the WholeNote™

Volume 27 No 3
DECEMBER 2021 / JANUARY 2022

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Getting to this milestone moment has been a long and challenging journey. When we closed our doors in the summer of 2018, nobody could have predicted what fate had in store.
— Jesse Kumagai, page 8

8 FOR OPENERS | **Many Happy Returns** | DAVID PERLMAN

STORIES & INTERVIEWS

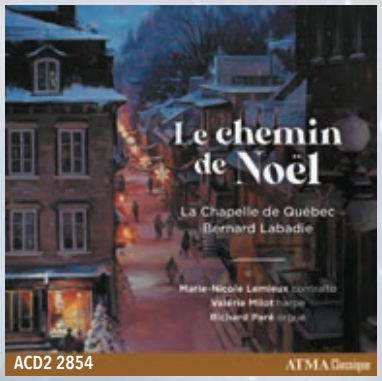
10 IN CONVERSATION | **Composer Ana Sokolović** | LYDIA PEROVIĆ

12 MUSIC THEATRE | **Emerging from postponement limbo as it all comes alive again** | JENNIFER PARR

14 CLASSICAL AND BEYOND | **Ólafsson on Mozart, as momentum builds toward 2022** | PAUL ENNIS

18 BEHIND THE SCENES | **Adversity to Advantage "Bach Among Friends"** | GARY CORRIN

ATMA Classique



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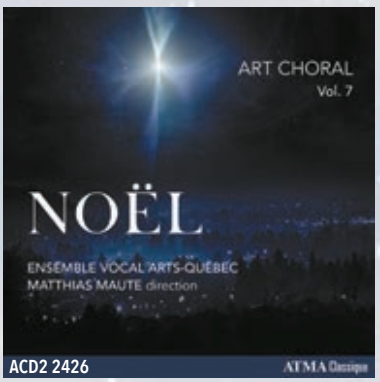

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STORIES & INTERVIEWS

20 IN WITH THE NEW | **Music for change - Kronos and Tacaq return to 21C** | WENDE BARTLEY

22 MAINLY CLUBS, MOSTLY JAZZ | **What a difference a year makes!** | COLIN STORY

60 REARVIEW MIRROR | **"The great era of Canadian pianism" Reflecting on the flags we fly** | ROBERT HARRIS

62 BACK IN FOCUS | **Previously covered, topical again** | STAFF

LISTINGS

24 Events by date

30 Available online
Blogs, pods & regular streams

31 In the Clubs (mostly Jazz)

32 Classified Ads

33 **The WholeNote Online Directories (index)**
Blue Pages for 2021-2022
Directory of Music Makers and Arts Services

DISCOVERIES: RECORDINGS REVIEWED

34 Editor's Corner | DAVID OLDS

36 Strings Attached | TERRY ROBBINS

38 Vocal

39 Classical and Beyond

41 Modern and Contemporary

46 Jazz and Improvised Music

51 Pot Pourri

53 Something in the Air | KEN WAXMAN

54 Old Wine, New Bottles | BRUCE SURTEES

55 Other Fine Vintages

56 New in the Listening Room, INDEX

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MANY HAPPY RETURNS

DAVID PERLMAN

[**David**] - welcome back to [**Massey Hall**]!

My name is [**Jesse Kumagai**], I am the [**President and CEO**] of [**Massey Hall and Roy Thomson Hall**] a [***charitable* non-profit organization**] and I want to tell you about [**last night**].

[**Last evening**], [**2,500 thrilled Torontonians**] gathered in the [**Allan Slaight Auditorium**] – a space that has brought us together for [**more than 127 years.**]

Getting to this milestone moment has been a long and challenging journey. When we closed our doors [**in the summer of 2018**], nobody could have predicted [**what fate had in store.**]

Because in March of 2020, the world changed.

The pandemic had a significant impact on our [**project**], stopping [**construction**] for an extended period of time, then making it so much more challenging when we resumed. It increased [**the cost**], interrupted our [**fund-raising**], and delayed [**our completion**] – all while [**Roy Thomson Hall sat dark, our business halted in its tracks**]. The fact we [**opened last night**] is something of a minor miracle.

Truthfully, there are a few elements that [**are not quite finished**], and under the circumstances, we could have [**postponed our reopening**]. But the pandemic also made us all appreciate just how important [**cultural events like this**] are to the fabric of our society. And as we [**return to the life we once knew**], *this* moment has taken on an entirely new significance. *Nothing* was going to deter us from [**welcoming you back**] and who better than [**legendary Gordon Lightfoot**] to [**perform at Massey Hall's reopening.**]

So I hope you'll [**forgive our imperfections**], and know that in due course, [**every last detail will be brought up to the standard Massey Hall deserves**]. And in the coming months, we will be [**opening more performance venues**], and [**spaces for music education, community groups, and of course, artists**], to realize the promise of [**Allied Music Centre.**]

But for now, I want to thank [**you all**]. I want to thank you for being part of our journey, and our community. You make it all worthwhile.

Let's make some [**new memories at Massey!**]

Here's the thing. I hope you get a bit of a chuckle, or a smile anyway, out of the adjacent treatment of Jesse Kumagai's heartfelt words, via email, on the occasion of the recent re-opening of Massey Hall. But I hope just as hard that the chuckle isn't cynical. Because that's not where I am coming from. It's hard for me to find anything to be spiteful about here.

What's not to like, for example, about main floor seating which can be slid under the stage transforming bums-in-plush-seats conventional concert attendance for those who desire it, into standing room for those audiences who cannot imagine being comfortable not moving to the music?

As Marianne McKenna principal architect of the loving and visionary restoration/renovation put it during a sneak peek guided tour for *EXCLAIM!* the day before the reopening: "[It's] what "everybody" wants, but the other part of the everybody, they want to sit down. So we can do both. We've introduced adaptability, flexibility. This really is a hall for the 21st century."

And what's not to like about the transformation of a great hall into a great hub, as Kumagai described it, full of "spaces for music education, community groups, and of course, artists"?

Think about it. If the largest among us in the arts ecosystem can opt for visionary transformation – from concert hall to hub for community arts – then maybe we are truly emerging into a time where support for that ideal will, for once, filter all the way down. Can you imagine some version of Kumagai's message being delivered when some not-to-distant big day dawns for an arts organization or cause that in every way you are invested in?

I sure can!

David Perlman can be reached, for now anyway, at publisher@thewholenote.com.

Upcoming Dates & Deadlines

Free Event Listings

NEW! Weekly online updates 6pm every Tuesday for weekend posting

for Volume 27 No. 4 January & February 2022

Print edition listings deadline
Midnight, Jan 3, 2022

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6pm Tuesday Jan 4, 2022

Classifieds deadline
6pm Saturday Jan 8, 2022

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Speaking of happy returns ...

THE BLUE PAGES

It is with a growing sense of optimism that we continue to welcome new and returning presenters to our Blue Pages directory, as their plans firm up for the calendar year ahead. Take a look at the index to our BLUE PAGES DIRECTORY OF MUSIC MAKERS on page 33, which keeps growing issue by issue. Full profiles can be found at **thewholenote.com/blue**.

All in all, there's a growing sense of hope and new beginnings, coupled with a pragmatism in regard to maintaining a safe approach to performing. Here's just a taste, from profiles recently added:

"After 'going to ground' for most of 2019/20," writes **Nine Sparrows Arts Foundation**, *"in cooperation with Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, we return this December with a virtual presentation of City Carol Sing 2021, and a plan to resume our Tuesday Lunchtime Chamber Music series in January 2022."*

The Toronto Symphony Orchestra will *"continue to offer a range of performance options, from a much anticipated return to in-person concerts at Roy Thomson Hall and the George Weston Recital Hall to a continuation of virtual concerts streamed throughout the season."*

"After a year of virtual rehearsals," **Etobicoke Centennial Choir** announces, *"our dedicated choristers have returned to safely and joyfully harmonizing together in person ... We are planning a virtual streamed concert in December, including Saint-Saëns' Christmas Oratorio, with a return to live performances in 2022."*

Some are concentrating for now on consolidating the online gains forced on them by pandemic necessity. *"In November 2020, **The Toronto Consort** launched Early Music TV – an all-new video-on-demand service dedicated to music from 1100-1700 AD. Early Music TV offers feature-length productions, behind-the-scenes documentaries, and extensive video and audio libraries."*

And if you're looking for something to do on New Year's Day, **Attila Glatz Concert Productions'** *"energetic, lighthearted, and full-of-romance Salute to Vienna New Year's Concert ... celebrates the limitless possibilities each New Year brings."*

And so say all of us.

If you're a music presenter or arts services organization, there's still time to join our Blue Pages directory. To celebrate a new year that is a new beginning in more ways than one, in our next print edition (January 21 2022) we'll publish a consolidated directory of all profiles received by January 6, 2022. For details on how to join contact Karen Ages at members@thewholenote.com

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"It's a necessity, creation."

Composer Ana Sokolović

LYDIA PEROVIĆ

ANDRÉ PARMENTIER

It's only when you leave a country – a culture, a language, a family – that you can really see it. And it's only then that you can consciously, rather than by inertia, belong to it.

This wisdom comes to most immigrants, expats and refugees by mid-life, but it came to Montreal-based composer Ana Sokolović early in her career, after the first performance of her music in her new country. "Critics described my music as having 'Slavic soul,' which stunned me. 'Slavic soul'?! I'm a contemporary, avant-garde composer, I thought, I'm as far from any kind of national folklore and nostalgia as possible," she recalls. When she moved to Montreal to work on her master's degree in the early 1990s, Yugoslavia, in which she grew up, the multicultural egalitarian experiment, was already disintegrating in ethno-nationalist acrimony, and she was eager to say goodbye to the rising ethnocentrism. The point for her was to say something new, not blindly follow the established tradition. But the talk of Slavic flair back then got her thinking about whether she was entirely in control of her own sound-making, or if something else voiced itself in the process, something less conscious. "I realized the local audience detected a certain openness to emotion that they translated as 'Slavic soulfulness'. Crucially, I realized that it wasn't a bad thing. And that perhaps I should bring it to light more."

We are sitting in her quiet home in Montreal, our only other company her Siamese cat sleeping in a patch of sun on the windowsill. *Svadba-Wedding* was about to be performed the following week by a young ensemble from Toronto's Glenn Gould School – her much travelled *a cappella* opera that uses idioms of Balkan singing techniques and South Slav language phonemes but is musically more like dissonant, rhythm-addled Stravinsky than the Balkans. "It's only when I physically removed myself from my place of birth that I understood this conversation between tradition and invention," she says. It's nothing to do with genes, she says. It's to do with different spices of how to be in the world. The dialects of humankind. It's like keeping Occitan in Languedoc alongside French, and not subsuming it under it. "Imagine if the only thing that divided us was this difference in style, the variety in the taste of the terroir? And religions would be there just to serve this cultural side of us. Just so we could sing to God in all kinds of idioms."

Toronto. Pittsburgh and Opera Philadelphia. Perm with Teo Curentzis. Montreal. Boston. Aix-en-Provence. And Belgrade, of course. *Svadba* is probably the most performed Canadian opera of the last two decades. Sure, it's small and inexpensive, emotionally communicative, visceral as a pagan ritual. All that helps. But that still doesn't explain its popularity. How does she explain it? "It's mad, isn't it? But I think part of it is that a wedding is a near-universal experience and a universally understood phenomenon. But here it's told through a very local perspective. That quote attributed to Tolstoy, 'If you want to be universal, start by painting your own village?' It's that." And people of all ethnicities have found something in the scenes in which six girlfriends prepare one of them for the wedding.

Before she embarked on *Svadba*, her second commission by Queen of Puddings Music Theatre in the late noughts, Sokolović travelled back to Belgrade to talk to ethnomusicologists about old South Slav rituals associated with female preparation for weddings. Some of these rituals she included (the henna painting, the weaving of the wreaths), some she didn't find particularly inspiring (breadmaking). Some would have been inherited from the long Ottoman colonization (the bathing/hammam, and here *Svadba* doesn't shy away from eroticism).

What also made *Svadba* so easy to follow is, paradoxically, that it's in the original language. "When I composed *The Midnight Court* for Queen of Puddings, I needed to make the story legible. The pace is decided by the text: the opera must unfold at the speed of the text, and must follow our understanding of the text. After that, I wanted to create something where no individual words needed to be understood – everything would be understood through music." And while many South Slav and Serbian words are used in *Svadba*, a lot of them are exploded into syllables and phonemes, both vowels and consonants, and used as purely musical tools. People generally understand what's going on, with or without the language, even in concert, she's noticed. "They understand the emotion."

Some activities which are not traditionally associated with weddings Sokolović introduced precisely for this musicality of words. Nursery rhymes, pattycakes and the alphabet play an important role in the opera. She also needed a dramatic peak, some kind of a scene of conflict, which the night before a wedding usually does not have. But what it has is the nerves – and the tension. So she played that up.

I tell her that I've noticed that people who have no interest in the institution of marriage also find the opera powerful, because it's

clearly about a rite of passage – the change from girlhood to womanhood, the leaving of childhood behind and moving to the unknown. I've also found the music very dark, I tell her; it's all those menacing seconds, like *Bluebeard's Castle*! And for women of the Balkans, and many other places in the world, the wedding may or may not have been a joyful event, depending on how they may or may not have been treated by the new family. "I get that," she says. "It's that complexity of feeling: the joy and the sadness. I mean, how do you explain the word *seta* in English? Something like Portuguese *saudade*? Sadness, but of a pleasant kind? There is no *seta* in *Svadba* I don't think, but there are ambivalent feelings."

She pauses for a few beats. "It all probably comes from the Mediterranean carnival. An occasion for ambivalent feelings, if there ever was one! It's the films of Kusturica, Fellini, Buñuel. You're happy and you're sad." Milica is not sad because she's about to get married, but her leaving is. "She is never going to be the same person. There's a line in the opera, 'Your mother will cry.' Of course. We cry at weddings. My mother cried on my first day of school. A new chapter opens. It's not quite clear why we cry at rites of passage, but we do! And this speaks to people, whether we get married or not, whether we are female or male."

Doesn't contemporary music have something of a PR problem, though, I ask? It's often dastardly to sing – some composers have no interest in writing voice-friendly stuff. It's unemotional (the worst thing is to be a Puccini – like the well-funded American composers end up being). It doesn't see itself in the business of giving pleasure. It's often written by people who teach at universities and effectively compose for tenure. Those who work in the tradition of serialism never see a second performance – and probably for a good reason. Scratch that: most don't experience a second performance. I've been to contemporary music concerts with four people in the audience; but as long as the grants from peers are coming down, the small contemporary music organization has nothing to worry about. Am I wrong?

"We are in 2021, though. A lot has happened and keeps happening from the time that serialism, or *dodécaphonie* in French, was major news," she says. "There isn't one thing, one school, with or against which we all have to define ourselves. There are a lot of branches on the tree. Schoenberg and Boulez had to exist. We are continuing on, but in different ways. There is a divide in classical music in that there is an audience that only listens to contemporary, and a usually older audience which prefers the traditional works of the Western canon. But imagine if there was a museum of anything that stops at the Romantic Age. It would be a strange museum, no?" And the contemporary vs. the traditional is a particularly sharp divide in music. In other art forms – visual, theatre, novels – it's much less present, she adds.

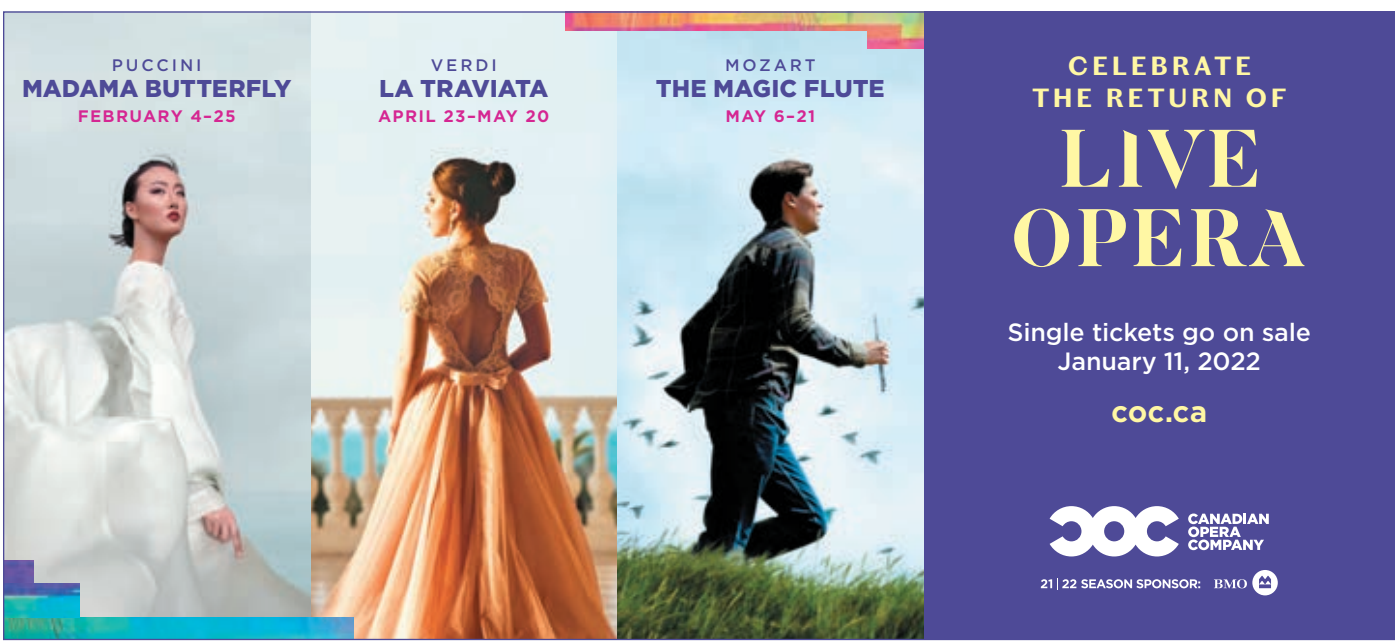
Are we talking about the modernists? I probe. Does modernism in music exist as a tradition now, or is it still a project? And does it even matter – is this something that only interests academics and critics, and the audience not in the least? Does Canada even have any modernists? I love Harry Somers' *Louis Riel*, which I presume is in that tradition, but John Weinzweig, for example, is not performed any more anywhere, and having tried some of the recordings, I can't say I'm too sad about it.

"It doesn't matter to me whether I'm one or not – most people would say that I'm not," she says. "But those boundaries are all

Continues on page 58

GREG REEKIE

Alexander Dobson and Krisztina Szabó in Ana Sokolović's Midnight Court – commissioned by Queen of Puddings Music Theatre and premiered at Harbourfront Centre, Toronto, June, 2005.



Emerging from postponement limbo as it all comes alive again

JENNIFER PARR

A Christmas Carol

For lovers of musical theatre, there is something uniquely magical about the holiday season this year as the world of live performance starts coming back into its own, including all the usual holiday entertainments we had to forgo last year, while we safely stayed home.

Nutcrackers and Scrooges

Live performances of *The Nutcracker* are returning, from the grand scale of the National Ballet of Canada's perennial favourite at the Four Seasons Centre to the smaller-scale beloved production of the Pia Bouman School for Ballet and Creative Movement, with a legacy almost as long as the National Ballet's. There is even a new entrant on the scene which straddles the line between live and digital: Lighthouse Immersive's *Immersive Nutcracker* is similar to their Van Gogh and Klimt programs, enveloping an audience within four bare walls on which is created a projected world – in this case, a shortened 40-minute version of *The Nutcracker*, part ballet, and part animation, fuelled by Tchaikovsky's iconic score. Audiences are free to roam and even dance along, which seemed to delight some of the children who were there when I was.

Another returning holiday tradition is the many and varied stage adaptations of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. I had the great treat of attending for the first time the opening performance of The Shaw Festival's version, adapted, and originally directed, by artistic director Tim Carroll, and this year directed by (former assistant director) Molly Atkinson. What was revealed to us in the cozy intimate setting of the Royal George Theatre was an intrinsically theatrical but also surprisingly musical version of the beloved transformation story: confirmed miser and hater-of-all-things-Christmas, Ebeneezer Scrooge metamorphosing into a spirit of joyous generosity. The show opens with a group of very tuneful carollers who not only set the scene and get the story started but pop up throughout to punctuate the action and to round everything off with what would – in non-COVID-wary times – be a group singalong with the audience.

There is a magical spirit of theatrical inventiveness in this production from the use of a front screen that resembles an outsize Advent calendar – with windows to be cleverly opened and even used as props – to one of the cleverest and most whimsical depictions of the three Christmas ghosts that I have ever seen.

Holiday Inn

I left the Royal George Theatre filled with the joy of the story and the season, and ready to see Shaw's other holiday offering, the full-scale stage version of Irving Berlin's musical *Holiday Inn*. Over at the Shaw's main Festival Theatre, *Holiday Inn* lives up to its desire to be a postcard to the Golden Age of Hollywood musicals and the light-hearted optimism of post-war America, transporting the audience to a time that is (mostly) free from care. Director Kate Hennig and choreographer Allison Plamondon have created a lively sweet show that combines a full, spirited performance of an admittedly lightweight book with wonderful song and dance numbers that embrace the full range required, from quiet emotional moments to a full-scale extravaganza leading to a happy Hollywood ending and joyful applause in the audience.

New year, real beginning

The fall saw companies very slowly getting their live-performance feet wet again in the world of relaxing pandemic protocols. Looking ahead, the new year, 2022, feels like a real beginning – not just of the calendar year but also of the performing arts season. The release from postponement limbo of shows we have all been waiting to see means that there will be a cornucopia of music theatre delights, many premieres among them, to choose from. Already my calendar is starting to fill up with shows that I know I don't want to miss.

One that I am particularly excited about is the world premiere of librettist Liza Balkan and composer Brian Current's *Gould's Wall* for **Tapestry Opera** exploring the theme of seeking perfection in the arts – and promising a literally wall-climbing physicality – in a production to be directed by Obsidian Theatre's Philip Akin in his opera debut.

Room

Holiday Inn

Immersive Nutcracker

Another is the longed-for Canadian premiere of the musical stage version of Emma Donoghue's *Room* at the **Grand Theatre** in London. Cancelled in March 2020 the day before its official opening, it will take place at last in January at the Grand, followed by a longer run in Toronto, starting in February at the intimate CAA (formerly Panasonic) Theatre on Yonge Street. *Room* is a dark story with a redemptive theme that many will be familiar with from the best-selling novel and film starring Brie Larson. This (newly revised) stage version which had its world premiere in London, England, in 2017, is also a musical with songs co-written by director Cora Bissett and Scottish singer-songwriter Kathryn Joseph. Word of mouth reports from the previews in 2020 say that Alexis Gordon leads a wonderful cast in a brilliantly constructed show that explores the triumph of the human spirit over an unbearable situation.

The **Mirvish** slate is full of other shows I want to see, but the one that goes on my calendar first is the main stage debut in January of Canadian Jake Epstein's autobiographical *Boy Falls from the Sky*, a show I loved at the Toronto Fringe back in 2019. This show is a musical theatre lover's treat, as Epstein takes us on his unexpected journey: from singing along to Broadway show albums on family road trips to New York; to appearing in Canadan TV hit *Degrassi*; to finding himself starring in Broadway shows such as *Spider-Man* and *Beautiful*. The Mirvish season also includes the return in the spring of *2 Pianos 4 Hands* starring its creators and original stars, Ted Dykstra and Richard Greenblatt.

One of my favourite recurring events at **Soulpepper** is the series of concerts masterminded by director of music Mike Ross. Year over year it inventively combines story with song, incorporating many different styles of music along the way and showcasing some of Toronto's most exciting talent. This coming February, for example, Soulpepper launches its season with a new concert, "The Golden Record", conceived by Ross and inspired by a recording NASA sent out into space to explain Earth to extraterrestrial life. "The Golden Record" will feature the talents of Divine Brown, Beau Dixon, Raha Javanfar, tap dancer Travis Knights, Andrew Penner, Mike Ross, Sarah Wilson and Strays star Frank Cox-O'Connell, who also directs.

And leaping ahead to June, I am looking forward – at last – to seeing how Karen Kain will reimagine *Swan Lake* for the **National Ballet**. As a longtime fan of the Erik Bruhn version that featured a female sorceress as opposed to the traditional male sorcerer (von Rothbart), who returned in the current James Kudelka version, I am particularly interested in what Kain will do with this role.

All this, and it's early days still! The **Musical Stage Company**, for example, has not yet announced anything official for the new year other than continuing development projects, but I am still hoping to hear that Sara Farb and Britta Johnson's musical *Kelly v. Kelly* (based on a real life story of the mother and daughter court battle over tango dancing) will get its world premiere soon, perhaps later this year? In the meantime, I am intrigued to excited to see what new musicals will be nurtured through First Drafts, the Musical Stage Company's new musical theatre development partnership with the Canadian Musical Theatre Project at Sheridan College in which final-year students at the college will have the opportunity to

work with professional creative teams on early drafts of new shows, showcasing the results for audiences at the end of the school year.

Lots to enjoy to celebrate the upcoming holidays, and even more to look forward to..

QUICK PICKS

It's A Wonderful Life

NOV 9 to DEC 23: *A Christmas Carol*. Royal George Theatre, Shaw Festival, Niagara-on-the-Lake. shawfest.com **LIVE**

NOV 14 to DEC 23: *Holiday Inn*. Festival Theatre, Shaw Festival, Niagara-on-the-Lake. shawfest.com **LIVE**

FROM NOV 20: *Immersive Nutcracker: A Winter Miracle*. Lighthouse Immersive, One Yonge Street. immersivenutcracker.com

DEC 10,11,17,18: *It's A Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play*. GD Productions, the Villa Lucia Supper Club, Ottawa. A live radio play performance of the classic film script adapted by Joe Landry, with pianist Nicolas Code underscoring scenes and playing transition music, along with live foley and sound effects throughout. iawl.eventbrite.ca **LIVE**

Touch

KAROLINA KURAS

NOW to JAN 2: *Touch*. Created by Guillaume Côté and Thomas Payette. Lighthouse Immersive, One Yonge Street. Due to technical difficulties on the night I was there, I only had the chance to see ten minutes, one pas de deux, of this fully immersive dance show, but it was so good, such an exciting mix of live dance and projected background that I can't wait to see the rest. lighthouseimmersive.com/touch **LIVE**

DEC 10 to 31: *The Nutcracker*. National Ballet of Canada, Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, www.national.ballet.ca **LIVE**

DEC 10 to 12: *Wintersong*. Canadian Contemporary Dance Theatre, Fleck Theatre (Harbourfront). Celebrating 33 years of illuminating the solstice through dance with a world premiere by Rodney Diverlus and the stage premiere of Alyssa Martin's *Star Seed*. ccdt.org **LIVE**

DEC 18 & 19: *2021 Nutcracker*. Pia Bouman School of Ballet and Creative Movement. piaboumanschool.org LIVE & Livestreamed.

JAN 8 to 30: *Boy Falls From The Sky*. Mirvish Productions. CAA (formerly the Panasonic) Theatre. mirvish.com **LIVE**

JAN 12 to 16: *Gould's Wall*. Tapestry Opera, part of the Royal Conservatory's 21C New Music Festival, performed in the RCM atrium. rcmusic.com/events **LIVE**

JAN 11 to 28: *Room*. Grand Theatre, London grandtheatre.com/event/room. North American premiere. **LIVE**

FEB 6 to APR 10: *Room*. CAA Theatre, Toronto. mirvish.com **LIVE**

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

Ólafsson on Mozart, as momentum builds toward 2022

PAUL ENNIS

Vikingur Ólafsson's Toronto debut was in 2014 – when I heard him play the *Goldberg Variations* at the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre and speak about how thrilled he was to be performing in Glenn Gould's hometown. Since then, the 37-year-old Icelandic pianist has released critically acclaimed recordings for Deutsche Grammophon (works by Glass, J.S. Bach and Rameau/Debussy) and has been named *Gramophone* magazine's 2019 Artist of the Year. His Toronto return – to Koerner Hall on January 13 – finds him performing his just-released CD, *Mozart & His Contemporaries*.

What follows is largely gleaned from Martin Cullingford's April 20, 2020 story in *Gramophone*, Katherine Cooper's interview in *Presto Music*, April 9, 2021 and an EPK interview for Deutsche Grammophon coincident with the release of his newest recording.

"When I play Mozart I often feel like the ink has just dried on the page," Ólafsson said on the DG website. "Despite the fact that the music was written 230 to 240 years ago, Mozart seems to reflect your innermost core." On the DG site, he describes playing Mozart since he was five or six years old; one of his most vivid memories from his musical childhood is of playing the C Major sonata which is on his new DG recording (and in his upcoming Toronto recital). "It's so serene, it's almost impossible to play it," he said. "It's so perfect by itself that you almost dare not touch it – it's like holding a newborn child – it's so fragile, the beauty of it, that you just marvel at it. Mozart was so above us – what he did was so perfect."

In the *Gramophone* interview, Ólafsson told Cullingford that Evgeny Kissin and Glenn Gould were early obsessions, followed by musicians of an older generation – Edwin Fischer, Benno Moiseiwitsch, Josef Hofmann, Clara Haskil, Dinu Lipatti, Emil Gilels and the young Vladimir Horowitz. "I think all the ones that I love are masters of sound. They're hugely different individuals, but they have something in common which is that they layer things, they create this dimension in the piano sound which is, really, the only way that a piano can sound beautiful in my opinion."

ARI MAGG

Víkingur Ólafsson

Elsewhere, in the booklet notes to Ólafsson's recent Bach album (which won two BBC music awards including Record of the Year in 2019), he wrote: "We performers must weigh our knowledge of period style against our individual and inescapably contemporary sensibility." When that's acknowledged and accepted, he told Cullingford, "What's left is a liberating freedom. It's like my manifesto. I really feel that. I see all music as contemporary music, I don't make a distinction. If we play the music of Rameau today we play it, inevitably, so differently from the way it has sounded before – certainly in his time, when he had nothing close to the modern piano, and when the horse was the fastest means of transport. But because we are reinventing the music, obviously it is contemporary. It is new music."

Ólafsson's love of recording owes a unique debt to his Icelandic childhood. "I think it has something to do with the fact that my exposure to music was limited growing up here in the 1990s. It was very different from how it is now, and it certainly wasn't as easy to fly abroad, either. If I were growing up right now my dad would probably just fly me to London or wherever to see whatever I wanted to see. But that wasn't the case then, and so I became a huge CD collector. And I didn't do any competitions – that was very far away from my mentality – and so I didn't have any exposure to what students my age were doing. I had no yardstick to measure myself against except through recordings."

Ólafsson's parents instilled in him a sense of the profound value of music, Cullingford writes. When he was born, they were living in a tiny apartment in Berlin, making ends meet. But when they then inherited some money, they chose to spend it on a Steinway. The piano moved with them to Iceland, becoming a cherished and dominant presence in their small basement flat.

As to why he chose to focus on the music of Mozart's last decade? "Simply because I think it shows us Mozart at his best," Ólafsson told Katherine Cooper. "There's a reason why 85 or 90% of what we hear in concert today by Mozart is from the 1780s. This last decade in Mozart's life is one of the most incredible decades in music history for any composer, both on a personal and a musical level. In 1781 he discovered the music of J.S. Bach – by accident almost, in a library in Vienna – and his own music would never be the same. He was really delving deeply into Bach study during this period, and you hear that clearly on this album. And at the same time he was going through this astonishing transformation from being the prodigy of all prodigies to being a mature musician: by his mid-20s he no longer has that free card of being the boy wonder, and he's facing a lot of difficulties with the musical establishment of his day. He wouldn't bow down to the pressures of the aristocracy; he always played his own game, and in a certain sense he was a wild card as a person."

Regional and community orchestras

Now that the TSO has made a triumphant return, it's time to pivot towards the GTA's community orchestras. The **Mississauga Symphony Orchestra** began their 50th season – and music director Denis Mastromonaco's eighth season – on November 20 with "A Triumphant Return," a program of orchestral favourites. The concert included *Autumn* from Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons* (concertmaster Corey Gemmell, violin soloist), the fourth movement of Mendelssohn's "Reformation" symphony, Mozart's *Overture to the Marriage of Figaro* (Miranda Brant, guest conductor) and Beethoven's iconic *Symphony No.5*. It's the first step leading to their 50th Anniversary Celebration on June 4, 2022 – complete repertoire to be released shortly.

The **Etobicoke Philharmonic Orchestra** season opened on November 5 – available to stream on YouTube via the orchestra's website – with a guided tour of the EPO led by music director Matthew

BO HUANG

Conrad Chow

BLACK UMBRELLA PHOTOGRAPHY

Denis Mastromonaco

Jones that culminated in a performance of Schubert's *Symphony No.8 "Unfinished."* They plan to close the season in June with an extravagant Diamond Anniversary Gala celebrating their 60th anniversary.

The **Cathedral Bluffs Symphony Orchestra** reaches the midpoint of their season on December 11 at 8pm, with guest conductor Martin MacDonald. Abigail Richardson-Schulte's *The Hockey Sweater* and Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker Suite* provide seasonal treats while Tchaikovsky's *Violin Concerto*, with 20-year-old violin soloist Eva Lesage, delivers the melodic heft of an evergreen classic.

The **Kindred Spirits Orchestra** season continues on December 18, with music director Kristian Alexander leading the orchestra in Tchaikovsky's *Capriccio Italien*, a musical travelogue of the composer's journey to Rome. Violinist Conrad Chow performs Korngold's lyrical, virtuosic and underrated *Violin Concerto* before the orchestra takes on Shostakovich's enigmatic *Symphony No.15*, his final symphony that's full of musical references to the composer's life and work as well as works by others.

Chamber orchestra, **Sinfonia Toronto**, continues its busy season with three concerts. On December 10 in the Jane Mallett Theatre, musical director Nurhan Arman leads the group in celebrating Beethoven's birthday with a performance of his *Symphony No.8*. Arman's chamber orchestra version is based on a historic string quintet arrangement by Sigmund Anton Steiner (1773-1838). The evening's program opens with Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's Fantasiestücke and Chopin's seductive *Piano Concerto No.1*, with soloist Dmitri Levkovich. In their return to the Jane Mallett Theatre on January 21, Sinfonia performs Mozart's *Piano Concerto No.22 K482*, one of his finest; Jocelyn Morlock's shout-out to Milan Kundera's *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*; Joseph Bologne's *Quartet in D Major, Op.1, No.6*; and Jaňácek's *Suite for Strings*, featuring his homeland's "beguiling folk melodies."

Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society (KWCMS)

The KWCMS continues to successfully navigate the pandemic waters. Not presenting concerts in their beloved Music Room – they're using Waterloo's First United Church instead – hasn't prevented the Penderecki String Quartet from finishing a traversal of Beethoven's string quartets with performances of the last two, Op.131 (arguably the greatest) and Op.135 on December 16 (the program is repeated two days later) as well as the alternate final movement to Op.130.

Rising star Kerson Leong performs a solo violin recital on January 9, with two sonatas by Ysayë, Schubert's *Erlkönig* and Bach's *Sonata No.1* and *Partita No.2* with its famous *Chaconne* (books have been written). And on January 16 pianist Michael Lewin leaves his Boston home base where he heads the piano department of The Boston Conservatory at Berklee to perform a technically challenging recital. Four sonatas by Scarlatti lead off, followed by Beethoven's highly compressed *Sonata No.22 Op.54* (written in the wake of the "Waldstein" Op.53), Franck's *Prelude, Choral and Fugue*, Busoni's *Carmen Fantasy* and works by Evencio Castellanos, Alberto Ginastera and Osvaldo Golijov.

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QUICK PICKS

Juilliard String Quartet

LISA-MARIE MAZZUCCO

DEC 12, 3PM: Jan Lisiecki makes his sixth Koerner Hall appearance with a rare pairing of Chopin's *Études Op.10 Nos. 1 to 12* with 11 Nocturnes (all 20 of which appear on Lisiecki's latest Deutsche Grammophon recording). Read more about how the pianist constructed his recital's program in the November/December issue of *The WholeNote*.

DEC 14, 7:30: The Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts presents a livestream recital by the versatile pianist Philip Chiu comprised of 21 preludes by Chopin, Debussy and John Burge (written between 2011 and 2015) divided into seven groupings of three preludes each by the three composers.

