
CAML REVIEW / REVUE DE L'ACBM

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CAML Review, published two times a year, is the official publication of the Canadian Association of Music Libraries, Archives and Documentation Centres. *CAML Review* welcomes submissions of research articles (peer-reviewed section), reports, news, essays, and reviews on topics relevant to the purposes of the Association, particularly those pertaining to music in Canada, music librarianship and archival management, and bibliography. [Author guidelines](#) can be consulted on the journal site. Email camlreview@caml-acbm.org for more information.

La **Revue de l'ACBM**, publiée deux fois l'an, est l'organe officiel de l'Association canadienne des bibliothèques, archives et centres de documentation musicaux. La *Revue de l'ACBM* vous invite à lui soumettre des articles de recherche (pour la section d'articles évalués par des pairs), des rapports, des nouvelles, des essais et des comptes rendus portant sur des sujets pertinents aux objectifs de l'Association, en particulier ceux qui traitent de la musique au Canada, de la bibliothéconomie et la gestion d'archives de la musique, ainsi que la bibliographie. On peut lire les [directives aux auteurs](#) sur le site de la *Revue*. Veuillez nous contacter à camlreview@caml-acbm.org pour en savoir plus.

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Message from the President / Message du présidente

Dear CAML members,

Spring greetings to all! By the time this message is published, our conference will be very close. I hope that many of you will once again attend this year's virtual meeting.

Looking back proudly over the past 50 years, we have much to celebrate. It is inspiring to see that the Association has remained so active over the decades, thanks to your sincere dedication, passion, and commitment. We can remember the richness of music libraries and archives in Canada and the accomplishments of our colleagues during this period.

The last while has been difficult for many of us, both personally and professionally. We realize more the importance of a united and empathetic community.

Before the pandemic, music libraries and archives were already rethinking new ways to retain their unique qualities while trying to remain relevant and be more accessible. Now we are faced with the need to recharge our batteries, regroup to undertake new projects, and relaunch work already in progress.

Chers et chères membres de l'ACBM,

Salutations printanières à tous! Lorsque ce message sera publié, le moment de notre conférence sera très proche. J'espère que vous serez encore une fois nombreux à assister à la réunion virtuelle de cette année.

En regardant fièrement les 50 dernières années, nous avons beaucoup à célébrer. Il est inspirant de voir que l'Association est demeurée si active au fil des décennies, grâce à votre dévouement, votre passion et votre engagement sincères. Nous pouvons nous souvenir de la richesse des bibliothèques et des archives de musique au Canada ainsi que des accomplissements de nos collègues au cours de cette période.

Ces derniers temps ont été difficiles pour beaucoup d'entre nous, tant sur le plan personnel que professionnel. Nous réalisons davantage l'importance d'une communauté unie et empathique.

Avant la pandémie, les bibliothèques et les archives de musique repensaient déjà à de nouvelles façons de conserver leurs qualités uniques tout en essayant de rester pertinentes et d'être plus accessibles. Nous sommes maintenant confrontés à la nécessité de nous ressourcer et de nous regrouper pour entreprendre de nouveaux projets et relancer des travaux déjà en cours.

I am sure we are all eager to tackle our next challenges.

Maureen Nevins

CAML President (2022-2024)

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Je suis certaine que nous nous attaquerons tous avec impatience à la réalisation de nos prochains défis.

Maureen Nevins

Présidente de l'ACBM (2022-2024)

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Editors' Column

[*Chronique de la rédactrices en chef \(lien vers la version française\)*](#)

In This Issue

Welcome to Spring, and this latest issue of *CAML Review*! We are delighted to include Kathleen McMorrow's article on Ogreta McNeill, "The Mother of Us All: Canada's First Professional Music Librarian." If you attended the 2021 CAML Conference you will remember this fascinating history, and if you did not attend then you are in for a treat. You will also find book reviews on a wide spectrum of music research topics, from *Music Research Data Management: A Guide for Librarians* (co-authored by CAML member Sean Luyk) to *Contemporary Musical Expressions in Canada*, edited by three Canadian scholars (Anna Hoefnagels, Judith Klassen, and Sherry Johnson). We hope you enjoy it!

New Editorial Team

It was with mixed emotions that we said good-bye this spring to two members of our team who have come to the end of their two-year terms: **Jada Watson (U Ottawa, co-Lead Editor)** and **Nina Penner (Brock U, Reviews Editor)**. They both brought a wonderful academic perspective, strong scholarly networks, and good humour to the team. We will miss working alongside them. However, their leaving provides the opportunity for new colleagues to join the team.

Carolyn Doi (Associate Editor) expressed interest in the co-Lead Editor position and was unanimously supported by the rest of the editorial team. This left two open positions on the team: Associate Editor (Carolyn's old position) and Reviews Editor (Nina's position).

The team hosted a Zoom coffee chat for the CAML community on Tuesday 1 March. We hosted 19 registrants who had the opportunity to learn about the work of *CAML Review* and meet members of the Editorial Team. Following the coffee chat the team issued a call for new members on CAML-L. Being mindful of the 2021 CAML Strategic Directions "CAML welcomes a wide range of people working with music information" and "CAML seeks meaningful relationship with other associations" the team posted the call to several other lists in order to cast the net as wide as possible: MusCan (Canadian University Music Society), American Musicological Society, Canadian Association of Professional Academic Librarians, and the Visible Minority Librarians of Canada.

The team was delighted to receive several expressions of interest. Following an interview process, we were unanimous in our decision to offer positions to **Scott Cowan (Librarian, U Windsor)** and **Phoebe Robertson (DMA cand., Manhattan School of Music)**.

Scott Cowan joined the team as Associate Editor. He will work alongside continuing **Associate Editors Megan Chellew (McGill U)** and **Deborah Wills (Wilfred Laurier U, ret'd)**. Scott brings his

music education background, broad liaison areas, and LGBTQ+ research perspective to the team, all of which we feel will serve the team and our readers very well. **Phoebe Robertson** has joined the team as Reviews Editor. She will work alongside continuing **Reviews Editor Brian McMillan (Western U)**. Phoebe has a strong academic background, a wide network of academic colleagues (especially Canadian colleagues living in the USA), and a strong knowledge of the Canadian academic landscape. We have been so fortunate to have Jada's and Nina's musicological perspective on the team that we are excited to bring Phoebe on board to maintain that link.

Anti-Racism Work

The team continues its semi-annual meetings to discuss readings on anti-racism and anti-oppression in scholarly publishing, and to reflect on our own practice within CAML Review. In order to create a safe space for open and honest conversation, we do not report on these conversations here. At our January meeting we discussed two documents:

1. Jesse Popp's [piece in The Conversation](#) titled "Want to reach out to an Indigenous Scholar? Awesome! But first, here are 10 things to consider."

This great article reminded us there are many excellent resources on Indigenous practices and perspectives, which can be referenced before seeking advice from Indigenous colleagues. We seek to learn from and support, rather than burden Indigenous colleagues.

2. Simon Fraser University's [Inclusive and Antiracist Writing Guide](#).

This comprehensive guide introduced us to newer writing practices on how to refer to historically marginalized people and avoid gendered language. . We recognize that such language practices can include AND exclude. We took time to consider whether there are cases where there is better language we can use without creating arbitrary or generalized groupings.

Carolyn attended the CALJ (Canadian Association of Learned Journals) webinar "[Equity, diversity, and inclusion: Update on C4DISC and how journals can implement EDI](#)." The C4DISC (Coalition for Diversity & Inclusion in Scholarly Communications) [Joint Statement of Principles](#) may be a document for the editorial team to explore further as we continue to apply DEI learning to our work. Our next conversation will take place at our June meeting, and possible readings include Dylan Robinson's 2019 [Open Letter](#) on music teaching curricula and [Anti-racist scholarly reviewing practices: A heuristic for editors, reviewers, and authors](#) from 2021. If you have questions about this work, or want to suggest a resource, we would love to hear from you!

We hope to see you at the upcoming 2022 CAML Virtual Conference, taking place June 7-9. Have a wonderful summer!

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Message des rédactrices en chef

[Message from the Editors \(link to English version\)](#)

Dans ce numéro

Nous sommes heureux de vous présenter le dernier numéro de la *Revue de l'ACBM*, qui coïncide avec l'arrivée du printemps! C'est avec joie que nous y avons intégré l'article de Kathleen McMorow sur Ogreta McNeill : « The Mother of Us All: Canada's First Professional Music Librarian ». Si vous avez assisté au Congrès 2021 de l'ACBM, vous vous rappellerez son histoire fascinante et, dans le cas contraire, son récit vous charmera. La *Revue* comprend également des comptes rendus de livres portant sur tout un éventail de recherche en musique, de *Music Research Data Management: A Guide for Librarians* (dont un membre de l'ACBM, Sean Luyk est co-auteur) à *Contemporary Musical Expressions in Canada*, publié sous la direction de trois érudites canadiennes (Anna Hoefnagels, Judith Klassen et Sherry Johnson). Bonne lecture!

Nouvelle équipe de rédaction

Ce printemps, c'est avec tristesse que nous avons dit au revoir à deux membres de l'équipe de rédaction qui avaient terminé leur mandat de deux ans : **Jada Watson, (Université d'Ottawa, corédactrice en chef)** et **Nina Penner (Université Brock, responsable des recensions anglophones)**. Toutes deux nous ont enrichis par l'étendue de leurs connaissances, leurs solides réseaux de collègues universitaires et leur sens de l'humour. Elles nous manqueront. Cependant, leur départ permet à de nouveaux collègues de se joindre à notre équipe.

Carolyn Doi (rédactrice adjointe) a manifesté de l'intérêt pour le poste de corédactrice en chef, et l'équipe de rédaction a soutenu sa candidature à l'unanimité. Il restait donc deux postes à pourvoir : celui de rédacteur adjoint (l'ancien poste de Carolyn) et de responsable des recensions anglophones (l'ancien poste de Nina).

