Cancelled/Postponed/TBA

April 2020
The month that would have been
FULL SEASON OF 13 CONCERTS $500, $459.
Other combinations available. Subscription prices include
Handling Charges and HST. All concerts at 8pm
BACH
GOLDBERG
VARIATIONS

Directed by Elisa Citterio

Apr 22–26, 2020
Jeanne Lamon Hall,
Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre

Apr 28, 2020
George Weston Recital Hall,
Meridian Arts Centre

Bach’s timeless keyboard masterpiece arranged for orchestra
by Music Director Elisa Citterio.

NEXT MONTH

A HANDEL CELEBRATION

Directed by Ivars Taurins

May 21–24, 2020
Koerner Hall, TELUS Centre
New Wave Festival
Postponed to 20/21 Season

Tidal Waves
Postponed to 20/21 Season
Guest Artists
VC2 Cello Duo
Michael Bridge Accordion
Keiko Devaux (Canada) Ebb (2018)
Quinn Jacobs (Canada) Action Gallery (2020)*
Julia Meremelstein (Canada) in turn (2017)
Chris Paul Harman (Canada) Suite for Two Cellos (2019)**
Tze Yeung Oh (Norway) Utrolig Varmt Vann ("extremely hot water") (2016)
Edson Zamprah (Brazil) Trazo ("stroke" as in brush stroke) (2014)
Stephanie Orlando (Canada) phases of the moon (2019)

Sonic Waves
Postponed to 20/21 Season
Guest Artists
Eugene Astapov Guest Conductor
Cameron Crozman Cello
John Rea (Canada) Accident (Tombeau de Grisey) (2004)
Misato Mochizuki (Japan) Chimera (2000)
Zibuoklė Martinaitytė (Lithuania) Completely

Embraced by the Beauty of Emptiness (2006)
Jamie Li (Canada) Liquid Luminosity (2020)*
Kaija Saariaho (Finland) Sept Papillons (2000)
Various Composers Mystery Variations (2010)

Electric Waves
Postponed to 20/21 Season
Keynote address by renowned composer, John Rea
Guest Artists
Shannon Mercer Mezzo-soprano
James O’Callaghan Electronics
Jennifer Nichols Choreographer/Dancer
Cameron Crozman Cello
James O’Callaghan (Canada) Not non-other (2020)
Alison Yun-Fei Jiang (Canada) Snow Music (2020)****
Maurizio Azzan (France) Where the here and now of nowhere is (2018)
Christina Volpini (Canada) waves, breaking, reflecting light (2020)***
Eugene Astapov (Canada) A Still Life (2020) for mezzo-soprano and orchestra
(poetry by Russian poet Polina Barskova)

Alex Pauk, Conductor
Eugene Astapov & Alison Yun-Fei Jiang, Guest Conductors

* World Premiere commissioned by Esprit Orchestra
** World Premiere commissioned by Esprit Orchestra with generous support from the Ontario Arts Council
*** World Premiere commissioned by VC2
**** World Premiere: revision/expansion of “Temporal”, originally commissioned by Esprit Orchestra

Season Sponsor
BMO Bank of Montreal

Festival Sponsors
ART MENTOR FOUNDATION LUCERNE

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espiritorchestra.com
ON OUR COVER

We chose the background photo of the Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts in Kingston to represent all venues little and large across our whole region, and because of all the concert halls we know its particular blend of asymmetric wood and subtly shaded forest green seating is a reminder that what we’re dealing with right now affects all of us indoors and out. Our cover art designer, Susan Sinclair says “When David sent me cover text with the heading Cancelled/Postponed/TBA I immediately thought, ‘Oh no, the issue is cancelled!’ On second reading (and double-checking with him) I realized it was just his cover concept for this strange and troubling issue. It’s been a tough few weeks for everyone, but especially for those in the service and performing arts sectors. Thankfully, I have my CDs and my little dog to keep me company. Hopefully May brings better news!”

FEATURES

7 OPENER | When a Virus Goes Viral | DAVID PERLMAN
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10 BITTEN BY THE BOOK BUG | Baritone Brett Polegato | LYDIA PEROVIC

47 MUSICAL LIFE | COVID-19 – Artist & Reader Resources | WHOLENOTE STAFF

69 REARVIEW MIRROR | The End of the CBC ... Again? | ROBERT HARRIS

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### UPCOMING SPECIAL SECTIONS

- **IN MAY 2020 | THE CANARY PAGES** All things choral in southern Ontario.
- **IN SUMMER 2020 (June/July/August) | THE GREEN PAGES** The WholeNote’s Summer Music Guide
At first, about two weeks ago, when the postponements and cancellations of events in March and April and beyond started to trickle in, we thought the best thing to do would be to take them out, as though they had never been planned. But as the trickle turned into a tide, we changed our minds about that. We have an explanation for why, and I’ll get to that. But with “Flattening the Curve” rapidly taking on the weight of an Eleventh Commandment, you will I hope forgive me my mild moment of rebellion in meandering a bit on my way to the point.

Ruth Vellis

I don’t remember when exactly Ruth Vellis’ first phone call to me was, but I can call to mind even now her bright clarity on the phone, every time we spoke thereafter: “Hello, this is Ruth Vellis speaking. I have read your magazine forever. I used to pick it up at St. Stephen-in-the-Fields, right across the road from here, if I got there before they were all gone.”

“Here,” across the road from St. Stephen’s, as she explained, was Kensington Gardens retirement home. “I am 96 and not going to concerts right now, but I still love to read about them, so I can decide which ones I would have chosen to go to. I enjoy doing that.”

From that moment on, without fail, Chris Malcolm our circulation manager made a point of dropping off Ruth Vellis’ personal copy at Kensington Gardens. And every time, over the ensuing years, Ruth would call me (most often, I suspect, at times when she could just leave a message) to say thank you, and the message would be the same: “I am 97, 98, 99, … going to be a hundred soon, I am a hundred and new dates are announced.

Staying in Print, But Not Only in Print

As you know, if you are turning pages as you read this, we are staying in print, but matching the number of copies to the distribution points (many forced to shutter temporarily) still available to us and to you. But we have a vigorous online, e-letter and social media existence as well, and I urge you, if you haven’t already done so, to avail yourself of these. A print publication that lumbers into existence nine times a year is ill-equipped to deal with the ever-changing, fast-moving pace of things, as a resourceful community in danger acts and reacts in the face of this unprecedented challenge, finding hope and beauty in hard times. Cues and clues to this digital realm, for artists and readers alike are dotted throughout this issue. I daresay most of you have time for a more-than-usual amount of reading and re-reading, so please seek them out.

When a Virus Goes Viral

11.30am, Sunday March 22 2020

A magazine in the same spirit. Here are, to the best of our ability, the concerts none of us of us will be going to right now, so that you can enjoy deciding which ones you would have chosen to go to, and so that you can, if you so choose, reach out to the artists and presenters in question to express your sense of connection to them, in whatever way you best can.

It is our hope that for the community that this issue (our 240th in an unbroken chain stretching back to September 1995) will serve a specific purpose – as a record of what the bright normal would have been, and therefore a useful starting point for compiling an inventory of what has been lost in the April that would have been.

Red Tide

As soon as word of cancellations and postponements started trickling in, we implemented a “cancelled/postponed” filter for our online listings. It is important for readers to note that the CANCELLED/POSTPONED notices in the listings in this print issue are just a snapshot – a frozen moment in a fluid situation, reflecting information received by us only up to Friday March 20. Do not assume that because something listed here doesn’t say cancelled that it is happening.

We will continue, to the best of our ability, to keep updating our listings information on a daily basis, including, whenever that may be, the moment when among the “cancelled” and “postponed” notices, we start to see signs that the tide has turned as things are rescheduled and new dates are announced.

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How They So Softly Rest

BRIAN CHANG

There’s never before been a time like this for the arts community. And we’re all in disarray. I’m feeling disconnected from my musical community, the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir and the wider connected cultural family of the Toronto live classical music world. These are people and friends I spend hours with every week, and hundreds of hours over the course of a season. They are faces I see and smile with, they are voices I sing with and feel comforted by. But like many of us across the arts community, we’re all separated from one another and the current season for the choir and most other arts organizations is totally up in the air.

A month before you get the magazine in your hands, writers are usually hard at work combing through listings and reaching out into networks to build and develop stories about what matters to everyday people. More often than not, it isn’t an issue about finding something interesting to write about, but rather, how to focus on only a handful of impacts sweeping our society, and our community’s responses to them, as best we can, in all the media available to us, so that you, our readers, can figure out how best to help, to whatever extent you can.

I discovered researching this piece that Ruth Vellis died on December 11, 2018 at the age of 102. I am certain she would have enjoyed choosing which of the concerts in this issue she would have gone to if she could. As, I am equally sure, will you.

David Perlman can be reached at publisher@thewholenote.com
The true story of an ordinary boy: an oratorio passion honouring Matt’s life, death and legacy

Considering Matthew Shepard
by Craig Hella Johnson

Pax Christi Chorale featuring Megan Miceli & Simone McIntosh, sopranos; Kristzina Szabó, mezzo-soprano; Lawrence Wiliford, tenor; Phillip Addis, baritone; and the Toronto Mozart Players

SUNDAY, APRIL 26, 2020, 3:00 P.M.
George Weston Recital Hall, Meridian Arts Centre (formerly Toronto Centre for the Arts)
5040 Yonge Street
BUY TICKETS ONLINE AT
PAXCHRISTICHORALE.ORG

"Rests and silence are how musicians make music truly magical."

But we won’t get to hear Considering Matthew Shepard this season. And we may not hear any more concerts. In the Mendelssohn Choir, we were preparing an austere Healey Willan piece, written to commemorate service people who died in World War I. How They So Softly Rest. It hums in my head as a memory of the sounds of what would have been the signature performance that the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir is known for, its annual “Sacred Music for a Sacred Space” concert, always performed on Good Friday.

I can’t bring myself to take my sheet music out of my knapsack. Even though I have nowhere to go, it doesn’t seem right to take it and put it away.

All our rehearsal halls and all our concert halls will be dark for the next little bit. And that’s okay. There’s an important adage in performance that goes something like this, “Anyone can make noise and hold notes, but rests and silence are how musicians make music truly magical.” Composers can write the loudest, most powerful, thick, heavily orchestrated chords, but they are often only powerful because of what precedes them or proceeds from them – a rest. And eventually, all music does come to silence. But this isn’t the end.

The spine-tingling moments of anxious waiting between the old 20th-Century Fox fanfare and the Star Wars theme. The silence after the three iconic opening notes of Beethoven’s Fifth. The great silence before the final two “Amens” of Handel’s Messiah. Silence is part of the great music we all love and rests mark so much of what we know in music. The world in isolation is no different. We’re on a grand pause right now. This isn’t the silence at the end of a song, it’s the dramatic silence before something wonderful. We have beautiful sounds ahead of us. We’ll see you back at rehearsal and in concerts soon enough.

Follow Brian on Twitter @bfchang.
Send info/media/tips to choralscene@thewholenote.com.
I had heard through the musician grapevine that baritone Brett Polegato owns a remarkable library, but putting in a request to poke around someone’s house and then write about it is not the easiest of asks. This March, however, after a sudden flurry of cancellations of his Lebanese, Italian and Nova Scotian engagements due to You-Know-What, Polegato found himself spending an unusual amount of time at home and we easily scheduled a get-together. I visited the three-storey row house he shares – or shall we call it his three-storey library – in the Carlton and Church area on one of the last evenings before the city went into a complete lockdown. Like a majority of working artists, he’s been hit hard by the loss of income due to cancellations. But this evening we decide to focus on what brings joy.

We skip the ground floor, which houses the piano, the CD collection in the middle of a major clearing out, and the downstairs books to which we’ll return, and go up to the living room. There are already bookcases here, behind glass doors in cubes on each side of the sofa, and I spot Naomi Alderman’s *Disobedience* in one of those. But that’s just a teaser for the main event upstairs, with the first stop in what looks like a linen closet. Packed with books.

“This is probably one of the oldest signed books that I have.” He pulls out a vintage edition of Philip Pullman’s *Galatea* (1978), which the author refused to re-issue in his later life. I spot an entire section of Ian McEwan and David Mitchell. “I have everything that Ian McEwan ever wrote,” says Polegato; his favourite is an early McEwan, *The Child in Time*. Where to start with David Mitchell, those of us who haven’t? “I’m a fan. Probably *Cloud Atlas*. His other two books are interlinked short stories with characters that appear in *Cloud Atlas*.”

There’s some Peter Carey in the closet too; I spot Sarah Perry’s Gothic *Melmoth*, a Tom McCarthy volume, and …David Duchovny?! “Holy Cow is a novel – *The X-Files* star actually writes novels,” he says when I raise an eyebrow. But then I notice Aleksandar Hemon when another door opens. “I have all of Aleksandar Hemon, and probably all of the André Aciman now.”

We leave the hallway and move on to the room that functions primarily as a library, with bookcases covering every wall. The books here are sizable, and are stunning objects to look at – not regular hard covers but bibliophile editions. A large section of Robertson Davies – “I got this book that he signed and dedicated to painter Max Bates in Victoria, I must have been 23 when I bought it” – and a lot of shelf space for Philip Pullman. “I wanted all the Philip Pullman books signed. This is *His Dark Materials* – these are all North American editions, but I also wanted British editions which cost ridiculous kind of money.” He only buys books in hard cover now. “It started with Pullman, and it spiralled out of control,” he says. “There is all of Michael Cunningham here too.”

Next we move to two cases which house classics in the most beautiful editions available. “These are all Folio edition books,” he says. “I joined the Folio [Society] years ago, when you had to buy four books per year to be a member. What I liked about them is that they were publishing in hard covers what you never find republished anymore.” My eyes are drawn to a luxurious complete Henry James and a towering single-volume *Brothers Karamazov*. “There’s Virgil’s *The Aeneid*, the Homer… all the way to the *Chronicles of Narnia*, all of the Dante...” He pulls out Dante’s *Divine Comedy*: “These Folio books are all hand-sewn; wherever you open them, they lie flat.” Moving on: “This is all of Charles Dickens. All of Thomas Hardy and Jane Austen in hard cover. Those are *Mapp and Lucia*… that’s E.M. Forster.” I spot a stunning complete hand cover set of *In Search of Lost Time*, which he also has, it’ll turn out later, in a hand-friendly quality paperback downstairs on the ground floor shelves. He has yet to read Proust – I urge him to, as he’s one of my favourites – but like a lot of book lovers who read a lot, he collects even more than he can catch up with and enjoys that state. What motivates him to collect? “My goal was that
From a combination of COVID-19, travel restrictions, and precautions, we regret that our final concert of this season on Thursday, April 16th with QUATUOR ÉBÈNE must be cancelled.

thanks patrons for their patience and goodwill, and wishes all music lovers well

Check out our 2020 – 2021 season!
See page 2 for the full season details

For full details, see www.music-toronto.com

some day when I’m retired and have a big library, I could just walk up to the shelves and say, ‘Hmm what do I want to read today?’ And have practically everything, Paradise Lost, or Wings of the Dove, or Roald Dahl complete tales.”

And when a global pandemic strikes and puts a pause on every-thing, what better refuge than a library so well stocked?

How does he decide what to buy? “One of the writers that I love, the Australian Steve Toltz, has a character in A Fraction of the Whole say: ‘All great books are about other books,’ I think that’s true. Often when you read, somebody will mention a book in conversation, or the dust jacket will say this is like X, Y or Z. For example, when I read The Beach by Alex Garland, which was made into a movie with Leonardo Di Caprio, the blurb described it as a combination of Lord of the Flies and The Magus by John Fowles. So after that I read The Magus; and while that was happening, somebody said to me OMG you have to read Fowles’ The Collector, so I read that. I think the same thing happens with movies.”

“My goal was that some day when I’m retired and have a big library, I could just walk up to the shelves and say, ‘Hmm what do I want to read today?”

By now we’ve crossed to the large video collection on the other side of the room –another two standalone cases. Many TV series on BluRay, and a place of prominence for Dr Who, and Martin McDonough’s film In Bruges. And also ... The Seven Year Itch with Marilyn Monroe?

“There was a deal on Amazon for nine Marilyn Monroe films and I got all of them. ... Niagara, Some Like it Hot, Gentlemen Prefer Blondes. One of the films had Montgomery Clift, and so I started buying Montgomery Clift films. I was re-watching Sunset Boulevard and that same year that Gloria Swanson was nominated for an Oscar, Judy Holiday won it for Born Yesterday. So I looked for it and it’s now one of my favourites. Then I started buying Judy Holiday films.”

Are there actors, directors whose aesthetic he prefers or is influ-enced by? “I’m into... economical actors. I wouldn’t say Bette Davis is subtle but she’s economical in the way she uses gestures and looks. I don’t find her hysterical ... even when she’s over the top, she’s efficient.” The stars of old Hollywood had greater presence, and were certainly not chameleonic, the way some of the method actors of today are. Is the old school closer to his tastes? “Hmm... This is what I liked when working with Yannick Nézet-Séguin – and the first thing I did with him was here in Toronto, a Faust production when the Four Seasons Centre opened as the new home for the COC. Yannick really allows the artist to inhabit things in their own style. He provides a comfortable environment for you to shine. I think that’s true for a lot of old directors and conductors, people like James Levine ... you could see that they helped singers. It feels that in contemporary art-making there’s much more control asserted by the director, more direction placed on the artist.”

But should we be nostalgic for an era of megastars who, while they sold a lot of tickets, never particularly bothered to act? Is it bad that we now expect even divos and divas to act – and for opera to be a full theatrical experience? “No, I agree. As an actor I’ve worked with Pierre Audi, with Robert Wilson, James Robinson, Kelly Robinson ... Some have a more realistic approach, some are funnier, some are more surreal. I’m used to all of those styles; it gives me a greater adaptability when it comes to working with a new director.”

Other actors he appreciates are Daniel Day-Lewis (speak of “chameleonic!”), Colin Firth, Julianne Moore (“she’s incredible”). “I love Gene Kelly and admire his ability to be so elegant and masculine
at the same time.” As for directors, a recent big revelation has been Paolo Sorrentino. “Because I was in Rome recently, a friend told me I had to watch La grande bellezza [The Great Beauty] and watched it now twice, it’s staggering. That’s the reason I bought La notte and L’avventura. Sometimes I just respond to visceral cinematic imagery... like Julie Taymor’s Titus Andronicus, Kubrick’s Barry Lyndon. With some films you sometimes think, I don’t know what that is, but it moves me.”

We linger some more in the Folio room while I ask him about poetry. “As I’m getting older, I respond a lot to poetry. I was never a big poetry buff growing up. But Gerard Manley Hopkins has become essential for me – it’s the images that bypass intellect. Cinema does the same thing, sometimes you just see the picture and the emotion registers before the intellect grabs on to it. Same thing with acting. I like directors who pull that out of me. Who stop me from intellectualizing the process.” He goes to theatre a lot, in his home town and whenever abroad, much more than to opera. “I always watch the actors who are not speaking. I want to see how people live on stage. It’s far easier to have the floor.” Is he more a Soulpepper kind of person or the Matthew Jocelyn’s Canadian Stage kind of person? “Maybe a little more Soulpepper. I like to be told a story but it doesn’t have to be in a linear, traditional fashion. It can be Ivo van Hove staging The Damned with video projections, which I saw at the Barbican in London.”

Is he like that as a reader too? Let’s keep the structure of the storytelling and don’t mess too much with it? “David Mitchell for example isn’t traditional storytelling at all,” he says. “And I have to mention Gerard Manley Hopkins again, whom I read over and over... and Thomas Hardy. Edna St. Vincent Millay.”

We have moved to another room, which has its own library and a mountain of books on the floor: the “To-Be-Read” room. I spot Alan Hollinghurst – his own library and a mountain of books on the floor: “I read over and over... and hard at work. I have you read City of Bohane? That’s a good example of the kind of stuff that I like. A bit like James Joyce. Dubliners is one of my favourite books ever.” I notice with delight that he has purchased all three Eimear McBride novels – another Irish writer working in Joycean, modernist tradition – and placed them prominently on their own. Oh and look, I say, there are the Ali Smith’s fast zeitgeist novels, Autumn, Winter and Spring – but he’s moved on to the poetry pile, bringing out Philip Larkin, Billy Collins, John Ashbury. “I’m very eclectic. This woman for example, Frances Hardinge, writes amazing YA fiction. The way she writes is so alive, so unpredictable.” There is a lot of CanLit on his shelves too. “I love Colin McAdam. There are things by Atwood that I like, but I like Lisa Moore even more. A friend of mine, Gil Adamson, is about to publish a new book. I love Joseph Boyden, Lynn Coady... I loved Anne Michaels before the world caught on.”

I ask him about Kazuo Ishiguro, whose books I spot on the lower shelf before we head down the stairs. “Huge Ishiguro fan, especially Never Let Me Go. Richard Powers. Michel Faber. All wonderful.” Is there anything that you never buy and never look for? “I read very little crime fiction,” he says. You don’t need a book to be plot-y? “Not at all. Take for example Dan Chaon, You Remind Me of Me. I cannot tell you the number of people who’ve read it and tell me nothing happened. I tell them, ‘What do you mean nothing happens, you learn all about these people!’ I am more interested in discovering people; while I appreciate storytelling, I don’t need to be told a story the Dan Brown way.”

Before we part ways, I ask him about projects coming up after this season of cancellations is over, if by then it is. A Canadian Art Song Project recording is on the agenda for May, and on June 6 a concert in honour of Randolph Peters’ 60th birthday, with music by John Estacio, Vincent Ho, Bramwell Tovey and Peters himself. On June 14, Off-Centre Music Salon and Petersburg, a song cycle by Georg Sviridov. In the fall, no small feat: the title role in Rossini’s Guillaume Tell with Irish National Opera.

But meantime, at home, the comfort of books – the more books, the better. Lydia Perović is an arts journalist in Toronto. Send her your art-of-song news to artofsong@thewholenote.com.
Beat by Beat | Classical & Beyond

The Cruellest Month
A Portrait of April 2020 as It Might Have Been

PAUL ENNIS

Art of Time Ensemble was to have presented “S’Wonderful,” their Gershwin brothers’ tribute at the beginning of April and “Dance to the Abyss,” with music by Kurt Weill (and lyrics by Bertold Brecht), Schulhoff, Spólniansky et al, early in May, both already cancelled. To ease the pain, artistic director Andrew Burashko has created “The Self-Isolation Playlist” on Soundcloud, inviting everyone to listen, and saying this:

This song list is a desire to share with you some of the music we’ve made over the years - a kind of offering at a time when everything is being taken away. Suddenly, having more time than I know what to do with - trying to distract myself from the fear and madness outside my window. I’ve been digging through recordings of past concerts - some not heard in years, and reflecting on the immense privilege I have had of making music with such remarkable people/musicians. I hope you will enjoy it.

If you’re reading this online, go to: soundcloud.com/user-185129516/sets/the-self-isolation-playlist, where you can hear Art of Time’s take on nine songs by the likes of Charles Aznavour, Jacques Brel, Gilles Vigneault, Charles Trenet and Robert Charlebois.

Canadian superstar Jan Lisiecki was also to appear at the beginning and end of this time period: scheduled to play Beethoven’s Piano Concertos No.3 and No.5 “Emperor” with the TSO in early April; and at the end of the month, with baritone Matthias Goerne, to perform a program of Beethoven songs at Koerner Hall. In November 2014 when Lisiecki and the TSO played Beethoven concertos 3, 4 and 5, the then 19-year-old sat down in the Roy Thomson Hall lobby with composer Gary Kulesha for a brief interview. “My modus operandi is to make the piano sing,” I remember Lisiecki saying. Kulesha wondered how Lisiecki would characterize the three Beethovens. The Third “has a similar ferocity and darkness as the D Minor Mozart K466 which it parallels”; the Fourth “pushes the boundaries... [it] begins from the soul of the piano”; the Fifth “broadens what can be done in a concerto.”

The following summer (2015) at Stratford, I heard Lisiecki and the Annex Quartet perform all five, arranged for piano and string quartet. It was part of an exhaustive learning process leading up to his recording of the concertos with the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields conducted by Tomo Keller. The Academy/Keller/Lisiecki live recording from Konzerthaus Berlin in 2018 is available for viewing on YouTube! It’s some consolation for the cancelled April TSO concerts.

In an interview in July 2019 for retopera.com, Lisiecki was asked about his evolving approach to the Chopin concertos; his response seems to me representative of his approach in general: “My interpretations are fluid, I change them from performance to performance, sometimes consciously, other times subconsciously. This is what makes music live, what makes it real and visceral to the audience.”

Regarding the anticipated recital at Koerner with Goerne, on March 11, Deutsche Grammophon posted on their Facebook page a snippet of a rehearsal in anticipation of the release, on March 20, of Matthias Goerne (baritone) and Jan Lisiecki’s recording of Beethoven songs to coincide with their concerts in Vienna (March 20), Munich (March 22) and Koerner Hall (April 24). A full performance video is coming soon per Facebook, offering an alternative should the April recital not take place.

Gimeno and Wang: April was also set to mark the return of incoming TSO musical director Gustavo Gimeno leading the orchestra in Brahms’ bucolic Symphony No.2, paired on April 8 and 9 with Brahms’ incendiary Piano Concerto No.1 and on April 11 with his uber-Romantic Piano Concerto No.2. In both instances, the soloist is the formidable Yuja Wang. YouTube features her emotions on display in both concerts with the Munich Philharmonic and their regular conductor Valery Gergiev. I was particularly looking forward to Wang’s musical conversation with TSO principal horn, Neil Deland, that begins the second concerto.
Peter Oundjian: Also scheduled for April, Oundjian’s first visit as TSO conductor emeritus, leading the orchestra in Mahler’s transformative Symphony No.5. The work’s breathtaking Adagietto sent Robert F. Kennedy’s funeral service heavenward and three years later immortalized Lucchino Visconti’s celebrated adaptation of Thomas Mann’s novella, Death in Venice, a film that may hit too close to home right now, despite its beauty. Slated to open the program, concert-master Jonathan Crow as soloist in Bruch’s lyrical calling card, his Violin Concerto No.1. Crow’s local musical presence has deepened in the last three years since assuming the artistic directorship of Toronto Summer Music and enriching a time of year that not too long ago was moribund. Speaking of TSM, Crow is scheduled to host a free noon-hour preview of TSM’s 15th anniversary season, at the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre on May 5.

Quatuor Ébène was set to conclude Music Toronto’s current series of downtown concerts on April 16 with performances of Beethoven’s String Quartet Op.18, No.6 and Op.132. The Toronto concert was to follow a world tour with the theme “Beethoven Live Around the World” that has resulted in live recordings of all 16 quartets. The next day, April 17, the ensemble had planned to begin a complete traversal of the quartets in Zankel Hall, NYC. What insights would they have conveyed, what power, what joy? YouTube offers some consolation with their six-year-old video of Op.132 from Festival Wissembourg in Alsace and a three-year-old version of Op.131 also from Wiessembourg. From seven years ago, there’s a spirited NPR spot where each Ébène member says a few words about their favourite quartet before selecting Op.131 as the group’s consensus pick. “It’s so intimate, so beautiful – leading to a heavy metal finale.”

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Emergent and Evolutionary
The Challenge to Let Go

WENDALYN BARTLEY

Self-isolation, social distancing, stay at home, connected isolation, the new normal, flattening the curve – all phrases that are becoming the latest updates to our current vocabulary. But as I along with everyone else take all this in, I am also listening to those who speak about how what’s also emerging are new levels of global co-operation, and that this is a time for societal reset, even a time that offers a choice for humanity to change or die.

In a sense we’ve all known somewhere inside us that this was coming, in some form: living in a culture that was killing off the very planet our lives depend upon was not sustainable. It’s almost as if the Earth is presenting a challenge to us to let go of our old and familiar ways. Now is the time to slow down and listen, and to sense what might be emerging and arising out of the old. When a caterpillar forms a chrysalis around itself, everything that once was disintegrates and turns to goo. The only things left are the imaginal cells that come together to form the new template – the emerging butterfly. This image gives us a model for the evolutionary process we are currently in the midst of.

Although it is early days for this new reality, I found myself looking to the ongoing Emergents Series at the Music Gallery for some hints as to what these emerging changes might forecast for the future of music-making. Flutist Sara Constant (who also does editorial work for the WholeNote website, but has no role in assigning or editing print magazine content such as this) has been the curator of this series since 2018, taking over from Chelsea Shanoff. Even though the April 25 Emergents Series concert, featuring the two string ensembles V aso and unQuartet has been cancelled, this felt like a good time to find out more about her curatorial vision for the series.

Her main goal, she told me in an email exchange, is to support early-career artists working in experimental music. “It’s more than just giving emerging artists an extra gig, though,” she said. “I want to make sure that these shows contribute meaningfully to community-building, equity-building, and long-term opportunity-building for artists in our field. This also includes supporting people to feel empowered to look outside of their genre for new approaches to sound.” This was a major goal for this April 25 show: “to bring together these two incredible experimental string ensembles, one specializing in contemporary chamber music and the other in free improvisation, that both think really deeply about sound and music.”

One of the things that Constant and other emerging artists are starting to dismantle is “the myth in performing arts institutions that opportunities will come to the most talented and most deserving. We are trying to dream up new ways of supporting experimental arts practice. I’m happy to see a community that feels increasingly plural and increasingly caring in its focus.” And since crises tend to amplify inequalities rather than reduce them, now, more than ever, it’s essential to work creatively towards equity-building.
**unQuartet**: After my exchange with Sara Constant, I also had an engaging three-way conversation with two members from unQuartet, violinist Meghan Cheng and cellist Cheryl O. The unQuartet ensemble began in 2017 originally as an improvising string quartet, they explained, but when their violist had to move back to Los Angeles, Nelson Moneo took over the violist role, and they decided to remain as a trio rather than find a new member. (Moneo was self-isolating in a remote region of British Columbia and unable to join us for the chat.).

We began by talking about the impact that social distancing was having on them as performing musicians, beyond the gig cancellations. Cheng began by quoting the phrase, “there’s no art without an audience.” As a performer, she said, “you need someone there to witness and experience everything that a live concert has to offer – the connection and the energy.” Cheng described the group’s approach to improvisation as being very spontaneous. At times they have used graphic and open scores, even played using a painting as inspiration. But generally their improvisations are unplanned, without preset parameters or themes. “Because we are all classically trained and have this classical form ingrained into us, we often have form to our improvisations with different movements and themes that grow throughout the improv.” Cheryl O. picked up on this, speaking about how important live performing is for her own growth and how she is changed by the interaction with her colleagues. “Not having an audience changes how we hear and how we return the energy to each other.” During the rehearsal process, she said, the other group members push her to practise different things in order to be able “to meet them individually. You get qualities from each other that drive me to heights.”

Not being able to be together has heightened their awareness of how much they miss each other. Meghan Cheng, said, going on to muse that this time may even turn out to be a great thing for the arts. “Maybe we will have a new appreciation for coming together and experiencing music and art.” Cheryl O. gave the example of how her own brother was beginning to see the value of the arts in a new way, especially now that it’s all currently gone.

“Tell us what we can do to help,” he offered. “Once this is over I think there will be a treasuring of artistic life,” she said.

As an ensemble, unQuartet takes improvisation very seriously, and as trained musicians their classical technique serves them well. And it’s more than just technique, O. said. “We’re really talking about listening. *Inter*-listening, which you don’t have a lot of opportunities to do when you’re playing someone else’s music, where you’re listening for perfection, entries, blending and colour, but not listening for personalities.” “That’s what I love about this,” she continued.

“There are three generations in the group at different stages of life. It’s amazing to come together with our diversities. We’re not one homogenous personality at all.”

