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From behind the lens.
It has been my distinct privilege to have been allowed access to photograph the superb musical talent featured at Parry Sound’s annual Festival of the Sound. At times the performances are so overpowering that I find myself taking the camera and surrendering to the magic of the musical moment.

That was my experience as I listened to Cameron Crozman play the Bach Cello Suite No. 2 to Ontario’s great outdoors. I was wholly taken by his interpretive responses to the lush new sounds that projected over the water and echoed from the trees.

Then I had to remind myself why I was there, and again reached for the camera. — Mark S. Rash

See Parry Sound, pg 18
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DISCOVERIES: RECORDINGS REVIEWED

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The air in the balloon

DAVID PERLMAN

> Listings Team
To me, Karen, Jack, Paul, Kevin
Jun 22, 2022, 11:20 AM
Subject: # 50,000

Dear Team,

Another milestone! We just achieved 50,000 listings in LUDWIG a few moments ago.

John

“John” is John Sharpe, our listings editor; LUDWIG is our acronym for the database at the heart of how, since 2011/12, we have processed concert listings. (That’s short for Listings Upload Database for WholeNote Information Gathering.) Cute, eh?

And for the 15 years before that? Not even spreadsheets. Using Word to sort monthly documents (which were subsequently scattered to the digital winds).

The number 50,000 is impressive – that’s free listings for around 5,000 live events a year. It’s an even more impressive number when you factor in that a lot of the music being made (gigs in clubs, for example, or festivals with multiple performances every day over a concentrated period of time) doesn’t easily fit an information-gathering system designed originally for classical and “post-classical” concerts. What’s most impressive of all is that what we cover is only the tip of the iceberg, in terms of the communities we don’t yet reach. Yet.

It’s impossible to exaggerate the importance of our listings to us. It’s how we find out what’s going on; it is where our writers find inspiration; it is the air in our balloon, our lungs, our tires. When COVID hit (the day the listings died), all the air went out of all those things.

A lot of hot air kept the balloon afloat, at least through those 28 months. Now, we are introducing the keep up with, and do justice to, the resurgent live music scene. “Partying like it’s 2019!” as Paul Ennis wryly observes in his story in this issue. True, but not if one reads the phrase as carte blanche to be stupid.

In Greek mythology, Sisyphus, the king of Ephyra, and a bit of trickster, is punished by Zeus for cheating death (twice!). The classic Jovian scenario of “fool Me once, shame on you; fool Me twice, shame on me.” His punishment is “to roll an immense boulder up a hill only for it to roll down every time it neared the top, repeating this action for eternity,” says Wikipedia.

But as some sage pointed out somewhere (I plead lingering COVID for not remembering who) to keep up with the 50,000th listing is Jul 20 at 11:00am, a nicely symbolic. It’s Jul 20 at 11:00am, a one-hour Toronto Summer Music Kids concert, by comedienne Kyra Millan and her musical partner Tina Faye “specially designed for children, ages 5-12 to introduce them to the worlds of classical music and opera.” Baby steps required.

So, party like it’s 2019, yes! but in the knowledge that something like 2020 (remember 2020?) is maybe just around the corner. And with all the bad, we learned a helluva lot from it.

Oh, before I forget, the 50,000th listing John Sharpe announced to the team is nicely symbolic. It’s Jul 20 at 11:00am, a one-hour Toronto Summer Music Kids concert, by comedienne Kyra Millan and her musical partner Tina Faye “specially designed for children, ages 5-12 to introduce them to the worlds of classical music and opera.” Baby steps required.

So, this is it from us, for print anyway, until September 20. But we’ll be around, via our weekly listings updates (sign up at thewholenote.com/newsletter), and posting stories to our blog and keeping you in the loop on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. So party on, but watch out for falling rocks!

publisher@thewholenote.com

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publisher@thewholenote.com
STRINGS

October 13  Quatuor Van Kuijk
November 17 Lafayette Quartet
December 1  St. Lawrence Quartet with Odin Quartet
February 2  Borealis Quartet
March 30  Gryphon Trio

PIANO

October 25  Michelle Cann
February 28  Janina Fialkowska

www.music-toronto.com
Nestled in every story is another story, like those wooden dolls hidden within selves. The festively decorated Arcadian Court was the site of this past April’s Toronto Arts Foundation Awards. The event, also referred to as the Mayor’s Lunch, has been a part of the Toronto arts ecosystem since 1996. The venue, located in what was then the Robert Simpson Company Store, at Queen and Bay, has been part of the city’s social, cultural and commercial fabric since the 1930s.

The large crowd in attendance included the Mayor of course, at the head table at the front of the room, along with Claire Hopkinson, Director and CEO of the Toronto Arts Foundation and its sister organization, the Toronto Arts Council, many financial donors to the arts, city councillors, and the event host, award-winning writer, producer and tv/radio host, Amanda Parris.

The Lunch
Round, white-table-clothed tables fill the rest of the room, each seating about ten guests. The finalists for the Toronto Arts Foundation’s Celebration of Cultural Life Award, Breakthrough Artist Award and Arts for Youth Award are interspersed among others like me, who have various links to the arts. So are representatives of Meridian, Ontario’s largest credit union, on hand to accept the already-decided Toronto Arts and Business Award in recognition of their ongoing program of providing transformational cultural funding to the communities they serve.

After some speeches, it’s time to eat. They feed us well and I chat with my table mates, a lustrous group of artists, arts administrators, heads of arts organizations, theatre directors, arts professors, and so on. After lunch, the brilliant Gryphon Trio plays Fugitive Visions of Mozart by Ukrainian composer, Valentin Silvestrov, followed by a tango, La muerte del ángel by Astor Piazzolla from Argentina. And then it’s time for the finalists to be recognized.

Even within a celebratory scenario such as this – the opening of envelopes and announcing of winners – the structure of a system is hard to ignore. Throughout the ceremony I’d noted the use of space (the stage), the use of time (1.5 hours) — who speaks and for how long. In particular, those opening envelopes, announcing winners and handing out monetary awards – the benefactors – were not reflective of the majority of people at the other tables in the room. There is a tale and a history hitting us in the face if we care to notice.

The Process
Initially, when asked to attend and write on the gathering, I wondered about the nomination and assessment process as the finalists seemed so vastly different in art form/contributions. I wondered how they could be assessed on the same criteria. I wondered where the Indigenous artists were. I went to the Toronto Foundation Arts and Toronto Arts Council staff to find out. They were forthcoming and thoughtful in their responses.

“Our outreach is mostly through emails,” says Jaclyn Rodrigues, Community Engagement Manager at the Toronto Arts Foundation. The outreach team reaches out to past award recipients, board
members, artistic directors, educational directors and the board presidents of organizations. “We also have a social media toolkit that we share with our local arts service organizations, as well as other various service organizations in Toronto such as East End Arts, Scarborough Arts, Lakeshore. We send targeted communications to past recipients like the Paprika Festival, artist resource centres like the Dancer Transition Resource Centre or Dance Umbrella of Ontario, Playwrights Guild of Canada and other organizations that kind of maybe have a membership network ... The nomination process is not like the grant application process. It’s very simple, it’s usually a handful of questions plus contact information. That’s something we stress when reaching out to smaller organizations that might have lower capacity.”

Liza Mattimore, the Award Program Manager at Toronto Arts Foundation, also participates in this exercise. She adds that there were more nominations during the pandemic: “Perhaps people were not doing programming and had time to consider the application, and had capacity to consider a nomination.”

This year however, the organization noted a decline in the number of nominations. Mattimore suggests that “perhaps people were ramping back up trying to get their programming going again.”

In response, she and other staff made a lot of personal calls to organizations that had received the awards and had experienced the benefit of them. “I also reached out to organizations that had some extra momentum, or for whom there was more interest building in their work, as well as to newer organizations, as we’ve got the Arts for Youth Award this year. We also have the Celebration of Cultural Life Award. So, I reached out to some strategic people to ask them to please feel free to consider nominating someone. It’s a combination of all of the individual staff members kind of doing their reach outs. We send out emails to all of our grant recipients, so it’s a pretty wide net that we cast, but I think there’s always room for improvement for sure.”

The Panel
Looking at the list of nominees for the Celebration of Cultural Life, for example, I found myself wondering how it might be possible to pick between a flamenco dancer and a writer and a woman who’s been an arts administrator for many years. The way a selection panel is chosen seems to be a key process.

Mattimore waits until the nominations are closed and only then looks for panel members: “I try to make sure that all of the disciplines that are nominated are reflected in the panel. We have an equity charge in terms of the makeup of our panels. I also like to think broader than that too. I like to think about generational differences and people in different places in their career. I always like to have people in the panel who have received awards — different awards, not necessarily only ones that we’re considering. I find that those people are often very thoughtful panelists, because again, they have this intuitive understanding of how powerful the awards can be. I try to...
reflect the communities within Toronto, not just the core downtown. I want to have panelists who are living and working in Scarborough and living and working north of the 401 and who are living and working in Weston, areas that are not necessarily always well reflected even in the nominations themselves.”

Each of the panelists selects a shortlist. “We also create space to have conversations about other nominations that are of note that we think need to be discussed. Ultimately, I found all of the panels come to consensus. This year in particular, there was very little dissent among the panelists about who should be the finalists and who should be the recipients.”

Who sits around each table?

Early on, I had wondered where the Indigenous artists were amongst the finalists for the group of awards being presented at this lunch. Hasanika Mediwake, Program Outreach Coordinator at Toronto Arts Foundation, spoke to this: “When I was doing outreach for these awards, I also included all our contacts we reached out to for the Indigenous Artist Award. And, I made sure to let them know about it and include them in any communications. However, I think the number of Indigenous artists accessing our resources is pretty low across the board. It’s something that we really need to think deeper about. And I’m so grateful to Catherine Tammaro, the Indigenous Arts Program Manager at the Toronto Arts Council – the two organizations work very closely together. She’s giving us opportunities and resources on how to do that better. Rather than just letting people know about it and include them in any communications. However, I think the number of Indigenous artists accessing our resources is pretty low across the board. It’s something that we really need to think deeper about. And I’m so grateful to Catherine Tammaro, the Indigenous Arts Program Manager at the Toronto Arts Council – the two organizations work very closely together. She’s giving us opportunities and resources on how to do that better. Rather than just letting people know about this opportunity, we need to really get into the community and build trust, and that’s more of an individual approach.”

Catherine Tammaro’s role is similar to that of Liza Mattimore’s in that she coordinates award processes and panels. She informed me that the Indigenous Artist Awards (a new TAF initiative) ceremony was a great success. She approached communities with care and the result was a tremendous celebration. “There was a lot of love in that room.” Nominees, finalists and winners enjoyed a context where they felt that their work was deeply understood.

New ways of doing outreach and new types of awards are always in the works. Sometimes the key is changing the name of an existing award, and along with the name change, a change in focus. The Breakthrough Artist Award is a good example. It was formerly called the Emerging Artist Award and it used to have an age restriction, but “there’s nothing in being an early career artist, as that assures that you are also young,” says Mattimore. “It was noted that the age restriction disproportionately impacts women, negatively impacts people of colour and anyone who is not earning top dollar.”

There are deeper issues, she says: “The problem with the arts is that it represents all of these, the systemic racism and systemic kind of disadvantages that happen in the rest of society in a more visible way. We’ve seen changes in the art [that is] in front of audiences, more than we’ve seen changes happening behind the scenes.”

Arts organizations are hugely class-divided, Mattimore says. “In order to be a working artist, you have to come from money. Unfortunately that still prevails. If you’re going to work at it [art], it’s because you don’t have the same stresses of housing, employment and being able to pay for food. We still see that in who’s represented, across arts disciplines, and often also in these awards. Saying that you can be a breakthrough artist at any age helps to try to undermine some of those systemic disadvantages.”

Deeper works

These awards are important. They are career sustainers and career makers for some. They provide financial support, a sense of legitimacy for others, and they certainly raise an artist’s profile. Also arts awards, unlike grants, are not taxable!

And yet, as Mattimore says, “There is work to do. I think there are always ways that we can honour and acknowledge the process that we have and how it works, but also try to find out where we can make things better. Who’s not in the room? How can we get more people to put forward nominations, to feel empowered, to know that they have a voice in our arts community.”

These are discussions already underway amongst TAF and TAC panels that are already moving awareness and focus towards such inclusion: for example the Muriel Sherrin Award, another of Toronto Arts Foundation’s initiatives, that oscillates each year between dance and music. Notably in 2021, “even though there was a record number of nominations, there was a conversation among the panelists on who was missing, who was not on this list, who’s not being nominated, and how can we better reach them,” Mattimore says. “I know it’s frustrating for us and frustrating for the Toronto Arts staff because they work really hard to get that information out there.”

In the next breath, she provides a possible solution. “I think a big part of it is on us. There’s only so much that you can do through zoom and digital means. You need to be there; you need to be in those places, you need to actually be at those community centres or connecting with people at the library.”

Turning the tables

Who gets to sit at all the tables that together make up the system is something that needs to continue to change. What will that kind of

On stage: Celebration of Life Award-winner Dwayne Morgan. To his immediate right, Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario.

“There’s only so much that you can do through zoom and digital means. You need to be there, you need to be in those places, you need to actually be at those community centres or connecting with people at the library.”

— Liz Mattimore
change begin to look like? For one thing, succession planning, team leads, department heads and organization leaders – the benefactors, as I referred to them earlier – will better reflect the beneficiaries at the round tables in Arcadian Court back in April. Earlier, Mattimore mentioned that when nomination numbers are low, staff reach out personally to former winners to spread the word. Perhaps there is an opportunity to formalize this work further. Perhaps finalists who do not win can be pulled further into the fold as paid cultural ambassadors who can reach out to contacts throughout the year. This would help ensure co-creation and early inclusion in the process. In that way the face of systemic change can look more like musician Jesse Ryan, winner of the Emerging Jazz Artist Award 2020, who now sits on the Foundation’s Board.

There continues to be cultural value in coming together whenever we can and under any guise. I don’t usually quote politicians, but this was a good one: “Increasing polarization is resisted via arts and culture. We can disagree and stand together at a concert or performance,” said Mayor John Tory. And, as Dwayne Morgan, winner of the Celebration of Cultural Life Award spoke, I covertly wiped away a tear or two with the edge of a napkin when he let us know that he usually invites his daughter to perform with him and he pays her to do so. This is so that she understands that art is a vocation for which you should be paid. Art, in addition to art for the sake of beauty and expression, also has deep economic value to any culture and must be included as such.

The winner of the Arts for Youth Award, the organization Never Gallery Ready focuses on media analysis for young people. They develop a capacity for analysis, to deconstruct and to note what systems are right in front of our eyes and how they are sustained and repeated. This is also art. As Dwayne Morgan said in accepting his Celebration of Cultural Life Award: “You have to build the door that opportunity knocks on.”

Meanwhile, however much their systems and processes can be improved, these awards are a crucial affirmation of the power of creativity. They acknowledge and help fund the deep work of artists in the act of building and sustaining our hearts. In the jubilant words of the winner of the Breakthrough Artist Award, Shelly Grace: “Peace, power and poetry. Off.”

Gloria Blizzard is a non-fiction writer, poet and penner of songs, whose essays, reviews and articles have appeared in numerous literary publications, magazines and sound recordings, including Poetry Canada Review, cbc.ca, The Globe and Mail, Humber Literary Review and World Literature Today. She is working on her first full-length book of essays. Instagram: @gloriawrites; Twitter: @gloriablizzard
Music lights the way at The RCM’s Celebration Series launch

KAREN ANNE KASTNER

The Royal Conservatory of Music, established in 1886, was the first institution in Canada focused on providing a graded music curriculum for musicians of all ages. In 1916, it published its first piano book based on the Conservatory’s graded curriculum. For private teachers sprinkled throughout the small towns of Canada, these books became a vital teaching resource: access to regulated examinations promoted a more consistent quality of teaching and a new sense of professionalism.

Cards face up on the table – my own first experiences as a student with The Royal Conservatory repertoire and examinations were not positive. Acceptable piano pieces, of primarily the ODWG (old dead white guy) variety, were limited to what could be played for the exam. Examiners were snappish if one took too long to look over a sight-reading excerpt or burst into tears because all memory of the List A Gigue had evaporated. Then again, it was the late 1960s. I was 11. My perception of reality could perhaps have been a bit off.

Perhaps, but 40 years into a piano-teaching career, the memory of those (mis)perceptions has been instrumental (as it were) in helping me clarify and stick to my goals as a music educator: to impart a love of repertoire by composers of all sexual orientations, cultures and historical periods, living and dead. And by doing all this, to provide each student with an individual course of study uniquely aligned with their strengths, challenges and personal goals.

In attempting to fulfill these goals, I have for many years cherry-picked from the curricula of different organizations including, but not confined to The RCM. Granted, The RCM piano-repertoire books were upgraded sporadically over the years, but largely within the ODWG loop. The exception to this would be the few works by living composers, such as Boris Berlin and Clifford Poole, appearing in the 20th-century section of the books.

The RCM Celebration Series

This was the scenario when I began formal piano lessons, more than five decades ago. Then, in 1988, The RCM’s Celebration Series® was released, and things slowly began to change for the better. This was the first series of piano books covering all levels of The RCM piano curriculum, published as a complete set by the institution. In 1994, two versions of the second edition were published, a slightly modified edition for the increasing number of American teachers and a more varied edition for Canadian teachers. The third edition of the series, in 2001, added additional popular-sounding repertoire, including Gentle Waltz by Oscar Peterson and George Shearing’s arrangement of Harold Arlen’s Over the Rainbow.

Contemporary-sounding repertoire was expanded still further in the 2008 fourth edition, and by the 2015 fifth edition, popular-sounding selections had been added to every level. Along the way, too, a frequently updated supplementary list of popular titles was introduced with specific graded arrangements of these familiar pieces allowed as substitutes for one of the études required for examinations.

But it was only with the 2015 edition of the Celebration Series®, that I would say that The RCM curriculum began to be significantly more relevant to me and my students. The addition of more repertoire by living Canadian and American composers, and the familiar pieces in the Popular Selections supplement, brought home the fact that music is alive and growing. If we can play music composed by people that we can check out on social media, we feel closer to the creative process. Music does not exist until it is performed. Once we start to extrapolate that sense of being part of the co-creative process even to to composers that were alive one, two, five hundred years ago, music becomes timeless.

The launch

Fast forward to April 27, 2022, 8:30 pm, at Koerner Hall: A single Steinway grand piano basks in the purple, yellow and blue glow of the large screen hovering behind. To the side, a podium awaits Mervon Mehta, executive director of performing arts at the Royal Conservatory, and our host for the roughly 90-minute event to follow – including live and video performances by piano luminaries Lang Lang, Tony Yike Yang, Angela Hewitt, Ian Listermeier and Stewart Goodyear, along with performances by students and Conservatory teachers. The occasion: the launch of Celebration Series®, Sixth Edition.

For me, the key words for the sixth edition are diversity, inclusivity, relevance and depth: 514 pieces are grouped in pedagogical order over 12 repertoire and 10 étude books. Composers from 22 different
countries are represented, ranging from the early Baroque to the present; 79 of the pieces are by living composers, of which 35 pieces were commissioned by the RCM specifically for this edition.

Women composers are now included in all eras, including the Baroque and classical, proving that women have been composing music all along. Black composers include H. Leslie Adams, Margaret Bonds, Harry T. Burleigh, Valerie Capers, Scott Joplin, Ulysses Kay, Nkeiru Okoye, Florence B. Price, Dorothy Rudd Moore, R. Nathaniel Dett and Oscar Peterson. Shande Ding, Edward Han Jiang, Vincent Ho, An-Lun Huang, Alexina Louie, Maggie Lu, Naoko Ikeda, Emily Lin and Chee-Hwa Tan are Asian composers with compositions in the series. Odawa First Nation composer Barbara Assiginaak has four compositions in the repertoire albums.

It is important that students experience that all people have always created music. From the inner awareness that “I can be creative” and the external awareness that “people different than me can be creative” the message is that music is a shared human experience.

Two small, but vitally important additions have also been made to the musicianship exam requirements. Students now have the option to read a lead sheet and improvise an accompaniment based on the given chord symbols in lieu of the standard sight-reading test; and students may choose to improvise an answer (consequent) to a given musical question (antecedent) rather than play back a given melody.

Online resources

The RCM has had online resources available to teachers and students for several years, but the past two years have really focused attention on just how significant these online resources are. Beginning in 2020, online examinations became available for the first time. In-person examinations are once again starting to return, but theory examinations remain online, as do certain categories of practical examinations. Students can now pay for online programs that hone specific musicianship skills such as ear training. With the launch of the new piano series, students and teachers will have access codes for video recordings of all repertoire and etude pieces, and there are additional online resources, including a new online “community,” designed to assist teachers with specific teaching challenges.

Two other significant announcements, made by Dr. Peter Simon, president of The Royal Conservatory, during his encouraging concluding talk, added to the excitement of the occasion for me. First, as part of the Music Lights the Way campaign to promote the value of music education, a complete set of the 22 books of the new Celebration Series®: Sixth Edition piano series and books for other instruments will be made available to more than 20,000 participating Royal Conservatory teachers, without cost.

Additionally, all music students across North America will be invited to submit videos of themselves playing any of the pieces from the Sixth Edition repertoire, Preparatory A to Level 10, as participants in a free virtual Music Lights the Way piano festival. A panel of judges will review the submissions. The public will be encouraged to vote. The winning submissions will be posted on The RCM website and promoted on RCM social channels. The festival will include two rounds of competitions followed by a grand finale at the end of February, in Koerner Hall, featuring celebrity judges. With over $200,000 in prizes and scholarships for students and their teachers, the goal is to provide an opportunity for students to demonstrate their creativity and self-expression through music while receiving recognition for their achievements (including a non-competitive event for adult students, ages 20 and older).

And next?

For this longtime piano teacher, as she and her two cats scan the horizon (all the way from what was to what’s next), this is the most significant leap forward so far, both in the musical content of the series, and in The RCM’s understanding of their role in the musical ecosystem.

Each teacher will use these extensive resources as best suits their teaching needs. Each teacher will immerse themselves in The RCM culture to the extent that they are comfortable. What I see is a genuine desire on the part of The Royal Conservatory to support teachers and students, as well as to connect with the larger community. The combination of the new Celebration Series® and the other initiatives I’ve mentioned here are signs that music education is heading in a positive direction.

Oh, and do watch the complete April 27 Music Lights the Way piano festival. A panel of judges will review the submissions. The public will be encouraged to vote. The winning submissions will be posted on The RCM website and promoted on RCM social channels. The festival will include two rounds of competitions followed by a grand finale at the end of February, in Koerner Hall, featuring celebrity judges. With over $200,000 in prizes and scholarships for students and their teachers, the goal is to provide an opportunity for students to demonstrate their creativity and self-expression through music while receiving recognition for their achievements (including a non-competitive event for adult students, ages 20 and older).

Karen-Anne Kastner is a self-employed music teacher, living in Nobleton, who has spent 40 years “teaching music to anyone who wants to learn.”

Stewart Goodyear, playing Oscar Peterson’s Land of the Misty Giants.

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Stewart Goodyear, playing Oscar Peterson’s Land of the Misty Giants.
A stellar spring, musical Shakespeare, and a summer of substance

(who could ask for anything more?)

JENNIFER PARR

Spring

It is rare when a show exceeds my expectations and even more rare when many shows do. This spring, three shows blew me away with their – very different – strengths.

Damn Yankees: my first reaction after seeing the opening-night performance of Damn Yankees at the Shaw Festival was a desire to tell all the cynics, who don’t see the value in remounting the slighter offerings of the Broadway musical canon, to make their way to Niagara-on-the-Lake and take in this show. Yes, this is a slight, rather oddball, musical that gives a Faustian twist to the American obsession with baseball by giving an older fan a deal with the devil to help his home team win. But in the expert hands of director Brian Hill, it is so much more.

Right from the word go the spirit and heart of this production is right on the money. It could have been cheesy and over the top, but it is not. Hill clearly understands the material inside and out and along with his expert creative team sets exactly the right tone and style so that we are taken along the deliciously comic journey, and at the same time gain an increasing recognition of the simple heartfelt values – love, honesty, loyalty – that lie at the heart of the story.

Personifying these qualities from the beginning is the young version of Joe – the transformed ball player – on opening night played by understudy Drew Plummer in a star-making performance of gorgeous singing and wonderful heartfelt acting. The repeated duet sung by Joe with his wife Meg becomes the beating heart of the simple values at the centre of the whole show. Kimberley Rampersad as the vamp sidekick-to-the-devil, Lola, is also wonderful. Her performance begins in the expected broad style but grows in depth and detail to become as moving as that of Joe, to the point where, in the deliciously comic journey, and at the same time gain an increasing recognition of the simple heartfelt values – love, honesty, loyalty – that lie at the heart of the story.

