

# the WholeNote™

25<sup>TH</sup> SEASON!

Vol 25 No 8

MAY AND JUNE 2020

## COMMUNITY VOICES

### How May is & what may be

Next season will see the first of our regional runout concerts attached to our main Sudbury season. We would love for any Northern Ontarians interested in bringing top-level classical music and musicians to their communities to contact us.

Even the skeptics have upped their Zoom game: people I thought would never turn on their web cams have finally done so.

COVID-19 has brought forward the tipping point, hastening the creation of new structures to support the creation and production of the arts in a different way than has been the case through the latter half of the 20th century to now. Strong developments and innovation arise in hard times as we focus on what matters.

So in the meanwhile, I have been playing Beethoven and Debussy on the piano daily. ... Witnessing how opera companies across Canada are dealing with the crisis and planning for the future. Advocating for inclusion of more artist voices so that our new reality on the other side of this works for administrators, as well as for creators and performers.

I miss the magic when the lights go down and the curtain rises. I miss the symbiotical flow of energy between us performers and our audiences, and yes I even miss the stress of preparation before.

No longer bound by geography, we have engaged Canadian solo artists who live abroad and wouldn't normally be able to perform with us. We have also set up a Patreon page so that people can support us with small monthly contributions.

We're optimistic that things will eventually return, but it's going to take a long while ... Right now, this all kind of feels like jazz: we're improvising ...

[thewholenote.com](http://thewholenote.com)

# 2020/21

# Passions of the Soul

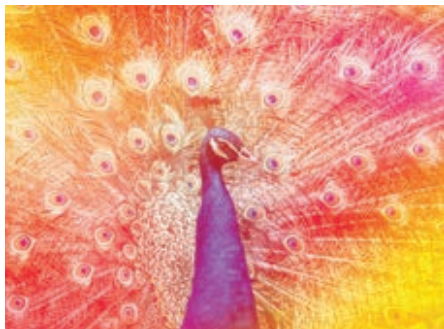
“Throughout history, music has accompanied important chapters of human existence. Each sound, each tone, each timbre immerses the human spirit in different states while also soothing the soul.”

— Elisa Citterio, Music Director

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## HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE



### Mozart Party

**SEP 24–29, 2020**

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### Cornetto Freestyle

**NOV 5–8, 2020**

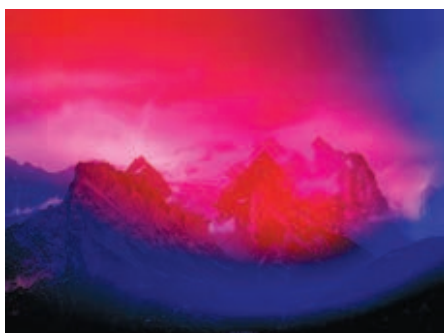
Featuring guest conductor and cornetto soloist Doron Sherwin



### Bach's Friends & Rivals

**JAN 21–24, 2021**

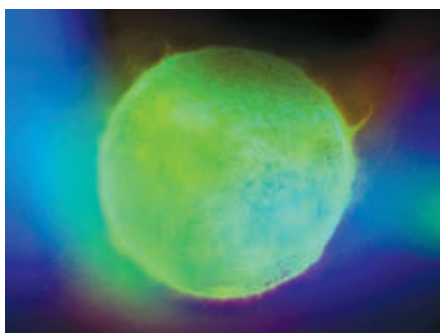
Tafelmusik favourite, guest conductor and oboist Alfredo Bernardini, returns



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**FEB 11–14, 2021**

A Beethoven 250th celebration with keyboard virtuoso Kristian Bezuidenhout



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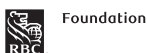
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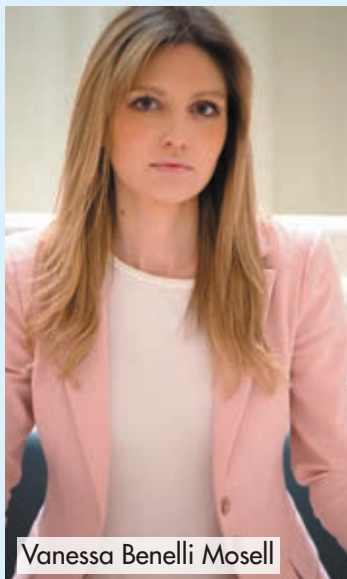
- Oct. 22 St. Lawrence Quartet
- Nov. 12 Castalian Quartet
- Dec. 10 Borealis Quartet
- Jan. 7 Tesla Quartet
- Feb. 4 Miro Quartet
- Feb. 25 Hagen Quartet
- Mar. 18 Gryphon Trio
- Apr. 8 Quatuor Van Kuijk



St. Lawrence Quartet



Hagen Quartet



Vanessa Benelli Mosell



Stephen Hough

## PIANO

- Nov. 3 Vadym Kholodenko
- Nov. 24 Vanessa Benelli Mosell
- Jan. 19 Stephen Hough
- Mar. 9 Saleem Abboud Ashkar
- Apr. 27 Janina Fialkowska

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# the WholeNote

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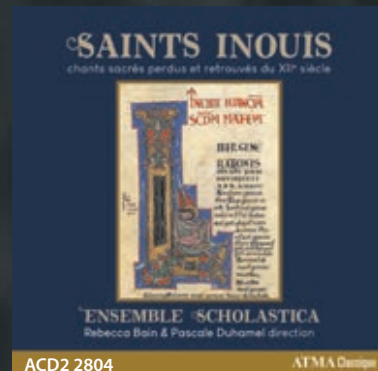
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FOR OPENERS | DAVID PERLMAN

# The Next Piece of the Puzzle

A couple of hours from now, as my final action in the extraordinary roller coaster ride of putting together this second last magazine of *The WholeNote's* 25th season, I will call up our designer and ask her to place the final missing piece of the puzzle, on page 5, so we can go to press. After that, I will shut down my computer, shed a few tears of one kind or another, and wander out into the early morning light for the one-mile walk home. The street will be unsettlingly unpeopled. Even if I do encounter someone, we will (how quickly we learn) gravitate to opposite edges of the sidewalk, as though we were oppositely charged magnets, or wearing invisible hoops skirts designed to make physical separation fashionable.

Upon receiving my phonecall, Susan will replace the line in the table of contents which presently reads **OPENER: ????? ?????** with whatever it is that actually appears as the title at the top of this page. But at this moment, just before sunrise, I truly do not yet know what that title is going to be.

The problem is not a lack of possibilities but too many: *COVID's Metamorphoses; Burns in Seats; Duck-Billed Platitudes; In the Blink of a Dystopian Eye; Three-Legged Stools and Shooting Sticks; Something's Got to Give; There's Always Time (Until Suddenly There Isn't); The Writing On the Wall; ...* and (far and away my favourite if it didn't take so long to explain) *The Initiative Code-Named Breve*.

I've been carrying the latter around in a corner of my brain for at least 15 years now, always aware that one day, in the implausible combination of elements, masquerading as a business plan, that has sustained this magazine for two and a half decades, something would snap.

I always liked it as a title, mostly for its aura of geekily swashbuckling mystery. "*The Initiative Code-Named Breve!*" I would say (air quotes included) to whomever I was replying that, yes, we *do* have a plan for long-term sustainability. And if their eyes didn't light up in instant appreciation at the ingenuity of the phrase, I would explain: "in that far-away land where musical time is counted in minims, crochets, quavers, semi-quavers and so on, the thing *we* call a wholenote is called a semibreve; so a breve is a *double* wholenote. Get it?"

Because somewhere behind our little-engine-that-could, self-made-entrepreneurial micro-business facade lurks a legitimate not-for-profit *doppelganger* **waiting to be born**. "*Doppelganger, double; second WholeNote, twin, Breve ... Get it?*" By which time, eyes glazing, smile frozen into a rictus, nodding obediently and only semi-comprehendingly, my victim would be desperately wishing they hadn't brought the whole thing upon themselves by asking, conversationally, "Gee, you're with *The WholeNote*. How do you guys manage to do what you do?"

## Double whole note



**BREVE:** Three examples of musical notation attempting to express the doubling of a whole note.



## Three Legged Stools and Shooting Sticks

I think the closest I ever came to articulating the “double wholenote” idea, in any form other than the occasional red-wine-fuelled post-concert reception rant, was in 2018, in the heady days after the Toronto Arts Foundation honoured us with that year’s Roy Thomson Hall Award of Merit, declaring us to be, in the citation announcing the award “vital to the entire music community.”

Boosted and burdened alike by such heady praise, I embarked on a round of grant application writing (*not* being a non-profit, those opportunities are far less frequent than you might think) in which I described *The WholeNote*’s time-tested business model as a “three-legged stool.”

Leg one: the aggregation, *free of charge*, of detailed performance listings for all eligible local performers and presenters;

Leg two: the use of best practices of controlled circulation and unrestricted access, to ensure the placement of this aggregated content in the hands of the broadest possible interested audience, also *free of charge*.

Leg three: around the core listings, a team of writers drawn from the music community the magazine covers, complemented by a range of affordable display advertising directly related to our core content.

It worked. Free listings meant interesting content for concert-going readers. Free circulation meant reaching lots of concert-going readers. Lots of concert-going readers meant lots of interest from advertisers. Their support in turn meant we could keep offering free listings and widespread free circulation. Win. Win. Win. An unbroken gravity-defying circle, despite a decade-long decline in industry-wide traditional advertising revenues.

But the writing was on the wall. “Advertising revenues can no longer be relied on as the only load-bearing leg of the three-legged stool if we are to hope to carry our vital community service forward in a vibrant, evolving manner, and in the hands of a new generation of leadership” the grant-writing publisher (me) thundered.

And now, in the blink of a dystopian eye, the two constants in the formula – that there would always be live concerts to list, and that there would always a way to reach our loyal readers – are, for how long we don’t know, splintered.

The next issue of this magazine (scheduled to come out on or before July 1, and covering JULY/AUGUST) will mark the end of our 25th season of doing what we do to cover live music in our town and region. I’d been looking forward to trotting out a few tried and true statements about looking forward to the next 25 years, service to the community, vital roles, etc. Now all of a sudden, COVID’s metamorphoses have rendered any such duck-billed platitudes entirely and irrevocably moot. Fact is, if we are to survive this extraordinary moment, it will be because we, like most of you, have found a way to “pivot,” as the fashionable phrase puts it, while avoiding the equally incapacitating subroutine of spinning madly and uselessly in circles.

I like to think this combined May/June issue, in the midst of the mirk, is rife with clues and cues as to where we might find ourselves headed. The next issue, July/August, brings us two months closer to new beginnings, whatever they may. See you on the other side.

**[publisher@thewholenote.com](mailto:publisher@thewholenote.com)**



LUCA PERMAN

**In the blink of a dystopian eye**

# SUMMER 2020 is Our 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY EDITION!

**Publication date: MONDAY JUNE 29, 2020**  
**Volume 25 No 9 July & August will reflect**  
**September 1, 1995 – that’s NOT a typo! –**  
**through to September 7, 2020**

**IT’S GOING TO BE REALLY, REALLY  
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the**WholeNote** presents

The 18th Annual

# CANARY PAGES

Choral Directory

## FEATURE



# COMM

**I**t was barely a couple of weeks ago (April 12) that some of you might have seen in your inbox a communication something like the following from me:

*Attached are four or five questions that will form the basis of a story planned for the May/June issue of The WholeNote. I hope it is mostly self-explanatory. If you wish to be involved, send your completed questionnaire to me at [publisher@thewholenote.com](mailto:publisher@thewholenote.com). Please also suggest other individuals in the community you think we might invite. ... The goal is to present a musically and regionally diverse picture of our community.*

Well, here are the first fruits of that invite, with more replies coming in every day, and already a long list of suggested people to write to. It's a lovely problem to have. We are hoping that this first version on the printed page can be the start of something that online, over time, helps us share and compare as we, collectively and individually, find our way through these gnarly times.

I hope you get the same pleasure out of reading it as I have putting it together. If you feel a little less alone at the end of it, that's a good day's work done. If you feel like adding your voice to the mix, better still.

There are simple instructions, at the end of the story, for how to chime in. I hope you will.

**David Perlman**

You may be thinking about eventually joining a choir, or perhaps you're a fan of choral music. The Canary Pages reflect the rich history and current diversity of Ontario's choral scene where there's something for everyone, from community choirs to auditioned professional choirs.

Flocks of choir profiles have arrived and we're posting new ones almost daily! We'll continue to update the online Canary Pages as profiles and photos arrive throughout the summer, so check back often to see the latest updates!

By the time we print them all in our beautiful September edition we're hoping that the music-making picture will be clearer for everyone. And meanwhile, we all need to sing - even if it's only singing along, safely at home, with an online performance by a favourite choir.

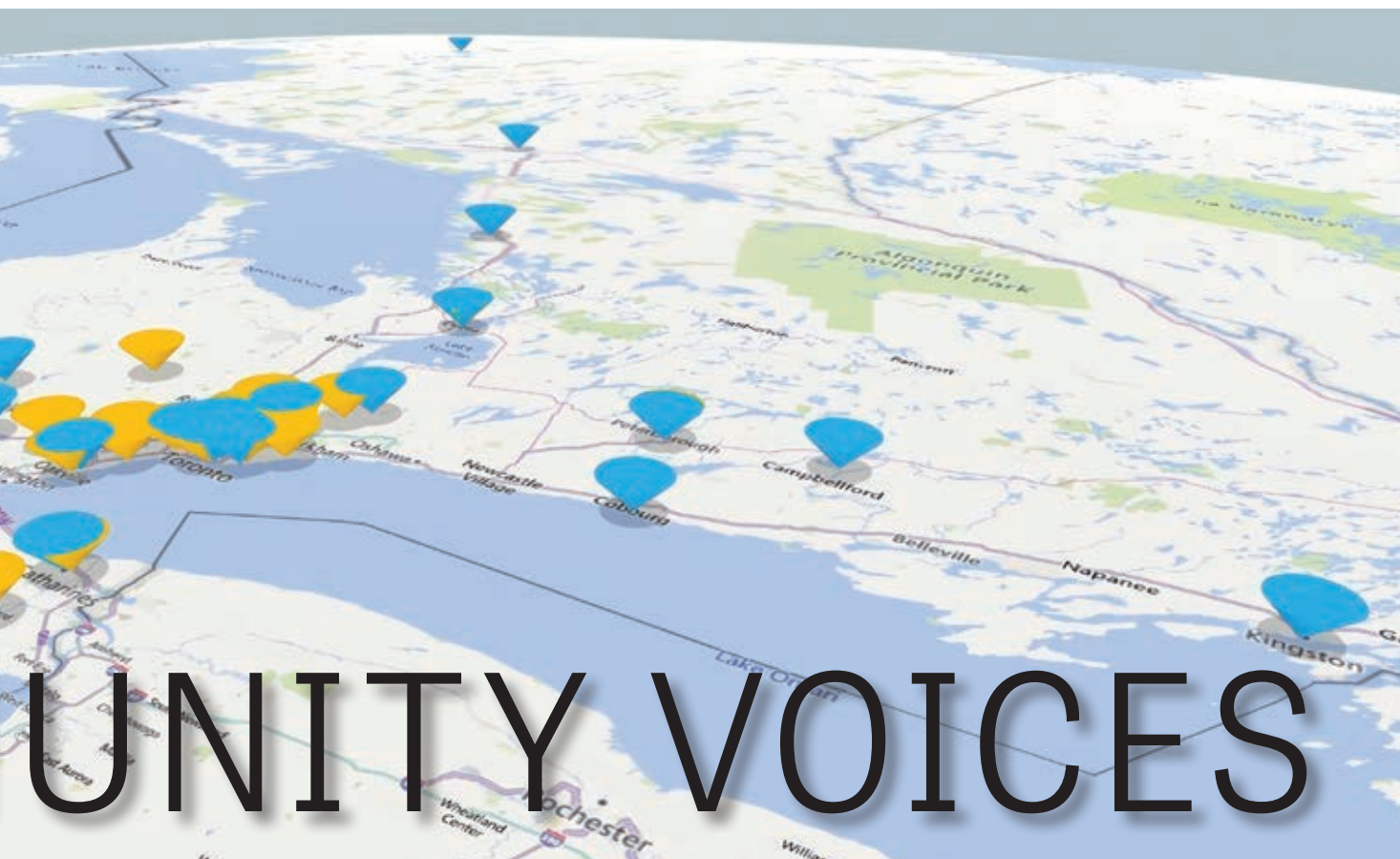
Here are the choirs whose profiles arrived by the time we printed this edition

A Cappella Niagara	Mississauga Festival Choir
Achill Choral Society	Oakville Choir for Children & Youth
Amadeus Choir of Greater Toronto	Oasis Vocal Jazz
Avanti Chamber Singers	Orpheus Choir of Toronto
Bel Canto Singers	Peterborough Singers
Canadian Celtic Choir	Resonance
Choralairs Choir of North York	Serenata Singers
Chorus York	Society of Singers
Church of St. Mary Magdalene	SoundCrowd
Common Thread Community Chorus	Tempus Choral Society
Cummer Avenue United Church Choir	The Annex Singers
DaCapo Chamber Choir	The Cellar Singers
Duly Noted	The Church of St. Peter and St. Simon-the -Apostle
Echo Women's Choir	The Yorkminstrels
Ensemble vocal Les voix du coeur	Toronto Beaches Children's and Youth Chorus
Georgetown Choral Society	Toronto Chamber Choir
Grand Philharmonic Choir	Toronto Children's Chorus
Harbourfront Chorus	Toronto Welsh Male Voice Choir
Healey Willan Singers	Upper Canada Choristers
Jubilate Singers	Vesnivka Choir
Leaside Chancel Choir	Village Voices
London Pro Musica Choir	VIVA Singers Toronto
MCS Chorus	Voices Chamber Choir
Men of Note	West Toronto Community Choir
Milton Choristers	Young Voices Toronto
Mississauga Festival Chamber Choir	

WOULD YOU LIKE YOUR CHOIR TO BE INCLUDED?

Contact Karen Ages 416-323-2232 ext 26  
[karen@thewholenote.com](mailto:karen@thewholenote.com)





# UNITY VOICES

## TRICIA BALDWIN

Speaking as director of the Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts, Kingston, we were lucky that our programming, for the most part, fit into the September – April university school year timeframe. Nevertheless, the COVID-19 cancellation involved five concerts and one film screening and it was heartbreaking to cancel these.

As to the question of following through on cancelled concerts, we have paid the artists and provided refunds for tickets to those who wanted them, as our 2020/21 season was already programmed. We had set aside savings from previous seasons that has enabled us to deal with COVID-19 related financial issues. (We had also done this at Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra when I was managing director there, to enable the organization to keep on steady ground with a buffer in funds set aside for future opportunities and challenges, whatever they may be.)

COVID-19 measures are necessary for our society's physical health, but they are hitting arts organizations so hard. I am glad that the governments are helping the sector. After all, the arts and cultural industries are a \$54 billion industry and major employer/engager in Canada.

The silver lining is that our technological expertise is skyrocketing, and more importantly, I believe the focus on core priorities and valuing the artists and audience as the arts' core stakeholders can lead to healthy developments in the sector. Baumol's cost disease (costs rising faster than revenues) was already causing substantial structural issues. COVID-19 has brought forward the tipping point, hastening the creation of new structures to support the

COVID-19 has brought forward the tipping point, hastening the creation of new structures to support the creation and production of the arts in a different way than has been the case through the latter half of the 20th century to now.

creation and production of the arts in a different way than has been the case through the latter half of the 20th century to now. Strong developments and innovation arise in hard times as we focus on what matters, and there will always be a great sense of purpose and urgency in making music that will propel us forward.

As an example, we delayed our Bader and Overton Canadian Cello Competition and have converted it online. It's currently planned for June 24-27, 2020, but we are waiting to hear about potential conflicts with the semi-finalists' schedules. All semi-final and final performances will be webcast on CBC. After much testing, we will be using OBN streaming software with VIMEO ingest. We have purchased an excellent stereo microphone kit for each competitor to ensure the full high fidelity sound at the source including a WARM stereo microphone kit and FOCUSRITE USB interface and microphone stands. Jury members will be receiving high fidelity Sennheisser headphones. Our own technical director has 20 years of extensive recording experience, and for this, we are very grateful (as we are for the support of Bader Philanthropies and CBC throughout the metamorphosis of the competition).

We are also in the process of creating a digital concert hall for high quality performance films and high-fidelity streaming, and an online summer festival with local musicians. The musicians will be paid, and will go away with a high definition film/audio with which to promote themselves.

To stay in touch, watch our website as announcements come up at [www.queensu.ca/theisabel](http://www.queensu.ca/theisabel), and email us at The Isabel box office ([IBCPAboxoffice@queensu.ca](mailto:IBCPAboxoffice@queensu.ca)). We will also be posting on facebook [facebook.com/queensuisabel](https://facebook.com/queensuisabel).

## JULIA WEDMAN

I am a baroque violinist, a member of Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, Eybler Quartet, and I FURIOSI Baroque Ensemble. I play regularly with the Toronto Bach Festival, Theater of Early Music, L'Harmonie des Saisons, and occasionally I fly over to Europe for

Having a break from the rigorous world of live performance is a welcome opportunity to reconnect with people, catch up on things that I have been “meaning to do”, and gives me some space (during panic breaks!) to think and create.

performances with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment (London) and the Orchestra of the 18th Century (Amsterdam). I teach baroque violin at the University of Toronto, at Tafelmusik’s Summer Institute and at the Banff Centre for the Arts (for the Evolution: Quartet program).

Since COVID-19 hit, I have had to let go of all of my concerts and record-

ings thus far until August. That includes 2 St. John Passions (one with L’Harmonie des Saisons in Montreal, one with Tafelmusik), a St. Matthew Passion (Kalamazoo Symphony), a Bach program and a Handel program with Tafelmusik including a new Handel recording, performances at the Toronto Bach Festival in May, a chamber music program in Montreal with some colleagues and students, a few Eybler quartet concerts as well as recording a new Haydn CD, teaching at Tafelmusik’s Summer institute and at the Banff Centre in July...and more to come...

All of the groups are planning on some kind of postponement of projects, but time will tell what kind of format they will take. I think probably my work with smaller groups will resume more quickly than others, but also we may start doing things like streaming concerts, planning smaller concerts, prioritizing recording, etc. For some projects we are doing things online instead of in person (like the recent Aspylmayr online CD launch).

Right now it is a lot of planning, re-thinking, strategizing, learning new skills, and creating projects that will support the changing world of what it means to be a musician. I have been working on a new website. Almost everyone has been making videos – I have done a few for Tafelmusik and L’Harmonie des Saisons, Eybler Quartet is in the process of making videos to support our newly released Aspylmayr recording, and I FURIOSI is in the process of releasing some tracks from live recordings that we have made over the last 20 years. Having a break from the rigorous world of live performance is a welcome opportunity to reconnect with people, catch up on things that I have been “meaning to do”, and gives me some space (during panic breaks!) to think and create. I would say that I am also being buoyed and inspired by my incredibly talented, creative and imaginative colleagues all around the world. It is definitely a time like this that I am exceedingly grateful for online platforms keeping us connected.

As for how best people reading this can stay in touch ... my new website!!! [www.juliawedman.com](http://www.juliawedman.com). I have been working on this with one of my brilliant students and I am thrilled with how it’s coming together! It is a way for people to keep up with what I have been up to, watch videos, find links to my groups, to buying recordings that will give money directly to artists, AND, what I might be the most excited about – it is a place where people have access to resources that I love! There is a baroque music learning page with links to books and scores, and there is a wellbeing section with links to books, websites, articles and more. This is a collaborative effort so please send me a comment through my contact page if you have suggestions or resources that you would like to see added!

I’ve “pinned” my response on this map to Trinity-St Paul’s Church, Tafelmusik’s home base and my favourite place to work in Toronto. I love the acoustics, I love the energy of the space with all of the different activities that happen here, and I love all of the people – both at Tafelmusik and at the church. It is my musical “happy place.”

## JACK MACQUARRIE

Music has been a part of my life since I started playing in a Boy’s Band at age 13. Although I am a Life Member of the musicians’ union, in recent years most of my musical life has been in amateur



organizations. For the past fourteen years I have written the monthly Bandstand column for *The WholeNote*.

What have I had to let go of completely since COVID-19 hit? Weekly rehearsals in three different groups, on three different instruments have all been cancelled. As well, at least three planned concerts have been cancelled.

As soon as possible I hope to carry on with all rehearsals and performances. Meanwhile I am researching a variety of musical topics. I also am doing some

lonely practicing in an attempt to retain some level of proficiency. For people reading this to stay in touch, the best way would be by e-mail through [bandstand@thewholenote.com](mailto:bandstand@thewholenote.com).

For mapping purposes here, my home community is Goodwood, Ontario. This is a small hamlet in the Township of Uxbridge. Goodwood has now received some fame as the location where the TV show “Schitt’s Creek” has been located. I live across the street from “The Mayor’s House”.

As soon as possible I hope to carry on with all rehearsals and performances. Meanwhile I am researching a variety of musical topics. I also am doing some lonely practicing in an attempt to retain some level of proficiency.

## RAUL DA GAMA

I am a poet and critic who writes regular reviews for David Olds’ “Discoveries” section in *The WholeNote*. I am single; with 3 grown children and a small grandson. But I live alone and only go out to attend concerts or exercise to keep a handle on multiple serious health issues.

Of all the things I have had to forgo since COVID onset, the hardest has been attending concerts at clubs and (my beloved) other venues e.g. Koerner Hall. I also had to forgo (this month) an opportunity to interview Elio Villafranca live at Lincoln Center about his new project.

First priority when circumstances permit? Getting back to attending live events, of course. Meanwhile, staying touch with musicians I know to keep tabs on when they will perform live and/or go on tour keeps me occupied and somewhat hopeful.

To stay in touch with what I am doing, planning, and listening to: print and online media, social media, e-mail.

For mapping purposes, home base is L9T 6Z5 (Milton, Ontario), but my heart is at M5S 1V6 (Koerner Hall).

## EDWIN HUIZINGA

I am an artistic director, violinist, baroque violinist, experimental, and producer. I am speaking for myself, as myself, in the time of Corona.

Of all the things I had planned, I have completely let go of performing live. I have had over 30 concerts cancelled, including a short tour, as well as multiple summer festivals, big and small. It is





If it starts with the allowance of parties coming together in groups of 10 or less, I will begin by performing concerts for 10 people. Just think, I might even sell out my first concert after Corona!

absolutely amazing how much I miss the opportunity to share with others, to feel the excitement and energy in a room full of people - there is absolutely NOTHING like it.

Performing will be a thrill, and something I will jump at the chance to do once the situation allows. If it starts with the allowance of parties coming together in groups of 10 or less, I will begin by performing concerts for 10 people. Just think, I might even sell out my first concert after Corona!

Instead of performing live right now, I'm looking inside, and discovering and noticing what I really really want to do, and to share in the future. I am also learning a ton about recording - have set up a personal recording studio, and I am even learning the basics of video. Things that we have to do all on our own at the moment to stay safe, and follow the protocols of distancing. I am also teaching online, sending out words of encouragement to my staff, colleagues, and friends. I am also working hard with my festival to find alternative scenarios to concerts that have already been postponed, to outreach, to youth programs, all of which may or may not be in peril of having to be completely restructured and organized to be able to follow the rules and guidelines of today's world. I am also having fantastic meetings with fellow directors and composers and colleagues about things we can help each other with, and also reading a ton, and hiking - so much more hiking!!!!

As far as getting ready for the time when I can perform? Well, I'm practising and recording so much, I think I'm going to have enough recital materials for multiple tours anywhere where people are willing to listen!

The best way to get in touch is just send a message, tweet, gram, book, email, and even snail mail me - I'm happy to chat, discuss, and share my music. It's a lonely world - and now some of us are forced to really really recognize and appreciate the need for community, the need for friendships, gatherings, and above all, well for me anyways, HUGS!!!

I'm pinning myself, on this map to NoB 2Jo - Puslinch, where I grew up, my home for the first 18 years of my life, and where I hope one day, I can start a music school, a festival for the ages, a concert series, and SO MUCH MORE!!!!

## LARRY BECKWITH

My name is Larry Beckwith and I wear a few musical hats. I am the artistic producer of Confluence Concerts; I conduct the Mooredale Senior Youth Orchestra and I teach strings and voice in the Arts Unionville program at Unionville High School.

Well, like everyone, I've had to let go of rehearsing and performing in person. I had a number of events planned with Confluence that have been either cancelled or postponed and we have had to modify or cancel several school concerts and recitals.

Two of our important Confluence events will be postponed to next season: our Salon on "Creativity and Aging" featuring Drs

We are plugging ahead with our plans to launch a digital podcast series on the eclectic music scene here in Toronto. And we are taking the time to do some deep strategic thinking and planning

Michael and Linda Hutcheon and performers Patricia O'Callaghan, Lawrence Wiliford, Sanya Eng and Robert Kortgaard; and our mainstage concert "The Mandala" curated by Suba Sankaran and featuring a whole host of wonderful musicians and storytellers.

With Mooredale Youth Orchestra Concerts, we will have to see if we can proceed with our June concert, though it seems unlikely. Similarly, with Unionville, we are currently looking at going back to school sometime in early May, but that could have changed by the time you read this.

Meanwhile, we carry on as and how we can.

With Confluence, we are plugging ahead with our plans to launch a digital podcast series on the eclectic music scene here in Toronto. And we are taking the time to do some deep strategic thinking and planning in the hopes that we can contribute positively to the music scene once we are able to gather again.

With Mooredale, we are continuing with our regular Saturday afternoon rehearsals online, meeting in sections and rehearsing Beethoven's Fifth Symphony and the Overture to Die Zauberflöte. We hope we can perform these pieces in public at some point.

With Unionville, we are continuing our regular classes and recitals online, preserving our special community and giving the students a chance to be together "virtually" and to continue their special bond through music.

To stay in touch, please check the Confluence Concerts website at [www.confluenceconcerts.ca](http://www.confluenceconcerts.ca) and sign up for our newsletter, which we send out every few weeks or so.

## RORY MCLEOD

I'm a violist & co-director, with pianist Emily Rho, of Pocket Concerts, with a mission to use intimate, extraordinary listening experiences to build and sustain connections in our community. Since 2013, we have brought people together to share the transformative power of music in banks, hair salons, clothing stores, parks, condo party rooms, and dozens of homes.

Individually since COVID-19 hit, I've had to let go of all the work I had been hired for with The National Ballet of Canada and Canadian Opera Company Orchestras. I've also had to let go of chamber music performances with Canzona Concerts, The Elora Festival, and Off Centre. Pocket Concerts has had to postpone all of the public and private concerts that we had planned this spring (six concerts in total).

Once circumstances allow, we will follow through with all of the Pocket Concerts performances if and when it's possible to gather in person again. We plan to present all of the postponed concerts at some point in the future, using the same hosts and the same artists whenever possible.

Meanwhile, instead of my performances, I'm practising repertoire that I wouldn't normally play, writing more for the Pocket Concerts blog, and we have launched a Livestream concert series called Pocket Concerts Live, pivoting to presenting ticketed live-stream concerts, and selling tickets for these performances through our website. No longer bound by geography, we have engaged Canadian solo artists who live abroad and wouldn't normally be able to perform with us. We have also set up a Patreon page so that people can support us with small monthly



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contributions. Our Patrons get access to our Livestream concerts, and the additional tickets we sell on our website are helping us to pay our musicians fully and promptly, including those whose performances have been postponed.

People reading this can stay in touch with what we are doing and planning by following me on Twitter at @Rory\_McLeod or @pocketconcerts. For Pocket Concerts, the best way to stay in touch is to buy a ticket or subscribe to our mailing list through our website ([www.pocketconcerts.ca](http://www.pocketconcerts.ca)). You can also follow us on Twitter/Instagram (@pocketconcerts), or follow our Facebook page ([facebook.com/pocketconcertstoronto](https://facebook.com/pocketconcertstoronto))

At time of writing, our next Pocket Concerts Live broadcast: Sunday, May 10th @10 AM EDT, Lucas Dann Live from Amsterdam.

So in the meanwhile, I have been playing Beethoven and Debussy on the piano daily. Witnessing how opera companies across Canada are dealing with the crisis and planning for the future. Advocating for inclusion of more artist voices so that our new reality on the other side of this works for administrators, as well as for creators and performers.

Sailing will definitely happen again someday. But I do not have any control on how companies proceed with their programming once it is safe to do so again, so I cannot say whether I'll be able to follow through on any of the postponed or cancelled engagements. Still very much crossing my fingers for Wales ...

So in the meanwhile, I have been playing Beethoven and Debussy on the piano daily. Attending weekly meetings via video-conference as a board member of Opera.ca. Witnessing how opera companies across Canada are dealing with the crisis and planning for the future. Advocating for inclusion of more artist voices so that our new reality on the other side of this works for administrators, as well as for creators and performers. Gathering inspiration by listening to recordings of wonderful singers, watching interviews with some of them on YouTube and remembering the most influential teachers I've been fortunate to have learned from. Like a bit of a self-prescribed masterclass in my own home.

For people reading this who want to find me, Instagram and Twitter are where I check in daily. I am @missprill on both. I do post on Facebook as Marion Newman, but that is mostly upcoming gigs so I'm not sure when I might appear there next!

