inspirations

Jonathan Crow, Artistic Director

July 7-30

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Tom Allen hosts an all-star line up

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Walter Hall

APPL & RIEGER IN RECITAL
Monday, July 11 at 7:30pm
Walter Hall

VC2
Tuesday, July 12 at 7:30pm
Lula Lounge
Amahl Arulanandam & Bryan Holt, cellos

ZULEYKHA
Wednesday, July 13 at 7:30pm
Walter Hall
Afarin Mansouri - Zuleykha
With Loose Tea Music Theatre

DOVER QUARTET
Thursday, July 14 at 7:30pm
Koerner Hall

THE VON MECK LETTERS
Friday, July 15 at 7:30pm
Walter Hall
John Novacek, piano
Jonathan Crow, violin
Emmanuelle Beaulieu Bergeron, cello
Kathleen Kajioka, host and narration

KLEZTORY
Monday, July 18 at 7:30pm
Walter Hall

TONY YIKE YANG, PIANO
Tuesday, July 19 at 7:30pm
Walter Hall

NOSKY & BAGAN: BAROQUE SPLENDOUR
Wednesday, July 20 at 7:30pm
Walter Hall

ECHO CHAMBER TORONTO: POETRY IN MOTION
Thursday, July 21 at 7:30pm
Isabel Bader Theatre

BRAHMS’ MUSE
Friday, July 22 at 7:30pm
Walter Hall
John Novacek, piano
Jonathan Crow, violin
Emmanuelle Beaulieu Bergeron, cello
Kathleen Kajioka, host and narration

TWO CANADIANS IN PARIS
Monday, July 25 at 7:30pm
Walter Hall
Jonathan Crow, violin & Philip Chiu, piano

NEW ORFORD STRING QUARTET: THE AMERICAS
Tuesday, July 26 at 7:30pm
Walter Hall

GRYPHON TRIO WITH MARION NEWMAN AND NORDIC VOICES
Wednesday, July 27 at 7:30pm
Walter Hall

INSPIRATIONS
Thursday, July 28 at 7:30pm
Koerner Hall
Nicolas Ellis, conductor
Karina Gauvin, soprano
TSM Festival Orchestra

A LITERARY AFFAIR
Friday, July 29 at 7:30pm
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TSM FINALE
Saturday, July 30 at 7:30pm
Walter Hall

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Angela Meade, soprano
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Sunday April 23

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Sky Dancers is a multidisciplinary performance about the Quebec Bridge disaster on August 29, 1907. There were 86 workers on the bridge when it collapsed, high above the St Lawrence River, and seventy-five died including thirty-three ironworkers from the Mohawk community of Kahnawake, famous to this day for their high steel work. Some of the dead were crushed by the twisted steel; others died from the fall or by drowning.

Award-winning traditional and contemporary dancer, educator and Sky Dancers’ choreographer Barbara Kaneratomi Diabo is originally from Kahnawake, and her great-grandfather, Louis D’Ailleboust, was among those who perished. Sky Dancers is not only about loss, pain and struggle: it illuminates the resilience of the Kahnawake women who took in and helped widows and children, and Indigenous and non-Indigenous people pulling together in the aftermath of this avoidable tragedy.

Set to a mix of contemporary and traditional music, Sky Dancers integrates dance, theatre, video projections and sophisticated set design to shine light on a story that needs telling: building bridges between people and generations. (See pg 19)

May 20–22, in the Fleck Dance Theatre at Harbourfront, Toronto.

ON OUR COVER

PHOTO: BRIAN MEDINA

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CLASSICAL AND BEYOND | Inspired by Inspiration at TSM | PAUL ENNIS

MUSICAL THEATRE + DANCE | Almost Too Many Shows to See | JENNIFER PARR

EARLY MUSIC AND MORE | The Seeds of a New Golden Age | MATTHEW WHITFIELD

ON OUR COVER

PHOTO: BRIAN MEDINA

The WholeNote™
VOLUME 27 NO 7
MAY 20 - JULY 12, 2022

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$64 + HST (6 issues)
single copies and back issues $8
*international - additional postage applies

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PHOTO: BRIAN MEDINA

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

**PIANO**

| October 25 | Michelle Cann |
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[www.music-toronto.com](http://www.music-toronto.com)
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In the old normal ...

DAVID PERLMAN

In the old normal, for us as magazine publishers, it used to cost around $1 to print and distribute one copy of an issue this size. In 2022’s post-pandemic pre-dawn, when it’s still too early to see whether the sky is really blue, the cost of printing alone is double that amount. Grim insider joke: if you want to know what the unit cost for printing the next issue of The WholeNote will be, it’ll be posted right above the pumps at your local gas station.

So whereas, in the old normal, faced with a story lineup like the one we had for this issue, we’d have said “damn the torpedoes” and added pages, instead we had to give more than usually careful thought as to which of those stories have the shortest and longest expiry dates, in terms of topicality. And we had to set aside the ones that will be just as fresh a month from now.

Like Karen-Anne Kastner’s coverage of an unusual recent concert, for an invited audience of private music teachers, in a filled-to-capacity Koerner Hall, heralding the release of the long-awaited 6th edition of the Royal Conservatory’s Celebration Series. This is a significant ancillary resource for piano repertoire, used for decades by tens of thousands of private music teachers across North America. Yes, there were speeches as well.

And like Gloria Blizzard’s searching write-up of this year’s Toronto Arts Foundation’s Awards, (back live again in its normal venue, the Arcadian Court at Queen and Bay), musing on what the phrase “a seat at the table” means in a context like that.

Both stories are on their way.

In the old normal, appearing first in print was what happened with most WholeNote stories, followed by a leisurely stroll onto the website. Increasingly the reverse is the case, with many stories being served better by appearing digitally first, especially when they incorporate elements that print cannot: video and/or audio links; extended photo galleries and the like. So if you haven’t already done so, consider signing up for our e-letter, HalfTones. You’ll be alerted, and linked to, online stories as they are posted. Signup is bottom right on our homepage at thewholenote.com.

And while you are there, make sure to also check the box to receive our weekly listings update. In the old normal we tied our publication dates predictably to the beginning of calendar months, with a couple of double issues thrown in. For the past two years, however, with event scheduling increasingly opportunistic or hard to predict, we’ve survived, in part, by reducing our publishing frequency to eight issues a year, with each issue covering roughly six weeks.

Weekly listings updates enable us, and you, to keep up with the volatility of the new normal, with the last minute announcements, date changes, postponements and cancellations. And, by the way, “Weekly listings update” doesn’t mean just events for the coming week. Each update offers an overview of the following six to seven weeks. The print listings in this issue of the magazine are, in fact, a snapshot of last week’s digital listings update; and they will already be out of date by next week! It’s a prime example of a situation where the old normal worked less well, for us and you, than what we’re embarked on now. So check the box. Please.

And finally, in the old normal - for the past 20 years, in fact - The WholeNote happily occupied what now seems like acres of space at 720 Bathurst Street. But with occupancy costs on the same upward trajectory as unit costs and gas prices, that too is about to change. We are already in the process of downsizing incrementally and by the late summer or early fall will hope to be cosily ensconced in more modest quarters, a mere stone’s throw from where, as a column in the Kensington Market DRUM, this magazine came into being 27 years ago.

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ZOSHA DI CASTRI
In the Half-light
DAVID PERLMAN

ew York-based Canadian composer, Zosha Di Castri spoke to me via Zoom May 9, ten days before her piece, In the Half-light, receives its world premiere performance under the baton of Toronto Symphony Orchestra Music Director Gustavo Gimeno.

Given the fact that the magazine goes into circulation the day of the concert, most readers will be reading this after that first performance is over. So our plan is to post the full length conversation after the event. But here’s a worthwhile snippet – Di Castri touching on some of the things that made this a particularly gratifying collaboration (something not to be taken for granted, especially in an orchestral context).

“The TSO approached me quite a while ago for this project,” Di Castri says. “As far back as 2019 I think. At that time I was living in Paris and they said would you be interested in writing something for the orchestra and Barbara [Hannigan] for our 100th season and I was immediately super-excited because if someone said is there any singer you could dream you would ever work with it would be her. So it just seemed so amazing that this opportunity would come up. We had met a while ago, in summer 2014, I think, in Santa Fe in a program called Creative Dialogues organized in part by the Sibelius Academy, kind of a Finnish/US partnership – composers and performers along with guest mentors for people developing pieces. And Barbara was one of my mentors and conducted my piece which was a short chamber piece. So I had gotten to know her a bit there and was excited that she had proposed my name to the TSO as somebody who might be right for this project.”

The text of “In the Half-light” is a series of seven short poems by Malaysian-born novelist and opinion writer Tash Aw, all relating, as the title does, to the liminal moment between night and day. The extent of Aw’s active involvement in the project as it developed was as pivotal as it was unusual.

“The actual writing and connecting with Tash happened a bit later,” Di Castri says. “Barbara and I had had a few exchanges about writing for her voice – helpful tips about what works and doesn’t, things to think about in advance.” The two of them started talking about text over the winter and summer of 2021. “We had these vague themes we were talking about for inspiration, And I said there’s this author I met in Paris, Tash Aw, who I think would be a really good person to work with. I was a Fellow at the Institute for Ideas and Imagination in Paris in 2018/19, and Tash was a fellow Fellow. He writes a lot on themes like migration and being uprooted. He emigrated from Malaysia to the UK and then France so that experience is very much something he has lived and gone through himself. And Barbara was talking about periods in her life as a touring artist where she didn’t even have a home base; as she said ‘I had a storage unit in Paris where I would go and get gowns and shoes before going to the airport, and I had my furniture there but I was touring so much it didn’t make sense to have a flat.’”

Unusually, Aw’s libretto was original to the project, not an adapted pre-existing text. “That was something I had to ask Toronto Symphony – kind of beg them – I said you know this is kind of important and the right thing for this piece, and they were willing to support the creation of the libretto. That was something special.”

They found themselves thinking a lot, Di Castri says, about the way people relate to the changing of spaces and location. “It’s something everyone can relate to on some level, but in such different ways – the perspective of refugees, for example. And somehow as I was writing the libretto, I think my mind was on Ukraine a lot.”

So it really was a full three-way collaboration?

“Yeah, and one of the more satisfying I have ever had. It felt like an equal partnership, feeding off each others’ ideas in a really productive way, and then as the writing [of the score] happened, even closer with Barbara. I’d send her movements as I finished them and she would send feedback and I would make changes as we went. We are still doing that. She texted me this morning! That’s been really wonderful for me; as a conductor/singer she really knows how to make sure her voice comes through, so that’s been a good learning experience for me as well.”

David Perlman can be reached at publisher@thewholenote.com
Revisit four of the six shimmering concertos that helped establish our international reputation as a creative force in baroque music.

LIVE CONCERT
May 28, 2022 8:00pm
Koerner Hall, TELUS Centre
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Tafelmusik Chamber Choir wraps up its 40th-anniversary season with a magical evening of Bach family motets and chorales written for choir and continuo, including such treasures as Jesu, meine Freude and Singet dem Herrn.

LIVE CONCERT
June 18, 2022 8:00pm
Eglinton St. George's United Church
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Music in the Barns
Creating musical events in unusual spaces is one of the signature features of Music in the Barns, an organization founded in 2008 by violist Carol Gimbel. At the time, Gimbel had an artist studio in the Artscape Wychwood Barns building which was renovated from several large early 20th-century TTC streetcar garages to create a multi-use facility that contains individual artist studios, a farmers market, a greenhouse, an event space and arts organization offices. On June 2, Music in the Barns is staging a celebratory post-Covid return with different events happening in the various Barns' spaces to create a multi-sensory experience for the audience.

Anchoring the evening will be a concert to finally celebrate their 2019 album – *Music in the Barns: Bolton, Godin & Oesterle* (newfocusrecordings.com). As Gimbel explained to me during a recent phone conversation, they had previously championed the music on the album during their concerts at the Barns, and after recording it and spending many hours editing it, they never had a chance to do the album-launch concert properly before the lockdowns began. This concert will therefore be the chance for an extended evening of celebration with all those who worked on the album.

One of the works on the album to be performed is Rose Bolton's *The Coming of Sobs*, nominated in 2020 for a Juno Award in the Classical Composition of the Year category. This work represents a shift in Bolton’s compositional language, moving away from a more mathematical approach to embracing and expressing intense emotional elements. Another album composition to be performed is Michael Oesterle’s string quartet – *Daydream Mechanics* – that evokes childhood adventures of playing in the backyard while encountering all the possible threats contained in that unique environment.

The evening will begin on a meditative note with Scott Godin's work *Longing*, to be followed by Steve Reich's *Proverb* for five singers, keyboards and vibraphones, composed in 1995, and to be conducted by Véronique Lacroix, founder of the recently disbanded Ensemble contemporain de Montréal. This work is heavily influenced by the music of French medieval composer, Perotin, celebrated for developing the four-part polyphonic vocal style. In the hands of Reich with his approach to creating pulsating and interlocking patterns both melodically and rhythmically, the work will no doubt transport the listener into alternate realms. The concert will end on a more raucous tone, with Trash TV Trance by Italian composer Fausto Romitelli for electric guitar, a work Gimbel describes as being “wacky, dark and fun, like being on an acid trip.” As well, a newly commissioned work by Canadian Geof Holbrook – *Brain Fills* – with its “wildfire rock and roll quality” will conclude the evening in a spirit of high energy. Accompanying this full-on sonic experience will be live painting by visual artist John Coburn. Gimbel and Coburn met as neighbours at the Barns and some of Coburn's drawings and paintings will also be on view at the Barns’ McKendrick Gallery from May 31 to June 3.

Music in the Barns has recently been involved in the development of a digital violin that will function as a video
game controller. “Instead of having the controller in your hand with a series of buttons, you will use the violin bow,” Gimbel explained. Part of the process of creating this instrument involved a series of conversations with teachers and students across Canada, some of whom will be present to view the prototype on display in the gallery. The evening will end with the firing up of The Stop’s pizza oven and an intermingling of all in the Barns’ gardens. This animation of the multi-use Wychwood Barns facility is a fulfillment of the original vision of the creators of this space, something that Gimbel finds deeply satisfying to participate in. It was during the recent reflective time that Covid offered that she came to realize that each event that Music in the Barns has been involved in is “a prototype, an experiment and a hypothesis.” This event is the next step in that journey.

R. Murray Schafer

The phrase “Creator of Epic Ideas” only begins to paint a picture of the gigantic legacy of composer R. Murray Schafer. That’s fitting, because he himself was committed to diving into the larger themes that human existence poses: a search for wholeness, the union of opposites, and a confrontation with the shadow of both the individual and the collective psyche – all themes opened up in the first half of the 20th century by Carl Jung. To handle such an enormous creative task requires entering into the realm of myth, and that is exactly the path that Schafer took, creating a series of mythic stories and characters that played out over 40 years in what he called his Patria cycle, a Latin word for “homeland.” Many of his works were performed in unusual spaces, like Toronto’s Union Station or the Ontario Science Centre, as well as in various outdoor locations and wilderness settings. And always running in the background in the multiple expressions of his creativity was the question: what is our relationship to the environment, to place, to the soundscape, to listening?

To honour and celebrate Schafer and his legacy, Soundstreams is offering a special concert event on June 5 at Toronto’s Grace Church on-the-Hill featuring a selection of his compositions. It’s fitting that this event will also coincide with the 40th anniversary of Soundstreams, which held its first concert on June 7, 1982. Over the years, Soundstreams and Schafer have had a close collaboration, with Soundstreams commissioning and premiering many of his works, some of which will be featured in the upcoming concert. The chosen repertoire offers a glimpse into the depth and scope of Schafer’s compositional work, and will feature many of his works for the human voice as well his Quartet No.12 written for the Molinari String Quartet, another close collaborator.

The concert will begin with an Aubade for soprano and trumpet from And Wolf Shall Inherit the Moon, the epilogue to the Patria cycle. Schafer wrote multiple aubades (pieces of music appropriate to the dawn) designed to be performed during The Wolf Project, an annual participatory performance event that took place over a week of living communally in a wilderness environment.

One of Schafer’s Soundstreams commissions, in 2003, was a large choral work – The Fall into Light – for six choirs with texts from Gnostic sources, and first performed in the atrium of the CBC building in Toronto. In the midst of this enormous work, three hymns were presented as moments of reflection and pause. These Three Hymns will be part of the June concert, offering the listener a moment of insight into aspects of Schafer’s spiritual interests.

The dusk-to-dawn ritual-performance piece, titled RA, was premiered in 1983 at the Ontario Science Centre. With a text created from ancient Egyptian sources, the piece initiated the audience members into a journey to the underworld, following the path of the sun god Ra through the darkness of night to resurrection at
dawn. One of the works from this production, *Two Sisters: Isis & Nephthys*, for two sopranos, harp and two percussionists, will be performed June 5, as will *Epitaph for Moonlight*, one of his most-often-performed choral works, which is written as a graphic score and allows performers who may not be skilled at reading notated scores the opportunity to participate. Here it will be performed by the Soundstreams’ Choir 21, conducted by David Fallis, who will also present Schafer’s *Fire* for choir and sticks.

The concert will conclude with a 2005 recorded performance of another Soundstreams’ commission, *The Death of Shalana* composed for four choirs. The text, written by Schafer, tells the story of Shalana, a human who goes to live in the forest with the animals. After his death, his voice lives on and can be heard in the soundscape of nature. So, too, does Schafer’s voice live on, both in his compositions of course, but also as an inspirational force whispering to our mythic imagination.

**QUICK PICKS**

**MAY 24 to JUNE 5:** Tapestry Opera and OCAD University collaborate in OCAD's Great Hall to perform *R.U.R. A Torrent of Light*. What is the future of our entanglement with AI? This new opera, with music composed by Nicole Lizée and libretto by Nicolas Billon, offers one vision of what happens when a creative duo’s visions lead to unexpected breakthroughs and ensuing conflict. The project combines dance, multimedia design, wearable technology and an orchestra of 100 instruments.

**MAY 26, 8PM:** Estonian Music Week. Jeanne Lamon Hall, Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre. A performance of Estonian composer Veljo Tormis’ *Forgotten People* by Collegium Musicale, an ensemble who combine performances of early music and contemporary music. The piece is based on indigenous Balto-Finnic song, a repertoire that has almost been lost. In the face of the current Russian invasion of Ukraine, protecting this heritage has become increasingly difficult and problematic. There will be a repeat performance in Hamilton on June 1 at the Cotton Factory.

**MAY 27, 8:30PM:** Black Fish Project, Aga Khan Museum. Featuring the Toni Bein String Quartet and a team of multi-genre Toronto musicians in a performance of a project written by Persian-Canadian composer Keyvan Emami. The score calls for the diverse performers to engage in improvisatory responses to each other, an activity that was challenging to rehearse during Covid. This performance will be the culmination of all their labours and collaboration.

**JUNE 9, 8PM:** Esprit Orchestra, Koerner Hall. “Esprit Live 2022!” The concert repertoire features pieces by Russian Sophia Gubaidullina, UK composer Thomas Adès and Canada’s Alison Yee-Fei Jiang, whose Esprit-commissioned work – *Sanctuary* – composed in 2020, will be given its world premiere. From 2020 to 2022, Jiang has been composer-in-residence with the National Arts Centre Orchestra of Canada; she combines multiple sources such as Chinese traditional music, Buddhism, film music and Canadian landscapes in her compositional language.

**JUNE 11, 8 PM:** Westben presents an online concert titled *The Pencil Salesman*. Created by Brian Finley, this opera tells the story of Boris Ball, an inventor who becomes increasingly disenchanted with technological advancements. The work is directed by Michael Mori, the director of R.U.R. *A Torrent of Light*, another opera devoted to the theme of technology gone awry, westbenddigitalvenue.ca.

**T**oronto Summer Music (TSM) is back, bigger than ever – July 7 to July 30 – with “Inspirations” as its theme. Toronto’s go-to summer classical music event will present an ambitious program of 26 mainstage concerts. Eight of them will showcase the TSM Academy Fellows and Mentors, highlighting one crucial aspect of the festival’s mandate – to offer high-level training to emerging musicians. The details of those eight ReGENERATION concerts will be announced in June; the contents of the other 18 were made public in late April.

I took the opportunity in early May to discuss the “Inspirations” theme with TSO concertmaster Jonathan Crow, now in his sixth year as TSM’s artistic director. (This interview has been edited for length.)

WN: In the festival release, you describe inspiration as “deeply motivating moments that connect us to one another.” Given that the backbone of Toronto Summer Music is the TSM Academy with its Mentors and Fellows, there is clearly a weight of inspiration to be had, in any TSM season, in terms of teachableperforming moments. But how did you make the leap from that to basing the whole festival on that theme?

JC: I don’t think the leap came about because of one specific moment, but rather from thinking about how we’ve put together themes these last five years at TSM. There are so many things that come into play when tying music together – the specific reasons for the composition, the actual inspiration of the composer, the meaning of music to the artists… I thought it might be interesting to explore more explicitly the reasons behind how we program great music.

Can you give some examples of how these inspirational catalysts manifest themselves in the programming, maybe starting with how you decided what works to include in the New Orford program on July 26?

The New Orford String Quartet program (“The Americas”) explores different inspirations that composers found in areas that may or may not have been their homes – from birdsong in Dvořák’s “American” Quartet, to American folk music in Jessie Montgomery’s *Strum*, and the flight paths of ravens in Carmen Braden’s *The Raven Conspiracy*. This program came about when Sharon Wei joined our quartet last year; we were looking for a standard work we had not played together as a group, and surprisingly we hadn’t yet done Dvořák’s “American” – even though it is probably the most played of all string

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quartets! I had heard Carmen Braden’s *The Raven Conspiracy* last year online when the Rosebud Quartet performed it as part of their Echo Chamber performance for TSM 2021, and loved the work. With those two pieces decided on, a theme of the New World became possible.

**And other examples?**

This summer we have programs based on many different concepts. Folk music, for example: our opening night concert [July 7] looks at how composers incorporated different kinds of folk music into their classical works – Dvořák using Czech dumka forms and Ravel using Transylvanian Roma ideas among others. Some of the programs had influences that I had no idea about until I started researching – in the Mendelssohn Octet, for example [July 29], there is a connection to Goethe’s *Faust*, which I had no idea about even after performing it dozens of times over the last years! Perhaps my personal favourite though, is the program [July 22] with the two Brahms Quintets; Brahms, of course, was constantly doubting his own abilities, and thought he had nothing left to say after his Op.111 Quintet. Luckily for us, he heard the inspiring clarinet of Richard Mühlfeld, and came up with several amazing late works including the *Clarinet Quintet*. And, of course, several pieces with no clarinet: I guess he wasn’t finished quite yet!

“The Von Meck Letters” on July 15 jumped out at me for the way it connects Debussy and Tchaikovsky.

Debussy was actually a tutor to Nadezhda von Meck’s children, and wanted to marry one of them – she refused though. Von Meck was a financial supporter of many musicians throughout her life, and later was a benefactor to Tchaikovsky, giving him financial support with the stipulation that they could never meet. Was this a reaction to her closer personal relationship with Debussy? Did that affect the way she thought about their music? Does any of this come across in their music? I suppose audiences will have to decide!

Franz Hasenöhrl’s arrangement for violin, double bass, clarinet, bassoon and horn of Richard Strauss’ *Till Eulenspiegel’s Merry Pranks*, July 29, also strikes me as an inspired choice.

This is one of my favourite pieces; I love Strauss and I love chamber music, but we don’t get to combine those two things very often, outside of the great Strauss Violin Sonata (stay tuned for next summer!) and a few smaller chamber works. I suppose when I think of Strauss I think of epic large-scale orchestral works, not quintets. But of all of the tone poems, *Till* is perhaps the lightest and most transparent, and works great in a reduction for chamber ensemble!

**What about the Dover Quartet’s Haydn/Mozart/Ravel program?**

It’s always nice to have an old-school quartet concert at the festival. The Dovers are performing a fantastic program [on July 14] with three of the all-time great compositions for quartet. Haydn was perhaps the
father of string quartet writing, composing almost 70 quartets; for me the “Lark” Quartet is one of the highlights (named “Lark” because of the soaring violin melody in the first movement). This quartet has another less famous nickname though – the “Hornpipe” – due to the hornpipe melody in the last movement. Haydn didn’t attach either of these nicknames, but do you think he was aware of these connections when writing? Was he hoping to provide this sort of imagery in his music, or are we attaching these ideas ourselves while we listen?

Mozart’s “Dissonance Quartet” was also not nicknamed by Mozart! It was part of a set dedicated to Haydn. Ravel’s quartet was similarly dedicated to his teacher Fauré (who didn’t care much for the work); it was modelled, however, on Debussy’s earlier quartet and Debussy very much liked the piece, sending Ravel a letter of encouragement. Mozart and Ravel both derived inspiration from a previous-generation composer, not looking to match the earlier composer’s work, but very much looking at setting out on new compositional paths – Mozart with unsettling new uses of harmony (hence the title “Dissonance”) and Ravel with a search for a new sound world.

What led you to choose the specific works in “Two Canadians in Paris” (July 25)? Did you consult with your performing partner Philip Chiu?

Similarly to The Americas program, Phil and I were searching for an anchor work that we had never performed; we’ve done the Franck Sonata dozens of times, but not the Fauré A Major; I also liked the idea of trying to pair French music with something of a different style, and although Louise Farrenc is French, she would have grown up hearing Beethoven and other Germanic works, as French music wasn’t in vogue (even in France...) at the time. In a way this is a program that brings together pieces that don’t have significant musical connections to highlight how composers from similar areas can have such different styles.

And using “Inspirations” as the title for the evening concert (July 28) featuring Keiko Devaux’s Arras and Mahler’s glorious Symphony No.4?

Well – we had to have one concert that used our theme for the title! Seriously though, these two works incorporate similar ideas into the music, with Mahler’s Symphony, exploring themes of religion – specifically Heaven – and Arras also bringing together sacred musical references. As well, Arras incorporates several extra-musical concepts, in particular the idea of memory, and weaves them together into what Keiko Devaux refers to as a “tapestry” even including the sound of a mechanical loom into the work! What I find fascinating are the different ways the two composers approached bringing these extra-musical elements to the awareness of the listener. Keiko speaks beautifully about all of her influences on the violin channel (theviolin-channel.com/vc-new-music-tuesday-composer-keiko-devaux-arras/).

Where do you personally find inspiration?

I think I find different inspirations when I’m performing and when I’m curating; when playing the violin I definitely find inspiration from the people around me – teachers, students, colleagues, family... Hearing someone play a piece and interpret it differently than I would, always opens up new ideas for me and helps me to challenge the way I might approach a piece I’ve played many times. And I think we’ve seen recently that most organizations have been inspired by current events such as the Black Lives Matter movement to change how music can reach people, and to question what role we play when we put musicians and works of music on a public stage – how what we program and put on stage can perhaps help to inspire others...

