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Native Drums / Native Dance

The Native Drums web site (<http://natedurms.ca>), which was launched in 2005 on National Aboriginal Day (21 June), is the subject of an article by Jodi Di Menna in the current issue of *Canadian Geographic* ('Drum nation,' Jan/Feb 2006: 23). As Di Menna notes, the web site 'is a scrapbook of essays, stories, videos, photos and illustrations that can be used by anyone interested in First Nations music.'

The editorial board responsible for Native Drums consists of Elaine Keillor, John Medicine Horse Kelly (whose Haida Aboriginal name is Clealls), and Franziska von Rosen, all of whom are affiliated with Carleton University. Assistance was provided by the Partnerships Fund of the Canadian Culture Online Branch of the Department of Canadian Heritage, and by a variety of First Nations organizations. Though currently available in English only, there are plans to translate the site into French and Ojicree.

From the web site: 'Centred around the central themes of drums and music in Aboriginal society, Native Drums traces the history, mythology, and significance of the drum in traditional Aboriginal societies of Canada's Eastern Woodlands, compared with Western Coastal regions in terms of history, arts and culture.' From the main page there are links to sections of the web site for scholars, teachers, and children, and also links to C.A.R.D. (the Canadian Aboriginal Research Database) and to the Mediabase, which provides access to pictures, music, and videos.

Plans are well underway to launch a related web site, Native Dance, on National Aboriginal Day this year. The Native Dance digital collection will consist of images showing dance regalia from various Canadian Aboriginal cultures, as well as sound and video clips of dances and interviews with dancers. A wide range of essays will place the dances in their broader cultural context and provide information about the dancers themselves. The web site will also include information about adaptations of the dances. Featured on the web site will be dances from the following cultural groups: Mi'kmaq/Maliseet, Innu, Anishnabe, Haudenosaunee, Kwakwaka'wakw, and Dene.

The next *ICM Newsletter* will appear in May 2006; the deadline for submissions is April 15th.

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Lavallée Portraits: Images of the 'Musicien National'

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Canada's long and sometimes fractious relationship with American culture has produced few symbols that are more potent than the photograph of the composer of *O Canada* dressed in a Union Army uniform (Fig. 1). Journalists have often exploited the irony of this image, making it easily the best known portrait of Calixa Lavallée (1842-1891). Most recently, this picture appeared on the opening page of a substantial Canada Day article in the *Ottawa Citizen*, as a provocative visual hook to draw readers in.¹



Fig. 1: Lavallée in Union Army uniform, ca. 1861, age 19

The Civil War photograph should generate a desire to know more about Lavallée and his time. The *Ottawa Citizen* article set out to explore the man, the anthem, and Canadians' attitudes toward patriotism. It was a rare effort to go beyond platitudes and tell something of Lavallée's story to the readership of a major Canadian newspaper. For more than a century

¹ Tony Atherton, 'O Canada,' *Ottawa Citizen*, 1 July 2005 (Special Canada Day wraparound): A3.

journalists have been writing about Lavallée in the popular press. With little scholarly research to rely on, they have usually resorted to reprinting the same list of apocryphal facts. Prior to the publication of the *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada* in the early 1980s, most writers turned to the only full-length biography of Lavallée, Eugène Lapierre's *Calixa Lavallée: Musicien national du Canada*.² It still provides some valuable details but is very much an artefact of the 1930s, taking a decidedly uncritical approach to the subject and glossing over many aspects of Lavallée's life.

A more judicious study of Lavallée is yet to be published. Gathering and carefully documenting information on his life brings us a step closer to achieving that goal and expanding our understanding of Canada's cultural history. Thus far only a small number of images of Lavallée have appeared in print, all of them long since in the public domain, and yet we still know very little about them. Added to these and included in this article are three photographs that have, to the best of my knowledge, never been published before, and two engravings that have not been re-published since they first appeared in periodicals in the 1880s. The re-discovered photographs are located in an album that was owned by Lavallée and that was acquired by the Archives of l'Université Laval in 1982 from Simone Paré, a retired and now deceased professor in the School of Social Work at Laval.³ It is the only item in the Fonds Calixa Lavallée (P354). The album has been plundered over the years, but still contains 204 photographs: some of Lavallée and his family, many others of his friends and acquaintances, and still others of famous people of his time. These images then form a priceless part of the Lavallée iconography, bringing the known number of photographs and engravings made during his lifetime up to twelve. In our visually oriented times, they should be fully and accurately utilized. Each can tell us something about Lavallée and his life, and ultimately bring about a greater appreciation of Canadian cultural history. In this article I present these images in what I

² *Calixa Lavallée: musicien national du Canada* was first published in 1937 (Editions Albert Lévesque). Revised editions appeared in 1951 (Granger Frères) and in 1966 (Fides). More recently the music historian Mireille Barrière has published *Calixa Lavallée*, an accessible 62-page book (Lidec, 1999).

