just be all that you are and create a piece of art together. When we open and listen to each other, a kind of change may arise that we haven’t found yet.”

Bourne’s work over the past few decades as a close collaborator with Pauline Oliveros and the Deep Listening process is a key component to her understanding of how to create a shared space through sound, and will bring an important perspective to the entire collaboration. Another of the influences she will be bringing into the creative mix is the ideas of author Lynn Margulis as expressed in her book, Symbiotic Planet. Margulis makes the point that all beings currently alive on the planet are equally evolved, and that “since all living things are bathed by the same waters and atmosphere, all the inhabitants of Earth belong to a symbiotic union.” For Bourne, this describes a way of listening, and will influence both the sonic decisions she will be making and the way she approaches improvisation and the collective process.

As mentioned earlier, Fides Krucker has been a collaborator with Peggy Baker’s company for the last five years and in that time that has created four vocal scores for the dancers. Krucker was just beginning this exploration back in 2015 when I interviewed her for the April edition of The WholeNote about Baker’s piece, locus plot. At
will be another element in the mix, as he weaves experience as a
ation of vocalists and musicians, the musical voice of Debashis Sinha
downtown improvisers scene. In addition to this adventurous combin-
enced by South Indian classical music, her collaboration in Vijay Iyer's
Spalding.

"will use my own voice to express the stories housed in the dancer's
bodies. Anne and I are designing improvisations to illuminate,
counterbalance and accompany the complexity of being 'othered'. I
will also use my body in motion to incarnate the female experience of
age ... and own it."

Bourne initially met Ganavya Doraiswamy at the Banff Centre for
Art and Creativity where they experienced a spontaneous impro-
visation session while performing one of Oliveros' early compos-
itons and discovered they shared a connection with Trichy
Sankaran. The next year, Ganavya participated as a composer in
the Collective Composition Lab for Music and Dance, a summer
program where Bourne serves on the faculty. Ganavya lives in
Brooklyn, NY and is currently a PhD candidate at Harvard where she
in the group, each member takes on the responsibility of leading
part of the group palette and what they can learn from each other. As
another choice. The overall approach is to discover what sounds are
in a block of sound where everyone contributes their own voice is

The aim of the group is to explore different textures and sound
worlds: having a choral blend is one possible choice; just as singing
in a block of sound where everyone contributes their own voice is
another choice. The overall approach is to discover what sounds are
part of the group palette and what they can learn from each other. As
Albu explained to me, since there is no conductor or artistic director
in the group, each member takes on the responsibility of leading
different projects. The advantage of this is that everyone has the
opportunity of experiencing artistic terrain that they wouldn't other-
wise pursue on their own.

A major component of their concert in March will be a performance of
Claude Vivier’s Love Songs, which he wrote in 1977, and which
caught Albu’s imagination after hearing a few different versions of
percussionist and electronic composer, and extensive theat-
rical experience into the creation of the sound design.

“The artists collaborating with me on her body as words
have navigated treacherous territory to bring this work into
being," Baker states in her notes. "I owe them my deepest
gratitude." In this intergenerational and inclusive inquiry
into female identity, stories of the participants' own indi-
vidual experiences will be integrated into a generous
expression of gesture, word and sound. The space that the
co-created music brings into being will be, in Bourne’s
words, "a space that allows the participants to impro-
vise how they want to enter, if they want to enter; and feel
authentically how they will express in that space."

**Phth at the Music Gallery**

On March 14, a relatively new vocal collective from Montreal
that goes by the name of Phth will be coming to Toronto’s
Music Gallery. This group of seven singers comes from
different backgrounds and each has had some form of
training in choral or Western lyrical singing. In addition to
being vocalists, many are also instrumentalists or have prac-
tices in the visual and radio arts. Phth formed officially in 2018 even
though many of the members had known each other for several years
before that. As well, many of Phth's members had worked with Joane
Hétu in her JOKER “choeur bruitiste" in the past, and this experience
has had an influence on their own collective. Pronouncing the name
Phth is a source of endless amusement, collective member Sarah Albu
said to me during our recent interview and often you have to make
a face in order to say it. “What comes out is more of a sound than a
word and everyone can have their own way of pronouncing it. Just like
there are many ways to sing, there are many ways to pronounce Phth.
When you say the name, it ends up sounding more like a tongue ram
(an explosive percussive gesture) on a flute or brass instrument”.

The aim of the group is to explore different textures and sound
worlds: having a choral blend is one possible choice; just as singing
in a block of sound where everyone contributes their own voice is
another choice. The overall approach is to discover what sounds are
part of the group palette and what they can learn from each other. As
Albu explained to me, since there is no conductor or artistic director
in the group, each member takes on the responsibility of leading
different projects. The advantage of this is that everyone has the
opportunity of experiencing artistic terrain that they wouldn't other-
wise pursue on their own.

A major component of their concert in March will be a performance of
Claude Vivier’s Love Songs, which he wrote in 1977, and which
caught Albu’s imagination after hearing a few different versions of

the piece. She decided to bring it to Phth. “It really struck me,” she said. “There was something non-classical about it and it was quite different from his other pieces.” When she did research into the piece, she discovered that it had been originally written for an experimental dance company, Le Groupe de la Place Royale, that was founded in 1966 by Jeanne Renaud in Montreal. Vivier wanted non-trained voices or differently trained voices to perform the piece. Even though the score is very notated, Albu says, it’s again different than his usual scores, and in fact it is Vivier’s introductory program note to the work that has given Phth the performance guidance that they’ve most relied on.

Love Songs for 4 women, 3 men.

To be staged or not? To be felt not understood. Let tones from the others inspire your own. Let the music flow out of you as if you were a kid. Notation is only a reminder for certain states. Never follow the signs but only their spirit. In this score you do what is appropriate for you to do and let the rest to the others. Always be in love.

– Claude Vivier.

The score indicates many specific gestures and motifs, and there are some areas of the piece that for Albu are structured in a similar way to Karlheinz Stockhausen’s vocal sextet work, Stimmung, composed in 1968. Different groups of people are doing things in sync with each other, but the choice of when things enter in time is left up to the performers, she explained. Albu has added the element of staging to the performance and this is having an impact on how they approach the interpretation of the score. “Relationships that we hadn’t figured out sonically are starting to become apparent by even doing minimal movements, such as placing two people in a part of the space together. All of a sudden this relationship is revealed and the way the voice is being used changes, because you’re not reading a score off a page but you’re looking at a person.” The overall approach is to let the relationships and the bodies in the space define the sound and intention. Because Vivier used a lot of invented language and quotations from poetic texts, it makes it difficult at times to know what the narrative is. Should the singer be delivering a love poem to the audience or to the person standing in front of you? Another aspect of their interpretation of the piece comes in the way the roles of the main couple are portrayed. “It’s not always performed by the same two singers, and it’s not given that this couple is one male—one female as written. Male/ female voice assignment isn’t always respected, and all of us switch and have several characters/archetypes throughout the piece.”

One aspect of the history of this work that sparked both my own and Albu’s curiosity was the fact that the Array Ensemble performed this work three times shortly after it was composed. According to Bob Gilmore who wrote a biography of Vivier titled A Composer’s Life, the composer also authorized a concert version of the piece. The first performance Array gave was in the fall of 1978 at the Heliconian Hall and during a recent conversation with one of the performers from that concert, composer and flautist Tina Pearson shared some of her memories. “It was wonderful and wacky and inspiring. The piece is a collage of vocal utterances, including invented languages, German, Latin, whistles, shouts, hums and nursery rhymes, all telling a love story of a main duo with a chorus of unruly commentators.” She performed in all three concerts and in the second and third shows performed the role of the lead female soloist. Array performed the piece again in 1980 at the AGO and a third time after Vivier’s death in October 1983 at the Winchester Street Theatre.

Other elements of Phth’s March 14 program will include group improvisations and other pieces coming from members of the group. As well, they will be collaborating on a piece with XLq, a local emerging pop-art duo who will also perform their own set as part of the evening’s activities. Later on in March, Phth will be performing a full program, including Love Songs, at a New Music Edmonton concert, and four members of the collective, including Gabriel Dharmoo who performed his Anthropologies imaginaires at the Music Gallery in January, will be travelling to Winnipeg’s Cluster Festival to perform a concert of two scored pieces and two structured improvisations.

[Correction: This story has been modified from that which appeared in print: a consistent number of vocalists appeared in the various Array performances of Vivier’s Love Songs, and in all cases no instruments other than voice were employed in the piece.]
Fourth Grosvenor Recital Tops an Intriguing List

PAUL ENNIS

Benjamin Grosvenor first came to prominence when he won the Keyboard Final of the 2004 BBC Young Musician Competition at the age of 11. He was invited to perform with the BBC Symphony Orchestra at the First Night of the 2011 BBC Proms at 19. In the same year he became the youngest British musician ever, and the first British pianist in almost 60 years, to sign with Decca Classics. Gramophone named him Young Artist of the Year in 2012. A riveting performer with keen musical insights, many inspired by pianists of the past, Grosvenor’s Music Toronto recital on March 31 marks his fourth appearance here since 2014, a testament to his prodigious talent. In the following email Q & A, which took place in mid-February, Grosvenor spoke about his latest CD and the program for his upcoming Toronto concert.

WN: I very much enjoyed your new recording of the Chopin piano concertos which I found to be highly contemporary yet informed by a sensibility reaching back into the last century. I interviewed you in the fall of 2017 and remember your response to my question “Who was the first composer you fell in love with as a child?” being Chopin. How did you decide to select his piano concertos as your first recording since Homages in 2016? How long have the concertos been part of your repertoire?

BG: I’ve been playing the works since I was very young. I learned the second when I was 12, and the first when I was 14 or so. My CDs to date have always included a mix of composers, and so I felt it was time to devote a disc to one single composer. Once I had decided with Decca on making a concerto recording, it felt quite natural for this to be of these pieces, since they had been in my repertoire for so long and given my long-term connection to this composer in particular.

How did your experience playing the chamber music version of the first concerto inform the recording?

I enjoyed playing the chamber versions of both works with the Doric Quartet last year. In the version made by Kevin Kenner (including double bass, which is I think is very important in this enterprise to give an orchestral sound to the strings) they are very effective and one hears lines in the orchestral writing with more clarity than in live performances of the works with orchestra. One principal ‘problem’ with the orchestration is that there are a number of undoubled wind lines (particularly in the sections of the opening movements where the piano has churning semiquavers) that in a live performance with orchestra can get lost. It is possible on a recording though to change the focus so that these come through, and we all felt that this should be a priority. I think that with these pieces, as with any concerto, it is important to study also the orchestral parts, and playing the chamber versions heightened my knowledge of these.

Did you draw inspiration from any Chopin recordings from the past?

I find that when preparing a work it is important to listen widely, to artists who approach it from different directions in terms of aesthetics. There are fascinating recordings for example by Noel Mewton-Wood, where he has a very Mozartian way with the music. Some recordings that have been particularly influential over the years though, in one concerto or the other, have been Cortot, Hofmann, Lipatti and, of the modern era, Martha Argerich.

What conductor or other musician of the past would you have liked to work with?

One name that immediately springs to mind from the recording era is Wilhelm Furtwängler. I have always found his interpretations fascinating, and his flexible organic approach with Beethoven in particular to be incredibly moving and inspired.

Turning to your Music Toronto recital on March 31, what considerations went into devising the program?

I thought that in this year of Beethoven celebrations, I should include one of his sonatas in my program. I have always enjoyed Op.7, which I would say is neglected relative to its merits and charms.
Kreisleriana is perhaps emotionally a kindred spirit – both with a lot of lyricism, but with unpredictably tempestuous outbursts. The Rameau makes for a good way to open a recital, and the Liszt Faust transcription is a good way to end.

Rameau’s Gavotte and Variations in A Minor would have fit nicely into your Dances recording from 2014. What drew you to it? Can we look forward to a Dances 2 CD?

I came to this work initially through the recording by Benno Moiseiwitsch, which has some adaptations by Leschetizky. It was quite a popular work by artists of that generation, with recordings also by Cherkassky, Marcella Meyer and others. It is a very effective set of variations, virtuosically inclined. As with most Baroque music on the piano, there is a range of possibilities in terms of conceptual and stylistic approach that are interesting to explore. There are no plans for Dances 2 at the moment, but it is a nice idea!

Beethoven’s Piano Sonata No.4, Op.7 has been in your repertoire for many years. When did you first begin playing it? How has your approach to it evolved?

I played this one for a season in around 2013 or so. It’s hard to say how my approach has evolved. With any piece one’s views naturally change over time, but I also don’t necessarily remember everything that I did last time I played the work. I’d probably say that on a large scale in this work not much has changed, but there are many small details that I may have approached differently this time.

Do you have any further plans for performing Beethoven in this 250th anniversary year of his birth?

I am playing some of the concerti in the latter half of the year, and also at that point I will be introducing Op.101 into my repertoire. I will have some all-Beethoven recitals with Op.7, Op.101 and Op.27 No.2, and then Op.101 continues into 2021.

The second half of your Toronto recital begins with Kreisleriana, Schumann’s passionate, novelistic love letter to his future wife, Clara Wieck. How does it speak to you?

It is a rich and enigmatic work, that is a thrilling piece to study and perform, filled with so many different emotions. At this time, his romance with Clara was forbidden by her father, and it seems to me an embodiment of all he was feeling in the moment, penned as it was over four days in a fit of inspiration. Full of moments of tenderness, intimacy, humour, there are also outbursts of frustration and anger. The novelistic influence is of course also interesting, and I think Schumann saw something of himself in the bipolar personality of Johannes Kreisler.

Leslie Howard wrote of Liszt’s “ingenious elaboration” of Gounod’s Valse de l’Opéra Faust that “Musically, Gounod is transformed and transcended at a stroke!” What attracted you to it? How would you characterize it?

I think there is genius in all of Liszt’s opera transcriptions. He takes the material and the essence of the opera and weaves with it his own rich musical tapestry. There is certainly something transcendent to this one – the bombast of the opening section waltz is balanced perfectly by his illuminating figuration in the central lyrical section, and emerges as a work with more deliciousness, humour and personality than the original.

Music Toronto presents Benjamin Grosvenor on March 31 at 8pm in the Jane Mallett Theatre of the St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts. 🎶
Sarah Jeffrey

James D. Stewart quartet-in-residence) celebrating their tenth anniversary with “Beethoven and the Fugue”, a free concert of Beethoven’s music in Walter Hall.

► MAR 13, 7:30PM; MAR 14 & 15, 8PM: Acclaimed Deutsche Grammophon recording artist, Sergei Babayan, known for his vast repertoire of 54 concerti, his two-piano partnership with Martha Argerich, and his mentorship of Daniil Trifonov, joins the TSO and conductor Jader Bignamini for a performance of Tchaikovsky’s monumental Piano Concerto No.1. Bignamini, resident conductor of the Orchestra Sinfonica la Verdi and music director designate of the Detroit Symphony, also leads the TSO in Ravel’s colourful orchestration of Mussorgsky’s Pictures at an Exhibition.

► MAR 14, 7:30PM: TSO principal oboist, Sarah Jeffrey, joins Gemma New and the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra for Vaughan Williams’ pastoral Oboe Concerto. Elgar’s Serenade and Haydn’s ‘London’ Symphony No.104 add to the British atmosphere.

► MAR 19, 8PM: Music Toronto presents the Pavel Haas Quartet, winners of six Gramophone Awards and known for their rapport and immersive approach, playing Martinu’s Quartet No.4, Bartók’s Quartet No.4 and Beethoven’s divine Quartet in B-flat Major; Op.130 and “Grosse Fuge” Op.133.

► MAR 22, 3:15PM: Andrew Wan, concertmaster of Orchestre symphonique de Montréal and a member of the New Orford String Quartet, teams up with his recording partner, pianist Charles Richard-Hamelin, silver medalist and laureate of the Krystian Zimerman prize at the 2015 International Chopin Piano Competition, for three of Beethoven’s violin and piano sonatas; No.4 in A Minor; Op.23; No.10 in G Major, Op.96 “The Cockcrow” and No.9 in A Major; Op.47 “Kreutzer”. Mooredale Concerts presents the duo at Walter Hall.

► MAR 26, 12:10PM: U of T Faculty of Music presents acclaimed pianist Dénes Várjon (this year’s Lorand Fenyves resident artist) in a free solo recital in Walter Hall.

► MAR 26, 7:30PM: Join conductor Gemma New and members of the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra for an unconventional, intimate, multi-sensory experience that integrates visual and multimedia arts in The Cotton Factory. Music is by Mendelssohn, Shostakovich, Tse, Ryan, O’Callaghan and Palej.

► MAR 28, 7:30PM: The Academy Concert Series “Goin’ Fishing” is an inventive piece of programming with three works for piano, violin, viola, cello and double bass: Ka Nin Chan’s Salmon Quintet; Vaughan Williams’ Piano Quintet in C; and Schubert’s delightful “Trotz” Quintet. Consummate chamber musician Phil Chu is the pianist; Amanda Goodburn, violin; Emily Eng, viola; Kerri McGonigle, cello; Joseph Phillips, bass.

► MAR 29, 3PM: Amici, and special guest, Yehonatan Berick, revisit the tradition of silent films with live music. Man Ray’s Emak-Bakia, Guy Maddin’s Heart of the World and Buster Keaton’s The Playhouse will be shown; music by Milhaud, Kradjjan, Poulenc, Rota and Saint-SAëns. At the Isabel Bader Theatre.

► APR 1 & 2, 8PM; APR 4, 8PM; APR 5, 3PM: Piano wunderkind Jan Lisiecki,
Gramophone's 2013 Young Artist of the Year, now 25, joins former TSO music director, Jukka-Pekka Saraste, in two programs featuring Beethoven's much-loved Leonore Overture No.3 and his exultant Piano Concerto No.5 “Emperor”. On April 1 and 2, at Roy Thomson Hall, Schoenberg's symphonic poem, Pelleas und Melisande, considered one of the “last gasps of Romanticism”, completes the concert. It's replaced by Beethoven's dramatic Piano Concerto No.3 on April 4, at RTH, and on April 5 at George Weston Recital Hall.

APR 3, 7PM: Violinist Pamela Frank and pianist Emanuel Ax resume their productive musical partnership with this Koerner Hall recital comprised of two Mozart violin sonatas (K379 and K454) and Beethoven's Violin Sonata No.10 in G Major, Op.96 “The Cockcrow”.

APR 3 & 4, 8PM: The youngest of the three musical sisters of the Skride family (Baiba's impressive TSO debut in Brahms' Violin Concerto four years ago still lingers in my memory), Laura Skride, is the soloist with the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony and conductor Andrei Fedor in Schumann's masterful Piano Concerto. Brahms' profound Symphony No.4 completes the program.

APR 3, 8PM: Gifted cellist, Stéphane Tétreault, headlines Sinfonia Toronto's Glenn Gould Studio concert in Schumann's ravishing Cello Concerto. Conductor Nurhan Arman also leads his string orchestra in works by Bacewicz and Prokofiev. Grażyna Bacewicz (1909-1969) was a Polish composer and violinist, only the second Polish female composer to have achieved national and international recognition. According to Sinfonia Toronto's program note, her Concerto for String Orchestra, composed in 1948, became one of her most frequently performed compositions. "This master-piece of neoclassicism fascinates as much by its invention and virtuosic brilliance as its harmonious combination of formal elements of a traditional nature with new tonal ideas."

APR 5, 1PM: Vietnamese-Canadian pianist Dang Thai Son caught the world’s attention in October 1980, when he won the Tenth International Chopin Piano Competition in Warsaw, becoming the first Asian-born competitor to do so. Montreal-based, his teaching and coaching skills are in demand as is his concertizing worldwide. For this rare local appearance in Mazzoleni Hall, he performs works by Debussy and Chopin. Free tickets will be available from the RCM beginning March 30.

Paul Ennis is the managing editor of The WholeNote.

**Beat by Beat**

**Early Music**

“Im Deutsch”

Exploring Germanic Musical Identity

MATTHEW WHITFIELD

Over the last seven centuries, German-speaking artists have provided a powerful and innovative influence in almost every artistic discipline, from the region’s beginnings as a constellation of independently governed states to the present day, setting a standard for excellence in music, art, and architecture, and producing a roster of artists and artworks that are exemplars within their chosen fields.

Consider, for example, these composers from what now constitutes a unified Germany: Bach, Handel, Beethoven, Brahms, Strauss and Schoenberg; each is a pivotal figure in the Western art music tradition, their music appearing countless times each year on concert programs throughout the world. Also consider these interpreters, conductors who have revolutionized the way we think of the bivalent orchestral leader: Mendelssohn, von Bülow, Furtwängler and Klempeter. Their recordings are some of the best-selling of all time. Expand our lists of German-speakers to neighbouring Austria, and the list becomes even more astoundingly impressive: Mozart, Mahler, Karajan, Böhm, Kleiber ...

Impressive as this “grocery list” rundown may be, the most significant point to be made is the extent to which these figures produced entire systems of creativity that permeated all of Europe. The concept of tonality, that hierarchy of tones and semitones that gives function to chords and directionality to progressions, is widely considered to have been codified in the works of J.S. Bach. Beethoven, Schumann and Brahms expanded the tonal vocabulary to create what we today call musical Romanticism, Mahler took this vocabulary to its breaking point and Schoenberg dissolved it altogether, establishing an organizing principle of these same tones and semitones that deliberately removed any and all reference to “tonality.”

We see, then, just how important the German contribution was to the history of music. It can be stated, with a good deal of certainty and confidence, that art music as we know it today would be a different species altogether without German musical engagement. Amidst this pantheon of superlative performers and interpreters however, there are lesser figures, often no less interesting than their more renowned counterparts, and it is these secondary stories that we direct our attention to this month.

**400 Years of Rosenmüller**

Johann Rosenmüller, depending on who you ask, was either a composer or an anatomist famous for his discovery of the pharyngeal recess, known as the fossa of Rosenmüller. The two Rosenmüllers lived almost sequentially, the composer from 1619-1684 and the anatomist from 1771-1820, and they are certainly two distinct and unique people. Rosenmüller (from here onward we will assume the composer) was born in Oelsnitz, near Plauen, studied at the University of Leipzig, and served as organist of the Nikolaikirche Leipzig from 1651 to 1655. In 1655, Rosenmüller was involved in a scandal involving alleged homosexual activities and fled to Italy to avoid prosecution and prison, eventually gaining employment at St. Mark’s in Venice and teaching at an orphanage for girls. In his last years, Rosenmüller returned to Germany with Duke Anton-Ulrich of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel, at whose court he served as choir master.

This return to Germany is significant, for with him Rosenmüller brought the influence of Legrenzi and Corelli, two Italian masters with whose style Rosenmüller became familiar and eventually adapted in...
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CROSSING THE CHANNEL

with Guest Director Scott Metcalfe

MARCH 6 & 7 at 8pm

TRINITY-ST. PAUL’S CENTRE, 427 BLOOR ST. WEST

The contenance angloise: fashionable harmonies from the dissonant courts of England, France and Burgundy.

Blue Heron’s Scott Metcalfe, guest directs a program exploring the marvellous 15th century music of John Dunstaple, Du Fay, and contemporaries, for voices, recorders, percussion, fiddle and harp.
beauty and this comprehensive performance is ideal for anyone looking to become more familiar with his delightful music.

**Bach’s *St. John Passion***

Last year, Tafelmusik collaborated with conductor Masaaki Suzuki, founding director of the Bach Collegium Japan, to present an extraordinary performance of Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion*. This year, from March 26 to 29, Ivars Taurins leads the Tafelmusik choir and orchestra through the *St. John Passion*, a work that, although smaller in scale than its massive counterpart, is no less satisfying in its profundity and reflection of Bach’s genius.

Written during Bach’s first year as director of church music in Leipzig, the *St. John Passion* was first performed on April 7, 1724, at Good Friday Vespers at the St. Nicholas Church. The structure of the work falls in two halves, intended to flank a sermon, and compiled from recitatives and choruses narrating the Passion of Christ as told in the Gospel of John, ariosos and arias reflecting on the action, and chorales using hymn tunes and texts familiar to a congregation of Bach’s contemporaries.

This music is sublime from beginning to end and is an ideal introduction to Bach’s vocal writing, for in the *St. John Passion* is found a comprehensive overview of every characteristic feature which we associate with the master, from earth-shaking choruses to tender and intimate reflections on the pain and suffering commemorated on Good Friday. This concert is highly recommended and will undoubtedly sell out, so plan ahead and book your tickets well in advance.

Is there a characteristic German sound, a way to determine the linguistic underpinnings of a piece of music through its compositional components? Such a question may be ultimately unanswerable, grasping at the intangible, but the existence of an unbroken tradition, passed on and evolving through subsequent generations, is undeniable. For where would the musical world as we know it be without Bach? And where would Bach and Telemann be without Schütz and Rosenmüller? This month Toronto’s audiences have a fine opportunity to explore these early days of German musical culture which, as the world celebrates Beethoven’s 250th anniversary, has even greater potency as the idea of Germanic genius fills concert halls throughout the world. But don’t take my word for it… listen for yourselves!

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**EARLY MUSIC QUICK PICKS**

- **MAR 7, 7:30PM:** Music at Metropolitan. “Sprezzatura! Music of the Forgotten Galant.” Metropolitan United Church (Toronto), 56 Queen Street East. The galant was an 18th-century phenomenon, characterized by a return to simplicity and immediateness of appeal after the complexity of the late Baroque era. This concert explores Italianate works by Galuppi, Scarlatti, Leo, and Handel, and provides a worthwhile look into the post-Bach musical landscape.

- **MAR 21, 1PM:** Royal Canadian College of Organists Toronto. “6th Annual Bach Walk”. Celebrate Bach’s 335th birthday with this year’s Bach Walk. Featuring three organists at three different venues, this annual event is ideal for fans of Bach’s astonishing organ music. With both solo and ensemble repertoire, there will be something for everyone. Best of all, all three events are free, with birthday cake after the last recital!

- **APR 6, 8PM:** Confluence Concerts/St. Thomas’s Anglican Church. “Baroque Music by Candelight.” St. Thomas’s Anglican Church (Toronto), 383 Huron Street. Featuring the music of Handel, Telemann and Bach, this concert was made for this month’s column. Explore works from the German Baroque and see for yourself if cultural identity can be expressed through sound.

*Matthew Whitfield is a Toronto-based harpsichordist and organist.*
Take a moment for contemplation in the midst of our hectic urban lives. Enjoy the soaring beauty of English motets from the 16th century by Thomas Tallis and William Byrd up to contemporary atmospheric works by John Tavener, James MacMillan and Eric Whitacre. All in the beautiful setting of St. Anne’s Church. The Choir will be under the baton of Gregory Batsleer, chorus director of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra.

Wednesday, April 8 and Good Friday, April 10
7:30 pm St. Anne’s Church 270 Gladstone Ave
$35 to $60, with $20 VoxTix for patrons 30 and under.
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PASSIONTIDE & HOLY WEEK AT YORKMINSTER PARK BAPTIST CHURCH

PASSIONTIDE DEVOTION

SUNDAY, APRIL 5TH 4:30 PM
Music for Passiontide and Holy Week by Willan, Vierne, Purcell and Allegri
The Choir of Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, William Maddox, Organist and Director of Music, Christel Wiens, Associate Musician.

IONA LITURGY

HOLY TUESDAY, APRIL 7TH 7:00 PM
Iona based liturgy with the musicians of Iona Passage
Meditation - Visio Divina with the St. John’s Bible - the first hand written Bible illumined with art and calligraphy in over 500 years.
Beat by Beat | Choral Scene

Graduation With High Honours in Song

BRIAN CHANG

The end of March and beginning of April mark a special time for anyone in the post-secondary education sector. The term comes to a close, the academic school year settles into its final exams, papers, and for music students – final concerts. This month we’re exploring the end-of-term concerts at Western University, University of Toronto (my alma mater), and York University.

University of Toronto is lucky in its breadth of ensembles and guests. The program is also very large with four major choral ensembles and over 200 students across the various ensembles. As conductors Mark Ramsay, Elaine Choi, Lori-Anne Dolloff, and David Fallis share, this work begins the previous year before the students even start classes.

It’s a delicate balance to program works that are familiar while challenging; pedagogical, but fun. Not all the music needs to be new, because as Ramsay shares, “Working with a new conductor and/or singing with new colleagues can bring a fresh perspective to a familiar work. Singers also sometimes note [by revisiting familiar works] that their own skills have improved. Elements such as break management, vowel unification and dynamic control that were challenging the first time, may now be easier.” But they note, “It’s important to have some challenging music late in the season to keep a goal to strive for.” The MacMillan singers, under David Fallis also have the pleasure of singing a composition written by one of their own, Katharine Petkovski’s The Angels.

For many singers, some songs they are singing may be familiar, some may not. John Holland at York University’s music program notes that he strives to “work towards finding a mix between unique music and music that will challenge the singers to raise their level of musicality.” It can’t just be all choral masterworks or the most popular music out there. The challenge is part of the work, and for Holland, “keeping choral students interested and excited, first and foremost, comes from the repertoire.” Holland’s approach is to create a welcoming and productive atmosphere that helps set the stage for a positive musical experience. “The students learn that they will be treated as professionals and are also held accountable for their work outside of the rehearsals, and that has helped foster a choral program that has produced many first-class choral musicians.”

The Value of Music Education

“Choir provides our students with crucial opportunities to explore and develop their professional musical selves,” shares Patrick Murray about the choral faculty at the Don Wright Faculty of Music at Western University. I asked him about the importance of setting students up for success as they graduate. “Be that through solo singing opportunities, furthering their ensemble skills, mentoring younger singers, leadership roles producing concerts and social events, or opportunities to connect with the community through concerts off-campus and on regional tours, ensemble singing sets our singers up to value their own musicianship and the role they want to serve in the community in their future careers.”

Many of them will go on to sing in choirs for years to come, lead ensembles of their own and teach a new generation of musicians. (Murray’s colleague, Gloria Gassi, was my one of my high school music teachers.)

The impact of solid music education is essential to a vibrant cultural landscape that enhances and vitalizes our communities. Murray continues, “It’s important that a musical education develop students’ critical thinking skills to question the canon, value works by living composers and other musical traditions, and think about what they will teach their own future students.”

St. Michael’s Concerts

present

Mozart Requiem

Thursday, March 12 | 7:00 p.m.
St. Michael’s Cathedral Basilica
65 Bond Street, Toronto

St. Michael’s Choir School Schola Cantorum
Schola Cantorum Orchestra

Guest Soloists
Teri Dunn – Soprano
Krisztina Szabó – Mezzo-Soprano
Michael Colvin – Tenor
Robert Pomakov – Bass

Conductor
S. Bryan Priddy

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www.stmichaelscathedral.com/concerts
The Bittersweet End

These concerts do mark a graduating point for some of the students. It’s hard not to feel a little sad at the end of the endeavor. “With the second semester concerts, there is that terminal thought — that ‘This may be the last time we all sing together,’” shares Holland. “Especially for graduating students, the second semester concerts have a very powerful energy.”

This is a common sentiment, shared by Patrick Murray at Western. “There’s always an energy of accomplishment after this concert. Each choir performs harder music and has grown in their sound and skill as an ensemble. It’s also always a bittersweet moment as we wish our graduating singers goodbye and they sing their final concert with us.” Some of these singers have sung together for four years, developing and challenging themselves as they’ve grown not only academically, but personally and professionally.

Mark Ramsay agrees: “It is always exciting to experience the growth throughout the semester. Singers are performing with greater confidence and comfort. Each concert throughout the year showcases a new level of skill and refinement.”

“The number one thing that I would want choral students to take with them is the concept of musical professionalism and all that entails” John Holland concludes. “The ideas of preparedness, accuracy, courtesy, pride, camaraderie, artistry and a high level of performance, are all part of being a professional musician. This can be challenging due to the high expectations of performance, so leaving an undergraduate music program with a strong skill set, understanding of repertoire and styles, and a high level of professionalism helps singers leapfrog their competition when it comes to audition time.”

In the end, as Mark Ramsay says, it’s about “a love of ensemble singing and a desire to continue singing for as long as [one] wishes throughout their life.”

Graduation isn’t just the end, it’s also the start. Catch these new beginnings at the end of March.

March 22, 3pm: The York University Concert Choir concludes its season with Vivaldi’s Gloria, Mozart’s Te Deum, and Dvořák’s Psalm 149. Conductor John Holland describes this program as “the blending of the popular classics with unique works … something not to be missed, and the fine singing of the students will make you realize what a hidden gem the York choral program is.” (And it’s just across the street from the York University subway stop!) Tribute Communities Recital Hall, Accolade East, York University.

March 27, 7:30pm: The might of the Western University Don Wright Faculty of Music choral program combines for “United We Stand” under the batons of Gloria Gassi, Patrick Murray and Kathleen Allan. The end of the university school year concert features the four UWO choirs separately and en masse: The Chorale, Les Choristes, St. Cecilia Singers and the Western University Singers. On the program are the men in James Erb’s classic arrangement of Shenandoah and 200 singers performing the Sanctus from Durufle’s Requiem, and the Hallelujah from Beethoven’s Christ on the Mount of Olives. St. Peter’s Cathedral Basilica, London, which conductor Patrick Murray calls
March 29, 2:30pm: With the largest choral program in Toronto, the University of Toronto Faculty of Music Choirs combine for their term finale, “Wake Into Voice.” The Tenor/Bass Choir will be led by Mark Ramsay. Elaine Choi leads the Soprano/Alto Chorus featuring 我身騎白馬 I Ride a White Horse by 高竹嵐 Gao Zhu-Lan and I Arise Today by local composing powerhouse, Matthew Emery. David Fallis leads the MacMillan Singers with Britten’s Hymn to Saint Cecilia, and a composition by one of their own singers, Katharine Petkovski’s The Angels. Lori-Anne Dolloff rounds out the quartet of conductors with a smaller set of the sopranos and altos in a treble chorus. MacMillan Theatre, Faculty of Music, University of Toronto.

