

MUSIC IN THE
AFTERNOON

MUSIC IN THE AFTERNOON

NEWS & NOTES

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A LOOK AT THE WMCT'S UPCOMING 116TH SEASON

By Simon Fryer, WMCT Artistic Director

With great pleasure I share the results of the Artists Selection Committee's efforts over the past months. I thank all the members of the Artists Selection Committee for their hard work, excellent judgement, and open-mindedness.

We miss Hanna Feuerriegel and Emmy Homburger, who left the committee after many years of dedicated service, and we warmly welcome Diane Martello who recently joined. It is an enlightening and gratifying experience to work with this wonderful group of people. I am sure you will agree that the 116th is a superb concert series.

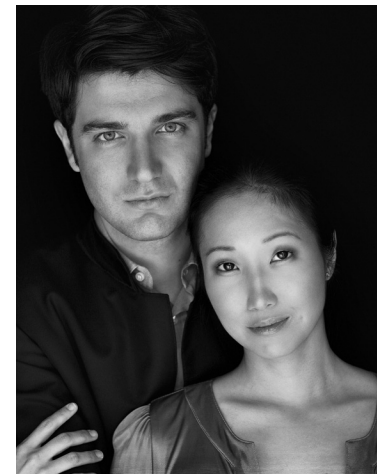
Music in the Afternoon is particularly exciting next season as it includes the winner of the WMCT Career Development Award: recorder virtuoso Vincent Lauzer. He brings his extraordinary musicianship and personality to every note and the WMCT is very happy to contribute in this meaningful way to his continuing rise.

There are many exciting elements, of course, in each new season, but I am especially proud that we were able to commission a new work this year from Christos Hatzis, one of Canada's most successful composers. Cellist Yegor Dyachkov will premiere this significant new work with pianist Jean Saulnier at their WMCT performance. The WMCT's role in introducing talent is again front and centre as it celebrates Canadian artists of the highest calibre as well as foreign artists well-established at home yet primed for recognition here in Canada.

The 2013-2014 series demonstrates attention to the values that have allowed *Music in the Afternoon* to thrive for so long and that the WMCT continues the tradition of excellence for which its members' concert experience is renowned.

The 116th season opens on **October 17, 2013**, with **Bax & Chung**, piano duo.

Alessio Bax and Lucille Chung are two great concert pianists who just happen to be married to each other. They bring a dramatic programme of both duo and solo works, including Stravinsky's four-hands transcription of his ballet *Petrouchka* and the duo's own transcription of *Three Tangos* by the great Argentinian master Astor Piazzolla.



Alessio Bax and Lucille Chung first met in 1997 in Japan and have been performing together since the Ottawa Chamber Music Festival had the brilliant idea to have them perform as a piano duo at the National Arts Centre for its Piano Extravaganza in 2003. Since then they have appeared on many of the most prominent concert platforms in the world including the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Russia, Israel, Korea, China, and the United States. Recently selected by touring organizations Prairie Debut and Debut Atlantic, this season the duo will also perform throughout Ontario and the United States, as well as internationally in Kuwait City.

Bax & Chung's recording of the complete works of György Ligeti for piano-four-hands and two pianos received prestigious awards in France and Germany. *Alessio Bax Plays Brahms* was recently chosen as "Disc of the Week" by CBC Radio Two's *In Concert*. In addition to recordings, live performances on CBC radio have established the duo as one of the most dynamic piano teams of their generation.

Alessio Bax and Lucille Chung's personalities connect with audiences as a perfect combination of balance and unity.

"...a marriage of wondrous colours and dextrous aplomb, subtly balanced to make the musical performance sound as one"

Music and Arts, United Kingdom

www.alessiobax.com
www.lucillechung.com



Next, on **November 21, 2013**, the WMCT presents *The Seasons*, with favourite Canadian soprano **Suzie LeBlanc** and **Les Voix humaines Consort of Viols**: Margaret Little, Mélisande Corriveau, Felix Deak, and Susie Napper. The specialty of these artists is the performance of early music; here they un-

expectedly depart into a programme of not just ancient and traditional music, but also modern songs, dances, and fantasias, as they celebrate the seasons of the year. Works by Purcell, Vivaldi, Browning, Le Jeune, Vigneault, Kosma, Prévert, Byrd, Lawes, Peerson, and Gershwin provide a whole new perspective on the expressive capabilities of these versatile artists.