Dixon Road, with book, lyrics and music all by Fatuma Adar, was commissioned by the Musical Stage Company in 2017 and the show had its opening on June 9 in the outdoor amphitheatre in High Park. As I wrote previously, my hopes for the show were high; my expectations were exceeded by the wonderful depth to the writing of both the book and music.

Telling the story of a Somali family who immigrate to Canada in 1991, as civil war begins to tear their homeland apart, Dixon Road deals with difficult issues and hard times; but infused throughout is a wonderful, rather wacky, sense of humour that leavens the darker material and makes the audience take these characters to their hearts. The music is also wonderfully infectious. Its mix of R&B, hip-hop, traditional Somali melodies and contemporary musical theatre idioms works. My only complaint is that the run was so short I couldn’t go back and see it again.

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 Damn Yankees
To finish my spring roundup, I have to add that Two Pianos Four Hands which just opened at the Royal Alexandra Theatre, starring its creators and original performers, Ted Dykstra and Richard Greenblatt, is as fresh and clever and laugh-out-loud funny as it was when it burst on the scene 25 years ago. It runs until July 17.

Musical Shakespeare
Who doesn’t like music with their Shakespeare? Since the Bard first wrote his plays, more than 400 years ago, music has been an integral part of bringing those plays to life onstage. This summer in Ontario there are three productions that take very different approaches to interweaving music with Shakespeare’s storylines.

Dream in High Park: In High Park at the end of a summer festival of musical concerts and events, the return of Shakespeare to the amphitheatre stage is being celebrated by a new production of one of the most song-filled of his plays, As You Like It. Directed by Anand Rajaram (well known as a clown-inspired performance artist and writer), and with sets and costumes designed by acclaimed outdoor performance company Shadowland Theatre, this promises to be a risk-taking, fun, physical theatre event. It will also be extremely musical, featuring new songs written for the show by Maryem Tollar, Lacey Hill, Serena Ryder and Kiran Ahluwalia; Belinda Corpuz is the show’s composer and musical director. As You Like It runs from July 28 to September 4 and has a running time of only 90 minutes, perfect for families and younger theatre goers. www.canadianstage.com

Driftwood Theatre: Driftwood Theatre Group, the indefatigable touring company, returns to the road July 14 to August 21, with their annual Bard’s Bus Tour, this time presenting King Henry Five, a new
adaptation/amalgamation of three Shakespeare plays (Henry IV Parts 1 & 2 and Henry V), tracing the journey of Prince Hal from wild party animal to responsible king. Set against the backdrop of a contemporary piano bar, this musical version of Henry’s story includes seven original songs, with lyrics by Germaine Konji (2020 Musical Stage Company Banks Prize) and music by Kelsi James (who wrote the wonderful music for Driftwood’s pre-pandemic A (Musical) Midsummer Night’s Dream). What intrigues me, as well, about this new production is that it will be performed by a cast of only five performers, including Hume Baugh and Richard Alan Campbell, and directed by Driftwood’s artistic director, D Jeremy Smith. For more information and where to find performances please see: www.driftwoodtheatre.com/see/bardbustour/

& Juliet: the new musical & Juliet, which has taken London’s West End by storm is arriving to make its North American debut (and the beginning of the journey to Broadway) with a run at the Princess of Wales Theatre in downtown Toronto, June 22 to August 14. This, of course, is not a play written by Shakespeare but is inspired by his Romeo and Juliet and by the question, “What if Juliet didn’t die, but went on to find a new life for herself and a second chance at love, instead?” The brainchild of Emmy-winning, Toronto-born book writer, David West Read (best known for Schitt’s Creek), the story of & Juliet is interwoven with 30 iconic pop standards, all from the catalogue of five-time Grammy Award-winning songwriter/producer Max Martin and his collaborators.

The creators promise to whisk us off on a fabulous multi-generational journey as Juliet takes the chance of remaking her life while singing a playlist of pop anthems such as Since U Been Gone, . . . Baby One More Time and Can’t Stop The Feeling. The book and the use of the songs within the plot have been praised to the rafters by the UK press, and the show sounds like a fun, up-tempo extravaganza of alternate-Shakespeare. www.mirvish.com

Summer Music
We don’t usually think of the summer as a time of new creation except in the context of fringe festivals. The landscape, however, is changing. There is, of course, the excitement of the return to live performance and the urge to share new ideas and new creations with live audiences, and to get feedback in real time. Perhaps, too, it is a sign of Canada’s growing identity as a launching pad for the creation and development of new musicals. Here are two of the world premiers launching in Ontario this summer:

Festival Players: The Shape Of Home: Songs in Search of Al Purdy
Up (or is it down?) in Prince Edward County, the Festival Players, led by their artistic director (since 2018), Graham Abbey, and their managing director, Vikki Anderson, have a dream to create a nationally recognized performance hub and cultural destination in PEC. In pursuit of this dream, and as a cornerstone to their ambitious 2022 season, is the commissioning and creation of a new theatrical song cycle: The Shape of Home: Songs in Search of Al Purdy. Just as the specificity of Fatuma Adar’s new musical Dixon Road makes it universally accessible, The Shape of Home also is rooted in a specific time and place – Prince Edward County during the life of “unofficial Canadian poet laureate” Al Purdy, and the demanding questions he explored in his poetry.

A fabulous team of music theatre performers and innovators, led by performer/curator Hailey Gillis and director/performer Frank Cox-O’Connell, including Radha Javanfar, Beau Dixon, Andrew Penner and Marni Jackson. Prompted by Purdy’s question, “What the hell do we do with this brief little life of ours?” they have taken Purdy’s unconventional poems and turned them into songs. The world premiere of this first iteration of the theatrical song cycle will feature 20 original songs that the company describe as not just a tribute to an iconoclastic poet but a “musical call to action; an adamant prompt to live fully, to love deeply, to challenge actively and to seek beauty everywhere.” July 14-31, Festival Players Pavilion. www.festivalplayers.ca

Eclipse Theatre Company: ‘Til Then: Eclipse Theatre Company is asking some of the same questions with the world premiere of their original Canadian song cycle: ‘Til Then, at the unconventional Berkeley Church event space on Toronto’s Queen Street East. The questions are equally universal but focused on a more recent past, specifically the last two and a half years of living through a pandemic, and how that has changed us – what questions it has made us ask ourselves.

Eclipse artistic director, Andrew Seok commissioned 18 new songs from 24 different writers: a wonderful cross section of Canadian talent from Susan Aghikark to Richard Ouzounian, from Leslie Arden to Britta Johnson to Chantal Kreviazuk and more. Seok then took the songs that arrived and out of them built three stories, writing the dialogue, and working with choreographer Nickeshia Garrick to tie the events and stories together. A cast of five including Garrick with Jeff Madden, Elena Juatco, Sera-Lys McArthur and Kimberly-Ann Truong, perform the cycle directed by Seok, who describes the show as “a celebration of Canadian musical theatre as well as a reflection of our times.” July 17-20, www.eclipsetheatre.ca

Oh, and check out the musical offerings at this year’s Toronto Fringe Festival to see what other new musicals are taking their first steps this summer. www.fringetoronto.com

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Tuesday, July 19

ANONYMOUS LOVER
Wednesday, July 27

LA VIE EN ROSE
Tuesday, August 2

THE BLACK FISH PROJECT
Tuesday, August 9

GATSBY
Tuesday, August 16

FROM THE NEW WORLD
Tuesday, August 23
As live music venues open up, summer music festivals get ready to party like it was 2019. Here, I am going to focus on just two of them, in no small part based on my own lifelong predilection for the piano.

**Festival of the Sound**

The roots of this venerable attraction extend back to the summer of 1979 when renowned pianist Anton Kuerti purchased a summer home near Parry Sound and organized three concerts by outstanding Canadian musicians. The enthusiastic response to these programs inspired him to propose an annual concert series, and the 1980 Festival of the Sound became Ontario’s first annual international summer classical music festival. In 1985, James Campbell began his tenure as the Festival’s second artistic director, a position he still holds today.

This year’s festival is not all about the piano, though. It opens Sunday night, July 17, with a joyous celebration of choral music by the Elmer Iseler Singers; July 18’s sold-out evening concert marks the 50th anniversary of the Canadian Brass. Then, after clarinetist Campbell and the Rolston String Quartet perform Brahms’ Clarinet Quintet, among other works on the afternoon of July 19, the festival takes an unusual pianistic turn, hanging its musical summer hat on a piano festival featuring some of Canada’s finest keyboard artists, with 20 concerts underpinning a cleverly designed series of connected recitals. Jazz, personified by Dave Young, Heather Bambrick, Campbell himself, and others, then takes over the last weekend of July.

**Pianofest Week 1**

The feast of piano music that caught my attention begins on the evening of July 19 with the doyenne of her generation, Janina Fialkowska, famous as Arthur Rubinstein’s last pupil (1974-1982) and a Chopin expert in her own right, with a representative Chopin program: a nocturne, a scherzo, a polonaise, waltzes, a ballade, preludes and berceuse. With masterclasses almost as much of a passion for me as the piano, the next morning is proof that one can have one’s cake and eat it too: Fialkowska participates in a masterclass as mentor to 25-year-old Xiaoyu Bruce Liu, the 2021 Chopin
Competition First Place Winner. Fialkowska will have much to impart to Liu as they work on the composer’s Piano Concerto No.2. Undoubtedly, she will draw on wisdom from her famous teacher. Expect entertaining anecdotes.

Named one of the 15 best Canadian pianists of all time by CBC Radio, David Jalbert, now in his mid-40s, gives an afternoon recital on July 20. The virtuosic program includes Kelly-Marie Murphy’s Smoke Darkened Sky (2021); Beethoven’s profound Sonata in E Major, Op.109; Debussy’s Cloches à travers les feuilles and Poissons d’or; and Prokofiev’s mighty Sonata No.7, Op.83. Jalbert will then catch a breath before joining twentiesomething cellist, Cameron Crozman, in a mid-afternoon concert spotlighting the much-heralded Crozman. Jalbert and Crozman will perform Paul Klengel’s arrangement of Brahms’ Sonata for Violin and Piano Op.78. The recital concludes with Alexina Louie’s “Quasi Cadenza” for solo cello.

Astute programming choices abound. The Quatuor Despax – comprised of four siblings, two sisters and two brothers, from Gatineau – opens the late afternoon July 20 concert with Beethoven’s String Quartet Op.18, No.3 – an adroit programming touch that serves as a warm-up for their role as “the orchestra” in Liu’s performance of Chopin’s Second Piano Concerto at 7:30pm, July 20. The concert is rounded out by the Rolston String Quartet, first-prize winners at the 2016 Banff International String Quartet Competition, teaming up with bassist Joel Quarrington for Dvořák’s String Quintet.

The first week of Pianofest continues in the afternoon of July 21: Fialkowska, supported by the Rolstons and Quarrington, performs Beethoven’s preternatural Piano Concerto No.4. Crozman then joins with the Rolstons for Schubert’s singular Quintet in C. That evening, the redoubtable Stewart Goodyear adds heft to the pianistic girth, performing Liszt’s evocative Sonata in B Minor, his own Acabras! Acabras! Acabras! (inspired by NFB animated films like The Log Driver’s Waltz). Jennifer Higdon’s Secret and Glass Gardens – dedicated to Lang Lang, it portrays a journey through a garden of wonder and discovery – and Debussy’s Masques and L’isle joyeuse.

Jalbert then returns on July 22 to bring the first week to a close, performing Beethoven’s Piano Concerto No.5 “Emperor” with the Boris Brott Academy Orchestra, who complete the evening with Elgar’s ever-popular Enigma Variations.
Week 2

On the afternoon of July 26, Charles Richard-Hamelin, silver medalist and laureate of the Krystian Zimerman Prize at the 2015 International Chopin Piano Competition, makes his first appearance at the festival. Now in his early 30s, Richard-Hamelin has proven to be a sensitive chamber musician. Here, he performs Brahms’ Sonata for Clarinet and Piano Op.120, No.1 with Campbell, before tackling Dvořák’s Piano Quartet No.2, Op.87 with Crozman, violinist Karl Stobbe and violist Ryan Davis (named one of “30 Hot Canadian Classical Musicians Under 30” by CBC Music in 2021).

Based in B.C., the Bergmann Piano Duo – Canadian-born Elizabeth and her husband Marcel, born in Germany – take over the first afternoon slot on July 27 with a program of high-energy music, from Rachmaninoff, Poulenc and Piazzolla to Chick Corea, Pat Metheny and Egberto Gismonti (arrangements by Marcel Bergmann). The Bergmanns are back for the late afternoon slot for a program called Cameron’s Choice: “Originals”, a concert of music composed and performed by Cameron Crozman, cello; Ryan Davis, viola; and Graham Campbell, guitar.

Richard-Hamelin’s solo recital in the evening of July 27 features Chopin’s beloved Sonata No.2 and two Nocturnes Op.27 as well as music by César Franck and André Gagnon.

Crozman returns on the afternoon of July 28 for “Tapeo: Sounds of Spain” performing music from his recent recording, with the help of Karl Stobbe, violin; Ryan Davis, viola; and the Bergmann Duo. Pianofest then concludes the next evening on a high note when Richard-Hamelin and Fialkowska perform two of the finest works for piano four hands: Schubert’s Fantasie D940 and Mozart’s Sonata K.397.

Festival Lanaudière

One of Canada’s largest summer festivals, Lanaudière, began even earlier than Festival of the Sound, founded in 1978 by Father Fernand Lindsay, who remained at its helm until 2008. This year it takes place June 30 to August 7, in Joliette as always, northeast of Montreal.

Appointed artistic director of the festival in 2018, Renaud Loranger highlighted some of the attractions in this year’s star-studded event: “Yannick Nézet-Séguin, who continues on his stellar career path and whose future accomplishments can barely be imagined, delivers an unmissable operatic event,” Loranger writes. “Leading the Orchestre Métropolitain and a world-class vocal cast, he restores Wagner’s tragic power [Die Walküre, Act 1, August 6], before reuniting with the sublime Hélène Grimaud, who performs at Lanaudière for the first time [Schumann’s Piano Concerto, August 7].”
What Loranger describes as “Beethoven’s enduring humanist message” comes to the fore once again at this year’s Festival, notably during three exceptional concerts by the Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, one of the most prominent German orchestras in the world, at Lanaudière for an exclusive North American engagement. “Then, there is the simple pleasure of gathering and of new friendships: whether it’s Bernard Labadie and Les Violons du Roy, Marc-André Hamelin and Charles Richard-Hamelin, Hilary Hahn, Alisa Weilerstein, Jean-Yves Thibaudet, Samy Moussa, Inon Barnatan, Michael Spyres and Lawrence Brownlee, Matthias Goerne and Alexandre Kantorow ... not to mention Canadian Brass or the Orchestre symphonique des Jeunes de Joliette: they will all be here with us.”

Concluding by returning to my own pianistic first love: two of Canada’s greatest pianists (both of whom I have covered extensively in my columns over the years), colleagues who share a name, though they are not related, perform together on the same stage for the first time on July 9. Marc-André Hamelin and Charles Richard-Hamelin play Mozart’s Sonata for Two Pianos K.448 and, with Bernard Labadie and Les Violons du Roy, Mozart’s Concerto for Two Pianos K.365.

Paul Ennis is the managing editor of The WholeNote.
It is often said that music has a special power to bring diverse people and cultures together. Two events in July occurring just two days apart highlight this truth – one local, one international.

**North Wind:** On July 16 at Toronto’s Heliconian Hall, North Wind Concerts is bringing together four Toronto-based musicians – each playing different types of wood or bamboo flutes – onto the same stage, for a concert titled “Encircling the World: Flutes II” part of an ongoing series. Combining flutes from Korea (the daegeum played by Jin Cho), from Japan (the shakuhachi played by Debbie Danbrook), from the Anishinaabeg First Nation (the pipigwan played by Rene Meshake), and from Indonesia (the suling played by Andrew Timar), the focus will be on an exchange of musical ideas and approaches to performance.

As artistic co-director Alison Melville explained to me, although many efforts have been made over the past 20 years by classical music organizations to stretch thematically beyond the boundaries of the European tradition, not much has changed when it comes to drawing in new audiences. “There’s something more fundamental that has to happen,” she said.

One key ingredient often missing is a primary focus on the music itself. How do people from different cultural backgrounds actually approach playing the music, and when, and why? “What instruments do you play that are like mine? If I listen to the way you play your instrument, how can that inform me about how one plays music, and even in understanding what music is?” Even though different fundamental techniques may be used when it comes to different wind instruments, exploring common elements, such as how to play with air, for example, can be informative. Regarding drawing in new audiences, people familiar with the music of their own culture are more likely to attend a concert such as “Encircling the World: Flutes II”; in so doing, they will be exposed to other approaches to music-making, traditions that they otherwise wouldn’t experience.

During the concert, each of the four players will play their own set, combining their performance with stories about their relationship to the instrument and their approaches to music-making. These sets will be followed by the four performers coming together in different combinations either to improvise or to perform something preplanned.

The evening will end with a chance for conversation with the audience. Melville pointed out, for example, that two of the performers are playing instruments different from the cultural heritage they were raised in. An interesting question to think about is why they made that choice, and what it has meant to them to pursue a career on that particular instrument.

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**THE IMPASSIONED STORIES of ten composers who altered the course of musical history**

*WENDALYN BARTLEY*

From left to right: Andrew Timar, Debbie Danbrook, Jin Cho and Rene Meshake

IN WITH THE NEW

Two musical exercises in cultivating cultural understanding

WENDALYN BARTLEY
World Listening Day

July 18 is World Listening Day (WLD), a date chosen to honour the birthday of R. Murray Schafer and his pioneering efforts in sound ecology. The event is coordinated annually by the World Listening Project; in 2022, the selected theme is Listening Across Boundaries, a focus that resonates with the Encircling the World event two days previously.

WLD is an invitation: for people from many countries and differing soundscapes both to listen to the sounds of nature and to explore the practice of field recording. That such a day exists highlights how the practice of listening is an important component in understanding each other and the world around us.

This year’s theme was suggested by marine biologist and sound artist Dr. Heather Spence from Washington D.C., who is challenging participants to offer works that ask us to be more inclusive in the way we listen. Sound artists, composers, performers and other interested individuals are invited to submit their events; these will be compiled and made available on July 18 for 24 hours of livestreamed listening adventures on the World Listening Project website.

NAISA: Locally, New Adventures in Sound Art (NAISA) is presenting their own online WLD event on July 17 with audio and audio-visual creations made by hearing and deaf musicians interpreting Ellen Waterman’s text score, Bodily Listening in Place. This concert was preceded on June 19 and 26 by two preparatory workshops using improvisation and inter-sensory exercises that invited participants to explore listening with the whole body, using all their senses while improvising in response to the environment around them. The overall experience offers hearing and deaf musicians the opportunity to learn from each other while reminding all of us that musical experiences need to include ways of listening for all kinds of bodies.

And speaking of resonances

Once I discovered the particular resonance between the Northwinds, WLD and NAISA events described in this story, I started to notice echoes of one or another aspect of it all around me. Here are four that caught my eye – or should that be ear?

July 10 at Westben, a 13-piece chamber pop ensemble The Queer Songbook Orchestra:
July 13 at Brantford Summer Music: Tomson Highway - Songs in the Key of Cree, Cree-Canadian playwright, storyteller, composer and performer Tomson Highway, with singer Patricia Cano;

August 1, Music Mondays, Where the Creator Rests, a collaboration with Métis composer, Karen Sunabacka and the Andromeda Trio;

Sept 1-5, Intersection Music and Arts Festival in Yonge Dundas Square - an annual multi-day festival that celebrates musical experimentation.

Although spring is usually what we think of as the season for rebirth, in post-lockdown 2022, summer is the new spring, with an explosion of festivals and programs back from dormancy. Along Toronto’s lakeshore, two treasured venues are rising from the ashes of the pandemic and bringing back lakeside live music.

Music Garden
Beloved by many hidden-gem miners, the Music Garden, in the Toronto harbourfront, was a tiny perfect setting for beautiful and eclectic acoustic concerts for decades until you-know-what hit and things went quiet. Now, a shiny new curator has been brought on board to steer the musical ship. Gregory Oh is a respected pianist, conductor and curator.

Although he’s bringing new life and fresh names to the programming that Tamara Bernstein – the founding artistic director of the Summer Music in the Garden series – handled so lovingly for many years, he’s staying true to the established format of top-notch small ensembles from a range of cultures and genres. Oh has said his main hope with this season is that people will discover something they’ve never seen or heard before.

With 18 free concerts, the series includes Oneida Nation group, The Ukwehuwe Connection; jazz saxophonist, Alison Au; and Autorickshaw (Suba Sankaran and Dylan Bell plus special guest, and Suba’s dad, master drummer Trichy Sankaran).

In August, 24-year-old cellist, Bryan Cheng, presents a solo program on a prized Stradivarius cello from 1696. The program fittingly culminates in Bach’s Cello Suite No. 1 in G Major, the piece that inspired Yo-Yo Ma to work to create the Toronto Music Garden in 1999.

Palais Royale
Although the majority of people who enjoyed the Palais Royale in its glory days are no longer with us, the legend lingers. Bands led by Count Basie, Duke Ellington and all the greats of the big-band era, passed through there after the hall transformed into a nightclub in the 1930s with shows six nights a week. But when the era of dance bands ended, so did the Palais Royale’s heyday. It was used sporadically for concerts for many years until it was refurbished in 2005 and reopened as an event space.
This summer will bring a taste of those glory days as the Toronto Concert Orchestra (TCO) hosts weekly Tuesday-night shows through July and August.

“There is so much music steeped into those walls. When we found ourselves without a venue in December of 2019, Palais Royale was the first place I approached,” said Sharon Lee, co-artistic director and concertmaster with the TCO. “I’ve been to so many events in the space, and in my eyes, the space was just aching for an orchestra to play there.”

TCO features a wide cross-section of guest artists and conductors and this summer’s program has everything from an Elton John tribute to Persian music. Two concerts are of particular note for big-band fans: “We’re bringing two dance orchestra shows there as a nod to the history: ‘La vie en Rose’, which explores Edith Piaf’s journey through her music and ‘Gatsby’, which we’re really treating as a party night,” Lee explained. “This is stuff you can get up and dance to. It’s happened before in our concerts that audience members get up and dance and we are all for it!

Summer Music in the Garden runs twice weekly on Thursdays at 7pm and Sundays at 4pm from June 21 to August 28.

Co-artistic directors (centre) Marcus Scholtes and Sharon Lee with members of the Toronto Concert Orchestra, at the Palais Royale.

Cathy Riches is a freelance writer and recovering singer.
JAZZ, MOSTLY

Revival House

On July 22, keyboardist Aaron Davis plays at Revival House in Stratford, as part of the Stratford Summer Music Festival. For those who may be unfamiliar, Davis has been a longtime fixture on the Canadian music scene, as a performer (with the likes of the Holly Cole Trio, Measha Brueggergosman and the band Manteca), an arranger (for the likes of Alison Krauss, Natalie McMaster and Eliana Cuevas), and a film composer with over 100 titles to his name. A newish resident of Stratford, Davis has assembled a compelling roster of musicians, including Ben Wittman on drums, Dylan Bell on bass, John Johnson on woodwinds, Lori Cullen on voice, Suba Sankaran on voice and keyboards, and Maryem Hassan Tollar on voice and shakers. With Davis’ deft touch on the piano and his penchant for nuanced, interesting orchestration, expect a compelling evening of music that evokes the best from his highly capable collaborators.

True Something Else

Though the main bulk of Hamilton’s Something Else! Festival fell from June 16 to 19 - two weeks before the publication of this issue of The WholeNote – it continues to offer shows on Saturdays and Sundays until mid-July. On July 16, at The Cotton Factory – a former working cotton mill, originally built in 1900 and now enjoying a second life as an office complex, film/photography location and event space – catch an evening of open improvised music, with sets from Lina Allemano’s Ohrenschmaus project and Ottawa trio Numinosity.
along with a screening of Part Four of the late guitarist Derek Bailey’s 1992 documentary *On the Edge: Improvisation in Music.* (Parts One through Three screened on earlier dates throughout the festival.)

**Ohrenschmaus** features Allemano on trumpet, the Norwegian bassist Dan Peter Sundland and the German drummer Michael Griener, playing Allemano’s compositions. The group’s debut album, *Rats and Mice*, was released to great critical acclaim on Lumo Records, and was included in the NPR Jazz Critics Poll of Best Music of 2020, *Citizen Jazz* France’s Best New Albums of 2020, and reviewed in this very magazine. Ohrenschmaus blends open improvisation with strong, specific elements, making the most of its bandmembers’ individual voices as well as the group’s capacity to listen deeply and create together.

