

REVIEWS

The sackbut blues : Hugh Le Caine, pioneer in electronic music. By Gayle Young. Ottawa : National Museum of Science and Technology, 1989. (274 p., \$29.95) (Issued in French as **Blues pour saqueboute : Hugh Le Caine, pionnier de la musique électronique.**)

I had the pleasure of spending some time with Gayle Young's well-documented account of the life and work of Hugh Le Caine not long after I had read Philip Marchand's biography of Le Caine's far more famous and controversial contemporary, Marshall McLuhan. These two books brought back a flood of memories from the 1964-68 period when I was a graduate student at the Faculty of Music of the University of Toronto. During those years, I met Le Caine and worked extensively with his equipment designs in the University's Electronic Music Studio, composing (among other pieces) my Three Etudes for Magnetic Tape, which I dedicated to him. In the 1966-1967 academic year, I was a student in McLuhan's graduate seminar, Media and Society -- a refreshing, salubrious change from the stuffy seminars I endured on the top floor of the Edward Johnson Building.

The parallels and the contrasts between these two outstanding contributors to 20th-century Canadian (and world) culture are not the proper subject for a book review, but clearly, Le Caine (1914-1977) and McLuhan (1911-1980) were internationally influential in their respective callings as very few Canadians have been. Both engaged in "interdisciplinary" or "crossover" pursuits involving electronic media, the arts and society, and contemporary thought; both were products of a conservative, frontier-spirit, English-speaking Canadian upbringing, with moral values and a sense of individualism left over from the Victorian era; and ultimately, both were tragic, isolated figures as their lives played out to a close.

At first, I wondered if Ms Young's title, The sackbut blues was a proper

choice for this biography. It is taken from the name that Le Caine gave to one of the pieces he composed for his pioneering synthesizer, the Electronic Sackbut. But after reflecting on the shy, often doleful, and socially awkward characteristics of this man, his feelings of rejection and lack of fulfillment late in his career, and the accidental circumstances leading to his early death, I sadly concluded that the title is an entirely appropriate one.

Ms Young has drawn upon a wealth of documents and personal interviews in tracing Le Caine's life from his birth and formative years in Port Arthur (now part of Thunder Bay), Ontario, through his education at Queen's University (Kingston, Ontario) and his obtaining a Ph.D. in nuclear physics from the University of Birmingham (England), to his lifelong employment at the National Research Council in Ottawa. I am impressed by the author's painstaking care in assembling her book, and by her sympathetic identification with her subject, whom she never met. However, Ms Young is a composer of electronic music herself, and before writing this biography, she had been engaged in the editing and dissemination of materials relating to Le Caine and his work. These activities included her collaboration in "The Hugh Le Caine Project," and in the publication of its newsletter, as well as the production of a recordings of Le Caine's compositions.

Even though Le Caine made a youthful decision to become an electrical engineer or a scientist, music was a consuming preoccupation throughout his life. He studied piano with his mother from early childhood, and in his attempt to play in public for the first time at

age six, he and his family discovered that he had absolute pitch. The recital piano, presumably correctly tuned, sounded a whole tone higher than the one at home -- throwing young Hugh into an "absolute panic" (p.8). But this incident prompted his mother to enroll him in the class of a local piano teacher who followed the course of study prescribed by the Toronto Conservatory of Music. Later, in the summer of 1935, he studied piano at the Conservatory with Viggo Kihl, a respected teacher.

Le Caine developed many of his early engineering and "tinkering" skills under the guidance of his father, an electrical engineer at the Current River Power Plant in Port Arthur. The elder Le Caine was always bringing home interesting electrical and mechanical "junk" and filling the family basement with it. Hugh's sister Jeanne Le Caine Agnew has related to the author how "...from his early years Hugh enjoyed taking things apart, more to see how they were made and how they worked than from any idea of putting them back together. Hugh also had a section in the basement, and there was always a new project or invention being built there" (10). These inventions from his public-school years included a mechanical device for quickly retuning a guitar during performance and an "electronic ukulele" -- which Le Caine later singled out as "a resounding failure" (17).

Assuming that he was to become an electrical engineer like his father, Le Caine entered Queen's University in 1934 and by 1939 he received a master of science degree in physical engineering. As he gained a greater knowledge of physics, engineering, and music, his electronic instrument designs improved dramatically. He later wrote that while still an undergraduate, "...I was working on my own organ which was also my first successful electronic instrument" (21). This early instrument, the Free Reed Organ, was partly inspired by

by the then-new Hammond Organ, with which Le Caine was very familiar, but his design was also a direct consequence of his knowledge of the equipment in the nuclear physics laboratories at Queen's. The scientist's love of music was merged with his considerable talent for practical experimentation, while his formal training in physics brought to his work the uncompromising rigour required for advanced, efficient concepts. Before the beginning of the Second World War, and probably before he realized it himself, Le Caine's life work had begun: the design of electronic musical instruments.

With the beginning of the war, Le Caine was hired by the National Research Council (NRC), and in March 1940 he began his research on highly classified radar systems. Ms Young recounts the circumstances which led to Le Caine's work for his only employer during his entire professional career:

His application for a position with NRC included a description of his work on the Free Reed Organ. As he later recalled, "In the interview which followed the application, in the spring of 1940, they told me very plainly that I wasn't to expect any electronic music projects at NRC. I replied that I had heard about the war and consequently didn't have any Great Expectations (from the novel of the same name)" (25).

When the war ended, Le Caine continued with important projects and "problem-solving" activities at NRC, including advanced research on microwave transmitters and electron accelerators. But in his spare time, he built an electronic studio at his home and began to design and construct the Electronic Sackbut. Ms Young states on p.xii that the Sackbut is "...now recognized to have been the first 'synthesizer,'" but one is also struck by the evidence that Le Caine's 1945 home installation was almost certainly the first North American electronic music studio. These begin-

nings were to culminate in no less than 22 electronic music instruments, numerous basic circuit designs used in a variety of electronic studio devices, 7 patents, pathfinding compositions of musique concrète and "pure" electronic music, and the electronic music studios at NRC, the University of Toronto, and McGill University.

