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Changes at the CBC

The recent announcement that CBC Vancouver Radio Orchestra will be disbanded on its 70th birthday is seen by some observers to be the final nail in the coffin for our national broadcaster. The CBC is dedicated not to commercial interests, but to public arts, a rare mandate in contemporary business practice (and especially in broadcasting). Much has changed in Canada since the orchestra's inception in 1938, though, and the CBC is unapologetically charting a new course. The question is not whether the changes should happen, but rather how they are taking shape and being implemented.

Changes in the programming for Radio 2 have been announced over the last couple of years. More pop and jazz have been programmed, but traditional listeners have been promised that a 'classical core' will be retained. The Friends of Canadian Broadcasting (as quoted on CBC's website) are calling it 'responsible management,' but others disagree. Despite the potential for the changes to address the listening habits of many diverse groups, including new Canadians and young listeners, the CBC is taking the safest route possible. The possibility of the CBC turning into yet another easy-listening/adult contemporary station comes as a disappointment, regardless of one's age or background.

Out of these proposed changes, a fascinating discourse has emerged which, though perhaps futile in stemming the inevitable tide of change, is providing a unique opportunity for the Canadian art music

community to conduct an exercise in self-assessment. The discussion has illuminated varied perspectives on the function the CBC serves and what its programming means to its listeners. Perhaps one of the most difficult questions is what this means for Canadian composers and artists already teetering on the brink of obscurity? Being left alone in the Canadian wilderness does not bode well, even in the springtime.

Unfortunately, the CBC is now playing an appeasement game with the Canadian public (whoever they currently conceive them to be) that ultimately exchanges trendsetters for trends. *Vincent Spilchuk*

The next issue of the *ICM Newsletter* will have the dateline May 2008.

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# PERCY GRAINGER'S CANADIAN REPERTOIRE

Glen Carruthers  
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Prior to 1960, Canadian orchestral repertoire was rarely programmed except by Canadian conductors, such as Geoffrey Waddington (1904-1966), Jean-Marie Beaudet (1908-1971) and Victor Feldbrill (b. 1924). Indeed, the situation today is much the same. Nonetheless, a handful of internationally renowned foreign conductors programmed Canadian music in the period 1913-1958. To this list, which includes the Frenchman Paul Paray (1886-1979), the German-born William Steinberg (1899-1978), and the English-born conductors Sir Adrian Boult (1889-1983) and Leopold Stokowski (1882-1977), may be added the Australian-born musician Percy Grainger (1882-1961), who conducted the Toronto Philharmonic Orchestra in two Canadian works in 1946.

Grainger was responsible for introducing the works of many composers to a wider audience. As Grainger himself explained in a letter to the music journalist and critic, D. C. Parker:

I think it might be said that I was the first to conduct any of the large works of Delius in America (I did, for the 1st time in America, 'The Song of the High Hills,' Piano Concerto, Cello Concerto, North Country Sketches), ... the first to bring forward Arthur Fickenscher's marvelous 'The Seventh Quintet' ['The Seventh Realm' – ed.], the first to present Grieg's 'Norwegian Folksongs' Op. 66 & 'Peasant Dances' Op. 72 in many lands, the first to popularize the Canadian Negro composer N. Dett's 'Juba Dance,' & the American folkpieces of David Guion, the first to play Carpenter's Concertino for piano & orchestra (1916, Chicago), [and] the first to play Albeniz in several countries.<sup>1</sup>

Grainger's admiration for the Canadian composer Nathaniel Dett, who was born in the same year as Grainger (1882) and died in 1943, is well documented in Grainger's own writings. It is evident that Grainger knew many of Dett's works, and he included two movements of *In the Bottoms Suite* – an excerpt from 'Prelude' (Night) and 'Juba Dance' – in his concert repertoire.

Grainger was well aware of Dett's Canadian background at a time when Canadians themselves knew little of Dett or his music. A concert by Grainger

with the Elgar Choir in Port Hope, Ontario, in 1916, opened with two choral compositions by Clarence Lucas (1866-1947), who was one of Canada's best-known composers, followed by Grainger playing Bach-Busoni's Prelude and Fugue in D major, BWV532, and the Choir singing Dett's *Listen to the Lambs*.

As Grainger explained in a letter to his mother, 'No one I had met seemed to know Dett was Canadian, & I felt stirred to do something for him, & focus attention on his composition, so during the Bach applause I held up my hand & said:

... Of course Clarence Lucas is famous throughout the whole English speaking world, but perhaps you do not all know that R. Nathaniel Dett is also a Canadian (cheers). I think he was born near Niagara Falls.<sup>2</sup> He is a Negro, a great friend of mine, & a highly gifted musician and composer. He is head of ... music at Hampton Institute, Virginia, & he is doing magnificent work. It is lovely for me to have this opportunity of hearing these works here.'<sup>3</sup>

This was, according to Grainger, the first time he had ever spoken to a concert audience, since at least at this stage in his career he 'had a horror of public speaking.' He was moved, however, by a 'passionate wish that Canadians should know [Dett was] born in Can[ada].'<sup>4</sup>

Grainger's little speech included the observation that '[A]s an Australian I am naturally particularly interested to hear the works of Canadian composers.'<sup>5</sup> Although Dett's works were the only Canadian compositions featured in Grainger's recital repertoire, he did have occasion to conduct two Canadian works in Toronto in 1946.

Prior to the concert of 21 May 1946, Grainger had appeared many times in Toronto, first in 1912, and most recently on 16 Nov. 1945 at a concert with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra led by the redoubtable Sir Ernest MacMillan. That concert, at Massey Hall, featured Grainger in the triple role of pianist, conductor and composer. He led the orchestra in his own 'English Waltz' and 'Norse Dirge' (both from *Youthful Suite*) with Sir Ernest playing the piano parts, and then

<sup>1</sup> Percy Grainger, 'To D. C. Parker,' 26 April 1933, letter 30 of *The All-Round Man: Selected Letters of Percy Grainger 1914-1961*, ed. Malcolm Gillies and David Pear (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994): 114.

<sup>2</sup> Dett was indeed born in Drummondville (now Niagara Falls), Ontario.

<sup>3</sup> Percy Grainger, 'To Rose Grainger,' 12 February 1916, letter 3 of Gillies and Pear: 19.

<sup>4</sup> Percy Grainger, 'To Nathaniel Dett,' 6 March 1925, letter 20 of Gillies and Pear: 74.

<sup>5</sup> Percy Grainger, 'To Rose Grainger,' 12 February 1916, letter 3 of Gillies and Pear: 19.

