

Newsletter

SEPTEMBER 2017

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Message From the President

Welcome to our Fall newsletter - complete with an expanded list of recitals and concerts in the Cello Calendar, our annual listings of community orchestras, news of summer activities, and the latest cello gossip. Some interesting cellists are visiting Vancouver for the first time this season; names such as Robert Cohen, Sheku Kanneh-Mason, Harriet Klijgh, and Edgar Moreau. This season promises to be an interesting one for cello aficionados!

I'd like to invite adult members to join our monthly cello ensemble sessions - held on the last Monday evening of the month at the Vancouver Academy of Music, 1270 Chestnut Street. We play everything from Bach to the Beatles with different coaches every month. This is a great opportunity to improve your reading skills and meet like-minded cello enthusiasts - and have a good time! The next session will be held on October 30th at 7:30 pm.

Just a reminder - Cello Club newsletter subscriptions and memberships are due. Membership applications may be found at the bottom of the newsletter or online at www.vancouvercelloclub.com. Dawn Binnington, our treasurer, will send you a receipt for your subscription or contribution to the Club. Your dues go a long way to provide workshops, masterclasses, adult ensemble classes, talks, and concerts by and for the local cello community.

Also, a reminder to teachers that the Vancouver Cello Club offers bursaries to students in financial need. The Cello Club can be of assistance to students who require help with tuition, instrument or bow rental or purchases, sheet music, and festival entry costs. Teachers may write the Cello Club with a description of the circumstances. The Club maintains two funds specifically designated to assist young Cello Club newsletter subscribers in their cello pursuits.

And for high school seniors, it is never too late to consider applying for the annual Caroline E. Riley Award. This scholarship is designed to assist Cello Club newsletter subscribers who are BC residents, Canadian citizens or Landed Immigrants, 17 and older, leaving their home base for the first time, to pursue advanced cello studies. The scholarship is awarded on the basis of an audition. Applications should be in writing, stating the applicant's

proposal for study and may be sent to the Club treasurer by May 1st. The Caroline E. Riley Scholarship is payable directly to an educational institution of the applicant's choice and in the past has exceeded \$1000.

Hope to see you at the next cello event!

Lee Duckles, President

Michael Vann's Notes from his Talk at the AGM About Restricted Items

With the current global attention on the long list of endangered species, both in the animal and plant world the traditional parts that once adorned our bows of the violin family have fallen into a class of restricted items and now face seizure at border crossings under international law known as CITES. Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species. Let's list them

Ivory - For centuries, the head of bows often have a faceplate made of ivory. It was relatively cheap, durable and a good source of protection for delicate heads. Often frogs were also made of ivory as well as the buttons on the screw. The elephant is now on the CITES list.

Whalebone - Once harvested for its meat, oil and bone, whales produced parts for ladies corsets, strips of their jaw bone, both in gold and black color was wound around the bow to serve as a grip. While corsets still exist occasionally, the ribs are now of plastic and the bow grips have a somewhat realistic whalebone imitation made of nylon. The whale is now on the CITES list.

Tortoise shell - Much sought after sea turtles found in the warm waters around South America, their shells made combs, jewel boxes and, of course, frogs for bows as far back as the mid-1700's. They were eaten by indigenous tribes and large shells were at times used as shields in time of war. The tortoise shell frog would add great value to a bow and bow makers learned to fuse a number of layers together to reach the required thickness. The tortoise is now on the CITES list.

Abalone shell - The most sought-after pearl shell to decorate the slides and pearl eyes of the bow frog is the Black Abalone shell found on the coasts of France and California. This shell held a delicacy of meat and at one time, during the 1960s, one location on the coast of British Columbia actually had an Abalone burger

stand. The population was nearly annihilated. The Abalone is now on the CITES list.

Ivory - The international bow made in my shop has only precious metal used as the faceplate, either sterling silver or gold. Whalebone rap is now replaced with either French silk, nylon "whalebone" wrap or wire winding in silver or gold. Tortoise shell as a frog is now replaced with Bison horn, which can range in color from near white to flamed and even black. Very durable, smooth and not susceptible to cracking. Abalone. I now use synthetic opal. A very beautiful manmade very hard plate of highly flamed opal particles.

Since the early years of the 17th century bows encompassed a wide range of practical parts that today can find its owners in legal purgatory.

Often bow frogs were made with the shell of the South American tortoise or ivory from the African elephant while the windings were made from whalebone. Most of these items also adorned the dressing tables in the bedrooms of the common folk.

Whalebone was used as support in lady's corsets, ivory as carved trinkets or handgrips on the pistol and tortoise shell made wonderful combs. Even the woolly mammoth has hit the skids since most customs officers cannot tell the difference between these two tusks.

For decades, Black Abalone was over-harvested for its delicate taste and the shell for its most desired patterns, used in frog slides, guitar inlays and jewellery. It is now controlled by the American Lacey act of 1900 and bows showing this material may be subject to seizure without a Lacey act certificate.

There was an abundance of bow wood available from Brazil. Ebony came from such regions as Viet Nam, Cambodia, South Africa and until the 1970's all these

items were in regular trade. Only one source of ebony is now available with approved certification. CITES has changed all that. All of these items are now on an international protected species list under one of three categories, ranging from a complete ban to a restricted trade. These regulations can carry very heavy fines if they are flouted.

