

MUSIC IN THE
AFTERNOON

MUSIC IN THE AFTERNOON

NEWS & NOTES

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A LOOK AHEAD TO THE 113TH SEASONBy *Simon Fryer, WMCT Artistic Director*

It is my distinct pleasure to share the results of the Artists Selection Committee's efforts over the past months with you. I thank Annette Sanger, Penelope Cookson, Peter Goulding, Hanna Feuerriegel, Emmy Homburger, and Julia Smith for their hard work, excellent judgement and open-mindedness. It has been both fascinating and a great pleasure to work with this wonderful group of people to put together the 2010-2011 season.

Our process began as it has each preceding year, by addressing the various components that we felt should constitute the series. This allowed us to build on the balance created for the 2009-2010 season and its predecessors, and to review the possibilities for solo recitals and chamber music. Once again considering the mass of possible instruments, voices, and combinations within those areas led us to a central layout for the season on which we could then base our exploration of prospective artists. Primary in all our discussions remains the principle of the WMCT's role as the introducer of talent. We seek Canadian artists of the highest caliber and foreign artists well-established at home and primed for recognition here in Canada.

To accomplish a satisfying programme balance we evaluated materials referencing dozens of musicians, using print, CD/DVD recordings, and web-based media. We each suggested artists who had attracted our attention and all discussed the appropriateness of each potential artist for the series given our parameters above. The WMCT is a well-known and respected presenting organization which renders potential performers happily responsive to its overtures. Thus once the ASC committee members arrived at a consensus on what we believe to be a balanced, stimulating and fascinating selection of artists, the effort of

assembling the components into a coherent season of events is a pleasurable one!

I think you will agree that the 2010-2011 series demonstrates attention to the core values that have made *Music in the Afternoon* so successful for so long, and that the new season reaches for new heights in our concert experience.



Livia Sohn, Geoff Nuttall, & Stephen Prutsman

The series opens on October 14, 2010, with magnificent violinist Livia Sohn. Livia has been hailed by *Opus Magazine* as "a stunning musician", and performs widely on the international stage. The WMCT is particularly fortunate that Livia will be joined for her appearance by well-known violinist Geoff Nuttall of the St. Lawrence String Quartet and versatile pianist Stephen Prutsman. All three of these exceptional artists feature on Livia's recently released Naxos disc, *Opera Fantasies*, and Livia and her illustrious guests will bring a dazzling programme that includes elements from this disc, unusual works for two violins (and violin and viola), and Richard Strauss' monumental sonata for violin and piano.

"Livia Sohn possesses a remarkably lithe and transparent tone of exceptional purity. [Her] virtually blemishless accounts...are nothing short of remarkable. Even when under

the most fearsome technical pressure at high velocity, every note rings true with pinpoint accuracy." *Strad Magazine*

www.liviasohn.com



James Campbell, New Zealand String Quartet, & Paul Stewart

Next, on November 25, the WMCT presents one of Canada's most established and decorated musicians: clarinetist James Campbell. Jim has performed in most of the world's major concert halls and with over 50 orchestras including the London Symphony, Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal, and the Russian Philharmonic. Jim has followed his muse to five television specials, more than 40 recordings, over 30 works commissioned, a Juno Award, the Roy Thomson Hall Award, Canada's Artist of the Year, the Order of Canada, and most recently The Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal. Jim brings friends the New Zealand String Quartet and pianist Paul Stewart for a programme of Brahms, Mozart, and new works by Phil Nimmons and Tim Corlis. Phil Nimmons is of course Canada's "godfather" of the jazz world and Tim Corlis is the recipient of this year's WMCT commission. Tim's piece will be a quintet for Jim and the NZSQ.