Grainger and MacMillan traded places, the former playing the piano in *Handel in the Strand* and in Fauré's *Ballade* for piano and orchestra.<sup>6</sup>

Shortly after the concert, which was a great success, Sir Ernest forwarded to Grainger a copy of *Saturday Night*, which contained a review by Hector Charlesworth.<sup>7</sup> Grainger responded, conveying the happy news that he had been invited to reappear in Toronto the following month:

You gave me such a wonderful time in Toronto + were so kind in every way that I cannot thank you enough. As a result of all you did I have been asked to both play + conduct one of the Promenade concerts, on May 23 [the actual date was May 21 – ed.], + I think I will give an 'all-English-speaking music' program, play Addinsell's Warsaw Concerto + Morton Gould's American Concertette, + conduct some 'English Gothic Music' (13th century to Bach) + the whole of my 'Youthful Suite' (of which 'Norse Dirge' + 'English Waltz' are the 3rd + 5th movements).<sup>8</sup> I would much like to do a Canadian work. Can you recommend one to me? ... I would be so grateful if you could make a suggestion to me.<sup>9</sup>

Three days later Sir Ernest wrote back:

Before your letter arrived I had already heard from Ernest Johnson who manages the 'Proms' and had recommended that you include in your program a Ballade for Viola and Orchestra by Godfrey Ridout, a young Toronto composer. It is about seven minutes in length and shows some influence of Delius and other composers but I

think you will like it. The principal viola for the 'Proms' this year is Stanley Solomin [the correct spelling is Solomon – ed.] – who was discharged last year from the army just too late to be engaged by us but who has been playing this season with an American Orchestra.<sup>10</sup> He is an excellent violist and can be counted on to do the solo part justice.<sup>11</sup>

Grainger thought that Ridout's *Ballade* sounded 'like just the thing' and it was added to the program.<sup>12</sup>

The concert, presented at Varsity Arena before an audience of over 5000 (including Sir Ernest), comprised the works cited in Grainger's letter, with the addition of *Shepherd Fennel's Dance* by H. Balfour Gardiner (British, 1877-1950), *Britannia – A Joyful Overture* by Violet Archer (Canadian, b. 1913), and the aforementioned *Ballade* for viola and string orchestra by Godfrey Ridout (Canadian, 1918-1984). Paul Scherman conducted the Addinsell and Gould works while Grainger was at the piano, but Grainger conducted the remainder of the program.<sup>13</sup>

Both Archer's and Ridout's works had already received several performances. *Britannia – A Joyful Overture* (1941) had been broadcast, with Sir Adrian Boult conducting, on the BBC on 19 March 1942 and 'the work was later recorded and broadcast by the BBC to the armed forces in Europe.'<sup>14</sup> Ridout's *Ballade* (1938) had been premiered in Toronto by the Melodic Strings conducted by Alexander Chuhaldin, with Cecil Figelski as soloist, on 20 May 1939 and subsequently 'had probably as many performances as any serious Canadian composition.'<sup>15</sup> Nonetheless, that Grainger had programmed not one, but two Canadian works, and comparatively recent ones at that, was unusual.

<sup>6</sup> It is likely in conjunction with this concert that one of Canada's most important composers, Murray Adaskin, recounts the following anecdote:

My brother John was sent by Sir Ernest MacMillan to pick Grainger up at the railway station, and bring him to the MacMillan home in Rosedale. When John met Grainger, he was carrying a rucksack as he emerged from the station. [He] threw it in John's car, and said I'll walk to the MacMillan's. John gave him the directions and (full of surprise) saw him off. When [Grainger] arrived at the MacMillan's, he was told his room was up a flight of stairs, which he ascended by jumping (or hopping) on one foot all the way up!

Murray Adaskin, letter to the author, 7 Aug. 1995. Grainger had first stayed at the MacMillan's home in 1938. See Ezra Schabas, *Sir Ernest MacMillan: The Importance of Being Canadian* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994): 93.

<sup>7</sup> Hector Charlesworth, 'Percy Grainger, Gerhard Kander as soloists with the T.S.O.,' *Saturday Night* 61.12 (24 Nov. 1945): 44.

<sup>8</sup> The concert marked the first Canadian performance of the complete *Youthful Suite*.

<sup>9</sup> Percy Grainger, letter to Sir Ernest MacMillan, 9 Apr. 1946, Sir Ernest MacMillan fonds, Music Section, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

<sup>10</sup> Solomon 'was briefly with the Baltimore, Columbia Music Festival, Columbia, and Toronto Philharmonic orchestras before joining the Toronto Symphony Orchestra in 1946.' 'Stanley Solomon,' *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada*, 1992 ed.

<sup>11</sup> Sir Ernest MacMillan, letter to Percy Grainger, 12 Apr. 1946, Sir Ernest MacMillan fonds, Music Section, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

<sup>12</sup> Percy Grainger, letter to Sir Ernest MacMillan, 15 Apr. 1946, Sir Ernest MacMillan fonds, Music Section, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

<sup>13</sup> Archer's *Britannia – A Joyful Overture* should be added to the catalogue of works conducted by Grainger, published thirty years ago in *The Grainger [Society] Journal*; Ridout's *Ballade* is already listed. See John Bird, 'Percy Grainger's concert repertoire,' *The Grainger [Society] Journal* 1.2 (December 1978): 33-43. Archer's work is also not included in Elizabeth Wright, 'Percy Grainger's concert repertoire,' *The Grainger [Society] Journal* 2.1 (July 1979): 20-23, or in Malcolm Gillies, 'Further consideration of Grainger's concert repertoire,' *The Grainger [Society] Journal* 5.1 (December 1982): 26-29.

<sup>14</sup> 'Violet Archer,' *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada*, 1992 ed.

<sup>15</sup> Allan Sangster, 'Grainger leads varied program at third Prom,' *The Globe and Mail* (Toronto, 22 May 1946): 4.

The concert received extensive coverage in the local press and there appeared in *The Globe and Mail* of 22 May 1946 four photographs, including one of Violet Archer and Godfrey Ridout (both of whom attended rehearsals and the concert), another of Grainger displaying to members of the orchestra an enlarged, multi-coloured score which he had prepared for ease in conducting, and a third of Grainger and Stanley Solomon taken during the performance of Ridout's *Ballade*. The same issue of the paper published a review by Allan Sangster<sup>16</sup> and an article on the Proms' 'thorny path to success.'<sup>17</sup>

Neither John H. Yocom, the critic for *Saturday Night* since Hector Charlesworth's death in December 1945, nor Sangster were impressed by Archer's work. The former noted that the piece was intended to embrace 'the light-hearted spirit of freedom, the sense of humor of the British people, and the bond of friendship between Canada and Britain,' but that 'an overture which tosses around the Rule Bri-tann-ia theme and a couple of French Canadian folk tunes in musical double talk hardly achieves the intention.'<sup>18</sup> Sangster was also curt, commenting only that, 'joyful did not seem to be quite the exact adjective.'<sup>19</sup>

Rose MacDonald, writing in *The Evening Telegram* (Toronto), disagreed. She called the *Overture* a 'robustly merry little work' and opined that, 'One cannot help but listen to it with good humour.'<sup>20</sup> Augustus Brindle, in the *Toronto Daily Star*, reported that after the performance Archer was 'hailed to the spotlight by Grainger; [she is a] vivacious young brunette, previously unknown here.'<sup>21</sup> It is to Grainger's credit that he introduced Violet Archer and her music to Toronto audiences.

All four Toronto critics at the concert – Yocom, Sangster, MacDonald and Brindle – thought highly of Ridout's *Ballade* and its soloist, Stanley Solomon. None does more than mention the fact that Grainger conducted, although, since they warmly praised the performance, it can be assumed that Grainger's conducting was more than adequate. Ridout, like Archer, was brought to the podium by Grainger to receive an ovation.

Accordingly, to the list of illustrious conductors of the past who displayed at least a passing interest in

Canadian music, including Paul Paray (who premiered works by Rodolphe Mathieu in Paris in 1913 and 1918), Sir Adrian Boult (mentioned above, and who had also premiered a work by Barbara Pentland in London in 1945), Leopold Stokowski (who led an all-Canadian program at Carnegie Hall in 1953), and William Steinberg (who premiered a work by Oskar Morawetz in Philadelphia in 1956 and conducted Paul McIntyre's *Judith* in Vancouver in 1958), may be added the name of Percy Grainger. It should not be forgotten that Grainger's efforts on behalf of his colleagues included promoting the work not only of many British<sup>22</sup>, American<sup>23</sup> and Scandinavian<sup>24</sup> composers, but also that of Canadians Violet Archer and Godfrey Ridout.