JAN 13, 8PM: Music Toronto's 50th anniversary season continues with a concert by the Juilliard String Quartet, who are celebrating their 75th year. Mendelssohn's last major composition, the *Quartet in F Minor, Op.80*, written as he mourned his sister's death, begins their program, which also includes Jörg Widmann's *Quartet No.10 "Cavatina" (Study on Beethoven V)* and Dvořák's glorious *String Quartet in F Minor "American."*

JAN 22, 8PM: The Royal Conservatory presents the indefatigable Danish String Quartet – as part of the 21C Music Festival – performing Schubert's *String Quartet No. 15* as well as a new composition by Bent Sørensen inspired by that same Schubert quartet. Also on the program is a curated suite of dances by Marc-Antoine Charpentier, John Adams and Felix Blumenfeld, which includes a new composition written by the members of the Danish String Quartet.

JAN 25, 8PM: Known for her work with Stockhausen – as both student and interpreter – the charismatic rising star Vanessa Benelli Mosell made her Music Toronto debut at age 15 in 2002 in a two-piano recital with the legendary French master Pascal Rogé, who described her as "the most natural musical talent I have encountered in my entire life." For her return to the Jane Mallett stage, Mosell will play Debussy's second book of preludes followed by music by Medtner, Nino Rota's suite from *Fellini's Casanova* and the demanding Busoni version of Bach's illustrious *Chaconne*.

Paul Ennis is the managing editor of The WholeNote.

Adversity to Advantage

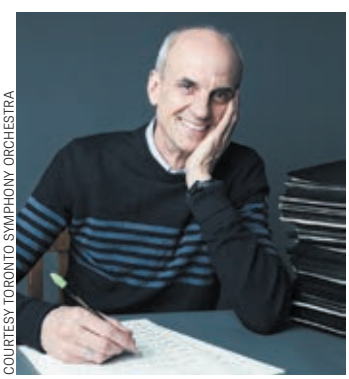
"Bach Among Friends"

GARY CORRIN

Bach among friends: gathered on the Grand Staircase in the west lobby of Roy Thomson Hall. Back row (left to right): Sarah Jeffrey (oboe), Leonie Wall (flute), Andrew McCandless (trumpet), Jonathan Crow (violin), Michael Sweeney (bassoon) Second row (left to right): Kelly Zimba Lukić (flute), Joseph Johnson (cello) Front row (left to right): Amalia Joanou-Canzoneri (violin) and Chelsea Gu.

"..., but Bach didn't write a Bassoon Concerto!"

That was the reaction of the Toronto Symphony's principal bassoonist, Michael Sweeney, as he related the story to me in May of this year. I'd had a similar reaction somewhat earlier when the TSO's concertmaster, Jonathan Crow, emailed me a photo of a CD jacket listing "Johann Sebastian Bach, Rediscovered Wind Concertos" and asked, "How possible would it be to get the parts for any of these?" Something unusual was in the works.



COURTESY TORONTO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Gary Corrin

As principal librarian of the Toronto Symphony, I've often thought that I have the greatest job in the world for gaining an appreciation of music. After researching, sourcing, acquiring and preparing those printed pages from which every musician on stage reads (a process that usually takes place over several months), I hear all the rehearsals (where the tricky spots are worked out) and then the concerts. Of course, my listening takes place over the sound monitor in the TSO Library, while I'm working on music to be performed in the months ahead. Best of all, I get to know the players. They all need to practice those printed pages, so everyone comes to the library. As I'm listening, I don't just hear an instrument, I hear a person. It's a fantastic experience and I often ponder how I might share it with our audience. This is a story about several of those players, their friendships, and their regard for one another. It's my privilege to tell it – mostly in their own words.

In any normal year, the TSO would announce its events for the coming season in February. The 2021-22 rollout was delayed as we, like every arts organization, strategized around pandemic-gathering restrictions. "How many musicians will we be able to put on stage?" "Will we even be able to host a live audience?" "How long should the concert be?" "Intermission?" and "What if the guest conductor from Europe can't get into the country?" These were the overriding questions of the time. In the midst of it, Jonathan Crow came up with an idea that turned adversity to advantage.

"The idea of a smaller-ensemble, player-led "All Bach" concert at the TSO grew out of the extraordinary success of the *Vivaldi, Four Seasons* project in the previous year," explained Jonathan (over the phone while on his elliptical machine – evidently time management is among his many super powers). "But instead of just one soloist – me – I wanted to showcase several members of our orchestra. After all, they're some of the best on their instruments in the world. Nothing had really been decided when the pandemic shut everything down, preventing any of us from gathering to perform – so the whole program went into a holding pattern."

The concert will also feature **Chelsea Gu**, the Grand Prize winner of the Play Along with Jonathan Crow Challenge, a collaborative initiative between Toronto Summer Music and the TSO. "The challenge got an enormous response from the community," Crow says. "We had over 70 entries with ages ranging from seven to 80. There

are several winners, who will be featured at both TSM and TSO events. [Violinist Lincoln Haggart-Ives will play with Jonathan on the February 6, 2022 TSO Young Person's Concert.] [But] Chelsea's submission so impressed the jury that it was obvious we needed to include her in the evolving Bach program."

Chelsea Gu is no ordinary nine-year-old. She speaks in complete sentences and with humility and purpose that would be admirable in a person of any age. "I was already playing the piano, but wanted to try the violin too. I had started taking lessons with **Amy Canzoneri** [a TSO violinist] in February of 2019, but then COVID prevented us from meeting in person. We continued on Zoom. Amy is very strict about the fundamentals of playing in tune, with precise rhythm and with a beautiful tone. I love that kind of detailed work."

"I knew right away that she is extremely gifted," says Canzoneri. "She absorbs concepts quickly and loves to practice. Her musical instincts come from her heart. It's a great joy to teach her!"

Chelsea continues, "My Dad brought home some CDs that Amy recommended and I got to know the "Bach Double" [*Two-Violin Concerto, BWV 1043*] from the recording by David and Igor Oistrakh. When I saw the contest to play this piece with Jonathan, I just decided it was something I wanted to do."

A lot of us may look back and ask ourselves, "What did I accomplish during the pandemic?" Chelsea Gu can say, "I started playing the violin and got good enough to play with the Toronto Symphony." (Adversity to advantage!)

I like to take at least partial credit for **Joseph Johnson** becoming principal cellist of the TSO. He and I were at the Grand Teton Festival together and he was scheduled to play a concerto for two cellos with Lynn Harrell. The page turns in the part were impossible, so my first contact with Joe was when he asked me to split the original two-stave part into two single-staff parts. The performance was remarkable, as was his leadership of the cello section, so I suggested to Joe that he might consider our principal cello position, which was open at the time. At the end of his audition in Toronto, the committee stood up and applauded.

Joe can be a late-night practicer and one evening, *after* a concert, he was setting up in our dressing room to run through a solo recital he was to perform the next day. Only the two of us were around, so I asked, "Is this the dress rehearsal and can I listen?" He agreed and I seated myself two feet in front of him, watching every detail of his playing. There was never any concern about simply playing the correct notes; He was searching, striving for precise sonorities and inflections – and I sat mesmerized, awash in his sound. In a lifetime of musical experiences, this is one I shall always remember. Joe will begin the TSO's Bach program with the *Prelude* from the *Cello Suite No.1.*

Talent runs deep at the TSO. While still a student at McGill University, our second flutist **Leonie Wall** won the principal flute job at the Orchestre des Grands Ballets Canadiens in Montreal. She was also a winner of the prestigious New York Flute Club Competition just before joining the TSO in 2004. Notes Jonathan, "Leonie and Kelly [**Kelly Zimba Lukić**, principal flute] are always working to achieve a balanced and flexible sound in our flute section and the *Brandenburg Concerto No.4* brings that teamwork to the front of the stage."

"I just love this piece," says Leonie. "After such a long separation from my colleagues, it's wonderful to have this opportunity, especially as a second flutist, to perform in such a prominent ensemble role."

Kelly adds: "Ten years ago, I heard the Pittsburgh Symphony perform the complete Brandenburg Concerti. It was a revelation to hear the instruments stand out in this context. I thought to myself, I hope I'll get to play these someday. I've played two before, but not four, and it will be especially meaningful to play with Leonie."

Next on the program will be **Michael Sweeney**'s mysterious Bach bassoon concerto mentioned earlier. "This music exists in two versions in Bach's collected works, neither of which is a bassoon concerto," explains Michael. "It first appears as three separate movements in two different Cantatas [BWV 169 and 49] that were

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> **"The practice of the time was for performers to improvise their own ornaments and scholars today debate endlessly as to exactly how that was done. This concerto shows how Bach himself did it!"**

written two weeks apart in 1726, with the organ playing the solo line. Twelve years later, Bach repurposed these movements to form his *Keyboard [Harpsichord] Concerto No. 2 BWV 1053*, but with upgrades. Changes to the harmony and refinements of the counterpoint and voice leading are all consistent with Bach's greater experience as a composer, but most significantly, he wrote far more florid versions of the melodies." Michael will play these later versions as his *Da Capos* [repeats of the opening musical material] in movements one and three. "The practice of the time was for performers to improvise their own ornaments and scholars today debate endlessly as to exactly how that was done. This concerto shows how Bach himself did it!"

For these performances, Michael has created an entirely new score and parts to match his own vision for this reconstruction of a bassoon concerto with oboe d'amore obbligato (to be played by principal oboe, Sarah Jeffrey). I can attest to it taking him most of these past seven months. As I write this, he's just finishing the string parts. (Adversity to advantage, once more!) Audience members who want to hear this piece again should come back to the TSO in February when pianist Angela Hewitt will play it as the *Keyboard Concerto No.2*.

There will be a lot of familiar tunes on this program, but none more immediately recognizable than the famous *Air on a G String*, the second movement of Bach's Orchestral Suite No.3. "Its simple melody provides a lovely interlude amidst some otherwise complex textures," notes Jonathan.

The *Brandenburg Concerto No.2 BWV 1047* is a riot of sound. The four soloists, (violin, flute, oboe and piccolo trumpet) toss phrases around, imitating and interrupting each other as if in competition for the listener's attention. "It's an especially difficult piece for the trumpet because it hangs around in the very highest range of the instrument," observes principal trumpet, **Andrew McCandless**. "Just hitting all the notes can be a major achievement, but then the sound can also be quite penetrating up there. One time, when I was asked to play this, I showed up at the first rehearsal to find my stand positioned off to the side – well away from the other soloists. I was told this was because the trumpet is always too loud. I told everyone, If any of you have to tell me to play softer, I'll donate back my entire paycheck. No one said anything and I got paid. For me, this is an elegant ensemble piece. I try to blend like I'm Sarah's oboe duet partner.

Principal oboe **Sarah Jeffrey** agrees, "My very favourite role in the TSO is being featured alongside my esteemed colleagues and best friends. In this concert, I not only get to back up Michael in an obligato role, but really mix it up with my other friends for the *Brandenburg 2*. We often hang out together and it's going to be like one of our animated dinner conversations."

After a 30-year "career" of listening to my colleagues of the Toronto Symphony, I continue to be impressed with and inspired by how good they are at what they do. To develop their level of skill requires dedication akin to an Olympic athlete and their teamwork rivals any sports franchise. Add to that their strong social bonds and you have the magic that will be on full display January 7, 8 and 9, 2022 at Roy Thomson Hall.

Gary Corrin was appointed principal librarian of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra in January 1992.

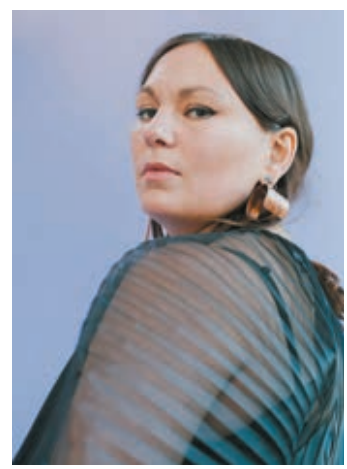
Music for Change
Kronos and Tagaq return to 21C

WENDE BARTLEY

"It's not so much a place I go to as a place I come to. It's a freedom, a lack of control, an exploration, and I'm reacting to whatever happens upon the path."
Tanya Tagaq (quoted in WN May 2016)

Five years ago at the 21C Music Festival, the Kronos Quartet introduced their *Fifty for the Future* project, performing four of these works including the world premiere of *Snow Angel-Sivunittinni* (meaning "the future children") created by the exhilarating and ferocious Inuk throat singer Tanya Tagaq. Spread over five years, the project commissioned 50 new works by 25 women and 25 men for string quartet, all designed to introduce future string quartets to the diversity of contemporary musical ideas. In *The WholeNote* article I wrote for the May 2016 issue, David Harrington, first violinist of the quartet, described Tagaq's voice as sounding "like she has a string quartet in her throat."

This year's edition of the 21C festival brings these two forces of creative fortitude back together once again, giving us a retrospective look at the *Fifty for the Future* project in the form of a live film documentary. On January 18, the multimedia performance piece *A Thousand Thoughts*, presented in partnership with the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema, combines live music and narration by Kronos with archival footage and filmed interviews with various artists, including Tagaq. It offers us an intimate look at the Kronos initiative to build this free library of 50 contemporary works which are available for download on their website. Another layer of the quartet's commitment to young performers will be a two-day mentorship with students from the Glenn Gould School, culminating in a concert on January 20 titled *Fifty Forward*.


Tanya Tagaq

On January 21, Kronos will perform their concert *Music for Change* with repertoire chosen to express their current artist vision, as articulated by Harrington. "Everything we do as citizens, as human beings, is a statement about how we want the world to be. Increasingly, I feel my role as musician is to point in constructive musical and cultural directions as we attempt to help repair the torn fabric of our

LISA SAKULENSKY

The Kronos Quartet with special guest Tanya Tagaq at 21C in 2016.

Dinuk Wijeratne

society." Several works on their program point to key moments of the civil rights movement: Zachary J. Watkins' exploration of the moment just before Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech, along with other works that reference the music of Billie Holiday, Mahalia Jackson and Jimi Hendrix.

The two guest performers joining Kronos on the stage are also the creators of their works being premiered: Tagaq and Aruna Narayan. Narayan will perform on the sarangi, an Indian bowed instrument she learned to play from her internationally renowned father, Ram Narayan. Tagaq's performance will be an arrangement she created with Kronos of her piece *Colonizer* that was recently announced as one of the pieces included on her forthcoming album *Tongues* to be released on March 11, 2022. The original version of *Colonizer* arose during an improvisation that happened while performing with the *Nanook of the North* film as she overlooked New York City's Columbus Circle, a traffic circle that has at its heart a monument to the colonizer Columbus himself. On the *Tongues* album, Tagaq has created two mixes of *Colonizer*, and describes on her Twitter feed that the piece is a "reflection on accountability and action." In this collaboration with Kronos, we will experience a unique and original remix which promises to be an fiery indictment of colonizer culture.

Niagara Symphony Orchestra, January 16

Following along with this theme of creating new arrangements is a new version of an older piece by composer Dinuk Wijeratne. This Sri Lankan-born Canadian composer is known for his boundary-crossing works, collaborating with symphony orchestras, tabla players and DJ artists. In 2014, he was commissioned by TorQ Percussion to create a concerto for percussion and wind ensemble titled *Invisible Cities*. Now the Niagara Symphony has invited him to create an orchestral arrangement of this piece to be performed on January 16.

The original work was inspired by selected short stories of Italo Calvino, the author of the book by the same name. The book contains fragmentary prose poems describing 55 imaginary cities narrated in the voice of the explorer Marco Polo during a conversation with emperor Kublai Khan. In the 2014 version, Wijeratne selected five of these cities to create a five-movement composition, each one exploring different aspects of musical colour and rhythm: musical symmetry, Gamelan-inspired timbres, Sengalese rhythms, South Indian rhythms, and a dip into the mathematical world of fractals. With the possibilities offered by a full orchestra, the 2022 orchestral version will be an adventurous expansion into new timbral terrain.

Emergents I, Music Gallery, December 14-17.

During the month of December, the Music Gallery's Emergents program curated by Sara Constant is offering a four-part series, titled *possible worlds*, dedicated to the theme of musical world-building. The kickoff event on December 14 will be a community-focused workshop in guided improvisation using graphic scores and conduction led by saxophonist and instrument maker Naomi McCarroll-Butler. This evening is geared for people interested in collective music-making who come from different artistic backgrounds and all levels of musical

21/22

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Not Alone – Oct.28.21

Aulos – Nov.11,18,25.21

50th Anniversary Distanced Commissioning Series: John Oswald – Feb.17.22

Difficult Grace: Seth Parker Woods in Concert – Mar.10.22

Imagined Sounds – Apr.10.22

SWARA Sutras – Apr.30.22

All concerts at 8pm

New Music Concerts

experience.

The second evening of the series on December 15 is a concert featuring performances by Skin Tone and Stephanie Castonguay with a focus on hacking and the use of found technology. Castonguay's inspiration for her sonic experiments is DIY culture, taking barely audible machines and turning them into playful instruments that reveal the resonances and random sounds hidden within their structures. She will be performing with her self-built light-scanner instruments that use modified scanner heads as audiovisual devices to translate objects built from various materials into sound and moving images. Skin Tone is the solo performance project of James Goddard who has been an innovative leader in Montreal's independent music scene, creating hubs for DIY music and presenting livestreamed concerts. In his Music Gallery performance he will bring his skills on voice, saxophone, mbira and electronics to create new worlds from sonic distortion.

Night three, on December 16, will be a feast of experimental performances by Sa.resi, Deidre, and Vixu who will delve into the worlds of noise, improvisation and different textures of sound. Prior to the concert there will be an opportunity to hear the performers speak about their work within the context of present-day experimental music and their visions for future developments. On the final night of the series, on December 17, in a co-presentation with PIX FILM Collective, Castonguay will speak about the design of her light-scanner instruments and the more recent work she has created with this custom-made instrument.

Music for change, indeed.

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

MAINLY CLUBS, MOSTLY JAZZ

What a difference a year makes!

COLIN STORY

Just 8760 little hours ago, in December of last year, most of us were hunkering down, keeping safe, and preparing for a very different winter than we'd enjoyed in years past. Visits home were cancelled; stockings were half-heartedly stuffed; home-office chairs swivelled disconsolately from Zoom meetings to Zoom cocktail hours. This year, however, things are looking just a little bit brighter: vaccination rates are up, case rates are down, and – though the threat of the pandemic looms, ever present on the periphery – it is looking as though we may indeed have a more conventional (and decidedly more sociable) holiday season.

As of December 16, we will officially be at the five-month mark of music being back in Toronto and environs in the kinds of venues I usually cover in this column. For some audience members, this has meant five months of being back in venues, watching musicians return to the stage after a lengthy intermission, and witnessing restaurants, bars and concert halls sort through the thorny logistics of making COVID-safe adjustments, training new staff and, often, enacting new payment policies to ensure a more equitable and fair disbursement of funds to musicians. For other audience members, the return to live music has been slower, whether because of worries related to COVID transmission, a change in lifestyle, or – as has happened for so many people – a move, enabled by a shift to remote work, from a dense urban area to somewhere with more affordable housing options and more accessible outdoor spaces.

Whatever the case may be, there are quite a few exciting shows happening in December. If holiday shows are your thing, there are a number of options, including the *Kensington Holiday Bash* (December 10, Grossman's Tavern), *A Charlie Brown Christmas* and Castro's Christmas Party (both December 12, Castro's Lounge), Tom Nagy's Christmas Experience (December 17, The Jazz Room), and the Jason White Christmas Special (December 18, also at The Jazz Room).

A shout-out for The Emmet Ray

For great non-holiday-themed shows in a venue that still evokes the warmth, community and good cheer of the season, I have one specific suggestion: The Emmet Ray. Since its opening in late 2009, The Emmet Ray has occupied a unique position in Toronto's club scene. Unlike venues such as The Rex and Jazz Bistro, The Emmet Ray's identity has as much to do with its bar program as it does live music. The bar is perhaps best known for its extensive international whiskey options, though it also features a selection of Trappist beer, offerings from local breweries, wine and cocktails. Divided into two spaces, the bar makes no demands of its patrons. In the front room, customers can relax, enjoy their drinks and carry on a conversation in a setting that borrows as much from an English village pub as it does from its more typical College Street counterparts. In the back room, table-lined walls lead to the stage space, complete with ceiling-mounted speakers, Wild Turkey-sponsored backdrop, and, of late, plexiglass panels, to ensure some particulate separation between performers and audience.

Like every other music venue in Toronto, The Emmet Ray has had its share of difficulties over the past year and a half. During the height of the pandemic, owner/operator Andrew Kaiser and team quickly pivoted, converting the bar to a bottle shop/grocery store, doing livestreamed shows, and creating courier-friendly kitchen items for home delivery. As live shows returned in July 2021, the bar

ORI DAGAN

The Emmet Ray's Andrew Kaiser

faced another kind of challenge: ballooning insurance costs, at a rate substantially higher than in previous years, as a direct result of COVID-related insurance industry anxiety. Despite all of these challenges, The Emmet Ray continues to go strong.

Jenna Marie Pinard

In December at The Emmet, there are a number of excellent shows taking place. On December 8, vocalist Jenna Marie Pinard takes the stage. A University of Toronto Jazz alum, Pinard wears many hats. She is the host of *Orange Grove Radio*, a show broadcast throughout North America, on stations as far-flung as Victoria, Cutler Bay, Florida, and Jackson, Mississippi. Since 2018, she has also run the U of T Jazz social media accounts and is the director of her own company, JMP Media. As a vocalist, Pinard is equally at home with standards as she is with R&B (Jenna Marie R&B has been a popular recurring gig at The Rex for a few years now). Though the power of her delivery and the burnished smoothness of her tone may be the first thing that many listeners notice, it is her attention to detail in phrasing and articulation that really sets her apart. Pinard is joined by keyboardist Ewen Farncombe and bassist Caleb Klager, both of whom – like Pinard – are thoughtful, confident jazz musicians who are equally at home in other styles.

Jenna Marie Pinard

"Unlike some musicians, I didn't find myself particularly inspired or soothed by the solitude of the isolation period," Pinard told me. "Instead I found myself yearning for live shows and communal connection through music." When Kaiser contacted her about the prospect of doing a December show, Pinard "knew that [she] wanted to do something intimate and reflective, with the goal of deeply connecting to the musicians and audience." Though this is a sentiment common to most live-performance situations, the immediacy and urgency of the audience-art connection has taken on new meaning in the aftermath of the most stringent lockdown measures. That being said, this will be the group's second time playing at The Emmet since its reopening in July; the first time," Pinard said, "was an incredibly restorative experience."

Continues on page 31

listings@theWholeNote.com

Event listings are free of charge to artists, venues and presenters.

Readers are encouraged to check weekly for changes and updates to existing listings, and for the numerous new listings being added each week, both current and further into the future.

Register for the weekly updates at thewholenote.com/newsletter

IN THIS ISSUE: THREE LISTINGS SECTIONS

- **Section 1: Events by date for Dec 8, 2021 – Jan 28, 2022**
These are events with an announced date and time that one could circle on a calendar, in order to "be there" when it happens for the first (or only) time. This includes live and livestreamed performances; first broadcasts and screenings; concerts, workshops, symposia, and so on.
If the event in question remains available after that first presentation (e.g. online or on demand), this is noted at the end of the listing.
- **Section 2: Ongoing online musical activity including date-related events now available on demand online**
These are musical activities that readers can access in their own time, usefully identified by the name of the presenter or the nature of the event.
- **Section 3: In the clubs (Mostly Jazz)**

How to List

1. Use the convenient online form at **thewholenote.com/applylistings**
2. Email listings to **listings@thewholenote.com**.
Please note, we do not take listings over the phone.

Deadlines

1. Weekly online updates:
submission deadline is 6pm Tuesday of the week prior to the event in question, for Friday posting.

2. Print:
approximately fifteen days before publication. Our next print issue covers the last week of January to the first week of March 2022, and the submission deadline for new listings and updates to listings previously processed is **6pm Monday January 3**.

Events by Date | December 8, 2021 to January 28, 2022

PLEASE NOTE: All times are Eastern Time unless otherwise noted. Listings are based on information sent to WholeNote in advance by event presenters. Due to current COVID-19 restrictions, some events may be cancelled or postponed. Also, current COVID health regulations may require proof of vaccination. Please visit presenters' websites or contact them directly for updates.

More detailed information for each listing is available at thewholenote.com/just-ask.

Wednesday December 8

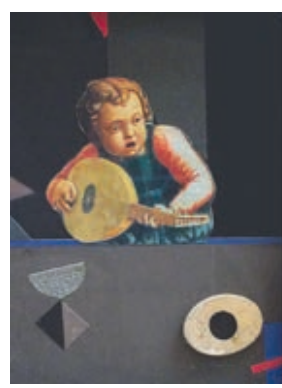
- **12:30: ORGANIX Concerts**. *Imre Olah*. All Saints Kingsway Anglican Church, 2850 Bloor St. W. 416-571-3680 or www.organixconcerts.ca. Freewill offering: $20 suggested.
- **1:00: Shaw Festival**. *Irving Berlin's Holiday Inn*. Music & Lyrics by Irving Berlin. Carla Bennett (Stella); Kyle Blair (Jim Hardy); Wren Evans (Charlie Winslow); Kristi Frank (Linda Mason); Elodie Gillett (Rose/Radio Quartet); Kyle Godemba (Ted Hanover); and other performers; Kate Hennig, stage director. Shaw Festival Theatre, 10 Queen's Parade, **Niagara-on-the-Lake**. 1-800-511-SHAW (7429) or www.shawfest.com. $25-$94. Runs until Dec 23.
- **1:30: Mirvish Productions**. *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. Lyrics by Tim Rice. Princess of Wales Theatre, 300 King St. W. www.mirvish.com/shows/. $39-$150. 9-12, 14-19, 21-24, 26, 28-31, 2021; Jan 2, 2022.
- **2:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra**. *TSO Holiday Pops*. Ryan Silverman, vocalist; Steven Reineke, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375 or 1-855-593-7769. Starting at $56, Matinee starting at $41. Also Dec 8(8pm); Dec 9(8pm).
- **8:00: Mirvish Productions**. *Jesus Christ Superstar*. See Dec 8. Also Dec 9-12, 14-19, 21-24, 26, 28-31, 2021; Jan 2, 2022.
- **8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra.** *TSO Holiday Pops*. Ryan Silverman, vocalist; Steven Reineke, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375 or 1-855-593-7769. Starting at $56, Matinee starting at $41. Also Dec 9(8pm).

Thursday December 9

- **1:00: Shaw Festival.** *Irving Berlin's Holiday Inn*. See Dec 8. Runs until Dec 23.
- **7:00: Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts**. *Imagine Online Festival: Kingston Jazz*. Room Tone, Chantal Thompson. 613-533-2424 or ibcpaboxoffice@queensu.ca. Free. ONLINE
- **7:00: Shaw Festival.** *Irving Berlin's Holiday Inn*. See Dec 8. Runs until Dec 23.
- **7:30: Storytelling Toronto**. *Storytelling Concert*. Original storytelling songs by Ramya Amuthan. Wychwood Barns Park, 76 Wychwood Ave. 416-656-2445. $15. ONLINE
- **8:00: Art of Time Ensemble**. *To All A Good Night 6*. Music by Stevie Wonder, John Prine, Stephen Colbert & Elvis Costello, and Duke Ellington. Jackie Richardson, Jessica Mitchell, Liam Russell, David Wall, and Tom Wilson. Koerner Hall, TELUS Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. www.artoftimeensemble.com or 416-408-0208. $24-$79. Limited capacity. Also available as a livestream.
- **8:00: Mirvish Productions**. *Jesus Christ Superstar*. See Dec 8. Also Dec 10-12, 14-19, 21-24, 26, 28-31, 2021; Jan 2, 2022.
- **8:00: Music Toronto**. *Gryphon Trio with David Harding*. Brahms: Piano Trio No.1 in B Op.8; Ryan: New Work (world premiere); Student compositions from the Earl Haig/Claude Watson program; Dvořák: Piano Quartet in E-flat Op.87. St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 27 Front St. E. 416-366-7723. $47.50-$52.

Music TORONTO

December 9 at 8 pm
GRYPHON TRIO
with
DAVID HARDING



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• **8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra**. *TSO Holiday Pops*. Ryan Silverman, vocalist; Steven Reineke, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375 or 1-855-593-7769. Starting at $56, Matinee starting at $41. Also Dec 7(8pm); Dec 8(2pm).

Friday December 10

• **1:00: Shaw Festival.** *Irving Berlin's Holiday Inn*. See Dec 8. Runs until Dec 23.
• **7:30: West End Micro Music Festival**. *Love Mozart*. Stravinsky: Three Pieces for String Quartet; Stravinsky: Three Pieces for Solo Clarinet; Stravinsky: Pour Pablo Picasso (fragment); Mozart: Allegro for clarinet and string quartet K516c; Francaix: Quintet for Clarinet and Strings. Emily Kruspe, Eric Kim-Fujita, violins; Maxime Despax, viola; Sebastian Ostertag, cello; Brad Cherwin, clarinet. Redeemer Lutheran Church, 1691 Bloor St. W. 647-880-9185 or www.westendmusic.ca. $20; $50(3-concert pass); Free(st).
• **8:00: Jazz Room**. *Mary-Catherine Pazzano*. Jazz Room, Huether Hotel, 59 King St N., **Waterloo**. 226-476-1565. .
• **8:00: Lula Lounge**. *Salseros with Attitude*. 1585 Dundas St. W. 416-588-0307. .
• **8:00: Mirvish Productions**. *Hometown Holidays with Barenaked Ladies: Hits for the Holidays*. CAA Theatre, 651 Yonge St. www.mirvish.com/shows/hometown-holidays-barenaked-ladies. $59-$150. Also Dec 11, 17, 18, 21, 22, 23.
• **8:00: Mirvish Productions**. *Jesus Christ Superstar*. See Dec 8. Also Dec 11-12, 14-19, 21-24, 26, 28-31, 2021; Jan 2, 2022.
• **8:00: Royal Conservatory of Music**. *Music Mix & Canada on Stage Series: Ashley MacIsaac with Special Guest Jully Black*. Koerner Hall, TELUS Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208 or www.rcmusic.com/performance. $40-$95.
• **8:00: Sinfonia Toronto**. *Beethoven @ 251: Happy Birthday!* Coleridge-Taylor: Fantasiestücke; Chopin: Piano Concerto No.1; Beethoven: Symphony No.8. Dmitri Levkovich, piano; Nurhan Arman, conductor. Jane Mallett Theatre, St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 27 Front St. E. In person 416-366-7723; virtual 416-499-0403 www.sinfoniatoronto.com. In-person: $55.97; $48.06(sr); $20.96(st); Livestream: $15. LIVE & ONLINE

Saturday December 11

• **2:00: Mirvish Productions**. *Jesus Christ Superstar*. See Dec 8. Also Dec 12, 14-19, 21-24, 26, 28-31, 2021; Jan 2, 2022.
• **4:30: Beach United Church**. *Heather Bambrick and Friends*. Thad Jones: A Child Is Born; and other seasonal favourites. Heather Bambrick, vocal jazz and piano. 140 Wineva Ave. www.beachunitedchurch.com or 416-700-9644. Videolink and in-person tickets at www.eventbrite.ca. Suggested donations: $25(in-person); $10(videolink). LIVE & LIVESTREAM
• **7:00: Shaw Festival.** *Irving Berlin's Holiday Inn*. See Dec 8. Runs until Dec 23.
• **7:00: Untitled Ensemble**. *Emily Suzanne Shapiro: A Menagerie of Sound*. Emily Suzanne Shapiro: Utter Zoo; Woodwind Quintet (premiere); Solo Improv. Emily Suzanne Shapiro, clarinet & bass clarinet; Elizabeth Christina Brown, oboe & English horn; Chris Buchner, horn; Iraj Tamadon-Nejad, bassoon; Jaye Marsh, flute. Array Space, 155 Walnut Ave. Click on www.untitledensemble.ca. By donation. Register at www.forms.gle/RrrUAq5iQ5ygeEW46.
• **7:30: Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts**. *Imagine Online Festival: Minerva by Suzanne Pasternak*. Isabel Digital Concert Hall. 613-533-2424 or ibcpaboxoffice@queensu.ca. Free. ONLINE
• **7:30: Northumberland Orchestra and Choir**. *Christmas in Northumberland*. Dinner followed by a Carol Cantata. Best Western, 930 Burnham St., **Cobourg**. 905-372-2105. $60. Includes dinner, show, service.
• **8:00: Acoustic Harvest**. *Boreal*. St. Paul's United Church, 200 McIntosh St., **Scarborough**. www.acousticharvest.ca. $30. No walk-in patrons.
• **8:00: Cathedral Bluffs Symphony Orchestra**. *In Concert*. Richardson-Schulte: The Hockey Sweater; Tchaikovsky: Nutcracker Suite; Violin Concerto. Martin MacDonald, guest conductor; Eva Lesage, violin. P.C. Ho Theatre, Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto, 5183 Sheppard Ave. E., **Scarborough**. 416-879-5566 or www.cathedralbluffs.com or cbsoboxoffice@gmail.com. $30-$48; $25-$38(sr/st); Free(under 12).
• **8:00: Jazz Room**. *Pat LaBarbera Quartet*. Jazz Room, Huether Hotel, 59 King St N., **Waterloo**. 226-476-1565.
• **8:00: Jon Feldman**. *Feldman/Malone/Higgins Trio*. Bemsha Swing, In Your Own Sweet Way, Au Privave, Oleo, Well You Needn't. Jesse Malone, trumpet; Bret Higgins, acoustic bass; Jon Feldman, piano. Tranzac Club, 292 Brunswick Ave. 647-862-3816. $20; $15(adv).
• **8:00: Mirvish Productions**. *Hometown Holidays with Barenaked Ladies: Hits for the Holidays*. CAA Theatre, 651 Yonge St. www.mirvish.com/shows/hometown-holidays-barenaked-ladies. $59-$150. Also Dec 17, 18, 21, 22, 23.
• **8:00: Mirvish Productions**. *Jesus Christ Superstar*. See Dec 8. Also Dec 12, 14-19, 21-24, 26, 28-31, 2021; Jan 2, 2022.
• **8:00: Royal Conservatory of Music**. *Jazz From Around the World Series: Alfredo Rodríguez & Pedrito Martinez Group*. Koerner Hall, TELUS Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208 or www.rcmusic.com/performance. $45-$105.
• **8:00: Singing Out**. *A Light Ahead: A Holiday Concert*. Bluma Appel Theatre, St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 27 Front St. E. www.singingout.com or www.ticketmaster.ca. $35.

Sunday December 12

• **Dec 12: Against the Grain Theatre/Toronto Symphony Orchestra**. *Messiah/Complex*. Performed in Arabic, Dene, English, French, Inuktitut, and Southern Tutchone. Handel: Messiah. Jonathon Adams, Looee Arreak, Spencer Britten, Rihab Chaieb, Deantha Edmunds, singers; Le Choeur Louisbourg; Halifax Camerata Singers; Toronto Mendelssohn Choir; University of Prince Edward Island Chamber Chorus; and other performers; Johannes Debus; conductor; Joel Ivany and Reneltta Arluk, co-directors. Register at www.bit.ly/messiahcomplex2021. Available until Jan 9, 2022. ONLINE
• **1:00: Shaw Festival.** *Irving Berlin's Holiday Inn*. See Dec 8. Runs until Dec 23.
• **2:00: Mirvish Productions**. *Hometown Holidays with Barenaked Ladies: Snacktime!* CAA Theatre, 651 Yonge St. www.mirvish.com/shows/hometown-holidays-barenaked-ladies. $49-$69. Also Dec 19.
• **2:00: Mirvish Productions**. *Jesus Christ Superstar*. See Dec 8. Also Dec 14-19, 21-24, 26, 28-31, 2021; Jan 2, 2022.
• **2:00 Shaw Festival.** *Irving Berlin's Holiday Inn*. See Dec 8. Runs until Dec 23.
• **3:00: Royal Conservatory of Music**. *Invesco Piano Concerts & Canada on Stage Series: Jan Lisiecki*. All Chopin program: Études and Nocturnes. Koerner Hall, TELUS Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208 or www.rcmusic.com/performance. $50-$105.
• **3:00: Tapestry Chamber Choir**. *Handel's Messiah: Part 1*. Soloists and strings from York Chamber Ensemble. Bradford Arts Centre, 66 Barrie St., **Bradford**. Click on www.ticketscene.ca or www.tapestrychoir.ca or 905-751-5335.
• **3:00: Villa Charities/Coro San Marco**. *Christmas Concert / Concerto di Natale*. Traditional English and Italian Christmas music. Coro San Marco Choir; Michael Colla, conductor; pianist Adolfo De Santis, piano. Columbus Centre, 901 Lawrence Ave. W. Click on www.villacharities.com/coro or 416-789-7011 x248. $15. A limited number of tickets will be available to purchase at the door.