## MITCHELL MARCUS

I'm the artistic & managing director of The Musical Stage Company which I founded 16 years ago. We are Canada's largest and leading not-for-profit theatre company dedicated to the development of musical theatre.

Fortunately there is nothing that we have let go of completely yet. Several things had to be postponed though. Once circumstances allow, we will be able to reinstitute all of the programming that was lost. Of greatest note, we are 100% committed to the world premiere of the new musical *Kelly v. Kelly* by Sara Farb and Britta Johnson which has been in development for the last several years and was set to premiere in May.

We have increased the number of workshops right now for the development of new musicals. We have found that these non-public workshops work fairly well in an online space. If we can use this time to strengthen the new Canadian musicals that are on the horizon, and ensure that they have a relevance and resonance

## MARION NEWMAN

Mezzo-soprano, speaking on behalf of myself.

Gone, or up in the air, since COVID-19 hit: the final week of shows for *I Call myself Princess* at the Globe Theatre in Regina; Kingston Symphony Beethoven 9; and *Turn of the Screw* with Opera 5 in Toronto. My sail-boat can't launch this month. News still pending on my debut with the Welsh National Opera, touring Britain and Dubai.

If we can use this time to strengthen the new Canadian musicals that are on the horizon, and ensure that they have a relevance and resonance in this current time, then I imagine a bright future ahead.

in this current time, then I imagine a bright future ahead. We are also engaged in very complex risk planning to make sure that The Musical Stage Company is well positioned to not only survive, but nimbly adapt to whatever needs greet us on the other side of this crisis.

Visit our website at [musicalstagecompany.com](http://musicalstagecompany.com) and follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram (MusicalStageCo)

I've pinned us on the map to our office; it is fairly central to all of the spots we work in.

## LINDA LITWACK

I'm an arts publicist specializing in classical music, speaking here for myself (something I don't often get to do!).

Since COVID-19 hit, I have had to let go of publicizing three of five May events on my calendar because they have been cancelled outright. The other two of those May events have been postponed till the fall: the Upper Canada Choristers' concert *Inti Ukana: A Latin American Tapestry*, has been rescheduled to October; and the International Resource Centre for Performing Artists is rescheduling its performance of *Ten Singing Stars: The New Generation* till the fall as well. The biggest of the cancelled events will take place in 2021, we hope as originally programmed for 2020.

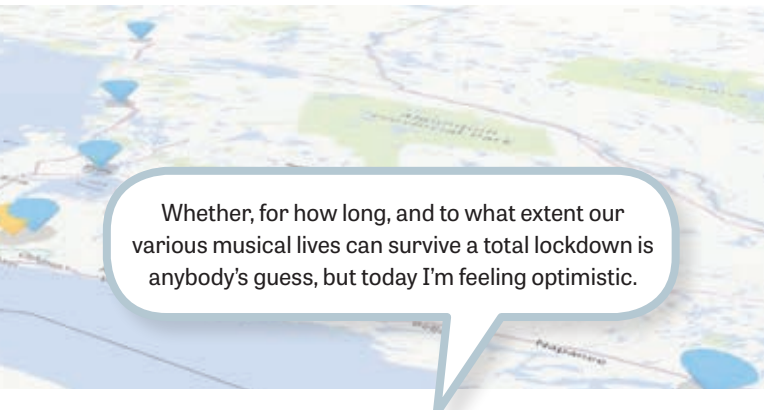
At the moment, the basic publicity materials are prepared for when the world is ready to roll. We will just have to change the date and update any other info that might have been revised. Meanwhile, I am doing some writing and editing for a couple of clients and dealing with other personal projects that have been put on the back burner for years – like cleaning up my office!

## STERLING BECKWITH

I am Sterling Beckwith, PhD. Former singer and conductor, retired professor of music at York University.

My active musical involvement has for some time been limited to reading about, reflecting on, and occasionally sampling the incredible richness and variety of our local music scene. The present issue of *The WholeNote* demonstrates once again how much we owe to this magazine's indefatigable support – as catalogue, catalyst, and cattle-prod – for all this activity. Without it, I doubt such an impressive level of quality and diversity could have been so soon attained. Whether, for how long, and to what extent our various musical lives can survive a total lockdown is anybody's guess, but today I'm feeling optimistic....

Meanwhile, I am doing some writing and editing for a couple of clients and dealing with other personal projects that have been put on the back burner for years – like cleaning up my office!



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Neither of my two lifetime musical projects has yet been interrupted:

1) Bridging the language and culture gap for young Canadian performers, by providing some of my favorite European vocal works with singable new English texts. Done so far:

Brahms: *Liebeslieder-Walzer Op. 52*. Monteverdi: *Ballo delle ingrate*. Rimsky-Korsakov: *Mozart & Salieri*. Schuetz: *Johannes-Passion*; *Weihnachts-Historie*. And most recently (while self-isolating) Shostakovich: *Babi Yar* (not yet performed).

2) Expanding the everyday teaching and learning of music, currently heavily slanted towards performance training, to include thoughtfully-designed computer-assisted exercises in composing, as well as guided listening to more than the latest pop hits. For the latter, I am actively looking for individual and institutional partners, and taking steps to insure that software development work can continue.


## NICK STORRING

I wear a number of hats in the music community. I'm primarily a composer and musician, but work as critic, curator/presenter, and publicist.

Just as COVID-19 was ramping up, American imprint Orange Milk Records released my sixth full-length recording entitled *My Magic Dreams Have Lost Their Spell* digitally and on LP/CD, composed in my home studio by overdubbing my own performances on a wide variety of instruments. On the writing end of things, I'm a regular contributor with *Musicworks Magazine* and my work has also appeared in publications such as the *Wire* and *Exclaim!* I've been the guest curator of the Canadian Music Centre's CMC Presents Series for the past two seasons, and have also devised programs for Soundstreams, the Music Gallery, New Adventures in Sound Art, and my own independent productions.

Publicity is the newest facet of my career, but it is expanding rapidly. Most of the work I've been doing has provided support to Canadian artists and events within my orbit.

For the most part I've actually been very fortunate in terms of the impact of COVID-19 on my various endeavours thus far. In a funny way, I feel as though it has created a receptive climate for recorded music and that's had a positive impact on the critical reception of my own record. That's been tremendously heartening.



For the most part I've actually been very fortunate in terms of the impact of COVID-19 on my various endeavours thus far. In a funny way, I feel as though it has created a receptive climate for recorded music and that's been tremendously heartening.

There are a few things that have been suspended: a collaboration with multidisciplinary artist Gary Kirkham and vocalists Bó Bardos and Pam Patel; Yvonne Ng has been working on a new full-length quintet dance entitled *Wéi* since 2017 and the plan had been to premiere it in the coming half-year. Thin Edge New Music Collective and I have been working (very slowly) on an album of my chamber music with Jean Martin at the controls. We've already recorded over half an hour of music, and it would be nice to wrap it up.

There's not really much that can be done to prepare this work in any way, except to remain positive, and I've been doing my utmost in that domain.

Instead, I've been continuing with other work of various kinds, publicizing new and forthcoming recordings by various artists, mixing some intriguing new recordings from multi-instrumentalist Colin Fisher that will no doubt surface, and been writing various grants for clients.

I also recently started a solo piece for baroque cello for Elinor Frey that poses an interesting challenge. As a cellist myself, I'm trying to imagine the music *away from the cello* as much as possible, to prevent my own habits and limitations on the instrument from seeping through. I want to be writing for her, her interpretive gifts, and her instrument, rather than merely transcribing myself.

Apart from that: various studio pieces, including a set where everything is recorded through those cheap humbucker pickups that one mounts in acoustic guitars for amplification. They only respond to the vibration of magnetic metals, which makes for a strange cocktail of serious restriction and peculiar sonic possibilities—everything from a Slinky to barbecue skewers, from tape measures to steel wool.

To find me: My website [www.nickstoring.ca](http://www.nickstoring.ca) offers the most thorough overview; my Soundcloud serves as a kind of audio scrapbook: [https://soundcloud.com/nick\\_storing](https://soundcloud.com/nick_storing); and my commercial recordings are all available from my Bandcamp: <http://nickstoring.bandcamp.com/>


## CHRISTINA PETROWSKA QUILICO

I am a concert pianist and a full professor of Piano Performance and Musicology at York University. I am speaking for myself.

What's been taken away from me most at this moment is peace of mind and family vacations. I had been planning to take some time away from work and piano to spend time with my family and go on vacation. I had booked time away from professional concerts and work to do so.

Instead, except for FaceTime and Skype, I will be home isolated and learning new repertoire (four concertos for future performances and recordings, and music for a solo CD recording and performance) after I finish grading and adjudicating two music competitions online. I will also be preparing PowerPoint lectures for online teaching in the fall.

You can always find me at York University email. Check the Faculty profiles or on my website [www.christinapetrowskaquilico.com](http://www.christinapetrowskaquilico.com) and my channel on YouTube. I am always adding new videos of performances.



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**MICHAEL PEPA**, artistic director, Les AMIS Concerts  
**KEN PRUE**, proprietor of The LOFT

**Michael:** I had three concerts left in this 2019-20 season. Please see [www.lesamisconcerts.org](http://www.lesamisconcerts.org). These had to be cancelled. I am doing my best to reschedule them for the 2020-21 season. Of course, rescheduling requires a lot of communication with the artists, venue, and a million other things. A lot of time is wasted but we'll do it.

Les AMIS Concerts are staged at The Loft, in Cobourg, Ontario, and here are additional comments from Ken Prue, the proprietor of The LOFT.

**Ken:** At The LOFT Cinema and Concert Hall we do live music, classical & jazz, paired with documentary and foreign film.

For the month of May we have had to cancel all films, a documentary Film Festival and the following live music events: Robert Sherwood/Dave Young/Reg Schwager – Music of Oscar Peterson; Al Lerman Solo Blues; Jerzy Kaplanek Quartet with Nancy Walker, Roberto Occhipinti, Ethan Ardelli playing the music of Grappelli, Ponty, Lockwood; and Les AMIS (Laurence Kayaleh, violin and Bernadine Blaha, piano).

All live music events will be rescheduled when Health Authorities give the ALL CLEAR. Meanwhile The LOFT is closed. During the closure we are improving stage lighting, and tuning pianos.

People reading this can stay in touch via our website, [www.cobourgloft.ca](http://www.cobourgloft.ca). From there they can also subscribe to the The LOFT Newsletter.

**ORI DAGAN**



In the meantime I have taken to a weekly live streaming show from my Facebook page. I started in late March and have been keeping it going every Thursday at 7pm EST. I started on Sarah Vaughan's birthday, March 27.

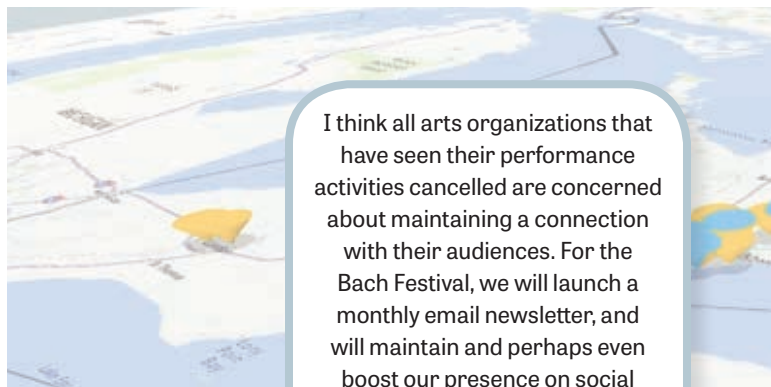
Jazz singer-songwriter.

I had a tour planned in Quebec for April, with my "Talent & Soul: 100 Years of Nat King Cole" concert booked in Pointe-Claire, Montreal and Quebec City, as well as my first European showcase planned for June. Everything is in the process of being rescheduled for 2021.

In the meantime I have taken to a weekly live streaming show from my Facebook page. I started in late March and have been keeping it going every Thursday at 7pm EST. While I miss the Toronto clubs and the inspiring musicians that I have been so blessed to work with, this series has been a very positive experience. Each week is a tribute to a different artist – I started on Sarah Vaughan's birthday, March 27, taking some requests along the way. For Jazz Appreciation month I continued with Billie Holiday, Carmen McRae, Sinatra, Ella, Nat King Cole and April 30 being International Jazz Day will be all by request. This series has given me an opportunity to connect with jazz lovers from far and wide; it has also been a kick in my behind to get my piano chops up to snuff. It's free to view from any device, though tips are greatly appreciated. I'm really looking forward to being on a real stage again but I'm beyond grateful to be able to still connect with an audience.

I've been staying in touch with folks via social media: my Instagram, facebook, twitter and YouTube handles are all @oridaganjazz. Folks can also sign up for my monthly newsletter at my website: [www.oridagan.com](http://www.oridagan.com)

Map pin? These days, my living room!



I think all arts organizations that have seen their performance activities cancelled are concerned about maintaining a connection with their audiences. For the Bach Festival, we will launch a monthly email newsletter, and will maintain and perhaps even boost our presence on social media to nurture these important connections.

**JOHN ABBERGER**

I am the artistic director of the Toronto Bach Festival, and am also a 30+ year veteran member of Tafelmusik. I perform with both organizations as an oboist. I can speak for the Bach festival, as well as for myself as a musician and member of Tafelmusik.

Regarding what I had to let go of when COVID-19 hit, for the Toronto Bach Festival this is quite straightforward: we cancelled the 2020 festival that had been scheduled to run May 29-31, 2020. This is not only our primary activity, it is essentially our only activity at this point in our relatively short existence.

Tafelmusik cancelled the remainder of the season somewhere around the middle of March. With the cancellation of Opera Atelier's spring production of Handel's *La Resurrezione*, my performing activities effectively ended for the foreseeable future.

In terms of follow-through, once circumstances allow, for the Bach Festival, our current assumption is that we will be able to offer a festival in May 2021. Once we complete the process of refunding ticket sales, processing any conversions of ticket sales to donations, and reassuring our donors, we will begin work on the groundwork of the 2021 festival.

For Tafelmusik, there is a great deal of uncertainty at this writing as to what will be possible in September with the start of the new season. As a musician, I am hoping the events of the next weeks and months will provide some clarity about that situation.

I think all arts organizations that have seen their performance activities cancelled are concerned about maintaining a connection with their audiences. For the Bach Festival, we will launch a monthly email newsletter, and will maintain and perhaps even boost our presence on social media to nurture these important connections. It is the hope, of course, that this will even increase our audience at the next festival (presumably in May 2021).

We had an outstanding fifth anniversary festival planned for May 2020, and we will soon begin to work on rescheduling as many of those events as possible for the next festival. If circumstances permit, we are also considering the possibility of producing a single concert, perhaps in the fall of 2020, as a means of staying connected to our audience, and we will be working on tentatively scheduling that event next month. At this point, however, there are so many unknowns it feels impossible to make any concrete plans.

For Tafelmusik, the core orchestra has been busy working with the marketing managers to produce some content that can be made available online, including a video produced by combining recorded performances from our homes.

For people reading this who want to stay in touch, the Toronto Bach Festival website ([torontobachfestival.org](http://torontobachfestival.org)) is a good place to start as details of our plans fall into place. Contact me at [director@torontobachfestival.org](mailto:director@torontobachfestival.org) to put yourself on a list to receive our newsletter.





## KATHERINE CARLETON

I am executive director, Orchestras Canada, as well as an avocational clarinet player, and I'm speaking for OC's members (and for myself, I guess ...)

Of all the things we had planned when COVID-19 hit, most significantly OC has had to cancel its national conference in Hamilton, May 20-23. Also, any face-to-face meetings, whether internal (a planned board meeting in Hamilton in May) or external (participation in a Charities on Parliament Hill event organized by Imagine Canada, and originally scheduled for today, April 21) are cancelled.

Every ensemble rehearsal and concert that I had scheduled to play in – cancelled. (This includes performances with the Peterborough Symphony, the B45 Clarinet Collective, the Clarington Concert Band, the Peterborough Theatre Guild's production of *Annie*, and the spring world tour of a New Orleans-style jazz band called Otis and his Honey Lambs that I play with. Well, "world" is a bit strong: we had dates in Peterborough, Millbrook and Bridgenorth! Maybe we'll make it out of Peterborough County some day.)

As to following through, once circumstances allow, most of the rehearsing and performing will happen, one way or the other, though specific productions or concerts are likely gone forever. Pretty much, as for everyone else in the world who can, we've moved everything on-line. I've been tremendously impressed with the rate at which even the skeptics have upped their Zoom game: people I thought would never turn on their web cams have finally done so.

From an Orchestras Canada perspective, we've observed that people are keen to stay in touch, find out how everyone else is coping, and acquire new skills and knowledge. So we've taken the opportunity to tear up the conference schedule and re-focus on hosting the discussions and information that feel most urgent right now. Rather than trying to stuff everything into three or four days, we're spreading what would have been our conference offerings between now and December 2020, buying ourselves the time to curate the content that is most needed, when it's needed. And we're organizing peer group meetings across the country, and have had excellent participation. We'll be guided by what we're learning in these discussions to curate better content, too.

Our advocacy work continues unabated, at both the federal and provincial levels. We don't work alone, either: we're working in conjunction with a group of arts leaders across the country to

I've been tremendously impressed with the rate at which even the skeptics have upped their Zoom game: people I thought would never turn on their web cams have finally done so.

identify what our members need and communicate that effectively to decision-makers, and we're also part of a roundtable convened by Imagine Canada to convey the impact on charities and not-for-profits of all sizes and kinds.

For people who want to get in touch with us and our member orchestras, our website is a good starting place: [oc.ca](http://oc.ca). As are our social media, where we're featuring plenty of content from Canadian orchestras, too: Facebook: [facebook.com/orchestras-canada](https://www.facebook.com/orchestras-canada) and Twitter: @OrchCanada.

On the map, Peterborough is where we are.

## MARSHALL PYNKOSKI



I am founding co-artistic director of Opera Atelier. We produce twice a year in Toronto – employing singers, a full corps de ballet and Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra.

I am happy to say that Opera Atelier has not had to 'let go of' anything completely. That being said, we have had to cancel – but only for the time being, our production of Handel's *The Resurrection*, our *Versailles Gala* and our *Dance Through Time* performances for students from our school.

We will, however, follow through with all three of the productions mentioned above, once circumstances allow. Sets and costumes are well underway for *The Resurrection*, and we were already two weeks into rehearsal when the Ontario Premier declared a state of emergency – so we have a very good idea of what the production is. OA's *Versailles Gala* is an annual event, and in the meantime we are planning a *Virtual Celebration* for our Gala patrons. *Dance Through Time* is a very popular program and although our students will be unable to perform for Doors Open – we anticipate there will be plenty of other opportunities.

Our one obvious change to our programming is that of replacing our *Versailles Gala* with an online *Virtual Celebration* which will take place on May 20th, the same date that the Gala had been planned. We already have a spectacular line up of Canada's finest artists from around the globe who will participate.

Opera Atelier is posting on a daily basis on our Instagram, Twitter (@operaatelier) and Facebook ([facebook.com/operaatelier](https://www.facebook.com/operaatelier)). There's plenty of fascinating content from all of our artists, plus regular blogs written by me and OA Designers, plus some fascinating book blogs visitors are certain to enjoy under the hashtag #OATutti.

Our one obvious change to our programming is that of replacing our *Versailles Gala* with an online *Virtual Celebration* which will take place on May 20th, the same date that the Gala had been planned.



## CEM ZAFIR

I'm Cem Zafir, the founder, back in 2000, of Zula Presents, organizing concerts, series, tours and festivals for nearly a decade in Vancouver and the islands in BC. Since June 2014, Zula's main project has been Hamilton's Something Else! Festival of Creative Music, several back-to-back days of double-bills with contemporary jazz artists, improvisers, sound artists and avant-pop performers. This year Zula added an ongoing series "Watch It Burn," pairing film, and live performance, to our planned activities, and a diversified June festival lineup.

Since COVID-19 hit, we still haven't officially postponed or cancelled the festival, but so far, the "Watch It Burn" series dates for March 15, April 24, and planned festival dates June 18-21, 2020 are the only things we had to let go, but just the dates, not the artists! Everything is postponed indefinitely. We hope to honour these agreements once on the other side, with 25-some acts, who were going to play our festival and series. We will postpone the festival indefinitely and hope to reschedule it for fall sometime. If the situation won't allow by year end, then we would skip/ cancel 2020 festival.

Hopefully we will follow through on all of them within a year or so.

Not much else I can do! We are mostly focusing on going back to live, in-the-moment presentation. We will release some festival and series archival videos on our websites. We may have interviews streamed along with some solo performances to tide audiences over, but we're not excited about such possibilities.

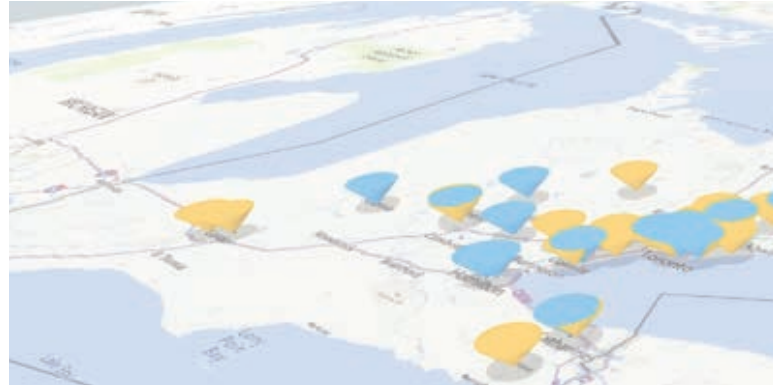
As for how people reading this can stay in touch with what we are doing and planning, our websites and facebook page will be updated as things progress: [somethingelsefestival.com](http://somethingelsefestival.com), [zulapresents.org](http://zulapresents.org) and [@zulapresents](https://www.facebook.com/zulapresents).

## CAROL KEHOE

When we can, we're absolutely going to find a way to present the new orchestral version of Bach's Goldberg Variations, which we had planned for April.



Speaking as executive director, Tafelmusik, since COVID-19 hit, I would say we have had to let go completely of any sense at all that we could plan for the immediate future! No, seriously: we were all looking forward to *A Handel Celebration* at the end of May, featuring the orchestra, choir and guest artists soprano Amanda Forsythe and tenor Thomas Hobbs. Choir director Ivars Taurins had completed so much work to curate a program of some of his favourite moments in Handel's oratorios. We were also planning to record the program live in Koerner Hall to release later this year on our Tafelmusik



Media label. It would have been the first recording featuring both music director Elisa Citterio and Ivars Taurins, with the Tafelmusik Orchestra and Chamber Choir. Sadly, those plans have been shelved and we are all extremely disappointed about that.

When we can, we're absolutely going to find a way to present the new orchestral version of Bach's *Goldberg Variations*, which we had planned for April. Bach's timeless keyboard masterpiece had been arranged for orchestra by Elisa Citterio, who turned these keyboard miniature masterpieces into various combinations of solo players as well as the full orchestra. She had spent most of last summer working on the arrangement, and we had also commissioned a new piece from Canadian composer Grégoire Jeay to open this program. This perfect 90-minute concert was going to be a highlight of the season.

A video recording of two variations (#1 and #30) from Elisa's orchestral arrangement of Bach's *Goldberg Variations* was posted online in late April and can still be seen as part of #TafelmusikTogether, a digital initiative we launched on March 17 on Tafelmusik's Instagram, Facebook and YouTube channels. It was one of the first performances Elisa suggested for our social media platforms and offers viewers a small taste of her arrangement. Elisa hopes our digital version will bring joy and help people feel less isolated.

Also, instead of a live recording, in March we launched our first digital-only release *Baroque for the Brain: Music to Study By*, curated by Music Director Emerita Jeanne Lamon. *Baroque for the Brain* is available on digital platforms and features tracks from previous Tafelmusik recordings including music by Bach, Handel, Vivaldi, Mendelssohn, and Beethoven.

We are hopeful about sharing live music in the future, and subscriptions for Tafelmusik's 2020/21 season, *Passions of the Soul*, are now available at [tafelmusik.org](http://tafelmusik.org). We also invite people to join us virtually for short performances and other artistic content being shared from musicians' living rooms and kitchens through #TafelmusikTogether on Tafelmusik's Instagram, Facebook and YouTube channels. I would also like to mention that Tafelmusik has launched the Keep Tafelmusik Together campaign with the goal of raising \$250,000 before June 30, 2020. This appeal will help Tafelmusik musicians and team members to continue to work on new initiatives, like #TafelmusikTogether, and prepare for the 2020/21 season. Donations can be made online at [my.tafelmusik.org/together](http://my.tafelmusik.org/together).

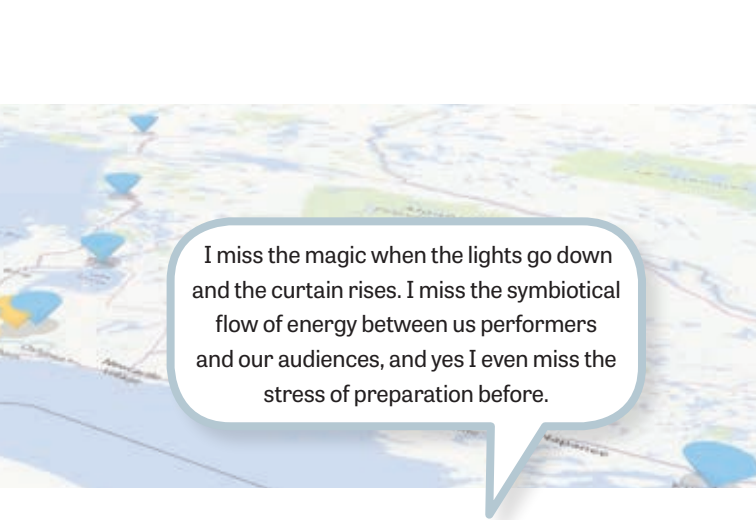
## JOHANNES DEBUS

I am music director of the Canadian Opera Company.

Since COVID-19 hit, as all performing artists I have had to let go the possibility of performing live. I miss this irreplaceable experience. I miss the magic when the lights go down and the curtain rises. I miss the symbiotical flow of energy between us performers and our audiences, and yes I even miss the stress of preparation before.

Let's hope sometime soon we will be able to open the doors to our performance venues again - to enjoy together the magic of sound embracing and surrounding us, evoking our deep emotions. In the





I miss the magic when the lights go down and the curtain rises. I miss the symbiotical flow of energy between us performers and our audiences, and yes I even miss the stress of preparation before.

meanwhile, I study scores, play the piano, clean up the kitchen – in no particular order.

People wanting to stay in touch with me can do so via Twitter @johannesdebus. You'll also want to keep checking the COC's various social platforms (@canadianopera on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram). They've been showcasing a series of past COC productions and newly-taped at-home performances under the hashtag #OperaAtHome, but soon you'll be seeing many new digital offerings and interactive opportunities, some of which I will be filming with the team. You'll have to stay tuned to see more!

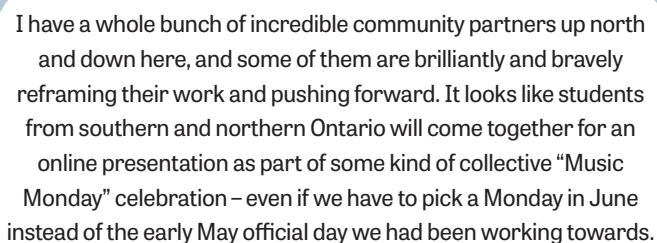
## SOPHIA PERLMAN

Music is my compass. I am a freelance musician, educator and community artist. I would be scared to see how long this response would take if I was speaking for anyone else but myself (although, currently, I am at the helm of a wonderful thing called the Hornepayne Community Arts Project, and can't pass up on the opportunity of wishing the brave music and theatre graduates from Mohawk and Centennial Colleges respectively huge congratulations and my support as they enter our community at this crazy time!)

When COVID-19 hit, I watched most of my summer plans for performance, collaboration and travel crumble over the course of a week. A lot of festivals and venues are cancelling or suspending activities all the way through till September.

As someone with a part-time contract at a post-secondary program, I was lucky to have a bit of an extra cushion. It has given me a (small) bit of breathing room to figure things out – but I am sending love and solidarity to my colleagues who, like me, are seeing a cancellation of the work that sustains them through the four otherwise lean months while we wait to find out if enrollment will allow our rehiring in the fall. The added uncertainty of what will happen next school year means that ultimately the thing I have had to let go of is any small bit of certainty I have found in my career as an artist.

Of all the things I will want to pick up on once circumstances allow, one stands out. Last year, I was lucky enough to receive an Ontario Arts Council grant for a collaborative community arts project in the amazing township of Hornepayne, in Northern



I have a whole bunch of incredible community partners up north and down here, and some of them are brilliantly and bravely reframing their work and pushing forward. It looks like students from southern and northern Ontario will come together for an online presentation as part of some kind of collective "Music Monday" celebration – even if we have to pick a Monday in June instead of the early May official day we had been working towards.

Ontario. Our last community visit has been indefinitely suspended, and the summer arts employment strategy that we were working on is in suspended animation while we wait to see how granting bodies will respond, or whether we'll be given the opportunity to re-imagine our project to respond to whatever restrictions are likely to be in place through the summer.

But! I have a whole bunch of incredible community partners up north and down here, and some of them are brilliantly and bravely reframing their work and pushing forward. It looks like students from southern and northern Ontario will come together for an online presentation as part of some kind of collective "Music Monday" celebration – even if we have to pick a Monday in June instead of the early May official day we had been working towards. It's nice to know that the collective will is to still celebrate what we've done. We've set our new goal as "The First Monday that we can all be together in the same place!"

Meanwhile, it's a bit like safely navigating a long curve on a motorcycle – you have to look at where you want to end up.

As an artist and musician, I'm giving myself time to incubate ideas, to create music for myself now that the college semester is over, and like anybody else, giving myself permission to feel whatever comes up during this strange time. Maybe by the time this is all over, I'll have created something new that I feel like sharing.

In my work as an educator and arts facilitator, I am trying to make frameworks for things, rather than concrete plans, so that I can stay as adaptable as I can to a situation that seems to be changing every minute.

For people reading this who want to stay in touch with what I am doing and planning, I took myself off social media a while back, and my website is about as interesting as I am in maintaining it (which is to say, not so much right now). However, at the moment, I am the human engine behind the social media for the Hornepayne Community Arts Project on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, or at hornepaynecommunityarts@gmail.com so you can, as often as not, find me there.

As for where to pin myself on the map, this is hard. Mostly, I'm in COVID land! One pin belongs in Hamilton Ontario – I am providing the postal code for Mohawk College rather than my home address. But another pin definitely belongs in Hornepayne, Ontario. (And there's another heart-shaped pin that belongs at M5T 2N4 in Toronto. But that's another story!)

## MATTHEW WHITFIELD

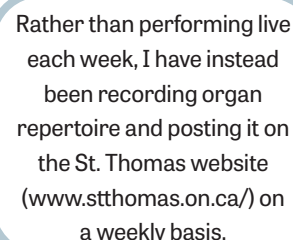
I am organist and director of music at St. Thomas's Anglican Church, Huron Street (and in less disrupted times *The WholeNote's* usual Early Music columnist).

When COVID-19 hit, I had a number of choral and solo concerts planned, as well as the responsibilities associated with Holy Week and Easter.

St. Thomas's has one of the most renowned church music programs in the country, and to miss this highlight of the year is a profound loss for all who participate in, and listen to, our choral programs.

While some of the concerts will not be rescheduled, I look forward to performing Louis Vierne's *Symphonie No. 2* as part of the RCOO Vierne birthday celebration, now in the fall (transferred from April), as well as a solo recital in Ottawa next season (transferred from May).

With all church and choral gatherings put on hold, I have had to adapt accordingly. Rather than performing live each week, I have instead been recording organ repertoire and posting it on the St. Thomas website ([www.stthomas.on.ca/](http://www.stthomas.on.ca/)) on a weekly basis. To date, I've worked through Brahms's complete chorale preludes, and will be recording Bach's *Neumeister Chorale Preludes* over the next few weeks. This preparation of material also helps me maintain



Rather than performing live each week, I have instead been recording organ repertoire and posting it on the St. Thomas website ([www.stthomas.on.ca/](http://www.stthomas.on.ca/)) on a weekly basis.



technique, so that when the rescheduled concerts arrive, I am ready to perform at a high level.

As for how best people reading this can stay in touch, there are two places: the first is St. Thomas's website (<https://www.stthomas.on.ca/>), where recordings and updates are posted regularly; and my own personal website (<https://www.orguenouveau.com/>), where a listing of recitals and concerts, as well as recordings, provides an outline of what I'm up to on a regular basis.



## Laurie Evan Fraser

I am a free-lance musician and founding artistic director of the Upper Canada Choristers, a non-auditioned community choir based in mid-town Toronto. We have had to cancel two public concerts, one of which we have rescheduled for October 2, 2020. We have also cancelled our early summer fund-raising garden social.

