The CMC Prairie Celebrates 30

Prairie orchestras present Canadian music and special events

The CMC is on the air

The CMC Prairie Region has its own radio program called Outside the Lines. It airs every Tuesday from 10 - 11 a.m. on CJSW 90.9 FM in Calgary and can be heard in real-time on the internet at www.cjsw.com. The show has been on the air for more than 20 years and features mostly new recordings of Canadian music on CD.

All of the music comes from the library of the CMC. Pledges of financial support are necessary to keep the show on the air. Please support the show by tuning in and making a pledge. Call (403) 220-7403.

CMC Associate Composers Violet Archer and Allan Bell at the Violet Archer Library, CMC Prairie Region office, 1986.

The Canadian Music Centre, Prairie Region celebrates its 30th anniversary this year in conjunction with the orchestras in Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Regina, Winnipeg and Lethbridge as well as Winnipeg’s Groundswell.

In honour of the anniversary each ensemble programmed a concert with a work or works by CMC composers and sometimes included a post or pre-concert anniversary celebration. The Regina Symphony Orchestra presented a joint celebration of the CMC’s anniversary and the 60th birthday of composer David McIntyre.

The CMC Prairie Region was established in the late 1970s, when Dr. Richard Johnston convinced the University of Calgary to commit office space and the Alberta government to set aside an endowment for the creation of the CMC, Prairie Region office, which opened its doors in February 1980.

In 1986, the Violet Archer Endowment was established at the University of Calgary, with the generous assistance of Violet Archer and the Province of Alberta, to permanently fund CMC Prairie Region library purchases.
Regional Director’s notes

Canadian band music has tremendous potential in that virtually every Canadian community has school and community “concert” bands and Canadian composers have created over 300 works for the idioms. CMC Executive Director, Elisabeth Bihl, sent Ontario Regional Director, Jason Van Eyk, and me to the Midwest Clinic (an International Band and Orchestra Conference) in Chicago last December to research potential future CMC involvement. It resulted in an invitation for me to present a paper An Overview of Canadian Band Music to I Geb, the International Society for Promotion and Research of Wind Music, in Oberschutzen, Austria in July (paper available upon request). It was enthusiastically received and it appears that international performances will result. The initiative continues with a second presentation of the research at Music Conference Alberta this fall and other directions as indicated.

Another exciting and innovative aspect of our work here in the Prairies is the presence of the Prairie Sounds imprint on Centrediscs, the house recording label of the Canadian Music Centre. Eight titles have been released over the past five years, garnering two WCMA awards in the process. We are presently soliciting new project proposals; please refer to the website for details.

We celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Prairie Region office with the orchestras in Edmonton, Calgary, Lethbridge, Saskatoon, Regina, and Winnipeg as part of the New Music in New Places project supported by the SOCAN Foundation and Canadian Heritage. Involvement with major classical awards programs continues with the Western Canadian Music Awards (Kelowna, October 23-24) and the JUNOs (Toronto, March 22-27, 2011). The 2011 Emerging Composer Competition will coincide with a joint celebration of CMCPR’s 30th anniversary and the 20th anniversary of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra’s New Music Festival February 3. I was recently elected to the board of Canadian New Music Network (Tim Brady, President) and the CMC will be involved in hosting the Alberta CNMN Regional Forum Saturday, January 29 in Calgary in conjunction with the University of Calgary New Music Festival. Also, Elisabeth Bihl and I met with officials from the National Music Centre (coming on stream in Calgary in 2012) and I am happy to report that the CMC will be the content provider for a permanent display on contemporary Canadian composition there. My trusted associate, Lindsey Wallis, and her cohort of part-time student workers are preparing the library for our imminent move to the Taylor Family Digital Library, which is currently under construction here at the University of Calgary campus.

Finally, I would sincerely like to thank all thirty-eight casino volunteers who helped out at our two-day event September 10-11, 2010. Although the pooling numbers were not received by press time, early indications are that the proceeds may be as high as $70,000 — a much-appreciated infusion!

