



The Music Scene

Spring 2005

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Editorial

On Monday, May 2, primary and secondary school students across the country will head outdoors. They will gather in courtyards and school grounds to share their passion for music and music education by playing *A Little Music*, a song written by Canadian composer and musician Chris Tait. The first annual event, dubbed "Music Monday," is an initiative of the Coalition for Music Education in Canada (CMEC), and aims to emphasize the crucial role played by music students and educators in ensuring Canada's musical future.

This issue of *The Music Scene* also celebrates young people and music. As the future of classical music, young people are its greatest ambassadors. And as our profiles on Canada's Rising Stars demonstrate (p. 18), they are clearly rising to the challenge. This summer, thousands of youngsters will head to Canada's woods and lakes for musical inspiration. We are happy to present our second annual Music Camp Directory (p. 12) to help them find it. Despite this great love for music-making, youth attendance at classical concerts has been declining for decades. On page 31, our British correspondent Norman Lebrecht explores ways to make concert-going a more appealing and rewarding experience. The article on the Vancouver Youth Symphony Orchestra (p. 10) looks at the parental opposition experienced by some young people hoping to translate their passion for music into a living. For youth hoping to study music (and perhaps for their parents as well), our Musical Careers feature on page 22 is a must-read. This feature also introduces the latest addition to *The Music Scene* team, musicologist and radio host Rick Phillips. Every issue, Rick will offer his picks of the best new classical CDs, starting with page 38 of this magazine. Lastly, we hope you will be inspired by our cover interview with Valery Gergiev (p. 26). For decades he has stayed true to his humanist and musical ideals while making music for the pure love of it. A better role model is hard to find.

Three years ago, CMEC Executive Director Ingrid Whyte had a vision of Canadians joining in music: "I remember thinking, 'wouldn't it be wonderful to have a day where everybody comes out and is unified through song?'" she told me. Music Monday is the realization of that vision, a vision that *The Music Scene* is proud to share. Just as Ingrid wants students to make *A Little Music* their own – apparently students in Newfoundland have already come up with a bluegrass version of the piece – we also want you to consider *The Music Scene* yours. Let us know what you'd like to see more (or less) of, and we'll make it happen.

See you on May 2. I'm sure we'll be hearing from you!



Wah Keung Chan

Editor-in-chief

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Alexia Cousin retires at 25

The rising French opera star Alexia Cousin caused waves with her announcement on March 3, that she is retiring from the opera scene. "I have decided to terminate my artistic career," she said in a statement posted on her agent's web site. "The passion and the wholeness that have always determined my way of singing will from now on lead my life in another direction. I would like to thank from the depth of my heart all those who had supported me in this special adventure, from close up or from far away, on both sides of the curtain."

The star, known for her remarkably large voice and stage presence, had recently won rave reviews for her role as l'Aiglou in Honegger and Ibert's eponymous opera, presented last September in Marseille. Cousin's sudden decision, and cancellation of her upcoming appearance in *Manon Lescault* at the Vienna State Opera, has fuelled the opera world rumour-mill, but to no avail. So far no word of explanation has emerged, although her agent, Laurent Delage, has kept some opera-lovers's hopes alive with these cryptic comments: "Who can predict the future? Should the future bring her back to



stage it would be a pity to shut the door definitely for all those who had believed in her, her unique talent and her precocious achievements [...] Alexia should be aware that she will always

find an open door with people who had believed in her." **SMD**

Students in harmony on Music Monday

On Monday, May 2, children across the country will unite to play the same piece of music in an event the Coalition for Music Education in Canada has dubbed Music Monday. The organization will provide a melody in a variety of arrangements to be played by both elementary and high school bands and orchestras at the same time. According to the Coalition's Web site (www.coalitionformusiced.ca), it hopes the event will offer "a tangible demonstration of how music programs shape young lives and the fun young people have in making music," as well as "show the important links between school music programs, their communities and the cultural vitality of this country."

A series of outdoor school concerts will also mark the occasion. Supporters of the project

include the Ontario Provincial Honour Band, Pinchas Zukerman, the National Arts Centre, Parents for the Arts, and The Canadian Brass. The Coalition for Music Education in Canada is an organization dedicated to ensuring all Canadian children have access to music education. Music Monday happens at 10 am PT, 1 pm ET and 2 pm AT. **DD**

BBC airs *Jerry Springer – The Opera*

Despite being pressured by a militant Welsh Christian group and receiving almost 50,000 complaints, the BBC aired *Jerry Springer – The Opera* last month to an audience of over 1.8 million viewers. Meanwhile, plans are now underway to bring the successful musical and 2004 Oliver award-winner to Broadway.

The musical, an irreverent comedy inspired by American trash-television culture, has been a London hit for three years. It stars a fictional Jerry Springer mediating a conflict between God, Satan, Mary and a diaper-wearing Jesus. It also features a large cast of audience members/choristers, transsexuals, a troupe of tap-dancing Ku Klux Klansmen and over 300 sung expletives.

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Christian Voice sent thousands of protest letters before the opera's broadcast, and published the home addresses and telephone numbers of BBC employees on its website, several of whom reported receiving angry and threatening calls.

"This is not an issue of freedom of speech," said Christian Voice national director Stephen Green, "but a case of broadcasting people not knowing the civilized limits and having to be told them." He later added: "If *Jerry Springer - The Opera* isn't blasphemous then nothing in Britain is sacred. The damage that must have done to impressionable young people is incalculable."

Christian Voice also pressured a Scottish cancer charity, Maggie's Centres, to return the £3,000 raised by a charity performance of the show by threatening to protest outside their office. David Soul, the actor who plays Springer, denounced the religious group's "strong-arm, mob-style tactics." For his part, Green said the charity had avoided a "potential public relations disaster of profiting from filth and blasphemy."

Mark Thompson, director-general of the BBC, stated that showing *Jerry Springer - The Opera* was "both right and important" in order for the BBC to remain "a space in which the widest range of ideas and creativity can be shared by the public."

"The play is a satire aimed not at Christianity but at what the authors take to be the valueless amorality of *The Jerry Springer Show*," Thompson said. "The second act explores the interior of the fictional Springer's mind - it was not a critique or attack on the Christian holy figures themselves."

Despite the controversy in Britain, the show's New York producer said that plans are still in place for bringing the \$13.9 million US show to Broadway. Although no dates or theatre has been announced yet, spokesperson John Barlow said the Broadway version of *Jerry Springer - The Opera* plans to finalize its funding in the next six months and premiere in early 2006. **SMD**

Lost Vocal Greats



The musical world lost several great singers in 2004, among them baritone Robert Merrill (1919-2004) and Italian soprano **Renata Tebaldi** (1922-2004). The former, reputed for his velvet-

smooth voice, earned admiration for his interpretations of dozens of roles, including Escamillo in *Carmen* and Figaro in *The Barber of Seville*. Renata Tebaldi, a great rival of Maria Callas, will be remembered for her rich and creamy voice and her masterful technique. Spanish soprano Victoria de los Angeles (1923-2005), also passed on in mid-January of this year. Despite beginning a career as a coloratura soprano, she went on to be recognized as one of the most outstan-

ding lyric singers of the century, never for an instant abandoning her Spanish roots. **WKC**

La Scala Saga continues

Recent events at Milan's reputed La Scala opera house have only contributed to worsen an already-tense atmosphere. "I believe that, at the moment, there are not the conditions for us to play music together," wrote musical director Riccardo Muti to his musicians. His statement left some people wondering whether Muti's letter was one of resignation.

In any case, his announcement forced La Scala to cancel yet another concert, adding to the financial unrest caused by the string of squabbles at the theatre. "The problem with Muti is that he wants to be the absolute dictator of La Scala - and he is succeeding," said the opera and film director Franco Zeffirelli. "It's unprecedented, unbelievable."

Musicians and staff of La Scala have been at odds with Muti and the board since February 24, when previous general manager Carlo Fontana was dismissed and replaced by Mauro Meli, the theatre's former artistic director and Muti's choice pick. Muti had accused Fontana of "dumbing down" La Scala's program.

Yet the conductor is attracting his own share of criticism. "He is drunk with himself, drugged by his own art and his own personal vanity," said Zeffirelli. "He can only talk about himself, he's become a caricature of a conductor." Under Muti's leadership, he added, La Scala has staged "one horrendous production after another: constipated, anal, with no explosion of vitality on stage."

All of the brouhaha has left concert-goers wondering whether they will have a chance to enjoy the expensive restructuring and refurbishment of the Italian theatre intended to return La Scala to the front rank of international opera houses. **DD**

New Budget Guarantees Canada Council's Extra \$25 Million

Officials at Canada Council are breathing a sigh of relief at the news that Ralph Goodale's February budget has left intact their \$25 million in extra funding. That amount, first granted to them in 2001, has now been extended all the way to 2010. "Of course it doesn't solve all of Canada Council's financial problems, but it's a start," said public relations director Donna Balkin, who expressed gratitude to Minister of Canadian Heritage Liza Frulla for "being a champion of the arts in Canada." Balkin also thanked the "many artists and arts groups who expressed their support for Canada Council."

The Council claims to have been extending and creating new funding avenues for the arts, including programs for new music, spoken-word and new media. "If we had lost the money, that would have meant some serious cuts in grants," said Balkin. "We know how much this means to artists, and now we can continue to help them achieve their goals." **SMD**



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VYSO: Baking their Cake and Eating it Too

DANIELLE DUBOIS

The Vancouver Youth Symphony Orchestra (VYSO) celebrates its 75th anniversary this year. Established in 1930, it is one of the oldest youth orchestras in the country, second only to Winnipeg's Youth Orchestra. "Our primary role is to give the most outstanding young classical musicians an outlet to play masterworks at a very high level," says Roger Cole, artistic director of the VYSO and conductor of the Senior Orchestra.

Composition is one of the chief elements that distinguishes the VYSO from other national youth orchestras. Eighty-five percent of the VYSO's 230 musicians aged 8 to 21 are of Asian descent. Of course, not all members of the Debut, Junior, Intermediate and Senior Orchestras join with a view to becoming professional musicians – quite the contrary. Yet, for those musicians coming from Asian families, it is a career-path often frowned upon by parents.

Kenneth Hsieh knows how difficult it can be to overcome parental opposition. A member of the VYSO from 1992 to 1998, first as a violinist and then as a tympanist and percussionist, he studied pre-law before heeding the call of music. "My mother was supportive but my father, a very traditional man who believes in absolute discipline, was really against it," says Hsieh. "Like many other Asian people, he does not consider that music can lead to a money-making career." Such a mentality is typical among Asian people, especially the Chinese and Taiwanese, says Hsieh who adds that parents want their kids to learn as many things as they can but never with the goal of bringing it to the next level. "I always make the analogy of baking the cake but not eating it," remarks Hsieh who finds it regretful so much money is spent on learning skills that are not fully valued.

Not all musicians find themselves at odds with their parents's vision. Li-Yin Wang joined the VYSO in 1992, shortly after arriving from Taiwan, and stayed on until 1996. She pursued violin studies at the University of Toronto and the University of Western Ontario, always with the full support of her parents. "My mother was a piano teacher and she was happy to see me studying music," says Wang whose mother had been discouraged from pursuing music while in Taiwan. "The 50s and 60s were not the best times economically. In Taiwan there was maybe one nation-

al orchestra and there was a definite lack of music schools and university programs. Partly for this reason, music was seen as a hobby and entertainment but was not really respected," explains Wang.

Hsieh agrees there is still much education to be done before mentalities change. "At Vancouver Symphony Orchestra concerts, there's only about 1 percent of Asians in the audience," a discouraging representation considering the demographics of the city. Nonetheless, Hsieh is encouraged by the steps taken by the VYSO to open up the musical horizons of its members. "The musicians of the VYSO are receiving a lot of encouragement from teachers to attend concerts," says Hsieh.

Now the Conductor of the Vancouver Metropolitan Orchestra and Apprentice conductor of the National Academy Orchestra, it was only when Hsieh got a job in the US that his father started warming up to the idea of his son being a conductor. "I hated it at the beginning," says Hsieh of his time with the VYSO. "I'd rather have been playing soccer. But people were very warm-hearted and offered a lot of encouragement. Even if it was boring at times, you learned. It definitely helped me to develop a passion for music."

Lina Chang's 16 year-old son William is a violinist with the Senior Orchestra of the VYSO. Although she encouraged her son to pursue a professional career in music, William, now in Grade 11, told her he would rather study law and keep music as a hobby, a decision Chang supports just as she would have a music career. "I have an open mind," says Chang, "I think it is a stereotype that musicians don't make a lot of money."

The native Taiwanese speaks positively of her



family's experience with the VYSO, which, like many organizations, relies greatly on the work of volunteers. Indeed, each of the 200 families is expected to volunteer 20 hours per season, as tuition brings in only half of the annual budget. "I was parent representative and volunteer coordinator and William volunteers as a conductor's assistant," says Chang of their involvement.

It is not uncommon for alumni of the VYSO to maintain good relations with the organization that helped them advance their own careers. Li-Yin Wang, now assistant and coach of the Debut and Junior Orchestras, knows the benefits of rehearsing with an orchestra of this calibre. "I learned a lot of orchestral technique as a member of the VYSO so that it was not a very big shock when I started playing in a university orchestra," says the musician who has played with various professional orchestras.

The talents of both alumni and current VYSO members will be showcased at the VYSO's 75th year Gala Concert held at the Orpheum Theatre on Sunday May 22. Gwen Hoebig, Concert Master of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra and VYSO alumnus, will perform the Glazunov Violin Concerto. The concert will also feature the world premiere of a commissioned work by Frederick Schipizky, performed by all four of the VYSO divisions. Guest conductor Maestro Kazuyoshi Akiyama will lead the Senior Orchestra and VYSO Alumni in Respighi's Pines of Rome. "It's going to be very special," promises Roger Cole who extends an invitation to all music-lovers in the Vancouver area. ■

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Jan Simons: A Life of Teaching

DANIELLE DUBOIS

JAN SIMONS WAS FLABBERGASTED TO LEARN HE WOULD BE THE RECIPIENT OF THIS YEAR'S HOMMAGE PRIZE AWARDED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CONSEIL QUÉBÉCOIS DE LA MUSIQUE. "I guess it must be because of my long association with CAMMAC (Canadian Amateur Musicians Musiciens Amateurs du Canada) and my teaching," says the Canadian baritone who has had an impressive career, both as a performer and a teacher.

Born in Germany in 1925, Simons was living in The Hague with his family when his father, certain there would be a war, decided to leave Europe for the United States. As chance would have it however, the day Hugo Simons presented himself at the American Embassy, its doors were locked. With little time to waste, he did what any responsible man of instinct would have done—he walked across the street to the Canadian Embassy. In May 1939, the Simons family arrived in Montreal.

Jan Simons has a vivid memory of his first performance. War obliging, he was asked to sing Elgar's *Land of Hope and Glory* at a school assembly with Oscar Peterson accompanying him on piano. "Oscar was not pleased about reading music," recalls Simons, who remembers listening to the pianist improvising during lunch hour at The High School of Montreal, now the FACE school. Despite having a natural voice, Simons had never had any formal musical training apart from singing in choirs and learning the recorder while still in The Hague. Nonetheless, it was clear he wanted to pursue singing and, after completing his high school diploma in 1947, he went to New York to audition for different voice teachers.

Simons stayed in New York for two years, studying with Emilio de Gogorza. Yet, the passing of the 1948 draft law convinced the young baritone to return to Canada, where he earned a scholarship to Toronto's Royal Conservatory of Music, studying with Ernesto Vinci and Emmy Heim. The latter was, musically speaking, the most influential of his teachers. "She was a very profound interpreter," says Simons. "It was maybe the death of two of her children from influenza that gave her her depth of feeling, her intensity," reflects the father of six. "What I've learned is mostly through instinct," he adds. "I've got a good feel for what I'm doing and I've been graced with

good ears. That's really the most important thing."

"Things really started taking off in Toronto," remarks Simons, who, by this time, had begun doing radio work for the French and English CBC networks. It is also while a student in Toronto that Simons befriended Glenn Gould. In 1950, the two shared a recital in Oshawa. Simons remembers attending Gould's performance of Bach's *D-minor Concerto* at the Brussels World Fair in 1958. He himself was there as part of the Montreal Bach Choir. "After his concert, Glenn asked me if I would carry his piano bench. I was tired of people always stopping us to congratulate Glenn so I went ahead to the tent where there was a big reception thrown by the Canadian Ambassador to Brussels. When Glenn got there a few minutes later, the doorman wouldn't let him in. He was wearing his typically dirty old raincoat. His hair was long and he looked like a bum." It fell to Simons to rectify the case of mistaken identity.

Possibly the most inspiring recital of Simons' career was his debut with Gerald Moore at London's Wigmore Hall. Despite a reputation for being unkind to artists he didn't like, Moore had a soft spot for Canadians and the two immediately hit it off. "The rehearsals were particularly satisfying," recalls Simons. "He was so generous with his time and I learned a lot." On the programme that evening were the Heine songs from Schubert's *Schwanengesang* and Schumann's *Dichterliebe*, the postlude of which Simons, whose preferred repertoire is lieder and oratorio, will never forget.

Also memorable was performing at the Philadelphia Academy, one of the 42 stops for the National Ballet of Canada and its production *Dark Elegies*, an Antony Tudor ballet in which Simons performed Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder*. "The day before the sold-out performance, I stood on the stage and felt like a dwarf, it was such a high building. I started to vocalise and a voice came from the back and said, this hall has the best acoustics in the world, you don't have to push, you'll be heard. It was the janitor, and he was right. It was a wonderful singing there," says Simons who still laughs when he thinks of how the dancers made fun of him for not knowing how to put on make-up.

There were many other firsts over the course of Simons' career: the lead role in the opera *In a Garden*, directed by Pierre Mercure in 1952; a

trip to Japan with the Bach Choir in 1961, where his solos were broadcast on Japanese television, in colour.

A man of initiative himself, in 1955 Simons joined Gordon Rye and Tom Brown to found a professional choir that would later be named the Elmer Iseler Singers, in honour of its conductor. That same year, Simons went to CAMMAC for the first time. Long a teacher at its summer camps held on the shores of Lake MacDonald, Simons served as its general and artistic director for 25 years. Still faithful, he returns every summer to teach vocal and interpretative classes.

Looking back on his musical career, Simons does not hesitate to say its most rewarding aspect has been teaching. His pedagogy is simple: "Going back to basics. I do that with every student, every lesson. That's the only way to keep the voice healthy," maintains Simons, who has always been keen on clear diction.

Officially retired from McGill since 1995, Simons continues to teach at the University 11 hours a week, together with pianist Michael McMahon. That's in addition to his private students, seasoned professionals, amateurs, and singers suffering from serious vocal problems. "One of the most important things in teaching is to be positive with your students, even if you don't think they're that talented, because if somebody really has a desire to sing, there's always something there," says an optimistic Simons, who was told he would never have a big voice. For beginners, Simons finds two shorter sessions a week make for more rapid progress than a longer one – supervised practice he calls it.

The care Simons takes in judging each personality and his insistence on having students develop their own voices instead of imitating those of others, make him a much a sought-after teacher. "I've never been so busy!" exclaims the 79 year old teacher whose better-known students include the likes of Stephanie Marshall, Olivier Laquerre, Matthew White, Michelle Sutton, and Marie-Annick Béliveau.

Although the pace is not likely to slow down anytime soon for Simons, you won't hear him complaining. "I'm still learning," declares the born teacher whose instinct and good ears are sure to serve him and his students for a while yet. ■



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How Music Camp Changed my Life

WHEN I WAS EIGHT YEARS OLD MY PARENTS ASKED ME WHICH INSTRUMENT I WANTED TO LEARN. I REMEMBER ANSWERING WITHOUT HESITATION: "I WANT TO PLAY THE BAGPIPES." My parents had the unfortunate duty to tell me that FACE, the fine-arts school I attend in Montreal, didn't offer bagpipe classes (a fact for which, I am sure, our neighbours are still thanking their lucky stars). They asked me if I was interested in any other instrument, but I could not fathom any instrument being better than the bagpipes. Fortunately for all of us, that summer my mother and I participated in the Canadian Amateur Musicians/Musiciens Amateurs du Canada (CAMMAC) music camp, where I discovered that there might be another place for me in the musical world.

My time at camp changed my life. The people there seemed to be in a perpetually good mood – the teachers were wonderful friends and excellent musicians, and the directors even cared about the campers enough to take a poll about which type of water we liked best: the water that had been filtered or the water straight from the lake. (The filtered water won.)

The most important moment for me, however, was the cello recital of one of my newfound friends. I was mesmerized by the instrument's deep, resonant, and warm sound, not unlike the

laugh of a grandfather mischievously handing out cookies right before dinner. From that moment on the other instruments at school didn't stand a chance. The wind instruments gave me a headache, the violin was worse, and as for the viola, well, who played the viola? There was no going back for me: I was hooked on cello.

After several joyful months of playing at school, I started taking private lessons on my tiny half-size instrument. With me at the helm it sounded much more like a raspy wind than anything else, but I loved it nonetheless. When I had finally grown enough musically and physically to move up to a three-quarter size instrument, I enjoyed the sound of the new creature so much that when I ran out of music to play I would just keep playing my own improvisations.

A couple of years later, a woman came up to me in the school hall with a music score and asked if I knew any cellists who could play it. After looking over the part carefully I replied that I was a cellist and would be willing to give it a try. Before I knew it I was in two separate orchestras with so much hard music to practice that I could hardly shake my bow at it all. One was a small chamber ensemble and the other, the FACE Symphony Orchestra, was a full-blown symphony orchestra of 50 musicians. The woman who had stopped me in the hall turned out to be Theodora Stathopoulos, a

teacher at the school and the conductor of both orchestras.

These new groups presented both challenges and opportunities. While the chamber orchestra repertoire was manageable, the music that the symphony played was quite a bit above my level. At my first rehearsal I remember the music flying by me at speeds I thought I would never be able to reach. It's funny how sometimes things that seem impossible are achievable after all. When someone plops a part down in front of you, at first you can only play a few notes. With a little work, however, it starts to gradually fill in, and with lots and lots of help you can actually play through the whole part.

Where has my initial camp experience led me? Well, I am currently finishing my eleventh and last year at FACE, and still enjoying being an active part of both orchestras. I continue to study cello privately with Gary Russell. I plan to devote my life to music, if I can, and would particularly like to explore period performance of early music. Maybe I will take up the viola da gamba? Who knows! What is certain is that I will always cherish my music camp memories, without which I wouldn't be doing what I am today. If it wasn't for my summer at music camp, I would still be trying to learn the bagpipes. ■

Camps News

Kincardine takes up Scottish fiddling

True to its Scottish roots, Kincardine Summer Music Festival (KSMF) has launched the Scottish Fiddle Orchestra, a new program for fiddle players running from August 1 to 5. Open to all players aged 14 and up who have a basic knowledge of notes and technique, the Orchestra is designed to help fiddlers "explore the fun and congeniality of playing traditional Scottish and Celtic tunes in a relaxed atmosphere," says KSMF Organizing Chair John Schnarr.

