



NEWS & NOTES

MUSIC IN THE AFTERNOON

Women's Musical Club of Toronto

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FROM THE PRESIDENT: MUSIC CRITICISM AND THE WMCT

By Kathleen McMorrow

Tim Page, a Pulitzer prize winning journalist, recently posted online "[In Memory of the Critic's Trade](#)," a depiction of the disappearance from most American newspapers of "paid, officially designated" classical music reviewers, and the consequent loss of the documentation of musical endeavours.

In Canada as well, the professional journalists who, through the twentieth century, recorded what was actually performed, how well it was done, and whether it was worth doing, have moved on (Robert Everett-Green, Tamara Bernstein), or are gone, occasionally resurfacing to promote or report on high-profile events on a contract basis (William Littler, Arthur Kaptainis).

The Women's Musical Club of Toronto was generously served by print media. One of the earliest articles appeared in the "Chit Chat" column of *The Globe* of 24 January 1899, describing its foundation as "an interesting little meeting," but noting in detail the location, the conditions of membership, and the names of the performers, of the newly-elected officers and of several members of the audience. Information and reviews published in *The Globe* and in other newspapers and magazines over the next hundred years were the major sources of the list of dates, artists, and repertoire established by the Feuerriegels for their [History of Concerts and Performers of the WMCT](#): the organized archiving of concert program books was not a priority in the early years of this volunteer-managed society. In some of these reports, the performer's dress, or the management of the refreshments received closer attention than the music.

The last review published in *The Globe and Mail* of a *Music in the Afternoon* concert was of the momentous 115th anniversary gala on 2 May 2013 at Koerner Hall featuring James Ehnes and Russell Braun. That concert also received abundant attention in the new world of online reviewing.



(L to R) Carolyn Maule, Russell Braun and James Ehnes at Koerner Hall
May 2, 2013 (Photo: Karen Reeves)

Since then, WMCT concerts, and the rest of the rich classical musical life of Toronto, have been almost entirely unrecorded, undocumented, unevaluated and uncontextualized in print, except as publicity or advertising. On the internet, self-appointed local bloggers bring a wider range of diverse voices to reviews. There are no space constraints, and lots of colour photos. But there is no guarantor of their authority or open-mindedness, they currently focus disproportionately on vocal music, and posts will remain alive only as long as domain and hosting fees for websites are covered.

For a longer examination of the history and practice of "the critic's trade" in this country, see the article in the [Encyclopedia of Music in Canada](#).

Kathleen McMorrow is the WMCT President, Co-Chair of the Media Relations Subcommittee and the Website Administrator.

LOOK WHO'S VOLUNTEERING

By Bonnie O'Dacre

It was the music that hooked Robin Sundstrom. A good friend had talked about the WMCT for years, but when she finally got to a concert, it was a quick trip to member, no pause, volunteer. Presto!

Robin manages the [WMCT's Twitter account](#) - @WMCT120 - promoting concerts and Club with tweets to Toronto's musical community about performers, students, and scholarship winners. She'd had a personal Twitter feed prior to taking on the job but welcomed the opportunity of helping shape tweets for a specific



Robin Sundstrom

purpose aimed at building an audience in the concert hall and on the Internet.

It's a good fit with her own business, IRonsideIR, which provides investor-relations services to entrepreneurial

companies either publicly listed or en route to listing on a public exchange - basically corporate communications and strategy for smaller, growing companies.

She moves easily from business to her other interest - the environment and nature. Beekeeping is also on her agenda. As Co-Chair and a director of the Toronto Beekeepers Collective she helps tend bees hived on the roof of the Fairmont Royal York Hotel, as well as at the Ontario Science Centre, Downsview Park, and Black Creek Community Farm, about 40 hives in all. "You could say it's a hobby, but a serious one. Caring for bees has made me much more environmentally aware."