CHORAL SCENE QUICK PICKS

There is a robust selection of fantastic choral programs across the region (many of them, doubtless, featuring alumni of university choral programs). There’s absolutely no excuse for not catching some of these performances in the next month and a bit. Let me know what you think and how you felt about the experience.

- **MAR 7, 7:30PM:** Grace Church on-the-Hill, Toronto. MAR 14, 7PM: Royal View Church, London. The Canadian Celtic Choir, based in London, Ontario makes a visit to Toronto with guests Anne Lindsay on fiddle and Sharlene Wallace on harp. A slightly different lineup joins the program for the London performance, including Dan Stacey on fiddle and Kyle Waymouth on guitar, both with step dance.

- **MAR 7, 8PM:** St John the Evangelist Anglican Church, Kitchener. MAR 8, 3PM: Trillium Lutheran Church, Waterloo. DaCapo Chamber Choir presents “Life and Love and Wings.” The signature piece of the evening is a new commission by friends in memory of Margaret Janzen. From a Distant Star: composed by Jeff Enns and featuring mezzo-soprano Jennifer Enns-Modolo.

**ANCIENT & MODERN REFLECTIONS**

- **Saturday, March 28th, 4:00pm**
  Grace United Church, Niagara-on-the-Lake

- **Sunday, March 29th, 4:00pm**
  Basilica of Our Lady, Guelph

- **Saturday, April 4th, 4:00pm**
  St. John’s Latvian Lutheran Church, Toronto

Follow Brian on Twitter @bfchang
Send info/media/tips to choralscene@thewholenote.com.
Newness Anchored In Passion and Experience

JENNY PARR

In Act Two of Stephen Sondheim’s Sunday in the Park with George, Dot sings to George: “Move on! Anything you do let it come from you, then it will be new.” This double idea, of continually trying new things but anchoring them in personal experience or passion, was at the heart of three of my music theatre highlights of February, and promises to be so for three of the shows coming up in March.

Caroline or Change, presented at the Winter Garden Theatre by The Musical Stage Company and Obsidian Theatre Company is anchored in Tony Kushner’s semi-autobiographical book and this powerful production amped up the electricity by casting as Caroline, R & B Queen Jully Black, who, in her musical theatre debut, gave a performance of great passion and integrity. Tapestry New Opera’s Jacqueline, a fascinating journey into the internal thoughts of virtuoso cellist Jacqueline du Pré as her career and life were both being tragically cut short by MS, was an exciting risk-taking experiment in storytelling, inspired by personal connections to the artist and envisioned as a duet for soprano and cello. Lin-Manuel Miranda’s Hamilton finally arrived in Toronto, showing us why it has been acclaimed as the “reinvention of the American musical,” a thrilling example of unexpected medium (hip-hop and diverse casting) melding with inspiring message (surprisingly interesting biography of lesser-known American founding father Alexander Hamilton) to create a truly satisfying evening of music theatre.

As March approaches, three more exciting productions, all wildly different, are blending personal passion and innovation to share with us both new and familiar stories in new ways designed to give them more immediacy and/or urgency in the telling.

Sondheim’s Sunday
Eclipse Theatre Company (ETC) is presenting Sunday in the Park with George in part as a celebration of Stephen Sondheim’s 90th birthday year, but even more as an investigation, through the use of an unusual setting and experimental production elements, of the musical’s own interrogation of the artistic process and the toll it can take on an artist’s personal life. Inspired by French pointillist painter Georges Seurat’s painting A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte, the plot revolves around George (a fictionalized version of Seurat) and his life with mistress and model Dot as he begins to create his masterpiece; it then segues in the second act to the present time when George’s great grandson, also an artist, finds himself at an artistic crossroads. Just as ETC found an ideal setting in Toronto’s old Don Jail for last year’s site-responsive production of Kiss of the Spider Woman, so they have chosen Toronto’s The Jam Factory for Sunday in the Park. I reached out to director Evan Tsitsias to find out more about this choice as well as his experimental approach to staging the show. He explained:

“I chose The Jam Factory because it offers incredible atmosphere for this particular time period and piece. It has a magical aura when you walk inside; it reminded me of both an artist’s studio, and, because of the expanse of the large room with all these wood beams, it had an outdoor quality as well, which felt like the perfect combination to...
tell this story. On top of that, the show takes place during the second industrial revolution when things were changing so rapidly in Paris, and The Jam Factory was built during that exact same time period, which I think is rare to find in Toronto. It was the perfect alchemy of space and show. We’ve also decided to stage it in an alleyway formation which will put the audience as close to the action as possible, hopefully making them feel like they are part of this community of people they are watching in this park.

Along the way, Tsitsias has added another immersive and unusual element to the production that he hopes will bring the audience even more into the world of George and Dot, by recruiting artist, Lori Mirabelli, “who will be painting her own experience of the show each night on canvases around the space. Each night will be different.” This will be a fully staged concert production allowing the company “to strip down to the essentials as far as costumes, set and lighting goes, using this incredible space as another character in the story, and really honing in on the words and music.”

Sunday in the Park with George plays at The Jam Factory from March 3 to 8, starring Evan Buliung as George, Tess Benger as Dot, and featuring Charlotte Moore as the Old Lady and Tracey Michailidis as Yvonne.

“Les Ballets Trocadero de Monte Carlo

The beautiful Winter Garden Theatre will be visited on March 7 and 8 by the iconoclastic dance company Les Ballets Trocadero de Monte Carlo with their famous blend of technical virtuosity and expert comic timing. “The Trocks,” as they are affectionately known, enable audiences to see classical ballet with new eyes through their lovingly comedic take on the foibles, accidents and underlying incongruities of serious dance enhanced by the – at first startling – fact that men dance all the parts, bodies delicately balancing on pointe in the roles of swans, sylphs and princesses. There is a delicate balance in the company’s performances between excellent technique and a tongue-in-cheek awareness of parody that delights both connoisseurs of classical ballet and new fans alike.

The Toronto program for each performance will include the company’s signature short version of Swan Lake, the Balanchine parody Go for Barocco, and Dying Swan (The Swan) which, in a Toronto-exclusive performance, will be danced by Toronto native, and former Trocks member Brooke Lynn Hytes known most recently for being the star runner-up contestant on RuPaul’s Drag Race in 2019.

Ten Choirs bear witness to The Events

At Streetcar Crowsnest, Necessary Angel Theatre Company is producing the Toronto premiere of Scottish playwright David Greig’s The Events, a much-darker themed show than the two shows above, but with a message of hope conveyed not only in the script but in the unique, innovative, shape and format of the production.

Described by The Independent newspaper as “one of the decade’s most incendiary and important works”, the play began as a response to the horrific 2011 killing of 69 people at a summer camp in Utøya, Norway. Set in Scotland, The Events tells the fictional story of Claire – a right-on, left-wing female priest who leads a community choir – who one day experiences something terrible: a young man she vaguely knew turns a gun on those who “aren’t from here” in an attempt to make his mark on society. The play is not a documentary telling of this terrible event, rather, it follows Claire’s attempt to understand how someone could do such an awful thing, and how this leads her on a path to self-destruction.

Originally commissioned by Scotland’s Actors Touring Company, the cast is small: one actor (Raven Dauda) plays Claire, a second (Kevin Walker) plays the Boy (the attacker) but also five other characters in her memory, as Claire tries to makes sense of what she has experienced. At the heart of the play is an exploration of how the community as a whole reacts and tries to move on and – in an innovative stroke – the community is played by a choir, ideally a different community choir for each performance. Fascinated by this, I reached out to director Alan Dilworth to find out more about the choir’s role in the play and the practicalities of recruitment and rehearsal.

“The choirs are the heart and soul of the production – they are a powerful healing and humanizing force. They are hope and light in the aftermath of the tragic targeting of a community choir in the narrative of the play. Like a Greek chorus, they also bear witness to the journey of Claire, the protagonist...”
of The Events. The choirs themselves, their performance of Irish composer John Browne’s compositions, and their function in the play, are all absolutely breathtaking. You have to witness it for yourself.”

Ten different community choirs will be participating in the production after Dilworth reached out to over 140 community choirs in the Southern Ontario region. He says: “I felt like I had discovered a whole new world. There are so many choirs doing brilliant work. I want to join a choir!”

Having ten different choirs as part of the production means discovering or inventing a show-specific preparation and rehearsal process. After consulting with a number of other theatre companies who had worked with community choirs, Dilworth said the company “developed a simple but effective series of guidelines for the choirs to learn the music with the guidance of their choir directors, and to gather for two brief, but very focused rehearsals before their performance. All of the choirs have had the script shared with them, but none have seen the play performed – although they have rehearsed the music and the cueing of their music. Like the audience, they will experience the entire performance of the play live as they perform!”

With a choir at the heart of the story, the music they will sing is clearly important. In Dilworth’s words: “The music composition by John Browne is very moving, at times playful, at times funny, and always taking us to the beating heart of this stunning play. Each performance begins with a choir singing a song of their own choice. We asked the choirs to choose a song that they thought would best represent them as a choir, and that they thought would be a good launching point for the play. It has been very inspiring. I cannot wait to share The Events with Toronto audiences.”

The Events plays March 1 to 15 at the Galloien Theatre, Streetcar Crowsnest. crowstheatre.com.
It seems the longer I'm involved with jazz, the less I understand it. I've been immersed in it now for nearly 50 years in many ways – studying it, playing it, reading about it, collecting records, listening to it, and more recently writing about it and teaching it – and yet at times I feel I know less and less about it and would be hard-pressed to offer a succinct definition of its essence. If it even has an essence anymore.

Part of it is the truth of that old saw: the more you learn about a subject, the less you know about it, or so it seems. As knowledge of jazz expands, so do the boundaries; the forest keeps getting bigger to the point where you can't see it for the trees.

Perhaps this is as it should be, because jazz is not a simple music, though often at its best it seems so. But it's quite complex, and part of the problem in trying to get a fix on what jazz actually is, is that it never stands still. It's constantly shifting and expanding, taking on new influences while also exerting an effect on other types of music. Like many things in the digital age, this cross-pollination process has sped up in recent years, leading to a bewildering array of hybrids, which I call “hyphen-jazz”: Acid-jazz, smooth-jazz, jazz-rock, vocal-jazz, Latin-jazz and so on, seemingly ad infinitum. Well, okay, these are contrived terms to describe narrow sub-genres of varying validity, but increasingly I hear people asking – and often ask myself – “Well, yeah, but what about ‘jazz-jazz’”? Does that exist anymore, and if so, then what is it?

A further complication, as always, is the timeline, on various levels. Firstly, jazz, being a largely improvised and spontaneous music, has always had an ephemeral, in-the-moment present. Unless it’s recorded, a jazz performance takes place in real time and then evaporates into thin air like vapour. This is one of the charms of the music, but also a source of frustration because this evanescence makes analysis, and thus understanding, difficult. But jazz is over 100 years old now and thanks to various forms of documentation – thousands of recordings, many films, books, publications and the like – it has a palpable history, an appreciable backlog of tradition and evolution, a past.

Thanks to the internet, all kinds of information about jazz history is more readily available than ever before. Simply by sitting at a computer, one now has access to thousands of recordings and videos of live performances; to articles and reviews about the music; to solo transcriptions and sheet music; and to biographical information about key contributors and how they changed the music. There’s no longer any excuse for what music educators call “jazz ignorance.”

But at the same time, the very nature of the internet, and the sheer vastness of the information it contains, has created a generation of (mostly) younger people with shorter attention spans than ever before, and with less curiosity about (and perhaps less appreciation for the importance of) history and the past. This will be a familiar refrain to others more or less my age, but I’m often stunned by what young jazz students – a largely hard-working, bright, talented and sincere group – don’t know about its history, and how few records some of them have listened to. There are exceptions, but some of them are completely unaware of Zoot Sims or Roy Eldridge or Ben Webster, never mind more distant figures like Sidney Bechet or Rex Stewart.

On the other hand, they are much more up on contemporary figures and goings-on in the music than I am; I’m forever learning about new players and records from them, for which I’m grateful. This brings us to another wrinkle in the jazz timeline: an individual’s age and the effects the aging process can have on the perception of what jazz is.

For example, I’m 63 and it’s a fact that more of my life is behind me than ahead; I have much more past than future. Throw in that I happen to have an extremely historical bent of mind and it’s small wonder that a lot of my ideas about what jazz is are rooted in its past, its history and traditions, and that I struggle to keep up with the present. Whereas many of my students and other younger players have their finger on the pulse of now, with little sense of the past or concern for history.

This generational disconnect is what makes teaching challenging, but also rewarding. I get to inform young players about elements of the music’s history and then hear how they use these in their own, contemporary-minded ways. While being around young players sometimes makes me feel out of touch, it also makes me realize the value of my past experience and knowledge. These people want to learn from what older experienced players know and, if anything, being around them makes me feel less out of touch and more convinced than ever of the continuum of jazz, the connection between its past and its present. So in trying to come up with a definition, I want it to reflect not just the past or what I think jazz ought to continue to be, or what “good jazz” is, but also to be inclusive of how it’s changed and what it is now.

All of these factors and others make defining jazz a daunting task, perhaps even a useless and unnecessary one. After all, Duke Ellington
hated the word jazz, found it too limiting. He said there were only two kinds of music, good and bad, and it was up to each individual to decide for themselves which is which. Certainly there’s a lot of good music that isn’t jazz, but at the same time jazz has certain special qualities that are unique to it and separate it from other types of music. It’s not a “style,” it contains many styles. And it’s not a what, so much as a how. (“’Taint What You Do, It’s the Way That You Do It,” as Trummy Young once put it.) So without further “pre-ramble” here’s what I would offer as a working definition of jazz: jazz is a music of collective improvisation which swings, and which places a premium on individual sonic expressivity. Notice that I used the term “collective improvisation,” an important distinction. Improvisation is obviously essential to all jazz, it is the music’s life blood. But that being said, there’s much more to jazz than improvising, and improvisation is not at all exclusive to it. What distinguishes the improvisation in jazz is that often everyone involved is doing it simultaneously – both the soloists and those “accompanying” them, i.e. the rhythm section – and this is not generally true in other types of music. Take country music for example – please (just kidding, I happen to like country music.) If you listen to, say, a Hank Williams record, the fiddler or pedal-steel player will often step out and take a solo turn, albeit usually a short one which stays in line with the song’s melody and the general style of the music. But these guys can really play and they’re most definitely improvising. However, the accompaniment remains essentially the same – rather four-square, not building or developing or interacting. The string bass continues to play two-beat, the drummer continues to play a simple country swing pattern with brushes, while the guitars strum away much like before.

Contrast this with what happens during a jazz solo, in any style, from any period. Notably the soloist is improvising an often intricate melodic line, but those accompanying this offer all kinds of interactive interplay; they shape the music with dynamics, push and goad and interject with a great deal of freedom and intensity. And as jazz has evolved, this has only increased. Consider the rhythm section in John Coltrane’s classic quartet of the 1960s or in the Miles Davis Quintet of the same period, both of which form a blueprint for how modern rhythm sections play. There isn’t another type of music which allows – or demands – so much freedom in accompaniment. But even in simpler, more straight-ahead styles, there’s a lot more going on behind the improvising soloist than meets the listener’s ear. The drummer, bassist and pianist are making hundreds of small decisions which directly impact and shape the music. This is what I mean by collective improvisation. It’s not just the multi-horn polyphony of New Orleans music or free jazz, it’s that everyone has a stake in the music as an improviser, not just the soloist.

This collectivity is what makes improvisation in jazz so complex and compelling, so subtle and multi-layered. And it’s what I love about being a jazz bassist. I can play an entire evening with a band and maybe not take one solo, yet I feel fulfilled because I’ve improvised and shaped the music as much as anybody on stage.

As for the “individual sonic expressivity” part of my definition, it’s also a key. Having a personal, identifiable sound and manner of phrasing is sometimes important in other music but not always, and never so much as in jazz, where it’s not only desirable, but essential. In classical music, soloists are expected to have their own sound – Jacqueline du Pré does not sound like Pablo Casals, who does not sound like Yo-Yo Ma. But this does not extend to ensemble playing or orchestras, where there are rigid standards about getting a “proper” sound and blending within sections. This is simply not true in jazz, whether in a small band, as a soloist, or in a larger group. Louis Armstrong, Pee Wee Russell and Vic Dickenson – to name but three of countless jazz players with highly individual sounds – would never have made the grade in an orchestra, and thank God they didn’t.

Regardless of this in larger jazz groups, there are many examples but we have only to consider The Duke Ellington Orchestra, the individual sections of which abounded with individual and distinctive sounds, not to mention personalities. Gary Giddins wrote a marvellous piece about hearing the band in a casual concert in Central Park, which afforded him the chance to lean his head over the front of the stage and hear the saxophone section up close. He heard their sumptuous collective tone but also the separate voices of Harry Carney, Jimmy Hamilton, Paul Gonsalves, Russell Procope and Johnny Hodges. They blended and yet they didn’t blend. The freedom to make one’s own
sound in jazz has produced many of its greatest glories.

I’ve left out the “which swings” part of my definition, which may be contentious to those who think swing has outlived its relevance or importance. Well, I beg to differ, but am running out of space here, so I will hope to return next month with Part Two of this, titled, naturally, Swinging Among the Branches.

**Footnote:**
This article was submitted well before deadline as I headed off on a Western tour in the middle of February, so I wasn’t able to complete my usual Quick Picks for March. (See my colleague Colin Story’s column Mainly Clubs, Mostly Jazz on page 65, for some of that.) However, there is one upcoming concert I wanted to mention, not entirely for reasons of self-promotion, but more as a shout-out to my sister, Tracey May, who has been staging jazz concerts the last few years at her church in Claremont. I’ve played about a half dozen of these, and they have all been a success, owing much to Tracey’s tireless organizing and promotion, for which I’ve nicknamed her “Norma Grazn.” Another big plus is the venue itself, a comfy old church with good acoustics and an intimate atmosphere which inspires a listening audience. It’s become one of my favourite places to play. And, if I do say so myself, the Mike Murley Trio ain’t a bad band. 😏

**The Mike Murley Trio**
Claremont United Church, 5052 Old Brock Road, Claremont Saturday, April 4 at 8pm, (doors open at 7:30pm)
Tickets $25 in advance, $30 at the door
For tickets or information call Tracey May at 647-982-4649 or email jazzincclaremont@gmail.com

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

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**Beat by Beat | Bandstand**

**Tenth Anniversary NHB’s Expanded Horizons**

**JACK MACQUARRIE**

Beware the Ides of March! Thus spoke the soothsayer as he, correctly, warned Julius Caesar of his impending doom. While “impending doom” is probably not the cause, we haven’t heard much of anything from our current band world about any activities planned for the month of March of this year, at least not in time to report on here. On the bright side, while waiting for information on coming band activities, I had time to check on the meaning of the Ides of March. While the term originally referred to the full moon, in ancient Rome it was the time for several religious observances and was also a deadline for settling debts. It is the word “deadline”, particularly, that caught my eye. In fairness to bands in our part of the world, it may be that the month of March may be one of preparation, but not performance. In a few cases, notices we receive, about concerts that have been in the works for months, arrive only a few days before the event. For us to mention an event we must receive any notice no later than the 15th of the month prior to the event. Be aware of the Ides of March (Sunday March 15) is therefore my message this month. Send me your April concert listings by then and I will be sure to make mention of them here.

**Behind the Scenes**

As many of you know full well, keeping a concert band going requires a few activities other than concert preparation and performances. These include library updating, financial matters and executive elections among others. As I think about such non-performance activities, a few stand out. Obviously a well-organized and well-catalogued library tops the list. There isn’t space here to detail the many possible formats, but with most bands having access to computers, a spreadsheet where searches may be easily done based on title, composer, library catalogue number, style etc. is easy to create and maintain! A few bands I know have a numbering system for all selections in their libraries, but others just stick to names. I’m a big proponent of a numbering system. When the conductor calls out a number to rehearse, everyone knows what to get. If the conductor should call for a selection such as Pop and Rock Legends: Elton John, and filing is alphabetical, one might look for Pop, Rock or Elton John. Numbering all of the charts would eliminate any confusion. Years ago I played with someone who filed any chart with a name starting with The under the letter T.

Another activity, sadly lacking in many musical organizations, is some form of band archives including photos, programs, videos, movies etc. How many bands have reliable, accurate, safely stored archives along with their libraries? Disasters can happen, as they did many years ago when arsonists destroyed the building where the Newmarket Citizens Band rehearsed and stored their music. Fortunately, music which had been stored in steel cabinets was salvagable.

One other, much more challenging, means of recording a band’s history and events could be to produce a movie of the band’s activities. In 1971 Canada’s National Film Board produced a film called Goodbye Sousa. Released in 1973, the film profiles “the Newmarket Citizens Band, one of Canada’s oldest marching bands.” This won the Canadian Film Award for best theatrical short film at the 25th Canadian Film Awards. In the words of the band’s current executive, however: “It won awards but did not present a positive view about the band’s relevance in the community. That’s why we feel a response is long overdue ...by almost 50 years.” So, now, in 2020, the Newmarket Citizens Band is on the verge of producing a new film of community band activities. Band members have already released release forms for...
their agreement “for appearance in a documentary.”

For those who might wish to view the original movie, there is a link to the video on the band’s website: newmarketcitizensband.ca.

Rants

Every once in a while I feel compelled to voice some concerns about matters in the community band world. This month’s rants may well apply to almost any organization presenting concerts or other events. The first concern has to do with event location. In recent months I have received a number of flyers which state the name of the venue but not the location. For example: one might advertise a concert at St. John’s Church. The obvious questions would be: which St. John’s Church, and what is the address? My other concern is more for archival purposes. Many programs just indicate month and day. This is fine at the time, but not if one wants to check on what a group might have performed some time previously. It is nice to know what year.

Expanded Horizons

It seems as though it was just a short while ago when I first learned about the establishment in the Toronto area of a New Horizons Band. How time flies. It was in early 2010, when Dan Kapp told me that he was forming such a group in Toronto. I had heard of the organization, but really didn’t know much about it. For those who don’t know about the organization, its role is to engage people from two categories. Those who either always wanted to play a musical instrument, but never got around to it, and those who had played many years previously, but such matters as jobs, marriage and children took priority.

One day, in a conversation with Dan, he mentioned that his very first performance with this new group was coming up, and he needed someone to play trombone. I agreed to sit in, presuming that this modest new startup beginners’ band would be performing in a local school or church. Not so. Dan had booked the CBC’s Glenn Gould Studio. I was to be playing beside another sub trombone player. Then, a day before the concert that sub became ill. What to do? Looking across the dinner table, I quietly mentioned to the lady of the house “you’re it.” Since she is a retired music teacher I knew that she could handle the trombone parts she would encounter. Since this was a beginners’ band, I was sure that there would only be a small audience of family and friends. Not so. To my amazement, the place was almost full. New Horizons Toronto was on its way.

In the early days, Dan Kapp was the conductor and do-it-all organizer. Before retiring (for the second time) and moving to Wolfville, Nova Scotia, Dan aided in the establishment of a committee to deal with the challenges of a much larger organization. A committee was formed. Randy Kligerman, one of the members of the very first band, is now president of the New Horizons Band of Toronto.

To get an update on New Horizons, I called Kligerman and he gave me a few basic statistics. When New Horizons Band of Toronto began teaching adults how to play concert instruments, it had one class of 17 people. Now in its tenth year, NHBT has grown to 260 members participating in nine concert bands, three jazz bands and two theory classes! “Our growth came with certain challenges,” says Kligerman. In the beginning the band rehearsed in a hall over the Long and McQuade store on Bloor Street. When they outgrew that space, they moved to a nearby Salvation Army location. After a few years their requirements outgrew that location too. Finding suitable practise space in Toronto on the subway line is difficult enough, but the fact that they run day and evening classes from Monday to Friday, made things much more complicated.

After a year of searching, NHBT now hangs their sign at 662 Victoria Park Avenue just north of Danforth Avenue. “The space is made to measure” says Kligerman, “Our band room is bright and clean, and easily accommodates our largest band of 55 members. The NHBT office is large enough to store instruments, our music library, a desk for our directors, and a board room table for members to sit and chat over a cup of coffee.

As mentioned, New Horizons Band of Toronto provides adults who have no musical experience, and also those who once played in school but have since been inactive, with the opportunity to learn or improve their skills in a non-competitive, friendly classroom setting led by highly accomplished music directors. “Everyone has musical potential,” says Kligerman, “and playing music, no matter the level, enriches your life intellectually and socially and is a lot of fun.” In addition to occasional performances throughout the year, NHBT have two special annual events. The first is their “Chamber Suites 2020” where a variety of small ensembles perform for each other’s entertainment. Then all of the groups will be performing their year-end concert, on May 29 at the Toronto Pavilion, where they will be celebrating their tenth anniversary. You can learn more about New Horizons Band of Toronto on their website: newhorizonsbandtoronto.ca.

Until I received word of this annual concert, by the way, I had never
heard of the Toronto Pavilion. Since I have frequently commented on performance venues, I wanted to learn more. It is located at 190 Railside Drive, south of Lawrence Avenue just east of the Don Valley Parkway. With a large stage, seating capacity of 1,100 and with 200 parking spaces available, it is worth checking out.

Silverthorn
A few hours before sitting down to finish writing this column I had the pleasure of attending a concert by Silverthorn Symphonic Winds. As usual, director Andrew Chung treated us to an excellent program including the Overture to Verdi’s Nabucco, Holst’s Moorside Suite, Dello Joio’s Scenes from the Louvre, the Overture to Rossini’s An Italian in Algiers, and Morley Calvert’s Suite on Canadian Folk Songs. Unfortunately a disruption totally beyond the band’s control arose. As the band performed, we could hear unwanted sounds from the floor below the concert hall. The room had been rented out to a large party with non-stop, super-loud rock music booming from the DJ’s sound system. It was the first time that I had ever heard Calvert’s She’s Like the Swallow with rock band bass accompaniment. Kudos to the unflappable Andrew Chung who did a remarkable job of producing an excellent evening of music.

BANDSTAND QUICK PICKS

> MARCH 22, 7PM: The Hamilton Concert Band with guests The Dofasco Male Choir will perform at St. Andrew’s United Church, 497 Upper Paradise Rd., Hamilton.


Jack MacQuarrie plays several brass instruments and has performed in many community ensembles. He can be contacted at bandstand@thewholenote.com.
Summer is just around the corner, and it’s time to start planning your musical activities, whether you are an avid amateur musician, professional, or looking for music education programs for children. Part 1 of our Summer Music Education directory appeared in print in our February issue, featuring profiles from programs most of which (but not all) had early application deadlines. The program names are listed below, but please visit www.thewholenote.com and look for “2020 Summer Music Education” under the “Who’s Who” tab to read the profiles. Newer submissions appear in the following pages (and can also be found online). Happy summer planning!

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

The WholeNote Directory Team

PROJECT MANAGER: KAREN AGES
PROJECT EDITOR: KEVIN KING
LAYOUT AND DESIGN: SUSAN SINCLAIR
PROOFREADING: DANIAL JAZAERI
WEBSITE: KEVIN KING

Visit thewholenote.com to read profiles for the following:

- **Canadian Opera Company**
  Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, Toronto, ON
  June 7 to August 1

- **Domaine Forget – International Music and Dance Academy**
  5 Rang Saint Antoine, Saint-Irénée, QC
  May 31 to August 20

- **Great Lakes International Summer Music Institute**
  Sault Ste. Marie, ON
  July 19 to August 1

- **Summer@Eastman**
  Eastman School of Music, 26 Gibbs Street, Rochester, NY
  June 29 to August 7

- **Tafelmusik Baroque Summer Institute**
  Faculty of Music, University of Toronto
  May 31 to June 13

- **Vancouver Symphony Orchestral Institute**
  University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC
  June 27 to July 6

- **Westben’s Performer–Composer Residency**
  6698 County Road 30 North, Campbellford, ON
  July 5 to July 12

- **CAMMAC**
  Harrington, QC
  June 28 to August 16
  Contact: Marion Plouvin
  1-888-622-8755
  communications@cammac.ca
  www.cammac.ca
  Deadline: No applications – registration up until each week’s beginning
  Cost: Children (5 to 11 yrs): $275 / Student (12 to 24 yrs): $375 / Adults (25+): $550 / Accommodations are additional.
  Residential Program

  Located on beautiful Lake MacDonald in the Laurentians, CAMMAC offers 7 week-long programs for musicians of all ages and abilities. Our summer programs take place in a relaxing, non-competitive environment, where you can play, meet people who share the same passions, learn from dedicated teachers, and discover new repertoire. Activities and workshops include choir, orchestra, chamber music, small ensembles, masterclasses, Broadway, Jazz, Early Music, World Music, Orff, dance, yoga, drawing, arts and crafts, outdoor activities and more. Vegetarian meals are available, and we offer a range of accommodations including private rooms, family rooms and camping. Make your summer memorable: come with family and friends, and immerse yourself in the best of what nature and music have to offer!

- **Camp Musical Tutti**
  2600 College St., Sherbrooke, QC
  June 28 to July 5
  Contact: Esfir Dyachkov
  514-486-8727
  info@camptutti.com
Camp musical Tutti takes place in the picturesque Eastern Townships. 2020 is our 25th anniversary! Our goal is to encourage students to love making music. We run residential and day camps, and we offer a flexi-stay program. Partial scholarships are available. As a non-profit organization, we will present our annual benefit concert, featuring the internationally acclaimed pianist Dang Thai Son, on April 16, 2020 at 7:30pm in Bourgie Hall, 1339 Sherbrooke St. West, Montreal H3G 1G2. We welcome participants of all ages (children/adults), all levels and all instruments. We teach in English, French and Russian. Courses include choir, master classes, individual lessons, chamber music and orchestra, theatre, art, swimming and other recreational activities. We end with a gala concert.

![Camp Musical Tutti](https://music.uwo.ca/outreach/choral-conducting-workshop.html)

### Centre for Opera Studies in Italy (COSI) 2020 Mozart “Requiem”

Sulmona, Italy  
July 1 to 8  
Contact: Dianne  
416-766-7817  
centreforoperasulmona@gmail.com  
www.cosiprogram.com  
Deadline: March 31, 2020  
Cost: $950* (Basic)  
Residential Program  
> Sing the Mozart “Requiem” in Italy! For singers aged 18-80. Join conductor Matthew Otto, COSI 2020’s Choir-In-Residence, the Toronto Youth Choir, Sulmona’s Cappella Musicale Pamphiliana, conductor Alessandro Sabatini, COSI Soloists, and instrumentalists of Ensemble COSI, in vaulting ancient cathedrals of Sulmona and Pratola Peligna. Enjoy “la vita bella” of Sulmona’s medieval town centre, introductory Italian lessons, master class attendance, group music sessions with COSI’s international faculty, rehearsals, the glorious culminating performances, and a day trip to the Amalfi Coast. All are included in the basic fee. Not included: transportation, food, and accommodation (made available by arrangement at €40/night double occupancy).

### Choral Mosaic 2020

Living Arts Centre, 4141 Living Arts Drive, Mississauga, ON  
June 26 and 27  
Contact: Kate Molina  
416-508-9639  
kmolina@mississaugafestivalchoir.com  
www.choralmosaic.com  
Deadline: Midnight June 12, 2020  
Cost: $249  
Day Program  
> Choral Mosaic 2020 is a brand-new choral music festival at the Living Arts Centre in Mississauga from June 26 to 27, 2020. Choral music lovers are invited to attend workshops and master classes that are designed for singers of all skill levels. These include: Embodied Choral Singing with Dr. Kimberly Barber; Building a Healthy and Expressive Choir with Dr. Elroy Friesen; Exploring Multicultural Connections Through Community Music with Dr. Charlene Pauls & Natalie Fasheh; An Introduction to South Indian Singing with Suba Sankaran & Dylan Bell and Raising Voices: Music and People Living with Dementia with Bob Anderson & Ruth Watkins. All choralists will be invited to sing in a mass choir gala performance of a new work by composer Kim André Arnesen.

