

## Spotlight on Music Collections: The CBC Montreal Radio Broadcasts Archive at the Marvin Duchow Music Library

*In this edition of Spotlight on Music Collections, Houman Behzadi and Melissa Pipe discuss their work at the Marvin Duchow Music Library and the acquisition of archival music radio broadcast files from CBC Radio Montreal including programs, photos, sound recordings, and other ephemera.*

*Spotlight on Music Collections aims to profile interesting or unique music collections and archives in Canada through the voices of those who work with them. If you have a suggestion for a collection or individual to be featured in a future edition of this column, please email: [camlreview@caml-acbm.org](mailto:camlreview@caml-acbm.org).*

### ***Welcome! Can you each give a short introduction to your roles at the McGill Marvin Duchow Music library and the type of work that you do?***

HB: My name is Houman Behzadi, and I am Head Librarian of the Marvin Duchow Music Library, McGill University. In this capacity, I oversee the staff, operations, spaces, and services of the library. I am also quite involved in the life of music library professional associations. I currently serve as a Board Member-at-Large of the Music Library Association, Chair of the IAML Advocacy Committee, and Local Organizer for the CAML 2024 conference, which will take place June 12-13 at McGill University.

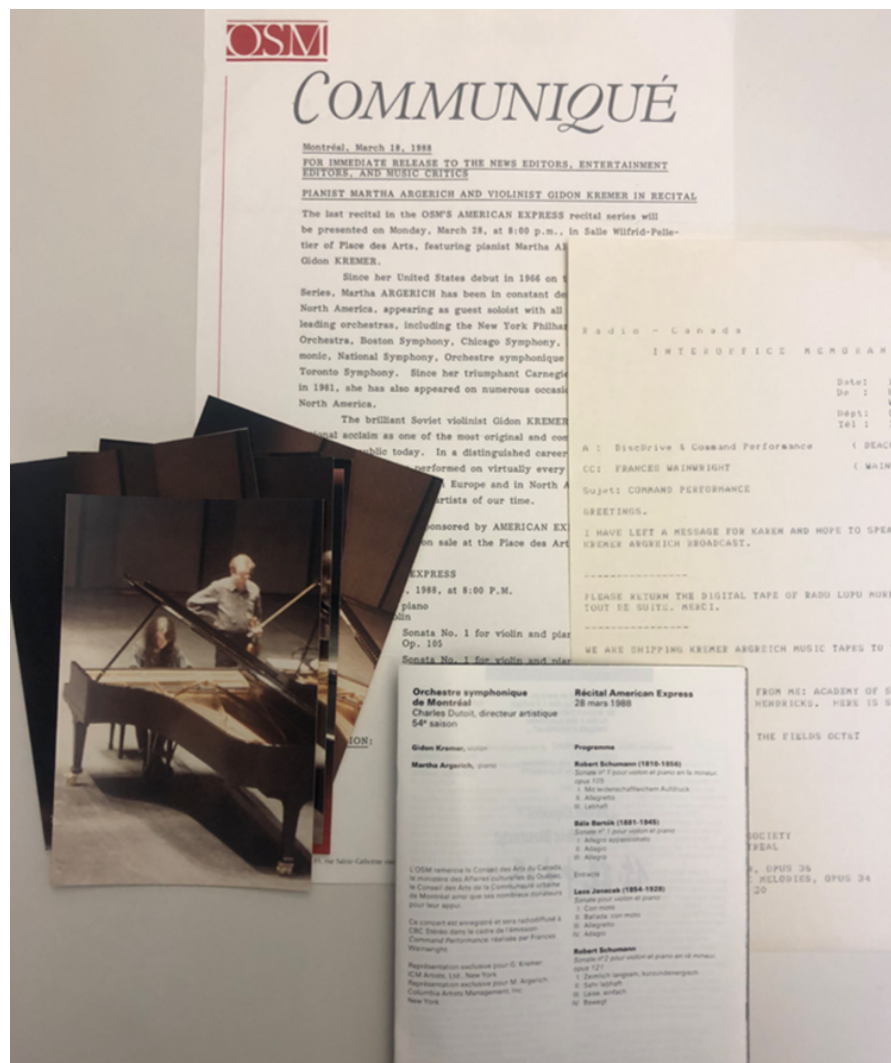
MP: My name is Melissa Pipe, and I am the Senior Documentation Technician in the Audiovisual Archives of the Marvin Duchow Music Library, McGill University. I oversee the library's archival audiovisual collections, provide reference and service desk support, and am part of the library's outreach team, which works on a number of initiatives including social media and exhibition curation.

### ***Can you describe the Montreal CBC Radio archive for the readers and how it came to be at the Marvin Duchow Music Library?***

**HB & MP:** In early 2022, the Marvin Duchow Music Library received the archive of several CBC Montreal music radio programs produced chiefly by Frances Wainright, Kelly Rice, and Robert Rowat. The collection's most frequently represented programs are *Music from Montreal*, *Quebec in Concert*, *Arts National* and *In Performance*, all drawing from musical events in Montreal and surrounding areas. The bulk of the content in the archive ranges from the 1980s to the early 2010s.

The archive is comprised of over 1000 individual broadcasts, each manifested by a folder containing textual materials (including background research, concert programs, production sheets, correspondence, and newspaper clippings) and, in many cases, sound recordings related to the broadcasts.