L'équipe a organisé un café-causerie de l'ACBM sur Zoom le mardi 1^{er} mars. Dix-neuf personnes inscrites ont eu l'occasion d'en apprendre plus sur le travail que réalise l'équipe de rédaction de la *Revue de l'ACBM* et de faire connaissance avec elle. Par la suite, l'équipe a lancé sur CAML-L une invitation dans le but de recruter de nouveaux membres. Désireuse d'élargir la diversité professionnelle de ses membres et de se lier avec d'autres associations, l'ACBM, dans le respect de ses Axes stratégiques 2021, a affiché son appel sur plusieurs serveurs de liste pour ratisser le plus large possible, dont les suivants : MusCan (Société de musique des universités canadiennes), l'American Musicological Society, l'Association canadienne des bibliothécaires en enseignement supérieur et les Visible Minority Librarians of Canada.

L'équipe a constaté avec joie que plusieurs se sont dits intéressés. Après avoir mené des entrevues, nous avons décidé à l'unanimité d'offrir les postes vacants à **Scott Cowan (bibliothécaire, Université de Windsor)** et à **Phœbe Robertson (doctorante en musique, Manhattan School of Music)**.

Scott Cowan s'est intégré à l'équipe en tant que rédacteur adjoint. Il travaillera avec les rédactrices adjointes **Megan Chellew (Université McGill)** et **Deborah Wills (à la retraite, Université Wilfrid Laurier)**. En plus de son réseau étendu de liaisons, Scott apporte à l'équipe son savoir en éducation de la musique et en édition de contenu du matériel LGBTQ+, un bagage qui nous bénéficiera, ainsi qu'à nos lectrices et à nos lecteurs. **Phœbe Robertson** deviendra responsable des recensions anglophones et se joindra à **Brian McMillan (Université Western)**, qui occupait déjà ce poste. Phœbe possède une solide formation, un grand réseau de collègues (surtout des Canadiennes et des Canadiens vivant aux É.-U.) et une connaissance approfondie du monde universitaire. Nous sommes privilégiés d'avoir profité de la perspective musicologique de Jada et de Nina, et nous accueillons avec enthousiasme Phœbe, qui nous fera tirer parti de la sienne.

Antiracisme

L'équipe de rédaction continue de se réunir deux fois par année pour discuter de ses lectures de travaux universitaires portant sur l'antiracisme et l'anti-oppression, et pour réfléchir à ses propres pratiques en matière de rédaction. Afin de créer des espaces sécuritaires favorisant des échanges ouverts, nous ne produisons pas de rapports de ces conversations. Lors de la rencontre de janvier, nous avons parlé de deux documents :

1. L'article de Jesse Popp dans [The Conversation](#), intitulé : « Want to reach out to an Indigenous Scholar? Awesome! But first, here are 10 things to consider ». Cet excellent article nous a rappelé qu'il existe beaucoup de ressources formidables sur les pratiques et les perspectives autochtones, et que nous pouvons y avoir recours avant de demander conseil à des collègues autochtones. Cherchons à soutenir nos collègues et à apprendre d'eux, au lieu de leur imposer un fardeau supplémentaire.
2. [L'Inclusive and Antiracist Writing Guide](#) de l'Université Simon Fraser. Ce guide des plus complets présente de nouvelles méthodes d'écriture et un langage neutre pour parler de peuples marginalisés. De telles pratiques sont À LA FOIS inclusives et exclusives. Nous avons pris le temps de nous demander si nous pouvons manier des mots sans créer arbitrairement divers groupes.

Carolyn a assisté au webinaire suivant de l'Association canadienne des revues savantes : « [Equity, diversity, and inclusion: Update on C4DISC and how journals can implement EDI](#) ». L'équipe de rédaction pourrait étudier le [Joint Statement of Principles](#) (l'Énoncé de principes) de la C4DISC (Coalition for Diversity and Inclusion in Scholarly Communications) en vue d'appliquer les principes de la diversité, de l'équité et de l'inclusion à son travail. Notre prochaine discussion aura lieu lors de

la réunion de juin. Nous pourrions y lire [la lettre ouverte](#) de 2019 de Dylan Robinson portant sur le curriculum musical, ainsi qu'[Anti-racist scholarly reviewing practices: A heuristic for editors, reviewers, and authors](#), datant de 2021. Pour toute question ou pour nous suggérer des ressources, n'hésitez pas à communiquer avec nous.

Nous espérons vous voir lors du Congrès virtuel 2022 de l'ACBM, du 7 au 9 juin. Passez un superbe été!

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CAML Milestones

This column aims to share organization news, celebrate our colleagues' accomplishments, and document changes for future researchers looking back. Have news to share? Contact the co-lead editors to have your news published in the next issue!

New Members

Since our last issue, there are 7 new CAML members.

Staffing News

Phoebe Robertson (Reviews Editor) completed her DMA at the Manhattan School of Music and received her hood on 17 May 2022.

Victoria Sigurdson is the new Media Collections Librarian at **York University Libraries (YUL)**, as of 1 February 2022. In this role, she is responsible for advancing the YUL portfolio in media collections: film, sound recordings, audiovisual recordings and photography, both digital and analogue. She will also be supporting the teaching, learning and research needs of all users, in addition to managing acquisitions, overseeing the processing of media materials, and developing policy and plans related to preservation, retention and migration. Victoria brings to the position over 10 years of experience empowering teaching, learning and research communities through the development of university library media collections and services.

Former co-Lead Editor **Jada Watson** will join the faculty of the **University of Ottawa's School of Information Studies** on 1 July 2022 as Assistant Professor in Digital Humanities. She has also received the Canadian Society for Digital Humanities/Société canadienne des humanités numériques's [Outstanding Early Career Award](#). "Dr. Watson has had significant leadership success in the digital humanities at the international, national, university level. She was a key member of the [DH2020](#) local organizing committee. She is the director of the University of Ottawa's [École d'été en sciences humaines numériques / Digital Humanities Summer Institute Technologies East](#) week-long workshop series (SHNTech/DHSITE). SHNTech/DHSITE is the only bilingual digital humanities summer institute in Canada. It has grown significantly in both quality and size under her leadership, and has garnered her national attention..."

Spotlight on Music Collections: EMI Music Canada Fonds

This edition of Spotlight on Music Collections takes us to Calgary, Alberta, and features a conversation with David Jones at the University of Calgary, who is working to preserve the EMI Music Canada Fonds. David speaks to some of the unique and familiar Canadian artists represented in the collection, aspects of digital migration, and a preview of what the digital collection (launching summer 2022) will contain.

Spotlight on Music Collections aims to profile interesting or unique music collections and archives in Canada through the voices of those who work with them. If you have a suggestion for a collection or individual that should be featured in a future edition of this column, please contact carolyn.doi@usask.ca.

What is your role at the University of Calgary?

My name is David Jones, and since 2020, I have been the Project Archivist for the [EMI Music Canada fonds](#) at the University of Calgary Archives and Special Collections. Prior to this role, I worked as an Audiovisual Conservation Assistant at U of C, working with the digital migration team.

IMAGE 1. DAVID JONES, PROJECT ARCHIVIST, ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS WITH THE EMI MUSIC CANADA ARCHIVAL BOXES.
PHOTO CREDIT: ANDY NICHOLS, UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY.



What are the EMI Music Canada Fonds and how did they come to arrive at the University of Calgary?

EMI Music Canada was one of the major record labels in Canada and played a vital role in fostering a domestic market and roster here in Canada. The label has its roots in Capitol Records of Canada, a subsidiary of the American label Capitol Records, established in 1949 in London, Ontario before moving to Toronto in 1956. In 1955, Capitol was acquired by the British label EMI, which is why the label has been known at times as Capitol Records of Canada, Capitol Records-EMI of Canada and finally EMI Music Canada. By the 1960s, the label enjoyed a financial windfall following the success of the Beatles and other British Invasion bands. Capitol Records of Canada had been the first North American label to bring these acts to the continent and soon was able to establish a domestic A&R department, record pressing plant and later CD manufacturing facilities. The label opened branch offices throughout Canada and established a French repertoire division in Montreal.

Many familiar and successful Canadian acts were represented by the label, such as Anne Murray, Tom Cochrane, Susan Aglukark, Glass Tiger, Stompin' Tom Connors, Northern Pikes Edward Bear, Helix, The Rankin Family, Rita MacNeil, Skinny Puppy, k-os, The Tea Party and so many others. There are literally thousands of artists represented by the label, which distributed international artists and artists from subsidiary and associated labels, such as Virgin Music Canada, Nettwerk, Anthem and Aquarius, among others. The fonds contains the complete assets of the company which consists of about 5500 boxes of textual, photographic, audiovisual, and digital content. It can be daunting to sum up without getting into the details, but we have the entire corporate archive of a major record label – something that is very rare to see in a public institution. I'm particularly interested in the places at the far reach of the label, such as demo tapes, sub-labels, and A&R activities. The label had quite a reach across the spectrum of Canadian music and culture, which of course carries with it a lot of power in determining the landscape of cultural production across the country.

I asked my colleague at U of C, Annie Murray, one of the original Principal Investigators of the project, to comment on how the material came to the U of C: "When Universal Music acquired EMI Music Canada in 2012, they were considering where to place the archival materials documenting the history of Capitol Records of Canada and EMI Music Canada. They were aware of the National Music Centre being established in Calgary and thought Calgary might be a good place to preserve the history of the labels. Andrew Mosker of the National Music Centre eventually connected with the University of Calgary's Libraries and Cultural Resources to explore the possibility of the archives coming to the university. In fall 2014, a small team from Libraries and Cultural Resources began discussions and planning with Universal Music Canada. The first materials were transferred in 2015, and the donation was announced to the public in March 2016 to coincide with the Junos being held in Calgary."

I understand that digital preservation and digitization of the archive is a major aspect of the project. Can you describe that work and some of the long-term goals that go along with the digital preservation of the EMI Music Canada fonds?

Yes, digital preservation, and what we refer to as digital migration, are central aspects of the project. We are at a very critical time where much of the recorded history of the second half of the twentieth century is at risk of disappearing. Thanks to a grant from the Mellon Foundation and ongoing support from Universal Music Canada, we have the resources to migrate as much as we can from the at-risk formats in the archive. The U of C has built an in-house migration studio with professional hardware and playback machines, many of historical vintage, to accommodate the migration of some of the more prevalent formats in our collection. Accompanying the studio is an imaging lab where high-resolution digital images capture every angle of the original object and accompanying material. These objects might be open reel audiotapes (such as 24-track 2-inch, or ¼-inch, 2-track open reel audiotape), video formats (such as U-Matic, Betacam and 1 and 2-inch open reel videotape) or audiotapes (Digital Audio Tapes, Compact Cassettes). For digital-born data records, we have a digital forensics lab to access and preserve data from obsolete formats.

