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I took this photograph during the dress rehearsal of Shanawdithit, produced by Tapestry Opera, at the Joey and Toby Tanenbaum Opera Centre, in May 2019. Between the bold courage of the character and the elegant poise of the performer, this peak moment was clearly deserving the ‘hero shot’ treatment. Marion looked up at the light and I looked up at her. No-brainer. — Dahlia Katz
BEAT BY BEAT

22 Art of Song | LYDIA PEROVIĆ
24 Classical & Beyond | PAUL ENNIS
28 Choral Scene | MENAKA SWAMINATHAN
34 Music Theatre | JENNIFER PARR
36 In with the New | WENDALYN BARTLEY
38 Early Music | MATTHEW WHITFIELD
40 On Opera | DAVID PERLMAN
42 Jazz Notes | STEVE WALLACE
44 Bandstand | JACK MACQUARRIE
69 Mainly Clubs, Mostly Jazz | COLIN STORY

LISTINGS

46 A | Concerts in the GTA
62 B | Concerts Beyond the GTA
66 C | Music Theatre
68 D | In the Clubs (Mostly Jazz)
71 E | The ETCeteras

DISCOVERIES:
RECORDINGS REVIEWED

74 Editor’s Corner | DAVID OLDS
76 Strings Attached | TERRY ROBBINS
78 Keyed In | ROGER KNOX, SHARNA SEARLE, ANDREW SCOTT, ADAM SHERKIN,
80 Vocal
81 Classical and Beyond
82 Modern and Contemporary
85 Jazz and Improvised Music
89 Pot Pourri
90 Something in the Air | KEN WAXMAN
92 Old Wine, New Bottles | BRUCE SURTEES

MORE

6 Contact Information
7 Upcoming dates and deadlines
72 Classified Ads
null
What an incredible evening last night! It was such an honour to perform the world premiere of Ian Cusson’s beautiful aria ‘Dodo, mon tout petit’ with Alexander Shelley. Ian was commissioned by the Canadian Opera Company and National Arts Centre Orchestra to replace the opening aria in Act 3 of the opera Louis Riel. It will forever be inserted in the opera, taking the place of the original aria which used a sacred Nisga’a melody without permission. It was a monumental evening in this time of reconciliation, and I am so honoured I was asked to sing! … I was proud to share this moment with, not only the incredibly gifted Métis composer Ian Cusson, but my colleague Marion Newman who gave a beautiful performance of Barbara Croall’s Zasakwaa: There is a Heavy Frost. Marion, your passion and voice within the indigenous community continues to inspire me! I can’t wait to see where the future takes us!

The “incredible evening” she was referencing was a concert, on September 19, at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, of the NAC Orchestra, and it serves as a useful narrative starting point for this story, which will, eventually, journey towards another significant evening, November 26, and repeated November 27, at Heliconian Hall, titled An Evening with Marion Newman. It will explore, in words and music, the question “What is classical Indigenous Music?” with the musical participation of Newman herself, mezzo-soprano Rebecca Cuddy, baritone Evan Korbut, and pianist Gordon Gerrard, with music by composers Ian Cusson, Barbara Croall and others.

Some of these participants were involved in the September 19 Ottawa concert, some not. All will be people whose artistic lives have intersected significantly with Newman’s. Some, but not all, are of Indigenous background. All have significant classical credentials. And all are committed participants in an emerging nationwide conversation about the ways classical music can and must move away from a model in which Indigenous song and storytelling have been up for grabs by non-Indigenous composers, artists and academics, at the same time as the Indigenous custodians of the words and works in question were forbidden to utter them.

En route from Ottawa in September to Yorkville in November, we must first detour to the West Coast, which is where I caught up, by phone, with Marion Newman in Victoria, BC, in late October, where she found half an hour to chat, very early in the morning of her first day off, halfway through a two-opera engagement with Pacific Opera Victoria (POV).

The first of the two productions, Puccini’s Il trittico, was already up and running. It’s better known by the names of its one-acter constituent parts: Il tabarro (The Cloak), Suor Angelica (Sister Angelica), and Gianni Schicchi. They are seldom performed together this way, but when they are, they pack a cumulative punch, gaining perspective by congruity. Newman’s role in Il trittico is in Suor Angelica, where she plays two rather forbidding roles: The Mistress of the Novices and the Abbess, in this tragic tale of a noblewoman banished to a convent for bearing a son out of wedlock.
The second of the two POV productions, Missing, just going into rehearsal as we spoke, is a piece that Newman has been involved with since its inception. It will run November 1 and 2 in Victoria, then, to Newman’s delight, travel to Regina Performing Arts Centre, November 8 and 9, and finally on to Prince George, BC, November 15, 16 and 17, on the Highway of Tears that, along with Vancouver’s Downtown East Side (DTES), is this searing work’s primary setting. Missing was created “to give voice to the story of Canada’s missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls, and to show that each and every one of these missing people is honoured.” It premiered on November 1 2017 during Vancouver’s DTES Heart of the City Festival, before an invited audience of families, friends and the DTES community of the missing. This was followed by runs of five performances each at Vancouver City Opera and POV. Newman reprises her original role in this run.

A review of the first run in Vancouver Magazine stated that Missing “lays the foundation for a bridge between two cultural solitudes that must work together ... to give birth to a new Canada.” And Opera Canada called it “an important piece of theatre that builds over its short 80 minutes to a shatteringly emotional conclusion... [it] is some-thing every Canadian should see.”

It also offers, in the way it was created, some clues to how to build that bridge between solitudes. One example: Marie Clements, who is Métis-Dene, fully developed the libretto prior to the selection of a composer; the composer selected, Brian Current, was one of four composers asked to set a portion of it, with their settings sung before a jury who did not know their identities.

For Marion Newman, the fact that Missing is going to Regina is a source of great satisfaction, because of her relationship with Gordon Gerrard, music director of the Regina Symphony Orchestra, who will be the pianist for Newman’s Heliconian Hall November concerts. As she explains: “Gordon was really key in bringing Missing to Regina; he wanted it two years ago. He was very determined. This is very much with the support of the Indigenous advisory council there, which I’m proud to be a part of. He has a board member who’s an Indigenous woman from Regina and he asked her if she thought it would be possible to have an Indigenous advisory council from all walks of life in Regina, and she thought that was a great idea, to help guide the RSO towards being more involved in telling Indigenous stories in music and community – really leading the way in terms of symphonies engaging the people on whose lands they exist.”

A recent manifestation of Gerrard’s commitment to meaningful collaboration was his role in the March 2019 mounting of the new opera Riel: Heart of the North by Métis librettist Suzanne Steele and composer Neil Weisensel (in which Newman, along with mezzo-soprano Rebecca Cuddy, who will be at the Heliconian with Newman, both had roles). But according to Newman, Gerrard’s commitment goes back further than that.

“Well before Riel, going back to the beginning of his tenure ... the first big thing we did was a festival for the symphony not part of the regular season, focused on social change and community. The first one was about truth and reconciliation and they partnered with the Art Gallery of Regina to make that happen, to create a unique space. Almost all the content was Indigenous performances in both dance and music. This coming year it’s about LGBTQ themes, planning for a different focus each year – related to people who don’t normally get a voice at the symphony – and to how to bring the community to the symphony, and the symphony to the community.

“He has been there when things got awkward and people stuck their foot in their mouth about Indigenous people with me right there, watching how that affected me and others. So bringing Missing there is a no-brainer ... and so is including him in a concert that is about Indigenous classical music. Besides, he is a wonderful pianist as well as conductor; so many of my ideas have grown out of conversations we have. I really want him to be part of this.”

Digging down into some of Newman’s other recent roles, the connections and bonds between her and the other November 26 Heliconian participants becomes clearer. For example, both Evan Korbut and Rebecca Cuddy were in Tapestry Opera’s production of...
Dean Bury/Yvette Nolan’s Shanawdithit in which Newman, as seen on our cover, played the title role.

“We keep meeting up here and there, and Rebecca and I have become very good friends as well as colleagues and I’m always delighted to work with her. I think she’s a really smart and interesting artist – she’s very young but very grounded and centred and learning very quickly how to speak up when that’s what’s needed in a great way. She’s definitely that next generation who are going to do incredible things, and so it was an easy one to want to have her on board. And Evan ... Evan has a beautiful voice – he’s from the Garden River First Nations in Ontario. And I think ... he could sing anything – it doesn’t need to be Indigenous music but I think that he does have an important voice there, and I really want to let him to know he is welcome in that place and I hope one day he is also helping lead where we’re all going – where there is truth in music, bringing our culture forward.”

In its mushiest sense, the word “confluence” is a bit like the word “synergy,” descriptive of any old kind of coming together – good for grant applications and things like that, but not particularly helpful as to how to go about it. But its narrower meaning is both intriguing and instructive: namely the junction of two equivalent rivers: each strengthened by the other as they continue, downstream. True confluence means neither accepting or demanding tributary status of the other.

The Heliconian event itself is a collaborative work in progress. “Evan and Rebecca are part of developing the plan. We need to make sure it’s not too wordy, but still offer some context ... a bit like introducing songs like at a potlatch or powwow, you talk about the permission granted to perform a work, about who you need to be naming. In ceremony there is speaking and music, so seeing this as a ceremony of sorts makes sense. We’ll be singing in Gitxsan and Odawa and a little bit of Kwak’wala. It’s an amazing opportunity to sing those languages back into the air. And we are drawing from repertoire I’ve been involved in over the years, that come with really good feelings – ones where collaborations worked beautifully. Some of it is new for Rebecca and Evan, but they are really cool at saying yes, this is an opportunity.”

There’s nothing abstract about Newman’s personal understanding of what true confluence entails: “I have understood this idea of Indigenous classical music my whole life. At five I was already steeped in the cultures of both sides of my family. There’s a picture of me wearing my kilt ... and my moccasins and my dad’s toque, with a pair of wooden spoons crossed on the floor, and I’m doing a highland dance. For my parents it was such a snapshot of how I was being raised, living all of my cultures. What it was like to be able to just be everything without anyone questioning. I began piano lessons – Suzuki – and right away did my own composing, like Kinanu, my lullaby, in its first iteration. I found my worlds could meld organically. Now it’s about getting other people to understand, and embrace, the possibilities.”

David Perlman can be reached at publisher@thewholenote.com
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Free tickets will be available starting Fri. Nov. 8.  
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MAZZOLENI CONCERT HALL  
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Academy Chamber Orchestra  
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14, 7:30PM MAZZOLENI CONCERT HALL  
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Assessing the legacy of a musician is tricky any day, but particularly when celebrating the person’s birth centenary, and especially when he was my teacher, colleague and then, friend, over several decades. It’s even more daunting when that person is the prolific composer, pianist, vocal coach, choral conductor, music journalist and educator, and mentor to several generations of Toronto musicians, Udo Kasemets (1919-2014).

Kasemets considered himself a perennial outsider. He also, however, possessed the entrepreneurial chops to stretch the definition of what it meant to be a composer – and somehow to survive doing just that throughout his fascinating, multifaceted and prolific career. For most of his life he was, as he put it, “always trying to get things going.”

The outlines of his biography may provide a few clues to this enigmatic man. Born into a musical Estonian family (his father Anton Kasemets was an organist, influential choral conductor, composer and musicologist), he was educated in Tallinn and, after WWII, in Germany. In 1951 Kasemets immigrated to Canada. He made Hamilton and then Toronto the home where his musical career grew; during his long life he mentored several generations of musicians, me included.

This is not the first time I’ve written about Kasemets in *The WholeNote*. In my 2010 article, *In Appreciation of Udo Kasemets*, Robert Aitken, founding artistic director of New Music Concerts calls him “probably the most uncompromising musician in Canadian musical history”; while my 2014 article, *Toronto’s Musical Avant-Gardist: Udo Kasemets (Tallinn 1919 – Toronto 2014) A Remembrance in Five Decades*, leaves no doubt about its contents.

A number of organizations have taken Kasemets’ 100th birth year as a cue to program his extraordinary compositions. We’ll look at several Toronto concerts scheduled throughout November. To aid us with background, I’ve reached out by email to Canadian musicologist Jeremy Strachan, Estonian flutist (and Ensemble U: member) Tarmo Johannes, Toronto pianist and concert curator Stephen Clarke, and composer Linda Catlin Smith. They knew Kasemets personally, either performing his work or writing extensively about it.

I first asked my interviewees why Canadians should care about Kasemets’ musical legacy.

Jeremy Strachan was the first to reply. “Udo was one of Canada’s most prolific composers and a trailblazing figure, bringing the avant-garde to listeners in this country. Although he is remembered fondly by those he knew and worked with, by and large his work has flown under the radar, outside of the small circle of enthusiasts of experimental music scattered across Canada. Aside from being a composer, concert promoter and writer, he was also a teacher and collaborator who brought many people together. I’m reticent to say ‘without Udo...’ but he really did an extraordinary amount of work to ensure that experimentalism in music and the arts had a legitimate place in the Canadian cultural landscape.”

Tarmo Johannes weighed in with his Estonian musician’s perspective. “He is a little known in Estonia – unfortunately too little. It has been our mission in Ensemble U: to introduce him more to our audiences, draw attention to his music and to situate him as a very important, very enriching part of Estonian music culture, a figure with no parallel in the Estonian ‘homeland.’ On the other hand let’s not forget that he returned to Tallinn in 2006 as an honorary guest of the Days of Estonian Music festival. There was a concert full of his music, a masterclass at the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre, interviews, articles, though there haven’t been many performances since.”

From Stephen Clarke, seasoned interpreter of Kasemets’ piano works: “Kasemets with Susan Layard, his singer/companion, travelled to Tallinn where he gave lectures – in Estonian, the first time he spoke it since the 1940s (!) – and performances. The German pianist Florian Steininger contacted me some years ago asking for scores of Kasemets’ later piano works. He has been performing them around Europe.”

Johannes further observed: “As an Estonian, I’ve been impressed by how many people talk about him with deep respect, admiration and warmth. But first of all, let’s consider his output as a composer.
Having studied several of his scores it has become more and more clear how strong his works are. My group Ensemble U: has considerable experience interpreting open scores. Even then, working with a Kasemets score still sometimes means we have to struggle for hours with quite complex sets of rules, yet time and again after unraveling the sounds, we’ve been astonished by the quality of his work! I’ve heard Kasemets sometimes referred to as Canada’s John Cage. Well, okay, but concerning his compositions, in my humble opinion, Udo Kasemets did it better.”

Clarke was just as unequivocal in his assessment: “I’m convinced that had Kasemets emigrated to the US instead of Canada, his would be an iconic name as a maverick composer along the lines of Harry Partch, for instance. But Udo kept a fairly low profile and any self-promotion was anathema to him.”

“Fortunately he moved to Toronto,” Clarke continued, “or I might never have had the friendship and collaborations with him! Musicologist Jeremy Strachan recently completed his doctoral thesis at the University of Toronto on Kasemets’ work. This is highly encouraging, not only for preserving a legacy, but for opening doors for further exploration. Kasemets’ work is prolific and vastly ranging.”

Linda Catlin Smith, performer in many Kasemets pieces and coordinator for his massive work Counterbomb Renga, as well as for the recording of his Eight Houses of the I Ching, put it this way: “Udo is important to Canadian music for his unique and individual approach to music making. He’s also notable for his many concerts dedicated to celebrating other artists, especially poets such as Octavio Paz, Robert Creeley, Louis Zukofsky and Susan Howe.”

I asked Strachan about Kasemets’ trailblazing 1960s and 1970s contributions to experimental music composition and performance in Toronto.

“Udo was sort of the right guy at the right place at the right time in 60s Toronto. It was a period of transition and possibility, and he was determined to make an intervention in the suffocating conservatism of Canadian musical culture. He was, I think, uniquely equipped with the skills, the pedigree, and the disposition to shake things up at a time when there was a desire for something to happen, but he also had the required skills when he was forced to go it alone. In the 70s, you start to see the emergence of arts councils, artist-run spaces, and more collectivization and support; Udo really didn’t have that in the 60s. [Earlier] he had to forge alliances with galleries and navigate a frankly hostile musical terrain to present his work and the work of avant-garde composers.”

Smith added: “He was incredibly active in his early years in Canada, and was a passionate participant along with the other composers of the day presenting concerts, working with the League of Composers, bringing John Cage’s work to Canada, etc. He had a devoted following of listeners who came to many of his self-produced events. He also attended many, many concerts over the years, and was a keen supporter of younger composers and performers.

Toronto audiences can explore for themselves why Kasemets’ music still attracts musicians, composers and musicologists at the following events.

**New Music Concerts: Kasemets@100**
November 12, New Music Concerts presents Kasemets@100 at Walter Hall, University of Toronto, with guest Ensemble U: and pianist

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**Udo Kasemets’ Timepiece for a Solo Performer: an aleatoric graphic score from the anthology, Notations (1969), collected by John Cage & Alison Knowles & documented via chance operations produced with the I Ching.**

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Stephen Clarke. Ensemble U: is the most active contemporary music ensemble in Estonia. Touring widely, it has gained recognition for performing very demanding works without a conductor.

This celebration of the eclectic compositions of Udo Kasemets has another aim: to build musical bridges between Kasemets’ Estonian heritage and his Toronto career. The program features four works by Kasemets from the 60s, 90s and 2000, but also includes works by outstanding Estonian composers Märt-Matis Lill (b. 1975) and Tatjana Kozlova-Johannes (b. 1977), compositional voices unfamiliar to most Toronto audiences.

An unusual programming touch for a contemporary music concert is the inclusion of Giovanni Palestrina’s sacred motet Tu es Petrus (1572); it directly addresses a Kasemets comment: “When studying Palestrina I sensed that musical order was larger than the sum of its components, however cleverly, imaginatively, and systematically they were put together.” It reflects the Kasemets view that composing music is a human approach to grasping the vastness of the multiverse and to creating order from its constituent parts.

“I’ve heard Kasemets sometimes referred to as Canada’s John Cage. Well, okay, but concerning his compositions, in my humble opinion, Udo Kasemets did it better.”
— Tarmo Johannes

Array Music: Udo Kasemets @ 100

November 23, Array Music presents Udo Kasemets @ 100 performed by the Array Ensemble at the Array Space. This concert also pays tribute to “a towering figure in Toronto’s experimental music scene” with a program of his lesser-known chamber works curated by Array pianist and longtime Kasemets collaborator Stephen Clarke.

The inclusion of the 1948 Kasemets work, Sonaat in E, Viiulile ja Klaverile, Op.10, in the concert reveals a relatively conservative compositional style in his 20s, an aesthetic he brought to Canada. During the first decade of his career here, Kasemets performed, directed and organized concerts not of the experimental music of the day, but rather European high-art music of past centuries. Proof: he was the founder-director of the Toronto Bach Society (1957/8), and also of Musica Viva (1958/9), a pioneering Toronto organization in that it performed both new compositions and early music.

Clarke’s case for programming the 1948 work? “Udo’s earlier activities with choirs and traditional classical music aren’t so surprising given his inclusive views on what music is and can be. His Violin Sonata might be the most shocking piece of Kasemets anyone has ever heard: precisely because it’s not shocking!”

Kasemets at Estonian Music Week

Toronto’s Estonian Music Week (EMW), November 14 to 17 this year, partners with Latitude 44, an Estonian digital conference being held in Toronto for the first time. I’d be willing to bet that if Udo Kasemets were in his prime today, he’d be dreaming of fresh experimental music-tech interfaces for Latitude 44 and organizing performance events for it. (For more on EMW, see the sidebar to this story.)

November 14, we can hear a prime example of a music-tech work at EMW when American composer Scott L. Miller’s immersive audio-visual concert work Ruba is performed three times by Ensemble U: at the WE Global Learning Centre. Ruba ("bog" in Estonian) is experienced by the audience wearing VR headsets. Audience members visually explore a 360-degree film while Ensemble U: performs the synchronized music. The ensemble and playback speakers physically surround the audience, providing each audience member with their own individual audio, as well as visual, experience.

November 17, the outstanding Toronto accordionist Tiina Kiik performs the 1993 Kasemets composition Kuraadi Kliik (Satan’s Swing) for solo accordion at the EMW’s wrap party at Tartu College. Kasemets wrote the work especially for Kiik, a well-known musician in the Estonian community, whose repertoire includes classical, folk and improvised music. The party headlines the Estonian singer-songwriter Vaiko Epšlik, a pop music star in his country, who has released 21 albums and produced music for many other artists.

Udo Kasemets: outsider or scene builder?

Let’s conclude our Kasemets centenary overview with one of his common declarations: “I’ve always been an outsider.” Strachan feels it’s not simply an off-handed statement of self-deprecation but rather speaks of a generation whose “attachments to place is far more grounded in displacement, dislocation and rupture – a diminished sense of rootedness” – one of modernism’s conditions.

Although Kasemets vigorously maintained his self-perceived outsider status to the end and questioned the lasting impact of his earlier accomplishments with cool skepticism, Strachan however assesses his legacy rather differently. Strachan’s 2014 Array Space lecture, Udo Kasemets: Uncompromising Experimentalist, ends with an optimistic appraisal: “The activity we see happening in Toronto today: with experimental music thriving ... new performance spaces opening as quickly as other ones close, and a sense of community among performers which is intergenerational, dynamic and always renewing itself – to me, that’s the promise that Udo saw in the 1960s, fulfilled.”

Andrew Timar is a Toronto musician and music writer. He can be contacted at worldmusic@thewholenote.com.
ESTONIAN MUSIC WEEK – NOVEMBER 14 TO 17

In addition to the two EMW concerts already mentioned here is another concert pick, providing a taste of the rest of the festival’s several performances.

On November 15 (Artscape Sandbox, Toronto) and November 16 (Cotton Factory, Hamilton) you can hear the quirky duo Puuluup (“wooden magnifying glass” in Estonian), from Viljandi, a town in southern Estonia. They’ve developed a unique musical hybrid variously dubbed “Estonian neo-folk” and ‘foktronica.” Their talharpas – horse-hair four-stringed bowed or plucked lyres – featured in the Estonian folklore revival, provide essential textures in their music, along with live electronic looping, electronic pedal effects, alternative bowing and amplified drumming techniques. Finnish jouhikko (a closely related bowed lyre) are also part of the mix. The duo’s catchy vocal melodies, harmonies and raps in the Estonian language draw inspiration from the village leiks (songs) of Vormsi island, Russian or Ukrainian chastushkas, and from more distant global music traditions. The tone is wry and unconventional, with lyrics about wind turbines, Polish TV heroes, fat cakes, and the “uncomfortable feeling that your neighbour’s dog might try to bite you while you take out the trash.” The old mashes with the new in their live performances and music videos, or as described in seasonally appropriate Baltic imagery, “sticking together like water and sleet.”

Estonian Music Week is co-presented with Latitude 44 a digital conference which introduces Estonia as the “world’s first digital society.” How did this Baltic country, about 24 times smaller than the province of Ontario, become such a digitally advanced society? Estonian e-engineers and managers share their success stories at the WE Global Learning Centre, 339 Queen St.E. Toronto. latitude44.to.ca/tickets

“Estonia, a small country, big traditions.” This country with a population of 1.3 million has over two million yearly concert visits. Massed national song and dance festivals have played an important role in the development and preservation of Estonian identity. During the “Singing Revolution,” for example, many thousands of Estonians gathered for massed choral demonstrations between 1986 and 1991, putting pressure on the USSR government to end decades of Soviet occupation. In 1991 Estonia achieved independence, nonviolently.

World music fans double the population of the town of Viljandi during the Viljandi Folk Music Festival which presents world music acts from all over the world. Jazz is prominent in the popular Tallinn Music Week and at the Jazzkaar Festival. Estonia also boasts a number of top composers, such as Arvo Pärt, among the world’s most performed living composers, and Veljo Tormis, who based some of his successful works on ancient regi songs. The country has also produced several fine conductors such as Neeme Järvi, Tõnu Kaljuste and Paavo Järvi, the latter having conducted Canadian musicians on a 1994 all-Kasemets CD on the Koch International label.
The recent announcement of composer Alexina Louie as the winner of the 2019 Molson Prize in the Arts, the first time the $50,000 prize has been awarded to a female composer, signalled something of a sea change in the world of Canadian music that's been developing gradually.

The prize was presented to Louie by the Canada Council for the Arts, on stage at Esprit Orchestra's season-opening concert at Koerner Hall this past October. “One of Canada’s most highly regarded and most often performed composers, performed and broadcast internationally,” the citation read. “Her commissioned works range across all musical genres, including ballet and opera.” It’s an award that recognizes Louie’s place at the forefront of the many women who have propelled themselves to positions of significant influence in Canada’s classical music community through both their activism and artistic achievements.

In a blog on the Esprit Orchestra website Louie states: “I’m proud of my large catalogue of wildly diverse compositions. They range from pedagogical piano pieces for children, a full-length main stage opera, my ‘ground-breaking’ comedic five-minute made-for-TV operas (created with my collaborators, director Larry Weinstein and librettist Dan Redican), to more unconventional, leading-edge compositions. In my pieces I aim to create something captivating, magical, touching, inspiring. It doesn’t matter if the work is meant for a young piano student or the audience of National Ballet of Canada, I cannot be satisfied with my work unless I aim high. I also avoid writing the same piece over and over, a trap that is easy to fall into. However, pushing boundaries and propelling yourself into new personal artistic territory can be frightening. The compositions listed in my catalogue span many decades. You can hear my musical voice taking shape in the earlier pieces. There are works from those formative years that still affect me deeply. They still ring true after so many decades.” And in a subsequent conversation Louie told me that the Molson Prize is especially meaningful to her because nominees come from all the arts, not just music. “When you look at the list of past winners, it spans the full range of artists in Canada from Alice Munro, Glenn Gould, Mary Pratt to Bill Reid, Margaret Atwood and of course, Alex Pauk, and so on.”

The Molson Prize is just one recent recognition of Louie’s prominence. Just a few days prior to her receiving it, she was also presented the Arts and Letters Award by the Arts and Letters Club of Toronto. John Stanley, the club member who nominated her for the award wrote: “Her work has been performed by all of Canada’s important...
symphony orchestras, locally and on tour. In addition, her works have been performed in the United Kingdom, Germany, the United States as well as in China. She was recently commissioned by the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal, and the National Arts Centre Orchestra to write a Triple Concerto for the orchestra’s concertmasters, a task which she fulfilled with great mastery and verve. The concerto was performed in all three cities in 2017/18. In 2019, she was the featured composer at Finding a Voice, a festival devoted to women composers, held in Cork, Ireland. This year, her work was also performed by the Ensemble symphonique Neuchâtel, Switzerland. The Canadian writer Emily-lane Hills Orford has described Ms. Louie’s work’s “ethereal quality [that] transcends both time and place and leaves the audience, as well as the performers, with a distinct feeling of being in a trance, a dream. The unique sounds and colours of Alexina Louie’s music enlighten the listener, allowing the music, the performer and the audience to experience an idea, to gain knowledge of an emotion.”

The Arts and Letters Award ceremony included performances of her vocal and piano music by soprano Caroline Stanczyk and pianist Morgan-Paige Melbourne; her accordion music, performed by Matti Pulkki; as well as excerpts from her made-for-TV operas, all introduced by the composer herself. She made the point that, though she’s a thoroughly Canadian composer, her musical voice is heard and recognized around the world. She told me: “In my desire to communicate and express my message, I’ve striven for a universality in my musical language.”

It should be noted here that I am not an unbiased observer! On a personal level, I’m proud of the role I played in encouraging Louie’s early development in the 1980s, having arranged her very first commission through CBC Radio, as well as the broadcasts of her works on the national CBC network program Two New Hours. These broadcasts introduced Louie’s music to a national audience through the CBC’s Radio Two network. Our recordings of her music in concerts were also disseminated internationally through the International Rostrum of Composers and the network of International program exchange that CBC had with organizations like the European Broadcasting Union.

I also produced her very first recordings on CD: clarinetist James Campbell and percussionist Beverley Johnston recorded her Cadenzas for Centrediscs in 1986, and the 2019 Governor General’s Performing Arts Award-winning pianist Louise Bessette recorded Music for Piano with me for CBC Records in 1993. Three years later I also produced a CBC Records CD with accordionist Joseph Macerollo that included the first recordings of Louie’s Earth Cycles for solo accordion, as well as her trio for accordion, harp and percussion, Refuge, the work I had commissioned in 1980 on the occasion of her return to Canada after ten years living in California.

I’ve also recently collaborated with another woman at the forefront of Canadian musical creativity, cellist Rachel Mercer, along with her violinist sister, Akemi Mercer-Niewöhner: their new recording of six works by Canadian women has now been released on the Centrediscs label. A few years in its making, the CD, Our Strength, Our Song, combines three of Mercer’s recently commissioned duos for violin and cello with three 20th-century Canadian duos.

The title of the recording comes from one of the works on the recording – one of the last compositions by the late composer Rebekah Cummings (1980–2019) who wrote of her composition: “Our Strength, Our Song is a tribute to the empowering generational bonds between women, and the beauty of sisterhood. I was so inspired to compose for a pair of sisters (the Mercer Duo), and for two instruments that support and complement one another so perfectly – unique, yet part of the same family – like sisters.” Cummings, who was Bulgarian-Canadian, found inspiration in the traditional two-part folk singing of Bulgarian women, and writes in her notes: “These songs are a strong, common bond among the women and girls in the community, and a remarkable way in which the older generation upholds the younger and imparts wisdom, culture, values, beauty and strength. This piece is based on a short theme written in traditional Bulgarian folk-singing style, recurring but ever-evolving, tenaciously rising again despite opposition, pain and struggle. The violin and cello personify the voices of sisters across generations, sharing and cultivating this ancient, everlasting song.”

This new recording also includes commissioned works by Alice Ho – her Kagura Fantasy, a new duo inspired by a Japanese fertility ritual – and by Jocelyn Morlock – Serpentine paths, depicting life’s twisting pathways. The pre-existing duos are by Violet Archer (Four Duets for Violin and Cello), Jean Coulthard (Duo Sonata for Violin and Cello), and Barbara Monk Feldman (Pour un nuage violet). Rachel Mercer told me she feels Our Strength, Our Song – the recording – is
“relevant to the current time we are in; celebrating and supporting the power and liberated expression of women. In this case we also hope our recording encourages others to play these older works that have been rarely performed.” It’s a fascinating mix of contrasting styles and approaches, all performed with verve and brilliance by this outstanding sibling duo. It’s a production I’m particularly pleased with.

Rachel Mercer has been commissioning new works since 2010, when she asked Dundas, Ontario-composer Abigail Richardson-Schulte to compose a piece for the Mercer-Park duo (with pianist Angela Park.) The resulting work, Crossings, remains in their repertoire and is regularly programmed on recitals. Her most ambitious project to date was the creation of 14 new works (by seven women and seven men from every region of Canada), commissioned through her quartet, Ensemble Made in Canada. Titled the Mosaïque Project, it was inspired by a desire to reflect the diverse regions of Canada in music and media, and consists of three components: the 14 commissioned piano quartets; a national concert tour extending through the 2018/2020 seasons; and a specially designed website that showcases audience-generated artwork inspired by the musical commissions. There is now an impressive web presence to explore at mosaiqueproject.com, involving “artists from across Canada including performers, composers, visual artists and web designers, in order to create an evolving artistic work that can be experienced by audiences, participants and online visitors throughout our country and internationally. Our aim is to celebrate the diversity and richness of Canada through the eyes and ears of its people.”

Mercer’s most recent commission is a cello concerto by pianist/composer Stewart Goodyear. She tells the story like this: “In 2015, I received an email from Stewart Goodyear, saying that he wanted to write me a cello concerto! We’ve known each other since we were 13 and playing in a trio together at the RCM Toronto (with Susanne Hou) and had played together a couple of times since, but this was completely out of the blue to me. I couldn’t believe it, but he said he was already sketching ... forward to 2016 ... I didn’t hear more about the concerto, but ended up playing the Canadian
premiere of his piano quartet with Ensemble Made In Canada at Ottawa Chamberfest ... finally in 2017 NACO [National Arts Centre Orchestra] was interested in programming the cello concerto and we received funding from the Ontario Arts Council and a research project at UOttawa. It will be a co-commission between me and NACO. I'm looking forward to seeing the score very soon and the premiere will happen on February 14, 2020 with my orchestra [National Arts Centre Orchestra]."

For Mercer, as she told me, her desire to commission new repertoire is because “It feels like the closest I can come to being part of a creation, besides the interpretive creation that happens on stage.”

The composer, Louie, and the interpreter, Mercer, are just two examples of women who have been steadily changing the direction of the creative tide in the creative branch of the Canadian classical music community. Others come easily to mind, such as the prolific collaborations I witnessed over the years between the late composer Ann Southam (1937-2010) and pianists Eve Egoyan and Christina Petrowska Quilico. Over the span of more than 20 years, I have been involved in the production of 14 CDs of Southam’s various and varied piano compositions. And the current collaboration between Hamilton Philharmonic (HPO) music director, Gemma New, and HPO Composer-in-Residence, Abigail Richardson-Schulte, seems to have exciting potential through their new initiative called the Composer Fellowship Program. In this program, emerging composers can apply to work with the orchestra. Richardson-Schulte says “Gemma is a great supporter of contemporary Canadian music at the HPO and I’m so pleased that we are able to commission, present, and mentor. We have a practically all-Canadian series (Intimate and Immersive), which is a larger instrumentation version of our previous What Next Festival (which was also Canadian new music). In addition to the Composer Fellowship, we have three main stage premieries by women this season – me, Alice Ho and Juliet Palmer. Gemma is conducting all of our new music at the HPO which shows her dedication to it.”

David Jaeger is a composer, producer and broadcaster based in Toronto.
My theremin is a musical instrument, an instrument of the air. Its two antennas emerge from a closed wooden box. The pitch antenna is tall and black, noble. The closer your right hand gets, the higher the theremin’s tone. The second antenna controls volume. It is bent, looped, gold, and horizontal. The closer you bring your left hand, the softer the instrument’s song. The farther away, the louder it becomes. But always you are standing with your hands in the air, like a conductor. That is the secret of the theremin, after all: your body is a conductor ...

Canadian author Sean Michaels’ debut novel (Random House) was called Us Conductors and the quotation above is from it. When Michaels won the 2014 Giller prize the citation read: “He succeeds at one of the hardest things a writer can do: he makes music seem to sing from the pages of a novel.” It’s based on the life of Lev Sergeyevich Termen, the Russian-born inventor of the theremin, set in the glittery Jazz Age of New York in the 20s, the grim gulags and prisons of Stalin’s 1930s Soviet Union, and includes Terman’s love affair with a beautiful young violinist – Clara Rockmore. Full disclosure: after a few pages I forgot entirely that I was reading fiction, and in the end was left with a fascination I have not been able to shake.

There’s something about the theremin and its ethereal voice that makes it hard to brush off because you just can’t put your finger on it – figuratively or literally. In Alfred Hitchcock’s Spellbound (1945) composer Miklós Rózsa used the theremin for a kind of alienation leitmotif. All you need to do is hear a little of that soundtrack composer-in-residence with the Talisker Players from 2001 to 2017, Rapoport’s had diverse commissions for orchestral, choral and chamber music, film scores, and incidental music for live theatre and musical comedy. But this new theremin learning curve was more or less self-inflicted.

Rapoport became aware of Stickney through Rauba, who is Rapoport’s wife. Stickney and Rauba had already worked together in Vienna. Rapoport did some arrangements for them and they decided he should write an original piece. “The First Sonata was a lot of fun, so I was able to talk them into letting me do two more. I wish I could do a hundred or so, as Haydn did with his symphonies and string quartets. By that time you’ve learned something.”

Stickney began her musical career as a Los Angeles jazz/rock musician after spending her teens playing piano, violin, viola, cello and contrabass. She had her first personal encounter with the instrument while working on a recording project in 1999. Stickney’s jazz background led to what emerged as a walking bass theremin technique. Today, based in Vienna, she performs internationally, and collaborates and records with a wide range of artists and ensembles. Stickney was instrumental to the final design of Robert Moog’s Etherwave Pro theremin.

Pianist and educator, Thessi Rauba, is active in Vienna’s alternative music scene, performing with her brother, instrument-inventor Hans Tschiritsch, thereminist Stickney, and accordionist Otto Lechner. She also performs one-person shows combining piano performances with literary readings. Rauba plays and records a diverse repertoire including jazz, popular and classical music.

Will it be gimmicky? Rapoport had this to say: “Wait until you hear Pam play! The theremin is a thoroughly legitimate instrument with special capabilities and also limitations, just like any other. It is also an instrument where a performer’s individual expression comes out much more than you would imagine, in my view because of the infinite variation in intonation and vibrato.”

The last word here goes to Sean Michaels:

The theremin has always been a machine with two strangenesses. There is the strangeness of the playing: palms flexing in empty space, as if you are pulling the strings of an invisible marionette. But the stranger strangeness is the sound. It is acute. It is at once unmodulated and modulating. It feels both still and frantic. For all my tweakings of timbre, the theremin cannot quite mimic the trumpet’s joyous blast, the cello’s steadying stroke. It is something Else.

Yes, the Elseness is what brings audiences to their feet. It is what inspires composers like Schillinger and Varèse. But there is no escaping the other part, too: like the pallor of an electric lightbulb, like the heat of an electric stove, the theremin’s sound is a stranger to the Earth.

MJ BUELL is the regular writer of We Are ALL Music’s Children
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Crossing Borders Builds Bridges

LYDIA PEROVIĆ

ot a lot of people in Canada know a whole lot about Colombia, the third largest country in South America, and what we manage to gather usually comes from American television shows and media reports on drug wars. The November 5 Toronto edition of Crossing Borders, the recital series founded by the Halifax-based soprano Maureen Batt, which pairs up Canadian composers with foreign ones in creatively themed evenings, may just change things on this score. Batt’s key partner in programming this time is Colombia-born, Ontario-based tenor Fabian Arciniegas, whom Toronto audiences may remember from the productions with Essential Opera and Opera in Concert. He left the Republic of Colombia in 2010 to complete a master’s at U of T, and stayed. “If any Latin American music is presented here in Canada,” he tells me on the phone from Coburg, where he now lives, “it’s usually a zarzuela – and that’s rare enough. What people think of music from Hispanic places, Spain included, they think either dance, or zarzuela, or de Falla. Composers from South America that are being performed outside South America are few. Carlos Guastavino is one – and he died in 2000. Piazzolla is another. And that’s where it ends.”

One day not so long ago, Batt and Arciniegas were chatting over instant messenger when the tenor mentioned in passing that he really wanted to put on a recital of songs by living composers from Colombia. Batt liked the idea and offered to produce it as a half-half evening Canadian and Colombian/Latin American, and soon enough they were posting public calls for scores. Arciniegas urged the Colombian composers that he knew or knew of to submit, but nobody’s placement in the program was guaranteed. It was, unusually, a blind submission process, which upon completion of the first round, Batt, Arciniegas and pianist Claire Harris tweaked here and there for diversity of themes and musical approaches.

The result is an eclectic program which, beside the classical art song, showcases electronic, improvised and popular songs. Juan Pablo Carreño is the composer of In Conspectu Tuo, a mass, incorporating the testimonies by the victims of the 2002 Bojá massacre in Colombia, and in this recital the piano-and-soprano piece from the Mass, In Conspectu Tuo, will be heard. Another Colombian composer, Leo Herrera, came to art song from the popular song tradition and acoustic guitar-playing – Arciniegas will sing his Noche. Words by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz and Jorge Luis Borges will be heard thanks to the Colombian composers Pedro Ramirez and Alba L. Potes who use them in their work. Stephen Bachicha employed a text by American Navajo poet Elizabeth Woody in an unaccompanied piece that has echoes of Hildegard von Bingen. Scottish composer Chris Hutchings’ I was listening to a pogrom, for speaking chorus and piano, deals with immigration and border crossings, and uses text by children’s author and BBC 4 radio presenter Michael Rosen. Many of the Canadians on the program have a direct link with Latin America, like the Cuban-born, Toronto-based Alondra Vega-Zaldivar.