Toronto Summer Music runs from July 7 to July 30. For further information please visit torontosummermusic.com.
**QUICK PICKS**

**MAY 25, 27 & 28:** Toronto Symphony Orchestra music director Gustavo Gimeno joins by Garrick Ohlsson in a performance of Beethoven’s Piano Concerto No.5 in E-flat Major Op.73 “Emperor”. The concert also includes the world premiere of TSO Spotlight Artist, Samy Mousssa’s Symphony No. 2. On MAY 27, at 6:15PM there is a pre-concert performance for ticketholders, by the TSO Chamber Soloists performing Schubert’s Shepherd on the Rock for soprano, clarinet and piano, written during the last months of the composer’s life. JUN 1, 2, 4 & 5: Child prodigy, world-class pianist and trail-blazing composer, Clara Schumann wrote her Piano Concerto at 14 to showcase her own virtuosity. Here it serves as a showcase for Toronto-born pianist Tony Siqi Yun, gold medalist at the first China International Music Competition in 2019. JUN 9 & 11 Gustavo Gimeno pays tribute to his native Spain: composer Francisco Coll’s new work, Elsipsian, reinforces his reputation as one of today’s most striking and individual musical voices, and Javier Perianes is the soloist in Grieg’s lush, melodic Piano Concerto.

**MAY 15, 16, 17 & 19** Beethoven’s transcendent Symphony No.9 is an ideal closer to the TSO’s 2021/22 season. Don’t miss it. **MAY 29, 3PM:** Bravo Niagara! Festival of the Arts presents pianist Jon Kimura Parker in a program of Beethoven’s “Moonlight” Sonata; a Scherzo by Clara Schumann; Brahms’ dynamic Variations on a Theme by Handel; Schubert’s lovely Impromptu in B-flat Op.142 No.3; Chick Corea’s Got a Match?; and other works. FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, St. Catharines.

**JUN 6, 8PM:** Trio Arkel performs Ravel’s String Quartet and Caplet’s Conte fantastique for harp and string quartet. Marie Bérard, violin; Emily Kruspe, violin; Rémi Pelletier, viola; Heidi Elise Bearcroft, harp; Winona Zelenka, cello. Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre.

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**JUN 24, 7:30PM:** Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra music director, Gemma New, conducts the HPO in Alexina Louie’s Music for a Celebration; Mozart’s divine Clarinet Concerto; Matthias McIntire’s Yangon Connection; and Prokofiev’s delightful Symphony No.1 in D Op.25 “Classical”, Dominic Desautels, solo clarinet. FirstOntario Concert Hall, Hamilton. JUN 26, 7:30PM: Gemma New conducts the HPO in propulsive new works accompanied by vibrant video installations created by Hamilton artist Andrew O’Connor: Paul Frehner’s Voluptuous Panic imitates the thrill of rollercoasters and fast cars; Juliet Palmer’s Foundry explores the sounds of metal transforming. Dragon Unfolding, by Kelly-Marie Murphy, portrays an origami dragon rising and taking flight. Luis Ramirez’s new work evokes an Aztec deity emerging from an ancient temple. The flow of water over Webster’s Falls inspires Abigail Richardson-Schulte’s Downstream. And Jordan Pal’s On the Double offers a bright conclusion to the evening. The Cotton Factory, Hamilton.

**JUN 27, 12:15PM:** Andrew Sords (violin) and Cheryl Duvall (piano) return to Music Mondays with a dive into the Romantic literature: from Beethoven’s “Spring” Sonata and Ravel’s Tzigane to Sarasate’s Pamplona. Works by Chopin and Brahms fill out this 19th-century feast. Church of the Holy Trinity, Trinity Square.

*Paul Ennis is the managing editor of The WholeNote.*
ALMOST TOO MANY SHOWS TO SEE

JENNIFER PARR

It seems that the resurgence of music theatre is for real this time. After so many short-lived restarts and sudden heartbreaking lockdowns, it is invigorating to finally have almost too many shows to see! Music theatre and dance are now back live in theatres and in the parks for a summer season packed with a wide variety of shows for audiences to choose from.

Dixon Road

Starting off the season with a city-wide bang is The Musical Stage Company’s Marquee Festival encompassing a number of initiatives all built around the central idea of “turning points” in people’s lives. The biggest project, and one that has been in development for several years, is the world premiere of the musical Dixon Road by Fatuma Adar, which will take its first bows in the High Park Amphitheatre (in association with Canadian Stage) June 1-19. Originally commissioned by The Musical Stage Company with funding from The Aubrey & Marla Dan Fund for New Musicals and developed as part of Obsidian Theatre’s Playwrights Unit, Dixon Road is a deeply personal story for its creator and one that many other children of immigrant parents will identify with.

Dixon Road tells the story of a Somali family who fled the civil war in their homeland in the 1990s to find a new home in Canada, specifically in the neighbourhood around Pearson Airport near Dixon Road and Kipling Avenue now known as Little Mogadishu. Central to the musical is the dynamic between the father learning to navigate his new world and create a new identity for himself while his daughter – now growing up in Canada – starts to have dreams of finding new opportunities of her own. Adar based the book on her own experiences living on Dixon Road. She has also written the score (both music and lyrics) drawing on music that was popular in her community growing up, including R & B, hip-hop, contemporary musical theatre and traditional Somali melodies. I am excited to see Dixon Road and hope that this is just the beginning of an outpouring of new shows by new storytellers.

The MSC is also bringing back its pandemic-inspired hit series of Porchside Songs concerts, this time featuring two multi-talented duos: Beau Dixon and Kelly Holiff with Mixed Tape: The Music That Changed Me, and Kevin Wong and Callin Stadnyk with Big Songs. Both concerts can be booked by anyone living in Toronto’s M postal code, and with a porch or performance space of the right size, for $425. Yes, the concerts are private events but also spill over into the surrounding neighbourhood, adding a festive gaiety to summer evenings. To find out more email ticketing@themusicalstagecompany.com.

Even more democratic and widely spread around the GTA is the new MSC initiative Musical Moments ranging from explosive street parties to
interactive jam sessions and a range of pop-up experiences, all inspired by the “turning points” theme. There are seven Musical Moments in total, chosen from open applications earlier this year, and running from May 28 through June 10. To catch all the moments in one place on the same day, head over to High Park Amphitheatre where they will be showcased on June 11 & 12. Find out more about each Moment and where they will be performed at the MSC website.

Luminato

Running parallel to the Marquee Festival is Toronto’s Luminato Festival, at last back live at its usual time of year, in multiple locations around the city. Among the eclectic potpourri of music, theatre and multimedia creations (including a late-night cabaret) are two music theatre productions inspired by the climate crisis and the ever-more-urgent need to find a solution.

The Cave, a sung-through musical fable about the destruction unleashed on the natural world by climate change, and specifically by horrific forest fires, was first seen in 2019, and returns to Luminato by popular demand – June 15-26 at Theatre Passe Muraille – in a newly revised form that now includes immersive animations by Bruce Alcock. A co-creation by composer and narrator John Millard, lyricist Tomson Highway, and book writer Martha Ross, The Cave is peopled by some of Toronto’s top musical theatre talent playing a collection of animals (Moose, Beaver, Skunk, Snake, Wolf, Crow, Fox and Spider) seeking safety from a rapidly spreading forest fire in the relative safety of Bear’s cave. As they gather, they sing to and with each other, of the fears they have for the future – but also of their joy in life.

Also drawing inspiration from our inescapable climate crisis is Creation Destruction taking place at the Trillium Park Pavilion at Ontario Place on June 15–17. Taking advantage of the natural setting on the shores of Lake Ontario, and happening each performance day specifically at sunset, the show is an intriguing combination of video installation by United Visual Artists, hypnotic rock music by Godspeed You! Black Emperor, and the expressive kinetic presence of 11 of Canada’s most distinctive dancers. It promises to immerse its audiences in a world struggling to adapt and survive despite threats of destruction.

Harbourfront

Toronto’s Harbourfront Centre has been quietly and steadfastly producing live dance performances from the earliest date it was safe to do so as the pandemic waned, via the Torque series showcasing companies from around the world. May 20-22 sees the visually stunning Sky Dancers which continues the theme of survival amidst destruction by exploring the impact of the Quebec Bridge disaster of 1907. And on June 28 and 29, Story, story die – from Norway – explores the more personal interaction between lies and love, as people as individuals try to present their best selves to the world.

Sky Dancers – see On Our Cover, page 6
Fans take note!
Like many other dance fans, I am eager to see former prima ballerina and National Ballet of Canada artistic director emerita, Karen Kain’s new take on that most classic of classical ballets, Swan Lake. Postponed in 2020 like so many other productions, Kain’s new “old version” will be revealed in a long run from June 10-26 at the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts. Look out for more on this to come.

And for those whose hearts lie with traditional Broadway-style musical theatre, I would recommend catching Cynthia Dale’s Take the Moment concert, which will interweave personal stories with Sondheim songs, at The Winter Garden Theatre, June 23-25; and Damn Yankees (perhaps best known from the movie version starring Tab Hunter and Gwen Verdon) directed by Brian Hill with choreography by Allison Plamondon (who created such great dances for Holiday Inn), running all season at the Shaw Festival.

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.

QUICK PICKS

2 Pianos 4 Hands at the Royal Alexandra Theatre
June 4-July 17.
Twenty-five years ago two young up and coming theatre talents, Ted Dykstra and Richard Greenblatt sat down and created a show based on their own memories of learning to play the piano and dreaming of concert-pianist stardom. It became a monster hit playing across the country and internationally with various teams after the originators stepped back – even an all-female version. Now 2P4H is back to celebrate its anniversary with its original creators and stars in place. Backing them up and taking the stage on Tuesday nights are two young performers who I’m sure are hoping for the same success: Richard Todd Adams and Max Roll.

R.U.R. A Torrent of Light May 24-June 5
Tapestry New Opera is known for its risk taking, and with this new opera by Nicole Lizée and Nicholas Billon they are really pushing the boundaries into science fiction, even including wearable body technology as well as multimedia designs in cooperation with OCAD University. For new opera fans (and fans of new opera!) this is a must see. https://tapestryopera.com/performances/r-u-r-a-torrent-of-light/

Ruth, May 28
New to me, but an event that has apparently been going on for 16 years, is the dramatic musical production Ruth by Ronald Beckett, which will be presented by Arcady Ensemble outdoors at the award-winning garden centre, Whistling Gardens in Wilsonville, for one performance on May 28. Inspired by the biblical story, Ruth will be performed by a combination of young professional singers (including Cristina Pisano as Ruth), emerging artists, and the Arcady Youth Chorus. For more information visit www.arcady.ca.

Ruth, a previous production at Brantford’s Sanderson Centre.

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For what feels like the first time in a long time, Toronto’s musical community is once again a busy and bustling place. Even a quick glance through this issue of The WholeNote will reveal a plethora of exciting and vibrant performances in a wide range of styles and genres, a welcome return after a stark, unpredictable and unsettling couple of years.

Although the broader world is not yet entirely back to normal, one has the sense that this spring’s increase in concerts is setting the stage for an even larger and more comprehensive reopening next season, planting seeds that, should the conditions be accommodating enough, will grow into an unprecedented artistic flourishing not seen since the early 20th century, with composers and performers creating a new Golden Age for both music and the Arts in general.

Utopian idealism? It is worth remembering that the greatest periods of artistic creativity and genius are often preceded by times of great social and political unrest, whether the Thirty Years’ War in the 17th century or the two World Wars in the 20th. Given these precedents, it is not unreasonable to consider that the years following the COVID-19 pandemic will be times of profound artistic reflection and expression.

It is with optimism and gladness, therefore, that this column looks at upcoming performances that have me enthused, across a wider range of genres than I usually do. It’s a personal and by no means comprehensive list of all that is taking place this month and next, but personal and somewhat more eclectic than usual is a good place to begin for anyone looking to jump back into the musical swim of things.

CHORAL

Those seeking a new and exciting choral experience should not overlook the visiting Estonian choir Collegium Musicale, who are coming to Jeanne Lamon Hall on May 26 as part of this year’s Estonian Music Week. This renowned group, led by conductor Endrik Üksvärav, performs a wide range of repertoire which extends from Renaissance to contemporary music, including oratorios and operas, with a special place in their repertoire belonging to Estonian contemporary composers including Arvo Pärt, Erkki-Sven Tüür and Veljo Tormis.

It is the latter composer’s music which is featured in this concert, as Collegium Musicale will perform selections from Tormis’ Forgotten Peoples, a monumental choral work which brings to life nearly lost Balto-Finnic traditional songs. Tormis (1930–2017) is one of Estonia’s most famous composers, renowned above all for his choral music. “I do not use folk song, it is folk song that uses me,” said the composer of his approach, and Forgotten Peoples promises to be a unique synthesis of folk song, the complexity of 20th-century composers such as Bartók and Stravinsky, and the minimalist compositional structure of Arvo Pärt.

For those seeking a more historically based choral concert, the Tafelmusik Chamber Choir presents Bach Motets Return on June 18, featuring two of Johann Sebastian Bach’s largest and most grandiose motets – Jesu, meine Freude and Singet dem Herrn – and a selection of smaller instrumental works performed by members of the Tafelmusik Orchestra.

Jesu, meine Freude is Bach’s longest and most involved motet, with 11 distinct movements and a tremendous range of both style and affect. Unique in its complex symmetrical structure which juxtaposes hymn and biblical texts, and with movements featuring a variety of styles and vocal textures, the motet is regarded as one of Bach’s greatest achievements in the genre.

Although smaller in scale than its counterpart, Singet dem Herrn is no less magnificent, written in three movements for double choir with a spectacular four-voice fugue concluding the work. It is speculated that this was the motet Mozart heard when he famously visited the Thomaskirche in Leipzig in 1789, to which he responded with great enthusiasm, studying the choral parts and even making a copy for himself.
ORCHESTRAL

Continuing their front-and-centre focus on J.S. Bach and his music, the Tafelmusik Orchestra presents Brandenburg Concertos 3, 4, 5 and 6 at Koerner Hall on May 28. These six multi-movement works, so titled because they were presented to Christian Ludwig, Margrave of Brandenburg-Schwedt in 1721, are widely regarded as some of the best orchestral compositions of the Baroque era. While he appears to have selected the six pieces from concertos he previously composed while employed at Köthen and Weimar, Bach wrote out the presented scores himself, rather than leaving that task to a copyist, a testament to the importance of this presentation to the composer.

Unfortunately for Bach, the fate of these now-renowned scores did not turn in his favour. Because King Frederick William I of Prussia was not a significant patron of the arts, Christian Ludwig seems to have lacked the musicians in his Berlin ensemble to perform the concertos. The full score was therefore left unused in the Margrave’s library until his death in 1734 and only rediscovered in the archives of Brandenburg in 1849, receiving its first publication the following year.

Despite their century-long delay in attaining public exposure, the Brandenburg Concertos have since become favourites in the modern era, performed frequently both by large orchestras and historically informed ensembles. In the hands of the period performance masters at Tafelmusik, there is little doubt that this concert will be a thrilling journey into Bach’s mind and music.

ORGAN

Even though it is often considered a niche component of the larger urban music scene, the pipe organ community is full of dedicated enthusiasts, rich history, robust musical material and fine performers. Since its inception in 2005, Organix Concerts has emerged as a top-tier venue for some of Canada’s most renowned and gifted organists, as well as a host to internationally renowned guests, two of whom will visit Toronto this June: acclaimed Tournemire scholar Richard Spotts; and the French organist Sophie-Véronique Cauchefer-Choplin.

Spotts performs on the Casavant pipe organ at All Saints Anglican Church on June 22, presenting a program consisting of Charles Tournemire’s Trois Phèmes. A mysterious and controversial genius, Tournemire was a quintessential church musician in the French tradition, renowned during his lifetime for both his improvisations and compositions. Despite his formidable contribution to the art form, however, his works are woefully understudied and underperformed by modern organists, and Spotts has devoted the last decade to unpacking Tournemire’s legacy and restoring the reputation of this early-20th-century genius.

Cauchefer-Choplin will be featured on the immense instrument at Timothy Eaton Memorial Church on June 29, playing a range of works by Bach, Widor and the Canadian composer Denis Bédard, before concluding her recital with a four-movement improvisation. A staple of the French organ tradition, this symphonic style of improvisation is utterly thrilling, as the use of themes submitted by audience members adds a level of spontaneity and excitement that is unparalleled. Indeed, where in some contexts the flawless execution of a written (and often memorized) score is cause for acclaim, here the expression of musical ideas “on the fly” is well worth the price of admission, especially when a theme is quickly and effectively spun into a complex, improvised fugue!

Whether diving into an organ recital, Bach’s Brandenburg Concertos, the Estonian Collegium Musicum, or one of the myriad concerts and recitals on offer this month and next, there is little doubt that Toronto’s music scene is recovering admirably from the challenges of the past two years. While we may not yet be on the verge of a new Golden Age, we remain hopeful that the progress experienced to date will continue and that artists across this community will flourish in ways both profound and unexpected.

Matthew Whitfield is a Toronto-based harpsichordist and organist.

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TMC presents the Canadian premiere of Mass for the Endangered by acclaimed composer Sarah Kirkland Snider.

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Matthew Whitfield is a Toronto-based harpsichordist and organist.
I recently bumped into violinist Larry Beckwith, Artistic Producer of Confluence Concerts, who told me he had an idea for a choral story. We were at New Music Concerts’ tribute evening, at Longboat Hall, honouring NMC’s founding artistic director, flutist Robert Aitken who has just stepped aside after 50 extraordinary years. Beckwith’s story idea was, however, for someone else who put in 50 years service to our musical scene, transforming it as he went!

This May, Beckwith reminded me, is the 20th anniversary of Nicholas (Niki) Goldschmidt’s third, and most triumphant, Toronto International Choral Festival, titled “The Joy of Singing in the Noise of the World.” As Dawn Lyons described it in our May 2002 cover story, the festival was designed, with typical Goldschmidtian understatement, “to fill May 31 to June 22 with choral music from across Canada and around the world.” (“Fill” is no exaggeration: audiences aside, there would end up being over 1,000 active participants in the event! By 2002, the 94-year-old Goldschmidt (born in Austro-Hungary in 1908) was without equal in the art of organizing a really festive festival!

He had arrived in Toronto in 1946, invited to head up the University of Toronto’s new opera school, the first in the country. He was astounded by the talent he found waiting for him on the first day he walked into the Conservatory. “Soon he needed a marketplace to display his fine crop of young Canadian singers,” Dawn Lyons wrote, “a place for them to see, hear, work with and take their measure against singers from around the world.” The Goldschmidt solution? Found the Canadian Opera Company! “It was the beginning of 50 years of creating what we would now call cultural infrastructure…” Lyons wrote: “If the word festival is in the title, and the program bulges with acknowledgment of partnerships, look for Niki in the credits.”
Here’s the interesting twist: as I flipped my way further into that May 2002 issue (they are all available for perusing at kiosk.thewholenote.com) I found that issue’s Choral Scene column, written by none other than the aforementioned Larry Beckwith! “May is the month when choral music-making is usually beginning to wind down for the season,” he wrote. “But 2002 is a special year. If anything, the action’s just beginning. The first two weekends in May are packed with exciting choral concerts, which will serve as hearty appetizers to the PODIUM conference on the May long weekend.”

The more things change, it seems, the more they stay the same! Because it is also 20 years, almost to the day, since PODIUM, Canada’s pre-eminent community-driven choral conference and festival, was held in Toronto! So to PODIUM’s organizers and attendees, a hearty welcome back to Toronto in an equally “special year,” albeit for a whole set of different reasons!

And to members of the local choral community and their audiences, as Larry Beckwith said 20 years ago, once again “the action is just beginning” – as we wrap our brains around idea of being able to rediscover, after two years of enforced silence, the joy of singing (in the noise of the world).

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Toronto Mendelssohn Choir

Five emerging conductors – from the TMC’s Conducting Symposium – lead the choir!

Experience a musical reflection on the meaning of exile and sanctuary through the works of Caroline Shaw, Paul Hindemith, Roderick Williams, Benjamin Britten, and many others.

MEET ME HERE:
SONGS OF SANCTUARY

TUE, JUNE 28  7:30 PM
YORKMINSTER PARK BAPTIST CHURCH

Enjoy a FREE TMC CONCERT

Experience in-person and online.

*Mask and vaccination proof required

Pre-registration required
www.tmchoir.org

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REMNENIYI HOUSE OF MUSIC

COME AND SEE OUR NEW LOCATION!

109 VANDERHOOF AV.
(LAIRD/ EGLINTON)
Here’s a taste of what the coming month and a half has in store.

PODIUM Choral Festival

The PODIUM conference is for registrants only, but the concerts of the accompanying Choral Festival are open to the public. Here they are in brief: May 20: 3:30: Prairie Voices, Singing Out (plus Song Sharing); 8:00: Toronto Mass Choir. May 21: 5:00: Jason Max Ferdinand Singers; 8:00: Dead of Winter. May 22: 4:00: Shallaway Youth Choir featuring the NL Deaf Choir, Winnipeg Boys Choir (plus Song Sharing); 8:00: Kaleidoscope Vocal Ensemble. May 23: 3:30: Exultate Chamber Singers, Canadian Men’s Chorus (plus Song Sharing).

For more information, consult our daily listings or visit podium2022.ca/festivalconcerts.

SING!

Hard on the heels of this year’s PODIUM (from May 26 to June 3), is SING! The Toronto International Vocal Arts Festival. “Started in 2011 on a shoestring budget with seven enthusiasts,” their website says, “we are now Canada’s premier a cappella festival: ten days of outstanding concerts featuring the [unaccompanied] human voice.”

Once again it’s an intriguingly creative concert lineup, ranging from four free concerts in Trillium Park at Ontario Place to headliner shows featuring the NL Deaf Choir, Winnipeg Boys Choir (plus Song Sharing); 8:00: Kaleidoscope Vocal Ensemble. May 23: 3:30: Exultate Chamber Singers, Canadian Men’s Chorus (plus Song Sharing).

For more information, consult our daily listings or visit podium2022.ca/festivalconcerts.

QUICK PICKS (for details see the daily listings).

MAY 26, 12PM: the COC’s Showcase Series presents Asian Heritage Month - Rasa Sayang: From Malaysia, With Love, an interactive lecture exploring composer Tracy Wong’s lived experience as a first-generation Canadian immigrant, conductor and musician; with members of the Hamilton Children’s Choir.

MAY 28, 3PM: Toronto Mendelssohn Choir. Endangered. Barbara Assignaak: Creation; Aaron Copland. In the Beginning; Sarah Kirkland Snider: Mass for the Endangered.


JUN 2, 8PM: Choir! Choir! Choir! Epic 80s Singalong, Centre in the Square, Kitchener, and JUN 3, 8PM: Never Stop Singing! Massey Hall.


JUN 5, 3PM: Tapestry Chamber Choir (Newmarket). Songs of Spirit. Andrew Balfour; Ambe; and works by Greg Jasperse, Ennio Morricone, Gerald Finzi and Mark Streeth.


David Perlman can be reached at publisher@thewholenote.com

ONE OF A KIND

Cem Zafir’s Something Else!

Hamilton, ON
June 16-19, 2022

STUART BROOMER

Since launching in 2014, Hamilton’s Something Else! Festival has created its own distinct format, making it one of the key events for the more creative edges of jazz and improvised music in Southern Ontario.

For 2022, the festival has grown substantially in both the number of performers and the number of events. Featured musicians include trumpeter Dave Douglas and clarinetist Don Byron, among the most acclaimed musicians of their generation. American clarinetist/alto saxophonist Michael Moore, singer Jodi Gilbert and percussionist Michael Vatcher have contributed mightily to the diverse and idiosyncratic Netherlands scene for decades, while Dave Rempis, appearing here with regular collaborator drummer Tyler Damon, renews the legendary Chicago lineage of forceful tenor saxophonists. Added to this is a strong complement of far-flung Canadians – from Montrealers Lori Freedman and Nicolas Caloia, to Torontoan Allison Cameron, and Vancouverites Peggy Lee and François Houle.

Outdoors and in: There are three full afternoon programs at Bayfront Park and four evening programs at the Cotton Factory, a revitalized industrial space. Each program includes five different groups, from solo performances to tightly arranged bands, but what distinguishes Something Else! are the opportunities to hear musicians interacting spontaneously in ad hoc ensembles, as likely to surprise and delight one another as the audience. It revives the spirit of early European free jazz and improvisation festivals, like Berlin’s Total Music Meeting, Amsterdam’s October Meeting and London’s Company Week.

Dave Douglas, as much celebrated as a composer and as a trumpeter, presents two bands. Marching Music, formed in 2019, is an iron-clad quartet that mixes Douglas’ own impassioned lyricism with a band that can emphasize the ethereal electronics of guitarist Rafiq Bhatia or the looming thunder of electric bassist Melvin Gibbs and drummer Sim Cain, the latter two known for their association with rock singer Henry Rollins. Elsewhere in the program, Douglas’ distinctly different Mountain Passage reprises an ensemble that recorded together in 2004 and that brings together many of the
Don Byron appears as a clarinet soloist, in a trio with Michael Vatcher and Vancouver bassist Torsten Müller, and another with Vatcher and Peggy Lee. He’s also part of an international clarinet quartet that combines the stellar inventiveness of Michael Moore, Lori Freedman and François Houle. The group Big Bottom packs together that clarinet quartet with bassists Müller and Caloia, the latter also heard elsewhere in the trio Zucaman 3 with Freedman and violinist Joshua Zubot.

Among the other performers, distinctive singers are present. Robin Holcomb and her partner, composer/pianist/electronic musician Wayne Horvitz, have created a uniquely contemporary take on the art song tradition, wistful, enigmatic and alive with inventive language and sounds. Holcomb also performs in a trio with Torsten Müller and Dylan van der Schyff and a duo with Peggy Lee, while Horvitz revisits his 2001 project, Sweeter than the Day. Jodi Gilbert is presenting voice workshops as well as appearing with Michael Moore and Horvitz in a program called Voice Is the Matter.

Post-festival: Something Else! continues its presentations after the festival at various Hamilton venues; performers include the Halifax ambient improvisation quartet New Hermitage on June 25; The François Houle 4/ Recorder and Gordon Grdina’s Nomad Trio, July 3; and trumpeter Lina Allemano’s Berlin-based trio, Ohrenschaum, July 16.


Stuart Broomer writes frequently on music (mostly improvised) and is the author of Time and Anthony Braxton. His column “Ezz-thetics” appears regularly at pointofdeparture.org.

Don Byron
AFTER two years of postponements, cancellations, and all of the attendant uncertainty of the pandemic, the TD Toronto Jazz Festival is back for 2022, from June 24 to July 3.

In some ways, it never left: though live shows have been few, Jazz Fest – like many of its festival counterparts – presented a variety of livestreamed events, and kept busy with community-oriented projects to support musicians and to deliver live performances to its audience. This year, however, Jazz Fest is back in full, with new artists, new stages and ten days of free outdoor shows throughout Yorkville, Victoria College at the University of Toronto, and Queen’s Park (in addition to a number of ticketed shows at venues such as Meridian Hall, Koerner Hall and Longboat Hall).

Naomi McCarroll-Butler

On July 2, at 4:45pm, saxophonist, clarinetist, and instrument maker Naomi McCarroll-Butler takes to the stage with CHRYSALIS, a new work undertaken with the support of the Jazz Festival’s 2022 Immersive Artist-in-Residence program. CHRYSALIS is a large-ensemble project featuring instruments from a variety of musical traditions, including woodwinds, strings, percussion, gayageum and tubulum. Conceptually, CHRYSALIS has roots in McCarroll-Butler’s “first years of transitioning: songs of hope for holding on, cries of joy and grief for the love of a suffering community, trance tapestries of woven sound accompanying the alignment of the physical body with the luminant body.”