Tuesday December 14

• **7:30: Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts**. *Preludes for Piano*. Preludes by Chopin and Burge. Philip Chiu, piano. 390 King St. W., **Kingston**. 613-533-2424 or email ibcpaboxoffice@queensu.ca. $10-$39; free(online). LIVE & ONLINE
• **8:00: Mirvish Productions**. *Jesus Christ Superstar*. See Dec 8. Also Dec 15-19, 21-24, 26, 28-31, 2021; Jan 2, 2022.
• **6:30: Music Gallery**. *Emergents I Series: Part 1*. Workshop: Community Sound, with Naomi McCarroll-Butler. Guided improvisations using graphic scores and conduction. Aimed at community members and early-career artists interested in exploring collective music-making, this will be a space for people with different artistic interests and backgrounds to meet, speak and create together. Naomi McCarroll-Butler, saxophonist, clarinetist, instrument maker. Music Gallery at 918 Bathurst, 918 Bathurst St. www.musicgallery.org. Free.

Wednesday December 15

• **12:30: ORGANIX Concerts**. *Hanné Becker, Organ*. Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church, 3055 Bloor St. W. 416-571-3680 or click on www.organixconcerts.ca. Freewill offering - $20 suggested.
• **1:00: Shaw Festival.** *Irving Berlin's Holiday Inn*. See Dec 8. Runs until Dec 23.
• **1:30: Mirvish Productions**. *Jesus Christ Superstar*. See Dec 8. Also Dec 16-19, 21-24, 26, 28-31, 2021; Jan 2, 2022.
• **7:00: Achill Choral Society**. *Comfort & Joy*. A virtual holiday concert featuring a mix of previously recorded live concert selections plus beautiful choral works recorded this fall. Shawn Grenke, conductor; Nancy Sicsic, piano. www.achill.ca. Free. ONLINE
• **7:00: Shaw Festival.** *Irving Berlin's Holiday Inn*. See Dec 8. Runs until Dec 23.
• **8:00: Mirvish Productions**. *Jesus Christ Superstar*. See Dec 8. Also Dec 16-19, 21-24, 26, 28-31, 2021; Jan 2, 2022.
• **8:00: Music Gallery**. *Emergents I Series: Part 2*. Concert: Stephanie Castonguay + Skin Tone. Hacking, breaking and reinventing the creative process. Stephanie Castonguay; Skin Tone (James Goddard). Music Gallery at 918 Bathurst, 918 Bathurst St. www.

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● **8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra**. *Messiah*. Anna-Sophie Neher, soprano; Rihab Chaieb, mezzo; Spencer Britten, tenor; Stephen Hegedus, bass-baritone; Toronto Mendelssohn Choir; Simon Rivard, RBC Resident Conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375 or 1-855-593-7769. Starting at $35. Also Dec 17, 18-3pm & 8 pm, 19-3pm.

Thursday December 16

● **1:00: Shaw Festival.** *Irving Berlin's Holiday Inn*. See Dec 8. Runs until Dec 23.

● **7:00: Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts**. *Imagine Online Festival: Classical and Beyond*. Grieg: Hall of the Mountain King, Ballade in g Op.24; Bach: French Overture; Works by Bach, Mattheis and Biber. Sheng Cai, Leonid Nediak, piano; Paelnai Duo; Chloe Kim, violin; Bryn Lutek, percussion. Isabel Digital Concert Hall. 613-533-2424 or ibcpaboxoffice@queensu.ca. Free.

● **7:30: Bravo Niagara! Festival of the Arts**. *TD Jazz Series: Pavlo: Home For The Holidays*. Partridge Hall, FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, 250 St. Paul St., **St. Catharines**. 905-688-0722 or 289-868-9177. $50; $25(st/youth with id).

● **8:00: Hugh's Room**. *Kellylee Evans Live*. 3030 Dundas West, 3030 Dundas St. W. Dinner reservations at www.3030dundaswest.com/menu. $35(in person); $10(livestream). LIVE & LIVESTREAM.

● **8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society**. *Penderecki String Quartet*. Beethoven: String Quartet No.14 in c-sharp Op.131; String Quartet No.16 in F Op.135; Große Fuge Op.133. First United Church (Waterloo), 16 William St. W., **Waterloo**. 519-569-1809 or www.ticketscene.ca/kwcms. $40; $25(st). Also Dec 18.

● **8:00: Mirvish Productions**. *Jesus Christ Superstar*. See Dec 8. Also Dec 17-19, 21-24, 26, 28-31, 2021; Jan 2, 2022.

● **7:00: Music Gallery**. *Emergents I Series: Part 3*. Parallel Playfields: Concert and Talk with Unit 2, for You In Mind. Experimental performances exploring noise, improvisation and different textures of sound including a pre-performance discussion, facilitated by Sameen and including all performers, with a focus on the creative process, the present culture of experimental music and the ways in which it can evolve. Sa.resi, Deidre, and Vixu. Music Gallery at 918 Bathurst, 918 Bathurst St. www.musicgallery.org. Free.

● **8:00: Tafelmusik**. *A Tafelmusik Christmas*. Bach: Sanctus in D; Bach: "Christum wir sollen loben schon" from Cantata 21; Bach: Kyrie, Gloria & Cum sancto from Lutheran Mass in G; Stradella: Sinfonia from Cantata per il Santissimo Natale; Charpentier: Agnus Dei from Messe de minuit; works by Berlioz, Poulenc, Pasquini, Handel; and Christmas Carols. Tafelmusik Chamber Choir, Ivars Taurins, conductor. Details at info@tafelmusik.org or 1-833-964-633. ONLINE

Friday December 17

● **12:00 noon: Music at Met**. *Friday Noon at Met Concert Series*. Featuring guest singers and music for the holiday season. Dr. Patricia Wright, organ. Metropolitan United Church (Toronto), 56 Queen St. E. Details at www.metunited.ca/live. Free. LIVE & STREAMED

● **1:00: Shaw Festival.** *Irving Berlin's Holiday Inn*. See Dec 8. Runs until Dec 23.

● **7:00: Serenata Singers.** *Songs of Comfort and Joy!* A festive selection of traditional and popular holiday music including the world premiere of a commissioned work by composer Samuel Kerr. Jonathan Wong, artistic director. www.serenatasingers.ca. ONLINE

● **7:00: Shaw Festival.** *Irving Berlin's Holiday Inn*. See Dec 8. Runs until Dec 23.

● **7:00: St. James Cathedral**. *La Nativité du Seigneur*. With readings between the movements of Messiaen's work for organ exploring the meaning of Christmas. Messiaen: La Nativité du Seigneur. Rashaan Allwood, organ. Cathedral Church of St. James, 106 King St. E. 416-364-7865. Donation.

● **7:00: Vesuvius Ensemble/Istituto Italiano di Cultura/Villa Charities**. *Quanno Nascette Ninno: Christmas in Southern Italy*. Francesco Pellegrino, tenor and director; Lucas Harris, lute; Romini di Gasbarro, vocalist; Luis Samão, guitar; Tommasso Sollazzo, bagpipes. Heliconian Hall, 35 Hazelton Ave. www.bemusednetwork.com/events/detail/873. Also Dec 18.

● **7:30: Southern Ontario Lyric Opera (SOLO)/Wish Opera Arts**. *Together Again for the Holidays*. Tonia Evans Cianculli, soprano; Eugenia Dermentzis, mezzo; Adam Luther, tenor; James Westman, baritone; SOLO Orchestra & Chorus; Peter Oleskevich, conductor.Burlington Performing Arts Centre, 440 Locust St., **Burlington**. www.burlingtonpac.ca or 905-681-6000. $55; $45(sr); $25(st); $20(livestream). LIVE & LIVESTREAM

● **7:30: The Edison Singers**. *Festival of Carols*. Basilica of Our Lady Immaculate, 28 Norfolk St., **Guelph**. 1-226-384-3100. $25-$40. Limited seating. Also Dec 20(Niagara-on-the-Lake); 27(Elora).

● **8:00: Jazz Room**. *Tom Nagy's Christmas Experience*. Jazz Room, Huether Hotel, 59 King St N., **Waterloo**. 226-476-1565. .

● **8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestra**. *Yuletide Spectacular*. Evan Mitchell, conductor. 519-745-4711 or 1-888-745-4717. $15-$100 per stream. Available Dec 17-8pm to Dec 19-11:59pm. Purchase 1 stream per household. ONLINE

• **8:00: Mirvish Productions**. *Hometown Holidays with Barenaked Ladies: Hits for the Holidays*. CAA Theatre, 651 Yonge St. www.mirvish.com/shows/hometown-holidays-barenaked-ladies. $59-$150. Also Dec 18, 21, 22, 23.
• **8:00: Mirvish Productions**. *Jesus Christ Superstar*. See Dec 8. Also Dec 18-19, 21-24, 26, 28-31, 2021; Jan 2, 2022.
• **7:00: Music Gallery**. *Emergents I Series: Part 4*. Artist Talk: Stephanie Castonguay, with PIX FILM. Diving into the artist's sound art practice and recent audiovisual work with self-built light scanner instruments. Stephanie CastonguayPix Film Productions, 1411 Dufferin St. Unit C. www.musicgallery.org. Free.
• **8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra**. *Messiah*. See Dec 15. Also Dec 18(3pm & 8pm), 19(3pm).

Saturday December 18

• **10:00am: Church of St. Andrew, Scarborough**. *Sing-Along Handel's Messiah*. A reading of selected choruses. Dr. Richard Heinzle, conductor; Jeff Vidov, accompanist. 2333 Victoria Park Ave., **Scarborough**. 416-447-1481. $25. Pre-registration required. Bring your own book or borrow from us. Bring your own lunch.
• **1:00: Shaw Festival.** *Irving Berlin's Holiday Inn*. See Dec 8. Runs until Dec 23.
• **2:00: Mirvish Productions**. *Jesus Christ Superstar*. See Dec 8. Also Dec 19, 21-24, 26, 28-31, 2021; Jan 2, 2022.
• **3:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra**. *Messiah*. See Dec 15. Also Dec 18(8pm), 19(3pm).
• **4:00: Pax Christi Chorale**. *Christmas Through the Ages*. Saint-Saëns: Oratorio de Noël; and works by Trotta, Rutter, Britten, Stephanie Martin, Handel, and Hagenberg; A Carol Sing-along. Odin Quartet; Joshua Tamayo, organ/piano; Jamie Drake, percussion; Elaine Choi, conductor. Grace Church-on-the-Hill, 300 Lonsdale Rd. www.paxchristichorale.org. $50; $45(sr); $25(st).
• **7:00: Shaw Festival.** *Irving Berlin's Holiday Inn*. See Dec 8. Runs until Dec 23.
• **7:00: Vesuvius Ensemble/Istituto Italiano di Cultura/Villa Charities**. *Quanno Nascette Ninno: Christmas in Southern Italy*. Francesco Pellegrino, tenor and director; Lucas Harris, lute; Romini di Gasbarro, vocalist; Luis Samão, guitar; Tommasso Sollazzo, bagpipes. Heliconian Hall, 35 Hazelton Ave. www.bemusednetwork.com/events/detail/873. Also Dec 17.
• **7:30: The Annex Singers**. *"Yes, Virginia."* An affirmation of the power of belief, faith and the imagination in this most magical of seasons. Works by Myers, Sirrett, Walton, and Willan. Colin Mochrie and Debra McGrath,

actors; Melanie Conly, soprano; Maria Case, artistic director. www.annexsingers.com. Free. Donations welcome. Available until Jan 9. ONLINE
• **7:30: Canadian Opera Company**. *In Winter*. Vivaldi: Winter from The Four Seasons; seasonal songbook selections; Ian Cusson: In Winter for for solo, chorus, and orchestra. Melody Courage, soprano; Jamie Groote, soprano; Midori Marsh, soprano; Anna-Sophie Neher, soprano; Charlotte Siegel, soprano; and other Artists of the COC Ensemble Studio; Canadian Opera Company Orchestra & Chorus; Johannes Debus. www.coc.ca/watch..ONLINE
• **7:30: Elora Singers**. *Radiant Dawn: A Festival of Carols*. Includes traditional and contemporary arrangements by Willcocks, Chilcott, Dove, Enns, Gjeilo, and others. Free. Available until Jan 7, 2022. Live concerts on Dec 21 & 22. ONLINE
• **7:30: Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra**. *Hometown Holidays*. Anderson: Christmas Festival; Abigail Richardson-Schulte: Making Light; Tchaikovsky: Selections from The Nutcracker Suite; Anderson: Sleigh Ride; Naughtin: Christmas Angels Sing-Along. Thomas Le Duc-Moreau, conductor. FirstOntario Concert Hall, 1 Summers Ln., **Hamilton**. 905-526-7756 or www.hpo.org. In-person: $35-$80;$30-$75(sr); $20(age 5-17). Livestream $24. LIVE & LIVESTREAM
• **7:30: Link Music Lab**. *Mahsa Vahdat & Sardar Mohamad Jani*. Part of Experimental Link Music Nights. Improvisation. Mahsa Vahdat, vocals; Sardar Mohamad Jani, oud. Small World Music Centre, Artscape Youngplace, 180 Shaw St. www.eventbrite.ca. $50. Exclusive concert with limited capacity.

• **7:30: Niagara Symphony Orchestra**. *Holiday Favourites*. Kaylee Harwood, vocalist; Sayer Roberts, vocalist; Laura Secord Senior School Choir (Katryna Sacco, director); Bradley Thachuk, conductor. Partridge Hall, FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, 250 St. Paul St., **St. Catharines**. www.niagarasymphony.com or 905-688-0722 or 905-688-5601 x3700 or 1-855-515-0722. $68; $60(sr); $39(arts worker); $15(st & youth). Also Dec 19(2:30pm).
• **7:30: Royal Conservatory of Music**. *Taylor Academy Concerts Series: Academy Chamber Orchestra*. Mazzoleni Concert Hall, Royal Conservatory, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208 or www.rcmusic.com/performance. Free.
• **8:00: Georgetown Bach Chorale**. *Handel's Messiah*. Georgetown Bach Chorale and Chamber Orchestra; Ron Greidanus, harpsichord/conductor.Holy Cross Parish, 14400 Argyll Rd., **Georgetown**. www.georgetownbachchorale.com or 905-873-9909. $45; $10(st). Also Dec 19(2pm).
• **7:30: Guelph Chamber Choir**. *Handel's Messiah LIVE*. Elizabeth Lepock, soprano; Autumn Debassige, alto; Lawrence Wiliford, tenor; Jeremy Ludwig, bass; Guelph Chamber Choir & Baroque Orchestra; Charlene Pauls, conductor. River Run Centre, 35 Woolwich St., **Guelph**. 519-763-3000 or www.riverrun.ca/events/2021-12-18. $45; $25(under 30); $25(livestream). LIVE & LIVESTREAM.
• **8:00: Jazz Room**. *Jason White Christmas Special*. Jazz Room, Huether Hotel, 59 King St N., **Waterloo**. 226-476-1565. .
• **8:00: Kindred Spirits Orchestra**. *Reflections*. Korngold: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra; Shostakovich: Symphony No.15. Conrad Chow, violin; Michael Berec, host; Kristian Alexander, conductor. Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, 10268 Yonge St., **Richmond Hill**. 905-604-8339 or www.ksorchestra.ca. $20-$40. LIVE & STREAMED. Moved from Flato Markham Theatre on Dec 11. Tickets purchased for Dec 11 are valid for the new date.
• **8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society**. *Penderecki String Quartet*. Beethoven: String Quartet No.14 in c-sharp Op.131; String Quartet No.16 in F Op.135; Große Fuge Op.133. First United Church, 16 William St. W., **Waterloo**. 519-569-1809 or www.ticketscene.ca/kwcms. $40; $25(st). Also Dec 16.
• **8:00: Mirvish Productions**. *Hometown Holidays with Barenaked Ladies: Hits for the Holidays*. CAA Theatre, 651 Yonge St. www.mirvish.com/shows/hometown-holidays-barenaked-ladies. $59-$150. Also Dec 21, 22, 23.
• **8:00: Mirvish Productions**. *Jesus Christ Superstar*. See Dec 8. Also Dec 19, 21-24, 26, 28-31, 2021; Jan 2, 2022.
• **8:00: Mississauga Symphony Orchestra**. *A Baroque Christmas*. Christopher Dunham, baritone; Lauren Estey, soprano; Daniel Taylor, conductor. Living Arts Centre, 4141 Living Arts Dr., **Mississauga**. www.mississaugasymphony.ca.
• **8:00: Royal Conservatory of Music**. *SongBird North Series*. Temerty Theatre, Telus Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208 or www.rcmusic.com/performance. $40.
• **8:00: That Choir**. *That Choir Carols*. St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 73 Simcoe St. 416-419-1756 or info@thatchoir.com or www.thatchoir.com. PWYC. Also Dec 19.

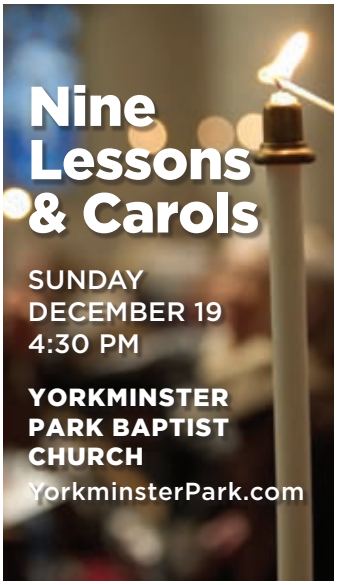
• **8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra**. *Messiah*. See Dec 15. Also Dec 19(3pm).

Sunday December 19

• **2:00: Georgetown Bach Chorale**. *Handel's Messiah*. Georgetown Bach Chorale and Chamber Orchestra; Ron Greidanus, harpsichord/conductor. Holy Cross Parish, 14400 Argyll Rd., **Georgetown**. www.georgetownbachchorale.com or 905-873-9909. $45; $10(st). Also Dec 18(8pm).
• **2:00: Mirvish Productions**. *Hometown Holidays with Barenaked Ladies: Snacktime!* CAA Theatre, 651 Yonge St. www.mirvish.com/shows/hometown-holidays-barenaked-ladies. $49-$69. Also Dec 5 & 12.
• **2:00: Mirvish Productions**. *Jesus Christ Superstar*. See Dec 8. Also Dec 21-24, 26, 28-31, 2021; Jan 2, 2022.
• **2:00: Mississauga Big Band Jazz Ensemble**. *Concert*. Featuring a Small Band Jazz Ensemble. Port Credit Legion, 35 Front St. N., **Port Credit**. PWYC.
• **2:00: Shaw Festival.** *Irving Berlin's Holiday Inn*. See Dec 8. Runs until Dec 23.
• **2:30: Niagara Symphony Orchestra**. *Holiday Favourites*. Kaylee Harwood, vocalist; Sayer Roberts, vocalist; Laura Secord Senior School Choir (Katryna Sacco, director); Bradley Thachuk, conductor. Partridge Hall, FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, 250 St. Paul St., **St. Catharines**. www.niagarasymphony.com or 905-688-0722 or 905-688-5601 x3700 or 1-855-515-0722. $68; $60(sr); $39(arts worker); $15(st & youth). Also Dec 18(7:30pm).
• **3:00: Mississauga Symphony Orchestra**. *A Merry Little Christmas*. Living Arts Centre, 4141 Living Arts Dr., Mississauga. www.mississaugasymphony.ca.
• **3:00: Smoke Show BBQ & Brew**. *York Jazz Ensemble*. Smoke Show, 744 Mount Pleasant Rd. 416-901-7469 or www.smokeshowbbqandbrew.com.
• **3:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra**. *Messiah*. See Dec 15.
• **4:00: Elmer Iseler Singers**. *Sherry & Shortbread "At Home"*. A fundraising event. James Campbell, clarinet; Graham Campbell, guitar; Sharang Sharma, tenor; Lydia Adams, conductor. 416-217-0567 or www.elmeriselersingers.com. By donation. ONLINE
• **4:00: Flute Street**. *It's Christmas on Flute Street*. Early, traditional and modern motets,

noëls and carols from around the world. Ten musicians on nine different sizes of flute from the 12-inch piccolo to the over 16-foot double contrabass flute. Lisa Jack, conductor. Heliconian Hall, 35 Hazelton Ave. 416-462-9498. $25; $20(sr/arts workers); $10(st).

● **4:30: Opera Revue**. *Opera Revue Christmas Show*. Fun, casual afternoon of opera, art song and more in a comfortable bar setting. Works by Gounod, Donizetti, Weill, and Mozart. Danie Friesen, soprano; Claire Harris, piano. The Emmet Ray, 924 College St. 647-637-7491 or www.operarevue.com. $10.



● **4:30: Yorkminster Park Baptist Church**. *Nine Lessons & Carols*. 1585 Yonge St. www.yorkminsterpark.com. Free.

● **8:00: That Choir**. *That Choir Carols*. St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 73 Simcoe St. 416-419-1756 or info@thatchoir.com or www.thatchoir.com. PWYC.

Monday December 20

● **7:30: Bravo Niagara! Festival of the Arts**. *TD Jazz Series: Molly Johnson - This Holiday Season*. Partridge Hall, FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, 250 St. Paul St., **St. Catharines**. 905-688-0722 or www.bravoniagara.com. $50; $25(st/youth with id).

● **7:30: Kingston Symphony Orchestra**. *Candlelight Christmas*. Tchaikovsky: Excerpts from The Nutcracker; Leroy's Anderson: Sleigh Ride; Christmas favourites by Howard Cable; and other works. Evan Mitchell, conductor. Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts, 390 King St. W., **Kingston**. Click on www.kingstonsymphony.ca/concerts-events/candlelight-christmas/ or call 613-533-2424. In-person + complimentary livestream access: $30(adults/sr); $15(st). Livestream: $15. Also Dec 21 & 22.

● **7:30: The Edison Singers**. *Festival of Carols*. Court House Theatre, 26 Queen St., **Niagara-on-the-Lake**. 1-226-384-3100. $25-$40. Limited seating. Also Dec 22(Elora).

Tuesday December 21

● **2:00: Shaw Festival.** *Irving Berlin's Holiday Inn*. See Dec 8. Runs until Dec 23.

● **5:00: Elora Singers**. *Radiant Dawn: A Festival of Carols*. James MacMillan: O Radiant Dawn; Ola Gjelio: The First Nowell; Mark Sirett: Thou Shalt Know Him; Bob Chilcott: Les anges dans nos campagnes; Stephanie Martin: Stopping by the woods on a snowy evening. Mark Vuorinen, conductor. Melville United Church, 300 St. Andrew St. W., **Fergus**. 519-846-0331. $30; $15(st/arts); $5(high school st). Also on Dec 21(7:30pm); 22(5:00 & 7:30pm).

● **7:00: Shaw Festival.** *Irving Berlin's Holiday Inn*. See Dec 8. Runs until Dec 23.

● **7:30: Kingston Symphony Orchestra**. *Candlelight Christmas*. Tchaikovsky: Excerpts from The Nutcracker; Leroy's Anderson: Sleigh Ride; Christmas favourites by Howard Cable; and other works. Evan Mitchell, conductor. Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts, 390 King St. W., **Kingston**. Click on www.kingstonsymphony.ca/concerts-events/candlelight-christmas/ or call 613-533-2424. In-person + complimentary livestream access: $30(adults/sr); $15(st). Livestream: $15. Also Dec 22.

● **8:00: Mirvish Productions**. *Hometown Holidays with Barenaked Ladies: Hits for the Holidays*. CAA Theatre, 651 Yonge St. www.mirvish.com/shows/hometown-holidays-barenaked-ladies. $59-$150. Also Dec 22, 23.

● **8:00: Mirvish Productions**. *Jesus Christ Superstar*. See Dec 8. Also Dec 22-24, 26, 28-31, 2021; Jan 2, 2022.

● **8:00: Mirvish Productions**. *Come From Away*. Book, Music & Lyrics by Irene Sankoff and David Bein. Royal Alexandra Theatre, 260 King St. W. www.mirvish.com/shows. $29-$139. From Dec 15. Tue-Sat(8pm); Wed(1:30pm); Sat & Sun(2pm).

Wednesday December 22

● **12:30: ORGANIX Concerts**. *David Alexander, Organ*. All Saints Kingsway Anglican Church, 2850 Bloor St. W. 416-571-3680 or www.organixconcerts.ca. Freewill offering of $20 suggested.

● **1:00: Shaw Festival.** *Irving Berlin's Holiday Inn*. See Dec 8. Runs until Dec 23.

● **1:30: Mirvish Productions**. *Jesus Christ Superstar*. See Dec 8. Also Dec 23-24, 26, 28-31, 2021; Jan 2, 2022.

● **5:00: Elora Singers**. *Radiant Dawn: A Festival of Carols*. James MacMillan: O Radiant Dawn; Ola Gjelio: The First Nowell; Mark Sirett: Thou Shalt Know Him; Bob Chilcott: Les anges dans nos campagnes; Stephanie Martin: Stopping by the woods on a snowy evening. Mark Vuorinen, conductor. Melville United Church, 300 St. Andrew St. W., **Fergus**. 519-846-0331. $30; $15(st/arts); $5(high school st). Also on Dec 22(7:30pm).

● **7:00: Shaw Festival.** *Irving Berlin's Holiday Inn*. See Dec 8. Runs until Dec 23.

● **7:30: Kingston Symphony Orchestra**. *Candlelight Christmas*. Tchaikovsky: Excerpts from The Nutcracker; Leroy's Anderson: Sleigh Ride; Christmas favourites by Howard Cable; and other works. Evan Mitchell, conductor. Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts, 390 King St. W., **Kingston**. Click on www.kingstonsymphony.ca/concerts-events/candlelight-christmas/ or 613-533-2424. In-person + complimentary livestream access: $30(adults/sr); $15(st). Livestream: $15. Also Dec 20 & 21.

● **7:30: The Edison Singers**. *Festival of Carols*. Knox Presbyterian Church (Elora), 51 Church St., **Elora**. 1-226-384-3100. $25-$40. Limited seating. Also Dec 17(Guelph); 20(Niagara-on-the-Lake).

● **8:00: Mirvish Productions**. *Hometown Holidays with Barenaked Ladies: Hits for the Holidays*. CAA Theatre, 651 Yonge St. www.mirvish.com/shows/hometown-holidays-barenaked-ladies. $59-$150. Also Dec 23.

● **8:00: Mirvish Productions**. *Jesus Christ Superstar*. See Dec 8. Also Dec 23-24, 26, 28-31, 2021; Jan 2, 2022.

Thursday December 23

● **1:00: Shaw Festival.** *Irving Berlin's Holiday Inn*. See Dec 8. Runs until Dec 23.

● **8:00: Mirvish Productions**. *Hometown Holidays with Barenaked Ladies: Hits for the Holidays*. CAA Theatre, 651 Yonge St. www.mirvish.com/shows/hometown-holidays-barenaked-ladies. $59-$150.

● **8:00: Mirvish Productions**. *Jesus Christ Superstar*. See Dec 8. Also Dec 24, 26, 28-31, 2021; Jan 2, 2022.

Friday December 24

● **1:30: Mirvish Productions**. *Jesus Christ Superstar*. See Dec 8. Also Nov 30, Dec 26, 28-31, 2021; Jan 2, 2022.

Sunday December 26

● **3:00: Smoke Show BBQ & Brew**. *Red Hot Ramble*. Smoke Show, 744 Mount Pleasant Rd. 416-901-7469 or www.redhotramble.ca or www.smokeshowbbqandbrew.com. .

● **6:30: Mirvish Productions**. *Jesus Christ Superstar*. See Dec 8. Also Dec 28-31, 2021; Jan 2, 2022.

Tuesday December 28

● **1:30: Mirvish Productions**. *Jesus Christ Superstar*. See Dec 8. Also 8pm. Also Dec 29-31, 2021; Jan 2, 2022.

Wednesday December 29

● **1:30: Mirvish Productions**. *Jesus Christ Superstar*. See Dec 8. Also 8pm. Also Dec 30-31, 2021; Jan 2, 2022.

● **8:00: Toronto Operetta Theatre**. *A Waltz Dream*. By Oscar Straus. Andrea Nuñez, Scott Rumble, Elizabeth Beeler, Keith Klassen, and Gregory Finney; Derek Bate, conductor; Guillermo Silva-Marin, stage director. Jane Mallett Theatre, St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 27 Front St. E. 416-366-7723 or 1–800-708-7654 or www.stlc.com. $75-$95. Also Dec 31(8pm), Jan 2(8pm), 4(3pm). CANCELLED

Thursday December 30

● **7:30: COSA Canada**. *The Pirates of Penzance*. Libretto by W. S. Gilbert. Music by Arthur Sullivan. Libretto adapted by Renée Salewski. Jacob Abrahamse, tenor (Frederic); Amy Moodie, soprano (Mabel); Nolan Kehler, tenor (Major General Stanley); Cristina Lanz, mezzo (Ruth); Ryan Hofman, baritone (Pirate King); Renée Salewksi, stage director; Darryl Edwards, music director. 647-272-6232. $20.11 or PWYC. Also Dec 31, Jan 1(2pm) & 2(7:30pm). ONLINE. POSTPONED TO FEB 3, 2022.

● **8:00: Mirvish Productions**. *Jesus Christ Superstar*. See Dec 8. Also Dec 31, 2021; Jan 2, 2022.

Friday December 31

● **1:30: Mirvish Productions**. *Jesus Christ Superstar*. See Dec 8. Also Jan 2, 2022.

● **7:30: COSA Canada**. *The Pirates of Penzance*. See Dec 30. Also Jan 1(2pm) & 2(7:30pm). ONLINE. POSTPONED TO FEB 4, 2022.

● **8:00: Toronto Operetta Theatre**. *A Waltz Dream*. See Dec 29. CANCELLED

Saturday January 1

● **2:00: COSA Canada**. *The Pirates of Penzance*. See Dec 30. Also Jan 2(7:30pm). ONLINE. POSTPONED TO FEB 5, 2022.

● **2:30: Attila Glatz Concert Productions.** *Salute to Vienna New Year's Concert*. Sera Gösch, soprano; Gergely Boncsér, tenor; Strauss Symphony of Canada; Europaballett; International Champion Ballroom Dancers; Peter Guth, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4255 or www.roythomsonhall.com. $75-$185. Also Jan 2(Hamilton).

Sunday January 2

● **2:00: Mirvish Productions**. *Jesus Christ Superstar*. See Dec 8. Also 8pm.

● **2:30: Attila Glatz Concert Productions**. *Salute to Vienna New Year's Concert*. Sera Gösch, soprano; Gergely Boncsér, tenor; Strauss Symphony of Canada; Europaballett; International Champion Ballroom Dancers; Peter Guth, conductor. FirstOntario Concert Hall, 1 Summers Ln., **Hamilton**. 905-546-4040 x0 or ticketmaster.ca. $50-$126. Also Jan 1(Toronto).

• **7:30: COSA Canada**. *The Pirates of Penzance*. See Dec 30. ONLINE. POSTPONED TO FEB 6, 2022.
• **8:00: Toronto Operetta Theatre**. *A Waltz Dream*. See Dec 30. CANCELLED

Tuesday January 4

• **8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra**. *Tribute to Louis Armstrong*. Byron Stripling, leader/trumpet/vocals. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375 or 1-855-593-7769. Starting at $56, Matinee starting at $41. Also Jan 5-2 & 8pm. Also available as a live stream Jan 4-8pm. www.TSO.CA/Livestreams.

Wednesday January 5

• **12:30: ORGANIX Concerts**. *Adrian Ross*. All Saints Kingsway Anglican Church, 2850 Bloor St. W. 416-571-3680 or www.organixconcerts.ca. Freewill offering - $20 suggested.
• **2:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra**. *Tribute to Louis Armstrong*. Byron Stripling, leader/trumpet/vocals. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375 or 1-855-593-7769. Starting at $56, Matinee starting at $41. Also at 8pm. Also available as a live stream Jan 4(8pm). TSO.CA/Livestreams.

Friday January 7

• **7:30: Toronto Symphony Orchestra**. *Bach's Brandenburg & More*. Jonathan Crow, leader/violin; Chelsea Gu, violin; Kelly Zimba, Leonie Wall, flute; Sarah Jeffrey, oboe and others. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375 or 1-855-593-7769. Starting at $29. Also Jan 8(8pm), 9(3pm).
• **8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestra**. *Elegance and Emotion*. Rameau: Suite de danses from Platée; Ravel: Piano Concerto in G; Schubert: Symphony No.4 in c "Tragic". David Greilsammer, conductor/piano. 519-745-4711 or 1-888-745-4717. $15-$100 per stream. Available Jan 7(8pm) to Jan 9(11:59pm). Purchase 1 stream per household.ONLINE

Saturday January 8

• **8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra**. *Bach's Brandenburg & More*. Jonathan Crow, leader/violin; Chelsea Gu, violin; Kelly Zimba, Leonie Wall, flute; Sarah Jeffrey, oboe and others. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375 or 1-855-593-7769. Starting at $29.

Sunday January 9

• **3:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra**. *Bach's Brandenburg & More*. Jonathan Crow, leader/violin; Chelsea Gu, violin; Kelly Zimba, Leonie Wall, flute; Sarah Jeffrey, oboe and others. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375 or 1-855-593-7769. Starting at $29.
• **8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society**. *Chamber Music Concert*. Bach: Sonata No.1; Ysaÿe: Sonata No.4; Schubert: Erlkönig; Ysaÿe: Sonata No.2; Bach: Partita No.2. Kerson Leong, solo violin. First United Church (Waterloo), 16 William St. W., **Waterloo**. 519-569-1809 or www.ticketscene.ca/kwcms. $35; $20(st).

Monday January 10

• **10:00am: Beach United Church**. *Jazz Lecture: From New Orleans to Big Band Swing*. Dr. Mike Daley. 140 Wineva Ave. www.eventbrite.ca or 416-700-9644. $100(series); $30(single). LIVE & LIVESTREAM

Tuesday January 11

• **12:10: Yorkminster Park Baptist Church**. *Lunchtime Chamber Music: Rising Stars Recital*. Featuring students from the Glenn Gould School. 1585 Yonge St. 416-922-1167. Free admission. Donations welcome.

Wednesday January 12

• **8:00: Royal Conservatory of Music**. *21C Music Festival Series: Gould's Wall*. Brian Current, composer/conductor; Philip Akin, director; Glenn Gould School New Music Ensemble. Atrium, Royal Conservatory, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208 or www.rcmusic.com/performance. $21-$85. Also Jan 13(6pm); 14(8pm); 15(10:30pm); 16(6pm).
• **8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra**. *Moussa, Wagner & Dvořák*. Kerson Leong, violin; Samy Moussa, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375 or 1-855-593-7769. Starting at $29. Also Jan 13, 15.

Thursday January 13

• **6:00: Royal Conservatory of Music**. *21C Music Festival Series: Gould's Wall*. Brian Current, composer/conductor; Philip Akin, director; Glenn Gould School New Music Ensemble. Atrium, Royal Conservatory, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208 or rcmusic.com/performance. $21-$85. Also Jan 14(8pm); 15(10:30pm); 16(6pm).

Music TORONTO

BEDFORD TRIO

DIOR QUARTET

POSTPONED

January 13 at 8 pm

• **8:00: Music Toronto**. *The Bedford Trio and The Dior Quartet*. Katharine Petkovski: Piano Trio No.1; Mendelssohn: Piano Trio No.1 in d Op.49; Dvořák: String Quartet No.13 in G Op.106. The Bedford Trio: Alessia Disimino, violin; Andrew Ascenzo, cello; Jialiang Zhu, piano; The Dior Quartet: Noa Sarid, violin; Tobias Elser, violin; Caleb Georges, viola; Joanne Yesol Choi, cello. St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 27 Front St. E.. 416-366-7723 or www.music-toronto.com. $47.50-$52.
• **8:00: Royal Conservatory of Music**. *Invesco Piano Concerts Series: Viklingur Ólafsson*. Galuppi: Andante spritoso from Piano Sonata No.9 in f; Mozart: Rondo in F K.494; Bach: Rondo II in d H290; Cimarosa: Sonata No.42 in d (arr. Ólafsson); Mozart: Fantasia in d K397 (fragment) and others. Koerner Hall, TELUS Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208 or www.rcmusic.com/performance. $55-$110.
• **8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra**. *Moussa, Wagner & Dvořák*. Kerson Leong, violin; Samy Moussa, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375 or 1-855-593-7769. Starting at $29. Also Jan 15.

