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JUST BEFORE ACCEPTING THE GLENN GOULD PRIZE sculpture, he first raised both hands in the air before dropping them gently onto the shoulders of the young musicians standing next to him; the prize was handed over to the musicians as soon as it was presented to him. For Dr. José Antonio Abreu, even 34 years after founding one of the most phenomenal education programs in the world, it is still all about the kids.

“No doubt this prestigious prize encourages us to create fraternal and eternal bonds with Canada’s brilliant new generation of musicians,” Abreu said through a translator upon accepting the triennial award at the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts in Toronto last month. “Music, within people’s reach, must be the highest expression of human dignity and social justice. Let’s strive together for this lofty ideal.”

As a musician, economist, educator, activist, and politician in Venezuela, Abreu dreamed of using his wide-ranging experiences and knowledge to create a free youth education system in which music was the principal avenue for social and intellectual improvement.

A lofty ideal, it would seem, but the modest 70-year-old has succeeded.

Born the eldest of six children to a musical family in Valera, Venezuela, Abreu graduated with a degree in economics from the Universidad Católica Andrés Bello and a PhD in petroleum economics from the University of Pennsylvania.

He has been a university professor, planning director at the Central Office of Coordination and Planning, advisor to the National Economic Council, minister of state for Culture, president of the National Council for Culture, and deputy in the Venezuelan Congress.

In music, Abreu studied with Doralisa Jiménez de Medina in Barquisimeto. He enrolled in the Caracas Musical Declamation Academy in 1957, where he studied piano with Moisés Moleiro, organ and harpsichord with Evencio Castellanos, and composition with Vicente Emilio Sojo. In 1967, he received the Symphonic Music National Prize.

Abreu realized his dream in a parking garage in Caracas in 1975, where he gathered together 11 children to play music. That was the humble beginning of what is now commonly known as El Sistema (the system), a government-funded organization sometimes called Fesnojiv.
Aside from symphony orchestras, various programs and educational, artistic, and cultural activities are always in touch and tried to imitate the orchestra’s oceanic sound,” Ruiz said.

Herbert von Karajan and the Berlin Philharmonic. “We were always in touch and tried to imitate the orchestra’s oceanic sound,” Ruiz said.

In a recent interview with the CBC, Dudamel credited El Sistema for giving him his first exposure to classical music at the age of four. “El Sistema, by making music so important, totally changed my life,” he said. “We are building better citizens with music.”

El Sistema emphasizes intensive music ensemble participation from the earliest age. Under Abreu’s guidance, it has transformed the lives of tens of thousands of kids, its most famous product to date being the 28-year-old conducting wunderkind Gustavo Dudamel, who succeeded Esa-Pekka Salonen as music director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic in September.

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THE DUDAMEL CONNECTION

THE ABREU FELLOWS

“HE NAME GUSTAVO DUDAMEL is synonymous with El Sistema these days. However, before “the Dude” was the poster child of Venezuela’s national music training program, he spent much of his time in El Sistema playing the violin and learning to conduct.

In an interview with CBC’s Jian Ghomeshi, Dudamel said he used to conduct his toys when he was six or seven years old. “It was always my favourite game,” he said. “But it was serious for me.”

In 1995, Dudamel began studying conducting formally with Rodolfo Saglimbeni and in 1999 with El Sistema founder Dr. José Antonio Abreu. This September, Abreu selected Dudamel as the recipient of The City of Toronto Glenn Gould Protégé Prize, an accompanying award to the Glenn Gould Prize which Abreu received.

“Music is about a lot of sensitivity,” Dudamel told CBC. “Music is changing a lot of lives of children in Venezuela.”

Born in Barquisimeto, Venezuela, Dudamel came to international attention in 2004, when he won the inaugural Bamberg Symphony’s Gustav Mahler Conducting Competition. From there, El Sistema’s flagship orchestra, the Simón Bolívar Youth Orchestra of Venezuela (under his leadership since 1999), made its Carnegie Hall debut in 2007.

Dudamel has been featured twice on CBS’s 60 Minutes and was named one of the 100 most influential people of 2009 by TIME magazine. In September, he became the music director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, to critical acclaim.

“We are one world; we are the same people. We are thinking the same,” he told CBC. “Music is changing a lot of lives of children in Venezuela.”

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“Music is about a lot of sensitivity,” Dudamel told CBC. “Music is changing a lot of lives of children in Venezuela.”

“High art, or whatever you want to call classical music, is not [accessible] to low-income people. Dr. [José Antonio] Abreu is turning that upside down.”

Founded this year, El Sistema USA serves as a support network for local El Sistema-inspired programs to share ideas, collaborate, and connect. The Abreu Fellows is its first initiative, which aims to train 50 Fellows in three to five years.

The one-year, tuition-free postgraduate certificate program was launched last month at NEC with 10 musicians, aged 22-24, from the United States, Canada, and Central America. Selected on the basis of their passion for music and social justice, the Fellows will study in Boston and Caracas and leave with leadership skills to direct music education centers in the United States and beyond.

Each full scholarship is worth $25,000 and includes 24 weekend workshops in Boston and a two-month residency in Venezuela. In addition, a $15,000 living stipend is available to Fellows on a needs-based basis.

“This has been in the planning for several years, but it only became focused last November,” said Churchill, who was in Toronto for the four-day Glenn Gould Prize celebration and moderated the symposium panel. “We have to look at what’s transferable and what isn’t. People need to be connected to learn from each other. It’s about empowering people and we are looking at developing social networks on our website.”

A strong believer in El Sistema, Churchill says he has become part of the Venezuelan community over the years. He discovered El Sistema 12 years ago and made his first trip to Venezuela two years later. In the last decade, he has travelled to that country 25 times and worked closely with Abreu, who, upon accepting the prestigious TED Prize in February, asked the TED community to support the creation of Abreu Fellows as his “Wish to Change the World.” “He hates the name. He doesn’t like that kind of publicity,” Churchill said of Abreu.

“We kind of twisted his arm into it.”

For Abreu Fellow Dantes Rameau of Ottawa, the program is about both leadership learning and having a bit of fun. “Everyday in this program we have seminars led by fabulous people who are experts in their respective fields. While they inspire with their credentials, what I especially admire about them is that they are leaders,” Rameau wrote on his blog. “Since we’re going to Venezuela for two months next semester I’ve been learning as much as possible about the culture while in Boston. This includes Spanish lessons at ridiculous hours of the morning, learning salsa and eating arepas, a staple of Venezuelan cuisine.”

Bien hecho.
cellist Margaret Munro Tobolowska, found
and McMillen, along with NAC Orchestra
several of the students. Upon her return, she
program there by giving flute lessons to
Canadian debut with the National Arts
phenomenon Gustavo Dudamel made his
DVD, watched the (El Sistema documentary)
our little dreams," she said. "When we
significant for youth music. That was one of
Unlocking the Secrets of Success.”

In October 2006, Tina Fedeski caught a CBC Radio review of
the Simón Bolívar Youth Orchestra of Venezuela’s
Deutsche Grammophon recording of Beethoven symphonies. Her ears
pricked up. “I thought, ‘What is a youth orchestra doing with Deutsche
Grammophon?’” recalled Fedeski, executive
director of Ottawa’s Leading Note Foundation, the first El Sistema-inspired
program outside South America. “Then I
heard ‘Venezuela’ and my ears pricked up
even more, because my sister had moved to
Venezuela a month earlier.”

Fedeski, a flutist, and her husband Gary
McMillen, an amateur cellist, have operated
the Leading Note Music Store in Ottawa for
10 years. Last month in Toronto, Fedeski was
a guest panelist at the Glenn Gould Prize
Celebration of Music, where she gave a talk
titled “El Sistema Around the World: Unlocking the Secrets of Success.”

“Before we opened the print music
store, we had wanted to do something sig
ificant for youth music. That was one of
our little dreams,” she said. “When we
watched the (El Sistema documentary)
DVD, Tocar y Luchar (To Play and To Fight),
we said, ‘This is it.’”

That was January 2007, when El Sistema
phenomenon Gustavo Dudamel made his
Canadian debut with the National Arts
Centre Orchestra.

Next, Fedeski visited her sister in Caracas
and became involved with the El Sistema
program there by giving flute lessons to
several of the students. Upon her return, she
and McMillen, along with NAC Orchestra
cellist Margaret Munro Tobolowska, found-
ed the Leading Note Foundation.

“We made it up, really. We decided what
was feasible in Ottawa and focused on one
area to contain a small size in the beginning,
and because our store is located downtown,
we chose Centretown,” Fedeski said. “It’s an
area full of immigrants and there are three
beacon schools in this area. We went to each
of the three schools and offered 10 spots per
school. In one school, we got 46 applications
back.”

In October 2007, instrumental classes
began with 30 students at the Bronson
Centre and Fedeski has since received
financial support from governments and
local fundraising events, plus more than
$40,000 worth of donated instruments.

The foundation now has nine teachers
and 10 Ottawa Youth Orchestra mentors who
give free music instruction to 100 children
from low-income families. Through programs
such as OrKidstra and KidSingers, it also
offers a course allowing University of Ottawa
music undergrads to earn credit for assisting
the teachers.

“It’s important to know that this is a
social program and making music is the
byproduct,” Fedeski said. “The focus is on
playing together—that is the real philoso
phy behind our program, to learn team
work.” She said the next step is for the
foundation to start up satellite centres
across Ottawa and make the program accessible to all needy children.

“It’s a tribute to new Canadians. These
new Canadians from different cultural
backgrounds and with financial challenges
are coming together and learning music
together. We call this a community-build
program; they are united through
music,” she added. “When people ask me if
I have children, I say I have 100.”

It WAS A SEARCH FOR GUEST CONDUCTORS IN 2007
that led the president of the New Brunswick
Youth Orchestra to the name Gustavo Dudamel.
Two years later, Sistema New Brunswick was born
and Ken MacLeod still can’t stop talking about El
Sistema.

In June, Macleod and three members of the orchestra’s
board of directors travelled to Caracas, Venezuela, with
the aim of adapting the revolutionary program back home
in a year’s time.

“The buildings there would be condemned buildings in
our society here, but the place was filled with music. It
was astounding: we saw what we read about, that it’s not
a music program, it’s a social program,” MacLeod said. “We
were barely scratching the surface. Halfway through, we
looked at each other and said, ‘We have to start right
away.’ It was just so moving and compelling.”

Wasting no time, the NBYO partnered up with New
Brunswick’s School District 2, the largest school district
there, to build a single prototype centre in Moncton’s
Beaverbrook School. Local businesses responded enthusi
astically to the free daily after-school program and the
province chipped in $15,000. On October 19, Sistema NB
welcomed 50 kids, aged six to nine.

“We thought we’d have 40 kids to start with—we
received 200 applicants,” MacLeod said. “This shows
there’s a need, a desire, and a demand for this. We believe
music is uniquely positioned to contribute to social
changes. It’s universal.”

