



MUSIC IN THE AFTERNOON

Women's Musical Club of Toronto

NEWS & NOTES

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A LOOK FORWARD TO THE WMCT'S 120TH SEASON

By Simon Fryer, WMCT Artistic Director

It is my pleasure to share with you the results of the Artists Selection Committee's efforts over the past months. 2017/18 represents a significant anniversary for the WMCT: our 120th season of *Music in the Afternoon* concerts. It is, of course, also the 150th anniversary of Canada and I am proud to say, my own 10th anniversary as Artistic Director of the WMCT. Such an auspicious series of anniversaries demands an auspicious series of concerts and the Artists Selection Committee worked hard to create a suitably special season.

It is always important to remind ourselves that in our deliberation first and foremost remains the principle of the WMCT's role as the introducer of talent. Searching for a satisfying program balance we seek Canadian artists of the highest calibre, and foreign artists well-established at home and primed for recognition here in Canada.

It remains a most absorbing and enjoyable experience to work with the committee and I thank Annette Sanger, Penelope Cookson, Diane Martello, Kathleen McMorrow, and Julia Smith for their hard work, excellent judgement and open-mindedness in putting together this series of concerts. I am sure you will agree that the 120th season demonstrates attention to the values that have nurtured *Music in the Afternoon* for so long, and that we have been successful in reaching new heights in our concert experience. I am already looking forward to planning the 121st!

Our concerts begin October 5, 2017 with Canadian violin virtuoso Lara St. John and pianist, Matt Herskowitz. Although resident in New York City for quite some time, Lara is no stranger to Canadian audiences and she has been described as "something of a phenomenon" by *The Strad* and a "high-powered soloist" by the *New York Times*. She and Matt bring elements from her recent *Shiksa* recording to our stage. This project has been a labour of love over many years for Lara. She has collected

traditional folk tunes from the Jewish Diaspora, Eastern Europe, the Balkans, Caucasus and Middle East, and presents them re-imagined by today's composers and performed with stunning élan. I heard Lara perform material from *Shiksa* a little while ago and knew immediately that we had to have this on our season. Coupled with a major sonata from the violin/piano repertoire this is



Matt Herskowitz

sure to be a spectacular opening to our 120th season. "What is truly remarkable is the way in which St. John effortlessly and completely captures the sound, style, mood and flavour of these evocative works; *Shiksa* may be a Yiddish term for a non-Jewish woman, but there's no hint here of St. John's being an outsider or anything other than totally and genuinely immersed in this music – you get the feeling that she's playing these pieces from the inside out." *The WholeNote*

On November 9, 2017 we welcome the Zodiac Trio: Riko Higuma, piano, Kliment Krylovskiy, clarinet, and Vanessa Molland, violin. The Zodiac Trio enjoys an international concert schedule spanning three continents and is considered one of the foremost clarinet-violin-piano ensembles performing today. These remarkable musicians have achieved a level of recognition



Lara St. John



Zodiac Trio

on the international chamber music stage rarely bestowed upon an ensemble of such untraditional instrumentation. The Zodiac Trio has a varied and eclectic repertoire and this is reflected in their wonderfully imaginative programming. Works by contemporary composers from America and Canada – Schoenfeld and Gilbert – rub shoulders with Stravinsky, Khachaturian, Bartok and Shostakovich as well as Piazzolla, to reveal a fascinating journey through the music of the WMCT's history. "One the best chamber ensembles of its generation..." *La Marseillaise*



Elias Quartet

After our winter break we resume on March 8th, 2018 with the Elias String Quartet. Internationally acclaimed as one of the leading ensembles of their generation and known for their intense and vibrant performances, the quartet has travelled the globe collaborating with some of the finest musicians and playing in the world's great halls. The Quartet takes its name from Mendelssohn's oratorio, *Elijah*, of which *Elias* is the German form.