³ I am very grateful to Laval archivist James Lambert for his assistance and for granting permission to reproduce several photographs in this article.

believe to be chronological order, providing background for each.

The location of the Union Army photograph (Fig. 1) is unknown. Lapiere included it in the third edition of his biography, in 1966, and claimed that it belonged to Lavallée's cousin Henri Valentine.⁴ By that time it was already well known. It may have been reproduced for the first time in an article on Lavallée in the October 1933 issue of the *Musical Review of Canada* with the caption: 'A hitherto unpublished photo of Lavallée, as an officer in the American troops, aged 24.'⁵ This date is probably off by four to five years, as Lavallée would have been 24 in 1866-67. He had left the army in October 1862 to return to civilian life and it seems highly unlikely that he would be posing for a portrait in his uniform four or five years later. More likely is that the photograph dates from about the time that he enlisted, in September 1861, and began basic training outside Providence, Rhode Island. During those heady days it was common for proud, young enlistees to pose for photographs in their new uniforms. His dewy expression is more consistent with the raw recruit than with the battle-weary veteran one sees in so many Civil War-era photographs, and which he would have been after experiencing a gruelling campaign that culminated in the Battle of Antietam. The photographs in the Laval collection may help to confirm this hypothesis, as both were probably taken within a year or two of the army photo.



Fig. 2: Lavallée with the vocalist Gustave Bidaux (detail)
Division des archives de l'Université Laval, Fonds Calixa Lavallée (P354)

⁴ Calixa Lavallée (1966): 83.

⁵ Madeleine, 'The lesson of Calixa Lavallée,' transl. by T. Don Titman, *Musical Review of Canada* (October 1933): 3.

No dates are given on the images in the Laval collection. Closer inspection provides some details. One of the two images is identified only as 'Gustave Bidaux (avec le violoniste)' (Fig. 2). It shows Lavallée standing next to the vocalist Theodore Gustave Bidaux, casually resting his elbow on Bidaux's shoulder. It is the only known image of Lavallée holding a violin, his main instrument throughout most of the 1860s. The photograph may have been taken to mark the awarding of the medals that both men are wearing.⁶

In October 1862, just days after Lavallée was discharged from the military, both he and Bidaux joined the New Orleans Minstrels. They then travelled together for nearly a year before Lavallée left the company. Bidaux was still travelling with it when Lavallée rejoined at the beginning of 1866. During these years they experienced considerable hardship together. Both were reported to be extremely ill while in New Orleans in January 1863.⁷ Others in the company suffered a similar fate during a return to that city in the fall of 1866 and it seems to have been a generally miserable time. During the stay Bidaux was fired, ending his professional association with Lavallée.

The other photograph of Lavallée in the Laval album, a portrait of him alone (Fig. 3), shows some physical changes. It is the only image of Lavallée sporting lambchop sideburns, which were perhaps influenced by those famously worn by his commander, General Ambrose Burnside. In contrast to the two other photographs, here the facial expression is serious, and the eyes intense. Part of the surface of the card has been removed, leaving the incomplete description: 'D.B. Spooner...Pynchon...Springfield, Mass.' This photography would be the work of David B. Spooner, who operated a studio in the Pynchon Bank Block in Springfield from 1856 to 1864.⁸ Lavallée was in Springfield twice in the early 1860s: 21-22 October 1862, just after his release from the military, and again 19-21 November 1863. His clothing is consistent with the attire suitable for autumn in Massachusetts. The later date seems probable if the photograph with Bidaux dates from the time of their release from the army. Oddly, though, he is not wearing the medal here. Bidaux is seen wearing it in a publicity engraving from

⁶ I have found no evidence that Bidaux was in the Army.

⁷ On January 10, the *New York Clipper* reported that all the members were well, with the exception of Bidaux 'who was quite ill, and unable to do anything.' 'Negro minstrelsy,' *New York Clipper* (10 Jan. 1863): 307. A later report informed readers that 'Lavallée and Bidaux had both been very sick for nearly two weeks, but were all right at last accounts, January 1st, and were on the bills again.' 'Negro minstrelsy,' *New York Clipper* (17 Jan. 1863): 318.

⁸ *Craig's Daguerreian Registry*, at http://www.daguerreotype.com/sl_table.htm (accessed 8 Nov. 2005).

1864, and one might expect that Lavallée would also wear it for a formal portrait.



