



MUSIC IN THE AFTERNOON
Women's Musical Club of Toronto

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Annual Report 2023 - 2024

126th Season

President's Report

The 2023-2024 year was busy and eventful as usual.

The WMCT continues to offer extremely high-quality chamber music performances. Artistic Director Simon Fryer's report highlights the wonderful 2023-2024 *Music in the Afternoon* (*MitA*) season.

In 2024, the 13th Career Development Award (CDA) competition was held. The \$25,000 award winner, [Midori Marsh](#), is an American-Canadian soprano who completed her Master of Music degree at the University of Toronto in 2020. She is an engaging and exciting artist, who will perform in our upcoming 2024-2025 season.

The CDA and the \$25,000 in [annual scholarships](#) are funded by the [WMCT Foundation](#), for which the Club is thankful. This year, in addition to University of Toronto and Royal Conservatory awards, we supported our educational mandate with a half fellowship at Toronto Summer Music and donations to The Oscar Peterson School and The Hammer Band.

I wish to acknowledge the generous contributions of all the donors who supported the WMCT in the past year. While our donors are highlighted in our programs, special mention should be given to Dianne Henderson for her ongoing support of WMCT [student outreach](#) initiatives; concert supporters including the Michael Smith Memorial Fund, Wilma Boughtflower, Kathleen McMorrow, The Mary-Margaret Webb Foundation, and Nora Wilson; and original composition supporter The Catherine and Maxwell Meighen Foundation.

This year, both the WMCT Foundation and the WMCT received bequests from past members who kindly remembered us in their wills. The April 4th concert was dedicated to Marianne Weil in recognition of her substantial gift. We are grateful to those generous individuals who have included the WMCT as beneficiaries in their wills.

With the retirement of Elizabeth Dowdeswell as Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, the Club applied for and was very pleased to receive, word that the Honourable Edith Dumont, current Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, will serve as Honorary Patron of the WMCT.

Compliance with the Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act (ONCA) is required by October 2024. As the WMCT was incorporated in 1930, there was considerable work required to revise governing and operating documents! Required documents and resolutions have now been approved by the Board of Directors and will go to members for approval at the Annual Meeting September 26, 2024.

In December 2023, we held a holiday lunch at a downtown Toronto restaurant. The event was an unqualified success thanks to the organizational skills of Diane Martello and Jerri Merritt-Jones. The keynote speaker, celebrated Canadian soprano and WMCT member Jean Edwards, was "interviewed" by member Nora Wilson and entertained attendees with stories from her long career.

The pre-concert *Tuning Your Mind* lectures were varied and extremely

interesting. Many thanks to Robin Elliott, Professor of Musicology at the University of Toronto, for arranging them. Talks included *An Introduction to Music Therapy*, an interview with composer Kevin Lau, history of the *The Clarinet in Chamber Music*, and a psychologist's presentation entitled *Life Lessons from My Cello*.

Our [commitment to Canadian composers](#) continued with the commission to Kevin Lau for his String Quartet no. 6 ...*like the stars in the firmament* premiered by the Tesla Quartet Nov. 16, 2023.

All of our volunteers, Board and committee members, along with Shannon Perreault and Simon Fryer are striving to build our audiences and donor support post COVID to ensure the continuing longevity of the Club.

Support for artists and the arts is essential to our society, and a desire to participate in community activities in person is reappearing. Thanks to the efforts of one of our members, the East York Probus Club in Toronto promoted our May 2nd concert to their members and 12 people attended. None had known of the WMCT prior to this – a demonstration of how members and extended friend and family groups can expand our reach.

Final recognition must go the small but extremely dedicated group of WMCT volunteers who spend countless hours ensuring that everything gets done. With Shannon and Simon, they do an amazing amount of work. Thank you all.

Janet Murray, President

Artistic Director's Report

The 126th *MitA* Concert Season opened with a well-established piano and string ensemble with an international following: the [Fauré Quartett](#). The rapt audience was treated to works by Beethoven and Reger and, after intermission, the great Second Piano Quartet of the composer whom they honour by name: Gabriel Fauré. It was a delight to experience the depth of understanding this long-established ensemble brought to each work and the consequent vitality that charged the music.

Our second concert brought us [Tesla Quartet](#), named after Nicola Tesla, the pioneer of electrical alternating current. Walter Hall was certainly sparking with excitement over the Quartet's performance of two great works: Dvorák's *Cypresses*, and Beethoven's 3rd Razumovsky quartet. The Quartet demonstrated the future of the string quartet genre with two unfamiliar works: the 3rd quartet by 20th-Century Polish composer Grazyna Bacewicz and the WMCT-commissioned Quartet no. 6, by Canadian composer Kevin Lau, which received its world premiere. Lau's spectacular work subtitled "...like the stars in the firmament", ended with a shower of ever-quieter sounds, perhaps reminiscent of an electrical crackling...