“I’ve always admired Alondra’s work,” says Batt on the phone from Halifax. I first saw her perform in Halifax, in a program called Opera from Scratch – she went as a singer and composer, both. It was brilliant; really lovely work. I wrote and asked her what else she had and she ended up sending me an opera for chamber orchestra that she wrote for her MA dissertation. So we’re premiering a couple of scenes from that opera in the version for the piano. It’s an opera about an actress going through many stages of her life, and it’s solo soprano for about 25 minutes or so, which I’m hoping to produce in full eventually.” Monica Pearce is also in the program. Pearce’s chamber opera, December, for three sopranos and string quartet, set in an airport departure lounge, will premiere in Toronto later next year, as a partly crowd-funded commission from Batt and Erin Bardua’s jointly run company Essential Opera.

When he asked the Colombian composers how they preferred to be paid, says Arciniegas, some were surprised that in addition to their work being performed, a payment would be forthcoming. “We in Colombia don’t have that tradition where you publish your music. So lot of things we’ll perform will be the first performance.” He tells me he’s been printing scores directly from the composers’ files, and we spend some minutes comparing the copyright and author royalties situation in the non-EU part of Eastern Europe, which I know well, and Latin America (it’s not great on either side). “And I’m not...
kinds of music. I became interested in opera because of The Three Tenors. People sometimes complain about these things, oh but they’re too popular etc. But that’s how classical music lovers are created. The very first classical thing that I’ve heard was probably Richard Clayderman. I was little, and that was the kind of classical music that you can easily find on LP. As I started studying music, my interest in the genre became more in-depth.”

As a towering figure in the development of his musical tastes, he mentions Leonard Bernstein. “I love that he’s capable of mixing love of a very classical tradition (he was a great Mahler conductor) with creating things like Trouble in Tahiti. He was not afraid to take on the more contemporary pop music and incorporate it into classical and make it all organic.” Arciniegas cites the “uptightness” of the classical music world as something that puts many potential music lovers off, him included. “I’m more and more going back to salsa, which I love dancing. And I like jazz musicians, who are less concerned with precision of delivery and more with the question of ‘How am I connecting to this, what am I saying with this?’”

What would he recommend to people who want to learn more about Colombia? “Two books. First, the obvious choice: Gabriel Garcia Marquez’ One Hundred Years of Solitude.” But he was writing magical realism, which is not exactly documentary, I protest. “Yes, but when you go to Colombia, you understand where all that comes from,” he says. “Magical realism is not as crazy as it looks. Crazy things happen in Colombia.” And the second one? “It’s a book translated into English as Oblivion, by Hector Abad. It’s a memorial to his father. His father was a doctor and the first doctor in Colombia who applied medicine as prevention – he went to poor areas, told people to boil water etc. Because he was doing that, he was suspected of having Communist sympathies. And he was murdered. Abad writes about their relationship, and what was happening in Colombia at that time. It’s the saddest book ever. So deep, and it reflects a lot of what we are: the worst and the best of Colombia.”

Crossing Borders: Travesía Latinoamericana – November 5, 7:30pm, Heliconian Hall, Toronto; then touring Colombia, including Bogotá, Pereira, Medellín and Cali. Full Colombian tour schedule on maureenbatt.com.

ART OF SONG QUICK PICKS


NOV 11, 7:30PM: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Chamber Music Concert Series: “Of War and Peace.” Works of remembrance from Handel to Sting. Monica Whicher, soprano; Steven Philcox, piano; Marie Bérard, violin. Walter Hall.


NOV 24, 3:15PM: Mooredale Concerts. Wallis Giunta, mezzo-soprano. Songs by Barber, Britten, de Falla, Schumann, Sondheim, etc. Steven Philcox, piano. Walter Hall, U of T. Giunta is now more likely to be found in Leipzig and Northern England than in Toronto, so mark your calendars.

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

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November’s Panoply of Future Stars

PAUL ENNIS

This month there is a panoply of young talent on display in various stages of development with many opportunities to see and hear potential musical stars, some of them in more intimate surroundings than the future may bring.

Nicholas Namoradze: One such artist is Nicolas Namoradze, who came to international attention when he was 26 years old after winning the 2018 Honens International Piano Competition in Calgary. Honens is proud of their reputation for discovering and nurturing talent for the 21st century and Namoradze is now in the second year of Honens’ three-year development program that includes management and mentorship opportunities. He will do well if he is able to follow in the footsteps of 2012 laureate Pavel Kolesnikov, now reaping the rewards of his Hyperion Records exposure, and indications are that he may well do so. Namoradze’s performances to date have been hailed by critics as “sparkling… sensitive and coloristic” (New York Times) and “simply gorgeous” (Wall Street Journal). One of his former teachers, the widely respected Emanuel Ax, said that Namoradze is set to become one of the truly important artists of his generation.

Born in Georgia and raised in Budapest, he grew up on a diet of great Hungarian composers like Bartók, Ligeti and Kurtag, as well as Liszt. But as he told Pamela Kuhn on her radio program Center Stage: “Everyone plays Liszt.” As an infant he would “get stuck” listening to Verdi and Wagner. “You could not drag me away,” he said. He began instrumental studies at seven with the piano, but before that he was obsessed with The Beatles and for a short period, AC/DC. Once he began to play, he lived strictly within the classical world. And apart from an interest in jazz, he still does.

Georgian is his mother tongue but if pressed he considers himself a European New Yorker who feels Georgian. Ax invited him to study at Juilliard when they met, when Namoradze was a teenager in Budapest. He accepted once he was ready to study for a master’s degree. He’s now pursuing a PhD at the CUNY Center. His daily regimen includes no more than four hours of physical piano practice, plus a lot of practice mentally. He does yoga, qi gong and tai chi; he’s big on meditation as well. “It helps with competitions and flying into same-day concerts,” he said. “It takes me and the audience to somewhere else.”

He’s also a composer who studied with John Corigliano. Namoradze spoke with Kuhn about Georgian folk music, which he called “one of the wonders of the musical world,” and which has influenced his composing. “It’s a musical tradition that came to tonal harmony from a completely different route,” he said. “And by the tenth and eleventh century; earlier than tonal harmony became established in Western music.”

“Georgian folk music was almost entirely vocal and that means that the tuning system had very little to do with what we call equal temperament,” he explained. “In Georgian folk music there is no octave -- the most stable interval is the third. You stack two thirds on top of each other and you get a triad!” He spoke of its great diversity and complex polyphony and how certain aspects of the way it treats polyphony and counterpoint influenced his composing approach.

Highlights of the current season include a critically acclaimed, sold-out Carnegie debut recital at Zankel Hall, about which ConcertoNet wrote: “[Namoradze] is a pianist who proved that, once in a while, the distinguished members of the jury make a good choice and select a winner who plays like a true artist; who impresses not with pyrotechnics but rather with keen intelligence, a rich tonal palette and refinement … It was a most auspicious debut by an artist representing that rare breed, a thinking virtuoso.” Two other highlights await this rising star: a recital at London’s Wigmore Hall and a recording on Hyperion -- the label of Hamelin, Hough and Hewitt. Meanwhile, his COC free noon-hour recital on November 19 includes his own Etudes I-VI in addition to Scriabin’s Etudes Op.42.

Two More COC Noon-Hour Concerts of Interest

Born in 1991, pianist and composer Philippe Prud’homme began his piano studies at 12 with professor Gilles Manny. At 16, Prud’homme was accepted, under special circumstances, to the Université de Montréal without even finishing his secondary school education and with only four years of piano under his belt. He earned his master’s with highest distinctions in the class of Dang Thai Son before beginning another graduate degree at the Conservatoire de Montréal in 2015 with Louise Bessette.

Well-known in Quebec, Prud’homme has won first prize at the Canadian Music Competition several times, in the solo piano category, as well as in chamber music. He is particularly interested in the works of Frederic Rzewski and François Morel. In 2016, Prud’homme took home the grand prize at the CMC in the 19-30-year-old category by

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November 2019 24
performing Prokofiev. A few weeks later, he was part of CBC Music’s 30 Hot Canadian Classical Musicians under 30. Soon after, he began his doctorate with Dang Thai Song at the Université de Montréal. His COC concert, November 14, features Liszt’s La Vallée d’Obermann and Prokofiev’s Sonata No.4, bracketed by Chopin and Hamelin. In addition, a week earlier, November 6, Artists of the Royal Academy of Music in London join with Artists of the Royal Conservatory in Toronto to perform Weinberg’s Piano Trio Op.24 and Hartmann’s String Quartet No.1. It’s a rare opportunity to hear students from two venerable musical institutions on the same stage.

Ray Chen
Born in Taiwan and raised in Australia, 30-year-old Ray Chen was accepted by the Curtis Institute of Music at 15 where he studied with Aaron Rosand. He won the Menuhin Competition in 2007 and the Queen Elisabeth of Belgium Competition in 2008, two prestigious prizes that raised his profile and established his professional career. He’s known for his vital social media presence where he interacts with his audience. He once performed in front of 800,000 people on Bastille Day in Paris and he has appeared on the Amazon series, Mozart in the Jungle. And he produced the lush sound that came out of Clive Owen’s character’s violin, jumping off the screen in François Girard’s new film, The Song of Names. He plays the Stradivarius violin once owned by the legendary Joseph Joachim, on loan from the Nippon Music Foundation, with a luxuriant sound reminiscent of David Oistrakh.

The program for his Koerner Hall recital with American pianist Julio Elizalde, on November 8, begins with Grieg’s Violin Sonata No.2 in G Major, Op.13, “written in the euphoria of my honeymoon” and brimming with Norwegian folk music references. Saint-Saëns’ finely

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Beethoven: Kreutzer and the Archduke
Ludwig van Beethoven

March 30, 2020, 7:30 p.m.
Folk Tunes Made Classic
Carl Czerny, Frank Martin, Antonín Dvořák, Fernandez Arbos

April 27, 2020, 7:30 p.m.
Clash and Calm: A Folkloric Journey
Joseph Haydn, Béla Bartók, Antonín Dvořák

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crafted Violin Sonata No.1 in D Minor, Op.75 is next followed by Bach’s monumental Chaconne from Partita No. 2 in D Minor for Solo Violin, BWV1004. Debussy’s ever-popular Clair de lune (arr. Roelens) and Ravel’s flamboyant Tzigane.

**Gallery 345**

Gallery 345’s abundant programming continues this month with further installments of the Art of the Piano series and more. Piano 6 Next Generation-member Anastasia Rizikov has dazzled the world ever since her orchestral debut in Kiev at seven. Now 20, having competed with musicians over twice her age in winning numerous international piano competitions, she has entered a new stage in her career. Her November 14 recital is built to please, beginning with three major works by Chopin. After intermission, Burge, Arensky, Scriabin, Rachmaninoff and Balakirev’s devilishly difficult Islameny will further showcase her musical skill set.

Ida Pelliccioli is a 31-year-old Italo-Croatian pianist who grew up in France. Her program, November 29, aims to create echoes between the music of Debussy and that of two composers who influenced him: Rameau and Albeniz. Debussy described Rameau as the pinnacle of the French tradition; his Suite in E Major opens the recital followed by Debussy’s Hommage à Rameau. Debussy was fond of reimagining the music of other countries and Spanish idioms inspired some of his most animated music. Three of the pieces Pelliccioli will play are also linked by the same element of inspiration: Albeniz’s La Veiga was also called Alhambra Suite; Debussy’s La Puerta del Vino refers to the gate of the same palace in Granada; and finally, Debussy’s Soirée à Grenade uses the Arabic scale and mimics guitar strumming to evoke images of this same land and heritage.

**NYO/EUYO Frenergy Tour**

The National Youth Orchestra of Canada (NYO Canada) and the European Union Youth Orchestra (EUYO) join forces for The Frenergy Tour, a landmark collaboration and celebration of music and friendship, featuring a combined total of 76 outstanding young musicians under the baton of acclaimed Viennese conductor Sascha Goetzel, with music by Rossini, Ravel, Saint-Saëns, Stravinsky and Wagner, as well as Canadian composer John Estacio’s Frenergy for orchestra. JUNO-nominated, burgeoning-star violinist and NYO alumnus, Blake Pouliot, is featured as guest soloist in two virtuoso showpieces: Saint-Saëns’ Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso and Ravel’s Tzigane. This groundbreaking tour comprises concerts in Toronto (Koerner Hall November 12), Kingston (Isabel Bader November 13), Montreal (November 14) and Ottawa (November 17).

**TSO Marks the Hits**

On November 27, 28  30 and December 1, 18-year-old Swedish-born violin phenom, Daniel Lozakovich, is the soloist in Tchaikovsky’s Violin Concerto, a Romantic masterpiece that is the featured work on his just-released, second Deutsche Grammophon CD. Lozakovich began playing the violin before he turned seven and made his debut two years later with Vladimir Spivakov and the Moscow Virtuosi Chamber Orchestra. His first appearance on DG came as a 15-year-old when Daniel Hope invited Lozakovich to join him in playing a selection of Bartok’s Duos for two violins on his Tribute to Yehudi Menuhin.

**A TAPESTRY OF YULETIDE MAGIC**

**Ontario Christmas Tour 2019**

**TORONTO PERFORMANCE**

**A FUNDRAISER FOR THE HOUSE OF COMPASSION**

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 29 | 7:00PM**

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Menuhin CD. Rounding out the all-Tchaikovsky program, TSO resident conductor Simon Rivard leads the orchestra in the composer’s beguiling Symphony No.1 “Winter Dreams” and the iconic 1812 Overture.

That program is the culmination of a month of orchestral favourites that begins November 13 with Sir Andrew Davis conducting Shostakovich’s Symphony No.10, arguably the composer’s greatest symphony. Concertmaster Jonathan Crow leads the TSO in Vivaldi’s The Four Seasons and Copland’s Appalachian Spring, November 16, 17, 20 and 21. And Leonard Slatkin makes a rare TSO appearance, November 22 and 23, conducting Gershwin’s joyous An American In Paris and Barber’s intensely emotional Piano Concerto (with soloist Jon Kimura Parker).

CLASSICAL AND BEYOND QUICK PICKS

► NOV 7, 7:30PM: Stewart Goodyear joins the legendary Fine Arts String Quartet in a performance of Brahms’ Piano Quintet in F Minor Op.34 at Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts, Kingston.

► NOV 10, 2PM: Chamber Music Hamilton presents the Fine Arts String Quartet playing Beethoven’s String Quartet Op.18 No.1 and, with cellist and Chamber Music Hamilton co-artistic director Michael Schulte, Bruckner’s unique String Quintet.

► NOV 13, 8PM: Violinist Kerry DuWors and pianist Futaba Nickawa were students at the Eastman School of Music when they founded duo526 in 2011. Their acclaimed new Navona CD, Double Fantasy, features works by Villa-Lobos, Bax and Bolcom, which comprise the bulk of their recital for the Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society (K-WCMS). On NOV 16 at 7:30, the duo repeats their program at Gallery 345 in Toronto. Gramophone Magazine praised their recording, calling them a “beautifully balanced duo, with exceptional intonation and a tangible empathy.”

► NOV 16, 8PM: The ever-elegant pianist David Jalbert, fresh from his impactful participation in Music Toronto’s spectacular Piano Six New Generation concert on October 22, gives a solo recital for K-WCMS headed by Debussy’s poetic Images Book I and II.

► NOV 17, 7:30PM: The formidable Jonathan Biss performs five Beethoven piano sonatas, from the early Op.7 to the celestial Op.109, at the Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts, Kingston.

► NOV 17, 7:30PM: Recalling two prior visits to Koerner Hall – his memorable Soundsystems performance of Max Richter’s Vivaldi Recomposed and subsequent Tribute to Yehudi Menuhin – violinist Daniel Hope returns with his new band, the Zurich Chamber Orchestra, to perform works connected to Menuhin as well as Vivaldi’s The Four Seasons.

► NOV 23, 7:30PM: Pianist Yefim Bronfman brings his virtuoso talent to a program of Beethoven and Brahms at the Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts, Kingston. NOV 24, 3PM: It’s all Beethoven – Sonatas Nos.7, 8 and 9 as well as No.23 “Appassionata” – when Bronfman comes to Koerner Hall.

► NOV 29 AND 30, 8PM: Sparkling violinist, Blake Pouliot, joins conductor Andrei Feller and the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony in a performance of Brahms’ unforgettable Violin Concerto.

► NOV 30, 7:30PM: Bravo Niagara! presents cellist Ofra Harnoy who continues her remarkable recovery from reconstructive shoulder surgery in 2015. Her Niagara-on-the-Lake recital features music by Bach, Corelli, Popper and a Beatles Medley, supported by her husband, Mike Herriott, on flugelhorn and trumpet. Herriott produced Harnoy’s latest recording, Back to Bach, much of which is the basis for this recital.

► DEC 1, 3PM: The first American in three decades and the youngest musician ever to win First Prize at the International Tchaikovsky Competition Cello Division, 20-year-old Zlatomir Fung (who is of Bulgarian-Chinese parentage) is poised to become one of the preeminent cellists of our time. Joining him in this Syrinx Concerts presentation, in the intimate surroundings of Heliconian Hall, are pianist Jean-Luc Therrien, a Jeunesses Musicales Canada alumnus, and violinist Mai Tategami, Orford Music Prize-winner. Piano trios by Haydn, Clara Schumann, Chan Ka Nin and Mendelssohn are enticing.

Paul Ennis is the managing editor of The WholeNote.
Some of my earliest memories of community are from being a member of choir. It has always held great prominence in my life. A few weeks ago, I watched a short YouTube video from J.W. Pepper of an interview with John Rutter, a renowned composer of choral music. Although the clip is only a few minutes long, his words resonated with me, for he spoke so eloquently and profoundly of the significance of choir.

My Introduction to the Choral World
I was seven years old when my family immigrated to Canada. Shortly after settling down in Toronto, my mother became involved with the choir of our then-community church as their pianist. Soon after, she encouraged my sister and me to join it. In addition to singing in church, my sister and I also became members of a choir called VOCE, a children’s choir affiliated with the Toronto Catholic District School Board. The rehearsals were held at Cardinal Carter Academy for the Arts. (We would go on to attend the high school a few years later.)

Because I was considerably younger than the other members of the church choir, attending rehearsals weekly was something I did primarily because of my mother. However, being part of VOCE, with other singers my own age, was a completely different experience. As Rutter says during the interview, “When you get together with a group of other singers […] all of those people are pouring out their hearts and souls in perfect harmony.” I felt at ease in choir as I mingled with like-minded children; all of us bonding over music, learning our parts together, competing for solos but also supporting one another. I remember having a lot of fun.
Choral Community and Inclusivity
I recently was affiliated with VIV A! Youth Singers of Toronto, as I worked part-time with them and sang with their Main Chorus. Founded in 2000, VIVA! is a welcoming space inclusive to singers with disabilities. After listening to the Rutter video, I was moved to discuss this theme of community with someone deeply rooted in the choral scene, so I reconnected by email with Carol Woodward Ratzlaff, founder of VIVA!, to get her perspective both as a conductor and a chorister.

When schools started eliminating arts programming 20 years ago, Ratzlaff, who was working for the Toronto District School Board at the time, felt she needed to turn to the private sector to respond. She tells me: “We need to work to inform education leaders and those in government of the personal advantages, educational benefits and holistic impact of arts opportunities. Too often, adult-centred economic concerns inform educational outcomes. I was aware of many other excellent private-sector choral experiences in the GTA, but I was not focused on what the market was already providing; it was not a business response. I was motivated by the fact that there were many children (as well as youth and adults with disabilities) who were not being provided with opportunities to sing and to create beautiful music together.” Ratzlaff’s words resonate strongly.
with Rutter’s. As he states: “Politicians need to take note […], and our educators, those who decide education budgets, church budgets, just need to remember [choral music is] not a frill.”

Ratzlaff’s first experiences in choir were from middle school in St. Catharines ON. Since then, she has sung with several esteemed choirs, including the Elmer Iseler Singers and the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir. She shares: “Choral singing has been one of the great joys of my professional and personal life. I am temperamentally suited to group singing and collaborative creative work. I am particularly intrigued by the rich connections that are fostered between choristers themselves, between choristers and audience, and the changing role of the conductor in this landscape.”

I asked her what she tries to instill in singers as a choral director. She replied: “I try to empower them to make decisions along with me, to take ownership of our creative journey, and to make something beautiful with their voices. […] I seek a balance between meeting individual and group needs.” Ratzlaff shares that she loves “the process of discernment in seeking how to teach a piece of music. [She loves] sound and the capacity of the human voice to produce many expressive colours to tell a story.”

The last word on this topic goes to John Rutter again: “Choral music is like a great oak that rises up from the centre of the human race and spreads its branches everywhere. That’s what music does for us. And choral music must stand as one of the supreme examples of it.”

Gloria!
Toronto’s Christmas Tradition featuring St. Michael’s Choir School continues at Roy Thomson Hall
Repertoire to include John Rutter’s celebrated ‘Gloria’ and an array of seasonal favourites

Conductors: Maria Conkey, Teri Dunn, S. Bryan Priddy, Joshua Tamayo
Accompanist: William O’Meara
Guest Instrumentalists: True North Brass

SUNDAY
8 DECEMBER 2019
3PM

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Concerts around the GTA
Speaking of Rutter, we can listen to some of his works that will be included in a few concerts over the next months. Under artistic director, Oliver Balaburski, the King Edward Choir will perform Rutter’s Angels’ Carol and Candlelight Carol during their concert, “Gloria!” on November 30. The Aurora United Church Chancel Choir
**Festival of Carols**

Toronto Mendelssohn Choir  
with the Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra  
*David Fallis* conductor  
*Simon Rivard* TSYO conductor  
*Ezra Burke* associate conductor

Join us for a joyous celebration of music for the season – by Berlioz, Tchaikovsky, Vaughan Williams and Rutter – and add your voice to the audience carol sing-along with full orchestral accompaniment.

**Tues, Dec 3 & Wed, Dec 4 at 7:30 pm**  
Yorkminster Park Baptist Church  
(just north of Yonge and St. Clair)

**Tickets start at $35**  
$20 VoxTix for patrons 30 and under

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and Handbell Ensembles, will have a Carols by Candlelight service on December 8. The first movement of Rutter’s Gloria will be one of the pieces sung. The MCS Chorus Mississauga will take you on a musical and literary journey with Christmas with Anne, also on December 8. Along with readings from Lucy Montgomery’s Anne of Green Gables books, savour the sounds of Rutter’s Carol of the Children and Angel’s Carol.

**Choral Mosaic: Invitation to Choirs**

With all this dialogue on choral music and community, you may feel inspired to get out and join a choir right away. But circle your calendar too for a great choral event, the inaugural Choral Mosaic Festival, taking place from June 25 to 27, 2020. Organized by the Mississauga Festival Choir and Festival Team, under the direction of David Ambrose, it will be three days of choral merriment: the choral Osheaga, if you will. Complete choirs, as well as individuals, are welcome to participate in the festival. Take the opportunity to hone your vocal skills and gain insight from professional speakers, be challenged by a variety of workshops and enjoy fraternizing with other singers. In addition, some notable features include an act by comedian Mary Lou Fallis and a closing gala performance by all the participants. The Festival will be held at the Living Arts Centre in Mississauga. If this has piqued your interest, look for more details on the festival website, choralmosaic.com. And take note! Early-bird registration has already begun.

**CHORAL SCENE QUICK PICKS**

- NOV 16, 7:30PM: The Bach Elgar Choir presents Brahms’ Requiem at Melrose United Church in Hamilton. The choir, under the direction of Alexander Cann, will perform with the accompaniment of a full orchestra.


- NOV 30, 7PM: The Incontra Vocal Ensemble presents “Creator of the Stars of Night,” under the direction of Matthew Otto. Look forward to hearing the works of Britten, Mendelssohn, and Chilcott, among others. The concert will serve as a fundraiser for the Institute for Christian Studies. At Knox College Chapel, U of T.

- DEC 6, 7:30PM AND DEC 7, 2PM AND 7:30PM: Cue the Home Alone face. Relive the joyous and laughter-filled memories with this beloved Christmas film. The Toronto Symphony Orchestra, with the Resonance Youth Choir, will present Home Alone in Concert under the direction of Constantine Kitsopoulos. The music by John Williams will be ringing once again at Roy Thomson Hall.

- DEC 7, 7:30PM: The Christmas season always feels complete with the soaring harmonies of Handel’s Messiah. Take in the beautiful sound of the Grand Philharmonic Choir with soprano soloist Mireille Asselin, mezzo Maude Brunet, tenor Astha Tenekeoon and baritone Samuel Chan. The Choir will be accompanied by the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony at the Centre in the Square in Kitchener.

Menaka Swaminathan is a writer and chorister, currently based in Toronto. She can be reached via choralscene@thewholenote.com.

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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15
4:30PM
A candlelight choral presentation featuring choirs and musicians of Yorkminster Park Baptist Church.
FREE ADMISSION. Doors open at 3:30 pm.

NINE LESSONS & CAROLS
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22
4:30PM
Following the historic tradition of King’s College in Cambridge. Featuring the Choirs of YPBC.
FREE ADMISSION. Doors open at 3:30 pm.

GLORIOUS SOUNDS OF HANDEL: Messiah
Elmer Iseler Singers with the Amadeus Choir
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13
7:30PM
TICKETS:
$55 REGULAR
$50 SENIOR
CALL: 416-922-1167

A FUNDRAISER IN SUPPORT OF THE YPBC REFUGEE FUND
SATURDAY, DEC. 7 - 2:00 PM
WITH SPECIAL GUESTS
Dina Pugliese • Murray McLachlan
Marc Jordan • Ian Thomas
FREE ADMISSION
A collection will be taken for the Churches on-the-Hill Food Bank.

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in collaboration with CITYtv
SATURDAY, DEC. 7 - 2:00 PM
WITH SPECIAL GUESTS
Dina Pugliese • Murray McLachlan
Marc Jordan • Ian Thomas
FREE ADMISSION
A collection will be taken for the Churches on-the-Hill Food Bank.

Glorious Sounds of Handel: Messiah
Elmer Iseler Singers with the Amadeus Choir
Friday, December 13
7:30 PM
Tickets:
$55 Regular
$50 Senior
Call: 416-922-1167

A Fundraiser in Support of the YPBC Refugee Fund
Saturday, Dec. 7 - 2:00 PM
With Special Guests
Dina Pugliese • Murray McLachlan
Marc Jordan • Ian Thomas
Free Admission
A collection will be taken for the Churches on-the-Hill Food Bank.

Free Admission. Doors open at 3:30 pm.

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O of the many music theatre events in October, one that stood out for me was the Canadian Musical Theatre Project’s annual festival of new musicals in progress at the beautiful Winter Garden Theatre. An international incubator for the creation of new musicals based at Sheridan College, the CMTP also gives fourth-year Sheridan musical theatre students an unparalleled opportunity to be part of the creation and development of new works alongside working professionals, and, on top of that, to have this exceptional showcase of their own abilities. Of the three musicals presented in excerpt, one in particular caught my eye: Pump Up The Volume by Jeff Thomson (music) and Jeremy Desmon (book and lyrics). Although based on the 1990 film by Alan Moyle, this show exploded onstage with youthful energy echoing the energy and passion of the growing number of youth-led movements to fix what is wrong with our world today, whether the proliferation of guns or the imminence of climate disaster. Songs, script and performances added up to more than the sum of their parts. If the whole musical is this strong, I can see young audiences responding to it in a big way.

This same energy was captured by Hanna Kiel’s world-premiere dance piece for Human Body Expression at the end of September: Resonance, explicit in its own language of movement and 80’s inspired rock music about the need for all of us to stand together to fight for what is right. (See my review on The WholeNote blog).

A Million Billion Pieces
Music, as an essential ingredient in portraying youthful passion and idealism, will also be seen in the upcoming new “play with opera.” A Million Billion Pieces by David James Brock (book) and Gareth Williams (music). Though a creative extension of The Breath Cycle Project the duo began with Scottish Opera in 2013, Brock explains that the play stands on its own, set in a “SciFi/Fantasy realm where a simple touch can cause the two main characters to explode into a million billion pieces, due to a rare genetic illness.” Isolated by their illness, two 16-year-olds, Pria and Theo, craving connection, create online personas and correspond as these “ideal” selves for a year before daring to meet in person. This online ideal world is set apart from the real world by being “heightened cosmically and sonically,” as Brock says, not just with singing but “through vocal effects and scoring, so that the music evolves into fuller vocal lines and scenes as the relationships do,” to the point where music enters the real world as Pria and Theo dare to actually meet in person. When I asked Brock if his writing process changed for this project since he was writing for a teenage audience, he said, “not much. The characters are teenagers, but they’ve lived their whole lives being told they wouldn’t survive to adulthood, so they’ve had to fit as much as possible in on a countdown. These characters are hyper aware of the finite amount of time in a life. I think we all have a sense we’re not using the time we have correctly – I certainly do. As a side note, at the climate march recently, I overheard a conversation where two teens truly didn’t think the planet would be around when they were 50.”

A Million Billion Pieces is directed by Philip Akin and runs November 25 to December 13 in YPT’s studio theatre. Paired with it in the season, and beginning two weeks earlier, is a heartfelt musical version of the classic fairy tale of the boy whose nose grows whenever he tells a lie: Pinocchio. Created by Neil Bartram and Brian Hill (who first met as cast mates in the Toronto production of Forever Plaid in the 1990s), this Canadian premiere will be directed by Canadian musical and television star Sheila McCarthy, notable for past incarnations as Audrey in Little Shop of Horrors and Adelaide in Guys and Dolls to name just two.

Orpheus Revisited
Over at the National Ballet of Canada, another classic tale is being explored and revisited through two short ballets: George Balanchine’s 1975 Chaconne, and the world premiere of Robert Binet’s Orpheus Alive. Both ballets are inspired by the classical tale of the musician, Orpheus, who petitions the gods to bring his beloved wife, Eurydice, back from the dead. Balanchine’s piece, while set to some of Gluck’s score for his opera Orfeo ed Euridice, is mostly abstract, whereas Binet’s new work sets out to really tell the story, setting it in our own times and switching the gender of the leading roles, making Orpheus a woman artist, and Eurydice a man, her husband. He also turns the audience into the gods who must judge their case. Set to a new score by the award-winning composer Missy Mazzoli, and including projections, and text spoken by some of the dancers to the audience, this looks like a must-see for fans of contemporary ballet.

Walls
Another must-see in November is the Toronto premiere (after the world premiere in Vancouver two weeks earlier) of The 9th! A dance work ten years in the making by co-choreographers Roberto Campanella and Robert Glumbek of ProArteDanza. Set to Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony and inspired by its connection with the celebration of of the fall of the Berlin Wall 30 years ago (almost to the day of the opening), the full-length work also uses the full four movements of the symphony to explore the idea of the need to demolish inhibiting walls in our lives, both tangible and metaphysical. (November 6 to 9, Fleck Dance Theatre, Harbourfront). (See my upcoming interview with Roberto Campanella on The WholeNote blog.)

The powerful image of a wall is central as well to Another Brick in the Wall, a new opera inspired by and based on Roger Waters’ music from the famous Pink Floyd album, The Wall. The album predated the fall of the Berlin Wall by ten years, but the themes being explored by composer Julien Bilodeau and director Dominic Champagne – “the
difficulties of a whole generation confronted with the destruction of its dreams” – are certainly similar. (November 13 to 23 at Meridian Hall, the former Sony Centre).

**Storytelling through song**
Old and new, traditional and experimental, were combined in another October highlight over at Crow’s Theatre in collaboration with Eclipse Theatre, with the Toronto premiere of Dave Malloy’s *Ghost Quartet* in a production that – with a stage the size of a postage stamp – managed to create a multi-layered, magical, eerie world of time travelling, interconnected characters, and a wild variety of mixed genre music, folk tale and dialogue that created a hypnotically fascinating world via the stories told by the songs of a concept album that forms the first layer of the show’s structure.

Brilliantly directed, designed and performed, this show is unique, and yet it also made me think of two ongoing Toronto concert series that in their own ways, create their own magic by revisiting classic songs in new contexts, creating new and enthralling music-theatrical world’s for audiences to experience. Both series have shows coming up this month. First is The Musical Stage Company’s 13th edition of *Uncovered*, this time looking at the connected lives and works of Stevie Wonder and Prince, inspired by the fact that the two artists knew and admired each other and influenced each other’s work. Following the gender-blind casting tradition begun in 2017 when Maev Beatty played David Bowie, and followed by Sara Farb as Bob Dylan in 2018, this year Sarah Afifi takes on the role of Stevie Wonder, with Chy Ryan Spain appearing as Prince.

Toronto’s other storytelling-through-song tradition, Soulpepper’s concert series curated by music director Mike Ross, brings back its 2017 hit *Riverboat Coffee House: The Yorkville Scene*. November 5 to 17. Written and directed by Frank Cox-O’Connell, this concert weaves together songs by and stories about such iconic Canadian singer-songwriters as Gordon Lightfoot, Joni Mitchell, Murray McLauchlan and Neil Young, to recreate the anarchic excitement of Yorkville in the 60’s.

**Bands on stage**
Onstage bands are the anchors of two more new plays with live scores opening in Toronto this month. The world premiere of *The Wager* is inspired by the true story of a scientist in the 19th century who accepted a bet to prove that the planet Earth is round rather than flat, only to have his proof rejected by the hostile flat-Earthers. Provocative and timely in our era of climate denial, the play employs Theatre Gargantua’s signature combination of physical theatre, innovative use of technology and a live vocal score to tell the story, with the cast doubling as the live on-stage band. (November 14-30 at Theatre Passe Muraille).

Opening shortly after *The Wager*, down the street at Factory Theatre (November 20 to December 8) is the Toronto premiere of *Between Breaths*, an Artistic Fraud of Newfoundland production written by Robert Chafe and directed by Jillian Kelley (famous for her very physical, almost stylized, productions at the NAC and Stratford). Inspired by the real life of Jon Lien known as “the Whale Man” the play tells the story of his inspiring career during which he freed more than 300 whales from fishing nets off Newfoundland’s coast. As might be intuited from the title, there are also links to A Million Billion Pieces, as later in his life Jon Lien suffered from dementia ending his days in a wheelchair, chronically short of breath. *Between Breaths* begins at the end of the story and travels back to Lien’s very first whale intervention, the whole story buoyed and infused by the live music, vocal and instrumental, of famed Newfoundland folk trio *The Once*. ❖

**MUSIC THEATRE QUICK PICKS**

- **NOV 4, 8PM**: One show only. Stratford Festival. Avon Theatre. *The House of Martin Guerre* in concert. A wonderful chance to see Leslie Arden’s musical version of this classic tale, starring the luminous Chilina Kennedy, directed by Richard Ouzounian.
- **NOV 4 TO NOV 17**: Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company. *The Pianist of Willesden Lane*. A play that makes classical music a character of its own through the piano playing of the protagonist. An intriguing premise.

Steve O’Connell and Berni Stapleton in Artistic Fraud’s *Between Breaths*

- **NOV 6 TO NOV 10**: National Ballet of Canada. *Giselle*. Music by Adolphe Adam. Sir Peter Wright, choreographer. Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts. One of the most beloved romantic ballets, and one of my favourite productions at the NBC. There will be some notable debuts and farewells in the role of Giselle this fall.
- **NOV 12 AND NOV 14, 8PM**: Mirvish. Mandy Patinkin in Concert: Diaries. Ed Mirvish Theatre. A rare chance to see a great musical theatre star live. Mandy Patinkin is electric onstage whether playing Che in *Evita* or singing concert material with Patti Lupone, or alone with a band.
- **NOV 28 TO DEC 22**: Theatre Orangeville. *Little Women*. Canadian composer Jim Betts’ musical version of the classic Louisa May Alcott novel. It debuted to acclaim in 2001 with a great cast that included Douglas Chamberlain, Tracey Michalidis and Michael Therriault.

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

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Textural Landscapes and Epic Journeys

WENDALYN BARTLEY

For this month’s column, I’ll be taking a look at two different events during the month of November that involve large-scale forces. The first involves the mainstay of communal soundmaking – the symphony orchestra, while the second is a significant new amalgam of voices coming together to create two operas.

I’ll begin with what’s happening with the Toronto Symphony and their affiliate composer, Emilie LeBel, who is currently in the second year of her position. One of the benefits of this position is that she is given the opportunity to compose one new piece each year for the orchestra. This year’s work, unsheltered, will receive its Toronto premiere on November 13, after performances on November 11 in Ottawa and November 12 in Montreal, part of an upcoming TSO tour. I spoke with LeBel about her new work, as well as another of the projects she is involved with at the TSO, titled Explore The Score.

Currently living and teaching in Edmonton, Alberta (when not engaged in her TSO commitments), LeBel says that she began composing unsheltered during the spring of 2019, while all around her wildfires were blazing north of Edmonton, amidst various public conversations and controversies about building more pipelines. She spoke about the general uneasiness and tensions that exist right now everywhere in the world and how her composition took on that atmosphere. She stressed that “the piece is not about politics or climate change in an overt way, rather I’m picking up on an uneasiness that feels very palpable right now.” In juxtaposition to this, LeBel said, is the natural beauty of the area she is currently living in, how different that environment is for her personally, and how it helps her aspire to be hopeful as well.

In her own note on unsheltered, she quotes a poem by Joanna Doxey as inspiration – speaking, as it does, to the importance of human connection during those moments we have with people, as well as to our experience of time, particularly when we look back on such moments in a more nostalgic way. The poem is from Doxey’s Book of Worry and begins “...in this humming and doubled land, hold worry, only me”.

It is the word humming that LeBel frequently referenced while speaking of the piece, to describe the overall atmosphere being invoked in her composition. Musically, it started off as a bass line from a Baroque piece that she has been studying with her students. “I was thinking about Baroque bass lines and how everything on top of it is like a textural landscape. This is often what I do in orchestral pieces. There are sections with slippery glissandos and high string harmonics that create an atmosphere where things feel tenuous.” The poetic excerpt from Doxey continues: “and I get older or I grow farther from myself and I always most love the moment before now...” It is a sentiment that is also reflected in LeBel’s piece; she chooses to end it on a note that, while part of the humming atmosphere, is both nostalgic and hopeful.

LeBel’s responsibilities as TSO affiliate composer have also entailed involvement in another hopeful venture. This year is the eighth season of the orchestra’s program – Explore the Score – and they have received great feedback from both the public and the composers about the experience. This November 30 will mark the second year for this new approach, and will include works by composers Ian Cusson, Matthew Emery, Fjola Evans, and Jared Richardson. In advance, the composers will have received guidance from the orchestra’s librarian on how to prepare the score and parts, with the new compositions being conducted by Gary Kulesha – the TSO’s composer advisor. After the performance, feedback from both Kulesha and LeBel will be given to the composers and during a lunch with representatives from the different sections of the orchestra, the composers will receive additional feedback from the musicians’ point of view. They will also have access to LeBel for a follow-up session for both compositional and/or career advice.

Beyond her TSO commitments, LeBel remains an active composer within the Toronto music community and she will be premiering a new work with Continuum on November 3 as part of their 35th anniversary celebration concert, alongside works by Canadians Jason Doell, Christopher Goddard, Cassandra Miller and Michael Oesterle.

Two Odysseys

The second project that caught my eye this month is the upcoming production of Two Odysseys: Pimooteewin/Gállábártnit running from November 13 to 17 at Daniels Spectrum. Produced by Soundstreams with partners Signal Theatre and the Sámi National Theatre, the performance will present two operas that are the first such works to be sung and narrated in the Indigenous languages of both Cree and Sámi (the language of the Sápmi people, whose territory today encompasses large northern parts of Norway and Sweden, northern parts of Finland, and the Kola Peninsula within the Murmansk Oblast of Russia). Both works will be directed collaboratively by Michael Greyeyes and Jóla Carita Eira. Swedish composer Britta Byström, who received the Elaine statements outlining what they wished to get out of the program. This way, composers who would get the most from this opportunity would be selected, regardless of age or stage in their career. Around the same time, there was a conversation at the TSO about opening up the process to the public, to offer them an experience of how a new orchestral work is rehearsed. A new name was given to the program – Explore the Score – and they have received great feedback from both the public and the composers about the experience. This November 30 will mark the second year for this new approach, and will include works by composers Ian Cusson, Matthew Emery, Fjola Evans, and Jared Richardson. In advance, the composers will have received guidance from the orchestra’s librarian on how to prepare the score and parts, with the new compositions being conducted by Gary Kulesha – the TSO’s composer advisor. After the performance, feedback from both Kulesha and LeBel will be given to the composers and during a lunch with representatives from the different sections of the orchestra, the composers will receive additional feedback from the musicians’ point of view. They will also have access to LeBel for a follow-up session for both compositional and/or career advice.

