



VIVRE LA MUSIQUE - LET'S MAKE MUSIC

**TORONTO REGION NEWSLETTER**

September 2020

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## **IN THE SPOTLIGHT:** **MUSIC IN TIMES OF TROUBLE**

*Submitted by Sheila M. MacRae*

‘Music instills clarity and dignity. I have a responsibility to pass that on.’ Joyce Di Donato

Based on the fact that there are no in-person concerts and so much music is available virtually, we might suspect that music performance has undergone, or is undergoing, a shift in this troubled time of the COVID-19 pandemic. But why, and how has that come about?

Music can be powerful in different ways. It can give voice to, and reflect, the times. This is nothing new. Haydn’s *Mass in Time of War*, Hoboken XX/9, was composed in August 1796, when Austria was mobilising for conflict. She was losing the war which had broken out in Europe following the French Revolution and was terrified she would be invaded. Reflecting the troubled mood of his time, Haydn integrated references to battle in two of the mass’ movements, the Benedictus and Agnus Dei.

Numerous examples in the twentieth century reflect periods of chaos through which mankind has passed in the past century - among them Ralph Vaughan Williams’ 1936 work *Dona Nobis Pacem*; Jenkins’ *The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace*; Bernstein’s *MASS* (convincingly performed for the opening of the Kennedy Center, 1981); Forrest’s *Requiem for the Living* (completed 2013); and R. Murray Schaeffer’s *Apocalypse*, commissioned by the CBC in 1976, premiered in London, Ontario, in 1980, and performed at Toronto’s Luminato Festival in June, 2015. All these works arguably help retain a sense of human dignity and maintain social cohesion in times of trouble.

Let us consider other ways in which music plays an important role in times of trouble. It can maintain our sense of humanity and dignity and has the potential to bring people together in spirit as they share a common experience. It helps deal with great difficulties, as well as the emotions to which those difficulties give rise. Music provides access to the emotions. Some forms of music give comfort, creating calm and

peace. (The simplest example is the lullaby - a universal example whose purpose is to soothe, to rock the child to sleep.) The objective of the great requiem masses is also to bring comfort, to provide peace and hope in the face of death. Other emotions can be accessed through music – the songs which are our national anthems cause a sense of patriotism; martial music instills courage in battle. One thinks of Beethoven’s *Fifth Symphony*, whose famous rhythmic motif became a rallying cry in Britain during the Second World War. Many examples show that music allows people to access feelings and deal with a whole range of complex emotions.

A pandemic such as COVID-19, which entails in addition massive economic distress, superimposed upon which is a renewed focus on systemic inequality, is a perfect storm during which music can play an important role. It helps people access their sorrow. People who have lost loved ones need to grieve but may not yet have been able to do so. Individuals may be experiencing a sense of isolation resulting from separation from family or friends during a time when sharing would be therapeutic. There is a lot of anxiety, stress of all kinds: people wonder whether they will regain what they had before, fear the future, fear loss of income and loss of a job or home; some may not know how they will survive. Decisions that result in anxiety have to be made - going back to work when it is not safe, sending children back to school while fearing for their well-being. All these factors are exacerbated by confusion caused by inconsistent government responses and directions, and conflicting information on social media and other platforms. Fatigue is a factor for families dealing with extra pressures such as the care of older relatives or children, and especially for first responders and front-line workers.

Music not only helps people to deal with these situations and the emotions to which they give rise, but can also provide a sense of community, a sense that we are all in this together.

Professional artists and musicians were among the first and the hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, having lost all or most of their opportunities to earn through their performances because venues suddenly went black.

The flip side of being an artist, however, is that a creative individual may come up with a creative solution. As Miles Davis said, “If anybody wants to be creative, they have to be about change”. Great artists have invariably continued to be creative, no matter the difficulty of times in which they worked: the arts cannot stop for social or health crises. During and after the worst outbreaks of his lifetime, Shakespeare, himself born during an epidemic, wrote some of his greatest works, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Coriolanus* and *Timon of Athens* during a plague<sup>1</sup>. Camus captured the idea of a pandemic in *The Plague*. The work (*La Peste*, published in 1947), relates the story of a plague that swept through the Algerian city of Oran.

