



# NEWS & NOTES

MUSIC IN THE AFTERNOON

Women's Musical Club of Toronto

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## ANNOUNCING OUR 126TH SEASON

By Simon Fryer

It is my great pleasure to offer some details of next season's *Music in the Afternoon* concerts.

We begin October 5th 2023 with the [Fauré Quartett](#). This well-established and internationally recognised, piano quartet – violin, viola, cello, piano – is based in Germany. The group tours regularly, performing in the world's most prestigious concert venues, and I feel fortunate that we are able to launch



Fauré Quartett (Photo: Tim Kloecker)

our season with such wonderful artists. The program - *The Pleasure and the Spirit* – includes works by Beethoven and Reger as well as the second Fauré Piano Quartet.

November 16th brings us the [Tesla Quartet](#). This USA-based string quartet has developed a reputation for innovative projects and creative thinking. No program details yet for our concert but you can be sure of something magical!

Following our winter break we resume on March 7th, 2024 with [Dominic Desautels](#), clarinet and [Jean Philippe Sylvestre](#), piano. You know Dominic as Principal clarinetist with the Canadian Opera Company and will remember him from his moving performance on the WMCT stage with soprano Jane Archibald. For his own full recital for the WMCT, Dominic and Jean-Philippe will demonstrate their virtuosity and deep emotional spectrum, through a gorgeous program of Brahms,

Bergmüller, and Schumann and will be joined by special guest bassoonist Zsófia Stefán for the *Trio Pathétique* by the father of Russian music, Mikhail Glinka.

Our fourth concert on April 4th, 2024 presents the spectacular Canadian pianist [Francine Kay](#) in recital. Francine was the very first winner of the WMCT Career Development Award (CDA) and has certainly validated our faith in her. Currently professor at Princeton University, she tours widely, maintaining an active and dedicated performing schedule. Her recent recording of Czech music *Things Lived and Dreamt* has received much acclaim and Francine will present music from this recording alongside works by Debussy and Chopin.

Our closing concert of the season on May 2nd, 2024 represents the rebirth of a program originally planned for 2021 but derailed by the pandemic. It is a particular joy therefore to present soprano [Joyce El-Khoury](#) with pianist [Serouj Kradjian](#). Joyce and Serouj have created a program

inspired by the journey Joyce has taken from her birthplace of Lebanon to her adopted homeland, Canada. Music from the Western canon represented by French composers Bizet, Fauré, Chausson, Ravel, and Saint-Saëns is interspersed with *Mélodies libanaises* to describe this dramatic cultural voyage. A programmatic tour de force for these performers to involve us in their background as well as exhibit their current superb artistry.



Joyce El-Khoury (Photo: Heather Elizabeth)

*Simon Fryer is the WMCT's Artistic Director*

## DEI AT THE WMCT

*By Annette Sanger*

Although the WMCT has always valued and espoused inclusivity, it was the horrific events in the US in the summer of 2020 that led to an increased focus on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI). At that time a DEI committee was formed, followed shortly by a statement on our [website](#) pledging a commitment to become more inclusive through education, policies, and actions for/by the board. With an exceptional 125-year history of presenting musicians from all over the world and supporting musical excellence, we have a solid basis from which to rise to current social expectations. We are questioning all aspects of what we do through an equity lens – who is playing, what is being played, who is listening, who is deciding and how is it being done? The Club acknowledges this is not an easy task, that it will take time, and that we need help from experts to guide us through this process.

Following up on an initial workshop back in January, 2021, with Renée Bazile-Jones (formerly of the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion), the WMCT is now working with Andrea Moffat, of [Diversity Consultants](#), to increase our awareness of issues around inclusion with the aim of gradually making all parts of our organization more equity-based. The board first met with Andrea in December 2022, and then, on March 16, 2023, attended a three hour in-person workshop at our office where we learned about anti-oppression and how we can better support under-represented groups in our WMCT community. Andrea facilitated an open, non-judgemental session where we shared our experiences and thoughts, as well as many questions whose answers were often quite nuanced, all in all demonstrating the complexities of DEI. Many thanks to Andrea for her guidance. We all still have much to learn and to do, but we can say with certainty that equity (in its many manifestations) is a priority for the WMCT moving forward.