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Lebenbom Memorial Award for Female Composers in 2015 from the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, was selected to bring her unique artistic language to bear in the creation of the music.

In the casting of Two Odysseys, great care was taken to reflect diverse Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives. The performers include two narrators—Yolanda Bonnell and Heli Huovinen, each fluent in their respective languages of Cree and Sámi, as well as vocal soloists Melody Courage, Asitha Tennekoon and Bud Roach. The musical performers also include a choir assembled by Soundstreams as well as a chamber ensemble. Métis soprano soloist Melody Courage provides a quick peek into her experience of the rehearsal process in a short excerpt from the promotional video available on the Soundstreams website, in which she reflects on “…the amount of pride I feel performing with so many ridiculously talented Indigenous artists that I’ve met for the first time ... It’s in the stages of coming together and it feels very magical.”

Both works examine the question of how we live together as a human community on this earth, and how we journey on to the land of the dead. Each piece is based on ancient stories from the two traditions. The Cree story tells the tale of the Trickster character Weesageechak (coyote) and Migisoo (eagle) and their desire to be reunited with loved ones. The Gállábártnit of the Sámi story are the “sons of the son of the sun,” hunter/inventor star beings who come to earth from the “belt” of the constellation known in European cosmology as Orion. This mix of Indigenous stories, languages, directors, librettists, narrators and soloists intermingle here in an art form with European roots, in music created by two composers who bring their own sensibilities and artistic voices to the project. It is a dialogue that explores the edges of the possibilities available when people of diverse cultures are able to work collaboratively with sensitivity, respect and a willingness to listen to each other. Soprano Melody Courage sums it up this way: “You can expect to be moved and transformed, musically and spiritually.”

IN WITH THE NEW QUICK PICKS

> **NOV 12, 8PM:** New Music Concerts/Faculty of Music, U of T. Kasemets@100. Palestrina: *Tu es Petrus*; Kasemets: *Tripont*; Märt-Matis Lill: *When the Buffalo Went Away*; Kozlova-Johannes: *Horizontals*; Kasemets: *4’33’* Fractals; Future is past...is now. Ensemble U; Stephen Clarke, piano. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building.

> **NOV 17, 8PM:** The Music Gallery. History Series: Celebrating Casey Sokol. An evening with one of the Music Gallery’s co-founders as he moves on from a storied career teaching improvisation at York University. The evening will be part improvised soirée/part interview with food and drinks.

> **NOV 24, 8PM:** The Music Gallery. Emergents I: Sarah Albu & Māri Māko • Anoush Moazzeni. Blend of electronics, improvisation and notated works. Sarah Albu, vocalist; Māri Māko, composer/sound artist; Anoush Moazzeni, piano/improvisation/composer.

> **NOV 24, 8PM:** Toronto Improvisors Orchestra. TIO Celebrates Casey Sokol. Casey Sokol, piano; Eugene Martynec, laptop; Rod Campbell, trumpet; Bill Gilliam, piano; Ambrose Pottie, percussion. Array Space

> **NOV 26 AND 27, 8PM:** Confluence Concerts. “An Evening with Marion Newman: What Is Classical Indigenous Music?” Marion Newman, mezzo; Rebecca Cuddy, mezzo; Evan Korbut, baritone; Gordon Gerrard, piano; Ian Cusson, composer. Heliconian Hall.

> **DEC 1, 8PM:** Esprit Orchestra. “Sustain.” Andrew Norman: *Sustain*, for orchestra; Adam Scime: *Afterglow*, concerto for violin and orchestra; José Evangelista: *Accelerando*, for orchestra. Véronique Mathieu, violin; Alex Pauk, conductor. Koerner Hall.

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

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University of Toronto, Walter Hall | 80 Queen’s Park

**ENSEMBLE U: (ESTONIA) | STEPHEN CLARKE PIANO**
Works by Udo Kasemets, Märt-Matis Lill & Tatjana Kozlova-Johannes
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Living with Legends
(or, How to Build a Program)
MATTHEW WHITFIELD

“Time is an equal opportunity employer” – Denis Waitley

While time may provide equal opportunity to those now living, history can be much less kind to the legacies of those who have gone before us. For example, when reviewing composers of classical music, we see specific instances of how such artists are grouped into seemingly infinite pyramid-shaped hierarchies, their status as “genius” determined as much by the quality of their output as their enduring and perennial appeal. Starting at the top, we encounter the universally revered composers, the capital-G Geniuses: Beethoven, Mozart, Brahms, Bach, and the other craftsmen whose works have transcended time and transfixed audiences for centuries. These are the figures after whom busts are sculpted and monuments built, and who can be trusted to draw large audiences year after year.

Another tier of the legacy tower is that of the well-respected, yet under-performed composer. Arnold Schoenberg and subsequent proponents of the Second Viennese School belong here, as do many of the 20th century’s finest musical minds, such as Ligeti, Berio and Stockhausen. While their works might not tickle the ears of every person who happens upon them, or fill up a concert hall, they nonetheless played significant roles in the development of new forms of musical expression. Yet another category is that of composers who achieve renown by virtue of their writing for a specific instrument, such as Josef Rheinberger’s compositions for the organ or Franz Liszt’s piano works; while both of these examples wrote a wide variety of material for a range of vocal and instrumental forces, their legacies rest primarily on a specific segment of their output.

No matter how we categorize the characters in our history books, these theoretical organizational principles are just that – theoretical. From a practical perspective, how does one choose which of these compositional strata to draw from when deciding what to perform next week, month, or year? Balance is key when constructing a concert program, and finding a stimulating and satisfying blend of composers and repertoire is the challenge of artistic directors across the globe. A quick case in point: when Pierre Boulez assumed control of the New York Philharmonic in 1971, succeeding Leonard Bernstein, his attempts to incorporate higher volumes of contemporary music led to much criticism and a drop in annual subscriptions to the orchestra’s seasons. While there was great merit to Boulez’s contemporary crusade, the slight change in emphasis from the easily digestible, top-tier “Genius” to the more sinewy Schoenbergian genius did not resonate with his audience and led to a challenging tenure for one of the 20th century’s greatest composer-conductors.

Much like the categorization of composers, there is a near-infinite number of approaches that can be taken to program-building and we will encounter some of them in this column, exploring a variety of early music through numerous combinations and juxtapositions, both of the music itself and the people who wrote it.

Discovering Antonio Lotti

A relatively unknown figure in a scene dominated by such heavyweights as Claudio Monteverdi, Antonio Vivaldi and Domenico Scarlatti, Antonio Lotti was an Italian composer who spent his career at St. Mark’s Basilica in Venice, working his way up the musical hierarchy from singer to maestro di cappella. Lotti wrote in a variety of forms, producing masses, cantatas, madrigals, nearly 30 operas, and instrumental music, thereby influencing some of the era’s great geniuses: Johann Sebastian Bach, George Frideric Handel and Jan Dismas Zelenka owned copies of Lotti’s Missa Sapientiae, consisting of a Kyrie and Gloria scored for chorus and orchestra, transcribed from the manuscript by each in their own hand.

This connection between Lotti’s Missa Sapientiae and the music of Bach, Handel and Zelenka is made apparent in Tafelmusik’s “Lotti Revealed”, presented from November 14 to 17 and directed by Ivars Taurins. This is the first time Tafelmusik has performed music by Lotti and it will be paired with excerpts from Bach and Zelenka masses, as well as Handel’s Carmelite Vespers. Stupendous and expressive, Lotti’s music will prove a valuable addition to Tafelmusik’s repertory and stimulating listening for those who enjoy the richness and depth of late-Baroque music.

Academie für Alte Musik Berlin

This Sounds Familiar...

The turning back of our clocks signals more than the arrival of colder temperatures; it also commences the annual transition to Christmas music, which regularly features combinations of classic works and interesting revelations. On November 24, the York University Concert and Chamber Choirs join forces to present a seasonal selection of music by Dieterich Buxtehude, Giovanni Battista Pergolesi, and Camille Saint-Saëns. Two of these composers are famous largely for their organ works: Buxtehude for his masterful praeludia, chorale preludes and pieces in free style; Saint-Saëns for his Third Symphony, which gives the organ a prominent place in what is an overall glorious masterpiece. Pergolesi, meanwhile, is renowned for his Stabat Mater, a passiontide classic that makes multiple appearances each year. While the names may be familiar, the York University choirs will not be performing a greatest hits concert, but rather a series of pieces...
that focuses on various aspects of the Christmas story.

Saint-Saëns’ Oratorio de Noël is a cantata-oratorio hybrid written for soloists, chorus, organ, strings and harp, composed while he was an organist at La Madeleine in Paris. Distinctly French in harmonic language, yet clearly indebted to the form of the Baroque cantata and dramatic element of the oratorio, this work combines arias, recitatives and chorus movements with the Latin texts of the Catholic lectionary, creating a piece of music with distinct characteristics and fascinating form. The cantata theme continues with Buxtehude’s Das neuge- borne Kindelein, a Protestant church cantata for chorus and chamber orchestra, and Pergolesi’s Magnificat. These works will not only frame Saint-Saëns’ unconventional cantata with more traditional essays in the form, but delight the audience with infrequently performed works by renowned masters of their craft.

Two Bits of Bach
Johann Sebastian Bach’s Brandenburg Concertos are stunning masterpieces, as virtuosic a display of compositional prowess as their instrumental interpreters must be to convey the secrets contained therein. This November, the Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin visits Kingston on November 26 and Koerner Hall on November 27 in a performance of the first five Brandenburgs, a not-to-be-missed musical event. The Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin (Akamus for short), founded in East Berlin in 1982, is one of the world’s leading chamber orchestras on period instruments. It has established itself as one of the pillars of Berlin’s cultural scene, holding its own concert series at the Konzerthaus Berlin for more than 30 years, as well as a concert series at Munich’s Prinzregententheater. Having sold more than one million CDs, their highly successful recordings have won all important awards for classical recordings; with such extraordinary international performers making a rare Canadian appearance, tickets for these concerts will certainly be in high demand.

Now in its 18th season, the Ottawa Bach Choir (OBC) continues to impress with their high level of skill and devotion to the art of their namesake composer. As a testament to their dedication and continued excellence, the OBC has been invited to return to Leipzig for the 2020 Bachfest as one of a select number of ensembles worldwide to present Bach’s entire chorale cantata cycle, a remarkable and imposing proposition! On November 30, the Ottawa Bach Choir, led by founding artistic director Lisette Canton, will visit Toronto for A Bach Christmas, providing us with the opportunity to hear a miniature Bachfest of our own. This program includes the cantatas the choir will perform at Bachfest Leipzig 2020 (Meinen Jesum laß ich nicht, BWV124; Ach Gott, wie manches Herzzeit, BWV3; Was mein Gott will, das g’scheh allzeit, BWV111), as well as the Christmas interpolations from the Magnificat, BWV243 (V om Himmel hoch, Freut euch und jubiliert, Gloria in excelsis Deo, Virga Jesse floruit), the

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celebratory motet, Singet dem Herrn, BWV225, and more. Featuring the Ensemble Caprice baroque orchestra with strings, oboes d’amore, horn, as well as soprano Meredith Hall, countertenor Nicholas Burns, tenor Philippe Gagné and bass Andrew Mahon, there is little doubt that this concert will give Bach aficionados much to rejoice about this Christmas season.

Whether discovering the profundity of Antonio Lotti for the first time, hearing a rare performance of Saint-Saëns’ Oratorio de Noël, or basking in the resplendent genius of Bach, the month of November is full of magnificent music that is well worth the price of admission. There is also much to look forward to in the following weeks, as the ushering in of the Christmas season brings with it many more opportunities to take in landmark works by both renowned and less-known composers. See you in December – until then, feel free to get in touch at earlymusic@thewholenote.com.

EARLY MUSIC QUICK PICKS

- **NOV 19, 7:30 PM:** University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Early Music Concerts: Purcell’s King Arthur. Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre. Containing some of Purcell’s most lyrical music and adventurous harmonies, King Arthur is a mystical journey through Arthur’s battle against the Saxons, with cameo appearances by Cupid, Venus and more! Much like last month’s Acis and Galatea, this is a fine opportunity to hear the U of T’s rising stars.

- **NOV 23, 7:30PM; NOV 24, 3PM:** Cantemus Singers. “A Boy is Born.” Church of the Holy Trinity, 19 Trinity Square (Saturday)/St. Aidan’s Anglican Church, 70 Silver Birch Avenue (Sunday). In a column devoted to building a program, Cantemus deserves a special mention, as their concerts regularly consist of a fascinating variety of material. This month’s presentation features carols and motets from Renaissance England, including Thomas Tallis’ stunning Missa Puer natus est nobis for seven voices.

- **NOV 24, 7PM:** Cantorei Sine Nomine. Bach: Christmas Oratorio. St. Paul’s Anglican Church (Uxbridge), 59 Toronto Street South. And so, it begins! This season’s first performance of the Christmas Oratorio features six cantatas drawn from the larger work, one of the finest Christmas choral pieces ever written and an unbroken sequence of drama and beauty that continues to inspire audiences, despite being premiered almost three centuries ago.

- **DEC 4, 7PM; DEC 5 TO 7, 8PM; DEC 8, 3:30PM:** Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra. “O Come, Shepherds.” Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre. With a diverse program connected through an underlying pastoral theme, this concert promises a unique combination of Baroque Christmas concertos and the soulful folk music of Southern Italy, with its own rhythms, instruments, and spirit – a fine continuation of Tafelmusik’s mission to broaden its horizons and those of its listeners, through innovative and unexpected presentations.

Matthew Whitfield is a Toronto-based harpsichordist and organist.

Beat by Beat | On Opera

Drilling Down into Operatic Bedrock

DAVID PERLMAN

With the Canadian Opera Company sleeping off the effects of Turandot and Rusalka, its two wildly contrasting fall main stage blockbusters, top spot in the operatic food chain this month goes to Opera Atelier’s remount of their convention-bucking, commedia-based Don Giovanni, in their new digs at the Ed Mirvish Theatre (formerly the Pantages) on Yonge Street, a big block north of OA’s longtime regular venue at the Elgin Theatre (now hosting an indefinite, and presumably lucratively lengthy, run of Come From Away). Don Giovanni opens October 31, one day before this issue hits the streets, but if you’re fast out of the blocks, you can still catch it November 2, 3, 8 and 9. And catch it you should, especially if you’re allergic to the heavy-handed Bergmanesque moralizing gloom that all too often accrues to this work. Mozart would have recognized the style of this production far more readily (and I dare say delightedly) than some of the other gloomily lit treatments it has received.

“Fast out of the blocks” will also need to be the operative phrase if you want to take advantage of the period covered in this issue to drill down into five other strata of activity that are the bedrock of opera as a lively art in our region: our universities and conservatories; our regional opera companies; a vibrant indie opera scene, constantly reinventing itself; a rich tradition of community-based participation in opera for the sheer love of it; and a decades-long tradition of opera-in-concert presentation of works we might otherwise, for various reasons, never have the opportunity to see and hear.

Universities and conservatories: Nov 1 and 2, at Mazzoleni Concert Hall, the Royal Conservatory’s Glenn Gould School gets things rolling with its fall chamber opera: a production of English composer Jonathan Dove’s Siren Song (libretto by Nick Dear). It’s a 70-minute work for five singers, one actor, and an orchestra of ten players (here conducted by Peter Tiefenbach), based on “a bizarre, true story of a young sailor who exchanges letters with a beautiful and successful model. Over time, a romantic and passionate relationship develops, but a meeting proves increasingly difficult to arrange.”

Later in the month, a short stroll down Philosopher’s Walk from the Royal Conservatory, the University of Toronto Faculty of Music gets

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into the act, twice. **Nov 21, 22, 23, and 24**, in the MacMillan Theatre, Edward Johnson Building, the Opera School presents Mozart’s *The Marriage of Figaro*, with two casts getting two shows each, and an “Opera Talk” lecture half an hour before each concert. And then, Dec 5, the U of T Symphony Orchestra gets into the act with a program titled Operatic Showpieces, featuring U of T Opera and the MacMillan Singers, conducted by COC chorus master Sandra Horst and Uri Meyer.

And if that’s not enough, or you live westwards, head down the 401 to the Don Wright Faculty of Music in London, where, on the same dates **(Nov 21, 22, 23, and 24)** *Opera at Western* presents Mozart’s *The Secret Gardener (La Finta Giardiniera)*, penned at the ripe old age of 18! Stage direction by renowned baritone Theodore Baerg.

**Regional and community opera:** **Nov 1 and 3** also offer an opportunity to observe *Opera York* in action, in Verdi’s *La Traviata*, at the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, one of two fully staged operas they will present this season. (The other will be Lehar’s *Merry Widow*, Feb 28 and Mar 1.) This tenacious company’s mission is “to provide professional opera that is accessible financially, geographically and comprehensively to the communities of York Region and surrounding communities, to encourage the development of the art form through educational and outreach activities and provide a platform for emerging and established Canadian artists” and they stick to it, as reflected in the quality of their casts. An example from this show: Natalya Gennadi (Violetta), whose Dora-nominated title role in Tapestry Opera’s *Oksana G.* in 2017 was widely praised. **NOW Magazine** called it “stunning... piercing in its openness and vulnerability.”

Later in the month, and proudly rooted at the community opera end of things for 73 years, on **Nov 21 and 23**, *Toronto City Opera*, formerly known as Toronto Opera Repertoire, presents Offenbach’s *Les contes d’Hoffmann*, at the Al Green Theatre, 750 Spadina. Founded in 1946, by an optimistic James Rosselino, as an “Opera Workshop” at Central Technical School, in collaboration with the Toronto School Board, and now under the artistic direction of the multi-talented Jennifer Tung (singer, vocal coach, collaborative pianist, conductor), they present at least two fully staged operas each year with early-career paid-professional soloists selected after open auditions, and an amateur non-auditioned community chorus that remains open to all. The result is a wonderful sense of community engagement that extends through the chorus to the audience, many of whom are often having their first
Through the years, jazz in Hamilton has often been overshadowed by the bigger scene in Toronto, just as Toronto jazz has been dwarfed by the huge and active scene in New York. Part of it has to do with economics and sheer size, as jazz, not being a popular music for some time, has always required a large population base in order to flourish. Generally, the bigger the city, the bigger and better its jazz scene. While all sorts of jazz musicians have come from very small towns, they have cut their musical teeth either on the road or by moving to bigger cities. Part of it also has to with Toronto tending to see itself as the centre of the universe, as many big cities do.

None of this has been fair to Hamilton, which has had its own interesting jazz scene for many years and continues to. For one thing, Hamilton, like its steel-producing sister city Pittsburgh, has produced a remarkable number of significant jazz musicians for a city its size. For example, guitarist Sonny Greenwich is from Hamilton, and it’s hard to think of a more singularly original voice in the entire history of Canadian jazz. Granted, like musicians from Pittsburgh who gravitated to New York in search of more work, Greenwich settled in Toronto and later Montreal, but he got his start in Steeltown.

So did saxophonist/arranger Rick Wilkins, another hugely important figure in Canadian music, jazz and otherwise. Being so quiet and mild-mannered, Rick is perhaps the ultimate insider in Canadian music. By this I mean that one could randomly pick 100 people on the street aged 60 or older and ask them if they’d heard of Rick Wilkins and maybe one or two would answer yes. But all of them would have heard lots of his music in some form – a saxophone solo with the Boss Brass, countless scores for television or movies, an arrangement on somebody’s record, a jingle – often without realizing it. Most of his career has taken place in Toronto, but he was born in Hamilton. Torontonians who are boastfully proud of their city’s rich opera experience. Their mission statement – passionately committed to opera for everyone – says it all.

Indie opera: With the recent buzz around Tapestry Opera’s 40th anniversary and the tenth anniversary tour of Against the Grain’s pub-based La Bohème, it’s easy to lose sight of the fact that independent opera in this town is fertile soil for much more. Just one example: Nov 2, 3 and 4, at Heliconian Hall, Loose Tea Music Theatre, under the always searching and provocative direction of Alaina Viau presents Singing Only Softly/ The Diary of Anne Frank – Operas from the Secret Annex which pairs two separate works: Singing Only Softly, (composed by Cecilia Livingston with libretto by Monica Pearce), and The Diary of Anne Frank composed by Grigory Frid. Singing Only Softly is based on the original, unredacted texts of the diary, “voicing Anne Frank as a fully formed young woman describing her experiences while discovering herself. Freshly interpreted in a current female context, it explores Anne’s complex self-awareness and self-representation.” Anne Frank is variously portrayed by sopranos Sara Schabas and Gillian Grossman, with music direction by Cheryl Duvall.

Opera in Concert: From the scope and scale of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra’s “Grand Opera in Concert” performances of Jules Massenet and Louis Gallet’s Thaïs, on Nov 7 and 9 at Roy Thomson Hall, to the intimate informality of Opera by Request’s Rossini’s Barber of Seville, Nov 15 at College St. United Church, opera in concert is alive and well as an art form in these parts. So it’s a fitting close to this exercise to give a special nod to a production by the company, now in its fifth decade, that pretty much single-handedly made the genre a natural and necessary part of the fabric of all things operatic around here: VOICEBOX: Opera in Concert’s presentation on Dec 1 of Leoš Janáček’s 1921 opera, Katya Kabanova.

Sung in English, the performance, in the company’s customary Jane Mallet Theatre surrounds, will feature Lynn Isnar, soprano; Emilia Boteva, mezzo; and tenors Michael Barrett and Cian Horrobin; with Jo Greenaway, music director/piano, and, as always, Robert Cooper, as chorus director. It’s not the opera that the brilliant 20th-century composer of Jenufa, The Cunning Little Vixen, and The Makropulos Affair is best known for. But that is the whole point. Opera in concert allows presenters, as play readings sometimes do, to bring to the eyes, and more importantly ears, of audiences works that, for a range of reasons that have nothing to do with artistic quality, might otherwise be consigned to archival oblivion. And we would all be the poorer for it. 

David Perlman can be reached at publisher@thewholenote.com.
Mike Malone were in the audience. Wheeler and Winstone were in Hamilton as artists-in-residence for a week of clinics and concerts at Mohawk College, another example of how that institution has boosted jazz in Hamilton.

**Steel City Jazz Festival**

Hamilton boasts many other long-term jazz outlets – the Corktown Pub, Artword Arbar (on which more later), Fieldcote Park in nearby Ancaster, The Pearl Company, as well as concert venues at Mohawk College and McMaster University. Hamilton has also staged its own festival for the last seven years, The Steel City Jazz Festival. This year’s festival runs from November 6 to 10 and will feature shows at Artword Arbar, the Corktown Pub and The Pearl Company. It will return to its roots by showcasing pianist Paul Benton, a longtime seminal figure in Hamilton jazz, in its opening concert, and by focusing on the past 30 years of jazz in the area.

Other artists will include the Nick McLean Quartet, the Sextet of Smordin Law artist-in-residence Jason Logue, the Waleed Kush African Jazz Ensemble and Mike Malone, playing as part of the ECJ quintet led by bassist Evelyn Charlotte Joe. This year the festival is also launching performances at the legendary Corktown Pub – George Grossman’s Bohemian Swing featuring Brandon Walker on November 7 and Blunt Object on November 8. It’s a diverse and interesting lineup.

**Farewell Artword, hail Zula**

Unfortunately, this year’s festival will mark the end of one of Hamilton’s best music venues, Artword Arbar, a café-bar on Colbourne Street which has been hosting jazz and other interesting music and theatre for the past ten years. Proprietors Ronald Weihs and Judith Sandiford have sold the building and its future use is unclear, but it won’t likely have to do with music or the arts. This is a decided blow to the local scene and one hopes someone will step in with an alternative space at some point. I only played there once, some years ago with the Mike Murley Trio, and very much enjoyed the experience. Artword Arbar has (had) good natural sound and a relaxing, casual, grassroots feeling which combined the best of both worlds – a small concert space and a rustic pub – one which encouraged audiences to listen and inspired artists to play their best. It will be missed.

But not all is lost... finally, a word on another force in Hamilton jazz, one largely unknown to many Torontonians, including yours truly until recently: Zula, a bold and independent arts organization dedicated to presenting adventurous and under-the-radar music against long odds in Hamilton. It is the brainchild of music lover and arts activist Cem Zafir, who originally founded Zula in Vancouver way back in 2000, transplanting the concept to Hamilton when he moved there in 2012. It is supported by the Ontario Arts Council and has gathered a board of local artists including Donna Akrey, Chris Aic, Neil...
Ballantyne, Gary Barwin, Ted Harms, Connor Bennett, Taing Ng-Chan, Kay Chornook, Andrew Johnson, Heather Kanabe, Neal Thomas and above all Zafir, whose non-conformist and creative spirit is the driving force behind it all.

Since 2014, Zula has staged the Something Else Festival, presenting under-known and adventurous musicians from Canada and abroad, who one would never expect to hear in Hamilton, never mind a larger city like Toronto. Such as William Parker, Samuel Blaser, Dave Gould, the Lina Allemano Four, David Lee, Ken Aldcroft and many more. Zula often coordinates with the equally adventurous Guelph Jazz Festival, another good example of uncompromising music flourishing in a smaller population centre against long odds, largely due to the vision and dedication of its founders.

So, as we’ve seen, bigger is not always better and jazz continues to grow in Hamilton, with all signs indicating that it will continue to.

**JAZZ NOTES QUICK PICKS**

- **NOV 2, 8PM**: Royal Conservatory of Music. “Music Mix Series: Toronto Sings the Breithaupt Brothers’ Songbook.” Jackie Richardson, Kellylee Evans, DenzalSinclaire, Heather Bambrick, Patricia O’Callaghan and others. Koerner Hall. A lineup of first-rate Canadian singers performing the witty and artistic songs of the Breithaupt Brothers.

- **NOV 8, 7:30PM**: Bravo Niagara! Festival of the Arts. Monty Alexander’s Harlem-Kingston Express and Larnell Lewis Band. Works by Monty Alexander and Larnell Lewis. Monty Alexander, piano; Hassan Abdul Ash-Shakur, bass; Jason Brown, drums; Andrew Bassford, guitar; Larnell Lewis Band. FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre Partridge Hall, 250 St. Paul St., St. Catharines. An attractive doubleheader featuring Monty Alexander, who needs no introduction, and local drummer Larnell Lewis, who has become something of a force in recent years.

- **NOV 21, 7:30PM**: Ken Page Memorial Trust. Jim Galloway’s Wee Big Band. 40th Anniversary celebration of swing-era music with special selections from Duke Ellington and Count Basie. Martin Loomer, guitar, arranger, leader. Arts and Letters Club, 14 Elm St. Licensed facility. Even after the death of its founder, this band is always worth hearing because it is so unique and has been left in the capable hands of its chief arranger/transcriber and longtime rhythm guitarist, Martin Loomer.

**Beat by Beat | Bandstand**

Occasional Rants and Fanfarones

**JACK MACQUARRIE**

Here we are midway through the last third of the year, and most community bands are busy rehearsing, for a variety of programs from formal concerts to Santa Claus Parades; the last thing that any band needs at this time of year is any disruption of rehearsals. Many community groups rehearse in schools, so for many bands in this part of the world there was near panic that these schools might be closed due to a possible labour dispute. Fortunately, at the very last minute the matter was settled. I, myself, received notices a few days later that all rehearsals would proceed as scheduled.

It was, however, a sobering reminder of a topic I have been known to occasionally rant about: the dilemma facing many community musical groups regarding rehearsal space. Most groups are tenants of schools, churches or community centres. Few have any real means of avoiding such matters. School music rooms are ideal rehearsal spaces, complete with music stands, and much of the heavier percussion equipment. However, most music teachers and many principals have concern for the safety of this equipment. I have known of a number of situations where a new music teacher, or principal, arrived at a school and expressed concern for equipment safety. All of a sudden, a band which might have rehearsed there for years, found themselves homeless. Even if they manage to obtain another kind of rehearsal space, where do they keep larger percussion instruments, stands and maybe music library?

Actually, we just recently heard of a good compromise. When the band Resa’s Pieces were told that the music room they had been using would no longer be available, they were offered a different, much larger room with no instruments or stands. With a bit of ingenuity the band was able to negotiate a compromise. Members of the band were given permission to construct a storage space at the end of the rehearsal room to store percussion equipment. Members still have to bring their own music stands.

Might it be time for community bands to be recognized as important components of the local culture and be accorded more assistance in obtaining and retaining a home?

Speaking of rants, I’d like to refer to one that I overheard at a rehearsal recently. One member of a band referred to it as the “band practice.” Another vigorously disputed the choice of words: stating that he was at “a band rehearsal.” The matter was eventually settled amicably; all agreed that they should “practice” at home to prepare for the “band rehearsal.”

**Conspicuous cold weather commitment**

Now, for coming band activities. When I first entered the band world, parades were an integral part of almost every band’s activities. My very first public performance was a Labour Day Parade. In smaller communities particularly, the town band was a major component of community activities. How often do community bands parade now? For many, the answer is never. We just received word from one of the few exceptions in this part of the world. The Newmarket Citizens Band (by their own admission, Canada’s oldest town band) has announced no fewer than three such events in the coming (chilly) weeks. These include a Remembrance Day Parade, A Candlelight Parade and Treetlighting Ceremony, and Santa Claus Parade. For those who have never played their instruments on parade before, help is available from more experienced band members. That band even has a set of special cold weather band parkas as part of their uniforms. They look at these events as an important part of their community involvement. What percentage of community bands in our part of the world can match that?

Toronto bassist Steve Wallace writes a blog called “Steve Wallace Jazz, baseball, life and other ephemera” which can be accessed at wallacebass.com. Aside from the topics mentioned, he sometimes writes about movies and food.
“Blowhards” by name
On October 11, I had the pleasure of attending a very different type of concert from anything that I had ever experienced before, by an instrumental group I had never heard of before. Made up of 10 wind musicians, conducted by John Liddle, they call themselves “Fanfarones.” The first portion of the concert consisted of relatively familiar music including: *Wedding Day at Troldhaugen* from Grieg’s *Holberg Suite*, *Tango Op.165* by Albeniz, *Jamaica Farewell* by Irving Burgie, and excerpts from *Rocky Mountain Suite* by Canadian composer Pete Coulman. To end the first portion of the program, conductor John Liddle played Hoagy Carmichael’s *Star Dust* on his trumpet.

The second portion of the program featured the Fanfarones performing a new work, *Canoe Dancing*, by local composer Stu Beaudoin. Beaudoin’s original idea had been to produce a ballet, and *Canoe Dancing* could still be described as a dance-like programmatic musical journey. As the work progressed, its musical impressions of canoeing were reflected on two large viewing screens on either side of the stage, capturing the many different aspects of canoeing in the music. The pictures taken by Beaudoin himself, and fellow canoeing enthusiasts, portrayed both scenic beauty and the sometimes terrifying experiences of the canoeists in rough water: from views of canoeists gently padding along tranquil waters at sunset to others struggling to stay afloat while trying to negotiate violent rapids with surf thundering over rocks on all sides. At times, audience members felt as though they were participating in a journey, with emotions ranging from tranquillity to terror. In all, a fascinating and entertaining performance, by a group worth knowing more about.

I contacted Helen Graham, one of the founding members of the group. Here’s how she described their birth: “Fanfarones was invented that past summer, when a group of us got together to see if we could come up with a wind octet. We decided it was more fun with ten, and so have kept with this formation. Core members at the time in 2012 were Tom Fleming, Bill Krange, Helen Graham, Dorothy Ward and John Liddle. Our player-members are drawn from the wind sections of community orchestras across the Toronto area.

“The name Fanfarones is Italian for ‘blowhards,’ which we consider to be both a pun on wind players, and poking some fun at ourselves if we ever get too arrogant, given the English language meaning (somebody who boasts and brags). We also like to say that Fanfarones means “quirky, elegant music.”

They perform music originally written for their instrumentation, as well as arrangements, and their programming ranges from classical through to modern day popular music. The earliest original piece for such instrumentation that they have found so far is a work by Donizetti.

All in all, Fanfarones are 11 musicians who celebrate beautiful music that surprises as well as delights. The group is comprised of pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets, French horns and bassoons. Sometimes they refer to themselves as a “decet.” The 11th member is conductor John Liddle, who on occasion plays trumpet with the group. In Helen Graham’s words: “We create a sonority that plays with a broad palette of instrumental colours. Orchestral musicians who also revel in that small group vibe, we provide quirky, elegant music.”

Other News
As I have mentioned previously, for many years my contact with Silverthorn Symphonic Winds has been Heather Engli. Heather decided to make a drastic move to Wolfville, Nova Scotia a few weeks ago. She now tells me that she is loving Wolfville. She already has hooked up with Dan Kapp, of New Horizons renown, who moved there some months ago. She is also very busy playing with the Silverthorn Symphonic Winds at the university and singing in a church choir. Dan Kapp also plays in the Symphonic Band and has invited her to play in the King’s County Community Band. It’s a great example of the social benefits of playing in musical groups, and of how one can find community through music.

Just Missed
As I write this, I am looking forward to the Wychwood Clarinet Choir’s Halloween concert “Creepy Clarinets” on October 27. Unfortunately, it will have passed by the time this issue is available. It includes Humperdink’s *Overture to Hansel and Gretel*; Moussorgsky’s *Baba Yaga’s Hut* and Great Gate of Kiev; Mancini’s; *The Pink Panther* and Grieg’s *In the Hall of the Mountain King.*

**BANDSTAND QUICK PICKS**
- **NOV 2, 2:30PM:** The combined Navy bands of Toronto’s HMCS York and Hamilton’s HMCS Star present their Remembrance Concert at the Cathedral Church of St. James, 108 King St. E in Toronto.
- **NOV 2, 7:30PM:** Toronto’s Professional Flute Choir. Flute Street will be joined by special guests, Les Flûtistes de Montréal, at the Church of St. Peter and St. Simon-the-Apostle, 525 Bloor St. E. If you are not familiar with the variety of flute sizes, this is a great chance to hear them. From the usual concert flute group this concert includes alto flute, bass flutes, contrabass flutes and even a giant sub contrabass flute. Compared to the regular flute, about two feet long, this instrument stands over six feet tall.
- **NOV 2, 7:30PM:** “A Little Wind Music” by Upper Canada Brass will include Impressions by Paul Lovatt-Cooper, When Thunder Calls by Len Ballantine and Hannaford March by Kevin Lau. St. Paul’s Anglican Church Innisfil, 3294 St. Paul’s Crescent St., Barrie.
- **NOV 23, 7:30PM:** Silverthorn Symphonic Winds will present their fall concert at the Wilman Heights Events Centre, 863 Pharmacy Ave., Toronto.
- **NOV 29, 7:30PM:** The Newmarket Citizens Band will be at Newmarket’s historic Old Town Hall, 460 Botsford Street, to present their formal seasonal concert, “Winter Fantasy,” with special guests, Marquee Theatrical Productions Elite Intermediate Youth Group.

**The Wholenote**

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**Jack MacQuarrie plays several brass instruments and has performed in many community ensembles. He can be contacted at bandstand@thewholenote.com.**
The WholeNote listings are arranged in five sections:

**A.** GTA (GREATER TORONTO AREA) covers all of Toronto plus Halton, Peel, York and Durham regions.

**B.** BEYOND THE GTA covers many areas of Southern Ontario outside Toronto and the GTA. Starts on page 62.

**C.** MUSIC THEATRE covers a wide range of music types: from opera, operetta and musicals, to non-traditional performance types where words and music are in some fashion equal partners in the drama. Starts on page 66.

**D.** IN THE CLUBS (MOSTLY JAZZ) is organized alphabetically by club. Starts on page 68.

**E.** THE ETCETERAS is for galas, fundraisers, competitions, screenings, lectures, symposia, masterclasses, workshops, singalongs and other music-related events (except performances) which may be of interest to our readers. Starts on page 71.

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

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

**LISTINGS DEADLINE.** The next issue is a combined issue covering the period from December 1, 2019 to February 7, 2020. All listings must be received by **11:59PM, Friday November 8.**

**LISTINGS can be sent by email to listings@thewholenote.com or by using the online form on our website. We do not receive listings by phone, but you can call 416-232-2232 x27 for further information.**

**LISTINGS ZONE MAP.** Visit our website to search for concerts by the zones on this map: thewholenote.com.

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**A. Concerts in the GTA**

**Friday November 1**

- **6:30:** Istituto Italiano di Cultura Toronto. Manotti and Moretti. Contemporary chamber music and instant compositions. Mario Manotti, trumpet; Elia Moretti, percussion. 496 Huron St. 416-921-3802. Free.
- **7:30:** Festival of Arabic Music and Arts. Naseer Shamma and Orontes Flamenico Night. Naseer Shamma, flamenco oud; Orontes Guitar Quartet. Bluma Appel Theatre. St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 27 Front St E. canadianarabicorchestra.ca. $74-$112.
- **8:00:** Opera York. La Traviata. Music by Giuseppe Verdi, libretto by Francesco Maria Piave. Natalya Gennadi, soprano (Violetta); Liudmila Kurkova, Mezzo soprano (Marguerite); Kip,o Dacal, baritone (Giorgio); Penny Cookson, stage director; Denis Mastromonaco, music director. Richard Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, 10258 Yonge St., Richmond Hill. 905-731-8911. From $40; $25(st). Also Nov 8/1st.
- **7:30:** St. George’s Lutheran Church/DAAD Alumni Association Canada. Schubert’s Winterreise. Arranged for bass-baritone and string quartet by Richard Krug, Daniel Lichtl, bass-baritone; Penderccki String Quartet, St. George’s Lutheran Church, 410 College St. 416-532-8591. $30; $10(st).
- **7:30:** York Region Chamber Music/Autour. Duo Kalyasta: Flute and Harp. Works by Debussy, Morlock, Schaefer, and others. Lara Deutsch, flute; Emily Belvedere, harp. Richard Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, 10268 Yonge St., Richmond Hill. 905-767-8811. $25; $20(st).
- **8:00:** Burlington Performing Arts Centre. Ken Lavigne: 3 Knights with a Tenor. 440 Locust St., Burlington. 905-681-6000. $49.50; $44.50 (members).
- **8:00:** Canadian Sinfonietta. Full Orchestra. Bach: Brandenburg Concerto No.5 in D BWV1050; Stamitz: Concerto in D Op.1; Mozart: Symphony No.29 in A K201. Maté Suícs, violin. Glenn Gould Studio, 250 Front St W. 416-812-0839. $40; $35(st); $20(sn).
- **8:00:** Etobicoke Community Concert Band. Radio Days. Alex Dean, saxophone. Etobicoke Collegiate Auditorium, 88 Montgomery Rd., Etobicoke. 416-410-1570. $15; free(child under 12).
- **8:00:** Gallery 345. Jazz at the Gallery: Look AHead. Paul Novotny, bass; Robi Botos, piano. 345 Sorauren Ave. 416-822-9781 or infopage345.com or eventbrite.ca. $30; $15(st). Cash only at the door.
- **8:00:** Roy Thomson Hall. Loreena McKennit: Lost Souls Tour. 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4255. $50-$120.50.