Fig. 3: Lavallée ca. 1863, age 21

Division des archives de l'Université Laval, Fonds Calixa Lavallée (P354)

After the first three images of Lavallée, there is a surprisingly wide gap of several years before the next ones: the photograph and engraving of 1873 (Figures 4 and 5). Evidence suggests that both might be the work of the Québec City photographer and illustrator Jules-Ernest Livernois (1851-1933). After the Union Army photograph, the 1873 engraving (Fig. 5) has been the most frequently used illustration of Lavallée. It first appeared in the March 1873 issue of the Montréal newspaper *Opinion publique*, accompanying an article on Lavallée by the respected journalist and future senator L.O. David.⁹ No credit is given for the engraving, but it is stylistically very close to others created for *Opinion publique* by Livernois in the early 1870s. This seems to be confirmed by information on the photograph, which was published in the periodical *La Musique* in 1920.¹⁰

⁹ 'Calixa Lavallée,' *l'Opinion publique* (13 March 1873): 131.

¹⁰ Arthur Letondal, 'Calixa Lavallée,' *La Musique* 2.14 (February 1920): 26.



Fig 4: Portrait dating from the spring of 1873 (age 30)



Fig. 5: Engraving from *l'Opinion publique*, March 1873

Lapierre used Fig. 4 as the frontispiece of the 1966 edition of his book, with the caption ‘Photo Livernois, conservée aux Archives du Séminaire de Québec.’¹¹ The date of both images can be narrowed to sometime between December 1872 and March 1873. During this time Lavallée returned home from Boston, and it must have been in Montréal that the photograph was taken, as he did not travel to Québec City until early May, when he gave his first piano recital there. Among the similarities between Figs. 4 and 5 are Lavallée’s clothing, and his goatee and waxed moustache. He looks almost directly into the camera, but the engraving shows him in a more idealised pose, looking to his left with his head held higher. It also reveals sideburns that are not present in the photograph. The comparison provides a revealing example of how nineteenth-century illustrators might alter their subjects.



Figs. 6 and 7: Two photographs by Wm. Notman from 1876

The remaining images pose fewer challenges for the historian. Late in 1873 Lavallée departed for Paris and did not return to Canada until the summer of 1875, when he settled again in Montréal. It was a time of optimism. After his studies in Europe, he was setting out a plan to institute important changes in Québec’s musical life. The fourth and fifth images (Figs. 6 and 7) are by the renowned Montréal photographer William Notman.¹² On 12 January 1876 Lavallée performed at a soirée held at Notman’s home in Longueuil, Québec. He was 33 years old at the time. In the photographs, his moustache remains but the hairline has receded slightly and the goatee is gone. From the expression, one might read into this image a more confident and mature musician. In the photograph on the right (Fig. 7), there is the hint of a smile.

¹¹ The original is no longer found in the Séminaire collection, which is now administered by the Archives nationales du Québec. In an email sent to me on 22 Nov. 2005 archivist Martin Lavoie attached a copy of the only image of Lavallée in their collection, which is that seen in this article as Figure 5.

¹² Copies of these photographs are in the Notman Photographic Archive at the McCord Museum in Montreal (images 11-40111.1 and 11-40112.1, respectively).



Fig. 8 (L): Photograph probably taken in Boston, ca. 1883-85
Fig. 9 (R): Engraving based on Fig. 8 [*The Folio*, Feb. 1885]

In the next image we see a Lavallée who has aged quite significantly (Fig.8). Nearly a decade may have passed since the Notman photographs were taken. During that time, Lavallée had performed continuously in Canada. He had relocated to Québec City in 1878 to pursue his plan to create a conservatory. He had composed a large-scale cantata to officially welcome the new governor general to Québec City, and the *Chant national* that would become Canada’s anthem. He also left once again for the United States, leaving his family behind, as he settled in Boston late in 1880. A slightly damaged print of this image was published in 1951.¹³ The change in Lavallée’s appearance indicates that considerable time has passed and the photograph could be from as late as the beginning of 1885, as it appears to have been the model for the engraving published in the February 1885 issue of *The Folio*, a US music publication (Fig. 9). As with the 1873 portraits, the engraving shows a more idealised image.

By 1885 Lavallée had set a new course, as the leading advocate of American composers. In 1884, he had given what is thought to have been the first piano recital devoted exclusively to the works of American composers. Encouraged by the attention the recital had received, Lavallée made performing the works of living American composers his specialty and found a vehicle for his ambition in the Music Teachers’ National Association, which he had joined in 1883.

From the early 1880s, Lavallée’s workload began to take a toll on his health, and he began to show symptoms of tuberculosis which would eventually take his life. In the summer of 1887 the New York-based *Musical Courier* printed an engraving of Lavallée (Fig. 10), for which there is no known photograph. The image is a revealing one of the now haggard-looking musician. The *Musical Courier*’s engraving was used to highlight a story on the forthcoming meeting of the MTNA, which Lavallée was to convene as president.