Last month in Toronto, MacLeod met El Sistema
founder, Dr. José Antonio Abreu, for the first time.”It felt as
if I were sitting with Nelson Mandela. He is a kind, gener
ous, and humble man. We told him our story and he was
grateful to us. He offered to send teachers to New
Brunswick,” MacLeod said. “He’s a bit frail, but the
moment he’s engaged in this topic, his eyes light up and
he just can’t help himself. What amazes me is he not only
had an idea, he took action and stuck with it. And he’s not
done. His goal is to reach a million kids. If it’s not a mira
cle, it’s close.”

At Sistema NB, kids have begun choral and rhythm
work and are building their chosen instruments (strings
only this year) out of cardboard and paper-mâché. “We’ll
have a paper orchestra. In about two weeks, we plan to
give a small recital for the parents and present the kids
with their instruments (which NBYO purchased new),”
MacLeod said. “It was hard the first week, but we are start
ning to hear positive feedback. We want this to be the best
part of their day.”

Next year, Sistema NB hopes to start woodwind and
brass. Its goal is to open six to eight children’s orchestra
centres throughout the province by 2015.

“The poverty in Venezuela is widespread, but there are
pockets of that in New Brunswick. There are 25,000 chil
dren here that are living below the poverty line. I love
what Dr. Abreu says, ‘Music is a right for everybody,’”
MacLeod said. “For them, this produces hope. The most
heard phrase there is, ‘Music changed my life.’”

In New Brunswick, lives are about to be changed.
LEARN HOW the Calgary Opera (pictured here: Rigoletto) and El Sistema (participant pictured below) are revolutionizing music.

EDITORIAL

Last month, Toronto was abuzz with excitement when Dr. José Antonio Abreu brought his protégé maestro Gustavo Dudamel and the Simon Bolívar Youth Orchestra to accept the prestigious Glenn Gould Prize. As reported on our blog, the feature performance on Oct. 26 was electrifying. Abreu’s renowned music education program El Sistema has made Venezuela a country passionate about music and also a future producer of music stars. It all starts at a young age, when students are initiated into an orchestra by using paper instruments; soon music becomes an integral part of their lives. In our cover story, Tiffany Hsieh looks at how El Sistema provides free music education to lower-income children and has since spawned many similar programs across the globe, including the Leading Note Foundation in Ottawa and Sistema New Brunswick.

Education is also on the minds of Canadian students as they begin planning for the following year, with applications and auditions. To help in this process, we offer our annual Guide to Higher Education, which contains a complete and easy-to-follow summary of the country’s top music programs. Complementing our guide are updates on the latest higher-education news and breakthroughs.

Our winter 2010 issue also celebrates the Canadian Music Centre’s 50th anniversary and the Canadian Opera Company’s 60th anniversary. The COC’s new artistic director Johannes Debus is also be the subject of a featured interview by Joseph So. The innovative Calgary Opera and its general director Bob McPhee are highlighted, while new pianos from Yamaha and Roland are reviewed. All this in addition to our CD/DVD/Book reviews and our Southern Ontario and Ottawa concert picks this in addition to our CD/DVD/Book reviews and our Southern Ontario and Ottawa concert picks for November to March.

In the last year, coverage of classical music in Canada has taken a blow with the closure of both Opera magazine and Performance magazine. This makes the work of The Music Scene and the monthly La Scena Musicale, our bilingual sister publication, all the more important. For English Canada readers, our publications are distributed four times a year: The Music Scene, with its focus on music education, is published in mid-March (camps) and mid-November (higher education), and the national issues of La Scena Musicale, with its focus on summer festivals, is published in May (Jazz, World, Folk festivals) and June (classical music and arts festivals). We are proud of our role in promoting and defending music and the arts, and the example of El Sistema reminds us that it is a cause worth fighting for.

Since February 2009, our non-profit organization has had to fight against the Canada Council for dropping eligibility for controlled-circulation magazines, directly affecting The Music Scene and La Scena Musicale. We feel that this change unfairly put our magazines at a financial disadvantage (since funded magazines derive 25% to 75% of their budget from grants); furthermore, the current rules effectively force arts and literary publications to remain small as they require magazines to sell at least 50% of their copies, which is contrary to the idea of arts outreach. We will continue this fight and we want to thank the 500 people who have signed our petition (still online) to reverse this policy. In the absence of government funding, our organization has launched a fundraising and subscription drive.

We are proud to introduce the La Scena Arts Lover Card, which includes a one-year subscription ($40) consisting of two issues of The Music Scene plus ten issues of La Scena Musicale, and a free monthly CD (in partnership with XXI Records, to Discover CDs per year), as well as discounts. Furthermore, paying subscribers will also receive access to 38,000 CDs through the streaming Naxos Music Library. See www.scena.org/LaSCENACard. Lastly, we are also proud to offer the $25 La Scena Green Card for environmentally-conscious readers, which will include the electronic versions of the magazines and the Naxos Music Library.

Keep warm this winter with a copy of The Music Scene in your hands and your favourite masterpieces playing in the background.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR LUCKY SUBSCRIBER, CLAIRE GARON, WINNER OF 100 CD’S FROM CBC RECORDS! LSM CONTINUES TO DEVELOP EXCLUSIVE FEATURES FOR SUBSCRIBERS, INCLUDING A MONTHLY DRAW FOR A CD COLLECTION, AND COMING SOON, PLAYLISTS FOR RECOMMENDED CONCERTS. SUBSCRIBE NOW AND YOU COULD WIN! SEE THE SUBSCRIPTION FORM ON PAGE 5.

UPCOMING FUNDRAISERS
- Puccini: Tosca, Opéra de Montréal, February 11, 2010
  514-948-2800 sub@scena.org

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FOR JUST $25, THE ENVIRONMENTALLY-CONSCIOUS ARTS-LOVER WILL RECEIVE THE GREEN CARD SUBSCRIPTION: ONLINE VERSIONS OF OUR MAGAZINES + ACCESS TO 38,000 CDs THROUGH THE STREAMING NAXOS MUSIC LIBRARY.
ROBERT AITKEN NAMED WINNER OF THE WALTER CARSEN PRIZE FOR EXCELLENCE IN THE PERFORMING ARTS

The Canada Council for the Arts has awarded Toronto native Robert Aitken the 2009 Walter Carsen Prize. Previous Walter Carsen prizewinners include R. Murray Schafer.

A flautist, composer and conductor, the new $50,000-prize winner is already an Order of Canada honouree and a Chevalier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres (France), as well as a recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Flute Association (USA).

COMPETITION WINNERS

SIXTH HONENS INTERNATIONAL PIANO COMPETITION
Calgary, November 6

First Laureate: Georgyi Tschaikowsky, 21 (Russia)
Second Laureate: Evgeny Starodubtsev, 27 (Russia)
Third Laureate: Gisèle Vonsattel, 28 (Switzerland)

www.honens.com

STELLA MARIS
Venice-Barcelona, Hapag-Lloyd Cruises lines, November 4

Cruise Critic Members’ Choice Award Winner: Soprano Wendy Bryn Harmer, New York’s Metropolitan Opera
Consulting by the Artist Management of Dr. Raab & Dr. Böhm and Guest Engagement at the Wiener Ensemble, and Victoria Symphony.

www.cruisecritic.com/articles.cfm?ID=1012

THE CANADIAN MUSIC COMPETITION
2009 Grand Prize Winners

• Grand Prize in the 19 to 30 years old category: Noam Bierstone, Keyboard Percussion and Vincent Lauzer, Recorder
• Grand Prize in the 15 to 18 years old category: Scott MacIsaac, Piano
• Grand Prize in the 11 to 14 years old category: Kerson MacIsaac, Piano
• Grand Prize in the 7 to 10 years old category: Ambrose Chooi, Flute
• Grand Prize in the 7 to 10 years old category: Ambrose Chooi, Flute

www.cmcnational.com

NYOC ANNOUNCES A $1,000 HONORARIUM FOR 2010 ORCHESTRA MEMBERS

The National Youth Orchestra of Canada marks its 50th anniversary with the launching of an honorarium program for all members of the 2010 orchestra, in addition to six Leadership Scholarships of $4,000 each. Since 2006, the NYOC has been tuition-free, but the new honorarium will provide extra incentive for Canada’s most talented young musicians to audition for the orchestra and make up for travel costs and forfeited summer employment.

www.nyoc.org

NOTES

Illustrous composers including R. Murray Schafer, John Cage, George Crumb, Elliott Carter, Toru Takemitsu, Gilles Tremblay, John Beckwith and Bruce Mather have written pieces for him, and his own compositions and recordings have gathered international acclaim. Aitken has also taught at the Banff Centre, the Johannesen International School of the Arts, and most recently the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik in Germany for 16 years. His conducting experience includes the Canadian Opera Company, NMC Ensemble, and Victoria Symphony.

www.canadacouncil.ca

Crystal Chan, Hannah Rahimi

It is a wonderful thing to work with the Canada Council for the Arts, as well as a recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Flute Association (USA).

www.canadacouncil.ca

MUSICAL INSTRUMENT BANK COMPETITION

THE CANADIAN MUSIC COMPETITION

2009 Grand Prize Winners

• Grand Prize in the 19 to 30 years old category: Noam Bierstone, Keyboard Percussion and Vincent Lauzer, Recorder
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• Grand Prize in the 11 to 14 years old category: Kerson MacIsaac, Piano
• Grand Prize in the 7 to 10 years old category: Ambrose Chooi, Flute

www.cmcnational.com

CONCOURS ROSTROPOVICH

Paris, November 8

International Cello Competition
First place: Dai Miyata, Japan
Second place: Jakob Koranyi, Sweden
Third place: Norbert Anger, Germany

DILETTANTE MUSIC

World’s First Digital Composer-in-Residence Competition
Winner: David T. Little, New York City
Runners-up: Chiayu, Aaron Gervais

www.dilettantemusic.com

THE MUSIC SCENE Winter 2010 13
JD: I studied conducting in Hamburg and got started in the classic way in Germany, as a rehearsal pianist in an opera house. If you are lucky, you get some evenings to conduct, and if you succeed you get more—that’s what happened to me.

JD: When I was studying in Hamburg, there was a very old conductor, Günther Wand, with the NDR Orchestra. I basically went to every concert he conducted. It was music from another planet—so out of this world. Everything was so logical, whether it was Schubert or Bruckner or Brahms. What he did was so convincing, so right. He had very strong ideas about how things should sound and got incredible results from the orchestra.

JD: It’s very nice of you to say that. I felt we just understood each other from the first moment. The musicians are fantastic. I must say—they have such a passion and love for the music and really want to give their best. It was a great atmosphere.