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Godfrey Ridout, ca. 1950

Source: *T.S.O. News* 3.9 (Oct. 1951): 15

<sup>16</sup> Allan Sangster, 'Grainger leads varied program at third Prom,' *The Globe and Mail* (Toronto, 22 May 1946): 4.

<sup>17</sup> Eva-Lis Wuorio, 'Proms climb thorny path to success,' *The Globe and Mail* (Toronto, 22 May 1946): 15.

<sup>18</sup> John H. Yocom, 'Canadian composers, conductor and soloist match Grainger,' *Saturday Night* 61.39 (1 June 1946): 26.

<sup>19</sup> Sangster (as n.16).

<sup>20</sup> Rose MacDonald, 'Percy Grainger charms house by folk music,' *The Evening Telegram* (Toronto, 22 May 1946): 37.

<sup>21</sup> Augustus Brindle, 'Composers in person make Prom highlight,' *Toronto Daily Star* (22 May 1946): 21.

<sup>22</sup> Frederick Delius, H. Balfour Gardiner, Cyril Scott, Roger Quilter et al.

<sup>23</sup> John Alden Carpenter, Henry Cowell, Fannie Dillon, Arthur Fickenscher, David Guion, Daniel Gregory Mason, Lewis Slavit et al.

<sup>24</sup> Edward Grieg (Norway), Selim Palmgren (Finland), Herman Sandby (Denmark) et al.

*snowSongs*  
by *vivienne spiteri*

(please note that all styles & formatting in this article were intended by the author)

the story begins many moons past in a faraway land, when one who sailed from « the silver »<sup>1</sup> to the white land, told tales of an ancient people of elemental existence. ramon pelinski, ethnomusicologist and musician, was speaking of the inuit<sup>2</sup> of northern canada whose essential element, snow, goes by many names.<sup>3</sup> at once life-line and death-trap, the inuit's ability to identify snows through naming could be for them, a matter of life and death.

i listened wide-eyed, fertile ears sprouting tendrils of song.

decades would pass before i would actually hear, see, feel and touch what i had never forgotten : that in northern canada at least, snow falls, blows, lingers and rests by different names, sounds, textures, colours, weights and forms. and it became possible because in 2002, the canada council for the arts launched a trial fund called *artists in the community collaboration fund*<sup>4</sup> that targeted the kind of work involved in such a project : the artistic collaboration between artist and members of a community. in my case the latter were to be older people – the elders – those who had once lived and experienced a life « on the land », a land whose myriad snowS i wanted to hear and capture, and though inextricably linked, my interest and priority in going north were these disappearing sounds rather than a disappearing ancient way of life. these sounds would be used to compose a 40-minute acousmatic work, one whose form, content and spatial architecture would unfold according to the dramatic, traditional – and

ancient – life cycle of the inuit people (*for me, music – besides other things – is drama. it has always seemed self-evident that the role of space (and what is fashionably known today as « spatialization » ) is fundamental and crucial to dramatic expression and to the shaping of a narrative, if and where there is one in an organic acoustic sculpture. where live instrumental music is concerned, space as a dramatic device can prove complicated, difficult and next-to impossible to control (indeed, here, space can become an enemy to music). the studio proves to be the perfect tool for circumventing such obstacles in order to attain an ideal.*<sup>5</sup> where electroacoustic undertakings are concerned, the space-as-dramatic-device problem seems, for the most part, non-existent).

### preparations

how did the project come to be? at the time, i knew next to nothing about northern canada. what i did know was that i was intrigued by the poetry of snow's having different names and therefore different voices. so i set out to learn everything i could about northern canada, its history, the inuit people's way of life, their art, their environment, traditions, beliefs etc., in particular during the period prior to their enforced settlement by the government (at the time i was barely aware of that « event »).<sup>6</sup> i watched films, consulted documents – books, reviews, magazines, pictures – at the libraries of *the canadian cultural centre* and *l'espace culturel inuit* (both in paris), attended lectures, exhibitions and expositions on the north, visited art galleries and museums that possessed any kind of northern collection, raided bookstores, contacted the *department of indian and northern affairs*, the *canadian embassy* in paris, *the canada council*, spoke to anyone whom i thought might be able to suggest source material and northern contacts, checked the internet regarding lists of names for snow in english, french, inuktitut, as well as information about the different northern communities (at that point, i still didn't know which northern community i would go to). i covered areas of

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<sup>1</sup> argentina. the name argentina (from Latin argentum: silver) was first used extensively in the 1612 book *historia del descubrimiento, población, y conquista del río de la plata* (history of the discovery, population, and conquest of the río de la plata) by ruy díaz de guzmán, naming the territory tierra argentina (land of silver). traditionally, the british english name for the country is 'the argentine.'

<sup>2</sup> « inuit » is the plural of « inuk » which means « person », hence « people »

<sup>3</sup> there are different dialects in the north so words, spellings and pronunciation may change from place to place. in linguistics, inuit language regarding snow-naming is a contentious issue. for further discussion on this subject see : martin, laura (1986). 'eskimo words for snow: a case study in the genesis and decay of an anthropological example.' *american anthropologist* 88 (2), 418-23. pullum, geoffrey k. (1991). *the great eskimo vocabulary hoax and other irreverent essays on the study of language*. university of chicago press. spencer, andrew (1991). *morphological theory*. blackwell publishers inc, p. 38.

<sup>4</sup> today called « artists and community collaboration program »

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<sup>5</sup> my 1998 solo double cd « the door in the wall...instrumentS d'illusion ? » is an excellent example of this; here, in recording and mix, i infused purely instrumental scores by brian cherney, rodney sharman and françois rose, with 6-channel spatial parameters – what i call « microphony » – as a dramatic device.

<sup>6</sup> a sensitive subject for all concerned that has left its mark all around. in the 1940s and 1950s, the international political situation sparked the canadian government to establish territorial sovereignty over the north. life for the inuit has never been the same since.

exploration, science and scientific research, electromagnetism, environment, mythology, politics, geography, sculpture, music, visual arts, literature, language, astronomy, weather, nordic survival, architecture, animal migration, sewing, sound, and of course, snow. i became a sponge, absorbing information, until slowly the germ of an idea began to take shape and light, meaning and focus. as i progressed in my search, two things became clear: first, that central and essential to the project were the elders, people at least 50 years old. they were the key, the temples of experience, knowledge and memory of a way of life who would lead me to the snowS. without them the project couldn't exist. secondly, the questions of environmental deterioration came inevitably to the fore. not only were the sounds of snows fading because inuit people no longer lived a life that conjured them, but also because the elemental itself was in danger, subjected to processes of abuse and destruction.<sup>7</sup> *snowSongs* then, would be a melancholy tribute to both, their swan song.<sup>8</sup>

### collaboration

one of the canada council's application requirements for this programme is a written confirmation by the collaborating partner of its participation in the project. my next step then, was to seek out my community. again, all i knew was that i wanted to go as far north as possible, in as cold a location as possible and/or somewhere in nunavut. i searched out and wrote to numerous northern government departments, organizations, elders societies, politicians. little interest overall. towards the middle of the last month preceding the application deadline, i came across a northern student web-site that had been set up as part of a school project in arviat.<sup>9</sup> in it i read about the desire and determination of elders to pass down ancient knowledge to the young people of the town.<sup>10</sup> the

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<sup>7</sup> so altered was the already-unpredictable (but previously negotiated) northern environment in 2006 (i was there from mid-february to mid-march 2006) that even some of the oldest and most experienced of elders, those who had lived on the land for a considerable length of time as adults before the « settlements », expressed reticence and fear about ever going back out onto the land. the intimacy and complicity between inuit life and the land, that had once been so essential for survival, was no more.