Le Caine and the internationalelectronic music community were fortunate that Dr. E.W.R. Steacie became president of NRC in 1952. Le Caine's numerous extra-curricular compositions, lectures, and demonstrations of his equipment came to Dr. Steacie's sympathetic attention, and in 1954 the NRC electronic music laboratory was established. Le Caine worked there until his retirement in 1974. During the ensuing two decades, Le Caine's accomplishments (only briefly listed above), certainly including his compositions such as Dripsody -- now a classic of experimental music -- reveal that he was a "world class" figure in electronic music. However, acclaim outside Canada was elusive for this shy, private man. Both Le Caine and the NRC administration had hoped that his equipment designs would enjoy commercial success, from patent or other licensing agreements with musical instrument manufacturers, but these prospects were never realized.

Le Caine's self-doubts were compounded by his reluctance to consider himself a composer, but from the vantage point of 1990, it is difficult to cite any Canadian composer of the 1950s and 1960s -- electronic or otherwise -- whose work is more original or more assured in technique than his. We must grant that his musical output was small, but each piece is significant because of Le Caine's ability to pose, and to solve, musical problems.

Le Caine's shyness and all-consuming devotion to his work appear to have precluded much of a personal life, but he did have his non-musical and non-

scientific passions: gardening and motorcycling (the latter brought about his tragic accident). In 1960, a happy event occurred: Le Caine married Trudi Janowski, step-daughter of Dr. Arnold Walter, director of the Faculty of Music at the University of Toronto. Dr. Walter, Professors Myron Schaeffer and Harvey Olnick of the U of T music faculty, Le Caine and the NRC administration, and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation all collaborated in establishing the University of Toronto Electronic Music Studio (UTEMS); Trudi Janowski met Le Caine through his contacts with Dr. Walter.

After a lifetime of accomplishment, Le Caine was active in retirement, working on electronic designs at home, studying Swahili, shooting films, painting, writing -- and riding his high-powered motorcycle. On July 4, 1976 (the date of the American Bicentennial was almost certainly of no interest to Le Caine), he was severely injured when his motorcycle slid off wet pavement as he was riding from Ottawa to Montreal. He appeared to improve after two months of hospitalization, but suffered a debilitating stroke shortly after Christmas, 1976. One year lacking a day from his accident, on July 3, 1977, Le Caine suffered another, and this time fatal, stroke.

In the appendices to this sympathetic biography, Ms Young discusses and documents photographically his many electronic equipment designs. I had hoped to find some mention of Le Caine's four-channel sound-in-motion panning controller that was part of the UTEMS instrumentation, but perhaps Le Caine did not consider it to be significant enough to describe it in his papers.

She provides (247) a brief description of the present activities of the Canadian composers who worked with Le Caine's equipment. I would have appreciated some mention also of the present status of that equipment at the two

principal Canadian electronic music studios (at Toronto and McGill). Is the equipment still used and maintained in good repair, or has it been relegated to a "museum" role? What is the nature of the present direction and artistic output of these two studios? Was their period of ascendancy and influence limited to the 1960s and early 1970s, when Le Caine was still active? Since I worked at UTEMS in the 1960s, perhaps I can be accused of an incurable case of nostalgia for Le Caine's equipment, yet I wish that Ms Young would have informed me and her other readers about what has become of his legacy.

My review copy suffered from lapses in editing and proofreading. Over the page break 122-123, we are presented with the statement "Le Caine was not the person to show the three composers at the aware that the limitations of the instrument itself determined the range of possibilities..." and on 134-135 the text reads "The Two Channel Alternator was used to alternate a sound Ciamaga." (Gustav Ciamaga became the second director of UTEMS after the death of Myron Schaeffer in 1965.) At least one entire line of text must be missing from each of these locations. The correct name of the 1954 German periodical which Le Caine had translated into English is Technische Hausmitteilungen des Nordwestdeutschen Rundfunks, not "Technische Hausmitteil urgent des Nordwestdeutscher Rundfunk," as we find on 234. On the dust cover, we find the misspelling "accoustical." Hopefully these problems will be corrected in subsequent printings.

Despite these minor criticisms, I found this excellent biography to be an admirable and finely balanced presentation of the technical and human sides of the active, productive life of Hugh Le Caine, Canada's leading figure in electronic music. In addition, as a special bonus, the book serves as a very appealing contribution to English-speaking Canadiana. Ms Young provides an insightful view into one aspect of Canadian life, work, thought, and aspirations from the 1930s to the 1970s, when most of Canada was emerging -- sometimes unwillingly -- from an end-of-the-Empire mentality into active participation in McLuhans's electronic "global village." While Le Caine's impact on the society of that global village may appear to be considerably less than McLuhan's, his breakthrough thinking and influence in electronic music cannot be minimized. Electronic synthesizers are now ubiquitous: they are standard instruments for the pop and rock music of the late 20th century. And while Le Caine would immediately dismiss any connection between his work and the proliferation of synthesizers in today's pop culture, his accomplishments in electronic music have had a long-term impact. The best measurements of Hugh Le Caine's influence, of course, are to be found in his contributions to contemporary art music, as an inventor, teacher, composer, and thinker. Electronic music is much less interesting now that he is gone.

-Lowell Cross
The University of Iowa



The violinist and pianist Géza de Kresz and Norah Drewett : their life and music on two continents, including parts of Norah Drewett's memoirs. By Péter Kiraly and Maria Kresz. Toronto : Canadian Stage and Arts Publications, 1989. (204 p., \$15.95)

This book is the result of an intricate co-operative venture involving various Hungarian and Canadian contributors. The authors are Hungarian: Péter Kiraly is a musicologist who otherwise specializes in early music, and Maria Kresz, the daughter of the subjects, was the curator of the Ethnographical Museum of Budapest from 1943 until her death in 1989. On the Canadian side, the Canada Council and the Secretary of State provided funds for the publication, and Torontonians John Parry and George Hencz were the editor and publisher, respectively.