JD: I went to a concert of the Henze Requiem, and it was a revelation—I was deeply impressed by his music. When Frankfurt staged a new production of Boulevard Solitude, I asked to play the piano rehearsals and became the musical assistant in the production. The conductor couldn’t do some performances and the theatre asked me. I got to meet Henze and we became very close friends—it was a lucky occasion. I have since conducted other Henze, an orchestral piece in Venice and chamber pieces in Munich. I’d love to conduct more of his music.

JD: When I was there for the 2009-2010 season, due to prior commitments this season, Debus’s involvement is limited to the Diamond Anniversary Gala and performances and the theatre asked me. I got to meet Henze and we became very close friends—it was a really one of my heroes. He found a way to strike by the affable, 34-year-old German maestro, his uncommon musical intelligence, singularity of vision, requisite solid preparation, impeccable work ethic, and rare gift for making beautiful music through consensus-building and bringing out the best in each musician. Opening night was an unalloyed triumph. Considering it was his Prokofiev debut, tackling something so monumental was a true baptism by fire, making his success all the more remarkable. It wasn’t long before talks started about Debus as a possible successor to the late Richard Bradshaw. COC General Director Alexander Neef wasted no time—in the January season launch, Debus was presented as the new music director beginning with the 2009-2010 season. Due to prior commitments this season, Debus’s involvement is limited to the Diamond Anniversary Gala and The Flying Dutchman. In the future, he is expected to conduct two to three productions a year.

Joseph So

Debus was presented as the new music director beginning with the 2009-2010 season. Due to prior commitments this season, Debus’s involvement is limited to the Diamond Anniversary Gala and performances and the theatre asked me. I got to meet Henze and we became very close friends—it was a revelation—I was deeply impressed by his music. When Frankfurt staged a new production of Boulevard Solitude, I asked to play the piano rehearsals and became the musical assistant in the production. The conductor couldn’t do some performances and the theatre asked me. I got to meet Henze and we became very close friends—it was a lucky occasion. I have since conducted other Henze, an orchestral piece in Venice and chamber pieces in Munich. I’d love to conduct more of his music.

JD: The special and strange thing about conducting is that you are creating a sound without playing an instrument. You rely totally on other people and you have to communicate your ideas. The character of communication might have changed in the last decades—no more Toscanini shrieking: “Tromboni, Vergognaaaaaaa!!!!” But there are still as many ways of doing it as there are conductors. Everyone has to find his own method “to give”, as Karajan said, “the musicians the freedom they need to do exactly what I want!” Mine is based on generosity, deep respect and the joy of playing music together.

JD: In my experience with the COC, I’d say—either due to a tighter time schedule or a different mentality—the rehearsal process is quicker and more disciplined than it is normally in Europe. I’m still impressed by the total silence of the Orchestra here when I stop to correct something.

JD: Well, the orchestra is in very good shape. Richard Bradshaw formed a group of people with great skills and a great spirit and I feel really fortunate to come into that inheritance. I’d be glad if we could add to our principal task in the pit some more activities, like concert operas and recordings. I think this orchestra has something to offer.

JD: I some¬times read an article in a German Rail magazine on a list of top 10 cities in the world. Guess which is first? It’s Vancouver, and Toronto is number five—two Canadian cities in the top 10. When I was there for War and Peace, I somehow felt at home. Toronto is very international and open-minded. It has lots of art venues and a wonderful art community—it’s a great city.

JD: WHEN YOU FIRST REHEARSED WITH THE COC, IT WAS BASICALLY “LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT” WITH THE ORCHESTRA...

JD: HOW DID YOU GET STARTED IN CONDUCTING?

JD: DO YOU HAVE A ROLE MODEL IN CONDUCTING?

JD: WHAT IS YOUR PHILOSOPHY ON CONDUCTING? WOULD YOU SAY CONDUCTING STYLES HAVE CHANGED SINCE THE TIME OF FURTWÄNGLER, KARAJAN AND SZELO?

JD: DO YOU FIND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EUROPEAN ORCHESTRAS AND ELSEWHERE?

JD: DO YOU HAVE IMMEDIATE PLANS FOR THE COC ORCHESTRA?

JD: I UNDERSTAND YOU ARE MOVING TO TORONTO. IT MUST NOT BE EASY TO LEAVE BERLIN TO COME TO TORONTO...

JD: HOW DID YOU COME FROM A MUSICAL FAMILY?

JD: A TYPICAL ORCHESTRA HAS 80 PLAYERS AND 80 DIFFERENT PERSONALITIES. HOW DO YOU ACHIEVE RAPPORT WITH THEM?

JD: HOW DO YOU GET STARTED IN CONDUCTING?

JD: DO YOU HAVE A ROLE MODEL IN CONDUCTING?

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JD: I UNDERSTAND YOU ARE MOVING TO TORONTO. IT MUST NOT BE EASY TO LEAVE BERLIN TO COME TO TORONTO...

JD: (laughs) I read an article in a German Rail magazine on a list of top 10 cities in the world. Guess which is first? It’s Vancouver, and Toronto is number five—two Canadian cities in the top 10. When I was there for War and Peace, I somehow felt at home. Toronto is very international and open-minded. It has lots of art venues and a wonderful art community—it’s a great city.
FIFTY YEARS FOR the CMC

STANDING ON GUARD FOR CANADA’S MUSIC

Crystal Chan

If you want to be an accountant, you get accredited. But for musicians,” quipped Canadian Music Centre Executive Director Elisabeth Bihl, “that’s where the CMC steps in.”

In celebration of the CMC’s golden anniversary, over 25 concerts were held across the country this year. The CMC is the unofficial accreditation body for Canadian composers; becoming an associate is a professional coming-of-age ritual, the gold standard for Canadian composers… including those who aren’t close to retirement. For some of their scores, they could never experience in their own schools, the CMC provides digital access to recordings of music by Canadian composers.”

“The CMC is the driving force popularizing new Canadian music on the international scene. Information about competitions is sent to each of its associate composers. Concerts and tours are arranged, and out-of-country events are marketed fiercely by the organization. This June, the CMC hosted the annual International Association of Music Information Centres’ annual conference in Toronto and Vancouver, showcasing Canadian music to 21 other countries. Perhaps most importantly, however, the CMC introduces Canadians to their own national tunes. Through its website, regional centres and libraries, as well as concerts (many of them free, and even since the launch of the New Music New Places initiative, about 40 of them every year in public places ranging from caves to airports), Canadians all across the country have access to the CMC’s resources. Education is a strong suit; sections of its website target specific age groups, and the CMC goes out to schools, universities, and other centres to give presentations and lectures in collaboration with teachers.

Harman was himself introduced to the CMC in high school. “As a student outside Toronto, I wouldn’t have been able to access such resources from anywhere else,” he said. “It helped to open up my ears to the music of living composers. I think the most important CMC initiative is welcoming high school students into the Centre to see the collection. This exposes students to music they could never experience in their own schools, and introduces them to the possibility of borrowing scores for free. Including contemporary Canadian music in the education of young students is essential to the growth and evolution of our musical culture in Canada.”

www.musiccentre.ca
OTTAWA MUSIC PREVIEW

Nov. 15, 2009-March 15, 2010

The National Arts Centre Orchestra is in the thick of its 40th anniversary celebrations that will continue over the next few months, with A-list guest artists flying in from the four corners of the globe to join the party. But while NACO will be stealing the spotlight even more than usual, there are other concert options to be found in the Nation’s Capital. Here are some of the highlights:

November 16 at the NAC’s Southam Hall, David Currie leads the Ottawa Symphony in Beethoven’s Creations of Prometheus, Kodály’s Concerto for Orchestra and Berlioz’s Harold in Italy, featuring the OSO’s new principal viola and University of Ottawa faculty member, Rennie Regehr. www.ottawasymphony.com

The following evening, the same venue receives renowned Ottawa-born pianist Angela Hewitt for a recital that will include Bach’s Partita No. 1, Mendelssohn’s Variations sérieuses, and Beethoven’s Appassionata Sonata. November 18-19, guest Douglas Boyd conducts the NACO in Beethoven’s 8th and works by Tippet, Corelli and John Williams. www.nac-ca.ca

November 26, the Württemburg Chamber Orchestra, under the direction of Ruben Gazarian, performs at Ottawa’s newest arts venue, Shenkman Arts Centre in suburban Orleans. Elgar, Ireland, Janáček and Britten are on the program, among others. www.shenkmanarts.ca


December 15-16, Trevor Pinnock leads this year’s edition of the Messiah at the NACO, with soprano Geraldine McCreevy, alto Marie-Nicole Lemieux, tenor Benjamin Butterfield and bass Robert Gleadow. www.nac-ca.ca

2010 kicks off with an all-Mozart NACO concert. Clarinetist Kimball Sykes and two members of New York’s Harubovitch Dance Company will perform Concerto 622, Lubovitch’s duet for two male dancers set to the slow movement from the Clarinet Concerto. Pinchas Zukerman will also conduct and perform Mozart’s Symphony No. 29 and Violin Concert No. 5. Performances are January 14-15. www.nac-ca.ca

The Gryphon Trio now officially heads the Ottawa Chamber Music Festival, so the city can expect to see a lot more of the group. February 7 at Dominion-Chalmers United Church, the trio performs Beethoven’s Ghost Trio, with commentary and spied by classical pitcher and garrulous NPR star, Rob Kapilow. www.chamberfest.com

February 10-11, Zukerman conducts Beethoven’s Missa Solemnis, with soprano Laura Whalen, mezzo Anita Krause, tenor Richard Clement, and bass-baritone Nathan Berg. Mahler’s orchestral transcription of Beethoven’s String Quartet in F minor opens the evening. www.nac-ca.ca

On Valentine’s Day, Jan Lisiecki, the towheaded 14-year-old piano prodigy from Calgary, plays the complete Chopin Études at the National Gallery of Canada. www.janlieslecki.com

Yannick Nézet-Séguin is leading the Rotterdam Philharmonic on its first-ever Canadian tour, with a stop in Ottawa on February 23. Strauss’ Ein Heldenleben, Messiaen’s Les offrandes oubliées, and the Ravel Concerto for the Left Hand are on offer, the latter with pianist Jean-Yves Thibaudet, making his NAC debut. www.nac-ca.ca

February 24-25, 21-year-old Russian-American pianist Natasha Paremski will power her way through the Rach 2. She’ll be sandwiched between the Overture to The Abduction from the Seraglio and Dvorák’s Symphony No. 7, with James Gaffigan conducting the NACO. www.nac-ca.ca

The 13th edition of Opera Lyra’s glittering annual fundraiser, the Black and White Opera Soiree, takes place February 27. No word yet on the musical talent, but the evening, themed Opera on the Hill, will be hosted by a pair of strange bedfellows indeed: Chétien-era Deputy PM and Heritage Minister Sheila Copps and Tory MP Maxime Bernier. operalyra.ca

