Cancelled/Postponed/TBA

APRIL 2020
THE MONTH THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN
**STRINGS**

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<td>St. Lawrence Quartet</td>
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<td>Nov. 12</td>
<td>Castalian Quartet</td>
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<td>Dec. 10</td>
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**PIANO**

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<tr>
<td>Nov. 3</td>
<td>Vadym Kholodenko</td>
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<td>Apr. 27</td>
<td>Janina Fialkowska</td>
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NEXT MONTH

A HANDEL CELEBRATION

Directed by Ivars Taurins

May 21–24, 2020
Koerner Hall, TELUS Centre

Peaches and Hydrangeas, After G.G., detail, Paulette Tavormina
New Wave Festival
Postponed to 20/21 Season

Tidal Waves
Postponed to 20/21 Season
Guest Artists
VC2 Cello Duo
Michael Bridge Accordion
Keiko Devaux (Canada) Ebb (2018)
Quinn Jacobs (Canada) Action Gallery (2020)*
Julia Merrelstein (Canada) in turn (2017)
Chris Paul Harman (Canada) Suite for Two Cellos (2019)***
Tze Yeung Oh (Norway) Utrolig Varmt Vann ("extremely hot water") (2016)
Edson Zampronha (Brazil) Trazo ("stroke" as in brush stroke) (2014)
Stephanie Orlando (Canada) phases of the moon (2019)

Sonic Waves
Postponed to 20/21 Season
Guest Artists
Eugene Astapov Guest Conductor
Cameron Crozman Cello
John Rea (Canada) Accident (Tombeau de Grisey) (2004)
Misato Mochizuki (Japan) Chimera (2000)
Žibuoklė Martinaitytė (Lithuania) Completely Embraced by the Beauty of Emptiness (2006)
Jamie Li (Canada) Liquid Luminosity (2020)*
Kaija Saariaho (Finland) Sept Papillons (2000)
Various Composers Mystery Variations (2010)

Electric Waves
Postponed to 20/21 Season
Keynote address by renowned composer, John Rea
Guest Artists
Shannon Mercer Mezzo-soprano
James O’Callaghan Electronics
Jennifer Nichols Choreographer/Dancer
Cameron Crozman Cello
James O’Callaghan (Canada) Not non-other (2020)
Alison Yun-Fei Jiang (Canada) Snow Music (2020)****
Maurizio Azzan (France) Where the here and now of nowhere is (2018)
Christina Volpini (Canada) waves, breaking, reflecting light (2020)**
Eugene Astapov (Canada) A Still Life (2020) for mezzo-soprano and orchestra (poetry by Russian poet Polina Barskova)

Alex Pauk, Conductor
Eugene Astapov & Alison Yun-Fei Jiang, Guest Conductors

* World Premiere commissioned by Esprit Orchestra
** World Premiere commissioned by Esprit Orchestra with generous support from the Ontario Arts Council
*** World Premiere commissioned by VC2
**** World Premiere: revision/expansion of “Temporal”, originally commissioned by Esprit Orchestra

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Alex Pauk, Founding Music Director & Conductor

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ON OUR COVER

We chose the background photo of the Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts in Kingston to represent all venues little and large across our whole region, and because of all the concert halls we know its particular blend of asymmetric wood and subtly shaded forest green seating is a reminder that what we’re dealing with right now affects all of us indoors and out. Our cover art designer, Susan Sinclair says “When David sent me cover text with the heading Cancelled/Postponed/TBA I immediately thought, ‘Oh no, the issue is cancelled!’ On second reading (and double-checking with him) I realized it was just his cover concept for this strange and troubling issue. It’s been a tough few weeks for everyone, but especially for those in the service and performing arts sectors. Thankfully, I have my CDs and my little dog to keep me company. Hopefully May brings better news!”

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UPCOMING SPECIAL SECTIONS
IN MAY 2020 | THE CANARY PAGES All things choral in southern Ontario.
IN SUMMER 2020 (June/July/August) | THE GREEN PAGES | The WholeNote’s Summer Music Guide
When a Virus Goes Viral

11.30am, Sunday March 22 2020

At first, about two weeks ago, when the postponements and cancellations of events in March and April and beyond started to trickle in, we thought the best thing to do would be to take them out, as though they had never been planned. But as the trickle turned into a tide, we changed our minds about that. We have an explanation for why, and I’ll get to that. But with “Flattening the Curve” rapidly taking on the weight of an Eleventh Commandment, you will I hope forgive me my mild moment of rebellion in meandering a bit on my way to the point.

Ruth Vellis

I don’t remember when exactly Ruth Vellis’ first phone call to me was, but I can call to mind even now her bright clarity on the phone, every time we spoke thereafter: “Hello, this is Ruth Vellis speaking. I have read your magazine forever. I used to pick it up at St. Stephen-in-the-Fields, right across the road from here, if I got there before they were all gone.”

“Here.” across the road from St. Stephen’s, as she explained, was Kensington Gardens retirement home. “I am 96 and not going to concerts right now, but I still love to read about them, so I can decide which ones I would have chosen to go to. I enjoy doing that.”

From that moment on, without fail, Chris Malcolm our circulation manager made a point of dropping off Ruth Vellis’ personal copy at Kensington Gardens. And every time, over the ensuing years, Ruth would call me (most often, I suspect, at times when she could just leave a message) to say thank you, and the message would be the same: “I am 97, 98, 99, … going to be a hundred soon, I am a hundred and April and beyond started to trickle in, we thought the best thing to do would be to take them out, as though they never been planned. But as the trickle turned into a tide, we changed our minds about that. We have an explanation for why, and I’ll get to that. But with “Flattening the Curve” rapidly taking on the weight of an Eleventh Commandment, you will I hope forgive me my mild moment of rebellion in meandering a bit on my way to the point.

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continued
The virus that went viral

Last Sunday morning around this same time, Jack and I were walking through a largely deserted Kensington Market, and ran across Maggie Helwig, poet, novelist, social justice activist, and minister of St. Stephen-in-the-Fields Anglican Church at College and Bellevue (yes, the selfsame St. Stephen’s at which Ruth Vellis used to pick up her copy of The WholeNote during her concertgoing days). “Shouldn’t you be in church?” we teased. The answer was that the diocese had instructed the suspension of all church services, but – thankfully, from Maggie’s perspective – not the suspension of other aspects of her ministry, in this inner city parish where the worlds of the least and most afflicted in our society most starkly intersect.

We talked about the strange time we are in. “We’ll never know for sure, whether or not all this was an overreaction or not,” I suggested. She nodded. “Unless, of course,” she said, “in spite of everything, it turns out to have been an under-reaction instead.”

Whether it’s the virus or the way the virus has gone viral that is most to blame for the tidal wave of impacts sweeping our society, is at this point immaterial. Moving forward, all we can do to help is to continue to tally those impacts, and our community’s responses to them, as best we can, in all the media available to us, so that you, our readers, can figure out how best to help, to whatever extent you can.

I discovered researching this piece that Ruth Vellis died on December 11, 2018 at the age of 102. I am certain she would have enjoyed choosing which of the concerts in this issue she would have gone to if she could. As, I am equally sure, will you.

David Perlman can be reached at publisher@thewholenote.com

How They So Softly Rest

BRIAN CHANG

There’s never before been a time like this for the arts community. And we’re all in disarray. I’m feeling disconnected from my musical community, the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir and the wider connected cultural family of the Toronto live classical music world. These are people and friends I spend hours with every week, and hundreds of hours with over the course of a season. They are faces I see and smile with, they are voices I sing with and feel comforted by. But like many of us across the arts community, we’re all separated from one another and the current season for the choir and most other arts organizations is totally up in the air.

A month before you get the magazine in your hands, writers are usually hard at work combing through listings and reaching out into networks to build and develop stories about what matters to everyday people. More often than not, it isn’t an issue about finding something interesting to write about, but rather, how to focus on only a handful
of things in the musical chaos and glory that the region has to offer. It is heartbreaking to look at the pages of listings with close to 100 listings, knowing that none of them are coming to fruition. This has never happened before.

We had so much to talk about this month too. I wanted to talk about Oakham House Choir’s Elijah. I wanted to talk about Considering Matthew Shepard with Pax Christi Chorale. I wanted to talk about preparing for Easter music. I wanted to talk about choral music and how much I love ensemble singing.

Pax Christi’s David Bowser and I had even met and the interview is sitting on my phone, recorded, the two of us delving into the powerful story of a gay man beaten and left to die because he was different. We talked about how Craig Hella Johnson was so moved by this that he decided to put it into music and develop an oratorio over many years. We talked about how significant it was for a choir to pick up music like this and be challenged musically and spiritually by it. And we talked about the power of choral music to tell powerful stories like this that leave us changed as musicians and audiences.

But we won’t get to hear Considering Matthew Shepard this season. And we may not hear any more concerts. In the Mendelssohn Choir, we were preparing an austere Healey Willan piece, written to commemorate service people who died in World War I. How They So Softly Rest. It hums in my head as a memory of the sounds of what would have been the signature performance that the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir is known for, its annual “Sacred Music for a Sacred Space” concert, always performed on Good Friday.

I can’t bring myself to take my sheet music out of my knapsack. Even though I have nowhere to go, it doesn’t seem right to take it and put it away.

All our rehearsal halls and all our concert halls will be dark for the next little bit. And that’s okay. There’s an important adage in performance that goes something like this, “Anyone can make noise and hold notes, but rests and silence are how musicians make music truly magical.” Composers can write the loudest, most powerful, thick, heavily orchestrated chords, but they are often only powerful because of what precedes them or proceeds from them – a rest. And eventually, all music does come to silence. But this isn’t the end.

The spine-tingling moments of anxious waiting between the old 20th-Century Fox fanfare and the Star Wars theme. The silence after the three iconic opening notes of Beethoven’s Fifth. The great silence before the final two “Amens” of Handel’s Messiah. Silence is part of the great music we all love and rests mark so much of what we know in music. The world in isolation is no different. We’re on a grand pause right now. This isn’t the silence at the end of a song, it’s the dramatic silence before something wonderful. We have beautiful sounds ahead of us. We’ll see you back at rehearsal and in concerts soon enough.

Follow Brian on Twitter @bfchang.
Send info/media/tips to choralscene@thewholenote.com.

“Rests and silence are how musicians make music truly magical.”

Considering Matthew Shepard
The true story of an ordinary boy: an oratorio honouring Matt’s life, death and legacy

Considering Matthew Shepard, by Craig Hella Johnson

Pax Christi Chorale featuring Megan Miceli & Simone McIntosh, sopranos; Kristzina Szabó, mezzo-soprano; Lawrence Wiliford, tenor; Phillip Addis, baritone; and the Toronto Mozart Players

SUNDAY, APRIL 26, 2020, 3:00 P.M.
George Weston Recital Hall, Meridian Arts Centre (formerly Toronto Centre for the Arts)
5040 Yonge Street
BBUY TICKETS ONLINE AT PAXCHRISTICHORALE.ORG

Postponed
I had heard through the musician grapevine that baritone Brett Polegato owns a remarkable library, but putting in a request to poke around someone’s house and then write about it is not the easiest of asks. This March, however, after a sudden flurry of cancellations of his Lebanese, Italian and Nova Scotian engagements due to You-Know-What, Polegato found himself spending an unusual amount of time at home and we easily scheduled a get-together. I visited the three-storey row house he shares – or shall we call it his three-storey library – in the Carlton and Church area on one of the last evenings before the city went into a complete lockdown. Like a majority of working artists, he’s been hit hard by the loss of income due to cancellations. But this evening we decide to focus on what brings joy.

We skip the ground floor, which houses the piano, the CD collection in the middle of a major clearing out, and the downstairs books to which we’ll return, and go up to the living room. There are already bookcases here, behind glass doors in cubes on each side of the sofa, and I spot Naomi Alderman’s *Disobedience* in one of those. But that’s just a teaser for the main event upstairs, with the first stop in what looks like a linen closet. Packed with books.

“This is probably one of the oldest signed books that I have.” He pulls out a vintage edition of Philip Pullman’s *Galatea* (1978), which the author refused to re-issue in his later life. I visit the three-storey row house he shares – or shall we call it his three-storey library – in the Carlton and Church area on one of the last evenings before the city went into a complete lockdown. Like a majority of working artists, he’s been hit hard by the loss of income due to cancellations. But this evening we decide to focus on what brings joy.

The books here are sizable, and are stunning objects to look at – not regular hard covers but bibliophile editions. A large section of Robertson Davies – “I got this book that he signed and dedicated to painter Max Bates in Victoria, I must have been 23 when I bought it” – and a lot of shelf space for Philip Pullman. “I wanted all the Philip Pullman books signed. This is *His Dark Materials* – these are all North American editions, but I also wanted British editions which cost ridiculous kind of money.” He only buys books in hard cover now. “It started with Pullman, and it spiralled out of control,” he says. “There is all of Michael Cunningham here too.”

Next we move to two cases which house classics in the most beautiful editions available. “These are all Folio edition books,” he says. “I joined the Folio [Society] years ago, when you had to buy four books per year to be a member. What I liked about them is that they were publishing in hard covers what you never find republished anymore.” My eyes are drawn to a luxurious complete Henry James and a towering single-volume *Brothers Karamazov*. “There’s Virgil’s *The Aeneid*, the Homer… all the way to the *Chronicles of Narnia*, all of the Dante…” He pulls out Dante’s *Divine Comedy*: “These Folio books are all hand-sewn; wherever you open them, they lie flat.” Moving on: “This is all of Charles Dickens. All of Thomas Hardy and Jane Austen in hard cover. Those are *Mapp and Lucia… that*’s E.M. Forster,” I spot a stunning complete hard cover set of *In Search of Lost Time*, which he also has, it’ll turn out later, in a hand-friendly quality paperback downstairs on the ground floor shelves. He has yet to read Proust – I urge him to, as he’s one of my favourites – but like a lot of book lovers who read a lot, he collects even more than he can catch up with and enjoys that state. What motivates him to collect? “My goal was that interlinked short stories with characters that appear in *Cloud Atlas*.” There’s some Peter Carey in the closet too; I spot Sarah Perry’s Gothic *Melmoth*, a Tom McCarthy volume, and…David Duchovny?! “*Holy Cow* is a novel – *The X-Files* star actually writes novels,” he says when I raise an eyebrow. But then I notice Aleksandar Hemon when another door opens. “I have all of Aleksandar Hemon, and probably all of the André Aciman now.”

We leave the hallway and move on to the room that functions primarily as a library, with bookcases covering every wall. The books here are sizable, and are stunning objects to look at – not regular hard covers but bibliophile editions. A large section of Robertson Davies – “I got this book that he signed and dedicated to painter Max Bates in Victoria, I must have been 23 when I bought it” – and a lot of shelf space for Philip Pullman. “I wanted all the Philip Pullman books signed. This is *His Dark Materials* – these are all North American editions, but I also wanted British editions which cost ridiculous kind of money.” He only buys books in hard cover now. “It started with Pullman, and it spiralled out of control,” he says. “There is all of Michael Cunningham here too.”

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some day when I'm retired and have a big library, I could just walk up to the shelves and say, ‘Hmm what do I want to read today?’ And have practically everything, Paradise Lost, or Wings of the Dove, or Roald Dahl complete tales.”

And when a global pandemic strikes and puts a pause on everything, what better refuge than a library so well stocked?

How does he decide what to buy? “One of the writers that I love, the Australian Steve Toltz, has a character in A Fraction of the Whole say: ‘All great books are about other books,’ I think that’s true. Often when you read, somebody will mention a book in conversation, or the dust jacket will say this is like X, Y or Z. For example, when I read The Beach by Alex Garland, which was made into a movie with Leonardo Di Caprio, the blurb described it as a combination of Lord of the Flies and The Magus by John Fowles. So after that I read The Magus; and while that was happening, somebody said to me OMG you have to read Fowles’ The Collector, so I read that. I think the same thing happens with movies.”

“My goal was that some day when I’m retired and have a big library, I could just walk up to the shelves and say, ‘Hmm what do I want to read today?’”

By now we’ve crossed to the large video collection on the other side of the room – another two standalone cases. Many TV series on BluRay, and a place of prominence for Dr Who, and Martin McDonough’s film In Bruges. And also – The Seven Year Itch with Marilyn Monroe?

“There was a deal on Amazon for nine Marilyn Monroe films and I got all of them. … Niagara, Some Like It Hot, Gentlemen Prefer Blondes. One of the films had Montgomery Clift, and so I started buying Montgomery Clift films. I was re-watching Sunset Boulevard and that same year that Gloria Swanson was nominated for an Oscar, Judy Holiday won it for Born Yesterday. So I looked for it and it’s now one of my favourites. Then I started buying Judy Holiday films.”

Are there actors, directors whose aesthetic he prefers or is influenced by? “I’m into… economical actors. I wouldn’t say Bette Davis is subtle but she’s economical in the way she uses gestures and looks. I don’t find her hysterical … even when she’s over the top, she’s efficient.” The stars of old Hollywood had greater presence, and were certainly not chameleonic, the way some of the method actors of today are. Is the old school closer to his tastes? “Hmm… This is what I liked when working with Yannick Nézet-Séguin – and the first thing I did with him was here in Toronto, a Faust production when the Four Seasons Centre opened as the new home for the COC. Yannick really allows the artist to inhabit things in their own style. He provides a comfortable environment for you to shine. I think that’s true for a lot of old directors and conductors, people like James Levine … you could see that they helped singers. It feels that in contemporary art-making there’s much more control asserted by the director, more direction placed on the artist.”

But should we be nostalgic for an era of megastars who, while they sold a lot of tickets, never particularly bothered to act? Is it bad that we now expect even divos and divas to act – and for opera to be a full theatrical experience? “No, I agree. As an actor I’ve worked with Pierre Audi, with Robert Wilson, James Robinson, Kelly Robinson … Some have a more realistic approach, some are funnier, some are more surreal. I’m used to all of those styles; it gives me a greater adaptability when it comes to working with a new director.”

Other actors he appreciates are Daniel Day-Lewis (speak of “chameleonic!”), Colin Firth, Julianne Moore (“she’s incredible”). “I love Gene Kelly and admire his ability to be so elegant and masculine
at the same time.” As for directors, a recent big revelation has been Paolo Sorrentino. “Because I was in Rome recently, a friend told me I had to watch La grande bellezza [The Great Beauty] and watched it now twice, it’s staggering. That’s the reason I bought La notte and L’avventura. Sometimes I just respond to visceral cinematic imagery… like Julie Taymor’s Titus Andronicus, Kubrick’s Barry Lyndon. With some films you sometimes think, I don’t know what that is, but it moves me.”

We linger some more in the Folio room while I ask him about poetry. “As I’m getting older, I respond a lot to poetry. I was never a big poetry buff growing up. But Gerard Manley Hopkins has become essential for me – it’s the images that bypass intellect. Cinema does the same thing, sometimes you just see the picture and the emotion registers before the intellect grabs on to it. Same thing with acting. I like directors who pull that out of me. Who stop me from intellectualizing the process.” He goes to theatre a lot, in his home town and whenever abroad, much more than to opera. “I always watch the actors who are not speaking, I want to see how people live on stage. It’s far easier to have the floor.” Is he more a Soulpepper kind of person or the Matthew Jocelyn’s Canadian Stage kind of person? “Maybe a little more Soulpepper. I like to be told a story but it doesn’t have to be in a linear, traditional fashion. It can be Ivo van Hove staging The Damned with video projections, which I saw at the Barbican in London.”

Is he like that as a reader too? Let’s keep the structure of the storytelling and don’t mess too much with it? “David Mitchell for example isn’t traditional storytelling at all,” he says. “And I have to mention Gerard Manley Hopkins again, whom I read over and over … and Thomas Hardy. Edna St. Vincent Millay.”

We have moved to another room, which has its own library and a mountain of books on the floor: the “To-Be-Read” room. I spot Alan Hollinghurst – own library and a mountain of books on the floor: St. Vincent Millay. “Kevin Barry! Now there’s an author that I love. A bit like James Joyce. Dubliners is one of my favourite books ever.” I notice with delight that he has purchased all three Eimear McBride novels – another Irish writer working in Joycean, modernist tradition – and placed them prominently on their own. Oh and look, I say, there are the Ali Smith’s fast zeitgeist novels, Autumn, Winter and Spring – but he’s moved on to the poetry pile, bringing out Philip Larkin, Billy Collins, John Ashbury. “I’m very eclectic. This woman for example, Frances Hardinge, writes amazing YA fiction. The way she writes is so alive, so unpredictable.” There is a lot of CanLit on his shelves too. “I love Colin McAdam. There are things by Atwood that I like, but I like Lisa Moore even more. A friend of mine, Gil Adamson, is about to publish a new book. I love Joseph Boyden, Lynn Coady … I loved Anne Michaels before the world caught on.”

I ask him about Kazuo Ishiguro, whose books I spot on the lower shelf before we head down the stairs. “Huge Ishiguro fan, especially Never Let Me Go. Richard Powers, Michel Faber. All wonderful.” Is there anything that you never buy and never look for? “I read very little crime fiction,” he says. “You don’t need a book to be plot-y? “Not at all. Take for example Dan Chaon, You Remind Me of Me. I cannot tell you the number of people who’ve read it and tell me nothing happened. I tell them, ‘What do you mean nothing happens, you learn all about these people!’ I am more interested in discovering people; while I appreciate storytelling, I don’t need to be told a story the Dan Brown way.”

Before we part ways, I ask him about projects coming up after this season of cancellations is over, if by then it is. A Canadian Art Song Project recording is on the agenda for May, and on June 6 a concert in honour of Randolph Peters’ 60th birthday, with music by John Estacio, Vincent Ho, Bramwell Tovey and Peters himself. On June 14, Off-Centre Music Salon and Petersburg, a song cycle by Georg Sviridov. In the fall, no small feat: the title role in Rossini’s Guillaume Tell with Irish National Opera.

But meantime, at home, the comfort of books – the more books, the better. Have you read City of Bohane? That’s a good example of the kind of stuff that I like. A bit like James Joyce. Dubliners is one of my favourite

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

The TPL has put together a quick guide to all of their digital resources called 38 WAYS TO USE THE LIBRARY FROM YOUR HOME including e-books and e-audiobooks; newspapers and magazines; comics and graphic novels; materials for children of all ages, online learning resources and podcasts. There are also classic films, world cinema, documentaries and popular movies available for on-demand streaming. And there is a ton of music, from the NAXOS music library.

For other online resources please see COVID-19 – Artist & Reader Resources, page 47 — WholeNote staff.
Beat by Beat | Classical & Beyond

The Cruellest Month
A Portrait of April 2020 as It Might Have Been

PAUL ENNIS

Art of Time Ensemble was to have presented “S’Wonderful,” their Gershwin brothers’ tribute at the beginning of April and “Dance to the Abyss,” with music by Kurt Weill (and lyrics by Bertold Brecht), Schulhoff, Spoliansky et al, early in May, both already cancelled. To ease the pain, artistic director Andrew Burashko has created “The Self-Isolation Playlist” on Soundcloud, inviting everyone to listen, and saying this:

“This song list is a desire to share with you some of the music we’ve made over the years - a kind of offering at a time when everything is being taken away. Suddenly, having more time than I know what to do with - trying to distract myself from the fear and madness outside my window, I’ve been digging through recordings of past concerts - some not heard in years, and reflecting on the immense privilege I have had of making music with such remarkable people/musicians. I hope you will enjoy it.

If you’re reading this online, go to: soundcloud.com/user-185119516/sets/the-self-isolation-playlist, where you can hear Art of Time’s take on nine songs by the likes of Charles Aznavour, Jacques Brel, Gilles Vigneault, Charles Trenet and Robert Charlebois.

Canadian superstar Jan Lisiecki was also to appear at the beginning and end of this time period: scheduled to play Beethoven’s Piano Concertos No.3 and No.5 “Emperor” with the TSO in early April; and at the end of the month, with baritone Matthias Goerne, to perform a program of Beethoven songs at Koerner Hall. In November 2014 when Lisiecki and the TSO played Beethoven concertos 3, 4 and 5, the then 19-year-old sat down in the Roy Thomson Hall lobby with composer Gary Kulesha for a brief interview. “My modus operandi is to make the piano sing,” I remember Lisiecki saying. Kulesha wondered how Lisiecki would characterize the three Beethovens. The Third “has a similar ferocity and darkness as the D Minor Mozart K.466 which it parallels”; the Fourth “pushes the boundaries... [it] begins from the soul of the piano”; the Fifth “broadens what can be done in a concerto.”

The following summer (2015) at Stratford, I heard Lisiecki and the Annex Quartet perform all five, arranged for piano and string quartet. It was part of an exhaustive learning process leading up to his recording of the concertos with the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields conducted by Tomo Keller. The Academy/Keller/Lisiecki live recording from Konzerthaus Berlin in 2018 is available for viewing on YouTube! It’s some consolation for the cancelled April TSO concerts.

In an interview in July 2019 for revopera.com, Lisiecki was asked about his evolving approach to the Chopin concertos; his response seems to me representative of his approach in general: “My interpretations are fluid, I change them from performance to performance, sometimes consciously, other times subconsciously. This is what makes music live, what makes it real and visceral to the audience.”

Regarding the anticipated recital at Koerner with Goerne, on March 11, Deutsche Grammophon posted on their Facebook page a snippet of a rehearsal in anticipation of the release, on March 20, of Matthias Goerne (baritone) and Jan Lisiecki’s recording of Beethoven songs to coincide with their concerts in Vienna (March 20), Munich (March 22) and Koerner Hall (April 24). A full performance video is coming soon per Facebook, offering an alternative should the April recital not take place.

Gimeno and Wang: April was also set to mark the return of incoming TSO musical director Gustavo Gimeno leading the orchestra in Brahms’ bucolic Symphony No.2, paired on April 8 and 9 with Brahms’ incendiary Piano Concerto No.1 and on April 11 with his uber-Romantic Piano Concerto No.2. In both instances, the soloist is the formidable Yuja Wang. YouTube features her emotions on display in both concerts with the Munich Philharmonic and their regular conductor Valery Gergiev. I was particularly looking forward to Wang’s musical conversation with TSO principal horn, Neil Deland, that begins the second concerto.
Peter Oundjian: Also scheduled for April, Oundjian’s first visit as TSO conductor emeritus, leading the orchestra in Mahler’s transformative Symphony No.5. The work’s breathtaking Adagietto sent Robert F. Kennedy’s funeral service heavenward and three years later immortalized Lucchino Visconti’s celebrated adaptation of Thomas Mann’s novella, Death in Venice, a film that may hit too close to home right now; despite its beauty. Slated to open the program, concert-master Jonathan Crow as soloist in Bruch’s lyrical calling card, his Violin Concerto No.1. Crow’s local musical presence has deepened in the last three years since assuming the artistic directorship of Toronto Summer Music and enriching a time of year that not too long ago was moribund. Speaking of TSM, Crow is scheduled to host a free noon-hour preview of TSM’s 15th anniversary season, at the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre on May 5.

Quatuor Ébène was set to conclude Music Toronto’s current series of downtown concerts on April 16 with performances of Beethoven’s String Quartet Op.18, No.6 and Op.132. The Toronto concert was to follow a world tour with the theme “Beethoven Live Around the World” that has resulted in live recordings of all 16 quartets. The next day, April 17, the ensemble had planned to begin a complete traversal of the quartets in Zankel Hall, NYC. What insights would they have conveyed, what power, what joy? YouTube offers some consolation of the quartets in Zankel Hall, NYC. What insights would they have conveyed, what power, what joy? YouTube offers some consolation of the quartets in Zankel Hall, NYC. What insights would they have conveyed, what power, what joy? YouTube offers some consolation of the quartets in Zankel Hall, NYC. What insights would they have conveyed, what power, what joy? YouTube offers some consolation of the quartets in Zankel Hall, NYC. What insights would they have conveyed, what power, what joy? YouTube offers some consolation.

Confluence: As I write this (March 20), Confluence Concerts’ artistic director Larry Beckwith has begun a blog in which he aims to analyze Confluence’s artistic directorship of Toronto Summer Music and enriching a time of year that not too long ago was moribund. Speaking of TSM, Crow is scheduled to host a free noon-hour preview of TSM’s 15th anniversary season, at the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre on May 5.

NPR Music, specifically their Tiny Desk Concerts, is a treasure trove of multi-genre performances, all under 30 minutes. A recent delight featured Igor Levit – why has he not been heard in Toronto? – introducing and playing up-close-and-personal selections from two Beethoven sonatas and Für Elise, last November. Bent over the keyboard of a small upright piano, his delicate, rigorous touch coming from a position of strength, he played the first movement of the “Moonlight” sonata. Next came the second movement of Sonata No.10, Op.2, which he called one of the funniest and wittiest of the sonatas. Levit drew out its cartoonish quality, tongue clearly in cheek all the way to the double-harlequin surprise at the end. The concert concluded with Bagatelle In A Minor “Für Elise,” which he characterized as “a total eye-roller, one of the most beautiful treasures ever written.”

Levit is one of many musicians in a growing list that Gramophone magazine’s streaming service has made available for these self-isolating times. Go to gramophone.co.uk (their website) for streaming or the hashtag #gramophone (on Twitter) if you are an artist and would like them to watch your performance for possible inclusion. Among the many participants as the calendar turns to spring are Gautier Capuçon, Yo-Yo Ma, Alisa Weilerstein, Tafelmusik’s bassoonist Domenic Teresi, Boris Giltburg and James Rhodes.

Three at Koerner: The immensely likable James Rhodes was the first of three singular concerts I was able to hear in Koerner Hall, March 5, and 6 before the world changed. Rhodes (whom I interviewed for WholeNote’s March issue) began with a Bach prelude in honour of Glenn Gould before playing – straight through with no break, like a rock concert – three Beethoven sonatas, and three encores to satisfy the enthusiastic crowd. The sheer lyricism and heartfelt beauty of Giovanni Sgambati’s arrangement of the Melody from Gluck’s Orfeo ed Euridice touched me the most.

South Korea-born violinist Kyung Wha Chung, who is celebrating her 50th year as a performer, made her Koerner Hall debut on March 6 with a substantive program of Mozart, Beethoven and Franck. Her beautiful round tone seemed to be an outgrowth of, and throwback to, violinists of the first half of the 20th century. Her straightforward demeanour belied the luminous sounds she and her longtime collaborative pianist, Kevin Kenner, produced – judicious phrasing and dynamics that illuminated the composers’ scores, from the riches of Franck’s Violin Sonata in A Major to the second movement of Mozart’s Violin Sonata No.21 in E Minor, K304, which floated so naturally into the ether.

Hélène Grimaud’s recital on March 8 was notable for its curatorial first half comprised of a mesmerizing hour of 13 works by Silvestrov, Debussy, Satie and Chopin chosen by the pianist to reflect “transparent textures, nostalgic, melancholic moods, cyclical structures... I think of the works as a sequence of crystalline miniatures, capturing time,” she wrote. “It serves to conjure atmospheres of fragile reflection, a mirage of what was – or what could have been.” A phrase that takes on more weight given our evolving circumstances.

For a taste of the Koerner Hall experience, RCM’s Live from Koerner Hall Concert Livestream is available from rcmusic.com/performance and free to all. There are currently 27 concerts available including Barbara Hannigan and Reinbert de Leeuw’s memorable salute to fin de siècle Vienna and the Second Viennese School; Terry Riley Live at 85; Stewart Goodyear; the Dover Quartet with Avi Avital; Kronos Quartet with Tanya Tagaq; and a number of world music and jazz performers (Robi Botos and Benny Barron stand out).

