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REVIEWS

Serge Garant et la révolution musicale au Québec. Ed. by Marie-Thérèse Lefebvre. Verdun: Louise Courteau éditrice, 1986. (239 p., \$34.95)

This book of writings both by and about the Canadian composer-conductor Serge Garant appeared in late 1986 only a few weeks after Garant's death at fifty-six, from cancer, on November 1. The event is referred to only in the caption to the frontispiece and in a five-page "postlude", but inevitably creates a shadowy context for the reader.

Pierre Boulez had several professional contacts with Garant starting at the time of his visit to Canada with the Barrault theatre troupe in 1952. His brief preface, without mentioning their association, states a number of generalities

about contemporary music. On the other hand the "avant-propos" of Robert Leroux, percussionist in many performances directed by Garant, is a touching tribute. Leroux also outlines the scope of the volume. The author/editor, in an "avant-dire", describes her first encounters with Garant as a member of his class at the University of Montréal in the mid-1970's. She goes on to state her guiding point of view, namely that the story of Garant's thirty-year career as composer, performer, conductor, teacher, writer, and radio-television broadcaster is at the same time "the story of a society, its cultural growth, its search for an identity"

(the reviewer's translation). Lefehvre compares Garant to the late Pierre Mercure in his impact on Québec's musical life. She feels that, like Mercure, Garant took a position against those who would return to past values, and she sees this as an important attitude in the "stifling climate" of mid-twentieth century Québec.

The body of the book consists of a well-researched illustrated biographical essay, fifty-two pages long, by Lefehvre, followed by 135 pages of various "écrits" by Garant himself, ranging from essays on particular works through concert reviews (written for L'Autorité, where one of his fellow writers was René Lévesque), and scripts from his radio series "Music of our century", to miscellaneous interviews and commentaries on musical questions.

The illustrations are generous and exceptionally interesting. There is the manuscript of an early song (1949) to a text by Verlaine. There are photos of early performances in which Garant participated as saxophonist, clarinetist, pianist, or hand conductor, in his native Sherbrooke. There is a fine photo of Claude Vivier, accompanying a selection from his lively correspondence with Garant. Finally there are several group photos -- for example, Messiaen's class in the early 1950s (not all students shown are identified; is that Clermont Pépin in the rear?), and one of Stockhausen's visits to Montreal.

Back matter includes a list of Garant's musical works, a list of CBC Archives' of talks and performances by him, and all the programs of his performances in Sherbrooke during 1949-51. To judge from this, the milieu in which he spent his youth may not have been as "stifling" as those of other medium-sized centres in Canada at the time. His outstanding multiple talents found outlets as piano soloist in the Rhapsody in blue, as clarinet soloist in standard repertoire by Weber and Brahms, and as hand conductor of the indigestible Opus 43 of Schoenberg among more conventional fare.

The biographical essay details the musician's growth into maturity. On his return from Parisian study in the fall of 1952 he accompanied a vocalist in a Sherbrooke concert whose program emphases were significant -- Messiaen, Debussy, Matton, Garant. After relocating in Montreal he organized, with Gilles Tremblay and François Morel, the first of several concerts where the

Canadian avant-garde was performed alongside some of the country's earliest exposures to Webern, Messiaen, and Boulez. The series, "Musique de notre temps," has general historical importance aside from its particular effect in highlighting Garant's own tastes and creative originality. His Nucléogramme, 1955, was the first Canadian work to mix taped and live-performed sounds, and his Pièces pour quatuor, 1958, the first Canadian aleatoric work (according to the Encyclopedia of music in Canada). While moving into these new creative areas, Garant supported himself as ballet accompanist, conductor of light music on radio, and occasionally as journalistic and broadcast critic and program host.