**Numinosity Trio** is David Mott on baritone saxophone, Jesse Stewart on drums, and Justin Gray on upright bass and bass veena. (The latter is a hybrid fretless bass that Gray and luthier Les Godfrey first put together in 2010, with four main bass strings, two drone strings and a ten-string short-scale harp.) Nominally a chordless group, in the tradition of baritone saxophonist Gerry Mulligan’s 1950s pianoless quartet with Chet Baker, Numinosity Trio’s sound is as equally informed by Mott’s melodicism and Stewart’s percussive stewardship as it is by the lush textural imagination of Gray, both on bass veena and on upright bass.

Those familiar with the kind of music presented at Something Else! will also, almost certainly, be familiar with Derek Bailey’s musical legacy. A third-generation musician born in Sheffield in 1930, Bailey was an early English proponent of free improvisation, and, throughout his storied career, would play with a wide variety of musicians, including Dave Holland, Cecil Taylor, Anthony Braxton, Pat Metheny, William Parker and John Zorn. *On the Edge* begins with the assertion that improvisation is the “most widely practiced of all musical activities, but probably the least recognized or understood.” Part Four features appearances from Jerry Garcia, George Lewis and Douglas Ewart, Buddy Guy and more.

Meanwhile, festivals aside, the club scene carries on, indoors and out, taking advantage of Toronto’s pandemic-inspired CaféTO initiative while they can, and then taking the music back indoors again. Check out the **Mainly Clubs** list that follows, for venues that stay the course year round! 

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

Live music is back! As venues begin to reopen, please consult their websites and social media directly to confirm their reopening plans, COVID-19 policies, and any other pertinent information to make your visit fun, safe, and enjoyable. Enjoy!

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A sleek music hall with exceptional sound and ambiance, featuring a draft list of house-made brews.

Cameron House
408 Queen St. W. 416-703-0811 thecameron.com
An intimate, bohemian bar with ceiling murals & nightly performances from local roots acts on 2 stages.

Capon’s Cocktail Lounge
1573 Bloor St. W. 416-534-7911 caponestoronto.com
A self-described perfect marriage of an intimate cocktail den and comfortable neighbourhood bar, with live music Wednesday through Sunday.

Castro’s Lounge
2116 Queen St. E. 416-699-8272 castroslounge.com
Featuring an ever-changing selection of specialty beers, Castro’s hosts a variety of local live music acts, including bluegrass, jazz, rockabilly, and alt-country.

C’est What
67 Front St. E. 416-867-9499 cestwhat.com
A haven for those who appreciate real cask ale, draught beer from local Ontario breweries, and live music.

Drom Taberna
458 Queen St. W. 647-748-2099 dromtaberna.com
A heartfelt homage to the lands that stretch from the Baltic to the Balkans to the Black Sea, with a wide variety of music.

Emmet Ray, The
924 College St. 416-792-4497 theemmetray.com
A whisky bar with a great food menu, an ever-changing draft list, and live jazz, funk, folk and more in the back room.

Grossman’s Tavern
379 Spadina Ave. 416-877-7000 grossmanstavern.com
One of the city’s longest-running live music venues, and Toronto’s self-described “Home of the Blues.”

Hirut Café and Restaurant
2050 Danforth Ave. 416-551-7560 hirut.ca
A major destination for delicious and nutritious Ethiopian cuisine, with monthly jazz residencies and jam sessions.

Home Smith Bar – See Old Mill, The

Hugh’s Room
296 Broadview Ave. 416-533-5483 hughsrroom.com
A dedicated listening room with an intimate performing space, great acoustics, and an attentive audience.

Jazz Bistro, The
251 Victoria St. 416-363-5299 jazzbistro.ca
In an historic location, Jazz Bistro features great food, a stellar wine list, and world-class jazz musicians in airy club environs.

Jazz Room, The
Located in the Heather Hotel, 59 King St. N., Waterloo. 226-478-1565 kwjazzroom.com
A welcoming music venue dedicated to the best in jazz music presentations, and home to the Grand River Jazz Society, which presents regular series throughout the year.

Lula Lounge
1585 Dundas St. W. 416-588-0307 lula.ca
Toronto’s mecca for salsa, jazz, afro-Cuban, and world music, with Latin dance classes and excellent food and drinks.

Manhattans Pizza Bistro & Music Club
951 Gordon St., Guelph 519-767-2440 manhattans.ca
An independently owned neighbourhood restaurant boasting a unique dining experience that features live music almost every night of the week.

Mezzetta Restaurant
681 St. Clair Ave. W. 416-658-5687 mezzettarestaurant.com
With a cozy atmosphere and a menu of Mid-Eastern cuisine, Mezzetta hosts music on Wednesday evenings.

Monarch Tavern
12 Clinton St. 416-531-5833 themonarchtavern.com
With a café/cocktail bar on the main floor and a pub with microbrews upstairs, Monarch Tavern regularly hosts indie, rock, and other musical genres on its stage.

Nice Bistro, The
117 Brock St. N., Whitby, 905-668-8839 nicebistro.com
A French restaurant with Mediterranean flair, Nice Bistro hosts ticketed live music events once every month or so.

Old Mill, The
21 Old Mill Rd. 416-236-2641 oldmilltoronto.com
The Home Smith Bar: With a stone-lined room and deep, plush seating, the Home Smith Bar provides elevated dining along with straight-ahead live jazz.

Pilot Tavern, The
22 Cumberland Ave. 416-923-5716 thepilot.ca
With over 75 years around Yonge and Bloor, the Pilot is a multi-level bar that hosts live music throughout the year.

Reservoir Lounge, The
52 Wellington St. E. 416-955-0887 reservolounge.com
Toronto’s self-professed original swing-jazz bar and restaurant, located in a historic speakeasy near St. Lawrence Market, with live music four nights a week.

Rex Hotel Jazz & Blues Bar, The
194 Queen St. W. 416-598-2475 therex.ca
With over 60 shows per month of Canadian and international groups, The Rex is Toronto’s longest-running jazz club, with full bar and kitchen menu.

Sauce on Danforth
1376 Danforth Ave. 647-748-1376 sauceondanforth.com
With Victorian lighting, cocktails, and an extensive tap and bottle list, Sauce on Danforth has live music Tuesday through Saturday (and sometimes Sunday).

The Senator Winebar
249 Victoria St 416 364-7517 thesenator.com
An intimate, upscale French-inspired bistro with live music serving hearty, delicious comfort food alongside a curated selection of wine and cocktails.

Smokeshow BBQ and Brew
744 Mt. Pleasant Rd 416-901-7469 Smokeshowbbqandbrew.com
A laid-back venue with an emphasis on barbecue and beer, Smokeshow hosts cover artists and original music Thursday through Sunday, with Bachata lessons on Tuesdays and Karaoke on Wednesdays.

Tranzac
292 Brunswick Ave. 416-823-8137 tranzac.org
A community arts venue dedicated to supporting, presenting, and promoting creative and cultural activity in Toronto, with live shows in multiple rooms every day of the week.
SUMMER MUSIC GUIDE

Welcome to WholeNote’s 18th annual Green Pages guide to summer music!

There’s a lot happening in the coming months, Especially compared to the last two years!

There’s something for everyone here, no matter what your first musical love is (classical, opera, music theatre, jazz, folk, improvised or experimental …)

Maybe you’ll discover some kind of music you’ve never experienced before!

With festivals from June to September, in Toronto, the GTA and all over southern Ontario and beyond, you’ll find many of your favourite performers popping up at more than one festival.

We hope the pages that follow will entice you to read the online profiles, provided by the festivals themselves.

For direct links to festival websites and other media links thewholenote.com/green Visit us often! New content is arriving all the time.

For more information about our Green Pages, contact karen@thewholenote.com or call Karen at 416-323-2232 x26
Elora Festival
“For three weekends in July, the village of Elora will resound with live music once again, with performances by ensemble-in-residence The Elora Singers, international guest artists, and celebrated Canadian musicians...”
www.elorafestival.ca

Festival of the Sound
“New this year... Canadian PianoFest, hosted by legendary Janina Fialkowska and featuring Stewart Goodyear, David Jalbert, Charles-Richard Hamelin, the Bergmann Duo, and this year's Chopin Competition winner Xiaoyu Liu.”
www.festivalofthesound.ca

Highlands Opera Studio
“Set in the beautiful surroundings of the Haliburton Highlands in Central Ontario, Highlands Opera Studio provides advanced operatic experience to a select group of talented emerging professionals”
www.highlandsoperastudio.com

Intersection Festival
“...an annual multi-day festival that celebrates musical experimentation, and confronts people in their own environment, on common ground... uniting the creative energy of Toronto-based musical artists and collectives.”
www.intersectionfestival.org

Leith Summer Festival
“Leith Summer Festival and artistic director Robert Kortgaard present five concerts in the summer in the Historic Leith Church... an intimate venue with excellent acoustics.”
www.leithsummerfestival.ca

Markham Village Virtual Music Festival
“The annual Markham Village Music Festival features five stages of entertainment with all genres of music including music from our diverse communities.”
www.markhamfestival.com

Music Mondays
“...a launching pad for emerging talent, and celebration of established local talent since its inception in 1992. Our pay-what-you-can lunchtime concerts take place in the warm acoustics of Holy Trinity Church”
www.musicmondays.ca

NYO Canada’s 2022 Borealis Tour
“82 of today’s brightest young classical musicians take to the stage and perform a new work by 2022 SOCAN composer Katerina Gimon and a repertoire of beloved classical masterpieces”
www.nyoc.org/tickets/borealis-tour

Ottawa Chamberfest
“Chamberfest™ is back in full force! A theme of light overcoming darkness runs through our 2022 festival, with the best and brightest artists gracing our stages.”
www.chamberfest.com

South Coast Jazz & Blues Festival
“South Coast Jazz & Blues 9th annual festival on the shores of Lake Erie. Saturday the 17th headliners include Juno Winners Jully Black, Laila Biali and Pat Collins.”
www.southcoastjazz.com

Stratford Summer Music
“Stratford Summer Music, an annual multi-week music festival that presents multiple events featuring 100+ artists, is set in indoor and outdoor venues throughout downtown Stratford, Ontario.”
www.stratfordsummermusic.ca

Summer Music in the Garden
“Summer Music in the Garden returns for its 21st season at Harbourfront Centre with new curator, Gregory Oh. Visit the Toronto Music Garden for free concerts by the water...”
Summer Opera Lyric Theatre

“This summer, SOLT brings three great works to the stage: Mozart’s The Marriage of Figaro, Humperdinck’s Hansel And Gretel and Menotti’s The Consul. A total of 12 performances at Alumnae Theatre” www.solt.ca

Sun Life UpTown Waterloo Jazz Festival

“What could be better than spending a warm summer afternoon or evening with family and friends enjoying great live music? We look forward to seeing everyone there!” www.waterloojazzfest.com

SweetWater Music Festival

“SweetWater 2022 once again will offer up internationally-acclaimed Canadian and global artists performing classical, jazz, and contemporary music on the shores of Georgian Bay.” www.sweetwatermusicfestival.ca

TD Niagara Jazz Festival

“a cutting edge celebration of all types of jazz, performed in intimate indoor and outdoor venues in the heart of Niagara’s stunning wine country.” www.niagarajazzfestival.com

TD Sunfest ‘22

“TD Sunfest will feature 42 top world music and jazz acts performing on 2 mainstages and 5 satellite stages. 2022 international headliners range from Ukrainian folk-punk phenomenon DakhaBrakha to Argentine electrotango pioneers Tanghetto.” www.sunfest.on.ca

Under the Spire Music Festival

“This summer, step inside the music and join us under the stunning 200-year-old vaulted, wooden ceiling for some of the best in classical, traditional, folk, jazz and world music!” www.underthespire.ca

Westben Centre for Connection & Creativity Through Music

“…where music comes to life amidst breathtaking nature… Westben’s summer festival features over 30 performances of classical, Broadway, jazz, pop, fiddle, roots and comedy” www.westben.ca

CANARY PAGES 2022

● Achill Choral Society www.achill.ca
● Amadeus Choir of Greater Toronto www.amadeuschoir.com
● Annex Singers www.annexsingers.com
● Bel Canto Singers www.belcantoexployers.ca
● Cabbagetown Community Choir cavochoir.ca
● Canadian Celtic Choir www.celticchoir.ca
● Canadian Children’s Opera Company canadianchildrensopera.com
● Cantabile Chamber Singers www.cantabilechambersingers.com
● Choralairs Choir of North York www.choralairschoir.ca
● Chorus York chorusyork.ca
● City Choir www.citychoir.ca
● Cumber Avenue United Church Choir www.summeravenueucc.ca
● Echo Women’s Choir www.echochoir.ca
● Ensemble vocal Les voix du coeur www.lesvoixdusoeur.com
● Esbobicet Centennial Choir www.etobocentennialchoir.ca
● Exultate Chamber Singers www.exultate.net
● Georgetown Choral Society www.georgetownchoral.ca
● Harbourfront Chorus www.facebook.com/harbourfrontchorus
● Healey Willan Singers www.healeylwingers.com
● Incontrada Vocal Ensemble www.incontradavocalensemble.com
● Jubilate Singers www.jubilatesingers.ca
● Leaside United Church Choirs www.leasideunited.ca
● Mississauga Chamber Singers www.mcsingers.ca
● Oasis Vocal Jazz www.oasivocaljazz.com
● Oriana Women’s Choir www.orianachoir.com
● Pax Christi Chorale www.paxchristichorale.org
● Penthealia Singers www.penthealia.com
● Serenata Singers www.serenatasingers.ca
● Toronto Chamber Choir www.torontochamberchoir.ca
● Toronto Children’s Chorus www.torontochildrenschorus.com
● Toronto Mendelsohn Choir www.tmchoir.org
● Toronto Welsh Male Voice Choir www.welshchoir.ca
● Upper Canada Choristers www.uppercanadachoristers.org
● Vesnirka Choir www.vesnirka.com
● UIVA Singers Toronto www.uivistertoronto.com/
● VOCA Chorus of Toronto www.voachorus.ca
● Voices Chamber Choir www.voiceschorm.ca
● West Toronto Community Choir www.facebook.com/groups/westtorontocommunitychoir
● Windsor Classic Chorale www.windorsclassichorale.org
● Yorkminstrels Show Choir www.theyorkminstrelshowchoir.weebly.com

Welcome to Who’s Who at thewholenote.com

The Green Pages
Summer Music Guide

The Canary Pages
Choral Directory

The Blue Pages
Directory of
Music Makers
listings@theWholeNote.com

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

This issue contains event listings from July 1 to September 19, 2022.

THERE ARE THREE SETS OF LISTINGS IN THIS ISSUE

- Proceed straight ahead and you will find six pages of daily listings for events with an announced date and time that one could circle on a calendar in order to "be there"... etc....noted at the end of the listing.
- Go back a couple of pages (to page 29) and you will be in the monthly index to the WholeNote Who's Who, our collection of online annual directories featuring different sectors of our musical ecosystem. This issue highlights our GREEN PAGES DIRECTORY OF SUMMER FESTIVALS.
- Go back one page further, and you can browse our MAINLY CLUBS list of a wide range of informal listening rooms, etc.....so get in touch.

How to List

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

Deadlines

Weekly: Eligible listings received by 6pm Tuesday, each week, will be included in The WholeNote WEEKLY LISTINGS UPDATE e-letter sent to registered readers the following Sunday. Listings received for the Weekly Listings Update are simultaneously posted to JUST ASK, our searchable online listings database. The weekly listings update looks five to six weeks into the future on an ongoing basis.

Print: Our next print issue, Volume 28 no.1 covers from September 20 to November 7. The print submission deadline for that issue will be September 6.

Readers are encouraged to register for the Weekly Listings update, or to check our online listings regularly for new listings or updates to listings previously submitted. Each weekly update looks 5-6 weeks into the future.

Register for the weekly updates at thewholenote.com/newsletter

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

Live or Live Streamed | July 1 to September 19, 2022

NOTE: All times are Eastern Time unless otherwise noted. Listings are based on information sent to WholeNote in advance by event presenters. The following listings include only basic information. For more complete and detailed listings or for information on later events, visit www.thewholenote.com/just-ask

Friday July 1

- 12:00 noon: Q107. Canada Day Picnic. Woodbine Park in the Beach, 1695 Queen St E. Call 416-904-7010. Free.
- 7:00: Westben. Friends on the Hill. William Hill Amphitheatre, 6698 County Road 30 N, Campbellford. Call 877-883-5777 or visit www.westbendigitalvenue.ca. $20-$35.

Saturday July 2

- 2:00: Westben. Ofra Harnoy, Ofra Har- noy, cello; Mike Herriott, trumpet; Jeanie Chung, piano, The Barn, 6698 County Road 30, Campbellford. Call 877-883-5777 or visit www.westbendigitalvenue.ca. $20-$65.

Sunday July 3

- 2:00: Westben. Michael Kaeshammer, Piano. The Barn, 6698 County Road 30, Campbellford. Call 877-883-5777 or visit www.westbendigitalvenue.ca. $20-$55.

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- 7:00: Westben. Friends on the Hill. William Hill Amphitheatre, 6698 County Road 30 N, Campbellford. Call 877-883-5777 or visit www.westbendigitalvenue.ca. $20-$35. (door); $20-$25 (adv).

Monday July 4


Tuesday July 5

- 8:00: Toronto Concert Orchestra. Fall in Love Again. Natalya Gennadi, soprano; Romulo Delgado, tenor; Palais Royal, 1601 Lake Shore Blvd W. Call 416-871-4275 or visit www.tcomusic.ca. $80 (VIP); $50 (adults/sr); $30 (under 30).

Wednesday July 6

- 12:30: ORGANIX Concerts. Aron Dobiás,
organ with Bence Janos Samodai, trumpet. All Saints Kingsway Anglican Church, 2850 Bloor St. W. Call 416-571-3680 or visit www.organixconcerts.ca. Freewill offering ($20 suggested).


Thursday July 7

● 7:00: Brookside Music Festival of the Bay. West. Combining the roots of voodoo and rara (an iconic traditional Haitian instrument), through afrobeat and hip-hop. Calvary Baptist Church (Mid-an iconic traditional Haitian instrument), through Wesli


● 7:30: Brott Music Festival. Via L’Italia PopOpera. Tamar Simon, soprano; Elita Gagner, mezzo; Lizzie Hoy, mezzo; David Fara Arnaud, tenor; Geoffrey Schellenberg, baritone; and others; National Academy Orchestra. L.R. Wilson Concert Hall, McMaster University, 1250 Main St. W., Hamilton. Visit www.brottmusic.com or call 905-256-7664. $59; $54(sr); $25(5); $10(under 12).

Friday July 8


Saturday July 9

● 7:00: Brookside Music Festival of the Bay. Sheng Cai, violin; Juan-Miguel Hernandez, piano; Yura Lee, violin; Marco Tin Seung Cai, piano; Bence Janos Samodai, trumpet. The Barn, 6698 County Road 30 N., Campbellford. Call 877-876-5777 or visit www.westbendigitalvenue.ca. $20–$55.


Sunday July 10

● 2:00: Westben. Queer Songbook Orchestra. The Barn, 6698 County Road 30 N., Campbellford. Call 877-876-5777 or visit www.westbendigitalvenue.ca. $20–$50.

Tuesday July 12

● 7:00: Collingwood Music Festival. Penderecki String Quartet. First Presbyterian Church, 200 Maple St., Collingwood. Call 705-416-1317 or visit www.collingwoodmusicfestival.com. $35.

● 7:00: Toronto Summer Music Festival. Appl & Rieger in Recital. Benjamin Appl, baritone; Wolfram Rieger, piano. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park. Call 416-408-0208 or visit www.torontosummermusic.com. $16–$90.

Wednesday July 13

● 12:30: ORGANIX Concerts. Alexander Straus-Fausto, Organ. All Saints Kingsway
Live or Live Streamed | July 1 to September 19, 2022

Anglican Church, 2650 Bloor St. W. Call 416-571-3680 or visit www.organixconcerts.ca. Freewill offering (20 suggested).

● 2:00: Westben. ABA! A Day! The Barn, 6698 County Road 30, Campbellford. Call 877-883-5777 or visit www.westbendigitalvenue.ca. $20-$35. At the Barn: Jul 13, 14, 19, 20. On Willow Hill: Jul 22(7pm). All at 2pm unless otherwise noted.

● 7:30: Collingwood Music Festival. KUNÉ Global Orchestra. First Presbyterian Church, 200 Maple St., Collingwood. Call 705-416-1317 or visit www.collingwoodfestival.com. $35.


Thursday July 14

● 2:00: Westben. ABA! A Day! See Juli 13.


● 7:30: Brott Music Festival. Cinderella. In Italian with English surtitles. Rosini: La Cenerentola. Lizzy Hoyt (Cinderella); Jordi Costa (Prince Ramiro); Geoffrey Schel- lenberg (Dandini); Maxime Martin-Vo (Don Magnifico); Cesar Bello (Alidoro); and other soloists; National Academy Orchestra; Enrico Castagnola, stage director. FirstOntario Concert Hall, 1 Summers Ln., Hamilton. Visit www.brottmusic.com or call 905-526-7664, $69; $64(sr); $25(st); $10(under 12).

Friday July 15


Saturday July 16

We welcome all listeners.

Avery Raquel in concert

July 20th 8 pm at Supermarket

268 Augusta Ave. Toronto

$15 in advance
$20 at the door

Tickets: reliveer.ca/event/july20

Avery Raquel

July 20

Monday July 18


www.westbenddigitalvenue.ca. $20-$35.


7:30: North Wind Concerts. Encircling the World: Flutes II. An evening of solo and group music making, commentary and discussion, and interaction with the audience. Jin Choo, daegeum; Debbie Danbrook, shakshachi; Rene Meshake, pipigwan for the text score and audio-visual realizations made by Hearing and Deaf musicians to improvise in response and Deaf musicians for the text score. Heliconian Hall, 35 Hazelton Ave. Call 416-588-4301 or visit www.bemusednetwork.com/events/detail/966. PWYC. Suggested admission $25.


bass clarinet; Jeff Reilly, piano. Church of the Holy Trinity, 19 Trinity Sq. Call 416-598-4521 X223 or visit www.musicmondays.ca. PWYC ($10 suggested).

Tuesday July 19

7:00: Ballet Jürgen. Anne of Green Gables – The Ballet®. Bluma Appel Theatre, St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 27 Front St. E. Visit www.tcomusic.ca/tolive/ballet-juergen-anneofgreen-gables-performances. $43-$83. Also Jul 22(7:30pm); 23(7pm) & 24(7pm).


Saturday July 23

11:00am: Stratford Summer Music. Musicbarge. See Jul 22.

12:30pm: Stratford Summer Music. Musicbarge. See Jul 22.

7:00: Ballet Jürgen. Anne of Green Gables – The Ballet®. Bluma Appel Theatre, St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 27 Front St. E. Visit www.tcomusic.ca/tolive/ballet-juergen-anneofgreen-gables-performances. $43-$83. Also Jul 22(7:30pm); 23(7pm) & 24(7pm).


Live or Live Streamed | July 1 to September 19, 2022

Academy Orchestra; Alain Trudel, conductor.
Ancaster Memorial Arts Centre, 357 Wilson St. E., Ancaster. Visit www.brottmusic.com or call 905-525-7664. $50; $45(sr); $25(st); $10(under 12).

1:30: Highlands Opera Studio. Richard Margison Masterclass #1email. Venue TBA. Visit www.brownpapertickets.com/events/3514524. $10. Location will be emailed to attendees closer to the event.


Friday July 29

- 11:00am: Stratford Summer Music. Musicbarge. See Jul 22. Also at 3:30.
- 7:30: Highlands Opera Studio. Richard Margison Masterclass #2. Venue TBA. Visit www.brownpapertickets.com/events/3514527. $10. Location will be emailed to attendees closer to the event.

Saturday July 30

- 11:00am: Stratford Summer Music. Musicbarge. See Jul 22.
- 2:00: Summer Opera Lyric Theatre. The Marriage of Figaro. Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Alumnae Theatre, 70 Berkeley St. 416-366-7723. $28; $22(sr/rt). Also Jul 31(2pm), Aug 3(8pm), 5(8pm).
- 2:00: Westben. Carol Weisman. The Barn, 6698 County Road 30, Campbellford. Call 877-883-5777 or visit www.westbendigitalvenue.ca. $20-$60.
- 3:00: Stratford Summer Music. Duo Concertante: Ecologies of Being. The Avondale, 194 Avondale Ave, Stratford. Call 519-271-2101 or visit www.stratfordsummermusic.ca/events. $60.