PRAIRIE SOUNDS Fall 2010 Canadian Music Centre Prairie Region

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Canadian Music Centre Prairie Region

Prairie Sounds is the newsletter of the Canadian Music Centre, Prairie Region and is distributed to supporters of Canadian music in the Prairies. The Canadian Music Centre is a nonprofit, charitable organization that exists to encourage and promote the awareness, appreciation, performance and study of contemporary Canadian music, in particular that of its Associate Composers. Names of the Associate Composers of the CMC appear in bold. The opinions expressed herein are not necessarily the opinions of the Canadian Music Centre.

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Prairie Region welcomes four new composers

Nova Pon
I am excited to join the CMC and for the opportunity to add to the body of music from which I have learned so much. I studied composition and flute at the University of Calgary where my mentors included Allan Bell, David Eagle, William Jordan, Hope Lee, and Miroslav Spasov, and continue my artistic development independently through rigorous etude writing, and the study of scores and treatises. Through a steady stream of commissions, I have written music for orchestra, wind ensemble, diverse chamber ensembles, and for film, and my music has been performed in Canada, the United States, and Thailand.

Dr. Arlan N. Schultz
I am very pleased to be a new associate of the Canadian Music Centre. Currently, I am head of the composition area at the University of Lethbridge (Alberta) and I also teach in our new Digital Audio Arts program. In addition to composition, I am active in several areas of research related to the field of composition. Specifically, I am engaged in implementing software algorithms for real-time audio spatialization in live performance and in designing symbolic computational algorithms for computer-assisted composition. I am looking forward to connecting with my colleagues across the country with this new opportunity.

Thom Golub
I make my living as a freelance bassist in the Edmonton area. I have a strong interest in writing music as traditional compositions, as well as composition as a template to improvisation. I have had my work performed by many great musicians including Harry Sparnaay, Elena Denisova, St. Crispin’s Chamber Ensemble and the Edmonton Chamber Players. I feel honoured to have been accepted as an Associate Composer of the Canadian Music Centre. The CMC offers great services to its members and I look forward to providing quality music and scores in kind for years to come.

Karen Sunabacka
I am excited to be an associate composer of the CMC. In 2009 I was honoured to win the CMC Prairie Region Emerging Composers Composition. I am an Assistant Professor of Music Theory and Composition at Providence University College in Manitoba. I grew up in Winnipeg, Manitoba, where I completed my BMus in Composition. In 2008 I completed my PhD in Music Theory and Composition at the University of California at Davis.

Cont. from page 1

Today, with more than 75 Associate Composers, the CMC, Prairie Region is part of Canada’s only organization mandated to house, actively promote and disseminate the music of Canada’s composers.

In addition to an extensive lending library, it has its own recording imprint, Prairie Sounds, engages in Canadian music advocacy, and administers outreach projects, including the Emerging Composer Competition and New Music in New Places.

Its website offers an online library catalogue, streaming audio of thousands of archival recordings, as well an event calendar and composer biographies.

The Canadian Music Centre Prairie Region gratefully acknowledges the efforts of its supporters both regionally and globally. We are truly humbled by their commitment to the CMC and Canadian music, and look forward to what the next 30 years will bring.
Jim Hiscott has had two premieres in the past months. *Moon Light* for violin and piano was given its first performance on March 13 at Eckhardt-Gramatté Hall at the University of Winnipeg, by Duo Diorama--Ming-huan Xu, violin and Winston Choi, piano. *Tangle* for oboe, percussion and double bass was premiered on September 1 at the Winnipeg Art Gallery by Caitlin Broms-Jacobs, Ben Reimer and Meredith Johnson.

*Ceremony III*, a chamber ensemble piece from the mid-70s, will be performed October 13 in the Festa Musica Nova in Sao Paulo, Brazil, by an ensemble conducted by Jack Fornter.

Jim is living in southern France this year, in Aix-en-Provence and near Avignon. He will be working on three new pieces as part of a Manitoba Arts Council Major Arts Grant.

