



# NEWS & NOTES

## MUSIC IN THE AFTERNOON

Women's Musical Club of Toronto

### EXPERTISE & OPTIMISM: DAISY LEUNG JOINS THE WMCT BOARD

By Diane Martello

Daisy Leung is a familiar face to many WMCT members. For over fifteen years she was Front of House Manager for our concerts at Walter Hall. Official duties: open and close the Hall and supervise back-stage. Unofficial duty: miracle worker!

*“The elevator is broken.” – call Daisy.*

*“We need a page turner.” – call Daisy.*

*“We’re short a volunteer to serve refreshments.” – call Daisy.*

*“OMG, the performers need a jazz drum set!” – call Daisy.*



Daisy Leung (Photo: Alice Hong)

Daisy Leung, pianist, teacher, adjudicator, concert organizer, and now WMCT member, was elected to the Board in September, 2021. She brings with her a world of concert-production expertise and a Rolodex full of contacts. Daisy has performed professionally in Boston, Calgary, Edmonton, Nova Scotia, Ottawa, Rochester, Toronto, Vancouver, Victoria and Quebec, and is a sought-after Festival Adjudicator across Ontario. As well as the University of Toronto, Daisy's CV includes work for the Young Artists Performance Academy of The Royal

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Conservatory, Music Toronto, and Toronto Summer Music.

Not yet 40 years-old, Daisy grew up in Edmonton and has been the recipient of numerous awards and scholarships from diverse sources including the Canadian Music Competition, Edmonton Kiwanis Music Festival, Alberta College and the RCM.

The surname “Leung” means “a beam, a bridge”, and Daisy Leung is both a beam of optimism and a bridge to the next generation for the WMCT. When asked for her ideas on the future of Chamber Music, she said, “There are so many musicians and artists that are aching for the chance to collaborate in any form. With this hunger and drive to create, chamber music should thrive for years to come!”

About the importance of music education, diversity and equity in the arts, Daisy said, “I have witnessed firsthand in my own education that having music as a part of one’s education is vital in developing heightened cognitive skills and creating a greater sense of community. Music allows us to connect with people around the world as a universal language.”

Thank you, Daisy, for believing in the WMCT – our *MitA* Concerts, our scholarships, our outreach to schools, and our Career Development Award. Welcome on Board!

*Diane Martello is the WMCT Past President and Chair of the MCM Committee.*

**We are looking for people with a variety of skills from diverse backgrounds to join the WMCT Board. If you, or someone you know, loves chamber music and could envision serving on the WMCT Board please contact us by calling the office at 416 923-7052, x.1 or writing to Shannon at [wmct@wmct.on.ca](mailto:wmct@wmct.on.ca)).**

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: ARE WE THERE YET?

By Kathleen McMorrow

Yes, the advertised artists for the 124th season will all appear, without COVID-induced cancellations or substitutions. And with added sparkle: Andrew Haji (March 3) has recently starred in productions by Against the Grain and the [Canadian Opera Company](#). Cameron Crozman (March 31) has just won a [\\$25,000 Canada Council prize](#).



Cameron Crozman (Nikolaj Lund)

Yes, the lockdowns and other restrictions stimulated new methods and perspectives. Livestreaming and posting recorded videos to YouTube have been added to the WMCT skillset. Last season's concerts were available freely anywhere, anytime, expanding the awareness of the series. With the support of wonderful donors, the artists were properly paid.

Yes, the repertoire this season will enlarge the boundaries of chamber music, by including both standards (Beethoven, Shostakovich,) and new works (commissions from Canadian composers) and unconventional ensembles (flower pots and voice.)

Yes, the WMCT Foundation has benefited from the increased value of the stock market. The endowment that supports scholarships, awards, and operational needs is at the highest level in its history.

Still ahead is the 125th anniversary of this volunteer-run concert presenting and award-giving organization, an opportunity for both reflection and celebration of chamber music in Toronto.