"Canada's pre-eminent clarinetist and wind soloist" *Toronto Star*

<http://www.gamisim.com/artist/jamescampbell/>

The WMCT begins 2011 on February 10 and it is a great pleasure to introduce to you Darrett Zusko, winner of the 2009 WMCT Career Development Award. Still in his early twenties and rapidly estab-



lishing himself as one of the most exciting young artists of the new generation, this Canadian pianist continues to garner much critical acclaim wherever he performs. "Clearly a phenom..." raved *The Cincinnati Enquirer*. He has been lauded for his "powerful technique and sonority" (*La Presse*) and his "exceptional musicality and

virtuosity" (*La Nueva España*). Mr. Zusko is fast becoming one of Canada's most sought-after soloists. Darrett will perform a programme in tribute to Franz Liszt on this the 200th anniversary of that Romantic icon's birth.

"...one of the most promising performers of the 21st century, so much so that no one would doubt that he may well become a figure of worldwide prominence." *La Nueva España*

<http://www.darrettzusko.com>



Aviv String Quartet

March 10 brings the dynamic Aviv String Quartet in a programme including Schubert's masterful G major quartet. The Aviv Quartet is a multiple award-winning ensemble that performs at leading venues throughout the world. Now recording for Naxos, the quartet's repertoire comprises approximately 100 works, from Haydn to contemporary composers. The quartet originated in Israel (as the name suggests) and the cellist is now Canadian Rachel Mercer, a past WMCT scholarship winner who recently won use of the Canada Council Bonjour Stradivari. The quartet will also give a master class at the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto, sponsored by the WMCT.

"honesty and integrity of interpretation at the highest level"

*Mozarteum
Salzburg*

www.avivquartet.com

The final concert of the season on April 14 features a unique collaboration! Superstar baritone Russell Braun – no stranger to the WMCT stage – with Montreal wind quintet Pentaèdre and accordionist extraordinaire Joseph Petric. This stellar collection of artists will perform Schubert's *Die Winterreise* in the remarkable arrangement by Pentaèdre's Normand Forget. I was captivated



Russell Braun, Pentaèdre Wind Quintet, & Joseph Petric

when I first heard this arrangement and am confident that you will be equally absorbed by Normand's subtle yet astonishing approach to Schubert's seminal work. I think Mr. Schubert would enthusiastically approve!

"A searching musician, Braun has one of the world's most beautiful baritone voices. He brings a poet's soul and a young man's bewildered grief to Schubert's shattering cycle of solitude and loss." *New York Newsday*

"Montreal has its own champions of the windy genre." Natasha Gauthier, Hour (Canada)

<http://www.pentaedre.com>

I hope the above excites you as much as it does me and that you will agree that this looks like a wonderful season! I am already looking forward to planning the next one!

SCHUMANN'S "MUSICKING" LISTENER

By Colleen L. Renihan

In Fernand Khnopff's famous painting *While Listening to Schumann*, a woman sits hunched over in a chair with her hand to her head, as though deep in thought, or perhaps deeply moved emotionally. Her back is turned to the pianist, whom we assume to be playing a piece by Robert Schumann. It is fascinating from a musical perspective that the subject of the painting is neither the pianist, nor Schumann's music, but rather the behaviour exhibited by the listener. Evidently, Khnopff's choice of Schumann as the composer of this music was not haphazard.

Historically, Schumann's piano music has been considered a prototype of the Romantic ideal of sublime emotionalism, as expressed in music. Often, these pieces are prefaced by a title that suggests an extramusical association, and when they are not, they still foster what seems

to be a narrative quality; their varied colour and their exquisite lyricism are the result of a particular element of Schumann's compositional style that nineteenth-century audiences would have interpreted as emotional content. In light of the bicentenary of Schumann's birth in 2010, and of the Schumann pieces on Janina Fialkowska's upcoming recital on April 29, I would like to briefly consider some of Schumann's own thoughts on the act of listening, as well as a relatively recent musicological theory that addresses this fascinating aspect of interpretation.

Schumann's double interest in music and literature reaffirms our interest in questioning his extramusical intentions and their effects. Through his work as editor and writer for the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* (a music magazine that he founded in Leipzig in 1834), Schumann engaged in popular debates about the nature of music's programmatic elements. While he did not believe that the goal of music should be exclusively that of communicating a specific programme, he did nevertheless see the potential for the relationship of music and text to be a close one in some instances. In his work as a critic, he denounced the programmatic efforts of many composers, but praised others, such as Beethoven and Schubert, who he believed were able to "translate every circumstance of life into the language of tone" (NZfM, I (1834), p.10). Significantly, however, it was the potential for (mis)interpretation on the part of the listener that most fascinated and concerned Schumann, particularly with regard to his own music.