Acadian soprano Suzie LeBlanc established an extraordinary career specializing in baroque and classical repertoire, but lately she has been drawn toward the repertoire of French mélodies, lieder, Acadian folk music, contemporary music, and improvisation. She has worked with leading early music ensembles in concert and opera as well as on film and disc. Concerts have taken her to festivals all over the world.



Susie Napper and Margaret Little, the two gambists of Les Voix humaines, have been thrilling audiences worldwide with dashing performances of early and contemporary music for viols since 1985. The two are renowned for their spectacular arrangements of a wide variety of music and have recorded some forty discs including several with soprano Suzie LeBlanc.

The duo has toured extensively and is regularly augmented by Montreal's finest young gambists to form Les Voix humaines Consort of Viols. In 2008 the ensemble recorded Henry Purcell's complete fantasias for viols and in 2012, J.S. Bach's Art of the Fugue. Les Voix humaines Consort of Viols remains the only permanent viol consort in Canada.

"LeBlanc has a superb ability to take the wonderfully pure sound she can make, over which she has consummate control, and wrap it in something luscious and special before giving it to you."

Sydney Morning Herald

www.suzieleblanc.com
www.lesvoixhumaines.org

On **February 27, 2014**, the WMCT presents its most recent Career Development Award winner, **Vincent Lauzer**. He will be joined by Tanya LaPerrière, baroque violin, Chloe Meyers, baroque violin, Margaret Little, baroque viola, Mélisande Corriveau, baroque cello, and Mylène Bélanger, harpsichord. Vincent Lauzer offers wide-ranging repertoire involving various members of the recorder family from soprano to the rarely heard bass. The programme will explore music of our time by Hirose, Zahnhausen, and Hahne, and of the high baroque by Vivaldi, Sammartini, Telemann, and J.S. Bach.



Named Breakthrough Artist of the Year at the 2012 Opus Awards, Vincent Lauzer is truly a rising star. A graduate of McGill University, where he studied with Matthias Maute, he won an extraordinary six first prizes during the National Finals of the Canadian Music Competition. First prize winner of the 2012 Canada Music Competition Stepping Stone and the first Mathieu-Duguay Early Music Competition, Vincent also won First Prize, the Audience Appreciation Prize, and Best Canadian Recorder Player Prize in the Montreal International Recorder Competition. He was awarded the Oliver-Jones First Prize at the Festival de musique classique du Bas-Richelieu in Sorel-Tracy and also won le Prix Montréal Baroque pour l'audace et la musicalité au Concours Étoiles Galaxie-CBC du festival Montréal Baroque.

Besides his work with the recorder quintet Flûte Alors! and the ensemble Recordare, Vincent Lauzer recently performed in the concert series Clavecin en Concert and with the ensembles Les Idées Heureuses and La Bande Montréal Baroque. He gave a recital for the CBC/McGill Young Artists Series and participated in the Boston Early Music Festival where he appeared as a soloist with the McGill Baroque Orchestra and with the Early Music America Festival Ensemble. He can be heard on Radio-Canada's Espace Musique and on CBC Radio Two.

www.vincentlauzer.com

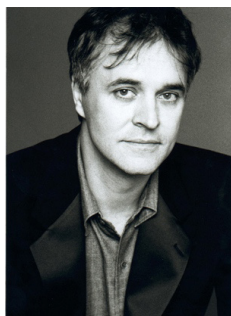
On **March 20, 2014**, the WMCT is proud to welcome back its 2000 Career Development Award winner cellist **Yegor Dyachkov**, together with his regular piano partner **Jean Saulnier**. Their programme of sonatas by Beethoven, Britten, and Shostakovich is complemented by the newly commissioned and eagerly awaited work by Christos Hatzis.



Lauded for his remarkable stage presence, depth of insight, nuance, and generosity, Yegor Dyachkov is an inspired recitalist, chamber musician, and concert soloist. Since winning the WMCT's Career Development Award in 2000, Yegor Dyachkov has performed throughout Europe, Latin America, Asia, Canada, and the United States, making his New York debut at The

Lincoln Center in 2000. He has appeared with major orchestras in Antwerp, Geneva, Montreal, Rio de Janeiro, Toronto, and Vancouver, and at international festivals in Évian, Kronberg, Lanaudière, Ottawa, and Tanglewood.