<sup>8</sup> my diptych « *anahata* » and « *snowSongs* » concern endangered elements (silence and snow respectively).

<sup>9</sup> arviat (« *place of the bowhead whale* »), formerly *eskimo point* (until 1 june 1989) is located on the western shore of hudson's bay, 61° 7" 0'n, 94° 3" 0'w, 280 km north of churchill, population just over 2000.

<sup>10</sup> although the historical circumstances and consequences are entirely different, the general time-frame is the same (mid-20th century) and the desire parallel: as with survivors of war camps, the inuit elders embody experience and memory, and northern communities are taking measures to record and safeguard those

nunavut department of education in that town was very active in sponsoring such projects that involved elders with youth. as i read on i became aware of another thread that would enrich and complete my collaborative tapestry : the youth of the town would be the receivers of what knowledge about snow sounds the elders would share with me. *snowSongs* now became a three-way collaboration, between elders, youth and artist. the artistic process was the medium through which ancient knowledge would pass down to youth. past and present would meet with a promise for a future.

within 24 hours, my letter explaining the project to the nunavut department of education in arviat, received a prompt, positive and enthusiastic response. students from the high school would participate and the department itself had in its employ a team of elders whose role it was to create written documents about inuit ancestry, life values and well-being, and to head up and inform student outdoor activities that sought to acquire traditional inuit knowledge. four of these elders – *rhoda karetak*, *donald uluadluak*, *mark kalluak* and *louis angalik* – were assigned to my project, and, since i didn't speak inuktitut, *nunia qanatsiaq*, language coordinator, also in the employ of the nunavut department of education, acted as our much-appreciated translator. *gord billard*, the drama teacher at the *qitikliq* secondary school, and back bone of the undertaking, elicited interest from students *jordan konek*, *patrick pingushat*, *albert napayok*, *darren eetak*, *evano aggark* and *veronica kidlapik*. we had our team. three months later the canada council lent its support and *snowSongs* was on its way.

### equipment

selection of stereo recording equipment was the next thing to consider, and after lots of reading and talking to people, i chose to do things simply, and to go with what i knew best, felt most comfortable with and have always found highly dependable (albeit only in normal temperatures!): digital audio tape. from montreal i rented two *tascam* portable dat machines (the second one as a backup), purchased an *audio technica* 824 stereo microphone (which turned out to be a huge disappointment), and took along my two *audio technica* 3031 mono mics for which i bought *rycote* wind screens. but i had no experience in extreme-temperature recording and i'd heard all kinds of horror stories about batteries freezing, running out of them, cables stiffening and breaking, condensation causing

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memories. with good reason: there are precious few remaining people who harbour them.

machines to malfunction, and so on. for all these potential problems i received good advice:

1. take a drink cooler to put the dat machine into while you're out on the land. it's one additional insulation layer away from direct cold.
2. place dat machines inside seal-top plastic bags inside the cooler and put desiccant sacks inside the plastic bags. desiccant absorbs moisture and prevents condensation upon returning indoors.
3. put hot packs on the batteries before you go outside; these keep the batteries warm and working.
4. as an additional precaution, to avoid those sudden temperature changes that can cause equipment to crack and contract, do not take the equipment directly into a heated house from the cold, but let it sit in an unheated inside-outside porch for an hour or so before taking it into the heated indoors.
5. not much, if anything, can be done to prevent cables from stiffening in extreme temperatures. just be very careful not to bend them so that they don't break.
6. take a soldering iron and small tool kit in case cables do break and need repairing.
7. take extra cables.<sup>11</sup>

i followed all this advice. during one month of recording in -40° to -20°C temperatures, nothing ever malfunctioned, broke, cracked, condensed or froze, and the soldering iron remained unused. the key is to keep equipment as consistently warm and dry as possible. i also went over-equipped and weighed-down with extra dat tapes, batteries, cables, hot packs and desiccant. it was worth it: were anything to have gone wrong, replacements would have been unavailable up north.

### the project

how was the project to unfold with so many different words for the different snows? how would the students participate so that they weren't just passive onlookers? and what about the snow, in what contexts would we hear it?

during the months of study leading up to the canada council application, i had learnt about the cycles of inuit life, the roles different people played within communities, the importance of children as bearers of continuity and of the future, the impact of a complex mythology, the inuit's relationship to, dependence on and use of animals, the passing of time, and the joys and dangers of daily survival. this wealth of inuit experience implied that sounds other than snow sounds would be relevant to the project. also, because of this, elders other than those from the department of education would have to be found to demonstrate the non-snow activities. the students helped in locating

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<sup>11</sup> thanks to doug quinn and john houston for sound advice.

them.<sup>12</sup> i realized too that the best way to get a comprehensive picture of all the sounds associated with the different snow names would be by reliving the inuit's life experience of them. in fact, reliving the inuit life cycle would give us everything: snow and non-snow sounds of living, including sounds connected to mythology and shamanism (which interested me very much).<sup>13</sup>

in my correspondence with the department of education, i had requested and suggested that the process be filmed, and so, under the supervision and sometimes example of cameraman michael angalik, the students shared in the filming. as for recording, the second dat machine originally intended as a back-up, came in handy for the students to try their hand at sound recording (although the recorded sound utilised in the acousmatic work comes solely from my recordings). in addition, the students performed tasks with snow that proved physically too difficult for the elders, so that in the end, the students had lots to do: film, record, locate and contact elders and perform snow tasks, and through this, learn by experience in an enriching and active way.

the unfolding of the inuit life cycle that was to guide the progress of the project had been established before i left for the north and would perhaps need some modification once i got there, depending on the availability of people, time and materials, and on the cooperation of the weather. i figured out the form of the acousmatic piece first and from that, worked backwards by tracing it onto the organization of the activities that would follow the narrative of the piece, so-to-speak. the unfolding began with myths: the creation myth, the myth of light and darkness involving the raven and the fox, that of the appearance of two male humans through *two clumps of earth*, and the transformation of one of them, through the power of

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<sup>12</sup> all elders and contributors – other than those employed by the department of education – were remunerated through the budget of the canada council grant.