It was most appropriate, given the nature of the book, that this should be a joint undertaking. Géza de Kresz and Norah Drewett spent roughly half their professional careers in Hungary and half in Canada, and they contributed equally to the musical life of both countries. The book is based primarily on materials assembled by Norah Drewett, but the collections of the relevant libraries in Canada were also consulted and associates of Kresz and Drewett in Hungary and Canada were interviewed. This is an altogether thorough and quite admirable piece of music research.

Unfortunately, the book was typeset and printed in Hungary, with predictable results. While no doubt handsome by East European publishing standards, to Western eyes the cover has all the visual appeal of a 1950s report on collective farming in Uzbekistan. But to be fair, nearly half of the book is devoted to photographs, concert programs, letters and other documents, and the black and white reproductions of this material are of good quality. No translator is credited: perhaps the book was written in English. In any case, it is a pity that John Parry was not able to improve the style, which is by

turns fractured and overly precious. To cite but one example of many, on p.13 it is stated that "The merry singing of pseudo-folksongs, was not customary in the family." The context, however, makes it clear that the family did like to sing "pseudo-folksongs," whatever those may be.

Kresz was born in Budapest in 1882 and studied violin with Hubay, Sevcik and Ysaye, among others. He was no child prodigy -- his professional debut, with the Vienna Symphony Orchestra, came in 1906 at the age of 23. According to most reports he was a very competent, intellectual performer rather than a dazzling virtuoso -- more along the lines of a Szigeti rather than a Heifetz, although not, of course, in the same league as either of those violinists. Harry Adaskin, Kresz' longtime partner in the Hart House String Quartet, mentioned that Kresz was unsteady rhythmically and tended to play out of tune, but that he had a good bow arm and a confident stage presence (A Fiddler's World: Memoirs to 1938, 1977: 113). Kresz also seems to have been a very good teacher. Since he was not a naturally gifted player, he was forced to think a great deal about violin playing, and about how to communicate his ideas.

Norah Drewett was born in England in 1882 and had an unspectacular student career at the Paris Conservatoire. She lived in Berlin during World War I, where she played sonatas with, and in 1918 married, Kresz, who was then concertmaster of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. Like her husband, Drewett was not an outstanding virtuoso, but she seems to have been a proficient accompanist and chamber music performer, and she too was a good teacher. She was evidently also a very determined woman;

after an attack of arthritis in her right hand in 1938, she fought back and was able to gradually resume her playing career.

Kresz, Drewett and their two children left Europe for Canada in the summer of 1923 after receiving an invitation from Boris Hambourg to teach in Toronto. The book makes it clear that this move was a difficult decision. Kresz had resigned from the Berlin Philharmonic in 1921 to pursue a solo career, and he and Drewett were just starting to make a name for themselves as sonata recitalists. It was a calculated gamble to leave behind their blossoming career in Europe for the uncertainties of a teaching position in Canada. For Kresz, at least, the gamble paid off, for he was soon to enjoy enormous success in Canada and abroad as the founding leader of the Hart House String Quartet.

The section of the book dealing with the Hart House String Quartet is the most complete account in print of this important Canadian ensemble, at least of the years when it was led by Kresz (1924-35; the group disbanded in 1946). Included here is Drewett's description of Ravel's 1928 visit to New York and Toronto for concerts in which the Quartet participated. This is a valuable addition to Gilles Potvin's essay on this subject (in John Beckwith and Frederick A. Hall, eds., Musical Canada: Words and Music Honouring Helmut Kallmann, 1988: 149-163). Many other interesting details of the Quartet's activities are provided, such as the fact that during the Depression era the ticket price for students and the unemployed was reduced to ten cents. But I question the authors' statement that "The Quartet frequently played Canadian works" (87); five works in eleven years hardly counts as frequent, although it is true that after Kresz' departure, the group played even fewer Canadian compositions.

Kresz' departure from the Quartet in 1935 is described in some detail, and

it is clear that this was one of those unpleasant ruptures characteristic of string quartets. Harry Adaskin has written that Kresz was too busy with his own career to devote his full energy to the Quartet, and also that he sometimes booked himself instead of the Quartet with concert-giving agencies, a clear case of conflict-of-interest (A Fiddler's World: Memoirs to 1938, 1977: 244). But the present book reveals that the Quartet members and their patron, Vincent Massey, were equally unprincipled. A European tour had been planned for 1935, and without discussing the matter with Kresz, who had gone to Europe, Massey sent him two cables. The first informed him that the tour was off; the second stated that his position as leader of the Quartet was terminated.

Unbowed, Kresz and Drewett returned to Budapest, where they resumed their teaching and performing careers. Kresz taught first at the Academy of Music and then in 1941 was appointed principal of the National Conservatory. Kresz' interesting ideas about music education are discussed in some detail on pp. 140-143. Unfortunately he was not successful in implementing his theories at the National Conservatory, although his approach was later taken up by others. Kresz and Drewett remained in Hungary during the war years; the book notes in passing that Kresz was criticized by the Nazis for allowing Jews to teach at the Conservatory and for assisting Jewish musicians in other ways.

Perhaps the most remarkable chapter in the story of Kresz and Drewett is the final one. In 1947 they moved to Canada once again and, starting over at the age of 65, resumed their lives and their performing and teaching careers in Toronto. Kresz' last concert was given in 1955; a stroke early in 1956 ended his playing career and a second one in 1959 took his life. Drewett moved back to Budapest after Kresz' death and died herself just six months later.