In addition to our usual spring and winter concerts, community service is the cornerstone of our choir and each year we typically visit over a dozen venues where people do not otherwise have the opportunity to hear live choral music. We share diverse music with audiences at long-term care facilities, seniors' residences, hospitals, rehabilitation centers, and schools. In May 2019, we celebrated our 25th anniversary of this mission with our 'Peace Through Music Tour,' rehearsing and performing with community-based choirs throughout Japan.

This is the aspect of our work that has taken the hardest hit in the current circumstances and we are actively exploring new ways to continue practising together and to serve our audiences.

We are also taking this time to refresh our website, including the addition of a 'virtual' choir performance. I also host regular online choir visits, sectional rehearsals, and "Choir Cocktail Parties" where we sing repertoire chosen by our singers. Online technology is effective as a means to learn new music but not for experiencing the magic of ensemble performing, and we all miss the synergy and support of actually singing together, with or without an audience.

Visit our website: [www.uppercanadachoristers.org](http://www.uppercanadachoristers.org)

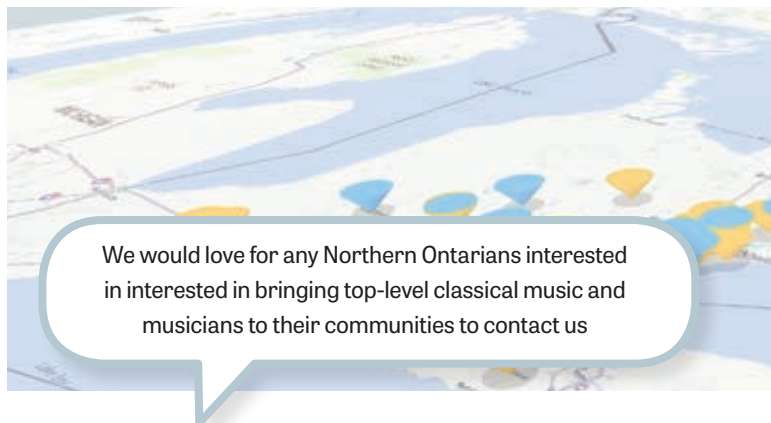
For the map, The Upper Canada Choristers rehearse at Grace Church on-the-Hill, 300 Lonsdale Road.

## Jen and Peter McGillivray

Northern Debut Nord seeks to establish a bi-annual touring project that will allow Northern Ontarians to access world-class, professional, classical music performances and encounters in their own backyard, working closely with local arts councils and community presenters.

We were heartbroken to have to postpone our final concert of our inaugural season by the Drive Shaft Trio that would've included our very first commissioned piece by local Sudbury composer, Robert Lemay.

We hope to reschedule the concert to the early fall or at least to organize a digital solution to seeing the concert through.



We would love for any Northern Ontarians interested in bringing top-level classical music and musicians to their communities to contact us

We're a small organization just starting out on our artistic and creative journey. We had hoped to present the concert online instead of in person but it became almost impossible logistically to make happen. We want to honour the music we have commissioned and premiering the work online, without the trio being able to properly rehearse together seems contrary to that spirit. So we have concentrated on making optimistic plans for our 2020/21 season and rolling the postponed concert into those efforts.

Sudbury, ON, is our home base of operations and where we plan our main concerts of our series and fundraising events. We are building our network of contacts around Northern Ontario for touring concerts in future seasons. Next season will see the first of our regional runout concerts attached to our main Sudbury season. We would love for any Northern Ontarians interested in interested in bringing top-level classical music and musicians to their communities to contact us at [info@northerndebutnord.com](mailto:info@northerndebutnord.com), to visit our website at [NorthernDebutNord.com](http://NorthernDebutNord.com), and to sign up for our newsletter to be included in our season launch announcements and kept up to date with our activities. That, and following us on social media including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

## Leslie Ashworth

I am a Canadian violinist and composer, a Master's of Music student at Rice University in Houston, Texas, and a recent graduate of The Glenn Gould School in Toronto. I am also the founder & director of the Suite Melody Care volunteer program.

Of all the things I had planned when COVID-19 hit, I have had to completely let go of orchestra and chamber music playing. I was studying at Rice in Houston when COVID-19 rapidly escalated and I had to return back home to Oakville, Canada. Though my academic classes and private lessons continued online for the rest of the semester, orchestra and chamber music were cancelled completely and similarly summer plans for orchestra/chamber music festivals in the U.S. and Germany have been rescheduled. I really miss the unique experience of making music together with my colleagues and, for now, I am enjoying the alternative of making recordings and syncing these together with friends.

I also run a volunteer program called *Suite Melody Care* (founded in 2012) which encourages young musicians and singers to give back to the community by performing in their local hospitals, retirement residences, and long-term care facilities. We give over 100 live



Hospital patients and the elderly ... can view these virtual performances from the safety and comfort of their own rooms



themed, interactive performances annually for hospital patients and the elderly across Ontario, Iowa, and just recently in Houston. Unfortunately, all of these live performances have had to stop for the time being to protect our audience members and performers.

Once circumstances turn for the better, I look forward to resuming orchestra and chamber music studying, rehearsals, and performances. I will also be particularly excited for Suite Melody Care performances to continue and grow to involve many more young musicians and reach even more audience members in hospitals, retirement residences, and long-term care facilities across Canada and in the U.S.

In the meanwhile, in order to bring some happiness into the lives of hospital patients and the elderly during these challenging times, Suite Melody Care has launched a Virtual Performance video series for hospital patients and the elderly in Canada and the United States to raise their spirits. They can view these virtual performances from the safety and comfort of their own rooms and with their own personal devices.

I created the first of these videos to inspire others who will be submitting videos to me which I will be combining and sharing. We have just published the first results, "Spring Together", a Suite Melody Care COVID Virtual Performance, on our YouTube Channel.

Suite Melody Care Inaugural COVID Virtual Performance links: Suite Melody Care Virtual Performance; "Spring Together"; Suite Melody Care website: [www.suitemelodycare.com](http://www.suitemelodycare.com)

For any musician, singer, or dancer interested in bringing some joy into the elderly and hospital patients' lives, I would welcome you to contact me and find out how you can take part in the Suite Melody Care Virtual Performance videos. My email address is [ashworthproductions@gmail.com](mailto:ashworthproductions@gmail.com).

## KARI HUEBER

I am director of audience engagement for the Kitchener Waterloo Symphony.

We provide professional orchestral concerts, education programming, and community outreach to Waterloo Region and beyond. Unfortunately the remainder of the 2019/20 Season

Meanwhile we've launched "Friday Night at the KWS": free.

had to be cancelled. Our concert season runs from September through May.

If circumstances allow we hope to be back in the concert hall to begin on our 2020/21 Season in September! We also hope to be able to program some of the cancelled concerts in future seasons.

Meanwhile we've launched "Friday Night at the KWS": free, online broadcasts of KWS concerts from the archives, some with video and some that are audio only. Each broadcast will feature a video introduction and a live chat with musicians throughout.

Work is also continuing as normal for the beginning of the 2020/21 season in September. People reading this can stay in touch with what we are doing and planning via our website ([kwsymphony.ca](http://kwsymphony.ca)) and social channels: Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and Twitter.



## JOHN AND PATTI LOACH, KITCHEN CONCERTS

**John:** Patti and I have hosted jazz and cabaret concerts here at our house for several years. Patti plays piano, I on trumpet. We are very appreciative of an extremely loyal following, and love our fellow musicians dearly. We miss them.

Things we had planned we have had to let go of completely since COVID-19 hit? Pretty much all of it. We're optimistic that things will eventually return, but it's going to take a long while. We have about 40 paying customers every six weeks or so. Even if restrictions were "lifted" it's doubtful that we, or our guests, would have the confidence to sit together in a confined space, right now. Challenging.

Once circumstances allow we will resume with all of it, to whatever extent is practical.

Meanwhile? Waiting. Practising. You can stay in touch with what we are doing and planning at <https://jazzinthekitchen.ca>

**Patti:** Further to John's response, we had to postpone – let's not say "cancel"! – Mike Murley's CD release for "Taking Flight with Special Guest Renee Rosnes" at a "Jazz in the Kitchen" here which was to have been May 10th. That evening would have featured Mike Murley, Reg Schwager, Renee Rosnes, and Steve Wallace. You can imagine, there was some long range planning involved in setting that up. It really hurt to postpone it. Right now, this all kind of feels like jazz: we're improvising... 🎷

**Attention all members of the music community**  
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# Sojourn in the Deep Shade

## The Only Way Is Through

LYDIA PEROVIĆ

I stay sane these days by walking industrial wastelands, edges of construction fields, less travelled ravine trails and the dead-quiet side streets of Toronto's east and north. Last time I clocked in just over 9.5km – it was raining, then overcast with nasty winds – while listening to *This Jungian Life*, a podcast in which three Jungian psychoanalysts talk amongst themselves. The recent shows have been all been about the current situation, with titles like *Facing the Fear*, and *When Everything Changes: Is There Opportunity in Crisis*, and *Nigredo: Finding Light Out of Darkness*. As I was rounding the final stretch of Rosedale Valley Road where it joins Bayview Avenue, past the outlier graves on the slopes of the St James Cemetery, I could hear the analysts in my earphones saying THAT When the darkness descends, when the Nigredo is upon us, we will have to sit in it for a time. We can't deny it away. We will have to stay in it, and then survive it. But the only way is through.



It's been impossible to read fiction these last few weeks. I've been searching for something escapist and plotted, precisely the books I don't enjoy in ordinary circumstances. My own library doesn't contain anything carefully plotted and neatly resolved, so I call Book City on the Danforth and bike over for a curbside pickup. I'm now nursing what turned out to be the least-plotted thing Patricia Highsmith ever wrote, *Found in the Street*. Jenny Offill's *Weather* was pointless; Jean Frémon's *Now, Now, Louison* non-immersive and even self-indulgent. It's been impossible to listen to recorded music too because you can't give over to it. Seconds in, you're besieged by thoughts about the future of live performance. I'm not a techno-optimist on the topic of performing arts. Every now and then a few singers start the conversation online with "how we can change and improve our profession for the future," presumably by adding an aspect of digital distancing to it. You can't. We can't. Things are either live, or they're not performing arts. Anything consumed on a screen at home is a different shebang.

We'd already begun self-isolating too much before the pandemic lockdown forced us to go full hermit. We as a society have already started preferring screens to live performance, digital communication to people in the flesh. Maintaining friendships outside the family unit was already made hard. Ticket sales for opera and song recitals have already been slowly but steadily declining in Toronto. We've already been living as citizens weary of other fellow citizens, not bothering to

Lydia Perović



VERONIKA ROUX

abstract out of our own condition to the life of the commons, in the public square. The end of the lockdown won't reverse this trend.

Despite the cheerful mantra that "we're all in this together," the pandemic has exacerbated the effects of the difference in income and property ownership, and has brought open authoritarianism to many countries in the world. To ours it has brought snitch lines, closed borders, and corona-shaming on social media. (What business do you have passing through this park today, citizen?) It has strengthened nationalism just about everywhere, and pride in narrow, visible, concrete belonging. There are already thinkers welcoming this new development, like the always globalization-suspicious John Gray in his compelling recent essay in the *New Statesman* where he wonders with crossed fingers if we're nearing the end of over-optimistic internationalism.

But hold on a moment. My life, that of a fairly integrated immigrant to Canada, has been made possible by that very same over-optimistic internationalism. As have the lives of many musicians whose careers are made possible by the existence of unfettered travel and open and curious (and solvent) audiences. How do our migrant narratives fit in? At the moment – the moment of closed borders, two million unemployment claims in Canada alone, a halted airline industry, newspapers shedding thousands of staff and the entirely disappeared performing arts – they don't. Our narratives are currently impossible, I'm afraid. This is our Nigredo – our sojourn in the deep shade.

To borrow from another writer's recent lockdown essay (Stephen Marche in the *Los Angeles Review of Books*), everything I usually do involves me going somewhere, seeing something, then writing about it. Moreover, maintaining family connections for me always involved cross-Atlantic travel. This coming June, I was supposed to visit two very aged aunts who live in two different cities in the Balkans so I could see them one last time before they are gone. That will not happen. Nor will my stop in London, UK for a sisterly visit: my sister's husband is just about to start chemotherapy and I, the traveller and potential corona-carrier, could literally kill him with my visit.

Those of us who survive (and survive sane), will meet again and work again, after a period of mending. As the three Jungians point out in one of their episodes, this crisis has sharpened the lingering questions each one of us has avoided dealing with – or thought would solve themselves – during normal times full of distractions and complacency. Questions like, where am I *really* at home? Why am I in this relationship or marriage? Who are my real friends? Why do I do what I do for a living? Is it meaningful to me, to the world? How would I live the rest of my life if death is nearer than I thought? The Nigredo, say the Jungians, is the first phase of an alchemic process: it is the burning away of the dross. And the only way, as the darkness deepens, the blackening begins, is through. Not over, not around it. Right through. ●

Lydia Perović is a writer in Toronto. Send her your art-of-song news to [artofsong@thewholenote.com](mailto:artofsong@thewholenote.com).



# Virtual Concerts Offer Some Consolation

PAUL ENNIS

**“S**oon they realized that simply being together could be a risk. A quartet is, by its nature, an intimate gathering. Players can’t sit more than six feet apart and still hear each other, breathe together or respond to what are often subtle visual cues.” – James B. Stewart writing on April 19 about the Tesla Quartet’s coping with the coronavirus in *The New York Times*

The New York Philharmonic had already cancelled its live performances through early June, but social distancing couldn’t stop more than 80 of its musicians from dedicating a special performance of Ravel’s *Boléro* to healthcare workers fighting the coronavirus pandemic. Orchestra members recorded their parts in their own homes for a virtual performance posted April 3 on YouTube.

**TSO:** Less than ten days after cancelling their March concerts, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra posted a virtual performance of the final three sections of Aaron Copland’s *Appalachian Spring Suite* on their Instagram page and YouTube on March 22. A month later almost 420,000 viewers had seen it on YouTube. TSO principal bassist Jeff Beecher, who organized and edited the crisp, four-minute-plus performance by 29 of the orchestra’s players, got the idea on the first day of spring. CEO Matthew Loden, concertmaster Jonathan Crow, principal oboist Sarah Jeffrey and Beecher, talked about the experience recently on the TSO’s Facebook page.

Beecher said that he sat on his couch and used the Sibelius program to produce all 29 parts, since the TSO library was closed and even the librarian had no access. The key to the enterprise was the click track, which, acting like an enlightened metronome, enabled each player to hear the “full voice of the score.” It was tricky since each participant was separate in their own home. But as Crow said: “The speed-ups and slow-downs [of the click track] made it feel like live music.”

“The singular difference was the missing live audience,” Jeffrey said. “Without the live audience you hear everything you’re doing.” The music was recorded on 27 iPhones and two Androids and edited on Final Cut 2. Jeffrey did her part in four takes; it took time to adjust to playing naturally since the musicians didn’t have the unified character that the conductor brings. Some interesting balance issues did not detract from the exuberant playing and emotional appropriateness of Copland’s use of the uplifting Shaker hymn, *Simple Gifts*.

**Hope:** Dazzling as these virtual acts of wizardry are, they lack the extraordinary intimacy of the music salon violinist/conductor Daniel Hope (@hopeviolin) has created in his living room, in the middle of Berlin, with the backing of the French broadcaster Arte (arte.tv/en/), who are making the concerts available at no charge for the next three months. “We’re coming to you live,” the personable Hope began on March 25. “[This is] a series to share music with you. Nothing brings things into perspective better than music.” With his collaborative pianist, Christoph Israel, at least six feet away, Hope dedicated the first episode to Johann Sebastian Bach and brought his singing violin tone along for support, ending the 32-minute concert with an arrangement of Schubert’s *An die Musik*. He called the Schubert an ode to music celebrating its power to take you to a different place and unite people – for which we should be extremely grateful.

The daily alchemy needed to sustain 26 episodes (as of April 23

On my way to a concert,  
one day last summer.



LAURA ROEBUCK

and ongoing) is considerable, but the results – and over one million streams – speak for themselves. Whether it’s Hope (who plays everything from memory) opening cold with a mesmerizing arrangement of Kurt Weill’s *Youkali* in Episode 2, turning over segments to in-house guests like Simon Rattle and his wife, soprano Magdalena Kožená, in Episode 20, or showing videos sent in by other musicians (like Lynn Harrell and seven other cellists’ virtual playing of Saint-Saëns’ *The Swan* in Episode 19), Hope’s living room is such a welcoming environment, it feels live. Rattle’s warmth at the piano was coupled with his immense musical insights into the repertoire he’s performing -- “The ethos of Debussy is the idea that suggestion is always more powerful



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# Alive and Online

It seems like every day there are additional new ways to find our music community online. Here are a few of particular note.



TSO Virtual Orchestra (screengrab)

## TSO MUSICIANS ONLINE & ACROSS SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

The **TSO Facebook page** hosts a regular series on Facebook Live on Tuesday and Friday afternoons called #TSOatHome. The most recent on April 24 featured violinist Leslie Dawn Knowles and her husband, tubist Mark Tetrault.

The TSO can also be found on Instagram ([torontosymphony](https://www.instagram.com/torontosymphony)), on Twitter ([@TorontoSymphony](https://twitter.com/TorontoSymphony)), and on YouTube [youtube.com/user/TorontoSymphony](https://www.youtube.com/user/TorontoSymphony)

Orchestra members are represented on Facebook and other platforms. They share content on Facebook ([TSO Musicians](https://www.facebook.com/TSOMusicians)), Instagram ([tsomusicians](https://www.instagram.com/tsomusicians)) and Twitter ([@TSOmusicians](https://twitter.com/TSOmusicians)).

On Thursdays, the TSO has partnered with the *Toronto Star* for a collection of "Musical Moments". On April 22, concertmaster Jonathan Crow and pianist Phil Chiu (recorded individually and paired up by TSO producers) performed the famous Air from *Bach's Orchestral Suite No.3*. [thestar.com/musicalmoments](https://www.thestar.com/musicalmoments)

## KOERNER HALL CONCERTS FROM HOME!

**There are more than 25 classical, jazz, and roots music concerts available online.** Just for example ...

- András Keller conducts the Royal Conservatory Orchestra (April 26, 2019)
- Nicolas Altstaedt and Fazil Say (March 2, 2018)
- Terry Riley: Live at 85! (January 18, 2019.)

[rcmusic.com/performance/live-from-koerner-hall-concert-livestream](https://www.rcmusic.com/performance/live-from-koerner-hall-concert-livestream)

## URGNT LIVE

This ad hoc crowd-funded livestream series of concerts was created in response to the covid-19 outbreak. You can pay a cover charge which will contribute to paying a nominal fee to all involved parties, and help with lost gigs and wages as a result of the quarantine.

Presenting a wide range of performances, including a May 8 10-show, one day festival that includes the Gryphon Trio, and Stewart Goodyear [urgnt.ca](https://www.urgnt.ca)

## THE CANADIAN OPERA COMPANY

**#Opera at Home** is an initiative to share one clip every day on social media channels to help bring opera to our audiences during this challenging time. With one clip, every day at 11am there are already 44 of these for viewing, so you have might some catching up to do! Find the link on their homepage [coc.ca](https://www.coc.ca)



DANIEL WALDHECKER / ARTE G&L E

Violinist Daniel Hope spends this period of social distancing by performing chamber concerts from his living room in Berlin with specially invited guests. Every day at 6pm.

than statement." As extraordinary as it was to be a part of Hope's salon, Rattle concluded: "Of course, we're all waiting for the moment when we're playing to people in front of people. Let's hope."

**Streaming sites:** British magazine *Classic FM* has an extensive list of streaming sites for many musical organizations, including the New York Philharmonic's *Boléro*, the TSO's *Appalachian Spring* and Daniel Hope's *Hope@Home*: [www.classicfm.com/music-news/live-streamed-classical-music-concerts-coronavirus](https://www.classicfm.com/music-news/live-streamed-classical-music-concerts-coronavirus)

Updated daily, the list for April 23 includes 43 links for classical music organizations live-streaming, or that have made their concert archives available online. Among them are The Metropolitan Opera's Nightly Met Opera Streams, the Berlin Philharmonic's Digital Concert Hall, Carnegie Hall's Live with Carnegie Hall, Wigmore Hall's Live Stream and the London Mozart Players' At Home with LMP.

The list of 12 upcoming classical concerts being live-streamed includes the Bang on a Can Marathon, May 3 at 3pm, with music by Philip Glass, Meredith Monk and others. The list of 75 past classical concerts that were live-streamed features Simon Rattle and the Berlin Philharmonic performing Bartók and Berio from March 13 and 14; Avi Avital, Daniel Hope and Jacques Ammon, Lang Lang, Max Raabe and Christoph Israel performing at the Konzerthaus Berlin without an audience, March 18; and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center 30th Anniversary Gala, April 21.

**More to mine:** Extensive as *Classic FM*'s streaming sites are, they are not exhaustive. Here are a handful to mine in the weeks ahead. Anyone with a Toronto Public Library card can access [medici.tv](https://www.medic.tv) concerts and masterclasses and the Naxos Music Library by visiting [torontopubliclibrary.ca](https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca). Bachtrack ([bachtrack.com](https://www.bachtrack.com)) currently has 1000 links to past live performances. YouTube remains a treasure trove; the TSO YouTube channel is one of many well worth examining. Facebook and Twitter are filled with musical notes of interest: the last weekend of April features The Metropolitan Opera virtual at home gala ([metopera.org](https://www.metopera.org)) with more than 40 artists led by Yannick Nézet-Séguin; more than 40 Broadway stars celebrate Stephen Sondheim's 90th birthday on April 26 (Broadway.com's YouTube channel); pianist Igor Levit gave his 42nd House Concert on April 23. Pity, my virtually non-existent German limits my understanding of his extensive introductions, but his Twitter feed ([@igorpiantist](https://twitter.com/igorpiantist)) woke me up with his playing of a Scott Joplin rag on April 13. And his radical rendition of Beethoven's "Waldstein" Sonata was completely gripping with its whirlwind first movement, contrasting second and sublime finale. The number of streams is closing in on 400,000.

Stay safe. Be well. Keep listening. 

Paul Ennis is the managing editor of *The WholeNote*.

Check out "ONLINE, LIVESTREAM, ETCetera" on page 33.



# When Your Instrument Is a Collective Noun

ANDREW TIMAR

**“S**tart by saying who you are and where music fits into that,” were my editor’s instructions for this piece. After which I was to move on to talking about what I was doing when COVID-19 hit: what I’d had to abandon, what I’m hoping to pick up on again, and how I am preparing for that.

Be careful what you ask for!

Born midcentury as Tímár András in Szombathely, Hungary, as a young child I was an unwitting participant in my family’s Canadian immigration saga. We segued from the trauma and dislocation of the aftermath of the Hungarian Revolution to the welcoming though utterly unfamiliar WASP-dominated environs of 1950s Toronto. These days I’m navigating another radical change – the challenging socially distanced landscape of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A few things of course happened in the intervening six decades, the branches of my various careers intertwining quite unpredictable, even mysterious, ways. I’ve worked as a landscape labourer and firm vice president, supervisor, draftsman, tree nursery manager, copy editor, New Music Concerts’ production manager, and artistic director of several music groups. I served as the founding editor of and frequent contributor to *Musicworks* magazine and as the President of my construction company.

One through-line though: I never stopped critically listening to, thinking about, performing and composing music. Since early childhood I’d been a musician – first a piano student, then a bassoonist and finally a gamelan and suling player. (The suling is the bamboo ring flute of West Java, Indonesia. And that is a story for another time.



Tímár András/Andrew Timar, Lábatlan, Hungary, c. 1954. (photographer unknown, coll. of author)

As for music journalism, my roots in it reach back to January 1978 when *Musicworks*, the music journal “for curious ears,” began publishing. For five years as its first editor-in-chief and a major contributor I worked with the brilliant John Oswald, building on the nascent writing and paste-up skills I honed at high school and university print weeklies. Most recently, for over the last decade it’s been a pleasure to serve as *The WholeNote*’s World View columnist, features writer, blogger and disc reviewer, filing several hundred items. (I invite you to sample them on WN’s comprehensive online archive.)

Like most musicians, my live gigs were cancelled when COVID-19 shut venues down. Several feature story ideas for *The WholeNote* are on ice. And while I remain Evergreen Club Contemporary Gamelan’s suling soloist, I was also deeply involved in planning two upcoming ECCG events which are also on ice: our composers’ workshop, organised with the support of the Canadian Music Centre, scheduled for this May at the Array Studio; and plans made over a year ago with leading Indonesian composer and musician Iwan Gunawan to travel to Toronto to work with ECCG for an extended period in June 2020. I also lead monthly community Gamelan Meetups, a joint ECCG/Array project, which have been cancelled since March 2020.

ECCG is actively discussing potential reactivation dates for the composer workshop with the CMC and Array. We’re also exploring how remote workshopping (via video) could work as an option in addition to live participation. Our artist-in-residence programme will have to wait until international travel and visas to permit it will once again be available. And as for the



Andrew Timar performing his Invocation to the Ancestors for solo suling gambuh, at ECCG concert, Array Studio, Toronto, 2017.

JOSEF TIMAR



# Maybe Soon? Or Maybe Not

BRIAN CHANG



Andrew Timar (left) plays suling gambuh with members of Evergreen Club Contemporary Gamelan at International Gamelan Festival, Munich, Germany 2018. The screenshot is from the Rainforest video on ECCG's YouTube channel.

Gamelan Meetups, they can theoretically resume when the Array studio reopens and social distancing measures are lifted. I'll have my work cut out for me to ensure a safe and welcoming meeting environment: attending jams after months of entrenched social distancing could be an issue.

Part of the issue is that gamelan is a collective noun, gamelaning an interactive music activity that happens in person. In one way different from most orchestras, individual gamelan musicians don't typically own their instruments; rather they are collectively owned (like ECCG's set) or owned by a single individual or institution. They stay together in one place. ECCG's degung (a kind of West Javanese gamelan) follows this model.

This means that unlike musicians in a symphony orchestra, chambre ensemble, soloist, jazz or rock band (or a DJ), there's no easy way for ECCG to pivot to live online ZOOM-type video shows to reach our audience. We don't have the instruments at home and of course can't meet in our studio to play on our degung and also maintain socially distancing requirements.

On the other hand ECCG has begun to address our online presence. In preparation for our composer workshop, percussionist and ECCG core member Mark Duggan and I prepared quick and simple degung instrument demos. Along with ECCG concert videos, they're hosted on our YouTube channel. ECCG has also launched a new website which we're gradually populating with content useful to composers writing for the group such as this ECCG degung instrument range sheet.

I invite readers to view this video of my composition *Open Fifths, Opens Hearts* (2018). It's an introspective exchange of improvised transcultural melodies over three successive drones. The work was performed by the Timar Parsons Duo, and Amely Zhou & Friends at the Small World Music Centre in celebration of Asian Heritage Month 2018.

The soulful mixed-culture *Kidung* was performed by Jessika Kenney (vocal), Eyvind Kang (viola), Bill Parsons (kacapi) and me on Central Javanese suling at a live The Music Gallery concert at the Jam Factory. You can view the 2015 video here.

As for the best place for gamelan-curious fans to get their live fix? Visit ECCG's new YouTube channel to hear recently uploaded music such as this exciting, freewheeling rendition of Canadian composer Paul Intson's *Rainforest* recorded at a live Munich concert.

In addition, a quick internet search will result in numerous ECCG audio recordings and albums, such as *Sunda Song* on Naxos.

Let's stay safe, and let's keep our ears, minds and hearts open. 🗨️

Andrew Timar is a Toronto musician and music writer. He can be contacted at [worldmusic@thewholenote.com](mailto:worldmusic@thewholenote.com).

## Come What May

Readers of *The WholeNote* know me primarily as the Choral Scene columnist and an active participant in choral music in Toronto. My involvement and experiences in the rich cultural offerings of Toronto isn't purely journalistic though, I'm also an avid theatregoer and it feels strange to me to go more than a few weeks without live art of some kind. This month I'm expanding our "What May Be" exploration beyond the choral world for some other touchpoints in the world of performing arts that I will miss.

### What was, and yet again may be, thoroughly enjoyed

The biggest theatre event of the year, hands down, was the Toronto arrival of the touring production of *Hamilton*. Toronto was home to the "Phillip" cast of the tour, and this was the biggest selling, most expensive set of tickets ever released for a Toronto music theatre show. The state of emergency happened a month into the Toronto run. I had early tickets in February, a trick of luck with the subscription my mom and I have had for a decade. And then I was lucky enough to catch it again when a friend's tickets became available and my boyfriend snatched them up so he could see it as well. I'm lucky, so very lucky to have experienced this magnificent theatre magic twice.

The Ed Mirvish Theatre at its brim, all the way to the stools, with the truncating wall behind the mezzanine removed, holds 2300 patrons. In a week, *Hamilton* would have played to 23,000 people. Over the course of its three months this would have translated to 276,000 theatregoers. The magnitude of the loss is striking in numbers, and totally inconceivable in loss of experience.

The ramifications for theatre continue with the two-part *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* openings planned for the fall of 2020 now postponed into the nebulous 2021. The all-Canadian cast was announced just before the state of emergency hit us in Ontario. The Wizarding World will stay beyond our reach for a little longer. Meridian Hall has the Toronto Symphony Orchestra still engaged for the film concert of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* for the end of October. It's still too early to know whether this will proceed or not. It's unusual to think this might be the next time I'll be in the seat of one of our Toronto theatres enjoying a remnant of the pre-COVID-19 world.

One thing is sure, the appetite for *Hamilton* is still powerful. And Mirvish has said they will endeavour to bring it back. Maybe they will, with a permanent production next time, filled with Canadian talent.

### What may still be a while away

It's no secret the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir (of which I am a member) has been without an artistic director for two years now. This choir is an important artistic partner to many arts organizations in the city, but also an important cultural treasure. Our entire season has been cancelled and this will have lasting effects as the artistic director search is also now postponed.

The painstaking, resource-intensive work of assembling a search committee, actioning the search, conducting interviews, narrowing a short list, and presenting candidates to the Choir and stakeholders for contention, is a long and arduous journey. This process began well over a year ago and is unlikely to conclude before a year from now. Mid-sized arts organizations like the Mendelssohn Choir are vital to the way that music sounds in Toronto. The musicians that make up this choir are found in every part of our cultural life. They are the teachers that empower young musicians in schools, the soloists that you hear in church every Sunday, the actors that liven up

your stages, the doctors at the front-lines of pandemics, the journalists who toil at getting to the stories that affect everyday people.

I was hoping that my September column would be a feature interview with the new artistic director of the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir. But that too, like so many others, is somewhere into the future. Eventually it will happen. The Toronto Mendelssohn Choir will have a new artistic director for audiences to get to know and the Choir to get to love.

There's a magical connection between a conductor and musicians. Our colleagues at the Toronto Symphony Orchestra get to explore this new relationship with their new Maestro, Gustavo Gimeno. Soon enough, the TMC will get to know the gestures and facial expressions of their new conductor. After a time, the choir will learn to cohere around the meticulous downbeat of the hands, emotional flow along the lines and arcs, and create some truly beautiful music.

#### What you may have missed

The Toronto Symphony Orchestra has been performing some innovative and creative concerts that bring us closer to some beloved-worldwide cultural icons (while at the same time, bringing new audiences to the TSO). At the beginning of May, the TSO was to take on the bombastic score of the first of the newest trilogy of *Star Wars* films with 2015's *The Force Awakens*. There are kids alive today who experienced *Episode VII* as their first *Star Wars* film. Followers of sci-fi epic sagas continue to fall in love with this series and the TSO started its play-through of the films in January 2019.

On April 10, 2020, Square Enix released a completely remade version of *Final Fantasy VII*. The cultural impact of this game is inseparable from the incredible power of its musical score. Nobuo Uematsu, the original composer, is one of the biggest composers in video-game music. The span of his talents covers boisterous opera, vicious Latin chorales, rock-infused riffs alongside 100-plus players in an orchestra and the simplest, loveliest of piano solos. For the remake,

composer Masashi Hamauzu has taken the reins, enhancing and resetting the beloved music. Video games often have 30 hours or more of fully orchestrated music. Japanese composers like Uematsu and Yoko Shimomura may be unfamiliar to Toronto audiences, but are world-wide video-game icons.

*Final Fantasy VII* has sold almost 13 million copies since it came out in 1997. The remake is already at a third of those sales at the time of writing, ten days after it was released. At the end of June, the TSO was to perform the score for the new film at Roy Thomson Hall. This concert has been postponed indefinitely.

So, stay tuned readers of *The WholeNote*. What may be may still be far off, but then again, maybe not so far. 🎧


Follow Brian on Twitter @bfchang

Send info/media/tips to [choralscene@thewholenote.com](mailto:choralscene@thewholenote.com).



JEFF SLATER

Choral Scene columnist Brian Chang at home recording a vocal part for a virtual choir project with the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir and Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra.



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# Mundane musings of a cheese-counter flâneur.