“This was the first time that I’ve been supported in this kind of way, to create something long term and large scale,” McCarroll-Butler told me when I spoke to her over Zoom. “It’s been a real opportunity for growth for me. It’s probably trite to say, but the pandemic has changed us all so much. I’ve noticed so many people creating much more introspective and slow music, because we’ve needed to be introspective and slow.” Part of CHRYSALIS, however, is “stepping out of that, embracing energetic music again.”

In her musical practice, McCarroll-Butler has a penchant for using drones, for using repetitive rhythmic and melodic motives and for paying special attention to timbre. Her music has a way of inviting the listener to hear in a deep, nuanced way, as initial melodic statements repeat, shift and reconstitute themselves; just as one develops an expectation as to what will come next, that expectation is subverted in surprising, compelling ways. This predilection comes in part from McCarroll-Butler’s early musical experiences. “I grew up doing a lot of religious singing, repetitive, congregational singing,” she told me, “songs from the Iona and the Taizé communities, which are very chant-y, and there’s something in that that has always spoken to me. The repetitive, grounding, timeless quality that can exist in those kinds of musical environments, that can suspend time for a moment and bring you to another dimension.”

In addition to funding and the performance itself, McCarroll-Butler will also do some outreach events for the festival, including a conduction workshop, which is happening in Bickford Park at 1pm on June 18 (open to all levels, ages and to practitioners of all musical genres). Conduction, in this sense, is intimately related to conventional conducting, i.e. a musician actively directing a musical ensemble. But conduction – originally pioneered by the American musician Butch Morris – is a method of directing an improvising ensemble, using baton and hand gestures. McCarroll-Butler learned conduction from Tyshawn Sorey, as well as through experiences with Toronto’s Christine Duncan, who has long used the method in her Element Choir.

In addition to teaching privately and leading workshops, McCarroll-Butler is also involved in music education with the Queer Songbook Youth Orchestra, an initiative undertaken by the Queer Songbook Orchestra to “provide an avenue for queer, trans, questioning, and allied youth, to further their musical training while actively engaging in 2SLGBTQ+ representation and community building.” The QSO was “in Regina, performing,” McCarroll-Butler told me, “and it was one
of the most powerful musical education experiences that I’ve ever had. There was a young trans boy who came up to me, and it seems as though he had never met an adult trans person before. And this isn’t why I went into music, but to model a future for kids, when they haven’t even necessarily been exposed to one existing, to know that they could live to be 30, for example, is a powerful thing. And so far the QSYO is shaping up to be a fantastic new project.”

Linking her experiences with the QSO to her bandleading responsibilities for CHRYSALIS, McCarroll-Butler said that “being able to establish a beautiful rehearsal environment, in which people can express themselves without needing to impress anyone,” has been an important lesson that she’s learned in her involvement with the QSO. Of the group that she’s assembled for the performance, “they’re all people who are exceptional at what they do, and who have their own voices with what they do. I want a group that sounds eclectic, in which every solo can bring you to a completely different place. I want to have as much freedom as one can have when you have 13 people on stage.”

Take 100!
A Brubeck Centennial Celebration

Included in the CHRYSALIS ensemble is trumpeter Kae Murphy, an exceptional musician who also featured in Ewen Farncombe’s performances at The Rex in March, which I attended and wrote about in the last edition of this column. During that performance, there was a very earnest audience request: Take Five, the Paul Desmond composition, popularized by Dave Brubeck on the seminal album Time Out. Why Take Five – an odd-metre instrumental jazz recording – became the massive hit that it did remains a mystery; Desmond, who “was ready to trade in the entire rights of Take Five for a used Ronson electric razor,” certainly didn’t think so. But a hit it was and a hit it remains, and, for many listeners, the song is the cornerstone of Dave Brubeck’s enduring legacy.

That legacy will be celebrated in late June, in a concert by the Brubeck Brothers Quartet. The Dave Brubeck Centennial Celebration honours the life and music of Brubeck, with performances from the quartet complemented by a multimedia show and by deeply personal anecdotes told by Brubeck’s sons, Chris and Dan. Catch the show in Partridge Hall in St. Catharines, at 7:30pm on June 22.

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

For our year-round list of venues (still mainly clubs, still mostly jazz), see page 39.
This issue contains event listings from May 20 to July 12, 2022.

THERE ARE TWO LISTINGS SECTIONS IN THIS ISSUE

- **Section 1: Live and/or Livestreamed Events, May 20 – July 12**
  These are events with an announced date and time that one could circle on a calendar, in order to “be there” when it happens for the first (or only) time. This includes live and livestreamed performances, first broadcasts and screenings; concerts, workshops, symposia, and so on. If the event in question remains available after that first presentation (e.g. online or on demand), this is noted at the end of the listing.

- **Section 2: In the clubs (Mostly Jazz)**
  “Clubs” is a loose catch-all for a wide range of informal listening rooms where food and or drink may be part of the mix, but listening to the music is the primary focus. “Mostly jazz” describes venues we’ve built relationships with over the years, but it’s not a rule! If you think you belong, based on this description, you probably do, so get in touch.

How to List

1. Use the convenient online form at thewholenote.com/applications
2. Email listings to listings@thewholenote.com

Please note, we do not take listings over the phone.

**Deadlines**

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

**Print:** Our next print issue, Volume 27 no.8 covers July and August. Listings received for the Weekly Listings Update are simultaneously posted to JUSTASK, our searchable online listings database. The weekly listings update looks five to six weeks into the future on an ongoing basis.

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

**Register for the weekly updates at thewholenote.com/newsletter**

**Deadlines**

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

**Live or Live Streamed**

**May 20 to July 12, 2022**

**Friday May 20**

- **12:10:** Music at St. Andrew's. [**Friday Noon-time Recital**] Schuman: Faschingsschwank aus Wien; Rachmaninoff: Sonata No.2. Matthew Li, piano; Bo Peng, violin. St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church (Toronto), 73 Simcoe St. www.standrewtowronto.org/events/music-at-standrews-2/. Free. Donations welcome. LIVE & ONLINE.

- **12:30:** PODIUM 2022 Choral Festival. Prairie Voices, Singing Out + Song Sharing, Philip Lapathya, Jody Malone, conductors; Beth Hanlon, accompanist; Shannon Thunderbird, Sandy Horne, Indigenous knowledge keepers. Metropolitan United Church (Toronto), 56 Queen St. E. podium2022.ca/festivalconcerts. $40; $30(sr); $20(st).

- **1:30:** Canadian Opera Company. La traviata. Music by Giuseppe Verdi. Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave. Amina Edris, soprano (Violetta); Shingo Tominaga, Matthew Polenzan, Marco Cera, tenors (Germont, Violetta’s father); Christian Vann, bass-baritone (Rigoletto); Etsuko Kimura, violin. Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, 427 Bloor St.W. wwwPodiumcentre.com. Also May 21(2pm & 7:30pm); 22(2pm); 23(2pm).

- **2:30:** North Wind Concerts. All Creatures Great and Small. Vivaldi (arr. Chedeville): Spring from The Four Seasons; Biber: Sonata representativa; Couperin: La linote; Scarlatti: Flute Fantasia Op.3; Zosha Di Castri: in the half-light, for soprano and orchestra (World Premiere); Rachmaninov: Piano Concerto No.4 Op.40; Prokofiev: Symphony No.5 in e-flat Op.111. Ludmil Angelov, piano; Kristian Alexander, conductor. Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, 10268 Yonge St., Richmond Hill. 905-604-8339 or KSOrchestras.ca or RHCentre.ca. $15-$40. LIVE, ONLINE or RECORDED.

- **8:00:** Western Wind Symphony Orchestra. Ginosa + Hanning. Julia Mermelstein: in moments, into bloom - Celebration Prelude (World Premiere); Stravinsky: Scheherazade; Rachmaninov: Piano Concerto No.4 Op.40; Prokofiev: Symphony No.5 in e-flat Op.111. Ludmil Angelov, piano; Kristian Alexander, conductor. Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, 10268 Yonge St., Richmond Hill. 905-604-8339 or KSOrchestras.ca or RHCentre.ca. $15-$40. LIVE, ONLINE or RECORDED.

**Saturday May 21**

- **10:00am:** Royal Conservatory of Music. The Taylor Academy Playathon. Held outdoors in the courtyard. Students, alumni, faculty, and other special guests will participate in the full-day playathon. 273 Bloor St.W. https://www.rcmusic.com/taylor-playathon. Free.

- **2:00:** Harbourfront Centre. Anikawara Dance Theatre: Sky Dancers. Barbara Kaneratoni Diabo, choreographer and director. Fleck Dance Theatre, Harbourfront Centre, 235 Queens Quay W. www.marinahtown.com. $30(sr); $20(st).

- **2:15:** Anthroponopsy in Toronto. Eurythmy Class. Lois Macaulay, performance eurythmist; Etsuko Kimura, violin. Trinity–St. Paul’s Centre, 427 Bloor St. W. 416-921-1043 or loisl@bellnet.ca. $25/class or $175 for 8-class series. Space is limited. Also May 28, June 4, 11.

- **5:00:** PODIUM 2022 Choral Festival. Jason Max Ferdinand Singers. Jason Max Ferdi- nand, conductor; John Stoddart, accom- panist. Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, 1585 Yonge St. podium2022.ca/festivalconcerts. $40; $30(sr); $20(st).

- **7:30:** Canadian Opera Company. The Magic Flute. Music by W.A. Mozart. Ilker Aybek, Cerdeno; Caroline Wettig, soprano (The Queen of the Night); Gordon Bint- ner, baritone (Papageno); Anna-Sophie Neher, soprano (Pamina); Canadian Opera Company Orchestra & Chorus; Patrick Lange, conductor. Ann Teodosakis, director. Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. 416-868-4321 or 1-800-250-4653. $35-$250.

- **7:30:** Harbourfront Centre. Anikawara Dance Theatre: Sky Dancers. See May 20. Also May 21(2pm); 22(2pm); 23(2pm).

- **7:30:** North Wind Concerts. All Creatures Great and Small. Vivaldi (arr. Chedeville): Spring from The Four Seasons; Biber: Sonata representativa; Couperin: La linote efarouchée; Williams: Sonata in Initation of Birds; Vivaldi: Concerto II, Gardelino. Marco Cera, oboe; Alison Melville, recorder/ flute; Cristina Zacharias, violin; Christopher Bagari, harpsichord; Jerri McGonigle, cello. St. Thomas’s Anglican Church (Toronto), 363 Huron St. 416-305-1732. PWYC. Suggested admission $25. Also May 20 (Columbus Centre).

- **8:00:** Kindred Spirits Orchestra. Love and Turmoil. Hindemith: Overture to Amor and Psyche; Rachmaninov: Piano Concerto No.4 Op.40; Prokofiev: Symphony No.5 in e-flat Op.111. Ludmil Angelov, piano; Kristian Alexander, conductor. Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, 10268 Yonge St., Richmond Hill. 905-604-8339 or KSOrchestras.ca or RHCentre.ca. $15-$40. LIVE, ONLINE or RECORDED.

- **8:00:** PODIUM 2022 Choral Festival. Dead of Winter. Andrew Balfour, conductor. Trinity–St. Paul’s Centre, 427 Bloor St. W. podium2022.ca/festivalconcerts. $40; $30(sr); $20(st).

- **8:00:** Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Gimmia + Hanning. Julia Mermelstein: in moments, into bloom - Celebration Prelude (World Premiere); Stravinsky: Scheherazade; Rachmaninov: Piano Concerto No.4 Op.40; Prokofiev: Symphony No.5 in e-flat Op.111. Ludmil Angelov, piano; Kristian Alexander, conductor. Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, 10268 Yonge St., Richmond Hill. 905-604-8339 or KSOrchestras.ca or RHCentre.ca. $15-$40. LIVE, ONLINE or RECORDED.


- **8:00:** Westben. Digital Concert: Lalita Biyaj. Lalita Biayl, vocals/piano. 877-883-5777 or www.westben.ca. Free or by donation at www.westben.ca/donate. NEW DATE. ONLINE.

**Sunday May 22**

- **2:00:** Harbourfront Centre. Anikawara Dance Theatre: Sky Dancers. Barbara Kaneratoni Diabo, choreographer and director. Fleck Dance Theatre, Harbourfront Centre, 235 Queens Quay W. www.marinahtown.com. CANCELLED.

niagara symphony orchestra at the meridian arts centre, 361 university Ave.
www.symphonyniagara.com or 905-688-0722 or 1-800-706-8764. $38-$50.

Saturday May 28

12:00 noon: SING! The Toronto International Vocal Arts Festival. In Concert: Collegium Musicale's performance with The Mobile Chorus and The Mobile Chamber Orchestra. The Great Hall, OCAD University, Level 2, 10 McCaul St. 416-408-0208 or www.eventbrite.ca/e/sing-the-mobile-chorus-and-mobile-chamber-orchestra-tickets-321405842527. $20 (ad); $15 (student).

Sunday May 29

10:00 AM: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. In Concert: Giornando Conducts "Emporor". Also May 28 (8pm).

12:00 noon: Black Fish Project. Black Fish in Concert, Ten Baroque String Quartet; Magd Sekkar, clarinet; Andrew Downing, double bass; Louis Pino and Naoko Tsujita, percussion; Keaney Emami, live electronics. Aga Khan Museum, 77 Wyndorf St. 416-648-4579; $40 ($35, friends, $30 student).

Saturday May 28


7:00 Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Giornando Conducts "Emporor". See May 25. Also May 28 (8pm).

12:00 noon: Tapestry Opera/OCAD University. In Concert: Tapestry Opera and OCAD University. The Great Hall, OCAD University, Level 2, 10 McCaul St. 416-357-6066. Also May 25, 26, 28, 29 (4pm), Jun 1, 2, 4, 5 (4pm).

12:00 noon: Black Fish Project. Black Fish in Concert, Ten Baroque String Quartet; Magd Sekkar, clarinet; Andrew Downing, double bass; Louis Pino and Naoko Tsujita, percussion; Keaney Emami, live electronics. Aga Khan Museum, 77 Wyndorf St. 416-648-4579; $40 ($35, friends, $30 student).

Saturday May 28


7:00 Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Giornando Conducts "Emporor". See May 25. Also May 28 (8pm).

12:00 noon: Black Fish Project. Black Fish in Concert, Ten Baroque String Quartet; Magd Sekkar, clarinet; Andrew Downing, double bass; Louis Pino and Naoko Tsujita, percussion; Keaney Emami, live electronics. Aga Khan Museum, 77 Wyndorf St. 416-648-4579; $40 ($35, friends, $30 student).

Saturday May 28


7:00 Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Giornando Conducts "Emporor". See May 25. Also May 28 (8pm).

12:00 noon: Black Fish Project. Black Fish in Concert, Ten Baroque String Quartet; Magd Sekkar, clarinet; Andrew Downing, double bass; Louis Pino and Naoko Tsujita, percussion; Keaney Emami, live electronics. Aga Khan Museum, 77 Wyndorf St. 416-648-4579; $40 ($35, friends, $30 student).
May 28 to July 12, 2022

2:15: Anthropophosy in Toronto. Eurythmy Class. Lois Macaulay, performance eurythmist; Etsuko Kimura, violin, Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, 427 Bloor St. W. 416-921-1043 or isigrelbellina.ca. $25/class or $175 for 8-class series. Space is limited. Also May 14, 21, June 4, 11.
3:00: Toronto Mendelssohn Choir. Endangered. Assignaka: Creation (TMC commission); Clandian: In the Beginning; Snider: Mass for the Endangered (Canadian premiere), Jean-Sébastien Vallée, conductor. Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, 1585 Yonge St. 416-408-0208. $30-$90; $20-$40 (online tickets). LIVE & ONLINE. Proof of vaccination required.
4:00: Arcady. Ruth. Emma Verdonk: Song of the Sun; Ronald Beckett: Ruth. Cristina Pisani (Ruth); Arcady Youth Singers; Arcady Soloists and Emerging Artists; Ronald Beckett, conductor. Whistling Gardens, 698 Concession 3, Wilsonville. $37.
7:00: Brownatasaurus Records. Nick Maclean Quartet Featuring Brownman Ali. Nick Maclean, piano; Brownman Ali, trumpet; Ben Duff, bass; Jacob Wutzke, drums. Live! on Elgin, 220 Elgin St., No. 2, Ottawa. 613-695-5489. $20/door; $30/adv - concert + 1st album & 2nd album pre-order; $25/adv - concert + Rites of Ascension album; $15/adv - concert only.
7:00: Stonebridge Wasaga Beach Blues. Rebirth of the Blues. The Keepers featuring Steven Henry and James Legere. Stonebridge Wasaga Beach, 3185. $37.
8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Gimeno Conducts “Emperor”. May 25. Also May 27(7:30pm).
8:00: Tafelmusik. Bach Brandenburg Concertos Nos. 3, 4, 5, 6; Orchestral Suite No.3. Koerner Hall, TELUS Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. info@tafelmusik.org or 1-833-984-633. Tickets on sale Apr 21 at 416-485-1988. Tickets available at www.eventbrite.ca. $25; $20 (sr); $15 (st). Audience members will be required to remain masked throughout the concert and to practice safe distancing in seated groups. Choir members will also be masked and distanced. Further COVID info at www.jubilatesingers.ca.
5:00: Cathedral Bluffs Symphony Orchestra. In Concert. Dvorak: Symphony No.8; Burh: Akasha; Rival: Northwest Passage Variations. P.C. Ho Theatre, Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto, 5183 Sheppard Ave. E., Scarborough. 416-879-5569 or cathedralbluffs.com or cbseboxoffice@gmail.com. $30-$48; $25-$38; $20-$40 (sr/st). Fee (under 12).
and bring about a team dedicated to the end result. 416-694-6900 or www.singtoronto.com. Free. ONLINE
• 7:00: SING! The Toronto International Vocal Arts Festival. The Multi-Faceted Musician: The Realities of Being a Working Artist (Workshop). A no-holds-barred discussion about the perils and pitfalls of life as a self-employed artist. 416-694-6900 or www.singtoronto.com. Free. ONLINE

Monday May 30
• 6:00: SING! The Toronto International Vocal Arts Festival. How to Start a Group, With Deke Sharon (Workshop). The “father of contemporary a cappella” tells you the best way to find members, run auditions, structure your group, build a quick repertoire, and start performing and bring about a team dedicated to the end result. 416-694-6900 or www.singtoronto.com. Free. ONLINE
• 6:00: TD Niagara Jazz Festival. Twilight Jazz and Blooz Series: Dames at the Distillery featuring the Cheri Maracle Quintet. www.singtoronto.com. Free. ONLINE

Tuesday May 31
• 12:00 noon: Canadian Opera Company. Showcase Series: Asian Heritage Month - Singing Chinese Classical Poetry. Introducing art songs based on classical Chinese poetry, set to music by contemporary composers from different Chinese-speaking communities around the world. Z. Xin, Emily Lapin, Maive Palmer, soprano; Jialiang Zhu, piano; Richard Bradshaw Amphi theatre, Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. Free. Ticket required.

Wednesday June 1
• 7:00: Brownssaurus Records. Brownman Akustik Quartet. Nick Maclean, piano; Brownman Ali, trumpet; Ben Duff, bass; Jacob Wutzke, drums. Drom Taberna, 458 Queen St. W. 647-748-2099, PWYC.

Thursday June 2
• 7:00: Brownssaurus Records. Brownman Akustik Quartet. Nick Maclean, piano; Brownman Ali, trumpet; Ben Duff, bass; Jacob Wutzke, drums. Drom Taberna, 458 Queen St. W. 647-748-2099, PWYC.

Friday June 3
• 7:00: Brownssaurus Records. Brownman Akustik Quartet. Nick Maclean, piano; Brownman Ali, trumpet; Ben Duff, bass; Jacob Wutzke, drums. Drom Taberna, 458 Queen St. W. 647-748-2099, PWYC.

June 2, 4, 5
• 8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Dundjian Conducts Brahms. Samy Moussa: Nocturne for Orchestra; C. Schumann: Piano Concerto in a Op.7; Brahms: Symphony No.4 in e Op.98. Tony Siqiq Yun, piano; Peter Dundjian, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-595-3735 or 1-855-595-7769. Starting at $29. Also Jun 2(7:30pm); 4(8pm); 5(3pm).

Saturday June 4
• 7:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Epic 80s Singalong. Rodger Martin, conductor. Browntasauras Records. Brownman Akustik Quartet Featuring Brownman Ali, Nick Maclean, piano; Brownman Ali, trumpet; Ben Duff, bass; Jacob Wutzke, drums. Drom Taberna, 458 Queen St. W. 647-748-2099, PWYC.

Sunday June 5
• 7:00: Brownssaurus Records. Brownman Akustik Quartet. Nick Maclean, piano; Brownman Ali, trumpet; Ben Duff, bass; Jacob Wutzke, drums. Drom Taberna, 458 Queen St. W. 647-748-2099, PWYC.
• 8:00: SING! The Toronto International Vocal Arts Festival. SING! Aca-film Festival. A trilogy of short films exploring stories of resilience featuring a cappella scores. Concert Hall, Masonic Temple, 888 Yonge St. 416-694-6900 or www.singtoronto.com. $43; $22(underfunded).
• 8:00: Tapestry Opera/OCAD University. R.U.R. A Torrent of Light. See May 24. Also Jun 2, 4, 5(4pm).


SOUNDSCAPES OF SPRING

Sunday May 29, 2022, 4pm
St. Michael & All Angels Church, 611 St. Clair Ave. W.
wychockychoir.ca

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Frida y June 3

- 6:00: Browntusaurus Records. Nick Maclean Quartet Featuring Brownman All. Nick Maclean, piano; Brownman Ali, trumpet; Ben Duff, bass; Jacob Wutzke, drums. Old Church Theatre, 940 Bonisteel Rd., Toronto. 413-348-1411. $20.25.

Saturday June 4

- 2:15: Anthropophoisy in Toronto. Eurythmyn Class. Los Macauley, performance eurythmynist; Etsuko Kimuma, violin. Trinity-St. Paul's Centre, 427 Bloor St. W. 416-921-1043 or losi@bell.ca. $25/class or $175 for 8-class series. Space is limited. Also May 14, 21, 28, June 11.
- 3:00: SING! The Toronto International Vocal Arts Festival. Intra to the Spoken Word (Workshop). Dwayne Morgan helps participants create a piece of original spoken word, from the original idea to writing, editing, and the use of the voice to communicate meaning and intention. Concert Hall, Masonic Temple, 888 Yonge St. 416-694-6900 or www.singtonto.com. $20; $12 (underfunded).
- 6:00: Toronto Children's Chorus. Untraveld Worlds. St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 27 Front St. E. 416-932-8666 or www.singto.ca. SING! The Toronto International Vocal Arts Festival. Unlocking Creativity Through Improvisation (Workshop). Using the musical tools we already possess, this workshop uses games and exercises to demonstrate how anyone can create music in the momenta to writing, editing, and the use of the voice to communicate meaning and intention. Concert Hall, Masonic Temple, 888 Yonge St. 416-694-6900 or www.singtonto.com. $20; $12 (underfunded).
- 8:00: Acoustic Harvest. Sultans of String with Special Guest Saskia Tomkins. St. Paul's United Church (Scarborough). 200 McIntosh St., Scarborough. www.acousticharvest.ca. $30 (advice only).
- 8:00: Mississauga Symphony Orchestra. Orchestra Fire Works: A 50th Anniversary Celebration. Respighi: The Pines of Rome; Handel: Music for the Royal Fireworks; Haydn: Symphony No.59 in A "Fire Symphony". Living Arts Centre, 4141 Living Arts Dr., Mississauga. $75; $65 (art. $30 (ages 16-26); $25 (ages 16 and under).
- 8:00: Royal Conservatory of Music. Jazz From Around the World: Joey Alexander Quartet & Selpuk Suna Quartet. Koerner Hall, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208 or rcmusic.com/performance. $45-$100.
- 8:00: SING! The Toronto International Vocal Arts Festival. In Concert: Take 6, presented by Raymond James. Concert Hall, Masonic Temple, 888 Yonge St. 416-694-6900 or www.singtonto.com. $43; $22 (underfunded).
- 8:00: Tapestry Opera/OCAD University. R.U.K. A Torrent of Light. See May 24. Also Jun 5 (4pm).
OFF CENTRE MUSIC salon
Live Concert
June 5th
— 3:00 pm at —
Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre

Intersections: Life Changing Meetings
Performing Artists:
Andrew Haji
Andrea Ludwig
Lauren Margison
Giles Tomkins
Ilana Zarankin
Rosebud String Quartet

For more details visit:
www.offcentremusic.com

Intersections. Works by Beethoven, Brahms, Dvořák, Mahler, Schubert, and Shostakovich.
Lauren Margison, soprano; Andrea Ludwig, mezzo-soprano; Andrew Haji, tenor; Giles Tomkins, bass-baritone; Inna Perkis, piano; Kathryn Tremills, piano; Boris Zarankin, piano. Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, 427 Bloor St. W., www.offcentremusic.com. $16.95-$54.06.

3:00: Tapestry Chamber Choir. Songs of Spirit. Andrew Balfour; Amber; Greg Jasperse. Oh How Beautiful, This Fierly Woven Earth; Ennio Morricone: Nella fantasia; Gerald Finzi: My Spirit Sang All Day; Mark Sirett: The Parting Glass. Tapestry Chamber Choir and Soloists; George Vandikas, piano; Harrison Vandikas, violin. St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church (Newmarket), 484 Water St. Newmarket. 905-853-7185 or tapestrychoir@gmail.com. $20.

3:00: Toronto City Opera. Cavalleria rusticana. See Jun 2.

3:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Ondjia Conducts Brahms. See Jun 1. Also Jun 5 (3pm, George Weston Recital Hall).

9:00: Browntasauras Records. Nick Maclean Quartet Featuring Brownman Ali. Nick Maclean, piano; Brownman Ali, trumpet; Ben Duff, bass; Jacob Wutzke, drums. Sugar Run, 33 Queen St. S., Kitchener. 416-389-2643. $20; $15 (adv); $10 (st/musicians/arts workers).

Sunday June 5


5:00: Canadian Children’s Opera Company. Alice in Wonderland. See Jun 3. Also Jun 5 (3pm).


5:00: Off Centre Music Salon.

SUN JUNE 4

8:00: Toronto Chamber Choir. Prima vera Baroque! Explore the musical exchanges between Europe and Latin America in the 17th and 20th centuries. Ariel Ramírez: Misas criollas; and other works. Rodrigo Chávez, clarinet & percussion; Ernesto Cardenas, voice & quena; Julia Seager-Scott, triple harp; Ben Grossman, percussion. Eastminster United Church, 310 Danforth Ave. 416-783-1695. Pay What You Choose. $5, $20, $30. Masks required. Distanced audience limited to 50% capacity.

8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Ondjia Conducts Brahms. See Jun 1. Also Jun 5 (3pm, George Weston Recital Hall).

9:00: Browntasauras Records. Nick Maclean Quartet Featuring Brownman Ali. Nick Maclean, piano; Brownman Ali, trumpet; Ben Duff, bass; Jacob Wutzke, drums. Sugar Run, 33 Queen St. S., Kitchener. 416-389-2643. $20; $15 (adv); $10 (st/musicians/arts workers).