CITES, located in Brussels, is an international organization known as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species. Supported and recognized by most of the countries around the world.

The solution to all these restrictions lies in the "International Bow".

We now make the bow from certified pernambuco, (certification not required after manufacture).

The face plate is now always made of metal, either sterling silver or gold, the frog and button are made from the horn of the bison, a domestic animal in most parts of the world, while the slide and the eyes are of synthetic opal.

The winding, traditionally of whalebone, is now either silver or gold wire wrap or of traditional French silk.

These bows are now the "International" bow.

If your bow has any of the CITE listed parts you may consider not travelling with it. Many of these bows have very high value and can happily remain in domestic domicile. Check our website for many more details at: michaelvann.com/cites.html and michaelvann.com/international-bows-for-sale.html ■

Michael Vann, Bow maker, Vann Bowed Instruments Ltd, 841 Canso Drive, Gabriola, BC, VBR1X0, 1-250-247-8030, 1-800-650-2697

Amateur Orchestra List

Vancouver Philharmonic Orchestra ❖ vanphil.ca / facebook.com/vancouverphilharmonic

Christopher Essex: vancouver.philharmonic@gmail.com ❖ Auditions required / Wednesdays: 7:30pm - 10pm /Shaughnessy Heights United Church, Vancouver /Current openings information available on website

Ambleside Orchestra ❖ amblesideorchestra.ca / facebook.com/AmblesideOrchestra/ Jeff Marliave, 604-984-9066 /

jeff.marliave@vanaqua.org ❖ No auditions required / Wednesdays: 3:30pm - 5:30pm / Highlands United Church, Edgemont Village, N. Vancouver ❖ Fees: \$150.00/adults \$75.00/students / Strings space available, see website for current openings / See website for ages 14-25 scholarship program

Elgar Strings Group ❖ facebook.com/elgarstrings ❖ Katie Ho, 778-323-3016 / katie0603@hotmail.com / No auditions required

Fridays: 10:00am - 12:00pm Willingdon Church, Burnaby / All instruments welcome, looking for violins & violas

North Shore Chamber Orchestra ❖ nschamberorchestra.org ❖ facebook.com/North-shore-Chamber-Orchestra-263553080362149

Kathy Allison, 604-988-8344 / kxallison@gmail.com / info@nschamberorchestra.org ❖ See Facebook for NSCO events/news No auditions required / Wed: 7:30pm - 9:30pm / Sutherland Sec School, N. Vancouver / All instruments welcome, looking for double bass

A Little Night Music ❖ www.alnm.ca ❖ alnm.conductor@gmail.com ❖ No auditions required / Mondays: 7:30pm - 9:30pm / Magee

Secondary School, Vancouver / Cello wait list / Check website for space availability

West Coast Symphony ❖ www.westcoastsymphony.ca / www.facebook.com/westcoastsymphony ❖ Paul McEwen, 604-674-7464

wcsot@westcoastsymphony.ca ❖ See Facebook / website for WCS events/news/ Auditions required/ Thursdays: 7:30pm - 10:00pm VCC Broadway, Vancouver. Contact orchestra for space availability

Fraser Valley Symphony ❖ fraservalleysymphony.org ❖ Kathy Klassen, 1-604-854-2024 / info@fraservalleysymphony.org

Informal auditions / Mondays: 7:15pm - 9:45pm / Aldergrove Community Secondary School, Aldergrove / Contact orchestra for space availability / See website for auditions information - Young Artists Solo Competition

White Rock Community Orchestra ❖ wrco.ca / facebook.com/whiterockcommunityorchestra ❖ Cheryl Jorgenson, 604-535-8949

tomnaverie@gmail.com / No auditions required / Sat: 9:30am - 11:30am Masonic Hall, White Rock / See website for current openings

Brock House 55+ Orchestra ❖ bhorchestra.webs.com ❖ Philip Neame, 604-737-8043 philneam@telus.net ❖ No auditions required

Wednesdays: 10:00am - 12:00pm Brock House, Vancouver / Looking for strings / violins

New Westminster Symphony Orchestra ❖ newwestsymphony.net

facebook.com/New-Westminster-Symphony-Orchestra-130553497004364/ Kyle Friesen ❖ nwso@shaw.ca

Informal auditions / Sundays: 1:45pm - 4:30pm Massey Theatre, Band room / Cello, violin and viola space available

Coquitlam Youth Orchestra ❖ coquitlamyouthorchestra.ca / facebook.com/events/1280309778663004

Reg Quiring, 604-939-9313 / reg@coquitlamyouthorchestra@gmail.ca

Auditions required / Fridays: 3:45pm - 9:30p (Jr./Intermediate/Sr.) / Evergreen Cultural Centre, Coquitlam