I asked our electronic records archivist, E-A Johnson, to comment on this question: “Making sure that the material in the EMI Music Canada fonds is accessible long-term is an integral part of the work we’re doing with this collection. For the born-digital material in the collection, which came in on floppy disks and hard drives among other formats, it’s important that we migrate it onto more stable forms of media. We’re also currently implementing a digital preservation system that will ensure that the digital material doesn’t degrade over time. This system can also migrate files that may be in proprietary or out-of-date file formats to more standard and open formats, to make sure that the files themselves are readable in the future. Our goal is that the material in this collection is preserved so that users of the fonds will be able to access this material decades down the line.”

Finally, it is important to note that one of our main goals with this project is to make the content available to researchers and anyone who is interested in it. This includes the paper and photographic portion of the archive, which is being arranged and described and physically stored at our facilities in Calgary, as well as the audiovisual content, for which we have been developing an online digital asset management system.

What has been one of the biggest challenges of working with the various media in the fonds?

I’m sure that everyone involved in the project can name their own particular challenge or challenges. For me, since my role is to do a lot of the archival processing on the fonds, I need to be able to identify and contextualize audiovisual assets. This requires having a deep knowledge of A/V formats and their role in the production and promotion of the commercial offerings of the record label. Knowledge of music history and cultural production in Canada and elsewhere is also useful. There is a lot of learning to do on the job, and I often rely on contacts and colleagues to help me out with this.

Can you share one of your favourite things about working on this project?

I think it's the ability to combine several of my interests in one. In at least some capacity I'm a musician, technological experimentalist, historian, and music lover. In my personal life, I collect recorded music, music-making machines and playback equipment. I've written and published on music and popular culture and spent some time performing on stage, recording in studios, and playing with bands.

Do you have a favourite object that is in the collection?

It's hard to settle on a single object, but objects with the most dramatic appearance are probably the film reels and vintage cans, especially when inspecting them on a light table. But there is a specific and unassuming DAT tape that I particularly like. It's the original master of a Skinny Puppy album with a track that, due to copyright infringement, never got released. I was a big fan in my teenage years and had never heard the full album as it was originally intended.

IMAGE 2. ORIGINAL LP MASTER FOR SKINNY PUPPY'S ALBUM "LAST RIGHTS" ON DAT TAPE. NOTE THE SPELLING OF THE ALBUM TITLE AS IT APPEARS ON THE ORIGINAL MASTER BEFORE THE COPYRIGHT STRIKE. IMAGE CREDIT: UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS.



What is one thing you would like readers to know about EMI Music Canada? How can we learn more about the work that's happening with this project?

Oh, that would definitely be the upcoming launch of our digital collection this fall. Visitors to our Digital Collections site will be able to stream audio and video content and view high-definition photographs of the original asset. Researchers and anyone who is interested in the subjects or content can request full access to assets for their own use. The archive contains invaluable information on so many different aspects of music, film, and video production in Canada. This

includes offering critical insight into major labels, artists and corporate or administrative bodies involved. As a body that had such reach across the cultural landscape here, going for a deep dive into the archival finding aids or through the Digital Collections site can be surprisingly rewarding. It will be an extremely rich source for academic and popular research.

Those interested can keep an eye on digitalcollections.ucalgary.ca where the digital collection will be staged this fall.

IMAGE 3. HANDWRITTEN NOTES BY THE MASTERING ENGINEER, WHICH IS AN EXAMPLE OF SOME OF THE TECHNICAL RECORDS THAT ACCOMPANY THE AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIALS. IMAGE CREDIT: UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS.

SET DL
Bernie Grundman MASTERING on #11
ARTIST SKINNY PUPPY 3700 #5
DATE _____ ROOM _____
1:06 TO 1:30 LABEL _____
BLD _____ LPT _____ ECHO _____ BAND _____

SIDE A LIM $\text{D}+3$ BUSS _____ DIGITAL LEVEL _____ PEAK _____ TONES *over tone 24/3=0*

	40	30	50	80	130	200	320	500	800	1.2	2	3.5	5	8	12.5	15	17.5
1	19	4	19	4	+	+	+	+	+						+	+	+
<i>Make low flat across top</i>																	
TC _____ TIME 5:35																	
2	19	4	19	4	+	+	+	+	+						+	+	+
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OVER

“The Mother of Us All”: (Og)Reta McNeill, Canada’s First Professional Music Librarian

By Kathleen McMorrow

Abstract

This paper presents extensive new biographical information, assembled from newspaper articles, about Ogreta McNeill, Canada’s first professional music librarian: pianist, singer, teacher, single mother, Toronto Public Library branch director, writer and bibliographer, impresario, founder and first chair of the Canadian Music Library Association.

The early accomplishments and influences of her formative years in Victoria BC offer were fully realized in her later identity as a generous contributor to the wider musical community.

Article

The article about Ogreta McNeill originally written for the *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada*, now incorporated in the *Canadian Encyclopedia*,¹ consists of a paragraph of about 150 words and a brief bibliography. The two most recent items in this bibliography are a tribute on her retirement in 1968 written by John Beckwith,² and a funeral eulogy from 1993 by Helmut Kallmann.³ By taking advantage of the digital availability of historical newspapers and journals, it is now possible to shed more light on the personality and accomplishments of this professional pioneer.⁴

Kathleen McMorrow headed the Faculty of Music Library, University of Toronto, 1974 to 2013, with particular responsibilities for building the recordings collections and special collections. During her tenure, the Library holdings increased from about 100,000 to nearly 500,000, and were moved into a purpose-built wing of the Edward Johnson Building. She has contributed articles to *Notes* (MLA) and to *Fontes* (IAML); edited the *CAML/ACBM Newsletter* for ten years; and has prepared four Canadian titles for the *Retrospective Index to Music Periodicals* project. Currently she is president and website manager of *Music in the Afternoon*, a concert-presenting organization founded in 1898.

¹ <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/ogreta-mcneill-emc>.

² John Beckwith, “A Tribute to Mrs. Ogreta McNeill,” *CMLA Bulletin*, July 1968.

³ Helmut Kallmann, “In Memoriam: a Pioneer Music Librarian,” *CAML Newsletter*, 21, no. 3, (1993).

⁴ An earlier form of this paper, a pandemic lockdown project, was presented on June 7, 2021, at the virtual conference of the Canadian Association of Music Libraries on its 50th anniversary.



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Ogreta McNeill settled in Toronto in the autumn of 1935, arriving from the west coast as a young widow with a toddler and a widowed mother.⁵ She established herself as a piano teacher and vocal performer. For example, she sang at a meeting of the Women's Missionary Society of Sherbourne United Church in early 1936,⁶ gave a recital at the Toronto Conservatory of Music with her friend, pianist Kathleen Irwin,⁷ and performed for a Speranza Musical Club meeting in 1937.⁸

In 1938, she sang at the Rosedale home of the socialite Mrs. R.Y. Eaton, accompanied by David Ouchterlony,⁹ at that time organist of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. She became the soprano soloist in that choir,¹⁰ and through the 1940s appeared in the annual performances at St. Andrew's of *Messiah* and the *Christmas Oratorio*.¹¹

In 1942, she joined the music section of the Toronto Public Library (TPL), and in 1944 became its head.¹² The Music Collection, established in 1915, was the first subject section of TPL and was housed at the west end of the central building at St. George and College. In 1948, there were newspaper articles about its holdings of books, scores, and choral parts, including Ogreta McNeill's remarks about the wide range of users of the collections.¹³

Since her son Jerry was high-school age by then, and she was also supporting her mother, there may have been financial reasons for Ogreta McNeill's move into full-time employment. She chose a field in which her generous personality and musical intelligence would make a real impact, and she gave it her full commitment.

She added to her education, completing the University of Toronto B.Mus. in 1952 and graduating from Library School in 1953, with her bibliographical study, *Music in 19th century Toronto*. She became active in the Ontario Library Association and in the music section of the Canadian Library Association. In the summer of 1955, she was one of a select nine-member Canadian delegation headed by the national librarian, W. Kaye Lamb, which travelled to the Brussels Congress of the International Federation of Library Associations for a meeting with the International Association of Music Libraries and the International Federation for Documentation.¹⁴ The December issue of the *CLA Bulletin* that year was devoted to the Congress and published her report on the IAML sessions.¹⁵ In the April 1956 issue of the *Bulletin*, she summarized the findings of a CLA-sponsored

⁵ "Social and Club Interests," *Victoria Daily Times*, October 21, 1935.

⁶ "Women's Organizations," *The Globe*, April 21, 1936.

⁷ "Chancellor Entertains," *The Globe and Mail*, March 11, 1937.

⁸ "Speranza Musical Club," *The Globe and Mail*, April 23, 1937.

⁹ "Former Ontario Premier," *The Globe and Mail*, February 9, 1938.

¹⁰ "Recital at St. Andrew's Sunday Evening," *The Globe and Mail*, January 16, 1943.

¹¹ Display Ad, "St. Andrew's," *The Globe and Mail*, December 14, 1946.

¹² "Library seeking Canadian Songs," *The Globe and Mail*, February 6, 1948.

¹³ "Fears Canuck Songs may become Extinct," *The Globe and Mail*, February 6, 1948.

¹⁴ "Ottawa Scene," *Globe and Mail*, August 6, 1955.

¹⁵ "The Brussels Congress, 1955," *Canadian Library Association Bulletin* 12 (December 1955): 98-107.

survey of music in 80 Canadian public libraries, with examples of establishments large and small.¹⁶ She described their holdings, coverage of local sources, and their facilities and staff, then offered useful criteria for the development of public music collections. She had already given some detailed guidance in an earlier published article.¹⁷

After World War II, Canadian cultural nationalism had become a force, expressed most memorably in the 1951 Report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences (the Massey Report). Looking back now, we can regret the absence of Indigenous or otherwise diverse Canadians in this process. The resulting cultural organizations, some still with us, were established on European or Anglo-centric patterns; in music, these were the Canadian Music Council headed by Ernest MacMillan, the Canadian League of Composers, the Canadian Music Journal, and the Canadian Music Centre.