¹³ L-J-N Blanchet, *Une vie illustrée de Calixa Lavallée* (Montréal: n.p., 1951). The original appears to be that now found in the Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa (image C112410).



Fig. 10: Engraving of Lavallée (age 45) as president of the MTNA, and ill with tuberculosis (*Musical Courier*, Summer 1887)

Many of the subsequent news reports mentioned his ill-health, and that after opening the meeting he spent most of the following days in bed in his hotel room.

After recovering, Lavallée returned to a busy schedule dominated by teaching and administrative work. In January 1888 he travelled to London as the MTNA's delegate to the meeting of the National Society of Professional Musicians, and at the next MTNA meeting, in Chicago that summer, he gave a report on the trip. His reading of this report is documented in an engraving that appeared in the *Chicago Tribune* on 4 July 1888 (Fig. 11).



Fig. 11: Lavallée at the 1888 MTNA conference (age 46)

It shows a revived and fully bearded Lavallée, now wearing spectacles and looking well, although much

older than his age. In the summer of 1889 the *Musical Courier* printed on its cover a vignette version of what is thought to be the last picture of Lavallée (Fig. 12), confirming the fidelity of this engraving.¹⁴ His full beard is fringed with white hair and again he is wearing eyeglasses. His heavy coat may indicate that the photograph was taken in the winter of 1887-88 or 1888-89. The photograph appeared in full form in *Freund's Music and Drama* later that year and in several other publications soon after.¹⁵



Fig. 12: The final known photograph, dating from ca. 1889

The final photograph appeared with several others in the 1933 special Lavallée issue of *Le passe-temps*. Also in this issue, and dating from the time of Lavallée's death, is the only known photograph of his one surviving child, Raoul, and of his wife, Joséphine Gentilly.¹⁶ Very little is known of this woman to whom Lavallée was married for 24 years. Her name was mentioned in the press at the time they were married, in December 1867, but almost never after that, and we know little about what became of her after Lavallée's death. The Laval collection then at least provides us with a vignette image of her from around the time that they were married (Fig. 13). From the stamp on the back, 'Bowers 204 Market St., Lynn,' we can deduce

¹⁴ Front cover, *Musical Courier* 19.1 (3 July 1889).

¹⁵ 'Calixa Lavallée,' *Freund's Music and Drama* 13.9 (Dec 1889): 24.

¹⁶ The photograph of Joséphine and Raoul accompanies an article titled 'Mme Calixa Lavallée,' *Le passe-temps* (August 1933): 42.

that the photograph dates from 1866 or soon after, when the Wilder T. Bowers' studio occupied 204 Market Street, in Lynn, Massachusetts.¹⁷ This photograph of the youthful Gentilly provides a substantial advancement in what we know about this woman. The Lynn city directory could further narrow the possible date that the photograph was taken.



Fig. 13: Lavallée's wife Joséphine Gentilly, age ca. 23
Division des archives de l'Université Laval, Fonds Calixa Lavallée (P354)

In time, we may find answers to the remaining questions about the extant images of Lavallée, and perhaps even rediscover still more photographs and engravings. For now, we are fortunate to have a dozen portraits that span 30 years and deepen our understanding of Lavallée and the musical life of his time.

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¹⁷ Chris Steele and Ronald Polito, *A Directory of Massachusetts Photographers, 1839-1900* (Rockport, Maine: Picton Press, 1993): 325.



Fig. 14: Complete version of the photograph shown in Fig. 2
Division des archives de l'Université Laval, Fonds Calixa Lavallée (P354)



Report on Recent Research in Canadian Music

“We Shall Go Forward with our Songs into the Fight for Better Life”: Identity and Musical Meaning in the History of the Toronto Jewish Folk Choir, 1925-1959

PhD thesis, University of Toronto, 2005

Benita Wolters-Fredlund



The Toronto Jewish Folk Choir and the Toronto Symphony with conductor Emil Gartner at Massey Hall, March 25, 1947
Source: Library and Archives Canada / NL-3254

My interest in the Toronto Jewish Folk Choir (TJFC) began with a trip I took to the Library and Archives Canada (LAC) to look at archives relating to the development of choral singing in Ontario in the early 20th century, which was my dissertation topic at the time. The TJFC collection was only one of several choral archives I reviewed during that trip, but it had by far the biggest impact on me. Although I had never heard of this choir before, I was left with the profound impression that the materials in the choir's archive – the colourful slogans and essays in programmes, the unique repertoire choices, and the obvious pride and sense of mission and community shared by choir members – represented a story that needed to be told. In fact, I was convinced enough that after consulting with my advisor, I decided to make the Toronto Jewish Folk Choir my dissertation topic, even though it meant starting much of my thesis research over from scratch, since I knew very little about the historical context out of which the choir arose, or, for that matter, how to

read Yiddish. But I have never regretted my decision – as I began to do research and interviews and translate Yiddish sources, the topic became more and more interesting, and I remain even more convinced now that the choir's story is one worth telling.

