

the music Scene

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ISSUE 11

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Jazz and the Word

Higher Education Guide

**The State of Arts Philanthropy
in Canada**

Dr. Stuart Davis,
Philanthropist

**Association of Canadian
Choral Conductors at 25**

Maureen Forrester at 75

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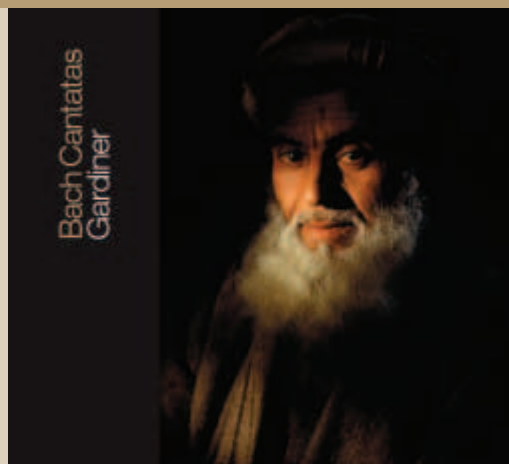


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in Gramophone Magazine

These fabulous four recordings and artists were set aside from the rest as the best of the year in each of their categories—have you heard them yet?

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Editor's choice 2005
Gramophone Magazine



Rachmaninov Piano Concertos;
Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini;
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MICHAEL VINCENT, KAT HAMMER, WAH KEUNG CHAN, DANIELLE DUBOIS

IN MEMORIAM

Harry Freedman (Lodz, Poland, 1922 - Toronto, Canada, 2005)

The composer Harry Freedman, who arrived in Canada at the age of three, was one of the country's most prolific and most often performed composers. First attracted by visual



arts, he eventually developed a taste for jazz, and finally, for classical music. Initially a clarinetist and an oboist, in the end he dedicated himself to the English horn, an instrument he played 24 years as a member of the Toronto Symphony before he turned to composing. Symphonies, ballets, works for orchestra or choir, chamber music and film music - there is no genre Freedman did not try his hand at. Over two hundred of his works can be found at the Canadian Music Centre. He liked to quote the following phrase from Aaron Copland, with whom he studied for a short time: "Music must be as simple as possible, but not more!" This advice helped Freedman become one of the rare Canadian composers able to live from his trade. Freedman passed away in Toronto last September 16th. **DD**

Montreal Symphony Orchestra Returns

The musicians and the board of the Montreal Symphony Orchestra have reached an agreement, ending the musicians' five-month strike. The new contract includes pay raises of 17% over the next five years, time off in lieu of overtime pay and longer rehearsals among the concessions from both sides. The orchestra will now be able to record and tour with new conductor Kent Nagano. The MSO's first performance following the new agreement was the national anthem at the start of the October 22nd Montreal Alouettes football game. **KH**

Radio City's musicians replaced with canned songs

The Radio City Music Hall management has locked out the 35-member orchestra and replaced it with canned music, over an escalating labour dispute with Local 802 of the American Federation of Musicians. In reaction to the musicians' walking out minutes before a Wednesday night preview show, the management said it could no longer trust the orchestra. The following day, the musicians changed

their tune and decided to go back to work, but they were refused entry when they showed up at the door. "We are ready to play unconditionally and immediately, but apparently we've been locked out," said David Lennon, president of Local 802. A Radio City spokesman responded by saying, "We told the musicians in no uncertain terms that until there is an agreement, and there is no possibility of them walking out on future performances, they remain on strike." **MV**

UK Orchestras 'face revenue crisis'

A major blunder in miscalculated insurance payments in the UK is threatening financial instability for UK orchestras. Since a change in labour laws in 1998, freelance singers and musicians have been classed as employees for insurance purposes, but self-employed for tax purposes. An investigation by the government has now found that orchestras have not been paying enough insurance and said the money will need to be reimbursed. According to an industry body, this means that 55 UK orchestras face closure if forced to pay a £33M National Insurance bill. **MV**

Uproar over budget cuts at La Scala

Italy has announced €230 million in budget cuts to the arts, including €164 million in cuts to opera over the next three years. Italy's prime minister, Silvio Berlusconi, accused La Scala of employing more than twice as much staff as necessary. The opera house has been attempting to return to normal after the hostile departure of music director Richard Muti and manager Mauro Meli earlier this year. The attacks on La Scala came just as Fedele Confalonieri, chairman of the television company Mediaset, was preparing to step down from La Scala's board of directors. Confalonieri was a strong supporter of Muti and is very close to Berlusconi. This announcement comes at a particularly bad time, as the season opens soon, and there is concern that this could scare off sponsors. **KH**

St. John's Choir wins prestigious choral competition

A small group of young choristers from St. John's, Newfoundland, has just won the 37th annual Tolosa International Choral Festival, held in Spain. This award is significant in that it pits some of the world's best choirs against each other and allows for a free exchange of musical styles and interpretations. Susan Knight, founder and artistic director of the group, said in a statement from Spain, "These awards are a testament to the dedication, skill and hard work of the young choristers." The

choir will complete a four-city tour in Europe before returning home on November 6th. **MV**

Western Canadian Music Awards

The winners of the 2005 Western Canadian Music Awards were presented October 23rd, in Vancouver. Land's End Chamber Ensemble tied with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra for the Outstanding Classical Recording award. Land's End's CD *Four Degrees of Freedom* features works by Antheil, Takemitsu, Gubaidulina, Milhaud, and Canadian composers Gordon Rumson and Kelly-Marie Murphy. The ESO's CD *Frenergy* features the music of composer-in-residence John Estacio.

Composer Stephen Chatman won the Outstanding Classical Composition award with his orchestral piece, *Proud Music of the Storm*. Chatman is the head of the composition department at the University of British Columbia. **KH**

Canadians Excel at Operalia 2005

Canadian tenor Joseph Kaiser won 2nd prize and baritone Joshua Langston Hopkins took 3rd prize at the 2005 Plácido Domingo Operalia competition this summer. The first prize was shared by Russian baritone Vasily Ladyuk and American soprano Susanna Phillips, who also took home the Audience Prize. Kaiser was recently cited by Domingo, in a recent spontaneous interview in the Montreal Gazette, as one of the top tenors of the new generation. **WKC**

Composer R. Murray Schafer Wins Prize

Canadian composer R. Murray Schafer has been announced as the winner of the Walter Carsen Prize for Excellence in the Performing Arts. Schafer was chosen for the prize based on his large volume of compositions, including chamber, choral and orchestral works, and works designed for performances in specific natural locations, such as *Music for Wilderness Lake*. In addition to his compositions, Schafer's book, *The Tuning of the World*, documented the work of the World Soundscape Project, which introduced the concept of acoustic ecology. Schafer is currently Artist in Residence at Concordia University.

The prize is awarded by the Canada Council and was created through a \$1.1 million donation by Toronto businessman Walter Carsen. Previous winners of the prize were dancer Veronica Tennant, playwright John Murrell and choreographer/director Brian Macdonald. The jury for this year's prize consisted of composers Anthony Genge and Jacques Hétu, pianist Jon Kimura Parker, former CBC Radio music head Janet Lea, and jazz pianist and bassist Don Thomson. **KH**

Conductor Valery Gergiev wins Polar Music Prize

Russian conductor Valery Gergiev has been announced as a winner of Sweden's Polar Music Prize, "for the way his unique electrifying musical skills have deepened and renewed our relationship with the grand tradition; and for how he has managed to develop and amplify the importance of artistic music in these modern, changing times." Gergiev is the Artistic and General Director of Russia's Mariinsky Theatre, which he has turned into one of the foremost opera companies in Europe. He has also organized many international music festivals and conducted most of the major orchestras in the world. Most recently he was appointed Principal Conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra.

The Polar Music Prize was founded in 1989, when Stig Anderson, manager and lyricist for the



pop group ABBA, made a large donation to the Royal Swedish Academy of Music. Each recipient is awarded 1 million Swedish Kroner, approximately \$135,000 US. The prize will be presented by Sweden's King Carl XVI. Gustaf Gergiev will conduct the Royal Philharmonic

Orchestra in Shostakovich's 11th Symphony at the awards ceremony. Past winners of the prize include Iannis Xenakis, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Sofia Gubaidulina, Pierre Boulez and Isaac Stern. **KH**

Cuban Singers Defect in Toronto

Eleven members of a Cuban choir on tour in Canada dodged security officers and jumped into waiting cars after concerts in Toronto. It is believed that they are in safe houses and planning to apply for refugee status. The Coro Nacional de Cuba was founded in 1959 by Che Guevara and tours the world, singing folk and classical music to promote Cuba's Communist regime. The twenty-nine remaining members of the choir continued with the tour, performing in Vancouver. No concerts were cancelled. **KH**

Why Singing Makes you Fat

Research carried out by Dr Peter Osin, Consultant at London's Royal Marsden Hospital, suggests that a singer's constant use of their lungs triggers an overdose in the excretion of leptin, causing the brain to build up a resistance to the protein. Leptin is a hormone, a protein made in fat cells that helps the brain assess how much fat the body is storing. The resistance to leptin suggests that the physical action of singing can actually make you gain weight. **WKC**

Virtual Classical Music in Alberta Schools

Thanks to a partnership between the National Arts Centre and Bell, more than 8,700 elementary school students from across Alberta watched a real-time concert by Canada's National Arts Centre Orchestra (NAC) last Nov. 14. The concert featured two young Alberta soloists, Meghan Nenninger, 13, of Calgary, and Maria van der Sloot, 12, of Medicine Hat, performing Vivaldi, and was web-cast via the Alberta SuperNet to more than 130 schools, the majority of which are located in rural Alberta. The performance also featured Saskatchewan native storyteller and singer/songwriter Joseph Naytowhow. "We are so happy to be able to use the Alberta SuperNet to bring this concert to students because it means we can reach so many more children," said NAC Music Education Director Claire Speed. The tour is just one of 90 educational events staged by the NAC in Alberta and Saskatchewan in honour of the centennials of those provinces. **Danielle Dubois**

La Scena Musicale 10th Anniversary Gala Organization Committee

We will be celebrating our 10th anniversary in print this coming September. We are looking for keen and talented individuals to assist in the organization and planning of this gala celebration. Please call (514) 274-1128 or email info@scena.org.

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Solution to last issue. Next crossword - Spring 2006

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The Davis Organ Concert

BY DANIELLE DUBOIS

A LEGACY OF LOVE

Stuart Davis was a private, unassuming man, unknown to those who worked at the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra (ESO) office. That changed, however, one day in August 2000, when Davis showed up on his bicycle at the stage door of the Winspear Centre. He wanted to make a donation to build an organ in memory of his late wife, Winona Davis. Would two million dollars be enough? "When it became apparent what he was prepared to offer, the office stopped," recalls Julian Mayne, the Winspear Centre manager and the organ project manager at the time.

Stuart Davis, born in Lethbridge on June 15, 1917, had been a long-time music lover. Back in the days when Stuart was a chemical engineering student at the University of Alberta, he and his future wife Winona Turner, a pharmacy student, would attend monthly organ concerts given by Professor Nicols. As his love of the organ grew, so did his love of Winona, and the two were married in 1940.

After obtaining his PhD from McGill University, Dr Davis was hired to teach in the chemistry department of his alma mater. On the side, the professor emeritus steadily built up his investment portfolio, increasing his profit margin on a \$75,000 legacy he had inherited in the 1970s. The money for the organ, Davis told the Winspear Centre marketing director, would come from the sale of some shares he owned. The shares were in Nortel, at that time worth over \$124 apiece. According to standard procedure, the stocks were sold

immediately, and the money safely stowed in the Edmonton Concert Hall Foundation's bank account.

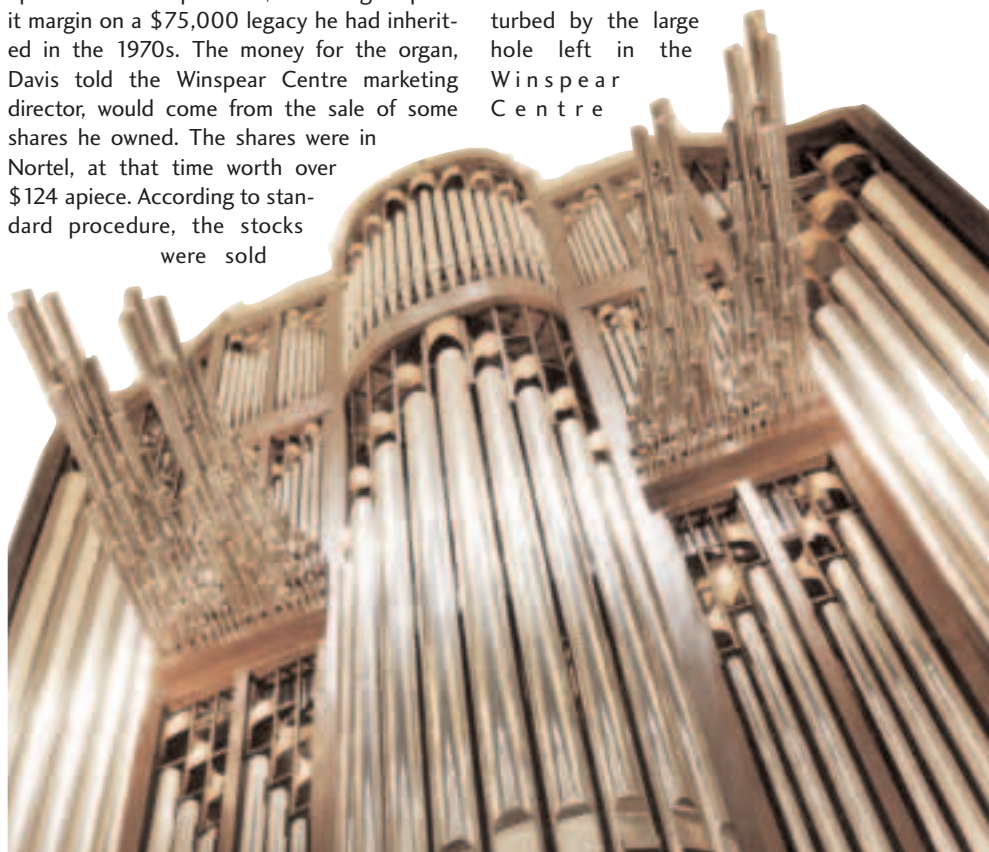
"He later told me laughingly

that he had a whole bunch more shares, which were now worth five cents," says Mayne. Yet, for all of his fortune, Dr Davis remained a very humble man. After his wife's death in 1994, he continued to live in their modest bungalow near the university. Most of the time he traveled by bus or bicycle, often pedalling across the University of Alberta campus. "Moreover, he owned a beat-up 1984 Volvo that probably didn't comply with current regulations," shares Elaine Calder, managing director and CEO of the Winspear Centre since 2001. In every way a true gentleman, Dr Davis enjoyed curling and cards, and had a large circle of friends.

He also regularly attended Symphony concerts and was disturbed by the large hole left in the Winspear Centre



Stuart and Winona Davis



after its construction. Thinking that "Nona" would have been pleased to hear an organ in this impressive new hall, Dr Davis thought to remedy the state of affairs. What he learned on his August 2000 visit was that the plans to build an organ had already been in place for four years. In 1996, when it was made known that \$500,000 from Francis Winspear's donation was being put aside for the organ, the Quebec organ builder Létourneau was selected for the job.

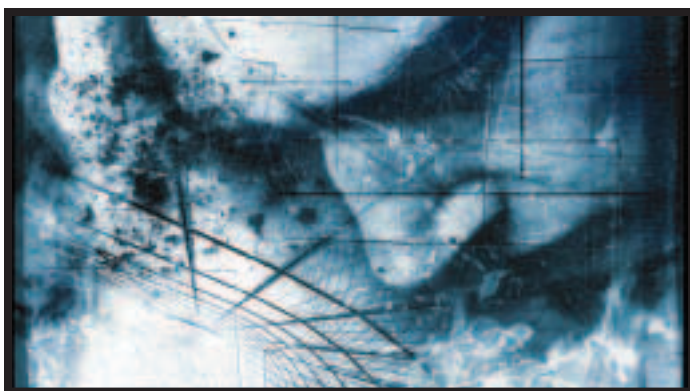


Rounding up the rest of the funds proved difficult, however, and energy for the project was beginning to dwindle. It was John David Sterne, the CEO of the Winspear Centre at the time, who put the project back on the books. "He was instrumental in making the project work," recalls Mayne. "It was his vision." Shortly after Dr Davis sold his shares in Nortel, the contract with Létourneau was signed. But in the end, the projected \$2 million was not enough to cover the costs. Getting the organ into the hall, a major engineering and architectural undertaking, would cost an additional \$1.5 million, which was obtained through a combination of grants and fundraising.

Dr Davis kept an interested eye on the building and installation of the Opus 50 organ. "He would come almost always every third day to watch and chat about how the project was going," says Mayne. This was familiar territory for Dr Davis, who had played a role in designing part of the chemistry buildings at the University of Alberta. Thanks to his generous donation, all the wishes on the organ committee's list came true, among these a second console to allow the organist to play onstage with the orchestra instead of behind the choir loft, and a second, portable organ. "In the old days, the symphony used an electronic organ for its concerts; there was nothing else available," remembers Mayne.

"Dr Davis was always so happy when he heard the organ used," says Calder. "Physically, the organ has transformed the performance hall right, left and centre." The octogenarian habitually chose to admire the organ from a seat in the front row, centre of the gallery, the best place in the hall for sound according to the acousticians. When asked what he would like to hear at the Organ Gala's inaugural concert in September 2002, Dr Davis picked the Saint-Saëns *Organ Symphony*. It was performed by Christopher Herrick, who subsequently recorded his *Organ Works X* on the Davis Concert Organ.

Dr Davis died unexpectedly last July following a serious illness. In his will he left a final parting gift to the ESO, as well as the University of Alberta and the University Hospital Foundation. Along with this gift he made a final request that the organ be well maintained. If the musical community has its way, there will be little difficulty honouring Dr Davis' request. Since its inaugural concert, Edmontonians have had the privilege of hearing important organ repertoire performed on this wonderful instrument by world-class artists like Dame Gillian Weir and Christopher Herrick. The Davis Concert Organ also gets played regularly in the Sunday Afternoon Series concerts, a series sponsored by Dr Davis that will be continued in honour of the man remembered as Edmonton's patron saint of music. ■



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Encouraging Arts Philanthropy

BY GILLIAN PRITCHETT

With rising costs and reduced public funding, it's little wonder then that arts groups across Canada are in desperate need of enhanced financial support from the corporate sector as well as from private individuals. And yet, although an overwhelming majority of Canadians recognize the importance of culture, according to an opinion poll by Ipsos Reid, when it comes to donations, the arts rank low on their list of priorities, attracting a mere 3% of total charitable giving.

Sources of revenue

This is a sad state of affairs given that, typically, ticket sales account for only 40% of a music group's annual income (theatre groups show a slightly higher average at 56%). With public government-funding accounting for another 30% of revenues, most musical groups are forced to rely heavily on private donations to make up the remaining 30% of their operating budgets.

Canada's donors

The National Survey on Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGVP) conducted in 2000 portrays the average donor as over 45 (57% of donors), university-educated (38%), and with a household income exceeding \$50,000 (71%). According to Statistics Canada, 25% of donors give over 75% of total donations, making the arts highly dependent on a limited number of generous patrons. Toronto Symphony Orchestra knows this only too well. The majority of its private funding comes from some 60 very generous patrons and is rounded off by smaller amounts (less than \$1,000) from a further 6,000 donors. Things are much the same at the Canadian Opera Company (COC), where half the funding comes from private donors making contributions of less than \$2,000. There as well, the bulk comes from some 60 patrons.

What we are seeing are two clear trends: a limited number of high value donations and a high number of smaller donations that, over the years, make for a significant contribution. Not to be ignored is the work of volunteers who are generally not the same people as those making financial donations. By giving their time, volunteers significantly reduce the financial burden for arts organizations - NSGVP 2000 calculates that the hours they donate represent over 159,000 full-time jobs.

Why give?

A variety of factors compel people to donate to the arts. Volunteers questioned responded with "Volunteering is my way of helping whilst also getting to enjoy great music that I could not otherwise afford." Prominent music patrons such as Noël Spinelli, Mario Létourneau and Hans Black all admit that their urge to give stems from the important role that music has played in their own lives. Noël Spinelli's childhood years fostered his enormous love of music, and for Mario Létourneau, "Having Raoul Jobin sing in my living room when I was a child made me love

opera." Patrons such as these often give with the hope of seeing both musicians and concerts attain a higher level of quality.

Encouraging philanthropy

Despite the ferocious competition for scarce donor dollars, there are many Canadians ready to give to the arts, especially when approached in the right way and shown the importance of their contributions. The administration of the COC has no qualms telling opera-lovers that the price of the tickets they are buying cover only 30-40% of the actual production costs. Opera-goers invariably respond favourably to the call for help by making donations.

Arts groups are recognizing the urgent need to broaden their donor base and are targeting ethnic groups, adolescents, the young professional and the elderly, offering them a variety of donation mechanisms such as payroll deduction; partnering to provide an employee giving program; on-line donations facilities; affinity credit cards; monthly giving schemes and professional advice for donors likely to donate life assurance policies, real estate, or to make bequests.

But perhaps the most essential element of fundraising is ensuring that donors feel appreciated. Sometimes this can involve naming a facility after a generous patron. For example the Four Seasons Centre in Toronto recognizes the generosity of the Four Seasons hotel group. But recognition can be as simple as inviting sponsors to visit the organization and its staff so that they can see personally what their dollars are achieving. Increasingly, philanthropy is approached as the building of a long-term relationship. If donors feel like a vital part of the organization, they are more likely to make regular contributions. Opéra de Montréal endeavours to give its patrons this type of recognition by inviting their principal sponsors and donors to an onstage tour, and offering them seats at the dress rehearsal of an upcoming production.

People give to people

Seizing the attention of prospective donors is one thing, converting them into loyal supporters is quite another. Yet, as successful art organizations know, winning the heart of one philanthropist can result in the acquisition of others. As Noël Spinelli said, "There is no great secret to collecting money; the simple truth is that people enjoy giving to people." Our archetypal philanthropist not only gives generously from his personal wealth but demonstrates a high level of activism in recruiting other donors. The flip side is that this breed of philanthropist expects arts groups to demonstrate a high level of accountability, robust management and good stewardship practices. Although a reasonable expectation, it highlights the all too common perception that urgently needs to be dispelled, namely that cultural organizations are lacking in these areas.

These high worth patrons invariably occupy senior positions in the business world and thus are also well placed to facilitate creative collaborations between arts groups and businesses. These points were made eloquently in the 2004 Kenneth Myer lecture, as well as by participants

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of the 2004 Round Table on Philanthropy in the performing arts held in Ottawa.

