

REVIEWS

The Musical world of Frances James and Murray Adaskin. By Gordana Lazarevich. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988.(331 p., \$37.50)

There are all too few books chronicling the development of music in Canada. Gordana Lazarevich's account of the role of Frances and Murray Adaskin in this development sheds valuable light on activities during the mid-twentieth century.

Chapter 1, The Early years, sets the tone and provides the necessary background. Frances James was born in Saint John, and became one of Canada's premier singers, associated with many of the country's leading musicians: Walter Clapperton, Ernest MacMillan and George Lambert among others. Toronto was the birthplace of Murray Adaskin, and he was destined to become an active violinist, conductor, and composer.

Chapter 2 reviews the emerging careers of Frances and Murray. During the 1930s they performed at the Banff Spring Hotel. In 1932 Murray formed his Banff Springs Trio (later known as the Toronto Trio), and Frances was always a star attraction at the hotel. Frances and Murray were even married at the hotel - - but only after the Trio had completed its evening session. So, during the decade of the Depression, winters were spent in Toronto and summers in Banff. There were early involvements with the CBC, and Frances' many recitals and cross country tours; Murray was a member of the Toronto Symphony, and later led his group at the Royal York Hotel. Then Canoe Lake in Algonquin Park became the compositional retreat, and the Adaskins spent many a summer there.

The next five chapters review Canadian performance in the 1940s, the studies with John Weinzweig, the establishment of the Canadian League of Composers, and the twenty-one year stay in Saskatoon at the University of Saskatchewan. These twenty-one years, 1952-1973, were fruitful ones for both Saskatoon and the Adaskins. As Head of the Department of

Music, Murray stimulated a great interest in composition and in Canadian music. His course in music appreciation was one of the university's most popular and successful offerings. He founded the Sunday Evening Series and brought to the campus and to the city such eminent artist as Benjamin Britten, Peter Pears, Roman Totenberg, Soulima Stravinsky, Julian Bream, Leon Goossens, and a host of fine Canadian performers. And there was music of Ives, Copland, Stravinsky, Milhaud, and Schoenberg being performed in Saskatoon.

During the summer of 1959 the Adaskins organized a Festival of Music: it was a marvellous event and attracted to Saskatoon twenty-one guests who performed the music of Carter, Dallapiccola, Copland, Barber, and Ives. Always interested in the visual arts, Murray staged in subsequent years a number of joint ventures with the university's Department of Art.

In the late 1950s and with the assistance of the Cosmopolitan Club of Saskatoon, the Saskatoon Symphony with Murray as leader began a commissioning program. Robert Fleming in 1958 was the first recipient. In ensuing years the Symphony, under subsequent conductors, and with the Club, welcomed Canadian composers Jean Papineau-Couture, John Weinzweig, Udo Kasemets, Neil Chotem, Harry Somers, Harry Freedman, Violet Archer, Eldon Rathburn, and Talivaldis Kenins. This remarkable program was one of the first in Canada.

During the 1967 Centennial Year some unique concerts/exhibitions were held at the university. The music played was complemented by displays of archival material of the featured composers. Local musicians joined with some of Canada's excellent ensembles in presenting the music of Papineau-Couture, Weinzweig, Pentland, Naylor, Pepin and

Rathburn.

Murray retired in 1973 and the Adaskins moved to Victoria where their musical activities continued to flourish. When Frances passed away, the Department of Music at the University of Saskatchewan dedicated its 1988/89 Celebrity Series to the memory of a great artist.

One must take issue with the inaccurate statement on page 206 regarding the Amati instruments. In point of fact, the Amatis have not gathered dust, nor have they become obscure. The reference on page 214 to the Saskatoon music faculty leaves a faulty impression and is incon-

sistent with the otherwise high quality of the book. Despite these minor criticisms, the book is a great success -- well written and certainly well researched, with useful photos, lists of compositions, musical examples, and a worthwhile bibliography. Dr. Gordana Lazarevich of the University of Victoria is to be commended. She has identified the lasting accomplishments of the Adaskins and has clearly documented their significant contributions, within the context of a valuable panorama of musical life in Canada.

-David Kaplan
University of Saskatchewan

La Chanson dans tous ses états. Par Robert Giroux et al. Montréal: Triptyque, 1987. (238 p., 14,95\$)

L'étude de la chanson populaire, tout particulièrement d'expression française, et de son environnement culturel et social n'est malheureusement pas très avancée. Les ouvrages de référence font défaut et si les biographies tapageuses abondent, les ouvrages plus sérieux sont encore rares. Déjà de ce point de vue, on ne peut que saluer cette collection de douze articles parue chez Triptyque.