The KSMF is located in the historically Scottish-based town of Kincardine, on the shores of Lake Huron. The festival offers 18 different programs for all instruments and ages. The first week, from August 1 to 5, offers nightly jazz and blues concerts. The second, from August 8 to 13, features chamber music and classical con-

certs. Both culminate in the 57-year old tradition of a Saturday evening pipe band parade through town with the Kincardine Scottish Pipe Band. More information is available on the KSMF website, www.ksmf.ca

New pros and program at Orford

The Orford Arts Centre Music Academy has announced the addition of new professors for the 2005 summer sessions, taking place this year from June 20 to August 13. Several of the new pros will come from abroad, including pianist Jacques Rouvier and bassoonist Marc Trénel (France), violist Michael Kugel (Belgium), violinist Michael Frischenschlager (Austria) and clarinetist Richard Stoltzman (USA).

Orford will inaugurate a new master class this year. It will be led by acclaimed Canadian accompanist Michael McMahon, and will focus on pianists specializing in voice coaching and accompaniment. It will also be open to singers

wanting to work on their repertoire. More information is available on the Orford website, www.arts-orford.org

CAMMAC receives building grant

Canadian Amateur Musicians/Musiciens Amateurs du Canada (CAMMAC) will receive \$2 million from the government of Quebec to help rebuild the Lake MacDonald Music Centre in Harrington, Quebec. Canada Economic Development is also putting \$814,928 towards the project, which includes a 41 room residence with kitchen and dining room, teaching studios, a concert area and space for CAMMAC's music library, which holds over 10,000 works.

The new centre will emphasize many concepts in green architecture such as the use of solar energy, the recycling of grey water, and roof gardens. Bosses design + Box architecture was the architectural firm selected to undertake the project.

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The Music Scene and *La Scena Musicale* have a tradition of featuring exceptional young Canadian musicians, such as Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Marie-Nicole Lemieux and James Ehnes. For our first annual Rising Stars feature, we chose the most promising students from Canada's major music schools.

Sean Rice, clarinetist

age: 21 / hometown: St. John's, NL

school: Memorial University

teacher: Paul Bendozsa

favourite interpreters: Kimball Sykes, James

Campbell, Richard Stoltzman

Sean Rice likes to perform music that pushes his limits.

"Beethoven and Mozart are greats but I like to present balanced programs with a variety of pieces," says the lover of contemporary music, whose favourite piece is Aaron Copland's Concerto for Clarinet and Strings.

"Work ethics are key," adds Rice. Having set his sights on a solo career, the two-time National Music Festival winner certainly does not lack performance experience. In 2003, he performed with Symphony Nova Scotia at the National Arts Centre and was invited to give his own concert in the Canadian capital. "The audience was great," recalls Rice, who finds auditions much more nerve-racking than performances. His immediate plans are to complete his Bachelor in Music Performance, after which he intends to pursue a Master's and a Doctorate degree in Music. "I'm expanding my technique and I still have a lot to learn," says Rice, who tries to practice between 4 and 5 hours a day.



Joel Tranquilla, choral conductor

age: 19

hometown: Fredericton

school: Mount Allison

teacher: Edmund Dawe (piano)

favourite composers: Bach, Eric Whitaker

Although Joel Tranquilla is pursuing a Bachelor of Music in piano, he has his sights set on choral conducting. A member of the America Boy Choir School when he was younger, Tranquilla is no stranger to high level performance. The summer before beginning university, he decided to form his own choir. VocalEse is a 20 voice mixed ensemble made up mostly of



university students whose repertoire spans a wide array of music from 16th Century Madrigals to African-American Spirituals.

With choral conducting being one of the lesser developed musical areas in Canada, Tranquilla seizes the opportunities to develop his skills whenever they present themselves. He recently attended masterclasses in Vancouver with the Elmer Iseler Singers. "I learn from making mistakes – that's how I see what my style is," says Tranquilla who cites Scott Leithead, founder and artistic director of the Kokopelli Choir Association, as being one of his role models. "I see myself settling in a community and fostering a choral program," shares Tranquilla who has experience working with both adults and children and who would like to do work with theaters in the future.

Nicolas Bernier, composer (electroacoustic music)

age: 27

hometown: Hull

school: Université de Montréal

teachers: Robert Normandeau and Jean Piché

favourite composers: Maurizio Martusciello (Italy), Robert Normandeau, Louis Dufort, Gilles Gobeil, François Dhomon, Stéphane Roy, Martin Bédard (d'Amours métal), Luc Ferrari, Serge Gainsbourg

"Every time that I win a prize or a piece is selected for a festival, I'm astounded," says Nicolas Bernier, who first tried to develop his knowledge of electroacoustic music by reading treatises on the topic. Four years later, he's landing prizes and invitations to festivals left and right.



His approach to composition is simple: "I think composition turns out for the best when it's done rapidly and intensely," Bernier says he uses his ear as a guide – the intellectual work comes later.

The composer is grateful to friends who make him discover musics not studied at university, and although many of them consider his music completely abstract, they can appreciate it, as do the bigwigs of the academic world.

Bernier is definitely not lacking enthusiasm for a career he foresees as multifaceted. "I want to do it all! Acousmatic music, more popular electro music, installations, video, development of tools, etc." One of his long term plans is to develop the cultural scene in his native Outaouais. His next project: an installation in a pool with speakers and an underwater video. "A very exciting project which will give us a chance to get new bathing suits," jokes Bernier.

Marie-Ève Poupart, violinist

age: 17

hometown: Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, QC

favourite interpreters: David Oistrakh, Jascha

Heifetz, Midori

school: Conservatoire de musique du Québec à Montréal

teachers: Angèle Dubeau, Anne Robert, Johanne Arel

favourite repertoire: Romantic, Baroque, Modern

Although many judges told her she had a promising career ahead of her, it is only this year that Marie-Ève Poupart started giving serious thought to the idea of being a full-time musician.

She definitely does not lack experience. Poupart has been soloist with ensembles such as the Montreal Symphonic Orchestra (OSM), the Longueuil Symphonic Orchestra and the Amati Ensemble. "I love going on stage and it is really wonderful when I feel the public react," says the violinist who recently won the « Paul Merkelo » bursary at the 65th edition of the OSM competition.

Once she completes her studies at the Conservatory, Poupart intends to go to the United States and Europe in order to study with the great masters. And after that? "Trips across the world and concerts in as many countries as possible."



Jessica Muirhead, soprano

age: 23 / hometown: Aurora, ON / school: McGill

teachers: Lucile Evans (voice teacher),

Robert K. Evans and Michael McMahon (coaches)

favourite composers: Mozart, Strauss

For Jessica Muirhead, performing is in large part about being honest. "I only want to perform music that I love because otherwise I feel like such a fraud!" says the soprano, who makes a point of analyzing music and researching the prose before she chooses her repertoire. "In the long run, my main goal is to stay true to myself and to the music," adds Muirhead whose main obstacle is being objective about her own performances.

A fan of Renée Fleming and Joan Sutherland, Muirhead is determined to have an international career. "Twenty years from now I would still like to be performing but I could also see myself starting up my own voice studio," says the student who completes her Master's degree in the fall. Coming



up is a performance of Beethoven's Mass in C Major and Dvorak's Te Deum with Cantabile in Lachine. Muirhead will also be busy learning Pamina for her European operatic debut in Vienna with the Volksoper Wien set for next December.

Mark Laver, jazz saxophonist

age: 22 / hometown: Scarborough, ON
 school: University of Toronto
 teachers: Kirk MacDonald, Alex Dean, Mike Murley, Len McCarthy, Phil Nimmons
 favourite composers: Debussy, Ravel, Benjamin Britten, Steve Reich, Thad Jones, Gil Evans, Phil Nimmons
 favourite jazz players: Lee Konitz, Paul Desmond, Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Bill Frisell, Ed Bickert

Mark Laver appreciates the flexibility of jazz. "I played the first Bach Cello Suite on alto in a concert in Cookstown, and we did a group improvisation based on the theme from Bach's The Art of the Fugue," he says. A member of the See Through Trio and the Toronto Jazz Orchestra, Laver still gets the jitters before getting up on stage. "I think I usually perform best if I'm a little bit on edge, at least initially."



Although he loves performing, Laver thinks his future has other things in store for him. "I'd like to be able to balance an academic and a performance career. I think that I would feel very unfulfilled and unhappy if I were to give up either one." Teaching during the year, touring during the summer, and a little composing in between – why not? "I've recently written a piece for saxophone quartet based on the fourth movement of T.S. Eliot's 'The Wasteland,' and a setting of Eliot's 'Marina,'" says the self-professed avid reader. And after all, in jazz, anything is possible.

Jonathan De Souza, composer

age : 22
 hometown : London
 teachers : Peter Paul Koprowski, Omar Daniel
 school: University of Western Ontario

Jonathan De Souza is passionate about music and theatre. "In fact, it is the same passion. Theatre is simply writing music with words," says the composer and playwright. "My music combines elements of tonality, atonality, aleatory techniques and serial techniques," explains De Souza whose musicals have won awards at the 2003 and 2004 Fringe Festivals.



photo: Emily Lockhart

"I try to call attention to the theatrical elements of performance," points out De Souza who also writes instrumental music and music for solo

voice. "I want to engage audiences on levels that are more than purely auditory."

Also a viola player, De Souza enjoys different genres of music, from baroque to folk. He intends to seek out new musical experiences by pursuing graduate studies in England, a path which might eventually lead to teaching. "I really enjoy working with people and I see it as a way of passing on my love of music."

De Souza just recently finished composing a musical for a local elementary school and is starting work on a piece for saxophone and electronics based on the telegrams of Charlie Parker.

Sasa Gerzelj, pianist

age: 28 / hometown: Maribor, Slovenia
 school: Glenn Gould School of The Royal Conservatory of Music, Toronto
 main Teachers: Walter Kamper (Vienna), John Perry (Toronto)
 favourite composers: Schumann, Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Stravinsky
 favourite interpreters: Vladimir Horowitz, Alfred Brendel, Claudio Arrau

Sasa Gerzelj finds inspiration everywhere. "I just try to have my ears, eyes and soul as open as possible. Life itself is like a huge encyclopedia; you can find almost everything if you look hard enough." A concert pianist in training, Gerzelj made her orchestra debut in Slovenia in 1992. This paved the way for solo recitals, recordings for RTV Slovenia, ORF (Austria), RNE (Spain), as well as solo performances in festivals around the world.



And the pace isn't letting up. This year Gerzelj played Strauss' Burleske with the Rotterdam Orchestra under the direction of Maestro Conrad von Alphen. She also recently recorded a CD produced by RNE, Music for two Pianos, with duo partner Regulo Martinez, also a student at the Glenn Gould School.

"The main thing is to prepare myself really well so that I feel confident. But when I play, I just let the music take hold and I try to be honest. And when I do that, the public appreciates it."

Gerzelj has followed master classes with teachers John Perry, Leon Fleisher, Marc Durand, Jacob Lateiner and S.I. Gadzije, among others. Although her focus is her performing career, she has given teaching some thought. "I think it is something I will enjoy."

Rebecca and Richelle Kruisselbrink, pianists

age: 20 and 19 years old / hometown: Tara, ON
 school: Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo / teacher: Anya Alexeyev
 favourite interpreters: piano duo James Anagnoson and Leslie Kinton

favourite repertoire: Romantic
 Rebecca and Richelle Kruisselbrink might be proof



that talent has something to do with genes. Respectively in their fourth and third year of the Honours Music Program, the two share almost everything, including concerts. They made their orchestral debut performing Mozart's Concerto for Two Pianos with the Georgian Bay Symphony (GBS) in February 2003, as well as Victor Davies' Mennonite Piano Concerto. In October 2004, their sister Renee joined them in a performance of Mozart's Three-piano Concerto, again with the GBS.

Although Rebecca and Richelle are very committed to music, the chemistry and physics lab partners hope to study medicine. The way they see it, a medical career does not rule out a musical one. Already experienced soloists, the pair has played a number of concerts, often benefit ones, in Canada and the United States. They are sometimes joined by the other four Kruisselbrink sisters, also musicians and singers. Their secret? "We set goals, manage our time well and get up early," say the sisters, who are very thankful they have such a supportive family.

Nikki Chooi, violinist

age : 15
 hometown: Victoria
 school : Mount Royal College, Calgary
 teachers : William van der Sloot
 favourite repertoire : Spanish music, Brahms

At the age of 15, Nikki Chooi is already well on his way to realizing his dream of becoming a world-renowned soloist. Every two weeks, he boards the plane going from Victoria to Calgary to meet violin teacher William van der Sloot with whom he's been working for two years.



Past teachers have included Pinchas Zukerman, Patinka Kopec, and Grigory Kalinovsky, with whom Chooi worked while a participant in the National Arts Centre Young Artists Programme in June of last year. The summer before, he attended the Juilliard School on scholarship and studied with Itzhak Perlman.

Chooi won top prize at the National Music Competition in Prince Edward Island this summer, and most recently, top honours at the 65th

Continued on page 21

Many young Canadian musicians have won major national and international competitions in the last year. Keep you eye out for them.

Phillip Addis, baritone

hometown: Port Colborne, ON

studies: University of Toronto

repertoire: Opera and Recital

awards: 2004 Winner of the 65th Montreal Symphony Orchestra Competition

2003 First Prize Winner of Orchestre de Québec's Canadian Concerto Competition

Career Highlights: He has sung the roles of Taddeo in L'Opéra de Montréal's production of *L'italiana in Algeri* following featured roles in the company's productions of *Madama Butterfly*, *Rigoletto* and *Die Zauberflöte*. As well, Addis has toured extensively throughout eastern Canada with Atelier Lyrique's production of *Carmen*.



Anne-Julie Caron, percussionist

hometown: Saint-Romuald, QC

studies: Conservatoire de musique de Québec, in Boston with marimbist Nancy Zeltsman

awards : 2004, Prix d'Europe

2003, winner of the Concours de l'Orchestre symphonique de Trois-Rivières

2002, winner of the Conservatoire de musique de Québec concerto competition

2001, winner CBC

Competition for Young Performers

inspirations : Percussionists Marie-Josée Simard and Mario Boivin



Upcoming: Two concerts as soloist with l'Orchestre symphonique de Québec in 2006

Hélène Guilmette, soprano

hometown: Montmagny, QC

studies: Université Laval, Chautauqua Summer School of Music, Mannes School

awards: 2004, second prize

at Queen Elizabeth International Music

Competition of Belgium;

2002, third prize in

Concours Voix nouvelles in

Paris;

Grant recipient from Canada Council for the Arts

Grant, Conseil des Arts et des Lettres du Québec

and de la Fondation Jacqueline-Desmarais.

Career highlights: tour of France, Switzerland and



photo: Anne De Gelas

Reunion Island; many recitals in Canada in 2003, notably on CBC Radio, and with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra; sung the role of the Countess Ceprano at the Opéra de Québec (*Rigoletto*, Verdi) in 2003 and in 2005 will sing Pedro (*Don Quichotte*, Massenet) and Frasquetta (*Carmen*, Bizet) at the Opéra d'Avignon.

Allen Harrington, saxophonist

hometown: Winnipeg, MB

studies: Northwestern University

awards: 2004 International Stepping Stone

competition, Canadian Music Competition

1999 Grand Award at the National Music Festival

of Canada

Career highlights: soloist with the Winnipeg Civic

Orchestra, the Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra

and The Saskatchewan Chamber Orchestra;

member of the National Youth Orchestra of

Canada; bassoonist for the Winnipeg, Saskatoon

and Regina Symphony Orchestras.

Lana Henschell, pianist

hometown: Calgary

studies: University of Calgary

awards: 2004 Winner of Eckhardt-Gramatté

Competition

2000 First-round competitor

in the Esther Honens

Competition

Career highlights: Soloist

with various orchestras

playing concerti by

Beethoven, Rachmaninoff

and Grieg. Henschell

participated in the 2003 "Barbara Krakauer"

Academy in Vaison la Romaine.



David DQ Lee, countertenor

hometown: Vancouver, BC

studies: Vancouver Academy of Canada

repertoire: Opera, Oratorio,

Songs

awards: 2003 Canada

Council for the Arts Career

Grant

2000 The Queen Elizabeth

International Music

Competition in Belgium

2000 Young Concert Artists International

Competition in New York

1999 Finalist at the Metropolitan Opera National

Council Audition, New York

discography: Arianna a Naxos with Yannick Nézet-

Séguin on piano (ATMA Classiques)

Upcoming: Lee will make his Vienna Volksoper

debut singing the role of Oberon from Britten's *A*

Midsummer Night's Dream.



Shannon Mercer, soprano

hometown: Ottawa, ON

studies: McGill University, University of Toronto

Opera School, Merola program of the San Francisco

Opera, COC Ensemble Studio

awards: 2004 Canada Council for the Arts Award

Discography: English Fancy with Masques (Analekta)

Career highlights: Cleone

(*Médée*) with Opera

Atelier, Dido (*Dido and*

Aeneas) with the Studio de

musique ancienne de

Montréal and Opera

McGill; and First lady (*Die*

Zauberflöte) with Opéra de

Québec. Soloist with Ensemble Arion, Les

Violons du Roy and Cantata Singers of Ottawa.

Upcoming: Shannon will spend a large part of

2005 in Vienna studying with Margaret Singer.



Jocelyne Roy, flautist

hometown : Repentigny, QC

studies : Conservatoire de musique de Montréal,

Université de Montréal, Manhattan School of Music

awards : 2004, grant from the Canada Council for

the Arts

2003, second prize at the Montreal Symphony

Orchestra Competition

2002–2003 Participant in Début INC. and CBC

Young Performers competitions

Career highlights : Soloist with the Montreal

Symphony Orchestra the Orchestre symphonique

du Conservatoire de Montréal

Jasper Wood, violinist

hometown: Moncton, NB

born: 1974

studies: Cleveland Institute of Music, presently pro-

fessor at the University of British Columbia

awards: 2004 Canada Council for the Arts Award

discography: MacDonald: Great Square of Pegasus

(Centrediscs), Saint-Saëns (Disques Pelleas),

Eckhardt-Gramatté (Analekta), Stravinsky

(Endeavour Classical)

Career Highlights: Dame

Myra Hess Series in

Chicago, the Phillips

Collection in Washington

D.C, Carnegie Hall, in New

York City, Place des Arts in

Montreal, Celebrity Series

in Calgary, and Premier

Performances in St. Louis.

Upcoming: Concerts in Québec and the mar-

itimes.



Avan Yu, pianist

hometown: Vancouver

teachers: Kenneth Broadway, Ralph Markham

Awards: 2004 Canadian Chopin Competition, 2002 First Prize in the Ninth Missouri Southern International Piano Competition for the Junior Division, 2002 and 2001 First Prize in the Canadian Music Competition (CMC), 2002 Prize-winner at the 4th Tchaikovsky International Music Competition for Young Musicians (China)



Upcoming: Attending the Tenth Hamamatsu International Piano Academy in Japan, the National Arts Centre's Young Artists Programme in Ottawa under the direction of Pinchas Zukerman, and in April of 2006, the performance of Mozart's D minor Concerto with the Victoria Symphony.

Learn more about the unrelenting drive, sacrifice, dedication and talent required of Avan Yu and fellow competition winners by watching Arts & Minds: THE CANADIAN CHOPIN PIANO COMPETITION on Bravo's weekly arts magazine on Saturday, March 26 at 6pm ET and Sunday, March 27 at 7pm ET.

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Rising Stars *continued from p. 19*

Montreal Symphony's Standard Life Concerto Competition. As part of his prize he performed Sibelius' Concerto with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra in November.

The admirer of Sarah Chang has a soft spot for Spanish music. "I really like gypsy music, especially Sarasate. It's fun and you can play around with the timing."

Heather Hindman, composer

age: 28 / hometown: Edmonton

school: University of Alberta

teachers: Howard Bashaw and Laurie Radford

favourite composers: Ligeti, R. Murray, Beethoven, Liszt, Messiaen

"The sounds we hear each day, the mass media we are bombarded with, the actions and reactions of individuals in our society, the effects of technology and capitalistic greed" – it is from these phenomena that Heather Hindman draws inspiration for her works. Composing is for her a personal experience, as well as a difficult one. "I



need to have a clear idea of a piece before I write a note, aesthetically, musically, and formally," says the winner of a 2004 SOCAN award who begins a Master's degree in composition in the fall.

It is by exploring different artistic environments that Hindman sees new music developing its social and cultural understanding of contemporary society, something she deems essential. In addition to concert music, Hindman would like to compose for dance, theater and installations. As she searches for a style that is uniquely hers, Hindman continues to reflect on the education that still needs to be done before the general public begins to value new music. Current projects include writing a collection of pieces for solo saxophone and tackling her first choral composition.

Amir Koushkani, Performer (Tar) and Composer

age: 35 ans / hometown: Teheran, Iran

school: Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, BC

teacher: Owen Underhill

favourite composers: Stravinsky, Bartók, Berlioz, Beethoven

Why would a man, a master of the tar with years of musical study behind him, return to university to study music?

"I wanted to learn about classical music," says Amir Koushkani, who is finishing up a BA in

music composition.

Classes in harmony and orchestration gave him the tools he needed to write his Concerto no. 1 for Tar and Orchestra, which the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra performed last March.

"When people were crying after the performance, I knew I had transferred some of the feeling."

Although he's the first to admit his performing abilities far surpass his composing ones – he has played in a number of ensembles and has already recorded four CDs of persian music – Koushkani has some definite goals with respect to his newly acquired knowledge. "I want to compose for orchestras and play in them," he says. Koushkani, who also plays the sitar and sings, draws inspiration from his past, spirituality and poetry. "My compositions have to be unique, I never use another person's music."



Victoria Medeiros, soprano

age: 19 / hometown: 100 Mile House

school: Victoria Conservatory of Music (VCM)

teacher: Joanne Hounsell

favourite repertoire: French art song

"Music is my goal and I will pursue it any way that I can," says Victoria Medeiros, who is just finishing up her diploma at the VCM. The first step on the ladder of ascent will be a Bachelor in Performance followed by a Master's degree. When asked where she'll be in ten years, Medeiros doesn't hesitate long: "Probably studying." A fan of Renée Fleming, she sees herself eventually migrating to Europe or the US in order to perfect her voice.

For inspiration, she looks to teacher Joanne Hounsell, who has helped define the route she wants her singing to take. Medeiros's predilection at the moment is for the songs of Poulenc, Debussy and Satie. "I love the textures and the atmosphere in the music as well as the symbolism in the poetry," declares the soprano of Portuguese descent. "Singing keeps the rest of my life in balance."

