

LETTERS

1. CANADIAN ART SONG

I am gathering material for a history of Canadian art song, and would like to communicate with anyone who has information about the location of printed or manuscript copies of art songs written by Canadians before 1920. As I have already investigated the holdings of the National Library and the Edward Johnson Music Library at the University of Toronto, I am now primarily interested in locating the work of composers of local repute, whose work may not be represented in those collections. It would be much appreciated if persons knowing of material potentially of interest would write to me at the address below, indicating the names of the composers represented and, if possible, the titles of the works or the approximate extent of the collection.

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2. A RESPONSE TO MR. W. RAY STEPHENS

I wish to make a personal response to your letter in the last Newsletter (Vol. 8, no. 2).

I believe few people are more sympathetic to music publishers in Canada than music librarians. After all, we share common concerns: to make published music available as widely as possible, to attract an ever-increasing clientele, to deal in a practical sense with soaring costs, to share our enthusiasm for music. It comes as a shock, therefore, to read your statement that "few, if any, music librarians actually concern themselves with Canadian products, particularly from the few sole-Canadian music publishers". I suggest your words are nonsense, and ask you to reconsider them. If you have facts to support your view, please do send them to me so that we in CAML may undertake a vigorous campaign with our music librarians on behalf of Canadian music.

Your views of Canadians in business, or of individuals, are surely irrelevant to any complaint towards CAML. I wish to address the issues specific to CAML that have raised your gall.

At last year's meeting in London during the ISME conference, CAML attempted an open exchange of views with publishers. We wanted to be "up front" with the publishers so that they might identify our concerns in buying Canadian. We wanted them to be

aware of the parameters within which we must operate, and to discuss with us how best we could work with each other. We wanted to gain a better understanding of the problems the publishers faced in meeting our requests. There was criticism of a kind on both sides, but I believed it to be a healthy criticism entirely without bitterness. We in CAML came away from our meeting with a new appreciation of the problems we both faced. And we had, at least, met face to face with some of our music publisher colleagues!

Concerning membership in CAML, it has been the practice of our membership secretary to apply dues to the nearest full year, unless a "late" applicant requests his membership for the current year. That is why your August application was applied to a 1979 membership, and why Frederick Harris is not listed with the 1978 members. Your dues receipt should have indicated this.

Now let me speak to our 1979 annual meeting in Saskatoon. In addition to announcements in the Newsletter, two mailings went out to individual members. That you chose a circuitous route to make inquiries was, I believe, your own misfortune. Our information made clear that we were meeting in conjunction with CAUSM, and under the umbrella of the Learned Societies - an arrangement we've found from previous experiences much to our benefit. In these circumstances, that you think it CAML's responsibility to round up publishers to mount exhibits seems to me a mistaken understanding of our role and your own role as a business organization. Surely it is normal business practise for publishers to keep abreast of annual events of special relevance to them.

In conclusion, may I remark that CAML is a small organization ever looking to strengthen its membership and its active members. We seek participation from them all and welcome constructive criticism along with active participation. We do regret it when members find cause to discontinue their support.

Isabel A. Rose.

3. MR. STEPHENS RESPONDS

Thank you for your reply of August 19th, relative to my letter as published in the May issue of the CAML Newsletter.

By the way, has there been an issue since that date?

I do not feel we should go into details, at the moment, for I expressed the situation relating to my company in that Newsletter, and have received a few replies, including yours. I do appreciate your expressions, for I feel criticism is essential to growth, and I will consider your points in due course.

For the moment, however, I am enclosing a complete set of current catalogues of Harris, which include a variety of sidelines, not of Canadian nature. We do not exist on Canadian material, for if we did, we would very soon be out of business.

From these lists, I would like you to evaluate their contents and let me know whether or not they relate to our music libraries. If they do not, then any further discussion on the subject is quite unnecessary.

In 1978, we mailed three times direct to Canadian libraries. In January, October and December. The October mailing was the first complete list of 395 names we had received from your suggestion of our August meeting. Before that, we had less than 100, collected from our own inadequate sources.

Again, in March of 1979, we sent a further 395 mailings, at a cost of \$67.15, or thereabouts, and we have just completed, last week, a mailing of our new textbook listings.

Our sales to Canadian Music Libraries in 1979, so far, total only \$243.47, or .60¢ per individual library. Would you believe that we average more than that daily of Canadian music to the U.S.A.!

Please let me know where we are going wrong with Canadian libraries, after such success from a foreign country on Canadian content. The Canadian library might only buy about 30% Canadian music from us, while the U.S.A. and other countries buy Canadian products only. I, too, am concerned and, perhaps, have a habit of expressing myself a little too forcibly. How else would I obtain a reaction? It is unfortunate.

W. Ray Stephens.

4. A RESPONSE TO MR. STEPHENS' RESPONSE

In his recent letter to Mrs. Rose, Mr. Stephens discusses various issues which merit a reply from the viewpoint of Canadian music librarians.

It is possible that Canadian librarians are purchasing a great deal more material than Mr. Stephens realizes. In an effort to obtain material more quickly and efficiently, many libraries have established blanket order plans with music dealers and jobbers. Thus, the agent who supplies materials to our music library is supposed to obtain one copy of every new serious work by a Canadian composer as soon as it is published. Since the orders for these works will be from a music dealer, Mr. Stephens is not going to be able to know that they are in fact purchased by a music library. It would be interesting to know how many of our Canadian academic and public

libraries obtain their materials in this fashion.

One of the difficulties encountered in the purchasing of Canadian materials is receiving notification of their new publications. It would be extremely helpful if Canadian publishers would indicate the works of both native and immigrant Canadian composers in some fashion, perhaps by an asterik as the Frederick Harris Company did some years ago.

A final suggestion--with the centenary of Healey Willan's birth so near, it would be a great service to the musicians of all countries if the publishers which hold the rights to out-of-print compositions could republish them.

Sister Louise Smith.

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TIN PUN ALLEY

As a teacher of piano and founding-director of the new College Conservatory of Music in Medicine Hat, Alberta, Gilbert Munroe has been battling overseriousness in music. After looking at his publication A Mush is a Soggy Diminuendo (Winnipeg: Peguis, 1978), however, I would have to say that his battling average is very low.

The blurb on the back proclaims: "This book is not intended primarily as a teaching device but simply as a light-hearted break from regular work. But then, can't we learn things when we are having fun? Perhaps this book will get the 'play' back into playing the piano." It would seem upon examining the book that for Mr. Munroe the phrase "light-hearted" is synonymous with "slap-dash." Even if the jokes were funny and the drawings good, the music should at least be clear and reasonably notated. Perhaps having six quarter-notes in a 6/8 bar (just one example) is part of the fun.

Though I am hesitant to "take up the gauntlet" in the struggle against underseriousness in music humour (there are those who would rather see me "run the gauntlet" for puns I have committed), I feel it my duty to warn my fellow music librarians against buying this soggy publication. Even mush is a cereal business.

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