Au premier coup d'oeil, on est frappé par le contenu très varié de cet ouvrage; en effet bien que la chanson québécoise soit le sujet de cinq études, on traite aussi de musique punk, de vidéo-clip, de censure, et de Maria Callas! Les périodes couvertes varient aussi: de la fin du XIXe siècle jusqu'aux années 1980. Le fil conducteur qui unit les différents articles de cette collection ne se situe donc pas à ces niveaux mais plutôt dans l'approche choisie par les auteurs: ici il n'est pas question de la chanson comme forme strictement musicale mais plutôt de la relation chanson-société -- la chanson comme objet de consommation, la chanson et les différents médias, la chanson analysée du point de vue de la linguistique, de la communication ou dans son aspect social. Ce fil conducteur donne à cet ouvrage toute son originalité et ici

on peut parler de réussite.

Cependant ce qui peut être moins intéressant pour le lecteur est la variation très évidente au niveau du style et de la méthodologie des auteurs: au style presque journalistique de Bruno Roy (Ils chantent, qu'ils paient!) s'opposent les styles plus "académiques" de Jacques Julien (La fonction conative dans la chanson populaire) ou de Réal LaRoche (La POPularisation de l'opéra par les industries culturelles). Je dois avouer que ces changements peuvent être un peu déroutants.

L'originalité et le type des recherches varient aussi; évidemment chaque lecteur compte tenu de ses intérêts et connaissances, appréciera différemment chaque article, néanmoins il m'est apparu que les articles de J. Julien et Réal LaRoche (La POPularisation... ainsi que La musique d'une image à l'autre) étaient les plus fouillés et les plus originaux; l'étude de ce dernier portant sur la relation entre l'opéra (avec Maria Callas en exemple) et l'industrie du disque est particulièrement intéressante.

L'article de Renée Berthe-Drapeau portant sur la chanson québécoise de

1920 à 1950 ainsi que les quatre articles signés ou auxquels a contribué Robert Giroux sont les plus riches en données "dures". Ce dernier collabore avec Jean-Jacques Schira à un essai discographique, s'interroge sur le présent du disque québécois et nous informe au sujet de la chanson populaire en Estrie. Ce genre d'étude est probablement plus susceptible de servir de tremplin à d'autres recherches sur le même sujet.

L'article de Manon Poulin, une comparaison entre Nathalie Simard et la série télévisée *Passe-partout*, s'arrête malheureusement un peu trop tôt, lorsque l'auteur discute de leur image publique et lorsque le lecteur commence à s'amuser! Tant qu'à l'étude de Yves Laberge portant sur le vidéo-clip, il est surtout intéressant pour sa synthèse

de la relation chanson-médias. Finalement les articles portant sur la censure et le punk ne m'ont appris rien de neuf quoiqu'ils comportent des informations intéressantes.

En général les articles sont bien construits, contiennent des notes bibliographiques, et la présentation typographique est assez soignée. Ce volume n'est pas un ouvrage de référence à proprement parler et n'est pas non plus de lecture toujours facile mais toute bibliothèque publique ou académique qui s'intéresse à la chanson populaire devrait se le procurer.

-Pierre Gamache
Bibliothèque nationale du Canada

Hello out there! Canada's new music in the world, 1950-85. Proceedings of the conference held in Toronto October 31, November 1 and 2, 1986 co-sponsored by the Institute for Canadian Music, Faculty of Music, University of Toronto, and the Canadian Music Centre, Ontario Region. Edited by John Beckwith and Dorith R. Cooper. Toronto: Institute for Canadian Music, 1988. (CanMus Documents, 2. v, 197 p., \$15.00)

The appearance of Hello out there! is a most welcome event -- a remarkable contribution to the tortoise-paced growth of information about Canadian music and musical life.

The editors of this volume of proceedings, John Beckwith and Dorith Cooper, tell us in the Preface that the conference was a "meeting for rather than of composers"... "to examine the isolation voiced by Canadian composers regarding the evidently limited contact between their repertoire and the world at large" and "to examine what has (and has not yet) been accomplished by agencies and individuals committed to...the dissemination of Canadian new music". The intended audience of the conference may have been the composers, but this publication deserves to have in its audience students, researchers and educators in the field of Canadian music, and in any of the fields related to its dissemination, promotion and pre-

servation.

The volume is a record of twenty-two papers which were presented in the context of six panels: on the cultural agencies; the media; visitors; criticism and education; the performers; and the composers. Also published were significant introductions by the panel chairmen of three of the sessions, and comments made during the discussion periods following each panel. Three "short presentations" about topics related to the publication of recordings and scores were not published, although the names of the speakers were given. It is disappointing that these could not have been included, as they surely contained information which could have contributed to the descriptive and documentary value of the volume.

Most of the topics covered are the expected ones -- the CBC, RCI, CMC; Canadian performers and music abroad;

music and scholarly publishings. Papers are also presented on Canadian film and TV music, Canadian Studies programs, and performing rights relations. The panel entitled "Visitors" made an interesting contribution. Mariano Etkin, an Argentinian composer, Sven-Ake Landstrom of Swedish Radio, William Elias of the Israeli Music Centre, and Richard Tang, a composer from the Chinese University of Hong Kong discussed the dissemination of contemporary music in their countries, and offered their perceptions of the situation in Canada.