Sometimes the troubles musicians have faced have been social and political, rather than medical: great Russian musicians Stravinsky and Shostakovich, as well as other creative artists, continued working notwithstanding devastating wars and the strictures imposed on intellectuals by the Stalinist regime. Not only did creative artists not stop for health, social or political problems, some continued to work, moved by a sense of social responsibility, a sense that it was part of their role as artists. There has been a generalized sense in the arts that “we can contribute in our way during this pandemic” and many have continued to write and perform notwithstanding the problems they faced, by means of alternative methods.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.wbur.org/hereandnow/2020/04/06/shakespeare-plague-coronavirus>

One of these methods is the virtual performance. While the concept of the virtual performance is not new (the inception of Eric Whitacre's first virtual choir, for example, was in 2009), what has been truly innovative has been the explosion of virtual performances via Zoom or other platforms. The development, as a function of the pandemic, of what has become a new art form - virtual performance - has allowed artists across all musical genres either to earn an income or to make a social contribution (such as speaking out against racial injustice or simply helping other people by means of their music), or both, from their homes – their kitchens, living rooms or verandahs.

Virtual performances by solo musicians are numerous. An early proponent was Yo Yo Ma, who started a trend with his virtuoso performances of the Bach Cello Suites on his platform "Songs of Comfort"<sup>2</sup>. Many musicians, including in the US, and highlighted on PBS, added virtual performances from their homes<sup>3</sup>.

A popular singer who has "gone virtual" is five-time Grammy-winner Mary Chapin Carpenter who has sold 15 million records and was scheduled to spend the summer touring and releasing a new album. But when the pandemic hit, she shifted to "Songs from Home" online, attracting a huge following<sup>4</sup>.

Web-based "venues" have provided visibility and space for musicians to perform either in small groups or solo. One example is "Baroque on Beaver"<sup>5</sup>. Toronto's Royal Conservatory participates<sup>6</sup>. Audience members in these venues are usually requested to make a donation.

Orchestras and Opera companies have been quick to provide the listening public with music, in certain cases *gratis*, in others with a request for a donation. Members of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra performed virtually from their homes to lift the spirits of people in isolation. They performed the final three sections of the suite from Aaron Copland's *Appalachian Spring*. Jeffrey Beecher, the TSO's principal double bass player who put the whole thing together, spoke to CBC's "Here and Now". He said it was something the musicians could do to give back to the community in this time of high anxiety<sup>7</sup>.

The Berlin Philharmonic launched its Digital Concert Hall in 2008<sup>8</sup>. At the beginning of the pandemic the orchestra began streaming soloist performances with commentator and without audience as well as recorded concerts from previous years, free of charge.

Metropolitan opera performances have been streamed continually every night<sup>9</sup>. Audiences world-wide have been able to watch stunning works such as Philip Glass' opera *Akhmaten* either free or with a donation.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rrBOKHfvNSY>.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZGagNhWoWSw>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZcFBfYjMLs4>,

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.baroqueonbeaver.org/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.rcmusic.com/performance/live-from-koerner-hall-concert-livestream>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5rzZ2F18MwI>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.digitalconcerthall.com/en/concerts>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.metopera.org/user-information/nightly-met-opera-streams/>

Musicians in Canada have been active. The CBC has been listing concerts performed by Canadian musicians in their homes<sup>10</sup>.

None of this would have been possible without the evolution in technology, including virtual streaming and track mixing, as well as wide-spread public access to virtual platforms. Motivating factors for the musicians have been economic, and/or a sense of social responsibility. Above all, there is the recognition that music brings a sense of dignity and comfort and a sense of shared humanity.