Monday June 6


8:00: Trio Arkel. Légende. Ravel String Quartet; Caplet. Conte fantastique for harp

Taberna, 458 Queen St. W. 647-748-2099. PWYC.

7:30: SING! The Toronto International Vocal Arts Festival. In Concert: Mass Choir Event. Paradise Theatre, 1006 Bloor St. W. 416-694-6900 or www.singtoronto.com. $43; $22 (underfunded); $30 (performance package); $22-$86 (mass choir participant), 12:30-3:00: group clinics; 3-5: mass choir dress rehearsal.

Lunchtime Concerts Mondays at 12:15
June 6 - Jason Wilson Band
June 13 - Elaine Lau, Homelands
June 20 - Jordan Klapman, 4Known
June 27 - Andrew Sords & Cheryl Duvall

Admission: PWYC

Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Ondjia Conducts Brahms. See Jun 1. Also Jun 5 (3pm, George Weston Recital Hall, Meridian Arts Centre, 5040 Yonge St. 416-598-3375 or 1-855-598-7789. Starting at $29.

4:00: Coro San Marco. La Mia Terra Lontana / My Distant Homeland: Celebrating migrants and refugees from women and music. St. Olave’s Anglican Church, 360 Windermere Ave. 416-789-568 or www.stolaves.ca. Contributions appreciated. The Queen’s Platinum Jubilee follows Evensong. LIVE & ONLINE.

4:00: Tapestry Opera/OCAD University. R.U.R, A Torrent of Light. See May 24.

Live or Live Streamed | May 20 to July 12, 2022

and string quartet. Marie Bérard, violin; Emily Kruspe, violin; Rémi Pelletier, viola; Heidi Elise Bearcroft, harp; Winona Zelenka, cello. Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, 427 Bloor St. W. https://triorkel.eventbrite.ca. $40. Live & On Demand. All live and on demand tickets purchased for Apr 3 will be honoured for the new date and no further action is required. Also available on demand from Jun 12 to 26.

Tuesday June 7


Wednesday June 8

- 6:00: Fiat Markham Theatre. Magic of Motown. 171 Town Centre Blvd., Markham. www.fiatmarkhamtheatre.ca or 905-305-7469 or boxoffice@markham.ca. $15-$65.

Thursday June 9

- 8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Gmene conducts Grieg & Mahler. Iman Habib: Celebration Prelude (World Premiere); Francisco Colé: Elysian for Orchestra (World Premiere); Grieg: Piano Concerto in a Op.16; Mahler: Symphony No.1 in D. Javier Gimeno, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-598-4521 X223 or musicmondays.ca. $25-$65.

Friday June 10

- 7:00: Canadian Children’s Opera Company. The Language of Birds. The Canadian Red Cross Ukraine Humanitarian Crisis Appeal

TSO.CA

Donations welcome.

ESPRIT LIVE 2022! Act 4 June 9 at Koerner Hall espiritorchestra.com

GOLDEN HARVEST

Music: Larysa Kuzmenko 
Libretto: Tania Zajac
A Benefit Concert: All Performers’ fees & Proceeds going to The Canadian Red Cross Ukraine Humanitarian Crisis Appeal

Tickets: $35 on Eventbrite.ca • In Person & Live Stream Tickets Available

Antonia Ermolenko
Soprano

Alexander Hajek
Baritone

Mia Bach
Pianist

Darryl Edwards
Conductor

Tuesday, June 7, 7:30pm
Humbercrest United Church
16 Baby Point Road
Toronto
www.cosacanada.org

Featuring the Vocal Artists of the Centre for Opera Studies & Appreciation

nyco.ca

RESOUNDChoir.ca

A GERMAN REQUIEM

June 11 – Toronto 8pm
June 12 – Oshawa 4pm

Donna Bennett, soprano (Rose); Alexander Dobson, baritone (The Pencil Salesman); Virginia Hatfield, soprano (Daisy); and others; Westben Festival Orchestra & Chorus; Daniel Warren, conductor; Michael Mori, stage director. ONLINE: 877-883-5777 or www.westben.org. Free or by donation at www.westben.ca/donate.

Sunday June 12

- 3:00: Canadian Children’s Opera Company. The Language of Birds. See Jun 11.

Monday June 13

- 7:00: Peterborough Singers. Vir-ald’s Gloria & Faure’s Requiem. Shannen McCracken, soprano; Jonathan Liebich, bass; Syd Birrell, organ; Christine Stelvan, conductor. Murray Street Baptist Church, 176 Murray St., Peterborough. 705-745-1920 or www.peterboroughsingers.com. All proceeds to be donated to three local charities.

Tuesday June 14


Wednesday June 15

- 8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Gmene + Beethoven’s “Ode to Joy”. Adam Scime: A Dream of Refuge (Next Generation Commission) (World Premiere); Bekah Sims: Bile (Next Generation Commission)
Friday June 17

- 8:00: Toronto Operaetta Theatre. *A Waltz Dream.* By Oscar Straus. Andrea Nuñez, soprano; Helene; Scott Rumble, tenor; (Niki); Elizabeth Beeler, soprano (Theodora); Keith Klassen, tenor (Prince Joachim IV); and Gregory Finney, baritone (Count Lothar); Derek Bate, conductor; Guillermo Silva-Marin, stage director. Jane Mallett Theatre, St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 27 Front St. E. 416-361-8888 or 1-800-708-7654 or www.stlc.org.

Saturday June 18

- 8:00: Tafelmusik. Bach Motets Return. Bach: *Jesu, meine Freude* (Jesus, my joy) BWV227; Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied (Sing unto the Lord a new song) BWV226; Sarabande from Cello Suite No.5 in c BWV1001; Giga from Partita in d for violin. 366-7723 or 1-800-708-7654 or www.stlc.org. $17-$29. Also June 19(3pm).

Sunday June 19

- 8:00: Tafelmusik. Bach Motets Return. Bach: *A Waltz Dream.* See Jun 17. Also Jun 19(3pm).

Bach Motets Return

LIVE CONCERT

June 18, 2022 8:00pm

Eglington St. George's United Church

tafelmusik.org

Fridays June 24


Saturday July 2

- 8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. TSO Chamber Soloists. Bella Barshikov, trumpet; Kristian Alexander, piano; Sheng Cai, piano; Michael Berec, host; Kristian Alexander, conductor. TSO concert ticket for the scheduled performance. Seating is limited, and latecomers will not be admitted after the performance start time.

Monday June 20

- 12:10: Yorkminster Park Baptist Church. Lunchtime Chamber Music: Sophie Lanigan; Roberta Paparo; Jordan Klapman; Jacqueline Haga; Kristian Alexander, conductor. Koerner Hall, 1 Front St. E. 416-971-3680 or musicmondays.ca. PWYC ($10 suggested).

Tuesday June 21

- 12:10: Kindred Spirits Orchestra. *Metamorphoses.* Franck: Symphonic Variations; Shostakovich: Piano Concerto No.2 in F; Tchaikovsky: Symphony No.5 in E. Joe Hisashi, conductor. Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, 10268 Yonge St., Richmond Hill. 905-604-8339 or KSOrchestra.ca or RHCentre.ca. $15-$40. Also June 25. LIVE, ONLINE, or RECORDED.

Wednesday June 22

- 12:30: Tafelmusik. *Organix Concerts.* Richard Spotts, organ; All Saints Kingsway Anglican Church, 2850 Bloor St. W. 416-567-3680 or organixconcerts.ca. Freewill offering($20 suggested).


- 7:00: Bravo Niagara! Festival of the Arts. Brubeck Brothers Quartet Celebrates Dave Brubeck’s Centennial. Chris and Dan Brubeck. FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, 250 St. Paul St., St. Catharines. 905-688-0725 or 905-688-5600 x7000 or 1-855-515-0725. $30(Orchestra); $40(Balcony); $25(st/st).
Live or Live Streamed

**Sunday June 26**

**Monday June 27**

**Tuesday June 28**
- 8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. The Music of ABBA. Rajaton, vocal ensemble; Lucas Waldin, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-408-0208 or torontosummermusic.com. $16-$90.

**Wednesday June 29**
- 12:30: ORGANIX Concerts. Sophie-Véronique Cauchefer-Choplin, organ. Timothy Eaton Memorial Church, 230 St. Clair Ave. W. 416-571-3680 or organixconcerts.ca. $45; $40(RCCO members). Online tickets only.

**Thursday June 30**

**Saturday July 2**
- 8:00: Kindred Spirits Orchestra. Unionville Canada Day Celebration. Music from Broadway, and light classics. Michael Beroc, conductor. Unionville Millennium Theatre: 160 Main St., Unionville. 905-804-8339 or KSO-orchestra.ca. FREE.

**Saturday July 9**
- 8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. The Music of ABBA. See Jun 28.

**July 4 to July 12, 2022**

### Lunchtime Concerts Mondays at 12:15

**July 4 - ChromaDuo**
**July 11 - Jui-Sheng Li**
**July 18 - Blackwood**
**July 25 - Toronto Brass Quintet**
**Aug. 1 - Andromeda Trio**
**Aug. 8 - Cardinal Consort**

Admission: PWYC
Church of the Holy Trinity
www.musicroommondays.ca

**Saturday July 2**
- 2:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. The Music of ABBA. See Jun 28. Also Jun 29(6pm).
- 7:00: ORGANIX Concerts. Special Presentation Series. Sophie-Véronique Cauchefer-Choplin, organ. Timothy Eaton Memorial Church, 230 St. Clair Ave. W. 416-571-3680 or www.organixconcerts.ca. $45.
- 8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. The Music of ABBA. See Jun 28.

## Opening Night: The Folk Influence

### July 7

Tom Allen hosts an all-star line up

416-408-0208 or totorontosummermusic.com. $16-$90.

### Friday July 8

- 7:00: Westben. Mary Walsh, The Barn, 6698 County Road 30, Campbeltown. 877-883-5777 or www.westbendigitalavenue.ca. $20-$35.

### Saturday July 9

- 416-408-0208 or totorontosummermusic.com. $16-$90.

**Sunday July 10**
- 2:00: Westben. Queer Songbook Orchestra. The Barn, 6698 County Road 30, Campbeltown. 877-883-5777 or www.westbendigitalavenue.ca. $20-$35.
- 3:00: Collingwood Music Festival. Swingin’ with Countermeasure. Innovative arrangements of pop favourites, classic jazz standards, and original songs. Countermeasure, a cappella group. First Presbyterian Church, 200 Maple St., Collingwood. 705-416-1317 or collingwoodfestival.com. $35.

## July 11

- 7:30: Collingwood Music Festival. Tonsor Highway: Songs in the Key of Cree. Tonso Highway, author, playwright, composer, songwriter, piano; Patricia Cano, vocalist; and Marcus Ali, saxophone. First Presbyterian Church, 200 Maple St., Collingwood. 705-416-1317 or collingwoodfestival.com. $35.
The ETCeteras | May 20 to July 12, 2022

ONLINE ON DEMAND & PODCASTS
- Arts@Home. A vibrant hub connecting Torontonians to arts and culture. Designed to strengthen personal and societal resilience through the arts. Visit www.artsathome.ca
- Capella Regalis Men & Boys Choir. Choral Concerts. Available at Capella Regalis YouTube Channel.
- Glenn Gould Foundation. Nahre Sol: Reinventing the Classical, Part I. In this first part of an expansive interview, Nahre discusses her classical training and transition to multi-media forms of creative expression, as well as her wide range of musical influences. Listen on our website at https://glenn Gould.com
- Kevin Barrett. Live from Lockdown. Kevin Barrett does a livestreamed set of solo guitar tunes, coming directly from his Lockdown studio. Tune in to Kevin’s Facebook page on Friday at 4pm at Kevin’s Facebook Page.
- Toronto Summer Music Festival. Penderecki String Quartet. Dr. Daniel Meh dizadeh. First Presbyterian Church, 309 Horner Ave. Open to all who are looking for a great band to join. Text Rob Hunter at 416-676-1730.

ONGOING EVENTS
- Mix 669. Beyond the B-side: Open Mic @ The Mix 669. Adam Golding, host. 669 College St. 416-909-2109. $5 cover: Weekly on Wed at 7pm.

ONLINE GROUPS
- Recollect: A unique musical online meeting group made up of people affected by memory challenges caused by illness (such as dementia) or brain injury (stroke, PTSD, etc.) and their care partners. Participation is free with pre-registration. Email info@recol lect.ca for meeting times, information and registration.
In the Clubs (Mostly Jazz)

With over 75 years around Yonge and Bloor, the Pilot is a multi-level bar that hosts live jazz on Saturday afternoons.

Poetry Jazz Café
224 Augusta Ave. 416-599-5299
poetryjazzcafe.com
A sexy, clubby space, Poetry hosts live jazz, hip-hop, and DJs nightly in its home on Augusta Ave in Kensington Market.

Reposado Bar & Lounge
136 Ossington Ave. 416-532-6474
reposodobar.com
A chic, low-light bar with top-shelf tequila, Mexican tapas, and live music.

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

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

Rex Hotel Jazz & Blues Bar, The
249 Victoria St 416-364-7517
thesenator.com
An intimate, upscale French-inspired bistro on Saturday afternoons.

Sauce on Danforth
1376 Danforth Ave. 416-748-1376
sauceondanforth.com
With Victorian lighting, cocktails, and an extensive tap and bottle list, Sauce on Danforth has live music Tuesday through Saturday (and sometimes Sunday).

The Senator Winebar
224 Augusta Ave. 416-599-5299
poetryjazzcafe.com
A chic, low-light bar with top-shelf tequila, Mexican tapas, and live music.

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

Smokey’s Bar, The
52 Beverley St. 416-598-3371
smookysbar.ca
A relaxing oasis in Kensington Market.

Trafalgar Square Piano Bar
224 Berkeley St. 416-977-2722
trafalgarbistro.com
A classy lounge with live piano music.

Tranzac
292 Brunswick Ave. 416-923-8137
tranzac.org
A community arts venue dedicated to supporting, presenting, and promoting creative and cultural activity in Toronto, with live shows in multiple rooms every day of the week.

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WHO’S WHO? ONLINE DIRECTORIES INDEX

As mentioned in previous issues, The WholeNote has a wealth of information online that is not included in our print issues. Our WHO’S WHO section atthewholenote.com is where you’ll find detailed profiles of various music presenters, choirs, summer education opportunities and summer festivals. In addition to our Blue Pages (music presenters) and Summer Music Education indexes, here we welcome participants in our Canary Pages choral directory, as well as those who’ve joined our Green Pages summer festivals directory, at time of publication.

These directories, with full profiles, are updated online as new submissions are received, so check back often at thewholenote.com under our WHO’S WHO tab, to look for a choir to join, summer music camps, programs and festivals, and who’s becoming active again on the live music scene.

For information on how to join any of our directories, please contact karen@thewholenote.com

thewholenote.com/whoswho

CANARY PAGES 2022

● Achill Choral Society
  www.achill.ca
● Amadeus Choir of Greater Toronto
  www.amadeuschoir.com
● Bel Canto Singers
  www.belcantsingers.ca
● Choralairs Choir of North York
  www.choralairschoir.com
● City Choir
  www.citychoir.ca
● Cummer Avenue United Church Choir
  www.cummeravenueuc.ca
● Echo Women’s Choir
  www.echochoir.ca
● Ensemble vocal Les voix du coeur
  www.lesvoixducoeur.com
● Etobicoke Centennial Choir
  www.etobicokecentennialchoir.ca
● Georgetown Choral Society
  www.georgetownchoral.ca
● Harbourfront Chorus
  www.facebook.com/harbourfrontchorus
● Healey Willan Singers
  www.heckleywillansingers.com
● Incontravocal Ensemble
  www.incontravocalensemble.com
● Jubilate Singers
  www.jubilatesingers.ca
● Leaside United Church Choirs
  www.leasideunited.org
● Mississauga Chamber Singers
  www.mccingers.ca
● Oasis Vocal Jazz
  www.oasisvocaljazz.com
● Pax Christi Chorale
  www.paxchristichorale.org
● Serenata Singers
  www.serenatasingers.ca
● Toronto Chamber Choir
  www.torontochamberchoir.ca
● Toronto Children’s Chorus
  www.torontochildrenschorus.com
● Toronto Mendelssohn Choir
  www.tmchoir.org
● Toronto Welsh Male Voice Choir
  www.welshchoir.ca
● Upper Canada Choristers
  www.uppercanadachoristers.org
● VIVA Singers Toronto
  www.vivasingstoresonto.com/
● Voices Chamber Choir
  www.voiceschoir.com
● West Toronto Community Choir
  www.facebook.com/groups/westtorontocommunitychoir
● Windsor Classic Chorale
  www.windsorclassicchorale.org
● Yorkminstrels Show Choir
  www.theyorkminstrelsshowchoir.welbcy.com

SUMMER FESTIVALS 2022

● Brantford Summer Music
  www.sandersoncentre.ca
● Collingwood Music Festival
  www.collingwoodmusicfestival.com/
● Elora Festival
  www.alsbfestival.ca
● Festival of the Sound
  www.festivalofthesound.ca
● Highlands Opera Studio
  www.highlandsoperastudio.com
● Markham Village Music Festival
  www.markhamfestival.com
● Stratford Summer Music
  www.stratfordsummermusic.ca
● Sun Life UpTown Waterloo Jazz Festival
  www.watertownjazzfestival.com
● SweetWater Music Festival
  www.sweetwatermusicfestival.ca/
● Under the Spire Music Festival
  www.underthespire.ca
● Westben Centre for Connection & Creativity Through Music
  www.westben.ca
SUMMER MUSIC EDUCATION 2022

- CAMMAC Music Centre
  www.cammac.ca/en/2022-summer-programs/
- Camp Musical Tutti
  www.campmusicaltutti.com
- COC Summer Opera Camps & COC Summer Opera Intensive
  www.coc.ca/summerprograms
- Interprovincial Music Camp
  www.cmipmc.ca
- Kodály Certification Program - Levels I, II and III (Western U)
  music.uwo.ca/outreach/kodaly-certification-program.html
- Lake Field Music
  www.lakefieldmusic.ca
- Music at Port Milford
  www.musicatportmilford.org
- No Strings Theatre
  www.nostringstheatre.com
- Oboe Intensive at Western University
  music.uwo.ca/outreach/oboe-intensive.html
- Stratford Summer Music Jazz Academy
  www.stratfordsummermusic.ca
- Stratford Summer Music Vocal Academy
  www.stratfordsummermusic.ca
- Summer Music
  www.summermusic.com
- Ukrainian Art Song Summer Institute 2022
  www.ukrainianartsong.ca
- Vancouver Symphony Orchestral Institute
  www.vancouversymphony.ca/the-vso-institute/the-vso-institute

BLUE PAGES DIRECTORY 2021-22

- Aga Khan Museum
  www.agnakhanmuseum.org
- Amadeus Choir of Greater Toronto
  www.amadeuschoir.com
- Amici Chamber Ensemble
  www.amiciensemble.com
- Art of Time Ensemble
  www.artoftimeensemble.com
- Attila Glatz Concert Productions (Salute to Vienna)
  www.salutetovienna.com
- Azrieli Foundation
  www.azrielifoundation.org/lamp
- Barrie Concert Association
  www.barriecconcerts.org
- Barrie Concert Band
  www.barriecconcertband.org
- Canadian Music Centre
  www.cmcanada.org
- Canadian Opera Company
  www.coc.ca
- Cathedral Bluffs Symphony Orchestra
  www.cathedralbluffs.com
- Chorus Niagara
  www.chorussniagara.org
- Church of St. Mary Magdalene
  www.stmarymagdalene.ca
- COSA Canada (Centre for Opera Studies & Appreciation)
  www.cosacanada.org
- Counterpoint Community Orchestra
  www.cocorchester.org
- DaCapo Chamber Choir
  www.dacapochamberchoir.ca
- Don Wright Faculty of Music, Western U
  music.uwo.ca
- Edison Singers
  www.theedisonsingers.com
- Elmer Iseler Singers
  www.elerisersingers.com
- Ensemble Vivant
  www.ensemblevivant.com
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Editor’s Corner

DAVID OLDS

In Terry Robbins’ Strings Attached column this month he reviews two new recordings of Vivaldi’s Four Seasons, each paired with more recent pieces of the same name. Further on in these pages Matthew Whitfield and Tiina Kiik discuss very different approaches to the setting of traditional liturgical texts by György Ligeti, Martins Vilums, Heidi Breyer and Johann Johannsson. With this in mind, it seemed fortuitous when I also found intriguing new takes on these themes by Žibuoklė Martinaitytė and Cheryl Frances-Hoad on my desk.

Frances-Hoad (b.1980) composed the solo cello piece Excelsus (Orchid Classics orchid-classics.com/releases/orcd100188-excelsus/) for Thomas Carroll in 2002 on the occasion of his Wigmore Hall YCAT debut. She says, “I’d known Tommy for over a decade: arriving at the Yehudi Menuhin School in 1989 as an eight-year-old cellist, I was soon very much in awe of this much more grown-up player. I have memories of playing many of the great string repertory works [...] with Tommy leading the section and me right at the back. These experiences shaped me as a musician, and I still look back with astonishment at the opportunities I was given at such an early age. By the time Tommy asked me to write something for his Wigmore concert (coincidentally my first premiere at the hall too) my dreams of being an international concert cellist had long since been diverted: Excelsus would be the first piece in my portfolio towards my Composition PhD at Kings College London. [...] Quite why I thought a Requiem Mass was the appropriate vehicle for a Young Concert Artist’s debut is beyond me today. But I’m still proud of this early work which seems full of exuberance and utterly lacking in self-consciousness. [...] Musically the entire work is based on two themes: one melodic, the Rex Tremendae or ‘King of Awful Majesty’ theme, heard at the very opening; and one chordal, the Lux Aeternum (Light eternal) harmonies, not revealed in their pure form until the pizzicato passage that concludes the suite. Other subliminal influences were the Bach and Britten cello suites, which I loved to play as a teenager.”

The composer’s self-described exuberance is an apt description of Excelsus, strange as that may seem for a requiem; perhaps more fitting for a celebration of life than a funeral service. The seven-movement work is uncompromising in the technical demands placed upon the soloist, but Carroll rises to the challenges with seeming ease in a mesmerizing and exhilarating performance of a breathtaking addition to the cello repertory.

The Martinaitytė disc includes not only her own version of the cycle of the seasons, Sienunaisema for solo cello and strings, but also instrumental works based on Latin texts, Ex Tenebris Lux (out of darkness, light) and Nunc fluens. Nunc stans., its title taken from The Consolation of Philosophy by Severinus Boethius: “Nunc fluens facit tempus. Nunc stans facit aeternitatum.” (roughly “the now that passes creates time; the now that remains creates eternity”).

Martinaitytė is a mid-career Lithuanian composer based in New York City whose 2020 awards included a Guggenheim Fellowship and the Lithuanian National Prize for Culture and Arts. When I reviewed her previous Ondine recording Saudade in March 2021, I said “evoking stark landscapes, there is a wonderful lushness to the music, which seems to grow inherently out of the initial quiet in vast arcs of sustained tones and tremolos, occasionally erupting like bubbles exploding from some primordial soup. The music builds and recedes in many-textured layers with no melodies per se, just shifting moods and colours that draw us in with a sense of yearning.” Incidentally, Esprit Orchestra gave the Canadian premiere of Saudade earlier this year at Koerner Hall.

That description of her music could equally be applied to Žibuoklė Martinaitytė: Ex Tenebris Lux with the Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra under Karolis Variaiokojis (Ondine ODE 1403-2 naxosdirect.com/search/ode-1403-2). All the works here date from the past three years, each paired with a work composed when he was a POW in WW2. Rooted in his deeply Christian faith, it was his first composition to include bird song.

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

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**DISCOVERIES | RECORDINGS REVIEWED**

**What we’re listening to this month:**

- Early Italian Cello Concertos
  - Elinor Frey, Claude Lapalme, Rosa Barocca
  - By bringing Vivaldi, Leo, Sammartini, and Tartini together, Elinor Frey explores the unique and captivating sound world of the violoncello family in the Baroque era.

- Sopra La Spagna
  - Alejandro Marias & La Spagna
  - Sopra La Spagna’, the new CD by Alejandro Marias & La Spagna!

- Messiaen “Quartet pour la Fin du Temps”
  - Out of darkness, light
  - Messiaen’s most famous work - composed when he was a POW in WW2. Rooted in his deeply Christian faith, it was his first composition to include bird song.

- John Bullard Plays 24 Preludes for Solo Banjo, Vol. 1
  - John Bullard
  - Banjo virtuoso John Bullard has released “24 Preludes for Solo Banjo, Volume One” produced by multiple Juno Award and Grammy-winning David Travers-Smith.
years and are scored for string orchestra. *Nunc fluens*... includes a percussionist (Pavel Günter), but his myriad instruments merely add to the dense, though gentle, textures. The title work, completed in 2021, involves 18 individual strings and was conceived as a commentary on the current world health crisis. The most substantial work is *Stella mare quaerens stellas*, which the composer says is a Finnish word meaning “soul-landscape, a particular place that a person carries deep in the heart and returns to often in memory...” *Soul-landscape* is related to questions of identity and place which resonate with two parallel cultural identities that I carry within – my native Lithuanian and later acquired American. In this case, the piece itself becomes an ideal soul-landscape reflecting a native environment as seen through the prism of four seasons.” Scored for “at least” 21 strings and solo cello, as in *nunc fluens*... the soloist (Rokas Vaitkevičius) is not a protagonist in some mystic battle with the orchestra, but floats above the ensemble often playing tremolo monotonies and simply adding textures to the whole. The work extends beyond half an hour and the four movements, which may also be taken as stand-alone pieces, are played without pause when performed together. While three of the seasons share the quiet density of Martinů’s signature style, *Spring* bursts forth with an ebullience reminiscent of John Adams’ *Shaker Loops* before the work returns to rich, dreamlike swells and respites. 

Stunning!

I reviewed Icelandic composer Anna Thorvaldsdottir’s earlier *Sono Luminus* disc *Enigma* last September, noting her music “is replete with extended techniques, extra-musical effects, unusual timbres and juxtapositions. There are few melodies per se, but rather moments and strings of events that constantly surprise and command rapt attention.” That release has been followed by the Sono Luminus (SL) reissue of the 2014 Deutsche Grammophon disc *Aerial* with the six original tracks supplemented by the addition of *Aura* from an earlier SL release featuring the LA Percussion Quartet. All the tracks have been remastered by Daniel Shores for this reissue (SLE-70025 sonoluminus.com). The sound is exceptional, but unfortunately the packaging is just as sparse as the original, with no program notes or biographical information. Fortunately the publicist was able to provide an article by Doyle Armbrust from *Music & Literature* dating back to the DG release that includes his extensive analysis of the works and interview excerpts with the composer, which provided a welcome context for this quite abstract fare.