Showing the human side of an arts organisation is vital. When donors can see that their dollars will be used to establish a new prize for musicians and attend a concert given by the winner, or when they enjoy a concert using instruments from an instrument bank, not only does the essential "feel-good" factor come into play, but they are more likely to make further contributions and encourage their families and friends to do so too.

What next?

Although the erosion of our cultural patrimony is less visible than the challenges facing our health service, it is equally insidious. When a people no longer exist their culture lives on and culture is the monument of a people. Arts organizations need to foster a way of thinking so that a culture of giving becomes the norm rather than the exception. Certainly, taking a collaborative approach to obtaining financial support, and lobbying government to provide greater incentives to giving, would provide much needed visibility to the current crisis. ■

PHILANTHROPY NOTES

\$1 Million Gift to the Vancouver Symphony

The Vancouver Symphony Orchestra has received a \$1 million donation from local philanthropist Martha Lou Henley. The gift is for the VSO's Endowment Campaign, which aims to raise \$20 million in total, \$8 in this phase. The endowment fund will provide ongoing revenue to ensure long-term stability. This is the largest single donation the VSO has ever received.

Henley has provided support to over 75 arts organisations in the Vancouver area. In 2004 she donated \$1 million to the Vancouver Opera. Her extensive philanthropy has been recognized through many awards, including the Lescarbot Award for Volunteerism, the Commemorative Medal for the 125th Anniversary of Canadian confederation, the Ramon John Hnatyshyn Award for Volunteerism of the Governor General's Awards, an award for philanthropy and volunteerism from the BC Arts Council, the Commemorative Medal for the Queen's Golden Jubilee, and the Vancouver Arts Awards' 2004 Honoree for Philanthropy.

Manitoba Chamber Orchestra

Farm equipment magnate John Buhler and his wife, Bonnie, have donated \$250,000 to the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra's endowment fund, previously at \$226,000. The orchestra hopes for a matching donation from the Winnipeg Foundation and Canadian Heritage to bring the fund to \$750,000. Buhler, who donates \$1 million per year to worthy causes, hopes to see the orchestra play regularly at Buhler Hall, in his hometown of Gretna, Manitoba. **CB**

Met Opera radio broadcasts saved

The future of the New York metropolitan Opera's legendary radio broadcasts has been under threat since Chevron-Texaco withdrew financial support in 2003. A majority of the broadcast's \$6 million seasonal budget will now be donated by Toll Brothers, a Horsham, Pennsylvania-based luxury home building company. The donation will ensure the survival of the broadcasts for four more years.

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Association of Canadian Choral Conductors Celebrates

HOLLY HIGGINS JONAS

Could it be that all the Cs in ACCC stand for celebration? 2005 marks the 25th anniversary of the Association of Canadian Choral Conductors, and judging by its many accomplishments over the years, there is certainly just cause for celebration.

The ACCC's beginnings go back to 1979 when representatives of provincial choral organizations met in Calgary to brainstorm on the concept of creating a national entity capable of handling activities that cannot easily be handled locally, while giving conductors across Canada a chance to network. The meeting resulted in the formation of the ACCC as a national body to serve the needs of choral conductors. The ACCC was inaugurated in Calgary in November 1980 with Robert Solem of Saskatoon as its first president. The association has since grown healthily and now counts some 540 members, who usually conduct more than one choir each. The dedicated board of directors includes a representative from each of the provincial choral associations, thus enhancing an aura of partnership and teamwork.

The aims of the ACCC are to support and encourage participation and excellence in choral music at all levels, to encourage the composition and performance of Canadian choral music and to cooperate with organizations with similar aims both provincially and internationally. Thus, providing appropriate training and resources to choral conductors is key. Since its inception in 1982, PODIUM, a biennial national conference for conductors, offers workshops, master classes and concerts of outstanding quality. One of the conference's regular highlights is a performance by the National Youth Choir (NYC). Inaugurated by the ACCC in 1984, the NYC consists of four singers from each province selected by audition. The 40 selected singers, aged 18 to 25, congregate in the PODIUM host city to rehearse intensively with the selected conductor for concerts there and throughout the host province. The NYC also gives workshops in schools and acts as a lab choir for the con-

ference. Its concerts are broadcast nationally on Choral Concert, CBC Radio Two. In 1998, the Conducting Apprenticeship Program was added, through which a promising young conductor gets to work with the NYC and its master conductor as an apprentice.

To encourage Canadian choral music, the ACCC organizes a biennial choral composition competition. In addition to being performed by choirs at PODIUM, the winning works are published. The ACCC also grants the National Choral Awards to recognize outstanding contributions in the categories of choral publication,



The National Youth Choir

choral work, choral recording, innovative sponsorship and distinguished service.

The ACCC's magazine *Anacrusis* (a musical term referring to a conductor's upbeat) is an invaluable communication tool for members, consisting of feature articles, choral news, reviews, conference details and dates of future choral festivals. Other publications include a Membership and Professional Directory and the Recommended Canadian Repertoire Series, featuring sacred, secular and folk music.

As part of its anniversary celebrations, the ACCC has inaugurated the 25-Year Club to honour members who have been conducting for 25 years or more. At PODIUM 2006, a new category for the National Awards will be added: choral dissertation or thesis. A new, exciting initiative will organize its members to offer master classes for local conductors, thereby giving local choirs the chance to work with different conductors. ■

Profile: Patricia Abbot

Patricia Abbott, part time executive director since 1993, is responsible for keeping all the ACCC cylinders firing. A graduate of three universities (Carleton, Concordia, and McGill) with a Master's degree in Vocal Pedagogy, Abbott has pursued many careers, including being an editor and consumer journalist. Since 1982, she has been conducting the *Choral de Gesù* women's choir and has progressively honed her conducting skills by attending workshops led by many of Canada's foremost musicians. She has conducted the English Montreal School Board Chorale since 1990 and is artist-in-residence at FACE school in Montreal. Still, she finds time to lead workshops for the *Alliance des chorales du Québec* and the CAMMAC Music Centre and at locations in Canada, France, Belgium, and the United States.

What is Abbott's "wish list" for the ACCC's future? She hopes the National Youth Choir will become an annual gathering as it provides young singers with a great stepping-stone for beginning their professional careers. "These talented young people become tomorrow's choral and opera performers, conductors, music educators and church musicians," says Abbott. "Wouldn't it be wonderful if some corporate body with vision would support this project?" Like most art organizations, the ACCC runs on a very limited budget. Abbott hopes for enough funds to transform the Executive Directorship into a full-time position.

Abbott's passion for choral music is what gives her the energy to dedicate herself to the choral community. She says of Canadian choral conductors, "They help to nurture the bond between people in our communities - who come from all walks of life and all layers of society - on a weekly basis in a way that few other activities can. There is nothing like getting together with others to re-create a beautiful piece of art with the personal instrument that is the voice, and then sharing that art within the larger scope of a concert, worship service, or special event. It is very special and it happens in every single community in Canada". *

In recognition of Abbott's immense contribution towards developing choral excellence in this country, she was awarded the ACCC National Choral Award for Distinguished Service in 2002, and a similar award from the *Alliance des chorales de Québec* in 2004.

* From *In Their Own Words: Canadian Choral Conductors* by Holly Higgins Jonas, Dundurn Press, which received the ACCC National Choral Award in 2002.

Funding a Music Education

CHRISTOPHER BOURNE

Juggling work, school and practising is always a challenge, but for many music students making ends meet means taking on a part-time job. Musical talent and knowledge can come in handy. *LaScena Musicale* looks at various ways students can fund their musical training during the school year.

Paid gigs

Being paid to perform. This kind of work doubles as practice time, and students learn valuable lessons about a performer's life. Whether playing in community ensembles, for weddings or funerals, singing in local churches, joining groups, or busking in the metro, students earn their keep while keeping their chops in musical form. Plunging into this world will help establish a network of contacts for later careers.

Rates: vary.

Teaching

Giving private lessons to beginners, junior musicians and adults is another answer. Although voice and piano are more in demand, there are students for most instruments. One can advertise with posters and classified ads in local papers and LSM, or join a music school. Talented pianists can find work as accompanists for aspiring singers.

Rates: \$15 to \$30/hr.

Music support

Music performance and promotion require a virtual army of support staffing, from ushers to front-of-house staff, and library assistants. Start with the school's concert hall then check local venues.

Rates: \$8 to \$10/hr.

Scholarships and Bursaries

Many schools have entrance scholarship programs and some in-course awards for the top students. In addition, many community groups and organisations offer various assistance programs to encourage talented young musicians.

Tuition Rates Shopping

Tuition rates for music programs can vary greatly across Canada. Tuition rates do not necessarily reflect the quality of education. Research what each school has to offer, and how a higher tuition rate benefits you. Quebec schools in particular are renowned for their relatively low tuition rates for residents. Canadian students born outside Quebec should investigate ways of becoming a resident, which can be as simple as living in the province twelve months without going to school full time.

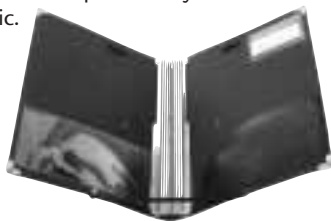
Teaching and Research Assistantships

Graduate students and undergraduate seniors often have the option of working for a professor as either a teaching or a research assistant. Teaching assistants help out with larger undergraduate classes, often grading assignments. Research assistants in music will rarely be involved in performance-related tasks, but rather ones involving music history, theory, or electronic music. ■

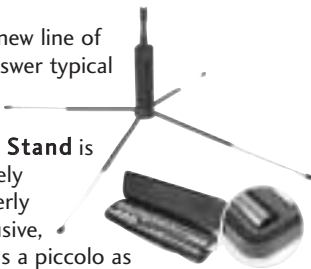
New in Instruments

CHRISTOPHER BOURNE

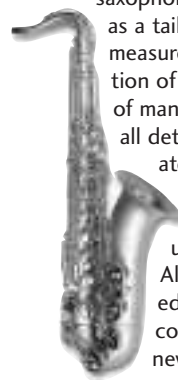
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The Borgani family have been crafting saxophones for over 130 years as a tailor creates made-to-measure clothes, careful selection of materials, high precision of manufacture, extreme care in all details. Their artisans create the instruments out of a variety of precious metals, each with unique tonal qualities. Although the '130' limited edition has sold out, this company promises many new innovations.



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A portrait of Guillermo Silva-Marin, a man with dark hair, smiling and sitting on a black stool. He is wearing a light-colored, ribbed sweater with horizontal stripes in a darker color across the chest and sleeves. The background is a solid, muted green. The title 'Guillermo Silva-Marin: Dreaming Big' is positioned in the upper right corner, with 'Dreaming Big' in a larger, blue font. Below the title is a short bio and the author's name. A decorative blue and white scrollwork border runs horizontally across the middle of the page, partially obscuring the man's torso.

Guillermo Silva-Marin: Dreaming Big

The dynamic stage director reflects on the past
and anticipates the future.

JOSEPH SO

Tenor, stage director, educator, administrator, impresario, fundraiser, theatre buff – Puerto Rican-born Guillermo Silva-Marin, or “Bill Silva” as he is known to friends and associates, admits to being a workaholic. Juggling the responsibilities of three companies, Opera in Concert, Toronto Operetta Theatre, and Summer Opera Lyric Theatre, Silva is the proverbial multitasker. When I arrived to interview him at the Edward Jackman Centre, the new home of OIC and TOT, it was Friday evening, when most people had already packed it in and left for the weekend. Not Bill – he was busy auditioning singers, in this case mezzo Michèle Bogdanowicz. His spacious office was nicely decorated with posters from previous productions, and a striking abstract canvas hung by the window. Family photos were displayed in one corner of a pleasantly cluttered desk, which was taken up by a huge computer, piles of paperwork, books, CDs and opera scores, including Bernstein’s *Candide*, which he was preparing for Opera McGill for the following Monday. Throughout the hour-long interview, our conversation was punctuated every once in a while by a loud ping from his computer, announcing the arrival of new e-mail. A self-professed night person, he was worried about having to get up early enough to catch the train to Montreal.

GSM: It leaves at 6:50 am! I am an owl – if you let me I can sleep until 10 or 11 in the morning. But I’ll get up *grudgingly* by 8, 8:30, and I don’t go to bed until 12 or 1 in the morning.

TMS: You run three companies, you stage direct and you teach. Where do you find the energy?

GSM: I am crazy! (Laughter) I am one of those who burn the candle at both ends. I am fascinated by the creative process of producing, of putting things together – that’s what keeps me going. I am motivated because I adore the art form.

TMS: How did you first get involved with Opera in Concert?

GSM: When Stuart Hamilton started OIC in 1974, he approached me to understudy the lead in *Hamlet* – I was a baritone then. As a silly young man, just graduated from the U of T opera school, I learned the aria and a couple of duets, thinking that I would *never* get to do the role. I remember being on tour with the COC performing *Faust* in Ottawa when I got the call from Stuart: “The baritone is sick, and if you don’t know this role I am going to burn your house down!” That was a week before the performance.

TMS: I guess you learned it really fast!

GSM: That’s how my career started in 1974. I was already a chorister. In those days you either joined the chorus, or packed your bags and went to Europe. Most went to Germany. I tried that route but I couldn’t hack it. I came back and sang in the COC chorus.

TMS: You took over as director of OIC in 1994?

GSM: Yes. Twenty years later, Stuart said, “Enough, I want somebody else to do it!” I was still having a fairly good career as a soloist, but I had already started with Toronto Operetta Theatre and was experimenting with staging. I was thrilled, of course – those were big shoes to fill.

TMS: Stuart has great things to say about you...

GSM: He is a friend and mentor, like he has been to so many singers. He was so generous with me, and I take great pride in trying to be like him. If I can do something of benefit to the artistic community, I would like to do that.

TMS: What is the mandate of OIC?

GSM: Two things: to present non standard operas and to promote the development of young Canadian singers by presenting them in leading roles. The vision has expanded a little in the range of repertoire, but I haven’t strayed too much. That’s what gives OIC value and validity. Thirty-two years ago, there was the COC and not much more. OIC fit nicely in the overall tapestry of the performing arts. Even though there is more competition now, OIC still has a place because there is no opera company in Canada that does 100% non-standard repertoire and features 100% Canadians.

TMS: What are the future challenges for OIC?

GSM: We need to be more responsive to the community; to step up to a new level. We are thinking of surtitles, and perhaps to do more pieces with orchestra. To the audiences who have resisted coming because it is unknown repertoire and unknown singers, we need to tell them to come and enjoy it as much as if they were going to *Butterfly*, *Bohème* or *Traviata*. And I’d love to experiment with the semi-staged format, and with the cast having memorized the material.

TMS: Have you done semi-staged productions before?

GSM: I think Stuart did *L’enfant et les Sortilèges* with a bit of staging, and he did *La voix humaine* – the Poulenc opera and the Cocteau play, as a double-bill, staged and memorized. There is repertoire that lends itself to experimentation and this is a new challenge for OIC. All this means money.

TMS: Speaking of money, Stuart told me he is amazed that you can do so much with so little money. Is finance a challenge?

GSM: Yes – for what company isn’t it? It is a major struggle to find funding and we are battling with that. There used to be a time when the government was more generous to the arts but that is no longer the case. We look to the private sector like the Metcalf Foundation and other private corporations. We get a little bit of help from Sun Life Financial. There is progress. I am an optimist and a romantic at heart. Sometimes you have to be realistic, but you also have to dream – close your eyes and say you’ve got to do it!

TMS: Is that how OIC got its new home, the Edward Jackman Centre?

GSM: We had trouble securing rehearsal space; we were nomads, basically. You have to provide artists with a space that is clean, safe, and conducive to the creative process. It got to a point that too many of our venues were cancelled at the last minute. One of the locations was a Presbyterian Church. We had been rehearsing in the banquet hall at the back of the church, or in the sanctuary downstairs. But in a house of God, if God needs the space, you are out on the street! One day I wandered up to this building (that belongs to the church) I didn’t know existed. There were all these little dusty, ugly rooms, but the space was empty. I called the church and found out they were looking for a tenant, but we couldn’t afford their offer. I went to the board and did my pushing and grunting and begging, saying we’ve got to do this for the artists and for our own growth. That’s how it got done. We raised \$30,000 to renovate the space, in exchange for a 10-year-lease from the church for very little.

TMS: Would you say you are a big dreamer?

GSM: Yeah... you have to dream. You have to dream but also be somewhat realistic, and pull back until you can dream some more.

THIS PAGE: Silva-Marin as
Bepe in *I Pagliani*
OPPOSITE LEFT: Silva-Marin as
Dandini in *La Cenerentola*
OPPOSITE RIGHT: Silva-Marin teaching
students early in his career



TMS: How does Toronto Operetta Theatre fit into all this? It has a very special niche, doesn't it?

GSM: There is no other company like TOT in Canada. It sort of fell into my lap and I wasn't looking for it. In 1986-7, an organization produced *Land of Smiles*, and it was such a success with the audience that they felt they needed to establish a company. They asked me to take it on. I knew that by taking on administration, it would have an impact on my career as a performer. But I was concerned that a lot of my colleagues weren't getting work, and they weren't getting stage experience to develop artistically. I firmly believe you learn as you go; you've got to get onstage. With TOT I could provide the artistic community with another option – that's what motivated me.

TMS: As if that wasn't enough, you also have Summer Opera Lyric Theatre.

GSM: That also started in the late 80s. There are lots of opera singers who do nothing in the summer, so it is a good time to recharge and to look at new things in terms of interpretation. We don't teach voice – it is not a program to help singers sing, but to help singers find ways to better conceive and interpret their roles through the structure of a workshop. Various people, like Lorna Macdonald, Dixie Ross Neill, Stuart Hamilton, give master classes. I also have people like Marshall Pynkoski, who has a very special approach to acting that's grounded in the baroque style. In 2005, there are lots of demands on the performer. In Mozart's time, they were performing in Italian and it would be their natural language. Today, artists have to know baroque, classical, romantic, *verismo*, and contemporary styles. As a performer myself, I can sympathize and understand the challenges of young singers today.

TMS: What advice would you give to these aspiring professionals?

GSM: They have to be absolutely prepared vocally. For some it may take five or ten years; for others it might just be a couple of years. Some just get up, open their mouths and sing, and you ask, "how is this monster born?!" (laughs) Once that is done, they need to prepare dramatically. Today you have directors who want Mimi to look consumptive and Mignon to look 15. If you are not 15, you need to use your body and your technique to portray it, because stage directors and even conductors demand it.

TMS: I find, generally speaking, singers don't feel comfortable with their bodies.

GSM: That's because while actors spend most of their time dealing with their bodies, singers spend most of their time dealing with the two little muscles (in their throat). Looking the part and casting by type have become a problem for many. I tell singers that they have to have a realistic sense of where they fit in the art form. Of course they want to be able to do Puccini, Wagner, Handel, Mozart – sometimes that's impossible – not everybody can be a Renée Fleming! She is one of those not afraid of the range that is there. Not everybody is born like a Maria Callas or a Pavarotti; these personalities are bigger than life. Let's face it, the majority of us belong to the general population of artists who earn a living singing and have satisfying careers (without being bigger than life).

TMS: Tell me how you came to be involved with Opera McGill.

GSM: In 1999, because of my involvement with training singers and through my association with Bill and Dixie Ross Neill, I was called to teach at McGill. We did a production of *L'enfant* in an experimental space – a

converted swimming pool in a high school! Since then, I have staged *Semele*, *L'Elisir d'amore*, and *Nozze di Figaro* for them. In *Nozze*, I had Jonathan Carl, Frédérique Vezina, and Joshua Hopkins. My last full production there was *Idomeneo*, featuring some phenomenal singers. I had Jessica



Muirhead as Ilia – she is now doing Pamina at the Volksoper. McGill has produced marvelous singers and it has been a privilege to work there.

TMS: Do you ever teach voice?

GSM: I've been curious about it, but I am so busy that if I take on any more, I'm just going to die! (hearty laugh) I tell everybody that I don't want a long-suffering illness. If I had my choice I would like to go like Leonard Warren: onstage. Very dramatic! Of course heaven knows what the future has in store. If I had my wish, I would just work and work and work with singers and to help them, and be involved in the whole aspect of the creative process. ■

Opera in Concert presents *Samson et Dalilah* by Camille Saint-Saëns, Sunday, December 4, 2005, and *La Griselda* by Antonio Vivaldi, on Sunday, January 29, 2006. Performances at 2:30 pm at the Jane Mallet Theatre, St Lawrence Centre. Tickets: Visit box office or call 416-366-7723 or 1-800-708-6754, or buy online at box office hours (noon to 6 pm, Monday - Saturday).

Toronto Operetta Theatre presents *Wiener Blut* by Johann Strauss, on December 27, 28, 30, and 31, 2005, and January 4, 6, 7, and 8, 2006, at the Jane Mallet Theatre, St Lawrence Centre. Evening performances at 8 PM, matinees at 2 pm. Tickets: call above phone numbers or buy online at www.torontooperetta.com



Favourite Singers of all time - Oralia Dominguez, Maria Callas, Carlo Bergonzi, Alfredo Kraus and Lois Marshall

Favourite Neglected composer - Rameau

Favourite work - Verdi's *Falstaff*

Currently reading - Lee Strasberg's *A Dream of Passion*

Current Cell phone Ring tone - Horror! I am repelled by their sounds - any of them.

* Choices subject to change.

My Baritone-Tenor Transition

BY GUILLERMO SILVA-MARIN

My voice was classified as a lyric baritone early in my professional career, with wide range and good agility. Two of my early successes were the role of Figaro in Rossini's *Barber of Seville* and the baritone solos in Orff's *Carmina Burana*, considered borderline roles in the baritone repertoire.

In the late 1970s I participated in the Bruce Yarnell Voice Competition (exclusively for baritones and basses) in New York City. Two of the three judges recommended to me that I should check out the tenor option. I was shocked and resisted their assessment but I went ahead and consulted with Stuart Hamilton, Lotfi Mansouri (COC) and others in the business. The consensus was that I should try. I found excellent assistance with Daniel Ferro in New York and tenor Carlo Bergonzi in Italy. By 1981 I made my tenor debut as Carlo in *Linda di Chamounix* for OIC and the rest is left to history – New York City Opera, the Met and continued work with COC.

There are a significant precedent-setting number of voice changes from baritone, and mezzos for that matter – Carlo Bergonzi, Plácido Domingo, Shirley Verrett, Grace Bumbry, to name a few – that support these transitions. Young singers should not be afraid as long as there is clear and solid support on which to base consideration.

A change from baritone to tenor can be a daunting endeavour especially if it happens during the course of a professional career, but it need not be as traumatic as it seems. Voice is generally defined by colour or timbre rather than by range. Of course singing the "money" notes is always a plus when advancing to the international arena but first of all, any singer, regardless of where they find themselves classified, must deal with issues of vocal identity. This is never so clear during the early stages of development. In my case, I was always able to sing high notes. Having a bright timbre and an open approach to singing in the upper register facilitated a smooth switch to the tenor repertoire.