<sup>13</sup> the inuit were converted to christianity by european missionaries (who also invented the written inuktitut syllabary), and unfortunately, my mention of shamanism resulted either in giggles or in a hushed refusal to speak of it. the subject has become more-or-less taboo. sonic references to shamanism in the acousmatic piece *snowSongs* are the result of imaginary musings based on films and readings about inuit mythology and shamanism in general, most notably mircea eliade's *shamanism – archaic techniques of ecstasy*. in 2006, igloolik isuma productions released a film that touches on the subject of shamanism called *the journals of knut rasmussen*, which, following a first screening in igloolik on march 12, 2006, opened *the toronto international film festival* on september 7, 2006. more indepth consideration of this subject can be found in john houston's and peter d'entremont's documentary films *arctic trilogy*.

thought, into a female and thus, procreation, followed by the violent myth of the sun and the moon. sonic imaginings of these myths were enacted – as they would be on a professional film set, but where for us, sound was the protagonist – and recorded from different perspectives (for instance, from inside and outside an igloo), after which we pursued practical life-on-the-land sounds such as searching for a snow ideal for igloo building (*illusaq*), testing it with a *sounder* for depth and consistency, and with a *pana* (a snow knife) cutting it out into blocks (*auviq*) and building (part of) an *iglu*. we then searched for a different kind of snow good for the patching up of spaces between the igloo blocks (we gathered this and did the patching). ice cutting and chipping took us to yet another location where an ice window was carved out of the ground ice, removed and installed into the snow-house. elsewhere, fresh water ice pieces for the purposes of melting and cooking (for tea or boiled food) were also chipped out. the elders in our team wore seal-skin boots (*qamiks*) and the variation in the sound of their walking on the different snows intrigued us all. modern snow boots make such a racket just in the touching of the snow at the placement of the foot that any discreet sonic result is obliterated. we recorded the sound of putting on the caribou coats, and the sound of this fur brushing against the snow. life-on-the-land sounds also included the traditional work of women: a *qulliq* (a stone horizontal lamp used to cook food, to heat and light the igloo, and to dry clothes) being filled with oil (traditionally seal blubber), having the moss that was to hold the flame arranged therein (moss which we'd gone to gather another time – far out on the open land on a bitterly cold and blistering windy day – and which pierced through the low snow drifts of that particular place), and being lit; also: scraping and cleaning skins with an *ulu* (a ¼-moon shaped knife), and sewing them. for this we recorded the rhythmic and hypnotic sounds of *rhoda karetak* sewing caribou skin, albeit without the authentic ancient bone needles and sinew thread, which are no longer available. at the elder's centre, sounds of cutting raw meat with an *ulu* and then the chewing of it were recorded. passing time was represented by sounds of carving antler into an *ayagaq*, object of play, and the playing with it, by drum dancing and singing (both throat singing and *ay-ya-ya* songs<sup>14</sup>),

<sup>14</sup> the throat singing i was interested in was not so much that which we have become rather accustomed to hearing (almost to the point of cliché), but that which was sung into a large pot, creating an eerie resonant halo around the sound. the students located « super granny » for this, an older elder and the last surviving member of the ihalmiut tribe\* that eventually had been relocated to arviat in 1957 by the royal canadian mounted police when they were found to have been dying of starvation, which, according to some, was a cyclic phenomenon, and to others, became so, only consequent to the arrival of europeans in the north (\*ihalmiut [ahiammiut], a

by the *buzz game*, by the later acquisition of the *jew's harp*, and by the almost inaudible sounds of string games. back outdoors, good travelling snow was identified and dog sleds were set up and directed over the terrain where the sounds of the sled-rails scraping against this hardened frozen lake snow were captured. danger was flirted with as we approached a thinning ice the further we went. we left the sleds and with harpoon-like tools prodded the ice as we tested – aurally, visually and by touch – for a solidity that would support our weight. eventually the liquid was encountered and as i stretched the microphone pole forward one of the men went ahead balancing himself, as gracefully and confidently as a circus artist, on a dislodged piece of floating ice from which he dunked a caribou skin into the water, there to stay overnight. on another day, on another lake – *tingmiasiuvik* lake, 10 miles north of arviat, to which we travelled by ear-splitting metal-cavities *bombardier*, a snow-terrain vehicle of the 1950s and 1960s used by the canadian government – an ice hole (for fishing) 5 to 6 feet deep was chiselled down until the lake water spouted up. small pieces of floating chipped ice were removed with a metal spade – the excess water gently dripping off the spade back into the water hole – and thrown aside. once the water in the hole was clear and cleared, a thread tied to a wooden handle-like object was lowered for jiggling. and then there are the winds, as diverse in direction as they are in force, texture, violence, voice and effect on snow forms and human skin. one thing that eluded us was the scurrying activity of lemmings in their under-ice network of tunnels. these then are just a few examples of snow sounds involved in the project which nevertheless, did not unfold without some disappointments: one was the absence of the much sought-after *bow drill*, and another, our inability

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caribou inuit band who had originally lived in the ennadai lake area. in 1949, the ihalmiut were relocated by the government of canada to nueltin lake. however, hunting was poor at nueltin and over time the people returned to ennadai. in 1957, the government again moved the ihalmiut, now numbering 59 people, to the henik lake area, 45 miles from padlei, the closest trading post. the henik group split in two early on. their lot was often dramatic and tragic, as in the famous case of kikkik, a mother of 5 children – all suffering from starvation – who was criminally charged by the canadian legal system. eventually judge john sissons dismissed all charges against her (see mowat, harley eber, karetak). one inuk man admitted to me that perhaps the two single « advantages » to the inuit's « induction » into canada was the health care system\*\*, and not having to face starvation again. (\*\*in cases where people from the north become seriously ill, they are transported south by air to the nearest hospital. this is called « med-evac » and because of the high cost of flying to and from the north, it is for some, the only time they go/will ever go south. in the fifties and sixties, this going south – depending on the seriousness of the malady and the time spent away from home – would provide the ailing person with a total exposure to the english language; elders who speak fluent english today are those who have had this experience).



to make, even on a small scale, a traditional sled with runners made out of frozen fish, meat and peat moss, and cross bars made out of antler and bone.<sup>15</sup>

### into the present

the narrative needed to come unstuck from ancient time. it needed to reflect the (inevitable?) evolution of ancient traditions into the present. and inuit life *has* evolved, for better or worse, into a relatively as-yet-young present with all the contemporary (and noisy) sounds of « *civilization* » that this entails. the erosion – a relatively abrupt and brutal one, which for inuit, still cuts to the quick – of the traditional ways, and the disruption of the natural balance and order of things, turned out to be, for my purposes, artistic conveniences towards an enrichment of the sound palette.

and what is this present? fewer dog sleds, for one.<sup>16</sup> four-wheel drives and skidoos that transport people to and from school, shops, the community centre, the elders' centre and neighbours' homes, creating each one, their own rush hour bedlam (and this in a town whose distance between the two furthest points is a twenty-minute walk).<sup>17</sup> skidoos also transport hunters out on the land, often resulting in mechanical breakdown which sometimes – coupled with the general lack of survival knowledge especially among the young<sup>18</sup> – results in loss of life. small and large airplanes – oppressive as airplanes are – carry the sick south and the healthy all about. electricity, electric sculpting tools, satellite dishes, antennae, radio and the omnipresent television-set, abound, producing sound. everywhere sound. if it weren't for the absence of asphalt linking the north to the rest of the planet, the north would be a place without distinction. in arviat,

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<sup>15</sup> the bow-drill was a tool used to pierce holes, and sometimes as a fire-starter. it was small and needed the mouth to hold the vertical drill, one hand to bow the vertical drill and the other to hold the object to be pierced. later, thanks to nick arnalukjuak who let me in to the normally winter-shut visitor's centre, i was able to locate remnants of one, use it and record it. we also played and recorded a modern and richer-sounding-though-artificial-skin drum. as for the sled, the person who had begun construction of it for our project was called away in the early stages, and we were unable to complete the expert-demanding task.

<sup>16</sup> inuit today tell of their dogs having been slaughtered by the RCMP (who still supply a presence in arviat) at the time of the settlements

<sup>17</sup> it is perplexing to me that people whose lives had been surrounded by and immersed in the unobtrusive sounds of the forces of nature, and whose hearing apparatus was so refined as to be able to hear the minutest of sounds so necessary for survival, do not seem to suffer from the noise of « *civilization* ».

