

REVIEWS

Some straight talk about the music business. By Mona Coxson. Toronto: CM Books, 1984. (207 p., \$14.95)

The "music business" - a very necessary and important ingredient for achieving a successful career as a professional musician - is a topic that a large number of musicians fail to comprehend, and avoid like the plague. However, Some straight talk about the music business, with Mona Coxson's writing style and the wide variety of anecdotes in the section "Tips from the pros", is interesting and insightful reading: curiosity and needs are both stimulated and satisfied.

Questions and concerns about the business side of being a professional musician are put forth fairly and, from the author's extensive musical background, are discussed fully and answered squarely. There is a warm and folksy quality throughout the book that continually stimulates and involves the reader. For this reader in particular, the clichés and anecdotes (some from old friends) had a sensitivity and vividness that awakened old memories, both pleasant and unpleasant (the former being in the majority). Of course, throughout all pervades that unique musicians' sense of humor, and in most cases, the tears would result not from sadness but from too much laughter. The "Tips from the pros" are "right on" and the author's conviction and integrity, in her own musical experiences, only further enhance their statements.

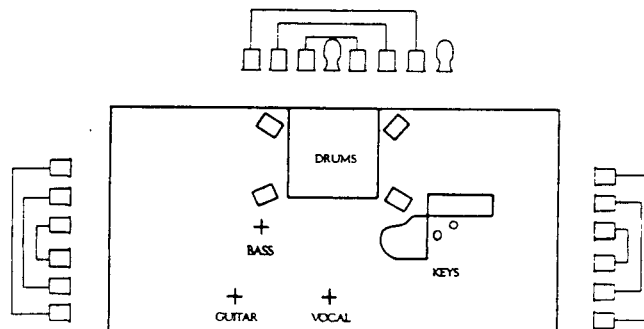
The 16 chapters and appendix cover a wide variety of areas and situations that affect the professional musician both as an artist and as a business person. There is complete examination of this variety, and for all questions there is an answer, or a direction provided. If any criticism is to be made, it is that the source or background material tends to focus on those musicians in the

"popular music" field (dances, clubs, jingles, recordings, videos, etc.), but lacks any directly relevant information for the symphonic musician or the solo concert performer and/or composer. This is a small observation, since the information provided in the book covers and serves most areas of the "music business" but, with specific instances in mind, I believe there is an omission here.

The "Tips from the pros" - Moe Koffman, Hazel Walker, Bobby Edwards, Pete Magadini, Pat LaBarbera and others - offer real and vital information. Advice also from other individuals and institutions - Les Weinstein, musicians' associations, actors alliances, performance rights societies, Richard Flohil, agents/personal managers/publishers and others - that are either associated with or related to the music business, further complements the information in the book. As one who was once a young musician, who has "paid some dues" and who is now somewhat "other", I can only say in retrospect that it would have been most beneficial to have had this publication available when I was young and up-and-coming. It would have probably helped me to avoid any dumb chord changes or wrong repeats with irrelevant 1st and 2nd endings, to make the right Da! segno or Da capo and **above all**, prepared me for the Coda.

Some straight talk about the music business, without reservation, is a step in the right direction. It should be required and necessary reading for all professional musicians, both young and the "other".

-Phil Nimmons
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Célébration: Essays on aspects of Canadian music published in honour of the 25th anniversary of the Canadian Music Centre / Aspects de la musique canadienne: essais publiés à l'occasion du vingt-cinquième anniversaire du Centre de musique canadienne
Edited by Godfrey Ridout and Talivaldis Kenins. Toronto: Canadian Music Centre, 1984. (144 p., \$10.00)

The extensive celebrations which took place in June, 1984 to mark the 25th anniversary of the Canadian Music Centre included the opening of the Toronto headquarters of the CMC, Maison Chalmers House, a Premiere Gala Concert of works by Canadian composers written especially for the occasion (part of Toronto's International Festival, 1984), a two-disc recording of the works performed at the concert (and issued the same evening!), a reception in which several composers' signature tunes were performed, and the essays under discussion which were also written on commission for the occasion. Célébration, and in fact the whole series of celebrations, was the brain child of John Miller, the Executive Director of the CMC. The original assignment as editor of the volume was given to Godfrey Ridout, a composer who was active during not only the twenty-five years of the CMC's existence but the previous twenty-five as well; unfortunately, illness prevented Ridout from completing the task and his colleague, Talivaldis Kenins, was called to complete the work. Alas, Ridout did not live to see the finished product in hand.