*Annette Sanger is the WMCT's Vice-President and Chair of the CDA and DEI Committees*



WMCT Board Members with Andrea Moffat,  
March 16, 2023

## CELEBRATING OUR 125TH

*By Janet Murray*

February 7, 2023 on a bright, sunny winter afternoon, the Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, hosted a reception in celebration of the 125th anniversary of the Women's Musical Club of Toronto. Club and Foundation members, donors and sponsors enjoyed beverages and canapés while viewing portraits of past Lieutenant Governors and the art exhibition "Breath, Heart, Spirit" in the state rooms in the northwest wing of the Legislative Building at Queen's Park.



The Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario,  
Queen's Park, February 7, 2023 (Photo: LG Office)

In her remarks, her Honour mentioned that the Office of the Lieutenant Governor has a long history with the WMCT. She also touched on the power of music, particularly live music, to engage, build bridges, comfort, and inspire.

The reception began with a performance by clarinetist, Bella Czyrnyj, the 2022-2023 UofT graduate student scholarship recipient. After remarks by Kathleen McMorrow and myself, our 2021 CDA winner and accordionist, Michael Bridge, provided additional lively entertainment.



The Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, with Michael Bridge  
and Bella Czyrnyj, Queen's Park, February 7, 2023 (Photo: LG Office)

In mingling after Michael's performance, the Lieutenant Governor was very gracious and made a point of speaking with many attendees.

All who were there agreed that it was a lovely event and a very special way of celebrating the WMCT's 125th anniversary.

*Janet Murray is WMCT's President*

## FROM SHEETS TO SCREENS

*By Kathleen McMorow*

The first time I saw digital scores on the Walter Hall stage was at the Borromeo Quartet performance of the six Bartok string quartets during Toronto Summer Music in 2015. Each player read from the full score on a laptop.

What seemed amazing then is now ordinary. The presence of an electronic device on the music stand, rather than paper sheet music, has become more and more usual, for chamber music ensembles and even conductors.



Board member Daisy Leung, a professional pianist, explained to me the advantages of reading music scores from a tablet. Uploading from several available apps, she can store and carry around her entire library on this lightweight object, including the differing published editions of popular works she needs as an accompanist; with software she can edit scores with a finger, adding text or sharps and flats, or emphasizing passages with colour or backlighting.

Another collaborative pianist who works with singers showed me how she keeps a file of each individual's entire repertoire, so she can pull any program together instantly.

Are there drawbacks? There is a period of adjustment to viewing just one page on the screen rather than the two-page opening of sheet music. Page turns no longer require

hands, but it takes time to develop the coordination needed to tap the wireless electronic pedal. Pianists often resort to a finger on the screen, to avoid the extra challenge of a fourth pedal. And as with any device, forgetting to charge the battery will have unhappy consequences.

In future, orchestras may digitize their large existing paper score libraries, and singers, who seem less attracted by this technology will probably adopt it. The greatest divide now between users is generational, as we observed at the first concert of the 125th season when accordionist Joe Macerollo (sheets) performed with his student Michael Bridge (screens).

If you are considering adding this ingredient to your own career, here's another tip from Daisy, who buys all her electronics on trips back to her family home: there's no sales tax in Alberta.