<sup>18</sup> attempts to correct this deficiency and to reclaim inuit survival knowledge are being made. courses in northern survival are given at the qitikliq secondary school and taught by the knowledgeable and experienced billy ukutak. today, many hunters (those who can afford it) also depend on their *global positioning system* gadget (gps).

one immense and two smaller supermarkets, that carry everything from chocolate bars to skidoos and building material, contribute loud local radio broadcasts while you shop,<sup>19</sup> and the same cash register beeps, clicks and rings as any other down south. indoors, homes are white-washed with the hum of furnaces<sup>20</sup> and fridges, toilet flushings, electrical appliances, more radio and wallpaper tv. sculptors carve with shrill electric tools, and thermometers and radio weather reports replace the stepping out to sense and feel the weather silently. outside, the majestic winds still howl, but their message is no longer identified or searched out by the housed inuit. the furies must strain against the roar of oil delivery trucks, the rumble of snow plows and of course, the irascible growling skidoos.

if i were to describe today's north sonically, i don't think i'd be far off the mark in saying that it is blaring white.

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*qitikliq secondary school* : gord billard, billy ukutak.  
*students* : jordan konek, patrick pingushat, albert napayok, darren eetak, evano aggark, veronica kidlapik

*other elders and contributors* : super granny, mary akjar, helen and james konek, richard tutsweetok (string games), lucien kabvitok (sculptor), jimmy muckpaw, guy and emma angalik, mary anowtalik and son david (elder's centre), nick arnalukjuak (*visitors' centre*), mick mallon (*inuktitut teacher*)

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Department of Education  
Ministère de l'Éducation

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<sup>19</sup> in fairness, local radio is a community life line

<sup>20</sup> these are located on the ground floor of the house, in a side or back room, since homes in the north have no basements. this is due to the permafrost layer that exists beneath the surface of the land, but which, also, due to climate changes, is slowly beginning to melt, emitting, besides other toxic gases, methane.

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**see pp. 15-16 for images related to this article**

## Review

Gillian Mitchell. *The North American Folk Music Revival: Nation and Identity in the United States and Canada, 1945-1980*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007. 222 pp. ISBN-10: 0-7546-5756-6. \$89.95 (cloth).

Despite the popularity and iconic status of musicians such as Joni Mitchell, Neil Young, Gordon Lightfoot, Ian and Sylvia, Bruce Cockburn and Murray McLachlan, surprisingly little has been written by scholars about the folk music revival in Canada.<sup>1</sup> Gillian Mitchell's recent book, a chronological history of the folk revival in both the USA and Canada, helps to fill this void. Although it is bi-national in scope, because a significant amount of scholarship on the US context of the revival already exists,<sup>2</sup> this book will be

<sup>1</sup> Nicholas Jennings' popular history of the Yorkville scene, *Before the Goldrush: Peace, Love and the Dawn of the Canadian Sound* (Toronto: Penguin Books Canada, 1998), describes the people, events and atmosphere of this era but provides little critical commentary. Robert Wright's article "Dream, comfort, memory, despair": Canadian popular musicians and the dilemma of nationalism, 1968-1972' in Beverley Diamond and Robert Witmer, eds., *Canadian Music: Issues of Hegemony and Identity* (Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press, 1994): 283-301 offers a fascinating scholarly analysis of stylistic and national themes in this revival but is limited in scope.

<sup>2</sup> See for example, Neil Rosenberg, ed., *Transforming Tradition: Folk Music Revivals Examined* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993); Robert Cantwell, *When We Were Good: Class and Culture in the Folk Revival* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996); Benjamin Feline, *Romancing the Folk: Public Memory and American Roots Music* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); and Ronald D. Cohen, *Rainbow Quest: The Folk Revival and American Society* (Boston: Massachusetts University Press, 2002).

particularly welcome to those interested in how the revival played out in Canada, and the following review is written with that interest in mind. Nonetheless, it should be noted that Mitchell's bi-national approach and her special attention to themes of national identity are new contributions to existing revival scholarship, as is her perspective as a cultural historian rather than a musicologist or music critic.

A broad historical scope and rich cultural contextualization are hallmarks of Mitchell's study from the outset. In the first chapter, 'Defining the People's Songs,' she situates the folk music revival of the 1950s and 1960s as one episode in a long history of interest in folklore and folk music in North America. Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, she chronicles a wide variety of folk-related activity of roughly a hundred-year period with surprising clarity. She includes the work and perspectives of influential folksong collectors (eg. Child, the Lomaxes, the Seegers, Creighton, Barbeau); ground-breaking initiatives which popularized folklore and ethnic pluralism (eg. the Federal Writers' Project and the Canadian Pacific Railway concerts); and the radicalization of folk repertoire by left-wing movements (eg. the Popular Front, People's Songs Incorporated and various secular Jewish organizations).

Here, as in later chapters, Mitchell's unique approach to the topic is to untangle the ways in which this repertoire was imagined by those interested in it, and especially how it was conceived in relation to national identity. She argues that in both countries a British-centric understanding of folklore was eventually replaced in the first decades of the twentieth century by a fascination with local folk cultures and a celebration of ethnic diversity and pluralism. How and when this shift took place and which non-British cultures were given attention in each country provide an interesting juxtaposition and demonstrate clearly that 'folk' and 'nation' are constructed concepts: in the USA, white and black working-class cultures of the south and west were understood as the nation's 'folk,' versus Quebecois, Native and various European immigrant cultures in Canada. This chapter of the book is heavily weighted to the American side of the story, and its Canadian perspective could be elaborated substantially. Nonetheless, her comprehensive introduction to revival history is succinct and engaging.

The boom years of the revival are scrutinized in the second chapter, which spans the period from the Kingston Trio's commercial hit 'Tom Dooley' in 1958 to Dylan's controversial 'electric' performance at the Newport Folk Festival in 1965. Canadian perspectives are much more in evidence in this chapter. Indeed, one of the more interesting discussions considers the extent to which the Canadian revival was merely derivative of American trends. She rejects the false dichotomy that Canadian revivalists need to be understood as either copycats of their American counterparts or as architects of a unique new 'Canadian sound' and suggests instead that the Canadian revival was certainly heavily indebted to the American revival but also drew on unique local scenes and a complex array of both commercial and traditional influences. The background provided in the first chapter, which elucidates some of these unique local and traditional resources, helps to make this argument convincing.

As her chapter title, 'Visions of Diversity: Cultural Pluralism and the "Great Boom" of the Folk Revival,' suggests, a running theme in her account of the revival's heyday is the value it placed on multiplicity and pluralism as markers of authenticity. Mitchell's unpacking of the revival's history through this lens brings a fresh and engaging perspective on the topic. As she compellingly argues, this interest in diversity led revivalists of this period to conceive of folk music in North American (rather than national) terms, seeing it as a manifestation, in the words of Pete Seeger, of a 'rainbow-patterned' continent (68). It also helps explain the success of the main avenues of folk revival activity – coffee houses, folk festivals, and revival magazines – which allowed for a wide variety

of styles and degrees of proficiency. And finally, it is crucial to understanding why white, middle-class, urban and suburban youth were drawn to the movement in both countries, since folk music's eclecticism offered a sense of authenticity and non-conformity that many of them craved. By tracing these sociological aspects in both Canada and the USA, Mitchell's history offers a welcome counterpoint to histories that concentrate on star performers and hit songs of one country alone.

