



MUSIC IN THE AFTERNOON

Women's Musical Club of Toronto

NEWS & NOTES

NUMBER 71 | JANUARY 2026

2025-2026 WMCT SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

By Adair Hope

Graduate Fellowship, University of Toronto

Hailing from Kelowna, B.C., tenor **Jacob Thomas** is equally at home in baroque ensembles and on operatic stages. Jacob recently completed his Master's degree in Early Music Performance at U of T and is currently pursuing a Doctorate of Musical Arts in Historical Performance with a special focus on the music of G.F. Handel. He graduated from U of T in 2022 with a double major in Historical Performance in Voice Studies and German Language and Literature and completed his Advanced Certificate in Historical Performance the year after. He has since enjoyed stepping into the world of early music under the tutelage of Prof. Daniel Taylor, O.C., and Prof. Jean MacPhail. Jacob is in his 8th year of singing with Prof. Taylor's Schola Cantorum and has sung with groups such as Voces8, Clarion Choir, Tafelmusik and the Toronto Consort.



Jacob Thomas

Centennial Scholarship, University of Toronto

Owen Phillipson is in his 4th year of a Bachelor of Music degree in Voice Performance at U of T, studying under Professor Daryl Edwards. An up-and-coming star, Owen is accomplished in both oratorio and opera repertoire. In 2025 he sang the role of Count Rodolfo in *La Sonnambula* with Teatro Nuovo under the leadership of Maestros Will



Owen Phillipson

Crutchfield and Elisa Citterio. This past November, he performed the role of the Impresario in University of Toronto's production of Donizetti's *Viva la mamma*. As an oratorio soloist, he has performed Ralph Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia on Christmas Carols* with the Toronto Symphony

Youth Orchestra, Bach's *Magnificat* with Stratford Summer Music, and Fauré's *Requiem* with St. Thomas's Anglican on Huron. A graduate of St. Michael's Choir School, Owen frequently sings with professional and amateur choirs, including the Elmer Isler Singers, Modern Sound Collective, and the St. Paul's Choral Academy.

110th Anniversary, Glenn Gould School

Mezzo-soprano **Jada Alexiou** (see photo on page 3) is in her first year of the Artist Diploma Program at the Glenn Gould School. Having completed her BFA in Voice Performance from York University, she is committed to elevating both her technical proficiency and artistic sensitivity. She has studied and trained with established performers, conductors, stage directors and répétiteurs

in both Canada (Toronto Operetta Theatre, Summer Opera Lyric Theatre, Opera Nuova), and in Europe (Brent Italy International Music Academy *BIIMA) and has collaborated with choral ensembles (Tafelmusik Baroque Summer Institute, VOICEBOX: Opera In Concert, Apocryphonia). She has organized and performed in her own feature recitals, and continues to participate in festivals, master classes, competitions, ceremonies and exhibitions across Ontario. Jada aspires to have an extensive career in the operatic world and explore performance opportunities abroad.

Adair Hope is the WMCT's Awards Committee Chair.

THE WMCT HELPS CAREGIVERS "TAKE A BREAK"

By Diane Martello

In the 2025/26 Season, the WMCT has partnered with the [Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence](#) to provide two complimentary tickets to *Music in the Afternoon* for caregivers/providers who are connected to the Centre.

People who look after those with special needs, be they a child, a spouse, a sibling or a client, are often forgotten by society. They may overcommit, neglect their own needs and face burnout. In partnering with the Centre, the WMCT honours caregivers/providers and encourages them to "take a break" by attending one of our fabulous afternoon concerts.

Diane Martello is Chair of the WMCT's Fundraising and Membership, Concerts and Marketing Committees.



(L to R): Ron Beleno, Diane Martello, and Mark & Patrice Walsh attend the Maxwell Quartet *Music in the Afternoon* concert, November 13, 2025

Did you know the WMCT also offers complimentary tickets to all accompanying caregivers/providers?
Call 416-923-7052 to reserve a caregiver ticket.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT: 2025 ANNUAL MEETING

By Janet Murray

Despite the threat of inclement weather, 33 voting members and four guests attended the WMCT Annual Meeting held at [The Arts & Letters Club of Toronto](#) on November 27, 2025.

While the primary purpose of the meeting is to ensure proper governance related matters are fulfilled, it also provides the opportunity for members to get to know each other apart from concert days or volunteer activities.



Janet Murray chairs the WMCT's 2025 Annual Meeting (photo: Don Johnston)

At the meeting, the minutes from the 2024 annual meeting were approved as presented as were the financial statements for the year ended June 30, 2025.

The auditors, Pennylegion Chung LLP, were re-appointed for the 2025-2026 fiscal year and the WMCT board was authorized to fix their remuneration.

Directors Giovanna Cavarra, Kathleen McMorrow, Janet Murray and Annette Sanger were re-elected.

Members heard a report from the WMCT Foundation outlining the significant ongoing support of the Club and the positive financial position of the Foundation assets.

We recognized 20-year members Bonita O'Dacre and Annette Sanger who have both contributed significantly volunteering in many roles and on the WMCT board. Also recognized were retiring board members Daisy Leung and Kathy Halliday who both gave of their valuable time and expertise in many areas, including concert day operations, marketing and special events.