Professor Kaplan welcomed two former grad students from China to the University of Saskatchewan. Having received their M.Mus degrees some twenty years ago, they returned to present a $1 million gift to the Department of Music.

The new Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra season began on October 9 and Kaplan was there to present his pre-concert chat. On the menu were works of Swan, Dvorak and Brahms.

The annual Festival of Faith, October 24, included a new work by Kaplan. His *Cantata on Three Spanish Words* calls for baritone, dancer and an instrumental ensemble.

Kaplan continues his association with the Canadian Legion as director of music for the annual Remembrance Day ceremony. Participating at this November 11 event will be a men’s chorus, two concert bands and two brass bands.

On November 21, Kaplan will produce *A Global Village*, a presentation of the Saskatoon Jewish Cultural Association. Featured on the program will be a multi-cultural orchestra with players and instruments from a number of world cultures. The Saskatoon Klezmer Band will be performing several of Kaplan’s middle eastern works with the dance groups. A new world arts group is being formed in Saskatoon, which plans to present a world music/dance festival in 2011.

Centrediscs has just released *Pinnacles*, a CD of seven recent works written by Winnipeg composer Diana McIntosh. Many of the works on the disc were inspired by McIntosh’s love of hiking and climbing in the Rocky Mountains, and being in high places. Her concert tour in Kenya, including a hot air balloon safari over the Masai Mara, a safari in the Amboseli region of Southern Kenya, and a day spent gazing at Mt. Kilimanjaro, were the inspirations behind three of the pieces.

On September 16, Diana, assisted by percussionist Beverley Johnston, gave a concert of three of her works in the Heliconian Hall, Toronto. As well as performing her solo autobiographic theatre piece, *Solitary Climb*, she and Johnston premiered McIntosh’s newest theatrical work, *The Ledges*, for percussion, piano, spoken text and electronics. The text is from the writings of the late Banff writer, Jon Whyte, which included *The Agony of Mrs. Stone*, pre-recorded by Stephen Schipper, Artistic Director of the Manitoba Theatre Centre. McIntosh also premiered her work for piano and temple blocks, *Les Souliers de Montmartre*, inspired by an afternoon in Montmartre in Paris. Photos of the wide variety of shoes that passed by that afternoon, taken by her husband, Grant, were projected during the performance.

On August 14 the world première of Forsyth’s *Trickster Coyote—Lightning Elk* took place in Hamilton. This is a four-movement work for solo violin and full orchestra and was commissioned by Mohawk violinist Tara-Louise Montour. The performance was at the Mohawk College in Hamilton, with this fine young violinist as soloist with the National Academy Orchestra of Canada. The work features elements of First Nations music and culture, in movements with titles like “Eagle: Sees Far,” and “Bear: Looks Within.” The work was met with a very enthusiastic reception in a concert hosted by Canadian ballet icon, Veronica Tennant, CC.

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COMPOSER NEWS

In Tokyo, Nov 3, 2010, at the Tessara Autumn Festival, pianist Yuji Takahashi performed _A Desert March_.

Csapó’s work _Cordiforme_ for solo viola received an honourable mention and performance recommendation at the Eufonia 2009 Composers’ Competition, Sofia, Bulgaria. The work was subsequently performed on February 1, 2010.

_Tundragobelin_ was performed in Amsterdam at “Zweite Heimat” on December 19, 2009, by the Ives Ensemble.

The Saskatoon Composers’ Performance Society nominated Csapó’s _Concerto for Viola and A Changing Environment_ for the 2010 Grawemeyer Award. He also participated as an Invited Professor at the Bartók Béla International Festival and Seminar in Szombathely, Hungary this past July. His _Embroideries on the Face of Cracked Earth_ was performed there by Trio Lignum, who also performed the work in April at an Old Music Academy UMZE (New Hungarian Music Society) concert in Budapest, Hungary.