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For their scheduled concert at the Music Gallery on April 25, they were planning to perform an improvisational set along with visuals, and a collaborative set, possibly using an open score, with the Vaso String Quartet (Aysel Taghi-Zada (violin), Hua-Chu Huang (violin), Peter Ayuso (viola), and Indra Yeshe Gailey (cello), a Toronto based ensemble striving for innovative programming that juxtaposes the standard string quartet literature with the equally valuable works of underrepresented composers, and “seeking out working relationships with artists and composers of different mediums to further expand the definition of contemporary music.”

As O. said, as we ended our conversation, performing and improvising gives her and unQuartet “the opportunity to learn patience, grace and compassion,” qualities we are all having to call on right now. “Having creative compassion for each other is what makes us a group,” she says. For now this planned encounter between the two ensembles will have to wait for some socially distant future moment. (And I look forward to being able to tell you when that moment comes.)

Compared to the connection and energy of live performance, waiting for this alienating moment we are living through to run its course is about as exciting as watching grass grow. Perhaps best to think of it instead as new tendrils arising, pointing beyond the immediate crisis towards new values, for the world of musical performance and creative engagement with sound.

**Wendalyn Bartley** is a Toronto-based composer and electro-vocal sound artist. sounddreaming@gmail.com.
Beat by Beat | Music Theatre

Triple Threat, Double Whammy

JENNIFER PARR

What strange days we are living in. As I have been preparing and researching to write this column over the last week or so, the true scope of the COVID-19 pandemic has become increasingly clear. Ontario’s provincial government has declared a state of emergency and theatres of every size have first postponed or cancelled spring performances, then followed that by closing down rehearsals and production altogether for an unspecified length of time, at least until the pandemic should be under control.

For theatre artists this is a double whammy. Not only are our livelihoods suddenly up in the air but our world is abruptly taken away. Even the smallest one-person show is created by a group of people, and one of the great joys of being part of this industry is that of working with other artists onstage, backstage, in preparation and rehearsal; experimenting with words, music, design and movement to craft our storytelling to the best of our abilities, then looking forward to the fulfillment of sharing our creations with a live audience. All of that is now on hold.

Many companies and individuals are looking for ways to move some of our work online at least temporarily, which is wonderful, but it is not and cannot ever be the same as sharing a live theatrical experience.

As fight director for Opera Atelier’s just cancelled production of Handel’s Resurrection, I am in mourning for a show that was just approaching that exciting moment of the rehearsal period when the dancers would have been joining the singers in the studio. My last rehearsal was teaching wonderful actor/singer Carla Huhtanen her portion of the fight choreography as the Archangel. She would have been joined in the last week of March by her nine Warrior Angels, including five of our female dancers wielding swords for the first time. Now all of that wonderful work, that human contact and collaboration, has been put in wraps until the – hoped-for – opportunity comes to bring it back. The same thing is happening to shows around the country and the world.

The chance to be in the audience of other artists’ shows is also something I am going to miss, the longer the need to keep up social distancing continues, particularly given the rich variety of live music theatre I have witnessed over the last month or so. Carly Street’s one-woman tour-de-force performance in Grounded for Theatre Six at Streetcar Crowsnest, refuses to leave my head. Her searingly real yet funny, moving portrayal of a woman pilot pulled against her will into the world of waging war by drone, was a devastating portrait of a buoyant human spirit trying to make sense of the ugliness of an increasingly dystopian modern world. (While not really music theatre, a custom-made mix tape played a critical plot role.) Necessary Angel’s production of David Greig’s two-actor play The Events followed the same theme, with a gay female priest trying to understand the motivation behind a devastating random attack on her choir, backed up by the presence and singing of an actual community choir on stage with her at each performance.

At the other end of the emotional spectrum was the magical experience of feeling inside the creation of George Seurat’s famous painting, A Sunday on the Island of La Grande Jatte, in Eclipse Theatre Company’s large cast musical-event staging of Sondheim and Lapine’s Sunday in the Park with George at the Jam Factory; and the sweet pleasure of a musical evening with Jane Austen, thanks to U of T Opera at the Faculty of Music’s production of Jonathan Dove’s Mansfield Park, directed with a light and clever hand by Tim Albery.
April 2020 was going to be a month notable for Canadian work, with shows again ranging from small cast to large, all promising to grab their audiences with stories that need telling: connected to the past but also important in the present and serving to create a better future. Small consolation, but at least I can honour what they promised but were denied the opportunity to deliver.

**Anandam Dancetheatre**: Phenomenal Toronto-based tap dancer Travis Knights, artistic director of the 2018 Vancouver International Tap Dance Festival, was to star in the one-man-show *Ephemeral Artifacts* for Anandam Dancetheatre Productions at Theatre Passe Muraille. Originally created by director Brandy Leary in 2017, this edition of the show is co-created and choreographed by Leary and Knights together, with the goal of using storytelling, dance and music to explore the intertwined history of tap and jazz, and how both are inextricable from the African American experience, both historical and contemporary. On top of this intriguing premise, this was also going to be a must see for me, having been bowled over by Knights’s wonderful combination of Gene Kelly and Bill “Bojangles” Robinson dance styles in Soulpepper’s *The Promised Land* last summer.

**Native Earth Performing Arts** were going to present the Toronto premiere of celebrated Ojibway playwright Drew Hayden Taylor’s *Sir John A: Acts of a Gentrified Ojibway Rebellion*, described by the *Ottawa Citizen* as “a smart punchy show that’s bolstered by sharp satire, a quirky musical score ... and a refreshing dose of humour.” Main character Bobby Rabbit has some unfinished business with Canada’s first prime minister. When Bobby learns that his grandfather’s medicine bundle lies mouldering in a British museum – another casualty of the residential school system – he enlists his friend Hugh to execute an epic heist and secure the ultimate bargaining chip – the bones of Sir John A. On their way to find the bones, they give a ride to a Kingston girl trying to get home and the road trip becomes a tangle of comedy, history and politics, all leavened by a fun score with lead vocals by Herbie Barnes as Hugh featuring riffs on ‘The Romantics’ *What I Like About You*, ‘Heart’s *Crazy on You*, Alanis Morissette’s *You Oughta Know*, Sinéad O’Connor’s *Nothing Compares 2 U*, and Cheap Tricks’ *I Want You to Want Me*. I was looking forward to this show not only for the combination of what sounded like a fun story peppered with songs and a contemporary political twist, but also because it was to be directed by the founder of Crow’s Theatre, acclaimed Canadian director Jim Millan.

**Leslie Arden**: Third on my list, and with the biggest cast, was Toronto Musical Concerts’ semi-staging of Leslie Arden’s Dora Award-winning large-scale musical *The House of Martin Guerre*. Originally produced by Theatre Plus in 1993, winning three Dora awards, with further award-winning productions following at the Goodman Theatre in Chicago in 1996, and in Toronto again by Canadian Stage in 1997, *Martin Guerre* then seemed to disappear. It started showing up again, however, in 2018 in a concert staging at the Charlottetown Festival, at Theatre Sheridan in a fully student production in April 2019, and just last fall at the Stratford Festival in a concert staging starring Chilina Kennedy. It turns out that the rights had been tied up for the last two decades with American commercial theatre producers but now that they are free again, productions are popping up all over. The timing might be to the benefit of the show, as not only does it have a beautiful score, but the story it tells of a woman at the mercy of her community resonates even more today in the era of #MeToo. Based on a well-known legend from 16th-century France, *The House of Martin Guerre* tells the tale of Bertrande, a young Catholic peasant girl who suffers eight years of abusive marriage to Martin Guerre only to be abandoned by him, left alone with their infant son. Years later, a stranger arrives claiming to be Martin, but completely transformed. Although Bertrande accepts her new loving husband, their happiness is threatened by the jealousy and greed of others. She is ultimately forced to denounce him as an imposter.

Christopher Wilson, the artistic producer of Toronto Musical Concerts (TMC) says that the contemporary relevance of the story was part of the musical’s draw. As he put it “This musical is a fascinating
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explosion of feminism in 16th-century France. It explores the power of the female voice struggling to exert itself amidst traditional conventions and societal pressures. The female protagonist’s ultimate desire is to achieve a universal goal—her chosen happiness—despite the collective forces working against her.” As well as this political and social relevance, something TMC usually tries to reference in its programming choices, they were delighted to be programming a Canadian mega-musical for the first time.

All of these productions have now unfortunately, but necessarily, been postponed or cancelled, but my hope is that they will find places in the next season, once theatre going is possible once again.

In the meantime, one source I am following for a constantly updated listing of music theatre performances to be found online, is playwright Nick Green’s Social Distancing Festival: socialdistancingfestival.com.

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.

Sir John A: Acts of a Gentrified Ojibway Rebellion

Leslie Arden

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Music in Times of Trouble

MATTHEW WHITFIELD

The world is not the same as it was before. Over the past few weeks we have been inundated with news and information about self-quarantines, social isolation, and a virus that has the potential to take thousands, if not millions, of lives. With national economies grinding to a halt and governments injecting billions of dollars into them, borders closing, and the word war being used more and more frequently, the impact this episode will have on the future is inestimable.

While this global pandemic affects every aspect and component of everyday life, the arts and culture sector has received a particularly severe blow. With concerts cancelled around the world and artists being released from contracts and freelance arrangements, performers are struggling to determine how to manage their lives and careers, and to plan for a highly unpredictable future. To put it mildly, the performing arts is not, by and large, a work-from-home sector; it is the gathering of people to share in a communal experience that lies at the heart of what it means to be a musician, whether in a church or concert hall, and the loss of this fundamental participatory component has rendered the entire cultural sector inert. While broadcasts and livestreams can replicate the concert experience to an extent, the inherently human facet of congregational listening (in both secular and sacred contexts) is left wanting. In short, it simply feels different when it’s not in person.

This is not, however, the first time that global events have impacted the arts in a wide-scale way, threatening to decimate an already precarious industry. Over the last five centuries there have been numerous instances in which war and disease have affected and influenced the process and product produced by composers and performers, and we learn that severe societal unrest has the power to evoke significant artistic changes. Consider, for example, the rise of the avant-garde after the World Wars, where composers such as Boulez, Stockhausen, Schnittke, Ligeti, Nono, Berio and Penderecki produced radical and often grotesque musical representations of the terrors of war. Little consolation, but it may be that such radical advancements in the musical lexicon might never have resulted if not for the immense anguish and savagery of war?

And here are some other examples.

The Thirty Years’ War

The Thirty Years’ War was a tri-fold disaster which decimated Germanic Europe between 1618 and 1648, a combination of war, famine, and disease that resulted in 8,000,000 fatalities, making it one of the most destructive conflicts in history. Tension between Catholics and Protestants created an unstable social environment which, combined with the political unrest of the Holy Roman Empire, resulted in a myriad of responses from composers and performers, including Heinrich Schütz and Michael Praetorius.

As Kapellmeister to the Elector of Saxony, Schütz had to provide music not only for standard liturgical ceremonies but also for special occasions, which was complicated by reduced performing forces as the war progressed. In fact, members of his church ensemble dropped one by one, such that from 1632 until 1639 the number of members diminished by 29 people. A 1625 letter from Schütz to Johann Georg I, the Elector of Saxony, complained that he and his ensemble had not been paid in two years, a reflection of the economic hardships faced by both the cities and courts as the war’s devastation increased. Although Schütz remained in Dresden throughout the war, other composers were forced to flee the violence and disease or lost their positions as courts were eliminated or relocated, changing Germany’s artistic topography in previously unthinkable ways.

Despite the terrors of war and disease and the destruction of his nation, Schütz nonetheless produced some of the most stunning and profound works of his era. From Gabrieli-inspired choral concertos to oratorios and passions, Schütz’s innovative and flexible approach to composition enabled him to adapt to the ever-changing circumstances presented by the Thirty Years’ War. As the desolation in Dresden increased, Schütz’s compositions were scored for fewer instruments and for more voices, but remained at a level suitable for the Dresden court, with or without a war raging outside their walls; and at levels suitable for us today, who are able to hear Schütz’s works in concerts throughout the year.

Michael Praetorius was another Dresden-based composer who remained in his position despite the effects of war. One of the most versatile composers of his age, Praetorius had a particularly significant impact in the development of musical forms based on Protestant hymns, many of which reflect an effort to improve the relationship between Protestants and Catholics. Praetorius was a prolific composer and wrote works of a consistently high quality; the nine parts of his Musae Sioniae and the 1611 published collections of his liturgical music (comprising masses, hymns, magnificats) follow the German Protestant chorale style and established him as a writer of religious works. In 1613 Praetorius accepted the position of court composer at Dresden, where he was responsible for producing festive music, and where he remained until his death in 1621.

Although a less universally known composer than Schütz, Praetorius’s works are still found on concert programs today. His organ music appears frequently on recital programs and his harmonization of Es ist ein Ros entsprungen is heard every December across the globe. Both Praetorius and Schütz are important historical figures in the concert hall since 2004.
who demonstrate that, even though (or perhaps because) external circumstances are challenging and dangerous, it is nonetheless possible to produce works of striking beauty and impact that continue to reach audiences today.

**The Spanish Flu**

While the current global pandemic is all too frequently compared with the Spanish Flu outbreak of 1918, one of the deadliest pandemics in history, there are a few significant differences. Between the lack of medical knowledge regarding viruses, the inability to isolate and create a vaccine, and the close quarters and troop movements of World War I, there was a perfect storm for the transmission of the virus, which devastated communities worldwide on an unimaginable scale.

Even in the midst of such loss, composers and performers continued to create and interpret stunning and striking works. Elgar’s *Cello Concerto* is a fine example, at once contemplative and elegiac, even mournful, with simple wisdom contained therein. Vaughan Williams’ *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* continues this trend of solemnity, using the phrygian mode to great effect, while Satie’s *Nocturnes* and Sibelius’s *Symphony No. 5* bring a lightness and, in the case of Sibelius, triumph, to the era’s tumultuousness. In these works we see a brief glimpse over the composers’ shoulders, looking back at the musical styles of past eras; Sibelius, for example, wrote an explicitly neo-Romantic symphony, perhaps due in part to his longing for the relative peacefulness of the late-19th century, while Vaughan Williams travels back to the Tudor era with his Tallis-based fantasy.

Whether through disease, famine, or battle, a brief review of history reveals that humanity has struggled with, and overcome, great tragedies and adversities. The important point to take away from this discussion is the fact that, in every single case, music continued to be made despite external pressures that threatened to collapse its creators. Although the current pandemic situation is unsettling and the concert halls are closed to live audiences, we should consider ourselves fortunate to have such a wealth of online resources to draw from as we seek to cultivate our passion for art and support the artists themselves.

While this point will undoubtedly be repeated multiple times in this issue, I encourage you to continue to support Toronto’s artistic institutions. If a concert is cancelled, consider donating your ticket back to the host organization or credit your account, rather than demanding a refund. This will allow the orchestra, choir, or presenter to use your ticket fee to sustain their behind-the-scenes operations, especially at a time of year when funds run low in anticipation of subscription renewals. Tune into webcasts and digital concert halls and, most importantly, let the artists know that they are respected and appreciated as they encounter a period of personal and professional uncertainty unlike any other in recent history.

As we continue through this most challenging time, feel free to get in touch at earlymusic@thewholenote.com. Until next month, be well and stay healthy.

Matthew Whitfield is a Toronto-based harpsichordist and organist.
Notes Toward a Definition of Jazz

Part Two: Swing

STEVE WALLACE

In Part One of this article, last issue, I offered this working definition of jazz: jazz is a music of collective improvisation which swings, and which places a premium on individual sonic expressivity. I went on to discuss the collective improvisation and individual sonic expressivity aspects, but ran out of space before getting to the business of swing and why it matters, which I’ll take up here. But before getting to that... perhaps not surprisingly, given the music’s moving-target nature, I’ve already expanded the definition: jazz is a music of collective improvisation which swings, and which places a premium on blues tonality and individual sonic and rhythmic expressivity.

Apologies for complicating things, but jazz is complex, and after all, the first part of the title is “Notes Toward...”. In all honesty, I may never arrive at a definition of jazz which is satisfactory – indeed, that may be impossible – but I’m trying to assemble the essential elements of the music and what makes it distinct from others and it occurred to me that the individual freedom essential to jazz extends not just to a player’s personal sound, but also to matters of rhythm and phrasing; Coleman Hawkins did not phrase eighth notes like Lester Young did and Wayne Shorter doesn’t phrase eighth notes like Young did, and so on down the line. And no two drummers play the iconic skip-beat on the ride cymbal the same way – not quite.

As to the use of blues tonality, I think we can all agree that it has been prevalent in jazz throughout its history. Not just on the standard 12-bar blues form, or in the obvious use of blue notes, but as a pervasive stylistic influence informing matters such as pitch, vocalism, sound, phrasing, spacing, vibrato (or the lack thereof) and above all, emotion; the feeling in jazz. To be sure, this blues influence is not exclusive to jazz; it can be heard in country and folk music, and in rock ‘n’ roll, but in jazz it’s much more central, more varied and subtle, even to the point of abstraction. Every time you hear a great jazz player – from Louis Armstrong to Ornette Coleman and beyond – put a buzz or a smear or a bend on a note, or play what seems like a wrong note, you’re hearing the blues. Lester Young could play the most obvious note – the tonic of a chord – and invest it with an extraordinary feeling; the feeling of the blues.

But what makes this so interesting is that jazz players apply it to all manner of material. Think Charlie Parker, for example. As Roy Haynes once said, “When Charlie Parker plays Laura, he’s playing the Laura blues.” That is to say that Bird superimposed blues feeling on everything he played, no matter how complex or seemingly far-removed from the blues. Miles Davis also did this all the time and his playing on Concierto de Aranjuez is a classic illustration; only someone with a deep and intrinsic blues sense could play a written melody with that kind of feeling. And then there’s what he does later while improvising; it’s blues from start to finish. And while the blues derives from black musical culture, scores of white players used real blues feeling in their playing too: Bix Beiderbecke, Jack Teagarden, Pee Wee Russell, Stan Getz, Zoot Sims, Lee Konitz, Bill Evans, Jim Hall, Keith Jarrett and on and on. This has also extended well beyond the borders of America, its place of origin. Listen to Jan Garbarek’s sound, or Kenny Wheeler’s, or Barney Wilen’s, and tell me you don’t hear blues. As the name of one of Manny Albam’s records proclaims, the blues is everybody’s business; it’s not absolutely ubiquitous in jazz, but it’s certainly never very far away, either.

So, on to the “which swings” part of my definition, which I fear might be contentious to some who feel that swing in jazz is old hat, or even irrelevant today. Perhaps part of the problem is the term “swing” itself, which has become almost a dirty word with all kinds of connotations and associations some find confusing or too wrapped up with the distant past; the Swing Era, swing bands, swing dancing, a kind of feel-good, beer-barrel approach to jazz, not to mention the sexual partner-swapping sense of it. But jazz has always had a unique rhythmic vocabulary, a pulsing drive, which has separated it from other kinds of music, and ever since Louis Armstrong arrived, this has been known as swing, or swinging. I don’t see it as feasible to dispense with a term so entrenched in usage, one so tied up with jazz history. We could use eggheaded terms like “rhythmic elasticity” or “undulating momentum” or “syncopated forward motion” but why bother when swing captures all of these qualities in one simple (though devilishly hard-to-define) word.

Once Louis Armstrong taught the world how to swing, as the phrase goes, jazz was set on a course unlike that of any other music.

What is swing, exactly? I don’t know that it can be defined any more than time can, or life, for that matter. I know it when I hear it, and like to think that I can do it, and also know when it’s not happening. It’s a special rhythmic feeling that is particular to jazz and has continued to evolve just as the music has. It has to do with elasticity, with tension and release, with not assigning strict or straight values to notes, yet it requires a split-second accuracy of timing. It takes place on many levels which interact in a jazz band – as in the melodic phrasing of a soloist against (or with) the united groove of a rhythm section, or even irrelevant today. Perhaps part of the problem is the term “swing” might be contentious to some who feel that swing in jazz is old hat, or very far away, either.

I was thinking about the relationship of swing and individual freedom essential to jazz extends not just to a player’s personal sound, but also to matters of rhythm and phrasing; Coleman Hawkins did not phrase eighth notes like Lester Young did and Wayne Shorter doesn’t phrase eighth notes like Young did, and so on down the line. And no two drummers play the iconic skip-beat on the ride cymbal the same way – not quite.

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There are those who feel swing is no longer relevant today because jazz has taken on so many other rhythmic concepts and influences in recent times: the bossa nova and other Latin rhythms, the straight-eights of rock, odd-meters, and so on. This is true to an extent: none of these idioms swing in the Count Basie or Louis Armstrong sense. But part of the history of jazz is following how swinging has evolved. Each school or style of jazz, from New Orleans to the Big Bands to bebop and cool and post-bop and beyond has swung in its own way. I would argue that if you listen closely to jazz musicians today playing a straight-eights tune or in odd meter, there’s still some swinging going on in their phrasing, in the rhythmic freedom they achieve. It’s not just a matter of the drummer going “ding-ding-a-ding” or the bassist laying down a walking 4/4; the elasticity of swing can be, and is being, applied to these newer concepts. A jazz-informed drummer will not play a simple rock beat the way a rock drummer would: it’s a subtle thing, but it will be lighter, more undulating, the corners will be rounded off a bit. And the same goes for soloists improvising in these seemingly straighter rhythmic styles: their eighth notes are generally not even, if you listen closely.

It’s impossible to imagine the history of jazz and its evolution without swing, it’s as much what separates the music from others as any single element. Once Louis Armstrong taught the world how to swing, as the phrase goes, jazz was set on a course unlike that of any other music. People could feel the difference, not just in their minds, but in their feet. Just as fat is what makes food taste good, swing is what makes jazz feel good; it adds a visceral layer to the music. And although there are some who lament that swinging is dead, I would argue that it lives on in new ways and I’m hearing a lot of younger players coming to grips with it. It is to me the hardest thing to do because it requires both discipline and a commitment to spontaneity. And it’s a curious thing, but those I hear pooh-pooing swing as old-fashioned never want to be told that they don’t swing. It’s still a mortal insult, just as the ultimate compliment a jazz band can hear is “Man, you cats be swingin’!”

A last word about why swing matters. A jazz group, even a large one, can’t really be expected to rival a full symphony orchestra in terms of range of colours, dynamics, volume, etc. But a jazz band, even a trio, can do something an orchestra can never do: swing and improvise, while making music out of thin air. But improvising has no particular meaning or value in and of itself if it takes place in a vacuum. It must have context and there must be some resistance to prove its mettle. And this resistance comes in the crucible of heat which swinging provides. It’s relatively easy to improvise without anything getting in one’s way, but swinging improvisation is what makes jazz so compelling.

For obvious reasons in these far from normal times, I’m foregoing the normal live music Quick Picks usually appended here. Instead, for solace and to pass the time, I suggest you go find something on Youtube by each of the 21 musicians named in paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 of this essay, swingers all. You’ll know “it” when you hear it.

I sincerely wish that all WholeNote readers, my fellow musicians among you, stay safe and well during this pandemic crisis.

Toronto bassist Steve Wallace writes a blog called “Steve Wallace jazz, baseball, life and other ephemera” which can be accessed at Wallace-bass.com. Aside from the topics mentioned, he sometimes writes about movies and food.
**Beat by Beat | Bandstand**

**Didgeridoo Meets Theremin**

**While We Wait and See**

**JACK MACQUARRIE**

Last month’s column opened with the following cautionary note: “Beware the Ides of March. Thus spoke the soothsayer as he warned Julius Caesar of his impending doom. As we know from history, the soothsayer was correct in his warning to Caesar.” With this quote, I was merely indicating that we had no idea what might be happening in the band world, because we had not heard from any bands about their scheduled activities. We did not think that there might be any impending doom. We certainly could not have forecast the doom which has beset our planet. Call it coronavirus or COVID-19, this pandemic has certainly upset our musical world. Most community musical groups rehearse and perform in schools, community centres, churches or similar venues. Almost without exception, these are all closed until further notice. Even if the venues had not been closed, most groups would certainly not get together with so many people in close contact.

For many bands this will be a wait-and-see situation. Some have already announced a suspension of all rehearsals and concerts for the season. A couple that we have heard of have announced innovative plans. In one case, the band has made arrangements for those who do not have their music folder at home and would like to keep up with practice during this break time. The Band Librarian has offered to create PDF copies of music from individual music folders. These would then be emailed to those who wished, and they would print them at home. In this situation each member would be limited to three or four pieces. Members also have been given the link to MP3 sample recordings of music in the band’s practice folder.

Another approach is to have the band “Go Virtual on Practice Night.” Their band memo says: “COVID-19 might stop us from having our weekly Monday rehearsals and social gathering BUT with modern technology we can “STAY CONNECTED”!! Band members are invited to “Join our rehearsal night VIRTUAL GATHERING (in lieu of rehearsals) from your computer, tablet, iPhone, iPad. They are also given information on how to join a Zoom meeting.

**Other Calamities**

While on the subject of calamities disrupting band activities, two very different calamities for bands come to mind. The first of these took place in January 1945 at the Canadian Navy’s Signal School in Saint-Hyacinthe, Quebec. The Signal School’s band had played an evening concert in Montreal. When they arrived back, late in the evening, the band members left all of their instruments in their bus which was then parked in the garage. Somewhere around 4am a fire broke out in an adjacent building where a large quantity of explosives were stored. Band members and others, manning fire hoses in temperatures of -20°F, watched as the inferno destroyed all of the band’s instruments and music.

The other calamity occurred in Newmarket. In 1899, Great Britain declared war in South Africa (in what was called the Boer War). Shortly thereafter a number of Canadian regiments offered their services and a cablegram of acceptance was received from the Imperial War Office. In May of 1902, when word came of British victory at Pretoria, the mayor and council created a committee to organize a patriotic concert to celebrate the victory. The following is an excerpt from the local newspaper of the time:

“A local holiday was granted, the citizens band engaged in preparation for a grand celebration. Rockets were procured for a magnificent display visible from the old dam that was partly composed of a platform with a railing extended over the water.

On the platform, the band was stirring the fervor with patriotic music. The box of rockets and other fireworks had been set upon this platform and the first rocket was set off. Unfortunately, it was thrown backwards and exploded among the remaining rockets. An uproar ensued as a great geyser of colourful combustion went up. Bedlam reigned. Members of the band were thrown into the water where, clinging to their instruments, they floundered. One rocket shot through the drum, ripping the heel from the shoe of the drummer. And still the fireworks continued. A portion of the dam was damaged but though the bandsmen received a thorough ducking, no lives were lost. I am sure it must have been unanimous that of the many celebrations staged throughout Canada, those of Newmarket must have been unique."

**Three Recent Events**

**Wychwood:** Of the musical presentations which I have attended in recent weeks there are three which warrant mention. The first of these was the Wychwood Clarinet Choir’s “Midwinter Suites”. As usual, Michele Jacot and Roy Greaves entertained with music from Leroy Anderson to Ralph Vaughan Williams. In this performance there were not only solos by Jacot and the full choir, but works by small ensembles from within the choir. For me the highlight was the full choir’s performance of Vaughan Williams’ English Folk Song Suite.

**Richard Herriott:** In the February column I mentioned that the Encore Symphonic Concert Band would be performing a special concert on February 28 to provide some assistance for pianist and composer Richard Herriott who was recently the victim of a serious fire where he lost everything. The proceeds of this concert were to be a part of a GoFundMe campaign to help him get back on his feet.

I had the pleasure of attending this concert. My vocabulary does not have sufficient superlatives to describe the evening. One feature was Herriott’s performance of his Four Note Concerto. For this number, audience members were asked to call out any four notes of the musical scale. Then Herriott began to improvise on those four notes. From very simple note sequences it advanced to a very pleasant melodic solo piano performance. Also in the first half of the concert was a flute and solo by band conductor John Liddle. I was familiar with Rodrigo’s Concierto de Aranjuez, but had never heard it before on a brass instrument. This arrangement by former band member Eddie Graf would be a worthy addition to any band’s repertoire.

While the four-note concerto was Herriott’s only part in the first half of the program, the second half was all his. An arrangement of Slaughter on Tenth Avenue for piano and band was followed by Liszt’s St. François de Paule marchant sur les flots for solo piano. The grand finale was Ferde Grofé’s arrangement for piano and band of Gershwin’s Rhapsody in Blue. An amazing performance of an excellent arrangement.

Not once during this concert was there any sheet of music on the piano. It was all stored in Herriott’s mind. Similarly for John Liddle’s solo. It was all from memory. This talent always makes me wince, because I couldn’t play Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star without the music in front of me.

**HMCS York Navy Band:** For a different sort of performance, we recently attended a “recital” by the Band of HMCS York, Toronto’s Reserve Naval Division. Yes, the term was recital, not concert. This ensemble is a large concert band with all of the usual instrumentation, but on this occasion, the performance venue was the Naval Club of Toronto, a social club whose members are Navy Veterans and associate members. Since there could be no way to set up such a large group to perform, it was an ideal location for several ensembles in a friendly, intimate atmosphere.

This Navy Band is an ideal group for such a program. Unlike most bands, which only play as a single large group, they have developed several small ensembles. Not only does this aid in the development of
musical skills, but there is a social benefit. Members get to know their fellow band members. Personally, I can think of many groups where I have played for years, but never got to know members on the other side of the rehearsal room.

In this concert we never did hear the full band, but heard excellent performances from no fewer than 11 small ensembles, with the band’s music director, Chief Petty Officer Maggie Birtch proudly introducing them. The ensembles varied from such standards as brass quintet to a tuba quintet and flute ensemble. Throughout there was one person who stood out. That was Leading Seaman James Chilton, who is known in civilian life as Doctor James Chilton PhD.

In the opening number Chilton was playing trombone in the brass quintet; a bit later he was playing the penny whistle in the Irish ensemble, along with the previous brass quintet’s euphonium player who had switched and was now playing violin. After intermission, Chilton then led both the trombone quartet and a group named Band Shells, in which the group played six different-sized conch shells, each of which produced a range of different pitches when the players moved their hands in and out of the open end.

The highlight of the evening occurred when Chilton pulled out his didgeridoo. I had heard him perform on this instrument before, but this time he added accompaniment. He accompanied himself on a theremin. Imagine blowing into a wind instrument supported on a stand while accompanying yourself with your hands on a different instrument.

For those not familiar with the terms, a didgeridoo is a wind instrument, generally anywhere from three to ten feet long. The original instruments developed by aboriginal people in Northern Australia an estimated 40,000 years ago were made from fallen eucalyptus branches that had been naturally hollowed out by termites. As for the theremin, I read one definition which described it as the only instrument which is played by not touching it! The performer stands in front of the instrument and moves his or her hands in the proximity of two metal antennas. The distance from one antenna determines frequency (pitch), and the distance from the other controls amplitude (volume). It is named after its inventor, Léon Thermin, who patented the device in 1928 (not an auspicious time economically, as it turned out, to launch a new product).

Overall this delightful recital by members of a large concert band showed what can happen when a larger ensemble rises to the challenge of creatively adapting to a size-restricted venue by enabling smaller groups to showcase their various talents (including hidden talents) with instruments they don’t generally employ with the band.

Jack MacQuarrie plays several brass instruments and has performed in many community ensembles. He can be contacted at bandstand@thewholenote.com.
2020/21

Passions of the Soul

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

— Elisa Citterio, Music Director
Handel Messiah and Sing-Along Messiah return

Subscribers save 15% on the best seats at the best price to Toronto’s favourite holiday tradition!

Handel Messiah features soprano Emöke Baráth, countertenor Christopher Lowrey, bass Philippe Sky, and tenor Charles Daniels.

The more you see, the more you save! Subscriptions for every taste and budget. Starting at just $105.
SPECIAL LISTINGS ADVISORY!

REGARDING CANCELLATIONS: due to the ongoing social distancing mandate, all Toronto shows in the immediate future have been cancelled or postponed. A phone number or website is provided with every listing in The WholeNote. In light of the changing public health situation it is expected that more events will be cancelled or postponed beyond those that we’ve indicated here. Please check before you go out to a concert.