Cello space available, contact orchestra for further space availability



Concerts for your Fridge Door

September 25	Adult ensemble / 7:30 p.m. / Rm 22B, VAM
September 27	Lee Duckles Recital / 11:00 a.m. / Calvin Presbyterian Church, Abbotsford
September 30	Ari Barnes with the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra / 7:30 p.m. / Key Meek Centre in West Vancouver
October 14	Post-Secondary Info Session / MOH 5:30 p.m. VAM / Admission reps from Juilliard, Eastman and Ithaca College
October 18	VWMC presents Olivia Cho in recital at 11:00 a.m. / Unitarian Church at 49 th and Cambie
October 25-27	Rolston String Quartet – Music in the Morning / 10:30 a.m. / See web page for locations
October 30	Adult ensemble / 7:30 p.m. / Rm 22B, VAM
November 5	Alban Gerhardt / 3:00 p.m. / Vancouver Playhouse
November 7	Vancouver Cello Quartet / 7:30 p.m. / Gordon Smith Gallery, Lonsdale North Vancouver
November 14	Cello Masterclass with Thomas Wiebe / 5:00 p.m. / Mary Olson Hall / Free
November 26	Pro Nova Ensemble Concert / 7:30 p.m. / Mount Seymour United Church, North Vancouver
November 29	Pro Nova Ensemble Concert / 7:30 p.m. / Kay Meek Centre, West Vancouver
December 3	Sheku Kanneh-Mason / 3:00 p.m. / Vancouver Playhouse
December 15	Adult Ensemble Christmas Play-In / 7:30 p.m. / 2047 W. 46 th Avenue, Vancouver
January 13	Eybler Quartet / 7:30 p.m. / Christ Church Cathedral
January 13/14/15	Harriet Krijgh (Dvorak) at the Orpheum: Jan 13 / 8:00 p.m.; Jan 14 / 2:00 p.m.; Jan 15 / 8:00 p.m.
January 20	Vancouver Cello Quartet / 10:30 a.m. / Hycroft
January 29	Adult Cello Ensemble / 7:30 p.m. / RM 22B, VAM

Paul Marleyn & Mauro Bertoli B.C. Tour

- ★ November 6: Golden / Private House concert
- ★ November 8: Kimberley / Arts @ Centre 64 / 8:00 pm
- ★ November 10: Kaslo / Kaslo Concert Society / St. Andrew United Church
- ★ November 12: Pender Harbour / Concert for Pender Harbour Concert Series / 2:00 pm
- ★ November 14: Cortes Island / Gorge Hall / 7:30 p.m.

Upcoming Events – Fall/Winter 2017

Please visit the respective web sites or Facebook pages for additional concert information

- Vancouver Philharmonic Orchestra – www.vanphil.ca
Saturday October 21, 8pm at Shaughnessy Heights United Church, Vancouver
Sunday December 17, 8pm, Chan Center for the Performing Arts, Vancouver
- Ambleside Orchestra – www.amblesideorchestra.ca ❖ TM - Consult web site.
- North Shore Chamber Orchestra – www.nschamberorchestra.org ❖ TBA - Consult web site or Facebook page.
- A Little Night Music Orchestra – www.alnm.ca
Friday September 29, 7:00pm at Magee Secondary School Theatre, Vancouver Special Open Rehearsal for Canada 150
Monday December 18, 7:00pm at Magee Secondary School Theatre, Vancouver
- West Coast Symphony – www.wEstcoastsymphony.ca
Friday October 13, 7:30pm at Queens Avenue United Church, New Westminster
Saturday October 14, 8pm at Christ Church Cathedral, Vancouver
Friday November 17, 8pm at Christ Church Cathedral, Vancouver
Sunday November 19, 3pm at Centennial Theatre, North Vancouver
Friday December 8, 8pm at Chan Center for the Performing Arts, Vancouver
Sunday December 10, 2pm at Bowen Island Community School
- Fraser Valley Symphony – www.fraservalleysymphony.org
Sunday November 17, 3pm at Matsqui Centennial Auditorium, Abbotsford
- White Rock Community Orchestra – whiterockcommunityorchestra.org
Saturday December 2, 7pm at Saint John’s Presbyterian Church, White Rock
- New Westminster Symphony Orchestra – www.newwestsymphony.net
Sunday November 5, 2pm at Massey Theatre, New Westminster
Friday December 8, 7:30pm at Massey Theatre, New Westminster
- Coquitlam Youth Orchestra – www.coquitlamyouthorchestra.ca
Saturday December 9, 32pm at Evergreen Cultural Centre, Coquitlam
- Elgar Strings Group: Consult Facebook page



The Banff Centre International String Quartet Festival / September 1 – 3, 2017

As a last fling before school and music lessons start again, I decided to attend the BISQ festival to refresh and stimulate with mountains and music. This inaugural festival will be held annually in non-BISQC years on the same closing weekend dates as the triannual competition. For 2017, the BISQ welcomed three past winners – the St. Lawrence String Quartet (winners in 1992), the Jupiter quartet (winners in 2004) and Canada’s 2016 winners: The Rolston String Quartet. A number of guests, including cellist Denis Brott, violinists Blake Bouliot, Alice Lee, singers Julie Nesrallah and Tyler Duncan, pianists Piers Lane, Alexander Malikov and filmmaker Beatriz Carvaggio, all made for exciting and varied programming.

As usual at Banff, the energy level was high and the concerts, all held in the Rolston Hall of the Music Building, were stimulating and at a very high performance level. For me, the favourite of day one was the Jupiter’s String Quartet No. 1 (Metamorphoses Nocturnes 1954) by Gyrdgy Ligeti. The Mendelssohn Octet with the St. Lawrence and the Rolstons exploded with energy. Fun to notice the St. Lawrence used music, the Rolstons (except violin II) used iPads / tablets. A lot of the musicians used programs called “forscore”, which allows you to add bowings and markings like you would with pencil, paper and eraser. (Go to youtube.com and look up “What’s the app for forscore?”.) For those past 50 years of age, it will help you relate to how the young express themselves!