GYULA CSÁPÓ

POSTCARD FROM THAILAND

Last year, I decided a sea-change in my life was appropriate for various reasons. I sold my house and moved to Thailand. I settled in Chiang Rai - Thailand’s most northerly province. The subsequent physical and mental adjustments for me were not only anticipated, but greeted as a great new adventure. In terms of climate, the contrast couldn’t be greater between my native Winnipeg and my present location. It is generally hot all year round, though northern temperatures in Thailand tend to be more moderate than in other parts of the country. From June through October is the rainy season, where the rain is fairly constant, and often torrential. I have experienced three tropical storms and a very small earthquake. I’ve also done a lot of travelling within the country and visited many, many Buddhist temples.

Thailand is a devoutly Buddhist country, and I have now taken up the practise of daily Buddhist chanting. Being so far from Canada, and so steeped in another culture, I have found within myself a perspective that would have been difficult to achieve otherwise. In a very strange way, I feel closer to my music than at any other point in my life. I bought an upright piano, and have prepared a new piano recital, as well as written a new work in honour of my parents called _Requiem innocente_.

As Thailand’s cuisine is divided into regions, I tend to eat northern food, which is readily available on every street from vendors, and at astonishingly cheap prices. Although I have come to Thailand during a difficult period in its history, in Chiang Rai, there has been no unrest. Needless to say, with an experience like this it is easier to segregate what is important in one’s life from what is unimportant. In many ways, this has been first and foremost a spiritual journey.

LAURIE DUNCAN

On a very warm night late in July, Pat Carrabré, Kyrie Kristmanson and the Afiara String Quartet premiered _The Domna Elegies_ at the Ottawa Chamber Music Festival. This collaborative project was commissioned with assistance from CBC Radio Two.

Kyrie is a rising star in the “indie” music scene. She wrote the text for this five song cycle after travelling through the south of France to visit medieval castles where the 13th century troubadours worked and lived. In constructing the musical setting, Pat took a “neo-gothic” approach, using some references to medieval techniques to match the text references to crusades and damsels.

The whole group met in New York City (the Afiara are the graduate resident string quartet at The Juilliard School) to work-shop the material about two months before the Ottawa concert. It was an important step in finding common ground between the two styles of performance. Four videos from the concert have been posted on YouTube (searching Carrabré in YouTube should get you there quickly). Three of the videos are arrangements Pat put together of songs by Kyrie and one, _Ghost_, is the final song from _The Domna Elegies_. The whole program will soon be available on the CBC website through Concerts On Demand.

PATRICK CARRABRÉ
COMPOSER NEWS

Elizabeth Raum was one of the featured composers for the International Women's Brass Conference this past June where she had two premières: Colour Code, for tuba, french horn, and piano, commissioned by the IWBC, Deanna Swoboda and Lin Foulk of Western Michigan University, and Jason and the Golden Fleece, commissioned by the Hannaford Street Silver Band. Her Pantheon for horn, violin, and piano and Four Elements for trombone and violin were also performed.

A CD featuring her Three Jazz Moods was released by Italian virtuoso trombonist, Lito Fontana with Fausto Quintabí on piano. Her Passacaglia Interruptus has also been recorded by Portuguese tubist, Sergio Carolino, Anne Jelle Visser and the Wild Bones Gang. Her Overture to Carmen, the Passion was performed by the Okanagan Symphony Orchestra October 15-17 for the concert preceding the Western Canadian Music Awards. Raum was one of five composers selected by the CBC to write a piece inspired by paintings from the National Gallery of Canada, premiered at the gallery as part of the Music and Beyond Festival. The work, White Horse Inn by Moonlight, inspired by the painting by Cornelius Krieghoff, was broadcast on CBC's Tempo.

Although she has recently moved to Toronto, Raum still has strong ties to Saskatchewan and the Prairies. She was recently honoured to be chosen as a recipient of the Saskatchewan Order of Merit, to be awarded November 23.

