

# Counterpoint

## COMMUNITY ORCHESTRA



www.ccorchestra.org

**Counterpoint  
Community Orchestra  
with Ateliera S  
presents...**



**Concert Program**

**Terry Kowalczuk, Music Director**

**Marriage of Figaro - Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**

*Overture*

*Cherubino's aria, Voi che sapete* (Martha Spence, mezzo-soprano)

**Don Pasquale - Gaetano Donizetti**

*Norina's cavatina, Quel guardo, il cavaliere* (Hélène Ducharme, soprano)

**La Forza del Destino - Giuseppe Verdi.**

*Overture*

**Rigoletto - Giuseppe Verdi.**

*Quartet, Bella figlia dell' amore* (Gilda: Hélène Ducharme, Maddalena: Martha Spence,

Duke: Patrick Huang, Rigoletto: Stuart Graham)

**Eugene Onegin - Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky**

*Onegin's aria, Vy mne pysaly* (Onegin: Stuart Graham)

*Quartet, Mesdames! Ya na sebya vsyal smyelost...* (Tatiana: Dolores Tjart, Larina/Olga: Martha Spence, Lensky: Patrick Huang, Onegin: Stuart Graham)

**Macbeth - Paul McIntyre**

*Lady Macbeth's Mad Scene* (Dolores Tjart, Soprano)

**Prince Igor - Alexander Borodin**

*Polovetsian Dances*

**Die Walküre - Richard Wagner**

*Wotan's Farewell and Fire Music* (Wotan: Stuart Graham)

**Counterpoint Community Orchestra**

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

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Special Guest Host **Stuart Hamilton**, from CBC's Saturday Afternoon at the Opera



**SEE YOU AT THE NEXT CONCERT**

**Saturday, March 1, 2008**

**St. Luke's Church (Sherbourne & Carlton) at 8:00pm**

**tickets:**

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## GUEST HOST: STUART HAMILTON



Stuart Hamilton is Counterpoint's Guest Host for our March concert, An Evening at the Opera. Hamilton is CBC Radio's quiz-master for the "Saturday Afternoon at the Opera." He is the Founder and Artistic Director Emeritus of Toronto's highly successful series, Opera In Concert, which is currently celebrating its twenty-fifth season. He is well known as a vocal coach and accompanist, having appeared with many of Canada's leading singers including Lois Marshall and Maureen Forrester.

Stuart Hamilton was the first Music Director of the Canadian Opera Company Ensemble, and regularly judges competitions such as the CBC Young Performers' Competition and Opera America Auditions, among others.

In 1984 Mr. Hamilton was awarded the Order Of Canada for his outstanding contribution to the musical life of Canada and in 1989 won the Toronto Arts Award in the Performing Arts Category. He is also the recipient of the Governor General's Award commemorating Canada's 125th year.

## EUGENE ONEGIN: TCHAIKOVSKY



The music in Tchaikovsky's opera reflects the drama of love and regret - themes the composer experienced repeatedly in his own life. Considered Russia's most popular opera, Eugene Onegin revolves around a hero who rejects the love of a young woman and prompts a fatal duel with his best friend. The story was so well known, Tchaikovsky used only the highlights of Alexander Pushkin's epic poem to form his composition.

Written in 1878, Tchaikovsky was inspired by folk melodies and the atmosphere of Russian country life at the time. The music is charming, with delicate orchestration and elegant chamber qualities. Gentle melodies are contrasted by big, bourgeois scenes full of dramatic flair.

Though Tchaikovsky was worried about the public's reaction to his unconventional choices in composition, he insisted on simplicity and sincerity in the performance of this work.

by Katya Diakow, violin

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### CCO COMMITTEES

Bylaws/Board Development, Concert, Fundraising, Program, Marketing & Promotion, Publishing

## WAGNER & VERDI: OPERA REVOLUTIONIZED

Our March concert is dedicated to opera - we will present orchestral and vocal selections from mainly 19th century operas. In a century full of great opera composers, whose work makes up more than half of present day repertoire, two stand above the rest: Wilhelm Richard Wagner (1813-1883) and Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901). In order to appreciate the importance of these two composers, one has to consider first the development of opera in its social and artistic context.

Opera was the brainchild of Florentine aristocrats who wanted to recreate the classical Greek drama started as courtly entertainment at the end of the 16th century. The presence of the choir in tragedies of Aeschilus, Sophocles and Euripides caused them to assume that classical Greek drama was sung.

It was supposed to be an art form in which drama was supported and enhanced by music. Soon after its birth, opera moved beyond royal and princely patronage and became a more popular form of entertainment, and as such, it had to cater to the taste of the audience. As a result opera soon became merely a pretext for good tunes, vocal virtuosity and, in the case of French opera, lavish spectacle; the drama component was reduced to being a vehicle for the music, mostly devoid of the elements that are required for good drama: well-paced action and credible, well-drawn characters.