My biggest challenge was not so much technical as psychological. Singing high occasionally is quite different from singing high perpetually. It requires not only an ability to stay up in the stratosphere but also a willingness to do so. I must admit that my willingness to change from baritone to tenor was not as strong in the beginning of the process as it was later on. Once I faced the reality of my resistance and let go of my attachment to the baritone repertoire that was dear to me, it was that much easier to succeed as a tenor.

A lot of young singers will find themselves in the predicament of divergent opinions as to who and what they are. Singers should remain open to advice and respect those who are trustworthy and savvy. Ultimately, singers must take ownership of their instruments and be happy with their personal choice, whatever it may be. ■

HIGHER MUSIC EDUCATION

Higher Music Education Guide 2005

To help students find information on music education, the edition of this month's *The Music Scene* offers a guide to the major educational institutions in Canada. An information coupon is available on page 26. Happy searching!

NOVA SCOTIA



**DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC,
DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY**
Room 514, 6101 University Ave
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3H 4R2
Phone: (902) 494-2418
Fax: (902) 494-2801
music@dal.ca
http://music.dal.ca

Programs offered

B. Mus.: Concentrations in Performance, Composition, History and Literature, Contemporary Musics, Instruction, & Self-Directed.

BA & B.Sc. combined honours, BA concentration in music, BA music & theatre.

All orchestral instruments, piano, voice, saxophone, and guitar.

Facilities

The Dalhousie Arts Centre's facilities include the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium, Sir James Dunn Theatre, teaching studios and classrooms, practice studios, recording studio, and computer lab.

Teachers

12 full-time, 26 part-time

Students

125 full-time, 5-10 part-time

Tuition fees

Domestic: \$8,292 / year
International: \$13,932

Description

Experience the opportunities of a large campus with the personalized benefits of a small department. Located in vibrant Halifax, NS, the Dalhousie Music Department offers many program options and a high level of training from nationally and internationally known faculty members. Many performance opportunities and masterclasses. Foundation preparatory classes and many music electives also offered.

QUEBEC



**FACULTÉ DE MUSIQUE DE
L'UNIVERSITÉ LAVAL**
Pavillon Louis-Jacques-Casault
Québec, Québec G1K 7P4
Téléphone : (418) 656-7061
Télécopieur : (418) 656-7365
mus@mus.ulaval.ca
www.mus.ulaval.ca/

Programmes offerts

Baccalauréat en éducation musicale; Baccalauréat en musique avec mention, selon le cas, en composition, en histoire, en interprétation classique et en interprétation jazz et musique populaire; Certificat en culture musicale.

Maîtrise en composition, didactique instrumentale, éducation musicale, interprétation et musicologie. Doctorat (Ph.D.) en éducation musicale et musicologie. Microprogrammes

Installations

Deux salles de concert (240 et 680 places)
Laboratoire d'informatique musicale

Studio de musique électroacoustique
Studio de musique ancienne
47 studios d'enseignement
117 studios de travail avec piano,
3 orgues, 6 clavecins
Bibliothèque de musique

Professeurs

24 à temps plein
120 à temps partiel

Étudiants

280 à temps plein
150 à temps partiel

Frais de scolarité

Étudiant canadien: entre 1 048 \$ et 2 539 \$ par session (15 crédits), selon le cycle d'étude et le lieu de résidence

Étudiant étranger: entre 5 248 \$ et 5 833 \$ par session (15 crédits), selon le cycle et le domaine d'étude

Description

Établissement renommé dans les domaines de l'éducation musicale, la musicologie, l'interprétation (classique, jazz et musique populaire), la didactique instrumentale et la composition. Instruments : bois et cuivres, chant, cordes, guitare, luth, orgue, percussion et piano. Nombreuses activités artistiques présentées chaque année : concerts, concours, conférences, cours de maître, etc.

La Scena Musicale Online

La référence en musique classique

- Actualités • Articles • Communiqués • Critiques de CD
- Entrevues • Le calendrier canadien de musique classique

The reference to Classical music

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- The Canadian Classical music calendar



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WWW.SCENA.ORG



SCHULICH SCHOOL OF MUSIC OF MCGILL UNIVERSITY

555 Sherbrooke W.
Montreal, Quebec H3A 1E3
Phone: (514) 398-4535
Fax: (514) 398-8061
www.mcgill.ca/music

Programs offered

B.Mus., B.A.
Licentiate, Artist Diploma
M. Mus., M.A.
D. Mus., Ph.D.
Undergraduate and Graduate programs in Performance, Orchestral Training, Opera, Jazz, Early Music, Composition, Musicology, Education, Technology, Theory, Sound Recording.

Facilities

3 concert halls (600/200/177 seats)
100-seat lecture hall
Recording studios
Digital Composition Studio
Music Technology Labs

100 practice rooms
Marvin Duchow Music Library
Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in Music Media and Technology

Teachers

50 full-time, 150 part-time

Students

840
600 undergraduate
240 graduate

Tuition fees

Quebec students: \$1,700
Non-Quebec students: \$4,500
International students: \$12,500

Description

Recently, an unprecedented philanthropic gift resulted in the naming of the Faculty of Music to the Schulich

School of Music of McGill University. This 20 million dollar gift will create approximately 40 Schulich scholars annually, as well as two endowed chairs, and additional scholarship and facilities support. Canada's largest university-level music school combines professional training with outstanding undergraduate and graduate education. Building on a strong base of studio and classroom teaching, McGill is renowned for its ensemble programs and for its award-winning creative and research work in humanities-based and scientific-technical study of music.



FACULTY OF MUSIC UNIVERSITÉ DE MONTRÉAL

P.O. Box 6128, succursale Centre-ville
Montréal, Québec H3C 3J7
Telephone: (514) 343-6427
Fax: (514) 343-5727
lise.bedard@umontreal.ca
suzanne.joncas@umontreal.ca
www.musique.umontreal.ca

Programs offered

Bachelor's degree: General, Musicology, Performance (classical, jazz), Composition, Writing

Master's degree: Musicology, Ethnomusicology, Performance, Composition, Conducting

Diplôme d'études supérieures spécialisées (specialized graduate diploma) in Performance (classical, jazz), Orchestral Repertory

Doctorate: Musicology, Ethnomusicology, Performance, Composition, Conducting

Facilities

Salle Claude-Champagne (1000-seat concert hall), two other concert halls, electroacoustic and multitrack composition studios

Faculty

142 (professors and instructors)

Students

Undergraduate: 424
Graduate: 261

Tuition

(per full-time semester, bachelor's)
Quebec residents: \$835
Canadians from outside Quebec: \$2,326
Foreign: \$5,620

Description

Welcomes the most graduate students of all music faculties in Canada. Partners with foreign institutions for exchange programs. Scholarships available at all levels. Substantial research on musicology, popular music, performance and creation, including through the Laboratoire de recherche sur les musiques du monde (ethnomusicology) and the Observatoire international de la création musicale (XXth century music).



SCHOOL OF MUSIC, UNIVERSITY OF SHERBROOKE

2500 University Blvd.
Sherbrooke, Quebec J1K 2R1
Telephone : (819) 821-8040
FAX: (819) 821-7635
etudes.musique@USherbrooke.ca
<http://www.usherbrooke.ca/musique>

Programs offered

B. Mus. in Performance (Classical and Jazz), Music and Culture, Music Education, and Multimedia)
Certificate in Musical Culture
Artist Diploma in Performance and in Choral Conducting

Facilities

University of Sherbrooke Campus: Auditorium Serge-Garant (85 seats), music library, four classrooms including a percussion studio and a jazz combo studio, one computer lab, one electronic piano studio, and individual practice, chamber music, and instrumental instruction studios. Certain concerts take place in the

Cultural Centre of the University of Sherbrooke (1900 seats).
Centre de Longueuil: large classroom and document center.

Faculty

5 full time, 30 part time

Students

94 full time, 67 part time

Tuition

1 year, 30 credits: approx. \$2,500

Description

Ever vigilant of new developments in the world of musical study, the University of Sherbrooke's School of Music is renowned for its vitality and for the high quality of its programs. The five options available to Bachelor

of Music students all aim to meet the demands of the professional sphere while producing versatile and self-sufficient musicians; witness the high number of the school's graduates currently working in the musical field. The Artist Diploma in Music Performance allows students to develop their autonomous skills while producing diversified and complete artistic portfolios. The program includes concert performance in venues across the region. Several specializations are possible.



MUSIC DEPARTMENT of CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

Faculty of Fine Arts
Music Department - Refectory Building
7141 Sherbrooke West
Montreal, Quebec H4B 1R6
Phone: (514) 848-2424 ext. 4705
FAX: (514) 848-2808
music@concordia.ca
music.concordia.ca

Undergraduate Programs

Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA)
BFA in Electroacoustic Studies
BFA in Integrative Music Studies
Specialization in Jazz Studies
Specialization in Music Performance Studies
Specialization in Music Composition
Minor in Electroacoustic Studies
Minor in Music

Graduate Program

Diploma in Advanced Music Performance Studies

Facilities:

7 Electroacoustic Studios

Digital 16-track Recording Studio
Oscar Peterson Concert Hall - 600 seats

Teachers

10 full-time
53 part-time

Students

176 full-time
110 part-time
10 graduate

Tuition fees

1 academic year, full-time:
Canadian - QC Resident: \$2,637.60
Canadian - Non-QC Resident: \$4,827.60

Description

Concordia's Music Department provides a rich environment for students from diverse backgrounds to perform, compose and improvise in different languages including jazz, classical, and electroacoustics. The focus on contemporary music is informed by a diversity of historical styles and genres studied through analysis, history, and performance. The vibrant Faculty of Fine Arts provides excellent opportunities for collaborations.



MARIANOPOLIS COLLEGE

3880, Côte-des-Neiges
Montreal, Quebec H3H 1W1
Phone: (514) 931-8792
Fax: (514) 931-8790
www.marianopolis.edu

Programs offered

DEC in music (2-year pre-university program)
Double DEC's in Music and Science; Music and Social Science; Music and Creative Arts, Literature and Languages
(3-year pre-university programs)

Facilities

Recital hall with two grand pianos
Music computer lab
Digital sound recording equipment
Practice rooms
Access to McGill University Faculty of Music library and practice rooms

Teachers

3 full-time
35 part-time

Students

35 full-time

Tuition fees

1 academic year, full-time:
\$3,080
International students:
\$4,714 additional

Description

Building on a tradition of excellence at Marianopolis, music students benefit from the program's association with the Faculty of Music at McGill. The size of the department allows for individual attention from teachers and for a warm personal atmosphere. All music students take private lessons with instructors at McGill University. Students also participate in the University orchestra, choirs, wind symphony and other large and small ensembles.

ONTARIO



Department of Music University of Ottawa

50 University Street, Room103
Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5
Phone: 613-562-5733
Fax: 613-562-5140
musique@uottawa.ca
www.music.uottawa.ca
www.musique.uottawa.ca

Programs offered: Undergraduate programs include the Baccalaureate of Music and the Baccalaureate of Arts honours and concentration, which can be combined with a concentration in arts administration, and a certificate in piano pedagogy. The programs include options in performance, music education, piano pedagogy, composition, theory and musicology. Graduate programs include the Master of Music, Master of Arts and two new Graduate Certificates in Orchestral Studies and Piano Pedagogy Research.

Performance venues: Freiman Recital Hall and Tabaret Hall

Rehearsal studios: two large rehearsal halls and dozens of practice studios

Technology & research: the newly opened 1.3 million dollar Piano Pedagogy Research Laboratory, electronic music studio, music and computers lab, and the latest recording technology

Library: Isobel Firestone Music Resource Centre

Nb of faculty (full-time): 19

Nb of faculty (part-time): 48

Nb of full-time students: 247

Nb of part-time students: 48

Tuition fees (1 academic year, full-time): \$4,603.89 (undergraduate); \$4,147.98 (graduate)

Our faculty is constituted of active performers on the national and international scene and scholars at the top of their fields. Small classes, in English and French, create an

intimate atmosphere, and our facilities are the envy of many institutions. Performance opportunities for students abound, both within the department (orchestra, concert wind ensemble, opera, choirs and many other ensembles) and in the greater community, thanks to close ties with arts organizations such as the Ottawa Symphony Orchestra and Opera Lyra Ottawa. With a campus located in the heart of the national capital, our students find it easy to enjoy the bilingual and multicultural milieu of the region and the rich cultural life of Ottawa, home of the world's largest Chamber Music Festival.



DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

4700 Keele St.
Toronto, Ontario M3J 1P3
Phone: (416) 736-5186
Fax: (416) 736-5321
musicprg@yorku.ca
www.yorku.ca/finearts/music

Undergraduate Programs

BFA Honours in Music (performance, composition)
BA Major, Minor and Honours in Music (history, theory)

Graduate Programs

MA in Musicology; Ethnomusicology; Composition; Jazz Studies; Popular Music Studies
PhD in Ethnomusicology/Musicology; Jazz Studies; Popular Music Studies
Combined MBA/MA in Music

Faculty

102: 23 full-time, 88 part-time.

Facilities

New Music Department building in 2006 with specialized instruction, rehearsal and performance facilities.

Students

411 undergraduate, 55 graduate

Tuition fees

(1 academic year, full-time):
Undergraduate - \$4,180 (domestic)
Graduate - \$4,860 (domestic)

Description

Based in Canada's largest Faculty of Fine Arts, York's Music Department offers comprehensive programs integrating intensive studio training and academic studies across a wide range of musical cultures and traditions. Streams of study combine courses in music history and theory, performance, contemporary technologies, musicianship, composition and arranging, ethnomusicology and

music pedagogy. Studio options include instrumental and vocal performance in western classical music, jazz, contemporary repertoire, world music, improvisation, electro-acoustic, digital and popular music. The department showcases student and faculty talent in more than 125 public concerts each year. Performances include solo recitals, chamber ensembles, jazz workshops, more than a dozen different world music ensembles, the York University symphony orchestra, concert choir, women's choir and world music chorus, electronic orchestra, wind symphony and four jazz choirs.



FACULTY OF MUSIC, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Edward Johnson Building
80 Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario M5S 2C5
Phone: (416) 978-3741
Fax: (416) 946-3353
undergrad.music@utoronto.ca
www.music.utoronto.ca

Undergraduate Programs

BMus - Performance (Classical & Jazz), Composition, Education, History & Theory
Artist Diploma
Diploma in Operatic Performance
Advanced Certificate in Performance

Graduate Programs

Master of Music - Performance (Classical, Jazz & Opera), Composition, & Education
Master of Arts - History & Theory
Doctor of Music - Composition, History & Theory
Doctor of Philosophy - Education, History & Theory

Facilities

Walter Hall (seats 425), MacMillan

Theatre (seats 815), Electroacoustic and Recording studios
Keyboard labs, extensive practice rooms, one of Canada's largest and most complete libraries in North America.

Teachers

Full Time - 45, Part Time - 150

Students

550

Tuition fees

Undergraduate Full Year (Sept. - May)
\$5,149.86 - Domestic
\$14,124.71 - International

Description

The Faculty of Music has a great tradition and reputation as one of the finest institutions in North America for

music studies. Each year we attract outstanding young musicians from across Canada and around the world. As part of the University of Toronto, our students have access to all of the services, diversity, and intellectual opportunities of the largest research university in Canada. Many of our graduates are now successful performers, educators, composers... A large part of that success comes from the complete musical education that the Faculty of Music provides. The Faculty of Music ensures that our students receive the finest instruction for musical excellence within a supportive community environment.

BRITISH COLUMBIA



SCHOOL OF MUSIC, UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

6361 Memorial Road
Vancouver, British Columbia V6T 1Z2
Phone: (604) 822-3113
Fax: (604) 822-4884
miriamn@interchange.ubc.ca
www.music.ubc.ca

Programs offered

B.Mus. in Composition, Opera, Voice, Guitar, Harpsichord, Music Scholarship, Orchestral Instruments, Organ, Piano and General Studies.
B.A. Major, Minor and Honours in Music

Graduate Programs

M. Mus. in Composition, Piano, Orchestral Instruments, Organ, Harpsichord, Guitar, Opera, Voice, and Choral Conducting.
M.A. in Musicology, Music Theory, and Ethnomusicology
D.M.A. in Composition, Piano, Voice and Orchestral Instruments
Ph.D. in Musicology (concentrations:

Historical Musicology,
Ethnomusicology, Music Theory)
Diploma in Collaborative Piano Studies
Diploma in Music Performance

Facilities

Recital Hall (289 seats)
The Chan Centre for the Performing Arts (1200 seats)
Gessler Hall (80 seats)
Practice studios
Computer music studio
Music library
Multimedia centre

Teachers

29 full-time, 60 part-time

Students

260 undergraduate, 100 graduate

Tuition fees

B. Mus. (30 credits) \$4,092
(Canadian, landed immigrants)
B. Mus. (30 credits) \$16,634 (non-Canadians, visa students)

Description

Situated within a large university with extensive research and learning resources on a campus near ocean and mountains, the UBC School of Music offers you an inspiring setting, many program options, and a high level of training from dedicated and internationally respected faculty members plus masterclasses and workshops from renowned guest artists, composers and scholars.



VICTORIA CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC

900 Johnson Street
Victoria, British Columbia V8V 3N4
Phone: (250) 386-5311
Fax: (250) 386-6602
info@vcm.bc.ca
www.vcm.bc.ca

Programs offered

Post-secondary Foundation Year (1 year) and Diploma in Music (2 years): majors in Piano, Collaborative Piano, Violin, Viola, Cello, Classical Guitar, Flute, Voice, Composition, Jazz Studies.
Teacher Training: majors in Piano, Violin, Viola, Cello, Classical Guitar, Flute, Voice.

Summer Vocal Academy and Summer String Academy: master classes with renowned guest artists, individual instruction, and performance opportunities.

Summer Jazz Workshop: big band and combo experience with established jazz artists.

Self-directed studies: instruction at all levels in piano, voice, orchestral instruments, theory, composition.
Ensembles, chamber music, Opera Studio, master classes.

Facilities

Alix Goolden Performance Hall (800 seats)
Robin and Winifred Wood Recital Hall (100 seats)
Teaching and practice studios, ensemble rehearsal rooms, Music Library

Faculty

162

Students

50 full-time, 2000 part-time

Tuition fees

Foundation Year: \$4,000 (Domestic) \$9,600 (International).
Diploma in Music: \$5,000 (Domestic) \$12,000 (International).
Teacher Training: \$2,000 plus fees for Theory and individual instruction.
Open Studio \$900

Fees may change, please consult website

Description

The Victoria Conservatory of Music provides professional music education and outstanding performance venues in a beautiful century-old heritage building. Students benefit from small classes, considerable one-on-one instruction, and performance opportunities.

Arts and Culture Event Management

Graduate Diploma in Administration (DIA)
Arts Administration option

Graduate Certificate in Event Management
and Fundraising

<http://www.johnmolson.concordia.ca/diadsa>

INFORMATION SESSIONS

Thursday 5:30 - 6:30 pm
January 19 or by appointment
1550 de Maisonneuve Blvd. W.
Room GM 403-2 - 4th floor
Guy-Concordia

John Molson
School of Business
Concordia University

PROGRAM FEATURES
Part-time or full-time study
Internship in the diploma
Transfer credits to the MBA program

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McGill Music renamed Schulich School of Music

On September 30th, McGill University's Faculty of Music officially opened a new building and at the same time was renamed the Schulich School of Music for businessman and philanthropist Seymour Schulich. The new building designed by architect Gilles Saucier houses a state-of-the-art recording rehearsal facility, the music library and a 200 seat recital hall. Forty percent of Mr. Schulich's \$20 million donation was applied to financing the Tanna Schulich recital hall, with the remaining 60% being invested to annually generate \$400,000 for bursaries and scholarships. The Schulich School of Music hopes to rival none less than New York's Juilliard. **CB**



Schulich School of Music

Donation levels playing field at Yale Music School

The Yale School of Music has recently announced it will be removing the financial burden of tuition on its undergraduate and graduate students effective September 2006. This announcement came in response to a \$100-million (U.S.) donation from an anonymous source, which effectively eliminated the university's financial need to continue to collect the current \$23,750 (U.S.) per year in tuition from its students. "It will be an important wake-up call to all schools that graduate students, by nature, are poor and need help," said Richard Killmer, an oboe

Education Notes

professor at the University of Rochester's Eastman School of Music: "When a precedent is set by a major school of music, others are going to have to look at the possibility and re-evaluate their fundraising efforts to go this way." **MV**

Fine Arts Faculty receives \$1.2 Million Donation

University of Calgary alumnus John Lefebvre has donated \$1.2 million to the Fine Arts Faculty at the U of C. Lefebvre studied law at the U of C in the late 1970s. During that time he was active in the music department. He believes those musical experiences were crucial to his success in his law studies. He made this gift because, he says, "Art is a way for people to step up and express themselves as human beings. Every time you do that, it makes you a better person. And every time you hear or see the expression of somebody else, it touches you, and you become a better person. Cultured people are compassionate people."

The donation will be used to establish four new entrance scholarships for Fine Arts students, one each in music, drama, dance and art. It will also fund the John Peter Lee Roberts Distinguished Professorship in Fine Arts, the Joyce and Quentin Doolittle Fine Arts Studio, and special projects. **KH**

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Remembering

BY JOSEPH SO

Maureen

Left: publicity headshot
Upper right: Maureen Forrester
singing with Ruth Morawetz
at the piano
Bottom: Maureen Forrester and
Quebec Premier Jean Charest in
April 2004

Maureen Forrester, one of the greatest contraltos in the world, turned 75 last July. I remember her birthday well, as it was around that time five years ago that I wrote a tribute to her, on the occasion of her receiving the first Opera Canada (Creative Artist) Award. I vividly recall that interview, at a residence for retired artists in downtown Toronto on a sunny summer morning. Then 70 years old, she felt she still had a lot to give. My most vivid memory of that conversation was when she smilingly quipped, "I tell people that the day they put me in a box, I'd probably open the door and say, 'Hey wait a minute, here's another song!'"

Five years is a long time in Maureen Forrester's life. Although the public was unaware at the time, people in the "industry" essentially knew that she had been ill for some time. I think that interview might have been the last one she gave formally. The media have always been protective of her and her privacy. Even today, most of us prefer to remember her for the way she was – a great artist and a warm human being, with a quick wit, easy smile and a hearty laugh. It seems so strange that she should be a victim of the dreaded disease of dementia. I had not seen her since April 2004, at a ceremony at which Quebec premier Jean Charest bestowed on Maureen the Order of Quebec. Although she didn't speak a word, it was almost vintage Maureen that afternoon – all decked out in full regalia and looking like a million dollars.

