

RiDIM/Canada Report -- May 28, 1976

1975-76 saw the beginning of Canada's active participation in RiDIM: there are now in New York, at the Research Center for Musical Iconography which serves as RiDIM International Headquarters, several contributions to the growing repertory.

The response received to the plea for collaboration sent to major art galleries and museums across the country was not overwhelming, but I am told that twenty percent is a good return on a first approach. A few had nothing to offer but expressions of interest and good wishes. Some had one or two examples of musical iconography in their collections and sent back very complete documentation including reproductions of the works reported. Others wrote that they had neither the time nor the staff to catalogue their musically representative works and accepted the offer I had extended of assistance from CAML. Still others, perhaps the most troublesome group, have reported their holdings but without reproductions and offering copies for a price. I have written emphasizing the need for the copies to allow complete cataloguing and analysing of the subject matter, explaining that RiDIM/Canada is without operating funds, and asking that the institutions donate the prints, but I was refused.

This last group made the until now vague plans for working out a budget an immediate necessity: it is obvious that we will have to raise some money. The National Library, which is the Canadian Headquarters for RiDIM, has agreed to absorb some of the expenses of the project such as postage, typing services for multiple mailings, reproduction services, and some of my time. But out-of-pocket expenses such as the cost of prints mentioned above, and eventually clerical assistance and travel expenses, must be provided for. I have begun to investigate the possibilities and I hope I will have something further to report before too long. The Canada Council is aware of RiDIM, having granted me travel assistance last year to attend the Third International Conference on Musical Iconography in New York. This year it has generously agreed to finance my trip to Bergen to attend the IAML conference. It is, I am confident, a matter of finding the right department with the suitable programme into which RiDIM operations will fit, and it is this I am now attempting to do.

I was invited again this year to give a brief report on Canada's activities at the Fourth International Conference on Musical Iconography, sponsored by the Greater New York Chapter of the American Musicological Society, RiDIM and the Research Center for Musical Iconography. My remarks, outlining our collecting methods, results and plans, were well received.

It is now time to enlist the help of CAML members for the following-up of mailed requests for cooperation, for the tracking-down of various leads to musical iconography, and for the actual documenting in cases, such as the Winnipeg Art Gallery and the Art Gallery of Hamilton, where such assistance is requested. I have a list of interested members with whom I will shortly be in touch, but I would be glad to hear from any potential iconographer who is willing to help.