While Listening to Schumann by Fernand Khnopff

This issue continues to fascinate musicologists today. Christopher Small is one of the most compelling voices in recent years to emerge in the study of music as a social practice. Small's notion of "musicking" understands the significance of music to lie in its social practice: "To music is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing, [...through composition] or by dancing" (1998, 9). Note the inclusion of the listener alongside that of the performer and composer in this definition. In Small's estimation, music is not a product but a process, of which the listener is an integral part.

Small's theory might relate particularly well to Robert Schumann's piano pieces, where music paints scenes of narrative dimensions, requiring the efforts of a keen listener to effect an emotional response, and thereby generate meaning. Given the composer's interest in the effects of a programmatic listening style, as well as the nineteenth-century understanding of music as a reflection of human emotion, we might consider ourselves justified in asking just how and why we might still respond so emotionally to his music today. Does it engage us in this way to a greater degree than other musics do? Why might this be so?

I would like to briefly consider a piece from Schumann's oeuvre — the postlude to the final song of *Frauenliebe und -leben* — to illustrate my point regarding the centrality of the listener in any designation of meaning that the music might be thought to "contain." Does a certain chord or progression in this postlude inherently "mean" something? Is it nostalgic or regretful, as is often suggested? In this very instructive case, is the music not derived quite directly from the brief prelude to the first song in the cycle? The composer and performer are only subsidiaries in the creation of meaning in this instance, and there are more examples like it including, of course, several by other composers.

Schumann's carefully-chosen compositional elements certainly form the beginnings of an emotionally poignant musical experience in his piano pieces. And the interpretive freedom that he invites from his performers continues towards this goal. But the real act of musicking in Schumann's music, as the artist Fernand Khnopff seems to have understood, lies unequivocally in the imagination of the listener. With Schumann, to listen is to interpret.

Colleen L. Renihan is a Ph.D. candidate in Musicology at the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto

FROM THE PRESIDENT

The February 25 concert with Isabel Bayrakdarian and Serouj Kradjian, in beautiful Koerner Hall, is a total sellout with three high school music classes and eleven of Catherine Robbin's vocal music students from York University attending free of charge as part of the WMCT's Student Outreach Programme. The WMCT's unsung hero, John Mayo, who writes meticulously researched and beautifully explicit programme notes for every concert outdid himself this time, making history come alive. Thanks to all the WMCT members who purchased extra tickets and to arts administrator Susan Corrigan, problem-solver and facilitator extraordinaire, for making this concert such a successful special event in the long history of the WMCT.

Artistic Director Simon Fryer has written an eloquent report about the Artists Selection Committee and the result of its work for next season's concerts. The WMCT has always been fortunate in its artistic directors and Simon is no exception. This internationally respected and accomplished cellist and chamber musician, alumnus of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and former professor of music and artist-in-residence at Wilfred Laurier University, gives of his heart and soul to the WMCT. Under his leadership the Artists Selection Committee has chosen an extraordinary 113th season for your musical enjoyment.

Musicologist Annette Sanger, chair of the Career Development Award Committee, arranges for her students to write erudite articles from academia for the newsletter for which we are very grateful. Thanks also go to Penderecki String Quartet violinist Jeremy Bell who writes about the collaboration between the quartet and composer Glenn Buhr for this issue.

Chair of the Membership and Marketing Committee, Bonnie O'Dacre and her team expect to have the new WMCT web site up and running soon. Don't miss Bonnie's delightful profile of indefatigable volunteer Marlene Preiss in this issue and be sure to look for archival anecdotes provided by WMCT archivist Susan Johnston in future issues.

Thanks to volunteer Nancy Lofft for so capably assuming the position of hospitality coordinator. In response to the many positive comments made by new members in a recent telephone survey, Patricia Hausner, chair of the Front of House Committee, said, "For me, like the rest of the Front of House volunteers, it is a heartfelt goal to provide a friendly environment and to make the concert experience a happy one for our members."