Sunday July 31

- 11:00am: Stratford Summer Music. Musicbarge. See Jul 22.
- 2:00: Summer Opera Lyric Theatre. The Marriage of Figaro. Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Alumnae Theatre, 70 Berkeley St. 416-366-7723. $28; $22(sr/rt). Also Jul 30(2pm), Aug 3(8pm), 5(8pm).
- 2:00: Westben. Barbara Lica & The Toronto Chamber-Pop Orchestra. The Barn, 6698 County Road 30, Campbellford. Call 877-883-5777 or visit www.westbendigitalvenue.ca. $20-$65.
- 3:00: Stratford Summer Music. Musicbarge. See Jul 22.
- 3:00: Brott Music Festival. A Royal Tribute. National Academy Orchestra; Alain Trudel, conductor. Sue-Ann Staff Estate Winery, 3210 Staff Ave, Jordan Station. Visit www.brottmusic.com or call 905-525-7664, $127. Food and wine included. Also 6pm.
- 3:00: Stratford Summer Music Vocal Academy Finale. The Avondale, 194 Avondale Ave, Stratford. Call 519-271-2101 or visit www.stratfordsummermusic.ca/events. $25.
- 6:00: Brott Music Festival. A Royal Tribute. See Jul 31 at 3pm.

Monday August 1

- 7:30: Highlands Opera Studio. Why Choose Opera? Venue TBA. www.brownpapertickets.com/events/3519628. PWYC. Location will be emailed to attendees closer to the event.

Tuesday August 2

- 8:00: Summer Opera Lyric Theatre. Hansel and Gretel. Music by Engelbert Humperdinck. Alumnae Theatre, 70 Berkeley St. 416-366-7723. $28; $22(sr/rt). Also Jul 30(8pm), Aug 6(2pm), 7(2pm).
- 8:00: Toronto Concert Orchestra. La Vie en rose. Songs of Edith Piaf. Pandora Topp, vocalist; Grand Salon Orchestra. Palais Royale, 1001 Lake Shore Blvd. W. 416-671-4275 or www.tcomusic.ca. $80(VIP); $50(adults/or) $30(under 30).

Wednesday August 3

- 2:00: Summer Opera Lyric Theatre. The Consul. Music by Gian Carlo Menotti. Alumnae Theatre, 70 Berkeley St. 416-366-7723. $28; $22(sr/rt). Also Jul 29(8pm), 4(8pm), 6(8pm).
- 7:30: Highlands Opera Studio. From Opera to Broadway. St. George’s Anglican Church (Haliburton), 67 Mountain St., Haliburton. www.brownpapertickets.com/events/3519667. $32.50.

Thursday August 4

- 8:00: Summer Opera Lyric Theatre. The Marriage of Figaro. Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Alumnae Theatre, 70 Berkeley St. 416-366-7723. $28; $22(sr/rt). Also Jul 30(2pm), 31(2pm), Aug 5(6pm).

Friday August 5

- 12:00: Sunday at Noon Live Streamed. 2022 Borealis Tour. Katarzyna Noszlo: composer/conductor; Philip Akin, director; Glenn Gould School New Music Ensemble. Atrium, Royal Conservatory, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208 or wwwющmusic.ca/performances. $21-$85. Also Aug 5, 9, 10, 12.
Friday August 5

8:00: Summer Opera Lyric Theatre. The Consul. Music by Gian Carlo Menotti. Alumnae Theatre, 70 Berkeley St. 416-366-7723. $28; $22(sr/st). Also Jul 30(8pm), Aug 2(8pm), 6(2pm).

3:00: Thursday Piano Duo. Free.

Saturday August 6

11:00am: Stratford Summer Music. Musicbarge. See Jul 22. Also 2:30pm.

8:00: Royal Conservatory of Music. 21C Music Festival Series: Gould’s Wall. See Aug 4.

11:00am: Stratford Summer Music. Musicbarge. See Jul 22. Also 2:30pm.

8:00: Summer Opera Lyric Theatre. The Marriage of Figaro. Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Alumnae Theatre, 70 Berkeley St. 416-366-7723. $28; $22(sr/st). Also Jul 30(2pm), 31(2pm), Aug 2(8pm).

5:00: Stratford Summer Music. Friday Night Live at Revival House - SSM All Stars - Team Canada. Revival House, 70 Brunswick St., Stratford. 519-271-2101 or www.stratfordsummermusic.ca/events. Free.

Monday August 8


Tuesday August 9


8:00: Royal Conservatory of Music. 21C Music Festival Series: Gould’s Wall. See Aug 4. Also Aug 10, 12.

11:00am: Thursday Piano Duo. Free.

11:00am: Stratford Summer Music. Children’s Concert - Chris McKhool’s Fiddlefire. Alumnae Theatre, 70 Berkeley St. 416-366-7723. $28; $22(sr/st). Also Jul 30(8pm), Aug 2(8pm), 7(8pm).

3:00: Thursday Piano Duo. Free.

Saturday August 7


11:00am: Stratford Summer Music. Musicbarge. See Jul 22. Also 2:30pm.


2:00: Summer Opera Lyric Theatre. Hansel and Gretel. Music by Engelbert Humperdinck. Alumnae Theatre, 70 Berkeley St. 416-366-7723. $28; $22(sr/st). Also Jul 30(2pm), Aug 2(8pm), 7(8pm).

3:00: Thursday Piano Duo. Free.
Onegin by Tchaikovsky, Northern Lights Performing Arts Pavilion, 5358 County Rd. 21, Haliburton. www.brownpapertickets.com/ event5319678. $37.50. Also Aug 27, 28(2pm), 29. With English subtitles.

Friday August 26

● 7:00: Brookside Music Festival of the Bay. Summertime in Midland. Jackie Richardson, vocals; Paul Novotny, bass; Robi Botos, piano. Midland Cultural Centre, 333 King St., Midland. www.brooksidemusic.com/ $30.

Saturday August 27


Sunday August 28


Monday August 29


Monday September 5


Wednesday September 7


Friday September 9

● 7:00: Westben Open Air Fall Fest. Showman & Coole. The Campfire, 6696 County Road 30 N., Campbellford. 877-883-5777 or www.westben.ca. $50; $48(2); $5(youth under 18).

Saturday September 10

● 10:00am: Westben Open Air Fall Fest. Sounds in Nature Series - Spirit of the Forest. Willow Hill Amphitheatre, 6698 County Road 30 N., Campbellford. 877-883-5777 or www.westben.ca. $55; $63(2); $5(youth under 18).

● 2:00: Westben Open Air Fall Fest. Sarah Harmer. Willow Hill Amphitheatre, 6696 County Road 30 N., Campbellford. 877-883-5777 or www.westben.ca. $55; $63(2); $5(youth under 18).

Sunday September 11

● 2:00: Westben Open Air Fall Fest. Sunday Live: Great Little Tunes, coming directly from his Lockdown tun Turner and the Barn, 6698 County Road 30 N., Campbellford. 877-883-5777 or www.westben.ca. $50; $48(2); $5(youth under 18).

September 2022

- ONLINE ON DEMAND & PODCASTS
- ArtsHome. A vibrant hub connecting Torontonians to arts and culture. Designed to strengthen personal and societal resilience through the arts. www.artshome.ca.
- Canadian Opera Company. Bluebeard’s Castle (Digital Performance). Academy Award-nominated director Atom Egoyan returns to the Canadian Opera Company at the helm of an ambitious digital reimagining of Bela Bartok’s Bluebeard’s Castle. In this hybrid work, Atom Egoyan melds his acclaimed film Felicia’s Journey with the chilling one-act opera about an infamous recluse whose previously young wives have mysteriously disappeared. American bass-baritone Kyle Ketelsen returns to the COC in the title role, and Canadian mezzo-soprano and Canadian Opera Company. Jane Archibald in Concert (Digital Performance). Renowned Canadian soprano Jane Archibald delivers a tour-de-force vocal performance in a program of sparkling coloratura arias—from George Frideric Handel to Leonard Bernstein. Archibald is joined for this performance by OCD Music Director Johannes Debus conducting the COC Orchestra. For full details, including program information and how to watch, please visit www.coc.ca/Archibald. Free with COC’s digital membership. Sign-up now at www.coc.ca/stream and visit www.coc.ca/Bluebeard for more information on how to watch, cast and creative team, and other Spring programming. Streaming now until Sep 24.
- Canadian Opera Company. Jane Archibald in Concert (Digital Performance). Renowned Canadian soprano Jane Archibald delivers a tour-de-force vocal performance in a program of sparkling coloratura arias—from George Frideric Handel to Leonard Bernstein. Archibald is joined for this performance by OCD Music Director Johannes Debus conducting the COC Orchestra. For full details, including program information and how to watch, please visit www.coc.ca/Archibald. Free with COC’s digital membership. Sign-up now at www.coc.ca/stream. Streaming now until Aug 27.
- Glenn Gould Foundation. Howard Shore: The Art of the Score. Howard Shore spoke with us about the four distinct careers he’s had over the past few decades—a member of pioneering Canadian jazz-rock fusion band Lighthouse, then the first Music Director at Saturday Night Live. This conversation covers it all, including his ascent of that musical Everest: the many hours of unforgettable orchestral and choral music created for The Lord of the Rings. Listen on our website at www.glengould.com.
- Kevin Barrett. Live from Lockdown. Kevin Barrett does a livestreamed set of solo gui tar tunes, coming directly from his Lockdown studio. Tune in to Kevin’s Facebook page on Friday at 4pm at www.facebook.com/kevin.barrett.165470.

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- Mix 669. Beyond the B-side: Open Mic @ The Mix 669. Adam Goldberg, host. 669 College St. 647-909-2109. $5 cover. Weekly on Wed at 7pm.

ONLINE GROUPS
- Recollective: 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@recollective.ca for meeting times, information and registration.
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THE WHOLENOTE

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**Editor’s Corner**

DAVID OLDS

Here we are at the summer issue, the final installment of Volume 27 (the completion of our 27th year of publishing *The WholeNote*). This means my last chance until September to try to make it through the pile of excellent discs that have caught my attention. I have winnowed them down to a top ten, but even so I will be hard pressed to cover them all within my allotted space. Of course it would be a much simpler task if I restricted myself to talking more about the discs and less about my own connections to them, but as regular readers know, the chances of that are slim at best.

The latest release by Montreal’s Quatuor Molinari is Philip Glass – *Complete String Quartets Volume One* (ATMA ACD2 4071 atmaclassique.com/en). Glass continues to add to the repertoire – he has eight quartets so far – heedless of those artists who have already published “complete” recordings. The first four are arranged here in a non-sequential, but quite effective order. *String Quartet No.2 “Company”* – with its haunting opening – is first up, followed by No.3 *Mishima* which was adapted from the soundtrack of the film by that name. Both of these works reflect Glass’ mature minimalism and it comes as a bit of shock when they are followed by his first venture into the genre, written in 1966 before he developed his signature style. This quartet is more angular and searching, although it too features a cyclical return to its starting point, a feature that the notes point out may “evoke for some the mythical Sisyphus, condemned to eternal repetition.” *String Quartet No.4 “Buczak”* – commissioned as a memorial for artist Brian Buczak – returns us to more familiar ground – its slow movement is even reminiscent of the opening of the second quartet – and brings an intriguing disc to a fitting close.

This Molinari release is digital only at the moment, but on completion of *Volume Two*, ATMA says they will be issued together as a double CD. Although founder Olga Ranzenhofer is the only remaining original member of the quartet, which has undergone myriad personnel changes in its 25-year history, the Molinari sound remains consistent and exemplary, and their dedication to contemporary repertoire is outstanding. Molinari’s impressive discography now numbers 14 in the ATMA catalogue, and includes such international luminaries as Gubaidulina, Schnittke, Penderecki, Kurtág and Zorn, along with Canadians Jean-Papineau Couture, Petros Shoujounian and the 12 quartets of R. Murray Schafer.

Canadian Soundscapes: Schafer; Raminsh; Schneider (CMCCD29722 cmccanada.org/shop/cd-cmccd-29722) opens with *The Falcon’s Trumpet*, a concerto R. Murray Schafer wrote for Stuart Laughton, a long-time participant in Schafer’s *Wolf Project* in the Haliburton Forest. Schafer wrote the piece while working at Strasbourg University in France and says “no doubt my nostalgia for Canadian lakes and forests strongly influenced the conception of this piece.” Certainly it is evocative of the wilderness, as the trumpet soars above the orchestra like a falcon in flight. In this performance soloist Guy Few joins the Okanagan Symphony Orchestra (OSO) under the direction of Rosemary Thomson. Thomson has been music director of the OSO since 2006, previously serving as assistant conductor of the Canadian Opera Company and conductor-in-residence of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra. The OSO is the third largest professional orchestra in B.C. and this is its inaugural recording. A striking feature of Schafer’s concerto is the wordless soprano obbligato in the final minute, in this instance sung by Carmen Harris. Perhaps more surprising, considering Schafer has frequently used high sopranos in his wilderness pieces, is the inclusion of a soprano in a vocalise duet with the soloist in Imant Ramjinš’s *Violin Concerto*. Ramjinš, best known and well-loved for his hush choral music, says he felt some trepidation when approached to write a piece for Vancouver Symphony Orchestra concertmaster Robert Davidovici. He felt no affinity for works “of flash and little substance” but ultimately felt comfortable creating something “more along the Brahmsian line – a symphonic work with solo violin obbligato.” At more than 40 minutes in four movements, it is truly grand in scope and lusciously Romantic in sensibility. Soprano Eva-Maria Kopp is first heard in the final minute of the *Agitato Appassionato* movement and throughout the following *Andante con moto*. She re-enters briefly towards the end of the *Con Spirito* finale. The shared timbres are scintillating and violinist Melissa Williams shines throughout this remarkable work. Ernst Schneider’s self-proclaimed *Romantic Piano Concerto* is the earliest piece here, dating from 1980, at a time when the composer was immersing himself in the study of piano concerti of the Baroque, classical and Romantic eras. It is just as advertised and young Canadian soloist Jaeden Lizk-Dzurko rises to the occasion admirably. I was particularly taken with the *Adagio Molto Espressivo* second movement, to my ears reminiscent of the same movement in Ravel’s *Concerto in G*.

The Canadian Music Centre’s latest release is a digital EP, *Mascarada* by Alice Ping Yee Ho (Centrediscs CMCCD 29922 cmccanada.org/shop/cd-cmccd-29922) featuring cellist Rachel Mercer, flamenco dancer Cyrena Luchkow-Huang and the Allegre Chamber Orchestra under Janna Sailor. The press release included a link to a video of Mucurada (youtube.com/watch?v=3hb7fvsA2o) and at first I was confused as to whether this was a video or an audio release. It seemed strange to credit a dancer in an audio-only recording, but once you hear it you will understand why. The flamboyant, percussive choreography is an integral part of the composition and is very present on the recording. Watching the video where all the performers are masked and socially distanced, it seems likely that this is yet another result of the current pandemic, but it is also an apt touch for a piece called a masquerade. Ho has successfully captured the flamenco spirit and it could just as easily have been called “My Spanish Heart.” I first met Mercer as a young artist while working as a music programmer at CJRT-FM in the early 90s. Since that time she has gone on to a stellar solo and chamber career, and now serves as principal cellist for Canada’s National Arts Centre Orchestra. She shares the spotlight with Luchkow-Huang here, and it’s hard to decide who is stealing the show from whom in this stunning performance.

I will venture out of my field of expertise for this next one, but not so much out of my comfort zone. Joel Quarrington – *The Music of Don Thompson* (Modica Music joelquarrington.com/store) is a fabulous collaboration between two of Canada’s top musicians. Although the overall feel of the disc is rooted in Thompson’s more-than-half-century career as jazz bass, vibes and piano player, he is featured...
here as composer and accompanist to Quarrington, a world-renowned musician who has served as principal double bass player for the Canadian Opera Company, Toronto Symphony, Canada’s National Arts Centre Orchestra and most recently the London Symphony Orchestra. The first four tracks feature Quarrington with Thompson on piano, beginning with Thompson’s arrangement of the classic A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square, followed by three Thompson originals. Quarrington’s tone is sumptuous and his ability to swing is truly impressive, as rarely heard from a classical musician.

The album notes comprise an extended reminiscence from Thompson in which he tells of early meetings with Quarrington and how their paths continued to cross over the years. One example was in 1989 when Quarrington asked him to write a piece for a gig he was doing for New Music Concerts involving multiple bass players, including Wolfgang Gütler, principal of the SWR Symphony Orchestra, Baden-Baden and Freiburg. The result was Quartet 89 for four double basses. Thompson, who was to play pizzicato in the ensemble, says “I knew I couldn’t write a real ‘classical’ piece, so I just tried to come up with something we could play that might be fun. I wrote a big part for myself with a solo intro, a solo in the middle plus a cadenza, and left it up to the rest of them to decide who played [what].” I was at that concert, although it was before my association with NMC began, and I can tell you they had fun indeed. In the current iteration, which completes the disc, Thompson sits out and Roberto Occhipinti takes his spot with aplomb, and great sound, with Quarrington, Joseph Phillips and Travis Harrison on the arco parts. Not a classical piece per se, but somewhere between that and the world of jazz with a foot in both camps, much like this unique collaboration.

Another disc that falls between two worlds is Im Wald conceived by, and featuring, pianist Benedetto Boccuzzi (Digression Music DCTT126 digressionmusic.it). In this instance the two worlds are the piano music of the late classical/early Romantic era, juxtaposed with contemporary works by Jorg Widmann, Wolfgang Rihm and Helmut Lachenmann. While purists will likely be offended by the imposition of sometimes abrasive works into such beloved cycles as Schumann’s Walzerzenen and Schubert’s Die schöne Müllerin (in a piano arrangement) I personally find it refreshing and even invigorating. The first half of the disc includes a complete performance of the Schumann (Forest Scenes in English) with selected movements from Widmann’s Elf Humoresken (11 Humoresques) interspersed. Then as a “palette cleanser” Boccuzzi inserts an electronic soundscape of his own creation, Im Wald (Into the Woods). In the second half of the disc we hear eight of the 20 movements of the Schubert, this time “interrupted” by a Landler by Rihm and Fünf Variationen über ein Thema von Schubert (not from Die schöne Müllerin) by Lachenmann. This latter is of particular interest to me as it is an early melodic work (1956) that predates the mature style I am familiar with in which Lachenmann focuses mainly on extra-musical timbres achieved through extended instrumental techniques. Boccuzzi is to be congratulated not only for the overall design of this project, but for his understanding and convincing realization of the varying esthetics of these diverse composers.

Speaking of Die schöne Müllerin, I was surprised when no one spoke up when I offered Gerald Finley’s new Hyperion recording with Julius Drake to my team of reviewers (CDA68377 hyperion-records.co.uk/dw.asp?dc=W1922_68377). I was also surprised to find that the renowned Canadian bass baritone had not previously recorded the cycle, familiar as I am with his other fine Schubert recordings. As we have come to expect from Finley and Drake’s impeccable performances of Winterreise and Schwanengesang, this latest release is everything one could ask for: nuanced, emotionally moving, pitch-perfect and well balanced. Finley is in top form and Drake is the perfect partner.

I was unfamiliar with the Bergamot Quartet before their recording In the Brink (New Focus Recordings FCR316 newfocusrecordings.com). Founded at the Peabody Institute in Baltimore in 2016, the quartet is “fueled by a passion for exploring and advocating for the music of living composers” and this disc is certainly a testament to that. It opens with a work by American cellist and composer Paul Wiancko, commissioned by the Banff Centre for the Toronto-based Eybler Quartet during the 2019 Evolution of the Quartet festival and conference. (The Eybler were on the faculty and the Bergamot were participants in the program that year.) Ode on a Broken Loom is evocative of a spinning wheel and its rhythmic drive is compelling. Tania León’s Esencia (2009) is a three-movement work that incorporates influences from the Caribbean and Latino America, cross-pollinated with Copeland’sque harmonic overtones. Suzanne Farrin’s Undeclin (2006) is the earliest work here, and is in some ways the most intriguing. The composer says it was written “when I was thinking about how memory could be applied as a process in my music. I was fascinated by the long lifespan of stringed instruments. In this work, I liked to imagine that the bow remembers all of the repertoire of its past and could [...] utter articulations of older pieces in an ephemeral, non-linear [gloss on] the present.” It’s a wild ride. The final work, the group’s first commission, is by first violinist Ledah Finck. In the Brink (2019) adds a drum set (Terry Feeney) to the ensemble, and requires the string players to vocalise, exclaim and whisper while playing. Not your traditional string quartet!

The San Antonio-based SOLI Chamber Ensemble has been championing contemporary music since their founding in 1994. They are comprised of violin, clarinet, cello and piano, the formation immortalized in Messiaen’s iconic Quatuor pour la fin du temps. Their latest CD presents The Clearing and the Forest (Acis APL50069 acisproductions.com), “an evening-length, staged work that dramatizes the relationship between landscape, migration and refuge through music, theater and sculpture” by Scott Ordway. A very
brief Prologue featuring quiet wind chimes leads into Act I – we must leave this place forever in five instrumental sections, mostly calm but with occasional clarinet and violin shrieks reminiscent of ecstatic passages in Messiaen’s work. The six-movement Act II – we must run like wolves to the end begins with quiet solo clarinet, once again echoing Messiaen. In Ordway’s defence it must be virtually impossible to write for this combination of instruments without referring to that master; however, there is much original writing here in Ordway’s own voice. A contemplative Intermezzo – a prayer of thanksgiving leads to the final Act III – the things we lost we will never reclaim. This single extended movement gradually builds and builds before receding and fading once again into the sound of chimes. Ordway says “I have tried to create a work which honors and embodies the values of welcoming, of care and concern for others, of keen attention to the small and secret phenomena unfolding around us in the living world every day.” I would say he has succeeded, as has the SOLI Ensemble in bringing this work to life.

I first listened to Vicky Chow’s CD Sierra (Cantaloupe Music CA21274 cantaloupe-music.com/albums/sierra) without reading the press release or the program notes and initially assumed I was hearing a remarkable piano solo. It turns out however that the compositions by Jane Antonia Cornish presented here are actually works for multiple pianos (up to six) with all the parts overdubbed by Chow in the studio. The lush, and luscious, pieces are beautifully performed, their multiple layers seamlessly interwoven to produce an entrancing experience. The five pieces, Sky, Ocean, Sunglitter, Last Light and the extended title work for four pianos, comprise a meditative, bell-like suite that I found perfect for releasing the tensions of everyday tribulations. Hmm, tintinnabulations as antidote to tribulations, I like that.

I did not know what to expect from the title Quatuors pour trois instruments (Calliope Records CAL195 calliope-records.com) without reading the press release or the program notes and initially assumed I was hearing a remarkable piano solo. It turns out however that the compositions by Jane Antonia Cornish presented here are actually works for multiple pianos (up to six) with all the parts overdubbed by Chow in the studio. The lush, and luscious, pieces are beautifully performed, their multiple layers seamlessly interwoven to produce an entrancing experience. The five pieces, Sky, Ocean, Sunglitter, Last Light and the extended title work for four pianos, comprise a meditative, bell-like suite that I found perfect for releasing the tensions of everyday tribulations. Hmm, tintinnabulations as antidote to tribulations, I like that.

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

David Olds, DISCoveries Editor
discoveries@thewholenote.com

TERRY ROBBINS

Canadian violinist Karl Stobbe recently created a series of online concerts featuring video recordings of solo violin repertoire, including all six of the Bach Sonatas & Partitas. These recordings are now being turned into a series of albums, with Bach & Bartók the opening volume (karl-stobbe.com).

Stobbe pairs Bach’s Sonata No.3 in C Major BWV1005 with the Bartók Sonata for Solo Violin for historical as well as musical reasons: Bartók heard Yehudi Menuhin play the Bach in early 1944 when he was working on his own sonata, commissioned by Menuhin after their late-1943 meeting. Stobbe senses a connection, feeling that the Bach C Major is the only one of the Bach works that has a similar musical journey to the Bartók – from darkness to light, through uncertainty and wandering harmonies to an expression of celebration and joy.

Stobbe has a big, rich sound, and the strength to navigate the fiendishly difficult Fuga in the Bach as well as the technical challenges in the Bartók. It promises to be a fascinating series.

Concert Note: Karl Stobbe performs at the Festival of the Bay, Midland Cultural Centre, on July 26 and at the Festival of the Sound on July 28.

There’s more Baroque violin music from an exact contemporary of Bach on Telemann 12 Fantasias for Violin Solo in supremely satisfying performances by Tomás Cotik (Cantaloupe CRC 39.49 tomascotik.com).

In previous reviews I’ve noted that the Fantasias, written some 15 years after Bach’s Sonatas & Partitas at first appear less challenging than the Bach. They seem so much easier on the page, shorter and with simpler lines and less multiple-stopping, but they’re fraught with technical pitfalls – angular.
awkward intervals, tricky string-crossing – and they play much faster than they look.

Still, nothing challenges Cotik, who uses a Baroque bow to lovely effect in the slow sections and to simply dance through the Allegro, Presto and Vivace movements. There are 44 sections in all, some only a few bars long, but all are inventive, varied and charming. The booklet essay says that “every note of these often complex pieces lies perfectly, if not easily, [my italics] under the bow.”

Well, yes – if you’re as superb a player as Tomás Cotik.