**Saturday November 2**

- **2:00:** Toronto Public Library, Centennial Branch. Sidecar 78 Saxophone Quartet: An Afternoon Concert. 578 Finch Ave. W. 416-395-5490. Free. Registration required.
- **4:00:** Church of the Ascension. Faure’s Requiem for All Souls. A service of thanksgiving and reflection in memory of loved ones who have passed. 33 Ontario St. South of Bay St. on Simontononto.ca. Freewill offering. Reception following in the Parish Hall. All invited.
- **4:30:** Hope United Church. Praise and Gospel Café. Open the Eyes of My Heart; Rafter’s Fire; Amazing Grace; Offer It Up. Brian Stevens, piano; Bill MacLean, bass; Mike Green, guitar. 2550 Danforth Ave. 416-691-9862. Freewill offering. Music and cafe style meal.
- **6:00:** Art of Life Community Centre. Touching the Sky. Works by Mendelssohn, Bach, Schumann, and Piazzolla. Prater Ensemble, Lawrence Park Community Church, 2180 Bayview Ave. 416-449-6747, $25.
- **7:00:** Alliance Française de Toronto. Live Nation Presents Anne Silla. Spadina Theatre, 24 Spadina Rd. Spadina Theatre, 24 Spadina Rd. 416-922-2014 x37 . Free. Followed by a Q&A.
- **7:30:** Boileroad United Church. Climax Jazz Band Live. 4258 Bloor St. W., Etobicoke. 416-620-3377 or 416-621-1710. $25/$20(adv); free(under 18).
- **7:30:** Flute Street. Entre Amis. Les Flûtes de Montréal, Church of St. Peter and St. Simon-the-Apostle, 525 Bloor St. E. 416-462-9489. $25; $20(sn/arts worker); $10(st).
- **8:00:** Loose Tea Music Theatre. Singing Only Softly/The Diary of Anne Frank - Operas from the Secret Annex. Singing Only Softly. Livingston; Pearce; Viss; The Diary of Anne Frank; Grigory Frid. Sara Schabas, Gillian Grossman, sopranos; Cheryl Duvall, piano. Church of the Ascension. 7:30/4:00/1:00.
- **8:00:** Opera Atelier. Mozart: Don Giovanni. Colin Ainsworth, Gustav Andreasen, Mireille Asselin, Stephen Hegedus, Carla Huhtanen, Olivier Laquerre, Meghan Lindsay; Paul Novotny, bass; Robi Botos, piano. 345 Sorauren Ave. 416-822-9781 or infopage345.com or eventbrite.ca. $30; $15(st). Cash only at the door.
- **9:00:** Roy Thomson Hall. Loreena McKennitt: Lost Souls Tour. 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4256. $50-$120.50.
**Serenade Benefit Concert**
Yorkminster Citadel, 1 Lord Seaton Rd., Presbyterian Church, 26 Delisle Ave. 647-238-0015
Dances; Marquez: Danzon 2; Arr. Carli: La Orquesta Dances of the World $30/$25(adv).

**Irish Mythen**
3:00: Irish Mythen (Giorgio); Penny Cookson, stage director; Denis Mastromonaco, music director. The Music Gallery, 985 Queen St. W. 416-536-5439.

**Trios Op 24; Karl Amadeus Hartmann: Strings Quartet No.1. Artists of the Royal Academy of Music; Artists of the Royal Conservatory of Music; Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre, Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. 416-363-8231. Free. First come, first served.**

**Orpheus: Vocal Tour 2019**
Glenda Cooper, soprano; Claire Harris, piano; and others. The Emmett Ray, 924 College St. 416-637-7491. PWYC. Also Dec 4.

**Thursday November 7**
12:30: York University Department of Music. Spotlight Series: Lisa Ping Wright, choreographer. Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. 416-345-8956. $41 and up. Opens Nov 6, 7:30pm. Runs Nov 6 to Nov 10. Wed-Sat(7:30pm), Thurs/Sat/ Sun(2:00pm).
3:00: Tol Live. The Kingdom Choir. Stand by Me; Beyoncé: Halo; Legend: All Of Me. Meridian Arts Centre (formerly Toronto Centre for the Arts), 5040 Yonge St., North York, 1-855-985-2787. 845-$65. Also Nov 7.
9:00: Nick MacLean Quartet. Nick MacLean Quartet featuring Brownman All. Dream Toiletta. 458 Queen St. W. 416-389-2643. PWYC.
9:20: Danie Friesen. Opera Revue. Classics, art song and other works. Danie Friesen, soprano; Claire Harris, piano; and others. The Emmett Ray, 924 College St. 416-637-7491. PWYC. Also Dec 4.

**Wednesday November 6**
November 7 at 8 pm

Vision String Quartet

NINE SPARROWS ARTS FOUNDATION
PRESENTS

A CONCERT OF REMEMBRANCE
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2019 | 7:30 PM
Yorkminster Park Baptist Church
1585 Yonge Street at Heath Street

SPECIAL GUESTS
Guido Basso trumpet
Neil Swainson bass

FEATURING:
Rob Crabtree, Piper
Lark Popov, Piano
Colleen Burns, Narrator
Choirs and Organ
Eric N. Robertson, Conductor

ADMISSION FREE - DONATIONS WELCOME

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WWW.9SPARROWSARTS.ORG

YUL, 4700 Keele St. 416-786-5888. $10.
● 8:00: Gallery 345. Jazz at the Gallery. John MacMurphy, reeds; Dan Ionescu, guitar; 345 Sorauren Ave. 416-822-9781 or info@gallery345.com or eventbrite.ca. $25; $10(st). Cash only at the door.
● 8:00: Grandmothers Partnering with Africa. Great Songs of the Folk Revival. Songs of Dylan, Baiz, Seeger, Peter, Paul and Mary, and others. Mike Daley, guitar; Jill Daley, piano/violin/vocals. Lula Lounge, 1585 Dundas St. W. GPWAfrica@gmail.com or Eventbrite. $50. Benefit for Stephen Lewis Foundation Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign.
● 8:00: ProArteDanza. The StH! Beethoven: Symphony No.9. Taylor Bojanowski, Ryan Lee, Sasha Ludavicius, Daniel McArthur, Victoria Mehaffey and others, dancers; Roberto Campanella and Robert Glumbe, co-choreographers. Harbourfront Centre Fleck Dance Theatre, 207 Queen’s Quay West. 416-872-1212. $39-$195. Also Oct 31, Nov 2, 31pm (9, 10:30pm).
● 8:00: Luke Jackson. The Songs of Nick Drake. Patricia O’Callaghan; Maris and David Celia; Elizabeth Shepherd; Mitchell Girio and others. Hugh’s Room Live, 2261 Dundas St. W. 647-339-5853. $40.

MOSAIC

Canadian Vocal Ensemble and members of St. Michael’s Choir School Alumni

November 8 and November 9

IN REMEMBRANCE CONCERT

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 8

● 7:30: Mosaic Canadian Vocal Ensemble. In Remembrance Concert. Elias: Dark Night of the Soul; Fauré: Cantique de Jean Racine; Brahms: How Lovely Thy Dwellings; Martin: Kyrie. Members of St. Michael’s Choir School Alumni; Classic String Quartet; Michael Barth, trumpet; Donna Klousis, flute; James Brown, guitar; Gordon D. Mansell, conductor. Holy Name Catholic Church, 71 Gough Ave. 416-571-3880 or gmdansell@sympatico.ca. Free.

SEPTEMBER 2019

Nurhan Arman, Conductor
MOAZT & TCHAIKOVSKY
Nov 8 & 9

Glen Gould Studio
sinfoniatoronto.com

● 8:00: Don Giovanni. Mozart: Don Giovanni. Robert Carsen, director; Aga Khan Museum, 73 Simcoe St. 416-593-5600 x231. Free.

SAFETY FIRST: Before entering the venue, please check your bag and belongings to ensure compliance with the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Statement. Attendees are warmly invited to attend our Accessibility Relations Forum at www.9sparrowarts.org/whats-on/access.

SINCE 1997, Nine Sparrows Arts Foundation has been produced by the Vokey–Dale Creative Group.
NowNet Arts Ensemble (connected from See Nov 6. Also Nov 9(7:30pm), 10(2pm). See Nov 7. Also Nov 9. temporaries Armenia: The music of Gomidas and his contemporaries.

647-825-3150 or info@gallery345.com or krehm, river guard, ryan downey and trevor chartrand. Gallery 345, 345 Sorauren Ave. 647-825-3151 or info@gallery345.com or eventbrite.com. $35; $25 (arts worker). 9:00 Global Village Creative. Jazz Armenia: The music of Gomidas and his contemporaries. See Nov 7. Also Nov 9.

Saturday November 9

2:00: National Ballet of Canada. Giselle. See Nov 6. Also Nov 9(7:30pm), 10(2pm).

5:00: Arraymusic. Telematic I. Van Nort: SSHRC Partnership Engage project. Doug Van Nort; Arrasmusic; Anne Bourne, cello; NowNet Arts Ensemble (connected from New York). Array Space, 155 Walnut Ave. 416-532-3019. $30 or PWYC. Concert can also be livestreamed.

4:00: Toronto Children's Chorus. Whether the Weather. Works by Bach, Poulenc, Debussy, Mendelssohn, Dally and others. TCC's Main Choir and Toronto Youth Choir. Church of the Redeemer, 162 Bloor St. W. 416-303-9866 x231 or torontochildrensofnchorus.com. Performances. $30; $15 (under 10); $10 (child).


7:30: Festival of Arabic Music and Arts. Joe Show. Living Arts Centre, Hammersmith Hall, 4114 Living Arts Dr.; Mississauga; canaricanorchester.ca. $30-$40.

7:30: Mosaic Canadian Vocal Ensemble. Remembrance Concert. Elias: Dark Night of the Soul; Tauré: Cantique de Jean Racine; Brahms: How Lovely Thy Dwellings; Martin: Kyrie. Members of St. Michael's Choir School Alumni; Classic String Quartet; Michael Barhart, trumpet; Donna Klossis, flute; James Brown, guitar; Gordon D. Mansell, conductor. St. Patrick Catholic Church, 921 Flagship Dr.; Mississauga. 416-571-3680 or gdmansell@sympatico.ca. Freewill offering. Also Nov 8(Holy Name Catholic Church, Toronto).

7:30: National Ballet of Canada. Giselle. See Nov 6. Also Nov 10(2pm).


8:00: Burlington Performing Arts Centre. Mariani Herencia de Mexico. 440 Locust St., Burlington. 905-681-6000. $49.50; $44.50 (members).

5:00: Cathedral Bluffs Symphonic Orchestra. Subscription Concert 2: Mozart and Brahms. Mozart: Piano Concerto No.23 in A; Brahms: Symphony No.1 in Op.68; Mozart: Overture to Don Giovanni. Lauren Esch, piano; Norman Reitnamm, conductor. P.C. Ho Theatre, Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto, 5183 Sheppard Ave, E., Scarborough. 416-879-5566 or catherdalbluffs.com. From $35; From $30 (sr/st); free (under 12). 7:15pm: Pre-concert talk.


8:00: Ron Davis’ SymphRONica. SymphRONica: Season 7: The Opener! Featuring new music and some old favourites. Ron Davis, piano; Kevin Barrett, guitar; Mike Downes, bass; Aline Homzy, violin; Guest MC: Jaymz Bee. 918 Bathurst Centre for Culture, 300 Lonsdale Rd. 416-763-1695. $30; $25 (sr); $12.50 (under 30). 7:15pm: Pre-concert talk.

8:00: Royal Conservatory of Music. Mozart: Piano Concerto No.23 in A major with pianist Lauren Esch. Brahms: Symphony No.1 in C minor.

Saturday November 9, 2019 at 8 p.m.

Don’t Be Weary, Traveller

(in concert with The Nathaniel Dett Chorale)

Saturday, Nov. 9, 2019 at 8 p.m. (pre-concert chat at 7:15 p.m. With Bradenr Blyden-Taylor)

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Arts Dr., Mississauga. 905-306-6000 or mississuagasymsphony.ca. $30.

Tuesday November 12


• 2:00: Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra. HPO at the Library. Composers influenced by their homeland, talk and performance. Burlington Public Library - Central Branch, 2331 New St., Burlington. 905-528-7758 or hpo.org. $12.

• 8:00: New Music Concerts/Faculty of Music. U of T. Kasemets@100. Palestrina: Tu es Petrus; Kasemets: Triptom; Mrt-Matia Lill: When the Buffalo Went Away; Tatiana Kozlova-Johannes: Horizontale; Kasemets: 4135 Fractals; Future is past... It... now. Ensemble U; Stephen Clarke, piano. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-961-9594. $35; $25(sr); $10(st). (U of T students admitted free with a valid TCard, space permitting.


Wednesday November 13


• 7:30: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. What Makes It Great? The Great Bands of the Swing Era. University of Toronto Jazz Orchestra; Rob Kapilow, conductor; Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-408-0208. $40; $25(sr); $10(st). U of T students admitted free with a valid TCard, space permitting.

• 7:30: York University Department of Music. York University Chamber Choir: A Master’s Recital. Works by Palestrina, Schütz, Monteverdi, Mendelssohn and Britten. Craig Garnham, guest conductor; Lisaet Canton, director. Tribute Communities Recital Hall, Accolade East, YU, 4700 Keele St. 416-735-5888. $15; $10(sr/st).

• 8:00: Productions Opéra Concept MP. Another Brick in the Wall: The Opera. Meridian Hall (formerly Sony Centre), 1 Front St. E. 1-866-865-2767. $50-$195. Also Nov 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23.

• 8:00: Soundstreams. Two Odysseyes: Pinotewein / Gállábártnit. Yona Bonnell, Heli Huovinen, narrators; Melody Courage, Aishta Tenkennek, Bud Rachel, soloists and others. Daniels Spectrum, 585 Dundas St. E. 416-408-0208. $25-$77. Also Nov 14, 15, 16, 17(2pm).

Thursday November 14


A. Concerts in the GTA


Tuesday November 12

• 8:00: Music Gallery. History Series: Celebrating Casely Sokol. An evening with one of Music Gallery’s co-founders as he moves on from a storied career teaching improvisation at York University. Music Gallery at 918 Bathurst, 918 Bathurst St. 416-204-1080. PWYC. 7:30pm: doors open.

B. The Frereung Try

National Youth Orchestra of Canada and the European Union Youth Orchestra

November 12

NYOC.org

• 8:00: New Music Concerts/Faculty of Music. U of T. Kasemets@100. Palestrina: Tu es Petrus; Kasemets: Triptom; Mrt-Matia Lill: When the Buffalo Went Away; Tatiana Kozlova-Johannes: Horizontale; Kasemets: 4135 Fractals; Future is past... It... now. Ensemble U; Stephen Clarke, piano. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-961-9594. $35; $25(sr); $10(st). (U of T students admitted free with a valid TCard, space permitting.

JANE ARCHIBALD

Jane Archibald, soprano
Liz Upchurch, piano
416-923-7052 wmct.on.ca

Thursday November 14, 2019 | 1:30 PM


• 7:00: Latitude44/Estonian Music Week. EMW Kickoff Party. Augie Rikis’ Jazz Duo; DJ Vaiko Epikt. Restaurant Archeo at Distillery District, 31 Trinity St. 416-925-6405. $90; $70(youth 30 and under).

• 7:30: Burlington Performing Arts Centre. The Abrams. 440 Locust St., Burlington. 905-681-8000. $45; $44(members).

Scherzo No.4 in E Op.54; Sonata No.3 in b Op.58; Arensky: Caprices Op.43 - No.4 in G; No.5 in D; and works by Scriabin, Rachmaninoff, Glinka and Balakirev. 345 Sorauren Ave. 641-667-4190. $30; $10(st).

7:30: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Instrumentalists. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-978-3750. Free. Open to the public.

8:00: Burlington Performing Arts Centre. Tiffany. 440 Locust St. Burlington. 505-681-6000. $69.50; $64.50(members).


8:00: Productions Opéra Concept MP. Another Brick in the Wall: The Opera. See Nov 13. Also Nov 16(8pm), 17(2pm), 23(8pm).

8:00: Tafelmusik. Lotti Revealed. Lotti: Missa Sapientiae; Choral works by Bach, Handel and Zelenka; James Rolfe: Kadosh/Sancus/Holy (world premiere). Tafelmusik Chamber Choir; Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra; Ivra Taurins. Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, 472 Bloor St. W. 416-964-9337. From $42. Also Nov 15, 16, 17(3:30pm).


7:00: Opera by Request. Rossini’s Barber of Seville. Gene Wu, baritone (Figaro); Meagan Larios, mezzo (Rosina); Gian Robobin, tenor (Almaviva); Aaron Durand, baritone (Bar-tolo); Natasha Fransblow, piano/music director and others. College St. United Church, 56 Queen St. E. 416-363-0331 x26 or metuntickets@torontomusicacademy.ca. $20; $10(st).

7:00: Gallery 345. CD Release: Let Me Explain. Works by Jaeger, Gionet, Mouset. Christina Raphaelie Haldane, soprano; Carl Philippe Gionet, Stu Harrison, piano. 345 Sorauren Ave. 416-822-9781 or info@gallery345.com or eventbrite.ca. $30; $15(st). Cash only at the door. Ticket includes refreshment.

7:00: Lotti Revealed. Lotti: Missa Sapientiae; Choral works by Bach, Handel and Zelenka; James Rolfe: Kadosh/Sancus/Holy (world premiere). Tafelmusik Chamber Choir; Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra; Ivra Taurins. Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, 472 Bloor St. W. 416-964-9337. From $42. Also Nov 14, 16, 17(3:30pm).


Saturday November 16

7:30: National Ballet of Canada. Orpheus Alive and Chaconne. See Nov 15. Also Nov 16(8pm), 17(2pm).

7:30: Tafelmusik. Lotti Revealed. Lotti: Missa Sapientiae; Choral works by Bach, Handel and Zelenka; James Rolfe: Kadosh/Sancus/Holy (world premiere). Tafelmusik Chamber Choir; Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra; Ivra Taurins. Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, 472 Bloor St. W. 416-964-9337. From $42. Also Nov 14, 16, 17(3:30pm).

7:00: Small World Music Society. Michelle Shocked. Small World Music Centre, Art- scape Youngplace, 180 Shaw St. 416-536-5430. $25. Also 9pm.


7:00: Fairlawn Avenue United Church. The Art of English Song: A Commonwealth Collaboration. Works by Britten, Finzi, Purcell, Vaughan Williams and others. Nicholas Nicolaidis, tenor; Doreen Uren Simmons, piano. 28 Fairlawn Ave. 416-481-6848 x21. $20; $10(child).

Friday November 15


7:00: Estonian Music Week. Jazz and Folk Night. Puulupu; Kaii Kinnon; Mari Sild; Muusika ja Müttest; Artscapes Sandbox, 301 Adelaide St. W. 416-925-9405. $20.


7:30: Opera by Request. Rossini’s Barber of Seville. Gene Wu, baritone (Figaro); Meagan Larios, mezzo (Rosina); Gian Robobin, tenor (Almaviva); Aaron Durand, baritone (Bar-tolo); Natasha Fransblow, piano/music director and others. College St. United Church, 452 College St. 416-455-2385. $20. In concert with piano accompaniment.

6:00: Gallery 345. CD Release: Let Me Explain. Works by Jaeger, Gionet, Mouset. Christina Raphaelie Haldane, soprano; Carl Philippe Gionet, Stu Harrison, piano. 345 Sorauren Ave. 416-822-9781 or info@gallery345.com or eventbrite.ca. $30; $15(st). Cash only at the door. Ticket includes refreshment.

7:00: Tafelmusik. Lotti Revealed. Lotti: Missa Sapientiae; Choral works by Bach, Handel and Zelenka; James Rolfe: Kadosh/Sancus/Holy (world premiere). Tafelmusik Chamber Choir; Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra; Ivra Taurins. Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, 472 Bloor St. W. 416-964-9337. From $42. Also Nov 14, 16, 17(3:30pm).


Saturday, Nov 16, 7pm Glenn Gould Studio torontomusicacademy.ca


7:10: Gallery 345. Duo526: Duo Fantasy. Works by Villa-Lobos, Mackey, Bax and Bolcom. Futaunie Ikawa, piano; Kerry DuWors, violin. 345 Sorauren Ave. 416-822-9781 or info@gallery345.com or eventbrite.ca. $30; $10(st). Cash only at the door.


7:30: Music at Metropolitan. Like As The Lute Delights. New and ancient songs exploring the voice of the lute in music, art, and literature. Benjamin Stein, lute; Emily Klassen, soprano; Hannah Stein, alto; Jenna Gallagher, violin. Metropolitan United Church (Toronto), 56 Queen St. E. 416-363-0331 x26 or metuntickets@torontomusicacademy.ca. $20; $10(st).

7:30: National Ballet of Canada. Orpheus Alive and Chaconne. See Nov 15. Also Nov 17(2pm), 20(7:30pm), 21(7:30pm).

7:30: St. George on Yonge. In Concert. Premiere of commissioned works by Tse, Procurier, Emery, and Richardson-Schulte; Webern: Langsamer Satz, Prokofiev: String Quartet No.1. Interro Quartet (Eric Kim-Fujita, violin, Steve Koh, violin, Maxime Despres, viola, Sebastian Ostertag, cello). St. George Anglican Church, 3550 Yonge St. 416-993-3172 or eventbrite.ca/e/new-classicsneo-classics-tickets-74643636125. $25/$20(adj);
A. Concerts in the GTA

$20/$15(st/adv).


8:00: **Mississauga Symphony Orchestra.** Symphonic Dances. Dvorak: Slavonic Dances No.3, 7, 8; Paganini: La Campanella; Enescu: Romanian Rhapsody No.3; Rachmaninoff: Symphonic Dances. Guest: Leslie Ashworth, violin. Living Arts Centre, Hammermill Hall, 4141 Living Arts Dr., Mississauga. 905-306-6000 or mississaugasymphony.ca. $40-$65.

8:00: **Productions Opéra Concept MP.** Another Brick in the Wall: The Opera. See Nov 13. Also Nov 23(8pm).

8:00: **Soundstreams.** Two Odysseys: Pinootewin / Gállábártnit. See Nov 13.

8:00: **Royal Conservatory of Music.** Music Mix Series: Mavis Staples. Koerner Hall, 300 Bloor St. W. 416-408-6000 or rcm.ca. $25-$120.

8:00: **Scaramella.** Chamber Concert. Rameau: Pièces en concerts. Lotti: Lotti Revealed. Lotti: Missa Sapientiae; Choral works by Bach, Handel and Zelenka; James Rolfe: Kadosh/Sanctus/Holy (world premiere). Tafelmusik Chamber Choir; Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra; Ivans Taurins, Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, 427 Bloor St. W. 416-964-6337. From $42. Also Nov 14, 15, 17(3:30pm).

8:00: **Toronto Symphony Orchestra.** Vivaldi’s Four Seasons. Jonathan Crow: leader/violin. George Weston Recital Hall; 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375. From $129. Also Nov 16, 20, 21(Roy Thomson Hall).

8:45: **Estonian Music Week.** Showcase Performance by NOEP. The Hideout, 423 College St. 416-925-9405. $25. Part of the Toronto Indie Week program.

9:00: **Alliance Française de Toronto.** Grooz. Spadina Theatre, 24 Spadina Rd. 416-322-2014 x37. $25; $14(members).

9:00: **Small World Music Centre.** **Two Odysseys: Pinootewin / Gállábártnit.** See Nov 13. Also Nov 17(2pm).

9:00: **Tafelmusik.** Lotti Revealed. Lotti: Missa Sapientiae; Choral works by Bach, Handel and Zelenka; James Rolfe: Kadosh/Sanctus/Holy (world premiere). Tafelmusik Chamber Choir; Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra; Ivans Taurins, Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, 427 Bloor St. W. 416-964-9337. From $42. Also Nov 14, 15, 16(11at 8pm).


10:30: **Small World Music Centre.** Daniel Lichti. Art Song in House. Lieder, Melodie and Art Song. Graduate level and emerging classical singers of all voice types. A Private Home, 13A Robina Ave. 416-684-9337. $42. Also Nov 14, 15, 16(11at 8pm).

12:00: **Estonian Music Week.** Wrap it up! EMW Closing Party. Tiina Kiik, accordion; Sarah Hagen. Works by 18th- and 19th-century female composers. 354 Soranen Ave. 416-822-9781 or info@eesti100.com or eventbrite.ca. $30; $10(st). Cash only at the door.

12:00: **National Ballet of Canada.** Orpheus Alive and Chaccone. See Nov 15. Also Nov 20(7:30pm), 21(7:30pm).

12:00: **Productions Opéra Concept MP.** Another Brick in the Wall: The Opera. See Nov 13. Also Nov 23(8pm).

12:00: **Soundstreams.** Two Odysseys: Pinootewin / Gállábártnit. See Nov 13.

12:00: **University of Toronto Faculty of Music.** UTJO and Hart House Jazz Ensemble. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 93 Queen’s Park, 416-978-3750. Free. Open to the public.


1:30: **Tafelmusik.** Lotti Revealed. Lotti: Missa Sapientiae; Choral works by Bach, Handel and Zelenka; James Rolfe: Kadosh/Sanctus/Holy (world premiere). Tafelmusik Chamber Choir; Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra; Ivans Taurins, Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, 427 Bloor St. W. 416-964-9337. From $42. Also Nov 14, 15, 16(11at 8pm).

2:00: **Gallery 345. The Art of the Piano.** Sarah Hagen. Works by 18th- and 19th-century female composers. 345 Sorauren Ave. 416-822-9781 or info@gallery345.com or eventbrite.ca. $30; $10(st). Cash only at the door.

2:00: **National Ballet of Canada.** Orpheus Alive and Chaccone. See Nov 15. Also Nov 20(7:30pm), 21(7:30pm).

2:00: **Productions Opéra Concept MP.** Another Brick in the Wall: The Opera. See Nov 13. Also Nov 23(8pm).

2:00: **Soundstreams.** Two Odysseys: Pinootewin / Gállábártnit. See Nov 13.

2:30: **University of Toronto Faculty of Music.** UTJO and Hart House Jazz Ensemble. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 93 Queen’s Park, 416-978-3750. Free. Open to the public.


3:30: **Tafelmusik.** Lotti Revealed. Lotti: Missa Sapientiae; Choral works by Bach, Handel and Zelenka; James Rolfe: Kadosh/Sanctus/Holy (world premiere). Tafelmusik Chamber Choir; Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra; Ivans Taurins, Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, 427 Bloor St. W. 416-964-9337. From $42. Also Nov 14, 15, 16(11at 8pm).

4:00: **Estonian Music Week.** Wrap it up! EMW Closing Party. Tiina Kiik, accordion; Sarah Hagen. Works by 18th- and 19th-century female composers. 354 Soranen Ave. 416-822-9781 or info@eesti100.com or eventbrite.ca. $30; $10(st). Cash only at the door.


4:00: **Hart House Singers.** Verdi: Messa da Requiem. Inga Filipova, soprano; Monica Zerbe, mezzo; James McLean, tenor; Jeffrey Carl, baritone; David Arnot-Johnston.

Like As the Lute Delights

**the lute’s voice in music, art & literature**

Saturday November 16th, 7:30 p.m.

Benjamin Stein, lute
Emily Klassen, soprano
Hannah Stein, alto
Jenna Gallagher, violin

metunited.ca

52 | November 2019
Welcome.

4. Donations welcome.

9. 7:30: Royal Conservatory of Music. ARC Ensemble Presents the Works of Dmitri Klebanov. Klebanov: String Quartet No.4; Piano Trio; and a selection of songs, Olenka Slywonska, soprano. Mazzoleni Concert Hall, TELUS Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208.

Free. Open to the public.

Monday November 18


Tuesday November 19


7:30: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Early Music Concerts: King Arthur. Purcell. Erik Thor; stage director; Christopher Bagan, conductor. Trinity-St. Paul's Centre, 427 Elizabeth St. W. 416-408-0039; $30; $20(s); $10(st). U of T students admitted free with a valid TCard, space permitting.


Wednesday November 20


7:30: Organix Concerts/All Saints Kingsway. Kingsway Organ Concert Series. Hannel Becker, organ. All Saints Kingsway Anglican Church, 2850 Bloor St. W. 416-571-3880 or organixconcerts.ca. Free—will offer appreciating.


7:30: National Ballet of Canada. Orpheus Alive and Chaconne. See Nov 15. Also Nov 21, 23(eve), 24, 24(eve).


8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Viváldi’s Four Seasons. Carmen Bradshaw: Songs of the Invisible Summer Stars; Copland: Suite from Appalachian Spring (1944 original orchestration); Vivaldi: The Four Seasons. Jonathan Crow: leader/violin. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-363-8375. From $35. Also Nov 16 (Roy Thomson Hall), 17 (George Weston Recital Hall); 20 (Roy Thomson Hall).

Friday November 22


7:30: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Music of the Marriage of Figaro. Mozart. MacMillan Theatre, Edward Johnson Building, 80 Queen's Park. 416-408-0208. $40; $25(s); $10(st). U of T students admitted free with a valid TCard, space permitting. "Opera Talk" lecture 1½ hour before concert. Also Nov 21, 23(eve), 24, 24(eve).

8:00: Gallery 345. The Art of Improvisation: Celebrating Gallery 345. Bill Gillian, piano; Kayla Milmine, soprano sax; Ambrose Pottie, drums; Bill McBirnie, flute; Eugene Martyncew, electro acoustics. 345 Sorauren Ave. 416-822-9781 or info@gallery345.com or eventbrite.ca. $20, $10 or PWYC(st). Cash only at the door.

Saturday November 23

2:00: U of T Student Concert. "Elgar Enigma Variations Young Performers. www.epocheaira.ca. $20; $10(st).


6:30: Royal Conservatory of Music. RCO Night. The Royal Conservatory of Music. 92 Charles St. W. 416-408-0208. $40; $25(s); $10(st). U of T students admitted free with a valid TCard, space permitting. "Opera Talk" lecture 1½ hour before concert.
Concerts in the GTA

Saturday November 23

● 2:00: Gallery 345. The Iris Trio: Homage and Inspiration. Works by Schumann, Kurtág, Bruch, Honegger and McCabe. 345 Sorauren Ave. 416-840-2028 or info@gallery345.com or eventbrite.ca. $25; $10(st). Cash only at the door.

● 2:00: Harbourtown Sound. The North Pole’s Got Talent. Guest: Melissa-Maarie Shri-ner, soloist. Burlington Performing Arts Centre, 440 Locust St., Burlington. 905-681-6000 or harbourtownsound.ca. $35; $30(sr); $20(st under 18). Also 2pm.

● 3:30: Toronto City Opera. Les contes d’Hoffmann. Music by Jacques Offenbach; libretto by Jules Barbier. Ryan Harpear tenor (Hoffmann); Nicole Dubinsky, soprano (Olym-pia/Antonia/Giulietta); Dylan Wright, bass baritone (Lindorff/Coppélius/Miracle/Daper-tia/Antonia/Antonia/Giulietta); Jennifer Tung, artistic director and others. Al Green Theatre, 760 Spadina Ave. 647-899-9391. $45-$55; $35(st). Also Nov 21 (7:30pm), 24(3pm).


A concert celebrating the oneness of human family.

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6PM
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54 | November 2019

Clavier à Couleurs: An Exhibit of Piano Preludes

Art • Music
November 23


● 8:00: Masterworks of Oakville Chorus and Orchestra. Mendelssohn’s Messiah. Allison McAuley, soprano, Erica Iris Huang, mezzo, Christopher Fischer, tenor, Joel Allison, bass. St. Matthew Catholic Church, 1150 Monks Passage, Oakville. 905-399-9732. $30(over 30); $25(st under 30); $25(st adv).

● 8:00: World Music Society. Journey to the East. Terez Ghiriti, guitar; Anwar Khurshid, sitar/vocals; Paddheh Ahrarnejad, Per-iian tar/vocals; Mushred Khalid, vocals; Mour-edman, conductor. Church of the Holy Trinity, 19 Trinity Sq. 416-578-6602 or canetums.ca. $20; $25/free (under 12). Also Nov 24 St. Aid-an’s Anglican Church.

● 7:30: Harbourtown Sound. The North Pole’s Got Talent. Guest: Melissa-Maarie Shri-ner, soloist. Burlington Performing Arts Centre, 440 Locust St., Burlington. 905-681-6000 or harbourtownsound.ca. $35; $30(sr); $20(st under 18). Also 2pm.


● 7:30: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. The Marriage of Figaro. Mozart; MacMillan Theatre, Edward Johnson Build- ing, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-408-0208. $40; $25(st); $10(s). U of T students admitted free with a valid TCard, space permitting. “Opera Talk” lecture ½ hour before concert. Also Nov 21, 22(eve), 24(mat).

● 8:00: Arrageymuir. Kyle Kasemats@. 100. Kasemats: Sonata in E, Viulje il Kavlerle Op.10, Pythagoras Tree, OP. Cage: Nocturne for violin and piano. Stephen Clarke, piano; Sheila Jaffe, violin; Lydia Muchinsky, cello. Array Space, 155 Walnut Ave. 416-532-3019. $50 or PWYC.

● 8:00: Gallery 345. The Art of the Piano: Nazareno Ferruggio. Works by Scarlatti, Mozart, Chopin, Satie, Grieg, Mompou and others. 345 Sorauren Ave. 416-822-9781 or info@gallery345.com or eventbrite.ca. $30; $10(st). Cash only at the door.

● 8:00: Guitar Society of Toronto. In Con-cert. Raphael Feuillâtre, guitar. St. Andrew’s Church (Toronto), 73 Simcoe St. 416-964-9560. $25; $15(st).

● 8:00: World Music Society. Journey to the East. Terez Ghiriti, guitar; Anwar Khurshid, sitar/vocals; Paddheh Ahrarnejad, Per-iian tar/vocals; Mushred Khalid, vocals; Mour-
Kaadan, percussion; Ali Masoudi, percussion/vocals. Small World Music Centre, Artscape Youngplace, 180 Shaw St. 416-536-5439. $35/$25(ad).


Sunday November 24

1:00: Opticiannée Eyewear. Mitch Filler. Opticiannée, 2919 Dundas St. W. 416-604-2030. Free. 2:00: Gallery 345. Magisterra Soloists. Farren: String Quintet; Dvorak: String Quintet; Lorie: Sonata for violin and bass. Annette-Barbara Vogel, Mikela Witjes, violin; Matt Antal, viola; Pablo Veglia-Mahave, cello; Josephフランスs, bass, 345 Sorauren Ave. 416-822-9781 or info@gallery345.com or eventbrite.ca. $30($5). Cash only at the door.

2:00: Mississauga Big Band Jazz Ensemble. Jazz at the Legion. Port Credit Legion, 35 Front St. N., Port Credit. 2:00:


Monday November 25

7:30: Opera5. Elizabeth Kre融n Memorial Concert: Shostakovich and Strauss. Bruck: Kol Nidrei; Strauss: Four Last Songs; Shostakovich: Symphony No.5. Michel Strauss, cello; Rachel Kreom, soprano; Evan Mitchell, conductor. Christ Church Deer Park, 1570 Yonge St. 847-968-4048 or opera5.ca/ekm7. PWYC. Donations to the St. Michael’s Hospital ICU.


7:30: Camerata Canadiana. Vaughan Williams’ Piano Quintet. Bottesini: Elegy No.1; works by Vaughan Williams and others. Jennifer Murphy, violin; Brenna Handy-Kavanagh, piano.
A. Concerts in the GTA

CAMERATA CANADIANA
inaugural concert
MONDAY NOVEMBER 25
7:30PM
Heliconian Club,
Toronto
marykenedimusic.com

Bld. ticketmaster.ca or 1-855-985-4557. $19.60 and up.
* 8:00. Confluence Concerts. An Evening with Marion Newman. Marion Newman, mezzo; Rebecca Cuddy, mezzo; Evan Korbut, baritone; Gordon Gerrard, piano. Heliconian Hall, 35 Hazelton Ave. 467-678-4923. $30; $25(st); $20(30 and under). Also Nov 27. Pre-concert talk at 7:15pm.

Wednesday November 27

* 8:00. Confluence Concerts. An Evening with Marion Newman. Marion Newman, mezzo; Rebecca Cuddy, mezzo; Evan Korbut, baritone; Gordon Gerrard, piano. Heliconian Hall, 35 Hazelton Ave. 467-678-4923. $30; $25(st); $20(30 and under). Also Nov 26. Pre-concert talk at 7:15pm.

Thursday November 28

* 12:10. University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Thursdays at Noon: Lele’s Tune. Braid: Lele’s Tune (scored for jazz quartet and string quartet), Daniel Lozakovich, Mike Murley and Jim Vivian from Jazz Studies join Mark Fewer and select graduate students from the Faculty’s Strings area. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-978-3750. Free. Open to the public.
* 7:30. National Ballet of Canada. Etudes & Piano Concerto #1 & Petite Mort. See Nov 27. Also Nov 26(9:30pm), 29, 30(2pm & 7:30pm), Dec 1(2pm).

Friday November 29

* 7:00. Yorkminster Park Baptist Church. A Fundraiser for the House of Compassion.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 29
7:00PM
Yorkminster Park Baptist Church
1585 Yonge St. 416-922-1167 or info@gallery345.com or eventbrite.ca. $30; $10(st). Cash only at the door.

Thursday November 28

* 12:10: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Thursdays at Noon: Lele’s Tune. Braid: Lele’s Tune (scored for jazz quartet and string quartet), Daniel Lozakovich, Mike Murley and Jim Vivian from Jazz Studies join Mark Fewer and select graduate students from the Faculty’s Strings area. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-978-3750. Free. Open to the public.

Thursday November 28 & 29

* 12:10. University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Thursdays at Noon: Lele’s Tune. Braid: Lele’s Tune (scored for jazz quartet and string quartet), Daniel Lozakovich, Mike Murley and Jim Vivian from Jazz Studies join Mark Fewer and select graduate students from the Faculty’s Strings area. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-978-3750. Free. Open to the public.
* 7:30. National Ballet of Canada. Etudes & Piano Concerto #1 & Petite Mort. See Nov 27. Also Nov 26(9:30pm), 29, 30(2pm & 7:30pm), Dec 1(2pm).

Friday November 29

* 7:00. Yorkminster Park Baptist Church. A Fundraiser for the House of Compassion.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 29
7:00PM
Yorkminster Park Baptist Church
1585 Yonge St. 416-922-1167 or yorkminsterpark.com. $20; free for under and under. A fundraiser for the House of Compassion.

Friday November 29

* 7:30. Gallery 345. The Art of the Piano: Ida Pelliccioli. Works by Debussy, Rameau and Albeniz. 155 Sorauren Ave. 416-822-9781 or info@gallery345.com or eventbrite.ca. $30; $10(st). Cash only at the door.
* 12:30. National Ballet of Canada. Etudes & Piano Concerto #1 & Petite Mort. See Nov 27. Also Nov 30(2pm), Dec 2(7:30pm), Dec 10(2pm).
* 7:30. St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, Humber Heights. Annual Christmas Concert.

7:30: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Wind Symphony Concerts. Daugherty: On the Air; Reed: Armenian Dances No. 1; La Fiesta Mexicana; Colgrass: Raag Mala; Ticheli: Rest. Jeffrey Reynolds, conductor. MacMillan Theatre, Edward Johnson Building, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-408-0208. $30; $20(sr); $10(st). U of T students admitted free with a valid TCard, space permitting.


Saturday November 30

2:00: National Ballet of Canada. Etudes & Piano Concerto #1 & Petite Mort. See Nov 27. Also 7:30pm. Also Dec 17.


2:00: Achill Choral Society. Glorious Sounds Christmas Concert. Chilcott: Gloria; and other works. Audience sing-along. Shawn Grenek, conductor. Christ Church Anglican (Bolton), 22 Nancy St., Bolton. 905-657-2307 or achill.ca. $25; $10(13-17);

2:00: Amphis Music. Celtic Spark. Heather Dale, vocals/Irish flutes/hammered dulcimer; Ben Deschamps, guitar/keys; Leanne Wright, cello; John Stadtlander, percussion. Zoomer Hall, 70 Jefferson Ave. 416-580-5538 or HeatherDale.com, $25 or PWYC.

4:00: Cathedral of the Transfiguration. Sounds Christmas Concert. Chilcott: Gloria; and other works. Audience sing-along. Sandra Faire and Ivan Fegan. 7:30, 17:30.


5:30: Faith Amour. Marmalade Jazz Live. Recording. Jeremy Ledbetter and band. 120 Diner, 120 Church St. 416-762-7725. $20 in advance.


7:00: Spadina Station. Holiday Relief Line. A cappella holiday music and beloved songs from the 60s to the 90s. Marlena McCarthy, alto; Jane Miller, soprano; Tyler Smith, tenor; Stephen Reich, bass. Guest vocalist: Iana Waldston. Buddies in Bad Times Theatre, 12 Alexander St. 416-975-8555. $20. Family-friendly concert.

7:00: University of Toronto Scarborough. Fall flourish Music Concert. UTSC Concert Choir, Concert Band, and String Orchestra. AC223, ARC Theatre, 1265 Military Trail, Scarborough. 416-208-4769. Free.


ENCIRCLING THE WORLD: ZITHERS!