The WMCT is also grateful to Joe Lesniak, Edward Johnson Building manager, for his assistance to Hospitality and Front of House at every concert. Ever pleasant and obliging, Joe once even arranged to bring in an elevator operator for a concert when the self-service function of the Faculty of Music's elevator was out of order so that WMCT members would not be inconvenienced. By chance, that concert was cancelled when a blizzard shut down Toronto and Karina Gauvin was stranded in Montreal, but Joe would not have let us down. Thank you, Joe, for all you do for the WMCT.

Kudos to editor Susan Corrigan came from a reader of the October newsletter who wrote saying, "...how impressed I was with the layout, writing, articles and overall impression of the publication. It is really a professional communication vehicle for the WMCT."

The members of the WMCT board of directors join me in wishing you all the best in 2010.

Julia Smith
President

WMCT CENTENNIAL FOUNDATION

Promoting excellence in music performance has been an integral part of the Women's Musical Club of Toronto since its inception in 1899. Over the years, dedication to this ideal has evolved, but never wavered.

Development of musical talent has taken many forms. Scholarships in music performance have been awarded at the University of Toronto since 1950, and the scholarship programme has since been expanded to include The Glenn Gould School at The Royal Conservatory of Music, among others. Scholarships have become an important part of the work of the WMCT and the WMCT Centennial Foundation.

Twenty years ago, support for excellence in music performance took a leap forward with the establishment of the Career Development Award, or CDA. The award was first given in 1989. Initial funding for the award came from the proceeds of the 90th anniversary fundraising efforts. Since 2000, when the Women's Musical Club of Toronto Centennial Foundation was

established, the Foundation has had responsibility for funding the award on behalf of the WMCT.

What distinguishes the Career Development Award from many other scholarships, bursaries, awards, and prizes is that it is targeted at a musician just on the threshold of a performing career. Often still unknown to audiences, a musician in this stage of a performance career needs both financial support and performance opportunities. The CDA was established to offer both.

Judged by a panel of eminent musical professionals, the CDA is awarded to a young musician who has embarked on a solo career and is expected to further the art of performance in Canada and beyond. The award consists of a cash component, as well as a performance in the Women's Musical Club of Toronto season. The cash award, \$10,000, is an important boost to the financial needs of a young musician. The performance opportunity as part of the prestigious WMCT season is a major event in the emerging career of a young performer, giving exposure, often for the first time, to a knowledgeable and supportive audience in Canada's largest city.

Award winners in the first twenty years of the CDA are:

- 1989 Francine Kay, piano
- 1992 James Ehnes, violin
- 1994 Karina Gauvin, soprano
- 1997 Jeanie Chung, piano
- 2000 Yegor Dyachkov, cello
- 2003 Sonja Chan, piano
- 2006 Shannon Mercer, soprano
- 2009 Darrett Zusko, piano



WMCT Centennial Foundation board members Peter A. Goulding and Ina van Berkel (right) at Koerner Hall with 2009-2010 scholarship winners from The Royal Conservatory of Music, Leigh-Anne Martin, mezzo-soprano (left), and Grace Kim, piano (centre). Photo courtesy the RCM.

Donors to the Centennial Fund have every reason to be proud of the musicians supported so far – each winner has rewarded audiences and supporters with the gift of excellence in music performance.

Your financial support for the Centennial Foundation means that this important work can continue. If you have not yet responded to the appeal letter sent in November, signed by James Ehnes, it's not too late – please sign and return your donor card today, or contact the Foundation at the WMCT office.

MARLENE PREISS: A Profile

By Bonnie O'Dacre

The musical life of Marlene Preiss has come full circle. From her roots in rural Ontario — piano lessons, playing the church organ — to her university degree majoring in piano, Marlene's early life was all about music. But working life and career took her into banking, where her musical talent and her interest lay hidden. "I needed a degree, but not a music degree," she says, "I hid that all my working life." Only after retirement did she get back to her first love.