### Guitar Workshop Plus

Toronto, ON; Nashville, TN; San Diego, CA; Seattle, WA  
July 26 to 31  
Contact: Brian  
905-567-8000  
info@guitarworkshopplus.com  
www.guitarworkshopplus.com  
Deadline: Up until start date (space permitting)  
Cost: Varies (depending on options chosen)  
Residential Program  
> Guitar Workshop Plus offers workshops in a musical environment at superb facilities. Our faculty members are professional musicians and instructors with extensive experience teaching in summer music programs, workshops, private settings, and post secondary universities. Along with receiving visits from world famous guest artists, our top ranked summer music program allows students to participate in daily classes, clinics, ensemble and student performances, and evening concerts. Guitar courses are offered for all levels, ages, and styles including blues, jazz, rock, country, acoustic, and classical. Bass, drum, keyboard, vocal, and songwriting classes are offered as well. Resident and non-resident tuitions are available.
Celebrating 60 years in 2020! IMC offers programs for orchestra, band, residential program
Deadline:
Cost:
Day Program
Contact:
info@kingswayconservatory.ca

Kingsway Conservatory Summer Music

Huron Heights Public School, 785 Russell Street, Kincardine, ON
August 10 to 15
Contact: D. Schnarr
519-398-9716
info@ksmsf.ca
www.ksmf.ca
Deadline: August 3, 2020
Cost: $200
Day Program
Camp Hours: 9am to 3:30pm

Kincardine Summer Music Festival

KSFM is renowned for excellence in programming and presentations. Daily music classes August 10 to 14 offer fun and exciting learning experiences led by professional musicians. Beginning to advanced levels in Strings, Bands, Guitar, and Vocal programs culminate in a Friday concert. Advanced students may join an orchestra and chorus in Saturday’s performance of Mendelssohn’s “Elijah”. Students receive tickets to the fabulous KSMF Evening Concert Series August 10 to 14, featuring the very best of Canada’s top artists. Special outreach concerts for students introduce their music. Free “4 O’Clock in the Park” concerts August 9 to 14 in downtown Victoria Park. A great opportunity for adults, younger students and families in lovely Kincardine on the Lake Huron shore - Music and the Beach!

Kingsway Conservatory Summer Music

Kingsway Conservatory of Music, 2848 Bloor Street West, Toronto, ON
Weekly programs from June 29 to August 21
Contact: Sharon Burlacoff
416-234-0121
info@kingswayconservatory.ca
www.kingswayconservatory.ca
Deadline: Registration open; early-bird savings deadline March 15, 2020
Cost: Program costs vary
Day Program
Camp Hours: Program hours vary

KCM’s inspiring summer programs for various ages and experience levels promise to excite and engage! For Summer 2020: Kingsway Chamber Music Festival - Strings & Piano for Intermediate & Senior levels (strings min RCM Gr. 3, piano min RCM Gr. 5) including coachings, orchestra rehearsals, group composition, workshops, guest artists; “Annie KIDS” (ages 8 to 12) and “Frozen JR” (ages 10 to 14) Music Theatre Camps - preparing and presenting fantastic, full-scale musical productions on a professional stage; Triple-Threat Arts Discovery Camps [ages 4 to 8] inspiring self-expression through music, art and drama; Suzuki/Traditional Strings Camp
Music at Port Milford

Prince Edward County, ON
July 19 to August 16
Contact: Margaret Hill
914-439-5039
director@musicatportmilford.org
www.musicatportmilford.org
Deadline: Rolling Admissions
Cost: $895 to $1005/week
Residential Program

2020 marks Music at Port Milford’s 34th year of bringing internationally-renowned artist faculty and students with a passion for chamber music together to create an inspiring summer music experience. Throughout July and August, this experience is proudly shared with Prince Edward County, as the students and faculty bring the highest calibre of chamber music to Ontario. 2020 Faculty Artists include Quatuor Saguenay (formerly Alcan), pianist Angela Park, select members of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and select faculty from the Phil and Eli Taylor Performance Academy, and Royal Conservatory of Music.

Music Niagara Performance Academy

St. Mark's Anglican Church, Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON
July 18 to 26
Contact: Barbara Worthy
905-468-0092 or 905-468-5566
bworthy@musicniagara.org
www.musicniagara.org
Deadline: June 15, 2020
Cost: $990 plus HST
Residential Program

Music Niagara’s Performance Academy is a nine-day program offering a unique blend of individual lessons, master classes, chamber music, interactive workshops, and public performances, for gifted young musicians aged 12 to 18, to improve, complement and enhance musical performance and stage presence.

Overview - Master Classes: open lessons, and solo/group chamber music instruction with acclaimed faculty and festival artists; Workshops: public presentation, vocal skills, body language and performance presentation
Niagara Symphony Orchestra Summer Music Camp

style; Drama: from Shakespeare to improvisation, scenes, games, text and activities; Period Dance: body movement and fitness, dancing to the music you play; Alexander Technique: relieve physical stress, improve performance strength. Students guaranteed up to four public performances.

Niagara Symphony Orchestra Summer Music Camp (SMC)

Niagara, ON
July 6 to 31
Brody Smith
905-687-4993, x223
brody.smith@niagarasymphony.org
http://www.niagarasymphony.com
Deadline: June 29, 2020
Cost: $190 to $410
Day Program
Camp Hours: 9am to 3:30pm

More than 40 hours of master classes, tutorials, reed making and recitals to choose from, designed to improve your oboe performance skills! Session 1 (July 21 to 23) - Oboe Fundamentals - master classes highlighting technique, embouchure, tone, pitch, articulation, vibrato and phrasing; hands-on reed making and cane preparation; daily reed checks for performers; the art of knife sharpening with additional optional classes. Maximum of 12 performer participants. Session 2 (July 24) - two options: a) Performance / Audition Preparation - includes techniques for successful performances, as well as managing performance anxiety, excerpt review, and mock audition; b) "Concert Stories" Workshop - designing and performing with Joey Salvaglio, former principal oboe of the Memphis Symphony Orchestra.

Oboe Intensive at Western University

Don Wright Faculty of Music at Western University, London, ON
July 20 to 31
Contact: Ruth Wright
519-661-2043
rwrigh6@uwo.ca
Deadline: June 1, 2020 (or until full)
Cost: $795 (subject to change)
Day Program

This course and workshop will focus on investigating the nature and pedagogies establishing progressive methods in popular music education in the 21st century. With an emphasis on practical music making, supported by reading, research, and discussion, participants will explore pedagogic developments in the field of music education and create their own version of a 21st century music curriculum. Content for this course and workshop will include: informal popular music learning; mash-ups and remixes; music video production; the iPad as a classroom instrument; song writing; creativity development using GarageBand and other music software and apps.

Progressive Methods in Popular Music
Summer Opera Lyric Theatre (SOLT) is a unique program combining learning and performing in an environment that reflects the professional operatic world of today. Participation in the SOLT workshop is achieved through an assigned role(s) after the audition process. The program combines a series of music rehearsals, master classes, dramatic discussions, lectures and staging rehearsals, culminating in the week of performances at the Robert Gill Theatre. Many past SOLT alumni have benefitted from the workshop through a fine-tuning of technical and interpretative skills and an expansion of repertoire in a career that demands great versatility. It has nurtured, developed and promoted the careers of hundreds of Canadian singers for over 34 years.

**Toronto Summer Music Community Academy**

Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, ON  
July 27 to August 1  
Contact: Jennifer Mak  
647-430-5699, x111  
jennifer@torontosummermusic.com  
www.torontosummermusic.com  
Deadline: Rolling Applications (April 24 for the Chamber Music Program)  
Cost: $700 for the Chamber Choir; $950 for the Chamber Music Program, Piano Masterclass, and Bass Workshop

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

If you’re an advanced amateur musician looking to connect with other musicians, join the TSM Community Academy, where you can spend a fun week making music with our Festival artists! Participants enjoy access to all main stage TSM Festival Concerts, lectures, events (July 27 to August 1), as well as the opportunity to perform onstage at Walter Hall.

**TORQ Percussion Seminar**

Stratford Summer Music, Stratford, ON  
August 16 to 22  
Contact: Lana Mau  
519-271-2101, x3  
info@stratfordsummermusic.ca  
https://stratfordsummermusic.ca/education/torq-percussion-seminar  
Deadline: May 31, 2020  
Cost: $600

Day Program

Now in its ninth year, TorQ Percussion Seminar is an opportunity for university-level percussionists to come together for an intense but rewarding week of rehearsals, discussions, master classes, creation and performance, under the direction of the TorQ Percussion Quartet (Richard Burrows, Adam Campbell, Jamie Drake and Daniel Morphy). Operated in association with Stratford Summer Music in beautiful Stratford, Ontario, TPS2020 will culminate in a series of public performances as part of the festival.

The core of the TPS experience is ensemble rehearsal. Each participant will be part of multiple ensemble pieces that will be rehearsed throughout the week; that rehearsal process will culminate in a finale concert, presented as part of Stratford Summer Music.

**Vocal Academy 2020**

Stratford Summer Music, Stratford, ON  
July 20 to July 29 and July 30 to August 5  
Contact: Lana Mau  
519-271-2101, x3  
info@stratfordsummermusic.ca  
https://stratfordsummermusic.ca/education/vocal-academy  
Deadline: March 20, 2020  
Cost: $600 to $1200

Day Program

The Stratford Summer Music Vocal Academy launches its sixth season in 2020. We are an intensive study program for professionally-trained singers and for pianists with a keen interest in pursuing careers as coach/accompanists. Our internationally recognized faculty focuses on the perfection of musicianship, language and technique within a supportive and creative atmosphere. This year we offer the course in two sections; Opera and Oratorio (July 20 to 29), and Art Song (July 30 to August 5). Applicants may apply to one or both of these sections. Applicants should either be in a degree/training program with a university, conservatory or opera company, or have recently completed such training. All participants will perform in a Finale Concert, as well as at other events TBA.
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 61.

**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 64.

**D. IN THE CLUBS (MOSTLY JAZZ)** is organized alphabetically by club. Starts on page 65.

**E. THE ET CETERAS** 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 68.

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

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

**LISTINGS DEADLINE.** The next issue covers the period from April 1 to May 7, 2020. All listings must be received by 11:59pm, Sunday March 8.

**LISTINGS.** "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.

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**A. Concerts in the GTA**

**Sunday March 1**

- **1:00:** Royal Conservatory of Music. Sunday Interludes Series: Alison Young, Mazzoleni Concert Hall, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. Free (ticket required). Tickets available a week prior to concert date.
- **2:00:** Opera York. The Merry Widow. Music by Franz Lehár. Sara Papini, soprano (Hanna Giannini); Douglas Tranqua, baritone (Count Danilo Danilovitsch); Geoffrey Butler, music director. Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, 10268 Yonge St., Richmond Hill. 905-767-8811. From $40; $25 (at) (all eve). Also Feb 28 (eve).
- **2:00:** Toronto Symphony Orchestra. The Composer Is Dead. Stookey: The Composer Is Dead. Kevin Frank, host; Eugene Ye, cello; Simon Rivard, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4255. $22. Also 4pm.
- **7:00:** Toronto Beach Choral. Carmina Burana. Music by Carl Orff. TorQ Percussion Quintet; 2 pianos; Christina Lamoureux, soprano; Michael Dodge, tenor; Matthew Casilis, baritone; Mervin W. Fick, conductor. St. Aloysius Organic Catholic Church, 270 Gladstone Ave. 647-812-2505. $30/$25(adv); $15/$12.50(7-18); free (under 7). Tickets available at toorobechchorale.com/upcoming.

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**THE INDIGO PROJECT**

Feb 27–Mar 1, 2020

- **12:30:** York University Department of Music. Music at Midday: Classical Instrumental Recital. Student soloists. Tribute Communities Recital Hall, Accolade East Building, York University, 4700 Keele St. 416-736-2100 x20054. Free.
- **7:00:** Pingxin Xu. Chinese Dulcimer Performance. Traditional, folk, contemporary and popular Chinese music. Pingxin Xu. Chinese Dulcimer, cimbalom, sanxian, santur; hackbrett; Xiaoyan Miao, Chinese lutes.
Toronto Reference Library, 789 Yonge St, 416-393-7157. Free. No registration required.

Tuesday March 3


Wednesday March 4

● 12:00 noon: Canadian Opera Company. Piano Virtuoso Series: Beneath a Solace of Stars. Howard Bashaw: 15 for Piano; and works by Liszt and Shostakovich. Lauren Margison, soprano; Matthew Cairns, tenor; Joel Allison, baritone; Alex Soloyov, piano. Princess Margaret Cancer Centre Atrium, 610 University Ave. 416-363-8231. Free and does not require a ticket.


● 2:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Music of John Williams. Themes from Jaws, Indiana Jones, Hook, Schindler’s List and others. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-822-4755. $37, Also Mar 3, 4(8pm), 5(8pm).


● 7:30: National Ballet of Canada. New Work by Crystal Pite & Chroma & Marguerite and Armand. See Mar 1. Also Mar 2, 3(2pm & 7:30pm); 5(7:30pm); 7(2pm & 7:30pm).


● 8:00: Toronto Operetta Theatre. H.M.S. Pinafore. Gilbert & Sullivan. Holly Chaplin, soprano; Rosalind McArthur, mezzo; Ryan Downey, Bradley Christensen, Gregory Finney, baritones; Derek Bate, conductor; Guillermo Silva-Marin, stage director. St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 21 Front St. E. 416-366-7723. $35-$95. Also Mar 6, 7, 8(3pm).

● 8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Music of John Williams. Themes from Jaws, Indiana Jones, Hook, Schindler’s List and others. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-822-4755. $32. Also Mar 3, 4(2pm), 5.

Thursday March 5


● 2:00: National Ballet of Canada. New Work by Crystal Pite & Chroma & Marguerite and Armand. See Mar 1. Also Mar 2, 3(3pm); 5(7:30pm); 7(2pm & 7:30pm).

● 2:00: Canadian Music Centre/Women in Music. CMC Presents: Elisa Thorn, Claire Downey, Bradley Christensen, Gregory Finney, baritones; Derek Bate, conductor; Guillermo Silva-Marin, stage director. St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 21 Front St. E. 416-736-2100 x20054. Free.

● 3:00: Tafelmusik. The Indigo Project. Created by Alison Mackay. Suba Sankaran, vocals; percussion; Trichy Sankaran, mridangam, kanjira and solkattu; Elisa Citterio, director; Cynthia Smithers, narrator & vocalist; Choirs from Earl Haig & Univeilville Secondary Schools; Members of Tafelmusik Chamber Choir; Ivars Taurins, choral director; Suba Sankaran, choral director. George Weston Recital Hall, Meridan Arts Centre (formerly Toronto Centre for the Arts), 5040 Yonge St. 416-964-6337 or 1-855-985-2787. From $39. Discounts for under 36 under 19. Also Feb 27, 28, 29, Mar 1-3.

● 6:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Music of John Williams. Themes from Jaws, Indiana Jones, Hook, Schindler’s List and others. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-822-4755. $32. Also Mar 4(2pm & 8pm), 5.

Friday March 6


Saturday March 7

● 11:00am and 1:00: University Settlement Music & Arts School. Student Concerts. St. George by the Grange Church, 30 Stephanie
CONCERTS IN THE GTA

St. 416-598-3444 x243/4, Free.
• 2:00: National Ballet of Canada. New Work by Crystal Pite & Chroma & Marguerite and Armand. See Mar 1. Also Mar 7(3pm).

• 2:00: Jubilite Singers. The Seas: Music Inspired by the Sea. Settings of “Ave maris Stella”; A selection of sea shanties; and works by Elgar, Grieg, Rheinberger, Halley, Stan Rogers, and others. Eastminster United Church, 310 Danforth Ave. 416-485-1888. $25; $20(sr); $15(st).

• 7:00: MCHS Chorus Mississauga. Mozart’s Requiem. Mozart: Requiem. MCS Chorus; MCS Chamber Orchestra. First United Church, 151 Lakeshore Rd. W., Mississauga. 905-290-7104. $25; $12(7-18).

• 7:30: Music at Metropolitan. Sperzzatura: Music of the Forgotten Galant. Works by Galuppi, Scarlatti, Leo, Handel and others. Rezonance Baroque Ensemble; Musicians on the Edge; Emily Klassen, soprano. Metropolitan United Church (Toronto), 56 Queen St. E. metunited.ca/music. $20; $10(st).


• 7:30: Opera by Request. Puccini’s Turandot. Naimei Eberhard, soprano (Turandot); Corey Arnold, tenor (Calaf); Amanda Daigle, soprano (Liù); Kyle MacDonald, bass-baritone (Timur); Lawrence Shirkie, baritone (Ping) and others. College St. United Church, 452 College St. 416-455-2365. $20.

• 7:30: Canadian Celtic Choir. An Irish Celtic Celebration. Guests: Anne Lindsay, fiddler; Sharlene Wallace, harp; Jean Willard, cello. Eastminster United Church, 310 Danforth Ave. 416-485-1888. $30; $25(st).

• 8:00: In Tribute Jazz Productions. The Story of Nina Simone: I Put a Spell on You; My Baby Just Cares for Me; Backlash Blues; Four Women; Feeling Good. Faith Amour, voice; Adreas Farrugia, piano; Chris Wallace, drums. Small World Music Centre, Artscape Youngplace, 180 Shaw St. 847-882-4848 or faithamourjazz.com. $25; $22(online); $20(7-18). Tu.


• 7:30: Mississauga Symphony Orchestra. A Guide to the Orchestra. Living Arts Centre, Berci Theatre, 4141 Living Arts Dr., Mississauga. 905-308-6000 or mississuagasymphony.ca. $30.


• 8:00: Trio Arkel. Brahms and Beyond. Brahms: Clarinet Quintet; Kulesha: String Trio; Bartók: Romanian Dances; Barber: Adagio. Marie Bérard, violin; Winona Zelenka, piano. Toronto Performing Arts Centre, RBC Theatre, 4141 Living Arts Dr., Mississauga. 905-308-6000 or mississuagasymphony.ca. $30.

FRI, MAR 6

• 7:30: Chicago Jazz Heath. The Piano Lunaire. Emmanuel Higginbottom, piano. Tribeca Pizza, 131 Church St. 212-463-7673. $30.

• 8:00: National Ballet of Canada. New Work by Crystal Pite & Chroma & Marguerite and Armand. See Mar 1.

• 8:00: In Tribute Jazz Productions: In Tribute Jazz Productions: The Piano Lunaire. Emmanuel Higginbottom, piano. Tribeca Pizza, 131 Church St. 212-463-7673. $30.

• 8:00: Aiki Jikishinkai. Aiki Jikishinkai Kyouryukan. 680 Bay St. 416-205-8697. $25; $15(st).


• 8:00: Mississauga Symphony Orchestra. A Guide to the Orchestra. Living Arts Centre, Berci Theatre, 4141 Living Arts Dr., Mississauga. 905-308-6000 or mississuagasymphony.ca. $30.


• 10:00: Trio Arkel. Brahms and Beyond. Brahms: Clarinet Quintet; Kulesha: String Trio; Bartók: Romanian Dances; Barber: Adagio. Marie Bérard, violin; Winona Zelenka, piano. Toronto Performing Arts Centre, RBC Theatre, 4141 Living Arts Dr., Mississauga. 905-308-6000 or mississuagasymphony.ca. $30.
Tuesday March 10


Wednesday March 11


7:00: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Upper Jazz Concerts: U of T Jazz Ensembles. Upper Jazz Studio, 90 Wellesley St. W. 416-363-3750. Free. Open to the public. Also at 8pm.


8:00: St. Michael’s Concerts. Mozart: Requiem. Stabat Mater from Gregorian Chant; Handel: Dead March from Saul; Mozart: Requiem. Teri Dunn, soprano; Kristinza Szabó, mezzo; Michael Colvin, tenor; Robert Pomakov, bass; St. Michael’s Choir School Schola Cantorum; Schola Cantorum Orchestra; S. Bryan Pridry, conductor. St. Michael’s Cathedral, 65 Bond St. 416-397-6367 or stmichaelscathedral.com/concerts. Freewill offering.

8:30: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. World Music Festival: Cuban Ensembles with Escola de Samba. Tribute Communities Recital Hall, Accolade East Building, York University, 4700 Keele St. 416-738-2100 x20054. Free.

Thursday March 12


St. Michael’s presents MOZART REQUIEM

Thursday, March 12 | 7:00 p.m.
St. Michael’s Cathedral Basilica
65 Bond Street, Toronto
St. Michael’s Choir School Schola Cantorum
Schola Cantorum Orchestra

Sprezzatura! Music of the Forgotten Galant
Galuppi, Scarlatti, Leo, Handel & more

Saturday March 7 - 7:30 pm
Rezonance Baroque Ensemble
Musicians on the Edge
Emily Klassen, soprano
A. Concerts in the GTA

**Saturday March 14**

- **2:00:** National Ballet of Canada. *Romeo and Juliet.* See Mar 11. Also Mar 14(7:30pm); 15(2pm); 18(3pm); 19(3:30pm); 20(3:30pm); 21(2pm & 7:30pm); 22(2pm).
- **3:00:** Cliqua Jazz Band. Matinee Jazz. Dorothy Rose, chanteuse. Smoke Show, 144 Mount Pleasant Rd. 416-901-7689. $5.
- **3:00:** Neapolitan Connection - Musical Matinées at Montgomery’s Inn. Rizikov Plays Rachmaninoff. Anastasia Rizikov, piano. Montgomery’s Inn, 4700 Dundas St. W. 416-231-0009 or neapolitanconnection.com. 8:15–30, Tea, historical tour (2:15pm); cookies included.
- **7:30:** National Ballet of Canada. *Romeo and Juliet.* See Mar 1. Also Mar 15(3pm). 18(3:30pm); 19(3:30pm); 20(3:30pm); 21(2pm & 7:30pm); 22(2pm).
- **7:30:** University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Mansfield Park. Music by Jonathan Dove, libretto by Alasdair Middleton. MacMillan Theatre, Edward Johnson Building, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-408-0208. $40; $25(sr); $10(st). U of T students admitted free with a valid TCard, space permitting. “Opera Talk” lecture ½ hour before concert. Also Mar 13, 16(3pm), 15(2pm), 16(3pm).
- **8:00:** Acoustic Harvest/Live Music East. James Keelaghan & Jaz Lowe. St. Paul’s United Church (Scarbrough), 200 McIntosh St. Scarborough. 416-729-1654 or acousticharvest.ca/2020-02-22. HTML. $30/25(sr/adv).
- **8:00:** Cathedral Buffs Symphony Orchestra. Beethoven & Schumann. Beethoven: Overture to Egmont; Schumann: Symphony No.4 in d at; Virgil: Serenade for Strings; Barbara Croall: Nimkii N’gamwin (Thunderbird Song). Barbara Croall, Odawa First Nations composer and soloist; Prakash Gandhi, guest conductor. P.C. Ho Theatre, Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto, 5183 Sheppard Ave. E. Scarborough. 416-879-5666 or cathedralbuffs.com. $35-65; $30-44(sr/adv); free under 12; 7:15pm Pre-concert talk.
- **8:00:** Music Gallery. Pitch + x4. Viver: Love Songs and other works. The Music Gallery, 918 Bathurst St. musicgallery.org. $18/13(adv); $10(st)/members. Venue not wheelchair accessible.
- **8:00:** Toronto Chamber Choir. Rosenmuller @400. Rosenmuller; Miss B. Revis, Siehe an die Werke Gottes, Ad dominum cum tribularum, Magnificat in B-flat à 10. Linda Pearse, saccbut. Calvin Presbyterian Church, 28 Delisle Ave. 416-763-1695 or torontochamberchoir.ca. $30; $25(sr); $15(st). U of T students admitted free with a valid TCard, space permitting. “Opera Talk” lecture ½ hour before concert. Also Mar 12, 13, 14(4ves).
- **9:00:** Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Pictures at an Exhibition. Eckhardt-Gramatté: Capriccio concertante; Tchaikovsky: Piano Concerto No.2; Mussorgsky/klyorl. Ravel: Pictures at an Exhibition. Sergei Babayan, piano; Jader Bignamini, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 80 Simcoe St. 416-872-4255. From $35. Also Mar 13(7:30pm), 15(3:30pm).

**Sunday March 15**

- **2:00:** National Ballet of Canada. *Romeo and Juliet.* See Mar 11. Also Mar 18(7:30pm); 19(3:30pm); 20(7:30pm); 21(2pm & 7:30pm); 22(2pm).

**Monday March 16**

- **7:30:** Shaftesbury Salon Music Series. Mirror Visions. Settings of the same text by different composers. Mireille Asselin, soprano; Scott Murphee, tenor; Jesse Blumberg, baritone; Grant Wenaus, piano. Atrium (Toronto), 21 Shaftesbury Ave. 416-519-7833. $30.
- **7:30:** University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Vocalics: Playing Well with Others. Master’s and doctoral level singers. Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, 427 Bloor St. W. 416-397-3750. Free and open to the public.
- **7:30:** York University Department of Music. Jazz Festival: Jazz Combos. Roy Patterson, Anthony Michelle, Artie Roth, Mark Eisenman, directors. Martin Family Lounge, Accadale East Building, York University. 4700 Keele St. 416-738-2100 x20054. Free.
- **8:00:** Aga Khan Museum/Kabir Cultural Centre. Fareed Ayaz & Abu Muhammed Qawwam Ensemble. Aga Khan Museum, 77 Wynford Dr. 416-646-4677. $55. $45(sr/ut/ st).

**Tuesday March 17**

- |12:10:** Nine Sparrows Arts Foundation. Lunchtime Chamber Music. Rising Stars Recital featuring students from the UofT Faculty of Music. Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, 1585 Yonge St. 416-241-1298. Free. Donations welcome.
- **7:00:** University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Student Conductor Concert. Edward Johnson Building, Walter Hall, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-978-3750. Free. Open to the public.
- **7:30:** York University Department of Music. Jazz Festival: Jazz Combos. Lorne Lofsky, Kelly Jeffery, directors. Martin Family Lounge, Accadale East Building, York University, 4700 Keele St. 416-738-2100 x20054. Free.
March 19 at 8 pm
PAVEL HAAS QUARTET
A. Concerts in the GTA

- 8:00: Guitar Society of Toronto. In Concert. Alexandra Christodimou and Yannis Petridis, guitarists. St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church (Toronto), 73 Simcoe St. 416-964-8298 or guitarssocietyoftoronto.com. $40; $35(s); $30(st); $35(adv); $30( sr adv); $25(st adv).

- 8:00: Tapestry Opera. Songbook X. Kristina Szabo, mezzo; Christopher Foley, piano. Ernest Balmer Studio, Distillery District, 9 Trinity St. 416-537-5068. $25. Also Mar 20.

- 9:00: Alliance Française de Toronto. Prince Yannick. Spadina Theatre, 24 Spadina Rd. 416-922-2014 x27. $28; $14 (members).

Sunday March 22


Taiko Returns

Sunday March 22

2020

8pm Concert Koerner Hall

ESPRIT ORCHESTRA espiritorchestra.com

- 8:00: Esperit Orchestra. Taiko Returns. Barbara Croall: Midjweheesin (Messages), for Anishinaabekwe soloist and orchestra; Christopher Goddard: Piano Concerto, concerto for piano and orchestra; Eugene Astapov: A Still Life, for soprano and orchestra; Maki Ishii: Mono-Prism for taiko drumming group and orchestra. Shannon Mercer, soprano; Nagata Schachu, taiko drumming group; Eugene Astapov, conductor; Christopher Goddard, piano; Barbara Croall, Anishinaabekwe soloist (vocals/traditional flute); Alex Pauk, conductor: Koerner Hall, TELUS Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. From $20. 7:15pm: pre-concert chat.

Monday March 23

- 7:30: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Gras During Chamber Ensembles. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-978-3750. Free and open to the public.

- 7:30: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. We the Broadway North. A celebration of musical theatre. Hart House Theatre, 7 Hart House Circle. 416-978-3750. Free and open to the public.

Tuesday March 24


- 7:30: Falun Dafa Association of Toronto.

Shen Yun: 5,000 Years of Civilization Reborn. Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. 416-373-8231. $100-$400. Also Mar 25(2pm); 26(7:30pm); 27(7:30pm); 28(2pm & 7:30pm); 29(1pm).

March 24 and 31


Wednesday March 25


- 12:30: York University Department of Music. Vocal Jazz Ensemble. Noonday Organ Recital. Matthew Larin, organ. 1585 Yonge St. 416-922-1167. Free. 7:00pm)

- 2:00: Falun Dafa Association of Toronto. Shen Yun: 5,000 Years of Civilization Reborn. Sat/Sun(2pm).

- 12:30: York University Department of Music. Experience in the Dark. See Mar 25. Also Mar 27(7:30pm); 28(7:30pm), 29(2:30pm).

- 7:30: Falun Dafa Association of Toronto. Shen Yun: 5,000 Years of Civilization Reborn. See Mar 24. Also Mar 26(7:30pm); 27(7:30pm); 28(2pm & 7:30pm); 29(1pm).

- 7:30: Array Space/Frank Horvat. Earth Hour Music: An Introspective Piano Experience in the Dark. See Mar 25. Also Mar 27(7:30pm); 28(7:30pm), 29(2:30pm).


Thursday March 26


- 12:30: York University Department of Music. Music at Midday: Chamber Music Concert. Tribute Communities Recital Hall, Accolade East Building, York University, 4700 Keele St. 416-736-2100 x20054. Free.

- 7:30: Array Space/Frank Horvat. Earth Hour Music: An Introspective Piano Experience in the Dark. See Mar 25. Also Mar 27(7:30pm); 28(7:30pm), 29(2:30pm).

Piano Erhu Project

Project. Works written for the PEP ensemble by Dorothy Chang; Alice He; Terri Hnro; Jocelyn Morlock; Serra Hvang; and others. Nicole Ge Li; erhu; Cory Ham; piano. Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, 427 Bloor St. W. 416-961-8594. $35; $25(sr/arts workers); $10(st). 7:30pm:
- 7:30: Tafelmusik. Bach. St. John Passion. Jana Miller, soprano; Kristina Szabó, mezzo; Charles Daniels, tenor; William Sharp, baritone; Andrew Mahon, bass-baritone; Tafelmusik Chamber Choir; Ivars Taurins, conductor. Koerner Hall, TELUS Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. From $39(Thu; Fr; Sat)/from $46(Sun); discounts for sr/under 38/under 18. Also Mar 26, 28, 29(mat).
- 8:00: Tafelmusik. Bach. St. John Passion. Jana Miller, soprano; Kristina Szabó, mezzo; Charles Daniels, tenor; William Sharp, baritone; Andrew Mahon, bass-baritone; Tafelmusik Chamber Choir; Ivars Taurins, conductor. Koerner Hall, TELUS Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. From $39(Thu; Fr; Sat)/from $46(Sun); discounts for sr/under 38/under 18. Also Mar 26, 28, 29(mat).

THE WHOLE NOTE • 2506 Listings_Master.indd 57
2/24/2020 12:06:02 AM
A. Concerts in the GTA

Remembering. McTee: Circuits; Laursdien: O Magnum Mysterium; Bayoyo: Last Breath; Colgrass: Winds of Nagual. Korin Thomas-Smith, baritone; Gillian Mackay, conductor; MacMillan Theatre, Edward Johnson Building, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-408-0208. $30; $20(sr); $10(st). U of T students admitted free with a valid TCard, space permitting.

• 7:30: York Chamber Ensemble. Beethoven 2507 Beethoven: Coriolan Overture; Piano Concerto No.5 “Emperor”; Symphony No.8. Coral Solomon-Berkovsky, piano; Michael Berec, conductor; St. Paul’s Anglican Church (Newmarket), 227 Church St., Newmarket. 416-931-7899. $20; $10(child).

• 8:00: Canadian Sinfonietta. Chamber Concert III. 20th and 21st Century Music for Voice and Strings. Debussy: Chansons de Bilitis (arr. Jake Heggie); Ravel: Duo for violin and cello; Caravassilis: Four Songs from the Age of the Rebetiko. Maria Souils, mezzo; Joyce Lai & Alain Bouvier, violins; Ian Clarke, viola; Andreas Weber, cello. Heliconian Hall, 35 Hazelton Ave. 647-812-0839. $35; $30(sr); $25(st).

• 8:00: Jazz Performance and Education Centre. Album Launch: Swing into Spring with Laila Biali. Aga Khan Museum Auditorium, 77 Wynford Dr. jazzcentre.ca. $40; $20(st). Includes admission to museum.

• 8:00: Mississauga Symphony Orchestra. Music by Request. Music selected by the audience. Works by Beethoven, Brahms, Mozart and Rachmaninoff. Guest: winner of MSO Youth Concerto Competition. Living Arts Centre, Hammermill Hall, 4141 Living Arts Dr., Mississauga. 905-306-6000 or mississaugasymphony.ca. $40-$65.

• 8:00: Voices Chamber Choir. Sounds of Spring. Carl Orff: Carmina Burana; John Rutter: Requiem; John Mackey: Climactik; John Musto: Mass for the Sun, etc. McEwan Hall, 222 College St., Toronto. 416-978-3217. $40; $30(sr/st).

Sunday March 29

• 1:00: Falun Dafa Association of Toronto. Shen Yun: 5,000 Years of Civilization Reborn. See Mar 24.

• 2:00: Canzona Chamber Players. English Music for Clarinet and String Quartet. Works by Arthur Bliss, York Bowen and Arnold Cooke. Jessica Tong, Csaba Koczo, violins; Jonathan Krehm, clarinet. St. Andrew-by-the-Lake Anglican Church, Cibola Ave., Toronto Island. bemusednetwork.com/groups/member/100. $30; $50(concert + 12:30pm brunch). Also Mar 30(7:30pm, St. George the Martyr, Toronto – concert only).

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

• 2:00: Onstage Uxbridge. The Mikado. See Mar 26. Also Apr 21(7:30pm); 31(7:30pm); 4(2pm & 7:30pm).

• 2:00: Toronto Mozart Players. Leopold & Wolfgang. W.A. Mozart: Twelve Duos for Horns K487; Leopold Mozart: Trumpet Concerto in D; David Bowser: The Forest; W.A. Mozart: Requiem K626. Andrew McCandless, trumpet; Amy Moodie, soprano; Rachel Miller, mezzo; David Walsh, tenor; Wesley Hui, bass; Pax Christi Chamber Choir; Toronto Mozart Players; David Bowser: conductor. Church of the Redeemer, 162 Bloor St. W. 416-471-7522 or mozartproject.ca. $40; $35(sr); $15(st).


