

MAESTRO SHELLEY'S LETTER TO FNACO PRESIDENT MCLAUGHLIN

Dear Christine,

Thank you for your kind email and for the wonderfully uplifting (Summer, 2020) edition of Con Brio. It was such a pleasure to read the musings of my eloquent friends and colleagues during these extraordinary times and to be re-connected with our remarkable and dedicated FNACO community.

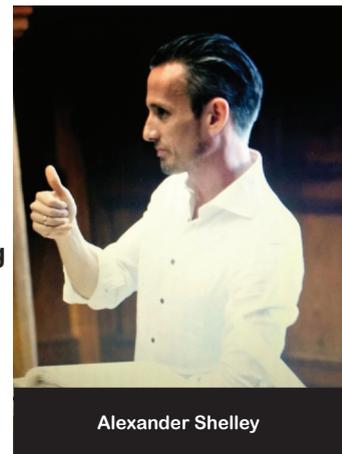
Will you please thank everyone involved in making it happen and send my warmest wishes to all members. We are working avidly behind the scenes to bring live music back to our stage as soon as possible and look forward to informing you first as soon as we have some definite plans in place.

I hope that you and the rest of the Friends are well and healthy and send you all good wishes from London.

Yours,

Alexander

(Alexander Shelley, Music Director, NACO)



Alexander Shelley

OUR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: AN ONLINE SURPRISE FOR EVERYONE

2020 has been a year unlike any other – with changes for all of us, including FNACO. For the first time, our annual general meeting took place online. Using Zoom enabled us to hold the AGM, while ensuring the safety and well being of all our members and respecting public health rules. More than 40 Friends members signed up to join us online for the AGM. The online format meant everyone who took part had a great surprise when our wonderful NACO conductor Alexander Shelley joined us, having just returned with his family from London the previous night. He gave us an update on the Orchestra's plans. After his isolation period of fourteen days is done, he is returning to rehearsals that will be very different as they look ahead to a gradual return of audiences in small groups. There will only be a few musicians rehearsing at a time to ensure they keep the required distance. It will be a novel experience playing in this new way, so they need to practise listening to each other. He also shared some ideas in the Orchestra's strategic plan for the next three years, including partnering with the CBC to give young musicians under 30 the chance to be heard and making great Canadian composers' music available for virtual listening. The rest of the AGM centred on reports on Friends' activities and plans. FNACO President, Christine McLaughlin welcomed everyone and thanked them for continuing to renew their memberships and their support of Friends' fundraising events. She emphasized how important it is for us all to keep our memberships and to encourage friends to join. She reminded the members that we continue to work on the 50th Anniversary Fund we began last year, which is raising \$50,000 for a constant stream of investment interest to support young musicians in the National Capital Region. Christine also reported on the FNACO activities that took place before the COVID shutdown, including events enabling members to enjoy the hospitalities of the embassies of Austria, Iceland, Morocco, Spain and Switzerland. We received many positive comments on our summer issue of Con Brio which featured wonderful stories from our own NACO musicians. Its success means we will continue this theme in future editions. She emphasized the importance, in these uncertain times, of keeping music alive in our community especially by supporting young musicians. Christine thanked all members of her team on the FNACO Board, after which our directors for the next year were voted in and the treasurer's report for the past year was accepted. We are hoping next year we will back to normal and have booked the Hellenic Centre for next year's AGM on September 19th 2021.

COVID ERA CONNECTIVITY SEAN RICE – SECOND CLARINET, NACO

If someone had told me a year ago that I would go five months without performing a concert, I think I would have said they were crazy! This is without a doubt a strange time and I think I speak for all my colleagues when I say we are excited for a time when we can collectively gather with audiences and share music together again. We train and practice for years for the chance to be on the stage performing and that can become a singular goal for a musician working towards that opportunity. The pandemic has reminded me however, that what really matters is the human experience of art and the community between performer and audience. Of course, I have missed performing music on stage. As the months have moved by, I realize for myself that the vulnerability and intimacy of the performer-listener relationship is a uniquely powerful dynamic and music is emptier without that bond.



The reciprocity of that energy between audience and performer has the potential to encourage each entity to feel more, express more, and deepen the human connection and performance experience. So here we are. What do we do when we are no longer able to gather and share that community?

Many of the musicians in the NAC Orchestra are trying to work with the next best thing until we can all safely reunite. That means going online and finding ways to make the musical experience as fulfilling as possible for audiences. Some colleagues have been very busy acquiring and perfecting the hardware necessary for streaming live performances. Other initiatives have included all of us participating in online distance teaching with many young musicians across the country. When MusicFest Canada became an online platform, I had the pleasure of teaching some very talented clarinetists and saxophonists from Korea and all across Canada. Many of my colleagues have also been forming mock orchestra audition committees on Zoom for the purpose of giving university students the chance to experience the rigors of an audition. The young musicians present a selection of orchestra excerpts and then the committee offers feedback on what orchestra musicians are listening for when we hold auditions. For me, I decided early on in the pandemic to learn as much as I could about audio and video recording and editing, and the necessary hardware/software required to create productions. This was my way of searching for connection and the chance to make art with my colleagues. Lucky for me, they were willing to trust me with the projects we created and it was elating for me to hear each of their sounds as we built recordings of Leroy Anderson's Sleigh Ride, Beethoven's Oboe Trio, and Mozart's Gran Partita as well as his Overture to the Marriage of Figaro. As much as each of us in the orchestra have tried to develop deeply meaningful, musical experiences online for audiences, I think it is fair to say that technology will never replace the real experience. Until the day when we can reinvest in the energy and humanity of a live performance together, we'll keep striving for ways to share and connect through music with you and each other.