March 6, Montreal’s Chantal Rémiillard joins the Ottawa Baroque Consort for a concert at St. Giles Presbyterian Church. The following afternoon, at Dominion-Chalmers United Church, the award-winning, all-female Cecilia String Quartet performs Beethoven’s String Quartet No. 1, the Franck Piano Quintet (with Louise Bessette), and Canadian composer Kelly-Marie Murphy’s another little piece of my heart, which apparently has nothing to do with the well-known pop song. www.ottawabaroque.ca

Scottish violin sensation Nicola Benedetti makes her NACO debut March 15-16 with the Sibelius Concerto. Zukerman also conducts Haydn’s last symphony and Fauré’s Masques et Bergamasques. www.nac-ca.ca

Finally, Valery Gergiev and the Mariinsky Orchestra perform at Southam Hall March 15. The program is scheduled to include Liszt’s Piano Concerto No. 1, with Denis Matsuev, and Shostakovich’s Symphony No. 15. www.nac-ca.ca

SOUTHERN ONTARIO VOCAL PREVIEW

Joseph So

For voice-loving Canadians, cold weather has its rewards. It is the season of operas, recitals and choral music. The Canadian Opera Company continues its 2009-10 season with Carmen and Otello, two of the most popular works in the standard repertoire. The Bizet opera stars American mezzo Beth Clayton as Carmen, Bryan Hymel, Pinkerton last fall, returns as Don José. Canadian soprano Jessica Muirhead sings Micaela. French bass-baritone Paul Gay, a frequent guest at the Paris Opera, makes company debut as Escamillio. Twenty-nine-year-old Scottish conductor Rory Macdonald makes his COC debut. There are twelve performances (Jan. 27 – Feb. 27). Otello will be sung by heldentenor Clifton Forbis, a wonderful Siegmund here three years ago. Desdemona is Italian soprano Tiziana Caruso. Baritone Scott Hendricks, last seen here as a highly dramatic Rodrigo in Don Carlos, sings Iago. Italian conductor Paolo Olimi, who received critical acclaim for his Don Carlos two seasons ago, returns to conduct. There are nine performances (Feb. 3 – 28) at the Four Seasons Centre. www.coc.ca

Opera in Concert offers Handel’s Giulio Cesare on Jan. 31, 2:30 pm, at the Jane Mallet Theatre, St. Lawrence Centre. The cast includes soprano Charlotte Corwin, who received the Joseph Rouleau Award for the Best Artist from Quebec at Chant 2009 in Montreal last May. Joining her are Catherine Rooney, David Trudgen and James Levesque. Kevin Mallon leads the Aradia Ensemble. www.operainconcert.com

If lighter fare is your thing, be sure to catch Kalman’s Countess Maritza at the Toronto Operaette Theatre, just in time for the holiday season. COC resident conductor Derek Bate leads the TOT Orchestra in seven performances from Dec. 26 to Jan. 3. For tickets, go to www.torontooperetta.com

Finally, the newly resurrected Opera Hamilton puts on Popera Plus!, a concert of arias and duets on Jan. 28 and 30, at the Great Hall in Hamilton Place. Soloists are soprano Gianna Corbisiero, mezzo Ariana Chris, tenor Richard Troxell and bass-baritone Jason Howard. No conductor is announced at press time, but the orchestra is the
SOUTHERN ONTARIO INSTRUMENTAL PREVIEW

L.H. Tiffany Hsieh

Everything dulls a tad these days after the young Venezuelan conductor Gustavo Dudamel made his mark in Toronto last month and left audiences wanting more from a live concert. However, there is no shortage of hot-blooded A-list classical music acts about town this winter.

Canada’s adventurous St. Lawrence String Quartet will be here not once, but twice. SLSQ’s animated first violinist Geoff Nuttall might just be the Dudamel of string quartets. Nuttall, along with violinist Scott St. John, violist Lesley Robertson, and cellist Christopher Costanza, celebrated the quartet’s 20th anniversary last season with a nationwide commissioning project. Their concert at the Faculty of Music’s Walter Hall (Nov. 16) features new works by Marcus Goddard, Elizabeth Raum, Brian Curtant, Suzanne Hebert-Tremblay, and Derek Charke. Later at the Jane Mallet Theatre (Feb. 25), SLSQ performs a Music Toronto concert in Haydn’s Quartet in F Major, Op. 77 No. 2, John Adams’ String Quartet, and Mendelssohn’s String Quartet in E-flat Major, Op. 12. www.music-toronto.com

Also making a much-anticipated return with Music Toronto at the Jane Mallet Theatre is the famed Tokyo String Quartet (Jan. 20). Doubling its seniority to that of the SLSQ, this group recently recorded the entire Beethoven quartets with Harmonia Mundi and their January concert showcases two of the composer’s Razumovsky Quartets, Op. 59, No. 1 and 2. www.music-toronto.com

If you are a regular concertgoer, the name James Ehnes probably sounds like your ringtone by now. This month alone, in what is being billed the “Ehnes week in Toronto,” the Grammy- and Juno-winning violinist plays three concerts with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and gives an intimate recital at the brand new Koerner Hall. He tackles Prokofiev’s Violin Concerto No. 2 at Roy Thomson Hall (Nov. 26, 28) under the baton of Stéphane Denève, who also leads the TSO in Shostakovich’s Symphony No. 5. The program repeats at George Weston Recital Hall (Nov. 29). In between all that, the 33-year-old Prairie boy teams up with pianist Andrew Armstrong on the Koerner Hall stage (Nov. 27) in Bartók’s Rhapsody No. 1, Respighi’s Sonata in B Minor, and Beethoven’s Kreutzer Sonata. www.tso.ca

Roy Thomson Hall may be home to the TSO, but come the New Year, it will host two of the more interesting symphony orchestras on the classical music scene right now.

First, the Montreal Symphony (MSO). Canada’s foremost orchestra, makes a highly anticipated return to Toronto with music director Kent Nagano (Jan. 25), who has been bringing back the orchestra to its former glory since 2006. The OSM performs Stravinsky’s Firebird and Beethoven’s Piano Concerto No. 1 with Austrian pianist Till Fellner, who is currently on a world tour performing, over the course of two years, a concert cycle of Beethoven piano sonatas. www.tso.ca

The second most important orchestra in the Netherlands after Amsterdam’s Concertgebouw, the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra under the direction of Canada’s Yannick Nézet-Séguin pays a rare visit on February 4. Nézet-Séguin, who last year succeeded Russian conductor Valery Gergiev in his newest post, also leads the London Philharmonic and Montreal’s Orchestre Métropolitain in his spare time. He conducts the RPO in Massaieri’s Les offrandes oubliées, R. Strauss’ Ein Heldenleben, Op. 40, and Ravel’s Piano Concerto for the Left Hand with French pianist Jean-Wei Thibaudet. www.roythomson.com

But last not least, everybody loves a festival. The University of Toronto New Music Festival (Jan. 25-30) presents a series of concerts and events centred on the esteemed Polish composer Krzysztof Penderecki, whose compositional style has reflected the evolution of new music from the avant-garde of the 1960s up to the present day. Highlights include three free concerts dedicated to the chamber music and new works of Penderecki. As well, Penderecki Plus! at Koerner Hall (Jan. 29) features Toronto’s Esprit Orchestra led by conductor Alex Pauk in Penderecki’s Concerto Grosso for three cellos and orchestra (Shauna Rolston, Roman Borys, Paul Widner, cellos) and Threnody to the Victims of Hiroshima. The festival wraps up with a choral concert at the Metropolitan United Church (Jan. 30, 31). Works by Henryk Gorecki and a world premiere by Norbert Palej will also be heard. The acclaimed Polish Chamber Choir from Gdansk makes its North American debut alongside the MacMillan Chamber Singers, Elmer Iseler Singers, and Toronto Children’s Choir. www.music.utoronto.ca.

**THE ST. LAWRENCE STRING QUARTET**

Hamilton Philharmonic. www.operahamilton.ca Choral fan can rejoice since this is Messiah season! The Toronto Symphony Orchestra modestly bills its own as “Toronto’s Favourite Messiah” – five performances from Dec. 16 to 21 at Roy Thomson Hall. Quebec maestro Jean-Marie Zeitouni leads a quartet of soloists (soprano Shannon Mercer, countertenor Matthew White, tenor Colin Balzer and baritone Tyler Duncan) and the venerable Toronto Mendelssohn Choir. www.tafelmusik.org

If you prefer a more intimate approach, try Tafelmusik’s version with Ivars Taurins conducting the Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and Chamber Choir. It takes place at Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre from Dec. 16 to 19 at 7:30 pm. There is also the Sing-Along version at Massey Hall on Dec. 20, at 2 pm. www.tafelmusik.org

On February 14, Quebec soprano Karina Gauvin gives a recital at Roy Thomson Hall as part of the RTH Vocal Series. Expect a surfeit of love songs, www.roythomson.com. Off Centre Music Salon offers its 15th annual Schubertiad on Nov. 29 at the Glenn Gould Studio, this time with Carla Huhtanen, Kristzta Szabo and Jesse Clark. On January 24 is the German-Spanish Salon, with soprano Shannon Mercer and mezzo Wallis Giunta, plus COC’s concertmaster Marie Berard. www.offcentremusic.com

The folks at Attila Glatz who produce the annual New Year day Salute to Vienna brings back Bravissimo! Opera’s Greatest Hits on December 3 at Roy Thomson Hall. An International cast including soprano Susan Neves and tenor Carl Tanner. salutedeinvienna.com

The Met’s Live in HD series of opera simulcasts continues until May. Visit www.metopera.org. La Scala and Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona are also joining the Live HD transmissions via Emerging Pictures in New York. However, they are only available in the US and Europe, as Emerging Pictures seemed to have lost their Canadian partners as we go to press. www.operaincinema.com
When Calgary Opera began operations in 1973, its first two productions, La Bohème and Rigoletto, were treasures from opera’s greatest hits, and it wasn’t until 1995 before audiences experienced a 20th-century work in the form of Britten’s Albert Herring. The reaction came as “shell shock.” Calgary audiences didn’t want ‘new’ opera, yet merely programming popular opera proved financially disastrous; by the end of the 1990s, Calgary Opera was more than $420,000 in debt and houses were generally no better than 65% full.

When Monica Sloan joined the Calgary Opera board in 1998, one of her first duties was to find a new managing director. Sloan knew Bob McPhee had guided the successful opening of the Winspear Centre in September 1997 and was looking for a new challenge. McPhee was a clear choice, having run the Edmonton Symphony, done marketing and fund development with the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and helped Calgary open its own new Jack Singer Concert Hall in 1985. Yet although he had aspired to be a singer himself, he’d never been associated with an opera company. First and foremost, McPhee saw the staid repertoire as a fundamental problem. “The first year I got here, the program was Rigoletto, Don Giovanni and Carmen,” he recalled. “And they still weren’t getting the houses that we needed.”