2024 began for *MitA* with the welcome return of clarinettist [Dominic Desautels](#) to the WMCT stage. This time with pianist Jean-Philippe Sylvestre and bassoonist Zsófia Stefán, Mr. Desautels delivered a passionate performance that included his own transcriptions of music by both Robert and Clara Schumann. Flowing from work to work and connecting them with delightful introductions, this performance left us in no doubt that the world of woodwinds contains both remarkable repertoire and extraordinary performers.

It was a shock when inaugural WMCT CDA winner, pianist Francine Kay, was forced, due to illness, to cancel her concert. But shock turned to awe when the announcement came that our replacement artist would be Canadian piano royalty, [Jane Coop](#)! Ms. Coop wowed the audience with her impeccable technique and astounding insight. She began with works by Haydn, Beethoven, Ravel and Debussy without once leaving the stage. After the interval, it was all Chopin including the mammoth 3rd Sonata. Such is Ms. Coop's artistry that we ceased to notice the colossal difficulty of these works and were immediately lost in the music and as a further bonus, the concert was recorded by CBC Radio for national broadcast.

Soprano [Joyce El-Khoury](#) and pianist [Serouj Kradjian](#) charmed the *MitA* audience with a very personal program reflective of both their Western music education and their rich Middle-Eastern heritage. The duo opened with Italian and French bel canto favourites, showcasing not just El-Khoury's full, rich operatic voice and Kradjian's sensitive collaborative piano, but the wonderful interplay between the two artists. Following intermission, many songs were sung in Arabic - a first for a *MitA* concert. The chosen music paid homage to the cultural background of both artists and included a memorable set of Armenian tango pieces. This was an immensely enjoyable, unique, intimate, and thoroughly engaging concert that closed our season with our audience on its feet, cheering!

Simon Fryer, Artistic Director

SUMMARIZED FINANCIAL INFORMATION

For the Year Ended June 30, 2024, with Comparative Figures for 2023

	<u>2023-2024</u>	<u>2022-2023</u>
Membership Fees	\$ 33,620	\$ 30,888
General Admissions & Other Revenue	13,911	9,912
OAF Endowment Income	3,087	2,983
WMCT Foundation	25,400	53,218
Other Charitable Foundation Donations	25,041	28,968
Member, Friends & Sponsorship Donations	109,297	74,351
Government Grants	2,140	2,375
Career Development Award from WMCT Fdtn	<u>21,000</u>	<u>6,045</u>
TOTAL REVENUE	<u>\$233,496</u>	<u>\$208,740</u>
Artistic Fees & Expenses	\$ 47,882	\$ 67,663
Commission of New Work	5,000	5,000
Production, Web Site, & Hall Rental	27,346	28,681
Occupancy Costs	17,151	23,281
Admin, Membership & Other Activities	72,013	60,023
Scholarships	25,000	25,000
Career Development Award Expenses	22,000	850
Special Projects	9,456	7,532
Contribution to WMCT Fdtn & Others	<u>1,500</u>	<u>14,000</u>
TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>\$227,348</u>	<u>\$232,030</u>
Excess of Revenue over Expenses	6,148	(23,290)
Net Assets, beginning of year	<u>63,126</u>	<u>86,416</u>
Net Assets at end of year	<u>\$ 69,274</u>	<u>\$ 63,126</u>
Where funding comes from	<u>2023-2024</u>	<u>2022-2023</u>
Membership Fees	14%	15%
General Admissions, Other Revenue, & Interest	7%	6%
WMCT Foundation	20%	28%
Other Charitable Foundation Donations	10%	14%
Member & Friends Donations	47%	36%
Government Grants	1%	1%
	100%	100%

Secretary-Treasurer Report

Thanks to our many donors and subscribers, in fiscal 2023-24 the WMCT posted revenues that increased by almost 12% over fiscal 2022-23, while expenses decreased slightly year over year, resulting in a small surplus of just over \$6,000. Audience numbers have yet to return to pre-COVID levels despite ongoing efforts, so increased donations were primarily responsible for our improved results.

In particular, thanks to the estate of Marianne Weil, one of our past presidents, for a substantial bequest of \$50,000. Her thoughtful generosity helped to position us to expand our active focus on outreach and marketing, growing our audiences and membership. This continues to be our major goal for the coming year.

We will continue to operate prudently and responsibly, and look forward to seeing you all at our concerts. Many thanks to all!

Robin Sundstrom, Secretary-Treasurer

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Our 126th anniversary Music in the Afternoon season was brought to you by:

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 All WMCT Scholarships and
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