Friday January 14

• **8:00: Royal Conservatory of Music**. *21C Music Festival Series: Gould's Wall*. Brian Current, composer/conductor; Philip Akin, director; Glenn Gould School New Music Ensemble. Atrium, Royal Conservatory, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208 or www.rcmusic.com/performance. $21-$85. Also Jan 15(10:30pm); 16(6pm).

Saturday January 15

• **8:00: Royal Conservatory of Music**. *21C Music Festival Series: ARC Ensemble: Marc Neikrug's A Song by Mahler*. Koerner Hall, TELUS Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208 or www.rcmusic.com/performance. $21-$85.
• **8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra**. *Moussa, Wagner & Dvořák*. Kerson Leong, violin; Samy Moussa, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375 or 1-855-593-7769. Starting at $29.
• **10:30: Royal Conservatory of Music**. *21C Music Festival Series: Gould's Wall*. Brian Current, composer/conductor; Philip Akin, director; Glenn Gould School New Music Ensemble. Atrium, Royal Conservatory, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208 or www.rcmusic.com/performance. $21-$85. Also Jan 16(6pm).

Sunday January 16

• **1:00: Royal Conservatory of Music**. *21C Music Festival Series: Morgan-Paige Melbourne*. Mazzoleni Concert Hall, Royal Conservatory, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208 or www.rcmusic.com/performance. Free.
• **2:30: Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts**. *Faculty Artist Series DAN School: Isabel Quartet with Sadaf Amini*. Burge: Shiraz, for Santur and String Quartet (premiere); Haydn: String Quartet in A Op.20 No.6; Beethoven: String Quartet in F Op. 59 No.1. 390 King St. W., **Kingston**. 613-533-2424 or ibcpaboxoffice@queensu.ca. TBA on sale Nov 1.
• **6:00: Royal Conservatory of Music**. *21C Music Festival Series: Gould's Wall*. Brian Current, composer/conductor; Philip Akin, director; Glenn Gould School New Music Ensemble. Atrium, Royal Conservatory, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208 or www.rcmusic.com/performance. $21-$85.
• **8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society**. *Piano Concert*. Scarlatti: Four Sonatas; Beethoven: Piano Sonata No.22 in F Op.54; Franck: Prélude, Choral et Fugue FWV 21; Busoni: Piano Sonatina No. 6 (Fantasia da camera super Carmen); Castellanos: Mañanita Caragueña; and other works. Michael Lewin, piano. First United Church, 16 William St. W., **Waterloo**. 519-569-1809 or www.ticketscene.ca/kwcms. $30; $20(st).

Tuesday January 18

• **12:10: Yorkminster Park Baptist Church**. *Lunchtime Chamber Music: Rising Stars Recital*. Featuring students from the Glenn Gould School. 1585 Yonge St. 416-922-1167. Free admission. Donations welcome.
• **8:00: Royal Conservatory of Music**. *21C Music Festival & Music on Film Series: Kronos Quartet on Film: A Thousand Thoughts*. A live documentary with the Kronos Quartet; written and directed by Sam Green and Joe Bini. Koerner Hall, TELUS Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208 or www.rcmusic.com/performance. $21-$85.

Wednesday January 19

• **12:00 noon: ORGANIX Concerts**. *Peter Nikiforuk*. All Saints Kingsway Anglican Church, 2850 Bloor St. W. 416-571-3680 or www.organixconcerts.ca. Suggested freewill offering of $20.
• **2:30: Niagara Symphony Orchestra**. *Invisible Cities*. Dinuk Wijeratne: Invisible Cities, Concerto for Percussion Quartet and Orchestra(world premiere of orchestra version); Glinka: Ruslan and Lyudmila Overture; Rimsky-Korsakov: Scheherazade. TorQ Percussion Quartet; Bradley Thachuk, conductor. Partridge Hall, FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, 250 St. Paul St., **St. Catharines**. www.niagarasymphony.com or 905-688-0722 or 905-688-5601 x3700 or 1-855-515-0722. $68; $60(sr); $39(arts worker); $15(st & youth).
• **8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra**. *Mendelssohn's "Reformation"*. Eric Abramovitz, clarinet; Miles Jacques, basset horn; Maxim Emelyanchev, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375 or 1-855-593-7769. Starting at $29. Also Jan 20, 22.

Thursday January 20

• **7:00: Magisterra at the Museum/Museum London**. *Holocaust: Composers in Exile*. Eisler: "Reisesonate"; Veprik: Suite; Schoenberg: Phantasy; Kahn: Piano Trio. Catalina Teican, piano. Museum London, 421 Ridout St. N., **London**. www.eventbrite.ca. $35; $30(sr); $15(st with id); $95(young adult pass-30 and under); from $15(streamed tickets). All tickets must be purchased in advance.
• **8:00: Royal Conservatory of Music**. *21C Music Festival Series: Kronos Quartet with students from The Glenn Gould School: Fifty Forward*. Mazzoleni Concert Hall, Royal Conservatory, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208 or www.rcmusic.com/performance. $21.
• **8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra**. *Mendelssohn's "Reformation"*. Eric Abramovitz, clarinet; Miles Jacques, basset horn; Maxim Emelyanchev, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375 or 1-855-593-7769. Starting at $29. Also Jan 22.

Friday January 21

• **8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society**. *Chamber Music Concert*. R. Strauss: Violin Sonata in E-flat Op.18. Lucy Zhang, violin; TBA, piano. First United Church, 16 William St. W., **Waterloo**. 519-569-1809 or www.ticketscene.ca/kwcms. $35; $20(st).
• **8:00: Royal Conservatory of Music**. *21C Music Festival Series: Kronos Quartet - Music for Change*. Reich: "Pendulum Music"(Canadian premiere); Traditional: Star-Spangled Banner (inspired by Jimi Hendrix, arr. Stephen Prutsman & Kronos), Raghupati Raghava Raja Ram (arr. Kronos Quartet) (Canadian premiere); Becker: No More (Canadian premiere); Haskell: God Shall Wipe All Tears Away (arr. Jacob Garchik)(Ontario premiere). Koerner Hall, TELUS Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208 or www.rcmusic.com/performance. $21-$105.
• **8:00: Burlington Performing Arts Centre**.

Canadian Jazz All-Stars. Guido Basso, Heather Bambrick, Mike Murley, Robi Botos, Dave Young, and Davide DiRenzo. Burlington Performing Arts Centre, Main Theatre, 440 Locust St., **Burlington**. 905-681-6000. $59.50; $49.50(member).

● **8:00: Sinfonia Toronto**. *Mozart & Janáček: Nostalgia*. Mozart: Piano Concerto No.22; Jocelyn Morlock: Nostalgia; Bologne: String Quartet in D Op.1 No.6; Janáček: Kreutzer Sonata. Artun Miskciyan, piano; Nurhan Arman, conductor. Jane Mallett Theatre, St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 27 Front St. E. In person 416-366-7723; virtual 416-499-0403 or www.sinfoniatoronto.com. In-person: $55.97; $48.06(sr); $20.96(st); Livestream: $15. LIVE & ONLINE.

Saturday January 22

● **5:00: Royal Conservatory of Music**. *21C Music Festival Series: 21C Cinq à Sept: Eve Egoyan*. Egoyan: Seven Studies for Augmented Piano (world premiere). Temerty Theatre, Telus Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208 or www.rcmusic.com/performance. $21-$50.

● **7:30: Guitar Society of Toronto**. *In Concert: Daniela Rossi*. St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 73 Simcoe St. www.guitarsocietyoftoronto.com or 416-964-8298. Advance: $35; $30(sr); $15(st); Door: $40; $35(sr); $20(st).

● **8:00: Royal Conservatory of Music**. *21C Music Festival & Chamber Music Series: Danish String Quartet*. Sørenson: Quartet "Doppelgänger" (inspired by Schubert D887) (Ontario premiere); An alleged suite, a curated suite of dances; Schubert: String Quartet No.15 in G D887. Koerner Hall, TELUS Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208 or www.rcmusic.com/performance. $21-$90.

● **8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra**. *Mendelssohn's "Reformation"*. Eric Abramovitz, clarinet; Miles Jacques, basset horn; Maxim Emelyanchev, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375 or 1-855-593-7769. Starting at $29. Also Jan 19, 20.

Sunday January 23

● **2:30: VOICEBOX: Opera in Concert**. *Vanessa*. Music by Samuel Barber. Libretto by Gian Carlo Menotti. Simona Genga, mezzo; Lauren Margison, soprano; Scott Rumble, tenor; Robert Cooper, chorus director; Narmina Afandiyeva, music director/piano. Jane Mallett Theatre, St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 27 Front St. E. stlc.com and 416-366-7723 or 1-800-708-6754.

● **3:00: Royal Conservatory of Music**. *21C Music Festival & Power Corporation of Canada Vocal Concerts: Gerald Finley with Julius Drake*. Schubert: Songs; Wolf: Songs from the Mörike Lieder; Turnage: Without Ceremony (North American premiere); Shakespeare in Love. Koerner Hall, TELUS Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208 or www.rcmusic.com/performance. $21-$90.

● **7:00: Burlington Performing Arts Centre**. *Piaf! The Show*. Anne Carrere, vocalist. Burlington Performing Arts Centre, Main Theatre, 440 Locust St., **Burlington**. 905-681-6000. $59.50; $49.50(member).

Tuesday January 25

● **12:10: Yorkminster Park Baptist Church**. *Lunchtime Chamber Music: Angus Sinclair - Ragtime!* 1585 Yonge St. 416-922-1167. Free admission. Donations welcome.

● **8:00: Music Toronto**. *Vanessa Benelli Mosell, Piano*. Beethoven: Piano Sonata No.16 in G Op.31 No.1; Medtner: Fairy Tales Op.20 No.1; Medtner: Forgotten Melodies Op.38 No.6 "Canzona Serenata"; Liszt: Réminiscences de Norma; Bellini (arr. Thalberg): Casta diva from Norma; Rossini (arr. Ginzburg): Largo al factotum from Il barbiere di Siviglia. St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 27 Front St. E. 416-366-7723 or www.music-toronto.com. $47.50-$52.

Wednesday January 26

● **10:00am: Royal Conservatory of Music**. *Discovery Series: Glenn Gould School Concerto Competition Finals*. Koerner Hall, TELUS Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208 or www.rcmusic.com/performance. Free.

● **12:30: ORGANIX Concerts**. *Alexander Straus-Fausto*. Our Lady Of Sorrows Catholic Church, 3055 Bloor St. W. 416-571-3680 or www.organixconcerts.ca. Suggested freewill offering of $20.

Thursday January 27

● **8:00: Royal Conservatory of Music**. *World Music Series: Mariza*. Koerner Hall, TELUS Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208 or www.rcmusic.com/performance. $50-$110.

Friday January 28

● **7:30: Toronto Symphony Orchestra**. *Gimeno Conducts Beethoven*. Jeffrey Beecher, double bass; Gustavo Gimeno, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375 or 1-855-593-7769. Starting at $29. Also Jan 29-8pm, 30-3pm George Weston Recital Hall. Also available as a live stream Jan 28(8pm). www.TSO-CA/Livestreams.

● **8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society**. *Ensemble Made in Canada*. Beethoven: Piano Quartet No.1 in E-flat WoO 36; Stewart Goodyear: Piano Quartet No.1; Saint-Saëns: Piano Quartet No.2 in B-flat Op. 41. First United Church (Waterloo), 16 William St. W., **Waterloo**. 519-569-1809 or www.ticketscene.ca/kwcms. $40; $25(st).

● **8:00: RBI/JAZZ-FM**. *An Evening with Pat Metheny*. Side-Eye with James Francies & Joe Dyson. Meridian Hall, 1 Front St. E. www.meridianhall.com or 416-366-7723 or 1-800-708-6754 or boxoffice@tolive.com. $72.50-$99.50.

Still Available Online

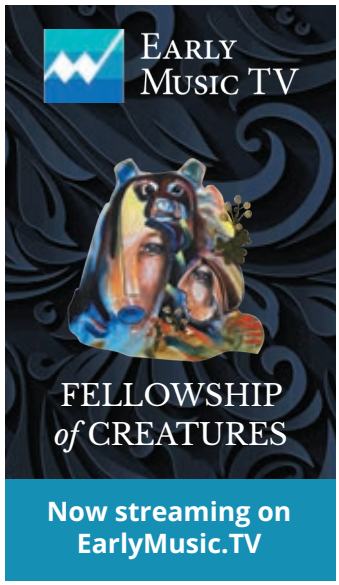
● **Arts@Home.** A vibrant hub connecting Torontonians to arts and culture. Designed to strengthen personal and societal resilience through the arts. www.artsathome.ca.

● **Canadian Opera Company**. *Gianni Schicchi*. www.coc.ca/watch. Available until Apr 30, 2022. ONLINE

● **Canadian Opera Company**. *In Concert: Russell Braun and Tamara Wilson with the COC Orchestra*. www.coc.ca/watch. Available until March 31, 2022. ONLINE

● **Capella Regalis Men & Boys Choir.** *Choral Concerts.* Available at http://www.youtube.com/capellaregalis.

● **Church of the Holy Trinity.** *The Christmas Story: A Pandemic Pageant*. Susan Watson and Eric Miller, co-directors. www.thechristmasstory.ca. Tickets by donation ($10 suggested). A link to the screening will be sent via email. Available until Jan 6, 2022. ONLINE



BLOGS, PODCASTS, STREAMING

● **Etobicoke Community Concert Band.** Full rehearsals every Wednesday night at 7:30pm. 309 Horner Ave. Open to all who are looking for a great band to join. Text Rob Hunter at 416-878-1730.

● **Kevin Barrett.** *Live from Lockdown.* Kevin Barrett does a live-streamed set of solo guitar tunes, coming directly from his Lockdown studio. Tune in to Kevin's Facebook page on Friday at 4pm at http://www.facebook.com/kevin.barrett.165470.

ONLINE GROUPS

● **Recollectiv:** A unique musical online meeting 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. Participation is free with pre-registration. Email info@recollectiv.ca for meeting times, information and registration.

Continued from page 23

YOUTUBE

Canadian guitarist, Lucian Gray and his custom Americana playing Time After Time with the Virginia MacDonald Quintet at the Emmet Ray in Toronto.

Lucian Gray

Later in the month, on December 18, The Emmet is host to guitarist Lucian Gray. Though still young, Gray has already assembled an impressive resume of professional achievements. A graduate of Berklee College of Music, where he studied with Mick Goodrick, Gray was a finalist in the 2015 Wes Montgomery International Jazz Guitar Competition and a semi-finalist in the 2019 Herbie Hancock Institute of Jazz International Guitar Competition. If the Wes Montgomery competition wasn't enough of a clue, it is readily apparent that Gray's playing is firmly rooted in a particular jazz guitar tradition. Favouring big-box Benedetto instruments and minimal effects, Gray has a strong command of bebop vocabulary, a full, robust tone and enough technique to make his way confidently through a wide variety of musical situations. All this being said, it is his sense of time that really sets him apart. Coupled with a patient sense of phrasing that he employs as frequently during flurries of 16th notes as he does in ballads, Gray's propulsive, confident rhythmic engagement with his instrument is well worth the price of admission.

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

In the Clubs (Mostly Jazz)

Burdock

1184 Bloor St. W. 416-546-4033
burdockto.com

Cameron House

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

Castro's Lounge

2116 Queen St. E. 416-699-8272
castroslounge.com
Dec 9 6pm *Mike Daley & Will Reid*. **Dec 10** 5:30pm *Little Magic Sam*. **Dec 11** 6pm *Thelonious Hank*. **Dec 12** 3pm *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, 8pm *Castro's Christmas Party*. **Dec 24** 5:30pm *Little Magic Sam*. **Jan 7** 5:30pm *Little Magic Sam*. **Jan 8** 6pm *Thelonious Hank*. **Jan 9** 3pm *The Delfis*. **Jan 14** 5:30pm *Fraser & Daley*. **Jan 15** 6pm *Thelonious Hank*. **Jan 21** 5:30pm *Little Magic Sam*. **Jan 22** 6pm *Thelonious Hank*. **Jan 23** 3pm *Lucas Stagg*. **Jan 28** 5:30pm *Fraser & Daley*. **Jan 29** 6pm *Thelonious Hank*. **Jan 30** 3pm *Tim Bradford*.

C'est What

67 Front St. E. 416-867-9499
cestwhat.com

Emmet Ray, The

924 College St. 416-792-4497
theemmetray.com
All shows at 8:00 PM, unless otherwise noted.
Dec 5 *Surefire Sweat Trio*. **Dec 6** *Chris Parnis Group*. **Dec 7** *The Andy Sharp Folk Series feat. Tasha White*. **Dec 8** *Jenna Marie Jazz*. **Dec 9** *Phill Tessis Series feat. The Pawn Shop*. **Dec 10** *Fuat Tuac*. **Dec 11** 4:30pm *Andrew Scott*, 8pm *Parade*. **Dec 12** 4:30pm *Diane Roblin Lady Finger*, 8pm *Tiago Cardoso & Sean McCarthy Duo*. **Dec 13** *Paul Callander Group*. **Dec 14** *Andy Sharp Series*. **Dec 15** *Where's Shane w/ Benjamin Weigensberg*. **Dec 16** *Phil Tessis Series feat. The Pawn*. **Dec 18** *Lucian Gray Group*. **Dec 19** 4:30pm *Opera Revue*, 8pm *The Ming & Mara Show*. **Dec 20** *Andy Sharp Series*. **Dec 22** *Seu & Sam Mora*. **Dec 23** *Phil Tessis Series feat. The Pawn*.

Grossman's Tavern

379 Spadina Ave. 416-977-7000
grossmanstavern.com
Dec 3 8pm *Fred Spek's Camp Combo*. **Dec 4** 8:30pm *Junction*. **Dec 10** 6pm *Kensington Holiday Bash*. **Dec 16** 7:30pm *The Action Sound Xmas Party, The Moving Violations*. **Dec 18** 8:30pm *Caution Jam Xmas Party*.

Hirut Cafe and Restaurant

2050 Danforth Ave. 416-551-7560
hirut.ca

Home Smith Bar – See Old Mill, The

Hugh's Room

2261 Dundas St. W 416-533-5483
hughsroom.com

Jazz Bistro, The

251 Victoria St. 416-363-5299
jazzbistro.ca
Dec 1 9pm *Tanya Wills Quartet*. **Dec 2** 9pm *Jozsef Botos Trio*. **Dec 3** 8pm *Colin Hunter & The Joe Sealy Quartet*. **Dec 4** 8pm *Colin Hunter & The Joe Sealy Quartet*. **Dec 8** 6pm *John Russon Presents: Jazz Bistro's Club 350 Jazz Jam*. **Dec 15** 6pm *John Russon Presents: Jazz Bistro's Club 350 Jazz Jam*.

Jazz Room, The

Located in the Huether Hotel, 59 King St. N., Waterloo. 226-476-1565
kwjazzroom.com
All shows at 8:00 PM unless otherwise noted.
Dec 3 8pm *Bernie Senensky Quintet*. **Dec 4** *Rebecca Hennessy's Makeshift Island*. **Dec 10** *Mary-Catherine Pazzano*. **Dec 11** *Pat LaBarbera Quartet*. **Dec 17** *Tom Nagy's Christmas Experience*. **Dec 18** *Jason White Christmas Special*. **Dec 29** 8pm *Indigenous Artist Showcase – 5 Artists, 5 Cities*. **Dec 31** 8pm *New Year's Eve with Gigi Marentette, KC Roberts, and Adam Bowman*.

Lula Lounge

1585 Dundas St. W. 416-588-0307
lula.ca
Check website for exact times; typically, doors open at 7pm, salsa dance lessons at 8:30pm, music begins at 9pm.
Dec 3 *Cuban Salsa Fridays: Charangon Del Norte*. **Dec 4** *Salsa Saturdays: Sean Bellaviti & Conjunto Lacalu w/ DJ Trambo*. **Dec 10** *Salseros with Attitutde w/ Sebastian Natal and DJ Suave*. **Dec 11** *Salsa Saturdays: Ricardo Barboza & DJ Trambo*. **Dec 17** *Salsa Saturdays: Yani Borrell w/ DJ Suave*. **Dec 18** *Salsa Saturdays: Son D'Aqui w/ DJ Trambo*.

Manhattans Pizza Bistro & Music Club

951 Gordon St., Guelph 519-767-2440
manhattans.ca
Dec 2 6:30pm *Joe Lucchetta*. **Dec 4** 7pm *Emily Kemp + Rob Christian*. **Dec 9** 6:30pm *Joe Lucchetta*. **Dec 10** 7pm *Belays Jazz Trio*. **Dec 11** 7pm *D'eve Archer*. **Dec 16** 6:30pm *Emily Kemp + Rob Christian*. **Dec 17** 7pm *Steven Taetz Trio*. **Dec 18** 7pm *Belays Jazz Trio*.

Mezzetta Restaurant

681 St. Clair Ave. W. 416-658-5687
mezzettarestaurant.com

Monarch Tavern

12 Clinton St. 416-531-5833
themonarchtavern.com

Nice Bistro, The

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

Old Mill, The

21 Old Mill Rd. 416-236-2641
oldmilltoronto.com
The Home Smith Bar:

Pilot Tavern, The

22 Cumberland Ave. 416-923-5716
thepilot.ca

Poetry Jazz Café

224 Augusta Ave. 416-599-5299
poetryjazzcafe.com

Reposado Bar & Lounge

136 Ossington Ave. 416-532-6474
reposadobar.com

Reservoir Lounge, The

52 Wellington St. E. 416-955-0887
reservoirlounge.com

Rex Hotel Jazz & Blues Bar, The

194 Queen St. W. 416-598-2475
therex.ca
Dec 1 5:30pm *Trevor Giancola Quartet*, 8:30pm *Mike Downes Quartet*. **Dec 2** 5:30pm *Kevin Quain*, 8:30pm *Mike Downes Quartet*. **Dec 3** 5:30pm *Xmas w/ Kayla & Hannah*, 8:30pm *Mike Downes Quartet*. **Dec 4** 5:30pm *Neon Eagle*, 8:30pm *Mike Downes Quartet*. **Dec 5** 5:30pm *Keith Barstow Group*, 8:30pm *Harley Card Group*. **Dec 6** 5:30pm *U of T Student Jazz Ensembles*, 8:30pm *Harley Card Group*. **Dec 7** 5:30pm *Paul Reddick Blues*, 8:30pm *Alan Heatherington – From Rio with Love*. **Dec 8** 5:30pm *Trevor Giancola Quartet*, 8:30pm *Ernesto Cervini & Turboprop*. **Dec 9** 5:30pm *Kevin Quain*, 8:30pm *Ernesto Cervini & Turboprop*. **Dec 10** 5:30pm *Emily Schultz*, 8:30pm *Ernesto Cervini & Turboprop*. **Dec 11** 5:30pm *Neon Eagle*, 8:30pm *Ernesto Cervini & Turboprop*. **Dec 12** 5:30pm *Ketih Barstow Group*, 8:30pm *Ted Warren Group*. **Dec 13** 5:30pm *Peter Hill Group*, 8:30pm *Ted Warren Group*. **Dec 14** 5:30pm *Paul Reddick Blues*, 8:30pm *Chris Gale Hosts the Classic Rex Jazz Jam*. **Dec 15** 5:30pm *Trevor Giancola Quartet*, 8:30pm *Alison Young Quartet*.

In the Clubs (Mostly Jazz)

Dec 16 5:30pm *Fabio Ragnelli Group*, 8:30pm *Alison Young Quartet*. **Dec 17** 5:30pm *Xmas w/ Kayla and Hannah*, 8:30pm *Alison Young Quartet*. **Dec 18** 5:30pm *Justin Bacchus Collective*, 8:30pm *Alison Young Quartet*. **Dec 19** 5:30pm *Keith Barstow Group*, 8:30pm *Donnybrook Organ Trio*. **Dec 20** 5:30pm *Peter Hill Group*, 8:30pm *Donnybrook Organ Trio*. **Dec 21** 5:30pm *Paul Reddick Blues*, 8:30pm *Chris Gale Hosts the Classic Rex Jazz Jam*. **Dec 22** 5:30pm *Trevor Giancola Quartet*, 8:30pm *Trevor Hogg w/ Lucas Dann*. **Dec 23-25** *Closed*. **Dec 26** 5:30pm *Keith Barstow Group*, 8:30pm *JabFung*. **Dec 27** 5:30pm *Peter Hill Group*, 8:30pm *JabFung*. **Dec 28** 5:30pm *Paul Reddick Blues*, 8:30pm *Chris Gale Hosts the Classic Rex Jazz Jam*. **Dec 29** 5:30pm *Trevor Giancola Quartet*, 8:30pm *Mike Deicont's Northern Danger*. **Dec 30** 5:30pm *Fabio Ragnelli Group*.

Sauce on Danforth

1376 Danforth Ave. 647-748-1376
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WHO'S WHO? THE WHOLENOTE ONLINE DIRECTORIES INDEX

Under the tab **WHO'S WHO** at THEWHOLENOTE.COM, you'll find our four directories containing detailed profiles about active participants in four areas of community life. In our ***Blue Pages*** you can read about music makers and presenters; in our ***Canary Pages*** you'll find the riches of choral activity all across southern Ontario. You can also find information about summer music performance in our ***Green Pages***, and about seasonal learning opportunities in Summer ***Music Education.***

Traditionally we published a single annual print supplement for each of these: *The Blue Pages* in the fall, *Summer Music Education* in late winter, *The Canary Pages* in May, and *The Green Pages* in early summer.) But these days it's more useful to allow for rolling deadlines for all concerned, so we've moved these directories entirely online. This means that directory participants a) can wait till their plans for the season have taken shape, and b) revise them as frequently as necessary, as restrictions governing venues and live performance continue to adjust, hopefully for the better!

So what follows here is an up-to-the-moment list (as of November 2021) of whom you will currently find in ***The Blue Pages***. Profiles are being added or, as importantly, are being updated on a weekly basis. And while most of the *Green Pages* and *Summer Music Education* participants' activities have ended for this year, we'll keep their 2021 profiles online for your awareness and future planning, until they are updated in the new year.

This index in our print edition serves two distinct purposes.

It tells you who is sufficiently far along in their planning to have joined the directories, and it offers you a handy way to window-shop their websites directly - via the website addresses that accompany every name in the index.

This is particularly easy to do – just with a "click" if you explore these pages while reading *The WholeNote* in our online flipthrough edition, accessible via kiosk.thewholenote.com.

So happy browsing! If you have any questions about the directories, either as a reader or prospective directory member, contact me at karen@thewholenote.com

Karen Ages, directory and member services

BLUE PAGES DIRECTORY OF MUSIC MAKERS 2021-22

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  www.mississaugasymphony.ca
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Editor's Corner

DAVID OLDS

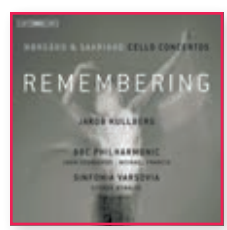
For the past month or so I've been immersing myself in new cello recordings. Some of the repertoire selections are old friends, some new to me and some new to the world. **Benedict Kloeckner: J.S. Bach – 6 Suites for Cello Solo (Brilliant Classics 96403 naxosdirect.com/search/bri96403)** encompasses the old and the new brilliantly, with striking performances of the suites interspersed with miniatures he has commissioned that "can be seen as a response to the challenges of the present [pandemic] in interaction with the Bach suites." Kloeckner's Bach, idiomatic contemporary interpretations on a modern instrument, ranges from breakneck speed such as in the *Prelude* of the first suite to thoughtful and contemplative pacing in the *Sarabande* of the second; sometimes playful, but always carefully considered, with tasteful ornamentations and occasional surprising rubato passages, such as in the *Bourée* of the third suite. What makes this 3CD set special though is the new works and how they bridge and complement the original suites. The composers represent an international spectrum: José L. Elizondo (Mexico), Elena Kats-Chernin (Australia), Bongani Ndodana-Breen (South Africa), Éric Tanguy (France), Geoffrey Gordon (USA) and Dai Fujikura (Japan).

My first few times through the set I simply let the CDs play and enjoyed the commissions as interludes, kind of palette cleansers, before rushing into the next Bach suite. Sometime later however, I listened to the six miniatures in isolation and was pleasantly surprised to find that they made a satisfying suite themselves. Elizondo's *Under the Starlit Sky of the Rhine* specifically references the sixth suite, albeit in passing, and pays tribute to the landscape of Kloeckner's home region, the Upper Middle Rhine Valley. In *I Am Cello*, Kats-Chernin compares the slow opening to the blossoming of a flower and describes the lyrical miniature as "almost a song." Ndodana-Breen, who had an active role in Toronto's contemporary music scene in the early 2000s, says that *Soweto Cello Riffs* combines elements of Afropop and South African jazz, although not overtly. Tanguy's *In Between* "addresses how emotions during the pandemic have vacillated constantly between uncertainty and hope." In Gordon's *Nes qu'on porroit*, from Machaud's song "It is no more possible to count the stars [...] than it is to imagine or conceive of the great desire I have to see you." The composer says he was thinking of past pandemics – Black Death, Italian Plague, Spanish Flu – in relation to COVID-19. Although most of these new works make little direct use of Bach's material, coming full circle Fujikura's *Sweet Suites* opens with echoes of the prelude of the sixth Bach suite, but in a minor key, and after brief hints at other movements, dissolves into a quiet and lyrical coda which rises and fades away into the ether. Kloeckner and his colleagues have provided a beautiful new take on Bach's masterpieces.

Young South Korean-American cellist **Jonah Kim** begins **Approaching Autumn (Delos delosmusic.com/recording/approaching-autumn)** with what I feel is the most important solo cello work of the first half of the 20th century and perhaps the most significant contribution to the genre since Bach, Zoltan Kodály's *Sonata for Solo Cello Op.8* from 1915. In his very personal introduction to the disc, Kim tells us that he considers Janos Starker one of his biggest musical influences. He started corresponding with Starker when he was seven years old after hearing Starker's Delos recording of the Kodály sonata and later was able to study with him. Starker had impeccable Kodály credentials having first played the solo sonata for the composer when his was 15 in his (and Kodály's) homeland, Hungary, and then again in 1967 shortly before Kodály's death. After that performance Kodály told Starker: "If you correct the ritard in the third movement, it will be the Bible performance." Starker recorded the work four times, the last in 1970 and it is this one that later appeared on the Delos release. So may we assume the correction was made? At any rate, Kim's own performance is outstanding – big, brash and gritty as called for in the outer movements; sensitive and lyrical in the *Adagio (con gran espressione)* – and his technique in this extremely challenging work is impressive. Kim is joined by pianist **Robert Koenig** for the remainder of the disc; the one-movement post-Romantic title work by American Mark Abel (b.1948) providing a kind of a bridge to Grieg's *Sonata for Cello and Piano Op.36* which concludes this excellent disc.

Bach was not the first to write for solo cello and **Hannah Collins' Resonance Lines (Sono Luminus DSL-92252 sonoluminus.com)** opens with a *Chiacona* by Giuseppe Colombi (1635-1694) which predates the Bach suites by half a century. This sets the stage for a recital of mostly contemporary works: two by Kaija Saariaho, the brief *Dreaming Chaconne* and *Sept Papillons*; *in manus tuas* by Caroline Shaw, which draws on the Thomas Tallis motet of the same name; and Benjamin Britten's *Sonata for Solo Cello No.1, Op.72*. The last track travels across two and a half centuries: Thomas Kotcheff's *Cadenza (with or without Haydn)*, a 25-minute work written in 2020 meant to serve (or not) as a cadenza for Haydn's *Cello Concerto in C Major* from 1761.

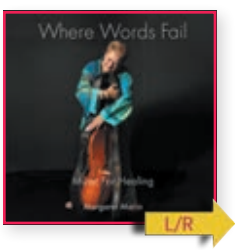
Listening to this piece led to the realization of how a cadenza – traditionally a composed or improvised interlude in a concerto giving the soloist an opportunity show off – differs from a stand-alone work that needs to provide its own context and development. Collins tells us that "Kotcheff's work contains musical nods to the other works on the album and ties everything together in an energetic and surprise-filled adventure." It certainly does that. When listening to the disc before reading the program notes, one of those surprises was hearing Britten's solo sonata, which I consider another milestone in the solo cello repertoire, quoted in a work "about" Haydn. The notes also give this a context however. It seems that Britten wrote a cadenza for Rostropovich for the same Haydn concerto and the result can be heard in a 1964 recording with Britten conducting "Slava" and the English Chamber Orchestra (it's well worth searching out on YouTube). Collins rises to all the various challenges of the diverse repertoire on this collection, especially those of the "cadenza" which requires everything from virtuosic bombast to the most subtle intimacy.



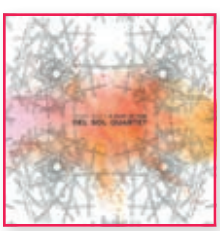
It is fitting that Collins' disc ends with a contemporary cadenza inspired by one of the first great cello concertos because that leads us to **Remembering – Nørgård & Saariaho Cello Concertos (BIS-2602 bis.se)** featuring **Jakob Kullberg**. Kullberg (b.1979, Denmark) has worked extensively with both these composers and all of Per Nørgård's cello writing in past 20 years has been dedicated to him. The two works by that Danish master recorded here, however, were written more than three decades ago when Kullberg was just a child. *Between* (1985) is a three-movement work in which the cellist begins in isolation, "unable to unite with the orchestral sound," but is gradually able to integrate with the larger group with the help of four solo cellos from the orchestra. At one point the din from the larger group even includes the sound of car horns reminiscent of the prelude to Ligeti's *Grand Macabre*. The second movement sees a gradual integration of the cello into the slow-moving textures of the orchestra. In the extended third movement, the cello takes a more traditional role but with a twist: the solo line is based on notes

from the Javanese pentatonic scale *slendro*, giving it an exotic edge. *Remembering Child* was composed as a viola concerto in 1986 but is presented here in Kullberg's adaptation for cello, including a new cadenza of his own design. The work honours Samantha Smith, an American schoolgirl, peace activist and child actress famous during the Cold War, who was killed in a plane crash at 13 in 1985, although Nørgård says the piece isn't intended as a requiem.

The two works by Nørgård provide bookends for Finnish composer Kaija Saariaho's *Notes on Light* written two decades later (2006). The first movement, *Translucent, secret*, takes place as if under water, picking up where her previous work for cello and orchestra *Amers* left off. After a "heated debate" between cello and orchestra in the second movement, *On Fire*, the gentler *Awakening*, which draws on material from Saariaho's oratorio *La Passion de Simone*, includes a quiet two-minute-long cadenza in the higher reaches of the cello composed by Kullberg. It's becoming obvious why these composers are happy to work with this creative soloist. As Aleksi Barrière's detailed program note points out, at this point we might think that the concerto is over, as an inversion of the tradition three-movement form, here slow-fast-slow, has been completed. But there are two more movements to come. Kullberg gets a rest though in the shimmering fourth movement *Eclipse*, and then re-enters quietly for the final, *Heart of Light*, which glimmers and gradually builds, only to subside into quietude again. That's actually how all three of these concertos end, "not with a bang, but a whimper." There are more than enough bangs along the way however to hold our attention and make for a satisfying disc.



Sometimes I wonder if it is possible to write for solo cello without referencing the iconic Bach *Suites*. Certainly **Margaret Maria**, in her most recent release **Where Words Fail – Music for Healing (margaretmariamusic.com)** does so in the opening track with arpeggiation reminiscent of the first *Prelude*, but it feels natural and is only one of its many dense layers. As with previous releases, Maria's music is lush and melodic, using many overlaid solo cello lines to create an orchestral atmosphere that is warm and welcoming. The current offering is the result of personal trauma, a response to almost losing her sister, who was on a ventilator and in a medically induced coma for more than two weeks as a result of COVID-19. The resulting compositions bear such names as *Blessing of Awakening* (written in advance of, and in hope for, her sister's return to consciousness), *Raindrops from Heaven* (with an ostinato reminiscent of Pachelbel's *Canon*) and *From the Brink* (with a fluttering bed track and eerie harmonics ultimately resolving into peaceful pizzicato under a gentle rising motif that resembles a hymn of praise). The disc (actually a digital release) concludes with the gentle *Turning Broken into Beautiful*, a meditative wash of soothing colours over Pachelbel-like pizzicato bass, providing a joyful resolution to this healing journey. Maria provides real comfort for these terrible times.