Then in June 1956, in Niagara Falls, at the annual meeting of the Canadian Library Association, Ogreta McNeill, Helmut Kallmann, and Jean Lavender formally founded the Canadian Music Library Association.¹⁸ Ogreta McNeill was chair in the first years, acting as liaison with the Canada Council, and presiding again in 1964-65. The major hotels in which CLA met across the country were appropriate facilities for the concerts which were the major activity of CMLA at these conferences. The 1967 program in the Chateau Laurier ballroom was a concert and dance, “cabaret style,” titled “Centennial music of 100 years.”

In the new CMLA, the cultural nationalist impulse generated a series of highly labour-intensive booklets attempting to document the country’s musical resources. Ogreta McNeill was the originator of some of these publications and a contributor to all of them:

- 1958 - Standards for music collections in medium-sized public libraries;
- 1961 - A bio-bibliographical finding list of Canadian musicians and those who have contributed to music in Canada;
- 1964 - Union list of music periodicals in Canadian libraries;
- 1965 - CMLA Centennial “Data sheets” project which eventually became the Union Catalogue of Canadian sheet music to 1950;
- 1966 - A survey of music collections in public and university libraries in Canada; Setting up and staffing a Music Library;
- 1967 - A selected list of music reference materials; Musical Canadiana: a subject index to vocal and instrumental pieces

¹⁶ “Music collections in Canadian Libraries,” *Canadian Library Association Bulletin* 12 (April 1956): 170-74.

¹⁷ “Basic Music Collection for a Small Public Library,” *Ontario Library Review* 39 (August 1955): 199-202.

¹⁸ Helmut Kallmann, “CMLA / CAML: 15 plus 25 Years of Flourishing,” 24, no.3 (1996): 9.

In April 1959, her day job at the TPL entered a new phase. The Music Library moved to Howard Ferguson House, former home of the Ontario premier, on the corner of Avenue Road and St. Clair Avenue.¹⁹ At the Central Library, Mrs. McNeill had initiated a series of chamber music events;²⁰ her new space included a proper small concert hall. Each week during the month of June, she produced four concerts funded by the Musicians Union, with prominent performers such as pianist Mario Bernardi, flutist Nicholas Fiore, violinists David Zafer and Morry Kernerman, and cellist Marcus Adeney.²¹ She was proud of the expanded collection of recordings in the new facility, and in July and August she broadcast concert music into the garden and adjacent park.²² In October, she organized a recital by Jan Rubes, accompanied by George Brough, of songs by Ernest MacMillan, Healey Willan, and other Canadians.²³ In November, she welcomed to the building the office of the Canadian Music Centre and its collection of scores by members of the Canadian League of Composers.²⁴

A feature article in the *Globe and Mail* in February 1960²⁵ started with her observations about the interest of young people in music other than rock and roll, and the intense use of library scores and recordings reflecting interest in local opera, ballet, concerts, and radio broadcasts. It outlined her career, centring on her enthusiasm for Bach, but also noting her interest in entertaining, gardening, and needlework. A second article in September 1960, is more specific about the size, depth, and breadth of the collection.²⁶ Mrs. McNeill is quoted again on its usefulness and relevance to young people, and the reporter mentioned enthusiastic remarks by several local high school students. There was one divergent opinion: Norman Snider, in Grade 12 at Lawrence Park, complained, "It needs a good collection of jazz." Snider went on to a career as a journalist and cultural commentator, whose work included writing on jazz and appeared regularly in newspapers and magazines. Mrs. McNeill responded that she did not plan to form a jazz collection, since many jazz fans didn't take care of records, and replacement costs would be unjustifiably high. According to the *Globe and Mail*, her opinion of rock 'n' roll was even more unfavorable. "It's not music and we don't stock it. Would you expect the book library to keep comic books? After all, we have our standards."

¹⁹ "Library Music Branch is Opened," *Globe and Mail*, April 20, 1959.

²⁰ "Music Calendar," *Globe and Mail*, May 10, 1958.

²¹ "Music Calendar," *Globe and Mail*, May 30, 1959; June 6, 1959, June 13, 1959, June 20, 1959.

²² "Lunch-hour Tape Recitals," *Globe and Mail*, June 27, 1959.

²³ "Music Calendar," *Globe and Mail*, October 17, 1959.

²⁴ John Kraglund, "Music in Toronto: Canadian Centre Achieving Aims," *Globe and Mail*, November 4, 1959.

²⁵ Jo Carson, "Says Demand is Growing for Music Data," *Globe and Mail*, February 3, 1960.

²⁶ "Music Library May Hook You on Classics," *Globe and Mail*, September 3, 1960.

She may have been playing up to the interviewer, or she may have later changed her tune. In 1968, John Beckwith wrote, "In discussing her attitude to pop music and show tunes with me, she once remarked that no library can keep pace with the current 'top forty,' yet whenever I examine the collection I notice that books and discs in these two areas are constantly updated."²⁷

She continued organizing concert series in the Music library. In 1961, Tela Podoliak performed all the Beethoven piano sonatas.²⁸ In 1962, there was a Debussy series with pianist Stuart Hamilton.²⁹ In 1963, a variety of performers explored Schubert song cycles,³⁰ and in 1964, the piano music of Brahms.³¹ The little hall was used by the Women's Committee of the Toronto Symphony,³² of which she was a member, for the preview lectures before concerts, with speakers ranging from Udo Kasemets,³³ flag-bearer of the avant-garde, through conductor Walter Susskind,³⁴ and of course, John Beckwith.³⁵ There were also meetings of the Women's Committee of the Mendelssohn Choir,³⁶ in which she still sang.

Ogreta McNeill retired in 1968, having made her library into a centre of community musical life and having established standards for librarianship in music. She maintained her musical friendships, as past president of the Pro Arte Orchestra,³⁷ a musical contributor to the Heliconian Club,³⁸ and vice-president of the Zonta Club,³⁹ She gave the opening address at the 1981 conference of CAML⁴⁰ and wrote articles for the *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada*.⁴¹ When she died in 1993, Helmut Kallmann wrote a tribute, calling her the "mother figure of Canadian music librarians," which was read at her funeral and published in the *CAML Newsletter*.⁴²

How did Ogreta McNeill become this remarkable person? Here are her own words, from the opening paragraph of her April 1956 survey report:

Many years ago a youthful piano student happened on a shelf of music volumes at the Victoria Public Library and diffidently took home a book of Schumann's songs as a change

²⁷ John Beckwith, "A Tribute to Mrs. Ogreta McNeill," *CMLA Bulletin*, July 1968.

²⁸ "Pianist Podoliak to Tackle Sonata Cycle of Beethoven," *Globe and Mail*, January 14, 1961.

²⁹ Haworth, Frank, "Stuart Hamilton Shows Control of Debussy," *Globe and Mail*, February 14, 1962.

³⁰ Haworth, Frank, "Voice Colourful but Tenor Needs More Training," *Globe and Mail*, April 24, 1963.

³¹ "Music Calendar," *Globe and Mail*, April 4, 1964.

³² "Continue TSO Support, Women Urged," *Globe and Mail*, December 4, 1962.

³³ "Today's Calendar," *Globe and Mail*, February 1, 1963.

³⁴ "Music Calendar," *Globe and Mail*, March 14, 1964.

³⁵ She had been his first piano teach in Victoria in the 1930s, personal communication to author.

³⁶ "Today's Calendar," *Globe and Mail*, January 25, 1962.

³⁷ Jean Brunton, "This Week in the Social World," *Globe and Mail*, November 30, 1961.

³⁸ "Carrying on the Club Tradition of Singing," *Globe and Mail*, December 15, 1967.

³⁹ "Zonta Annual," *Globe and Mail*, April 25, 1967.

⁴⁰ "Programme," *CAML Newsletter*, 10, no. 1 (1981): 6

⁴¹ "Toronto Mendelssohn Choir," "Victor Di Bello."

⁴² Helmut Kallmann, "In Memoriam: a Pioneer Music Librarian," *CAML Newsletter*, 21 no.3 (1993).

from her daily scales and sonatinas. Here was a treasure trove indeed, and all of her own finding, for who would expect to discover music in a library? That same piano student now presides over the Music Division of a large public library and feels rewarded whenever she hears that note of delighted discovery in the voice of some searching borrower who has stumbled on similar treasure unexpectedly, or indeed, stumbled on the music itself, since many people still do not expect to find music in a library.

Eva Mary Ogreta Ormiston was born on August 2, 1903, in Cape Breton, to a master mariner and his wife; they moved to Victoria soon afterwards. Her father built a career as a captain of Canadian Pacific coastal cargo ships working from Seattle to Alaska. Her parents had two more daughters and a son. Ogreta, or Reta as she was known then, first came to the attention of the *Victoria Daily Times* at the age of 10 for her recitations at the closing exercises of South Park School in December 1913.⁴³ From then until her final removal to Toronto, her name appeared in the Victoria or Vancouver newspapers over 250 times, documenting her musical progress from teenaged organist at her church, or in her teacher's piano recitals in the Empress Hotel, through two years at Victoria College, to opening her own piano studio, through her many performances with the Ladies Musical Club, to her final professional west coast vocal appearances in 1935.

When she was in her twenties, it was the nineteen twenties, and even in seemingly remote and quiet Victoria, there was a social and musical whirl. In the first six months of 1925, her participation can be followed in the local press, through reports of her performances as a singer, dancer, piano soloist, accompanist, and chamber musician.

On January 12, at a party for the fourth anniversary of the founding of the Kumtuks Club (later known as the Victoria Business and Professional Women's Club) she contributed piano solos and accompanied a dancer.⁴⁴ On the 22nd, she herself danced in an exhibition of advanced pupils in the studio of Madame Varda.⁴⁵ At the end of January, her father died suddenly at the age of 50.⁴⁶ She didn't appear in public again until February 20, playing a short piece in a Rachmaninoff program at the Victoria Conservatory.⁴⁷ On the 27th she was an accompanist in an evening organized by the Ladies Musical Club.⁴⁸

On March 9, at the next Kumtuks Club meeting, she accompanied a singer.⁴⁹ On Wednesday, March 11, she was on radio CFCT playing Glinka in a piano trio along with a solo Rachmaninoff Valse, probably the one she played on February 20th at the Conservatory, and probably no. 2 of the

⁴³ "Closing Exercises in City Schools," *Victoria Daily Times*, December 19, 1913.