Wider success came with Anerca, 1961, a chamber-ensemble setting of English translations by Edward Carpenter from Inuit poetry. The work was first performed as part of Mercure's "Semaine de musique actuelle" in Montreal that year, replayed in Toronto's Ten Centuries Concerts a year or so later, and soon after that recorded in the RCA Victor Centennial series. Following Mercure's tragic death in a highway accident early in 1966, Garant was the obvious choice to direct the newly-formed Société de musique contemporaine du Québec. Lefehvre gives hardly any coverage to his work with this organization, spanning two decades. The omission is unfortunate and no reason is given (was she denied cooperation in gathering material?); she merely says that this phase of his career "deserves a volume to itself." A number of the essays by Garant on works by himself and others are however taken from SMCQ program notes.

From his later career, glimpses are given of his trips abroad. From Bali in 1972 he says he appreciates the music there but feels it is only exportable to a limited degree -- a different reaction, if one recalls correctly, from that of his colleagues Tremblay and Vivier. From Italy, where he followed Harry Somers as a visiting Canadian composer-in-residence in 1973-74, he says he feels as if in a museum, and greatly misses the North American "taste for the new." His later contacts with other musical centres in his own country are insufficiently noted. A more balanced picture would have to include his teaching and conducting work at various times in Vancouver, Banff, Ottawa, Toronto, and elsewhere (for example with the National Youth Orchestra of Canada). His

conducting of his Offrande II with the University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra in the mid-1970's was a vivid experience for the student members, and Garant said he found it an illuminating one for his part as well. Garant identified strongly both with his time and with his territory, which he took to be North America, or Canada, or Quebec, as occasion merited. It was aesthetics, not root-culture, which turned him so outspokenly against territorial manifestations such as historicism, pictorialism, or folklorism in music. In later years he always wore his Order of Canada lapel pin with pride.

For a musician so engrossed in performance and composition, he also wrote extensively and with extraordinary articulateness on musical matters. The criticisms collected here are strongly expressed, and cover a wider gamut than one might expect. Garant wrote in 1966:

You can't love contemporary music without loving music (Machaut, Monteverdi, Bach, Mozart, etc.). But I deplore a cult of the past which closes all doors to a magnificent present...Our era is extraordinarily rich...

Thus among the reviews we find Garant enthusing over La Traviata, Mozart's E major piano trio, and other classics, but the emphasis moves most often towards contemporary and Canadian works. In 1955 he regards a new album of Canadian piano pieces as representing our music's "academic phase," and comes down particularly hard on Jean Papineau-Couture's contribution, though at the same time praising Morel's. His early frank criticisms of works by P  pin, Charpentier, and Mercure are striking examples of his courage and outspokenness -- despite which, one gathers, he never lost the respect of his colleagues. In 1962 he regrets the lack of recording and publishing outlets for Canadian music, and a concert-management scene in which Canadian music is generally "played as a last resort." He finds Montreal's new music newer and bolder than that of Toronto or Western Canada (his cautious "as far as I know" suggests he was aware of poor communications at that period). He greets the Quartet of Champagne as "like early Schoenberg," and praises Glenn Gould's performances while taking issue with his keenness for the Ode to Napoleon and the music of Krenek. In later reviews and program notes he writes interestingly about Ives, Reich, Rochberg, and Crumb.

The most striking portrait of Garant as a critic, tastemaker, and new-music crusader is found in a 1970 interview with Claude Gingras, music reviewer for La Presse. Garant complains that at the SMCQ concert where the Montreal premi  res of Zeitmasse and Offrande I were given -- two especially challenging new works -- no critics attended. To the reply that there was a piano recital by Michelangeli the same evening, Garant responds:

"It is more important here to attend a first performance."

"But Michelangeli is also creative."

"Not at all."

"The rest of the [SMCQ] program had already been heard."

"You are fantastic. What of the rest of Michelangeli's program? -- you never heard any of it before? It's snobbery, this veneration of star performers...grotesque. I prefer not to talk about it..."

That is Serge Garant to the life.