**Richard Wagner**

There were, of course, attempts to steer opera back to its original aims and create true musical drama; some notable successes were those by Gluck and most notably the three operas Mozart wrote in collaboration with Lorenzo da Ponte. These reforms didn't catch on, however. Such was the situation of opera when Verdi and Wagner appeared on stage.

Except for his physical appearance, Richard Wagner was a personality larger than life. Full of contradictions, and with an ego matching his incontestable genius, he saw himself as some kind of artistic apostle whose mission was to reform music and all the arts in general. Influenced by such philosophers as Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, he set about creating the "Gesamtkunstwerk" - the total work of art fusing together drama, music and the arts. To achieve this he wrote his own libretti, believing himself to be as good a dramatist and poet as he was a composer. He even had a special theatre built for the express purpose of presenting his "music of the future", the Bayreuth Festspielhaus (Bayreuth Festival Theatre).

But it is the musical aspect of opera that underwent the most

profound transformation. From a work made up of self contained "numbers" (arias, duets, larger ensembles), it became a through-composed work, characterized by a continuous flow of music. He used daring musical language, full of novel harmonies, chromatics and ambiguous tonalities. His orchestration is extremely rich, the orchestra becoming as important as - and often more important than - the voice; it doesn't accompany the singers, rather it complements, and singing and action are often interrupted by long orchestral passages.

And finally, the one musical innovation most associated with Wagner: the introduction of the leitmotifs, the guiding themes that represent characters and ideas musically. Thus, under his hand, opera became a lofty work of art, with complex actions and even more complex characters, all about ideas and drama expressed in music - often more about ideas than drama, as Wagner, for all his theorizing, lacked the dramatic instinct to know what works well on stage and what doesn't. But while we may argue to what extent Wagner realized his own ideals, there is no doubt that he revolutionized not only opera, but music as a whole.

If Wagner reformed opera through an artistic revolution, Giuseppe Verdi achieved the same goal through gradual evolution. A simple, modest man, he believed that giving the audience what it wanted was not incompatible with good musical drama. Unlike

**continued on page 4**

## WAGNER & VERDI: OPERA REVOLUTIONIZED (continued)

Wagner, he didn't have a "mission" and he didn't theorize; he did, however, have an unerring instinct for what makes good musical drama: good action, believable, multi-faceted characters, good music and above all good singing.

During the first years of his career, which he himself called his "galley years" he worked under contracts with various theatres, which required him to produce a yearly number of operas - without any control over the subjects and the libretti and no leisure for more than turning out good tunes for the singers. As his fame grew and he became more established, he could afford to be more selective in the subjects he chose for his operas. While he never attempted to write his own libretti, he chose as sources, works by great dramatists (Shakespeare, Schiller, Hugo, among others) and he exercised very tight control on the libretti. He continued to write opera by "numbers", but making sure that musically the "numbers" lead into each other seamlessly, and as he progressed they also become more and more extended.



**Giuseppe Verdi**

Verdi's last two operas, "Otello" and "Falstaff" were through-composed, very much like Wagner's (and they were actually criticized in some circles of being Wagnerian). He allowed the voice to reign supreme, but with the eye constantly on the drama, never indulging in vocal virtuosity for its own sake. He never made the orchestra a pet, the way Wagner did, but as soon as he could compose more leisurely, he took great care with his orchestration, which becomes richer with each new work, and the role of the orchestra itself increasingly more important, becoming an active participant that reveals the inner life and thoughts of his characters. His preoccupation with fusing drama and music is also testified by the fact that he often revised his operas, invariably resulting in tighter action, more complex characterization, richer and more colourful orchestration.

Both Wagner and Verdi transformed opera as an art form, establishing it firmly as musical drama. More importantly, they created the most moving human dramas, expressed in sublime music.

by Joseph Nachman, violin

## ATELIER S



**Stuart Graham**

Toronto-based private vocal studio and master classes, Atelier S, has partnered with Counterpoint Community Orchestra for our March 1st concert.

The founder of Atelier S, Stuart Graham created his first vocal/dramatic studio in 1995. After relocating to Toronto, Mr. Graham opened a vocal/dramatic studio, Atelier S. Atelier S has opened fantastic possibilities in support of the technical and artistic growth of its student members. In addition to offering voice lessons and performance coaching, the studio has created a fully structured performance program specialized for the transitioning artist who is working to bridge from the student career to the lyric profession.

Partnership with Counterpoint Community Orchestra

Counterpoint is delighted to partner with Atelier S for this concert of major works of vocal and orchestral opera repertoire. This event features the vocal talents of sopranos Hélène Ducharme and Dolores Tjart, mezzo-soprano Martha Spence, tenor Patrick Huang and baritone Stuart Graham.