The next work, which I would also consider healing music, is a string quartet that starts with an extended, somewhat melancholy duet between cello and viola. Chinese-born US-based composer **Huang Ruo** composed **A Dust in Time (Bright Shiny Things bright-shiny.ninja)** as a response to the worldwide COVID pandemic. It is a meditative and cathartic work written in collaboration with the **Del Sol Quartet** who first performed it using the labyrinth of Grace Cathedral in San Francisco as its stage, livestreaming the premiere from the empty church. In the booklet notes – the booklet is actually a colouring book featuring stylized mandalas created especially for this project by high school student Felicia Lee – we learn that the first performance was preceded by an open-air rehearsal for a few friends in the park across the street from the cathedral. "Soon we were joined by passersby who paused with their dogs and strollers to listen as Huang Ruo's hour-long palindromic passacaglia grew from silence to euphoria and then faded back into the wind, sirens and jackhammers of the city." Listening to this recording in the relative quiet of my home I have to imagine the Cage-ian ambience of that experience, but the arc of the music is immersive and compelling, and indeed cathartic. The Del Sol Quartet are tireless champions of contemporary music and in the last three decades have commissioned or premiered literally thousands of works from such composers as Terry Riley, Chen Yi, Mason Bates, Pamela Z and Gabriela Lena Frank to name just a few. You can find excerpts on YouTube of another project Huang Ruo has been working on through the pandemic – a production of *M. Butterfly* in collaboration with playwright Henry David Hwang for the Santa Fe Opera.

Many readers will be aware of my affection for Schubert's *Winterreise* in its many and varied interpretations, including Hans Zender's contemporary chamber orchestra setting, replete with bells and whistles, and Philippe Sly and the Chimera Project's reworking with klezmer ensemble. All of the versions I have encountered maintain the melody line more or less intact, and feature a voice of one range or another. When I encountered Richard Krug's transcription for string quartet and baritone, however, I found myself imagining a rendition in which the soloist would be a cellist. I haven't found a cello version yet, but this month I did encounter another purely instrumental adaptation. Pianist **Hilary Demske**, creator of **Journey for One: A Winterreise Fantasy for Solo Piano (Navona Records navonarecords.com/catalog/nv6370)** is quick to point out that it was not her intention to "arrange or improve the original work but to offer a different lens and add my individual perspective [...] to an intimate glimpse into grief, the simple story of a young man rejected by love [that] conveys the universal experience of searching for peace." She goes on to say "Foremost in my mind was the text and meaning of Müller's poetry. I built many pieces around individual lines that resonated with me and reflected the overall poem, leading to increasingly dramatic compositions and unusual techniques." The booklet includes the German titles and English translations of Müller's poems (something that even some vocal versions neglect to do) and lists the piano preparations and other instruments employed on each track. These include such extraneous materials as timpani mallets placed on the piano strings, castanets, aluminum foil, drumsticks wedged between piano strings, xylophone mallet on wood block and rubber floor mat on strings, among others.

Devotees of traditional lieder and fans of Schubert may not get much out of this quite extreme interpretation of *Winterreise*, but I found it quite satisfying. Rather than a transcription *per se*, it's an exploration of the poems themselves in Demske's personal voice, during which Schubert's melodies and rhythms occasionally shine through, glistening like familiar gems. A particular highlight was the antepenultimate movement *Mut (Courage)* which in Demske's percussive performance (drumsticks on woodblocks and strings) I found reminiscent of the *Baby Shark* song that my young neighbours Henry (five) and James (two) take endless delight in exuberantly declaiming.

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

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STRINGS ATTACHED

TERRY ROBBINS

On **Préludes et solitudes** the Quebec violinist **Marie Nadeau-Tremblay** provides one of the best CDs of Baroque solo violin works that I've encountered **(ATMA Classique ACD2 2823 atmaclassique.com/en)**.

There's a lightness of touch in the idiomatic playing, with a rhythmic freedom which adds character to the music and which, far from weakening the sense of line or structure actually enhances it. It's perfectly illustrated in the Telemann *Fantasies Nos.7 in E-flat Major* and *9 in B Minor* but is never absent in short works by Pedro Lopes Nogueira, J.H. Roman, Nicola Matteis Jr., Torelli, Thomas Baltzar and Purcell, and a terrific performance of the *Passacaglia in G Minor* from Biber's *Mystery Rosary Sonatas.*

Nadeau-Tremblay adds her own brief *Prélude improvisé* to complete an outstanding disc.

On **12 Stradivari**, violinist **Janine Jansen** – who herself plays the 1715 Shumsky-Rode Stradivari – experiences a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, a ground-breaking project devised by Steven Smith of J & A Beare that brought together in London 12 of the best violins of Antonio Stradivari, some not played for many years, others having belonged to the likes of Fritz Kreisler, Nathan Milstein and Ida Haendel. This resulting album, with pianist **Antonio Pappano**, music director of the Royal Opera House, captures the individual characters of each instrument **(Decca 4851605 deccaclassics.com/en)**.

Unfortunately, there's no information identifying the individual violins. Still, no matter; Jansen's inspired and ravishing playing of well-known short pieces by Falla, Suk, Clara and Robert Schumann, Vieuxtemps, Tchaikovsky, Szymanowski, Ravel, Elgar, Rachmaninoff, Kreisler, Heuberger and Jerome Kern takes your breath away.

The entire project has been captured in the documentary film *Janine Jansen: Falling for Stradivari.*

There have been three recent CDs of the Beethoven Violin Sonatas, two of which complete a three-CD set of the entire canon:

Beethoven Violin Sonatas Nos. 4, 9 & 10 with **Andrew Wan** and **Charles Richard-Hamelin** is the third issue in their **Analekta** series **(AN 2 8796 analekta.com/en)**.

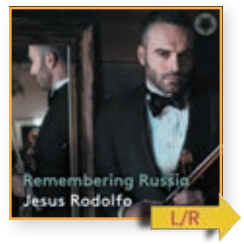
Wan's warm, smooth and expressive playing is well-matched by Richard-Hamelin in lovely performances of the *Sonatas No.4 in A Minor Op.23, No.9 in A Major Op.47 "Kreutzer"* and *No.10 in G Major Op.96*. There's excellent balance in a crystal-clear recording that completes a highly satisfying set.

The last two sonatas are also featured on **Beethoven: The Violin Sonatas Nos. 8-10**, with which **Frank Peter Zimmermann** and **Martin Helmchen** complete their series for **BIS (BIS-2537 bis.se)**.

A lively and dazzling reading of the *Sonata No.8 in G Major Op.30 No.3* opens the disc, with the *Op.47 "Kreutzer"* and the *G Major Op.96* receiving equally animated and high-octane performances, although sensitivity and nuance are never lacking when needed.

The *Sonata No.8 in G Major*, along with *Sonatas No.6 in A Major and No.7 in C Minor*, is also featured on a CD of the three **Beethoven Sonatas Op.30**, the latest release by **Christian Tetzlaff** and **Lars Vogt** on the **Ondine** label **(ODE-1392-2 ondine.net)**.

The publicity blurb says that these relatively early but completely original sonatas belong to the artists' favourite works by Beethoven, and it shows in every bar of beautifully judged and nuanced performances, with the *Adagio* middle movement of the *A Major Sonata* in particular drawing breathtakingly beautiful playing from Tetzlaff.



On **Remembering Russia** the Spanish violist **Jesús Rodolfo**, accompanied by pianist **Min Young Kang** makes his **Pentatone** label debut in a recital showcasing three 20th-century Russian composers all of whom left their homeland **(PTC 5186 287 naxosdirect.com/search/ptc5186287)**.

Six selections from Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*, arranged by the Russian violist Vadim Borisovsky make a strong opening to the disc. Borisovsky also made the wonderfully effective 1950 transcription of Rachmaninoff's *Cello Sonata in G Minor Op.19*, a work perfectly suited to the viola's tonal quality and range. Rodolfo's own transcription of Stravinsky's *Suite Italienne "Pulcinella"* completes the CD.

Rodolfo is a terrific player with a gorgeous tone. He is fully matched here by Kang, with the Rachmaninoff in particular drawing quite superb playing from both performers.

Heritage, another CD celebrating mid-20th-century Russian composers, sees the French-Russian violinist **Fedor Rudin** accompanied by pianist **Boris Kusnezow** in a recital of works by Prokofiev, Shostakovich and, in particular, his own grandfather Edison Denisov **(Orchid Classics ORC100183 orchidclassics.com)**.

Denisov's rarely heard *Three Concert Pieces Op.15* from 1958 opens a CD which also includes his short 12-tone *Sonata* from 1963 and the unpublished 1972 *Sonatina* that marked a return to more melodic tonality. In between are Prokofiev's *Sonata No.1 in F Minor Op.80*, the incomplete *Moderato con moto* movement rom Shostakovich's unfinished 1945 *Sonata in G Minor* and Rudin's own transcription of Denisov's orchestration of the *Prelude and Duo* from Debussy's unfinished opera *Rodrigue et Chimène.*

Rachmaninoff's arrangement of Mussorgsky's *Hopak* completes a terrific CD.

It's difficult to imagine better interpretations of Schubert's last two string quartets – *No.14 in D Minor "Death and the Maiden" D810* and the quasi-symphonic *No.15 in G Major D887* – than those by the **Aviv Quartet** on **Schubert: The Last Quartets (Aparté AP266 apartemusic.com/?lang=en)**.

The two works were composed during the final years of the composer's life as he struggled to come to terms with his own mortality. I can't do any better than quote the publicity release, which says that the Aviv Quartet "brilliantly illuminates the elegiac and tragic melodies in which Schubert wrapped his torments." That they certainly do, in stunning performances that grab you from the opening bars of No.15 and hold you enthralled until the last note of the great D minor.

The **Alexander String Quartet** marks its 40th anniversary as well as the departure of founding violist Paul Yarbrough with **Brahms: String Quartets**, the final volume in the ensemble's series of the complete string chamber works of Brahms **(Foghorn Classics FCL2022 foghornclassics.com)**.

Yarbrough notes that the ASQ took decades to feel ready to record these quartets, and they certainly get to the heart of the music in powerful performances of strength and depth in the *String Quartets in C Minor Op.51 No.1* and in *A Minor Op.51 No.2*. The *String Quartet No.3 in B-flat Major Op.67* – Brahms' favourite of the three – is bright and playful.

A transcription of Brahms' *Intermezzo in A Major Op.118 No.2* by the ASQ's first violinist Zakarias Grafilo completes a fine disc.

Works by the brother and sister Mendelssohns are given committed performances by the **Takács Quartet** on **Felix and Fanny Mendelssohn String Quartets (HyperionCDA68330 hyperion-records.co.uk/a.asp?a=A1355)**.

Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel`s *String Quartet in E-flat Major* from 1834 was her only work in the genre and may never have been performed in her lifetime, the score and parts not being published by Breitkopf & Härtel until 1988. It`s now favourably compared with quartets by her younger brother, Schubert and Schumann.

The central work on the disc is the *String Quartet in F Minor Op.80* from 1847, written by Felix in the closing months of his life and into which he pours his grief over the death of his sister in May of that year. His *String Quartet in A Minor Op.13* from 1827 completes a lovely disc.

The high standard set by the **Dover Quartet** with its first volume of **Beethoven Complete String Quartets** continues with the 3CD set **Volume 2 The Middle Quartets (Cedille CDR 90000 206 cedillerecords.org)**.

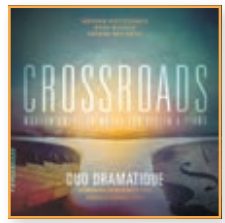
This release covers *String Quartets No.7 in F Major Op.59 No.1, No.8 in E Minor Op.59 No.2, No.9 in C Major Op.59 No.3* (all commonly referred to as the Razumovsky quartets), *No.10 in E-flat Major Op.74 "Harp"* and *No.11 in F Major Op.95 "Serioso."*

My December 2020 review of the previous volume described the performances as being full of conviction and depth, and noted that this promised to be an outstanding set. There's certainly no reason to change those opinions.

Rhythm & the Borrowed Past features violinist **Daniel Kurganov** and pianist **Constantine Finehouse** performing world premiere recordings of works by Lera Auerbach and Richard Beaudoin, along with works by John Cage and Olivier Messiaen **(Orchid Classics ORC100182 orchid-classics.com)**.

Auerbach`s *Sonata No.3 for violin and piano* and Beaudoin`s *In höchster Not (in deepest need)* were both written in 2005, the former a powerful and striking work that makes an immediate impact and the latter described by the composer as being marked by a constant evasion of stabilities, the contrapuntal lines in all three movements not necessarily coinciding.

Cage`s very effective *Nocturne* from 1947 is written in fluid notation, resulting in some performances being twice as long as others. An outstanding performance of Messiaen`s *Thème et variations* from 1932 completes a top-notch CD.



On **Crossroads**, the **Duo Dramatique** – violinist **Dominika Dancewicz** and pianist **Donald Doucet** – presents a recital of modern American works for violin and piano **(Navona Records NV6380 navonarecords.com/catalog/nv6380)**.

Arthur Gottschalk's *Sonata "In D"* (a reference to the performers' names) uses extreme contrasts in music meant to depict sarcasm, humour and quiet serenity, with a virtuosic moto perpetuo *Finality* last movement. Erberk Eryilmaz's terrific *Insistent Music* draws on Eastern European folk music, with percussive patterns and explosive melodic lines.

Both players are quite outstanding in a CD simply bursting with life and energy.

The recent pandemic has provided the impetus for numerous solo recording projects, the latest of which to reach me is **Reger Three Suites for Solo Viola Op.131d** played by violist **Tonya Burton (Tōnsehen TSN-009 tonsehen.com)**.

Reger wrote the suites in 1915. They are short four-movement works (total CD time is only 30 minutes) which look back to Bach, whom Reger idolized, but also forward with early-20th-century traits. Each movement is written in Baroque or Classical form, with Reger's usual chromaticism balanced by lyrical melodies.

Burton calls the suites "enticing, expressive and dramatic, all the while full of humour and charm," qualities amply displayed in her excellent performance.

With the 2CD set **21st Century Spanish Guitar Vol.4** the outstanding guitarist **Adam Levin** completes his 13-year commissioning project that produced more than 30 new works **(Frameworks 793888175143 adamlevinguitar.com)**.

CD1 is the brilliant and striking *Concierto de La Herradura* by the Cuban composer Eduardo Morales-Caso, with the Orquesta de Extremadura conducted by Álvaro Albiach.

CD2 features world-premiere recordings of four solo works: Leonardo Balada's *Caprichos No.14*; the bluegrass-influenced *Portraits from the Heartland* by Jorge Muñiz, written in 2015 for the bicentennial of Indiana and built on the state anthem *On the Banks of the Wabash, Far Away*; José Luis Turina's *Arboretum*; and Salvador Brotons' *Sonata Sefardita Op.143*, a gathering of songs in the Sephardic tradition.

Music written specifically for the guitarist, in this case **David Tanenbaum**, also features on **As She Sings**, a CD showcasing works created for him during the past five decades **(ReEntrant REN01 newfocusrecordings.com)**.

Sérgio Assad's *Shadows and Light* is followed by Ronald Bruce Smith's fascinating *Five Pieces for guitar with live electronics*, in which different playing styles combine with a range of electronic processing.

Music for Guitar is an early piece by Tanenbaum's father Elias Tanenbaum. Tanenbaum is joined by mezzo-soprano Wendy Hillhouse, flute, bass and ceramic gongs for Dušan Bogdanović's *Games*, seven short settings of poetry by the Yugoslavian poet Vasko Popa.

John Anthony Lennon's elegiac title track completes an intriguing and sometimes challenging disc.

VOCAL

La Grazia delle Donne
Miriam Leblanc; Ensemble La Cigale; Madeleine Owen
Analekta AN 2 9159 (analekta.com/en)

► Eight books of compositions? Little, if any support from the Church? Or from a spouse? And a woman? This was Barbara Strozzi, understandably the best known female composer of her time (1619-1677).

It is her compositions that occupy pride of place on this CD. *Lagrime mie* combines the passion of Myriam Leblanc's soprano singing, the anguished lyrics of Pietro Dolfino and the supportive yet inspiring playing of Ensemble la Cigale to form a masterpiece of the Italian Baroque. Masterpiece, too, is the deserved description for Strozzi's other piece on the CD, *Hor che Apollo,* as the same musicians master perhaps even greater achievements with this latter text and score.

It is clear from the very first two tracks, Isabella Leonarda's *Purpurei flores* and *Sonata prima*, that this CD brings together the best in female Baroque vocal writing along with one instrument in particular which is at last allowed to display its versatility – the Baroque recorder. Full credit, indeed, to Leblanc and recorder-player Vincent Lauzer.

The prominence given to the two composers above should not detract from the others' contributions. Prodigiously talented, Vittoria Aleotti mastered the harpsichord at a phenomenally early age. The results are very apparent as Leblanc interprets three of her songs, all very short but all very moving in their musical and lyrical context.

This CD proves the presence of female singers and, above all, female composers in the Renaissance. It challenges preconceptions.

Michael Schwartz

Rossini – L'Equivoco Stravagante
Antonella Colaianni; Patrick Kabongo; Giulio Mastrototaro; Emmanuel Franco; Gorecki Chamber Choir; Virtuosi Brunensis; Jose Miguil Perez-Sierra
Naxos DVD 2.110696 (naxosdirect.com/search/2110696)

► The little town of Bad Wildbad, a spa, is located in the Black Forest in Germany, a very scenic holiday spot with a small, intimate opera house and a relaxed, but keen, enthusiastic audience. This performance was for the Wildbad Rossini Festival's 30th anniversary in 2018. *L'equico Stravagante* (Curious Misunderstanding) is Rossini's first opera, written when he was only 19, his first step toward becoming a master of *bel canto* and an amazing career of wealth and fame and 39 operas.

It is a two-act *dramma giocoso*, a farce format that Rossini got very good at, but it ran into difficulties at the premiere in Bologna because its somewhat risqué libretto offended public taste! It was cancelled after three performances and disappeared into oblivion until its present day revival. Risqué because the heroine was accused of being a *castrato* and a deserter to avoid military service; a curious misunderstanding indeed!

It's a silly story, but offers good theatricals and lots of funny situations. The small stage is practically bare; with ingenious lighting effects and shifting panels as a backdrop but filled with a youthful, energetic cast, headed by the *primadonna* mezzo-soprano Antonella Colianni and *primo tenore* Patrick Kabongo, all superb voices and buoyant, delightful music. Most notable are Rossini's beginning efforts of ensemble writing: duets, trios, quartets, and a beautiful quintet: *Speme soave, ah, scenda.* The first act finale is a real showstopper with the whole cast on stage, all singing up a total mayhem. This feature will appear in many of his later operas and become a Rossini trademark.

We must emphasize the *Overture*, a remarkably mature work conducted by the young, convivial José Miguel Pérez-Sierra with vigour, hugely enjoying himself.

Janos Gardonyi

César Franck – Hulda
Soloists; Opern-und Extrachor des Theater Freiburg; Philharmonisches Orchester Freiburg; Fabrice Bollon
Naxos 8.660480-82 (naxosdirect.com/search/866048-82)

► It shouldn't have taken until 2019 for *Hulda* to receive its first-ever complete performance, recorded here. César Franck finished his *magnum opus* in 1885, but died before its 1894 premiere in an abridged version, as were all its few subsequent productions.

Set in 11th-century Norway, Charles Jean Grandmougin's lurid, blood-spattered libretto was based on an 1854 play by Norwegian Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, 1903 Nobel Prize-winner. Hulda (soprano Meagan Miller) vows revenge on her family's murderers, Aslak (bass Jin Seok Lee) and his sons. Forced to marry Aslak's son Gudleik (baritone Juan Orozco), at the wedding feast she entices the king's emissary, Eiolf (tenor Joshua Kohl), who fights and kills Gudleik. Hulda and Eiolf declare their love but when Eiolf betrays her with his former lover Swanhilde (soprano Irina Jae Eun Park), Hulda conspires with Aslak's remaining sons to kill him, and Eiolf's warriors to attack them in return. Her vengeance complete, she commits suicide.

Franck's surging, vehement score, influenced by his much-admired Wagner, features the use of leitmotifs, fervent arias, ecstatic *Tristan*-like love duets and many opulent choruses and dances, the orchestra often in the foreground. Conductor Fabrice Ballon drives the 15 soloists, chorus and orchestra with unremitting urgency, maintaining momentum throughout the opera's 162 minutes.

Regrettably, the 3CD set omits the French-language libretto or English translation, offering only an act-by-act synopsis (*Wikipedia* provides a better one). Nevertheless, I was delighted to finally hear Franck's incandescent *Hulda* just as he had intended.

Michael Schulman

American Originals: A New World, A New Canon
Reginald Mobley; Agave
Acis APL20445 (acisproductions.com)

► For countertenor Reginald Mobley, this is a deeply personal project. In his booklet notes, he describes his early years studying music as a person of colour, when he was convinced that "nothing worth hearing and knowing in classical music was ever written by anyone who looked like me." How better to expose what he rightly calls the "whitewashing of music history" than by highlighting some remarkable, largely unknown composers of colour? And so we have this adventurous survey of vocal and instrumental works from across the Americas, dating from the Baroque to the 20th century.

In six gorgeous songs – and two instrumental song arrangements – by Florence Price (whose music is finally starting to receive the attention it deserves), Mobley and the versatile musicians of Agave convey the impassioned vision underlying the composer's evocative imagery. The Brazilian priest José Mauricio Nuñes Garcia's exquisitely Mozartian *Te, Christe, solum novimus* leaves me wanting to hear more from this composer (his magnificent *Requiem* is featured in Paul Freeman's landmark *Black Composers Series* on Sony Classical). A virtuosic performance of Baroque composer Esteban Salas y Castro's *Taedet Animam Meam* reveals its sublime intensity. It's hard to understand why his music is so rarely heard outside his native Cuba.

Mobley draws on seemingly endless reserves of power and beauty. But there's something even more exciting going on here – a direct, urgent connection with the music. In this he is well matched by Agave's vivid colours and stylish phrasing.

Pamela Margles

CLASSICAL AND BEYOND

Scarlatti – Essercizi Per Gravicembalo
Hank Knox
Leaf Music LM248 (leaf-music.ca)

► Hank Knox has used the lockdown period very fruitfully. He spent ten months immersed in this, the only authorized publication by Domenico Scarlatti and, to its credit, one that has remained in print since it was published in 1739. *Essercizi per gravicembalo* is accurately translated as *Exercises for harpsichord*, underpinned by Hank Knox's choice of a harpsichord after the Dulcken family of Flemish harpsichord makers.

From the start, the combination of Scarlatti's very lively composing, its consequently demanding playing techniques and the brilliance of Knox, create a solo harpsichord masterpiece. For example, in its complexity the *Sonata in A Minor* (track 3) is reminiscent of everything J S Bach could create. Perhaps Scarlatti and Bach learned by listening to each other's works.

Even the longest sonatas, such as that in *G Major* (track 13) do not let up in their demands on the harpsichordist. This is especially true of the significantly longer second CD. Here, the *Sonata in D Major* (track 29) continues to bring out the best in Knox.

It is rare to find a collection of pieces so consistent throughout. Consequently, the sheer consistent joyfulness and exhilaration of these 30 *Sonatas* mean it is difficult to isolate any particular one as being superior to the others; we are spoiled for choice.

Born in 1685, along with Handel and Bach, Scarlatti is by far the least recognized composer of these three greats. The virtuosic exuberance of his *Essercizi* in this rendering makes a strong case for diminishing the recognition gap.

Michael Schwartz

Bach – Au Pardessus de Viole (transcriptions of diverse sonatas with clavecin)
Mélisande Corriveau; Eric Milnes
ATMA ACD2 2826 (atmaclassique.com/en)

► Although relatively obscure today, it is not hard to imagine pardessus de viole being the queen of the instruments in mid-18th century France, albeit for a short period of time. The smallest member of the viola da gamba family was invented in France to counter the newcomer of that time – the violin. Its uniquely delicate sound and slender shape were particularly popular with women, inspiring a slew of new compositions and arrangements before falling off the musical radar.

Multi-instrumentalist Mélisande Corriveau shines spectacularly on this recent release of selected Bach compositions adapted for pardessus de viole. An imaginative and elegant player, Corriveau ventures on a fine exploration of the contemplative aspects of Bach's music, further enhanced by the sonic qualities of her instrument, which, interestingly, was made during the reign of King Louis XV. On the other end of this musical equation is harpsichordist Eric Milnes, an intrinsic performer with a splendid feel for balance and flourish. Here the voices are so finely attuned to the nuances of Bach's music that we never question the fact that Bach did not write a single piece for this instrument and, in fact, may not have been aware of its existence.

The album is comprised of sonatas and trios originally for violin, viola da gamba and organ, rich with counterpoint and dialogue between instruments. There is a stillness and beauty to the ensemble playing that engages the listener on a deep level.

Ivana Popovic

Bach – Sonatas & Partitas
Fabio Biondi
naïve (highresaudio.com/en/album/view/xhdnab/fabio-biondi-bach-sonatas-partitas)

► These timeless works receive a superb and fanciful recorded performance from one of the most interesting and adventurous violinists alive today.

The *Six Sonatas and Partitas* were written sometime between 1717 and 1723, while Bach was employed by Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Cöthen. The sonatas are each made up of four substantial movements, including brilliant and virtuosic fugues. The partitas are jammed with a variety of dance movements and "doubles," the *D Minor Partita* concluding with the justly renowned extended *Chaconne*.

The brilliant Fabio Biondi is a celebrated violinist, conductor and the founder of Europa Galante who has made a specialty of Baroque works large and small, including recital tours with pianists, harpsichordists and fortepianists. That said, he plays on a fortified modern violin with technical prowess, confidence and a big personality that would not be mistaken for being historically informed. He made this recording a special project as he turned 60, saying in the notes that he has long felt intimidated by these towering works "so intimate, yet so universal, so close to the essence of things and so technically demanding as well."

These performances are fresh, assured, lyrical, exciting and full of vitality. Highlights include the *Presto* of *Sonata I*, the *Giga* and *Chaconne* of *Partita II*, the three enormous fugues, the heartbreakingly nostalgic *F Major Largo* of *Sonata III* and the *Gavotte en Rondeau* of *Partita III*. Some of the tempi are a little too breakneck, some of the ornamentation is outrageous and at times the overall sound gets a little too heavy and intense. But this is playing with a self-assured point of view, a big heart, a rock-solid technique and a humble wisdom, full of respect for how these pieces connect to the human soul. Highly recommended.

Larry Beckwith

Schumann – The Roots & The Flower: Counterpoint in Bloom
Jens E. Christensen
Our Recordings 6.220675
(naxosdirect.com/search/6220675)

► A prolific and highly respected composer of the Romantic era, Robert Schumann wrote in a variety of styles for a range of instruments, from solo piano to large orchestra. Tucked within Schumann's 148 opus numbers are a few works written for the pedal piano which, rather than having the standard three foot pedals, contained an entirely separate keyboard, similar to that found on pipe organs, which was manipulated by the feet. Once a relatively common household instrument, the pedal piano has since become extinct, though separate foot pedal attachments and even complete replicas can still be found.

The presence of a pedalboard is a unique similarity between the pedal piano and the modern organ which has led to a number of works for the former instrument being adapted to the latter. Schumann's pedal piano

works are of particular note in this regard – their contrapuntal dexterity and complexity are conveyed particularly well on the organ, as demonstrated by renowned Danish organist Jens E. Christensen.

Performing Schumann's *Six Fugues on B-A-C-H, Op.60* and the *Six Canonic Studies, Op.56*, Christensen shows Schumann at his most cerebral, writing that is rigid in its structure yet fluid in its harmonic style. Indeed, the choice of the famous B-flat - A - C - B natural motif (B-A-C-H in German note names) is a not-too-subtle homage to Schumann's idol. His choice to use this theme as the source of six independent fugues is a demonstration of Schumann's devotion to his craft, a flexing of musical muscles that demonstrate his ability to exist within a defined structure while simultaneously expanding and manipulating these structures to their limits.

One of the great challenges with performing this music on the organ is the registration, or stops and pipes, that the organist must choose to best convey the composer's intentions. Christensen is heard here on the organ in Copenhagen's Von Frelser Church, an instrument that is historical both in age and temperament, best suited to the works of Bach and earlier composers. Despite the apparent temporal discrepancy, this sound is exceedingly effective: while Christensen may occasionally incorporate one too many Baroque phrasings into his interpretations, the combination gives Schumann's chromatic material the backwards-looking realization it requires, reinforcing the direct references to Bach and his own contrapuntal genius.

Matthew Whitfield

Sibelius – Symphony No.3
Orchestre Métropolitain de Montréal; Yannick Nézet-Séguin
ATMA ACD2 4033 (atmaclassique.com/en)

► After gaining world fame and plaudits too numerous to mention, Yannick Nézet Séguin is back in Canada with his first orchestra, the Orchestre Métropolitain de Montréal and, with ATMA Classique, is in the process of recording the seven symphonies of Jean Sibelius. This new release is part of this ambitious series.

The seven symphonies of Sibelius are certainly music the world had never heard before; music of the North, inspired by Finnish myths and sagas and a landscape with elemental forces of nature. Interestingly, there is a stylistic evolution from the first to the seventh symphony. Despite their wildly different characteristics, all progress towards the same purpose, a condensation, a telescoping of elements that comes into full fruition in the *Seventh Symphony* where all four movements fuse into a single one.

Nearly the shortest of the seven and in the key of C Major, the *Third* has almost a Mozartian clarity with transparent textures and straightforward momentum. Mysteriously however, somewhere in the first movement suddenly everything quiets down with a perpetual, nearly inaudible rustle of strings as if we would disappear into a misty thicket with only an occasional shriek of a bird (on the clarinet) breaking the silence.

A combination of the third and fourth movements, the *Finale* is magnificent: as the rhythmically pulsating, suspenseful *Scherzo* gradually dies down, a new march-like theme emerges almost imperceptibly; pianissimo on the cellos and gaining momentum, and before we know it we are in the midst of the *Finale*. Soon, all the strings and the woodwinds join in louder and louder. Finally the clarinets, flutes and horns raise their instruments high and the trumpets and trombones bring everything to a final glory. Nézet-Séguin manages this giant crescendo masterfully.

Janos Gardonyi

A Net of Gems
Suzanne Shulman; Erica Goodman
Wolftone WM21061 (shulmangoodman.bandcamp.com)

► The CD opens with flutist Franz Doppler's and harpist Antonio Zamara's co-composed *Casilda Fantaisie*, based on the opera, *Casilda*, by Ernst II, Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha (and Queen Victoria's brother-in-law). Erica Goodman and Suzanne Shulman navigate this mix of lyricism and virtuosity admirably, offering virtuosic lyricism and lyric virtuosity!

Next comes Bernard Andrès' *Narthex* followed by David Occhipinti's *Net of Gems*, which gives the disc its name. Though composed 49 years apart, they have much in common, both inspired by religious themes, the first by Romanesque church architecture, the second by Hinduism's net of Indra. Melodic, through composed and episodic, both have the surreal quality of a metaphorical journey through a variety of distinctive and contrasting neighbourhoods. The performers' sensitivity to the contrast between episodes is what really helped me to navigate this difficult musical structure.

Next on the program was Camille Saint-Saëns' *Fantaisie, Op. 124*, originally composed for violin and harp but so well adapted for the flute by Hidio Kamioka and Shulman that you would never guess that Saint-Saëns ever had any other instrument in mind. To me this was the highlight of the CD: both players seemed so comfortably at home both with the music and with each other. In Erik Satie's *Gnossienne No.5*, which might be translated as "the unknowable part of the known," Shulman and Goodman play without expression, perfectly conveying this miniature's implicit irony. John Keats' words come to mind: "Heard melodies are sweet … therefore, ye soft pipes, play on…."

An afterthought: A case could be made that wars, floods, fires, famines and pandemics, laying waste to the complacency that seems to come with peace, and destroying trust in formerly trusted institutions – governments, medicine, the judiciary, the media, universities and more – give rise to creation and the search for beauty. A friend quoted this recently: "When fishermen cannot go to sea, they stay home and mend their nets"; one might add, "When coming together to listen to music is prohibited, musicians compose, learn new repertoire and record!"

Allan Pulker

Florence Price – Symphonies 1 & 3
The Philadelphia Orchestra; Yannick Nézet-Séguin
Deutsche Grammophon (deutschegrammophon.com/en/catalogue/products/price-symphonies-nos-1-3-nezet-seguin-12476)

Florence Price – Symphony No.3; Mississippi River; Ethiopia's Shadow in America
Radio-Symphonieorchester Wien; John Jeter
Naxos 8.559897 (naxosdirect.com/search/8559897)

Who Is Florence Price?
Students of the Special Music School at Kaufman Music Center, NYC
Schirmer Trade Books ISBN-13: 978-1-7365334-0-6 (chapters. indigo.ca)

► The so-called classical canon, capturing a list of composers and compositions deemed worthy of study, multiple performances and recordings, has been expanding. It now represents a more fulsome group of individuals from a wider swath of identities – mainly seeing growth in the areas of nationality, gender, race and sexual orientation – than has traditionally been characterized. Said broadening is but one important step taken to cultivate a culture of inclusion within classical music and present a more representative snapshot of what constitutes historical significance. Further, it has been shown to be important that burgeoning performers and composers both hear and see themselves represented in the canon so that, for example, female African-American composers can locate others who perhaps have an intersectional identity not totally unlike their own.

Florence Price (1887-1953), a native of Little Rock, Arkansas and a graduate of Boston's New England Conservatory of Music, was a pianist and composer who, despite enjoying a modicum of recognition during her lifetime (including having her *Symphony No. 1 in E Minor* premiered in 1933 by Frederick Stock and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, a first for an African-American woman) was a composer whose work was almost lost to history. As the charming illustrated children's book *Who is Florence Price?*, written by students of the Special Music School at New York's Kaufman Music Center recounts, a box of Price's dogeared and yellowed manuscripts of original compositions and symphonic works was found (and thankfully not discarded) in 2009 in a dilapidated attic of the Chicago-area summer home in St. Anne, Illinois in which Price wrote. This discovery has led to what could be described as a Price renaissance, with multiple recordings, premieres, the dissemination power of the Schirmer publishing house (that acquired worldwide rights to Price's catalogue in 2018), and, most recently, two excellent discs that capture the American composer's elegant music in its full glory.

Rooted in the European Romantic compositional tradition that was her training, but blended with the sounds of American urbanization, the African-American church, as well as being imbued with elements of a folkloric vernacular blues style, Price's *Symphonies 1 & 3* (on Deutsche Grammophon) and the never before recorded *Ethiopia's Shadow in America* (Naxos American Classics) come to life with tremendous splendor and historical gravitas in the capable hands of Yannick Nézet-Séguin and The Philadelphia Orchestra and the ORF Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra respectively.

Of note is Price's under-recorded *The Mississippi River*, that ORF conductor John Jeter suggests captures "the depth of the American experience… like no other composer." Articulating in sound the experience of the Great Migration, the large-scale movement and relocation of African-Americans from the Southern United States to such Northern locales of employment, urbanization and distance from "Jim Crow" laws as Chicago, Detroit and New York, that was both compositional fodder for Price and her own lived experience.

The book and two discs represent tremendous strides towards greater inclusion and representation within the canon and, at least for this reviewer, facilitated the discovery of a creative and exceptional new musical voice.

Andrew Scott

Americascapes
Basque National Orchestra; Robert Trevino
Ondine ODE 1396-2 (naxosdirect.com/search/ode+1396-2+)

► Alsace-born Charles Martin Loeffler (1861-1935) moved to the U.S. in 1881. His 25-minute *"Poème dramatique," La Mort de Tintagiles, Op.6* (1897), based on a play for marionettes by Maurice Maeterlinck about a murderous queen, is definitely "dramatique." Between its stormy opening and mournful close, Loeffler's lushly scored, ravishing music conjures a scenario of sensuous longing and dangerous conflict, with long-lined, arching melodies and vibrant orchestral colours redolent of French late-Romanticism-Impressionism. I loved it; why isn't it better known?

Carl Ruggles (1876-1971) depicted his wife and three friends, including Charles Ives, in his four-movement, ten-minute *Evocations* (1943), orchestrated from earlier piano pieces. Hardly affectionate music, it's austere and perturbed. To me, Ruggles' very name embodies what I hear in all his music, including *Evocations* – rugged struggles.