COLIN STORY

**T**he economic ramifications of COVID-19 will play out in the coming months and years, and will have an effect on the artistic community unprecedented in recent memory. But long-term economic effects must, necessarily, be of less concern than the immediate, urgent need to stay inside, to save lives. One of the initial challenges of this period for many of us, no matter how community-conscious we strive to be, was to confront our own natural reaction to view with skepticism any potential changes to our everyday life. The coffee shop where I like to write, the studio space where I like to practise, the grocery store where I like to stop every few days and purchase more cheese than a single man living by himself should have any healthy reason to consume: these communal spaces were the sites at which I experienced the mundane foundational joys of my life. But now, things are different: the studio is closed, the coffee shop is open for takeout and delivery only, and the grocery store, though open, is no longer amenable to the contemplative cheese-counter flâneur.

The weekend of Saturday, March 14, marked the moment at which our current situation became suddenly and inescapably real in Toronto's music community. Following a week of increasingly dire announcements – that public schools would remain closed for at least two weeks after March break, that Ontario had the most confirmed cases in the country, that Canadians abroad were being urged to return home while international travel was still possible – it was apparent that the circumstances of our day-to-day lives would be changing immediately, for an indefinite amount of time. Students cancelled lessons; band-leaders cancelled rehearsals; venues, cautiously optimistic, committed to remaining open while taking enhanced sanitary measures to protect musicians and guests, then promptly closed, as the full scope of the social-distancing mandate became clear. Some venues – such as Burdock, with its in-house brewery and bottle shop – have had success in pivoting to delivery/takeout models of commerce, supplementing lost revenue and providing home-bound Torontonians with a tangible connection to the collective experience of local culture. Other venues, without the same pre-existing alcohol/food programs, have not been so fortunate.

On the week of March 16, I was set to begin recording a new album. I had booked two days of rehearsal and three days of studio time with Mackenzie Longpré, my drummer and co-producer, and Tyler Emond, my bassist. The recording process for this album represented the culmination of over a year's worth of work: a Canada Council

grant, a residency at the Banff Centre, countless hours spent writing and rewriting music, thinking through instrumentation and tones and arrangements and production techniques. Following the initial recording session, I was to have had a second session, with Thom Gill, to record keyboards, vocals, guitars and other parts. All of this was put on hold, indefinitely, on March 16. Compared to the life-or-death stakes of the pandemic itself, the experience of postponement is insignificant: recording sessions will be rescheduled, release dates will be adjusted and my project will go on.

The postponement of my recording session, however, marked a growing uncertainty about the nature of my work – and the work of my fellow musicians/writers/artists – during lockdown. When your work is inextricably bound up in your connection to others, how do

you proceed at a distance, your every professional interaction now mediated by a screen, by Zoom and Skype and the strength of your Internet connection? In a normal week, my professional time is spent making music, teaching and writing, and I've been lucky that most of these activities have transitioned online, for the time being. Making music with others is still possible, albeit remotely, for those lucky enough to have some kind of home recording set-up, though recording is a pursuit in and of itself, and contains little of the immediacy and interactivity of playing music live with other people. Teaching, too, is made possible via technology, although the same issues are there: how does one communicate the subtleties of tone and time via an iPhone speaker?

Of my three professional activities, writing is the only one for which solitude is preferable. But one must write about something. The Mainly Clubs, Mostly Jazz column I write for this magazine is, as the name suggests, about upcoming performances in Toronto clubs that program jazz, blues, indie and other genres of music. I write this column in conjunction with the upcoming month's club listings, which provide me with source material; a typical column might feature previews of notable upcoming shows, a profile of a

venue, or a profile of a visiting artist. With the suspension of all public gatherings until social distance protocols are lifted, it is no longer possible to write my column as it typically appears. The Toronto Jazz Festival, which I typically cover in a series of articles and interviews published both prior to and during the festival, was officially postponed on March 31, after Toronto cancelled all city-led mass events and third-party permits until June 30.

And so, like so many of us, I am simply living, day by day, counting myself lucky that I am healthy, that I can continue with the majority of my work, and that the many overlapping communities in which I play a role continue to exist. It is tempting to think of our collective isolation from one another as inactivity, as a denial of our individual capacity to grow, as a dissolution of the social body. But, as the nightly cheers remind us – heard, without fail, at 7:30pm in buildings around my neighbourhood – by staying in, we are actively preserving our communities. All of us, at the individual level, are doing something small for the sake of large-scale good, that we all, once this is over, may return to the mundane pleasures of our daily lives. **●**

*Colin Story is a jazz guitarist, writer and teacher based in Toronto. He can be reached at [www.colinstory.com](http://www.colinstory.com), on Instagram and on Twitter.*



The author's quarantine self-portrait, complete with self-administered buzzcut.



# Don't Get Around Much Anymore

STEVE WALLACE

**T**o wildly understate matters, these are not normal times. Neither will this be a normal *WholeNote* issue, nor is this a normal column for me, if such a thing exists. I don't intend to make this seem all about me, but I do want to go into detail about how the pandemic shutdown has affected me as a musician and music teacher, in the knowledge that mine is just one of thousands of such stories, and in the hope that my experience will resonate with others in the same position. Or those who are worse off.

The crisis really hit home on March 11/12, when all professional sports shut down almost at once; this sent shockwaves about how real and serious this virus is, and remains. Within hours schools closed, social distancing measures were implemented and by March 16, Ontario had issued lockdown orders re non-essential businesses closing, limiting travel and large social gatherings, etc. To quote two lines from W.B. Yeats' poem, *Easter 1916*: "All changed, changed utterly: A terrible beauty is born."

On March 11, my wife Anna developed a sudden, burning cough, a concern for obvious reasons. It was diagnosed the next day as "only" pneumonia, perhaps the first time ever that a fairly serious illness was greeted with relief. On March 15, the last day I appeared in public, I developed a bad cold: sinus congestion, bad cough, but no other overt COVID-19 symptoms. We were laid up for about three weeks with these ailments and there were times we were certain that we had it. There's nothing like a highly contagious and deadly virus to waken the inner paranoid hypochondriac in all of us. Like most others, we stayed home as much as possible and tried to stifle our uncertainties and anxieties.

Meanwhile, on the musician front... all of my gigs from March 14 through June were cancelled in a gradual trickle, and of course beyond this, no new gigs are being booked for the simple reason that there's just nowhere to play. In the early going, one musician I'm close to, saxophonist Mike Murley, showed some real initiative and leadership around this. With just one day's notice he cancelled a March 14 gig we were set to do at the Pilot, postponed an April 4 concert by his trio in Claremont and informed other bandleaders he would be cancelling out of their gigs. He received considerable pushback on this from some, but his prescience – his partner is a doctor with UHN on the front lines – became clear as the enormity of the situation grew every day. None of us were going to be playing anywhere for some time to come. (As a sidebar, the Kitchener-Waterloo Jazz Society which runs the series at The Jazz Room paid the musicians half their fee for a cancelled March 28 gig, which was both generous and thoughtful. As we have seen, a crisis like this brings out the best and worst in people.)

I work on three fronts, so I'm more fortunate than most musicians who have lost their incomes as a result of having no gigs. Apart from music, I've worked for 30 years in the Great Library at Osgoode Hall, and the Law Society of Ontario has continued to pay salaries since it closed on March 15. I also collect my musician's pension and U of T continued to pay my salary through to the end of April. I'm extremely concerned about the lot of fellow musicians with less of a safety net and I hope they will be able to take advantage of CERB, which has offered financial support to those who don't qualify for UI. I know my son Lee, also a freelance musician, has received some help and I pray others will too. I think all musicians can agree there's not just a financial aspect to all of this; like all of us, I can't even say how much I miss playing and hanging in public or being able to go hear others play. I despair that it will be a long while before any of this comes back and



Steve Wallace, upright citizen, in isolation.

that it may never, fully.


At the same time, my role as a part-time jazz teacher at U of T was suspended March 13. I feel badly for the students who paid tuition for a full year and missed three or four weeks of instruction, but there was nothing much to be done about it. At least the school year was approaching the end and everyone will receive full credit for their year. I miss my students badly and have taken steps to reach out to them via Skype to make up the lessons and just stay in touch.

As to what I'm doing in the face of all this sudden suspension... well, I'm practising a lot

to stay in shape for gigs in the future, which in my case has been a mixed success. Practising is *not* performance and I realize as a bassist I need to *play* with other musicians to really knuckle down and do my job. I'm hoping to go out on the front porch to play some short little concerts for the neighbours but it's been far too cold for that. Playing jazz also has a mental component so I've been doing a lot of reading and cryptic crosswords to stay mentally sharp. And above all, now that I'm feeling better, I hope to do more writing on my blog, as my posts have become very infrequent due to being so busy. No such excuses now!

Speaking of which, here's a link to my latest post, *Alone Together: The COVID-19 Songbook*: [www.wallacebass.com/alone-together-the-covid-19-songbook](http://www.wallacebass.com/alone-together-the-covid-19-songbook)

And a YouTube link to a Mose Allison song I find particularly apt for these times: *Ever Since the World Ended*: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=KKwCCLIXhUM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KKwCCLIXhUM)

To everyone in the coming months, stay home, stay well, stay strong and stay in touch. 

*Toronto bassist Steve Wallace writes a blog called "Steve Wallace jazz, baseball, life and other ephemera" which can be accessed at [Wallace-bass.com](http://Wallace-bass.com). Aside from the topics mentioned, he sometimes writes about movies and food.*

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# Personal POV on the Pandemic

DAVID JAEGER

**T**he consequences of a pandemic are, as we have all experienced, incredibly far-reaching. The near complete closing down of life as we had known it has had such a sweeping affect on us all, we barely have any tangible evidence of what we might otherwise have accomplished in the spring of 2020. And of course, the projects we had proposed for this period of time all have roots in the past, with planned steps leading, one after the other, towards the completion of works of art we would have been proud to share with our public.

In my particular case, a unique project, several years in the making, was to have seen light of day in both Toronto and in Halifax late this past April. *Poetry and Song* was designed as a touring program in which I was to join two poets, a soprano and a pianist, to reveal not only recently composed art songs, but also to share the usually hidden processes used in the collaboration that led to the creation of these works.

The story of this collaboration begins nearly five years ago, when I first encountered the artistry of soprano Christina Raphaëlle Haldane. Ms. Haldane was pursuing her DMA at the University of Toronto Faculty of Music under the guidance of Professor Darryl Edwards, when I first heard her singing Handel arias. I was so struck by the beauty of her singing, I wanted to compose for her. And once I discovered the inspired poetry of her father, the Irish Canadian award-winning novelist and poet, Seán Haldane, I was convinced it should be his poetry I should set.

The ensuing events are best told by Haldane herself, in the notes to her new recording, *...let me explain*. She writes, "I have been musing

on Dad's words my entire life and am delighted to be finally able to sing them! My chance encounter with producer and composer David Jaeger occurred three weeks after my move back to Toronto in the fall of 2015. I was asked at the last minute to sing a recital of Handel arias at the Arts and Letters Club, and David happened to be in the audience that serendipitous day. An enriching collaboration and friendship has ensued, which led to the creation of *The Echo Cycle*, a song cycle conceived for my solo soprano voice, set to six of my Dad's poems. David gravitated towards poems with sonic overtones and captured their sense of boundlessness, at times playful, yet at times full of gravitas, with his thoughtful through-composed settings. My delight in virtuosity was duly humoured in this cycle, and these songs fit me like a vocal glove. I premiered *The Echo Cycle* on May 12, 2018."

*The Echo Cycle* has subsequently been released as part of *...let me explain* on the Redshift Records label. And the publication of Seán Haldane's newest collection of his poetry this spring only whets the appetite for further songs to come.

The collaboration with Haldane, the author, led me to connect with his friend, David Cameron, a Scottish poet and novelist living in Belfast, NI. Cameron is well known, having been awarded the Hennessy Literary Award for Poetry in 2014 for his collected poems published by Rune Press as *The Bright Tethers*. One of his poems, *Night Singing*, is in the school curriculum in Ireland. My interest in Cameron, however, was sparked by the inherent music I discovered in his verses, and I composed five songs for voice and piano, on Cameron poems that I found to be irresistible. Christina Haldane gave the premiere of the cycle, given the collective title *I Never Knew*, last November, in The Piano Lunaire series in Toronto, with pianist Adam Sherkin. Cameron and I have plans for another, larger-scale work, in which both music and poetry will interact.

With such a fruitful and, in fact, ongoing collaboration within our circle, it seemed a logical next step to organize public performances with the direct participation of the creators, poets Cameron and Haldane and me, the composer, and the interpreters of the new works, Christina and her accompanist, Carl Philippe Gionet. The opportunity to arrange for audiences to be able to meet creative partners in a current collaborative effort

led us to organize performances in which works of both the poets and composers were to be presented. These were to take place in Toronto and in Halifax, where Christina Haldane is now teaching as a faculty member of the Fountain School of Performing Arts at Dalhousie University. Dates with halls had been booked, travel grants were received, and hopes were high that the tour could go ahead.

Under the current circumstances, our planned events have been postponed, and can hopefully be rescheduled in the fall. Of course, it's too soon to be certain about anything, and planning has become an exercise in hypothesis making. Many artists have sought solutions through creative uses of technology, and certainly much will be learned in this respect. Composing and the writing of poetry continues, but its ultimate outlet remains, for now, a question. **●**

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



At the Crescent Theatre, Belfast in May 2019: (left to right) Carl Philippe Gionet, Christina R. Haldane, Seán Haldane, David Jaeger C. M., David Cameron

# Quarantine-Fuelled Recalibration

JENNIFER NICHOLS

**M**usic plays a role in absolutely everything I do, professionally and artistically! It is the reason why I started dancing as a child. I did play an instrument briefly as a teenager, but ultimately using my body as my instrument spoke to me more, and so this is the path I pursued. I danced for ten years with Opera Atelier, which deepened my love of Baroque music and introduced me to the world of opera. Through this exposure, I've been fortunate enough to create several choreographic works for opera companies, for both singers and dancers alike. Designing movement that complements vocal phrasing, not just for those who have to execute it, but for those experiencing it, is an entirely unique and satisfying process.

My work in television and film allows me to explore music from every different time period and of every genre, and this is thrilling. Often it means playing with the juxtaposition of a movement or dance scene with a very unexpected musical pairing, to achieve a narrative effect. And some of my favourite moments in this work is in the edit suite after everything has been shot, when we're working with scored music and overlaying it in precise moments to find a cadence that enhances the drama or expresses the choreography in a new light. Music can change not just how you hear, but how you 'see' everything.

My work as director of Hit and Run Dance Productions involves designing tailor-made performance experiences for any type of event or showcase, and this typically means selecting the music first, to create the mood or vibe. Everything else, including the choreography, follows from there. I'm the type of choreographer who visually designs the basic structure of piece in my mind once I hear the music. Music inspires and dictates everything I do, rather than approaching it from the movement first and then placing it on the score.

And finally, my ballet fitness company relies heavily on music, because all of our classes are conducted to curated playlists. Music is vital here; it has the power to lift the spirit of a room full of people, to give them energy to push through difficult physical exertion and to encourage that amazing endorphin release, the high that comes from movement. This is where I get to really play, to explore every genre of



Jennifer Nichols

GENEVIÈVE CARON

music, to discover new artists, play with rhythm, base line and flow. Curating these playlists and witnessing how they inspire my students is one of my favourite things to do!

Of all the things I was doing when COVID-19 hit, the one I have had to let go of completely is dancing in the presence of others. While we can still present work online, live performances with an audience and dancing together in the studio in a class setting or rehearsal is obsolete. This means absolutely all of my professional work has been affected.

Last Saturday (April 18) I was to have premiered a new piece for Esprit Orchestra's New Wave Festival, a solo work for Maurizio Azzan's "Where the here and now of nowhere is", with cellist Cameron Crozman. Sadly, this performance (and the entire festival) has been postponed, as have all performances and festivals around the world. Absolutely every artist across the globe has been affected.

All of our work for Hit and Run Dance Productions, has also ground to a halt, including an extraordinary site specific performance with conceptual artist Brendan Fernandez, 'Free Fall', at the Art Gallery of Ontario, which has likewise been postponed.

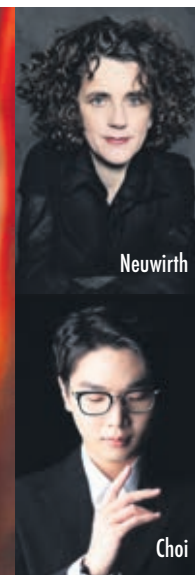
My studio, the Extension Room, is closed for business, as of course we cannot gather to dance and sweat together. Unfortunately, although we are government-mandated to shut down, we (along with other small businesses) are still obliged to pay our rent (which,

Sunday May 31, 2020 @ 8 Introduction @ 7:15  
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# Digitally Aided Rehearsals and Reminiscences

JACK MACQUARRIE

**T**his month's column is a very different perspective on the current status of music in our part of the world. There is no point in discussing in generalities the coronavirus pandemic. We have heard enough about it. As a columnist friend, Roger Varley, who writes for *Cosmos*, a weekly community newspaper in Uxbridge, recently remarked, "It's rather like going to a Luciano Pavarotti concert only to hear him sing *Nessun Dorma* over and over again for two hours." Instead, let's have a more specific look at how this pandemic is affecting our musical world, starting by dividing our musical world into two groups: performers and listeners (with, hopefully, almost all performers being listeners to forms of music other than that which they perform). The coronavirus has forced us all into quarantine.

## Performers

The regulations now in effect, affect music makers in several ways. First, as they stand, the laws have closed all possible locations where groups might rehearse or perform until further notice. Second, even if there were places, no groups larger than five individuals, other than those who live in the same location, are permitted to assemble. Third, all people in a group must maintain a separation of at least two metres.

For performers in bands, orchestras and choirs there are two major reasons why they regularly rehearse and perform. Yes, they are individuals who love to make music, but even more important, to make it with others. The social component is now missing. Many isolated members of bands, orchestras and choirs have now turned to their computers, cell phones and other electronic devices. They now socialize, play and sing with such Internet applications as Zoom and others. While far from the real thing, these help to maintain, at least, the social element of performing with friends.

Having observed a number of such online rehearsals of choral groups, the musical outcome is rarely of concert quality, or even rehearsal quality. On the other hand, with a suitably skilled individual orchestrating the event, and some means of synchronizing all parts, it can be quite satisfying for all participants. In most cases that I have seen, individual participants have been singing while filming themselves with their cell phones. I can't imagine attempting an online band rehearsal with tuba or trombone players taking selfies while playing.

## Listeners

As for online listening, I have seen an amazing (and amusing) variety of both animated and live selections. There are three performances which have captivated my attention enough to warrant returning to them periodically.

For a start I suggest a visit to a most entertaining performance of Erik Satie's *Gymnopédies* on YouTube, performed by the Cats and Friends Choir. Featuring the distinctive vocal sounds of cats, cows and sheep, the rendition is, to put it mildly, unique.

Just about the most entertaining musical work that I have heard and seen on the Internet is a rendition of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, featuring a full symphony orchestra broadcast in the format of a major football or hockey game. All of the orchestra members, including the conductor, have numbers on their backs. Moving about, all over the stage, is a referee in his striped jersey. When an orchestra member



KAROLINA KURAS

**Small business threat: Nichols' Extension Room faces closure due to "COVID-19, government inaction, and lack of landlord cooperation."**

in Toronto, is enormous) and all of our other operational costs. Sadly, this could mean the demise of at least half of the small businesses in the city.

Once circumstances allow, I am determined to pick up all the pieces! I am hoping that the shows I have been commissioned for will eventually find new dates. However, it may be a much longer time than we anticipated, before audiences will be able to gather for live performance.

Similarly, I'm hoping to be able to open my studio again; however it may be in a different location and context. My fitness program, the Extension Method, has already undergone a restructuring during quarantine. Since I cannot teach live groups, I currently teach free online classes, not only for my studio community, for but anyone who wishes to tune in and stay active at home. To be honest, there are some beautiful positives associated with this. I have reconnected with students who haven't been able to attend classes in person for years. My viewing audience has grown exponentially, and now I am reaching students across the globe. We, as humans, are resilient and creative.

I'm also continuing to work in the development stage of my creative projects, writing grants and virtually meeting with composers and writers for productions that will hopefully be presented down the road. My focus while in quarantine is to find ways to make art and movement viable and relevant in a different format. We don't know how long it will be before we can gather in groups as we did. There may be serious restrictions; the general public may nervous. The ultimate scenario, I believe, may be a tempered one, in that we find a balance between in-person and virtual experience, so I am working towards finding ways to present dance, theatre, music on screen in a new manner.

My husband is a filmmaker, and we have started exploring this -- for example speaking with a colleague, an opera singer, about ways to shoot and present dance with classical and new music in a manner that is appealing and accessible to children; and using the art of filmmaking to present a multi-dimensional experience involving several artists who don't have to be in the same place, or at least with minimized contact in a controlled environment. There are unlimited possibilities! **●**

*Jennifer Nichols is a dancer, choreographer (for both stage and screen), director and teacher (of dance and fitness) based in Toronto. Her work can be seen on screen in the upcoming Netflix series, *Tiny Pretty Things*, for which she is head choreographer.*

plays a wrong note, the referee raises his flag, gives him a penalty and sends him off stage. As in a team sports event, there is a box at the rear of the hall with two commentators discussing the performance. In the opening of this work, when the first four-note phrase is repeated, the commentators discuss why that phrase was repeated. So it goes throughout. For this one google PDQ Bach, Beethoven 5th and you will find it.

Another humorous performance is by the Competitive Foursome two violins, a cello, and piano engaged in the most amazing athletic manoeuvres while performing. To see this one: google Wettstreit zu viert.

For those without Internet access, there have been many excellent programs on TV and radio. On Easter Sunday I had the pleasure of seeing and hearing Andrea Bocelli, the blind Italian opera-singing icon, performing at the Duomo di Milano, the cathedral church of Milan in Italy. There he was standing alone with only the organist accompanying him. While he did sing other numbers, I will never forget his rendition of César Franck's *Panis Angelicus*.

Invited by the city of Milan and the church to spread a message of positivity, love and hope through the power of music, Bocelli, broke two of YouTube's biggest records: the biggest classical livestream event in the website's history; and also its biggest musical livestream of all time. According to *Variety*, that Music For Hope concert reportedly was seen and heard by more than 2.8 million "peak concurrent viewers" across the globe while it was actually happening.

### Reminiscing

For no particular reason, with so many musical activities curtailed for a while, I found myself exploring the deeper crevices of my brain known as the Reminiscence Department, where I found my way to radio feature programs of the 30s and 40s. In other words, pre-TV. For years one of the most popular radio programs was *Major Bowes' Amateur Hour* where once a week, amateur musical performers competed. If below a suitable standard, the Major hammered the Gong, and that competitor was gone. I remember one broadcast in which a girl from my home town was the top performer for that show, happened to be heard by big band leader Raymond Scott, and was hired to join his group. I have no idea as to how that worked out, but I did acquire a bit of fascination for Scott and his sometimes strange music.

Scott's original name was Harry Warnow, and he was the brother of Mark Warnow. Mark, a violinist, was the leader of the orchestra on the weekly broadcast called *Your Hit Parade*, sponsored by Lucky Strike cigarettes. Rather than ride on the coat tails of his well-known brother, Harry chose Raymond Scott as his stage name.

Scott's compositions for big swing band included some "almost



PAT NEAL

**Uxbridge Museum Heritage Day - I was dressed for the occasion and sitting on a bench that I donated.**

standard" ones like *Toy Trumpet* and *Powerhouse*. The ones that have fascinated me most include such strange titles as *Twilight in Turkey*, *In an 18th Century Drawing Room*, *New Year's Eve in a Haunted House*, and the amazing *Dinner Music for a Pack of Hungry Cannibals*. In 2011 his children produced a movie about him titled *Deconstructing Dad*. You never know what surprises will pop up on the internet, when you have time on your hands. **O**

*Jack MacQuarrie plays several brass instruments and has performed in many community ensembles. He can be contacted at [bandstand@thewholenote.com](mailto:bandstand@thewholenote.com).*

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The WholeNote listings are typically arranged in five sections:

**A. GTA (GREATER TORONTO AREA)** covers all of Toronto plus Halton, Peel, York and Durham regions (Zones 1, 2, 3, and 4 on the map below). Listings in section A are arranged by date and time.

*In this issue, there are no confirmed listings for Section A.*

**B. BEYOND THE GTA** (zones 5, 6, 7, and 8) is the remaining regions of Southern Ontario we regularly cover in our listings. Listings in section B are arranged by date and time.

*In this issue, there are no confirmed listings for Section B.*

**C. MUSIC THEATRE** covers a wide range of music types: from opera, operetta and musicals, to non-traditional performance types where words and music are “in some fashion equal partners in the drama.” Listings in section C are arranged alphabetically by presenter then by name of show.

*In this issue, there are no confirmed listings for Section C.*

**D. IN THE CLUBS (MOSTLY JAZZ)** is organized alphabetically by the name of the venue, followed by contact information and daily or recurring event details, if available, for that venue.

*In this issue all venues normally listed in Section D remain closed until further notice.*

**E. ETCETERAS** is for musical events *other than live performances*, such as galas, fundraisers, competitions, screenings, online and livestreamed events, lectures, symposia, masterclasses, workshops, singalongs and other date-specific music-related events which, in our discretion, we believe may be of interest to our readers.

*In this issue, all events submitted for listing fall into the realm of online and/or live-streamed activity.*

**HOW TO LIST:** Listings in *The WholeNote* in all five sections above, are a **free service**, available in our discretion, to eligible presenters. Where the upcoming issue is a single-month issue (September, October, November, February, March, April) the listings deadline is the **8th of the month** prior to the month covered by the issue. Where the upcoming issue is a two-month issue (December/January, May/June or July/August) the listings deadline is the **15th of the month** prior to the publication of the issue.

**UPCOMING LISTINGS DEADLINE:** The next issue covers the period from **July 1 to September 7, 2020**. All listings must be received by **11:59pm, Monday June 15**.

**HOW TO SUBMIT LISTINGS:** Listings may be sent to the attention of listings editor John Sharpe at [listings@thewholenote.com](mailto:listings@thewholenote.com), or by using the appropriate online form on our website at [thewholenote.com/applylistings](http://thewholenote.com/applylistings). Please note we do not receive listings by telephone, but you can call 416-323-2232 x27 for guidance or further information.

**HOW TO SEARCH OUR LISTINGS BY EXPANDED DATE RANGE OR GENRE:** visit [thewholenote.com/justask](http://thewholenote.com/justask)

# THE MAY AND JUNE THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN

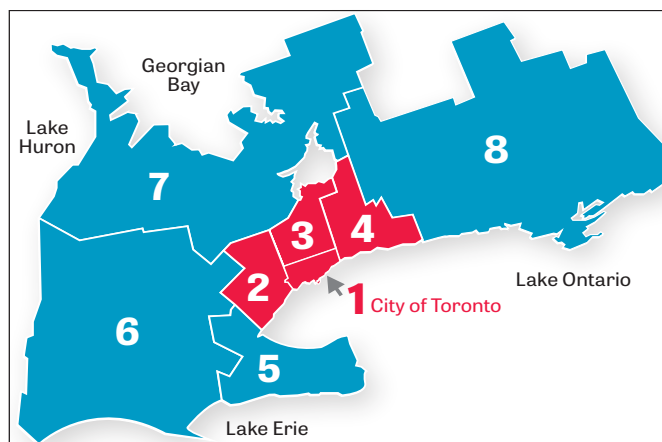
**I**n our previous issue, Volume 25 No. 7 (April 2020), we printed all of the listings we had received up to the time of going to press indicating cancellations and postponements for performances affected by COVID-19. We did so because we believed it was important to document the full extent of the immediate and widespread impact on the community of safety measures arising from efforts to combat the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

We are continuing to document this impact online, by retaining, rather than deleting, all of the impacted listings of which we had knowledge, and adding appropriate tags: cancelled, postponed; rescheduled. This information is available, in detail at “Just Ask” under the listings tab at [thewholenote.com](http://thewholenote.com), and is regularly updated as performers and presenters own plans for rescheduling these events crystallize.

However, since the impact of social and physical isolation measures is now, for the foreseeable future, all-encompassing, rather than page after page of listings for cancelled events, we offer the following summary. (We also encourage you to visit the websites of each of these presenters to find out the latest information on their plans for the future.)

- **SECTION A – GTA LISTINGS:** By the time this issue of *The WholeNote* went to press, we had received and processed 195 listings for the months of May and June from over 85 presenters in the GTA.
- **SECTION B – BEYOND THE GTA LISTINGS:** We had received 64 listings from over 30 presenters in the parts of Ontario beyond the GTA.
- **SECTION C – MUSIC THEATRE:** We had received 45 listings from over 25 music theatre presenters across all of Ontario.
- **SECTION D – IN THE CLUBS (MOSTLY JAZZ):** We typically list music, mostly jazz, taking place in from 30-40 clubs throughout the Greater Toronto Area. At time of press all remained shuttered. What follows on the next page is their basic web and telephone contact information so you can stay up to date on developments, venue by venue. (Some, we should add, are still open food and/or beverage takeout and delivery, so supporting them in these capacities now would be a way of showing appreciation for the role they play musically at other times.)
- **SECTION E – The ETCeteras:** all live Etcetera events are subject to the same constraints as in the previous sections. However significant numbers of online and live-streamed activities are emerging instead. Please see the next page.

*The WholeNote's Listings Editor, John Sharpe, can be reached at [listings@thewholenote.com](mailto:listings@thewholenote.com)*





## D. In the Clubs (Mostly Jazz)

### 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  
thebluegoosetavern.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  
burdockto.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.

### Emmet Ray, The

924 College St. 416-792-4497  
theemmetray.com (full schedule)  
All shows: No cover/PWYC

### 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

### Jazz Bistro, The

251 Victoria St. 416-363-5299  
jazzbistro.ca (full schedule)

### Jazz Room, The

Located in the Huether Hotel, 59 King St. N.,  
Waterloo. 226-476-1565  
kwjazzroom.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  
mezzettarestaurant.com (full schedule)

### Monarch Tavern

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

### N'awlins Jazz Bar & Dining

299 King St. W. 416-595-1958  
nawllins.ca  
All shows: No cover/PWYC.

### Nice Bistro, The

117 Brock St. N., Whitby. 905-668-8839  
nicebistro.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.

### Only Café, The

972 Danforth Ave. 416-463-7843  
theonlycafe.com (full schedule)

### Pilot Tavern, The

22 Cumberland Ave. 416-923-5716  
thepilot.ca  
All shows: 2:30pm. No cover.

### Poetry Jazz Café

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

### Reposado Bar & Lounge

136 Ossington Ave. 416-532-6474  
reposadobar.com (full schedule)

### Reservoir Lounge, The

52 Wellington St. E. 416-955-0887  
reservoirlounge.com (full schedule).

### Revolucion, La

2848 Dundas St. W. (416) 766-0746  
larevto.com (full schedule)

### Rex Hotel Jazz & Blues Bar, The

194 Queen St. W. 416-598-2475  
therex.ca (full schedule)  
Call for cover charge info.

### Salty Dog Bar & Grill, The

1980 Queen St. E. 416-849-5064  
thesaltydog.ca (full schedule)

### Sauce on Danforth

1376 Danforth Ave. 647-748-1376  
sauceondanforth.com  
All shows: No cover.

### The Senator Winebar

249 Victoria St 416 364-7517  
thesenator.com (full schedule)

### Tranzac

292 Brunswick Ave. 416-923-8137  
tranzac.org (full schedule)  
3-4 shows daily, various styles, in three different performance spaces. Mostly PWYC.

## E. Online, Live-Streams, ETCeteras

• **Brampton Folk Club.** *Online Open Mics via Zoom.* **May 22 7:30.** For information on how to join please contact info@bramptonfolk.ca, 647-233-3655, or visit [bramptonfolk.ca](http://bramptonfolk.ca).  
• **Canadian Brass:** welcomes friends around their virtual fireplace for learning and laughs. All events take place on [facebook.com/canadianbrass](https://facebook.com/canadianbrass).  
• **Canadian Opera Company** #Opera at Home is an initiative to share one clip **every day** on social media channels to help bring opera to our audiences during this challenging time. With one clip, every day at 11am there are already 44 of these for viewing, so you might have some catching up to do! Find the link on their homepage [coc.ca](https://coc.ca).  
• **Canzona Chamber Players.** *Jessica Tong, Violin: Livestream Solo Recital.* **May 31, 2:00. Livestream: YouTube.com/CanzonaChamberPlayers.**  
• **Canzona Chamber Players.** *Marie Bérard, Violin Livestream Solo Recital.* **May 17, 2:00: Livestream: YouTube.com/CanzonaChamberPlayers.**  
• **Canzona Chamber Players.** *Winona Zelenka, Cello: Livestream Benefit Solo Recital.* **May 03, 2:00** Donations to the St. Michael's Hospital COVID-19 Courage Fund, in memory of Elizabeth Krehm, can be made at [tinyurl.com/couragefund](https://tinyurl.com/couragefund). Livestream: [YouTube.com/CanzonaChamberPlayers](https://YouTube.com/CanzonaChamberPlayers).  
• **Classical Jukebox** Founded as a response to the days of Covid19 social separation, this site is designed to provide you the ability to sing and perform your favorite classical pieces from the comfort of your own home, with accompaniments by organ and piano accompanist, Matthew Larkin. In addition, Classical Jukebox offers another service - assisting with the creation of Virtual Choirs and virtual choir videos for those missing that collaborative and artistic outlet in their lives.