⁴⁴ "Kumtuks Celebrate Fourth Birthday," *Victoria Daily Times*, January 12, 1925.

⁴⁵ "Exhibition by Dancing Pupils," *Victoria Daily Times*, January 22, 1925.

⁴⁶ "Veteran Seaman Died Here To-Day," *Victoria Daily Times*, January 29, 1925.

⁴⁷ "Russian Composer Inspired Concert," *Victoria Daily Times*, February 23, 1925.

⁴⁸ "Ladies' Musical Club Entertained Aged Women's Home," *Victoria Daily Times*, February 28, 1925.

⁴⁹ "News in Brief," *Victoria Daily Times*, March 9, 1925.

Morceaux de salon, op. 10.⁵⁰ On the following Saturday, she played a piano solo in a concert reception in the Empress Hotel, arranged by the local chapter of the IODE to celebrate the 82nd anniversary of the founding of the city. It was attended by the Lieutenant-Governor, the Premier, the Mayor, and the Chief Justice.⁵¹ The Empress Hotel, in the Inner Harbour, Victoria, had opened as a Canadian Pacific Hotel in 1908. By 1920, it was a tourist destination, and the social and entertainment centre of the city.

On March 20, there was a church anniversary concert, including her piano trio ensemble, at Hampshire Methodist, where she had been an active member since childhood.⁵² She assisted a lecturer on Mendelssohn at the Victoria Conservatory on April 17, playing the solo Andante and Rondo Capriccioso, op. 14, and movements from op. 49 with her piano trio.⁵³ On April 18, there was a large group picnic by ferry to James Island; the entertainment lasted till after midnight. Included among all the comic and vaudeville numbers described in the newspaper, Reta “received much applause for her splendid work in several piano solos,”⁵⁴ A couple of days later at the “Home Products Fair” attended by 5,000 people, she accompanied a dancing exhibition by Madame Varda.⁵⁵

On April 28, she played several solos at a concert given in Sidney, on the tip of the peninsula, for the North Saanich IODE chapter.⁵⁶ On May 12, in Memorial Hall for the Victoria Schubert Club, she played duets with a local violinist.⁵⁷ The annual recital of her own piano students at the Conservatory in mid-June was reviewed favourably; she was congratulated on “her intelligent, consistent leading of her young pupils through the difficult pathways toward sound musicianship.”⁵⁸ On June 24, she played Liszt’s virtuoso Concert Etude no. 3 in D flat, Un Sospiro, at Knox United Church, as a break in a vocal recital by junior pupils of her friend and teacher Mary McCoy Jameson.⁵⁹

In the periods before and after these six months, Reta’s datebook was just as full. Immersed in teaching, learning, and performing music for her community, her character and strengths were formed, becoming the basis of the values and projects she advocated and initiated later in life.

⁵⁰ “Daily Radio Programmes,” *Victoria Daily Times*, March 11, 1925.

⁵¹ “Chapter Observes City’s Birthday,” *Victoria Daily Times*, March 16, 1925.

⁵² “Anniversary Concert,” *Victoria Daily Times*, March 21, 1925.

⁵³ “Mendelssohn Music Theme of Lecture and Programme,” *Victoria Daily Times*, April 18, 1925.

⁵⁴ “St. Mary’s Belles at James Island,” *Victoria Daily Times*, April 25, 1925.

⁵⁵ “Many Attend Final Night of Products Fair,” *Victoria Daily Times*, April 27, 1925.

⁵⁶ “Sidney News,” *Victoria Daily Times*, May 1, 1925.

⁵⁷ Display Ad “The Schubert Society of Victoria,” *The Daily Colonist*, May 10, 1925.

⁵⁸ “Pupils’ Recital is Much Appreciated,” *Victoria Daily Times*, June 24, 1925.

⁵⁹ “Pupils’ Recital was Enjoyable,” *Victoria Daily Times*, June 25, 1925.

In October 1927, there was a pause, and then many changes of dynamics. She married⁶⁰ Charles Elwood McNeill, a young businessman who had recently been appointed to manage the Shell Oil facility in Nanaimo, about 100 km north of Victoria.⁶¹ This move interrupted her musical life, but a year later her husband was promoted to run the Victoria plant⁶² and she fully resumed her teaching and performing. Another year later, in November 1929, McNeill was again promoted, to the Vancouver offices.⁶³ Their son Jerry was born in Vancouver in October 1930. And then, a few months later, after what was described on the front page of the *Victoria Daily Times* as a serious operation after a lengthy illness, Charles McNeill died.⁶⁴

Ogreta McNeill retreated to the family home on Island Road in Victoria, where her mother would share her son Jerry's upbringing.⁶⁵ She returned to teaching in August,⁶⁶ resumed her regular work as an accompanist, developed a more prominent presence as a vocal soloist, and soon became a director of the Victoria Musical Arts Society, successor to the Ladies Musical Club.⁶⁷ In July 1932, she received her Toronto Conservatory of Music Associateship in solo piano with first class honours.⁶⁸ In July 1933, after, and perhaps even inspired by a lecture by a visiting Ernest MacMillan,⁶⁹ she moved to Toronto for two years of study at the TCM with Viggo Kihl.⁷⁰ Her husband had left an estate of more than \$9,000;⁷¹ with this amount in 1933, one could build a new house in Victoria, buy 15 cars, or even live in Toronto for two years.

In July 1935, the *Times Daily Colonist* was delighted to announce Ogreta McNeill's return to Victoria.⁷² But she had decided on a different direction, and embarked on what was really a farewell tour, with half a dozen performances as a pianist, or as a vocalist in recital with her friend, pianist Kathleen Irwin,⁷³ before a final appearance at the tea hour in the Empress Hotel on Saturday,

⁶⁰ "Oak Bay Wedding Pretty Ceremony," *Victoria Daily Times*, October 10, 1927.

⁶¹ "Local Boy Promoted to Nanaimo Plant," *Victoria Daily Times*, April 9, 1927.

⁶² "Charlie McNeill to Manage Shell Firm," *Victoria Daily Times*, October 22, 1928.

⁶³ "Personal Items," *Victoria Daily Times*, November 9, 1929.

⁶⁴ "Chas. E. M'Neill, Native Son, Dies," *Victoria Daily Times*, March 26, 1931.

⁶⁵ "In Memory of Charles Gerald McNeill <https://www.sweenyfuneralhome.ca/book-of-memories/2246327/mcneill-gerald/obituary.php>

⁶⁶ Display Ad, "Ogreta McNeill Announces the Reopening of Her Pianoforte Studio," *Victoria Daily Times*, August 29, 1931.

⁶⁷ "Musical Art Society Doing Splendid Work," *Victoria Daily Times*, April 21, 1932.

⁶⁸ "Victorians Pass Music Exams," *Victoria Daily Times*, July 26, 1932.

⁶⁹ "Radio Affects Music Studies," *Victoria Daily Times*, June 14, 1933.

⁷⁰ "Pianiste to Give Recital," *Victoria Daily Times*, July 13, 1935.

⁷¹ "McNeill Will Probate Sought," *Vancouver Daily Province*, June 12, 1931.

⁷² "Popular Pianist Returns," *The Daily Colonist*, July 10, 1935.

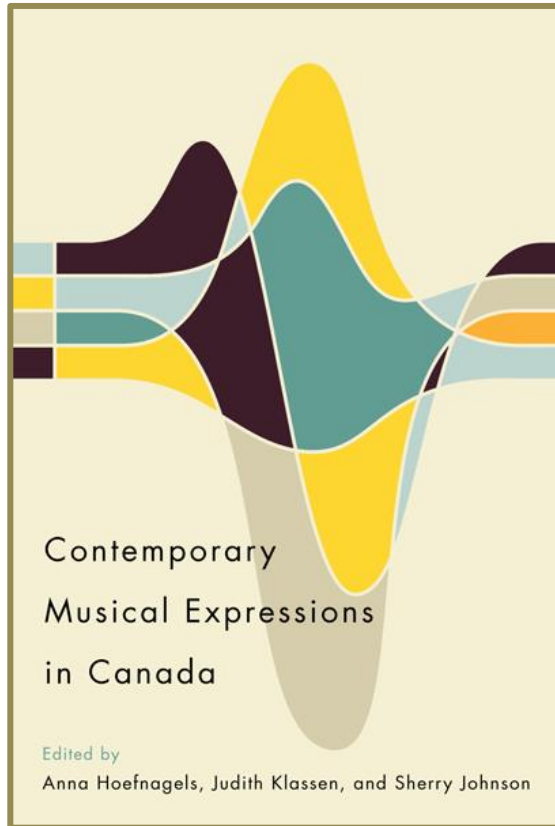
⁷³ G. D. B. "Ogreta McNeill and Kathleen Irwin Give Artistic Performance," *Victoria Daily Times*, September 14, 1935.

September 21, 1935.⁷⁴ In October, her mother and son joined her in Toronto,⁷⁵ where she began a new career of enriching the musical life in that city.

Ogreta McNeill's early discovery of "musical treasure" in the Victoria Public Library had marvelous consequences. With the addition of academic qualifications to her original talents as a pianist, singer, and teacher, she created a new identity for herself – library director, writer, bibliographer, impresario – and for us, as founder of our professional association.

⁷⁴ "Social and Club Interests," *Victoria Daily Times*, September 23, 1935.

⁷⁵ "Social and Club Interests," *Victoria Daily Times*, October 21, 1935.



[Contemporary Musical Expressions in Canada.](#)

Edited by Anna Hoefnagels, Judith Klassen and Sherry Johnson. Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2019. 536 pp. ISBN: 9780773558809.

Reviewed by: Hannah Willmann

Contemporary Musical Expressions in Canada, edited by Anna Hoefnagels, Judith Klassen, and Sherry Johnson, is a welcome addition to the increasing efforts of scholars to decenter a Eurocentric narrative of music history. The editors and authors seek to provide a collection of subversive microhistories of music in Canada, put in dialogue in order to avoid the superficiality that can occur when merely matching diversity and inclusion quotas under the guise of multiculturalism (6). The editors even take a reflective position, questioning their own work, and acknowledging that research and writing can do damage and reinforce

hierarchies (6). They dedicate the volume to Beverley Diamond, whose work has profoundly impacted the development of ethnomusicology in Canada, and whose contributions to the field are evident throughout. In addition to noting Diamond's work, the first chapter provides an extensive (though not comprehensive) state of the research of ethnomusicology in Canada since 1990.