'Folk Music and the Community in "The Village"' looks at two of the most famous folk revival neighbourhoods, Greenwich Village and Yorkville. Mitchell adds to existing knowledge of famous personalities and coffee houses of this scene by examining the group identities of the idealistic communities formed in each, which were remarkably similar. Although developed in distinct ways, the two 'villages' emerged in the early 1960s as bohemian cultural centers in which people believed that folk music could help bring about the utopian dreams of equality, peace, and community. (Both declined in the late 1960s when biker gangs, drugs and rock and roll were introduced and folk singers who had found commercial success left to pursue recording careers). Although much of the worldview and behaviour of these communities is well known, Mitchell's account offers both a socio-historical context and a critical perspective often missing from other histories of these neighbourhoods. She points out for example that despite the emphasis on equal opportunity and the central roles being played by black and women performers in the movement, village communities were not as equitable as they imagined. Even as a 'stunning kind of mutual self discovery' was brought about between black performers and white audiences, black musicians were still often viewed in romanticized terms as oppressed but noble master musicians (123). And while women achieved an unprecedented level of popularity and success as performers, they were frequently evaluated in terms of their looks, behaviour and sexuality in a community in which 'cultural freedom was very much defined by male villagers' (125).

One of the more fascinating insights of Mitchell's bi-national study is her juxtaposition of the different conceptions of the relationship between folk music and nationalism in Canada versus the USA in the late 60s, a contrast she clarifies in the fourth chapter, 'The Post-Revival Folk: Canadian Dreams and American Nightmares in the Late 1960s and 1970s.' According to her analysis, in the optimistic climate of Centennial celebrations and in the wake of the success stories of artists such as Mitchell, Young, Lightfoot and others, folk music began to be understood by

Canadian journalists and fans (if not the artists themselves) as a uniquely Canadian genre, and the work of Canadian folk artists as having a uniquely 'Canadian sound.' Conversely, the tumultuous political atmosphere of the late 1960s in the USA resulted in deep pessimism and disillusionment that made the idealism of the folk revival seem naïve and irrelevant, and pushed many musicians to more personal (rather than political) lyrics, to experiment with newer emerging rock styles, and retreat both from folk music and discussions of nationalism. While many of the ideas she presents about the US side of this story have been given elsewhere, the 'Canadianization' of folk music in Canada during this era has received surprisingly little scholarly attention.<sup>3</sup> Her critical analysis of the development of a nationalist discourse, which described a unique "Canadian sound" as gentle, acoustic, folk-based, and concerned with themes of nature, is both convincing and fascinating, and goes a long way toward explaining how folk music grew to have a special place in the Canadian cultural identity after the late 1960s.

The final chapter, 'Folk Since the 1970s: Diversity and Insularity,' rounds out the history of the folk revival by considering how in the 1970s the hodge-podge eclecticism of the boom era shifted towards revivals of specific distinct traditions, such as Irish, Klezmer, and Maritime music. Although this chapter is once again heavily weighted to US content (giving a paltry three-sentence synopsis of the 'gloom and anxiety' of this decade in Canadian history), she provides a credible argument that these trends in folk music were related to the escapism and self-reflection of the 1970s, and that interest in individual traditions in the 1970s paved the way for the world music industry of the late 1980s and beyond. Curiously, the theme of national identity, which is carefully woven throughout her history, is suddenly dropped in this last chapter. This is a shame – an analysis of the extent to which, for example, Klezmer music was conceived in US terms or Maritime music in Canadian terms would have been a fitting and potentially interesting end to the book.

On the whole I am impressed at the breadth of the history offered in *The North American Folk Music Revival* and I am convinced by her arguments. I am disappointed however that her history does not include a more thorough account of the contributions of Jewish and/or left-wing groups in Canada to this revival generally and to constructions of national identity in folk music particularly.<sup>4</sup> Most notably, in the 1950s,

<sup>3</sup> Robert Wright's article is a notable exception (see n. 1).

<sup>4</sup> In his five-part CBC radio documentary, 'The People's Music,' Gary Cristall describes the important contribution of Jewish and left-wing organizations to the development of folk music in English-speaking Canada. See especially the second episode, 'The

musical groups affiliated with the United Jewish People's Order (UJPO) argued that the pluralistic programming of folk music (common in both countries during that era) was a reflection of Canada's diverse multi-ethnic culture, and as such uniquely Canadian. In contrast to later nationalist discourse, this construction of nationalism focused on multicultural programming rather than on a particular timbre, style or subject matter and was articulated long before the heady nationalism of the late 1960s.<sup>5</sup> Most of the musical groups affiliated with the UJPO (Toronto Jewish Folk Choir, UJPO Folk Singers) remained relatively unknown, but The Travellers, whose roots were also in this organization, achieved national recognition. Their iconic Canadian version of 'This Land is Your Land' and their enthusiastic inclusion of Canadian content during the late 1960s, and during their Centennial tour in particular, should have been included in the book's discussion as an illuminating foil for the more famous Yorkville musicians who turned to more personal writing in the late 1960s and shied away from nationalistic labels.

Generally speaking, Mitchell's history is well-written and engaging, although the book's origins as a doctoral thesis<sup>6</sup> are obvious in the dry introduction, which lays out the themes and terms of her study and offers a review of the literature in the field, and in her propensity to repeat main points at the beginning, middle, and end of subject headings. The book will be useful to anyone interested in North American folk music, but especially to those who are already familiar with the names, places and songs of the revival and are interested in a cultural historian's take on the topic. It also would work particularly well as a text for those teaching a course on folk or popular music who are interested in including Canadian material.

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Genre Comes of Age' (originally broadcast 13 July 2008) which argues that Fagel Gartner's UJPO Folk Singers were a pivotal influence to Canada's revival.

<sup>5</sup> Benita Wolters-Fredlund, "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* (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 2004), 113-25.

<sup>6</sup> *The Nation and National Identity in the Folk Music Revival Movement of Canada and the United States from 1945 to 1980* (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 2004).

## Obituaries

### Roma McMillan

(b. Lachine, QC 5 July 1911; d. Ottawa 4 July 2007)

The Canadian fiddler Roma McMillan (née Clarke) suffered a stroke and died one day shy of her 96th birthday. Beginning at the age of seven, she studied classical violin and piano, leading to a relatively short stint as a second violinist in the Montreal Philharmonic Orchestra 1929-35. Her departure as a newlywed for Elma, Ontario in 1935 marked a turning point, as her husband suggested that she pursue a musical style more accessible to her new community. Thus she began a career as one of Canada's premier fiddlers.

After taking up traditional music, McMillan would earn (beginning in the 1960s) over 175 prizes in the next 40 years, including Most Entertaining Fiddler at the Canadian Open Championships in 1988 and a Canadian Grandmasters Fiddle Championship lifetime award. She was inducted into the North American Fiddlers Hall of Fame (1984), the New York Fiddlers Hall of Fame, and the Ottawa Valley Country Music Hall of Fame (2003). Into her 90s, McMillan continued to perform at prestigious events such as a 2001 concert for the then-Governor-General Adrienne Clarkson, and in 2003 she made an appearance on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*.  
*Vincent Spilchuk*

### Oskar Morawetz

(b. Svetla, Czechoslovakia 17 Jan. 1917; d. Toronto 13 June 2007)

Renowned Canadian composer Oskar Morawetz died in Toronto at the age of 90. Morawetz fled the Nazi occupation of Europe in 1940 and came to Canada where he studied piano at the University of Toronto. He taught at the Royal Conservatory of Music and at University of Toronto, but it was as a composer that Morawetz would garner his critical acclaim.

