

Counterpoint

CCO community orchestra



Newsletter

v10.2



Next Concert: Saturday, March 7, 2009

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

\$16 IN ADVANCE

from members of the orchestra or at

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Message from the Chair

Paul Willis, chair

Under the guidance of our energetic conductor, Terry Kowalczyk, the orchestra musicians are busy rehearsing the 9 magnificent pieces for the upcoming March 7th concert as well as starting to work on the challenging and thrilling Beethoven's 9th Symphony for our 25th Anniversary Gala May 30th concert at the MacMillan Theatre in the Edward Johnson Building at the University of Toronto.

The Board is also busy on preparations for these two concerts. The concerts which you have grown to enjoy cannot happen without volunteers - many volunteers. We need to expand our volunteer base in order to meet the demands of our growing organization. Our current volunteers' capabilities have been stretched to the limit and we have now reached a milestone where we need to find more volunteers. We say a sad goodbye to one of our strong volunteers, Lise Beaupré, who had been chairing the Fundraising committee.

Like many of you I was moved by the inspired reality of Barack Obama's inaugural address. His "Yes we can" approach is one which every arts group, including Counterpoint Community Orchestra, can and must learn from. In this spirit, as we look forward to our Gala concert and the many years of the orchestra, I am asking you to look at your skills, your time and your interests and decide how you can help our orchestra fulfill its mandate.

To give you an idea of where you can assist, here are some of the aspects of the orchestra organization which need volunteer assistance - newsletter production, graphic designing, typing correspondence, concert set up, publicizing and promoting concerts, distributing posters, assisting the Treasurer, fundraising, writing grant applications, librarian assistant, archivist, website maintenance, folding orchestra material and stuffing envelopes, ticket selling and refreshment handling at the concert, donating prizes for fundraising, and assisting at fundraisers such as Woody's Night.

With your help of a few hours each month, we can together continue enjoying great music at Counterpoint's concerts. Please e-mail about your interest in volunteering to: info@ccorchestra.org.

And, I look forward to meeting many of you at our Woody's Night fundraiser on Thursday, March 26th, 2009 between 9:30 and midnight.

You are cordially Invited !

In honour of its 25th Anniversary, Counterpoint Community Orchestra will perform the exciting Beethoven 9th Symphony along with Toronto's The Bell'Arte Singers. Conducted by Terry Kowalczyk, Music Director.



**Gala Birthday Concert
May 30, 2009
The MacMillan Theatre
The University of Toronto**

**Additional Information will
be available soon at
www.ccorchestra.org**



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Magnificent Music

Terry Kowalczyk, music director

Symphony No. 5 op 107 by Felix Mendelssohn

The Hebrides Overture (Fingal's Cave) opus 26 by Felix Mendelssohn

Jubel-Ouvertüre, J.245, Op.59 by Carl Maria von Weber

Raiders March from Raiders of the Lost Ark March by John Williams

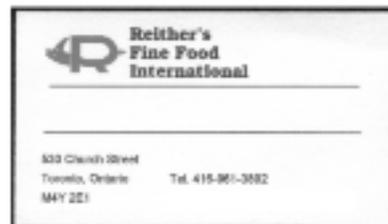
Magnificent 7 by Elmer Bernstein

Sometimes I hear the Dreamy Whitethroat by Paul McIntyre

Romeo and Juliet Suite no 2, Op. 64b: Montagues and Capulets by Sergei Prokofiev

Pictures at an Exhibition (Great Gate of Kiev) Modest Mussorgsky, orchestrated by Maurice Ravel

Marietta's Song from Die Tote Stadt (The Dead City - 1920) by Erich Korngold
 • Jennifer Rasor, soprano



Reel Music

Magnificent Seven - Elmer Bernstein

Trish Tervit, violin

This classic soundtrack originated from the 1960 Western film masterpiece, The Magnificent Seven. The recognizable score, by Elmer Bernstein, is a robust mix of Mexican folk motifs and sly classical genius. Nominated for an Academy Award in 1961, the music rose to the status of American cultural icon, particularly because of its use in commercials for Marlboro cigarettes.

Raider's March - John Williams

Katya Diakow, violin

With its triumphant attitude symbolic of action and adventure, Raiders March is regarded as one of the most iconic American movie themes.