Medeiros has placed at the Provincial Festival of the Arts on different occasions. ■

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Alternative Careers

WAH KEUNG CHAN, JOHN DEFAYETTE, DANIELLE DUBOIS, GAÉTAN MARTEL

Here are some music-related careers outside of performance.

Jeremy Brown, Professor and Department Head, Department of Music, University of Calgary

Age: 48

Studies : Washington State University, Eastman

School of Music, Ohio State University

City: Calgary, AB



When Jeremy Brown obtained his Music Education degree from Washington State University in 1980, he had a pretty clear idea of where he was headed. "I knew I wanted to be a university or a college teacher; the best way to do it was to be versatile," says the saxophonist who went on to do a Master's degree at the Eastman School of Music in woodwind pedagogy. This gave him the tools he needed to teach band at Grand Prairie College, which he did for six years before going back to school, to Ohio State University this time, where he earned a Doctor in Musical Arts degree in saxophone and conducting.

Coming to the University of Calgary in 1990 was both a curse and a blessing shares Brown. "Because I could do a lot of things, I was asked to do everything," explains the professor who has taught jazz history, jazz saxophone, woodwind techniques, band directing and a host of other classes. These days however, Brown focuses on teaching saxophone, publishing articles, and fulfilling his tasks as department head. Still, the administrator finds time to pursue his performing inclinations. A member of the Verismo Jazz Quintet, Brown is featured on two recordings, one with the Calgary Philharmonic (Scaramouche, CBC records) and another solo disc with Charles Foreman on piano (In the Company of My Soul, Arktos Records). Eventually, the saxophone soloist would like to record works by Henry Cowell, an American avant-garde composer on whom he has also done some research.

"I enjoy the sheer variety of the things I do, and working with people, whether as a performer, a teacher, a conductor or an educator," says Brown. His advice to those who would like to find a niche in academia: "Be the best you can possibly be on your instrument and then find another

thing you can do well," advises Brown who is also a conductor. **DD**

Michèle Gaudreau, Mezzo-Soprano, Translator

Studies: Université de Montréal

City: Montréal, QC

Like many children, Michèle Gaudreau began her musical career learning the piano. At the age of 16 however, after 10 years of practicing, she turned to singing. It was the continuation of a love story with words that had begun some years earlier. Already at the age of 12, Gaudreau felt a strong affinity for language. "I loved latin while others didn't understand anything. After my translation studies at the Université de Montréal, I continued my musical studies by travelling the world: a scholarship winner in Ottawa, I went to study singing in France, where I won a competition in the interpretation of French melodies. I then followed [Louis] Quilico to Toronto and New York."

There is, for Gaudreau, many links between music and language. "German lieder help to memorize!" says the mezzo-soprano. "Singing also gives assurance and encourages one to seek the understanding of a word. Texts have to be considered as adaptations that have to be made supple, more flowing and singing, so that one no longer feels the translation." Gaudreau often finds that her musical antecedents actually make problems more easy to solve. "Take for example, the traditional song 'Old MacDonald'. How can it be adapted in French to the original melody?"

Gaudreau recognizes that the training received by translators is not the same as it was twenty years ago. "Unfortunately, the younger generation no longer has Latin or Greek. That makes translation much more difficult, not knowing the sources or the etymology... The training has changed a lot but experience remains the most important, more than training, just like in singing the most important is the voice, the voice and again the voice..." For her, voice and words are not easily separated. "It's by translating that I've been able to sing all this time." **GM/DD**

Sheila Killoran, Music Therapist

Age: 26

Studies: Capilano College, North Vancouver

City: Saskatoon, SK

Sheila Killoran did not always know she wanted to be a musical therapist. "I love music but I didn't know if I wanted to be a performer," says the young woman who obtained a Psychology degree from the University of Saskatchewan before attending Capilano College. "I had worked at a camp for people with disabilities and I knew I liked helping people. Music therapy (using music or



music techniques to promote wellness) just seemed like a nice marriage for me."

After completing her 1000 hour internship at the Montreal General Hospital in palliative care, Killoran moved back to her hometown of Saskatoon to exercise her profession. "Music therapists are often client-focused," explains Killoran who in addition to piano, has studied guitar and voice as part of her training. Her present activities include working as a research assistant, with a private client, and on an after-school program for kids. "Working in correction facilities, in hospitals, in the area of rehabilitation, with adults who have experienced trauma, or with youth at risk are all options for a musical therapist," says Killoran who points out that musical therapy can achieve physical, social, emotional and psychological goals. "I like working in palliative care because it is an area where you deal with very personal and emotional issues. It makes you realize that music is part of our life story."

Although music therapy is not very developed in Saskatchewan – there are sixteen musical therapists in the province and approximately 600 in the country – Killoran says that people have been very receptive and interested in her work. She recently obtained a grant to do music therapy in an Edmonton hospital, something Killoran hopes will allow her to pursue her career in the prairies.

Killoran has the following advice for those thinking of pursuing music therapy: "Find a music therapist in your area and observe. Make sure to look into an area you are interested in." **DD**

André Gremillet, President and Director of Development

Studies : Mannes School of Music, McGill

City: St. Hyacinthe, QC

"I consider myself a musician-administrator," says André Gremillet, president of Casavant Frères, one of the most famous organ-builders in the world. Indeed, the company has built 3800 organs over the last 125 years for clients around the world. "To be a good administrator in the music world, I believe one has to have a sound knowledge of musicians and of their milieu," shares Gremillet who



has a Master's in Piano Interpretation from New York's Mannes School of Music.

Also a graduate of the Master's in Business Administration program at McGill, his job at Casavant Frères allows him to harmonize business savvy with musical knowledge. "Originally, I thought I would be working for arts centres or opera houses but things worked out differently." As president and director of development, Gremillet determines and implements the strategic orientations of the company and manages 90 employees. "Building organs is a complex process which involves many people: artisans, musicians and organists of course. We also have an architect on our team."

Gremillet is confident that the market will continue to demand people with a background similar to his. "There is a need for musician-administrators who are able to balance the financial aspects and the artistic product," says Gremillet, who adds that it is a difficult, albeit interesting challenge. As to the future of Casavant Frères, it looks promising. "The market is more refined: quality is more important than quantity. Clients are better informed and they know exactly what they want. For this reason, we'll always need artisans," assures Gremillet, who also explains that given the high cost of instruments, sales are cyclical and dependent on the economy. **GM/DD**

Barbara Scales, Founder and Manager of Latitude 45 Arts Promotion

Studies : McGill (BA, MA in Philosophy)

City: Montreal, QC

From childhood, Barbara Scales has cultivated a passion for the arts. "With my father, a music-lover, I listened to recordings every evening, especially of opera singers." She herself sang soprano as part of an ensemble, in addition to studying the piano. "I really liked modern and contemporary dance and music. I did ballet and was on a scholarship at the Martha Graham School of Contemporary Dance," says Scales.

Scales was no stranger to the arts when she founded her own artistic agency Latitude 45 Arts Promotion. "I registered the company in 1981 with a type-writer as the sole piece of equipment," recalls Scales, who now counts Lucille Chung,

Christophe Rousset, David Fray, Alain Trudel, le Nouvel Ensemble Moderne and the ensemble Clément Janequin among her clients. "The most important thing in my line of work is to establish a relationship between the artist and the public," says Scales. Polyvalence, she believes, is the key to success. "It is important to have many facets, to develop other skills, to think about what we are doing and what we would like to do. There are too many people who manage halls and artists without knowing anything about the arts, especially in small communities where it's important to keep the public educated..."

Scales is well aware that not everyone who studies music will become a musician. As her experience demonstrates, those who can combine curiosity, patience, persistence and a knowledge of the music world, with an appreciation of artistic questions and the principles of business, might think of applying their talents elsewhere, always in the service of music of course. **GM/DD**

Rick Phillips, Radio Personality

Studies : McGill, University of Toronto

City: Toronto, ON



"Keep your options open," says Rick Phillips, one of the most recognizable voices on CBC Radio Two. Now the host of *Sound Advice*, a popular CD reviews show heard on Saturday mornings, Phillips has spent 30 years of his career working for CBC. If Phillips came to radio, it was by walking into open doors. After obtaining a Bachelor in Music degree in piano and choral conducting from McGill University, and a Master's from the University of Toronto, Phillips taught music history and theory courses at Bishop's University.

In addition to accompanying singers and directing choirs, he began to do reviews for CBC Radio on a freelance basis. Phillips contributed to Jim Coward's show *Mid-Morning* from 10 am to noon. This led to a 5-year assignment in Alberta, where he produced the show *RSVP* in Edmonton and recorded live concerts in Calgary. "Initially, it was culture shock, but I grew to love the West," says Phillips. In 1985, he returned to Toronto to produce *Stereo Morning* and *Arts National*, rising to the rank of Executive Producer for 5 years.

"I really didn't like it in management."

In 1994, when the network was looking for new ideas, Phillips seized the opportunity to produce, by himself, a music appreciation and CD reviews show all in one. Part of the conditions were that he become a freelancer on contract, something which has its ups and downs. "I like the fact that I'm my own boss," says Phillips, "but the insecurity keeps me awake at night." The key to Phillips's success is in his preparation – every word is scripted in advance and thoroughly rehearsed. Although he wrote papers at university, writing for radio has its particular challenges. "You must speak in thoughts, in short sentences. The writing is conversational style." **WKC**

Bruce Allen Scudder, Cruise Director

Studies: Juilliard School of Music

City: Detroit, Michigan

When Bruce Allen Scudder says his job is a cruise, he isn't talking about a holiday. As Musical Director of the MS Prinsedam, Holland America's cruise ship, Scudder is busy keeping guests on board entertained night and day.

Scudder's passion for music was kindled early. He began playing a home organ at the age of 6, and later joined the Detroit organ club. After receiving a Bachelor and Master's degree in music, he studied piano performance at Juilliard. His employment in the cruise industry is the consequence of fortuitous circumstances. "It started in New York. I was in musical theatre for a few years. One thing led to another and I joined Holland America in 1992," explains Scudder. "I have been fortunate to have done ten world cruises, in addition to other cruises."

Scudder describes the hoops one has to jump through in order to find a job on a cruise ship: "Our Seattle head office has a Director of Entertainment who is responsible for choosing musicians. There is also a division in charge of individual performers and a music department, which hires the orchestra musicians. Most of the performers have agents, and since we are at sea union membership is not an issue."

There are many elements considered in choosing the entertainment offered passengers. "In music we look at the passenger mix, age, and whether the cruise is Caribbean or European. Then there are more technical considerations like the size of the stage – we have four lounges with pianos, which means we can offer almost all types of music. The length of the cruise (7 versus 21 days), as well as the feedback we receive from our passengers are also determining factors."

Scudder advises musicians seeking cruise employment to brush up on their sight-reading and be flexible players. "They have to be excellent sight-readers as they are hired individually and meet the other members only once they board the ship," he explains. "On this cruise, they accompany various acts such as the flutist and vocalist." **JD/DD**



Will Crutchfield: New Life for Bel Canto

PETER PHOA

“I always wanted to conduct, the other activities along the way were a detour,” says Will Crutchfield in between bites of his sandwich. It’s dinner break at the Canadian Opera Company (COC) where rehearsals for the upcoming production of Rossini’s *Tancredi* are well under way. Knowing that he has had something of an extraordinary musical career makes Crutchfield’s claim particularly provocative; critic for the *New York Times*, champion of *bel canto*, conductor of rare opera, musicologist and discoverer of lost works – these are not credentials often found on even the most impressive of resumes.

Crutchfield’s association with music is not surprising considering he has been immersed in the world of opera since childhood. Reclining slightly in his chair, he fondly recalls his father, a Presbyterian Minister and tenor who sang both lead and comprimario roles with an opera company in Virginia. Music being something of a family affair, Crutchfield junior sang in a children’s chorus, and began playing piano at an early age. The skills he acquired eventually enabled him to be an accompanist and coach during his university years. Yet Crutchfield did not view music as an exclusive career-path. He considered studying law and even wrote the LSATs, but, try as he might, there was no ignoring the call of music coursing through his veins.

Crutchfield looks back on certain seminal moments in his life as having led to extraordinary opportunities. There was, for example, the time he was living in Connecticut; someone approached him at a party and asked whether he would write music reviews for the *New Haven Register*. He accepted and was subsequently noticed by Donel Henahan, senior critic of the *New York Times*. Crutchfield soon became one of its journalists, consolidating his reputation as a music writer.

Most people assume, based on Crutchfield’s fame, that rare opera is his area of predilection. However, a little prying will yield a confession: “Verdi and Wagner are my favourite.” As the current Music Director of Opera de Colombia in Bogotá, Crutchfield explores the standard repertoire – Verdi’s *Otello* and *Aida*, Mozart’s *Don Giovanni* and *Figaro*, to name a few. In America however, he is best known for breathing fire and drama into seldom performed operas. Also Music Director of the Caramoor Festival, Crutchfield has explored works like Rossini’s *Otello* and *La*

donna del lago, and Donizetti’s *Lucrezia Borgia*.

Apart from being his area of specialty, it is with this obscure repertoire that Crutchfield acquired his first experience on the podium. “*Bel Canto* is something where I saw a need for a clearer understanding of certain historical things and for a better approach to teaching young singers.” After being with the *Times* for five years, Crutchfield approached Mannes College about staging a performance of Gluck’s *Paride ed Elena*. This opportunity proved to be another defining moment for his career: the production attracted a lot of notice and his calendar soon began to fill with engagements. Crutchfield admits that in walking this path of learning, taking the first step was a formidable adventure.

Crutchfield is well aware of the curious disconnect opera goers sometimes feel when approaching little-known Italian works, particularly of the *bel canto* tradition. According to him, this condition results from a lack of contextual familiarity: “There is a certain feeling of immediate access to Puccini because his musical and dramatic language is closer to our time. When we get to styles that are more remote, it is easier for those works that are funny because laughter is universal,” he says. For example, when audiences think of Rossini’s operas, his comedies like *The Barber of Seville* and *Cenerentola* are the ones that come to mind, rather than serious masterpieces like *Tancredi* or *Semiramide*. “It requires more from the audience to give itself over to a serious piece from an earlier time,” says Crutchfield who acknowledges that not all rare works are brilliant.

“If I have a talent, it is this: I can look at a score that has not been revived and see an opera, rather than pages of arias and recitative. If I can believe in the whole piece as a music drama and see the shape as an evening in theatre – that’s when I want to do it,” says the experienced director who saw that kind of potential in *Elizabeth*, a lost opera by Donizetti that he discovered while looking through the dusty library of Covent Garden. Never performed because of unfortunate circumstances, Crutchfield prepared the work and gave life to music, which until then, had been heard only in the composer’s head.

Part of the magic of opera until the height of Wagner was due to the music’s ornamentation: singers showed off their voice and artistry by embellishing melodies and investing the music with

their own signature. Much to Crutchfield’s dismay, this operatic tradition has been completely lost. He laments the fact that the typical opera graduate is not equipped with the proper knowledge of the details, techniques and principles that allows the imagination to speak through ornamentation. “Before World War I, in the small window of recording from that time, there are ten different recordings of *Una Furtiva Lagrima*. Then Caruso’s record sold about a million copies, and ever since then, there is exactly one cadenza for *Una Furtiva Lagrima*, and its the one from Caruso’s record. This isn’t ‘tradition’, this is ‘deciding what recording gets imitated.’”

He concedes that some might find *bel canto* less naturalistic than other opera. But Crutchfield dismisses this argument as having any significance: “Shakespeare is less naturalistic than Eugene O’Neill. But it is all heartfelt music drama. It is just different, just like Matisse is different from Monet,” maintains Crutchfield. It is hard to ignore his passion when the man speaks of *Tancredi*, the work he is conducting for the COC. “The musical freshness and beauty is absolutely stirring. Rossini is poised on the brink of understanding Romantic opera. He has one foot in Mozart, but also in his briefcase is everything 19th century Opera is going to use.”

Crutchfield is encouraged by the increasing sophistication of opera audiences, and how this has led some to seek different programming. Initially championed by the operatic deities Maria Callas, Joan Sutherland Marilyn Horne and Monserrat Caballé who drew audiences to obscure work because of their star power, the future for *bel canto* work remains promising. “Forty years ago there were only two cities that had ever seen *Tancredi*. Now there are over 25,” Crutchfield asserts as he offers me a cookie. ■

Peter Phoa is an opera aficionado who works in Marketing and Communications. He can occasionally be heard on CBC’s Saturday Afternoon at the Opera.

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Tania Miller, Music Director



Valery Gergiev Maestro in Motion

NORMAN LEBRECHT



Photo: Swedish Radio

Few are those in public life who can look back on a career path that has run straight, deviating neither in principle nor in purpose. Tony Blair, who entered Parliament in 1983 as a picket-line unilateralist, has evolved into a boss-friendly warlord. The antimaterialist Martin Amis of *Money* (1984) became the huge-advance fat cat of *Experience* (2000). Sadly enough, maturity and the seductions of compromise deflect men from the purity of first ideals.

Valery Gergiev is a singular exception. When he turned 50 two years ago, the director of the Kirov-Mariinsky Theatre of St. Petersburg, the only Russian cultural institution to flourish since the fall of the Soviet Union, went home to Vladikavkaz, in Ossetia, for a half-century birthday fest in the company of extended family and musical friends.

For three days Gergiev was in his element. "The weather was great," he says, "we went to the mountains and I gave myself the best possible present: swimming in a fast, ice-cold river, like I did as a boy."

Turning 50 was important to Gergiev. His father died at the age of 49, and Gergiev's friends attribute his incredible drive to the fear of dying young. The day his father died marked a musical turning point in Gergiev's life. "It was the worst day of my life. I know that in sitting down and playing the same chords at the piano, it was maybe some melancholy sadness," says Gergiev. "Somehow, I was rescued."

Vladimir Putin was among the well-wishers who cabled Gergiev birthday greetings. The two have known each other – "I don't say we are friends" – since 1991 when the president was deputy mayor of Leningrad and the conductor was running the Kirov on a promise of roubles that arrived late and heavily devalued. Putin has now guaranteed the theatre \$24 million (£15 million) in core maintenance for the next three years, and has also approved a \$160 million (£102 million) project to restore the crumbling Dostoevskian edifice, parts of which have not been touched since the 1860s.

But the biggest boost, says Gergiev, "comes from the sense of stability which Putin immediately brought to the country. We worked together in the most difficult years. Today the country is in better shape, the theatre is going to be renovated and we will build a second stage because one is not enough. We can fill both halls every night."

This is classic Gergiev: extending private conviction into public mission. "At one point," he recounts, "I went into direct conflict with the ministers of culture and construction, unleashing an open and unreserved anger.

"We cannot allow a project as important as ours to drag on for 20 years, so I raised my voice. I told them, if you can't understand one way, I'll change my tone. I am the leader of the Mariinsky and I force others to be responsive."

Gergiev was elected by company members 17 years ago to lead them through the post-Soviet

murk. A staff conductor with roots in the wilder parts of Caucasia, the conductor trained at the Rimsky-Korsakov Conservatory had at that time no experience of the non-communist world.

With an English dictionary in his pocket, Gergiev flew to London and forged a Covent Garden connection using mostly sign language. He soon initiated an exchange of productions which was accompanied by a flow of new artists. His own debut was remarkable for the suggestiveness of his gestures and a baton style so ethereal that old hands likened it to Furtwängler's.

As the Bolshoi subsided into whinging sloppiness, Gergiev forged Team Kirov, persuading his divas that they would shine better as part of a prestigious touring company than alone in the dollar-driven West. Within a decade the Kirov had become a fixture on the world's greatest stages.

The key to all of Gergiev's relationships is reciprocity. From the outset he embraced cultural exchange as distinct from the money-grabbing cultural parasitism of other Russian companies who exported creaky old Nutcrackers with demotivated casts. He avidly courted Western benefactors, but when the Cuban-American Alberto Vilar defaulted spectacularly on his global pledges two years ago, Gergiev, the neediest of his recipients, fastidiously refrained from joining the recriminatory chorus.

Indeed, Gergiev is a paragon of consistency. Before he became principal guest conductor at the Metropolitan Opera eight years ago, he said that his aim in committing himself to three productions a year in New York was to let his Kirov team loose in that technological powerhouse and bring home all they had learned. New York promptly cast him as a successor to the incumbent, James Levine. When Gergiev declined to play politics, *The New York Times* reported that musicians at the Met disliked him. "If they don't want me," he shrugged, "I am happy to stay at home. Do you think I ever considered taking a position in London or New York?"

The cultural balance has shifted to his advantage. A leaderless West, driven by individual self-interest, looks to Gergiev for moral example. "Do you know why I work abroad?" he demands rhetorically. "Not for money. I have conducted more performances for no money than anyone alive. In Russia, at one point, I conducted for three dollars an opera. I was happy – I could grow, learn leadership, nurture new singers. "I conduct abroad to help my company and for my own pleasure. I spend six weeks a year with the Vienna Philharmonic – the best orchestra in the world. If I have no pleasure, I don't go."

His success has been so demonstrable that Gergiev can now dictate solutions to richer opera houses in the decadent West. "In Berlin," he relates, "my friend and colleague Daniel Barenboim had problems with public funding. I

told him: you have to raise your own singers. You cannot just rely on big stars, where every performance costs you so much that you will never reach financial stability. You have to balance your artistic appetite with your investment in young and inexpensive artists."

He has much the same message for Covent Garden, which forsook its founding obligations towards English singers. "Mariinsky sends London a signal," says Gergiev. "If you want to live in harmony with your future, invest in your own talent."

Gergiev cites Plácido Domingo as an example. When the tenor appears at Covent Garden, he never meets a British singer. Yet, when Gergiev brought him to St. Petersburg 14 years ago, it was to sing *Otello* with an untested house cast. "It was a great inspiration for our young singers to work with a world star in such great shape," recalls Gergiev, who refers to that time as, "the beginning of our work in Verdi."

Relentless travel has taken a toll on the conductor, both artistically and physically. Orchestras grumble that Gergiev arrives late and is slow to warm up. His beat, typically opaque, can be vague to the point of obfuscation. His 2001 Verdi season at Covent Garden lacked the white heat of the previous summer's Russian rep. He has thickened at the jowls and waist, the mark of gourmet meals at unsocial hours. The demonic scowl has crinkled into something less ferocious. In short, he is at risk of becoming domesticated. Six years ago, Gergiev married Natasha, a hometown girl less than half his age. They have two sons – Abisal, named after his father, and Valery, after hers. "It's a fantastic change in my life," he smiles. "The more time I spend at Mariinsky, the more I can give to them."

Today, Gergiev is late for rehearsal, as usual. An aide holds out a selection of three batons; he rejects all three, opting to conduct *Onegin* with bare hands. The question of purpose still preoccupies him as he walks towards the stage.

