

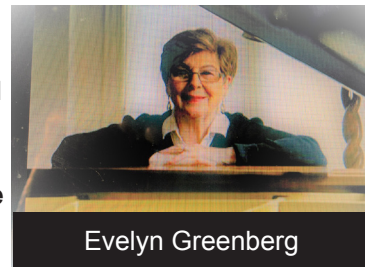
## DEAR FRIENDS

The last ten months have been very hard for us all. So many of us have been unable to visit our families or have them visit us. We have been unable to travel, whether to the next town or another country. Throughout all this, I feel we as Members of FNACO have shown a willingness (albeit reluctantly) to accept the situation, follow the required rules and live with it as well as we can until this is finally behind us. We are so fortunate to have access to the NACO concerts, and Lunch breaks plus all the multitudinous ways music is presented to us. As we are all lovers of music, we have much to occupy our minds and souls. **'If music be the food of Gods, play on.'** On behalf of the FNACO board directors, we send you our sincere wishes for a safe, healthy, happy and musical Christmas. Christine McLaughlin, Madeleine Aubrey, Melina Vacca-Pugsley, Michel Drapeau, Carol Lutes Racine, Kathleen McKillop, Louise Rowe, Julie Anne Brown, Sheila Murray and Elizabeth Rajanayagam

## THE JOYS OF PIANO ACCOMPANIMENT Evelyn Greenberg

**W**hen I was asked to write something for Con Brio I chose the topic dear to my heart – the world of ensemble playing, specifically piano accompaniment. And this relates to some memorable music making with members of the NACO and the reason for founding the Friends of NACO, formerly the National Arts Centre Orchestra Association. As performers, we experience magic moments working with other fine musicians. This is what orchestral players experience every day. For me, choosing the highlights in my ensemble career would be like counting the leaves on a tree. How did it begin? I started to accompany many decades ago. At age fourteen I was not the best pianist in school but could sightread, so I was always the go-to accompanist. At Carleton University, I wanted to sing in the choir but the only other pianist was a tenor who was needed more than me – back to the piano again! Soon I found myself performing on stage with others, unless they were playing unaccompanied Bach or other a cappella works. Listening to the radio one day, I heard the host saying that Itzhak Perlman would play the Franck Sonata for Violin and Piano.

I thought, how clever, he will play both parts. Not a word about the pianist. That started me on my mission to establish the Accompanist Liberation Movement. Our name may be in smaller letters in the program, hopefully not, but we are vital to the performance. One amazing highlight in my career was being invited by Mario Bernardi to play auditions for entry into the NACO and then accompanying each wonderful violinist for placement as firsts or seconds. And then, Jean-Marie Beaudet asked me how to fill the hall for this unknown orchestra. I became the Founding President of the new NACO support group and the rest is musical history. And all because I am a piano accompanist. Making music with others is one of the most fulfilling pleasures that life has to offer. There's no life like it!



## THOUGHTS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Jeremy Mastrangelo First Violin, NACO

**“If it doesn’t look easy it is that we have not tried hard enough yet.”** When you watch Fred Astaire dance, hard work is the last thing you are probably thinking of. The same can be said when watching anyone who excels in their field, and only occasionally do we pause to consider what goes in to that which seems effortless (how often have I watched a golf tournament in the winter, months removed from the last topped, shanked, thinned, or fatted mis-hit of the season and fleetingly thought, “Oh, I know I’ll be playing way better next summer.”) As far as the lives of the individual musicians on a stage performing, you most likely have some idea, and more than a few of you undoubtedly have anywhere from a smattering to a lifelong connection with the craft of performing a musical instrument- childhoods where playing scales is as regular a part of the daily routine as doing homework.



Jeremy Mastrangelo

Eventually we break through the audition process (that subject, with its attendant trauma, is worthy of its own article) and reach a land flowing with milk and honey- gainful employment as a classical musician! But a really good orchestra is much more than an assemblage of talented, rhythmically astute, pitch reproducers. And so the work of being a great ensemble takes shape, beyond the time spent learning one’s own part. Becoming increasingly aware of what goes on beside, in front of, behind you, and as far away as the stage and physical distancing precautions allow. Studying scores and knowing who you are playing with and how your part relates to others, besides how you fit within your own section and with your stand partner (have to remember to get that page over sooner). But, to paraphrase the old proverb, it takes a village to produce a concert, and rarely can one part of the village do the work of another part’s with the same proficiency (a lesson learned the hard way one summer, spent as part of a student quartet that was also paid to do stage work. A tiny stage, moving a grand piano, stairs... Fortunately, two other members of the quartet possessed strength that is not typically associated with classical musicians). There are countless parts that have had a hand in any given concert, from planning repertoire to contacting soloists (usually years in advance), helping the sub from out-of-town find a place to eat dinner, marketing, selling tickets. And now that our concerts are being streamed online, the additional technical factors are incredible. Which is why we need people like the Friends of NACO, those who are members of the village, the part of the iceberg below the tux-clad tip. Patronage has always been the backbone of the arts, from the courts and the church supporting artists like Haydn and Bach to the many individuals who continue this work today, so that this living art form can continue to thrive. So the next time you are enjoying a performance of your favourite Beethoven symphony, or are being introduced to a new piece of music, pause for a moment to consider what goes into that which seems effortless, including your own role, and savour the music which is now that much sweeter.