I have learned that in the intervening 18 months, her health has seriously deteriorated. Like other dementia sufferers, her illness has robbed her of the most precious thing in life. Recently, a friend, pianist Ruth Morawetz, and I went to see her at a long-term care facility where she resides. On the door to her room is the cover of her 1956 New York Town Hall debut recital program, with a beautiful picture of the young singer. It was a warm and sunny afternoon, so we decided to push her wheelchair down to the lovely garden courtyard. It is always difficult to gauge one's level of awareness, but I felt an inexplicable urge to "reach" her. We sat face to face, making eye contact, and I held her hand. I told her how much I loved her singing, how much her voice had meant to me and to countless others over the years. We sat mostly in silence amidst the flowers and the gentle breezes. "You sweet man – warm..." she said out of the blue, before remaining silent again for the rest of my visit. I was stunned by her words. It was a bittersweet moment.

It seems trite to say it: flesh decays but art lives on. For those of us who enjoyed the artistry of Maureen Forrester, we are fortunate to have it preserved in recordings, films, and, in her autobiography *Out of Character* – words. In a career that lasted half a century, her recorded legacy is huge, some elements dating back to the earliest days. She made her professional debut in Montreal in 1951, in Elgar's *The Music Makers*, and her opera debut as a

sewing girl in Charpentier's *Louise* in 1953. Good things happened shortly after: singing in Beethoven's 9th *Symphony* in Montreal under Otto Klemperer, *Messiah* in Toronto, her European debut in Paris in 1955 and her New York debut in 1956. A defining moment came in February, 1957, when the great Bruno Walter chose her as the soloist in Mahler's *Second Symphony*, in performances that marked Walter's farewell. In her long career, Forrester sang for many other great conductors including Barbirolli, Beecham, Bernstein, Karajan, Krips, Reiner, and Stokowski, but her collaboration with Walter had the greatest impact on her career. Under his tutelage, Forrester became one of the most celebrated Mahler interpreters of our time. Her "Abschied" from *Das Lied von der Erde* is supremely moving. So it is too bad that for contractual reasons, Forrester – an RCA artist at the time – was unable to record it with Walter for Columbia. Fortunately, a live recording of Walter's very last *Das Lied* with Forrester and Richard Lewis, taped in Carnegie Hall in 1960, is available on CD (Music & Arts 4206).

In its prime, the Forrester voice is best described as a force of nature – a big sound that comes from deep within and envelops the listener with its smooth, opulent, dark timbre, in a range that descends from mezzo-soprano highs to the most resonant of contralto lows, all employed with intelligence and musicianship. Besides being a superb Mahlerian, Forrester was a fine exponent of the music of the great masters spanning three centuries, from Bach and Handel to Beethoven, Brahms, Schubert, Schumann, Strauss, Wagner, Rachmaninoff, and 20th century composers. Despite her international fame – in her heyday she gave 120 performances a year on five continents – she remained quintessentially Canadian, averaging 30 performances a year in her home country. She toured China and Japan as a representative of Canada on several occasions. Many Canadian composers like Srul Irving Glick, Oskar Morawetz, and R. Murray Schafer, wrote music especially for her.

Primarily a concert artist, the bulk of Forrester's operatic performances happened fairly late in her career. Still, she was a noted Brangaene (captured on video with Jon Vickers and Roberta Knie from Montreal), Dame Quickly, Erda, Ulrica, Madame Flora, the Old Countess in *Pique Dame*, Herodias, Klytemnestra, and the Old Prioress in *Dialogues of the Carmelites*. Her searing portrayal of Madame de Croissy in her death throes in a Canadian Opera Company production of the Poulenc opera is unforgettable. Despite possessing histrionic skills to wring the last tears from an audience, Forrester was a happy person in public. Her entrance into a room was announced with her resonant speaking voice, her infectious, hearty laugh followed by her smiling face. "I never had any problems with conductors. They like me because I show up on time, know my part, and I am cheerful."

It is doubtful that any Canadian classical singer is as decorated as Maureen Forrester. The recipient of 30 honorary degrees, she was named Companion of the Order of Canada (1967), was Chancellor of Wilfrid Laurier University (1986-90), and served as chair of the Canada



PHOTO: JOSEPH SO

Council (1983-88). By the 1990s, she had scaled back her international activities, but continued to be active on the concert stage. In the mid 90s, composer-pianist David Warrack wrote *Interpretations of a Life*, a collection of bittersweet songs based on material from her life and career. The two took it on tour across Canada and the songs are recorded on CD. As her illness advanced, she performed only occasionally. To the best of my knowledge, her final public performance was a full-length benefit concert for the Toronto Sinfonietta in June, 2001. With the help of friends and family, she continued to appear as guest at various public functions and galas.

Research tells us that long-term memory is the last to go – Maureen continues to respond to the sound of music. I recall a concert given by soprano Mirela Tafaj in a private home in Maureen's presence about three years ago. She not only came alive and responded vividly to the singing, but shared the finer points of vocal production, her tricks of the trade as it were, with the singer after the concert. Later she sat by the piano to join in a round of familiar songs. Once again, she was in her element. This is how I would like to remember Maureen Forrester. ■



PHOTO: JOSEPH SO

HUMANITY AND COMPLEXITY

Twilight for our Times

BY MISHA ASTER

Lohengrin's a feeble piece of drama." Tim Albery is not one to pull his punches. A tall string-bean of a man with a devilishly quick wit and a veritable encyclopedia of knowledge swirling behind narrow, attentive eyes, the British-Canadian stage director is unfazed by the scale of the task before him. A few weeks prior to commencing rehearsals for the Canadian Opera Company's new production of Richard Wagner's epic *Götterdämmerung*, Albery, the only member of the COC's Ring Team to have already done a Ring Cycle reviews his past encounters with the German composer: "I saw Chereau's *Ring* (Bayreuth, 1976) on television, then I saw Richard Jones's cycle at Covent Garden in the mid-1990s. I did *Lohengrin* at ENO, but that experience just gave me a greater appreciation for the *Ring*. One can see how Wagner's drama developed from a rather rudimentary tussle between light and dark (*Lohengrin*) into something much more subtle and complex."

In *Götterdämmerung*, the Gods have grown weak over the preceding episodes, and the focus now shifts to a world inhabited almost exclusively by humans. At the end of *Siegfried*, the hero of the title discovers and weds Brünnhilde, Wotan's disgraced Walküre daughter, crowning their love with the cursed Nibelung ring. As *Götterdämmerung* begins, Siegfried is feeling restless, and Brünnhilde is experiencing disquieting premonitions. Vowing eternal faithful-

ness, the couple prepares to part. "It is a rather odd situation really," Albery describes, "with Brünnhilde playing both wife and mother roles, sending Siegfried out into the world saying, 'Well then, I've taught you everything, now off you go and be good.'"

Siegfried rides down the Rhine to the kingdom ruled by Gunther, his sister Gutrune (the Gibichungs) and their half-brother Hagen. Hagen is the human son of Wotan's arch-nemesis, Alberich, and himself has designs on the fabled ring. Hagen instigates a plot to destroy Siegfried and Brünnhilde, betrothing each to his ineffectual half-siblings with the aid of a potion. "The central problem of *Götterdämmerung* is really quite simple: Siegfried forgets who he is married to," Albery wryly remarks. "The drink, however, is really just a metaphor. Brünnhilde and Siegfried live in a kind of mother-son relationship, she providing him with warmth, comfort, safety, but none of the instinctive, sexual, sensual need the mysterious Gudrune presents. She is like a first girlfriend who gets forgotten when someone new and more exciting appears on the scene. The potion is just a plot device facilitating an experience many of us know."

Hagen cons Brünnhilde into revealing Siegfried's mortal weakness, then stabs the hero in the back while on a hunting expedition. Brünnhilde, meanwhile, has learned about Hagen's treachery from the Rheinmaidens, and in the Cycle's climactic scene, commits her husband's body to a great funeral pyre before charging into the roaring inferno herself. The pyre's flames rise up to consume Walhalla while the Rhine River breaks its banks and floods the world. Hagen drowns cursing the Rheinmaidens, who return the ring to the watery bosom from where the Rheingold first came. "The last quarter hour of *Götterdämmerung* comprises some of the most evocative and thrilling music ever

"What is amazing though, is what Brünnhilde is talking about. Here we are, at the end of a six hour opera at the end of this massive cycle, and she basically dismisses the whole story as irrelevant. It is the supreme act of abnegation where she essentially says, 'Gods are all well and good as symbols, but ultimately, we humans need to transcend the mess of greed, lust and ambition ourselves if we are to survive.' She is the real heroine of the *Ring* Cycle because of this message; she is the one who understands that it is love that takes us closer to the Gods."

Speaking of production designer and *Rheingold* director Michael Levine, Albery comments, "It really is his *Ring*. We have worked particularly closely as *Götterdämmerung* pairs with *Rheingold*, both dramatically and metaphorically. The entire Cycle is imagined as a journey from *Rheingold* in the 19th Century to *Götterdämmerung* in the 21st, but in *Götterdämmerung*, some characters, such as Alberich, remain as remnants from previous times, while other things will happen that will not make sense until *Rheingold* [which Toronto audiences will only see in Sept. 2006]." A number of other "visual linkages" can also be expected in Brünnhilde, "who will continue to be encumbered by the weight of her past," while a connection will be revealed between the Rheinmaidens at the end of the culminating opera and the three mystical Norns who preface it.

As for the cataclysmic final scene, Albery is coy, yet remains true to his credo of the timelessness in the timeless. "Every generation finds in the *Götterdämmerung* a new beginning. It was true in 1919 or in 1946, and is true also today. With the growth of fundamentalism, and our awareness of the frightening force of nature," he says, "there is an inherent sense of unease among people. No matter how you choose to present it theatrically, depicting the annihilation of the world will powerfully resonate with an audience that knows our tentative hold on this world is largely due to our own follies. As Brünnhilde warns, the Gods are over. We can no longer rely on mythology to solve our problems. 'Dämmerung' in German means twilight both at sunrise and sunset. Through this ambivalence, she offers us the chance at a new beginning." With opera at its most complex yet most utterly human, director and heroine throw down the gauntlet: now it is our responsibility. ■

Tim Albery (right) with fellow members of the Ring Cycle creative team Michael Levine (centre) and Richard Bradshaw (left); Behind: *Götterdämmerung* production sketches

Wagner's *Götterdämmerung*, Canadian Opera Company, directed by Timothy Albery. www.coc.ca 416-363-8231. Jan. 30, Feb. 2, 4, 7, 10, & 12

Winter 2006 Concert Picks

Previews



Bramwell Tovey



Susan Platts



The Gryphon Trio



Brett Polegato

Victoria Preview

JOHN DEFAYETTE

Living in Victoria, you very often hear people commenting on how lucky they are. This will be especially true for music lovers in the upcoming 2006 season. The Cathedral Festival Orchestra rings in New Year's Day with "Vienna" at the Cathedral. Aventa and the Victoria Symphony are next, Jan. 7, with the Ligetti Chamber Concerto. The following day, the Symphony presents Tango Nuevo. The Conservatory hosts a local and well-known pianist, Robert Holliston, on the 14th, and a faculty concert, Romantic Strings, on the 15th.

The Victoria Symphony has a full schedule presenting a Russian Music evening on Jan. 14 and 16, followed by Piano pops Jan. 19-21, and a kids program on Jan. 22. The Galiano Ensemble is also busy Jan. 22 performing works by Bartok and Janacek. A new group to Victoria, Global Rhythms, presents Alpha Ya Ya Diallo Jan. 23. There are two concerts at the end of January at the Conservatory: Gorvan Krivokopic, classical guitarist, performs Jan. 24, while the faculty show their skills Jan. 28, performing music from Canadian, British and French composers. The same evening, The Early Music Society features a program of 17th century love songs. Finally, the Symphony will present Beethoven and Weill compositions Jan. 29 and 30.

February is almost as busy, starting with The Global Rhythms and Raco Pena Flamenco on the 1st, followed on the 4th by The Palm Court Orchestra, whose program is entitled "Ain't Misbehaving." We are also lucky to have the Pacific Opera artist director Timothy Vernon. He recently received the Ruby Award for outstanding contributions to opera in Canada. Jane Heffelfinger should also be thanked for her 28 years of support during which she served as general manager and sat on the Board of Directors. The opera *Rape of Lucretia* is slated for Feb. 9-18. The Celebration of

Music group performs Feb. 12. On the same day, the Symphony plays Reel Music. Piano lovers should note that May Link Kwok is the soloist at the Sidney Classical Orchestra concert Feb. 17. The Early Music group performs a Violin Sonata on Feb. 18 while the Symphony performs Handel, Mozart and Schubert Feb. 19. Aventa has an innovative programme of U. Vic. composers Feb. 19-21. And not to be missed is the Youth Orchestra pairing up with the Victoria Symphony for Mahler's First Symphony Feb. 26-27.

Although we can never tell whether March will come in as a lamb or a lion, there will probably be many spring flowers in bloom on the 1st, with the *Mélo die Française* at the Conservatory. Mar. 4 is busy with the Civic Orchestra playing Hungarian compositions while the Faculty concert promises a program of Russian Masters. In addition, the Symphony is presenting celtic music Mar. 2-4 and the Young Musicians Concerto Showcase Mar. 5. Paul Galbraith, classical guitarist, plays at the Conservatory Mar. 6, followed by choral music from the Portland Oregon group Capella Romana with a program entitled Fall of Byzantium.

Further information on any of the aforementioned concerts is available at 250-598-3442 or ul345@victoria.tc.ca.

Vancouver Mid-Season Picks

ROBERT JORDAN

Christmas begins early this year. Nov. 27 is the first Sunday in Advent and already the Christmas musical bounty is upon us with the usual, the unusual and even some anomalies. If I had carte blanche, here is where I would go, not only during the Christmas season but also during the following months. Unless otherwise noted, all concerts start at 8 pm.

It's the Vancouver Chamber Choir's turn to tackle Handel's *Messiah*, and this year has a particularly attractive line-up of soloists, with

soprano Jennie Such, alto **Susan Platts**, tenor Colin Balzer and bass Gregory Dahl. The VCC will be joined by the eminently capable Laudate Singers and accompanied by the CBC Radio Orchestra conducted by the VCC's founding music director, Jon Washburn. Performances are Dec. 9-10 at the Orpheum Theatre.

But Christmas is not over for the VCC with *Messiah*. On Dec. 16 and 18 (the latter at 3 pm), the choir presents "Here Are We in Bethlehem: a Healey Willan Christmas" at Ryerson United Church to commemorate the increasingly popular composer's birthday 125 years ago. Organist Bryn Nixon and harpist Rita Costanzi will add sonic variety to a generous offering of Willan's motets, anthems, the Great O Antiphons for Advent and, of course, carols galore. There will also be a performance of Washburn's completion of *The Annunciation*, a work left unfinished by Willan at his death in 1968. www.vancouverchamberchoir.com (604) 738-6822

The Vancouver Symphony Orchestra takes over the Orpheum for two performances of Dmitri Shostakovich's Symphony No. 7 (Dec. 11 and 12). Although I have been fascinated by the music of Shostakovich for more than 35 years, I have yet to hear the *Leningrad* live in concert. Written during the Nazi siege of Leningrad (1941-44), it is a potent testimonial to the resilience of the human spirit in the face of overwhelming adversity. Performances are rare these days, so when VSO music director **Bramwell Tovey** steers the orchestra through this massive opus, I'll certainly be there.

With music from Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker* ballet on the program, I suppose the VSO is giving a nod to the Christmas season and, if Rachmaninov's *Rhapsody on a Theme by Paganini* (with pianist Mark Zeltser) also seems a little incongruous next to the anguish and drama of the *Leningrad*, so be it. www.vancouversymphony.ca (604) 684-9100

At Holy Rosary Cathedral on Dec. 17, at 2:30 pm, and again at 3 pm the next day at West Vancouver United Church, the Vancouver

Cantata Singers present their annual free Christmas concert. This year, "A Christmas Reprise" (celebrating the choir's new Christmas CD) is "an hour-long program of traditional and contemporary Christmas music with a calming and concentrated focus in the midst of the busy Christmas shopping scene." Seating is first-come, first-served and seats go fast – so arrive early! www.cantata.org (604) 730-8856

On the evening of Dec. 18, Ramona Luengen's Phoenix Chamber Choir presents its annual *A Phoenix Christmas* at Shaughnessy Heights United Church. This year, the choir is joined by organist Roy Campbell as well as Janet Kyle's Soundwave Handbell Choir for Christmas music familiar and unfamiliar, readings and sing-alongs. There is also the world premiere of a newly commissioned arrangement of *I Wonder as I Wander* by Jonathan Rathbone, former music director of the Swingle Singers. www.phoenix-chamberchoir.bc.ca (604) 986-7520

If you're ready for a dashing brace of dissonance by January, I recommend the Emerson Quartet at the Vancouver Playhouse on Jan. 10 to break the post-Christmas concert lull. The program is fabulous – Mozart's Quartet in C Major, K. 465 "Dissonance," Bartok's Quartet No. 2 and Sibelius's "Voces Intimae" Quartet. www.friendsofchambermusic.ca (604) 437-5747

The American Emerson Quartet is a legend in its own time but the **Gryphon Trio** is in the same interpretive league and, what's more, they're Canadian! The Toronto-based threesome (violinist Annalee Patipatanakoon, cellist Roman Borys and pianist Jamie Parker) play in the Koerner Recital Hall of the Vancouver Academy of Music February 21-24 at 10:30 am (coffee will be served in the lobby at 10 am). Music in the Morning is coy about what repertoire the Gryphons are playing but does say the program "includes" Dvořák's Dumky Trio. It's a lovely piece, but let's hope there's more, much more. www.musicinthemorning.org (604) 873-4612

On Feb. 24, Early Music Vancouver brings top-notch baroque violinist John Holloway to the UBC Recital Hall to play three of Bach's six sonatas and partitas for solo violin – the sonata in A Minor and the partitas in E Major and D Minor. The latter, of course, has the monumental "Chaconne" as its finale, a single movement in which a wealth of profound human emotion is enshrined. It's one of Western civilization's musical pinnacles. www.earlymusic.bc.ca (604) 732-1610

Finally, on Mar. 4, 7, 9, 11 and 13, at 7:30 pm, Vancouver Opera presents Mozart's *Don Giovanni* at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre. This particular opera is on many an opera buff's desert island list. Directed by Michael Cavanagh and conducted by Jonathan Darlington, this "sumptuous production



Frédérique Vézina

reflects the opera's rich palette of humour, sadness, rage and conflict." With **Brett Polegato** as the irredeemable Don, Carol Wilson as Donna Anna, Angela Fout as Donna Elvira and Nathalie Paulin as Zerlina, this Vancouver incarnation should be stunningly well sung, too. www.vancouveropera.ca (604) 683-0222

The Calgary Music Scene

KENNA BURIMA

For some odd reason December is a quiet month in Calgary's classical music scene. Luckily the same does not apply for the New Year. If the month of January is any indication of the 2006 season, classical audiences will have their fill of great performances by local and international musicians.

January is a busy month for modern music lovers and performers as the University of Calgary presents its annual new music festival "Happening," running Jan. 23 to 28. Throughout the festival, the Eckhardt-Gramatté Hall will house numerous lectures, panels, discussions, master classes, recitals and concerts dedicated to new music. Running concurrently this year with Happening is symposium "Perspectives on Music in Canada," which features guest artists and lecturers dealing with all aspects of Canadian music.

There are three concerts of note in the Happening schedule. The Land's End Chamber Ensemble concert on Jan. 26 features its "Alberta Saskatchewan Centennial Project." It will be a fitting tribute to prairie music with premieres of music by Roger Fera Jr., Shane Fage and John Abram. www.landsendensemble.ca

The second concert of note finds four dynamic and talented women taking the stage on January 27. The powerful all female ensemble Electra presents "The Canada Connection, Music and Film" with soprano, recorders, violin

and marimba, electronics, and video. Its program will feature live performances with images and music by John Abram, Belinda Reynolds, Ron Ford, and Louis Andriessen, and film by J.C. Mol, Betsy Torenbos, and Hal Hartley. www.ffa.ucalgary.ca

Lastly, on Jan. 28, New Works Calgary presents "Cloud Walking." Composer and pianist Diana McIntosh and Canada's prima percussionist Beverley Johnston present a colourful program of duos, solos and theatrical music in various combinations of percussion, piano, tape and spoken text. A highlight will be the premiere of a newly commissioned piece by Calgary composer Quenten Doolittle based on the life of Calamity Jane. Aspects of her tumultuous career in the Wild West, both true and attributed, will be portrayed by words, sound and music. www.newworkscalgary.ca

As is customary, Calgary's Mountain View Connection offers excellent small format concerts for the discerning vocal and chamber music lover. On Jan. 15 the Mountain View Connection presents "Mozartiad" in the Eckhardt-Gramatté Recital Hall. Soprano Allison Angelo, violinist Edmond Agopian, the Mountain View Chamber Ensemble and pianists Kathleen van Mourik and Charles Foreman will offer rarely heard Mozart concert arias performed with orchestra. www.mountainviewconnection.com

The following month, Mountain View continues its season with the concert "Vienna and the Turn of the 19th Century" on Feb. 5 in the Eckhardt-Gramatté Recital Hall. Audiences will have the opportunity to journey with Mahler, Wolf, Berg, Strauss and other composers who called Vienna their home during the last glory days of Austria's Habsburg Empire. The concert will feature soprano **Frédérique Vézina** and with pianists Kathleen van Mourik and Charles Foreman. www.mountainviewconnection.com

The Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra continues in full swing with "Influences and Inspirations" on Jan. 25 in the Jack Singer Concert Hall. Conductor Jean-François Rivest leads an innovative program with Sir Michael Tippett's tribute to the music of Corelli. www.cpo-live.com

No February would be complete without a performance of Wagner's *Prelude* and *Liebestod* from *Tristan and Isolde* to put everyone in the mood for Valentine's Day. The CPO presents "Classics for Lovers" on Feb. 10-11 in the Jack Singer Concert Hall. Music Director Roberto Minczuk and violinist Leila Josefowicz will entertain audiences with Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto, op. 64, in e minor, Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet Suite*, and of course Wagner's *Prelude* and *Liebestod*. www.cpo-live.com

Following in the footsteps of the Alberta Theatre Projects with its successful run of Peter



Janina Fialkowska



Frances Ginzer



William Eddins



Tracy Dahl

Schafer's *Amadeus* in September, the CPO celebrates the birth of Mozart 250 years ago on Feb. 22 in the Jack Singer Concert Hall. Principal Baroque Conductor Ivars Taurins will lead the CPO with Canadian guest soprano Karina Gauvin. www.cpo-live.com

The CPO continues its ode to Mozart with "Mozart and Tchaikovsky" on Mar. 3 and 4 in the Jack Singer Concert Hall. Calgary's favourite guest conductor Bramwell Tovey, Conductor, and pianist **Janina Fialkowska**, will join the CPO. www.cpo-live.com

The Calgary Opera hasn't skipped a beat upon returning to its home in the Jubilee Auditorium. It begins the new year in an unusual manner with the Canadian premiere of *Dead Man Walking*. Based on the book by Sister Helen Prejean, the award-winning film of the same name has been adapted to operatic form by author Jake Hoggie. It will run Jan. 28, and Feb. 1 and 3. www.calgaryopera.com

Calgary's Pro Musica Society presents "Close Encounters With Music" on Jan. 16 at the University Theatre. For more than 18 years, Close Encounters has been presenting thematic concerts of chamber music with commentary. Pro Musica's "Discoveries" concert will include piano trios by Joaquín Turina, Robert Schumann and Anton Arensky. www.calgarypromusica.org.