The three main sections of the volume provide structure while avoiding framing the stories within a narrative that promotes cultural homogeneity. The first section of the book is organized around the concept of tradition. Recognizing that tradition is a loaded term, the authors in this section examine the interplay of tradition and development, especially in response to changing technology, performance, and reception. In her chapter on French Canadian *veillées* (social gatherings which may include singing and dancing), Laura Risk explains the interrelated histories of staged versions (which are structured and performed in commercial settings) and unstaged versions (which continue to be part of Québec culture). Her comparison is not for the sake of arguing for the authenticity of the unstaged over the staged, but rather to show how the staged versions



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contributed to the understanding of folklore and tradition in the early twentieth century, and how unstaged events blur distinctions between genres through the breadth of music they include.

To further complicate the relationship between tradition and innovation, Margaret Walker investigates kathak dance in Canada. This classical Indian dance, with roots in Vedic practices of the Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan regions, continues to develop in Canada and around the world (87). Walker's explanation of tradition as a foundation for creativity, rather than as a rigorous standard which must be maintained, provides a helpful framing as the purpose of the genre shifts based on its various contexts – contexts which provide opportunity for intercultural dialogue and collaboration.

As ethnomusicology seeks to rid itself of the vestiges of imperialism and coloniality, researchers continue to acknowledge the biases of song collecting as a practice that impacts the legacy and the present of the original song cultures. Chris McDonald's chapter on folk music in Nova Scotia serves as an example of how this canon shaping process continues to impact how future generations accept or refuse these stereotypes (or perceived traditions) in their performances.

In section two of this volume, each of the chapters treat genre and musical practices as a point of connection and creation rather than as distinct, bounded entities. Through these chapters it is evident that negotiations between tradition and innovation can apply both to music practices and generic categorizations. For instance, in addressing Metis (style) fiddling, Monique Giroux notes that there are particular style markers, including clogging, cross-tuning, and asymmetrical phrasing which have meant that scholars tend to see the genre as fixed.¹ In practice, however, this interpretation is complicated by the changing social context and cultural relevance of the practice which Giroux sees as bridging past and present, static and evolving.

Fiddling is also the subject of Ian Hayes's contribution to the volume where he investigates the disparate ways through which the "liveness" of Cape Breton fiddling events is replicated in recording. Although it is not as much about genre as it is about replicating or invoking a particular aesthetic and communal environment, the chapter echoes this section's theme of the flexibility of artistic practices via Hayes's analysis of the recording medium.

¹ Giroux uses the term Metis without an accent following the work of Metis scholar Brenda Macdougall, *One of the Family: Metis Culture in Nineteenth-Century Northwestern Saskatchewan* (UBC Press, Vancouver: 2010), who argues that including the accent emphasises French heritages over Indigenous identity or other European backgrounds. Giroux's use of the term "style" in parentheses serves to show that this type of fiddling is also practiced outside of Metis culture, but that to Metis fiddlers in particular, community is more important than style (234).

Although the book's title refers specifically to musical expressions in Canada, Colin McGuire demonstrates the intricacy of cross-genre interaction in his discussion of lion dance in Toronto. This practice, which bridges martial art and percussion, functions as a core aspect of reinforcing Chinese identity and countering racism.

Like Hayes' chapter, Jesse Stewart and Niel Scobie do not focus as much on generic characteristics as on the socio-cultural role that Canadian hip-hop artists (e.g., Michelle "Michie Mee" McCulloch and Wes Williams) play in communicating aspects of diasporic and hybridized identities. Stewart and Scobie identify this hybridization particularly through the use of "code-switching" (using multiple languages) and sampling as a reflection of the primary "trope" of call and response in African diasporic music (308–9).

The third and final section focuses on the construction of difference. Beginning with Louise Wrazen's chapter on how the practices of Polish Górale (or Highlanders) contribute to ethnocultural diversity in Toronto, the chapters in this section challenge notions of diversity as simply a twenty-first century buzzword and instead address tangible practices (especially those which have lacked funding and attention) that shape diversity. These chapters serve the editors' goals of centering microhistories by countering the fact that some instances of diversity get more attention than others. For example, Rebecca Draisey-Collishaw addresses how broadcasting can serve as a gatekeeper of intercultural encounters. Modelling her discussion around "fusion programming" on the CBC, Draisey-Collishaw presents a nuanced argument that acknowledges the potential for programming to inadvertently reinforce inequality by how such programs are framed. In one instance, Draisey-Collishaw notes that while the radio's first "Come By Concerts" program from St John's, Newfoundland featured a choir with mixed Eastern European heritage and repertoire, the positioning of the choir in an accompaniment role to local musician Pamela Morgan reinforced a hierarchical structure of culture around Western ideals (400).

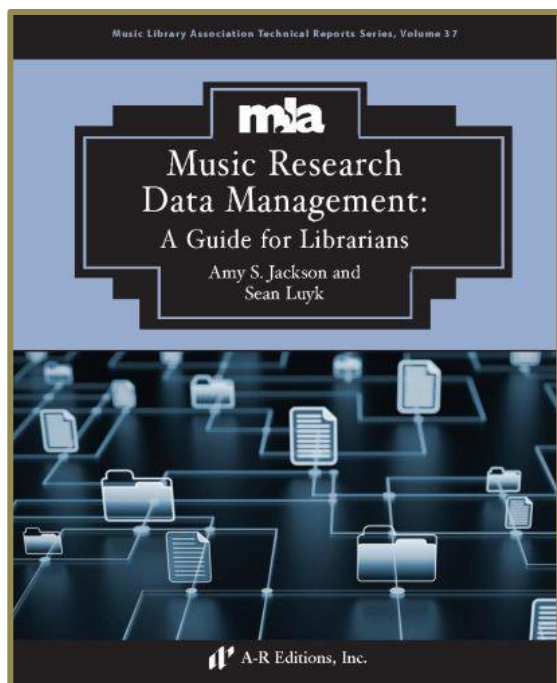
Similarly, Judith Klassen's examination of "heterogeneity" and "permeability" amongst Mennonite communities in rural Manitoba is a helpful reminder against the tendency towards essentializing that can occur in cross-cultural dialogues and artistic practice. Klassen describes the impact and evolution of Mennonite practices such as *Brommtopp* (a mumming tradition) and "circle games" as examples of the flexibility within various cultural communities. Like Klassen, Marcia Ostashewski counters the idea of cultural homogeneity by examining the role of church music practice in preserving Ukrainian identity, but makes note of the ways these practices have been developed and changed, and are localized rather than homogeneous.

This volume offers a potent reminder and helpful investigation of the complexity of such terms as tradition, genre, authenticity, and diversity. The authors took care to explain their use of these terms and to show how they are neither fixed nor impermeable. What also makes this text valuable is not only the diversity of the subject matter but of approaches to that subject matter, for example,

in the three different chapters on fiddling and in the interdisciplinary nature of the two chapters focused not on music but on dance (kathak and lion dance).

Students and scholars of all levels will find this to be an excellent resource whether they are addressing music within Canada or looking for examples of the progress that is being made in how ethnomusicological research is responding to the broader social movements of decoloniality and anti-racism.² *Contemporary Musical Expressions in Canada* represents a step towards centering diverse stories and practices in ethnomusicology.

² Following Walter Mignolo, I make the distinction between “decolonization” as a physical, political act and “decoloniality” as its epistemological, intellectual accompaniment. Walter D. Mignolo, *The Politics of Decolonial Investigations* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2021), 13. See also Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, “Decolonization is Not a Metaphor,” *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1, no. 1 (2012): 1–40.



[Music Research Data Management: A Guide for Librarians](#). By Amy S. Jackson and Sean Luyk.

Middleton, Wisconsin: A-R Editions Inc., 2020. 142 pp. ISBN: 9780895798909.

Reviewed by: Francesca Giannetti, Rutgers University–New Brunswick, NJ

Amy S. Jackson and Sean Luyk carve out new territory for music librarianship in the transitional spaces between scientific research data management (RDM) and scholarship in music and dance in *Music Research Data Management: A Guide for Librarians*. The authors argue that the inputs and outputs of research in the performing

arts are data and are deserving of long-term preservation. They see the music librarian as occupying a place within a nexus of experts who together contribute to the work of collecting, organizing, describing, and preserving data to ensure its discoverability and reusability. Performing arts researchers—with the exception of those engaged in technical sub-specialties such as music information retrieval, music encoding, and digital signal processing—are reluctant to use the word “data” to describe their sources. The authors successfully build a case for raising awareness of RDM practices within performing arts disciplines for the purpose of seeding future cross-disciplinary research. They contend that arts and humanities librarians have an important interpretive role to perform at the interface of scientific and cultural research domains.

After a short introduction and a chapter on music data that grapples with definitions and standards, Jackson and Luyk organize their chapters by musical discipline, a sensible choice given their emphasis on the social aspects of research cultures. In each of the chapters on musicology and music theory, ethnomusicology, composition, music education, music performance, and dance performance (chapters 3–8), the authors first describe what is characteristic about that discipline’s research process, as seen from a research data management perspective, then discuss how data is found and shared by scholars of the discipline. This latter discussion delves into the history of the discipline as it relates to researchers’ sources, methods, and products. To give an example, the authors describe how intricately the discipline of ethnomusicology is tied to the history of recorded



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sound and the eventual ability to make one's own field recordings. The field recordings are the data in this case, as are the annotations, notes, images, spreadsheets, and whatever else supports the researcher's inquiry. This "data abundance" (p. 61) is a source of some concern since it is often kept on personal hard drives and not preserved. Of course, the study of sound recordings is not unique to ethnomusicology, and the authors' organization of the book by discipline does result in the occasional redundancy, as there is some overlap in terms of the media and platforms used in each. With that said, *Music Research Data Management* may easily be read selectively for the areas of greatest interest to the reader.

