

Message from the President

As President of the Board of Directors of the Friends of the National Arts Centre Orchestra, I am delighted to present the first of four special anniversary editions of our newsletter, *Con Brio*. It is a great privilege for me to follow the Friends musical score that was envisaged by Evelyn Greenberg 50 years ago. Much dedication and talent has been generously provided by past and present Board members along with an enthusiastic orchestra of volunteers. We owe them all a huge debt of gratitude for keeping the spirit and work of Friends very much alive over the years. This is an exciting moment to reflect on our past and look forward to exciting opportunities as we continue to support the NACO, the Music Education Programs and young musicians in our community.

Albert V. Benoit, mvo, President, *Friends of the National Arts Centre Orchestra*



A Message from the President and CEO of the NAC

To all FNACO members,

Please accept my sincere congratulations for 50 years of “connecting music and people” through your support of the National Arts Centre Orchestra. All of us at the NAC are very grateful for the tremendous impact you have had on the NAC Orchestra and music education across Canada through volunteer work and fundraising activities.

As English composer Malcolm Arnold once said, “*Music is the social act of communication among people, a gesture of friendship, the strongest there is.*” Thank you so much for forging an enduring friendship with the NAC through your love of music.



I look forward to seeing you at the many performances and festivities that will be held during 2019 as we celebrate 50 remarkable years together.

Sincerely,

Christopher Deacon
President and CEO, *National Arts Centre*

Message from Alexander Shelley, Honorary Patron

Any arts organization lives from the support, passion and generosity of its patrons. And we here, at the NAC, are lucky to have some of the finest friends in the world. We, the musicians and I on stage, feel the warmth and energy of the audience every time we perform, and it helps us to bring every second of the music to life. We are thoroughly grateful for this support and would like to thank every single one of the Friends of the NAC Orchestra for all that they do to further the cause of music in the city, the region and the country. May we all continue to build on the wonderful foundation that has been laid in the first 50 years of the history of this institution and ensure that music is a vibrant part of our community. I wish you another great 50 years! Thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for all that you do and a very happy birthday.



Alexander Shelley

Music Director of the *National Arts Centre Orchestra*

Honorary Patron of the *Friends of the National Arts Centre Orchestra*

Message from former Honorary Patron, Jeanne d'Arc Sharp



In the happy years of my tenure as Honorary Patron, I saw up close the resourceful and thoughtful **Friends** giving freely their time and multi-talents to support the NAC Orchestra as well as young musicians. A light will shine bright on June 2nd, celebrating a 50-year continued commitment from the generous **Friends**.

Applause! Applause!

This light will remain bright in the future; I shall be cheering very loudly.

An extract from our Archives:

Did you know Southam Hall was originally called The Opera House?

Reflections from Past Presidents

Evelyn Greenberg, pianist and Founding President of the NACO Association, 1969-1972

There is no greater satisfaction in founding an organization to see it thriving 50 years later. The Friends deserve their own standing ovation for supporting our esteemed National Arts Centre Orchestra for five decades. We knew in 1969 that the NACO would bring glory to Canada and we are still witnessing this today. Bravo all!



Photo by Lois Siegel

Facts from the Archives:

In the Autumn of 1969, the founder of the NAC Orchestra, M. Jean-Marie Beaudet, asked Evelyn Greenberg, well-known Ottawa musician, to form a group of people to help sell subscription tickets and fill the hall for the first NAC concerts. The group worked hard and with great success. NACOA was launched and has not looked back since.

“ As the founder of the NACO Association, the Directors of the FNACO Board 2018/2019 extend our deep appreciation to Evelyn Greenberg for the ideas and motivation behind starting a volunteer association that not only supports the orchestra, but also plays a strong educational role in supporting musicians and youth that makes a significant contribution to the community and to the nation.

Albert V. Benoit, President of FNACO

Josie Finestone, President from 2003-2010

In 1995 I was lucky enough to travel with my husband, who had just been asked to be the tour Doctor for the NAC orchestra, on their three week tour of Europe. It was an outstanding experience and the beginning of my love affair with the musicians of NACO. When we returned, I asked



Josie Finestone passing the gavel to Jean-Guy Dumoulin, photo by Lois Siegel

Christopher Deacon, the orchestra's managing director and now CEO, what I could do if anything to assist them and the NAC. He mentioned the Friends of NACO and a fifteen year relationship was born, seven of which I served as President. It was the honor and thrill of a lifetime. We still maintain a close relationship with the musicians and management of the NAC and many wonderful friends who have over the years served as dedicated volunteers.

