



# NEWS & NOTES

MUSIC IN THE AFTERNOON

Women's Musical Club of Toronto

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## THE NEXT CDA

By Annette Sanger

There's always something exciting happening at the WMCT! Right now we are preparing for the next Career Development Award (CDA) competition: the winner will be announced at our March 7, 2024 concert. As usual, this is a collaborative project with the CBC. It is funded by the WMCT Foundation with a prize of \$25,000 as well as a recital in our *Music in the Afternoon* series.

The CDA committee – Kathy Halliday, Tamar Adaskin Nelson, Adair Hope, Matthew Parsons (CBC) and myself – began its deliberations back in the summer with a review of the definition, selection process and timeline. CBC producers then chose eight young Canadian classical musicians embarking on performing careers; they are from all over Canada and play a range of instruments:

- [Christ Habib, guitar](#)
- [William Leathers, trumpet](#)
- [Brandyn Lewis, double bass](#)
- [Jonathan Mak, piano](#)
- [Midori Marsh, soprano](#)
- [Elisabeth Saint-Gelais, soprano](#)
- [Jonelle Sills, soprano](#)
- [Tony Yike Yang, piano](#)



Elisabeth Saint-Gelais (Photo: Christinne Muschi)

Maybe you have already heard some of them. If you click on the links to find out more, you cannot fail to be impressed by the cornucopia of talent!

A jury of five accomplished musicians is also in place, conforming to our broad criteria of varied expertise, experience adjudicating/teaching masterclasses etc., cross-Canada representation and diversity: Philip Chiu, Professor Gillian MacKay, Natasha Aziz (jury Chair), Professor Sung-Ha Shin Bouey and Dinuk Wijeratne.

The candidates recently submitted their audio/visual/written materials, which have now been sent out to the members of the jury. A big thank you to Matthew Parsons, our CBC representative, who organized and oversaw this process. We are also extremely grateful to the jurors who will have a huge amount of material to review before reaching their decisions.

We all eagerly look forward with great anticipation to welcoming the 2024 winner to the WMCT CDA family!



Jonathan Mak (Photo: Toby Winarto)



Jonelle Sills (Photo: Daniel Denino)

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

## WMCT MEMBER PROFILE: JEAN EDWARDS

*By Nora Wilson*

As I chatted with long-time WMCT member Jean Edwards in her bright apartment, I noticed that her walls were covered with beautiful paintings by her sons. At 96, she has had a remarkable and very long career, and she has never stopped singing, although she took time off to raise her five sons with support from her beloved husband, Stan.

Jean was born on December 9, 1926 in Calgary and she grew up there, winning awards at provincial music festivals from a young age. She once said "I have to sing! Music is part of my soul and very being." She went on to say, "I feel the most meaningful, personal and spiritual form of expression is through the human voice." And Jean has been singing all her life, into her 80s and even her 90s!

Born into a musical family, she was encouraged to audition for the *Singing Stars of Tomorrow* national competition, and this led to a scholarship at the Toronto Conservatory of Music, where she studied for two years. She sang in two of the earliest operas performed there, initiated by Edward Johnson, Nicholas Goldschmidt and Dr. Geiger-Torel, *Hansel and Gretel* and *Marriage of Figaro*.

During the years she raised her family, Jean always continued to sing as a soloist in church choirs. When her sons were older, she joined the Elmer Iseler Singers and toured

in Europe with them; she found this a tremendous and very exciting learning experience, very rigorous and demanding but also very rewarding. She then joined the Toronto Consort as soprano soloist and also toured with them. She really loved singing with this group and she found that Baroque and Early music were better suited to her



Jean Edwards, November 2023

voice than opera. There were many highlights in Jean's very long career, but a special thrill for her was singing the solos in the Brahms German Requiem with the Calgary Symphony Orchestra in her home town, even though her parents were no longer alive. I hope Jean will tell us more of her personal highlights in her talk at the WMCT Holiday Luncheon, as well as the ways in which she was influenced by all the marvellous teachers she studied with over a very illustrious career which has spanned almost 80 years! Jean is a national treasure and we are fortunate that her career has been in Canada and that she has been a proud supporter of the WMCT!

*Nora Wilson is a long-time WMCT member and regular Music in the Afternoon concert sponsor.*

All WMCT members and friends are invited to:

### **CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAY SEASON WITH THE WMCT**

Date: Tuesday, December 5th at 1pm

Location: [HOTHOUSE](#) Restaurant, 35 Church St.

Cost: \$55 non-refundable for a three-course meal

Guest of Honour and Speaker: Jean Edwards

*To learn more, contact us at [wmct@wmct.on.ca](mailto:wmct@wmct.on.ca). RSVP with Payment [online](#) or by phone (416-923-7052) by **November 20, 2023**. Space is limited.*

## TUNING YOUR MIND

*By Janet Murray*

For the *Tuning Your Mind* lecture on October 5th, Dr. SarahRose Black, PhD, RP, MTA introduced the *Music in the Afternoon* audience to the concepts and practice of music therapy.

Music therapy is a field of medicine in which credentialed professionals use music to treat various conditions and support development, health, and well-being.

Dr. Black told us about the practice of music therapy at the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre, where she is the head of the program. She reminded us how music connects to all parts of the human experience. Musical sounds are often the first acoustic sensations we are exposed to – think of a mother's heartbeat felt in utero.