Be well. Keep your social distance. Partake of music where you find it: on vinyl; on disc; on a streaming service; on YouTube. And remember before going to sleep, we’re one day closer to the end of the pandemic.

Paul Ennis is the managing editor of The WholeNote.
Emergent and Evolutionary
The Challenge to Let Go

WENDALYN BARTLEY

Self-isolation, social distancing, stay at home, connected isolation, the new normal, flattening the curve – all phrases that are becoming the latest updates to our current vocabulary. But as I along with everyone else take all this in, I am also listening to those who speak about how what’s also emerging are new levels of global co-operation, and that this is a time for societal reset, even a time that offers a choice for humanity to change or die.

In a sense we’ve all known somewhere inside us that this was coming, in some form: living in a culture that was killing off the very planet our lives depend upon was not sustainable. It’s almost as if the Earth is presenting a challenge to us to let go of our old and familiar ways. Now is the time to slow down and listen, and to sense what might be emerging and arising out of the old. When a caterpillar forms a chrysalis around itself, everything that once was disintegrates and turns to goo. The only things left are the imaginal cells that come together to form the new template – the emerging butterfly. This image gives us a model for the evolutionary process we are currently in the midst of.

Although it is early days for this new reality, I found myself looking to the ongoing Emergents Series at the Music Gallery for some hints as to what these emerging changes might forecast for the future of music-making. Flutist Sara Constant (who also does editorial work for the WholeNote website, but has no role in assigning or editing print magazine content such as this) has been the curator of this series since 2018, taking over from Chelsea Shanoff. Even though the April 25 Emergents Series concert, featuring the two string ensembles V aso and unQuartet has been cancelled, this felt like a good time to find out more about her curatorial vision for the series.

Her main goal, she told me in an email exchange, is to support early-career artists working in experimental music. “It’s more than just giving emerging artists an extra gig, though,” she said. “I want to make sure that these shows contribute meaningfully to community-building, equity-building, and long-term opportunity-building for artists in our field. This also includes supporting people to feel empowered to look outside of their genre for new approaches to sound.” This was a major goal for this April 25 show: “to bring together these two incredible experimental string ensembles, one specializing in contemporary chamber music and the other in free improvisation, that both think really deeply about sound and music.”

One of the things that Constant and other emerging artists are starting to dismantle is “the myth in performing arts institutions that opportunities will come to the most talented and most deserving. We are trying to dream up new ways of supporting experimental arts practice. I’m happy to see a community that feels increasingly plural and increasingly caring in its focus.” And since crises tend to amplify inequalities rather than reduce them, now, more than ever, it’s essential to work creatively towards equity-building.

Sunday May 31, 2020 @ 8 Introduction @ 7:15
New Music Concerts Ensemble | Matthias Pintscher
Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, 427 Bloor St. W.

Matthias Pintscher (Germany 1971)
whirling tissue of light for solo piano (2013)

Joehyuck Choi (South Korea 1994)
dust of light for ensemble (2019)

Pintscher - Uriel for cello and piano (2011)

Olga Neuwirth (Austria 1968)
Hooloomolo for ensemble (1996/97)

Pintscher - celestial object 1 for trumpet and ensemble (2009)
unQuartet: After my exchange with Sara Constant, I also had an engaging three-way conversation with two members from unQuartet, violinist Meghan Cheng and cellist Cheryl O. The unQuartet ensemble began in 2017 originally as an improvising string quartet, they explained, but when their violist had to move back to Los Angeles, Nelson Moneo took over the violist role, and they decided to remain as a trio rather than find a new member. (Moneo was self-isolating in a remote region of British Columbia and unable to join us for the chat.).

We began by talking about the impact that social distancing was having on them as performing musicians, beyond the gig cancellations. Cheng began by quoting the phrase, “there’s no art without an audience.” As a performer, she said, “you need someone there to witness and experience everything that a live concert has to offer – the connection and the energy. I wonder if doing online concerts has the same impact as a live event.” Cheryl O. picked up on this, speaking about how important live performing is for her own growth and how she is changed by the interaction with her colleagues. “Not having an audience changes how we hear and how we return the energy to each other.” During the rehearsal process, she said, the other group members push her to practice different things in order to be able “to meet them individually. You get qualities from each other that drive me to heights.”

Not being able to be together has heightened their awareness of how much they miss each other, Meghan Cheng said, going on to muse that this time may even turn out to be a great thing for the arts. “Maybe we will have a new appreciation for coming together and experiencing music and art.” Cheryl O. gave the example of how her own brother was beginning to see the value of the arts in a new way, especially now that it’s all currently gone.

“Tell us what we can do to help,” he offered. “Once this is over I think there will be a treasuring of artistic life,” she said.

As an ensemble, unQuartet takes improvisation very seriously, and as trained musicians their classical technique serves them well. And generally their improvisations are unplanned, without preset parameters or themes. “Because we are all classically trained and have this classical form ingrained into us, we often have form to our improvisations with different movements and themes that grow throughout the improv. Our pieces often sound as if they have been composed.”

For their scheduled concert at the Music Gallery on April 25, they were planning to perform an improvisational set along with visuals, and a collaborative set, possibly using an open score, with the Vaso String Quartet (Aysel Taghi-Zada (violin), Hua-Chu Huang (violin), Peter Ayuso (viola), and India Yeshe Gailey (cello), a Toronto based ensemble striving for innovative programming that juxtaposes the standard string quartet literature with the equally valuable works of underrepresented composers, and “seeking out working relationships with artists and composers of different mediums to further expand the definition of contemporary music.”

As O. said, as we ended our conversation, performing and improvising gives her and unQuartet “the opportunity to learn patience, grace and compassion,” qualities we are all having to call on right now. “Having creative compassion for each other is what makes us a group,” she says. For now this planned encounter between the two ensembles will have to wait for some socially distant future moment. (And I look forward to being able to tell you when that moment comes.)

Compared to the connection and energy of live performance, waiting for this alienating moment we are living through to run its course is about as exciting as watching grass grow. Perhaps best to think of it instead as new tendrils arising, pointing beyond the immediate crisis towards new values, for the world of musical performance and creative engagement with sound.

Cheryl O. described the group’s approach to improvisation as being very spontaneous. At times they have used graphic and open scores, even played using a painting as inspiration. But generally their improvisations are unplanned, without preset parameters or themes. “Because we are all classically trained and have this classical form ingrained into us, we often have form to our improvisations with different movements and themes that grow throughout the improv. Our pieces often sound as if they have been composed.”
Beat by Beat | Music Theatre

Triple Threat, Double Whammy

JENNIFER PARR

What strange days we are living in. As I have been preparing and researching to write this column over the last week or so, the true scope of the COVID-19 pandemic has become increasingly clear. Ontario’s provincial government has declared a state of emergency and theatres of every size have first postponed or cancelled spring performances, then followed that by closing down rehearsals and production altogether for an unspecified length of time, at least until the pandemic should be under control.

For theatre artists this is a double whammy. Not only are our livelihoods suddenly up in the air but our world is abruptly taken away. Even the smallest one-person show is created by a group of people, and one of the great joys of being part of this industry is that of working with other artists onstage, backstage, in preparation and rehearsal; experimenting with words, music, design and movement to craft our storytelling to the best of our abilities, then looking forward to the fulfillment of sharing our creations with a live audience. All of that is now on hold.

Many companies and individuals are looking for ways to move some of our work online at least temporarily, which is wonderful, but it is not and cannot ever be the same as sharing a live theatrical experience.

As fight director for Opera Atelier’s just cancelled production of Handel’s Resurrection, I am in mourning for a show that was just approaching that exciting moment of the rehearsal period when the dancers would have been joining the singers in the studio. My last rehearsal was teaching wonderful actor/singer Carla Huhtanen her portion of the fight choreography as the Archangel. She would have been joined in the last week of March by her nine Warrior Angels, including five of our female dancers wielding swords for the first time. Now all of that wonderful work, that human contact and collaboration, has been put in wraps until the — hoped-for — opportunity comes to bring it back. The same thing is happening to shows around the country and the world.

The chance to be in the audience of other artists’ shows is also something I am going to miss, the longer the need to keep up social distancing continues, particularly given the rich variety of live music theatre I have witnessed over the last month or so. Carly Street’s one-woman performance in Grounded for Theatre Six at Streetcar Crowsnest, refuses to leave my head. Her searingly real yet funny, moving portrayal of a woman pilot pulled against her will into the world of waging war by drone, was a devastating portrait of a buoyant human spirit trying to make sense of the ugliness of an increasingly dystopian modern world. (While not really music theatre, a custom-made mix tape played a critical plot role.) Necessary Angel’s production of David Greig’s two-actor play The Events followed the same theme, with a gay female priest trying to understand the motivation behind a devastating random attack on her choir, backed up by the presence and singing of an actual community choir on stage with her at each performance.

At the other end of the emotional spectrum was the magical experience of feeling inside the creation of George Seurat’s famous painting. A Sunday on the Island of La Grande Jatte, in Eclipse Theatre Company’s large cast musical-event staging of Sondheim and Lapine’s Sunday in the Park with George at the Jam Factory; and the sweet pleasure of a musical evening with Jane Austen, thanks to U of T Opera at the Faculty of Music’s production of Jonathan Dove’s Mansfield Park, directed with a light and clever hand by Tim Albery.

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April 2020 | 17
April 2020 was going to be a month notable for Canadian work, with shows again ranging from small cast to large, all promising to grab their audiences with stories that need telling: connected to the past but also important in the present and serving to create a better future. Small consolation, but at least I can honour what they promised but were denied the opportunity to deliver.

Anandam Dance Theatre: Phenomenal Toronto-based tap dancer Travis Knights, artistic director of the 2018 Vancouver International Tap Dance Festival, was to star in the one-man-show *Ephemeral Artifacts* for Anandam Dance Theatre Productions at Theatre Passe Muraille. Originally created by director Brandy Leary in 2017, this edition of the show is co-created and choreographed by Leary and Knights together, with the goal of using storytelling, dance and music to explore the intertwined history of tap and jazz, and how both are inextricable from the African American experience, both historical and contemporary. On top of this intriguing premise, this was also going to be a must see for me, having been bowled over by Knights’s wonderful combination of Gene Kelly and Bill “Bojangles” Robinson dance styles in Soulpepper’s *The Promised Land* last summer.

Native Earth Performing Arts were going to present the Toronto premiere of celebrated Ojibway playwright Drew Hayden Taylor’s *Sir John A: Acts of a Gentrified Ojibway Rebellion*, described by the Ottawa Citizen as “a smart punchy show that’s bolstered by sharp satire, a quirky musical score ... and a refreshing dose of humour.” Main character Bobby Rabbit has some unfinished business with Canada’s first prime minister. When Bobby learns that his grandfather’s medicine bundle lies mouldering in a British museum – another casualty of the residential school system – he enlists his friend Hugh to execute an epic heist and secure the ultimate bargaining chip – the bones of Sir John A. On their way to find the bones, they give a ride to a Kingston girl trying to get home and the road trip becomes a tangle of comedy, history and politics, all leavened by a fun score with lead vocals by Herbie Barnes as Hugh featuring riffs on *The Romantics’ What I Like About You*, *Heart’s Crazy on You*, *Alanis Morissette’s You Oughta Know*, *Sinéad O’Connor’s Nothing Compares 2 U*, and *Cheap Tricks’ I Want You to Want Me*. I was looking forward to this show not only for the combination of what sounded like a fun story peppered with songs and a contemporary political twist, but also because it was to be directed by the founder of Crow’s Theatre, acclaimed Canadian director Jim Millan.

Leslie Arden: Third on my list, and with the biggest cast, was Toronto Musical Concerts’ semi-staging of Leslie Arden’s Dora Award-winning large-scale musical *The House of Martin Guerre*. Originally produced by Theatre Plus in 1993, winning three Dora awards, with further award-winning productions following at the Goodman Theatre in Chicago in 1996, and in Toronto again by Canadian Stage in 1997, *Martin Guerre* then seemed to disappear. It started showing up again, however, in 2018 in a concert staging at the Charlottetown Festival, at Theatre Sheridan in a fully student production in April 2019, and just last fall at the Stratford Festival in a concert staging starring Chilina Kennedy. It turns out that the rights had been tied up for the last two decades with American commercial theatre producers but now that they are free again, productions are popping up all over. The timing might be to the benefit of the show, as not only does it have a beautiful score, but the story it tells of a woman at the mercy of her community resonates even more today in the era of #MeToo. Based on a well-known legend from 16th-century France, *The House of Martin Guerre* tells the tale of Bertrande, a young Catholic peasant girl who suffers eight years of abusive marriage to Martin Guerre only to be abandoned by him, left alone with their infant son. Years later, a stranger arrives claiming to be Martin, but completely transformed. Although Bertrande accepts her new loving husband, their happiness is threatened by the jealousy and greed of others. She is ultimately forced to denounce him as an imposter.

Christopher Wilson, the artistic producer of Toronto Musical Concerts (TMC) says that the contemporary relevance of the story was part of the musical’s draw. As he put it “This musical is a fascinating
exploration of feminism in 16th-century France. It explores the power of the female voice struggling to exert itself amidst traditional conventions and societal pressures. The female protagonist’s ultimate desire is to achieve a universal goal – her chosen happiness – despite the collective forces working against her.” As well as this political and social relevance, something TMC usually tries to reference in its programming choices, they were delighted to be programming a Canadian mega-musical for the first time.

All of these productions have now unfortunately, but necessarily, been postponed or cancelled, but my hope is that they will find places in the next season, once theatre going is possible once again.

In the meantime, one source I am following for a constantly updated listing of music theatre performances to be found online, is playwright Nick Green’s Social Distancing Festival: socialdistancingfestival.com.

Jennifer Parr is a Toronto-based director, dramaturge, fight director, and acting coach, brought up from a young age on a rich mix of musicals, Shakespeare and new Canadian plays.
Although Schütz remained in Dresden throughout the war, other faced by both the cities and courts as the war’s devastation increased. not been paid in two years, a reflection of the economic hardships I, the Elector of Saxony, complained that he and his ensemble had diminished by 29 people. A 1625 letter from Schütz to Johann Georg one by one, such that from 1632 until 1639 the number of members the war progressed. In fact, members of his church ensemble dropped occasions, which was complicated by reduced performing forces as music not only for standard liturgical ceremonies but also for special the terrors of war. Little consolation, but it may be that such radical produced radical and often grotesque musical representations of Boulez, Stockhausen, Schnittke, Ligeti, Nono, Berio and Penderecki produced radical and often grotesque musical representations of the arts and culture sector has received a particularly severe blow. With concerts cancelled around the world and artists being released from contracts and freelance arrangements, performers are struggling to determine how to manage their lives and careers, and to plan for a highly unpredictable future. To put it mildly, the performing arts is not, by and large, a work from-home sector; it is the gathering of people to share in a communal experience that lies at the heart of what it means to be a musician, whether in a church or concert hall, and the loss of this fundamental participatory component has rendered the entire cultural sector inert. While broadcasts and livestreams can replicate the concert experience to an extent, the inherently human facet of congregational listening (in both secular and sacred contexts) is left wanting. In short, it simply feels different when it’s not in person.

This is not, however, the first time that global events have impacted the arts in a wide-scale way, threatening to decimate an already precarious industry. Over the last five centuries there have been numerous instances in which war and disease have affected and influenced the process and product produced by composers and performers, and we learn that severe societal unrest has the power to evoke significant artistic changes. Consider, for example, the rise of the avant-garde after the World Wars, where composers such as Boulez, Stockhausen, Schnittke, Ligeti, Nono, Berio and Penderecki produced radical and often grotesque musical representations of the terror of war. Little consolation, but it may be that such radical advancements in the musical lexicon might never have resulted if not for the immense anguish and savagery of war?

And here are some other examples.

The Thirty Years’ War
The Thirty Years’ War was a tri-fold disaster which decimated Germanic Europe between 1618 and 1648, a combination of war, famine, and disease that resulted in 8,000,000 fatalities, making it one of the most destructive conflicts in history. Tension between Catholics and Protestants created an unstable social environment which, combined with the political unrest of the Holy Roman Empire, resulted in a myriad of responses from composers and performers, including Heinrich Schütz and Michael Praetorius.

As Kapellmeister to the Elector of Saxony, Schütz had to provide music not only for standard liturgical ceremonies but also for special occasions, which was complicated by reduced performing forces as the war progressed. In fact, members of his church ensemble dropped one by one, such that from 1632 until 1639 the number of members diminished by 29 people. A 1625 letter from Schütz to Johann Georg I, the Elector of Saxony, complained that he and his ensemble had not been paid in two years, a reflection of the economic hardships faced by both the cities and courts as the war’s devastation increased. Although Schütz remained in Dresden throughout the war, other composers were forced to flee the violence and disease or lost their positions as courts were eliminated or relocated, changing Germany’s artistic topography in previously unthinkable ways.

Despite the terrors of war and disease and the destruction of his nation, Schütz nonetheless produced some of the most stunning and profound works of his era. From Gabrieli-inspired choral concertos to oratorios and passions, Schütz’s innovative and flexible approach to composition enabled him to adapt to the ever-changing circumstances presented by the Thirty Years’ War. As the desolation in Dresden increased, Schütz’s compositions were scored for fewer instruments and for more voices, but remained at a level suitable for the Dresden court, with or without a war raging outside their walls; and at levels suitable for us today, who are able to hear Schütz’s works in concerts throughout the year.

Michael Praetorius was another Dresden-based composer who remained in his position despite the effects of war. One of the most versatile composers of his age, Praetorius had a particularly significant impact in the development of musical forms based on Protestant hymns, many of which reflect an effort to improve the relationship between Protestants and Catholics. Praetorius was a prolific composer and wrote works of a consistently high quality; the nine parts of his Musae Sioniae and the 1611 published collections of his liturgical music (comprising masses, hymns, magnificats) follow the German Protestant chorale style and established him as a writer of religious works. In 1613 Praetorius accepted the position of court composer at Dresden, where he was responsible for producing festive music, and where he remained until his death in 1621.

Although a less universally known composer than Schütz, Praetorius’s works are still found on concert programs today. His organ music appears frequently on recital programs and his harmonization of Es ist ein Ros entsprungen is heard every December across the globe. Both Praetorius and Schütz are important historical figures
who demonstrate that, even though (or perhaps because) external circumstances are challenging and dangerous, it is nonetheless possible to produce works of striking beauty and impact that continue to reach audiences today.

The Spanish Flu
While the current global pandemic is all too frequently compared with the Spanish Flu outbreak of 1918, one of the deadliest pandemics in history, there are a few significant differences. Between the lack of medical knowledge regarding viruses, the inability to isolate and create a vaccine, and the close quarters and troop movements of World War I, there was a perfect storm for the transmission of the virus, which devastated communities worldwide on an unimaginable scale.

Even in the midst of such loss, composers and performers continued to create and interpret stunning and striking works. Elgar’s Cello Concerto is a fine example, at once contemplative and elegiac, even mournful, with simple wisdom contained therein. Vaughan Williams’ Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis continues this trend of solemnity, using the phrygian mode to great effect, while Satie’s Nocturnes and Sibelius’s Symphony No. 5 bring a lightness and, in the case of Sibelius, triumph, to the era’s tumultuousness. In these works we see a brief glimpse over the composers’ shoulders, looking back at the musical styles of past eras; Sibelius, for example, wrote an explicitly neo-Romantic symphony, perhaps due in part to his longing for the relative peacefulness of the late-19th century, while Vaughan Williams travels back to the Tudor era with his Tallis-based fantasia.

Whether through disease, famine, or battle, a brief review of history reveals that humanity has struggled with, and overcome, great tragedies and adversities. The important point to take away from this discussion is the fact that, in every single case, music continued to be made despite external pressures that threatened to collapse its creators. Although the current pandemic situation is unsettling and the concert halls are closed to live audiences, we should consider ourselves fortunate to have such a wealth of online resources to draw from as we seek to cultivate our passion for art and support the artists themselves.

While this point will undoubtedly be repeated multiple times in this issue, I encourage you to continue to support Toronto’s artistic institutions. If a concert is cancelled, consider donating your ticket back to the host organization or credit your account, rather than demanding a refund. This will allow the orchestra, choir, or presenter to use your ticket fee to sustain their behind-the-scenes operations, especially at a time of year when funds run low in anticipation of subscription renewals. Tune into webcasts and digital concert halls and, most importantly, let the artists know that they are respected and appreciated as they encounter a period of personal and professional uncertainty unlike any other in recent history.

As we continue through this most challenging time, feel free to get in touch at earlymusic@thewholenote.com. Until next month, be well and stay healthy.

Matthew Whitfield is a Toronto-based harpsichordist and organist.
In Part One of this article, last issue, I offered this working definition of jazz: "Jazz is a music of collective improvisation which swings, and which places a premium on individual sonic expressivity." I went on to discuss the collective improvisation and individual sonic expressivity aspects, but ran out of space before getting to the business of swing and why it matters, which I’ll take up here. But before getting to that … perhaps not surprisingly, given the music’s moving-target nature, I’ve already expanded the definition: Jazz is a music of collective improvisation which swings, and which places a premium on blues tonality and individual sonic and rhythmic expressivity.

Apologies for complicating things, but jazz is complex, and after all, the first part of the title is “Notes Toward….”. In all honesty, I may never arrive at a definition of jazz which is satisfactory – indeed, that may be impossible – but I’m trying to assemble the essential elements of the music and what makes it distinct from others and it occurred to me that the individual freedom essential to jazz extends not just to a player’s personal sound, but also to matters of rhythm and phrasing. Coleman Hawkins did not phrase eighth notes like Lester Young did and Wayne Shorter doesn’t phrase eighth notes like Young did, and so on down the line. And no two drummers play the iconic skip-beat on the ride cymbal the same way – not quite.

As to the use of blues tonality, I think we can all agree that it has been prevalent in jazz throughout its history. Not just on the standard 12-bar blues form, or in the obvious use of blue notes, but as a pervasive stylistic influence informing matters such as pitch, vocalism, sound, phrasing, spacing, vibrato (or the lack thereof) and above all, emotion; the feeling in jazz. To be sure, this blues influence is not exclusive to jazz; it can be heard in country and folk music, and in rock ‘n’ roll, but in jazz it’s much more central, more varied and subtle, even to the point of abstraction. Every time you hear a great jazz player – from Louis Armstrong to Ornette Coleman and beyond – put a buzz or a smear or a bend on a note, or play what seems like a wrong note, you’re hearing the blues. Lester Young could play the most obvious note – the tonic of a chord – and invest it with an extraordinary feeling; the feeling of the blues.

But what makes this so interesting is that jazz players apply it to all manner of material. Think Charlie Parker, for example. As Roy Haynes once said, “When Charlie Parker plays Laura, he’s playing the Laura blues.” That is to say that Bird superimposed blues feeling on everything he played, no matter how complex or seemingly far-removed from the blues. Miles Davis also did this all the time and his playing on Concierto de Aranjuez is a classic illustration; only someone with a deep and intrinsic blues sense could play a written melody with that kind of feeling. And then there’s what he does later while improvising; it’s blues from start to finish. And while the blues derives from black musical culture, scores of white players used real blues feeling in their playing too: Bix Beiderbecke, Jack Teagarden, Pee Wee Russell, Stan Getz, Zoot Sims, Lee Konitz, Bill Evans, Jim Hall, Keith Jarrett and on and on. This has also extended well beyond the borders of America, its place of origin. Listen to Jan Garbarek’s sound, or Kenny Wheeler’s, or Barney Wilen’s, and tell me you don’t hear blues. As the name of one of Manny Albam’s records proclaims, the blues is everybody’s business; it’s not absolutely ubiquitous in jazz, but it’s certainly never very far away, either.

So, on to the “which swings” part of my definition, which I fear might be contentious to some who feel that swing in jazz is old hat, or even irrelevant today. Perhaps part of the problem is the term “swing” itself, which has become almost a dirty word with all kinds of connotations and associations some find confusing or too wrapped up with the distant past: the Swing Era, swing bands, swing dancing, a kind of feel-good, beer-barrel approach to jazz, not to mention the sexual partner-swapping sense of it. But jazz has always had a unique rhythmic vocabulary, a pulsing drive, which has separated it from other kinds of music, and ever since Louis Armstrong arrived, this has been known as swing, or swinging. I don’t see it as feasible to dispense with a term so entrenched in usage, one so tied up with jazz history. We could use eggheaded terms like “rhythmic elasticity” or “undulating momentum” or “syncopated forward motion” but why bother when swing captures all of these qualities in one simple (though devilishly hard-to-define) word.

Once Louis Armstrong taught the world how to swing, as the phrase goes, jazz was set on a course unlike that of any other music.

What is swing, exactly? I don’t know that it can be defined any more than time can, or life, for that matter. I know it when I hear it, and like to think that I can do it, and also know when it’s not happening. It’s a special rhythmic feeling that is particular to jazz and has continued to evolve just as the music has. It has to do with elasticity, with tension and release, with not assigning strict or straight values to notes, yet it requires a split-second accuracy of timing. It takes place on many levels which interact in a jazz band – as in the melodic phrasing of a soloist against (or with) the united groove of a rhythm section, or even in the divided roles of a solo pianist’s two-hands section. On a technical level it has to do with the imposition of the triplet feel on eighth and quarter notes, but there’s much more to it than that. Swing is not simple or reducible, there’s a magic and levitation to swinging at its best which cannot be easily explained or understood, but can only be felt. All I know is that the best jazz I’ve heard or played has this feeling in some manner, and continues to. Swinging is not just a feel, it’s the
sum total of a whole bunch of things going right at the same time, but with seeming effortlessness.

There are those who feel swing is no longer relevant today because jazz has taken on so many other rhythmic concepts and influences in recent times: the bossa nova and other Latin rhythms, the straight-eights of rock, odd-meters, and so on. This is true to an extent: none of these idioms swing in the Count Basie or Louis Armstrong sense. But part of the history of jazz is following how swinging has evolved. Each school or style of jazz, from New Orleans to the Big Bands to bebop and cool and post-bop and beyond has swung in its own way. I would argue that if you listen closely to jazz musicians today playing a straight-eights tune or in odd meter, there’s still some swinging going on in their phrasing, in the rhythmic freedom they achieve. It’s not just a matter of the drummer going “ding-ding-a-ding” or the bassist laying down a walking 4/4; the elasticity of swing can be, and is being, applied to these newer concepts. A jazz-informed drummer will not play a simple rock beat the way a rock drummer would: it’s a subtle thing, but it will be lighter, more undulating, the corners will be rounded off a bit. And the same goes for soloists improvising in these seemingly straighter rhythmic styles: their eighth notes are generally not even, if you listen closely.

It’s impossible to imagine the history of jazz and its evolution without swing, it’s as much what separates the music from others as any single element. Once Louis Armstrong taught the world how to swing, as the phrase goes, jazz was set on a course unlike that of any other music. People could feel the difference, not just in their minds, but in their feet. Just as fat is what makes food taste good, swing is what makes jazz feel good; it adds a visceral layer to the music. And although there are some who lament that swinging is dead, I would argue that it lives on in new ways and I’m hearing a lot of younger players coming to grips with it. It is to me the hardest thing to do because it requires both discipline and a commitment to spontaneity. And it’s a curious thing, but those I hear pooh-poohing swing as old-fashioned never want to be told that they don’t swing. It’s still a mortal insult, just as the ultimate compliment a jazz band can hear is “Man, you cats be swingin’!”

A last word about why swing matters. A jazz group, even a large one, can’t really be expected to rival a full symphony orchestra in terms of range of colours, dynamics, volume, etc. But a jazz band, even a trio, can do something an orchestra can never do: swing and improvise, while making music out of thin air. But improvising has no particular meaning or value in and of itself if it takes place in a vacuum. It must have context and there must be some resistance to prove its mettle. And this resistance comes in the crucible of heat which swinging provides. It’s relatively easy to improvise without anything getting in one’s way, but swinging improvisation is what makes jazz so compelling.

For obvious reasons in these far from normal times, I’m foregoing the normal live music Quick Picks usually appended here. Instead, for solace and to pass the time, I suggest you go find something on Youtube by each of the 21 musicians named in paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 of this essay, swingers all. You’ll know “it” when you hear it.

I sincerely wish that all WholeNote readers, my fellow musicians among you, stay safe and well during this pandemic crisis.

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.
Beat by Beat | Bandstand

Didgeridoo Meets Theremin
While We Wait and See

JACK MACQUARRIE

Last month’s column opened with the following cautionary note: “Beware the Ides of March. Thus spoke the soothsayer as he warned Julius Caesar of his impending doom. As we know from history, the soothsayer was correct in his warning to Caesar.” With this quote, I was merely indicating that we had no idea what might be happening in the band world, because we had not heard from any bands about their scheduled activities. We did not think that there might be any impending doom. We certainly could not have forecast the doom which has beset our planet. Call it coronavirus or COVID-19, this pandemic has certainly upset our musical world.

Most community musical groups rehearse and perform in schools, community centres, churches or similar venues. Almost without exception, these are all closed until further notice. Even if the venues had not been closed, most groups would certainly not get together with so many people in close contact.

For many bands this will be a wait-and-see situation. Some have already announced a suspension of all rehearsals and concerts for the season. A couple that we have heard of have announced innovative plans. In one case, the band has made arrangements for those who do not have their music folder at home and would like to keep up with practice during this break time. The Band Librarian has offered to create PDF copies of music from individual music folders. These would then be emailed to those who wished, and they would print them at home. In this situation each member would be limited to three or four pieces. Members also have been given the link to MP3 sample recordings of music in the band’s practice folder.

Another approach is to have the band “Go Virtual on Practice Night.” Their band memo says: “COVID-19 might stop us from having our weekly Monday rehearsals and social gathering BUT with modern technology we can “STAY CONNECTED”!! Band members are invited to “Join our rehearsal night VIRTUAL GATHERING (in lieu of rehearsals) from your computer, tablet, iPhone, iPad. They are also given information on how to join a Zoom meeting.

Other Calamities

While on the subject of calamities disrupting band activities, two very different calamities for bands come to mind. The first of these took place in January 1945 at the Canadian Navy’s Signal School in Saint-Hyacinthe, Quebec. The Signal School’s band had played an evening concert in Montreal. When they arrived back, late in the evening, the band members left all of their instruments in their bus which was then parked in the garage. Somewhere around 4am a fire broke out in an adjacent building where a large quantity of explosives was stored. Band members and others, manning fire hoses in temperatures of -20°F, watched as the inferno destroyed all of the band’s instruments and music.

The other calamity occurred in Newmarket. In 1899, Great Britain declared war in South Africa (in what was called the Boer War). Shortly thereafter a number of Canadian regiments offered their services and a cablegram of acceptance was received from the Imperial War Office. In May of 1902, when word came of British victory at Pretoria, the mayor and council created a committee to organize a patriotic concert to celebrate the victory.

The following is an excerpt from the local newspaper of the time: “A local holiday was granted, the citizens band engaged in preparation for a grand celebration. Rockets were procured for a magnificent display visible from the old dam that was partly composed of a platform with a railing extended over the water.

On the platform, the band was stirring the fervor with patriotic music. The box of rockets and other fireworks had been set upon this platform and the first rocket was set off. Unfortunately, it was thrown backward and exploded among the remaining rockets. An uproar ensued as a great geyser of colourful combustion went up. Bedlam reigned. Members of the band were thrown into the water where, clinging to their instruments, they floundered. One rocket shot through the drum, ripping the heel from the shoe of the drummer. And still the fireworks continued. A portion of the dam was damaged but though the bandsmen received a thorough ducking, no lives were lost. I am sure it must have been unanimous that of the many celebrations staged throughout Canada, those of Newmarket must have been unique.”