Jean-Guy Dumoulin, President from 2010-2012

I would like to congratulate Albert Benoit on his performance as President of FNACO. I find that we the members are being kept well informed about events and provided details on where our donations are being spent. I am pleased that President Benoit has brought new ideas to raise funds in support of the NAC orchestra and young musicians across Canada. The President has helped to integrate a very capable and enthusiastic volunteer Board that work on these activities. I think that the Board has achieved a great deal over the past year and I wish them continued success.

Extract from "Twenty Years of the NAC Orchestra Association" from the 1989 Calendar

Over the years NACOA has evolved into a support organization which carries out many functions. One of the most important and rewarding of these is its work for children in helping to create future audiences. A vital programme has been developed, and contributions are made on a regular basis to the Orchestra's Youth Programmes: "Adventures in Music", "Student Matinees" and "Musicians in the Schools." Recently, the Association has been investigating the production of a video which will make these programmes known to a wider audience.

The Early Days of Con Brio

By Maria Neil

In the early days of the National Arts Centre and its Orchestra, under the Leadership of Evelyn Greenberg, the musically delighted and inclined of Ottawa and Area formed the National Arts Centre Orchestra Association or NACOA. Various and varied were the programmes devised and maintained by those members. During our fiftieth year, in the next issues of Con Brio, some of those programmes and ventures will be recalled and described.



Photo by Lois Siegel

Con Brio was originally the newsletter, jointly, of the Orchestra and NACOA and in 1972 membership cost \$3.00 single or \$5.00 for a couple. The first few NACOA Con Brios in our Archives date from 1972, while other documents refer to dates before that. In an early edition, Michael Aze, Music Administrator, wrote of the Orchestra's high reputation being due to the "spade work of NACOA in the early years"

Gleaned from NACOA early newsletters

The earliest Con Brio we have is from 1972 when the group was called the National Arts Centre Orchestra Association and was deeply associated with the activities of the musicians. In this document, it noted the success of the Orchestra's third tour to the scientists in Deep River of Northern Ontario, then on to play on ice in Sudbury (cold feet as well as cold hands?) and on to the uranium mining centre in Elliot Lake.

As well as work to support the Orchestra, the documents contain the many delights of the activities of members: for instance, members of NACOA did considerable travelling together to concerts and on musical tours. From at least 1970, NACOA arranged "Soirées" for members ranging from a gathering on a boat; meeting Canadian composers; attending exhibitions of handicrafts by Orchestra wives; to hearing a presentation by Jane Fournier, CBC producer of Mostly Music. Programme Chairperson Lois Harper organized an evening at the Mexican Embassy to hear the Mexican pianist Guadalupe Parrondo. Another pleasant evening was spent with Robert Cram, NACO's principal flautist and Evelyn Greenberg pianist.

Share your stories with our members in upcoming editions of Con Brio by emailing them to Maria Neil at neilreyn1405@gmail.com

About the Friends of the NAC Orchestra

By Maria Neil

This is a community of music lovers who share our passion through social and cultural activities and by supporting the Orchestra's music education program. Join us today and spread the love for great music.

The Friends of the NAC Orchestra had its beginning in 1969 just after the founding of the National Arts Centre Orchestra. Through almost all of its history the organization has been known as the "National Arts Centre Orchestra Association or NACOA, but it was renamed in 2006.

The origin of the Friends was the request made by founding NAC Director, Hamilton Southam, to Ottawa resident and musician Evelyn Greenberg, to ensure that the first performance of the Orchestra was sold out. Indeed, it was sold out and the Friends evolved from that success to its present activities of:

- ♦ aiding the NAC Orchestra and the NAC Music Department (particularly, but not exclusively in its endeavours in music education) through the raising of funds as well as providing Friends volunteers;
- ♦ organizing music-related activities for Friends, members and their guests; and
- ♦ Fundraising.

