

THE
Aldburgh
C O N N E C T I O N

Parnassus on Elm Street

Walter Hall, Sunday, November 30, 2008, 2:30 pm



We wish to thank the following:

Michael and Anne Gough
for sponsoring Monica Whicher

Sally Holton and Stephen Ireland
for sponsoring Lauren Segal

James Norcop
for sponsoring Colin Ainsworth

Patricia Howard
for sponsoring Giles Tomkins

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We also thank James and Connie MacDougall
for providing the floral arrangement on the stage

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We are performing on the Edith McConica Steinway

Parnassus on Elm Street

The centenary of the Arts & Letters Club, Toronto

Monica Whicher, soprano

Lauren Segal, mezzo

Colin Ainsworth, tenor

Giles Tomkins, bass-baritone

Stephen Ralls and Bruce Ubukata, piano

Above the fireplace let us set the emblem of the Club - the Viking ship with the sails full spread before the rising sun - to remind us of the open sea and the great adventure. (C.W.Jefferys, November 1911)

The Arts & Letters Club of Toronto was founded in 1908 by a group of the city's most creative young men, led by the journalist, Augustus Bridle, who was concerned that the arts had been neglected here for far too long. The first official meeting took place in late October in the Palms Room at McConkey's Restaurant, 27 King Street West. The architect, William A. Langton, was named the first president and expressed his hope that the Club would become "an art society where the jingle of coin would not be part of the music." In 1920, a move was made to the St. George's Hall, 14 Elm Street (the premises originally of the St. George's Society), where the Club has remained ever since, acquiring the hall as its own in 1986.

This afternoon's concert is an attempt to relate some of the distinguished history of the Club, the work of its members and the extraordinary variety of visitors who have passed through its doors. A full account has been written by a past president, Margaret McBurney, and we do urge you to acquire this very handsomely produced volume, published by the Club, which has recently won a Heritage Toronto Award and which provides far more information than we can hope to lay out today:

The Great Adventure: 100 Years at The Arts & Letters Club, by Margaret McBurney.

The book is available from the Arts & Letters Club, 14 Elm Street, Toronto M5G 1G7, phone 416.597.0223, or through www.artsandlettersclub.ca.

Parnassus, a mountain in ancient Greece, was sacred to the Muses. These deities, originally the nymphs of inspiring springs, later became the goddesses of song in general, before they acquired individual attributes and responsibilities. Our own Parnassians on Elm Street were a little slow in following this model. Admittedly, as early as 1909 there was a “meeting with the ladies” - the members of the newly-formed Heliconian Club (Helicon being another Greek mountain where the Muses could be found); but it was not until 1983 that the president was asked to “try the experiment of women being allowed as lunch guests on Mondays”. In 1985, a motion “that women be welcomed to all forms of membership in the Club” was passed by a two-thirds majority. Only two members resigned in protest. Since then, the contribution of women members, officers and presidents has been a vital and necessary part of the Club’s history.

We celebrate all of this glorious century today. The Aldeburgh Connection is proud to have been a part of that history, from our early concerts in the 1980s in the St. George’s Hall through to the present series of previews of our Discovery Series recitals which take place at Wednesday Music Tables. Many threads were drawn together in 2004, when the Artistic Directors of the Aldeburgh Connection were presented with a handsome medal, designed by Anne Lazare-Mirvish, as token of the annual Arts & Letters Award, presented “to a person (or persons) who has made a significant contribution to the arts in Toronto”. We warmly reciprocate that tribute!



OVERTURE

Allegro molto, quasi presto (Quartet in G, Op 18/2) Ludwig van Beethoven
(piano-duet) (1770-1827)

The Arts & Letters Club Constitution (first part) (*anon.*) Healey Willan
(bass-baritone/ensemble) (1880-1968)

Born in London, Willan emigrated to Canada in 1913 to become head of theory at the Toronto Conservatory of Music and organist of St. Paul's Anglican Church. In 1914, he began teaching at the university and in 1921 became organist of St. Mary Magdalene's, a post he held until his death. The Constitution of the Arts & Letters Club was set to music soon after he became president in 1922.