Musicians and venues are facing an unprecedented challenge, and will need major community support to re-establish themselves once we’re all allowed outside again. If you’d like to be proactive and to offer support, please be in touch with them to find out what you can do to help.

The WholeNote listings are arranged in five sections:

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

BEYOND THE GTA covers many areas of Southern Ontario outside Toronto and the GTA. Starts on page 39.

MUSIC THEATRE covers a wide range of music types: from opera, oratorio and musicals, to non-traditional performance types where words and music are in some fashion equal partners in the drama. Starts on page 41.

IN THE CLUBS (MOSTLY JAZZ) is organized alphabetically by club. Starts on page 43.

THE ETCETERAS is for galas, fundraisers, competitions, screenings, lectures, symposia, masterclasses, workshops, singalongs and other music-related events (except performances) which may be of interest to our readers. Starts on page 45.

LISTINGS DEADLINE. The next issue covers the period from May 1 to June 7, 2020. All listings must be received by 11:30pm, Wednesday April 8.

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

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A. Concerts in the GTA

Wednesday April 1

▶ 12:00 noon: Canadian Opera Company. Jazz/World Music Series: Heart and Soul. OKAN. Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre, Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. 416-363-8231. Free. CANCELLED.

▶ 12:30: Organix Concerts/All Saints Kingsway. Kingsway Organ Concert Series. Damien M crossed, organ. All Saints Kingsway Anglican Church, 2850 Bloor St. W. 416-571-3880 or organconcerts.ca. Freewill offer in much appreciated.


▶ 7:00: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Upper Jazz Concerts: U of T Jazz Ensembles. Upper Jazz Studio, 90 Wellesley St. W. 416-978-3750. Free. CANCELLED.

▶ 8:00: Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts. Mission Songs Project. By Jessie Lloyd. 130 Navy St., Oakville. 905-815-2021 or oakvillecentre.ca. $35-$47.

▶ 8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Lisiecki Plays Beethoven’s Emperor. Apr 1 & 2: Beethoven: Leonore Overture No.3, Piano Concerto No.5 “Emperor”; Schoenberg: Pelleas und Melisande. Apr 4 & 5: Beethoven: Leonore Overture No.3, Piano Concerto No.3 & 5 “Emperor”. Jan Lisiecki, piano; Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra (Apr 1 & 2; Overture only); Jukka-Pekka Saraste, conductor. Massey Hall at Heliconian Hall, 55 Hazelton Ave. 416-872-4255. From $35. Also Apr 1, 4, 5, 35p, Meridian Arts Centre).

Thursday April 2

▶ 1:30: Women’s Musical Club of Toronto. Music in the Afternoon: Beverley Johnston & Friends. George Kontogiorgos: Axion esti; Bach: On Marimba; Christos Hatzis: Arctic Dreams; Russell Hartenberg: New work for percussion quartet; Julie Spencer: Everybody Talk About Percussion; and other works. Beverley Johnston, percussion; Gordon Fry, percussion; Aiyun Hung, percussion; Russell Hartenberg, percussion; Susan Hoeppner, flutes; Marc Do ti, violin. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-923-7052 or onstageuxbridge.com. $25. CANCELLED.


▶ 7:30: Programs for 50+ and Community Engagement. Musicians from Marlboro. Works for strings and voice. Lauren Pearl (mezzo-soprano); Scott St. John; Sharon Wei. Arts and Letters Club, 14 Elm St. continuing. ryerson.ca/upload/musicians-from-marlboro-event-info.pdf. $35; $20(student with Ryerson student card).

▶ 8:00: Art of Time Ensemble. S’Wonderful. George & Iris Gershwin. Someone to Watch Over Me; He Loves Me; She Loves Me. Instrumental works by George Gershwin; and music from Porgy and Bess. Jackie Richardson, John Southworth, Sarah Sean, Billy Newton-Davis, Gregory Hoskins, singers; Andrew Burashko, piano; and others. Harbourfront Centre Theatre, 255 Queens Quay W. 416-878-4600 or artoftimeensemble.com. $25-$64. CANCELLED.

Friday April 3

▶ 11:00am: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Felix Galimir Chamber Music Award Concert. Edward Johnson Building, Walter Hall, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-978-3750. Free. CANCELLED.


▶ 7:30: University of Toronto Faculty of Music. U of T Symphony Orchestra. Nielsen: Maskarade (Overture); Schumann: Symphony No.1 Op.38 in B-flat (Spring); Brahms: Der Rosenkavalier (Suite). Kyle Orlando, trombone; Brian Meyer, conductor. MacMillan Theatre, Edward Johnson Building, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-408-0208. $30; $20(sr); $10(st). CANCELLED.

▶ 7:30: Upper Canada Brass. Brass-ing Off! Sutton: The Paragon; Ballantine: Don’t Doubt Him Now; Gayfer: Canadian Landscape. Tom Hutchinson, cornet. St. Mary’s Anglican Church, 10300 Yonge St., Richmond Hill. 705-702-5768 or brt.ca/25rsfu. $30/$25(online).

▶ 7:30: York University Department of Music. York University Gospel Choir. Karen Burke, conductor. Sandra Faire and Ivan
**Fecan Theatre, Accadale East Building, York University, 4700 Keele St. 416-736-5888. $15; $10(sr/st).**

- **8:00:** Alliance Française de Toronto. Y2: Duo Yanick Rieu, Ira Gershvin: Someone to Watch Over Me; Lorelei; He Loves, She Loves; instrumental works by George Gershwin; and music from Porgy and Bess. Jackie Richardson, John Southworth, Sarah Sloan, Billy Newton-Davis, Gregory Hoskins, singers; Andrew Burashko, piano; and others. Harbourfront Centre Theatre, 235 Queens Quay W. 416-873-4000 or artoftimeensemble.com. $25-$64. CANCELLED.
- **8:00:** Roy Thomson Hall. Buddy Guy. Guest: Tom Harbridge. 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4255. $49.50-$129.50.
- **8:00:** Sinelf at Toronto. Cellista: Mazwick. Concerto for String Orchestra; Schuman: Cello Concerto; Gliick; Spring; Prokofiev: Sonatina. "Kabardinian". Stéphane Tétreault, cellist; Nourham Arman, conductor. Glenn Gould Studio, 250 Front St. W. 705-726-1181. $42-$55/st; $10/student.
- **8:00:** TD Live. Hiromi. Meridian Arts Centre (formerly Toronto Centre for the Arts), 5040 Yonge St., North York. 1-855-985-2878. $42.50-$65.
- **9:00:** Small World Music Society/TD Toronto Jazz Festival/Jazzcast. Aditya Prakash Ensemble. 334 Queen St. W. 416-538-5439. $20. CANCELLED.

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**Saturday April 4**

- **2:00:** Onstage Uxbridge. The Mikado. Music by Arthur Sullivan, libretto by W.S. Gilbert. Uxbridge Music Hall, 16 Main St. S., Uxbridge. onstageubxbridge.com. $25. CANCELLED.
- **2:30:** University of Toronto Faculty of Music. World Music Ensembles. African drumming and dancing, steel pan, and Brazilian music ensembles. Edward Johnson Building, Walter Hall, 80 Queen’s Park. 416-978-3760. Free. CANCELLED.
- **7:00:** Music at St. Andrew’s. Handel’s Messiah. Suzie Leblanc, soprano; Daniel Taylor, countertenor; Colin Ainworth, tenor; Russell Braun, baritone; Nota Bene Baroque Players & Singers; Howard Dyck, conductor. St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church (Toronto), 73 Simcoe St. 416-955-8800 x231 or standrewstoronto.org. $40. CANCELLED.
- **7:00:** University of Toronto at Scarborough - Department of Arts, Culture & Media. Spring Awakening Concert: Roaring Twenties. University of Toronto at Scarborough Concert Band, Concert Choir and String Orchestra. University of Toronto at Scarborough, AC223, ARC Theatre, 1265 Military Trail, Scarborough. 416-208-4747. Free.
- **7:30:** Etobicoke Centennial Choir. Offering. Cherubini: Requiem Mass in C Minor; Brahms, Nanie, Op.82; and works by Elgar, Vaughan Williams, Mascagni and Chatman.

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**Sunday April 5**

- **1:00:** Royal Conservatory of Music. Sunday Interludes Series. Works by Debussy and Chopin. Danh Thai Son, piano. Mazzoleni Concert Hall, TELUS Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. Free (ticket required).
- **2:30:** VOICEBOX: Opera in Concert. Adriana Lecouvreur. Music by Francesco Cilea, libretto by Arturo Calautti. Sung in Italian with English subtitles. Sally Dibbelle, soprano; Romulo Delgado, tenor; Geneviève Lévesque, mezzo; Opera in Concert Chorus; Narmina Afandiyeva, music director & pianist; Robert Cooper, chorus director. Jane Mallett Theatre, St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 727 Bay St. E. 416-366-7723. $20-$45. POSTPONED.
- **3:00:** North York Concert Orchestra. Jurassic Fun. John Williams: Highlights from Jurassic Park; Dean Bursy: Carnival of the Dinosaurs (narrated by the composer). Dean Bursy, narrator. Adath Israel Congregation, 37 Southbourne Ave., North York. 416-628-9195. $25; $20/st; $10/child; $5/student.
- **3:00:** Roy Thomson Hall. Conference of Independent Schools Music Festival. An opportunity for students and music educators to collaborate in a non-competitive atmosphere. 60 Simcoe St. 416-672-4255. $45-$55.
- **3:00:** Royal Conservatory of Music. Music Mix Series: George Hinchliffe’s Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain. Koerner Hall, TELUS Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. $35-$90. POSTPONED.
- **3:00:** Syrinx Concerts Toronto. Air. Strings & Keys. Works for theremin, violin and piano by Villa-Lobos, Saint-Saëns, Sibelius, Boris din, Jorgensen, and others. Heliconian Hall, 2507_Listings_Master.indd 29
A. Concerts in the GTA

PASSIONTIDE DEVOTION
SUNDAY, APRIL 5TH 4:30 PM
IONA LITURGY
HOLY TUESDAY, APRIL 7TH 7:00 PM

Yorkminster Park Baptist Church


» 7:30: Toronto Opera Society. Silent Film “The Doll”. William O’Meara, organ. Roncesvalles United Church, 240 Roncesvalles Ave. 416-459-6292 or tors. ca. $20/$17(adv). Cash only at the door.


» 8:00: Confluence Concerts/St. Thomas’s Anglican Church. Baroque Music by Candlelight. A time for quiet reflection at the beginning of Holy Week. Vocal and instrumental music by Handel, Telemann and Bach. St. Thomas’s Anglican Church (Toronto), 383 Huron St. 647-678-4923. Free. CANCELLED.

Monday April 6


» 7:00: Yorkminster Park Baptist Church. Iona Liturgy. Musicians of Iona Passage. 1555 Yonge St. 416-922-1167. Freewill offering. CANCELLED.


Wednesday April 8


» 6:00: Music Gallery/York University. York Archives Show And Tell. Praphitsha Kohli, host. York University - Scott Library, Room 305, 4070 Keele St. musicgallery.org. Free. CANCELLED.

Tuesday April 7

> Lucas Harris, archlute, colascione, guitar; Romina Di Gasbarro, voice, chitarra battente; Felix Desl, violin, viola da gamba. Guest: Debra Nagy, oboe. Joseph D. Carrier Art Gallery, 901 Lawrence Ave. W. 416-789-7011 x248 or villacharities.com/concerti. $20/$10(sr). CANCELLED.

Music at Metropolitan presents Timeless music for Good Friday

Ralph Vaughn Williams
Donna Nobis Pacem
Chelsea Van Pelt, soprano
Nicholas Higgs, baritone

Wolfgang A. Mozart
Requiem, K. 626

Gisele Kulak, soprano
Valeria Kondrashov, alto
Charles Davidson, tenor
John Schneider, bass

Metropolitan Festival Choir & Orchestra
Dr. Patricia Wright, Conductor

Friday April 10 | 7:30 PM

$30/$10 students
416-363-0331
metunited.ca

Tuesday April 7


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Wednesday April 8


> 6:00: Music Gallery/York University. York Archives Show And Tell. Praphitsha Kohli, host. York University - Scott Library, Room 305, 4070 Keele St. musicgallery.org. Free. CANCELLED.

Music at Metropolitan presents

Requiem Aeternam
GRAND OPULENCE

Timeless music for Good Friday

Ralph Vaughn Williams
Donna Nobis Pacem
Chelsea Van Pelt, soprano
Nicholas Higgs, baritone

Wolfgang A. Mozart
Requiem, K. 626

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April 2020

Thursday April 9

* 12:00 noon: **Toronto Mendelssohn Choir**. Sacred Music for a Sacred Space. Works by Tallis, Byrd, Taverner and MacMillan. Simon Rivard, conductor. St. Anne’s Anglican Church, 270 Gladstone Ave. 416-408-0208 or tmchoir.org. $35-$60; $20 (VoxTix 30 and under).

Friday April 10


Saturday April 11

* 3:00pm: Climax Jazz Band. Matinee Jazz. Dorothy Rose, chanteuse. Smoke Show, 744 Mount Pleasant Rd. 416-301-4769. $5. **CANCELED**

* 7:30pm: **Opera Atelier**. Handel: The Resurrection. Isaiah Bell, Stephen Hegedus, Carla Huhtanen, Meghan Lindsay, Alyson McHardy, vocalists; Marshall Pynkoski, stage director; Jeannette Lajeunesse Zingg, choreographer; Artists of Atelier Ballet, Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra; David Fallis, conductor. Koerner Hall, TELUS Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. $49-$205. Also Apr 16, 17, 18(4:30pm), 19(3pm).

* 7:30: **The Salvation Army**. An Easter Celebration. Worthy is the Lamb; Hallelujah to the King; The Easter Song; A Choral Symphony. International Staff Songsters; Canadian Staff Band; Canadian Staff Songsters; NOIN. Lyric Theatre, Meridian Arts Centre (formerly Toronto Centre for the Arts), 5040 Yonge St., North York. 1-855-682-6758. $20 + tax.

* 8:00pm: Small World Music Society. So Long Seven with Samantha Jorgensen; Small World Music Centre, Artscape Youngplace, 180 Shaw St. 416-536-5349. $30/$20 (adv). **CANCELLED**

* 8:00: **Toronto Symphony Orchestra**. Gimeno, Yuja Wang & Brahms. Apr 8 & 9: Brahms: Piano Concerto No.1, Symphony No.2. Yuja Wang, piano; Gustavo Gimeno, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4255. Starting at $37. Also Apr 14(8pm), 15(2pm).

* 6:00: **Elyser Quartet**. In Concert. Selections from Tiranio and Asplmyer String Quartets. Burdock Music Hall, 1184 Bloor St. W. 416-319-2657. $20/$15 (adv).

* 8:00: **Toronto Symphony Orchestra**. Classics: Rodgers & Hammerstein. Classics from The Sound of Music, Carousel, Oklahoma, South Pacific and others. Emily Padgett, soprano; Josh Young, tenor; Jordan Donica, baritone; Amabile Choirs of London; Steven Reineke, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4255. Starting at $52. Also Apr 14(8pm), 15(2pm).

Thursday April 14


* 8:00pm: **Opera Atelier**. Handel: The Resurrection. Isaiah Bell, Stephen Hagedus, Carla Huhtanen, Meghan Lindsay, Alyson McHardy, vocalists; Marshall Pynkoski, stage director; Jeannette Lajeunesse Zingg, choreographer; Artists of Atelier Ballet, Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra; David Fallis, conductor. Koerner Hall, TELUS Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. $49-$205. Also Apr 11, 17, 18(3:00pm), 19(3pm).

Thursday April 15


Wednesday April 15


* 7:00: **MRG Concerts**. Max Raabe & Palast Orchester: Max Raabe, singer; Cecilia Crisafulli, violin; Sven Bährns, clarinets; Bern Dietrich, double-bass; Louisian, South Pacific and others. Emily Padgett, soprano; Josh Young, tenor; Jordan Donica, baritone; Amabile Choirs of London; Steven Reineke, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4255. Starting at $52. Also Apr 14(8pm), 15(2pm).

Saturday April 16


* 7:30: **Royal Conservatory of Music**. Requiem in D minor, Op.48 — Gabriel Faure. Good Friday, April 10 11am Religious Service | Free will offering humberrcrest.ca
New Wave Festival

ESPRIT ORCHESTRA

St. W. 416-408-0208. $10-$40. POSTPONED.

7:00: Music Gallery. Joon-Young Lee: Spiegelreihe. $35-$55; $30-$45(sr/st); free(under 12).


8:00: Esprit Orchestra. New Wave Festival for Young Composers: Sonic Waves. $10-$20 (with early reservation).

Saturday April 18

1:00: Canzona Chamber Players. Beethoven Sonatas. Robert Uchida, viola; Peter Allen, piano. St. George the Martyr Cathedral, 30 St. Stephen Ave. 416-822-0613. $30. Also Apr 19 (3:00pm), St. Andrew-by-the-Lake Church, Toronto Island. Concert and brunch.

3:00: Esprit Orchestra. New Wave Festival for Young Composers: Sonic Waves. John Rea: Accident (Tombeau de Grisey); Misato Sharp: Some Colours the here and now of nowhere is; Christina Reintamm: Altered Atmosphere; Jennifer Nichols, multi-media artist and octophonic electronics; Alison Yun-Fei Jiang: Snow Music; Maurizio Azzan: Where Life Leaves the Field of Music.

7:00: Opera Atelier. Handel: The Resurrection. Isaiah Bell, Stephen Hegends, Cara Hultman, Meghan Lindsay, Allyson McHardy, vocalists; Marshall Pynkoski, stage director; Jannette Lajeunesse Zingg, choreographer; Artists of Atelier Ballet; Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra; David Fallis, conductor. Koerner Hall, TELUS Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208. $43-$205. Also Apr 11, 16, 17, 19 (19:30pm).

7:00: Dofasco Male Chorus. Harmony 4 Hamilton. Nuvo Network, 1295 North Service Rd., Burlington. 905-548-7200 x2094 or dofscomalechorus.com/contact.html. $15-$25.

8:00: Esprit Orchestra. New Wave Festival for Young Composers: Sonic Waves. John Rea: Accident (Tombeau de Grisey); Misato Sharp: Some Colours the here and now of nowhere is; Christina Reintamm: Altered Atmosphere; Jennifer Nichols, multi-media artist and octophonic electronics; Alison Yun-Fei Jiang: Snow Music; Maurizio Azzan: Where Life Leaves the Field of Music.

POSTPONED to 20/21 Season
Sunday April 19

• 10:00am: Vesenivka Choir. Easter Liturgy. St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Church, 4 Bellingwood Ave. 416-763-2197. Freewill offering, Religious service.


• 2:00: Rezonance Baroque Ensemble. Encounter in Constantinople. Ottoman Empire and European Baroque influenced by the east. April 19, 2pm

• 3:00: Orchestra Toronto. Suenos Ibericos. Rimsky-Korsakov: Capriccio espagnol; Bizet: Selections & Arias from Carmen; Falla: Fire Music from El amor brujo (Love the Magician); Suite from The Three-cornered Hat. Julie Nesrallah, mezzo; Esmerelda Enriquez Dance Company. George Weston Recital Centre, Meridian Arts Centre (formerly Toronto Centre for the Arts), 504 Yonge St. 416-467-7142. $25-$45; $39($r); $19(OTopux); $15(under 10).

• 3:00: Toronto City Opera. Il Glabicio: From Sicily to Toronto - A Celebration of Culture and Music. Mascagni: Cavalleria Rusticana (excerpts); Classical Italian folk pieces. Anna Tasmina and Lauren Estey, sopranos; Romulo Delgado, tenor; Carmen Spada, accordionist; Jennifer Tung, conductor. St. Andrew’s Church (Toronto), 73 Simcoe St. 416-679-9391; torontocityopera.com. $75. Fundraising concert followed by food, wine and silent auction. CANCELLED.


• 7:00: Schola Magdalena. A Prayer for the Earth. Works by Hildegard von Bingen;
A. Concerts in the GTA


10:00: Soundstreams. Secrets: Claron McFadden, vocals; Michel Massot, tuba/trombone; Tuur Floriozone, chromatic accordion; Marine Horbaczewski, cello. Drake Underground, 1150 Queen St. W. 416-504-1282 or rcmusic.com/tickets/seats/139002. $25-$44. Also Apr 24 (SOLD OUT).


10:00: Tapestry Opera. Rocking Horse Winner. Music by Gareth Williams, libretto by Anna Chatterton. Asitha Tennekoon, tenor; Lucia Cesaroni, soprano; Keith Klassen, tenor; Peter McCullivary, baritone; Michael Hidetoshi Mori, stage director; Kannna Gupta, music director. St. George’s Anglican (Bolton), 2 Aven. N. 416-793-2263. $25; $10(st). Free parking at church and on side streets.


12:10: Canadian Men’s Chorus. 10! A Decade of Song. Church of the Redeemer, 162 Bloor St. W. canadiennemannscoro.ca/concerts. $20-$85.


16:00: MSO Pops. Star Wars. April 25, 2020 8PM. Hammerson Hall. From the Imperial March to the Throne Room End Title, this concert will feature your favorite music from the Star Wars galaxy!

18:00: Stravinsky. The Rite of Spring. St. George’s Anglican (Bolton), 2 Aven. N. 416-793-2263. $25; $10(st). Free parking at church and on side streets.


21:00: Tapestry Opera. Rocking Horse Winner. Music by Gareth Williams, libretto by Anna Chatterton. Asitha Tennekoon, tenor; Lucia Cesaroni, soprano; Keith Klassen, tenor; Peter McCullivary, baritone; Michael Hidetoshi Mori, stage director; Kannna Gupta, music director. St. George’s Anglican (Bolton), 2 Aven. N. 416-793-2263. $25; $10(st). Free parking at church and on side streets.

Saturday April 25

3:00: Achill Choral Society. Journeys. Canadian/Celtic folk songs; Medley from Les Misérables; World War I songs. Shawn Grenke, conductor. Christ Church Anglican (Bolton), 2 Aven. N. 416-793-2263. $25; $10(youth 13-17); $5(child). CANCELLED.

3:00: Villa Charities. Concert in Galleria: Philippe Gionet; Manchester; Elias Citterio, conductor. St. Simon’s Anglican Church (Oakville), 1450 Litchfield Rd., Oakville. 905-815-2021 or oakvillecentre.ca. $30; $25 (sr); $15 (teen), free (child). POSTPONED.

8:00: Canadian Sinfonietta. Beethoven 250th Anniversary. Overture from Egmont
Op. 84; Piano Concerto No. 4; Symphony No. 7.
Daniel Tselyakov, piano; Tak Ng Lai, conductor.
Markham Wesley Centre, 22 Erna Park Dr.,
Markham. 416-812-0383. $40; $35(sr); $20(st/child).
8:00: Kingston Road Village Concert Series.
Mrs.搁望, A Model Comedie Cantata. A mixture of comedy pieces and musical selections
by extant composers. Bach: Erbarme Dich; Matthew Reid: new works. Etsuko
Kimura, violin; solo; Cary Heffernan, Kris Siddiqi,
Ashley Comeau and Darryl Hinds, comedy
performers; Musicians from the Toronto Symphony Orchestra.
St. John’s United Church (Georgetown), 11 Guelph St.,
647-980-6000 or ticketscene.ca/
events/27753. $35/$30(adv).
POSTPONED.
8:30: Mississauga Symphony Orchestra.
For more information, please visit our website.

Saturday April 25

8:00: Royal Conservatory of Music. String
Concerts Series: Bomosori Kim with Rafał
Blechacz. Beethoven: Violin Sonata No.1 in
Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, cello. The Music Gallery,
691 Bathurst St. musicgallery.org. $12; $8/st members.
Part of the Emergent Series. Venue not wheelchair accessible.
8:00: Scarborough Philharmonic Orchestra.
Romantic Gems. Beethoven: Leonore Overture No.3 Op.72b; Rossini: Overture
To the Barber of Seville; Dvořák: Slavonic Dances No. 72 Nos.3-7; Brahms: Violin Concerto
in D Op.77 (Mvt 1); Elgar: Cello Concerto
in E Minor; Vaughan Williams: Blake Songs.
First Church of Christ Scientist, 247 Eglinton Ave.
416-408-0028. $35-$85.
8:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra.
Symphonic Fairy Tales. Jeffrey Beecher, double
bass/host; Dina Gilbert, conductor.
Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4255.
Starting at $27. Also 4pm.
Songs for the Holy Other: Hymns Affirming the LGBTQ2S+ Community.
Cedars Klassen, Sherman Hesselgrefe, and friends.
Church of the Holy Trinity, 19 Trinity Sq, 416-827-4251. Free.
3:00: Encore! Chorus. Seize the Day! A concert
to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day.
Bethel Community Christian Reformed Church, 222 Davis Dr.,
Newmarket. 905-826-3317. $18; $15/child.
A portion of the ticket money raised will go to
support the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation
Authority.
3:00: Oakville Chamber Orchestra. Upbeat Rossini: Barber of Seville
Overture; Mendelssohn: Heribert’s Overture;
Chopin: Concerto No.1 (1st mvmt); Arias by Handel,
Mozart, and Alabiev. Jason Cheng, piano; Anna Wojcik, soprano; Charles Demeynck,
conductor. St. John’s United Church (Oakville),
222 Randal St. Oakville. 905-851-2021 or
oakvillecentre.ca. $30; $25/child; $15/teen;
free/child. POSTPONED.
3:00: Organix Concerts. Special Presentation
Series. Xaver Varnus, organ. All Saints
Kingway Anglican Church, 2950 Bloor St.
416-571-3880 or organixconcerts.ca. $25.
3:00: Pax Christi Chorale. Considering
Matthew Shepard. Music and lyrics by Craig
Hella Johnson. Megan Miceli & Simone
McIntosh, sopranos; Kristine Sabo, mezzo;
Lawrence Wiliford, tenor; Phillip Addis, bass-baritone;
Toronto Mozart Players. George
Weston Recital Hall, Meridian Arts Centre
(formerly Toronto Centre for the Arts),
5040 Yonge St. 416-729-3530. $25-$85.
POSTPONED.
3:00: Royal Conservatory of Music.
Invenso Piano Concerts Series: Angela Hewitt.
Bach: Art of the Fugue BWV1080. Koerner
Hall, TELUS Centre, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0028.
550-$110.
Jeffrey; work for harpsichord (world premiere).
Charlotte Nediger, harpsichord; Elisa Citterio, conductor.
Trinity St. Paul’s Centre, 427 Bloor St. W. 416-
964-6337. From $50. Discounts for sr/under
36/under19. Also Apr 22(7pm), 23, 24, 28 (all
8pm), $25/mat.
3:00: Alliance Française de Toronto.
Sunny Nalaye. Spadina Theatre, 24 Spadina
Rd. 416-922-2014 x4. $25; $20/sr (all 36/under19).
13/members.
Sunday April 26

8:00: Canadian Opera Company. Aida.
Music by Giuseppe Verdi. Tamara Wilson,
soprano (Aida); Russell Thomas,
tenor (Radames); Clémentine Margaine,
mzzo (Amneris); Roland Wood, baritone
(Amonasro); Jader Bignamini, conductor and
others. Four Seasons Centre for the Performing
Arts, 145 Queen St. W. 416-363-8231 or
coc.ca. $35-$825. Runs Apr 18 to May 8. Start times vary.
2:00: Peter Margolian and Friends.
Chamber Music Concert. Music for voice, winds,
strings and piano. Works by Purcell, Pepsuch,
Austin G. Bush, Berkeley and Ireland. Victoria
College Chapel, 21 Charles St. W. 416-980-5474. Free.
2:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra.
Symphonic Fairy Tales. Jeffrey Beecher, double
bass/host; Dina Gilbert, conductor.
Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4255.
Starting at $27. Also 4pm.
2:30: Mississauga Ancliff Church.
The Best of Animals. Choral Evensong for St.
George. 360 Windermere Ave. 416-796-5866 or
stolaves.ca. Contributions appreciated.
Followed by St. George’s Tea at 5pm. The Best
of Animals: St. Olave’s Arts Guild presents
drama, poetry, music and songs. Orwell: Ani-
mal Farm (excerpts); Cannon: The Trouble
with Goats and Sheep (excerpts).
4:00: Toronto Symphony Orchestra.
Symphonic Fairy Tales. Jeffrey Beecher, double
bass/host; Dina Gilbert, conductor.
Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4255.
Starting at $22. Also 2pm.
Musical Fairy Tale! Jeffrey Beecher, double
bass/host; Dina Gilbert, conductor.
Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4255.
Starting at $22. Also 2pm.
Concerts in the GTA

A. Concerts in the GTA

Quartet No.4 in G Op.64; Bartók; String Quartet No.2 in E Flat Op.51 BB9, Basquin Quartet (Amanda Goodburn, violin; Eric Kosaka, violin; Ivan Ivanov-Peters, viola; Roberta Janzen, cello). Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, 427 Bloor St. W. 416-221-8342. $25; $23(sr/st). RESCHEDULED TO JUNE 15.

Tuesday April 28


8:00: Tafelmusik. Goldberg Variations. Bach (arr. Citterio), Jeyk: work for harpsichord (world premiere). Charlotte Nediger, harpsichord; Elisa Citterio, conductor. George Weston Recital Hall, Meridian Arts Centre (formerly Toronto Centre for the Arts), 5040 Yonge St. 39 (under 35/under 19). Also April 22(7pm), 23, 24, 25, (all 8pm), 26(mat).

8:00: Tapestry Opera. Rocking Horse Winner. Music by Rachel Williams, libretto by Anna Chatterton. Asitha Tennekoon, tenor; Lucia Cesaroni, soprano; Keith Klassen, tenor; Peter Mc Gillivray, baritone; Michael Hidetoshi Mori, stage director; Kamna Gupta, music director. Streetcar Cresentwin, 345 Carlaw Ave. 416-537-6066. $10-$85 Pick Your Price. Also Apr 23, 25(4pm), 28, 30, May 2.

Wednesday April 29


12:30: Organix Concerts/All Saints Kingsway. Kingsway Organ Concert Series. Imre Olah, organ. All Saints Kingsway Anglican Church, 2850 Bloor St. W. 416-571-3680 or organixconcerts.ca. Freewill offering appreciated.


Thursday April 30


7:30: Access Aloud. A Fine Bouquet: Faúrd at The Distillery. Faúrd: Piano Quartet No.1 in c; Maslanka: Tears; Gallon: Récit et Allegro. Victor Li, violin; Rémi Pelletier, viola; Emmanuelle Beaulieu Bergeron, cello; Fraser Jackson, bassoon; Monique de Margerie, piano. Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre, Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. 416-363-8231. Free. First come, first served. No late seating.

7:30: Canadian Opera Company. Aida. Music by Giuseppe Verdi. Tamara Wilson, soprano (Aida); Russell Thomas, tenor (Radames); Claire Marguerite, mezzo (Amneris); Roland Wood, baritone (Amonasro); Jader Bignamini, conductor and others. Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. 416-363-8231 or coc.ca. $35-$225. Runs Apr 18 to May 8. Start times vary.

8:00: Tapestry Opera. Rocking Horse Winner. Music by Rachel Williams, libretto by Anna Chatterton. Asitha Tennekoon, tenor; Lucia Cesaroni, soprano; Keith Klassen, tenor; Peter Mc Gillivray, baritone; Michael Hidetoshi Mori, stage director; Kamna Gupta, music director. Streetcar Cresentwin, 345 Carlaw Ave. 416-537-6066. $10-$85 Pick Your Price. Also Apr 23, 25(4pm), 28, 30, May 2.

Friday May 1

12:00 noon: Cantala Women’s Choir. The Ineffable Beauty of Song. Britten: Missa Brevis In Infinite Beauty of Song; Britten: Oboe Quartet (formerly T oronto Centre for the Arts), 425 Bloor St. W. 416-638-8445. $20; $15(sr/st/unwaged). POSTPONED.