Kresz and Drewett were, to paraphrase

Richard Strauss' remark about himself, not first-rank musicians, but first-rate musicians of the second rank. Neither made any commercial solo recordings, and the existing private recordings are reportedly of poor quality. Their reputations lived on for a time through their pupils, but have now faded with time. And yet they lived full, reward-

ing, and even courageous lives, and their contributions to the musical life of Hungary and Canada deserve to be remembered. This book is a fine and fitting tribute to their memory.

-Robin Elliott
Encyclopedia of Music in Canada

Three studies : College songbooks; Toronto Conservatory; Arraymusic. By Rebecca Green; Gaynor G. Jones; Colin Eatock. Toronto : Institute for Canadian Music, 1989. (CanMus Documents, 4) (194 p., \$15.00)

It is encouraging that the Institute for Canadian Music of the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto, has committed itself to giving wide distribution to material dealing with various aspects of musical Canadiana through its publications program, currently making available three volumes of documents (with three more in preparation) and four handbooks (two more in preparation). Three studies retains the high standard that its predecessors set both in terms of typography and design. One would only have wished that the Institute had gone to the small additional expense of preparing the photographic plates on a different quality of paper, as they appear lifeless and lacking in detail in the present document. In addition, a reorganization of the Table of Contents (perhaps indenting the titles of the four appendices) would have given the titles of the three main papers greater prominence.

Three Studies comprises, as the title suggests, three extensive papers which deal with college songbooks, the early history of the Toronto Conservatory of Music, and a detailed account of the activities of Arraymusic from its inception in 1972 until 1986. While at first glance the papers seem unrelated, all are what might be described as "local history" endeavors, and this tends to give a certain unity to the volume. Each paper will be examined in turn.

Rebecca Green's "Gaudeamus igitur: College Singing and College Songbooks in Canada" (pp.3-48) is a discussion of more than thirty extant college songbooks from ten universities across Canada and dating from 1879 until the 1930s. Green relates the appearance of such documents in Canada to similar developments in the United States (principally at Yale University) and in Europe, showing the influence that other such songbooks had upon their Canadian counterparts. In addition, she traces the development of college glee clubs as the catalytic force behind this movement, and often the publisher of these booklets. She deals substantially with the texts of many songs, particularly those which deal in parody, and with contrafacta (i.e. words and/or melodies borrowed from other sources and sometimes adapted to their new setting). She also attempts to set the contents of the college songbooks examined into a social context -- a mirror, as it were, of the social conscience of the writer and compilers. She takes particular notice here of racial slurs and the implied differences between the "inside" and "outside" of the university social strata.

Perhaps the most important contribution of this paper is the section which deals with newly-composed songs by Canadian composers. Unfortunately, this aspect of the study comprises little more than one page of text, but does include two

interesting musical examples.

Appendix A provides a list of Canadian college songbooks while Appendix B lists other selected college and student songbooks. A bibliography of books, articles and archival materials is included.

It appears that only one question remains to be answered. Why?

The second paper "The Fisher Years: The Toronto Conservatory of Music, 1886 - 1913" (59-136) is a thoroughly-researched and well-written document which obviously forms the first part of a far more extensive study. Those of us who have endured the rigours of the Toronto (later Royal) Conservatory external examinations have a certain pride in this institution which reaches far beyond the metropolitan boundaries of Toronto -- it is truly a Canadian establishment. Whatever Edward Fisher's primary motives may have been in developing his conservatory (and these are covered in considerable detail in the article), this movement has resulted in the raising of both musical consciousness and musical standards all across Canada. Thus this article will be of great interest not only to music historians and those interested in Canadiana but also to the many young ladies and gentlemen who sat "at the altar of St. Cecilia" awaiting the impending appearance of the guru from the East who would perform a kind of symbolic "laying on of hands" which, hopefully, would also include a certificate.

Apart from occasional lapses into colloquialisms in an otherwise highly academic article (and she might be forgiven for "drummed up" on p.66, considering the subject matter and the context), Jones presents an entertaining, lucid and highly-documented account of the various political intrigues which Fisher and his colleagues had to endure in order to bring the Conservatory to the prominence which it had already achieved by 1913. Jones was fortunate in having access to early

records of the activities of the Conservatory which have hitherto been uninvestigated.

She is careful to set each of the developments in the story of these early years into a social and historical context, giving the reader a broader perspective of the significance of each element. She is also careful to give us detailed biographical information about each of the individuals mentioned, thus clarifying the importance of some people involved in these developments who have otherwise been forgotten.

An appendix provides two sample concert programs from 1887, and although there is no bibliography, the endnotes are extensive.

Arraymusic (formerly Array) has had, since 1972, a significant impact on the development, performance and preservation of modern music -- particularly music of young Canadian composers. The article "Arraymusic: The First Fifteen Years" is written in a much more journalistic style than the other two, but this does not detract from its significance as an important historical document.

Eatock begins his study of Arraymusic by detailing developments as early as the 1950s as background to the formation of a consortium of six young composers in 1971; this group would later become Array. He deals not only with the bare chronological facts associated with the early days of the group, but makes his story more vivid and telling through the words and ideas of its original members. Thus he is able to paint an extensive and accurate picture not only of the group, but of the individuals who struggled to make the concept succeed.

The article is divided logically into several chronological sections determined largely by the changing personnel and objectives of the group. Through the use of material gathered from programs, the Array Newsletter and news-

paper reviews, Eatock shows the directions which the group took in establishing itself as a vital force for modern Canadian music -- and, especially in later years, for modern music in general. He is also careful to list both "permanent" members of the group and guest artists who performed with them, and the changing structure of the relationship between composer and performer which emerged over the years. The article, which was written in 1986,

includes a short postscript which provides an update to 1989. Two appendices list the programs for all concerts given in Toronto, and the touring performances (without repertoire), from 1972 until 1986. A short bibliography is included.

This article should be required reading for any student of modern Canadian music.