FOUNDING FATHERS

Ariadne Waking (*Leigh Hunt*) Leo Smith (1881-1952)
(soprano)

Leo Smith began his career as a cellist with the Hallé Orchestra in Manchester and at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden. He arrived in Canada in 1910 and soon became active as a chamber musician - he joined the Academy Quartet to replace George Bruce when the latter went to France in 1916-18. From 1932 to 1940, he was principal cellist of the Toronto Symphony. *Ariadne Waking* is one of *Four Songs*, published in 1914. The poem describes the rapturous state of Ariadne before she awakens fully and realises she has been deserted by Theseus.

Spring Sorrow (*Rupert Brooke*) John Ireland (1879-1962)
(bass-baritone)

The World is Waiting for the Sunrise (*Eugene Lockhart*)
(tenor/ensemble)

Ernest Seitz
(1892-1978)

Seitz was born in Hamilton and studied in Berlin with the great pianist, Josef Lhévinne. His pianism was celebrated throughout North America, but his greatest success was this hit song, published in 1919.

Overture to Tannhäuser (excerpt)
(piano-duet)

Richard Wagner (1813-83)

On the evening of November 27, 1920, the Club celebrated its move to the St. George's Hall. After dinner, a chorus of twenty launched into the Pilgrims' Chorus from *Tannhäuser*, after which Boris Hambourg played the cello and Campbell McInnes sang a few songs.

MUSIC FROM THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE

Two Irish folksongs (*anon.*)
(mezzo)

Herbert Hughes (1882-1937)

Hughes, longtime music critic of the London *Daily Telegraph*, collected and arranged many Irish folksongs.

A Ballynure Ballad (County Antrim)
I know my love (West Irish)

Sonnet: To Sleep (*John Keats*)
(bass-baritone)

Willan

Willan made this fine setting for the baritone, Campbell McInnes, who sang many times at the Club, despite his stormy personal life which allowed him to be admitted as a member for only two years. (His least pardonable offence was an attempt to elope with Ernest MacMillan's sister, Dorothy.)

Three folksongs of French Canada (collected by Marius Barbeau) (*anon.*)

Barbeau was born in 1883 in Ste-Marie-de-Beauce, his father a traditional singer and his mother a trained pianist. After graduating from Oxford University, he became the first French-Canadian anthropologist. From 1913 on, he collected some 4,000 wax cylinders of folksongs, together with thousands more written records. In 1928, *Twenty Folksongs of French Canada* was published, arrangements with piano accompaniment by various composers (including MacMillan and Smith) which did their best to retain the textual and musical peculiarities of Barbeau's original recordings.

Voici le printemps
(tenor)

arr. Ernest MacMillan (1893-1973)

*It is spring; love wakes anew and everyone wants a new sweetheart.
(Refrain:) Good wine makes me sleepy, love wakes me up again.
Everyone wants to change, but I want to keep my own one. Ah! how sweet to be
loved by such a beauty, to be kissed by her beside a clear spring!*

La Plainte du coureur des bois
(bass-baritone)

arr. Smith

*Lament of the backwoodsman. On the sixth of May last year, I enlisted to go to
the mountains among the wild people. How long is winter, how monotonous the
weather! Night and day I long for spring, for that is what consoles unhappy lovers.
When spring arrives, the April winds will fill our sails and take us back home;
at the corner of St. Sulpice I will greet my lover. Farewell, savages, farewell to the
mountains, farewell to drudgery!*

Les Jeunes filles à marier
(mezzo)

arr. MacMillan

*Young, marriageable girls. Through the town I hear the young girls say, "Mother,
I must have a lover." "Quiet, silly girl! You can't have a lover until you are six-
teen. Here is money to take you to the convent." "Yes, mother, with this money I
can buy a man, I'll be happier than in the convent." "Come, daughter, there is
the road to the convent." "Yes, mother, here is my road which leads to the arms of
my waiting lover."*

Sonnet (Elizabeth Barrett Browning)
(soprano)

MacMillan

AN ARTISTIC MECCA

When you had left our pirate fold (The Pirates of Penzance) (W.S.Gilbert)
(mezzo/tenor/bass-baritone)

Arthur Sullivan (1842-1900)

One night in 1927, the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company visited the Club and remained until the early hours of the morning, singing popular G & S choruses and ensembles. In this famous trio, Ruth and the Pirate King explain to Frederick, the hero, that although he believes he has come of age, he cannot leave them as expected - he has not actually attained his 21st birthday, having been born on February 29.