"A lot of people," reflects Gergiev, "struggle to find what they identify with. I am very lucky. I crossed the piazza just once in St Petersburg, from the Conservatory of Music to the door of the Kirov. That was the only important journey of my life."



photo: Marco Borggreve

renown. A high-octane performer, his first loyalty is to his company, "to the people who elected me – I remember that every second." Spiritually, though, his roots are Caucasian. "I am Ossetian, first and foremost," he insists, returning to his homeland whenever three clear days appear in his diary to mingle with friends and refresh himself in mountain streams.

He was there just two days before terrorists seized the number one school in Beslan. He sensed tension, but no worse than usual in a troublesome border area. "What kind of place is Beslan?" he reflects. "It's like Omagh, in Northern Ireland, same size. An ordinary place, where nothing happens. Then something terrible happens."

Gergiev was on the phone to Beslan ceaselessly during the siege, and daily ever since. "We are one million Ossetians. The tragedy, compared to 9/11, is that children were targeted. Certain families lost their only child. Some lost more than one. These are relatives of mine, friends of my friends. No point in mentioning names, there are so many..."

It is easier now that the 330 dead are buried to point fingers. "There was no plan to storm the school. Many should feel guilty in front of those families – governments, media, everyone. There was no professional preparation. The heroes were Russian special forces – the Alpha unit – who saved children by covering them with their bodies as they fled. Eleven soldiers died. These men were highly trained but they forgot the rules and behaved like human beings."

Emotion flows unstopably, inseparable from a sense of personal responsibility. "I don't know how others feel," says Valery Gergiev. "I feel a little guilty. We who know this region did not do enough to protect peaceful life."

He and Vladimir Putin are the same generation, products of the privileged nomenklatura. Gergiev's uncle was Stalin's favourite tank designer; he once called on him for *protektsiya* to get a better teacher at the conservatoire. Unlike Putin, for whose growing authoritarianism Gergiev has some sympathy, the conductor was

The Beslan Tragedy

On the day of the Beslan school massacre last year, Valery Gergiev was due to conduct the opening concert of the Vienna Philharmonic season. Racked with grief and fear for loved ones, he contemplated pulling out and flying home. But the programme was suitably sombre: the *D-minor concerto* by Rachmaninov and Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique symphony*. That night, Austrian television showed Gergiev conducting the *Pathétique* with tears rolling down his unshaven cheeks. "The most terrible concert of my life," he calls it.

He booked a flight to Moscow and went on national television, appealing to the people of Ossetia to keep the peace. No anti-Russian demonstrations, he implored. No attacks on Muslims. "The only ones who will benefit from violence are the terrorists... It won't bring our children back."

Gergiev is the only Ossetian of international

never a party member. Still, he continues to cherish some values of the communist regime, particularly its emphasis on the role of culture in a healthy society. Something of that legacy, along with one-man rule, persists in Gergiev's Mariinsky.

"When Putin became president," he sighs, "there was no government, only corruption. There was a huge robbery of national wealth. Many became astronomically rich." Gergiev, who has had dealings with the media magnate Berezovsky, now in London ("they called him Rasputin"), and with the Yukos oil chief Khodorkovsky, now in prison awaiting trial, knows of what he speaks. "I once proposed to Putin that these people should put a fraction of their money into building hospitals and schools, as the rich do in the West. If Yukos had done that, Khodorkovsky would not be in jail."

Putin, Gergiev argues, has not much time before the Caucasus erupts. "I will tell him that unless people have jobs, unless they have something to lose, there will never be peace. He must invest in the economy. The warlords must be stopped. I don't know how to bring peace. I only see huge dangers, worse than Iraq." He worries about a double standard in the war on terrorism and wonders why Bin Laden and Saddam are being pursued more hotly than the Beslan murderers. "I won't be surprised if they return," he warns.

To raise funds for victim relief, Gergiev is giving benefit concerts around the world. "It's not about money," he stipulates. "It's about sympathy, solidarity, understanding. Beslan is in danger of becoming yesterday's news. Music has the power to remind people what they felt. Also, it's important for people in Ossetia to know that people in England feel for them."

Funds from his appeal will enable gifted young Ossetians to study in St. Petersburg and in the West, to help them recover. On November 2004, two months after the tragedy, he once again conducted the *Pathétique*, that peculiarly Russian blend of grandeur and helplessness, aspiration and resignation to a terrible fate.

That is not necessarily how Gergiev sees it. His interpretative style departs from the Russian norm, averse to self-pity, unafraid of fate. "I am," he growls determinedly, "a representative of the Scythian civilisation, which is 2,500 years old. I don't want us to be remembered for what happened in Beslan." ■

Valery Gergiev and the Kirov Orchestra's 2005 North American tour begins on March 26 and concludes in Toronto at Roy Thomson Hall on April 21 and 22. (416) 872-4255. <www.roythomson.com>

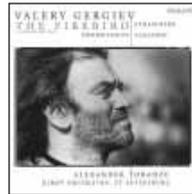
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Valery Gergiev – Recommended Recordings

RICK PHILLIPS

1) I. Stravinsky: *The Firebird* (complete)

Kirov Orchestra St. Petersburg/Valery Gergiev
Philips 446 715-2



A truly Russian *Firebird*, with more of the raw Russian power of Stravinsky than French refinement. But Gergiev ties it all together. It's dramatic and the virtuosity of this orchestra is impressive.

2) S. Prokofiev: *Romeo & Juliet* (complete)

Kirov Orchestra St. Petersburg/Valery Gergiev
Philips 464 726-2



In one of his self-proclaimed favourite scores, Gergiev gives a highly Romantic reading of *Romeo & Juliet*, with a focus more on the ballet's lyrical strengths, than its energy and power. Once again, the orchestral playing is top-notch with a full, rich recorded sound.

3) N. Myaskovsky: *Violin Concerto in D Minor, Op. 44*

Vadim Repin, Kirov Orchestra St. Petersburg/Valery Gergiev
Philips 473 343-2



This CD contains a very good *Violin Concerto* by Tchaikovsky as well, but the Myaskovsky alone is worth the price. A friend and confidante to Prokofiev, Myaskovsky was also a gifted composer. Repin gives a magical reading with Gergiev completely at home in a neglected score that's full of melancholic lyricism.

4) N. Rimsky-Korsakov: *The Legend of The Invisible City of Kitezh*

cast, Kirov Opera Orchestra & Chorus/Valery Gergiev
Philips 462 225-2



No one has done more to champion the rarely heard operas by Rimsky-Korsakov than Gergiev. This one was recorded live in St. Petersburg and there are occasional extraneous noises. The cast led by Galina Gorchakova is solid, and Gergiev highlights the beauty and magical mystical nature of the music.

5) P. I. Tchaikovsky: *Symphony No. 5, Op. 64*

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra/Valery Gergiev
Philips 462 905-2



Recorded live, this Tchaikovsky *Fifth* bristles with energy and electricity in a highly dramatic, almost theatrical reading. Full of Russian passion and pathos, there is an obvious love affair happening between orchestra and conductor. The gorgeous Vienna strings work wonders in the lyrical strengths of the work.

6) S. Prokofiev: *Alexander Nevsky, Scythian Suite*

Olga Borodina, Kirov Orchestra & Chorus
Philips 473 600-2



This is one of the best all-Russian "Nevskys" available, and the famous "Battle on the Ice" scene is truly thrilling. In the Scythian Suite, Gergiev wisely cuts through the obvious brutal parts to reveal a score of warmth and heart.

7) D. Shostakovich: *Symphony No. 7, "Leningrad"*

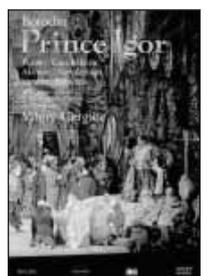
Kirov & Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestras/Valery Gergiev
Philips 470 845-2



Gergiev's Shostakovich Symphony cycle has been hit-and-miss, but this is one of the finer offerings so far. Recorded live, and with the combined forces of his two orchestras, there is a great sense of occasion that only enhances this work. The various emotional states are captured well, with Gergiev concentrating just as much on the musical elements as the dramatic.

8) A. Borodin: *Prince Igor* (complete)

cast, Kirov Orchestra & Chorus/Valery Gergiev
Philips 442 537-2



One of the problems with *Prince Igor* has always been how to tie together a series of grand, epic scenes. Acting on recent research, Gergiev re-ordered a couple of the scenes, and re-inserted long-omitted arias with new orchestrations. Aided by a stellar cast, the result is a much more cohesive work that is now the definitive *Prince Igor*.



Francesca Caccini's Opus to Woman Power

BESS VASILAKOPOULOS

THREE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY YEARS AGO, THE OBSCURE BAROQUE COMPOSITION *LA LIBERAZIONE DI RUGGIERO DALL'ISOLA D'ALCINA (LLRDA)* BECAME AT ONCE THE FIRST OPERA WRITTEN BY A WOMAN, THE FIRST OPERA NOT TO BE BASED ON GREEK LEGEND, AND THE FIRST ITALIAN OPERA EVER TO BE PERFORMED OUTSIDE OF ITALY. Thanks to exceptional timing, its author, the now forgotten Francesca Caccini (1587–c. 1640) was able to express her incredible talent in a society where virtually every woman was powerless. Both in historical significance and in its musical treatment of the libretto, *LLRDA* became a symbol of woman power.

The eldest daughter of prominent composer Giulio Caccini (1546–1618), Francesca, nicknamed "La Cecchina" (the songbird) by the Florentines for her lovely singing, received early training in singing and composition from her father at a time when monody and opera were new and growing genres. She would eventually compose and publish the first collection of sacred monodies, *Il Primo libro delle musiche a una e due voci* (published in 1618), which was the most extensive collection of solo songs by a composer to be published at the time.

Francesca was admired by the Medici court and famous intellectuals of the day, including composer Claudio Monteverdi, Italian Renaissance poet Gabriello Chiabrera and opera composer Giacomo Peri. Impressed by Francesca's October 1600 performance at her wedding to King Henry IV of France, Maria de' Medici took notice of this rising star, asking Giulio to consider keeping Francesca at the French court permanently. Giulio's refusal would later benefit his daughter.

On September 15, 1607, Francesca officially entered the service of the Florentine court receiving a small salary, composing smaller works and quickly graduating to large-scale operas as well as her aforementioned *Primo libro*. She would later become the Medici court's highest paid

singer and composer – only the Duke's secretary earned a higher salary

In 1620, the death of Cosimo II resulted in an unusual circumstance; since his ten-year-old son was too young to be in power, Cosimo de Medici's mother, Christine of Lorraine (1565–1636), and wife, Maria Maddalena of Austria (1587–1630), were appointed joint regents from 1621–1628. For the first time, women dominated the Medici court, and Francesca had the perfect environment in which to compose her greatest work.

During this period, the Grand Duchess Maria Maddalena commissioned Francesca to compose a work for the *carnevale* of 1625 in honour of the forthcoming visit of the Polish Prince Wladislaw Sigismund IV, who was returning to Poland after a long exile. He had just defeated the Turks in Wallachia and was headed to Rome where the pope was to bless him. The topic of *LLRDA* was most appropriate because in the story a Christian defeats the "heathens." Although it was highly unusual in the 17th century for a woman patron to help another woman artist with her career, Maria Maddalena not only used her private funds to realize the work, she also became involved in the preparation of it, offering Francesca Florentine courtiers and live horses for the dance scenes.

LLRDA was performed at the Villa Poggio Imperiale on February 3, 1625. The list of dancers who performed in the *balletti* was composed of Florentine aristocrats, which demonstrates the artistic stature of this masterpiece, and the esteem with which Francesca's music was regarded. Prince Sigismund IV was so impressed by the opera that he had it translated into Polish and performed in his own country three years later.

A tale of female power and desire, the plot centres around two women, the evil and seducing sorceress Alcina and the good Melissa, the true hero of the story, who fight for the possession of the fallen war hero Ruggiero. Francesca's music displays marked sophistication in its manipulation of musical structure, harmony, motives, phrase rhythm, text-painting, and broader issues of musical representation. Her use of harsh intervals, namely the diminished fourth and fifth, addresses Alcina's seductive and deceitful words. Unlike Alcina, Melissa's character makes comparatively little use of harsh intervals, proving that she is good and pure.

The harmonic and tonal means used by Francesca to portray the characters and dramatic

situations throughout her opera were unique for the time. Examining two significant musical numbers by Alcina shows how she used tonal centres to depict the wicked sorceress's strength and weakness. The first segment is relatively stable tonally, moving through the tonal centers a, F, g and d respectively. Following the first cadence in G major, a sudden shift to a G minor makes it the new key. The same shift occurs in the second cadence in D major, which immediately moves to D minor, hence the new tonal centre. Here, the very straightforward harmony reflects Alcina's control.

The second musical segment of two consecutive solo settings, "Ahi, Melissa, Melissa" and "Ferma, ferma crudele", depicts Alcina's anger and confusion. Melissa has just broken Alcina's spell, thereby causing the sorceress to lose her power and self-control, which is depicted in the tonal instability and very chromatic music. Francesca's choice to move through many tonal centres throughout this aria – a, F, g, A and e implied – is fitting.

Gender aside, Francesca was a pioneer of early monody and opera. Her music is of an artistic stature comparable to that of the leading composers of early Baroque music, among which figure her father Giulio Caccini, Jacopo Peri and Claudio Monteverdi. It is high time that Francesca's talent and contributions be acknowledged, taught, celebrated and performed. ■

This essay is dedicated to all the unsung female heroes—real, fictional, past, present and future. Bess Vasilakopoulos received her MA (University of Connecticut) in 1999 with a thesis on the subject of Caccini's first opera.

Francesca Caccini:
La Liberazione di Ruggiero dall'isola d'Alcina

Discography

Nannert Recordings
Ars Femina Ensemble/Richard Burchard
Cat. N° Nanerl NR-ARS 003 (1 CD)
1993/out of print

Pro Musica Camerata/Wladyslaw Klosiewicz
PMC 012 (1CD)

Who's Afraid of Classical Concerts?

NORMAN LEBRECHT

Whenever someone predicts the demise of symphony concerts, reassurances come fluttering from every obvious quarter. The Association of British Orchestras (ABO) produces a wireless device that allows concertgoers to follow the music interactively. A record label pays a million pounds to a schoolgirl violinist. A big-name soloist announces that more people than ever are tuning into classics.

As in any death foretold, these final rites will not affect the sad outcome. The Co-Co (short for Concert Companion) that the ABO showed in February at its annual conference enables listeners to zoom in on the conductor's sweaty brow or the deep cleavage in the second desk of cellists, while receiving snippets of text information. It has novelty value but that will soon wear off once the menu options are exhausted.

Deutsche Grammophon's huge deal with Nicola Benedetti, winner of BBC's 2004 Young Musician of the Year, is equally flimsy. DG is in the market for physical assets. Benedetti, 17, an Ayrshire blonde of Italian blood, has been trailed in *The Sun* as 'Scotland's sexiest star'. Declining modelling jobs, Benedetti is keen to proselytise classical music among her own age group. But when her CDs are counted a year from now, DG will find that Nicola has sold overwhelmingly to middle-aged men in country towns and to grannies looking for an educative birthday gift – just as every other teenage wonder has done over the past two decades.

New audience? What new audience? Classical managers clutch at straws when they look to Classic FM, with six million UK listeners, for hope of renewal. Classic's audience is chiefly passive: they may tune in, but they seldom buy concert tickets or extend their taste for Mozart to encompass a complete work. During the 12-year lifespan of Classic FM, concert attendances in Britain have steadily declined. Meanwhile, educational investments by many orchestras have failed to yield more than a smattering of children for whom classical music becomes a lifelong passion.

Why the world has gone off classical concerts is a conundrum in which almost every reasonable assertion is disputable. Take the attention-span thesis. Many in the concert world believe that its decline stems from the public's flickering toler-

ance for prolonged concentration. If politicians speak in soundbites, how can we expect voters to sit through a Bruckner symphony?

It is a persuasive argument but one that I have come to find both fatuous and patronising. Around me I see people of all ages who sit gripped through four hours of *King Lear*, *Lord of the Rings* or a grand-slam tennis final but who, ten minutes into a classical concert, are squirming in their seats and wondering what crime they have committed to be held captive, silent and legroom-restrained, in such Guantanamo conditions.

Their ennui will not be relieved for long by an electronic gizmo which gives them an illusion of mechanical control, nor for that matter, by a kid soloist who has yet to grow a musical personality. These are gimmicks bred of desperation, not a coherent approach to a cultural crisis.



Nicola Benedetti, photo: David Woolfall

If the shrunken attention span is not to blame for the classical turn-off, nor is price. Most concert tickets now cost less than cinema stubs. Last year, the London Symphony Orchestra adopted an impulse price of four or five pounds but failed to attract first-timers. Let's face it:

in a busy metropolis with multiple counterattractions, most people won't be dragged to a symphony concert at any price. As the New York impresario Sol Hurok used to say: "When people don't want to come, nutting will stop them."

So what, precisely, scares them off? In a word, the atmosphere. The symphony concert has stultified for half a century. It starts in mid-evening and lasts two hours. The ritual cannot be altered without inconveniencing the musicians and alarming the subscription audience; so nothing changes.

A Chinese businessman, David Tang, believes busy people want shorter concerts. He is launching one-hour concerts at Cadogan Hall, Chelsea, next week, but his revolution has been disabled from the outset by a standard 7 pm start.

The only concerts that attract twenty-somethings are those which play to their rhythms. In Madrid and Barcelona, concerts begin at 10 pm and are thronged by youngsters. In Vienna, the standing room at the rear of the opera house and the Musikverein is a singles-scene enclosure, walled off from the stuffy interior and giving the standees a sense of ownership and empowerment.

Elsewhere, the concert hall is a gerontocracy, its decorum enforced more rigidly than in places of



worship, its exclusiveness innate. Thirty years ago, in my mid-20s, I used to sit in the backless choir seats behind the orchestra at the Royal Festival Hall, studying conductors' expressions. At the time, I was one of the older kids on the row. Today, at my present age, I'd practically be the youngest.

The greying of the audience is an admitted fact of concert life. Less acknowledged is the ageing of everyone else. One expects conductors to be in their seventies, but most soloists have been at it too long and there is barely an orchestral manager of any consequence under 50.

Small wonder that the concert hall atmosphere is about as lively as a cruise liner, its intellectual magnetism as potent as a pension plan. Why would any red-blooded postmodern person want to spend an evening in God's waiting room, even with a Co-Co to sex up the da capo?

Other arts, too, have rigid traditions. Theatre, you might argue, has also failed to alter its timing or rituals since Olivier was in full cry. But theatre has continuously overhauled its repertoire, making Shakespeare and Schiller fight for stage time against Pinter and Osborne, Stoppard and Hare, and *Jerry Springer: The Opera*. Theatre has sharpened its capacity to surprise, while classical concerts rely on stupefying familiarity.

There are ways to change the atmosphere. Design 40-minute concerts for under-40s. Provide free child-care on weekends. Introduce standing room. Try the late-night route. If there was a genuine will to refresh the concert experience, it could be done.

But, as any good shrink will confirm, the classical business must first want to change – and I detect no such desire. The old gang won't give up its hegemony and the last one to leave will politely turn out the lights. ■

Norman Lebrecht is a prolific writer on classical music and culture. His weekly column can be found at <<http://lebrecht.scena.org>>

Reviews

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Reviewers

JKS Joseph K. So
 WSH W.S. Habington

ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

Gavriil Popov: *Symphony No 1*

Dmitri Shostakovich: *Theme and Variations*

London Symphony Orchestra,
 Leon Botstein, conductor

Telarc CD-80642 (65 min 24 s)

★★★★☆ \$\$\$\$

The past year has seen a number of important releases of Eastern European music, especially dating from the Soviet era. Composers such as Ivanov, Miaskosvsky, Vainberg / Weinberg, Khrennikov and Tishchenko are gradually emerging from relative obscurity as their music reaches a wider audience via recordings. This account of Popov's *First Symphony* is the best of the lot by a significant margin. Indeed, with respect to form it is a work that can stand alongside Shostakovich and Prokofiev's best efforts. Conceived with incendiary revolutionary fervour, it was nevertheless banned the day after its 1935 premiere in Leningrad. The opening movement (*Allegro energico*) thunders and thrashes for more than 23 minutes. The slow middle movement conveys musical expression of aching beauty followed by a diabolical and aggressive finale. In all, a remarkably imagined composition which reveals a more Central European orientation rather than a strictly Russian one. The very appropriate Shostakovich (Op. 3) coupling is also a rarity on disc. The LSO tackles both unfamiliar pieces under the fearless direction of Leon Botstein, with Telarc providing outstanding sound quality throughout. **W.S. Habington**



Kurt Atterberg: *Symphonies 1-9*

Radio-Sinfonie-Orchester Frankfurt, Radio-Philharmonie Hannover des NDR, Radio Sinfonieorchester Stuttgart / Ari Rasilainen

CPO 777 118-2 (329 min 55 s - 5 CDs)

★★★★☆ \$\$\$

This attractively priced box gathers up the first complete cycle of Atterberg's symphonies issued individually between 1999 and 2003. Atterberg (1887-1974) composed in all forms, played the cello in chamber music concerts, engaged in music journalism and served in an executive capacity in professional associations and musical governing bodies. Moreover, throughout his long and productive life he continued to hold down a full-time job as an electrical engineer in the Swedish Patent Office (having been retired, under protest, at the age of 81). He considered himself a nationally oriented Classicist rather than a hold-over Romantic. His symphonies are of a higher order of attainment than those of predecessors Wilhelm Stenhammar and Hugo Alfvén and still head and shoulders above closer contemporaries such as Ture Rangström and Dag Wirén.