-Dale McIntosh
University of Victoria

Guidelist of unpublished Canadian band music suitable for student performers. By Patricia Martin Shand. Toronto : Canadian Music Centre, in cooperation with the Canadian Music Educators' Association, 1987. (76 p., \$6.00)

A guide to unpublished Canadian brass chamber music suitable for student performers. By Eleanor Victoria Stublely. Toronto : Canadian Music Educators' Association, in cooperation with the Canadian Music Centre, 1989. (106 p., \$10.00)

The John Adaskin Project, named for the former cellist, broadcaster, and from 1961 to 1964, Executive Secretary of the Canadian Music Centre, has in recent years, under the direction of Dr. Patricia Shand, Professor of Music Education at the University of Toronto, produced a number of guidelists publicizing music by Canadian composers suitable for grade school and high school performers.

The first was entitled Canadian Music: A Selective Guidelist for Teachers (1978), which listed, graded, and briefly described published works recommended for school choirs, bands, string orchestras or chamber ensembles. Other titles of that nature have followed, notably Shand's Guidelist of Unpublished Canadian String Orchestra Music (1986) and the two publications under discussion.

These volumes are clearly laid out with the entries arranged alphabetically by composer according to level of

difficulty; there are successive groupings of easy, medium and difficult material with grading criteria explained in the Preface and Explanatory Notes. The Band volume contains information on original, unpublished works for band composed by Canadians before July 1983. In 1983-84, during a research project funded by the Ontario Ministry of Education, Shand compiled a list of 103 works possibly suited for performance by elementary and secondary school students. Criteria for assessing levels of difficulty were developed in consultation with a panel of band directors, and eventually 81 pieces were chosen for further assessment. From classroom trials of works for which scores and parts are available, 63 were recommended. The resultant Guidelist entries include instrumentation, duration, availability, level of difficulty, and prose notes on musical characteristics, technical challenges and pedagogical value. There are also alphabetical indexes by composer and title, notes on standard band instrumentation, and glossaries of

abbreviations and instrumental ranges. Both volumes are printed on good quality paper and have practical cerlox binding for ease of use.

The John Adaskin Project constitutes a necessary and laudable effort to introduce more Canadian music into the country's classrooms. While I cannot judge the Canadian content of choral and string programs, I am the product of a band program which was probably then all too typical of those throughout this country. From the time before I began my undergraduate music studies at the University of Toronto, no titles by Canadian composers return to mind, among the works for band or ensemble in which I had played. Even during my time at the U of T, little Canadian music was programmed by the conductors of the large student ensembles such as the concert band, orchestra and chorus. (This contrasts sharply with my later experiences at two universities in the United States, where American music was unabashedly championed.)

From news items which have come to my attention since I graduated, I assume that things have improved in that department, but fear that little may have changed during the interim in the primary and secondary school instrumental classes across the country. The principal resources available to instrumental teachers and ensemble directors for finding and ordering new literature are still the publishers' and retail dealers' catalogues. Since there is little or no band music published in Canada, and since few Canadian works of any type are published abroad, most of what is studied and played in Canadian band programs is of foreign imprint, largely American. In my view, this is a regrettable situation; if music students were led by enlightened teachers, using resources like the Adaskin Project guidelists, to study and perform music from our own country, they might eventually as audiences or music teachers themselves, consider Canadian repertoire just as viable and relevant as foreign,

rather than perpetuate a colonial perception of our artists.

After expressing strong approval for the Project and its aims, I have however a few suggestions for future publications. A brief biographical note, perhaps with a photo, for each composer, would be welcome and instructive. Learning more about Canadian composers, how they come to write music, and what they are trying to express in specific works could be as enlightening for student performers as playing the music. (Even on the idealistic assumption of a copy of the Encyclopedia of Music in Canada in every band room or school library, not all composers in the band volume are included in EMC.)

Mention of other works by the composers for the same medium would also be useful to the teacher; if playing Godfrey Ridout's Tafelmusik to take only one example from the Band Music Guidelist, was a positive experience for a high school wind ensemble, might not the director (or even the students) also like to know about Ridout's unpublished Partita Accademica for full band, with is neither included nor mentioned, although of about the same level of difficulty, and available from the CMC?

In comparing the format of the Band volume with the first Project publication, Canadian Music: A Selective Guidelist for Teachers, I prefer the original, where a representative page of score is shown along with the data and comments about each work. A page of score can sometimes tell an experienced conductor much more than written comments, and make the difference between considering it for performance or not. In the current volumes, apart from some brief rhythmic excerpts, there are no musical examples. Shand remarks on subjective response and musical tastes in her Preface to the Band volume, but seems to have sacrificed in this publication what I would consider important in stimulating a positive response -- graphic illustrations of the melodic or

harmonic materials discussed -- in favour of an admittedly less cluttered page arrangement, larger type and more blank space per page.

While on the topic of subjective response, I cannot ignore the dry, academic style of the prose notes in the Band volume and the lack of basic information in some of them. While the choice of titles is explained for some works, no explanation is given for colourful ones such as Murray Adaskin's Night is No Longer Summer Soft or Clifford Crawley's Tyendinaga. Much is made of rhythmic challenges, technical demands, staccato passages, and so on, in the discussion of each piece, but the commentary does little to promote any enjoyment value or fun in the music; obviously didactic in aim, they come across, regrettably, as rather stuffy and uninspired. Ridout's Tafelmusik is described in part thus:

Movement I, Blues, is in ABA coda form. It is tonal, being based on a blues scale on F. There are quite frequent chromatic embellishments characteristic of the blues idiom, and some chordal extensions characteristic of the jazz idiom. It is in a slow 4/4...Extensive use of triplets...