In summary, during the pandemic, many musicians and musical organizations have continued to perform, and those who have been able to have taken full advantage of available technologies. Although we don't yet know the long term effects, there is little doubt that the times through which we are living have already caused a seismic shift for performers and audiences, which may very well be a point of no return in years to come.



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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.cbc.ca/music/an-up-to-date-list-of-canadian-live-streams-to-watch-during-covid-19-1.5500113>

# **OF NOTE:**

## **CAMMAC TORONTO REGION PROGRAMMING 2020 – 2021**

*Submitted by Cristina Oke*

There are currently no readings confirmed in the Toronto region for Fall 2020. This decision is based on the various guidelines and directives which CAMMAC regions must follow.

### **Risk factors**

There is some controversy at this time about risk factors associated with playing and singing in groups. CAMMAC National's Board have highlighted the risk during the COVID-19 pandemic from singing and playing (See below, Regarding Event Planning for the 2020-2021 Season). On the other hand, certain studies claim to demonstrate that these activities involve little or no risk.

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/covid-wkwsf/2020/07/what-we-know-transmission-risks-singing-wind-instruments.pdf?la=en>

[https://www.whatsonstage.com/london-theatre/news/singing-talking-covid-study-spread\\_52241.html](https://www.whatsonstage.com/london-theatre/news/singing-talking-covid-study-spread_52241.html)

<https://www.thestrad.com/news/study-shows-no-increased-risk-to-orchestral-musicians-from-concerts/10687.article>

Notwithstanding different assessments, it is unlikely CAMMAC's in-person activities will be allowed for some period of time because of the constraints to which the National and Regional organizations are subject, which include provincial and municipal guidelines, the directives governing the Church in which we meet for Toronto Region, and CAMMAC's insurance requirements,

### **Insurance Requirements**

CAMMAC's insurance company requires that CAMMAC must abide by the public health requirements of the region in which activities are held and be transparent about how those requirements are being met.

### **Rental Facilities**

If space for readings is rented in an Anglican Church in Toronto, CAMMAC Toronto Region must follow the directives of the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario and the Anglican Diocese of Toronto, as well as the Church itself.

### **CAMMAC National Programs**

CAMMAC National is providing a program of online conferences, lectures and lessons which will continue into the fall and perhaps much longer, in which all CAMMAC members are invited to participate. Information about these activities is available at this link:

<https://CAMMAC.ca/en/2020-summer-music-camp-virtual-edition/> .

Continuing updates will be provided on the CAMMAC National website.

## **CAMMAC Membership Fees**

All those who participate in readings are encouraged to become members of CAMMAC. Benefits include receiving information on CAMMAC activities in your region; ability to borrow music from the music library of more than 11,000 works; participation in sight-readings and workshops; participation in music programs at the CAMMAC Music Centre; and receipt of CAMMAC newsletters.

Individual Membership for individuals between 25 and 59 years old is \$40.24.

Individual Membership for individuals 24 and younger, and those 60 and older is \$34.49.

Family Membership is \$63.24.

Memberships and donations to CAMMAC may be purchased online at <https://cammac.ca/en/>.

**Update on 2020 – 2021 Readings** A further update will be provided in the October newsletter.

For further information the Message to CAMMAC Regions from the Board of Directors “Regarding Event Planning for the 2020-2021 Season” is included below so the membership will understand constraints faced by the Management Committee in restarting.