The highlights for me in day 2 concerts were the Rolstons doing R. Murray Schafer’s “String Quartet #2 Waves” and the St. Lawrence and Tyler Duncan (baritone) and Piers Lane in a performance of “La Bonne Chanson”, Op. 61 (1894) by Faure.

Day 3 began with a conversation with Spanish filmmaker Beatriz Caravaggio and Barry Shiffman, Festival Director, concerning her project of a video to collaborate/illustrate “Different Trains” composed in 1988 by Steve Reich.

My favourites today were Barber’s “Dover Beach” with Tyler Duncan and the Jupiter and the Rolstons with pianist Piers Lane in a performance of Shostakovich’s piano quintet in G Minor Opus. 57.

These two works, plus Steve Reich’s “Different Trains” (Rolston String Quartet) made up the final evening program – all on the dark side and especially “Different Trains”, an innovative work for string quartet and pre-recorded tape and now with a video. Autobiographical, it’s about train journeys from New York to Los Angeles made to visit his divorced parents in the first section, leading into one-way trains to Nazi death camps in the second section and the final section the end of WW2 and the survivors’ inability to leave behind anxieties and memories with new trains symbolizing new lives. In spite of very fine performances by the Jupiters and Rolstons, one was left rather depressed because all 3 works are **dark**. I would have preferred to have this program on either the first or second evening. In spite of a glass of champagne afterwards, I did not feel like celebrating.

There were a few glitches and the Banff Centre had new staff for this occasion. However, it was an excellent concept and a very varied and interesting three days of programs (2 per day). I recommend next year’s BCISQ Festival: August 31 – September 2, 2018.

I will be booking my same seats as soon as the info arrives on my computer! ■ Judith Fraser, Editor

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MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FOR 2017 / 2018 (VCC Year-end is May 31)

Membership subscriptions are now due, please send to: Dawn Binnington, Treasurer, 979 Beatty St., Vancouver, BC V6Z 3C5

Please enrol me as a member of The Vancouver Cello Club:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ Email: _____

Student Adult Amateur Professional ❖ Renewal New Member

Contribution Membership	\$ 50.00	Donation to Scholarship Fund	\$ _____
Sustaining Membership	\$ 35.00 – 49.00	Donation to Performance Fund	\$ _____
Family or Individual Membership	\$ 25.00	Donation for General Purposes	\$ _____
Out-Of-Town Membership	\$ 20.00	Donation to Summer Bursaries	\$ _____
Subscription to Newsletter (for non-members)	\$ 20.00		

Where various string quartets are based:

- **Rolston String Quartet** will be heading to Yale School of Music as the resident quartet – also teaching as well as having a busy concert schedule (so **Jonathan Lo** told me at the BISQ festival).
- The **Jupiter String Quartet** is based at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana and ensemble-in-residence for 2017 at the Tuscon Winter Chamber Music Festival.
- The **St. Lawrence String Quartet** has been in residence for many years at Stanford University in California, where they are also all the teaching faculty.
- The **Argus Quartet** has been named by the Julliard School as their graduate resident string quartet for one year starting 2017.
- **Cecilia String Quartet**, 2010 Banff winners released their 4th album: Mendelssohn's String quartets Op. 44 #1 and 2 in October, 2016, and were nominated for a Juno. Unfortunately, they will disband shortly like the 2nd place 2010 **Afiara Quartet**. The cellist from the Afiara, **Adrian Fung**, will be the new administrator of Music in the Morning.
- The 2013 winners, the **Dover Quartet** became the first quartet-in-residence for the Curtis Institute of Music, won the prestigious Cleveland Quartet Award and were recently awarded the Hunt Family Award as part of the Lincoln Centre Emerging Artists Awards.
- **Miro Quartet** is based in Austen, Texas as quartet-in-residence at the University of Texas where its members are on the faculty of music of the Butler School of Music (1998 winners).
- **Daedalus Quartet** is the resident string quartet of the University of Pennsylvania's Music Department. They are involved this fall with a Beethoven Quartet Project at the Annenberg Centre Harold Prince Theatre (2001 winners).

My Summer at Sea, Rosanna Butterfield

One perfect summer evening down at Locarno Beach, perhaps ten or twelve years ago, perched on a log as the sun set over the mountains in the distance, and watched as a procession of three cruise ships sailed out to sea. My family and I wondered aloud what it would be like to go on a cruise up to Alaska, and I remember thinking that while it might be fun for a few days, life on a big ship wouldn't be my cup of tea at all. I used to get terribly motion-sick in cars and sometimes even on the ferry to Vancouver Island, and hated being in enclosed spaces. I think my exact words were something like: "You couldn't pay me to get on one of those things!"

If only my teenage self could have seen into the future — past the four years of music school, past the years in an orchestral training program and the summers at music festivals, past the fifteen professional orchestra auditions, past the temporary contract and the gigs and the many plane tickets and the joy and disappointment and exhaustion that came with it all — to April 25th, 2017, when I boarded Holland America Line's MS Oosterdam to play chamber music for the summer. Sure enough, someone had offered to pay me to "get on one of those things," and I had accepted.