A champion of new music, Yegor Dyachkov has premiered works dedicated to him by creators including Jacques Hétu, Michael Oesterle, Ana Sokolovic, and the late André Prévost. Yegor Dyachkov was invited by Yo-Yo Ma to take part in the Silk Road Project. He now teaches at the Schulich School of Music of McGill University.



Jean Saulnier leads an active career as a recitalist, chamber musician, and teacher, and has broad experience with both the solo and the chamber music repertoire. Renowned for his flexibility, natural playing ability, and his generous spirit of partnership, he is a collaborator sought after by the finest musicians. Winner

of numerous competition prizes, Jean Saulnier has performed throughout the Americas and in Europe, and is a regular guest soloist with the world's great orchestras. He can also be heard at major Canadian music festivals and on CBC radio. Jean Saulnier's discovery of a rare 1848 Pleyel piano led him to extensive research on the interpretation of Chopin's works and to the release in 2003 of a much-praised recording of Chopin's music on this very piano. Jean Saulnier is currently a professor at l'Université de Montréal.

"Dyachkov and Saulnier play with intensity and involvement. I have seldom heard such effortless technical playing and such smooth phrasing."

American Record Guide

www.yegordyachkov.com

For the final concert of the season on **April 10, 2014**, the amazing **Pavel Haas Quartet** – Veronika Jarůšková, violin; Marek Zwiebel, violin; Pavel Nikl, viola; and Peter Jarůšek, cello – brings a classic string quartet programme of immense depth and breadth. Shostakovich's first, Britten's second, and Brahms's second quartets allow the Pavel Haas Quartet to demonstrate the wealth of expertise that has brought the ensemble to the forefront of its field in only ten years.

The quartet was founded in 2002 and named in honour of one of the most distinguished Czech composers of the first half of the twentieth century. A pupil of Leoš Janáček, Pavel Haas was deported to the Terezín ghetto in 1941, and died in Auschwitz three years later at the age of 45.



Since its foundation the Pavel Haas Quartet has closely collaborated with Professor Milan Škampa, violist of the legendary Smetana Quartet, and has received multiple competition awards. In the wake of winning the Premio Paolo Borciani in Italy, the quartet made an extensive world tour that included more than 40 concerts, and its members were nominated as Rising Stars by the European Concert Hall Organisation. The Pavel Haas Quartet has performed at all the world's great concert halls and records exclusively for Supraphon, a partnership that has resulted in more awards. The group's most recent recording, Antonín Dvořák's string quartets, won a 2011 Gramophone Award in the chamber category as well as the most coveted prize, Recording of the Year.

"The world's most exciting string quartet? Well, they suit the tag line better than most. Their tone is large, quasi orchestral. They take risks. Above all, they play with passion." *The Times*

www.pavelhaasquartet.com

I hope the above excites you as much as it does me and that you will agree that this looks like a wonderful season.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

I would like to wish all WMCT members, though somewhat belatedly, a very happy new year for 2013 – may it be a year of good health, happiness, and much beautiful music. The WMCT can certainly help with the latter as we continue the exceptional 115th anniversary season with concerts by The Duke Piano Trio (February 14), Tippett Quartet (March 28), and a brilliant finale at Koerner Hall on May 2, featuring two former award winners performing together for the first time: James Ehnes, violin, and Russell Braun, baritone.

There are still a few tickets left for the Koerner Hall concert on May 2 so I hope that you will bring along your friends and family to share in this special performance. Tickets can be purchased through the Koerner Hall box office, 416-408-0208. The WMCT would like to acknowledge the generosity of the sponsors for this concert, without whom it would not be possible – the Women's Musical Club of Toronto Foundation (concert sponsor), Roger Moore (new composition commission), Sun Life Financial (James Ehnes's performance), BMO Financial (Russell Braun's performance), and Hélène and Peter Hunt (Carolyn Maule's performance). As always, the WMCT has invited members of the younger generation to attend through its Student Outreach Programme – over one hundred students from public high schools as well as students from York University's voice programme.