• 2:00: Mirvish. The Boy Friend. Music, lyrics and book by Sandy Wilson. Princess of Wales Theatre, 300 King St. W. 416-872-1212. $49 and up. CANCELLED.

• 2:30: Bel Canto Singers. Fairy Tales, Myths and Legends. A selection of music from operas, Broadway shows and popular movies. Scarborough Bluffs United Church, 3739 Kingston Rd., Scarborough. 416-690-3585 or belcantosingers.ca. $20; $5(child under 12). Cash only at the door. Also 7:30pm.

• 4:00: Osakaillie Choir for Children and Youth. True Colours. Clearview Church, 2300 Sheridan Garden Dr., Oakville. oakvilleoic.org, $25; $20(5r); $15(12 and under). Also 1:30pm.

• 4:30: Canadian Opera Company. Aida. Music by Giuseppe Verdi. Tamara Wilson, soprano; Robert McEwan, tenor (Radames); Clémentine Margaine, mezzo (Amneris); Roland Wood, baritone (Amonasro); Jader Bignamini, conductor and others. Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. 416-363-8231 or cocc.ca. $35-$225. Runs Apr 18 to May 8. Start times vary.

• 7:00: Cantala Women’s Choir. The Infinite Beauty of Song. Music from across the globe: from Ireland to Mexico to Australia and back home to Canada. Works by Toronto composers Bev Lewis, James Rolfe and others. David Shatzko, pianist; Stephen Hsu, piano. Forest Hill United Church, 2 Wembley Rd. 416-464-6749 or cantalawomenschoir.com. $20. Also 7:30pm.

• 7:30: Mississauga Festival Choir. Northern Reflection. Mississauga Symphony. Hammermill Hall, Living Arts Centre, 4414 Living Arts Dr., Mississauga. 905-508-6000 or livina-gartcentre.ca. $37. CANCELLED.

• 7:30: Music at Metropolitan. The Marg & Jim Norquay Celebration Concert. Chelse Van Pelt, soprano; Nicholas Higgs, baritone. Metropolitan United Church (Toronto), 56 Queen St. E. metunited.ca/music. $20.


• 8:00: Opera21. Africana. A selection of music from operas, Broadway shows and popular movies. Scarborough Bluffs United Church, 3739 Kingston Rd., Scarborough. 416-690-3585 or belcantosingers.ca. $20; $5(child under 12). Cash only at the door. Also 2:30pm.

• 8:00: Toronto Opera 2020. Opera21. A Spring Night of Opera. Metropolitan United Church (Toronto), 56 Queen St. E. metunited.ca/music. $20. CANCELLED.

• 8:30: Toronto Opera 2020. Oundjian Conducts Mahler. Fung Duck-Vil: Bruch: Violin Concerto No.1; Mahler: Symphony No.5. Jonathan Crow, violin; Peter Oundjian, conductor. Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. 416-872-4255. Starting at $35. Also Apr 28, May 9(7:30pm). May 1 only: 6:30pm pre-concert performance by TSO Chamber Solists.

Sunday May 3


For ongoing updates to cancellations & postponements visit thewholenote.com/cancelledevents

thewholenote.com

April 2020 37
AS VAST AS THE OCEAN AND AS FULL OF WONDER
MYSTERIOUS AND DEEP

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS
FIVE MYSTICAL SONGS & A SEA SYMPHONY

Tuesday May 5
12:00 noon: Canadian Opera Company.
Jonathan Crow, artistic director; Toronto Summer Music festival.
Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre, Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W.
No late seating.

12:10: Nine Sparrows Arts Foundation.
Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, 1585 Yonge St.

12:30: Canadian Opera Company. Aida.
Music by Giuseppe Verdi. Tamara Wilson, soprano; Robin Dann, tenor (Radames); Clémentine Margaine, mezzo (Amneris); Roland Wood, baritone (Amonasro); Jader Bignami, conductor and others.
Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W.
1585 Yonge St. 416-363-8231 or coc.ca. $35-$225. Runs May 1 to 16. Start times vary.

Wednesday May 6
10:30am: Outside Looking In. 13th Annual Show.
Buffi Sainte-Marie, musician/artist; Tamara Podemski, host; DJ Shubb, performer.

Thursday May 7
12:00 noon: Canadian Opera Company.
Vocal Series: Boundless Bass.
Goderdzi Janelidze, bass; Sandra Horst, piano.

Meridian Hall (formerly Sony Centre), 1 Front St. E. 1-855-872-7669 via Ticketmaster. $5. Also 7:30pm.

12:00 noon: Canadian Opera Company.
Chamber Music Series: Haydn and Beethoven.
String Quarts of Beethoven and Haydn. Rosebud String Quartet, Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre, Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W.
No late seating.

12:30: Canadian Opera Company.
The Flying Dutchman.
Music and libretto by Richard Wagner. Vitalij Kowaljow, bass (The Dutchman); Marjorie Wilson, soprano (Genta); Dmitry Ulyanov, bass (Daland); Miles Mykkkanen, tenor (The Steersman); Mary Ewa Plonka, mezzo (Mary); Michael Schade, tenor (Erik); Johannes Debuc, conductor; Christopher Alden, stage director.
Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W.
1585 Yonge St. 416-363-8231 or coc.ca. $35-$225. Runs May 1 to 16. Start times vary.

12:30: Outside Looking In. 13th Annual Show.
Buffi Sainte-Marie, musician/artist; Tamara Podemski, host; DJ Shubb, performer.
Meridian Hall (formerly Sony Centre), 1 Front St. E.
1-855-872-7669 via Ticketmaster. From $30. Also 10:30am.

8:00: Soundstreams.
Music für das Ende.
By Zack Russell. Vania Chan, Carla Hutton, Lindsay McIntyre, sopranos; Robin Dann, Aviva Chernick, mezzos; and other singers.
Canadian Opera Company, stage director.
Canadian Opera Company, stage director.
Buddies in Bad Times Theatre, 12 Alexander St.
416-975-8555. MAY 6 SOLD OUT. Also May 7, 8, 9(7:30pm & 8pm).

Thursday May 7
12:00 noon: Canadian Opera Company.
Vocal Series: Boundless Bass.
Goderdzi Janelidze, bass; Sandra Horst, piano.

Meridian Hall (formerly Sony Centre), 1 Front St. E. 1-855-872-7669 via Ticketmaster. $5. Also 7:30pm.

12:00 noon: Canadian Opera Company.
Chamber Music Series: Haydn and Beethoven.
String Quarts of Beethoven and Haydn. Rosebud String Quartet, Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre, Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W.
No late seating.

1:30: Serenata Singers.
Come Fly With Us.
Music for all ages and tastes.
Songs new and old and from near and far.
Toronto Korean Presbyterian Church, 67 Scarsdale Rd., North York.
416-449-4053 or serenata-singers.ca. $25/$20(adv); free(under 13).
Also May 8(7:30pm).

8:00: Art of Time Ensemble.
Dance to the Abyss.
Well/Brecht: The Threepenny Opera Suite; Works by Weill, Schulhoff, Spolianisky and others.
Andrew Burashko, piano; Torquil Campbell, Sarah Slean, singers; Wal lace Halladay, saxophone; Al Kay, trombone; and others.
Bradshaw Amphitheatre, Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W.
No late seating.

1:30: Women’s Musical Club of Toronto.
Music in the Afternoon.
Blakpoil, violin, with Hsin-I Huang, piano.
416-923-7052
wmct.on.ca

8:00: Lunchtime Concerts.
Pay-what-you-can.
May 4 - Stephanie Chua & Véronique Mathieu
May 11 - Western University Singers
May 18 - Toskov, Tosek & Gojcic
May 25 - Medieval:
Andrea Gerhardt & Michael Franklin
Meridian Hall (formerly Sony Centre), 1 Front St. E. 1-855-872-7669 via Ticketmaster. $5. Also 7:30pm.

7:30: International Resource Centre for Performing Artists.
416-362-1422 or info@ircpa.net. $20.
CANCELLED.
Wednesday April 1

6:00: District School Board of Niagara/Brock University Chorus Niagara. Niagara Children’s Honour Choir. Guests: Chorus Niagara Children’s Choir and Brock University Choir; Mark Sirett, director. FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, 250 St. Paul St., St. Catharines. 905-688-0722 or 1-855-515-0722 or FirstOntarioPAC.ca. $15. CANCELLED.

7:30: Brock University Department of Music. University String Orchestra: String Concert No. 2. George Cléland, conductor. FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, 250 St. Paul St., St. Catharines. 905-688-0722 or 1-855-515-0722 or FirstOntarioPAC.ca. $12, $514 and under/eyeGO. CANCELLED.

8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. Youth Orchestra. Sun and Fire. Stravinsky: The Firebird. Centre in the Square, 101 Queen St. N., Kitchener. 519-745-4711 or 1-888-745-4717 or kwsymphony.ca. $20-$87. Also Apr 4.

9:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. Joy and Passion: Schumann & Brahms. Pal/Chana: Upwell (new commission); Schumann: Piano Concerto in a; Brahms: Symphony No 4 in e. Lauma Skride, piano; Gurpreet Chana, tabla/electronics; Andrei Feher, conductor. Centre in the Square, 101 Queen St. N., Kitchener. 519-745-4711 or 1-888-745-4717 or kwsymphony.ca. $20-$87. Also Apr 4.

Saturday April 4

2:30: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Youth Orchestra. Sun and Fire. Stravinsky: The Firebird. Centre in the Square, 101 Queen St. N., Kitchener. 519-745-4711 or 1-888-745-4717 or kwsymphony.ca. $18; $11(child). Free pre-concert activities from 1:15pm.

7:30: Gravenhurst Opera House. Six Guitars Starring Chase Padgett. A single performer portrays six different guitar-playing characters each sharing their own style of music. Storytelling with songs of various genres. 295 Muskoka Rd. S., Gravenhurst. 705-687-5550. $30; $10(st); free(child under 12).

8:00: Brock University Department of Music. Brock University Choirs: Choir Concert No. 2. Rachel Renzack-Hoff, conductor. FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, 250 St. Paul St., St. Catharines. 905-688-0722 or 1-855-515-0722 or FirstOntarioPAC.ca. $15; $10(st/ct); $5(eyeGO). CANCELLED.

Monday April 6


8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. Joy and Passion: Schumann & Brahms. Pal/Chana: Upwell (new commission); Schumann: Piano Concerto in a; Brahms: Symphony No 4 in e. Lauma Skride, piano; Gurpreet Chana, tabla/electronics; Andrei Feher, conductor. Centre in the Square, 101 Queen St. N., Kitchener. 519-745-4711 or 1-888-745-4717 or kwsymphony.ca. $20-$87. Also Apr 5.


8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. Joy and Passion: Schumann & Brahms. Pal/Chana: Upwell (new commission); Schumann: Piano Concerto in a; Brahms: Symphony No 4 in e. Lauma Skride, piano; Gurpreet Chana, tabla/electronics; Andrei Feher, conductor. Centre in the Square, 101 Queen St. N., Kitchener. 519-745-4711 or 1-888-745-4717 or kwsymphony.ca. $20-$87. Also Apr 5.

Sunday April 5

2:30: Georgian Music. Schubert’s “The Trout”. Schubert: Piano Quintet in A D667 "The Trout" and Quintets by Hummel and Fusse. Annette-Barbara Vogel, violin; Raquel Bastos, viola; Katerina Jurskova, cello; Joseph Phillips, double bass; Peter Grobler, piano. Bethel Community Church, 128 St. Vincent Street, Barrie. 705-726-1181. $65 or by subscription.

2:30: MusIkova Concert Association. Vocal Recital. Brett Polegato, baritone; Robert Kortgaard, piano. Trinity United Church (Gravenhurst), 290 Muskoka Rd. N., Gravenhurst. 705-867-5550. $32; $7(st); free(child under 10); $27(group of 10+).

5:00: Northern Debut Nord. Drive Shaft Trio. Music for piano and violins by Milhaud,
Thursday April 16


Friday April 17

7:30: Derek Bond/Kevin Williams Entertain-

ment. Pat Bianche Trio. New Life Assembly, 85 Clerche Ave., Brantford. 1-800-

265-0710 or tickets.sandscentre.ca. $45.

Saturday April 18


722, $69 ($64/10), $33/10 and under); $20 (arts worker); $12 (student/child); $5 (eduGO). Also Apr 18 (3:00pm).

7:30: Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society. Dali String Quartet. Arriaga: Quartet No. 3 in E-flat; Ginastera: Quartet No. 1; Penfound: String Quartet in g. Music Room (Waterloo); 57 Young St. W., Waterloo. 519-888-1673. $35; $20(ad.)

Sunday April 19

8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society. Alexander Panizza, Piano. Beethoven; Diabelli Variations; Stravinsky: Petrouchka Suite; and other works. Music Room (Waterloo); 57 Young St. W., Waterloo. 519-888-1673. $35; $20(ad.)

Wednesday April 15

12:00 noon: Music at St. Andrews. Organ Recital. Marilyn Reesor, organ, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church (Barrie), 47 Owen St., Barrie. 705-726-1181; $10; free(ad.)

Wednesday April 8

2:30: Senior Serenade. Odin String Quartet. Schumann: Piano Quintet in E-flat Op.44. Alex Tskov and Tanya Charles Ivaniski, viol-

iners; Veronica Lee, viola; Samuel Bisson, cello; Talisha Blackman, piano. Bethel Community Church, 128 St. Vincent Street, Barrie. 705-726-1811. Free.

2:30: Isabel Bader Centre for the Per-
forming Arts. Beautiful Scars. Lyrics by Tom Wilson. Tom Wilson; Kingston Symphony. 390 King St. W., Kingston. 613-533-2424 or 1-800-785-7555; $42-$59; $39-$56(faculty/staff); $12(arts worker); $8/student/child; $5 (eduGO). Also Apr 12 ($39-$46).

5:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society. SHHH! Poulenc: Sonata for flute and piano (arr. SHHH!!); Akiko; Kara-kureni; Donkin: Album of Old Photographs; Beethoven: Meanwhile for marimba and piano; Castellnuovo-Tedesco: Fantasia for guitar and piano (arr. SHHH!!); Zak Pulach, percussion; Edana Higham, piano. Music Room (Waterlo-

o), 57 Young St. W., Waterloo. 519-888-1673. $30; $20(ad.)

Friday April 10

7:30: Grand Philharmonic Choir. Brahms: Requiem. Elennawals: Passion and Resurrection. Leslee Bouza, soprano; Tyler Duncan, baritone; Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony; Grand Philharmonic Choir. Centre in the Square, 101 Queen St. N., Kitchener. 519-

578-5660 x2920. $30-$82; $14(ad.) Under 30); $20(ad.)/child(ad.)

Tuesday April 14

8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society. Alexander Panizza, Piano. Beethoven; Diabelli Variations; Stravinsky: Petrouchka Suite; and other works. Music Room (Waterloo); 57 Young St. W., Waterloo. 519-888-1673. $35; $20(ad.)

Saturday April 4


5:00, $45($25/ad): $20(ad.) Also Apr 18 (3:00pm).


722, $69 ($64/10), $33/10 and under); $20 (arts worker); $12 (student/child); $5 (eduGO). Also Apr 12 ($39-$46).
April 2020

For ongoing updates to cancellations/postponements visit thewholenote.com/cancelledevents

The whole note

www.thewholenote.com

cello and piano. Angela Park, piano. Yohannan Berick, violin; Rachel Mercer, cello. Music Room (Waterloo), 57 Young St. W., Waterloo. 519-886-1673. $40; $25(st).

Wednesday April 29

8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. Beyond Words. Lully: Passacaille d’Armide; de Rore/Bassano: Divisions on Ancre che col partire; Cima: Sonata for Violin and Violone; Rossi: Sonata No. 6 in dialogo detta la vienna; Schmelzer: Harmonia à 5 and others. Rebecca Morton, curator; Kathleen Kajoka, leader/violin. First United Church (Waterloo), 18 William St. W., Waterloo. 519-745-4711 or 1-888-745-4717 or kwsymphony.ca. $37. Also May 10(Harcourt Memorial United Church, Guelph), May 11(Central Presbyterian Church, Cambridge).

Friday May 1

8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. Beyond Words. Lully: Passacaille d’Armide; de Rore/Bassano: Divisions on Ancre che col partire; Cima: Sonata for Violin and Violone; Rossi: Sonata No. 6 in dialogo detta la vienna; Schmelzer: Harmonia à 5 and others. Rebecca Morton, curator; Kathleen Kajoka, leader/violin. Harcourt Memorial United Church, 87 Dean Ave., Guelph. 519-745-4711 or 1-888-745-4717 or kwsymphony.ca. $37. Also Apr 29(First United Church, Waterloo), May 2(Central Presbyterian Church, Cambridge).

Saturday May 2

10:30am: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. Flowers Wake up. Kati Taylor, storyteller; KWS musicians. Woolwich Memorial Centre, 24 Snyder St. S., Elmira. 519-874-0227 or 1-888-745-4717 or kwsymphony.ca. $13; $11(child). Also Apr 18(CONCERT Centre, Kitchener), May 16(Waterloo Region Museum, Kitchener).

3:00: Achorill Social Choir. Journeys. Canadian/!Celtic folk songs; Medley from Les Miserables; World War I songs. Shawn Greke, conductor. Westminster United Church (Orangeville), 247 Broadway Ave., Orangeville. 905-873-4727 or ashill.church.ca; $25; $10(youth 10-17); $5(child). CANCELLED.


7:30: Bravo Niagara! Festival of the Arts. From Broadway, With Love. Jason Forbach, Sir Howard and Joseph Spielenden. St. Mark’s Anglican Church (Niagara-on-the-Lake), 41 Byron St., Niagara-on-the-Lake. 289-868-9177 or music@bravoniagara.org. $50-$70.


7:30: Chorus Niagara. Topsy Turvy! The Best of Gilbert & Sullivan. Niagara Symphony Orchestra; Cailtin Wood, soprano; Maria Soulis, mezzo; Giles Tomkins, baritone. Par- tridge Hall, FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, 250 St. Paul St., St. Catharines. 905- 686-0782. $45; $41(60+); $20(15 and under); $15(15 and under); $5(eyeGO); $10(50 and under).


7:30: Kingston Symphony. Beethoven 8 & 9. Beethoven: Symphony No. 8; Symphony No. 9. Teiya Kasahara, soprano; Marion Newman, mezzo; Kevin Myers, tenor; Johnathan Kirby, baritone; Kingston Chamber Choir; Queen’s University Choral Ensemble; Evan Mitchell, conductor. Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts, 390 King St. W., King- ston. 613-546-9792 or 613-530-2050. $10-$50. Also May 3(2:30pm).


7:30: Kingston Symphony. Beethoven 8 & 9. Beethoven: Symphony No. 8; Symphony No. 9. Teiya Kasahara, soprano; Marion Newman, mezzo; Kevin Myers, tenor; Johnathan Kirby, baritone; Kingston Chamber Choir; Queen’s University Choral Ensemble; Evan Mitchell, conductor. Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts, 390 King St. W., King- ston. 613-546-9792 or 613-530-2050. $10-$50. Also May 3(2:30pm).

8:00: Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. Beyond Words. Lully: Passacaille d’Armide; de Rore/Bassano: Divisions on Ancre che col partire; Cima: Sonata for Violin and Violone; Rossi: Sonata No. 6 in dialogo detta la vienna; Schmelzer: Harmonia à 5 and others. Rebecca Morton, curator; Kathleen Kajoka, leader/violin. Awenda United Church, 194 Awenda Ave., Stratford. 519-271-0990. $40; $10(st); free(child under 12).

April 2020

Thursday May 7

2:00: Schneider Male Chorus. Spring Concert. St. Peter’s North Mennonite Church, 100 Benjamin Rd., Waterloo. 519-889-5968 or info@schneidermalechorus.ca. Free admission. In support of the Children’s Choir program.


2:30: Kingston Symphony. Beethoven 8 & 9. Beethoven: Symphony No. 8; Symphony No. 9. Teiya Kasahara, soprano; Marion Newman, mezzo; Kevin Myers, tenor; Johnathan Kirby, baritone; Kingston Chamber Choir; Queen’s University Choral Ensemble; Evan Mitchell, conductor. Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts, 390 King St. W., King- ston. 613-546-9792 or 613-530-2050. $10-$50. Also May 27(3:00).

2:30: Niagara Symphony Orchestra. Le Petit Prince. Music by Kevin Lau. Bradley Thachuk, conductor. FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, 250 St. Paul St., St. Catharines. 905-688-0722 or 1-855-517-0522. $65; $55(60+); $33(10 and under); $20(arts worker); $20(st/child); $5(eyeGO).


4:00: Church of St. Mary Magdalene. Organ Music by Bach. Andrew Adair, organ. St. Mary Magdalene Anglican Church, 335 Main St., Picton. 613-561-7955. Free.

8:00: Kingston Road Village Concert Series. Music Theatre. These music theatre listings contain a wide range of music theatre types including opera, oroperetta, musicals and other performance genres where music and drama combine. Listings in this section are sorted alphabetically by presenter.


Music Theatre

Orchus Niagara. Topsy Turvy! The Best of Gilbert & Sullivan. Partridge Hall, 1st Floor, Performing Arts Centre, 250 St. Paul St., St. Catharines 905-888-0277. $47.45(sr) $40.60(st) $37.60(adv); $15 under 15 valid id; $5(e=s)Click here for details.
Can also be seen at Drayton Entertainment on May 2.

Do not hallucinate.
The group’s relationship to La Rev: “I have two albums funded and waiting to be recorded. One is with my group Aline’s étoile magique, which features Thom Gill, Dan Fortin and Michael Davidson. The other will be all string music with some special guests. Lions d’Or also would like to record an album when this is all over. Even in the early stages of this period, many musicians are facing an unprecedented challenge, and will need major community support to re-establish themselves once we’re all allowed outside once again. Some are offering food pick-up/delivery; others are selling merch; the Tranzac, a not-for-profit, has a membership option. If you’d like to be proactive and to support a venue in some capacity, please be in touch with them to find out what you can do to help.”

Learning from our current moment: “I hope that the bigger community will see how live music impacts them, or rather the lack of live music right now. Our development often depends on a face-to-face public…I believe we will see lots of interesting art come out of this. But I do hope that people take care of themselves and of each other and take as much time as they need to find the right mindset to be creative.”

D. In the Clubs (Mostly Jazz)

Due to the ongoing social distancing mandate, all Toronto shows in the immediate future have been cancelled or postponed. Though it is not yet clear when live music will resume, it is probable that most—if not all—April shows at local venues will not be taking place. As such, instead of our typical listings of individual shows happening at specific venues, we’ve chosen instead to list all of the venues, as they currently stand, and to encourage our readers to reach out to their favourite venues directly as the current quarantine situation progresses. Much like musicians, venues are facing an unprecedented challenge, and will need major community support to re-establish themselves once we’re all allowed outside once again. Some are offering food pick-up/delivery; others are selling merch; the Tranzac, a not-for-profit, has a membership option. If you’d like to be proactive and to support a venue in some capacity, please be in touch with them to find out what you can do to help.

Aline Homzy

The Blue Goose Tavern

1 Blue Goose St. 416-255-2442
thebluegoosetavern.com (full schedule)

Artwork Artbar

15 Colbourne St., Hamilton. 905-543-8512
artwork.net (full schedule)

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

Alleycatz

2409 Yonge St. 416-481-6865
alleycatz.ca
All shows: Call for cover charge info.

Bloom

2315 Bloor St. W. 416-767-1315
bloomrestaurant.com (full schedule)
All shows. 7pm 19+. Call for reservations.

Burdock

1184 Bloor St. W. 416-546-4033
burdockta.com
Ticket prices vary by show, but typically $10-$20; check website for individual show prices.

C’est What

67 Front St. E. 416-867-8499
cestwhat.com (full schedule)
All concerts are PWYC unless otherwise noted.

Cameron House

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

Castro’s Lounge

2116 Queen St. E. 416-699-8272
castrolounge.com (full schedule)
All shows: No cover/PWYC

While Staying in Touch

It is imperative, at this critical moment in the history of the Toronto music community, to continue to support one another: musicians, venues, patrons, schools, and publications alike. If you’re new to the artists below, please follow them on social media, check out their websites, and, if you enjoy their music, consider purchasing an album on Bandcamp, or on other services. This goes for any of your favourite local musicians, many of whom, beyond cancelled performances, are also experiencing a drastic cut in teaching, recording and other activities. Also, even in the early stages of this period, many musicians are live-streaming concerts, offering online lessons, and creating new ways to interact with the community. So, please: be in touch! Just not literally.

The Artist: Aline Homzy, violinist

The Event: Ongoing weekly residence at La Revolucion, 2848 Dundas St. W.

The Project: Lions d’Or, a hot-club group with co-leader guitarist Tak Arikushi and guest bassists, including Scott Hunter (Lions d’Or was formerly known as Les Petits Nouveaux)


Social Distancing While Staying in Touch

COLIN STORY

As I write this – on March 20, 2020, five days into Toronto’s period of mass social distancing and self-isolation/quarantine – all live musical performances have been cancelled in Toronto venues for the foreseeable future. While it isn’t possible to know when, exactly, we will all be able to return to some semblance of normalcy, it is still possible to celebrate the April shows that would have been. In this month’s edition of my column, I’ve interviewed five different artists, involved in four different April shows, including a long-term weekly residency at La Rev, a month-long weekly residency at The Rex, a double-album-release show at the Array Space, and a doctoral recital in the jazz performance program at the University of Toronto.

It is imperative, at this critical moment in the history of the Toronto music community, to continue to support one another: musicians, venues, patrons, schools, and publications alike. If you’re new to the artists below, please follow them on social media, check out their websites, and, if you enjoy their music, consider purchasing an album on Bandcamp, or on other services. This goes for any of your favourite local musicians, many of whom, beyond cancelled performances, are also experiencing a drastic cut in teaching, recording and other activities. Also, even in the early stages of this period, many musicians are live-streaming concerts, offering online lessons, and creating new ways to interact with the community. So, please: be in touch! Just not literally.

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Aline Homzy

The group’s relationship to La Rev: “Tak and I have been playing together for over five years at La Rev and all over Toronto. We are excited because as we relaunch our weekly performances as Lions d’Or, we also have new arrangements and new original music. This residency has meant a lot to us as we are able to bring in different repertoire and explore it in front of an audience, every single week. Not having the ability to do this [due to mandated April venue closures] changes the relationship to how we can develop our music. La Rev has been incredibly generous to us and Indira (owner and musician) has helped us and other musicians in so many ways. The absence of this ‘repetitive musical meeting’ will definitely be a strange change in routine.”

On future projects: “I have two albums funded and waiting to be recorded. One is with my group Aline’s étoile magique, which features Thom Gill, Dan Fortin and Michael Davidson. The other will be all string music with some special guests. Lions d’Or also would like to record an album when this is all over.

Learning from our current moment: “I hope that the bigger community will see how live music impacts them, or rather the lack of live music right now. Our development often depends on a face-to-face public…I believe we will see lots of interesting art come out of this. But I do hope that people take care of themselves and of each other and take as much time as they need to find the right mindset to be creative.”
The Artist: Julian Anderson-Bowes, bassist
The Event: Weekly residence at The Rex during the month of April
The Project: A trio, with guitarist Sam Dickenson and drummer Anthony Daniel, and a quartet, with keyboardists Chris Pruden and Yunjin Claire Lee, and drummer Eric West.
Contact details: www.instagram.com/nakedcatzz

Inspiration and the Toronto music community: “I feel proud and lucky to be part of a community that’s filled with so many talented and interesting people! I basically never feel short of inspiration as I’m in the same room with many of the people who I admire, which makes it easy to take risks. I’m really excited to have Yunjin involved in this as well – we’ve played a handful over the years and I always feel very present when I play with her, I think because she is incredibly in the moment with her music-making.”

The impact of social distancing on academic life and music education: “I am a Resident Massey College Fellow, and because of social distancing I am moving out. I can’t teach my ensemble anymore (you...”

The Artist: Meghan Gilhespy, vocalist (and U of T DMA student)
The Event: Doctoral recital, U of T
The Project: An ongoing duo project with guitarist Patrick O’Reilly

Performing with O’Reilly: “My most recent gigs have all been duo with [O’Reilly], and so was this recital. We recorded at Desert Fish Studios back in the fall, and this recital was going to be a lot of that music. Some of my compositions, some Messiaen and some pop music. We like to do Girls Just Wanna Have Fun and I Hope That I Don’t Fall In Love With You.”

The Projects
Counsel of Primaries
False and Johnston’s new album

Newscast Live
The Event
The Artist: Julian Anderson-Bowes, bassist
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Inspiration and the Toronto music community: “I feel proud and lucky to be part of a community that’s filled with so many talented and interesting people! I basically never feel short of inspiration as long as I’m present and open to what’s going on around me here in Toronto. Maybe this is a nice chance to say thank you to all my fellow artists who are so committed to creating and bettering themselves. You really keep me going!”

The Artist: Meghan Gilhespy, vocalist (and U of T DMA student)
The Event: Doctoral recital, U of T
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Performing with O’Reilly: “My most recent gigs have all been duo with [O’Reilly], and so was this recital. We recorded at Desert Fish Studios back in the fall, and this recital was going to be a lot of that music. Some of my compositions, some Messiaen and some pop music. We like to do Girls Just Wanna Have Fun and I Hope That I Don’t Fall In Love With You.”

The impact of social distancing on academic life and music education: “I am a Resident Massey College Fellow, and because of social distancing I am moving out. I can’t teach my ensemble anymore (you...”

The Artists: Rob Clutton, bassist, and Pete Johnston, bassist
The Event: A double-CD release at The Array Space, for Clutton’s new album Counsel of Primaries and Johnston’s new album False Ghost, Minor Fears, sponsored by the Toronto Jazz Festival Special Projects Fund
The Projects: The Rob Clutton Trio, with Clutton, drummer Nick Fraser and saxophonist Karen Ng, and the Johnston-led See Through 4, with Johnston, Ng, Fraser and pianist Marilyn Lerner.

D. In the Clubs (Mostly Jazz)

Emmet Ray, The
924 College St. 416-792-4497
theemmtray.com (full schedule)
All shows: No cover/PWYC

Grossman’s Tavern
379 Spadina Ave. 416-977-7000
grossmanstavern.com (full schedule)
All shows: No cover (unless otherwise noted).

Hirut Cafe and Restaurant
2050 Danforth Ave. 416-551-7560
hirut.ca

Home Smith Bar – See Old Mill, The
Hugh’s Room
2261 Dundas St. W 416 533 5483
hughsrroom.com
All shows at 8:30pm unless otherwise noted.

Jazz Bistro, The
251 Victoria St. 416-363-5299
jazzbistro.ca (full schedule)

Jazz Room, The
Located in the Huerther Hotel, 59 King St. N., Waterloo. 226-476-1565
kwjazzroom.com (full schedule)
Attendees must be 19+. Cover charge varies (generally $12-$25)

Lula Lounge
1585 Dundas St. W. 416-588-0307
lula.ca (full schedule)

Manhattans Pizza Bistro & Music Club
951 Gordon St., Guelph 519-767-2440
manhattans.ca (full schedule)

See website for individual show prices.

Mezzetta Restaurant
681 St. Clair Ave. W. 416-658-5687
mezzettarestaurant.com (full schedule)

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

N’awlins Jazz Bar & Dining
299 King St. W. 416-395-1958
nawlins.ca
All shows: No cover/PWYC.

Nice Bistro, The
117 Brock St. N., Whitby. 905-668-8839
nicelistro.com (full schedule)
Live jazz and dinner, $45.00 per person, Dinner from 6pm and music from 7pm to 9pm.