• 3:00: Array Space/Frank Horvat. Earth Hour Music: An Introspective Piano Experience in the Dark. See Mar 25.

• 3:00: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Choirs in Concert: Wake Into Voice. Works by Britten, Schubert, Brahms, Runestad and others. MacMillan Singers; Women’s Chorus; Women’s Chamber Choir; Men’s Chorus; David Fälls, Elaine Choi, Lotti-Ann Dalkoff and Mark Ramsay, conductors. MacMillan Theatre, Edward Johnson Building, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-408-0208. $30; $20(sr); $10(st). U of T students admitted free with a valid TCard, space permitting.

• 3:00: Amici Chamber Ensemble. Cinema. Revisiting the tradition of silent films with live music. Films: Man Ray: Emak-Bakia; Guy Maddin: Heart of the World; Buster Keaton: The Playhouse. Music by Milhaud, Kradjian, Poulenc, Rota, Saïns, guest: Yohanatan Berick, violin; Amici Chamber Ensemble (Joaquin Valdepeñas, clarinet; David Hetherington, cello; Serouj Kradjian, piano). Isabel Bader Theatre, 53 Charles St. W. 416-200-0208. $50; $45($r); $30(under 30); $15(st).

• 3:00: Vesnivka Choir. Robert. Katerina Khravtova, soprano; Juri Hryhorosh, baritone; Ukrainian Male Chamber Choir. Al Saints Kingsway Anglican Church, 2850 Bloor St. W. 416-763-2197. $30; $25($r/sr).

• 3:00: York University Department of Music. York U Wind Symphony. William Thomas, conductor. Tribute Communities Recital Hall, Accadale East Building, York University, 4700 Keele St. 416-736-5959. $20; $15($r/sr).

• 3:00: Tafelmusik. Bach. St John’s Passion. Jana Miller, soprano; Kristzina Szabó, mezzo; Charles Daniels, tenor; William Sharp, baritone; Andrew Mahon, bass-baritone. Tafelmusik Chamber Choir; Ioars Taurins, conductor. Koerner Hall, TELUS Centre, 273 Bloor St W. 416-408-0208. From $39($r/th, Fr, Sat) / from $46($b/Sun); discounts for sr/under 36/under 19. Also Mar 28, 21, 28 (all eve).


Monday March 30


• 7:30: Canzona Chamber Players. English Clarinet Quintets. Works by Arthur Bliss, York Bowen and Arnold Cooke. Jessica Tong, Stephenson, organ; Ron Ka Ming Cheung, violin; Amici Chamber Ensemble (Joaquin Valdepeñas, clarinet; David Hetherington, cello; Serouj Kradjian, piano). Isabel Bader Theatre, 53 Charles St. W. 416-200-0208. $50; $45($r); $30(under 30); $15(st).

Saturday March 28, 2020 - 7:30 PM

FIRST UNITED CHURCH, 151 LAKESHORE ROAD W. MISSISSAUGA ON

Mississauga Festival Chamber Choir explores music on similar themes and texts from the Baroque and modern eras, covering 400 years of choral music.

SATURDAY MARCH 28, 2020 • 7:30 PM

MCC CHOIR

FIRST UNITED CHURCH

75 WYNFORD DRIVE, NORTH YORK

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with Laila Biali — launching her new recording Out of Dust with a fabulous 7-piece band.

TICKET INCLUDES ADMISSION TO THE AGA KHAN MUSEUM

77 WYNFORD DRIVE, NORTH YORK

jaszcentre.ca
Csaba Koczó, violins, Rory McLeod, viola; Robin Howe, cello; Jonathan Krehm, clarinet. St. George the Martyr Church, 30 Stephanie St. bemusednetwork.com/groups/member/100. $30. Also Mar 29 (2pm, St. Andrew-by-the-Lake, Toronto Island).

March 31 at 8 pm
BENJAMIN GROSVENOR pianist

Music in the Afternoon: Classical Piano. Tribute Communities Recital Featuring students from the UofT Music at Midday: New Music Ensemble. First come, first served. No late seating.

Wednesday April 1

12:00 noon: Canadian Opera Company Jazz/Worship Series: Heart and Soul. OKAN. Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre, Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. 416-363-8231. Free. First come, first served. No late seating.


Tuesday March 31


12:30: Organix Concerts/All Saints Kingsway. Kingsway Organ Concert Series. Damien McAodo, organ. All Saints Kingsway Anglican Church, 2850 Bloor St. W. 416-571-3860 or organixconcerts.ca. Freewill offering appreciated.


A. Concerts in the GTA

416-593-5600 x231. Free.

● 7:30: Onstage Uxbridge. The Mikado. See Mar 26. Also Apr 2(7:30pm).


● 7:30: Upper Canada Brass. Brass-ing Off! Sutton: The Paragon; Ballantine: Don’t Doubt Him Now; Gayfer: Canadian Landscape. Tom Hutchinson, cornet. St. Mary’s Anglican Church, 10030 Yonge St. Richmond Hill. 705-702-5768 or bit.ly/2srsfbu. $30; $25(online).


● 8:00: Art of Time Ensemble. S’Wonderful. George & Ira Gershwin: Someone to Watch Over Me; Lorelei; He Loves, She Loves; instrumental works by George Gershwin; and music from Porgy and Bess. Jackie Richardson, John Southworth, Sarah Slean, Billy Newton-Davis, Gregory Hoskins, singers; Andrew Burashko, piano; and others. Harbourfront Centre Theatre, 235 Queens Quay W. 416-973-4000 or arttofensemble.com. $25-$64. Also Apr 2, 4.


● 8:00: TD Live. Hiroshi, Meridian Arts Centre (formerly Toronto Centre for the Arts), 5040 Yonge St., North York. 1-855-985-2787. $42.50-$65.


Saturday April 4

● 2:00: Onstage Uxbridge. The Mikado. See Mar 26. Also Apr 4(7:30pm).


● 7:00: Music at St. Andrew’s. Handel’s Messiah. Suzie Leblanc, soprano; Daniel Taylor, countertenor; Colin Ainsworth, tenor; Russell Braun, baritone; Nata Bena Baroque Players & Singers; Howard Dyck, conductor. St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church (Toronto), 73 Simcoe St. 416-395-5600 x231 or stan-drewstoronto.org. $40.


● 8:00: Art of Time Ensemble. S’Wonderful. George & Ira Gershwin: Someone to Watch Over Me; Lorelei; He Loves, She Loves; instrumental works by George Gershwin; and music from Porgy and Bess. Jackie Richardson, John Southworth, Sarah Slean, Billy Newton-Davis, Gregory Hoskins, singers; Andrew Burashko, piano; and others. Harbourfront Centre Theatre, 235 Queens Quay W. 416-973-4000 or arttofensemble.com. $25-$64. Also Apr 2, 3.

Painted with Love

Stéphane Tétreault, cellist Schumann • April 3 • 8 pm
sinfonioronto.com


Cellissimo!

Cherubini, Requiem Mass in C Minor; Brahms, Nanie; and works by Elgar, Vaughan Williams, Mascagni and Chatman.

Satur aty April 4

TRINITY ST. PAUL’S CENTRE

www.NewMusicConcerts.com

SUNNYCONCERTS.CA

Sunday April 5

● 1:00: Royal Conservatory of Music. Sun- day Interludes Series. Works by Debussy and Chopin. Dang Thai Son, piano. Mazzoleni Concert Hall, TELUS Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. Free(ticket required). Tickets available a week prior to concert date.

● 2:30: VOICE@OPERA: Opera in Concert. Adriana Lecouvreur. Music by Francesco Cilea, libretto by Arturo Colautti. Sung in Italian with English surtitles. Sally Dibblee, soprano; Rômulo Delgado, tenor; Geneviève Lévesque, mezzo; Opera in Concert Chorus; Narmina Afandyeva, music director & pianist; Rob Cooper, chorus director. Jane Mallett Theatre, St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 27 Front St. E. 416-386-7723. $20-$50.

● 3:00: Royal Thames Hall. Conference of Independent Schools Music Festival. An opportunity for students and music educators to collaborate in a non-competitive atmosphere. 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4255. $45-$85.


Air, Strings & Keys theremin, violin, piano

Sunday April 5, 3pm

SyrinXConcerts.ca


● 3:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Lisiecki Plays Beethoven’s Emperor. Apr 1 & 2: Beethoven: Leonore Overture No.3, Piano Concerto No.5 “Emperor”; Schoenberg: Pelias und Melisande. Apr 4 & 5: Beethoven: Leonore Overture No.3, Piano Concerto No.3 & 5 “Emperor”. Jan Lisiecki, piano; Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra (Apr 1 & 2: Overture only); Jukka-Pekka Saraste, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4255. From $45. Also Apr 1, 2, 5(3pm), Merid- ian Arts Centre.

 Picks for Bob

Lisiecki Plays Beethoven’s Emperor

SAT.APR.4 TRINITY ST.PAUL’S CENTRE www.NewMusicConcerts.com

● 8:00: New Music Concerts. Pieces for Bob. Celebrating Atken@80. Daniel Foley: Epigrams for Robert Atken; George Crumb: Idyll for the Misbegotten (Images III); John Cage: Ryonan; Elliot Carter: Scrivo in vento; Diego Luziargia: Tierra...tierra; and other works. NMC Ensemble; Robert Atken; and others. Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, 427 Bloor St. W. 416-961-5934. $35; $25(st/arts workers); $10(st). 7:15pm: pre-concert talk.

● 8:00: The Rose Theatre Brampton. LAL / New Chance / R. Flex. Rose Theatre, 1 Theatre Ln., Brampton. 905-674-2800. $25.

● 8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Lisiecki Plays Beethoven’s Emperor: Apr 1 & 2: Beethoven: Leonore Overture No.3, Piano Concerto No.5 “Emperor”; Schoenberg:...
B. Concerts Beyond the GTA


Sunday March 1
- 12:30: Don Wright Faculty of Music. Dance Studies in Motion. Paul Davenport Theatre, Talbot College, Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767. Free.
- 2:30: Niagara Symphony Orchestra. An Ocean Called Doven. Kevin Lau: Postcards from a Blue Planet (sections); Good: An Ocean Called Doven. NSD Arts & Minds Wind Trio; Dwight Schenk, author, artist, songwriter; Scott Good, composer, arranger, narrator: Bradley Thachuk, conductor. FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, 250 St. Paul St. St. Catharines. 905-688-0722 or 1-855-515-0722. $65-$64(30)/$33(30) and under); $20(arts worker); $12(st/child); $5(eyeGO).

Wednesday March 4
- 12:00 noon: Midday with Shigeru. Bedford Piano Trio. Hiway Pentecostal Church, 50 Anne St. N., Barrie. 705-729-1181. $10; free(st).
- 7:30: FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre. Sarah Sloan and Hawksway Workman. 250 St. Paul St., St. Catharines. 905-688-0722 or 1-855-515-0722 or FirstOntarioPAC.ca. $35; $30(Hot Ticket members); $25(st/uni/college); $5(st/high school). Also Mar 6.

Thursday March 5
- 8:00: FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre. KascheDance: Facing Home - Love & Redemption. 250 St. Paul St., St. Catharines. 905-688-0722 or 1-855-515-0722 or FirstOntarioPAC.ca. $35; $30(Hot Ticket members); $25(st/uni/college); $5(st/high school). Also Mar 6.
- 8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society. Dave Young, bass. Music of Scandinavia and Brazil. Kevin Turcotte, trumpeter; Bernie Senyesi, piano; Dave Young, bass. KWCMCS Music Room, 57 Young St. W., Waterloo. 519-569-1805. $35; $20(st).
- 8:00: TD Sunfest World Music & Jazz Series. Dervish. Aeolian Hall, 795 Dundas St. E., London. sunfest.on.ca. $40-$45(adult).

Friday March 6
- 12:00 noon: Westben. Tick Talk: Hearing Beethoven. A conversation exploring the history and hearing of Beethoven with Chris Cameron, Barbo Hobart, and Brian Fley. Clock Tower Concert Hall, 36 Front St. S., Campbellford. 705-653-5508 or 1-877-883-5777. PWYC (suggested min. $10).
- 12:30: Don Wright Faculty of Music. Fridays at 12:30 Concert Series. Erika Baum, violin; Thomas Wiebe, cello. Von Kuster Hall, Music Building, Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767. Free.
- 7:30: Isobel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts. Virtuoso. Jazz. Canadian Opera Company, Toronto. 5040 Yonge St., North York. 416-872-4255. From $59. Also Apr 4 (8pm Roy Thomson Hall), 2pm and 8pm, Thomson Hall. 4pm, Roy Thomson Hall.

The wholeNote.com

Passion Dieu Devotion
SUNDAY APRIL 5TH 4:30 PM

Iona Liturgy
HOLY TUESDAY, APRIL 7TH 7:00 PM

Yorkminster Baptist Church


Monday April 6
- 6:00: Confluence Concerts/St. Thomas’ Anglican Church. Baroque Music by Candelight. A time for quiet reflection at the beginning of Holy Week. Vocal and instrumental music by Handel, Telemann and Bach. St. Thomas’ Anglican Church (Toronto), 383 Huron St. 416-878-4923. Freewill offering.

Tuesday April 7
- 7:00: Yorkminster Park Baptist Church. Iona Liturgy. Musicians of Iona Passage. 1585 Yonge St. 416-922-1167. Freewill offering.
### Concerts Beyond the GTA

- **Thursday March 12**
  - **2:00:** *Chetaro -30 at the Centre for the Performing Arts*, 70 King St. E., Ottawa. 613-568-7756 or hpo.org. $24-$71.
  - **2:00:** *Chetaro -30 at the Centre for the Performing Arts*, 70 King St. E., Ottawa. 613-568-7756 or hpo.org. $24-$71.

- **Friday March 13**
  - **12:30:** *Don Wright Faculty of Music*, Fridays at 12:30 Concert Series. The Southwest Guitar Trio. Von Kuster Hall, Music Building, Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767. Free.

- **Sunday March 15**
  - **2:30:** *Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts*. Dan School of Drama and Music: 2020 Spring Concert - Choral Ensemble & Polyphony. Works by Mozart, Rogers & Hammerstein, Arlen, Sondheim, and others. Queen's Choral Ensemble and Polyphony Vocal Ensemble. 390 King St. W., Kingston. 613-533-2424 or queenusa.ca/theisabel/tickets. $7-$15.

- **Monday March 16**
  - **7:30:** *Cuckoo's Nest Folk Club*. Runa, Chau's Pub, 222 Carling St., Ottawa. 613-519-5847. $30/$25(adv).
  - **7:30:** *OneOntario Performing Arts Centre*. Dahkabrakha. 250 St. Paul St., St. Catharines. 905-688-0772 or 1-855-516-0772 or OneOntarioPAC.ca. $45; $45(Ticket members); $25(under-college); $25(high school).

- **Wednesday March 18**
  - **8:00:** *Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony*. Symmetry: Bach & Math. Barbara Croll: Zasakwaa (There is a Heavy Frost); Bach: Ich habe genug für alto, The Art of the Fuge. Chaconne. Tommy Kay, flute; Andrei Feher, curator/conductor. First United Church (Waterloo), 16 William St. W., Waterloo. 519-745-1874 or 1-888-745-4771 or kwsymphony.ca. $12-$37. Also Mar 20 (Harcourt Memorial United Church, Guelph), 21(Central Presbyterian Church, Cambridge).

- **Saturday March 21**
  - **11:00:** *CPUW Belleville and District*. Recorders on the Run. Junesse Musicales Canada; Caroline Tremblay, Marie-Laurence Primeau, Alesa Raine-Wright, Vincent Lauzer, flutes. Belleville Public Library, Parrott Gal- lery, 254 Pinnacle Street, Belleville. 613-968-6731 or cbxbelleville.com. $5; free(under 2).
  - **13:00:** *CPUW Belleville and District*. Recorders on the Run. Junesse Musicales Canada; Caroline Tremblay, Marie-Laurence Primeau, Alesa Raine-Wright, Vincent Lauzer, flutes. Belleville Public Library, Parrott Gallery, 254 Pinnacle Street, Belleville. 613-968-6731 or cbxbelleville.com. $5; free(under 2).

- **Monday March 16**
  - **8:00:** *Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony*. Symmetry: Bach & Math. Barbara Croll: Zasakwaa (There is a Heavy Frost); Bach: Ich habe genug für alto, The Art of the Fuge. Chaconne. Tommy Kay, flute; Andrei Feher, curator/conductor. Harcourt Memorial United Church, 87 Dean Ave., Guelph. 519-745-4711 or 1-888-745-4717 or kwsymphony.ca. $12-$37. Also Mar 18 (First United Church, Cambridge), 210(Central Presbyterian Church, Cambridge).

### March 15, 3pm

**St. Mark’s Anglican Church, Niagara-on-the-Lake**

bravonigara.org | 289-866-9177

- **3:00:** *Brago Niagara Festival of the Arts*. Guitar Concert: Mikei Kondagapi; Bach: Late Partita (Suite) in c BWV997; Granados: Andaluza from 12 Danzas Españoles Op.37 No.5; Granados: Orientale from 12 Danzas Españoles; Albeniz: Asturias from Suite española (arr. for guitar); Lennie/McCart- ney: Blackbird/Yesterday/While My Guitar Gently Weeps; and other works. St. Mark’s Anglican Church (Niagara-on-the-Lake), 41 Byron St., Niagara-on-the-Lake. 289-866-9177 or music@bravoniagara.org. $30; $60.


- **4:30:** *Music at St. Thomas’. A Cello & Violin Concert Series*. Don Wight Faculty of Music. St. Lawrence College, 300 King St. S., Brockville. 613-968-8819. $20(ad).

### March 17

- **1:00:** *Canadian Celtic Choir*. Irish Benevo- lent Society Luncheon. Western Fair Carou- sel Room, 865 Florence St. London. thewholenote.com

**irishbenevolentosociety.ca**, $40(includes buf- fet lunch). Admission only by pre-pur- chased luncheon ticket. All seats will be reserved.

- **7:00:** *Don Wright Faculty of Music*. West- ern University Percussion Ensemble. Paul Davenport Theatre, Talbot College, Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767. Free. Also 12:30pm.

- **7:30:** *Brock University Department of Music*. Rondell Concerto; Enigma Concert No. 3. FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, 250 St. Paul St., St. Catharines. 905-688-0772 or 1-855-516-0772 or FirstOntar- iOPAC.ca. $29; $295(ad); $18(Brock Uni. Music Student); $13(under and under); $6(ad).

- **8:00:** *Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony*. Symmetry: Bach & Math. Barbara Croll: Zasakwaa (There is a Heavy Frost); Bach: Ich habe genug für alto, The Art of the Fuge. Chaconne. Tommy Kay, flute; Andrei Feher, curator/conductor. Harcourt Memorial United Church, 87 Dean Ave., Guelph. 519-745-4711 or 1-888-745-4717 or kwsymphony.ca. $12-$37. Also Mar 18 (First United Church, Cambridge), 210(Central Presbyterian Church, Cambridge).
more. Lonely Joe; Nick Scolfield; Cedric Noel.
Clock Tower Concert Hall, 30 Front St. S.,
Cambridge. 705-653-5506 or 1-877-883-5777.
$25.

8:00. Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. Symmetry; Bach & Math. Barbara Croul,
Zazuak (There is a Heavy Frost); Bach. Ich
habe genug für alto, The Art of the Fugue,
Chaconne. Tommy Kay, flute; Andrei Feher,
curator/conductor. Central Presbyterian
Church (Cambridge), 7 Queens Sq.,
Cambridge. 519-745-4711 or 1-888-745-4717
ticket/3. $25-$15. Also Mar 18(F)1st
United Church, Waterloo), 20(Harcourt
Memorial United Church, Guelph).

8:00: Night Kitchen Too. Variety Show.
See and hear a diverse group of perform-
ers present their poetry, music and spoken
word in a welcoming and warm venue.
Invited musicians, poets and spoken
word artists; Joe Callahan, co-producer
and presenter. Pinnacle Playhouse, 255 Pinnacle
St., Belleville. 615-243-9753. $10.

Sunday March 22

5:00: FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre.
The Next Generation Leitao. 250 St. Paul
St., St. Catharines. 905-372-2210 or 1-855-
519-0172 or FirstOntarioPAC.ca. $45; $42(Hot
Ticket members); $25(itun/colllege); $5(st/
high school).

5:00: Isabel Bader Centre for the Per-
forming Arts. Dan School of Drama and Music;
Queen’s Orchestra - 2020 Spring Con-
cert. Queen’s Symphony Orchestra. 390 King
St. W., Kingston. 613-533-2424 or queenus
.ca/theisabel/tickets. $7-$15.

4:00: FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre.
Heart&Heart Niagara Music Series; Mark Lalama
Trio. Guests: Jack Dekeyser and Jim Craig.
250 St. Paul St., St. Catharines. 905-688-0722
or 1-855-519-0172 or FirstOntarioPAC.ca. $35;
186(table of six).

7:00. Hamilton Concert Band. Hamil-
ton Concert Band with Canadian Band Male Choir.
St. Andrew’s United Church (Hamilton),
479 Upper Paradise Rd., Hamilton. 289-339-
6296. $10(free(child under 13)).

7:30: Cuckoo’s Nest Folk Club. The Wanted.
Chaucer’s Pub, 122 Darling St., London.
905-519-3847. $25/$20(ad)

8:00. Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music
Society. The Azuline Duo. Falls; Two Spanish
Pieces (arr. Azuline Duo); To the Heart;
Symphony No.6 “Pathtéque”; Smetana: Dances
from the Bartered Bride. Ashley Yip, violin;
Daniel Warren, conductor. Humanities Thea-
tre, University of Waterloo, 200 Avenue Ave.
W., Waterloo. 519-885-0220 x24226. Free.

Ethereal folk artist. Songs that transport the audience
to places of quiet wonder; unspoken love,
and serene landscapes. Clock Tower
Concert Hall, 36 Front St. S., Cambridge.
519-653-5500 or 1-877-883-5777. $25.

Friday March 27

12:00: Don Wright Faculty of Music.
Fridays at 12:30 Concert Series. Noel Wan, harp.
Von Kuster Hall, Music Building, Western Uni-
vity, 115 Richmond St. N., London. 519-
681-3767.

7:30. Brock University Department of Music.
Les AMIS. The Magic of Harry Potter.
London Philharmonic Orchestra; Grand Philhar-
monic Youth Chor; Scott Terrell, conductor.
Centre in the Square, 101 Queen St. N., Kitch-
ener. 519-579-6211 or 1-888-745-4717
ticket/3. $15-$20(ad).

7:30. Don Wright Faculty of Music.
Choral Concert: United We Stand. The Chor-
est; Cecilia Singers; Les Choristes Choral.
St. Peter’s Cathedral Basilica, 156 Dufferin
Ave., London. 519-681-3767. $15(adv).

7:30. Don Wright Faculty of Music.
Western University Wind Ensemble.
Works by Daugherty, Markowski and Serra,
Shae-
lyc Anscheidt, soprano. Paul Davenport
Theatre, Talbot College, Western University,
115 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767.

7:30. University of Waterloo Department of
Signs by Willan; Bennett: All Creatures Now
 tyre/staff); $19-$29(st).

10:00. University of Waterloo Department of
Music. Vocal Chamber Ensemble.
Requiem. Noel Edison, conductor. Grandly
Reception to follow.
In Concert. Grandy; new work; and other
works; video of highlights of choir his-
tory. Trinity United Church (Cobourg),
284 Division St., Cobourg. $25/$22(ad).
$10(child). orianasingers.com. Info and
tickets available at Snap! and from choir members.

7:00. Waterloo University Dept. of
Music. University of Waterloo Choir: Jour-
neys. Works by Mäntyjärvi, Dvořák, Victoria,
Hogan, and others. Lisa Jetchick, con-
ductor; Nicola Simone, accompanist. Trillium
Lutheran Church, 22 Willow St., Waterloo.
519-885-0220 x24226. $10($5(st)).

8:00. Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. The
Magical World of Harry Potter. Carusel
Dance Company; Grand Philharmonic Youth
Chor; Scott Terrell, conductor. Centre in the
Square, 101 Queen St. N., Kitchener. 519-745-
4711 or 1-888-745-4717 or kwsymphony.ca.
$38-$95. Also Mar 28(2:30pm & 8pm).

Saturday March 28

7:30. Don Wright Faculty of Music. West-
ern University Symphony Orchestra. Works
by Rachmaninov and Beethoven. Paul Daven-
port Theatre, Talbot College, Western University,
115 Richmond St. N., London. 519-
661-3767. $10(adv).

8:00. Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. The
Magical World of Harry Potter. Carusel
Dance Company; Grand Philharmonic Youth
Chor; Scott Terrell, conductor. Centre in the
Square, 101 Queen St. N., Kitchener.
519-579-6211 or 1-888-745-4717
ticket/3. $15-$20(ad).
Monday March 30
- 7:30: Don Wright Faculty of Music. Early Music Studio. Von Kuster Hall, Music Building, Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-681-3767. Free.

Tuesday March 31
- 6:00: Don Wright Faculty of Music. Electroacoustic Music Compositions Concert. Paul Davenport Theatre, Talbot College, Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767. Free.

Wednesday April 1
- 6:00: District School Board of Niagara/Brock University/Chorus Niagara. Niagara Children’s Honour Choir. Guests: Chorus Niagara Children’s Choir and Brock University Choir; Mark Siret, director. FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, 250 St. Paul St., St. Catharines. 905-688-0722 or 1-855-515-0722 or FirstOntarioPAC.ca. $15.
- 7:30: Brock University Department of Music. String Concert No.2. George Cleland, conductor. FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, 250 St. Paul St., St. Catharines. 905-688-0722 or 1-855-515-0722 or FirstOntarioPAC.ca. $15; $10(st/hs).
- 8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. Joy and Passion: Schumann & Brahms. Pal/Chana: Upwill (new commission); Schumann: Piano Concerto in a; Brahms: Symphony No.4 in e. Lauma Skride, piano; Gurpreet Chana, violin; Katerina Juraskova, cello; Joseph Phillics, bass; Bethel Community Church, 128 Vincent Street, Barrie. 705-726-1181. Free.
- 8:30: Musikado Concert Association. Vocal Recital. Brett Pelegato, baritone; Robert Kortgaard, piano. Trinity United Church (Grenway), 250 St. Catharines Rd. N., Guelph. 519-687-5550. $32; $7(st); free(child under 10).
- 8:30: Musikado Concert Association. Vocal Recital. Brett Pelegato, baritone; Robert Kortgaard, piano. Trinity United Church (Grenway), 250 St. Catharines Rd. N., Guelph. 519-687-5550. $32; $7(st); free(child under 10).
- 2:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Young Orchestra. Sun and Fire. Strawinsky: The Firebird. Centre in the Square, 101 Queen St. N., Kitchener. 519-745-4711 or 1-888-745-4711 or kw Symphony.ca. $20-$50. Also Apr. 4.

Saturday April 4
- 8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. Joy and Passion: Schumann & Brahms. Pal/Chana: Upwill (new commission); Schumann: Piano Concerto in a; Brahms: Symphony No.4 in e. Lauma Skride, piano; Gurpreet Chana, violin; Katerina Juraskova, cello; Joseph Phillics, bass; Bethel Community Church, 128 Vincent Street, Barrie. 705-726-1181. Free.
- 8:30: Musikado Concert Association. Vocal Recital. Brett Pelegato, baritone; Robert Kortgaard, piano. Trinity United Church (Grenway), 250 St. Catharines Rd. N., Guelph. 519-687-5550. $32; $7(st); free(child under 10).

Sunday April 5
- 2:30: Georgian Music String Quartets. Schubert: Trout Quintet; and quartets by Hummel and Dussek. Pieter Grobler, piano; Annette Barbara Vogel, violin, Raquel Bastos, viola; and Alexander Juraskova, cello; Joseph Philip lips, bass, Bethel Community Church, 128 Vincent Street, Barrie. 705-726-1181. Free.

City Centre Musical Productions. The Hunchback of Notre Dame. Music by Alan Menken, lyrics by Stephen Schwartz, book by Linda Woolworth. The Elora Singers & Elmer Iseler Singers, conductor. Meridian Hall, 1 University Ave. 416-361-0467. $25(st); $15(at); Mar. 8, 3pm. Also 7pm.


Canadian Stage. How to Fail as a Pop Star. Written and performed by VivekShraya. Berkeley Street Theatre, 26 Berkeley St. 416-598-3100. $49-$70. Opens Feb 18, 6pm. Runs to Apr 4. Thu-Sat(7:30pm), Fri(7pm), Sun(2pm).

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City Centre Musical Productions. The Hunchback of Notre Dame. Music by Alan Menken, lyrics by Stephen Schwartz, book by Linda Woolworth. The Elora Singers & Elmer Iseler Singers, conductor. Meridian Hall, 1 University Ave. 416-361-0467. $25(st); $15(at); Mar. 8, 3pm. Also 7pm.
and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat.
Music by Andrew Lloyd Webber, lyrics by Tim Rice. Grand Theatre, 471 Richmond St, London. 519-672-8800. $33.90. Opens Mar 27, 7:30pm. Runs to Apr 5. Tues-Sat(7:30pm), Sat/Sun(1:30pm). Note: Relaxed performance Mar 29(1:30pm).


- **Necessary Angel.** The Events. Text by David Greig, music by John Browne. Streetcar Cresent, 345 Carlaw Ave. 647-341-7590 x1010 or boxoffice@streetcartheatre.com. $20-$40. Opens Mar 12, 8pm. Runs to Mar 15. Days and times vary.

- **North Toronto Players.** The Millionaire (A Musical Murder Mystery). Papermill Theatre, Todmorden Mills, 67 Potterycl Rd, northtornon- toplayers.com. $29. Opens Mar 13, 8pm. Runs to Mar 22. Fri/Sat(8pm), Sun(2pm). Note: also Mar 21 at 2pm.


- **Opera by Request.** Tartanot. Music by Giacomo Puccini, libretto by Giuseppe Adami and Renato Simoni. College St. United Church, 452 College St. 416-455-2365. $20. Mar 12, 7:30pm.

- **Opera by Request.** Puccini’s Il Tabarro & Gianni Schicchi. Music by Giacomo Puc- cini, libretto by Giuseppe Adami and Giovanni chi Forzano. College St. United Church, 452 College St. 416-455-2365. $20. Mar 28, 7:30pm.

- **Opera York.** The Merry Widow. Music by Franz Lehár, libretto by Viktor Léon and Leo Stein. Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, 10268 Yonge St., Richmond Hill. 905-787-8871. From $40; $25(1st). Feb 28, 7:30pm. Also Mar 1(1mat).


- **Show One Productions.** Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo. Winter Garden Theatre, 189 Yonge St. 416-872-1212. $35-$115. Opens Mar 7, 8pm. Also Mar 8(2pm/7pm).

- **Tapestry Opera.** Songbook X. Krista- ina Szabó, mezzo; Christopher Foley, piano. Ernest Balmer Studio, Distillery District, 9 Trinity St. 416-537-6066. $25. Opens Mar 20, 8pm. Also Mar 21.

- **Theatre Orangeville.** Early Morning Rain: The Legend of Gordon Lightfoot. Created by Lesa Way, Orangeville Town Hall Opera House, 87 Broadway, Orangeville. 519-942-3243. $42-$22(1st). Opens Feb 13, 8pm. Runs to Mar 1. Wed-Sat(2pm/7pm), Thurs/Fri(8pm), Sat(7pm). Note: also Feb 28(7pm). (Relaxed Performance).


- **University of Toronto Faculty of Music.** Early Music Concerts: Giulio Cesare. Dan- iel Taylor, conductor. Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, 427 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. $30; $20(ur); $10(1st). Opens Mar 20, 7:30pm. Also Mar 21.

- **University of Toronto Faculty of Music.** We the Broadway North. Hart House Theatre, Hart House Circle. 416-978-3750. Free. Open to the public. Mar 23, 7:30pm.

- **University of Toronto Faculty of Music.** Parlami d’Amore (Speak to me of love) Operatic repertory from three centuries. Wal- ter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto. 416-978-3750. Free. Open to the public. Mar 5, 12(10pm).

- **University of Toronto Faculty of Music.** Menopause, the Musical. Victoria Hall, 55 King St. W., Cobourg. 855-372-2100. $45. Opens Mar 26, 7:30pm. Runs to Mar 28.


- **World Stage at the Elgin.** Blond Ambition. Music by Carl Orff. St. Anne’s Anglican Church, 270 Gladstone Ave. 647-812-2505. $30-$20(adv); $19/12(5-17); $18(under 17). (Also Apr 1-4, 11(7pm)).


- **Winter Garden.** Turandot. Music by Puccini. This event is ticketed. For more info, please visit thebluegoosetavern.com (full schedule).