Yes, groups of friends can have meals and colleagues meet in-person, I have non-virtual sessions with my



Walter Hall (Photo: Diane Martello)

physiotherapist, and audiences are applauding in many halls across Toronto. Our yearnings for haircuts or for religious community can now be fulfilled. But while members of the public can go to Varsity Arena to watch the Blues play hockey, no, we may not enter Walter Hall to hear Beverley Johnston play for *Music in the Afternoon*. This disappointment is hard to bear.

*Kathleen McMorrow is the WMCT President.*

## STUDENT OUTREACH CONTINUES

By Tamar Adaskin Nelson

While all of us miss in-person concerts and the happy presence of senior high school students at Walter Hall, the Club has continued to support Outreach by making the concerts available online. The Spring concerts attracted four schools each; teachers sent enthusiastic messages back to the office asking for more! The online format suited the schedule which high schools were following last year – partial attendance in-person, and partial remote learning - as teachers were able to use the concert as a whole-class listening experience and/or give the link to the students to “attend” on their own time. Teachers could also present parts of a concert to junior grades. The number of views showed us that many people listened again.

“We loved the last concert!”

Heather Shaw, RH King Academy

“Thanks for continuing to promote live music with the entire community throughout these difficult times. It sends a great message to our students.”

Jeff Wrigglesworth, Unionville High School

“We are delighted, and honoured, to attend the fall concert offerings...Thank you so much for thinking of us, and please do thank your wonderful donors as well on our behalf.”

Andrew Kizas, Port Credit Secondary School

The Club is grateful to our Student Outreach sponsor, Dianne Henderson, whose continued generosity has enabled us to reach a wider audience online. Now, through technology, we are reaching, on a regular basis, Arts-oriented schools in the wider GTA.

We will welcome new listeners at the November concert, online, from the specialty Arts Program [PSAT] at Ecole Saint-Frère-André in the French Catholic Board of Toronto (Conseil Scolaire Catholique, Mon Avenir).



Jane Archibald, Liz Upchurch and Dominic Desautels with students from Unionville C.I. Music in the Afternoon, November 14, 2019 (Photo: James Kippen)

The WMCT continues to support music education, music students and their teachers – even if we cannot, right now, meet them in person in the concert hall!

*Tamar Adaskin Nelson is the WMCT Student Outreach Coordinator.*

## IN MEMORIAM TRIBUTE

The following cherished friends and loyal supporters of the WMCT passed away this fall. They will be deeply missed but their contributions will not be forgotten.

**Danuta Buczynski** - As President of the WMCT from 2001-2004, Danuta led the Club during a period of remarkable growth in membership numbers, while overseeing four concert seasons. As an active member for many years, she had initiated the *Tuning Your Mind* series of pre-concert lectures in partnership with the Faculty of Music at the U of T.

**Ann Hughson** - A former long-standing WMCT Board Member, Ann served as the WMCT's Front of House Chair for many years and remained a WMCT Honorary Board Member.

**John B. Lawson** - Ann's sibling and a WMCT member for over 25 years, John was also a WMCT Honorary Advisor, and a generous donor to both the WMCT and the WMCT Foundation.

## WOMEN'S MUSICAL CLUBS IN CANADA: AN ASTONISHING NUMBER!

*By Annette Sanger*

While looking into the history of musical life in Canada I was surprised to learn that the WMCT was, in fact, one of many women's musical clubs formed around the turn of the twentieth century. Often the first and the oldest surviving musical organizations in their respective communities, they were formed to enrich musical life and encourage and support young artists. Women – often housewives and mothers who loved and appreciated music – took the lead while their husbands focused on their careers and providing the family income.

*The Canadian Encyclopedia* lists sixteen women's musical clubs, ten of which continue operating. The oldest extant club, dating back to 1889, is The Duet Club in Hamilton, founded by Ellen Ambrose, a piano teacher who encouraged her more shy students to perform duets together. In 1922, in consultation with the renowned pianist Vladimir Horowitz, the Club purchased its own semi-concert Steinway grand piano which is still played to this day. And happily, Horowitz graced The Duet Club stage with a performance on this piano in 1928. Over the years The Duet Club has also provided many music scholarships, and has its own choir, Women of Song.