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

Pilot Tavern, The
22 Cumberland Ave. 416-923-5716
theonlycafe.com (full schedule)

Poetry Jazz Café
224 Augusta Ave. 416-599-5299
poetryjazzcafe.com (full schedule)
Johnston, on the significance of the show and the musical community it celebrates: “This is a record release show for debut albums by new groups, for both Rob and me. Each member has played together in various combinations over the years (even Rob and I have a duo double bass record), but these are the first recordings from these permutations of people. Rob and Nick have played together in many projects over the last two decades including Drumheller, the Ryan Driver Sextet and the Nick Fraser Quartet. Karen has been on many records of mine with See Through and Rachel Andrist (piano) offering each singer suggestions on artistic skills and providing valuable career information and guidance, stressing the need for professionalism and striving for excellence. Venue: TBA. Offered at no cost to the singers. Application forms and information available at ircpa.net. Application deadline: Apr 1 at 5pm EDT. POSTPONED.

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

Tours
- Apr 05 10:30am: Canadian Opera Company, 30-Minute Tour of the Four Seasons Centre. Led by a trained docent, includes information and access to the Isadore and Rosalie Sharp City Room, the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre and R. Fraser Elliott Hall, as well as backstage areas such as the wig rooms and dressing rooms, the orchestra pit, and other spaces that only a stage door pass could unlock. Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W. 416-363-8231, co.ca. $20(adults); $15(sr/st) Also Apr 19 (French).

Workshops & Classes
- Apr 05 1:30: Toronto Early Music Players Organization. Workshop coached by recorder player Vincent Lauzer. Armour Heights Community Centre, 2140 Avenue Rd. Bring your early instruments and a music stand. 416-779-5750 or tempotoronto.net. $20.

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Choir Director Wanted. The Rockway Community Church, an inclusive 40 member church community chorus mainly composed of older adults, sing four-part harmony. The Kitchener chorus performs monthly at retirement communities and gives four concerts per year. We seek an experienced chorus director for the 2020-21 season. (Honourarium) Apply to Barbara van DeKeere@Kitchener.ca. City of Kitchener.

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Buy & Sell
- Classical Record and CD Collections Wanted. Minimum 350 units. Call, text or e-mail Aaron 416-471-8169 or A@A31.CA

French Horn: Selmer prototype by Reynolds. Double horn in excellent condition. mjbuell@gmail.com

Tenor saxophone; Yamaha; TRUMPET; Olds Ambassador; euphonium; Besson silver, compensating. Phone 416-864-3942.

WHAT’S IN YOUR CLOSET? Sell that nice old record, tapes, photos etc.? Recitals, gigs, auditions, air checks, family stuff. On 76’s, cassettes, reels, 35mm slides etc.

Sight-Singing Workshops: sacred/secular Renaissance music, on the last Monday of the month. 7:30-9:30pm. Drop in $10. For free members of the Toronto Early Music Centre. All levels are welcome. Near Woodbine subway. Call/text 416-574-5250.

Violin, Guitar, and Piano Lessons. Violinist with TSO, COC, Kitchener and other symphony orchestra experience. Details and references available upon request. 647-701-4055, alex.audioamp@yahoo.com

Voices Available / Wanted
- Are you planning a concert or recital? Looking for a venue? Consider Bloor Street United Church. Phone: 416-924-7439 x22. Email: tina@bloorstreetunited.org.

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INSTRUCTION
- Do you sing in a choir? Would you like to practice your sight-singing skills? Or need a little help learning your notes or rhythms? Or experience the joy of singing duets? Treat yourself! Private and group lessons available near Woodbine subway. Call or text Sheila at 416-574-5250, or woodbine.joyofsinging@gmail.com

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Lessons for All! Friendly and firm - I’m an experienced musician and mom teaching piano and singing to children (and the young at heart) in my Toronto home (East Leslieville). To discuss your child's need for music-making please contact ks.kwhite@gmail.com

Sight-Singing Workshops: sacred/secular Renaissance music, on the last Monday of the month. 7:30-9:30pm. Drop in $10. For free members of the Toronto Early Music Centre. All levels are welcome. Near Woodbine subway. Call/text 416-574-5250.

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COVID-19 – Resources

Artist Resources

In light of recent and ongoing cancellations, closures, and quarantines due to the ongoing novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, many folks are facing suddenly precarious financial and social circumstances. Arts organizations, freelancers, arts workers and other gig/temporary workers constitute a particularly hard-hit group—one that our team is trying our best to support.

Visit thewholenote.com/COVID for resource lists designed to assist arts workers impacted by the ongoing crisis. These resource lists will be updated on a regular basis.

Our intent is not to re-invent the wheel, but rather to amplify and broadcast the work put in by those who created (and are creating) those resources and support systems, by sharing them directly with our readership—especially those resources that might particularly apply to musicians and other arts workers based in the area we serve.

Resources compiled to date fall into four broad areas.

• COMPILATION DOCUMENTS: These are large, compiled resource lists that provide an overview of resources for arts workers struggling with issues related to COVID-19.

• FINANCIAL/ADVOCACY RESOURCES: These are organizations who routinely work to provide support and emergency funding for professional artists in Canada.

• FINANCIAL RESOURCES: INFORMATION FROM GOVERNMENT AND GRANTING BODIES: This is where you can find information related to government and grant support.

• COMMUNITY-LED INITIATIVES: These are initiatives for support led by individuals, organizations, and community groups.

If you have information to contribute please contact editorial@thewholenote.com

For those readers who would like to support arts workers and folks in otherwise precarious circumstances, please consider donating to one or more of the community initiatives you will find online on our COVID-19 Artist Resources page. You can also donate to local arts organizations, buy artists’ recordings and merchandise, and tune in to (and financially support) musicians’ livestreams.

Reader Resources

The WholeNote is committed to keeping our readership informed of COVID-19 changes and developments in all our coverage areas and in all the media at our disposal.

We will continue to update daily listings online as and when we receive new information concerning live concert and event listings that have been cancelled, postponed, and rescheduled.

We have added a search tag to our online listings to enable you to check on the status of events in those listings. Go to thewholenote.com/justask and click on “advanced options” to select cancelled/postponed as one of the filters.

We are working on adding an online/virtual events component to our daily listings, where you’ll be able to find online events, live streams, and recorded concerts by artists who had to cancel upcoming performances. If you have information about any such initiatives, help us to help you.

• Send information to listings@thewholenote.com

• Register on our website home page for HalfTones, our regular e-letter so we can keep you in the loop.

• Write to us at editorial@thewholenote.com with news of value to other music lovers in these complex times.

• We are committed to maintaining an increased social media presence during this time. Find and follow us on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook.

Finally, a helpful hint:

Do you have a Toronto Public Library Card?
All branches are closed but no fines will be charged for overdue materials you currently have at home, and if your card is due to expire it will remain valid until June 1. You can continue to place holds on items you’d like, for pick-up when the libraries re-open. Online at torontopubliclibrary.com, and on their Facebook page, you will find a special guide to all their digital resources called 38 ways to use the library from your home. This includes access to reading materials and also podcasts, movies and lots of music. If you have any questions about how to access TPL digital resources you can contact them by email at answerline@tpl.ca. You can also connect with TPL on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram.
Once upon a time, and a long time ago it was, I was sitting around with friends discussing what we would do if we won the lottery. I said I would buy a radio station – this was long before blogs and podcasts – so that I could play just the music I liked. My friend Gary suggested it was not necessary to actually buy a station to make that happen, and asked did I know about the Ryerson alternative music station CKLN-FM (1983-2011)? I did not, but was pleased to learn of this incredible, if somewhat limited, community resource which by that time had expanded from being an in-house station “broadcasting” to about a dozen speakers around the Ryerson campus, to a whopping 50 watt operation accessible to anyone with a strong FM receiver in the downtown core of Toronto. I began to listen and was quite taken with the breadth and diversity of its programming, virtually all of which (from alt-pop, punk and grunge, reggae, hip-hop, house and rap, to such varied offerings as old timey roots and gospel, electronica, ambient music, spoken word, LGBT politics and ultra-left takes on current events) could not easily be found anywhere else on the dial at the time.

Although it seemed a strange extension of the mandate, I proposed a program of contemporary classical music, kind of a supplement to Two New Hours (which had been airing weekly on the CBC since 1978, under WholeNote colleague David Jaeger’s production). Station manager Adam Vaughan and program director John Jones, although amused when I included talking on a taxi radio, my “day” job at the time, in my broadcast experience, found enough merit in my proposal to give me access to the equipment and a few brief lessons on how to run the board to allow me to produce a demo tape. To bring a long introduction to an end, in the early days of 1984 I made my radio debut as the host of Transfigured Night, named after my favourite piece of chamber music at the time, Schoenberg’s Verklärte Nacht. The show initially aired from 2am to 7am on Tuesday mornings, which of course was Monday night to me, having been a denizen of the night-shift driving Globe and Mail trucks and later Beck Taxis for many years. During the seven years that I produced and hosted Transfigured Night, I broadcast works of Arnold Schoenberg on 109 occasions including ten performances of the show’s namesake. My final broadcast aired on November 25, 1991 and on that occasion I played the recording that had made me fall in love with the work, Pierre Boulez’s sextet version with Le Domaine Musical from the 1950s.

(All) that all being said, I was delighted to find a new release of Schoenberg’s Violin Concerto paired with Verklärte Nacht featuring Isabelle Faust and the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra under Daniel Harding’s direction (Harmonia Mundi HMM 902341 harmoniamundi.com). The six performers for the latter piece include Canadian-born French cellist Jean-Guihen Queyras whom I had the pleasure of meeting back in 2002 when he was awarded the City of Toronto Glenn Gould Prêtége Prize as selected by Pierre Boulez, laureate of the Glenn Gould Prize that year. As part of the concert at the award event, Queyras was the soloist in Boulez’s Messagesquisse performing with a sextet of other cellists assembled by New Music Concerts for the occasion.

Normally I would have forwarded this disc to Terry Robbins for his Strings Attached column, but due to the number of personal connections, and the fact that Terry reviewed another performance of the violin concerto last month, I have selfishly retained this one for myself. But I will borrow from Terry’s review. He told us that in spite of the composer’s own description of the concerto – extremely difficult, just as much for the head as for the hands – “it’s a quite stunning work that is emotionally clearly from the heart, and that really deserves to be much more prominent in the mainstream violin concerto repertoire.” With two significant recordings emerging in as many months, I think it is safe to say that the concerto is beginning to receive the attention it deserves. The sextet (1899) with its dark and stormy backstory is resonant in late-Romantic sensibility that only hints at the (a)tonal developments to come. The concerto was written almost four decades later, several years after the composer’s move to the USA. While it employs the serial (12 note) technique central to his mature works, Schoenberg had taken a more tonal approach to writing after his move to America and the concerto has many neoclassical elements, not unlike Stravinsky. Faust’s performance is outstanding, finding a perfect balance between the at times craggy angularity of the melody and the lyrical moments of respite. Her tone is assured and her technique flawless. The performance of Verklärte Nacht is everything I would have hoped for – warm and lush without sacrificing nuance or detail. A very welcome opportunity to revisit what is still one of my favourite works.

It was during the time of Transfigured Night that I became enamoured of electronic music in many of its (classical) forms – musique concrète, mixed works (electronics and live instruments), computer-generated and synthesized compositions, acousmatic art etc. – and at a conference in Montreal in 1986 became a founding member of the Canadian Electroacoustic Community. I also became the first to commission radiophonic works for community station broadcast, a
dozen pieces from such luminaries as Norma Beecroft, Francis Dhomont, Yves Daoust and Paul Dolden, along with the abovementioned Jaeger and another current WholeNote colleague Wendalyn Bartley.

Although in recent years my interest in the form has waned, the most recent release from Toronto cellist/composer/producer Nick Storring has brought fond memories of my earlier involvement with the medium. The nostalgia I feel is not just the reminder of the many ways that electronic media can be used to convey personal expression, but also the variety of programming across the board at CKLN. Storring’s My Magic Dreams Have Lost Their Spell (orangemilkrecords.bandcamp.com) is described as a “heartfelt, albeit oblique, homage to Roberta Flack” who, Storring goes on to say, “in addition to managing profound emotion and consummate musicality as a vocalist, has a brilliant curatorial mind. She brings together songs into smart and beautiful arcs and assembles artists to adorn these songs with powerful production choices and arrangements.” Oblique as it is, I’m not sure I would have recognized this as a tribute to the powerful pop icon without the artist’s statement contained in the press release.

Storring’s latest, and his first release on vinyl (though I’m working from digital files), is a multi-faceted creature divided into six movements ranging from about five to ten minutes in length. The overall feel is gentle and tonal, although there are many different moods. Tides That Defeat Identity is a kind of synthetic aural sunrise which begins with barely audible cello scrubbing and develops through many layers in which a number of acoustic instruments can be discerned in various forms of electronic disguise. After a couple more dreamlike tracks What A Made-Up Mind Can Do builds gradually to a tumultuous clatter that gradually gives way to a Morse Code-like interlude followed by some funky bass licks with Latin beats, electric piano and psychedelic guitar that in turn recede into the mist via some gamelan-like percussion. To my ear, the title track is most reminiscent of Roberta Flack. The opening electric piano arpeggio immediately reminded me of one of her mega-hits, Killing Me Softly with His Song, and there I have a personal connection as well. I attended an Eric Andersen show at the Riverboat in 1974, the year after the release of Flack’s hit, and was surprised to find that the opening act, Lori Lieberman, had “written” the song. I remember that several times during his set Andersen snickered (or maybe just grinned), hummed a bar or two of Killing Me and said “I wish I’d written that...” At any rate, isn’t the internet a wonderful resource? I just Googled and was informed that Charles Fox and Norman Gimbel, Lieberman’s agents, actually wrote the song “in collaboration with Lori Lieberman.”

There’s much more juicy info in the entry if you’re interested in some sordid details. At any rate, until Storring’s wonderful tribute to the (still active at 83) songstress, that was my main connection to the (still active at 83) songstress, Roberta Flack. And don’t let my talk about nostalgia lead you to believe that My Magic Dreams Have Lost Their Spell is an anachronistic throwback. It’s a carefully crafted and very effective eclectic post-modern creation. Give it a spin on your turntable, or your digital media provider, or wait for the CD release which I understand is imminent.

My years as a volunteer at CKLN-FM garnered me the experience to land what I sometimes consider to have been the “best” job of my life, five years as a music programmer at CJRT-FM (especially now that I’m benefitting from a modest Ryerson University pension). Reconstructed as JAZZ-FM in 2001, the Ryerson station had been a multi-format broadcaster since its inception in 1949 and during the five years I worked there (1993-1998) the programming included classical music, opera, jazz, folk and blues shows, live concert recordings (jazz and classical), BBC variety programs and an assortment of academic courses under the auspices of Open College Ryerson. I had the great pleasure of selecting the music for Alex Baran’s Music for Midday, recording – with engineer William van Rees – and scripting CRT Concert, selecting the music for Peter Keigh’s Music Before 1800, interviewing such celebrities as Ben Heppner for This Week in Music and producing Canadian Currents, 52 hour-long programs celebrating the concert music of our native land. This last notwithstanding – it was funded by a grant from Joan Chalmers through the Canadian Music Centre – the music I was “allowed” to program was for the most part not contemporary and certainly not “challenging.” After all, the publicly funded station existed thanks to the generosity of its listeners, who for the most part enjoyed “traditional” fare. It was during my tenure there that the Symphony of Sorrowful Songs swept the classical world, including the august halls of CIR. In 1992 the London Sinfonietta, under David Zinnman with soloist Dawn Upshaw, recorded Henryk Górecki’s 1976 Symphony No.3 with that now-famous subtitle. To date, the Nonesuch recording has sold more than a million copies, something unheard of for a contemporary classical recording. I find it somewhat surprising to note that the three string quartets by this, until then, obscure Polish composer, were all commissioned by the American Kronos Quartet, and that two of them predate the release of the chart-topping symphony that brought him world fame. Another instance of the foresight of this adventuresome group.

They have been newly recorded by Quatuor Molinari for ATMA on Henryk Górecki Complete String Quartets (ACDz 2802 atmaclassique.com). Although there are some quiet and contemplative moments, particularly in the opening of the second quartet with its extremely dark viola melody, anyone looking for a reprise of the beauty of the “sorrowful songs” will likely be disappointed. At times...
reminiscent of the stark and angular pathos of some of Shostakovich’s later quartets, especially in Górecki’s second, these works are more what you would expect from a member of the Polish postwar avant-garde. Even in the String Quartet No.3 “Songs are Sung” with its four extended sombre and quiet movements interrupted by one brief central upbeat interlude, the brooding character never finds the transcendence of the famous symphony. Quatuor Molinari bring their vast skill and dedication to this latest addition to an impressive discography, not only adding to our understanding of this undersung composer who died a decade ago, but also proving that Górecki was not just a one-trick pony. Highly recommended!

Although I see that I’ve pretty much used up my allotment of words mostly talking about myself once again, (but heck, it’s my corner...) I did want to mention one more disc that I’ve been spending a lot of time with this month, Fred Lerdahl Volume Six (Bridge Records 9522 bridgerecords.com). I must confess to a lack of familiarity with this American composer who was born in 1943 and is the Fritz Reiner Professor of Musical Composition at Columbia University. Lerdahl is known for his work on musical grammar and cognition, rhythm theory, pitch space and cognitive constraints on compositional systems. For all that, I must say I find his music quite lyrical and not at all academic. The disc includes recent chamber works and one concerto, beginning and ending with pieces composed for Finnish cellist Anssi Karttunen in 2010. There and Back Again for solo cello (Tom Kraines), was commissioned by Karttunen as part of the Mystery Variations, a series of solo works to commemorate his 50th birthday. As with all the variations, it takes as its point of departure, and in this case return, the Chacona for solo cello by Giuseppe Colombi (1635-1694). In less than five minutes we are transported from the 17th century to the 21st and back again. This is followed by String Quartet No.4 from 2016, a one-movement work which sounds thoroughly modern without being atonal. Commissioned to celebrate the ensemble’s 15th anniversary, it is performed by the Daedalus Quartet. Fire and Ice is a setting of Robert Frost’s poem of the same name for the unusual combination of soprano (Elizabeth Fischborn) and double bass (Edwin Barker), based on one of Lerdahl’s theoretical papers The Sounds of Poetry Viewed as Music. The liner notes explain how the tenets of the 2001 paper were applied to the 2015 compositional process which culminates when “the soprano and double bass gradually fan out to their highest and lowest registers, symbolizing the antipodes of fire/desire and ice/hate around which Frost’s poem is organized.” The performance is at times jazz-tinged Three Bagatelles from 2016 was written for guitarist David Starobin who performs here with violinist Movses Vorobjev. The programmatic arc of the disc, with its palindrome cycle of composition dates, is completed by Arches, a cello concerto which was a Pulitzer Prize finalist in 2011. Performed masterfully here by Danish cellist Toke Møldrup with the Odense Symphony Orchestra under Andreas Delfs, the dramatic work itself is, not surprisingly, arch-like, beginning and ending quietly after a rollercoaster of a ride. I found this a great introduction to the music of a character never finds the transcendence of the famous symphony. Quatuor Molinari bring their vast skill and dedication to this latest addition to an impressive discography, not only adding to our understanding of this undersung composer who died a decade ago, but also proving that Górecki was not just a one-trick pony. Highly recommended!

The four concertos here are from 1969, 1989, 2001 and 2003, and all are essentially single-movement works of similar length – from 13 to 16 minutes. No.1 is perhaps the most modern-sounding; No.2 is “infused with a lyrical mood” (the composer’s own booklet notes) with contrasting episodes that vary “from elegy to intense expressivity.” No.3 is dominated by the opening solo violin fugue, and again varies in tone “from lyrical to intensely dramatic.” No.4 is dominated by driving rhythmic patterns. Biełow is terrific in top-notch performances of works full of strong, idiomatic writing. Volume 2 should make this set a significant addition to the contemporary violin concerto discography.

On Incantation, the French violinist Virgil Boutellis-Taft explores the range of connections for the word, from simple enchantment through religious context to demonic spells and charms. Jac van Steen conducts the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (Aparté AP234 apartemusic.com).

There’s a fair amount of reworking of original sources here, and some tracks consequently fare better than others. Bruch’s Kol Nidrei Op.47 is quite beautiful although “remodeled” by Boutellis-Taft with the middle section omitted. The Chaconne in G Minor, attributed to Vitali, is reworked from the original violin and bass manuscript and comes across as a bit overblown. Saint-Saens’ Danse macabre Op.40 is newly orchestrated based on the composer’s own violin and piano arrangement. Bloch’s Nigun from Baal Shem, Tchaikovsky’s Sérénade mélancolique Op.26 and Chausson’s lovely Poème Op.25 are handled beautifully. Shigeru Umebayashi’s Yumeji’s Theme, with its abrupt ending is an odd choice for the closing track.

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

Ivan Pochekin is the outstanding soloist on Dmitri Shostakovich Violin Concertos 1 & 2, with Valentin Uryupin conducting the Russian National Orchestra (Profil PH19073 naxosdirect.com).

The Concerto No.1 in A Minor Op.77 was written in the years following the end of the Second World War, but was withheld by the composer until 1955. The Concerto No.2 from 1967 was Shostakovich’s final concerto.

The four concertos here are over a 45-year span, and the first four are presented on Myroslav Skoryk Violin Concertos 1. Nos.1–4. Andrej Biełow is the soloist with the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine conducted by Volodymyr Sirenko (Naxos 8.574088 naxosdirect.com).

The Ukrainian composer Myroslav Skoryk (b.1938) wrote a cycle of nine violin concertos over a 45-year span, and the first four are presented on Myroslav Skoryk Violin Concertos 1. Nos.1–4. Andrej Biełow is the soloist with the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine conducted by Volodymyr Sirenko (Naxos 8.574088 naxosdirect.com).

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David Olds, DISCoveries Editor
discoveries@thewholenote.com
Boutellis-Taft plays with his heart firmly on his sleeve on a CD that has some truly lovely moments.

The virtuoso violinist and composer Giuseppe Tartini left over 100 concertos for violin, as well as a large number of sonatas for various string combinations, so any single CD is only going to scratch the surface of his output.

Tartini Violin Concertos & Sonatas features two Sonatas a Quattro in D Major together with first recordings of two unpublished Concertos for violin and strings, in A Minor and B-flat Major. Laura Marzadori is the violin soloist in the concertos, with Massimo Belli conducting the Nuova Orchestra da Camera “Ferrucio Busoni” (Brilliant Classics 957690 naxosdirect.com).

In the solo violin sections Tartini reduced the accompaniment to that provided for the viola, which allows Marzadori’s sweet, pure tone to be even more effective. There’s a pleasing lightness of touch in the orchestral performances throughout a pleasant but fairly lightweight (at 47 minutes) CD of finely crafted and genteel 18th-century works.

Three works written relatively late in their composers’ lives are featured on French Violin Sonatas played by the Hungarian duo of violinist Krisztián Baráti and pianist Klára Würtz (Brilliant Classics 95756 naxosdirect.com).

Debussy wrote his Violin Sonata in financial straits following the third winter of the Great War, and in great pain from the cancer that would kill him the following year, all of which makes its warmth and clarity all the more remarkable. There’s a lovely dynamic range and freedom of phrasing from both performers.

Ravel’s Violin Sonata No.2 in G Major dates from 1927, its jazz-influenced Blues middle movement and Perpetuum mobile finale again drawing fine playing from the duo.

Franck’s Sonata in A Major was one of a small handful of works that finally won the composer some public acclaim in the closing years of his life. There’s big playing from both performers here, with terrific piano work from Würtz in the second movement in particular, and with Baráti drawing a huge tone and sound from his terrific piano work from Würtz in the second movement in particular, and with Baráti drawing a huge tone and sound from his

The Italian violinist Liliana Bernardi is excellent in music by Johann Joseph Vilsmaier and Heinrich Ignaz Franz von Biber on Austrian Baroque for Solo Violin (Stradivarius STR 37147 naxosdirect.com).

Vilsmaier (1663-1722) was a member of the Archbishops’ chapel in Salzburg where Biber (1644-1704) was Chapel Master. His Partitas I and VI in A Major and V in G Minor are from the Artificiosus concentus pro camera distributes in sex partes, a set of six partitas in a collection of Vilsmaier’s solo violin music in the British Museum. The movements are very short – 24 of the 29 are under two minutes – but their multiple-stopping and arpeggio passages, while perhaps more reminiscent of Telemann’s Fantasias, clearly point towards the Bach Sonatas and Partitas.

Biber’s influence is clear in the scordatura (retuning of the strings) in the Partita V. His own work here, preceded by an extremely short Prelude in D is the challenging Passacaglia in G Minor (The Guardian Angel), the last of his remarkable Rosary Sonatas.

The Constanze Quartet makes its label debut with Felix Draeseke String Quartets Vol.1, the first volume in the complete recordings of the quartets by the German Romantic contemporary of Liszt, Wagner and Brahms (cpo 553 281-2 naxosdirect.com).

Early in his career Draeseke (1835-1913), was considered an extremist, but later in life he was repelled by what he felt was the exaggerated unnaturalness of the late 19th century, responding to the 1905 premiere of Strauss’ Salome with a pamphlet on Confusion in Music.

His three string quartets postdate those of Brahms, with no equivalent works by Liszt or Wagner to act as models. The two quartets here – No.1 in C Minor Op.27 from 1880 and No.2 in E Minor Op.35 from 1886 – are described as viewing the classical quartets of the Romantic era through a Wagnerian lens, especially in the way that long, melodic threads serve to hold the music together.

They’re certainly substantial and engrossing works, given fine performances by the Constanze ensemble.

The American string quintet Sybarites is back with its fourth album, Live from New York. It’s Sybarites, recorded live at their regular performance space in Chelsea’s The Cell (Bright Shiny Things BSTC–0131 brightshiny.ninja).

Silkroad percussionist Shane Shanahan joins the group for William Brittlelle’s Future Shock and John Coltrane’s Alabama. Ehsan Matoori and his santoor (Persian dulcimer) are front and centre in two of his own works: Tehran When Lonely and Naqsh-e Jahan. Mezzo-soprano Blythe Gaisser sings Michael Dellaria’s Star Globe, based on a poem by Nancy Manocharian.

Other works are Brandon Ridenour’s NuPac Kanon & Jig (Pachelbel meets Tupac Shakur!), Marc Mellits’ driving Groove Machine, Steven Snowden’s Traveler No.65 and Aleksandra Vrebavol’s My Dearest. My Rose. An unlisted bonus track is a lovely arrangement of Pete Seeger’s Where All the Flowers Grown.

There’s not a dull moment on an album brimming with the quintet’s trademark energy and drive.

In much the same way as his orchestral serenades preceded – and perhaps acted as preparation for – his symphonies and thus avoided direct comparison with Beethoven, Brahms wrote his two String Sextets Nos.1 in B-flat Major Op.18 and 2 in G Major Op.36 before his three string quartets.

They’re available on Brahms String Sextets in performances by the WDR Chamber Players, instrumentalists drawn from the WDR Symphony Orchestra of Cologne (Pentatone FTC 5186 807 naxosdirect.com).

The string sextet was not a firmly established form at the time, but
the expanded string ensemble of three pairings of violins, violas and cellos gave Brahms the opportunity to explore the orchestral possibilities of chamber music while still retaining the subtlety and intimacy of the genre.

The playing here is suitably rich and warm in exemplary performances.

There’s another superb recital CD in the outstanding Naxos Laureate Guitar Series, this time featuring the Korean guitarist Ji Hyung Park, winner of the 2018 Changsha International Guitar Competition (Naxos 8.573410 naxosdirect.com).

Transcriptions of three sonatas by Domenico Scarlatti and two excerpts from Iberia by Isaac Albéniz open the disc, followed by the world premiere recording of Scarlatti’s Las Cícades arcaicas from 2018. Morì no na da de (In the Woods), from November 1995, was the last work Toru Takemitsu wrote before his death the following February; the second of its three pieces portrays the trees in Toronto’s Rosedale area.

Mario Castelnovo-Tedesco’s Sonata in D Major Op.77 “Ommaggio a Boccherini” was written for Segovia in 1934, and is heard here in its original manuscript form pre-dating Segovia’s editing. A simply gorgeous arrangement of Toots Thielemans’ Bluesette ends a terrific disc.

Park has everything you could want – tone, colour, warmth, technique, dynamics – in a recital that fully lives up to the extremely high standards of this series.

There’s more excellent guitar playing on Asencio Complete Guitar Music featuring works by the Spanish composer Vicente Asencio (1908–79) played by the Italian guitarist Alberto Menisca (Brilliant Classics 95806 naxosdirect.com).

Asencio’s interest in the guitar grew from his teaching musical interpretation to the young Narciso Yepes in the 1940s, a relationship that resulted in the Suite de Homenajes of 1950, three homages to Domenico Scarlatti, Manuel de Falla and Federico Garcia Lorca.

Collectrici Intim is a suite of five songs and dances written in 1965 at the request of the by-then famous Yepes. Suite Valenciana reflects the colour and light of the composer’s native Valencia. The three-movement Suite Místico started life as a single piece, Dipsó, written for Holy Week in 1971; Segovia was sufficiently impressed to suggest that Asencio add a further two Passion-related items.

Two short pieces – Canzón d’hiver and Danza Valenciana – complete the CD. Menisca displays excellent, clean playing with a wide range of technical skills in a very interesting recital.

Italian Guitar Concertos is the somewhat misleading title of a CD by the Italian guitarist Emanuele Segre with the Orchestra Pomeriggio Musicale under the direction of composer Carlo Boccadoro (Delos DE 3546 naxosdirect.com).

Aria for Guitar and String Orchestra is Segre’s arrangement of a contralto aria from a Vivaldi cantata, and the work by Mauro Giuliani is a guitar and string orchestra version of his Gran Quintetto Op.65. The Vivaldi Concerto in D Major is at least a true concerto, but the main interest here is the world premiere recordings of two contemporary single-movement works: The Black Owl by Giovanni Sollima (b.1962) and Dulces Memoria II for Guitar and String Orchestra by Boccadoro (b.1962), the latter originally written for clarinet and strings in 1995. Clocking in at about 18 and 14 minutes, respectively, they’re not substantial works, but both explore a nice range of techniques and textures.

Performances throughout are fine without ever being dazzling.

Bach – Harpsichord Works
Jory Vinikour
Sono Luminus DSL-92239 (sonoluminus.com)

Comprised of four revered works, this album makes for a fine collection for harpsichord enthusiasts and fans of Johann Sebastian Bach. Jory Vinikour, two-time Grammy-nominated harpsichordist and conductor, has made quite a few recordings of Bach’s music so far and his expertise and passion for this composer is evident here. I enjoyed the clarity of Vinikour’s sound (this harpsichord is modelled after a German instrument of Bach’s time) and his refined and thoughtful interpretation. This recording has elegance and virtuosity, bringing out both the grand and hidden gestures of Bach’s compositions.

The collection features the buoyant Italian Concerto (written for two-manual harpsichord, thus distinguishing tutti from solo passages), Ouverture in French Style (consisting of eight dance movements), the exceptional Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue and an interesting pairing of the Prelude and Fugue in A Minor BWV894 with Bach’s transcription of the Andante from Sonata for Solo Violin in A-Minor. I liked the progression of the pieces: traditional pairing of more formal works (Italian Concerto and Ouverture in French Style were even published together in 1835) is followed by expansion of virtuosic and improvisatory elements in Fantasy and Fugues.

Vinikour’s impeccable knowledge and sensibility to Bach’s music makes these pieces sound very personal. Listeners are granted a sonic glimpse of the unique world where the nuances are treated with care and the sound is enriched with measured restraint.