*As you may know by now, the CAMMAC Board of Directors has made the difficult, but necessary, decision to cancel the usual 7-week summer program at the Music Centre in Harrington, Quebec.*

*A key part of the decision making involved assessing under what conditions, and with what precautions, it would be possible to hold in-person activities. The same type of assessment needs to be applied to planning of regional activities for the coming 2020-2021 season.*

*It is fairly clear from scientific studies, and according to public health directives, that large gatherings will not be possible for the foreseeable future, and that both singing and playing instruments involving air expelled from the mouth are activities which involve a high degree of risk and will not be allowed in groups for some time to come, possibly a year or even more.*

*Consultation with CAMMAC’s insurance company has confirmed that CAMMAC must abide by the public health requirements at any given point in time, and be transparent about how our planning satisfies those requirements. If we do so, then our insurance coverage will continue; failure to do so would result in the cancellation of our policy.*

*The work done by the Executive Director of CAMMAC has included (and will continue to include) a comprehensive assessment of how to abide by the public health requirements which have been laid out by the Quebec provincial government, including the specific situation in the municipality in which the Music Centre operates. The regions are in different municipalities and two provincial jurisdictions, and public health directives are not exactly the same in each of those areas.*

*Also, the requirements have changed since the beginning of the pandemic and are quite likely to continue to change over time. The Regional Management Committee in each region is, therefore, requested to familiarize itself with the requirements for their specific location, so that it can be demonstrated to our insurance company that their region is in compliance.*

*Included in the Appendix to this memo is a list of some of the sources for that information. Also attached to this memo is a form in which to record the requested information. This is so that the insurance company will have a consistent presentation of the information on which to base their assessments. An online version of the form is being prepared to mirror the form and will be made available to the regions shortly.*

*Regions must show that each event that they are proposing is consistent with the stated requirements. Descriptions of each planned event and how the region will abide by the latest public health and government requirements are to be submitted to Cynthia Bonenfant-Lingat, Executive Director of CAMMAC by the Regional Representative to the National Board. The Executive Director will then coordinate with the insurance company to have the plan reviewed.*

*If the insurance company's assessment is positive, then the Regional Management Committee will be able to undertake the detailed planning for, and hold, that event; if their assessment is that the proposed plan for an event does not satisfy the requirements for a safe undertaking, then the RMC will either have to cancel or postpone that event until it can satisfy the requirements, or change the proposed approach to address any shortcomings identified by our insurers.*

*Having said all of that, the Regional Management Committees should be aware that work has begun at the national level to determine what type of events and experiences can be offered in lieu of the on-site summer program at the Music Centre. While these options are not by any means a complete replacement for the in-person events which the regions typically plan, they could provide an opportunity for the regions to promote those events to their members, thus keeping CAMMAC alive in the region in lieu of the more usual events.*

*If you have any questions regarding this message or how it applies to your region, please raise them with your Regional Representative to the Board:*

- *Margaret Sankey for Montreal,*
- *David Stitt for Ottawa-Gatineau, or*
- *Sheila MacRae for Toronto.*

*Appendix:*

*Here are some sources of information, which may prove useful in assessing how the event plan can satisfy public health and government directives:*

- *Quebec Public Health: <https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/answers-questions-coronavirus-covid19/>*
- *Montreal Public Health: <https://santemontreal.qc.ca/en/public/coronavirus-covid-19/>*
- *Gatineau Public Health:*

*[https://www.gatineau.ca/portail/default.aspx?c=enCA&p=avis\\_importants\\_alertes\\_urgences/maladie\\_coronavirus\\_covid\\_19](https://www.gatineau.ca/portail/default.aspx?c=enCA&p=avis_importants_alertes_urgences/maladie_coronavirus_covid_19)*

• *Ontario Public Health:*

[http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/dir\\_mem\\_res.aspx](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/dir_mem_res.aspx)

• *Ottawa Public Health:*

<https://www.ottawapublichealth.ca/en/publichealth-topics/novel-coronavirus.aspx>

*Toronto Public Health:* <https://www.toronto.ca/home/covid-19/covid-19-what-you-shoulddo/covid-19-orders-directives-by-laws/>

## **FEATURE**

### **Member contributions**

#### **Andrea Rush**

Music has never been as important and fulfilling. I have been taking lessons online with two outstanding teachers: Daniel Domb (cello) and Michael Berkovsky (piano), on Zoom and Skype. In addition, Roland Wilk (Google Groups) has so generously shared ideas on playing chamber music remotely, including identifying software that is free - Jamulus. Berklee online courses have been fantastic. Taking advantage of the summer, I accompanied an excellent bass player in my garage. New meaning to “garage band” - we both played at diagonally opposite locations with the doors open wearing masks. Lots of fun!