Three Recent events

Wychwood: Of the musical presentations which I have attended in recent weeks there are three which warrant mention. The first of these was the Wychwood Clarinet Choir’s “Midwinter Suites”. As usual, Michele Iacot and Roy Greaves entertained with music from Leroy Anderson to Ralph Vaughan Williams. In this performance there were not only solos by Iacot and the full choir, but works by small ensembles from within the choir. For me the highlight was the full choir’s performance of Vaughan Williams’ English Folk Song Suite.

Richard Herriott: In the February column I mentioned that the Encore Symphonic Concert Band would be performing a special concert on February 28 to provide some assistance for pianist and composer Richard Herriott who was recently the victim of a serious fire where he lost everything. The proceeds of this concert were to be a part of a GoFundMe campaign to help him get back on his feet.

I had the pleasure of attending this concert. My vocabulary does not have sufficient superlatives to describe the evening. One feature was Herriott’s performance of his Four Note Concerto. For this number, audience members were asked to call out any four notes of the musical scale. Then Herriott began to improvise on those four notes. From very simple note sequences it advanced to a very pleasant melodic solo piano performance. Also in the first half of the concert was a flugelhorn solo by band conductor John Liddle. I was familiar with Rodrigo’s Concierto de Aranjuez, but had never heard it before on a brass instrument. This arrangement by former band member Eddie Graf would be a worthy addition to any band’s repertoire.

While the four-note concerto was Herriott’s only part in the first half of the program, the second half was all his. An arrangement of Slaughter on Tenth Avenue for piano and band was followed by Liszt’s St. Francois de Paule marchant sur les flots for solo piano. The grand finale was Ferde Grofé’s arrangement for piano and band of Gershwin’s Rhapsody in Blue. An amazing performance of an excellent arrangement.

Not once during this concert was there any sheet of music on the piano. It was all stored in Herriott’s mind. Similarly for John Liddle’s solo. It was all from memory. This talent always makes me wince, because I couldn’t play Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star without the music in front of me.

HMCS York Navy Band: For a different sort of performance, we recently attended a “recital” by the Band of HMCS York, Toronto’s Reserve Naval Division. Yes, the term was recital, not concert. This ensemble is a large concert band with all of the usual instrumentation, but on this occasion, the performance venue was the Naval Club of Toronto, a social club whose members are Navy Veterans and associate members. Since there could be no way to set up such a large group to perform, it was an ideal location for several ensembles in a friendly, intimate atmosphere.

This Navy Band is an ideal group for such a program. Unlike most bands, which only play as a single large group, they have developed several small ensembles. Not only does this aid in the development of...
who had switched and was now playing violin. After intermission, Chilton then led both the trombone quartet and a group named Band Shells, in which the group played six different-sized conch shells, each of which produced a range of different pitches when the players moved their hands in and out of the open end.

The highlight of the evening occurred when Chilton pulled out his didgeridoo. I had heard him perform on this instrument before, but this time he added accompaniment. He accompanied himself on a theremin. Imagine blowing into a wind instrument supported on a stand while accompanying yourself with your hands on a different instrument.

For those not familiar with the terms, a didgeridoo is a wind instrument, generally anywhere from three to ten feet long. The original instruments developed by aboriginal people in Northern Australia an estimated 40,000 years ago were made from fallen eucalyptus branches that had been naturally hollowed out by termites. As for the theremin, I read one definition which described it as the only instrument which is played by not touching it! The performer stands in front of the instrument and moves his or her hands in the proximity of two metal antennas. The distance from one antenna determines frequency (pitch), and the distance from the other controls amplitude (volume). It is named after its inventor, Léon Thermin, who patented the device in 1928 (not an auspicious time economically, as it turned out, to launch a new product).

Overall this delightful recital by members of a large concert band showed what can happen when a larger ensemble rises to the challenge of creatively adapting to a size-restricted venue by enabling smaller groups to showcase their various talents (including hidden talents) with instruments they don’t generally employ with the band.

Jack MacQuarrie plays several brass instruments and has performed in many community ensembles. He can be contacted at bandstand@thewholenote.com.
2020/21
Passions of the Soul

“Throughout history, music has accompanied important chapters of human existence. Each sound, each tone, each timbre immerses the human spirit in different states while also soothing the soul.”

— Elisa Citterio, Music Director
Handel Messiah and Sing-Along Messiah return

Subscribers save 15% on the best seats at the best price to Toronto’s favourite holiday tradition! Handel Messiah features soprano Emöke Baráth, countertenor Christopher Lowrey, bass Philippe Sky, and tenor Charles Daniels.

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE

Mozart Party
SEP 24–29, 2020
Merrymaking Mozart with guest soloists, harpist Masumi Nagasawa and flutist Emi Ferguson

Cornetto Freestyle
NOV 5–8, 2020
Featuring guest conductor and cornetto soloist Doron Sherwin

Bach’s Friends & Rivals
JAN 21–24, 2021
Tafelmusik favourite, guest conductor and oboist Alfredo Bernardini, returns

Beethoven Symphony no. 4
FEB 11–14, 2021
A Beethoven 250th celebration with keyboard virtuoso Kristian Bezuidenhout

Birth of a Symphony
APR 8–11, 2021
The whole universe is a symphony: explore music through the narrative of chaos theory

Vivaldi’s Choral Colours
MAY 13–16, 2021
Featuring guest conductor Rinaldo Alessandrini, one of Italy’s leading baroque specialists

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Regarding cancellations: due to the ongoing social distancing mandate, all Toronto shows in the immediate future have been cancelled or postponed. A phone number or website is provided with every listing in The WholeNote. In light of the changing public health situation it is expected that more events will be cancelled or postponed beyond those that we’ve indicated here. Please check before you go out to a concert.

Musicians and venues are facing an unprecedented challenge, and will need major community support to re-establish themselves once we’re all allowed outside again. If you’d like to be proactive and to offer support, please be in touch with them to find out what you can do to help.

The WholeNote listings are arranged in five sections:

A. Concerts in the GTA

B. Beyond the GTA

C. Music Theatre

D. In the Clubs (Mostly Jazz)

E. The etceteras

Listings deadline. The next issue covers the period from May 1 to June 7, 2020. All listings must be received by 11:59pm, Wednesday April 8.

Listings zone map. Visit our website to search for concerts by the zones on this map: thewholenote.com.

Wednesday April 1

- 12:00 noon: Canadian Opera Company.
  - Jazz/World Music Series: Heart and Soul.
  - CANCELLED.

- 12:30: Organix Concerts/All Saints Kingsway.
  - Kingsway Organ Concert Series.
  - Damien Macedo, organ. All Saints Kingsway Anglican Church, 2850 Bloor St. W, 416-571-3680 or organixconcerts.ca. Freewill offer appreciated.

- 12:30: York University Department of Music.
  - Music at Midday: New Music Ensemble.
  - Matt Brubek, director. Tribute Communities Recital Hall, Accolade East Building, York University, 4700 Keele St. 416-736-2100 x20054. Free. CANCELLED.

- 12:30: Yorkminster Park Baptist Church.
  - Upper Jazz Concerts: U of T Jazz Ensemble.

- 7:00: Royal Conservatory of Music.

- 7:00: University of Toronto Faculty of Music.
  - Upper Jazz Concerts: U of T Jazz Ensembles.
  - Upper Jazz Concerts: U of T Jazz Ensemble.

- 8:00: Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts.
  - Mission Songs Project. By Jessie Lloyd.
  - 130 Navy St., Oakville. 905-815-2021 or oakvillecentre.ca. $35-$47.

- 8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra.
  - Lisiecki Plays Beethoven’s Emperor.
  - Toronto Symphony Orchestra.
  - 702-5766 or bit.ly/2srsfbu. $30/$25 (online).

Thursday April 2

- 1:30: Women’s Musical Club of Toronto.
  - Music in the Afternoon: Beverley Johnston & Friends. George Kontogiorgos: Avian exil; Bach: Bach on Marimba; Christos Hatzis: Arctic Dreams; Russell Hartenberg: New work for percussion quartet; Julie Spencer: Everybody Talk About Percussion; and other works.
  - Beverley Johnston, percussion; Gordon Fry, percussion; Alwyn Hung, percussion; Russell Hartenberg, percussion; Susan Hoeppner, flutes; Marc D’Acy, oboin. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-923-7052 or organixconcerts.ca. Free. CANCELLED.

- 7:00: Onstage Uxbridge.
  - The Mikado.

- 7:30: Programs for 50+ and Community Engagement.
  - Music from Marlboro.
  - Works for strings and voice. Lauren Pearl Eberwein; Scott St. John; Sharon Wei.
  - Arts and Letters Club, 14 Elm St. continuing ryerson.

CANCELLED/POSTPONED? Check ahead.

cu.upload/musicians-from-marlboro-event-info.pdf. $35; $20 (student with Ryerson student card).

- 8:00: Art of Time Ensemble.
  - S’Wonderful.
  - George & Ira Gershwin: Someone to Watch Over Me; George & Ira Gershwin: Someone to Watch Over Me; George & Ira Gershwin: Someone to Watch Over Me; and will need major community support to re-establish themselves once we’re all allowed outside again. If you’d like to be proactive and to offer support, please be in touch with them to find out what you can do to help.

Special Listings Advisory!

Listings Deadline. All listings must be received by May 1 to June 7, 2020.

Listings Zone Map. Visit our website to search for concerts by the zones on this map: thewholenote.com.

Friday April 3

- 11:00am: University of Toronto Faculty of Music.
  - Felix Galimir Chamber Music Award Concert.
  - Edward Johnson Building, Walter Hall, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-978-3750. Free. CANCELLED.

- 12:10: Music at St. Andrew’s/Guitar Society of Toronto.
  - Noontime Guitar Recital.
  - Falla: Seven Spanish Songs; William Beauvais: Rounding the Human Corners. Beaumais Souls Duo, guitar and mezzo. St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church (Toronto), 73 Simcoe St. 416-593-5600 x231. Free. CANCELLED.

- 6:00: York University Department of Music.
  - Electro-Acoustic Orchestra.

- 7:30: University of Toronto Faculty of Music.
  - U of T Symphony Orchestra.
  - Lisiecki Plays Beethoven’s Emperor.
  - Toronto Symphony Orchestra.
  - 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4255. From $35. Also Apr 1, 4, 5 (3pm, Meridian Arts Centre).
Fecan Theatre, Accadale East Building, York University, 4700 Keele St. 416-736-5888. $15; $10(sr/st). POSTPONED.

8:00: Alliance française de Toronto. 12: Duo Yanick Rieu. Libretto by W. S. Gilbert. Uxbridge Music Hall, 16 Main St. S. Uxbridge. onstageuxbridge.com. $25. CANCELLED.

Saturday April 4

8:00: Art of Time Ensemble. S’Wonderful. George & Ira Gershwin: Someone to Watch Over Me; L’Oeillet; He Loves, She Loves; instrumental works by George Gershwin; and music from Porgy and Bess. Jackie Richardson, John Southworth, Sarah Bean, Billy Newton-Davis, Gregory Hoskins, singers; Andrew Burashko, piano; and others. Harbourfront Centre Theatre, 235 Queens Quay W. 416-872-4000 or artoftimeensemble.com. $25-$64. CANCELLED.

8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. University of Toronto at Scarborough. Toronto Symphony Orchestra Youth Orchestra (Apr 1 & 2: Overture only). Jukka-Pekka Saraste, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-672-4255. From $45. Also Apr 1, 2, 5(3pm, Meridian Arts Centre).

Sunday April 5


2:00: VOICEBOX: Opera in Concert. Adriana Lecouvreur. Music by Francesco Cilea, libretto by Arturo Colautti. Sung in Italian with English surtitles. Sally DiBible, soprano; Romulo Delgado, tenor; Senaïve Lévesque, mezzo; Opera in Concert Chorus; Narmina Afandiyeva, music director & pianist; Robert Cooper, chorus director. Jane Mallett Theatre, St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-366-7723. $20-$50. POSTPONED.

3:00: North York Concert Orchestra. Jurassic Fun. John Williams: Highlights from Jurassic Park; Dean Burry: Carnival of the Dinosaurs (narrated by the composer). Dean Burry, narrator. Adath Israel Congregation, 37 Southbourne Ave., North York. 416-628-9195. $25; $20(sr); $10(st); $5(child).

3:00: voicebox: Voicebox. Opera in Concert. Adriana Lecouvreur. Music by Francesco Cilea, libretto by Arturo Colautti. Sung in Italian with English surtitles. Sally DiBible, soprano; Romulo Delgado, tenor; Senaïve Lévesque, mezzo; Opera in Concert Chorus; Narmina Afandiyeva, music director & pianist; Robert Cooper, chorus director. Jane Mallett Theatre, St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-366-7723. $20-$50. POSTPONED.

3:00: Royal Conservatory of Music. Music Mix Series: George Hinchliffe’s Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain. Koerner Hall, TELUS Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. $35-$90. POSTPONED.


3:00: Syrinx Concerts Toronto. Air, Strings & Keys. Works for theremin, violin and piano by Villa-Lobos, Saint-Saëns, Sibelius, Borodin, Jergensen, and others. Heliconian Hall,
35 Hazelton Ave, 416-654-0877 or syrinxconcerts.ca. $30; $20(st). CANCELLED.

> 3:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Lisieski Plays Beethoven’s Emperor. Apr 1 & 2; Beethoven: Leonore Overture No.3, Piano Concerto No.5 “Emperor”, Schoenberg; Pellias und Melisande. Apr 4 & 5; Beethoven: Leonore Overture No.3, Piano Concerto No.3 & 5 “Emperor”. Jan Lisieski, piano; Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra (Apr 1 & 2: Overture only); Jukka-Pekka Saraste, conductor. Meridian Arts Centre (formerly Toronto Centre for the Arts), 5040 Yonge St., North York. 416-872-4255. From $39. Also Apr 1 (8pm Roy Thomson Hall), 2(8pm, Roy Thomson Hall), 4(8pm, Roy Thomson Hall).


> 4:30: Yorkminster Park Baptist Church. Passiontide Devotion. Music for Passiontide and Holy Week. Works by Willam, Vierne, Purcell and Allegri. Choir of Yorkminster Park Baptist Church; William Maddox, organist and director; Christel Wiens, associate musician. 1555 Yonge St. 416-922-1167. Freewill offering. CANCELLED.

> 7:30: Richmond Hill Philharmonic Orchestra. Creatures Great & Small. Lisacek: Kimkhora; Prokofiev: Peter and the Wolf; Williams: Jurassic Park; Dowd: The Water Goblin. Jessica Kun, conductor. Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, 10288 Yonge St., Richmond Hill. 905-767-8811 or rhpca.ca. $34; $29(sr); $20(univ); $19(child). CANCELLED.


Monday April 6


> 7:30: Toronto Theatre Organ Society. Silent Film “The Doll”. William O’Meara, organ. Roncesvalles United Church, 240 Roncesvalles Ave. 416-459-6292 or tlos.ca. $20/10(st). Cash only at the door.


> 8:00: Confluence Concerts/St. Thomas’s Anglican Church. Baroque Music by Candlelight. A time for quiet reflection at the beginning of Holy Week. Vocal and instrumental music by Handel, Telemann and Bach. St. Thomas’s Anglican Church (Toronto), 338 Huron St. 647-678-4923. Freewill offering. CANCELLED.

> 8:00: World Music Series: Music of Syria, Algeria, World Music Series: Music of Syria, Algeria. Romina Di Gasbarro, voice, chitarra battente; Marco Cena, oboe, guitars, mandolin; Lucas Harris, arcolute, colasione, guitar; Romina Di Gasbarro, voice, chitarra battente; Felix Desk, violoncello, viola da gamba. Guest: Debra Nagy, oboe. Joseph D. Carrier Art Gallery, 901 Lawrence Ave. W. 416-789-7001 x248 or villacharities.com/concerts. $20, $10(st). CANCELLED.

Tuesday April 7


> 7:00: Yorkminster Park Baptist Church. Iona Liturgy. Musicians of Iona Passage. 1555 Yonge St. 416-922-1167. Freewill offering. CANCELLED.

Wednesday April 8


> 5:00: Music Gallery/York University. Toronto Archives Show And Tell. Pratishtha Kohli, host. York University - Scott Library, Room 305, 4700 Keele St. musicgallery.org. Free. CANCELLED.
POSTPONED TO NOV 8

Duruflé Requiem.

PHYNO No.2. Yuja Wang, piano; Gustavo Gimeno, conductor.

organ; Colleen Allen, saxophone; Jamie Drake, cello. 561 Danforth Ave. 416-465-7443. Free.


11:00 am: Humbercrest United Church. Faruq: Requiem. Sinead White, soprano; Kieran Kane, baritone; Alex Halliday, bass; Michelle Chung, organ; Melvin Hurst, conductor. 16 Baby Point Rd. 416-767-6712. Free. Cancellation.

56 Queen St. E. metunited.ca/music. $30; $10(st).

11:00: Royal York Road United Church. Good Friday Service. di Lasso: Es non fu il pianto suo; List: Ave verum; Bruckner: Christus factus est; Dake: Jesus Walked This Lonesome Valley. Choir; vocal soloists and cello. 851 Royal York Rd. 416-231-9401. Free. All are welcome to attend this traditional Good Friday Service.


4:00: Music at Metropolitan. Requiem Aeternum - Give Us Peace. Mozart: Requiem in d K626; Vaughan Williams: Dona Nobis Pacem. Metropolitan Festival Choir and Orchestra; Patricia Wright, conductor. Metropolitan United Church Toronto; 56 Queen St. E. metunited.ca/music. $30; $10(st). Cancellation.

Tues. 705-357-3299. Free will donation

Music for a Sacred Space. Classics from The Sound of Music, Carousel, Oklahoma, South Pacific and others. Emily Padgett, soprano; Josh Young, tenor; Jordan Donica, baritone; Amabile Choirs of London; Steven Reineke, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4255. Starting at $37. Also Apr 14(8pm), 15(8pm).


8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Classics: Rodgers & Hammerstein. Classics from The Sound of Music, Carousel, Oklahoma, South Pacific and others. Emily Padgett, soprano; Josh Young, tenor; Jordan Donica, baritone; Amabile Choirs of London; Steven Reineke, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4255. Starting at $52. Also Apr 14(8pm), 15(8pm).

Thursday April 15


2:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Classics: Rodgers & Hammerstein. Classics from The Sound of Music, Carousel, Oklahoma, South Pacific and others. Emily Padgett, soprano; Josh Young, tenor; Jordan Donica, baritone; Amabile Choirs of London; Steven Reineke, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4255. Starting at $37. Also Apr 14(8pm), 15(8pm).

3:00: Climax Jazz Band. Matinee Jazz. Dorothy Rose, chanteuse. Smoke Show, 744 Mount Pleasant Rd. 416-901-4768. $5. Also Apr 13, 14, 20, 21, 27. Free. First come, first served. No late seating.

7:30: Opera Atelier. Handel. The Resurrection. Isaiah Bell, Stephen Hegedus, Carla Huhnman, Meghan Lindsay, Allyson McHardy, vocalists; Marshall Pynkoski, stage director; Jeannette Lajeunesse Zingg, choreographer; Artists of Atelier Ballet, Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra; David Fallis, conductor. Koerner Hall, TELUS Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. $49-$205. Also Apr 16, 17, 18(11am), 18(4:30pm), 19(3pm).

7:30: The Salvation Army. An Easter Celebration. Worthy is the Lamb; Hallelujah to the King; The Easter Song; A Choral Symphony. International Staff Songsters; Canadian Staff Band; Canadian Staff Songsters; NOIN. Lyric Theatre, Meridian Arts Centre (formerly Toronto Centre for the Arts), 5040 Yonge St., North York. 1-855-862-6738. $20 + tax.


Saturday April 11

3:00: Climax Jazz Band. Matinee Jazz. Dorothy Rose, chanteuse. Smoke Show, 744 Mount Pleasant Rd. 416-901-4768. $5. Also Apr 13, 14, 20, 21, 27. Free. First come, first served. No late seating.


11:00 am: Humbercrest United Church. Fauré: Requiem. Sinead White, soprano; Kieran Kane, baritone; Alex Halliday, bass; Michelle Chung, organ; Melvin Hurst, conductor. 16 Baby Point Rd. 416-767-6712. Free. Cancellation.

56 Queen St. E. metunited.ca/music. $30; $10(st). Cancellation.

7:30: Toronto Beach Choral. Consecration. Fauré: Requiem; Laudes: Lux Aeterna; Barber: Adagio for Strings, Jennifer Krabbe, soprano; Kieran Kane, baritone; Alex Halliday, bass; Michelle Chung, organ; Melvin Hurst, conductor. 16 Baby Point Rd. 416-767-6712. Free. Cancellation.


7:00: MRG Concerts. Max Raabe & Palast Orchester; Max Raabe, singer; Cecilia Crisiwall, viola; Sven Bährens, clarinets; Bernd Dieterich, double-bass/looseau; Fabio Duwentester, percussion; Matthias Casale, baritone; Martin Prinzbfd Blvd. $55-$359; $45. Also Apr 14(8pm), 15(8pm).

8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Classics: Broadway; Rodgers & Hammerstein. Classics from The Sound of Music, Carousel, Oklahoma, South Pacific and others. Emily Padgett, soprano; Josh Young, tenor; Jordan Donica, baritone; Amabile Choirs of London; Steven Reineke, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4255. Starting at $52. Also Apr 15(2pm & 8pm).

Tuesday April 14


8:00: Opera Atelier. Handel: The Resurrection. Isaiah Bell, Stephen Hegedus, Carla Huhnman, Meghan Lindsay, Allyson McHardy, vocalists; Marshall Pynkoski, stage director; Jeannette Lajeunesse Zingg, choreographer; Artists of Atelier Ballet, Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra; David Fallis, conductor. Koerner Hall, TELUS Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. $49-$205. Also Apr 11, 17, 18,19(4:30pm), 19(3pm).
New Wave Festival

estritorchestr.com

Saturday, April 18 • 7:30 PM

Grace Church on-the-Hill

CARMINA BURANA

Offs masterpiece & selection of works inspired by the Song of Solomon

St. W. 416-408-0208. $10-$40. POSTPONED.

4:30: Opera Atelier. Handel: The Re-creation. Isaiah Bell, Stephen Hegeneg, Carla Hujtanen, Meghan Lindsay, Allyson McHardy, vocalists; Marshall Pynkoski, stage director; Jeannette Lajeunesse Zingg, choreographer; Artists of Atelier Ballet; Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra; David Falls, conductor. Koerner Hall, TELUS Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. $49-$205. Also Apr 11, 16, 17, 19(3m).

7:00: Dofasco Male Chorus. Harmony 4 Hamilton. Nuvo Network, 1295 North Service Rd., Burlington. 905-548-7200 x204 or dofascoMaleChorus.com/contact.html. $15-$25.

7:30: Canadian Opera Company. Aida. Music by Giuseppe Verdi. Tamara Wilson, soprano (Aida); Russell Thomas, tenor (Radames); Clémentine Margaine, mezzo (Amneris); Roland Wood, baritone (Amonasro); Jader Bignamini, conductor and others. Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. 416-383-8231 or cco.ca. $35-$225. Runs Apr 18 to May 8. Start times vary.


8:00: Acoustic Harvest. Cadence: For Men, Four Microphones, No Instruments! St. Paul’s United Church (Scarborough), 200 McIntosh St., Scarborough. 416-729-7564. $27/$25(adv).

8:00: Aga Khan Museum. Tanya Evan- son’s Bothism. Ron Onesti, artistic director; Jason Sharp + Kaie Kellough. Sufi whirling. 77 Wynford Dr. 416-648-4671. $35. $20(art/st).

8:00: Cathedral Bluffs Symphonic Orches- tra. Annual Festival and Silent Auction. Elgar: Cello Concerto in e (Mmuts 1 & 2); Saint-Saëns: The Carnival of the An- imals; Piazzolla/Volkov/Libertango; Glinka: Overture to Ruslan and Lyudmila; Elgar: Pomp and Circumstance Marches Nos. 3 & 4; Samantha Yang, cello; Ken Gee, piano; Nor- man Reintamm, piano/conductor. P.C. Ho Theatre, Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto, 5183 Sheppard Ave. W., Scarborough. 416-879-5566 or cathedralbluffs.com. $35-$65; $30-$45(adv); $15(under 12). POSTPONED.

8:00: Esprit Orchestra. New Wave Festival for Young Composers: Sonic Waves. John Rea: Accident (Tombeau de Grisey); Misato O’Callaghan: Not non-other, for orchestra and octophonic electronics; Alison Yun-Fei Sharp + Kaie Kellough. Sufi whirling. 77 Wynford Dr. 416-648-4671. $35. $20(art/st).

7:30: Annex Singers. Choral Concert. Orff: Carmina Burana; and works by Willian, Whitacre, Grieg, and others. Melanie Conly, soprano; Joshua Clemenger, tenor; Alex Halliday, bass-baritone; Young Voices Toronto; Coral Solomon & Michael Berkovisky, pianos; Alejandro Capedes, percussion; Maria Dase, artistic director. Grace Church on-the-Hill, 300 Lonsdale Rd. 416-484-4434. $30;$25(art); $15(art); free(under 12). CANCELLED.

7:30: Canadian Opera Company. Aida. Music by Giuseppe Verdi. Tamara Wilson, soprano (Aida); Russell Thomas, tenor (Radames); Clémentine Margaine, mezzo (Amneris); Roland Wood, baritone (Amonasro); Jader Bignamini, conductor and others. Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. 416-383-8231 or cco.ca. $35-$225. Runs Apr 18 to May 8. Start times vary.


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Sunday April 19


Encounter in Constantinople
Ottoman Empire and European Baroque influenced by the east
April 19, 2pm

POSTPONED

mooredaleconcerts.com

❖ 2:00: Rezonance Baroque Ensemble. Encounter in Constantinople. Works by Cantemir; Fux, Biber and others. Rezan Gnen-Lapointe and Kailey Richards, baroque violins; Nicolas Royer-Artuso, oboe; James Freeman, percussion; David Podgorski, harpsichord. St. Barnabas Anglican Church, 361 Danforth Ave. 416-779-5696 or rezonanceensemble.com/concerts. $25/$20(online); $15(st). POSTPONED.
❖ 3:00: Off Centre Music Salon. Beethoven. After All. Mavee Palmer, soprano; Giles Tomkins, bass-baritone; Kathryn Tremills, piano; Boris Zarankin, piano; Irena Perkis, piano; Rosebud Quartet; Julia Zarankin, host. TrinitySt. Paul’s Centre, 427 Bloor St. W. 416-466-6323. $30; $40(3+); $15(3-12); $5(12 and under). POSTPONED.
❖ 3:00: Opera Atelier. Handel: The Resurrection. Isaiah Bell, Stephen Hegeds, Carla Hultanen, Meghan Lindsay, Alison McHandy, vocalists; Marshall Pyneukoi, stage director; Jeannette Lajuenesse-Zing, choreographer; Artists of Atelier Ballet; Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra; David Falls, conductor: Koerner Hall, TELUS Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. $40-$305. Also Apr 11, 16, 17, 18(4:30pm).
❖ 3:00: Orchestra Toronto. Suenos Ibericos. Rimsy-Korsakov: Capriccio espagnol; Bizet: Selections & arios from Carmen; Fallas: Fire Music from El amor brujo (Love the Magician); Suite from The Three-cornered Hat. Julie Nesrallah, mezzo; Esmerelda Enrique Dance Company. George Weston Recital Hall, Meridian Arts Centre (formerly Toronto Centre for the Arts), 5040 Yonge St. 416-467-742. $25-$45; $39(sr); $19(OTopus); $15(under 13).
❖ 3:00: Toronto City Opera. Il Giubilo: From Sicily to Toronto - A Celebration of Culture and Music: Mascagni: Cavalleria Rusticana (excerpts); Classical Italian folk pieces. Ana Tomaina and Lauren Estey, sopranos; Romulo Delgado, tenor; Carmen Spada, accordionist; Jeay: work for harpsichord. Toronto City Opera. $75. Fundraising concert followed by food, wine and silent auction.
CANCELLED.

Dali String Quartet
3:15pm Apr 19

Beethoven, after all

“There is only one heroism in the world: to see the world as it is, and to love it.”
— Romain Rolland

Mavee Palmer, soprano
Irena Perkis, piano
Giles Tomkins, bass-baritone
Kathryn Tremills, piano
Boris Zarankin, piano

Visitthewholenote.com/cancelledevents for updates.
A. Concerts in the GTA

Schola Magdalena

A Prayer for an Angel with
Julia Seager Scott, harp
Wed., April 22, 7:30 PM
Church of St. Mary Magdalen, Toronto
www.scholamagdalena.ca


Free. First come, first served. No late seating.

8:00: Soundstreams. Secrets: Claron McFadden, vocals; Michel Massot, tuba/trombone; Tuur Florizoone, chromatic accordion; Marine Horbaczewski, cello. Drake Underground, 1150 Queen St. W. 416-504-1282 or rcmusic.com/tickets/seats/19002. $25-$44.

Also Apr 24 (sold out).


8:00: Tapestry Opera. Rocking Horse Winner. Music by Gareth Williams, libretto by Anna Chatterton, Aislinn Teenneken, tenor; Lucia Cesaroni, soprano; Keith Klassen, tenor; Peter Mc Gillivray, baritone; Michael Hidetoshi Mori, stage director; Kannia Gupta, music director. Streetcar Crowsnest, 345 Carlaw Ave. 416-531-6066. $5-$95. Includes an invitation to the post-performance reception. Also Apr 25(4pm), 28, 29, 30, May 2.

Friday April 24


7:00: Brampton Folk Club. Friday Folk Night: Creative Unices. Coffee-house-style folk music concert. Former of Tanglefoot, RPR (Richie-Parrish-Richie). St. Paul’s United Church (Brampton), 30 Main St. S., Brampton. 647-233-3655. $18; $15(adv/st).

7:30: Core Culture Connections. A Night of Music. Richmond Hill United Church, 10201 Yonge St., Richmond Hill. facebook.com/corecultureconnections. $18/$15(adv); $15(adv/st)/$12(adv). Intermission appetizers included.

7:30: St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church (Royal York Rd.). Spring Concert. Well-known classical and jazz works. Frank Jacino, organ and host; James Rasmussen, keyboard; George Baumann, saxophone; David Redmon, vocals. Guest: George Heldt, organ and piano. 1579 Royal York Rd. 416-824-4667 (Frank). $25; $10(st). Free parking at church and on side streets.

8:00: Christina Raphaëlle Haldane, Carl Philip Geijert and David Jaeger. Where Versailles Angel Cherished. A Celebration of Poetry. Trin-Song. David Jaeger: The Echo Cycle; I Never Knew, James Moffett: The Lavender Fields; Songs of Absence and Presence. Chris-Raphaëlle Haldane, soprano; Ariana Chris, mezzo; Michele Jacot, clarinet; Carl Philip Geijert, piano; Sean Haldane, piano; Ernest Balmer Studio (313), Distillery District, 9 Trinity St. 416-274-4277. $20/$15(adv); $15(adv/st)/$10(adv). POSTPONED.

8:00: Kingston Road Village Concert Series. Mass Hysterical, A Comedic Cantata. A mixture of comedy pieces and musical selections by extant composers. Bach: Erbarme Dich; Matthew Reid: new works. Etsuko Kimura, violin solo; Carly Heffernan, pianist; Kyle Diadi, Ashley Comeau and Darryl Hinds, comedy performers; Musicians from the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. St. Andrew’s United Church (Markham), 32 Main St. N., Markham. 416-699-6091 or masshysterical.eventbrite.com. $30/$25(adv). POSTPONED.