## FNACO AWARDS TO KIWANIS MUSIC FESTIVAL WINNERS 2020

### SENIOR SCHOLARSHIP - MARIA-SOPHIA PERA- VIOLIN

Dear Ms. McLaughlin,

I would like to thank you very much for the scholarship you have offered me! I am grateful that I got chosen to receive it. This summer's plans to study at Salzburg's Mozarteum University for two weeks unfortunately got cancelled, but I will use this opportunity to prepare more repertoire and to apply once again next year. In the past, my participation at the Orford Academy and at Germany's Kronberg Summer Academy- to name a few- helped me meet wonderful teachers and musicians who have transformed my perceptions of the industry, on the violin technique and musicianship. My positive experiences convince me that I will obtain further insight from my travels to Austria. While I will be overseas, I will also be able to schedule additional private lessons with teachers who inspire me, and with which I could possibly study in the future. Next Spring, I will complete my Masters program in Violin Performance at McGill and I believe that this is the right time to meet more teachers from various institutions and to get additional indications on the pieces that I am polishing. Overall, this scholarship will bring me much closer to my long-term goals and to new possibilities.

Kindest regards,

**Maria-Sophia Pera**

### PERFORMANCE SCHOLARSHIPS INCLUDING THE JOHN GAZI AWARD

#### Jonathan Moellman – senior strings

Dear Ms. McLaughlin, I am writing to express my gratitude for the FNACO scholarship that I received this year at the Ottawa Kiwanis Music festival. It will be put to good use for my ongoing musical studies.

Sincerely, Jonathan Moellman

#### Jackson Kelly – brass

Dear Ms. McLaughlin and Friends of NACO,

Wow, I cannot believe that I won! I am absolutely honoured that you would consider me. I worked extremely hard for this competition and though it was very difficult, I had lots of fun. This is my first time competing in Kiwanis and I was unaware of any scholarship; nor did I think that I was good enough to place first. I will use this money to further my musical education. I thank you for your acknowledgement and support and I hope to impress you next year.

Sincerely, Jackson Kelly

To all our Friends and our wonderful musicians who make our hearts sing and fill our being with joy,  
Best wishes for the Holidays. Take care of you and your families... and may we have the pleasure of  
listening to our great orchestra and applauding you live again soon in 2021!

Merry Christmas - love and health in the New Year

Gisèle Lamontagne - Your Con Brio translator

## “ODE TO JOY”

Ann Carson-Tempier - FNACO Member

In these very altered times, it is a tribute to human resilience the way the NAC musicians and Maestro Shelley have stepped up. Right from the beginning, the musicians have been presenting fun, informative lunch hour sessions, inviting us into their own spaces from where they accompany us musically. Then, the whole orchestra, as much as possible, has been open to learning a whole new way of playing, at a distance, with an empty hall, to offer us marvellous, inspiring concerts. Since it seems technology is able to do so many things, it would be good if there were a pair of hands for us to click on after the musical selections that would translate to a crescendo of clapping for the wonderful NAC orchestra.