In 1928 Columbia Records sponsored an international competition for composers to commemorate the Schubert centennial. Atterberg took first place with his *Symphony No. 6*. His sound symphonic skills had been on display since his *First* of 1910, and the cycle was distinguished by its variety and instinctive balance. From the vivid tone painting in *No. 3 (West Coast Pictures)* to the folk inspired aspects of *Nos 4, 7 and 8*, and the stupendous choral Ninth (*Sinfonia Visionaria*), the music is original and stimulating. The fine consistency of the three orchestras involved in the recording project is a tribute to Ari Rasilainen's grasp of the music and his ability to communicate the composer's ideas. Overall, it is an essential acquisition for collectors with Nordic sympathies, and conclusive proof that the era and region contained more than just Sibelius and Nielsen. **WSH**

Beethoven: *Piano Concertos 2 & 3*

Martha Argerich, piano; Mahler Chamber Orchestra / Claudio Abbado

DG 00289 477 5026 (64 min)

★★★☆☆ \$\$\$\$

These performances were recorded at live concerts in Ferrara in 2000 (*No. 2*) and 2004. The account of *No. 3* is of special interest because it is Martha Argerich's first recording of the work, which has been absent from her performing repertory for many years. Argerich is in full, idiosyncratic flight in both concertos. The disc offers a dazzling display of pianism although one suspects that the soloist takes an individual view of every performance. The Mahler Chamber Orchestra is alert and precise in the accompaniment, with Abbado directing in the



fashionable "Ludwig van Lite" manner. This technique is applied more flexibly to achieve closer integration between keyboard and orchestra by Nikolaus Harnoncourt with Pierre-Laurent Aimard and the COE in their excellent cycle for Teldec. Yet Martha's legion of fans will not be disappointed with the results here. Those who still worship Beethoven at the altars of Kempff and Gilels need not apply. **WSH**

Richard Wetz: *Violin Concerto & Vocal Works*

Ulf Wallin, violin; Markus Köhler, baritone; Kammerchor der Musikhochschule Augsburg, Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz / Werner Andreas Albert

CPO 999 933-2 (52 min 11 s)

★★★★☆ \$\$\$\$

Collectors acquainted with the CPO recordings of the three symphonies of Richard Wetz (1875-1935) will not be entirely prepared for this very original concerto – his orchestral manner has been typically Brucknerian in scale in previous issues. The *Violin Concerto* is thirty minutes long and cast in four movements. Its introduction is dramatic but the interplay between soloist and orchestra is primarily lyrical in design. Wetz takes infinite care with his note clusters to achieve a developmental metamorphosis that continues throughout the work. This is definitely not a concerto as Bruckner might have conceived it.



It was Wetz's penultimate composition – a more personal statement than the symphonies convey and in an advanced idiom entirely appropriate to the 1930s. The soloist, Ulf Wallin, provides a fine interpretation with excellent support from Werner Andreas Albert and the orchestra. The couplings are the brief *Traumsommernacht* for female chorus and orchestra and *Hyperion* (16+ minutes) for baritone, mixed choir and orchestra. These provide interesting examples of the composer's sympathetic approach to vocal music (Wetz also composed two operas). This disc is recommended as a worthwhile exploration. **WSH**

VOCAL

Naxos Robert Craft Collection

Arnold Schoenberg: *Gurrelieder*

Vocal soloists; Simon Joly Chorale; Philharmonia Orchestra / Robert Craft

Naxos 8557518-19 (117 min 48 s - 2 CDs)

★★★★☆ \$

Igor Stravinsky: *Oedipus Rex*

Vocal soloists; Simon Joly Male Chorus, Philharmonia Orchestra / Robert Craft; Les Noces - Vocal soloists; Simon Joly Chorale; International Percussion Ensemble / Robert Craft

Naxos 8557499 (76 min 31 s)

★★★☆☆ \$

These recordings were previously issued on the Koch label. Naxos scooped them up for the Robert Craft Collection. It plans to record, under Craft's direction, the complete works of Schoenberg, Stravinsky and Webern. The conductor's credentials in 20th century music are impeccable. He became musical assistant to Igor Stravinsky in 1947 and was closely associated with the composer for more than two decades.



If Gustav Mahler's *Ninth Symphony* extinguished the embers of the Romantic era, Schoenberg provided its summation with *Gurrelieder*. The Craft Collection is off to an auspicious start with this performance that, in terms of spectral grandeur, is comparable to Stokowski's pioneering 1927 recording from Philadelphia. Craft's interpretation is swift and thrilling. Stephen O'Mara really inhabits the part of Waldemar. Melanie Diener (Tove) and Jennifer Lane (the Wood Dove) are poignant and ethereal. The limited documentation to the set includes the text of a letter written by Schoenberg in 1950, which sharply critiques Stokowski's recording of the work. Unfortunately, neither libretto nor translation is provided. For *Gurrelieder*, this resource is essential to achieve a full understanding of the Romantic archetypes (virtue defiled, love, death, blasphemy and damnation) conveyed in the original poetry of the Dane, Jens Peter Jacobsen. But for such false economy, this issue would have been awarded five stars.

Full text and translation are provided in the booklet for the Stravinsky disc. It is especially welcome as recordings of this combination are not thick on the ground. Currently, the Mariinsky forces under Valery Gergiev have been performing *Oedipus* and *Noces* in live stagings. The Craft accounts are good but not of the same exalted quality as the *Gurrelieder* set.

Initial releases in the Craft Collection also include probing discs of orchestral and chamber works by Schoenberg (8557520) and Webern (8557530). The collection is an ambitious and potentially valuable undertaking, which will be followed with interest. **WSH**

Pauline Viardot-Garcia Songs

Isabel Bayrakdarian, soprano

Serouj Kradjian, piano

Analekta AN 2 9903 (69 min 8 s)

★★★★☆ \$\$\$\$

Some of these Viardot songs date back to the very beginning of Isabel Bayrakdarian's career. She sang them in a church concert while making her professional debut as Diana in Gluck's *Iphigénie en Tauride* at Glimmerglass Opera. It is nice to hear her return to these pieces now, with the same beauty of tone and natural charm, but with the addition of well-judged nuance, technical assurance, and a flamboyance that come with experience. These Viardot gems, with their natural lilt and sunny seductiveness, fit the Bayrakdarian soprano like a glove. The French pieces such as *Hai luli*, *Havanaise*, *Les filles de Cadix*, and *L'enfant et la mère*, are sung with great attention to textual detail, and in particular to the sudden shifts of mood through subtle vocal shading. In the German songs, the soprano shows off her excellent diction even if she loses some of the spontaneity present in the French pieces. Melodically recalling Liszt, *Die Sterne* shows much poise and plangent tone. Pianist Serouj Kradjian, who happens to be the singer's husband and artistic partner, offers assured support, with the two of them performing as one. The recorded sound is clear and favors the voice; the packaging and design are first rate. An important addition to the discography of Pauline Viardot. **Joseph K. So**



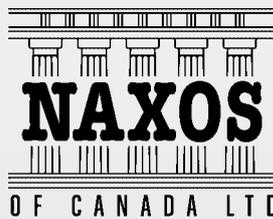
CONTEMPORARY

Elvis Costello: Il Sogno

Peter Erskine, percussion, John Harle, Saxophone, Chris Laurence, double bass, London Symphony Orchestra, Michael Tilson Thomas, conductor

DG B0003284-02 (61 min 56 s)

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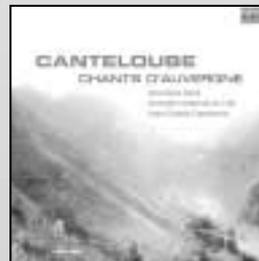
Brahms Symphony No. 1
Marin Alsop, Conductor
8557428

Disc of the Month April

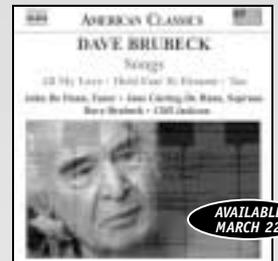


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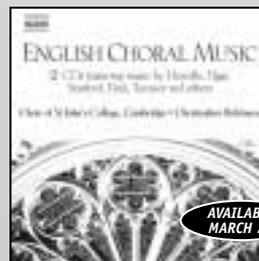


Canteloube - Chants d'Auvergne
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The portrait of Elvis Costello, which appears on the cover, displays a perceptive, penetrating gaze with just a hint of concern. Yet, it seems there really was no cause to worry.



It is a rare thing for an emerging composer of serious art music to achieve an outright success with a first major orchestral score and Costello has done just that. *Il Sogno* was commissioned by the Italian dance company Aterballetto as an adaptation of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It was first performed at the Teatro Comunale in Bologna in October 2000. For the present recording, the composer and conductor collaborated to cut passages of the work applicable only to the choreography. The resulting twenty-four numbers adhere to the sequence of stage presentation and can be followed in the handy booklet synopsis. But this is a performance that can also stand up on its own.

And what is the music like? Some have detected influences as varied as Sibelius and Bernstein, but in fact the score is not at all derivative and affinities are much closer to home. In character, the music is comparable to the exquisite poise of Michael Tippett, the impish wit of Malcolm Arnold and the eclecticism of them both. Costello transposes the play into a musical score with the utmost sensitivity and an expansive imagination. Courtiers get the formal orchestral treatment while commoners are brought on with folk tunes and marches. The supernatural element is conveyed by vibrant jazz led by the distinguished soloists. The styles become entwined as the plot advances and the whole works together superbly. The LSO and Tilson Thomas give the sort of enthusiastic performance which puts all doubts to rest. **WSH**

DVD

W.A. Mozart: *Le nozze di Figaro*

Knut Skram, Ileana Cotrubus, Benjamin Luxon, Kiri Te Kanawa, Frederica von Stade, Nucci Condo, Marius Rintzler, Glyndebourne Chorus, London Symphony Orchestra / Sir John Pritchard - Stage Director: Peter Hall, Video Director: Dave Heather
Arthaus 101 089 (185 min) Sound 2.0

★★★★☆ \$\$\$

This 1973 live performance from Glyndebourne is

truly a joy to behold. Versions of more advanced technical quality exist and others make claims for "authenticity" but this production is infused with the purest essence of *opera buffa*. Director Peter Hall makes it great fun and humorous in the way that Mozart and da Ponte surely intended it to be. The international cast forms a natural ensemble of comic compatibility. On stage, the tone is set by Benjamin Luxon's straying Count. Knut Skram gives us an unexaggerated Figaro whose cunning makes a greater than usual impact by emerging from a straight face. On the female side, Cotrubus, Te Kanawa and von Stade are superb. This is also a musically superior *Figaro*, outstandingly well sung and played. John Bury's realistic sets fit the modest Glyndebourne stage perfectly and Dave Heather's camera work (for television) has stood the test of time. Sound quality is a bit shallow but certainly better than it had ever been heard before. Arthaus provides a decent booklet note and a choice of multilingual subtitles. Enthusiastically recommended. **WSH**



Dmitri Shostakovich: *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*

Nadine Secunde, Christopher Ventris, Anatoli Kotcherga, Francisco Vas, Graham Clark; Symphony Orchestra and Chorus of Gran Teatre del Liceu, Chamber Chorus of the Palau de la Musica Catalana / Alexander Anissimov - Stage Director: Stein Winge, Video Director: Toni Bargalló
EMI 5 99739 9 (187 min - 2 DVDs) Sound: 2.0 & 5.1

★★★★☆ \$\$

Barcelona might not seem to be an obvious place to stage Shostakovich's politically afflicted masterpiece. However, considering Spain's own history of internal conflict and repression in the not-so-distant past, a powerful synergy makes this a *Lady Macbeth* of ferocious dedication. The opera premiered in Leningrad in 1934 and was performed to wide acclaim in the Soviet Union and abroad. In December 1935, Stalin attended a performance in Moscow. Within a month, the infamous



"Muddle instead of music" editorial was published in *Pravda*. Overnight, the work vanished from Soviet theatres and Shostakovich almost disappeared with it. Stalin's personal objections apparently focused on the sexually explicit subject matter and the wide-open dissonance of the score. Yet in many ways, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* is a perfect fit for the narrowing Soviet artistic template of the time. It is merciless in its satirical depiction of the pre-revolutionary land owning mercantile class, the Orthodox clergy, Czarist police and the emancipated but docile serfs of provincial Russia. If the portrayal of Boris Ismailov witnessed by Stalin was anything like Anatoli Kotcherga's in the present issue, the great dictator was confronted with a character very much like himself. Kotcherga anchors the performance convincingly. His Ismailov is brutal, greedy and lecherous.

Excellent performances are offered across the often crowded stage. Nadine Secunde and Christopher Ventris personify the lethal lust of wayward Katerina and dastardly Sergey. Alexander Anissimov's command of the score is impressive and he never carries it to excess. The flexi-set by Benoit Dugardyn displays and demands imagination and Stein Winge's direction is thoroughly apt. The final moment involves a postmodern twist for Katerina's third homicide, which is actually more effective than the original tandem plunge into an icy lake. Until we can have a production of *Lady Macbeth* from the Mariinsky and Gergiev, this will do very nicely. **WSH**

Vienna State Opera 1978

Giuseppe Verdi: *Il Trovatore* - Piero Cappuccilli, Raina Kabaivanska, Fiorenzo Cossotto, Plácido Domingo, José van Dam; Chorus and Orchestra of the Vienna State Opera / Herbert von Karajan - Stage Director: Herbert von Karajan, Video Director: Günther Schneider-Siemssen
TDK DVUS-CLOPIT (151 min - 2 DVDs) Sound: 2.0 & 5.1

★★★★☆ \$\$\$

Georges Bizet: *Carmen*

Elena Obraztsova, Plácido Domingo, Yuri Mazurok, Isobel Buchanan; Chorus, Ballet and Orchestra of the Vienna State Opera / Carlos Kleiber - Stage and Video Director: Franco Zeffirelli
TDK DVUS-CLOPCAR (154 min) Sound: 2.0

★★★★☆ \$\$\$

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Carmen staged, respectively, in May and December of 1978. Both feature an ardently youthful Domingo and are essential acquisitions for the sake of his formidable portrayals of Manrico and Don José. If further incentive to invest is required, these pieces can also be considered the definitive performances of the operas to have appeared thus far on DVD. Even though the plots are well known, the Vienna productions of *Trovatore* and *Carmen* still generate dramatic tension throughout.



Il Trovatore was a Karajan specialty. Under his baton, the score is rendered with exquisite vehemence; the violence of the music erupts with Hellish intensity. It is entirely in accord with Karajan's stage direction and sensitive support to the singers. Kabaivanska and Cossotto are musically and dramatically perfect as the female leads. Cappuccilli projects Luna as an obsessively malign nobleman damned to survive the final torment of Azucerna's revenge. Sets and costumes are traditional in design and video direction by Schneider-Siemssen is excellent. Despite two cut numbers, this is the *Trovatore* to have.

Kleiber and Zeffirelli combine their unique talents to produce a marvelous *Carmen*. Obratzsova's interpretation of the title role is fascinating. The conjunction of the music and her intuitive nature

transform *Carmen* into the most desirable woman on the stage. The infatuation of Domingo's Don José is utterly believable. Yuri Mazurok gives us a strong, if more sympathetic, Escamillo than usual but nothing about the performance is the slightest bit routine. The Scottish soprano, Isobel Buchanan, is also well cast as Micaëla.

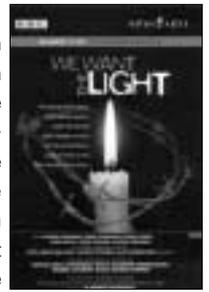
Zeffirelli's staging is spectacular and old Seville springs to life with multitudes of people and working quadrupeds. As film director, he shows us what he wants us to see and often cuts from the stage to the conductor. It is as if Zeffirelli understood that the images of Carlos Kleiber in the pit would have special significance later – and alas, so they have. **WSH**

Christopher Nupen: We Want The Light

The Gürzenich Orchestra of Cologne, Vladimir Ashkenazy, conductor
 BBC Opus Arte (336 min - 2 DVDs)
 ★★★★★ \$\$\$

On the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz comes this deeply moving documentary by filmmaker Christopher Nupen. It focuses on the roles played by Jews in the German classical music tradition, from the time of Mendelssohn to the Holocaust. It deals with the influence of Wagner's anti-Semitic essay "Das Judenthum in der Musik" on the thinking of Hitler that ultimately led to the wholesale slaughter of 6 million Jews. Of the many poignant moments, the interviews with 98 year old Alice Sommer Herz, a survivor of the

Theresienstadt concentration camp who stayed alive in body and spirit through the power of music, are particularly memorable. The title of the documentary, "We Want the Light", is taken from a poem by 12 year old Theresienstadt inmate Eva Pickova, whose words are set to music by American composer Franz Waxman in his work *The Song of Terezin*. The soundtrack also includes fragments of works by Mahler, Bach, Schoenberg, Bruch, Schumann, Mendelssohn, Wagner, Schubert, Bloch, and Brahms, with the Gürzenich Orchestra of Cologne conducted by Vladimir Ashkenazy. The DVD is in three parts: the 60 minute documentary, followed by a visual presentation of the music alone, and four hours of additional in-depth interviews of such musical luminaries as Barenboim, Kissin, Mehta, Perلمان, and Zukerman. Definitely not to be missed. **JKS**



BOOKS

Renée Fleming

The Inner Voice: The Making of a Singer
 Viking 2004, 222 pp.
 ISBN 0-670-03351-0

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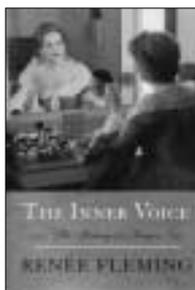
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she sing beautifully, but Renée Fleming, America's favourite prima donna, is also a good writer. Fans might be disappointed to learn that other than a dust jacket photo and one in the frontispiece, the book has no pictures, almost unheard



of in a diva tome. But perhaps this is to its benefit, since *The Inner Voice* is no puff piece. In 13 chapters spanning 220 pages, Fleming writes articulately and with candor about every aspect of her art, from the early days spent honing her skill to the trials and tribulations of career building, the first flush of success, and finally the musings of a mature artist. There is a welcomed sincerity and simplicity to her writing. Only when it comes to her failed marriage and personal relationships does one detect that much is left unsaid. Voice aficionados will find her discussion of technique interesting. Her singing is so remarkably effortless that it comes as a surprise to learn that she struggled like everyone else to acquire the solid technique for which she is famous. Her accounts of meeting and working with other singers and teachers – among them Jan DeGaetani, Edith Wiens, Elizabeth Schwarzkopf, Marilyn Horne,

and Arleen Auger – makes for fascinating reading. Particularly memorable is her audience with the great Leontyne Price. Many conductors and fellow singers make cameo appearances, the likes of Carlos Kleiber, Dmitri Hvorostovsky, and Plácido Domingo. Despite the absence of an index and a general lack of glitz in terms of production values, this is serious book. Reasonably priced at \$36 Canadian, this makes a great gift and should be on every opera lover's book shelf. **JKS**

The Essential Classical Recordings: 101 CDs

Rick Phillips

McClelland & Stewart (Toronto)

Trade Paperback 240 pages

ISBN 0-7710-7001-2

★★★★☆ \$5

Rick Phillips, host and producer of *Sound Advice* on CBC Radio, is a man with a mission. He is out to debunk the erroneous notion that "classical" music is arcane and elitist. This is a worthy objective and Phillips is fully deserving of our support. One of the most forbidding obstacles to the wider popularity of serious art music is the lack of basic knowledge. This handy little book supplies the optimum entry-level information which will do away with any apprehension of appearing silly and ignorant upon ventu-

ring into a classical record shop.

The toughest part of preparing the book must have been picking the 101 most essential CDs out of the entire classical inventory. Result: only three Beethoven symphonies (Nos 5, 7 and 9) are discussed, one of Mahler's (No. 4) and none by Schumann. The survey is nonetheless wide-reaching – it starts with Gregorian Chant and finishes with Arvo Pärt – and the recommended recordings are well-chosen. It is true that Herbert von Karajan gets but one nod (Mussorgsky's *Pictures*) but bless the author's heart for plugging Sir Charles Mackerras in his Mozart symphonies with the Prague Chamber Orchestra. And no argument from this quarter on the unsurpassed Mackerras recording of Rimsky's *Scheherazade* with the LSO. The commentary on each selection is in good plain English and fully accessible to the general reader. An excellent gift for a novice collector or any bright youngster, this book has the potential to please the classical aficionado as well. Hopefully, it will help Phillips reach mission accomplished. **WSH**



Symphonies from CPO

The German independent record label Classic Produktion Osnabrück (cpo) has seemingly taken up the task of reviving the music of every "unknown" symphonist worthy of the name. Its catalogue offers a wealth of rewarding rarities on compact disc. These include the symphonies of Carl Friedrich Abel, Felix Draeseke, Louise Farrenc, Benjamin Frankel, Herman Goetz, Ernst Krenek, Allan Pettersson, Ervin Schulhoff, Robert Volkmann, Richard Wetz, and many others. The artistic, technical and presentation values maintained by cpo are of the highest standards. Some excellent examples (all four-star performances and better) released during the past year were fully auditioned and can be confidently recommended:

For adherents of authentic period performance, The Symphonies Op. 3, Nos 1, 2 and 6 of **Franz**



Ignaz Beck (777 034-2) will surely please. An almost exact contemporary of Haydn, Beck was adventurous by nature, and Michael Schneider and La Stagione Frankfurt are truly swash-buckling in their interpretations. **Ferdinand Ries** was a close colleague of Beethoven's. Howard Griffiths and the Zurich Chamber Orchestra conclude their Ries symphony cycle with dashing accounts of Nos 7 and 8. The disc (999 904-2) is the first Hybrid Super Audio (SACD) released by cpo. The Anglo-French composer, **Georges Onslow**, was also active during the same period as

Ries. The NDR Radio Philharmonic under Johannes Goritzki perform symphonies (Nos 1 and 3) of comparable merit by Onslow (999 747-2). Symphonies Nos 8 to 11 by **Joachim Raff** (1822-1882) represent the succession of the seasons and are given superb, mid-Romantic readings by Werner Andreas Albert and the Philharmonia Hungarica in a bargain priced double disc set (999 536-2).

The young Slovenian conductor, Marko Letonja leads the Basel SO in the first installment of a cycle



of the symphonic works by the great Dalmatian-born maestro, **Felix Weingartner**. Weingartner's Symphony No. 1 and König Lear symphonic poem (999 981-2/Hybrid SACD) reveal musical works of real stature. As Christoph von Dohnanyi remarked, "In the last resort, it doesn't matter how good – or bad – a symphony by Klemperer is... it is a process he has gone through and a process he is better able to grasp." That statement is substantiated by Alun Francis and the Rhineland-Pfalz State Philharmonic with their recording (999 987-2) of orchestral works (including Symphonies Nos 1 and 2) by **Otto Klemperer**.

Alun Francis completed his cycle of the symphonies of genial serialist **Ernst Toch** (1887-1964) with Nos 1 and 4 (999 774-2). Francis conducts the Berlin RSO. The musical reputations of two other Jewish composers fleeing the Nazi regime, **Egon Wellesz** and **Karol Rathaus** have been sub-

stantially restored by cpo. Symphonies Nos 1 and 8 (999 998-2) by Wellesz, splendidly performed by the Vienna RSO under Gottfried Rabl, is the third release in the cpo cycle of his nine symphonies. Wellesz was an early disciple of Mahler. Mahlerian principles also surface in Rathaus's Symphonies Nos 2 and 3 (777 031-2). Israel Yinon, perhaps the leading authority on the music of Rathaus, directs the Brandenburg State Orchestra Frankfurt in searing accounts.