The Friends is administered by a volunteer Board of Directors and is a community-based, registered charitable organization whose members volunteer their time and talents in support of the Orchestra. Membership is open to anyone interested in the Orchestra. Members enjoy regular mailings of "Con Brio" – the Friend's newsletter, special Embassy concerts, access to special rehearsals, the opportunity to sell CDs at concerts, and the opportunity to undertake volunteer effort on behalf of the Orchestra and the pleasure of supporting one of the world's finest orchestras.

From the beginning, the goals of Friends have been to support the Orchestra and to support and subsidize its music education programmes, and to work in close collaboration with the NAC Music Department. Friends has provided much varied practical support through the years. Fundraising projects not only raise money but also raise community awareness for both the Orchestra and the NAC.

In the past, volunteers organized galas, benefits, raffles, calendars, tours outside Ottawa to orchestral venues, the sale of music books, CDs and Silent Auctions. CBC Talent Festival competitors have been housed, the Canadian Orchestra Conference hosted and students in the Young Artists Programme have been ferried between university residences, the airports, train and bus depots and the NAC.

Friends has hosted the after-concert receptions for visiting artists, held informal parties for the Orchestra members and purchased musical instruments for young students living in remote Northern areas.

Friends have supported the Kiwanis Music Festival, Ottawa Youth Orchestra Academy, the Young String Performers Academy, MusicFest, Remix, and a special concert *The Man with the Violin* with Joshua Bell. Friends also support the National Arts Centre Summer Music Institute. The Friend's Award is given annually at the NACO Bursary Competition to a young musician aspiring to an orchestral career. Interest from a bequest from the estate of the late James Morton, founding principal clarinetist of the NAC Orchestra, has contributed to the award which totals over \$3,000.

FNACO is proud to support Orkidstra, the social development program that empowers children from underserved areas in Ottawa by teaching life skills through playing instruments and singing music together.

In 1999, Friends members and other parties donated funds for the acquisition of instruments for the Orchestra. In 2002 Friends presented the Zukerman Musical Instruments Foundation for the National Arts Centre Orchestra with \$105,000 to acquire a 1785 Gagliano violin for use by NACO musicians. The Foundation named this instrument the "NACOA GAGLIANO."

Through funding and volunteer effort, Friends aids the Orchestra's Music Education programmes designed to pique young people's curiosity with the many aspects of music performance and encourages a close, relaxed interaction between students and musicians. Friends organizes, funds and presents TuneTown pre-concert activities at the popular Family Adventures Series every season.

Friends was honoured to receive a substantial bequest from the estate of the late William Kirkpatrick, an Ottawa resident and long-time subscriber to the Orchestra. The interest from this fund facilitates innovative programming, such as works requiring enlarged wind sections, not otherwise available through the Orchestra's budget.

Above all, Friends members and Board of Directors are deeply committed to this world renowned Orchestra and believe that the Friends, through community outreach activities and direct support to the Orchestra, helps the NACO maintain and expand its profile in the cultural life of Ottawa and environs.

Join us today by becoming a member, renewing your membership, or gifting a membership by contacting Membership Secretary Madeleine Aubrey madarte@gmail.com or through our website friendsofnaco.ca

Reflections from Jim Burgess, our webmaster and a long time volunteer

When I finally joined *Friends* after many years as a subscriber to concert series, I realized I should have done it much sooner. Membership gave me many opportunities to learn more about the music, the operation of the orchestra and the NAC. It also introduced me to people with similar interests to mine and provided social events, such as *Music to Dine for*, where one could spend a pleasant evening with other members. In turn, as a volunteer, I'm helping *Friends* communicate with its membership.



Photo by Susi Cullison



Photo by Uwe Arens

Reflections from Aspiring Young Musicians Bryan and Silvie Cheng

While growing up in Ottawa, from the *Music to Dine For Series* to *Embassy Concerts*, FNACO provided wonderful opportunities and support to both of us over the years. Artists give hope to the world, and FNACO's work in nurturing young musicians is absolutely invaluable."

- Cheng² Duo (Bryan and Silvie Cheng).

Thank You!

Thank you to Maria Neil for her extensive archival research that has truly enriched this anniversary edition. And to all our collaborators who have contributed to this special edition of *Con Brio*! Lucie Dion, Christine McLaughlin, Kathleen McKillop, Jim Burgess, Melina Vacca-Pugsley, Yetta Riegel

Support the Friends

In our goals to support the Orchestra and Young Musicians please consider a donation to the [FNACO Legacy Fund](#)

FNACO Legacy Fund