Much like Žibuokšč Martinaitė, Thorvaldsdottir’s music is all about textures and colours. It moves at a seemingly glacial pace, or perhaps that of a cooling lava flow. In the pieces on offer here, the instrumentation is mostly sparse although the timbres are rich and dense. *Aeriality*, performed by the Iceland Symphony Orchestra under Ilan Volkov, is the only work for forces beyond a small chamber ensemble. As a matter of fact the opener, *Into – Second Self* for seven brass and four percussion, is performed by only three players through overdubbing, one each of percussion, trombone and horn. The overall effect is similar to R. Murray Schafer’s *Music for Wilderness Lake* (where 12 trombonists positioned around the periphery of a small lake play meditative music at dawn or dusk). The longest work, at 15 minutes, is *Trajectoires* for piano (Tinna Thorsteinsdottir) and an electronic track is which we seem to hear, amongst other things, the tinkling of ice crystals as if in an arctic cove before freeze-up. True to its name, *Shades of Silence* for violin, viola, cello and harpsichord, written for and performed by Nordic Affect, is deeply meditative once again. The whole album unfolds as if in slow motion, but if you surrender to its pace, Aerial can be a transcendental experience.

The final classical selection this month is Olivier MESSIAEN QUATUOR pour la FIN DU TEMPS (Our Recordings 6.226679 ounrecordin- cings.com). The quartet is the only chamber–ensemble piece composed by Messiaen, and was written during his internment at a Silesian German POW camp in 1940-41. It is scored for musicians who were fellow prisoners in the camp, a violinist, a clarinettist and a cellist, with Messiaen himself at the piano. Messiaen was a deeply religious person and served as organist at l’Eglise de la Trinité in Paris for most of his career, even after he became world renowned as a composer. The eight movements of the *Quatuor*, with the exception of a brief *Interlude*, are based on biblical themes with titles such as *Liturgy of Crystal, Praise for the Eternity of Jesus and Dance of Fury for the Seven Trumpets (of the Apocalypse)*.

The musicians on this recording, violinist Christina Astrand, clarinetist Johnny Teysssier, cellist Henrik Dam Thomsen and pianist Per Salo are all principals in the Danish National Symphony Orchestra and their performance is flawless. (My only quibble is the abrupt cutoff of the final note of the opening movement). Their unisons are so aligned that I keep finding myself straining to try and figure out just how many of them are playing at any given time. And Teysssier’s dynamic control when building from absolute silence in his solo movement, *Abîme des oiseaux*, is amazing! But the real reason to add this disc to my extensive Messiaen collection was the excellent essay by Jens Christian Grondal. It incorporates passages based on eyewitness testimony, descriptions and statements from Rebecca Rischin’s book *For the End of Time: The Story of Messiaen’s Quartet*, as well as Messiaen’s own preface to the score and excerpts from the *Book of Revelation*. There is also a translation of three stanzas of the poem *Enfant, pale embryo* (Child, pale embryo) by Messiaen’s mother Cécile Sauvage who said “I suffer from an unknown distant music” before the composer’s birth. It’s truly enlightening.

I recently read Permanent Astonishment, the latest from acclaimed playwright and novelist Tomson Highway. It’s a memoir of his first 15 years, growing up in northern Manitoba where it borders Saskatchewan, the Northwest Territories and what is now Nunavut. Far beyond where all roads end, access to the outside world was only by bush plane and local transport (i.e. a several hundred mile radius) was by dog sled and canoe. In spite of the hardships growing up in the bush with little-to-no amenities, Highway tells a charming story beginning with his birth (and near death) in a snowbank in December 1951. And later, of spying on his older sisters as they gather round a transistor radio to listen to country music from down south thanks to aberrant AM radio waves reflected through the atmosphere late at night. Even his time spent at a residential school is told fondly, albeit without glossing over the abuses perpetuated by some of the Christian Brothers.

Highway’s latest project is a CD – *Cree Country (tomsonhighway. com)* – featuring a dozen of his songs in classic country style sung by his frequent collaborator Patricia Cano. I first heard that incredible Peruvian-Canadian singer in Highway’s play *The (Post) Mistress* in which she sang in English, French and Cree and for which she won the Toronto Theatre Critics Award for Best Actress in a Musical in 2017. In this outing it’s all Cree, but thankfully, English translations are included. As I say, it’s in classic country style and I imagine it’s not much different than the music he would have heard growing up in the 1950s on those long nights in the sub-Arctic. Highway penned all the music and lyrics, but the production and arrangements are by Toronto jazz singer John Alcorn, who also adds some background vocals. The band includes some big names in Canadian country music: Mike “Pepe” Francis (guitars and direction), John Dymond (bass), Steve O’Connor (piano), Sean O’Grady (drums), Don Reed (fiddle) and Smith (steel guitar). Reed and Smith are stellar throughout, with authentic down-home solos, and Francis’ high-string acoustic accompaniment on Sassag Tópi-Skow (It’s Night Already) is a real treat. Most of the songs are up-tempo, and even the ballads and laments are hopeful and uplifting rather than
maudlin. No “high-lonesome” moaning here, even in Ateek Iguv Adele (Ateek and Adele), the story of 20-year-old Ateek, affianced to Adele, who drowns one day when “a wind came up | and the waves grew in size | He started sinking. Ateek’s canoe started sinking | He drowned. He drowned. Adele!” Interestingly Highway also gives us his take on the four seasons in the contemplative Ooma Kaa-Pipook (When It’s Winter) “When it’s winter, there is snow everywhere | But when it’s spring, the snow disappears | When it’s summer, the sun shines | But in the fall, the Earth will soon sleep. Life on this Earth | It works the same way | You are born, you live | But in the fall, you, too, begin to die.”

**Concert note:** Tomson Highway hosts the launch of *Cree Country* at the Horseshoe Tavern on May 23. It’s a digital release available now on all streaming platforms.

It’s too late to attend the launch of *Thieves of Dreams: Songs of Theresienstadt’s Secret Poetess*, the latest by Toronto-based Czech singer Lenka Lichtenberg (lenkalichtenberg.com) which took place at the Paradise Theatre on Mother’s Day. That date had a double significance for Lichtenberg because it was also the anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi “camp-ghetto” Theresienstadt (Terezin), where Lichtenberg’s mother, grandmother and grandfather were interned during the Second World War. Although her mother and grandmother survived, her grandfather was transported to Auschwitz where he was executed in a gas chamber.

Lichtenberg says “When my mother Jana Renée Friesová passed away in 2016, I was sorting through her desk in Prague and discovered two small notebooks. They were filled with poetry my grandmother, Anna Hana Friesová (1901-1987), wrote in the Terezin concentration camp. I knew that both my mother and grandmother were imprisoned in Terezin during the war — my mother wrote a book about it in 1996, *Fortress of My Youth*. However, I knew nothing of my grandmother’s experience. Most of us, if we’re lucky enough, have a brief window with our grandparents. That time isn’t typically spent listening to their traumatic stories. But there before my eyes were tattered pages with the handwritten dreams of my grandmother — and her nightmares in the camp, stories she never told me. So, I embarked on a quest to share her writing from the ‘hell on earth,’ to quote Primo Levi, and to bring her voice back to life in the way I best knew how: as music, in a project spanning eight decades and three generations.”

*Thieves of Dreams* is the culmination of this project to set the poems of her grandmother to music. She wrote eight of the 16 tracks, produced the album and is responsible for most of the arrangements. The remainder of the songs were composed by her collaborators Milli Janatková, Rachel Cohen, Jessica Hana Deutsch, Shy-Anne Hovorka, Zita Petrak and Lorie Wolf. The styles range widely from pensive ballads and torch songs to jazz-tinged sketches, folk-inspired chorales and anthems. The vast cohort of musicians involved includes many familiar names such as David Buchbinder (trumpet and flugelhorn), Jessica Deutsch (violin, viola, cello), Beverley Johnston (marimba), George Koller (double bass), Fern Linzon (piano), Tomaš Reindl and Anita Katakkar (tablas) among a host of others, with harmony vocals by Auri Fell, Murray Foster, Milli Janatkova and Andrew McPherson. Mámy vlastní trud (I have my own grief) features narration by Lichtenberg’s late mother. All of the songs are sung in Czech as in the original texts. The booklet includes facsimiles of the pages of Friesová’s notebooks and full English translations. This is a glorious achievement and a wonderful tribute to Lichtenberg’s forebears.

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

David Olds, DISCoveries Editor discoveries@thewholenote.com

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**STRINGS ATTACHED**

**TERRY ROBBINS**

*Beethoven Vol.1* is the initial digital release in a new series of the Complete Sonatas and Variations for Cello and Piano featuring cellist Yegor Dyachkov and pianist Jean Saulnier. The series will be launched in both digital and physical format, with the second digital volume available in September and a complete 3CD physical set due for release in October (ATMA Classique ACD2 4046 atma-classique.com/en).

The central works on this first digital volume are the Cello Sonatas No.1 in F Major Op.5 No.1 and No.2 in G Minor Op.5 No.2. Both were written in late 1796, and mark the beginning of Beethoven’s development of the cello and piano sonata as an equal partnership.

The two sets of variations are both on themes from Mozart’s *The Magic Flute*: the 12 Variations on “Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen” Op.66 and the 7 Variations on “Bei Männern, welche Liebe fühlen” WoO46. The Horn Sonata in F Major Op.17, in the cello version prepared by Beethoven himself, closes the disc.

Dyachkov is a professor at McGill’s Schulich School of Music, and he and Saulnier both teach at the Université de Montréal. Their performances here are intelligent and beautifully nuanced, promising great things for the works still to be released.

When the COVID lockdown started, the London-based Korean violinist Joo Yeon Sir took the opportunity to explore the solo violin repertoire. Old and new works are equally represented on the resulting CD *Solistude* (Rubicon Classics RCD1076 rubiconclassics.com).


[THE WHOLE NOTE.COM](https://thewholenote.com/listening)

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**FRANZ SCHUBERT**

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**AMOUR ET FANTAISIE**

*Songs by Lionel Daunais* **Dominique Côté, Esther Gonthier, Ensemble vocal Charlevoix**

An homage to a unique artist.

Daunais’ catchy music is influenced by French melodies and songs, sometimes with a jazzy edge.
Sir is also a composer, and her My Dear Bessie from 2018 leads a group of four contemporary works, the others being Roxanna Panufnik’s Hora Bessarabia, Fazil Say’s Cleopatra Op.34 and Laura Snowdon’s Through the Fog, written for this CD. Ysaye’s Sonata No.6, Op.27 ends an excellent recital.

Sir has a big, strong tone and shows full command in a range of technical challenges.

This is more of a belated notification of availability than a review; unfortunately, but due to a confusing digital link I was only able to listen to three complete works plus assorted movements from the Leonidas Kavakos release of the complete Sonatas & Partitas on Bach Solo Solo (Sony sonycd.Focus.com/ releases/releases-detailed/bach-solo-solo).

Still, the warm tone, traditional – almost Romantic – approach, rhythmic freedom, judicious ornamentation, leisurely triple and quadruple stops and resonant recording make it clear that this is a notable addition to the discography.

After a gap of 13 years the American guitarist Jason Vieux has finally released Jason Vieux: Works for Violin, completing his Bach cycle that started with three lute suites on Vol.1: Works for Lute. The works here are the Partita No.3 in E Major BWV1006 (which is also Lute Suite No.4), the Sonata No.2 in C Major BWV1005 and the Sonata No.1 in G Major BWV1001 (Azica ACD71347 jasonvieux.com/music).

From the opening bars of the Partita it’s clear that this is going to be something very special: faultlessly clean technique and a full, rich, warm tone, all beautifully recorded with a resonant clarity.

“I always try to just play what’s there,” says Vieux, “the difficult thing with Bach’s music on guitar is that there’s so much ‘there’. He is fully aware of how interpretation can change and deepen as the years go by, and says “I hope you will enjoy this latest snapshot of where I’m at on that particular journey.”

“Enjoy” is an understatement: these are performances that get to the heart of this extraordinary music on an outstanding CD.

Jason Vieux is also the sensitive accompanist for all but three of the 14 outstanding tracks on Shining Night, the latest CD from violinist Anne Akiko Meyers; Fabio Bidini is the pianist on the other three tracks (Avie AV2.455 avie-records.com/releases).

Described as an album that embraces themes of love, poetry and nature, the disc spans music from the Baroque era through to the contemporary scene. Vieux is the partner on Corelli’s La Folia, Bach’s Air on G, Pagani’s Cantabile, the achingly lovely Aria from Villa-Lobos’ Bachianas Brasileiras No.5, Duke Ellington’s In My Solitude, Piazzolla’s complete four-movement Histoire du Tango, the Elvis Presley song Can’t Help Falling In Love and Leo Brouwer’s ode to the California giant sequoia trees Laude al Arbol Gigante.

Bidini accompanies Meyers on the Heifetz arrangement of Ponce’s My Dear Bessie and on Direit-On and Sure On This Shining Night, the two Morten Lauridsen pieces that close the CD. Meyers is in her usual superb form throughout a recital that is an absolute delight.

Entre dos almas – Between two souls – features the music of the Spanish guitarist and composer Santiago de Murcia (1673-1739) in performances by Stefano Maiorana on Baroque guitar (Arcana Aq84 stefano-maiorana.it). The two souls are Spanish and Italian, the latter especially representing the influence of Arcangelo Corelli in Madrid. The two major works here are both Murcia’s transcriptions of Corelli: the Sonata in E Minor from Op.5 Nos.5 & 8; and the Sonata in C Major Op.5 No.3. Only the first and last movements of the latter survive, so Maiorana has supplied his own transcriptions of the middle three.

The eight individual pieces are an absolute delight, with a lively opening Fandango and a terrific Tarantelas particular highlights. Maiorana plays with an effortless technique and with complete freedom in a beautiful but quite different sound world that is just bursting with life. Some additions and arrangements are apparently by Maiorana, but his experience renders them completely undetectable.

Another quite different sound world – this time five-string banjo – is to be found on John Bullard Plays 24 Preludes for Solo Banjo by Adam Larrabee, Volume One Books 1 & 2 Nos. I-XII (Bullard Music johnbullard.com/music).

Dedicated to developing and transcribing classical repertoire for the five-string banjo, Larrabee commissioned Reuven to write 24 preludes, which the composer says “follow the long-standing tradition of writing pieces in all the major and minor keys to showcase an instrument’s versatility.” The major keys here are C, D, E, F-sharp, A-flat and B-flat; the minor keys are A, B, C-sharp, E-flat, F and G. Each Prelude has a title – Dialogue, Jig, Barcarolle, Impromptu, Waltz, etc. – with the A-flat Major Cakewalk a particular standout.

I don’t know what astonishes me more – that someone could write these pieces or that someone can play them. They’re simply terrific – as indeed is Bullard. Volume Two eagerly awaited!

Keeping the “different sound world” theme going, The Mandolin Seasons – Vivaldi, Piazzolla features Jacob Reuven on mandolin and his boyhood friend Omer Meir Wellber playing accordion and harpsichord as well as conducting the Sinfonietta Leipzig, 18 string players drawn from the Gewandhaus Orchestra (Hyperion CDA68357 jacobreuven.com).

Each of the Vivaldi Four Seasons is followed by the appropriate season from Piazzolla’s Las cuatro estaciones porteñas, the four Buenos Aires pieces written between 1965 and 1970 and heard here in arrangements based on Leonid Desyatnikov’s orchestral adaptation. Each of the Piazzolla pieces contains direct quotes from the relevant Vivaldi concerto, so the pairings here feel perfect. The influence goes both ways, too – the Vivaldi concertos feature improvised accordion as well as harpsichord continuo.

Reuven displays dazzling dexterity and technique in beautifully atmospheric and effective performances, Wellber’s accordion adding a new and never intrusive dimension to the Vivaldi.

“A magical and fascinating sound world,” say my notes. Indeed it is.

If you prefer your Vivaldi Four Seasons in more traditional format then it’s hard to imagine better performers than I Musici, who made their debut in Rome in March 1952 and their first landmark recording of the work in 1955, just eight years after the 1947 recording by American violinist Louis Kaufman that launched the Vivaldi revival. Six more versions would follow between 1969 and 2012. The group marks the 70th anniversary of that first concert with the release of a new recording of Vivaldi, Verdi: Le Quattro Stagioni – The Four Seasons (Decca 4852630 deccaclassics.com/en/catalogue/products/the-four-seasons-i-musici-12623).

Marco Fiorini, whose mother was a founding member of I Musici is
the soloist in sparkling performances of the Vivaldi, paired here with the world-premiere recording of Verdi’s work of the same name, the ballet music from his 1855 opera I Vespri Sciliarri, arranged for piano and strings by composer-pianist Luigi Pecchia.

Violin Odyssey, the latest CD from violinist Itamar Zorman is the result of his 2020 livestream video series Hidden Gems, another COVID lockdown project which featured lesser-known and rarely played works; ten were chosen for this album. Piano accompaniment is shared by Ieva Jokubaviciute and Kwan Yi (First Hand Records FHR119 firsthandrecords.com).

The two major works are the 1917 Violin Sonata No.2 in B-flat Minor Op.43 by Dora Pejačević and the 1927 Sonata No.2 by Erwin Schulhoff, both terrific works. The eight short pieces of the Heifetz arrangement of Joseph Achron’s Children’s Suite Op.57 are here, and there are short pieces by Grażyna Bacewicz, Moshe Zorman, Silvestre Revueltas, Ali Osman, Gao Ping and William Grant Still. Gareth Farr’s 2009 Wukatipu for solo violin is a brilliant highlight.

Zorman displays his customary strong, impassioned playing throughout an excellent disc.

Rebecca Clarke Works for Viola, featuring the French violinist Vinciane Béranger with pianist Dana Ciocarlie is another addition to the growing body of recordings acknowledging the significance of the English viola virtuoso’s contribution to the viola repertoire (Aparté AP289 apartemusic.com).

The major work here is clearly the outstanding Viola Sonata from 1919, a passionate reading of which opens the disc. It’s followed by another early work, Morpheus from 1917-18 and the Passacaglia on an Old English Tune, from 1941.

Cellist David Louwerse joins Béranger for the Two Pieces for Viola and Cello from 1918 and the Irish Melody (Emer’s Farewell to Cucullain “Londonderry Air”) from c.1918, the latter only rumoured to exist until being discovered in the Royal Academy of Music in 2015 and published in 2020; this is its world-premiere recording.

Hélène Collette is the violinist for the Dumka for Violin, Viola and Piano from 1941; the mostly pizzicato Chinese Puzzle for viola and piano from 1922 completes a fine CD.

Two of the Clarke pieces, plus two tracks from the Shining Night CD turn up on Adoration – Music of the Americas, a CD by the Brazilian violinist Amaro Dubois with pianist Tingting Yao (Spice Classics amarodubois.com).

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

Schubert – Winterreise
Nathaniel Watson; Michael McMahon
Leaf Music LM253 (leaf-music.ca)

Having been recorded well over 500 times, Winterreise remains one of the most beloved compositions by Schubert. Set to 24 poems by Wilhelm Müller, a poet, soldier and Imperial Librarian, this song cycle follows the journey of a heartbroken wanderer through the countryside. Narratively nothing much happens here, everything unfolds inside the protagonist. This music requires a high level of maturity and insight from both performers and listeners. From the darkness of Good Night, to the beautiful torment of On the Stream and the turbulence of The Stormy Morning, the intensity of Schubert’s music never lessens.

Nathaniel Watson, baritone, and Michael McMahon, piano, convey a world that is bleak and lonely, profound in its vulnerability yet, on the other end, almost exhilarated in its core. These two artists are well attuned to Schubert’s music, their phrasing impeccable and their synergy unmistakable. Originally written for tenor, Winterreise is frequently transposed to other voices. Baritone works particularly
well, with its range of colours and a degree of masculinity. Watson’s voice is dark and expressive, adding a layer of intensity to the words. The piano, having an equal role to the voice, paints the winter imagery of the harsh natural elements such as storms and wind, and McMahon does it exuberantly. On the other hand, he parallels the emotional unrest expressed in the voice with a wonderful restraint.

Not for the faint of heart, this album is a heartfelt addition to the music libraries of contemplative listeners.

Ivana Popovic

Amour et Fantaisie – Melodies de Lionel Daunais

Dominique Côté; Esther Gonthier

ATMA ACD2 2839 (atmaclassique.com/en)

► Canadian baritone Dominique Côté is world renowned for his opera and concert performances. Here Côté demonstrates his talented musicianship by singing his favourite songs by multi-talented Quebecer Lionel Daunais (1901-1982). Côté’s illustrious singing is accompanied with passion by Quebec pianist Esther Gonthier.

Daunais’ popular, accessible songs are as wide-ranging as his career as a composer, singer/songwriter, performer, author, artistic director and radio host. Daunais sets his own lyrics brilliantly. Highlights include the opening track Amour de moi with slight atonal short piano intro, low-range-touching vocals, faster mid-section and “très” dramatic to eat drives section and entertaining spelling out of the opening track L’amour de moi.

Highlights include the back-and-forth answering of Côté’s clear lead vocals by Ensemble Vocal Charlevoix, under musical director Julie Desmeules. Daunais’ songs with texts by writers including Paul Fort, Paul Eluard and Éloi De Grandmont are surprisingly conventional, particularly the 1955 collections written while he was still in Hungary. These songs pair exceedingly well with Kodály’s more traditional fare, while the inclusion of Lux Aeterna consists of the 1982 Drei Phantasien nach Friedrich Hölderlin which formed a new basis for musical life in Hungary. These songs pair exceedingly well with Kodály’s more traditional fare, while the inclusion of Lux Aeterna consists of the 1982 Drei Phantasien nach Friedrich Hölderlin which formed a new basis for musical life in Hungary.

One of the fundamental elements underpinning this disc is the importance of folk music in Hungarian musical traditions, which was the basis of their institutional training methodologies. Indeed, it was Kodály’s study and use of folksong in his compositions, which formed a new basis for musical life in Hungary. It is no surprise, then, to find that much of the material on Lux Aeterna is arrangements and adaptations of folk songs.

While Ligeti’s music is often synonymous with the avant-garde, many of his folk songs are surprisingly conventional, particularly the 1955 collections written while he was still in Hungary. These songs pair exceedingly well with Kodály’s more traditional fare, while the inclusion of Lux Aeterna consists of the 1982 Drei Phantasien nach Friedrich Hölderlin which formed a new basis for musical life in Hungary.

The Danish National Vocal Ensemble is in fine form on this disc, embracing and showcasing the extraordinary complexity of Ligeti’s modern works, the brilliant word-painting of his earlier folk songs and the late-Romantic sumptuousness of Kodály’s musical settings.

Tiina Kiik

Lux Aeterna – Choral works by György Ligeti and Zoltán Kodály

Danish National Vocal Ensemble; Marcus Creed

Our Recordings 6.220676 (naxosdirect.com/search/6220676)

► At first glance, the pairing of Kodály and Ligeti might seem strange, given the disparate nature of their musical works. While Kodály composed in a largely conventional yet extended tonal idiom, Ligeti is a renowned master of the avant-garde, famous for his introduction of microphony and the use of his atmospheric music in the films of Stanley Kubrick. Despite this musical disconnect, both composers share close personal connections, including their Hungarian nationality. Four decades older than Ligeti, Kodály appointed his younger countryman as a teacher of theory and counterpoint at the Liszt Academy in Budapest before Soviet troops entered Hungary in 1956 and Ligeti fled to Vienna.

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Heidi Breyer – Amor Aeternus: A Requiem for the Common Man

Various Artists

Winterhall Records WRC006 (heidibreyer.com)

Composer/pianist Heidi Breyer composed this ten-movement contemporary Requiem for chorus, vocal soloists, piano, strings, harp and horn over almost a decade. As Breyer writes, “Amor is a musical anthology of our times...” It is another musical pandemic project for the listener, this one recorded during the first year of COVID lockdowns.

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Matthew Whitfield

Martins Vilums

Latvian Radio Choir; Kaspars Putnins

LMIC SKANI 131 (skani.lv)

The musical heritage of the Baltic countries is rich and unique, offering a wide range of composers and works which are unlike those of any other tradition. This disc features the music of Martins Vilums (b.1974), a Latvian composer and accordionist whose material is characterized by fascinating titles and rich textures, all expertly performed by the Latvian Radio Choir and their director Kaspars Putnins.

Perhaps the most traditional piece on this disc is Vilums’ Lux Aeterna, inspired by the traditional requiem text and portrayed through a wide range of timbres and layers. The use of melodies resembling Gregorian chant and Eastern Orthodox psalmody declamation which emerge through luminous cent choral textures make this work immediately appealing, especially for those familiar with Ligeti’s setting of the same text.

Other works range greatly in instrumentation and theme, from the Zoroastrian cosmological text On the conflict wagged with the primeval ox which features extended vocal techniques including overtones and micro-intervals, to the expansive Aalomgon for percussion, trombone, horn and 12 voices. This latter piece is perhaps the most fascinating, a mini-oratorio over 30 minutes in length and comprised of a “libretto” of syllables, arranged in a particular system by the composer, intended to resemble words of demonic conjuring and godly cursing. Aalomgon is a dense yet utterly fascinating experience, and a unique sonic expression of deeply spiritual themes.

If there is one word to best describe this disc, it may well be “abstract.” While Vilums’ music can certainly be experienced without guidance, the composer’s words and insights are vital to achieving complete comprehension of many of these pieces. From the systemically syllabic Aalomgon to the overarching spirituality of Lux Aeterna and On the conflict wagged with the primeval ox, there is much on this disc worthy of appreciation, not least of which is the monumental effort put forth by the Latvian Radio Choir.

Matthew Whitfield

Composer/pianist Heidi Breyer composed this ten-movement contemporary Requiem for chorus, vocal soloists, piano, strings, harp and horn over almost a decade. As Breyer writes, “Amor is a musical anthology of our times...” It is another musical pandemic project for the listener, this one recorded during the first year of COVID lockdowns. Sung in Latin, Breyer composes with moving vocal and instrumental combinations. Introit opens with low-pitched...
Jóhann Jóhannsson – Drone Mass
ACME; Theatre of Voices; Paul Hillier
Deutsche Grammophon
(johannjohannsson.com)

Jóhann Jóhannsson (1969-2018) was an Icelandic composer who wrote music for a wide array of media including theatre, dance, television and films.

His music blends traditional instruments and orchestrations with contemporary and electronic components, resulting in a unique and characteristic soundscape.

At once meditative, mystifying and minimalistic, there are clear similarities between the Drone Mass and the music of 20th-century Eastern European spiritualists such as Pärt and Gorecki, but with notable deviations such as the integration of electronic techniques and the use of texts taken from the “Coptic Gospel of the Egyptians,” part of the Nag Hammadi library discovered in 1945.

For those expecting a Catholic-based Mass in the style of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, the incorporation of a hymn described by Jóhannsson himself as “a seemingly meaningless series of vowels” will mark a radical deviation from the norm, and yet the characterization of this work as a “Mass” is nonetheless fitting, as there is an interconnectedness and weaving of meaning between movements which provide structure and form to Jóhannsson’s large-scale work.

This world-premiere recording of the Drone Mass by the American Contemporary Music Ensemble, Theatre of Voices and conductor Paul Hillier is a revelatory look into the musical mind of Jóhannsson as represented in his art music, rather than his film scores, and is an extraordinary achievement. The demanding score is executed flawlessly and both singers and instrumentalists deserve commendation for their impeccable intonation.

Jóhannsson’s Drone Mass is highly recommended, not only to those fond of Pärt, Gorecki and Tavener, but to all who enjoy contemporary music performed at the highest levels of excellence.