Oft-cited for his lyricism, energetic rhythm and novel exploration of instrumental colour, Morawetz, in his fifty-plus years as composer, completed over 100 orchestral and chamber works, and earned numerous awards including two Junos for classical music, and the 1966 Critics Award in Cava dei Tirrena, Italy. His accessible, Romantic approach supported his penchant for themes involving past and contemporary tragedy, most poignantly expressed in works such as *Memorial to Martin Luther King* for cello and orchestra (1968, shortly after the civil rights leader's assassination), *From the Diary of Anne Frank* (1970, based on the famous diaries of the Jewish girl in Nazi-occupied Holland), and *Prayer for Freedom* (1994, based on the anti-slavery poems of Frances E.W. Harper).

Many of Morawetz's works have become standard repertoire internationally, with performances by over 130 orchestras and acclaimed soloists such as Yo-Yo Ma, Glenn Gould, and Ben Heppner. In 1984 the CBC released a seven-disc anthology of his output.

Morawetz received some of Canada's highest awards for his work as composer and he was the first composer to receive the Order of Ontario in 1987. He also received the Order of Canada in 1989, an honorary diploma from the Royal Conservatory of Music in 1998, and the Queen's Jubilee Medal in 2002. His daughter Claudia said of her late father, 'We also remember his generosity towards others, his love of hearing and telling a good joke, and his endearing absent-mindedness.'

A memorial concert was held at Walter Hall in Toronto on 28 June 2007 with performances of works by Morawetz and spoken tributes from Anton Kuerti, Jan Matejcek, and Claudia Morawetz. Links to the CBC recording of this event, together with comprehensive information about the composer's life and music, is available at [www.oskarmorawetz.com](http://www.oskarmorawetz.com).  
V.S.

### Douglas Brian Riley

(b. Toronto 12 April 1945; d. Calgary 27 Aug. 2007)

Doug Riley, affectionately known as 'Dr. Music,' died of a heart attack at the age of 62 while departing Calgary airport after headlining the Calgary Jazz & Blues festival. The prolific composer, arranger and keyboardist began taking lessons as a child at Toronto's Royal Conservatory of Music, later earning a Bachelor of Music in composition from the University of Toronto. While preparing to embark on a Master's degree in composition and ethnomusicology (his interest in First Nations music, particularly of the Iroquois, would be expressed in his later recordings), Riley's moonlighting as R&B keyboardist in Toronto nightclubs led to his working with the legendary Ray Charles, appearing as arranger and second keyboardist in his 1968 LP *Doing His Thing*.

Riley would go on to establish himself as a pillar of the Toronto music community, performing, writing and arranging music for classical, jazz, blues, R&B, and commercial settings. Through the 1960s and 1970s, he wrote over 2,000 commercial jingles and was involved in musical production for numerous television shows. His own 16-piece vocal/instrumental group Doctor Music had a string of top-20 hits through the same time period, and his considerable musical influence and personality led to his acquiring of the band's moniker as his own.

While writing pop, jazz, and commercial music, Riley also composed three ballets for the National Ballet, a double concerto for flute and string quartet (for Moe Koffman), and a piano concerto for Mario Bernardi's retirement from the National Arts Centre Orchestra, among other works. The tenor Plácido Domingo commissioned an arrangement of Tchaikovsky's *None But the Lonely Heart* from Riley and recorded it with the London Symphony Orchestra.

Other notable collaborators include Ringo Starr, Anne Murray, David Clayton Thomas, Bob Seger, the Brecker Brothers, Gordon Lightfoot, Ofra Harnoy, and many others. He was loved and admired by such luminaries as jazz keyboard legend Herbie Hancock and Paul Shaffer, musical director of television's *Late Show with David Letterman*.

Riley established the PEI Jazz Festival in the 1990s, was named jazz organist of the year from the annual Jazz Report Awards continuously from 1993 to 2000, and was awarded the Order of Canada in 2004.

V.S.

### **Gerhard Joseph Wuensch**

(b. Vienna or Klosterneuburg, Austria 23 Dec. 1925;  
d. London, ON 8 June 2007)

The composer, pianist, musicologist and educator Gerhard Wuensch died at the age of 81. He studied piano as a child, but since he was one-quarter Jewish finished his studies at home after the 1938 *Anschluss*; nevertheless he was drafted into the German army in World War II, and spent most of his service in Denmark, after which he was briefly taken as prisoner of war by the Russian army.

After the war Wuensch obtained his Ph.D. in musicology (completing his dissertation on the German composer Max Reger at the University of Vienna in 1950) and diplomas in piano and composition (from the Academy of Music in Vienna, 1952), and spent a few years as a freelance pianist and composer for the Austrian radio network. On a Fulbright scholarship he moved to Austin in 1954 for post-doctoral studies with Paul Pisk and Kent Kennan at the University of Texas. From there Wuensch began a long and prolific teaching career, working at Butler University, Indianapolis (1956-63), University of Toronto (1964-9), University of Calgary (1969-73), and finally the University of Western Ontario (1973-91) where he acted as chairman of the theory and composition department 1973-6. He also won a Canada Council research fellowship in 1972 for work on his book on Reger, later published in 1989, entitled *Max Reger (1873-1916): A Second Look*.

As a composer Wuensch was much lauded for his varied and prolific output, generally considered a 'practical eclectic' for his reflective and commentative

works. During his time in the USA he composed two ballets for Butler University's ballet department, and won the Benjamin Prize for his 1956 *Nocturne* (which was performed by the North Carolina Symphony Orchestra) and the first prize at the Syracuse Fine Arts Festival for his brass quartet *Mosaic*.

In 1964 he moved to Canada to teach at the University of Toronto, and soon after he was preparing a CBC radio series on Schoenberg, Berg and Webern. Wuensch began composing for the accordionist Joe Macerollo, including *Alberta Set* and *Prelude, Aria and Fugue* (1971), contributing greatly to modern accordion repertoire. He composed for piano, chamber groups, orchestra, band, soloist and orchestra, and chorus; one of his grandest was the *Laus Sapientiae* for orchestra, brass group, several choirs, three soloists, and organ, broadcast in celebration of the University of Western Ontario's Centennial Anniversary in 1978.

After his retirement from UWO in 1991, Wuensch continued to compose, and his works *Nice People* (1991), *Pygmalion* (1995) and *Scherzino* (1996) were all premiered in London, Ontario. His *Psalm 150* for baritone, brass, choir and organ (1992) was written for the 400th anniversary of the installation of an organ at the Monastery of Upper Waldhausen, Austria. He composed many pedagogical piano pieces for children. Wuensch was an associate of the Canadian Music Centre, the Canadian League of Composers, and the Composers, Authors and Publishers Association of Canada.

V.S.

images for snowSongs

figures 1 to 4 are reproduced here courtesy of gord billard, drama teacher at qitikliq secondary school, arviat.



Figure 1: team members from left to right : gord billard (drama teacher), evano aggark (student), vivienne spiteri (sound), patrick pingushat (student), albert napayok (student), michael angalik (camera). missing from photo, students jordan konek, darren eetak, veronica kidlapik



Figure 2: the bombardier vehicle



Figure 3: super granny throat singing into casserole



Figure 4: the past meets the present with hope for the future: louis angalik in caribou skin, listening back to his snow-block cutting sounds