This information is not inaccurate but it does not tell the whole story. While space may have been a consideration, once again there is no background information or explanation of the title-- it would add to the appreciation of this work to know it was commissioned by the Alumni Association of the U of T Faculty of Music for a banquet (Tafelmusik = banquet music) honouring Robert Rosevear, Canada's first professor of instrumental music, on the occasion of his 30th anniversary there. This light-hearted piece is typical of Ridout's wit and humour, combining rather different popular styles. The moody "Blues" movement features trumpet and woodwind solos over a "walking bass" line, with such jazz trappings as "blue" notes and harmonies, repeated "riffs", and wa-wa and plunger mutes in

the brass. The Finale mixes a Walton-esque opening with the bite of Poulenc (bitonality, trombone glissandi, a theme rather close to "Merrily we Roll Along") and the harmonic style of Morton Gould in a movement of cheerful good spirits. Shand describes it as:

a brilliant Allegro...featur(ing) an introductory triplet passage, followed by three contrasting themes. This material is then developed. The melodic material is folk-like in style, with chordal and rhythmic accompaniment figures reminiscent of Bartok...

If ensemble directors are to be encouraged to perform Canadian works, it is important that these guidelists not overwhelm their readership or damn with faint praise the music for which they are designed to rally interest. If music is interesting or fun to play (and the Ridout most definitely is!) let's be sure to say it.

The Brass Chamber Music Guide includes original unpublished compositions for heterogeneous brass trios, quartets and quintets written by Canadian composers before December 1985. Based on the same well-established criteria for inclusion as the Band volume, this undertaking also employed the expertise of a professional panel. While the text has a similar format, though allowing two pages per entry rather than just one, it groups most of its prose commentary under the headings Technical, Musical and Ensemble Challenges. One wonders whether is all must be expressed as challenges: while giving teachers what they need to make informed choices of appropriate repertoire, it seems to me that such a Guide also has a promotional function, to "sell" this music to its reader, Canadian brass teachers, and ultimately to the student performers and their audiences. Am I being too sensitive in asking whether such headings might contribute to a reverse effect? Two laudable features of this volume are the line graphs in each entry which give a more precise indication of relative difficulty within the general

levels of Easy, Medium and Difficult, and the cross-referencing of works which might be attempted by students at a lower level of proficiency. Glossaries of ranges and abbreviations are also included.

In this volume too, although there is generally more extensive instructive commentary, in certain cases, titles and techniques might be better explained: in deriving a soggetto cavato for a "Flourish" on Alfred Whitehead's name, why did Graham George consider the H to equal B-natural? High school students won't know this, and the brass instructor may have long since forgotten. Why did Derek Healey use the title "Divisions" for a theme and variations? Basic music history lessons could be included here in addition to performance pedagogy.

On perusing both publications it becomes clear that much more Canadian material is needed for first- and second year players than the three band works and four brass ensemble pieces included in the Easy sections. Perhaps the impetus of inclusion in guides such as these, and, one hopes, the performances which should follow, will provide the necessary spark for future work. The John Adaskin Project is providing an invaluable service to Canadian music and music educators. Publications such as these should be required reading for music education students and copies should be on the shelves of every brass and band instructor in the country. May they both enjoy many reprintings.

-Timothy Maloney
National Library of Canada



The bandonion : a tango history. By Javier García Méndez and Arturo Penón; translated from the French by Tim Barnard. London, Ont. : Nightwood Editions, 1988. (88 p., \$8.95)

Discourse about music -- in the form of theory, history, biography, essay, etc. -- comes usually after the fact, with the intention of confirming, describing, or interpreting it... (Are there by chance any music works composed in order to confirm a theory? And if so, with what results?) The recent comeback of tango has, indeed, inspired some remarkable studies. Among them is this book by Penón and García Méndez.

I had some involvement in the circumstances which led to the production of this book. Towards the end of 1984, after seventeen years as the principal bandonion player of the most original tango orchestra of Buenos Aires, that of

Oswaldo Pugliese, Arturo Penón decided to leave his post. It was then that I contacted him to join Tango x 4, an ensemble which I founded in Montréal in 1980. The book in question was the product of dialogues between Penón and the Uruguayan-Canadian journalist Javier García Méndez.

The original bilingual edition in Spanish and French, co-signed by Penón and García Méndez with the title Le bandonéon depuis le tango / El bandonéon desde el tango (1986), was made possible by a grant from the airline Aerolíneas Argentinas. A reprint by VLB followed, with a more comprehensive title: Petite histoire du bandonéon et du tango (1987).

Thus, a small history of the bandonion becomes a small history of the tango. And while the English edition here reviewed is an exact and insightful translation of the French-Spanish one (some graphic material has been eliminated, however), the book title becomes more sweeping. Here García Méndez is promoted to the first place in the author's binomium, and a musical consultant is added to the staff. Now, (hi)story is being promoted to History.

Setting aside this case of semantic inflation, a book in English about the bandonion and the Argentine tango is a welcome and overdue enterprise. Other than Collier's solid study of Carlos Gardel, there are in English only scattered articles about the tango.

The Bandonion : A Tango History offers more and less than what its title leads one to expect. Indeed, we do not get a comprehensive history of the bandonion and of the tango, but rather a partial and particular perspective. In fact, the Argentine tango is seen through an instrument, the bandonion, which gave it timbral and articulatory identity, and, at the same time, severely limited its possibilities for new instrumental combinations. However, this restricted vision of tango history is compensated for by the authenticity of a privileged participant-observer's oral testimony.

The narrative has been transcribed, rewritten and filtered by García Méndez, Penón's interlocutor. However you might consider it -- as a palimpsest, as a process of double subjectivization (tango--oral account by author 1--written text by author 2), or, to put it in Bakhtinian terms, as a kind of polyphony, where 'one voice includes other voices' --the result is a heterogeneous book: it contains some of the best pages ever written about the bandonion (e.g. 29-34), as well as dispensable anecdotes and sociological commonplaces (as, for instance, the description of Argentina's social context at the end of the 19th century when with immigration to

Argentina came also the bandonion.)