After the business end of the meeting, the 2025-2026 WMCT and Foundation scholarship winners performed. It was unique this season that all three recipients were vocalists. They and their accompanists treated members to varied programmes of music and enjoyed listening to each other perform.



Jada Alexiou performs after the WMCT's 2025 Annual Meeting (photo: Don Johnston)

Members, guests and performers then enjoyed a light lunch and visited in the lovely Arts & Letters environment. Many thanks to all involved, especially Shannon Perreault, for putting the day together and making it such an enjoyable occasion.

Janet Murray is the WMCT's President and Board Chair as well as the Chair of the Nominating & Governance Committee.

MAXWELL QUARTET STUDENT OUTREACH

By Janet Murray

On November 12, 2025, the day before performing a concert in the WMCT *Music in the Afternoon* 128th season, the [Maxwell Quartet](#) conducted a series of workshops for strings students at Port Credit Secondary School (PCSS) in Mississauga.



Maxwell Quartet, *Music in the Afternoon*, Walter Hall November 13, 2025 (photo: Duc Tam Nguyen)

Under the leadership of Dr. Andrew Kizas, Artistic Director of the [Regional Strings Program](#) for the Peel District School Board, PCSS has an extremely robust award-winning strings program.

The PCSS students and teachers were thrilled to have the very talented and approachable members of the Maxwell Quartet come to them as past trips to attend *Music in the Afternoon* concerts found them stuck for hours in traffic, trying to return to Mississauga.

Plus, they got so much more than a concert!

Violin, viola and cello students attended separate workshops, watching intently as a few of their fellow students played with and were coached by the quartet members.



Maxwell Quartet work with students at PCSS, November 12, 2025

After the sessions, all the students came together to hear the Maxwell Quartet perform and share stories of how the group was formed in Scotland, about the music which is important to them, and what it is like to be a professional musician. They took questions from the audience and there was a lively exchange of information.

"It was an absolute pleasure to welcome the Maxwell String Quartet to Port Credit and I know that the students will remember this for a very long time. The quartet's passion, artistry, and coaching were truly remarkable and we feel very fortunate to have had this opportunity." - Dr. Andrew Kizas

As they were already west of Toronto, three members of the quartet took advantage of their first trip to Toronto and visited Niagara Falls.

It was indeed a special day for all involved.

THE ADASKIN FAMILY AND THE WMCT

By Kathleen McMorrow

The Adaskins were a remarkable family of musicians who participated in and influenced Canadian cultural life for much of the 20th century. Three brothers were string players who had studied and worked with Luigi von Kunits, first conductor of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. As performers and teachers, they promoted Canadian and contemporary music. All were married to performers who appeared in WMCT concerts in the 1930s.

Harry Adaskin (1901–1994), a soloist and chamber musician, founded the UBC music faculty, and created CBC broadcasts. He played in several WMCT ensemble concerts between 1919 and 1933, as second violin of the Hart House String Quartet, or with his wife, pianist Frances Marr. Harry was born in Riga, Latvia, and was an infant when the family emigrated to Canada.

Murray Adaskin (1906–2002) was a composer, orchestra violinist, first head of music at the University of Saskatchewan, and a conductor. His wife, soprano Frances James, gave a WMCT recital in 1933, and Murray's Divertimento no. 9 was performed at a 2009 concert by a string trio named in honour of the family.

John Adaskin (1908–1964) was a conductor, CBC Radio producer, and administrator. As a cellist he played with pianist Naomi Yanova in a duo active from 1929 to 1938, and they married in 1934. Naomi also toured eastern Canada during those years in a piano duo with Etta Coles, which made its WMCT debut in 1933. Naomi's career after 1939 was as an orchestral soloist; she made her last professional appearance at a Promenade Symphony concert conducted by André Kostelanetz in 1943. She later taught at the TCM, wrote music criticism, and edited school music texts.

There is one further significant connection with the WMCT: Naomi and John's daughter Tamar Adaskin Nelson has been a member since 2007, and has organized student outreach since 2016, coordinating high school class attendances at concerts, masterclasses and workshops. She also currently serves on the board.



(L to R) John Adaskin, Frances James, Murray Adaskin, Naomi Yanova.
Published in the *Globe and Mail*, August 16, 1947

For more information on the Adaskins, consult the [Canadian Encyclopedia](#). For more colourful reporting of WMCT concerts of the 1930s, describing performers' dresses, offering long lists of prominent audience members, and sometimes noting the repertoire, try the *Globe and Mail* Newspaper Archive (available through the Toronto Public Library).

For a complete list of performers and program repertoire at WMCT concerts since the beginning, consult the on-line [History](#) by Hanna and Fred Feuerriegel.

Kathleen McMorrow is the WMCT's Website Administrator and Past President.

The WMCT is very much a volunteer-run organization, and we are always looking for help from among our members/subscribers for various tasks. Please do consider becoming a volunteer this season! We are particularly looking for assistance with marketing, governance and finance. If you are interested, we'd love to hear from you! Email us at wmct@wmct.on.ca or complete the volunteer questionnaire on our [website](#).