The Bartók sonata also turns up in Ostinata: works for solo violin, the excellent debut recording from the young London-based French violinist Charlotte Saluste-Bridoux (Champs Hill ChrCD258 champshillrecordords.co.uk).

Biber’s Passacaglia In G Minor, “The Guardian Angel”, the final piece from his Rosary Sonatas, is followed by Bartók’s Sonata for Solo Violin and the Prokofiev Sonata in D Major Op.115. Grażyna Bacewicz’s Sonata No.2 from 1958 and Ysaye’s Sonata No.4 in E Minor Op.27, dedicated to Kreisler, complete the disc.

There’s smooth, clean playing throughout, with technical assurance, strong melodic lines and no hint of roughness – I’ve certainly heard the Bartók Fuga (which Karl Stobbe interestingly terms “brutal”) played with more attack and spikiness. The Presto final movement in the Bacewicz is quite brilliant, and an idiomatic reading of the Ysaye sonata completes a highly satisfying recital.

There should be a warning label on violinist Patricia Kopatchinskaja CDs: “Fireworks – handle with care.” You always get something different and incredibly exciting from this player who never hesitates to take risks, and so it is with her latest CD Le Monde selon George Antheil with pianist Joonas Ahonen (Alpha Classics ALPHA797 outhere-music.com/en/albums/le-monde-selon-george-antheil).

Antheil, the American composer and pianist, caused riots in early 1920s Europe as a “Pianist-Futurist” who wrote machine-like and explosive piano works. Presented here is his astonishing Violin Sonata No.1 from 1923, its percussive and machine-like outer movements in particular drawing terrific playing from the duo.

Antheil’s world, referenced in the CD title, included Morton Feldman and John Cage, the former represented here by the brief Piece (1950) and Extensions 1 (1951) and Cage by his 1947 Nocturne. It’s the Violin Sonata No.7 in C Minor Op.30 No.2 by Antheil’s lifelong hero Beethoven, however, that sees Kopatchinskaja really upping the excitement levels in a quite remarkable performance.

There’s an outstanding new set of the complete Beethoven Cello Sonatas, this time with cellist Alisa Weilerstein and pianist Inon Barnatan (Pentatone PTC5186884 pentatonemusic.com/product/beethoven-cello-sonatas).

The two have been playing together since 2006 and are close friends, and their mutual understanding shows in every moment of these beautifully judged performances. They were recorded during the pandemic in 2020 for the 250th anniversary of Beethoven’s birth, with Weilerstein saying that doing so “at such a fragile, chaotic time” helped make it an immensely rewarding experience.

It certainly shows in superb performances that will more than hold their own against any competition.

Denmark’s Nightingale String Quartet follows up its outstanding first volume of fellow-countryman Vagn Holmboe’s complete works in the genre with Vagn Holmboe String Quartets Vol.2 (Dacapo 6.220717 naxos.com/catalogue/item.asp?item_code=6.220717).

The three works this time are the String Quartet No.2 Op.47 from 1949, the String Quartet No.14 Op.125 of 1975 and the two-movement Quartetto sereno Op.197 posth., the shortest of Holmboe’s quartets and unofficially No.21. Started just two months before the composer’s death in 1996, it was completed by his friend and former pupil Per Norgård.

The exceptionally high standard of the initial volume is continued here, the publicity material accurately describing the performances as “energetic, precise yet lively and poetic interpretations” of works which “stand among the most significant contributions to the genre in the 20th century.”

Swordsman, horseman, athlete, violinist, composer – what a fascinating individual Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges must have been. SAINT-GEORGES Six Concertante Quartets is the fourth Naxos CD devoted to his works, in performances by the Arabella String Quartet (8.574360 naxos.com/catalogue/item.asp?item_code=8.574360).

Saint-Georges wrote three sets of six quartets, starting with Six Quatuors Op.1 in 1772 and ending with Six Quatuors concertantes...
The string quartet form in France was in the early stages of development at the time, the four-movement form being developed by Haydn having little influence. Still, as the booklet notes remark, while small in scale these quartets are exceptionally rewarding, amply demonstrating Saint-Georges’ rich lyrical gifts and natural ability to delight performers and audiences alike.

Lovely playing makes for an absolutely delightful CD.

The French violinist Gérard Poulet, who turns 84 later this year, is no stranger to the Beethoven violin sonatas, having released a 4CD box set in 2001 in addition to a few single releases, all with different pianists. His latest recording is *Beethoven Sonates pour violon et piano nos. 3, 5 et 7*, with pianist Jean-Claude Vanden Eyden (Le Palais des Dégustateurs PDD026 lepalais-des-degustateurs.com).

The sonata keys and opus numbers aren’t identified, but they are No.3 in E-flat Major Op.12, No.5 in F Major Op.24 “Spring” and No.7 in C Minor Op.30 No.2. Poulet has a lovely sound – warm, sweet and never forced or over-stressed. These are simply lovely readings, with the “Spring” sonata (which also features in all the above-mentioned recordings) at the heart of a delightful recital.

*Chinoiserie – Building New Musical Bridges* is the fascinating debut CD from the Duo Chinoiserie of classical guitarist Bin Hu and Jing Xia on guzheng, the Chinese plucked string instrument similar to a zither. Described as a true melding of Eastern and Western cultures, it features arrangements of works by Granados, de Falla and Debussy as well as contemporary compositions (Navona NV6417 navonarecords.com/catalog/nv6417).

Newly commissioned works by Sérgio Assad and Mathias Duplessy, along with Yusuke Nakanishi’s *Inari* open and close the disc. All other titles are transcriptions by the Duo Chinoiserie, including Stephen Goss’ *Cantigas de Santiago*, three excerpts from *El amor brujo*, the Granados *Oriental* and Debussy’s *Girl with the Flaxen Hair* and *Gollivog’s Cakewalk*.

The guzheng’s clear, distinctive sound obviously tends to dominate, especially if it’s taking the melodic line, but it combines perfectly with the guitar to produce a quite unique musical experience.

*Consolations – Liszt Six Consolations and other reflective pieces for violin and piano*, featuring violinist Maya Magub and pianist Hsin-I Huang is another lockdown project, started when Nathan Milstein’s transcription of the third of Six Consolations for Solo Piano inspired Magub to transcribe the remaining five for violin and piano herself (CRD Records CRD3540 crdrecords.com).

The big difference here was the decision to record the tracks independently and then combine them in the studio, although having to decide which to record first possibly contributed to a sense of treading carefully and a general absence of risk-taking.

Accompanying the Liszt are 12 short pieces, with evergreen favourites by Schumann, Massenet, Rachmaninoff, Kreisler, Bach/Gounod, Dushkin/Paradis, Handel, Chopin and Mendelssohn.

Magub’s violin sound is clear and warm and quite distinctive – a slow vibrato (if any at all) and occasional portamento. Both instruments are clearly recorded.

The Armenian-American Aznavorian sisters Ani, cello, and Marta, piano, make their duo recording debut with *Aznavorian Duo: Gems from Armenia*, a CD that explores their musical heritage (Cedille Records CDR 90000 209 cedillerecords.org).

The disc opens with five ancient folk songs arranged by the Western-trained orthodox priest, composer and musicologist Komitas Vartabed (1869-1935), a seminal figure in Armenian classical music. Four Soviet-era composers are represented: Aram Khachaturian with two brief pieces; Arno Babajanian (1921-83) with the lovely *Elegy* for solo piano and the *Arta & Dance*; Alexander Arutjunian (1920-2012) with the lively *Impromptu*; and Aved Tertian (1929-94) with the really impressive three-movement *Sonata for cello and piano* from 1956.

Contemporary Armenian composers are represented by single short pieces by Sergouj Kradjian (b.1973), well known in Toronto as the pianist in Amici, and Vache Sharafyan (b.1966), plus the world-premier recording of *Mount Ararat*, commissioned from Peter Boyer (b.1970) for this recording project.

There’s some really lovely music here, all beautifully played and recorded.

The Tcherepnin family of composers is celebrated on *Three Generations: Chamber Music by Ivan, Alexander and Nikolai Tcherepnin*. Violinist Quan Yuan and pianist David Witten are the duo for almost the entire CD (Toccata Next TOCN 0012 toccata-classics.com).

Works by Alexander Tcherepnin (1899-1977) open the disc, his Romance WoO from 1922, his *Elegie Op.43* from 1927 and *Arabesque Op.11 No.5* from 1921 all being first recordings. The major work here is his three-movement *Sonata in F Major Op.14*.

The most attractive music on the disc is by the composer most active in the Russian late-Romantic era, Nikolai Tcherepnin (1873-1945). His *Poème Lyrique Op.9* from 1900 is a simply lovely work that draws particularly fine playing from Quan, and his *Andante and Finale Op. posth.* from 1943 (another first recording) is also a gem, the dazzling folk-influenced *Finale* having more than a hint of Stravinsky’s Petrushka.

Two flute works by Ivan Tcherepnin (1943-98), *Pensamiento* and *Cadenzas in Transition* are played here by his wife, Sue-Ellen Hershman-Tcherepnin. She is joined by pianist Donald Berman and clarinetist Ian Greitzer for the premiere recording of the latter.
Although it was apparently released in 2020 I only recently received the CD of Brahms Trio Op.114 and Sonatas Op.120 in the composer’s own viola arrangements of three of the four late chamber works inspired by his friendship with clarinetist Richard Mühlfeld, but I’m including it because it features some of the loveliest viola playing I’ve heard in a long time (Le Palais des Dégustateurs PDD023 lepalaisdesdegustateurs.com).

Ettore Causa is the outstanding violist, ably supported by pianist Boris Berman throughout and by cellist Clive Greensmith in the Trio. The Steinway D piano adds depth and body to beautifully judged performances of Brahms at his most autumnal.

### VOCAL

**Fidelio FACD052 (mariannelambert.com)**

Marianne Lambert; Valerie Milot

The grand conception of this disc, intended to be in praise of bel canto, is instantly discernible. Why would it not be? Quebec soprano Marianne Lambert inhabits this repertoire, sliding into it as if into a second skin; musical secrets revealed from the tablet of her heart.

The singer’s lustrous voice soars in melismatic and arpeggiated leaps, sometimes with sly, but glorious coloratura. She is an eminently graceful singer who can generate genuine pathos, as superbly captured on Vivaldi’s Sposa, son disprezzata or Rossini’s Giusto Ciel, in tal periglio!, conjure great hope as in Mozart’s Ridente la calma and Rossini’s La promessa; and unfettered joy on Donaúnya’s Vaghissima sembianza.

Lambert is an artist of the first order. She makes key phrases in these arias come alive and spring in balletic arcs, cutting through the still air of this room. She digs into the meaning of words and phrases and infuses their poetry with a sense of nostalgia and melancholy, painting the song’s fluid melodies with poignant candour.

With radiant chromaticisms and splendid sonorities the harpist Valerie Milot complements the plaintive soundworld of the characters played by the singer. Her notes are ideally weighed and measured, and fit perfectly onto Lambert’s vocals as if punctuating these songs with wistful and melancholy accents. Together Lambert and Milot create a grand edifice of song through this well-chosen repertoire.

**Raul da Gama**

**Brian Field – Choral and Orchestral Works**

**Budapest Symphonic Orchestra and Choir; Liv Philharmonic Society and Chorus; Composers’ Choir; Heelan Chorale; RMN Classical RMN70709 (brianfield.com)**

I grew up in the Anglican tradition: high mass, chant choir in front, choir and organ in the loft behind, masses by Healey Willan, smells and bells, the lot. All this to say... I take issue with one reviewer’s pronounced that Field “stretches tonality to and beyond its limits.” He seems quite content within tonality’s limits, whatever those are.

Choral excellence from a variety of groups sets a standard not met by the instrumentalists of the Budapest Symphonic Orchestra. While the ensemble’s standards of rhythm and phrasing are acceptable, they seem casual regarding intonation; “stretched tonality” might have masked this, but Field’s tonal palette deserves more care. Carping aside, Shiva Tandava is a compelling concerto grosso and makes a nice change from the very fine choral writing.

Perhaps more generous liner notes would explain how the Hindu god of destruction gets along with the reputedly benign Christian version, or at least what the title references. I’d appreciate knowing too, which choirs sing which of the various sacred (Christian) texts. His lovely setting of the Christina Rosetti poem In the Bleak Midwinter adds just a few pounds of tonal stretch to Gustav Holst’s version.

**Max Christie**

**Secret Places – A Tribute to Michel Legrand**

**Sharon Azrieli; Tamir Hendelman LML Music (sharonazieli.com)**

The brilliant composer and pianist Michel Legrand died in 2019, and yet his work continues to resonate – not only in the films in which his compositions were heard, but in the many fine versions of his body of work

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

*Fables*  
Philip Chiu  
Canadian pianist Chiu pairs two piano transcriptions by Ravel with Mndoonskaa (A Multitude of Insects), a 2021 work by Anishnabekwe composer Barbara.

*Richard Strauss Arvo Part*  
I Musici de Montréal  
First I Musici album on ATMA Classique label, first album with conductor Jean-Marie Zeitouni and first album in 10 years for the orchestra.

*Port of Call: Buenos Aires*  
Louise Besette  
Travel musically to Buenos Aires with Astor Piazzolla’s tango performed by renowned pianist Louise Besette and her trio.

*Transfiguration*  
Stéphane Tétreault, Valérie Milot  
An album and concert experience featuring harpist Valérie Milot and cellist Stéphane Tétreault performing works by contemporary composers in a spellbinding cinematic digital environment.
that have been lovingly interpreted by international artists, including Canadian Sharon Azrieli. The arrangements and orchestrations on this fine collection were created by pianist Tamir Hendelman and Azrieli, who also co-produced the disc with David Merrill. First up is *If There Were No Dreams* (with lyrics by Neil Diamond). Azrieli brings her well-seasoned, classically trained and sibilant voice to this gentle, lifting and rarely performed ballad, while Lori Bell’s elegant flute and Alex Frank’s sinuous bass lines intertwine with an unaffected loveliness. Another delight is *Secret Places* – with snappy lyrics from master wordsmith, Alan Jay Lerner, the well-chosen title track displays the irrepressible joy of Legrand’s musical sensibility with a stunner of a piano solo by the irrepressible joy of Legrand’s musical sensibility with a stunner of a piano solo by Frank. Arguably, Legrand’s most constant collaborator were luminous lyricists Marilyn and Alan Bergman, bringing us many memorable compositions written for an array of fine films, including *Les Moullins de Mon Coeur* (better known as *The Windmills of Your Mind*) from 1968’s *The Thomas Crown Affair*. Azrieli renders this excellent interpretation in English, and also in flawless French, expertly capturing the romance and passion of the cinematic plot. Also with the Bergmans, in *What Are You Doing For The Rest of Your Life?* Azrieli evokes an aura of deep emotion and mystery here – just as *The Thomas Crown Affair*. The pairing of late sonatas by Haydn (*E-Flat Major No.62* and *D Major No.61*) and Schubert (the “grand” *Sonata in A Major D959*) is a world-premiere recording for these six quartets, an amazing fact because the sheer dramatic quality of these works means they deserved much earlier appreciation. In addition, recognition of Carlo Monza should surely have been forthcoming as a certain Mozart had been a 14-year-old in Monza’s native Milan looking out for local composers in order to make his own technique more locally acceptable.

From the initial *Quartetto in C Major “Gli amanti rivali”* there is a spirited, operatic character to Monza’s compositions, as if the instruments are singing their own private arias, sometimes almost arguing with each other. The same quartet brings us the haunting, slow, subdued strings of the largo *L’amante favorito muore*.

The more one explores this collection, the more one wonders why Monza’s music was lost for so long. There is a stateliness to the *adagio* from *Il giocatore* reminiscent of Pachelbel’s famous canon; the following *allegro* is worthy of Mozart or any of his contemporaries, while the same suite’s *ravveduto* appears to draw on the pastoral movements of the early Baroque. Finally, there is the *La caccia* suite, unmistakable for the boisterousness of its opening movement, conjuring up the sounds of the hunt from which it is inspired. Monza saves perhaps his most intricate movement for last; *Rondò de’ pastori frattanto che i cacciatori cenano* creates the images of a hunt concluding in a quiet, satisfied atmosphere.

Fabio Bondi devoted much time to finding Monza’s manuscript. A private library refused to lend it; kudos then to the Bibliothèque Nationale de France for lending its copy. And to Bondi for his perseverance in finding it.

**Michael Schwartz**

*Fantasias*

Mélisande McNabney

**ATMA ACD2 2812 (atamaclassique.com/en)**

The fantasia is an old and well-traversed musical form that reached its peak in the 18th and 19th centuries, combining improvisational flourishes, compositional skill and virtuosic panache into a single work. Many of music’s greatest minds have written fantasias for a range of keyboard instruments, including J.S. Bach’s works for harpsichord and organ, Mozart’s pianoforte fantasias and Liszt’s immense organ fantasias. This disc focuses on music written by three Baroque and classical-era luminaries: Johann Sebastian Bach; his son, Carl Philipp Emmanuel Bach; and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, performed on the fortepiano by Montreal-based keyboardist Mélisande McNabney.

The decision to begin a fortepiano-centred recording with J.S. Bach’s *Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue*, BWV903 is an interesting one, as Bach almost certainly composed this work with the harpsichord in mind. (The fortepiano was invented in 1698, while J.S. Bach died in 1750; it’s not implausible to think that Bach was acquainted with early models of the fortepiano, but there is no evidence that he composed anything specifically for that instrument.) For those familiar with BWV903 performed on rhythmically percussive, reverb-rich harpsichord recordings, McNabney’s choice of instrument provides a drier and less aggressive approach, with more room for flexibility and rubato.

The remainder of the disc is comprised of smaller works by C.P.E. Bach and Mozart, as well as the large-scale *Fantasias in C Minor, K.475*. This is, perhaps, the most successful combination of composition and instrument, as the moody affect combines with the fortepiano’s unique timbre and ability to produce contrasting dynamics with great success. *Fantasias* leaves little doubt that McNabney is a master keyboardist and skillful interpreter; this, combined with the charming and dramatic music itself, makes for a highly recommended recording, especially for those with a particular interest in early instruments.

**Matthew Whitfield**

*Haydn; Schubert*

**Boris Berman**

**Le Palais des Degustateurs PDD025**

(lepalaisdesdegustateurs.com)**

Boris Berman has had a long and distinguished career as a concert pianist, teacher and author. Many will remember his impeccable performances with orchestras around the globe, as well as his recordings of numerous solo piano works. He is most certainly a performer who projects a technical prowess within the gentle curves of the heart and, as such, late music by Haydn and Schubert suits him very well.

Perhaps it is only fitting for a performer of that calibre to revisit, at some point in their career, the music that seems simple in structure and expression yet complex in nature. The pairing of late sonatas by Haydn (*E-Flat Major No.62* and *D Major No.61*) and Schubert (the “grand” *Sonata in A Major D959*) is simply wonderful. These two composers shared a similar structural architecture, rarely wrote flamboyant music and often left plenty of interpretative choices to the performers. Berman takes full advantage of it and is very successful in finding and bringing out commonalities, especially the splendid elegance of the phrases. On the other hand, he is equally brilliant in underlining the emotional restraint of Haydn versus the deep emotions of Schubert, without losing sight of the form and intentions of the composers. To me Berman’s playing feels like a...
narration of the story, and this narrator knows all the secrets behind the scenes. 

Ivana Popovic

Schubert – Relics
Mathieu Gaudet
Analekta AN 2 9186 (analekta.com/en)

When Schubert’s unfinished Sonata in C Major D840 was published in 1861, the publisher gave it the title Reliquie (Relic), a name which shall forever remain a mystery. The title was deemed worthy enough to be given to this Analekta recording featuring this and the Sonata in A Major D664 with pianist Mathieu Gaudet, the sixth volume in an ongoing series presenting Schubert’s complete piano sonatas and major piano works.

Despite its incomplete state, the Sonata D840 is monumental in size and there were opinions that it may even have been intended as a piano version of a large-scale symphony. Indeed, the majestic opening movement — all 16 minutes of it — is truly symphonic in spirit with large block chords and much unison writing which Gaudet handles with a solid assurance. The minuet and trio — which never progressed beyond the recapitulation — is more “scherzo” than “minuet” while the sprightly Rondo Finale is halting at mid-development. (The recording uses an alternate ending by pianist Paul Badura-Skoda.)

The Sonata D664 was composed during the summer of 1819 and is now known as the Little A Major Sonata to differentiate it from the much lengthier work (D959) in the same key from 1828. This is placid and lyrical from the much lengthier work (D840) in the sprightly Rondo Finale

An added bonus is the brief Danse Allemande et Ecossaise D643, an appealing interlude between the two sonatas. For lovers of Schubert — or Romantic period piano music — this is another welcome addition to the series and we can look forward to more.

Richard Haskell

My Life In Music
Ruth Slenczynska
Decca B0035175-02 (deccaclassics.com/en)

Like it or not, success in the world of recorded music (classical, pop, jazz or otherwise) no longer, if it ever did, results exclusively from musical excellence. Rather, what is required is the coalescing of good music and a compelling backstory in order to command listener and record label attention. Though not a simple binary, examples abound, of course, of music more heavily weighted in one area, and not the other. There is the classic “style-over-substance” designation. Conversely, examples are many of truly great playing that has no extra musical narrative to help push its reception towards broader recognition.

As music lovers, I am sure that we can all think of examples that reside in either of these two categories. Rarely, do both imperatives come together. But, thankfully such is the case on Ruth Slenczynska’s My Life In Music, new from Decca Records. The music: Samuel Barber, Debussy, Grieg, Bach and, of course, Chopin (Slenczynska had earned a reputation as among the most celebrated of Chopin interpreters while still a child prodigy) is, given the considerable time spent working on this repertoire, predictably amazingly played, recorded, interpreted and executed. But it is the extra musical bits, most notably the fact that this 2022 album was recorded when Slenczynska was 97-years old, representing a return to the Decca label after an absence of nearly 60 years, that makes this recording both a satisfying musical statement and a punctuation note on a fascinating life in music that I knew little about prior to the record’s release, the ensuing press and the considerable interest in this remarkable story.

Andrew Scott

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

Across Time
Frederic Hand
An album of original compositions composed over several decades that draws its inspiration from diverse traditions and musical languages.

Nebraska Impromptu
Marti Epstein
This recording highlights instrumentations that include clarinet, and also shines light on Epstein’s penchant for expansive textures that are shaped by the Great Plains.

Venez donc chez moi
Laura Anglade & Sam Kirmayer
Vocalist Laura Anglade’s homage to her beloved France features jazz versions of classic French standards made famous by Maurice Chevalier, Edith Piaf and others.

Avery Raquel
Alternative Soul artist Avery Raquel’s 4th solo self-titled album, a fun mix of RnB/Soul and Pop with a flavour of her Jazz & Blues experiences.
play the “Heroic” A flat Major Op.53, which I fell in love with). Schaaf plays it with joy and panache and the middle ostinato is particularly menacing. The Andante Spianato is flowing gracefully in sustained piano and the following Grand Polonaise erupts in fortissimo as a magnificent contrast. This is highly accomplished, technically brilliant, enthusiastic piano playing and a recording to match.

János Gardonyi

Slavic Heart
Anna Petrova
Solo Musica SM383 (anna-petrova.com)

► Classical music is rarely political anymore, although extra-musical narratives can be unpacked from much of Western Art Music and be applied both for the purposes of historical contextualizing and in an effort to make sense of today’s world. And while making sense of today’s world may seem like a yeoman’s task as of late, classical music listeners should not avoid listening to and reflecting on the music of the many great Russian composers of yesteryear whose gifts to the world were many indeed.

It would be a shame to make the legacy of such 20th century Russian composers as Sergei Rachmaninoff, Sergei Prokofiev and Alexander Scriabin yet another casualty in the ongoing and horrific war in Ukraine. Recorded prior to the Russian invasion of February 2022, Hungarian pianist Anna Petrova, a highly feted pianist and Doctor of Musical Arts who is on faculty at the University of Louisville, takes on the challenge of interpreting this fine music with aplomb on her Solo Musica release, Slavic Heart.

Capturing the music of the three afore-mentioned composers, along with the work of Bulgarian Pancho Vladigerov, this excellent new recording mines what must have been a creatively fertile geographic area and 50-year time period (1892 to 1942) to bring these haunting melodies back into focus. I can only imagine that solo pianists love (and perhaps dread?) the inherent challenges that the canon of these four composers presents. But with marvellous technique, a deft touch on the piano and an ability to coax new insights from these canonic pieces, Petrova makes it clear on Slavic Heart that she is up to the task.

Andrew Scott

Fables – Maurice Ravel; Barbara Assiginaak
Philip Chiu
ATMA ACD2 2843 (atmaclassique.com/en)

► Indigenous issues are an important topic in Canada today and Canadian pianist Philip Chiu addresses their significance on this ATMA recording by pairing music by Maurice Ravel with that of Anishinaabekwe composer Barbara Assiginaak. Inaugural winner of the Méécalt Musica Prix Goyer, Chiu has made a name for himself as both soloist and chamber musician. His musical partners have included Emmanuel Pahud and Raphael Wallfisch.