Avete torto! . . . Firenze è come un albero fiorito (*Giovacchino Forzano*)

(tenor)

Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924)

You're mistaken! . . . Florence is like a flowering tree.

Rinuccio, youngest of the crafty relatives of the recently dead Buoso Donati, persuades the family that Gianni Schicchi is the man to sort out the will for them. He may be a rustic person, but their beautiful Florence has always benefited from those who come from outside the city.

INTERMISSION

during which tea will be served in the Torel Room,
with the kind assistance of students of the
Opera Division, Faculty of Music.

SONG WITHOUT END

Mighty like a rose (*Frank Stanton*)

(bass-baritone)

Ethelbert Nevin (1862-1901)

Like Ernest Seitz, Nevin was a fine pianist (he studied with Karl Klindworth in Berlin), whose only lasting fame came as a popular song composer. This number, published in 1901, was a favourite hit of the bass-baritone, Paul Robeson, who was entertained by the Club in 1944.

Der Neugierige, from *Die schöne Müllerin* (*Wilhelm Müller*), D795/6

(tenor)

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

The Questioner. I ask no flower, no star; none of them can tell me what I want to know. I'm no gardener, the stars are too remote; so I'll ask the millstream if my heart deceived me.

"How silent you are today! I want to know just one thing, one little word, yes, or no; these two words hold all the world for me. I shall tell no-one else. Tell me, does she love me?"

Three songs from *South of North: Images of Canada* (Richard Outram)

(mezzo)

Srul Irving Glick (1934-2002)

In honour of the Club's ninetieth anniversary, Richard Outram produced a collection of poems from which Glick selected eight for his song cycle. The first performance was given on December 6, 1998, by baritone James Westman and pianist Albert Krywolt. These are the opening three songs.

Wilderness on Centre Island (*dedicated to Valerie Siren*)

As rain white-pocks the olive water
of the lagoon, under flailed willows
a small flock of Canada geese roots,
probes, softly complaining, across
the cropped, mortal emerald grass.

Vane (*dedicated to Louis Applebaum*)

The copper cock atop
the weathered barn burns
in the first morning's sun,
in the last slant light;

swivels daylong to flourish
aloft viridian plumes,
to brandish his rust crest
in the blazed eye, defiant;

spins with the swift winds
to whet the four quarters
of his whole gold-spurred
world blooded below.

Grace (*dedicated to Richard and Barbara Outram*)

In the luminous, pearl, interior day,
on a long, rainswept silver reach
of willow-bordered meadow river,

a pair of sure, fastidious, white
mute swans is drawn, carefully,
thoughtfully, on downstream.

PASTIME AND GOOD COMPANY

Hi, Sooky, ho, Sooky (Valse Serenata) (*Paul Hiebert*) John Greer (b. 1954)
(soprano)

This is the second song from Greer's *A Sarah Binks Songbook: The Sweet Songstress of Saskatchewan*. The first performance was given by Martha Collins and the composer in 1988; Mary Lou Fallis and Mark Morash performed the cycle at the Club in October 1996.

I went to a marvellous party from *Set to Music*
(baritone) words and music by Noël Coward (1899-1973)

Noël Coward was a guest of the Club in 1937. His songs have remained a staple of Club entertainments over the years.

A Very Old Barn Dance from *No Room at the Inn* (*Jim Parr*)
(ensemble) Malcolm McGrath

Jim Parr (president of the Club in 1982-84) and Malcolm McGrath, described by Margaret McBurney as “that remarkable duo”, contributed many musical productions to the Club’s schedule from the late seventies through into the nineties.

What star is this? (*Latin hymn*) Godfrey Ridout (1918-84)
(soprano)

Ridout, a Torontonion by birth, taught at the university from 1948 to 1982. This setting of an old Christmas hymn was dedicated to his wife, soprano Freda Antrobus.

