



Women's Musical Club of Toronto

Annual Report 2020 - 2021

123rd Season

President's Report

It was a strenuous year.

At the beginning, like all performance venues in Ontario, our concert home in Walter Hall was closed to the public. Our signature [*Music in the Afternoon*](#) series had to be reimagined event by event, with postponement, then cancellation of the first concert, and a Board decision to turn to virtual offerings.

By September, planning for an online concert in November had reached the point of details of payment to videographers, and the question of membership response to this new direction. U of T and GGS scholarship winners were announced, and demonstrated their artistry in video, rather than live performances.

In October, Columbia Artists, the premier North American agency, collapsed suddenly, adding to the chaos for performers of lockdowns and lockouts, and endangering arrangements with artists for next season.

In November, with the crew hired, the YouTube channel set up, final changes in the artists and repertoire settled, a new commission written and rehearsed virtually, and with Artistic Director Simon Fryer having pre-recorded videos welcoming the audience and thanking the performers, the first *MitA* livestream went on. And on, for nearly two hours, sustained by the stunning virtuosity and terrific personal charm of the performers. Involving an additional contemporary work, and scholarly introductions to all the pieces, the program doubled as a University of Toronto doctoral recital, meaning a reduction in the hall rental costs.

Also in November, [Kelly-Marie Murphy](#) was awarded the Canada Council Léger prize for her chamber work commissioned by the WMCT and premiered at CelloDrama! in *MitA*'s 120th season.

By early 2021, the Fundraising Committee's Holiday Appeal, led by Julia Smith, was a success; the new Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, led by Annette Sanger, had created a [position statement](#) for the website and organized a workshop for the Board; the 2021 Career Development Award Committee, also headed by Annette, ran a flawless competition, with accordionist [Michael Bridge](#) declared the winner of the \$25,000 prize; but the Artists Selection Committee still had only an outline for the 124th season.

Simon Fryer, unfazed by the destructive effects of the pandemic on live concerts, triumphantly revitalized the 123rd season by obtaining pre-recorded performances from some of our promised artists, and shared news of his own performance of the complete Beethoven cello sonatas. He created a final grand virtual event of mini-concerts by CDA winners, from the first to the most recent, including personal appreciations of the momentum the award had given them.

After extensive Executive and Board debate about the financial impact of free concerts versus reaching a wider audience, all season events were posted publicly on YouTube. Tamar Nelson, as Student Outreach Coordinator, sent contact links to high school teachers. The Advertising sub-committee, led by Bonnie O'Dacre and Kathy Halliday, worked with our nimble designer to create pop-up online ads. John Mayo speedily supplied program notes for all the new repertoire. The resulting videos were each viewed on about 400 individual devices, with the CDA gala in June replayed many times. Arts Administrator Shannon Perreault sustained all WMCT activities, running the office and managing innumerable Zoom meetings from her home. For the Website, Fred Feuerriegel updated the [History of Concerts and Performers](#): the conclusion of a year of experimentation, adaptation, and flexibility.

Back in May, while Simon's aspirational "look forward" to the artists and repertoire for the 124th season had been posted on the website, Shannon, and Secretary-Treasurer Janet Murray were working with an entertainment lawyer to devise additional contract language to negotiate the added legal issues in recording and webcasting the season. The season brochure, usually issued at the first spring concert, would have to wait.

In mid-June, past-president Diane Martello called a special meeting of the Marketing, Concerts and Membership Committee, which produced a confident consolidation of views on all aspects of future concert production, from ticket pricing to refreshments, brochure writing to archives, and all things digital.

The Club has stayed true, I believe, to the "We're all in this together" mantra so popular early in the pandemic. Members, volunteers, and donors have demonstrated unshakeable financial and personal commitment to *Music in the Afternoon*.

Kathleen McMorrow, *President*

Artistic Director's Report

The 123rd season of *Music in the Afternoon* concerts brought a new direction for the WMCT – our first 'virtual' concert season. Forced on us by the necessities of precautions against the COVID-19 virus, we nevertheless adapted with customary skill and fortitude to a new medium, and successfully presented a series of online events.

We opened with a concert in our customary venue of Walter Hall but live streamed without an in-house audience. A strange experience in many ways but one brought to vivid life by accordion virtuoso Michael Bridge with colleagues [Kornel Wolak](#), clarinet, and [Amahl Arulanandam](#), cello. This virtuoso trio brought us a program of music ranging

from the baroque to the contemporary, including the dazzling world premiere of WMCT-commissioned *Lekking Birds* for accordion, clarinet and cello by Canadian composer [Anna Pidgorna](#).

As we worked with artists and technology to explore new ways to present concerts our next event was delayed until March. However, we were fortunate to have American pianist [Eric Lu](#) provide MitA with an exclusive video of complete performances of works by Schubert and Chopin. Eric's recorded message to us was as warm and personal as his playing. We all took comfort in hearing great works of historic repertoire performed with such facility, sensitivity and depth during the midst of the pandemic.