As the first installment in the Indiana Jones franchise, Raiders of the Lost Ark was directed by Steven Spielberg, produced by George Lucas, and starred Harrison Ford. It was the top grossing film of 1981 and enjoyed considerable success from audiences and critics. Composed and conducted by John Williams, Raiders March was performed by the London Symphony Orchestra for the movie.

Though Williams originally wrote two different versions for Indy's heroic theme, Spielberg insisted both were used together. Although the score received an Oscar nomination for Best Original Score, it lost to Vangelis' Chariots of Fire.



Our winter concert features two compositions by Mendelssohn: one of them, the Hebrides Overture, is one of the most popular of his orchestral compositions; the other, the Reformation Symphony, although a less known work, is nonetheless full of inspired and charming music.

In 1829 Mendelssohn made his first visit to England; he was met with great success and affection, and so began a love affair with this country, to which he returned nine more times, to increasing acclaim. During this first visit in 1829, Mendelssohn - an avid traveller - undertook a walking trip to Scotland, which left an indelible impression in him and inspired two of his most popular works: the Scottish Symphony (Symphony No. 3 in A minor) and the Hebrides Overture .

The Hebrides Overture, subtitled Fingal's Cave is inspired by the boat trip Mendelssohn made to a basalt grotto called Fingal's Cave on the island of Staffa in the Hebrides. Such was the impression it made on him, that on the same evening he sent a musical sketch in a letter to his sister Fanny, back in Berlin.

The music, though labelled as an overture, is intended to be a stand-alone work. It does not tell a story and is therefore not programmatic; instead, the piece depicts a mood and "sets a scene", one of the first such musical pieces to do so.

Mendelssohn wrote the Reformation Symphony in 1830 for the 300th anniversary of the "Augsburg Confession" - the central document of the Reformation - hoping to perform it during the Berlin celebrations of the event. It is not without irony that Mendelssohn, who was born Jewish and was baptized in the Lutheran faith at age 8, should write a work that celebrates one of the most important Christian denominations. But then, it was not the first of such ironies in Mendelssohn's life: it was him, who together with his friend, the actor Eduard Devrient, revived Bach's "St. Matthew's Passion" 10 years earlier, in 1820, thus starting a Bach revival. The irony wasn't lost on Mendelssohn himself: after convincing his teacher, Carl Zelter, to back the project, he exclaimed to Devrient in one of the few references Mendelssohn made to his origins, "To think that it took an actor and a Jew-boy to revive the greatest Christian music for the world".

Sadly for Mendelssohn, his Jewish origin was neither forgotten nor forgiven, and the commission to write music for the Berlin festival commemorating the "Augsburg Confession" went to Eduard Grell, a now completely forgotten mediocrity. Mendelssohn tried to have the symphony performed during the Leipzig festivities, but they had to be cancelled due to riotous opposition to the celebrations. A further attempt was made in Paris in 1832; during the rehearsals, however, the orchestra complained that the work was "too learned, containing too much fugato, too little melody", so the performance was cancelled. The first performance took finally place later the same year in Berlin, under the composer's own direction, but met only with luke-warm reception. The symphony was eventually published and well received, but only after the composer's death in 1847.

A special thanks to
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25 Years of Counterpoint

Bill McQueen, clarinet



Early Counterpoint logo (1986).

Now in its 25th year, Counterpoint Community Orchestra arrived on the scene in 1984/5 and joined an upsurge of Lesbian and Gay people in Toronto, in Canada, and internationally, seeking to express themselves with dignity through "Gay Pride." Among their millions, Gay Pride came as response to the spectre of HIV/AIDS, and many local, national and international struggles ensued against discrimination, in some cases against violence, and for human and citizen rights. So, Counterpoint, often with the support of the Lesbian & Gay Community Appeal, moved out to create safe spaces for people, and to help members of the Toronto Lesbian and Gay community grow and flourish. The CCO had become the first secular Lesbian and Gay Orchestra in Canada and in the world.



Joe Lauzon.