After an imaginary sketch describing a "musical occasion" with the participation of the new arrival -- the bandonion-- the authors draw an organological, musical and aesthetic profile of this polyphonic instrument, characterized by two monodic keyboards whose buttons give different sounds when the bellows are deployed or closed. Its "proteic" form favours an intimate contact between player and instrument, its timbre and dynamics can be modulated, and its articulations richly contrasted. Above all, there is a resemblance between the bandonion's sound and human speech intonation. This phenomenon may explain why the bandonion has been considered "the principal voice of the tango."

A technical discussion about the tango's slow tempo, its meditative character and the bandonion's rôle in the tango closes the first section of the book.

In a kind of intermezzo, the voice of Manuel Román, the expert consultant, joins the binomium Penón-García. According to Román (and contrarily to common belief), the bandonion was invented by a certain C. Zimmermann, of Carlsfeld (Saxonia), who presented the new instrument to the 1849 Industrial Exposition under the name "Carlsfelder Concertina." This instrument is supposed to have been identical with the later Krefelder "Bandonion."

In the following chapter, the authors deal with the tango's passage from clandestineness to public acceptance by Argentine society after World War I. While the subject has often been covered in more depth by sociologists and historians, what is interesting in the book under scrutiny are the particular observations about the professionalization of tango musicians, the transition from oral to written tradition (with the consequent neglect of improvisation), and Julio De Caro's importance in tango history. Considered to be the systematizer of the instrumental tango

in the twenties (i.e. in the time when Gardel defined tango as song, and El Cachafaz the Argentine style of tango dancing), Julio De Caro (1899-1980) created the tango's characteristic swing. It was in De Caro's sextet that the bandonion players Pedro Láurenz and Pedro Maffia developed playing techniques (bordoneo, fraseo, arrastre, mordente, etc.) which have defined the identity of the bandonion as "the tango's soul." Penon's observations are the more authoritative as he became, in the fifties, a bandonion player in De Caro's orchestra.

After elaborating on the styles of the famous tango orchestras of D'Arienzo, Pugliese, Troilo, di Sarli and the young Piazzolla, the book ends with a reflection of the "penuries of tango" in Argentina and abroad today. It would take too long to deal here with Penón's contradictions. As, while the postulate according to which the "perpetual transformation of tango is a product and a testimony of its vinculation with the changing reality" is meant to be valid in Argentina, why shouldn't it be valid for the practice of tango abroad?

Furthermore, we could ask, what is then the relation between the advanced state of musealisation (and "touristification"?) of today's tango in Buenos Aires and Argentina's changing social reality? As a young bandonion player put it: "We only play for tourists in Argentina and for foreigners abroad..."

Another question remains open: is the Argentine tango able to refunctionalize itself aesthetically and technologically without ceasing to be the tango? This answer lies in the hands of the public and the musicians, certainly not those of musical consultants and musicologists.

Despite the fact that The Bandonion: A Tango History is more a history of the bandonion than of the tango itself, the insights into the history of the tango through the looking glass of the bandonion make the book recommendable -- as a fine testimony of a bandonion player who speaks authentically with a borrowed voice.

-Ramón Pelinski
University of Montréal

1. For example, Simon Collier, The life, music & times of Carlos Gardel (Pittsburgh : University of Pittsburgh Press, 1986); Dieter Reichardt, Tango, Verweigerung und Trauer (Frankfurt am Main : Suhrkamp, 1984).



Preventing physical problems in violin playing : a guide for teachers.
By Vic Pomer. Ottawa : University of Ottawa Press, 1988. (61 p., \$13.75) (Issued in French as **Le violon sans douleur : Guide à l'intention des professeurs.**)

Music schools and symphony orchestras everywhere today are faced with increasing evidence of physical problems in their senior students and professional players. This is nowhere more obvious than in string players' problems of tendinitis or other muscular-related stress. Indeed, many of these institutions now hire resident or part-time physiotherapists in an effort to curtail the rising numbers of deferred exams or recitals, eliminate last-

minute "subbing," and even prevent traumatic career changes. More and more published papers deal with the problem, and specialized musicians' clinics have emerged in response to this phenomenon.

Vic Pomer's "guide" is timely and welcome. The little book is a concentrated 61 pages of advice and warnings, of sound pedagogical principles and suggested exercises. I am convinced that, had I and/or my first teacher been

able to take advantage of this book, as well as the writings of Paul Rolland and others today, I would have been spared the various physical ailments I with most of my colleagues have experienced over the years.

After a short introduction, Pomer devotes chapters to discussing general posture; the right hand and arm, from the initial bow hold to developing sound concepts and bow changes; the left hand and arm including shifting and position work; vibrato from the beginning stages to achieving complete control; and some closing comments on practising, sitting position, and advice for the senior performer. While the text at times reads like a beginner's manual on playing techniques, the author relates each bit of advice to the key word in his title, the preventing of future physical problems.

In his introduction, for example, he recommends a flatter model of chinrest, one which extends over the tailpiece: excellent advice indeed, given the array of other artful, geometric designs available today to hinder a comfortable chin! Some mention might have been made here of the importance of selecting not only a violin of the right size, with properly adjusted strings and bridge, but also a bow with a straight stick and good hair. String students often become discouraged and tense from stretching with a violin or bow too large for arms and fingers.

"Keep the head straight" (p.15), illustrated well in photo 1, is a maxim too often ignored, with dire consequences in later eight-hour recording sessions! While some pedagogical writings differ slightly in discussing hand and arm positions, Pomer's warnings to keep shoulders low and relaxed, adjust the left elbow position as you play, and avoid squeezing the chinrest or clenching the teeth, are universally accepted truths in playing the violin or viola.