The cinematically rhapsodic *Before the Dawn, Op.17* (1920), anticipates the many beauties that would be heard in the symphonies of Howard Hanson (1896-1981), his first appearing just two years later. The brief (under seven minutes) tone poem here receives its long overdue, first-ever recording.

Henry Cowell (1897-1965) spent the winter of 1956-1957 in Iran, part of a tour jointly subsidized by agencies of the U.S. and Iranian governments. Three works resulted: *Persian Set*, *Homage to Iran* and the 19-minute *Variations for Orchestra* (1956) recorded here. It's filled with exotic sonorities hinting at arcane magic and nocturnal mysteries.

Thanks to conductor Robert Trevino and the Basque National Orchestra for these revelatory performances of four almost-forgotten American works.

Michael Schulman

MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY

New Jewish Music Vol.3
Sharon Azrieli; Krisztina Szabó; Nouvel Ensemble Moderne; Lorraine Vaillancourt
Analekta AN 2 9263 (analekta.com/en)

► The Azrieli Foundation has released their recording of this year's composition prize for new Jewish music, along with recordings of commissioned works in the categories of Canadian Composition and Jewish Music: Yotam Haber's *Estro Poetico-armonico III* in the latter, Keiko Devaux's instrumental work *Arras* in the Canadian category. Yitzhak Yedid's *Kadosh Kadosh and Cursed* won the prize for an existing work of Jewish Music. *Dissidence*, a concise and somewhat anachronistic work for small orchestra and soprano (Sharon Azrieli, a fine soprano and founder of the prize) by the late Pierre Mercure, rounds out the disc.

Kadosh… is concerned with Jerusalem's Temple Mount, the place shared as sacred by three major religions. Embattled chattering and shouts introduce Yedid's work, followed by brassy bombast and unison modal melody in alternation, depicting conflict, even violence. A middle section provides relief, insofar as mourning relieves cataclysm. The individual players of Montreal's excellent Nouvel Ensemble Moderne get a brief chance to sing before hostilities recommence, devolve into a nasty Hora, returning tragically to increasing strife. By the end of the movement, we're hoping, nay praying for peace. Hope deferred, the heart is sick. A chant melody in the piano calls through maddened violin scratches and braying brass. Yedid seems pessimistic; in spite (or because) of the spiritual importance of the Temple Mount, hostilities persist.

The formidable mezzo Kristina Szabó joins the ensemble for Haber's work, a complex piece with so much historical/textual weight it deserves a review unto itself. Highly effective writing.

Arras is a woven tableau, relying on breath and bow effects, microtonal vibrato and dissonances, and shifting background textures to frame lush, even lurid melody. A single movement of nearly 25 minutes' length, it makes a patient argument for beauty.

Max Christie

Andrew Staniland – Reddened by Hammer (Earthquakes and Islands Remixed)
Robin Richardson; Tyler Duncan; Martha Guth; Erika Switzer
Centrediscs CMCCD 29121
(andrewstaniland.com)

► Andrew Staniland is on the faculty of music at Memorial University where he teaches composition and electronic music. He is director of the Memorial ElectroAcoustic Research Lab which has produced the Mune digital instrument. *Reddened by Hammer: Earthquakes and Islands Remixed* is based on Staniland's earlier song cycle for soprano, baritone and piano with the poetry of Robin Richardson. In fact "Side B" of this album features a selected set of recordings from that cycle (performed by soprano Martha Guth, baritone Tyler Duncan, pianist Erika Switzer) remastered for vinyl. "Side A" uses those recordings as a source, but overlays many electronic effects to both obscure and reinvent the original compositions.

Meditations is contemplative and I am reminded of standing beside a river with trees creaking, wind blowing and a storm working its way closer *Reddened by Hammer* is more industrial sounding and the original recording with piano and singers is more immediate (as if someone is performing music in another room). The vocals, emerging from behind the electronics, bring a resonant, ethereal and sometimes spooky quality to the proceedings (particularly in *All the Grey Areas are God*). All five of the remixes are fascinating and their effects range from intense/ambient to edgy and percussive. Listening to the whole album allows us to first hear the reinventions which then inform our appreciation of the acoustic originals. The digital release is available now from the Canadian Music Centre, with a limited-edition vinyl pressing to come early in 2022.

Ted Parkinson

Chamber Works by Dmitri Klebanov
ARC Ensemble
Chandos CHAN 20231 (rcmusic.com/arc-ensemble)

► After his *Symphony No.1* (1947), "dedicated to the memory of the martyrs of Babi Yar," was performed in his native Kharkiv and then in Kyiv (where, in 1941, Nazis had massacred over 30,000 Jews at the Babi Yar ravine), Jewish-Ukrainian composer Dmitri Klebanov (1907-1987) was vilified as "unpatriotic" for memorializing Jewish civilians rather than Soviet soldiers. The Union of Soviet Composers banned the symphony and Klebanov lost his posts as chairman of the Composers Union's Kharkiv branch and head of the Kharkiv state conservatory's composition department. He was eventually "rehabilitated."

This latest in the *Music in Exile* series by Toronto's ARC Ensemble (Artists of the Royal Conservatory) presents violinists Erika Raum and Marie Bérard, violist Steven Dann and cellist Thomas Wiebe in Klebanov's *String Quartets Nos.4* and *5*. The joyous *No.4* (1946), filled with singable, folk-like tunes, is dedicated to the memory of composer Mykola Leontovych, a Ukrainian separatist murdered by the secret police in 1921. It includes two melodies by Leontovych familiar to Ukrainian listeners, one of them known in the West as the Christmassy *Carol of the Bells*.

No.5 (1965) is more "serious," its melodies tinged with dissonance and pessimism, with heavily accented rhythms – it's strong, attention-riveting music. Pianist Kevin Ahfat joins Bérard and Wiebe in the highly Romantic *Piano Trio No.2* (1958). Here, warm, tender lyricism alternates with splurges of invigorated celebration, ending as sweetly as it began.

There's real beauty on this disc, all beautifully played.

Michael Schulman

Mountains Move Like Clouds
Noam Bierstone
No Hay Discos NHD 001
(noambierstone.com)

► Noam Beirstone is a Canadian percussionist and curator dedicated to modern artistic performance whose main projects include his saxophone and percussion duo, scapegoat, the Montreal performance series NO HAY BANDA, and Architek percussion quartet. Bierstone's debut album, *mountains move like clouds*, features three works for solo percussionist by composers Hanna Hartman, Pierluigi Billone and Zeynep Toraman. This album could best be described as "long listening;" the three pieces on the album are extended discoveries of very slow arcs of scrapes, buzzes and ripples of percussion, allowed to vibrate and feedback and cycle over themselves, giving the listener time to reflect on the generation and degradation of the sounds.

The three works are unique, and feature alternate sound sources; flower pots, bricks, knives and drum initiate the first set of sounds, metal on metal the second, and the third is best described by the artist himself: "The work captures fleeting hums, resonances, and noises – the buzzing of snares, the emerging ripples and vibrations of the skin – and feeds them back into the bodies of the instruments…." All three are interesting soundscapes in themselves, and as a collection they work well. (A word of note however, if headphones are being used: the album contains some higher resonances, but the third track in particular involves extremely high pitches that may warrant cautionary volume levels.)

Cheryl Ockrant

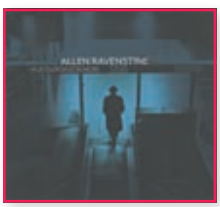
Allen Ravenstine – The Tyranny of Fiction: Electron Music; Shore Leave; Nautilus; Rue du Poisson Noir
Allen Ravenstine; Various Artists
Waveshaper Media WSM-05/06/07/08
(allenravenstine.com)

► A quartet of EP discs frame an artistic effort by Pere Ubu founder Allen Ravenstine, which together bear the cryptic title *The Tyranny of Fiction*. Each one is about a half-hour's worth of sonic content; attractive covers reference the respective disc titles, and on each, a micro-fiction. These shorter-than-short stories, which may or may not link to the music (I'd call it likely, with not much to go on), provoke the imagination and more than satisfy a narrative arc. Each is a slice of a longer story, a tile stolen from a mosaic.

And why not allow mosaic to describe how the music and fictions interact? Maybe here I'm closing in on the essential tyranny. Listening to these while bearing in mind their story, see if you don't feel compelled to write your own novel. Does the story demand attention while the music rolls by? Do words determine the music?

My favourite is the fourth disc, *Rue du Poisson Noir*, which features tracks with titles like *Rear Window*, *Brothers Grimm*, *Open Season*, complete with a menacing beast snarling at the end of a mysterious hunt through the dusk of a musical forest, with rattles and shrieks punctuating a bass ostinato. Who's doing the hunting, on whom is the season open? Maybe there's a clue in the text: "I was here when the dinosaurs lumbered… and I will be here when the time comes and the bell tolls…" This is film noir without dialogue or visuals. The title track combines snippets of spoken words, street noise, rainfall and Tom Waits-style clarinet lines (sampled? There's no clarinet credit!); an intro for a monologue that never begins. Delightful nonsense verse accompanies the first track, *Doff Downie Woot*, more James Joyce than Ogden Nash or Edward Lear.

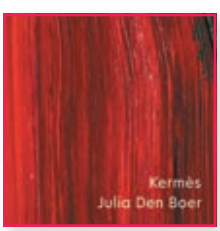
The tracks range from two to six or seven minutes: mosaic fragments, or vignettes, like the stories; they mostly heel to a prog-pop aesthetic: interesting harmonic language but never jarringly dissonant. The first disc, *Electron Music*, features almost exclusively electronic sounds, with some acoustic piano in there as well. Its final track, *5@28*, at nearly ten minutes' length, extends itself beyond its welcome. Otherwise, the array of newer and older synthetic-sound instruments (theremin and ondes martenot, as well as prepared piano and guitar) are deployed in many ways: at times rhythmic, others lyric and still others wandering about or staying in place, always evocative, distinctive. The accompanying story is deeply sad, and then terrifying.



The other two discs are related by a maritime theme, although not by their fictions. The story on *Shore Leave* captures envy and regret; *Nautilus* is a ghost story told in detached first person. The individual tracks of *Shore Leave* are gorgeous brief musical scenes. *Nautilus* is more unsettled and angsty. Titles like *Ninety Miles to the Spanish Harbor*, *Fog (Devil's Island Mix)* and *Red Skies at Night* suggest Ravenstine is a sailor as well as a musician and fabulist. For those cool enough to have been Pere Ubu fans, maybe the material will sound familiar; to my ear it's all more listenable and more fun.

Max Christie

Kermès
Julia Den Boer
New Focus Recordings FCR311 (newfocusrecordings.com/catalogue/julia-den-boer-kermes)



► Julia Den Boer's latest release is an invitation and a gift. The listener is drawn into a series of towering resonances and rewarded with a listening experience that redefines our acquaintance with the piano. Each of the four works on the disc extends what is sonically capable for the instrument and Den Boer's expressive interpretations are world-class in their execution. It is through such superb performances that we are able to fully grasp the deeper communicative qualities each piece is offering the listener.

First, Giulia Lorusso's *Déserts* begins with hyper-colouristic and excited brush strokes that evolve into lonesome pinpricks of brilliant colour and imagination. Linda Catlin Smith's *The Underfolding* is a harmonic wonderscape. Smith's sound world reveals itself as one of the most compelling artistic voices one can encounter: wonderfully layered sonorities create a veil of undiscovered colours in an ideal trance haven. The distant hollowness of Anna Thorvaldsdóttir's *Reminiscence* produces a cerebral experience that evokes forlorn beauty. Rebecca Saunders' *Crimson* uses prickly clusters and obtrusive deep interruptions that create unsettling exchanges. Den Boer's attention to detail and expressive capabilities makes *Kermes* a must-listen.

Adam Scime

A Love So Fierce – Complete Solo Organ Works of David Ashley White
Daryl Robinson; Sarah Mesko; Jesús Pacheco Mánuel; Floyd Robinson; Grace Tice
Acis APL61020 (acisproductions.com)

► A renowned composer of both secular and sacred works, David Ashley White is perhaps best known for his contributions to the world of church music. Using influences drawn from a variety of sources, both ancient and modern, White's musical lexicon is diverse and ranges from simple hymn tunes to challenging vocal and instrumental pieces; it is the organ works that are put in full focus on this disc.

The state of Texas plays a pivotal role in the identity of *A Love So Fierce*: White is a seventh-generation Texan, the organ used for the recording is located at Christ Church Cathedral in Houston, and the disc begins with *Fanfare for St. Anthony*, an homage to San Antonio. Organist Daryl Robinson is also Texas-based, serving as Cathedral organist at Christ Church and director of Organ Studies at the University of Houston.

Although not always as overt as in the opening *Fanfare*, there is a strong sense of Americana in many of White's works, with use of modality and extended harmonies in a manner reminiscent of Leo Sowerby, who himself was a significant contributor to liturgical music in the 20th century.

It is often challenging to separate the efforts of the performer from those of the instrument itself, so entwined is the organist with the manipulation of stops and keyboards in addition to the notes and rhythms themselves. In this instance, both Robinson and the 1938 Aeolian-Skinner organ are in top form, executing White's often demanding scores in a fluid and seamless manner.

Though not a household name, White's contributions to the organ repertory are not to be overlooked, and this is recommended listening for all who enjoy the majestic sounds of what none other than Mozart considered the King of Instruments.

Matthew Whitfield

Lou Harrison – Concerto for Piano with Javanese Gamelan
Sarah Cahill; Gamelan Galak Tika; Evan Ziporyn; Jody Diamond
Cleveland Museum of Art n/a (clevelandart.org/events/music-and-performances/cma-recorded-archive-editions/lou-harrison)

► American composer Lou Harrison (1917-2003) had an exuberant and searching spirit which extended beyond music to the graphic and literary arts and social activism. Today he is perhaps best known for incorporating in his mature scores non-mainstream tunings and other musical elements from several cultures outside Western classical music.

Although he was nearing 60 at the time, Harrison nevertheless launched with considerable passion into an in-depth study of the gamelan musics of North, South and West Java. Each region possesses its own kind of music. No mere dilettante, he went on to compose several dozen works for various kinds of gamelan, and was among the first composers to incorporate standard Western concert instruments in his gamelan scores. He even built complete gamelans (orchestras) from scratch with his partner William Colvig.

Harrison's *Concerto for Piano with Javanese Gamelan* (1986) is a good example of all these influences at work. In it he aimed not only for *a* musical synthesis of East and West, but also to bring the piano into what he fancied as just intonation's "paradise garden of delights." In that transcultural musical playground a pianist could experience the rare pleasure of performing with a complete gamelan. Sarah Cahill, the brilliant pianist on this album, reflects on her first encounter with Harrison's retuned piano. She found it, "disorienting at first, since the keys typically associated with corresponding pitches now ring out with a completely different result. The disorientation, however, provokes more intense listening."

Jody Diamond and Evan Ziporyn, both longtime champions of Harrison's music, directed this outstanding recording of the concerto with members of Boston's Gamelan Galak Tika.

Andrew Timar

Planispheres
Mike Block
Bright Shiny Things (brightshiny.ninja)

► Cellist, singer, songwriter, composer and educator Mike Block has one of the most eclectic résumés around. From his "chopping" folk history, to jazz and cross-cultural music collaborations (check out his duo with tabla player Sandeep Das, for example) Mike Block has worked with nearly everyone from Stevie Wonder to Will.i.am to Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble. From pop to jazz, classical and bluegrass, there seems to be no end to the continuous exploration and collaborations around the world for this diverse and prolific artist. As an innovator, Block was among the first wave of cellists to develop a standing style of playing in order to move while performing, and can – and does – play his challenging repertoire sitting, standing and even while singing. He was also the first standing cellist to perform at Carnegie Hall, and on top of that, his Bach is superb. What is such a diverse collaborator to do during a world pandemic?

Bring in Block's latest, and possibly most poignant project, *Planispheres*. As an exploration of human connection during a time when these connections are nearly impossible to make, each track is a full, freely improvised solo to one unknown lucky listener, in a large open space which allowed him to sonically explore and test the acoustics throughout the album. The intimacy of each performance is palpable and adds to the personal nature and timely relevance of the album. Here we have an opportunity to witness not only the wide range of sonic participation of the venue, but also the silent participation of each unnamed audience recipient. We can hear Block's urgency to connect with others, while allowing space and time to be a fourth element in the room. This album will engage anyone who is missing the intimate experience of live chamber music, but most especially lovers of the cello.

Cheryl Ockrant

Chris Campbell – Orison
Various Artists
Innova 008 (innova.mu)

► An orison is a type of prayer, perhaps better described as a plea. Maybe Chris Campbell is asking for relief, or faith in the future, as are many of us. He makes this plea by means of *Orison*, a chamber work for strings, piano, and percussion, 14 players in all, named but not designated by instrument. Track titles directly refer to one another. Movements three and five, for example, are *Ten Thousand Streams (Forward Motion)*, and *Ten Thousand Streams (Retrograde)*; the second movement is *Rotating Light Mirrors the Water*, the sixth, *Rotating Hymns*. The first movement, *Parallels, Threading Light*, finds an answer in the last, *Ground Calls Out to Sky* (an implied parallel?). The central movement, perhaps a mirroring plane, is *Streams to Source, Object to Origin*.

Arvo Pärt comes to mind in the early going of *Parallels*, but he and the consonant, pleading intervals disappear into turmoil and opaque dissonance. Piano lines emerging from this seem improvisatory, and here as elsewhere the recording values seem hell bent on saturation. It isn't easy to stay with, especially at a higher volume. The storm passes, as storms do, and a segue leads into the calmer second track, and middle voices expressing again those chant-like parallel intervals. The tracks run together, many times introduced by a manic drum kit.

It's difficult to puzzle out the structure; I take it on faith that there is one. The drum kit passages drive impetuously through the often otherwise wandering sound-cloud formations. Colours and textures recur, in patterns not immediately apparent. Is this a masterpiece? I'm not prepared to say yes or no. I do give benefit of the doubt to Campbell.

Max Christie

Tiffany Ng – Dark Matters
Various Artists
Innova 050 (innova.mu)

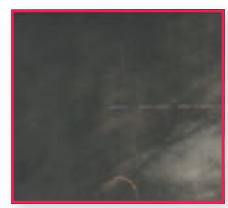
► A fascinating collection, *Dark Matters* features the music for carillon of Stephen Rush performed by Tiffany Ng. Questions of the technical sort arise: what microphone placements worked best; and if any ambient sound needed to be filtered out? It must have been a spectacular project to work on, purely in this regard. Musically, Rush makes brilliant use of his years spent studying the instrument, learning how to capitalize on the peculiarly diminished quality of the bells' overtone profiles. A noticeable rise before and decline after each performance, makes for a kind of ambient "huff," an enveloping foggy frame, like giant respiration.

Two carillons, one in Michigan and one in the Netherlands, play so differently it reminds one of how particular this type of instrument is, and how contingent the performance is on their sounds, much like organs. Whereas an organ has a synthetic animus, or breath, bells are defined by attack, such that every note's momentum diminishes through its sustain. What Rush makes room for, and Ng perfects in execution, is a linearity that counters this. Decay follows attack, but gently repeated notes and Ng's impressive control of dynamics give sustenance to line.

The smaller lighter instrument in the Netherlands is featured on *Sonata for Carillon* from 2007, as well as on the title track, from 2013, and on *Six Treatments*, which uses live electronics that animate the music in fascinating ways. The U of Michigan bells are darker and deeper, and are heard only on the disc's bookends: *Three Etudes*, 1987, and *September Fanfares*, 2018, for carillon, brass quintet and percussion. The *Sonata* is a revelation, titanic chamber music by turns soulful and dancelike. *Fanfares* is the least effective track, possibly on account of difficult balance and timing issues, but brass quintets should find a way to program it anyway.

Max Christie

Sunrise
Jacob Cooper; Steven Bradshaw
Cold Blue Music CB0062
(coldbluemusic.com)



► We need to create a new category of artistic manifestation, along the lines of "responses to the pandemic." This disc, sung by Steven Bradshaw and embellished by the electroacoustic work of Jacob Cooper, would fit. Bradshaw and Cooper played remote call and response over the course of several months until they were satisfied with the outcome.

The title refers to an early 20th-century popular song: *The World is Waiting for Sunrise*, by Ernest Seitz and Gene Lockhart. Covered by Duke Ellington and Willie Nelson, to name only two, it seems to have been an anthem of hope during a dark era, as alluded to in the liner notes; the song was written during the Spanish influenza epidemic.

This is no song cover; the closest analogy would be *cantus firmus*. The original lyrics, deconstructed or otherwise, are chanted at intervals throughout what amounts to a 32-minute meditation; they're partially buried behind a more or less constant C Minor-ish drone. The events, or processes, develop gradually, but two-thirds of the way in the voice disappears into a burgeoning melee. The piano enters with a repeated motif that yearns toward G Minor. The voice returns as vocalise, soaring above on syllables from the original text, but barely recognizable. I'm reminded of Matthew Arnold's *Dover Beach*, another prayer for love in a dark time.

There have been plenty of musical depictions of the sunrise, and this fits in that category as well. Essentially a long process piece that demands and rewards attention, even if it doesn't offer consolation.

Max Christie

Emily Koh – [word]plays
New Thread Quartet; Noa Even; Philipp Stääudlin
Innova 055 (innova.mu)

► Emily Koh's biography lists her as: "composer+" a suggestion that in addition to being a composer, she is also a bassist. However, that mathematical sign does not even begin to describe her prodigious gifts as a multi-disciplinary artist. This enables her to inform her radiant music with experiences from across the visual and sonic artistic spectrum. Remarkably, on the repertoire for the album *[word]plays*, Koh also adds a literary dimension to her compositions.

While it is true that the five pieces on this album are – as Koh correctly subtitles the collection – "microtonal works for saxophone(s)," the artistic topography of the music is spectacularly prismatic. This is best experienced in the three items performed by the New Thread Quartet, comprising saxophonists Jonathan Hulting-Cohen (soprano), Kristen McKeon (alto), Erin Rogers (tenor) and Zach Herchen (baritone). The items are further connected like a three-movement suite with titles that play upon three words: *homonym*, *heteronym/*, *cryptonym*. They unfold in diaphanous layers of sound as the quite magical mystery of each is revealed in waves of microtones.

That set is bookended by *medi+ation* and *b(locked.orders)*; two solo saxophone pieces, the former performed by Philipp Stäudlin (baritone) and the latter by Noa Even (soprano). These are clever miniatures, the writing of which feels as if the performance instructions suggested is one-or-more-syllables-per-non-uniform-length note. There is exquisite poetry in these charts; a rumbling gravitas in the former and a high and lonesome, swirling tonal palette in the latter.

Raul da Gama

Three
Chas Smith
Cold Blue Music CB0061
(coldbluemusic.com)

► Multi-instrumentalist Chas Smith's recording *Three* is not simply atmospheric, its ethereal sonic palette comes with a twist in that the ripples on his ocean of sound spread vertically, seemingly piercing the very dome of the sky. Even the title is subtly idiomatic; its reference being more Trinitarian than merely numeric.

The musical hypnosis begins almost immediately in the whispered, metallic hiss of a myriad of instruments on *Distance*, continuing through *The Replicant* and into the denouement of this recording on a piece aptly called *The End of Cognizance*. The composer says that "the spirit of Harry Partch" pervades throughout. But even a first run-through of this repertoire suggests overtones of the soundtrack of a Philip K. Dick cinematic narrative. In particular, the short story *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* – which became Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* – comes presciently to mind.

The music throughout seems to hang in the air like dense vapour of a sonic kind. But the seeming stasis is constantly changing, metamorphosing into something quite different at every turn. Its dark melodic fragments spin and pirouette constantly, revealing Smith's singular balletic lyricism. The three parts of the music are layered one atop the other like sonic strata evocative of the massive natural forces pervading a planet spinning its way into infinity in triumph against time. The orchestration is as brilliantly inventive as the instruments that are employed to play it; all constructed by Smith himself.

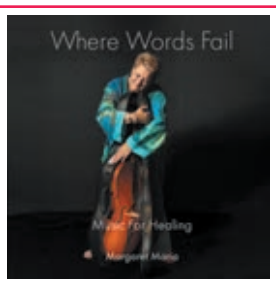
Raul da Gama

confined. speak.
Ensemble Dal Niente
New Focus Recordings FCR308
(newfocusrecordings.com)

► The Chicago based Ensemble Dal Niente releases a collection of works that were streamed during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. With each work offering a variety of experimental techniques and sound worlds, this music reveals the ensemble's incredible musical abilities. Igor Santos' *confined. speak.* is a post-Lachenmannian work that explores themes of "confinement and liberation." Santos' music is carefully crafted and contains an impressive series of magical events. The harp concerto of Hilda Paredes, titled *Demente Cuerda*, contains endless virtuosic gestures for both soloist and ensemble members – all of which are expertly performed. With Tomás Gueglio's *Triste y madrigal* we receive a delicate and mysterious soprano part amid outlandish restlessness in the ensemble – a beautifully enigmatic work. In *Merce and Baby* by George Lewis, the composer creates an imagined musical scenario that exists only in the documentation of a collaboration between jazz drummer Baby Dodds and avant-garde dancer Merce Cunningham in the 1940s. Finally, Andil Khumalo's *Beyond Her Mask* is a disturbing and important statement that confronts violence against women in South Africa. Ensemble Dal Niente delivers stunning performances of works that truly speak to our time.

Adam Scime

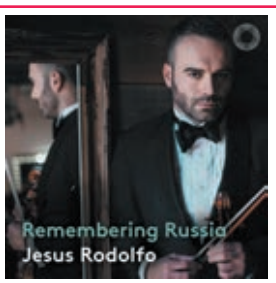
What we're listening to this month: thewholenote.com/listening



Where Words Fail Music For Healing
Margaret Maria
'My deepest hope is that this music can offer some healing, understanding, comfort, strength when we feel weak or when words fail us.' - Margaret Maria

Préludes et Solitudes
Marie Nadeau-Tremblay
A very personal album of pieces for solo unaccompanied violin by Baroque composers such as Telemann, Purcell, Torelli, Baltzar and Biber.

Beethoven: Violin Sonatas n° 4, 9 & 10
Andrew Wan and Charles Richard-Hamelin
This third and marvelous last volume of the complete sonatas for violin and piano is characterized by its refined instrumental textures and intimate mood.



Remembering Russia
Jesus Rodolfo & Min Young Kang
Violist Jesús Rodolfo makes his PENTATONE debut showcasing three 20th-century Russian composers who left their homeland.

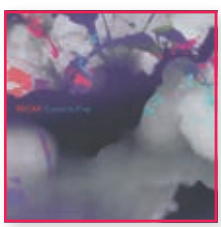
Northscapes
Ieva Jokubaviciute
Sono Luminus DSL-92251
(sonoluminus.com)

► In a release of 21st-century piano music by Lithuanian Ieva Jokubaviciute, aptly titled *Northscapes*, we receive a selection of ethereal sonic planes all evoking the majesty of nature's expanse. Jokubaviciute handles each piece with a delicate touch and an inspired approach to phrasing – attributes that are necessary to reveal the wonderful poetic characteristics of each piece. With each composer being from Nordic or Baltic countries, the overall atmosphere is one of a stark, and yet endlessly colourful, depiction of engulfing northern panoramas. Whether whirling through the unrelenting chroma-glow of Lasse Thoresen's *Invocation of Pristine Light*, taking pause in the crafty expressiveness of Bent Sørensen's *Nocturnes*, or sinking into the dreamworld of Kaija Saariaho's well-known *Prelude*, each work connects landscape to psychological enchantment.

Anna Thorvaldsdottir's *Scape* transports the listener into this psycho-geographical state with brilliance and ease. The innovative approach to the piano in her piece shifts the mind from the immediate to a vast apocryphal arena. This allows the sonic experience to travel much deeper than mere surface-level representations of nature scenes. When listening to this disc, one begins to wander among geographies of the mind – realms that haunt and comfort, obfuscate but also reassure. For an experience that will transport ear and mind, listen to *Northscapes*.

Adam Scime

Count to Five
Recap w/Transit New Music
Innova (innova.mu)



► The story begins with four New Jersey middle schoolers Arlene Acevedo, Alexis Carter, Tiahna Sterlin and Aline Vasquez who began studying percussion with Joe Bergen, a member of the Mantra Percussion ensemble. Then in 2020 at ages 19 and 20 they formed Recap, a professional percussion quartet of BIPOC women.Recap seeks to reevaluate the white-male-dominated world of percussion within the contemporary classical music scene. As Acevedo said, "We're young women of colour doing this… and you can too!" The results are impressive and they've now released an exciting debut album.

Count to Five features six works, one each by Angélica Negrón, Allison Loggins-Hull, Ellen Reid, Lesley Flanigan, Mary Kouyoumdjian and Caroline Shaw. Puerto Rican composer Negrón's surreal *Count to Five* opens the album. In it, everyday objects like shuffled playing cards, squeezed bubble wrap, dragged chairs and bowed and tapped wine glasses create an intimate sonic atmosphere interrupted by prerecorded children's and other sounds; a harmonica note is incessantly repeated. And yes, the performers count to five, whispering.

Another highlight is New York experimental musician and composer Flanigan's impressive *Hedera* which draws from another experimental music lineage, perhaps more Laurie Anderson than John Cage. *Hedera* features Flanigan's multitrack vocalise, supported by Recap's tonally ever-modulating bass drum and tom-tom swells. For 20 minutes, their pulsing 16th-note waves propel the work which increases in density and emotional intensity while Flanigan's voice builds into a massive choir. In the end the drums and choir float away like clouds on a hot summer's day.

Andrew Timar

Plays Well With Others
Loadbang
New Focus Recordings FCR307
(newfocusrecordings.com)

► The brass and woodwind ensemble, loadbang, explores what appears to the harmonious nature of humanity on *Plays Well With Others*, aptly titled because the quartet is expanded, joined in this odyssey by a 12-person string section plus piano. The result is an extravagantly sumptuous sound-world. The airy sculpting of this music by the horns dwells in an exquisitely dramatic recitation by Jeffery Gavett together with Andy Kozar (trumpet), William Lang (trombone) and Adrian Sandi (bass clarinet), and orchestral accompaniment.

Loadbang performs this avant-garde repertoire with architectural authority and elegant rhetoric. There are ink-dark, gossamer whispers and deep growls on Taylor Brook's *Tarantism* and the work progresses with long-limbed elegance, as if spinning a beguiling web with the (principal) tarantula character. *Riven*, by Heather Stebbins, pulsates with appropriate irregularity before it shatters along its elliptical harmonic grain.

Eve Beglarian's *You See Where This is Going*, with its narration of a surreal poem, sees strings, piano and horns entwining until the work is twisted into a powerful musical edifice. Reiko Füting's *Mo(nu)ment for C/Palimpsest* returns us to the dark world of terrorism made more sinister by the hushed performance. Scott Wollschleger's *CVS* offers another sinister take on socio-political extremism. All of this leads to the dynamic sound-palette of Paula Matthusen's *Such Is Now the Necessity* – a most appropriate finale to this hypnotic repertoire. Anyone reacting well to the mystery and surprise of music will certainly take this disc to heart.

Raul da Gama

JAZZ AND IMPROVISED

On A Mountain
Shannon Gunn; Renee Rosnes; Neil Swainson; Billy Drummond; Brad Turner; Pat LaBarbera
Cellar Music CM052001 (cellarlive.com)

► With last year's untimely loss of gifted jazz vocalist, composer and dedicated jazz educator, Shannon Gunn, a painful shockwave passed through the Canadian jazz community. Gunn was well respected and loved as a kind, generous and inspired musical force, and with the release of this never-before-heard 2002 recording, her significance as an artist is clear. For the project, Gunn surrounded herself with dear friends and Canada's most skilled musicians, including producer/pianist/composer Renee Rosnes, bassist Neil Swainson, drummer Billy Drummond, trumpeter/arranger Brad Turner and tenorist Pat LaBarbera. The program features a tasty selection of original tunes, as well as contributions from Tom Jobim, Cole Porter, Carla Bley and Renee Rosnes.

First up is the haunting Gunn composition, *From You*. Her sumptuous voice is so warm and rife with emotion – reminiscent of the great Irene Kral. Rosnes' sensitive and harmonically sophisticated solo is a thing of beauty, as is the trio work, and the perfect complement to Gunn's vocal. A standout is *Carla's Blues* by the eminent Carla Bley and jazz vocalist Norma Winstone. The arrangement (by Gunn's partner, Brian Dickinson) is dynamic and energizing – the solos by Turner and LaBarbera are both swinging and exquisite and Drummond's taste, skill and rock-solid rhythmic sensibility propel everything.

Another stunner is Lerner and Loewe's classic, *I've Grown Accustomed to His Face*, featuring a duet between Gunn's rich alto voice and Swainson's nimble, sonorous bass. Gunn's original *On a Mountain*, transports the listener to a mystical musical precipice. The beautifully arranged closer is Porter's *Everything I Love*, which is quite appropriate, as it expresses not only my feelings about this CD, but the fact that Gunn herself was all about everything that we love.

Lesley Mitchell-Clarke

Songbook
Dizzy & Fay (Amanda Walther; Mark Lalama)
Independent (dizzyandfay.com)

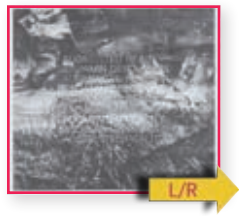
► The dozen intriguing, piano/voice duo tunes here were all composed by Dizzy and Fay, and were produced, mixed and mastered by Dizzy. "Fay" is actually the alter ego of JUNO nominee and multiple award-winning singer/songwriter/composer Amanda Walther (familiar to many as half of the folk/roots duo Dala) and "Dizzy" is in reality, noted Canadian singer/songwriter/pianist/accordionist/producer and in-demand-performer, Mark Lalama. When Lalama and Walther met on tour, the timeline of their mutual creativity began energizing!

Walther's dusky, sensual, pitch-perfect voice (bringing to mind Julie London) is the ideal companion for Lalama's sensitive piano work. The opening track, *Maybe Someday*, inspires cinematic images of a lonely and blue lady, perched on a lone bar stool at 2am, with a final martini in hand. There are many lovely and potent musical baubles presented here, all elegantly crafted into a compelling genre and infused with compositional talent. Make no mistake – Dizzy and Fay are highly musical tunesmiths and storytellers.

Of particular beauty are *Ordinary Love*, replete with a moving lyric and delicious chord changes; the sweet and innocent love song *Walk Me Home*, which opens with a stunner of a piano solo; the sexy-cool (and a cappella) *Boom* and the evocative *Gravity* which has such a visual element, bolstered by a beautiful melodic line and lyric, that it is really a hit song looking for a film. The closer of this exquisite recording, *Paris Rain*, is somehow both steeped in nostalgia and breathtakingly contemporary – which could also be said of every perfectly presented, emotionally charged track here.

Lesley Mitchell-Clarke

Augmented Reality
Benjamin Deschamps
MCM MCM053 (benjamindeschamps.com/en)



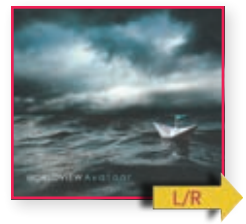
► Saxophonist, clarinetist, composer and arranger Benjamin Deschamps has been very active in the Canadian jazz scene, collaborating with groups such as the Orchestre national de jazz de Montréal and JazzLab Orchestra (Effendi). He has also led his own groups, from trios to the sextet on this offering, and released several albums. *Augmented Reality* is an assured and swinging jazz album with a modern sound, clever tunes and impeccable musicianship. The opening tune, *Unfinished Business*, is a terrific and intelligent scorcher which begins with a four-note, ostinato, tenor sax riff that is underpinned by the funky drums and then joined by trombone and the rest of the ensemble. The piece works through a hopping piano solo from Charles Trudel, then an assured sax solo from Deschamps as the energy builds. The band cuts out and we are left with the ostinato played on the Wurlitzer, joined by bass and guitar with a vibrant drum solo (from Al Bourgeois) over top. The piece finishes with everyone intensely playing the riff.

The title tune opens with a fuzz-rock, rhythm-section riff, then the ensemble plays an elegant melody which leads into a number of excellent solos over a fuzz guitar-infused background. The slower *Healing Chant: The Resurrection* begins with a beautiful bass clarinet line that turns into a duet with trombone (Jean-Nicolas Trottier), then moves into an exquisitely lyrical guitar solo from Nicolas Ferron.

Augmented Reality is an excellent album which combines superb performances from all musicians with a range of intelligent and varied compositions from Deschamps. It both swings and rocks.