McPhee tapped into the vitality of the proud Alberta city. He explained, “Calgary is a young city that likes people to take risks.” When they hired McPhee, no one at Calgary Opera thought that under his leadership the organization would become Canada’s most dynamic opera company, the most prolific creator of new opera. By contrast, the Canadian Opera Company’s last new full-length work was The Golden Ass in 1999, and its next one is only slated for 2011-12.

People who talk about McPhee’s vision always point to the methodical way he works. Every new venture is nurtured along a path that includes exit ramps in case the giant idea loses creative or financial momentum. “In the first five-year plan I moved the company in the direction of new repertoire,” said McPhee. This meant Carlyle Floyd’s Susannah in 2001, the unfamiliar Dialogue of the Carmelites in 2002 and Sweeney Todd in 2004.

These early ventures culminated in the commissioning of Calgary Opera’s first full-length opera, Filumena, composed by Canadian John Estacio; Estacio was hired as composer-in-residence almost as soon as McPhee took the job. “With Estacio came the plan to commission our first opera,” McPhee said. “Now we’re up to six commissions that we’ve either premiered or are working on.”

In 2003, Calgary Opera co-produced, with the Banff Centre, the world premiere of Estacio and John Murrell’s Filumena, a quintessentially Albertan story about the last woman hanged in the province, to positive reviews. Estacio and Murrell’s second opera, Frohisher, premiered in 2007, and two other new operas are in the works, one by Vancouver Symphony music director Bramwell Tovey and librettist Murrell, tentatively titled The Inventor, and the other a co-commission with the Dallas Opera, San Diego Opera and San Francisco Opera of Melville’s Moby-Dick by Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer, which will premiere at the end of April 2010, during the inaugural season of Dallas’s Margot and Bill Winspear Opera House at the Dallas Center for the Performing Arts. Calgary got the call to participate largely because of its successful 2006 Canadian premiere of Heggie’s Dead Man Walking.

Just two years after McPhee arrived, the company that had never staged any Canadian premiere produced Turtle Wakes, a one-act opera for children from Allan Gordon Bell and Rick McNair. That educational outreach has continued. In April 2009, Edmonton composer Allan Gilliland and Vancouver librettist Val Brandt’s children’s opera Hannanraptor, with a strongly Albertan dinosaur theme, began touring schools in southern Alberta with young singers from Calgary Opera’s three-year-old Emerging Artists program, another brainchild of McPhee’s.

Tovey is tremendously impressed with McPhee and his staff. Tovey, who conducted the first Filumena productions, recalls how McPhee turned a potential nightmare (the absence of a printed program for a Renée Fleming Gala in 2007) into a splendid evening by announcing that Fleming would speak to the audience.

And that special relationship with his audience is what gave the company a 96% average attendance last year. When they performed Dead Man Walking, a symposium on capital punishment issues was organized, and before the company’s Canadian premiere of The Ballad of Baby Doe in January 2008, the city was urged to see how the opera’s 19th-century American riches-to-rags story was relevant to Calgary, which was going through a boom of its own at the time.

“He’s increasingly finding the links that resonate with the community around the story, so there’s a social aspect to what he’s doing,” said Sloan. He also enlists the support of the media to create that community awareness.

Tovey said McPhee’s genius is that with every new project, there is a very long-term plan. “He understands the progress that needs to be made from workshop to workshop. I don’t know a company of this size that is able to plan with such foresight. We’re talking about the structure of creation, seeing it through from concept to final performance.”

Estacio noted that in the three years Filumena was in the making, McPhee did everything he could to get his audience used to the idea that a brand new Canadian opera was coming its way. Casts for Calgary Opera are almost exclusively Canadian and include singers with established international reputations such as John Fanning. “He’s a huge, formidable supporter of Canadian artists: composers, singers, musicians in general, and Canadian work,” said Estacio.

So where will Bob McPhee be in five years? He said he’s happy at Calgary Opera, which has grown from a $2-million to a $5-millionoperation. “I’m a prairie boy. I like Calgary. It’s home. There are so many things I can do here,” McPhee insisted at the time.

Looking back at where Calgary Opera has come from during the 10 years McPhee has been in charge, Sloan sees his legacy as being able to manage risk without losing sight of the creative purpose of the enterprise. “For us, the fantastic success story of working with Bob since 1998 is how much we’ve learned about the possibilities of managing a tight financial ship and still creating a good artistic product. It’s not an either/or. You can do both.”
In January 1910, while touring the United States, the great French conductor and pianist Emmanuel Haim conducted a concert at Carnegie Hall. He was an advocate for the music of contemporary composers, and his influence was felt in many upcoming recordings. When he died in 1966, the French government awarded him the highest honor, the Legion of Honor. His contributions to the field of music cannot be overlooked.

Handel: La Resurrezione
Camilla Tilling, Kate Royal, soprano; Sonia Prina, contralto; Toby Spence, tenor; Luca Pisaroni, bass-baritone; Le Concert d’Astrée/Emmanuelle Haïm, harpsichord, organ & dir.
Virgin Classics 50999 694567 0 1 (CDs: 62 min 22 s; CD2: 45 min 50 s)

As different from Mahler’s as horse from locomotive, Handel’s 1708 Easter oratorio is a string of devotional arias sung in operatic style. The stars are Camilla Tilling and Kate Royal but what keeps the attention on tenterhooks for two hours is Emmanuel Haim’s adroit keyboard control of rhythm and mood. Recorded live at Lille, it fizzles with an irreverent theatricality. **NL**

Puccini: Madama Butterfly
Angela Gheorghiu, Jonas Kaufmann, Enkelejda Shkosa, Fabio Capitanucci, Gregory Bonfatti, Raymond Aceto; Orchestra e Coro dell’Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, conducted by Antonio Pappano
EMI Classics 50999 6 98936 2 9 (CD1: 46 min 29 s; CD2: 37 min 50 s)

Given the incredibly rich discography of **Madama Butterfly**, does the world need another one? EMI certainly thinks so when it comes to Romanian diva Angela Gheorghiu – never mind that she has never sung it on stage. Judging by this recording, her first outing as the Japanese geisha is a qualified success. Her sound is cool and a bit weak in the middle and lower registers, and the palette of tone colours not particularly wide. Hers is a gentle Butterfly – the dramatic demands of the role are only partially fulfilled. However, she does sing beautifully, and one is impressed with her musical and dramatic acuity. She acts with the voice – her Butterfly is passionate and vulnerable, and ultimately very moving. She is paired with the Pinkerton of German tenor sensation Jonas Kaufmann. Kaufmann is a great Florestan, Parsifal, Don Jose, and maybe even Lohengrin, which he is tackling for the first time in Munich this July. But Pinkerton? Yes, his sound is thrilling but I find it too heroic, grainy, and lacking in sweetness, especially in the love duet. It is more suitable for Tristan than the American naval officer. Albanian mezzo Enkelejda Shkosa is a fine Suzuki, a tad mature and possessing too much vibrato, but she is a good foil for the lyric Butterfly of Gheorghiu. Fabio Capitanucci makes a mellifluous if somewhat generic Sharpless. The supporting roles are well taken, with a particularly unctuous Goro (Gregory Bonfatti). Sonically, this set is wonderful, with fantastic engineering backed by the magnificent and idiomatic playing of the orchestra under the passionate and masterful baton of Pappano. When all is said and done even though it doesn’t erase memories of the very best versions of the past, this recording is a very respectable effort worth purchasing if you are a fan of Gheorghiu and Pappano. **JKS**

Verdi: Messa da Requiem
Anja Harteros, soprano; Sonia Ganassi, mezzo-soprano; Rolando Villazón, tenor; René Pape, bass; Coro dell’Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia; Orchestra dell’Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia/Antonio Pappano
EMI Classics 50999 6 98936 2 9 (CD1: 46 min 29 s; CD2: 37 min 50 s)

With considerable advance hype, this Requiem has much going for it – a Roman orchestra and chorus, a strong quartet of soloists and the finger-tip control of Covent Garden’s music director Antonio Pappano. The big bang of Dies Irae will jump you out of your skin and the two women, Anja Harteros and Sonia Ganassi, are very well cast, if a little florid. Rene Pape is the capable bass. The weakness arrives in the Ingemisco, when the troubled tenor Rolando Villazón fails to impose himself. Whether he is saving the voice for some future comeback is not for me to judge. Villazón does nothing wrong – he’s just not there in the way that big tenors from Bjorling on announce their presence at this point. One listens with trepidation and diminished satisfaction to the performance. Everything is fine, but doubt prevails. Hear Frisay’s set on DG and you’ll recognise the difference. An instrumental flawless team can make. **NL**

**INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC**

An Emotional Journey: Clarinet Works of Johannes Brahms
Kennedy Center Chamber Players (Loren Kitt, clarinet; Lambert Orkis, piano; David Hardy, cello)
Dorian Sono Luminus DSL-90902 (65 min 15 s)

This disc contains all the clarinet works of Brahms’ late period except for the Quintet. I must confess that I have always considered these pieces to be second-rate Brahms and this new recording doesn’t change my opinion. The Quintet is a glorious piece but these works often seem tedious and uninspired. Clarinetists love them, of course, but then they have precious few works by major composers to call their own.

The performers are all members of the National Symphony Orchestra of Washington, D.C., and the best-known is undoubtedly pianist Lambert Orkis. He is Anne-Sophie Mutter’s regular sonata partner and a fine artist. But listening to these performances I began to feel that either his personality was too strong or that of his colleague’s too weak. Especially in the sonatas clarinetist Loren Kitt plays beautifully but in a self-effacing kind of way. I think it is also Brahms’ fault in giving the piano much more to do. The notes by Kitt and Orkis are more interesting than the performances. **PER**

Britten: Double Concerto for Violin and Viola/Variations on a Theme of Frank Harrison’s Garden’s music directed by Masur (LPO – 0010) and concluded by Philip Glass’s Violin Concerto (LPO – 0011)

It is good to see that the LPO is at least a little bit adventurous in its repertoire choices on its new house label. They already have a live Britten War Requiem conducted by Masur (LPO – 0010) and now this excellent Britten collection under its current principal conductor. The Double Concerto dates from 1932, when Britten was only nineteen.
Dmitri Shostakovich: Symphonies Nos 1 & 15
Mariinsky Orchestra/Valery Gergiev
Mariinsky MAR0502 (Hybrid SACD; 75 min 52 s)

This is a notable release for two reasons. It is the second recording produced by the Mariinsky Theatre on its in-house label with essential Shostakovich repertory never recorded when Gergiev was under contract to Philips. Also, it is the first occasion for a head-on collision between this conductor and the other Russian podium maverick, Moscow-based Mikhail Pletnev. Appearing only months apart, both tackle Shostakovich 15. Both albums are offered as Hybrid SACDs (Pletnev’s for Pentatone). The main work has been controversial since its first performance in 1972. With extensive quotations from Rossini, Beethoven and Wagner (all, mind you, re-orchestrated at each appearance in the score) plus much self-quotation, the composer’s intentions have been widely misunderstood. The Fifteenth is, in fact, a testament on a lifetime of experience. Recorded versions abound but only two conductors, the composer’s son Maxim (Collins and Supraphon) and Kurt Sanderling (Berlin Classics and BPO Centennial) ever seem to have realized its full measure on disc. How does the man of the theatre, Gergiev, stack up to virtuoso pianist and orchestra leader Pletnev? Both can claim performances in the M Shostakovich/Sanderling league. In direct comparison it is a dead heat. Pletnev achieves greater cohesion while Gergiev has an advantage in spontaneity. The couplings may influence a choice. Gergiev conducts a thrilling account of the First Symphony while Pletnev opted for a selection from the incidental music to the 1931 stage play, Hamlet. Why not go for both?