New Works Calgary presents Saint Crispin's Chamber Ensemble on Mar. 4 in the Eckhardt-Gramatté Recital Hall, including some of the best classical players in Edmonton. The planned program will feature new and commissioned works from Calgary composers Hope Lee and Sonya Guha-Thakurta, as well as various Edmonton composers. www.newworkscalgary.ca

The Millenium Music Foundation offers a concert with the world renowned King's Singers, Feb. 21 at the Rozsa Centre of the University of Calgary. The program promises a variety of works, both ancient and modern, to showcase the power and range of this breathtaking ensemble. www.kingssingers.com

Edmonton Scene

GORDON MORASH

Edmonton is a hockey and football town. The

self-described City of Champions – a moniker derived from the numerous Stanley and Grey Cups acquired over the years – provides much competition to Edmonton's cultural side. In a city that has been known for the Oilers and Eskimos, a vibrantly active theatre community, and some nationally acclaimed restaurants such as The Hardware Grill and Jack's Grill, just how do you put bums in the seats for a burgeoning classical season? Even when you have prime acoustic real estate in the Francis Winspear Centre for Music or newly renovated performance halls such as the Northern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium, it's hardly a guarantee that bums – and ears – will gather on cue.

In the case of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, you could hire a socially outgoing, precocious, headline-grabbing music director by the name of **William** ("Call me Bill") **Eddins**.

Or you might take the pizza route, as done by at least three musical organizations. Several years ago, Edmonton Opera inaugurated its Explorers' Club, designed to draw prospective opera fans aged 18-29. In addition to a night at the opera for \$20 a ticket, a cold beer and pizza is provided during intermission. Annual club dues are \$40; for more information call (780) 429-1000 or go to www.edmonton-opera.com.

Pro Coro Canada has Friends of the Quire, which over the past year has undergone a ten-fold increase in membership. The trick to its growth? "We simply got rid of the membership fee," says David Garber, Pro Coro's administrative director. Restricted to chorus lovers aged 15-25, Friends of the Quire offers best seats available for \$14, a logo baseball cap, and pizza in the Winspear's Founder's Lounge during the intermission. And that spelling, *quire*, is not only absolutely and cheekily correct, but appropriate. Says Garber: "If you look up the word 'quire' in the dictionary, it means a group of 24 or 25 pages. Which is what we as a choir of 24 or 25 voices are." For details, phone (780) 420-1247 or go to www.procoro.ab.ca.

The Richard Eaton Singers, Edmonton's 140-voice symphonic choir, has an educational program for high school students that this season welcomes them to the dress rehearsal performances of its Mozart-Haydn-Beethoven concert with the Alberta Baroque Ensemble (Feb. 5)

and Edward Elgar's massive and seldom-performed *The Dream of Gerontius* with the ESO (Apr. 30). Pizza – as well as scene-setting commentaries and question-and-answer sessions with composers – is the popular pre-performance enticer.

Even the ESO has its entry-point program called the Pulse8 Club, designed for music lovers aged 18-29. The draw here is free membership, \$15 tickets, and a club members' Web site, with personably eccentric postings from ESO music director Eddins and orchestra players. For more information, go to www.pulse8club.com.

A Choral Christmas: The Francis Winspear Centre for Music will be festively alive with no fewer than 10 Christmas concerts set for the venue. These range from Pro Coro Canada's traditional *A Pro Coro Christmas* with the Cantillon Choirs and Jubiloso! Handbells (Dec. 4), to Handel's *Messiah* with the ESO and Richard Eaton Singers (Dec. 16-17), to the popular live broadcast Christmas Bureau Singalong (Dec. 23), which last year drew a full house to sing with the more than 300 choristers in the choir loft and on stage. For a full list of concerts, go to www.winspearcentre.com.

Edmonton Opera: On Feb. 4, 7 and 9, EO offers what has now become a traditional pairing of two modern classics. Robert Lepage's production of *Bluebeard's Castle* by Béla Bartók and *Erwartung* by Arnold Schoenberg hits the Jubilee Auditorium stage. EO describes the package as "the single most important and unanimously praised operatic event ever to come out of Canada." Soprano **Susan Marie Pierson** will sing the roles of Judith in *Bluebeard's Castle* and The Woman in *Erwartung*. Welsh baritone Jason Howard will sing the title role of Bluebeard. In keeping with its promotional bent, EO has paired up with the Delta Edmonton South hotel for the Jubilee Dinners program, which provides a meal and wine at the auditorium. (Edmonton Opera, (780) 424-4040, www.edmontonopera.com)

Edmonton Symphony Orchestra: The ESO will have the movies on show on Mar. 2, when **William Eddins** conducts "Hollywood: Behind the Silver Screen." Among the works: Howard Shore's *Suite from The Lord of the Rings*, selections from Bernard Hermann's scores for

Citizen Kane and *Psycho*, and selections from *The Godfather* and *Romeo and Juliet* by Nino Rota. The concert will serve as a prelude of sorts for the highly anticipated Apr. 20 presentation of *City Lights*, when Eddins will conduct the original Charlie Chaplin score as the silent movie unspools above the stage in the Winspear. (Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, (780) 428-1414 or 1-800-563-5081, www.edmontonsymphony.com)

Pro Coro Canada: For the 250th birthday of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Edmonton's 25-voice professional chorus offers up a performance of the *Coronation Mass* on Jan. 22. Richard Sparks conducts, the Pro Coro Chamber Orchestra accompanies, but as of deadline, soloists had not been named. As a festive addendum, those preferring a small-chorus treatment of *Messiah* will need to travel to Red Deer, south of Edmonton, where Pro Coro will perform the oratorio with the Red Deer Symphony Orchestra on Dec. 10. (Pro Coro Canada, (780) 420-1247 or 1-800-563-5081, www.procoro.ab.ca)

Alberta Baroque Ensemble: Mozart will also be on the minds of the players in the ABE on Jan. 22, with guest Martin Riseley, the ESO's concertmaster since 1994. On the bill for "A Taste of Mozart" are Symphony No. 1 in E Flat Major K. 16, Three Church Sonatas, Symphony No. 10 in G Major K. 74, and Violin Concerto in B Flat Major K. 207. (Alberta Baroque Ensemble, (780) 467-6531, www.alberta-baroque.com)

Southern Ontario Vocal Preview

JOSEPH K. SO

With the concert and opera season in full swing, there are plenty of delectable morsels for vocal buffs to choose from. On the opera front, the COC Ensemble Studio is presenting Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, an ideal work to showcase young artists with fresh voices. An additional attraction is the presence of the renowned musicologist Andrew Porter, who will be directing the show. All three performances are already sold out, but you can try for returns (Dec. 16, 18, 20 at the Macmillan Theatre, (416) 872-2262).

Opera Hamilton offers "Popera," an evening of operatic potpourri, with an all-Canadian cast – soprano **Tracy Dahl**, mezzo Allyson McHardy, tenor Gordon Gietz, and baritone James Westman. This is a good chance to catch this excellent quartet of singers, whom we hardly ever get to hear in this neck of the woods (Nov. 24, 26, Hamilton, Nov. 25 Kitchener-Waterloo).

Saint-Saëns's *Samson et Dalilah* is an opera unjustly neglected by Canadian companies –



Louis Lortie

would you believe it has never been done by the COC? (Opera in Concert, Dec. 4 2:30 pm at Jane Mallet Theatre, (1-800-708-6754, (416) 366-7723) Another important highlight is Vivaldi's *La Griselda*, put on by OIC with orchestra, on Jan. 29, 2:30 pm, at the Jane Mallet Theatre. This will be the Canadian premiere of this opera in complete form. This work is so rare that OIC General Director Guillermo Silva-Marin had to commission a translation of the libretto for the occasion – an event not to be missed.

Also a must-see will be COC's sole presentation for its winter season – Wagner's *Götterdämmerung*. This will be the third installment of the COC Ring Cycle, starring **Frances Ginzer**, Christian Franz, John Fanning and Richard Paul Fink. The director is Tim Albery. This is arguably the most vocally and musically demanding of the four Ring operas, so it will be interesting to see how the COC meets its fearsome challenges (Jan. 30, Feb. 2, 4, 7, 10, 12, (416) 363-8231).

There is a wide selection of concerts and recitals on offer in the next three months. Last heard at a highly successful Roy Thomson Hall solo recital in May, Canada's newest prima donna, Isabel Bayrakdarian, will give a benefit concert at the University of Toronto Convocation Hall on Nov. 25, 8 pm, to raise funds towards the restoration of the century-old pipe organ in the historic building. Ms. Bayrakdarian is an alumna of the U of T School of Engineering. Tickets are available through UofTTix.ca or at (416) 978-8849.

If you are more "pop" oriented, you might be interested in hearing tenor Russell Watson at Roy Thomson Hall on the same evening. Bayrakdarian will team up with the ever popular Canadian baritone Russell Braun in a joint concert of arias and duets for Opera Ontario (Jan. 15 & 22, Hamilton).

Lyric soprano and former COC Ensemble member Shannon Mercer will be the featured artist in the Music Toronto "Discovery" Series,

singing Mozart, Wolf, Debussy, Villa-Lobos, and the world premiere of a work by Andrew Ager, *Goddess Excellently Bright*. She will be accompanied by Steven Philcox, coach and assistant conductor of the COC and teacher at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto (Jan. 26 Jane Mallet Theatre). Tickets are available at 1-800-708-6754 or (416) 366-7723, or online at www.stlc.com.

Off Centre Music Salon will present a tribute to Albert Einstein, who is reputed to have said "if I were not a physicist, I would probably be a musician. I often think in music. I live my daydreams in music. It is my violin that brings me the greatest joy in life." Baritone Jason Nedecky and mezzo Allyson McHardy will join violinist Michail Gantvarg in a program of Einstein's favourite composers: Bach, Mozart, Schubert and Brahms. (Jan. 22, 2 pm, Glenn Gould Studio, (416) 205-5555). Known for its inventive programming, Off Centre will present an afternoon of "Laughing Musically: Greeting Winter 'Off Centre' Style," featuring the husband-wife team of Anne Grimm and Benjamin Butterfield, joined by pianists Inna Perkis and Boris Zarankin, musicians from the Toronto Symphony, and the redoubtable Stuart Hamilton (Dec. 4, 2 pm, GGS, (416) 205-5555).

And let's not forget December means *Messiah* month in English Canada. As usual, Torontonians will have a variety to choose from. TSO bills its own version as "Toronto's Best Messiah," and I will let you be the judge. This year, Jane Glover conducts **Nathalie Paulin**, Susan Platts, Michael Colvin, and Nathan Berg (Dec. 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, RTH). If you like a more intimate experience, try Tafelmusik's version (Dec. 14-17, Trinity-St. Paul's Centre, (416) 964-6337). The soloists are Anne Grimm, Laura Pudwell, Benjamin Butterfield, and Christopheren Nomura. If audience participation is your thing, by all means go to their popular "Sing along Messiah," with the same soloists, at Massey Hall (Dec. 18, 2 pm). The excellent Les Violons du Roy will also be in town, offering Bach Cantatas for Christmas and the New Year (Nos 63, 110, 151, 171), with a fabulous cast of Karina Gauvin, Christoph Prégardien, Christophe Dumaux, and Brett Polegato, under the baton of Bernard Labadie. (Dec. 16, 8 pm, RTH)

Toronto Area Instrumental Preview

CLAIRE MARIE BLAUSTEIN

January 27, 2006 would be Mozart's 250th birthday, were he fortunate enough to have found the elixir of life. To celebrate, most of the performing ensembles in the Toronto area will be putting on their finest to tip their hats to the great composer.

The Toronto Symphony Orchestra

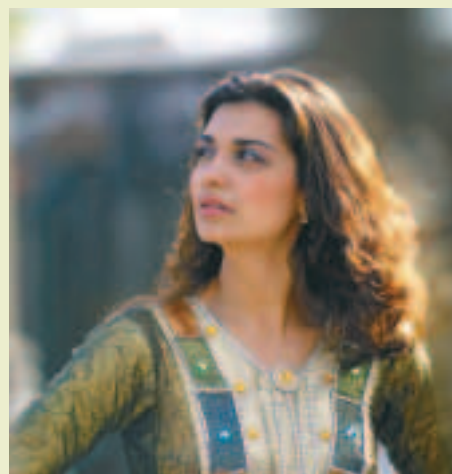
(www.tso.on.ca – (416) 593-4828) will be celebrating with their “Mozart @ 250 Festival.” There will be three separate programs. “Mozart: The Singing Voice,” on Jan. 18-19, will feature Viktoria Mullova, violin, playing Mozart’s fourth violin concerto and Isabel Bayrakdarian, soprano performing a selection of arias. “Mozart: The Symphonist” will be on Jan. 21-22, showing off the composer’s skill with the orchestra through his Jupiter Symphony and his Symphony No. 1, as well as the 22 Piano Concerto with soloist Yefim Bronfman. Finally, we will get a deeper look into the life of this prolific and sometimes troubled composer through “Mozart: A Life in Letters,” a program developed by Michael Schade. It will present a selection of Mozart’s letters to family and friends alongside the music they inspired. Joining Schade will be soprano Karina Gauvin, baritone Russell Braun, and conductor Peter Oundjian (Jan. 26-27, RTH).

For another glimpse into Mozart’s life, we can go to Tafelmusik (www.tafelmusik.org – (416) 964-6337) for Amadeo: Mozart in Italy (Feb. 3-5, 7-9). Designed by violist Elly Winer, this program follows the young Wolfgang on one of his earliest trips to Italy through his letters and his music.

The University of Toronto (www.music.toronto.ca - (416) 978-3744) is joining the literary bastion with “Marrying Mozart,” a program inspired by the novel by Stephanie Cowell about

TV: Bayrakdarian's Journey Home

In the spring of 2004, Armenian-Canadian soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian traveled to her homeland Armenia for the first time. In this Stormy Nights Production documentary, director Eileen Thalenberg captures Bayrakdarian’s first experience of her native land and her musical collaborations with local musicians in various historical and religious settings. Narrated by interviews with the international soprano, the video is slow moving. The gems are the numerous excellent performances of Armenian folk songs and plainchant, which make up almost half of the 60 minute documentary. *A Long Journey Home* airs on January 19, 2006 on CBC TV’s Opening Night. **WKC**



Mozart’s music and loves, featuring Lorna MacDonald, soprano, Cameron Stowe, piano, Erika Raum, violin, and Peter Stoll, clarinet (Jan. 27).

For something closer to the confectionary end of birthday celebrations, Sinfonia Toronto (www.sinfoniatoronto.com - (416) 499-0403) has their “Mozart in Jeans” series. First will be a program of music and dance to Mozart’s *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* Jan. 28, and on Feb. 5, a program entitled “Mozart’s Moods,” with violinist Etsuko Kimura, and a guest artist who will be translating the imagery of the music onto canvas as it happens.

And for something multidisciplinary, Via Salzburg returns to Glenn Gould Studio (glenn Gould Studio.cbc.ca - (416) 205-5555) with “Mozart and More,” a program with dancer and choreographer Naoko Murakoshi collaborating with the Via Salzburg String Quartet (Dec. 8-9). The concert will include Mozart’s Divertimento in D major for strings and two horns KV334, as well as Ravel’s First string quartet. Murakoshi will also present the premiere of a contemporary work that features live musicians and dancers, and is set to Penderecki’s String Quartet No. 1.

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SUNDAY DECEMBER 11, 2005 3 P.M.

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Russel Braun



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If you're looking for something a little less intertextual, there are several concerts that will be featuring Mozart's chamber music – the Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society – (886-1673 - www.k-wcms.com) will have two concerts, one for Mozart's actual birthday on Jan. 27, with Kerry DuWors & Min-Jeong Koh, violins, Karen Moffatt, Nancy Nehring, violas, Mark Rudoff, cello performing Mozart's Quintet, K. 614, his magnificent Trio, K. 563 (some think it Mozart's greatest piece), and the Duo, K. 423 for violin and viola. Then on Feb. 1, the Penderecki Quartet will be playing two of Mozart's quartets and the Viola Quintet K. 174 with guest artist Douglas Perry. Hamilton ChamberWORKS! (www.chamberworksmusicensemble.com - (905) 522-7529) will also have an all Mozart program (Feb. 5) featuring his Kegelstatt Trio in Eb major for clarinet, viola and piano. And Music Toronto (www.music-toronto.com - (416) 366-7723) will present the world renowned Tokyo String Quartet and clarinetist Sabiene Meyer in an all Mozart Program on Jan. 19. Selections will include the King of Prussia String Quartet and the beautiful dissonant Clarinet Quintet in A Major.

The Toronto International Chamber Music Festival (www.torontochambermusic.com - (416) 763-5066) will also be going on from Jan. 27-29, and their Opening Gala concert (Jan. 27) will be full of birthday wishes. With the Vienna Symphony Virtuosi, The Eastman Brass, and Austrian pianist Felicitas Keil, they'll be playing a variety of music, including a brass arrangement of the Alleluia from *Exultate Jubilate*, and the Allegro for Trombone and Piano.

Finally, there will be a rare recital performance by pianist **Louis Lortie** on Jan. 29 at Glenn Gould Studios. The program will include pieces composed by Mozart and inspired by him: the Sonata in B-flat major, K. 333, and the Fantasia in D minor, K. 397, as well as Chopin's *Variations on Mozart's "La ci darem la mano"* and Liszt's *Concert paraphrase on themes from Mozart's Don Giovanni*.

For those who are tired of the "All Mozart, All The Time" feeling of the winter season, there are plenty of ensembles out there waiting to cleanse musical palates with new and unusual offerings.

At the Royal Conservatory of Music, (www.rcmusic.ca - (416) 408-2824, ext. 321) the Great Artists Series will have a program on

the Music of Latin America (Jan. 29). Joaquin Valdepenas, one of the most distinguished clarinetists of his generation, will explore the music of Latin America, featuring works by Heras, Marquez, Chavez, Poulenc and Martinu.

One can always expect new and exciting music from New Music Concerts (www.newmusicconcerts.com - (416) 961-9594) but their upcoming concert on Feb. 26 will be new on a much grander scale. "New at New Music" will feature four world premieres, three by Canadian composers. The New Music Concert ensemble, with pianist **James Avery** and flutist and director **Robert Aitken**, will perform works by Charles Wuorinen, André Ristic, Denis Dion, and Juliet Kiri Palmer.

Now, just because Mozart is hitting the big two-five-oh doesn't mean we want to forget his younger counterparts. This year also marks the 100th anniversary of the birth of Dmitri Shostakovich, a composer as prolific as he was politically influential. He's being celebrated in several concerts, including the Toronto Symphony Orchestra's "Shostakovich Remembered" festival. The first of these concerts is on Feb. 15-16, with cellist Enrico Dindo. He will be playing Shostakovich's First (Feb. 15) and Second (Feb. 16) cello concertos, and both concerts will include Shostakovich's 11th Symphony, "The Year 1905," a piece that represents the slaughter of demonstrators by czarist forces, an event that would lead to the widespread revolution later sweeping Russia. Music Toronto will bring us the amazing St Lawrence String Quartet on Feb. 9, performing Shostakovich's 7th String Quartet in F sharp, as well as Beethoven's heart-rending String Quartet Op. 131.

Ottawa Music Calendar

NATASHA GAUTHIER

From Schütz to Schoenberg, Lupu to Bayrakdarian, black-tie opera soirées to student recitals, it's going to be a very busy few months in the nation's capital. Here are some top picks:

December

To kick off the festive music season, the Ottawa Choral Society presents its Christmas concert Dec. 4. The concert features the Cantabile

Youth Singers, mezzo Marion Newman and other soloists, all under the direction on Matthew Larkin (www.ottawachoralsociety.com).

Dec. 5, it's a Baroque European Christmas with the Thirteen Strings chamber orchestra and guest conductor Thomas Annand (www.thirteenstrings.ca). Luminous Canadian soprano **Shannon Mercer** joins them in works by Christian Corrette, Vivaldi, Bach, Charpentier and others.

Dec. 9, the University of Ottawa's Faculty and Friends Series presents the Lumière Quartet (www.music.uottawa.ca). The group will perform Beethoven's String Quartet op. 18, no. 6, Boccherini's "Fandango" Quartet and Mendelssohn's String Quartet op. 44, no. 2. Dec. 12 at the Maison de la Culture de Gatineau, the orchestra of the Conservatoire de musique de Gatineau, conducted by Yves Leveillé, performs Sibelius's *Finlandia*, Rachmaninov's Piano Concert no. 2 (with soloist Geneviève Danveau) and Mozart's Symphony no. 40 (www.ville.gatineau.qc.ca/mcg/spectacles_calendrier.htm).

Although it's only three years old, the Ottawa Bach Choir, directed by Lisette Canton, has quickly gained a reputation as one of the area's premiere vocal ensembles. The Choir will be launching its new CD, *A Christmas Story*, with two concerts featuring the women in the group, Dec. 13-14. (www.ottawabachchoir.ca)

Fresh from a wildly successful tour of Western Canada in November, the National Arts Centre Orchestra takes over the NAC's Southam Hall for its annual *Messiah*, Dec. 14-15 (www.nac-cna.ca). Baroque specialist Julian Wachner conducts the NACO, and the massed choirs of the Ottawa Choral Society, Seventeen Voyces. This year's soloists are Dominique Labelle, soprano, Allyson McHardy, mezzo, Frédéric Antoun, tenor, and James Westman, bass-baritone.

Dec. 17, it's guaranteed warm yuletide fuzzies with "Christmas with the NACO." The traditional carol sing-along features the massed voices of the Cantata Singers, the Opera Lyra Chorus and the Ottawa Regional Youth Choir, all led by Frank McNamara (www.cantatsingers.ottawa.on.ca). They'll have some pretty fierce competition: that same night, the luscious soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian will be packing them in across town, courtesy of the Cathedral Arts Series (www.cathedralarts.ca).

The Christmas concert season winds down Dec. 21, when the Ottawa Chamber Music Society presents a varied program (including Bach, Wagner, Schoenberg and Reinecke) and a multitude of soloists, including soprano Wanda Procyshyn, the Rideau Lakes Brass, organist and harpsichordist Thomas Annand, pianists Stéphane Lemelin and Andrew Tunis, clarinetist Kimball Sykes and many others (www.chamberfest.com).