Laura had the great fortune to receive two artist residencies this summer. The first, in June, was at Wildacres, in the Blue Ridge Mountains, North Carolina where she wrote a Sonata for flute and piano for renowned Swedish flutist Göran Marcusson, who will premiere it in 2011.

She also attended a residency at ARTerra in Tondela, Portugal this August. While there, she spent her time absorbing the culture, researching traditional musical forms and instruments, recording sounds specific to the landscape, and conversing with residents, discussing their rich history and culture. Her research will culminate in an orchestral work utilizing some traditional instruments, representing the beauty of Portugal past and present -- a proud nation of people grounded in tradition, history and family. Upon completion the work will be performed in Portugal.

One musical form, Fado, touched Laura greatly. Fado is traced to the 1820's in Lisbon, and is usually linked to the Portuguese word “saudade” meaning to miss or long for someone or something. Some say its origins are a mixture of African slave rhythms with the traditional music of Portuguese sailors and Arabic influence.

On November 20, 2010, CMC Associate Monte Keene Pishny-Floyd, one of Canada’s senior composers, will be the focus of the world-premiere of his new work, Rozhrani: Bolestné a Radostné (“Interface: Sorrow and Joy”), commissioned by the Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra for a special appearance by Viennese-based Elena Denisova, guest violin soloist, and her husband, Alexei Kornienko, guest conductor. A unique spinoff is that Pishny-Floyd donated his $10,500 commission fee back to the SSO; in turn, that amount was matched by the Remai matching grant campaign. Pishny-Floyd’s donation also inspired others to donate thousands of dollars to the symphony. This is thought to be a first in Canadian music history! CMC’s John Reid will be present at the concert as part of the CMC-Prairie Region’s 30th Anniversary celebration.

Rozhrani (2010), composed specifically for Denisova’s style, is dedicated to the composer’s daughters, Amy, Sarah, Laura, and Jennifer as a musical expression of his parental feelings about the many “interfaces” in their own lives. As the work’s ending indicates, all have found happiness.

The concerto-like work, loosely based on the Czech Dumka (which alternates between melancholic and exuberant music), is a double set of variations, one on a slow tune, the other on a sprightly tune. The work has been co-edited by calligraphists Annette Floyd and Shaun Bzdel.

Denisova and Kornienko are also collaborating with Pishny-Floyd on a CD venture, including his Sonatas for Violin and Piano, Vanished, and a lovely Doina and Freilach by David Kaplan, all recorded in Moscow last December. It will also include works by Bulgarian, Austrian, and other Canadian composers.

Composer Richard O. Burdick has released a CD of his collected works for horn ensemble, Nine Notes, a retrospective of works, 1981 to 2010. You can hear samples on cdbaby.com.

Burdick, with the Electrum Brass Trio premiered his trio Gargoyles, opus 156 no. 20 Saturday, October 30th at Knox-Metropolitan United Church in Regina. They also performed music of Bach, Hidas, Hindemith, and others at the concert.

His Electrum Brass Trio, is interested in collaborating with composers, and would like to offer to record compositions written for a horn, trombone, and tuba trio, in exchange for a link on the composer's web site. Contact rb@horn.pro for more information.
Two fantastic new CDs were released in 2010 on the Canadian Music Centre, Prairie Region’s Prairie Sounds Imprint label on Centrediscs. Erika Raum and David Moroz’s From the Heartland was released this past spring, followed by Diana McIntosh’s Pinnacles in the summer.

From the Heartland, supported by the Saskatchewan Arts Board and the Canada Council, brings together two critically acclaimed artists. It features two works by Elizabeth Raum: Les Ombres and her Sonata for violin and piano. The disc also includes Sid Robinovitch’s folk-rooted Dance Set #2 and David McIntyre’s brilliant Sonata for violin and piano, Sprints.