Nov. 30, 7:30pm Heliconian Hall, Toronto northwindconcerts.com

7:30: North Wind Concerts. Encircling the World: Zithers. Featuring zithers, dulcimers and psalteries from Egypt, Finland, China and Iran. Lina Cao, guzheng; Bill Parsons, kacapi; Amin Reihani, santour; George Savva, qanun. Heliconian Hall, 35 Hazelton

Jubilate Singers

Navidad Nuestra

Music by ARIEL RAMIREZ

& Latin American Seasonal Music

With SIKURIS ST. LAWRENCE

Sat. Nov. 30, 7:30 pm Eastminster United Church jubilatesingers.ca
A. Concerts in the GTA

NAGATA SHACHU
Saturday Nov. 30 ~ 8 pm
AL GREEN THEATRE

hibiki.com

GRAND CHORUS:

7:30: Ottawa Bach Choir. A Bach Christmas. Bach: Meinem Jesum lass ich recht BWV147; And Ach Gott, wie manches Herzelein BWV3; Was mein Gott will, das g'scheh allzeit BWV111; and others. Meredith Red, soprano; Nicholas Burns, counter-tenor; Philippe Gagné, tenor; Andrew Mahon, bass; Ensemble Caprice Baroque Orchestra; Jonathan Oldengarm, organ. Grace Church on-the-Hill, 300 Lonsdale Rd. 613-270-1015. $30 (reserved); $40 (adv); $35 (sr/65+); $15 (st). Also Dec 1 (Knock Presbyterian, Ottawa).


7:30: York University Department of Music. York University Gospel Choir. York University University Chapel, 333 Crosby Ave., Richmond Hill. 905-884-7922. $30/$20 (adv); $15 (st under 36).

8:00: Chorus York. Celebrate the Season. A program of Christmas favorites, with some audience participation. Stéphane Potvin, director; Andrea Van-Pelt, piano; guests: The Bells of St. Matthew’s handbell choir; Joan Plume, director. St. Matthew’s United Church, 333 Crosby Ave., Richmond Hill. 905-884-7922. $30/$20 (adv); $15 (st under 36).

8:00: Oriana Women’s Choir. St. George’s Christmas Concert: The Sound Post. Fall Salon Concert. Church of St. Mary Magdalene (Toronto), 477 Manning Ave. orianachoir.com. $25; $20 (sr); $10 (st). Also Dec 1 (Knock Presbyterian, Ottawa).

8:30: Royal Conservatory of Music. Fall Salon Concert. Piano Recital. Inna Perkis, piano; Boris Zarankin, piano. St. Andrew by-the-Lake Church, 131 McCaul St. 416-286-9798. $30; $20 (sr); $10 (st).


9:00: Al Green Theatre, 750 Spadina Ave. hibi/brownpapertickets.com. $30-$35; $15 (st). Also Dec 1(3pm, Richmond Hill Centre for Performing Arts).

Sunday December 1
1:00: Royal Conservatory of Music. Sunday Interlude Series: Jinjoo Cho, violin. Maz-Mazoleni Concert Hall, TELUS Centre, 275 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. Free ticket required. Tickets available a week prior to concert date.

2:00: Chorus York. Celebrate the Season. A program of Christmas favorites, with some audience participation. Stéphane Potvin, director; Andrea Van-Pelt, piano; guests: The Bells of St. Matthew’s handbell choir; Joan Plume, director. St. Matthew’s United Church, 333 Crosby Ave., Richmond Hill. 905-884-7922. $30/$20 (adv); $15 (st under 36).

2:00: Al Green Theatre, 750 Spadina Ave. hibi/brownpapertickets.com. $30-$35; $15 (st). Also Dec 1(3pm, Richmond Hill Centre for Performing Arts).

3:00: Off Centre Music Salon. Runaway Waltz. Works of Strauss, Debussy, Poulenc, Siltani, Tchaikovsky and others. Allard Angelo, soprano; Ernesto Ramirez, tenor; Ilana Zarankin, soprano; Helen Bucque, piano; Innis Perks, piano; Boris Zarankin, piano. Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, 427 Bloor St. W. 416-486-6225. $50; $40 (sr); $35 (under 25); $15 (student)

High Mass for Christmas Day
Experience the rich pageantry of Christmas at Sant’Apollinare in the acme of the High Renaissance with austere chant, brilliant polyphony and sonorous instrumental pieces from the Golden Age of Music.

Saturday, November 30, 7:30 pm
St. Patrick’s Church, 141 McCaul St.

Tickets: $30, Seniors: $25, Students with ID: $10 (only at the door)
Info: 416 286-9798 Order online: boxoffice.tallischoir.com

The WholeNote.com
Recital Hall, Accolade East, YU, 4700 Keele St. 416-736-5888. $15; $10 (sr/st).

- 4:00: Andrew Adair. Seven Allegorical Pictures by Sverre Eftestal. Andrew Adair, organ. Church of St. Mary Magdalene (Toronto), 477 Manning Ave. 416-531-7955. Free.

CANZONA
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Toronto Island &
City Concert Series

MARIKO KAMACHI-COSBEY & PETER COSBEY

Island Concert
Sunday, December 1, 2pm
St. Andrew-by-the-Lake Church
Toronto Island
*Brunch 12:30pm
Tickets $30
Brunch $20 *reservation required
Please visit canzona.org

City Concert
Monday, December 2 7:30pm
St. George the Martyr Church
197 John Street, Toronto
Tickets $30

ST. OLAVE’S ANGLICAN CHURCH

SUN 1 DEC AT 4
Choral Evensong
plus Christmas Tea and at 5

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS
Light music and light entertainment including rare Christmas pieces by Charles Dickens

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17th season   7 ensembles   14 concerts

Runaway Waltz
DECEMBER 1, 2019 | 3PM

"Now is the time when trembling on its stem
Each flower fades away like incense;
Sounds and scents turn in the evening air;
A melancholy waltz, a soft and giddy dizziness."
– Charles Baudelaire

Allison Angelo, soprano
Ernesto Ramirez, tenor
Ilana Zarankin, soprano
Helen Beque, piano
Inna Perkis, piano
Boris Zarankin, piano

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ANNUAL FALL SALE - Nov 19-23
FALL SALON CONCERT - Dec 1, 2 pm
Elizabeth Chang, violin & Nardo Poy, viola
Limited seating. Email: events@thesoundpost.com

thewholenote.com
Sunday December 1 2019
8pm Concert Koerner Hall

ESPRIT ORCHESTRA espritorchestra.com

- 8:00: Esprit Orchestra, Sustain. Andrew Norman. Sustain, for orchestra; Adam Scime: Afterglow, concerto for violin and orchestra; José Evangelista: Accelerando, for orchestra. Véronique Mathieu, violin; Alex Pauk, conductor. Koerner Hall, TELUS Centre, 273 Bloor St W. 416-408-0208. From $20. 7:15pm: pre-concert chat.

Monday December 2

- 7:30: Chorisma. An Evening of Christmas Music. Guests: Alexia Ball, flute; Damon Richardson, percussion; Lona Richardson, accompanist; Bob Richardson, conductor. Thornhill United Church, 25 Elgin St., Thornhill. 905-731-8318. Freewill offering. In support of the Thornhill Christmas Assistance Program. Please bring a non-perishable offering for the food bank.
- 8:00: Sustain. Andrew Norman. Sustain, for orchestra; Adam Scime: Afterglow, concerto for violin and orchestra; José Evangelista: Accelerando, for orchestra. Véronique Mathieu, violin; Alex Pauk, conductor. Koerner Hall, TELUS Centre, 273 Bloor St W. 416-408-0208. From $20. 7:15pm: pre-concert chat.

Tuesday December 3


Wednesday December 4

- 12:30: Organix Concerts/All Saints Kingsway. Kingsway Organ Concert Series. Dudley Oakes, organ. All Saints Kingsway Anglican Church, 2580 Bloor St W. 416-571-3680 or organixconcerts.ca. Free. Open to the public.

Thursday December 5

- 7:30: Gallery 345. Song Under the Stair. Beth Anne Cole, vocalist; Martin van de Ven, clarinet; Tania Gill, piano; and a surprise guest. 345 Sorauren Ave. 416-822-9781 or info@gallery345.com or eventbrite.ca. $25. Cash only at the door.

A. Concerts in the GTA

ROY THOMSON HALL

Concerts

Tuesday December 3

- 8:00: Roy Thomson Hall. Orchestration: Royal Wood and Friends. Guests: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4255. $41.70-$62.40.

Wednesday December 4

- 12:30: Organix Concerts/All Saints Kingsway. Kingsway Organ Concert Series. Dudley Oakes, organ. All Saints Kingsway Anglican Church, 2580 Bloor St W. 416-571-3680 or organixconcerts.ca. Free. Open to the public.

Thursday December 5

- 7:30: Gallery 345. Song Under the Stair. Beth Anne Cole, vocalist; Martin van de Ven, clarinet; Tania Gill, piano; and a surprise guest. 345 Sorauren Ave. 416-822-9781 or info@gallery345.com or eventbrite.ca. $25. Cash only at the door. 7:30: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. U of T Symphony Orchestra: Operatic Showpieces. UTSO; U of T Opera; MacMillan Singers; Sandra Horst and Uri Meyer, conductors. MacMillan Theatre, Edward Johnson Building, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-408-0208. $30; $20(sr); $10(st). Pre-performance lecture ‘Symphony Talk’. U of T students admitted free with a valid TC Card, space permitting.
violin; Roman Borisy, cello; Jamie Parker, piano; Robert Pomakov, bass. Jane Mallett, piano; Robert Pomakov, bass. Jane Mallett violin; Roman Borys, cello; Jamie Parker, atre, 24 Spadina Rd. 416-922-2014 x37. $28; La Sonate de Saint-Saëns 80 Queen's Park. 416-978-3750. Free. Open Johnson Building, University of Toronto, Walter Hall, Edward Music. From $49. Partial-view seats from $35. Also Con- tention Dec 8. Constantine Kitsopoulos, conductor. Roy Brampton. 647-233-3655. $18; house-style folk music concert. Boreal (Tan- 416-598-3444 x243. Free; donations welcome George the Martyr Church, 30 Stephanie St.几何 the Song of Angels Etobi- 8:00: O Come, Shepherds Tafelmusik. 7:30: George the Martyr Church, 30 Stephanie St. 416-978-3750. $25(st/income challenged). Also Dec 5, 7, 8(2pm), 7(8pm), 8(3:30pm); 10(8pm at George Weston Recital Hall). Friday December 6 • 7:00: University Settlement Music & Arts School. Term Student Concert. St. George the Martyr Church, 30 Stephanie St. 416-598-3444 x243. Free; donations welcome at the door. Also Dec 7(11am); 3pm. • 7:30: Brampton Folk Club. Friday Folk Night: Songs for the Snowy Season. Coffee- house-style folk music concert. Boreal (Tann- nis Simmons, Katherine Wheatley and Jude Vadalal). St. Paul’s United Church (Brampton), 30 Main St. S. Brampton. 647-233-3655. $18; $15(sr/st). • 7:30: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Home Alone in Concert. Resonance Youth Choir; Constantine Kitosopoulos, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375. From $49. Partial-view seats from $35. Also Dec 7(2pm and 3:00pm). • 7:30: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. PianoFest. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building. University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-978-3750. Free. Open to the public. • 8:00: Alliance Française de Toronto. La Sonate de Saint-Saëns. Saint-Saëns: Cello Sonata No.3 Op. posth. Juliette Her- lin, cello; Kevin Ahfat, piano. Spadina The- atre, 24 Spadina Rd. 416-922-2014 x7; $28; $14(members). • 8:00: De Bouche / À Oreille. In Concert. Pierre Flynn; Quatuor Étoile Magique (Brielle Goheen, Aline Homyz, Catherine Gray, Beth Silver). Heliconian Hall, 36 Hazelnut Ave. 647-892-7367 or dbaoproductions.ca. $30. • 8:00: Exultate Chamber Singers. Holidays with a Twist: A Merry Rump Through Some Festive Favourites. Mark Ramsay, conductor. St. Thomas’s Anglican Church (Toronto), 383 Huron St. 416-410-4561. $30; $25(sr); $20(arts workers/under 30); $10(st). • 8:00: Music Gallery/Bad New Days. Mel- ancholia: The Music of Scott Walker. Part concert, part spectacle, part existential talk-show. Music Gallery at 918 Bathurst, 918 Bathurst St. 416-204-1080. $25/$20(adv); $15(st/members); Also Nov (Fee & mat). • 8:00: Raging Asian Women Taiko Drummers. Undaunted: Into the Open. Japanese Taiko drumming combined with singing, movement and video-stories. Betty Oliphant Theatre, 404 Jarvis St. 416-671-7256. PWYC. Also Dec 6, 7, 8(2pm). Family-friendly concert on Dec 8. • 8:00: Tafelmusik. O Come, Shepherds. Manfredini: Christmas Concert; Dall’Aba- baco: “La zampogna”; Pasquini: “Pastorale”; and traditional music from Southern Italy. Guest: Tommaso Sollazzo, zampogna; Vesi- vius Ensemble; Tafelmusik Baroque Orches- tra. Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, 427 Bloor St. W. 416-964-6337. From $42. Also Dec 4(7pm), 6(6pm), 7(8pm), 8(3:30pm); 10(8pm at George Weston Recital Hall). • 8:00: Upper Canada Choristers. Christ- mas Fantasy. Featuring carols from the 15th century to the modern era. Boar’s Head Carol and Noël for the Darkness (arr. L.E. Fraser); Vaughan Williams: Fantasia on Christmas Carols; and other works. Bradley Chris- tensen, baritone; Hye Won Cecilia Lee, piano; Pierre Flynn; Quatuor Étoile Magique (Brielle Goheen, Aline Homyz, Catherine Gray, Beth Silver). Heliconian Hall, 36 Hazelnut Ave. 647-892-7367 or dbaoproductions.ca. $30. • 8:00: University Settlement Music & Arts School. End of Term Student Concert. St. George the Martyr Church, 30 Stephanie St. 416-598-3444 x243. Free; donations welcome at the door. Also Dec 7(11am); 3pm. • 7:30: Bel Canto Singers. Tidings of Comfort and Joy. Scarborough Bluffs United Church, 3793 Kingston Rd., Scarborough. 416-690-3858 or belcantosingers.ca. $20; $5(child under 12). Cash only at the door. Also 2:30pm. • 7:30: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. PianoFest. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-978-3750. Free. Open to the public. • 2:30: Village Voices. Comfort and Joy. Gjelio: Northern Lights; Jannehomed: Nur Reflections on Light; Daley: In Remembrance; taken for the Churches-on-the-Hill Food Bank. • 2:30: Bel Canto Singers. Tidings of Comfort and Joy. Scarborough Bluffs United Church, 3793 Kingston Rd., Scarborough. 416-690-3858 or belcantosingers.ca. $20; $5(child under 12). Cash only at the door. Also 2:30pm. • 7:30: Bel Canto Singers. Tidings of Comfort and Joy. Scarborough Bluffs United Church, 3793 Kingston Rd., Scarborough. 416-690-3858 or belcantosingers.ca. $20; $5(child under 12). Cash only at the door. Also 2:30pm. • 7:30: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. PianoFest. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-978-3750. Free. Open to the public. • 2:30: Village Voices. Comfort and Joy. Gjelio: Northern Lights; Jannehomed: Nur Reflections on Light; Daley: In Remembrance; • 7:00: University Settlement Music & Arts School. End of Term Student Concert. St. George the Martyr Church, 30 Stephanie St. 416-598-3444 x243. Free; donations welcome at the door. Also 10pm; Dec 6(7pm). • 1:00: University Settlement Music & Arts School. End of Term Student Concert. St. George the Martyr Church, 30 Stephanie St. 416-598-3444 x243. Free; donations welcome at the door. Also 11am; Dec 6(11pm). • 2:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Home Alone in Concert. Resonance Youth Choir; Constantine Kitosopoulos, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375. From $49. Partial-view seats from $35. Also Dec 6 & 7 both at 7:30pm. • 2:00: Yorkminster Park Baptist Church. City Carol Sing. Dina Pugliese, host. Guests: Murray McLachlan, Marc Jordan, Ian Thomas. Hogtown Brass; Bach’s Children’s Choir; Yorkminster Park Baptist Church Choir; Hedgerow Singers; William Maddox, organ; Eric Robertson; conductor. 1585 Yonge St. 416-922-1167. Free. A collection will be taken for the Churches-on-the-Hill Food Bank. • 2:30: Bel Canto Singers. Tidings of Comfort and Joy. Scarborough Bluffs United Church, 3793 Kingston Rd., Scarborough. 416-690-3858 or belcantosingers.ca. $20; $5(child under 12). Cash only at the door. Also 2:30pm. • 7:30: Etobicoke Centennial Choir. Sweet Rejoicing. Vivaldi; Gloria; Ranchmaninoff, Ave Maria; Pearsall: In dulci jubilo. Humber Val- ley United Church, 76 Anglesley Blvd., Etobi- coke. 416-779-2258. $30. Venue has elevator access. • 7:30: Georgetown Choral Society. Gloria: The Song of Angels. Vivaldi; Gloria; seasonal songs and anthems, including some audi- ence participation. Chris Dawes, director. Georgetown Christian Reformed Church, 11611 Trafalgar Rd., Georgetown. 905-877- 7795. $25. • 7:30: Mississauga Festival Choir. An East Coast Christmas. Seasonal music from the Maritimes and beyond. Guests: The Barra MacNeils. Hammerson Hall, Living Arts
A. Concerts in the GTA

Centre, 4141 Living Arts Dr., Mississauga, 905-306-6000 or livingartscentre.ca. $42.

7:30: Oakville Choral. Reflections: Rediscovering the Women of Music History. Clearview Reformed Church, 2800 Sheridan Garden Dr., Oakville. 289-351-1574. $30/$25(adv); $15(st); free(child 12 & under). Also Dec 8(3pm, Chartwell Baptist Church, Oakville).

7:30: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Home Alone in Concert. Rendition of Youth Choir; Constantine Kitsopoulos, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375. From $49. Partial-view seats from $35. Also Dec 6(7:30pm) & 7(7:30pm).

7:30: VOCA Chorus of Toronto. Comfort and Joy. Vivaldi: Gloria; Vaughan Williams: Fantasia on Christmas Carols; works by Gjeljo, Letourneau, Pentatonix and others. Dallas Chorale, soprano; Lindsay Connolly, mezzo; Parker Clements, baritone; VOCA Chamber Orchestra; Elizabeth Acker, accompanist; Jenny Croker, conductor. Eastminster United Church, 310 Danforth Ave. 416-947-8447. $30; $25(sr); $15(st).


B. Concerts Beyond the GTA


Friday November 1

7:30: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. Water and Ice. Handel: Water Music (excerpts); other works exploring ways water and ice can be musical. KWS Youth Orchestra; Matthew Jones, conductor; Carousel Dance Company. Centre in the Square, 101 Queen St. N., Kitchener. 519-745-4711 or 1-888-745-4717 or kwcon.org. $15; $11(child). 1:15pm: art activities hosted by the KW Art Gallery; music activities hosted by Music for Young Children; mini lessons from a KWS musician on a variety of instruments.

7:30: O Come, Shepherds. Tafelmusik. 615 Richmond St. N., Toronto. 416-964-6337. From $42. Also Dec 4(7pm), 8:00: Tafelmusik. O Come, Shepherds. Manfredini: Christmas Concerto; Dall’Abaco: “La zampogna”; Pasquini: “Pastorale”; and traditional music from Southern Italy. Guest: Tommaso Sollazzo, zampogna; Alexis Wright, percussion. Paul Davenport Theatre, Talbot College, Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-681-3787. $15/$10(adv). No fee.


8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. Czech Hills. Smetana: Sárka from Má vlast; Dvořák: Trio in E Op.90. AYR Trio (Angela Park, piano; Yehonatan Berick, violin; Rachel Mercer, cello). First Unitarian Church of Hamilton, 170 Dundurn St. S., Hamilton. 905-599-5215. $20; $15(sr); $5(st/unwaged); free(under 12).


7:30: Cantabile Choirs of Kingston. Life Has Loveliness. Quartet; Mark Stier, conductor. The Spire/Sydenham Street United Church, 82 Sydenham St. Kingston. cantabile choirs.ca. $22; $20(adv); $12(child 12 and under).

7:30: Chorus Niagara. A Child of Our Time. Michael Tippett. Johane Arsell, soprano; Lauren Segal, mezzo; Andrew Hajji, tenor; James Westman, baritone; Orpheus Choir of Toronto; Niagara Symphony Orchestra; Robert Cooper, conductor; Partridge Hall, FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, 250 St. Paul St., St. Catharines. 905-688-0722. $47; $45(adv); $40(50+); $30(under 50); $20(50+ valid id); $15(ch under 15 valid id); $5(eyeGO high school at valid ID). Season subscriptions also available.


Sunday November 3

- **2:00 Tim Nast. In Concert. Marble Arts Centre, 13 Bridgwater Rd., Tweed. timnast.com. $30.**
- **5:00 DaCapo Chamber Choir. The Sun’s Birthday. 2019 NewWorkings winning composition. Angela Schwarzkopf, harp. John the Evangelist (Kitchener), 23 Water St. N., Kitchener. 519-725-7549. $25. $20(under 18); $15(18-25); $25(youth/child 18 and under). Also Nov 3(3pm), Trillium Lutheran, Waterloo.**

Sunday November 4

- **8:00 City Steel Jazz Festival. Nick Maclean Quartet featuring Brownman Ali. Art World Arthouse; 15 Colborne St., Hamilton. 416-389-2643. $20.**

Friday November 8

- **11:30am: Hamilton Philharmonic Orchest- ra. School Concert: A Canadian Brass Experience. Canadian Brass. FirstOntario Concert Hall, 1 Summers Ln., Hamilton. 905-526-7756 or hpo.org $5.**
- **7:30 Bravo Niagara Festival of the Arts. Monty Alexander’s Harlem-Jersey-Linking and Larron Lewis Band. Works by Monty Alex- ander and Larnell Lewis. Monty Alexander, piano; Hassan Abdul Ash-Shakur, bass; Jason Brown, drums; Andrew Bassford, guitar; Larnell Lewis Band. FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre Partridge Hall, 250 St. Paul St. St. Catharines. 889-869-1177 or music@stony- agara.org. $25-$50 ($50/year).**
- **7:30 Jass @ the Loft. Nick Maclean Quartet’s Tribute to Herbie Hancock featuring Brownman Ali. The Loft, 201 Division St., Cobourg. 905-372-2120 or tickets kobourg.ca/ TheManager/1 online?performance=3161. $25.**
- **7:30 Tim Nast. In Concert. Joshua Bates Centre, 1 Main St., Athers. timnast.com. $20.**

Saturday November 9

- **10:30am: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. The Parridge Port. Adaptation of a classic German fairytale created by the Grimm Brothers. Kait Taylor, storyteller; KWS musicians. Waterloo Region Museum, 10 Huron Rd., Kitchener. 519-745-4711 or 1-888-745-4717 or kwsymphony.ca. $13 ($11/child). Also Oct 26 (Elmira), Nov 16 (Kitchener). 10am. music activities provided by Music for Young Children: following concert meet performers and their instruments.**
- **8:30 Barrie Concerts. Voices of Angels. Hamilton Children’s Choir. Zimfrina Poloz, con- ductor. Hiway Pentecostal Church, 50 Annette St. N., Barrie. 705-726-1181. $10 (free).**
- **8:30 Grand Philharmonic Choir. Winter Hymn. Quartet: A Winter’s Day; Giuseppe’s The Rose; Burhan: Super Fumina Babylonia; and other works. Grand Philharmonic Cham- ber Singers. St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church, 23 Water St. N., Kitchener. 519-578-5660 x2290. $30; $14/under(13); $5/child/ HS student.**
- **8:30 Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra. A Canadian Brass Salute. Canadian Brass, guest artists; Joey Pietraroia, conductor. FirstOntario Concert Hall; 1 Summers Ln., Hamilton. 905-526-7756 or hpo.org $19-$71.**
- **9:30 Isabel Bader Centre for the Per- forming Arts. Big Band D.S. Swing Shift Big Band; Heather Bambrick, June Garber and Larisa Renee, vocalists; Jim John, music director. 390 King St. W., Kingston. 613-533-2424 or queenus.ca/thei- sabel/tickets. $42-$50; $39-$56(faculty/staff); $19-$29(st).**
- **7:30 Tim Nast. In Concert. La Fraternelle, 49 Paul St., Alexandria. timnast.com. $20.**
- **8:00 TD Sunfest World Music & Jazz Ser- ies. Amanda Minchin: CD Release Concert for “Libere”. Aeolian Hall, 795 Dundas St. E., London. sunfest.on.ca. $28/$34.**

Sunday November 10

- **2:00 Chamber Music Hamilton. In Con- cert. Beethoven: String Quartet No.1 in F Op.18 No.1; Bruckner: String Quintet. Fine Arts Quartet; Michael Schulte, cello. Art Gal- lery of Hamilton, 123 King St. W., Hamilton. 1-905-719-6475. $35 ($30/students): $15.**
- **3:00 Les AMIS Concerts. In Concert. Works by Hummel, Schubert, Mendelssohn and Pepa. Kaili Maimets, flute; Rachel Mer- caldo, soprano; Liz Upchurch, piano. Von den Spells by Maurice Ravel. 390 King St. W., Kathener-Waterloo Symphony. 519-526-7756 or hpo.org $5-$14 (student).**

Tuesday November 12

- **7:30 Isabel Bader Centre for the Per- forming Arts. Spirit and Soul: Measha Brueggergosman, soprano. 390 King St. W., Kingston. 613-533-2424 or queenus.ca/thei- sabel/tickets. $42-$50; $39-$56(faculty/staff); $19-$29(st).**

Wednesday November 13

- **12:30 University of Waterloo Department of Music. Noon Hour Concerts: Root Systems. Letting Go (new art) and works by Berio, Man- surian, Sunabacka, Matthews and others. Park Sounds (Jennifer Thiessen, viola, viola d’amore) and Ben Reimer percussion. Great Hall of Con- rad Grebel University College, 140 Westmount Rd. N., Waterloo. 519-885-0220 x24226. Free.**
- **6:30 Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society. Chamber Music Concert. Villa- Lobos; Sonata Fantasia No.2. Mackey; Elegy and Fantaisie; Bac: Violin Sonata No.2. Bol- com: Duo Fantasy. Duo 528 (Kerry DuiWors, violin; Faruza Niekwano, piano). KW CMS Music Room, 57 Young St. W., Waterloo. 519-589-1809. $30. $20(students).**

Tuesday November 19

- **7:30 FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre. Juliet – Romeo by Decidedly Jazz Dance Works. Fraser: Live band jazz score. 250 St. Paul St., St. Catharines. 905-387-0722 or 1-855-516-0722 or FirstOntarioPA.com. $55. $45(Hot Ticket members); $25(st-university/ college); $5(st-high school).**

Friday November 15

- **12:30 Don Wright Faculty of Music. Fri- days at 12:30 Concert Series. Jane Archi- bald, soprano; Liz Ueberchurch, piano. Von den Officers Hall, Music Building, Western Univer- sity, 151 Richardson St. N., London. 519-661-3767. Free.**
- **1:30 Don Wright Faculty of Music. Songs of Many Lands. Von Kuster Hall, Music Build- ing, Western University, 151 Richardson St. N., London. 519-661-3767. Free.**
- **6:00 Hamilton Philharmonic Orches- tra. CF Lime Ridge Tree Lighting. HPD and HPPO ensembles perform. CF Lime Ridge Mall, 999 Upper Wentworth St., Hamilton. 905-526-7756 or hpo.org. Free. come to be confirmed.**
- **7:00 Vera Causa Opera. The Child and the Spells by Maurice Ravel. First United Church (Waterloo), 10 William St. W., Waterloo. 519-277-5277. $15; free(st/child). Also Nov 16, 2019.**

FINE ARTS QUARTET

Sunday, November 10
2pm Art Gallery of Hamilton

CHAMBER MUSIC HAMILTON.CA

7:30: Don Wright Faculty of Music. Early Music Studio. Von Kuster Hall, Music Building, Western University, 151 Richardson St. N., Lon- don. 519-661-3767. Free.
Concerts Beyond the GTA

Saturday November 16

<table>
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<td>10:30am</td>
<td>Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. The Porridge Pot. Adaptation of a classic German fairytale collected by the Grimm Brothers. Kaat Taylor, storyteller; KWS musicians. Conrad Centre for the Performing Arts, 38 King St. W., Kitchener, 519-745-4711 or 1-888-745-4717 or kwsymphony.ca. $13; $11(child). Also Oct 25(Emir), Nov 9(Kitchener). 10am: music activities provided by Music for Young Children, following concert meet performers and their instruments.</td>
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at Western: The Secret Gardener (La Finta Giardiniera). Paul Davenport Theatre, Talbot College, Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767. $30/$20(adv). Also Nov 21(7:30pm), 22(7:30pm), 24(2pm).

● 7:30: Arcady. There’s a Song in the Air. Works by Beckett. St. Andrew’s United Church (Brantford), 95 Darling St., Brantford. 519-752-5823. $25/$15(st).

● 7:30: Isabel Baden Centre for the Performing Arts. Virtuoso Pianist. Works by Beethoven and Brahms. Yefim Bronfman, piano. 390 King St. W., Kingston. 613-533-2424 or queensu.ca/theisabel/tickets. $42-$59; $39-$56(faculty/staff); $19-$29(st).


● 6:00: Karen Schuescher Singers. Shining Night. Wesley Knox United Church, 91 Akin St., London. keisingers.com. $28/$20(adv) $25/$22(admission); $10(st).

● 6:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. Christmasmastide: A Baroque Christmas. Vivaldi: Concerto in C for 2 trumpets and strings; Corelli: Symphonies des Noëls No. 3. Chan- pentier: Noël pour les instruments; Mannfredini: Sinfonia da Chiesa; Corelli: Concerto grosso Op.6 No.8 “Christmas Concerto”;

Sunday, Nov. 24, 7PM Tickets $25

● 7:00: Cantorei sine Nomine. Bach’s Christmas Oratorio. Bach: Christmas Oratorio (complete and in English). Colin Ainsworth, Shannon Coates, Sasha Liebich-Tate, Jonathan Liebich: soloists; Cantorei sine Nomine choir; Orpheus Symphonietta; Stuart Beau Donovan, director. St. Paul’s Anglican Church (Brantford), 59 Toronto St. S., Uxbridge. 905-852-7016. $25.


Tuesday November 26

● 7:30: Don Wright Faculty of Music. Opera at Western. The Secret Gardener (La Finta Giardiniera). Paul Davenport Theatre, Talbot College, Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767. $30/$20(adv). Also Nov 21(7:30pm), 22(7:30pm), 23(2pm).

● 7:30: Don Wright Faculty of Music. Opera at Western. The Secret Gardener (La Finta Giardiniera). Paul Davenport Theatre, Talbot College, Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767. $30/$20(adv). Also Nov 21(7:30pm), 22(7:30pm), 23(2pm).

● 7:30: Don Wright Faculty of Music. Opera at Western. The Secret Gardener (La Finta Giardiniera). Paul Davenport Theatre, Talbot College, Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767. Free.

Wednesday November 27


Thursday November 28

Concerts. Beyond the GTA


7:30: King Edward Choir. Gloria! A Christmas Concert. Vitalstv: Gloria; Rutter: Angels; Candile Choir: Willian; Hodie, Chris-tus natus est; Telfer: Christmas Fanfare; and others. Work and others. Oliver Balaburski, conductor. Bethel Community Church, 128 St. Vincent Street, Barrie. 705-733-7955 or kingedward-choir.ca. $25; $15(st). Also 2pm.


8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. German Romantics. Schumann: Overture, Scherzo and Finale; Brahms: Violin Concerto in D; Gershnein Symphony No. 2 in E-flat. Andrei Fefer, conductor; Blake Pouliot, violin; Centre in the Square, 101 Queen St. N., Kitchener. 519-745-4711 or 1-888-745-4717 or kwsymphony.ca. $20-$87. Also Nov 29.

8:00: Zula. Nick Fraser Trio Rock on Lockie. Nick Fraser; drums/composition; Tony Malaby, saxophones; Kris Davison, piano. Church of St. John the Evangelist, 320 Charlton Ave. W. Hamilton. zulapresents.org. $15 or PWYC.

Sunday December 1

1:30: Don Wright Faculty of Music. New Horizons Band 20th Anniversary: Roy Ernst, guest conductor. Paul Davenport Theatre, Talbot College, Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-561-3767.


3:00: Achiil Choral Society. Gloria! Sounds Christmas Concert. Chilcott: Gloria; and other works. Audience sing-along. Sheng, Grenke, conductor. West-University United Church (Orangeville). 247 Broadway Ave., Orangeville. 506-873-2737 or achil.ca. $10($17-$13); $5(child). Also Nov 30(Balton).

3:00: Guelph Chamber Choir. Guelph Chamber Choir’s Christmas Lessons and Carols with Brass Quintet, Charlene Pauls, conductor. St. George’s Anglican Church (Guelph). 99 Woolwich St., Guelph. 765-3000. $25/$4 for $80; $100($50 and under; $75 youth 14 and under).


3:00: Westben. A Western Christmas Carol. Rob Winslow; Solistos; Westben Youth, Teen and Festival Choirs. Norwood United Church, 4254 Hwy 7, Norwood. 705-655-5508 or 1-877-885-5717. $28(ad); $15(under $30); $5(youth). Also Nov 23(2pm, Campbellford). 243pm, Campbellford). 30(3pm, Peterborough).

7:00: Barrie Concert Band. Christmas at the Beach. Lighthouse Community Church, 800 Sundial Cres., Barrie. 705-735-0720. Donation to the local food bank. Pro-ceeds to the Wasaga Beach Ministerial Food Bank. Sponsored by Waterside Retirement Lodge and Lighthouse Community Church.

7:30: Ottawa Bach Choir. A Bach Christ-mas. Bach: Meinem Jesu lass ich nicht BWV14; Ach Gott, wie manches Herzeleid BWV3; Was mein Gott will, das g’scheh all-zeit BWV111; and others. Meredith Hall, soprano; Nicholas Burns, countertenor; Philippe Gagné, tenor; Andrew Mahon, bass; Ensemble Caprice baroque orchestra; and Jona-than Oldenberg, organ. Knox Presbyterian Church (Ottawa), 120 Lisgar St., Ottawa. 613-270-1015. $50(reserved); $40(ad); $35(sr); $15(st). Also Nov 30 (Grace Church Barrie).
### Monday December 2

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<tr>
<td><strong>12:30 Don Wright Faculty of Music</strong></td>
<td>Contemporary Music Studio, Von Kuster Hall, Music Building, Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767. Free.</td>
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### Tuesday December 3

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<td><strong>12:30 Don Wright Faculty of Music</strong></td>
<td>Western University Wind Ensemble. Works by Stetter, Khachatryan, Stamp and Ticheli. Paul Davenport Theatre, Talbot College, Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767. Free.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>12:30 Don Wright Faculty of Music</strong></td>
<td>Electronic Acoustic Music Compositions. Von Kuster Hall, Music Building, Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767. Free.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>12:30 Don Wright Faculty of Music</strong></td>
<td>Western University Symphony Band. Works by Barnes, Ticheli, Can der Rooft, Hadlock, Von Kuster. George Paul Davenport Theatre, Talbot College, Western University, 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767. Free.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>7:30 Cuckoo’s Next Folk Club</strong></td>
<td>Sarah Matthews and Doug Eunson. Chaucer’s Pub, 122 Carling St., London. 519-381-5847. $25/$20(ad).</td>
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<td><strong>12:15 St. George’s Cathedral (Kingston)</strong></td>
<td>Advent Concert. Douglas Handforth, violin; Jennifer Tindale, cello; Frank Harkness, piano. 270 King St. E., Kingston. 613-548-4617 or stgeorgecats.ca. Free.</td>
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### Friday December 6

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<td><strong>11:00am: Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts</strong></td>
<td>To Giò with Love. Works by Beethoven, Brahms and Dvořák. Gryphon Trio. 390 King St. W., Kingston. 613-533-2424 or queenus.ca/theisabel/tickets. $42-45; $39-45(faculty/staff); $29-32(st).</td>
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<td><strong>8:00 TD Sunfest World Music &amp; Jazz Series</strong></td>
<td>“Five for Brown Christmas.” Ailân Hall, 795 Dundas St. E., London. sunfest.on.ca. $40/$33(ad).</td>
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<td><strong>11:00am: Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts</strong></td>
<td>Celebrate Holidays! The Global Village. Recommended for ages 6 to 12. Chris McKhouf and Friends. Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts, Rehearsal Hall, 390 King St. W., Kingston. 613-533-2424 or queenus.ca/theisabel/tickets. $10; $7(faculty/staff); $5(30 and under). Post-concert workshop: Storytelling and Trout Music.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2:00 Barrie Concert Band</strong></td>
<td>A Christmas Chocolate Box. Collister Street United Church, 112 Collister St., Barrie. 705-736-0720. $20; $10(ad); free(under 13).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>7:30 Bach Elgar Choir</strong></td>
<td>Handel’s Messiah. With choir and orchestra. Melrose United Church, 68 Homewood Ave., Hamilton. 905-527-5995. $40; $25(ad); $20(st).</td>
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### Productions

- **Sweeney Todd.** Music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, book by Hugh Wheeler. McManus Stage at the Grand Theatre, 471 Richmond St. London. 519-672-8800. $33.90. Nov 26, 7:30pm. Runs to Dec 7. Wed, Sat(Tue)7:30pm; Sun(3:00pm). Note: also Dec 7, 1:30pm. |
- **National Ballet of Canada.** Giselle. Music by Adolphe Adam. Sir Peter Wright, choreographer. Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. 416-345-9595. $41 and up. Opens Nov 6, 7:30pm. Runs to Nov 10. Wed-Sat(3:00pm), Thurs/Sat/Sun(2:00pm). |
- **National Ballet.** Etudes & Piano Concerto a & Petite Mort. Music by Carl Czerny, Dmitri Shostakovich, and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Harald Lander, choreographer; Alexei Ratmansky, choreographer; Jill Ayland, choreographer. Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. 416-345-9595. $41 and up. Opens Nov 27, 7:30pm. Runs to Dec 1. Wed-Sat(7:30pm), Sun(2:00pm). |
- **Off Broadway Theatre.** Talbot College. Works of Strauss, Debussy, Poulenc, Glinka, Tchaikovsky and others. Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, 427 Bloor St. W. 416-466-6323. $50; $40(sr); $15(13-25); $12(under 13). Dec 1, 3pm. |
- **Opera by Request.** Rossini’s Barber of Seville. Music by Gioachino Rossini, libretto by Cesare Sterbini. College St. United Church, 452 College St. 416-455-2365. $20. In concert with piano accompaniment. Nov 15, 7:30pm. |
- **Opera York.** La Traviata. Music by Giuseppe Verdi, libretto by Francesca Maria Piave. Richard Wagner Music Hall, 308 Bloor St. E., Richmond Hill. 905-787-8811. $40 and up; $25(st). Nov 1, 7:30pm. Also Nov 3(mat). |
- **Peterborough Theatre Guild.** 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee. Music and lyrics by William Finn, book by Rachel Sheinkin. The Guild Hall, 364 Rogers St., Peterborough. 705-745-4211. $15-$25. Opens Nov 8, 8pm. Runs to Nov 23. Thurs-Sat(8:00pm), Sun(2:00pm). |
- **Performances Opera Concept.** AP. Another Planet in the Brick Wall. The Opera. Conceived and created by Julian Bilodeau and Dominique Champagne, based on the music and lyrics of Roger Waters. Meridian Hall, 1 Front St. E. 416-851-9790. $55 and up. Opens Nov 13, 8pm. Runs to Nov 22. Days and times vary. Visit meridianhall.com for details. |
- **Randolph Academy.** Cabaret. Music by John Kander; lyrics by Fred Ebb. book by Joe Masteroff. Annex Theatre, 72 Bathurst St. 416-924-9245. $25. Opens Dec 3, 8pm. Runs to Dec 7. Tues(7:30pm), Sat(2:00pm). |
- **Royal City Musical Productions.** Mamma Mia! Music and lyrics by Benny Andersson, Björn Ulvaeus, and some songs with Stig Anderson, book by Catherine Johnson.operating company. 1151 Richmond St. N., London. 519-661-3767. $69; $64(sr); $33(30 and under); $20(ad). Opens Nov 8, 7:30pm. Runs to Nov 16. Thurs-Sat(7:30pm), Sun(2:00pm). Note: also Nov 9, 2pm. |
- **Theatre Ancaster.** Mamma Mia! Music and lyrics by Benny Andersson, Björn Ulvaeus, and some songs with Stig Anderson, book by Catherine Johnson. Ancaster High School, 1-800-567-1600. $35 and up. Opens Nov 15, 7:30pm. Runs to Nov 30. Fri(Sat)(7:30pm), Sun(2:00pm). Also Nov 23(2:00pm). |
- **Theatre Aquarius.** hairspray. Music by Marc Shaiman, lyrics by Scott Wittman and
Marc Shaiman, book by Mark O’Donnell and Thomas Meehan, based on the film. Thea
er Aquarius, 190 King William St. Hamilton. 905-
522-7659. $40 and up. Opens Nov 27, 7:30pm.
Runs to Dec 24. Tues-Sat(7:30pm), Sat/ Sun(7:30pm). Note: Dec 24 show at 1:30pm.