Ivana Popovic

Bach – English Suites
Andrew Rangell
Steinway & Sons 50136 (naxosdirect.com)

If the central tenet of music-making is the desirability of singing or playing in tune, accurately producing sound waves that vibrate at the correct frequency, then no one, it seems, did this better than Johann Sebastian Bach. Much of his keyboard music was written for the harpsichord – a near-ubiquitous instrument in his day – and it began to make a seamless transition to the piano no sooner the instrument was invented and to this day continues to be wonderfully interpreted.

One of the most recent is the unveiling of the English Suites with these gorgeous, free-spirited performances by Andrew Rangell. The suites are decidedly more grandiose than the French Suites and written entirely for pleasure rather than for instruction. The allemandes are rock steady throughout, the gigue extremely lively; the courante sections rapid while the sarabandes are utterly noble. The six suites are altogether easygoing and exquisitely flowery and are said to have borne a slight resemblance to the style of Couperin, with whom Bach is known to have corresponded.

The English Suites are not actually English, but rather more influenced by other European compositional elements, that seemingly – and fortuitously – held Bach’s attention. They begin with a prelude which is often, as in the Suite No.3 in G Minor BWV808, a large-scale concerto-like movement. Rangell brings matchless clarity to Bach’s

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Analekta AN 2 9147 (analekta.com)

Charles Richard-Hamelin; Les Violons du Roy; Jonathan Cohen

Mozart – Piano Concertos Nos.22 & 24

Naxos 2.110653 (naxosdirect.com)

Bach – Well-Tempered Clavier Book 1

Sir András Schiff

The 24 preludes and fugues work through the 12 major and 12 minor keys. Unequaled in the profligacy of their inventiveness, the books were intended partly as a manual of keyboard playing and composition, partly as a systematic exploration of harmony and partly as a celebration of a new development in tuning technique that allowed the instrument to be played in any key without being retuned.

Sir András Schiff’s performance at the BBC Proms (2017) is authoritative and eminently satisfying. The fact that it has been well-crafted as a DVD is cause for additional celebration. Schiff exploits the full range of the piano’s sonorities: a crisp, hard touch is used for the more rhythmically motorized preludes, yet there are no qualms about using the sustain pedal to add colour and warmth. His speeds are slow, in some of the fugues, but the shape and direction of a piece is never in any doubt.

Mozart – Piano Concertos Nos.22 & 24

Charles Richard-Hamelin; Les Violons du Roy; Jonathan Cohen

Analekta AN 2 9147 (analekta.com)

Mozart’s spirit is (arguably) most evident in his piano-concerto writing – where vitality is entwined with gaiety, with brilliance and lyricism multilayered across. This first recording collaboration between acclaimed young pianist Charles Richard-Hamelin and Quebec City’s chamber orchestra Les Violons du Roy, led by Jonathan Cohen, captured that essence note by note. Richard-Hamelin’s fiery mastery is matched with the unwavering elegance of the orchestra’s responses while Cohen’s artistic vision underlines the most minute details of expression. Together they created a thrilling gem.

Mozart composed 11 piano concertos between February 1784 and March 1786, while living in Vienna, his creativity unrivaled by any other composer that came after him when it comes to piano concerto writing. The two concertos on this album stand on different sides of his creative expression. No.22 in E-flat Major, sometimes referred to as the queen of Mozart’s piano concertos, is stately and noble in nature, with a prominent wind section throughout. On the other end, No.24 in C Minor, is uncharacteristically emotional and dark, and is considered to be one of Mozart’s finest efforts.

I could not get enough of the beauty of Richard-Hamelin’s sound on this recording – it contains a precious combination of shimmering lightness, fluent articulation and an array of colours. Most impressive are the cadenzas he has written for these concertos, a spirited personal salute to Mozart. 

Beethoven – Piano Concertos Nos. 2 & 5

Kristian Bezuidenhout, Freiburger Barockorchester; Pablo Heras-Casados

Harmonia Mundi HMM902411 (harmoniamundi.com)

Kristian Bezuidenhout has recently turned his attention to a trilogy of Beethoven concerto discs. He is known for his inspired, imaginative and revivifying approach to fortepiano repertoire, proving time and time again that communicating brave new things at the neoclassical keyboard can be attained through good taste, apt performance practise and the right dash of courage. This first of three such recordings embodies all of these celebrated attributes and, rather triumphantly, establishes new ones.

From the vibrancy of Heras-Casado’s conducting, to the sparkling lines in winds and brass; from the marvellous sonorities revealed in Beethoven’s writing when played expertly on period instruments to the glimmering, pearl-like textures Bezuidenhout attains with unshakable, inspired finesse, this disc is absolute perfection to behold. Here is the Beethoven the world needs to know.

Brimming over with jubilant, dazzling sonic palettes, we hear musical craftsmanship on this record being set alight. The quest for innovation and (re)discovery is ever present as these gifted, impassioned artists deliver two of the best-loved piano concertos known to Western music. Bezuidenhout and Heras-Casado delight us; they astonish us, drawing us into a glorious, vivid reality from centuries gone by. In divining treasures from the past, through exceedingly hard work and a sincere love for what they do, they have set an 18th-century stage resounding with every scale, trill, arpeggio and cadence now sung afresh for the contemporary ear. Beethoven, surely, is applauding their achievement from on high.

Chopin – Piano Concertos

Benjamin Grosvenor; Royal Scottish National Orchestra; Elim Chan

Decca Records 4850365 (store.deccaclassics.com)

At 27, Benjamin Grosvenor has dazzled audiences from the very brink of his extra-ordinary career through to what is now his fifth release on Decca Classics. The Royal Scottish National Orchestra itself presents formidably, with a pared down ensemble and robust presence, helmed by the intrepid Elim Chan. Her command of the players is classically clean-lined, crisp and no-nonsense in its approach to such familiar music. Both piano concerti by Chopin are often criticized for their lack of fulsome orchestra writing. However, Chan seems to disregard any longstanding notions of inadequacy in the orchestration, declaring every accompaniment episode and march-like interlude with shining surety and emphatic musicianship.

As for the solo part, Grosvenor unassumingly guides his piano to the core of each concerto’s argument, with interpretations that are commanding and forthright yet never self-indulgent. Abounding with beautiful melodies and lyrical highpoints, all of this music is aptly suited to Grosvenor’s zeal for textural clarity and elegant, quick-silver conceptions of Chopin-esque expressivity. (The first movement of No.1 and the second of No.2 are examples.) His tone and balance of phrasing remain exceedingly cultivated with a personal aspect that seems to exude a deep sense of integrity.

The poise and lucidity of Felix Mendelssohn’s keyboard writing might be a candidate for influencing Grosvenor’s approach here (and the results likely closer to Chopin’s original intentions!). No small feat it is today, to record such well-worn repertoire with fresh ears, hands – and heart.
Rubinstein – Piano Sonatas Nos.1 and 2
Han Chen
Naxos 8.573989 (naxos.com)

"Van the Second." That’s what Franz Liszt called Anton Rubinstein, referring to his fellow pianist’s titan’s resemblance to Beethoven’s unkempt, leonine looks and pile-driving keyboard aggressiveness. Like Beethoven, Rubinstein also composed in all genres but, unlike “Van the First,” he’s rarely performed today outside his native Russia.

The music on this CD dates from 1850-1855, when Rubinstein, in his early-to-mid-20s, was immersed in early Romanticism. As a teenager studying in Berlin, Rubinstein even met Mendelssohn, who is channeled in the restless, urgent first movement of Piano Sonata No.1. It’s followed by a soulful prayer, a pensive waltz and another chorale melody that ends the fourth movement, and the sonata, in grandiose fashion.

Sandwiched between the two sonatas, both lasting nearly half an hour, are the lovely, gentle Three Serenades, flavoured with subtle echoes of Chopin. Piano Sonata No. 2 is in three movements, the first two recalling Schumann in their inward, almost downcast, reflectiveness. The sonata ends much as the CD began, with a dramatic, Mendelssohnian surge of stormy energy.

Pianist Han Chen, born in Taiwan and now living in New York, was himself in his mid-20s when, in 2018, he recorded these works in King City, Ontario, with expert producers Norbert Kraft and Bonnie Silver, fine musicians themselves. Chen successfully conveys the music’s varied moods, from tender to agitated to triumphal. I found all these attractive works, though derivative, a pleasure to listen to. I think you may, too.

Michael Schuman

Debussy – Études; Children’s Corner
Aleck Karis
Bridge Records 9529 (bridgerecords.com)

Claude Debussy’s two books of Études from 1915 are less well known than many of his other piano compositions and until recently, had been neither widely performed nor recorded. Written three years before his death, they are regarded by some as his last testament to his works for piano solo, the form itself having been long embraced by such composers as Clementi, Czerny, Liszt and Chopin, to whom they were dedicated and whose music Debussy adored. The two sets are technically challenging – even the composer himself confessed to struggling with certain passages – but any difficulties are met with admirable competency by the American-based pianist Aleck Karis on this Bridge recording featuring both sets and the charming Children’s Corner Suite.

Beginning with the first étude in Book 1, Pour les cing doigts, Karis displays a precise and elegant touch, his interpretations at times thoughtfully nuanced. Indeed, these pieces, ranging in length from two minutes to just under seven, are true “studies” in contrast. The first, a tribute to Czerny, features repeated melodic progressions, while number four is moody and mysterious, and the sixth, Pour les huit doigts, a relentless perpetuum mobile.

The disc concludes with the familiar Children’s Corner Suite from 1908, a heartfelt depiction of childhood from a far simpler time. Opening with Doctor Gradus ad Parnassum, Karis’ playing is refined and sensitively articulated, with just the right amount of tempo rubato. The atmospheric Jimbo’s Lullaby would induce even the most obstinate pachyderm into slumber, while The Snow is Dancing and The Little Shepherd are true musical impressions that surely would have delighted his beloved daughter Chouchou.

Rounding out the set is the popular Golliwog’s Cakewalk, all bounce and joviality, which brings the disc to a most satisfying conclusion.

Richard Haskell

Rachmaninov, Liszt
Luiz Carlos De Moura Castro
Independent n/a (luizdemouracastro.com)

The Brazilian pianist Luiz Carlos de Moura Castro, who plays with extraordinary virtuosity and passion, is so self-effacing that his only presence apart from the occasional entry in a digital classical music encyclopedia is on recordings, happily as brilliant as this one he produced himself. The works by Rachmaninov and Liszt – two of the greatest piano virtuosos of all time – with which he is represented here on a breathtaking-sounding Fazioli F308, are a testament to Castro’s pianistic genius.

The Liszt Piano Concerto No.2 in A Major, like everything Liszt, demands the highest level of virtuosity with its astounding octave leaps and high pianistic drama. Castro gives an overwhelmingly powerful and authoritative reading of it. His fingerwork has a steely energy to it which is remarkable. He is well supported by the Société d’Orchestre, Bienne under Jost Meier, who conducts the concerto with extraordinary musical empathy and understanding of its difficult score.

Rachmaninov’s compositions are all very difficult to play and also reflect the composer’s complete technical command of the piano. Concerto No.3 in D Minor is uncommonly taxing and No.2 In C Minor is filled with bravura. Castro brings to life both of these – as well as Liszt’s Rhapsody on a Theme by Paganini, a work almost as capricious as anything Paganini himself wrote – with the Slovenian Radio and TV Symphony Orchestra, the fiery Ligia Amadio conducting brilliantly.

Raul da Gama

Percy & Friends
Richard Masters
Heritage HTGC 179 (richard-masters.com)

“Let us go then, you and I, / When the evening is spread out against the sky…” Let us listen then, of summer evenings, nightingales and shepherd’s hey; of rainbow trout, bridal lullabies and colonial songs. Pianist Richard Masters offers an attractive new disc, celebrating varied solo piano pieces from an unexpected cohort: Roger Quillier, Henry Balfour Gardiner, Cyril Scott, Norman O’Neill, Frederick Delius and Percy Grainger.

Such English-speaking expatriates who were, at one time or another, in school together at the Hoc Conservatory, Frankfurt, became known as the Frankfurt Group, not including Frederic Delius. The other five revered Delius and often subsumed him in various articles written about the composers during their time: the New English School was profiled as an adventurous collective of young musical artists, Anglo-centric and German-despising.

The 17-track record from Masters, in combination with his fine liner notes, transports the listener to a gentle world of breezy morning strolls and wholesome sips of afternoon tea. This aesthetic never seeks to poke or to prod, nor to unseat the status quo; here is a unique strain of harmonious connectedness, always sumptuous in its tonal nuance. From such discarded chests of keyboard music emanates a sincerity of lyricism, generously set against tapestries of perfumed sonic spaces.

With comedy confidence and a slightly perceptible dash of American Southern charm, Masters cajoles you and me, as he brings this New English School of the early 20th century back to life.

Adam Sherkin
Prokofiev – Piano Sonatas Nos. 6, 7 & 8

Steven Osborne
Hyperion CDA688298 (hyperion-records.co.uk)

▶ With three gritty, strenuous piano sonatas that run the gamut of expression in movements now dreamy and languid, now pungent and divisive, Scottish pianist Steven Osborne proves yet again that he can tackle any corner of the piano repertory with technical prowess and innate stylistic aplomb.

In this new disc, Osborne rips into some of the most challenging keyboard music ever written by Russian composer Sergei Prokofiev. The challenges here extend far beyond the thorniness of the sonatas’ character and their assembled identity as three war sonatas. (Opp.82, 83 and 84), written during the years 1939 through 1944. These broad and complex works demand an acute understanding of modernist expression and its concept of human experience when stretched to the very edge.

This edge can be extreme in some cases, compelling both listener and pianist alike to embrace the ridiculous as well as the sublime. A successful performance of such music depends on the wits (and technique!) of a multi-versed artist up to the challenge. Osborne leaves us with no doubt as to our emotional survival: we immediately jump onboard for the ride, putting ourselves in his safekeeping until the end of this disc. Therein, Osborne’s hands cast spells of colour and light that echo the deft craft of impressionist composers, betraying a kinship (rarely revealed) between the inspired music of turn-of-the-century France and that generation of Russian modernists who emerged in the 1920s, with Prokofiev at the vanguard.  

Adam Sherkin

Samuil Feinberg – Piano Sonatas Nos. 1-6
Marc-André Hamelin
Hyperion CDA 68233 (hyperion-records.co.uk)

▶ Wondrous and fair, is the music of Russian composer-pianist, Samuil Feinberg. Today, 58 years after his death, he remains little known outside of Russia. Nevertheless, veteran virtuoso Marc-André Hamelin has long championed the ravishing piano catalogue of Feinberg, peppering his own recital programs with his music. Now, for the first time in a truly voluminous discography, Hamelin has recorded six sonatas by Feinberg, Op.1, 2, 3, 6, 10 and 13. Each one is a marvel of pianistic craft, gazing down from the pinnacle of early 20th-century Russian lineage.

Both the first and second sonatas owe a great deal to the spectrums of resonance and open-hearted romanticism found in Rachmaninoff’s piano writing. (in particular the Sonata No.2 in B-flat Minor Op.36). These works gleam with whimsical, searching melodies, buoyed up by formidable textures. Hamelin aptly leads the adventure, taking the utmost care and cultivation. In fact, Hamelin navigates every page of these fascinating, singular pieces with splendid ease and confidence. He finds ways to personalize the expressive potential Feinberg embeds in his scores.

Another highlight of the disc, Feinberg’s Sonata No.5, invites us into an eerie, unsettled world. The opening rollicks with overwrought chords that grope and sniff their way through the dark. What – or whom – might they be seeking? This disc bears repeated listening, as is so often the case with Hamelin’s artistry. Verily, today’s musical world would be a dimmer place without him.

Adam Sherkin

VOCAL

Rossini – Zelmira
Soloists; Górecki Chamber Choir, Krakow; Virtuosi Brunensis; Gianluigi Gelmetti
Naxos 8.660468-70 (naxosdirect.com)

▶ Dating from 1822, Zelmira is the 33rd of Rossini’s 39 operas and the last one he wrote in Naples. By that time he was aiming for international attention, first step to be Vienna. Zelmira achieved great success there and later in Paris, but inexplicably it fell out of public favour and simply disappeared for nearly two centuries. By a stroke of luck in 1995, Richard Bonyng and Joan Sutherland found the score in an antique bookshop in Paris and it was quickly bought by the Pesaro Festival and triumphantly performed there with a stellar cast.

The reason for the disfavour was Rossini’s attempt to reconcile Italian and German styles by devising new harmonies and orchestral effects, no doubt to please Vienna audiences, but unfortunately it was too unusual for Italians. Too bad, because it’s a tremendous grand opera with magnificent, original and highly inspired music and great opportunities for singers; particularly for the two principal tenors and the lead soprano (written for Rossini’s wife, Isabella Colbran).

The story takes us to the Age of Antiquity, to Lesbos on the Aegean Sea. It revolves around the king’s daughter Zelmira, who after many vicissitudes, false accusations and even prison, saves her father, and her son, from wicked usurpers to the throne. The main villain is Antenore, secondo tenore (American tenor Joshua Stewart) with a tremendously difficult tessitura, full of powerful high notes à la Rossini. He comes to the stage first, but just you wait for the primo tenore, Ilo, prince of Troy and Zelmira’s husband (sung by Turkish virtuoso Mert Süngü), and his first cavatina – C’era di bellezza! – with even more hair-raising vocal acrobatics.

Silvia Dalla Benetta is Zelmira. She crowns the whole work with even more hair-raising vocal acrobatics. The prison itself.

Janos Gardonyi

Leoš Janáček – From the House of the Dead
Bayerisches Staatsorchester and Chorus; Simone Young
BelAir Classiques BAC173 (naxosdirect.com)

▶ Janáček’s From the House of the Dead is a gripping dramatic work. The last opera he composed, this adaptation of Dostoyevsky’s novel premiered in 1930, two years after Janáček’s death, with an orchestra completed by two of his students. From the House of the Dead is notable for a number of reasons, including the use of chains as percussion in the orchestra (to reflect the sounds of the prisoners shuffling back and forth) and the lack of narrative content; there is no overarching storyline, but rather a number of episodic narratives relating to individual prisoners interspersed with occurrences within the prison itself.

This video release from the Bayerische
Staatstoper is captivating, providing a gritty interpretation of Janáček’s work. Featuring an onstage cage in which the majority of the large ensemble cast is contained throughout the performance as well as superb costumes, including an homage to the famous Day of the Dead, the visual plays as important a role in this opera as the music. It is fascinating to see how this production so ably serves the dramatic requirements of Janáček’s opera and reinforces just how confined and uncomfortable this Siberian prison camp is, as told by Dostoyevsky.

The Staatsoper soloists, chorus and orchestra are superb throughout this short yet intense work, conveying the depth and darkness of the score without once coming across as melodramatic. One of the 20th century’s most profound and significant operatic composers, Janáček displays his mastery in full force in From the House of the Dead, and reinforces just how confined and uncomfortable this Siberian prison camp is, as told by Dostoyevsky.

Matthew Whitfield

Zemlinsky – Der Traumgörge
Josef Prosckka; Pamela Coburn; Janis Martin; Hartmut Welker; Hessischer Rundfunk Youth Chorus; RSO Frankfurt; Gerd Albrecht
Capriccio C5395 (naxosdirect.com)

► In 1907, Alexander Zemlinsky’s new opera Der Traumgörge was set to premiere at Vienna’s Court Opera. But after its conductor, Zemlinsky’s mentor Gustav Mahler, abruptly resigned as music director of the opera house, the production was cancelled. Zemlinsky was already well-established as a composer, pianist, conductor and teacher (his students included Schoenberg, Korngold and Alma Schindler, who later married Mahler). But it took almost 75 years for Der Traumgörge to get its first performance.

This version, recorded live at a concert performance in 1987, seven years after the much-delayed premiere, has long been unavailable. Now, with Zemlinsky’s music finally getting the attention it deserves, Capriccio has reissued it.

The psychological undercurrents of Der Traumgörge’s libretto by Leo Feld resonate with Freudian profundity. Görg the Dreamer, who lives in a world of fairy tales, sets off on a quest to find the princess he’s been fantasizing about. Instead he encounters a troubled woman, Gertraud. When she is brutally attacked for being a witch, Görg rescues her and brings her back home. Finally he figures out that she is the woman of his dreams after all.

Conductor Gerd Albrecht shows an incisive grasp of Zemlinsky’s opulent late-Romantic style. The terrific cast of singers get right to the heart of this inspired music. With the only other recording of this opera, James Conlon’s from 2001, unavailable, it’s disappointing that Capriccio did not include the libretto with this release. Otherwise, it’s a most welcome reissue.

Pamela Margles

Clytemnestra
Ruby Hughes; BBC National Orchestra of Wales; Jac van Steen
BIS BIS-2408 SACD (naxosdirect.com)

► The maverick Welsh soprano Ruby Hughes is the star of this alluring collection of song cycles which opens with five songs by Gustav Mahler based on the poetry of Friedrich Rückert, sung with admirable sensitivity and a clear, light voice. There are of course landmark recordings of these lieder that are richer in tone and emotionally more compelling, by the likes of Janet Baker, Christa Ludwig and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau; nevertheless Hughes offers a youthful and well-considered take on these intimate songs.

The Viennese premiere of Alban Berg’s Altenberg Liederg in March 1913 was the cause of a legendary riot. Though only two of the five songs of the cycle were performed, a member of the audience soon belloved out that both the composer and poet (the whimsical picture-postcard texts were authored by Peter Altenberg) should be sent to the insane asylum. In fact, the poet was already there! Fisticuffs ensued and the remainder of the concert was abandoned. The effect on Berg was devastating. A complete performance of this astounding composition, which presages advances in chromaticism (including some proto-serial elements) that foreshadow those of his mentor Schoenberg, would not take place until 1952, long after his death. This is a most worthy contribution to the limited roster of recordings of this great work.

Clytemnestra, a 25-minute song cycle by the Welsh composer Rhian Samuel, is a vivid, blood-curdling setting of Aeschylus’s tale of the murder of Agamemnon by his wife. Commissioned by the BBC Wales Orchestra in 1994, Samuel’s libretto is constructed solely from Clytemnestra’s point of view. This is a garish, unabashedly cinematic work, massively orchestrated and incorporating some provocative electric bass guitar solos, compellingly brought to life in a riveting performance from both soloist and orchestra under the direction of their principal guest conductor Jac van Steen.

Daniel Foley

Apparition
Agata Zubel; Krzysztof Książek
CD accord ACD 263-2 (naxos.com)

► The 20th century was a time of immense creativity, with the fundamental building blocks of musical composition and interpretation disassembled and reconstructed by some of Western music’s most legendary figures. Apparition explores a number of lesser-known and underappreciated composers from this period, including Barber, Crumb and Szymanowski.

This disc opens with Maurice Ravel’s Shéhérazade, an art song triphtych based on the renowned Arabic folk tales of One Thousand and One Nights, most famously set to music by Rimsky-Korsakov. Ravel’s songs feature characteristic exoticism, combining “oriental” material with impressionistic harmonies and long vocal lines, expertly interpreted by Zubel and Książek.

These traditional, almost Debussian works are sharply contrasted with George Crumb’s Apparition, a set of songs which combine the familiar with the avant-garde. Within this cycle, Crumb gives the singer her expected role, singing texts set to tunes, with a few exceptions such as the three Vocalises, which utilize the timbral aspect of the voice independent of textual tethers. The piano part, however, is a demanding essay in extended techniques throughout the cycle, as the pianist is required to utilize every part of the piano to produce percussive, shimmering, and rattling effects.

The remainder of this disc’s contents fall between these two stylistic extremes: Szymanowski’s Songs of a Fairy Tale Princess, Barber’s Opus 13 songs, and Fernando Obradors’ Cancones all align themselves more closely with Ravel than Crumb, bringing the 19th-century tradition of art song forward into the 20th. As a whole, Apparition is a well-thought-out and equally well-performed survey of piano-voice repertoire from the last century and well worth a listen, especially for those who appreciate the radical genius of George Crumb.

Matthew Whitfield

David Lang – The Loner
Rod Gilfry; Conrad Tao; Bang on a Can Opera Ensemble; Lesley Leighton
Cantaloupe Music CA21155 (cantaloupemusic.com)

► When I hear a line like, “Strangely enough I met Glenn on Monk’s Mountain, my childhood moun-
called Suicide Mountain, since it is especially suited for suicide and every week at least three or four people throw themselves off it into the void,” and find myself, despite myself, laughing, I know I’m experiencing the misanthropic comedy of Thomas Bernhard. In this case I’m listening to the nameless narrator of Bernhard’s novel, The Loser, who, as many Canadian readers know, is obsessed with the Glenn mentioned above, last name Gould. Aside from pianistic virtuosity, though, this “Glenn” is ultimately fictional, serving as a paragon of perfection against which Bernhard’s frustrated narrator measures his own failures.

David Lang’s opera adaptation of the novel, sung by baritone Rod Gilfry, offers an outstanding musical correlate to Bernhard’s centripetal comedy of Thomas Bernhard. In this case I’m listening to the nameless narrator of Lang and Gilfry’s and company’s interpretation is brilliant, deserving full praise.

Bernhard’s frustrated narrator measures his own failures.

Aside from pianistic virtuosity, though, this “Glenn” is ultimately fictional, serving as a paragon of perfection against which Bernhard’s frustrated narrator measures his own failures.

“...Bernhard Gueller conducted SNS in Ecstasy (2018) by Hatzsis (music) and Slean (text), a three-movement musical portrayal of the intellectual and mystical human mind. Slean’s clearly articulated higher vocals drive Love, and likewise Logos, with its contrasting calm and intense dance sections. Bhakti is a calmer atonal/tonal work with unexpected orchestra member whispers, held notes and Slean’s a cappella vocal finale.

Performers, compositions and CBC live performance recordings are exquisite. Dramatic music fans definitely will love this. And everyone else, take a listen! Magical!

Adam Seelig

Sarah Slean
Sarah Slean; Symphony Nova Scotia;
Bernhard Gueller
Centrediscs CMCCD27820
(cmcccanada.org)

Tonal/atonal classical, popular and musical theatre genres meet amicably in this ambitious Canadian collaboration by vocalist/actress/poet/composer Sarah Slean, Symphony Nova Scotia and composer Christos Hatzis.

Hatzis’ three-song/movement Lamento was written for a Symphony Nova Scotia/ Slean concert in April 2012. Based on Purcell’s aria When I am Laid in Earth from Dido and Aeneas, his self-described exploration of the Baroque stepwise descending “lamento bass” creates grief-stricken sounds of loss of loved ones, mental illness and suicide. The opening When This is Over features heartbeat- reminiscent drum beats, Slean’s lower vocals with clarinet contrasts, huge orchestral sound, a cappella sections, and modern/pop/dance grooves shifts. My Song nicely uses flute- played daybreak bird songs, waltz feel, sing-along vocal melody and loud closing musical theatre-like finale build. The complex yet accessible Despair is wrought with heart- wrenching atonal wide- pitched vocals/instruments, contrasting dynamics, instrumental interludes, eerie squeaks, Baroque/Purcell effects and gloomy repeated vocal “remember me” finale.

In his final season, Bernhard Gueller conducted SNS in Ecstasy (2018) by Hatzsis (music) and Slean (text), a three- movement musical portrayal of the intellectual and mystical human mind. Slean’s clearly articulated higher vocals drive Love, and likewise Logos, with its contrasting calm and intense dance sections. Bhakti is a calmer atonal/tonal work with unexpected orchestra member whispers, held notes and Slean’s a cappella vocal finale.

Performers, compositions and CBC live performance recordings are exquisite. Dramatic music fans definitely will love this. And everyone else, take a listen! Magical!

Tiina Kilk

CLASSICAL AND BEYOND

Telemann – Recorder Sonatas
Caroline Eidsten Dahl; Kate Hearne; Christian Kjos
LAWO LWC1181 (naxosdirect.com)

If virtuosorecorder player is your thing, then Caroline Eidsten Dahl really delivers on this CD. Of the 34 movements, 18 are fast and she plays them at tempos that leave even the listener breathless.

Her virtuosity is particularly extraordinary in the second movement of the Sonata in C Major, TWV41C2 and the first movement of the Sonata in C Major, TWV41C5. (BTW, C major is the perfect key for alto recorder virtuosity because of fingerings and because it lies in the middle of the instrument’s two-octave range.)

To focus one’s attention solely on the recorder soloist, however, is to miss much that makes this recording outstanding and Telemann’s composing remarkable. The fact is that this is a collaboration by three equal musicians, and that these “solo” sonatas are in reality trios. If you focus your listening on the cello part, played by Irish cellist Kate Hearne, you can hear, it sometimes just as virtuosic as the recorder, as the lower part of a duo. And the harpsichord, played by Christian Kjos, not only fills in the harmonies implied by the other two parts, but also supplies harmonic momentum and adds sparkling melodic solos when opportunities arise.

In the short movements of these nine sonatas – the shortest is 47 seconds, the longest three and a half minutes – one can gain insight into the composer’s mind, crafting each movement into a unique miniature masterpiece.

This disc offers so much, not only to recorder aficionados but also to music lovers, musicians and composers.

Allan Pulker

Schumann – Piano Trios Vol. 1
Kungsbacka Piano Trio
Bis BIS-2437 SACD (naxosdirect.com)

The piano trio – namely, a combination of piano, violin and cello – has a curious history, with composers of historical note, many of whom either wrote very few or none at all. One may attribute such a lack of attention to the apparent balancing issues when writing for this combination of instruments. Others will mention the string quartet taking hold of composers’ attention as the most favourable chamber music combination. An exception to this trend would be Haydn who wrote no less than 45 piano trios in his impressive output. Haydn aside, it remains true that the most celebrated composers in history paid little attention to this genre: Beethoven, Mozart, Brahms and Dvořák all writing less than ten. Robert Schumann belongs to this group, having written three piano trios and a Fantasiestücke (Fantasy Pieces, also with the piano trio instrumentation) in his lifetime.

In this latest release, the Swedish Kungsbacka Piano Trio has included Schumann’s Piano Trios 1 and 2, and the Fantasiestücke in an impressive volume that contains masterful interpretations of these works. The Kungsbackas have earned a well-deserved international reputation since their formation in 1997. Their latest recording is an excellent example of how the ensemble continues to deliver world-class musicianship and expressiveness to listeners around the world. This recording does great justice not only to the works recorded, but to the genre itself – reminding us that this instrumental combination is indeed worthy of any composer’s attention if performed by the right musicians.

The members of the Kungsbacka Trio have an impressive ability to merge their sound into a single instrument, a quality that brings a sonorous lyrical element to the music not present in other recordings of this kind. This high quality recording leaves the listener wanting more – a pleasing thought since there will be a second volume coming soon.

Adam Scime
Bruch – 8 Pieces Op.83
Philon Trio
Analekta AN 2 8923 (analekta.com)

It is so easy to love Max Bruch’s music, and particularly these works for clarinet, viola and piano. His Acht Stücke Op.83 were composed for his son, Max Felix, a noted clarinetist of the early 20th century. They are the sole material on the recording released this year by the Philon Trio, comprised of David Dias da Silva on clarinet, Adam Newman, viola, and pianist Camilla Köhnken.

The work is quite often performed in excerpts, for the simple reason that the pieces vary so much in character and duration that there is no compelling reason to present them all as if they formed a united suite. As the only material on this disc, one might carp that something might have been added as a bolister to the value; the total playing time is just under 35 minutes. Possibly there were time or financial constraints. Still, including Schumann’s Märchenerzählungen, for context and contrast with another work for the same forces, would have been welcome.

But I won’t carp; I will stick to the positives: these are great performances. Tending more to a dreamy or meditative character for the most part, the collection is leavened by numbers four and especially seven, both of which are presented at a good pace, demonstrating how technically able these fine musicians are. Köhnken hails from Bruch’s home city Köln, and seems to have his spirit guiding her playing. Da Silva’s sound is airy and fluid at once, and while sometimes he fights the demon of sharpness, he most often wins. Newman’s playing is agile and sure. The mix seems to favour the clarinet sound overall, an odd balance anomaly that points to perhaps a hurried production or difficult acoustic.