Marlene heads up the WMCT communications sub-committee. She and her committee members are the voices you hear reminding you of the first concert in the fall, the AGM, or asking if you forgot to renew your membership in time for the Early Bird deadline. Working with five volunteer "phoners" she organizes the call list, creates the questions or check list of information to be relayed, and puts the resulting data together into a report for the Membership and Marketing Committee. Her commitment is absolute. She believes that keeping in touch with members helps make the WMCT a strong organization.

But does she like the work? "It's uplifting," she says. "We get very positive feedback from members, when you're finished talking to people, you feel great." And, indeed, the members feel the same about Marlene. "Now that we use e-mail, Marlene doesn't call so often with reminders," says one member. "I'd much rather talk to her."

Certainly she brought cheer into the life of one member when she phoned and got the spouse. "I could tell he was sad," she says, "his wife had taken the car in for repairs and he regretted he could no longer do that." Calling back later, the wife was still out, but Marlene delighted the gent: "Well she's probably run off with the mechanic, so why don't you and I just go to lunch." Laughter stretched to both ends of the phone. "He reminded me of my dad. I would have said that to him."

Marlene describes her interests as music, travel and walking. In addition to the WMCT she volunteers at the National Ballet and with Toronto Dollar a St. Lawrence neighbourhood organization. She attends concerts with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the Canadian Opera Company, Aldeburgh Connection, and Music Toronto's programme of string quartets. As well, she is a member of the Wagner Society and attends courses offered by the COC. She finds master classes at University of Toronto and The Royal Conservatory of Music listed in *Wholenote* magazine and attends. Travel takes her to the great cities of Europe for more musical experiences. Berlin beckons this winter where every night she will attend orchestral and chamber music concerts as well as taking in five operas.



Bonnie and Marlene at the WMCT's December 3, 2009, concert in Walter Hall.

However, classical isn't her only passion. Marlene's always home in the summer for the Toronto Jazz

Festival. And one of her favourite gifts this Christmas was the CD of Leonard Cohen's London concert.

Looking past music Marlene's a keen baseball fan and a Blue Jay subscriber for more than 20 years. She's chased games to Chicago, Baltimore, Detroit, Boston, Montreal, and even the final weekend series in the old Yankee stadium.

Her childhood home was a Hereford cattle farm near Brantford where the family ate so much beef Marlene always wanted hot dogs on her birthday. "As soon as our legs were long enough we drove the tractor. We attended a one-room school house and I was a 4H Club gardener. Like most farm families we were cash poor, but my parents always had money for music lessons." She and her sister were driven to Hamilton each Saturday and she learned to play the piano and then the organ becoming a church organist at the age of fourteen, a job that helped pay tuition fees at the University of Western Ontario.

"I thought I'd be a high school music teacher," she says of her university degree, but after five years instructing children in Ontario and Scotland, she was hired by CIBC as a management trainee and then worked in Human Resources. Preparation for this new career meant evenings were spent taking business and management courses at university rather than listening to music in concert halls. She subsequently moved to the Canadian Bankers Association's Institute of Canadian Bankers, eventually becoming Regional Director Ontario, managing educational programs for bankers throughout the province. All in all, she spent 21 years in the banking industry and she wouldn't have traded the experience for anything.

But this was not her final career move. The "best job of all" came at the end of her work life when she retrained at York University to become an English as a Second Language teacher and worked as a department head with new Canadian teenagers in York Region. "We had students from each wave of immigration," she says, "Iran, Hong Kong, the former Russian bloc countries." And she loved it.

When she retired in 2000 *Wholenote* magazine provided a eureka moment - "What have I been missing". So after hiding her skills and interest throughout her working life she's come full circle. "Now music is what my life is all about." A perfect rondo.

Bonnie O'Dacre chairs the WMCT Membership & Marketing Committee.