You are reminded that through the WMCT's fabulous new website (www.wmct.on.ca) you can keep abreast of everything connected to the organization, including reviews of past concerts as well as upcoming performances and other events. I am pleased to announce that from now on the WMCT will be posting the programme for each concert, including the illuminating notes by John Mayo, on the website one week in advance. Given that it is sometimes difficult to find the time to read and digest the notes in the few minutes before a performance, this will give you the opportunity to read them at your leisure, hopefully enhancing your overall enjoyment of the music.

In addition to its concerts, the WMCT organizes many other connected events. A new members' reception was hosted prior to the November 29 concert at the home of Esther McNeil, former president of the WMCT and the WMCT Foundation. New members enjoyed the opportunity to meet with others from the WMCT, and develop a greater sense of "belonging." On February 14, the 116th anniversary season launch also took place at the home of Esther McNeil. WMCT artistic director Simon Fryer spoke to the press and the WMCT Foundation's *Legacy Circle* members about the upcoming *Music in the Afternoon* season. The WMCT's and WMCT Foundation's annual donor reception will be at the home of WMCT Foundation chair Peter Goulding after the concert on March 28, with a short performance by the 2012 WMCT/WMCT Foundation summer music scholarship winner from the National Youth Orchestra of Canada, Vladislav Kalinichenko. Sincere thanks to Esther McNeil and Peter Goulding for generously hosting these events.

Finally, I would like to congratulate four of the recent honorees for the Order of Canada with close ties to the WMCT: William Aide, Jane Coop, Stephen Ralls, and Bruce Ubukata. All have performed for the WMCT, and Jane Coop was a scholarship winner in 1970-1971. Stephen Ralls and Bruce Ubukata are well known for their remarkable and unique musical organization dedicated to vocal chamber music, The Aldeburgh Connection, sadly now in its last year of operation. It is heartening to know that stars of the classical music concert stage are recognized and honoured by the Governor General for their distinguished service and important contribution to Canadian cultural life. Hearty congratulations to all, and long may classical chamber music flourish!

Annette Sanger, President

Volunteer Profile: ANNETTE SANGER

by Timothy McGee

Extraordinary and talented leadership is one of the main reasons for the amazing success of the Women's Musical Club of Toronto for more than 100 years, as exhibited over the past four years by departing president, Julia Smith. The WMCT's new president, Dr. Annette Sanger, continues in that tradition and brings with her an unusual and extremely broad musical background in terms of education, performance experience, and administrative expertise.

Annette was born and raised in Poole, England, and began piano lessons at age six. Later on, while studying music at Dartington College of Arts, she was exposed to the wider area of musical cultures in courses on world music. One of her classes involved a research project on the music of Bali, which led to an interest that soon became the major musical focus of her academic and performance life. Shortly afterward she began doctoral studies in Belfast at Queen's University, and spent two years in Bali doing fieldwork on music and dance in Balinese culture, the subject of her Ph.D. thesis. One thinks of two years in such an exotic spot as Bali as being a dream come true, but while she enjoyed her time there, not everything was ideal: her accommodations were in a rural village where there was no electricity or running water. Nevertheless, she became immersed in Balinese culture, and that subject area has continued to be her main research focus, resulting in a continuing flow of journal articles and conference papers.



Annette Sanger in Hyderabad, India, in 2011.

Annette's fascination with the music of Bali also caused her to change her performance instrument to the gamelan, an instrument she continues to play and teach. Presently she performs in three different gamelan groups: two Balinese ensembles, including the large ensemble at the University of Toronto, and one that performs the music of Java. Her

professional gamelan quartet, Rat Nadi, continues to perform frequently in and around Toronto as well as elsewhere in North America.

Her teaching background is equally impressive. After finishing her Ph.D. in 1986, she was appointed professor of music in the Department of Anthropology at Queen's University of Belfast, where she taught until 1989 when both she and her husband, James Kippen, accepted appointments to the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto. She continues to offer courses in world music both at the Scarborough campus, and downtown at the Faculty of Music where she also directs the university's gamelan ensemble.

As an administrator, Annette brought her broad musical experience to the University Settlement House in 1990. That programme had traditionally centred

around lessons on the more conventional instruments such as piano, violin, and voice, but during her tenure as director of the Music & Arts School (1990-2000), Annette broadened the offerings to include a number of non-Western musics such as African drumming, Indian kathak dance, and Chinese gu-zheng, making the programme far more reflective of the cultures and backgrounds of the students and, not incidentally, attracting a significantly larger enrollment. All of this took place while she raised three talented children.