And how does it all fit into just one life? "I've become passionate about bees, but I've always been passionate about music." Robin plays viola - "rather badly" - with a small string group so her volunteer work extends and contributes to being hands-on with music in her life. As well, she feels strongly about the WMCT's efforts to bolster support for and promote young musicians.

"Being with other people who love music, supporting brilliant musicians in the early stages of their careers, learning what works best to make Twitter effective for the WMCT, helping some worthy endeavours along — it all feels good."

Bonnie O'Dacre is Chair of the Advertising Subcommittee and Co-Chair of the Media Relations Subcommittee.

FOUNDATION FUNDAMENTALS

By Diane Martello

In 1997 Esther McNeil became president of the WMCT for the second time. Her major task: oversee preparations for the WMCT's Centennial Celebrations. Wisely, Esther engaged the impresario Walter Homburger to mount a special Centennial Celebration Concert to be held on May 24, 1998 at the George Weston Recital Hall in North York. Mr. Homburger hired performers baritone Russell Braun; tenor Michael Schade; mezzo-soprano Catherine Robbin; violinist James Ehnes, and the pianists Jeanie Chung and Stephen Ralls. With 1036 seats to fill, WMCT volunteers worked overtime to both raise funds and sell tickets. The concert was a huge success and to everyone's delight the WMCT was left with a profit of over \$100,000!

However, it soon became apparent that the WMCT was not set up to administer investments. So, in 2000 the WMCT Centennial Foundation, with charitable status, was established. A board of energetic and talented directors was formed, with Esther McNeil as founding President. The WMCT's surplus funds from the Centennial Concert were turned over to the new Foundation.

Now known simply as the WMCT Foundation, the mission has never wavered. It is to develop and prudently manage the financial resources required to support the activities of the Women's Musical Club of Toronto, including its long-established chamber music concert series, and funding of awards and scholarships to continue the development of talented Canadian classical musicians.

Now in its 20th year, the WMCT Foundation board has recently restructured and is working more closely than ever with the WMCT. Members from both organizations collaborate to fundraise, recruit and steward Legacy Circle members and run the Awards Committee. Thanks to Esther's vision, the WMCT Foundation continues to support chamber music through its on-going support of the activities of the WMCT.



Fundraising Committee member Joan Sinclair at the Legacy Circle table, Walter Hall, May 2, 2019 (Photo: James Kippen)

Diane Martello is the Past President and Chair of the Membership, Concerts & Marketing Committee

ARE WE THERE YET?

By Bonnie O'Dacre

Well, not really, according to female trumpet player Katherine Moffatt. In the world of brass, women players still don't occupy the space that males do. Looking at the major Canadian orchestras she says, the brass sections are male dominated. But change is happening. Women brass players are mentoring a generation of young women with the skills and confidence to challenge the status quo. And Katherine has benefitted from the process.



Katherine Moffatt (photo: Steven Fielder)

She's a U of T Master's student in trumpet performance heading for a career in the field, so gender equity looms large. She's from Newfoundland and credits her start as a trumpet player to having attended a St. John's school with a wonderful music program. From kindergarten to Grade 12, students played instruments. There were concert bands, jazz ensembles and smaller brass ensembles to play in. In grade four she chose the trumpet and never changed her mind about that. She graduated from the School of Music at Memorial University, and is now continuing her studies at U of T.

"Traditionally women haven't had role models," she says. But Katherine credits the women teachers and mentors she's had with changing the landscape. In St. John's, her teacher Katie Sullivan - "my main source of musical inspiration growing up" - plays trumpet in the Newfoundland Symphony Orchestra and teaches. In Toronto she's found dedicated people at school and beyond. Obviously it's not a quiet revolution. It's a big noisy movement with people who have joined force to promote gender diversity. Boldly entitled "That's What She Said", the Canadian Women's Brass Collective held a week-long conference at U of T last January. Canada's top professional brass-playing women from coast to coast came together, from Merrie Klazek (Victoria, BC) to Karen Bulmer (St. John's, NL) to hold masterclasses, workshops, competitions and discussions. It

finished with a huge performance featuring guest artists in Walter Hall.