[classicaljukebox.ca](https://classicaljukebox.ca)

• **Danny Michel** *Live From Lockdown* Sundays, **May 03, May 10, May 17, May 24, May 31, at 3:00.** A weekly live, interactive online concert on Sundays at 3pm, on ZOOM from his studio in the woods. Unlike Facebook live, fans can see each other, interact, chat, play along & be a part of the show. Buy a ticket for \$7.00, get a private link in your email and join the party on Zoom (free download available) [dannymichel.com](https://dannymichel.com)  
• **Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony** *Friday Night with the KWS.* Online broadcasts of archival concerts every **Friday at 8pm.** Select broadcasts will feature video and others will be audio-only. Content for each concert will be announced each week via KWS social media platforms. [facebook.com/kwsymphony](https://facebook.com/kwsymphony) and [youtube.com/user/kwsymphony/videos](https://youtube.com/user/kwsymphony/videos).  
• **Koerner Hall CONCERTS FROM HOME** There are more than 25 classical jazz, and roots music concerts currently available online. See page 22 for details. [rcmusic.com/performance/live-from-koerner-hall-concert-livestream](https://rcmusic.com/performance/live-from-koerner-hall-concert-livestream).  
• **Music Gallery and Canadian Music Centre** *Music Gallery At Home: Performances and Interviews.* May 1, Suzanne Kite; May 8, Slowpitchsound; May 15, Nick Dourado; May 22, Charles C. Smith. [facebook.co/musicgalleryto](https://facebook.co/musicgalleryto).  
• **Ori Dagan** *A series for Jazz Appreciation Month*, every Thursday at 7pm. [facebook.com/oridaganjazz](https://facebook.com/oridaganjazz).  
• **Piano Lunaire.** *Flower Moon.* **May 7, 7:30** Adam Sherkin, piano. Livestream event without audience. For information, call 416-535-4612. Suggested donation only. Online at [universe.com](https://universe.com) Due to the ongoing pandemic, The Piano Lunaire will present all upcoming events online until further notice. They can be

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viewed on Instagram and **Facebook LIVE**: @thepianolunaire.

● **Pocket Concerts.** Lucas Dann Live from Amsterdam. **May 10, 10:00am.** Lucas Dann, piano. Presented via Livestream on Youtube. \$20; \$5(arts/healthcare/child). Ticket holders will be sent a link to this unlisted broadcast, and the link will stay open for 12 hours. 647-896-8295. Tickets are available at [pocketconcerts.ca](http://pocketconcerts.ca).

● **Recollectiv:** Currently holding on-line meetings. A unique musical group made up of people affected by memory challenges caused by illness (such as dementia) or brain injury (stroke, PTSD, etc.) and their care partners. Volunteers of all ages also form part of the band, making this a positive intergenerational experience for all. Participation is free with pre-registration. **May 02, May 9, 16, 23, 30, June 6, 13, & 20.** Contact [info@recollectiv.ca](mailto:info@recollectiv.ca) for meeting times, information and registration. [recollectiv.ca](http://recollectiv.ca)

● **Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts.** a·P·art {of} performance series, every Thursday at 7:30pm on [facebook.com/RHCPA](https://www.facebook.com/RHCPA).

● **Small World Music and Music Together.** **May 7.** Livestreams hourly, beginning at 11:00am, Abbas Janmohamed; 12:00noon, Arnab Chakrabarty; 1:00pm: Karla Garcia; 2:00pm, Sardaar Mohamadani; 3:00pm, NaMaNa; 4:00pm, Padideh Ahrarnejad and Ali Massoudi; 5:00pm, Amely Zhou; 6:00pm, Shaho Andalibi; 7:00pm, Majd Sekkar. [facebook.com/smallworldmusic](https://www.facebook.com/smallworldmusic)

● **Suite Melody Care:** virtual performances created for hospital patients and elderly in Canada and the United States to bring them some joy through music during these challenging times, in the safety and comfort of their own rooms and with their own personal devices. The first of these performance videos is available at [youtu.be/UEg4YsVvHdk](https://youtu.be/UEg4YsVvHdk) [suitemelodycare.com](http://suitemelodycare.com).

● **Toronto Symphony Orchestra:** The TSO Facebook page hosts a regular series on Facebook Live on Tuesday and Friday afternoons called #TSOatHome. The TSO can also be found on Instagram (@torontosymphony), on Twitter (@TorontoSymphony), and YouTube [youtube.com/user/TorontoSymphony](https://www.youtube.com/user/TorontoSymphony). Orchestra members are also represented on Facebook and other platforms. They share content on Facebook (TSO Musicians), Instagram (tsomusicians) and Twitter (@TSOmusicians). The TSO has also partnered with The Toronto Star for a collection of "Musical Moments" on Thursdays, [thestar.com/musicalmoments](https://www.thestar.com/musicalmoments).

● **URGNT Live** This ad hoc crowd-funded livestream concert series was created in response to the covid-19 outbreak. You can pay a cover charge which will contribute to paying a nominal fee to all involved parties, and help with lost gigs and wages as a result of the quarantine. Presenting a wide range of performances, including, on May 8, a 10-show, one day festival that includes the Gryphon Trio, and Stewart Goodyear [urgnt.ca](http://urgnt.ca).

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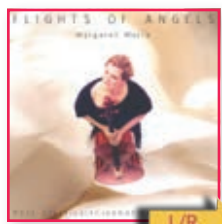
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# Editor's Corner

DAVID OLDS



L/R

While I don't personally put much store in celestial beings, in these dire times I concede that we need all the help, comfort and support we can get anywhere we can find it. It seems that the extraordinary cellist **Margaret Maria** firmly believes in angels, and they are an ongoing source of inspiration in her work. Her latest, **Flights of Angels** ([enchanten.bandcamp.com](http://enchanten.bandcamp.com)),

once again creates an orchestral texture by

combining many layers of sounds generated by her solo cello. From the artist's website ([enchanten.com](http://enchanten.com)) we learn this is meant to be: "Healing music being released into a broken world. Music created from otherworldly energies and the spirit world that can only be felt when you open your spirit to the invisible that exists just beyond what we can see. This music represents my spiritual journey in finding my music and moments of subconscious/dream states where I felt compelled to move in a certain direction, as if guided by a light towards an idea or emotion..."

Beginning with *Snow Angel*, "overjoyed by the dancing snowflakes as they descend upon her wings," we embark upon a journey that takes us through many states of being and consciousness: *An Impossible Gift* (to feel everything, to be a channel for both the dark and the light); *An Angel for Maria* (a special angel or spirit... one of the most beautiful Angels); *Another World Opens* (limitless, timeless, expansive); *Tears of an Angel* (listening to the sadness in the world); *Passing Through* (reality passes in and out of consciousness and finally, through); *Breathtaking Light* (a liminal light... made of half earth and half heaven); *What If* (...what if / In your dream / You went to heaven / And there plucked a strange and beautiful flower...); *Floating Hope* (the strongest emotion that keeps propelling me forward is hope...); *And They Kept Kissing* (heaven on earth to my tortured soul); *Be Love* (...a place where I can float in a space of love) and finally *Princes of Heaven* (I have been sent four Archangels in my life...).

Having disclosed my scepticism of celestial creatures I must consider it a coincidence that as I write this on April 21 while listening to *Snow Angel* I am enchanted to find myself watching a veritable blizzard outside my window. It has now passed and it's a beautiful,

albeit blustery, sunny day. Hopefully, like the late season snow, the COVID-19 virus too shall pass quickly. In the interim I take heart from Margaret Maria's music. It does have healing powers, if the calm and gentle invigoration I've been feeling while listening is any indication.

As with almost everyone I am sure, self-isolation (with my dear wife Sharon) has curtailed much of my activity, foremost that of making music with other people. As regular readers will know, I am an avid amateur cellist, and in the months before this lockdown my string quartet had been working on several movements from Richard Krug's arrangement of Schubert's *Winterreise*. We were almost ready to bring in a singer to work with us when the pandemic reared its ugly head and all bets were off for the moment. I first encountered the string quartet version several years ago when I received a recording with baritone Johan Reuter and the Copenhagen String Quartet, of which Krug is the cellist (you can find my April 2018 review at [thewholenote.com](http://thewholenote.com)). Last fall, in my first outing following knee replacement surgery, I had the pleasure of experiencing a live performance by Daniel Lichti and the Penderecki String Quartet, during which I found myself thinking, hey, I could play (at least some of) that! I contacted Krug and purchased the score and parts to his arrangement and shortly after began to rehearse with my friends.



I look forward to getting back to rehearsal as soon as this crisis is over, but in the interim another interesting transcription has come my way. **Winterreise for string quartet** (Solo Musica SM 335 [naxosdirect.com](http://naxosdirect.com)) is a purely instrumental version of the classic song cycle arranged by Andreas Hrricht, violist of the featured **Voyager Quartet**. Hrricht

has taken half of the original songs and linked them with intermezzi of his own design to make a 50-minute suite (the entire cycle spans about 75 minutes). I have mixed feelings about the result. While it works quite well in its own right, and of course Schubert's tunes are among the finest, I still miss the singer and the emotional content provided by the words. And I miss some of the songs, most particularly two of the ones my group has been focused on, *Die Wetterfahne* and *Erstarrung*, this latter presenting

What we're listening to this month:

[thewholenote.com/listening](http://thewholenote.com/listening)


## Flight of Angels Margaret Mara

Transcendent healing music being released into a broken world. Music dreamed of, composed, performed and produced by a uniquely inspirational Canadian artist.



## Giuseppe Clemente Dall'Abaco: Cello Sonatas

Elinor Frey  
Passacaille Records and Elinor Frey, with Federica Bianchi, Giangiacomo Pinard, and Mauro Valli, present the first recording of cello sonatas by Giuseppe Clemente Dall'Abaco.



## Imp in Impulse Barbara Kolarova

Bracing solo violin recording by virtuoso Czech violinist including the premiere of Pascal Le Boeuf's title piece alongside two underrepresented 20th century masterpieces.



## nocturnes & lullabies Richard Valitutto

Beautifully curated and performed album of inward looking piano compositions that challenge conventional ideas about virtuosity.



the most difficult challenge to the cellist in Krug's arrangement and the one on which I have spent the most time and effort. That being said, Höricht's interludes provide useful bridges between the selected songs and bring a contemporary sensibility without being particularly jarring. He has chosen seven songs from the first 19 of the cycle, but presents the final five in sequence ending, of course, with the *Der Leiermann* (The Hurdy-Gurdy man) in a suitably haunting performance.

I say "of course" but in another transmogrification of *Winterreise* this was not the case. In January of this year Philippe Sly and the Chimera Project brought a live performance of their stunning Klezmer/Roma arrangement for baritone, violin, clarinet, trombone and accordion to Koerner Hall. In their rendition – fully staged and performed entirely from memory – the evening begins with a surprisingly peppy instrumental version of the opening song *Gute Nacht* before proceeding through the other 23 songs in order. After *Der Leiermann* with the singer accompanied by the quartet, instead of being the end of the performance, Sly, alone on the stage, then gave a chilling rendition of *Gute Nacht* accompanying himself on the hurdy-gurdy. It was unsettling and has stayed with me ever since. You can find Pamela Margles' June 2019 review of the Chimera Project Analekta recording at [thewholenote.com](http://thewholenote.com).



Other than the music of Peter Sculthorpe, I'm not well versed in Australian culture or repertoire, but from the opening strains of Hilary Kleinig's *Great White Bird* on the **Zephyr Quartet's** new CD **Epilogue** ([navonarecords.com](http://navonarecords.com)) I knew I was listening to music from Down Under, with its drones, overtones and distinctive rhythms. Touted as

Australia's "leading genre-defying explorers of dynamic cross-artform, multi-focused collaborations," Zephyr was founded in 1999 and has since garnered numerous awards and accolades. The members all compose, arrange and improvise and their latest release brings together works written by them between 2013 and 2019. Cellist Kleinig contributes three tuneful works, *Cockatoos* and *Exquisite Peace* in addition to the opening number. Violinist Belinda Gehlert is represented by the three-movement tribute to notorious women *Femme Fatale* and the concluding title track. Violinist Emily Tulloch and violist Jason Thomas each contribute a pair. Tulloch's *Blindfold Gift* starts as a gentle pizzicato meditation which turns into a minimalist lilting jig of sorts. Much like the disc itself, Thomas' *Time's Timeless Art*, the longest selection, is one extended harmonious arch in which time indeed seems to stand still. A balm for these troubled times.



**Treasures from the New World (Somm Recordings SOMMCD 0609** [naxosdirect.com](http://naxosdirect.com)) features piano quintets by **Amy Beach** (1867-1944) and **Henrique Oswald** (1852-1931) performed by **Clélia Iruzun** and the **Coull Quartet**. Beach's *Piano Quintet* dates from 1908 and had more than 40 performances during her lifetime. She premiered it with the Kneisel Quartet, with

whom she had previously performed the quintets of Schumann and Brahms. While exhibiting both a distinctive and mature voice, the work acknowledges the early influence of those two masters.

Although Beach has been receiving well-deserved attention recently and recordings of her music are proliferating – there are currently 19 titles listed on [Grigorian.com](http://Grigorian.com) – Henrique Oswald is a new name to me. He was born in Brazil of Swiss and Italian parents and after early studies in São Paulo he travelled to Italy to study and remained in Florence for some 30 years. He returned to Brazil in 1902 where he accepted the post of director of the Instituto Nacional de Música in Rio de Janeiro. His influences were primarily the French Romantics and he was dubbed "the Brazilian Fauré" by his friend Arthur Rubinstein. Composed in 1895, toward the end of his sojourn in Florence, the *Piano Quintet* reflects not only his fondness of French idioms, its

outer movements look back to the music of Robert Schumann, making a wonderful pairing with Beach's quintet.

The charming disc also includes a short work for piano and ensemble by Brazilian Marlos Nobre (b.1939) who says "I can say I am a contemporary composer still capable of writing a beautiful melody," and Beach's celebrated *Romance for Violin and Piano* with Iruzun and Roger Coull. The performances throughout are idiomatic and compelling.



The final disc that caught my attention this month also features music from the New World, in this case mid-to-late century works by distinguished American composers. **Aspects of America: Pulitzer Edition (PentaTone PTC 5186 763** [pentatonemusic.com](http://pentatonemusic.com)) features Pulitzer Prize-winning works by **Walter Piston**, **Morton Gould** and **Howard Hanson**

performed by the **Oregon Symphony** under **Carlos Kalmar**. It was Hanson (1896-1981) that drew me to this disc, as he was the one to convince Canadian icon John Weinzweig to pursue a master's degree at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester NY, where he studied under Bernard Rogers in the years before WW2. Although not a result of the formal teaching he received there, this period proved seminal in Weinzweig's development by virtue of his exposure to 12-tone composition through the works of Alban Berg which he found in the school library. While he didn't become a strict serialist, Weinzweig did incorporate dodecaphonic principles into his own compositions, seemingly the first Canadian to do so, and later passed them on to his own students at the University of Toronto.

Hanson, himself, was considered a neo-Romantic composer by his peers. He personally rejected the serial approach although he did incorporate some dissonance and bi-tonality in his work. He won the Pulitzer in 1944 for his *Symphony No.4, Op.34 "Requiem."* This is one of seven symphonies and Hanson claimed it as his favourite. It's in four movements, named for parts of the Catholic Mass for the Dead: *Kyrie, Resquiescat, Dies irae* and *Lux aeterna*. Although the earliest work here, it is placed last on the program, with its "eternal light" providing an uplifting and ethereal closing to the disc. There is no mention in the notes as to whether the symphony references the global war that was raging at the time of composition.

Chronologically next, Piston's *Symphony No.7*, is the first selection on the disc. Piston (1894-1976) studied in France with Nadia Boulanger and Paul Dukas after attending Harvard, where he later taught from 1926 until retiring in 1960. His illustrious students included the likes of Elliott Carter and Leonard Bernstein. His textbook, *Harmony*, was published in 1941 and is still in use today. The Pulitzer he won in 1961 for the *Seventh Symphony* was actually his second, the first being awarded for his *Third Symphony* in 1948. The Seventh starts ponderously but soon develops into a driving *Con moto* before receding quietly. This is followed by a meditative *Andante pastorale* movement; the symphony finishes with a boisterous *Allegro festevole*.

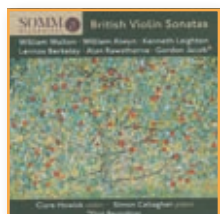
The most recent work is *Stringmusic* by Morton Gould (1913-1996) which won the Pulitzer in 1995. It was written for Mstislav Rostropovich and "showcases all the possible sounds and colours of a string orchestra," although anyone familiar with Penderecki's *Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima* might disagree. It's a lyrical five-movement work – *Prelude, Tango, Dirge, Ballad and Strum (perpetual motion)* – which serves as a fitting monument to the life of a man whose eclectic career spanned vaudeville and Tin Pan Alley to Broadway and concert halls around the world. This excellent disc is part of an ongoing tribute to American music from PentaTone and the Oregon Symphony. ●

We invite submissions. CDs, DVDs and comments should be sent to: [DISCoveries](mailto:DISCoveries), [WholeNote Media Inc.](http://WholeNoteMediaInc.com), The Centre for Social Innovation, 503 – 720 Bathurst St. Toronto ON M5S 2R4.

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# STRINGS ATTACHED

TERRY ROBBINS



English violinist **Clare Howick** garnered rave reviews for her previous five CDs of violin music by British composers, and it's easy to hear why with her latest contribution to the genre, **British Violin Sonatas** with pianist **Simon Callaghan** (SOMM SOMMCD 0610 [naxosdirect.com](http://naxosdirect.com)).

The six composers represented were exact contemporaries: Gordon Jacob (1895-1984); William Walton (1902-83); Lennox Berkeley (1903-89); Alan Rawsthorne (1905-71); William Alwyn (1905-85); and Kenneth Leighton (1929-88). Walton's *Sonata* and Alwyn's *Sonatina* are quite beautiful works which leave you wondering why they're not heard more often; Leighton's *Sonata No.1* is another absolute gem.

The three short but delightful Jacob pieces – *Elegy*, *Caprice* and *Little Dancer* – are premiere recordings. Three more short but lovely pieces – Rawsthorne's *Pierrette: Valse Caprice* and Berkeley's *Elegy Op.33 No.2* and *Toccata Op.33 No.3* – complete an enthralling recital.

Howick plays with a gorgeous free-flowing rhapsodic strength and passion, matched by Callaghan in all respects. Superb recorded sound and balance, with a rich, deep and sonorous piano and full, warm violin add to a simply outstanding disc.



My sheet of notes for **Grieg - The Violin Sonatas**, the stunning Super Audio CD by Norwegian violinist **Eldbjørg Hemming** and Macedonian pianist **Simon Trpčeski** (BIS-2456 [naxosdirect.com](http://naxosdirect.com)) has one word at the top – “Wow!!” – that could easily suffice as the entire review.

It should come as no surprise that

Hemming has an innate affinity for the music of Norway's favourite musical son, but the high level of her interpretation here is still a real ear-opener, with big, spacious and expansive playing in the *Sonatas No.1 in F Major Op.8, No.2 in G Major Op.13 and No.3 in C Minor Op.45*. Trpčeski is a fine partner, clearly at one with Hemming in all respects.

Hemming's own solo violin composition *Homecoming - Variations on a folk tune from Valdres* – showcases a tune her great-great-grandfather sang that found its way into Grieg's solo piano *Ballade Op.24*. It's a brief tour de force that provides a fitting end to an outstanding CD.

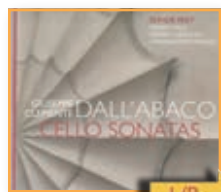


Erich Wolfgang Korngold was an astonishingly precocious and gifted musical talent, considered in his early years in Austria to be the greatest composer prodigy since Mozart. Evidence of his youthful abilities is paired with the most popular work from his later years in Hollywood on **Korngold Violin Concerto & String Sextet** with violinist **Andrew Haveron**, the RTÉ Concert Orchestra under **John Wilson**, and the **Sinfonia of London Chamber Ensemble** (Chandos CHAN 20135 [naxosdirect.com](http://naxosdirect.com)).

Although fully revised in 1945, the concerto was actually drafted in 1937 before Korngold moved to America. Essentially reworking

material from his 1930s Hollywood film scores, it's an unashamedly romantic work in sweeping cinematic style, and given a terrific performance by Haveron, whose lustrous tone combines brilliance and warmth in an immensely satisfying recording.

Haveron is also first violin in the *Sextet*, a remarkably impressive four-movement work written when Korngold was only 17. While there are shades of Brahms and hints of early Schoenberg, an eminent critic at the premiere wrote that Korngold's signature was unmistakable from the very first bar.



Cellist-composer Giuseppe Clemente Dall'Abaco (1710-1805) was esteemed throughout the major European musical centres, but while his unaccompanied 11 *Caprices* have been published his 35 accompanied sonatas remain virtually unknown. Five of them – the *Sonatas in A Major ABV30, C Minor ABV32, D Minor ABV35, VII in C Major ABV18 and VIII in G Major ABV19*, the latter usually incorrectly attributed to Sammartini – are featured on **Dall'Abaco Cello Sonatas**, a delightful CD from the Montreal-based cellist **Elinor Frey**, accompanied by Mauro Valli (cello), Federica Bianchi (harpsichord) and Giangiacomo Pinardi (archlute) (*Passacaille 1069 passacaille.be*).

The music is Italianate and full of sunlight and brilliance. In her excellent and extensive booklet notes, Frey comments on Dall'Abaco's experimenting with newly fashionable qualities that we now associate with *galant* or pre-classical music, and on the many characteristics which we identify with better-known cello music from later decades by the likes of Boccherini or Haydn.

It is indeed cello music that “remains fresh, audacious, alluring and often utterly beautiful,” and is a significant contribution to the early cello repertoire. Frey's critical edition of the complete 35 cello sonatas of Dall'Abaco is due to be published by Edition Walhall this year.



**Imp in Impulse** is the outstanding debut solo CD by the Czech violinist **Barbora Kolářová**. The title work was written for her by the American composer Pascal Le Boeuf and receives its premiere recording here, Jean Françaix's *Theme with 8 Variations for Solo Violin* and Klement Slavický's *Partita for Solo Violin* completing the disc (**Furious Artisans**

**FACD6822 [furiousartisans.com](http://furiousartisans.com)).**

Kolářová says that she loves searching for pieces that are generally unknown and unrecorded, and that speak to her artistically and

[thewholenote.com/listening](http://thewholenote.com/listening)



**Nuits Blanches**  
**Karina Gauvin**; Pacific Baroque Orchestra; Alexander Weimann  
White Night is a much anticipated new recording by soprano Karina Gauvin, who stylishly animates the opera heroines of the 18th century Russian court.



**Jacques Hétu: Concertos**  
**Jean-Philippe Sylvestre; Alain Trudel**; Orchestre symphonique de Laval  
This album marks the 10th anniversary of the death of Canadian composer Jacques Hétu, featuring Piano Concerto No. 2 and Trombone Concerto.



emotionally; her desire to record these compositions and to be the first to share them with the world was the impetus for this CD.

Certainly all three works here have a great deal to offer, with the Slavický *Partita* particularly impressive. Kolářová plays with a remarkably strong, rich tone, terrific rhythmic drive and technical brilliance: you can watch her perform the title work on YouTube.



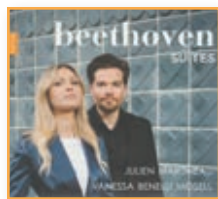
Only two of the three Schumanns featured on **Un moment musical chez les Schumanns**, the new CD from cellist **Cyrielle Golin** and pianist **Antoine Mourlas** were related, but you'd never know it from the music (**Klarthe Ko93 klarthe.com**).

Robert Schumann's *Fünf Stücke im Volkston Op.102* is paired with sonatas by the German brothers Georg and Camillo

Schumann, both gifted organists, pianists, conductors and composers. From a compositional viewpoint their not being well known may be due to the traditional style of their relatively late works, as well as the overwhelming influence of Johannes Brahms which indirectly unites their sonatas with the Robert Schumann work.

The *Sonata Op.19* by Georg Schumann (1866–1952) is from 1897; the *Sonata No.1 Op.59* by his brother Camillo (1872–1946) from the even later date of 1905. Both are impressive three-movement works in the strongest German Romantic tradition – sweeping, passionate writing which is way above the merely competent.

Fine and resonant performances make for a fascinating CD.



There's more than just **Beethoven Suites** on the new mandolin and piano CD from **Julien Martineau** and pianist **Vanessa Benelli Mosell** that features works either by Beethoven or inspired by his fondness for the erstwhile folk instrument (**Naïve V7083 naxosdirect.com**).

Beethoven is represented by four short works: the *Adagio ma non troppo WoO43b*;

the two *Sonatinas in C Minor WoO43a* and *C Major WoO44a* and the *Andante con variazioni WoO44b*. The *Allegretto* from *Symphony No.7* is heard in a transcription by Hans Sitt.

The major work on the CD is by Beethoven's direct contemporary Johann Nepomuk Hummel – his *Grande sonate Op.37a*, rightly described as a masterpiece. Fritz Kreisler's *Rondino on a Theme by Beethoven*, an arrangement of Walter Murphy's pop hit *A Fifth of Beethoven* and Corentin Apparailly's *Lettre à l'immortelle bien-aimée*, written especially for this CD, complete the disc.

Martineau handles the technical challenges effortlessly and musically, with Mosell finding a nice balance between the original keyboard sound and the modern piano, never allowing the accompaniment to sound too heavy or overwhelming.



The remarkable Vivaldi Edition project created by musicologist Alberto Basso and the Naïve record label to record all 450 pieces in the collection of Vivaldi's own personal scores in the National Library in Turin reaches **Volume 63** with **Vivaldi Concerti per violino VIII 'Il teatro'**, with the French violinist **Julien Chauvin** and **Le Concert de la Loge**, the ensemble he

founded in 2015 (**Naïve OP 30585 backl.ink/107881253**).

There are six concertos here: in *C Major RV187*; *B Minor RV387*; *D Minor RV235*; *D Major RV217*; *G Minor RV321*; and *B-flat Major RV366 'Il Carbonelli'*. All are in the Fast-Slow-Fast three-movement form established by Vivaldi, with the D major concerto a particular stand-out with its lovely slow movement and dazzling finale.

Chauvin provides impeccable solo playing, with a bright, resonant clarity supported by a strong continuo and bass in works that the

booklet essay rightly notes exhibit clear links with Vivaldi's vocal music.



Silk Road violinist **Johnny Gandelman** follows up his outstanding *Sonatas & Partitas* with **JS BACH: COMPLETE CELLO SUITES Transcribed for Violin**, including the first-ever recording of the *Sixth Suite* on a five-string violin (**In A Circle Records ICR013 johnnygandelman.com**).

There's no booklet, so it's not clear exactly what Gandelman means in the promo blurb quote: "In the violin pieces, I tried to follow the manuscript as much as I could. The cello suites feel different. What I see is an implication for infinite possibilities, the way an incredible improviser can find endless variation within the simplest form." Cellos are tuned an octave and a fifth lower than violins – CGDA as opposed to GDAE – and with the exception of the *Suite No.6 in D Major* the suites here are transposed to the corresponding violin *string*, e.g. from G major to D major, or from D minor to A minor. Other than that, it's difficult to discern any major changes without the benefit of a score.

Certainly Gandelman brings the same effortless control and musicianship to these suites as he did to the *Sonatas & Partitas*, and once you get used to the much higher register and resulting lack of tonal depth it's a truly engrossing and enlightening journey.



Gandelman is also the first violinist in the string quartet **Brooklyn Rider**, whose new 2CD set **Healing Modes** pairs Beethoven's *String Quartet No.15 in A Minor Op.132* with five short works written for the performers in an exploration of the power of music to heal body, mind and spirit (**In A Circle Records IRC014 brooklynrider.com**).

The lengthy central *Adagio molto – Andante* of Beethoven's quartet reflected a period when he was recovering from a serious intestinal infection, and the new works address topics ranging from personal illness through mental health to current social issues. Compositions by Matana Roberts, Reena Esmail, Gabriela Lena Frank, Du Yun and Caroline Shaw are placed around and between the first three of the five Beethoven movements, which tends to weaken the impact of the latter without notably adding to that of the new works.

How successful you feel this is will probably depend to a large extent on how comfortable you are with contemporary string works and their juxtaposition with traditional, albeit forward-looking masterpieces.



Violinist **Peter Sheppard Skærved** continues his fascinating series **The Great Violins** with the 2CD **Volume 3: Antonio Stradivari, 1685 – The Klagenfurt Manuscript** (**athene ath23206 naxosdirect.com**).

The manuscript, which also dates from the mid-1680s was found in a Carinthian convent, and Skærved offers the opinion that the anonymous composer was probably one of the nuns or lay sisters. All 96 movements for solo violin are recorded here, the overwhelming majority of them only between one and two minutes in length. An astonishing 51 involve any one of six scordaturas – retuning of the strings – although it's difficult to identify the resulting "striking changes in colour and timbre" that Skærved references in his extensive and extraordinarily detailed booklet essay that explores every possible aspect of the challenges and possibilities that he encountered in the project.

It's a record of a quite remarkable personal journey of discovery, and while not a set for the casual listener, it's an absolute mine of information for anyone interested in the violin music of the period. ●



# Keyed In

**Beethoven – The Complete Piano Concertos**  
**Stewart Goodyear; BBC National Orchestra of Wales; Andrew Constantine**  
**Orchid Classics ORC100127 (naxosdirect.com)**



► Fond of storytelling, the dauntless Stewart Goodyear has long been associated with Ludwig van Beethoven, preferring a cyclic approach to the composer's catalogue. Dubbed "The New Testament" of keyboard literature, Beethoven's 32 sonatas have frequently been performed by Goodyear in a single day; he has also recorded the

full cycle.

Now, a recent release from Orchid Classics features yet another testament: the five piano concertos, spanning three full discs, in chronological order. In the opening essay of the liner notes, Goodyear recounts his first meeting with *the concerti*, at age nine: "...great theatre, great drama, great virtuosity, and most importantly, great merriment. I felt like I was hearing Beethoven the entertainer, the actor, the storyteller, the playwright."

Goodyear's considerable success at performing the complete cycle of sonatas has led him to this point: the concertos. He continues to probe the multifaceted nature of Beethoven's craft – as he's outlined in the observation above. With evolving depth of knowledge and stylistic insight, Goodyear celebrates these cornerstones of the concerto catalogue, aiming for a kind of narrative arc, from the youthful first, *Op.15* to the fifth, *Op.73*, the "Emperor." Choice of orchestral collaborator for this ambitious project has been apt: Andrew Constantine and the BBC National Orchestra of Wales coexist with Goodyear's musical vision, offering an attractive kind of vigour and dedication.

Like the impressive lineage of Beethoven exponents before him, Goodyear retains a pianistic perspective that is invariably clear and pronounced. If anything, he seems galvanized by the past achievements of great artists who have recorded this repertoire – Alfred Brendel, Wilhelm Kempff and Artur Schnabel, to name but a few: mighty company indeed!

Adding various touches of his own, Goodyear experiments with early Romantic rubato, often shaping musical lines in unusual ways. His choice of tempi can tend toward surprise, as he takes characterful

liberties and rests, seldom ventured by others. He does prove master of quicksilver textural changes; at best, these sharp turns offer rushes of excitement, steering the listener headlong from one structural pillar to the next, leaping – bounding – along the way. The manner is particularly effective in cadenzas and freer passages which are delivered with the utmost control and technical tang.

Goodyear's approach is consistently individual, finding niches to exploit for his own particular brand of music-making. Sometimes, the curious ebbs and flows of inflection betray unusual rhythmic pacing. Nevertheless, within such melodic curves, microstructures of motivic design are revealed – that very well might be Goodyear's intention! Omnipresent is a low-fi, headlong sense of chase: a playful, almost childlike glee detected in much of the fast, rhythmic material, particularly in the early concertos, *Nos.1 and 2*.

There are moments of tenderness and cajoling here that tug at our hearts – a side of Beethoven one should hardly forget about. As faithful soloist, Goodyear opens up to us with valiant vulnerability. As per his own claim, this "vulnerability" is a quality learned from Beethoven's 32 sonatas and apparently, one he continues to enshrine.

**Adam Sherkin**

**Schubert – Late Inspirations**  
**Mathieu Gaudet**  
**Analekta AN 2 9182 (analekta.com)**



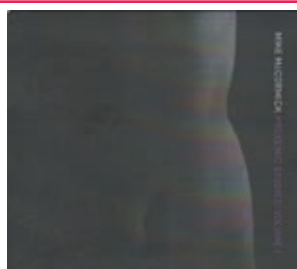
► Mathieu Gaudet has recently embarked on a Schubert project, presenting the lion's share of the composer's works for keyboard. While themed *Late Inspirations*, the latest disc (Volume 2) opens with an early sonata, followed by two other works: the curious *Ungarische Melodie, D817* and the *Drei Klavierstücke, D946*.