Matthew Whitfield

Heinz Holliger – Lunea
Christian Gerhaher; Juliane Banse; Ivan Ludlow; Sarah Maria Sun; Annette Schönmüller; Philharmoniker Zürich; Basler Madrigalisten; Heinz Holliger
ECM New Series ECOM 2622/23
(ecmrecords.com/shop)

Heinz Holliger is among the most prominent oboists of his generation. Also a prominent modernist composer, his work includes the 1998 opera Schnee und Tüten. Fascinated by artists living on the edge, his music often interrogates their lives and the texts they left. His opera Lunea (2017) is no exception.

Unfolding in 23 scenes Lunea is built on many aphoristic visions, based on the biography and work of the celebrated Biedermeier poet Nikolaus Lenau (1802-1850). Suffering a suspected midlife stroke and exhibiting unmistakable signs of mental illness, Lenau was confined to a mental institution for the rest of his life. Art imitating life, Lunea protagonists distort and rearrange words just as Lenau did after his stroke. The score employs a compositional procedure in which material is stated in reverse order, paralleling the narrative’s shuttle back and forth in time.

Handl Klaus’s spare libretto reflects the outlines of the poet’s biography, retaining the flavour of Lenau’s near-Dadaist statements such as, “Man is a sandpiper by the sea of eternity.” Holliger’s music reflects the poet’s turmoil, despair and insights with surprising, effective sounds. For example, his skillful, prominent use of the cimbalom is perhaps a sly reference to Lenau’s birthplace in the Kingdom of Hungary and early career in Budapest. Reflecting the concentrated emotion characteristic of the Romantic period, Holliger’s brilliant orchestration underscores the disjointed libretto with impressively expressive instrumental and vocal writing. Juliane Banse’s achingly soaring soprano aria in Scene 12, and the violin soloists sprinkled throughout, are memorable for their atonal yet emotional lyricism.

Andrew Timar

What we’re listening to this month:
thewholenote.com/listening
The work of prolific and influential German composer Hans Werner Henze (1926–2012) is extremely varied in style, showing influences of atonality, serialism, Arabic music, neoclassicism, jazz and more. He wrote over 30 operas and theatre scores throughout his long creative life, and they received numerous international performances. Henze was also well known for his Marxist politics; he produced compositions honouring Ho Chi Minh and Che Guevara. The latter’s Hamburg premiere in 1968 sparked a riot and arrests.

Henze’s 1960 Das verratene Meer (The Betrayed Sea), an opera in two parts and 14 scenes, is based on Yukio Mishima’s 1963 novel The Sailor Who Fell from Grace with the Sea. The choice of Mishima, a Japanese fascist, by the committed leftist revolutionary Henze seems unexpected on the surface, yet there are parallels in their biographies: both were traumatized by World War II, both were openly gay and abhorred bourgeois life. Unlike Henze’s overtly political theatre works however, Das verratene Meer is rather a menacing meditation on the sea, seasons, sex and jealousy. The straightforward plot follows a widow who falls in love with a sailor. Her jealous teenage son traps the sailor with the help of his gang, and they sadistically murder him.

This two-CD Capriccio set is based on Vienna State Opera’s latest production of the work featuring brilliant dramatic coloratura soprano Vera Lotte Boecker as the young widow Fusako. The strong Danish baritone Bo Skovhus portrays the sailor she falls for, while the convincingly young Canadian lyric tenor, Josh Lovell, is the widow’s son.

Henze’s musical evocation of Mishima’s narrative is couched in an expressionistic Second Viennese School aesthetic. I distinctly felt the ghost of Alban Berg at several moments. Considerable angst is generated by ostinato instrumental textures and drama from the inclusion of unusual percussion instruments, including Japanese drums and clapper that hint at the world of the Japanese characters.

The opera opens in the summer, the second section is set in the winter; a series of lush, sophisticated orchestral interludes evokes the seasons and the three primary characters’ inner feelings. Simone Young masterfully conducts the complex score; the Vienna Staatsoper orchestra, augmented for the occasion to vast late-Romantic proportions, is undoubtedly yet another star in this satisfying production.

Andrew Timar

CLASSICAL AND BEYOND

Shining Shore Three Notch’d Road – The Virginia Baroque Ensemble Independent (tnrbaroque.org)

Early music in North America, and not in Italy, England or France? Surely not? And yet the Virginia Baroque Ensemble Three-Notch’d Road has recorded 17 pieces ranging from a broadside ballad through hymn arrangements to the dizzly heights of Handel and Purcell arrangements.

There is a haunting quality to many tracks: listen to bass Peter Walker as he solemnly declaims the anonymous but highly emotive Liberty tree, a setting of Thomas Paine’s support for the American revolutionaries. After the rigours of the War of Independence, it is little wonder that Oliver Shaw composed the invigorating Jefferson’s March. Here, Dominic Giardino breathes his enthusiasm for military music and early instruments into one of the very first forms of the clarinet.

Then there are pieces with a deep spiritual content. The singers on the CD lend a very human quality to Jeremiah Ingalls’ Farewell Hymn with its subject of death. It is followed by a slow, stately and traditional Appalachian interpretation of I Wonder as I Wander sung by Peter Walker.

The instrumental pieces are also worthy of note. To Drive the Cold Winter Away was a great favourite in English collections; its simplicity may well have led to an aural transmission across the Atlantic – ready for Giardino’s clarinet skills.

We hear far too little early music from the New World. This CD must surely be the start of the fightback.

Michael Schwartz

David Hyun-su Kim plays Schumann

David Hyun-su Kim

Centaur Records CRC 3877 (challengeres.com)

While early 19th-century pianos may lack the rich and sonorous tone of a modern concert grand, they can offer a greater sense of intimacy and as such, have an appeal all their own. Korean-American pianist David Hyun-su Kim has made a specialty of historically accurate performance practice, and in this recording he presents music by Robert Schumann performed on a replica of a piano-forde from the 1830s. A true Renaissance man, Kim graduated from Cornell as a Presidential Research and National Merit Scholar in chemistry. Yet a chance encounter with Beethoven piano sonatas convinced him to change direction, and following studies in the U.S. and Germany – with an acclaimed debut in Vienna – he’s now regarded as among the finest young American pianists of his generation.

Papillons, from 1831 is a charming set of 12 kaleidoscopic miniatures. Based on a novel by Jean Paul Richter and intended to represent a masked ball, the movements flow by in quick succession. Kim delivers an elegant and polished performance, adroitly capturing the ever-contrasting moods.

The bulk of the recording comprises one of Schumann’s most renowned compositions Carnaval from 1835. Again, Kim demonstrates a true affinity for this much-loved repertoire. Movements such as Pierrot and Klopstrog are suitably whimsical. Chopin in Aveu, posed and introspective, while the rousing Marche des Davidsbündler is performed with great bravado.

The disc concludes with the gracious Arabesque Op.18, a fitting ending to a most satisfying recording. Kim proves without a doubt that Romantic period repertoire can sound as compelling on a pianoforte (or a replica) as it does on a modern instrument. Here’s hoping we’ll hear from this gifted young artist again in the near future.

Richard Haskell

Chopin – Piano Concertos, Chamber Versions

Emmanuel Despax; Chineke! Chamber Ensemble

Signum SIGCD700 (emmanueldespax.com/recordings-1)

Even a hundred years ago there were no radios and TVs. The phonograph had just been invented and orchestral works and concertos could only be heard at a concert hall. In order to make it accessible to the common man these had to be arranged in chamber versions or piano transcriptions to be performed at private salons or soirees where Chopin himself was often invited to play the piano part.

Following this train of thought, a brilliant young French pianist, Emmanuel Despax, already well known in Europe and according to Gramophone magazine, “A formidable talent, fleet of finger, elegant of phrase and a true keyboard colourist,” decided to do just that: he collected five string players (the
Chopin’s two piano concertos with the orchestra reduced to a string quintet, so what we have here is effectively a piano sextet.

Chopin’s orchestration has been much criticized over the last centuries. Berlioz thought it rigid and superfluous, but since the piano plays almost continuously, this version with smaller forces is quite enjoyable. One nevertheless misses the power and instrumental colour of the orchestra, especially at one thrilling moment in the second movement of the Second Concerto when suddenly the mood changes. There is hushed intensity, everything quiets down into a pianissimo string tremolo with a heartbeat-like timpani and the piano enters with a dramatic melody that hasn’t been heard before. I also miss the clarion call on the horn near the end, when the prevailing F Minor key suddenly changes to major as if the radiant sun suddenly comes out and turns everything bright and beautiful.

Janos Gardonyi

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Janos Gardonyi

Pogorelich Chopin

Ivo Pogorelich

Sony Classical 19439912052

The performance on this disc is altogether exceptional. Pianist Ivo Pogorelich takes nothing for granted in music. Nor should we in listening to him.

If you know how Chopin “goes” then this almost certainly isn’t for you. Not that Pogorelich does anything wildly idiosyncratic, à la Glenn Gould. Rather, Pogorelich plainly understands that every interpretation is but one possibility, and he offers us a very enticing opportunity to open our minds, especially in these familiar works most burdened by tradition.

Everywhere revelations abound, beginning with the spacious opening of the Nocturne in C Minor Op. 48/1. Pogorelich’s Nocturnes are altogether dreamy and lyrical. And in the Fantasy in F Minor Op. 49 he takes us unexpectedly into another world. It’s full of glistening lights, mysterious depths, expectations, doubts and hopes like the shattered shadows of a rapturous quasi-Mendelssohn scherzo, glimpsed by moonlight in a forest.

In sheer colour and variety, in the depth of characterization and in the exceptional range and refinement of pianism, Pogorelich imparts a power and majestic stature to Chopin’s Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58. In its component parts the pianist displays urbanity and lyricism that is truly seductive and persuasive, which in itself is an object lesson in the very essence of style. The Scherzo is played with buoyant, aristocratic grace, psychological ambiguity and insolent virtuosity; Chopin as few pianists could even hope to try.

Raul da Gama

The Art of Chopin

Alan Hobbs

Maestro Music Company MMCD005

(alanhobbins.com)

Canada seems to produce many first-rate pianists one after another: Hewitt, Lisiecki and Falkowska, not to mention the immortal Glenn Gould! Into this august circle now endeavors to step Alan Hobbs. A pianist of Jamaican descent, Hobbs graduated from The Royal Conservatory and later studied at Juilliard. His teachers included the late great Leon Fleisher and Chopin specialist Marek Jablonski. Since then he has given many concerts in Toronto and New York to great critical acclaim. I remember several concerts in the 80s (he being my daughters’ piano teacher) and was invited to his debut concert. I was particularly impressed with his special affinity to the music of his homeland and American jazz.

Chopin is definitely his favourite composer and this is Hobbs’ third recording devoted entirely to his work. It’s a wonderful collection skillfully selected to give a good cross section of Chopin’s most beloved and immensely difficult pieces. He masters all the challenges with superb technical skill. Above all he brings “a subtlety of expression to every phrase, single chord or a note” raves one newspaper.

From the program of Scherzos, Nocturnes and Impromptus, some of my favorites are the majestic Nocturne in D-Flat Major with its grand melody. This is followed later by a masterly performance of the Scherzo No. 2 in B-Flat Minor that opens with those powerful chords from which a beautiful, emotionally charged melody emerges followed by that peaceful meditative mid-section and the magnificent super bravura coda.

And dare I mention the explosive, tremendously passionate, heroic Nocturne in C Minor that makes me shiver every time I hear it? This is truly grand-scale pianism with the ebb and flow of emotion superbly controlled.

Janos Gardonyi

Tchaikovsky Symphonies

Tonhalle-Orchester Zurich; Paavo Järvi

ALPHA 778 (naxosdirect.com/search/alpha778)

I have been a longtime admirer of the conductor Paavo Järvi since the release of his live Beethoven cycle with the Kammerphilharmonie, Bremen of September 2009. At that time, I was very impressed by his ability to beautifully balance the orchestra.

Now we have a box set of Tchaikovsky symphonies together with various orchestral works and here it is again, the orchestra balanced so well that every instrument is clearly audible, still in its natural balance without being spot lit. This five-CD set from Alpha Classics has been so well recorded that you can map out the entire orchestra, the Tonhalle-Orchester Zurich, of which Järvi is music director. His presentation of these works is more thoughtful and sensitive than some other recorded versions from the likes of Karajan, Mravinsky et al, but no less powerful.

Symphony No. 1 “Winter Daydreams” is eloquently gentle and Symphony No. 2 “The Little Russian, positively optimistic, patriotic and joyful. We move through the power and cumulative intensity of the Third “Polish” to the power of the Fourth and unabashed exuberance and positive optimism of the Fifth to the overwhelming sadness and ultimate resignation of the final movement of the Sixth Symphony, “Pathétique”.

The six orchestral works accompanying the symphonies include Francesca Da Rimini, Capriccio Italian, two pieces from Eugene Onegin, the Waltz and the Polonaise, as well as Romeo and Juliet and the Festival Coronation March. All enjoy the same meticulous attention to detail that we now expect from Järvi.

After a lifetime of listening to these works conducted by so many others, this recording may very well be my preferred version. Here the music unfolds as a narrative. It flows. These are well-considered new readings that may have you rethinking certain passages and perhaps reappraising the others. The five discs are also available separately.

Bruce Surtees

Mahler – Symphony No. 4

Chen Reiss; Czech Philharmonic; Semyon Bychkov

PentaTone PT5186972 (naxosdirect.com/search/ptc5186972)

Four decades have passed since the Czech Philharmonic completed their first edition of the complete Mahler symphonies under Václav Neumann in 1982. Mahler was born in Bohemia and raised in Moravia (born in 1860 during the Hapsburg era, he considered himself an Austrian and spoke mainly German) so this first instalment of a new cycle can
be considered a festive homecoming for a favourite son. Mahler’s Fourth Symphony is relatively compact in comparison to its gargantuan predecessors in the so-called “Wunderhorn” cycle of symphonies inspired by the 19th-century collection of folk-song texts known as The Youth’s Magic Horn, portions of which Mahler had previously set to music. Despite this economy of means, the symphony’s mischievous antics, ironic stance and complex structure confounded the critics of his time. Today it is regarded as one of his most accessible works. Mahler himself once observed, “The real art of conducting consists in transitions.” Mahler’s own constantly shape-shifting music teems with kaleidoscopic tempo fluctuations which not every conductor can interpret convincingly. Bychkov’s mastery in this regard marks him as a genuine Mahlerian. The finale of the symphony features Israeli soprano Chen Reiss in an ingenuous rendition of the song ‘Gmüth ist mir verwirret’ (O Sacred Head, Sore within me) by Hans Leo Hassler (1564-1612), originally derived from the madrigal by Johann Gottlieb Janitsch. The album opens with Simone Dinnerstein’s solo piano recital Undersong, brilliantly captured in the warmth of this recording by Orange Mountain Music. But arch-Romantic Robert Schumann’s ‘Arabesque, Op.18’ with its rippling arpeggios and translucent glissandi that follows will likely take your breath away.

The pianism is impressively nuanced throughout the program. Dinnerstein displays her strong rhythmic backbone with the bubbling lilt of Philip Glass’ ‘Mad Rush’ but it is, to my mind, at any rate, Schumann’s ‘Kreisleriana Op.16’ that is the apogee of this recording. Rarely has the restless romance of this work been captured with greater imagination. Its heavenly, mercurial luminescence is tempered by the pianist’s intellectual rigour through its eight dazzling vignettes.

Dinnerstein has long been one of the most articulate pianists in the world, remaining technically sound and musically eloquent no matter what the repertoire. Her Satie and Glass is a case in point. On the latter’s ‘Digital Bird Suite, Op.15’ which traverses the gamut from lyrical reverie to reality-defying pyrotechnics.

Her interpretation of Satie’s ‘Gnosienne No.3’ is eloquent and direct, quite without impediment or undue idiosyncrasy, yet musical to the core. Meanwhile, she approaches Coppen and Schumann with uncommon refinement of colour and texture. All of this makes for a disc to die for.

**Melissa Scott**

**Undersong Simone Dinnerstein**

**Orange Mountain Music OMM 0156**

(orangemountainmusic.com)

*A lyrical rubato-laden, eminently shapely* Les Barricades Mystérieuses *by Couperin opens Simone Dinnerstein’s solo piano recital Undersong, brilliantly captured in the warmth of this recording by Orange Mountain Music. But arch-Romantic Robert Schumann’s ‘Arabesque, Op.18’ with its rippling arpeggios and translucent glissandi that follows will likely take your breath away.*

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**Ebenbild**
Juri Vallentin; Trio d’Iroise; Bernward Lohr: Caroline Jungmanns
PASCHEN Records PR 220072
(paschenerrecords.de/katalog/pr220072/)

*Only to be described as unique and colourfully unconventional,* the newly released album Ebenbild, featuring oboist Juri Vallentin and the Trio d’Iroise, is a blend of recited song text, choruses by J.S. Bach, as well as five pieces from various eras and styles all married together with one common theme: J.S Bach’s ‘O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden’ (O Sacred Head, Sore Wounded).

Originally derived from the madrigal Mein Gmüth ist mir verwirret (My mind’s confused within me) by Hans Leo Hassler (1564-1612), this theme was repeatedly used by Bach throughout his life in many works, including the St. Matthew Passion and the Christmas Oratorio. Arranged for oboe quartet, the album begins with the original madrigal and then is followed by the recited text of the first stanza, a chorus using the theme from one of Bach’s works and then the Sonata da camera in G minor O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden by Johann Gottlieb Janitsch. The album continues in this format with four other recited stanzas, four choruses and four works: Frederick Kelly’s ‘Romance from the String Trio in B Minor’, Charles Bochska’s middle movements from two of his oboe quartets, Four Preludes to Infinity by Theo Verhey and the unfinished final fugue written by J.S. Bach shortly before his death.

The performances by Vallentin and Trio d’Iroise are virtuosic and thoughtful, showing a range of musical knowledge and sensitivity. A polished gem, this album is truly a heightening experience.

**Daniel Foley**

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**Night Light**
Lara Deutsch; Phil Chiu
Leaf Music LM249 (leaf-music.ca)

*Kudos to Leaf Music of Halifax for its confidence in these young musicians, flutist Lara Deutsch and pianist Philip Chiu. The program is built around the theme of dreams, which opens such possibilities, for example, including a work by Franz Schubert – Introduction and Variations on Trockne Blumen – in a program of music by contemporary composers.*

The disc opens with Takashi Yoshimatsu’s ‘Digital Bird Suite, Op.15’, the opening movement of which, Bird-phobia, described by Deutsch as “fiendishly challenging,” is at the nightmare end of the dream spectrum, but also shows both consummate command of her instrument and her partner’s uncanny ability, despite the formidable challenges of his own part, always to be in sync with her. In the contrasting lyrical second movement, A Bird in the Twilight, their exquisite phrasing and consistent sensitivity to each other lift the notes off the page.

The dreamlike atmosphere is perhaps most eloquently expressed in the first movement of Jocelyn Morlock’s I Conversed with You in a Dream, which traverses the gamut from lyrical reverie to reality-defying pyrotechnics.

In the Schubert, Chiu reveals himself as a leader collaborative pianist of stature, convincingly telling the story and revealing the atmosphere of the music. For example, his playing of the repeated quarter and two eighth note motif at the very beginning is full of eerie foreboding; you know at once that this is not going to end well!

Individually and as a duo Deutsch and Chiu are consummate interpreters, who move with the music, so to speak, and reveal the meaning behind the notes.

**Allan Pulker**

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**Night Light**

Michael Oesterle – Quatuors
Quatuor Bozzini
Collection Quatuor Bozzini CQB2229 (actuellecd.com)

Tom Johnson – Combinations
Quatuor Bozzini
Collection Quatuor Bozzini CQB 2230 (actuellecd.com)

*Quatuor Bozzini has energetically championed the newest in classical music since 1999 in their Montreal hometown, on tour and on outstanding albums. Their mission is to cultivate risk-taking music, evident in the creation of an impressive commissioning...*
program of over 400 pieces. Frequent collaborations with other musicians and cross-disciplinary projects have been another career feature. An example of an unusual collaboration, one that I took part in, happened in 2012 with the development of new concert repertoire with Toronto’s Evergreen Club Contemporary Gamelan, performed live and subsequently released on the album Higgs’ Ocean. The title track, scored for string quartet and gamelan degung, was by prolific mid-career Canadian composer Michael Oesterle.

Oesterle’s mature compositional style balances two late-20th- and early-21st-century streams: American minimalism and European postmodernism. The latter comes through in his exploitation of sonorities, formal, timbral and harmonic sophistication, allusions to historical Euro musics and an identifiable Oesterlean lyricism. This album’s four substantial string quartets offer an appealing balance between musical straightforwardness and complexity. Oesterle often generates drama from the friction between the idiomatic and the completely unexpected.

Daydream Mechanics (2001), which evokes the “awkward adventures of childhood when the backyard seemed as full of disturbing possibilities as any uncharted territory,” offers an example of Oesterle’s use of extra-musical inspiration. On the other hand the composer describes his Three Pieces for String Quartet as “three short pieces [composed with] modules drawn from a system of triangular numerical sequences...” I however hear surprisingly Renaissance- and Baroque-infused character homages to the three animals Oesterle titles each movement after: kingfisher, orangutan and orb weaver.

American-born composer and long-time French resident, Tom Johnson (b.1939), served as The Village Voice’s influential music critic from 1971 to 1983 covering the era’s exciting new classical music scene. The first to apply the term “minimalist music,” Johnson’s personal compositional style leans toward minimalist formalism. Quatuor Bozzini has collected his complete works for string quartet covering four compositions from 1994 to 2009 on this album.

Dwelling on mathematic sequences and permutations of a limited core musical material, in Johnson’s hands the musical whole emerges satisfyingly greater than the sum of its lean components and intellectual procedures. Each relatively brief movement vibrates like a sonic poem. For example, the opening six-note motif of Johnson’s Tilework for String Quartet (2003) is transformed through his exploration of the myriad ways in which lines are “tiled using six-note rhythms,” relying on a computerized list of rhythmic canons. The composer helpfully adds, “Of course, composers, performers, and listeners don’t have to know all of this, just as we don’t need to master counterpoint to appreciate a Bach fugue... [because] music allows us to directly perceive things that we could never grasp intellectually.”

Performed senza vibrato, Quatuor Bozzini renders these scores with virtuoso precision along with warmth and a subtle lyricism, a winning combination I grew to appreciate after repeated listening.

Andrew Timar

to you through

India Gailey

Redshift Records (indiayeshe.com)

> Halifax-based cellist India Gailey’s first album includes a diverse mixture of contemporary composers, including a McGill colleague and a work of her own.

Though sometimes sounding improvised, each piece is fully scored for cello, some with voice and occasionally multitracked with electronics. Gailey’s album flows like poetry, and she includes in her CD booklet descriptions of each track as a collection of thoughts and photographs that reads more like a journal, giving the collection almost a gallery setting, as if you could walk room by room to experience each work. Gailey’s writing includes personal reflections on her own feelings of place, being uprooted by the pandemic, emotions of disconnection and loneliness, the difference between a material home and feeling at home, and letting go of the perpetual search for a place to land.

While the album is an excellent introduction to Gailey’s breadth of skill as a cellist, the most outstanding tracks for me were the more recent works: compositions by Fjola Evans, Yaz Lancaster and Anne Leilehua Lanzilotti. Gailey’s own 2020 composition Ghost, for acoustic cello and voice, is a delicate lament for the destruction of the Earth inspired by the Australian bush fires. Michael Gordon’s 2004 Light is Calling, written after the destruction of 9/11, is outstanding. Making use of stereo panning and seven layers of electronics plus cello, it encapsulates the climate of moving somewhere while staying rooted in place, much like our recent years, and ends with a sublime organic deconstruction. If I could have a soundtrack playing the next time I am surfing a standing wave in a canoe, this would be it.

Cheryl Ockrant

Mark Ellestad – Discreet Angel

Cristián Alvear; Mark Ellestad; Apartment House

Another Timbre at185

(anothertimbre.com)

> Hesitancy, or possibly abstract detachment, might describe the communicative mode of Mark Ellestad’s Discreet Angel. Instead of passages, we are presented with spaces between notes, plucked one or two at a time by guitarist Cristián Alvear. At just over 20 minutes in length, this is the second longest work presented. I’m reminded of Linda C. Smith’s music, or Martin Arnold’s. A more active middle section buoys one along on something more like a quiet brookside walk in a treed ravine, following the sleepy spring dawn.

Sigríður features Ellestad performing this short work on Hardanger fiddle and pump organ. Disagreement between pitches seems almost to be the point of the thing, the reed organ tuned one way and the fiddle strings another. Underlying the plain chorale is the ceaseless counter rhythm of the foot pedals, pumping the organ’s bellows full. Imagine Ellestad bowing and pedalling simultaneously while elbowing the organ keys (or more likely overdubbing). It’s pretty and quirky.

In the Mirror of this Night, a duet for violin and cello, weighs in at nearly 46 minutes. Opening in a misterioso unison (well, in octaves) passage, the chant-like melody spins beautifully in tune, senza vibrato, then begins to refract into parallel pitches, sounding sometimes almost like the pump organ. It’s a workout for the attention span, or a soundtrack for meditation.

Canadian Ellestad (b.1954) abandoned composing for nearly 20 years; he wrote these pieces in the 1980s and 90s but never recorded them to his satisfaction. He’s now brought them to light, encouraged by the quality of performance of his collaborators. Kudós especially to Míra Benjámin (violin) and Anton Lukoszevieze (cello, as well as the cover art).

Max Christie

All Worlds, All Times

Windsync

Bright Shiny Things BST-0167

(brightshiny.ninja)

> It’s not every day woodwind quintet music will make you want to get up and dance. Seize this disc and the day, says me. Opening things, Thetis from Apollo

thewholenote.com
by Marc Mellits, almost literally bops from the get-go. The piece is moon-themed – modern and ancient references abound – but mostly it all feels like a set list of a really good and interesting dance band. If rhythm is their strong suit, pitch is not. The second movement, Sea of Tranquility, opens with intonation issues so glaring one is left wondering whether it’s intentionally spectral, but I doubt it. It’s a flaw that could have been addressed prior to releasing the recording. Chords do not settle, unisons clash. But carping aside, the music itself is just so darned chipper. The finale, Moonwalk, scoots along; if this was the pace those first moonwalkers took, I’m an Olympic sprinter. Toe-tapping fun.

Composer and percussionist Ivan Trevino joins the ensemble for his Song Book Vol.3, and the dancing just gets better. The titles refer to singer-songwriters: St. Annie (St. Vincent) is really sweet. (David) (St. Vincent) (b.1963) will not. At 30-minute Piano Concerto (2013). The opening Allegro alternates fierce orchestral barrages with rapid, folk-dance-flavoured melodies played by pianist Agnese Eglina; both elements then merge, building to a motorized, near-cacophonous climax. In Crossroad, the piano’s slow walking pace over grey orchestral chords suggests a pensive stroll through a misty landscape. Despair mixes brutal, wildly syncopated polyrhythms, aggressive brass, percussion and musicians’ shouts. Lullaby quotes a traditional melody, but at an energized velocity and volume antithetical to sleep. The rustic romp finally subsides; the lullaby, now gentle and sweet, ends the concerto.