At the time of our founding, we were a resilient group of about 14 persons, guided by such determined leaders as Joseph D. M. Lauzon, a skilled computer programmer, and who made many artistic contributions to our survival as a community organization. In addition to being a virtuoso clarinet player, often as not, he designed our concert programme booklets, and came up with catchy themes for our performances, too. He designed a t-shirt which became quite popular because of the slogan emblazoned across it, "Coming Out of Haydn". With a violin piercing



through a pink triangle, the t-shirt design expressed our desire for Pride in ourselves and for our just human rights. Joe passed away some years ago, as did other founding members. Still, Joe's enthusiasm for the Spirit of Music, the Gay Community and a genuine caring for people won't be forgotten.

The CCO sought to hold at least one benefit concert in our community each season. At our October 25, 1986 concert "SoirAid. An evening of Music & Song" we gave the concert proceeds to the AIDS Committee of Toronto (ACT) to support increasing "public awareness regarding the prevention of AIDS, as well as to provide support and counselling to people affected by AIDS...." Arias by Bach, Handel, Mozart, and Verdi were heard, along with compositions by Purcell, Tchaikovsky and original works written for the Orchestra. The words to "No More Fear" were printed in the programme. "No More Fear" was "a gay anthem from the Toronto musical revue 'Fruit Cocktail 85'". The words reflected the members desire for a safe and peaceful world in which to live.



In the fall of 1987 we sought to help raise funds for the building of Casey House Hospice, a now well-established community respite care centre. In a press release at the time, we said: "Counterpoint is proud of the unique contribution it is able to make to the gay community by providing this opportunity for lesbians and gay men to show their support for important projects such as the Casey House Hospice."

On November 28, 1987, "SerenAid for Casey", was held in the 519 Church Street Community Centre Auditorium and raised \$868.14. The concert featured a Mozart Symphony, excerpts from Warlock's Capriole Suite, and works by Beethoven, Elgar and others. Counterpoint brought together singers from the Canadian Opera Company Chorus and Ensemble in Mozart's motet "Exsultate, Jubilate" and other vocal works.

In the final newsletter of our 25 anniversary season, and on the occasion of our birthday, we look at the amazing musical growth of our Orchestra during the last decade.

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Sometimes I hear the
Dreamy Whitethroat - Paul McIntyre

Terry Kowalczyk, music director

In our March concert we perform our second composition by Canadian Composer Paul MacIntyre. He was born in Peterborough, Ontario in 1931.

The title is a quote from the sonnet "Solitude", by Archibald Lampman (1861-1895). This piece may be perhaps best described as a commentary between 'nature and civilization'.

The WHITETHROAT is a sparrow common to North American woodlands such as Algonquin park an area a place dear to my heart for it's beauty and solitude and as Mr. McIntyre calls "God's Country". The song of the Whitethroat in 'birder's language' is "Sweet, sweet Canada".

The inspiration is felt immediately in the serenity of the first section of the work started by lower strings with a horn solo followed by the oboe and flute - morning dawn that is soon broken by the sound of human progress, as builders get up to hammer away in order to finish new cottages prior to the start of the summer rental season. The hammer blows and building is depicted in the second section of the work in the percussion instruments. The song may be interrupted by rain squalls or human 'progress', but it always remains. The piece ends as serenely as it started with two quiet chirps from the wood-winds in the final bar.



The Dead City: Marietta's Song - Erich Korngold
Jennifer Rasor, guest soprano

Trish Tervit, violin



"The Dead City" is an opera in three acts, based on a short novel by Georges Rodenbach. The work was later banned by the Nazi régime because of Korngold's Jewish ancestry and following the Second World War it was not performed. Recently it has had revivals, among others in Bonn, the San Francisco Opera and at the Vienna State Opera. Korngold's score shows influence both from Richard Strauss and Giacomo Puccini.

"Marietta's lied", scored as a duet for tenor and soprano, in our concert is presented as a soprano aria. Marietta's is a demanding role for high tessitura of the Empress in Strauss' Die Frau ohne Schatten.



Our guest soprano soloist is Jennifer Rasor. Ms. Rasor is an alumnist of L'Opéra de Montréal's Atelier Lyrique and has graced many operatic stages with acclaim in Canada and Europe. Locally, she has performed at Mooredale Concerts and sung with Atelier S, which has collaborated with Counterpoint in previous concerts. She has completed a Master of Music degree in Voice Performance at the University of Toronto.