McIntosh’s disc, Pinnacles, supported by Manitoba Film and Music, brings together a stunning ensemble, including Beverley Johnston and Ben Reimer, percussion, Laurel Ridd, flute, Vincent Ellin, bassoon, Daniel Scholz, viola, Karl Stobbe, violin, and Yuri Hooker, cello. The disc was inspired by the mountains and McIntosh’s many travels, in Canada and abroad. Works include Approaching Kilimanjaro, From Wapta Ice, Uhuru Kamili, On a Glacier, Porini, Porini!, Porini!, Just Add Water and A rose is a rose....

Audio samples can be found on the CMC website, www.musiccentre.ca, where these discs are also available for purchase.

Want to keep up-to-date on Canadian Music? Sign up for our e-newsletter by emailing prairie@musiccentre.ca or join the Canadian Music Centre’s Facebook group.

Congratulations to CMC Associate composer Elizabeth Raum who was recently honoured with the Saskatchewan Order of Merit!

This year the Western Canadian Music Awards were held in Kelowna, British Columbia and the Canadian Music Centre was there to present its fourth annual Classical Music Showcase. The CMC Prairie and BC regions engaged artistic director Sylvie Lange to present an evening full of exciting music. Nominees for Classical Recording of the Year performed, including Calgary saxophonist Jeremy Brown, Vancouver flute and piano duo Mark McGregor and Rachel Iwaasa, the musica intima choir and Fringe Percussion, as did the local duo of Colleen and Alicia Venables and guitarist Ed Henderson. The program included works by composers nominated for Classical Composition of the Year: Stephen Chatman’s Wilcat, Sid Robinovitch’s Adieu Babylon and two works by Jocelyn Morlock. Prairie composer William Jordan’s Sonata for alto saxophone and piano also appeared on the program. The program concluded with a “jam” by the performers on a theme by Elizabeth Raum.

CMC associate composer Stephen Chatman walked away with the honour for Classical Composition of the Year for his work Earth Songs, recorded on a disc by the same name by the University of British Columbia Singers and the CBC Radio Orchestra under the direction of Alain Trudel. Musica intima’s all-Canadian repertoire disc into light won Classical Recording of the Year.

The Okanagan Symphony helped the Canadian Music Centre celebrate Canadian music at the WCMAs with concerts October 15, 16 and 17 where Elizabeth Raum’s Overture to Carmen: “The Passion” was performed.
When singers with an international career retire they have many golden memories, glowing reviews, respected recordings, and sometimes, students who carry on their distinguished tradition. Maureen Forrester had all this and a special gift, which she left to all of us when she passed away earlier this year, a large body of song cycles dedicated to her.

Forrester was born in Montreal in 1930. She loved to sing and her first opportunities were in choirs, in particular St. James United and Stanley Presbyterian. The choirmasters recognized her talent and gave her lessons in theory, sight reading and other subjects. Early in her career she sang in productions for the Montreal Opera Guild, gave recitals for community music series in small towns in Ontario and Quebec, and appeared with the Montreal Symphony and the McGill Chamber Orchestra.

In 1956, Bruno Walter was looking for a contralto to take the place of the great British contralto, Kathleen Ferrier, who had died of cancer in 1953. Walter was captivated by Forrester’s sound and musicality. She became his favourite singer, making recordings and appearances with his orchestras – it was the beginning of Forrester’s international career. A patriot at heart, Forrester championed Canadian vocal music throughout her career, performing it at home and introducing international audiences to the music of Canadian composers.

Spring Rhapsody was composed by Jean Coulthard and dedicated to Forrester for the first Festival of the Arts held in Vancouver in 1958. Coulthard chose to set Canadian poets Bliss Carman, Now Great Orion Journeys to the West, W. E. Marshall, To a May Flower, L. A. McKay, Admonition for Spring and D. C. Scott, Ecstasy. Though the song cycle is not well known, Ecstasy is very popular. It is used in recitals, chosen for festivals, and found in the vocal syllabi of the Royal Conservatory of Music and Conservatory Canada. The eloquent vocal lines and sweeping piano figures with a grand climax in both parts explain its popularity. This cycle was published by Waterlow Music in 1978 with Ecstasy available as sheet music.