Carl St. Clair conducts the Stuttgart RSO in the continuing series devoted to the doyen of Brazilian composers, **Heitor Villa-Lobos**. Symphony No. 7 of 1945 is coupled with Sinfonietta No. 1 (999 713-2). Modern Turkish music is represented by Symphonies Nos 3 and 5 (999 968-2) of **Ahmed Adnan Saygun** (1907-1991). The Rhineland-Pfalz State Phil perform under the baton of the redoubtable Finn, Ari Rasilainen. For modernism verging on steel-fisted contemporary, it is difficult to find a more intricately gritty composer than Israel's **Joseph Tal**. Tal was born in Poland in 1910 and attended the 2003 recording sessions for his Symphonies Nos 4-6. Israel Yinon imparts his special insight of the scores with the NDR Radio Philharmonic (999 922-2). **WSH**



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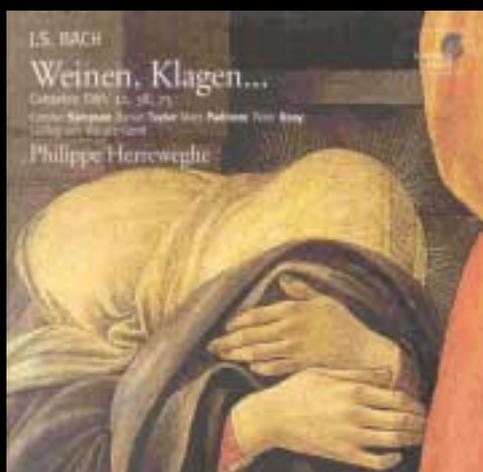


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Johann Sebastian Bach: Weinen, Klagen... Cantates BWV 12, 38 & 75

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In 1723 and 1724, the congregation of the Lutheran parish church of St Thomas's in Leipzig had ample opportunity to discover, week after week, a little more of the talent of their new Kantor, a certain Johann Sebastian Bach. These Cantatas are some from this period. This is also the first recording from Philippe Herreweghe in which he makes use of the Canadian Countertenor, Daniel Taylor.

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This recording is one of our most ambitious and unique projects to date – a recording of Bolivian baroque music in the Church of Concepción in the middle of the Bolivian jungle. Following auditions held in Santa Cruz, four unknown Bolivian singers were selected and trained by Florilegium's director Ashley Solomon to participate in a unique recording. Channel Classics (and 300kg of equipment brought over from Holland)



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teamed up with Florilegium and recorded this disc of music which flourished in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the Jesuit Missions. The majority of the programme was only recently rediscovered in the crypt of the Church of Concepción which dates back to 1707. Both the music and the story behind the music are here for the first time on SACD and DVD.

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Rick Phillips reviews four of his top ten picks for the current issue of The Music Scene. Phillips is the Host/Producer of SOUND ADVICE, the weekly guide to classical music and recordings on CBC Radio One and Radio Two. Sat. at 12:05, 1:05 AT, and 1:35 in Nfld., on CBC Radio Two, and Sunday evening at 6:30, 7:30 AT, and 8:00 in Nfld., on CBC Radio One.

1) A. SCARLATTI: Disperato Amore – Cantatas & Instrumental Music
Matthew White, Les Voix Baroques (Analekta AN 29904)

2) HANDEL: Opera Seria
Sandrine Piau, Les Talens Lyriques / Christophe Rousset (Naïve E 8894)

3) C. MONTEVERDI: Vespro della Beata Vergine (1610 Vespers)
Concerto Italiano/Rinaldo Alessandrini (Naïve OP30403)

4) LEONARD BERNSTEIN: The 1953 American Decca Recordings (5-CDs)
New York Stadium Symphony Orchestra / Leonard Bernstein
(DGG Original Masters 00289 477 0002)

5) A. VIVALDI: Orlando Furioso, R. 278
Marie-Nicole Lemieux et al, Ensemble Matheus / Jean-Christophe Spinosi
(Naïve OP 30393)

6) Grands Succes du Deuxieme Millénaire – Musique Française 1000–2000
Skye Consort (Ombu 1006)

7) STEPHEN KOVACEVICH Plays BEETHOVEN (6-CDs)
Stephen Kovacevich, BBC and London Symphony Orchestras / Colin Davis
(Philips 475 6319)

8) Music For A While –Baroque Melodies
Anne Sofie von Otter, Jory Vinikour, Jakob Lindberg, Anders Ericson
(Archiv 477 5114)

9) S. BARBER: Piano Sonata, Op. 26
Marc-André Hamelin, piano (Hyperion CDA 67469)

10) J. A. DONOSTIA: Basque Preludes, etc.
Jordi Maso, piano (Naxos 8.557228)

1) A. SCARLATTI: Disperato Amore – Cantatas & Instrumental Music
Matthew White, Les Voix Baroques (Analekta AN 29904)

Last year, Canadian countertenor Matthew White and Tafelmusik released a very strong CD on the Analekta label called simply "Italian Oratorios." It was one of my picks for the Sound Advice Best of 2004, and has a Juno Award nomination. "Italian Oratorios" featured some of the music of Alessandro Scarlatti, the father of the more popular Domenico. For his latest Analekta recording, Matthew White teams up with the Montreal-based group Les Voix Baroques, of which he is artistic director. The recording contains nothing but music by Alessandro Scarlatti – four vocal works and two instrumental sonatas.

In addition to having a beautiful countertenor voice of great purity and accuracy, Matthew White is very musical and expressive. I loved his subtle ornamentation in the da capo, or repeat sections of many of the arias. Always aware of the text, it is ever tasteful and never overdone. I also enjoyed the work of Les Voix Baroques, a group only six years old. It's made up of solid and experienced early music string players like Chantal Rémillard, Hélène Plouffe and Amanda Keesmat, with the continuo nicely filled out by Alexander Weimann on keyboards and the incomparable Sylvain Bergeron on lute and theorbo. You feel as well as hear the rich theorbo sound, due to the expert playing and a rich, full, recorded sound.

3) C. MONTEVERDI: Vespro della Beata Vergine (1610 Vespers)
Concerto Italiano / Rinaldo Alessandrini (Naïve OP30403)

Rinaldo Alessandrini is an Italian Monteverdi scholar and performer who has just come out with a version of the *Vespro della Beata Vergine*, also known as the *1610 Vespers*, with his group Concerto Italiano. They had recently been working away at recordings of music by Vivaldi. Now they've turned their sights to arguably the crowning glory of Monteverdi's work.

This is one of the hallmarks of all vocal music – a work that sets the standard in the early Baroque. Alessandrini went back to the original sources for an unclouded view, and, as he's done before in his Vivaldi recordings, he's

highlighted the vocal qualities and strengths of this music. It's one singer to a part, rather than a choir of several singers on each part, and the instrumental component is scaled down. By using this method, clarity and articulation are enhanced and the music has a more agile, responsive and dance-like character. It all seems very alive, natural and unencumbered.

There have been transpositions of keys and the like – Alessandrini restoring things to the way he believes is correct. The chant antiphons before each number are not included and the set includes two versions of the closing *Magnificat* – one for seven parts and a rarely recorded one for six parts. In comparison to previous recordings of this work by English early music types like Philip Pickett or Andrew Parrott, they come across as a bit formal and stilted – not as free. The vocalists and instrumentalists of Concerto Italiano are top-notch and the recorded sound is superb. Here's yet another feather in the ever-growing cap of Rinaldo Alessandrini.

4) LEONARD BERNSTEIN: The 1953 American Decca Recordings (5-CDs)
New York Stadium Symphony Orchestra / Leonard Bernstein
(DGG Original Masters 00289 477 0002)

The Deutsche Grammophon (DG) label, on their Original Masters line, has recently released recordings from 1953 featuring Leonard Bernstein. This is a 5-CD box set at a budget-price containing Bernstein's first recordings of five great symphonies. It is the first time these symphonies, recorded when Bernstein was in his mid-30s, have been available on CD. You get *Symphony No. 2* by Schumann, *No. 4* by Brahms, *No. 9 From the New World* by Dvorak, *No. 6 Pathétique* by Tchaikovsky and *No. 3 Eroica* by Beethoven. Also included are Bernstein's musical explanations of these works, never before available on CD.

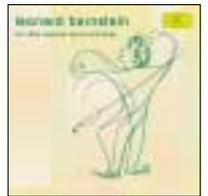
Bernstein was much more than a conductor. He was also a talented composer, pianist, writer, teacher and educator. In 1954, he appeared on the CBS TV program "Omnibus," and explained how Beethoven had composed his *Symphony No. 5*. It was the start of a long side-line to his musical career, that of an educator breaking down some of the walls to classical music and encouraging a better appreciation of it. A little later, the Book-of-the-Month club commissioned him to write and narrate, with musical illustrations, an analysis of each of the five symphonies recorded in 1953. These musical explanations are included with the five symphonies in this new box set from DG.

To some, Bernstein was conceited, arrogant, pompous and brash. But others found him brilliant, insightful and engaging. He always had something interesting to say, even if it was controversial at times. He reached out to us, challenging, stimulating, even annoying us. If you don't like Bernstein, you won't like this set. But I enjoyed it, and his fresh interpretations of the symphonies included here. They are in mono sound, but good mono sound. The New York Stadium Symphony Orchestra, by the way, was just a summer name for the New York Philharmonic.

7) STEPHEN KOVACEVICH Plays BEETHOVEN (6-CDs)
Stephen Kovacevich, BBC and London Symphony Orchestras / Colin Davis (Philips 475 6319)

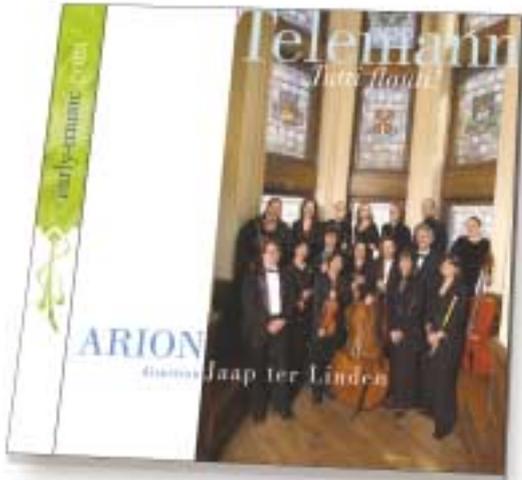
Over the years, this pianist has been known by several names – Stephen Bishop, then Stephen Bishop-Kovacevich, then Stephen Kovacevich. The Bishop part of the name came from his mother's second husband. Today, he's known exclusively as Stephen Kovacevich.

The music of Beethoven has been an important part of his career all along. To me, Stephen Kovacevich's finest Beethoven was his earlier stuff – from 30 years ago now, for the Philips label, and that's what's been recently reissued on this 6-CD set. In his 30s, Kovacevich had a better grip on Beethoven. There was a sense of discovery and fascination that was very appealing. It's not without depth and understanding, but it is without some of the affectations and mannerisms that cropped into his later EMI recordings. To be honest, I had forgotten how good these earlier Beethoven recordings with Kovacevich were. Included are the five *Piano Concertos*, eight *Piano Sonatas*, the *Diabelli Variations*, and the complete Bagatelles by Beethoven. The concertos are magical at times, thanks to close work with his frequent collaborator, conductor Sir Colin Davis. The Sonatas, Variations and Bagatelles have always been solid performances, rarely available for 30 years – a very attractive all-Beethoven box set, especially at a budget-price. ■

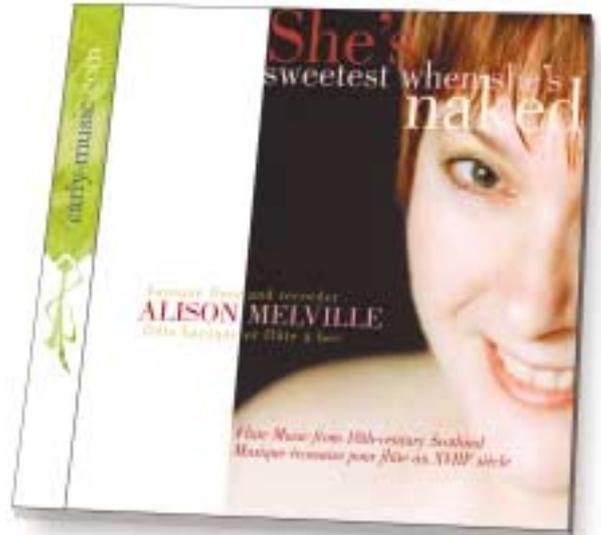




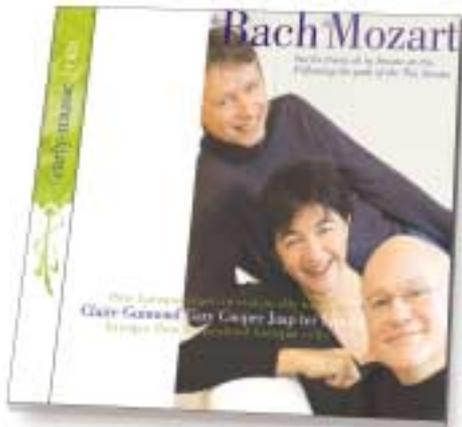
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Howard Shore



Huutajat

Southern Ontario Vocal Preview

BY JOSEPH K. SO

Winter-weary Torontonians can look forward to a spring of wonderful vocal blooms. The Matthias Goerne recital, postponed last fall due to illness, has been rescheduled for April 3 at Roy Thomson Hall. We should be holding our collective breath, as Herr Goerne has just cancelled two dates at the prestigious Wigmore Hall last week, again due to illness. He last visited Toronto during the SARS crisis, one of the few star performers who *didn't* cancel. His smooth-as-silk baritone and consummate artistry are always a joy. He will be performing Schubert's *Die Winterreise*, a cycle he recently recorded with Alfred Brendel at the piano. Let's keep our fingers crossed! Vocal fans will get a chance to compare Goerne with Canada's own baritone extraordinaire, Gerald Finley, who will be singing his first *Winterreise*, with Stephen Ralls at the piano. This concert is Aldeburgh Connection's *Annual Greta Kraus Schubertiad* (April 14, 8 pm, Walter Hall).

Of great interest is Canada's newest prima donna Isabel Bayrakdarian, who has been wowing audiences everywhere with her special blend of sparkling voice, innate musicality, and beguiling stage persona. Her husband and artistic partner, pianist Serouj Kradjian, will accompany Bayrakdarian in her Roy Thomson Hall recital on May 8. Their recent recording of Pauline Viardot Songs on the Analekta label has garnered favourable notices. Also noteworthy is the return of the ever-popular tenor Michael Schade, in a *Liederabend* of works by Schubert, Mendelssohn and Pfitzner (May 25, 8 pm, Glenn Gould Studio).

On the opera front, the most anticipated event is undoubtedly the Canadian Opera Company's Canadian premiere of Rossini's *Tancredi*, starring the incomparable Polish contralto Ewa Podles in the

title role. Soprano Laura Claycomb, the stunning Gilda from last season, has unfortunately cancelled, but COC has found a worthy replacement in fiery Bulgarian Alexandrina Pendatchanska as Armenaide. Those who saw her performing the roles of Ermione and Vitellia in *La Clemenza di Tito* in Santa Fe will tell you that this incredibly exciting singer will knock your socks off! Returning to the COC will be Quebec contralto Marie-Nicole Lemieux, tenor Michael Colvin, and bass Robert Pomakov – talk about a dream cast! Six performances are scheduled at the Hummingbird Centre (April 1, 5, 7, 10, 13, 16). Paired with the rare Rossini will be the Verdi warhorse *Il Trovatore*, marking the local debut of Romanian soprano Doina Dimitriu, who is making quite a splash in Europe. Russian tenor Mikhail Agafonov returns as Manrico, and American baritone Robert Hyman will make his debut as Count di Luna. Hyman, incidentally, will open next season in the title role of *Macbeth*.

For those interested in early music, Opera Atelier (OA) presents Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* and Charpentier's *Acteon* as a double bill, starring many OA regulars, including sopranos Nathalie Paulin, Jennie Such and Monica Whicher, tenor Colin Ainsworth, mezzo Laura Pudwell, and baritone Curtis Sullivan. This company is known for its historically-informed baroque productions that combine period dance styles and stage movements, sumptuous costumes, and the mellifluous strings of the Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra under Jeanne Lamon (April 21-30, Elgin Theatre). Farther afield, there is Opera Ontario's (OO) *Carmen*, starring a voice new to Ontario – mezzo Jessie Raven. Quebec audiences may remember her in the title role of Thérèse Raquin. Singing Don Jose will be American Patrick Marques, who performed in the Montreal Opera Gala in 2002, singing Siegmund's aria, and more recently as Tichon in Janacek's *Katya Kabanova*. Now called a heldentenor, it will be interesting to see if he lives up to that billing. OO Artistic Director Daniel Lipton conducts (Hamilton Apr. 16, 21, 23; Kitchener Apr. 29).

Southern Ontario Choral, Orchestral, Early, and New Music

BY PETER PHOXA

Warmer weather often corresponds to an onslaught of weddings. Sometimes wonderful and intimate, these spectacles can also be gaudy and impersonal. With a bit of luck, the circus of weddings can provide great entertainment. Even if the bride's dress is frightful, you can delight in the horror factor and do your best to turn awful nuptials into exciting events.

Now, if only audiences would approach concerts of new music in the same way they approach weddings. Although there is a good chance that the marriage will end in failure, you still attend the ceremony and hope for the best. In much the same way, a large percentage of the pieces you hear at a new music concert will not endure. Yet, it is vital for its propagation that new music continue to be produced and performed, and that the public attend. In addition to the composers who are there merely to flex their intellect or to fulfill the requirements of some grant or commission, to those who appear irretrievably clueless, you will find the composer who is truly inspired and touches his audience. Amid the dross will emerge the classics of our age and it would be best if we were there to hear them.

New Music Director for the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Peter Oundjian, has inaugurated the New Creations Festival celebrating works of our time with the foremost soloists of our time. At *Fireworks & Flourish* (March 30, 31) the charming Oundjian will act as onstage guide while Oliver Knussen conducts his own *Flourish with Fireworks* and *Violin Concerto*. Pinchas Zukerman is the soloist. The program will also feature the world premiere of Gary Kulesha's *Symphony No. 2*. In a concert entitled *Modern Masterpieces* (April 6, 7), violin virtuoso Joshua Bell plays Iranian Behzad

THE MUSIC SCENE'S SUBSCRIPTION SERIES FIRST ANNUAL GUIDE

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Renowned violinist Moshe Hammer returns to Victoria for a performance of Beethoven's stirring *Violin Concerto in D major* (January 29 and 30).

The talented young musicians of the Greater Victoria Youth Orchestra join the Victoria Symphony to perform *Mahler's Symphony no. 1* (February 26 and 27).

Brian Jackson fans will be in for a treat when he teams up with Victoria's own famous fiddler Daniel Lapp for a celebration of Celtic music (March 2, 3 and 4)

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Sunday, November 20, 2005
- Christine Brewer, soprano
Sunday, February 12, 2006
- Vadim Repin, violin & Nikolai Lugansky, piano, Friday, March 24, 2006
- Krystian Zimerman, piano
Thursday, April 27, 2006

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Kitchener-Waterloo: October 28 & 30

Popera™ Grandé, featuring Tracy Dahl, Allyson McHardy, Gordon Gietz and James Westman
Hamilton: November 24 & 26
Kitchener-Waterloo: November 25

Don Giovanni by Mozart, featuring Russell Braun, Lyne Fortin, Benjamin Butterfield, Sally Dibblee and Gary Relyea
Hamilton: February 11, 16 & 18
Kitchener-Waterloo: February 3 & 5

La Traviata by Verdi, featuring Jeanine Thames, Marc Hervieux and John Fanning
Hamilton: April 29, May 4 & 6.
Kitchener-Waterloo: May 12 & 14

Toronto Symphony Orchestra

Toronto, ON :: 416-598-3375
info@tso.on.ca
www.tso.on.ca

Welcome to Peter Oundjian's second great season with the TSO! Maestro Oundjian will appear on every series in the 2005-06 season. The TSO's top six:

1. Russian phenom Evgeny Kissin will perform all five Beethoven piano concertos over a 2-night period, with Sir Andrew Davis conducting. Oct 5/7, 2005.
2. The Mozart@250 Festival. Celebrate Mozart's 250th birthday with Peter Oundjian and friends, including violinist Viktoria Mullova, Canadian sopranos Isabel Bayrakdarian and Karina Gauvin, pianist Yefim Bronfman and actor Colm Feore. Jan. 18 - 28, 2006
3. Shostakovich Remembered: concerts celebrating the master's 100th anniversary feature cellist Enrico Dindo, Maxim Vengerov, and conductors Peter Oundjian, Stefan Sanderling, and Andrey Boreyko. Feb. 15 - Jun. 3, 2006.
4. Peter Oundjian conducts the New Creations Festival. Soloists include Leila Josefowicz, Emanuel Ax, Leon Fleisher and the TSO's Joel Quarrington. Composers include Jacques Hétu, John Adams, and Chen Yi. Mar. 30 - Apr. 5, 2005.
5. Canada's exciting showman pianist Jon Kimura Parker plays Prokofiev 3. Mar. 8-10, 2005.
6. Peter Oundjian and the great Canadian tenor Ben Heppner collaborate in a concert of Sibelius, Wagner, and Beethoven. June 15/17, 2005.



Kitchener Waterloo Philharmonic Choir

Kitchener, ON :: 800-265-8977
kwpc@kwphilharmonic.com
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Ralph Vaughan Williams: *A Sea Symphony*
Francis Poulenc: *Gloria*
October 22, 2005
Measha Brueggergosman, soprano

G.F. Handel: *Messiah*
December 16 & December 17, 2005
Soloists: Nancy Argenta, soprano
Russell Braun, baritone

Derek Holman: *Magnificat*
Mozart: *Mass in C Minor* (compl. by Robert Levin. Canadian premiere)
February 25, 2006
Sookhyung Park, soprano, Michael Colvin, tenor

J.S. Bach: *St. Matthew Passion*
April 15, 2006
Isabel Bayrakdarian, soprano, John Aler, tenor



FESTIVAL 500 - Sharing the Voices

St. John's, NL :: 709-738-6013
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www.festival500.com

FESTIVAL 500 Sharing the Voices is an international festival of choral music that takes place every two years in St. John's, NL. In 2005, July 3-10, choirs from Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Cuba, Czech Republic, China, Japan, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, United States and Canada will join in the celebration of song with massed choir conductors Maria Guinand and Tonu Raljuste. Join us also for 2007, from July 1 to 7!

NOTE: Programme and soloists subject to change.



Norwegian Soloists

Ranjbaran's *Violin Concerto* which has been praised for its ravishing melodic line. Noted interpreter of new music, Canadian soprano Barbara Hannigan, sings *Correspondances* by Henry Dutilleux, a work currently making the international rounds that Hannigan has already sung at the Royal Concertgebouw.