- **Artwork Arbar.** 15 Colbourne St., Hamilton. 905-543-8512. artwork.net (full schedule)

- **The Blue Goose Tavern.** 1 Blue Goose St. 416-255-2442. thebluegoose tavern.com (full schedule)

- **Alleycatz.** 2409 Yonge St. 416-481-6865. alleycatz.ca

- **120 Diner.** 120 Church St. 416-732-7725. 120diner.com (full schedule)

- **Alleycatz.** 2409 Yonge St. 416-481-6865. alleycatz.ca

- **D. In the Clubs (Mostly Jazz) Beat by Beat | Mainly Clubs, Mostly Jazz!** In my column last month, I wrote about the February 7 appearance of the American jazz guitarist Russell Malone at Hugh’s Room Live, an unusually high-profile show to occur in the bleak Toronto winter. What looked like an anomaly for the Dundas West venue, however, now seems as though it’s part of a growing trend. During the last week of March 8, Hugh’s Room Live hosted a special event: Drum Week, sponsored by Yamaha, with 50 acts taking the stage from Sunday, March 8, to Saturday, March 14. Drum Week will feature leading Canadian and American drummers from multiple generations and stylistic backgrounds.

Starting things off on March 8 is Sarah Thawer, who plays at 2pm. Thawer – who stays busy both locally and internationally as a bandleader, sideman and educator – is an exciting, high-energy drummer with a wealth of technique, whose own music incorporates elements of jazz, hip-hop, fusion and other genres. Next up during drum week: the legendary Jimmy Cobb, who, at the age of 91, is the only surviving contributor to the seminal Miles Davis album Kind of Blue, recorded in 1959. Active since the 50s, Cobb has played with a wide range of jazz luminaries in addition to Davis and co., from Dizzy Gillespie, Billie Holiday and Stan Getz, to younger players such as Peter Bernstein, Brad Mehldau and Vincent Herring.

On March 11, Drum Week continues with a doubleheader of two Canadian groups: Lewis.Brown and Mark McLean’s Playground. Lewis. Brown is – as the name suggests – a duo of drummer Larnell Lewis. Brown is – as the name suggests – a duo of drummer Larnell
Lewis and bassist Rich Brown. Both Lewis and Brown are masters of their respective instruments and both bring a deep sense of musicality to their playing that extends far beyond technical accomplishments. Playground, a five-piece ensemble led by McLean on drums, features saxophonist Kelly Jefferson, guitarist Kevin Breit, keyboardist Matt Giffin and bassist Marc Rogers.

While most of Drum Week will feature drummers, the kit-heavy programming will be broken up midweek with a performance by TorQ Percussion Quartet, a classical percussion ensemble made up of Richard Burrows, Adam Campbell, Jamie Drake and Dan Morphy. TorQ has collaborated with major orchestras – including the Buffalo Philharmonic, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal – has played at numerous festivals and is highly involved in the realm of Canadian music education, performing at many schools and student music festivals, as well as hosting the annual TorQ Percussion Seminar during the summer months.

Next up, drummer Ari Hoenig, who has long been a champion for younger musicians, and has consistently hired new and exciting voices to complement his lyrical playing style. There is something enduringly exciting about the unique creative tension generated between improvising musicians of different generations, which is precisely what Hoenig brings to Hugh’s Room Live on March 13, when he appears with the trio of pianist Nitai Hershkovits and bassist Or Bareket. Both Bareket and Hershkovits are in their early 30s, and both, like Hoenig, are based in New York, appearing regularly at Smalls, where Hoenig began a longstanding residency in 2003.

(As an aside, hiring younger musicians and providing them with an on-the-road musical education was an important step within the jazz community. You need look no further than drummer Art Blakey’s Jazz Messengers band for a prime example of this tradition; Messengers alumni include the likes of Wayne Shorter, Woody Shaw, Wynton Marsalis, Terence Blanchard and Mulgrew Miller. The practice does not exist to the same extent today, primarily for financial reasons: with fewer gigs to go around, and less remunerative touring opportunities, bookers tend to hire their peers and keep groups relatively consistent over longer periods of time. This is not necessarily better or worse; Shorter’s current quartet, with pianist Danilo Pérez, drummer Brian Blade and bassist John Patitucci, would be a very different group if its personnel changed every few years.)

Rounding out the week of Drum Fest is a special trio performance by Jeff “Tain” Watts, whose musical output, over the past 40 years, has been amongst the most prodigious of any working jazz drummer. Beginning with the Wynton Marsalis Quartet in 1981, Watts has played with the likes of George Benson, Harry Connick, Jr and McCoy Tyner, has appeared as an artist in Spike Lee’s Mo’ Better Blues, and recently, in 2017, received a Guggenheim Fellowship for composition. Watts plays with a singular focus and intensity and is a consummate drummer with an extensive command of the jazz tradition.

Women From Space

It is always reassuring to see smaller-scale festivals taking place in Toronto within the jazz/improvised music community; though the TD Toronto Jazz Festival and other large-scale productions play an important role in the well-being of the scene, there is something equally significant in the creation of space for artists and groups who might not otherwise find the representation that they deserve on Toronto’s cultural calendar. Artists working in the improvised/
creative music realm tend to find themselves in something of a niche in the broader Toronto jazz community to begin with; although there are great organizations who routinely present this music, such as the not-for-profit Somewhere There, there are far fewer opportunities to present an evening of free jazz than there are to present an evening of conventionally played jazz standards. Even within this niche, however, women tend to be programmed less than men, and stereotypes that exist within the broader jazz community about women performers tend to perniciously replicate themselves.

Partly in reply to this issue, the Women From Space Festival, now in its second year, will be taking place from March 5 to 8, with 17 acts taking place over four nights at Burdock and at 918 Bathurst. The festival, which is organized by Bea Labikova and Kayla Milmine, seeks to highlight “visionary women working within and between exploratory musical traditions,” with an emphasis on performances by artists whose work falls somewhere at the intersection between jazz, contemporary classical and creative improvised musics. The performances coincide with International Women’s Day weekend and will feature Claire Yunej Lee, Susan Acorn, Sahara Morimoto, Kris Davis, and Ingrid Laubrock, amongst many others, with affordable ticket prices, including multi-day and student pricing.

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

MANLY CLUBS, MOSTLY JAZZ QUICK PICKS

**MAR 5, 8PM:** Various artists, Women From Space Festival, Burdock. On the first night of the festival, catch Elsa Thorn, Claire Yunej Lee, Amy Brandon and Susan Acorn at Burdock (co-presented with Canadian Music Centre and Riparian Acoustics).

**MAR 6, 8PM:** Various artists, Women From Space Festival, 918 Bathurst. The final night of the Women From Space Festival – and the only one to take place at 918 Bathurst – includes sets by Elizabeth Lima and Meghan Cheng, Kris Davis and Ingrid Laubrock, amongst many others, with affordable ticket prices, including multi-day and student pricing.

**MAR 11, 8PM:** Lewis Brown and Mark McLean's Playground, Drum Week, Hugh’s Room Live. This double bill features two of Toronto’s top drummers – Lewis Brown and Mark McLean – appearing with some of Toronto’s most exciting musicians for Drum Week at Hugh’s Room.

**MAR 13, 8:30PM:** Ari Hoenig Trio, Drum Week, Hugh’s Room Live. With pianist Nita Hershkovits and bassist Or Bareket, leading modern jazz drummer Ari Hoenig comes to Hugh’s Room Live for an evening of communicative, high-stakes trio music.

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

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D. In the Clubs (Mostly Jazz)

9:30pm Tangent. Mar 3 6:30pm Melissa Lau- ren Quartet, 9:30pm Tangent. Mar 4 6:30pm Worst Pop Band Ever, 9:30pm Jenna Marie R&B. Mar 5 6:30pm Kevin Quain, 9:45pm Tetradehorn Album Release. Mar 6 4pm Hogtown Symphonics, 6:30pm James Hill's Local Talent, 9:45pm Tetradehorn Album Release. Mar 7 12pm Terry Wilkins’ Unice Bass, 3:30pm Laura Hubert Band, 7pm Lester McLean Trio, 9:45pm O’Kane & Turcotte.

Mar 8 12pm Excelsior Dixieland Jazz Band, 9:30pm Red Hot Rambles, 7pm Julia Cleve- land Trio, 9:30pm Scotch. Mar 9 6:30pm U of T Student Jazz Ensembles, 9:30pm Josh Grossman’s Toronto Jazz Orchestra. Mar 10 6:30pm Melissa Lauren Quartet, 9:30pm Chris Gale hosts the Rex Jazz Jam. Mar 11 6:30pm Worst Pop Band Ever, 9:30pm Peter Hu- m Sexed. Mar 12 6:30pm Kevin Quain, 9:30pm Peter Hum Sextet. Mar 13 12pm Hog- town Symphonics, 6:30pm James Hill’s Local Talent, 9:45pm Hannah Barstow S. Mar 14 12pm Terry Wilkins’ Unice Bass, 3:30pm George Lake Big Band, 7pm Lester McLean Trio, 9:45pm Roberto Occipinti. Mar 15 12pm Excelsior Dixieland Jazz Band, 3:30pm Beverly Tartt Quartet, 7pm Julia Cleveland Trio, 9:30pm Alex Kapo Quintet. Mar 16 6:30pm U of T Student Jazz Ensembles, 9:30pm Terry Promane’s U of T 12tet. Mar 17 12:30pm Mel- issa Lauren Quartet, 9:30pm Curtis - Garabedian > Sperrazza. Mar 18 12:30pm Worst Pop Band Ever, 9:30pm Curtis - Garabedian > Sperrazza. Mar 19 6:30pm Kevin Quain, 9:30pm Mark Kelso’s Jazz Exiles. Mar 20 12pm Hogtown Symphonics, 6:30pm James Hill’s Local Talent, 9:30pm Mark Kelso’s Jazz Exiles. Mar 21 12pm Terry Wilkins’ Unice Bass, 3:30pm Swing Shift Big Band, 7pm Lester McLean Trio, 9:45pm Elizabeth Shepherd. Mar 22 12pm Excelsior Dixieland Jazz Band, 3:30pm Dr. Nick and The Rollercoasters, 7pm Julia Cleveland Trio, 9:30pm Jacob’s Cattle. Mar 23 8:30pm U of T Student Jazz Ensem- bles, 9:30pm Chris Hunt Tentet + 2. Mar 24 6:30pm Melissa Lauren Quartet, 9:30pm Chris Gale hosts the Rex Jazz Jam. Mar 25 6:30pm Worst Pop Band Ever, 9:30pm Noah Franche-Nolan Trio. Mar 26 6:30pm Kevin Quain, 9:30pm Spin Cycle. Mar 27 12pm Hog- town Symphonics, 6:30pm Autoahm Trio, 9:30pm Spin Cycle. Mar 28 12pm Terry Wilkins’ Unice Bass, 3:30pm Paul Redlick Blues, 7pm Neon Eagle, 9:45pm Dave Young Quin- tet. Mar 29 12pm Excelsior Dixieland Jazz Band, 3:30pm Murphy Bros. All-Stars, 7pm Julia Cleveland Trio, 9:30pm Barry Romb- erg Group. Mar 30 6:30pm U of T Student Jazz Ensembles, 8:30pm John MacLeod’s Rex Hotel Orchestra. Mar 31 6:30pm Melissa Lau- ren Quartet, 9:30pm Chris Gale hosts the Classic Rex Jazz Jam.

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E. The ETCeteras

Clubs & Groups

Mar 15 1:00: Toronto Opera Club. Guest speaker: Michael Patrick Albano, Resident Director of TFO, on a presen- tation on the current U of T Opera production of Jonathan Dove’s Mansfield Park, based on the Jane Austen novel. There is also an opportunity to attend the opera perfor- mance at 2:30pm. The presentation is in Room 300, Edward Johnson Bldg, Faculty of Music, 8 Queens Park, Room 330. 416-924-3940. Free. Note: There is a charge for admission to the opera performance. See listings in Sec- tions A and C for details.

Mar 22 2:00: Classical Music Club Toronto. Beethoven 250 (Part 3). Join us for our ongoing project to celebrate the 250th anniversary of Beethoven’s birth. Visit classicalmusicclubtoronto.org or contact John Sharpe at 416-889-2549 or don throat@sympatico.ca. Annual mem- bership: $25(regular), $10(conc). Free for first-time visitors. Donations accepted for refreshments.

Mar 30 7:30: Toronto Wagner Society.

Galas, Tributes and Fundraisers


Mar 08 3:00 Help Violinist Arthur Lewino- witz perform fundraising concert. An afternoon of music featuring Arthur Boomin, Halton Jazz Singers, Elisa Malatasta, Mark Twang, Linda Lavender Band, and others. All artists are donating their time and talent. Proceeds go to help Arthur with his mount- ing bills and with future expenses for produc- ing an album of the music he is composing while in cancer treatment. Relish Bar & Grill, 511 Danforth Ave. Advance tickets @ Event- brite $20, $25 at the door.

Mar 19 7:30: Orchestra Brevia Academy Orchestra. Music for Social Change: A Bene- fit Concert for Sistema Toronto. Mozart: Symphony No.40; Beethoven Concerto No.2; Tanovich: Symphony in B-Flat; Vivian Kwok, piano; Evan Tanovich, conductor; Ricardo Ferrer, conductor; Emma Moss, conductor. Seeley Hall, Trinity College, 6 Hoskin Ave. 416- 981-8441. Admission by donation.

Mar 26 8:00: Toronto Symphony Orches- tra. Evening Epic. The TSO’s annual fund- raising event will feature a gala dinner and EPIC party! With performances by members of the TSO and the Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra, and a one-night-only mainstage performance featuring the TSO in collabora- tion with award-nominated alternative-electro- nomic Indigenous singer/longwriter isvkie. This is a 19 + event. The Carlu, 440 Yonge St. Visit EveningEpic.ca for tickets to the event. Early Bird tickets are on sale now for $155!

Apr 04 7:00: Echo Women’s Choir. 2nd Annual Folkling Awesome Music Trivia Night. Specially designed for music lovers of all ages, this fun evening will challenge your upper register (your brain)! Echo challenges all other Toronto choirs to send a team to compete! Evening includes complimentary- ary snacks, cash bar, great prizes + bragging rights for the winners! Russel Harder, host and quiz master. Tranzac Club, 292 Brunswick Ave., Main Hall. echochoralmusic-trivia-2020. eventbrite.ca. Info: echowomenschoir .ca. $20, $25 (team table of 4).

Lectures, Salons and Symposiums


Mar 04 7:00: Canadian Opera Com- pany. Opera Talks: Music and Mental Health. Explore the art and science of music’s impact on our physical, mental and emotional health with accredited music therapists and regis- tered psychotherapist SarahRose Black and cellist Andrew Asencio. Participants will discover how music can punctuate life’s most important moments and learn more about music’s important role in the health- care industry and personal well-being. North York Central Library, 5120 Yonge St. Free but advanced registration is recommended by calling 416-395-5639.
Singalongs, Jams, Circles

Mar 14 12:30: Recollectiv. A unique musical group whose members are mainly made up of people affected by memory challenges (caused by Dementia, Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s, stroke, PTSD, brain injury, etc.). Volunteers of all ages also form part of the band, making this a positive intergenerational experience for all participants. Recollectiv’s mission is to help people with memory challenges find joy and a sense of community through music-making. The band meets weekly at a central accessible location and is free with pre-registration. For more information, to participate, volunteer or donate, please visit recollectiv.ca or call Smile Theatre at 416-599-8440. Tranzac Club, 292 Brunswick Ave. Free/PWYC. Also Mar 21, 28, Apr 4.

Tours

Mar 0110:30am: Canadian Opera Company. 90-Minute Tour of the Four Seasons Centre. Led by a trained docent. Includes information and access to the Isadore and Rosalie Sharp City Room, the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre and R. Fraser Elliott Hall, as well as backstage areas such as the wig rooms and dressing rooms, the orchestra pit, and other spaces that only a stage door pass could unlock. Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. 416-368-8521. Cost: $30/student, $15/stud (with ID). Also Mar 8 and 15 (French).

Workshops & Classes


Mar 17 12:00 noon: Canadian Opera Company. Vocal Series: Opera for All Ages. Artists of the COC Ensemble Studio playfully explore opera in a lively interactive March Break concert. Audience members of all ages can listen to, learn about, and try their hand at the fascinating art of opera. This program is fun for the whole family and welcomes people of all abilities and exceptionalities! Richard Bradshaw Auditorium, Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. (at University Ave.) Free. Note: Admission is on a first-come, first-served basis. Participants are encouraged to arrive early as late seating is not available after 12:00 noon.

Mar 21 10:30am: Toronto Mendelssohn Choir. Singalong: Opera Choruses with Sandra Horst. Join Sandra Horst, Chorus Master of the Canadian Opera Company, for a lively morning of popular opera choruses. Bring your voice; we provide the music. Register at the door. We ask that participants come to the event scent-free. Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, 1550 Yonge St. $10 (includes refreshments).

Mar 22 2:00: CAMMAC Toronto Region. Reading for singers and instrumentalists of Brahms’ Ein deutsches Requiem. Ross Inglis, conductor. Christ Church Deer Park, 1570 Yonge St. 647-458-0213. $10. (members).

Mar 24 7:00: Canadian Music Centre. New Musical Resources: A Composition Workshop with the Brodie West Quintet. Shedding light on lesser understood aspects of rhythm, its function and organization, this three-day workshop will be beneficial to composers of all levels and backgrounds, with even a fundamental understanding of music theory. Each evening will include interaction between participants and the ensemble. Participants are welcome to attend all or any of the evenings. You must register for each individual event. To register and for details of each evening’s topics, visit on.mccanada.org/event/brodie-west-quintet. Canadian Music Centre, 20 St. Joseph St. $10 admission per day.


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WHENgardening season returns, in April, he'll be reprising a role that had everyone rocking in 2016, in an award-winning production with Tapestry New Opera.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR WINNERS!

Aaron Davis’ Circle Of Friends, March 26: 8pm. Composer and keyboardist Aaron Davis performs original compositions from his upcoming new recording, in collaboration with Suba Sankaran, Lori Cullen, Maryem Tollar, Gabriel Davis, Dylan Bell, John Johnson, Rob Piltch, Davide Direnzo and others at the Lula Lounge, Toronto. A pair of tickets awaits at the door!

Confluence Concerts: The Mandala, May 9: 8pm. Their final show this season is curated by Suba Sankaran: words and music inspired by an enduring image, with Ed Hanley, Dylan Bell, Sheniz Jamshahidi and others, at St. Thomas’s Church, Toronto. A pair of tickets each, for MARGARET OLDFIELD and CELIA HARTE

Confluence Arts Projects presents SING! In Concert – ‘O Canada! We Are The World, May 29, 8pm.

SING! is comprised of 28 Canadian artists, including Tragically Hip, Bryan Adams, Gord Downie, Nickelback, Alanis Morissette, Sarah McLachlan, and others. At Young People’s Theatre, Toronto. A pair of tickets to JOAN SAYER

WHO IS APRIL’S CHILD?

A rare moment of sitting quiet – these days he’s always on the move! Adventures so far this season include: Love & Murder (with Northern Début Nord, Sudbury); The Marriage of Figaro, as Bartolo (Edmonton Opera); La Bohème as Schaunard (Calgary Opera); La Cenerentola, as Don Magnifico (Vancouver Opera)

Hope he travels with his Overcoat! (Toronto 2018)

Know our Mystery Child’s name? WIN PRIZES!
Send your best guess by March 22 to musicschildren@thewholenote.com

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR WINNERS!

Tapestry New Opera.

Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, 1976
March’s Child is Suba Sankaran

Suba Sankaran is a vocalist, choral director, arranger, educator and composer. People use the word “fusion” a lot when they talk about her work, for want of a word that was especially coined for what she does. Her body of work lovingly embraces a wide world of disciplines and performance genres, and an even wider world of musical traditions.

Most recently you may have noticed her as the composer for the epic Madrasi Vaanam Saicingh - A Tamil version of The Mahabharata, with Tafelmusik. Sankaran performs across North America, Europe, the UK, Asia, Australia and Africa with the trio Autorickshaw; with her father, master drummer Trichy Sankaran; with her husband, Dylan Bell as the FreePlay Duo; and with Retrocity, an octet a cappella revue. Sankaran composes and produces music for theatre, film, radio and dance. She currently teaches in the jazz department at Humber College, co-directs Toronto’s City Choir, is professor/founder of South Indian music studies at York University, Trichy Sankaran.

Suba Sankaran lives in a 100-plus-year-old home in east Toronto with her husband who is also her partner on and off stage, Dylan Bell. While they are without children, their Steinway and myriad of plants are their de facto children.

Beyond music, Suba enjoys dancing, movie-watching, cooking, gardening, walking, reading, and being close to water, mountains and forest wherever and whenever possible. She tours and travels whenever the opportunity arises.

When you look at your childhood photo today? I think about the curiosity and joy that is behind the mildly serious look on my face. I spent a lot of time alone, just singing to myself or playing with toys, or creating my own play space (especially when my sister was in full-day school and I in half-day school). It shows my happy independence.

Suppose a friendly child asks what your job is? I eat, sleep and breathe music. I love my job so much that it doesn’t feel like work at all, so hopefully, when you get older, you will also find something that brings joy to your life.

What would you say to parents/grandparents hoping their young children will grow up to love and make music? Everyone will come at music in a different way. It can’t be forced. That being said, it’s good to send the message that music is communication. Music is storytelling. Music can be your best friend. Music is healing. Music will come at music in a different way. It can’t be forced. That being said, it’s good to send the message that music is communication. Music is storytelling. Music can be your best friend. Music is healing. Music will be here long after we are gone. Music is in the cosmos and it’s all around us. We just have to listen.

Suba Sankaran’s full-length interview, which includes an astounding list of upcoming projects and appearances, can be read at thewholenote.com/musicsschildren.

Over 100 artist profiles and full-length interviews can be read at thewholenote.com/musicsschildren

Digital back issues in their original magazine format are also available online: kiosk.thewholenote.com
Editor’s Corner

DAVID OLDS

In Terry Robbins’ Strings Attached column you will see Schubert’s string quartet Death and the Maiden referred to as an “almost symphonic work,” which fits right in with my first selection. 12 Ensemble is a string orchestra from the UK founded in 2012 by co-directors Eloisa-Fleur Thom and Max Ruisi. Touted on its website as a “modern, versatile and virtuosic ensemble, the group is built around a core of 12 of London’s finest chamber musicians. Always playing without a conductor, the ensemble’s acclaimed performances combine the energy, excitement and creativity of a small ensemble with the breathtaking sound afforded by a string orchestra.” The core membership is supplemented as required by the repertoire and by my count from the video clip, there are 14 players involved in the group’s transcription of the title work from Death and the Maiden (Sancho Panza digital release the12ensemble.com). The disc opens with John Taverner’s transcription of his tranquil choral setting of Blake’s The Lamb, which is followed by the tumultuous Schubert. Ruisi’s program note includes an extended explanation of why 12 Ensemble chose not to use Mahler’s well-known transcription of this iconic work. Instead they decided to go “back to basics, using Schubert’s quartet parts and creating a double-bass part that adds impact and depth when required but is sensitive to the delicate balance of Schubert’s orchestration.” To my ear this is an effective treatment with only occasional moments of overbearing thick textures. For the most part the playing is light, dynamic and convincing.

Some 15 minutes later we are granted respite from Schubert’s emotional rollercoaster with Henney Siren, a three-movement work by Oliver Leith written especially for the ensemble in 2019. Leith tells us “I was thinking about sirens; the wailing kind, not the bird women singing on rocks. [...] They usually signal something ominous; these sirens do not. They are honeyed, dripping in globules of sweetness [...] like a smiling alarm.” All is not entirely placid however and the last movement ends with some near-strident tension before the sirens fade. The brief final work is truly calming. It dates from an Icelandic residency in 2016 when ensemble member Guy Button came up with the idea. The piece features two rather diverse movements. The first, a three-movement work by Astor Piazzolla, who begins with a tango. This intriguing pairing features quartets from early in the careers of two eccentric, accomplished pianists, their only ventures into the genre. While Gulda (1930–2000) is described as a pianist and composer, Gould is almost exclusively known as keyboard virtuoso. Of course we know of Gould’s work as a radio documentarian, a genre which he approached in a most composerly fashion, but his actual musical output was minimal with the string quartet accounting for roughly half if considered by duration (about 35 minutes). We can be forgiven for looking on this work, composed around the age of 21, as an aberration. Unlike his performance practice of focusing on the Baroque era, and to a certain extent the 20th century, the quartet seems rooted in the romanticism of the 19th century and is positively lugubrious in its thick textures at times. I note that the first recording described it as “reflect[ing] Gould’s love for Bruckner, Wagner, and Richard Strauss,” a love that, as far as I can tell, was only otherwise manifest in his lone venture as a conductor (other than his own chorales) in his recording of A Siegfried Idyll. Be that as it may, this somewhat anachronistic work stands as testament to his understanding and command of the idiom.

Gulda, a man of broad tastes and talents, was as well versed in jazz as in the contemporary classical world. Born two years before Gould, Gulda’s lifespan exceeded his coeval’s by two decades, but he too wrote his only quartet at the age of 20. The String Quartet in F-sharp Minor was premiered in Vienna in 1953. Although not particularly forward-looking – no hints of postwar avant-garde tendencies here – it is firmly rooted in idioms of the first half of the century. With contemplative outer movements that are interrupted by a sprightly scherzo which itself gives way to a gentle middle section, the overall quartet has a slow-fast-slow-fast-slow arc. Incidentally, for those of you not familiar with Gulda the pianist, in the April edition of Old Vine in New Bottles, Bruce Surtees will be reviewing a newly issued set, Friedrich Gulda: Piano Concertos by Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Strauss on the SWR Music label.

The Acies Quartet, founded some 15 years ago, is now in the fifth year of its current membership. Having studied and participated in masterclasses with some of the world’s outstanding ensembles – including the Alban Berg and Guarneri Quartets – it is not surprising that these still-young musicians play with an understanding beyond their years. Of note, besides excellent musicianship is their curatorial inspiration in bringing these two little-known works together. And kudos for the booklet which gives an insightful context to each, with essays by Jens F. Laursen (Gould) and Walter Gürtschmidt (Gulda).

I have WholeNote alumna Simone Desilets to thank for bringing the next disc to my attention. Pianist Claren Longendyke was the recipient of the George Brough Memorial Endowment scholarship at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity in 2017 and the following year Desilets invited her to Toronto to participate in celebrations to mark Brough’s centennial. Together with recital partner violist Rose Wollman, Longendyke recently released Homage to Nadia Boulanger (rosewollman.com) featuring works by the iconiclastic teacher and her lineage on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of her death. Boulanger (1887-1979) mentored many of the leading composers and musicians of the 20th century, among them such notable Canadians as Gabriel Casson, Jean Papineau-Couture, István Anhalt, Maurice Blackburn, Gabriel Charpentier, Pierre Mercure, John Beckwith, Sterling Beckwith, Roger Matton, Walter Buczynski and Arthur Ozelins, to name a few of the more than 60.

This Homage begins with Le Grand Tango by Astor Piazzolla, who studied with Boulanger in his 30s when he was already an established tango artist. Wollman says the duo worked extensively with tango experts to ensure an authentic performance of this idiomatic work.
and that she is currently preparing a transcription of their approach into an “edition that will help classically trained musicians perform this piece stylistically.” The disc concludes with Boulanger’s own *Trois pièces pour violoncelle et piano* in Wollman’s arrangement for viola. Two gentle movements of great beauty are followed by a driving finale reminiscent to my ears of Prokofiev, described as *vite et nerveusement rythmé*.

The project claims to include Boulanger and her students and “great grandstudents.” I wondered what this latter term meant and was told that the youngest of the composers included – Gabriela Lena Frank (b.1972) – studied with William Albright and Samuel Jones who studied with Ross Lee Finney and Bernard Rogers respectively, who in turn were themselves students of Boulanger. A bona fide lineage indeed. Frank’s contribution is a lilting and mostly lively dance suite titled *Cinco Danzas de Chambi* (2006), inspired by the work of Peruvian Martín Chambi (1891-1973), the first Amerindian photographer to achieve international acclaim. The suite ends hauntingly with the mournful *Harau de Chambi*.

The most substantial work presented here is also the last on the disc. Emile Naoumoff is a French pianist and composer who was born in Bulgaria in 1962. Wikipedia tells me that “At the age of eight, after a fateful meeting in Paris, he became the last disciple of Nadia Boulanger, who referred to him as ‘the gift of my old age’. He studied with her until her death in late 1979.” The *Sonata for Viola and Piano* dates from 2001 and was revised eight years later. It is in one extended movement, beginning darkly but gradually moving toward the light. A pizzicato theme passed back and forth between the instruments introduces a lyrical section before the piece gradually returns to quiet calmness. The Wollman-Longendyke duo worked extensively with Naoumoff in preparation for this recording, about which he has said, “Wonderful playing and captivatingly generous narrative sound quality! Thank you for playing my sonata with such solar depth!” No argument from me – I expect the other composers would (have) agree(d).

I seem to be shedding instruments at every turn in this column. I’m down to one cello in the final entry, *En Solo*, featuring challenging works by Canadian composers very ably performed by Pierre-Alain Bouvette (ATMA ACD24039 digital release atmaclassique.com). As an amateur cellist and avid collector of Canadian music, I welcome this addition to the catalogue, but I must admit a number of frustrations with this digital only release. I find the recording quality and performance very satisfactory, but the digital booklet leaves much to be desired. There is a biography of this young and accomplished cellist, who for more than a decade has played with the renowned Molinari Quartet, but about the composers there is no information except for their years of birth and death in the case of one) or about the pieces. There are hyperlinks which in three cases lead to Canadian Music Centre biographies, and in the fourth to Michel Gonneville’s own French-only website. There is also a link to Gonneville’s program note, but no notes for the other works even on the CMC site. Frankly I have come to expect more from the otherwise excellent ATMA label.

The opening selection is *Paeon*, a 1989 composition by Otto Joachim (1910-2010, two and half months shy of his 100th birthday!). I believe this is its first commercial recording, but fortunately I have in my collection a Radio Canada portrait disc devoted to the works of Joachim which includes a broadcast recording of the premiere in 1992 by the dedicatee Guy Fouquet. (I believe my photographer friend André Leduc and I were actually at that performance which took place during the Quinzaine du violoncelle in Montreal.) Thanks to the Radio Canada release I am able to tell you that in his program note Joachim says that “Paeon is mainly a 12-tone work but I subconsciously integrated into the series a melodlic pattern from a Tamil raga that I knew, thereby creating a haunting melisma. I added to those long sustained notes a rhythm based on the tabla heard in this very raga...” He added “One assumes that it is harder to find ideas at 80: this was not the case with Paeon, which I wrote in a relatively short time.” Now that’s the kind of information and insight that I find helpful when listening to a contemporary work.

It’s a shame that we are left wanting with two of the other pieces. Antoine Ouellette’s *Psaume*, Op.5 which dates from 1982 and was revised in 2013, and Denis Gougeon’s *Six Thèmes Solaires: Pluton* from 1990, revised in 2014. These meagre details I was able to glean from the CMC catalogue of works, along with the information that Gougeon’s six themes are each scored for different instruments or instrumental combinations and take their names from planets (Pluton = Pluto); and I suppose that Ouellette’s title is self-explanatory. As mentioned, Gonneville’s website does provide a description, in French, and a translation of the German title *Hinauf, dem Bach entlang*. My understand of the French is “walking up along the brook” and there is a pun here on the name of Bach, which means brook in German. Gonneville says the piece takes some of its inspiration from Bach’s Solo Cello Suite No.5. Perhaps a bit ironically, it is Gougeon’s piece that is most reminiscent of Bach’s solo cello writing to my ear, not Gonneville’s. All that being said, this is still an important addition to the catalogue, and my collection, and it’s great to get to hear Bouvette come into his own with this solo tour de force. ☝

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

David Olds, DISCoveries Editor discoveries@thewholenote.com
(strings attached)

Terry Robbins

Not many months go by without a new set of the Bach solo works for violin or cello appearing, and this month sees two new additions.

The American cellist Mike Block is a member of the Silkroad Ensemble and inventor of the Block Strap, an attachment that allows the cellist to stand and walk around while playing. His latest release, Step into the Void (Bright Shiny Things BSTC-0132 brightshiny.ninja), is a 3CD set featuring the Complete Bach Cello Suites with a live companion album featuring phonograph performance artist Barry Rothman.

Normally with these releases the booklet notes mention a lifelong study of the works and an attempt to define a personal approach to the music before committing a performance to disc, but while Block admits to doing “the obligatory study” of various editions and recordings with the goal of creating his own consistent and historically informed interpretation, he now opts instead for spontaneity preferring to find different ways of playing them every time and not making too many performance decisions in advance, instead letting the feel of the audience and the acoustic space be his guide.

Certainly there’s a refreshing freedom and a sense of exploration in his beautiful playing here, a feeling of “let’s see where this goes” with delightful results. For this album he limited himself to two takes for each movement in order to “stay in the moment” and “play from the gut.” He also chose not to observe repeats in the dance movements as the only way . He admits that many of those challenges “can ultimately be solved only by each of you in performance – not to mention differently every time” (my italics).

And perhaps, as with Mike Block, that’s the secret here: never settle for one consistent interpretation and always let curiosity be a constant inspiration. If Tomas Cotik ever revisits these works on record it will be fascinating to hear the results, but it’s hard to see how they could be better than this.

The third CD, recorded live at a sold-out show a few days after the recording of the Bach Suites, grew from an earlier free-improvisation performance with Rothman. Block asked if they could play a completely improvised live duo concert with him using only material from the Bach Cello Suites. The results are quite fascinating – with less LP interaction than you might expect – although probably not to everyone’s taste. A bonus track of Block’s own pizzicato Prelude to a Dream completes a quite special set.

