

## ON THE EDITOR'S DESK

### A personal look into our new national mirror

Hurtig Publishers in Edmonton issued 150,000 copies of The Canadian encyclopedia in mid-1985. Just before Christmas, the W.H. Smith chain was reassuring us through ads in our "national newspaper" that copies were indeed still available in their bookshops across the country. This patriotic success story of the year has a now poignant note in its introduction: in thanking the (rather few) supporters of the publication, Mel Hurtig says that "the Canadian Commercial Bank believed in the encyclopedia, whereas numerous other bankers had dismissed the project as being too risky." (For the benefit of readers outside the country, the CCB failed dramatically about the time when the encyclopedia was enjoying its first sales.) It then gets off to a happy start: the first of its 8,000 articles is our national motto: "A mari usque ad mare."

Reviewers have been enthusiastic over the 2089 p., 3 v. work, delighting in both the trivial and the profound in it, and admiring its truly remarkable feature, the hundreds of colour illustrations - maps, photographs and reproductions of art works. On a suggestion from Helmut Kallmann (one of many for the Newsletter which I appreciate) I've tried to wade through it, ignoring the fascinating pieces on goats, real wages, social mobility, and William Lyon Mackenzie King, to concentrate on the treatment of music. The Encyclopedia of music in Canada is given a laudatory article, and The Canadian encyclopedia's obvious reliance on it - many of the musical biographies are telegraphic versions by Mabel Laine or others of EMC material - is an assurance of both TCE's reliability, and of its limited usefulness, in music questions, for owners of the earlier encyclopedia. There are some additions of course - updates on major career moves (e.g. Bernardi's to Calgary, Staryk's to the TS, but Feldbrill's to Tokyo is overlooked) and recent deaths (e.g. Breau, Ridout, Saint-Marcoux), and an elegant historical and technical discussion of "Noise", a subject the EMC didn't tackle.

The "Guitar" article takes us up to the list of concertos commissioned for the Guitar 84 conference in Toronto, and brings us up against one of the major irritations of the work: the cross-reference structure is quite untrustworthy. TCE's general articles beginning with "Music..." seem intended as the gathering point. They are crammed with cross-references (indicated by capitals) to almost all other musical people and topics, in forms usually like the ones actually found as entries: "Musical instruments mentions GUITARS and PIANO, but the reader will find "Guitar" and "Piano manufacturing". (The guitar is the only instrument whose history, from 2500 BC on, with information on Canadian repertoire and performers, is included in TCE: dare I point out its author is an Edmonton guitarist). SONGS AND SONGWRITING is cross-referenced in the "Music, profession of" article: "Singing" is not, although there is an article on it, which describes how people make their living at it. Other cross-references indicate there are articles at CHAMBER and ORCHESTRAL MUSIC, but don't mention "Choral music", which also is an entry. Erratically, names are mentioned without indication that they are indeed subject entries: in the article "Czechs", their cultural contributions to Canada are summarized, and the names of Josef SKVORECKY and Oskar Morawetz included; but there is an article on Morawetz also. At "Songs and songwriting" among a list of 20th-century contributors to Canadian song literature, with most names capitalized as cross-references, is Clermont Pépin; he too is a subject entry. The most confused situation I noticed concerns David Willson, founder of the Children of Peace at Sharon. The best treatment of his hymn writing and their musical activities is in the article on "Hymns", but there is no cross-reference to it in the biographical article on him; the index entry on "Sharon" refers one to "Hymns" and to a brief mention at "Folk art", but not to "Willson".

Most articles have no bibliography; where one exists, the selection criteria are not obvious. Here are a few puzzling examples in articles on individuals. After "Pentland", the new book is listed; for "Edward Johnson", Ruby Mercer's 1976 book is given; the single bibliographical listing for "Weinzweig" is an excerpt from a 15-year-old rather popular book; but "Schafer" and "Somers"

have no citations, despite the existence of relatively recent biographies in the same series as the Pentland.

The central articles seem to me to be models of conciseness. Some are sparkling (Opera, Hymns), some plodding (Choral music, Singing). There's no attempt of course to define "music", but TCE does get right down to business, leading off with "Music, profession of" - musicians can make a living as teachers, performers or non-performers (e.g. composers, music librarians). Then Helmut Kallmann in 10 columns manages a rather breathtaking sweep of "Music history" - from Marc Lescaobot, Union harmony and WWI patriotic songs, to music publishers, pop song writers and 12-tone technique. Most (though again, not all) composers for whom there are (always brief) individual entries are named here, in capitals - there are probably about 45. There might be another 100 or 125 biographical articles on performers, including pop music, and another 50 or so articles on orchestras, organizations, concert halls, and musical topics including, as well as some listed already, Music education, Musicology, Jazz, Electroacoustic music, and the Recording industry.

"Popular music" by Juan Rodriguez is (in contrast to the other music articles I read, which just included facts, as many as possible, in as short as space as possible) an opinionated tract, laced with hyperbolic, Slonimskian adjectives of praise or dismissal, and barely mentions music before 1950. Pop figures are represented comparatively well by individual biographies: although Bryan Adams who swept the Junos last year, is too recent a phenomenon for inclusion, at "Hawkins" you'll find, not John, but "Rompin' Ronnie". And while I'm in the EMC index, the family is represented here by my brother.

There is little musical impact however, in the other 7,800 articles: the one on Parry Sound mentions Bobby Orr, but not Anton Kuerti; Governor General Award recipients are listed, but not Léger Prize winners. Discussion of some scientific topics can be reasonably technical (e.g. the information about Telidon); description of an equally specific cultural manifestation (e.g. the Sun dance of the Plains Indians) is in language ordinary to a fault. Particularly noticeable in a publication from the West, the music of the native

peoples, and other Canadian musics of interest to ethnomusicologists, are virtually ignored, except for historical articles on Anglo- and Franco-Canadian "Folk music". By contrast there is generous treatment of the visual arts and oral literature of the Indians and Inuit.

There are in fact fairly heavy doses of Canadian culture other than in musical forms. "Painting" is twice as long as "Music history", and has 12 colour reproductions; there are other illustrated articles on drawing, sculpture, art, public art, votive painting, topographic paintings, etc. There are dozens of lengthy articles on aspects of literature in French and English, from autobiographical writing, through book publishing, drama, novels, to exploration and travel writing. A "representative sample" of Canadian literary works" are entered under their titles, and described, "in hope that they will introduce readers to good Canadian books." The only musical work to receive such an introduction is "O Canada."

For me a final disappointment is the absence of any musical presence among the previously-mentioned glorious illustrations. I counted 5 black-and-white photos: Forrester, Lightfoot, MacMillan, Vigneault and Weinzweig; plus the NAC and Roy Thomson Hall. The one of Louis Riel doesn't count - Somers' opera is nowhere mentioned in the historical article. In the celebrations of the International Year of Canadian Music, TCE casts something of a shadow - a nationally-self-defining reference work now being consulted in every library across the country, in which music appears only sketched in outline, somewhere on the fringes of life.

#### CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

Stephen E. Young teaches what is probably the only course in the US on Canadian music. He has received grants for study in Canada in the summers of 1983 and 1985, and is currently preparing an article on Canadian music of the 1980s. Special thanks to Vladimir Simosko and to our peripatetic parental president, Joan Colquhoun for their major additions to these pages.