Esprit Orchestra presents the final concert of its season on May 26, as part of its New Wave Composers Festival. Funded by the Canada Council, Chris Paul Harman's *Concerto for Cello and Orchestra* will be premiered by virtuoso cellist Shauna Rolston. Other works include Paul Frehner's two new pieces *Sanctuary* and *Profanity*, Scott Wilson's *Four Names of Beauty*, and the Canadian Premiere of Gyula Bánkóvi's *Accord(ion) Concerto*.

When he was a boy, Soundstreams Artistic Director Lawrence Cherney remembers looking down at a globe of the world, and seeing a new landscape of the circumpolar world emerge. Northern Voices Choral Festival and Conference (June 3-12) showcases ensembles from over a dozen northern countries, each with their own choral tradition. Daily concerts held at either Metropolitan United or Trinity-St.Paul's, will feature the likes of the Danish National Choir, Erik Westberg Vocal Ensemble, Latvian Radio Choir, Norwegian Soloists, Nordic Voices, and Canada's own Tafelmusik, Nathaniel Dett Chorale, Elmer Iselers, and Pro Coro. Ten of days of heaven for the lover of choral music.

Intriguing programming includes the pairing of Finnish choirs (June 7) Rajaton & Huutajat. Both internationally renowned, Rajaton, and its more popular sensibilities (their album was a top-10 hit back home), sings in one half, while Huutajat, with its performance art immortalized in the film "Screaming Men", sings the other. Those who enjoy the Voices of Youth (June 12, 3pm) will like the pairing of Canadian Youth Opera Chorus with Iceland's Hamrahlid. Hamrahlid is a cultural institution, its most famous alumnus being singer Björk. Swan dress, anyone? The celebratory Opening Gala (June 3) and Closing Gala (June 12) combine several of different choirs. Repertoire for the Festival ranges from Baroque to Modern, with a particular focus on the finest composers of each visiting country. (416-366-7723)

Honorary Patron, her Excellency the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson opens the Northern Voices choral conference held on the weekends of

the Festival (June 3-5, 10-12). Choristers, conductors, and others involved in the choral world are invited to attend the various vocal workshops, choral showcases, round table discussions, and seminars. Speakers include John Tavener, R. Murray Schafer and John Ralston Saul - they will be covering topics such as choral aesthetic, northern identity, and new creation. (416-504-1282)

Fans of J.R. Tolkien can hear *The Lord of the Rings Symphony* by Canadian Howard Shore. Maestro Markus Huber conducts the Kitchener Waterloo Symphony Orchestra and a chorus of more than 250 voices from the Kitchener Waterloo Philharmonic Choir, Kitchener Waterloo Philharmonic Youth Choir, Kitchener Waterloo Philharmonic Children's Choir and Consort Caritatis under the artistic direction of Howard Dyck. (June 4, 7:30 pm at Centre in the Square, 800-265-8977, www.centre-square.com). Toronto audiences will also have the chance to hear *The Lord of the Rings Symphony*. (June 5, Roy Thomson Hall, 2:00 pm and 7:00 pm, 416-872-4255)

Other Choral Events



Those looking for seasonal music have the option of hearing *St. Matthew Passion* (March 24, 26) at Roy Thomson Hall. An Easter tradition in Europe, it would be great if, at this time of year, the Passions became as regular as Messiahs at Christmas. If you like your Bach big, this evening with the Mendelssohn singers, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, conductor Nicholas McGegan, evangelist Ben Butterfield and tenor John Tessier, is for you (416-498-0422). In Kitchener Waterloo, **Howard Dyck** leads his Philharmonic Choir for a Good Friday performance of Brahms's glorious *Ein Deutsches Requiem*. Soprano Charlene Pauls and ever-outstanding baritone Russell Braun present what is considered the Protestant response to a requiem mass, in this case, an extraordinary one. (519-578-1570)

Later in the spring, Tafelmusik presents its first ever performance of Handel's oratorio *Deborah* (May 5 - 7 at 7:30pm, May 8 at 3:30pm). After his Italian operas fell into disfavour, Handel came into his own with this dramatic English oratorio. Based on a story from the book of Judges, *Deborah* tells of the captive Israelites assassinating the evil

Canaanite leader Sisera. Gillian Keith returns to Toronto to sing prophetess Deborah, and Ann Monoyios is the assassin Jael who slays the wicked, wicked Ben Butterfield. Sounds like a really good episode of *Alias*. Ivars Taurins conducts. (416-964-6337)

The Winnipeg Scene

BY ANDREW THOMPSON



The big news in Winnipeg's classical music scene involves a substantial change in the musical landscape. In early January, the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra's (WSO) Conductor and Music Director **Andrey Boreyko** announced that he would not be extending his contract at the end of the 2005-06 season. Maestro Boreyko's decision does not come as a big surprise considering his recent successes as a guest conductor in Berlin and Chicago. Future engagements are booked with major symphonies in Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Pittsburgh, and Munich.

Candidates auditioning for the WSO will appear as guest conductors for the 2005-06 season. With a new board of directors and recent financial problems, it would not be surprising to see the WSO undertake a financial re-evaluation of the sort of star power expected to be on its podium.

Meanwhile, Boreyko's final concert of the 2004-05 season promises to be an impressive event. On April 28-30, he will lead his forces (along with the Mennonite Festival Chorus) in Arvo Pärt's *Cecilia*, *verginė romana*, along with the Sibelius Symphony No. 2 and Dvorák's Cello Concerto, performed by Johannes Moser. Moser is the 25 year old German who received great acclaim as the winner of the 2002 Tchaikovsky Competition. (www.wso.mb.ca)

The WSO is not the only group undergoing changes at the top. The Manitoba Chamber Orchestra (MCO) is also actively seeking applicants for its soon-to-be-vacant conductor position. The departing Roy Goodman has left his mark on the MCO with his vigorous style and period instrument background. The organization now has a strong characteristic sound that combines the

Creations Old and New

DANIELLE DUBOIS

Quartet Becomes Orchestra

What is a Beethoven's String Quartet, from the early 19th century doing on a program of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra's (TSO) New Creations Festival? Maestro **Peter Oundjian**, who will lead the TSO in his orchestration of Beethoven's Op. 131 has a ready answer. He describes the threefold aim of the festival: "One: to commission new pieces, two: to bring to the audience some interesting pieces from around the world and three: to include music relevant to the first two categories." For Oundjian, the Beethoven Quartet fulfills this last criterion. "The music is so original, it will always be a new creation."

Beethoven's penultimate work, the Quartet was reputedly his favourite. "It is seven movements without interruption, an incredible world of fantasy which opened up the door to the ideas of Gustav Mahler. Mahler was in fact the first to say it should not be played by just four people," declares Oundjian, whose long history with the piece makes its orchestral transcription an ever-evolving process.

"I know it from every fibre of my body," says the conductor and violonist who has played it literally hundreds of times. Such intimate knowledge of the work has definitely influenced the way in which Oundjian transformed the chamber-size work to one for an orchestra of over 50 musicians. He is not the first to have been moved by the universal dimensions inherent in the Quartet; both Leonard Bernstein and André Previn conducted orchestrations of it. "I try to get a concertante feeling, add first violins in octaves for example, make it more orchestral," explains Oundjian who describes the process as "Quartet becoming orchestra. We work as a team and performing it is a very spiritual experience."

As with all transcriptions, some things are more delicate than others. In this case, the main challenge comes from the Scherzo. "To make it crisp and delicate enough with all the players is a challenge, but one we were excited about," shares Oundjian. He depicts the alteration in the following way: "The quartet version is pure in a personal way while the orchestral version is pure with broader horizons." For Oundjian, the act of transcribing the Op. 131 Quartet is that of servant rather than creator. "When you share the stage with Beethoven, you have to disappear," says Oundjian. "My goal is to fulfill what Beethoven meant."

Sharing the stage with Beethoven at Roy

Thomson Hall on April 2 will be a new composition for winds and percussion by Ray Luedeke, clarinetist with the TSO, as well as Murray Schafer's Quartet entitled Forty-Four. The latter will be performed by the St. Lawrence String Quartet. "It creates a balance," says the conductor who is very attentive to the juxtaposition of pieces making up a concert program. The New Creations Festival runs from March 30 to April 7.

Gary Kulesha's Symphony No. 2

Gary Kulesha's Symphony No. 2 was born out of a moment of illumination. "As I finished my First Symphony in 1998, I instantly had an understanding of what the Second Symphony would



be," says the TSO Composer Advisor **Gary Kulesha**, who explains that the two works are intimately tied. In many ways autobiographical, Kulesha's First Symphony deals with his formative years. "I turned 50 when I was writing it; it looks at how I have evolved, how I see myself and the world." Performed by several orchestras in the country, Kulesha's Symphony No. 1 received the prize for Best Canadian Orchestra Composition of the 1990s at the Winnipeg Symphony New

Music Festival in 2001.

Despite the success enjoyed by his First Symphony, Kulesha was left with the nagging feeling that there was still much to add to this story. "This Second Symphony begins with the end of the First Symphony," says the composer who began work on it in March of last year. The end result is a four-movement work lasting twenty-three minutes. "It's separated in two parts. Movement one and two telescope together, as do three and four," describes Kulesha.

As in the First Symphony, the piano plays a significant role. "It's a recurring instrument meant to represent my voice," says Kulesha, who's given it two extended solos. The other important solo in the Symphony was given to the tuba, something Kulesha admits is a little unusual. He had no pre-conceived ideas about the instruments he would use when he sat down to compose: "That's simply how it evolved as I was writing."

Although he finds it demanding, Kulesha loves working for orchestra. "The symphony has a unique architecture," says the composer who has written chamber music as well as opera. "Yet the problem remains the same: getting notes that are convincing onto a page," remarks Kulesha. He believes his symphony has the innate sense of drama required to keep listeners convinced from beginning to end.

"It's definitely not an easy-listening piece," warns Kulesha. He grieves the fact that composers often simplify the technical demands of their music rather than do something serious. As a conductor, he is well aware of what the Toronto Symphony Orchestra is capable of. "If anything, it encouraged me to write very difficult music." Indeed, the sheer technical virtuosity of the piece will be the biggest challenge for the TSO players come March 30. "There are lots of notes. Rhythmically, it's complex, and the metric structure is complicated, though it won't appear so to the audience," asserts the composer who finds the New Creations Festival a very exciting initiative for the city of Toronto.

With his Second Symphony completed, Kulesha does not deny having given thought to a third. "It will be different, but in a sense a continuation of the last two," he hints. "It will probably be less serene, and deal more with the struggle to live." Something to look forward to, perhaps in a future edition of the New Creations Festival. ■

Photo: Gylla von Tiedeman



romantic shades and lush textures of Goodman's predecessor, Simon Streatfeild, with Goodman's



oen elastic and driving energy.

The audition process for Goodman's replacement has been going well, with the buzz indicating that a couple of key candidates have already been identified. The **MCO** will be looking to make its choice public in the very near future, most likely in conjunction with the announcement of the 2005-06 subscription season.

Goodman's farewell concert held on May 17 features three composers with whom Goodman can be strongly identified: Weber, Haydn, and Mozart. The former's Concertino for Clarinet will be played by Connie Gitlin, while the great Oxford and Jupiter symphonies of the latter two are the evening's main offerings. (www.manitobachamberorchestra.org)

2005 is proving to be a breakout year for Yuri Klaz and the Winnipeg Singers (www.winnipegssingers.com). This group of 24 trained voices will first be performing in an Easter choral concert along with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra on March 26. This is a big production featuring the Fauré *Requiem*, the Verdi *Stabat Mater*, and Bach's *Cantata No. 4, Christ lag in Todes Banden*. Klaz's other major choir, the large Winnipeg Philharmonic Choir, will join the Singers to achieve the required numbers. Frédérique Vézina and Nathaniel Watson are, respectively, the guest soprano and baritone.

In July and August, the Singers have been invited by the International Federation for Choral Music to perform at the 7th World Symposium on Choral Music in Kyoto, Japan. This event, which happens once every three years, brings together the best choral conductors, choirs, and choral instructors in a week long series of seminars and concerts. This international recognition is a huge honour for the Singers; the only other Canadian choir attending is the Nathaniel Dett Chorale.

The Singers have been trying to fundraise to help pay the costs of attending a symposium so far away. At press time however, financial pressures continued to jeopardize the Singers's attendance at this prestigious event. It would be a shame if Klaz and his ensemble were unable to represent Canada under such circumstances.

The finale of the Virtuosi Concerts in the University of Winnipeg's Eckhardt-Gramatté Hall is a typical one for this first-rate organization. Patrons of the series have grown accustomed to solo piano and chamber recitals and will not be disappointed by the appearance of cellist Kaori Yamagami and pianist

Richard Raymond on April 2. (www.virtuosi.mb.ca)

Yamagami's career started with a bang when she won the 2001 CBC Radio National Competition for Young Performers. This led to her being loaned the 1696 Bonjour Stradivari cello, an instrument which, valued at \$4.5 million (USD), is the Canada Council's most valuable instrument. Although Raymond is no stranger to Winnipeg audiences, it is worth recalling that he won the Van Cliburn Competition's Chamber Music Prize.

The Virtuosi Concert program leans heavily on Romantic repertoire: Raymond will tackle the *Second Ballade* of Liszt before the two pair up for Chopin's light *Polonaise Op. 3*, Schumann's *Fantasy Pieces*, and the staggeringly beautiful Rachmaninov *Cello Sonata*. Hearing Yamagami and Raymond playing the gorgeous third movement, *Andante*, should be well worth the price of admission. Clark Ross's *Lamentations* for solo cello and a Haydn *Divertimento* round off the program.



And, of course, spring in Winnipeg would not be complete without an opera production from Manitoba Opera. On April 16, 19, and 22, fans of the genre will be able to attend Donizetti's delightful *Leslisir d'amore* at the Centennial Concert Hall. Stuart Howe, a New Brunswick native whose European premiere of the tenor role in this opera earned him the title of "the quintessential Nemorino", and coloratura soprano Nikki Einfeld, a Winnipegger currently with the San Francisco Opera as and Adler Fellow, should bring considerable stage presence to this production. (www.manitobaopera.mb.ca)

Manitoba Opera's long-standing financial woes have slowly begun to subside: with four years of balanced budgets and shows that are filled to 97%, Manitoba Opera is successfully reducing its \$600,000 debt. Its current policy of fiscal responsibility, realistic productions, audience development, and traditional programming, paired with an understanding of what it means to be an opera company in Winnipeg's relatively thrifty and limited market, seems to be paying off.

The Edmonton Scene

BY GORDON MORASH

Edmonton classical music lovers – and Edmonton Symphony Orchestra (ESO) players in particular – sent cheers heavenward in January with the announcement that after a two-year search, the ESO had chosen a new musical director in the form of Buffalo, New York-born William Eddins, current resident conductor of the Chicago Symphony.

The Edmonton Journal muted the thunder of the ESO's announcement somewhat by disclosing Eddins's appointment a day before the symphony had done the deed. Unfortunately, for all of its eagerness in jumping the gun, the newspaper did not publish a story about Eddins's first concert in February until two days after the fact.

Eddins quickly became a controversial figure last October when he was quoted as saying he had no interest in spending time courting monied dowagers in fund drives. Some considered his statement to be a slam directed at Harriet Winspear, the 100-year-old arts patron whose husband Francis had donated \$6 million to complete the concert hall that bears his name.

The infamous quote in *The Journal* certainly seemed designed to inflame: "I'm not the guy who's going to walk in, in the suit, with the German accent, and go over and schmooze Mrs. Whatever-Her-Name-Is, who's 93 years old and is ready to donate all her husband's old gold stocks to the orchestra and have everyone call me 'Maestro' and run things like some last outpost of the Third Reich."

However, on the day of his appointment four months later, Eddins took pains to state clearly that he was not referring to either Winspear.

In the 2005-06 season, Eddins will conduct concerts in all of the ESO's programs save one—the country-and-western series. His first trip to the ESO podium for the remaining part of the current season will be as conductor and performer at the second annual Mozart Effect on June 14, 16 and 18, a three-concert event that was tailored for him last year.

And so, to some of the better draws of the remaining spring season:

Alberta Baroque Ensemble: The closing concert of ABE's 25th season on April 17 will feature soprano Linda Perillo in a program of Handel and

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Bach. ABE's concert earlier this month has already drawn significant attention. It featured an oboe concerto commissioned from Edmonton composer Allan Gilliland, who approached the task in the style of Albinoni. The 16-member ensemble conducted by ESO's assistant principal oboe Paul Schieman will also perform in Ottawa for the April 28-May 10 Alberta Scene festival, with the Edmonton-born, Los Angeles-based trumpet soloist (and former Canadian Brass-man), Jens Lindemann. (780-467-6531, www.albertabaroque.com)

Edmonton Opera: In its edgiest and most displaced season due to the year closure of its traditional Jubilee Auditorium digs, the Edmonton Opera concludes the 2004-05 season at the Francis Winspear Centre for Music with a concert performance of *Porgy & Bess*. Throughout the current season, opera goers have been offered a mix of Weill in a refurbished movie house, *Lakmé* on the Winspear stage, as well as *The Emperor of Atlantis* in both play and opera at the Citadel. While it has opened up the musical form to some audiences that might not previously have given opera a chance, other regular subscribers have clearly taken the year off. (www.edmontonopera.com 780-424-4040)

A two-pack of tradition and controversy: Pro Coro Canada has been working its way through the memorial choral canon each Good Friday for the past seven years. This year, the work of choice to be sung on March 25 is the Mozart *Requiem*, with soloists Jolaine Kerley (soprano), Mireille Rijavec (alto), Michel Landry (tenor), and **Paul Grindlay** (bass). But if a nuance of controversy is more to your liking, Pro Coro performs *Carmina*



Burana on April 24. Lately, some music commentators have detected strong Nazi overtones that tes-

tify to composer Carl Orff's apparent pro-Nazi sentiments during the Second World War. Unlike the glitz-and-glamour of the mammoth-staged productions that played in Toronto and Montreal earlier this month – the *Globe and Mail* called it “Cirque du Soleil having a run at Gregorian chant” – Pro Coro's *Carmina Burana* will present a more concertized approach by employing a piano quartet, percussion and timpani, children's choir (the Cantillon Chamber Choir), the appropriate vocal soloists (soprano Charla Nafziger, alto Mireille Rijavec, tenor John Tessier and baritone Michael Meraw), and a chorus quite capable of handling the devilish Latin word-play. (780-420-1247, www.procoro.ab.ca)

Alberta Scene ... and Heard in Ottawa: It is perhaps a bit sobering that the most representative concert of Alberta artists and composers will be held at the National Arts Centre on April 29, courtesy of a touring Edmonton Symphony Orchestra. The content of the concert, titled *Made in Alberta*, has been heard in Edmonton in various programs throughout the fall. Included on the program are works by the ESO's two former composers-in-residence, John Estacio (composer of the opera *Filumena*) and Allan Gilliland, as well as works by Allan Gordon Bell, Malcolm Forsyth and Jeffrey McCune. Throughout the three-week festival, other Alberta classical music artists will appear, including cellists Amanda Forsyth, Shauna Rolston and David Eggert; pianists Lana Henschell, Heather Schmidt, Daniel Moran and Katherine Chi; violinist Juliette Kang and Jessica Linnebach; and renowned trumpet soloist Jens Lindemann in the aforementioned Alberta Baroque Ensemble concert. Still, if you need an at-home ESO concert to



attend, see what follows immediately below.

Isabel Bayrakdarian and the University of Alberta Madrigal Singers: This could be a concert made in heaven. The award-winning 40-voice Mads have just returned from a prestigious Los Angeles gig at the Walt Disney Concert Hall, and Bayrakdarian is a bit of a double threat with her Juno-nominated recording *Cleopatra* (accompanied by Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and featur-

ing works by Heinrich, Hasse, Handel and Mattheson), and her *Pauline Viardot-Garcia*, a collection of art songs by the 19th century singer and composer. Bayrakdarian's ESO concert on April 22 and 23—her second appearance here—will feature arias and scenes from Rossini's *Semiramide*, Verdi's *Nabucco*, Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*, and Donizetti's *Don Pasquale*. (780-424-1818, www.edmontonsymphony.com)

The Calgary Scene

BY KENNA BURIMA

As spring arrives in Calgary, audiences wanting to reunite themselves with the classical music scene will find there is much to choose from.

The Millenium Music Foundation continues to present the world's best musicians in an intimate chamber music setting with the Brazilian-born guitar duo, the Assad Brothers, March 30. The concert takes place at 7:30 pm in the Rozsa Centre at the University of Calgary and will feature a transcription of three Baroque sonatas by Scarlatti arranged by Sérgio Assad. The brothers will also play two *Preludes and Fugues* by Castelnuovo-Tedesco, the *Pavane pour une infante défunte* by Ravel and the *Tonadilla* for two guitars by Rodrigo.

After intermission, the concert will have a distinctly Brazilian flavour, with *Baião malandro* by Gismonti, *Choros no. 5, "Alma Brasileira"* by Villa-Lobos, arranged by Sérgio Assad, as well as the *Danzas concertantes* by Brouwer, *Noites Cariocas* by Bandolim and *O Ovo/Bebe* by Pascoal. The evening will end with Sérgio's own *Suite Brasileira*. (www.mmf-yfm.org, 403-283-5388)

The Land's End Chamber Ensemble will perform its last concert of the season with a mixed bag of works on April 4, in the Eckhardt-Gramatté Hall. The night will feature a new work for two pianos by Allan Gordon Bell, works by Henryk Górecki, Darius Milhaud, and Arnold Schoenberg and the winner of the Land's End composer's Competition. (www.landsendensemble.ca, 403-220-6395)

On Saturday April 2 the University of Calgary's Celebrity Series presents the ninth installment of the Special Beethoven Piano Series, with pianist Charles Foreman, playing *Sonata No. 7 in D Major, Op. 10, No. 3, Sonata No. 12 in A Flat Major* (“Funeral March”), *Op. 26*, and *Sonata No. 32 in C Minor, Op. 111*. (www.fca.ucalgary.ca, 403-220-4999)

Each year more than 20 students working towards their Performance degrees in the Department of Music compete for the chance to perform a major concerto work with the University of Calgary Orchestra. This year Edmond Agopian leads the University Orchestra Friday, April 8 and Saturday April 9 in the Eckhardt-Gramatté Hall. Previous winners have gone on to win national and international awards and to perform throughout Canada, the United States and Europe. The evening will feature winners Sherrie Ashworth (soprano),



Daniel Fung (pianist), Nadia Sparrow (flautist), and Tao Yan (violinist), performing works by Donizetti and Delibes, Chopin, Liberman, and Khachaturian. (www.ffa.ucalgary.ca, 403-220-4999)

Canadian conductor **Yannick Nézet-Séguin** makes his Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra (CPO) debut with an evening of Berlioz and Beethoven, Friday, April 1 and Saturday, April 2 in the Jack Singer Concert Hall. Only thirty years old, Nézet-Séguin already holds the position of Artistic Director of the Orchestre Métropolitain du Grand Montréal and is Principal Guest Conductor of the Victoria Symphony. Berlioz's *Le Corsaire* and Beethoven's *Eroica Symphony* is on the program, as well as Tchaikovsky's *Piano Concerto No. 1*, performed by Calgary favourite Michael Kim. (www.cpo-live.com, 403-571-0270)

The CPO draws its season to a close with the presentation of two important works Friday, April 22 and Saturday, April 23 in the Jack Singer Concert Hall. The evening includes the thrilling world premiere of a brand new work commissioned by the CPO, Andrew Paul MacDonald's *Symphony No. 1 (The Red Guru)*. Completing the evening, conductor Carlos Miguel Prieto leads the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, soprano Catherine May, tenor Benoit Boutet, and baritone Peter McGillivray in what is sure to be an exciting performance of Orff's *Carmina Burana*. (www.cpo-live.com, 403-571-0270)

Though their official season will be over, the CPO continues to present concerts throughout the summer. One of their most popular along with spring's *Mozart in the Mountains* is *Beethoven in the Badlands* held in Drumheller's awe-inspiring Canadian Badlands Passion Play site. Rosemary Thomson conducts this second annual outdoor concert Saturday May 28. (www.cpo-live.com, 403-571-0270)

Still homeless, the Calgary Opera continues its creative 2005 season with *A Kurt Weill*, starring Jean Stilwell March 10 to 12, 16, 18, and 19 at the Calgary Petroleum Club. This evening includes a dinner and cabaret featuring *The Seven Deadly Sins*, considered by many to be Kurt Weill's masterpiece among his European scores, plus a variety of other great cabaret songs. (403-262-7286, www.calgaryopera.com).