Annette first joined the WMCT in 2005 as a member of the Artists Selection Committee and, subsequently, chair of the Career Development Award Committee. In 2011 she accepted the position of vice president. When she can find time in the midst of all this activity, she makes regular research trips to Bali, participates in academic conferences, and occasionally is able to fit in a recreational visit to her family home in Nice, France. Clearly Annette Sanger brings a new meaning to the terms "multi-tasking" and "multi-talented."

Annette's continuing career as a professor and performer, together with her broad musical interests and background in arts administration, have uniquely equipped her for the often demanding job of guiding the WMCT. The Women's Musical Club of Toronto is fortunate to have such a talented new leader.

Timothy McGee was WMCT artistic director and chair of the Artists Selection Committee from 2002 to 2005 and artistic director emeritus for the 2006-2007 season.

Remembering: RUTH & JACK BRICKENDEN First Editors of the WMCT Newsletter

Ruth and Jack Brickenden, both of whom died in the past year, Jack in June 2012 and Ruth more recently in January 2013, were dedicated volunteers of the WMCT in the 1980s and 1990s. They had a keen appreciation and love of chamber music.

When Ruth became the WMCT's publicity chair her fliers were noted for their flair. At the time of the 90th Anniversary Concert, December 4, 1987, Jack wrote an important article for *Music Magazine* which described the activities of the WMCT and its history. In 1991 Ruth and Jack started the WMCT newsletter which has continued to this day.

They remained active in the WMCT until they moved to London, Ontario, in 2004.

Esther McNeil

BERNARD HERRMANN'S *PSYCHO*, *A SUITE FOR STRINGS*: HIGHBROW vs. LOWBROW by John Haines

Few will have heard Bernard Herrmann's *Psycho*, *A Suite for Strings* that is being performed at the Women's Musical Club of Toronto concert by the Tippett Quartet on March 28, 2013, but many more will know the composer's original music for Alfred Hitchcock's film *Psycho*, both from 1960. The very existence of these two musical manifestations of *Psycho*, a string quartet piece for the concert hall and an underscore for one of the most popular films of all time, illustrates well the modern tension between highbrow and lowbrow. Like many film composers before him, Herrmann aspired to the concert hall, but settled for the cinema. Another Hitchcock musician, Miklós Rózsa, titled his biography *Double Life* – striving for great-composer status while paying the bills in Hollywood. By 1982, when Rózsa published his biography, film composers had been suffering from this dichotomy for nearly a century. That most famous of music-makers for the movies, Max Steiner, with over three hundred film scores to his name, once said of his chosen career, "I'm almost ashamed." For most of the twentieth century, the film composer was viewed as a lower species – a musical "lackey," as Theodor Adorno and Hans Eisler put it in their 1947 book *Composing for the Films*.

The last few decades have been kinder to film composers and more generally to the movies, conferring on the erstwhile mass entertainment a high art status – or at least certain films. Those of Alfred Hitchcock stand at the top of the popular heap. First fêted by the French New Wave in the late 1960s as an *auteur*, Hitchcock passed away at just the right time in April 1980, the year he was knighted. Thanks first to the director's self-promotional *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* series (1955-1962), and then, shortly after his death, to the template-changing media of video home cassettes and digital video disks, Sir Hitchcock has become, in a word, great; as many see it, the greatest film director that ever lived. Fully five academic monographs have been published on music in Hitchcock – the most recent one by a Canadian, Dalhousie University professor David Schroeder (*Hitchcock's Ear: Music and the Director's Art*, 2012). It is a curious development, therefore, that Hitchcock's pristine image has suddenly been tarnished in the last year with the release of two films, *The Girl* (HBO) and *Hitchcock*, that detail the director's disturbing mistreatment of women – including his own wife, Alma Reville, the person who helped make him a success in the first place.

Still, Hitchcock is to be thanked for making Bernard Herrmann into a great composer. No one would be listening to the highbrow *Psycho*, *A Suite for Strings* were it not for the film to which the suite owes its name, *Psycho* – a blatant imitation of the cheap horror flick that was so successful in drive-in theatres at the time. Of Hitchcock's fifty some films, he and Herrmann collaborated on eight and a half, arguably the best in the director's oeuvre, with *Psycho* the very best of these. In turn, Herrmann can be credited for saving *Psycho* from oblivion. After finishing filming and viewing a rough cut, the director was so depressed about the film that he planned to cut it up in sections to be used for his television series. Famously, Herrmann composed the score behind Hitch's back, including the infamous shower scene for which the director had explicitly forbidden music. The rest is film history.