January

2006 marks Mozart's 250th birthday, so it's no surprise that the composer pops up all over the place, especially in January, his birthday month. Ottawa-born soprano Donna Brown and baritone **Russell Braun** get the ball rolling Jan. 9 at the NAC with a program of Mozart solos and duets. Pianist Carolyn Maule – who appears on Braun's recent recording of *Die Winterreise* – accompanies.

Jan. 12-13, Finnish conductor Eri Klas leads the NACO in Arvo Pärt's *Fratres*, Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony and Rachmaninov's Piano Concerto no. 2, with French virtuoso Jean-Philippe Collard. Collard sticks around for a chamber concert Jan. 15 at the National Gallery; he'll be joined by musicians from the NACO for works by Bliss, Hersant and, of course, Mozart.

There's more Mozart and more NACO Jan. 18-19, when artistic director Pinchas Zukerman returns to the podium after a break of a few weeks. On the program are the composer's Adagio for Violin and Orchestra, his Linz Symphony (no. 36) and the Bassoon Concerto, with soloist Christopher Millard.

Jan. 20, the Appassionata Ensemble and the Montreal Guitar Trio join forces under the direction of Daniel Myssyk. Also on Jan. 20, chamber orchestra Thirteen Strings performs a Klezmer-inspired program with guest conductor Jean-Marie Zeitouni and guests Kleztory. Jan. 23, David Currie leads the Ottawa Symphony in folk-flavoured works by Kodály, Sibelius and François Dompierre (www.ottawasymphony.com).

The Cantata Singers of Ottawa and new artistic director Michael Zaugg bring January to a close on the 29th with a 500-year journey through choral settings of the Book of Psalms, including works by Schütz and Mendelssohn.

February

The February calendar starts off on the 8th with a highly anticipated Schubert and Schumann recital by Radu Lupu. The legendary pianist was scheduled to appear at the same time last year, but had to cancel due to minor surgery. Feb. 9-10, another big-name soloist, violinist Vadim Repin, joins Zukerman and the NACO for Shostakovich's Violin Concerto no. 1; Bach's Third Orchestral Suite and Haydn's Symphony no. 98 round out the program.

Feb. 17, the Ottawa Chamber Society presents the superb, elegant artistry of violinist **Kyung-**

Wha Chung. Accompanied by pianist Akira Eguchi, she'll be performing Beethoven, Schubert, and Mozart. The following evening, Opera Lyra hosts its annual Black and White Opera Soirée at the National Arts Centre, one of the biggest social events in Ottawa. At press time, the list of soloists had yet to be confirmed.

Brit Stephen Hough brings his formidable keyboard virtuosity to the NACO Feb. 22-23, when he performs Mozart's Piano Concerto no. 21. Guest conductor Carlos Kalmar also leads the orchestra in Dvorak's Symphony no. 7 and the world premiere of a new commission by Canadian composer Alexina Louie.

Feb. 27, The Ottawa Symphony and David Currie

present a "capricious" program: Tchaikovsky's *Capriccio italien* and Rimsky-Korsakov's *Capriccio espagnol*, both with special guest the Ottawa Youth Orchestra.

Early March

Lisette Canton and the Ottawa Bach Choir get in the Lenten spirit Mar. 5 with Bach's *St. John Passion*. The choir is joined by instrumental group the Theatre of Early Music and an impressive quintet of soloists: soprano Gillian Keith, countertenor (and Ottawa favourite son) Daniel Taylor, tenor Charles Daniels (one of the world's most sought-after Evangelists), and basses Peter Harvey (as Jesus) and Daniel Lichti.

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Sunday January 8, 2006 • **Grettir** — an Icelandic Saga music by **Thorkell Sigurbjörnsson**
libretto by **Bödvar Gudmundsson**
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Premieres by Palmer, Ristic, Dion & Wuorinen.
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Sunday April 30, 2006 • **Baltic Currents**
Guest composer **Raminta Serksnyte** curates a concert of works by Ciurlionis, Martinaitis, Tulve, Dzenitis & Serksnyte.
Glenn Gould Studio | 7¹⁵ Intro • 8⁰⁰ Concert

Saturday + Sunday May 27/28, 2006 • **Elliott Carter at 97**
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Glenn Gould Studio (28th) | 8⁰⁰ Concert



Friday June 9, 2006 • **Music of Iannis Xenakis**
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THE MUSIC SCENE STAFF'S ANNUAL GIFT SUGGESTIONS

Barenboim West-Eastern Divan Orchestra

Warner Classics 2564
62190-5 (CD + DVD)

On one hand, Daniel Barenboim's West-Eastern Divan Orchestra is a purely musical Arab-Israeli peace initiative. On the other, these youthful musicians from Israel and Arab countries make marvelous music together, if this 2004 Geneva concert – Tchaikovsky's *Symphony No. 5*, Verdi's *Force of Destiny* Overture and Sibelius's *Valse Triste* – are anything to go by.

This recording is recommended for the tremendous performances alone – but there's more: a film of the above concert, a documentary on the orchestra and 83 minutes of wide-ranging conversations between Israel-born Barenboim and Palestinian-American scholar Edward Said, on which their book *Parallels and Paradoxes* is based. **Robert Jordan**



Glenn Gould at the Movies

Sony

In 1972 I attended, with my future wife Peg, a piano student, a showing of *Slaughterhouse-Five*, directed by George Roy Hill from Kurt Vonnegut's novel. The soundtrack was performed by Glenn Gould and contained a number of newly recorded Bach pieces from the *Goldberg Variations* and *Brandenburg Concerto*, as well as some incidental music composed by Gould. The movie remains, the perfect blend of image and music, and contains some splendid playing by Gould. It was also my introduction to the piano pieces of Bach. The original soundtrack is now out of print, though Sony has released it, with other Gould film work (from *The Wars*, and *Thirty-Two Short Films About Glenn Gould*) on *Glenn Gould at the Movies*. **Gordon Morash**



Christmas Wish

G.F. Handel: *Saul*

Rosemary Joshua, Emma Bell, Lawrence Zazzo, Jeremy Ovenden, Gidon Saks, etc., RIAS-Kammerchor, Concerto Koln/Rene Jacobs
Harmonia Mundi HMC
801877.78

Although the oratorio "Messiah" by Handel is the one closely associat-



ed with Christmas, this new recording of his "Saul" would be a welcome addition to any music lover's collection on Christmas morning. Over the last few years, conductor Rene Jacobs has released a number of stellar recordings – last year's Grammy-award winning release of "Le Nozze di Figaro" by Mozart, would be just one. "Saul" is one of the most dramatic oratorios composed by Handel, and Jacobs and his talented forces beautifully catch his brilliant depiction and characterization here. **Rick Phillips**

Rossini: *Il Turco in Italia*

Bartoli, Raimondi, Widmer, Rumetz, Macias, Chorus and Orchestra of the Zurich Opera House/Franz Welser-Möst (140 min)
Arthaus 100 369

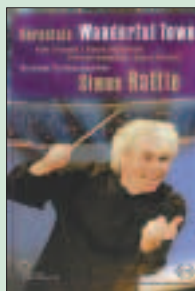
This could be the funniest opera production ever. It is shrewdly directed by Cesare Lievi to achieve a *buffa*-with-vengeance effect. Costumes and scenery, body language and even facial expressions tastefully induce laughter. The wayward Donna Florilla might even come to be regarded as the definitive stage role for Cecilia Bartoli because Lievi fully exploits her tendency to comic excess. Ruggero Raimondi is perfect as the Turk and Paolo Rumetz gives a Chaplinesque portrayal of the long-suffering Don Geronio. Franz Welser-Möst makes the score sparkle and even seizes control of the stage action to bring the opera to an end. **Stephen Habington**



Bernstein: *Wonderful Town*

Criswell, McDonald, Hampson, European Voices, Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra/Sir Simon Rattle (76 min) EuroArts 2052298

Why not celebrate the New Year as they did in the Berlin Philharmonic in 2002? Simon Rattle dispensed with the traditional lashings of Wagner and Verdi to present a semi-staged performance of Lenny's breeziest musical comedy. The imported American singers are idiomatically perfect and the BPO shows that it can really swing. The fun is extended with a complete encore of *Conga*! **SH**



Carl Davis: *A Christmas Carol*

Kerridge, Walker, Choir and the Northern Ballet Theatre, BBC Philharmonic/John Pryce-Jones (86 min) Arthaus 101 193

This DVD captures a 1992 performance of the ballet based on Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. It is a generous entertainment which also answers the question, "How do you create a ballet from a story as familiar as this?" It takes a good score tailored to the concept. Here Carl Davis (his music is a Yuletide pastiche of Aaron Copeland and Sir Arthur Bliss) meshes very well with Massimo Morricone's choreography. Newly released, this DVD could easily become a season standard. **SH**



BPO Europa-Konzert 2002 Palermo

Gil Shaham (violin) Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra/Claudio Abbado (112 min)
EuroArts 2051987

Every year, the BPO is somewhere else in Europe as musical ambassadors for the capital of a united Germany. In 2002, the destination was the glorious Teatro Massimo in Palermo. The concert opens with Beethoven's *Egmont Overture* and concludes with Verdi's Overture to *I vespri Siciliani*. In between, there is a sumptuous account of the Brahms Violin Concerto with Gil Shaham as the soloist and an incandescent Dvořák Symphony No 9, *From the New World*. The BPO is in top form and Abbado surpasses his previous recordings of the principal works. **SH**



Gala Reopening of the Teatro La Fenice

Vocal soloists, Orchestra and Chorus of the Teatro La Fenice/Riccardo Muti (66 min) TDK DVW-CORLF

The *Gran Teatro La Fenice* was built in 1792 and destroyed by fire (for the second time) in 1996. The reopening of the theatre, restored to its former splendour, called for a special concert programme of pieces with



specific Venetian associations. It consists of the Beethoven overture, *Consecration of the House*, Stravinsky's *Symphonie de psaumes*, the *Te Deum* by Antonio Caldara and two Wagner selections: *Kaisermarsch* and *Huldigungsmarsch*. The DVD enshrines splendid performances, entirely appropriate to the occasion. **SH**

Haydn: String Quartets

The Lindsay Quartet; Peter Cropper, Ronald Birks (violins), Robin Ireland (viola), Bernard Gregor-Smith (cello) (172 min – 2 DVDs) Opus Arte OA 0920 D

The Lindsays have been an internationally top-rated string quartet for decades and now they are retiring. This set shows them at work in some of their key repertoire, filmed at the Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival in 2004. The performances of seven quartets (Opp 20/2 & 5, 33/3, 42, 54/1 & 2 and 76/4) are sublime. The DVD includes an extra feature in the form of a 52-minute documentary by Reiner E. Moritz on string quartets. **SH**



Mozart: Le Nozze di Figaro

Fischer-Dieskau, Te Kanawa, Freni, Prey, Ewing, Vienna State Opera Chorus, Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra/Karl Böhm (181 min – 2 DVDs) DG 00440 073 4034

A Jean-Pierre Ponnelle staged, directed and designed feature film, Hermann Prey reprises the role of Figaro in this 1976 production of the Beaumarchais sequel to *Barbiere*. With Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau as the Count and Kiri Te Kanawa the Contessa fighting it out in their mid-life crisis, Mirella Freni's resolute Susanna and Mari Ewing's hilarious Cherubino, this is a Mozart movie that should not be missed. **SH**



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Natasha Gauthier



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Hallelujah

it's Messiah in miniature

BY NORMAN LEBRECHT

The English may not know much about music, but they know what they like and they assume an attitude of reverent ownership in the face of *Messiah*. George Frideric Handel's oratorio was, until the Beatles, our most universal musical creation, adored on all five continents. Composed in London in 24 summer days of 1741, it was premiered in Dublin the next Easter, and while London audiences proved somewhat more sceptical, the work being neither outright entertainment nor religious rite, when the King rose at the words "for the lord God omnipotent reigneth" in the Hallelujah chorus, the entire nation shot to its feet and has continued to do so ever since.

An English tradition was established for doing *Messiah* on the grand scale, swelling by the late 19th century to 4,500 musicians and a crowd of 88,000 at Crystal Palace. Latterly, "scratch performances" have packed the Royal Albert Hall with 5,000 participants, some carving their own instruments for the concert. Handel intended *Messiah* for the greater good of mankind, giving away the proceeds of early performances and staging annual benefits on behalf of Thomas Coram's Foundling Hospital in Bloomsbury, to which he left a precious set of parts in his will. *The Coram Boy*, a new play at the National Theatre based on Jamila Gavin's Whitbread-winning children's thriller about an escaped slave boy and an unwanted nobleman's son, is constructed around one of these orphanage fundraisers, with *Messiah* serving as a harbinger of hope amid despair.

Nobody does *Messiah* like the English. We own the score (at the British Library), the language, the history, the continuity, the board game. We have the music in our bloodstream, the motives in our national character. Band Aid, Live Aid and all similar philanthropic outpourings are, wittingly or not, offshoots of Handel's example in his London *Messiah*. So when some continental comes along with a baton and tells us we're doing it all wrong, we can't count crotchets in Comfort-*Ye* or tell a *pp* from a *ppp*, we're not, for once, going to nod obeisance and say musical Europe always knows best. Hands to ears, we English don't need to be told how to sing *Messiah*, right?

Unless the instructor is Nikolaus Harnoncourt, that is. Harnoncourt, 75, is the market leader in period practice, a thoughtful musician, who in more than 440 recordings has used primary sources to reveal how composers wanted their music to sound. A descendant of Habsburg emperors and Huguenot refugees, reduced by 20th century circumstances to common musicianship, Harnoncourt has been thinking about *Messiah* for half a century – ever since, as a salaried cellist in the Vienna Symphony Orchestra, he submitted to the showy conductorship of Sir Malcolm Sargent, who brought along a chorus from Huddersfield because no one in Europe was loud enough. "The ladies were like tanks," laughs Harnoncourt. "When they opened their mouths the Musikvereinsaal shivered."

It was not just the noise that bothered him. The English singing was "too precise, almost zombie-like." The absence of passion, allied to encrusted tradition, sent Harnoncourt in search of Handel autographs, not just analysing the notes between staves but employing a graphologist to study the pressure of the master's hand as it raced across the paper, where it skimmed, where it pierced. "I have seen every pencil stroke of Handel in *Messiah*," he maintains, "and I found very interesting things that were generally overlooked."

The results, freshly recorded on Sony-BMG, are startlingly flexible.



Handel in the BL score often omitted barlines, whether in the heat of invention or because they impeded an effect. Singers and musicians unthinkingly emphasize the first note in a bar, not realising that the barrier was inserted by some over-zealous printer, not by the composer. Playing the music without bars gives a free-flowing rhythm, devoid of jarring stops and starts.

Where Handel sought emphasis, he cut against the rhythmic grain. A note is placed on what appears to be a wrong syllable – the penultimate of "incorruptible", for instance. "The English are very quick to say Handel, a German, couldn't speak English," scolds Harnoncourt. "I couldn't believe that because, as a musician, Handel had an ear for languages, and he had the English librettist (Charles Jennens) at his side. He used English as it was spoken in his time – "incorrupteeble," in the French manner. In fact, in the same aria he uses both ways of pronouncing the word, and that's what I follow." It may well be that the pronunciation followed class divisions and that Handel wanted to reflect both levels of society.

Harnoncourt was first alerted to English eccentricities during a 1970s *Messiah* conducted by the retired countertenor Alfred Deller, who called in a tympanist of national authority: the Keeper of prints and drawings at the British Museum, no less. Edward Croft-Murray was an antiquarian of noble birth and period enthusiasms. He dressed in 18th century military garb and had his instruments set up by a frock-coated butler. In a small Kent church, he drowned the Hallelujah chorus with his jolly hammering. "That was not *Messiah*," says Harnoncourt dryly.

Using Handel's dimensions, Harnoncourt employs a chamber orchestra and chorus of 35 apiece, and opens Hallelujah at something like sotto voce. "Handel specifies that the trumpets must come in softly," he notes, inferring that all else is tamped down. The effect is an unexpected clarity, a gradual parting of clouds to reveal the ultimate glory. Some will find his approach unsatisfying, lacking the necessary catharsis, but the adjustment is both illuminating and intimately beautiful.

Harnoncourt, who stands above the vicious bickering of period conductors, makes no definitive claim for his interpretation and respects the work's singular importance in the English tradition. "I am not interested in repeating a performance of a special day in the 18th century. After all we have survived – in life, in politics, in art – the message of a work changes. You can project the message better by using the possibilities of the time, but not always. When there is a tradition that has grown for two centuries, a lot of things that don't belong to the work are added, and they become part of the country, of the national identity."

That tradition, persistent in tsunami, earthquake and Armistice Day poppy appeals, was the core of the great composer's message. After the first London performance in 1743, a friendly member of the aristocracy congratulated him for the pleasure he had given. "My Lord," said Handel, "I should be sorry if I only entertained them. I wished to make them better." ■

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

1) J. S. Bach: Alles Mit Gott und Nichts ohn' ihm, BWV. 1127
Elin Manahan Thomas, English Baroque Soloists/John Eliot Gardiner
Soli Deo Gloria • SDG 114

2) F. J. Haydn: Die Schopfung (The Creation)
Sunhae Im, Jan Kobow, Hanno Muller-Brachmann, VokalEnsemble
Koln, Capella Augustina/Andreas Sperring • Naxos 8.557380-81

3) F. Couperin: Keyboard Music, Vol. 3
Angela Hewitt, piano • Hyperion CDA 67520

4) P.I. Tchaikovsky: 18 Pieces, Op. 72
Mikhail Pletnev, piano • DGG 00289 477 5378

**5) G. P. Telemann: "Tutti Flauti"
Concertos for Flutes & Recorders**
Arion/Jaap ter Linden • early-music.com EMCCD-7763

6) D. Scarlatti: 18 Sonatas
Vincent Boucher, organ • Atma SACD 22341

7) C. Le Jeune: Autant en Emporte le Vent & other chansons
Ensemble Clement Janequin/Dominique Visse
Harmonia Mundi HMC 901863

8) G. Palestrina: Missa Papae Marcelli
Tallis Scholars/Peter Phillips • Gimell GIMSE 401

9) A. Scarlatti: Keyboard Music, Vol. 1 – Toccatas
Alexander Weimann, harpsichord • Atma ACD 22321

10) Concerti Virtuosi
Tafelmusik/Jeanne Lamon • Analekta AN 29815

1) J.S. Bach: Alles Mit Gott und Nichts ohn' ihm, BWV. 1127
Elin Manahan Thomas, The English Baroque Soloists/John Eliot Gardiner
Soli Deo Gloria SDG 114

It's not often that a new work by one of the great composers is discovered, and even rarer that the composer is J. S. Bach. The last time a complete vocal work by Bach was found was 1935! The present one was discovered serendipitously, with a bulk of dusty printed library material this past summer in Weimar. The musicologist who found it couldn't believe his eyes – or his luck. It's a twelve-stanza song intended for the Duke of Saxe-Weimar's birthday in 1713. Bach, who had just obtained his first major appointment, was only 28 years old and yet the song has all the traits of the mature master. Gardiner and his forces recorded only three of the twelve stanzas for inclusion on this sampler disc of highlights from their planned cycle of the complete cantatas. But the twelve minutes of song are enough to illustrate the talent, skill and craft of the young Bach. A true find!



2) F. J. Haydn: Die Schopfung (The Creation)
Soloists, VokalEnsemble Koln, Capella Augustina/Andreas Sperring
Naxos 8.557380-81

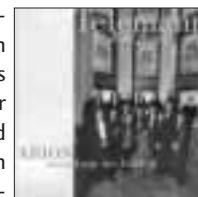
If you're looking for a good, period-instrument version of The Creation, the great oratorio by Haydn, at budget price, look no further. This new one from Naxos, of the German version, Die Schopfung, is youthful, fresh and energetic, nicely capturing the wide-eyed innocence, mystery and

awe of the work. The soloists are all strong. I especially liked the young Korean-born soprano Sunhae Im. Her voice is bright and agile – perfectly suited to the work. The choir and orchestra are scaled down, but alert and responsive. If you think you might miss out on some of the grandeur of The Creation with a period-instrument ensemble and the historically informed approach, don't worry – the faster tempos and energy of this performance more than make up for the smaller forces. And the recording has a nice bloom to the sound, in keeping with the approach and size of the performing ensemble.



5) G.P. Telemann: "Tutti Flauti" – Concertos for Flutes & Recorders
Arion/Jaap ter Linden
early-music.com EMCCD-7763

The Montreal-based early music group Arion is celebrating its 25th anniversary this season. Back in 1980, Arion was one of the first early-music groups in Montreal, and in many ways, set the standard for the many that followed. Montreal is now a hotbed of early-music activity in North America. Arion started out as a quartet but now expands as repertoire demands, and world-renowned guest conductors regularly work with the ensemble. The latest recording, on their own record label, is a disc called "Tutti Flauti" – a collection of concertos by Telemann for recorders and/or flutes with strings, guest-conducted by the noted Dutch cellist and conductor Jaap ter Linden. It's up to Arion's usual high standards, showing off some of the young, up-and-coming musicians as well as the veterans. Best wishes for another successful 25 years, and keep the recordings coming!



8) G. Palestrina: Missa Papae Marcelli
The Tallis Scholars/Peter Phillips
Gimell GIMSE 401

This year also marks the 25th anniversary of the English record label Gimell, set up in 1980 to record The Tallis Scholars directed by Peter Phillips. One of their first releases contained the Missa Papae Marcelli by Palestrina, the famous Miserere by Allegri and Vox Patris Caelestis by the 16th-Century English composer William Mundy. It was an immediate artistic and commercial success, making it to No. 1 on the classical chart in the U.K. in 1981. This recording set a standard for both the performance and recording of Renaissance sacred music. Many feel that these are the definitive versions of the Palestrina and the Allegri works in question. In honour of the 25th anniversary of the Gimell label, it has been re-issued at budget-price, making it all the more attractive. ■



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★★★★★ A MUST!
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★★★☆☆ VERY GOOD
★★★☆☆ GOOD
★★☆☆☆ SO-SO
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Reviewers

RB Réjean Beaucage
FC Frédéric Cardin
PG Philippe Gervais
WSH W.S. Habington
IP Isabelle Picard
JKS Joseph K. So

Vocal

Arias for Senesino

Works by Handel, Albinoni, Lotti, Porpora and A. Scarlatti

Andreas Scholl, countertenor;
Accademia Bizantina / Ottavio Dantone
Decca 475 6569 (65 min 30 s)

★★★★★ \$\$\$

Between 1707 and 1740, the alto castrato Francesco Bernardi was sought after and idolized throughout Europe, from Italy to Dresden to London—as much for his acting talents as for his voice. He was a superb performer of Handel, incarnating the roles of Giulio Cesare, Ottone, Orlando, and Rinaldo, among others. The present program is designed to relive various moments in the astonishing career of the man who was nicknamed Senesino ("the little one from Sienna"). It cleverly mixes well-known Handel arias with a number of unpublished works by less celebrated composers such as Lotti and Porpora. Senesino's range wasn't as great as Farinelli's, but the former was admired for his good taste, perfect technique, and superb singing—qualities that Andreas Scholl possesses to the highest degree. He performs the vocally difficult



with elegance, handling speed, *cantabile*, and breath control with ease. His dramatic presence is masterful, and his subtle expression of emotion is everywhere. This is perhaps one of his finest recitals, and the *Cara sposa* is certainly one of the most moving renditions on record. The musicians of the Accademia Bizantina accompany him to the split second (they backed him two years earlier on a CD of newly discovered Italian cantatas). They make a point of always performing to the same high standard, the same attention to detail, but always transcended by virtuosity, a fine sense of rhythm, and beautifully worked coloration (two harpsichords for the continuo!). An aria by Antonio Lotti gives us a chance to hear the first violin playing solo; another aria, this time by Alessandro Scarlatti, gives free rein to the enthusiastic humour of the horn players. Cecilia Bartoli may be the *nec plus ultra* for those looking for a baroque song recital, but Andreas Scholl, in the ideal and sustained use of such musical associates, is equally fine.