I auditioned for the cruise ship job in September 2016, after several months of disappointing orchestral auditions. I had finished my temporary contract with the Oregon Symphony, and was back home in B.C. after eight years of training and playing in the States. I had taken a good number of auditions in the past few years and although I had come close to "winning" on several occasions, I still didn't have a job. In the midst of preparing for still more auditions and playing some gigs in Victoria and Vancouver, heard about a new program on cruise ships called Lincoln Center Stage. One of my cellist colleagues from Miami was about to start a contract, and told me that I should check it out, so I decided to learn more about what it entailed. It turned out that this was no ordinary cruise ship job of the kind I had heard about before, playing background music at dinner time and sleeping in bunk beds at the very bottom of the ship. Holland America Line was keen to offer classical chamber music at a high level on its ships, and had teamed up with Lincoln Center in New York City to send professional piano quintets to sea. This was the first time

that Lincoln Center licensed its name to be used elsewhere, and they were excited to help develop this new experience for the passengers onboard. Like many string players, my ultimate dream had always been to play chamber music for a living, so this sounded like an opportunity worth pursuing.

Lincoln Center Stage auditions are advertised on musicalchairs.com and other similar sites, and in some ways resemble an orchestral audition. Applicants submit a one-page resume as well as video samples of their playing, and then, if invited, attend a live audition. Currently, RWS Entertainment, the production company in charge of Lincoln Center Stage, is holding auditions several times a year in New York City, as well as other cities in the US and in Europe. I was invited to the audition in New York last September. For the first round, I played the opening of the Dvorak concerto and two contrasting Bach movements, as these were things I had prepared for recent auditions. The only requirement is that the pieces show off different styles, and other colleagues of mine auditioned with lesser-known repertoire, from virtuoso pieces to contemporary works. After waiting to hear whether I had a "call-back," I played the second round, which was a chamber music reading that afternoon with other applicants. We read the third movement of Brahms' piano quintet, the first movement of Dvorak's piano quintet, and a fun arrangement of Nina Simone's "Feeling Good? I had a short interview with the Artistic Director, and then left the building feeling positive about my chances. One month later, on the evening of an especially disappointing audition day. I got a call offering me a contract on the MS Oosterdam for the April-August 2017, and I went for it!

On April 10th, my group arrived in New York for two weeks of intensive rehearsals. With the exception of a violinist and the pianist, who perform together regularly in Europe, the five of us were complete strangers, and we ranged in age from 22 to 41— two musicians from Moldova, one from Chicago, one from Orange County, and mostly-Canadian me! We had different styles, different opinions, different levels of experience, different mother tongues, different priorities in rehearsal, different approaches to just about everything, and those two weeks

were a real lesson in chamber music diplomacy as we prepared to board the ship! We had been sent all the sheet music digitally, but still had a lot of work to do putting together over eight hours of performance material. There were fifteen different programs ranging from "Masterworks" (Brahms and Schumann quintets) to "All-American" (Hoe Down to West Side Story) and "French Connection" (Faure to Jacques Brel), and they were all between 35 and 45 minutes long. We played jazz, bossa nova, Coldplay, The Beatles, and many other non-classical pieces, as well as classical quintets, trios, and solo works in different configurations, and Lincoln Center hired fantastic composers to write exclusive arrangements of all the pieces that weren't originally for Piano Quintet. Somehow we survived the 6-8 hour per day rehearsal weeks, and flew together to San Diego to board the Oosterdam on April 25th. On April 26th we played our first three performances as the ship sailed north to begin the Alaska season.

And so we began our fourteen roundtrips from Seattle to Alaska and back again. Every Sunday morning we arrived in Seattle, dropped off our passengers, and welcomed on another group for the next week. Sundays were also our day off, so we enjoyed a relaxing evening on the first night of each cruise. Mondays were spent at sea, heading north at 22 knots. I had never really appreciated the vastness of Vancouver Island until I sailed the whole length of it twice a week...It's really, really big, and once clear of it, you're only half way to Alaska! On Tuesdays we reached Juneau, and enjoyed an afternoon of hiking and finding wifi, and on Wednesdays we went still further north to the icy grandeur of Hubbard Glacier. Our Thursdays were spent in Sitka, my favourite port of the trip, whose fascinating history includes being the capital of Russian America. We reached Ketchikan on Friday morning, which is known as the rain capital of North America. Yes, it really does get more rain more than Vancouver! On Fridays at noon we would be back on the ship, and it was time to begin the long journey down the coast again. I had the added bonus of seeing my family once a week because the ship docked in Victoria briefly every Sat. night.

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We played fifteen recitals per week — two or three per day, six days a week — and when we weren't performing we were "guest status" on the ship. That meant that we ate in the same areas as the guests, and were free to use the pool, the gym, and other facilities. Our rooms were on "A deck," one floor below the lowest passenger deck but still above the water line. They were tiny, but we were among the small number of ship employees who had rooms to ourselves, so we felt very privileged. Our audiences were a mix of everyone from dedicated concert-goers to complete newcomers who had never attended a classical music concert before. They wandered into our venue as they left the dining room, following the sound of our instruments down the hall, and many came up to us afterwards to tell us how much they had enjoyed it. We had small children

run up and proudly tell us that they play an instrument too, and one girl even had her violin with her on the ship so that she could practice every day. One of the main reasons we felt so connected to the audience was that we spoke from the stage before almost every piece. It took a bit of practice to get comfortable switching between playing and talking, but it was absolutely worth it to give a sense of context and to break down the barrier between the stage and the audience.