Hitch and Herrmann

A sad history, nevertheless, since shortly after *Psycho* relations soured between the once bankable duo. Following his lucky streak of successes with Hitchcock, Herrmann had become increasingly outspoken with the famously authoritarian director. In the course

of planning *Torn Curtain* (1966) Universal Studios was wary of Herrmann's impetuousness and his old-fashioned sound in the face of changing times. The studio asked Hitchcock for a musical score more in keeping with the 1960s, "something with a beat," as Hitch suggested to Herrmann. But the peeved composer flew in the face of both studio and director, and created one of his most extravagant orchestral creations. Halfway through hearing the music, Hitch fired Herrmann right in front of the orchestra.

Herrmann never recovered. Making lowbrow music for films, not highbrow suites for the concert hall, was what had made his reputation. After Hitchcock fired him, other directors worried that Herrmann would be too difficult to work with. Of the few film scores he wrote after his Hitchcockian heyday, several recalled *Psycho*. The day Herrmann died, Christmas Eve 1975, he had just finished the music for *Taxi Driver*; it concludes with a quotation from *Psycho*. Neither did Hitchcock recover after his split with Herrmann, each one of his subsequent films growing weaker until his final mediocre wave to cinema, *Family Plot* (1976). *Psycho*, a lowbrow horror flick in a highbrow chamber-music suit, had apparently been too much for both of them.

John Haines is a professor of musicology at the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto.

WMCT Foundation – THE WMCT'S BEGINNINGS: MARY HENDERSON FLETT DICKSON by Kathy Halliday



Born in Hamilton, Ontario, in the 1850s to a Scottish sea captain and his wife, Mary Henderson Flett must have possessed the soul of an aesthete. One wonders how much art – music or otherwise – was available to her during her youth in newly-founded, industrial Hamilton. Yet Mary became an original member of the Women's Musical Club of Toronto in 1899, as well as the principal of St. Mar-

garet's College, which she and her husband, George Dickson, founded in Toronto that same year. For nearly 30 years St. Margaret's was highly regarded for its instruction in academics, music and fine art.

Mary was also a dedicated volunteer, playing pivotal roles in The Toronto Council of Women, The Women's Canadian Club, and The Toronto Symphony Women's Committee, to name but a few of her favourite organizations. By all accounts Mary was an enterprising, gracious woman, deeply involved in the cultural and artistic life of Toronto.

Robin Elliott, in his history of the WMCT, *Counterpoint To A City: The First One Hundred Years of the Women's Musical Club of Toronto*, quotes from Mary's obituary in *Saturday Night* magazine, in October of 1940: "An ardent and discriminating patron of music, [Mary Dickson] was one of the most energetic founders of the Women's Musical Club, and a well-known figure at every musical event of quality in Toronto... There is an art of living, which is more important because more inclusive than all the other arts of the human race. It is too often neglected in new and aggressive communities, but Mrs. Dickson understood and practised it, and her own long life, which closed last week, was in consequence one of the most perfectly rounded and satisfactory that any human being could desire."

The WMCT was founded 115 years ago by such sterling characters as Mary Dickson. As their heirs, we are in their debt, and we owe it to them to support not only the finest music, but the "art of living." In the same way that the WMCT helps to ensure that chamber music thrives in Toronto, the WMCT Foundation helps to safeguard the organization's fiscal health and continued success in meeting its goals.

THE STORY OF THE MONTREAL WOMEN'S SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA by Maria Noriega

The twentieth century witnessed the advancements of Canadian women in politics, suffrage, labour, and education. Despite these gains, music as a profession remained largely male dominated, especially in the field of orchestral playing. To challenge their exclusion from the musical establishment, women created their own music clubs, associations, and women's chamber groups and orchestras. In 1889, the Duet Club of Hamilton became the first women's musical organization to be established in Canada. Four years later, the Ladies' Morning Musical Club of Montreal was created, and in 1899 a group of enthusiastic women founded the Women's Musical Club of Toronto.

