

## DEAR FRIENDS



I trust everyone continues to keep well in these trying times.

As a Board we have many ideas for our future fund raising events but until we have the all clear there is little we can do. I do want you to know we are still here and looking forward to presenting ideas for future events maybe in the Summer or early Fall. You will be the first to know. In the meantime thank you to those of you who so kindly have sent in a donation. It will certainly help our finances which without fundraising have become a little depleted! On behalf of the Friends Board, we send you our best wishes to keep safe and trust you continue to enjoy the wonderful musical variety we receive from our musicians.

**Christine McLaughlin** – President [www.friendsofnaco.ca](http://www.friendsofnaco.ca) [mcmclaugh@sympatico.ca](mailto:mcmclaugh@sympatico.ca)



## A FEW WORDS FROM OUR CONCERT MASTER Yosuke Kawasaki – Concertmaster NAC Orchestra

**W**hen the reality of the pandemic first hit us almost a year ago, my family struggled to find a daily rhythm; that sounds funny having spent a lifetime keeping and manipulating rhythm through my violin. In the beginning, navigating virtual learning for our kids was irritating. Jessica and I love to cook but having to come up with a balanced lunch menu for our kids that didn't see pizza, grilled cheese and mac & cheese on a 3 day rotation was annoying. Taking walks with our kids with no destination or goal was inexplicable. But as the weeks went by all these things got easier and we slowly started to establish a new rhythm. Today, virtual school is a lesson in patience, listening and compassion.

Lunch is mostly leftovers from the night before (plus veggies of course). And taking a walk is just exercise (with treats). We recalibrated how to schedule our practicing, teaching, meetings, errands and guilt-free Netflix binge watching into our daily lives. I learned that although we were creatures of habit, we also possessed an incredible capacity to adapt. I used to yearn for normalcy but I didn't know what that was anymore. To me, life in the moment was normal and I questioned what "going back to the way it was" really meant. Did it mean going back to sending our kids to school; my daughter is back in-person and nothing about that feels abnormal. Did it mean going back to dining in restaurants; I did that in the summer and it didn't feel strange.

Did it mean going back to performing on the stage of Southam Hall; we have been doing that too and that seemed normal. All the little changes like wearing masks and physically distancing had become part of our lives and we found a way to work and sometimes thrive within those parameters. So what were we desperately trying to go back to?



Wife Jessica, son Kaj, Jennifer (mother-in-law)  
and daughter Hanako

Back in July Jessica and I organized a porch concert walking tour when restrictions lifted to where 100 people could finally gather outdoors. We started off on Park Avenue with a violin duo by Leclair. It had been nearly 4 months since we played in front of an audience and I was excited to play but to my surprise, there was no catharsis. Maybe I was too focused on executing the act of performance. Maybe I was too nervous to feel anything or maybe I was just resigned to what had become normal.



As I put my instrument away I was confused and started doubting if I really needed music but I didn't have time to go down that dark path and I quickly jumped back outside to herd the 50+ people to the next porch concert on Frank Street. The migrating audience had found a temporary space across the street to watch the next 2 performers serenade them from the 2nd story balcony. I nestled myself under the balcony and watched the onlookers as the oboe and clarinet played the Sull'aria duet from Mozart's Marriage of Figaro. It was at that moment that I finally realized this was something normal that I truly missed. I couldn't help casting myself into that scene from Shawshank Redemption and for a brief moment feeling free from the walls of COVID.

My colleagues at NACO and I have been performing to empty spaces and halls since September. We normalized the digital imprint of live music but that's all it is; a mere outline of what we do with a void that is waiting to be filled. I eagerly await live performances to reconnect with all of you and share the rainbow of emotions through music again.

## WHO WERE THEY?

### Louise Rowe – Treasurer, FNACO

**F**riends of NACO have two endowment funds based on contributions received in the 1990's from **William B. Kilpatrick** and **James William Morton**. Here's a little history of these important contributors.

**William B. Kilpatrick** was an ardent lover of music and a regular patron of the National Arts Centre from the time of its opening. In 1994 and 1995 his will bequeathed financial gifts to the NACOA (as FNACO was then called) totaling \$85,688. He wanted to make a direct contribution to support the orchestra, so NACOA's Board invested the money conservatively and agreed that the proceeds be used to enhance the orchestra's programming. In 2017 the Board rounded the capital up to \$90,000 for ease of investment decisions. Friends' annual Kilpatrick contribution of \$4,500 allows the hiring of extra musicians for the performance of a work that might not otherwise be possible under the existing NACO budget. Continued recognition of William Kilpatrick's generosity is acknowledged in concert brochures as the Kilpatrick Concert and also maintained as the Kilpatrick investment fund as shown in Friends' financial statements.