Yannick Nézet-Séguin has taken over Valery Gergiev’s rostrum in Rotterdam and is working as number two conductor with the London Philharmonic. Friends in the US keep asking whether he’s as good as I have made out. Here, on his first major-label release, I feel no need to eat any past paeans of praise.

A French-Canadian, Nézet-Séguin cut his record teeth on Bruckner with a seductive lyricism reminiscent of his Italian mentor, Carlo Maria Giulini. In Ravel, he is more obviously on home turf. The first effect to catch the ear is the simmer he gets out of Strauss’s Metamorphosen makes for a generous bonus. It is visualised before our closed eyes. In Valses nobles et sentimentales, the conductor lets his players off the leash for some window-rattling sonorities. La Valse is appropriately ghostly, restrained in the opening phrases but slowly building an image of a Vienna that is dancing towards self-destruction. At the risk of stamping Nézet-Séguin with false role models, I haven’t heard such sleek and controlled Ravel since Abbado in the 1970s. This is a conductor of very high promise indeed.

Richard Strauss: Symphonia Domestica, Metamorphosen
Staatskapelle Weimar/Antoni Wit
Naxos 8570895 (75 min 11 s)

For his recording debut as conductor-soloist, Louis Lortie appears to have adopted the motto, “l’audace, l’audace, toujours l’audace.” The demanding dual role is akin to directing traffic at a busy intersection while transcribing sonnets on a laptop. Lortie displays supreme confidence and a gift for meticulous preparation. The pianism dazzles and the OSQ responds in kind. This team exemplifies the exuberance intended by the composer. These performances sweep aside the current favourite (Brautigam/Amsterdam Sinfonietta/Markiz – BIS) to establish new benchmarks for the num- bered piano concertos by Mendelssohn. Lortie and the orchestra render the same exalted level of service in the Reformation Symphony. It seems closer to Robert Browning’s Fra Lippo Lippi in spirit than grumpy old Martin Luther and is all the more entertaining for that. The OSQ exhibits remarkable strength and finesse and the disc leaves the impression that they thoroughly enjoyed the sessions during April of this year.

This issue is a landmark in Louis Lortie’s progress to consummate musicianship. Barring a major injustice, it should earn him a Juno Award and is deserving of the highest international honours as well.

Ravel: Daphnis et Chloé/Le valse
Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra/Yannick Nézet-Séguin
EMI Classics 5099996644226

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Richard Strauss: Symphonia Domestica, Metamorphosen
Staatskapelle Weimar/Antoni Wit
Naxos 8570895 (75 min 11 s)

The Staatskapelle Weimarn and Antoni Wit achieved a major success for Naxos with their recording of Strauss’ Alpine Symphony (855781). These performances are just as fine although this should not be so. The recording sessions took place in 2005 and 2007 and somehow the orchestra and conductor pair seemed to seamlessly unite as they left off (at the midpoint of Symphonia domestica) to create an account to rival Rudolf Kempe’s from Dresden (EMI). The Staatskapelle deploys the precision and tonal weight of a traditional German orchestra. A superb rendering of Metamorphosen makes for a generous bonus. It provides a stark contrast with the main work, which becomes a sentimental recollection of the security...
always musically — the 2010 season will feature all Zeffirelli productions of Turandot, Aida, Madama Butterfly, Carmen, and Il Trovatore. With top tickets at 200 Euros — scalpers ask for a lot more — it’s pricey, but an unreserved spot on the stone steps sets you back only 20 Euros. This TDK box set of three Italian warhorses gives a very good idea of the Verona experience. The Franco Zeffirelli Madama Butterfly from 2004 is typical of his work — incredibly elaborate sets, sumptuous costumes, busy stage action involving cast of hundreds, and ultra-tradition- al interpretation. The three principals, Cedolins, Giordani and Pons, are big-name artists with generous voices and stage presence. Verona performers aren’t too subtle — Giordani and Cedolins engage in a high C competition at the end of the love duet, with the tenor out-yelling the soprano. Israeli Daniel Oren conducts with a sure hand. Not a Butterfly for the ages but enjoyable. Cedolins also sings the title role in Tosca from 2006. She is a good Tosca, although the role taxes her essentially lyric instrument. Argentinean tenor Marcelo Alvarez is a fine Cavaradossi. The evergreen Ruggiero Raimondi shows he still has what it takes to be a vocally commanding and evil Scarpia. Daniel Oren gives a fluid reading of the score. The modern, stylish production is a pleasure to the eye, with the Te Deum scene particularly impressive. Video quality is also excellent. The oldest of the three videos is Aida (from 1992) and the least enjoyable of the three. The singing is uneven, with an Aida (Maria Chiara) way past her prime, the voice sounding off pitch, thin and worn, afflicted by a slow vibrato. As Radames, Icelandic tenor Kristján Jóhannsson’s23 incessant bellowing gets tiring very fast. Top vocal honours go to both the young Dolores Zajick (Amneris) and a robust-voiced Juan Pons (Amnonasro). Nello Santi does yeoman service, but Chiara and the orchestra go their separate ways in ‘Ritorna vincitor.’ The ballet sequence has dancers wearing the blackest makeup, embarrassingly choreographed with African tribal movements. The video quality leaves a lot to be desired. There you have it — a mixed bag but still worthwhile if you want a taste of this fabled arena.

PER

DVD

Arena di Verona – Puccini Madama Butterfly; Tosca/Verdi: Aida
Florence Cedolins, Marcello Giordani, Juan Pons, Marcelo Alvarez, Ruggiero Raimondi, Maria Chiara, Kristján Jóhannsson, Dolora Zajick, Nicola Ghiuselev; Orchestra and Chorus of the Arena di Verona
Stage Director: Franco Zeffirelli; Hugo de Ana; Gianfranco De Bosio
TGD Gold Edition DVWW-GOLD06X (DVDs: 142 min; DVD2: 119 min; DVD3: 146 min)

Every summer, half a million people attend performances at the Arena di Verona. Any opera lover should make a pilgrimage to this legendary Roman amphitheatre at least once. The atmosphere is unique and unforgettable: performances start at 9 pm and often go beyond midnight, with casual audiences prone to sing along. Candles are lit at dusk — the sea of flickering lights makes for a stunning visual experience. What’s on stage is grand visually if not

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We already have a modern-dress/eternal Russia DVD production of Khovanshchina with Stein Winge’s exciting 2007 production from Barcelona (Opus Arte). The newcomer was also recorded in 2007. It will exercise strong appeal to collectors with a special interest in staging because Dmitri Tcherniakov erects a double-decker Eisenstein-style montage structure on the stage, which is used for all but the last scene. The largest and perhaps the supreme exemplar of Tan Dun’s striving for unified and universal musical expression. With the composer directing the orchestra and a lavish production from Pierre Audi, this is likely to be the definitive performance for all time. Marco Polo is an opera of daring conception. Dozens of aspects deserve comment but let us focus on the plot. There isn’t one. The work is a succession of sensations in the progress of a voyage of exploration and ultimate confrontation with the unknown. Of the extensive dramatic personae, only two characters are ‘real’ in the conventional sense: Polo and Kublai Khan. The explorer’s spiritual side (Marco) is assigned to a female voice. The supporting players are all notional. Viewers are advised to bring their sense of the abstract to these proceedings. Dun gives us fascinating music, combining traditional Eastern instruments with a modern chamber orchestra. The score includes quotations from Mozart and Mahler (who is also recruited as a character in the opera). The vocals are similarly interwoven. It is a performance which breaks down boundaries in all directions. Opus Arte also offer DVDs of Tan Dun’s Water and Water concerts. This beautifully produced book serves as both a valuable reference and a work for casual browsing on your coffee table. Author Joyce Bourne has already written Who’s Who in Opera, which analyzes 2,500 roles from 280 operas, as well as having served for the past 25 years as a researcher, typist and occasional co-author to her husband, noted music critic Michael Kennedy. This new volume boasts a foreword by Lord Harewood and a foreword by Bryn Terfel. Despite its flaws, this volume has more or less lived up to its advance hype. It contains an all-too-brief introduction to the history of opera followed by a slightly lengthier discussion of voice types. The bulk is devoted to a chronological survey of operas divided into Baroque, Classical, Romantic, Late Romantic, and “20th Century and Beyond.” Bourne has done a good job of giving the reader a little background on each composer and opera, a brief synopsis, and a summary of the important arias. There are many beautifully reproduced illustrations of historical drawings and production photos, some quite recent and in colour. Understandably, it’s impossible to be comprehensive, but I must question some of Bourne’s choices. There is a surfeit of 20th-century British composers, while others are relegated to near oblivion. For example, Bourne goes into great detail on Thea Musgrave, Harrison Birtwistle, Maxwell Davies and Judith Weir, but Les Dialogues des Carmélites by the great Francis Poulenc receives a one-sentence treatment! The illustrations are also Anglo-centric, with an inordinate number coming from Glyndebourne. These complaints aside, I did enjoy reading the book and it is a valuable resource for people new to opera.
The popularity of the graduate program at McGill's Schulich School of Music has compelled the school to create a second orchestra (the McGill Sinfonietta) to provide students with more performing opportunities. Invited artists for the school's Year of the Woodwinds include bassoonist Carlo Colombo, flutist Jeanne Baxtresser, oboist Stefan Schilli and clarinetist Larry Combs while percussionist Joe LaBarbera is this year's Jazz Visiting Artist. New names on the faculty roster include Matthias Maute and François Ouimet in the choral department and Richard King in Sound Recording. David Lefkowich will guest direct Opera McGill’s January production of Stravinsky's The Rake’s Progress. Don MacLean, who is in his last year as Dean, hopes to raise the $10-million needed to complete the School's world-class sound recording studio.

For a few glorious minutes, you become Haydn. That’s the idea behind the Schulich School of Music Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in Music Media and Technology (CIRMMT)'s latest star project. The first-ever recording using CIRMMT's cutting-edge 'room-capture' technology celebrates the 200th anniversary of Joseph Haydn’s death. Virtual Haydn, a NAXOS four-Blu-ray-disc set of the composer's complete keyboard works performed by pianist and professor Tom Beghin, was released last month.