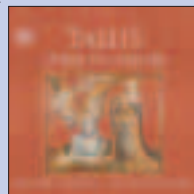
Philippe Gervais

Tallis

Gaude gloriosa, Magnificat
The Cardinal's Musick / Andrew Carwood
Hyperion CDA67548 (69 min 15 s)

★★★★★ \$\$\$

Thomas Tallis (1505–1585) lived in what was probably the most violent period of England's religious history. He was born in a Roman Catholic country and had risen to prominence when Henry VIII closed down and emptied abbeys throughout the land and transferred all Church property to the State. Under his elder daughter, Queen Mary, the country returned to Roman Catholicism, only to become Protestant once more under Queen Elizabeth I. Tallis navigated skilfully between the shoals of this turbulent period. His works generally express an abiding interest in modernism: techniques handed down by past masters, such as the *cantus firmus* and melismatic (embellished) phrasing, virtually disappeared from his mature work. The motet form is seen here, a happy blend of Italian tradition and English sensitivity, and one of the most accomplished musical works of the entire Renaissance. Perhaps because of the circumstances in which Tallis worked, but assuredly thanks to his exceptional talent, he is one of the most important, inspiring, and original composers of the pre-baroque era. He developed a unique and absolutely transcending musical language. It is difficult to imagine a performance that does greater justice to this work than that of the musicians on this recording. **Frédéric Cardin**



Chamber music

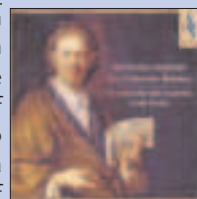
François Couperin

Les Concerts Royaux

Le Concert des Nations,
Jordi Savall, viol and conductor
Aliavox AV9840 (62 min 54 s)

★★★★★ \$\$\$

Jordi Savall is a man on whom you can rely. In 1976 he opened the Astrée collection—one of the finest ever devoted to baroque music—with a memorable recording of two suites for viol by Couperin. Thirty years later, he has brought together a few of the finest of his earlier group (Hantaï, Cocset, Kraemer & Co.!) for a further homage to the composer. Savall, who is steeped in French culture, speaks fervently of Couperin as the "Poet Musician." He refuses to consider the *Concerts Royaux* as merely ordinary works of their time. "They epitomize a grace more lovely than beauty itself," he says, citing La Fontaine. A somewhat faded grace, perhaps, since Couperin was writing at the end of Louis XIV's reign, but with a charm that still holds us, especially when Savall is conducting. He has taken extraordinary care with this recording, tastefully varying the instrumentation, as he is quite free to do. For example, on occasion we hear a veritable small orchestra made up of the eight instrumentalists (a superb, deep-toned prelude in the fourth concert), elsewhere a rippling violin or flute *courante*, or a tender air on the viol. Needless to say, all the soloists have mastered their instruments to perfection. Alfredo Bernardini's oboe playing is particularly captivating. In addition, Philippe Beausant's program notes provide a brief but inspired commentary on each piece. **PG**

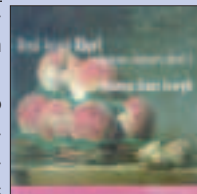


[OCT] Henri-Joseph Rigel

Quatuors dialogués, (Quartet Dialogues),
Opus 10 Franz Joseph Quartet
Atma ACD2 2348 (76 min 44 s)

★★★★★ \$\$\$

Rigel was a French composer of German birth who lived between 1741 and 1799, and came to Paris in 1767. Henri-Joseph Rigel (born Heinrich-Joseph Riegel) is pretty well forgotten in our day. The Franz Joseph Quartet, featuring Olivier Brault and Jacques Houle on violin, Hélène Plouffe on viola, and Marcel Saint-Cyr on cello, have been inspired to study this unexplored repertoire. Here they give us what may well be the first recording of the six quartets of Rigel's Opus 10. The special aspect of these four dialogues



is the melodic line, which, rather than being given to the first violin, passes from one performer to another, creating a kind of dialogue among the instruments, with the performers taking turns being either accompanists or soloists. Sometimes, even within a phrase, the melodic line switches instruments in what seems a perfectly natural way. The result is music full of variety, elegance, and subtlety, without any great dramatic tension, but interesting to follow nevertheless. The musicians use period instruments to render the music with a fresh charm. **Isabelle Picard**

Contemporary Music

Naturel - Musiques Montréal-Liège

Works by Defresne, Mather, Pousseur, Gonneville, Laporte

Francis Orval (horn); Jean-Pierre Peuvion (clarinet); Yolande Parent (soprano);

Launeddas Ensemble; Quatuor Tellus; Quatuor Euterpe

ATMA Classique ACD2 2363 (66 min)

★★★★☆ \$\$\$

This recording is the fruit of an exchange between the Conservatoire de musique de Montréal and the Conservatoire Royal de Liège. It brings together composers interested in sound research in a non-tempered harmonic context. Henri Pousseur is the main inspiration, and his work *Naturel* for solo horn offers an example of the use of natural harmonics. It's also an irreplaceable reference work for the instrument, giving a major boost to the repertoire for soloists. Michel Gonneville was a pupil of Pousseur, whose influence is evident in *Île arc-en-ciel*, (*Rainbow Island*) for soprano and microtonal organ. The use of microtones is no longer the novelty it was in Wyschnegradsky's time. We can now appreciate its beauty. Regrettably, Gonneville gives us only an excerpt of his piece *Îles* (1991), which is 45-minute long. Jean-François Laporte is a composer whose music is beginning, as here, to be heard in recordings. *De la matière première* is a highly exploratory work, with members of the Quatuor Euterpe putting their instruments through their paces with fierce intensity. Bruce Mather is our apostle of microtonality, and his *Quintette* for clarinet and strings is performed here with impressive mastery, producing a sparkling rendition of his dream-like coloration. On this CD we also meet the work of composer Paula Defresne, whom we'd like to hear more of. **Réjean Beaucage**



[OCT] Steve Reich

Different Trains

The Smith Quartet

Signum Classics SIGCD064 (47 min)

★★★★★ \$\$

The Smith Quartet (Britain) has been performing Steve Reich's *Different Trains* (1988) for some years, and it's great to have it on CD (the Kronos Quartet has already done it, and the Quatuor Bozzini is about to release their version.). Coupling it with *Triple Quartet* (1999) and the short *Duet* (1994) provides us with a magnificent portrait of the American composer's writing for this type of ensemble... and more! The composer has added tracks over the quartet that literally multiply the performance—up to four times for DT, three for TQ. In *Duet*, a tribute to Yehudi Menuhin, we have a really far-out *duo* with two solo violins, four violas, and four cellos. There are also snatches of speech that form the background of DT, a reminder of Reich's very first works, with train whistles as well. This work is far more dynamic in its construction than his youthful works, and we certainly can't accuse Reich of minimalism nowadays. He has long been a master of mixed music. **RB**

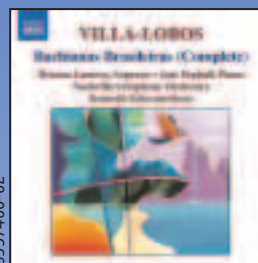


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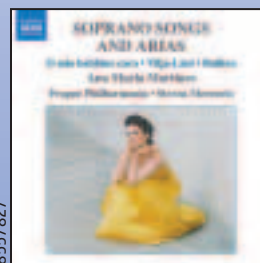
Feature of the Month



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Steven Mercurio, conductor

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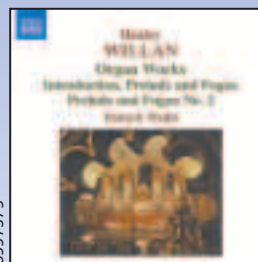
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Chamber Music

Louise Farrenc: Chamber Works

Nonette pour cordes et vents Op 38 (1), Mélodie (2), Variations concertantes pour violon et piano Op 20 (3), Études Op 26 (4), Trio pour clarinette, violoncelle et piano Op 44 (5): Philippe Bernold (flute - 1), François Leleux (oboe - 1), Romain Guyot (clarinet 1, 5), André Cazelet (Horn - 1), Gilbert Audin (bassoon - 1), Guillaume Sutre (violin - 1, 3), Miguel da Silva (viola - 1), François Salque (cello - 1), Vincent Pasquier (double bass), Brigitte Engerer (piano 2, 3, 5), Jean-Frédéric Neuberger (piano - 4)

Naïve V5033 (74 min 31 sec)

★★★★☆ \$\$\$

Those contemplating a New Year's resolution to get more pure enjoyment out of the music emanating from the home sound system would do well to add this refreshing disc to their collections. Louise Farrenc will already be familiar to collectors fortunate enough to have acquired the CPO discs of her orchestral works (999 603-2 and 999 820-2) performed by the NDR Radiophilharmonie under Johannes Goritski. These revealed a composer of merit and originality from an era in French music which had seemed to begin and end with Hector Berlioz. This formidable woman achieved the virtually impossible in the 19th century. As a pianist, composer and teacher, she earned an ample living in music. Her compositions were much admired by Robert Schumann.

This sampler of her chamber works presents the composer in an intimate light. The Nonet is the essence of Farrenc –Mozartian charm and Gallic elegance to open the programme. Scintillating piano miniatures follow and the disc concludes with the lively Trio. The performers are among the finest musicians in France and the playing (recorded live in concert at the Louvre in January 2005) is splendid. The sound quality is excellent. **W.S. Habington**

Judy Loman: The Romantic Harp

Works for solo harp by Grandjany, Tournier, Rota, Pierné, de Falla, Fauré, Prokofiev, Salzedo and Murphy – Judy Loman (harp)

Naxos 8554561 (59 min 25 s)

★★★★☆ \$

In the right hands and with the right music, the harp can ravish. The art of Judy Loman gently takes us beyond harmonic sensualities to a blessed state of rapture. Readers acquainted with her previous solo album for



Naxos (Harp Showpieces - 8554347) will know what to expect here. This recital demands consummate precision and timing but the performances are truly great by virtue of the artist's intuitive grasp of the music and her ability to recreate every expressive nuance conceived by the composer. The programme is especially well chosen. The longest piece is Carlos Salzedo's *Ballade*, Op 28, at just under ten minutes. Loman honours her former teacher at the Curtis Institute with an exquisite account of this early (1913) composition. All ten of the miniatures on the disc are rendered in a manner that will convince you that perfection is an attainable state. In recognition of Loman's retirement after 42 years as the principal harpist of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the CBC commissioned Canadian composer Kelly-Marie Murphy to write a harp concerto (*And then at night I paint the stars*) dedicated to Loman. The four-minute third movement cadenza absolutely scintillates. Loman continues to teach at the U of T, the Royal Conservatory in Toronto and the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia. **WSH**

Orchestral Music

Johannes Brahms: Orchestral Works

Symphony No 2, Hungarian Dances Nos 1, 3, 10, and 17-21: London Philharmonic Orchestra/Marin Alsop

Naxos 8557429 (65 min 06 sec)

★★★★☆ \$

Typically, most conductors (such stalwarts as Furtwängler, Karajan and Böhm among them) bring in the opening movement of the Brahms Second in less than fifteen minutes. Like the 1988 Claudio Abbado benchmark recording with the Berlin Philharmonic, Marin Alsop fully honours the immaculate recapitulation and the exposition repeat of the *Allegro non troppo* and takes over twenty minutes to render the movement. This is how Brahms conducted it himself.

The first installment in the Alsop Brahms symphony cycle (No 1 with the *Tragic* and *Academic Festival* Overtures) was greeted with wide acclaim when it appeared earlier this year. This account of the second is even finer rivaling the recent and highly rated recording from Mariss Jansons and the Royal Concertgebouw (RCO 05002). Alsop gives us a warmly enlightened performance that accords with the composer's conception of expansive optimism.

Alsop enjoys the eager cooperation of the LPO's battle-hardened veterans; there is a spark in the orchestral playing that has not been as consistently evident on record since



the Tennstedt era. This generous spirit is also demonstrated in the selections from the *Hungarian Dances*.

Although, the Abbado set of Brahms symphonies and choral works (DG 435 683-2) still looks unbeatable; Alsop's is a clear first choice in the mid-price and below range. The disc is expertly engineered by Tim Handley. **WSH**

Felix Draeseke: Orchestral Works

Symphonies Nos 1 & 4, Gudrun Overture: NDR Radiophilharmonie/Jörg-Peter Weigle

CPO 999 746-2 (68 min 58 sec)

★★★★☆ \$\$\$\$

The appearance of this fine disc reinforces the suspicion that CPO (Classic Production Osnabrück) really stands for 'Classical's Precious Obscurities'. Filed chronologically by the composers' date of birth, CDs of the music of Felix Draeseke (1835-1913) would occupy shelf space with other under-appreciated symphonists such as Max Bruch, Friedrich Gernsheim and Herman Goetz. Yet, to paraphrase Richard Strauss's self-effacing quip, "Draeseke may have been a second-rate composer, but he was a first-class second-rate composer." His First Symphony lacks the cohesion of the Second and Third (CPO 999 719-2 and 999 581-2, respectively) but it is bursting with good ideas. Symphony No 4 *Symphonia Comica*, was completed in 1912, twenty-six years after No 3. This compositional postscript shows the devoted Liszt adherent to have landed stylistically on the threshold of the 20th century. The Overture to Draeseke's 1882 opera, *Gudrun*, makes an attractive coupling. Jörg-Peter Weigle succeeds in presenting the music to best advantage and his Hanover orchestra responds with enthusiasm. This issue completes the CPO cycle of Draeseke symphonies. The label has also recently released an impressive disc of Symphonies Nos 2 and 5 by Mahler contemporary Emil Nikolaus von Reznicek. In the near future, we can also look forward to recordings of symphonies from more 'precious obscurities' including Joseph Eybler, Ludwig Thuille, FLA Kunzen, Georg Gerson and Eduard Erdmann. **WSH**



Modest Mussorgsky: Stokowski Transcriptions

A Night on Bare Mountain, Entr'acte to Act IV of Khovanshchina, Symphonic Synthesis of Boris Godunov, Pictures at an Exhibition, coupled with transcriptions of: Tchaikovsky: Humoresque, Solitude and Stokowski: Traditional Slavic Christmas Music – Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra/José Serebrier

Naxos 6110101 Hybrid SACD (76 min 47 sec)

★★★★☆ \$

José Serebrier has maintained an active record-

ing schedule in recent years with notable discs for BIS, Warner and Naxos. Releases for the latter label received a couple Grammy nominations in 2004 and the recording of his own arrangement of a *Carmen Symphony* after Bizet was honoured with a Latin Grammy. Serebrier usually contributes authoritative booklet notes and in the present issue, these are of great value because Stokowski was an influential mentor for the young Serebrier.

Stokowski's orchestration of *A Night on Bare Mountain* is well known from the soundtrack of Disney's *Fantasia* of 1940. The Serebrier performance is even more sinister and violent than the master's own. The excerpt from *Khovanshchina* is a reminder of the extraordinary quality of the opera and that is exactly what Stokowski had in mind when he transcribed it. The Stokowski treatment of *Pictures* is radically different from the familiar Ravel orchestration. He dispensed with the *Tuileries* and *Market Place at Limoges* passages entirely and exerted himself to make the piece more Mussorgskian. Serebrier makes a very convincing case for this version although he is not ready to forsake the Ravel either. It is certainly worth hearing and the music lends itself to 5.0 SACD surround sound; the stereo tracks are also impressive.

The Bournemouth SO is more than equal to the challenge of this demanding music. The additional material makes for an interesting and generous programme. **WSH**

Holiday

Aeterna

Natalie Choquette, soprano; Noëlla Huet, alto; Éléonore Lagacé, treble

Selections of sacred pieces with solo voices, choir, and chamber ensemble

ISB CD 5107 www.isbamusic.com

★★★★☆ \$\$\$

Aeterna Romantica

Natalie Choquette, soprano; David DQ Lee, countertenor; Éléonora Lagacé, treble

Selections of classical pieces arranged for solo voices, choir, and chamber ensemble

ISB CD 5109 www.isbamusic.com

★★★★☆ \$\$\$

For those looking for Christmas stocking stuffers in the 'easy listening' genre, these two discs will prove quite irresistible. The star on both is Natalie Choquette, the gifted soprano and classical comedienne, who has delighted audiences worldwide with her sidesplitting antics for the past decade. What is sometimes overlooked is the fact that Choquette possesses a modest-sized but lovely instrument of range and flexibility. In these two albums, she has eschewed her usual comic impulses for 'straight' renditions of sacred and classical pieces, rearranged by the talented Éric Lagacé to suit her vocal gifts. For some selections, she is joined by Noëlla Huet, alto, and the excellent countertenor David DQ Lee. Also on the disc is treble Éléonora Lagacé, the soprano's seven-year-old daughter. The first album, *Aeterna*, released in November 2004, has sold 25,000 copie, and recently received an ADISQ award as Album on the Year – Classical Soloist and Small Ensemble. Choquette took it on tour last season. Part of the proceeds from sales of these discs will benefit La Fondation Québécoise du Cancer, of which Choquette is the spokesperson.

Building on the success of *Aeterna*, Choquette has released *Aeterna Romantica*, based on the same format, and definitely not for purists. All the pieces are re-orchestrated, some drastically; and often the melodic line designated for instruments is replaced by voice and/or choir. If you are not bothered by that – and I am not – these discs are for you. They are beautifully produced and highly enjoyable. Choquette and music director Éric Lagacé have chosen the most musically accessible pieces, some retained in their original form with little tinkering, for example the



'Barcarolle' from *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, while others are almost totally rearranged for voice, such as the *Adagietto* from Mahler's Fifth. Choquette sings with a girlishly 'white' tone that is devoid of vibrato, an approach that actually suits the music and the chamber arrangements well. Occasionally she tosses in a high note to show off her upward extension. Understandably, some selections are more successful than others. The Hoffmann duet is lovely, her voice blending nicely with the countertenor. On the other hand, one misses the argent quality of a tenor sound in 'Una furtiva lagrima' – her otherworldly, disembodied approach is not to my taste. But overall, these two releases are terrific choices for the Yuletide season. **Joseph K. So**

Christmas with Winchester College Chapel Choir

Sara Macliver, soprano

Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, William Lacey, conductor

Naxos 8.557965 (66 m 21 s)

★★★★☆ \$\$\$

This disc will put you in the Christmas mood. It features the Winchester College Chapel Choir performing the chestnuts one has come to love during the Yuletide season, plus a few less familiar modern pieces. The first four selections are sung *a capella*, with the old standard 'O come, all ye faithful', the Bach cantatas and Handel's *Messiah* accompanied by the Hong Kong Philharmonic. The treble voices are lovely, but elsewhere the blending of male voices can be a bit spotty. Australian Sara Macliver has a pretty, light soprano with good coloratura and just a touch more vibrato than your typical "nymphs and shepherds"-type voice one has come to expect in this repertoire. She is the standout on this disc. The orchestra uses modern instruments, so if you are looking for authentic baroque sound, you won't find it here. The conducting of William Lacey is leisurely. If you like your cantatas and oratorios a bit more full-bodied, you will find this disc quite enjoyable. Included are substantial selections from Handel's *Messiah*, plus bits and



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Sikora: Vancouver's CD Valhalla

BY CLAIRE BLAUSTEIN

Everyone has their own idea of heaven. As a classical musician, I always pictured my Valhalla as a big record store in the sky, with thousands and thousands of CDs to pick from. But it turns out I don't have to wait for the afterlife for my vision to come true. I could just go to Vancouver instead.

Vancouver's Sikora's Classical Records has a stock of 25,000 albums. Twenty-five THOUSAND. Everything is there: classical CDs, classical concert and opera DVD/Videos, Super Audio CDs, and DVD-Audios, as well as vinyl LPs

music as were its founders.

Working in a classical music store had not been in the stars for either of the men. "I have a BSc in Cell/Molecular Biology and an MSc in Genetics," Savenye said about his academic background. "I have taken some basic piano lessons to a certain level." Roger Scobie does have a degree in music – he studied piano at the Victoria Conservatory – though he doesn't play any longer. Yet, it's apparent that both are equally devoted to music and excited about their work.

For Ed Savenye and Roger Scobie, Sikora's is

tickets to events, Sikora's keeps itself actively involved in the musical community. But the store itself is also a community, especially for the people who have been shopping there since the beginning.

"We offer a great selection of the music people know and love from their experiences growing up and attending concerts," Savenye said. "We have a great, friendly and knowledgeable staff - it makes for a good impression and a great experience shopping at the store. People feel good about coming here to shop."

With larger chain stores becoming the norm, there is a fear that smaller businesses may not be able to compete. So far, Sikora's hasn't been affected. "Things have remained pretty stable overall here," said Savenye. "Our LARGE selection of classical titles keeps us in good (or better) standing with respect to any competition. Customers tell us the other outlets are cutting back significantly on their classical inventory, so our selection puts us in a relatively good position."

Although business is going well, it hasn't been an entirely smooth path for Scobie and Savenye. As they'll tell you, any enterprise of this magnitude has its ups and downs.

"We haven't had any real difficulties with the basic operation of the store," Savenye said. "[But] Roger and I were just handed the store when Rod developed some serious health concerns. That was a very emotionally shocking event - with a very STEEP learning curve I can tell you!"

"Probably the worst thing was the four months of Transit strike that started just as Roger and I took over the store from Rod. The best – [it's] hard to say. I think the privilege of being at the store, working here, being able to say one truly enjoys their job - the 'Sikora's experience' as a whole has to be the best."



for those who prefer older technological forms.

Sikora's has been up and running for over 25 years, an impressive feat for any business, especially one dealing in the niche market of classical music. It got started in 1978 when Rod Horsley got together with Dick and Dorothy Sikora and decided that Vancouver needed a store that would help foster a strong classical presence in the city.

Although Dick is still involved with the store, he has turned over the day-to-day business to Ed Savenye and Roger Scobie, who are as dedicated to the distribution of classical

more than a store, it's a part of the classical music community in Vancouver. "We have a very broad base of regular customers here who have been regular customers for many, many years," Scobie said. "And we do a lot of promotion for local concerts, selling tickets."