MY SUNDAY AFTERNOONS WITH GLENN GOULD

ELIZABETH RAJANAYAGAM - FNACO BOARD MEMBER

Toronto, 1982. Setting: The iconic Inn on the Park Hotel. Catalyst: The Sunday New York Times. While going to University, I worked part time in the hotel's gift shop for about two years. One of the weekly special orders that I was responsible for coordinating was the receipt of the Sunday New York Times. Once received, I would put the recipient's name on the front, so it was identified and ready for pick-up. Most were picked up on the same day and as expected by well dressed, elderly gentlemen. Except for one. Cue: Mr. Gould and my first conversation. He would always enter from the outside entrance of the shop, never through the lobby as other guests. And despite the summer temperatures he always donned a newsboy cap, long black wool coat, plaid scarf, and fingerless gloves. To a twenty-year-old salesgirl he stood out, it was July after all. What I remember is that he was always kind, soft spoken and always looked me in the eye. And each week he would greet me with "How are you today, Elizabeth?" The most preeminent classical pianist of the 20th century remembered my name!

(Full disclosure- I knew him as Mr. Gould who read the Sunday New York Times not as the Canadian treasure he was.) They were not long chats and I do not remember the topics, but I always looked forward to Sundays and those few minutes with this articulate, courteous, somewhat eccentric man. It was on one of those Sundays that my colleague was in the shop when Mr. Gould dropped in for his paper.



When he had left my colleague turned to me and asked me "Do you know who that is?" to which I replied (naively) "Of course that's Mr. Gould" to which she raised her eyebrows in astonishment and said "That's Glenn Gould!" My reply, "Who's Glenn Gould?" Sadly, I was about to find out.

Our weekly Sunday conversations continued until his stroke and subsequent death in October. Only when I read the massive media coverage of his life did I learn the huge gift he had given to Canada and the world through his sublime musical talents. At the time of his death, he was living at the hotel and working on his latest interpretation of Bach's The Goldberg Variations.

On September 25th, this year Glenn Gould would have turned 88 years old. The irony is not lost on me that there are 88 keys on a piano. The National Arts Centre continues to honour his extraordinary legacy having his piano on display in the Southam Hall foyer. Every time I go to a concert, I spend a few minutes at this memorial and remember this Canadian music marvel, who to me, was the affable Mr. Gould, always taking a few minutes to chat with the hotel giftshop girl on Sunday afternoons. I look forward to returning to the NAC soon.

WHY I WENT TO LAW SCHOOL.

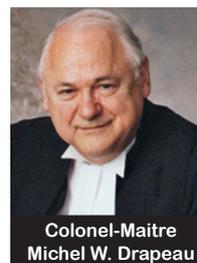
Colonel-Maitre Michel W. Drapeau - Director, Legal Affairs, FNACO

In 1995, in the aftermath of a full military career (34 years), the Canadian government instituted a Commission of Inquiry into the deployment of the Airborne Regiment to Somalia. It deals with allegations of misconduct, command failures and malformations of the military justice system.

Driven by a desire to contribute to this review which could pave the way for essential reforms, I attended the hearings. Disappointed to hear several of my former colleagues in their testimony resort to lapses in memory and dodging, I took part in the public debate. Over the months my disappointment turned to frustration as I realized more and more that even if the Commission were to succeed in exposing the serious shortcomings of the military justice system, I also knew that the military staff would nevertheless continue to have control of the change process. I wanted to play a role in this necessary transformation.

In 1996, I decided to follow in the footsteps of my son Daniel who already practiced law. I was 53 years old and entering law school.

After completion of my articles of clerkship in the Federal Court of Appeal in 2002, I was admitted to the Bar and I immediately opened a boutique law firm specializing in military law. In 2009, I was appointed adjunct Professor, Faculty of Law, University of Ottawa. I am now taking part in the evolution of the military justice system, a slow but beneficial process. In 2020, the Ontario Bar Association granted me the Award for Distinguished Service for my contribution to the legal profession in Ontario.



Colonel-Maitre
Michel W. Drapeau

MUSIC FROM THE HEART

GISÈLE LAMONTAGNE – FNACO MEMBER

Although I have never been a musician, I've always loved music and I thank my parents for that. Around age 10, I learned to play the harmonica. At 15, when I had a spinal fusion, the surgeon walked into my room the day after the surgery and heard me playing. He told the personnel to remove all the instruments working my lungs and just let me play. As a consequence I needed very little pain medication.

As an adult, I always have my harmonica with me and sometimes pull it out to soothe crying babies and it works. Guess you know why I'm not a professional musician: I put my audience to sleep! I have even played it in the ER where troubled people have relaxed and calmed down. Music always works.

But the most amazing moment arose recently when I visited my former husband in palliative care. I asked if he wanted to hear me play the harmonica, something he hadn't heard in over 40 years. He loved my mini-music moment. Days later, as he deteriorated rapidly I was again at his bedside when he tried to tell me something. I heard "nica, nica". Finally I understood and played for him. He calmed and smiled ... a smile I will never forget as he never spoke again and sank into a final coma. That is the magic of music.

That is what all of you, who work so hard to become great musicians bring to all of us who love your music – peace, tranquility, appreciation and many smiles. How fortunate we are to have such great and dedicated musicians here at NACO!

De tout coeur, MERCI.



NOTA BENE FOR MUSICIANS



PIANO

(soft)

the neighbours have complained

FORTE

(loud)

the neighbours are out

CRESCENDO

(louder)

testing the neighbours tolerance level



FORTISSIMO

(very loud)

to heck with the neighbours !

PIANISSIMO

(very soft)

the neighbours are at the door



Thank You

Many thanks to Gisèle Lamontagne, Christine McLaughlin, Carol Lutes Racine, Jim Burgess and Juan Sebastian Zuluaga Molina for their work on publishing this issue of Con Brio.