In the 1890s several more clubs were formed: Club musical de Québec (also known as Quebec Ladies' Morning Club) in 1891; Ladies' Morning Musical Club



Myra Hess, 1923

Montreal, and Concert Society of Ottawa both in 1892; Women's Musical Club of Winnipeg in 1894 and then the Women's Musical Club of Toronto in 1898. Apart from the Ottawa club, all of these continue to operate. Often, in their early years these clubs presented performances by the members themselves but later progressed to concerts

by professionals who came from all over Canada and then the world – an early example in the history of the WMCT was a concert by famed British pianist Dame Myra Hess on February 15, 1923. Interestingly too, The Hamilton Duet Club performed for the WMCT on March 4, 1931!

Farther afield, in the West and the East of Canada, women's musical clubs were started in the early years of the twentieth century – in Calgary (1904), Edmonton (1908), Regina (1907), Saskatoon (1912), Vancouver (1905), Victoria (1906), and Halifax (1905), to mention just some. And closer to home, the Women's Musical Club of Brantford (now known as the Musical Club of Brantford) was formed in 1902.

Generally speaking, these clubs have several things in common – they are volunteer run, they were founded by and still run mainly by women (though men are sometimes subscribers), concerts are often in the mornings or afternoons rather than the more typical evening time-slot, they present anything from five to ten concerts per season, they fundraise to provide numerous scholarships and awards to young musicians and, over and above all else, all are the result of a labour of love on the part of thousands of women then and now.

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

## 2021-22 AWARD WINNERS

This year's recipient from the Glenn Gould School is violinist Keris Choi, a third-year undergraduate studying with Atis Bankas. Keris grew up in Toronto in a musical family but was led to the violin by a friend's influence, rather than her family. She was accepted at age 10 into the Phil and Eli Taylor Academy for Young Artists with a full scholarship, and from there progressed into the undergraduate



Keris Choi (Photo: Anonymous)

program at the Glenn Gould School. She has participated in many local music festivals, both as a soloist and with her Taylor Academy String Quartet. For the past two years of her studies, Keris has focused on learning more repertoire – the Sibelius, Brahms and Tchaikovsky concertos, for example, but she also wants to explore the string quartet and violin

sonata repertoire. Keris hopes to continue her studies, working towards a Master's degree, either in Canada or the USA, and is aiming for an orchestral career. (Keris plays the Ferdinando Garimberti violin 1935.)

From the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto, the recipient of this year's undergraduate award is Canadian/American soprano Gabrielle Turgeon, who is studying with Elizabeth MacDonald in the Faculty's voice and



Gabrielle Turgeon

(Photo: Anna Pelletier-Doble/ Kevanna Studios)

performance programs. Gabrielle has already had an active career as a soloist, singing with the Orpheus Choir, St. Paul's Bloor Street choir, and the Toronto Lyric Opera, among others. She has also participated in the *Beckwith Songbook*. Gabrielle has a formidable year ahead of her, as she plans to audition for the Curtis Institute, Juilliard and the Houston Grand Opera Young Artists'

Vocal Academy, as well as compete in the Metropolitan Opera's Laffont competition. We wish her well!

Our graduate award winner from the University of Toronto is Juliette Moreno, a clarinetist from Montreal. Juliette has a Master's degree from the Conservatoire de Musique de Montréal. She started playing the clarinet at the age of 10, thanks to the musical programs of Le Plateau and the Joseph François Perrault schools, progressed to the Conservatoire, participated in many festivals in Quebec, and played with the Montreal Youth Orchestra and the Quebec Opera Bouffe Orchestra. Although she is a Montrealer, Juliette describes her decision to continue her studies in Toronto as "one of the best decisions (she's) ever made".

*Susan Johnston is the Chair of the Awards Committee and the WMCT Archivist.*

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