2015 saw the quartet complete their ground-breaking Beethoven Project: performing and recording the complete string quartets of Beethoven. Broadcast by BBC Radio 3 and performed in 11 major venues in the UK, the Quartet also recorded the cycle for the "Wigmore Hall Live" record label. The Elias later took all-Beethoven programs to Carnegie Hall and San Francisco performances and for us brings the twelfth of Beethoven's quartets Op.127 along with works by Janáček and Schubert - a strikingly dramatic program of great works from the classic string quartet repertoire. "Remarkable throughout... bold, rich tone and expressive nuances contributing to an intense and deeply felt interpretation." *The New York Times*

We continue April 12, 2018 with Spanish soprano Sylvia Schwartz, and Quebec pianist Olivier Godin. Together they will perform a gorgeous program of German and Spanish songs. Sylvia Schwartz is one of the most exciting lyric singers of her generation. She has appeared at many of the world's finest opera houses including the Teatro Real Madrid, La Scala Milan,



Sylvia Schwartz

Berlin Staatsoper, Wiener Staatsoper, The Bolshoi Theatre, and festivals such as Edinburgh, Salzburg and Verbier. Sylvia is also much in demand in concert and is a celebrated recitalist.



Olivier Godin

A native of Montreal, Olivier Godin pursues a career as a pianist and chamber player both in Canada and abroad. A successful recording artist, he was appointed professor at the Conservatoire de musique de Montréal at the age of 25, and presently holds the position of director of Opera Studies.

"Soprano Sylvia Schwartz's reputation as a rising star is confirmed by her Hyperion debut album, a programme of songs from her native Spain...There are some exquisite songs in Catalan, by Eduardo Toldrá; and Schwartz's performance of Jesús Guridi's torrid *Seis canciones castellanas* is all the more remarkable for being so admirably restrained." *The Guardian*

I am honoured (and not a little flattered), that during our deliberations concerning the 120th season of *Music in the Afternoon*, the WMCT Artists Selection Committee suggested that I might consider building a program of my own to celebrate my 10th season as Artistic Director. I was excited by the prospect and considered several different possibilities. Ultimately, the idea of a cello ensemble event seemed most attractive to me as well as the committee, and I have enjoyed inviting friends and colleagues from across the country to join me on May 3rd 2018 for CELLODRAMA! - a multi-cello spectacular. With Canada's most brilliant cellists as guests we'll play music from Barrière to Penderecki and Queen to Jean-Sebastien Bach scored for from one



Simon Fryer

to eight cellos. Not only that, the supremely versatile and talented Sarah Slean will be with us for the Villa-Lobos and the WMCT has commissioned award-winning composer

Kelly- Marie Murphy to write a new eight cello work for premiere at this event. I can hardly wait!

Simon Fryer is the Artistic Director of the WMCT.



Sarah Slean

WMCT - 120 YEARS YOUNG

By Diane Martello, President

Welcome to the WMCT's new look and new logo! Tradition inspires our future as the volunteer-run WMCT supports the beauty and excitement of chamber music into our 120th year. Our signature *Music in the Afternoon* series features outstanding Canadian and international musicians, often performing in Toronto for the very first time. Also included in the experience is our *Tuning Your Mind* pre-concert lectures, delivered by music professors from the University of Toronto, complimentary refreshments at intermission and a Meet-and-Greet the Artists after every performance.

The WMCT supports Canadian composers by commissioning a new work each year to add to the chamber music repertoire. This Season it was *Bounce*, a Horn Trio which received its World Premiere at our second concert and was written by Edmonton-born Vivian Fung.

The WMCT inspires our youth by providing free tickets to High School music classes and students from the Royal Conservatory of Music, the University of Toronto, and York University. But that's not all! We also sponsor a master class for these students which is open to our subscribers and is taught by one of our prestigious performers. Normally held the day following the concert, this season's master class was given by Canadian James Sommerville, Principal Horn of the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

The WMCT awards scholarships through the WMCT Foundation. This year the Foundation supported five upper level students: a singer, a harpist, two violinists, and a conductor. Partnering with the CBC, every third year the WMCT presents its prestigious Career Development Award to an emerging Canadian artist. The winner in 2015 was pianist Charles Richard-Hamelin, who went on to major acclaim at the Chopin International Piano Competition. Charles will perform for us again on May 4th. Following the concert the entire audience is invited for a reception to celebrate both Charles and our 120-year commitment to chamber music.