In the orchestral suites from the ballet *Romeo and Juliet*, Sergei Prokofiev engulfs the tragic young lovers with some of his most lyrical and colourful music. Though the work grew to become one of the composer's biggest successes, its creation was long and difficult.

cannot." Eventually choreographers found a way to express the tragic ending and the musical score was adjusted.

Music from the ballet was later extracted by Prokofiev to form three suites for orchestra. The *Montagues and Capulets* suite forms a dark and atmospheric piece. Today, this movement is widely used as a soundtrack for dramas, documentaries and commercials as a signature tune evocative of the Soviet era.

Prokofiev returned to the Soviet Union in 1935, after living in the U.S. and Paris for several years. In the early stages of composing, Prokofiev's attitude toward classical art changed to reflect the official Soviet policy towards music. Audiences at the time lost their taste for lightweight sensational works; so many artists gave up on experimentation to avoid controversy.

Prokofiev heightens the dramatic tension of the characters by developing his musical themes to balance the light-hearted festivities with the looming tragedy of the plot. His work shows extraordinary integrity, especially given the pressure he faced in having to express government-ordered "socialist realism" in all artistic works.

Before the first performance of the ballet, there were many fights between Prokofiev and the choreographer. The dancers failed to understand the music and, in a last-ditch effort to avoid disaster, the orchestra tried canceling the show. Taking a line from Shakespeare's play, the theatre world reacted by saying, "There is no tale of greater woe than Prokofiev's music for *Romeo*."

Although Prokofiev was greatly honoured by his country, he was officially censured for "excessive formalism" in 1948 as part of Stalin's crackdown on Soviet composers. A few years later, Prokofiev died from a brain hemorrhage at the age of 61 – on the same day as Joseph Stalin. The mourning of Stalin's death made it impossible to have a proper funeral service for the composer. Instead, paper flowers and a taped recording of the funeral march from *Romeo and Juliet* was played, as all real flowers and musicians were reserved for Stalin's funeral. Prokofiev's two sons dedicated a large part of their lives to the promotion of their father's life and work.

Contrary to the Shakespearean script, the original ballet version of *Romeo and Juliet* had a happy ending. In his autobiography, Prokofiev commented on the huge ruckus caused by the altered finale. "In the last act *Romeo* arrives a minute earlier, finds *Juliet* alive and everything ends well. The reasons for this bit of barbarism were purely choreographic: living people can dance, the dying

Roy Dean Design



In honour of and in celebration of Counterpoint Community Orchestra 25th season, jewellery designer Roy Dean of Roy Dean Design has exclusively created icon pins for the entire orchestra.

This year has brought a great honour to Roy Dean Design. The Canadian Aids Society in Ottawa has been looking to put a symbol to their new fundraising efforts. They have chosen Roy Dean to create and manufacture the new stylized Maple Leaf Ribbon icon as their registered trademark. Look for this new symbol in the future and help support The Canadian Aids Society by purchasing a lapel pin.

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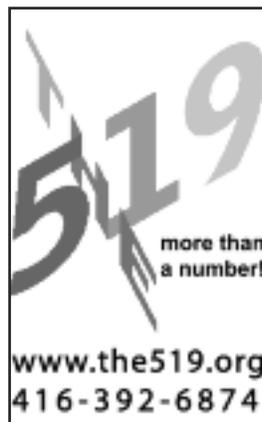
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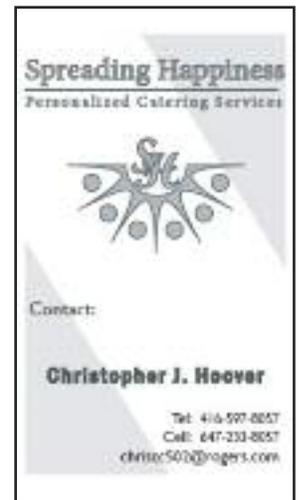
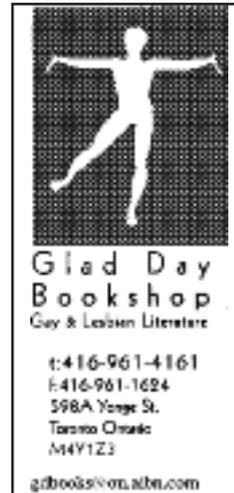
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