**James William Morton** was a founding member of NACO as principal clarinet. Married to Celia Franca, Jay, as he was known by his colleagues, left a bequest of \$10,000 to NACOA in 1998, specifying it be made part of the NACOA Bursary Fund. The Board of the day invested it and has since contributed that fund's proceeds to the NACO Bursary Competition's FNACO Award. This award of \$3,000 is funded by James W. Morton's bequest and generous donations from Friends.

The bequest is also maintained and recognized in Friends of NACO financial statements.

## LEARNING FROM BACH AND BABES Julia MacLaine – Assistant Principal Cello, NACO

I have been among the lucky ones in my experience of this pandemic. I live in a country where the effects, while still keenly felt, are not compounded by mass poverty and lack of resource; my family and friends have, so far, been healthy; I have a supportive and resilient employer; and I have had the time and means to make the disruptive effects less palpable for my young child. And so you see, the feeling of luck evolves very quickly into one of responsibility. It's like a micro mid-life crisis: I worry that unless I really make something of this time, I might look back and feel regret for a missed opportunity. So what has that meant for me? Three things, largely: 1 - spending more quality time with my family, 2 - being physically active outdoors, and 3 - tackling a substantial personal music project. So, between penguin-ing and snow-plowing my way around the Gatineau Park's HILLY cross-country ski trails, and occupying my CHATTY 4 year-old with piano and cello and skating and sledding and skiing (HE has no fear!) and drawing and reading and writing, I have at long last had the time to set into motion an exciting creative project. With crucial support from the Canada Council for the Arts and the astonishing Marg Campbell, I have commissioned six composers from around the country to compose pieces in response to the Préludes from Bach's Cello Suites. The goal is a CD - 6 Bach Préludes paired with 6 new Canadian works for solo cello. (If all goes according to plan, it will be released in January 2022!)

This has been a fascinating process - the composers so far have each responded very differently to the Bach, and yet a Bach-inspired unity has emerged in terms of the interpretive process itself. There are so few indications in a Bach score, so we cellists get to make all the decisions! Louder here, softer over there, a big build-up in this section, short notes this time, long ones the next, a romantic interpretation, a historically informed one...it's like a giant, creative free-for-all! And while it can be liberating to have so much freedom, there are more obscure, and perhaps more stressful constraints - the weight of historical opinions on how one ought to play Bach, the inability to erase famous recordings from one's ear, or to shed built-in habits we have learned from inspiring and convincing teachers. The combination of freedom and expectation can feel overwhelming, especially for a recording. "What is my perspective of these works?" is the enormous question that looms over my daily practicing. New music of course has the advantage of not having any one "way" we are expected to play it, but what has surprised me is that the openness in the scores of Bach has made its way into all three of the pieces that are finished so far. It's not that the composers are lazy and didn't bother writing in any indications. In one case, Carmen Braden made her score with her articulations and dynamics...and **WOULDN'T LET ME HAVE IT!** She sent me a blank score! She wanted to know where I would go with her piece if I was given the same kind of information I have when I look at Bach. It was cool. I made a couple of different versions, sending her audio files from my phone and pictures of my pencil-scribbled score, and then, finally, she let me see hers. Many things were totally different while other passages seemed to be more consistent, as though the essence of those figures was truly IN the notes themselves. We are still working our way toward a final version, choosing the best of our ideas, but Carmen is going to include a blank score with the piece so that other cellists can enjoy the same freedom I did. If they so choose. And so, in the conversation-like vibe I hoped this project would have, the new pieces in turn give me new ideas to try out in their corresponding Prélude; after playing through PEI fiddler Roy Johnstone's new piece, I can't help launch into the D major Prélude with folksy, gigue-like glee.

Carmen's piece was also inspired by play with her few month-old baby. She encouraged me to approach her music in a playful, instinctual way, like a child inspecting an object in his hand, in his mouth (ew, drool!) with the main purpose of exploring. This gentle nudge was in fact a beautiful gift; I'm sure I'm not the only one struggling for balance between intellect and instinct. The combination of having a motivating goal, the time and space to dive deep into this (new and old) music, and the reminder - from Carmen and also from my own little Robin - not to lose that child-like wonder and delight in the world has made for some very rich and rewarding time spent with my cello. The process is of course ongoing, and it will continue past the moment of making this recording, but what a treat it has been to be able to explore my instrument in this way! And, that being said, I also can't wait to get back to making music with my colleagues in the orchestra; solo music is cool, but it's a bit lonely!