The purpose of Célébration is to discuss the "enormous changes and developments of Canadian musical life over the past twenty-five years." Each author was directed to "avoid the odour of the academic style," and to follow the aims of "high-class journalism." If by "academic" the editors implied the inclusion of a great deal of factual information, then it is fortunate that most of the writers did not follow this directive. To be useful it is imperative that such a series of essays be not only factually correct but also complete. By and large they have fulfilled this aim very well and the Canadian musical community will be indebted to them for some time to come. Indeed, some of the more interesting essays are

those in which completeness of factual information is achieved, a goal which good writing of any kind, be it academic or journalistic, cannot ignore! This reviewer would say that only two of the eleven essays followed the editors' guideline to be non-academic.

With the exception of the editors' Introduction and Karen Kieser's history of the Canadian Music Centre, which are in both official languages, each essay is in the chosen language of the author, three in French and seven in English. One interesting feature in this regard is that the essay on the contribution of foreign-born composers to Canadian music in the post-World War II period, most of whom have lived and worked in English-speaking Canada, was written in French by Louise Bail-Milot. This represents a very nice departure from the usual practice which seems to confine francophone writers to the discussion of music in Quebec.

The most substantial essay of the set is Kieser's "The Canadian Music Centre: A History." This is an impressive piece of work, tracing as it does the activities of the CMC from the initial idea of a repository library of Canadian music as put forth by Sir Ernest MacMillan in the 1930s, to the latest Centredisc recording project. Kieser discusses the contributions of each of the executive secretaries/directors, Jean-Marie Beaudet, John Adaskin, Keith MacMillan, John Roberts and John Miller and the particular emphases of each. She does not fail to mention the very important role of the dedicated staff with which the CMC has been blessed throughout the years, singling out Norma Dickson, Henry Mutsaers and Maria Kiors. The CMC will no doubt find this essay one of the more important ones for its archives. It is fortunate and well chosen that it, of all the others in the book, appears in both English and French.

Helmut Kallmann's "The Canadian League of Composers in the 1950s: the Heroic Years" is also an important document although Kallmann has been over most of this material in other publications. Nevertheless, it represents an important summing-up of the League's activities in the first decade of its existence. David Keane's "Electro-acoustic Music in Canada: 1950-1984" gives a detailed account of the contributions of Canadian musicians to the field, citing the pioneering efforts of Hugh LeCaine and ascribing to him, quite rightfully, a special place. Keane provides a summary table of electroacoustic studios in Canada, giving the date of establishment, size and names of directors in each case. Another essay of special interest to this reader was Marie-Thérèse Lefebvre's "Les débuts du modernisme musical à Montréal." The acceptance of musical modernism, so-to-speak, in Quebec came slightly later than in English Canada but in the course of the 1950s moved more quickly, and by the time of La Semaine internationale de musique actuelle in 1961, the leadership of the musical avant garde had clearly passed to a small group of Montreal musicians, with Serge Garant and Gilles Tremblay being the most prominent. While in the 1980s Montreal is not the exclusive enclave of musical modernism in Canada, Mireille Gagné's essay "Les jeunes compositeurs au Québec" tells us of the activities of a variety of young composers who are contributing actively to the maintenance of a high standard of new music creativity in "la belle province."

Elaine Keillor's "The Conservative Tradition in Canadian Music" and Carl Morey's "The Beginnings of Musical Modernism in Toronto" do not break much new ground but do manage

to add some interesting factual data and insights. Keillor points out that some of the younger present-day composers are carrying the mantle of musical conservatism through neo-tonal works, while Morey attempts to prove, not entirely convincingly, that musical modernism came to Toronto sooner than is generally thought. G. Campbell Trowsdale's "The Furthest West; The Beginnings of Modernism in Vancouver" is the only essay in the set which considers solutions to the innumerable problems which beset Canadian music in the 1980s.

The Prairie provinces and Atlantic Canada are two areas of the country which do not receive more than a passing mention in any of the essays, with the exception of Robert J. Rosen's article on "Canadian Composers at Banff," which confines most of its discussion to musical activities at the Banff Centre. The new music activities in the centres of Calgary, Edmonton and Winnipeg are scarcely mentioned. Célébration rounds out its selection of essays by Keith MacMillan's informal account of the tangled web of the performing rights organizations in Canada, a potentially very dull subject which is made readable by MacMillan's ready wit.

All in all, Célébration is an important book. It obviously could not be expected to have covered every topic in the field of Canadian music with an equal amount of detail and attention. But what it does do is to give Canadian musicians and music lovers a sense that Canadian music is important enough now to have a history of its own. Indeed, this in itself is cause for celebration!

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