One of the event sponsors was the [International Women's Brass Conference](#), an organization with a mission to educate, develop, support and promote women brass musicians - globally.

And what's the take-home message? "Confidence is the key, says Katherine. "You can't hide behind your instrument."

Female role models are part of the solution, however physicality factors into the whole equity picture. Katherine says women have to work harder at endurance and breath capacity than men do. So she's a runner and does a program called Breathing Gym to keep fit.

Katherine won the WMCT Graduate Fellowship, this year - and last year too, one of a group of just three young people to win a WMCT award twice. The money has ensured that her education extends beyond campus into the Toronto experience. "No other city in Canada offers musical performances like Toronto," she says. Looking ahead she plans to stay here, "ideally play in an orchestra" and teach. No doubt mentoring is part of that picture.



Katherine Moffatt, trumpet with Jared Tehse, piano
WMCT AGM, September 27, 2018 (Photo: James Kippen)

IN TRIBUTE: ELIZABETH NEWTON

By Esther McNeil & Ina van Berkel

Elizabeth Newton died on February 6, 2019.

Elizabeth joined the WMCT in 1986. Her membership was a farewell gift from her colleagues at Havergal upon her retirement as a teacher and administrator. But merely attending the concerts was not enough - Elizabeth became an active volunteer.

Elizabeth's two biggest projects resulted from the presentation of the WMCT's 90th anniversary celebration concert, and, a decade later, the 100th anniversary celebration concert.

After the 90th anniversary concert, the funds were used to establish a new award: the Career Development Award. Elizabeth helped envision the concept of the award - to assist musicians newly embarked on their professional performing careers - and also helped



Elizabeth Newton

establish and implement the structure, which early on included a live competition in Toronto with judges drawn from the international music community. Elizabeth chaired the first several competitions.

A decade later, Elizabeth became a founding officer and director of what was initially

called the Women's Musical Club of Toronto Centennial Foundation, serving as vice-president alongside founding president Esther McNeil. Elizabeth soon found a niche in organizing the disbursement of funds for the scholarships, as well as in preparing the annual fund-raising letter sent by the new Foundation.

When the [Legacy Circle](#) was established - through which supporters declare their intention to include the WMCT and the WMCT Foundation in their will - Elizabeth added her name.

It was always a delight to receive minutes when it was Elizabeth's turn to take them - they were beautifully composed with perfect penmanship and elegant grammar, capturing the essence of the meeting.

To her colleagues in both the WMCT and the WMCT Foundation, Elizabeth was known for her gentle manner, keen listening skills, lively sense of humour, great capacity for hard work, and formidable organizational abilities. Her legacy lives on through the Career Development Award and the WMCT Foundation.

Esther McNeil is the Founding Chair of the WMCT Foundation and of the Career Development Award, and a former President of the WMCT. Ina van Berkel is a member of the WMCT's Finance Committee.

THE WMCT AND WMCT FOUNDATION 2019-2020 AWARDS

Women's Musical Club of Toronto
& WMCT Foundation
Centennial Scholarship – \$8,000
(Faculty of Music, University of Toronto)

2019-2020 Recipient:
Hannah Corbett, violin

Women's Musical Club of Toronto
& WMCT Foundation
Graduate Fellowship – interest on \$50,000 endowment
topped up with \$4,000
(Faculty of Music, University of Toronto)

2019-2020 Recipient:
Katherine Moffatt, trumpet

Women's Musical Club of Toronto
& WMCT Foundation
110th Anniversary Scholarship – \$13,000
(The Glenn Gould School, RCM)

2019-2020 Recipient:
Vivien Illion, soprano

Women's Musical Club of Toronto
& WMCT Foundation
Academy Fellowship – \$5,000
(Toronto Summer Music Festival)

2019-2020 Recipient:
Fiona Robson, cello



Hannah Corbett, violin with Jeanie Chung, piano
WMCT AGM, September 26, 2019 (Photo: James Kippen)