Ted Parkinson

Worldview
Avataar
InSound Records IS005
(sundarmusic.com)



► Award-winning Toronto world-jazz group Avataar is led by the multiple Juno-nominated saxophonist, bansurist, vocalist and composer Sundar Viswanathan who writes all the band's charts. On *Worldview* he's supported by an all-star ensemble including Michael Occhipinti (electric guitar), Justin Gray (bass), Todd Pentney (piano, synth, Rhodes), Aaron Lightstone (oud), Ravi Naimpally (tabla) and Max Senitt (drums & percussion).

Felicity Williams' tasty vocal top lines are very effective in adding human colour and harmony to the instrumentals. Her straw-coloured diaphanous soprano elevates *Innocents (12/14/12)*, *Blue As It Ever Was* and the other tracks she's featured on.

Viswanathan's vision for the album "is a musical commentary on the state of our world, on the pandemic, and on the inability of our leaders to lead with integrity, honesty, and compassion." Several tracks including *Song Song*, *Little Kurdi (for Alan Kurdi)* and *A Safe Space For Children (For All)* were inspired not only by childhood nostalgia and saudade but also by "the honesty and fragility of children faced by a world of uncertainty and confusion created by adults."

While *Worldview* is embedded in a framework of contemporary jazz and its musical

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

La Grazia Delle Donne
Ensemble la Cigale and Myriam Leblanc
This is a collection of wonderful works by female composers of the Baroque era. Soprano Myriam Leblanc joins the ensemble with her warm voice.

Scarlatti: Essercizi per garvicembalo
Hank Knox
Knox's recording highlights Scarlatti's technically demanding work composed with the intent of a study in technique, resulting in a spectacular showcase of virtuosic performance.

Bach au Pardessus de viole
Mélisande Corriveau ; Eric Milnes
This album revisits various of the composer's sonatas in the rare but no less authentic colors of the pardessus de viole.

New Jewish Music, Vol. 3 Azrieli Music Prizes
Nouvel Ensemble Moderne and Lorraine Vaillancourt
This beautiful album features world premiere of the winning composers of the 2020 edition of Azrieli Music Prizes interpreted by Nouvel ensemble Moderne.

kin, echoes of the musical traditions of India, Africa, the Middle East and Brazil are never far away. Viswanathan's evocative bansuri (Hindustani bamboo transverse flute), Aaron Lightstone's oud solo and Ravi Naimpally's supportive tabla playing are examples of how inextricably – and beautifully – these elements are woven into the fabric of the music.

Andrew Timar

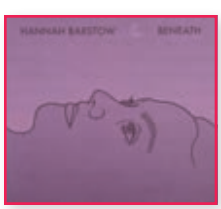
Stir Crazy
Heavyweights Brass Band
Slammin' Media
(heavyweightsbrassband.com)

► The Toronto-based Heavyweights Brass Band always brings the spunk and this latest release definitely doesn't fall short in that respect! Featuring rhythms that get you moving and a mix of unexpected covers as well as original compositions, this album is a tantalizing musical journey that you'll find you just can't get enough of. Most tracks have been arranged or written by saxophonist Paul Metcalfe or tubist Tom Richards which really draws attention to the fact that the songs are driven heavily by prominent tuba riffs.

Opening the album is catchy *Sweet Pauly's Boogaloo*, a fitting introduction to the musical virtuosity showcased throughout the record. *Feel Like Makin' Love* is a cover of the great soul and R&B vocalist Roberta Flack's tune, featuring an amped-up bass line and a captivating groove, courtesy of Richards and drummer Lowell Whitty. The title track is a tune that truly brings forth every musician's talents; with soaring trumpet and saxophone melodies conjured by John Pittman on the former and Metcalfe on the latter, as well as a winding and rhythmically complex tuba line from Richards. The band is known for collaborating with famed musicians and this time is no different; rounding out the throwback and vintage sound of the album is Joel Visentin (of JV's Boogaloo Squad fame) on the unique Hammond C3 organ. For the fan of contemporary jazz looking for an energizing boost, this is a great addition to the collection.

Kati Kiilaspea

Beneath
Hannah Barstow; Mike Murley; Reknee Irene Harrett; Keith Barstow
Independent (hannahbarstow.com)



► It's always refreshing to see younger talents in the music world finding their places and voices and Hannah Barstow has done just that on her latest release. The album showcases her talents as a pianist, vocalist and composer; tracks range from calming and mellow to fast-paced and positively toe-tapping – a perfect accompaniment to the dreary days that are upon us. Supported by a band of well-known musicians such as Mike Murley on saxophones, Reknee Irene Harrett on bass and Keith Barstow on drums, this record is a great addition to any jazz lover's collection. Most tracks are penned or arranged by Barstow herself, a talent that she has clearly mastered.

Starting off the album is the title track, *Beneath*, a waltz-flavoured tune that shines a spotlight on the vocalist's warm and sultry timbre and how it intertwines with her flowing piano melodies. Throughout the record is the way in which Barstow manages to give an expressive voice to the piano, almost as if there was a second vocalist accompanying her and blending with her own vocals. A standout track is *Love Can Never Lose*, featuring a faster tempo and a catchy swing feel carried by Harrett's bass riffs and Barstow's dance-worthy rhythms. *For Now* brings the album to a fitting close, with an intricate melody that brings forth hopeful and positive vibes for the future and for what else is in store from this talented young musician.

Kati Kiilaspea

Montréal Jazz Trio
Steve Amirault; Adrian Vedady; Jim Doxas
Odd Sound ODS-20 (steveamirault.com)

► Montreal has always been a unique city, maintaining a consistent and identifiable character amidst a cultural melting pot. Tourists from elsewhere in North America point out European aspects, those from Western Canada observe its truly Quebecois nature, and this Toronto-born writer always notices an American grit to the island metropolis. All of these influences and more are present in the music created by pianist Steve Amirault, bassist Adrian Vedady and drummer Jim Doxas, who make up the Montréal Jazz Trio.

This latest self-titled offering from the group features originals, arrangements of jazz standards, and two of Amirault's pieces – *All Those Lovely Things* and *Nowhere* – based on well-known progressions from the genre. The latter of those tracks features a beautiful bass solo from Vedady, which prefaces him taking the melody of *Wray*, a tribute to pianist Wray Downes. Other originals include *Empathy* and *Soho Dreams* by Amirault, which are both melodic and modern sounding. Alongside his role as the trio's drummer, Doxas mixed the nine tracks heard on the recording at his home away from home, the *Boutique de Son* studio on Montréal's West Island. Doxas' father George was behind the controls during the recording of the album and is renowned for the excellent sounds he achieves on countless albums per year. The production, repertoire and personnel heard on this recording give it a delightful "hundred-mile diet" sensibility, and transport its listeners to La Belle Province from wherever they may be.

Sam Dickinson

Naufragés
Alex Lefaivre Quartet
arteboreal (alexlefaivre.com)

► Alex Lefaivre's latest quartet outing is a delightfully sequenced blend of energy and lightness that makes for a compulsively listenable project. As a listener, I've found that my most memorable experiences often occur when I can tangibly sense how much musicians relish interacting with each other, and this recording is a prime example of such synergy. Lefaivre's basslines and guitarist Nicolas Ferron's rhythmically inclined blowing on standout original *Reset* serve as a wondrous showcase for two musicians who are fully engaged with each other, listening intently. Meanwhile, Alain Bourgeois' drumming is sensitive and understated, playing nothing but the bare functional necessities for most of the album's duration, releasing only the occasional outburst for the most exciting moments. The band is locked in and Lefaivre is the primary driving force behind their sound. In the compositional sense, his lines propel the forward motion of the rhythm section while anchoring the melodic content, particularly on the rather animated track *Sly*.

Lefaivre's time feel is rock-solid and assured, helping to firmly ground the ensemble during the eccentric time signatures of tracks like *Sneaked*. He also fashions the bass into a highly effective comping instrument, providing a springboard for Erik Hove's alto showcase on *Sin City*. All in all, Lefaivre has assembled both a group of artists and a set of tunes (playfully including a Led Zeppelin cover) that have allowed him to refine his band, leading chops in a very enjoyable way.

Yoshi Maclear Wall

Imaginary Structures
Levi Dover Sextet
Three Pines Records TPR-004
(levidover.com)

► In his debut as a leader, Montreal bassist Levi Dover has concocted something refreshingly original while also remaining true to his post-bop influences. From the very moment they hit the listener's ears it's apparent Dover's compositions have a methodical quality to them; every statement of a tune's central melody utilizes his entire sextet to its full expansive potential. Each line trickles into the next smoothly, as if the instrumentalists are finishing each other's sentences. Musical phrases possess the easy flow of a daily conversation between friends. Dover is a very deliberate arranger, and one of his most interesting creative decisions (that ends up being greatly to the benefit of the music) is heavily featuring two functionally similar instruments: vibraphone and piano. Additionally, pianist Andrew Boudreau and vibraphonist Olivier Salazar are often playing the same material in tandem, creating an incredible textural effect that almost feels like an aesthetic marriage of Andrew Hill and Bobby Hutcherson.

While a fair bit of Dover's ornate writing brings to mind vintage mid-60s Blue Note, his personal progressive and classical leanings also shine through on immensely electrifying standouts like *L'Appel du Vide* and *Galapagos*. Boudreau is more often than not an effective mouthpiece for Dover's vision, grounding the band through the more complex passages of rhythmic counterpoint and constantly serving as the primary accompanist for Dover's own playing. *Imaginary Structures* is beautiful, and Dover establishes himself as an artistic force throughout eight masterful ensemble performances.

Yoshi Maclear Wall

Galeanthropology
Darrell Katz & OddSong
Jazz Composers Alliance JCA1806
(darrellkatz.com)

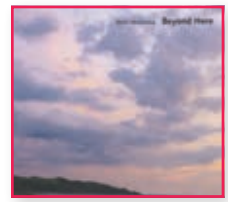
► Any considered exposé of Darrell Katz's oblique, still under-appreciated genius is always welcome, especially one that is inspired by – and evocative of – his late wife, Paula Tatarunis' poetry. *Galeanthropology* is an elliptical metaphor that connects Katz's literary and musical pursuits, from the conventional to the experimental, the mechanical to the emotional. Making a leap from that almost illusionary promontory, this repertoire traces an evolutionary arc as if falling off a proverbial cliff and is comprised of elongated melodic, harmonic inventions with the rhythmic aspect provided by the radiant mallet percussion colours of the marimba and vibraphone.

Tatarunis' extraordinarily expressive poetic canvas derives from life as a jazz cat and her lyrical canticles come alive together with Katz's stylishly delivered instrumental contributions. Making the most of Tatarunis' deeply elegant poems requires a particular sensitivity to linear shape, lyrical articulation and clarity of texture, not least in order to infuse it with the pungency of the harmonic language that this music breathes into it.

The most striking example of this is certainly not restricted to the song *Galeanthropology* with its quote from Charlie Parker's iconic, *Ornithology*. Katz's ingenious hipness comes alive on his especially free-floating take on Charles Mingus' *Duke Ellington's Sound of Love*, James Taylor's *Sweet Baby James* and the traditional *I Am a Poor Wayfaring Stranger*; the latter being a profoundly consequential musical experience for the listener. The elegantly idiomatic performance all around is fronted by Rebecca Shrimpton's lustrous, poignantly executed vocals.

Raul da Gama

Beyond Here
Beth McKenna
Independent (bethmckenna.ca)



► Beth McKenna really showcases her versatility as a bandleader, writer and improviser on her most recent effort, *Beyond Here*. Throughout the record, the sextet of McKenna on woodwinds, François Jalbert on guitar, Guillaume Martineau on keys, Oliver Babaz on bass, Peter Colantonio on drums and Sarah Rossy on voice, manages to generate a versatile sound that often borders on the sublime. The album's mood changes significantly but never in a manner that feels jarring, as the unwavering richness of the arrangements and production helps maintain cohesion.

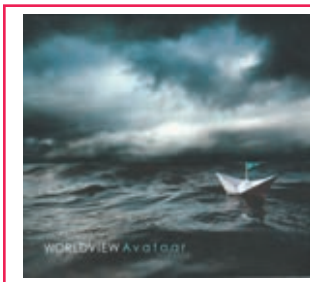
McKenna's care for her craft ensures that the ensemble thrives as a unit, and her graciousness as a bandleader allows the spotlight to be evenly distributed among musicians. Rossy's talents are featured most sparingly, but they are perhaps utilized most effectively, often at the end of pieces when the energy reaches its apex. McKenna and Colantonio's impassioned playing complements the overall tone beautifully and adds a fair bit of substance to the music. The overall quality of improvisation is outstanding, particularly with the breathtaking interplay between members of the rhythm section in tracks such as *From Divided to One*.

Yoshi Maclear Wall

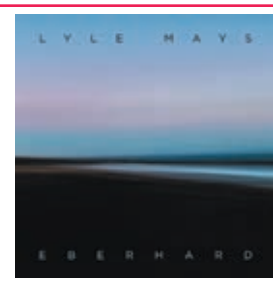
What we're listening to this month: thewholenote.com/listening

Songbook
Dizzy & Fay
Songbook - The debut album by Canadian jazz songwriting duo Dizzy & Fay. 12 original songs written as a love letter to the American Songbook.

Augmented Reality
Benjamin Deschamps
This album takes a more electric, powerful and lyrical direction. The sextet formation delivers introspective, robust and ingenious original compositions.



Worldview
Avatar
In an innovative marriage of ancient and modern, jazz and world music intersects with cinematic atmospheres and soaring melodies, creating fresh, emotive sonic experiences.



Eberhard
Lyle Mays
Lyle Mays' final recording "Eberhard" is a 13-minute, multi-movement work featuring 16 musicians, in tribute to the great German bass player Eberhard Weber.

Searching for the Disappeared Hour
Sylvie Courvoisier; Mary Halvorson
Pyroclastic Records PR 17
(pyroclasticrecords.com)

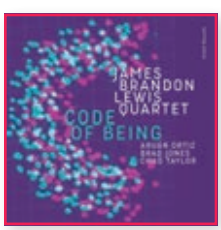
► Swiss pianist Sylvie Courvoisier and American guitarist Mary Halvorson are distinguished members of an emergent elite, technically brilliant, creative musicians whose work freely combines improvisation and global musical materials. *Searching for the Disappeared Hour* – its fold-out graphic presents eerie gouache renderings of clocks by artist Dike Blair – achieves a startling, even utopian, elegance, merging their precise articulation, lyric sensibilities and refined timbres with Halvorson's strange electronic pitch-bending and Courvoisier's percussive invention breaking through the refined surface.

There's a hint of hypnotic unease in Halvorson's opening *Golden Proportion*, matching obsessive repetition with a dissonant undercurrent. Courvoisier's *Lulu's Second Theorem* postulates a common ground for bop phrasing and spectral harmonies, while her gorgeous *Moonbow* constructs a series of imaginary worlds in sound. The fluid dance of Halvorson's *Torrential* might be the perfect complement to scenes from Fellini, until the sepulchral thrum of a piano bass note, suggesting Ravel's *infante défunte*, anchors the glassy upper-register runs. Halvorson's fondness for the clash of quarter tones against the piano's fixed pitches is particularly lush in her own scores, as if the disappearing hours of the title might be measured in the cycles per second of her bending guitar pitches. In the improvised *Four-Point Play*, Courvoisier's rhythmic knocks and clusters become the unpredictable element while Halvorson's rapid runs become the constant.

There's a sense of the uncanny here, as Courvoisier and Halvorson seem somehow simultaneously to perfect and reveal new sonic worlds.

Stuart Broomer

Code of Being
James Brandon Lewis Quartet
Intakt 371 (intaktrec.ch)



► Tenor saxophonist James Brandon Lewis began recording about a decade ago, around the time he finished studies at CalArts with, among others, Charlie Haden and Wadada Leo Smith, two profoundly lyrical players. Since then, Lewis has become a powerful voice reflecting the jazz tradition, his controlled intensity recalling John Coltrane circa 1964 (e.g., *Crescent*), his broad sound and emotive vibrato suggesting David S. Ware. Like them, Lewis is suspended between the creative risk of free jazz and the explosive tension of form, here using composed melodies with freely determined harmonies.

That controlled intensity is apparent from the opening *Resonance*, the group realizing multiple levels of activity, from pianist Aruán Ortiz's looming chords to the press of Brad Jones' bass and the rapid-fire, dense rush of drummer Chad Taylor's sticks across his rattling snare and cymbals, and a pulsing hi-hat cymbal receiving simultaneous attention from foot-pedal and sticks. It's Taylor's special gift, rarely heard and consistently reinforced by his collaborators, to convey both majesty and mission, grandeur and struggle, wedding a nobility of sound with underlying tension and tumult that threaten disintegration. The emotional complexity extends to *Every Atom Glows*, a glacially slow, utterly beautiful piece that expands through its fragility.

The title track is highlighted by Ortiz's densely inventive solo, its complex lines overlapping and compounding in a welling mystery that suggests Andrew Hill, specifically, but also the whole ethos of those mid-60s musicians who first fused the energies of post-bop and free jazz.

Stuart Broomer

I Insist
Kazemde George
Greenleaf Music GRE-CD-1087
(kazemdegeorge.com)

► A musician's debut album as a leader requires ample planning before ever seeing the light of day, and artists are often hyperconscious of small details since these albums provide a formal introduction to listeners. Kazemde George's release *I Insist* resists overcomplicating things musically or programming repertoire that is exceedingly eclectic for the sake of variety. Instead, listeners are treated to a balanced ten tracks of music that showcase the young saxophonist's playing and composing, and a stellar cast of his New York colleagues.

Tracks like *Coasts*, *I Insist* and *This Spring*, conjure up the hard swinging rhythms and dense harmonies heard in Miles Davis' second quintet, still sounding contemporary next to today's improvised music. *Haiti* and *Happy Birthday* are groove-based numbers, apropos on George's debut album given his beat-making alter ego *KG,B* and experience playing neo-soul alongside his fiancée, vocalist Sami Stevens, in The Love Experiment. The remaining tracks exist within the modern jazz idiom, while varying in style and arrangement, offering the listener a well-rounded album from start to finish.

When first listening, the mix/blend achieved at Big Orange Sheep in Brooklyn was not my favourite. However, this grew on me over time. The band acts as one cohesive unit throughout the album, and it is no surprise that the pieces presented have been performed live time and time again prior to entering the studio. Enjoy *I Insist* now and expect to hear more great things in the future from George!

Sam Dickinson

Station Three
Quartet Diminished
Hermes Records Her 092
(quartetdiminished.com)

► Despite the repressive theocratic regime that governs Iran, some form of music is still being performed, even progressive improvised music – as this decisive CD proves. Iranian-Canadian guitarist Ehsan Sadigh and his cohorts, soprano saxophonist/clarinetist Sohil Peyghambari, pianist Mazyar Younessi and percussionist Rouzbeh Fadavi make up Quartet Diminished. The band recorded its four extended group compositions in Tehran in a style that mixes jazz-rock fusion and purer improvisation with Persian musical overtones.

From the first track while guitar flanges, sliced string chording and cascading piano licks relate to Western music, there are also sections where Fadavi's measured thumps take on doumbek-like resonations and Peyghambari's pinched glissandi project ney-like characteristics. At the same time, there's no attempt to shoehorn textures from either tradition onto the other, merely to work out a mutual blend. So, for instance, the title track is as focused on drum press rolls, calliope-like trills from the reeds and buzzing guitar twangs as on any Middle Eastern inflections. Other tracks project R&B-like sax snarls, arena-rock-like guitar shakes, modulated drum ruffs and an exploratory interlude on *Rhapsody* which vibrates between piano key plinks and Morse code-like reed bites.

Overall, the sophistication of the performances suggests the quartet's name is a misnomer. Rather than diminishing sounds, the band is augmenting all timbres into a satisfying Persian-Western fusion.

Ken Waxman

POT POURRI

Forever
Bill McBirnie; Bruce Jones
Extreme Flute EF09-EP (extremeflute.com)

▶ This is the third Extreme Flute release, and on this new musical salvo, all of the compositions were penned by Bruce Jones, who also produces, performs on guitar, percussion and synths. Co-producer Bill McBirnie performs masterfully here on flute and alto flute, along with Robin Latimer on electric bass. As COVID was in full throttle during the actual recording of this CD, the production process was complex, and involved countless exchanges of sound files between McBirnie and Jones. The material here has a lovely Brazilian bent – purposely chosen by McBirnie and Jones for the music's healing and optimistic properties in a time of global pandemic.

First up is *Criole Blessing (Saravá Criola)*, a lilting, reggae-infused samba that generates pure joy and features gymnastic soloing from McBirnie and a potent rhythmic background from Jones. Also a stunner is the legato and sensual samba, dedicated to McBirnie's wife, *Song for Svetlana (Um Choro Para Svetlana)* which is rife with lovely exchanges between alto flute and guitar.

Of special mention is the delightful, contemporized bossa, *It's the Time (Saber Se Amar)* in which McBirnie soars over the chord changes and rhythmic patterns of this thoroughly elating tune, and also *Dreams and Light (Canta Canção)* a beautiful balladic bossa with a thrilling rhythmic backbone and mystical percussion.

The closer, *Full Moon Blue Wolf (Lua Cheia Lobo Azul)* features deep Brazilian-inspired vocals by the multi-talented Jones and McBirnie's dynamic and elastic soloing in concentric circles of melody and percussion.

Lesley Mitchell-Clarke

In Relation To
Big Space
Independent (bigspaceband.com)

▶ The latest Big Space album, *In Relation To*, is equal parts technically impressive and refreshingly easy on the ears. Tastefully incorporating elements of math-rock, post-rock and funk into their blend of fusion, the trio's firm grasp of the songwriting process is consistently on display. Despite recording live in studio with no overdubbing, the airtight rhythm section, composed of drummer Ashley Chalmers, bassist Ian Murphy and guitarist Grant King, manage to remain in near-perfect lockstep with each other throughout. Thankfully, their outstanding proficiency as a unit doesn't end up as a vehicle for listless noodling. Instead, it greatly enhances the overall clarity of the musical ideas. The track *Relevator* is a masterclass in tension and release. Largely buoyed by the tandem of Chalmers and Murphy, Big Space repeatedly establishes a memorable, stripped-down groove that eventually builds to multiple, expertly realized climaxes. During these synchronized bursts of sublime energy, King's commanding solos manage to spearhead the band's gargantuan sound without once crossing the line into overplaying. The musicians' combination of precision and restraint along with their knack for melody writing gives *In Relation To* a distinct, beguiling quality.

Yoshi Maclear Wall

Amir ElSaffar – The Other Shore
Rivers of Sound Orchestra; Amir Elsaffar
Outhere Music OTN 640
(outhere-music.com)

▶ Amir ElSaffar's exquisite recording begins – most appropriately – in the wispy smoke of a prayer (*Dhuha*), heralding that time when the sun is at its zenith. The ululations of his near falsetto voice are the perfect setting for this supernatural music. ElSaffar is an astute composer, vocalist and trumpeter who also plays the santur, a Middle Eastern version of the zither.

What is most remarkable about this music is its swirling, alchemical fusion of mugami modes, mystical, microtonal music that stands in stark contrast to the Western pentatonic scale. That ElSaffar has managed to gather together a group of musicians from diverse backgrounds who play his proverbial Zen – or Sufi – creations with idiomatic brilliance is a testament not just to the musicians who play it, but also to the fact that ElSaffar can write music from such a deep niche while still having universal appeal.

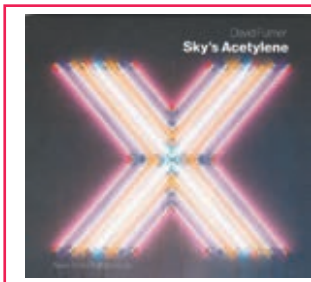
Part of the reason for that is that humanity is riven by a universal, existential angst that has literally ripped humanity apart. ElSaffar intends for us to listen with our hearts; to make amends and be transformed into more spiritual beings.

To this end his suite leads us onward and upward. His swirling dervish-like *Concentric* drives us to what Plato once called divine madness. The composer suggests this magical state may be attained with *Medmi*, the mesmerizing contemplative finale of this singularly eloquent and symphonic work that takes us to *The Other Shore*.

Raul da Gama

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

The Space in Which to See
Borderlands Ensemble
Tucson based Borderlands Ensemble formed to foster connections across disciplines and music communities that have traditionally been separated.



The Sky's Acetylene
David Fulmer
Commissioned and premiered by The New York Philharmonic as part of their CONTACT! series, this EP release celebrates this kaleidoscopic work

Mangetsu
Duo Della Luna
Remarkable versatility and integrated ensemble approach to a rarefied instrumental combination, with both musicians taking advantage of their impressive range.

Unsnared Drum
Michael Compitello
Reframes how people think about, perform, and practice the snare drum, freeing the drum from its historical and idiomatic chains.

Open House
The Fretless
Birthday Cake BDAY037CD
(thefretless.com)

► Canadian Juno award-winning string quartet The Fretless is Trent Freeman (fiddle/viola), Karrnnel Sawitsky (fiddle/viola) Ben Plotnick (fiddle/viola) and Eric Wright (cello). Each member is a technical and musical virtuoso. Together they transform stereotypical classical ensemble instrumental and roots music sounds into new sonic forms. The Fretless continue their musical explorations in this, their sixth release, collaborating with vibrant powerful singers on ten tracks of carefully chosen, arranged, performed and produced covers.

The arrangements are clearly influenced by a wide range of styles. *Retrograde*, featuring Ruth Moody, is a slower work with held string notes, melodies and plucks colourfully mixing with Moody's vocals and closing humming. *Dirty Work* is a short dramatic new take on the Steely Dan tune with Freddie & Francine singing fast clean vocals against repeated instrumental grooves and a guitar solo reminiscent background strings. Less intense instrumentals put the spotlight on The Bros. Landreth singing their own *Let it Lie*, another more straightforward roots rendition. Alessia Cara's *Stay* gets upbeat, rocking wailing by Nuela Charles as the quartet supports with repeated chordal textures and held low-note swells. Closing track *Fall Away Blues*, with guests Red Tail Ring, including its composer Laurel Premo, has classical music reminiscent of background strings and countermelodies until a fast flourish mid-section with a bit of welcome instrumental improv showcasing the quartet's diverse talents.

Thank you to The Fretless for providing the vocalists the opportunity to develop and record songs with them. Outstanding music.

Tiina Kiik

Grateful
Caroline Wiles
Independent (carolinewiles.com)

► Ontario-based, self-taught musician and songwriter Caroline Wiles performs her musical heart out with lush lead and harmony vocals, and clear guitar/harmonica playing in her fifth release, *Grateful*. Nine tracks are her own compositions, which run the sound spectrum from 60s-70s-80s' flavoured pop to country, and one Gordon Lightfoot cover, all recorded by her longtime Hamilton, Grant Avenue Studio producer/bassist/multi-instrumentalist Bob Doidge.

Wiles' melodies and storytelling lyrics are heartwarming. A highlight is the earworm title track *Grateful*, dedicated to her sister, featuring positive real-life sentiments like "I am so grateful for you," a feeling we can all relate to. *Make a Memory with Me* is an upbeat 70s tune with wide-ranging high/low pitched vocals and singalong la-la-la sections. *What Could Have Been* is a radio-friendly pop song with a solo voice alternating with her own group vocals singing "I may never win" to a final held note. Country style *Lovey Dovey*, has solo and full harmonic sung sections and full band instrumentals featuring Shane Guse fiddle backdrop and solo interludes. It is so admirable that Wiles has recorded her first-ever cover, Gordon Lightfoot's *Talking in Your Sleep,* as a respectful tribute to the Canadian icon. Her perfect diction and vocal colours are emotional as bandmember Amy King's vocal harmony/solo piano stylings keep the mood. Lightfoot has complimented Wiles for all her performances here.

Precise intonation, smooth rich vocal colour, enthusiastic instrumental performances and easy listening songs make *Grateful* a release for listeners of all ages.

Tiina Kiik

Songs from Home
Polky
Independent n/a (polkyband.com)

► Polky – "Polish women" in English – is a Canadian folk band started by three Polish-Canadian musicians, singer Ewelina Ferenc, dancer/singer Alicja Stasiuk and multi-instrumentalist Marta Solek. This is their first full-length recording and the six-piece band, with four special guests, energetically perform uniquely passionate music drawing on their Polish musical roots, various Eastern/Central European musics and that of the multicultural Canadian setting they call home for their musical influences.

Featured are nine Polky arranged/composed traditional Polish compositions. Opening track *Hej z pola z pola* is an eloquent introduction with Ferenc's written chantlike vocals above guest Wojciech Lubertowicz's haunting duduk drone. Then an upbeat fast polka change of pace in an arrangement of traditional Polish *Oj Musialas*. Vocal solo, choral full answer, energetic vocal squeals, full bass and drum cymbal rings add to its fun feel. Slow instrumental start, full vocals and sudden shift to fast polka in *Jewish Polka*, with Georgia Hathaway's violin and Tangi Ropars' accordion adding to the joyful sound. *Rain*, one of two original tunes, is composed by Solek. String plucks, repeated wind notes, bass groove and vocals build to final quiet instrumental rain drops. Bassist Peter Klaassen drives and holds the band together in the closing more traditional upbeat polka rendition of *Wishing Kasia* with his strong groove supporting group vocals and alternating instrumental solos to the closing loud accent.

Polky musically incorporates the love of all their homes' traditional music into their own luminous original sound. Canadian Folk Music Awards 2022 nominations in three categories!

Tiina Kiik

Folk for Little Folk Volume 1
Gordie Crazylegs MacKeeman
Independent n/a (gordiemackeeman.com/site/albums)

► Uplifting joyous energetic musical surprises abound as superstar East Coast fiddler/singer/dancer/composer Gordie "Crazylegs" MacKeeman directs his musical energies to kids and their families in 17 songs. MacKeeman is a father and, when not performing, has worked for ten years as a daycare teacher seeing, as he writes in the liner notes, "a lack of variety in children's music." I too spent years teaching daycare music and agree, kids enjoy musical variety. I love what MacKeeman has accomplished here, as he sings and fiddles in many styles like folk, bluegrass and country. He is joined by numerous musicians, including two Gordie McKeeman and His Rhythm Boys bandmates, Peter Cann (guitar) and Tom Webb (banjo/pedal steel).

All Around the Kitchen has upbeat traditional East Coast old-time MacKeeman fiddling, and hilarious cock-a-doodle-doo female vocals. More traditional fiddling with high-pitch fiddle sections in *Listen to the Mockingbird*. Fiddle and guitar solos between MacKeeman's robust singing in his really fast rendition of *Hokey Pokey* encourages boisterous listener participation. Classic singalong rendition of *Log Driver's Waltz* sets the mood for "chair dancing." A cappella vocals and sounds of trickling/splashing water create a hilarious change of pace in *Dancing in the Bathtub*. MacKeeman's composition *Boogie Woogie Baby* uses the title words as lyrics, making it easy for kids of all ages to sing and dance to its walking groove feel. His relaxing waltz *Dreamland* closes with tinkly piano.

MacKeeman's children's release is perfect! More please!

Tiina Kiik

Something in the Air

Japanese Improvised Music Has Taken and Still Takes Many Surprising Forms

KEN WAXMAN

Since at least after World War Two, the skill of Japanese players of every type of music has been unquestioned, and it's the same for jazz and improvised music. However since non-notated music's bias has been North American and European-centred, except for the few who moved to the US, numerous Japanese innovators are unknown outside the islands. But these discs provide an overview of important players' sounds and the evolution of the form.

Although arriving from a dissimilar tradition, free-form experiments were common in 1960s Japan with several avant-garde ensembles throughout the country. One player who tried for more international renown was trumpeter **Itaru Oki** (1941-2020). He relocated to France in 1974 and was soon playing with locals. Occasionally he returned to gig in Japan, and **Live at Jazz Spot Combo 1975 (NoBusiness NBCD 143 nobusinessrecords.com)** reproduces one of those visits. Playing with drummer Hozumi Tanaka who was part of his Japanese trio, bassist Keiki Midorikawa and, crucially, alto saxophonist/flutist Yoshiaki Fujikawa, Oki's quartet roams through five themes and improvisations. The trumpeter's truculent flutters set the pace with speedy arabesques in counterpoint to slithery flute flutters. While keeping the exposition horizontal, the trumpeter prolongs intensity with triplets and half-valve effects. Backed by sul tasto bass string rubs and percussion slaps, Fujikawa is even more assertive beginning with *Combo Session 2*, where initial saxophone concordance with trumpet puffs soon dissolves into strangled reed cries and irregular vibrations. Dragging an emotional response from Oki, both horns are soon exfoliating the narrative, seconded by cymbal shivers. But the four stay rooted enough in jazz to recap the head after cycling through theme variations. These opposing strategies are refined throughout the rest of this live set. But no matter how often the saxophonist expresses extended techniques such as doits and spetrofluctuation, linear expression prevents aural discomfort. In fact, the concluding *Combo Session 5* could be termed a free jazz ballad. While Oki's tonal delineation includes higher pitches and more note expansion than a standard exposition, at points he appears to be channelling *You Don't Know What Love Is*. That is, until Midorikawa's power pumps, Tanaka's clapping ruffs and the saxophonist's stentorian whistles and snarls turn brass output to plunger emphasis leading to a stimulating rhythmic interlude. With trumpet flutters descending and reed trills ascending a unison climax is reached.

Flash forward 15 years and more instances of first generation Japanese free music are on **Live at Jazz Inn Lovely 1990 (NoBusiness NBCD 135 nobusinessrecords.com)**. In one way it was a reunion between two pioneering improvisers, guitarist **Masayuki Jojo Takayanagi** (1932-1991), who began mixing noise emphasis and free improvisation in the mid-1960s with in-your-face groups featuring the likes of saxophonist Kaoru Abe and pianist **Masabumi Puu Kikuchi** (1939-2015). **Kikuchi evol**ved a quieter style after moving to the US in the late 1980s and this was the first time the guitarist and pianist played together since 1972. Problem was that this was a Takayanagi duo gig with longtime bassist Nobuyoshi Ino until Kikuchi decided to sit in, creating some understandable friction. Agitation simmers beneath the surface adding increased tautness to the already astringent sounds. This is especially obvious on the trio selections when the guitarist's metallic single lines become even chillier and rawer. Initially more reserved, Kikuchi's playing soon accelerates to percussive comping, then key clangs and clips, especially on the concluding *Trio II*. For his part, Ino serves as a bemused second to these sound duelists, joining an authoritative walking bass line and subtly advancing swing to that final selection. On the duo tracks, he and the guitarist display extrasensory connectivity. He preserves chromatic motion with buzzing stops or the occasional cello-register arco sweep. Meanwhile with a minimum of notes, Takayanagi expresses singular broken chord motion or with slurred fingers interjects brief quotes from forgotten pop tunes. On *Duo II* as well, Ino's string rubs move the theme in one direction while Takayanagi challenges it with a counterclockwise pattern. Still, fascination rests in the piano-guitar challenges with Kikuchi's keyboard motion arpeggio-rich or sometime almost funky, while Takayanagi's converse strategies take in fluid twangs, cadenced strumming and angled flanges.

Abandoning chordal instruments and concentrating on horn textures, **Live at Little John, Yokohama 1999 (NoBusiness NBCD 144 nobusinessrecords.com)** provides an alternative variant of Nipponese free music. Backed only by the resourceful drumming of **Shota Koyama**, a trio of wind players creates almost limitless tonal variants singly, in tandem or counterpoint. Best known is tenor saxophonist **Mototeru Takagi** (1941-2002), who was in Takayangi's New Direction Unit and in a duo with percussionist Sabu Toyozumi. The others who would later adopt more conventional styles are **Susumu Kongo** who plays alto saxophone, flute and bass clarinet, and **Nao Takeuchi** on tenor saxophone, flute and bass clarinet. No compromising of pure improvisation is heard on this CD's three lengthy selections, although there are times when flute textures drift towards delicacy and away from the ratcheting peeps expelled elsewhere. Whether pitched in the lowing chalumeau register or squeaking clarion split tones, clarinet textures add to the dissonant sound mosaic. This isn't anarchistic blowing however, since the tracks are paced with brief melodic interludes preventing the program from

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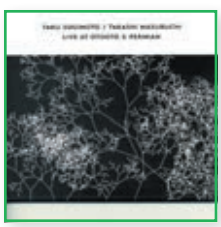
Spirits
Van Stiefel
A collection of his own performances of layered compositions developed in his home recording studio.