The disc opens with the Ravel String Quartet in F, composed in 1903. A truly beautiful work, the quartet is considered by many to be among the finest in the repertoire and this transcription by Lucien Gurban and Alexander Scriabin yet another casualty of the war. Throughout, Chiu does it full justice, his approach as poised and elegant as the music itself. The frenetic finale is a true tour de force, with the young artist demonstrating a formidable technique.

Assiginaak’s piece MnidoonkauA (A Multitude of Insects), composed in 2021, is a perfect companion. Inspired by Indigenous teachings, the work – the first of two collections of short pieces – is in five movements and pays homage to those tiny creatures that are often unseen or simply ignored. Movements such as Water Striders and Mosquito Larvae are highly atmospheric – true examples of 21st-century impressionism – while the brief third movement One Certain Mosquito Sings, is hauntingly lyrical.

Concluding the disc is Ravel’s familiar Ma mère L’Oye (Mother Goose) as arranged for piano by Jacques Charlot. Here, Chiu evokes a true fantasy world, his playing refined and sensitively articulated, from the mysterious opening Pavane to the majestic Jardin Féerique.

These are fine fables indeed – engaging repertoire beautifully performed – how could we ask for more?

Richard Haskell

Stravinsky Early Ballets
London Symphony Orchestra; Sir Simon Rattle
LSO Live LS05096 (lso.co.uk)

► Stravinsky told stories; his ballets are like film scores accompanying every moment of the action. Here are his three early masterpieces, musical Art Nouveau, produced with tremendous care and skill by the London Symphony Orchestra, led by Sir Simon Rattle. It’s impossible to overstate the quality of playing here, at the individual and ensemble level.

I love how confidently they produce the now-familiar Firebird, yet the music still sounds new, and utterly Russian (notwithstanding the debt owed Ravel, in terms of the rich orchestration and harmonic colour). Sharp details emerge from the misterioso bass murmurs of the introduction. The orchestra provides lush romantic gestures, but gives nothing away in rhythmic acuity. The Princess’ Game, the Firebird Variation and most of all the Infernal Dance will get you up and dancing. The detail is phenomenal! So much of what Stravinsky created has since been borrowed repeatedly, especially by film
Stravinsky – Ballet Russes
Les Siècles; François-Xavier Roth
Harmonia Mundi HMX2905342.43
(store.harmoniamundi.com)

When There Are No Words – Revolutionary Works for Oboe and Piano
Alex Klein; Phillip Bush
Cedille CDR 90000 208
(cedillerecords.org)

Perhaps you remember that Le Sacre du Printemps was used in the Disney film Fantasia and Stravinsky was invited to the studio for a private screening. He was offered a score as a courtesy but the maître politely declined, saying “I don’t need it; the score is in my head.” Oh, but it all changed, sir... was the answer.(!)

Certainly nothing is changed here as the Le Sacre is played in its original form with instruments of the period by Les Siècles, a French orchestra formed by François-Xavier Roth. Do not be concerned about period instruments. Roth thoroughly researched the instruments of the period (around 1900) and his orchestra sounds every bit as good as a much larger modern orchestra.

Along with Le Sacre, the two other ballets were first presented in Paris between 1910 and 1913 as a celebration of Russian arts. A certain Russian impresario, Serge Diaghilev, was the mastermind and organizer, a “terrible, charming man who could make stones dance” as Debussy referred to him.

Paris at this time was a hothouse of invention in the arts and these ballets form a change, indeed a revolution, a turning point in the direction of music of the 20th century, Le Sacre especially. Inspired by rituals of pre-Christian, pagan Russia this is something the world had never heard before. It’s brutal, elementary, forceful, violent and upsetting.

The other two ballets are a bit more conventional but equally exciting and very colourful. The Firebird is based on a Russian fairy tale and Petrouchka conjures up a noisy village marketplace with a puppet theatre featuring three characters and a very sad story. A brilliant new recording.

Max Christie

When There Are No Words – Revolutionary Works for Oboe and Piano features the talents of world-renowned oboe virtuoso, Alex Klein, and pianist Phillip Bush. The album consists of six works paired into three sections reflecting the circumstances in which they were composed: reality of war, anti-war activism and exile.

The first section contains pieces written during World War I: the popular Sonata for Oboe and Piano by Paul Hindemith paired with the Pavel Haas Suite for Oboe and Piano which was written at the very beginning of the Nazi occupation. Haas was later sent to Auschwitz and did not survive.

The second section contains works with anti-war sentiments: Benjamin Britten’s frequently played Temporal Variations which was written for a play about coal miners and their strikes in 1936; and William Bolcom’s Aubade – for the Continuation of Life, written during the Cold War.

The third and final section features Three Etudes for Oboe with Piano Accompaniment by Brazilian composer José Siqueira and Suite for Oboe and Piano by Czech composer Klement Slavicky, which were both written to protest their political exile.

Klein’s thoughtful linking of these compositions sheds light on some lesser known but beautifully written works for oboe and piano. These works explore dissonant intervals, lyrical lines and a variety of tonal colours, allowing the listener to become immersed in the emotional expression of the composer’s experiences. Klein is a complete master of the

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

Chronotope
George Crotty Trio
Cellist George Crotty has forged an improvisatory language, engaging in cross-cultural interplay between post-bop, South American grooves, Indian Raga, and Arabic Maqam

Confluence
Mina Gajić & Zachary Carrettin
Pianist Mina Gajić & violinist Zachary Carrettin juxtapose Balkan Dances by Marko Tajčević with Ray Granlund’s Tango Nuevo on their new album, “Confluence”.

Ottoman Spendours
Lamia Yared
In Ottoman Spendours, Lebanese-born singer Lamia Yared draws her inspiration from the Arabic, Ottoman, Sephardic, and Greek musical traditions of Asia Minor.

Home
Les Arrivants
Home is the first album of this Montreal based group formed of three musicians who combine traditions of Tango, Arabic music, and Persian rhythms.

When There Are No Words – Revolutionary Works for Oboe and Piano
Alex Klein; Phillip Bush
Cedille CDR 90000 208
(cedillerecords.org)

Perhaps you remember that Le Sacre du Printemps was used in the Disney film Fantasia and Stravinsky was invited to the studio for a private screening. He was offered a score as a courtesy but the maître politely declined, saying “I don’t need it; the score is in my head.” Oh, but it all changed, sir... was the answer.(!)

Certainly nothing is changed here as the Le Sacre is played in its original form with instruments of the period by Les Siècles, a French orchestra formed by François-Xavier Roth. Do not be concerned about period instruments. Roth thoroughly researched the instruments of the period (around 1900) and his orchestra sounds every bit as good as a much larger modern orchestra.

Along with Le Sacre, the two other ballets were first presented in Paris between 1910 and 1913 as a celebration of Russian arts. A certain Russian impresario, Serge Diaghilev, was the mastermind and organizer, a “terrible, charming man who could make stones dance” as Debussy referred to him.

Paris at this time was a hothouse of invention in the arts and these ballets form a change, indeed a revolution, a turning point in the direction of music of the 20th century, Le Sacre especially. Inspired by rituals of pre-Christian, pagan Russia this is something the world had never heard before. It’s brutal, elementary, forceful, violent and upsetting.

The other two ballets are a bit more conventional but equally exciting and very colourful. The Firebird is based on a Russian fairy tale and Petrouchka conjures up a noisy village marketplace with a puppet theatre featuring three characters and a very sad story. A brilliant new recording.

Max Christie

When There Are No Words – Revolutionary Works for Oboe and Piano features the talents of world-renowned oboe virtuoso, Alex Klein, and pianist Phillip Bush. The album consists of six works paired into three sections reflecting the circumstances in which they were composed: reality of war, anti-war activism and exile.

The first section contains pieces written during World War I: the popular Sonata for Oboe and Piano by Paul Hindemith paired with the Pavel Haas Suite for Oboe and Piano which was written at the very beginning of the Nazi occupation. Haas was later sent to Auschwitz and did not survive.

The second section contains works with anti-war sentiments: Benjamin Britten’s frequently played Temporal Variations which was written for a play about coal miners and their strikes in 1936; and William Bolcom’s Aubade – for the Continuation of Life, written during the Cold War.

The third and final section features Three Etudes for Oboe with Piano Accompaniment by Brazilian composer José Siqueira and Suite for Oboe and Piano by Czech composer Klement Slavicky, which were both written to protest their political exile.

Klein’s thoughtful linking of these compositions sheds light on some lesser known but beautifully written works for oboe and piano. These works explore dissonant intervals, lyrical lines and a variety of tonal colours, allowing the listener to become immersed in the emotional expression of the composer’s experiences. Klein is a complete master of the

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

Chronotope
George Crotty Trio
Cellist George Crotty has forged an improvisatory language, engaging in cross-cultural interplay between post-bop, South American grooves, Indian Raga, and Arabic Maqam

Confluence
Mina Gajić & Zachary Carrettin
Pianist Mina Gajić & violinist Zachary Carrettin juxtapose Balkan Dances by Marko Tajčević with Ray Granlund’s Tango Nuevo on their new album, “Confluence”.

Ottoman Spendours
Lamia Yared
In Ottoman Spendours, Lebanese-born singer Lamia Yared draws her inspiration from the Arabic, Ottoman, Sephardic, and Greek musical traditions of Asia Minor.

Home
Les Arrivants
Home is the first album of this Montreal based group formed of three musicians who combine traditions of Tango, Arabic music, and Persian rhythms.

When There Are No Words – Revolutionary Works for Oboe and Piano
Alex Klein; Phillip Bush
Cedille CDR 90000 208
(cedillerecords.org)
Port of Call: Buenos Aires Astor Piazzolla Chloë Dominguez; Louise Bessette; Marc Dijokic
Analekta AN 2 9298 (analekta.com/en)

Canadian pianist Louise Bessette’s second recording from her series A Piano Around the World travels to Buenos Aires, Argentina with works by the world-renowned composer/bandoneonist/tango master Astor Piazzolla. Here Bessette is joined by Canadians violinist Marc Dijokic and cellist Chloë Dominguez.

The opening work, Oblivion, is an arrangement for piano, violin and cello by José Bragato, former Buenos Aires Philharmonic member and cellist in several Piazzolla ensembles cellist. This is a tight meditative almost classical rendition with the piano groove supporting the famous alternating violin and cello melodies. Bragato also arranged the four-tango movement Las cuatro estaciones porteñas (The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires) which Piazzolla composed independently between 1965 and 1970, about the city’s weather seasons. Tight performances in fast and happy Primavera Porteña. A more orchestral arrangement in Verano Porteña with cello and violin solos amidst classic Piazzolla grooves, accents, tango lines and piano flourishes.

Le grand tango (1982), written for Mislavl Rostropovich, is a one-movement original virtuosic work featuring Dominguez’s well-thought-out clear legato cello phrases above Bessette’s rhythmic piano accompaniment. Dmitry Varelas’ violin and piano arrangement of Piazzolla’s four-movement Histoire du Tango (1983), is a decades-spanning musical tango history from the classic early high-spirited tango Bordel 1900 with Dijokic’s memorable high-pitched violin lines and percussive taps, to the current Concert d’aujourd’hui, with its more atonal violin/piano lines. From the melancholy opening to tempo and mood changes, Bessette’s solo piano interpretation of Adiós Nonino is perfect Piazzolla.

A standing ovation for these respectful Piazzolla tango performances!

Transfiguration
Stéphane Tétrauld; Valérie Milot
ATMA ACD2 2865 (atmaclassique.com/en)

A “classical” CD opening with jazz and ending with rock? Credit Quebeckers Stéphane Tétrauld (cello) and Valérie Milot (harp) for assembling these wildly disparate “transfigurations” by five Canadian composers. La Folia, a Renaissance-era Portuguese dance tune, has inspired variations by hundreds of composers from Vivaldi to Rachmaninoff (including my fellow WholeNote reviewer Daniel Foley!). In Alexandre Grogg’s buoyant Three Variations on La Folia, drummer Bernard Riche joins Tétrauld and Milot for this semi-improvised, bossa-nova-flavoured jazz arrangement. Tétrauld’s cello floats melodically amid Milot’s rippling in Grogg’s Swan to Swan, quoting “swan music” by Gibbons, Sibelius and Barber, leading to the iconic The Swan by Saint-Saëns.

Kelly-Marie Murphy’s Si veriah la rana (a Ladino nursery rhyme), arranged from her Concerto for cello and harp, moves from solemn Hebraic prayer to wailing flamenco frenzy. Puccini’s Madama Butterfly infuses Transfigured Sentiment in Marjan Mozetich’s audience-pleasing style of repeated phrases expressing endless yearning.

François Vallières’ busy, fragmented Double-Monologue depicts two individuals incessantly speaking without hearing each other, self-absorption that’s symptomatic, says Vallières, “of contemporary society’s alienation and shocks” as intense outpouring of multi-rhythms in chaotic fashion.

Raul da Gama

MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY

Richard Strauss – Metamorphosen; Arvo Pärt – Symphony No.4 “Los Angeles”
I Musici de Montréal; Jean-Marie Zeitouni
ATMA ACD2 2813 (atmaclassique.com/en)

What constitutes interpretation? Certainly every artist or orchestral ensemble worth its name seeks to internalize the message of the music they choose to perform in the hopes of sharing a unique perspective with the audience. In the very best cases, that perspective is highly individual, shaped by training, culture, intelligence, imagination, curiosity and countless other factors. The best music invites a variety of approaches and our source of continuing fascination with the Western canon is the constant artistic revivification of its musical literature.

I Musici de Montréal’s revisiting of Richard Strauss’ Metamorphosen and Arvo Pärt’s Symphonie No.4 “Los Angeles” is a breathing reminder that personal interpretation can lie just off the beaten track – so as to make your experience of it utterly breathtaking.

The sense of foreboding in Metamorphosen is not simply complete and ink-black but inhabits the gloom of post-war Germany with enormous tonal power, conjuring the visual skyline of shattered cathedrals and priceless bombarded Gothic structures, open to the sky, roads filled with the debris of war, with desolatory, homeless survivors scavenging for a living. It is a show-stopping performance.

The poetic sentiments of Pärt’s Symphonie No.4 are no less weighty in tone textures, albeit far less grim. The three-movement work is based on the prayer to the Guardian Angel, taken from the Slavonic Orthodox Canon. Jean-Marie Zeitouni leads the ensemble in a monumental, sacred essence of the work in haunting, spectral and evocative terms.

Melissa Scott

Émilie Girard-Charest – Intimités
Émilie Girard-Charest; various artists
Ambiances Magnétique AM 263 CD (actuellecd.com)

Émilie Girard-Charest is a multi-talented Montreal cellist, improviser and composer. Here, four compositions written between 2014 and 2018 for varying strings, piano and percussion ensembles touch upon her self-described clear personal inspirations in unique, though at times challenging, music all her own.

Girard-Charest plays cello on the first three compositions too. Along with violinists Lyne Allard, Geneviève Liboiron and violist Jean René, Asyndètes (2017) is her exploration of the effects of “fracture energy and shocks” as intense outpouring of ragged sounds from fast strings to accents, multi-rhythms and wide pitch settings are

Tiina Kilk
spaced out by silences to quieter calm held notes. Épangements (2014), for violin (Liborion), cello and piano (Daniel Afez), is based on silences which separate a fascinating use of noisy modern strings sounds and single-note piano, making for focused listening. Heurts (2019) explores the notion of rupture point. Violin, cello, piano and percussion (Noam Bierstone) are dramatic in faster rhythmical driving music with clever percussion (Andrew Timar). The title track Intimités, for chamber ensemble comprised of four cellos and four double basses, is more atonal with almost painful dissonances as the composer explores aspects of intimacy. Powerful original musical ideas are gradually developed, effectively utilizing held notes throughout – like each ensemble member holding an extended personal note with pitch/tremolo subtlety – and closer to the end, very low-pitch, thunder-like grumbles.

Contemporary music aficionados, and all other listeners too, are encouraged to experience this great Girard-Charest release.

Almost Touching

An Laurence

people | places | records PPR 033 (peopleplacesrecords.bandcamp.com)

The predominant reflective recurring musical idea heard throughout is comprised of short, single-note melodies with ascending and/or descending intervals, and repeated note segments, reminiscent of the minimalistic genre. Horvat, along with Jean Martin mixing and mastering, successfully develops these ideas for meditation with numerous effects. The calm opening with a tonal, single, wide-spaced-note melody sets the mood, with a gradual inclusion of electronic wash backdrops, sounds which resurface throughout. Drama is achieved with volume changes, varied electronic timbres and tonal jumps with subtle quasi-key modulations. The unexpected, brief, louder accented-notes passage at around the 15-minute mark is especially arousing. High, single, electronic tonal/atonal pitches support facing emotional tension. Interspersed throughout are calming, short silence spaces between the earworm melodies and softer volumes. The last ten minutes are a calming, peaceful shift, leading to the closing two-pitch and repeated notes with soft wash ending. Innertation is a timeless memorable intelligent electronic composition perfectly produced. Horvat’s contemplative sounds encourage repeated listening while meditating, and otherwise too.

Innertation

Frank Horvat

I Am Who I Am Records (frankhorvat.com)

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too. Doubtful. His creative processes are apt, though baffling; I feel like maybe I can hear what he says he did. You don’t need to know how it works for it to work, any more than a car you drive or a plane you fly in, or the microwave you use to heat your coffee.

The two tracks are Pre disposition, which removes an Ariana Grande song from its original frame and takes it for a ride round the galaxy; and Apophis, named for the (potentially) Earth-shattering asteroid on course to bring about a reckoning on Friday, April 13, 2029. Katy Perry’s lyrics pop in after the cataclysmic orgasmic moment of truth. Both are fantastically consuming. Its impossible to stop with one track. I highly recommend the entire album.

Max Christie

Gayle Young – As Trees Grow
Xenia Pestova Bennett; Ed Bennett
farpont recordings fp084
(xeniapestovabennett.com)

Composer Gayle Young has in the course of her career been a musician, builder of microtonal musical instruments and sound sculptor. She’s also made a significant contribution as an author and music journalist. For several decades she served as editor and publisher of Canada’s leading magazine “for curious ears” Musicworks and in 1989 her definitive biography of Canadian inventor Hugh Le Caine, The Sackbut Blues: Hugh Le Caine, Pioneer in Electronic Music, was published by the National Museum Of Science And Technology.

Young’s fifth album, As Trees Grow, showcases three piano-centred compositions. The three-part Ice Creek, six-part Forest Ephemerals: Four Flowers and the 20-minute title work all reflect seasonal aspects of her Niagara-region home as well as her dedication to Deep Listening. Underscoring direct links to nature, field recordings of natural sounds infuse several sections of the works, privileging the voice of nature alongside that of the grand piano.

Pianist Xenia Pestova Bennett, a specialist in contemporary concert music, renders the scores with sensitivity of imagination, listening and touch. She collaborated extensively with the composer in preparation for As Trees Grow, exploring the piano’s eight octave range. Another collaborator, Ed Bennett, subtly enhances the instrument’s resonance with live-electronic treatments in sections.

In Ice Creek the recorded sounds of flowing water played through a series of tuned resonators are mixed with the piano’s sonics. This process not only selectively sustains the keyboard’s acoustic resonance, but also draws the listener’s awareness to the natural soundscape and to our often problematic engagement with it.

Evoking Ontario spring wildflowers, Young’s Forest Ephemerals: Four Flowers builds on the chromatic harmonic language of the previous century, her aphoristic and rhythmically organic phrases blending with it to express a very singular musical voice, one which reaches for hope.

Andrew Timar

Pauline Oliveros - Half a Dove in New York
Pauline Oliveros; Reynols
(paulineoliverosreynolds.bandcamp.com)

Composer Pauline Oliveros wrote frequently about what it means to listen throughout her career, which spanned over half a century and encompassed electronic works, compositions for magnetic tape, improvisation and exercises in focus and reflection designed to deepen everyday engagement with sound. As a composer and accordionist, she significantly contributed to the development of electronic music, and the culmination of her life-long fascination with music and sound is what inspired the practice of Deep Listening, the art of listening and responding to environmental conditions.

As the artist herself put it: “…If you are too narrow in your awareness of sounds, you are likely to be disconnected from your environment... Listening is a lifetime practice that depends on accumulated experiences with sound; it can be focused to detail or open to the entire field of sound.”

Though Oliveros died in 2016, her music and her mentorship have inspired thousands of artists around the globe, and her Deep Listening Meditations practice continues to be shared among sound artists, healers and non-musicians alike. Oliveros was a leader in “listening outside the box” and has one of the most committed followings one can find in music. Recordings continue to surface of workshops and performances, and interest in her written work, as well as her performance practices, continues to grow. There is hardly an improvising musician anywhere who has not been in some way touched by Pauline Oliveros.

As with most experiential music, the end results occasionally fall in the “you had to be there” category, and it is not unusual to find recordings that were inspiring to play but had a lesser focus on the product. Such is the case with The NetCast Improvisation with the group Reynols (Miguel Tomasín, drums; guitarist Roberto Conlazo, guitarist Anla Courtis) plus Monique Buzzaré, trombone and Kevin McCoy, computer processing. Comprising two 20-minute-plus tracks recorded in 1999, they stand as one of Oliveros’ earliest collaborations via the Internet. Not an easy listen, but a relevant part of the Oliveros archive, and a reminder to check in with the Deep Listening practice during these troubled times.

Cheryl Ockrunt

Roger Reynolds – Violin Works
Gabriela Diaz; Boston Modern Orchestra Project; Gil Rose
BMOP Sound 1086 (bmop.org)

The Boston Modern Orchestra Project and soloist Gabriela Diaz release a disc representing Roger Reynolds’ violin works written over a 15-year period. Throughout Personae, for violin and orchestra, four characters are personified as indicated by the four movements’ respective titles: The Conjuror, The Dancer, The Meditator and The Advocate. In this music, Reynolds makes sparse and delicate use of the orchestra, brilliantly supporting the varying expressions of character in the violin part. Intriguing echo motifs and electronic pulsations evoke atmospheres of striking originality. In the composer’s own words, “the violin has a multifaceted voice” – a sonic attribute that is certainly achieved in this work.

Kokoro, a work for solo violin in 12 short movements, is a substantial contribution to the repertoire. Like Personae, it was written in consultation with dedicatee Irvine Arditti. This Zen-inspired work demands not only a world-class technical prowess, but also requires that the performer enter several challenging psychological dispositions in order to convey the poetic intention of the music. In her performance, BMOP violinist Diaz projects newfound dimensions of expression and colour. Each movement is delivered with a breathtaking and deeply personal musicality.

Last on the recording is Aspirations, a six-movement work for violin and orchestra that is a deep gesture representing the composer’s long-time collaborative relationship with Diaz. It is decidedly thicker in scoring as compared to its companion heard earlier on the disc. Where Personae makes use of character manifestation, Aspirations utilizes a myriad of textures and colours as the primary mode of expression. Perhaps the most challenging of all the works on the recording, Diaz’s extraordinary virtuosity is unforgettable throughout this work. Gil Rose produces a highly impressive amount of precision and definition from the BMOP ensemble and is quite at home in Reynolds’ soundworlds.

Adam Scime
FIVE MINUTES for Earth
Yolanda Kondonassis
Azica (yolandaharp.com/earth-at-heart)

► With its tremendous range, dynamic possibility and immediately identifiable sonic thumbprint, the solo harp has the potential to be among the most expressive and emotive instruments in music. This is most certainly the case when this ancient instrument finds itself in the capable and eminently musical hands of multiple-Grammy Award-nominee Yolanda Kondonassis. Recording here for the Azica Records label, FIVE MINUTES for Earth is an ambitious project that combines Kondonassis’ considerable and obvious musical talent with her love for planet Earth.

Like so many, Kondonassis acknowledges that the pandemic and lockdown provided space and time to think deeply about what one finds most meaningful in life. And it was in this thoughtful place that inspiration for this project first hit. “It seemed like a perfect way to combine a number of missions – most importantly, the opportunity to draw attention to Earth conservation and climate change through the language of music.” Tapping 16 celebrated composers representing a wide range of ages, backgrounds and intersectionality yet united in their connection to environmentalism, this fine new recording was captured in the acoustically beautiful Sauder Concert Hall. FIVE MINUTES should go a long way to further solidify Kondonassis’ reputation of being among the world’s preeminent solo harpists, while giving listeners opportunity to experience a musical “metaphor for the urgent and emotive urgency.” The works display the influence of Feldman and also Toru Takemitsu. They should be enjoyed in a spirit of contemplation and peace. These are calm explorations, inviting us to breathe and consider the future.