I finally got a little taste of what life in a professional chamber group would be like, playing together night after night through bad weather, bad colds, technical difficulties, instrument-bow collisions, and other mishaps. My quintet had little arguments about silly things, a few big arguments about even sillier things, and got to know one another's quirks and foibles as well as our own, but by the end it felt like we

were a family. Life on the Oosterdam was like living on a different planet for three and a half months, and it took me several weeks to get my land legs back. I have enough "ship life" stories to write a whole book about the experience (perhaps I'll get around to it some time), but for now it's enough to say that I'm really glad that I did it. I'm ready to get back to my life as a land-based cellist now, but I would recommend Lincoln Center Stage to anyone who wants to get paid to play chamber music and explore new places for a few months. The program is currently on four Holland America Line ships, but is expanding over the next year, so they're looking for more people! For more information go to: rwsandassociates.com/lincolncentrestage/auditions, or email me at arvyarby@gmail.com ■

Barbro Holmberg...

Barbro was for years a radio producer/director for YLE in Helsinki. On retirement, about six or seven years ago, she decided to take up the cello and this is her story about the cello itself and her introduction to playing it. She is trying to locate the name of the cellist she first heard, but may or may not come up with it. Barbro is a multi-talented person, speaking fluently more than five languages and winner of major national and international awards for her many-layered radio sound features. I thought of the story as a possibility some time for your Cello Club Newsletter (Don Mowatt).

My cello history is this: I went to a wonderful summer concert in Borga, a small town by the sea, close to our summer cottage. There was this magic cello soloist performing that made me speechless. After the concert. I sent a message to my very good friend Lisbeth Landefort who is a flutist, a drama director and an opera director and asked her whether in our/my next life she would play with me, if by some heavenly luck I was horn musically gifted. I got an immediate answer telling me that her advice to me would be to start right away. And I thought: Why NOT? I was retiring that year from Radio and had more time ((thought) to do things worthwhile - and the cello has always been my favourite instrument. I struggled with the piano when I was a small girl, never really loving what I was doing. And my teacher was a lady who loved metronomes, not children... Lisbeth then wrote me a new message informing me that she had her aunt old cello somewhere - it came to Finland with her aunt and Lisbeth's whole family, fleeing from Vienna in 1938-. She had lent it to one of her assistants at the National Opera (of Finland), it certainly no longer needed it, so I could have it. And she the following day- found me a teacher! Eleonora, an exacting but warmhearted Russian cellist, who now has become a very good friend of mine, She certainly has a good sense of humour- that might help in cases like this...

Getting the cello took some time, the assistant had parked it in a sleeping bag in the attic of his summer cottage, he kept postponing going for it because of rehearsals, children's birthdays, then later (we were now already in November) there were snowstorms or other impediments. At last Lisbeth told him to go NOW! And no living creature in this country would dare not obey her, so he drove in panic to his house and brought back the instrument. Dark walnut brown. beautiful! Built in Berlin in the year of the French Revolution: 1789!

Three days later the assistant called Lisbeth and told her what had occurred in his country house: it had burned down completely! And the cello had been in the house for more than 10 years, now saved by three days. So Lisbeth called me and said "NOW: someone on the Upper Floor wants you to play! This is a clear sign!"

And so, I have been playing ever since, two hours every single day, doing miniature progress, much like a small ant in a sandstorm, progress nonetheless! I love it. And my ears are developing - to my great surprise! I did not know that was possible; after all you should start at the age of 6, not 60...

Barbro Holmberg



★ Congratulations to **Amy Laing** (husband Roman Tomé) on the birth of a second son, Luke Quinn, on September 16th (just missed my birthday!).

★ Nice to hear **Michael Unterman** and Byron Schenkman perform one of the opening concerts of the Vancouver Bach Festival sponsored by Early Music, BC. Titled, "Conversions: Mendelssohn, Moscheles and Bach", the concert was held August 4th at 1:00 p.m. at Christ Church Cathedral (see Alumni section for Michael's bio).

★ **WILDER & DAVIS LUTHIERS** will be in Vancouver October 30 – November 4 at their usual spot, the Sylvia Hotel. To make an appointment, contact: wilder_davis_luthiers@mail.vresp.com All strings are on sale until September 30th.

★ Here is summer news from **Nicole Chung**: "I've just returned from the Bowdoin Festival and I'm back in Ann Arbor now. Bowdoin was a ton of fun. I had such a wonderful musical experience. Working with Steven Doane was truly the highlight of my years. (He also remembers you and spoke very highly of Sylvia!). He was so inspiring and exciting to work with and I hope to work with him again in the future. I played in three chamber groups this summer: Souvenir de Florence, Brahms C Minor piano quartet and Dvorak's Dumky piano trio. My Souvenir de Florence group was amazing. All six of us got along very well which was a surprise to all of us because our first few rehearsals were a little chaotic and slow. The Dumky and Brahms groups had a more tense dynamic. But in the end, all three groups performed very well and I have the videos from them if you would like to see. I'm happy to be back in Michigan. Now, I have to learn my excerpts for the seating auditions next month."

