

Music in Canada / La Musique au Canada : A Collection of Essays, Volume 1. Guido Bimberg, editor. Bochum, Germany: Universitätsverlag Dr. Norbert Brockmeyer, 1997. (Kanada-Studien; v. 25) 183 p. 35,-- DM ISBN 3-8196-0516-9

This is a most unusual publication—a collection of articles about music in Canada intended for a German readership! Under the direction of the Institut für Kanada-Studien at the University of Augsburg, the series to date has covered a wide range of topics in the social sciences and the humanities. That a music volume should have been added to this impressive list is undoubtedly due to the enthusiasm and diligence of its editor, music researcher and professor Guido Bimberg now teaching in Dortmund. He, in turn, credits the emergence of the idea to various Canadian colleagues, beginning with Simone Auger at the Canadian Music Centre in Toronto.

It then bounced back and forth across the country between Calgary, Halifax, Vancouver and Ottawa, gathering momentum as it went. Potential authors and subjects were recommended to him and he was assured of more than enough original research to fill at least one volume. Dr. Bimberg promises a second volume, but from the list of committed contributors and others who are interested in participating it would not be surprising if three or four volumes eventually emerge.

Now, to the contents of this first volume. Greetings and congratulations from the Canadian Ambassador to Germany, Gaëtan Lavertu, a preface by the editor, and an introduction by our own Helmut Kallmann as Chair of the Canadian Musical Heritage Society, all in

German, are followed by nine far-ranging and varied papers:

1) Helmut Kallmann, "Mapping Canada's Music : A Life's Task" (pp.11-34). The inspiring story of how a self-described "compulsive mapmaker" set about the charting of virtually virgin territory when he began his lifelong quest for the who, what, how and why of music in Canada. Kallmann touches upon major milestones, acknowledges collaborators and successors, and leaves us with some thought-provoking musings on various approaches to the writing of history.

2) Carl Morey, "The Founding of Toronto : Music in the Town of York" (pp.35-47). A wonderful overview of the role of music in the temporary administrative post set up in 1793 by Lord Simcoe—from the use of military bands at formal dinners and Arcadian picnics, through itinerant fiddlers, fife and drum accompaniment to dancers at evening parties, genteel instruction for ladies, the establishment of specialized church music schools, the importing and building of musical instruments, to the founding of the Mechanics' Institute (which would become the Toronto Public Library), and the performance of opera and public concerts—right up to the change of name from the Town of York and its incorporation as the City of Toronto in 1834.

3) Elaine Keillor, "Auf Kanadischer Welle: The Establishment of the Germanic Musical Canon in Canada" (pp. 49-75). A minutely-documented account of the presence of works by Germanic composers in Canadian life from the early performances of music by Haydn, Gluck, J.C. Bach, Stamitz and Mozart in the late 18th century through to regular inclusion of Berg, Hindemith, Mahler, Bruckner and Schoenberg on 20th century programs. Keillor credits this early and continuous adoption of such music to the immigration of teachers and performers familiar with this repertoire, to its spread through printed tune books and arrangements for band, chamber music and keyboard of symphonic literature, and to the availability of scores listed in conservatory syllabi, as well as to the study abroad by Canadian musicians.

4) Bruce Lobough [sic], "Harry Walker, Pioneer Musician in the Canadian Prairie West 1870-1906" (pp.77-90). Born in Lancashire, England in 1840 and already 25 when he emigrated to Canada, Harry Walker seems to have embodied the spirit of adventure and restlessness which characterized so many of the early pioneers. He put his musical training to full use as a militia band leader and composer with an active extra-curricular life providing music for community events wherever he went. Beginning with Fort Garry and the Red River settlements as bugler with the 1st (Ontario) Battalion, he spent time in Manitoba and the North West, moved up and down in the military, and eventually switched from the militia to the North West Mounted Police, always bringing competent music-making and

adventurous programming to his eager audiences.

5) Marc-André Roberge, "Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji's Quintet for Piano and Four Stringed Instruments and its intended performance by Norah Drewett and the Hart House String Quartet" (pp.91-108). The strange story of how the premiere performance of the eccentric Parsi composer's piano quintet, scheduled to be given by the Toronto-based ensemble on 29 November 1925 at Aeolian Hall in New York, never took place. Roberge provides a glimpse of Sorabji's attitude to performances of his compositions, a chronological list of his music for chamber ensemble and an introduction to this quintet. Completed in 1920 and published in 1923, the work has yet to be performed.