The "Postlude" reads poignantly. It is based on an interview with Garant only a few months before he died. He speaks frankly of his "companionship with death." Asked why he has been composing less in the 1980s, he says he has been busy with teaching and conducting duties, and also that he wants to try using "a new [musical] language" rather than relying on "the same recipes as ten years ago." He finds what he calls the "retro" attitude of younger composers disturbing: "What is the use of making fakes in the style of 1929? It's idiotic." About his own work he says: "I remain always surprised when told my music is violent, because to me it seems not violent enough."

Though this book was not initially planned as such, its appearance as a sort of memorial to the composer may have resulted in a too-hasty production. This is suggested by the many regrettable small errors: "Ugo" Kasemets, Louis "Quilicot," Ernest "Block," "Earl" Brown, "Norman" Beecroft, Berg's "Opus 2" Quartet (Opus 3 is meant), Strauss' "Hildenleben," and so on. Another cavil: the journalistic excerpts in the "  crits" section are set in three columns in an uncomfortably small size of the sans-serif type-face chosen for the book, and they are quite hard to read.

Despite its uneven production and its lack of the cohesiveness of a full-scale study (the subtitle's reference to a musical equivalent of the Quiet Revolution is only obliquely explored in the contents, for example), this is still a valuable compilation. No doubt the forefront contribution and influence of Garant, and the legacy of his music, will "deserve a volume

to itself." The trouble with that thought is that Canadian music still lacks sufficient writing and publishing support for such needs to be met realistically and readily. We can only hope.

-John Beckwith
Institute for Canadian Music
University of Toronto

Guide de rédaction de travaux en musique: nouv. éd. rev. et corr. Par Claude Beaudry. Québec: Bibliothèque de l'Université Laval, 1986. (34 p., \$5.00)

Cet ouvrage dont nous avons obtenu de l'auteur, la dernière édition est une brochure qui s'adresse en premier lieu aux étudiants et aux professeurs de l'École de Musique de l'Université Laval et suit les normes de l'École des gradués de cette institution. Ce document est composé de deux chapitres principaux, soit Les Parties du manuscrit et La Mise en page. Ils sont suivis d'une Liste des ouvrages consultés et d'un index très détaillé.

Commençons par le premier chapitre qui explique chacune des parties du manuscrit. Ce chapitre expose de façon schématique toutes les parties du manuscrit et donne des exemples très appropriés. De toute évidence, ce guide s'adresse aux chercheurs de l'Université Laval à cause de ses exemples de pages de titre de thèse, d'essai et de composition musicale. Cette présentation officielle des manuscrits est intéressante car ces exemples de pages de titre n'existent pas dans toutes les universités. Ce guide donne des exemples musicaux et des tables de sigles et d'abréviations. L'auteur a eu la sagesse de nous indiquer sa principale source d'abréviations musicales, soit le

Dictionnaire de la musique (Paris: Bordas, 1979).

Le deuxième chapitre touche à la mise en page et s'inspire des normes de l'École des gradués de l'Université Laval. Quant aux modèles des notes en bas de pages, certains d'entre eux proviennent de l'excellent ouvrage de Demar Irvine, Writing about music (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1968). Ce chapitre est très instructif quant à la présentation des notes et de la bibliographie. Il recèle des explications justes quant à la séparation des mots et à l'emploi des majuscules. Enfin, l'index très détaillé permet très rapidement de repérer l'exemple recherché.

Ce guide est court et concis. Il peut être facilement adapté aux besoins de chacune des institutions universitaires. De même, ce guide peut être utile lors de la rédaction et de la présentation de travaux grâce à ses exemples de tout genre. Toutes les bibliothèques de recherche auraient intérêt à se procurer ce guide bien fait et peu coûteux.

-Monique Lecavalier
Bibliothèque de musique, Université de Montréal

The Canadian Musical Heritage / Le Patrimoine Musical Canadien. 5: Hymn tunes / cantiques. John Beckwith, Editor/Directeur de l'ouvrage. Ottawa, 1986. (lxii, 236 p., \$34.95)

The fifth volume of The Canadian Musical Heritage / Le patrimoine musical canadien is devoted to a collection of 310 hymn tunes (cantiques) published and used in Canada between 1801 and 1939. The tunes are in part imported pieces and in part original works by Canadian tunesmiths.