The Boar’s Head Carol (*anon.*) English traditional
(tenor/ensemble)

This carol is sung each Christmas at the Club. The Boar’s Head Feast was originally a Norse custom which persisted in the north of England until the seventeenth century, when the wild boar became extinct. Feast and carol are still enjoyed at Queen’s, an Oxford college with strong northern connections.

THE ALDEBURGH CONNECTION CONCERT SOCIETY

FOUNDING PATRON: Sir Peter Pears

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Our Sunday Series in Walter Hall resumes in the new year with a concert at 2:30 pm on February 1 entitled *The Wings of Song*. This will celebrate the 200th birthday of Felix Mendelssohn, with soprano GILLIAN KEITH, mezzo ELIZABETH TURNBULL and tenor LAWRENCE WILIFORD. Single tickets at \$50 (student rush seats \$12) are available from our box office, 416-735-7982, or through our website: www.aldeburghconnection.org

Our Discovery Series, featuring talented young stars from the University of Toronto's vocal programmes, continues on Tuesday, February 10, at 7:30 pm in Walter Hall. Soprano CATHERINE MARCHANT, mezzo MIA HARRIS, tenor PATRICK JANG and baritone GIOVANNI SPANU will present *Cycles of Love*, an early celebration of St Valentine's Day, with songs by Beethoven, Rossini, Schumann, Fauré and Poulenc. Tickets at \$18 (seniors/students \$12) are available from the Faculty of Music box office, 416-978-3744.

Copies of our CDs, including the Juno-nominated *Schubert among friends* and our latest, *Our own songs*, which features today's soloists Monica Whicher and Colin Ainsworth, as well as our double album *Twentieth anniversary collection*, are available during the intermission or through our website: www.aldeburghconnection.org

Box office revenues cover only a portion of our operating budget; grants, corporate funding and individual donations are needed for the balance. We encourage you to consider joining one of our supporting categories: Benefactor (\$1,000 or more), Champion (\$500 or more), Patron (\$100 or more) and Friend (\$500 or more). Donations may be made by cheque or VISA, and may be made in instalments. You will receive information about our activities, and all donations will be acknowledged by a receipt for income tax purposes. Donors may act as sponsors for a concert, an artist or a special commission. Suggestions for corporate sponsorship are also very welcome. Please reach us through 416-735-7982 or: www.aldeburghconnection.org. Your support is vital to the continuation of these concerts!

We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the following in the presentation of today's concert:

The Ontario Arts Council
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 James and Connie MacDougall
 The Arts & Letters Club Centenary Committee
 Scott James
 Carol Anderson
 Malcolm McGrath
 many individual donors

Aldeburgh is the small town on the east coast of England where Benjamin Britten, Peter Pears and Eric Crozier founded the Festival of Music which flourishes to this day. Artistic Directors **Stephen Ralls** and **Bruce Ubukata** visited and worked there for many summers, as has a large number of the singers who appear with the Aldeburgh Connection.

Monica Whicher's performances on the concert and opera stage are imbued with style and musical elegance, combined with an intuitive theatrical sense. Her 2008/09 season reflects the varied aspects of her artistry; highlights include *Elijah* with the Calgary Philharmonic and the title role in *Thaïs* for Pacific Opera Victoria: "Monica Whicher offered an elegantly crafted performance as Thaïs the woman in search of her true soul, her French diction near flawless, and her acting skills honed to perfection. Her famous "Mirror Aria" was brilliantly understated, flowing seamlessly into the impressionist palette rather than being a stand-alone wonder, and her death scene was simply thrilling as, entering paradise, she beholds her new god." (Review Vancouver, October 2008). Other appearances this season include Bach's *Johannes-Passion* for the Amadeus Choir and performances at the Westben Festival, Festival of the Sound and the Aldeburgh Connection. Last year, she was heard in Haydn's *Missa Sancti Nicolai* with the Calgary Philharmonic, Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* with the National Arts Centre Orchestra and *Messiah* with the Mississauga Choral Society. Also on the concert stage, she sang Mozart's *Mass in C minor* with the Kingston Symphony, Grieg's *Peer Gynt* with the Victoria Symphony and a new work by Gavin Bryars for Talisker Players in Toronto. Her discography continues to expand with a set of songs from the collected vocal works of the Ukrainian composer, Dimitri Lysenko. On the Aldeburgh

Connection's 25th anniversary issue *Our own songs* (Marquis Records) she performs John Beckwith's *Stacey* (written for her to texts by Margaret Laurence) and also takes part in John Greer's *Liebesleid-Lieder*.