The Confession Stone by Robert Fleming was written for Forrester in 1962. Owen Dodson, the poet, wrote a cycle of poems embracing songs of Mary, Joseph, Mary Magdalene, Jesus, Judas and God. The songs are the poet’s conception of “their thoughts about themselves and others on that hard stone of confession on which most of us kneel in our lives.” Fleming chose the Songs of Mary – like Robert Schumann’s Woman’s Love and Life, the first song, a lullaby, is repeated at the end of the cycle. Mary is first holding the baby Jesus and then his broken body after the Crucifixion. Other songs show Mary’s concern over companions such as Judas and her puzzled thoughts about Lazarus raised from the dead. In other songs we hear of premonitions, anxious thoughts, very skilfully shown in the nervous accompaniment and the broken vocal lines of song VI. This is altogether an emotional and expressive work and was widely performed by Forrester.

I never saw another butterfly is a cycle of songs set to children’s poems from the concentration camp at Terezin (1942 – 1944), commissioned by the CBC for Maureen Forrester. The composer, Srul Irving Glick, made sensitive settings of the poems, sometimes quoting Hebrew folk songs in the accompaniment, imitating sounds from the camp – the boat whistle, the scampering of the little mouse. The vocal line uses Sprechstimme, monotone lines, beautiful melodies and extreme register shifts to express the emotions in the poems. The cycle was performed by Forrester across North America, Europe, Israel and Australia.

The lyrics of Four Russian Poems were discovered when the composer’s brother was Canada’s envoy to Russia. The composer, George Fiala used the poems Such Days as These by Anna Akhmatova, The Golden Grove and Letter to My Mother by Sergei Yessenin, and The First Ice by Andrei Voznesensky. Fiala uses a more conventional harmonic language but the interesting use of two against three and asymmetrical phrases make these worthy songs. Each song is connected by using key centers a tone apart.

Malcolm Forsyth arranged well-loved folk songs Chanson du Petit Cordonnier (Song of the Little Shoemaker), Adieu de la Mariee (The Farewell of a Bride) and Chanson de la Grenouillere (Song of the Frog Plain) for Three Metis Folk Songs from Saskatchewan, commissioned by the CBC for Maureen Forrester for the International Music Congress, Calgary, AB, in September, 1975.

The independent piano part lends a jaunty air to the setting of Petit Cordonnier and changes of key in two of the middle verses keep interest high. In the next folk song, arpeggio chords either rolled or written as sixteenth notes, allow the singer freedom to express the sad and melancholy feelings of the bride as she enters an arranged

OTHER SONGS DEDICATED TO MAUREEN FORRESTER


In addition there are orchestral versions of Glick’s I never saw another butterfly and Fleming’s The Confession Stone.

Sheet music and recordings of these works can be found online at www.musiccentre.ca

Cont. on page 12
Living composers write living music for young choirsters

by Catherine Glasser-Climie

Cantaré Children’s Choir was thrilled to travel to Ottawa in July 2010 to sing for Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II and His Royal Highness, Prince Philip on their recent visit to Canada. The performance took place in Ottawa at a private event at Rideau Hall. It was the thrill of a lifetime to be able to perform in such an intimate setting for the Queen and her entourage.

Being in Ottawa afforded Cantaré the opportunity to spend a day in Kingston with composer Dr. John Burge at Queen’s University. The day was devoted to exploring his work Angels’ Voices, which Cantaré will perform with the Calgary Civic Symphony in February 2011.

It’s a fascinating experience for artists to share in a discovery process with the composer. The composer can provide insight into the creative process – how did the work come to “be”? What were the influences that drove the compositional process? What were the logistical limitations of the piece when it was being written? How did you choose the texts? The artist can offer feedback or questions to the composer from the performer’s perspective – often an insightful experience. We all enjoyed the day immensely and considered it such a privilege to be able to work together in this creative process.