★ New from VSO Cellist, **Olivia Blander**, currently on sabbatical: "Five years ago, I was very fortunate to join the faculty of the Saint James Music Academy, a wonderful community music school in the downtown east side neighbourhood. At Saint James you will find a super energetic atmosphere where hundreds of lovely kids are spending their time after school. It was created to provide an opportunity for families who might otherwise not have access to or be able to afford music education, and the kids who attend take part in choir, orchestra, theory and technique classes. Currently, there are 32 budding cellists at Saint James, from grade to up to grade twelve. Please come and visit us – you will be inspired!

★ News from **Winca Chan** in Hong Kong, who was married last December to a pharmacist, is very busy playing a lot of pop shows and new media music – very different from classical music. However, one of her students received the gold medal in the Hong Kong Senior Cello Competition.

ALUMNI... Michael Unterman & Evan Buttar



MICHAEL UNTERMAN enjoys a busy performing career on both modern and baroque cello. On baroque he currently serves as principal cellist of Boston Baroque and performs with The Handel &

Haydn Society, the Boston Early Music Festival Orchestra, Trinity Wall Street, and New York Baroque Inc. Special performances have included appearances in recital at the Vancouver Bach Festival, and as principal cello with Les Arts Florissants, Pacific Baroque Orchestra, and at the Britten-Pears Institute in England. He was also a member, from 2014-2017, of the Portland Baroque Orchestra, twice appearing as concerto soloist. In 2014 Michael earned a Master's degree in Historical Performance from The Juilliard School, where he studied with Phoebe Carrai, and performed with Juilliard415 under the direction of artists such as William Christie, Richard Egarr, Monica Huggett, Robert Mealy, Jordi Savall, and Masaaki Suzuki.

On modern cello, Michael's primary work has been with the Boston-based chamber orchestra A Far Cry which he joined in 2010. With the ensemble, he has toured the United States, Canada, and Austria, collaborated with artists such as Yo-Yo Ma, Anthony Marwood, and Leon Fleisher, and recorded three albums, playing solo cello on the orchestra's recordings of Schoenberg's *Verklarte Nacht* and Christopher Tignor's "Thunder Lay Down in the Heart." He has been praised in reviews for his "particularly lovely solo playing" and "nuanced, sensitive, and wholly gorgeous collaborations" (Boston Musical Intelligencer).

One of Michael's passions in music has been to chip away at convention, to push towards a more finely curated, relevant, and engaging concert experience. A Far Cry has been an ideal forum for this through its policy of allowing members to design concert programs. Programs of Michael's have included one that interspersed works by Hindemith, Corelli, Rossini and Grieg within a set of Jean Francaix preludes; another, called "Divisions," that increasingly fractured the orchestra as it progressed, through works by Paert, Vaughan Williams, Steve Reich and Beethoven; and "VS." which explored competition and conflict in music, through works by Zorn, Rameau, Biber, Takemitsu and others. His programs have been praised in reviews as "just the kind of imaginative artistic agenda that more groups should be prodded to try" (Boston Globe) and "the way good programming should proceed" (ArtsFuse), and the program "Subtraction" (feat. music by Cage, Schnittke and Haydn) was named in the Boston Classical Review's Top Ten Performances of 2012. Michael has performed at the Tanglewood, Kneisel Hall, Banff, and Birdfoot music festivals, and played under the batons of Simon Rattle, James Levine, Bernard Haitink and Rafael Fruhbeck de Burgos. Recent special performances have included a performance of the Mendelssohn Octet with the Aeolus Quartet on a "What Makes it Great?" concert with Robert Kapilow in Merkin Hall (NYC), and a concert produced at ICA Boston entitled "The Long Count," curated by artist Matthew Ritchie and featuring indie/crossover artists Aaron and Bryce Dessner, Kelley Deal, Shara Nova, and Evan Ziporyn.

Michael is an alum of the New England Conservatory (B.Mus. '08, M.Mus. '11) where he studied with Laurence Lesser and Natasha Brofsky, and coached chamber music with Roger Tapping, Lucy Chapman, Paul Katz, and members of the Borromeo String Quartet. In 2008-09, he studied in Barcelona, Spain on a Fulbright Scholarship, working with Lluís Claret and the Quartetto Casals.

A native of Vancouver, BC, Michael began his cello studies with Judy Fraser at the VAM, also

received important instruction from cellist John Kadz, Heilwig von Koenigslow, his longtime quartet coach, and Kathy Bjorseth, his mother, pianist, and longtime musical collaborator.

EVAN BUTTAR was born and raised in Vancouver, Canada. After completing a Bachelor on modern cello in Ottawa, 2014, he moved to the Netherlands to pursue a baroque cello Masters with Jaap ter Linden at the Royal Conservatory of the Hague. He graduated in 2016, and the same year started a second Masters there on the viola da gamba with Mienke van der Velden and Philippe Pierlot. He enjoys playing and exploring a wide variety of repertoire from early baroque to modern with many ensembles, orchestras, and as a soloist. Evan plays with groups such as Ribattuta Musica, Café Haydn/Hummel, and the Dutch Baroque Orchestra, and is a recipient of BC Arts Council and Adriana Jacoba Fonds scholarships. He has performed in many festivals, such as Musica Antica da Camera (The Hague), Geelvinck Fortepiano Festival, MAFestival Brugge and Oude Muziek Utrecht fringe, and Bach Festival Dordrecht. Evan plays a baroque cello by Jakob Weiss (ca. 1745) generously on loan from the collection of The Dutch Musical Instruments Foundation (het Nationaal Muziekinstrumenten Fonds).