Before this, capturing period music had obvious flaws. Most recordings take place in or approximate the sound of concert halls, but those were uncommon until late in Haydn’s day. Recording in-studio and then reproducing authentic acoustics in post-production means musicians play in dry, acoustically perfect rooms with little reverberation and cater their performance to this unnatural setting. Move the recording on-location, however, and one finds 18th century concert spaces now surrounded by modern noise and traffic. Myriad other factors get in the way: instruments such as square pianos and clavichords are rare, for example, and original instruments’ response and tone have degraded from aging.

Frustrated by these flaws, Beghin and Martha de Francisco, a noted recording engineer and producer, decided to collaborate on a revolutionary recording when they met on their first day of teaching at McGill in 2003. Smooth-playing replicas of seven historically accurate instruments were commissioned, many the first of their kind in modern times; some can play common figures such as “Viennese short octaves” (requiring wider chords), which cannot be played on modern keyboards.

The tables really turned when CIRMMT founding director Wieslaw Woszcyk came along: what if, he suggested, their studio was transformed into Haydn’s study, or the Esterháza Castle in Hungary, where Haydn was the resident composer, or the Holywell Music Room, where Haydn played during the English tours that gained him celebrity status?

To do so, they developed technology capable of capturing the acoustic characteristics of these and six other rooms. These characteristics can then be plugged into a studio. Back in Montreal, Beghin performed pieces on specific instruments and ‘in specific rooms’ according to the carefully researched music history of Haydn’s repertoire. The music is manipulated live, so Beghin can hear the music as if he were in one of Haydn’s old haunts as he performs—no traffic or plane tickets necessary. Some sonatas are even recorded ‘in Haydn’s study’ at his clavichord, with the microphone configuration directing the sound from the player’s position. It’s the closest one can get inside a composer’s head.

“Virtual Haydn is a crowning jewel of the historically informed performance movement comes with a making-of documentary and one-minute clips of the same music played in all possible pairings of room and keyboard for the listener to compare,” says Beghin.

“THE OLD MUSIC BECOMES MODERN TECHNOLOGY AGAIN

- TOM BEGHIN

www.thevirtualhaydn.com
INNOVATION in the CLASSROOM THE LATEST IN CANADIAN MUSICOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Compiled by Crystal Chan

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Dr. Keith Hamel and Dr. Bob Pritchard at the UBC School of Music are developing an integrated score-following environment that can be used in interactive multimedia performances. The project, entitled iMUSE, consists of a multi-application software environment capable of tracking, coordinating and synchronizing live multimedia performances. At the core of the system is a graphical score that includes traditional musical notes as well as control messages, gesture data and movement maps. During a live performance, pitch and gesture tracking is performed on the participating artists and this information is used to synchronize the performance to the score. The score may also include sound files and control messages for sound or video processing that are triggered by events in the live performance. This research is funded by SSHRC and is being undertaken in collaboration with IRCAM in Paris.

Over the last four years, John Roeder, a Professor of Music Theory at the University of British Columbia School of Music, together with graduate students in music theory and other student specialists in computer animation, have developed innovative ways to analyze contemporary art music, displaying the results with computer animation. They studied a wide range of music by Carter, Adés, Bryars, Rochberg, Stockhausen, Pépin, Part, as well as Berg and Bartók. The group developed “transformational theory”, which describes music not simply as relationships among notes, but as actions in musical “spaces”. The computer animations show visualizations of those spaces, and of motions in them, synchronized to the music. Many of the results of this SSHRC-funded project appeared in a special issue (15.1) of Music Theory Online: mto.society-musictheory.org

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Ian Bruce Tallon, Friedemann Sallis, and Evan Rothery have developed The Nono Project, which focuses on A Pierre. Dell’azzuro silenzio, inquietum. A più cori (1985), a late work by Luigi Nono (1924-90), one of the most significant composers of the second half of the twentieth century. A Pierre is a composition for contrabass flute, contrabass clarinet and live electronics, in which Nono integrated extended instrumental performance techniques with electronically modified sounds of the instruments. The sounds are transformed in timbre and pitch (by electronic filtering and harmonizing), in space (by controlled sound diffusion), and in time (by multiple electronic delays). These procedures combine to create a complex polyphonic texture that is only partially notated in the performance score. For example, the electronic delays of twelve and twenty-four seconds create a three-part, canon-like structure that runs throughout the work. These layers of electronically produced sounds are absent from the score and yet are overwhelmingly present in the concert experience of this music. One of the short-term objectives is to produce a score of a recorded performance that will give a more complete visualization of the work.

The immediate aim is to better understand how musical themes and sound textures in A Pierre evolve in time and space; a long-term goal is to use this experience to lay the foundations for analysis of other musical works. This is particularly important with regard to Canada’s musical heritage, a significant part of which has been produced since the 1950s and uses similar electroacoustic techniques.

LEARNING JAZZ

Marc Chénard

From its beginnings until today, jazz has always been a matter for argument, with hardly anyone agreeing on its definition. Moreover, its history is studded with controversies over its various styles (West Coast cool in the 1950s, the “new thing”, or free jazz, of the following decade, and the jazz fusion developed by Miles Davis and cohorts). There is also the everlasting debate on the relative merits of teaching jazz in schools. This short article will not try to resolve this question, but will present a brief overview of the state of jazz education in this country’s institutions of higher learning, from East to West.

ATLANTIC CANADA AND QUEBEC

Jazz teaching at the post-secondary level is a fairly recent phenomenon, dating back to the 1970s, with larger centres in Toronto and Montreal leading the way, then spreading out nationwide. In the Maritimes, for instance, there are no full time jazz studies programs per se, but jazz courses are offered at Memorial University in Newfoundland and Dalhousie University in Halifax, each of these institutions boasting its own student jazz ensemble. St. Francis Xavier University, in Antigonish, N.S., also has a long history of jazz teaching in Eastern Canada.

In Quebec, McGill University began to offer jazz courses rather timidly in the 1970s, then enlarged its scope by creating a Bachelor of Music degree in jazz studies, and a master’s degree in jazz performance in the 1990s. Concordia University, for its part, has offered a B.F.A in jazz studies for over thirty years. Among the francophone music faculties, Université du Montréal has a degree program comparable to Concordia’s, while at UQAM, jazz has taken its place within a popular music program. Also in Montreal, two public CECEPs with impressive music departments, Saint-Laurent (francophone) and Vanier (anglophone), provide excellent training for young jazz musicians headed for the universities. Elsewhere in the province, Université Laval offers jazz theory, jazz history, and jazz ensemble courses within a more general program of studies. Jazz also has a place, albeit modest, in Quebec’s conservatories (Montreal and Chicoutimi).

ONTARIO AND THE WEST

The only place that can compete with Montreal in Jazz Education is Toronto, where two major institutions, University of Toronto and York University, offer jazz studies at the undergraduate and graduate levels, with a pool of teachers that includes a good number of elite jazz musicians. Also well known for its jazz teaching, Humber College was one of the first training grounds for Canadian, particularly Toronto jazz artists, and fulfills a function not unlike that of the two Quebec CECEPs mentioned above.

Between Ontario and the Rockies, there are jazz programs both at the University of Manitoba and Brandon University; also worth noting here is the exceptional role played by the Banff Centre, which holds its prestigious International Workshop in Jazz and Creative Music every year in May.

On the West Coast, finally, Vancouver has its two prestigious institutions, UBC and Simon Fraser University, the former offering jazz courses as part of its B.A. in music, and the latter geared towards a multidisciplinary program that includes electronic music. About a year ago, two BC colleges with music programs were upgraded to university status: Vancouver University (formerly Vancouver Community College) favours contemporary (with an emphasis on improvisation), while Capilano University (formerly Capilano College) leans toward more traditional jazz styles.

To find out more, visit these school’s websites

[Translation: Darcy Dunton]

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To find out more, visit these school’s websites
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4300 Cawthra Road, Mississauga, ON, L4Z 1V8
Tel.: 905-306-9900
info@chopinfestival2010.com
www.chopinfestival2010.com
Dates: March 1-7, 2010
Deadline: November 9, 2009

This competition offers performance opportunities for young Canadian pianists and enables the three top winners to compete in the Preliminary Round of the 16th International F. Chopin Piano Competition to be held in April 2010 in Warsaw, Poland. The Gala Winners Concert will be held in Koerner Hall of the Royal Conservatory as well as the opportunity to play with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra. Second to Sixth Place finishes will also receive monetary awards. There is also a $1,000 award for the best performance of the test piece.

THE SHEAN PIANO COMPETITION

Applications: 45-1130 Falconer Rd NW, Edmonton, AB T6R 2J6
Competition Venue: Muttart Hall, MacEwan, Alberta College Campus
Tel.: 780-438-2412
www.sheancompetition.com
Dates: May 19-21, 2010
Deadline: December 11, 2009
Ages: 15-28 yrs

Six finalists will be chosen to compete for the top prize of $8,000 as well as the opportunity to play with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra. Second to Sixth Place finishes will also receive monetary awards. There is also a $1,000 award for the best performance of the test piece.

10th INTERNATIONAL JEAN SIBELIUS VIOLIN COMPETITION
Sibelius Academy, P.O. Box 86, 00251 Helsinki, Finland
Tel.: +358 20 7539 645
www.siba.fi/sibeliuscompetition
Dates: Nov. 21 – Dec. 2, 2010
Deadline: August 16, 2010
Ages: born in or after 1980

The International Jean Sibelius Violin Competition was organized for the first time in 1965. In 2010 it will be organized for the tenth time by the Sibelius Society and the Sibelius Academy. During its existence, this competition has become one of the most prestigious in its category.

QUEEN ELISABETH COMPETITION - BRUSSELS
20 rue aux Laines, B-1000 Brussels, Belgium
Tel.: +32 2 213 40 50
info@cmireb.be
www.cmireb.be
Ages: Piano - born after January 15, 1983
Voice - born after January 15, 1978

The Queen Elisabeth International Music Competition of Belgium is holding a competition from May 3 to May 29, 2010 for pianists. This competition is for musicians who have completed their training and who are ready to embark upon an international career. The 2011 competition is dedicated for young singers and will be held in May 2011.

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jeby@ubishops.ca
www.ubishops.ca / www.gobishops.ca

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www.conservatoire.gouv.qc.ca

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**BISHOP'S UNIVERSITY**

Programs offered
- B.A.
  - with Honours, Major, or Minor in Music
- Certificate in Music Studies
  - Both Classical and Popular Music Studies are available

Facilities
- Bandeen Hall
  - (160 seats, 2 Hamburg Steinways)
- 1 Smart Classroom
- 1 Theory Lab
- (Mac computers + keyboards)
- Electronic Studio

12 Studios + practice rooms
2 Manual Wilhelm tracker organ
Music Library (adjacent)

Description
Bishop's is a liberal arts university and the Music Department shares this philosophy of education. We offer courses in theory, history, literature and performance, and music studies may be combined with any other discipline at Bishop’s. We offer an excellent concert series as well as regular master-classes, small classes and personal attention to students.

