

CANADIAN MUSIC CENTRE/CENTRE DE MUSIQUE CANADIENNE

by Mark Hand, National Librarian



[With this article on the CMC, we begin a descriptive series on individual Canadian music resource collections, in the hope of supplementing and amplifying the coverage of the NLC/BNC survey, published in 1980. -Ed.]

The Canadian Music Centre is Canada's national collection of music by our major concert composers. The Centre's activities, conducted through the national office in Toronto and its regional offices in Montreal, Toronto, Calgary, and Vancouver, are organized to support the creative work of more than 200 composers who are called Associates of the CMC. The Centre collects, promotes, reproduces, records and distributes the Associates' music. In these services, then, it works with Canadian and international musicians, conductors, scholars, educators, and other creative artists and groups such as choreographers, film-makers, and broadcasters.

D'abord fondé et établi à Toronto en 1959 par le Conseil canadien de la musique, sur recommandation de l'Association des Compositeurs Auteurs et Editeurs de Canada (CAPAC) et de la Ligue canadienne de compositeurs, il existe maintenant à Montreal depuis octobre 1973, à Vancouver depuis octobre 1977 et à Calgary depuis février 1980. Un bureau indépendant, qui dessert la province de l'Ontario, a été créé en 1983.

The library consists primarily of music scores, of which there are currently about 9000, by Associate Composers of the Centre. We also have a sizable collection of Canadian music on disc and cassette tape, vertical files on our member composers, and a small collection of monographs. The vertical files which consist of clippings, concert programmes, programme notes, photographs,

and biographical information are a valuable source of information to students, scholars and journalists.

In theory, the library collection of the national office in Toronto is duplicated in each of the three regional branches; in practice, this is not exactly the case, but the branches co-operate to supply patrons with materials which, for whatever reason, are not available locally.

The music scores are available on free loan to any interested person or organization. The loan period is two months, but can be extended depending on the circumstances. Orchestra parts for unpublished works are available on a rental basis.

Printed materials and recordings are available for reference use within the Centres and may not be borrowed. Listening rooms and a piano are provided.

Staff members are available to assist clients in finding appropriate materials in the library and to answer reference questions on contemporary Canadian music. To people finding us listed in a library directory or in the phone book, our name, Canadian Music Centre, often implies that the scope of our collection is broader than it actually is. We are primarily concerned with collecting information on Associate Composers of the Centre and their involvement in the concert music, rather than popular music, scene. Thus we are not always equipped to adequately answer the variety of requests

for information the library receives. We do, however, refer patrons to other music organizations, such as CAPAC and PRO, or other music libraries such as the Music Division of the National Library of Canada, when we cannot furnish the information or materials.

Nos listes annuelles d'acquisitions sont le moyen privilégié de permettre un accès continue aux usagers qui ne peuvent se prévaloir en personne des services du Centre ou de ses succursales. Les bulletins publiés par les régions de la Colombie britannique, des Prairies, et de l'Ontario, de même que les tableaux d'affichages dans chaque bibliothèque renseignent les compositeurs et les amateurs de musique contemporaine quant aux concours, concerts, et autres nouvelles d'intérêt. Les expositions dans le foyer de la Maison Chalmers mettent en relief les personnages et les événements d'importance de la scène de la musicale canadienne.

The public is welcome to visit the Centres from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays to Fridays (the hours vary slightly in the summer from region to region) and the staff is available to assist in the use of the collection. Larger groups, such as school classes, are advised to make appointments in advance, especially if a tour is desired. Many of our most regular users cannot come in person to the Centre or any of its branches. In fact, more than half of the scores loaned, and questions answered, are in response to requests by letter and telephone. Our clients are based not only in Canada but around the world.

The library is in the process of investigating a system for automating the catalogues and circulation of our materials. The size of the collection is small compared to many libraries, so although the size of the database will be manageable, the great distance between the branches may pose some problems. Instituting an automated system will mean a retrospective recataloguing of the collection, giving us an opportunity to standardize

our cataloguing, which has developed in an idiosyncratic manner as the collection grew. Description of materials will conform to AACR II standards and subject headings will be assigned in French and English. At present, subject access to the collection is very limited; despite the fact that the majority of our users are performers, indexing of the score collection by instrument has been minimal, making searches time consuming. On-line access will make using the collection easier and faster for both patrons and staff, and automation should provide for enhancement of current awareness services and production of printed catalogues.

La bibliothèque principale, qui emploie cinq personnes, est située dans la Maison Chalmers, le bureau central du CMC. En 1981, John Miller, le directeur général, entreprit les formalités d'achat d'une demeure historique située au coeur de la ville de Toronto, au 20 rue Saint-Joseph. Le bureau d'architectes Moriyama et Teshima reçut le contrat afin d'effectuer les rénovations nécessaires. Le nouveau Centre fut inauguré en juin 1984 à l'occasion du vingt-cinquième anniversaire du Centre de musique canadienne.

Within Chalmers House, besides the library, are the administrative offices for the CMC, and for the Centrediscs arm of the organization, which produces digitally-recorded albums on our own label "Centrediscs/Centrediscques" and distributes a variety of records and tapes which feature Canadian music.

The size of the Centre, and the variety of services it provides to its composers and the public, make it one of the most envied in the international community of music information centres which exist in twenty-three countries around the world.

Further reading:

Kieser, Karen. "The Canadian Music Centre: A History/Le Centre de music canadienne: Present et Passé" in/dans Célébration. Toronto: Canadian Music Centre, 1984.