Violinist Tomás Cotik’s brilliant recording of the Bach Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin (Centaur CRC 3755/3756 tomascotik.com) is released this month to mark the 300th anniversary of their composition.

The promo copy came with an extremely detailed 32-page booklet which appears to be a collection of the ten brief articles Cotik wrote for The Strad magazine last year, and which can be accessed through his website at tomascotik.com. Just about every approach to performance issues is addressed – everything from the physical instrument and bow through early treatises and editions, to the implementation of slurs, dynamics, chords, vibrato, pitch, ornaments, trills and much more.

Cotik uses a modern violin – albeit with softer and more resonant strings than usual – with a Baroque bow, which he feels offers more expressive potential, subtle nuances and transparent textures and allows for “a lighter sound, quicker, more flowing tempi, and lively articulations.” That’s exactly what we get here, with Cotik producing a smooth but bright sound with a lightness and agility that is quite breathtaking and never in any danger of becoming heavy-handed or over-stressed. Slower tempos are relaxed but never allowed to drag; faster tempos are dazzlingly brilliant, with faultless intonation.

The result is a very personal and distinctive sound and style, with even the massive D-minor Chaconne never approaching the heavy and ponderous tones of some recordings.

Interestingly, Cotik repeatedly returns in his writings to the need not to be hide-bound by rules of interpretation; studying the music is just the starting point of a journey where interpretation changes along the way. He admits that many of those challenges “can ultimately be solved only by each of you in performance – not to mention differently every time” (my italics).

And perhaps, as with Mike Block, that’s the secret here: never settle for one consistent interpretation and always let curiosity be a constant inspiration. If Tomas Cotik ever revisits these works on record it will be fascinating to hear the results, but it’s hard to see how they could be better than this.

Manchester isn’t exactly a city you associate with Baroque violin sonatas, but it’s front and centre in Vivaldi – Manchester Sonatas, an excellent new 2CD set from violinist Mark Fewer and harpsichordist Hank Knox (Leaf Music LM229 leaf-music.ca).

The manuscripts for this collection of 12 works by Antonio Vivaldi originated in the private collection of Vivaldi’s contemporary Cardinal Ottoboni, passing through several owners (including Handel’s librettist Charles Jennens) before being purchased by the Manchester Public Library in 1964. Even so, they were only discovered in Manchester’s Henry Watson Music Library in 1973 by musicologist Michael Talbot.

Apparently dating from the 1716–1717 period the collection contains only four sonatas that were completely new – Nos. 5, 10, 11 and 12 – the remaining eight known to exist in earlier sources although reworked in numerous ways here to fit the duo genre. The violin part, while quite detailed for the period, still leaves room for embellishment by the performer; the harpsichord part, meanwhile, does not even feature a figured bass line most of the time, so Knox has full rein when it comes to realizing the accompaniment.

Fewer’s playing is bright, assured and technically brilliant; with Knox supplying a rich accompaniment that focuses more on harmonic support than contrapuntal interplay of melodic voices. The sonatas themselves are highly entertaining and inventive, featuring less of the usual Vivaldi arpeggios, scales and sequences than you might expect. The fast movements in particular are quite exhilarating.

There are no track timings, but the two CDs run to 68 and 63 minutes respectively.

There are quite lovely performances of the Beethoven Violin Concerto & Romances on a new CD featuring Lena Neudauer and the Cappella Aquileia under Marcus Bosch (cpo 777 559-2 naxosdirect.com).

The ensemble, founded by Bosch in 2011 as the orchestra for the Heidenheim Opera Festival, draws top-level musicians from across Germany and beyond, with its size based on the original chamber-symphony proportions of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra. There’s a resulting clarity and transparency to the playing that makes the concerto in particular less heavy than in many performances, the quite dry and short opening timpani strokes setting the stage for an idiomatic performance that never lacks emotional depth. The timpani also features in the first movement cadenza, Neudauer drawing on Beethoven’s own cadenza for his piano transcription of the concerto. The Romances in G Major Op.40 and F Major Op.50 have the same delightful feeling of light and clarity...
without ever sounding lightweight.

Neudauer’s playing throughout is exemplary and stylistically beautifully judged – hardly surprising given her admission that it was Thomas Zehetmair’s recording with Franz Bruggen’s Orchestra of the 18th Century that was the key to her understanding the concerto. Bosch provides sympathetic support on an outstanding CD.

I can’t remember when I last heard the Schoenberg Violin Concerto, which made Schoenberg Brahms Violin Concertos, the latest CD from the outstanding violinist Jack Liebeck, even more welcome. Andrew Gourlay conducts the BBC Symphony Orchestra (Orchid Classics ORC100129 orchidclassics.com).

The album, celebrating Liebeck’s upcoming 40th birthday, is a deeply personal one for him, described in the booklet notes as a “visceral and passionate portrait of two major violin concertos, emotionally drawing from the experience of his grandfather and honouring the many members of his family who perished during the Holocaust.” More than three dozen of Liebeck’s mother’s Dutch relatives died. Liebeck’s grandfather, Walter Liebeck, was a decent amateur violinist; a student in Germany when Hitler came to power in 1933, he left for South Africa the following year. The Brahms was his favourite concerto.

Schoenberg himself left Germany in 1933 for the United States. His 1936 concerto marked a return to atonality after a relatively tonal period, but despite its 12-tone basis and the composer’s own description of it – “extremely difficult, just as much for the head as for the heart” – it’s a quite stunning work that is emotionally clearly from a link with the Vivaldi era, but in a strongly tonal work the sound is unmistakably Glass.

Much the same can be said of the Violin Sonata, apparently written with youthful memories of the violin sonatas of Brahms, Faure and Franck in mind, but again unmistakably Glass, with a show-stopping third movement.

Top-notch performances all round make for a highly enjoyable disc.

The Fitzwilliam String Quartet continues the celebration of its 50th anniversary with another outstanding CD following the Shostakovich Three Last Quartets reviewed here last month. This time it’s Franz Schubert String Quartets – those in A Minor D804 (often called the “Rosamunde”) and the monumental D Minor D810 “Death and the Maiden” – performed on period instruments with Viennese gut strings (Divine Art dda 25197 naxosdirect.com).

Violinist Alan George’s outstanding booklet notes once again add immensely to our understanding of these almost symphonic works and the performance questions they raise – questions superbly answered by the FSQ. Vibrato – if used at all – functions as an expressive device, emphasising accents, increasing intensity and employed as decoration or ornamentation. Similarly, historically informed use of the bow, the treatment of the abundant dynamic markings and the approach to choice of tempo were all subjects with which the ensemble took great pains.

The resulting performances consequently have a feeling of authen-
ticity that is quite remarkable and perfectly exploits the emotional range of these visionary works. In spite of knowing and coaching the Death and the Maiden quartet for many years, the Fitzwilliam only added it to their own repertoire eight years ago, although it sounds as if they’ve been performing it all their lives; the wild finale, says Alan George, “still leaves us all physically and emotionally shaking.”

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

En Solo Pierre Alain Bouvrette A unique album that invites the listener into the worlds of major Canadian composers Otto Joachim, Antoine Ouellette, Denis Gougeon, and Michel Gonneville.

Vivaldi: Manchester Sonatas Mark Fewer and Hank Knox Vivaldi’s Manchester Sonatas featuring violinist Mark Fewer and harpsichordist Hank Knox, the first Canadian recording of the 12 works brought to light in 1973.

A Howl, That Was Also a Prayer Ekmeles Intrepid vocal ensemble releases its debut recording to critical acclaim of works featuring microtonality of Taylor Brook, Erin Gee, and Christopher Trapani.

Mosaïque Ensemble Made In Canada 14 thrilling and diverse new works for piano quartet celebrate the richness, beauty and diversity of Canada.
CPE Bach – The Solo Keyboard Music Vol.39
Miklós Spányi
BIS BIS-2370 (naxosdirect.com)

Verschiedener (varied) is perhaps an understatement for the sheer variety of compositions on this CD. The 22 movements break down into forms as intense and individual as Fantasius lasting less than two minutes and as structured as a 23-minute conventional three-movement Concerto. Miklós Spányi has thus set himself a challenge. In fact, regardless of the type of movement, throughout the whole of this CD he has to draw on the tremendous expertise normally required for compositions by the (i.e. JS) Bach. The aforementioned Concerto in its Allegretto and Allegro movements bear this out.

As if the compositions themselves were not sufficiently testing, Spányi discusses at great length the problems posed by the harpsichords of the day. There was a trend at the court of CPE Bach’s employer (Frederick the Great), to commission harpsichords from one highly fashionable centre, London. These instruments often incorporated specialized attachments not usually found on other harpsichords, something reflected in CPE Bach’s work – and adding to Spányi’s task.

While it is difficult to single out the most attractive tracks on this highly varied and attractive CD, the measured Allegro ma non troppo from the Sonata in D Minor is highly enjoyable, as are the demanding Sinfonia in G Major and Fugue in G Minor.

Spányi has taken on so much to bring us this particular demonstration of CPE Bach’s skills and ingenuity. His interpretations deserve a wide audience.

Michael Schwartz

Mozart – Piano Sonatas Vol.2
Jean Muller
Hänssler Classics HC19074 (naxosdirect.com)

In a 21st-century sonic sea, awash with dozens of recordings of Mozart sonatas released each year, the savvy listener must scrutinize attributes from one such disc over another, divining the hallmarks of Mozartian keyboard perfection simply via one’s own tastes. In the case of Luxembourgian pianist Jean Muller’s newest release on the Hänssler Classic label, the listening experience is immediately amicable: we deeply appreciate Muller’s gifts at delivering this repertoire with expertise and humbled reverence.

Opening with Mozart’s inspired D Major Sonata, K311 – written in Mannheim in December 1777 – this record gently sets two oft-played works against two more heard infrequently; this programming is subtle and perfectly balanced. As bookends to the disc, the two sonatas in D stand as points of departure and return, closing with the earlier work of the two, K284, sometimes nicknamed the “Dürnitz” Sonata. (It was written in 1775 for a Baron von Dürnitz – a bassoonist – who infamously withheld payment for the sonata!). Incidentally, it is the longest of Mozart’s 19 solo piano sonatas.

Muller brings utter neoclassical eloquence to all four sonatas on the album, charming with cajoling melodies and playful ornamentation. The imaginative – even boyish – spirit of Mozart’s keyboard is fully on display. Here every interpretive decision Muller makes is of the highest order, historically informed and beautiful to behold. He has produced an engaging, aesthetically satisfying album, sure to make any savvy Mozart listener smile with delight.

Adam Sherkin

Games
Melissa Galosi
Col legno CL3 1CD 15001 (naxosdirect.com)

Italian pianist Melissa Galosi makes a strong case for the common wellsprings of both play and music on her debut album Games. She presents an argument for her thesis in piano music by master European composers of the 18th (W. A. Mozart) and 20th (György Kurtág) centuries. Kurtág rediscovered his compositional creativity in the 1970s through his observations of “…children who were spontaneously playing an instrument…” who still saw the piano simply as a toy. They try to touch it, to caress it; they attack it and let their fingers run along the keyboard […] pure pleasure in the act of playing, joy of daring…” These experiences inspired his Játékok (“Games” in Hungarian), a substantial collection of piano works imbued with the creativity and wit of youthful games.

On the other hand Mozart never had a true childhood. Driven by his musician father, by the age of three he was hard at work practising the piano. His father kept him constantly practising, performing and touring: the very model of the prototypical child prodigy. Yet W.A. maintained a childlike sense of play for his entire life.

Galosi has chosen 17 aphoristic works from Játékok, interspersed with excerpts from three works by Mozart: variations on the famous Ah vous dirai-je maman (“Twinkle, Twinkle…”) and two other variation suites. I found the “mixed tape” across two centuries that Galosi presents convincing, musically delightful. Her playing is direct, unaffected, yet energetic and incisive when the music calls for it.

Andrew Timar

Beethoven Piano Sonatas Nos. 23; 18; 6
Young-Ah Tak
Steinway & Sons 30106 (steinway.com)

With his 250th birthday approaching, the popularity of Ludwig van Beethoven continues unabated for classical music audiences and performers alike. Captured here in her debut recording for the Steinway label, South Korean-born, now America-residing pianist, educator (on the faculty at SUNY Potsdam’s Crane School of Music) and academic, Young-Ah Tak, performs the late composer’s piano sonatas with a deft touch, a stylistically appropriate grand Romantic gesture and a level of familiarity with LvB’s work that is unsurprising, given the fact that her first solo recital, at age nine no less, included some of the very pieces captured here.

Recorded live at New York City’s Steinway Hall, this CD has an appropriately intimate quality to it and, as such, the engaged listener can identify, and, perhaps, even relate to the artistic struggle that occurs when an ambitious and deservedly feted pianist takes on a repertoire of well-trodden (and perhaps overly familiar) material – think Sonata No.23 in F Minor, “Appassionata” – yet desires to reify the expectations of an audience who demand that she make this material her own. Not an easy task, to be sure, but in Tak’s capable hands, new and effervescent subtleties of this music are introduced, exposed and played with to the satisfaction of both the performer and audience (and one would hope composer too). Nowhere is this more evident than in Tak’s dramatic interpretation of the clarion call “The Hunt,” (Piano Sonata No.18 in E-flat Major, Op.31, No.3). A recommended addition for piano enthusiasts and LvB collectors alike.

Andrew Scott
Beethoven – Sonatas Opp.26 & 90
Victor Rosenbaum
Bridge Records 9517 (bridgerecords.com)

Victor Rosenbaum’s third recording for Bridge Records underlines his affinity for classical-era composers. Here we have a selection of Beethoven’s piano pieces ranging from early to late works and including two sonatas, variations, rondo and bagatelles. The chronological progression of pieces on this album is a wonderful treatise on the evolution of Beethoven’s compositional style and techniques.

It is especially enjoyable listening to the two sonatas on this album. *Sonata in A-Flat Major Op.26* is charming and unconventionally structured, opening with a relatively slow movement in the form of a theme with variations. Rosenbaum is delightfully playful in the *Scherzo* and introspective in his interpretation of the striking *Funeral March* (third movement). Written some 14 years later, *Sonata in E Major Op.90* contains only two movements but they are vastly different in character. The first movement, written in E Minor, is dramatic, depicting the loneliness and anguish that will later become even more prominent in Beethoven’s music. The second movement, written in E Major is, in contrast, gentle and more Romantic in character. Rosenbaum navigates between the two worlds so naturally; his interpretation is powerful in the first movement and exquisitely nuanced in the second.

The naturalness and the candour of Beethoven’s language is very much suited to Rosenbaum, who has no difficulty communicating his musical ideas with conviction. It is as if the acumen acquired in his long performing career has been poured into every phrase, thus making this recording special.

Ivana Popovic

Schumann – Complete Music for Piano 4-Hands
Roberto Plano; Paola Del Negro
Brilliant Classics 95675 (naxosdirect.com)

There is something deeply satisfying about playing piano duets. Perhaps it is the synergy one might feel with his fellow player or the shared delight in casual music making. The jubilant sense of teamwork is undeniable in this recording. Pianists Roberto Plano and Paola Del Negro are an unyielding force together, beautifully attuned to each other’s ideas and expressions, and clearly ardent about Schumann’s music. Here we hear it all: passion, precision, style, energy and, above all, joy.

Schumann himself loved playing piano duets and wrote an extensive collection of pieces that ranged from his beginning years as a composer to the late Op.130. This 2CD album includes the whole scope of his piano four-hands music: eight early *Polonaises* (homage to Schubert); 12 *Vierhändige Klavierstücke für Kleine und große Kinder* (which became well-known and loved pieces of the piano repertoire); *Bilder aus Osten* (influenced by Eastern poetry and philosophy); and two late collections of dance pieces, *Ballsszenen* and *Kinderball*.

Some of these compositions are quite complex and many became quite popular, inspiring various arrangements. Here they are played with a combination of gusto and lyricism and an evident sense of style. With this album Plano and Del Negro pay tribute to all the intricacies and wonders of Schumann’s piano music while bringing forward their own artistic perspectives.

Ivana Popovic

Variations
Mishka Rushdie Momen
Somm Recordings SOMMCD 0603 (somm-recordings.com)

The bright, young pianist Mishka Rushdie Momen has released a new recording that features works in variation form by assorted composers: Clara Wieck and Robert Schumann, Brahms, Mendelssohn, Nico Muhly and Vijay Iyer. Rushdie Momen’s thoughtful liner notes offer a rationale for her recording choices, explaining the “variation” thread that connects each piece on the disc. In some cases, there are direct quotes and reorganization of materials from an older piece to a newer one (Vijay Iyer’s *Hallucination Party. After R. Schumann’s Op.99* is one such example). In other instances, works are referenced by thematic origin: Robert Schumann wrote variations on a theme by Clara and vice-versa; Brahms wrote variations on a theme by Robert Schumann, and so on.

Throughout the disc, one is struck by Rushdie Momen’s tonal command and wide-ranging technique as she wields the instrument in a quest for beauty of sound. This is a rare phenomenon today, particularly from a performer so young. Warmth and perfection of pianism seem at the forefront of Rushdie Momen’s musicianship; her attention to detail and technical confidence is on par with the artistry of such old master pianists as Clara Haskil, Sviatoslav Richter and Myra Hess.

Rushdie Momen can evidently manage any musical era with aplomb and the premiere recordings of works by Muhly and Iyer offer promise of exciting things yet to come from this gifted young artist. Composers – along with the rest of us – should flock to her keyboard side!

Adam Sherkin

Available March 20th
Grammy-nominated composer Michael Hoppe presents his newest album: the inspirational voices of the Sedona Academy Chamber Singers and the Tetra Quartet, conducted by Ryan Holder.

Spring Hill Music
www.springhillmedia.com

Michael Hoppe
Peace & Reconciliation
Wrangell-Mt. St. Elias National Park
Saint-Saëns – Piano Concertos 3 & 5
Louis Lortie; BBC Philharmonic; Edward Gardner
Chandos CHAN 20028 (naxosdirect.com)

Camille Saint-Saëns was an exceptionally gifted pianist, admired by his contemporaries for his dexterity and grand style. Yet despite his significant output of piano music, it’s only the works for piano and orchestra – including five concertos – which seem to have stood the test of time. To be certain, recordings of these compositions are by no means scarce, but this one featuring Louis Lortie and the BBC Philharmonic conducted by Edward Gardner, is a particularly worthy addition to the catalogue.

The majestic Piano Concerto No.3 from 1869 has been often overshadowed by the others – particularly the second – but the pairing of Lortie and the BBC orchestra is a sublime one. From the mysterious opening measures with the arpeggiated piano passages, Lortie demonstrates a flawless technique, his delivery strongly self-assured. The wistful second movement Andante is but a calm interlude before the buoyant and joyous third movement Allegro non troppo.

Piano Concerto No.5 – written in Luxor between 1895 and 1896 and suitably named the “Egyptian” – has always proven more popular. The piece is a true study in contrasts – the opening Allegro alternates between slow and fast segments; the central Andante begins with an introductory blast before settling into its more lyrical section and the piece ends with an energetic Molto allegro, the opening of which simulates the sound of a paddlewheel boat up the Nile.

Interspersed with the concertos are the popular Rhapsodie d’Auvergne and the less familiar Allegro appassionato, both from 1884, and each a satisfying melding of piano with orchestra in under ten minutes. In all, Lortie proves once again he is a pianistic supernova, one who can easily conquer the most demanding repertoire. The clarity of his interpretation and his elegant touch – along with a solid backing from the BBC Philharmonic – combine to make this a stellar recording.

Richard Haskell

Rubinstein – Music for Piano Four Hands Vol.2
Duo Pianistico di Firenze
Brilliant Classics 95965 (naxosdirect.com)

Pianists Sara Bartolucci and Rodolfo Alessandrini, collectively known as Duo Pianistico di Firenze (Piano Duo of Florence) have been garnering the accolades of the classical world since 1990, mining the overlooked, rarely performed or forgotten piano repertoire of the Western art music canon on a series of recordings, concerts and artistic residencies. Here, on this sprawling 2019 double CD released on the Brilliant Classics label, the Italian duo mightily dig in to the little-known, four-hand piano work of Russian composer Anton Rubinstein (1829–1894).

A touring piano soloist, composer and educator (he is perhaps best known as the teacher of Tchaikovsky), Rubinstein’s work here, similar to some of the best-known pieces of JS Bach, is didactically pedagogical by design. As founder of the Saint Petersburg Conservatory, Rubinstein’s 20-movement long Bal Costumé is not a high-water mark of Russian pianistic virtuosity (for which Rubinstein was known), but rather is intentionally welcoming and accessible to amateur and student pianists, a collection of tuneful miniatures meant for parlour performances for attendees at a costume ball. Although Rubinstein the pianist would become celebrated for his virtuoso performances, he too included Bal costume in his concerts, performing with Anna Vesipova or Monika Terminskaya, garnering accolades for the popular Toreador et Andalouse, movement seven from this suite. Captured here as the complete suite, this recommended CD set features the beautiful four-hand touch, playing and simpatico interaction of Bartolucci and Alessandrini seamlessly weaving together a unified tapestry of sound that is worth adding to one’s classical CD collection.

Andrew Scott

Four Elements Vol.2 Fire
Yu Kosuge
Orchid Classics ORC 100108 (orchidclassics.com)

This disc is Volume 2 of Yu Kosuge’s four-CD series Journey of the Four Elements. Fire begins intimately and after the pianist’s long, well-chosen program of late 19th-/early 20th-century compositions closes with grandeur. In Tchaikovsky’s January: At the Fireside, she conveys a family event’s togetherness well, along with imagined romantic passions. By contrast, five pieces from Max Reger’s Dreams at the Fireside evoke solitude. Here the composer remembers piano works from his youth: for example, piece No.2 references Brahms’ well-known Intermezzo No. 2, Op.118 A Major. Reger adds complex harmony and voice-leading, but fortunately Kosuge clarifies the tonal structure well. Next, a storm arrives in the guise of Liszt’s symphonic poem Prometheus (arr. Ludwig Stark). Sizzling “lightning flashes,” a difficult fugue and bravura alternating octaves followed by cascading chords, present technical challenges that Kosuge masters ably.

Among succeeding short pieces, Debussy’s brief Les soirs illuminés par l’ardeur du charbon (1917) is a welcome, evocative novelty discovered only in 2001; while the Feux d’artifice (Preludes, Book II) ranks with the best recordings I have heard. Kosuge’s touch is even and crisp, her grasp of the litfult harmonic base secure. The disc’s pièce de résistance is five numbers from Stravinsky’s piano version of his great Firebird Suite (1919). Brilliant handling of the Infernal Dance’s syncopations and cross-rhythms, a mysterious mood with magical tremolos in the Lufiaby and astonishing bell-like sonorities at the finale’s tremendous climax cap this marvellous CD.

Roger Knox

Sergei Prokofiev – Piano Sonatas 3; 8; 9
Freddy Kempf
BIS BIS-2390 SACD (bis.se)

Sergei Prokofiev’s music is a study in dramatic contrasts, not the least because the composer always seemed to look forward while harking back to the past. He was a brilliant piano virtuoso whose work was redolent of melodicism wedded to a tonality that was

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Solo Sessions Volume 1
Brenda Earle Stokes
Solo Sessions Vol. 1 is a stunning mix of standards, originals and arrangements of materials recorded in a single 4-hour session by Sarnia-born, NYC-based jazz pianist and vocalist Brenda Earle Stokes

thewholonote.com

Mirrored Glass
Takus
Featuring the music of Ann Southam and Philip Glass Album Launch Party @ the Tranzac Club Tuesday, March 10th, 7pm

thewholonote.com/listening
characterized by cascading warmth often spiked by the force of dramatic rhythms and broad dissonances. All of this is heard in these Piano Sonatas especially the last two – No. 8 and No. 9. Prokofiev’s work always demanded fingers of flexible steel and those on Freddy Kempf’s hands seem to embody this to perfection. From the first dramatic rendering of the Piano Sonata No. 3 in A Minor Kempf plays like a man possessed, and his breathtaking variety of touch means that the less hard-driven passages of No.8 and No.9 have an unparalleled degree of subtlety and nuance. His muscular style is eminently suited to such tempestuous music.

The Piano Sonata No.3 in A Minor is the shortest and from Prokofiev’s earlier attempts at the form, while No.8 in B-flat Major and No.9 in C Major are much longer and infinitely more intricate. Yet all three live and breathe in sharply characterized music that demands a sense of structure and momentum. Kempf embraces their wide tonal range, sharply drawn contrasts and intricate detail with sublime energy and a wonderful sense of occasion.

Rachel Mahon
Canadian Organ Music on the Organ of Coventry Cathedral
Delphian Records Ltd. DCD34234 (delphianrecords.co.uk)

On the surface, this disc appears to be an interesting international essay: Canadian organ music played on an English cathedral organ, performed by a Canadian organist working in the UK. It seems straightforward enough but, if one looks into the historical relationship between Canada and Coventry, a much deeper and meaningful relationship is quickly uncovered. In 1940 the Coventry organ was destroyed by German air bombers, reducing the entire medieval building to a pile of rubble. At the same time, the (Royal) Canadian College of Organists was collecting donations from its members to assist with the rebuilding of damaged English instruments. In the end, the decision was made to dedicate the entire amount of raised funds to Coventry, paying for a major part of their new instrument. It is therefore no surprise that there is a large brass maple leaf on the west-end floor of the Cathedral, commemorating Canada’s generosity.

It is with this historical backdrop in mind that organist Rachel Mahon selected her program. The first work, Healey Willan’s monumental Introduction, Passacaglia and Fugue bridges both countries; born in England, Willan later moved to Canada and eventually became known as the “Dean of Canadian composers.” Mahon treats this tripartite tome with the focus it requires, blending rhapsodic virtuosity with careful attention towards the structure of the composition. Gerald Bales’ Petite Suite and Ruth Watson Henderson’s Chromatic Partita are smaller pieces, but no less satisfying to hear on this magnificent organ, while Rachel Laurin’s Symphony No.1 is simply breathtaking in its immensity and dramatic content.

This disc merits repeated listening for numerous reasons, both historical and immediately practical. Mahon, recently appointed the next director of music at Coventry, is a superb performer with a keen ability to craft a satisfying program, and her debut recording is highly recommended.

Matthew Whitfield

Aphorisms – Piano Music of Carl Vine
Lindsay Garritson
Independent (lindsaygarritson.com)

The music of composer, pianist and conductor Carl Vine so often evokes the lucidity and sun of this artist’s home country: Australia. The world premiere recording of his Fourth Piano Sonata (2019) is included on a new disc by American pianist, Lindsay Garritson, a disc entirely devoted to Vine’s varied piano catalogue. Pianists tend to revel in performing Vine’s music; it is idiomatic and expressive – Romantic at heart yet fresh and buoyant, unmistakably of our time. (American composer Lowell Liebermann’s aesthetic seems a close relative to Vine’s.)

Garritson throws herself headlong into the fulsome soundscape of Vine’s newest piano sonata, in a whirl of an opener to the record, demanding the listener’s attention. Her heart is clearly devoted to every single note of this album, with a seemingly special affection for The Anne Landa Preludes (2006). These programmatic, deeply expressive pieces are aptly suited to Garritson’s musical sensibility as she relishes their expansive resonating lines and tolling chords, born of a personal mode of expression. After these (12) preludes, the record returns to sonata form, in a rhapsodic performance of one of Vine’s most popular works from his early period, the Piano Sonata No. 1 of 1990.

After five Bagatelles, including the haunting Threnody (for all of the innocent victims), Garritson treats the listener to Vine’s Toccattissimo (2011), a robust and thrilling finale to this attractive new album by a self-assured young pianist, with a career on the rise.

Adam Sherkin

What we’re listening to this month:

- **Greg Runions Big Band**
  - Suite Vincent
  - Featuring Dave Barton, William Carn, Tara Davidson, Mike Cassells, Brian Dickinson, John MacLeod, Brian O’Kane, Andrew Rathbun and Artie Roth

- **Lara Driscoll**
  - Woven Dreams
  - Chicago based French-American pianist with “captivating style and uncluttered finesse” and “magical touch... musical solos” releases debut jazz trio album Woven Dreams.

- **Ensemble Vivant**
  - Latin Romance
  - Beautiful, joyful, interpretively clarionant performances. A sparkling tapestry of Brazilian/Argentinian/Cuban/Latin inspired works including the world premiere of John Burke’s evocative Art Tango, La Despedida.

- **Lynne Harrison**
  - Something More
  - Songs that delve deep into love, life and the human spirit.
  - “I knew instantly Lynn was a special artist.” (John Apice, “Americana Highways”)
Schumann – Myrthen
Camilla Tilling; Christian Gerhaher; Gerald Huber
Sony Classical 19075945382
(sonyclassical.de)

Both genres demand an immersion of sorts into the music itself. The performance by this choir does more than simply tick all the boxes; it soars impossibly high, taking the music to another realm altogether. Another challenge – admirably handled by the choir – is the fact that the music spans almost 800 years of evolved tradition.

The program itself is an inspired one and is quite representative of women composers who, as the title suggests, emerged with high honours in a world dominated, at every level of art and its commerce, by men. This recording gets off to a glorious start with music by the ecstatic mystic, Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179). In the extract from Ordo Virtutum, where the monastic nun adapted the language of visions and of religious poetry, the choir’s interpretation is resonant and retains the exquisite purity of the music.

From the soaring intensity of the anonymous 17th-century composition Veni, sancte Spiritus by the nuns of Monastère des Ursulines de Québec through songs from Gartenlieder by the prodigiously gifted Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel (1805-1847) to the deep melancholia of Clara Schumann’s (1819-1896) work, the musicians and choristers achieve unmatched levels of elegance and refinement.

Raul da Gama
Whither Must I Wander
Will Liverman; Jonathan King
Odradek ODRCD389
(odradek-records.com)

Wanderlust – both literal and figurative – lies dormant in the human genetic makeup. It is often awakened, especially among artists, and takes flight into both real and imagined landscapes often with breathtaking results. From Wanderers Nachtlieder, Goethe’s poetry set to song by Nikolai Medtner, to lieders by Robert Schumann; from Songs of Travel by Ralph Vaughan Williams to King David by Herbert Howells and At the River by Aaron Copland, Whither Must I Wander captures the timeless beauty of man’s propensity for real and imagined travel.

The music is interpreted by Will Liverman, an outstanding lieder singer blessed with a warm-toned baritone. Liverman shows himself to be an artist of the first order. His performance here eschews melodrama and his interpretations are understated yet powerfully convincing. Howells’ King David is typical. Although Liverman is still young, and will surely mature, his singing already combines an authoritative vocal sound with accomplished interpretative insights into the music.

Liverman has an outstanding relationship with pianist Jonathan King. Together the two parley with the familiarity of old friends. The singer is aware of when to recede from the spotlight, making way for King to embellish melodies. The pianist, for his part, always rises to the occasion; his playing is full of adventurous handling of harmony and tone. Together with Liverman’s vivid storytelling, this makes for a profoundly dramatic and characterful performance.

Tina Kilk
Ongologoulou – Vocal masterpieces of the Experimental Generation 1960-1990
Sara Stowe
metier msv 28593 (divinartrecords.com)

English soprano Sara Stowe is a versatile and inventive musician with repertoire ranging from contemporary concert music...
Paul Moravec – Sanctuary Road

Solos; Oratorio Society of New York Chorus and Orchestra; Kent Tritle

Naxos 8.559984 (naxosdirect.com)

▶ Stories of the plight of the African slave in the US have echoed in the secrecy of the Underground Railroad for hundreds of years, the best of them recounted in prose, poetry and, somewhat recently, also in film. Musical stories – sung in the style of classic and modern blues and extended narrative jazz compositions – have also been heard. However, the operatic stage with live characters offers a distinctly different canvas where some of the most uplifting stories of the escape from slavery have been told.

In this most recent one, Paul Moravec and Mark Campbell have come together as musician and librettist in Sanctuary Road, to recreate epic narratives of William Still’s book The Underground Railroad. This is a powerful work, layered with meaning, rich in detail, tragedy and triumph and, above all, cathartic paths. All of this takes more than the characters themselves. It takes a fabulous cast, which Moravec and Campbell have found in the singers and musicians of the Oratorio Society of New York Chorus and Orchestra directed by Kent Tritle.

On Sanctuary Road Still’s narratives rise to a rarefied realm thanks to compelling performances by its soloists. Soprano LaQuita Mitchell is radiant, mezzo-soprano Racheen Bryce-Davis is mesmerizing, and tenor Joshua Blue, baritone Malcolm J. Merrilweather and bass-baritone Dashon Burton are spellbinding. Each of the soloists palpably evokes the suffering and joy of those who escaped to freedom from the American South into Canada.

Raul da Gama

CLASSICAL AND BEYOND

Del Signor Graun
Ludovice Ensemble
Veterum Musica VM021
(veterummusica.com)

▶ Music at the court of Frederick the Great usually conjures up images of J. Quantz and C.P.E. Bach – or even Frederick himself. That image is now under challenge due to this recording of music by the brothers Graun, who occupied key positions during Frederick’s rule.

This CD features three sonatas by each composer. Some movements are highly spirited. Listen to the Poco Allegro from the opening of the Sonata in D by Carl Heinrich and then contrast it with the Large from the same sonata; there is an almost hesitant entry of the flute. And some movements are genteeel. The Adagio from the Sonata in G is thoughtful and measured.