COMMISSIONING GLENN BUHR: PSQ'S Jeremy Bell Reflects

This year the Women's Musical Club of Toronto is generously funding Glenn Buhr to write a new work for the Penderecki String Quartet, to be premiered on March 25, 2010, at Walter Hall in Toronto. Since the inception of the Penderecki String Quartet in Poland some 24 years ago, commissioning composers to write new works has been an important part of the quartet's identity. It represents for us and for many music ensembles, not only our musical connection to contemporary society but also how we see the future of our art and who we want to take with us into the unknown. Indeed, the composers we commission are our contemporaries and since most of them are Canadians living in our midst, we share common views in terms of what we experience as artists working in a similar arts environment. This "commonality" is all the more amplified with a composer like Glenn Buhr who shares the same work environment as the Penderecki Quartet: that is we all teach at the Faculty of Music at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo.

One might assume that the "commonality" of the Buhr-Penderecki match will embody a special identity that will be revealed in this commission project. I think there is some truth to this assumption for I believe there is a definable pulse or "vibe" at Laurier University. I have sensed this over the last decade,



Canadian composer Glenn Buhr

particularly during the annual student composer readings hosted by Laurier faculty composers Glenn Buhr, Peter Hatch, and Linda Caitlin-Smith. I identify this vibe through cross-comparison with other artistic centres. For example, our identity is remarkably different when compared to my experiences with student readings at University of Southern California, Stanford, and even of Western University just down the highway. To be crude

and terribly general, the primary Laurier aesthetic value that seems to hold sway in performance, academics, and composition is the notion of "let's listen to what you have to say that is truly YOU". Not that elements of this kind of truth and individualism aren't valued at other institutions, but certainly "follow-the-leader" paradigms are generally more discouraged here than elsewhere.



The Penderecki String Quartet's Christine Vlajk, viola, Jacob Braun, cello, Jeremy Bell, violin, and Jerzy Kaplanek, violin, will perform for the WMCT on March 25, 2010, at Walter Hall.

So if there is something of the antithesis of "school of thought" at Laurier, then should we really expect something specific to take place in the Buhr-Penderecki commission? Well, to begin our little "case study," we can say the PSQ knows Glenn more than we know most composers. We have a sense of his tastes, his life-riddle, we've heard his debates in faculty meetings, we see how he carries himself, how he speaks to students. We know him better than most of the Canadian composers we have commissioned.

I have always thought that it is a fascinating process to "get to know" a person by performing their music. I wonder often how well do I "know" the western classical masters I spend so much of my career studying. By having played all of Beethoven's symphonies, sonatas, and chamber music, do I know his spirit as well as say Glenn Buhr? I have only played Glenn's first two quartets, but surely I know Glenn better than Beethoven, right?

Well, this brings me to question the importance of the "physical" in the "meta-physical": Does one have to be physically "there" to truly understand the genesis and spirit of a work of art? This ques-

tion reminds me of American playwright and film director David Mamet's tirade against Hollywood's "method acting." But I confess, I have made many pilgrimages to the dead master composers' homes or work places in hope of embodying a spirit I can "act-out" on stage. I have visited the former residences of Dvorak, Beethoven, Bartók, Mozart, Tchaikovsky, and Janáček. My visit to Mozart's apartment in Vienna hit me rather hard. This was the closest I felt physically to the beauty of his genius. Perhaps, I am a Hollywood sap like the rest of them!

But with Glenn Buhr, we see him, can shake his hand, and we will be able to describe him vividly to others in the future who want to "get him." So it is in fact our hope that our physical history and commonality with Glenn will play out in our workings with him on his new quartet, and how we take it in,

how we jockey his demands and reveal his wit as we find it in the music.

Jeremy Bell is a violinist with the Penderecki String Quartet.

NEWS & NOTES

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Alexander Neef, general director of the Canadian Opera Company, will be the guest speaker at the annual WMCT luncheon at the Donalda Club on Wednesday, May 19, 2010. WMCT members are welcome to bring guests to this popular event. Full details will be sent to WMCT members in April.

COAT CHECK REMINDER

The coat check on the main floor of the Edward Johnson Building will be open for the use of WMCT members for the March 25 concerts. As the season is sold out and space is at a premium, **members are urged to make use of the coat check.** Coats are not to be left on seats and the WMCT is not responsible for coats or other items left in the Walter Hall lobby on the day of the concert. Please do not leave your coat on nearby seats.