American Discoveries
Lansdowne Symphony Orchestra
Celebrates previously unrecorded orchestral repertoire, featuring music by three female composers: Priscilla Alden Beach, Linda Robbins Coleman, and Alexandra Pierce.

overheating. The more than 40 minute *Yokohama Iseazaki Town* gives the quartet its greatest scope, as vibrating split tones pass from one horn to another with percussion crunches keeping the exposition chromatic. Takagi's hardened flutters and yowling vibrations may make the greatest impression, but Kongo's alto saxophone bites are emphasized as well. Although space exists for clarion clarinet puffs and transverse flute trilling, it's the largest horn's foghorn honks and tongue-slaps that prevent any extraneous prettiness seeping into the duets. Still, with canny use of counterpoint and careful layering of horn tones backed by sprawling drum raps, the feeling of control is always maintained along with the confirmation of how the balancing act between expression and connection is maintained.

Takagi's former duo partner, percussionist **Sabu Toyozumi** (b.1943) continues playing free music as he has since the mid-1960s. Recently he's formed a partnership with American alto saxophonist **Rick Countryman**, with **Misaki Castle Tower (Chap Chap Records CPCD-0190 chapchap-music.com)** the most recent session. It's fitting that one track is entitled *Ode to Kaoru Abe* since the saxophonist who overdosed at 29 in 1978 is a Charlie Parker-like free jazz avatar in Japan. While the healthy duo's homage is strictly musical, Countryman's spiralling tones, modulated squeaks and brittle reed interjections are aptly seconded by Toyozumi's hard ruffs and cymbal pops. Segues into shaking flattement, renal snarls and multiphonics characterize the saxophonist's playing on other tracks and the drummer responds with positioned nerve beats, complementary rim shots and restrained press rolls. Hushed tone elaborations, during which Countryman moves pitch upwards with every subsequent breath, distinguish the concluding *Myths of Modernization* from the preceding tracks. But the saxophonist's ability to snake between clarion peeps and muddy smears when not eviscerating horn textures, remains. The summation comes on that track, as articulated reed squeezes and stops meet irregular drum bops and ruffs.



Although they play the same instrument as Takayanagi, the sounds from **Taku Sugimoto** (electric guitar) and **Takashi Masubuchi** (acoustic guitar) on **Live at Otooto & Permian (Confront Core Series core 16 confrontrecordings.com/core-series)** reflects a new minimalist genre of Japanese improvisation. Called Onkyo, which loosely translates as quiet noise, it's as introspective as free jazz is brash. Through a sophisticated use of voltage drones, string percussion and harmonic transformation, these two guitarists prevent the five selections recorded at two Tokyo clubs from being bloodless. With the electric guitar projecting a buzzing undercurrent, harsh jabs, bottleneck-like twangs and inverted strums inject rhythmic and harmonic transformation into the tracks even as the narratives unroll horizontally. While the gradual evolution is rigid, there are sequences as on *At Permian II*, where repetitive undulations from both join singular cells into a distant melody. Plus, by moving patterns between guitarists, the duo ensures that neither droning continuum nor singular string prods predominate, making sound transformation as logical as it is unforced.

Too often Western listeners think of unconventional Japanese music as foreign, frightening and impenetrable. As these sessions show there's actually much to explore and appreciate with close listening.

Old Wine, New Bottles

Fine Old Recordings Re-Released

BRUCE SURTEES

Many years ago, I chatted with members of the **Juilliard String Quartet** in Toronto when they were engaged to play at the recently opened North York Centre for the Performing Arts. I asked which of them was considered the "head of the quartet"? They each replied that they were all equally involved and responsible for decisions of repertoire and performance. Perhaps this is the secret to their excellence and longevity, that they all feel they are equal contributors.

The Juilliard String Quartet was neither composed of students nor members of the faculty of the elite New York conservatory, but rather founded at the instigation of William Schuman, American composer and president of the Juilliard School. His wish was to form a quartet that would "play the standard repertoire with the sense of excitement and discovery and play new works with a reverence usually reserved for the classics." Schuman found a kindred spirit in the young violinist, Robert Mann, who brought with him two former Juilliard classmates, cellist Arthur Winograd and violinist Robert Koff. They found their fourth member, Raphael Hillyer, in the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Hillyer enthusiastically switched from violin to viola to complete the ensemble.

This original Juilliard String Quartet gave their first public performance in 1947 in Tanglewood, introduced by the Boston Symphony's Serge Koussevitzky. The sound of these recordings, made by Columbia in the early years of the quartet from 1949 to 1956, is remarkably immediate and strikingly fresh. Some of the works may be new to a few collectors but every opus on these 16 well-chosen recordings enjoys an outstanding performance. The repertoire, featuring the Juilliard and a number of their colleagues, is as Schuman envisioned, including, not unexpectedly, two works of his own.

Here are all the works to be heard on these 16 CDs in the order in which they appear. Notice that this is not a potpourri of the usual repertoire of best-loved pieces but includes performances of many compositions that were new then. The opening work is Darius Milhaud's *Cantate de l'enfant et de la mere, Op.185* with text by the Belgian poet Maurice Carême. It is for speaker, piano and string quartet and had premiered in Brussels in 1938 with the Pro Arte Quartet and the composer's wife Madeleine as speaker. Columbia made this recording two days before Christmas in 1949 in New York with Madeleine, pianist Leonid Hambro and the Juilliard all directed by Milhaud himself. A second Milhaud opus is *The Household Muse*, a collection of five pleasant piano pieces each lasting less than two minutes, played by Milhaud and recorded in 1945.

The complete Bartók *String Quartets*. The set that drew attention worldwide was the premiere recording of the complete string quartets by the recently deceased Béla Bartók. The Juilliard gave the first public performance of the complete cycle in 1949. Present in the audience were Dmitri Shostakovich and Columbia's legendary producer Goddard Lieberson, who shortly afterward went on to make these recordings. This was no small event as the "Bartók Scene" was where it "was at." I had not heard the complete cycle for some time and listening and paying attention, not only the intensity of the performances but the body of sound and the feeling of the players being right there, is captivating.

The next works are Berg's *Lyric Suite* and Ravel's *String Quartet in F Major*. For Aaron Copland's *Sextet for Clarinet, Piano and String*

Quartet the Juilliard is joined by David Oppenheim and pianist Hambro. A composer named Ellis Kohs (1916-2000) is represented by his *Chamber Concerto for Viola and String Quartet*, with Ferenc Molnar solo viola. The abovementioned Schuman's *String Quartet No.4* is follow by *Ingolf Dahl's Concerto a Tre* for clarinet, violin and cello with Mitchell Lurie, Eudice Shapiro and Victor Gottlieb. The complete string quartets of Arnold Schoenberg are followed by Anton Webern's *Three Movements for String Quartet* and Alban Berg's *String Quartet No.3*. Mann recalls an encounter with Arnold Schoenberg after a session when they were recording his four string quartets: "After we finished... we waited anxiously. He was silent for a while. Eventually he said with a smile 'I really must admit that you played it in a way I never conceived it... but you know, I like how you play it so much that I'm not going to say a word about how I think, because I want you to keep playing in that manner.'" These recordings from 1951-52 comprise three discs in this box set.

Reading lists like this one can surely become tiresome to the reader but I can assure you that listening to all these works, not in one sitting of course, was a pleasure. These are fine performances meeting Schuman's original ideals quoted above. But wait, there's more...

More American music from Leon Kirchner (*String Quartet No.1*) played by the American Art Quartet. Then we return to the Juilliard themselves with Irving Fine's *String Quartet*, Peter Mennin's *String Quartet No.2* and Andrew Imbrie's *String Quartet No.1*. And then, at last, Mozart – *String Quartet No.20 K499* and *No.21 K575*, providing a breath of fresh air and respite from the somewhat craggy modernism that dominates the discs. But after that refreshing pause we're back in the thick of the 20th century with Virgil Thomson's *String Quartet No.2* and our old friend William Schuman's piano cycle, *Voyage*, in five movements played by Beverage Webster.

The penultimate disc features Alexei Haieff's *String Quartet No.1* and Samuel Barber's *Hermit Songs Op.29* sung by the incomparable Leontyne Price accompanied by the composer on piano. Columbia/Sony wraps up this collection with the Lukas Foss *String Quartet No.1* with the American Art Quartet and finishes with the Juilliard performing William Bergsma's *String Quartet No.3*. **Juilliard String Quartet – The Early Columbia Recordings 1949-1956 (Sony Classical 194398311029 16 CDs, amazon.com/Early-Columbia-Recordings-Various-Artists/dp/B08YLZW1YY)**

OTHER FINE VINTAGES

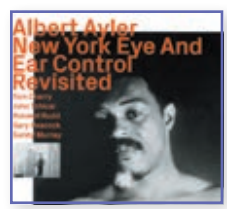
After Hours 1966
Norm Amadio Trio + Tommy Ambrose
Panda Digital PDCD0291 (pandadigital.com)

► A stalwart of the Toronto jazz and live music community, the late Norm Amadio is captured here on *After Hours 1966* in the kind of fine form that hundreds of musicians locally and such visiting American players as Stan Getz and Coleman Hawkins (among many others) experienced when working with Amadio on the bandstands and jam sessions of any number of Toronto clubs over the numerous decades of his storied career. Capturing some of the long ornamented piano lines and furious comping that made him a bebop soloist and accompanist of choice for so many, Amadio is joined on this recording by bassist Bob Price and drummer Stan Perry, occasionally in support of vocalist (and longtime Amadio collaborator) Tommy Ambrose.

The compositions, all of which were written by Andrew Meltzer (including one with lyrics by journalist and Order of Canada Member George Jonas), all move harmonically and melodically like standards, that is to say the music of the gilded fraternity of tunesmiths who wrote for the Broadway stage, that jazz musicians love to perform and extemporize upon. Accordingly, everyone here plays beautifully and in a relaxed manner that imbues a sense of intimacy and familiarly. For Melzer, this release is a dream that dates back to when he was a 60-year-old songwriter in conversation with Amadio about doing this recording on the stage of Toronto's The Cellar club. For the rest of us, this album is a welcome addition to our collection of great Toronto jazz from yesteryear and a testament to Amadio's amazing musicianship.

Andrew Scott

New York Eye and Ear Control Revisited
Albert Ayler
ezz-thetics 1118 (hathut.com)



► A movie soundtrack that's as acclaimed as the film for which it was conceived, 1964's *New York Eye and Ear Control* has maintained its reputation for both the distinctive quality of Toronto artist/pianist Michael Snow's experimental film, and the unique ensemble which improvised its soundtrack. Following Snow's instructions to create an improvised score, New York's top free jazz players of the time – cornetist/trumpeter Don Cherry, trombonist Roswell Rudd, alto saxophonist John Tchicai, tenor saxophonist Albert Ayler, bassist Gary Peacock and drummer Sunny Murray – rose to the challenge.

Part of the disc's longstanding appeal is the unfiltered reed extensions from Ayler, who emerges as first among equals in the group, even though it's one of the saxophonist's few non-leadership sessions.

Although free jazz at its freest, the tracks' sounds aren't formless, with the nephritic honks of Ayler's saxophone serving as thematic leitmotif throughout. Other than that, the sound narrative is expressed by contrasting guttural snarls and low-pitched bites from Ayler, sometimes seconded by Tchicai's snaky split tones, while Cherry's shrill rips and flutters propel melodic and linear interludes. Rudd's smeary triplets are heard sparingly, most conspicuously on *A Y* in an up-and-down duet with Peacock, whose systematic rhythmic thumps likewise stay in the background. Not Murray, whose drum rolls and ruffs frequently punctuate the ongoing group narratives. Balanced experimentation like the film, the session confirms its structure when Ayler ends it by recapping the subterranean growl which begins the program.

Ken Waxman

Down to Earth
Time Warp
Cornerstone Records CFST CD 159 (cornerstonerecordsinc.com)

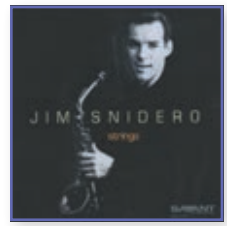
► Formed in 1980 by drummer Barry Elmes and bassist Al Henderson as a forum for their compositions, Time Warp became one of the leading Canadian jazz bands of its era. Rooted in hard and post-bop, it also integrated world music materials, including Asian, African and Latin American elements. Initially a trio with Bob Brough, the group added Mike Murley in 1985, giving it a particular snarl when the two saxophonists both played tenors. *Down to Earth* was originally released on cassette, but the rediscovered original tapes have been restored, remixed and remastered for this CD.

The compositional emphasis shows in the brevity of the treatments, with ten tracks packed into 45 minutes, but the concentration intensifies the music. Henderson and Elmes create masterful grooves, apparent from the outset on Elmes' *Blue Mustard*, a soul jazz demonstration of the drive of twinned tenor saxophonists. There's even more evidence of jazz showing its blues roots on Henderson's *Muddy's Blues*, complete with mimetic honks and wails from the saxophones. There's variety as well, though, with the Japanese undercurrent to *Black Koto*, the high-speed bop of *Sonny's Tune* and *Backlash* and the moody *Solar Wind*. There's an added rhythmic complexity to *Nightwing*, a slightly Latinate feature for Brough's alto saxophone, and *Clunker*, which brings Henderson and Elmes to the foreground.

Time Warp's personnel altered through the following years, with leaders Elmes and Henderson as the constants; their last release, *Warp IX*, marked their 20th anniversary in 2000. Cornerstone is currently reissuing their earlier recordings.

Stuart Broomer

Strings
Jim Snidero
Savant Records SCD 2199 (jimsnidero.com)



► On September 10, 2001 alto saxophonist Jim Snidero could not have predicted what a trajectory this album would take. Set to record on September 11 in New York City, unexpectedly postponed due to the tragic circumstances, this fine album was originally released in 2003 and reissued on September 10, 2021. A lot can happen in a musician's career and the world itself in the span of 20 years but Snidero's music remains relevant and touching, depicting the weight of its times.

Originally written and arranged for a jazz quartet and a 10-piece string ensemble, the reissued version has an added double bass in the string section and an enhanced sound. I loved the sound of the strings on this album – lush, expansive, dreamy and all encompassing. Snidero's arrangements work very well in all the tunes. The album showcases six original compositions and two standards, and is heavy on the ballads. *River Suite*, comprised of three parts, is especially captivating. A homage to the Hudson River, this gorgeous music tells a story of an innermost experience. Absolutely devilish solos by drummer Bill Drummond and violinist Marc Feldman in the third part of the suite, *Torrent*, are whirling with intense energy.

Featured are some memorable solos by the fantastic Renee Rosnes (piano), Paul Gill (bass) and Tomas Ulrich (cello). Snidero's sax interacts with the strings in the most natural way. His solos demand attention and bring in lyricism to unexpected places. With just a touch of nostalgia, Snidero's compositions are sonic evocation of the times past. You will find *Strings* incredibly satisfying.

Ivana Popovic

New to the Listening Room

This Issue

Where Words Fail – Music For Healing **35**
Margaret Maria

Préludes et Solitudes **36**
Marie Nadeau-Tremblay

Beethoven: Violin Sonatas n° 4, 9 & 10 **36**
Andrew Wan and Charles Richard-Hamelin

Remembering Russia **36**
Jesus Rodolfo & Min Young Kang

La Grazia Delle Donne **38**
Ensemble la Cigale and Myriam Leblanc

Scarlatti: Essercizi per garvicembalo **39**
Hank Knox

Bach au Pardessus de viole **39**
Mélisande Corriveau ; Eric Milnes

New Jewish Music, Vol. 3 **41**
Azrieli Music Prizes

Songbook **47**
Dizzy & Fay

Augmented Reality **47**
Benjamin Deschamps

Worldview **47**
Avatar

Volume 27 no. 2

Eberhard **51**
Lyle Mays

The Space in Which to See **47**
Borderlands Ensemble

The Sky's Acetylene **45**
David Fulmer

Mangetsu **39**
Duo Della Luna

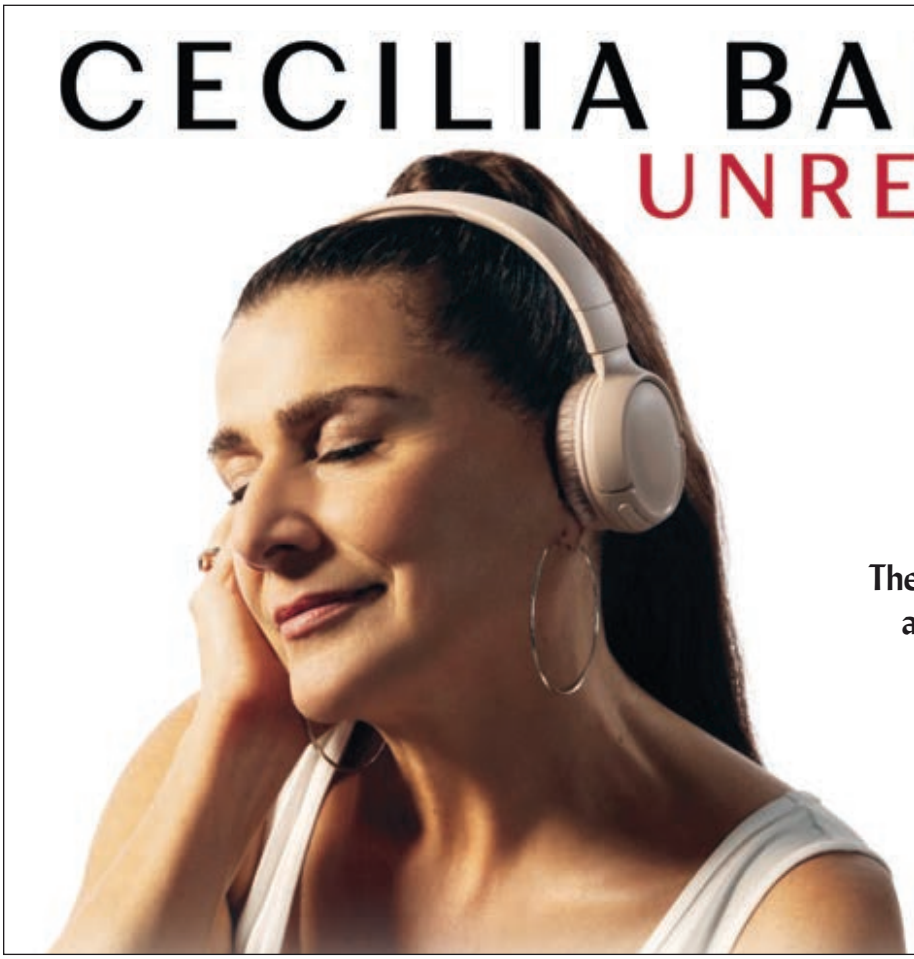
Unsnared Drum **47**
Michael Compitello

Spirits **44**
Van Stiefel

American Discoveries **45**
Lansdowne Symphony Orchestra

Read the reviews here, then visit
thewholenote.com/listening

CECILIA BARTOLI
UNRELEASED



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DECCA

Composer Ana Sokolović in conversation continued from page 11

JOHN LAUENER/QUEEN OF PUDDINGS MUSIC THEATRE

***Svadba-Wedding*: (from left) Shannon Mercer, Krisztina Szabó, Jacqueline Woodley (the bride, in front) Carla Huhtanen, Laura Albino, and Andrea Ludwig. Commissioned by Queen of Puddings Music Theatre, in June 2011 at the Berkeley Street Theatre, Toronto.**

porous. A lot of modernists are using extended techniques, which they borrow from, say, world music, folk, East European or South American nations, tribe cultures... That would technically make them post-modernists, no? We can have these conversations. But when I'm in my creative stage, it's something I don't think about. I do what I feel I have to do – what is urgent for me to do. It's a necessity, creation. That's what guides me."

So, what to say to those who say contemporary music just doesn't grab them? Or to music programmers who give living composers only the first ten minutes of a two-hour symphonic concert. "OK, but there are so many contemporary musics," she counters. "You can't decide about the entirety of visual arts by looking at one or two paintings. The tricky thing about music is, it demands time. It can't be compressed or abridged."

So composers have to open their pieces with clickbaity things, like newspaper articles? I ask. "Sometimes!" she laughs. "I think more of us are aware of this demand than we admit." And composers have to be aware that they are making music for all kinds of audiences: specialist, well-informed non-specialist, nonspecialist, and even hostile. A filled concert hall is always a mix.

Besides, composer is a fairly recent line of work, says Sokolović. "In a lot of early eras you are always something else – a cantor, an aristocrat's entertainer, a singer, an instrumentalist. I find that today a lot of composers are building their careers in that very old school way. A lot of them are working musicians, or perform their own pieces, or write 'applied' music for film. It's a very lively scene." As a professor at Université de Montréal who works with a lot of young musicians, what advice does she give them? "Now this is going to sound cheesy, sorry! The thing that's most important to me is that they are good people. And that does include traditional university fare such as composition skills, knowledge of history of music, orchestration, instruments. But I also include in that knowing how to collaborate. Being aware that you're not the centre of everything. Knowing that you'll have to work with many, many other people, that you'll have to write *for them*. You are in effect never alone. Others will be catalysts of your music. A lot of us composers say, Well I just write for myself. Well then, fine, you never have to leave the room and work with other people. But the job requires the opposite."

And how much do *you* want your music to be heard? "That's the next question," she says. "There needs to be a desire to communicate. Ask yourself, why would anyone want to hear your music? And to hear it again, and for the third time, and then maybe get the CD? I'm not talking about the commercial side of things. I'm talking about communication."

What about the notorious Milton Babbitt article "Who cares if you listen?", a phrase which haunts contemporary music like phantom tinnitus? Do composers genuinely want to communicate? "Not all music is expressive in the same way, nor should it be," Sokolović says. "Sometimes you want to create a distance, and that's OK. But your piece has to be an event of some kind. Something must happen. You're communicating something of human interest. Something that the person listening would want to experience again." We're all reacting to our own time, she says, and Babbit reacted to something in his. That context called for that article, and those particular words. "Every age has boring music, good music, all kinds of different music," she says.

Another tack: Standard gossip of late 20th-century music is, I venture, that Boulez was the alpha and omega of French musical life and that unless you were one of the "Boulez mafia" you could expect your career to be somewhat complicated. "But in Boulez's time, someone like Ligeti existed! He had a different path, while he was also a modernist. I think Ligeti, unlike numerous other 20th-century composers, is more influential now than in his own time." Was he an influence for you? "Yes, and for many others. Ligeti was hugely important for me, as was Gérard Grisey. I really feel Grisey's music."

Sokolović is one of those composers who happily seek out the work of their colleagues and students, and is always curious about what else is happening on the music scene. "Two of my former students are really interesting, Keiko Deveau and Ofer Peltz. And I went to Ostrava Days Festival last year and discovered Czech composer František Chaloupka, who is completely his own."

How does she explain the international popularity of Claude Vivier, probably the only Canadian composer regularly performed abroad these days? "I did not mention him, because it almost goes without saying, but I adore Vivier's work. I think Ligeti might have had something to do with his later rise. One of Ligeti's students, Denys Boulianne, great Canadian composer, brought Vivier's work to Ligeti's attention, and it struck Ligeti as important." What Sokolović loves about Vivier, she says, is that he found his unique voice. "Vivier at first wrote dodecaphonic music but then left Canada and went to Darmstadt to work with Stockhausen, and started composing as Vivier. He found a way to write *his own music*. Like many others, he had to leave his home to find his voice."

IN THE WORKS

The new Boston Lyric Opera production of *Svadba* will be the first cinematic version of the opera. The three-time winner of the New York Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, African-American soprano Chabrelle Williams sings Milica, who is to be married – it will transpire – to a woman. Available to stream in winter 2022.

Chabrelle Williams

The COC commission *The Old Fools*, to the libretto by Paul Bentley based on Philip Larkin's poem, is near completion – give or take a few months of work on orchestration, says Sokolović. The verses "Perhaps being old is having lighted rooms / Inside your head, and people in them, acting" inspired this story of an old man near the end of his life who's having to move out of his house into a care home. Sokolović collaborated on the shaping of the opera, across the Atlantic, with the original *Svadba* music director Dáirine Ní Mheadhra.

IRISH LANGUAGE SONG PROJECT

Dáirine Ní Mheadhra, Queen of Puddings Music Theatre

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

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Dang Thai Son on the cover of *The WholeNote, vol. 6, no. 5*

REAR VIEW MIRROR

"The great era of Canadian pianism" Reflecting on the flags we fly

ROBERT HARRIS

"The final was, he says, 'Inspiration upon inspiration. For me there was nothing to fear. Nobody knew me. It felt fresh.'"

The quote above is by a Montreal-based winner of the prestigious Warsaw Chopin Piano Competition, a Canadian citizen since 1995, reflecting on his victory. But it's not Bruce Liu, whose stunning performances in Warsaw won him first prize just a few weeks ago. It's Dang Thai Son (one of Liu's teachers, as it happens), as quoted in *The WholeNote, vol. 6, no. 5*, in February 2001, on the occasion of his first Toronto recital. Born and raised in Vietnam, Dang was resident in the Soviet Union when he won the Chopin Competition in 1980, and has lived in Montreal since 1991.

ABIGAIL LEBRECHT

Norman Lebrecht

On the heels of Bruce Liu's triumph in Warsaw, Norman Lebrecht, the resident scourge and critic of the classical world through his many books and his popular blog, *Slipped Disc*, proclaimed the present day the "era of the Canadian pianist," noting that, with his Warsaw victory, Liu joins the ranks of Angela Hewitt, Marc-André Hamelin, Charles Richard-Hamelin, Jan Lisiecki and Stewart Goodyear as players of the first rank on the international stage. Forget Glenn Gould – for Lebrecht, this is the great era of Canadian pianism.

Previously, it was Canadian singers that dominated the classical world, helping us punch above our weight in international musical circles – the Heppners, Schades, Brauns, Finleys, Pieczonkas, Bayrakdarians. Within a smaller sample size, we can also note Yannick Nézet-Séguin's achievements as one of the great names in international conducting today.

The question that keeps crossing my mind, though, is this. Should we Canadians take any particular flag-waving pride in these international superstars? Is there anything intrinsically Canadian about them?

With the significance of nationalism as one of the central debates defining the modern world, it is not an incidental question. One of the surprises, for me, anyway, of this pandemic, has been the extent to which, despite the existence of a deadly planetary crisis, nationalism became a central determining factor in everything – from pandemic rules, mask mandates, vaccine distribution, infection rates, likelihood of death. We are all one world, in theory – until it comes time to get your shot. Then it's every country for itself. (The climate emergency is unfolding exactly the same way.)

Paradoxically, we are, as a nation, conflicted about nationalism in the arts, especially now in our post-nationalist, confused 21st century, as we try to deal with our odd doubled colonial past, as a country that was colonizing and colonized at the same time. On the one hand we are suspicious of national enthusiasms, especially as we view their more frightening and murderous manifestations around the world. On the other hand, let's be honest, the emergence of cultural nationalism in Canada in the 1970s, which led to everything from Canadian content rules in the recording industry to Telefilm Canada to a resurgence of an almost moribund CBC Radio to a renewed interest in Canadian writing, was one of the great moments in our cultural history. It led to many Canadian cultural heroes, one of whom, not to put too fine a point on it, won a Nobel Prize in Literature – not an insignificant cultural achievement.

So, can we legitimately take similar pride today in the Goodyears, Lius, Hamelins, Lisieckis and Hewitts of the world? Let me try to answer that question by shifting the focus from one international performing arena to another. This year's US Open Tennis Championships, the one dominated on the women's side by the teenagers Emma Raducanu and Leylah Fernandez raised a a similar question for me: among the many fascinating correspondences between the two young women who contested the tournament final was one generally overlooked – they both hold Canadian citizenship! Raducanu was born in Toronto 19 years ago; Fernandez, 19 years ago in Montreal: Raducanu to a Romanian father and a Chinese mother; Fernandez to an Ecuadorian father and a Filipina mother. Raducanu moved to England when she was two. Fernandez currently lives in Florida.

SLROBI

Leylah Fernandez at the US Open, summer 2021.

How exactly would you parse either of their nationalities? I'll tell you how. Not at all. In

DAREK GOLIK / NIFC

Bruce Liu

every possible way, these two young women are both modern children of the 21st century. It seems to me to make almost no sense whatsoever to talk of their nationality, singular, as though it was the single defining category in their lives. Nationalities, perhaps. Nationality, no.

And is the same true of our "Canadian" pianistic superstars? What would we say is Canadian about them? Anything? They don't even all live here. They were not all born here. So in what way, if any, do their achievements belong to us all?

In two very significant ways, I would say.

First is that for each of them their formative training, and for half of them, their *entire* musical training, was done in this country. Marc-André Hamelin did some post-grad work at Temple University, as did Charles Richard-Hamelin at Yale, and Stewart Goodyear at both Juilliard and Curtis; but Hewitt, Lisiecki and Liu were more or less trained exclusively here. This was also true, by and large, for the great singers that preceded them. That is an immensely significant achievement. No longer is Canada merely a hunting ground for talented young people who are then immediately shipped off to New York or London or Paris for the bulk of their studies.

Today we have the institutions and expertise, world-class, to do it here. That is something in which we all can take pride, because those institutions, in Montreal and Toronto and Calgary and Vancouver, could not exist unless we all recognized the importance of being able to have world-class facilities for world-class talent in our own backyard. That's a lesson for us that extends far beyond classical music.

Second, and just as significantly, the success of these young performers demonstrates the true meaning and success of the so-often vilified policy of multiculturalism in our country. Multiculturalism does not mean that people from all over the world come here to have the same opportunity to enjoy Timbits or shop at Canadian Tire. Multiculturalism means that Canada, through its relative openness to the world, is a magnet drawing people from all over the planet, as a place to settle in, and live, and bring their values to, and raise children, with the understanding that the children they raise, or they themselves, will sometimes evince musical greatness. Or medical greatness. Or financial greatness. Or whatever other kind of special achievement.

It is that possibility that attracted Bruce Liu's parents to come here, and Jan Lisiecki's, and Stewart Goodyear's and, in a different generation, Angela Hewitt's. And Emma Raducanu's and Laylah Fernandez's. And hopefully, many others we don't know yet. That is something to take pride in – the extent to which we are capable of creating a welcoming environment with nothing to fear for these artists of the first rank, and their families.

That being said, our modern nationalism in this country demands a lot from us, based as it must be in the future more than a reliable past, so depriving those of us already here with that sense of changelessness and security, which everyone yearns for, but which has not helped us to come to terms with the founding cultures in this country, steeped in the experience of tens of thousands of years.

Yes, it seems to me that the success of our new "Canadian" piano superstars is not just accidental, not just a statistical quirk. But on the other hand, neither is it cause for enormous parochial celebrations of Canadian "greatness" (as if we were capable of such a thing outside a hockey arena). Somewhere in between is an elusive but potentially useful meaning of nationalism today, in the arts and in the world. Nationalism is real, and can be positive, even necessary, but only when used with great care.

***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.Story of O Canada.**

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BACK IN FOCUS

Previously covered in *The WholeNote*, and topical again

2P4H

In this issue: *"The Mirvish season also includes the return in the spring of* 2 Pianos 4 Hands *starring its creators and original stars, Ted Dykstra and Richard Greenblatt."* Jennifer Parr, p 13.

Flash back ten years, *Vol 17 No 3,* and you'll find Dykstra and Greenblatt in a very nice Robert Wallace story, "bringing home arguably the most successful play in the history of Canadian theatre … opening on November 2 [2011] for a limited run at Toronto's Panasonic Theatre, before it moves to Ottawa's National Arts Centre in January".

The show was already in its 15th season by 2011, featuring several different duos. "This is their first reunion since 2003" Wallace writes, "and, according to Greenblatt, probably their last."

The hastily arranged photo shoot for the cover reflected the mood. One of them had a cold, they wanted to get on with rehearsing; nobody had told them. Five minutes. No time to plug anything in. They sat down at the piano and mugged. Bravely but having done this before.

"O.k. I'm done." The wannabe famous photographer concedes defeat, and the two look up from the keys with a look of *[click!]* release, relief …. gratitude.

Note: the 700-seat Panasonic Theatre of 2011 (now dubbed the CAA Theatre) is still part of the Mirvish suite of theatres. But it is to the 2000-seat Princess of Wales Theatre on King St. W. that Greenblatt and Dykstra will return, March 19 2022, for a ten-years-since-their-last reunion, further final farewell appearance together in these roles.

Aline Homzy, in 2018

Aline Homzy

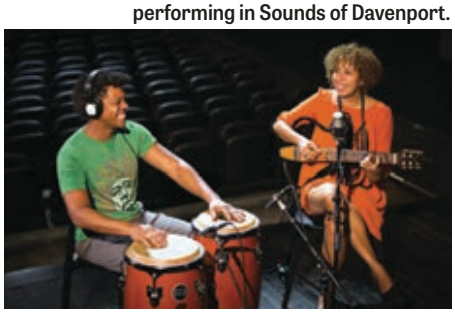
Then* was April 2018 (Vol 23 No 7)** – Sara Constant's story titled ***Bitches Brew Anew - A Conversation with Aline Homzy.

"When violinist Aline Homzy submitted an application to [2018's] TD Toronto Jazz Festival Discovery Series for a project called "The Smith Sessions presents: Bitches Brew," she had a lot of musical and linguistic history to reckon with. And when her application was selected, with a concert of the same name slotted for April 28 at the Canadian Music Centre's Chalmers House in Toronto, she knew it would be a starting point for something new … a quadruple-bill show, featuring four different women-led ensembles fronted by Homzy, flutist Anh Phung, bassist Emma Smith and drummer/percussionist Magdelys Savigne."

Flash forward three and a half years to November 17 2021 and Homzy's focus has shifted again. In Reigniting a musical neighbourhood: Aline Homzy's "Sounds of Davenport", written for *The WholeNote* blog, Samantha Fink writes about Homzy's recent project, which again digs deep, this time into the music life of her own neighbourhood.

Sounds of Davenport, Fink writes, "[is] a virtual concert, featuring 17 performances by 28 musicians from the Toronto Davenport riding, many of whom belong to the LGBTQ+ and BIPOC communities. From September 20-22, 2021, the musicians performed original music at the Paradise Theatre, where they were recorded by Homzy's team; on October 23, these performances debuted together in an hour-and-a-half-long virtual compilation available on YouTube."

Luanda Jones (R) and Chaveco (L), performing in Sounds of Davenport.



CLAIRE HARVIE

"Glad to see you back," someone said. But we don't subscribe to that because …

The Midnight Court

In this issue: A COC commission titled *The Old Fools*, by Ana Sokolović to a libretto by Paul Bentley is near completion, Lydia Perović informs us at the end of a conversation with Montreal-based Sokolović about her opera *Svadba*. "Sokolović collaborated on the shaping of the opera, across the Atlantic, with the original *Svadba* music director [Queen of Puddings Music Theatre founder/director] Dáirine Ní Mheadhra," we are informed.

Flashback to April 2005: right when Ní Mheadhra and Queen of Puddings Music Theatre were in the process of putting librettist Bently and Sokolović together for their first collaboration, *The Midnight Court*.

"*The Midnight Court*, a new Canadian opera by the brilliant Montreal composer Ana Sokolović, with a libretto by Paul Bently of The Handmaid's tale fame and based on a wild and famous 17th century Irish epic poem by Brian Merriman, a rambunctious and earthy tale … will premiere at Toronto's Harbourfront centre June 11 [2005]," we wrote back then.

Looking back now, Sokolović reflects: "What also made *Svadba* so easy to follow is, paradoxically, that it's in the original language. When I composed *The Midnight Court* for Queen of Puddings, I needed to make the story legible. The pace is decided by the text: the opera must unfold at the speed of the text, and must follow our understanding of the text."

Which direction will *Old Fools* have taken, we wonder, when eventually (sooner rather than later, we hope), it comes back into focus.

POSTSCRIPT

Then: David Perlman in Vol 20 No4 (Dec 2014), page 12, in a short piece titled "Survival Guide to the Season's Messiahs", writes "I remember hobnobbing with one of the region's greatest boosters (and presenters) of the Messiah, Grand Philharmonic Choir's former long-time conductor Howard Dyck in the lobby of the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts. I think I said something about wondering what the secret was to the enduring popularity of Handel's Messiah. As best as I can remember, his reply in a stage whisper was "It's the music, stupid!"

And of course he's right. It's the music. And more than that, it's the music's ability to shift its shape and the size of its grandeur to accommodate almost any combination of musical forces – the bigger, the better.

This time last year: we were all variously riffing on the anomaly of "Sing-alone-Messiahs" …

Now: Will this be remembered as the year of the "Masked Messiahs" for those of us who dare to sing *Hallelujah*?

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