## THOUGHTS FROM JIM BURGESS – OUR FIRST WEBMASTER.

I developed a love of classical music as a child since our radio was always tuned in to CBA, the CBC's main transmitter for the Maritimes. I never learned to play an instrument nor did I have any musical training, something I regret today but I learned early on that although I loved to listen to music, my abilities were better suited to technology than the arts. As I was finishing university, computers were becoming important in many areas. I had taken every computer course offered (3!). I thought it would be interesting to see something else of the world, and applied for a computer job in Munich, where I spent seven years. I returned to Canada to earn a Master's in computing and then was offered a position in Ottawa. Before long, I bought a subscription to the NAC Orchestra. Later, I became involved with the fledgling Ottawa International Chamber Music Festival and after that with Music and Beyond. Every year, I returned to Munich for a visit which was carefully planned: I would leave right after the Chamber Music Festival ended here and return just after the Oktoberfest ended there! I had, of course, already discovered Friends of NACO. I used to attend Behind the Music, which I always found extremely interesting. From Munich, I would check the Friends website to see if an event was coming up shortly after my Ottawa return. Unfortunately, the website wasn't always up to date: Most Septembers, all that was listed were events from the previous seasons. On enquiring, I discovered that the NAC was responsible for maintaining this site and it understandably was not at the top of their list. However, the Friends were working on obtaining more control over their own website. I offered my services. I was eventually asked to a meeting with the Board where they invited me to take over this position. The technical part of setting up the website, putting up the necessary information and keeping it up to date was all easy enough to handle. However, the FNACO website has to be bilingual and published simultaneously. We were being held up by the lack of translators. Finally, a friend, who was both a member of FNACO and a professional translator, agreed to help; I'm pleased to say he worked with us for ten years and was in no small part responsible for the success of the website and of our emails in keeping our membership informed of upcoming events. Our Friends web page is now capably controlled by Juan Molina and I am responsible for the emails to all our members simultaneously. But what about my “musical experiences”? During my time in Munich in the 1970s, I attended many concerts. One that stays in my memory is the full performance of Bedřich Smetana's *Má vlast*, by the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra (BRSO), conducted by Rafael Kubelík. Another involved Tchaikovsky's violin concerto. I used to work with a translator on many evenings and, when the going got rough, we would put on a recording of this concerto - David Oistrakh and the Philadelphia Orchestra under Ormandy - for inspiration.



However, the concerto never appeared on live concert programmes. One day after about 18 months, I saw posters for two performances of the concerto in the same week, one with the BRSO and the other with the Munich Philharmonic. (This city has five excellent orchestras!) So I went to each, on consecutive nights. The BRSO was perhaps the better orchestra, but it was the violinist with the Munich Phil who impressed me. I thought, “we’re going to hear more of this guy” and I took careful note of the name: Gidon Kremer. It would have been one of his first appearances outside the Soviet Union. Some of the summer events also stand out: an open-air performance of Gianni Schicchi in a courtyard of the royal residence in Munich; and Turandot, in an open-air performance in Augsburg on the stage in front of the Red Gate, a portion of the old city wall. The “Munich Sunday Concerts” with the Radio Orchestra (the Bavarian Radio’s other orchestra) were also memorable with orchestral excerpts and opera arias with excellent singers. In Ottawa, whatever was on the programme, I always enjoyed Franz-Paul Decker concerts and made sure to have a ticket. Pinchas Zukerman’s summer concerts of 1999, at the start of his tenure, also stand out. He brought in several outstanding young artists: violinist Ilya Gringolts and soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian. In Munich where I now permanently live, we’ve subscribed to the “Great Orchestras” series which presents excellent orchestras from around the world. One of the best received with a standing ovation - a rarity in Munich - was with the Montreal Symphony under Kent Nagano. It gives me great pleasure to continue to assist the Friends of NACO; with modern technology; a task I can do just as well as if I were still in Ottawa.

## WHY I VOLUNTEER FOR FNACO

Juan Sebastian Zuluaga Molina - FNACO Web Site Coordinator

One of the most common pieces of advice I got when emigrating into Canada was to look for volunteering opportunities as a strategy to get local references, relationships, and experience. So, back in 2018, when I started searching, one posting caught my eye. It was to help maintain the Friends of the National Arts Centre Orchestra website. For me, this volunteering holds a personal meaning as it allows me to make a tiny contribution towards music and so honor my father who is a musician himself. I grew up among different instruments, piano practices, Colombian and classical music in general. Our holidays and family gatherings were always full of love, tenderness, and my father’s music. He sang and played accordion, piano, or flute. He tried to pass music along to me and my siblings. But, skill, passion, and talent are not necessarily inherited. In fact, only one of my siblings chose music as a profession. On the other hand, I went for computer science and far away from the music scene. Or so I thought until FNACO gave this opportunity for which I am much grateful.

Lastly, let this be the chance to wish you all:

Merry Christmas Feliz Navidad y prospero Año Nuevo  
and a prosperous New Year

(And we wish to thank Juan for volunteering and maintaining our  
web site so efficiently.)



Juan Sebastian Zuluaga Molina

### Thank You

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

Please let us know if you enjoyed this edition.

We welcome your comments and articles anytime.

[www.friendsofnaco.ca](http://www.friendsofnaco.ca)

The Friends of The National Arts Centre Orchestra is a registered charitable organization - (BN 12895 RR0001)

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