8:00: Royal Conservatory of Music Power Vocal Series: Matthias Goerne, baritone with Jan Liesiecki. All Beethoven program. Koerner Hall, TELUS Centre 275 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. $50-$105.

8:00: Soundstreams. Secrets: Claron McFadden, vocals; Michel Massot, tuba/trombone; Tuur Florizoone, chromatic accordion; Marine Horbaczewski, cello. Drake Underground, 1150 Queen St. W. 416-504-1282 or rcmusic.com/tickets/seats/19002. $25-$44. Apr 24 - SOLD OUT. Tickets available for Apr 23.

8:00: Tafelmusik. Goldberg Variations. Bach (arr. Citterio); Jeay; work for harpsichord (world premiere). Charlotte Nediger, harpsichord; Elisa Citterio, conductor. Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, 427 Bloor St. W. 416-964-6337. From $50. Discounts for subscribers under 19. Also Apr 22(7:00), 23, 25, 28 (all 8:00), 26(mat).

Saturday April 25

3:00: Achiil Choral Society. Journeys, Canadian/Celtic folk songs; Medley from Les Miserables; World War I songs. Shawn Grenke, conductor. Christ Church Anglican (Belton), 24 Nancy St., Bolton. 905-857-2277 or achill.ca. $25; $10(youth 13-17); $5(child). CANCELLED.
Op. 84; Piano Concerto No. 4; Symphony No. 7. Daniel Tselyakov, piano; Tak Ng Lai, conductor. Markham Wesley Centre, 22 Ezra Park Dr., Markham. 416-822-8393. $40; $35(sr); $20(st).

3:00: April 24, 2020, 3:00 p.m.


36/under19. Also Apr 22(7pm), 23, 24, 28 (all 8:00).

3:00: Sunday April 26

Sun. April 26, 2020 at 4:00pm

Eglington St George’s United Church

With guests: The Elora Singers

2 Great Voices: One great sound! Conductors: Lydia Adams and Mark Vuorinen

416-217-0537
eimer@eimerlasingers.com

Eimerlasingers.com

1:00: Tapestry Opera. Rocking Horse Winner. Music by Gareth Williams, libretto by Anna Chatterton. Asitha Tennekeon, tenor; Lucia Cesaroni, soprano; Keith Klassen, tenor; Peter McGillivray, baritone; Michael Hitoshi Mori, stage director; Karma Gupta, music director. Streetcar Cenwesnest, 345 Carlaw Ave. 416-537-6066. $35-$70. Also Apr 23, 25(4pm), 28, 30, May 2.

8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Oundjian Conducts Mahler. Fung: Dust Devils; Bruch; Violin Concerto No.1; Mahler: Symphony No.5. Jonathan Crow, violin; Peter Oundjian, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 1585 Yonge St. 416-221-8342. Free. Noonday Organ Recital


12:30: Ormig Organix/All Saints Kingsway, Kingsway Organ Concert Series. Imre Olah, organ. All Saints Kingsway Anglican Church, 2850 Bloor St. W. 416-571-3680 or organixconcerts.ca. Free.


12:30: Ormig Organix/All Saints Kingsway, Kingsway Organ Concert Series. Imre Olah, organ. All Saints Kingsway Anglican Church, 2850 Bloor St. W. 416-571-3680 or organixconcerts.ca. Free, offering appreciated.


1:00: Tapestry Opera. Rocking Horse Winner. Music by Gareth Williams, libretto by Anna Chatterton. Asitha Tennekeon, tenor; Lucia Cesaroni, soprano; Keith Klassen, tenor; Peter McGillivray, baritone; Michael Hitoshi Mori, stage director; Karma Gupta, music director. Streetcar Cenwesnest, 345 Carlaw Ave. 416-537-6066. $35-$70. Also Apr 23, 25(4pm), 28, 30, May 2.

8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Oundjian Conducts Mahler. Fung: Dust Devils; Bruch; Violin Concerto No.1; Mahler: Symphony No.5. Jonathan Crow, violin; Peter Oundjian, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 1585 Yonge St. 416-922-1167. Free.


12:30: Ormig Organix/All Saints Kingsway, Kingsway Organ Concert Series. Imre Olah, organ. All Saints Kingsway Anglican Church, 2850 Bloor St. W. 416-571-3680 or organixconcerts.ca. Free, offering appreciated.
**2:00: Mirvish. The Boy Friend. Music, lyrics and book by Sandy Wilson. Princess of Wales Theatre, 300 King St. W. 416-872-1212. $49 and up. CANCELLED.

**7:30: Bel Canto Singers. Fairy Tales, Myths and Legends. A selection of music from operas, Broadway shows and popular movi- ies. Scarborough Bluffs United Church, 3729 Kingston Rd., Scarborough, 416-690-3585 or belcantiosingers.ca. $20; $5(child under 12). Cash only at the door. Also 7:30pm.

**4:30: Oakville Choir for Children and Youth. True Colours. Clearview Church, 2300 Sheridan Garden Dr., Oakville, oakvillechoir.org, $25; $20(s); $15(12 and under). Also 1:30pm.

**4:30: Canadian Opera Company. Aida. Music by Giuseppe Verdì. Tamara Wil- son, Church, 131 McCaul St. 416-286-9798 or tal- by Schütz and Lassus. Aaron James, organ;


**8:00: Sinfonia Toronto. Beethoven & Ginastera: Beethoven@250. Beethoven: Piano Concerto No.3 in C Op.37. Six Landleri- sche Dances; Ginastera: Concerto for Strings Op.23. Marka Bourouski, piano; Sinfonia Toronto; Durham Arman, conductor. Merid- ian Arts Centre (formerly Toronto Centre for the Arts), 5040 Yongs St. North York. 705-726-1811. $42; $35(s); $15(s/t).


**8:00: Tapestry Opera. Rocking Horse Win- ner. Music by Gareth Williams, libretto by Anna Chatterton. Asitha Tewaradana, tenor; Lucia Cascaroni, soprano; Klaas Kex, tenor; Peter McIcDilvray, baritone; Michael Hidetoshi Moró, stage director; Kamra Gupta, music director. Streetcar Crowneest, 545 Carlaw Ave. 416-537-6066. $35-$70. Also Apr 23, 25(4pm), 28, 29, 30.

**8:00: Toronto Operaette Theatre. A North- ern Lights Dream. Music by Michael Rose. Natalya Gennadi, soprano; Karen Bojti, mezzo; River Guard, tenor; Suzy Smith, con- ductor. St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 27 Front St. E. 416-366-7723. $29-$49. Also May 3(1pm).

**8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Ondjuidan Conducts Mahler. Fung: Dust Dev- ils; Bruch: Violin Concerto No.1; Mahler: Sym- phony No.5. Jonathan Crow, violin; Peter Ondjuidan, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4255. Starting at $35. Also Apr 29, May 1(7:30pm). May 1 only: 6:30pm pre-concert performance by TSO Chamber Soloists.

**3:00: Chorus York. Spirit of Spring. Works by Bach, Mozart, Handel and spirituals. Jacqueline Chang, soprano; Asal Irannmehr, accompanist; Stéphane Potvin, conductor. St. Matthew’s United Church, 333 Crosby Ave., Richmond Hill. 905-884-7922 or chor- uxyork.ca. $30/$25(online); $15(ages 18-35); free(ages 17 and under). Also May 3(3pm), Thornhill Presbyterian Church. Reception post-concert May 2.

**8:00: Greater Toronto Philharmonic Orchestra. Romantica. Stravinsky: Suite for Small Orchestra; Beethoven: Piano Concerto No.5 "Emperor"; Schumann: Symphony No.3 "Rhenish". Darriash Vandasik, piano; Oliver Balaburski, conductor. Calvin Presbyterian Church, 26 Delowe Ave. 647-238-0016 or gtpo.ca. $30; $25(s); $15(st).


**8:00: Sinfonia Toronto. Beethoven & Ginastera: Beethoven@250. Beethoven: Piano Concerto No.3 in C Op.37. Six Landleri- sche Dances; Ginastera: Concerto for Strings Op.23. Marka Bourouski, piano; Sinfonia Toronto; Durham Arman, conductor. Merid- ian Arts Centre (formerly Toronto Centre for the Arts), 5040 Yongs St. North York. 705-726-1811. $42; $35(s); $15(s/t).


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**8:00: Toronto Operaette Theatre. A North- ern Lights Dream. Music by Michael Rose. Natalya Gennadi, soprano; Karen Bojti, mezzo; River Guard, tenor; Suzy Smith, con- ductor. St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 27 Front St. E. 416-366-7723. $29-$49. Also May 3(1pm).

**8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Ondjuidan Conducts Mahler. Fung: Dust Dev- ils; Bruch: Violin Concerto No.1; Mahler: Sym- phony No.5. Jonathan Crow, violin; Peter Ondjuidan, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4255. Starting at $35. Also Apr 29, May 1(7:30pm). May 1 only: 6:30pm pre-concert performance by TSO Chamber Soloists.

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**8:00: Greater Toronto Philharmonic Orchestra. Romantica. Stravinsky: Suite for Small Orchestra; Beethoven: Piano Concerto No.5 "Emperor"; Schumann: Symphony No.3 "Rhenish". Darriash Vandasik, piano; Oliver Balaburski, conductor. Calvin Presbyterian Church, 26 Delowe Ave. 647-238-0016 or gtpo.ca. $30; $25(s); $15(st).
A. Concerts in the GTA

- 7:00: Richmond Hill United Church. Celtic Heart. Music from Ireland, Scotland and Nova Scotia. Richmond Hill United Church Chancel Choir; Saskia Tomkins, fiddle, nyckelharpa; Steafán Harrigan, bodhrán, tin whistle; Stillman Matheson, organ, piano. 1001 Yonge St., Richmond Hill. 905-384-1301 x5. $50 (family of 4); $25; $20 (adult). CANCELLED.

- 7:00: Toronto Tabla Ensemble. CD Release: Unexpected Guests. Fleck Dance Theatre, Harbourfront Centre, 235 Queens Quay W. 416-973-4000 or tickets@harbourfrontcentre.ca. $35; $40 (sr); $25 (st). CANCELL


B. Lunchtime Concerts Pay-what-you-can

- May 4 - Stephanie Chua & Véronique Mathieu
- May 11 - Western University Singers
- May 18 - Toskov, Nosko & Goj coerc
- May 25 - Medieval: Andrea Gerhardt & Michael Franklin

Meridian Hall (formerly Sony Centre), 1 Front St. E. 1-855-872-7669 via Ticketmaster. $5. Also 7:30pm.


C. CANCELLED


Tuesday May 5


Wednesday May 6

- 10:30am: Outside Looking In. 13th Annual Show. Buffy Sainte-Marie, musician/artist; Tamara Podemska, host; DJ Shubb, performer.

Thursday May 7


- 1:30: Serenata Singers. Come Fly With Us. Music for all ages and tastes. Songs new and old and from near and far. Toronto Korean Presbyterian Church, 67 Scarsdale Rd., York North. 416-449-4053 or serenata-singers.ca. $25-$20 (adv); free (under 13). Also May 8 (7:30pm).


- 8:00: Soundstreams. Musik für das Ende. By Zack Russell. Vania Chan, Carla Hulte, Lindsay McIntyre, soprano; Robin Dann, Aviva Chernick, mezzo; and other singers. No late seating.

- 1:30: Royal Conservatory of Music. World Music Concerts Series: Maniza, Keeran Hall, TELLUS Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. $50-$110. CANCELLED.

- 8:00: Soundstreams. Musik für das Ende. By Zack Russell. Vania Chan, Carla Hulte, Lindsay McIntyre, soprano; Robin Dann, Aviva Chernick, mezzo; and other singers. No late seating.

- 1:30: Royal Conservatory of Music. World Music Concerts Series: Nine Sparrows Arts Foundation. Harbourfront Centre, 235 Queens Quay W. 416-973-4000. $25-$64. CANCELLED.

- 8:00: Time Ensemble. Dance to the Abyss. Weill/Brecht: The Threepenny Opera Suite; Works by Weill, Schulhoff, Spoliansky and others. Andrey Buraszkio, piano; Torquil Campbell, Sarah Sloan, singers; Wallace Halladay, saxophone; Ai Kay, trombone; and others. Harbourfront Centre Theatre, 235 Queens Quay W. 416-973-4000. $25-$64. CANCELLED.


- 8:00: Art of Time Ensemble. Dance to the Abyss. Weill/Brecht: The Threepenny Opera Suite; Works by Weill, Schulhoff, Spoliansky and others. Andrey Buraszkio, piano; Torquil Campbell, Sarah Sloan, singers; Wallace Halladay, saxophone; Ai Kay, trombone; and others. Harbourfront Centre Theatre, 235 Queens Quay W. 416-973-4000. $25-$64. CANCELLED.

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 Sirett, director. FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, 250 St. Paul St., St. Catharines. 905-688-0722 or 1-855-515-0722 or FirstOntarioPAC.ca. $15. CANCELLED.

Thursday April 2

- 7:00: Sanderson Centre for the Performing Arts. Mission Songs Project. By Jessie Lloyd, 88 Dalhousie St., Brantford. 519-769-8090. $44.

Friday April 3

- 7:30: FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre. Mission Songs Project. Guest: Lacy Hill, 250 St. Paul St., St. Catharines. 905-668-0722 or 1-855-515-0722 or FirstOntarioPAC.ca. $35; $30(Hot Ticket members); $25(st - univ/college); $20(st - high school). CANCELLED.
- 8:00: Don Wright Faculty of Music. Fridays at 8:30 Concert Series. Andreas Klein, piano; Von Kuster Hall, Music Building, Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767. Free. CANCELLED.
- 8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. Joy and Passion: Schumann & Brahms. Pal Chana: Upwell (new commission); Schumann: Piano Concerto in a; Brahms: Symphony No 4 in e. Lauma Skride, piano; Gurpreet Chana, tabla/electronics; Andrei Feher, conductor. Centre in the Square, 101 Queen St. N., Kitchener. 519-745-4711 or 1-888-745-4717 or kwsymphony.ca. $20-$87. Also Apr 4.

Saturday April 4

- 2:30: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Youth Orchestra. Sun and Fire. Stravinsky: The Firebird. Centre in the Square, 101 Queen St. N., Kitchener. 519-745-4711 or 1-888-745-4717 or kwsymphony.ca. $18; $11(child). Free pre-concert activities from 1:15pm.
- 7:00: Gravenhurst Opera House. Six Guitars Starring Chase Padgett. A single performer portrays six different guitar-playing characters each sharing their own style of music. Storytelling with songs of various genres. 290 Muskoka Rd. N., Gravenhurst. 705-687-5550. $30; $10(st).
- 7:30: Brock University Department of Music. Brock University Choirs: Choir Concert No.2. Rachel Renick-Hoff, conductor. FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, 250 St. Paul St., St. Catharines. 905-668-0722 or 1-855-515-0722 or FirstOntarioPAC.ca. $15; $10(st); $5(eyeGO). CANCELLED.

Sunday April 5

- 2:30: Georgian Music. Schubert’s “The Trout”. Schubert: Piano Quintet in A D667 “The Trout” and Quintets by Hummel and Dussek. Annette-Barbara Vogel, violin; Raquel Bastos, viola; Katarina Juruskova, cello; Joseph Phillips, double bass; Peter Grobler, piano. Bethel Community Church, 128 St. Vincent Street, Barrie. 705-726-1181. $65 or by subscription.
- 2:30: Muskoka Concert Association. Vocal Recital. Brett Polegato, baritone; Robert Kortgaard, piano. Tommy United Church (Gravenhurst), 290 Muskoka Rd. N., Gravenhurst. 705-897-5550. $32; $27(st); free(child under 10); $27(group of 10+).
- 8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. Joy and Passion: Schumann & Brahms. Pal Chana: Upwell (new commission); Schumann: Piano Concerto in a; Brahms: Symphony No 4 in e. Lauma Skride, piano; Gurpreet Chana, tabla/electronics; Andrei Feher, conductor. Centre in the Square, 101 Queen St. N., Kitchener. 519-745-4711 or 1-888-745-4717 or kwsymphony.ca. $20-$87. Also Apr 4.
Thursday April 16

* 7:30: Cuckoo’s Nest Folk Club. *One for the Foxes.* Chaucer’s Pub, 122 Carling St., London. 519-319-5847. $25/$20(adv). CANCELLED.

* 7:30: The Huarachas; Abby Stewart; Justin Bird; Andrew Streitsov, director; Evan Mitchell, conductor. Grand Theatre (Kingston). 219 Princess St., Kingston. 519-546-9729. $35; $20(st). Also Apr 19(2:30pm).


* 7:30: Iseler Singers. *Ella Singers & Elmer Iseler Singers.* Mark Vuorinen, conductor. Basilia of Our Lady of Fatima, 13 Whiteoaks Rd., St. Catharines. 905-688-0722 or 1-855-515-0722. $69; $64(ur); $33(20 and under); $20(arts worker); $12(st/child); $5(eveG0). Also Apr 26(3:30pm). CANCELLED.

* 8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestra. *Senior Serenade.* Music Room (Waterloo). 57 Young St. Waterloo. 519-886-1673. $35; $20(st).

Friday April 17

* 7:30: Grand Philharmonic Choir. *Brahms: Requiem.* Elenawells: Passion and Resurrection. Lesley Bouza, soprano; Tyler Duncan, baritone; Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony; Grand Philharmonic Choir. Centre in the Square, 101 Queen St. N., Kitchener. 519-578-5660 x2290. $30-$82; $14(st/under 30); $5(eveG0). Also Apr 18(12:00 noon).

* 8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society. *St. Mary’s Schola.* Westminster University, 75 Willis Ave., Kitchener. 519-868-7000. $45; $30(st); $15(child). Also Apr 18. CANCELLED.

* 8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society. *Dall String Quartet.* Arriaga: Quartet No.3 in E-flat; Ginastera: Quartet No.1; Debussy: String Quartet in g. Music Room (Waterloo). 57 Young St. Waterloo. 519-886-1673. $35; $20(st). CANCELLED.

Saturday April 18

* 7:30: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestra. *Franz Welser-Moos.* — Concert 3. Centre in the Square, 101 Queen St. N., Kitchener. 519-745-4711 or 1-888-745-4711 or kwsymphony.ca. $20-$90. Documentary film with Philip Glass score performed live by KWS. Also Apr 25.

* 8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestra. *Spring’s Anglican Church.* — Concert 3. Centre in the Square, 101 Queen St. N., Kitchener. 519-745-4711 or 1-888-745-4711 or kwsymphony.ca. $20-$90. Documentary film with Philip Glass score performed live by KWS. Also Apr 25.

* 8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestra. *Spring’s Anglican Church.* — Concert 3. Centre in the Square, 101 Queen St. N., Kitchener. 519-745-4711 or 1-888-745-4711 or kwsymphony.ca. $20-$90. Documentary film with Philip Glass score performed live by KWS. Also Apr 25.
cello and piano. Angela Park, piano; Yeho- natan Berich, violin; Rachel Mercer, cello. Music Room (Waterloo), 57 Young St. W., Wat- erloo. 519-888-1673. $40; $25(st).

Wednesday April 29

6:00p: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. Beyond Words: Lully: Passacaille d’Armide; de Rore/Bassano: Divisions on Ancor che il partire; Cima: Sonata for Violin and Viola; Rossi: Sonata No. 6 in dialoga detta la viena; Schmelzer: Harmonia à 5 and others. Reb- ecca Morton, curator; Kathleen Kajoka, leader/Violin. First United Church (Waterloo), 18 William St. W. Waterloo. 519-745-4711 or 1-888-745-4715 or kwsymphony.ca. $37. Also May 10/11 at Hartcourt Memorial United Church, Guelph (2) & Central Presbyterian Church, Cambridge.

Friday May 1

8:00p: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. Beyond Words: Lully: Passacaille d’Armide; de Rore/Bassano: Divisions on Ancor che il partire; Cima: Sonata for Violin and Viola; Rossi: Sonata No. 6 in dialoga detta la viena; Schmelzer: Harmonia à 5 and others. Reb- ecca Morton, curator; Kathleen Kajoka, leader/Violin. Hartcourt Memorial United Church, 87 Dean Ave., Guelph. 519-745-4711 or 1-888-745-4715 or kwsymphony.ca. $37. Also Apr 29 (First United Church, Water- loo), May 2 (Central Presbyterian Church, Cambridge).

Saturday May 2


3:00p: Aching Choral Society. Journeys. Canadian/ Celtic folk songs; Medley from Les Miserables; World War I songs. Shawn Grenchk, conductor. Westminster United Church (Orangeville), 247 Broadway Ave., Orangeville. 905-857-2537 or 613-564-2721. $25; $10(youth 15-17); $5(child). CANCELLED.


7:30p: Bravo Niagara! Festival of the Arts. From Broadway, With Love. Jason Forbach, Sir Howard and Joseph Speidelken: St. Mark’s Anglican Church (Niagara-on-the-Lake), 41 Byron St., Niagara-on-the-Lake. 289-886-9177 or music@bravoniagara.org. $50-$70.


7:30p: Chorus Niagara. Topsy Turvy! The Best of Gilbert & Sullivan. Niagara Symphony Orchestra, Calin Wood, soprano; Maria Soulis, mezzo; Giles Tomkis, baritone. Par- tridge Hall, FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, 250 St. Paul St., St. Catharines. 905- 688-0722. $41; $45(60+); $20(st valid id); $15(ch under 15 valid id); $5/eyeGO high school at valid id).


7:30p: Kingston Symphony. Beethoven 9 & 2. Beethoven: Symphony No. 9: Symphony No. 2. Teiya Kasahara, soprano; Marion Newman, mezzo; Kevin Myers, tenor; Johnathan Kirby, baritone; Kingston Chamber Choir; Queen’s University Choral Ensemble; Evan Mitchell, conductor. Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts, 390 King St. W., King- ston. 613-546-9729 or 613-530-2050. $10-$50. Also May 3(3:00pm).


8:00p: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. Beyond Words: Lully: Passacaille d’Armide; de Rore/Bassano: Divisions on Ancor che il partire; Cima: Sonata for Violin and Viola; Rossi: Sonata No. 6 in dialoga detta la viena; Schmelzer: Harmonia à 5 and others. Reb- ecca Morton, curator; Kathleen Kajoka, leader/Violin. First United Church (Waterloo), 22 Bridgeport Rd. W., Waterloo. 416-689- 6091 or masshysteria4.eventbrite.com. $25. POSTPONED.

Wednesday May 6


8:00p: Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society. Veronique Mathieu, Violin; Stephanie Chua, Piano. Clara Schumann: Romances; Clark: Midsummer Moon; Schmidt: Adagio; Molinari-Dame: Baczewicz; Concertino; and works by Jacques de la Guerre. Music Room (Waterloo), 57 Young St. W. Waterloo. 519-888-1673. $30; $20(st).


CANCELED.


POSTPONED TO JUN 2-3.

Brampton Music Theatre. Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat. Music by Andrew Lloyd Webber, lyrics by Tim Rice. Theatre East, Theatre East, Brampton. 905-874-2800. $29-$33. Opens Apr 2, 7:30pm. Runs to Apr 5. Thurs-Sat(7:30pm), Sat/Sun(1pm). POSTPONED, DATE TBD.

Canadian Children’s Opera Company. Alice in Wonderland. Music by Errol Gay, libretto by Michael Patrick Albano. Harbourfront Centre Theatre, 231 Queen’s Wharf Way W. 416-973-4000. $35; $25(5); $20(ch). Opens Apr 30, 10am. Runs to May 3. Thurs/Fri(10am), Fri(3pm), Fri/ Sat(7:30pm), Sat/Sun(3pm).

Canadian Opera Company. Vocal Series: Collaborations. Singers from the young artist program of the Canadian Opera Company and l’Opéra de Montréal. Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre, Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. 416-383-8231. FREE. First come, first served. No late seating. Apr 9, 10pm.


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

For ongoing updates to cancellations/postponements visit thewholenote.com/cancelledevents

thewholenote.com

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C. Music Theatre

**The Flying Dutchman**

Rice, Grand Theatre, 471 Richmond St, London. 519-672-8800. $33.90. Opens May 27. Runs to May 3. Days and times vary; visit theatrencanster.com for details. POSTPONED.

**London Road Village Concert Series**

Mass Mystical, A Comedic Cantata. 30 Main St. N., Markham. 416-699-6091. $30/$25(ad). Apr 24, 8pm. Also Apr 25(Georgetown). May 3(Waterloo).

CANCELLLED.

**Knightsbridge Village Road Concert Series**

Mass Mystical, A Comedic Cantata. Emmanuelle United Church (WaterloO), 22 Bridgeport Rd. W., Waterloo. 416-699-6091. $35/$30(ad). Apr 25, 8pm. Also Apr 24(Markham), Apr 25(Georgetown). CANCELLLED.

**Lower Ossington Theatre**

Beauty and the Beast. The Musical. By Alan Menken, lyrics by Howard Ashman and Tim Rice, book by Linda Woolverton. Randolph Theatre. 736 Bathurst St. 1-888-324-6282. $45.99-$79.99. Opens May 3, 7:30pm. Runs to Apr 5. Thurs(Sat,7:30pm), Sat(3:00pm), Sun(2:00pm). CANCELLLED.

**London Road Village Concert Series**

Mass Mystical, A Comedic Cantata. Emmanuel United Church (Waterloo), 22 Bridgeport Rd. W., Waterloo. 416-699-6091. $35/$30(ad). Apr 25, 8pm. Also Apr 24(Markham), Apr 25(Georgetown). CANCELLED.

**Lower Ossington Theatre**

Matilda. Music and lyrics by Tim Minchin, book by Dennis Kelly, based on the novel. Randolph Theatre, 736 Bathurst St. 1-888-324-6282. $49.99-$69.99. Opens Apr 18, 8pm. Runs to May 10. Fri(7:30pm), Sat(3:00pm), Sun(3:00pm), 4:30pm.

**Mansfield's Cabaret**


**Mirvish**


**OrchestrA Toronto**

Sueños Ibericos. Book and lyrics by Joe Masteroff. Scarborough Village Theatre. 905-815-4049. $30/$27(ad). Opens Apr 9, 7:30pm. Runs to Apr 19. Tues-Sat(7:30pm), Sat/Sun(2:00pm). Note: no show Apr 10.

**Theatre Unlimited Performing Arts**

Chitty Chitty Bang Bang. Music and lyrics by Richard and Jenny Sherman, book by Jersey Sams. Meadowvale Theatre, 3513 Montevideo Rd., Mississauga. 905-615-4720. $35/$32(ad); $31(ad). Opens Apr 17, 8pm. Runs to Apr 26. Thurs-Sat(8pm), Sun(2pm). Note: extra show Apr 25, 2pm.

**Toronto City Opera**

Il Giubileo: From Sicily to Toronto - A Celebration of Culture and Music. St. Andrew's Church (Toronto), 121 Richmond St. W. 416-531-8668. $35/$32(ad); $31(ad). Opens Apr 17, 8pm. Runs to Apr 26. Thurs-Sat(8pm), Sun(2pm). Note: extra show Apr 25, 2pm.

**TTY Theatre**

Rapunzel: The Family Friendly Musical. Annex Theatre, 730 Bathurst St. tytetheatre.com. $20. Opens Apr 3, 7:30pm. Runs to Apr 10. Tues-Sat(7:30pm), Sat/Sun(2:00pm). CANCELLLED.

**C. Music Theatre**

**Toronto Music Project**


**Choir**


**Mirvish**

St. James Players. Matilda. Music and lyrics by Tim Minchin, book by Dennis Kelly, based on the novel. St. James Auditorium, 221 Romaine St., Peterborough. 705-753-9901. $20/$15(st). Opens Apr 24, 7:30pm. Runs to Apr 26. Fri(Sat,7pm), Sat(Sun,2pm). POSTPONED, DATE TBD.

**Stratford Festival**

Guys and Dolls. Music, lyrics and book by George Miller and book by Joe Masteroff. Stratford Festival. Festival Theatre, 10 Queen's Parade, Stratford, ON. 1-800-514-7249. $24 and up. Previews begin Apr 12, 2pm. Runs to May 25. Days and times vary; visit stratfordfestival.ca for details. POSTPONED, DATE TBD.

**C. Music Theatre**

**Theatre Ancaster**

British Invasion, the Concert. Ancaster High School Auditorium, 374 Jerseyville Rd. W., Ancaster. 905-304-7469. $37, $32(ad); $17(st). Opens Apr 24, 7:30pm. Runs to May 3. Days and times vary; visit theatrencanster.com for details. POSTPONED, DATE TBD.

**Theatre Aquarius**

Ring of Fire: The Music of Johnny Cash. Theatre Aquarius, 190 King William St. Hamilton. 905-522-7540. $40 and up. Opens Apr 15, 7:30pm. Runs to May 2. Tues-Sat(7:30pm), Sat/Sun(5:30pm). POSTPONED, DATE TBD.

**Theatre Sheridan**

Guys and Dolls. Music and lyrics by Frank Loesser, book by Jo Swerling and Abe Burrows. Macdonald-Heaslip Hall, 1430 Trafalgar Rd, Oakville. 905-815-4049. $30/$27(ad). Opens Apr 9, 7:30pm. Runs to Apr 19. Tues-Sat(7:30pm), Sat/Sun(2:00pm). Note: no show Apr 10.

**Theatre Sheridan**

In Real Life. Music and lyrics by Kevin Wong, book and lyrics by Nick Green. Studio Theatre, 1430 Trafalgar Rd. Oakville. 905-815-4049. $30/$27(ad). Opens Apr 9, 7:30pm. Runs to Apr 19. Tues-Sat(7:30pm), Sat/Sun(2:00pm). Note: no show Apr 10.

**Teatro Unltded Performing Arts**

Chitty Chitty Bang Bang. Music and lyrics by Richard and Jenny Sherman, book by Jersey Sams. Meadowvale Theatre, 3513 Montevideo Rd., Mississauga. 905-615-4720. $35/$32(ad); $31(ad). Opens Apr 17, 8pm. Runs to Apr 26. Thurs-Sat(8pm), Sun(2pm). Note: extra show Apr 25, 2pm.

**Teatro Unltded Performing Arts**

C. Music Theatre
A

Social Distancing While Staying in Touch

C.OLIN STORY

As I write this – on March 20, 2020, five days into Toronto’s period of mass social distancing and self-isolation/quarantine – all live musical performances have been cancelled in Toronto venues for the foreseeable future. While it isn’t possible to know when, exactly, we will all be able to return to some semblance of normalcy, it is still possible to celebrate the April shows that would have been. In this month’s edition of my column, I’ve interviewed five different artists, involved in four different April shows, including a long-term weekly residency at La Rev, a month-long weekly residency at The Rex, a double-album-release show at the Array Space, and a doctoral recital in the jazz performance program at the University of Toronto.

It is imperative, at this critical moment in the history of the Toronto music community, to continue to support one another: musicians, venues, patrons, schools, and publications alike. If you’re new to the artists below, please follow them on social media, check out their websites, and, if you enjoy their music, consider purchasing an album on Bandcamp, or on other services. This goes for any of your favourite local musicians, many of whom, beyond cancelled performances, are also experiencing a drastic cut in teaching, recording and other activities. Also, even in the early stages of this pandemic, many musicians are live-streaming concerts, offering online lessons, and creating new ways to interact with the community. So, please: be in touch! Just not literally.