• Theatre Aurora. Assassins. Music and
lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, book by John
Weidman. Theatre Aurora, 150 Henderson Dr.
905-727-3669. $25; $23(sen). $10(st). 
Opens Nov 28, 8pm. Runs to Dec 1. Thurs-
Sat(8pm), Sun(2pm).

• Theatre Gargantua. The Wager. Created by
Jacquie A. P. Thomas, written by Michael
Spence. Theatre Passe Murnaille, 16 Ryerson
Ave. 416-260-4560. $22-$35. Opens Nov 14,
7:30pm. Runs to Nov 30. Wed-Sat(7:30pm).

• Theatre Orangeville. Little Women. Music and
lyrics by Jim Betts, book by Nancy
Early. Orangeville Town Hall Opera House, 87
Broadway, Orangeville. 919-942-3423.
$44, $21(tkt). Opens Nov 26, 8pm. Runs to Dec
22. Days and times vary. Visit thea-
tre-orangeville.ca for details.

• Theatre Sheridan. Newsies. Music by Alan
Menken, lyrics by Jack Feldman, book by Har-
vey Fierstein, based on the film. Macdon-
ald-Ahefull Hall, 1430 Trafalgar Rd, Oakville.
905-815-4049. $30; $27(tkt). Opens Nov 26,
7:30pm. Runs to Dec 8. Tues-Sat(7:30pm), 
Fri/Sat(8pm), Sat/Sun(2pm). Note: no show Dec 1.

• Theatre Sheridan. Nine. Music and lyrics by
Maury Yeston, book by Arthur Kopit. Studio
Theatre, 1430 Trafalgar Rd, Oakville.
905-815-4049. $30; $27(tkt). Opens Nov 29,
7:30pm. Runs to Dec 5. Tues-Sat(7:30pm), 
Sat/Sun(2pm).

• TO Live. Juego Ensemble - A Man of Good
Hope. St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts,
27 Front St. 1-855-985-2875. $60-$85. Opens
Nov 13, 8pm. Runs to Nov 17. Wed-Sat(7:30pm), 
Sat/Sun(2pm).

• TO Live. Taj Express: The Bombay Musical
Revue. St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts,
27 Front St. 1-855-985-2875. $40-$60. Opens
Nov 24, 7pm. Runs to Dec 1. Tues-Sat(7:30pm), 
Sat/Sun(2pm).

• Tongue in Cheek Productions. Opera
5: Eight Singers Drinking. Works by Handel, Per-
ter, Montsalvatge, Berlioz, Viardot and others.
Gallery 345, 345 Sorauren Ave. 647-825-3515.
$35, $25(art workers). Nov 8, 8pm.

• Toronto City Opera. Les contes d’Hoffmann. Music by Jacques Offenbach, 
libretto by Jules Barbier. Al Green Thea-
tre, 750 Spadina Ave. 647-699-9391. $45-
$55; $35(st). Opens Nov 21, 7:30pm. Also
Nov 23(4pm), 24(3pm).

• Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Grand
Opera in Concert: Thais. Music by Jules Mas-
senet, libretto by Louis Gallet. Roy Thomson
Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-3375. $35 and up.
Nov 7, 8pm. Also Nov 9.

**C.** Music Theatre

120 Diner
120 Church St. 416-792-7725
120diner.com (full schedule)
Most shows $30-$60
All shows: PWYC ($10-$20 suggested)

Alleycatz
2409 Yonge St. 416-481-6665
alleycatz.ca
All shows: Call for cover charge info.
Mon 8:30pm Salsa Night with DJ Romantico with free lessons.
Tues 8:30pm Bachata Night with Weekly Guest DJ with free lessons.
Wed 7pm Midtown Blues Jam hosted by Andrew “Voodoo” Walters.
Thurs 7pm Spotlight Thursdays.
Fri & Sat 9:30pm Funk, Soul, R&B Top 40 $10 cover after 9pm.
Sat 5pm-6pm Matinee Jazz.
Sun 4pm Blues in The Alley w/ Big Groove.
Nov 8 Gyles Band. By Urge. Nov 9 Rur, Nov 14 Where it Zat. Nov 16 Red Vel-
ade (evening). Nov 28 20 Flight Rockers.

**D.** In the Clubs (Mostly Jazz)

Stevein
Nov 27 6:30pm SHANEICE, 9:30pm 
KRUTH. Nov 29 9:30pm Running Red Lights and Mike Della.

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

Castro’s Lounge
2116 Queen St. E. 416-699-8722 
castrolounge.com (full schedule)
All shows: no cover/PWYC

Cest What
67 Front St. E. (416) 867-9499
cestwhat.com (full schedule)
All concerts are PWYC unless otherwise noted.
Nov 1 9pm Fraser Melvin Band. Nov 2 7pm The Hot Five Jazzmakers, 9pm Mr! Mouray and Cocksnow.

Emmet Ray, The
924 College St. 416-782-4497
thecommunity.com (full schedule)
All shows: no cover/PWYC

Grossman’s Tavern
379 Spadina Ave. 416-977-7000
grossmantavern.com (full schedule)
All shows: no cover unless otherwise noted. Every Sat 4:30pm The Happy Pais Duxieland Jazz Jam. Every Sun 4:30pm New Orleans Connection All Star Band; 10pm Sunday Jam with Bill Hedelive. Every Wed 10pm Action Band w/ Leo Valskiosi.

Hirut Cafe and Restaurant
2050 Danforth Ave. 416-551-7560
hirut.ca
Everday 3pm Hirut Sundays Open Mic. First and Third Tuesday 8pm Fingerstyle Gui-
tar Association.
Nov 1 8pm Daniel Barnes Ethio Jazz Quartet. 
Nov 2 8pm Marty Harrison Jazz Quartet.
Nov 5 8pm Fingerstyle Guitar Association Open Stage. Nov 8 8:30pm Don Nabardi Jazz of the Americas. Nov 10 7pm The Dun-
ton Money Trio. Nov 15 8pm Steve Koven Trio.
Nov 16 8pm Enku Scholarship Fund raising Party. 
Nov 19 8pm Fingerstyle Guitar Asso-
Nov 29 Hirut Hoot Comedy Night.

Home Smith Bar – See Old Mill, The
Hugh’s Room
2261 Dundas St. W. 416-533-5483
hughesroom.com
All shows at 8:30pm unless otherwise noted. See website for individual show prices.
Nov 2 Johnny A. Nov 3 Jessica Rayhe Pre-
sets: The Dylan Project. Nov 4 Myles Good-
wyn and Friends of the Blues. Nov 5 8pm 
November Gets Seriously Busy

A

h, November. A month so rich in music that it causes one to strain against word limits, bridle at the constraints of the page and discard a number of truly perfect jokes, whose inclusion – if a writer took less seriously his charge to write about, well, music – would have sent this magazine’s readership into dangerous paroxysms of laughter, such that finishing the rest of this column would surely prove impossible. Out of kindness: let’s get to it.

On November 14 and 15, the Montreal-based pianist Gentiane MG (Michaud-Gagnon) leads her eponymous trio at Jazz Bistro in support of her recent album, Wonderland. Though Michaud-Gagnon may be a new name to Toronto audiences, she has been increasingly active on the Canadian jazz scene following her time at McGill, at which she studied with Rémi Bolduc, André White and Jean-Michel Pilc, among others. Her debut trio recording, Eternal Cycle, won the 2016 Juno Award for ‘Best Jazz Album.’

Michaud-Gagnon brings her working rhythm section, bassist Levi Dover and drummer Louis-Vincent Hamel. The trio’s playing runs the gamut from introspective, pensive ballads to uptempo swingers. Throughout it all, Michaud-Gagnon discharges her pianistic duties with aplomb, playing both single-note lines and lush chords with succinct clarity.

Also at Jazz Bistro: vibraphonist Dan McCarthy, on November 26, featuring the same band. Recorded in May of this year at Canterbury Music Company, McCarthy’s newest release, City Abstract, features the same band. Recorded in May of this year at Canterbury Music Company, McCarthy’s newest release, City Abstract, highlights the 251 Victoria St. 416-363-5299 jazzbistro.ca (full schedule)

Jazz Bistro, The

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


Jazz Room, The

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

Lula Lounge

1558 Dundas St. W. 416-588-3007 lula.ca (full schedule)
Every Fri 7:30pm Afterwork Global Party Series Free before 8pm; Every Fri 8:30pm Havana Club Fridays @5; Every Sat 10:30pm Salsa Saturdays @5.

Monarch Tavern

12 Clinton St. 416-531-5833 themonarchtavern.com (full schedule)
Nov 1 8:30pm Haunting The Monarch: Love Wagon, Averages & Rikshaw. Nov 3 9pm Pones w/ Mustardmind, Animal Party, Torandaga. Nov 4 7:30pm Martin Looner & His Orange Devils Orchestra. Nov 5 8pm Belleville-Ville. Nov 6 8:30pm Motherhood

Mezzetta Restaurant

681 St. Clair Ave. W. 416-658-5687 mezzetterestaurant.com (full schedule)

...In the Clubs (Mostly Jazz)...

Gentiane MG Trio

Pat Collins and drummer Ted Warren. McCarthy’s quartet appears in support of his recently released album, City Abstract, which features the same band. Recorded in May of this year at Canterbury Music Company, City Abstract is something of a homecoming for McCarthy, who, after living and working in New York for 15 years, has moved back to his hometown of Toronto. McCarthy is a superlative vibraphonist, with chops, tone and taste to spare; his performance/recording credits include work with American musicians such as Steve Swallow, Ben Monder and George Garzone, as well as with leading Canadian musicians, including Lorne Lofsky, Terry Clarke and Lalai Bialli. Though the vibraphone has been something of an uncommon instrument in modern jazz, McCarthy — along with other notable young players, including the American Joel Ross and Toronto’s Pat Collins and drummer Ted Warren. McCarthy’s quartet appears in support of his recently released album, City Abstract, which features the same band. Recorded in May of this year at Canterbury Music Company, City Abstract is something of a homecoming for McCarthy, who, after living and working in New York for 15 years, has moved back to his hometown of Toronto. McCarthy is a superlative vibraphonist, with chops, tone and taste to spare; his performance/recording credits include work with American musicians such as Steve Swallow, Ben Monder and George Garzone, as well as with leading Canadian musicians, including Lorne Lofsky, Terry Clarke and Lalai Bialli. Though the vibraphone has been something of an uncommon instrument in modern jazz, McCarthy — along with other notable young players, including the American Joel Ross and Toronto’s
Landline

Michael Davidson – serves as a good reminder of the instrument’s strengths and capabilities, and of the unique music that it makes possible.

On November 6 and 7, saxophonist Chet Doxas brings the group Landline to The Rex. Though currently a Brooklyn resident, Doxas was born and raised in Montreal, where he attended McGill for both his undergraduate and graduate degrees; his brother, Jim Doxas, is one of Canada’s better-known jazz drummers, and still based in their shared hometown. Landline – whose eponymous debut album will release on November 1 – is a quartet, made up of Doxas, pianist Jacob Sacks, bassist Zack Lober and drummer Vinnee Sperrazza. Landline is something of a family affair: in May of this year, George Doxas, Chet’s father, recorded the album in Montreal at Boutique de Son Studios. Landline gets its name from a two-year-long process of “collaborative composition” by all four members of the quartet, each of whom made contributions to each piece in a process reminiscent of the children’s game “broken telephone.” What this means isn’t precisely clear, but I imagine that all will be revealed at The Rex. What is clear is that Landline represents an intriguing new project from accomplished modern jazz musicians who have played together – both in this specific quartet and in other configurations – for a number of years, with a collective group dynamic that only comes with shared experience.

Sacks will be returning to The Rex later in the month with the Dan Weiss Trio, where he – along with Weiss (drums) and Thomas Morgan (bass) – will be playing two consecutive nights on November 20 and 21. The last time that I wrote about Weiss for The WholeNote, it was in the wake of his 2018 Jazz Festival performance with his Starebaby project. Drawing influence from Twin Peaks, the album Starebaby was a study in Lynchian intensity, with bombastic and quiet moments sustained past conventional points of resolution. During the group’s packed Toronto show, this exploratory spirit was on display in full force; the show that I saw qualified as one of the loudest and quietest shows that I’ve ever seen at The Rex, or, for that matter, at any jazz venues.

...In the Clubs (Mostly Jazz)

w/Pete Carmichael & The Volts, Maybelleen
Nov 7 & 8 9pm Mimico w/Vallens, Bart. Nov 8 8:30pm Sorry Girls w/Favours & More. Nov 9 8:30pm Pale Lips w/Praner, Terrastray.

N’awlins Jazz Bar & Dining

299 King St. W. 416-595-1958
nawlin.ca
All shows: no cover/PWYC.
Every Tue 6:30pm Stacie McGregor. Every Wed 7pm The Jim Heineman Trio. Every Thu 8pm Nothin’ But the Blues with Joe Bowden. Every Fri & Sat 8:30pm N’awlins All Star Band. Every Sun 7pm Brooke Blackburn.

Nice Bistro, The

117 Brook St. N., Whitby. 905-666-8339
nicebistro.ca (full schedule)
Live jazz and dinner, $45.00 per person. Dinner from 6pm and music from 7pm to 9pm.
Nov 13 Suzy and Doug. Nov 27 Paul Greco and Laura Gauthier.

Old Mill, The

21 Old Mill Rd. 416-236-2641
oldmilltoronto.com (full schedule)
The Home Smith Bar: No reservations. No cover. $20 food/drink minimum. All shows: 7:30-10:30pm unless otherwise listed.
Nov 1 Canadian Jazz Quartet & Friends.

Pilot Tavern, The

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

Poetry Jazz Café

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

Resposado Bar & Lounge

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

Reservoir Lounge, The

52 Wellington St. E. 416-955-0887
reservolounge.com (full schedule).
Every Tue & Sat, 8:45pm Tyler Yaremko and his Rhythm. Every Wed 7pm The Digs. Every Thurs 9:45pm Stacey Kaniuk. Every Fri 9:45pm Dee Dee and the Dirty Martinis.

Rex Hotel Jazz & Blues Bar, The

104 Queen St. W. 416-598-2475
therex.ca (full schedule). Call for cover charge info.
Nov 1 4pm Hogtown Syncopators, 6:30pm Lester McLean Trio, 9:45pm Andy Ballantyne’s Sidewinders.
Nov 2 12pm Terry Wilkins’ Uncle Bass, 3:30pm Connor Gains, 7pm Elena Kapelinen Group, 9:45pm Bernie Senensky Sextet.
Nov 3 12pm Excelsior Dixieland, 3:30pm Club Django, 7pm Marilyn Lerner Duo, 9:30pm Barry Romberg Group. Nov 4 6:30pm U of T Jazz Ensembles, 9:30pm JazzLab Orchestra. Nov 5 6:30pm Brodie West Quintet, 9:30pm Jazz Lab Orchestra. Nov 6 6:30pm Chris Pratt Trio, 9:30pm Chet Doxas’ Landline. Nov 7 6:30pm Kevin Quain, 9:30pm Chet Doxas’ Landline. Nov 8 4pm Hotgton Synopators, 6:30pm Lester McLean Trio, 9:45pm Alex Dean Jazz Orchestra.
Nov 9 9pm Terry Wilkins’ Uncle Bass, 3:30pm Laura Hubert Band, 7pm Jenna Marie R&B, 9:45pm Alex Dean Jazz Orchestra.
Nov 10 12pm Excelsior Dixieland, 3:30pm Red Ramble, 7pm Marilyn Lerner, 9:30pm W/V Boogaloos. Nov 11 6:30pm U of T Student Jazz Ensembles, 9:30pm Brigham Phillips Jazz Orchestra.
Nov 12 6:30pm Brodie West Quintet, 9:30pm Harry Bartlett Trio.
Nov 13 6:30pm Chris Pratt Trio, 9:30pm Lauren Falls Quintet. Nov 14 6:30pm Kevin Quain, 9:30pm Robb Cappelletto Group.
Nov 15 4pm Hogtown Syncopators, 6:30pm Lester McLean Trio, 9:45pm Avi Granite.
Nov 16 12pm Terry Wilkins’ Uncle Bass, 3:30pm Chris Hunt Trotter + 7, 7pm Justin Bacchus, 9:45pm Dave Young Quintet.
Nov 17 12pm Excelsior Dixieland, 3:30pm Dr. Nick & The Rollercoasters, 7pm Marilyn Lerner Trio, 9:30pm Dan Pitt Trio.
Nov 18 3:30pm U of T Student Jazz Ensembles, 9:30pm Humber College Jazz Orchestra.
Nov 19 6:30pm Brodie West Quintet, 9:30pm Classic Rex Jazz Jam.
Nov 20 6:30pm Chris Pratt Trio, 9:30pm Dan Weiss Trio. Nov 21 6:30pm Kevin Quain, 9:30pm Dan Weiss Trio. Nov 22 4pm Hogtown Syncopators, 6:30pm Lester McLean Trio, 9:45pm Michael Dunston.
Nov 23 12pm Terry Wilkins’ Uncle Bass, 3:30pm Advocats Big Band, 7pm Justin Bacchus, 9:45pm Roberto Occhipinti.
Nov 24 12pm Hart House Jazz Ensemble, 3:30pm Excelsior Dixieland, 7pm Chris Banks Trio, 9:30pm Michael Eckert’s Neon Eagle.
Nov 25 6:30pm U of T Student Jazz Ensembles, 8:30pm John MacLeod’s Rex Hotel Orchestra.
Nov 26 6:30pm Brodie West Quintet, 9:30pm Gynnpoved.
Nov 27 6:30pm Chris Pratt Trio, 9:30pm Carmen / Davidon.
Nov 28 6:30pm Kevin Quain, 9:30pm Carmen / Davidon.
Nov 29 4pm Hotgton Synopators, 6:30pm Lester McLean Trio, 9:45pm Brad Shigeta w/David Brand. Nov 30 12pm Terry Wilkins’ Uncle Bass, 3:30pm Paul Redlick, 7pm Justin Bacchus, 9:45pm Joe Bowden Quintet.

Salty Dog Bar & Grill, The

1880 Queen St. E. 416-849-5064
thesaltydogca.com (full schedule)
Every Tue 7pm Jazz Night. Every Thu 8:30pm Karaoke. Every Fri 9:30pm Blues Jam - house band with weekly featured guest. Every Sat 3pm Salty Dog Saturday Matinee.

Sauce on Danforth

1376 Danforth Ave. 647-748-1376
saucandonfartoronto.com
All shows: No cover.
Every Mon 9pm Elena Paparino’s Club Book. Every Tue 7pm Julian Faith. Every Wed Paul Reddick & Friends. Every Thu 8pm Steve Koven and Arnie Roth. Sat and Sun Matinees 4pm various performers.

The Senator Winebar

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

Tranzac

202 Brunswick Ave. 416-823-8137
tranzac.org (full schedule)
3–4 shows daily, various styles, in three different performance spaces. Mostly PWYC.

Isaac Fields; photo: Taylor Smith

November 2019

70 | 2503_Listings_Master.indd 70
10/27/2019 8:29:30 PM
Colin Story is a jazz guitarist, writer and teacher based in Toronto. He can be reached at www.colinstory.com, on Instagram and on Twitter.
Nov 10, 17, 24, Dec 363-8231. coc.ca. $20(adults); $15(sr/st). Also for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. 416-

California Music Centre, Chalmers Performance
Space, 20 St. Joseph St., 416-961-6601.
Free admission.

Nov 17 2:00: CAMMAC Toronto Region. Reading for Singers and Instrumentalists of Haydn’s Te Deum and Bruckner’s Te Deum. Maria Case, conductor. Christ Church Deer Park, 1570 Yonge St. 905-877-0671. $10; $6(members).

Nov 23 10:30am: Toronto Mendelssohn Choir. Singation Saturday Choral Workshop. Guest conductor Dr. Andrew Donaldson will lead participants through part-songs, call-and-response freedom songs, and dance songs from various faith traditions and many countries. Cameron Hall, Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, 1585 Yonge St. Information at tmchoir.org/singation-saturdays/. $10 fee includes refreshments.

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Bradshaw Amphitheatre and R. Fraser Elliott Hall, as well as backstage areas such as the wig rooms and dressing rooms, the orchestra pit, and other spaces that only a stage door pass could unlock. Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W, 416-363-8231. coc.ca. $20(adults); $15(sr/st). Also for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. 416-

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GLORY AND GLORY: Rehearsal at 10am Sat., Nov. 16, at the same address.

Sung by members of the Kingston Symphonic Society:

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TRUMPET Bach Stradivarius model 37 (never used). TENOR saxophone, Yamaha; TRUMPET, Olds Ambassador; Phone 416-964-3642.

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TENOR AND BASS SECTION LEADERS NEEDED, for Anglican Church in Unionville. Paid positions. Contact nwucotton@spoth.ca

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WE ARE ALL MUSIC’S CHILDREN
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Who is DECEMBER’S CHILD?

Not happy about practising then, but currently grateful.
Not on stage but definitely part of Pacific Opera, Victoria’s current production mentioned in our cover story (see pages 8-10).
Now composing himself for conducting some new music concerts.

In our listings on November 3
Know our Mystery Child’s name? WIN PRIZES!
Send your best guess by November 22 to musicschildren@thewholenote.com

Previous artist profiles and full-length interviews can be read at thewholenote.com/musicschildren. Or – you can view them in their original magazine format by visiting our online back issues https://kiosk.thewholenote.com

Ottawa suburbs circa 1978

The WholeNote
20TH ANNUAL BLUE PAGES
UPDATE: November 2019

Welcome to the following presenters whose profiles were received too late to publish in our October 2019 Blue Pages Directory of Music Makers. It’s available online, and updated year-round, at thewholenote.com/blue.

Lula Music and Arts Centre

Lula Music and Arts Centre (LMAC) aspires to nourish a thriving Canadian world music scene. With a focus on local world artists performing music of the Americas, LMAC fosters all expressions of Canadian world music. Through concerts, festivals, cultural exchanges, education and outreach as well as audience and professional development, LMAC supports musicians from diverse cultural backgrounds, encouraging artistic cross-pollinations and cross-cultural understanding. LMAC values collaboration, mutual respect in all partnerships, community development, inclusiveness, diversity, accessibility and artistic integrity.

Tracy Jenkins
416-588-0307
www.lulaworld.ca

Ottawa Bach Choir

The Ottawa Bach Choir (OBC), founded in 2002 by Dr. Lisette Canton, offers audiences a wide range of choral music of the finest quality, performing music from all historical periods while keeping Bach’s choral œuvre as the focus of its repertoire. Through a combination of both a scholarly and emotional approach to choral music, the ensemble expands all aspects of the artistic spectrum. Joining some of Canada’s most accomplished artists and top choristers from the National Capital region and beyond, the professional choir has received national and international recognition. Now in its 18th season, the OBC performs a large subscription concert series in Ottawa and travels extensively in Canada and abroad. In 2020 the choir has been invited to return to the world’s most prestigious international Bach festival, Bachfest Leipzig, as one of a select number of ensembles worldwide (and the only Canadian ensemble) to present the entire chorale cantata cycle of Bach. Last season, the choir released its 7th CD, Handel, Bach & Schütz, on the ATMA Classique label. Performances this season include “A Bach Christmas” on Nov. 30 (in Toronto), “The Genius of Josquin” and “Prelude-Europe 2020”, several Special Events and a 5th European tour.

Dr. Lisette Canton, founder & artistic director
613-270-1015
www.ottawabachchoir.ca

Interested in WholeNote’s Blue Pages membership? Please contact Karen Ages members@thewholenote.com or at 416-323-2232 x26.
Editors' Corner

DAVID OLDS

I had a great musical visit with my good friend Ted a couple of weeks ago and he took the opportunity to show off his marvellous guitar collection. Ted has so many fine guitars that I didn’t even bother to pack one of my own for the overnight visit. Of particular interest to me was his recently acquired Larriveé 12-string, but this turned out not to be the one that impressed the most. His pride and joy is a finely hand-crafted Lowden six-string instrument with the most incredible resonance, and perfectly balanced dynamics from the quietest to the loudest range, not to mention some extremely artistic inlay over the neck and body of the guitar. It is probably the finest instrument I’ve ever had the privilege to play, and it answered the question that always pops to mind when I hear one of the masters playing: How do they get that gorgeous sound? Well of course it has a lot to do with impeccable technique, but also it seems, with the quality of the instrument itself.

Speaking of masters, Celtic guitarist Tony McManus (Scottish-born with Irish heritage), who has made his home in Elora for the past dozen years, is exactly that. His reputation is such that the prestigious Maryland-based custom guitar manufacturer PRS has produced a signature Tony McManus Private Stock Acoustic guitar line, one of which, not surprisingly, is featured on his latest release Live in Concert with multi-instrumentalist Julia Toaspern (CDTRAX.05 felicitas-records.de). Toaspern also plays a PRS (Angelus Private Stock) guitar, an unidentified violin, and they each, on occasional tracks, play a Greenfield G9 soprano guitar. The soprano guitar (a new one on me, tuned an octave above a standard guitar) is particularly effective on the Django-inflected Breton Waltzes (McManus) and Star of Munster Set (Toaspern). Although primarily a virtuosic instrumental album, McManus and Toaspern each sing a few songs, and the influences encompass Celtic, roots, jazz and Latin, along with one foray into early classical repertoire – Caccini’s Amarilli – which Toaspern says is a holdover from her days training as an opera singer. Her beautiful soprano voice is suitably idiomatic to the 16th-century love song, and the acoustic guitar accompaniment is immaculate. Also of note is her arrangement for two guitars of Manha de Carnaval from Black Orpheus in medley with the Irish tune The Musical Priest, with some familiar quotations from disparate genres thrown in along the way. Very effective. McManus’ own distinctive vocal work on a setting of Robbie Burns’ Bonnie Jean with Toaspern’s vocal and violin harmonies is stunning, harkening back to the best of the string band music to find its way to North America from the British Isles in the heyday of the 60s and 70s. As one of the “50 most influential acoustic guitarists of all time” (Guitar Player Magazine), we are fortunate that McManus has chosen to follow that path too, and settle with us in Southern Ontario. He is truly masterful and the music he has chosen to share with us here is enchanting.

Concert Note: Tony McManus and Julia Toaspern perform with John McMillan at Burdock Music Hall, 1184 Bloor St. W. on November 2 at 6:30.

Jessica Meyer is an accomplished violist who has championed contemporary applications for her instrument and expanded its repertoire through commissioning and collaboration. She is also active in the fields of period performance and improvisation, and is a renowned educator. During the past five years she has added composition to her palette and Ring Out on Bright Shiny Things (BSTC-0128 brightshiny.ninja) is a showcase for this aspect of her creativity. The disc features six powerful works ranging from solo cello through various string combinations, to songs for voice, viola and piano and the title work, for a cappella vocal octet (Grammy-winning Roomful of Teeth) and field recordings. This latter work, the title track which concludes the album, was composed in 2017 for Colorado’s TANK Center for Sonic Arts with its incredible 20-second reverberation decay, exceeding both the Taj Mahal and the Great Pyramid in this regard. Meyer takes full advantage of this in a stunning work, the overall acoustic of which is reminiscent to my ear of some of the great works of Renaissance polyphony, albeit with contemporary close harmonies. The addition of handbell percussion and recordings of church bells adds greatly to the effect.

The disc begins somewhat abrasively with But Not Until for viola (Meyer) and cello (Andrew Vee), inspired by a quote from one of my favourite authors, David Foster Wallace: “The truth will set you free. But not until it is finished with you.” This is followed by I Only Speak of the Sun, for string trio, which takes its inspiration from a poem by Rumi. Released, for specially tuned cello, “explores ideas surrounding the last moments of life… flickering lights and memories, and perhaps a swirling vortex of images of your life flashing before your eyes.” Seasons of Basho is a four-song setting of haiku by that 17th-century Japanese master, featuring the beautiful and haunting countertenor voice of Nicholas Tamagna. Only a Beginning is an instrumental duo for violin (Miranda Cuckson) and viola, but it too takes words as a point of departure, in this case a quote from Indira Gandhi – “Martyrdom does not end something, it is only a beginning” – and the text of In Paradisum from the Catholic funeral mass. All in all, this is an impressive maiden voyage for Meyer the composer, with performances and production values beyond reproach. My only caveat is the lack of information in the package, although the lyrics are included. Fortunately, all the performer details and biographical information about Meyer are available on her website jessicameyermusic.com.

Although they have been making music together since 2005, Novel Voices (Melos Records ML.812/33-100) marks the debut recording for the Carr-Petrova Duo (carpetravaduo.com), Molly Carr (viola)
have been hard-pressed to identify the origins of this gentle, lyrical Sabre Dance Khachaturian’s ballet, such as the famous Lullaby from the ballet Gayaneh in an arrangement by the duo. I must say I was only familiar with the bombastic highlights of Aram Khachaturian’s ballet, such as the famous Subre Dance, and would have been hard-pressed to identify the origins of this gentle, lyrical work so beautifully realized here. Mieczyslaw Weinberg is also represented by a transcription, in this instance of his Sonata for Clarinet and Piano, Op. 28, reminding us of the close similarities between the timbre of the viola and the darker registers of the clarinet. This is not to say that the work itself is gloomy. The charming, and at times angular, Allegretto middle movement is reminiscent of Shostakovich and Prokofiev at their most playful, but, like late Shostakovich, the work ends with a mostly sombre Adagio.

The centrepiece of this disc is a work by British composer Rebecca Clarke (1886-1979) who moved to the United States at the age of 30. From the liner notes I take the following: “three years later she entered a male-dominated composition competition sponsored by the wealthy American philanthropist Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge. Out of a field of 72 candidates for the prize, her Viola Sonata came first, tied with a composition by Ernest Bloch. Ultimately, though, the award went singlehandedly to Bloch, amidst prejudice-ridden rumours that ‘Rebecca Clarke’ was simply a pseudonym for another male composer, because ‘it could not have been’ a woman who had written such a beautiful piece of music.” That harsh judgement notwithstanding, the notes go on to say: “The Viola Sonata has almost become a flagship for the advocacy of the viola as a solo instrument, and is now considered one of the magnificent jewels of chamber music literature.” This nuanced performance goes to demonstrate just how much culture was lost through the tragedy of the Holocaust, and the thoughtful and thorough booklet notes by OREL Foundation scholar Robert Elias provide context.

The premise of the project is intriguing, and is the focus of a documentary by filmmakers Victoria Stevens and Skyler Knutzen that will premiere in 2020. A young Mexican, Fernando Arroyo Lascurain, was selected to be the project’s composer-in-residence and he accompanied the musicians on their tour of refugee camps. The resulting work, Novel Voices, is in three movements: Stories and Dreams, Dance and Uncertainty and Call and Prayer. It “magically weaves together the different music of the various children’s ancestral cultures we encountered: from Arabic music to the music of Bulgaria, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Syria, Chechnya...” and provides a moving and effective ending to this outstanding CD.

I must admit that I was only familiar with two of the names of the composers included on Silenced Voices, Hans Krása and Gideon Klein. The disc features works for string trio by Jewish composers from early in the 20th century performed by the Black Oak Ensemble (Cedille CDR 90000 189 cedillerecords.org). Both Krása and Klein spent time in the German “camp-ghetto” Theresienstadt, where the latter organized cultural events and the former’s children’s opera Brundibár received more than 50 performances. Although the Nazis cynically described Theresienstadt as a “spa town” where elderly German Jews could “retire” in safety, the ghetto was in reality a collection centre for deportations to killing centres in Nazi-occupied Eastern Europe. Krása died at Auschwitz and Klein was sent to Fürstengrube, where he perished just days before its liberation in 1945. The other composers represented here all suffered similar fates, with the exception of Géza Frid (1904-1989) who fled his native Hungary to the Netherlands “where he managed to escape detection as a ‘stateless Jew’ and eventually became a citizen and celebrated composer.” He is represented by his first published work, the String Trio Op.1, with hints of Hungarian hurdy-gurdy and bagpipes, in its world premiere recording. The other composers – Dick Kattenburg (1919-1944), Sándor Kuti (1908-1945) and Paul Hermann (1902-1944) – all perished at the hands of the Nazis. The marvellous and diverse music contained on this disc gives a glimpse of just how much culture was lost through the tragedy of the Holocaust, and the thoughtful and thorough booklet notes by OREL Foundation scholar Robert Elias provide context.

The project-based Black Oak Ensemble is comprised of Swiss-American violinist Desirée Ruhstrat, British-born cellist David Cutliff and French-born violist Aurélien Fort Pederzoli. Silenced Voices was inspired, in part, by Pederzoli’s mother, a history teacher of Sephardic descent who led annual student trips to Auschwitz, Treblinka and Terezin (Theresienstadt). In August of this year the group presented Silenced Voices at the Terezin House of Culture during the Everlasting Hope International Music Festival. It is our good fortune that they have also committed the project to disc.

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. We’re listening to this month: thewholenote.com/listening

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Janina Fialkowska

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thewholenote.com/listening
There was never any doubt about what would be the lead review once I received HK Guitar Duo Plays Mozart, the latest CD from two of Canada’s most outstanding instrumentalists, guitarists Drew Henderson and Michael Kolk (Independent, hkguitarduo.com).

What I wasn’t expecting, though, even from them, was the first of the three transcriptions on the disc — the complete Symphony No.40 in G Minor K550, the idea for the arrangement growing from some impromptu improvising on the opening theme during a break in a 2008 recording session.

Transcribing the Duo No.1 in G Major for Violin and Viola K.423 was, as Kolk readily admits, a much simpler process, and finding an arrangement for two violins of the Piano Sonata No.8 in A Minor K.310 clearly assisted with their excellent transcription for two guitars. Henderson plays a custom-built eight-string guitar in the Symphony No.40 as well as in the middle Adagio movement of the Duo, the two extra bass strings enabling an extended bass range that was particularly essential for the symphony.

The playing throughout the CD is immaculate, the technical artistry always matched by the musical sensitivity and intelligence. The Duo and the Piano Sonatas are not exactly insubstantial works, but the real gem here is the Symphony No.40. “It’s incredible,” says the accompanying promo blurb, “that four hands and 14 strings can cover so much music that was written for an orchestra, but the HK Duo makes it sound effortless.”

Indeed they do, but more significantly — and crucially — they also make it sound both musically and artistically meaningful and an immensely satisfying listening experience in all respects. It’s a quite astonishing technical and musical accomplishment, completely convincing through all four movements.

Engineered and edited by Drew Henderson to his usual impeccable standards at the Church of St. Mary Magdalene in Toronto, this is a simply outstanding guitar CD.

By sheer coincidence, for the second month in a row I received a guitar quintet CD that opened with the Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco Quintet for Guitar and String Quartet Op.143 and closed with Luigi Boccherini’s Quintet for Guitar and String Quartet In D Major — the one with the famous Fandango final movement. Last month it was Jason Vieux and the Escher Quartet, and this month it’s guitarist Sharon Isbin and the Pacifica Quartet on Souvenirs of Spain & Italy, a CD that features music by Italian-born composers influenced by Spanish idioms (Cedille CDR 90000 190 cedillerecords.org).

The other works on the CD are Vivaldi’s popular Lute Concerto in D Major RV93, heard here in Emilio Pujol’s arrangement for guitar and string trio, and Joaquin Turina’s La oración del torero Op.34 in the composer’s own string quartet edition of the original for late quartet.

Perhaps the words “seldom-heard gem” are finally becoming inappropriate for the gorgeous Castelnuovo-Tedesco quintet, which would be welcome news. There may possibly be a bit more warmth and tonal colour in Vieux’s playing and a slightly less-forward guitar balance, but both performances feature excellent work by the soloists backed by beautiful quartet playing, and can be recommended without reservation.

The two performances of the Boccherini quintet are also very similar and equally impressive, the main difference being the addition of castanets and tambourine for almost the entire Fandango on this current disc, whereas on the Vieaux, the castanets (no tambourine) only appear for a brief single spell in the middle of the movement. Isbin adds her own Baroque ornamentation in a measured and thoroughly enjoyable performance of the Vivaldi concerto; indeed, the two middle works on this CD give it a decided edge over the Vieux disc.

David Starobin is the classical guitar soloist on New Music with Guitar Vol.12, the latest CD in the excellent ongoing series on the Bridge label (9520 bridgerecords.com).

All five composers represented — Fred Lerdahl, John Musto, William Bland, Edward Green and David Leisner — were born between 1943 and 1954, and the works are predominantly mature pieces, only Green’s Genesis: Variations for Solo Guitar, written for Starobin in 1974 and recorded in 1975, predating 2010. Starobin is joined by violinist Movses Pogossian in Lerdahl’s Three Bagatelles (2017) and by pianist Yun Hao in Bland’s Sonata No.4 (2016), the latter’s Blues final movement ending effectively with Starobin unwinding the lower guitar strings.

The outstanding baritone Patrick Mason joins the guitarist in two brief but quite superb song cycles: Musto’s The Brief Light (2010) on poems of James Laughlin and Leisner’s Three James Tate Songs (2007). Leisner’s abilities as a virtuoso guitarist make for some dazzling and imaginative settings in the latter.

Starobin and partners are all in top form in a highly entertaining program.

Chiaroscuro, the latest CD from the Schumann Quartet completes the trilogy of concept albums that began with the two CDs, Landscapes (2017) and Intermezzo (2018) (Berlin Classics 0301213BC berlin-classics-music.com).

Described as “a picture-gallery of music” the album uses Mozart’s settings of Five Fugues from Bach’s The Well-Tempered Clavier K.405 as the promenade music and connecting path between the various works: Mendelssohn’s Fugue in E-Flat Major Op.81 No.4; Philip Glass’ brief String Quartet No.2 “company”; Shostakovich’s Two Pieces for string quartet from 1931; Webern’s Six Bagatelles Op.9; and Janáček’s String Quartet No.2 “Intimate Letters.” Gershwin’s Lullaby adds a dream-like epilogue to the series.

The Schumann Quartet is performing the complete Chiaroscuro program in their live recitals, and recommends that the CD be listened to from start to finish without a break. It certainly works very well, despite — or perhaps because of — the disparity between the musical selections. Performances throughout are excellent, particularly the heartfelt reading of the astonishingly raw and emotional Janáček quartet.

The string music of the American composer Juri Seo (born 1981) is featured on the impressive CD Respi, with the Argus Quartet and cellist Joann Whang (Innova 022 innova.mu).

The quite lovely title track for string quartet is subtitled in memoriam Jonathan Harvey, and pays tribute to the British composer — a practising Buddhist — who died in 2012, and whose signature musical gesture was an evocation of breathing.
Whang is the soloist for the Suite for Cello, a suite of five dance movements very much in the J.S. Bach solo cello mode but with an increasing use of harmonics, adding what the composer terms a lingering sense of displacement.

The String Quartet – Infinite Season aims to depict the story of a year unfolding, the four movements tracing the sounds of nature as the seasons change. There’s a lovely use of harmonics again, together with field recordings of birdsong and insect noises.