Then there is the other Graun, Johann Gottlieb. The Adagio from his Sonata in D demonstrates how much freedom this composer allowed his flutist, what with this movement’s forthright and almost chirpy playing, something enhanced in the following Allegro ma non molto. Joana Amorim obviously appreciates this tuneful opportunity, although it should not be allowed to overshadow Fernando Miguel Jalóto’s harpsichord playing.

Contrasted as they are in their approaches, these two composers’ works are rarely performed these days. It is time for them to be restored to a more popular status.

Michael Schwartz

Schumann – Overture Genoveva;
Symphonies 2 & 4
London Symphony Orchestra; Sir John Eliot Gardiner

LSO Live LSO0818 (naxosdirect.com)

▶ Sir John Eliot Gardiner represents a new breed of conductors, like Norrington, Jacobs and others who began their careers in Baroque repertoire with period instrument orchestras and then through the back door, came to the classics and Romantics and modern symphony orchestras. Gardiner with the LSO and modern instruments interestingly now turns to the very Romantic music of Robert Schumann.

Schumann’s symphonies have been much maligned in the past by critics saying that he couldn’t orchestrate, but actually this was caused, in Gardiner’s words, by “the late 19th century, opulent concept of Schumann” with muddled textures resulting from the over-Romantic approach of conductors of the time. Gardiner intends to rectify this by bringing “freshness, vivaciousness and clarity” and clean and transparent textures, using his previous experiences with period orchestras.

The Fourth is a particular favourite of mine and also it seems a favourite of conductors. It’s compact, optimistic, forward-looking and full of surprises. Note how Schumann links the movements together with no stops between them, the “trombone sigh” in the first movement development or the mysterious transition between the end of the third and beginning of the fourth movement. I remember Solti practically dancing the lovely melody in the last movement.

The Second is a turbulent affair, a work of genius; the first movement especially, a tremendous tour de force of a single strong rhythmic theme relentlessly driven with reverbernding variants towards a strong conclusion on the brass. Gardiner opts for fast speeds throughout (except for the heavenly Adagio espressivo) that can be very exciting, but can be detrimental to the beauty of the details. Bernstein’s magisterial reading with the VPO is still my benchmark.

Janos Gardonyi

Piccolo Concertos
Jean-Louis Beaumadier; Prague RSO; Vahan Mardirianski

Skarbo DSK3192 (site.skarbo.fr)

▶ How extraordinary is this recording of the Prague Radio Symphony and virtuoso piccolo crusader, Jean-Louis Beaumadier!
Smashing any expectations of the loud, piercing or vulgar, this first-ever CD comprised entirely of piccolo concerti with full orchestra, casts the solo instrument in a most reflective, sweet and expressive light. From the outset, the neo-Romantic impressionist music of Florentine Muslans offers both soloist and orchestra multiple opportunities to soar, which they do marvelously. With whole-tone passages, Ravel-like transparencies and their sensitive rendering, it is compelling listening.

The well-known staple amongst serious piccolo players, Lowell Liebermann’s Concerto follows and then a colourful, newly orchestrated version of Joachim Andersen’s Moto Perpetuo. On both, Beaumadier assures us of his utter command of the instrument through impressive technical displays and as trademark control of hushed pianissimos.

While the redundancy of both of these works being available online (in other versions) might diminish the CD’s value, the sheer magic of this album lies in the remaining three concerti and the Muslans, all dedicated to Beaumadier and composed since 2012. Véronique Poltz’s ‘Kilumac’ Concertino is brooding and suspenseful and showcases Beaumadier’s stellar flute–tonguing. Very minimalist ostinati spin ethereal tapestries in Régis Campo’s Touch the Sky, over which the soloist weaves evocative threads. In conclusion, the final Concerto composed by the late Jean-Michel Damase is a poetic, three-movement masterpiece, filled with humour, episodic melodic sonority and brilliant orchestration. Simply forget that it’s for a piccolo; this recording is truly a musical delight.

Nancy Nourse

Mahler 4
Carolyn Sampson; Minnesota Orchestra; Osmo Vänskä
BIS BIS-2356 (naxosdirect.com)

Osmo Vänskä continues his ongoing Mahler cycle in this fifth installment of his well-received survey of the complete symphonies. Composed at the dawn of the 20th century, Mahler’s uncharacteristically carefree and nostalgic Fourth Symphony turns the classical conventions of the symphonic tradition of Haydn, Mozart and Schubert on its head with a dark, oftentimes menacing humour. This way, affectionate sarcasm is, for me, best captured in the classic 1965 recording by George Szell and the Cleveland Orchestra at the height of their fame. Though Vänskä does not command the subtle structural micro-shifts of tempo Szell was able to coax from his notoriously intimidated band in the first two movements, the amiable Minnesotans still have much to offer. I particularly enjoyed the hushed serenity of the opening of the adagio movement and the expanded dynamic range of the digital process enables. At times I even felt that the musicians are almost too fastidious – the unique melodic unison of four flutes in the first movement is so unnervingly in tune that the evocative, distant fuzziness of this moment is lost.

Carolyn Sampson is the vocal soloist in the finale of the work, to which she lends the stipulated youthful, angelic tone along with excellent diction. Curiously, a photograph in the erudite booklet shows her performing from the rear of the stage on a riser next to three trumpets, though in the digital mix she is very much front and centre. I would have preferred to experience the true ambience of this accommodatory stage placement. That aside, this is an excellent rendition that I very much enjoyed.

Daniel Foley

The Deeper the Blue...
Janet Sung; Simon Callaghan; Britten Sinfonia; Jae van Steen
Somm Recordings SOMMCD 275 (naxosdirect.com)

The title of this disc refers to a series of associations in the areas of harmony and instrumental colour. A key figure is prominent British composer Kenneth Hesketh’s (b.1968), recipient of many significant commissions and awards. A student of Henri Dutilleux (1916-2012), Hesketh orchestrated that composer’s piano suite Au gré des ondes (1946) and the recording here by the Britten Sinfonia led by Netherlands conductor Jac van Steen is delightful. Among these six post-Ravelian miniatures I am particularly enchanted by the oboe solo in Improvisation, accompanied by a complex textural weave with particularly notable harp writing. The harp is also prominent in Mouvement perpetuel, where rapid flutes, piccolos, trumpets, horns and violins compete for attention.

Hesketh’s own composition Incription–Transformation for violin and orchestra pays homage to his teacher and to his grandmother Muriel McMahon. It is a substantial work where sustained long pedal points provide direction including a suggestion of the octatonic (eight-tone) scale structure. In the foreground is an exciting solo part played cleanly and with brio by US-based virtuoso Janet Sung; it is by turn aggressive and calm, and is supplemented by instrumental scattering and outer-space-like sonorities from the other instruments. Sung also excels with pianist Simon Callaghan in Ravel’s Tzigane and in Vaughan Williams’ Concerto for Violin and String Orchestra (1924-25), which is well shed of its former name “Concerto Academico” – I especially enjoyed the melodic invention of the slow movement and the irresistible closing Presto.

Roger Knox

MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY

Mosaïque
Ensemble Made In Canada
Independent 0 51497 14047 2
(mosaïqueproject.com)

Canada’s remarkable ethnic and scenic diversity is glowingly reflected in the stylistic diversity of the 14 pieces that constitute Mosaïque, each about four minutes long, drawing from classical, jazz, folk, pop and Indigenous idioms. The Mosaïque project was created by Ensemble Made In Canada, Western University’s superb ensemble-in-residence, comprising pianist Angela Park, violinist Elissa Lee, violist Sharon Wei and cellist Rachel Mercer. Since premiering Mosaïque in 2018, EMIC has performed the suite in every province and territory, as each province and territory is represented musically in one of the pieces.

Fourteen composers contributed to the project: David Braid, Barbara Croall, Julie Doiron, Andrew Downing, Vivian Fung, Nicolas Gilbert, Kevin Lau, Nicole Lizée, Richard Mascal, Samy Moussa, William Rowson, Darren Sigemund, Sarah Slean and Ana Sokolović. Many of their pieces depict familiar features of Canada’s physiognomy: prairies, mountains, the icy North and lots of flowing water – rivers in Quebec, Manitoba, B.C., Yukon and Northwest Territories are referenced in six pieces. There are also echoes of Gaelic, Acadian and Métis folk music, aboriginal petroglyphs, canoe trips, a legendary Newfoundland and Saskatoon ghosts.

Happily, all these disparate pieces fit together like tesserae, those tiny, coloured bits of stone, glass or ceramic that compose a mosaic floor, wall or ceiling. Here all the differently coloured musical bits have combined to create a vivid sonic “mosaïque” of our remarkable country, vividly performed by Ensemble Made In Canada. A truly wondrous achievement!

Michael Schulman

Mirrored Glass
Taktus Duo
Ravello Records RR8027 LP, CD and Digital (taktusduo.com)

The Taktus duo was formed in 2010 by Canadian percussionists Greg Harrison and Jonny Smith while pursuing master’s degrees at the University of Toronto. With musical influences ranging from classical to electronica, their stated mission includes

Roger Knox
making music “that crosses borders between genres...”. Their second album consists of very effective marimba duet arrangements made by the duo of key minimalist keyboard works by Canadian Ann Southam (1937-2010) and American Philip Glass (b. 1937).

Southam is represented by five pieces on Side A. The four from the piano work Glass Houses (1981, revised 2009) are constructed from short, primarily major-key tonal units. Possessing an overall lyrical quality, the composer slowly transforms melodies derived from only a few tonal chords. Inside those chords, in the evocative words of Musical Toronto, “a tone row gradually unfolds at the speed of a tulip blossom opening on a warm, sunny spring morning.” The fifth work is from Southam’s earlier and harmonically more adventurous Rivers I (revised 2004).

Side B features spirited, idiomatic Taktus arrangements of Glass’ well-known Music in Contrary Motion (1969) and pieces from Etudes (1994-2012). Throughout, the duo’s playing is both precise and nuanced, as is the quality of the accurate and warm-sounding recording. The use of processing to lengthen the decay on the percussive marimba sound is organic, never obtrusive. Harrison and Smith sensitively render the complex interplay of solo and accompanying voices with virtuoso panache in both sets.

This satisfying album promises a bright Taktus future.

Andrew Timar

Shostakovich 13 “Babi Yar”
Alexey Tikhomirov; Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Male Chorus; Riccardo Muti CSO Resound CSOR 901-1801 (naxosdirect.com)

► In January of 1970 Ricardo Muti conducted the first performance in Western Europe of Shostakovich’s controversial 13th Symphony written in 1962. The orchestra in Rome was the RAI Symphony Orchestra and the soloist was bass Ruggero Raimondi. One of Italy’s most highly regarded and enlightened artistic directors succeeded in securing a microfilm of the forbidden symphony and translated the poetry into Italian. A tape of the performance was sent to the composer who liked the translation. That very tape had been presented to Muti by Shostakovich’s widow as a gift a few months before this powerful performance in Chicago, making for a real sense of occasion. Muti certainly knows the music, as many of us who have seen the video of this same live performance of this thrilling, cantata-like symphony posted on YouTube will attest. The YouTube sound, of course, pales again this CD release. The CD booklet gives an account of how and why the symphony was banned. Here is an outline.

The symphony is set to texts by Yevgeny Yevtushenko. The composer was drawn to his poem Babi Yar, written in 1961, that tells of the 1941 massacre of 34,000 Jews in 36 hours on a hillside in Kiev. Shostakovich selected four other poems for a five-movement symphony. The selection was made by Shostakovich and was in no way intended by the composer to be a song cycle. Upon its first performance on December 18, 1962 the work was immediately banned with no review. For Khrushchev and the Presidium and others whose anti-Semitism was ubiquitous, this was an open condemnation. Yevtushenko eventually undertook to emend Babi Yar so that not only Jews were slaughtered in Kiev, and that the Russian people fought the Nazis. There was however one more performance using the unchanged text two days after the first; Kirill Kondrashin conducted it in the Conservatory and that powerful performance was recorded and is available on all formats from Praga Digitals.

Audiences today are once again hearing Yevtushenko’s original poem.

Bruce Surtees

Weinberg – Flute Concertos Nos. 1 and 2; 12 Pieces for Flute and Piano; 5 Pieces for Flute and Piano
Claudia Stein; Szczecin Philharmonic Orchestra; David Robert Coleman
Naxos 8.573931 (naxosdirect.com)

► Mieczyslaw Weinberg (1919-1996) was a Polish-Jewish pianist and composer who came of age just as Europe was plunged into the inferno of the Second World War. Moving first to Minsk to escape the Nazi occupation of Poland, he subsequently moved to Tashkent and then, with some help from Shostakovich, to Moscow where he lived for the rest of his life. The music on this recording, composed between 1947 and 1987 is a window into the musical culture, nipped in the bud by World War II, emerging in the 1930s in Eastern Europe.

The first thing that struck me about Weinberg’s music was his prodigious mastery of technique. For example, the first movement of Flute Concerto No.1 is an exciting, dramatic and technically challenging dialogue between the soloist and the orchestra. The second movement, an elegiac soliloquy for the flute, is supported by a simple but profoundly expressive chord progression played by the orchestra: the two movements couldn’t be more different, but both display equal mastery.

The first of the Five Pieces for Flute and Piano, begins by quoting the opening of Debussy’s La fille aux cheveux de lin, but moves on seamlessly into Weinberg’s own wonderfully original and expressive flight of melodic invention.

Flutist Claudia Stein, pianist Elisaveta Blumina and the Szczecin Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by David Robert Coleman, are equally up to the challenges of Weinberg’s music. Kudos also to Naxos for introducing us to Weinberg’s music for flute.

Allan Pulker

Michael Byron – Bridges of Pearl and Dust
Ben Phelps
Cold Blue Music CB0057 (coldbluemusic.com)

► This CD single features Bridges of Pearl and Dust, a 16-minute four-vibraphone work by “second-generation West Coast minimalist” American composer Michael Byron. It’s dense, contrapuntal and polyrhythmic music which generously rewards repeated listening.

I first met the Los Angeles-based Byron at Toronto’s York University around 1973. He came to study composition with American Richard Teitelbaum, as well as to teach music. Byron had already studied with maverick composer James Tenney in LA, and had formed close musical friendships with influential post-modernist, minimalist composers Harold Budd and Peter Garland. At York Byron worked closely with music professor, composer, musician and biofeedback-music pioneer David Rosenboom. Very quickly Byron became an integral member of the vibrant mid-1970s Toronto avant-garde performing arts community. Byron moved to New York City a few years later, and there too found an influential place in the downtown experimental music scene.

Byron’s compositions are marked by those varied influences, yet even his earliest works project a unique musical voice. One reviewer called it “shimmering minimalism.” The four vibraphones in Bridges of Pearl and Dust (2011), all played with élan by LA percussionist Ben Phelps, combine to express a complex, harmonically shifting sound field. Challenged on the first listening, I replayed the album four times. Over time, the logic and aesthetics of Byron’s musical imagination were revealed.

Filled with rhythmically percolating, interpenetrating melodic lines, the resulting tightly interwoven texture elicits, as the composer aptly put it, “a musical experience in the present tense.” And as I found out, one which richly rewards deep listening.

Andrew Timar
Memory – Patrick Yim plays works for solo violin
Patrick Yim
Navona Records nv6268 (navonarecords.com)

Patrick Yim displays both dazzling technique and passionate interpretations of solo violin works on his new release, Memory. Among five pieces, four are commissioned for this occasion and premiered on the album, and three are inspired by Miles Upon Miles: World Heritage Along the Silk Road, an exhibition at the Hong Kong Museum of History.

Memory features works by a talented array of composers – Chen Yi, Kai-Young Chan, Yao Chen, Austin Yip and Michael-Thomas Foumai. Their music is both an engaging showcase of inventive musical ideas and treatises on contemporary violin techniques. Through the exploration of cultural identity and the role of memory in preserving it, they bring out a delicate tapestry of ideas on the significance of sound in both past and present-day settings. Field recordings processed through granular synthesis in combination with amplified violin in Miles Upon Miles by Yip is a perfect example of accord between relics of the past and rich expressions of the modern language.

Yim is very attuned to each of these pieces. His skill in highlighting the minute nuances and details is fiercely supported by an understanding of the musical language and ideas of each composer. His sound is encompassing and penetrating at times, lyrical and poetic when needed, adding a special dimension to this album.

Elliott Miles McKinley – Shadow Dancer
Janáček Trio; Auriga String Quartet
Navona Records nv6264 (navonarecords.com)

As I write this review on Valentine’s Day (despite any personal reservations about this day) it seems fitting – and strangely serendipitous – that I am writing about a collection of pieces centred around the common theme of remembered love. Elliott Miles McKinley’s Shadow Dancer contains three chamber works from the well-known American composer: a quartet performed by the Auriga String Quartet, a duo for cello and piano, and the title work, a piano trio in six movements performed by the eminent Janáček Trio.

Sentimentality is a term thrown around in many negative contexts – and rightly so when a surplus of emotion is offered in excess of the object itself. That said, McKinley provides easily recognizable moods through varying angles that in turns assume flourishes of jarring dissonances, agonizing punctuation and repetitive thoughts that somehow create a welcomed atmosphere of sentimentality. These shifts in emotional temperament are most expertly woven in the String Quartet No.8 – a work that ignites a journey of doubt and eventual spontaneous resolution. The aforementioned duet, A Letter to Say I Love You, and Goodbye, is most fittingly titled in its obvious dramatic purpose and longing.

Shadow Dancer attempts to create a sense of purpose through love and understanding – wordless poems that are expertly performed by the highly accomplished musicians.

Adam Scime

Playing on the Edge
Sirius Quartet
Navona Records nv6249 (navonarecords.com)

The brightest star in the visible night sky has been given the name Sirius – a word of Greek etymology meaning “glowing” or “scorching.” The Sirius Quartet certainly lives up to such a depiction in their masterful performances on this release, comprised of five genre-bending composers, each providing a confident array of compelling sonic landscapes. Jennifer Castellano, Ian Erickson, Brian Field, Marga Richter and Mari Tamaki all bring a level of creative excellence that elevates this disc to a compulsory level along with the brilliant performances by the musicians.

The need to push boundaries and push limits is an ever-present theme in contemporary genres; however, as one listens throughout, such pushing is seemingly met with no force as it feels natural and pure as the music is refreshingly contemporary while avoiding any tired cliches. We do get the standard contemporary tricks as are heard in many pieces of recent times, but unexpected innovation takes over if any doubt arises concerning overused performance techniques. For those who ask if there are still new sounds and new contexts to be accomplished in contemporary classical music – this release is a must-listen.

Adam Scime

Found Objects – New Music for Reed Trio
PEN Trio
Summit Records DCD 754 (summitrecords.com)

I’m seeking synonyms for “whole-some.” I do so because I so enjoy what seems to me the very salubrious effect of listening to the timbre of three distinct reed voices. I am ready to accept that this is not everybody’s cup of tonic, but it seems to cure what ails me to listen to the very excellent PEN Trio. The tuning between the instruments is uniformly excellent, whether in consonant or dissonant voicings. Whether they’re swatting staccato flies or swinging languorous legato lines, they match character to one another. They play their respective windpipes with
driven at others.

This disc rolls on to its significant final track, featuring the Ligeti Quartet in a companion work to the first, Atomic Legacies. Pestova Bennett directs the action in a florid series of closely connected gestures, deconstructing Haydn’s music and her own.

Adam Sherkin

JAZZ AND IMPROVISED

Solo Sessions Volume 1
Brenda Earle Stokes
Independent ASNM 007 (brendaearle.com)

Smooth and rather sultry-voiced, vocalist Brenda Earle Stokes has released a truly enjoyable collection of well-known pop and jazz songs that she has put her own twist on. Featuring her own compositions among closely significant musicians in the general music universe including Dave Brubeck, Huey Lewis and Michael McDonald, this album is a versatile and captivating journey. The title refers to the fact that it’s just her and the piano on this record, which creates such a charming sense of intimacy; the listener truly feels as if they are seated right by the piano, watching and hearing Stokes play.

If ‘Never Come to Me’ opens up the album with a sensual punch, showcasing Stokes’ very apparent vocal talent. Stolorz is an original, a unique and modern piece that features interesting chord and melodic progressions which easily catch anyone’s attention. Throughout the album, not only is the listener taken through various genres from traditional jazz to the blues, but Stokes’ talent as a pianist is very well showcased. Her voice and melodies blend in seamlessly for a satisfying whole. A favourite is undoubtedly the cover of Lewis’ Power of Love, in which the original song is still fully recognizable but has been jazzed up just enough to be refreshing. Anyone looking for a treat to the ears and something a little different from the norm will enjoy this album.

Kati Kiliaspea

Embargo
University of Toronto Jazz Orchestra
U of T Jazz n/a (uoftjazz.ca)

It is no easy feat to construct an eclectic, thematically programmed album that maintains its flow from start to finish, but this is exactly what the University of Toronto Jazz Orchestra, under the direction of Gordon Foote, has done with their most recent release, Embargo. The student compositions on the album all demonstrate intricacy and wisdom, ranging from swing numbers to more contemporary pieces, and everything in between. It is a testament to both the quality of these arrangements and the stylistic programming of the album, that they sound right at home next to legendary trombonist and arranger Rob McConnell’s version of Take the A Train. McConnell’s treatment of the Ellington/Strayhorn classic is a demanding one to execute, but the ensemble does a fine job, as do the four soloists featured. Hearing the music of the Boss Brass live on through a younger generation of Toronto musicians is a unique treat. It is apropos that this should happen at the University of Toronto, which inherited McConnell’s scores and library following his death in 2010.

From contemporary ballads like Jesse Marshall’s Summer’s Over, and the energetically uplifting title track, Embargo, which features solos from its composer Vonne Aguda and guitarist Julian Bradley-Combs, to Hannah Barstow’s Count Basie-esque Medium Blue, a wide scope of large ensemble jazz writing is present on this release. Full of arrangers, composers and soloists who are wise beyond their years, depth and maturity are the true themes of this album.

Sam Dickinson

Suite Vincent
Greg Runions Big Band
Independent Grind 2019 (gregrunions.net)

With the release of this superbly conceived, performed and recorded big band project, vibraphonist/composer/arranger Greg Runions has fashioned a magnificent musical celebration of the iconic, late Canadian trumpeter/composer/arranger Kenny Wheeler. To realize his concept, Runions built upon his longstanding septet, and also created a “live-off-the-floor experience” by recording in the studio of the Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts. Wheeler was an unassuming, ego-less, gentle genius, who would no doubt be incredibly honoured by this inspired six-movement musical tribute.

The skilled A-list cast includes Andrew Rathban, Tara Davidson and Bob Leonard on reeds/saxophones; John MacLeod, Brian O’Kane and Jason Logue on flugelhorn and trumpet; William Carn on trombone; Brian Dickinson on piano; Mike Cassells on drums; Dave Barton on guitar; Artie Roth on bass and the lithe vocals of Yoon Sun Choi, channeling Wheeler’s longtime collaborator, Norma Winstone – particularly on the vocal feature The Long Way (which also displays Dickinson’s moving, emotionally vulnerable
and technically thrilling piano work).

The project opens with Chorale for Ken, composed by Runions in 1992, a stirring brass choir followed directly by Bass Interlude – an intricate and stunning bass solo by Roth. Wheeler’s profound influence as a seminal jazz composer and trumpeter saturates this arrangement of Bitter Tart, as does the exquisite flugelhorn work by MacLeod. Another stunner is Around About, featuring Barton with Davidson on alto and O’Kane on trumpet. The final Suite, Jeckle & Clyde, includes a nod to the more free aspects of Wheeler’s style, and Rathbun’s lush tenor incites the rest of the ensemble into gorgeous solos and heavenly, contrapuntal ensemble work.

Lesley Mitchell-Clarke

Concert Note: Greg Runions Septet and Big Band present the premiere of Suite Vincent in concert March 1, Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts, Kingston, Ontario.

Troll in Swimwear
Harrison² Independent (harryvetro.com)

Harrison² (that Harrison squared) abounds in doubles. There are two Harrisons, saxophonist Harrison Argatoff and drummer Harrison Vetro, both newcomers, and they’re paired with two veterans, saxophonist Mike Murley and bassist Steve Wallace. Further, both saxophonists are playing tenors. The group began in an encounter between Vetro and Wallace, the latter a change- of-pace substitute for Vetro’s drum teacher (Nick Fraser deserves credit here) at the University of Toronto. Argatoff joined in on some standards at the end of the lesson; a performance at Toronto’s Rex followed with Murley making it a quartet.

The absence of a chordal instrument opens up the music, encouraging the saxophonists’ dialogue and heightening Wallace and Vetro’s presence. It puts Wallace’s strong lines in the foreground and adds more room for his sculpted solos; Vetro is a very good drummer, precise and assertive with a keen sense of form.

Argatoff and Murley each contribute four compositions, developing them in ways that suggest the classic pairing of Lee Konitz and Warne Marsh; lithe, convivial music with a harmonic focus, but with a harder edge to their sounds. The two play together, whether it’s the dovetailing improvised dialogue of Argatoff’s title track or the way the younger saxophonist trails Murley on his ballad Writers’ Tears, as much an invitation to reflection as the Irish whiskey for which it’s named. Though it’s set deep in the tradition, the band has a special vitality, some rare chemistry among different generations.

Stuart Broomer

Murray: Trombone Solos
Scott Thomson
Tour de Bras TDB90036CD (tourdebras.com)

Trombonist, conceptualist, composer of site-specific works and programmer, Scott Thomson takes a speculative approach to improvised solo performance. In April 2014, he launched his first Trombone Solos at Odd Hours in Montreal’s La Pêle dance studio at times like 4 June 9:11 am. Since then he has performed over 130 such concerts, often for a single listener. In 2016, the Calgary label Bug Incision released Heures Indues, a CD with three performances; Murray comes from a 2019 series in the Montreal studio of Thomson’s late friend and collaborator, the painter and drummer John Heward.

Thomson’s solos don’t explore a single idea; rather, they’re permutations, here two half-hour long journeys through a variety of impulses and inspirations, with shifting melodies and timbres that can burst forth with marching band gusto or alight in a singing high register. Sometimes there’s a resonant partnership with some other material, whether an appended mute or something like furniture moving in the room. Sudden volume shifts suggest that Thomson is playing two trombones, one blasting loudly into the microphone, the other a distant, whispered aside. The CD is packaged with cards reproducing two of Heward’s starkly powerful abstractions, and the echoes of his studio may play a role in these performances, thematic as well as sonic. There’s something dramatic here, moods developing and changing along with the materials, a moving meditation in a terrain full of surprises, the shifting interior monologue of a musical flâneur.

Stuart Broomer

Augmented Indifference
Manteca Mmusic MM201913-4 (facebook.com/MantecaMusic)

Happy anniversary, Manteca! A perennial audience favourite, Manteca returns to mark their 41st year with Augmented Indifference, a four-song EP bristling with their trademark energy, creativity and virtuosity. And a fitting celebration it is.

In the band’s 41-year history, they have been one of Canada’s leading musical ambassadors, sharing stages with Miles Davis, Ella Fitzgerald and Van Morrison. Founded by percussionist Matt Zimbil and bassist Henry Heillig, who was the group’s music director for three decades, the group has been recognized as a musical innovator, drawing upon diverse influences in exhilarating performances. Accordingly, this latest release finds the group charting out new directions, while also revisiting more familiar musical territory. Mitis Meteo, arguably the most experimental song, pairs electric guitar with spoken word, trumpet and the bass clarinet of Colleen Allen, along with alternating driving rhythms and spacey textures. Somehow, they make it all work! Busking In Deadwood, introduces a beautiful, majestic melody and features some outstanding work by Lucas Zimbil on accordion and Steve McCabe on trumpet.

The aptly titled Arvant Cool highlights the innovative pairing of guitar and alto flute, while the set closer, a Beach Boys-inspired Koezubunga, again features guitarist Nick Tateshii alongside bright, punchy horn backgrounds. Let’s all raise a glass to Manteca – here’s to another 40 years!

Barry Livingston

Nostalgia and Other Fantasies
Aaron Dolman
Independent (aarondolman.com)

Montreal-born, up-and-coming drummer, composer and bandleader Aaron Dolman takes the listener on a meandering trip through music with his latest release. Closing your eyes while listening to this record evokes a feeling as if you were in a film, with each track bringing up a vivid image in the mind to accompany the melodies. Each piece is composed by Dolman himself and features younger musicians such as Marcus Savard-Lowry and Zacharie Bachand on guitars, Mathieu McConnell, bass, and Caitlin Smith on viola and vocals. The folk element imbedded in many of the pieces is a welcome and pleasing experience to the ear.

Gone for a While II is an atmospheric and ethereal beginning to the album, a fitting start to the journey on which the listener is about to embark. Stars in a Midnight Lake features a beautiful acoustic guitar riff underlying the entire piece, with the soft vocals by Smith joining in during the middle of the song for a wonderful and captivating interlude. The reprise of Willow Bunch is a joyful conclusion to the record and to the almost cinematic ride the listener has been taken on. The enjoyment in this album comes from not knowing exactly what’s going to be happening musically behind the next turn in the road, so to speak. It provides for an interesting listen that truly pulls you in and keeps you focused on the music.

Kati Killaspea
Old Prose
Richard Whiteman Quartet
Cornerstone Records CRSTCD 151
(cornerstonerecordsinc.com)

➤ Toronto pianist Richard Whiteman developed a late fascination with string bass about a decade ago, rapidly becoming an adept performer, as demonstrated here in a 2019 performance from the Huether Hotel’s Jazz Room in Waterloo, Ontario. Another distinguished Toronto multi-instrumentalist, Don Thompson, has described Whiteman’s bass lines as “Bach-like” in their precision. Perhaps it’s a pianist’s special gift, but it’s apparent here in both accompaniment and some well-constructed solos.

Perhaps befitting a bassist’s role, Whiteman may be the most retiring member of his own quartet. The principal role is given to visiting American pianist Harold Danko who provides five of the six compositions played here, while tenor saxophonist Pat LaBarbera and drummer Terry Clarke supply much of the band’s fire. The music is consummate mainstream modern club jazz, focused, energetic, sometimes dense, sometimes lyrical, often intense, but always involved and involving.

Though Danko has worked extensively with cool jazz giants like Chet Baker and Lee Konitz, his compositions reveal the breadth of his inspirations. Blue Swedish Wildflower is gently melodic, with Danko’s own introduction reaching toward the rhapsodic; McCoy’s Passion, however, a clear nod to modal master Tyner, is an open invitation to LaBarbera and Clarke to summon up their roots in the inspirational turbulence of John Coltrane and Elvin Jones. That balance between the gentle and the edgy, sometimes contrasting, sometimes combined, distinguishes this entire set of engaged post-bop jazz, crafted by senior masters.

Stuart Broomer

Job’s Trials – A Jazz Song Cycle by Dan Loomis
Yoon Sun Choi; Song Yi Jeon; Dan Loomis; Jeff Miles; Jared Schonig; Daniel Breaker
Independent (danloomismusic.com)

➤ With this release, New York City-based producer, composer, librettist and bassist, Dan Loomis, has created a 14-part, contemporized and unusual look at the biblical story of Job. The recording (to quote Loomis) is “...a song cycle and narration that offer a fresh look into a universal story exploring why bad things happen to good people” – perhaps a story only previously explored in a contemporary light in Neil Simon’s Job-focused hit comedy God’s Favorite. All compositions here are by Loomis with the exception of the project closer, Dear Lord by John Coltrane.

The Narrator (A.K.A. Satan) is masterfully performed by Broadway Star Daniel Breaker (Hamilton, The Book of Mormon), and the balance of the company includes vocalists Yoon Sun Choi and Song Yi Jeon, guitarist Jeff Miles and drummer Jared Schonig. Highlights of this unique jazz song cycle include Abundance Overture, where a funky, insistent bass supports the heavenly choir of Choi and Jeon, as they proceed through a complex scat section, underpinned by dynamic guitar work from Miles as well as relentless, bombastic drumming by Schonig.

As Job sinks into despair and confusion, Do Not Cover My Blood also takes a dive into the darker aspects of the human psyche, as the vocalists bob and weave through a cacophony of emotions and bop motifs. Although not a blues in the traditional sense, Job’s Blues focuses on our hero as he begins to bargain with his God with a rapid fire tempo, propelled into hyper-drive by Miles and Loomis. The closing salvo, Dear Lord, re-sets Coltrane’s lovely tune – leaving us with hope for the triumph of the unconquerable human spirit.

Lesley Mitchell-Clarke

Woven Dreams
Lara Driscoll
Independent (laradriscoll.com)

➤ On the face of it, with cold hard logic, the act of weaving is simple: you treadle a needle with yarn (weft) that passes evenly through even lengths of more yarn (warp) strung taut across a frame. If you’re skilled, you could do all manner of ornamental things with that weft as well. Applied to music, however, weaving is altogether more daunting, especially when your aim is to become a weaver of dreams.

Whether Lara Driscoll was challenged in making Woven Dreams, however, seems to be a proverbial moot point. This is truly outstanding music that tells wordless stories about living things (Siblings and Trespassers) conjuring each with humour and detail; it sketched and paints moving pictures and landscapes with vivid colour and texture (Black Dog Skirts Away and Isfahan) and does so much more, seemingly enchantingly, by manipulating the black and white keys of the piano, which is then woven into bass lines and dappled with percussion colours.