The Artist: Aline Homzy, violinist

The Event: Ongoing weekly residence at La Revolucion, 2848 Dundas St. W.
The Project: Lions d’Or, a hot-club group with co-leader guitarist Tak Arikushi and guest bassists, including Scott Hunter (Lions d’Or was formerly known as Les Petits Nouveaux)

The group’s relationship to La Rev: “Tak and I have been playing together for over five years at La Rev and all over Toronto. We are excited because as we relaunch our weekly performances as Lions d’Or, we also have new arrangements and new original music. This residency has meant a lot to us as we are able to bring in different repertoire and explore it in front of an audience, every single week. Not having the ability to do this [due to mandated April venue closures] changes the relationship to how we can develop our music. La Rev has been incredibly generous to us and Indira (owner and musician) has helped us and other musicians in so many ways. The absence of this ‘repetitive musical meeting’ will definitely be a strange change in routine.”

On future projects: “I have two albums funded and waiting to be recorded. One is with my group Aline’s étoile magique, which features Thom Gill, Dan Fortin and Michael Davidson. The other will be all string music with some special guests. Lions d’Or also would like to record an album when this is all over.

Learning from our current moment: “I hope that the bigger community will see how live music impacts them, or rather the lack of live music right now. Our development often depends on a face-to-face public… I believe we will see lots of interesting art come out of this. But I do hope that people take care of themselves and of each other and take as much time as they need to find the right mindset to be creative.”

Social Distancing While Staying in Touch

Colin Story

D. In the Clubs (Mostly Jazz)

Due to the ongoing social distancing mandate, all Toronto shows in the immediate future have been cancelled or postponed. Though it is not yet clear when live music will resume, it is probable that most – if not all – April shows at local venues will not be taking place. As such, instead of our typical listings of individual shows happening at specific venues, we’ve chosen instead to list all of the venues, as they currently stand, and to encourage our readers to reach out to their favourite venues directly as the current quarantine situation progresses. Much like musicians, venues are facing an unprecedented challenge, and will need major community support to re-establish themselves once we’re all allowed outside once again. Some are offering food pick-up/delivery; others are selling merch; the Tranzac, a not-for-profit, has a membership option. If you’d like to be proactive and to support a venue in some capacity, please be in touch with them to find out what you can do to help.

120 Diner
120 Church St. 416-792-7725
120diner.com (full schedule)
All shows: PWYC ($10-$20 suggested)

Alleycatz
2409 Yonge St. 416-481-6865
alleycatz.ca
All shows: Call for cover charge info.

Artword Artbar
15 Colbourne St., Hamilton. 905-543-8512
artword.net (full schedule)

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

Bloom
2315 Bloor St. W. 416-767-1315
bloomrestaurant.com (full schedule)
All shows: 7pm 19+. Call for reservations.

Burdock
1184 Bloor St. W. 416-546-4033
burdockta.com
Ticket prices vary by show, but typically $10-$20; check website for individual show prices.

Cameron House
408 Queen St. W. 416-703-0811
thecameron.com

Castro’s Lounge
2116 Queen St. E. 416-699-8272
castroslounge.com (full schedule)
All shows: No cover/PWYC

C’est What
67 Front St. E. 416-867-9499
cestwhat.com (full schedule)
All concerts are PWYC unless otherwise noted.
The Artist: Julian Anderson-Bowes, bassist
The Event: Weekly residence at The Rex during the month of April
The Project: A trio, with guitarist Sam O'Reilly and drummer Anthony Daniel, and a quartet, with keyboardists Chris Pruden and Yunjin Claire Lee, and drummer Eric West.
Contact details: www.instagram.com/nakedcatzz

Inspiration and the Toronto music community: “I feel proud and lucky to be part of a community that’s filled with so many talented and interesting people! I basically never feel short of inspiration as long as I’m present and open to what’s going on around me here in Toronto. Maybe this is a nice chance to say thank you to all my fellow artists who are so committed to creating and bettering themselves. You really keep me going!”

The Artists: Rob Clutton, bassist, and Pete Johnston, bassist
The Event: A double-CD release at The Array Space, for Clutton’s new album Counsel of Primaries and Johnston’s new album False Ghost, Minor Fears, sponsored by the Toronto Jazz Festival Special Projects Fund
The Projects: The Rob Clutton Trio, with Clutton, drummer Nick Fraser and saxophonist Karen Ng, and the Johnston-led See Through, , with Johnston, Ng, Fraser and pianist Marilyn Lerner.

D. In the Clubs (Mostly Jazz)

Emmet Ray, The
924 College St. 416-792-4497
theemmetray.com (full schedule)
All shows: No cover/PWYC
Frank’s

Grossman’s Tavern
379 Spadina Ave. 416-977-7000
grossmantavern.com (full schedule)
All shows: No cover (unless otherwise noted).

Hirut Cafe and Restaurant
2050 Danforth Ave. 416-551-7560
hirut.ca

Home Smith Bar – See Old Mill, The

Hugh’s Room
2261 Dundas St. W 416 533 5483
hughsrroom.com
All shows at 8:30pm unless otherwise noted.

Jazz Bistro, The
251 Victoria St. 416-363-5299
jazzbistro.ca (full schedule)

Jazz Room, The
Located in the Huter Hotel, 59 King St. N., Waterloo. 226-476-1565
kvwjazzroom.com (full schedule)
Attendees must be 19+. Cover charge varies (generally $12-$25)

Lula Lounge
1585 Dundas St. W. 416-588-0307
lula.ca (full schedule)

Manhattans Pizza Bistro & Music Club
951 Gordon St., Guelph 519-767-2440
manhattans.ca (full schedule)

Mezzetta Restaurant
681 St. Clair Ave. W. 416-658-5687
mezzettaarestaurant.com (full schedule)

Monarch Tavern
12 Clinton St. 416-531-5833
themonarchtavern.com (full schedule)

N’awlins Jazz Bar & Dining
299 King St. W. 416-395-1958
nawlins.ca
All shows: No cover/PWYC.

Nice Bistro, The
117 Brock St. N., Whitby. 905-668-8839
nicelbistro.com (full schedule)
Live jazz and dinner, $45.00 per person, Dinner from 6pm and music from 7pm to 9pm.

Old Mill, The
21 Old Mill Rd. 416-236-2641
oldmilltoronto.com (full schedule)
The Home Smith Bar: No reservations. No cover. $20 food/drink minimum. All shows: 7:30-10:30pm unless otherwise listed.

Nico Bistro, The
1585 Dundas St. W. 416-588-0307
lula.ca (full schedule)

See website for individual show prices.

Vincent Lim
Johnston, on the significance of the show and the musical community it celebrates: “This is a record release show for debut albums by new groups, for both Rob and me. Each member has played together in various combinations over the years (even Rob and I have a duo double bass record), but these are the first recordings from these permutations of people. Rob and Nick have played together in many projects over the last two decades including Drumheller, the Ryan Driver Sextet and the Nick Fraser Quartet. Karen has been on many records of mine with See Through 5 and See Through Trio. Nick and Marilyn play together in the Ugly Beauties (with Matt Brubeck). So it’s a bit of a celebration of long-term relationships and the cohesion of the left-field jazz scene in Toronto.”

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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Estey, sopranos; Romulo Delgado, tenor; Carmen Spada, accordionist; Jennifer Tung, conductor. St. Andrew's Church (Toronto), 73 Simcoe St. 416-697-9391 or toronto-cityopera.com. $75. CANCELLED.

Lectures, Salons & Symposia


> Apr 05 10:30am: Canadian Opera Company. 30-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 F. 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. 416-363-8231, coc.ca. $20(adults); $15(sr/st). Also Apr 19 (French).

Workshops & Classes

> Apr 05 10:30: Toronto Early Music Players Organization. Workshop coached by recorder player Vincent Lauzer; Armour Heights Community Centre, 2140 Avenue Rd. Bring your early instruments and a music stand. 416-779-5750 or tempartoronto.net. $20.


> Apr 26 2:00: CAMMICAN Toronto. Reading for Singers and Instrumentalists of Beethoven’s Mass in C. Robert Cooper, conductor. Christ Church Deer Park, 1570 Yonge St. 416-458-0213. $10; $6(members).

> May 02 10:30am: Canadian Opera Company. Music and Wellness: Yoga. Music and mindfulness unite in harmony in this unique yoga class, hosted in the Canadian Opera Company’s soaring Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre. Feel the integration of live music and movement, as mezzo-soprano Jamie Grote and pianist Liz Upchurch, Head of the COC Ensemble Studio weave uplifting melody into this unique yoga experience, led by certified instructor Priya Shah. Designed for all levels of ability. Bring your own mat and we’ll bring the music. Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre, Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. (at University Ave.). $24; $20(st). Reserve tickets at coc.ca or call COC Ticket Services at 416-363-8231. Please note that the box office will be closed during this event and no tickets will be sold at the door. All tickets MUST be purchased in advance.


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AUDITIONING TENORS AND SOPRANOS now until June for Mostly Madrigals: 1-on-a-part a cappella ensembles. 2-hr workshops between April 7-18, 7-9pm. Call/text 416-910-1091 or circle@thewholenote.com. INQUIRE BY APRIL 25 for the May edition.

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CLASSICAL RECORD AND CD COLLECTIONS WANTED. Minimum 350 units. Call, text or e-mail Aaron 416-471-8169 or aar413A1CA

FRENCH HORN: Selmer prototype by Reynolds. Double horn in excellent condition. mjbuell@gmail.com

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WHAT’S IN YOUR CLOSEST? Does your old guitar gently weep? Sell that nice old accordion / clarinet / drum kit and find it a new owner! WholeNote classified ads start at just $24.00 INQUIRE BY APRIL 25 for the May 2020 issue. classad@thewholenote.com

DO YOU SING IN A CHOIR? Would you like to practice your sight-singing skills? Or need a little help learning your notes or rhythms? Or experience the joy of singing duets? Treat yourself! Private and group lessons available near Woodbine subway. Call or text Sheila at 416-574-5250, or woodbine.joyofthesinging@gmail.com

FLUTE, PIANO, THEORY LESSONS. RCM Certified Advanced Specialist. Samantha Chang, FTCL, FLCM, LRAM, PGDip, ARCT. Toronto, Scarborough 416-801-9196, samantha.studio@gmail.com or samanthalfute.com

LESSONS FOR ALL! Friendly and firm - I’m an experienced musician and mom teaching piano and singing to children (and the young at heart) in my Toronto home (East Leslieville). To discuss your child’s need for music-making please contact kskwhite@gmail.com

SIGHT-SINGING WORKSHOPS: sacred/ secular Renaissance music, on the last Monday of the month. 7:30-9:30pm. Drop-in $10. Free for members of the Toronto Early Music Centre. All levels are welcome. Near Woodbine subway. Call/text 416-574-5250.

VIOLIN, GUITAR, AND PIANO LESSONS. Violinist with TSO, COC, Kitchener and other symphony orchestras experience. Details and references available upon request. 647-701-4055, alex.audioamp@yahoo.com

VENUES AVAILABLE / WANTED

ARE YOU PLANNING A CONCERT OR RECITAL? Looking for a venue? Consider Bloor Street United Church. Phone. 416-924-7439 x22. Email: tina@bloorstreetunited.org.

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COVID-19 – Resources

Artist Resources

In light of recent and ongoing cancellations, closures, and quarantines due to the ongoing novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, many folks are facing suddenly precarious financial and social circumstances. Arts organizations, freelancers, arts workers and other gig/temporary workers constitute a particularly hard-hit group—one that our team is trying our best to support.

Visit thewholenote.com/COVID for resource lists designed to assist arts workers impacted by the ongoing crisis. These resource lists will be updated on a regular basis.

Our intent is not to re-invent the wheel, but rather to amplify and broadcast the work put in by those who created (and are creating) those resources and support systems, by sharing them directly with our readership—especially those resources that might particularly apply to musicians and other arts workers based in the area we serve.

Resources compiled to date fall into four broad areas.

- **COMPILATION DOCUMENTS:** These are large, compiled resource lists that provide an overview of resources for arts workers struggling with issues related to COVID-19.
- **FINANCIAL/ADVOCACY RESOURCES:** These are organizations who routinely work to provide support and emergency funding for professional artists in Canada.
- **FINANCIAL RESOURCES: INFORMATION FROM GOVERNMENT AND GRANTING BODIES:** This is where you can find information related to government and grant support.
- **COMMUNITY-LED INITIATIVES:** These are initiatives for support led by individuals, organizations, and community groups.

If you have information to contribute please contact editorial@thewholenote.com

For those readers who would like to support arts workers and folks in otherwise precarious circumstances, please consider donating to one or more of the community initiatives you will find online on our COVID-19 Artist Resources page. You can also donate to local arts organizations, buy artists’ recordings and merchandise, and tune in to (and financially support) musicians’ livestreams.

Reader Resources

The WholeNote is committed to keeping our readership informed of COVID-19 changes and developments in all our coverage areas and in all the media at our disposal.

We will continue to update daily listings online as and when we receive new information concerning live concert and event listings that have been cancelled, postponed, and rescheduled.

We have added a search tag to our online listings to enable you to check on the status of events in those listings. Go to thewholenote.com/justask and click on “advanced options” to select cancelled/postponed as one of the filters.

We are working on adding an online/virtual component to our daily listings, where you’ll be able to find online events, live streams, and recorded concerts by artists who had to cancel upcoming performances. If you have information about any such initiatives, help us to help you.

- Send information to listings@thewholenote.com
- Register on our website home page for HalfTones, our regular e-letter so we can keep you in the loop.
- Write to us at editorial@thewholenote.com with news of value to other music lovers in these complex times.
- We are committed to maintaining an increased social media presence during this time. Find and follow us on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook.

Finally, a helpful hint:

**Do you have a Toronto Public Library Card?**

All branches are closed but no fines will be charged for overdue materials you currently have at home, and if your card is due to expire it will remain valid until June 1. You can continue to place holds on items you’d like, for pick-up when the libraries re-open. Online at torontopubliclibrary.com, and on their Facebook page, you will find a special guide to all their digital resources called 38 ways to use the library from your home. This includes access to reading materials and also podcasts, movies and lots of music. If you have any questions about how to access TPL digital resources you can contact them by email at answerline@tpl.ca.You can also connect with TPL on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram.

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STREAMING CONCERTS IN EMPTY VENUES

SUPPORTING THE ECONOMY OF CULTURE

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thewholenote.com
Once upon a time, and a long time ago it was, I was sitting around with friends discussing what we would do if we won the lottery. I said I would buy a radio station – this was long before blogs and podcasts – so that I could play just the music I liked. My friend Gary suggested it was not necessary to actually buy a station to make that happen, and asked did I know about the Ryerson alternative music station CKLN-FM (1983–2011)? I did not, but was pleased to learn of this incredible, if somewhat limited, community resource which by that time had expanded from being an in-house station “broadcasting” to about a dozen speakers around the Ryerson campus, to a whopping 50 watt operation accessible to anyone with a strong FM receiver in the downtown core of Toronto. I began to listen and was quite taken with the breadth and diversity of its programming, virtually all of which (from alt-pop, punk and grunge, reggae, hip-hop, house and rap, to such varied offerings as old timey roots and gospel, electronica, ambient music, spoken word, LGBT politics and ultra-left takes on current events) could not easily be found anywhere else on the dial at the time.

Although it seemed a strange extension of the mandate, I proposed a program of contemporary classical music, kind of a supplement to Two New Hours (which had been airing weekly on the CBC since 1978, under WholeNote colleague David Jaeger’s production). Station manager Adam Vaughan and program director John Jones, although amused when I included talking on a taxi radio, my “day” job at the time, to my broadcast experience, found enough merit in my proposal to give me access to the equipment and a few brief lessons on how to run the board to allow me to produce a demo tape. To bring a long introduction to an end, in the early days of 1984 I made my radio debut as the host of Transfigured Night, named after my favourite piece of chamber music at the time, Schoenberg’s Verklärte Nacht. The show initially aired from 2am to 7am on Tuesday mornings, which of course was Monday night to me, having been a denizen of the night-shift driving Globe and Mail trucks and later Beck Taxis for many years. During the seven years that I produced and hosted Transfigured Night, I broadcast works of Arnold Schoenberg on 109 occasions including ten performances of the show’s namesake. My final broadcast aired on November 25, 1991 and on that occasion I played the recording that had made me fall in love with the work, Pierre Boulez’s sextet version of Le Domaine Musical from the 1950s.

(All) that all being said, I was delighted to find a new release of Schoenberg’s Violin Concerto paired with Verklärte Nacht by Isabelle Faust and the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra under Daniel Harding’s direction (Harmonia Mundi HMM 902341 harmoniamundi.com). The six performers for the latter piece include Canadian-born French cellist Jean-Guihen Queyras whom I had the pleasure of meeting back in 2002 when he was awarded the City of Toronto Glenn Gould Protegé Prize as selected by Pierre Boulez, laureate of the Glenn Gould Prize that year. As part of the concert at the award event, Queyras was the soloist in Boulez’s Messagesquissse performing with a sextet of other cellists assembled by New Music Concerts for the occasion.

Normally I would have forwarded this disc to Terry Robbins for his Strings Attached column, but due to the number of personal connections, and the fact that Terry reviewed another performance of the violin concerto last month, I have selfishly retained this one for myself. But I will borrow from Terry’s review. He told us that in spite of the composer’s own description of the concerto – extremely difficult, just as much for the head as for the hands – “it’s a quite stunning work that is emotionally clearly from the heart, and that really deserves to be much more prominent in the mainstream violin concerto repertoire.” With two significant recordings emerging in as many months, I think it safe to say that the concerto is beginning to receive the attention it deserves. The sextet (1899) with its dark and stormy backstory is resplendent in late-Romantic sensibility that only hints at the (a)tonal developments to come. The concerto was written almost four decades later, several years after the composer’s move to the USA. While it employs the serial (12 note) technique central to his mature works, Schoenberg had taken a more tonal approach to writing after his move to America and the concerto has many neoclassical elements, not unlike Stravinsky. Faust’s performance is outstanding, finding a perfect balance between the at times craggy angularity of the melody and the lyrical moments of repose. Her tone is assured and her technique flawless. The performance of Verklärte Nacht is everything I would have hoped for — warm and lush without sacrificing nuance or detail. A very welcome opportunity to revisit what is still one of my favourite works.

It was during the time of Transfigured Night that I became enamoured of electronic music in many of its (classical) forms – musique concrète, mixed works (electronics and live instruments), computer-generated and synthesized compositions, acousmatic art etc. – and at a conference in Montreal in 1986 became a founding member of the Canadian Electroacoustic Community. I also became the first to commission radiophonic works for community station broadcast, a
There’s much more juicy info in the entry if you’re interested in some sordid details. At any rate, until Storring’s wonderful tribute to the (still active at 83) songstress, that was my main connection with Roberta Flack. And don’t let my talk about nostalgia lead you to believe that My Magic Dreams Have Lost Their Spell is an anachronistic throwback. It’s a carefully crafted and very effective eclectic post-modern creation. Give it a spin on your turntable, or your digital media provider, or wait for the CD release which I understand is imminent.

My years as a volunteer at CKLN-FM garnered me the experience to land what I sometimes consider to have been the “best” job of my life, five years as a music programmer at CJRT-FM (especially now that I’m benefitting from a modest Ryerson University pension). Reconstructed as JAZZ-FM in 2001, the Ryerson station had been a multi-format broadcaster since its inception in 1949 and during the five years I worked there (1993-1998) the programming included classical music, opera, jazz, folk and blues shows, live concert recordings (jazz and classical), BBC variety programs and an assortment of academic courses under the auspices of Open College Ryerson. I had the great pleasure of selecting the music for Alex Baran’s Music for Midday, recording – with engineer William van Ree – and scripting CRT Concert, selecting the music for Peter Keigh’s Music Before 1800, interviewing such celebrities as Ben Heppner for This Week in Music and producing Canadian Currents, 52 hour-long programs celebrating the concert music of our native land. This last notwithstanding – it was funded by a grant from Joan Chalmers through the Canadian Music Centre – the music I was “allowed” to program was for the most part not contemporary and certainly not “challenging.” After all, the publicly funded station existed thanks to the generosity of its listeners, who for the most part enjoyed “traditional” fare. It was during my tenure there that the Symphonic Music of Sorrows swept the classical world, including the august halls of CST. In 1992 the London Sinfonietta, under David Zinman with soloist Dawn Upshaw, recorded Henryk Gorecki’s 1976 Symphony No.3 with that now-famous subtitle. To date, the Nonesuch recording has sold more than a million copies, something unheard of for a contemporary classical recording. I find it somewhat surprising to note that the three string quartets by this, until then, obscure Polish composer, were all commissioned by the American Kronos Quartet, and that two of them predate the release of the chart-topping symphony that brought him world fame. Another instance of the foresight of this adventuresome group.

They have been newly recorded by Quatuor Molinari for ATMA on Henryk Gorecki Complete String Quartets (ACD2 2802 atmaclassique.com). Although there are some quiet and contemplative moments, particularly in the opening of the second quartet with its extremely dark viola melody, anyone looking for a reprise of the beauty of the “sorrowful songs” will likely be disappointed. At times
reminiscent of the stark and angular pathos of some of Shostakovich's later quartets, especially in Górecki's second, these works are more what you would expect from a member of the Polish postwar avant-garde. Even in the String Quartet No.3 "Songs are Sung" with its four extended sombre and quiet movements interrupted by one brief central upbeat interlude, the brooding character never finds the transcendence of the famous symphony. Quatuor Molinari bring their vast skill and dedication to this latest addition to an impressive discography, not only adding to our understanding of this undersung composer who died a decade ago, but also proving that Górecki was not just a one-trick pony. Highly recommended!

Although I see that I've pretty much used up my allotment of words mostly talking about myself once again, (but heck, it's my corner…) I did want to mention one more disc that I've been spending a lot of time with this month, Fred Lerdahl Volume Six (Bridge Records 9522 bridgerecords.com). I must confess to a lack of familiarity with this American composer who was born in 1943 and is the Fritz Reiner Professor of Musical Composition at Columbia University. Lerdahl is known for his work on musical grammar and cognition, rhythmic theory, pitch space and cognitive constraints on compositional systems. For all that, I must say I find his music quite lyrical and not at all academic. The disc includes recent chamber works and one concerto, beginning and ending with pieces composed for Finnish cellist Anssi Karttunen in 2010. There and Back Again for solo cello (Tom Kraines), was commissioned by Karttunen as part of the Mystery Variations, a series of solo works to commemorate his 50th birthday. As with all the variations, it takes as its point of departure, and in this case return, the Chacona for solo cello by Giuseppe Colombi (1635-1694). In less than five minutes we are transported from the 17th century to the 21st and back again. This is followed by String Quartet No.4 from 2016, a one-movement work which sounds thoroughly modern without being atonal. Commissioned to celebrate the ensemble's 15th anniversary, it is performed by the Daedalus Quartet. Fire and Ice is a setting of Robert Frost’s poem of the same name for the unusual combination of soprano (Elizabeth Fischborn) and double bass (Edwin Barker), based on one of Lerdahl’s theoretical papers The Sounds of Poetry Viewed as Music. The liner notes explain how the tenets of the 2001 paper were applied to the 2015 compositional process which culminates when “the soprano and double bass gradually fan out to their highest and lowest registers, symbolizing the antipodes of fire/desire and ice/hate around which Frost’s poem is organized.” The playful and at times jazz-tinged Three Bagatelles from 2016 was written for guitarist David Starobin who performs here with violinist Movses Pogossian. The programmatic arc of the disc, with its palindromic cycle of composition dates, is completed by Arches, a cello concerto which was a Pulitzer Prize finalist in 2011. Performed masterfully here by Danish cellist Toke Møldrup with the Odense Symphony Orchestra under Andreas Delfs, the dramatic work itself is, not surprisingly, arch-like, beginning and ending quietly after a roller-coaster of a ride. I found this a great introduction to the music of a heretofore unknown composer. I’m glad to know there are five previous volumes in the series.

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 Oids, DISCoveries Editor discoveries@thewholenote.com

Ivan Pochekin is the outstanding soloist on Dmitri Shostakovich Violin Concertos 1 & 2, with Valentin Uryupin conducting the Russian National Orchestra (Profil PH19073 naxosdirect.com).

The Concerto No.1 in A Minor Op.77 was written in the years following the end of the Second World War, but was withheld by the composer until 1955. The Concerto No.2 from 1967 was Shostakovich’s final concerto.

Pochekin has exactly the right sound for these works – a dark-hued, rich and velvety tone with a strong vibrato and a fine grasp of linear phrase. There may be more strident and abrasive readings of the fero-cious cadenzas available, but none with more passion. The Russian National Orchestra, founded by Mikhail Pletnev in 1990, provides excellent support in two immensely satisfying performances.

Ukrainian composer Myroslav Skoryk (b.1938) wrote a cycle of nine violin concertos over a 45-year span, and the first four are presented on Myroslav Skoryk Violin Concertos 1, Nos.1-4. Andrej Bielow is the soloist with the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine conducted by Volodymyr Sirenko (Naxos 8.574088 naxosdirect.com).

The four concertos here are from 1969, 1989, 2001 and 2003, and all are essentially single-movement works of similar length – from 13 to 16 minutes. No.1 is perhaps the most modern-sounding; No.2 is “infused with a lyrical mood” (the composer’s own booklet notes) with contrasting episodes that vary “from elegy to intense expressivity.” No.3 is dominated by the opening solo violin fugu, and again varies in tone “from lyrical to intensely dramatic.” No.4 is dominated by driving rhythmic patterns.

Bielow is terrific in top-notch performances of works full of strong, idiomatic writing. Volume 2 should make this set a significant addition to the contemporary violin concerto discography.

On Incantation, the French violinist Virgil Boutellis-Taft explores the range of connections for the word, from simple enchantment through religious contexts to demonic spells and charms. Jac van Steen conducts the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (Aparê AP234 aparitemusic.com).

There’s a fair amount of reworking of original sources here, and some tracks consequently fare better than others. Bruch’s Kol Nidrei Op.47 is quite beautiful although “remodelled” by Boutellis-Taft with the middle section omitted. The Chaconne in G Minor, attributed to Vitali, is reworked from the original violin and bass manuscript and comes across as a bit overblown. Saint-Saëns’ Danse macabre Op.40 is newly orchestrated based on the composer’s own violin and piano arrangement. Bloch’s Nigun from Baal Shem, Tchaikovsky’s Sérénade mélancolique Op.26 and Chaussson’s lovely Poème Op.25 are handled beautifully. Shigeru Umebayashi’s Yuriefi’s Theme, with its abrupt ending is an odd choice for the closing track.
Boutellis-Taft plays with his heart firmly on his sleeve on a CD that has some truly lovely moments.

The virtuoso violinist and composer Giuseppe Tartini left over 100 concertos for violin, as well as a large number of sonatas for various string combinations, so any single CD is only going to scratch the surface of his output.

Tartini Violin Concertos & Sonatas features two Sonatas a Quattro in D Major together with first recordings of two unpublished Concertos for violin and strings, in A Minor and B-flat Major. Laura Marzadori is the violin soloist in the concertos, with Massimo Belli conducting the Nuova Orchestra da Camera “Ferrucio Busoni” (Brilliant Classics 957690 naxosdirect.com).

In the solo violin sections Tartini reduced the accompaniment to just orchestral first and second violins, which allows Marzadori’s sweet, pure tone to be even more effective. There’s a pleasing lightness of touch in the orchestral performances throughout a pleasant but fairly lightweight (at 47 minutes) CD of finely crafted and genteel 18th-century works.

Three works written relatively late in their composers’ lives are featured on French Violin Sonatas played by the Hungarian duo of violinist Kristof Barati and pianist Klara Wurtz (Brilliant Classics 95756 naxosdirect.com).

Debussy wrote his Violin Sonata in financial straits following the third winter of the Great War, and in great pain from the cancer that would kill him the following year, all of which makes its warmth and clarity all the more remarkable. There’s a lovely dynamic range and freedom of phrasing from both performers.

Ravel’s Violin Sonata No.2 in G Major dates from 1927, its jazz-influenced Blues middle movement and Perpetuum mobile finale again drawing fine playing from the duo.

Franck’s Sonata in A Major was one of a small handful of works that finally won the composer some public acclaim in the closing years of his life. There’s big playing from both performers here, with terrific piano work from Wurtz in the Allegro second movement in particular, and with Barati drawing a huge tone and sound from his 1703 “Lady Harmsworth” Stradivarius violin.

The Italian violinist Liliana Bernardi is excellent in music by Johann Joseph Vilsmaier and Heinrich Ignaz Franz von Biber on Austrian Baroque for Solo Violin (Stradivarius STR 37147 naxosdirect.com).

Vilsmaier (1663-1722) was a member of the Archbishops’ chapel in Salzburg where Biber (1644-1704) was Chapel Master. His Partitas I and VI in A Major and V in G Minor are from the Artificiosus concentus pro camera distributes in sex partes, a set of six partitas in a collection of Vilsmaier’s solo violin music in the British Museum. The movements are very short – 24 of the 29 are under two minutes – but their multiple-stopping and arpeggio passages, while perhaps more reminiscent of Telemann’s 12 Fantasias, clearly point towards the Bach Sonatas and Partitas.

Biber’s influence is clear in the scordatura (retuning of the strings) in the Partita V. His own work here, preceded by an extremely short Preludio in D is the challenging Passacaglia in G Minor (The Guardian Angel), the last of his remarkable Rosary Sonatas.

The Constanze Quartet makes its label debut with Felix Draeseke String Quartets Vol.1, the first volume in the complete recordings of the quartets by the German Romantic contemporary of Liszt, Wagner and Brahms (cpo 553 281-2 naxosdirect.com).

Early in his career Draeseke (1835-1913), was considered an extremist, but later in life he was repelled by what he felt was the exaggerated unnaturalness of the late 19th century, responding to the 1905 premiere of Strauss’ Salome with a pamphlet on Confusion in Music. His three string quartets postdate those of Brahms, with no equivalent works by Liszt or Wagner to act as models. The two quartets here – No.1 in C Minor Op.27 from 1880 and No.2 in E Minor Op.35 from 1886 – are described as viewing the classical quartets of the Romantic era through a Wagnerian lens, especially in the way that long, melodic threads serve to hold the music together.

They’re certainly substantial and engrossing works, given fine performances by the Constanze ensemble.

The American string quintet Sybarites is back with its fourth album, Live from New York, It’s Sybarites, recorded live at their regular performance space in Chelsea’s The Cell (Bright Shiny Things BSTD-0131 brightshiny.ninja).

Silkroad percussionist Shane Shanahan joins the group for William Brittle’s Future Shock and John Coltrane’s Alabama Mezzosoprano Blythe Gaissert sings Michael Dellaira’s Star Globe, based on a poem by Nancy Manocharian.

Other works are Brandon Ridenour’s NuPac Kanon & Jig (Pachelbel meets Tupac Shakur!), Marc Mellits’ driving Groove Machine, Steven Snowden’s Traveler No.65 and Aleksandra Yrebalov’s My Dearest, My Rose. An unlisted bonus track is a lovely arrangement of Pete Seeger’s Where All the Flowers Grow.

There’s not a dull moment on an album brimming with the quintet’s trademark energy and drive. In much the same way as his orchestral serenades preceded – and perhaps acted as preparation for – his symphonies and thus avoided direct comparison with Beethoven, Brahms wrote his two String Sextets Nos.1 in B-flat Major Op.18 and 2 in G Major Op.36 before his three string quartets. They’re available on Brahms String Sextets in performances by the WDR Chamber Players, instrumentalists drawn from the WDR Symphony Orchestra of Cologne (Pentatone PTC 5186 807 naxosdirect.com).

The string sextet was not a firmly established form at the time, but...
the expanded string ensemble of three pairings of violins, violas and cellos gave Brahms the opportunity to explore the orchestral possibilities of chamber music while still retaining the subtlety and intimacy of the genre.

The playing here is suitably rich and warm in exemplary performances.