Freedom & Faith is the second album from the American string quartet PUBLIQ Quartet on the Bright Shiny Things label (BSTC-0126 brightshiny.ninja). The quartet is dedicated to presenting new works, and the music here is from two of PUBLIQ’s signature initiatives: MIND I THE I GAP, collaborative compositions and improvisations by the four group members; and PUBLIQ Access, a program that commissions new string quartet works by composers living in the United States. The latter is represented by the opening and closing works – Jessica Meyer’s three-movement Get into the Now from 2017 and Shelley Washington’s Middleground from 2016 – while three collaborative creations from the former project are at the centre of the disc: Sancta Femina, reflections on Hildegard von Bingen. Francesca Caccini and Chiara Margarita Cozzolani; Ellai, based on Ella Fitzgerald’s performance of A-Tisket, A-Tasket; and Nina!, a celebration of Nina Simone.

Anything goes in the performances at times, with normal string playing being replaced by a whistle, unison singing and chanting, rhythmic clapping and percussive effects on the instrument bodies in some vibrant and decidedly upbeat music.

The outstanding violinist Tianwa Yang is the soloist on Wolfgang Rihm Music for Violin and Orchestra Vol.2 with the Deutsche Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz under Darrell Ang (Naxos 8.573667 naxosdirect.com). Yang has a strong association with Rihm’s music, having already recorded his Complete Works for Violin and Piano (8.572730) and the first volume of the Violin and Orchestra Music (8.573812) for the Naxos label.

The three substantial works here are Gesungene Zeit (Musik für Violine und Orchester Nr.2) (1991-92), Lichtes Spiel (Ein Sommerstück für Violine und kleines Orchester) (2009) and COLL’ARCO (Musik für Violine und Orchester Nr.4) (2008).

Rihm’s music is not always immediately accessible, but these works are engrossing from start to finish with some truly beautiful moments, especially in the lengthy COLL’ARCO, which with its hints of Alban Berg often sounds like a violin concerto from the Second Viennese School.

Yang is, as usual, simply brilliant in music that makes great technical and interpretative demands.

Evocation – Violin Works by Paul Ben-Haim traces the gradual assimilation of Middle Eastern influences in the music of the composer (born Paul Frankenburger in Munich, Germany) after his emigration to the British Mandate of Palestine (the future Israel) in the 1930s. Itamar Zorman is the violin soloist with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales under Philippe Bach (BIS-2398 bis.se).

The major works are the 1942 title track and the Violin Concerto from 1960, a solidly professional work with a simply lovely Andante affettuoso slow movement. Pianist Amy Yang joins Zorman for the Berceuse sfaradite from 1945 and Three Songs without Words from 1951.

The Three Studies for Solo Violin, written for Yehudi Menuhin in 1981 are among Ben-Haim’s last works. An arrangement for violin and orchestra of the Toccata piano solo from 1943 by the soloist’s father, Moshe Zorman, completes an entertaining CD.

Vaughan Williams enjoyed playing the viola for most of his long life, its sound a seemingly perfect projection of the pastoral and nostalgic nature (on the surface, at least) of his music. On Viola Fantasia, on Albion Records, the official label of the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society, violinist Martin Outram and pianist Julian Rolton perform the composer’s works for viola and piano, together with the Four Hymns for Tenor, Viola and Piano forte with tenor Mark Padmore (ALBCD 036 albion-records.org).

The Suite and Romance both sprang from Vaughan Williams’ relationship with the viola virtuoso Lionel Tertis. Six Studies in English Folk Song and the Fantasia on Sussex Folk Tunes both originally featured solo cello, the former heard here in the composer’s alternate viola version and the latter in an arrangement by Outram. The Fantasia on Greensleeves was arranged for viola and piano by another British viola virtuoso, Watson Forbes.

There’s perhaps a tendency for the viola tone to sound a bit tight at times, but there’s much to enjoy on what is clearly an authoritative CD.

For his recording project Meditations on Family the Russian-American violinist Yevgeny Kutik commissioned eight composers to translate a family photo into a short musical miniature of about two to three minutes in length for violin and various ensemble. The resulting tracks were released digitally on a weekly basis, and were gathered together on a 23-minute Extended Play CD earlier this year (Marquis 774718149329 marquis-classics.com). Composition Christopher Cerrone, Gregory Vajda, Joseph Schwantner, Kinan Azmeh, Paola Prestini, Timo Andres, Andreia Pinto Correia and Gity Razaz produced brief but intriguing works for solo violin, violin and piano, violin and double bass, violin and clarinet and violin with vocal quartet and glass harmonica. Kutik plays them with warmth and commitment.

The original photos, along with additional background information and audio tracks can be found at meditationsonfamily.com.
Les sons et les parfums
Janina Fialkowska
ATMA ACD2 2786 (naxosdirect.com)

Tailleferre were dominant forces on the French music scene. And, as Fialkowska tells us, a time when most of the older musicians with whom she came in contact during those visits, knew not only those noted composers, but also Ravel, Debussy and Fauré. One further fun fact: her piano teacher in Paris in the mid-60s, Yvonne Lefébure, noted composers, but also Ravel, Debussy and Fauré. Actually worked on the two Ravel pieces featured on the CD with Ravel himself! Can anyone imagine a headier environment for one's musical studies?

Fialkowska’s "love letter to Paris" includes works by all of the above-mentioned composers, as well as Emmanuel Chabrier. From Tailleferre’s charming and shimmery Impromptu, Fauré’s sensuously evocative Nocturne in E-flat Major Op.36, and Poulenc’s sparkling Intermezzo in A-flat Major FP18 with its sense of yearning, to Debussy’s beloved and beyond-beautiful Clair de Lune and the stunning, virtuosic and impressionistic pleasures of Ravel’s Jeux d’eau and Sonatine, Fialkowska indeed captures les sons et les parfums of a bygone Paris. It is there in the characteristic nuance, warmth, commanding musicianship, delight and dignity of her performance, which is nothing short of ravishing.

Chopin – Ballades & Impromptus
Charles Richard-Hamelin
Analekta AN 2 9145 (analekta.com)

The quietly heroic Canadian pianist, Charles Richard-Hamelin, has just released a record – his fifth on the Analekta label – of Frédéric Chopin’s most expressive and inspired music: the four Ballades, (presented in chronological order) and the three Impromptus, followed by the Fantaisie-Impromptu.

Audiences the world over have heartened to Richard-Hamelin’s extraordinary talent, a talent without self-indulgence, wholly in service of musical candour on the highest order. It is this very quality, (amongst flawless technique, lyrical sensitivity, inspired voicing and impeccable stylistic command), that makes Richard-Hamelin so unique in today’s individualistic, ego-crazed culture. The pianist brings a poetic integrity to his music-making, born of a sincerity that is both reassuring and human. His craft calls on the objective – not the subjective – to aid him in his quest for beauty, awakening virtue and aesthetic perfection at every musical turn.

In these hands, not one of Chopin’s phrases, chords or moments of pause are left unconsidered or unloved. Richard-Hamelin intimately knows every last fibre of the musical canvas, from first note to last; a marvel of integral conception. It is like seeing a skilled and seasoned painter in action, as he places every brush stroke – every swirl and point – with absolute care and expertise. Richard-Hamelin is redesigning this loved (and oft-performed) music, entirely afresh. Each cherished musical moment is revealed to be uniformly exquisite, and the listener is spellbound. Charles Richard-Hamelin is an artist of this rare Earth, singing of its myriad wonders.

Beethoven – Piano Sonatas Nos.8, 21, 23
Jae-Hyuck Cho
Sony S803556 (jaehyuckcho.com/recording)

Pianist Jae-Hyuck Cho is a well-established international recitalist and a classical music radio presenter in Korea. This CD of three much-recorded Beethoven sonatas – the C minor “Pathétique,” C Major “Waldstein” and F minor “Appassionata” – is justified by its excellent playing and sound engineering. In the Pathétique Cho’s tonal control is exceptional, from the introduction’s sonorities onwards, featuring finely graded crescendos. In the Adagio, expression is fine and intimate, while the Rondo builds and does not overwhelm. No banging in this Beethoven, or in the following Waldstein Sonata. Here, with melody mostly reduced to brief motifs in the first movement, a wealth of harmonic interest, plus the raw energy of pulses and tremolando chords, carry the movement forward. Cho achieves this task, and then shows an atmospheric side to his playing in the heartfelt introduction to the Rondo. Adhering mostly to Beethoven’s blurring pedal markings and extended trills, raising the contrast level through effective accentuation in the episodes, and managing the coda’s octave glissandos well, the end result is stellar.

The Appassionata Sonata is a little overwhelming in Cho’s...
reading. Admittedly this sometimes aggressive work is not my favourite Beethoven – one is likely to bang and I don’t begrudge Cho’s becoming emotive at times. With mostly controlled and clean playing here, there is much for devotees to admire. The CD adds an unlisted bonus encore: a finely-realized Liszt transcription of Schumann’s Widmung S666.

Marc Ponthus is revelatory. Known for major recitals of monumental works, Ponthus here offers technical brilliance with exquisite control throughout, but more colour and expression would have been welcome for Beethoven’s quasi-improvisational mode. There are great heights and depths in this work that may require risk-taking. Nevertheless, Shin handles the finale’s fugal section and the theme’s return with extended trills particularly well.

For me Franz Liszt’s Bénédiction du Dieu dans la solitude from the cycle Harmonies poétiques et religieuses, (1847) conveys a genuinely religious sense in the way the piece unfolds. Shin is flawless with the opening’s rustling background and the rich ventures into the bass register, and also in the subsequent dramatic harmony and varied figuration. He confidently paces the balance of the work well, including in the closing section where it is mainly rolled chords that support the pensive upper line. By the end, peace and calm have stilled the emotions of earlier sections.

Of the disc’s three Chopin waltzes I particularly enjoyed Op.42, informally known as the 2/4 “waltz” because of the melody’s cross rhythm against the triple-time bass. Shin is high-spirited here, pedalling lightly, creating a whirl with accents and rubato, and achieving a bravura ending. The brilliant Waltz in A-flat Major, Op.34, No.1 add to the lustre of a splendid CD.

The duo piano approach of the Turkish-born Austrian twins Ferhan and Ferzan Önder comes together on this 2019 Winter & Winter recording to mine the many musical gems found in the music of contemporary Turkish composer Fazil Say. Although, unfortunately, Say has been plagued by political persecution in recent years – sentenced to jail time in 2013 for tweets that were considered “blasphemous” by the Turkish government – the now 49-year-old composer and pianist himself, has remained prolific and artistically relevant, writing challenging new pianistic and symphonic work, which is taken on here with class and aplomb by the Önder sisters with sweeping accompaniment from the Berlin Radio Symphony. Difficult to categorize stylistically – Say combines a historically rigorous mastery of Western art-music traditions, with influence taken from Turkish folk music, jazz and chance or improvisatory forces of unpredictability. Of the Fantasie (1836–8) his insightful program notes observe “a realm larger than reason”;

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elements – the composer has assembled a hauntingly beautiful and unusual musical world that the talented Önder sisters tackle with virtuosity, expertise and their own recognizable musical agency.

Notable is the Sonata for Two Pianos, commissioned by the Louis Vuitton Foundation, which premiered earlier this year. Here, the sisters explore the range and expressive depth of the four-hand piano tradition in order to bring to life this beautiful and challenging work that prods listeners to confront their own expectations of what constitutes contemporary classical performance in 2019 and to rethink what remains possible within the codified three-part sonata form employed here. Both the music of Say, and the nuanced playing of the Önder sisters, was new to me prior to receiving this recording. I am pleased to musically get to know these important and, very much of this moment, global artists.

Andrew Scott

VOCAL

Zachary Wadsworth – When There Is Peace: An Armistice Oratorio
Chor Leoni Men’s Choir; Erick Lichte
Independent CLR 1909 (chorleoni.org)

▶ One year ago (November 10 and 11), the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I, this work was premiered and recorded in Vancouver, where Zachary Wadsworth (b.1983) is the Chor Leoni Men’s Choir composer-in-residence. Wadsworth says his goal was “to honour the experiences” of those who served and “to celebrate those who gave their lives in search of peace.”

The 58-minute oratorio draws from 17 different writers, including many soldiers’ wartime descriptions and poetry by Robert Service, Siegfried Sassoon, Sara Teasdale and others. Soprano Arwen Myers, tenor Lawrence Willford and five readers add to the sonic mix led by the chorus, Borealis String Quartet and percussionists Martin Fisk and Robin Reid, all conducted by the choir’s artistic director, Erick Lichte.

The prevailing mood, as expected, is sombre, with the chorus suggesting (to me) the haunted voices of the dead, ghostly laments from beyond the grave. A recurring motif relates to birds – representing life in contrast to the carnage below. Musically, there’s a repeated ascending violin melody (shades of Vaughan Williams!) while the text (included) mentions “larks,” “thrush,” “brave birds,” “bird songs,” “swallows,” “robins” and Sassoon’s description of the armistice: “...with such delight and Sassoon’s description of the armistice: “...with such delight...” Everyone burst out singing... with such delight as prisoned birds must find in freedom.”

The well-crafted music of this worthy addition to the choral memorial repertoire provides a platform for the powerful words of war and peace, century-old words still relevant, not only on Remembrance Day, but on all days.

Michael Schulman

Charles Gounod – La Nonne Sanglante
Michael Spyres; Vannina Santoni; Marion Lebègue; Accentus; Insula Orchestra; Laurence Equilbey
Naxos 2110632 (naxos.com)

▶ In 2018, the bicentennial of Gounod’s birth, the Paris Opéra Comique revived this opera, unspooled until 2008 in Germany following its brief, 11-performance run in 1854. Whatever the reasons for its initial failure, this production, with highly dramatic scenes, brilliantly sung by an outstanding cast, makes a persuasive case for its future survival.

During the dark, nervous Overture we witness the Nun’s murder and semi-mo start of a battle between two warring clans in 11th-century Bohemia. (Today’s opera directors abhor closed curtains during overtures.) The libretto involves two lovers from the rival clans, the ghost of “the Bleeding Nun” seeking vengeance against her murderer, mistaken identity, ghostly gatherings and a murder plot, ending with the lovers, Agnès and Rodolphe, finally reunited.

Befitting the supernatural goings-on, the semi-abstract sets and projections are all grey and black, as are most of the cast’s costumes, a mix of medieval and modern. The Nun wears a white, bloodstained shroud; the other ghosts appear in grey military garb or shrouded in white.

Tener Michael Spyres (Rodolphe) dominates the action – his arias presage Gounod’s great tenor arias for Faust and Roméo – and with his sweet yet powerful voice he sings them all magnificently! Paralleling Spyres’ intense, thrilling vocalism are sopranos Vannina Santoni (Agnès) and Jodie Devis (Arthur, Rodolphe’s page), and mezzo Marion Lebègue (Nun). Conductor Laurence Equilbey’s minor cuts, mostly in the ballet, help propel the excitement throughout.

Enthusiastically recommended to all lovers of great singing!

Michael Schulman

Verdi – Donizetti
Michael Fabiano; London Philharmonic Orchestra; Enrique Mazzola
Pentatone PTC 5186 750 (pentatonemusic.com)

▶ Opera excerpt recordings are a dime a dozen, but this new issue intrigued me. Michael Fabiano, a young American tenor of considerable repute for his starring roles in Italian and French repertoire at the most famous opera houses around the world, comes out with his debut recording on the prestigious Pentatone label with a remarkable collection of difficult bel canto arias by Verdi and Donizetti. Why these two? In his scholarly introduction Fabiano maintains that there is a relationship between the two composers, particularly in their middle periods. There is a departure from the
relatively simple Bellini cantilena towards a “symbiosis of sonority,” deepening emotions, more intense drama, more complex instrumentaton and the orchestra generally becoming more important. This thesis definitely bears out, with many examples from Verdi’s Luisa Miller, Un ballo in Maschera and La Forza del Destino vs. Donizetti’s Poliuto, Lucia di Lammermoor and Maria di Rohan. These operas and more are beautifully represented here by the tenor and sung with a voice of passion, power and fire with no lack of spectacular sustained high notes, but also with tenderness and lyricism where it’s called for.

A good example is Forse la soglia attinse from Verdi’s Un Ballo, a beautiful aria where Count Riccardo, in love with his best friend’s wife, has to give her up, but wants to see her “ultima volta,” for the last time, an aria of infinite anguish followed by the intense excitement of anticipation even though he knows he will be assassinated during the ball. But, for my money, Fabiano is strongest when he is thinking about whether he will be able to go through with the assassination or not. The excitement of the music is present in Vivaldi’s pieces, making each come alive in its own way.

The appointment of a new music director is a tumultuous experience for any group, especially for one as established as Tafelmusik. Vivaldi con amore shows us that we need not look to the future to expect great results from this orchestra’s newest chapter; they are already here, and present on this disc.

Matthew Whitfield

Back to Bach

Ofra Harnoy; Mike Herriott

Analekta ACD 2 8907 (analekta.com)

With the release of her much anticipated new recording, luminous, gifted and transcendent Israeli/Canadian cellist, Ofra Harnoy, and her brilliant collaborator and husband, Mike Herriott, have not only brought forth a project of breathtaking beauty, but they have done the near impossible – through the use of contemporary technology, Herriott’s multi-instrumental/arranging/producing skills, Harnoy’s exquisite cello work (including large cello ensembles performed entirely by her), as well as a united, inspired vision – Harnoy and Herriott have manifested a fresh, innovative and genuine way of presenting this Baroque music in a way that is both exciting and accessible.

Not since the late Jacqueline du Pré (with whom Harnoy studied) has the world heard a cellist of Harnoy’s technical calibre and almost telepathic communicative skills. The well-chosen selections here include some material previously recorded by Harnoy from her 40-plus albums, as well as favour- ites such as Bach’s Air from Orchestral Suite No. 3 and Bist du bei mir, with the addi- tion of more obscure, but stirring repertoire from Corelli and Allegri… and the sound of Harnoy’s breathtaking musicianship, multiplied by nine on Allegri’s Misere is almost too beautiful to bear.

In bringing her vision to life, Harnoy also wanted to experiment with using brass instruments instead of the traditional string (or pipe organ, etc.) accompaniments, so Herriott created complex brass arrangements, and performed all of the parts himself: piccolo trumpet, trumpet, flugelhorn, French horn and trombone. There are literally only a handful of individuals in the world who could have accomplished what Herriott has so deftly done on this remarkable project. This recording is a triumph, and a must-have for any serious collector.

Lesley Mitchell-Clarke

Berlioz Symphonie fantastique

Lucile Richardot; L’Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique; John Eliot Gardiner

Chateau de Versailles CVS011

(naxosdirect.com)

Matthew Whitfield

Analekta, with the addi-

ion of special interest. A hinged package contains two video discs and trilingual booklet. Presented is a video of an all-Berlioz concert given by Sir John Eliot Gardiner directing his orchestra, the Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique in the opulent Opera Royal, Chateau de Versailles on October 17, 2018. The participating guest artist is mezzo-soprano Lucile Richardot. The program begins with the Overture to Le Corsaire, followed by a long-time favourite, the heartfelt, La mort de Cléopâtre, passionately delivered by the totally involved Richardot. From Les Troyens the orchestra plays The Royal Hunt and Storm and the impressive Richardot returns with a deeply felt realization of the Monologue and air de Didon, “Ah, je vais mourir… Adieu, ô fière cité.” Richardot is a French mezzo-soprano who is highly respected as a soloist in Baroque music and a lot more. You can readily appreciate her voice and versatility on any of her countless videos on YouTube.

As the arguments pro and con original instruments, i.e. the instruments of the composer’s day, have all been stated and debated there is no point in carrying them on here. However, here at least, these unique, previously unheard sonorities and textures of the instruments that Berlioz knew are eloquently articulate and a revelation for listener and viewer alike. Berlioz would be elated.

Footnote: “The Secret of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony” with Gardiner and his orchestra on YouTube is a must-watch.

Bruce Surtees

Mahler – Symphony No.1 in D Major

Minnesota Orchestra; Osmo Vänskä

BIS BIS-2346 (bis.se)

This is the fourth entry from the Minnesota Orchestra in a projected Mahler symphony cycle, following releases
of the Second, Fifth and Sixth Symphonies under the direction of Osmo Vänskä, the well-regarded Finnish conductor who has devoted himself to bringing this ensemble to international renown since 2003. Mahler’s First Symphomy, composed in his 24th year, reveals at a single stroke a unique and compelling voice; it remains one of his most often-performed works. Vänskä’s solid and unaffected interpretation of the work, though structurally very well-paced, strikes me at times as a wee bit circumspect, particularly so in the funereal third movement, the opening of which is normally played as a mournful string bass solo but is contentiously (alas, not for the first time) assigned here to the entire bass section, robbing this introduction of its essentially grotesque quality; the underplaying of the intentionally vulgar interruptions of klezmer music that follows is yet another ironic opportunity missed. That being said, the strong bond between this orchestra and their leader provides in the end a highly compelling performance. I was tremendously impressed by the excellence and enthusiasm of the Minnesota musicians – I’ve rarely heard such a fierce viola section cut their way through the tumult of the finale of the work. Props as well to the recording team lead by Robert Suff; the low-floor recording level and resultant extended dynamic range lend an other-worldly aura to the liminal level and resultant extended dynamic range lead by Robert Suff; the low-floor recording level and resultant extended dynamic range lend an other-worldly aura to the liminal

Michael Colgrass – Side by Side; Letter from Mozart; The Schubert Birds
Joanne Kong; Boston Modern Orchestra Project; Gil Rose
BMOP Sound 1064 (bmop.org)

You receive a letter from “your favourite composer” signed “Your friend, Mozart,” requesting a 20th-century take on his style using extra percussion which “in my day wasn’t dignified.” The resulting 15-minute Letter from Mozart (1976) is a wonky, percussion-heavy series of dreamlike, stream-of-consciousness episodes, a drug-induced merging of the 20th and 18th centuries, requiring two conductors to avoid complete chaos. It’s great fun!

Side by Side (2007) presents Joanne Kong playing both piano and harpsichord, set 90 degrees to each other. To balance the disparate instruments, Colgrass first muted the piano strings, then amplified both to compete with the orchestra. Colgrass never severed his roots as a jazz drummer, so the 24-minute concerto exploits the percussive qualities of both keyboards and orchestra.

Colgrass wrote that The Schubert Birds (1989) is “a crazy quilt of theme and variations... based on Franz Schubert’s Kupelweiser Waltz, a little-known piano piece.” The title refers to “Schubert as a bird who spent his life singing, surrounded by a circle of others who... sang with him.” Like the CD’s other two works, the 19-minute piece revels in kaleidoscopic fragmentation and glittering sonorities.

The prolific, always-inventive Colgrass, the 1978 Pulitzer Prize-winner who died at 87 this past July, is less well-represented on disc than he should be. A Chicago native, he’d lived in Toronto since 1974, yet entitled his 2011 memoir Adventures of an American Composer. Please, record companies, give us more CDs of the adventurous Michael Colgrass!

Michael Schulman

Memorial Note: there will be a celebration of Michael Colgrass’ life and art at Walter Hall, University of Toronto, on November 10. Doors open at 2 pm, and the afternoon will be filled with the stories, memories and music by friends and colleagues from Canada, the U.S.A. and Europe, including Side by Side soloist Joanne Kong.

Kickin’ It 2.0
Land’s End Centrediscs CMCCD 26819 (musiccentre.ca)

The idea of north is central to Canadian composer Carmen Braden’s latest release, titled Songs of the Invisible Summer Stars. The imagery of shimmering icy planes at dusk – an impression imbedded within all Canadians whether physically experienced or not – is ever present in Braden’s writing for various chamber ensembles. But this imagery is not obvious, nor is it obfuscated through artistic trickery. Braden’s music is clear, and it is bright. It drifts, lingers, dances, and breathes at rest. It is at once far and near – a personal representation of a liminal landscape that is at once distant and comforting. One true gift (among many) on the release is the second move – that dark unbroken remoulding of the sky against sun, ice and smoke. This recording is captured psychogeography – a process that asks us to embrace the playfulness of our surroundings, and to drift among those places without cause. It is clear that Braden is trying to provide a portrait – but also a release – between life and surroundings. With a wide range of instrumentation, colours, and ambiances, the sounds on this recording will haunt and comfort – much like the strange beauty of the northern terrain.

Adam Scime
Lutalica
Mark Takeshi McGregor
Redshift Records (redshiftrecords.org)

As he writes in the liner notes, the motivation for his new album came from an exploration of his identities. “Lutalica [the word invented by John Koenig] meaning ‘the part of one’s identity that doesn’t fit into categories’ is a solo flute project that grew out of an identity crisis.”

McGregor has been performing music of predominantly European composers on the metal concert flute, even though he was “anything but Western European. I am half-Japanese, half-Australian, born and raised on the West Coast of Canada: a true product of the Pacific Rim.” His geographically informed search culminated in Lutalica, an album of nine recent widely varied solo flute works by composers hailing from Australia, Canada, Chile, Japan, New Zealand, Taiwan and the USA.

Bookending the album are works by two composers with strong Canadian connections. Hope Lee’s moving requiem for her father, forever after (2000), alternates moments of lyrical grief with percussive anger. Emilie LeBel’s 2017 Hiraeth (Welsh for homesickness, nostalgia, grief for lost places of the past) explores at length the “traveller’s desire to be free… all the while longing for a home to which they cannot return… which maybe never was.” The final alternating long low tones make a beautiful and satisfying ending to this album’s musical journey around the Pacific rim.

Should you consider listening to an entire album of contemporary solo flute music? When it’s so well composed, thoughtfully curated, and impressively performed as Lutalica is, my answer is a resounding yes.

Andrew Timar

Frank Horvat – What Goes Around
Various Artists
Centrediscs CMCCD 27419 (musiccentre.ca)

Vancouver flutist Mark Takeshi McGregor is an internationally recognized interpreter of classical flute music, particularly of the experimental kind.

minimalism is attractive, bright-coloured and poppy. Also surprising. Also, somewhat formulaic. This last is not a criticism of the quality or value of his writing. I’m no judge in that regard, but it does strike me that five of the six cuts on the newly released What Goes Around clock in at roughly ten minutes, suggesting a pattern of construction he consistently follows.

Breaking with this pattern, at nearly 15 minutes, is the most powerful piece, 7 Planos, recorded on several tracks and performed by the composer. A concentration exercise for the listener, it’s almost a game of recognizing the extremely gradual variations away from the initial minute of a repeated gesture. Maybe it’s me being jaded, but this one challenges me to truly listen and not let the patterning lull my attention. Fatigue for the performer is sometimes a cherished aesthetic of the composer (those guys burn me up), and if it is so for Horvat, he has at least chosen a willing victim: this is intensity from start to finish.

A curiously titled piece referencing the late Rob Ford is similarly a multi-track recording with Peter Stoll ably accompanying himself on multiple clarinets in melancholy tunefulness; apparently Horvat felt more compassion than outrage regarding the misguided mayor. Other performers include the redoubtable Bev Johnston on mallets, and the disc ends with a strangely offensive (to me, I have issues) voice loop on the repeated phrase “I Love You.”

Max Christie

Russell Hartenberger – Requiem for Percussion and Voices
Nexus; TorQ; Lindsay Kesselman; Cory Knight
Nexus 11031 (nexuspercussion.com)

The requiem mass has provided composers with inspiration for centuries, from which has come some of Western music’s greatest works, including the Requiems of Verdi and Mozart, Fauré and Duruflé, as well as those incorporating external texts, such as Britten’s War Requiem.

Russell Hartenberger’s Requiem for Percussion and Voices is a work in the latter form, eschewing the traditional requiem texts in favour of an eight-movement reflection on death and nature. Incorporating tolling bells, funeral drum beatings, a Bach chorale, bird songs and bugle calls, this requiem is an eclectic and wide-ranging synthesis of musical style that suggests a broad, universal outlook.

The disc’s liner notes, written by Hartenberger (who is also a member of Nexus), are exceedingly insightful and highly recommended to anyone who listens to this piece, for within them one will find a personal story behind each movement, from Hartenberger’s days in the United States Air Force Band to his study of West African drum music. In a work with such wide-ranging and globally sourced material as this Requiem, such commentary serves as a road map, guiding the listener into an invaluable way.

In an area of the arts so often committed to revising the works of the past, it is vitally important to explore new material in addition to the old standards. This recording provides a splendid example of why this is: tuneful, contemporary (in its truest sense), and a fine display of vocal and instrumental ability. Requiem is worthwhile listening for all.

Matthew Whitfield

Suite Nostalique – Musical Impressions from Ukraine
Izabella Budai; Matthew Christakos; Maria Dolnycky; Alex McLeod; Peter Stoll
Independent n/a (store.cdbaby.com/cd)

Pianist Maria Dolnycky originally brought together the five local musicians on this recording to perform the stylistically diverse music of these seven Ukrainian composers in 2016 at Toronto’s Gallery 345 as a fundraiser for modern prosthetic limbs for Ukraine.

Dolnycky performs with passion and detail in all the works. Mykola Lysenko’s traditional Romantic-flavoured Sorrow (Elegy), Op. 39 opens with cellist Matthew Christakos playing a mournful solo line leading to singable melodies above tonal piano chords. Anatoly Kos-Anatolsky’s Waltz for cello and piano is upbeat with dramatic touches of swing and big band styles. Now it’s violist Alex McLeod’s turn to perform expressively in Vasyl Barvinsky’s Three Romances, a three-movement work highlighted by the happy closing It’s Spring Again! movement. Levko Kolodub’s Moldovan Sketch for viola and piano showcases the composer’s and two performers’ musical talents ranging from classic high tinkles to rhythmic Moldovan-flavoured folk music. Title track Suite Nostalique for clarinet and piano is the strongest composition here, as clarinetist Peter Stoll joins Dolnycky in playing composer Taras Yashchenko’s four-movement exploration of two-step Foxtrot, slower Aria and intense rhythmic party Samba. Flutist Izabella Budai also traverses musical styles with piano from the sweet to atonal in nine short tasty selections from Boris Kosak’s Petit Fours (bite-sized treats), and the expressive Théodore Akimenko’s Idylle, Op. 14 for flute and piano.

Let’s applaud Dolnycky for making these fascinating lesser-known Ukrainian works available for wider audiences to hear and contemplate.

Tiina Kilk
Come Closer
Michael Harley; Phillip Bush
New Focus Recordings FCR240
(newfocusrecordings.com)

▶ If you play clarinet in an orchestra, the bassoon is your best friend. That rich and deeply grained sonority forgives a multitude of pitch variances; a well-supported bassoon sound is a perfect colour complement to the whistling voice of its single-reed neighbour. So immediately I must declare a bias in this commentary on Come Closer, featuring American bassoonist Michael Harley playing the music of several of his colleagues from the University of South Carolina and beyond.

Listen to this album. Just go out and buy it and put it on and marvel at the title track by John Fitz Rogers. A quartet performed in multi-track by Harley, with definite echoes of Reich, Adams and Glass, it nourishes the ear, never tiresome, always delightful. Precision marries beauty. In the following piece, Mphadventures by Stefan Freund, we’re treated to a blues-infused dialogue between bassoon and piano (played with sympathy and guts by Phillip Bush). An introductory arioso sets the stage for a swinging dance in a stylish syncopated four to a bar. This is Americanism, not Americana. It’s never hackneyed, simply enjoyable. Harley allows just the harest hint of jazz in the introduction, which is good. Too many bends induce nausea.

If you begin to think this all sounds too like easy listening, stay tuned. The third track will satisfy your wish for tonal exploration. Alarums and Excursions by Carl Schimmel bills itself as a Puzzle-Burlesque, but really leave off the brain work and just gloat that here’s something very grabby that also avoids close atonal harmonies to create the keening quality suggested by its title. On the other hand multiple Grammy Award-winning composer Michael Daugherty’s Bounce (1988) explores a series of dramatic moments in various moods, tempi, dynamics and bassoon ranges. Bluck (2008) by American post-minimalist Marc Mellits stays light of heart throughout. Echoes of Steve Reich at his most ebullient permeate the work, however Mellits’ complex cross-rhythms and syncopations also reference rock’s straightforward tonality and forward-propelling energy.

Darker Things is a fun and thought-provoking album suitable for double reed players – as well as the rest of us.

Max Christie

Darker Things
Tuple
Bright Shiny Things BSTC-0179
(brightshiny.ninja)

▶ Here’s certainly something different, a bassoon duo playing contemporary concert music. Music scored for two bassoons apparently only reaches back a few decades, yet undeterred, bassoonists Rachael Elliott and Lynn Hileman formed their duo Tuple in 2006. They have played their unusual repertoire widely at American experimental art and music venues ever since. Darker Things, their debut album, displays their admirable technique and musicality, as well as the surprising tonal, timbral and emotional range possible on just two bassoons.

The earliest work here is by the celebrated Tatar-Russian composer Sofia Gubaidulina. Her masterfully crafted, impassioned Duo Sonata (1977) is characterized by one of her extra-musical themes: reaching for the divine in music. Frequent glissandi, intense chromatic motives, the use of micro-chromaticism (i.e. quarter tones) and multiphonics illustrate what Gubaidulina characterizes as striving for “a transition to another plane of existence.”

Lacrimosa (1991), by the idiosyncratic Dutch master composer Louis Andriessen, is a slow and deliberate work employing major and minor sonorities. Here’s something very grabby that also avoids close atonal harmonies to create the keening quality suggested by its title. On the other hand multiple Grammy Award-winning composer Michael Daugherty’s Bounce (1988) explores a series of dramatic moments in various moods, tempi, dynamics and bassoon ranges. Bluck (2008) by American post-minimalist Marc Mellits stays light of heart throughout. Echoes of Steve Reich at his most ebullient permeate the work, however Mellits’ complex cross-rhythms and syncopations also reference rock’s straightforward tonality and forward-propelling energy.

Darker Things is a fun and thought-provoking album suitable for double reed players – as well as the rest of us.

Andrew Timar

Now for percussion patterns. Daniel Adams’ two-marimba work Road Traversed and Reversed opens with attention-grabbing marimba rolls, then lots of exciting repeated notes, tight duet contrapuntal playing and grooves. David Arbury’s Four Snare has four snare drummers performing constantly on the move – snare rolls, effects, taps and dynamic variations.

Bunny Beck’s mango-flavoured expressive Suite for Sarro for string trio encompasses contemporary and Romantic sounds. Fun abounds in Jan Järlepp’s Bassoon Quartet. The four bassoons emulate car sounds like short beeps in Cadillac. The slower Reaching showcases the instrument’s low pitch abilities. Danceable Jig is rewarding at the low pitch with twirling melodic patterns.

The pattern is completed with impeccable production and performances. Great, great, great!

Tiina Kilk

Kaja Saariaho – True Fire; Trans; Ciel d’hiver
Gerald Finley; Xavier de Maistre; Finnish NSO; Hannu Lintu
Onpine ODE 1309-2 (naxosdirect.com)

Sturm
Ensemble Musikfabrik
Wergo Edition Musikfabrik 15
(musikfabrik.eu/en)

▶ Kaja Saariaho appears to engage all the senses at full throttle when she is writing music. This tactility is channelled in such a manner that one might conceivably hear the creeping of the shadow of a tree elongating at dusk or a flower weeping in the rain in long inventions and subtly sculpted lines for a cello. All of this appears to make for works that comprise highly complex sound masses, created out of microscopic tangles of intertwined instrumental lines – a kind of musical spider’s web woven with microphopoly. Through it all she remains completely focused on melody, counterpoint and harmony, with rhythm also surfacing in dramatic outbursts. Saariaho appears to push form to its limit, creating a compelling musical world at once eerie and beautiful.

The music on this disc is made up of three exquisite orchestral works and is beyond tonality, atonality and post-modernization. On Trans, a work in three movements for harp and orchestra, Saariaho creates a vivid storyline and invites the listener to follow her principal character – personified by the harp – as it evolves in the music’s narrative. Harpist Xavier de Maistre’s performance is lustrous and the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra is outstanding as they make the work seem visionary, highlighting Saariaho’s gift for
creating hauntingly memorable sounds.

Saariaho also reveals her heightened sense of the dramatic in Ciel d’hiver, a retelling of part of the journey of the son of Poseidon, re-orchestrated from her larger piece, Orion. The approximately smaller symphony and orchestra still manages to deliver the work’s supple textures with consummate musicality, allowing for the beauty of the mythic narrative to emerge with compelling force. On True Fire, Saariaho turns to perhaps her greatest strength – the setting of poetry to music. This work is performed by the great Canadian baritone Gerald Finley, who weathers the enormous difficulty of the vocal writing with glorious ease. His vocal outpourings, together with masterful orchestral direction by Hannu Lintu, help the poetry leap off the page.

Saariaho’s music reappears on a second disc also featuring works by two other contemporary composers, Steffen Schleiermacher and Michael Wertmüller. The disc is titled Sturm (or Storm) as the music is evocative of – poetically or otherwise – atmospheric agitation appropriately conjured up by the extraordinary contemporary collective, Ensemble Musikfabrik, joined throughout by soloing guest musicians.

In the case of Saariaho’s contribution, the music translates parts of Shakespeare (The Tempest) reincarnated in a cycle of songs titled The Tempest Songbook and brought to life by the lustrous soprano of Olivia Vermeulen and the ink-dark baritone of Peter Schöne. Schleiermacher’s Das Tosen Des Staunenden Echos (The roar of the amazed echo) captures an agitated journey, its turbulent repeated gestures revolving theatrically, breaking in waves and sounding like fluid birth pangs in the very act of the enigmatic composition itself. Wertmüller’s Antagonisme is a fiery piece that roars between the freelwelling worlds of jazz and avant-garde music styles as soloists, including the inimitable saxophonist Peter Brötzmann, take the music to dizzying heights.

JAZZ AND IMPROVISED

A Cheerful Little Earful

Diana Panton; Reg Schwager; Don Thompson
Independent (dianapanton.com)

At times, Nick Fraser has been Toronto’s busiest jazz drummer, but he’s increasingly involved in developing his own music and some key international partnerships. Among his projects is this trio with New York-based saxophonist Tony Malaby and pianist Kris Davis. For the trio’s second outing (Too Many Continents appeared in 2015), they’ve enlisted guests: New York saxophonist Ingrid Laubrock and Toronto trumpeter Lina Allemano appear on the three Fraser compositions included here.

It’s a hard-edged band with a disciplined intensity that shows in each taut track, with or without guests, a give and take between form and freedom that often moves toward form. The incendiary opening dialogue between Malaby and Laubrock (he has the warmer jazz tone; she’s responsible for the weirder hollow harmonics and deliberate beats) is eventually drawn into form. Throughout the program, tight-knit figures are frequently employed to develop structural tensions that will ultimately explode before reassembling themselves.

Fraser’s Sketch 46, a dance between restraint and expression, begins with the most incidental wisps of sound: the lightest piano flourishes, a muffled cymbal, air through a trumpet, saxophone plosives. These events, increasingly pointillistic, gradually increase in length and intensity; volume remaining low, relations among parts sketchy. Eventually the band activity expands to an increasingly dense collective. Drawn into Fraser’s fierce knitting drum figures, the horns emerge for brief solo episodes, until a long-toned melody, almost choral, emerges.

It’s just one crucial piece in this demanding set of brilliantly realized works.

Stuart Broomer
The Chronicles of Fezziwig
Mark Kelso Jazz Project
Maiisamark Music MKJE003 (groovydrams.com)

Could this musical yarn of Fezziwig, whose chronicles the Mark Kelso Jazz Project so expertly spin, hark back to a character from the novel A Christmas Carol? Created by Charles Dickens? If the time and circumstance of Dickens’ story and our time were to inhabit similar capsules, then the jovial, foppish man with a large Welsh wig might just as well be evoked by this breathtakingly effervescent music for our rather dark times, to sweep away the turmoil of our century into a Green Revolution, just as the character in Dickens’ story did at the cusp of the Industrial Revolution.

Opening the fold-over package to get to The Chronicles of Fezziwig we read the words: “Inspire creativity.” This is the kind of spark that Kelso’s drumming inevitably provides whenever he becomes the rhythmic and catalytic pivot in any ensemble. Here too, the electrifying drummer plays that role in this sextet. In Fezziwig’s character, Kelso’s songs can be quirky (Ellipseical, elegiac (A Message from Idris), mesmerizing (Pine/heel) and more. Each song evolves into a gripping narrative evoked by a riveting melody laced with glorious harmony. The rippling jazz grooves that ensue gently build into boppish rhythms inspired by Nigerian drummer Tony Allen. Ending the record is Scoffle Strut, a sultry, positively scintillating tune. For those looking for a pick-me-up for the longer fall and winter days ahead, this album is a perfect candidate to get you out of your daily rut.