Having sat mesmerized through it all, Driscoll, together with Paul Rushka (bass) and Dave Laing (drums), will have done for you just what they did for me: imprint upon your mind’s eye something of a magical, seemingly unending dreamscape. In sheer colour and variety, in the depth of its characterization and the exceptional range and refinement of her pianism, Driscoll imparts an extraordinary bigness to this music that most pianists would die to achieve. This is music evoked as few pianists can.

Raul da Gama

Concert Note: Lara Driscoll launches Woven Dreams at The Rex Hotel Jazz & Blues Bar on April 9.

Chimaera
Emmeluth’s Amoeba
Ora Fonogram OF149 (orafonogram.no)

➤ Emmeluth’s Amoeba consists of Signe Emmeluth, alto saxophone and compositions, Karl Bjorå (guitar), Ole Moljell (drums) and Christian Balvig (piano). Their playing is tense and engaging. Chimaera was recorded in Trondheim, Norway in 2019 and features eight compositions which offer a great deal of improvisatory freedom: much of this album’s excitement comes from the contrasts between the improvised portions and the sudden interruption of composed ensemble sections. Emmeluth’s saxophone is lithe and delightfully erratic and Balvig is particularly impressive with his clusters of runs and staccato interjections.

Throughout the album, change is the main constant. For example, the first half of Squid Circles features Emmeluth’s skittering saxophone lines interspersing melodic fragments with quick multi-phonics. Then the drums enter with guitar and piano soon after. The last two minutes are a solid groove that builds towards an extremely abrupt ending. AB is a longer piece with a variety of sonic adventures, including a short section reminiscent of some zany music that Raymond Scott might have written. No. 1 begins with a slightly off-kilter lounge piano section and keeps this same nuanced mood as more instruments are added. It’s understated and beautiful. Chimaera is an excellent album that manages to be surprising, charming and edgy at the same time.

Ted Parkinson

Living Midnight
Colin Fisher Quartet
Astral Spirits MF211/AS 107 (astralspiritsrecords.com)

➤ Leaving his guitar back in Toronto, Colin Fisher took his saxophones to New York and recorded this Sometimes sage, trio of exemplary improvisations with
three of that city’s most accomplished free players: multi-instrumentalist Daniel Carter, bassist Brandon Lopez and drummer Marcus Edwards. All four function as if they’ve worked together for years.

With Fisher on alto and tenor saxophones, while Carter roam among clarinet, flute, tenor, alto and soprano saxophones, the only disorientation occurs when both play saxophones. But on Valley Spirit for instance, the resulting layered reed affirmations create enough elastinized power to counter the rugged polyrhythms of Edwards, who is constantly aggressive, although his distinctive accents and patterns never disrupt the narratives.

Elsewhere Carter’s discursive trumpet flutterers, breezy flute tones or fluid clarinet timbres create a calm oasis during the extended tracks, which Fisher joins with breathy lower-case vibrations. Meanwhile Lopez’s sprawling thumps maintain the tunes’ flow, except those times he joins the others for expressive thunks.

Crescent Moon Furnace to create packed tension or relaxed flow with those times he joins the others for expressive narratives.

Overall, the horn players use chalumeau and clarion registers in double counterpoint constantly aggressive, although his distinctive accents and patterns never disrupt the narratives.

Vocals and music on Benjamin at the Border, without neglecting consistent piano note patterns. These merge with Rose’s kinetic glissandi and hoedown-like patterns that complement the exposition while mocking the pianist’s few lapses into romanticism. Dramatically intriguing, The Marcuse Problem is built upon thickening a narrative constructed from angled fiddle runs and keyboard clinking to reach such a level of echoed intensity that it appears the pressure can’t be further amplified – and then it is. Finally the theme is deconstructed, leading to an appealing conclusion.

Recorded in sessions two years apart in Rome and Sydney where each musician lives, the CD’s stimulating duo program should encourage the two to collaborate more frequently. — Ken Waxman

Café Grand Abyss
Jon Rose; Alvin Curran
ReR Megacorp ReRJcR
(rermegacorp.com)

Busman’s holidays for American pianist Alvin Curran and Australian violinist Jon Rose: the two navigate a program of improvisations that also reference Curran’s experiments with electronics and Rose’s habit of stretching the fiddle’s expected characteristics for offbeat music-making.

Both are possessed of a sardonic sense of humour. For instance, they end the disc with a brief singing saw-and-keyboard-clipping variant on Tea for Two and precede that with a pseudo-blues, where at every turn, wide multi-string violin squeaks burlesque the jittery piano syncopation beside it. But this café’s main courses are extended duets, where amplified tenor violin sweeps expose unexpected techniques answered succinctly by keyboard colours plus wave-form drones or sampled sounds.

Curran exhibits percussion backing, brass-like pumps, electronic wiggles, and sampled vocals and music on Benjamin at the Border, without neglecting consistent piano note patterns. These merge with Rose’s kinetic glissandi and hoedown-like patterns that complement the exposition while mocking the pianist’s few lapses into romanticism. Dramatically intriguing, The Marcuse Problem is built upon thickening a narrative constructed from angled fiddle runs and keyboard clinking to reach such a level of echoed intensity that it appears the pressure can’t be further amplified – and then it is. Finally the theme is deconstructed, leading to an appealing conclusion.

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| POT POURRI |
| Latin Romance Ensemble Vivant Opening Day OGR 7458 (ensemblevivant.com) |

This is Ensemble Vivant’s 14th album. Founder, artistic director and pianist, Catherine Wilson, and her merry band of fellow world-class musicians, have been serving up a captivating mix of classical, Latin, jazz, ragtime and music from the Great American Songbook, in an intimate chamber music format for over 30 years!

Writing this, as I am, on Valentine’s Day, how very appropriate that so much of the music, and the music-making, on Latin Romance is absolutely stirring and heart-achingly beautiful; Wilson’s opening solo on Gismonti’s Memoria Y Fado is especially poignant. And speaking of matters of the heart, sadly, noted Canadian composer, John Burke, whose rich and rhythmic La Despedida for solo piano (a gift to Wilson, his longtime friend and colleague) graces track five, passed away on January 18, 2020. (Eerily, and perhaps fittingly, La Despedida – translated as “The Farewell” – was the last piece of his music Burke heard performed, live, before he died six weeks later.)

Wilson, along with bassist Jim Vivian, violinist Corey Gemmell, violinist Norman Hathaway, cellist Sybil Shanahan, and guests Don Thompson, whose vibe work on Gismonti’s Loro is an exhilarating tour de force, trumpeter Kevin Turcotte, and Juan Carlos Medrano and Luisito Orbegoso on Latin percussion, sparkle, shimmer, pulsate, yearn, beckon, move, tango and haunt in gorgeous (and often sexy) pieces by Piazzolla, Jobim, Lecuona, Albeniz, Mozart Camargo Guarnieri, Ernesto Nazareth, Leroy Anderson and Phil Dwyer.

Latin Romance is chamber music at its evocative best! — Sharna Searle

Concert note: A Tribute Concert to John Burke: A Celebration of His Musical Life is being organized by Catherine Wilson, to be held later in 2020. For details contact cathrine@ensemblevivant.com or visit www.ensemblevivant.com.

Something More
Lynn Harrison
Independent (lynnharrison.ca)

Sometimes a low-key first impression leads, like the title of this CD, to something more. Toronto folk singer Lynn Harrison’s finely crafted, penetrating lyrics and music become more and more intriguing as the disc progresses. In the title song I was at first concerned about plainness, but now I realize that, together with hollow-sounding guitar chord voicings, the repeated word “something” builds a sense of trouble effectually. Relentless lyrical uncertainty is appropriate enough in the song Riddle, yet in the closing guitar passage acceptance emerges non-verbally. In another song, Don’t Know How It Works, the line “To turn this anxious overflow into an easy grace” is especially memorable. In When I’m on the Water the continuation goes “... I’m above deep blue/When I hold my paddle I can glide on through.” With political and environmental themes, Protester and Pretty It Up become distinguished contributions in the social justice tradition.

Hope in the face of difficulty is pervasive, and this artist’s inner depth no doubt also supported her work as Unitarian Universalist minister. In Harrison’s folk style, her clear alto voice and confident acoustic guitar work are notable. Enriching influences from blues, rock and jazz in her songs are realized by stellar contributions from Noah Zacharin on guitars, including slide work on You Come to Me, and from too many other excellent instrumentalists to name individually. Production by Zacharin in association with Douglas September tops it all off professionally and imaginatively. — Roger Knox

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Ken Waxman
The Space Between Disguises
Simone Baron & Arco Belo
Independent GF0001 (simonebaron.com; arcobelo.com)

American pianist/accordionist/composer/arranger Simone Baron created her self-described “genre queer” seven-member chamber ensemble Arco Belo to perform styles ranging from classical to jazz to folk to world to new music. This debut release is a grounded creative quasi-work in progress performed with expertise. Co-produced with bassist Michael Pope and percussionist drummer Lucas Ashby, Baron’s music is eclectic accessible listening.

Baron is equally proficient in arranging and composing. Highlights include her opening track composition, Post Edit Delete, with lush string sounds opening, followed by her solo piano playing leading to a more jazz sound with solo violin. Its diversity is surprisingly not fragmented and introduces the listener to Baron’s self-described musical “worlds as different gestures.” Her Passive Puppeteer touches on many, never dissonant, ideas featuring her piano grooves and accordion runs supported by Pope’s electric bass virtuosity. Love her three short Disguise Interludes with static electronic sounds and voice.

Baron’s arrangement of Brazilian composer Tibor Fittel’s Valsa, which features a lyrical accordion part with bass, full string section and traditional harmonies, shifts from sad to upbeat rhythmic tango. Baron’s sensitive accordion performance here would benefit from more subtle dynamic variations but the high accordion pitches, trills and repeated notes at the end are colourful. World music sounds abound in her take on Béla Bartók’s Buciumeana/Kadynja.

String players Aaron Malone, Bill Neri and Peter Kibbe, and percussionist Patrick Graney complete the band membership. Other special guests play here too and Baron’s musical forecast shines brightly!

—Tillia Kilk

The Westerlies
Wherein Lies the Good
Westerlies Records WST001
(westerliesmusic.com)

The Westerlies are a brass quartet playing postmodern roots music with classical finesse while throwing in some down and dirty jazz licks and a few extended techniques. Wherein Lies the Good is their third album and the current members are Riley Mulherkar and Chloe Rowlands (trumpet) and Andy Clausen and Willem de Koch (trombone). The album is just over an hour with 18 songs and they run the gamut from Charles Ives to five gospel numbers transcribed from the Golden Gate Quartet’s arrangements, and an original from each member of the group.

One of my favourites is Robert Henry, written by Clausen for his nephew’s birth. It has a beautiful lilting melody played by the trumpets over pensive and moving trombone bass lines. It contains strains of minimalism with rapid fire exchanges between the trumpets and crisp articulation from everyone. Like many of the works, it has several sections which shift moods and keep the listener engaged. On the other hand, Entropy Part II becomes densely discordant and downright spooky. Wherein Lies the Good is a fresh delight and the arrangements make the four horns seem like much a larger ensemble.

—Ted Parkinson

Something in the Air
Expanding the Trumpet’s Role and Range Outwards

KEN WAXMAN

With the trumpet’s traditional heraldic and heroic roles in most music, and construction which depends on only three valves, tubing and a bell, it would seem that distinctive brass innovation would be at a premium. Yet as the following discs demonstrate, those who mix innovative concepts and technical sophistication can create notable exploratory sessions.

While American Dave Douglas’ Engage (Greenleaf Music GRE-CD-1074 greennleafmusic.com) is the performance closest to the jazz tradition, his choice of engaged song titles such as Sanctuary Cities and Living Earth confirms his political concerns, while the group lineup is unconventional. Besides drummer Kate Gentile and bassist Nick Dunston, it includes guitarist Jeff Parker, cellist Tomeka Reid plus Canada’s Anna Webber moving among alto and bass flutes and tenor saxophone. Engaged, not agit-prop though, challenges are expressed in sound. Orchestral, with a bass flute introduction for instance, In It Together splinters from anthemic to atonal due to trumpet gusts, swift cello string jerks and barbed guitar frails. One Sun, A Million Rays makes an exemplar of brass tongue jujitsu and valve hide-and-seek timbres propelled by guest trumpeter Dave Adewumi, with parade ground-like drumming and a chromatic counter line from the flutist. Meanwhile Living Earth could be a sleigh-ride melody reimagined by a Dixieland combo, although Webber’s tough tenor intensity, Parker’s colourful finger-picking and Douglas’ open horn work, backed by vamps from Adewumi and another trumpet guest, Riley Mulherkar, confirm its contemporary stance. This substantiates another Douglas concept. Like a concerned progressive who wishes society to evolve not rupture, his compositions cannily advance new textures that build on established ones. Faith Alliance and Free Libraries, Engage’s most advanced tracks, are instances of this. Faith Alliance slides Parker’s Jimi Hendrix-like squealing flanges and razor-sharp distortions within a layered horn vamp, culminating in a challenge from string pressure to brass expansion. Free Libraries could be termed roots music with the cello’s string swelling and the guitar’s blues licks never disrupting the harmonized horn part that, with gentling grace notes, instills concluding calm.

Touching on roots music by inference is Dropping Stuff and other Folk Songs (Relative Pitch RPR 1094 relativepitchrecords.com) but the eight tracks don’t resemble any extant folk music. Instead they reflect the sounds made by instruments stretched to their technical limits during improvisations created by an unconventional line-up of Amsterdam-based violinist Ig Henneman and flutist Anne La Berge plus American trumpeter Jaimie Branch. There are a few instances of
the extroverted trumpeter producing bugle call-like vamps, ferocious yelps and an entire section on the concluding title track where her inner Bubber Miley is revealed via plunger mute snarls. But Branch generally mutes her output to match the others’ horizontal pitches. Meanwhile La Berge often concentrates on affiliating peeping and keening trills as Henneman’s spiccato string slices alternate between disruptive angled pings and flowing ostinato pulses. Although enough echoes within the trumpet’s body tube, narrow flute whines and dissected string drags are featured, a perverse lyricism sometimes peeks through. Branch’s arching brassiness is effective in meeting the pseudo-romanticism of Henneman’s sluicing buzzes on Gigging, while unexpected, though quickly cut off, trio elation characterizes Canal Rounds. However the defining track is the extended When bells stop ringing. Melting the violist’s sul ponticello swells with the trumpeter’s propelling triplets and smears at Flight of the Bumblebee speeds, flute peeps create the connective continuum. Finally harmonized whispers from the horn players match Henneman’s protracted string saving for a downsloping conclusion.

Also in the realm of close-knit tripartite improvisation, but intensified with programming, is Hangerum (Clean Feed CF 537 CD cleanfeedrecords.com) involving trumpeter Tom Arthurs and electronic musician Isambard Khroustaliov both from the UK and Swiss percussionist Julian Sartorius. Vibrant and balanced, the disc consists of five tracks, which purposely reveal the distinct aspects of each instrument through separation and interaction until the trio’s parallel strategies cinch. Beginning with rounded trumpet notes, Arthurs’ pitches are held and framed by galloping pulsations from Khroustaliov’s electronics and Sartorius’ interminent beats until the brass player’s muted lyricism, highlighted with note flurries, meets knob-twisting oscillations and sharp, unexpected peeps. By the time Herrgöttli is elaborated, midpoint digression has Arthurs timbre-stretching to piccolo trumpet-like pitches or fluttering growls, but without weakening the narrative thread which was advanced at the outset. While the electronic undulating continues in building tension, there’s a sudden realization that live processing has created a secondary brass line, whizzing alongside the first. Timed chimes echoes plus power ratamacues from the percussionist concentrate the textures of the subsequent Duch even further, until halfway through a nuanced melodic line from the trumpeter unexpectedly floats over the sound miasma, leading to Reréaux, the extended finale. Picking up on each of the sound properties propelled by the trio members, the piece is buzzy, bellicose and breezy in equal measures. While the programmer’s synthesized outer-space-like whooshes and juddering oscillations are audible, so are the drummer’s doorbell-like tolling, churning bass drum pumps and ascending cymbal pings. Yet as much as the percussion and electronics vibrate irregularly beside him, Arthurs not only excavates the nooks and crannies of his horn for unusual textures, but uses muted puffs to confirm the alluring beauty of the suite.

Stripped down even further in concept and execution is the duo of French bassist Benoit Cancoin and German trumpeter Birgit Ulher, who uses a radio, speakers and objects to further splinter her brass sound during Electric Green (Blumlein edition blumlein.net). Interestingly enough, despite the obvious differences between their instruments there are points at which the bassist’s arco string sweeps and the trumpeter’s sounding of wide projected textures make differentiation nearly impossible. Most of the time though, Cancoin propels his low-pitched stops and rubs to create an ongoing continuum, while Ulher manipulates her horn and add-ons to source unique vibrations. One second she can output fire-drill-like elevated pitches, while on the next inflate balloon-like blows from deep inside her horn or latterly produce gentle flute-like tones. In fact, the extended Seladon is one of the date’s most low-key tracks with brief sniffs and watery gurgles from the trumpet’s innards brushing up against the bassist’s string stretching and wood banging until her aviary bleats and his col legno string slaps move their strategies closer. Establishing individual real estate they can be discordant, as on AureoIn, contrasting jet-plane-like brass propulsion and powerful purposed string shredding from the bassist. But overall the aim is to stretch expected timbres in the course of affiliation. By the brief, final Signal Blue, they establish an unshakable rapport so that the trumpeter’s note burbling and mouthpiece French kisses snuggly align beside the closest Cancoin comes to pumping out a swing beat on the date.

Something completely different is Possible Worlds (SOFA 575 sofamusic.no), a single track, 66-minute program of mesmerizing avant-ambient sound by Norwegian duo Pip. Consisting of Torstein Lavik Larsen on trumpet, sampler and synthesizer plus Fredrik Rasten who plays fretless electric and acoustic guitars, chimes and electronics in varied combinations, here the brass is used sparingly to infuse accents onto constantly repeated microtonal hooks propelled by Rasten’s stunted fingering. Subtly, the sequences gradually intensify as the track progresses while synthesized granular motifs including brass vibrations and organ-like sweeps inflate and take up more aural space. A defining division arrives at the three-quarter mark as the finger-picked guitar pulse is strengthened and turns upwards to meet synthesizer drones and percussive slaps. Meanwhile, inside horn growls from Larsen wash over the interaction. After fuzzy tones, chime echoes and dripping water-like sound samples are introduced into the mix, the continuous guitar strums are reintroduced to slide through harsher drones and bond with the exposition.

Each of these trumpeters chose to blow his or her horn in a unique fashion and all the strategies are equally valid.
Old Wine, New Bottles
Fine Old Recordings Re-Released

How fondly remembered are Leonard Bernstein’s Young People’s Concerts with the New York Philharmonic as seen on CBS Sunday afternoons from 1958 to 1972 and held in the New Philharmonic Hall, Lincoln Center. Years later the videos were first issued by Sony on VHS but those are long gone. We now have some of them on a four Blu-ray video disc set from Emjor as Volume Two of these concerts (Unitel Edition 800504 naxosdirect.com).

For these readers who may not be aware of these still-memorable concerts, the intention was to introduce younger people, and anyone else, and help them appreciate and hopefully understand classical music, new and old. Bernstein explained in easily understood language, with examples conducting the orchestra, what the music is all about and what the composer intended. Bernstein himself wrote all his scripts, over which he devoted enormous time and care. What we see and hear appears completely spontaneous, sharing information and never talking down to his audience.

In this collection there are 14 programs on subjects of interest upon which he elaborates and illustrates, each of which turn out to hold our attention even when presenting familiar works. For instance, Two Ballet Birds, aired on September 14, 1969, tells us that there are basically two kinds of ballet, one that tells a story and the other which does not. Les Sylphides is a perfect example of the latter. Bernstein illustrates a combination of both with music from Tchaikovsky’s Swan Lake. All very beautiful Romantic music, but with an abundance of simply abstract dancing for our pleasure, choreographed to show what the dancers can do and not to advance the story. On the other hand, in Stravinsky’s thrilling ballet, The Firebird, what is unfolding on the stage is precisely described and reinforced by the orchestra in the pit. Bernstein treats the audience in the hall with Stravinsky’s own suite from the ballet.

The set includes a tribute to Shostakovich on the great composer’s 60th birthday, January 5, 1966, including a very interesting analysis and complete performance of the compact Symphony No.9. There is also a tribute to Sibelius with a discussion and performance of Finlandia on the composer’s 100th anniversary, February 12, 1961, which ended with Copland conducting his well-known El Solitón México. But there is more, much more! Plus, there are three episodes of “Young Performers” introducing, among so many of outstanding talents, pianist André Watts, violinist James Oliver Buswell IV and the 30-year-old Claudio Abbado. This is a unique, engaging collection; a pleasure to watch and listen to the articulate Lenny talk about music and music-making. Volume Three on Blu-ray has been announced and is imminent.

Hans Rosbaud was one of the few great conductors of his time who rarely performed beyond Germany, Switzerland and France. Undoubtedly, he would have been internationally recognized had he been active in the outside world. However, his name was somewhat familiar as the conductor in many records by Wilhelm Backhaus, Walter Gieseking, Pierre Fournier and various singers. DG issued their complete catalogue of Rosbaud recordings in 2004 but it is on SWR Classic CDs that he is now best represented. In addition to single CDs they have numerous composer-dedicated sets: Bruckner, Haydn, Tchaikovsky, Mozart, Brahms, Chopin and now a Schumann collection (SWR19085CD, 3 CDs naxos.com). Disc One has the First and Fourth Symphonies and an overture to Shakespeare’s Julius Caesar, Op.128. Disc two has the Cello Concerto, Op.129 with Pierre Fournier and the Violin Concerto, WoO23 with Henryk Szeryng. The Third CD finds Annie Fischer playing the Piano Concerto In A Minor, Op.54. Schumann, as some readers may know by now, is my most cherished composer and I am critical of any performer, live or recorded, who skews the score by straying too far from what is written. Here are perfectly balanced performances, meticulously prepared but not for a moment sounding over-rehearsed or uninspired. Were it not that I have a copy, I would want this set.

On the other hand, Austrian conductor Karl Böhm (1894-1981) was recognized across the music world, emerging, in the 1930s with his superb recordings from Dresden with the then Saxon State Orchestra. After WWII he was a major maestro worldwide until his death in 1981. From the late 1930s on just about any station in the world that played any classical music even for only a few hours on the weekend, most probably would have a 78 rpm record or two of light classics by the Saxon State Orchestra. Conducted by Böhm, a part of their recorded repertoire consisted of overtures and entertaining concert pieces, the genre of music that Sir Thomas Beecham would refer to as “lollypops.” Their 78s were sold in stores around the world.

Today it is interesting to see some of the repertoire that did so well for Electrola, HMV, et al. being reissued by Profil as Edition Staatskapelle Dresden, Vol. 43: Karl Böhm (PH18035, 2 CDs naxosdirect.com). The performances are absolutely first rate and the recordings full bodied and dynamic. Do they have the same attraction all these years later? Here is the list of just the overtures: Die Fledermaus, Abduction from the Seraglio, Marriage of Figaro, Egmont, Leonore 3, Der Freischütz, Oberon and The Bartered Bride. That’s only CDs of two. More overtures to follow plus the Rakoczy March, the Emperor Waltz, Eine Kleine Nachtmusik, Capriccio Italian, and more to a total of 24 complete little showpieces. Two and a half hours of “never-a-dull-moment.” A lot of contagious energy here. ☝️
process – it can take an hour to go through just seven bars. As well, the loss of his once dazzling sight-reading skills precludes him from jamming with others unless he’s already memorized the music. “I can’t just get together with an oboist and play for fun,” says Arnowitt.

Losing vision later in life is more challenging than being born blind, says Di Nino. As your sight gradually diminishes, you realize how much you rely on that faculty just to get around, and, in its absence, you might be limited in what you used to be able to accomplish. “You can have the feeling…(that the) world is literally closing in,” she says.

Loss of sight can impact your social life as well. People usually gravitate to communities of friends who share similar capacities, so the shift into blindness can make the person feel out of place amongst their old networks. It can also shake up romantic relationships, says Di Nino.

Music therapy can be healing in these situations. As a nonverbal medium, it helps clients process their grief before they’re able to attach words to their feelings. Later, when their mobility has been restored, clients can turn to songs to help them forge connections and keep loneliness at bay. “Music is a social act to be shared,” she says.

Music therapy can also help newly blind clients augment their remaining sensory capacities and regain their functional independence. Neurologic music therapist John Hartman, from the Milwaukee Center for Independence in Wisconsin, uses musical techniques to boost auditory discrimination. In one exercise, clients try to emulate the pace and volume of the therapist’s playing, reproducing these on their own instruments. In another lesson, they concentrate on the location of sounds, turning their heads towards notes issuing from instruments spread out in the room.

Hartman also uses music to activate newly blind clients fearful of flailing around in the dark. Rhythm engages the brain’s motor area, rousing people into motion. Hartman plays clients well-known action songs like Row, row, row your boat, which stimulate movements in response to the musical cues. As clients begin to explore their surroundings in the safety of familiar pieces, their ability to navigate improves.

Arnowitt hasn’t needed formal music therapy to compensate for his perceptual loss, since he’s accomplished this naturally. Though the pianist’s hearing hasn’t changed since he lost his vision, he already had a highly trained ear by that time), he’s become better at orienting himself in the environment. Arnowitt maintains the same organization of objects in every room, so when he looks for something, his hand always moves to the same spot. He believes this emphasis on spatial memory has impacted his piano playing. “The blindness might have caused me to be more aware of the distances between things, …so maybe I’m able to play greater jumps…on the piano,” he says.

Arnowitt’s tactile ability has also grown since he lost his vision. He attributes this development to his increased reliance on the sense to identify commonly used items like toothpaste, scissors, or a hairbrush. This experience has, in turn, refined this dimension of perception. (That)...sensitivity in the fingertips…would make (your) piano touch a little bit better,” says Arnowitt.

Music has also helped Arnowitt come to terms with the difficulties issuing from his disability. “(Music) is a peaceful escape from the world and the frustrations…the blindness creates,” he says. His years of solo practice have also made him comfortable spending long hours by himself. He rarely feels alone when he’s at the piano, since the instrument itself is a companion. So are the composers. “You have a connection to them even though you didn’t live (during) their time,” he says.

Back at the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, “Evening in the Key of B” is ending. Arnowitt stands and bows. The theatre explodes with applause and cries of “Whoo, whoo.”

McClean is relaxed after the show, her seriousness giving way to a smile as she talks to her parents. “It was a fantastic evening,” says her father. De Val agrees. “Working with Susanna is a real trip for me…she’s so professional, so musical,” she says. “It’s a bit of a high.”

Arnowitt too is surrounded by fans. These moments of communion insulate him from the loneliness that can trouble others with visual impairment. “I lead an unusual life compared to typical blind people…every time I perform, I’m surrounded by people afterwards who want to talk to me and shower me with compliments,” he says.

Every once in a while, spectators go deeper. One time a woman credited his concert with helping her mourn a death. Times like these confirm Arnowitt’s own conviction of music’s transformative potential. “You like to think that making music is more than entertainment,” says Arnowitt. “When you know someone in the audience had a deeper experience, it gives myself, as a performer, a special satisfaction.”

Vivien Fellegi is a former family physician now working as a freelance medical journalist.
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There is an aspect to cultural work – or in our case, artistic ceremony – which does not align with current colonial reviewing practices. In order to encourage a deeper discussion of the work, we are inviting critiques or thoughts from IBPOC folks only. There is a specific lens that white settlers view cultural work through and at this time, we’re just not interested in bolstering that view, but rather the thoughts and views of fellow marginalized voices and in particular Indigenous women.” —Yolanda Bonnell

Actor and playwright Yolanda Bonnell created quite a stir in Toronto arts circles in mid-February when she made the above statement, widely interpreted as a request that only Indigenous, black or other persons of colour be sent to review her show at Theatre Passe Muraille, *bug*. The play is a searing look at indigeneity and addiction, among other things, and Bonnell suggested that she felt, based on some previous experience, that critics from the dominant cultural group in society would be more likely to misrepresent her work in their reviews. She is not alone in this idea – many other Indigenous artists have been thinking along the same lines for some time. Bonnell also noted what she called the ceremonial aspects of *bug*, its role as a unifying rite for people who have suffered similar traumas to her own, a production style she did not feel jibed with the traditional expectations of a conventional review.

I’ve cycled through a surprising range of personal responses to Bonnell’s request – surprising to me, that is. And I’d like to share my thought processes about it, as a sort of confession of confusion around the deeply problematic issue of art and politics in our present age.

When I first read about Bonnell’s statement, I wasn’t especially alarmed. A bit surprised, but not alarmed. Reviewers have an enormous amount of power over artists and their productions, and in setting the limits of discourse around a work of art. A review is inherently an exercise of power. Why wouldn’t artists try to influence the exercise of that power, for whatever motivation? It’s true that the power of the mainstream review, in an era of disappearing arts sections in North American newspapers and a plethora of blogged, Instagrammed and Facebooked responses to arts events, has never been weaker. But it’s still there. Why not try to enjoin it? I could live with that.

Or so I thought.

But then I realized, or was honest enough to admit to myself, that I am one of the people Bonnell was targeting in her request. (And it was a request, not a demand, it’s important to note.) I’m a mainstream critic who is neither Indigenous, black or a person of colour. In effect, therefore, Bonnell was telling me that she didn’t want me to review her show, because she didn’t think I could do so responsibly. And that hurt me, and made me angry. Surprisingly so.

Why? I wondered. At first, I said to myself, this is offensive: I’m a professional reviewer – art is art, even ceremonial art, and I’ve been trained to separate out my personal biases from my professional opinion of it, and I resent the implication that I cannot – a nice argument, except that we now understand, or should, that this notion of a politically neutral “art” is a form of bias all of its own – that art is inherently political. Especially within classical music, my usual critical stamping grounds, this dispute between art as cultural meaning and art as pure form has been fought for decades, mainly in the academy, around discussions about the new, politically conscious musicology. And the new musicology has won, by and large. And rightly so. My taking umbrage at being accused of potential professional critical incompetence was a bit disingenuous.

Then, I surprised myself even more by turning petulant. “I know several people of colour” I protested to an absent Yolanda Bonnell, “who would be considerably less sympathetic to *bug* than I would be. Why do you assume that my sympathies wouldn’t be with you?” In asking the question, I had to laugh at myself. Because I full well knew the answer, like it or not. The answer is that Indigenous people have been watching our “settler colonial” behaviour with great care in this country for the past 400 years. We haven’t acquitted ourselves well in the past; there’s no reason to think we will now. I don’t like that answer very much – no one likes to be stereotyped – but it’s hard to argue with it, if I’m being honest. So the fact that I was not being sought out for my views can’t really be the root of my anger either.
Here, I confess, is what I think is the real reason for my personal reaction. I think, in the end, I realized that I couldn’t bear to absorb, in even the mildest possible dose, this tiny, tiny check on my autonomy – absurdly tiny – having to deal with the suggestion that I wasn’t welcome to review a work of theatre. It was infuriating to me. And I was a bit ashamed to realize that. More than a bit ashamed. I realized that privilege, and the assumption of privilege takes many forms, and is very insidious. It’s not just about the imposition of an inherited cultural framework – it’s about the assumption that everything in my world should be open to me, that I had the right to be and go anywhere I choose. To understand that there are things that aren’t for me, or about me, was a lesson it was about time I learned.

So, I can understand and fully endorse Bonnell’s initiative to create a supportive mental and emotional infrastructure for works of art that are harrowing, and vulnerable, and open to being misunderstood. But that’s not quite the end of the story for me. Because, as much as I can sympathize with the reasoning behind Bonnell’s statement, I worry about it becoming the default position in the relationship of mainstream audiences and non-mainstream art, or to put it more baldly, (perhaps too much so), the relationship between the audience of the oppressors and the art of the oppressed. Art is a vehicle for celebrating many aspects of humanity: from forming community among people of like experience (one of the stated goals of bug), to allowing different points of view a vehicle for expression, to providing forms of entertainment. Above all, art is primarily a vehicle for the liberation of the imagination – the imagination not just of the artists making the art, but the imaginative landscape of the audiences absorbing it, reflecting upon it, eventually critically reviewing it. If Bonnell’s statement (and others like it) are simply making a plea for, and an argument about, the expansion of the cultural diversity of arts reviewers, I, for one, am not going to argue with her.

But there is another point at play here as well, I think. Art is at its most valuable in its ability to disturb preconceived notions, to expand the emotional and imaginative range of people stuck in a depressing sameness of mental and cultural viewpoints, to jiggle and jostle and storm the bastions of hatred and prejudice and limits – limits of empathy, limits of understanding. That is the most important work we have for ourselves these days in our complex, multivalent society. And it is work that art is uniquely positioned to do.

It might be unfair to impose on Yolanda Bonnell the expectation, even the demand, that bug radically alter the perception of people who might otherwise be ignorant of, and unintentionally diffident about, the circumstances that gave rise to her art. In fact, she has done a great deal of that work already by simply making her statement and taking the stand she did, to considerable personal hostility, as she has reported. Eventually, we need to find a way to create a landscape of equivalence and equality, of righteousness, to use a very old-fashioned word, in our society. Exclusion cannot be a permanent vehicle to get to that hoped-for state. But Bonnell and her creative team, in a very courageous way, have helped all of us begin to understand what exclusion is, the many levels on which it operates, and the hurt it occasions. For that, we should give her sincere thanks.

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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