Gaudet's artistry is quintessentially suited to Schubert: it possesses a tender, inward nature that, while personal, is never furtive; Gaudet consistently cherishes every miraculous musical turn, sharing them generously with his listener (and even ornamenting certain melodies and harmonies along the way!). The music of Schubert – clearly a lifelong vocation for Gaudet – seems the perfect platform for his aptly controlled, cultivated musicianship. When it comes to the Austrian master, sung indelibly from Gaudet's piano, we are at once nourished and enlightened.

The five-movement *Sonata in E major* is rarely played. In the hands of Gaudet, this surprising – even quirky – piece glistens and bubbles with a delightful lack of self-consciousness, justly suited to such early essays in the form. (Schubert wrote the sonata when he was 19.) Gaudet introduces this music to us like an old friend he's been

What we're listening to this month:

[thewholenote.com/listening](http://thewholenote.com/listening)



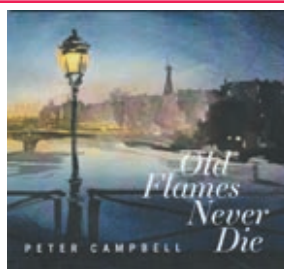
**Proxemic Studies: Volume I**  
**Mike McCormick**

This collection of songs is a personal study of human intimacy depicting the beauty of love, the bitterness of heartbreak, and the volatility of passionate lust.



**And That One Too**  
**Sandbox Percussion**

Sandbox Percussion's debut album And That One Too presents music by Andy Akiho, David Crowell, Amy Beth Kirsten, and Thomas Kotcheff



**Old Flames Never Die**  
**Peter Campbell**

A distinctive voice, as honeyed as Nat Cole, Johnny Hartman and Johnny Mathis. Robert Rusch (Cadence Magazine)



**I Bless the Wounds**  
**Don Bray**

13 hopeful songs written through the lens of Complex PTSD

hobnobbing with for decades. One meets wondrous things: humour, juvenility and even a bit of Viennese buffoonery – a notable feat of Schubertian interpretation!

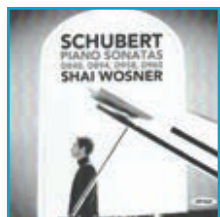
Perhaps it is worthy to note in these trying times of the COVID-19 pandemic that Gaudet is also a full-time emergency physician. We eagerly await the future instalments of his recording project once the current crisis has abated. Our world will need more Schubert *like this*.

**Adam Sherkin**

### **Schubert – Piano Sonatas D845; D894; D958; D960**

**Shai Vosner**

**Onyx ONYX 4217 (shaiwosner.com)**



► While Schubert succeeded in publishing only three piano sonatas during his lifetime, the depth of his world is fully revealed in this genre, especially in the late sonatas presented on this album. Shai Vosner, considered to be one of the most prominent Schubert interpreters, is so intimately connected to that world that he becomes a guide of sorts, leaving no corners of

Schubert's musical mind untouched. A beautiful essay Vosner wrote in the liner notes for this album brings these intimate explorations to the next level.

In contrast to the preceding period of songwriting, Schubert's late piano sonatas opened up a different microcosm, putting on full display the unique ingredients of his musical mode – the uncanny combination of intimate gestures in a large setting. Four sonatas on this album show different aspects of that mode – dark, melancholy momentum in *Sonata No.16 in A Minor*, transparent stillness in *Sonata No.18 in G Major*, relentless fire in *Sonata No.19 in C Minor*, and yearning introspection in his last major work, *Sonata No.21 in B-flat Major*. All four seek to deconstruct the conventional sonata structure and do it with the vulnerability of distinct musical expressions.

I love Vosner's sound, the manipulation of colours and his control over the smallest of details. Equally convincing in lyrical language as he is in bold, fiery passages, Vosner brings in wholesome devotion to this remarkable music.

**Ivana Popovic**

### **Louise Farrenc – Etudes & Variations for Solo Piano**

**Joanne Polk**

**Steinway & Sons 30133 (naxosdirect.com)**



► The name Louise Farrenc is practically unknown today, but during her lifetime, she was a respected composer and pedagogue at a time when the professional artistic world was very much male dominated. Born in Paris in 1804, she was an almost exact contemporary of the novelist George Sand. Like Sand – and also Clara Schumann and Fanny Mendelssohn – she was forced to

overcome societal biases of the time, but ultimately enjoyed a long and successful career. Her compositions include symphonies, overtures, chamber, choral and vocal music, and a great many pieces for solo piano. These latter are well represented on this Steinway & Sons recording featuring American pianist Joanne Polk.

The first three tracks on the disc are sets of variations; the first on a Russian song; the second on an aria from Bellini's *Norma*; and the third, the Lutheran chorale *Ein Feste Burg* used in Meyerbeer's successful opera *Les Huguenots*. The music is elegant and well crafted, with the original themes creatively varied. Throughout, Polk demonstrates a real affinity for the music, approaching it with considerable fluidity and élan.

The two sets of *Etudes Op.26* making up the remainder of the disc were so highly regarded that they were ultimately adopted by the

Conservatoire as required repertoire. There is much to appreciate in these musical gems – do I hear echoes of Mendelssohn and even Chopin? Many of them pose considerable technical challenges that surely only advanced pupils could have handled.

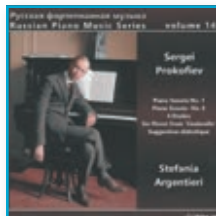
Despite its obscurity, Farrenc's music should never be dismissed as secondary. There is evidence of fine creativity, matched here by an equally fine performance. Kudos to Joanne Polk and to Steinway & Sons for helping bring to light repertoire that might otherwise have been overlooked. Recommended.

**Richard Haskell**

### **Russian Piano Music Series Vol.14 – Sergei Prokofiev**

**Stefania Argentieri**

**Divine Art dda 25156 (divineartrecords.com)**



► Prokofiev began his career as a concert pianist; hence it comes as no surprise that piano music comprises a significant part of his output – three concertos, nine sonatas and more than 100 pieces of various types written over a 40-year period. His continual quest for freedom from typical 19th-century styles resulted in a particular eclecticism, clearly evident in this attractive program on the Divine Classics label, performed by

Italian pianist Stefania Argentieri.

This disc is the second in the *Russian Piano Music* series devoted to Prokofiev and includes his first and sixth sonatas, *Six Pieces from Cinderella Op.102*, *Four Etudes Op.2* and the *Suggestion Diabolique*.

The *Piano Sonata No.1* from 1907 – but later revised – owes more than a passing reference not only to Schumann, but also to Rachmaninoff and Scriabin, the style lushly Romantic. In contrast, the sixth sonata, written in 1940, is pure pianistic gymnastics, technically beyond the capabilities of many pianists. Here, Argentieri demonstrates a true command of this daunting repertoire, meeting the challenges with apparent ease. Equally demanding are the *Four Etudes*, music of a confident 18-year-old pianist/composer eager to demonstrate his skills. The set was originally intended as a “slap in the face” to conservative audiences, but it also earned him a loyal following.

*Cinderella* is one of Prokofiev's most popular ballets and while the set of piano transcriptions from 1944 is equally delightful, it's the youthful *Suggestion Diabolique* where Argentieri once again proves her pianistic prowess. Aptly marked *Prestissimo Fantastico*, the piece demands extraordinary virtuosity – a true *perpetuum mobile*, with a surprisingly calm conclusion that brings the disc to a subdued, but most satisfying conclusion.

**Richard Haskell**

### **A Little Dark Music 2**

**Frank Horvat**

**IAM who IAM Records (frankhorvat.com)**



► Toronto composer and pianist Frank Horvat's passionate concern for social and environmental issues has long been a core theme in his music. His 2010 album, *A Little Dark Music*, for example, featured *Earth Hour*, an hour-long solo piano improvisation performed in the dark. In it, the composer-pianist passionately advocated for a sustainable approach to the environ-

ment. A decade later, Horvat's follow-up solo grand piano release, *A Little Dark Music 2*, his 11th album, continues to express his extra-musical concerns for the health of our planet.

The title theme of the opening hour-long track *Earth Hour 2* is confirmed by the explicit program notes. Horvat renders a personal commentary on the state of our global environment in this expansive solo. The liner notes suggest we take the time “to become grounded

within [ourselves]" to reflect on positive change we can imagine while we listen. And the episodic and programmatic nature of this explicitly tonal work leaves plenty of time and sonic space for contemplation

The much shorter *Heat Island* continues the theme of man-made climate change. "The rumbly and murky start of this composition attempts to emulate the world oozing heat from pavement," states the composer. As the piece progresses, "it gradually works its way up to the higher registers with a more calm tone."

The album concludes with the optimistic *Life for Mars*, a (mostly) major key "soothing statement on the positive impact of connecting to ourselves and our surroundings." It's a message of hope many of us can use during this dark time.

Andrew Timar

## nocturne & lullabies

Richard Valitutto

New Focus Recordings FCR243 ([newfocusrecordings.com](http://newfocusrecordings.com))

► Contemporary keyboard exponent Richard Valitutto has released a timely, meditative new record that features seven premiere recordings of works by six composers. (The penultimate track on the album – Linda Catlin Smith's *A Nocturne* – was first recorded by Eve Egoyan in 2012.) each written within the last 35 years. Valitutto claims to have been "focused on cultivating a sort of pianistic 'anti-virtuosity'... performing music that seems simple on the surface but in actuality



affords a great many challenges." The tracks are, generally, connected to the theme of *night* and its various dimensions: dream-haunting nocturnes and lullabies, uncertain of – or anachronistic in – their 21st century functions.

Admirable ranges of expression are displayed here through experimental modes of resonance. The disc's chronology is well

curated, moving through dark soundscapes to brighter moments of lucidity and repose. Immediately striking is Valitutto's intimacy with each of these works, collected and considered from a specific time and place with fortitude and explorative zeal.

Amongst the many highlights of the disc is *shadow* (2013) by Rebecca Saunders, a study in so-called "acoustic shadows." Valitutto relishes this music's intensity and sculpture, urging a keen ear when listening to every last brilliant moment of the score.

Another intriguing track is Philip Cashian's *Nocturne* (1984). Modelled on Oliver Knussen's *Sonya's Lullaby*, Cashian's newer piece supersedes Knussen's, grabbing its way to overcome all aches and sighs. Now morbid and jazzy, now contemporary and timeworn, this entire album grips both performer and listener alike, glimpsing a hazy yet urgent future where nocturnes and lullabies still haunt our dreams.

Adam Sherkin

## VOCAL

### Handel – *Almira*

Emöke Barath; Amanda Forsythe; Colin Balzer; Boston Early Music Festival; Paul O'Dette; Stephen Stubbs  
cpo 555 205-2 ([naxosdirect.com](http://naxosdirect.com))



► Besides being Handel's first exercise in operatic composition, *Almira* (1704) is a notable, if slightly eccentric work for several reasons.

Various styles and languages are mixed, with the opera including both German and Italian arias, as well as vocal dance numbers, da capo pieces and instrumental ballet inserts. The result is a colourful and surprisingly unified mixture, and the melodic signatures that we consider so typical of Handel are already recognizable.

This recording features an expert interpretation of this middle-Baroque work, as the Boston Early Music Festival Orchestra and soloists manage to synthesize *Almira*'s Venetian, German and French influences into a cohesive and convincing musical and dramatic product. The use of harpsichord and lute in the basso continuo section provides a temporal reference point, between theorbo-based Monteverdi and the later harpsichord- and organ-grounded works of Bach.

Although Handel's later operas and oratorios receive the vast majority of modern performances, it is worthwhile to encounter an expertly performed edition of such an early work from such an esteemed composer.

Much like Bach's early chorale preludes, *Almira* reflects the effort of an already extraordinarily gifted musical mind, which continues to be developed and refined as the years progress. This opera's apparent eccentricities aside (largely due to the traditions of the Hamburg opera, rather than Handel's own innovation), *Almira* is a rewarding listen for all who appreciate the style and evolution of Baroque opera.

Matthew Whitfield

### The *Other* Cleopatra, Queen of Armenia – II Tigrane Arias

Isabel Bayrakdarian; Kaunas City Symphony; Constantine Orbelian  
Delos DE 3591 ([naxosdirect.com](http://naxosdirect.com))



► Yes, there was another Cleopatra and thanks, in part, to Isabel Bayrakdarian the wife of King Tigranes (140–55 BCE) has a bright new light shone

on her. These arias are, of course, from composers who knew of her and first glorified her in opera: Hasse, Vivaldi and Gluck. What Bayrakdarian has also done as with many of her recordings, is to shed light on the historical riches of Armenia. More remarkably, however, on *The Other Cleopatra: Queen of Armenia* Bayrakdarian seems to sing as if with real, lived experience.

Bayrakdarian is a bright lyric soprano, but she can also swoop really low into what must clearly be the edge of a soprano's comfort zone. One such example comes with Baroque smokiness in Hasse's elegant aria *Strappami*

*pure il seno*; also a wonderful example of her breathtaking eloquence and range. Chronologically Vivaldi's version of *Il Tigrane* (1724) was premiered first, followed by Hasse's (1729) and finally Gluck's (1743). All three operas were based on the same libretto by Abate Francesco Silvani.

Most interesting, however, is the subtle differences in the music by each of the composers. Vivaldi delivers characteristic vivacity, dazzling vocal solos with dashes of acute characterization. Gluck's demands a complete balance between music and drama and Hasse's is a highly lyrical blend of style and emotions. Meanwhile, Bayrakdarian's artistry enables her to deliver each style absolutely masterfully.

Raul da Gama

### Nuits Blanches – Russian Opera Arias of the 18th Century

Karina Gauvin; Pacific Baroque Orchestra; Alexander Weimann  
ATMA ACD2 2791 ([atmaclassique.com/En](http://atmaclassique.com/En))



► Johann Sebastian Bach's ambition of becoming a musician at the Imperial Russian Court never materialized but that disappointing fact – plus the unfortunate reputation of 18th-century

Russian music – has not deterred recent musicologists from discovering some very accomplished composers. Combine that with the artists listed above and *Nuits Blanches* is the pleasing result.

As might be expected, Karina Gauvin's



soprano voice dominates this CD. Listen to the variations in her voice as she literally runs a gamut of emotion in determining Armide's relationship towards Renaud in Gluck's *Armide*. And then there is the opera *Demofonte* by the tragically short-lived Maxime Sozontovitch Berezovski (1745-1777). This is a work which does not survive in completeness; what does survive is a disturbing unravelling of events which is deeper in intensity than many better-known and complete operatic works. The two arias recorded here bring home not just this complexity of plot but also the extent to which Gauvin's expertise is tested.

In fact, Gauvin's singing does not monopolize this CD. Listen to the *Ouverture* from *Le Faucon* by Dimitri Stepanovitch Bortnianski. It offers a genteel introduction to the subsequent complexities of the relationship between Don Federigo and Elvira.

This CD introduces listeners to music which is almost unknown. Enjoy, incidentally, not just its soprano and instrumental qualities but also some deeply researched and sometimes rather amusing program notes.

**Michael Schwartz**

**Wagner – Die Walküre**  
Soloists; Orchestra of the Royal Opera House; Antonio Pappano  
Opus Arte OA 1308D (naxosdirect.com)



► Ever since Patrice Chereau's centennial revival in Bayreuth in 1976, dozens of *Ring* productions have proliferated all over the world. In fact every major opera house has created one, all different concepts

exploiting every possible angle: historic, sociological, psychological, philosophical etc. *Rings* are named after the various cities and/or the directors or the conductors. Now we have a Met *Ring* (Lepage/Levine), Berlin *Ring* (Kupfer/Barenboim), Stuttgart *Ring* (Zagrosek), St. Petersburg *Ring* (Gergiev), Vienna *Ring* (Rattle/Adam Fischer), Valencia *Ring* (Zubin Mehta), not to mention our own from Toronto. This production from London (2018) heralds a new, and judging by this *Walküre*, a momentous one directed by Keith Warner.

From the staging point of view it is a sound and light extravaganza, using all possible audiovisual technology culminating in the third act *Ride of the Valkyries* with films in the background combined with shadow play of the warrior maidens and superb choreography. The magic fire that envelops the stage is a spectacular finale. Pappano's conducting is nothing less than magnificent. He absorbs himself thoroughly in the score, and no detail is missed. There are moments of ecstasy like

the first act love-duet between Siegmund (Stuart Skelton) and Sieglinde (Emily Magee) in waves and waves of passion as the "world never heard before" (Sir Simon Rattle), and at the climax when Siegmund triumphantly pulls out the sword from the ash tree, wow! Or Wotan's final embrace of his daughter Brünnhilde, a moment at which I almost cried when I first heard it.

The entire cast is phenomenal headed by John Lundgren as a powerful, larger-than-life Wotan, a very complex character, a god torn between his duty to the law he created and the love for his daughter, Brünnhilde (the wonderful Nina Stemme) whom he has to punish. A gripping *Walküre*, highly recommended.

**Janos Gardonyi**

**Offenbach – Les contes d'Hoffmann**  
Soloists; Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra; Carlo Rizzi  
Cmajor 752808 (naxosdirect.com)



► Often spoken of disparagingly in his day, Jacques Offenbach clearly knew what he was doing. With equal measure of sardonic humour and lyricism, he triumphantly invented the whole idea of the operetta, paved the way for Lehár and

Sullivan, and eventually came to be called (by Rossini, no less) "the Mozart of Champs Élysées." Fusing dialogue and show-stopping pieces, Offenbach also created the can-can dance and laid the ground for the modern musical. But in 1881 he also produced his first and last opera – *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* – his only through-composed work without spoken dialogue; replaced by a sombre libretto instead.

Three acts recount three tales by the German Romantic writer E.T.A Hoffmann. Tobias Kratzer's spectacular staging adds a prelude and background to the story (Act 1) followed by the three acts conceived by Offenbach. The first concerns the inventor and his mechanical doll, Olympia who seduces Hoffmann. The second involves Hoffmann's other passion, the consumptive singer Antonia, preyed upon by the evil Dr. Miracle. The third tells of Giulietta, who tries to trick Hoffmann into selling his soul. The final act presents Hoffmann, liberated, returning to his muse.

The sweep of Offenbach's score is supremely caught by Carlos Rizzi in a reading that tingles with frenetic energy while bringing out the lushness of Guiraud's recitatives. John Osborn is in his richest voice, summoning the impetuous ardour of Hoffmann. Nina Minasyan excels in the bravura arias. Overall, the casting is inspired and outstanding.

**Raul da Gama**

**Respighi – La bella dormiente nel bosco**  
Soloists; Orchestra e Coro del Teatro Lirico di Cagliari; Donato Renzetti  
Naxos 2.110655 (naxosdirect.com)



► The legendary Ottorino Respighi's *La bella dormiente nel bosco* (*The Sleeping Beauty*) was first conceived in 1922. The version presented here by the Teatro Lirico di Cagliari has been enhanced from the original by Respighi's inspired

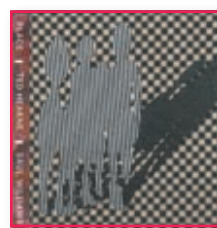
orchestrations. Although he died in 1936, this fresh, emotional and fantastic rendering of the original fairy tale about the Princess who pricks her finger on a spindle, and falls into a comatose state until she is awakened by her Prince, is as new and exciting as if presented on Broadway today. Brilliantly directed by Leo Muscato (with video direction by Tiziano Mancini, Donato Renzetti as conductor and a lively book by Gian Bistolfi), this production features a broad-palletted *mis en scene*, which is a delectable feast for both the eyes and ears.

Featured performers include the versatile Veta Pilipenko (the Queen, Old Lady and Frog); the impossibly lovely Angela Nisi as the Princess; baritone powerhouse Antonio Gandia as the Prince and the venerable Vincenzo Taormina as the King. Clever, bombastic and magical costumes (perhaps reflecting a bit of the Comedia Del'Arte) by Vera Pierantonio Giua and choreography by Luigia Frattaroli complete this thoroughly entertaining and spiritually uplifting operatic pastiche.

Written in three acts, the piece opens with a conceptual, almost surreal appearance of birds on swings and frog-like ladies (or lady-like frogs!), and ends with the expected kiss as the diaphanous princess rises up from her crescent moon bed, and into the arms of her Prince, followed by a joyous, dance-infused number by the entire cast. Huge kudos to the Teatro, for not only presenting this nearly lost treasure of one of the world's foremost 20th-century composers, but also doing it to perfection!

**Lesley Mitchell-Clarke**

**Ted Hearne; Saul Williams – Place**  
Vocalists; Place Orchestra  
New Amsterdam Records NWAM137  
(newamrecords.com)



► Although the drama of *Place* is somewhat diminished without a visual staging (i.e. a possible DVD of a presumptive film version), its power is not diminished

because of the inventive way in which its principal artists – Ted Hearne (music, libretto) and Saul Williams (libretto) – have used their respective artistic specialities. This means not only words, music and vocalizations, but also their compelling, internecine method of adapting traditional and contemporary artistic styles – from hip-hop to chamber music – and infusing this event with every possible sonic element: music, noise and pregnant silences.

Music and poetry collide in *Place* as Hearne and Williams describe the emotional effects that the gentrification of a city has when people and their cultural habitat are trampled upon in the name of money and modernization. Williams' poetry pulls no punches, especially regarding racism. Using this poetry, Hearne creates jagged miniatures to simulate a musical disruption of the senses that mirrors the socio-political upheaval of their city.

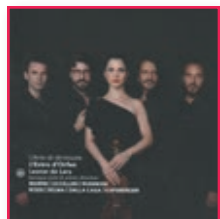
Some spiky, and often serrated, songs are like miniatures depicting human upheaval. This is characterized by extraordinary, jagged rhythmic flexibility. These episodes alternate between moments of tenderness and heartache, anger and despair. An ink-dark atmosphere pervades even when relative calmness is explored in *The Tales You Tell Your Children*. Occasionally brightness might break through, as in *Hallelujah in White*, but not for long. The glistening delicacy of the musical equanimity is broken in the finale, in the desperate plea against gentrification of *Colonizing Space*.

Raul da Gama

**Editor's Note:** A performance video of *Place* is in the final stages of production and will likely be available on a major public platform by the time this article is published.

## CLASSICAL AND BEYOND

**L'Arte di diminuire**  
**L'Estro d'Orfeo; Leonor de Lera**  
**Challenge Classics CC72843**  
**(lestrodorfeo.com)**



► The outstanding L'Estro d'Orfeo quintet was founded by violinist and artistic director Leonor de Lera in 2015 to perform a "historically-informed approach in line

with the aesthetics of the time," on period instruments. Her mission was to champion the advanced instrumental virtuosity which developed in Europe during the late Renaissance to early Baroque eras.

*L'Arte di diminuire* is dedicated to musical diminution, the interpretative art of extemporary melodic variation and embellishment,

an essential improvisatory aspect of musical performance practice of that time. Simply put, in this practice musicians melodically and rhythmically subdivided a received series of long notes into shorter values. In that period and region, a written composition was routinely regarded as raw material requiring musicians to embellish the score during its performance via diminutions. Such performances gave considerable scope for virtuosic display and interpretive exploration. This album explores that practice applied to 15 period motets, popular melodies and dance forms. The ensemble has chosen scores by early Baroque composers and interpreted them by applying advanced diminution procedures, in the process highlighting the individual contributions of L'Estro d'Orfeo's 21st-century musicians.

Outstanding tracks include the madrigal *Io canterei d'amor...* reinterpreted via diminution by the ensemble's viola da gamba and viola bastarda virtuoso Rodney Prada. De Lera's four contributions are exemplars of this ensemble's musically exciting approach to this interpretative inter-century practice. The most impressive part of the listening experience might be the freewheeling-sounding – yet always tasteful – instrumental virtuosity on display here. Prada's mindboggling viola bastarda performances, leaping from treble to tenor to bass ranges and back with abandon, are alone worth the price of admission.

Andrew Timar

**Flute Passion: Bach**  
**Nadia Labrie; Luc Beauséjour; Camille Paquette-Roy**  
**Analekta AN 2 8921 (analekta.com/en)**



► Only one of the compositions on this recording is actually a solo, the *Partita in A Minor*, which flutist Nadia Labrie plays with energy and assurance. I

particularly appreciated her approach to the only slow movement, the *Sarabande*, as a reflective and perhaps melancholy soliloquy, which she plays with feeling but never with sentimentality.

Two of the other three sonatas on the CD are called flute sonatas but are in fact ensemble pieces. The *Allegro* fourth movement of the *Sonata in E Minor* is as much a virtuosic solo piece for the keyboard, on this modern instrument recording a piano, which Luc Beauséjour plays as the complete equal to the flute, a collaborator, not a supporting actor. This is also particularly evident in the final *Presto* of the *Sonata in B Minor*. Similarly the cello part in the *Andante* first movement of the same sonata can be heard as the other half of a duo with the flute, and is played that way by cellist Camille Paquette-Roy.

The *G Major Sonata* on the disc is a trio sonata, originally for two flutes and continuo. On this recording, however, Beauséjour plays the other "flute" part, leaving the bass line to the cello. While in a certain sense emancipating the cello, it somehow doesn't work as well as a duo as, for example, the *Allegro* movement already mentioned.

Nevertheless, bravissimi to our three collaborators for a fine addition to the recorded ensemble music of Bach.

Allan Pulker

**Beethoven – Piano Trios Vol.1**  
**Sitkovetsky Trio**  
**BIS BIS-2239 SACD (naxosdirect.com)**



► This year marks the 250th anniversary of Beethoven's birth date and as such it has been bringing in an assortment of new releases of the great master's works. The

Sitkovetsky Trio attracts attention with their elegant interpretations of carefully selected Beethoven piano trios and the creation of a particular sound that is very much their own. I was charmed by the lovely blend of the instrumental colours and the finely detailed and thoughtful work that went into directing and following the tides of these notable compositions.

The wisely chosen progression of the trios includes the early *Op.1 No.3 in C Minor*, middle period *Op.70 No.2 in E-flat Major* and the late *Allegretto in B-flat Major WoO39*. C minor could certainly have been Beethoven's favourite key because it allowed for the storminess of emotions like no other. It is hard to believe that this work belongs to such an early opus as it brings in radical and innovative approaches to the chamber music of that time. The *E-flat Major Trio* and *Allegretto* show, in contrast, that Beethoven was just as much attuned to pastoral and peaceful settings and that he was unapologetically paving the way for the further development of the Romantic elements.

Much appreciated is the Sitkovetsky Trio's ability to stay within the bounds of traditional chamber music-making while adding the intensity and vitality of their own understanding. A noble companion to contemplative times.

Ivana Popovic

**Dvořák – Symphony No.9; Copland – Billy the Kid**  
**National Symphony Orchestra; Gianandrea Nosedá**  
**National Symphony Orchestra NSO 001**  
**(gianandreanoseda.com)**



► This most enjoyable disc is the debut recording of a new label, NSO Live from the Kennedy Center, with the National Symphony Orchestra of Washington

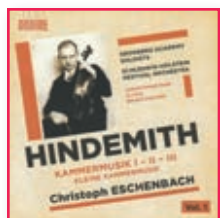
DC. The group is famous for having been directed by Rostropovich at one time, but now Gianandrea Nosedá is its music director. Nosedá heralds “new beginnings” and judging by this issue, he certainly delivers. The recording simply throbs with life and shows Nosedá’s love for America by selecting two works he says “on which American sound has continued to be built over the decades.” The two works come from vastly different backgrounds, yet the American spirit is unmistakable, and this makes this issue so exciting.

The first piece is by the venerable American composer Aaron Copland who was born in Brooklyn to a family of Russian immigrants, yet no other composer has been able to better evoke the frontier spirit of the Wild West. *Billy the Kid*, a ballet from 1938, is about an outlaw and gunfighter who murdered eight men by the age of 21, when he himself was killed. Copland’s score provides a vivid depiction of prairie life incorporating several cowboy tunes, Mexican dances and even a gunfight with explosions, certainly never heard before from a symphony orchestra. Nosedá has a lot of fun with it and it is catching.

And now an absolutely stunning performance of Dvořák’s *New World Symphony* where the musical material is “inspired by American folk songs, African-American spirituals and North American Native songs” all intermixed with tremendous compositional skill. Dvořák introduces new themes in each movement, but these then reoccur in different guises culminating in the magnificent last movement for an astounding conclusion. Demonstration quality sound, highly recommended.

**Janos Gardonyi**

**Hindemith – Kammermusik I - II - III**  
**Kronberg Academy Soloists; Schleswig-Holstein Festival Orchestra; Christoph Eschenbach**  
**Online ODE 1341-2 (naxosdirect.com)**



► Over the course of his lifetime (1895-1963) Paul Hindemith, increasingly ossified by his academic obsessions, underwent a peculiar reverse

metamorphosis. Born a butterfly, he eventually became a caterpillar. He was a world-famous composer, a consummate musician and an influential Ivy League savant, yet the 50th anniversary of his death in 2013 passed with little fanfare from the classical music establishment. In his early career he was considered an avant-garde miscreant, ultimately branded and banished as an “atonal noisemaker” by the Nazi regime. Noisy? Perhaps, but powerfully so. Atonal? Not in the least, though bracingly dissonant at times.

Hindemith’s astounding orchestral mastery (he was able to play any instrument he wrote for) is amply demonstrated in the adventurous *Kammermusik* series composed in the 1920s, from which we have on offer here the first three suites, with future volumes presumably in the works to complete the set of seven. The first suite is composed for 12 instruments in four movements, a provocatively satirical remodelling of the *Brandenburg Concertos* which receives a rollicking performance under Eschenbach’s direction. The second instalment, scored for piano and ensemble, is equally enjoyable and glitteringly dispatched by soloist Christopher Park. The third, cast in the form of a concerto featuring cellist Bruno Philippe, is less convincing due to sub-optimal tempos (perhaps the soloist’s prerogative) and an over-miked solo part which obscures the inner voices. Claudio Abbado’s lively 1999 EMI recording, some two and a half minutes faster, makes a far better case for this work. An enjoyable nightcap, the beloved *Kleine Kammermusik* for wind quintet, rounds out the proceedings.

**Daniel Foley**

**MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY**

**Jacques Hétu – Concertos**  
**Jean-Philippe Sylvestre; Orchestre symphonique de Laval; Alain Trudel**  
**ATMA ACD2 2793 (atmaclassique.com/en)**



► A treasure trove of musical Canadiana awaits the steadfast listener who seeks a (Western) classical contemporary canon from true north shores. Despite the few generations of composers who could claim such affiliations, an impressive array of works exist from the last 50 years, especially those written in Quebec. Among French Canada’s most distinguished 20th-century composers, the late Jacques Hétu is revered for his prowess as orchestral colourist. Formidably, he penned no less than 15 concertos for a variety of instruments. Hétu once remarked: “My taste for the concerto is directly linked to the genre of drama; the soloist is a singer, and

the concerto his or her stage.”

A recent all-Hétu recording spotlights the indomitable dream team of pianist Jean-Philippe Sylvestre and trombonist/conductor, Alain Trudel. Trudel brings his irrepressible artistry to the collaboration, setting the stage for a creative synergy. He wields a keen, razor-sharp sense of pacing, as he ferries the Orchestre symphonique de Laval from one striking Hétu work to another, brimful with devotion and panache. (The tone poem, *Sur les rives du Saint-Maurice*, Op.78, is also included, again proving Hétu’s mastery of orchestration, arguably his finest gift.)

The stalwart Sylvestre rollicks in a commanding realization of the second piano concerto. The keyboard writing that inspired Hétu seems a near-blood relation to music by Prokofiev. For the final work, Trudel conjoins baton and trombone, dazzling our ears with a golden, luscious reading of Hétu’s concerto for that instrument.

**Adam Sherkin**

**Proxemic Studies Volume 1**  
**Mike McCormick**  
**Smeik SMKCD204 (smeik.no/en; mikemccormickmusic.com)**



► It is not an obvious concept to combine technical guitar exercises you wrote for yourself with extracts of letters and emails from your former “romantic part-

ners” as a basis for an album of contemporary music. Yet this is what Oslo-based guitarist, laptop performer and composer Mike McCormick, originally from Yellowknife, has done with his *Proxemic Studies*. The album is both intensely personal (some of the quotations detail sexual intimacy, heartbreak and betrayal) and surprisingly clinical. Befitting our social distancing times, McCormick tells us “Proxemics [is] the branch of knowledge that deals with the amount of space that people feel it necessary to set between themselves and others.” McCormick performs his compositions with Laura Swankey (voice), Emily Denison (trumpet) and Knut Kvifte Nesheim (percussion). Swankey’s vocals are expressive yet measured and Nesheim provides a delicate palette of background accompaniments. One of the most beautiful pieces is *Alvorada*, on which Denison plays some floating and tasteful trumpet lines reminiscent of Kenny Wheeler, and the vocal intermittently glides between the musical lines. At the other extreme is *Madness* with fuzzed-out guitar and a series of accusatory and harsh statements vibrating with anger.

The album is intriguing, but one may wonder how McCormick’s former partners feel about their intimate notes being part of a public performance. The text ranges from poetic to banal (“Just got out of the shower,



you were kind of there too”) and this contrast may be one of the points being made about human interaction. *Proxemic Studies* is an uneasy intertwining of personal history with innovative musical expression.