The sections on sharing data, found in each disciplinary chapter, may arguably be more aspirational for now. Despite the existence of some well-known repositories and platforms, such as IMSLP and YouTube, ethical, legal, technical, and social barriers abound in all musical fields. There is some cause for hope, however, and the authors tend to frame their recommendations in terms of least to greatest effort, all while flagging the trade-offs involved with each. For example, chapter 2 includes an extremely helpful table (p. 40) that assesses the current terrain of openly available online platforms for their strengths and weaknesses in terms of streaming support, metadata, intellectual property policies, and their suitability (or lack thereof) for long-term archiving. The authors generally present a range of recommendations suitable for institutions with varying levels of resources to commit to research data management. Emerging as we are from the COVID-19 pandemic, however, it is probably not an exaggeration to say that libraries are all feeling overstretched. The "good for now" solutions may be the only actionable steps in the near term. Of course, Jackson and Luyk submitted their book manuscript and copy edits before the pandemic. While neoliberal austerity was certainly a factor beforehand, the authors had no way to foresee the extra turn of the knife COVID-19 would bring to library budgets and staffing. Nonetheless, reading their book in this particular moment may make their recommendations appear a bit rosy or optimistic, with too great a responsibility placed on the shoulders of individual librarians.

Additionally, as a consequence of making a case for research data management in *all* fields of music study, Jackson and Luyk blur the distinctions between two separate curatorial fields: research data management and digital preservation. The study of music is often constructed into binaries, such as the theoretical (music theory, musicology, ethnomusicology) and the practical (e.g., performance and composition). The authors seem to suggest that treating the outputs of these fields as separate obscures the very real data management needs in all of them. After all, performers do research just as musicologists do; only the outputs differ. While their point is well taken, there are conceptual and concrete differences in the data of these disciplines. For example, performers produce websites, social media posts, concert programs and flyers, while composers may have versions of their works saved in open or proprietary music notation file formats; these are dissimilar to the typical musicology outputs.¹ By glossing over these distinctions of kind, the authors may disguise

¹ For an eye-opening discussion of what it takes to preserve the output of a composer active in the 1990s, see Doug Reside, "'Last Modified January 1996': The Digital History of *RENT*," *Theatre Survey* 52, no. 2 (2011): 35-40.

the complexity of the role they encourage librarians to adopt. Experts in digital preservation and data management may use similar tools, but they tend to pursue separate professional tracks. Scientific research data managers don't often encounter the plethora of media, formats, and mediums that are commonplace in the performing arts, and for which digital preservationists are better prepared. Underplaying the boundaries of these two specializations with only glancing acknowledgement of the complexity involved adds to the perceived burden of constructions like "libraries should" and "libraries are well positioned" and "librarians can help," even though the authors undoubtedly intend to convey a hopeful message about a new growth area.

The authors augment their claims wherever possible with references to existing guidelines, policies, and statements of professional organizations in addition to scholarly citations. It is of immense help to the reader to examine how some institutions have developed policies and practices oriented towards their specific communities of music researchers and performers. The authors do not enter into discussions of collections management or cost-benefit analysis, although they do reference personal digital archiving as a possibility in cases where the institution cannot or will not intervene. This omission is probably deliberate, as there will be a number of local factors influencing a librarian's decision-making in this space. At a basic level, however, it is important to acknowledge that some kind of selection process or prioritization needs to occur. As Trevor Owens states in *The Theory and Craft of Digital Preservation*, we need to "accept and embrace the archival sliver," since saving everything is not an option and never was.²

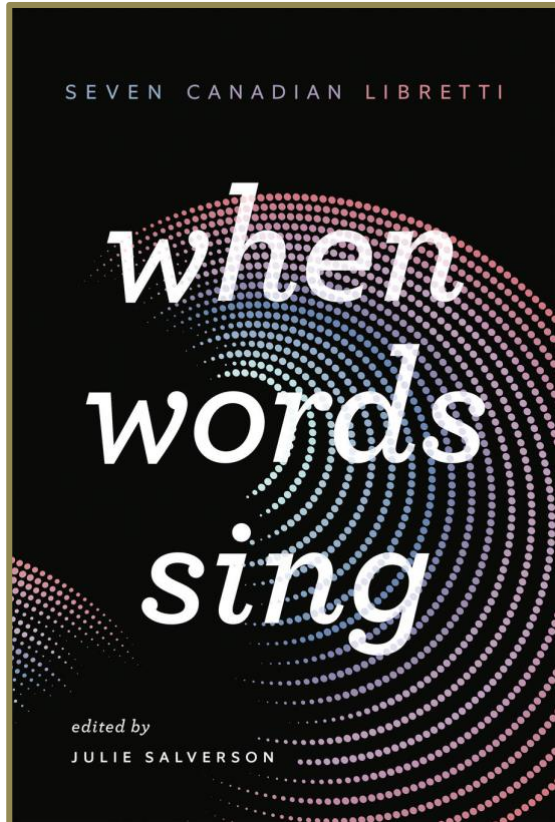
One of the authors' best and strongest points is that music librarians can exercise a critical advocacy and awareness-building role, even without being experts in all aspects of the data preservation pipeline, without specialized colleagues or an institutional repository to lean on, and most importantly without managing the data *themselves*. Jackson and Luyk's recommendations in such cases might be described as concierge services that point researchers to resources both in the college or university and beyond.³ In other words, music librarians can guide researchers and performers to make more informed choices about how to organize their research materials, where to share their work, what to be mindful of before they start to capture their data, and where to go to find more information. Despite (and also because of) our current lean times, librarians need to be future-minded about their work, and at this point it seems inarguable that the demands of data-centric research will only continue to grow.

Co-authors Amy Jackson and Sean Luyk bring a wide range of expertise to this volume. Jackson has a research background in data curation in the arts, music librarianship, metadata and discovery, and music performance. Luyk has published on the topics of collecting local music, digital curation, and governance in Canadian academic libraries. *Music Research Data Management* is an excellent

² Trevor Owens, *The Theory and Craft of Digital Preservation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018), 8.

³ Chris Bourg, "The Library Concierge Project at Stanford University," *The Journal of Creative Library Practice*, June 6, 2013, <https://creativelibrarypractice.org/2013/06/06/the-library-concierge-project-at-stanford-university/>.

introduction to research data management for the musical domain, a topic that is currently under-researched and under-resourced but that will likely grow in importance as funder mandates and open access policies become more stringent. This volume will be of interest to anyone who wishes to develop their knowledge of music data curation, music librarians and archivists perhaps foremost, but also music researchers, performers, and data librarians in the sciences and social sciences.



[When Words Sing: Seven Canadian Libretti](#). Edited by Julie Salverson. Toronto: Playwrights Canada Press, 2021. 424 pp. ISBN: 9780369101242.

Reviewed by Colleen Renihan, Queen's University

When Words Sing represents a uniquely vibrant cross-disciplinary perspective on seven recent operas with Canadian-authored libretti. It is a glowing testament to how vibrant Canadian opera is today, and to its potential to continue to thrive as a rich site of artistic collaboration. It is also one of the only places to access these libretti, which are not available elsewhere. The volume is ideally positioned to be of use to researchers, practitioners, instructors, performers, and enthusiasts alike. It would also serve as an invaluable resource for use in undergraduate and graduate courses on opera or Canadian music. Beginning with a warm and

personal foreword by internationally renowned Canadian soprano and conductor Barbara Hannigan, as well as a comprehensive and insightful introduction by Linda Hutcheon and Michael Hutcheon, the book then offers sections on George Elliott Clarke and James Rolfe's *Beatrice Chancy* (1998), Royce Vavrek and David T. Little's *Dog Days* (2012), Marie Clements and Brian Current's *Missing* (2017), Ann-Marie MacDonald and Nic Gotham's *Nigredo Hotel* (1992), Robert Chafe and John Estacio's *Ours* (2016), Anna Chatterton and Gareth Williams's *Rocking Horse Winner* (2016), and Julie Salverson and Juliet Palmer's *Shelter* (2012). Each section contains the complete libretto followed by contributions from several members of each creative team, who offer insight on each opera's inception, creative process, and prominent themes. The book concludes with a series of brief bios of the creators featured in the book.

The leap of faith required on the part of contemporary creators of opera, and the fortuitous series of events that seem to have occurred in order to facilitate the creative collaborations necessary for each opera's inception, has not been extensively explored in a contemporary context, and certainly not in Canada. It is refreshing, for example, to read George Elliott Clarke, librettist for *Beatrice Chancy*, write of his memories penning songs in his childhood bedroom, looking to Bob Dylan,



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Charles Beaudelaire, Dylan Thomas, and LeRoi Jones, for inspiration. Julie Salverson and Wayne Strongman describe the multi-year evolution of the Salverson-Palmer collaboration for *Shelter*. And Brian Current tells of the “blind” audition process he underwent to be commissioned as composer for *Missing*. While each opera is presented along with some of the transcendent themes, features, and complex readings that make them the impressive works of art they are, the book also seems to suggest the very real possibility for curious and creative writers to find their way to opera. It should also be noted that the libretto and descriptions of each work’s inception are more accessible than each opera’s score might be for those looking for a “way in” to contemporary opera.