Although lacking a stated program, Laci’s 37-minute Latvian Symphony (2019) features compelling, evocative episodes reflecting the movements’ titles. Paraphrases of the “Fate” fanfares from Tchaikovsky’s Fourth Symphony open The Night Is Dark; a propulsive struggle ensues, ending peacefully. The Lake shimmers impressionistically, framing a brass-heavy, grandiosely imposing central section. Of the rumbustious folk tunes in the Latvian Scherzo, amply spiced with dissonances, Laci says, “I took all the songs that are still in my head from childhood and I threw them all together.” Hurry, Dear Sun is clearly Nature-music: throbbing “forest murmurs” slowly crescendo to a grand, climactic sunrise; a brief, violent storm bursts, followed by folk-song-based music of relief and thanksgiving, ending with the musicians’ unaccompanied, chant-like humming. Conductor Atvars Lakstigala generates real excitement in these very colourful works. Enthusiastically recommended!

Max Christie

Kārlis Lācis – Piano Concerto; Latvian Symphony
Agnese Eglina; Artūrs Noviks; Liepāja Symphony Orchestra; Atvars Lakstigala
LMIC SKANI 133 (skani.lv)

“Extreme emotions” and “maximalism” are well-chosen words that Latvian composer Kārlis Lācis (b.1977) uses to describe his 30-minute Piano Concerto (2013). The opening Allegro alternates fierce orchestral barrages with rapid, folk-dance-flavoured melodies played by pianist Agnese Eglina; both elements then merge, building to a motorized, near-cacophonous climax. In Crossroad, the piano’s slow walking pace over grey orchestral chords suggests a pensive stroll through a misty landscape. Despair mixes brutal, wildly syncopated polyrhythms, aggressive brass, percussion and musicians’ shouts. Lullaby quotes a traditional melody, but at an energized velocity and volume antithetical to sleep. The rustic romp finally subsides; the lullaby, now gentle and sweet, ends the concerto.

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Michael Schulman

Thomas Larcher – Symphony No.2 “Knoetaph”; Die Nacht der Verlorenen
André Schuen; Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra; Hannu Lintu
Ondine ODE 1393-2 (naxosdirect.com/search/ode=1393-2)

The subtitle “Knoetaph” signals that the 36-minute Symphony No.2 (2016) by Austrian Thomas Larcher (b.1993) will not be easy listening. Commemorating the hordes of desperate refugees recently drowned in the Mediterranean, the music is dark, vehement and angry. Explosive percussion and sinister suspense dominate the opening Allegro, culminating in a catastrophic blast. The sombre Adagio grows mournfully with repeated, drooping brass notes, interrupted by fortissimo shrieks before the brass groans resume. In the Scherzo, snarling dissonances and scattershot rhythms lead to an accelerando of pounding brass and percussion, and another cataclysmic climax; gentle woodwinds, offering brief respite, end the movement. The Introduzione, Molto allegro is filled with yet even more highly violent cannonades until the symphony’s final two minutes, a slow, hymn-like dirge that fades into silence.

The 28-minute cycle Die Nacht der Verlorenen (2008) is one of three works Larcher has set to words by Austrian author-poet Ingeborg Bachmann (1926-1973), a suicidal, alcoholic drug addict. Unsurprisingly, these songs are pained and depressive, beginning with Alles verloren – Everything’s lost; the title song – in translation The Night of the Lost – declares, “Now, all is dark.” Powerfully dramatic, whether crooning or shouting, André Schuen’s burnished-bronze baritone superbly expresses all the texts’ tortured angst, while the orchestra, including accordion and prepared piano, glitters, drones and surges.

Both works, emphatically performed by conductor Hannu Lintu and the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, grabbed and held me with their incandescent sonorities and unremitting, ferocious intensity.

Michael Schulman

Elles
Angèle Dubeau; La Pietà
AnelektA AN 2 8754 (anelektA.com/en)

With the debonair virtuosity and unmatched passion of her playing, Angèle Dubeau is at the peak of her powers today. She is the consummate master of mood and atmosphere, with the ability to coordinate colour and structure to a rare degree. On her 2022 recording, Elle, Dubeau leads her celebrated ensemble La Pietà in interpreting repertoire by 13 women-composers spanning the 12th century of Hildegard von Bingen to the 21st century of Rachel Portman, Dalal and Isabel Waller-Bridge.

Every past performance by Angèle Dubeau & La Pietà was immersed not simply in the harmonious combination of musical sounds but in the divine harmony of the cosmos. The performance on this disc is no exception. By the time you traverse its music and get to the title song – in translation Everything’s lost; the title song – in translation The Night of the Lost – declares, “Now, all is dark.” Powerfully dramatic, whether crooning or shouting, André Schuen’s burnished-bronze baritone superbly expresses all the texts’ tortured angst, while the orchestra, including accordion and prepared piano, glitters, drones and surges.

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Michael Schulman

Andrew Paul MacDonald – Music of the City and the Stars
Andrew Paul MacDonald; Quatuor Saguenay
Centredecs CMCCCD 29622 (cmccanada.org/shop/cd-cmccd-29622)

Andrew Paul MacDonald is a composer and guitarist who taught music at Bishop’s University in Lennoxville, QC from 1987 to 2021. His compositions have been performed around the world and he has released dozens of works for chorus, brass quintet, opera and...
orchestra. *Music of the City and Stars* is his 20th album and has MacDonald on archtop guitar paired with the Quatuor Saguenay string quartet (formerly the Alcan Quartet). There are two multi-movement works on the album, *Lyra* and *Restless City*. *Lyra* is played in seven short movements with no breaks and tells the story of the god Hermes’ invention of the lyre. The titles (including *Orpheus and the Argonauts, Orpheus and Hades, The Death of Eurydice*) are suggestive of the moods the movements work through. MacDonald’s electric guitar is distanced sonically from the quartet by his use of chorus and delay throughout this piece. String quartet and jazz guitar is an unusual and intriguing combination which MacDonald has found to be a combination of skills and guitar chops to bring off very well. *Restless City* is jazz inspired and his archtop guitar often blends in with the quartet. The three movements – *Bird Talk*, *Dameronics* and *Monkin’ Around* – refer to the jazz legends Charlie Parker, Tadd Dameron and Thelonious Monk. *Bird Talk*’s guitar lines are a bit bouncy while the quartet plays angular lines with a staccato edge. *Dameronics* is slower with some beautiful harmonies reminiscent of the jazz composer’s style. *Monkin’ Around* contains much lively interplay between the guitar and quartet parts which are sometimes light-hearted and at other times intense. *Music of the City and Stars* is a thoughtful and entrancing collaboration.

**Ted Parkinson**

Bekah Simms – *Ghost Songs*

*Thomas Morris; Amanda Lowry; Kalun Leung; Joseph Petric*

people | places | records PPR 031 (peopleplacesrecords.bandcamp.com/ album/ghost-songs)

- Bekah Simms’ most recent release, *Ghost Songs*, continues to explore her expert electronic music composition ideas in four works for solo instrumentalis. The first three tracks are part of her mind-boggling *Skinscape* series, featuring the interaction of a soloist playing traditional/extended techniques live, with an electronically disembodied version of themselves. *Skinscape I* (2019), with soloist Thomas Morris (oboe), combines contrasting oboe and electronic sounds which at times melt together, or contrast like the high-pitched oboe notes above a softer electronic background. In *Skinscape I* (2017), flutist Amanda Lowry’s superb extended techniques, fast trills and melodic lines are coupled by such gratifying electronic effects as spooky growling, pitch-bending tones and airy background sounds. *Skinscape III* (2021) features loud attention-grabbing electronic wailing effects, trombonist Kalun Leung’s held notes and the almost painful gritty sounding electronics, which subside with the calming closing trumpet. In an acoustic version of *Jubilant Phantoms* (2021), Simms combines fragments from accordionist Joseph Petric’s recordings with electronic echoing chordal drones. The combination of higher pitched accordion sounds and lower electronic pitches creates an especially beautiful effect. Recording and production are fantastic! Simms’ compositions range from disconcerting and perhaps troubling sounds to calming breathy sound environments. Her electro and acoustic instrumental sound combinations open the door to a new world of music all her own.

The Canadian Music Centre has just announced Simms as the winner of the 2022 Harry Freedman Recording Award for *Metamold*, a work for large ensemble and electronics. *Metamold* was a triple commission from Crash Ensemble, Eighth Blackbird, and NUNM as a result of Simms winning the prestigious 2019 Barlow Prize.

**Tina Kilk**

**JAZZ AND IMPROVISATION**

Jewlia Eisenberg – *The Ginzburg Geography*

*Charming Hostess*

*Tzdak (tzdak.com)*

- Acknowledging that labels and classifications of music are inelegant and confusing at the best of times, I cannot, for the life of me, begin to properly describe or compartmentalize this curious, extremely musical and compelling album: *The Ginzburg Geography* by Charming Hostess, a trio comprised of Jewlia Eisenberg, Cynthia Taylor and Marika Hughes. Not only is this programmatic recording interesting in its theme – exploring the lives and work of Natalia and Leonie Ginzburg, Jewish anti-fascist political activists who played central roles in the Italian resistance movement – but the narrative of how this recording came to be, following the untimely death of singer and principal performer Eisenberg in 2021 at age 49, is equal parts tragic and captivating.

Both storylines coalesce here on this fine 2022 *Tzdak* release that is both historical in its mining of a fascinating story of activism (combining research, creative reportage and original content creation) and historic in that it represents the final creative project of Eisenberg, a longtime respected contributor to the creative music scenes of New York and San Francisco’s Bay area. Further, as Eisenberg’s passing occurred prior to the album’s completion, it took the efforts of longtime collaborator Hughes to complete this recording consistent with Eisenberg’s original vision.

This would be, I imagine, a difficult process not only personally, but providing a sort of musicological challenge where information on composer and creative intentions were gleaned from notes and past performances before being will to fruition on the recording here. Classifications be damned, there is much to learn from and to like with this provocative and thoughtful new release.

**Andrew Scott**

Ryan Oliver With Strings

*Ryan Oliver; Bernie Senensky; Neil Swainson; Terry Clarke*

Cellar Music CM102021 (cellarlive.com)

- Juno-nominated, Victoria-based saxophonist, Ryan Oliver, has collaborated with a fantastic group of musicians on his latest release, making for a captivating musical voyage that any listener will want to join. The album features a group of famed musicians, with Bernie Senensky on piano, Terry Clarke on drums and rounded out by Neil Swainson on bass. What makes this album a truly unique endeavour is the string accompaniment that is present throughout each track, adding a wonderfully melodic and classy flavour to the record. Most songs were written by Oliver himself and arranged by Mark Crawford.

A soaring and sonorous string melody along with Oliver’s mellow saxophone solo lead into the first piece, *The Ballad of Buffalo Bill*. A slightly mysterious yet positively groovy song, this will get any listener’s toe tapping and body moving. *Tango for Astor*, one of the pieces not penned by Oliver, features a rhythmic, fittingly tango-esque groove from Clarke and a beautiful, pizzicato bass line played by Swainson. *Eddie* is an up-tempo tune with a scintillating riff in the strings underpinning a masterful saxophone line and piano solo showcasing Senensky’s talent perfectly. To close out the album, *Walk Up on the Road* has a bluesy and gospel flavour to it, perhaps a fitting melancholic yet positive end to this record. For anyone looking to add touch of “James Bond-esque” class and style to their night in, this is the album for you.

**Kati Killaspea**
In This Moment
Sam Kirmayer
Cellar Music CM030422 (cellarlive.com)

- Sam Kirmayer, a Montreal-based jazz guitarist who has gained a lot of notoriety playing with famed musicians nationally, has been and remains one of the most in-demand sidemen within the genre. Already quite a feat on its own for someone under 35, Kirmayer can add his third and latest release to that quickly growing list of accomplishments. The prolific musician’s newest record features a track list of all new, original pieces that showcase not only his talent as a guitarist but also as a great composer. With renowned musicians such as Sean Fyfe on piano, Alec Walkington on bass and Andre White on drums, Kirmayer’s already stellar compositions reach new heights aided by this fantastic backing band. If there’s a common theme or element that could be pinpointed throughout the record, it would be the guitarist’s clean and precise style of playing that is just a pleasure to the ears. The Turnout features a driving bass line that keeps the song moving along at a pleasing pace, grounded by a constantly moving drum groove. Sleight of Hand takes us to a more down-tempo setting in which we hear a mellow piano riff underpinning the album’s textural sensibilities.

Song Within the Story
James Brown; Clark Johnston; Anthony Michelli; Mike Murley
NGP Records (jamesbrown.ca)

- Based out of Oakville, renowned jazz guitarist James Brown has returned from a 13-year hiatus to release a much-awaited new album. And what an album it is: chock full of original tracks penned by Brown himself, and two covers of well-known Canadian folk-rock songs that he’s put a unique spin on. Helping breathe life into the pieces is an all-star lineup of musicians, featuring Clark Johnston on bass, Anthony Michelli on drums and Mike Murley on tenor saxophone. A pleasurable and relaxing musical journey, this album will appeal to jazz lovers, both old and new, looking for a modern jazz staple to add to their collection. Igor starts off the record with a nod to classical composer Stravinsky, one of Brown’s influences in his classical guitar pursuits. Within the guitar melody are hints of phrases akin to what you’d hear in a Stravinsky piece; Brown once again masterfully mixes the musical realms of classical and jazz into one pleasant whole as he is known to do. Mhira Kids has its own unique flavour, with sections of the bass line and the rhythmic setup of the piece evoking elements of African music, “specifically those of Zimbabwe’s Shona people.” But perhaps most captivating is a beautiful and melodious cover of Joni Mitchell’s A Case of You, closing out the album on a hopeful yet slightly melancholy note, leaving the listener to peacefully contemplate a truly satisfying and fantastic album.

Kati Killaspea

Concert note: James Brown performs at Th Roxy every Monday in May from 5:30pm to 7:30pm.

g(o) sol(o)
Bernard Falaise
Ambiances Magnétiques AM 267 CD (actuellecd.com)

- Using no overdubs but minimal looping and timbral effects, the seven selections on Montrealer Bernard Falaise’s solo guitar tour de force are completely improvised, while pivoting to other instrument-reflecting sounds for greater variety. The attraction of g(o) sol(o) is how Falaise, part of local bands such as Quartetski – uses all parts of his instrument to suggest wider textures while creating miniature sonic tales.

Prime instance of this is the extended 320003, where string shakes and slurred fingering means the staccato introduction on flattened strings is succeeded by bell-pealing shakes, double bass-like low-pitched resonances and organ-like tremolo pulses. These sway the exposition forward into a single line to a buzzing conclusion. Slogan, the slightly longer first track, sets the scene, as bobbing fuzztones and high-voltage shakes rumble along before splitting into pressurized sound loops on the bottom and single-string strings on the top. Both tones are audible as they intersect and slide into one another for a percussive climax.

With pointed stops and starts, Falaise uses varied motifs to define the tunes, including string rubs that drone across the sound field for warmer expositions, or pointillist below-the-bridge scratches for tougher interface. Galop does just that as well, with knob-twisting and effects-pedal-pressure launching tones every which way until all subside into a connective drone. Sol – G in English – is the fifth note of the C Major scale. Yet G(o) sol(o) cannily treats all of the scale’s notes in a unique fashion.

Ken Waxman

Cherished Possessions
Steve Boudreau; Adrian Vedady; Jim Doxas
Independent (steveboudreau.com)

- Gifted Ottawa-based pianist/ composer Steve Boudreau has just released his first trio recording of primarily his own music, and has also realized his dream of recording with two of Montreal’s finest jazz musicians: bassist, Adrian Vedady and drummer, Jim Doxas. Boudreau had just completed a five-volume solo piano recording project, when he was compelled to begin this exciting trio album. There are ten intriguing tracks here – including two contributions from the diverse artists, Wayne Shorter and Björk. The recording was completed in a single remarkable day – as so many of the finest jazz recordings have also been made. The resulting energy, creativity and spontaneity are palpable in every track.

The title track is imbued with contemporary lyricism, expressed in Boudreau’s exquisite piano sound, attack and ideas. Doxas and Vedady are nothing short of luminous – engaging with each other and Boudreau on a psychic and spiritual level. Vedady’s solo here explores the many tonal colours of the bass, and Doxas impeccably uses his kit and cymbals as an extension of his emotional expression. Other stand-out tracks include Words of Hope – a sensuous, lacyon ballad, filled with warmth and delicious chord progressions; For Staff Only – a Monk-ish trip into the free zone; and Rolling Oil – an up-tempo cooker where the trio shines again. Boudreau’s technical chops are quite breathtaking here, inciting every nuance to feel effortless and natural.

Of special mention is the trio’s masterful take on Shorter’s Go, framed by Doxas’ exquisite percussive choices, and the potent closer, Charlie’s Family Reunion, which captures the pure joy of making music with skilled, like-minded souls. This project is one of the finest trio jazz recordings that I have been privileged to experience in many a moon.

Lesley Mitchell-Clarke

Concert note: Steve Boudreau will celebrate the launch of Cherished Possessions at Woodroffe United Church in Ottawa on May 25.
Open Skies
Tom Reynolds Trio
Zsan Records (tomreynoldstrio.com)

With the release of this emotionally and spiritually profound recording, noted pianist/composer/arranger Tom Reynolds has fashioned a musical contribution of special beauty. His noted collaborators here include two uber-skilled and versatile artists: bassist George Koller and drummer Lorne-Nehring. Co-produced by the trio, the 13 original tracks – all composed and arranged by Reynolds throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The music itself is a meditation on the depth of our isolation and loss, tempered by faith in the human spirit, and in the words of Reynolds, “we wanted to contribute something hopeful and reflective of the possibilities for resilience, kindness and social change during a challenging and emotional time”.

The program begins with Far Away Lands, a gentle, Latin-infused ballad with fine performances by the trio, and exquisite piano work from Reynolds. Next up is Butterflies – a gossamer-like work, literally calling out for a Marilyn and Alan Bergman-esque lyric! A real stand-out is Spring Will Come, which is a jaunty and uplifting tune, replete with a superb bass solo from Koller as well as dynamic, succinct and complex drum work from Nehring. Other fine offer-ments include Hold On, which has some palpable Gospel-infused motifs, and Prism. The trio literally shines here – moving like a single-celled organism, reflecting the prismatic spectrum of light through their instruments. One of the most psychotropic tracks is Guidance, which has been arranged with an esoteric intro (defined by Koller’s arco work), which segues into a lilting, melodic expression of joy. Also, of special note is the deeply moving Ode to Nova Scotia, which invokes ancient spiritual presences and heady remembrances of home. The lovely title track reminds us all of the joy of life and art, the delicious taste of freedom and our deep connection to all that is.

Lesley Mitchell-Clarke

The Alberta Lounge
Deanne Matley; Taurey Butler; Paul Shrofel; Steve Raegele; Morgan Moore; Richard Irwin
Barbette Records BBR224 (deannematley.com)

This is Dianne Matley’s first album since she bared her soul in 2018 on When I Loved. But although that music was born of sadness, we always had a sense that there was much hope in her questing voice. On The Alberta Lounge, she picks up where she left off, with the ebullient lyricism and joyful swing of this repertoire, which is a proverbial dawning of the hat to Oscar Peterson. Matley is an artist of the first order; her silken voice, perfect pitch and gentle vibrato at the top of her range bring a touching vulnerability to the lyrics of the ballads The Land Was White (When Summer Comes), If You Were Here Today and Hymn to Freedom. Meanwhile her control of tone and pitch are on full display on the swinging charts, where she makes adventurous vocal leaps. Everywhere on this album her interpretive responses come in primary colours, tempered by a steady stream of vocal tone which imbues the music with a tricky combination of ethereal and concrete imagery.

The fact that Matley is bilingual enables her to shine on the English fare as well as the junked French version of Lionel Hampton and Jeri Jones’ Je Ne Sais Pas, re-christ-tened here as Merci Pour Ça! Her Portuguese version of Mas Que Nada Nadia also gets a passing grade. Matley saves the best for last: a gloriously spiritual vocal version of Peterson’s Hymn to Freedom.  

Raul da Gama

Black Lives – From Generation to Generation
Various Artists (including Oliver Lake; Marcus Strickland; Jacques Schwarz-Bart et al)
Jammin’colorS (jamminicolors.com)

It is usually difficult to judge albums that contain repertoire by various artists simply because single songs – while representing the best music by a particular artist – may, on the other hand, not suggest consistent artistry on a long-playing album. However, in the case of this Black Lives album, concept trumps compilation not only because the concept of the album is a strong one but because each track is loaded with both artistry and message. Credit must, de rigueur, go to the album’s executive producer Stefany Calembert. She says in her booklet notes that she wanted “… to give black lives a voice and to listen to what they have to say in 2021…” something that stemmed from being “…deeply disturbed by the air of superiority and hypocrisy of white people.” Calembert is white and does herself enormous credit for giving voice to these artists. Moreover, she has a discerning taste for Black music. There is a subliminal suggestion that Black music – born in Africa – has spread and been reimagined forever thanks to the blues, jazz rap and hip-hop music of Black American artists.

Artistic excellence is uniformly evident among the strident voices on both discs. Thus, it would be unfair to single out a select few artists and their songs for appropriate praise. Unrelenting intensity drives every song. The inclusion of African-born artists at the beginning and end of discs one and two was an inspired choice… and an enthralling tone, from end to end.

Raul da Gama

#CubanAmerican
Martin Berjeano
Figgland Records FR-003 (martinbejerano.com)

CubanAmerican is how I would describe many aspects of Miami, and South Florida in general. A true melting pot deeply influenced by Cuban culture, due to Florida’s proximity to the island and the waves of immigration that have occurred from the 1980s onwards. Pianist Martin Bejerano has been a staple on the Miami music scene for decades now – born and raised in the Magic City – possessing an impressive résumé from a career that has taken him across the US and abroad.

Bejerano’s fourth album #CubanAmerican is an eclectic yet unified collection of compositions and sounds. I was shocked to read that the veteran musician “insists he is not a great Latin piano player.” But this statement may come from a combo of modesty and a desire for authenticity. Jazz and improvised music tend to be broad umbrella terms, and much of the “Latin jazz” one hears on the radio would sound foreign to someone who inhabits the lands this music borrows rhythmic content from. After listening to #CubanAmerican, it seems Bejerano has chosen a very wise path by collecting ample influences and creating something original. The results are exciting!

The group performs Cuban rhythmic material at a level that is surgically accurate, without losing their sense of heart or vulnerability. Improvised solos are all on par with the cutting edge of modern jazz music, and the album is recorded beautifully at North Miami’s Criteria Studios. #CubanAmerican offers something for everyone, whether your tastes are rooted in traditional jazz, fusion or Latin-based music.

Sam Dickinson
In Common III
Walter Smith III; Kris Davis; Dave Holland; Terri Lyne Carrington
Whirlwind Recordings WR4783 (waltersmith3.com)

Guitarist Matthew Stevens and saxophonist Walter Smith III have been collaborating for some time now, first documenting themselves on the 2018 release In Common. That recording featured a who’s who rhythm section of New York greats, which became a theme with In Common II and this most recent release In Common III.

Approaching a group this way has many benefits. It showcases Smith and Stevens, since they’re the common denominator on all three albums. It also manages to bring together some less-common pairings of musicians, which keeps the music fresh and creative.

Pianist Kris Davis sounds quite comfortable providing subtle triadic accompaniment on the album’s first full band track, Loping. A testament to her versatility and deliberately creative wisdom, Davis sounds equally at home showing off chops and avant-garde ideas in an energetic solo on Hornets.

The bass and drum positions are occupied by stalwarts Dave Holland and Terri Lyne Carrington. In Common III’s liner notes mention a “formula” of one-page songs, and the way Holland and Carrington are able to approach this music gives the listener no doubts as to why the two are some of the most in-demand accompanists in the improvised music world today.

While the sheet music may consist of one-page songs, the music heard on this album is far from simplistic. Stevens and Smith’s musicality provides the glue to bringing each tune together, and their rhythm section orchestrates the entire album brilliantly. What these 15 tracks have “in common” is ample musicality and professionalism.

Sam Dickinson

At One Time
John Oswald; Henry Kaiser; Paul Plimley
Independent (henrykaiser.bandcamp.com/album/at-one-time)

This recording is an intriguing experiment in free improvisation created under COVID conditions, advancing a radical notion of the score. The music is developed on the work of an absent guest: Cecil Taylor, the late pianist and composer who did as much as anyone to shape free jazz and improvised music over the past 65 years.

Californian guitarist Henry Kaiser, Toronto saxophonist John Oswald and Vancouver vibraphonist (usually pianist) Paul Plimley all worked with Taylor and were closely involved with his methods of building music. Here they have developed the novel idea of each improvising separately with a series of Taylor recordings, heard on headphones, then combining the results. The result is a series of pieces in which we listen to three or four musicians (Scott Amendola plays drums on one track, Tracy Silverman six-string fiddle on another) all responding to the same inflexible duo partner, in effect an insistently composed in which each improviser is impervious to the other “performers” that we are bearing.

The music has a special coherence, based on part in the loyalty to the unheard Taylor, creating empathetic and coherent results. The most remarkable track is also the longest, the 27-minute Oceans Felons Salad with Silverman, the group achieving remarkable levels of illusionary interaction through their collective fidelity to a missing inspiration. The quality of the music, as well as the imagination of its methodology, makes this one of the year’s most significant events in improvised music. Unusual as it may be, it’s somehow a great band.

Stuart Broomer

Moves Eucalyptus
Independent (eucalyptusjazz.bandcamp.com)

There’s a long history of jazz embracing popular culture, another of it pursuing experimentation. Sometimes the impulses converge, creating some very interesting moments. Toronto alto saxophonist/composer Brodie West embraces both traditions with Eucalyptus, an octet with three percussionists that’s devoted to complex moods, 1950s Martin Denny exoticism and occasional free jazz expressionism, suggesting both Don Cherry’s forays into World Music and, more specifically, Sun Ra’s creation of dream states suggesting mid-century lounges suspended in space.

The miracle of Moves, available as LP or download, is that Eucalyptus compresses such dreams into pieces less than six minutes in length. The opening Infinity Bananas has a drum pattern that is at once repeated and internally erratic, holding the angular shards emitted by West and trumpeter Nicole Rampersaud tightly in place. It’s in a Move resembles a film noir nightclub scene, West and Rampersaud weaving wobbly melodic leads through an underbrush of Kurt Newman’s trebly guitar, Ryan Driver’s clavinet and a languid Latin conga drum. Dust In the Wind is very lush, its repeating melodic pattern lapping over itself like waves on a beach. Rose Manor, more languid still and with a burnished brass trumpet solo, ends with a mysterious upward glissando, like an ascending sci-fi spacecraft. The concluding Looke suggests a band lost in time and space at the end of New Year’s festivities, poised between the lachrymose and the parodic.

At times an ironic flirtation with background music, Moves is always more than entertaining, never less than art.

Stuart Broomer

Zurich Concert
Punkt.Vrt.Plastik
Intakt CD 380 (intaktrec.ch/380.htm)

Punkt.Vrt.Plastik consists of three of Europe’s most active and creative free jazz musicians in their mid-to-late 30s; Slovenian pianist Kaja Draksler, Swedish bassist Petter Eldh and German drummer Christian Lillinger. Eldh and Lillinger are active in numerous bands together (Amok Amor, Koma Saxo), each one an intense, complex, highly interactive, high-speed musical affair. Punkt.Vrt.Plastik is the traditional piano trio format placed under that same pressure, and Draksler is an ideal partner, similarly precise, technically brilliant, highly inventive and capable of being witty at the same time. Zurich Concert takes compositions from the group’s two previous studio CDs to the stage, opening them up to further elaboration while maintaining a certain taut discipline.