The papers range in style from the informal to the scholarly; from research-derived presentation of data and trends to experientially-derived presentation of views from the field; from straight forward documentation of the state of current policy and practice to wishful musings or concrete proposals for changes to advance the status quo. The negative impressions and findings are presented with the positive, but thankfully there appears to have been an effort made to avoid the oft-heard lamentations. All papers are excellently edited, readable, and full of useful information and ideas. The inclusion of the discussions between the panelists and the audience is enlightening and encourages us, the post-partum audience, to read the papers less passively and enter an on-going dialogue.

Several of these papers should be considered required reading for anyone interested in Canadian artistic activities in any medium. For example, the summaries by Karen Kieser and Gilles Potvin of the differing mandates of the CBC and RCI and their roles in the production and dissemination of recordings of Canadian music and musicians for the broadcast community and for commercial distribution are particularly illuminating. The survey of the coverage of contemporary Canadian music in general Canadian cultural periodicals, by David Melhorn-Boe, and that of the coverage in recent general music and new music reference works, by John Beckwith, provide valuable information for any of

us involved in reference and research advisory work. The discourse on contemporary music criticism and its role as a vehicle for the survival of new musical works, by William Benjamin, contains important food for thought for educators, critics, musicologists, and composers.

The conference was held over two years ago, and some of the factual information is expectedly dated. The wonderful program through which Canadian University Music Society member institutions received each successively-issued volume of the Anthology of Canadian music, to which Gilles Potvin refers, was unfortunately (and quietly) terminated. Recent political events render William Benjamin's assertion that "we Canadians are too fair-minded and democratic to buy the trickle-down theory in economics..." wryly humorous. The passage of time also allows opportunity for positive change, and the editors point out that the Canadian critical journal devoted to contemporary music, which was proposed by Dr. Benjamin, is being actively considered.

The volume includes several useful features: a list of conference participants and registrants and their institutional affiliations, photographs of the Canadian composers and the visitors who spoke, and the programs of three concerts of new music held as part of the conference. The list of end-notes for those papers presented with documentation of sources or amplification of information brought additional useful bibliography to the work.

All charts, table, and visual examples were reprinted within the text of their related papers. The inclusion of the cartoon by Henry, which illustrated Michael Schulman's report on Hello out there! in Music scene, no. 353 (January/February) was a happy final touch.

Many times we have had to welcome the appearance of a new Canadian music source with the pronouncement "It has many flaws, but it's better than

nothing". Hello out there! is one of the others, a work we welcome without qualification. We should applaud and encourage the Institute for Canadian Music

in its efforts to chronicle Canadian musical life.

-Sandra Benet Acker
University of Victoria

MLA WINTER MEETING CLEVELAND MARCH 1989

The Music Library Association 58th annual conference was held at the Stouffer Tower City Plaza Hotel, March 14-18, with a total registration of 453 music librarians and 49 exhibitors. Of necessity, this report covers only those sessions I was able to attend; for further information, please consult forthcoming issues of the MLA Newsletter.

MLA conferences usually begin with a pre-conference to explore current trends and practices in a specialized area. This year "Music in an online environment" was investigated through three plenary sessions and a number of small group discussions. In the plenary sessions, Michael Malinconico from the Pratt School of Computer Information and Library Science spoke on the design of online public access catalogues (OPACs), Martin Dillon from OCLC described "Conflicts and compromises" or "why doesn't it do what we want it to, and when will that feature be available?", and Walter Crawford from RLG discussed user interface with OPACs. All of the speakers were conversant with the unique qualities of music material and the careful consideration which must be given to it in online environments, particularly with regard to OPAC display and search strategies. None of them seemed very hopeful that vendors and parent institutions were going to spend the extra money and time to develop programming to solve the problems, since the music sector of the library automation market is small. Mr Crawford was quite blunt in saying that most of the information needed to answer such basic questions as duration of a work, instrumentation, etc., were already contained in music cataloguing records, but access to it was being hindered by system design.

The small group discussions dealt with user groups, recon, authorities, maintenance of bibliographic records, public relations and bibliographic instruction. We were each allowed to attend four of these sessions, chosen in advance. Since the University of Saskatchewan has already converted its holdings and has had an OPAC for almost 3 years, I did not attend the sessions dealing with recon and public relations. The discussion of bibliographic maintenance centred around "you don't know how bad it is until you see it online", and "where do you stop?" There was no consensus on how to handle bibliographic maintenance of the catalogue; some institutions have whole units, mainly staffed part-time by students, systematically examining all their records. Others correct records as they are brought to the cataloguing department's attention, as we do. Another method was to check common names and pattern headings. One institution was comparing its shelflist for class M against the OPAC and correcting typographical errors.

The session on user groups centred around how to organize such a group. It should function as a communications vehicle between the vendor and the system users, not as an arena for confrontation.

The session on authority control was historical and descriptive, whereas the bibliographic instruction gathering operated on the "round table" principle. Bibliographic instruction is naturally tailored to the local system, and the majority of music librarians are using the traditional "lecture and handout" system. I heard very little about CAI-based methods or hypertext.