Most of the imported tunes came from Great Britain and the United States, with a smattering from other traditions, such as German Lutheran, French Catholic, and Ukrainian, as well as some adaptations to American Indian tongues. Almost all of the tunes are presented in photographic

reprint of the original publications, and, considering the heavily foxed pages usually found in the originals, the reproductions are amazingly clear.

The volume begins with an historical introduction to the hymn tune and its place in Canadian musical life. This is followed by brief critical notes on each of the tunes. These sections are given in both English and French, between which are found a bibliography, a checklist of musical sources, a list of abbreviations, and a table of library sigla. Twelve pages of facsimiles of title pages precede the music. Indexes at the end give access to authors, composers, and first lines of text.

In the music, one is immediately struck with how close Canada and the United States have been in their hymn tune traditions. Both have their roots in British parish-church psalmody. Both responded similarly to the various forces and movements in religious song: e.g., adaptations from the "classics", the Oxford movement, gospel music, etc. Both developed a group of native composers for whom congregational song was a primary mode of expression. Few of Canada's serious composers appear to have contributed to this repertory (Healey Willan is a notable exception). The impression one receives from this body of music is one of utility, pieces correctly harmonized, with rather bland melodies and regular rhythmic features. One does not find here the musical imagination of a William Billings, the melodic charm of a Timothy Swan, or the rhythmic impulse of a Jacob French, although the music of these composers was known in Canada. Canadians seem to have come to psalmody when a reform movement in Britain and the United States was well advanced, thus missing a vital developmental stage which produced some of the best hymn tunes in both these countries.

The editor, John Beckwith, better known as a composer and educator than as a hymnologist, has done a creditable job in assembling this volume. In spite of a few errors and questionable interpretations, it fairly represents the hymn tune in Canada. Beckwith's solid, well researched and well presented introduction traces the rise and progress of hymn singing in Canada, relating it to its traditions and influences. His annotations for the tunes, however, have a

tentative quality, are repetitive and perfunctory, and generally lack the insights into the music that one would like to find in a work of this sort. My major problem with the anthology is the lack of a clear statement about why these pieces were selected and what, specifically, they represent. Although general selection criteria are given for the series --artistic merit, historical or social significance, etc.-- in a work of this sort, more specific reasons need to be given, or the user is left in the dark. In the music, corrections have been made in the margins, with the erroneous note or passage bracketed in the score. There is, however, no discussion of or justification for the corrections in the critical notes, and, indeed, some seem at least questionable. Another problem in the work is in locating the sources for the tunes. Tunes selected from each tunebook source are given in the checklist of sources, but this information is often omitted from the critical notes, and is never given with the music itself. Thus the user is left floundering, having to dig this information out of nearly 100 cryptic entries.

There are a few erroneous attributions in the critical notes for which I can offer corrections: No. 75 "Edom" is by the American composer Elisha West, not the British psalmist Benjamin West. West claims it as his own in his tunebook The musical concert (Northampton, 1802), but it had been in wide circulation some years prior to that. No. 82 "Mortality" is by American composer Holland Weeks. Stephen Jenks published an affidavit from Weeks in Jenk's The delights of harmony (New Haven, 1804) in which Weeks claims the tune. No. 84 "Troy" is by Zalmon Peck, not Daniel Peck. So far as is known, Daniel Peck was only a compiler of tunebooks, not a composer.

On balance, while not a work of high scholarship, this volume of The Canadian musical heritage is useful for illuminating a small but important corner of Canadian musical life. If it is not all that it could be, it does bring together within one cover a wealth of musical pieces which can serve students, teachers, church musicians, and the general public well in presenting an overview of congregational song in Canada.

-Karl Kroeger
University of Colorado, Boulder