Having taught the violin for almost the

same number of years as Pomer, I found little to disagree with, and much that is clearly organized and well-articulated. The "square" or "Franco-Belgian" bow hold has for my students long been the most natural and efficient. Emphasis on a curved right thumb and straight left wrist (often reversed in beginning players!), pronation of the hand and forearm at the tip, some form of comfortable shoulder support, a left thumb relaxed and at the right height, the upper arm initiating a shift, and some caution against beginning vibrato too soon -- all are principles that should not be ignored.

The "floating shoulder" concept in bow changes at the heel (33-34) would benefit from a video or live demonstration to avoid misconstruing this technique, and a solution for the "double-jointed" or "inside-out" left or right thumb of some students would be helpful. Equal finger pressure in soft and loud passages is well discussed, although a special warning against excessive left hand pressure in forte passages could have been added. A selected bibliography would also have been useful, especially with reference to the emphasis on relaxation in the writings and films of Paul Rolland, Ivan Galamian, William Starr (on Suzuki) and others. Many of these would support and augment Pomer's excellent comments on bow changes, vibrato, shifting, and how to practise.

This booklet, with its excellent illustrations, can be read in one sitting, and much can be digested and implemented in the first few weeks or months of a student's violin/viola career. Valuable for teachers, students, and even parents to read, it speaks well for Pomer's dedication, concern, and experience as a teacher. Favourable critiques from such luminaries of the string world as Starker, Prystawski, Staryk and Gulli would suggest the booklet is a good investment indeed -- against future inflationary stress!

-Robert Skelton
University of Western Ontario

Directory of associate composers. Ed. by Carolyn Beatty and Mark Hand. Toronto : Canadian Music Centre, 1989. (unpaged, \$8.95) (Also issued in French as **Répertoire des compositeurs agréés**)

An information source on Canadian composers and their works has been needed for several years. Contemporary Canadian Composers (1975) and the Encyclopedia of Music in Canada (1981), though still useful, have become outdated. The Canadian Music Centre, sponsors of the former, have now issued this Directory, in a handy and inexpensive looseleaf form, which is intended to fill this need, and -- especially for works composed since the early 1980s -- succeeds in doing so, at least to a commendable degree. But several words of caution to users are necessary.

The Directory consists of a two-page (one leaf) entry on each of 199 Canadian composers who are (or were before their death) associates of the CMC. The biographical information is uniform in format and length for each (none are more equal than others), and is based -- for living composers at least -- on forms submitted by the composers themselves. Composers who, in the words of Simone Auger's introduction, "chose not to participate" (i.e., did not send in their forms), have been excluded. I compiled a list of seventeen associate composers whose works have achieved enough prominence that one would expect to find them, but who have been left out evidently for this reason: Adaskin, Beecroft, Behrens, Cable, Ciamaga, Collier, Ford, Goldberg, Hambraeus, Hawkins, Heard, Kelsey Jones, Montgomery, Pannell, Pedersen, Vallerand, Winiarz. I believe their omission weakens the usefulness of the Directory as a guide to current compositional activity in Canada.

Twenty deceased composers are included. They clearly did not fill out their forms. But the basis on which they were chosen for inclusion is obscure, since one notes not all deceased associates of the Centre are covered. MacMillan is

there, but not Mathieu, for example, Champagne but not Tanguay or Gratton. This too weakens the Directory's potential as a reference tool.

Each living composer was asked to select a maximum of thirty works to be listed in the Directory alongside his/her biography. Some young associates have yet to complete that number of works, whereas it represents for veterans like Somers less than a third of their output. Thus, what the list consists of -- what the list shows about a composer's composing career -- differs from one case to another. This is not made clear in the introduction.

My own entry includes (at my suggestion) the information that I have produced "over eighty compositions" (by now the number is in fact over ninety). However this point does not appear in the French translation of the entry. This raises the inevitable question (inevitable in Canadian enterprises) whether the French and English listings are exactly parallel. It appears they are not. A suggestion for future revisions of the entries: when composers are sent copies for checking, they should be sent both language versions.

The price is extremely reasonable, and the Directory is handy, well edited, and attractively designed. The format consists of loose sheets suitable for placing in a binder, packaged in plastic with a sticker to label the spine of the binder. Two minor annoyances: 1) An "ordinary binder," suggested in the introduction, will not be adequate: the ones I bought (one for each language) are already too full; I recommend "larger than ordinary." 2) The stickers lose their adhesiveness as the volumes are handled.

The effort by the CMC is welcomed, and the Directory will be frequently consul-

ted -- at least until the appearance of Son of EMC. The intention is apparently to enlarge and update it with looseleaf additions and corrections; this inspires the hope that some of the

weaknesses noted above may be corrected with time.

-John Beckwith
University of Toronto

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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Lowell Cross teaches in the School of Music, The University of Iowa, and directs its Electronic Music Studio.

Robin Elliott's recent doctoral dissertation examined the history of string quartet performance and literature in Canada. He is English style editor for the second edition of the EMC.

Bryan Gooch is a writer, pianist, and conductor who teaches in the Dept. of English, University of Victoria. He currently directs the Shakespeare Music Project.

Timothy Maloney, chief of the Music Division of NLC, has directed student ensembles and taught at Lakehead University and Stetson University (Florida). His doctoral dissertation focussed on Canadian wind ensemble music.

R. Dale McIntosh is chairman of the Dept. of Arts in Education in the Faculty of Education of the University of Victoria. His most recent book is History of music in British Columbia, 1850-1950.

Ramon Pelinski, an Argentine-Canadian (ethno)musicologist, teaches at the University of Montréal. He has conducted fieldwork among the Inuit and has also worked in the popular music of Argentina. He is a pianist, arranger and composer of tango, and leader of the ensembles Tango x 3 (formerly Tango x 4) and Metatango.

Robert Skelton is co-ordinator of the String Department and teaches violin and chamber music at the Faculty of Music, University of Western Ontario. He is a member of the CJRT Orchestra and Toronto Philharmonic and is concertmaster of the London Concert Players. He recently embarked on a round-the-world study of violin pedagogues.