Max Christie

Nielsen; Ibert; Arnold – Flute Concertos
Clara Andrada; Frankfurt Radio Symphony; Jaime Martin
Ondine ODE 1340-2 (naxosdirect.com)

While the subtitle of this disc is “French Orchestral Works,” it could just as easily be called “Spanish Music from France,” for that is what comprises the majority of Escales’ contents. The opening and closing tracks are Chabrier’s Espuña and Ravel’s Rapsodie espagnole, clearly evoking a strong Spanish influence, while Ibert’s Escales outlines a three-part journey from France, through Italy, to Spain. Between these works are more standard essays in 20th century French composition, with such classics as Debussy’s Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune and Massenet’s Méditation.

The interesting subtext to this disc is that, although the Spanish-infused pieces are clearly and deliberately exotic and meant to sound Spanish, they are immediately recognizable as being French. Perhaps this is because the works themselves are only caricatures of another style, or perhaps because they are surrounded by more characteristically familiar music of the same school; regardless of the reason, this disc makes a strong case for France’s inherent national musical identity through its composers.

The Sinfonia of London are fine interpreters of this rich and lush material, coaxing out the timbral subtleties of each composer’s material. From the tranquil openings of Debussy’s Prélude to the driving conclusion of Ravel’s Rapsodie, the character of this music is expressed to full effect, aided in large part by the terrific quality of the sound itself. Released as a super audio CD, Escales captures a high degree of sonic detail, such as the robust spectrum of overtones produced by the divided string section, and translates these into a product that is remarkably close to a live performance in a concert hall, ideal for these colourful impressionistic works.

Mattheue Whitfield

Escales – French Orchestral Works
Sinfonia of London; John Wilson
Chandos CHSA 5252 (naxosdirect.com)

The most remarkable aspect of this iconic work – apart from the work itself – is that Richard Strauss started out as someone who was brought up to almost despise the work of Wagner and Liszt, who created the very form of one of Strauss’ most famous works. The nine-part symphonic tone poem, Also sprach Zarathustra is a spectacular homage to Nietzsche’s philosophy of the Superman and his celebration of human power and energy. Strauss’ response to Nietzsche’s book is a work of enormous proportions, a free-flowing fantasía which, apart from its philosophical aspirations, creates some truly awe-inspiring orchestral sounds. Not the least of these is the work’s inspired ‘sunrise’ opening, depiction of a primordial darkness-to-light so elemental that the titanic, sustained contra–octave C played on the organ, contrabassoon, contrabass and bass drum begins barely audible to the human ear.

This is a stupendous live recording. The Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks play with adventure and excitement under Marriss Jansons’ inspired leadership. Few other versions manage to give a convincing sense of the shape to this work. The Burleske, written ten years earlier, may belie a Brahmsian influence, but also foretells the future of a composer seized with the true immensity of symphonic sound. Pianist Daniil Trifonov is particularly dazzling with exemplary lucidity, showing why he is the darling of the cognoscenti today as he employs the sweetest tones to create a great Romantic wash of colour.

Raul da Gama
Karl Weigl – Symphony No.1; Pictures and Tales
Deutsches Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz; Jürgen Bruns
Capriccio C5365 (naxosdirect.com)

► Karl Weigl (1881-1949) was a successful Vienna composer and teacher whose Jewish origins forced him to emigrate in 1938. In the United States, he remained active but it has taken a long time for his relatively conservative music to receive the acclaim it deserves. The Symphony No.1 (1908) demonstrates his mastery of a personal late-Romantic style, opening with pastoral cheerfulness and a lyrical Viennese touch. The busy scherzo features chattering winds and sophisticated play with cross-rhythm and syncopation. Especially good is the slow movement – a yearning fantasy in the strings. Again in the third movement, woodwinds take a prominent role and there is a tremendous passage of multiple wind trill chains that must be heard – a true chorus of nature! In this work there is little fin-de-siècle brooding. The high-register orchestration is outstanding again in the finale, a somewhat parodic march ending with a boisterous close.

In a much different vein, Weigl composed Pictures and Tales, Op.2 (1909), a set of short piano pieces which he orchestrated into a suite for small orchestra in 1922. The title alludes to scenes and images from fairy tales, e.g. Stork, Stork Clatter or Elves Dance in the Moonlight, with deft and transparent orchestration and appeal for children and adults alike. Jürgen Bruns is a much-in-demand conductor who has led a much-needed recording that would likely delight the composer and the conductor who has led a much-needed recording. Jürgen Bruns is a much-in-demand conductor who has led a much-needed recording that would likely delight the composer.

Homage and Inspiration – Works by Schumann, Kurtág, Mozart and Weiss
Iris Trio
Coviello Classics COV92002 (iriistrio.com)

► Reviewing a former student’s second chamber music recording in as many years nudges my feelings from pride toward sheer professional envy; especially because this is the better of two fine discs involving clarinetist Christine Carter. Cleverly compiled, the disc of music for clarinet, viola (Molly Carr) and piano (Anna Petrova) explores the way each work was influenced by the previous one.

In 1786, Mozart composed his Trio in E-flat Major, K.498, known familiarly as the “Kegelstatt,” for his friend and clarinetist Anton Stadler (for whom he also wrote the Quintet for Clarinet and Strings and the Concerto K.622). Robert Schumann responded with his peculiar Marchenzahltungen, Op.122 in 1833. Hungarian composer György Kurtág wrote his Hommage à R. Sch. Op.15d. Finally on disc is a recent commission for the same group by Christof Weißen (whose liner notes provide much helpful information), his Drittes Klaviertrio für Klarinette, Viola und Klavier “Gespräch unter Freunden.”

The works are ordered to highlight the links from past to present, rather than chronologically.

It’s lovely to hear the Mozart presented with such fresh freedom. Pulse is allowed to ease and press forward, such that the music comes close to representing what one so often hears it is meant to depict: a conversation among friends over a game of bowling. A special nod to Petrova; this is a small piano concerto in fact, and she knocks it over with grace and flair.

Working on Kurtág’s Hommage was one of many experiences for which I can thank Robert Aitken and New Music Concerts. These mysterious works are uncannily beautiful, and this rendition is absolutely breathtaking.

Max Christie

MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY

Lutosławski – Symphonies Nos. 2 & 3
Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra; Hannu Lintu
Ondine ODE 1332-5 (naxosdirect.com)

► There’s no mystery why Polish composer Witold Lutosławski’s Symphony No.3 from 1983 has been recorded so frequently. It’s an influential work. And, as this new recording with Hannu Lintu conducting the Finnish Radio Orchestra demonstrates, it’s a truly exciting work, full of delights and surprises.

It starts with a definitive burst of four rapidly repeated E’s, which keep returning right until the end. That motif is the last thing heard. Lintu, who has conducted the Toronto Symphony in a number of memorable concerts during the past decade, brings out the sharp contrasts that make Lutosławski’s music so dramatic. In the semi-improvised sections, where Lutosławski stipulates what notes are played but allows the musicians the freedom to choose the rhythms, the orchestra creates unearthly sounds that shimmer with twists and slides.

But it’s the contemplative passages that show the real strength of this recording – its open-hearted embrace of the lyricism that make this work so moving. Lintu’s interpretation easily measures up to the fine recordings from Solti, who commissioned the work, Salonen, who made the first recording, Wit, Barenboim and Lutosławski himself.

With a colourful performance of Symphony No. 2 from 1967, Lintu wraps up his set of Lutosławski’s four symphonies. Like the third, this symphony is in two connected sections, here called Hésitant and Directe. The scale is less grand. But the impact just as powerful, and the performance is every bit as rewarding.

Pamela Margles

Rose Petals – Canadian Music for Viola
Margaret Carey; Roger Admiral
Centredisks CMCCD26319 (cmccanada.org)

► The oldest and longest work on this CD, Jean Coulthard’s Jig, is an 18-minute Rhapsody (1962), filled with moody introspection and intense yearning, makes an auspicious beginning to violinist Margaret Carey’s “hand-picked” collection of Canadian compositions.

Three pieces are for solo viola: Jacques Hétu’s Variations, Op.11 is predominantly slow and songful, occasionally interrupted by rapid, virtuoso passagework; in 19.06, Evelyn Ramón combines intricate, electronics-like viola sonorities with vocalizations by the soloist; Howard Bashaw’s Modular 1, the first movement of a longer work, is a tightly rhythmic study in repetition, sustaining momentum throughout its four-minute duration.

Pianist Roger Admiral, heard in Coulthard’s piece, also collaborates in three other works. Ana Sokolović’s Toccute, another four-minute essay in motoric rhythms, strikingly (pun intended) evokes the sounds of the cimbalom and Serbian Gypsies.

The CD’s title, Rose Petals, is taken from the titles of a poem and a painting by Carey, both reproduced in the booklet. They, in turn, inspired Sean Clarke’s The Rose, commissioned by Carey. Clarke writes that in it, Carey also sings fragments of the poem but I found these inaudible. Nor could I discern much in the way of structural or expressive coherence amid the music’s disconnected, brutal fortissimo chords.

Laurie Duncan describes the first two movements of his Viola Sonata as “melancholic” while “the third movement, Jig, is unexpectedly gay and joyous.” It’s a substantial, satisfying conclusion to this adventurous traversal across highly disparate compositional approaches and aesthetics.

Michael Schulman
Un Vélo, une Auto, un Boulevard et de la Neige
Louis-Philippe Bonin
ATMA ACD2 4041 (atmaclassique.com)

This digitally released album of saxophone and piano music combines classic saxophone repertoire with a few surprises. The performances by both Louis-Philippe Bonin (alto saxophone) and Catherine Leroux (piano) achieve an excellent balance of clean technique and precise emotion. Bonin’s tone is lean yet full and he makes many technically difficult passages seem effortless. Leroux’s playing is articulated and balanced while lending a spark when required.

The album contains five works, two of them more traditional saxophone sonatas, one by William Albritton (1984) and the other by Fernande Dercruck (1943). Florent Schmitt was a contemporary of Debussy and Ravel and the beautiful Légende. Op. 66 (1918) is reminiscent of those composers’ tonality. One of the surprises, Kristin Kuster’s Jellyfish (2004) is a three-movement piece capturing the movements of different types of jellyfish; the various swirls and bursts of sound paint a perfect sonic portrait of these creatures.

The title composition, Un Vélo, une Auto, un Boulevard et de la Neige, by Félix-Antoine Coutu (2018) was commissioned by Bonin and brings classical saxophone music into the social media arena. In a December 2017 Facebook post, a blogger called a cyclist a “jerk” for riding on the street in the newly fallen snow and “zigzagging” in front of the writer’s car. The post caused quite an outcry on social media and Coutu’s piece is based on five of the more than 500 Facebook responses and the “variety of rhetorical devices” people used to express their opinions. The work effectively presents these five rhetorical “movements” and Bonin’s playing artfully mimics and embraces this social media conflict.

Ted Parkinson

Modulation Necklace – New Music from Armenia
Various Artists
New Focus Recordings FCR244 (newfocusrerecordings.com)

The Armenian diaspora retains strong ties to their ancient homeland. Six pieces from the last 20 years by five Armenian composers invite attention for their lucidity and mastery. Tonalities from Armenian folklore pervade the superbly performed and recorded song settings and tone poems for string and piano ensembles, duo, and piano solo. The album was crafted at the Armenian Music Program of UCLA with help from the Lark Musical Society and the Dilijan Chamber Music Series, which commissioned four of the works.

Tekeyan Triptych (2018), by Artashes Kartalyan (b.1961), sets three poems for mezzo-soprano and string quartet by Vahan Tekeyan (1878-1943), the most important poet of the Armenian diaspora. Novelette (2010), by Ashot Zohrabyan (b.1943), for piano quartet, is a searching dialogue for piano and strings. Michel Petrissan’s (b.1973) A Fiery Flame, a Flaming Fire (2017), a masterful movement for piano trio, refers to Moses’ biblical burning bush in honour of violinist and director Mivos Pogossian, with references to an Armenian folksong. The lively Suite for Saxophone and Percussion (2015) is by Ashot Kartalyan (b.1985), the youngest of the composers. Artur Avanesov (b.1980) composed Quasi Harena Maris (2016), a compelling fantasy for piano quintet inspired by the Book of Job, and Feux Follets, a collection of short pieces. Avanesov is the admirable pianist for the entire program.

Austin Clarkson

Jin Yin
Civitas Ensemble (includes Canadian Winston Choi)
Cedille CDR 90000 193 (cedillerecords.org)

Chicago’s Civitas Ensemble is an unusual quartet: violinist/leader Yuan-Qing Yu, cellist Kenneth Olsen, clarinet/bass clarinetist J. Lawrie Bloom, all eminent members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, are joined by Canadian pianist Winston Choi, Roosevelt University’s piano-program head. On Jin Yin (Golden Tone) they present five recent instrumental works by composers of Chinese heritage, offering world premiere recordings of works by Vivian Fung, Yao Chen, Lu Pei plus new arrangements of works by Chen Yi and Zhou Long.

Long’s Five Elements (2014) is the album’s longest work, its tonal richness bolstered by the addition of Vihan Chen (pipa), Cynthia Yeh (percussion) and Emma Gerstein (flute, piccolo). The Five Elements – metal, wood, water, fire, earth – were considered by ancient Chinese sources to be the building blocks of the physical universe. In his Five Elements, the composer represents each in turn. His programmatic music employs both modernist sonic gestures and percussive allusions to Chinese antique ritual music in the “metal” movement for example, employing effective tone-painting throughout the rest of the opus.

Canadian composer Vivian Fung’s Bird Song (2012) for violin and piano showcases the virtuosity of both instruments, characterized by runs, intense rhythmic passages and exploration of improvisational moments. The title refers to the birdcalls of the opening and closing passages, to the sprightly tonal arpeggios in the central section and to the overall rhythmic spirit of the violin writing. The ending is a haunting contrast to the rest of the work, marked by a sort of soft nostalgia.

The other three works on Jin Yin have much to recommend them as well, altogether providing a full and fascinating 77 minutes of listening.

Andrew Timar

Music from the APNM (Assoc. for the Promotion of New Music) Vol. 1 & 2 (electronic)
Various artists
New Focus Recordings n/a (newfocusrerecordings.com)

The Association for the Promotion of New Music (APNM) was founded in 1975, and is celebrating its long commitment to composers with this double release of acoustic, electroacoustic and electronic works by member composers.

Volume 1: Chamber Music is mostly acoustic music performed by a variety of excellent musicians and ensembles. The opening work Wind Chimes, performed by composer/guitarist Stephen Dydo with Chen Yu on pipa, is a continuous colourful sound mix of the two instruments in 12 continuous sections each based on an early Chinese music mode. Thomas James describes his Odd Numbers as utilizing odd numbers to create “aggregate” rhythms, with piano soloist Sheila Simpson especially spectacular in the delineated sections. Love Joseph Hudson’s piano/electronics work Starry Night. The composer memorably orchestrates my own interpretation of the night sky with floral piano lines against held, calming, electronic sounds, weather changes with louder rhythms and forceful ticking, and clouds drifting by in the closing slow piano/electronics section. Other works are composed by Laurie San Martin, Andrew Timar, Elaine Barkin and Sheree Clement.

Volume 2: Computer + Electronic Music consists of eight contrasting compositions. Explosions, rapid-fire lines open Arthur V. Kreiger’s For Diane, with a plethora of interesting electronic sounds created on fixed audio media, while Adam Vidiksis’ Ouroboros features more current-day electronic sounds like plops and repeated rhythmic figures. Almost theatre/movie music, Stereo Fantasy by Maurice Wright is fully noted and
performed by synthetic orchestra, complete with sparkling staccato lines, electronically generated strings and drones. Lots of contrapuntal conversations with noisy bangs, tunes and almost-live instrument sounds in Jeffrey Hal’s’ *From the Winds of Avalor*. More computer-generated instrumental sounds in Joel Gressel’s *Deconstructing Maria*. Works by Samuel Wells and Carl Christian Bettendorf combine electronics with live instruments, trumpet and viola respectively.

A fabulous collection of acoustic and electronic compositions showcasing the talents of APNM’s members and the organization’s multi-decade work supporting new music. - *Tilina Kiik*

**Etereo – new music for flute**

Lindsey Goodman

*Nvona Records nv6265 (navonarecords.com)*

From the outset, in Josh Oxford’s *Bluez... for solo flute*, Lindsey Goodman demonstrates she is a flutist who has it all. With a palette of luscious tone colours and engaging phrasing, she easily negotiates the many different focalizations, bluesy thirds, glissandi, flutter tonguing and tongued pizzicato, all while maintaining a compelling, rock-solid beat. This track alone is worth the investment.

Yet what follows is of equal merit. The next four tracks are also for solo flute. Bruce Babcok’s *Solloquoxy* is moody with flashes of technical display. Steven Block’s *Sweet Soulless Solstice* offers moments of two-part writing with harmonic overtones defining an ostinato and regular tones, a brief melody. While Goodman’s performance engages us in both Taurins’ *Gadjfly* and *Marsyas* for alto flute, the obvious quotations from Varese’s Density 21.5 are neither mentioned nor explained in the scanty online program notes.

Using fixed media with effective employment of stereo panning, Mara Helmhut’s programmatic *Butterfly Within* reveals spurs of flitting about and flapping wings. The most hauntingly lyrical work is Alla Elana Cohen’s four-movement Watercolors of the Master Who Is Accustomed to Paint with Oils, ably accompanied by pianist Robert Frankenberry. The penultimate track, *In Memorium* by Peter Castine, opens serenely, becoming increasingly more agitated as first the cello dialogues in counterpoint with the alto flute, and later as the crotales and toy piano enter. Jennifer Jolly’s *Flight 710*, a rhythmic tour-de-force spectacularly played by the flute/cello/piano Leviathan Trio, closes one very impressive, boundary-pushing collection of new music for flute.

- *Nancy Nourse*

**Moto Celeste**

*Trio Casals*

*Nvona Records nv6266 (navonarecords.com)*

Moto Celeste is the fifth installment of *Navona Records’ MOTO series featuring the Trio Casals*. Conductor/cellist/composer Ovidiu Marinescu, violinist Sylvia Ahramjian and pianist Anna Kilištys are outstanding gifted musicians who together create a tight, musical, technically virtuosic chamber trio sound. Here they perform eight new compositions, all listener-friendly, drawn from an eclectic mix of musical ideas.

Each work is a masterpiece in its own right. Highlights include the opening track, *Earth Rise*, by Diane Jones. Inspired by the sun, moon and earth, the opening piano high-pitched slow trilling tinkles lead to matching melodic phrases on all instruments, a slower reflective cello solo and a moving, almost romantic, planet dance. Quick change to a rockin’ rhythmic work, *Los Ritmos Para Tres (Rhythms for Three)* by Edna Alejandra Longoria, a fun mix of jazz, rock and contemporary music rhythms and lines. Cellist Marinescu’s amazing almost athletic performance of his own composition *Sunt Numai Urechi (I’m All Ears)* for solo cello is flawless. An exciting flamenco-guitar-inspired virtuosic work, he almost sounds like two performers as he tackles his fast, circling, chromatic melodies, lyrical sections, high pitches and changing mixed metres. Canadian composer Joanna Estelle’s brief, yet sweet, tonal *Faraçuy Star*, is a programmatic piece of star-crossed lovers – female violin, male cello and piano narrator, played with clarity and storytelling precision.

Compositions by Christina Rusnak, Chad Robinson, Clive Muncaster and Eliane Aberdam complete this memorable recording.

- *Tilina Kiik*

**Ex Machina**

*Donald Sinta Quartet*

*Bright Shiny Things BSTC-0133 (brightshiny.ninja)*

Formed in 2010 and named after their mentor, a University of Michigan saxophone professor, the Donald Sinta Quartet is an exciting award-winning modern ensemble featuring saxophonists Dan Graser (soprano), Zach Stern (alto), Joe Girard (tenor) and Danny Hawthorne-Foss (baritone). In their second recording, the tight virtuosic classical/contemporary music group performs seven new works, six of them premiere recordings.

The seven-movement *Ex Machina*, by American Marc Mellits, is a funky, minimalist work exploring his self described idea “to express the beauty locked within machines.” Machine I (Let the Funk Out) sets up this idea with minimalist machine-like grooves. The contrasting slower Machine II (Flowing) features long ascending and descending lines, with a slightly rhythmic backrop. Love the choppy sudden change to rhythmic machine-like industrial sounds in Machine IV (Dancing a Mean Gusty Dance) performed with aplomb. No surprise Machine VII (Aggressive & Funky) ends with a final held honkin’ chord. Mellits’ other work here is the swirling, syncopated Black.

Richard Chowenhill’s slower In Solitude I Sit is a refreshing reflective change with its lengthy held drone notes and higher pitches, all played with great breath control. No background rhythms enhance the calmness. Touches of Middle Eastern and klezmer-flavoured sounds in Chris Evan Hass’ faster Volcanic Ash are performed to style. Works by Soby Raman, David Biedenbender and Mischa Zupko feature memorable challenging rhythms, swirling lines and contrasting dynamics.

These talented, technically astute, rhythmic and musical saxophonists shine throughout.

- *Tilina Kiik*

**Ripples**

*Clarion: Keith Benjamin; Melody Turnquist-Steed*

*Crystal Records CD961 (crystalrecords.com)*

When I hear trumpet playing with organ, I am immediately in church, willingly or not, and there is no shortage of the expression that brings me there on this disc. Kansas City, MO-based duo Clarion, made up of trumpeter Keith Benjamin and Melody Turnquist-Steed on organ, has released a collection of works written for them by a range of contemporary American composers.

The most current, or at least the youngest of these, is Adam Schoenberg (b.1980) a graduate of Oberlin College and the Juilliard School of Music. He now teaches composition and film scoring, which certainly shows in the bold and highly visual quality of Apollo, which aims in the first movement, Beyond, to depict the majesty of outer space. To my mind it’s fairly effective character-filled music that could evoke a mountainscape as readily as astral travel, but he does refer somewhat to Holst’s harmonies and even Mercurial playfulness here, so...

The second movement, Light, is prayerful
and lovely, as American as Copland, and I'm back in church again.

Not all the works are as strong, but I did enjoy *Passing Illuminations* by James Moherly, and Stacey Garrop's *Road Warrior* comes across as the most daring and experimental, especially in using the organ to provide interesting and unusual effects. The title refers to a book written by the late Neil Peart, of Rush, who took to the road mourning the loss of a child and spouse. The connection is intentional: this and one other work share some key musicians. Rob Clutton's eponymous trio includes saxophonist Karen Ng and drummer Nick Fraser; so too does the See Through 4, with pianist Marilyn Lerner making it a quartet.

For many jazz musicians, composition can be a perfunctory task, but Rob Clutton takes it seriously and his groups, like the long-running Cluttertones, are designed for conversation. These two bands have much in common. Each is led by a bassist/composer, Pete Johnston in the case of See Through 4, and they share some key musicians. Rob Clutton can reduce a line to a spare series of deeply felt, highly resonant tones, while the group that he has assembled couldn’t be more attuned to his work. It’s immediately evident in the opening *Strata*, brought into sharp focus by Fraser’s insistent cymbals and Ng’s Morse Code-like monotone. *Counsel of Primaries* is a distinctive zone of her own, a compound mood that can mingle celebration and lamentation in a single phrase, while Fraser solos over the band’s final extended version of the theme. *Battleting in Extra Ends* employs a stiff punctuation of bass and drums in unison to frame a flowing, baladic Lerner improvisation. *The Sidewalks Are Watching* begins with an up-tempo boppish theme, but advances through a series of rhythmic displacements that have individual band members occupying distinct temporal dimensions.

Given how much the two bands have in common, Clutton, Johnston and their gifted associates create two very different worlds. Given their shared personnel, it’s striking just how different the two groups are, their identities intimately connected both to the leaders’ compositional styles and their partners’ insights. Clutton’s minimalism gives way to Pete Johnston’s further extension of Lennie Tristano’s already abstracted linear vision. In a playful manner all his own, though, Johnston’s pieces can provide a series of loose frames for a series of solos. Another *Word for Science* has pianist Marilyn Lerner begin an unaccompanied solo with a series of wavy keyboard asides, with Johnston and Fraser entering tentatively until the three have created a tangle of kinetic lines; Ng uses the free dialogue to explore a distinctive zone of her own, a compound mood that can mingle celebration and lamentation in a single phrase, while Fraser solos over the band’s final extended version of the theme. *Battleting in Extra Ends* employs a stiff punctuation of bass and drums in unison to frame a flowing, baladic Lerner improvisation. *The Sidewalks Are Watching* begins with an up-tempo boppish theme, but advances through a series of rhythmic displacements that have individual band members occupying distinct temporal dimensions.

Given how much the two bands have in common, Clutton, Johnston and their gifted associates create two very different worlds.

**Max Christie**

### JAZZ AND IMPROVISED

**Counsel of Primaries**

**Rob Clutton Trio**

**SnaillBongBong Records**

(robclutton.bandcamp.com)

**False Ghosts, Minor Fears**

**See Through 4**

**All-Set! Editions (all-set.org)**

▶ These two Toronto bands have much in common. Each is led by a bassist/composer, Pete Johnston in the case of See Through 4, and they share some key musicians. Rob Clutton’s eponymous trio includes saxophonist Karen Ng and drummer Nick Fraser; so too does the See Through 4, with pianist Marilyn Lerner making it a quartet.

For many jazz musicians, composition can be a perfunctory task, but Rob Clutton takes it seriously and his groups, like the long-running Cluttertones, are designed for it. His new trio plays jazz as if it were sculpture. Lines are clearly etched, content reduced to bare meaning and intent, with a special structural and emotional clarity. Clutton can reduce a line to a spare series of deeply felt, highly resonant tones, while the group that he has assembled couldn’t be more attuned to his work. It’s immediately evident in the opening *Strata*, brought into sharp focus by Fraser’s insistent cymbals and Ng’s Morse Code-like monotone. *Counsel of Primaries* veers toward Caribbean dance, with Ng investing even the briefest phrases with a wealth of emotion. *Sterling* suggests a kind of dissonant prayer, Clutton’s bowed harmonics coming to the fore amidst Ng’s long tones and Fraser’s gently scraped cymbals. *Cloak* is less austere, but it too, carries with it a sense of reverie, an engagement with resonance as an active participant, feeding back into the music. Given their shared personnel, it’s striking just how different the two groups are, their identities intimately connected both to the leaders’ compositional styles and their partners’ insights. Clutton’s minimalism gives way to Pete Johnston’s further extension of Lennie Tristano’s already abstracted linear vision. In a playful manner all his own, though, Johnston’s pieces can provide a series of loose frames for a series of solos. Another *Word for Science* has pianist Marilyn Lerner begin an unaccompanied solo with a series of wavy keyboard asides, with Johnston and Fraser entering tentatively until the three have created a tangle of kinetic lines; Ng uses the free dialogue to explore a distinctive zone of her own, a compound mood that can mingle celebration and lamentation in a single phrase, while Fraser solos over the band’s final extended version of the theme. *Battleting in Extra Ends* employs a stiff punctuation of bass and drums in unison to frame a flowing, baladic Lerner improvisation. *The Sidewalks Are Watching* begins with an up-tempo boppish theme, but advances through a series of rhythmic displacements that have individual band members occupying distinct temporal dimensions.

Given how much the two bands have in common, Clutton, Johnston and their gifted associates create two very different worlds.

**Stuart Broomer**

**Fantosme**

**Carl Mayotte**

**Independent (carlmayotte.com)**

▶ Montreal bassist Carl Mayotte has just released his debut CD, which was co-conceived by Mayotte and the iconic Michel Cournoyer (UZEB). This evocative project features ten original compositions (mainly penned by Mayotte), which embrace the indelible burst of artistry and creativity from influential 1970s artists such as Weather Report, Frank Zappa, Hermeto Pascoal, Chick Corea and Pat Metheny.

Mayotte, who performs masterfully here on electric and fretless bass, has also assembled a hungry pack of young jazz lions who perform this challenging material with boundless energy as well as technical thrills and chills. The cast includes Gabriel Cyr on electric guitar; Francis Grégoire on keyboards and synthesizers; Stéphane Chamberland on drums; Damien-Jade Cyr on tenor, alto and soprano; Jean-Pierre Zanella on alto and flute; Patrice Luneau on baritone; Remi Cormier on trumpet; Emmanuel Richard-Bordon on trombone; Luke Bolvin on percussion and Raymond Gagnier on voice.

First up is the two-part suite, *Le Fantosme*. Part 1, *Le Poltergeist*, is spooky and otherworldly, with synth-infused structures and a theatrical use of voice and breathing. Part 2, *Le Polisson* segues into a face-melting drum solo from Chamberland, followed by a funky big band explosion, replete with a fine bass solo and a caustic, Jan Hammer-ish synth solo. Sumptuous flute work by Zanella kicks off the fast-paced *O Commodo*, and...
the spirit of Jaco Pastorius can be felt by Mayotte’s bass work throughout this invigorating composition. Cormier’s volcanic trumpet adds incredibly, while the band morphs into a second-line influenced passage, and then back to the lilting head...sheer beauty. A stand-out is Marise – an ego-less portrait of Mayotte’s incredible skill and melodic sensibility.

Lesley Michell-Clarke

Monicker
Libr’aerie
Bug Incision bim-79 (bugincision.com)

- Few international improvising ensembles get to persist after their initial meetings, but Monicker – the trio of guitarist Arthur Bull and trombonist Scott Thomson, both Canadians, and the English drummer Roger Turner – is currently enjoying a second life, with a recent Australian tour and upcoming dates in France and England. Libr’aerie documents a 2018 performance from Quebec City’s Librairie Saint-Jean-Baptiste.

There’s no easy way to describe the group’s music: any substantial segment might include the dauntingly abstract, the drolly witty and the broadly, almost physically, comic, and each dimension, among others, might be caught in the same passage. This recording is more minimalist than their previous release (Spine on Ambiances Magnétiques), with Turner reducing his kit to snare drum, cymbal and “small junk percussion,” the latter the source of the high-pitched, near-random, metallic chatter that sometimes animates this music.

There’s a broad movement here from the abstract to the celebratory. Turner’s special momentum has roots in early jazz and similar tastes have shaped the work of his younger partners. Thomson can reflect a century of jazz trombone, from a New Orleans moan to elegant legato, but there are special moments when he combines unlike elements, matching bebop velocity to vocalic smears. Bull often extends early blues idioms, and a rapid passage of string-bends can sound like a nice edge. Then Chris Pruden plays a tinkling, arpeggiated and out-of-tempo piano solo that is quite beautiful. "If we can’t get a gig, let’s groove on our own.” Nick Fraser’s stylish and complex drums provide the perfect jazz-samba backbeat. After a sophisticated solo by Pruden the two saxes heat things up with an unaccompanied arpeggiated tenor sax) slightly in and out of sync giving it a nice edge. Then Chris Pruden plays a tinkling, arpeggiated and out-of-tempo piano solo that is quite beautiful. No Gig Today is a breezy up-tempo bossa nova tune that seems to say, “If we can’t get a gig, let’s groove on our own.”

Raul da Gama

Square Peg
Mark Godfrey Quintet
Independent PRAM004 (markgodfreybass.com)

- Square Peg is a collection of jazz tunes bassist and composer Mark Godfrey wrote while commuting between Toronto and New York over a four-year period in his Dodge Caravan (a great vehicle for holding an upright bass). The album title could refer to how a vehicle associated with families and soccer is turned into a conduit for art and music. Many of the tunes are meditative, possibly because driving a familiar route often leads to introspection.