There’s another superb recital CD in the outstanding Naxos Laureate Guitar Series, this time featuring the Korean guitarist Ji Hyung Park, winner of the 2018 Changsha International Guitar Competition (Naxos 8.574140 naxosdirect.com). Transcriptions of three sonatas by Domenico Scarlatti and two excerpts from Iberia by Isaac Albéniz open the disc, followed by the world premiere recording of Scarlatti’s Las Ciclades arcaicas from 2018. Mori no naka de (In the Woods), from November 1995, was the last work Toru Takemitsu wrote before his death the following February; the second of its three pieces portrays the trees in Toronto’s Rosedale area.

Mario Castelnovo-Tedesco’s Sonata in D Major Op.77 “Ommaggio a Boccherini” was written for Segovia in 1934, and is heard here in its original manuscript form pre-dating Segovia’s editing. A simply gorgeous arrangement of Toots Thielemans’ Bluesette in its original manuscript form pre-dating Segovia’s editing.

There’s more excellent guitar playing on Asencio Complete Guitar Music featuring works by the Spanish composer Vicente Asencio (1908–79) played by the Italian guitarist Alberto Mesirca (Brilliant Classics 95806 naxosdirect.com). Asencio’s interest in the guitar grew from his teaching musical interpretation to the young Narciso Yepes in the 1940s, a relationship that resulted in the Suite de Homenajes of 1950, three homages to Domenico Scarlatti, Manuel de Falla and Federico Garcia Lorca.

Collectici Intim is a suite of five songs and dances written in 1965 at the request of the by-then famous Yepes. Suite Valenciana reflects the colour and light of the composer’s native Valencia. The three-movement Suite Mística started life as a single piece, Dipsó, written for Holy Week in 1971; Segovia was sufficiently impressed to suggest that Asencio add a further two Passion-related items.

Two short pieces – Canço d’hivern and Danza Valenciana – complete the CD. Mesirca displays excellent, clean playing with a wide range of technical, dynamics – in a recital that fully lives up to the extremely high standards of this series.

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Bach – Harpsichord Works

Jory Vinikour

Sono Luminus DSL-92239 (sonoluminus.com)

Composed of four revered works, this album makes for a fine collection for harpsichord enthusiasts and fans of Johann Sebastian Bach. Jory Vinikour, two-time Grammy-nominated harpsichordist and conductor, has made quite a few recordings of Bach’s music so far and his expertise and passion for this composer is evident here. I enjoyed the clarity of Vinikour’s sound (this harpsichord is modelled after a German instrument of Bach’s time) and his refined and thoughtful interpretation. This recording has elegance and virtuosity, bringing out both the grand and hidden gestures of Bach’s compositions.

The collection features the buoyant Italian Concerto (written for two-manual harpsichord, thus distinguishing tutti from solo passages), Ouverture in French Style (consisting of eight dance movements), the exceptional Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue and an interesting pairing of the Prelude and Fugue in A Minor BWV894 with Bach’s transcription of the Andante from Sonata for Solo Violin in A Minor. I liked the progression of the pieces: traditional pairing of more formal works (Italian Concerto and Ouverture in French Style were even published together in 1835) is followed by expansion of virtuosic and improvisatory elements in Fantasy and Fugues.

Vinikour’s impeccable knowledge and sensibility to Bach’s music makes these pieces sound very personal. Listeners are granted a sonic glimpse of the unique world where the nuances are treated with care and the sound is enriched with measured restraint.

Ivana Popovic

Bach – English Suites

Andrew Rangell

Steinway & Sons 50316 (naxosdirect.com)

If the central tenet of music-making is the desirability of singing or playing in tune, accurately producing sound waves that vibrate at the correct frequency, then no one, it seems, did this better than Johann Sebastian Bach. Much of his keyboard music was written for the harpsichord – a near-ubiquitous instrument in his day – and it began to make a seamless transition to the piano no sooner the instrument was invented and to this day continues to be wonderfully interpreted.

One of the most recent is the unveiling of the English Suites with these gorgeous, free-spirited performances by Andrew Rangell. The suites are decidedly more grandiose than the French Suites and written entirely for pleasure rather than for instruction. The allemandes are rock steady throughout, the gigue extremely lively; the courante sections rapid while the sarabandes are utterly noble. The English Suites are not actually English, but rather more influenced by other European compositional elements, that seemingly – and fortuitously – held Bach’s attention. They begin with a prelude which is often, as in the Suite No.3 in G Minor BWV808, a large-scale concerto-like movement. Rangell brings matchless clarity to Bach’s

Italian Guitar Concertos is the somewhat misleading title of a CD by the Italian guitarist Emanuele Segre with the Orchestra I Pomeriggi Musicali under the direction of composer Carlo Boccherodo (Delos DE 3546 naxosdirect.com).

Aria for Guitar and String Orchestra is Segre’s arrangement of a contratlo aria from a Vivaldi cantata, and the work by Mauro Giuliani is a guitar and string orchestra version of his Gran Quintetto Op.65. The Vivaldi Concerto in D Major is at least a true concerto, but the main interest here is the world premiere recordings of two contemporary single-movement works: The Black Owl by Giovanni Sollima (b.1962) and Ducis Memoria II for Guitar and String Orchestra by Boccadoro (b.1962), the latter originally written for clarinet and strings in 1995. Clocking in at about 18 and 14 minutes, respectively, they’re not substantial works, but both explore a nice range of techniques and textures.

Performances throughout are fine without ever being dazzling.
multi-stranded music. This set of discs shows the pianist at his most enjoyable, astonishingly fleet-fingered and full of delightful argumen-
tative intelligence.  

**Bach – Well-Tempered Clavier Book 1**  
*Sir András Schiff*  
*Naxos 2.110653 (naxosdirect.com)*

> Bach’s renown in his own lifetime was less as a composer than as a keyboard player, both at the harpsichord and at the organ. His great ability was summarized in his obituary: “All his fingers were equally skillful; all capable of the most perfect accuracy in performance.” Today of course we know better, naturally giving due respect to the greatness of his compositions. Most notable among these – considering he was one of the greatest inventors of keyboard music – is *The Well-Tempered Clavier*.  

The 24 preludes and fugues work through the 12 major and 12 minor keys. Unequaled in the profligacy of their inventiveness, the books were intended partly as a manual of keyboard playing and composition, partly as a systematic exploration of harmony and partly as a celebration of a new development in tuning technique that allowed the instrument to be played in any key without being retuned.  

Sir András Schiff’s performance at the BBC Proms (2017) is authori-
tative and eminently satisfying. The fact that it has been well-crafted as a DVD is cause for additional celebration. Schiff exploits the full range of the piano’s sonorities: a crisp, hard touch is used for the more rhythmically motorized preludes, yet there are no qualms about using the sustain pedal to add colour and warmth. His speeds are slow, in some of the fugues, but the shape and direction of a piece is never in any doubt.

**Mozart – Piano Concertos Nos.22 & 24**  
*Charles Richard-Hamelin; Les Violons du Roy; Jonathan Cohen*  
*Analekta AN 2 9147 (analekta.com)*

> Mozart’s spirit is (arguably) most evident in his piano-concerto writing – where vitality is entwined with gaiety, with brilliance and lyricism multilayered across. This first recording collaboration between acclaimed young pianist Charles Richard-Hamelin and Quebec City’s chamber orchestra Les Violons du Roy, led by Jonathan Cohen, captured that essence note by note. Richard-Hamelin’s fiery mastery is matched with the unwavering elegance of the orches-
tra’s responses while Cohen’s artistic vision underlines the most minute details of expression. Together they created a thrilling gem.  

Mozart composed 11 piano concertos between February 1784 and March 1786, while living in Vienna, his creativity unrivaled by any other composer that came after him when it comes to piano concerto writing. The two concertos on this album stand on different sides of his creative expression. No.22 in E-flat Major, sometimes referred to as the queen of Mozart’s piano concertos, is stately and noble in nature, with a prominent wind section throughout. On the other end, No.24 in C Minor, is uncharacteristically emotional and dark, and is considered to be one of Mozart’s finest efforts.  

I could not get enough of the beauty of Richard-Hamelin’s sound on this recording – it contains a precious combination of shimmering lightness, fluent articulation and an array of colours. Most impres-

**Beethoven – Piano Concertos Nos. 2 & 5**  
*Kristian Bezuidenhout, Freiburger Barockorchester; Pablo Heras-Casados*  
*Harmonia Mundi HMM902411 (harmoniamundi.com)*

> Kristian Bezuidenhout has recently turned his attention to a trilogy of Beethoven concerto discs. He is known for his inspired, imaginative and reviving approach to fortepiano repertoire, proving time and time again that communicating brave new things at the neoclassical keyboard can be attained through good taste, apt performance prac-
tice and the right dash of courage. This first of three such recordings embodies all of these celebrated attributes and, rather triumphantly, establishes new ones.  

From the vibrancy of Heras-Casado’s conducting, to the spark-
ling lines in winds and brass; from the marvellous sonorities revealed in Beethoven’s writing when played expertly on period instruments to the glistening, pearl-like textures Bezuidenhout attains with unshakable, inspired finesse, this disc is absolute perfection to behold. Here is the Beethoven the world needs to know.  

Brimming over with jubilant, dazzling sonic palettes, we hear musical craftsmanship on this record being set alight. The quest for innovation and (re)discovery is ever present as these gifted, impassioned artists deliver two of the best-loved piano concertos known to Western music. Bezuidenhout and Heras-Casado delight us; they astonish us, drawing us into a glorious, vivid reality from centuries gone by. In divine treasures from the past, through exceedingly hard work and a sincere love for what they do, they have set an 18th-century stage resounding with every scale, trill, arpeggio and cadence now sung afresh for the contemporary ear. Beethoven, surely, is applauding their achievement from on high.

**Chopin – Piano Concertos**  
*Benjamin Grosvenor; Royal Scottish National Orchestra; Elim Chan*  
*Decca Records 4850365 (store.deccaclassics.com)*

> At 27, Benjamin Grosvenor has dazzled audiences from the very brink of his extra-
ordinary career through to what is now his fifth release on Decca Classics.  

The Royal Scottish National Orchestra itself presents formidable, with a pared down ensemble and robust presence, helmed by the intrepid Elim Chan. Her command of the players is classically clean-
lined, crisp and no-nonsense in its approach to such familiar music. Both piano concerti by Chopin are often criticized for their lack of fulsome orchestra writing. However, Chan seems to disregard any longstanding notions of inadequacy in the orchestration, declaring every accompaniment episode and march-like interlude with shining surety and emphatic musicianship.  

As for the solo part, Grosvenor unassumingly guides his piano to the core of each concerto’s argument, with interpretations that are commanding and forthright yet never self-indulgent. Abounding with beautiful melodies and lyrical highpoints, all of this music is aptly suited to Grosvenor’s zeal for textural clarity and elegant, quick-
silver conceptions of Chopin-esque expressivity. (The first movement of No.1 and the second of No.2 are examples.) His tone and balance of phrasing remain exceedingly cultivated with a personal aspect that seems to exude a deep sense of integrity.  

The poise and lucidity of Félix Mendelssohn’s keyboard writing might be a candidate for influencing Grosvenor’s approach here (and the results likely closer to Chopin’s original intentions!). No small feat it is today, to record such well-worn repertoire with fresh ears, hands – and heart.
Rubinstein – Piano Sonatas Nos.1 and 2
Han Chen
Naxos 8.573989 (naxos.com)

> “Van the Second.” That’s what Franz Liszt called Anton Rubinstein, referring to his fellow pianist titan’s resemblance to Beethoven’s unkempt, leonine looks and pile-driving keyboard aggressiveness. Like Beethoven, Rubinstein also composed in all genres but, unlike “Van the First,” he’s rarely performed today outside his native Russia.

The music on this CD dates from 1850-1855, when Rubinstein, in his early-to-mid-20s, was immersed in early Romanticism. As a teenager studying in Berlin, Rubinstein even met Mendelssohn, who is channeled in the restless, urgent first movement of Piano Sonata No.1. It’s followed by a soulful prayer, a pensive waltz and another chorale melody that ends the fourth movement, and the sonata, in grandiose fashion.

Sandwiched between the two sonatas, both lasting nearly half an hour, are the lovely, gentle Three Serenades, flavoured with subtle echoes of Chopin. Piano Sonata No. 2 is in three movements, the first two recalling Schumann in their inward, almost downcast, reflectiveness. The sonata ends much as the CD began, with a dramatic, Mendelssohnian surge of stormy energy.

Pianist Han Chen, born in Taiwan and now living in New York, was himself in his mid-20s when, in 2018, he recorded these works in King City, Ontario, with expert producers Norbert Kraft and Bonnie Silver, fine musicians themselves. Chen成功fully conveys the music’s varied moods, from tender to agitated to triumphant. I found all these attractive works, though derivative, a pleasure to listen to. I think you may, too.

Michael Schuman

Rachmaninov; Liszt
Luiz Carlos de Moura Castro
Independent n/a (luizdemouracastro.com)

> The Brazilian pianist Luiz Carlos de Moura Castro, who plays with extraordinary virtuosity and passion, is so self-effacing that his only presence apart from the occasional entry in a digital classical music encyclopedia is on recordings, happily as brilliant as this one he produced himself. The works by Rachmaninov and Liszt – two of the greatest piano virtuosos of all time – with which he is represented here on a breathtaking-sounding Fazioli F308, are a testament to Castro’s pianistic genius.

The Liszt Piano Concerto No.2 in A Major, like everything Liszt, demands the highest level of virtuosity with its astounding octave leaps and high pianistic drama. Castro gives an overwhelmingly powerful and authoritative reading of it. His fingerwork has a steely energy to it which is remarkable. He is well supported by the Société d’Orchestre, Bienne under Jost Meier, who conducts the concerto with extraordinary and empathetic understanding of its difficult score.

Rachmaninov’s concertos are all very difficult to play and also reflect the composer’s complete technical command of the piano. Concerto No.3 in D Minor is uncommonly taxing and No.2 in C Minor is filled with bravura. Castro brings to life both of these – as well as Liszt’s Rhapsody on a Theme by Paganini, a work almost as capricious as anything Paganini himself wrote – with the Slovenia Radio and TV Symphony Orchestra, the fiery Ligia Amadio conducting brilliantly.

Richard Haskell

Debussy – Études; Children’s Corner
Aleck Karis
Bridge Records 9529 (bridgerecords.com)

> Claude Debussy’s two books of Études from 1915 are less well known than many of his other piano compositions and until recently, had been neither widely performed nor recorded. Written three years before his death, they are regarded by some as his last testament to his works for piano solo, the form itself having been long embraced by such composers as Clementi, Czerny, Liszt and Chopin, to whom they are dedicated and whose music Debussy adored. The two sets are technically challenging – even the composer himself confessed to struggling with certain passages – but any difficulties are met with admirable competency by the American-based pianist Aleck Karis on this Bridge recording featuring both sets and the charming Children’s Corner Suite.

Beginning with the first étude in Book 1, Pour les cinq doigts, Karis displays a precise and elegant touch, his interpretations at all times thoughtfully nuanced. Indeed, these pieces, ranging in length from two minutes to just under seven, are true “studies” in contrast. The first, a tribute to Czerny, features repeated melodic progressions, while number four is moody and mysterious, and the sixth, Pour les huit doigts, a relentless perpetuum mobile.

The disc concludes with the familiar Children’s Corner Suite from 1908, a heartfelt depiction of childhood from a far simpler time. Beginning with Doctor Gradus ad Parnassum, Karis’ playing is refined and sensitively articulated, with just the right amount of tempo rubato. The atmospheric Jimbo’s Lullaby would induce even the most obstinate pachyderm into slumber, while The Snow is Dancing and The Little Shepherd are true musical impressions that surely would have delighted his beloved daughter Chouchou.

Rounding out the set is the popular Golliwog’s Cakewalk, all bounce and joviality, which brings the disc to a most satisfying conclusion.

Michael Schuman

Percy & Friends
Richard Masters
Heritage HTGCD 179 (richard-masters.com)

> “Let us go then, you and I, / When the evening is spread out against the sky…” Let us listen then, of summer evenings, nightingales and shepherd’s hey; of rainbow trout, bridal lullabies and colonial songs. Even simpler are the country breakfasts, even the most recalcitrant of the New English School was reverenced Delius and often subsumed him in various articles written as the Frankfurt Group, not including Frederick Delius. The other five school together at the Hoch Conservatory, Frankfurt, became known as the Frankfurt Group, not including Frederick Delius. The other five revered Delius and often subsumed him in various articles written about the composers during their time: the New English School was profiled as an adventurous collective of young musical artists, Anglo-centric and German-despising.

The 17-track record from Masters, in combination with his fine liner notes, transports the listener to a gentle world of breezy morning strolls and wholesome sips of afternoon tea. This aesthetic never seeks to poke or to prod, nor to unseat the status quo; here is a unique strain of harmonic connectedness, always sumptuous in its tonal narrative.

From such discarded chests of keyboard music emanates a sincerity of lyricism, generously set against tableaux of perfumed sonic spaces. With comedy confidence and a slightly perceptible dash of American Southern charm, Masters cajoles you and me, as he brings this New English School of the early 20th century back to life.

Adam Sherkin
With three gritty, strenuous piano sonatas that run the gamut of expression in movements now dreamy and languid, now pungent and divisive, Scottish pianist Steven Osborne proves yet again that he can tackle any corner of the piano repertory with technical prowess and innate stylistic aplomb.

In this new disc, Osborne rips into some of the most challenging keyboard music ever written by Russian composer Sergei Prokofiev. The challenges here extend far beyond the thorniness of the sonatas’ character and their assembled identity as three war sonatas. (Opp.82, 83 and 84), written during the years 1939 through 1944. These broad and complex works demand an acute understanding of modernist expression and its concept of human experience when stretched to the very edge. This edge can be extreme in some cases, compelling both listener and pianist alike to embrace the ridiculous as well as the sublime. A successful performance of such music depends on the wits (and technique!) of a multi-versed artist up to the challenge. Osborne leaves us with no doubt as to our emotional survival: we immediately jump onboard for the ride, putting ourselves in his safekeeping until the end of this disc. Therein, Osborne’s hands cast spells of colour and light that echo the deft craft of impressionist composers, betraying a kinship (rarely revealed) between the inspired music of turn-of-the-century France and that generation of Russian modernists who emerged in the 1920s, with Prokofiev at the vanguard.

Adam Sherkin

Samuil Feinberg – Piano Sonatas Nos. 1-6
Marc-André Hamelin
Hyperion CDA68233 (hyperion-records.co.uk)

With wondrous and fair, is the music of Russian composer-pianist, Samuil Feinberg. Today, 58 years after his death, he remains little known outside of Russia. Nevertheless, veteran virtuoso Marc-André Hamelin has long championed the ravishing piano catalogue of Feinberg, peppering his own recital programs with his music. Now, for the first time in a truly voluminous discography, Hamelin has recorded six sonatas by Feinberg, (Opp.1, 2, 3, 6, 10 and 13). Each one is a marvel of pianistic craft, gazing down from the pinnacle of early 20th-century Russian lineages.

Both the first and second sonatas owe a great deal to the spectrums of resonance and open-hearted romanticism found in Rachmaninoff’s piano writing. In particular the Sonata No.2 in B-flat Minor Op.36. These works gleam with whimsical, searching melodies, buoyed up by formidable textures. Hamelin aptly leads the adventure, taking the utmost care and cultivation. In fact, Hamelin navigates every page of these fascinating, singular pieces with splendid ease and confidence. He finds ways to personalize the expressive potential Feinberg embeds in his scores.

Another highlight of the disc. Feinberg’s Sonata No.5, invites us into an eerie, unsettled world. The opening rollicks with overwrought chords that grope and sniff their way through the dark. What – or whom – might they be seeking? This disc bears repeated listening, as is so often the case with Hamelin’s artistry. Verily, today’s musical world would be a dimmer place without him.

Adam Sherkin

Leos Janácek – From the Dead
Bayerisches Staatsorchester and Chorus;
Simone Young
BelAir Classiques BAC173
(naxosdirect.com)

Janáček’s From the House of the Dead is a gripping dramatic work. The last opera he composed, this adaptation of Dostoyevsky’s novel premiered in 1930, two years after Janáček’s death, with an orchestration completed by two of his students. From the House of the Dead is notable for a number of reasons, including the use of chains as percussion in the orchestra (to reflect the sounds of the prisoners shuffling back and forth) and the lack of narrative content; there is no overarching storyline, but rather a number of episodic narratives relating to individual prisoners interspersed with occurrences within the prison itself.

This video release from the Bayerische
Staatsoper is captivating, providing a gritty interpretation of Janáček’s work. Featuring an onstage cage in which the majority of the large ensemble cast is contained throughout the performance as well as superb costumes, including an homage to the famous Day of the Dead, the visual plays as important a role in this opera as the music. It is fascinating to see how this production so ably serves the dramatic requirements of Janáček’s opera and reinforces just how confined and uncomfortable this Siberian prison camp is, as told by Dostoyevsky.

The Staatsoper soloists, chorus and orchestra are superb throughout this short yet intense work, conveying the depth and darkness of the score without once coming across as melodramatic. One of the 20th century’s most profound and significant operatic composers, Janáček displays his mastery in full force in From the House of the Dead, and this production is highly recommended to all who enjoy this Czech master’s works.

Matthew Whitfield

Zemlinsky - Der Traumgörge
Josef Proschtscha; Pamela Coburn; Janis Martin; Hartmut Welker; Hessischer Rundfunk Youth Chorus; RSO Frankfurt; Gerd Albrecht
Capriccio C5395 (naxosdirect.com)

In 1907, Alexander Zemlinsky’s new opera Der Traumgörge was set to premiere at Vienna’s Court Opera. But after its conductor, Zemlinsky’s mentor Gustav Mahler, abruptly resigned as music director of the opera house, the production was cancelled. Zemlinsky was already well-established as a composer, pianist, conductor and teacher (his students included Schoenberg, Korngold and Alma Schindler, who later married Mahler). But it took almost 75 years for Der Traumgörge to get its first performance.

This version, recorded live at a concert performance in 1987, seven years after the much-delayed premiere, has long been unavailable. Now, with Zemlinsky’s music finally getting the attention it deserves, Capriccio has reissued it.

The psychological undercurrents of Der Traumgörge’s libretto by Leo Feld resonate with Freudian profundity. Görge the Dreamer, who lives in a world of fairy tales, sets off on a quest to find the princess he’s been fantasizing about. Instead he encounters a troubled woman, Gertraud. When she is brutally attacked for being a witch, Görge rescues her and brings her back home. Finally he figures out that she is the woman of his dreams after all.

Conductor Gerd Albrecht shows an incisive grasp of Zemlinsky’s opulent late-Romantic style. The terrific cast of singers get right to the heart of this inspired music. With the only other recording of this opera, James Conlon’s from 2001, unavailable, it’s disappointing that Capriccio did not include the libretto with this release. Otherwise, it’s a most welcome reissue.

Pamela Margles

Clytemnestra
Ruby Hughes; BBC National Orchestra of Wales; Jac van Steen
BIS BIS-2408 SACD (naxosdirect.com)

The maverick Welsh soprano Ruby Hughes is the star of this alluring collection of song cycles which opens with five songs by Gustav Mahler based on the poetry of Friedrich Rückert, sung with admirable sensitivity and a clear, light voice. There are of course landmark recordings of these lieders that are richer in tone and emotionally more compelling, by the likes of Janet Baker, Christa Ludwig and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau; nevertheless Hughes offers a youthful and well-considered take on these intimate songs.

The Viennese premiere of Alban Berg’s Altenberg Lieder in March 1913 was the cause of a legendary riot. Though not only five of the five songs of the cycle were programmed, a member of the audience soon bellowed out that both the composer and poet (the whimsical picture-postcard texts were authored by Peter Altenberg) should be sent to the insane asylum. In fact, the poet was already there! Fisticuffs ensued and the remainder of the concert was abandoned. The effect on Berg was devastating. A complete performance of this astounding composition, which presages advances in chromaticism (including some proto-serial elements) that foreshadow those of his mentor Schoenberg, would not take place until 1952, long after his death. This is a most worthy contribution to the limited roster of recordings of this great work.

Clytemnestra, a 25-minute song cycle by the Welsh composer Rhian Samuel, is a vivid, blood-curdling setting of Aeschylus’s tale of the murder of Agamemnon by his wife. Commissioned by the BBC Wales Orchestra in 1994, Samuel’s libretto is constructed solely from Clytemnestra’s point of view. This is a garish, unabashedly cinematic work, massively orchestrated and incorporating some provocative electric bass guitar solos, compellingly brought to life in a riveting performance from both soloist and orchestra under the direction of their principal guest conductor Jac van Steen.

Daniel Foley

Apparition
Agata Zubel; Krzysztof Książek
CD accord ACD 263-2 (naxos.com)

The 20th century was a time of immense creativity, with the fundamental building blocks of musical composition and interpretation disassembled and reconstructed by some of Western music’s most legendary figures. Apparition explores a number of lesser-known and underappreciated composers from this period, including Barber, Crumb and Szymanowski.

This disc opens with Maurice Ravel’s Shéhérazade, an art song triptych based on the renowned Arabic folk tales of One Thousand and One Nights, most famously set to music by Rimsky-Korsakov. Ravel’s songs feature characteristic exoticism, combining “oriental” material with impressionistic harmonies and long vocal lines, expertly interpreted by Zubel and Książek. These traditional, almost Debussian works are sharply contrasted with George Crumb’s Apparition, a set of songs which combine the familiar with the avant-garde. Within this cycle, Crumb gives the singer her expected role, singing texts set to tunes, with a few exceptions such as the three Vocauxes, which utilize the timbral aspect of the voice independent of textual tethers. The piano part, however, is a demanding essay in extreme techniques throughout the cycle, as the pianist is required to utilize every part of the piano to produce percussive, shimmering, and rattling effects.

The remainder of this disc’s contents fall between these two stylistic extremes: Szymanowski’s Songs of a Fairy Tale Princess, Barber’s Opus 13 songs, and Fernando Obradors’ Cançones all align themselves more closely with Ravel than Crumb, bringing the 19th-century tradition of art song forward into the 20th. As a whole, Apparition is a well-thought-out and equally well-performed survey of piano-voice repertoire from the last century and well worth a listen, especially for those who appreciate the radical genius of George Crumb.

Matthew Whitfield
called Suicide Mountain, since it is especially suited for suicide and every week at least three or four people throw themselves off it into the void,” and find myself, despite myself, laughing, I know I’m experiencing the misanthropic comedy of Thomas Bernhard. In this case I’m listening to the nameless narrator of Bernhard’s novel, The Loser, who, as many Canadian readers know, is obsessed with the Glenn mentioned above, last name Gould. Aside from pianistic virtuosity, though, this “Glenn” is ultimately fictional, serving as a paragon of perfection against which Bernhard’s frustrated narrator measures his own failures.

David Lang’s opera adaptation of the novel, sung by baritone Rod Gilfry, offers an outstanding musical correlative to Bernhard’s centri-fugal prose. The melodies, deceptively simple, gain complexity through gradual repetition and subtle layering over time, much like Bernhard’s text itself, and the minimalist accompaniment from the note-perfect Bang on a Can Opera Ensemble captures the inner echoes of the narrator’s solipsistic musings.

Considering Bernhard once wrote that “a prize is invariably only awarded by incompetent people who want to piss on your head,” it somehow fails to apprise The Loser, but Lang, Gilfry and company’s interpretation is brilliant, deserving full praise. Can someone please convince them to perform it in Toronto, maybe at, say, Glenn Gould Studio...?

Adam Seelig

Sarah Slean
Sarah Slean; Symphony Nova Scotia; Bernhard Gueller
Centrediscs CMCCD27820 (cmcccanada.org)

If virtuoso recorder playing is your thing, then Caroline Eidsten Dahl really delivers on this CD. Of the 34 movements, 18 are fast and she plays them at tempos that leave even the listener breathless! Her virtuosity is particularly extraordinary in the second movement of the Sonata in C Major, TWV41C2 and the first movement of the Sonata in C Major, TWV41C3 (BTW, C major is the perfect key for alto recorder virtuosity because of fingerings and because it lies in the middle of the instrument’s two-octave range.)

To focus one’s attention solely on the recorder soloist, however, is to miss much that makes this recording outstanding and Telemann’s composing remarkable. The fact is that this is a collaboration by three equal musicians, and that these “solo” sonatas are in reality trios. If you focus your listening on the cello part, played by Irish cellist Kate Hearne, you can hear it, sometimes just as virtuosic as the recorder, as the lower part of a duo. And the harpsichord, played by Christian Kjos, not only fills in the harmonies implied by the other two parts, but also supplies harmonic momentum and adds sparkling melodic solos when opportunities arise.

In the short movements of these nine sonatas – the shortest is 47 seconds, the longest three and a half minutes – one can gain insight into the composer’s mind, crafting each movement into a unique miniature masterpiece.

This disc offers so much, not only to recorder aficionados but also to music lovers, musicians and composers.

Allan Pulker

Schumann – Piano Trios Vol. 1
Kungsbacka Piano Trio
Bis BIS-2437 SACD (naxosdirect.com)

▶ The piano trio – namely, a combination of piano, violin and cello – has a curious history with composers of historical note, many of whom either wrote very few or none at all. One may attribute such a lack of attention to the apparent balancing issues when writing for this combination of instruments. Others will mention the string quartet taking hold of composers’ attention as the most favourable chamber music combination. An exception to this trend would be Haydn who wrote no less than 45 piano trios in his impressive output. Haydn aside, it remains true that the most celebrated composers in history paid little attention to this genre: Beethoven, Mozart, Brahms and Dvořák all writing less than ten. Robert Schumann belongs to this group, having written three piano trios and a Fantasiestücke (Fantasy Pieces, also with the piano trio instrumentation) in his lifetime.

In this latest release, the Swedish Kungsbacka Piano Trio has included Schumann’s Piano Trios 1 and 2, and the Fantasiestücke in an impressive volume that contains masterful interpretations of these works. The Kungsbackas have earned a well-deserved international reputation since their formation in 1997. Their latest recording is an excellent example of how the ensemble continues to deliver world-class musicianship and expressiveness to listeners around the world. This recording does great justice not only to the works recorded, but to the genre itself – reminding us that this instrumental combination is indeed worthy of any composer’s attention if performed by the right musicians.

The members of the Kungsbacka Trio have an impressive ability to merge their sound into a single instrument, a quality that brings a sonorous lyrical element to the music not present in other recordings of this kind. This high quality recording leaves the listener wanting more – a pleasing thought since there will be a second volume coming soon.

Adam Scime
**Bruch – 8 Pieces Op.83**  
**Philon Trio**  
**Analekta AN 2 8923 (analekta.com)**

> It is so easy to love Max Bruch’s music, and particularly these works for clarinet, viola and piano. His *Acht Stücke Op.83* were composed for his son, Max Felix, a noted clarinettist of the early 20th century. They are the sole material on the recording released this year by the Philon Trio, comprised of David Dias da Silva on clarinet, Adam Newman, viola, and pianist Camilla Köhnken. The work is quite often performed in excerpts, for the simple reason that the pieces vary so much in character and duration that there is no compelling reason to present them all as if they formed a united suite. As the only material on this disc, one might carp that something might have been added as a bolster to the value; the total playing time is just under 35 minutes. Possibly there were no financial constraints. Still, including Schumann’s *Märchenerzählungen*, for context and contrast with another work for the same forces, would have been welcome.