Reading through the various libretti in the collection is enough to convince one of the value and relevance of contemporary opera in North America. Creators answer questions like “why are [the characters] singing?” (Gareth Williams) and “Where do words and music come from?” (Juliet Palmer). The answers to these questions are not only fascinating from a theoretical perspective but are also crucial to understanding how this art form makes sense for creators and audiences today. These pieces are contemporary and reflective of their time and place. Royce Vavrek writes that *Dog Days* “was undeniably contemporary in every way, requiring an honesty and directness in the language, and it had characters that spoke like me and my family” (69). The flexibility of form and focus of the chamber opera genre are partly to thank for this, as Linda and Michael Hutcheon write: “Their relatively smaller scale also makes chamber operas quicker to create and produce, and thus more rapidly responsive to issues of the day” (2). Hearing from those involved in the creation of these pieces affirms the work that contemporary opera can do vis-à-vis some of our biggest social challenges in contemporary Canada. Marie Clements, for example, writes about her impetus to write the libretto for *Missing*: “I’ve decided I will continue to write about [missing and murdered Indigenous women] until I don’t have to” (139). While keeping Dylan Robinson’s caution around “feeling reconciliation” front of mind, we can perhaps also hold up the potential for music theatre to bring about positive change on issues of Indigenous sovereignty, awareness of contemporary political issues, and building awareness of our past history.²

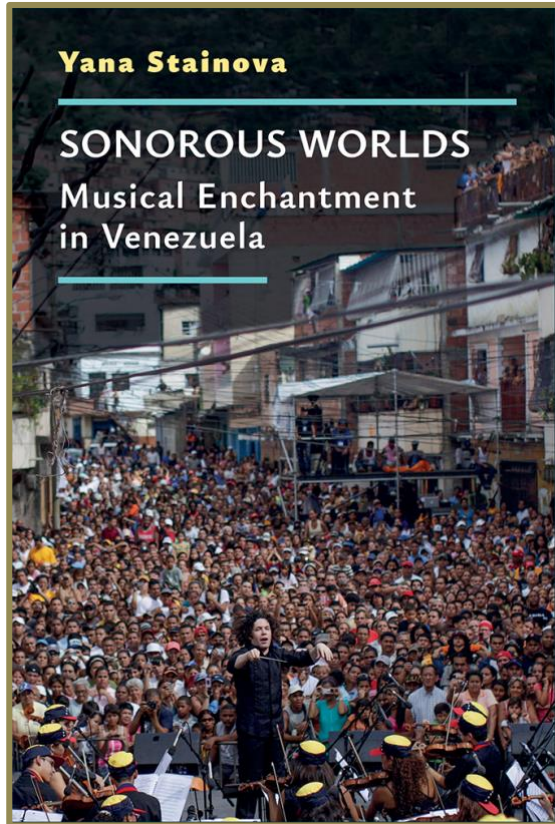
Editor and writer Julie Salverson describes the impetus for the collection beautifully and hopes that the book will demonstrate that opera has a place for writers, though many aren’t aware of its possibilities. As many writers featured here, including Salverson herself, discovered through their participation in various composer-librettist workshops in Canada (those at the Banff Centre, and at Tapestry Opera in Toronto, for example), opera can be nothing short of *transformed* through the contributions of fresh, creative literary voices. While the operatic artistic process, but also opera scholarship, has often relegated the libretto to a static form that exists somehow prior to the creative process that begins with the composer, here it is given the prominence it deserves. Indeed, perhaps the volume’s greatest contribution is its inherent positioning of the work of the librettist at

² See Dylan Robinson, *Hungry Listening: Resonant Theory for Indigenous Sound Studies* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 2020).

the heart of the operatic endeavour. Further, it demonstrates that these are works of literature, deserving of study in the way that spoken plays are. Since most of these works are recent ones (all but two were written in the past ten years), this is the first, and for most, only place they can be accessed.

The tensions between text and music in opera have been explored from various perspectives by scholars such as Linda Hutcheon and Herbert Lindenberger, among many others.³ And yet, the art of contemporary operatic creation, as it is told in these pages, seems to be one of organicism, of give-and-take in the messiest and most beautiful sense. *Rocking Horse Winner* composer Gareth Williams admits that the process of creating the opera in collaboration with librettist Anna Chatterton reveals the tightly knit nature of text and music in opera and the intense relationship between the two. He writes, “All the initial ideas [for the opera], the eureka moments, the discussions and dead ends, the drafts and decisions—they are all buried within the stitching of the work, and it would require some unpicking to clearly see the path taken. [...] For the process to work, and for the finished piece to blossom, composer and librettist have to trust one another, to be on the same wavelength” (325). *Shelter* reminds us of something else: that to develop new opera, “Chemistry isn’t enough. You need form, elegance, physics, to lease this fire, this hidden energy” (366). One can only hope that Salverson will find the energy to bring us another collection like this. Opera libretti—indeed, the collaborative enterprise of new opera in Canada—deserves more of the inspired attention it has been given in this collection.

³ See Linda Hutcheon and Michael Hutcheon, “Prima La Musica, Poi Le Parole? Operatic Challenges to Word-Music Relations,” *University of Toronto Quarterly* 79, no. 3 (2010): 869–880; Herbert Lindenberger, *Situating Opera: Period, Genre, Reception* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010).



[Sonorous Worlds: Musical Enchantment in Venezuela.](#)

By Yana Stainova. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2021. 280 pp. ISBN: 9780472129355.

Reviewed by Emily Hopkins, University of Saskatchewan

A lot has happened in Venezuela since El Sistema first made international headlines. The program was started by Jose Antonio Abreu in 1975 in Venezuela, providing free classical music education to residents of Venezuela's barrios, and has inspired many imitators worldwide. Stainova's book is an engaging combination of theoretical insight and observations from fieldwork and interviews with Sistema musicians spanning 2011-2018. Currently an anthropologist on faculty at McMaster University, Stainova is also a trained musician from Eastern Europe, and thus well situated to understand both

music practice and state control. This book will be interesting to music scholars, educators, and performers and anyone who has asked themselves questions about music and its place in society, particularly during times of struggle or unrest.

The book has four main sections: Music, Enchantment, Aspiration, and Power. The first section introduces El Sistema as well as the key tension between "music practice as a freedom-giving force" and the "ways in which it is summoned by powerful agents to control the wills of people" (p. 29). Stainova argues that "attending ethnographically to music and the stories that arise from it" can reveal the important political and social potential of imagination and its relationship to the future (p. 29).

The second section, "Enchantment," fleshes out a central theme for the author's reading of El Sistema. Her interlocutors consistently describe music in terms of magic and enchantment, evoking the "ephemeral energy of collective musical practice" and the power of playing music to serve as a "form of freedom" (p. 122, p. 80). Stainova recalls bringing that "vibrant affect" back to her



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academic mentors, “still calling it magic” (p. 96). They said she needed critical distance: “It was acceptable to study why people would choose to call music magical but not to believe in that magic myself” (p. 96). She explains that while anthropology has “traditionally taken an interest in magic, sorcery, and enchantment”, earlier anthropologists situated themselves outside of any kind of lived experience, as “rational” scholars studying “irrational” magic (p. 120). Stainova describes the move towards phenomenology in the 1980s, with a shift from attempts to “explain and understand” other cultures towards “aspiring to convey the sensory realities of...fieldsites and subjects” and even to “co-experience” enchantment (p. 120). She takes this tension seriously. Referencing commodity fetishism, she explains that “describing [her] interlocutors’ fascination with music as ‘mystification’ would be condescending”; it would suggest that in her scholarly role she “benefit[s] from a superior analytical capacity to recognize their own fetishizing” (p. 98). Thus, while her analysis includes more removed observations, social and historical context, and larger institutional realities, Stainova also plays music with her interlocutors and takes seriously their challenges to “forget [her]self and [her] seriousness” and “take a break from being an anthropologist” to experience music on their terms (p. 39, p. 118). This understanding of enchantment “transcends the binaries set up between rationality and emotion” and has “important implications for...academic scholarship that goes beyond critique” (p. 27).

The third section, “Aspiration”, details the work individuals and communities put in to make this enchantment possible. Stainova reads this situation through the book *Revolutionary Mothering*,² taking seriously the role of families and mothers in particular in creating new possibilities for their children. She describes a “Consejo de Madres”: seven mothers, each representing a different sector of the barrio, collaborating to coordinate bus routes around gang activity. The enchantment of music is not a passive reprieve from daily life, but is achieved only through enormous effort from musicians and their families.

The fourth section, “Power”, addresses the role of the state and musicians’ political involvement more directly. El Sistema has always had a careful relationship to the state, receiving funding and surviving through a variety of governments, and it was widely criticized for its lack of formal response to the protests in 2018. While the protests were “a reaction to food shortages, inflation, everyday violence, and dissatisfaction with Maduro’s government,” they were also “largely limited to the middle- and upper-class parts of town” (p. 224). In contrast, musicians were often still from barrios and were divided on whether to join protests. One musician’s mother asked, “If the state gives me a salary and pays for my trips..., [d]o you think I have the right to behave like this?” However, many musicians also chose to be involved in the protests, even if the orchestra itself abstained. Stainova documents this as well as attending protests herself. She quotes one of the musicians: “I feel useless just sitting at home. I need to be either throwing bombs at the police or giving oboe classes. One of the two things” (p. 229). From 2016-2019, 4.5 million Venezuelans left

² Gumbs, Alexis Pauline, China Martens, Mai’a Williams (Eds.) *Revolutionary Mothering: Love on the Front Lines*. PM Press: Oakland, 2016.

the country, with many El Sistema musicians among them. The book ends with a “Coda,” wherein the author meets up with several of her interlocutors in Paris in 2018. They are surviving and even thriving as musicians and music students, “creating a sense of home and finding joy in the midst of precarity” (p. 209).

It is worth situating Stainova’s work in relation to Geoffrey Baker’s notorious 2014 critique of El Sistema.³ Stainova praises Baker’s book for its “analyses, especially those about the colonial roots of the discourses about music education presented by El Sistema,” but takes issue with his “exclusively critical” approach and its “claims to truth” (p. 125). However, when Baker was writing, being critical of El Sistema was still controversial. Jose Antonio Abreu had just won a TED prize, Tricia Tunstall’s 2012 book⁴ was full of praise, and new programs were springing up everywhere. For Stainova, writing in 2021, the question of whether El Sistema is a revolutionary program that is going to save classical music and poor children is not as relevant as it was for Baker in 2014. The political reality post-2018 in Venezuela precludes a simple verdict; passing judgment on El Sistema is not really the point. Instead, she works to understand “havens of enchantment in the midst of disillusionment,” an approach that fundamentally centres the experiences of her interlocutors, good and bad (p. 129).

In the introduction, Stainova relates a story about young revolutionaries in Cuba reading Cortázar novels. They told him, “In the intervals between what we do, we love reading your stories” (p. 37). Stainova uses this anecdote to illustrate the “difficult, and often futile, question about the causal relationship between artistic practice and political change,” suggesting that “it affirms the vital role of the imagination to social and political survival and as a source of energy essential to political change” (p. 37). Music can enchant its practitioners and take them out of their ordinary lives, but this escape does not preclude political struggle. Indeed, it may create the conditions for change by allowing people to imagine different and better futures, whether that manifests as throwing bombs, teaching oboe lessons, or moving to Paris.

³ Baker, Geoffrey. *Orchestrating Venezuela’s Youth*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2014.

⁴ Tunstall, Tricia. *Changing Lives: Gustavo Dudamel, El Sistema, and the Transformative Power of Music*. W.W. Norton: New York, 2012.