Quality. Community. Integrity. The WMCT's 120 year tradition inspires our future.

Diane Martello is the President of the WMCT and Chair of the Marketing & Membership Committee.

this season

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WELCOME BACK, CHARLES!

In April 2015, pianist Charles Richard-Hamelin gave a spectacular and winning performance at Walter Hall in the WMCT's 10th anniversary Career Development Award (CDA) competition, garnering \$20,000 in prize money as well as the opportunity to give a concert in the WMCT's celebrated chamber music series, *Music in the Afternoon*. That performance will take place this May 4th at 1:30pm, where Charles will be performing music by Schubert, Chopin, and Scriabin. This is definitely a concert not to be missed!



Charles Richard-Hamelin

Since winning the CDA, Charles's performing career has developed exponentially, not least because he went on to win the silver medal and the Krystian Zimmerman prize at the 17th Frederic Chopin International Piano Competition in Warsaw in October 2015. Subsequently, he has maintained a busy schedule performing in

Europe and Asia as well as North America. He has also released two CDs – the first in September 2015 featuring late works by Chopin, and the second a year later presenting music by Chopin, Beethoven and Enescu, recently nominated for a JUNO award.

In honour of Charles the WMCT will be hosting a special reception after the May 4 concert. Thus, there will be no intermission refreshments on that day. All members of the audience are cordially invited to

attend this reception – in the Geiger Torel room close to Walter Hall – where there will be an opportunity to mix and mingle with fellow WMCTers and to meet Charles. This will be an event to celebrate the end of our 119th season of *Music in the Afternoon* and to herald our upcoming 120th anniversary year and 11th CDA, both in 2017-18.

We look forward to seeing you at the concert and reception on May 4th!

Annette Sanger is the Chair of the Career Development Award Committee.



PAT BRODIE'S BEQUEST TO THE WMCT

Pat Brodie was a bright spark in the long history of the WMCT. She was a retired physiotherapist and music-lover who for years assisted Front of House using her professional expertise to help physically challenged members with appropriate seating. When her health no longer permitted this strenuous activity, she turned her hand to Green Room assistance. Pat and Johanna Morgan greeted our artists and tended to their every need with cheerfulness and enthusiasm.



Entirely due to the generosity of Pat Brodie, the WMCT has been able to proceed with an extensive Strategic Plan to expand our membership, and further professionalize our volunteer-run organization.

On March 9, 2017, Artistic Director Simon Fryer will present the 120th Anniversary Season Launch of this oldest music organization in Ontario, heralded by a bright new logo, banner, and an eye-catching brochure format. We have much to celebrate!

As we remember Pat Brodie, please never forget the importance of your Bel Canto donations to the health and stability of our organization. The donations you include with your membership renewals provide a significant portion of the funding needed to present outstanding concerts..

Julia Smith is the Chair of the Fundraising Committee.



THE WMCT AND WMCT FOUNDATION 2016-2017 RECORD OF AWARDS

The Womens Musical Club of Toronto and Women's Musical Club of Toronto Foundation Centennial Scholarship – \$10,000

2016-2017 Recipient: Myriam Blardone, harp and piano

The Women's Musical Club of Toronto and Women's Musical Club of Toronto Foundation Graduate Fellowship – interest on the \$50,000 endowment

2016-2017 Recipient: Alexandra Bourque, conducting

The Women's Musical Club of Toronto and Women's Musical Club of Toronto Foundation 110th Anniversary Scholarship – \$10,000

2016-2017 Recipient: Milica Boljevic, soprano

Toronto Summer Music Festival
The Women's Musical Club of Toronto and the Women's Musical Club of Toronto Foundation Scholarship – \$3,000

2016-2017 Recipient: Sophia Szokolay, violin

National Youth Orchestra of Canada
The Women's Musical Club of Toronto and the Women's Musical Club of Toronto Foundation Scholarship – \$5,000

2016-2017 Recipient: Danielle Green, violin

All scholarship winners were invited to perform at the WMCT Annual General Meeting on October 5, 2017.