Highlights include the title piece which starts with a lilting melody played together by Allison Au (alto sax) and Matt Woroshyl (tenor sax) slightly in and out of sync giving it a nice edge. Then Chris Pruden plays a tinkling, arpeggiated and out-of-tempo piano solo that is quite beautiful. No Gig Today is a breezy up-tempo bossa nova tune that seems to say, “If we can’t get a gig, let’s groove on our own.” Nick Fraser’s stylish and complex drums provide the perfect jazz-samba backbeat. After a sophisticated solo by Pruden the two saxes heat things up with an unaccompanied duet break which evolves into trading eights when the rhythm section returns. This is a great tune with many nuances. Square Peg is accessible yet sophisticated, with all musicians sounding impeccable. May I suggest slipping this CD into your car (or van) stereo system for one of those lengthy drives?

Ted Parkinson

Tetrahedron
Ernesto Cervini
Anzic Records ANZ-0067 (ernestocervini.com)

- Ernesto Cervini, famed jazz drummer, has yet again brought together a greatly talented group of musicians on this debut release by his new venture Tetrahedron. The name is derived from the flags that indicate wind direction at airports, carrying on a theme of “flight” from Cervini’s other well-known sextet Turboprop. But more importantly, the tetrahedron is also “a three-dimensional triangle (with four sides) which seems to fit a chordless trio... recording with a fourth member and special guest.” On this album, the trio consists of Cervini, Luis Deniz on alto saxophone and Rich Brown on electric bass; with renowned guitarist Nir Felder as the “fourth.” Together, these musicians breathe life and direction into Cervini’s musical imagination and the journey that emerges from it.

Starting off the album with a righteous bang is the track Softly, As In A Morning Sunrise. Brown’s soft and unique bass intro moves into a rhythmically complex and dancing line that is overlaid by Felder’s signature Stratocaster sound, Cervini’s equally tricky drum groove and Deniz’s smooth, melodic sax tune. Angelicus is a beautiful, slower piece composed by Vince Mendoza which had stuck with Cervini since his first year studies at the University of Toronto. Meandering throughout the album, the end track The Sneaky Two is similar to the opening track in that it leaves the listener tapping their foot, hooking into the rhythm and awaiting what the next release by this supergroup will be.

Kati Kiliaspea

Ordinary Heroes
Peter Hum
Independent (peterhum.com)

- Canadian musicians, it appears, are no less exempt (than US ones), from the unpleasant vagaries of the seemingly pervasive, angst-ridden socio-political climate in the continent. We like to think that ground zero for all of this is the US, but the ripples are often felt in Canada. At least this is what pianist and composer Peter Hum seems to say as he references, in his music, numerous disturbing incidents that have left our society shaken to its core.
Let Your Honesty Shine – The Simon Project
Heidi Lange
Independent (music.apple.com)

Talented jazz vocalist and professor Heidi Lange’s newest release is a pleasant modern jazz take on beautiful gitariffs, Eric St-Laurent on guitars and Ben Riley on drums, the album is a perfect soundtrack for a rainy day, for contemplation or relaxing. Lange’s voice is a balanced combination of wispiness and depth, pulling in the listener and invoking complete focus on her.

Each track features a prominent piano melody that blends in outstandingly with Lange’s timbre and is further supported by beautiful guitar riffs, a moving, yet calming, drum rhythm and a sultry bass line. A touching version of Bridge Over Troubled Water is a definite highlight of the album, as is the unique take on Dazzling Blue and the captivating Another Galaxy. Standing out from the rest of the tracks for its upbeat tempo and slightly more driving melody and rhythm is The Boy in the Bubble, also unique for the fact that the entire band sounds the most blended here, intricacies of each instrument played out to create a cohesive but dynamic whole. This is where the listener can hear just how well these talents merge together. For longtime fans of Paul Simon’s music, as their website states.

“timeless, swinging, heartfelt and resonant”

The core members of Sneider’s band are a unified flow of originals by Sneider – a sensuous rhapsody, silkier than remembered. The tracks on the album are shaped by Zaleski’s luminous piano work, and Pino’s inspired sax solo is full of longing and youthful joy. Another outstanding track is Evolution of Perspective – a sobering introspection that bounces back with a gymnastic, rapid-fire solo from Finzer, as well as equally superb, vibrant solos from the ensemble.

Other standouts include Patience, Patience – a haunting ballad perfectly parent-sized by Zaleski’s luminous piano work, and Venus – a sensuous rhapsody, silkier than the finest satin. With this thought-provoking recording, Finzer guides the listener on a journey through seemingly chaotic, quantum entanglement, which eventually morphs into our sense of self as so eloquently put by the title of the last offering in the cycle, We’re More than the Sum of Our Influences. 

Lesley Mitchell-Clarke

Air
Asmus Tietchens; Dirk Serries
New Wave of Jazz nwoj 0026 (newwaveofjazz.bandcamp.com)

Not lighter than air, but certainly as omnipresent, Air is a singular instance of what could be termed brazen (un)ambient music. Belgian Dirk Serries improvised sounds on accordion, concertina, harmonica, melodica and clarinet, which were then used as source material manipulated, splintered and sewn together again by the computers and electronics of German composer Asmus Tietchens. The result is a collection of six tracks that challenge much more than they soothe.

On a sequence like Air Akkordeon for instance, as tremolo accordion reaches a juddering crescendo that spreads over the track like jam on toast, fragments of those vibrations, treated by Tietchens’ computer, are reflected mirror-like back into the mix, moving with hints of avairy whistles that hover along side Serries’ initial tones, before both glide away.

That type of scenario evolves throughout the disc, as wafting clarinet quivers confront Big Ben-like repetitive chiming or minimalist concertina squeezes and/or harmonica breaths mix with whispery vocal-like echoes that ascend to ululating choral refrains. Carefully layered through granular synthesis and pitch manipulations, these congruent tones transcend solo instrument-like resemblance, to become mechanized or other-worldly-like vibrations by the final Air Klarinette 2. Becoming louder and more diverse, the layers of interspaced oscillations negate “real” or “treated” origins to become almost symphonic with impressionistic colourations.

Overall though, what’s also distinctive about Tietchens’ and Serries’ program is that kernels of impulsive audacity and strength can be heard beneath the unfolding ambience.

Ken Waxman
Canada Day Quartet Live
Harris Eisenstadt
Clean Feed CF 533 CD (cleanfeed-records.com)

Perhaps an inadvertent comment on Canadians’ welcoming nature, this iteration of Toronto-born drummer Harris Eisenstadt’s Canada Day band is filled out by American trumpeter Nate Wooley, British pianist Alexander Hawkins and French-German bassist Pascal Niggenkemper. However, the equality expressed as the four animate Eisenstadt’s eight compositions in his Poschiavo series could relate to the harmonious melting pot-ideology that was a mark of the pre-Trump US.

Relaxed, but with a powerful, though understated rhythmic pulse, the tracks often feature hand-muted plunger expositions or open-horn clarion raps by Wooley, a band member since it began in 2009. These are propelled in double counterpoint with the swift shading and lightly voiced textures by Hawkins, with whom the drummer plays in other bands. Leisurely or accelerated percussive riffs, rolls and raps encourage this interaction. Meanwhile Poschiavo Four-Voice 4 is the one time Niggenkemper moves upfront with creaking sul tasto extensions and later col legno recoils which usher in moderate keyboard animation and a final lyrical action. Meanwhile Poschiavo Four-Voice 4 is the one time Niggenkemper moves upfront with creaking sul tasto extensions and later col legno recoils which usher in moderate keyboard animation and a final lyrical action.

Still, it’s the extended Poschiavo 36 that is most outstanding. As Wooley’s insistent bestial yaps sourced from trumpet innards dominate the exposition, double-bass stops and expressive piano patterning subsequently lighten the narrative. The climax exposes a melodic groove seconded by drum backbeats and expressed by the trumpeter in warm heraldic tones.

For followers of expressive improvised music this live disc should be as welcome as Canada’s July 1 holiday.

Ken Waxman

POT POURRI

Kora Flamenca
Zal Sissokho
Analekta AN 2 9171 (analekta.com)

Zal Sissokho is a griot, continuing the grand oral traditions of his Mandinka people of Senegal in Montreal where he settled in 1999. His long clan lineage and deep improvisation skills are on full display when he plays the 21-string kora and sings in Mandinka and Wolof as a solo performer and collaborator with numerous bands.

Ever since he heard flamenco performed live in Seville, Sissokho dreamt of combining Andalusian music and the Mandinka culture of his native West Africa. Kora Flamenca – a musical collaboration with composer and virtuosa flamenco guitarist Caroline Planté – is the result. The album’s ensemble also includes percussionist Miguel Medina, first-call Montreal oudist Mohamed Masmoudi and bassist Jean Félix Mailloux. Sissokho explains, “I sought to expand the limits of my instrument, the kora, as far as possible. Inspired by soaring improvisational flamenco riffs, I tried to create a hybrid style... [To me] musical inspiration begins with respect for the instrument’s tradition, history and sounds. Then... I sought to... push my collaborators to create music in which composition, technical prowess and improvisation unite...”

Musically and stylistically, kora and flamenco guitar are worlds apart. Linked by their common plucked string heritage however, Sissokho and Planté find ample common musical ground on which to hang flights of melodic fancy. Characterized by fast tempi, pop-forward arrangements, brief modal improvisations and Sissokho’s vocals, this set of ten concise songs makes a convincing case for combining kora and flamenco.

Andrew Timar

Levantine Rhapsody
Didem Başar
Analekta AN 2 9172 (analekta.com)

Didem Başar is a professionally trained player of the kanun, or Turkish zither. On this CD, she unites Turkish and Western classical music under her own compositions, scoring them for kanun and Western instruments played by Guly Pelletier (flutes), Brigitte Dajczer (violin), Noémy Braun (cello) and Patrick Graham (percussion). Başar works with the Centre des Musiciens du Monde, which enables such cross-cultural experiences to happen.

Başar’s initial composition Deervi-1 Rûskon will immediately remind visitors to Turkey of that country’s rich musical heritage; listen to its thoughtful kanun solo sections as they build up to a climax of plaintive string playing, a lively flute part and vigorous drumming. Often, the compositions are short; Bird Song lasts just 2:26, but I challenge anyone to find so many variations on percussion instruments to create as many bird sounds as there are on this single track!

On one occasion, Başar dips into classical Turkish music. She states that Kantemiroğlu’s Rust Pışrev still has the power to inspire even though that composer died almost 300 years ago; complex playing by all the instrumentalists contributes to an arrangement unfamiliar to Western ears.

Başar offers Cray as a plea for all those suffering the consequences of deadly conflicts. The endless wanderings of refugees are echoed in the flute part as it intermingles with the kanun to represent pain and sorrow. Riddle is her other intensely personal composition. Short but intense and loud phrases on the kanun and cello are intended to represent contrasting feelings: is life itself not a riddle?

And Canada is not forgotten. 5 à 7 is “happy hour” in Quebec. What with the five- and seven-beat textures of Başar’s composition of that name, it is just the right time to invite guests round to enjoy traditional Turkish cuisine to the backdrop that is Levantine Rhapsody.

Michael Schwartz

Traces
Jessica Deutsch and Ozere
Independent (jessicadeutsch.com)

The music of Jessica Deutsch on Traces may not appear to require a virtuosic, high-flying performance on the violin but make no mistake; it is diabolically difficult to play. There is great demand for atmospheric playing complete with subtle innuendo, dynamics and colour. Deutsch has this in spades and brings all of it to the repertoire on the album.

Each of the works – exquisite miniatures born aloft by her lonesome violin, supported by mandolin or guitar, glued together by cello and contrabass, with occasional keyboards and voices – is laden with intimacy and an emotional intensity that can only be described by the poetry of feeling. Deutsch’s performance throughout is lightly perfumed and evocative, especially in the slower songs, where her sensitivity shows best. The ephemeral Traces and The Bones of Clouds, with its wispy imagery not unlike the early poetry of Elizabeth Bishop, are superb examples of her playing.

Deutsch creates a perfect blend of delicacy and muscularity. Her ingenuity enables her to combine phrasing and touch with subtle shifts of emphasis that refashions phrases in an unexpected but utterly convincing manner. Her playing throughout, combined with cello and bass is highly redolent of the rustle of expensive raw silk. The rest of the group is completely harmonically and rhythmically entwined with Deutsch’s artistry. Their performances are altogether remarkable, possessing sinewy vigour and dynamism which contributes to putting a unique stamp on this music.

Raul da Gama
Something in the Air
Forging a Guitar Identity in Impromptu Music

KEN WAXMAN

Probably the most popular instrument in the world in its various forms, the guitar poses unique challenges for analytical players. With the six-string front- and centre in so many branches of music, how can one forge an individual path? Yet each of the pleceters here has done so as uniquely as there are makes of guitars.

For instance Nels Cline is in a situation many others would envy. As lead guitarist for American alternative rock band Wilco, he has a steady gig with a large following. Yet Cline has been an integral part of Los Angeles’ improvisé music scene since the 1980s and immerses himself back in that context any chance he gets. The Radical Empathy Trio’s Reality and Other Imaginary Places (ESP 5035 espdisk.com) is a recent example. During two extended tracks the guitarist finds a place among the swirling dynamics propelled by two committed improvisers: drummer Michael Wimberley and keyboardist Thollem McDonas.

Propelling relaxed finger-style chording alongside McDonas’ acoustic piano on the second track and challenging a misa of swirling synthesized kinetics from the keyboardist with corrosive string distortions on the first, Cline references either mainstream or fusion jazz. Yet in both cases backed by explosive rattle and riffs from the drummer, confounding patterns trump convention. McDonas’ keyboard expression moves from sentient hunt-and-peck chording to repetitive extraterrestrial-like glissandi during his solos. Cline’s amplified bugle-like pulsations easily make common cause with McDonas’ distinctive sounds on the latter, as the guitarist’s gentling impressionistic fills do with the first strategy. Despite on-the-mark finger-styling, guitar motifs are all over the ten selections in solo features or in duo or trio pairings. The antithesis to this is Points (MultiKulti Project MPSMT 016 multikulti.com). Consisting of four lengthy improvisations, the performances featuring cellist Cecaldi and three Lisbon-based players are better integrated. Connection is such in fact, that the string shadings of guitarist Marcelo dos Reis sometimes almost vanish into the synchronous sounds created by the blended textures of percussionist Marco Franco, trumpeter Luis Vicente and the cellist.

On the other hand, few trops point out the diversity that can exist among guitar-focused combos than the following sessions, both of which include French cellist Valentin Cecaldi. One-quarter of the oddly named qOãIp group, the band's eponymous CD (BMC CD 237 bmcrecords.hu) defines the symmetry expressed by a working group that includes the cellist and his violin-playing brother Theo Cecaldi, as well as two Germans, guitarist Ronny Graupe and drummer Christian Lillinger. With Graupe and Lillinger serving as the counter-balance to the cultivated arco and pizzicato strategies of the Cecaldins, guitar motifs are all over the ten selections in solo features or in duo or trio pairings. The antithesis to this is Points (MultiKulti Project MPSMT 016 multikulti.com). Consisting of four lengthy improvisations, the performances featuring cellist Cecaldi and three Lisbon-based players are better integrated. Connection is such in fact, that the string shadings of guitarist Marcelo dos Reis sometimes almost vanish into the synchronous sounds created by the blended textures of percussionist Marco Franco, trumpeter Luis Vicente and the cellist.

Far away from mainstream jazz and jazz-rock fusion are the specially configured musical cycles of American guitarist Joe Morris and British saxophonist Evan Parker on The Village (Fundacja Stuchaj FSR 13/2019 stuchaj.org). A first-ever duo recording, each player arrives with a distinctive instrumental approach worked out over years of experimentation. Copasctic but not compounded, the key to the Morris-Parker duo is that neither abandons individual expression while propelling tandem association in double-counterpoint. Sticking to moderated tenor saxophone smears on the nearly 40-minute opening, The Mound – a similar linkage with Parker’s intense nasal soprano saxophone tones is highlighted on the other brief track – the reedist’s multiphonics splutter, smear and slap beside Morris’ canny use of pointed patterning that encompasses high-pitched strings sourced from near the tuning pegs and mid-range, folksy strums. Meanwhile, as the duo’s key-in-lock cooperation is activated, enough distance is maintained so that episodes of Parker’s instantly recognizable circular breathing develop logically, as do those passages when Morris’ string pressure gives the sequence a low-pitched rhythmic feel. Eventually, scratching string fills backed by reed vibrations confirm that each player has adapted enough of the other’s distinctive approach to improvisation to create an intertwined finale.

Coordination and climaxes are also present on Nomad Trio (Skridl Records 04.4 skirerecords.com), as a trio filled out by Americans, pianist Matt Mitchell and drummer Jim Black join Vancouver’s Gordon Grdina to interpret six of his compositions. While only the final Lady Choral picks up the exquisite bass and treble patterns Grdina can create using the multi-string oud, playing guitar his robust finger styling sounds nothing like Morris’ introverted interval stings or Cline’s thrashing rock-inflected fills. Instead his playing is both sharp and swift, as if he’s an elated Jim Hall, coursing and flaring against the drummer’s active clatter or cymbal rebounds, as the pianist slides from maelstroms of circular patterning to measured stop-time clips. The title tracks expresses how despite overbearing crescendos from Mitchell, the guitarist can move from knotty and discursive runs to electric knob-twisting and string bending without losing his cool. As descriptive, Grdina’s string-and-fret architecture on Ride Home allows for story-telling reflection, as he moves from note constriction to expansive flanges. Meeting percussion splashes and processional keyboard lines, guitar pulsations make the finale so connectively opaque that it’s almost overbearing.

With the six-string front-and-centre in so many branches of rock-related runs that almost literally punch a hole in the sequence and, backed by Lillinger’s power pops, quickly expose a series of frailing and plinking theme variations. With a selection of moods ranging from refined to raw, the four musicians take cohesion to its logical conclusion. No matter how radical the motifs become, continuity remains. This is expressed best on the textual framed finale of Get Together, when a combination of energetic, near impenetrable riffs from the drummer and intermitent picking from the guitarist threaten to spin out of control before being reined in. Additionally, there’s the, unusual—for-a-European-band, track titled Toronto. Yet this stop-time near-ballad seems to describe the city with a moody collection of sliding string harmonies. In fact, when the four stretch out, as on extended tracks like Mermaids and Sperm Whales the qOãIp members can dazzle. Speedily they move from unison moderato expositions to delicate
minuet-like narratives. Fusing arco cello and violin lyricism to guitar
frails that emphasize impressionism, they’re completed by favouring
the metallic properties of energized violin and guitar runs plus precise
drum runs. Never is momentum lost nor does any linkage seem artificial.

Valentin Ceccaldi’s other affiliated outing is much more exploratory, but no
matter how long the tracks are, or how the extended techniques upend the program,
the tracks always right themselves into harmony variants. Rotating the introduc-
tions among band members, as themes are elaborated, spontaneous interactions
occur, such as having downward slithering Harmon-muted trumpet tones under-
scored by sul tasto cello responses; or how melding cymbal splashes, gutbucket brass smears and spiccato strings produces memories of
both Debussy and Dixieland. Throughout, dos Reis forges a singular
path, with his contributions more felt than heard. Only at the very
end of the Exclamation Mark for instance, are distant flanges and
plucks audible. Meanwhile among sequences where all members’
elevated pitches or foundation croaks are emphasized, Question Mark
is the most fully realized. Almost an assembly line of effects, it begins
with distant guitar string plucking, exposes pure air forced through
the trumpet without valve motion, introduces drumming clip clops and
completes the first cycle with swift strokes from the cellist. The
climactic resolution finally arises as brass tones brightly flutter on
top of drum press rolls while Ceccaldi and dos Reis combine into a
flurry of percussive near-Andalusian cadences. Instructively the finale
evolves into warm lyricism as trumpet peeps and finger-style string
emphasis gently combine.

Upfront or reticent, each of these guitar strategies uniquely comple-
ments the improvised musical situation in which it is placed and
suggests that many other strategies are feasible.

Old Wine, New Bottles
Fine Old Recordings Re-Released

One of the treasures of recorded music is Mahler’s Das Lied von
der Erde recorded over three days in May 1952, in Vienna. The Vienna Philharmonic was conducted by Bruno Walter and
soloists were Kathleen Ferrier and Julius Patzak. That Decca recording has never been out of print. Back in 1947-48 Walter wanted to conduct a festival performance of Das Lied and had searched in vain for a
contralto who could live up to the demands of this remarkable work.
“I was told of a young English singer who made quite a great
impression on all those who heard her... and she came and sang for me
in New York. She sang Lied von der Erde in New York.” He goes on to
speak about making the 1952 recording, “It was unforgettable how this
tremendous voice filled the space of Carnegie Hall and the radio listeners that Walter had not exaggerated
one little bit. The CD also has an informative 1956 interview by Arnold
Michaels with Walter, excerpted above, in which he talks about Ferrier,
his close friend Gustav Mahler and Bruckner. The sound has remark-
able presence and is not an aircheck but an in situ recording by the Carnegie Recording Company. Some unobtrusive, slight surface noise
occasionally, but the balances are perfect.

After Der Abschied (Farewell), SOMM adds three short, gentle
Bach settings of love songs from a recital in Town Hall, New York on January 8, 1950. Vergiss mein nicht (Do not forget me) BWV505: Ach,
dass nicht die letzte Stunde (Ah! Why has not the final hour) BWV439;
and Bist du bei mir (If thou art near) BWV508. Perfect choices. Her
accompanist is pianist and friend John Newmark.

This is a unique document, earning a place in every collection.

Pianist Friedrich Gulda is certainly not a household name today but from the 1960s
on he was indeed recognized by classical LP collectors as a master, and by thinking
jazz fans as a progressive jazz innovator. He toured worldwide, including appearances
with the polished SWR Radio Symphony Orchestras of Stuttgart and Baden-Baden.
The SWR recorded all the performances that they presented and their CDs reflect care
and expertise in documenting these concerts. Their latest release is a
three-disc set of concerts by Mozart, Beethoven, Haydn and Richard
Strauss (SWR Classic SWR19088CD naxosdirect.com). Here they are
all recorded between 1959 and 1962 with their conductors: Mozart
No.14 in E-flat Major K449 and No.23 in A Major K448, Hans Rosbaud;
No.24 in C Minor K491, Joseph Kellibeth; Beethoven No.4 in G Major
Op.58, and Haydn No.11 in G Major XVIII:11, Hans Muller-Kray;
Strauss Burleske in D Minor, Muller-Kray, with a solo encore, Zugabe;
and finally Debussy’s solo piano Feux d’artifice.

All these were recorded before appreciative audiences, resulting in
personal performances closer to the heart and different from playing
to microphones. This is perhaps not always the case, but certainly
is so in the music-making on these three discs. The kind of music-
making that has you hanging on every note. There is the age-old
question of who is in charge in a concerto, the conductor or the
soloist? Here we have three different conductors each tuned to this
articulate pianist.
The 1960s was the era during which many prodigiously talented USSR instrumental virtuosos were at last permitted by their government to concertize in the West. None elicited more universal excitement than Sviatoslav Richter who possessed a seemingly limitless technique, equally at home in Beethoven and the German Romantic composers, the French Impressionists and, of course, contemporary Russian composers. He is now recognized as one of the greatest pianists of the 20th century. He made his American debut in Chicago on October 15, 1960, gave a series of concerts in New York that season and appeared as soloist with the New York Philharmonic. To hand is an 11CD set Sviatoslav Richter plays Rachmaninov & Prokofiev (Profil PH19052 naxosdirect.com).

Many of these recordings pre-date his American debut. There are two versions of the Rachmaninov First Piano Concerto: the version from March 9, 1949 is conducted by Oleg Azarov followed by a performance from February 18, 1955 under Kurt Sanderling. The second concerto also has two performances: live under Agarkov on May 19, 1948 and with Sanderling on February 6, 1959. He also plays eight of the Etudes-Tableaux from Opp.33 and 39. The “bonus” on this disc is two songs sung by soprano Nina Dorliac, Richter’s lifelong partner. Rounding out the Rachmaninov entries are some preludes. Richter had put together a suite of 12 preludes heard live, also another of six preludes.

There are so many works of Prokofiev on the seven remaining discs! The First Piano Concerto with Kondrashin and the Moscow Youth Symphony Orchestra in 1952, followed by two performances of the Fifth; with Kondrashin and the Moscow Philharmonic on April 24, 1961; and a real gem, a previously unreleased concert recording with the Philadelphia Orchestra and Eugene Ormandy in Leningrad from June 14, 1958. Another interesting entry is the recording of the world premiere performance of Prokofiev’s Symphony-Concerto for Cello and Orchestra In E Minor, Op.125. The dedicatee, Mstislav Rostropovich, is the soloist, and the conductor is Sviatoslav Richter. There are seven piano sonata performances, 11 Vision Fugitives, Op.22; piano transcriptions from the ballet Cinderella; the second and third cello sonatas, two performances of the Suggestion diabolique No.4, Op.4, and eight songs sung by Nina Dorliac.

Paul Tortelier was a French cellist born Paris in 1914. He won First Prize in cello at the Paris Conservatoire at 16. He became principal cellist of the Boston Symphony in 1935 returning to France in 1939. He settled in Israel in 1955, travelling to Europe for concerts. He recorded major concerted works for EMI and was also a member of the Casals Festival in Prades with Casals, Stern, Istomin, Menuhin and the rest. He died in 1990.

A three-CD set Paul Tortelier – The RIAS Recordings (Audite 21.455 naxosdirect.com) is devoted to cello sonatas recorded by the Radio in the American Sector in 1949, 1962 and 1964 and are released here for the first time. These are superbly performances that from the first bar of the Beethoven Sonata No.5 leave no doubt that these musicians love what they are doing. The accompanist, or rather partner, is Lothar Broddack with whom he collaborates in the Mendelssohn No.2; Fauré No.2 and Papillon; Paganini Introduction and Variations on Dal tuo stellate soglio from Moses in Egypt; and Casella’s Sonata No.2. Pianist Klaus Billing replaces Broddack for Brahms Sonata No.1, Schumann’s Fantasiestücke Op.73 and Tortelier’s own Trois p’tits tours. He needs no accompanist for the Kódaly Sonata Op.8. These are immaculate recordings of wonderful performances.
At the end of February, Tony Burman, former head of CBC News, in his column in The Toronto Star, more or less approvingly quoted the conclusions of two Canadian media professors, Chris Waddell and David Taras, from their recent book, The End of the CBC?.

Waddell and Taras, surveying the devastating wreckage of mainstream Canadian journalism, and noting the CBC’s inability to be all things to all people, added the two together and declared that “The CBC needs to shed much of its old skin and become solely a news and current affairs organization, dedicated to producing high-quality, dependable, and fair news and analysis.” So in their view, more Peter Mansbridge and Ian Hanomansing, less or no drama, comedy, music, arts, or any other cultural programming.

It’s a provocative thesis, but far from a new one.

When I was a manager at the CBC, in both the Radio Music and Radio Variety departments, we were constantly being called upon to defend our “frivolous” cultural spending when news bureaus were being forced to close around the world, and news resources were being cut back at home. Democracy demands an informed public, we were lectured – harangued actually. The needs of News must prevail. And nobody’s interested in your damn classical music, anyway. It’s just there for elitists. Reading through The End of the CBC? was like an immediate flashback to my professional past. The same attitudes are all there.

What was wrong with those arguments then is what’s wrong with them now. It’s not that Waddell, Taras and Burman are incorrect in their analysis of the current chaotic state of information in the world. We live at a time where truth and lies are becoming fatally indistinguishable, destroying the very possibility of establishing...
the foundations of a functioning society. For us, that’s a huge problem.

For the would-be authoritarians of the world, on the other hand, it’s a game plan. As Steve Bannon, former Donald Trump adviser put it, rather bluntly, in 2018: “The real opposition is the media; and the way to deal with them is to flood the zone with shit.” That is, with disinformation. In this nightmarish world, a properly functioning news service works like society’s filtration plant for truth, providing us a clean information supply so we all don’t get very sick. And who better to provide that service than a public broadcaster, with a responsibility of service to the nation built into its very raison d’être? It’s really, in essence, a public health issue. Burman and his colleagues aren’t wrong on this score. Their only failing, and it’s a significant one, is their cultural blind spot, their failure to understand that truthful information about the world doesn’t just come from newscasts or current affairs interviews. The real news of the world comes from music, novels, movies, dramas, visual art – culture, in a word, the whole panoply of human imaginative response to life that fuels the deeper, more powerful ties of solidarity and understanding that fully create a society.

Let’s take Indigenous Canada as an example, a topic that’s been very much in the “news” recently. If we are serious about coming to terms with the reality of Indigenous Canada, we need to be exposed to more than stories about the differences between hereditary and band leadership, articles examining the complexities of ceded and unceded land, examinations of Supreme Court rulings about meaningful consultation. We do need these. But we also need – desperately – a fuller understanding of the entire spiritual outlook of Indigenous peoples – their understanding of their relationship to the land, to each other, to their creator, to the country. Once we have that, or begin to have that, the political situation becomes clearer, more understandable – and our chances of approaching each other increase.

That fuller understanding does not come from news. It comes from culture – from story and music and visual art, and spiritual philosophy – precisely those things that would be abandoned if the CBC became a news-focused organization. An abandonment that would diminish the CBC – and the people of Canada as well – it would be a powerful and fatal loss.

And it’s not just in regard to Indigenous Canada that this is true. Look at the immense outpouring of attention and gratitude the CBC received when it broadcast the last concert of the Tragically Hip from Kingston in 2016. The impact on the Canadian psyche, I think it’s fair to say, was powerful and significant. How many newscasts was that concert worth? More than a few, I think most would say. We all live in many worlds at the same time. A public institution devoted to the intellectual and moral health of a country needs to pay attention to them all, or at least the most significant ones. And I won’t bother to recount to you for the 100th time the CBC’s astonishing record in cultural programming over the years (the place didn’t even have a news department until 1941, when the exigencies of war forced one

on it). If we had to choose one Canadian created by the CBC who has most helped further our identity, sense of nation, and understanding of the world, would it be Peter Mansbridge or Glenn Gould, Rosie Barton or Alice Munro (whose first literary work was broadcast on the CBC long before the publishing world had ever heard of her)? If I had to choose, I know where my focus would be. But we don’t have to choose – that’s the most important thing to consider in all of this. It doesn’t have to be a contest between forms of content at the CBC. It’s a mistake to assume that the CBC will never have enough money to do everything it needs to do and therefore must choose one thing or the other. My experience within the CBC itself is illuminating in this regard, I think. While I was there, I was constantly being told that there wasn’t any money for some initiative or other I had proposed, only to see vast sums of money spent on some other initiative soon thereafter. I realized that when people told me there was no money for something, they really meant they didn’t believe it had enough value. They could, and would, find the money if they believed it did. That, in a nutshell, is the dilemma the CBC faces these days – it must convince the Government of Canada, having first convinced the people of Canada, that what it proposes to offer Canadians is of clear and obvious worth. Make that case, and the money, or some of it (it’s never enough) will follow, in one form or another.

The problem is that the CBC has not made that case effectively to Canadians for a long, long time, which is why it is caught in the tumult of so many problems, inconsistencies, and controversies. If the CBC can regain the trust and confidence it enjoyed for many, many years – that saw the Canadian public support its formation (in the middle of the Great Depression, no less, and originally by a Conservative government, let’s not forget), it may be able to thrive once more. But restricting its focus solely to news and current affairs, abandoning its cultural history, and ignoring its cultural present, is not the way to make that case for value. Life is not all news; the CBC shouldn’t be either.

And one last thought in these plague-saturated times. The CBC’s news department has done an excellent job of keeping us up to date on the swirling, ever-changing reality of our lives these days. That’s what they’re supposed to do, and they’re good at it. But when the all clear is eventually sounded and we emerge to survey the social and economic damage that’s been done by the coronavirus blitz, it won’t be just news we’ll need. It will be the things that culture provides – entertainment, thoughtfulness, spiritual depth, common experience. Those are the things that build structure and community in our lives. A public broadcaster can’t be without them.

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