By April we were hitting our stride! The [Viano String Quartet](#), winner of the 2019 Banff International String Quartet competition, sent a beautiful video demonstrating not only the dynamism that won them this coveted prize, but also a keen sense of humour in their personal introduction. Schubert's Quartet *Death and the Maiden* and *Entr'acte* by Caroline Shaw, youngest ever winner of the Pulitzer Prize for music, proved the stunning versatility of this exemplary young string quartet.

Sadly, we lost our planned video performance by soprano Joyce El Khoury and pianist Serouj Kradjian to the impossibility of recording while the city was locked down, but we were incredibly fortunate that the [Rolston Quartet](#) (former winners of the Banff Competition) were able and willing to step into the breach with a superb video performance of Haydn's *Rider* Quartet and the lesser-known G minor Quartet of Grieg.

Our closing concert of the season took a slightly different route. Rather than using online technology to present concerts we might otherwise have expected to hear live, we used the opportunity offered by the online medium to present a panoply of amazing artists in the same event. Thus, this remarkable concert featured nine of the [WMCT's Career Development Award Winners](#), beginning with 1990 CDA winner pianist Francine Kay, and ending with 2021 CDA winner: accordion supremo Michael Bridge. In between were musical selections from James Ehnes, violin, Jeanie Chung, piano, Yegor Dyachkov, cello, Shannon Mercer, soprano, Vincent Lauzer, recorder, Charles Richard-Hamelin, piano and Blake Pouliot, violin. Each performer began by speaking eloquently about what the WMCT's award has meant to them, followed by a signature concert presentation. Compositions ranged from works by 17th Century Henry Purcell to 20th Century Canadian, Sophie-Carmen Eckhardt-Gramatté and 21st Century Petri Makkonen. The result was breath-taking. Long may the WMCT flourish and continue to support gifted musicians.

This was a challenging year, and everyone involved with the WMCT rose to that challenge with aplomb. My congratulations to everyone in every area of this wonderful organization!

Simon Fryer, *Artistic Director*

SUMMARIZED FINANCIAL INFORMATION

For the Year Ended June 30, 2021, with Comparative Figures for 2020

Concert & Career Development Award Funds	2020-2021	2019-2020
Membership Fees	\$ 27,684	\$ 39,658
General Admissions & Other Revenue	4,273	8,428
OAF Endowment Income & Interest	2,940	2,549
WMCT Foundation	26,300	36,653
Other Charitable Foundation Donations	13,847	14,044
Member, Friends & Sponsorship Donations	78,948	78,315
Government Grants	2,500	2,500
Career Development Award from WMCT Foundation	<u>21,484</u>	<u>0</u>
TOTAL REVENUE	\$177,976	\$182,147
Artistic Fees & Expenses	\$ 28,472	\$ 27,185
Commission of New Work	4,500	0
Production, Web Site, & Hall Rental	14,156	28,636
Occupancy Costs	22,817	23,442
Administration & Membership Costs	43,795	44,119
Scholarships	25,000	25,000
Career Development Award Expenses	<u>21,484</u>	<u>5,000</u>
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$160,224	\$153,382
Excess of Revenue over Expenses	17,752	28,765
Fund Balance, beginning of year	<u>72,034</u>	<u>43,269</u>
Fund Balance at end of year	\$ 89,786	\$ 72,034

Where funding comes from	2020-2021	2019-2020
Membership Fees	16%	22%
General Admissions, Other Revenue, & Interest	4%	6%
Corporation Donations	0%	0%
WMCT Foundation	27%	20%
Other Charitable Foundation Donations	8%	8%
Member & Friends Donations	44%	43%
Government Grants	1%	1%
	100%	100%

SOURCE AND USE OF FUNDS

Revenues

"Earned" (membership fees, admissions, etc.)	20%	28%
Donations (private, corporate, grants)	68%	72%
Career Development Award	12%	0%
Total revenues	100%	100%

Expenses

(excl. contribution to WMCT Foundation and Projects)		
Concert production	29%	37%
Career Development Award	13%	3%
Scholarships	16%	16%
Operating costs (general admin, newsletter, etc.)	42%	44%
Total expenses	100%	100%

The generosity of the WMCT members and donors in the 2020-2021 season allowed the Club to continue presenting outstanding chamber music performances albeit virtually, as in-person attendance was not possible.

WMCT Foundation of funding Club scholarships and the Career Development Award continued.

Certain amounts in the statement of operations for the year ended June 30, 2020 have been reclassified to conform with the current year's basis of financial statement presentation.

Janet Murray, CPA, CA, *Secretary-Treasurer*

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2021 Career Development Award

Hee-Soo Yoon, violin
110th Anniversary Scholarship
(The Glenn Gould School, RCM)

Emily Bosenius, violin
Centennial Scholarship
(Faculty of Music, University of Toronto)

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Simon Fryer

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VOLUNTEERS 2020-2021

All WMCT Board & Committee members
Program Archives: Hanna & Fred Feuerriegel
Photographer: James Kippen

Program Notes: John Mayo

ARTS ADMINISTRATOR

Shannon Perreault

WMCT



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