6) Lucien Poirier, "'Et je serai guidé jusqu'à la joie' : Genèse et réception de *Cantate pour une joie* de Pierre Mercure" (pp.109-135). An analysis by our much-lamented colleague of Mercure's first "grande oeuvre" on two levels: a history of the genesis of the work begun in Paris in 1950 and completed in Montreal in 1955, and a partial reconstruction of the compositional process. Poirier refers to the ideas on "hypertextuality" expressed by the literary theorist Gérard Genette in his *Palimpsestes* (Paris, 1982) and also brings out the influence to varying degrees of Luigi Dallapiccola, Arthur Honegger and Igor Markevitch on the young composer.

7) Robin Elliott, "The Spirit of Compromise in the Canadian String Quartet " (pp.137-150). The works of Ernest MacMillan, Otto Joachim, Harry Somers, Harry Freedman, R. Murray Schafer, and John Beckwith form a body of material which, according to Elliott, neither follow the mainstream European traditions of the genre, nor stretch its established boundaries beyond recognition. While all the works discussed include contemporary compositional techniques such as tone rows, proportional notation, scordatura, etc., they "are governed by this spirit of compromise which, in music no less than in other areas of human activity, has been one of the hallmarks of the Canadian psyche."

8) Robin Elliott, "The Guess Who and the 'Stigma of Being Canadian'" (pp.151-164). When The Guess Who rose to international prominence in 1969, rock music in Canada was pretty well an import business. Previous successes such as Paul Anka, Joni Mitchell and Neil Young made their names only after moving to the States. But the Winnipeg-based group remained firmly Canadian in sound and sentiment, even after "These Eyes" put them on the coveted *Billboard* Hot 100 chart. While admitting that there was nothing original or intrinsically Canadian about their music, they were proud of being Canadian and used Canadian symbols in their advertising. They were pleased that their success preceded the CRTC's Canadian content rules and dispelled some of the "stigma of being Canadian" for the wave of Canadian rock talent which followed them.

9) Guido Bimberg, "Kanada in der deutschen Musikgeschichtsschreibung (1. Teil)" (in German) (pp. 165-177). Until World War II, Europeans knew virtually nothing about music outside of Europe. Early accounts of adventurous travelers, historical novels and song lyrics gave a narrow image of this land, full of clichés and stereotypes. North-American music was referred to in glancing remarks about primitive peoples until the great wave of emigration following the war brought the U.S. and the emerging field of ethnomusicology into sharper focus. Bimberg mentions those immigrants from Germany and Austria who contributed to the enrichment of musical life in Canada and who, in exchange, took on the study of our native and transplanted musical cultures. The period of international exchange in broadcasting programs that followed nourished a new generation of musicians and music-lovers interested in contemporary music and great performances regardless of country of origin. Canadian performers such as Glenn Gould, Oscar Peterson, and The Guess Who became internationally recognized names.

On first glance one might wonder at the choice of subject matter. Each article has merit in its own right, but is there any cohesiveness or relationship of one to the other? Does there need to be? Certainly their very divergence illustrates the multiplicity and perhaps even contradiction in Canadian culture and modes of expression: from the erudition of Lucien Poirier to the "down home" quality of Bruce Lobaugh's

article, from Carl Morey's seamless flow to Elaine Keillor's rigorous documentation, and from the exotic conundrum by Marc-André Roberge to the two pieces by Robin Elliott, themselves quite different in content and style. I might have wished for more careful or critical textual editing: typographical errors abound (which is partly excusable given the primary language of the editor), critical formatting dropped (e.g., italics), and a problem with footnote superscripts which in some papers caused unfortunate spacing aberrations. But even more serious, in my opinion, is the too frequent use of colloquialisms and jargon which would be out of place in any scholarly publication, but especially so in this one destined to be read by foreign students. I

have the feeling there was some urgency behind the gathering of these offerings, that the editor published whatever he managed to receive in time, and that therefore some editorial "niceties" fell by the wayside. That is not to say, however, that this collection will not make a welcome addition to the field of Canadian studies both abroad and at home (if you can manage to buy a copy). Congratulations are in order to Guido Bimberg for his daring and farsightedness. I hope we shall not have long to wait for a second volume.

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