The historical parameters of my history of the choir were set early in the project to the years from the choir's beginnings in 1925 as the *Freiheit Gezang Farein* or Freedom Singing Society up to the departure of their dynamic conductor Emil Gartner in 1959. This decision was influenced by a number of factors: first, it was the period during which the choir was most active – especially the heyday years under Emil Gartner; second, the sources in the LAC collection related chiefly to these years, especially the late 1930s, the 1940s and the early 1950s; and third, these years covered what I found to be the most interesting political-historical contexts, relating to the Jewish left in Canada during the labour movement, World War II, and the beginnings of the Cold War. The year 1959 not

only marked the end of the choir's heyday period under Emil Gartner, but also the beginning of the decline of the choir's sponsoring organization, the United Jewish Peoples' Order (UJPO), which was reeling from revelations of Stalin's regime and suffered major losses after an organizational split at the end of that same year.

My thesis begins by outlining the choir's historical contexts in Chapter 1, especially Jewish immigration to Canada, the emergence of a Jewish leftist community in Toronto and the Toronto Jewish Labour movement, the establishment of the Labour League (which later became the UJPO), and the development of the Yiddish folk chorus tradition. I also give a brief historical outline of the life of the choir between the years 1925 and 1959, introducing some of the key figures in the life of the choir during these years and summarizing the choir's main activities. Besides setting the stage for broader discussions about the life of the choir, one of the more important aspects of this first chapter is to clarify the role of politics in the choir's history. Although their discourse and rhetoric show that they were certainly influenced by socialist and communist ideas and admired the Soviet Union, neither the UJPO nor the choir were ever officially affiliated with the Communist Party.

In Chapter 2, I move from historical analysis to theoretical discussion of identity and musical meaning. After reviewing some of the literature on these issues I argue that the choir's history supports the notion that musical meaning and identity are not intrinsic but are socially constructed. In the case of the folk choir, musical meaning and identity were shaped to a great degree by the choir's discourse but also by historical contexts and through performance. I also contend that the dichotomy between the so-called "homology" and "constitutive" models of identity formation put forth in much recent writing on music and social groups is a false one, and suggest that *both* models offer insights into the musical articulation of identity.

In the second half of Chapter 2, I map out four separate but overlapping facets of identity taken on by the choir, namely: politically progressive, working-class, Jewish, and Canadian. To do this I draw primarily on the choir's own texts to demonstrate their perceptions of their identity and the relationship of their identity to their musical activity. For each of the four facets of identity I discuss, I demonstrate how this facet was understood during the inaugural years (1925-39) and during the Gartner years (1939-59). Comparing these two periods allowed me to show clearly how the choir's understanding of their identity and musical activity changed throughout the years.

Chapters 3, 4 and 5 offer examinations of the choir's understanding of contemporary, classical and folk genres, respectively. In each chapter I explain the

choir's understanding of the genre under discussion as gleaned (again) from their own discourse. I clarify, for example, that contemporary music was considered to have special relevance to contemporary circumstances, classical music was a tool to educate the masses, and folk music was understood to encompass anything relating to the lives of everyday people. Each chapter offers an overview of works performed by the choir in that particular genre, and ends with a detailed analysis of the meanings associated with specific works. These include an analysis of the choir's performance of Max Helfman's *Di Naye Hagode*, Shostakovich's *Song of the Forests*, Handel's *Judas Maccabaeus*, Beethoven's *The Glorious Hour*, and a variety of folk and song repertoire. In each case, these more detailed analyses show that the significance of a work can be related to a host of different elements (genre, text, style, historical context, etc.), and that works were usually related to more than one aspect of the choir's identity.

There are a number of ways in which I believe this history of the Toronto Jewish Folk Choir may have broader significance. As a historical study, this thesis tells the story of the TJFC in scholarship for the first time, shedding light on a history which had been ignored to this point. In so doing it also sheds light on musical activity of the Jewish left more generally and provides a broader understanding of Toronto's musical landscape between 1920 and 1960. It also provides an interesting contrast to the better-known histories of both mainstream ensembles in Toronto during this period and American Yiddish folk choruses.

In the context of ongoing discussions in music scholarship about identity and meaning, this history of the folk choir is also useful, in that it provides an instructive example of how musical identities are multifaceted, mutable, overlapping and sometimes contradictory. Perhaps the most important theoretical contribution of this history is my contention that different forms of musically-articulated identity can exist simultaneously – that sometimes, even within one musical group, musical activity acts as an expression or reproduction of pre-existing identities, and at other times musical activity acts as the site where emerging or newly developing identities are created or constituted, and that these two modes of identification are not mutually exclusive. Other scholars, such as Born and Slobin, have made similar arguments, but few studies exist which demonstrate these different modes operating within the same musical community.