*Kathleen McMorow is the WMCT's Past-President, Website Administrator and Chair of the Fundraising and Nominating & Governance Committees*

## HAMMER TIME!

*By Adair Hope*

For the past several months, the Awards Committee has been examining ways to be more inclusive and equitable in its activities. To that end, a new recipient of WMCT support in 2023-24 will be [The Hammer Band](#), a Toronto-based music education organization and brainchild of renowned violinist Moshe Hammer. The Hammer Band, a registered charity established in 2007, provides students in under-served and at-risk neighbourhoods with the opportunity to learn to play an instrument and to perform together. The aim, supported

by research and studies, is to instill self-esteem in these young people, along with life skills such as self-discipline, teamwork and resilience. Not only are children enriched, the community strengthens as well. Our \$1,500 donation to The Hammer Band will provide three children with a year's worth of music lessons.



*Adair Hope is the WMCT's Awards Committee Chair*



## REMEMBERING JOHN BECKWITH

*By Kathy Halliday*

Canada, and indeed the WMCT, lost one of its cultural treasures on December 5th, 2022. John Beckwith was widely admired as a pedagogue, author, critic, broadcaster, music journalist, intellectual and tireless music advocate, and of course as a composer. Anyone who listens to Canadian classical radio will have heard John's work, and if you happened to catch CBC Music's afternoon program with Tom Allen paying tribute to John after his death, you were treated to a remarkable arc of talent. Among a host of other awards, John Beckwith received the Order of Canada in 1987, the Toronto Arts Award for Music in 1995, and the Diplome d'Honneur of the Canadian Conference of the Arts in 1996.

On February 28th, family, friends, admirers, and music lovers came together for a concert at the U of T's Faculty of Music to pay tribute to John. Walter Hall was full, as we were treated to extraordinary talent performing his music and remembering his long and productive life. With songs, choral music, opera excerpts and instrumental chamber music, the [concert](#) made clear the breadth and intellectual depth of John's work.



John Beckwith at home, February 2021 (Photo: Toronto Star)

Our own Kathleen McMorow, past President of the WMCT and retired Music Librarian, was John's partner for 45 years. The Beckwith McMorow home in Toronto was full of music, invigorating conversation, art and good fellowship. Even at the age of 95, John Beckwith's loss seems too soon...the gap in Canada's cultural and musical landscape will be felt for years to come.

*Kathy Haliday is Chair of the WMCT's Advertising Subcommittee*

## STUDENT OUTREACH CONTINUES

*By Tamar Nelson*

We all enjoy the energy in Walter Hall when students attend our concerts. We can feel it. We can read about it because over the years, the WMCT has received many appreciative notes from members, teachers and students.

Student Outreach is an integral part of both the WMCT legacy and future. Through our outreach, high school students experience small ensemble music at its best. They meet Canadian and international artists. They acquire an appreciation for the small ensemble art form.

During the Pandemic, through personalized contacts with teachers, we were able to send our on-line concerts to four different schools for each recital date. Since 2016 we have also extended our outreach beyond the boundaries of the Toronto District School Board and now serve teachers and students from Peel and York regions.

However, there are future challenges for Student Outreach. At the end of the Pandemic the TDSB switched all high schools to the semester system. The pace is fast! Semester One exams and final assignments are scheduled in November; the new semester begins in early February. At the same time, applications for college and university are due. It is high-stress for both students and teachers. Additionally, dates in May often conflict with the schools' own end-of-year concerts and transportation is difficult to book for those coming from outside the city. These factors have affected in-person attendance at our concerts.

Despite these challenges, happily, there will be students in Walter Hall for our April and May 2023 concerts! And, we continue to explore new ideas for expanding outreach.

Thanks go to Dianne Henderson for her ongoing financial support of Outreach, and to Shannon Perreault, our Arts Administrator, for editorial and technical support.

*Tamar Adaskin Nelson has served as Student Outreach Co-ordinator for the WMCT since 2016. Thanks to her, hundreds of young people have experienced the joy of small ensemble music. Tamar will be stepping down in September, 2023. If you can imagine yourself taking over as WMCT's Student Outreach Co-ordinator please say hello at a concert or [email](#) the office.*



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