**IMAGE 1.** FOLDER: MARCH 28, 1988, KREMER/ARGERICH. SHOWN HERE ARE PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE ARTISTS ON STAGE, A CONCERT PROGRAM, A MEMO FROM THE ORCHESTRE SYMPHONIQUE DE MONTRÉAL, AND AN INTERNAL CBC MEMO. PHOTO CREDIT: MARVIN DUCHOW MUSIC LIBRARY



### *What is significant to you about this archive?*

**HB & MP:** Archives of radio music broadcasts can provide unique insights into local artistic history, bearing witness to musical events of a given time and place. The study of broadcast materials documenting productions, collaborations, musical programs, and venues offers an overview of the curatorial work of radio producers and the dissemination of music to broad audiences. The breadth of this cultural heritage collection provides a narrative in conjunction with the Quebec musical scene at large, as well as offering a snapshot of many music organizations and concert series active in Montreal and other Quebec locations. Select source materials within the collection also document a chapter of McGill University’s artistic history, for example, a significant number of the broadcasts were recorded in the Schulich School of Music’s concert halls and feature many former

and current faculty members. Furthermore, a review of the archive reveals McGill faculty members' collaborations amongst each other as well as with non-McGill performing artists.

***Do you each have a favourite item from the archive? Can you tell us what makes it interesting to you?***

**HB:** The Martha Argerich and Gidon Kremer 1988 performance at *Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier* was a delightful discovery for me (see Image 1). As a violin student, I used to gain inspiration from the collaborative work of these two giants of the performance world. Beyond that, the representation of the artistic life of the Schulich School of Music is of highest importance to me and to the mandates of the Marvin Duchow Music Library when it comes to preserving our local history.

**MP:** I can't say that I have a particular favourite item from the archive; there is a lot to choose from! From an institutional perspective, I find this fonds particularly rich in how it enhances our documentation of the Schulich School of Music's history (see Image 2), providing insights into events, collaborations, and choice of repertoire. The "Début" series represented in the archive features young performers from years past, many of whom have gone on to have careers in music, among them alumni and faculty from the Schulich School of Music.

***What has been most challenging about working with the archive?***

**HB & MP:** As with many archival collections, the conceptual and physical organization of the materials can be approached in multiple ways. For this collection, we decided to maintain the original physical organization while imposing a taxonomy that aims to capture the essential information which will be needed to represent the contents on McGill's Archival Collections Catalogue via AtoM (Access to Memory) in the future.

In thinking about the archive, it became clear that the broadcast itself was the main overarching event, encompassing both the performances and the surrounding research and production work. The textual materials are organized in folders that are primarily labelled by performer or group. Within each folder, broadcasts are described at the item level to capture each individual instance and enhance discoverability. Our descriptive work follows the Rules for Archival Description (RAD), the standard used in McGill's Archival Collections Catalogue.

As the spreadsheet was being populated, a parallel controlled vocabulary list was created to have consistent entries for: 1) document types; 2) radio program titles; 3) events and concert series; and 4) performance venues. Given the growing list of item types and locations, the vocabulary needed to be reviewed regularly to ensure single entries for each entity, and to disambiguate places of performance (e.g., churches with two near-identical names could refer to two separate physical places, or one physical location could be referred to by both its French and English names).

**IMAGE 2.** FOLDER: ARION ENSEMBLE. SHOWN HERE ARE CONCERT PROGRAMS AND CBC CUE SHEETS. ARION IS A MONTREAL-BASED BAROQUE ORCHESTRA FOUNDED IN 1981. IT HAS STRONG TIES WITH BOTH THE LOCAL MUSIC SCENE AND MCGILL AS THERE HAVE BEEN, AND CONTINUE TO BE, A NUMBER OF MCGILL FACULTY MEMBERS AND ALUMNI AMONG ITS MEMBERS. THE ARION FOLDER CONTAINS PROGRAM NOTES, PRODUCTION NOTES, CUE SHEETS, RADIO SCRIPTS, CLIPPINGS, BIOGRAPHIES, CORRESPONDENCES, AND PRESS RELEASES FOR OVER 20 CONCERTS HELD IN COLLABORATION WITH THE CBC. PHOTO CREDIT: MARVIN DUCHOW MUSIC LIBRARY.



***Are there any plans to digitize the Archive?***

We are currently prioritizing transferring the audio recordings contained in the Archive for preservation purposes as most of them are on CDRs which are prone to deterioration. As for the textual documents, we'll assess this at a later date according to our digitization priorities.

***How can readers learn more about the archive?***

**HB & MP:** The archive is currently in the process of being re-housed and the inventory will soon be ingested into McGill's Archival Collections Catalogue. We look forward to making the collection discoverable by researchers at the library and beyond! In the meanwhile, if readers would like to



obtain more information about the archive, we invite them to contact us at [music.library@mcgill.ca](mailto:music.library@mcgill.ca). We will be happy to share insights into this rich and multi-faceted archive!

In closing, we wish to acknowledge the significant contributions of our colleagues Anna Dysert, Manuel Lopez Tovar, and Sofie Tsatas to the description of the CBC Montreal Radio Music Broadcasts Archive.

**IMAGE 3.** FOLDER: ELLY AMELING. SHOWN HERE ARE AN ANNOTATED FOLDER, A CONCERT PROGRAM, A HEADSHOT, AND AN INTERNAL CBC MEMO. ELLY AMELING IS AN INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED SINGER. THE FOLDER CONTAINS PROGRAM NOTES, A PHOTO OF THE SOLOIST, A CUE SHEET, MEMOS, A PRESS RELEASE, A RADIO SCRIPT, AND CLIPPINGS AROUND A RECITAL WHICH WAS HELD AT MCGILL'S POLLACK HALL, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE CBC. PHOTO CREDIT: MARVIN DUCHOW MUSIC LIBRARY.