Vancouver Mid-Season Report

BY ROBERT JORDAN

Vancouver's 2004-5 classical season lurched a bit coming out of the gate last fall when two big-name artists cancelled right off the bat. First, Daniel Barenboim bowed out of his solo piano recital for the Vancouver Recital Society on October 12 because of back problems. Then American soprano Deborah Voigt withdrew from Vancouver Opera's first-ever staging of *Der Rosenkavalier*, a production in which she was to have made her role debut as the Marschallin. Press releases claimed Voigt "was stretched too thin and exhausted" and that "her personal life was unsettled by the recent hurricanes" in Florida, where she lives, to such an extent that she was "unable to complete her personal preparations for the role."

It was interesting to note, then, that Voigt sang her first Marschallin at the prestigious Deutsche Oper in Berlin three months later. Reviewer Jochen Breiholz raved over the newly-trim Voigt's fabulous looks, divine singing and meticulous preparation. Clearly, it was Vancouver's loss and Berlin's gain, even though Voigt's replacement, American soprano Carol Wilson, was an absolute triumph.

And so Vancouver's season surged on, if not triumphantly, at least garnering a generous quantity of superlatives in the local press with few performers going wrong in most reviewers's eyes. Ironically, the National Arts Centre Orchestra's reception in the press was only lukewarm for its Vancouver concert on November 10, even though touring symphony orchestras include Vancouver in their itineraries about as often as Paul Martin says something decisive. "Zukerman's overall conception of [Brahms's Symphony No. 1] appeared suspect," sniffed David Duke in *The Vancouver Sun*. Duke also queried the orchestra's current direction, wondering if the aspirations of the orchestra were any different from those of its current music director, Pinchas Zukerman. These were valid questions but Duke elaborated no further, probably because he was too busy reviewing other concerts, of which there will be many more before the season is over.



Here are some of the most promising. All except the joint recital by cellist **Steven Isserlis** and pianist Stephen Hough are at 8:00 pm and tickets can be purchased by calling Ticketmaster at (604-380-3311).



On March 25 at the Orpheum Theatre, the Vancouver Chamber Choir (VCC) tackles Bach's *Mass in B Minor*. Conductor Jon Washburn does not have a way with Bach but still, the professional VCC is a polished and skillful group and up to the technical demands of this immense score. Besides, the musical strengths of Bach's *Mass in B Minor* are so awe-inspiring that it is always worth hearing, and even more so with this dream team of soloists. Soprano **Suzie LeBlanc**, alto Anita Krause, tenor Colin Balzer and bass Daniel Lichti are skilled, dexterous and experienced interpreters of this sublime music. Backed by the CBC Radio Orchestra, this performance of the *Mass in B Minor* promises intrinsic musical rewards. (www.vancouverchamberchoir.com)

With the Vancouver Recital Society, one is always spoiled for choice. Performing are pianists Emanuel Ax and Yefim Bronfman on March 22 at the Orpheum, soprano **Dawn Upshaw** and pianist Richard Goode on April 12 and finally Isserlis and Hough at the Chan Centre on April 17 at 3:00 pm. Can't make all three? Well, if you really must choose, the refreshing Isserlis and the never less-than-profound Hough are a safe bet. Besides, the novelty of hearing an international calibre cellist in Vancouver who is not Yo-Yo Ma (Ma is a sublime artist – he's just not the only wonderful cellist out there) is too enticing to resist. (www.vanrecital.com)

It has been more than 20 years since Vancouver Opera staged *Un Ballo in Maschera*. The company's billed-in-English, sung-in-Italian, non-surtitled production of October 1984 left many audience members somewhat hazy as to what was going on. This production, running from April 30 to May 7 at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre, will certainly allow for a better comprehension of this curiously underrated Verdi opera. Stage direction is by Stanley M. Garner while the company's resident music director, Jonathan Darlington, is in the pit – also worth mentioning, Vancouver Opera's surtitles which will be a valuable comprehension aid to the Italian-challenged in the audience. (www.vanopera.bc.ca)

The Little Chamber Music Series That Could's (LCMSTC) is not saying much about its season-closing show on May 15, other than it will be performed in the intimate confines of the Vancouver East Cultural Centre by three

singers/actors, six musicians and a ghost or two. The show is set in an old time radio studio where a group of artists perform a chilling radio drama in the style of the Golden Age of Radio. It is made up of original songs and music, with a number of classical and jazz standards thrown in for good measure. And if you still need convincing, know that the LCMSTC has a proven track record of highly original shows laced with intelligence and wit. (www.littlechamber.org)



One of the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra's few forays from the warhorse paddock this season comes on May 16 at the Roundhouse Arts & Recreation Centre with *True Brit: New Music from the Old Country*. Music director **Bramwell Tovey**, who hails from England himself, has a good ear for new, well, newish music (Peter Maxwell Davies' *A Mirror of Whiting Light* dates from 1977), sure to have a minimum of audience appeal and artistic substance. If the idea of hearing a rare Vancouver performance of Judith Weir's Piano Concerto or James MacMillan's ... *as others see us* ... or even Gavin Bryars' *The North Shore* is alluring, give this concert a try. (www.vancouver-symphony.ca)

CBC Radio is hosting a Gala Operatic Tribute to two of Canada's most famous French Canadian opera stars of the international opera world-Pierrette Alarie and Leopold Simoneau. Some of Canada's finest young singers have been assembled for the occasion – soprano Lyne Fortin, mezzo Allyson McHardy, tenor Philippe Castagner and baritone Jean-François Lapointe. The concert is at the Chan Centre April 10 at 3 pm.

The Victoria Scene

BY JOHN DEFAYETTE

Last month, Victoria had a plethora of musical events – orchestral concerts, chamber music, jazz and opera to celebrate the arrival of an early spring and to prolong the festivities of the Chinese New Year. Though March brings with it a blizzard of cherry blossoms, there are fewer musical offerings.

On March 18 and 19, the Victoria Conservatory of Music has an 'Opera Studio' performance featuring *Riders to the Sea* by Ralph Vaughn Williams and *The Old Maid and the Thief* by Gian Carlo Menotti. (250-386-5311)

Yannick Nézet-Séguin is conducting the Victoria Symphony in a programme of 'Sacred Music', well-suited for an Easter concert which will include Beethoven-Mahler *Quartetto Serioso, Op 95* and Haydn's *Seven Last Words of Christ*. This performance is on March 26 at 2:30 pm at the U. Vic Auditorium. (250-385-6515)

On a different note, the Van Isle Music Society has a Hot Jazz Jubilee on April 14-17 with 11 groups performing at different venues. (www.victoria-hot-jazz.com) To get you warmed up for the Jubilee, well-known trombonist, composer, conductor, and professor Hugh Fraser, presents the U Vic Jazz Ensembles at the U. Vic Centre Farquhar Auditorium on March 20 at 8pm. (250-721-8559)

May will be busy for the Victoria Symphony and its conductor **Tania Miller**. She leads her musicians in the performance of Beethoven's nine Symphonies with the exception of May 8, when Bramwell Tovey takes over. All concerts of the Beethoven Festival are at the Royal Theatre (250-385-6515).

With more than 5,000 young performing artists having enrolled in piano, choral, strings, ethnic dance, studio dance, speech and dramatic arts and school dance, there will be no lack of performances during the Greater Victoria Performing Arts Festival taking place March 30 to May 11. Particularly pleasurable will be the vocal finals and RoseBowl held on April 30 at 7:30pm. Another interesting performance is the Roberto & Mary Wood Scholarship concert which will be held on May 1 at 1:30pm. Both concerts are at the University of Victoria Philip T. Young Recital Hall. (250-386-9223)



Spring brings many events to the Victoria area. On March 19 and 20, the Sooke Philharmonic Chamber Players & Chorus perform Vivaldi's popular Four Seasons, his *Concerto for orchestra in G major*, and Schubert's *Mass No. 2 in G major D 167*; Christopher Taber is the violinist, Norman Nelson the conductor. (250-642-2849)

On the same dates in Sidney, a 60-voice chorus present 'Broadway and Beyond' at the Charlie White Theatre with pianist Bob LeBlanc, soprano Sue Doman, and artists Kathleen West, Dwayne Gordan, Timothy Kyle and Pam Miller. This programme is repeated in Victoria on April 2 and 3. (250-474-5525)

The Sidney Classical Orchestra is celebrating 1685 by performing Handel *Coronation Anthems*, Bach *Brandenburg Concertos* and Scarlatti's *Sonata Suite* with the Via Choralis Elizabeth. Shannon Brown conducts. (250-480-1133)

The Aventa Ensemble, conducted by Bill Linwood, presents a program featuring the music of Ligeti on May 20 at the Philip T. Young Recital Hall. (250-592-9713). On June 4, the Linden Singers present their 25th Anniversary Concert which will include Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass*, Schubert's *Part songs*, as well as favourite spirituals. (250-592-2596).

Also on June 4, the Sooke Philharmonic performs Bernstein's *Candide Overture*, Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* (Linda Gould, piano), Barber's *Adagio for strings*, Beethoven's *Symphony No. 5*, and the world premiere of Cheryl Stanz *Symphony No. 1, Pilgrimage*. (250-642-5760) ■

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John Stetch

Crossing Borders

(The Canadian presence on the international scene)

MARC CHÉNARD

As the neighbouring country to the birthplace of jazz, Canada was well exposed to this music as Toronto journalist Mark Miller is well documents in his fascinating book *Such Melodious Racket, the Lost History of Jazz in Canada, 1914-1949* (Mercury Press, Toronto, 1997). Although the migration of American musicians across our borders has been steady for decades now, there has been a conspicuous lack of "free trade" with regard to the music. At least until recently. By and large, the spectre of protectionism down South has been a major stumbling block for our musicians, what with its exorbitantly priced work permits and red tape. Nonetheless, these circumstances have not deterred some of our talents from settling there and, in some cases, earning much acclaim both stateside and internationally.

For a long time, the list of Canadian jazzmen who made it to such a level was an all too short one. The average jazz fan can readily identify Montreal-born Oscar Peterson (1925-) as the most notable Canadian contribution to the jazz world, while more knowledgeable ones may add

pianist Paul Bley (1932-) and twin trumpeters Maynard Ferguson (1928-) and Kenny Wheeler (1930-). Others like guitarist Peter Leitch (1944), former Goodman trombonist Murray MacEachern, (1915-1982), pianist Kenny Kersey (1917-1983) or the swing tenorman Georgie Auld (1919-1991) are jazzmen worth including.

The new breed

As modest as the above list appears, it has been bolstered considerably over the last 20 years. While some may view her with a jaundiced eye, few can deny the fact that Diana Krall (1964) has achieved a degree of notoriety at least comparable to Peterson's. But there are many other New-York based Canadian expats. Of these, pianist Renée Rosnes (1962-) qualifies as the first of her generation to make it in the Apple. Like Krall, she too was raised in British-Columbia and started

in 1992. In that same decade, he landed a spot with New York's first-call mainstream jazz drummer Victor Lewis, which was followed by a stint with John Scofield. In between, he would put his own groups together, one of these being his quirky electric quintet the Bloomdaddies.

After studies in the States and subsequent periods of residence in Europe, trumpeter Ingrid Jensen (1966-) has now established a solid foothold in the ever competitive New York scene. A winner of the prestigious Carmine Caruso trumpet competition, she has proved her mettle with Maria Schneider's Orchestra. Jensen now concentrates on her own musical projects, a number of them with her saxophonist sister, and Montreal resident Christine (1970-).

If wind players are increasingly making their mark, pianists continue to be the most significant Canadian contribution to the jazz world, in the tradition exemplified by Peterson and Bley. Leading the pack in the younger generation is D.D. Jackson (1967-), an Ottawa native who made his breakthrough over a decade ago in company of the ubiquitous tenorman David Murray. A musician best known for his florid technique, he is an insightful writer, most notably in his periodical *Downbeat* columns. After a short stint with a major, he is back to his original label, Montreal's Justin Time Records, his latest recording being "New York Suite", a post 9-11 tribute work for a larger ensemble including Americans and Canadians such as Montreal trombonist Tom Walsh and Vancouver cellist Peggy Lee.

As for **John Stetch** (1966-) and Jon Ballantyne (1963-), natives of Alberta and Saskatchewan respectively, both are products of McGill University's jazz program and one-time winners of that city's annual jazz competition. Each headed south in pursuit of the big times. While the former has managed to maintain his profile thanks to the support of Justin Records (see review on next page), the latter (who also benefited from that label's support in the past) has been rather elusive in recent times. In contrast, Andy Milne (1967-) found his niche with altoist Steve Coleman in his Five Elements band, a prelude to his jazz-meets-rap project, a.k.a. the "Cosmic Dap Theory".

On the European Front

Generally overlooked in surveys of Canadian jazz musicians abroad are those who, like Wheeler headed to Europe. Since moving to England in 1952, he is celebrated as a brassman with a distinctive voice, a composer of considerable influence on musicians back home, and a seasoned player at ease in traditional and experimental settings alike. Largely forgotten nowadays is saxophonist John Warren (1932-), who also moved to

Continued on page 49

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her musical career there. By 1983, she had made the move and five years later, she landed a deal with Blue Note Records, an association that enhanced her profile throughout the next decade. In so doing, she would pave the way for a host of Western Canadian talents.

Among these, tenor saxist and bass clarinetist Michael Blake (1964-) made a similar West-East move in the late 1980s. Mixing in with a crowd of like-minded contemporary jazzers, he would be an integral part of fellow saxophonist John Lurie's "Lounge Lizards" throughout the last decade. By 1997, he started moving out on his own, his first album ("Kingdom of Champas"), the result of a trip to Vietnam. He has of late begun a trans-Atlantic collaboration with Danish musicians in a band known as "Blake Tartare". Related only by name, the upstart tenorman **Seamus Blake** (1970-) who headed East in 1986, where he emerged as one of the prize students at Boston's Berklee College, and finished in the runner-up spot at the annual Thelonious Monk competition

Normand Guilbeault
Ensemble: Mingus Erectus
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★★★★☆



Dave Young Quintet:

Mainly Mingus
Justin Time JTR 8512

★★★★☆

As the noted Mingus scholar Andrew Homzy mentions in the liner blurb to the first of these recordings under review, the Normand Guilbeault Ensemble is able to play Mingus's music convincingly because the



Montreal musicians make it their own. With a slightly different instrumentation than the Mingus usual, the band plays with the boisterous energy and the lyricism that characterize the bassist-composer's original creations. Furthermore, the live performance captured at a Montreal club venue gives the music an immediacy that is essential to the Mingus style. The up-tempo tunes are the more successful, wherein the soloists shine over a driving rhythm section. Ivanhoe Jolicoeur, with appropriately hard bop trumpet playing full of spark and ideas, turns in some sizzling work. Musique actuelle icon Jean Derome on saxophone and flute, and Mathieu Bélanger on clarinets, weaving freely over the idiosyncratic vehicles, are no slouches either. "Peggy's Blue Skylight" isn't quite as successful as the other tunes; the energy flags and it comes off as too pedantic a reading, much in contrast to the soulful abandon of "Pithecanthropus Erectus", and "All the Things You Could be by Now if Sigmund Freud's Wife Was Your Mother". The mid-tempo "Fables of Faubus", with an update on political idiocy via new lyrics with references to George Dubya and his war on Iraq, is slightly better, but "MDMD", a tune penned by Derome in the style of a Mingus dirge and embroidered with a long solo by Normand Guilbeault, is convincing and relevant. Yet the band is more engaging in the faster tunes, like the closer, "Moaning," with its signature baritone riff.

Toronto bassist Dave Young's Quintet pays tribute to the master with another set of tunes which are played in a more understated way. Of the seven tracks, only the "All the Things..." variant is heard here, but more importantly, the band offers a milder reading of Mingus's music. Of these, they tackle the often-covered "Goodbye Pork Pie Hat", "Nostalgia in Times Square", and "Self-Portrait in Three Colours" along with "Oscar Pettiford" and "Wham Bam Thank You Ma'am", rounding out the program with two originals by the leader. The playing by Young and his cohorts—Gary Williamson on piano, Kevin Turcotte on trumpet, Perry White on saxophones

and Terry Clarke on drums—is top-notch with sensitive renderings of the melodies and polished solos. Conversely, there is a lack of intensity in spots, most notably in the theme statement of "Goodbye Pork Pie Hat". Perhaps the space used for this live recording, Toronto's noted Top of the Senator, has something to do with it, but the performance clearly conveys only one aspect of the composer's style, i.e. the cool, melodic one. Even if a tune like "Self-Portrait in Three Colours" comes off well, the rowdier vehicles don't quite make it. While the leader and his drummer provide a good anchor, it is the horn-players who provide some personality in their solos, albeit much more restrained than in the previous recording. Young's quintet sounds respectful of the letter of the late bassist's law, although it doesn't rise to the heights of the Maestro's rebellious spirit. **PS**

Kate Hammett Vaughan Quintet: Eclipse
Maximum Jazz Max 14782

★★★★☆

Originally from Nova Scotia, but a Vancouver resident for 25 years, vocalist Kate Hammett Vaughan has followed a singular musical path, one that cross-cuts through the mainstream of jazz right into the more open forms of improvised music. When she is not doing the latter, as with the Now Orchestra or in duo with guitarist Ron Samworth, she tackles the great American songbook of venerable tunesmiths like Cole Porter, Kurt Weill or Richard Rogers. For this live date recorded in April 2003, she is backed by a reliable quartet of local confreres: Chris Gestrin, piano, Jim Pinchin, tenor sax, André Lachance, bass, and Tom Foster, drums. Anchored by standards like "All or Nothing at All", "Falling in Love with Love" (two items by Rogers) and the Weillian "This is New", this session includes less obvious choices, notably the moody Mingus opus which gives the title to this disc and a pair of more off-beat choices in Joni Mitchell's "For the Roses" and "Cold Blue Steel (and) Sweet Fire". Because of Vaughan's work in freer musical settings, she has more of a "team player" approach than that of the traditional diva. She gives her sidemen a lot of room, something to be expected in a live performance; the pianist in particular is heavily featured as a soloist, but there are spots for the bassist and saxist, the latter putting his best foot forward on the lilting and somewhat whimsical "Tatamagouche Tango". Mainstream jazz fans will like the relaxed grooves and the soothing voice of the singer, who thankfully keeps the scat clichés to a bare minimum. And speaking of "bare", is it really necessary to undress oneself to sell records these days, however tasteful or arty the image may be? **MC**

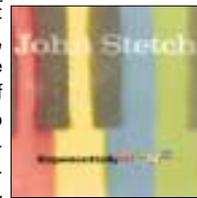


John Stetch: Exponentially Monk

Justin Time Just 206-2

★★★★☆

Is there a jazz musician, next to Duke Ellington of course, whose work has been more recorded than that of Thelonious Monk? Hard to 'think of one', which happens to be one of the thirteen tracks (but no "Friday the 13th" on this set), cut by the native Edmontonian keyboardist turned New Yorker, John Stetch. Clocking in at a shade over 55 minutes, this all-solo side is a carefully chosen collection of the masters' most beloved opuses, "Round Midnight", "Blue Monk" and "Evidence" topping that list. But more obscure gems like the rarely heard "Gallop's Gallop", the waltz-time ballad "Ugly Beauty", the minimalistic "Green Chimneys" and the jaunty opener "Bright Mississippi", surging forth with its perpetual motion and quasi surrealist stride playing, also make it on. Stetch, it must be noted, has done more than simply take a bunch of tunes he likes and play them; he has worked out his renditions beforehand, so much so that each cut sounds like a thoroughly composed arrangement. While he can demonstrate considerable keyboard prowess, it never seems self-serving or overly indulgent. Stetch makes use throughout of a wide range of so-called extended techniques, like prepared piano on "Well you Needn't" and "Think", with some strummed strings at the finale of "Ask me Now". Musicians will also appreciate the pianist's insights into technical points which he shares in the liner notes, always with a good dose of dry wit. In fact, it is the humour that really shines through in these takes on Monk, a man whose enigmatic persona often overshadowed his mischievous streak. In any event, if this side doesn't make you smile at least once, then the joke is on you. **MC**



Crossing Borders, from page 48

the British Isles from his hometown of Montreal, but spent his career working as an arranger.

In neighbouring France, the connections with Quebec are many and of the expatriates there, saxophonist François Théberge has achieved the most prominence by directing the jazz studies program at the Paris Conservatory, while maintaining his ties to home by recording for the Montreal label Effendi Records.

The Canadian contribution to the jazz world has been more significant since the 1980s than in all of the previous decades combined. But outside of our country, being Canadian has little bearing in the jazz world, unlike being American or, more significantly, a New-Yorker. Without pretending to be exhaustive, this survey gives but a glimpse of how Canadian jazz musicians have made their way onto the international stage, thus proving that our country is rife with exportable talent. ■

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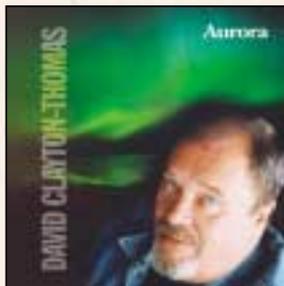
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