Christopher Trapani – Horizontal Drift
Amy Advocat; Marco Fusi; Maximilian Haft; Daniel Lippel; Marilyn Nonken
New Focus Recordings FCR296 (newfocusrecordings.com)

► Other than his name and email, the only thing on multiple-award-winning American/Italian composer Christopher Trapani’s business card is, “Mandolins and Microtones.” Both interests are reflected in the outstanding album, Horizontal Drift, featuring six of his compositions. Trapani’s bespoke compositional approach taps the soundworlds of American, European, Middle Eastern and South Asian origin, blending them into his own musical palette. Certainly ambitious in its cultural diversity, Turkish maqam and South Asian raga rub shoulders with Delta blues, Appalachian folk and 20th-century-influenced electronically mediated spectral effects and canons. Horizontal Drift also reflects Trapani’s preoccupation with melody couched in microtonality and just intonation. Timbral diversity derived from the use of unusual instruments, retuning and preparation are other compositional leitmotifs. Album opener Tăngul (the name of a Romanian river) is scored for the Romanian horn-violin plus electronics. With a metal resonator and amplifying horn, it has a thin, sound reminiscent of a 1900s cylinder violin recording. Trapani’s intriguing composition maps a modern musical vocabulary onto the instrument’s keening voice, his work interrogating its roots in the folk music of the Bihor region of Romania.

The track Tesereou features the viola d’amore, a Baroque-era six- or seven-stringed bowed instrument sporting sympathetic strings. After exploring multi-tonally inflected modal melodies with gliding ornaments, well into the piece Trapani engineers the musical analogy of a coup de théâtre. In Marco Fusi’s skillful and sensitive hands the viola d’amore unexpectedly morphs into a very convincing Hindustani sarangi. This magical moment of musical metamorphosis was so satisfying I had to play it several times.

Andrew Timar
Marti Epstein – Nebraska Impromptu, Chamber Music for Clarinet
Rane Moore; Winsor Music
New Focus Recordings FCR324 (newfocusrecordings.com)

► Music that follows in the tradition of Morton Feldman is perhaps best suited to live performance, an experience to share among an audience; but alone by the stereo, in a room with the windows open for spring air is good too. The release this month of the music of Marti Epstein features fine performances by all participants, notably clarinetist Rane Moore, whose rich and brilliant sound is heard on each track. The works display the influence of Feldman and also Toru Takemitsu. They should be enjoyed in a spirit of contemplation and peace. These are calm explorations, invitations to dream, and journeys without goals. Three of the five pieces reference or respond to visual inspiration. Oil and Sugar, for clarinet, flute, violin and piano (2018), references a conceptual video of motor oil being poured over a mass of sugar cubes. Komorebi for clarinet, oboe and violin (2018), is the Japanese word for sunlight filtered through leaves. Nebraska Impromptu, for clarinet and piano (2013), was inspired by the landscape of Epstein’s childhood. A visual artist herself, she stretches her musical colours across great expanses of “canvas.”

The debt to Takemitsu is especially apparent in Komorebi, but Epstein is an original artist within this aesthetic realm, and for those who enjoy contemplative naturalist art, the performances are delightfully in tune and in synch. She allows remarkably long silences to divide and set off the swatches of sound, like negative space in a painting, allowing the listener to savour the previous moment before hearing the next.

Max Christie
Brian Baumbusch – Effigy
CSU Fullerton Wind Symphony; Other Minds Ensemble; Dustin Barr
Other Minds Records OM 1032-2
(otherminds.org)

Hard to know whether I would have felt the same way about this quirky and interesting music had I opted not to read the extensive liner essay, by Oscar Smith, that accompanies the roughly 60 minutes of music by Brian Baumbusch on Effigy. It would be fair to say the reading was less interesting than the listening, yet unfair to call the essay uninteresting; a bit lengthy, a bit academic, but certainly informative. Knowing Baumbusch’s complex processes aroused some skepticism, and I was relieved to hear that the resulting textures and colours are much more than an exercise in synchronous unmatchd pulse.

The science of polyrhythm guides but doesn’t completely determine Baumbusch’s aesthetic. There are feel and sound like multiple layers of events randomly superimposed one on the other, but the effect is distinctive and listenable.

Kings, a multi-movement piece for chamber ensemble including strings, percussion, piano and clarinet, occupies the longer half of the disc. Written as a kind of homage to composer Lou Harrison, the fourth track, Interlude, is a rhythmic canon. Among Harrison’s innovations was an 11-limit just intonation guitar (a tuning system based on the harmonic overtone series). Played by Baumbusch on Boru, the fifth track of the disc, it leaves me feeling more enamoured of just intonation than before.

The other work on the disc is Isotropes, for large ensemble. Clever title, clever writing, cleverly played by the Cal State University Fullerton Wind Symphony, each member having recorded their part in isolation. One has to wonder what amount of tailoring and refitting might have been needed to coax uniformity from the large (c. 60-voice) ensemble.

Max Christie

Passages Through Time – The Music of Rain
Worthington
Various Artists
Navona Records nv6398
(navonarecords.com/catalog/nv6398)

In the May 2019 WholeNote, I reviewed a CD of music by five composers, praising Rain Worthington’s ten-minute In Passages for violin and string orchestra as “a sustained, moody beauty, imbued with Middle Eastern melodic melismas and glissandi.” That recording reappears here along with seven other works, lasting four to 12 minutes, by the New York-based Worthington (b.1949). Composed between 2011 and 2020, mixing “antique” and world-music modes, late-Romanticism and minimalism, they provide lots more “moody beauty.”

Three pieces feature the cello: Resolves for solo cello (expressing, writes Worthington, “a sense of acceptance and inner strength”), Full Circle for cello and small orchestra (“the cycles of emotion that emerge and recede throughout life”) and the ominously perturbed Shadows of the Wind for small orchestra (“an approaching storm… shifting shadow patterns…”). More “shadows”: Balancing on the Edge of Shadows for violin and piano evokes plaintive Judaic or Islamic chants (“quite beautiful, mysterious, with delicate subtlety”).

Intense yearning fills Night Stream for two violins (“reflecting on the flow of life and time, imagined impressionistically as lights streaming across a rain-streaked window”). Brooding, pulsating melodies pervade works composed during the pandemic: Within Deep Currents for string orchestra and Dreaming Through Fog for small orchestra (“a continuous undercurrent of tragedy and uncertainty, mixed with cycles of waiting and moments of hope”).

Worthington is a rare contemporary composer who unabashedly calls her own music “quite beautiful,” but she’s absolutely justified in doing so!

Michael Schulman

What is American
PUBLIQuartet
Bright Shiny Things (brightshiny.ninja)

What is American is the most recent album by the PUBLIQuartet and purposefully titles the work as either a question or a statement, a summons to rediscover the roots of classical European music that bind to American Indigenous and Black music. But the string quartet doesn’t stop there, though as a group they are found under “contemporary classical” they are known for their boundary-crossing genres, and the compositions are demanding of each performer’s skills in jazz, blues, improvisation, chopping, folk and swing.

Beginning with the inspired re-working of Dvořák’s “American” Quartet, an arrangement retracing the African Indigenous and Black roots of the music giving it a somewhat ironic tone, to Vijay Iyer’s Dig the Say, a rich and rhythmically textured work in four movements dedicated to the music of James Brown and highlighting the group’s finely honed ensemble work. Each interpretation is outstanding. PUBLIQuartet has a knack for keeping to the score while playing freely and with joy.

What is American includes the world premiere recording of Roscoe Mitchell’s 2020 composition Cards, as well as a collection of four original compositions by the quartet from their MIND THE GAP series, further exploring improvisations on compositions by Ornette Coleman, Alice Coltrane, Lila Cox, Betty Davis, Tina Turner and Fats Waller. Rhiannon Giddens’ At the Purchaser’s Option, an emotional exploration of an 1830s newspaper advertisement selling a young Black woman, including her nine-month-old child “at the purchaser’s option” is powerfully arranged by the quartet and is both heartbreaking and dynamic. Take a moment to look up the actual ad to bring that piece home. It is followed by Pavement Pounding Rose exploring Waller’s Honeysuckle Rose as a tribute to Madam C.J. Walker and beautifully narrated by Walker’s great-great-granddaughter A’Leilia Bundles.

The track list for this album numbers 20, and a paragraph could be dedicated to each. The Fifth Verse, based on Oliver Wendell Holmes’ denouncing slavery in his writing of the unofficial fifth verse of the Star-Spangled Banner some 50 years after Key’s original, is then shadowed later in interrupted fragments that took my breath away, keeping the messaging on track like connective tissue to arms and legs. This album is dedicated to reminding us of our current culture, where we came from, and simultaneously hoping and fearing where we could be going.

Cheryl Ockrant
Ben Duinker; Architek Percussion – 6 Changes
Architek Percussion
Independent (architekpercussion.com)

► The Montreal-based quartet Architek Percussion, founded in 2012 by McGill University music graduates, has established itself along the lines set in the last century by other classical music-based percussion groups such as NEXUS. They are equally comfortable in the 20th-century percussion ensemble repertoire now considered “classic,” as well as in new works generated via commissions and collaborations. Consisting of Noam Bierner, Ben Duinker, Alexander Haupt and Alessandro Vallante, Architek Percussion has toured Canada multiple times and commissioned works by composers from some 11 countries.

Six Changes, an extended collaboration between Duinker and his bandmates, takes the group in a novel direction. In six parts, the album charts a stylistic path referencing electronica, percolating pulse-based minimalism and the experimental fringes of rock, all snpped to attention by a closely miked drum kit. Stock keyboard percussion instruments also make an appearance, as do airy synth chord pads, which drift in and out, occasionally interrupted by grooving bass synth melodic lines.

Yet another element here is the transformation of rhythms the inventive Duinker has encountered in daily life. For example, his transcribed rhythms from an MRI machine feature in On Sitting the Next Few Plays Out, layered into a multi-pulse mesh. And he first heard the ostinato in Dark Horse Fan in a malfunctioning ceiling fan. It took much of the album to get fully into Six Changes, but in the end the superimposition of clever rhythms, vernacular harmonic modulations, kicked in the pants by an assertive groove, won me over.

Andrew Timar

Venez donc chez moi
Laura Anglade; Sam Kirmayer
Justin Time (justin-time.com)

► Francophone jazz lovers rejoice. Laura Anglade and Sam Kirmayer have released an album of 11 songs, entirely in French. The French-American singer, now based in Toronto, and the Montreal-based guitarist collaborated on this collection of classic songs from the not-too-distant past made famous by artists such as Barbara and Charles Aznavour. Unadorned by other instruments (except for accordion on two tracks) or fancy production tricks, Venez Donc Chez Moi (So Come to My House) is simply two exceptional musicians presenting beautiful songs. Some swing gently, but ballads dominate and Anglade’s gorgeous voice and Kirmayer’s solid and sensitive guitar accompaniment handy navigate all paces and styles.

Both Kirmayer and Anglade get in some professional collaborations, but here Pomanti speaks in his own creative voice by presenting a project rife with original compositions and inspired pairings with artists with whom Pomanti has previously co-created. The jazz, R&B and pop luminaries here include vocalist Emillie-Claire Barlow, iconic trumpeter Randy Brecker, soulful vocalist and lead singer of Blood, Sweat and Tears David Clayton-Thomas, contemporary crooner Matt Dusk, masterful singer/songwriter Marc Jordan, the funkadelic Oakland Stroke blue-eyed soul singer John Finley, gifted vocalists Dionne Taylor, Irene Torres, June Garber and Robyn Black, drummer Larnell Lewis and guitarist/synth wizard Sam Pomanti. The material here is a virtual potpourri of eclecticism and perfectly curated tracks – effortlessly pairing the right artists with the right tunes, brilliantly arranged and performed by the A-List musicians in the stirring charts created by Pomanti.

First up is a large, come-hither take on Lennon/McCartney’s Come Together featuring the magnificent Jordan and emerging vocalist Black, set in an inspired arrangement that oozes sophistication. A true standout is the swinging and soulful rendition of Mose Allison’s Your Mind is On Vacation featuring the made-in-heaven vocal match of Findley and Clayton-Thomas, followed by the irresistible Laura Nyro hit, Stoned Soul Picnic, reimagined by Pomanti, replete with an in-the-pocket tempo and featuring the breathtaking Barlow as well as a groovy face-melter from Brecker.

Pomanti’s “ten piece touring funk juggernaut, Oakland Stroke” is represented here with a bluesy and thrilling version of Me and Mrs. Jones, graced by the incredible pipes of George St. Kitts. Of special, luminous beauty is the haunting Windmills of Your Mind perfectly rendered by the incomparable Garber – who doesn’t just sing the lyrics, but imbues them with deep emotional content and flawless interpretation. Of special note is Pomanti’s composition, What Remains – a loving tribute to his adored wife of more than 20 years – made all the more moving by featuring the still-besotted Pomanti on vocals.

Lesley Mitchell-Clarke

The most familiar songs (to this Anglophone) are simply two exceptional musicians presenting beautiful songs. Some swing gently, but ballads dominate and Anglade’s gorgeous voice and Kirmayer’s solid and sensitive guitar accompaniment handy navigate all paces and styles.

Both Kirmayer and Anglade get in some brief, melodic improvisations – not easily done in such a stripped-down environment – otherwise the songs are delivered in a straightforward, true-to-the-original manner.

The most familiar songs (to this Anglophone)
are Michel Legrand’s La Chanson de Maxence (You Must Believe in Spring) and La Valse des ilias (Once Upon a Summertime), which evoke sweet melancholy. But really the whole album is like a lovely time-out from today’s harsh reality. Pull up a café chair and let your self be swept away.

Anglade and Kirmayer have many live performances coming up, separately, in Canada, the U.S. and Paris. Check samkirmayer.com and lauraanglade.com for dates.

Cathy Riches

Avery Raquel
Avery Raquel
Independent ARK2022 (averyraquel.com)

Multi-talented jazz vocalist Ori Dagan wears a number of hats on his latest recording, including composer. Dagan wrote nearly every track, often in collaboration with a coterie of fine artists, including Jane Bunnett, Nathan Hiltz, Mark Klewetter and Erik Flow. Guitarist Hiltz also serves as musical director here, and is joined by a septet of A-List musicians as well as guest artists Bunnett on flute and soprano sax, rapper Flow and vocalists Simone Denny and Donovan Locke.

Much of the material here was written with a witty, contemporary, Cole Porter-ish social media-centric skew. Kicking things off is Viruses, which boasts fine horn arrangements by Hiltz and Hennessy, as well as a goofy cool, up-tempo perspective with fine alto soloing by Alison Young coupled with Dagan’s fine delivery of the clever lyrics. Also tasty is Clicked on Romance, which boasts a distinctive Les Paul-ish country-swing flair. Dagan bobs and weaves confidently throughout the delightful melody and engaging lyric, making wonderful use of his powerful lower register.

Would You Swing My Way is a truly outstanding track, a beautiful legato verse segues into a delicious bebop ballad. Cleverly arranged with several different time signatures, the listener is constantly engaged with the rhythmic, aggressive solo (he combines these elements extremely well throughout the recording). Much of the material here was written with a witty, contemporary, Cole Porter-ish social media-centric skew. Kicking things off is Viruses, which boasts fine horn arrangements by Hiltz and Hennessy, as well as a goofy cool, up-tempo perspective with fine alto soloing by Alison Young coupled with Dagan’s fine delivery of the clever lyrics. Also tasty is Clicked on Romance, which boasts a distinctive Les Paul-ish country-swing flair. Dagan bobs and weaves confidently throughout the delightful melody and engaging lyric, making wonderful use of his powerful lower register.

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Yoshi Maclear Wall

Chronotope
George Crotty Trio
Independent (georgecrotty.com/trio)

Cellist George Crotty, bassist Jonathan Chapman and drummer Matias Recharte have their versatility on full display throughout Chronotope. Produced, led and composed in its entirety by Crotty, the music certainly plays like a showcase of the cello’s capabilities. However, while Crotty’s virtuosity and melodicism undeniably take center stage, that doesn’t mean there exists a hint of passivity from Chapman or Recharte. As an incredibly accomplished two-man rhythm section, they provide a bedrock solid foundation for the ever-expanding/contracting pace and energy of the sound. Some of the most potent moments occur when the trio triples down on a passage, which functionally puts great emphasis on the more crucial rhythms, all while bringing out the weight of their tandem.

On Prayer Dance, a standout, the lines played in unison instill a sense of urgency in the listener. The combination of Crotty’s lyrical, aggressive solo (he combines these elements extremely well throughout the album) and Recharte’s dynamic playing almost transcends the trio format in terms of scale, or sheer amount of sound produced necessarily always translate to a crescendo in volume or vigour.

Bassist/handleader/pianist/vocalist/engineer/producer extraordinaire Carl Mayotte is a master of making his compositions feel organic and like breathing. Irrisitible earworm (try getting that guitar ostinato out of your head) Au milieu de nulle part starts by gradually adding complexity to its initial groove, and just when the proverbial beat feels ready to drop, everything comes down. The subsequent bass solo leads back into the first motif seamlessly; which essentially resets the clock and adds dimensionality to the dance. Turning another corner, the band drops out again to give way to ambient noise, foreshadowing the sombre and meditative Hiver. This track is a brilliant showcase of Mayotte’s warm bass tone and his proclivity to utilize the entire range of his instrument when improvising. There is also a lot to love about the variety of layered bass tones used, from the dominant warbly sound more characteristic of a frettless approach, to the understated and hushed tones arpeggiating in the left channel during the outro. Also central to Mayotte’s music is the use of simple repeated phrases, percussion and rhythm that drives every track.

Escale
Carl Mayotte
Analekta AN 2 8836 (analekta.com/en)

Nary a single second of Escale feels superfluous. Track after track, canvasses for expression are established, occupied, broken down and eventually transformed. The compositions build in fashionable fashion, and that doesn’t necessarily always translate to a crescendo in volume or vigour.
over a span of time. In a moment of positively beautiful sequencing, the significantly calmer yet immensely moving *Metamorphosis* comes next. Chapman hops on electric bass, and his ability to sustain notes within his arpeggios allows for a sound that blankets the mix in warmth, giving a spellbinding depth of harmonic context to Crotty’s vibrato. That’s the recurring theme throughout *Chronotope*—the diverse complementary potential of musical instruments being fully realized.

**Yoshi Maclear Wall**

**Concert Note:** The George Crotty Trio have two release concerts for *Chronotope* coming up in Toronto, August 9 at The Rex and September 15 at Jazz Bistro.

**Live at Frankie’s Jazz Club**
**Steve Kaldestad; Chris Gestrin; Conrad Good; Jesse Cahill**
**Cellar Music CM072321 (cellarlive.com)**

Live recordings often give the listener a bit of an extra feeling for the music, a certain *je ne sais quoi* that studio albums may not necessarily convey.

Star saxophonist and music educator Steve Kaldestad’s newest release is, in fact, a live recording of his show at Frankie’s Jazz Club in Vancouver; the energy rolling off the band can fully be felt throughout this album. Kaldestad mentions that the whole point of this recording was to “document the renewed feeling of urgency and gratitude emanating from the quartet” while being able to play together properly after a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic. The sheer joy from musicians getting to do their thing together on stage and instruments blending with each other is truly palpable while giving this a listen.

Backed by a fantastic group of musicians, featuring Chris Gestrin on piano, Conrad Good on bass and Jesse Cahill on drums, the pieces in this live set are transported to new heights and filled with a positive energy that could penetrate even the gloomiest of mindsets. The record features a unique and captivating improvisation on a jazz classic, *Con Alma*, by Dizzie Gillespie; a mellow saxophone melody soars over a captivating piano and bass line. Among the stellar collection of pieces, Kaldestad’s own *Equestrian Interlude* stands out as well, a rhythmically groovy tune that gets your head bopping right along. A great addition to any jazz lover’s collection.

**Kati Killiaspea**

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**The Artist**
**John Lee; Carl Allen; Miles Black; Cory Weeds**
**Cellar Music CM111620 (cellarlive.com)**

I first knew John Lee primarily as a drummer, but even at that point close to a decade ago, he wore plenty of different hats. On *The Artist*, we hear Lee featuring himself on upright bass. Having not heard the young musician in several years, I first thought this was a strange choice, but hearing the first 20 seconds of music are enough to assure even the most critical listener that Lee is in his element.

This album features an excellent cast of musicians who brilliantly execute its hard-swinging repertoire. As both bassist and a drummer, it makes sense that Lee is acutely aware of the relationship between these two instruments in a jazz rhythm section. He’s chosen American drum great Carl Allen to join him, and he fits into this Canadian ensemble perfectly.

The music heard on *The Artist* is unapologetically straight ahead, but the energy Lee’s band brings to it makes it appealing to listen to in 2022 and ensure that it’s by no means just a time capsule harkening back to a bygone era. Tracks like *Soul Leo* and *Carl’s Blues* set the mood for the album, and Lee’s two originals, *Life is a Beautiful Thing* and *The Artist*, fit thematically and musically.

Like so much great jazz, this album can be enjoyed in several different contexts. I initially took diligent notes while listening through high-fidelity headphones, then subjected it to a second listen while chopping carrots and onions in the kitchen. *The Artist* passed both tests!

**Sam Dickinson**

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**Interpret It Well**
**Ches Smith; Craig Taborn; Mat Maneri; Bill Frisell**
**Pyroclastic Records PR 19 (chessmith.com)**

Drummer/vibraphonist Ches Smith’s capacity for creative synthesis became clear last year’s *Futh of Seven Colors*, a combination of Haitian vodou music and jazz, ultimately named best jazz album of the year by *The Guardian*. *Interpret It Well* is similarly outstanding work, adding guitarist Bill Frisell to Smith’s trio with pianist Craig Taborn and violinist Mat Maneri. The title appears in a sparse drawing by Raymond Pettibon in which a railroad track and telephone poles seem to drift toward approaching smoke or a tornado. (It’s sufficiently significant that a 42 by 27cm reproduction is folded in the CD sleeve.)

Working with Smith’s compositional sketches, the musicians meet the titular challenge admirably, with a special balance of individual freedom and collective invention, at different moments weaving together disparate materials into a kind of polyphonic unity. As the theme of the title track is gradually elaborated, a Webern-ish abstraction is matched by the concrete blues of Frisell’s electric guitar. Taborn is transforming throughout, luminous flurries giving way to looming chords, which turn to arpeggated pointillism with drums and viola adding turbulence. *Mixed Metaphor* opens with a sparse, liquid beauty but ultimately becomes a home for Maneri’s dissonant intensity.

The program unfolds with a sense of assembling meaning, a new understanding intuited out of what might be described as complementary disjunctions among harmonies, melodies, rhythms and timbres, a different music arising from familiar elements and rare empathy.

**Stuart Brooner**

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**John Scofield**
**ECM 2727 (ecmrecords.com/shop)**

Stalwart New York-based guitarist John Scofield has gone in an even more bold direction than usual with his latest release on ECM. The band? Scofield at the electric guitar, accompanied by a looper pedal and the many decades of playing experience that make his music so unique and excellent. The looper makes this album less of a traditional solo-guitar experience than you may be familiar with from Joe Pass or Ted Greene, but it’s not a gimmick to make Scofield’s life easier. Instead, he treats the pedal like a bandmate he is intimately familiar with. There are also plenty of moments where Scofield shows off his ample harmonic sensibilities, which can be overshadowed in ensemble settings by his fiery single-note, line playing.

As a brief technical note that I hope can be appreciated by jazz guitar experts and casual fans alike, I heard Scofield interviewed several years back about things he still wanted to improve upon with his playing. Then in his 60s, he gave a very tangible response about hoping to add wider intervals and more angular sounds to his music. It was beautiful to hear someone talk about how much there still is to learn, even after decades in the industry. What brought this to mind now, is that I hear concrete evidence of the 70-year-old guitar master playing these very intervallic ideas on this solo guitar offering.

While Scofield continues to find meaning
through playing music, we can all find a little just from listening to this poignant opus.  

Sam Dickinson

Poetic

Jonathan Barber & Vision Ahead

Independent (jonathanbarber.bandcamp.com/album/poetic)

> Connecticut-native, famed drummer Jonathan Barber has released a scintillating third album with Vision Ahead, a group of musicians he’s been pushing the limits with for over a decade. Barber has worked on refining his sound on this record, honing in on a unique modern sound with just enough of the classic mixed in to intrigue both older and newer fans of the genre. Featured are all original compositions, not only by the drummer himself but also by guitarist Andrew Renfroe, alto-saxophonist Godwin Louis and keyboardist Taber Gable. A journey through a beautiful musical landscape, this album is sure to catch the attention of many a listener from the first note.

Barber mentions that “the album showcases... the striking cohesiveness of a band who have performed by each other’s side...” and that is certainly very apparent throughout the record. Within each piece, each musician’s talents are very much showcased, but there’s a blending of sounds and instruments, of vibes, that only comes from having a true understanding of your fellow musicians. What lends a truly specific and interesting dimension to the pieces is how they are very much driven by rhythmic grooves but not in an overpowering way, it all comes together for a captivating whole.

