



VIVRE LA MUSIQUE - LET'S MAKE MUSIC

TORONTO REGION NEWSLETTER

October 2020

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IN THE SPOTLIGHT:
MUSIC IN TIMES OF TROUBLE (2)
STEPHANIE MARTIN

Submitted by Andrea Manuel



Stephanie Martin

“A new normal... “We’re in this together” ... “It’s unprecedented” ...: just a few typical phrases we’ve either said or heard these past few months due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. And indeed, these are strange and unprecedented times. There were no templates to follow, no guidebooks to direct our next steps. Uncertainty and doubt became unwelcome guests in our families, our homes, and our lives. And for musicians: when audiences were no longer, when singing/performing together was no longer safe, we’ve had to course-correct.

However, in the past few months, we have seen the development and emergence of new approaches and creative ways to stay connected to music. In a way, the pandemic became the impetus for expanding the musical experience in ways we may not have naturally conceived. Earlier this year I saw the Canadian opera “Llandovery Castle” concerning nurses in the First World War, music by Stephanie Martin, libretto by Paul Ciufu. Inspired by the common thread of ‘troubled times’ I reached out to Stephanie to further inquire on some aspects of this theme.

1. On music:

What role do you see music having in times of trouble and chaos? What types of music are particularly impactful? (Please feel free to reference any of your works you consider to be so, and why)

When COVID-19 paralyzed our communities, many musicians felt compelled to reach out with something creative, and many of us quickly adapted to new technology that allowed us to make virtual choir videos. (I’m sure you’ve seen the results of these online ventures. If you’ve participated in one, you know that you really sing alone, and only after clever editing does everyone’s part come together.) Since our Earth Day concert in April was cancelled, my women’s ensemble ‘Schola Magdalena’ wanted to send out a virtual message, and what came to mind was the old protest song ‘We shall overcome’ sung widely during civil rights protests in the 1960s. We thought it was an appropriate response to COVID isolation, but during the following months, it became so much more poignant, as we witnessed the crisis of violence in our policing institutions, and the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement. Little did we know that shift in meaning would happen over the following 6 months.

Here’s a link to the song:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=68nun8IAwCA>

I suppose in times of trouble we have to dig deeper and try harder to use our craft to address current issues and to take steps toward reconciliation. In June I was approached by the American organist and choral conductor Jason Abel to write a piece for his historic church in Alexandria, Virginia. It’s the church that George Washington attended. Since the Black Lives Matter movement required us to reconsider figures like George Washington, who claimed to embrace liberty and equality whilst upholding systemic racism and slavery, it was incumbent upon me to find the right text to address the weight of history in that parish. I was so fortunate to find the words of an 18th-century poet who actually met George

Washington and had written a poem dedicated to the pursuit of freedom. The poet also happened to be a woman, and an African American, Phillis Wheatley, who had been brought to America as an enslaved, 8-year-old child. This research journey, learning about her life and engaging with her text, was a glorious revelation; a rich outcome of these troubled times, and hopefully an opportunity to shine a tiny light on Phillis Wheatley's phenomenal life and wonderful poetry.

2. On the role of the artist:

Can crisis change the role of the artist, and if so, how?

COVID has made us hyper-aware that we don't thrive or even survive as individual artists, but we're part of a complex artistic ecosystem. We need each member of that matrix to be healthy in order to thrive. As a composer, I need conductors, artistic directors and organizations to commission works, and choirs and instrumentalists to rehearse them and bring them to performance. We need audiences to receive the works, and give the performances meaning. Otherwise, why compose? It's very difficult to create without the people who work to bring a piece to life. Writing without a purpose feels quite pointless. I've been very grateful for the conductors and musical organizations who continue to commission new works, support creativity, or sponsor competitions for young composers. It's essential to stay engaged in tough times.

3. On personal impact:

How do you see this crisis affecting artists on a personal level? Or perhaps for yourself, how has this affected or influenced you personally?

I don't like to be all doom and gloom. The COVID crisis has forced me to embrace the digital era. I have learned so much since March and I've come to appreciate the possibilities and openness of communicating, teaching, collaborating, problem solving, and meeting through online platforms. Thank goodness these digital tools were already in place, and we could make a fairly seamless transition to holding our York University classes online. Once we became fluent in the technology, we realised the potential of talking with people right across Canada and around the world in Zoom meetings. We'd never really fully exploited these capabilities before, and hopefully it will open up a whole new era of communication and collaboration.

4. Does a serious crisis such as the Covid-19 crisis change attitudes of society to art/music/the artist? How? Why?

Time will tell. I am sure many people now have a much keener appreciation for music and its power to bring people together. There's nothing like losing something to make you appreciate what you had.

I do worry about the young folks who are missing the hands on 'real' experience of music-making. What effect will this have on our 10-year-olds in the future - not being able to sing together, play in an ensemble, or dance holding hands in a circle. These simple things are fundamental social building blocks, not just for future musicians, but for every human. I feel like we should be prepared to invest more heavily in music for children and young people once this global pandemic subsides.