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## A WORD FROM THE KIWANIS NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION MUSIC FESTIVAL

Kim Chadsey – Executive Director

**T**he best that can be said for 2020 is that it was quite the year. We all struggled with a new reality and moving forward with business as close to normal as we could. The 2020 Kiwanis Music Festival - NCR was just about to happen when the pandemic hit and the initial lockdown was proclaimed in March. After a few stutters, we decided to hold our Festival “virtually” and asked the participants to send us their videos so that the Adjudicators could do their viewing from home. We ended up with about 2/3 of our original entries agreeing to meet the challenge of participating by submitting a video. This told us that we did the right thing in supporting and respecting the hard work of our communities’ music students. Our donors felt the same – scholarship donations were equal to other years and we were able to award about \$35,000 to our participants.

Late last summer when we turned our eyes to April 2021, we knew that the world would not be righted yet and decided that the Festival would again be held Virtually. We expect our donors to again support all the students’ hard work and dedication by giving their usual gifts that will be awarded at the end of the Festival. We thank the Friends of the NAC Orchestra for their yearly donation of \$1,500 in support of both our Performance Scholarships and our Senior Scholarships. It is only through generosity like this that we are able to offer the scholarships and trophies that are awarded through our Festival, recognizing the best young talent in Ottawa.

On behalf of all the students, parents, teachers, and Festival volunteers – Thank you.

Kiwanis National Capital Region Music Festival (1945)

## OTTAWA YOUTH ORCHESTRA ACADEMY

Shannon Whidden – Executive Director; Donnie Deacon – Music Director

**C**COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the operations of the [Ottawa Youth Orchestra Academy](#). In March last year, we had to stop classes 6 weeks early, which meant that 25 ensembles were unable to complete their studies. In addition, we lost 4 performances – a joint concert with NACO, a concert for the Ottawa Junior Youth Orchestra, a concert for the Ottawa Youth Orchestra, and a Family concert for all OYOA ensembles. Beyond the loss of classes, COVID continues to have a detrimental impact on the OYOA. We chose to refund our families for the lost 6 weeks of classes last year, and also were unable to run our summer camp. These combined factors meant a loss of nearly \$60,000 in revenue – a huge challenge for the organization.

Despite this challenge, the OYOA has found opportunities to continue to connect with our students during the pandemic. We are running 6 classes in person in our second term (beginning on March 6); 3 string ensembles, 2 orchestras (strings only), and a brass class. Our students have been overjoyed at the opportunity to meet safely in person and make music. As well, we are running a national initiative that presents masterclasses and workshops to youth orchestra students across Canada. So far, we’ve reached over 250 students with the series. We are working towards reopening all of our regular classes, beginning with our summer camp in July.

We thank the [Friends of the National Arts Centre Orchestra](#) for their continuing yearly support of \$1,000.

## AN IN- DEPTH CHAT WITH THE MAESTRO Elizabeth Rajanayagam – Friends of NACO Board Member

I recently tuned into the radio programme Digging Deep hosted by Mark Sutcliffe. His guest was none other than NACO's Maestro extraordinaire, Alexander Shelley. To no surprise the interview was informative, enjoyable, and varied in its topics. What I found most captivating was that Mr. Sutcliffe adeptly brought out a side of Alexander that is not always seen or known and for that I was grateful. At the end of the hour-long discussion, I can say that in Mr. Sutcliffe's interview style of "digging deep" I got to learn more about our virtuoso musician and conductor in a fun and relaxing milieu. And COVID friendly!

I encourage members to have a listen, it is easy. [Simply go to our Friends web site - friendsofnaco.ca](http://friendsofnaco.ca) and on the front page click on the Facebook connection. (You do not have to be a Facebook member). Once you are on the page, scroll down about halfway until you see a photo of Alexander with the Digging Deep title. Click on the link and it will take you to the audio interview. Sit back with your beverage of choice and get to know the maestro a little bit more.

### BURSARY COMPETITION

The NACO Bursary competition will be held in May. All applicants will be judged on line. The week prior to the final day of May 29th, the jury will release the names of 8 finalists. Each one will be presented daily via Facebook as a tantalising reminder for the final day. On the final day, the Fourth Stage will be open, only for the two (FR. and Eng.) presenters to announce virtually all the winners. The finalist will have been notified in advance and will give a live performance on May 29th at 2:00pm.

**Happy Birthday to Maryse Robillard who turned 97 last month on Feb 7th.**  
Maryse is a long standing member of FNACO and supporter of the orchestra.  
We all send our congratulations and wish Maryse continued health and happiness.

If you know of any member who is turning 90 or more, please contact  
Christine McLaughlin at: [president@friendsofnaco.ca](mailto:president@friendsofnaco.ca)



### 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)

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