But I won’t carp; I will stick to the positives: these are great performances. Tending more to a dreamy or meditative character for the most part, the collection is leavened by numbers four and especially seven, both of which are presented at a good pace, demonstrating how technically able these fine musicians are. Köhnken’s flairs from Bruch’s home city Köln, and seems to have his spirit guiding her playing. Da Silva’s sound is airy and fluid at once, and while sometimes he fights the demon of sharpness, he most often wins. Newman’s playing is agile and sure. The mix seems to favour the clarinet sound overall, an angular second subject, however, is without refinement by Andrada, before becoming more to a dreamy or meditative character for the late 1920s and early 30s. The third movement of Arnold’s *Flute Concerto No.1* (1935), fast, short, exciting – and tonal – is unquestionably a product of the 20th century. Arnold’s skil as a composer is very much in evidence in this movement, as he builds energy and excitement through the alternation of soloist and orchestra.

I must commend conductor, Jaime Martín, a flutist himself, and the Frankfurt Radio Symphony, for their exemplary rapport with the soloist – musical teamwork at its best.

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**Escales – French Orchestral Works**  
**Sinfonia of London; John Wilson**  
**Chandos CHSA 5252 (naxosdirect.com)**

> While the subtitle of this disc is “French Orchestral Works,” it could just as easily be called “Spanish Music from France,” for that is what comprises the majority of Escales’ contents. The opening and closing tracks are Chabrier’s *España* and Ravel’s *Rapsodie espagnole*, clearly evoking a strong Spanish influence, while Ibert’s *Escales* outlines a three-part journey from France, through Italy, to Spain. Between these works are more standard essays in 20th century French composition, with such classics as Debussy’s *Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune* and Massenet’s *Méditation*.

The interesting subtext to this disc is that, although the Spanish-infused pieces are clearly and deliberately exotic and meant to sound Spanish, they are immediately recognizable as being French. Perhaps this is because the works themselves are only caricatures of another style, or perhaps because they are surrounded by more characteristically familiar music of the same school; regardless of the reason, this disc makes a strong case for France’s inherent national musical identity through its composers. The Sinfonia of London are fine interpreters of this rich and lush material, coaxing out the timbral subtleties of each composer’s material. From the tranquil openings of Debussy’s *Prélude* to the driving conclusion of Ravel’s *Rapsodie*, the character of this music is expressed to full effect, aided in large part by the terrific quality of the sound itself. Released as a super audio CD, *Escales* captures a high degree of sonic detail, such as the robust spectrum of overtones produced by the divided string section, and translates these into a product that is remarkably close to a live performance in a concert hall, ideal for these colourful impressionistic works.

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**Raul da Gama**
Karl Weigl – Symphony No.1; Pictures and Tales
Deutsches Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz; Jürgen Bruns
Capriccio C5355 (naxosdirect.com)

Karl Weigl (1881-1949) was a successful Vienna composer and teacher whose Jewish origins forced him to emigrate in 1938. In the United States he remained active but it has taken a long time for his relatively conservative music to receive the acclaim it deserves. The Symphony No.1 (1908) demonstrates his mastery of a personal late-romantic style, opening with pastoral cheerfulness and a lyrical Viennese touch. The busy scherzo features chattering winds and sophisticated play with cross-rhythms and syncopations. Especially good is the slow movement – a yearning fantasy in the strings. Again in the third movement, woodwinds take a prominent role and there is a tremendous passage of multiple wind trill chains that must be heard – a true chorus of nature! In this work there is little fin-de-siècle brooding. The high-register orchestration is outstanding again in the finale, a somewhat parodic march ending with a boisterous close.

In a much different vein, Weigl composed Pictures and Tales, Op.2 (1909), a set of short piano pieces which he orchestrated into a suite for small orchestra in 1922. The title alludes to scenes and images from fairy tales, e.g. Stork, Stork Clatter or Elves Dance in the Moonlight, with deft and transparent orchestration and appeal for children and adults alike. Jürgen Bruns is a much-in-demand conductor who has led a much-needed recording that would likely delight the composer even more than us.

Homage and Inspiration – Works by Schumann, Kurtág, Mozart and Weiss
Iris Trio
Coviello Classics COV92002 (iristrio.com)

Reviewing a former student’s second chamber music recording in as many years makes my feelings from pride toward sheer professional envy; especially because this is the better of two fine discs involving clarinetist Christine Carter. Cleverly compiled, the disc of music for clarinet, viola (Molly Carr) and piano (Anna Petrova) explores the way each work was influenced by the previous one.

In 1786, Mozart composed his Trio in E-flat Major, K498, known familiarly as the “Kegelstatt,” for his friend and clarinetist Anton Stadler (for whom he also wrote the Quintet for Clarinet and Strings and the Concerto K.622). Robert Schumann responded with his peculiar Märcchenzärtlungen, Op.152 in 1833. Hungarian composer György Kurtág wrote his Hommage à R. Sch. Op.15d. Finally on the disc is a recent commission for the same grouping by Christof Weiß (whose liner notes provide much helpful information), his Drittes Klaviertrio fur Klarinette, Viola und Klavier “Gespräch unter Freunden.” The works are ordered to highlight the links from past to present, rather than chronologically.

It’s lovely to hear the Mozart presented with such fresh freedom. Pulse is allowed to ease and press forward, such that the music comes close to representing what one so often hears it is meant to depict: a conversation among friends over a game of bowling. A special nod to Petrova; this is a small piano concerto in fact, and she knocks it over with grace and flair.

Working on Kurtág’s Hommage was one of many experiences for which I can thank Robert Aïtken and New Music Concerts. These mysterious works are uncannily beautiful, and this rendition is absolutely breathtaking.

MAX CHRISTIE

Lutosławski – Symphonies Nos. 2 & 3
Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra; Hannu Lintu
Ondine ODE 1332-5 (naxosdirect.com)

There’s no mystery why Polish composer Witold Lutosławski’s Symphony No.3 from 1983 has been recorded so frequently. It’s an influential work. And, as this new recording with Hannu Lintu conducting the Finnish Radio Orchestra demonstrates, it’s a truly exciting work, full of delights and surprises.

It starts with a definitive burst of four rapidly repeated E’s, which keep returning right until the end. That motif is the last thing heard. Lintu, who has conducted the Toronto Symphony in a number of memorable concerts during the past decade, brings out the sharp contrasts that make Lutosławski’s music so dramatic. In the semi-improvised sections, where Lutosławski stipulates what notes are played but allows the musicians the freedom to choose the rhythms, the orchestra creates unearthly sounds that shimmer with twists and slides.

But it’s the contemplative passages that show the real strength of this recording – its open-hearted embrace of the lyricism that make this work so moving. Lintu’s interpretation easily measures up to the fine recordings from Solti, who commissioned the work, Salonen, who made the first recording, Wit, Barenboim and Lutosławski himself.

With a colourful performance of Symphony No.2 from 1967, Lintu wraps up his set of Lutosławski’s four symphonies. Like the third, this symphony is in two connected sections, here called Hésitant and Direct. The scale is less grand. But the impact just as powerful, and the performance is every bit as rewarding.

PAMELA MARGLES

Rose Petals – Canadian Music for Viola
Margaret Carey; Roger Admiral
Centre Discs CMCCD26319 (cmccanada.ort)

The oldest and longest work on this CD, Jean Coulthard’s 17-minute Rhapsody (1962), filled with moody introspection and intense yearning, makes an auspicious beginning to violist Margaret Carey’s “hand-picked” collection of Canadian compositions.

Three pieces are for solo viola: Jacques Hétu’s Variations, Op.21 is predominantly slow and songful, occasionally interrupted by rapid, virtuoso passagework; in 19.06, Evelin Ramón combines intricate, electronics-like viola sonorities with vocalizations by the soloist; Howard Bashaw’s Modular 1, the first movement of a longer work, is a tightly rhythmic study in repetition, sustaining momentum throughout its four-minute duration.

Pianist Roger Admiral, heard in Coulthard’s piece, also collaborates in three other works. Ana Sokolović’s Toccata, another four-minute essay in motoric rhythms, strikingly (pun intended) evokes the sounds of the cimbalom and Serbian Gypsies.

The CD’s title, Rose Petals, is taken from the titles of a poem and a painting by Carey, both reproduced in the booklet. They, in turn, inspired Sean Clarke’s The Rose, commissioned by Carey. Clarke writes that in it, Carey also sings fragments of the poem but I found these inaudible. Nor could I discern much in the way of structural or expressive coherence amid the music’s disconnected, brutal fortissimo chords.

Laurie Duncan describes the first two movements of his Viola Sonata as “melancholic” while “the third movement, Jig, is unexpectedly gay and joyous.” It’s a substantial, satisfying conclusion to this adventurous traversal across highly disparate compositional approaches and aesthetics.

MICHAEL SCHULMAN
Un Vélo, une Auto, un Boulevard et de la Neige
Louis-Philippe Bonin
ATMA ACD2 4041 (atmaclassique.com)

This digitally released album of saxophone and piano music combines classic saxophone repertoire with a few surprises. The performances by both Louis-Philippe Bonin (alto saxophone) and Catherine Leroux (piano) achieve an excellent balance of clean technique and precise emotion. Bonin’s tone is lean yet full and he makes many technically difficult passages seem effortless. Leroux’s playing is articulated and balanced while lending a spark when required.

The album contains five works, two of them more traditional saxophone sonatas, one by William Albright (1984) and the other by Fernande Decruck (1943). Florent Schmitt and William Albright (1984) and the other by lending a spark when required.

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The five movements of each piece capture the movements of different types of jellyfish; the various swirls and bursts of sound paint a perfect sonic portrait of these creatures.

The title composition, Un Vélo, une Auto, un Boulevard et de la Neige, by Félix-Antoine Coutu (b.1985) was commissioned by Bonin and brings classical saxophone music into the social media arena. In a December 2017 Facebook post, a blogger called a cyclist a “jerk” for riding on the street in the newly fallen snow and “zigzagging” in front of the writer’s car. The post caused quite an outcry on social media and Coutu’s piece is based on five of the more than 500 Facebook responses and the “variety of rhetorical devices” people used to express their opinions. The work effectively presents these five rhetorical “movements” and Bonin’s playing artfully mimics and embraces this social media conflict.

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Ted Parkinson
Modulation Necklace – New Music from Armenia
Various Artists
New Focus Recordings FCR244 (newfocusrecordings.com)

The Armenian diaspora retains strong ties to their ancient homeland. Six pieces from the last 20 years by five Armenian composers invite attention for tone-painting throughout the rest of the opus.

Canadian composer Vivian Fung’s Bird Song (2012) for violin and piano showcases the virtuosity of both instruments, characterized by runs, intense rhythmic passages and exploration of improvisational moments. The title refers to the birdcalls of the opening and closing passages, to the sprightly tonal arpeggios in the central section and to the overall rhapsodic spirit of the violin writing. The ending is a haunting contrast to the rest of the work, marked by a sort of soft nostalgia.

The other three works on Jin Yin have much to recommend them as well, altogether providing a full and fascinating 77 minutes of listening.

Andrew Timar
Music from the APNM (Assoc. for the Promotion of New Music) Vol 1 & 2
Various artists
New Focus Recordings n/a (newfocusrecordings.com)

The Association for the Promotion of New Music (APNM) was founded in 1975, and is celebrating its long commitment to composers with this double release of acoustic, electroacoustic and electronic works by member composers.

Volume 1: Chamber Music is mostly acoustic music performed by a variety of excellent musicians and ensembles. The opening work Wind Chimes, performed by composer/guitarist Stephen Dydo with Chen Yu on pipa, is a continuous colourful sound mix of the two instruments in 12 continuous sections each based on an early Chinese music mode. Thomas James describes his Odd Numbers as utilizing odd numbers to create “aggregate” rhythms, with piano soloist Sheila Simpson especially spectacular in the delicate sections. Love Joseph Hudson’s piano/electronics work Starry Night. The composer memorably orchestrates my own interpretation of the night sky with florid piano lines against held, calming, electronic sounds, weather changes with louder rhythms and forceful ticking, and clouds drifting by in the closing slow piano/electronics section. Other works are composed by Laurie San Martin, Andrew Timar and others.

Volume 2: Computer + Electronic Music consists of eight contrasting compositions. Explosions, rapid-fire lines open Arthur V. Kreiger’s For Diane, with a plethora of interesting electronic sounds created on fixed audio media, while Adam Vidiksis’ Ouroboros features more current-day electronic sounds like plops and repeated rhythmic figures. Almost theatre/movie music, Stereo Fantasy by Maurice Wright is fully notated and

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Various artists
New Focus Recordings n/a (newfocusrecordings.com)

The Association for the Promotion of New Music (APNM) was founded in 1975, and is celebrating its long commitment to composers with this double release of acoustic, electroacoustic and electronic works by member composers.

Volume 1: Chamber Music is mostly acoustic music performed by a variety of excellent musicians and ensembles. The opening work Wind Chimes, performed by composer/guitarist Stephen Dydo with Chen Yu on pipa, is a continuous colourful sound mix of the two instruments in 12 continuous sections each based on an early Chinese music mode. Thomas James describes his Odd Numbers as utilizing odd numbers to create “aggregate” rhythms, with piano soloist Sheila Simpson especially spectacular in the delicate sections. Love Joseph Hudson’s piano/electronics work Starry Night. The composer memorably orchestrates my own interpretation of the night sky with florid piano lines against held, calming, electronic sounds, weather changes with louder rhythms and forceful ticking, and clouds drifting by in the closing slow piano/electronics section. Other works are composed by Laurie San Martin, Andrew Timar and others.

Volume 2: Computer + Electronic Music consists of eight contrasting compositions. Explosions, rapid-fire lines open Arthur V. Kreiger’s For Diane, with a plethora of interesting electronic sounds created on fixed audio media, while Adam Vidiksis’ Ouroboros features more current-day electronic sounds like plops and repeated rhythmic figures. Almost theatre/movie music, Stereo Fantasy by Maurice Wright is fully notated and
performed by synthetic orchestra, complete with sparkling staccato lines, electronically generated strings and drones. Lots of contrapuntal conversations with noisy bangs, tunes and almost-live instrument sounds in Jeffrey Hall’s From the Winds of Avalon. More computer-generated instrumental sounds in Joel Gressel’s Deconstructing Maria. Works by Samuel Wells and Carl Christian Bettendorf combine electronics with live instruments, trumpet and viola respectively.

A fabulous collection of acoustic and electronic compositions showcasing the talents of APFM’s members and the organization’s multi-decade work supporting new music. 

**Tilina Kilk**

**Etereo – new music for flute**

*Lindsey Goodman*

*Nevosa Records nv6265 (navonarecords.com)*

> From the outset, in Josh Oxford’s *Blues... for solo flute*, Lindsey Goodman demonstrates she is a flutist who has it all. With a palette of luscious tone colours and engaging phrasing, she easily negotiates the many different flocalizations, bluesy thirds, glissandi, flutter tonguings and tongued pizzicato, all while maintaining a compelling, rock-solid beat. This track alone is worth the investment.

Yet what follows is of equal merit. The next four tracks are also for solo flute. Bruce Babcock’s *Solloqua* is moody with flashes of technical display. Steven Block’s *Sweet Soulless Solstice* offers moments of two-part writing with harmonic overtones defining an ostinato and regular tones, a brief melody. While Goodman’s performance engages us in both Taurins’ *Gadfly* and *Marigas* for alto flute, the obvious quotations from Varese’s *Density 21.5* are neither mentioned nor explained in the scanty online program notes.

Using fixed media with effective employment of stereo panning, Mara Helmuth’s programmatic *Butterfly Within* reveals spurts of flitting about and flapping wings. The most hauntingly lyrical work is Alla Elana Cohen’s four-movement *Watercolors of the Master Who is Accustomed to Paint with Oils*, ably accompanied by pianist Robert Frankenberry. The penultimate track, In Memorium by Peter Castine, opens serenely, becoming increasingly more agitated as first the cello dialogues in counterpoint with the alto flute, and later as the crotale and toy piano enter. Jennifer Jolley’s *Flight 710*, a rhythmic tour-de-force spectacularly played by the flute/cello/piano Leviathan Trio, closes one very impressive, boundary-pushing collection of new music for flute.

**Nancy Nourse**

**Moto Celeste**

*Trio Casals*

*Nevosa Records nv6266 (navonarecords.com)*

> Moto Celeste is the fifth installment of Nevosa Records’ MOTO series featuring the Trio Casals. Conductor/cellist/composer Ovidiu Marinescu, violinist Sylvia Ahramjian and pianist Anna Kišlištsyna are outstanding gifted musicians who together create a tight, musical, technically virtuosic chamber trio sound. Here they perform eight new compositions, all listener-friendly, drawn from an eclectic mix of musical ideas.

Each work is a masterpiece in its own right. Highlights include the opening track, *Earth Rise*, by Diane Jones. Inspired by the sun, moon and earth, the opening piano high-pitched high-sounding tinkle leads to matching melodic phrases on all instruments, a slower reflective cello solo and a moving, almost romantic, planet dance. Quick change to a rockin’ rhythmic work, *Los Ritmos Para Tres (Rhythms for Three)* by Edna Alejandra Longoria, a fun mix of jazz, rock and contemporary music rhythms and lines. Cellist Marinescu’s amazing almost athletic performance of his own composition *Sunt Numai Urechi (I’m All Ears)* for solo cello is flawless.

An exciting flamenco-guitar-inspired virtuosic work, he almost sounds like two performers as he tackles his fast, circling, chromatic melodies, lyrical sections, high pitches and changing mixed metres. Canadian composer Joanna Estelle’s brief, yet sweet, tonal *Farauqay Star*, is a programmatic piece of star-crossed lovers – female violin, male cello and piano narrator, played with clarity and storytelling precision.

Compositions by Christina Rusnak, Chad Robinson, Clive Muncaster and Eliane Aberdam complete this memorable recording.  

**Tilina Kilk**

**Ripples**

*Claron: Keith Benjamin; Melody Turnquist-Steed*  
(Crystal Records CD961 (crystalrecords.com))

> When I hear trumpet playing with organ, I am immediately in church, willingly or not, and there is no shortage of the expression that brings me there on this disc. Kansas City, MO-based duo Clarion, made up of trumpeter Keith Benjamin and Melody Turnquist-Steed on organ, has released a collection of works written for them by a range of contemporary American composers.

The most current, or at least the youngest of these, is Adam Schoenberg (b.1980) a graduate of Oberlin College and the Juilliard School of Music. He now teaches composition and film scoring, which certainly shows in the bold and highly visual quality of *Apollo*, which aims in the first movement, *Beyond*, to depict the majesty of outer space. To my mind it’s fairly effective character-filled music that could evoke a mountainscape as readily as astral travel, but he does refer somewhat to Holst’s harmonies and even Mercurial playfulness here, so...

The second movement, *Light*, is prayerful contemporary music group performs seven new works, six of them premiere recordings.

The seven-movement *Ex Machina*, by American Marc Mellits, is a funky, minimalist work exploring his self described idea “to express the beauty locked within machines.” *Machine I (Let the Funk Out)* sets up this idea with minimalist machine-like grooves. The contrasting slower *Machine II (Flowing)* features long ascending and descending lines, with a slightly rhythmic backdrop. Love the crispy sudden change to rhythmic machine-like industrial sounds in *Machine IV (Dancing a Mean Gusty Dance)* performed with aplomb. No surprise *Machine VII (Aggressive & Funky)* ends with a final hell honkin’ chord. Mellits’ other work here is the swirling, syncopated *Black.*

Richard Chowenhill’s slower *In Solitude I Sit* is a refreshing reflective change with its lengthy held drone notes and higher pitches, all played with great breath control. No background rhythms enhance the calmness. Touches of Middle Eastern and klezmer-flavoured sounds in Chris Evan Hass’ faster *Volcanic Ash* are performed to style. Works by Sohy Raman, David Biedenbender and Mischa Zupko feature memorable challenging rhythms, swirling lines and contrasting dynamics.

These talented, technically astute, rhythmic and musical saxophonists shine throughout.  

**Tilina Kilk**

**Ex Machina**

*Donald Sinta Quartet*

*Bright Shiny Things BSTC-0133 (brightshiny.ninja)*

> Formed in 2010 and named after their mentor, a University of Michigan saxophone professor, the Donald Sinta Quartet is an exciting award-winning modern ensemble featuring saxophonists Dan Graser (soprano), Zach Stern (alto), Joe Girard (tenor) and Danny Hawthorne-Foss (baritone). In their second recording, the tight virtuosic classical/
and lovely, as American as Copland, and I'm back in church again.

Not all the works are as strong, but I did enjoy Passing Illuminations by James Moherly, and Stacey Garrop's Road Warrior comes across as the most daring and experimental, especially in using the organ to provide interesting and unusual effects. The title refers to a book written by the late Neil Peart, of Rush, who took to the road mourning the loss of a child and spouse. The connection is intentional: this and one other of the works presented refer indirectly to the death of Benjamin's son to leukemia in 2010. Ripples spreading out from that event might well describe the impetus behind this loving collection of new works. Max Christie

JAZZ AND IMPROVISED

Counsel of Primaries
Rob Clutton Trio
SnailBongBong Records

False Ghosts, Minor Fears
See Through 4
All-Set! Editions (all-set.org)

These two Toronto bands have much in common. Each is led by a bassist/composer, Pete Johnston in the case of See Through 4, and they share some key musicians. Rob Clutton’s eponymous trio includes saxophonist Karen Ng and drummer Nick Fraser; so too does the See Through 4, with pianist Marilyn Lerner making it a quartet.

For many jazz musicians, composition can be a perfunctory task, but Rob Clutton takes it seriously and his groups, like the long-running Clutternets, are designed for it. His new trio plays jazz as if it were sculpture. Lines are clearly etched, content reduced to bare meaning and intent, with a special structural and emotional clarity. Clutton can reduce a line to a spare series of deeply felt, highly resonant tones, while the group that he has assembled couldn’t be more attuned to his work. It’s immediately evident in the opening Strata, brought into sharp focus by Fraser’s insistent cymbals and Ng’s Morse Code-like monotone. Counsel of Primaries veers toward Caribbean dance, with Ng investing even the briefest phrases with a wealth of emotion. Sterling suggests a kind of dissonant prayer, Clutton’s bowed harmonics coming to the fore amidst Ng’s long tones and Fraser’s gently scraped cymbals. Clouk is less austere, but it too, carries with it a sense of reverie, an engagement with resonance as an active participant, feeding back into the music.

Given their shared personnel, it’s striking just how different the two groups are, their identities intimately connected both to the leaders’ compositional styles and their partners’ insights. Clutton’s minimalism gives way to Pete Johnston’s further extension of Lennie Tristano’s already abstracted linear vision. In a playful manner all his own, though, Johnston’s pieces can provide a series of loose frames for a series of solos. Another Word for Science has pianist Marilyn Lerner begin an unaccompanied solo with a series of witty keyboard asides, with Johnston and Fraser entering tentatively until the three have created a tangle of kinetic lines; Ng uses the free dialogue to explore a distinctive zone of her own, a compound mood that can mingle celebration and lamentation in a single phrase, while Fraser solos over the band’s final extended version of the theme. Battling in Extra Ends employs a still punctuation of bass and drums in unison to frame a flowing, balladic Lerner improvisation. The Sidewalks Are Watching begins with an up-tempo boppish theme, but advances through a series of rhythmic displacements that have individual band members occupying distinct temporal dimensions.

Given how much the two bands have in common, Clutton, Johnston and their gifted associates create two very different worlds. Stuart Broomer

Concert Note: At time of going to press, the Rob Clutton Trio and the See Through 4 are scheduled to have a joint CD launch at Array Space, 155 Walnut Ave., on April 17.

Voir dans le vent...
Symon Henry; Ensemble SuperMusique
Ambiances Magnétiques AM251CD (actuelled.com)

Symon Henry is a visual artist, poet and composer of graphic scores. His Voir dans le vent qui hurle les étoiles rire, et rire (l’un-e sans l’autre) is a hand-drawn 168-page score. The sample drawings in the CD booklet suggest minimalist landscapes as much as the heavens. There are light and heavy lines, some are gently arcing horizontal, others shoot off at sharp angles. In this live recording, the visuals were projected on screen and each of Ensemble SuperMusique’s ten musicians followed the score on individual iPads, with the work’s arranger, Danielle Palary Roger, conducting.

The work is an immediate surprise, opening with a hive of overlapping, eerie glissandi from instruments that take a while to distinguish, strings and vernacular flutes with touches of a ratcheting bird call. As the 50-minute piece proceeds through its six movements, each develops its own density and sonic language, though frequently employing the shifting glissandi as linear representations. Rencontres adds some gritty scraping noises, and Guillaume Dostaler’s exploratory piano to the mix, while the extended Les nues continuously adds new and shifting textures.

Voir dans le vent... highlights the improvisatory invention and detailed listening of Ensemble SuperMusique, a group founded in 1988. Henry’s work emphasizes a special sectional creativity and interaction from the various woodwinds of Joane Hétu, Jean Derome and Lori Freedman and the strings of Guido Del Fabbro, violin, Rémy Bélanger de Beaupoint, cello, and Pierre-Ves Martel, viola de gamba and zither. Stuart Broomer

Montreal bassist Carl Mayotte has just released his debut CD, which was co-conceived by Mayotte and the iconic Michel Cuscuna (UZEB). This evocative project features ten original compositions (mainly penned by Mayotte), which embrace the indelible burst of artistry and creativity from influential 1970s artists such as Weather Report, Frank Zappa, Hermeto Pascoal, Chick Corea and Pat Metheny.

Mayotte, who performs masterfully here on electric and fretless bass, has also assembled a hungry pack of young jazz lions who perform this challenging material with boundless energy as well as technical thrills and chills. The cast includes Gabriel Cyr on electric guitar; Francis Grégoire on keyboards and synthesizers; Stéphane Chamberland on drums; Damien-Jade Cyr on tenor, alto and soprano; Jean-Pierre Zanella on alto and flute; Patrice Luneau on baritone; Remi Cormier on trumpet; Emmanuel Richard-Bordon on trombone; Luke Bovin on percussion and Raymond Gagnier on voice.

First up is the two-part suite, Le Fantome. Part 1, Le Poltergeist, is spooky and other-worldly, with synth-infused structures and a theatrical use of voice and breathing. Part 2, Le Polisson segues into a face-melting drum solo from Chamberland, followed by a funky big band explosion, replete with a fine bass solo and a caustic, Jan Hammer-ish synth solo. Sumptuous flute work by Zanella kicks off the fast-paced O Commodo, and...
the spirit of Jaco Pastorius can be felt by Mayotte’s bass work throughout this invigorating composition. Cormier’s volcanic trumpet adds incredibly, while the band morphs into a second-line influenced passage, and then back to the lilting head… sheer beauty. A stand-out is Marise – an ego- less portrait of Mayotte’s incredible skill and melodic sensibility.

Lesley Michell-Clarke

Monicker
Libr’aerie
Bug Incision bim-79 (bugincision.com)

► Few international improvising ensembles get to persist after their initial meetings, but Monicker – the trio of guitarist Arthur Bull and trombonist Scott Thomson, both Canadians, and the English drummer Roger Turner – is currently enjoying a second life, with a recent Australian tour and upcoming dates in France and England. Libr’aerie documents a 2018 performance from Quebec City’s Librairie Saint-Jean-Baptiste.

There’s no easy way to describe the group’s music: any substantial segment might include the dauntingly abstract, the drollily witty and the broadly, almost physically, comic, and each dimension, among others, might be caught in the same passage. This recording is more minimalist than their previous release (Spine on Ambiances Magnétiques), with Turner reducing his kit to snare drum, cymbal and “small junk percussion,” the latter the source of the high-pitched, near-random, metallic chatter that sometimes animates this music.

There’s a broad movement here from the abstract to the celebratory. Turner’s special momentum has roots in early jazz and similar tastes have shaped the work of his younger partners. Thomson can reflect a century of jazz trombone, from a New Orleans moan to elegant legato, but there are special moments when he combines unlikely elements, matching bebop velocity to vocalic smears. Bull often extends early blues idioms, and a matching bebop velocity to vocalic smears. Angelicus is a beautiful, dancing line that is overlaid by Felder’s signature Stratocaster sound, Cervini’s equally tricky drum groove and Deniz’s smooth, melodic sax tune. Angelicus is a beautiful, slower piece composed by Vince Mendoza which had stuck with Cervini since his first year studies at the University of Toronto. Meandering throughout the album, the end track The Sneaky Two is similar to the opening track in that it leaves the listener tapping their foot, hooking into the rhythm and awaiting what the next release by this supergroup will be.

Kati Killaspea

Ordinary Heroes
Peter Hum
Independent (peterhum.com)

► Canadian musicians, it appears, are no less exempt (than US ones), from the unpleasant vagaries of the seemingly perva- sive, angst-ridden socio-political climate in the continent. We like to think that ground zero for all of this is the US, but the ripples are often felt in Canada. At least this is what pianist and composer Peter Hum seems to say as he references, in his music, numerous disturbing incidents that have left our society shaken to its core.

Ted Parkinson

Much music that makes reference to manmade tragedies is often strident in tone and utilizes disturbing dissonances to make its point, but Hum’s music doesn’t do so. The very title of the recording, Ordinary Heroes, provides an insight into Hum’s poetics and aesthetic and it is this: principally, disquiet is viewed from a perspective apposite to the violence that causes it. He evokes this in the emotion and intellect of his pianism.

Thus we hear the voices of victims instead of perpetrators – innocent worshippers shot to death in a mosque (Tears for the Innocent), Japanese migrants imprisoned in internment camps during World War II (Ordinary Heroes) and refugees from Latin American countries, Myanmar and Syria (Safe Passage), for instance – soar in the deeply meditative paths of melodic and harmonic conceptions.

And when rhythms are employed to bring stories to life, even in music such as Rouser, Hum does so in a manner that is artfully idiomatic.

Raul da Gama

Square Peg
Mark Godfrey Quintet
Independent PRAM004 (markgodfreybass.com)

► Square Peg is a collection of jazz tunes bassist and composer Mark Godfrey wrote while commuting between Toronto and New York over a four-year period in his Dodge Caravan (a great vehicle for holding an upright bass). The album title could refer to how a vehicle associated with families and soccer is turned into a conduit for art and music. Many of the tunes are meditative, possibly because driving a familiar route often leads to introspection.

Highlights include the title piece which starts with a lifting melody played together by Allison Au (alto sax) and Matt Woroshyl (tenor sax) slightly in and out of sync giving it a nice edge. Then Chris Pruden plays a tinkling, arpeggiated and out-of-tempo piano solo that is quite beautiful. No Gig Today is a breezy up-tempo bossa nova tune that seems to say, “If we can’t get a gig, let’s groove on our own.” Nick Fraser’s stylish and complex drums provide the perfect jazz-samba backbeat. After a sophisticated solo by Pruden the two saxes heat things up with an unaccompanied duet break which evolves into trading eights when the rhythm section returns. This is a great tune with many nuances.

Square Peg is accessible yet sophisticated, with all musicians sounding impeccable. May I suggest slipping this CD into your car (or van) stereo system for one of those lengthy drives?

Ted Parkinson
Let Your Honesty Shine – The Simon Project
Heidi Lange
Independent (music.apple.com)

Talented jazz vocalist and professor Heidi Lange’s newest release is a pleasant modern jazz take on Paul Simon’s music, mixing in elements of pop and rock to create a unique whole. With current jazz greats like Mark Kieswetter on piano, Jordan O’Connor on acoustic bass, Eric St-Laurent on guitars and Ben Riley on drums, the album is a perfect soundtrack for a rainy day, for contemplation or relaxing. Lange’s voice is a balanced combination of wispiness and depth, pulling in the listener and invoking complete focus on her.