This study offers provocative examples of the mutability of musical meanings. This is most persuasively shown of the choir's interpretations of *Song of the Forests*, *Judas Maccabaeus* and *The Glorious Hour*, which, as the analyses in Chapters 3 and 4 show, diverge markedly from interpretations of those works

in other contexts and communities. My analyses of the choir's interpretation of these works may prove helpful to those interested in the reception history of the music of Shostakovich, Handel, and Beethoven.

Examining and elucidating the TJFC's discourse and understanding the role of this discourse in the choir's history has been a cornerstone of this project. It has been my contention that the choir's discourse played a key role not only in articulating but also in shaping both musical meaning and identity, and in relating the two to each other. I have included as much of the choir's own discourse in my study as possible in an effort continually to emphasize their own thoughts and perceptions of their activities. Working (again) from the assumption that both musical meanings and identities are not intrinsic but socially constructed, I have understood these texts as a kind of translation, interpretation or negotiation of their musical activities.

I have also argued that because the choir's discourse had the ability to shape and construct their activities, it became an important strategy in creating an identity for the choir which was proud and powerful. The very confident and colourful rhetoric found in concert programmes was one of the first things that drew me to the choir's archive and their history, and is part of what makes their history a compelling one. When one learns that those in the choir were in fact marked as outsiders ethnically and politically, both by the Canadian dominant culture as well as the mainstream Jewish community, the construction of this proud identity seems all the more remarkable. Furthermore, it is my belief that despite the fact that their understanding of their identity and musical meaning were constructed, were part of what music scholars like to call the 'musical imaginary,' they were in fact real. Through musical activity the choir's identity and their interpretations of genres and works became reality – these became real as they were lived and performed. In these ways the power of musical activity to shape our lives in dramatic ways is revealed in this history.

If I may indulge in a bit of personal reflection, I would say my work with this project reminded me in a new and potent way about the power of musical activity and the very human and personal implications for those involved in it. In large part this was because the historical contexts of immigration, the labour movement, the Holocaust and the Cold War had tremendous and deeply personal implications for this immigrant, working-class, Jewish and left-wing organization. The impact of these contexts was brought home to me again and again in the writing of this history. A few examples include learning about Emil Gartner's deep depression at the end of his life, believed to be a result of his guilt over surviving the

Holocaust and his paranoia about being hunted and watched as a communist sympathizer during the Blacklist era; having my interviewee Brenda Fishauf break down as she sang parts of *Di Naye Hagode* from memory and explained how the work helped her to express the pain of losing friends and family during the war; reading about the overwhelming sense of betrayal and disillusionment that Morris Biderman and others in the Jewish left felt when they learned of Stalin's anti-Semitic atrocities; and experiencing the tensions that exist even today, 45 years after the split in the UJPO, between those who left and those who stayed in the organization. All these stories demonstrate that for the choir, the stakes involved in their musical activity were both very high and deeply personal.

In particular, I was very moved by my research on events of the Holocaust and the TJFC's experience of and response to those events. So much of the choir's mission and activity during and after the war was made especially poignant because of this Holocaust and post-Holocaust context – their feelings of unity with the broader Jewish community, their promotion of the idea of human equality and the kinship of humanity, their insistence that Jewish culture had a place in Canadian society, their identification with the other oppressed peoples of the world, and their refusal to be cast as victims. The fact that musical activity allowed the choir to construct a proud and positive Jewish identity during this period and create a space where peace, human equality and multiculturalism were a reality is perhaps the most moving example of the power of musical activity that this project offers.



Freiheit Gezang Farein (Freedom Singing Society), 1927

Source: Library and Archives Canada / e-002344173

Benita Wolters-Fredlund is currently a full-time sessional Assistant Professor at Redeemer University College. She plans to continue to pursue Canadian music topics in her research, especially Canadian musical activity during the Cold War era.

Review

Marie-Thérèse Lefebvre. *Rodolphe Mathieu: L'émergence du statut professionnel de compositeur au Québec 1890-1962*. Cahiers des Amériques 10, Collection Musique (ed. Marie-Thérèse Lefebvre). Sillery, QC: Septentrion, 2005. 280 pp., ill. ISBN 2-89448-408-9. \$29.95 (paper).