From beginning to end, this album pushes the boundaries of the genre in the best ways possible, leaving the listener waiting for the next musical statement from this extraordinary musician and group.

Kati Killaspea

What Does It Mean To Be Free

Anthony Fung; David Binney; Luca Mendoza; Luca Alemanno

Independent (anthonyfungmusic.com)

> Drummer/composer Anthony Fung was born in Richmond Hill and raised in Canada, but has studied and lived in the United States for several years. He earned a Bachelor of Music degree from Berklee and a master’s from the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz Performance. What Does It Mean to Be Free? is his third album and was recorded in L.A. where he currently lives.

This an exciting album with eight original compositions and a great arrangement of Wayne Shorter’s “Sightseeing,” all played with an intense yet grooving style by some stellar musicians. In addition to the core quartet (Fung on drums; David Binney, alto sax; Luca Mendoza, piano; Luca Alemanno, bass) several tracks have special guest performers. On the title track, Andrew Renfroe brings some blistering guitar work including a high intensity exchange with Binney on sax. Defiance features Braxton Cook on a tender yet intense alto sax melody throughout and Alemanno with a pretty bass solo. Let Us Not Forget to be Kind has Roni Eytan providing some beautiful Toots Thielemans-influenced harmonica.

Throughout the album Mendoza’s piano is spectacular, providing tasteful accompaniment and solos on the slower tunes and effortlessly complex bop lines on the up-tempo numbers. Fung’s drums are propulsive and complex while still providing a solid backing to the proceedings. What Does It Mean to Be Free? At least part of the answer has to be: free to make great music.

Ted Parkinson

For Simon H. Fell

Rhodri Davies

Amgen 04 (rhodridavies.com)

> A studied requiem for UK bassist/composer Simon H. Fell (1959–2020), Welsh harmonist Rhodri Davies uses transformative digitalization on this eponymous disc to exhibit the assemblage of timbres, pitches and rhythms he can induce from the acoustic pedal harp. Davies and Fell were members of the imposing string trio IST for 25 years – cellist Mark Wastell was the third participant – and although most of this salute evolves at moderato and lento tempos, it’s no lachrymose dirge. Instead, the performance includes interludes of bubbling drama, heartfelt emotion and coiled percussiveness.

Interspersed with pauses and reverberations, Davies’ almost hour-long creation forges unique harp timbres, which alternately resemble vibrathone reverberations, tambourine-like drum strokes, keyboard-like vibrations and woody rubs against unyielding material. All are used for emphasis and sequence shifts. Expected thick glissandos, multi-string drones and singular staccato echoes figure in as well, so that by midpoint multiple strokes are layered into an almost opaque squirming mass. Its subsequent division into single-string high and low twangs and plinks that move forward and ricochet back into the concentrated narrative, suggest not only IST’s multiple string tropes, but the sort of unique compositions Fell wrote, arranged and played.

Ken Waxman

Blue Journal

Ester Wiesnerova

Independent (esterwiesnerova.com)

> The eloquent vocalist Ester Wiesnerova bids you to sink into her very private world with this elaborately packaged Blue Journal: 11 songs, and an illustrated, 120-page book. Here Wiesnerova invites us to enter what appears to be a musical portal. Listening to the opening bars of her very first song – Sinking Deep – you will find it hard to resist relocating yourself into her world. Her voice is like a warm, inviting, whispered breath as the poetic alluring lyrics are released into air.

Wiesnerova is accompanied by musicians completely attuned to her vision and artistry. Sam Knight’s questing horn soars above tumbling cascades of Charles Overton’s radiant harp. Kan Yanabe’s percussion colourations glued together with the gentle rumble of Michal Sepeł’s bass also invite us with impassioned conviction into Wiesnerova’s private world.

Wiesnerova beckons you between the sheets (so to speak) of the Blue Journal. She lures you into this music of unsentimental intelligence, with her clear, beguiling tone. At the heart of her artistic conception is Nightingales and Maple Trees, a song that lies at the heart of Wiesnerova’s secret soundscape deep inside her Blue Journal.

Throughout this repertoire, warmth and affection abound, befitting the delicately amorous subjects of the songs. For her part the inimitable Wiesnerova breathes her way into this extraordinary music with imagination and infectious musicality.

Raul da Gama

Justice – The Vocal Works of Oliver Lake

Sonic Liberation Front and the Sonic Liberation Singers

Hugh Two HT038 (sonicliberationfront.com)

> Decades ago I was a young saxophone player attending university in Edmonton and saw a poster for an Oliver Lake solo concert. It had only a picture of him.
standing alone holding an alto saxophone. Intriguing. In that concert Lake chanted, shook beads and other percussion, hummed and spoke a few words between long soliloquies on his horn. The evening was a meditation that moved from one mood and thought to another and it was entrancing. Since then, Oliver Lake has performed and composed with an incredibly diverse range of musicians including the World Saxophone Quartet, and released over 40 albums as leader and more as a sideman.

The Sonic Liberation Front invited Lake to write for their unique instrumentation of violin, tenor sax, acoustic bass and drums with a vocal quartet. Lake wrote eight pieces which include two poems. This album has a great energy, which moves freely amongst all the players. What is funny and has an uplifting and syncopated melody played together by saxophone, violin and vocalists. It then moves into a scrappy but swinging sax solo by Elliot Levin while Veronica Jurkiewicz’s phased violin solo reminds me a bit of Jean-Luc Ponty. Dedicated’s beautiful flute line, combined with the smooth vocals, sounds like a strange and misplaced Burt Bacharach composition. I love it!

Ain’t Nothing Real BUT Love is one of the two pieces based on Lake’s poetry and has only some delightful a cappella background vocals accompanying the emphatic statements about how love moves independently of our fears and desires. Justice manages to be loose, edgy, groovy and heartfelt all at the same time.

Ted Parkinson

POT POURRI

Confluence – Balkan Dances and Tango Neuvo
Zachary Carrettin; Mina Gajić
Sono Luminus DSL-92256 (sonoluminous.com/store/confluence)

Confluence marks the second release for the acclaimed Sono Luminus label by husband-and-wife duo, pianist Mina Gajić and violinist Zachary Carrettin.

The pairing of Marko Tajčević’s folksy Balkan Dances with the contemporary tangos by Ray Granlund may seem risky at first glance but it also works very well and is a reflection of the cultural influences that are meaningful to these two performers. Here we have a flowing together, a merging of two different compositional languages, coming from regions that are geographically distant but complementary with their distinct rhythmicity and melodic flavour.

The selected tangos were written for Carrettin and it is obvious how much he enjoys playing them. The passion and lyricism, mixed together in both the writing and interpretation, are truly engaging. Granlund leaves room for improvisation and plenty of interpretative choices, and Carrettin thrives on the explorative freedom the tangos are providing. His sound is mellow and intense at the same time, as if he is daring us to get up and join him in dance.

Tajčević’s Balkan Dances, written for solo piano, are not as exuberant but they have an absolutely relentless rhythmical drive, reminiscent of Bartók, and the melos and sturdiness of Balkan music. Gajić brings the percussiveness to the forefront and she does it with both grace and conviction. TangoNometria, one of the pieces on the album, easily links all the aspects of the music and performances on display here – ever-shifting rhythms, visceral melodies and thrilling interpretations.

Ivana Popovic

Ottoman Spenders
Lamia Yared; Ensemble Oraciones
Analekta AN2 9176 (analekta.com/en)

Diverse does not begin to describe the musical heritage of the Ottoman Empire. Full credit then to Lamia Yared, who has assembled a suitably diverse CD, drawing on Sephardic, Turkish, Hebrew and Greek music. Full credit to Didem Başar for her plaintive settings of the kanun part. The versatility of the kanun is in fact proven by Başar’s own playing.

The performers were very brave in condensing music from a whole swath of Europe onto one CD – which demonstrates how right they were to amalgamate their exceptional talents.

Michael Schwartz

Home
Les Arrivants
Analekta AN 2 9175 (analekta.com/en)

Les Arrivants is a positive COVID-19 pandemic creation. The three musicians -- Amichai Ben Shalev on bandoneon, Abdul-Wahab Kayyali on oud, and Hamin Honari on percussion -- independently settled in Montreal between the summers of 2019 and 2020 where they met and found a musical common ground playing together as an ensemble. They each draw on their personal backgrounds, resettlement experiences and respective musical expertise of Argentinian tango, classical Arabic music and traditional Persian rhythms with Montreal contemporary/traditional/improvised music and life during COVID to make unique music.

Each musician is also a composer. Title track Home (Chez Soi) by Honari has his repeated percussion rhythm grounding the bandoneon’s modern wide-pitched, held notes and chords midstream, then an oud solo and a closing upbeat group build. Kayyali’s Burkana (Volcan/Volcano) is fast and fun, more traditional oud music, with the band members doubling and answering the oud lines. Each member performs a solo track. Shalev’s bandoneon composition Solitude is a musical contemporary storytelling take on the tango genre with swells, held notes and wide-pitch ranges. Special guests Reza Abae on gheychak, and Pierre-Alexandre Maranda on double bass, appear on select tracks like the closing Nava by Parviz Meshkatiyan, showcasing the band’s world, improvisation and popular style musician.

Special thanks to artistic residency support from the Montreal-based Centre des Musiciens du Monde in collaboration with Analekta for this album. Les Arrivants’ tight seamless blending of styles and instrumentals creates accessible, colourful, world/popular music for all to enjoy.

Tiina Kiik

thewholenote.com  
July 1 - September 20, 2022 | 59
Almost from the time when so-called classical music was first recorded, inventive musicians have figured out ways to alter the scores in some way for novelty, commerce or homage. The most sincere of these trends began in the 1950s as creative musicians began interpolating improvisations into what had been treated as immutable musical doctrines since High Culture codification began in the late 19th century. This sonic refashioning continues, with the discs here demonstrating different approaches to the revisions.

Outlier of the group is the octet led by Polish woodwind player Marek Pospieszalski on Polish Composers of the 20th Century (Clean Feed CF 385 CD cleanfeed-records.com). Rather than re-creating or borrowing from the classical canon’s greatest hits by great composers on this two-CD set, Pospieszalski, two other horn players, three string players, a pianist and a percussionist plus the use of tape and a soundboard, produce variations on a dozen themes by contemporary Polish composers. Titled with the composers’ last names, most of which are little known outside their home country, the tunes are given additional resonance as jazz, noise and electronic tropes are worked into the performances. Staying true to the music’s genesis though, references are always made to the initial theme. Each track is, above all, an orchestral work, since there are few solos, and no protracted ones, with each performance arranged as primarily group work. What that means, for instance, is that while a piece like Stachowski may be broken up with effects pedal rock-like flanges from guitarist Szymon Mika and metallic percussion from drummer Qba Janicki, the track’s essence is a horizontal flow that flanges from guitarist Szymon Mika and metallic percussion from drummer Qba Janicki, the track’s essence is a horizontal flow that

Moving from the music of a composer who died in 1750 to one who was around until 1937, are compositions partly based on Maurice Ravel themes played by Montreal’s Cordâme sextet on Ravel Inspirations (Malarsarts mam 048 cordame.bandcamp.com/album/ravel-inspirations). Mature in his own writing, leader/bassist Jean-Félix Mailloux alternates tracks directly influenced by the French composer and those wholly his own. The group’s treatment of Boléro demonstrates how these transformations evolve. With the familiar theme first stated by harpist Éveline Grégoire-Rousseau, it’s taken up by violinist Marie Neige Lavigne and then harmonized with supple modulations from pianist Guillaume Martineau. As harp glissandi and Sheila Hannigan’s cello lines embellish the exposition, Mailloux’s bass and Mark Nelson’s percussion create a rhythmic bottom. When Martineau pulses a bluesy interlude within the theme, massed and discordant string plunks add to its fragmentation, but by the end it’s reconstituted with sympathetic harp strums. Group harmonies keep the narrative linear during other glipses into the Impressionist’s canon such as Pavane pour une infante défunte at the same time as stop-time string strokes and piano-created note swells build up excitement. That done, piled on textures from harp, cello and violin calm the performance so that it finally relaxes during the concluding integrated sequence. Other tracks may sound a bit too formal until they’re suffused by the warmth of tincture additions in Mailloux’s arrangements. Meanwhile Cordâme originals are characterized by more overt modernism in the arrangement and performances. Horizontal bow sweeps and clocklike drum ticking give way to violent triple stopping and continuous harp patterns on La bárdena; while tough and heavier sound coordination among band members suture the rubato sections of Océanos, which, besides staccato string stings, feature a rugged drum solo and a near-foot-tapping groove. Drum rumbles and pops also characterize what may be the preeminent composition Kenny Wheeler, named for another Canadian musical innovator. By cannily contrasting undulating motifs from the strings which attain smoothness without sweetness and rhythm section power, Mailloux realizes the same sort of half-Impressionist, half-intense composition, that is not unlike Wheeler’s memorable work.
Coming from the so-called other side of the musical world is France’s Ensemble 0 whose Musica Nuvolosa: Pauline Oliveros/György Ligeti (Sub Rosa SR 528 ensemble.com) provides an intriguing object lesson in the present day state of the improvised/notated divide. The eight-member ensemble consisting of two woodwind players, three string players, two percussionists and a pianist specialize in contemporary repertoire, usually by living composers. Unfortunately this isn’t the case here, but the adaptations of Horse Sings From Cloud (1975) by Oliveros (1932–2016) and the 11-part Musica Ricercata (1951–53) by Ligeti (1923–2006) are equally instructive. Oliveros, who had a long association with improvisers such as Joe McPhee and Joëlle Léandre, composed a 20-minute piece that, while minimalist, is less than doctrinaire and has enough chance elements to alter each performance. Encompassing an underlying string drone, the repetitive theme adds more instrumental colour and timbral extensions as it evolves, but stays true to gradual dynamics. Such as Joe McPhee and Joëlle Léandre, composed a 20-minute piece such as Joe McPhee and Joëlle Léandre, composed a 20-minute piece such as Joe McPhee and Joëlle Léandre, composed a 20-minute piece.

Improvised and notated music appear to be drawing closer during every decade. These albums demonstrate some of the results of this evolution. A different matter, Musica Ricercata draws on Ligeti’s Austro-Hungarian background as well as more modern currents. Moving through sections of melancholy and light-heartedness it never stays long enough in either mode to define an overriding emotion. Still, while the downcast sections are slower moving and include taut bell-tolling inferences, they never become tearful. Meanwhile the speedier pieces not only resemble Magyar music, but are often foot-tapping enough to pass unnoticed in a swing band. There are even points where the piano strays close to boogie-woogie chording, the flute stops aim for rhythmic bites and violinist Tomoko Katsura could be playing at a hoedown. Furthermore with percussionists Aurélien Hadyniak and Stéphane Garin creating textures from vibraphone, glockenspiel, piccolo snare drum, small triangle, gong, marimba, xylophone, tubular bells and tam-tam, the rhythmic underpinning sometimes sounds like the beat-affiliated orchestrations and arrangements that Ferde Grofé and his imitators made for large early so-called jazz orchestras like Paul Whiteman’s.

Old Wine, New Bottles
Fine Old Recordings Re-Released

BRUCE SURTEES

The Art of Duo-Piano Playing is the title of a box of four CDs from Marston Records devoted to the recordings of one of the most esteemed duos of their era, that is the late 1930s and beyond. Luboshutz and Nemenoff (marstonrecords.com/products/luboshutz-nemenoff). They were, of course, not pioneers of the art but they were a little different from their immediate predecessors: the public would have been familiar with Bartlett and Robertson, also Vronsky and Babin and others. With Luboshutz and Nemenoff we have a superb classical pianist with an enviable background in chamber music and an experienced accompanist. Pierre Luboshutz was born in Odessa in 1891 to a Russian-violinist father who taught him to play. Although his first instrument was the violin, he eventually focused on the piano, becoming a pupil of the Moscow Conservatory where he studied with Konstantin Igumnov. His debut performance at the Conservatory was Brahms’ Piano Concerto No.1 conducted by Serge Koussievitzky. As a pianist he toured 50 cities in Russia, also touring notably with the American dancer Isadora Duncan. He toured the United States with violinist Efrem Zimbalist, cellist Gregor Piatigorsky and double bass virtuoso Koussievitzky (one and the same as the conductor). While teaching in Paris at the Conservatory he met his future wife who was among the participants attending a piano masterclass he was giving. He married Genia Nemenoff and they settled in New York City. Nemenoff, born in Paris, spent her years before Luboshutz primarily as an accompanist to singers. On January 18, 1937 they began their duo concert debut tour under the name Luboshutz-Nemenoff. The duo began recording in 1939 for RCA Victor, and it’s easy to hear why they enjoyed such popularity and praise from both critics and colleagues. Included in The Art of Duo-Piano Playing are 57 complete works by a miscellany of composers from Bach to Khachaturian.

We can’t possibly go through each performance, as much as I’d love to. The essence of their playing is that they clearly enjoy playing together; they are seamless. You never get the sense that they are waiting for their turn, or even taking turns, it’s simply beautiful music. Their playing reflects how wonderfully in sync they are with each other, and that through the music, they are adhering to the simple yet profound beauty of musical dialogue between instruments. The box set includes most of their commercial recordings but also some recently discovered live performances.

In no particular order, here are some highlights from this box set. On September 8, 1939 they recorded a transcription by Luboshutz of the Danse Russe from Petrushka. It’s dynamic and exciting and well worth listening to. The Bat, a fantasy from Strauss’ Die Fledermaus is really captivating. We hear absolutely gorgeous playing from this duo throughout, including the Sonata for Two Pianos in D Major K.448 by Mozart and Robert Schumann’s Andante and Variations in B-flat Op.46. There’s also a performance of the Ritual Fire Dance from de Falla’s El amor brujo, once again in a Luboshutz arrangement in which they capture all the excitement and romanticism of the work.

What would a program of this kind be if it didn’t include the Tambourin Chinois by Fritz Kreisler? It is joyful and playful. We are also treated to a mighty impressive transcription of the Coronation Scene from Mussorgsky’s Boris Godunov. An important contribution to the third disc is Brahms’ Variations on a Theme of Haydn; and the Liebeslieder Waltzes are perhaps the most beautiful I’ve ever heard.

While trying not to mention everything, I can’t leave out Saint-Saëns’ Variations on a Theme of Beethoven Op.35. The alternating chords and the playing and waiting nature of the piece make it a very exciting performance. Three Pieces for Two Pianos by Khachaturian offer something different from the other repertoire in this set and they are certainly worth hearing. The Scaramouche Suite of Milhaud is played with a jaunty rhythm and is very convincing. The duo plays it like they believe it and are moved themselves by the piece. The 4CD
set culminates with Harl McDonald’s *Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra*. This is especially good, played with the Philadelphia Orchestra and conducted by the composer (1944).

Included in this little box from Marston, is a 46-page booklet and appreciation of the duo. There are lots of photographs of the artists at various stages of their career. Marston, well known for issuing such valuable performances, does us a service and deserves our thanks for undertaking this venture. Marston is very highly regarded in the business of reissues and has certainly excelled in this one. I cannot overstate the satisfaction and pleasure of hearing these performances so famous and popular in their day. Truly, this is the art of duo piano playing.

If you search YouTube, you can find Ward Marston’s channel, called *Past Forward*, where he introduces the release of this new box set and plays Luboschutz’s marvellous transcription of Mozart’s overture from *Le Nozze di Figaro*. While listening we are treated to photos from the booklet, and even a few that appear not to have been included.

Romanian pianist *Clara Haskil* (1895-1960) was a close friend and admirer of *Herbert Von Karajan*; sadly they never formally recorded together despite their deep mutual admiration. However, there is a recording of live performances from Salzburg made during a 1956 tour in celebration of Mozart’s bicentenary, *Mozart: Piano Concerto No. 20, Symphony No. 39 & Nine Variations on a Minuet by Duport* (ICA Classics arkivmusic.com/products/mozart-piano-concerto-no-20-symphony-no-39-9-variations-on-a-minuet-by-duport). The collaboration of the two in this live concert is quite a unique experience. Karajan conducts the *Philharmonia Orchestra* and lucky for us, one of the compositions on which they collaborated was the Mozart Piano Concerto No.20 in D Minor K466. What do we hear in this recording? Do we hear Karajan or do we hear Haskil? The fact is, we hear both of them and they are, together, far greater than the sum. The Philharmonia Orchestra under Karajan’s direction play with incomparable precision as was his style at the time. The orchestra was very familiar with his conducting and were certainly up to the mark. As a bonus, there is solo recording of the *Nine Variations on a Minuet by Duport* K573, also a live performance, taken from a recital in Besançon in September of that same year. For many, this little gem will be worth the price of the whole album, mono only, but in rather good sound.

Anyone looking for an incredible biography might want to pick up Jerome Spycket’s *Clara Haskil* (Lausanne, 1975). Haskil’s story begins in Bucharest in 1895 and ends in Brussels in 1960. In between there is every element imaginable of a compelling and powerful life story. As for Mozart’s *Symphony No.39* which provides the heart of this CD, we have a great example of Karajan’s obsession with precision, highlighting the excellence of the orchestra.

**OTHER FINE VINTAGES**

*Live at Room at the Top*  
**Pepper Adams: Tommy Banks Trio**  
*Reel to Real Recordings* RTR CD-008 (cellarlive.com)

▶ Undoubtedly the best – if not the only – exceptional jazz session featuring a member of the Canadian Senate, this set includes pianist Tommy Banks, who was in the Upper House from 2000-2011. While this date took place in 1972, Banks (1936-2018) exhibits the supportive and organizational skills that had made him one of Alberta’s most accomplished musicians for years.

Of course the adaptive skills of Banks, bassist *Bobby Cairns* and drummer *Tom Doran* were stretched to the maximum on backing baritone saxophonist Pepper Adams (1930-1986), then a sometime visitor to Edmonton’s clubs, arguably the U.S.’s pre-eminent hard bopper on his instrument. Making the most of the trio’s rhythmic and improvisational talents, Adams elevates this program of two originals and five jazz-songbook standards to fervorous extended interactions. During *Oleo*, for instance, his unbroken line of earthy and empathetic variations is an object lesson in how to make the familial exclusive. Banks’ speedy bop timing with blues underscoring keeps the piece moving. Here and elsewhere, excitement is torqued by thumping bass and crashing drum breaks, with both trading fours with the soloists. Sticking to mid-range tones, Adams uses squeaks and glissandi to advance his parts with the brightness of a higher-pitched instrument. The few times he emphasizes the baritone’s glottal rasp are during stop-time sequences. The resulting excitement gets added ompf when Banks’ solo styly interjects song quotes.

Judging from their protracted applause the audience was impressed by the music. You can be too.

Ken Waxman

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Brian Field

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Louise Besette

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Marti Epstein

55 Venez donc chez moi  
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56 Avery Raquel  
Avery Raquel

56 Chronotope  
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59 Ottoman Spendours  
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59 Home  
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Read the reviews here, then visit  
thewholenote.com/listening
The cataclysmic pianist and composer Cecil Taylor frequently worked with large bands, his activities with student ensembles and workshop groups shaping generations of improvising musicians. His 1968 recording with the Jazz Composers Orchestra was a key event in large-scale free jazz, while his 1988 Berlin orchestra fed his own development as well as European free improvisation; however, there may have never been a band quite as apt as the compact, shifting Orchestra from Two Continents with which he performed in Europe in 1984. This performance from Warsaw presents an 11-member version, assembling many of the most distinguished members of the international free jazz community of the era.

Like many of Taylor’s works, this hour-long piece had a ritualistic character, incorporating chanting and shouting. Here, movements with cries, hollers and snippets of song, hinting at mysteries and suggesting primordial rites, alternate with longer instrumental passages of motivically organized improvisation. These segments touch on Taylor’s deep roots. With the reeds loosely assembling around a blues-drenched riff, a passage gradually matches the loose, swarming intensity of a Charles Mingus band; a keening balladic segment spontaneously expands to the harmonic richness of Duke Ellington’s orchestra.

More dazzling though is Frame from a few years later with a different band. Here the electronics’ irregular jiggling timbres and equivalent live drum processing easily make common cause with the spectacular spiccato jumps and sprawling glissandi from violinist Phil Wachsmann. Dominant, while accompanied by Larry Stabbins’ rugged sax smears and Riley’s pounding piano rumbles, the fiddle-drums intersection projects commanding irregular textures at supersonic speeds, but not without revealing an ever-widening spectrum of sonic colours.

Remastered with full-spectrum, 21st-century sound, these heirlooms of an earlier era easily justify their unearthing and prominent display.

Ken Waxman
Yannick Nézet-Séguin and the Chamber Orchestra of Europe present Beethoven’s nine symphonies in what is the very first recorded cycle to be based on the recently concluded New Complete Edition text of Symphony No.9

New Album • July 15