Each track features a prominent piano melody that blends in outstandingly with Lange’s timbre and is further supported by beautiful guitar riffs, a moving, yet calming, drum rhythm and a sultry bass line. A touching version of Bridge Over Troubled Water is a definite highlight of the album, as is the unique take on Dazzling Blue and the captivating Another Galaxy. Standing out from the rest of the tracks for its upbeat tempo and slightly more driving melody and rhythm is The Boy in the Bubble, also unique for the fact that the entire band sounds the most blended here, intricacies of each instrument played out to create a cohesive but dynamic whole. This is where the listener can hear just how well these talents merge together. For longtime fans of Paul Simon’s work or for music fans interested in a modern jazz sound, this album is a definite recommendation.

Kati Killaspea

The Scrapper
John Sneider
Cellar Music CM072819 (cellarlive.com)

In the same way a plethora of Canadian jazz fails to reach our neighbours to the south, there are also many American artists that we are not exposed to here. This is why I was delighted to see trumpeter and composer John Sneider’s first release under his own name in over 20 years appear on the Canadian Cellar Live label. Sneider’s album The Scrapper fits in perfectly with Cellar Live’s usual programming, which hosts artists from both sides of the border who play “timeless, swinging, heartfelt and resonant” music, as their website states.

The core members of Sneider’s band remain the same as on his last release Panorama from 2000: John Hart on guitar, Larry Goldings on organ and Andy Watson on drums. It is the shared influences among these veterans of the New York City scene that give the group its contemporary yet grounded sound. The tracks on the album are a unified flow of original by Sneider and Goldings, small-group arrangements of two Duke Ellington pieces, and tracks that feature its guest artists: vocalist Andy Bey and young trumpeter David Sneider. Bey contributes a conversational rendition of Miles Davis’ classic Solar, and Sneider demonstrates he shares his father’s mature yet playful compositional style on the two-trumpet closer Dinosaur Eggs. Overall, The Scrapper is an excellent release that pays homage to the tradition while still sounding current in 2020.

Sam Dickinson

Cast of Characters
Nick Finzer
Outside In Music OiM 2000 (nick-finzer.myshopify.com)

With the release of his new 14-song concept recording, respected trombonist, producer and educator, Nick Finzer, has pushed the creative envelope into new, vital and challenging emotional territory. Long known as a formidable storyteller, Finzer’s new opus is a musical exploration of influential archetypes who are often common to the human experience, e.g. inter-connections with those individuals who inspire us, disappoint us, break our hearts, support us tirelessly and love us unconditionally.

Finzer’s stellar sextet includes Lucas Pino on reeds, Alex Wintz on guitar, Glenn Zaleski on piano, Dave Baron on bass and Jimmy Macbride on drums. There is no gratuitous soloing on this project, but there is intense and emotional, post-bop group exploration in which all of the members have a voice. On the evocative opener, A Sorcerer, the Ellingtonia is palpable. The sextet is pristine and swinging, gliding over the complex musical motifs with skill, insight and taste, and Pino’s inspired sax solo is full of longing and youthful joy. Another outstanding track is Evolution of Perspective – a sobering introspection that bounces back with a gymnastic, rapid-fire solo from Finzer, as well as equally superb, vibrant solos from the ensemble.

Other standout include Patience, Patience – a haunting ballad perfectly parented-sized by Zaleski’s luminous piano work, and Venus – a sensuous rhapsody, silkier than the finest satin. With this thought-provoking recording, Finzer guides the listener on a journey through seemingly chaotic, quantum entanglement, which eventually morphs into our sense of self as so eloquently put by the title of the last offering in the cycle, We’re More than the Sum of Our Influences.

Lesley Mitchell-Clarke

Air
Asmus Tietchens; Dirk Serries
New Wave of Jazz nwoj 0026 (newwaveofjazz.bandcamp.com)

Not lighter than air, but certainly as omnipresent, Air is a singular instance of what could be termed brazen (un)ambient music. Belgian Dirk Serries improvised sounds on accordion, concertina, harmonica, melodica and clarinet, which were then used as source material manipulated, splintered and sewn together again by the computers and electronics of German composer Asmus Tietchens. The result is a collection of six tracks that challenge much more than they soothe.

On a sequence like Air Akkordeon for instance, as tremolo accordion reaches a juddering crescendo that spreads over the track like jam on toast, fragments of those vibrations, treated by Tietchens’ computer, are reflected mirror-like back into the mix, moving with hints of avairy whistles that hover alongside Serries’ initial tones, before both glide away.

That type of scenario evolves throughout the disc, as Waiting clarinet quivers confront Big Ben-like repetitive chiming or minimalist concertina squeezes and/or harmonica breaths mix with whispery vocal-like echoes that ascend to ululating choral refrains. Carefully layered through granular synthesis and pitch manipulations, these congruent tones transcend solo instrument-like resemblance, to become mechanized or otherworldly-like vibrations by the final Air Klarinetta 2. Becoming louder and more diverse, the layers of interspaced oscillations negate “real” or “treated” origins to become almost symphonic with impressionistic colourations.

Overall though, what’s also distinctive about Tietchens’ and Serries’ program is that kernels of impulsive audacity and strength can be heard beneath the unfolding ambience.

Ken Waxman
Analekta AN 2 9171 (analekta.com)
Zal Sissokho
Clean Feed CF 533 CD
Harris Eisenstadt
Canada Day Quartet Live
Canada’s July 1 holiday.

This live disc should be as welcome as
and expressed by the trumpeter in warm
lighten the narrative. The climax exposes a
brass blend.
keyboard animation and a final lyrical
collection recoils which usher in moderato
with creaking sul tasto extensions and later
the one time Niggenkemper moves upfront
action. Meanwhile
other bands. Leisurely or accelerated percus-
Hawkins, with whom the drummer plays in
swift shading and lightly voiced textures by
propelled in double counterpoint with the
member since it began in 2009. These are
open-horn clarion rasps by Wooley , a band
feature hand-muted plunger expositions or
pre-Trump US.

pot-ideology that was a mark of the
Poschiavo
expressed as the four animate Eisenstadt’s
Hawkins and French-German bassist Pascal
Koran and flamenco guitar are worlds apart. Linked
by their common plucked string heritage
however, Sissokho and Planté find ample
common musical ground on which to hang
flights of melodic fancy . Characterized by
temp, pop-forward arrangements, brief
modal improvisations and Sissokho’s vocals,
this set of ten concise songs makes a convinc-
ing case for combining kora and flamenco.

Andrew Timar
Levantine Rhapsody
Didem Başar
Analekta AN 2 9172 (analekta.com)

The music of
Jessica Deutsch on Traces may not appear to require a virtuosic,
high-flying performance on the violin but
make no mistake; it is diabolically
difficult to play. There is great demand for atmospheric playing complete with subtle
innuendo, dynamics and colour. Deutsch has this in spades and brings all of it to the repertoi-
re on the album.

Each of the works – exquisite miniatures
borne aloft by her lonesome violin, supported
by mandolin or guitar, glued together by cello
and contrabass, with occasional keyboards
and voices – is laden with intimacy and an
emotional intensity that can only be described
as the poetry of feeling. Deutsch’s performance
throughout is lightly perfumed and evocative,
especially in the slower songs, where her sensi-
tivity shows best. The ephemeral Traces and
The Bones of Clouds, with its wispy imagery
not unlike the early poetry of Elizabeth Bishop,
are superb examples of her playing.

Deutsch creates a perfect blend of delicacy
and muscularity. Her ingenuity enables her
to combine phrasing and touch with subtle
shifts of emphasis that refashions phrases in an unexpected but utterly convincing
manner. Her playing throughout, combined
with cello and bass is highly redolent of the
rustle of expensive raw silk. The rest of the
group is completely harmonically and rhyth-
ically entwined with Deutsch’s artistry.
Their performances are altogether remark-
able, possessing sinewy vigour and dynamism
which contributes to putting a unique stamp
on this music.

Raul da Gama

Kora Flamenca
Zal Sissokho
Analekta AN 2 9171 (analekta.com)

Zal Sissokho is a griot, continuing the grand oral traditions of his
Mandingo people of Senegal in Montreal
where he settled in 1999. His long
clan lineage and
deep improvisation skills are on full display
when he plays the 21-string kora and sings in
Malinke and Wolof as a solo performer and
collaborator with numerous bands.

Ever since he heard flamenco performed
live in Seville, Sissokho dreamt of combining
Andalusian music and the Mandinka culture
of his native West Africa. Kora Flamenca –
a musical collaboration with composer and
virtuosa flamenco guitarist Caroline Planté
– is the result. The album’s ensemble also
includes percussionist Miguel Medina, first-
call Montreal oudist Mohamed Masmoudi and
bassist Jean Félix Mailloux. Sissokho explains,
“I sought to expand the limits of my instru-
ment, the kora, as far as possible. Inspired by
soaring improvisational flamenco riffs, I tried to create a hybrid style... [To me] musical
inspiration begins with respect for the instru-
ment’s tradition, history and sounds. Then...
I sought to... push my collaborators to create
music in which composition, technical
prosely and improvisation unite...”

Musically and stylistically, kora and
flamenco guitar are worlds apart. Linked
by their common plucked string heritage
however, Sissokho and Planté find ample
common musical ground on which to hang
flights of melodic fancy . Characterized by
temp, pop-forward arrangements, brief
modal improvisations and Sissokho’s vocals,
this set of ten concise songs makes a convinc-
ing case for combining kora and flamenco.

Andrew Timar
Levantine Rhapsody
Didem Başar
Analekta AN 2 9172 (analekta.com)

Didem Başar

is a professionally
trained player of the
kuran, or Turkish
zither. On this CD,
she unites Turkish
and Western clas-
sical music under
her own compos-
tions, scoring them for kanun and Western
instruments played by Guy Pelletier (flutes),
Brigitte Dajžer (violin), Noémy Braun (cello)
and Patrick Graham (percussion). Başar
works with the Centre des Musiciens du
Monde, which enables such cross-cultural
experiences to happen.

Başar’s initial composition Deér-i
Rûksan will immediately remind visitors
to Turkey of that country’s rich musical
heritage; listen to its thoughtful kanun solo
sections as they build up to a climax of plain-
tive string playing, a lively flute part and
vigorously drumming. Often, the compos-
tions are short; Bird Song lasts just 2:26, but I
challenge anyone to find so many variations
on percussion instruments to create as many
bird sounds as there are on this single track!

On one occasion, Başar dips into clas-
sical Turkish music. She states that
Kantemiroğlu’s Rast Pışrev still has the
power to inspire even though that composer
died almost 300 years ago; complex playing
by all the instrumentalists contributes to an
arrangement unfamiliar to Western ears.

Başar offers Gery as a plea for all those
suffering the consequences of deadly
conflicts. The endless wanderings of refugees
are echoed in the flute part as it intermingles
with the kanun to represent pain and
sorrow. Riddle is her other intensely personal
composition. Short but intense and loud
phrases on the kanun and cello are intended
to represent contrasting feelings: is life itself
not a riddle?

And Canada is not forgotten. 5 à 7 is “happy
hour” in Quebec. What with the five- and
seven-beat textures of Başar’s composition
of that name, it is just the right time to invite
guests round to enjoy traditional Turkish
cuisine to the backdrop that is Levantine
Rhapsody.

Michael Schwartz

Traces
Jessica Deutsch and Ozere
Independent

For followers of expressive improvised
music this live disc should be as welcome as
Canada’s July 1 holiday.

Ken Waxman

POT POURRI

Kora Flamenca
Zal Sissokho
Analekta AN 2 9171 (analekta.com)

Zal Sissokho is a griot, continuing the grand oral traditions of his
Mandingo people of Senegal in Montreal
where he settled in 1999. His long
clan lineage and
**Something in the Air**

**Forging a Guitar Identity in Improvised Music**

KEN WAXMAN

Probably the most popular instrument in the world in its various forms, the guitar poses unique challenges for analytical players. With the six-string front-and-centre in so many branches of music, how can one forge an individual path? Yet each of the electrumists here has done so as uniquely as there are makers of guitars.

For instance Nels Cline is in a situation many others would envy. As lead guitarist for American alternative rock band Wilco, he has a steady gig with a large following. Yet Cline has been an integral part of Los Angeles’ improvised music scene since the 1980s and immerses himself back in that context any chance he gets. The Radical Empathy Trio’s Reality and Other Imaginary Places (ESP 5035 espdisk.com) is a recent example. During two extended tracks the guitarist finds a place among the swirling dynamics propelled by two committed improvisers: drummer Michael Wimberley and keyboardist Thollem McDonas.

Propelling relaxed finger-style chording alongside McDonas’ acoustic piano on the second track and challenging a misma of swirling synthesized kinetics from the keyboardist with corrosive string distortions on the first, Cline references either mainstream or fusion jazz. Yet in both cases backed by explosive rattle and ruffs from the drummer, confounding patterns trump convention. McDonas’ keyboard expression moves from sentient hunt-and-peck chording to repetitive extraterrestrial-like glissandi during his solos. Cline’s amplified bugle-like pulsations easily make common cause with McDonas’ distinctive sounds on the latter, as the guitarist’s gentling impressionistic fills do with the first strategy. Despite on-the-mark finger-styleing guitar riffs alongside acoustic piano runs or knob-twisting guitar flanging meeting kinetic keyboard expansions, no one would confuse the two for Joe Pass with Oscar Peterson or, in the other case, with Sun Ra meeting Jimi Hendrix. Still, the way Cline fits both roles, while managing to propel his own guitar definition, demonstrates accomplishment. His individual musical empathy – and that of the others – comes across as radical as well as sympathetic, making the trio’s name highly appropriate.

Far away from mainstream jazz and jazz-rock fusion are the specially configured musical cycles of American guitarist Joe Morris and British saxophonist Evan Parker on The Village (Fundacja Stuchaj FSR 13/2019 stuchaj.org). A first-ever duet recording, each player arrives with a distinctive instrumental approach worked out over years of experimentation. Copasetic but not compounded, the key to the Morris-Parker duo is that neither abandons individual expression while propelling tandem association in double counterpoint. Sticking to moderated tenor saxophone smears on the nearly 40-minute opening, The Mound – a similar linkage with Parker’s intense nasal soprano saxophone tones is highlighted on the other brief track – the reedist’s multiphonics splutter, smear and slap beside Morris’ canny use of pointed patterning that encompasses high-pitched stings sourced from near the tuning pegs and mid-range, folky strums. Meanwhile, as the duo’s key-in-lock cooperation is activated, enough distance is maintained so that episodes of Parker’s instantly recognizable circular breathing develop logically, as do those passages when Morris’ string pressure gives the sequence a low-pitched rhythmic feel. Eventually, scratching string fills backed by reed vibrations confirm that each player has adapted enough of the other’s distinctive approach to improvisation to create an intertwined finale.

Coordination and climaxes are also present on Nomad Trio (Skirl Records 04.14 skirrecords.com), as a trio filled out by Americans, pianist Matt Mitchell and drummer Jim Black join Vancouver’s Gordon Grdina to interpret six of his compositions. While only the final Lady Choral picks up the exquisite bass and treble patterns Grdina can create using the multi-string oud, playing guitar his robust finger styling sounds nothing like Morris’ introverted interval stings or Cline’s throbbing rock-inflected fills. Instead his playing is both sharp and swift, as if he’s an elated Jim Hall, coursing and flaring against the drummer’s active clatter or cymbal rebounds, as the pianist slides from maelstroms of circular patterning to measured stop-time clips. The title tracks expresses how despite overbearing crescendos from Mitchell, the guitarist can move from knotty and discursive runs to electric knob-twisting and string bending without losing his cool. As descriptive, Grdina’s string-and-fret architecture on Ride Home allows for story-telling reflection, as he moves from note constriction to expansive flanges. Meeting percussion splashes and processional keyboard lines, guitar pulsations make the finale so connectively opaque that it’s almost overbearing.

On the other hand, few tropes point out the diversity that can exist among guitar-focused combos than the following sessions, both of which include French cellist Valentin Ceccaldi. One-quarter of the oddly named qOOp group, the band’s eponymous CD (BMC CD 257 bmcrecords.hu) defines the symmetry expressed by a working group that includes the cellist and his violin-playing brother Theo Ceccaldi, as well as two Germans, guitarist Ronny Graupe and drummer Christian Lillinger. With Graupe and Lillinger serving as the countermbalance to the cultivated arco and pizzicato strategies of the Ceccaldis, guitar motifs are all over the ten selections in solo features or in duo or trio pairings. The antithesis to this is Points (MultiKulti Project MPSMT 016 multikulti.com). Consisting of four lengthy improvisations, the performances featuring cellist Ceccaldi and three Lisbon-based players are better integrated. Connection is such in fact, that the string shadings of guitarist Marcelo dos Reis sometimes almost vanish into the synchronous sounds created by the blended textures of percussionist Marco Franco, trumpeter Luis Vicente and the cellist.

On the qOOp session, Graupe’s assertive soloing is best defined on Wrioñê. Sweeping up from an interconnection of string-based tones, the guitarist suddenly breaks out rock-related runs that almost literally punch a hole in the sequence and, backed by Lillinger’s power pobs, quickly expose a series of frailing and plinking theme variations. With a selection of moods ranging from refined to raw, the four musicians take cohesion to its logical conclusion. No matter how radical the motifs become, continuity remains. This is expressed on both the textural framed finale of Get Together, when a combination of energetic, near impenetrable ruffs from the drummer and intemperent picking from the guitarist threaten to spin out of control before being reined in. Additionally, there’s the, unusual-for-a-European-band, track titled Toronto. Yet this stop-time near-ballad seems to describe the city with a moody collection of sliding string harmonies. In fact, when the four stretch out, as on extended tracks like Mermaids and Spemn Whales the qOOp members can dazzle. Speedily they move from unison moderato expositions to delicate...
minuet-like narratives. Fusing arco cello and violin lyricism to guitar frails that emphasize impressionism, they’re completed by favouring the metallic properties of energized violin and guitar runs plus precise drum runs. Never is momentum lost nor does any linkage seem artificial.

Valentin Ceccaldi’s other affiliated outing is much more exploratory, but no matter how long the tracks are, or how the extended techniques upend the program, the tracks always right themselves into harmony variants. Rotating the introductions among band members, as themes are elaborated, spontaneous interactions occur, such as having downward slithering Harmon-muted trumpet tones underscored by sul tasto cello responses; or how melding cymbal splashes, gutbucket brass smears and spiccato strings produces memories of

both Debussy and Dixieland. Throughout, dos Reis forges a singular path, with his contributions more felt than heard. Only at the very end of the Exclamation Mark for instance, are distant flanges and plucks audible. Meanwhile among sequences where all members’ elevated pitches or foundation croaks are emphasized, Question Mark is the most fully realized. Almost an assembly line of effects, it begins with distant guitar string plucking, exposes pure air forced through the trumpet without valve motion, introduces drumming clip clops and completes the first cycle with swift strokes from the cellist. The climactic resolution finally arises as brass tones brightly flutter on top of drum press rolls while Ceccaldi and dos Reis combine into a flurry of percussive near-Andalusian cadences. Instructively the finale evolves into warm lyricism as trumpet peeps and finger-style string emphasis gently combine.

Upfront or reticent, each of these guitar strategies uniquely complements the improvised musical situation in which it is placed and suggests that many other strategies are feasible.

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Old Wine, New Bottles
Fine Old Recordings Re-Released

BRUCE SURTEES

One of the treasures of recorded music is Mahler’s Das Lied von der Erde recorded over three days in May 1952, in Vienna. The Vienna Philharmonic was conducted by Bruno Walter and soloists were Kathleen Ferrier and Julius Patzak. That Decca recording has never been out of print. Back in 1947–48 Walter wanted to conduct a festival performance of Das Lied and had searched in vain for a contralto who could live up to the demands of this remarkable work. “I was told of a young English singer who made quite a great impression on all those who heard her… and she came and sang for me.” He goes on to speak about making the 1952 recording, “It was unforgettable how this very beautiful girl stood at my side already in the throes of the most terrible disease. And it was the last time I saw her.” Kathleen Ferrier succumbed in 1953.

The British label SOMM, in their continuing Kathleen Ferrier series, has issued the recording of the actual New York Philharmonic’s inspired performance of Das Lied with Walter and Ferrier, January 18, 1948. Kathleen Ferrier in New York (SOMM Ariadne 5007 naxosdirect.com). The tenor is Set Svanholm whose prophetic Das Trinklied sets the stage for the kinetic performance to follow. And here is the pristine voice of Ferrier confirming to those in Carnegie Hall and the radio listeners that Walter had not exaggerated one little bit. The CD also has an informative 1956 interview by Arnold Michaelis with Walter, excerpted above, in which he talks about Ferrier, his close friend Gustav Mahler and Bruckner. The sound has remarkable presence and is not an aircheck but an in situ recording by the Carnegie Recording Company. Some unobtrusive, slight surface noise occasionally, but the balances are perfect. After Der Abschied (Farewell), SOMM adds three short, gentle Bach settings of love songs from a recital in Town Hall, New York on January 8, 1950. Vergiss mein nicht (Do not forget me) BWV505; Ach, dass nicht die letzte Stunde (Ah! Why has not the final hour) BWV439; and Bist du bei mir (If thou art near) BWV508. Perfect choices. Her accompanist is pianist and friend John Newmark.

This is a unique document, earning a place in every collection. Pianist Friedrich Gulda is certainly not a household name today but from the 1960s on he was indeed recognized by classical LP collectors as a master, and by thinking jazz fans as a progressive jazz innovator. He toured worldwide, including appearances with the polished SWR Radio Symphony Orchestras of Stuttgart and Baden-Baden. The SWR recorded all the performances that they presented and their CDs reflect care and expertise in documenting these concerts. Their latest release is a three-disc set of concerts by Mozart, Beethoven, Haydn and Richard Strauss (SWR Classic SWR19088CD naxosdirect.com). Here they are all recorded between 1959 and 1962 with their conductors: Mozart No.14 in E-flat Major K449 and No.23 in A Major K488, Hans Rosbaud; No.24 in C Minor K491, Joseph Kellibert; Beethoven No.4 in G Major Op.58, and Haydn No.11 in G Major XVIII:11, Hans Muller-Kray; Strauss Burleske in D Minor, Muller-Kray, with a solo encore, Zughabe; and finally Debussy’s solo piano Feux d’artifice.

All these were recorded before appreciative audiences, resulting in personal performances closer to the heart and different from playing to microphones. This is perhaps not always the case, but certainly is so in the music-making on these three discs. The kind of music-making that has you hanging on every note. There is the age-old question of who is in charge in a concerto, the conductor or the soloist? Here we have three different conductors each tuned to this articulate pianist.
The 1960s was the era during which many prodigiously talented USSR instrumental virtuosi were at last permitted by their government to concertize in the West. None elicited more universal excitement than Sviatoslav Richter who possessed a seemingly limitless technique, equally at home in Beethoven and the German Romantic composers, the French Impressionists and, of course, contemporary Russian composers. He is now recognized as one of the greatest pianists of the 20th century. He made his American debut in Chicago on October 15, 1960, gave a series of concerts in New York that season and appeared as soloist with the New York Philharmonic. To hand is an 11CD set Sviatoslav Richter plays Rachmaninov & Prokofiev (Profil PH19052 naxosdirect.com).

Many of these recordings pre-date his American debut. There are two versions of the Rachmaninov First Piano Concerto; the version from March 9, 1949 is conducted by Oleg Azarov followed by a performance from February 18, 1955 under Kurt Sanderling. The second concerto also has two performances: live under Agarkov on May 19, 1948 and with Sanderling on February 6, 1959. He also plays eight of the Études-Tableaux from Opp.33 and 39. The “bonus” on this disc is two songs sung by soprano Nina Dorliac, Richter’s lifelong partner. Richter had put together a suite of 12 preludes heard live, also another of six preludes.

There are so many works of Prokofiev on the seven remaining discs! The First Piano Concerto with Kondrashin and the Moscow Youth Symphony Orchestra in 1952, followed by two performances of the Fifth; with Kondrashin and the Moscow Philharmonic on April 24, 1961; and a real gem, a previously unreleased concert recording with the Philadelphia Orchestra and Eugene Ormandy in Leningrad from June 14, 1958. Another interesting entry is the recording of the world premiere performance of Prokofiev’s Symphony-Concerto for Cello and Orchestra In E Minor, Op.125. The dedicatee, Mstislaw Rostropovich, is the soloist, and the conductor is Sviatoslav Richter. There are seven piano sonata performances, 11 Vision Fugitives, Op.22; piano transcriptions from the ballet Cinderella; the second and third cello sonatas, two performances of the Suggestion diabolique No.4, Op.4, and another of six preludes.

Paul Tortelier was a French cellist born in Paris in 1914. He won First Prize in cello at the Paris Conservatoire at 16. He became principal cellist of the Boston Symphony in 1935 returning to France in 1939. He settled in Israel in 1955, travelling to Europe for concerts. He recorded major concerted works for EMI and was also a member of the Casals Festival in Prades with Casals, Stern, Istomin, Menuhin and the rest. He died in 1990. A three-CD set Paul Tortelier – The RIAS Recordings (Audite 21.455 naxosdirect.com) is devoted to cello sonatas recorded by the Radio in the American Sector in 1949, 1962 and 1964 and are released here for the first time. There are superlative performances that from the first bar of the Beethoven Sonata No.5 leave no doubt that these musicians love what they are doing. The accompanist, or rather partner, is Lothar Broddack with whom he collaborates in the Mendelssohn No.2; Fauré No.2 and Papillon; Paganini Introduction and Variations on Dal tuo stellate soglio from Moses in Egypt; and Casella’s Sonata No.2. Pianist Klaus Billing replaces Broddack for Brahms Sonata No.1, Schumann’s Fantasiestücke Op.73 and Tortelier’s own Trois p’tits tours. He needs no accompanist for the Kodály Sonata Op.8. These are immaculate recordings of wonderful performances.
At the end of February, Tony Burman, former head of CBC News, in his column in The Toronto Star, more or less approvingly quoted the conclusions of two Canadian media professors, Chris Waddell and David Taras, from their recent book, The End of the CBC?.

Waddell and Taras, surveying the devastating wreckage of mainstream Canadian journalism, and noting the CBC’s inability to be all things to all people, added the two together and declared that “The CBC needs to shed much of its old skin and become solely a news and current affairs organization, dedicated to producing high-quality, dependable, and fair news and analysis.” So in their view, more

Peter Mansbridge and Ian Hanomansing, less or no drama, comedy, music, arts, or any other cultural programming.

It’s a provocative thesis, but far from a new one.

When I was a manager at the CBC, in both the Radio Music and Radio Variety departments, we were constantly being called upon to defend our “frivolous” cultural spending when news bureaus were being forced to close around the world, and news resources were being cut back at home. Democracy demands an informed public, we were lectured – harangued actually. The needs of News must prevail. And nobody’s interested in your damn classical music, anyway, they added. It’s just there for elitists. Reading through The End of the CBC? was like an immediate flashback to my professional past. The same attitudes are all there.

What was wrong with those arguments then is what’s wrong with them now. It’s not that Waddell, Taras and Burman are incorrect in their analysis of the current chaotic state of information in the world. We live at a time where truth and lies are becoming fatally indistinguishable, destroying the very possibility of establishing...
the foundations of a functioning society. For us, that’s a huge problem.

For the would-be authoritarians of the world, on the other hand, it’s a game plan. As Steve Bannon, former Donald Trump adviser put it, rather bluntly, in 2018: “The real opposition is the media; and the way to deal with them is to flood the zone with shit.” That is, with disinformation. In this nightmarish world, a properly functioning news service works like society’s filtration plant for truth, providing us a clean information supply so we all don’t get very sick. And who better to provide that service than a public broadcaster, with a responsibility of service to the nation built into its very raison d’ètre? It’s really, in essence, a public health issue. Burman and his colleagues aren’t wrong on this score. Their only failing, and it’s a significant one, is their cultural blind spot, their failure to understand that truthful information about the world doesn’t just come from newscasts or current affairs interviews. The real news of the world comes from music, novels, movies, dramas, visual art — culture, in a word, the whole panoply of human imaginative response to life that fuels the deeper, more powerful ties of solidarity and understanding that fully create a society.

Let’s take Indigenous Canada as an example, a topic that’s been very much in the “news” recently. If we are serious about coming to terms with the reality of Indigenous Canada, we need to be exposed to more than stories about the differences between hereditary and band leadership, articles examining the complexities of ceded and unceded land, examinations of Supreme Court rulings about meaningful consultation. We do need these. But we also need — desperately — a fuller understanding of the entire spiritual outlook of Indigenous peoples — their understanding of their relationship to the land, to each other, to their creator, to the country. Once we have that, or begin to have that, the political situation becomes clearer, more understandable — and our chances of approaching each other increase.

That fuller understanding does not come from news. It comes from culture — from story and music and visual art, and spiritual philosophy — precisely those things that would be abandoned if the CBC became a news-focused organization. An abandonment that would diminish the CBC — and the people of Canada as well — it would be a powerful and fatal loss.

And it’s not just in regard to Indigenous Canada that this is true. Look at the immense outpouring of attention and gratitude the CBC received when it broadcast the last concert of the Tragically Hip from Kingston in 2016. The impact on the Canadian psyche, I think it’s fair to say, was powerful and significant. How many newscasts was that concert worth? More than a few, I think most would say. We all live in many worlds at the same time. A public institution devoted to the intellectual and moral health of a country needs to pay attention to them all, or at least the most significant ones. And I won’t bother to recount to you for the 100th time the CBC’s astonishing record in cultural programming over the years (the place didn’t even have a news department until 1941, when the exigencies of war forced one on it). If we had to choose one Canadian created by the CBC who has most helped further our identity, sense of nation, and understanding of the world, would it be Peter Mansbridge or Glenn Gould, Rosie Barton or Alice Munro (whose first literary work was broadcast on the CBC long before the publishing world had ever heard of her)? If I had to choose, I know where my focus would be.

But we don’t have to choose — that’s the most important thing to consider in all of this. It doesn’t have to be a contest between forms of content at the CBC. It’s a mistake to assume that the CBC will never have enough money to do everything it needs to do and therefore must choose one thing or the other. My experience within the CBC itself is illuminating in this regard, I think. While I was there, I was constantly being told that there wasn’t any money for some initiative or other I had proposed, only to see vast sums of money spent on some other initiative soon thereafter. I realized that when people told me there was no money for something, they really meant they didn’t believe it had enough value. They could, and would, find the money if they believed it did. That, in a nutshell, is the dilemma the CBC faces these days — it must convince the Government of Canada, having first convinced the people of Canada, that what it proposes to offer Canadians is of clear and obvious worth. Make that case, and the money, or some of it (it’s never enough) will follow, in one form or another.

The problem is that the CBC has not made that case effectively to Canadians for a long, long time, which is why it is caught in the tumult of so many problems, inconsistencies, and controversies. If the CBC can regain the trust and confidence it enjoyed for many, many years — that saw the Canadian public support its formation (in the middle of the Great Depression, no less, and originally by a Conservative government, let’s not forget), it may be able to thrive once more. But restricting its focus solely to news and current affairs, abandoning its cultural history, and ignoring its cultural present, is not the way to make that case for value. Life is not all news; the CBC shouldn’t be either.

And one last thought in these plague-saturated times. The CBC’s news department has done an excellent job of keeping us up to date on the swirling, ever-changing reality of our lives these days. That’s what they’re supposed to do, and they’re good at it. But when the all clear is eventually sounded and we emerge to survey the social and economic damage that’s been done by the coronavirus blitz, it won’t be just news we’ll need. It will be the things that culture provides — entertainment, thoughtfulness, spiritual depth, common experience. Those are the things that build structure and community in our lives. A public broadcaster can’t be without them.

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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