I first started being interested in historically informed performance practice (HIP) at the end of high school, when I was still studying with Judith Fraser at the Vancouver Academy of Music. A fellow cellist let me borrow a solo viola da gamba CD, *Les Voix Humaines* by Jordi Savall, and I was hooked. The following year, I went off to the University of Ottawa with Paul Marleyn for my Bachelor's, and immediately searched for anything viola da gamba related in the area. Surprisingly enough, I found a teacher and instrument right away! The teacher was Barbara Zuchowicz, and the instrument was (funnily enough) from the school, collecting dust somewhere in a storage room. I started lessons, and though it was slow and somewhat difficult, I enjoyed it a lot, and the feeling of gut strings was something new and exciting to me (and still is). After one year with that, Barbara suggested I try the Tafelmusik Baroque Summer Institute (TBSI), which I did that next summer on baroque cello. Those two weeks were very challenging and trying, but also eye-opening – I highly suggest that course to anyone interested in or curious about HIP. Over the next three years of my time in Ottawa, I started playing more and more on baroque cello, and by my final year, I was convinced I wanted to pursue my studies in this field.

The summer before my final year in Ottawa, I attended four different festivals throughout North America to learn more, and to find a teacher to study with: TBSI (again), Oberlin Baroque Performance Institute, International Baroque Institute at Longy, and the Early Music Vancouver Baroque Instrumental Programme. At that final program (which has now moved to Minneapolis), I met Jaap ter Linden, and I knew right away that he was the one I wanted to pursue my studies with. So, that's what I did! The following year, 2014, I started my studies at the Koninklijk Conservatorium Den Haag (the Royal Conservatory of the Hague) in the Netherlands, coming to Europe and living in another country for the first time in my life. It was a slightly scary move, but I soon felt at ease, and have not felt any doubt about my decision. The atmosphere for music here, in both this country and the conservatory, is amazing and inspiring, not only for HIP, but also for modern performance, jazz, composition, etc. The school is very international, with students coming from all across the globe to study here.



One of the great things about being in Europe is how close everything is – already I've been to nearly ten other countries for vacation and for concerts, and the history and beauty is like nothing I had seen before. People in the Netherlands are very friendly (if quite direct), and it is easy to get by with just English since nearly everyone here speaks it – I have been learning a bit of Dutch recently, however, as I intend to stay here for at least a few more years, and it's nice to be able to speak the native tongue.

During my first two years here, I completely immersed myself in school life. The early music department at the conservatory is one of the biggest in the world, and it's amazing how much activity is always taking place. It was a bit slow for me at the beginning, but once I started performing in small school concerts, I got asked for more and more things, and soon I found myself completely busy with tons of rehearsals, lessons, master classes, concerts, and so on. It was really hard to say no! It's a skill that is tough to develop, but I certainly did here, by necessity – I hardly had any time to myself, and for my own practice. However, that immersion was very educational and essential for me. I learned a lot not only from the excellent teachers at the school, but also from my colleagues. Plus, playing through so much repertoire is vital for learning about older styles. Over the past year, I have taken a bit more time for my own practice and been involved in more professional engagements, but still take part in school groups and activities quite often, just not as intensely as before.

Throughout my Masters on baroque cello, I also took minor lessons on the viola da gamba, since I was still interested in learning more about this instrument (I hadn't gotten very far when I was still in Canada). These lessons were with Mienke van der Velden, and I found her teaching to be helpful, supportive, and inspiring, and so after I finished with the baroque cello, I decided to pursue another degree, this time on the viola da gamba. I was accepted to do a second Masters here with her and Philippe Pierlot (who seems to me and most people to be some sort of musical genius), and I just finished my first year of that in June. I am really enjoying learning this instrument and getting immersed in its special sound and language. I especially love that playing the gamba opens whole new worlds of repertoire, especially French baroque music, and repertoire before the late 17th-century, which is where our solo repertoire begins as cellists.

Over the past three years, I have made quite a few connections, and slowly but steadily built up a professional life. Because it is such a thriving field here, it is also very competitive, and hard to break into the professional world. However, it is still possible (or seems to be, anyway) with some hard work and patience. I am working with some colleagues on building ensembles, but this always takes time, and is quite challenging when everyone (including myself) is so busy with concerts all around the continent. One highlight so far has been playing the first two Beethoven cello sonatas and a set of variations with a fortepianist here, Tullia Melandri – we concertized around the Netherlands over the past year, playing on various historical pianos and on my wonderful old cello from the Dutch Musical Instruments Foundation. Another highlight has been playing the viola da gamba solos for a tour of Bach's St. John Passion, which is a nerve-wracking but rewarding experience.

All in all, my experience in Europe has been incredible so far. I have learned and grown a lot as a musician and as a person, and love the atmosphere and feeling here. For anyone interested in this field, or looking for a change of scenery in general, I can highly recommend taking a leap of faith and hopping over the pond. ■