**Ted Parkinson**

**Mark John McEncroe – Musical Images for Chamber Orchestra (Reflections & Recollections Vol.2)**

**Janáček Philharmonic; Anthony Armore**  
**Navona Records nv6269**  
**(navonarecords.com)**



► The Australian self-professed “easy listening” composer Mark John McEncroe has made a name for himself in the orchestral world with his audience-friendly

and pleasantly digestible output. In this latest release, several piano works by McEncroe have been orchestrated by Mark J Saliba – also an Australian composer – to comprise the selection of *Musical Images* heard on the recording.

This music is not trying to be anything other than what it is: gentle and welcoming. While some contemporary composers writing in older Romantic styles still feel pressured to insert some sort of newness into their music, resulting in a confusing clash of aesthetic commitment, McEncroe delivers a straightforward and unburdened nostalgia to the listener. Nevertheless, we still receive contrast throughout the 11 movements.

At times playful, foreboding, heart-warming, and reassuring, the music does in fact lead the listener on a journey – albeit a highly protected one. There is a filmic quality to McEncroe’s style, an attribute that is furthered by titles such as *Natalie’s Theme*, *Floating Lilies* and *A Rainy Summer’s Day*. This quality perhaps leaves the listener wanting to experience these missing images alongside the music; in contrast to profoundly written program music where the extra-musical elements are so deeply provided in the music, one does not require them in any other form. With that in mind, this disc is perfect for a rainy day with a book, or a relaxing afternoon by the fire.

**Adam Scime**

**Vox**  
**Hearne Ensemble**  
**Innova Recordings 040 (innova.mu/albums)**



► What is a “test of time” measured against the universe’s, or even our planet’s? On the human scale, George Crumb’s *Vox Balaenae* for

three masked players performing on amplified instruments – flute, cello and piano – has stood up well over the half century since its composition. The Hearne Ensemble opens with this work, whose theme reminds humans of how tiny their lifespan is measured against that of the Earth. Even without the blue ambient lighting Crumb indicated for live performance, the music draws us into the depths: meditation and wonder, awe and exhilaration. Like Messaien’s *Quartet for the End of Time*, *Vox Balaenae* (voice of the whale) is a work of praise, threaded through with references to time and timelessness; the object of Crumb’s *louanges*, unlike Messaien, is the world itself, and his angelic voice is that of the whale. The performances are flawless, and the recording quality excellent; *Vox Balaenae* is a timeless masterpiece.

Next, *Bencharong* by Narong Prangcharoen depicts the five colours of classic Thai ceramics. The movements are brief, and while the composer makes no overt claim that he experiences synaesthesia, the musical colours are as distinct as the visual ones.

*Silver Dagger*, by Stacy Garrop, references an American folk song she researched and found to have three distinct variants and outcomes, almost a post-modern Romeo and Juliet. Like Berio in his folk song settings, Garrop is content to find mystery and beauty in the simplicity and power of the original. It’s beautiful Americana.

*Melodies for Robert* by Carter Pann is a celebration in memoriam of “an American war hero,” to quote the liner notes. There are two movements: *Sing* and *Listen*. I don’t find myself able to listen to them following the rest of the disc. I haven’t much room left for dessert, especially not one so sweet.

**Max Christie**

**This is My Letter to the World**  
**Kate Amrine and various artists**  
**Innova Recordings 042 (innova.mu)**



► It is almost too apt to be reviewing trumpeter/composer Kate Amrine’s new release in the COVID-19 era. Whatever new power music

has developed within our collective, it has always drawn us into shared experience. This message from a millennial asks all of us to please reflect on the harm we bring on ourselves. How can the tracks of this disc bend our path away from mutually assured destruction, one is forced to wonder. One supposes: through hope.

Amrine’s own piece, *What Are We Doing To Ourselves*, addresses climate change and degradation through a combination of electronic underlay made of the recorded sound of a forest fire, simple melodic fragments that join the voices of alto flute, trumpet, viola and

cello, and an almost childlike recitation of the text of a suicide note. This latter document was left for media by an activist lawyer who set himself on fire in an act of protest. Heavy stuff. Her very short title track eloquently quotes Emily Dickinson with a bucket-muted trumpet *nearly* overshadowing the text.

The next track, *Thoughts and Prayers*, by Kevin Joest, addresses gun violence. A single trumpet line accompanies all-too-familiar news chatter reacting to various mass-murders. *My Body My Choice* by Niloufar Nourbakhsh, uses the words of the title in a chant rising towards the final bars of a processional featuring trumpet and electronics.

Sandwiched in among the earnest messages is a clever and entertaining track (omitted in the liner notes): *Close Fight* sets up a funky dance number using a post-fight interview with a boxer whose cocky answers are chopped into rhythmic bits, and played to by the band. This is such an excellent antidote, it’s why we need to support these young creators like Amrine. I wanted it to go on. We all need it, to go on.

**Max Christie**

**Song of the Redwood-Tree**  
**Scott Pool; Natsuki Fukasawa; Stefanie Izzo; Gina Cuffari; Xelana Duo; Sunny Knable**  
**MSR Classics MS 1749**  
**(sunnyknablecomposer.com)**



► American composer, pianist and educator Sunny Knable’s four works here illuminate the many sound possibilities that the bassoon produces as a lead instru-

ment and in ensemble. The three-movement title track *Song of the Redwood-Tree* for soprano, bassoon and piano is based on Walt Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass*. *A California Song* opens with bassoonist Scott Pool’s beautiful held notes, pianist Natsuki Fukasawa’s contrapuntal lines and soprano Stefanie Izzo’s high pitches. *Death-Chant* is understandably more atonal with dramatic high vocal pitches, and *Golden Pageant* features more tonal cadences, and piano/vocal unisons.

*Tango Boogie* combines a bit of tango and swing in a surprising gratifying sonic mix played by the alto saxophone/bassoon Xelana Duo. *Double Reed* on Charles Wyatt’s poem *To the World’s Bassoonists* showcases Knable’s understanding of the breath control required to play reed instruments, as he performs on the accordion with soprano/bassoonist Gina Cuffari. Its second movement *Tragic Bassoon* is especially noteworthy with the solo bassoon melody above the left- and right-hand accordion-held chords and vocal backdrop creating a memorable sound. Lots of familiar true-to-life sounds in *The Busking*

Bassoonist as Pool and Fukasawa perform such Knable-created city-sound effects as trilling birds, rhythmic marching and a distant subway piano pedal echo.

Knable clearly understands the bassoon's vast possibilities beyond its traditional instrumental setting. His compositional expertise grounds his explorative instrumental creations and answers his own question "Why does this work have to exist?" Because it is great!

**Tiina Kiilk**

## And That One Too Sandbox Percussion Coviello Contemporary COV91918 (sandboxpercussion.com)



► Brooklyn NY Sandbox Percussion ensemble members Jonny Allen, Victor Caccese, Ian David Rosenbaum and Terry Sweeney have created long-term close collab-

orations with the composers who write for them, resulting in smart, diverse, challenging contemporary musical works. Their debut release features four of these.

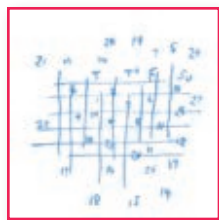
Andy Akiho's *Haiku 2* observes the 5-7-5 haiku form with minimalistic repetitive hits coupled with tuned percussion sounds. Each movement of David Crowell's *Music for Percussion Quartet* was inspired by different environments. *Mov. I - Fluctuation* and *Mov. III - Oscillation* feature polyrhythms on drums and vibes, creating a busy city sound. *Mov. II - Sky*, with its slow meditative ringing vibes and hypnotic repetitive tonal sequences perhaps sound like the sky at dusk. Low resonances abound in *Mov. IV - Landscape*. Composer/vocalist Amy Beth Kirsten performs her composition *she is a myth* with great tonal colour on multiple tracks, with Sandbox playing opening percussion like paper, sandpaper and scratches, and subsequent toe-tapping rhythms. Thomas Kotcheff's *not only that one but that one & that too* is divided into three parts, each focusing on a different percussion type. *Part I* features wooden instruments with the opening attention-grabbing "what is this" woodblock taps leading to a wooden percussion sound panorama of pitch and rhythm. *Part II* is all about drumming rhythms and rolls, while in *Part III*, pitched metal instruments and finger cymbals create calming effects.

Sandbox Percussion plays brilliantly with musical accuracy and nuance.

**Tiina Kiilk**

## JAZZ AND IMPROVISED

### Fortunes Ways + Simon Toldam Lorna 12 (brodiewest.com)



► Ways is the Toronto duo of alto saxophonist Brodie West and drummer Evan Cartwright, formed in 2012. This is the group's first recording, and it comes from a

Copenhagen session with Danish pianist Simon Toldam. West's music has a distinct rhythmic focus. His quintet includes two drummers, the octet Eucalyptus adds an additional percussionist and a pianist, and both groups include Cartwright. If a piano might blur instrumental typologies, Toldam's approach is definitely percussive. The strings are variously prepared to alter decays and ambiguate pitches. West even pushes the saxophone into the percussion family, often working within a restricted pitch range while creating complex staccato patterns.

This rhythmic focus links to a corresponding interest in timbre that immediately distinguishes the trio. The opening *Fame* contrasts passages of saxophone and prepared piano with passages of drums, with saxophone and piano sounding like next of kin, the former's pointillist pops synched to the latter's muffled, echoing, repeated phrase. On *Love*, the three create a complex pattern while sometimes reducing themselves to single notes: West's wispy sounds are mere amplified breaths; Toldam's notes, punctuation marks; Cartwright's kit, a single drum.

The activity gradually expands: *Money II* is a virtual explosion of anxious, rapid-fire saxophone ricocheting through harpsichord-like piano figures and suddenly dense drums, yet still as closely knit as to suggest a single organizing mind on works credited to all three musicians. The ultimate results are as invigorating as they are unusual.

**Stuart Broomer**

### GGRIL Plays Ingrid Laubrock GGRIL; Ingrid Laubrock Tour de Bras TDB900039 / Circumdisc microcidi015 (tourdebras.com/ ; www.circum-disc.com)

### Le Rnst Xavier Charles; Pierre-Yves Martell; Éric Normand; Matija Schellander Ambiances Magnétiques AM254 CD (actuellecd.com)



► Since 2003, Éric Normand has been building a unique musical empire, a thriving hub of free improvisation in the city of Rimouski

on the Gaspé Peninsula. There he's assembled an orchestra, created a record label and festival, and brought major figures to appear as guest soloists and conductors. He's also managed to arrange performances for that orchestra, GGRIL, or Grande Groupe Régional d'Improvisation Libérée as far afield as Europe, building increasingly strong links.

The measure of Normand's Rimouski achievement is apparent immediately on *GGRIL Plays Laubrock*, with the orchestra hosting German-born, New York-resident Ingrid Laubrock, a brilliant saxophonist and improviser whose work extends to conducting Ligeti's *Poème Symphonique* for 100 metronomes and her own large ensemble pieces released as *Contemporary Chaos Practices* (Intakt). Here she leads a 16-member GGRIL in three pieces, covering a series of divergent methodologies.

It's a heterodox ensemble mixing electric guitars and bass with winds, strings, a harp and assorted percussion; a lightly plucked cello can share space with droning feedback, but it's a group in which sharp contrasts take on a unity of their own. The opening *Silent Light* is a graphic score with inserted conduction, moving between spacious textures and sudden forceful interludes, its delicately plucked strings merging with dense explosions and structural trumpet blasts. Laubrock's tenor saxophone comes forcefully to the fore in its later moments. *Strak Dark* is composed, developing passages of muted electronics and pensive bowed strings, while the concluding *Palindrome* is a collective improvisation with set dynamic markings. The intense performance testifies both to the orchestra's creative range and Laubrock's inventiveness with minimalist structural inputs.



Another side of Normand is evident in *Le Rnst*, a single 34-minute improvisation that combines two Quebecois musicians with two Europeans, Austrian

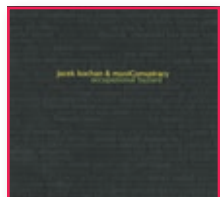
Matija Schellander is playing an acoustic double bass, Normand is playing his home-made electric bass as well as objects and fellow Quebecer Pierre-Yves Martel is playing viola de gamba as well as harmonicas. French clarinetist Xavier Charles completes the group.

Recorded in l'église Saint-Merry in Paris, the church's resonance performs a major role in the performance, adding scale and a special depth, and highlighting a gradual and detailed interaction in which the instruments' harmonics take on a life of their own. Charles is a great sonic explorer, summoning unknown avian species within the confines of his clarinet, even creating the illusion of an alto or even a bass version of the instrument. The various bass string players are similarly

resourceful, sometimes functioning as electronic drones or hand drums, depending on an individual instrument's characteristics, while an extended passage of spacious long tones manages even to blur their identities with Charles' clarinet. It's free improvisation of a rare, sustained and tranquil beauty.

**Stuart Broomer**

**Occupational Hazard**  
**Jacek Kochan & musiConspiracy**  
**Roots 2 Boot Roots2Boot 1912**  
**(jacekkochan.com)**



► Polish-Canadian drummer, composer, band-leader, arranger and producer Jacek Kochan has gathered several well-renowned musicians together

for his newest release – talents such as vocalist and pianist Elizabeth Shepherd, bassists Rich Brown and Adrian Veady, alto saxophonist Luis Deniz among a long list of other fantastic musicians. This unique album is highly recommended for any jazz fans looking for an interesting take on mixing jazz, improvisation and rock together into an eccentric musical jambalaya. All compositions are written and arranged by Kochan himself, with Marta Kochan penning the lyrics. For anyone looking for a true musical adventure, the album “weaves rhythms and harmonies from around the world into an eclectic and infectious mix sure to please the ears of any adventurous listener.”

The album starts off with the track *Fear No More*, a slightly haunting piano riff amplified by Shepherd's vocals. The song progresses into a foot-tapping number with Kochan's constant drum groove and sizzling solos by Brown on electric bass, Deniz and Petr Cancura on saxophones and Jerry De Villiers Jr. on electric guitar. The title track of the record features a very captivating vocal duet by Shepherd and Sari Dajani and a positively groovy riff thanks to Mo Boo on electric bass. *Soliloquy* is perfectly fitting for spring with its intense energy and infectious drum and bass rhythms. This record is a perfect mix of contemporary with just enough structure to each piece mixed in to keep the listener enraptured.

**Kati Kiillaspea**

**Lift Off**  
**Mark Segger Sextet**  
**18th Note Records 18-2018-3**  
**(marksegger.com)**



► Sophisticated, supple and swinging sextet sounds, *Lift Off* shows off the advanced compositional and arranging skills of Edmonton-based

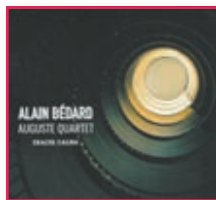
drummer Mark Segger, helped immeasurably by contributions from his five GTA associates. With echoes of feathery neo-classicism mixed with technical explorations, Segger's eight tunes become even more animated when filtered through brassy provocation from trombonist Heather Saumer and trumpeter Jim Lewis; the expressive inflections of tenor saxophonist/clarinetist Peter Lutek; keyboardist Tania Gill's note-perfect comping; and the solid grounding of bassist Rob Clutton.

Case in point is *For the Bees*, with the horns providing the buzzing motif as the theme evolves from a canon with a West Coast Jazz-like feel into more solid sound expressions helped by swirling piano lines and as the climax, pinched notes from Lewis. Meanwhile, despite its title, the concluding *Bassline* is actually a trombone feature with a mixture of rapid-fire blasts and slinky slurs from Saumer. After the trumpeter's Mariachi inflections and thick piano patterns expand the tune, a jumpy finale confirms its unforced jollity. Meanwhile, *One Note* is more complex than imagined, since the emphasis is on each player creating a distinctive variation without violating the unfolding limitations of the slow-motion idea.

Limiting his playing to timekeeping and distinctive accents that help propel the peeps, slurs and trills that personalize his creations, there's no question of Segger's mastery of his triple role. The only question is why this authoritative 2016 date took so long to be released.

**Ken Waxman**

**Exalta Calma**  
**Alain Bédard Auguste Quartet**  
**Effendi Records FND158**  
**(effendirecords.com)**



► Gifted Quebecois jazz bassist, composer and president of the forward-thinking Effendi Records, Alain Bédard, has just released the latest project from

his Auguste Quartet, which features the equally gifted Félix Stüssi on piano, Mario Allard on soprano and alto saxophones and

the facile Michel Lambert on drums. The majority of the intriguing compositions here have been penned by Bédard, with two fine contributions from Stüssi (the evocative *Debout au bout du Bout-du-Bank* and *Insomnia*), as well as one gem from J.P. Viret (NY – *Pas encore*).

The opener, *PouTiti*, begins with a subtle Afro-Creole beat that underscores the quirky melody, with delightful and melodic soprano sax contributions from Allard. Bédard establishes the steady pulse with his undulating bass lines, while Lambert develops an intricate second-line-inspired framework, and on *La Silva Major II*, Bédard's nimble bass exploration leads the way into an exotic, sonic journey.

On Stüssi's *Debout au Bout du Bout-du-Bank*, a unison piano/sax intro segues into a groovy, boppish construct, written to delight the ear and stimulate the imagination. A standout is *Queen Ketchup*, where a concentric swing propels the players into a symbiotic dance that fully illustrates not only the ego-less democracy of this ensemble, but their ability to communicate almost telepathically. An inspired bass solo punctuates the piece brilliantly. The closer, *Insomnia*, is the perfect postscript to a thoroughly gorgeous, well-recorded, conceived and performed contemporary jazz recording. With an almost futuristic West Coast Jazz feel, this final track again displays the wide skills of all of the players, captured in the act of creation. Vive Montréal! Vive Québec!

**Lesley Mitchell-Clarke**

**Old Flames Never Die**  
**Peter Campbell**  
**Independent (petercampbellmusic.com)**



► Respected NYC vocalist, Peter Campbell, has long been a much-loved presence at top cabaret and jazz venues across North America; in 2012 he brought his

gorgeous voice and superb musical taste and settled in Toronto. With the release of this new recording, Campbell has gifted us with an inspired smorgasbord of musical delights. Diverse, inter-generational composers and lyricists are represented here, including Dorothy Fields, Cy Coleman, Irving Berlin, Joni Mitchell, Fred Hersch and Oscar Peterson. Campbell also serves as producer/arranger and has assembled a group of fine musicians, with co-arranger Adrean Farrugia on piano, Reg Schwager on acoustic and electric guitars, Ross MacIntyre on bass, Kevin Turcotte on trumpet and flugelhorn and Michael Occhipinti on electric guitar and effects.

The opening track, *Stars*, is a gem of a tune, written by genius pianist Hersch and the incomparable jazz singer Norma Winstone.



Campbell's pitch-pure instrument soars, bobs and weaves through this contemporary, bossa-infused track and Turcotte's muted solo is a thing of rare beauty. Also intriguing is Coleman and Carolyn Leigh's *My how the Time Goes By*, which reveals a whole different dimension to Campbell, as he dips deep into the blues.

The title track opens with creative, other-worldly sonic affects which then segue into a film noir-ish, 3am ballad of love, loss and longing, expertly rendered. An absolute stand-out is Farrugia's breathtaking arrangement of *Both Sides Now*. His stunningly inventive chord substitutions and Campbell's skilled vocals have not only created their own musical perspective, but also honoured Mitchell's immortal classic.

**Lesley Mitchell-Clarke**

**Rythme de Passage**  
**Emie R Roussel Trio**  
**Uni Musiqc UNICD-4720**  
**(emierroussel.com/en/home/)**



► In traditional larger ensembles the piano, bass and drums feature in what is referred to as the "rhythm section." Famous trios from

Nat Cole to Art Tatum, Paul Bley, Bill Evans, Keith Jarrett and others changed all that. With more adventurous exploration of the instruments, trio music has evolved enormously. Singularity of sound, however, has often remained elusive. Not so with the trio of Emie Rioux-Roussel (piano), Nicolas Bédard (bass) and Dominic Cloutier (drums).

Rioux-Roussel's music is born of a fluid relationship between written material and improvisation and dwells in the delicate balance of European and American jazz. *Rythme de Passage* celebrates a decade of such musical collaboration; its repertoire clearly establishes how the relationship between each musician has evolved from being one in which the fire and brimstone of youth has paved the way for the well-honed values of experience. This is brilliantly caught in the sumptuous music of this record.

The trio operates as a partnership of equals, not as piano and accompaniment. The sound is essentially produced by unamplified, acoustic instruments. Electric instrumentation is unobtrusively integrated in the same spirit with the pianist and bassist principally exploiting it. Its use is sparing and enhances the acoustic instrumentation rather than distracting attention from it.

This trio music glows in its unique lithe elegance, its warmth and poetic joyousness; the tantalizing symmetry of melody and harmony. A musical adventure which sets off in unexpected directions and always swings exactly right with its own fascinating rhythm.

**Raul da Gama**

**Vortex**  
**ITACA 4tet**  
**Nusica nusica.org 17 (nusica.org)**



► Four musicians – clarinetist François Houle, alto saxophonist Nicola Fazzini, bass guitarist Alessandro Fedrigo

and drummer Nick Fraser – have managed to create music exactly as promised: that is, a *Vortex* of sound. Vortices are formed – in the physics of fluid dynamics – by stirring fluids or gasses into whirlpools, smoke rings, tornadoes and dust devils. And while a turbulent artistry might characterize the curl of the flow velocity of this music, perhaps in the opening bars of *Sketch 26*, the most mesmeric musical vectoring shows up as the music progresses into *Saturno* and beyond.

In later repertoire such as *Chorale* and *Calanques*, for instance, we discern a degree of artistry that is highly commendable. There are displays of controlled instrumental pyrotechnics. These have a direct bearing on the resulting music, which is always rigorous and driven by architectural acuity. Houle, Fazzini, Fedrigo and Fraser, all ooze impetuosity and their performances are full of vitality especially on *Nette*, a boppish song with diabolical harmonic inversions. The musicians may not play together often, as they are located in disparate places, yet they parlay with the familiarity of old friends.

Nothing is forced or exaggerated, an error often observed in consciously experimental music. Tempos, ensemble and balance – all seem effortlessly and intuitively right. There is much sensitive give and take between the four instruments, much intimacy and subtle variation of momentum, colour and feeling. In sum, this music suggests uncommon gem-like craftsmanship.

**Raul da Gama**

**Wide**  
**François Carrier; Tomek Gadecki; Marcin Bozek; Michel Lambert**  
**FMR Records FMRCD556**  
**(fmr-records.com)**



► When opening the CD case containing my copy of *Wide* for the first time, a piece of what I assumed to be packaging dropped out. Upon further

inspection, this hand-ripped offering was not wrapping (though it resembles part of an envelope), rather it was a sort of calling card for ColyaKooMusic, the co-production and publishing outfit François Carrier created in 1994. This well-designed paper, with its quirky and compelling hand-stamped

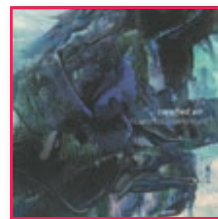
insignia, is a harbinger of what's to come on the rest of the album.

Before my first listen, I was next intrigued by the disc being over 64 minutes long and containing just three tracks. This may be alarming to a listener expecting a bevy of jazz standards or bite-sized original compositions, but anyone familiar with the playing of Carrier and Michel Lambert, or their Polish bandmates Tomek Gadecki and Marcin Bozek, will know to expect bold and spontaneous improvisation. The album does not disappoint!

During this COVID-19 pandemic I am self-isolating with my mother, who was quick to raise an eyebrow when I first played the disc. Her response is not an unsurprising one, given the dense and at times chaotic improvising one hears frequently throughout the album, but it is upon listening to this recording as a whole that one notices the sensitive arcs these masterful musicians are able to create while improvising freely.

**Sam Dickinson**

**Rarefied Air**  
**Huet; Fournier; Kuhl**  
**Furniture Music Records AF003**  
**(alexfourmier.bandcamp.com)**



► This month, my assignments included two discs of freely improvised music, which are at the same time the simplest and most difficult to review. In

one way it becomes all about the vibe of the recordings, and in another there are no traditional compositions/tracks/solos to discuss in a more formal manner. The review of *Wide* dealt with an offering that was recorded live and fit more into the free-jazz realm we associate with the likes of Ornette Coleman and Eric Dolphy, whereas this disc is far more ambient, in one way smoother to listen to, and in another more subdued and introspective.

Edwin Huet, Alex Fournier and Mike Kuhl have collaborated on *Rarefied Air* which consists of four freely improvised tracks involving double bass, drums and electronics. Fournier, who has for years been a mainstay on the free-jazz scene in Toronto, brings his usual mix of stoic restraint and instrumental proficiency to the table. Huet and Kuhl hail from the Baltimore area, and are both known for their expertise in freely improvised music and a variety of other styles. Kuhl's drumming is exciting and uplifting, while Huet's use of electronics gives the recording a unified, produced sound. We are living in odd and unprecedented times, but avant-garde recordings like *Rarefied Air* now provide a thought-provoking and welcome release from the strangeness of this era.

**Sam Dickinson**

**Windward Bound**  
**Dennis Kwok Jazz Orchestra**  
**Independent (denniskwok.ca)**



► *Windward Bound* is an elegant album of program music written for a 19-piece jazz orchestra. Thematically, it is based on multi-instrumentalist/

composer Dennis Kwok's teenage years spent sailing on Lake Ontario and its six movements (*The Calling; Ready, Aye, Ready; A Flat Boat is a Fast Boat; The Tempest; Elegy and Red, Right, Returning*) chronicle different elements of journeys over water. Kwok was only 22 years old when he wrote the music and assembled the excellent group of players, and one can feel his excitement about combining two of his consuming interests in this project.

The first two sections are quite evocative: *The Calling* begins with the musicians blowing through their wind instruments behind a beautiful oboe solo which conjures the idyllic stasis of the beach. *Ready, Aye, Ready* opens with a faster tempo and a repeated piano riff, then flute and bass enter and it builds into the full band which generates the excitement of setting out to sea (or lake) on an adventure.

The album notes state the group is comprised of "musicians under 35 from the southern Ontario region" and that the music is "dedicated to preserving the big band tradition while staying relevant to our generation." This is a well-produced album with solid musicianship that fully realizes its engaging premise.

**Ted Parkinson**

**Out of Dust**  
**Laila Biali**  
**Chronograph Records CR-085**  
**(lailabiali.com)**



► 2019 JUNO Award-winner for Vocal Jazz Album of the Year, stunning singer-songwriter Laila Biali's latest release is a truly interesting musical journey

and, in her own words, a "deeply personal... album" that reflects the roller coaster the last few years have been for her. The record has a clearly positive tone, it's almost as if you can feel the warm spring sun shining down on you throughout each track. Most of the songs have been composed by Biali herself, with drummer Ben Wittman and her son Joshua Biali-Wittman listed as co-composers on a couple of the tracks. The album includes several renowned musicians such as vocalist Lisa Fischer, drummer Larnell Lewis and

bassist Rich Brown, making for a star-studded release overflowing with stellar talent.

As a groovy starter to the record, *Revival* features a bass riff by Brown that goes straight to the soul of the listener, unique chord progressions and a catchy chorus that quickly have you singing along. *Wendy's Song* is a touching tribute to a friend of Biali's, Wendy Nelles and is a song that could be considered among the most positive and uplifting on the entire record. The album closes with *Take the Day Off*, the track co-composed by Biali's son, and has a certain childlike element of wonder to it, amplified by the backing vocals and choice of instruments. A fitting piece to close out the musical journey, as it leaves you with a positive outlook to the world and a curiosity to explore and engage more with your surroundings and loved ones.

**Kati Kiilaspea**

**Duchess – Live at Jazz Standard**  
**Duchess Trio (Amy Cervini; Hilary Gardner; Melissa Stylianou)**  
**Anzic Records ANZ-0066**  
**(duchesstrio.com)**



► Quick! Think of the Boswell Sisters, the Andrews Sisters and the Barry Sisters, and what immediately comes to mind? Some jazzy, Swing Era singing, tight

harmonies, impressive vocal gymnastics and a rollicking good time. Well, fast forward from the 1930s and 40s to 2020, and you've got Duchess, a trio of talented, New York-based, sisters-in-song, Amy Cervini, Hilary Gardner and Melissa Stylianou, deftly channelling the infectious (we are in pandemic times, after all) energy of those vintage, vocal groups, while adding their own modern and comedic spin to the mix, in their latest release, recorded live at one of New York City's most beloved jazz joints, Jazz Standard.

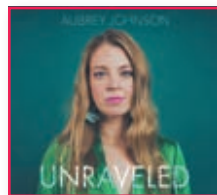
Duchess has been singing and swinging together since 2013. And it appears there's been a love affair going on between the trio and Jazz Standard for about as long (if not longer). Their first CD was released there in 2015, and according to the Duchess website, an eponymous cocktail was created especially for them by the venue's master mixologist. That's some serious respect!

Respect must also be given to the superb quartet performing with the trio: Michael Cabe, piano; Jesse Lewis, guitar; Matt Aronoff, bass; Jared Schonig, drums.

With this live album, you can "hear" the women smiling as they perform such nuggets as *Heebie Jeebies*, *Bei Mir Bist Du Schoen* and *Everybody Loves My Baby* before a very appreciative audience. *Live at Jazz Standard* is a fun and fabulous romp, sure to make you smile, too!

**Sharna Searle**

**Unraveled**  
**Aubrey Johnson**  
**Outside In Music Oim 2002**  
**(aubreyjohnsonmusic.com)**



► Wisconsin-born, New York-based vocalist Aubrey Johnson makes her solo debut with *Unraveled*, a ten-song collection that is an equal testament to her formidable

skills and artistry as a bandleader, composer, arranger, storyteller and world-class singer. Just ten years into her professional music career, Johnson has garnered multiple awards and has worked with an array of stellar musicians including Lyle Mays, Bobby McFerrin and Fred Hersch. It is her singular, captivating vision that is on display here though, in the company of her phenomenal working group: pianist Chris Ziemba, bassist Matt Aronoff, drummer Jeremy Noller, along with Michael Sachs on alto sax and bass clarinet. Violinist Tomoko Omura and accordionist Vitor Gonçalves also contribute beautifully to several songs.

The title track, an outstanding Johnson original with heartfelt, thought-provoking lyrics, is a bold statement about facing and overcoming depression. There is also a refreshing take on *The Peacocks* (lyrics by Norma Winstone), and the inclusion of Jobim's *Dindi* is pure pleasure, with lovely accordion/voice unison passages. Egberto Gismonti's *Karate* is a fitting upbeat closer, featuring stunning piano, vocal and accordion solos, along with playful ensemble interplay, all imbued with a positive energy and inherent lyricism. Special mention also goes to Omura for her magnificent piece, *Voice Is Magic*, and to Steve Rodby for his sparkling production work.

There is so much to recommend here. One could not ask for a better debut.

**Barry Livingston**

**POT POURRI**

**Rebel Moon Blues**  
**Sass Jordan**  
**Stony Plain Records SPCD1410**  
**(sassjordan.com)**



► The visceral beauty – yes, such a thing is possible – together with the long-limbed melancholy of the blues, is what makes the music of *Rebel Moon Blues* by

Sass Jordan a flaming masterpiece. Despite the fact that she hasn't made a recording in almost a decade, she has clearly been in top

form throughout that period. Jordan indulges in what can only be described as a spontaneously intuitive unleashing of these melodies. There is no gratuitous ornamentation, no playing to the rock gallery; no fuss; just the raspy hardness of her vocals unfolding with enormous colour and emotion song after song.

There is never any room for shallowness with the blues and Jordan seems not only to understand that perfectly, but to find places to reach deep within her chest to deliver on the emotion that the songs demand. She is appropriately intimate on *My Babe*, relentless and unforgiving on *One Way Out* and rivetingly plaintive on *Still Got the Blues*. The reason she can breathe life into those songs and the others on the disc is because she seems to inhabit them as if they were hers and hers alone, despite the fact that other musicians actually penned these classic tunes.

Part of the allure of this recording comes from the fact that the musicians who support Jordan on her journey are fully attuned to her artistry. Together with Jordan they make this a recording to die for.

**Raul da Gama**

## I Bless the Wounds

**Don Bray**

**Independent DBCD2006 (donbray.ca)**



► Ottawa-based, singer-songwriter Don Bray's self-produced sixth recording succeeds on several levels. It features Bray's appealing soft baritone and fine guitar

work. Subtle, concise contributions of backup singers and tasteful ensemble players are impressive, especially those from guitarist/vocalist Terry Tufts. Most outstanding of all are Bray's original songs. He states he was "born to an abusive father, and a rape victim; that set me up for 27 years in the Toronto Fire Department." He continues to cope with complex PTSD, and this disc's 13 songs include a wealth of life insights expressed in lyrical-musical work of a high order.

Bray does not shy from the rough and rude, as in *Don't You Think It's Time*, which ironically applies a warm melody plus gentle fingerpicking to voicing the need for leaving a house party horror show. In the confidently uptempo *I Don't Get Out Much*, the singer comments wryly on a life of procrastination and isolation. *Time to Go* is an attractive country waltz with pedal steel and mandolin – but about abuse. Best of all for me is the exquisite *I Bless the Wounds*, which is well chosen as the title track. Here I find the progression from darkness to light haunting, as the songwriter finds love again in waltz time. There is always risk in self-disclosure, and we are fortunate that Bray has brought forward these timely meditations on loss and

hope with such self-knowledge and dignity.