"We're located right next to the large print music shop in Vancouver [Long and McQuade]...and that's where the young musicians come to get their scores. So a lot of young musicians come through here trying to promote their concerts."

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Le belle immagini: Myslivecek, Mozart and Gluck opera arias, Magdalena Kozena DG CD 471 334 2

It is refreshing and exciting to hear Myslivecek

- a lesser known but very delightful composer - on the same disc with some well-loved Mozart and Gluck arias, performed by the magnificent Magdalena Kozena.

Rameau: Une Symphonie Imaginaire, Les Musiciens du Louvre, Marc Minkowski Archiv 477 557 8

Energetic French Baroque music interpreted by some of the best musicians in the field. Delightful.

pieces from Bach's Cantatas 10, 42, 147, and 236. The recording was made when the choir was on tour in Hong Kong in December 2004. The booklet includes a brief essay on the pieces, a listing of all the choir members, artist bios, texts and translations, plus several picturesque photos of the chapel and the choir. The sound is good without too much reverberation. **JKS**

DVD

Dmitri Hvorostovsky in Concert

Mussorgsky Songs and Dances of Death, Respighi The Pines of Rome, arias from Un ballo in maschera, Don Carlo, Barbiere di Siviglia

Orchestre symphonique de Montreal, Charles Dutoit, conductor

Live performance at Lanaudiere Festival, July 1998

VAI DVD 4330 (54 min)

★★★★☆ \$\$\$\$

We seem to be enjoying a 'golden age' when it comes to baritones. Even in an extremely crowded field, Dmitri Hvorostovsky stands out as the proverbial crème de la crème. Arguably there is nobody today, with the possible exception of Bryn Terfel, who can touch the Siberian when it comes to sheer beauty of voice and stage charisma. While the Welshman may be more versatile in terms of repertoire, in sheer vocal terms, Hvorostovsky's smooth-as-silk baritone and amazingly long breath-line are hard to beat.

This concert, taped live in summer 1998 at the Lanaudiere Festival, when Hvorostovsky was only 35, captures the Russian at his youthful prime. He opens with *Songs and Dances of Death*, a cycle of galvanizing intensity. He has previously recorded it on the Philips label, one of his earliest recordings. If anything, his interpretation has deepened in the intervening years. The three Verdi arias that followed show his timbre to be absolutely ideal in this repertoire. Everything is sung with unfailing beauty of tone, and one cannot ask for a more resplendent top. In Rossini, his 'Largo al factotum' shows flair for comedy not normally associated with him. The audience responded with warm applause after the Mussorgsky. With each succeeding aria, the ovations increased in intensity until he brought the house down with the Rossini. The concert ended with the traditional Russian melody, 'Dark Eyes'. At 54 minutes, the DVD is on the ungenerous side, and typical of VAI products, there is a minimum of information and zero program notes. Another blemish is the slight synchronization problem



between video and audio, just enough to be annoying. But given the excellent singing, it is well worth the hefty price. **JKS**

Claudio Monteverdi: L'incoronazione di Poppea

Live Recording from the Netherlands Opera 1994.

Cynthia Haymon (Poppea), Brigitte Balleys (Nerone), Ning Liang (Ottavia), Michael Chance (Ottone), Harry van der Kamp (Seneca), Heidi Grant Murphy (Drusilla), Jean-Paul Fouchécourt ((Arnalta), Dominique Visse (Nutrice), et al, Les Talents Lyriques/ Christophe Rousset

Stage Director: Pierre Audi, Video Director:

Hans Hutscher

Opus Arte OA0925 D (219 min – 2 DVDs) Sound 2.0 & 5.1

★★★★☆ \$\$\$

Monteverdi's masterpiece for the stage was composed to a libretto by Busenello after Tacitus and Suetonius. The 1642 premiere of *Poppea* in Venice was a landmark in the still new art form of opera. It is a dramatization of historical facts; real people snared in lethal affairs of state (a genre that Giuseppe Verdi would ultimately master). The plot revolves around the illicit love of Nerone and Poppea, with the muses of Fortune and Virtue taking a beating from Cupid. With the passage of time, *Poppea* stands as a searing indictment of the human condition in the nexus of lust and power.

Poppea, presented here in almost complete form, must now be recognized as a great music drama by the standards of any age.

The *castrato* role of Nerone is taken by mezzo-soprano Brigitte Balleys with distinction. Counter-tenor, Michael Chance, exhibits remarkable stage presence as Ottone, cuckold and would-be cross-dressing assassin. As Seneca, the doomed philosopher, Harry van der Kamp is superb. The remainder of the cast (with over twenty named roles) is consistently excellent.

Conductor Christophe Rousset contributes a very useful book which explains the musical approach: "... the 'orchestra' consists of only two violins, a viola, a cello, a bass, two harpsichords and two lutes." These are augmented by cornets, recorders, theorbo and viola da gamba, which Monteverdi tended to favour in other works. The drama in *Poppea* is carried by the recitative and Rousset's songful accompaniment is marvelous.

Consult the DVD extras before viewing the opera for the helpful illustrated synopsis. Set designer Michael Simon succeeds with three austere layouts and Jean Kalman provide excellent lighting. **WSH**



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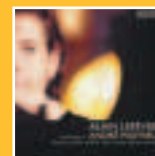
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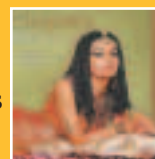


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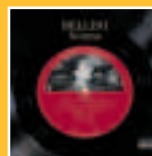


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Photo: Dave Carter

Yoon Choi & Hayden Beale - Scene from "Québécois"

Arias of swing

MARC CHÉNARD

Close Encounters of the Unusual Kind

Jazz and opera, opera and jazz... Whatever way one chooses to look at it, no two genres seem so far apart from each other as this pair. A bourgeois art par excellence, opera remains the grand theatrical spectacle for well-heeled audiences. Jazz, in stark contrast, is a perpetual renegade stigmatized by its strictly proletarian beginnings. Yet, music is an adventure across borders, and more so in these post-this and neo-that times.

In September 2003, a jazz opera was premiered right here in Canada. Commissioned by the Guelph Jazz Festival on the occasion of its tenth anniversary, "Québécois" was a collaborative effort between composer-pianist D.D. Jackson and librettist George Elliot Clark. An interracial love story based on the life of the composer's own parents, this drama (which operas usually are) was performed by a small stage cast, with backing provided by a jazz quintet. Since its premiere, and a reprise in Vancouver shortly thereafter, this work has slipped quietly out of the spotlight. Far from having said his last word in this medium, Jackson received a new commission last June, this time from Toronto's Harbourfront Centre. Written in tandem with librettist Clark, this new work, entitled "Vistas," will revolve around the career of former Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau, its premiere slated for that institution's next season.

This kind of undertaking has historical antecedents. In fact, one can go back as far as Scott Joplin's turn of the century "Tremonisha", taking into account that the composer wrote in a pre-jazz idiom, ragtime. But in the Roaring Twenties, European classical composers were fascinated by the rhythms of the New American music and incorporated it into their scores, in spite of their cursory understanding of it. As early as 1924, Ravel integrated some of those

sounds in "L'Enfant et les Sortilèges". More striking was Ernst Krenek's "Johnny Spielt auf" in 1927, a work that met such resounding success after its premiere, that 42 more performances were staged that same year.

But these were all forerunners to George Gershwin's "Porgy and Bess", surely the most successful American opera of all times. Because the composer cleverly straddled the lines between popular and serious music, he enjoyed a degree of legitimacy in both camps, and his numerous hit songs took on a life of their own as jazz standards.

Although classical music drew on jazz in decades past, it took much longer for acknowledged jazz composers to measure up to the operatic challenge. Pianist Anthony Davis, for one, has written no less than four operas over a ten-year span. Beginning with "X" (aka "The Life and Times of Malcolm X") in 1986, he followed with "Under the Double Moon" (1989), "Tania" (1991, based on the Patti Hearst story) and "Amistad" (1997).

Yet, when it comes to ambition, no one beats Anthony Braxton. Indeed, his projected "Trillium Series" will comprise, by writing's end – if he gets there – no less than 36 one-act operas, all of which can be mixed and matched in any sequence or number for a given performance.

In Europe, opera's cradle, other such ventures are worth noting, most notably those by the Swiss pianist and composer George Gruntz (see record review in this section). "Cosmopolitan Greetings" (libretto by Allan Ginsberg) was premiered in Hamburg in 1987 and, more recently, he spun out a jazz version of the venerable "Magic Flute", complete with a cast of American singers and compatriot instrumentalists. Although cursory this survey is indicative of the reach of jazz, even if its encounters with opera are spotty at best. ■

Jazzpoetry: The Music of Words

PAUL SERRALHEIRO

Combining music and words is a practice of nearly all musical traditions. In jazz, the blending seems natural, the art having evolved within the song form. In classical music, the more common practice has been to compose "settings" for words. Over time, jazz composers have gone beyond writing in the basic song format, but have also written settings for words, and with some noteworthy results, too.

Probably the first to approach the setting of poetry in jazz was Duke Ellington, who, with Billy Strayhorn, rendered musical impressions of Shakespeare for a work commissioned by the Stratford Theatre Festival in 1956. The result was "Such Sweet Thunder," a suite in which the composers and the band put their distinctive stamp on the bard, with pieces like "Lady Mac Waltz," "Sonnet in Search of a Moor," "Star-Crossed Lovers," and "Madness in Great Ones."

Around the same time, the Beat poets were reading their words to jazz accompaniments. While dismissed by some as a fad, the practice which showed much creative promise had its precursors in the blues and in works of poets like Langston Hughes. Notable sessions teamed Jack Kerouac with David Amram or Al Cohn and Zoot Sims, while poets Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Kenneth Rexroth developed the art to a high level, mostly with lesser-known musicians. After the Beats came the Last Poets and Amiri Baraka, extending the counter-culture expression to serve larger political agendas.

While the Beat phenomenon was largely about poets being influenced by jazz, musicians were also drawn to the writers. A perfect case in point is Steve Lacy. His "Beat Suite," which takes an art song approach, is based on the work of ten writer friends (which include Kerouac, Rexroth, and Ginsberg). Lacy works much like a Schubert setting the poetry of Heine and Müller. Lacy's other word-music projects includes "Futurities," settings of poems by Robert Creeley and Kenneth Noland, and *The Cry*, based on the poetry of Bangladeshi writer Taslima Nasrin.

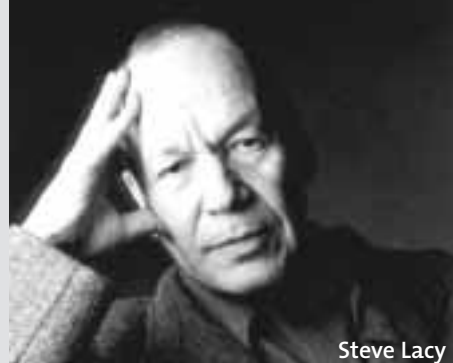
Viennese composer and trumpeter-flugelhornist Franz Koglmann has done

something similar in his strange and engaging “O Moon My Pin-Up,” which fused the poetry of Ezra Pound with a jazz-meets-expressionism musical idiom. The 1998 project based on Pound’s “Pisan Cantos” shows the possibilities of creating music using the complex architecture of an extended poetic creation. Pianist Fred Hersch recently collaborated with singer Kurt Elling (who once wrote and directed a theatrical homage to Allen Ginsberg) in a setting of Walt Whitman’s poems, now released on the CD “Intersections.”

Dutch sound-poet and composer Jaap Blonk is also an important voice in the choir of those who attempt to weld poetry to the improvisa-

tions of instrumentalists. In this case, his poetry is pure sound and the nuances of meaning are carried by the vowels and consonants of the human voice. The points of departure are often “poetry scores,” idiosyncratic graphic cue sheets for blending music and voice.

The meeting of jazz and classical approaches to the art of words and sounds was recently exemplified on May 15, 2005, at Carnegie Hall when pianist Brad Mehldau and soprano Renée Fleming performed the former’s musical settings of four Rilke poems. Even if the singer released a jazz CD in 2005, she maintained in a recent interview that “these are art songs,”



Steve Lacy

and that Mehldau “has crossed over to my world.” Based on this small sample alone, these two worlds are not so far apart as one might think. ■

OFF THE RECORD

Phil Nimmons

(with the Dave McMurdo Jazz Orchestra)

Canadian Composer Portraits

Centre Discs CMCD11005 (3 CD Box set)

★★★★☆

At 82 years young, composer, arranger, educator and clarinetist Phil Nimmons is the dean of all Canadian jazz musicians, even exceeding Oscar Peterson by two years. Unlike that internationally celebrated pianist, Nimmons carved out his niche in Canada, and Toronto in particular, where he wrote and composed extensively for the CBC. Through it all, he kept up his jazz interests at the helm of his own band, known as “Nimmons & Nine Plus Six”. To acknowledge his considerable contribution, the Canadian Music Centre has released a remarkable document, a three-CD set. Disc one comprises a fifty-minute documentary, in which the musician talks about the various stages of his career, starting from the then backwaters of Kamloops, B.C., his studies at New-York’s Juilliard School of Music and his subsequent work in his adopted city. The remainder, however, is all music (and plenty of it, too), courtesy of the Dave McMurdo big band. In over two and a half hours of a live club performance, this big band tackles 17 originals, with the composer soloing very fluently on four of the tracks. Overall, CD two features older pieces which is attested to by the squeaky-clean arrangements showing their age; conversely, the last disc strikes more updated chords, with some collective blowing and a few heated solos, most notably by tenorist Alex Dean. Jazz big band fans will be well served here, and those who’ve been around a bit will surely enjoy the recollections of Mr. Nimmons. Just in passing, the liner notes were written by



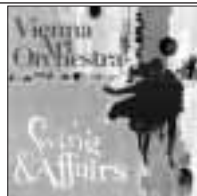
an old friend of his, the recently departed Harry Freedman. If music reflects the personality of its creator, then this most gentlemanly music is totally in keeping with the man. **MC**

Vienna Art Orchestra: Swing and Affairs

EmArcy 060249874469

★★★★☆

This big band has survived for over 25 years, no easy feat in this day and age. Not only has it survived, it has made a name for itself with serious jazz fans for its creative large ensemble ways in terms of composition and arrangement, as well as for its high-calibre playing. The big band has also been creative in its choice of repertoire, a fact evident here, where Mingus, Eric Satie, Eric Dolphy, Franz Schubert and Johann Strauss all rub shoulders. With the program on this disc, culled from eight of its previous program-based albums, the band is sure to gain an even wider audience, as it has become such a polished, tight unit with the sparkle of a first-rate show band. This very fact might disappoint some of the older fans. The music is delivered via a well-oiled machine, with solos that are always on the mark, displaying the professional polish of the group more than its creative edge—an edge which is given up here in favour of showmanship. Disappointing in this regard is the rather bland version of “Round Midnight” and the cheesy rhythms and voicings of “Tango from Obango.” That said, this is not music to be ashamed of at all. Tried and true though it may be, there are many a pleasant moment, such as Satie’s “Gnossienne No. 1,” which sounds fabulous as a big band arrangement, or the fluegelhorn theme of “Lisboa Reverie.” Finally, there are plenty of solos, played by some of the most accomplished musicians around. **PS**



Pino Minafra: Terronia

Enja enj 9480 2

★★★★☆

Energy and excitement animate this recording which is a passionate combination of various musical languages—with one reservation however: the use of jazz clichés in “Maccaroni,” and “La Danza del Grillo,” where the intended humour of the Walt-Disney-like phrases, followed by Satchmo scat imitations/parodies make this listener roll his eyes in disbelief. Notwithstanding this aesthetic lapse, the writing, playing and improvising on this disc are polished and powerful. The opening “Canto General” on poetry by Pablo Neruda and latter poetic passages for voices give Terronia a seriousness of intent, which the humorous tracks are but a counterpoint to. The charts are often boisterous, but capable of finely shaded nuance, as in “A Mia Madre,” which features sensitive fluegelhorn solo passages by the leader, or the understated fanfare and vocal opening of “Mediterraneo.” The backgrounds and transitional sections in the extended pieces (most are over 10 minutes long) are smoothly pulled off, as three different ensembles combine to render this ambitious music: the sextet Sud Ensemble (Minafra is from the south eastern coast of Italy), the vocal quartet Farualla, and the 22-piece Meridiana Multijazz Orchestra. The result is a mass of sound reflecting the leader’s varied influences: the community “banda,” baroque and renaissance music (in the voicings of the vocal and tutti passages) and the jazz band. This all comes together in the closing, title track, reminding us that jazz is alive and well and living in Italy. **PS**



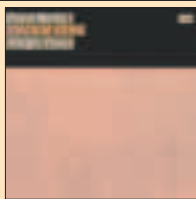
OFF THE RECORD

Piano Works I: Joachim Kühn: Allegro Vivace

Act 9750-2

★★★★☆

German pianist Joachim Kühn is truly one of the great virtuoso players on the international jazz scene. Since defecting from the East in the mid-sixties, this steely-fingered keyboardist has led a chequered career, playing free jazz, rock fusion, standards and classical repertoire, the latter being prominently featured on this solo side. In the inaugural disc of a new series launched by Act Records, Kühn covers a lot of ground, tackling works by Couperin, Bach, Mozart, Coltrane, Ornette Coleman and some of his own. His trademark impetuous runs work best with those of the latter three composers, but are frequently at odds with the former. What's more, his readings seem stiff at times (most noticeable in Couperin's Plainchant), and one gets the feeling he's itching to break away from the scores. Obviously, the pianist wanted to please himself by crossing boundaries, but lovers of classical piano may find him too iconoclastic for their taste, while jazz fans (and Kühn's in particular) will view his playing as too contained. Four stars for the musician, three for some of the renditions. **M.C.**



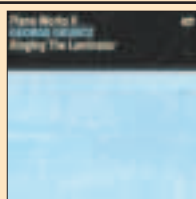
Piano Works II:

George Gruntz: Ringing the Luminator

Act 9751-2

★★★★☆

Amazingly, veteran Swiss pianist George Gruntz recorded his first solo album in 2004, at 72. Given his long and varied career, it stands to reason that a wealth of experience is embedded in his fingers. The release opens with an intriguingly titled three-part suite which gives its name to the disc, augmented by another 12 pieces over this generous 68-minute side. As a European, there are obvious classicist touches on the harmonic level, but there is bop-pish fluency as well, even touches of whimsy and some schmalz. Never an innovator, but one who has certainly absorbed trends, George Gruntz may have waited a long time to do this, but he is a solid jazz citizen, and an all-round piano stylist in his own right. Piano fans take note: there are now three more titles in this series, one by American Bruce Barth, another by Cuban Ramon Vallé (playing the music of Alberto Lecuona), and a compilation of romantic piano pieces performed by the aforementioned, and others as well. **M.C.**



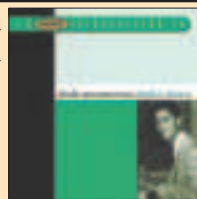
A Proper Introduction

to Dodo Marmarosa: Dodo's Dance

Proper INTRO CD 2055

★★★★☆

Dodo Marmarosa (1925-2002) may be known to the cognoscenti alone, mainly because of his playing on Charlie Parker's legendary Dial sessions. But his West Coast activities during the 1940's did not lead him to a very productive career, and he more or less retired from music by the early 60's. Nevertheless, his recorded output includes some very interesting sides from that bygone era, either in solo or trio settings, even as co-leader with another largely neglected figure, the recently departed saxophonist Lucky Thompson. True, the sound is at times sub-par (which was the case when records were cut for very small and elusive labels), but this should not deter one from the fact that this compilation is a good illustration of the spirit of those times, where the pianist shows us his modernist and classicist leanings, including a clear hint of French impressionism on two solo cuts, aptly entitled Tone Paintings I & II. For piano aficionados and those seeking a good value, this very reasonably priced disc is a definite keeper. **F.H.**



Paul Rutherford Ken Vandermark, Torsten Müller, Dylan van der Schyff

Hoxha

Spool Line 26

★★★★☆

This co-op quartet is a collection of four seasoned free music players starting with one of the pioneers of this genre, British trombonist Paul Rutherford. Sharing the front line here is the high-profiled reedman Ken Vandermark (on tenor and clarinet), the lesser-known German expatriate to Canada, bassist Torsten Müller and Vancouver's one and only Dylan van der Schyff on drums. Six cuts ranging from four minutes (including a minute and a half of unneeded applause) to 21 cover this hour-plus side of musical fisticuffs. But all is not Sturm und Drang here, for there are serene moments as well. As is the case for music in this idiom, it's more the process, or the natural ebb and flow of events that counts, and those best served by this outing were the audience at this live performance in Portland, Oregon, in December 2004. One puzzle remains though, its title. Why would one name this recording after the Communist dictator who once ruled Albania with an iron fist? Go figure... **M.C.**



MARC CHÉNARD, FELIX HAMEL, PAUL SERRALHEIRO

Andrew Rathbun-Owen Howard Quintet: Days Before and After

Fresh Sound New Talent FSNT 194CD

★★★★☆

As the label name suggests, this is music by emerging musicians who have something to say. The freshness comes from the lyrical compositions and the presence of two guitars, a somewhat untypical choice for a jazz group. This last fact makes for a special soundscape, as Ben Monder and Geoff Young bring a distinct blend of moody textures. Fellow Canadian expatriates and co-leaders, Andrew Rathbun on tenor and soprano, and Owen Howard on drums, have come up with meaningful vehicles that obviously say something to the instrumentalists. The closing "Nomad" gypsy theme and dreamy mood sum up the wistfulness that permeates the album, aptly suggested by the title. The compositions are thoughtful, though not always surprising in their directions, as the harmonic colours vary very little from tune to tune where darkish tones predominate. Produced by saxophonist Pat Labarbera, and also featuring bassist John Hebert, this is an offering that has sinewy reed solos, lots of depth to the guitar voicings and imaginative bass and drum underpinnings. **P.S.**



Miles Perkin: Common Thread

Ombu 1009

★★★★☆

This is a promising first album which combines strong voices from the Montreal jazz scene, led by Miles Perkin on bass, with Erik Hove on alto, Chet Doxas on tenor, Josh Rager on piano, Thom Gossage on drums, and the latter's brother, flutist Dave Gossage, guesting on one track. There are many good moments, making this a worthwhile listening experience, as in the opener "Common Thread Suite" or the funky, bass-driven "Insane Asylum." But there are moments where things drag. With over 75 minutes of music here, some cuts could have easily been made, like the popish "Orange Horizon," which, despite its clever rhythmic overlays, veers into rather saccharine melodicism, or "Game # 1" and "Fragile Innocence" which are sluggish and bog down the proceedings. There is no question of the quality of the musicianship here, but greater selectivity in the editing process could have made this a stronger album. **P.S.**



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