Kati Kiliaspea

Surefire Sweat
Surefire Sweat
Independent (surefiresweat.com)

This debut album is a breath of funky, fresh air by JUNO-nominated musician Larry Graves’ project, Surefire Sweat. All eight tracks on the record are originals written by Graves and are “an emotive journey, offering real-time reflections...on the human condition.” The mostly instrumental nature of the album truly allows the rhythmic complexity of each piece to be brought to the forefront, which the first-time bandleader himself has mentioned is an incredibly important factor throughout. Featured is a lineup of talented musicians such as Elena Kapeleris on tenor sax and vocals, Paul Metcalfe on baritone sax and Paul MacDougall on guitar and vocals.

Threshold is a fiery, rhythmically hot start to the record and manages to pull the listener right into the catchy groove. Throughout the album, it is easy to hear the fusion of funk, jazz and world music not only through the instrumental riffs, but even through the rhythms themselves. The distinct flavour of percussion and drums tells an extremely expressive story all on its own. Sunshine Interference has an especially addicting bass groove that just gets your head hopping along and Number Nine takes the listener on a journey through completely dance-worthy rhythms inspired by Nigerian drummer Tony Allen. Ending the record is Scoffle Strut, a sultry, positively scintillating tune. For those looking for a pick-me-up for the longer fall and winter days ahead, this album is a perfect candidate to get you out of your daily rut.

Unstoppable
Joel Miller
Independent MCM043 (joelmillermusic.com)

Joel Miller has made a career for himself as an adventurously searching saxophonist and bandleader. Based in Montreal, he has led projects that range in style from straight-ahead modern jazz to 80s pop/rock, and has collaborated with internationally recognized musicians, including Sienna Dahlen, Geoffrey Keezer, Christine Jensen and Kurt Rosenwinkel. His new release, Unstoppable, is the result of a different kind of searching: a return to school, a newly minted master’s degree in jazz composition, and a desire to write music for “21st-century chamber symphony,” an ensemble comprising woodwinds, brass, percussion and the traditional big band rhythm section of guitar, piano, bass and drums. In addition to composing and arranging all of Unstoppable’s material and playing tenor and soprano saxophones, Miller conducts ten of the album’s 14 pieces (the remaining four are conducted by Jensen).

At first glance – and before your first listen – Unstoppable might seem like it would be similar to Michael Brecker’s Wide Angles, a lushly orchestrated blowing vehicle for a top-tier tenor player; it might also bring to mind comparisons with Maria Schneider’s large ensemble, or other modern big band writing. The truth, however, is both more unexpected and more interesting: Unstoppable is a true showcase for Miller’s compositional voice, and though it has moments of bombastic instrumental athletics, listeners are just as likely to hear the influence of Bernstein and Copland as they are Brecker and Coltrane. A beautiful album, and a serious accomplishment for Miller.

I’ve Got Just About Everything
Laura Anglade
Justin Time JTR 8619-2 (justin-time.com)

With her sparkling debut release, talented, Montreal-based jazz vocalist and composer, Laura Anglade, fearlessly plunges headlong into a wide range of top-notch material, drawn from both the
Phare

Yves Léveillé
Effendi Records FND155
(efendirecords.com)

Befitting a rhythmically flashing beacon evocative of the meaning of this album title (Lighthouse), or perhaps arising out of it, the repertoire of Phare flashes in gentle pulses beamed into the mind’s senses and led by the refined pianism of its creator, Yves Léveillé. This is music that is by turns grand and spacious, spare and angular. The short, sharp phrases and interjections between the trumpet of Jacques Kuba Séguin and the saxophones of Yannick Rieu come stammering over Léveillé’s expansive piano while all three musicians bounce ideas off an edifice of rhythm erected by contrabassist Guy Boisvert and drummer Kevin Warren.

The result is a dreamy set of songs where melody, harmony and rhythm are intricately woven together in a diaphanous fabric of sound. The gentle pulsations of the title track kick things off with its spacious phrases and liquid runs by the pianist and his accompanying musicians, who parley with the familiarity of old friends. Their playing always retains that sense of grace and nobility associated with a chamber orchestra. Yet nothing is forced, exaggerated or overly mannered; tempos, ensemble, solos and balance – all seem effortlessly and intuitively right.

The horn sound is lucid – especially on Sang-Froid – and the piano and bass add warmth to the rhythmic architecture, chiseled into shape by delicate percussion. The result is poised, faultless music written and arranged by Léveillé which sheds fresh light on the relationship between composition and improvisation.

Wonderland

Gentiane MG Trio
Effendi Records FND154
(efendirecords.com)

Gentiane Michaud-Gagnon (MG) is a composer and piano player who studied at the Quebec Conservatory in Saguenay and then majored in Jazz Performance at McGill University. She has played with many jazz artists around Canada and also toured in China and Mexico. The Gentiane MG Trio’s first album, Eternal Cycle (2017), was named by CBC Music as one of the ten best jazz recordings of that year. Wonderland’s liner notes describe it as “a place of endless possibilities. A place where things can be different.” Indeed, the works are all inventive but never cliched. The harmonies are complex and most pieces start from one idea or theme and work their way through different thoughts and images more organically than simply melodies and solos.

At the album’s core are Wonderland (Part 1: Comeback), Wonderland (Part 2: Shadows) and Wonderland (Part 3: Unbearable). Comeback begins with an ostinato from the piano, then Louis-Vincent Hamel on drums introduces a complex lilting samba pattern and the piece continues to expand on those ideas with repeated ostinatos and exchanges with the drums. Shadows has many pensive chords over which Levi Dover plays a thoughtful bass solo. Unbearable opens with tense chords and a simple pattern punctuated by rhythmic and inventive drum fills. Eventually the piano becomes more contrapuntal and the bass joins the exchange as well. Michaud-Gagnon’s piano style is cerebral with hints of Bach, Lennie Tristano, Bill Evans and occasional Monk-ish riffs. The trio plays off each other in subtle shades as they work through Michaud-Gagnon’s compositions. Wonderland is like visiting a safe, thoughtful and meditative world.

Ted Parkinson

Concert Note:
Gentiane MG perform 7pm
November 13 at Brookstreet Hotel, Ottawa;
9pm November 14 and 15 at Jazz Bistro, Toronto; and 8:30pm November 16 at The Jazz Room, Waterloo.

Genius Loci Mixtape

Jeannette Lambert
Jazz from Rant rant 1953
(jazzfromrant.com)

A distinctive and creative singer, Jeannette Lambert presents an imaginative and intimate travelogue in music here, interacting spontaneously with numerous musicians in different locales. Sometimes she sings other writers’ lyrics, sometimes her own; whether playfully or wistfully, she sings with a poet’s diction, making every song a model of clarity.

The most frequent collaborators are her musical family: her husband, Montreal drummer Michel Lambert, plays on all 11 tracks; her brother, Toronto guitarist Reg Schwager, on four. His appearances include two recordings from a Barcelona apartment: the opening Keys explores a stark text about trust among lovers by Catalan poet Clementina Arderiu; the final vision is Gaudi, a celebration of the architect’s crowning achievement, the city’s Sagrada Familia, now a century in the making. Lambert artfully conveys the complex emotion of her lyric about “something that was created for the sake of creating.”

In between are other evocations of the spirit of place. Two tracks from Puget-Ville, France, have Lambert improvising melody with a rambunctious quintet that includes the great veteran bassist Barre Phillips. Sometimes poem and site create compound spaces: the welling emotion of Anne Brontë’s A Windy Day was realized with pianist Greg Burk in Ostia, Italy; while Spanish poet Federico Garcia Lorca’s Gypsy Nun was recorded in Montreal with harpsichordist Alexandre Grogg. The most joyous music here comes from furthest afield, the virtuosic Cogote, recorded at a festival in Sulawesi, Indonesia with Schwager and bassist Fendy Rizk.

Stuart Broomer

Double on the Brim

Leblanc; Gibson; Vicente; Mira; Ferreira Lopes
Atrito-Afeito 011 (atrito-afeito.com)

Pianist Karoline Leblanc and drummer Paulo J Ferreira Lopes have a developing

thewholenote.com
relationship with Lisbon, a warmer complement to their Montreal base. Lisbon is a burgeoning centre for free jazz and improvised music, with numerous performance spaces, these genres’ most active record labels (Clean Feed and Creative Source have produced over 600 CDs each since 2001) and a growing list of well-known improvisers taking up residence. Leblanc and Ferreira Lopes recorded A Square Meal there in 2016, and Leblanc recently recorded Autoschedaism in Montreal with Lisbon violinist Ernesto Rodrigues.

Double on the Brim, recorded in Lisbon this year, develops the connection further.

The quintet here includes Brazilian-born saxophonist Yedo Gibson, trumpeter Luis Vicente (returning from A Square Meal) and cellist Miguel Mira. There are six episodes, ranging in length from four to 16 minutes. The longest of them, Anthropic Jungle and the title track, are intense collective improvisations that pulse with vitality, moving tapestries in which instruments tumble over one another. The relatively brief Singra Alegria, almost dirge-like, foreshadows the usual density, with Leblanc’s looming bass clusters creating an ominous mood in which Vicente’s subdued lyricism comes to the fore. Jaggy Glide is the most tightly focused, with Gibson’s alto spiralling through the dense rhythmic field created by Leblanc, Ferreira Lopes, and the versatile Mira, who can also provide convincing bass lines when required.

Sometimes instrumental identities will blur, but Leblanc’s brilliant articulation and Ferreira Lopes’ multidirectional drumming shine.

Stuart Broomer

Tunes in a Hotel
Quinn Bachand’s Brishen
Independent CP104 (brishenmusic.com)

When I first listened to Cheyenne (Quilt Your Talkin’) from Brishen’s second album, Blue Verdun, I assumed it was a cover of a jazz/pop song from the 1930s. It was surprising to discover this clever and engaging song was written and sung by Quinn Bachand, a young musical prodigy from Victoria. He was studying at the Berklee College of Music (on a full scholarship) and recorded that album in his apartment in Verdun, Quebec while on a semester leave. It is a remarkable trip into a past style creatively re-imagined in the present.

Brishen, Romany for “bringer of the storm,” has released a third album, Tunes in a Hotel, which is an idiosyncratic re-imagining of several Django Reinhardt tunes (including Odette, It Had to Be You and Pennies from Heaven). The backstory is dramatic with Bachand’s Berklee residence involved in a fire which left his instruments safe, but smelling of smoke. He and other students were relocated to the Boston Sheraton where he recorded this album in room 737! The ensemble sounds tight and feisty with Bachand (at points) playing a borrowed Gibson ES 125 through an “amazingly crunchy 50s tube amp.” One striking aspect of these pieces is their crisp economy: with an average length of less than three minutes, the melodies and solos seem compressed and melodically inventive with Eric Vanderbilt-Mathews (clarinet) and Christiana van Hemert (violin) contributing several excellent improvisations. Bachand’s guitar playing is both an homage to Reinhardt and an expression of his own eclectic originality. I highly recommend this retro, low-fi, yet modern revisiting of Reinhardt’s catalogue. And I look forward to the surprises of a fourth Brishen album, possibly even recorded in a studio!

Ted Parkinson

Jaelem Bhate – On the Edge
Various artists
Independent (jaelembhate.com)

Jaelem Bhate’s website contains listings for what seem to be two or three different people: conducting competitions in Italy and Romania, an inaugural concert as musical director of Symphony 21 in Vancouver and other symphony conducting mentions from saxophonists including Steve Kaldestad on a soulful tenor saxophone. We can only hope Bhate adds to his résumé with more jazz projects in the future.

Ted Parkinson

B.O.A.T.S – Bass’d on a True Story
Brandon Robertson
Slammin Media

Brandon Robertson has released a stellar debut album featuring all but two original songs written over the span of the past 14 years. He has referred to the record as “the first chapter of his musical biography,” wherein each song harks back to a significant moment in his lifetime. Featured is a band comprised of stars on the jazz circuit, including collaborators such as Lew Del Gatto on tenor saxophone, Zach Bartholomew on piano and Gerald Watkins Jr. on drums.

The record is sultry and luxurious, especially when giving a close listen to Robertson’s bass riffs that are very literally on fire. Each song has its own distinct flavour, almost creating an image in the mind of what kind of memory the bassist was recalling in the midst of writing. An interesting feature of the album is that Robertson is clearly just as comfortable leading within a piece as he is accompanying his collaborators and allowing them to have a moment in the spotlight. East of the Sun and The Next Thing to Come are great opening tracks as they have an irresistible, foot-tapping rhythm. Robertson’s pizzicato technique can really be appreciated on Lullaby for Noelle, while bowing is also used earlier in the same piece. While each track has its own story, there is also a welcome togetherness throughout the record, which makes it a sound choice for any jazz listener.

Kati Killaspea

Willsau
Leimgruber/Demierre/Phillips/Lehn
Jazz Werkstatt JW 191 (jazzwerkstatt.eu)

Adding another voice to an established trio is a risk. But as these extended performances from saxophonist Urs Leimgruber and
pianist Jacques Demierre, both Swiss, and expatriate American bassist Barre Phillips indicate, the inclusion of German Thomas Lehni’s analogue synthesizer illuminates new tinctures in the improvisational picture the others perfected over nearly two decades. This ever-shifting continuum of electronic judders not only enhances this program, but also allows the creation of parallel duos. For the first time, low-pitched string bowing is matched with keyboard strums and cadenzas while altissimo reed sputters are backed by wave-form grinding. Throughout, partners are changed as in a decidedly un-square dance.

Individual set pieces for each remain though, as when Lehni’s vibrations alternate wood-flute-like gentleness and intensely vibrated doits, subtly seconded by pumping piano cadenzas; or when the jagged subsequent shape of Monkeybusiness 2, defined by Phillips’ low-pitched sweeps in the introduction, darkens and deepens to spicato string pumps, buttressed by Leimgruber’s bubbling split tones by the finale. Elsewhere, Demierre’s key dusting can swiftly turn to a string pumps, buttressed by Leimgruber’s quent shape of Monkeybusiness 2 vibrated doits, subtly seconded by pumping though, as when Lehn’s vibrations altered—changed as in a decidedly un-square dance. wave-form grinding. Throughout, partners are matched with keyboard strums and cadenzas the first time, low-pitched string bowing is also allows the creation of parallel duos. For judders not only enhances this program, but others perfected over nearly two decades. tinctures in the improvisational picture the musicians casually discussed another possible collaboration; however, when Björling’s return flight to Sweden was cancelled due to inclement weather, the plans for this collaboration really began to solidify. On the final night of her stay, it was decided: there would be a new project. Glasses were raised, and voilà, Skye Consort & Emma Björing was on its way. Flash forward to 2019, the group is embarking on tour and releasing their first CD. There is truly something for everyone on this fine recording, a collection of Swedish, Norwegian, Irish, Scottish, English, French-Canadian and original songs. Herr Hillbrand, a fitting upbeat opener, showcases the talents of the entire group. Next, Björling delivers a powerful, riveting rendition of Om Berg Och Dalar, a traditional Norwegian love song which segue into a Swedish polska. Björling’s stunning original, En Ängel, features empathic support from Amanda Keesmaat (cello) and Seán Dagher (bouzouki). The fiddle tunes, played by Alex Kehler, are an absolute pleasure.

The songs are beautifully arranged, and Björling’s vocals are fully integrated into the ensemble, giving the music the feel of a true collaboration. One of the best folk recordings of 2019.

Ken Waxman

Niblock/Lamb
Ensemble neoN
Hubro HUBRO CD 2601 (hubromusic.com)

Two over-20-minute microtonal compositions by variations of the strings, reeds and percussion of Norwegian Ensemble neoN not only yield provocative listening but also recognize how the sub-genre has evolved over time.

To Two Tea Roses by Phill Niblock (b.1933), with its miniscule microtonal displacement, borders on a solid mass as the six-piece group begins playing a collective crescendo and continues with an unresolved drone throughout. While separate layers of thickness and intensity give the choked program shape and fascination, individual instrumental identity is curtailed.

In contrast, Parallaxis Forma by Catherine Lamb (b.1982) sets up a program where seven instrumentalists contrast and comeleonal tonalities into a musical wash that parallels a vocal exposition from Stine Janvin Moland and Silje Aker Johnsen. As the singers’ voices drift in and out of aural focus, their closely related lyric soprano timbres unite in near church-like harmonies or pull apart with tremulous pitches, trade leads, hocket or reach protracted pauses. Eventually, the thickened buzz that develops from these sequences allows individual tones to peep outwards as the piece undulates to its conclusion.

Without jarring moments, this program still rewards deep listening as it provides unparalleled sonic definitions in dissimilar interpretations.

The Passion of Octavius Catto
Uri Caine
816 Music 816-1904 (uricaine.com)

Concise in length but expansive in execution, this CD could be termed a secular oratorio, celebrating the life, contributions and premature violent death of African-American activist Octavius Catto (1839-1871). Composed by pianist Uri Caine, the ten-part, 29-minute program integrates the sophisticated affirmations of Caine’s trio, including bassist Mike Boone and drummer Clarence Penn, with the amplified colouring provided by a full-sized, specially constituted philharmonic orchestra conducted by André Raphel, two vocal ensembles and, most crucially, singer Barbara Walker, who personalizes episodes in Catto’s storied life that ended in murder during election day riots when blacks first tried to vote in post-bellum Philadelphia.

Using ragtime and swing tropes to advance the narrative, Caine’s playing meshes with multilayered orchestral timbres, particularly during Murder (October 19, 1871), which also integrates gunfire and police whistles, and culminates with the pianist’s subtle key clinking and military-style drum beats dolefully celebrating the fallen protagonist.

Elsewhere the swell of Walker’s vocal equipment with melismatic emphasis, backed by sympathetic affirmations from the 35 singers, almost turns each outing into gospel music. This is no mean feat when the syllables being emphasized deal with topics such as rallying free men of colour to the Union cause, new amendments to the American Constitution or, on Change, replication of a memorable Catto speech from 1866.

A momentous achievement. If there were fairness in the musical world, performances of The Passion of Octavius Catto would be part of any symphony’s repertoire, rather than a one-time event.

Ken Waxman

POT POURRI

Skye Consort & Emma Björing
Emma Björing: Skye Consort
Leaf Music LM225 (leafmusic.ca)

How exactly does a Celtic-Quebeco-Franco-Anglo-Gallo-Baroquo band team up with a Swedish folk singer? The answer to this intriguing question, posed by the liner notes, begins in November 2017, when vocalist Emma Björing was invited to Montreal to take part in a project which also featured members of the Skye Consort. The musicians casually discussed another possible collaboration; however, when Björing’s return flight to Sweden was cancelled due to inclement weather, the plans for this collaboration really began to solidify. On the final night of her stay, it was decided: there would be a new project. Glasses were raised, and voilà, Skye Consort & Emma Björing was on its way.

Flash forward to 2019, the group is embarking on tour and releasing their first CD. There is truly something for everyone on this fine recording, a collection of Swedish, Norwegian, Irish, Scottish, English, French-Canadian and original songs. Herr Hillbrand, a fitting upbeat opener, showcases the talents of the entire group. Next, Björling delivers a powerful, riveting rendition of Om Berg Och Dalar, a traditional Norwegian love song which segue into a Swedish polska. Björling’s stunning original, En Ängel, features empathic support from Amanda Keesmaat (cello) and Seán Dagher (bouzouki). The fiddle tunes, played by Alex Kehler, are an absolute pleasure.

The songs are beautifully arranged, and Björling’s vocals are fully integrated into the ensemble, giving the music the feel of a true collaboration. One of the best folk recordings of 2019.

Barry Livingston

Concert Note: Skye Consort & Emma Björing perform October 31 at the Tranzac Club, Toronto; November 2 at Artword Arbar in Hamilton; and November 3 at Zen Waffle Inn, Waubashene.

Gamelan of Java, Vol. 5: Cirebon Tradition in America
Gamelan Sinar Surya; Richard North
Gamelan Music of Cirebon, Indonesia
Gamelan Sinar Surya; Richard North
Gamelan of Java, Vol. 5: Cirebon Tradition
(lyrichord.com)

Gamelan Music of Cirebon, Indonesia
Gamelan Sinar Surya; Richard North
Gamelan of Java, Vol. 5: Cirebon Tradition
(gamelansb.com)
Gamelan Music of Cirebon, Indonesia: Volume 3
Gamelan Sinar Surya; Richard North
Sinar Surya Records GS503 (gamelansb.com)

Richard North, the California-based gamelan musician and lecturer at UC Santa Barbara, has been studying, teaching and performing gamelan music and related arts since 1972. This passion has taken him from Sundanese villages in highland West Java to the coastal palaces of the Sultans of Cirebon on the island of Java. Recognized today as an authority on the musical traditions of the ancient kingdom of Cirebon, North has called it “an ancient spiritual centre [where] all of the arts radiate a wonderful vitality and energy.” His contributions to the preservation, transmission and development of Cirebonese gamelan music have not gone unappreciated – they have been rewarded by both Cirebon’s royal palace and the Indonesian government.

Back home in Santa Barbara, North has directed the community group Gamelan Sinar Surya since 2002. The group plays two complete gamelan orchestras. The praegu set (in a 5-tone tuning without semitones) plays gamelan repertoires of Cirebon, Sundan and Malaysia. The pelog set (in a 7-tone tuning with semitones) plays pelog gamelan musics of Cirebon, as well as Sundanese degung klasik music which typically uses instruments tuned to a 5-tone subset of pelog. The three CDs in this review are a record of Gamelan Sinar Surya’s dedication to the study and performance of a repertoire rarely heard outside its Cirebon homeland.

Released nine years ago, Gamelan of Java, Vol. 5: Cirebon Tradition in America was a 2010 landmark: the first commercial recording by an American group of examples of five traditional gamelan genres practised in Cirebon. It gave non-insiders a tantalizing taste of the aristocratic and ritual music of this rich 500-year-old musical culture.

Something in the Air
Japanese Improvisation Moves Far Beyond its Island Base
KEN WAXMAN

legendary as the country where every type of Western music has some followers and where every disc extant is rumoured to exist in some form or another, Japan likewise has a healthy jazz and free music scene. This appreciation extends to homegrown improvisers, but few are known throughout the larger musical world. Not only do these discs demonstrate how this situation is changing as Asian players interact with more Westerners, but some outsider players have also moved there since they found the country’s audiences to be sympathetic to their music.

In the former group, one of the most prominent is Hiroshima-born alto saxophonist/clarinetist Akira Sakata, 74, who’s been improvising in an individual free jazz style since the early 1970s which also involves his off-the-wall vocalizing. A marine biologist as well as a musician, Sakata organized the co-operative trio Arashi a few years ago with Norwegian percussionist Paul Nilsson-Love and Swedish bassist Johan Berthling. The exciting Ikran Arashi (PNL Records PNL 045 paamlisen-love.com) is its newest disc. Reminiscent of the heyday of “The New Thing” sound explorers, on saxophone. Sakata has seemingly never found a tone he couldn’t split or a timbre he couldn’t overblow. This is demonstrated most convincingly on the extended Yamanoue-no-Okura with a solo that’s all snarls and growls, and that inflates with pressured vibratos and propelled reed bites each time he outputs a phrase. In sympathy, Betherling’s accelerated strumming and Nilsson-Love’s constant thumping, fluidly pulse and push with the same intensity. Besides the trio’s sliding and shredding instrumentally up and down the scale, here and elsewhere Sakata vocalizes guttural syllables that wouldn’t be out of place on a Japanese horror film soundtrack. Eventually, gurgles and mumbles that involve the guts and throat more than the mouth and lips give way to small instrument whumps and cymbal lacerations from the drummer culminating in triple intensity. While the saxophonist’s frenetic Aylerian screams and pressurized stutters mix with Nilsson-Love’s constant pounding on the title track, he also shows off restrained chalumeau-register clarinet storytelling on Tsuiku, partnered by cymbal slides. Despite his concluding shrilling output and a return to guttural rumbling, Jikan is another indication of why the reedist has maintained his creativity over the decades.

Another first-generation Japanese improviser who has maintained a similar musical ingenuity is Yokohama-born percussionist Sabu Toyozumi, two years Sakata’s senior. Having worked over the years in different-sized assemblages with local and foreign Free Music players, Sol Abstraction (Sol Disk SD 1901 soldisk.com) is a stripped-down live date from the Philippines where he goes head-to-head with American alto saxophonist Rick Countryman on nine tracks. A committed free jazzier, the saxophonist’s collection of multiphonics, irregularly pitched vibrations, tension-building and soprannissimo screams are met with expressive touches, resonating conga-like hand slaps brought into play alongside claps and swing affiliations. Although only the extended Integrity of Creation includes what could be termed an albeit brief drum solo of claps, clatter, press rolls and rattles, Toyozumi’s constant rumbles and patterns keep up with Countryman who crams as many notes as he can into every bar, pulls his split tones as far as possible without breakage and triple tongues into the stratosphere before ending with crying flutter tonguing. The drummer’s skill using the erhu or spike fiddle is also displayed on a couple of related tracks as he cannily manages to mirror the saxophonist’s circular textural screams and squeaky overblowing with two-stringed slices, even as place-marking drum beats remain. The two also manage to append a relaxed shuffle groove to the feverish sallies that make up Brokan Art Part I and Part II, but the best expression of Toyozumi’s – and by extension Countryman’s – versatility occurs on the three parts of Balkad of Mototoru Takagi. A threnody for a deceased saxophonist colleague, the suite moves from tongue-slapping, reed-shaking theme development to repeated diaphragm-intense cries from the saxophonist, as the drummer’s narrative

90 | November 2019
thewholenote.com
contribution is cymbals tolling with narrow clangs. Finally Toyozumi’s slaps rebound at a choppier pace as Countryman elaborates the now passive theme with melancholy sound spurts.

Moving on a generation and compounding Japanese improvisers, almost-elicited fascination with electronics is in Cotton and Wool (Ftarri ftarari-980 ftarari.com), a duet between the audio feedback generated by Toshimaru Nakamura’s no-input mixing board and the trumpet and electronics of Berlin’s Axel Dörner. Moving past expected musical tropes, or for some music, the program mixes manipulated loops of industrial-strength voltage feedback from Nakamura’s machine to such an extent that the outcome appears to possess the strength and velocity of both a high-speed locomotive and a tropical thunder storm. This is particularly true of the extended Hemp, especially when extended electronic rumbles nearly attain drum–beat qualities, with Dörner’s response a combination of dissociated peeps and an intermittent moose-call–like ending. Variations of this strategy play out during the subsequent selections, with, for instance, grace notes from the trumpet audible through a cloud of heavily amplified drones on Silk, before the track speeds up to the extent that it could be the sound of a car crash captured in real time, until the noise is abruptly cut off. The loops of blurred whistling and puffs are resolved on the final track, Cashmere, as narrow tongue splatters from the horn are overshadowed by blurred input–output pulses from the mixing board to create an ambulatory synthesized exposition which Dörner amplifies with capillary bites and echoes until brass qualities are buried under synthesized pulsation created by both his and Nakamura’s electronics.

More general acceptance of projects like Nakamura–Dörner’s is what persuades even more experimental players to settle in Japan. Case in point is Saskatchewan–native Tim Olive, who lives in Kobe. Using his preferred tools of magnetic pickup and electronics, Olive joins with Beijing–based Yan Jun, who manipulates electronics and field recordings, on Brother of Divinity (845 Audio 845-10 845 audio.bandcamp.com), for a fascinating 28-minute sound collage that admittedly makes even the previous discs appear conventional. A rare electronic session that culminates with foreground resonance after synthesizing the impulses created by the duo, Brother of Divinity works its way from loops of crackles and pops, as distant voice singing or beating out rock–styled music comes in and out of aural focus. As ring modulator–like gong–feeding loops become more prominent, the blurry interface also takes on percussive side scratches and bounces until what initially seemed to be reverbering pulses splinter into chirps and thumps in double counterpoint. With its keyboard–suggested bent–note narrative, the final section becomes more reductionist with metronomic timepiece–like clicks, suggesting a stain spreading slowly on a yielding surface, crunching beats and church–bell–like pealing, project with synthesized pulsations into conclusive buzzes and shuffles.

If Japanese free improvisers are little known outside of a small coterie, imagine the situation for a Korean saxophonist committed to experimental music. Yet An Eternal Moment (NoBusiness Records NBCD 115 nobusinessrecords.com) is a 76–minute live 1995 Yamaguchi concert by Japanese percussionist Midori Takada and alto saxophonist Kang Tae Hwan, visiting from Seoul. One track is an extended solo saxophone meditation and the last, Dan–Shi, posits what sonic challenge would result if sax/drum duos like it mixed narrow, high–pitched, sometimes barely audible reed explorations, with gamelan–like marimba pops and sizzling cymbal hisses, besides regular drum beats. However, the key parity is the nearly 42–minute Sjuan–Soku. During the exposition, Hwan’s strained reed vibrations work up to lacering split tones and down to narrowed ghost notes, then up to bagpipe–like overblowing timbre–smears as Takada hits tuned aluminum bars and shakes reverberating cymbals. Rhythmic drum taps spark thin chirps from the saxophonist, who soon seems able to simultaneously output a slim, whistling tone and more rounded coloratura variations. Reaching the first climax at mid–point, the narrative slows down to the extent that Hwan’s dissonant slurs seem to be being pushed back into his horn’s body tube. Crushing riffs from the percussionist become non–metered whacks in opposition, helping to transform reed multiphonics into low–pitched trills that neatly affiliate with unforced cymbal patterns, leading to a finale that links splash cymbal power with retrained reed snarls.

Politically and sociologically Asia is no longer the Mysterious East for most Westerners. These CDs could provide a similar demystification of sound when it comes to improvised music. ❇️
Old Wine, New Bottles
Fine Old Recordings Re-Released

Bruce Surtees

In the last century, many superb conductors, in North America at least, did not achieve the fame that was accorded to the maestros under contract to and promoted by the major record labels.

Over the decades, many of these first-rate musicians, conductors and soloists alike, were engaged by the SDR (Southern German Broadcasting of Stuttgart) and SWF (South West Radio, Baden-Baden) to appear with their incomparable orchestras. In 1998 the two merged as the SWR. Some recent SWR releases in a sub-section, “20th Century Classics,” include Debussy Orchestral Works (SWR 19508) under the baton of the French conductor Sylvain Cambreling. The three Images: Gigue, Iberia and Rondes de printemps are conducted with enthusiasm, as are the two Danses: Danse sacrée and Danse profane, closing with a very credible La Mer.

Roger Norrington also has several surprisingly impressive versions of some familiar favourites for SWR. His recent releases in “19th Century Classics” include two Mahler symphonies, the First and the Fifth. One might wonder why they selected Norrington, well known in Baroque and early music interpretations, for that repertoire. Listening, it becomes clear that he was the right man for the job. The First Symphony includes the Blumine movement making this a five-movement work (SWR 19510). There is a palpable sense of discovery throughout, leading to the closing pages that are keenly driven to a positive resolution. The sound is thrillingly open and clear with no instrument obscured. Norrington is that are keenly driven to a positive resolution. The sound is thrillingly open and clear with no instrument obscured. Norrington is an also responsible for desirable performances of the Dvořák Seventh and Eighth Symphonies (SWR 19511). Three more Norrington performances in “20th Century Classics” are Elgar’s First Symphony with Wagner’s Meistersinger Prelude (SWR 19520), Holst’s The Planets with Elgar’s Serenade for Strings (SWR 19507) and Elgar’s Enigma Variations, In the South and the Introduction and Allegro (SWR 19509).

Looking back, previous SWR releases that may have gone unnoticed include these favourites: The Mahler Sixth Symphony under Kirill Kondrashin from 1981 (SWR 19416); a 3-CD set of the legendary pianist Wilhelm Backhaus recorded in 1953, 1959 and 1962 playing Beethoven’s Third and Fifth Concertos and the Waldstein and Hammerklavier Sonatas; the Brahms Second Concerto and some short encores (SWR 19057, 3CDs); and violinist Ida Haendel in captivating performances of two concertos, the Tchaikovsky (1960) and the Dvořák (1965), conducted by Hans Müller-Kray (SWR Hänssler 94.205).

It is a truism that a composer does not automatically make a conductor, even of their own works, but there are, of course, exceptions. Paul Hindemith and Benjamin Britten have both conducted notable performances for the SWR: Britten conducts the Suite from Gloriana, the Sinfonia da Requiem, Variations on an Elizabethan Theme and Chaconne from Purcell’s King Arthur (SWR Hänssler 94.213); and, from June 24, 1968, the prolific conductor Hindemith directs the Bruckner Seventh Symphony (SWR 19417) replete with composerly insights.

The most popular and successful film biography of the 1940s was the 1945 biopic, A Song to Remember, a portrait of Frédéric Chopin, with José Iturbi as the pianist on the soundtrack. So convincing was his “playing” that for the longest time, star Cornel Wilde received earnest invitations from various groups to engage him for a recital. Iturbi’s recordings on RCA/HMV became bestsellers, particularly his Chopin. Similarly, Song Without End, the story of Franz Liszt, is a 1960 movie in which Jorge Bolet (1914-1990) was the pianist for Dirk Bogarde’s Liszt, but in Bolet’s case purists condemned him for his ultra-Romantic playing in the film. All was forgiven after a triumph at Carnegie Hall recital in 1974, after which music lovers sought out his recordings on various labels, and he became a virtuoso among virtuosos. The Havana-born Bolet studied at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia with Leopold Godowsky, Josef Hofmann and Moritz Rosenthal. In 1937 he won the Naumburg Competition and made his debut. In 1942 he joined the army and was sent to Japan as part of the Army of Occupation. He conducted the first performance in Japan of The Mikado!


Even now, over 65 years after her death, the British contralto Kathleen Ferrier remains a voice of interest to music lovers around the world thanks to her legacy of fine recordings. Ferrier was born on April 22, 1912 in Lancashire, living until October 8, 1953. She was much admired for her Bach, Brahms, Mahler and Elgar as well as for folk song interpretations. And she remains so. She was catapulted to fame when the 1952 Decca recording of Das Lied von der Erde, conducted by Bruno Walter with Julius Patzak and the Vienna Philharmonic, hit the world. That recording has never been out of print. SOMM Recordings has issued a first release of the Bach Magnificat, BWV 243.2 in a live performance from June 10, 1950 in the Musikverein in Vienna (Kathleen Ferrier: In Celebration of Bach, ARIADNE 5004). Ferrier is joined by Ingardi Seefried, Otto Edelmann and five other distinguished soloists with the Chorus of the Vienna State Opera and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Volkmar Andreae. This is an exuberant performance, clearly and dynamically recorded. A treasure. Three cantatas that were recorded in London in 1949 with the Jacques Orchestra and Reginald Jacques fill out this most welcome collection. Sung in English are Cantata No.11, Praise our God; Cantata No. 67, Hold In affection Jesus Christ and Cantata No.147 Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring. An added bonus: the informative booklet contains a chronology of Ferrier’s life.
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love Porgy and Bess. I’ve loved it ever since I first heard the Leontyne Price/William Warfield RCA recording of excerpts from the opera in the mid-60s. The moment I hear that first octave gliss announcing the overture, and that thrilling Stravinsky-like syncopated ostinato that begins the score, I’m lost. And I don’t regain myself until the strange, half-apologetic sixth chord that ends the opera has sounded, after Porgy has demanded of the Catfish Row residents that they “Bring my goat!” (Stephen Sondheim claims to love this line) and Porgy is on his way to find Bess in New York.

Basically, the beauty of the music simply dissolves everything I want to think and decide and judge and insist about Porgy and Bess. It all just gets lost in the overwhelming sense of joy I have in simply listening to the music, in an exalted state of thankful wonder, again and again and again. So perhaps I’m the last person who can adequately work his way through all the remarkably thorny issues that still surround, or should continue to surround this masterpiece. I say “should” because I’ve been more than a little amazed at how little controversy has attended the Metropolitan Opera’s current production of Porgy and Bess. It all just gets lost in the overwhelming sense of joy I have in simply listening to the music, in an exalted state of thankful wonder, again and again and again.

The opposite was the case in 1959, when the movie version of Porgy and Bess premiered. The reaction to the film was so negative that it has been permanently removed from circulation, Soviet-style. Watching the elegant Sidney Poitier and the glorious Dorothy Dandridge debase and prostitute themselves to the worst racial stereotypes imaginable, in the years just before the civil rights era, was too much to bear. Why watching Eric Owens as Porgy and Angel Blue as Bess do more or less the same thing in 2019 on the Met stage is not, is fascinating to contemplate.

My own feeling is that, in 1959, those distorted images of black America were too painful because they were too real, too close to the surface, too close to the actual attitudes many white Americans still harboured about their black co-citizens. The discomfort is seeing these stereotypes appallingly splayed over a major Hollywood screen, with the stamp of approval such a treatment implied, was too stark. In 2019, audiences, black and white, seem to feel quite differently, even as another major institution – the Metropolitan Opera – gives its nod of approval to the piece. And that’s because we have different models for black manhood and womanhood in the America of the 21st century. Not every black woman needs be a sultry Bess or a mammy-like Clara. Black women can be Michelle Obama, Oprah, Toni Morrison, Serena Williams. Black men needn’t follow the trajectory of the crippled Porgy or the equally damaged Crown. Black men are Barack Obama, LeBron James, Ta-Nehisi Coates. Jay-Z. Porgy and Bess doesn’t offend or alarm black America as much anymore – perhaps – because black America isn’t afraid of those stereotypes anymore. The reality of a different black American life has rendered them impotent.

And yet, the fact remains that Porgy and Bess, the opera, is still a depressingly literal treatment of black America closer to the world of slavery than the world of #BlackLivesMatter. Porgy is still a problem, I think. Imagine a contemporary black composer and black librettist sitting down today to write an opera on black American themes. How likely is it they would come up with Porgy and Bess? Not likely at all. And maybe that’s a good thing.

The reality of a different black American life has rendered them impotent.
its racial anachronisms to be as painless as the voodoo/witchery of the black Ulrica in the Boston-set version of Verdi’s A Masked Ball.

But that would be a terrible mistake. Porgy and Bess is a great masterpiece of music, one of the greatest, and it needs productions which match the universality of the score. It’s interesting to note that at a time, from the 1950s to the present day, when productions inevitably provoked intense questions and controversy, there was one version where this was not the case. That was the production of Porgy produced in South Africa in 2006, set in the Soweto of the 1970s. That production spoke to its African audience powerfully and immediately, its caricatures in an American context deeply resonant in a South African one. There’s something extremely important to be learned from this success. Porgy may actually be ahead of its time, not behind it. If there was ever an opera that begged for a regietheater version, Porgy and Bess is it – a production that blows away the fog of literalism which settles like a horrible blanket of racist tropes on every Catfish Row setting, no matter how stylized or “dignified” it may be; a production that recognizes that, deep at the heart of Porgy and Bess, are archetypes both of and transcending black America – the crippled hero, the hyper-sexualized woman, the ultra-violent alpha male – that still ring true, whether we like them or not, and have universal significance.

And then there is that sprawling, massive, insanely ambitious score, a work of Western art in the end, but so American, so completely American in its bones, with its black accents, its popular idioms, its desire for European artistic status, its mixture of black culture and Jewish-American existential dread, a work uneasily at home in settings as diverse as Harlem, Tin Pan Alley, La Scala, Broadway, and the gospel churches of the South, but comfortable in none. We value Porgy and Bess because of its music, a score of which George famously said “The music is so beautiful, I can’t believe I wrote it.” No boast, that, merely an acknowledgment of the mystery of the creative process, an acknowledgment that, I note with respect, has been many times recognized by the greatest black American musical artists of the last 60 years, despite Porgy’s contradictions. The great performances of numbers from Porgy and Bess are still by Billie Holiday, Nina Simone, Miles Davis. They heard in the score American greatness. Porgy and Bess, the opera, is still waiting for the unclouded stage realization that lets that greatness shine.

Robert Harris is a writer and broadcaster on music in all its forms. He is the former classical music critic of the Globe and Mail and the author of the Stratford Lectures and Song of a Nation: The Untold Story of O Canada.
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