#### **Barbara Adams**

Throughout the COVID-19 restrictions, I decided my days needed structure. So brisk walks to explore various parts of my neighbourhood have become part of my daily routine. I have not played the piano for several years due to a wrist injury. I felt, now that I had lots of time, I could return to the keyboard and gradually build up muscle strength. This turned out to be a good strategy and I've enjoyed reviewing "old" music and learning some new pieces. I sing with Amadeus Choir and weekly Zoom sessions enabled us to continue with some rehearsal and social times into the summer. In August, I canoed with friends for a few days in Algonquin Park...such a treat, not only to spend quality time with friends, but to enjoy such beautiful nature and hear the loons' calls. I look forward to making more music on my own at the piano and, hopefully not too far into the future, with friends at choir and at CAMMAC events.

#### **Sheila MacRae**

I was lucky enough to have signed up for ten weeks of group and individual lessons with Jennet Ingle (Indiana) right before the pandemic struck. These lessons have been very motivating. Only recently did I begin to play again in a trio, physically distanced: it's been a joy to play again with others. I have enjoyed some of the CAMMAC National virtual offerings – in particular, the *History of Jazz*, and *Four Hundred Years of Opera*. I would recommend these programs (if offered again) as well as other virtual offerings, private lessons, and social events, which have been successful and are likely to continue through the year. But I'm the first to admit that it will be great to get together again with CAMMAC friends – in person!!!

# **CAMMAC TORONTO REGION** **NOTICES**

## **INSTRUMENTS FOR SALE:**

4/4 Antique Cello, made in Saxony; bow and case; beautiful deep, rich sound.

4/4 Violin, pernambuco bow and case; made in West Germany; plays with a bold sound.  
Asking \$1,200.00

Mandolin (alto); Trinity College; and case; pristine condition. Asking \$1,100.00.

If interested, please contact Sarah Lapp

Email: [sbcello@hotmail.com](mailto:sbcello@hotmail.com)

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CONTACT THE NEWSLETTER EDITOR.  
SEE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE  
LAST PAGE OF THIS EDITION FOR CONTACT INFORMATION**

# **PLAYING AND SINGING OPPORTUNITIES**

**TEMPO 2019-2020**

## **Toronto Early Music Players Organization**

"The Toronto Early Music Players Organization (TEMPO) holds nine Sunday afternoon meetings between September and May. We play under the guidance of a professional coach and welcome intermediate and advanced recorder and viol players. Due to restrictions on gatherings because of Covid-19, all the sessions for 2020-2021 will be held online. Please refer to our website for details on how to participate: <http://tempotoronto.net>."

# **CONCERT NOTICES AND UPCOMING EVENTS**

**(all groups listing an event must include at least one CAMMAC member; only events received by the Editor by the Newsletter Deadline will be published )**

*The Newsletter welcomes short announcements in Playing Opportunities and Concert Notices from all CAMMAC members. Please send details to the Editor by next Newsletter deadline.*

**Next CAMMAC Newsletter deadline  
No newsletter materials including Playing Opportunities or Concert Notices  
will be accepted after September 15, 2020**

## **ADVERTISING RATES**

Full page	\$90 (max. 6 ½ W x 7 ½ H)
Half page	\$50 (max. 6 ½ "W x 4 5/8" H)
Quarter page	\$30 (max. 3 ½" W x 4 5/8" H)

Advertising is subject to space availability. Neither publication nor positioning is guaranteed

## CAMMAC TORONTO REGION MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 2020 – 2021

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\*Toronto Region Representative to the CAMMAC Board of Directors