Après avoir publié une sélection de textes inédits du compositeur Rodolphe Mathieu (Guérin, 2000), Marie-Thérèse Lefebvre, musicologue et professeure à l'Université de Montréal, poursuit ses recherches dans son ouvrage intitulé *Rodolphe Mathieu : L'émergence du statut professionnel de compositeur au Québec 1890-1962*. En partant de l'idée que le discours du compositeur est à la source de la compréhension de ses œuvres dans leur contexte de création, elle raconte l'histoire des revendications de Rodolphe Mathieu, autodidacte et libre-penseur, à travers sa biographie et son réseau de sociabilité et reconstruit ainsi la trame historique du milieu musical montréalais de la première moitié du XXe siècle.

Le premier chapitre couvre les années 1890 à 1920. Après avoir évoqué brièvement l'enfance de Mathieu à Grondines et sa formation musicale à Montréal, l'auteure se concentre sur la description du milieu culturel dans lequel s'élaborent les débuts de la carrière du compositeur. Pour ce faire, elle dessine le réseau des personnalités influentes du Montréal culturel du début du XXe siècle : Alfred Laliberté qui fait découvrir au Québec les théories et la musique de Scriabine, Ornstein et Altschuler, musiciens russes autour desquels se polarise le débat entre la musique moderne et la musique nationaliste, Léo-Pol Morin défenseur de la musique de ses contemporains – il diffusa la musique de Mathieu autant en Europe qu'en Amérique – Arthur Laurendeau et Édouard Montpetit, dont « l'action s'étend dans plusieurs sphères de l'activité musicale et politique (p. 57) ». Le chapitre se clôt sur l'épisode laborieux de la création d'un programme de bourses du gouvernement dont Mathieu fut le premier boursier grâce à l'appui de Morin et de Laurendeau.

Les chapitres suivant s'attardent à décrire le contexte artistique parisien et montréalais des années 1920. À cette époque, Mathieu est à Paris, ville à la « vie musicale étourdissante (p. 84) » pour achever ses études en composition. Il y retrouve son camarade Léo-Pol Morin, qui avait déjà présenté au public parisien ses *Trois Préludes*, ainsi que les Canadiens Roy Royal, Marcel Dugas, Sarah Fischer et Claire Fauteux. Parallèlement aux cours de la Schola Cantorum, Mathieu assiste aux conférences du « Groupe d'études scientifiques et philosophiques pour l'examen des idées nouvelles », ce qui nourrit les réflexions sur l'Acte créateur qu'il transcrit dans des cahiers de notes. Au même moment, à Montréal, le critique Frédéric

Pelletier du journal *Le Devoir* fait la pluie et le beau temps sur le domaine musical. Cette section de l'ouvrage est une véritable mine d'or par les renseignements qu'elle renferme sur le milieu musical montréalais pendant les années folles. Marie-Thérèse Lefebvre traite de l'influence de la critique, des problèmes de l'édition musicale, de l'impossibilité « d'obtenir un consensus sur l'orientation que devrait prendre l'enseignement de la musique (p. 124) » devant le foisonnement des écoles privées et religieuses et du débat pour la création d'un conservatoire de musique laïc gratuit, de la nécessité de former le public à la musique moderne et de la place grandissante qu'occupe la radio dans la diffusion de la musique au détriment du concert. De plus, la musicologue souligne quelques chantiers en attente de leurs chercheurs (histoire des revues musicales et des critiques musicaux des quotidiens, étude de l'édition musicale au Québec dans la première moitié du XXe siècle, apport de la communauté anglophone au milieu musical montréalais) s'excusant d'effleurer certains sujets qui auraient mérité plus de profondeur, mais dont il était nécessaire de parler pour comprendre un peu mieux certains aspects du milieu.

C'est dans ces années fastes de la vie de concert que Rodolphe Mathieu retourne à Montréal en 1927. Lui-même ne resta pas oisif longtemps. Au cours des années 1920 et 1930, il publie des textes de réflexion, fonde le Canadian Institute of Music, où il enseigne la composition, et organise les Soirées Mathieu en plus de composer et d'être joué en concert. Comment ce fait-il alors que Mathieu abandonne la composition en 1933 ? À l'aide de sources fiables et nombreuses, Marie-Thérèse Lefebvre démontre comment les goûts musicaux des intellectuels et des politiciens qui assistent à ces concerts sont demeurés ancrés dans une esthétique dix-neuviémiste, isolant les compositeurs modernes par leur indifférence. De plus, en libre-penseur, Mathieu s'inscrit à contre-courant de la musique à caractère folkloriste. Il revendique l'individualisme, la possibilité de choisir ses sources d'inspiration et la possibilité « d'être de son temps ». En fait, toute son activité le marginalise et l'oppose à ses pairs, provoquant même la rupture avec son allié de toujours, Léo-Pol Morin, et son départ vers Paris où il supervise la carrière de son fils, le jeune pianiste-compositeur virtuose André Mathieu. La carrière de compositeur de Rodolphe Mathieu se termine dans l'oubli et la désillusion. Enfin, comme le souligne

justement l'auteure, c'est grâce à l'acharnement de certaines personnalités influentes du réseau musical et à la création d'associations structurées telles la Ligue canadienne de compositeur (Toronto, 1951) et le Centre de musique Canadienne (Toronto, 1959) que le statut professionnel de compositeur a commencé à être reconnu dans la société comme le souhaitait Rodolphe Mathieu.