My website:

www.stephaniemartinmusic.com

Llandovery Castle

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zV3RDHrgkBA>



OF NOTE
GESUALDO SIX



Gesualdo Six

Workshop and concert with a Thanksgiving theme.

NOTE: For their first Canadian Tour and their only appearance in Quebec, The Gesualdo Six performed at CAMMAC in 2018. The group was supposed to come again in the summer of 2020. They have agreed to come in 2021.

“Ingeniously programmed and impeccably delivered, with that undefinable excitement that comes from a group of musicians working absolutely as one.” – Gramophone (2020)

The Gesualdo Six is a vocal consort comprised of some of the UK’s finest young consort singers, directed by Owain Park. Formed in March 2014 for a performance of Gesualdo’s Tenebrae Responsories for Maundy Thursday in the chapel of Trinity College, Cambridge, the group went on to give over 150 performances around the United Kingdom and abroad in its first five years. During this time, The Gesualdo Six further strengthened a passion for ensemble singing that for many of them stemmed from formative years as choristers in churches and cathedrals around the country. The Gesualdo Six regularly performs at festivals around Europe, and will tour Australia, Canada, Mexico and the USA in 2020. The ensemble often incorporates educational work into its activities, holding workshops for choirs and composers and giving concerts alongside local performers. The Gesualdo Six has curated two Composition Competitions, with the 2019 edition attracting entries from over three hundred composers around the world.

The ensemble released their debut recording ‘English Motets’ on Hyperion Records in early 2018 to critical acclaim, followed by a festive album of seasonal favourites in late 2019, ‘Christmas’. The group’s latest recording is an album of compline-themed music titled ‘Fading’.

Link for the music for the Workshop:

<https://www.thegesualdosix.co.uk/?s=abendlied>

For other information about CAMMAC National’s Virtual Program please go to this link for current programs.

<https://cammac.ca/en/>

The link is updated regularly. Do not forget to renew your CAMMAC membership in October.

FEATURE

BEETHOVEN MASS IN C

Submitted by Cristina Oke

In 2020, the 250th anniversary of Beethoven's birth is being celebrated around the world. The Toronto Region of CAMMAC had scheduled a reading of his *Mass in C* on the 2019 - 2020 schedule. However, due to COVID-19, the reading was cancelled.

The *Mass in C*, Opus 68, is one of the three sacred pieces that Beethoven composed. The *Mass* was commissioned in 1807 by Prince Nicolaus Esterhazy II for the September celebration of the name day of his wife.

Between 1796 and 1802, Josef Haydn, Beethoven's former teacher, had composed six choral Masses for the name day of the Prince's wife. After Haydn's retirement, the Prince invited other prominent composers to write this *Mass*. Since he had never composed a *Mass*, Beethoven was hesitant about following in Haydn's footsteps.

The *Mass* has five movements: Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Benedictus, and Agnus Dei, and is scored for soprano, alto, tenor and bass soloists plus chorus. The orchestration is for 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, strings and organ. However, the form of the *Mass* was different from others of the time. Beethoven integrated the soloists with the choir, rather than having each vocal part sing separately.

The first performance of the *Mass* was conducted by Beethoven in a private performance on September 13, 1807 at the Esterhazy palace in Eisenstadt. Unfortunately, it was not well received. The rehearsals had been difficult, as Beethoven's hearing loss had affected his conducting. The Prince did not appreciate the new format of the *Mass*.

Beethoven never gave the Prince a copy of the score. Instead, when the *Mass* was published in 1812, it was dedicated to Prince Ferdinand Kinsky, a patron of Beethoven in Vienna.

Beethoven held deeply felt religious beliefs, and commented that he wanted the emphasis to not be on God or princes, but on the individual entering the church. In the *Mass in C*, he used the inherited classical model and added revolutionary, romantic, and deeply affected musical content.

Although the *Mass in C* has not achieved the success of the *Missa Solemnis*, Opus 123 (1823), it is considered by many to be an innovative work and a masterpiece of sacred music.

CAMMAC TORONTO REGION NOTICES

INSTRUMENTS FOR SALE:

4/4 Antique Cello, made in Saxony; bow and case; beautiful deep, rich sound.
\$2,500.00 cello kit

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

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

If interested, please contact Sarah Lapp
Email: sbcello7@gmail.com
Cell # 416 559-6565

Piano and Organ

The church I have gone to for over 40 years has disbanded and the building and the rest of its contents are going to be demolished October sometime.

We are selling an organ for \$400 (or best offer) and speakers that go with it. We also have a piano that is free. If anyone is interested, please contact me via my cell phone (416.505.8450) or email me at pjfell@rogers.com.

For pictures and information please contact

Pamella Fell
CBSO Violinist & Board Member
416.505.8450

Editor's Note: Some of the following instruments may now be gone.



TIME ON YOUR HANDS?

**DO YOU WANT TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE NEWSLETTER AS A WRITER
EDITOR OR PROOF-READER?
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 November 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

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