**Roger Knox**

## Power Women of the Blues Vol.2 –

**Prove it on me**

**Rory Block**

**Stony Plain Records (m2.labelstore.ca)**



► The last (and only) time I saw Rory Block perform was at the Winnipeg Folk Festival in 1985. But I remember being blown away by what I heard, and how she rocked that workshop stage! So, 35 years and six Blues Music Awards later, I am happy to report that Block continues to rock! With her recent album, *Prove it on me*, the second in her *Power Women of the Blues* series dedicated to the groundbreaking women of the blues, Block "proves it on us" why she is considered one of the world's

finest blues artists.

While the first album of the series honoured the legendary Bessie Smith, this second volume celebrates some of the more obscure, yet immensely talented women of the blues; the well-known title track by Ma Rainey, and Memphis Minnie's *In My Girlish Days* are the exceptions.

Each carefully chosen track features the "Rory Block Band," that is, Block on vocals, all guitars, all drums and percussion. Her signature raw energy, soulfulness, authenticity and scorching vocals breathe new life into sassy tunes like Helen Humes' *He May Be Your Man*, *It's Red Hot* by Madlyn Davis, Rosetta Howard's *If You're a Viper* and *Milk Man* by Merline Johnson. Other names to look out for: Arizona Dranes, Lottie Kimbrough, Elvie Thomas.

Block has always paid homage to those who came before her. *Prove it on me* secures the place of these founding women of the blues in the annals of blues history.

**Sharna Searle**

# Something in the Air

## Reissues Keep Genre-Defining Sessions in Circulation

KEN WAXMAN

A well-known improviser once stated that "My roots are in my record collection" and most serious fans cite seminal discs that helped them define their commitment to favoured music. That's why the reissuing of musical classics is so important, especially with improvised music so related to in-the-moment communication. Not only does listening to these innovative discs confirm the fond memories of those who heard them when first issued, but they also provide valuable insights for those hearing them for the first time.



For instance, **Albert Ayler Quartets 1964 Spirits to Ghosts Revisited (ezz-thetics 1101 hathut.com)** and **Sun Ra Arkestra's Heliocentric Worlds 1 & 2 Revisited (ezz-thetics 1103 hathut.com)** are newly remastered versions of discs that helped define the free jazz revolution of the mid-1960s. Moreover the sets are each made up of two LPs initially issued on ESP-Disk. Fifty-six years on, tenor saxophonist Ayler's basic melodies swirled out in rasping, ragged blasts can still be upsetting when first heard. Especially with tunes that begin with sonic excess and climb upwards from there, the saxophonist seems

to be repeatedly thrashing out similar elementary themes over and over. Yet these versions of some of Ayler's best-known tunes are unique in that his foil in both cases is a trumpeter, the little-known Norman Howard on the first four tracks and Don Cherry, famous for his association with Ornette Coleman, on the rest. With Howard's flighty obbligatos decisively contrasting with Ayler's wide snarls, they pair perfectly. Sunny Murray's drum smacks make *Holy Holy* and *Witches and Devils* the standout tracks, especially during those times when the



saxophonist's Ur-R&B screams are actually pitched higher than the trumpeter's clarion growls. Always ready to default into favourite motifs, Ayler works in the melody from *Ghosts*, his best-known composition, during the first track, and following a thumping bass solo, even layers a mellow turn into his solo on the second. Still, the performances were conventional enough to include recapped heads at the end of each tune. Cherry, on the other hand, brings advanced harmonies to his six tunes, with his soaring brassiness contrasting Ayler's rugged slurs on the first titled version of *Ghosts*. At the same time, while the trumpeter sticks to fluttering song-like variations, Ayler uses glossolalia and split tones to deconstruct the tune still further, aided by plucks deviations and col legno pops from bassist Gary Peacock. This contradiction is also obvious on *Mothers*, the closest to a ballad track in this set. While bowed bass backs Cherry adding operatic highs to his otherwise moderato solo, buzzing strings fill in the spaces alongside Ayler's sardonic peeps and squeaky altissimo shakes when he takes over the lead. As well, the concluding *Children* may start off stately and neutral, but after Murray's door-knocking smacks and echoing double bass thumps quicken the rhythm, both horn men create an explosion of brassy brays and skyrocketing saxophone slurs.



Ayler drowned himself at 34 in 1970, after only eight years of recording, but Sun Ra, who claimed to have been born on the planet Saturn, passed from this planet in 1993 at probably 80 earth years. However, he recorded with various versions of his Arkestra from 1956 on, and with the band still functioning today innumerable discs are

available. **Heliocentric Worlds** from 1965 is particularly noteworthy though, because these were the first LPs massively distributed and which firmly situated Ra in the centre of the improvisational avant-garde. Earlier and later recordings subsequently proved that these exploratory excursions were just one part of his burgeoning oeuvre though. Listening to the suite that takes up the first seven tracks, then and now easily refutes those who claimed the New Thing was no more than random, inchoate noise. Ra's complex program is as adroitly orchestrated as any symphony with meticulous shading and balance among bass clarinet slurs, piccolo trills, multiple percussion bangs and split-tone showdowns between trumpet and piccolo and sliding alto saxophone and plunger trombone. Massed explosions from the five woodwind players are often followed by col legno emphasis from bassist Ronnie Boykins. When Ra finally asserts himself on *Other Worlds*, his witty alternation between roadhouse-style piano exuberance and electronic space sizzles underlines the composition's duality. Jimmhi Johnson's tympani resonations match the higher-pitched brass throughout, at the same time as five other musicians add clanking claves and small percussion fillips alongside Ra's relaxed comping and Boykins' ambulating line. If the penultimate *Nebulae* highlights free-form blowing from saxophonists, then the concluding *Dancing in the Sun* could be a Swing Era trope with vamping section work pushed ahead by John Gilmore's tenor saxophone, Marshall Allen's alto and a showy Cozy Cole-like drum solo from Johnson. This musical intricacy is confirmed on the subsequent tracks that were *Heliocentric Worlds 2*. With the Arkestra shrunk to an octet, arrangements emphasize ear worms such as Allen's piccolo shrills, what sounds like electrified saxophone runs, and the constant leitmotif of Ra's tuned bongos. *Cosmic Chaos* confirms its post-modernism as Boykins' rhythmic swing contrasts with Allen's multiphonic reed smears, and Robert Cummings' bass clarinet puffs are as prominent as heraldic calls from trumpeter Walter Miller. Meanwhile Ra's percussive output is as much Albert Ammons as Cecil Taylor. Finally, the supplementary percussion complete the composition, with gong resonance and bongo-thwacks. However *The Sun Myth*, a nearly 18-minute concerto defines Ra's skills even more. Sonorous and contrapuntal, mournful bowed strings are heard at one point and clashing junkeroo-style percussion at another. After the bagpipe-like multiphonic tremolo created by the four reed players presages the finale, Ra's piano solo with its echoes of *Blue Rondo à la Turk*



confirms the band's subtle swing groove.

If swing's the thing, what about the **New Acoustic Swing Duo's** sardonically titled eponymous session (**Corbett vs Dempsey CD 0066 corbettvsdempsey.com**)? With Willem Breuker playing five different woodwinds and Han Bennink a music store's inventory of percussion instruments, it was the first issue on the ICP label and one of the

sessions that confirmed that European improvisers had the same inspirational skills as their North American counterparts. Now *New Acoustic Swing Duo* is a two-CD set that includes not only the Amsterdam duo's original 1967 LP, but six newly discovered 1968 live tracks from Essen. Later known for his leadership of the more precise large Kollektief, Breuker (1944–2010) was at his loosest here, squeezing, slurring, shrieking and snarling in free form from all his horns. Bennink, who would soon become a linchpin of the ICP Orchestra, was at his loud ferocious best as well. Constantly in motion, he mixes primordial yelps and cries as he crashes cymbals, beats hand drums, sets snares and toms reverberating, rings bells, smacks and rattles small idiophones and creates undulating tabla drones. The saxophonist puffs out nephritic gut spilling without a real blues line on *Singing the Impalpable Blues*, moves between squawks and sensitivity on *Music for John Tchicai* and fires so many broken tones at the percussionist on *Mr. M. A. De R. in A*. that Bennink's sten-torian responses would enliven an entire street parade. At 21 minutes plus however, the aptly named *Gamut* is the novella to earlier musical short stories. Working up from overblowing with wrenching vigour, the tenor saxophonist craftily settles on multiphonic slurs and glossolalia to push his ideas, as the drummer pounds along on anything that shakes. Despite snuffling bass clarinet asides at midpoint, Bennink's relentless bangs and pops bring back altissimo smears, reed bites and sighing flutter tonguing to cement drum bombast and reed explorations into a multi-hued exposition. Interestingly enough, the extended *Essen 3* finds Breuker augmenting his reed lines to penny-whistle-like airiness in double motif variation, with the antithesis low-pitched bass clarinet solemnity, while Bennink's percussion discussion references jazz-swing. Furthermore the fife-and-drum band groove both reach on that track is given more expression on the final *Essen 6*. As the cacophony of duck-like quacks and air-raid siren shrills from the reedist and drum bangs and slaps give way to a more serene middle section, the concluding bouncy parade sounds find Breuker emphasizing the tongue-in-cheek melody burlesquing he would perfect with the Kollektief, while Bennink's drum strategy sticks to the jazz affiliations emphasized by the ICP Orchestra.



On the other hand **Baroque Jazz Trio + Orientasie/Largo** (**SouffleContinu Records FFLCD057 soufflecontinurecords.com**) from 1970, is a session that could only have been created at that time. That's because the eight selections take on influences from so-called classical and world music, rock and ethnic sounds. Furthermore the members of the Paris-based trio are cellist Jean-Charles

Capon, who often plucks his instrument to create guitar-like fills and drummer Philippe Combelle, who spends much of his time on tablas. Since then both have stuck pretty close to the mainstream jazz and instrumental pop music worlds. However the third member is harpsichordist Georges Alexandre, the alias of pianist Georges Rabol, who besides being a notated music recitalist, also composes for ballet, theatre, film, radio and TV. While as with most artifacts of the psychedelic era there are some groovy soundtrack-like suggestions, when Capon's pseudo lead-guitar stabs, Combelle's back beat and harpsichord clashes sway together, the references are more towards Led Zeppelin and The Doors and avant-rock freakouts than anything else. Adding tabla interludes and connecting keyboard harmonies, this leaning is most obvious on *Delhi Daily* and *Latin Baroque*. However the real demonstrations of the combo's versatility are *Cesar Go Back*

*Home* and *Largo*. The former, a pseudo-blues prodded by cello thumps and harpsichord strums, interpolates a funk beat compete with shuffle rhythms from the drummer. Less slow and dignified than vibrating and swinging *Largo* is one of the few experiments of this kind that achieves a so-called classical/free-form/rhythmic meld, especially when cello shakes and rolling percussion link up with swift keyboard continuo.



Along with these sets there's another category that involves sessions recorded years ago, but not issued until now. Prominent among them is **Zenith** (NoBusiness Records NBCD 124 nobusinessrecords.com), a 1977 date featuring a quintet led by multi-instrumentalist **Sam Rivers** that made no other discs in this configuration. Intense from beginning to end, the one-track, over 53-minute

session gives Rivers ample space to display his seesawing style on tenor and soprano saxophones, flute and piano. The uncommon backing band consists of Joe Daley's tuba lines which often function as a Greek chorus to Rivers' inventions; the subtle and supple string strategies of bassist Dave Holland; and the boiling tumult provided by not one, but two

drummers: Barry Altschul and Charlie Persip. With the bassist's sympathetic strums framing him, Rivers' tenor saxophone moves through split tones and glossolalia during the piece's introductory ebb and flow. Yet, as Daley's plunger whinnies stunningly contrast with Rivers' staccato snarls and doits, the sliding narrative picks up additional power from Holland's walking pumps and hand-clapping drum beats that owe as much to bebop as free jazz. Intricate chording from the bassist with a banjo-like twang, help slow down the pace, which moves to another sequence propelled by Rivers' low pitched flute modulations, stretching out his passionate storytelling until layered contributions from all five lead to a climax of unmatched intensity. Following heightened applause, Rivers resumes the performance hammering and tinkling tremolo pushes from the piano, followed by supple tongue-stretching slides from Daley, as drum fills and double bass swipes replicate a pseudo-Latin beat. Finally, high-pitched soprano saxophone vibrations, doubled by klaxon-like snarls from the brass player, signal the approaching finale, which despite a detour into a drum dialogue, ends with bass thumps and flutter tongued reed variations that relate back to the initial theme.

Whether well distributed or formerly a secret shared only by the cognoscenti, each of these free jazz classics deserve the wider appreciation they can now receive. **O**

## Old Wine, New Bottles | Fine Old Recordings Re-Released

BRUCE SURTEES



A few months ago, I drew the reader's attention to Volume Two of **Leonard Bernstein's Young People's Concerts**, recorded during the late 1960s. **Volume Three** is now available, again on four Blu-ray video discs (**Unitel 800704 naxosdirect.com**).

As to be expected, Bernstein is again both entertaining and informative as he outlines musical forms and terms to his young audience. An inside view into each work is followed by the performance with the New

York Philharmonic. Volume Three includes 18 episodes – the Concerts Nos. 29–43 plus Young Performers Nos. 7–9 (featuring Edo de Waart, Horacio Gutiérrez and Young Uck Kim). The repertoire is surprisingly broad including works rarely presented to such a young audience.

“The Road to Paris” includes Gershwin’s *An American in Paris*, Bloch’s *Schelomo* with cellist Zara Nelsova plus dances from De Falla’s *Three-Cornered Hat*. “The Sound of a Hall” lays out the daunting tasks faced by the acoustician in the new Philharmonic Hall in Lincoln Center. Works are Berlioz’s *Roman Carnival Overture*, shorter pieces by Copland and Tchaikovsky’s *1812 Overture* with a riotous outing for the many percussionists. In “A tribute to Teachers,” Bernstein conducts works by his teachers, Randall Thompson and Walter Piston and honors Fritz Reiner in a stunningly exuberant version of Brahms’ *Academic Festival Overture*. “The Genius of Paul Hindemith” features excerpts from a dozen of his works together with a most persuasive, lengthy appreciation of Hindemith’s music. In “Farewell to Nationalism,” Bernstein demonstrates to his audience that a composer’s country of origin is not necessarily reflected in his or her compositions.

In “Charles Ives: American Pioneer,” Bernstein discusses and performs the music of Charles Edward Ives, “the first great American composer.” In “Forever Beethoven,” the master is profiled and his works are performed and discussed. “Fantastic Variations” is a full program devoted to Richard Strauss’ *Don Quixote*. This is Bernstein’s very detailed exploration of how Strauss depicts the self-styled Knight

Errant’s various delusional encounters, his final return to reality and peaceful last breath. In “Bach Transmogrified,” Bernstein discusses the many different transmogrifications of the “Little” *Fugue in G Minor BWV578* for organ. After hearing the original, the first iteration is the celebrated transcription for orchestra by Leopold Stokowski, who was on hand to conduct the orchestra. Next, the audience watched a Moog synthesizer rolled across the stage and listened to that version. Then came the Lukas Foss transformation of the little Bach piece.

The third Blu-ray disc contains “The Anatomy of a Symphony Orchestra,” in which Bernstein draws the audience’s attention to the sections of the orchestra, strings, winds, brass and percussion. He puts it all together in a complete performance of Respighi’s *The Pines of Rome* with a roof-raising finale, as the tread of the unstoppable Roman legions gets closer and closer through *The Pines of the Appian Way*. In sharp contrast is “A Copland Celebration,” featuring the *Clarinet Concerto* and closing with a ballet suite from *Billy the Kid*. In “Thus Spake Richard Strauss,” Bernstein examines Strauss’ musical interpretation of Nietzsche’s writings. Interesting. “Liszt and the Devil” examines *A Faust Symphony*, a work in three movements, *Faust*, *Gretchen* and *Mephistopheles*. Liszt’s symphony was deservedly a favourite of Bernstein who had recorded it in New York in 1960 and would so again with the Boston Symphony in 1976. Here he was happy to explain all about the Faustian subject and Liszt. Fascinating insights into both composer and compositions. “Holst: The Planets” (minus Saturn and Neptune), is the last work in this collection of annotated concerts for a young audience.

Bernstein had loads of charisma and he was certainly the right person, arguably the only person, for these events, to the extent that still today, half a century later, he can hold the viewer’s undivided attention. Lenny never spoke condescendingly to his young audience, always treating them with respect.

Each Blu-ray disc, except for the fourth, holds five concerts and plays for over four hours. The fourth contains young, some very young, performers as soloists playing with the orchestra. The set, which feels as fresh today as when the concerts took place, is also available on seven DVDs. **O**

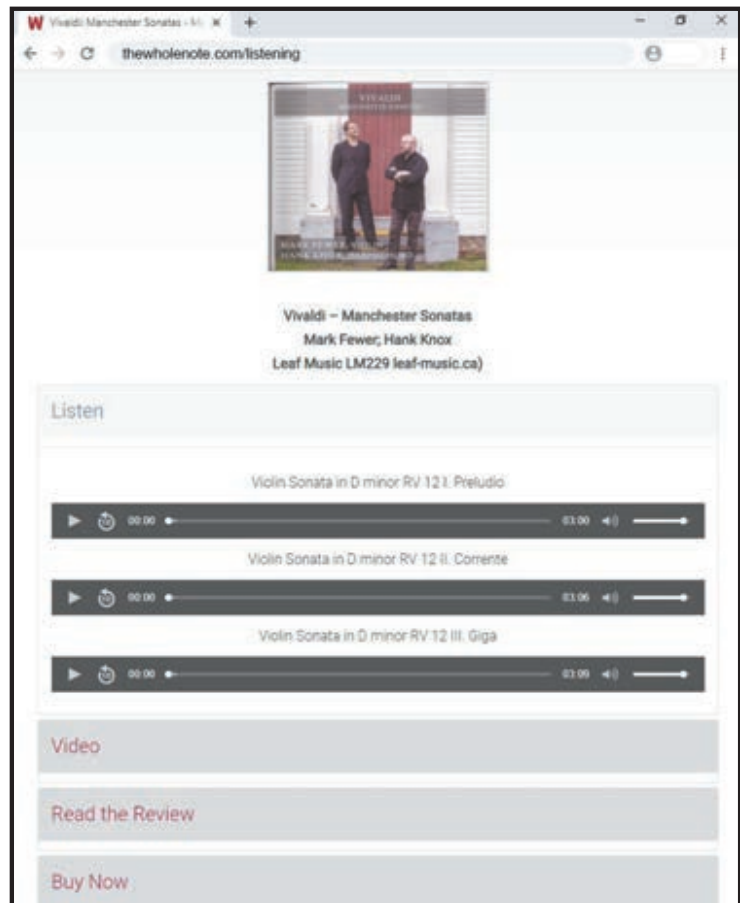
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# REAR VIEW MIRROR

## Listening habits blighted by COVID's curse

No pleasure in solitary listening when it's no longer a choice

ROBERT HARRIS

As we enter into this extraordinary exercise in willed sensory deprivation that is our new reality (and how bizarre it is), I have found myself surprised by almost all of my reactions to the coronavirus. Not the least of which are my reactions to music. If I wanted to be rational about it, I would have to admit that while yes, I enjoy going to concerts, a good 90 per cent of the music I actually listen to – on the radio, online, from CDs, and files and even, heaven help me, on records – is still available to me. My listening habits really shouldn't haven't changed that much at all.

And yet, they have. The musical impact on me of the coronavirus has been profound. Unexpectedly so.

For one thing, I can hardly bear to listen to music at all these days. Not a note. I assume I'm in a tiny minority because COVID-19 playlists are popping up everywhere. I've tried listening to a few – I never get very far. I'm just not moved. Even some of my favourite composers are unbearable to me these days. Beethoven I find appalling. All that power and desperate projection of will strike me as completely wrong-headed these suffering days. Bach's crystalline mathematical perfection likewise comes across, to me, as an utterly tone-deaf response to a world seemingly without ballast or divine balance. Who is left? Mozart, of course, to my mind the perfect coronavirus composer in his deeply ambiguous, but fundamentally loving relationship to the world. I just listened to the last act of *Figaro* the other day, which begins with that amazing G-minor *Cavatina* of Barbarina (my nominee for Mozart's most underrated aria, right up there for the expression of pure grief with Pamina's *Ach, ich fühl's*, although Barbarina is lamenting the loss of a pin, not a lover) and ends with

that extraordinary heaven-sent hymn to forgiveness (more religious than anything in the *Requiem*) that perfectly sums up Mozart's fundamentally confused relationship to the world. That confusion, the combination of comedy and depth, farce and love, the unexpected breaking out of the purest feeling in the middle of nonsense is such a perfect reflection of our present state, except ours is one of horror, not farce, that I found myself, much to my surprise, awash in tears at opera's end, weeping not just for the Countess – surely the most perfect, angelic creature in opera – but for us all.

So if I haven't been listening to much music during this numbing, get-through-each-day-one-at-a-time pandemic, what have I been doing? Well, I've been doing a lot of thinking about music itself and what it means for us, and again, have surprised myself. I mentioned earlier that I admit to being a child of the recording – most of the most significant musical experiences I've had in classical music, and almost all of them in pop music, have been through records. Consequently, all my life I've been somewhat skeptical of the Frankfurt school of thought, of Theodor Adorno and Walter Benjamin, that consistently undervalued, and even opposed the recording as a form of musical enlightenment. Adorno felt that the recording robbed music of its essential communal nature; Benjamin felt that mechanical reproductions of art lacked a certain "aura" that the originals enjoyed. I disagreed. The recording, I felt, had an aura of its own, different from that of a live performance, but very real nonetheless; and the private listening to music that the recording afforded certainly made for an experience quite separate from that of a concert hall, but no less worthy.

The coronavirus has proven to me that I was wrong on both counts.

Don't ask me to explain, because I'm not sure I understand myself, but the fact that I can't go to a concert anymore has also robbed my recordings of the aura they once had. It doesn't make sense: one shouldn't have anything to do with the other. Whether or not the TSO is performing Stravinsky in Roy Thomson Hall tomorrow shouldn't influence how much I love my 60-year-old recording of Bernstein conducting *The Firebird*. But it does. I can feel it. I can only surmise that when I was listening to my recordings, I was unconsciously imagining myself at a live concert; and that fantasy was actually a central part of my listening experience. Without the potential of a live performance in my imagination, the record made little sense. I enjoyed the recordings because I knew I could experience a live concert when I wanted, even if I went to very few. Now that I no longer can, even if only temporarily, the power of the recording has eroded for me. Without live concerts, records mean considerably less, I've discovered. Much to my surprise.



In Muti's *Figaro*, Patrizia Pace is Barbarina who, *Gramophone* magazine says, "packs a world of pathos into her Cavatina."

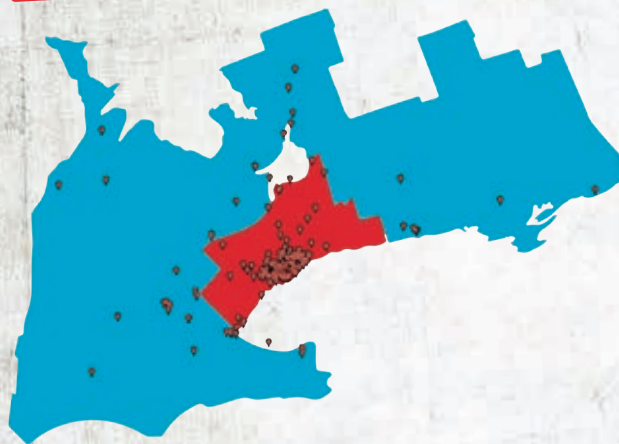
Which explains, I think, my last reaction to the virus, which is to feel a great deal of pain on behalf of my musician friends and colleagues. It sounds, I know, a bit elitist and out of touch to mourn for musicians when so many of our other fellow citizens are hurting so profoundly and face real dislocations in their lives. Worrying about art seems to be a bit on the frivolous side when the basic underpinnings of our society seem to be eroding – witness the brouhaha over the 25 million-dollar grant to the Kennedy Centre included in the midst of a 4.5 trillion US stimulus package, which was so controversial it needed Donald Trump's personal endorsement to be included. (it represents five one hundred thousandths of the total, in case you're wondering.) But musicians, especially classical musicians, are unlike any other set of workers in this cryogenic suspension of ours, even other performing artists, like actors or dancers. Classical musicians expect to be in front of an audience regularly – even pop musicians only tour from time to time. Performing live is like breathing to classical musicians, a natural outlet that makes all their other activities – practising, studying, rehearsing – make sense. Take the performances away, and suddenly nothing makes sense. It's as though my musician friends are all in the artistic ICU, hooked up to aesthetic ventilators. Their normal functioning has been disturbed – and not just theirs, but ours as well. It's a strangely unsettling experience.

The virus has reminded us that music is the most social of the arts – it needs a functioning collective of performers, administrators, entrepreneurs and audience members to be most fully itself. It can't really exist in a recorded vacuum. It needs real live bodies to exist – performing bodies, and listening bodies. When we connect physically through music, we create something together that didn't exist separately before – this was the essence of Adorno's complaint about the record and radio broadcast, the lack of that physical and psychical creativity of which music is capable. I'm becoming increasingly sure that the world that will emerge, blinking and confused, at the other end of this cataclysm is going to be very new in many ways – we won't be returning to as much as we think, or hope. So we will need music, as we always have, to help us reconnect with each other, and make sense of what we are collectively experiencing when the time comes.

Let's hope music retains the power to do so, so that when it returns to us, in its full communicative splendour, whenever that is, it will help us take stock of the new tomorrow that awaits us. ○

**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*.**

# THE MAP THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN



Many of the hundreds of public places where music-loving readers usually find **The WholeNote**, free of charge, are still shuttered and the people there are facing unprecedented hardships and uncertain futures

They are all waiting to know what "business as usual" is going to look like, and wondering when this will start to happen. Just like the concert presenters who send us their listings. Just like musicians. Just like audiences. Just like us.

*The WholeNote* is committed to being here for them – and you – when "normal" resumes.

**So here is something you can do to help us. Keep an eye open for places you usually pick up our magazine, or visit [thewholenote.com/findus](http://thewholenote.com/findus) and take time to browse this map online for locations you know. When you notice that one of these locations near you has re-opened, please let us know!**

Meanwhile if you or someone you know is currently reading *The WholeNote* online and would like a paper copy of this edition, please contact us!

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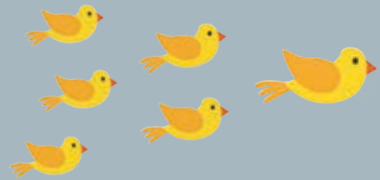
Chris Malcolm, Circulation Manager |  
David Perlman, Publisher



# The WholeNote's 18th Annual Choral Canary Pages



PREVIEW:  
*First fifty  
choirs are in*



First priority when circumstances permit? Getting back to attending live events, of course. Meanwhile, staying in touch with musicians I know ... keeps me occupied and somewhat hopeful.

Meanwhile we've launched free, online broadcasts of concerts from the archives, some with video and some that are audio only. Each broadcast will feature a video introduction and a live chat with orchestra musicians throughout.

I have a whole bunch of incredible community partners up here and down south, and some of them are brilliantly and bravely reframing their work and pushing forward.

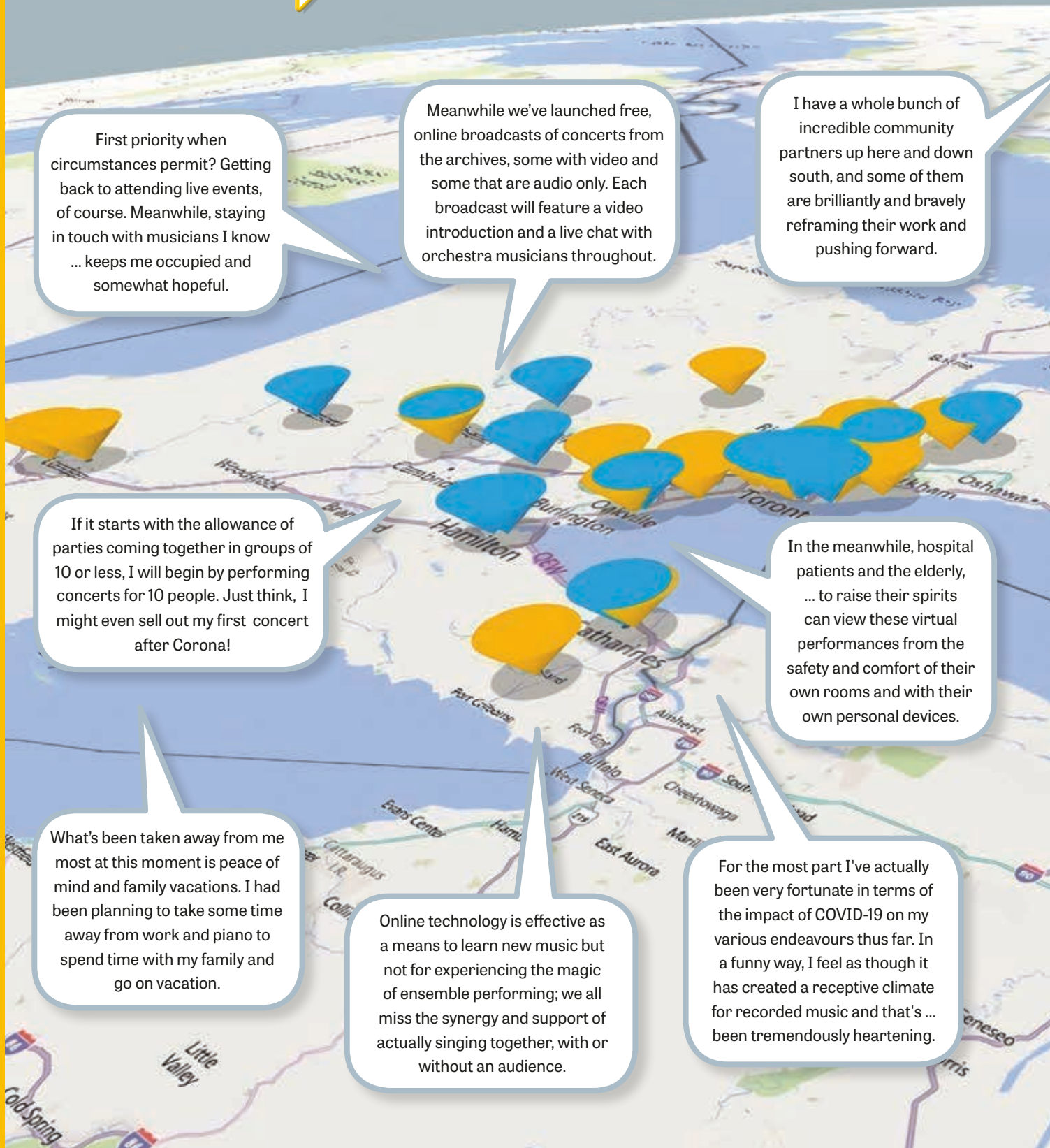
If it starts with the allowance of parties coming together in groups of 10 or less, I will begin by performing concerts for 10 people. Just think, I might even sell out my first concert after Corona!

In the meanwhile, hospital patients and the elderly, ... to raise their spirits can view these virtual performances from the safety and comfort of their own rooms and with their own personal devices.

What's been taken away from me most at this moment is peace of mind and family vacations. I had been planning to take some time away from work and piano to spend time with my family and go on vacation.

Online technology is effective as a means to learn new music but not for experiencing the magic of ensemble performing; we all miss the synergy and support of actually singing together, with or without an audience.

For the most part I've actually been very fortunate in terms of the impact of COVID-19 on my various endeavours thus far. In a funny way, I feel as though it has created a receptive climate for recorded music and that's ... been tremendously heartening.





# the WholeNote™

25<sup>TH</sup> SEASON!

Vol 25 No 8

MAY AND JUNE 2020

## COMMUNITY VOICES

### How May is & what may be

Next season will see the first of our regional runout concerts attached to our main Sudbury season. We would love for any Northern Ontarians interested in bringing top-level classical music and musicians to their communities to contact us.

Even the skeptics have upped their Zoom game: people I thought would never turn on their web cams have finally done so.

COVID-19 has brought forward the tipping point, hastening the creation of new structures to support the creation and production of the arts in a different way than has been the case through the latter half of the 20th century to now. Strong developments and innovation arise in hard times as we focus on what matters.

So in the meanwhile, I have been playing Beethoven and Debussy on the piano daily. ... Witnessing how opera companies across Canada are dealing with the crisis and planning for the future. Advocating for inclusion of more artist voices so that our new reality on the other side of this works for administrators, as well as for creators and performers.

I miss the magic when the lights go down and the curtain rises. I miss the symbiotical flow of energy between us performers and our audiences, and yes I even miss the stress of preparation before.

No longer bound by geography, we have engaged Canadian solo artists who live abroad and wouldn't normally be able to perform with us. We have also set up a Patreon page so that people can support us with small monthly contributions.

We're optimistic that things will eventually return, but it's going to take a long while ... Right now, this all kind of feels like jazz: we're improvising ...

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