**Conservatoire de musique et d'art dramatique du Québec**

Programs offered
- Higher education courses in instrumental and vocal performance, orchestral conducting, composition, and electroacoustic composition.
- Advanced Studies I (equivalent to Bachelor’s level)
  - Performance: Bachelor in Music,
    Diploma of Specialized Study in Music, Orchestral Conducting Certificate, Higher Education
  - Diploma I in Music, Higher Education Certificate I in Music;
    Composition: Higher Education
    Diploma I in Music, Higher Education Certificate I in Music

Advanced Studies II (equivalent to Master’s level)
- Masters in Music, Artist’s Diploma in Music, Diploma of Specialized Study in Music, Higher Education Diploma II in Music, Higher Education Certificate II in Music; Composition: Higher Education

Advanced Training (post-graduate level)
- Facilities
  - Seven premises in music: Gatineau, Montreal, Quebec, Saguenay, Rimouski, Trois-Rivières, Val-d’Or / classroom and practice studios, rehearsal and concert halls, listening rooms, libraries, audiovisual and MIDI laboratories.

Faculty: 182

Students
- 578 preparatory and intermediate studies-level, with 202 at the collegiate level.
- 229 Advanced Studies I and II and Advanced Training.

Tuition
- One full-time year for residents of Quebec: maximum $1,900.

Description
Teachers are nationally and internationally-celebrated musicians. The low ratio of students to teachers assures a high quality of education, permitting students to progress rapidly through their studies. Professors as accompanists: free throughout the length of study.

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SCHOOL OF MUSIC
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Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5
Tel: (613) 562-5733
Fax: (613) 562-5140
music@uottawa.ca
www.music.uottawa.ca

UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA SCHOOL OF MUSIC
6361 Memorial Road
Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1Z2
Tel: (604) 822-3113
Fax: (604) 822-4884
music.admissions@ubc.ca
www.music.ubc.ca

Programs offered
Dec in Music
- (2-year pre-university program)
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- Music and Social Science; Music and Creative Arts, Literature and Languages
- (3-year pre-university programs)
Facilities
Two recital halls with grand pianos
Music computer lab
Digital sound recording equipment
Practice rooms
Access to McGill University Schulich School of Music library and practice rooms
Faculty
37 (full-time & part-time)
Students
40 full-time
tuition fees
One academic year, full-time:
$3,980
International students:
$5,226 additional
description
Building on a tradition of excellence at Marianopolis, Music students benefit from the program’s association with the Schulich School of Music.

Programs offered
B.A. with Honours (Specialization in Music), Major in Music – some programs can be combined with a Major or Minor in Arts Administration.
Graduate: M.Mus; M.A.
Two Certificates, Orchestral Studies and Piano Pedagogy Research
Facilities
Freiman Recital Hall and Tabaret Hall
Two large rehearsal halls and dozens of practice studios.
Technology & research: $1.3 million dol-
lar Piano Pedagogy Research.
Electronic music studio, music and computers lab.
The latest recording technology; Isobel Firestone Music Library & Resource Centre.
Faculty
19 full-time, 40 part-time
Students
320 full-time, 65 part-time
tuition fees
(1 academic year, full-time)
$5,590.86 (undergraduate) $4,684.53 (graduate)
description
Celebrating its 40th anniversary in 2009, the newly named School of Music has a roster of professors who are 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. Performance opportunities are plentiful, both within the school and in the greater community. As part of a comprehensive university, thanks to close ties with arts organizations such as the Ottawa Symphony Orchestra and the National Arts Centre, with a campus located in the heart of the nation’s capital, our students find it easy to enjoy the bilingual milieu and rich cultural life of the region.

Programs offered
B.Mus.
- in Composition, Opera, Voice, Guitar, Harpsichord, Music Scholarship, Orchestral Instruments, Organ, Piano and General Studies
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 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)
Old Auditorium Concert Theatre (530 seats)
Gessler Hall (80 seats)
Practice studios
Computer music studio
Music library
Multimedia centre
Faculty
30 full-time, 56 part-time
Students
280 undergraduate, 130 graduate
tuition fees
B.Mus, Canadian landed immigrants: $4,725 (32 credits)
B.Mus non-Canadians, visa students: $21,660 (32 credits)
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 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.

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the music scene Winter 2010 27
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Fax: (514) 343-5727  
musique@umontreal.ca  
www.musique.umontreal.ca

**Programs offered**  
Bachelor's degree:  
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Master's degree:  
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Performance, Composition, Conducting  
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**Students**  
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Undergraduate: 509  
Graduate: 297

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**Department of Music**  
2500 University Boulevard  
Sherbrooke, Quebec J1K 2R1  
Tel: (819) 821-8040  
Fax: (819) 821-7635  
etudes.musique@USherbrooke.ca  
www.USherbrooke.ca/musique

**Programs Offered**  
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**Faculty**  
19 full-time, 47 part-time

**Students**  
275 full-time, 142 part-time

**Tuition**  
(1 year, 30 credits) : $2,500 (approx.)

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**Laval University**  
**Faculty of Music**  
1055 Seminaire Avenue  
Quebec, Quebec G1V 0A6  
Tel: (418) 656-7061  
Fax: (418) 656-7365  
mus@mus.ulaval.ca  
www.mus.ulaval.ca

**Programs offered**  
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Music Performance Diploma  
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Ph.D. in Music, Composition

**Facilities**  
250 seat recital hall; 400 seat newly renovated theatre with orchestra pit;  
Organ recital room: 2,200 seat hall.

**Faculty**  
42 full-time, 69 part-time

**Students**  
600 undergraduate, 130 graduate

**Tuition fees**  
(1 academic year, full-time): $5,900

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Popular Music Studies.  
Music Performance Diploma  
Certificate in Piano Technology  
M.Mus.in Composition, Literature and Performance, Music Education  
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M.A. in Music Theory, Musicology, Popular Music and Culture  
Ph.D. in Music, Composition

**Facilities**  
250 seat recital hall; 400 seat newly renovated theatre with orchestra pit;  
Organ recital room: 2,200 seat hall.

**Faculty**  
42 full-time, 69 part-time

**Students**  
600 undergraduate, 130 graduate

**Tuition fees**  
(1 academic year, full-time): $5,900

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Tel: (514) 987-4174
Fax: (514) 987-4637
bacc.musique@uqam.ca
www.musique.uqam.ca

Programs offered
B.Mus
- Education Concentration: 120 credits
- Performance Concentration: 90 credits

Major in music: 60 credits
Graduate diploma specializing in film music (D.E.S.S.)
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Doctorate in arts studies and performance

Facilities
Many classrooms and practice studios; professional recording studio; anechoic chamber; MIDI studio, library, music and sound archives; computer labs.

The UQAM Department of Music also has access to Pierre-Mercure Hall in the Pierre-Péladeau Centre for concerts of large ensembles (wind orchestras, vocal ensembles, percussion ensembles...).

Faculty
16 full-time, 63 part-time

Students
193 full-time, 92 part-time

Tuition fees
For one full-time year (10 courses X 3 credits)
Quebec residents: $2,656.40
CDN non-residents of QC: $6,189.20
International: $14,132.30

Description
Entirely updated, the B.Mus offers a contemporary vision built upon the realities of artistic practice and pedagogy as well as music education. Performance students can choose, in addition to the regular curriculum, an individualized program. The Excellence program offers high-achieving students the possibility of including in their program 3 credits from graduate-level courses. The Major program offers the possibility of pursuing an education in a complementary domain as a minor or a certificate.

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Victoria, British Columbia V8N 3N4

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Fax: (250) 386-6602
info@vcm.bc.ca
www.vcm.bc.ca

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Teaching and practice studios, rehearsal rooms, music library

Faculty
30

Students
50 full time
(Professional School only)

Tuition fees
Course prices vary. Annual costs range $2000 - $4500/year.
Pedagogy $700/term
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Digital pianos have been around for a long time. Yamaha produced its first, the Clavinova, in 1983. While they have steadily improved in quality and realism and grown in popularity, the classical music community has been resistant. Digital pianos typically reproduce notes prerecorded from an acoustic piano by using a sampling technology. Limitations with playing digital pianos include the inability for the pianists to have the same control and physical sensations as if they were playing on an acoustic piano. There is also the issue of the authenticity of the sound. However, the introduction of two new products, the AvantGrand from Yamaha and the V-Piano from Roland—two very different machines using totally different technologies—may finally be changing the minds of purists.

The Yamaha AvantGrand is billed as a “hybrid” piano, combining the best elements of the traditional acoustic piano with current state-of-the-art digital audio technology. I attended a private demonstration in Toronto given by Jun Fujimoto of Yamaha in July. The AvantGrand looks deceptively like a small baby grand. The actual feel of the piano, when playing, is pretty much indistinguishable from that of an acoustic piano, down to the same vibrations—it’s uncanny. Looking under the lid, you will see clusters of speakers. There is also a small control panel unobtrusively mounted on the bottom left edge of the keyboard that allows the player to make adjustments through Yamaha’s newly developed Tactile Response System that simulates the physical sensations of playing an acoustic piano. The proof of the pudding is in the hearing—the sound coming out of the AvantGrand is astoundingly good. Yamaha has achieved a breakthrough in the classical music world by enlisting two eminent pianists, Alexander Kobrin and Cyprien Katsaris, to endorse the AvantGrand. The N3 sells for around $20,000 US, while the upright N2 is considerably less costly. Go to the beautifully designed AvantGrand website at www.avantgrand.com to watch Kobrin and Katsaris in action.

The V-Piano from Roland takes a different approach. It is not based on sampling but rather on Roland’s proprietary Component Object Sound Modeling technology. According to the Roland press release, the sounds are generated from scratch using complex mathematical models, which Roland claims that this technique is more authentic and capable of unprecedented levels of control. Each of the “core elements” of the acoustic piano, such as the strings, hammers, damper, sound board and frame, are individually crafted and customizable, something that isn’t possible with digital pianos based on sampling. The V-Piano features a new keyboard where the keys are progressively weighted like in an acoustic piano; the lower register keys are heavier. Roland’s Ivory Feel technology simulates the touch and feel of the keys of a premium grand piano. The piano contains a computer dedicated to monitoring the keyboard. It senses how the piano is being played and leads to adjustments of the sound. I attended the Roland press preview in July and was completely bowled over by the amazing sound quality. Visually the big difference is that the Roland does not look like an acoustic piano, let alone a grand. The appearance is that of a tastefully designed keyboard with external speakers. But then, at $8,500, it is eminently more affordable, not to say portable, than an acoustic parallel, with—to my ears at least—equally amazing sound.

www.roland.com/V-Piano

For those with deep pockets, I highly recommend purchasing both!
Piano

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