## POLOVTSIAN DANCES: BORODIN



Known for leading a dual life, Alexander Borodin, a chemist by profession, failed to complete many of his musical works, including the Prince Igor opera. The composer spent more than 20 years writing the piece, based on a ballad about a Russian hero who fought the

tribes of central Asia.

The dramatic momentum of the opera centers on the imprisonment of Igor by the Polovtsy

tribe. The famous Polovtsian Dances take place during a banquet scene - characterized by brilliant sounding music with barbaric undertones.

The composition shows influences of French grand opera in its exotic depictions, as well as elements of daring harmonies typically associated with Russian composers such as Mussorgsky. Borodin intended his score to be a great historical tableau, and the completed version is known as a crowd-pleasing example of Russian Romantic music.

by Katya Diakow, violin

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Counterpoint Community Orchestra is approaching its 25th Anniversary. Our supportive audience, especially those who have been with us many years, know how the quality of the musical experience that the orchestra presents has improved over the years.



What occurs on stage at the concerts does not happen without a great deal of behind-the-scenes work, carried out by a loyal team of volunteers. However, the volunteer team is wearing thin.

As Chairman of the Board, I have two items that need to be brought to your notice:

1. There are presently 2 vacancies for non-orchestra members from the community on our 9 person Board. This also includes the position of Treasurer. This is a big gap which is starting to result in a slowdown in the Orchestra's administration. Our needs include for example, help in programming, fundraising, bookkeeping, and concert organization. If you know of anyone who might be interested in being more involved with the day-to-day running of your Orchestra please contact me at [paul.t.willis@on.aibn.com](mailto:paul.t.willis@on.aibn.com).

2. The Fundraising Committee is in urgent need of more help. Besides the money from ticket sales, and member's fees, your Orchestra gets a major portion of its operating expenses from donors (both corporate and individual) as well as from private and government agencies. There are a variety of skills required for a fundraising committee - networking, idea initiation, writing of grant applications, presentations, etc. To be on a committee, experience is not as necessary as enthusiasm to help us grow.

I know that everyone is busy, but please take a few minutes to think of who you know that might be interested in being involved with the Orchestra as a Board member or as a volunteer in other areas. Here is a wonderful opportunity for you to be a part of helping the orchestra raise the funds and do the organizing necessary to present a spectacular 25th Anniversary season. Orientation and training will be provided for those who want to participate.

Once again, if you know someone or are yourself concerned to find out more about how you can help the orchestra, please contact me at [paul.t.willis@on.aibn.com](mailto:paul.t.willis@on.aibn.com) or (416) 926-9806.

Thank you.

Paul T. Willis, Chairman of the Board

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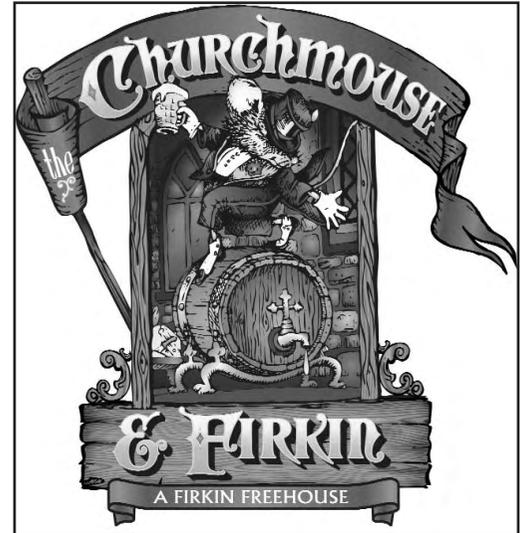
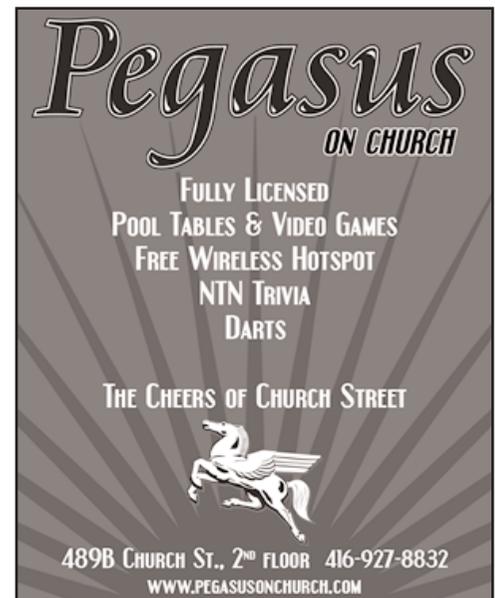
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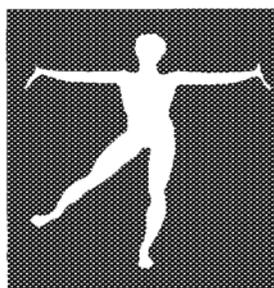
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