At Princess Margaret, music therapy is used for pain and symptom management; as a mood changer; for grief and bereavement support; relaxation; and to support medically assisted dying. Goals for each patient are individually tailored to their treatment needs.



*Tuning Your Mind* pre-concert lecture with Sarah Rose Black, October 5, 2023  
(Photo: James Kippen)

Dr. Black, with prior permission from the patients, shared a few examples where music and the involvement of a music therapist had significant positive impacts on the well-being of that cancer patient and his or her families. It was very clear how important this area of medical practice has become in patient care.

The compassion, care and passion Dr. Black brings to her work was evident in her words to us. As a pianist, violinist, singer, teacher and performer she brings a unique mix of skills to her academic achievements and qualifications as a registered psychotherapist, certified music therapist, qualitative researcher and clinician-educator.

As music lovers, we understood how music influences our emotions - the impact it has on us. Dr. Black touched many of us in a different way, illuminating how, in a medical environment, music can improve the quality of life and death in a different context.

*Janet Murray is the President of the WMCT.*

## SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS DELIGHT

*By Adair Hope*

Those who attended the Annual Meeting on September 28 at the Arts & Letters Club of Toronto were treated to a stellar Scholarship Winners' Recital at the conclusion of the event. The audience enjoyed a varied and interesting program which beautifully displayed the outstanding talent of the music students that the WMCT supports with its scholarships.



WMCT Annual Meeting, September 28, 2023 (Photo: James Kippen)

Daphné Bourbonnais, recipient of the 2022-23 110th Anniversary Scholarship (The Glenn Gould School, RCM) opened the recital in exciting fashion with a captivating and nuanced performance of Rhapsody No. 1 and Rhapsody No. 2 for solo violin by the contemporary American composer Jessie Montgomery (born 1981).



Daphné Bourbonnais, September 28, 2023 (Photo: James Kippen)

Second to the stage was pianist Lynna Bao, last year's Centennial Scholarship recipient (Faculty of Music, University of Toronto). Lynna is now pursuing a Masters of Music degree at the Cleveland Institute of Music and travelled all the way back to Toronto to play the first two movements of Robert Schumann's challenging *Fantasie* in C, Opus 17. Lynna's performance fully demonstrated why she is recognized for her "blend of heart and mind".

The final artist to play was violinist Tiffany Yeung, 2023-24 winner of the 110th Anniversary Scholarship and currently pursuing her Bachelor's degree at the Glenn Gould School. Tiffany has received many accolades in her young career and her much-recognized musical gifts shone through in her beautiful performance of Johann Sebastian Bach's demanding Partita no. 1 in B minor.



Lynna Bao, September 28, 2023 (Photo: James Kippen)

We will have more to share about Tiffany and other 2023-24 Scholarship recipients in the next WMCT Newsletter!

It is always wonderful to have the opportunity to see our scholarship recipients perform and we greatly appreciate that these three gifted young musicians were able to grace our recital stage this year.

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

## WMCT MEMBERS ON THE PAGE

*The following are excerpts from: "At my age, I'm never sure what's coming next (so I better leave a clean house behind)" by WMCT member Ruth Miller, first published in The Globe and Mail, September 22, 2023*

"These days, before I leave the house, I make my bed and straighten up things in the kitchen, in case I don't come home. I'm 84 years old, and end-of-life issues are on my mind. I worry I might drop dead while away from home or end up in hospital. I don't want whoever goes into my house to find a mess.

I'm not the neatest person. My desk at work was not neat, and neither is the desk in my home office. Every now and then I go into a frenzy of cleaning and straightening out and throwing things away. I don't want my kids to kill me when I die. 'Why did Mom leave such a mess? Did she really have to keep all those files? And all these books?!' When my mother died she left very little for my brother and me to clear up and throw away. It was a gift she left us. I want to do the same, but I'll have to live a while longer to accomplish that.

My mother died at 84, the age I am now. Long ago I did one of those surveys that tells you how long you are going to live. It said I'd live to be 85. I didn't like that answer and have decided I will live to at least 90. Will I?"

"I'm not shy about telling people my age. In reply, I often hear, 'You don't look that old.' (I'll stop telling people how old I am when they stop saying that.) But I am keenly aware of my age and keenly grateful for the friends who are still alive, especially the ones from nursery school and kindergarten. I have newer friends from my work days and others from the acting and writing classes I pursued when I retired. As I age, friendships are even more precious. My friends feel the same way; they tell me so. I don't want to lose any more of them.

Human beings are social animals. The research says loneliness is dangerous to your health, and it's good for you to interact in one way or another with seven people a day. Now that I live on my own, I have to make an effort to stave off the scourge of loneliness.

And while I like people, I also like to be alone when it is my choice. But it's reassuring to know my calendar is mostly full of plans to be with other people, to enjoy plays and the opera, and to head off to travel. I believe that when you step out the front door good things happen.

My kids and grandkids will lose me one day. But I'll do my best to stay around for a few years more. So, excuse me, I have to tidy up my bedroom and put the dishes in the dishwasher. I'm going out soon, to a concert, with a friend. I am confident I'll return. But you never know."

*Globe and Mail online subscribers may read [the entire piece](https://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/first-person/article-at-my-age-im-never-sure-whats-coming-next-so-i-better-leave-a-clean/) at <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/first-person/article-at-my-age-im-never-sure-whats-coming-next-so-i-better-leave-a-clean/>*

*Ruth Miller is a member of the WMCT Awards Committee.*



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