Pour conclure, l'ouvrage que nous propose Marie-Thérèse Lefebvre, fruit de recherches méticuleuses, est voué à devenir un classique pour tous ceux qui s'intéressent à l'histoire de la création musicale de la première moitié du XXe siècle. Les magnifiques photographies d'époque contribuent au succès du livre. Aussi, en plus de la discussion

intéressante sur les revendications de Mathieu pour l'émergence du statut professionnel de compositeur, le lecteur attentif perçoit en filigrane les autres préoccupations musicologiques de la chercheuse, notamment le rôle des femmes dans la création artistique. À la lumière de ce portrait historique du milieu musical québécois du début du siècle, il est à se demander pourquoi cette époque a été négligée par les générations qui lui ont succédé.

Ariane Couture termine sa maîtrise en musicologie à l'Université de Montréal. Impliquée dans son milieu, elle participe notamment aux activités organisées par le Cercle de musicologie et l'Observatoire international de la création musicale.

Obituaries

Harry Freedman

(b. Lodz, Poland 5 Apr 1922; d. Toronto 16 Sep 2005)

The composer and English hornist Harry Freedman has died at age 83 from cancer. He is survived by his wife, the outstanding soprano and pedagogue Mary Morrison (whom he wed in 1951), and by their three daughters, one of whom is a professional musician (Lori Freedman, a Montreal-based composer and clarinetist).

Freedman moved with his family from Poland to Medicine Hat, Alberta in 1925 and then to Winnipeg in 1931. His initial professional training was as an artist (at the Winnipeg School of Art) and his first love in music was jazz. After serving in the RCAF during World War II (he played the clarinet in the Central Silver Band), he used his rehabilitation grant to study music at the Toronto Conservatory of Music, where his teachers included John Weinzweig (composition) and Perry Bauman (oboe). He soon landed a job playing the English horn with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, a position he held from 1946 until 1970. He served as the TSO's first composer-in-residence during the 1970-71 season. For the last 35 years of his life he was a prolific full-time composer, writing up to ten commissioned works a year. In the course of his nearly 60-year-long career as a composer, he completed over 200 works.

Freedman drew upon an eclectic range of compositional techniques during his career. He made use of the twelve-tone method, but soon came to the realization that timbre was more important to him than pitch. As a result he often liked to use graphic notation, aleatoric and improvisatory sections, and other types of indeterminate pitch structures. His works are variously influenced by the visual arts, jazz, and literature. They are invariably rewarding for both the performer and the listener, and often reveal an urbane and sophisticated sense of humour. In addition to an extensive catalogue

of concert and stage music, he wrote many background scores for stage, film, and television productions.

Freedman was an active participant in many organizations, including the Canadian League of Composers (of which he was a founding member), Ten Centuries Concerts, the Guild of Canadian Film Composers, the Toronto Arts Council, and Pollution Probe. He became an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1984, and was the subject of a two-CD *Composers Portraits* set (with a documentary by Eitan Cornfield) released in 2002 (Centrediscs CMC CD8402). He was the Jean A. Chalmers Visiting Professor of Canadian Music at the University of Toronto (1990-91). His life and career are discussed in Gail Dixon's *The Music of Harry Freedman* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), reviewed by Stephanie Moore in this newsletter (3.1, Jan. 2005: 14), and in a forthcoming biography by Walter Pitman, *Music Makers: The Lives of Harry Freedman and Mary Morrison*, which is due to be published in March 2006 by Dundurn Press.

Obituaries: Robert Everett-Green, 'Harry Freedman, musician: 1922-2005,' *Globe and Mail* (20 Sep 2005): S9. Peter Goddard, 'His music lifted TSO, theatre, art,' *Toronto Star* (18 Sep 2005): C8.

Dick (Richard Francis) Nolan

(b. Corner Brook, NL 4 Feb 1939; d. Carbonear?, NL 12 Dec 2005)

Singer-songwriter and guitarist Dick Nolan has died of a stroke a month after receiving a lifetime achievement award from Music NL, the provincial music industry association. Nolan's songs combined Newfoundland traditional themes with country and western music; he was best known for his hit comic song 'Aunt Martha's Sheep' (1972). Though often criticized for perpetuating stereotypes, he was popular with expat Newfoundlanders in Toronto and Alberta. He is survived by his wife Marie.