The set opens and closes with compositions by Lillinger, several of them brief, mechanistic complexes that can suggest drum solos transcribed for trio or fragmented Thelonious Monk compositions, repeated patterns developing more and more internal detail. Traditional melodic figures are common here, from each musician. Body Decline – Natt Raum combines two of Eldh’s compositions, moving from a rubato, trance-like longing to an insistently repeated traditional dance figure that eventually disintegrates. Similarly, Draksler’s Vvivica II develops tremendous tension through repetition, eventually giving rise to explosive free play.

Those repeating patterns arise in each of the members’ compositions, a shared insistence that can assume both manic and comic dimensions, an ongoing examination of the military band, the folk dance, the classical etude. It assures Punkt.Vrt.Plastik’s music a human dimension, making the results more stimulating than exhausting.

Stuart Broomer
Dave Douglas – Secular Psalms
Dave Douglas; Berlinda Deman; Marta Warelis; Frederik Leroux; Tomeka Reid; Lander Gyselinck
Greenleaf Music (greenleafmusic.com)

➤ Trumpeter/composer Dave Douglas’ Secular Psalms is a suite commissioned to commemorate the 600th anniversary of Jan and Hubert van Eyck’s Ghent altarpiece, Adoration of the Mystic Lamb, completed around 1432. Begun in 2018, Douglas’ creation was soon affected by the COVID-19 lockdown, necessitating online recordings including some collective improvising with Douglas, cellist Tomeka Reid and six young European musicians. It’s a multi-faceted work, with composed, improvised and quoted materials, even considering the court of Philip the Good of Burgundy in which the van Eycks worked; other artists present included the composer Guillaume Dufay and the poet Christine de Pisan, and Douglas has gone so far as to echo their works in the suite. Those 15th-century artists aren’t the limits of Douglas’ reach. In one brief lyric, he patches together Marvin Gaye’s phrase “Mercy, Mercy, Me” (twice), “Kyrie Eleison” and Psalm 59’s “but I will sing” with nine words of his own.

Leaving aside questions of taste and appropriateness, it’s an ambitious, insistently egalitarian work, with Douglas creating expressive textures that mix chamber music sonorities with other instrumental voices. The merger includes the Agnus Dei with Douglas’ central, dark-toned trumpet variously counterpointed to ruggedly rhythmic cello, percussively dissonant piano and jarring, fuzz-toned electric guitar. The collective improvisation of Instrumental Angels is accomplished, and there are moments of real synergy created under difficult conditions.

After repeated listening, the work’s structure and contours may still feel unfocused, but one can salute an artist working under challenging circumstances to connect such diverse impulses. It may be the muffled, mutating cries and penetrating lyricism of Douglas’ trumpet that reverberate longest.

Stuart Broomer

Tags
Joane Hétu
Ambiances Magnétiques AM 268 CD (actuellementcd.com)

➤ Tags enters with the tranquil, yet perhaps slightly uneasy droning double stops of bassist Nicolas Caloia and the half-whisper, half-growl of Lori Freedman’s sound poetics. The intro is immediately suggestive of a gradual build, while also operating as a self-contained space between intentions, or even different media for sound-creation. This entire project of Joane Hétu’s “orphaned” compositions (as she puts it in the liner notes), often feels like it operates in various gray zones, or lost in the middle of listener preconceptions and musical conventions. For example, Freedman and Hétu at numerous points are either simultaneously vocalizing while playing, or at least constantly threatening to cross over into the other means of communication at will.

Members of Hétu’s string section commonly opt for a percussive approach to playing arco, which creates a consistent textural effect that beautifully complements the fragmented phrasing of the soloists. These explorations of instrumental function give the music a more nuanced relationship between melodicism, texture and speech than would be otherwise present, creating greater optionality to the realization of Hétu’s compositions. The most impressive aspect of Tags is perhaps how the four tracks feel cut from the same tapestry, despite not having the same personnel, and all of said compositions being unreleased strays. This unexpected uniformity is aided by the prevalent relationship between instrumentation and silence. More specifically, as more instrumentation is added, silent passages are increasingly used as a key aspect of form.

Yoshi Maclear Wall

L’Échelle du Temps
Yves Léveillé
Effendi Records FND165
(propagandedistribution.com/products/yves-leveille-lechelle-du-temps-cd)

➤ Yves Léveillé’s L’Échelle du temps is an exploration of form and interactivity; one that makes patient use of its parts while laying down a profound mosaic of musical lineage. As a writer of chamber music, the emphasis Léveillé gives to the lower voices is particularly notable, allowing for a unifying sense of melodicism throughout the ensemble.

After the piano ostinato is established in the title track, the first statement of the main theme is given to Étienne Lafrance’s upright bass, which creates a mesmerizing effect aided by the fullness of tone. The piece itself takes Léveillé’s simple rhythmic figure and stretches it across eight engaging minutes, with each instrument responding while the others operate in the margins. Repetition is a tool Léveillé uses to great effect compositionally, getting mileage out of a handful of set ideas largely by never allowing the music to stagnate dynamically. Each restatement functions as a recontextualization, perhaps with slightly different notes to complement a new arrangement of moving parts. The passages have incredible cohesion, and no element of the overall product is given precedence over the others. This is in part due to Léveillé’s arranging choices; as well, the mixing has quite the feeling of intimacy to it, with every aspect constantly at the forefront.

While much of L’Échelle du temps sounds hypnotically consonant and interlinked, dissonance is equally embraced. This symmetry finds a perfect equilibrium constantly, but especially on Encodage 2.0.

Yoshi Maclear Wall

Dual Unity
Jay Yoo; Mark Kasakevich
Independent (distrokid.com/hyperfollow/markkasakevichjayyoo/dual-unity)

➤ Sometimes, two musicians sharing a space can be more than enough to convey volumes of information. This is certainly the case with the partnership between Toronto-based guitarist Jay Yoo and pianist Mark Kasakevich, for whom the label “natural pairing” would be a tragic undersell. Six out of nine of these tunes are composed by the pair, and they all put the “tune” in tuneful, as well as the “sing” in singable.

The set was largely inspired by contemporary/Brazilian jazz forms, and it is a testament to Dual Unity’s writing talents that the works of the likes of Jobim and Tania Maria feel perfectly in place. As for the renditions of Insensatez and Quero Não, they are so deeply interpretive that the context of the actual composers feels nearly superfluous. Dual Unity leaves their own imprint on every song they tackle, and this sonic palette owes itself entirely to Yoo and Kasakevich. There are so many moments of sudden unison, where a melodic or harmonic line is relayed by the strength and precision of their tandem. However, perhaps even more compelling are those of the divergent. Having an arrangement of two comping instruments allows for expressive elasticity during the solo sections, freely flowing between monologue and dialogue. Yoo’s interjections, in particular, blend seamlessly into walking basslines that both punctuate and provide support. It would be a disservice to not highlight More to It, a Sistine Chapel of melody and interactivity.

Yoshi Maclear Wall

Concert note: Dual Unity has a release show at Jazz Bistro on May 31, with special guests Jon Chapman on bass and Patrick Smith on saxophone.
**Independent (jordanatalsky.com)**

- **Talsky stumbled upon looping by accident.** She was trying to find a quick way to capture musical ideas and found that doing a recording was faster than notating.
  
  Having a strong voice, a big range and a variety of vocal colours to draw on certainly helps, and Talsky has it all, plus exceptional songwriting skills and an ear for arranging. Collaborating with talented multi-instrumentalist Justin Abedin – here lending a hand with producing, recording and songwriting – also helps. The six songs on the EP are all very accessible in that they follow traditional verse-chorus structures and have relatable themes about self-exploration and relationship struggles. The general musical style is more in the pop vein than Talsky’s earlier jazzier releases and tinges of the blues show up on *Trouble Up* and there’s a soulful edge to *City Lights*. Oh Yeah has hit written all over it.
  
  There are plenty of artists out there using looping and other technologies to one degree or another and, of course, lots of great music is being made by singers recording the old fashioned way, in a studio with a band. I just really appreciate it when artists mix it up a bit, and Zahava is a fine example of that.

**Cathy Riches**

**Concert note:** In case you think looping is only for recording, you can see Talsky perform live on June 4 at the SING! Festival and June 27 at the TD Toronto Jazz Festival.

**Forever Lecuona**

**Luis Mario Ochoa**

**Independent (luismario.com)**

- **Ernesto Lecuona,** known as “the Gershwin of Cuba,” is the subject of the recent release by singer-guitarist Luis Mario Ochoa. Since Lecuona wrote both music and lyrics during his prolific and celebrated career, I suppose he’s both George and Ira Gershwin. Indeed, his most famous work was done in the field of operetta and film (for which he was nominated for an Academy Award), and Ochoa includes several of those tracks, lovingly reproduced here.

  You couldn’t find a more authentic interpreter of this music than Ochoa, who was born and raised in Cuba and studied the great masters during his musical education at the University of Havana. Cuba’s loss was Toronto’s gain when Ochoa emigrated here in 1990 and became a bandleader and regular feature on the club circuit. Ochoa has drawn on the deep Toronto talent pool for the world-class musical support on this album, including gifted multi-instrumentalist Louis Simao on bass, fellow countryman Hilario Duran on piano (no electronic keyboards here!) and Luis Orbegoso and Chendy Leon on percussion.

  With songs dating back to the early 1900s, this is a nostalgic but still relevant collection of classic Cuban sounds. Themes of heartbreak and longing never go out of style, do they? Neither does dancing, and this album will surely inspire you to get on your feet and take a turn around the floor. This may be especially true for non-Spanish speakers, as all the songs are in that language, of course. But everyone speaks the language of uplifting rhythm and Ochoa’s beautiful guitar playing and bright, plaintive singing clearly convey the message.

**JoyRide**

**Colin Maier; Charles Cozens**

**Independent (joyrideconcerts.com)**

- **Oboist Colin Maier, who also plays bass here, and accordionist/pianist Charles Cozens, are the Canadian duo JoyRide.** Their multi-instrumental performances, arrangements and compositional talents are centre stage in hybrid music incorporating many styles including classical, jazz, klezmer, blues and tango in this, their first studio album.

  JoyRide performs the music perfectly. It’s a bonus to hear them also talking in humourous conversations like in the opening Maier/Cozens Spirit of Earth chat about Maier’s on tour encounter with pelicans above Maier’s bass and Cozens’ keyboard backdrop music. The next track, Cozens’ super-fast arrangement of the Dixieland classic, *Tiger Rag*, features alternating virtuosic oboe and accordion lines. Cozens’ COVID-lockdown-inspired upbeat composition, *Isolation Blues*, has Maier on harmonica, Cozens on honky-tonk piano and both on vocals. Relatable COVID-experience lyrics, midstream chatter like “I finally learned how to use a vacuum,” and colourful piano and harmonica solos make this my nomination for COVID theme song.

  Music only in Cozens’ J.S. Bach arrangement named *Air on a Blue String* as string members from Burlington’s New Millennium Orchestra join in a very classical start with its famous opening theme played true to style by Maier’s oboe until Cozens’ gradual piano change to jazzy style eventually gives way to a more classical ringing note strings closing. Time to dance in Cozens’ *Tango de la Noche* with his bouncy tango nuevo accordion lines, his upfront piano grooves, Maier’s bass and oboe lines, and strings. From serious to hilarious, JoyRide’s release should lift all music lovers’ spirits to make life fun again!

**Tina Kilk**
Remains of the Day
Vlada Mars
Independent (vladamars.com)

There are some albums that go straight for the heart of the listener and stay there for a while. Remains of the Day is certainly such an album. Written for solo piano, this music is pure poetry, spoken from the heart with a genuine sense of purpose.

Vlada Mars, Serbian-Canadian composer and pianist based in Vancouver, has seven albums under her belt but this one definitely stands out. Although dedicated to all matriarchs of the world, Remains of the Day is an ode to one woman – Mars’ mother. Composed over the period of two years and paralleling the last few months of her mother’s life, her subsequent death and Vlada’s own grieving, this album is so personal that the listener can’t help but feel the emotions expressed as part of ourselves.

Mars presents a unique compositional voice. Genre crossing and embracing the minor keys, her music is haunting, nostalgic, intimate. There are no big statements here but rather everything is expressed in understated, meaningful gestures that have beauty in their core. Still, there is an unmistakable passion, especially in the juxtaposition of the driving rhythms underneath tender voices. Mars is a master of rubato phrases, which adds to her flair for sentimental melodies. Perhaps the meaning of Saudade, one of 11 compositions on the album, shows the nature of her music: the best – a melancholy of longing for something or someone that is no longer here. Note: this album is not available for streaming. One can purchase it from Vlada’s website as a CD or download.

Ivana Popovic
De La Cour de Louis XIV à Shippagan – Chants traditionnels acadiens et airs de cour du XVIIesiècle
Suzie Leblanc; Marie Nadeau-Tremblay; Vincent Lauzer; Sylvain Bergeron
ATMA ACD2 2837 (atmaclassique.com/en)

Louis XIV made his France a hub for culture which attracted composers such as Michel Lambert and Robert de Visée. French settlers in what is now Eastern Canada – for instance in Shippagan, an overwhelmingly French-speaking town in northeastern New Brunswick – brought music from France. The contents of this CD reflect a selection of these treasures performed by some of ATMA Classique’s most talented artists. It does not take long for recorder player Vincent Lauzer to make his presence felt; with his trilled notes he admirably captures the atmosphere of Pourquoi doux rossignol?

Then there is the aunting quality of Rossignollet sauvage, with its theme of a finished love affair (il faut se dêlasser, we must move on). Listen to the combination of soprano Suzie LeBlanc (accompanying herself on dulcimer!) and the instrumentalists as they interpret the lines of this traditional song.

The instrumental tracks should not be disregarded. De Visée’s Prélude, sarabande et gigue, played with dignity on archlute by Sylvain Bergeron, is very typical of exactly the contemporary lute music Louis XIV encouraged with his cultural offensive.

Overall perhaps, and despite the courtly – and supposedly superior – origin of many of these tracks, it is the traditional pieces that are the most effective. Le berger features LeBlanc declaring her love for her shepherd in the yearning manner reminiscent of bygone troubadours. A CD with a new angle on musical history – and well worth of attention.

Michael Schwartz
Supra
Iberi Choir
Naxos World NNW76162-2 (naxosdirect.com/search/nnw76162-2)

Buba Murgulia, leader of the Georgian male-voice choir Iberi, is described in the Supra liner notes as “growing up surrounded by singing,” like many Georgians. Unlike most however, he formed a choir with other passionate countrymen. They’ve taken Georgian song to international audiences since 2012, touring Europe, USA, Asia and Australia.

Recognizing the significance of Georgian vocal polyphony, in 2008 it was inscribed on UNESCO’s List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Iberi’s broad repertoire includes a variety of regional Georgian styles, drawing on the rich history of Georgian polyphonic song.

Simplifying to great degree, Georgian choral singing most often has three voices. And regional genres range from soft, moving liturgical songs, lullabies and guitar-accompanied urban songs, to loud and rugged songs meant for work, recounting history – and very importantly, for feasting.

The word supra is commonly translated as “feast.” Integral to Georgian society, this ancient, frequently multi-day tradition, features wine, food, singing and ritualized toasting which reaffirms the essential values of life, the importance of the ancestors and the motherland.

Iberi’s new album Supra is a selection of 13 songs that you might well hear at such a celebration. I was stirred by first songs like Mravaltzhamenti (May You Live Long), soothed by the medieval Georgian hymn Shen Khar Venakhi (Thou Art a Vineyard) and charmed by the urban love song Mkholod Shen Erts. My only regret? I didn’t have a bottle of Georgian wine at hand to join in the supra.

Andrew Timar
Set the Record
Horojo Trio
Stony Plain SPCD 1446 (stonyplainrecords.com)

This recording roars to life right out of the gate with the rollicking, bluesy song: Man of Steel. This music instantly tells you that Horojo Trio has an instinctive feel for the musical tension of the blues line; they infuse and temper the narrative of each song with elemental despair and the soaring exhilaration of hopefulness.

In terms of wail and sinewy tone, Jeff Rogers seems cut from the same cloth as musicians like Greg Allman. His evocative vocals also profit from the gutsy guitar lines of JW-Jones. A unique tension between the harmonically loaded melody and the astonishing fireworks of Rogers’ piano collides with Jones’ guitar. Meanwhile Jamie Holmes unleashes the rolling thunder of his drumming that propels each song with visceral energy. Together the three artists create music that has an emotional power which is truly affecting. Songs such as Man of Steel and A Little Goes a Long Way are fiercely driven and typical of this wonderfully stormy repertoire. The piece Stay Crazy is nuanced and exquisitely soulful.

The music is beautifully written, which must certainly make it easier to sing and play. All three members of the trio come across as rugged musical adventurers and it is this sort of abandon that makes for the unique and vivid nature of the music – appropriately raw, yet never strident; this makes the music of Set The Record not to be missed.

Raul da Gama
New Dreams, Old Stories
Way North
Roots2Boot Recordings R2B22-01 (waynorthband.com)

New Dreams, Old Stories is the third album from Way North, a group founded in Brooklyn with three Canadians (Rebecca Hennessy, trumpet; Petr Cancura, tenor saxophone and Michael Herring, bass) and their American drummer, Richie Barshay.
Ten of the 12 pieces are originals by Hennessy, Cancura and Herring while Barshay provides two arrangements. All the tunes are lively and melodic and infused with the energy of good friends making music together.

The opener, Play, is an up-tempo song they use to open their concerts. I'm Here to Stay is an off-kilter blues with a stuttering melody. Cancura’s tenor solo is funny, funny and occasionally aggressive while Hennessy’s trumpet solo is contrastingly melodic, quoting from the song’s theme and infusing other snippets as it builds. Herring’s If Charlie Haden couldn’t write a song to bring world peace, what hope is there for me? has a mournful Mingus quality, with its lengthy melody played by the trumpet and saxophone, and includes an intriguing bass solo.

New Dreams, Old Stories is an album full of catchy songs that reveal more complexity with repeated listening. The solos are varied and intriguing and the rhythm work by Herring and Barshay is both solid and inventive.

Ted Parkinson

**Arcomusical**

**Emigre and Exile Panoramic Recordings PAN25 (arcomusical.com)**


All performers and compositions are perfect. I am so pleasantly surprised how much I enjoy these enlightening berimbau musical sounds!

Tiina Kilik

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**Something in the Air**

**It’s All About the Bass ... in Duo Configurations**

KEN WAXMAN

Despite its infrequent celebration in a few pop songs and prominence as a funk band groove maker, the double bass in both acoustic and electronic configurations doesn’t get much respect. Usually relegated to brief solos, its movement to the forefront has only been accepted and confirmed with the loosening of rules in creative music. Also, because free music has no instrumental hierarchy, the shibboleth as to which instruments constitute a duo is jettisoned, as the following bass-affiliated sessions demonstrate.

Working up from the expected lower parts of the scale on *Conduits (Relative Pitch Records RPR 1135 relativepitchrecords.com)* are baritone saxophonist Cath Roberts and double bassist Olie Brice from the United Kingdom. Although capable of projecting the subterranean textures associated with their instruments as they do at times during the three extended tracks here, wide-ranging timbral preference is also on tap. Screechy timbres, sputterfluctuation, tongue slapping, reed bites and thick vibrations from the saxophonist are complemented, confronted or stabilized by the bassist playing arco or pizzicato. Peering is the most realized instance of this. Opening with Roberts propelling harsh shakes down the scale to wallowing lows, Brice’s arco concordance switches to harsh col legno slaps as a sweeping response to her sudden leaps to altissimo peeping. Additional reed snarls and snorts are shaped with spiccato string pressure, culminating in responsive duo sequences as the finale. Brice’s echoing string plucks, alternating with arco arides, are more prominent elsewhere. Yet whether the sequences evolve lenito or presto, high-pitched or low, with multiphonics or in carefully thought-out single notes, warm bass strums confirm the partnership and each tune’s linear movement. Although it isn’t apparent, because of COVID restrictions, the disc was created during one session in real time over the Internet. Despite being confined in different places, each player responds adroitly to the other’s improvisations.

A variation of that inventive COVID-created situation with a more common bass duo configuration is *Thread of Light (Fundacja Shuchaj FSR 02/2022 firecords.net)*. Pianist Satoko Fujii recorded melodies and improvisations at home in Kobe then forwarded ten sound files to bassist Joe Fonda in New York. After studying them during several weeks of careful listening, Fonda ingeniously improvised the bass parts. Rather than decoration however, they come across as unified and purposeful, like a carefully conceived addition to an already existing edifice. If you didn’t know the scenario, there are tracks which suggest Fujii is following Fonda’s lead. This occurs on tunes such as *My Song* and the concluding *Between Blue Sky and Cold Water*. The former is introduced by bass reverberations that echo down the scale and end with distinct string thumps as distant tones are shaken from the piano’s sound board. Fujii’s piano-key stopping and string ruffles evolve beneath the bassist’s elaboration of a straight-ahead melody on the final track, culminating in a Romantic-styled duet with guitar-like strokes from Fonda and keyboard dusting from Fujii. When she moves to the bass cleft the connection is cemented. Playing flute on *Wind Sound*, Fonda again states the theme, while his double-tongued arborescent leap into the pianist’s high-pitched soundboard vibrations. *Finale* is a dual atmospheric drone. All through the disc the two project faultless dialogues, with lightning quick interaction as if they were playing side by side. Fujii’s hesitant comping or
swirling glissandi bring forth the appropriate plucks and strokes from Fonda’s string set, whether culminating in processional near-stasis or sparkling motif jumps. So close is their processed interaction that it’s never clear whether the string echoes which begin the lengthy Reflection are from bass or piano. Fonda’s dark-power plucks and Fuji’s keyboard clicks make identities clearer during subsequent horizontal variations on the theme until woody piano pressure and arco bass buzzes bring the two together again.

Although also created during a COVID lockdown, Side Effects (Nische NIS 221 blindman.bandcamp.com/album/side-effects) was recorded in a Copenhagen studio by Blind Man’s Band’s members electric bassist Claus Poulsen and pianist Christian Rønn both on site. Committed to sound turbulence as well as spatial improvisations, many of the 11 brief tracks resemble a traffic jam during rush hour, with droning engine-like conveyance from Poulsen while Rønn creates multiple notes into the exposition as he jockeys from one position to another. When the bassist adds Dictaphone crackles and string thumps to What curve?, his vibrations fill the between-the-keys spaces left by the pianist. Not that there are many, since Rønn sounds clank from the keyboard at the same time as he presses the pedals to expose the instrument’s lowest tonal range. Other tracks such as Chocolate machinegun evolve with measured bass rumbles joining widening dynamic patternning from the pianist, while those like Pink fairies use rapid fingering from both players to suggest the bouncy airiness of those mythical creatures. Still, dynamic concordance is the preferred musical output. This ability to project unexpected improvisations, while not letting pressurized counterpoint degenerate into density for its own sake, is demonstrated on the connected Follow and Free fall. Evolving at first lento and warm with the pianist’s open chording emphasizing high- and low-pitched fills, Poulsen’s chunky string slaps on the second selection move from tandem comping to create a secondary theme that develops in double counterpoint complementing the first one.

Moving slightly eastward to Stockholm, The Great Escape Plan (Tilting Converter tiltingconverter.bandcamp.com) offers two matched improvisations by bassist Joe Williamson, a Vancouverite relocated to Sweden, and local drummer Dennis Egberth. Together and singly, both are members of various groups. Bass and drums make up a standard rhythm section for most bands, but on their own Williamson and Egberth transform the configuration so that the emphasis is on narrative and reaction to reductionist sounds, not cadences. As bass string thrusts and swells and percussion clanks and strokes personify the program, both players convey dissonant and melodic concepts, rather than concentrated pulses. Often there’s role reversal as when the bassist’s col legno string crashes are more percussive than the drummer’s slim paradiddles. Throughout both tracks a thin squeezed tone is frequently upfront. But whether it results from Egberth’s rapid scratch across a cymbal or Williamson using his bow to lace the strings at the bass’ highest point is never made clear. On the concluding Plan B – the first track is also prosaically titled Plan A – as interaction becomes more intense as the tempo shifts from andante to presto, the bass part becomes a multi-string drone and drum-top claps turn to an unvarying shuffle. Attaining a variant of the phrase that began the disc, the two typify bass-drum timbral extensions and rhythmic consistency at the same time.

A modification of this configuration is expressed on Murs Absurdes (Ayler AylerCD-172 ayler.com), by the French duo Derviche. But with Eric Brochard pushing his electric bass parts more aggressively than other users of the same instrument like Blind Man’s Band’s Poulsen, and Fabrice Favriou pummeling his drum kit, echoes of Black Metal infuse the sound layers which make up the six-track suite. Creating this wall of sound can be sensed as pedal movement slightly alters Brochard’s output. By the penultimate Sequence IX, despite perceived heaviness, the two break up the exposition with more graduated sounds that mix improvisational motifs within the theme based around Favriou’s foot-banging ruffs and rebounds. Interrupting the concluding Sequence X with a space-making buzz, Derviche returns to hearty percussion smacks and rugged string drones at the finale, while referencing improvisational movements.

Despite these sessions’ common denominator of including the double bass in its acoustic or electric form, varied textures and techniques expressed by these inventive players mean that no one duo sounds remotely like another.

A TRULY FINE VINTAGE

The commemorative stamp recently issued by Canada Post is indicative of the cultural, societal, musical and artistic contributions that Salome Bey (1933-2020) made to Canada – and to the entire Globe, for that matter. An American-born, Canadian singer-songwriter and actress, Bey first emerged on the international scene as part of Amba Bey and the Bey Sisters along with her sister Geraldine and brother Andy. With the trio, Bey embarked on a long recording and performing career and soon became known as “Canada’s First Lady of the Blues.” It was 52 years ago that this stunning, eponymous recording was released under the auspices of the Canadian Talent Library. Now in re-release, everyone can finally experience the thrillingly wide range of Bey’s musical and interpretive talent, which embraces material as far flung as Hoagy Carmichael’s Stardust and Gilles Vigneault’s Mon Pays. Also included in the collection is original material from Rick Wilkins and Russ Little.

The ten choice selections include Rick Kardonne’s Hit the Nail Right on the Head, which is a delightful pop/jazz tune, firmly rooted in the early 1970s tradition, replete with a beautiful arrangement involving a complete orchestra. Bey swings, bows and sails throughout this thoroughly delightful number. One of the absolute stunners here is Bey’s intimate rendition of Stardust, enhanced with a sumptuous, string-laden arrangement and gorgeous piano and guitar work. Also, the soulful Underground Railroad Station is a bluesy tribute to the fathers and mothers of abolition, who led so many to freedom in Canada.

Other highlights include the sunny, swinging, upbeat love song, Muy Caliente No! (Love Our Lives Away), the clever, stirring medley of Anthony Newley and Leslie Bricusse’s Once In a Lifetime and Dory Previn’s You’re Gonna Hear from Me. Additionally, Gershwin’s But Not For Me boasts a magnificent guitar accompaniment, and Bey’s voice at her most lyrical, moving and sumptuous.

Lesley Mitchell-Clarke
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