Lauren Segal was born in South Africa and holds a Master's of Science degree from the Department of Physics at the University of Toronto. She has recently returned from Austria, where she was the only North American chosen to participate in the Salzburg Festival's Young Artists Project. She is also an alumna of the Ensemble Studio of the Canadian Opera Company, who featured her in the roles of Siebel (*Faust*), Aljeja in Janáček's *From the House of the Dead* and Popova in Walton's *The Bear*. She has performed in Calgary Opera's production of Allan Bell's *Turtle Wakes* as part of their Emerging Artist Programme and the role of Sesto in Mozart's *La clemenza di Tito* at the Orford Arts Festival. This season, she appeared as Sonya in the COC's acclaimed production of Prokofiev's *War and Peace*; later this season, she will be seen as Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*. She will also sing *Messiah* with the Victoria Symphony, Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly* with Manitoba Opera and Opera Hamilton, and Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. She is the recipient of two Encouragement Awards from the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions.

Colin Ainsworth's career continues to expand. His summer season in 2008 was highlighted by his debut with Lake George Opera, New York, as Rinuccio in *Gianni Schicchi* and Frederick in *The Pirates of Penzance*. He also appeared at the Bayfield and Westben Festivals and sang Schubert's *Die schöne Müllerin* at the Elora Festival. He debuted in September with Philharmonia Baroque of San Francisco, Nicholas McGegan conducting, in the title role of Rameau's *Pygmalion*, followed immediately by Tamino in *The Magic Flute* for Opera Hamilton, a role he reprises later in the season for Pacific Opera Victoria and for Orchestra London. Also this season, he will be in Edmonton as Nadir in Bizet's *Les Pêcheurs de perles* and Tonio in *La Fille du régiment*, with concerts scheduled for the Vancouver and Edmonton Symphonies and the Elmer Isler Singers in Toronto. Last year, he made a critically acclaimed debut with the Royal Opera, Covent Garden and at the Edinburgh International Festival as Youth in the premiere of Stuart MacRae's opera *The Assassin Tree*. He appeared as Gluck's Orphée with the Greek National Opera in Athens and repeated the role for Opera Atelier in Toronto, under the baton of Andrew Parrott. He also made his debut as Castor in Rameau's *Castor et Pollux* with Opéra français de New York. Recent CD releases include Ottone in Vivaldi's *La Griselda* (Naxos), Bach and Mondonville for Tafelmusik and two recordings with the Aldeburgh Connection: *Schubert among friends* with Gillian Keith and Gerald Finley and *Our own songs*, in which he sings the premiere recording of Derek Holman's *The Heart Mislaid*.

Giles Tomkins is the recipient of a number of awards, including the Distinguished Graduate Award from the University of Toronto and the John Scott Award for career development from Scottish Opera; he was a finalist in the International Vocal Competition in Marmande, France. He has performed with the Canadian Opera Company, the Aldeburgh Connection, Opera in Concert, Chorus Niagara, Tapestry New Opera Works, the St Lawrence String Quartet and the Canadian Brass. His performances in the UK include concerts at the Aldeburgh Festival (including Purcell's *King Arthur* conducted by Laurence Cummings), the role of Colline in *La bohème* for Scottish Opera and the European premiere of Ana Sokolovic's *The Midnight Court* at the Linbury Theatre, Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. Other operatic roles include Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte*, conducted by James Levine, at Tanglewood, Mozart's Figaro at the Banff Centre and for Opera Lyra, Ottawa, Superintendent Budd in *Albert Herring* at the Aldeburgh Festival, Don Basilio in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* for Scottish Opera and Pistola in *Falstaff* for the same company. In February 2009 he will create the role of Pedro in James Rolfe's opera *Inés* with Toronto's Queen of Puddings. He has appeared on five Naxos recordings with the Aradia Ensemble, including Vivaldi's *La Griselda*.

Shortbread cookies are provided by Carl Strygg at
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Drawings by W.W. Alexander (cover) and Arthur Lismer (page 3)