These pioneering organizations assisted the professional development of international and Canadian female artists, and later expanded their membership and guest-lists to include men as well. Although women's music clubs did not succeed in provoking immediate sweeping changes within the largely male musical milieu, they nevertheless challenged societal norms by making women performers more visible, providing a network of support, and creating opportunities for career development.

All-women ensembles were also important in providing performing opportunities for women. By 1930 there were more than 30 all-women orchestras across the United States. In Canada, The Montreal Women's Symphony Orchestra would become a part of this trend, but its creation was far more ambitious and daring than anything south of the border.



In 1940 violinist Ethel Stark, who had graduated from the Curtis Institute of Music, returned to her native home in Montreal to play on a CBC radio broadcast. Hearing of her visit, Madge Bowen, the wife of a prominent CPR executive, proposed to the violinist a most daring venture: start a women's string orchestra to

train Canadian women for professional careers in music. No one could be better equipped for the job; after all, Stark had studied with renowned conductor Fritz Reiner. Pointing to the numerous chamber orchestras in the U.S., Stark explained that it would not be worth her time – anyone could start a chamber orchestra – but would Mrs. Bowen be interested in building a full-fledged all-woman symphony orchestra?

Within ten days and with ten dollars, Mrs. Bowen had rounded up the first 40 women, found enough instruments, a venue, and even a set of chairs for the first rehearsal. Teachers, factory workers, students, grandmothers, and even a photographer's model gathered for the first rehearsal. Rumours soon began to spread throughout print media and amongst critics. Even family members reminded the women of the sad fates of many other such "ladies'" organizations: women could not function properly without male authority, so what chance could a group of women in Montreal, with no money and no sponsor, have to succeed?

Six months later, on July 31, 1940, the MWSO gave its first concert at the Chalet, on top of Mount Royal, putting all rumours to rest. It was an unforgettable evening for many, including sixteen-year-old Violet Grant States. An aspiring clarinetist, she sat in awe listening to a performance of music by Beethoven, Bach, Mozart and Saint-Saëns. So enthralled was Grant States that she – and indeed others – did not seem to notice that apart from a few players, almost all the women in the orchestra had never before set foot on stage, and had begun lessons only months earlier. Three years later Grant States became the first black musician in the orchestra, and, quite possibly, the first black musician in any Canadian symphony orchestra.

Over the years, the orchestra grew in numbers, stability, and range of repertoire. By the end of 1946, the orchestra had given more than 35 concerts, each received with increasing acclaim. On October 22, 1947, the MWSO became the first Canadian orchestra to play in New York City's Carnegie Hall – a great feat given that other established orchestras in Canada were vying for the opportunity to be invited to perform on American soil. The orchestra's debut concert was well received, and invitations came from around the world, including the Soviet Union, Japan, England, and countries in South America.

After more than a decade of success and numerous concerts, the orchestra dwindled due to financial reasons. Although the orchestra gave its last concert in 1965, its mission to train Canadian women had been fulfilled. In fact, it was one of the strongest stimuli in the Canadian classical music scene, and along with the many other women's musical clubs and organiza-

tions, it became a sort of "women's movement" in music. Members of the orchestra soon joined other major Canadian orchestras including those in Toronto and Montreal. MWSO violinist Mildred Goodman and contrabassist Nathalie Feldman became members of the McGill Chamber Orchestra, and performed in Toronto on November 3, 1960. The concert was hosted by the Women's Musical Club of Toronto.

Although it took only ten days to put the MWSO together, in reality, the foundations of this organization had been in existence since the turn of the twentieth century, with the nurturing of female talent by women's musical clubs, chamber groups, and other organizations.

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Maria Noriega is a Ph.D. candidate in musicology at the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto.

SAVE THE DATES

Wednesday, March 27, 2013, 7.00 p.m.: WMCT-sponsored master class given by the Tippett Quartet, Room 330, Edward Johnson Building, 80 Queen's Park. Free; all WMCT members are welcome to attend.

Friday, May 10, 2013: 12.30 p.m.: Donalda Club annual "fun-raising" luncheon, with speaker Victor Feldbrill. More details will be mailed to WMCT members in April. Guests are welcome.

Thursday, October 3, 2013, 10.30 a.m.: The Women's Musical Club of Toronto Annual General Meeting at the Women's Art Association of Canada, 23 Prince Arthur Avenue.