This was not Cantaré’s first time working with Dr. Burge. It began in Ireland in 2002 when we, together with choirs from Ireland and the United States, performed Simple Songs, a four movement work for treble chorus and orchestra, at the National Concert Hall in Dublin. Cantaré next worked with John at the CME Millennium Festival in Toronto in 2005 where he was composer-in-residence – the gala concert included a performance of his piece Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue. This time together led to discussions regarding the possibility of a commission for Cantaré Children’s Choir, which came to fruition in October of 2008.

A Prairie Tribute for treble chorus, piano and clarinet was premiered in Calgary. Each movement bears the title of a W.O. Mitchell novel. The first movement “Vanishing Points” is a soundscape; the second “What I did on my Summer Vacation” uses ideas that our choristers emailed to John as the text; and “Who Has Seen the Wind”. Through the generous support of SOCAN John spent a week in residence with Cantaré to put the finishing touches on the work. We are delighted that we are able to continue this very special relationship with John and to continue to showcase his works to singers and audiences alike.

Like many treble choirs across North America, Cantaré is committed to commissioning composers to create new works for the treble chorus. Since our inception in 1997 we have commissioned on our own three times: Allan Bevan Cradle Song (2002); John Burge A Prairie Tribute (2008); Ruth Watson Henderson A Summer Day (2009). In addition, we have joined forces with 20 choruses from around the globe, to jointly commission the following works: Bob Chilcott, Like a Singing Bird; Paul Caldwell and Sean Ivory, Witness; Rollo Dillworth, Every Time I Feel the Spirit; and David Brunner, Spiritual Music

Performing artists working together with composers makes for a very memorable experience. It infuses the artists’ understanding of the work with personal insight, anecdotes and inspiration. It offers the composer the opportunity to discover how the artist approaches exploring a work. It’s a process that is far deeper than “tell us how you want it to go.” This collaborative process ensures an exciting performance experience that will be cherished by composer, artist and audience.

State of the art recording studio opens in Lethbridge

by Dr. Rolf Boon and Chris Morris

The University of Lethbridge, Faculty of Fine Arts, Department of Music has recently completed work on the Studio One for our Bachelor of Music Digital Audio Arts program. The vision is to provide access to our facilities for nationally and internationally recognized performing artists in efforts to support their career development by using the highest level of professional audio production.

Studio One is a world-class recording and educational facility designed by acclaimed acoustician Jay Kaufman. This state-of-the-art facility boasts a spacious control room built for teaching and is accompanied by two capture spaces. In addition, Studio One is linked to a 200 seat recital hall via dedicated audio, video and foldback lines for large ensemble recordings, including the use of 9’ Steinway or Yamaha grand pianos.

Quality technology is key to this advanced 5.1 facility with a Solid State Logic Duality 48-channel console bringing digital and analog realms to the forefront. Accompanied by outboard technology from Focusrite, Avalon, George Massenburg, Lexicon, and Great River, Studio One also boasts a varied collection of microphones including, but not limited to, Neumann, Telefunken, AKG, and DPA.

The studio is available to all performing artists, ensembles, and composers — contact us to explore possibilities, seek common ground, and research the benefits of working with us in this exceptional studio. Interested parties could incorporate usage of our facilities as part of Canada Council, Alberta Foundation for the Arts, Canadian Music Centre or other grant applications.

For further information contact:
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Robert Turner celebrates 90 with Toronto and Winnipeg
by Sara Scott Turner

In a birthday blast for Chopin’s and Schumann’s 200th and Robert Turner’s 90th birthdays, Music Director Peter Oundjian and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra opened this season with Turner’s Opening Night (A Theatre Overture). It put a smile on the evening that would last all the way through to Mahler’s reorchestration of Schumann’s Symphony No. 2.

In cooperation with the Canadian Music Centre, Prairie Region, the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra Music Director, Alexander Mickelthwate appropriately chose for performance October 29th and 30th, Turner’s Shades of Autumn. This 1987 work was written while Turner was in residence at the famed MacDowell Artist’s Colony in New Hampshire.

Robert Turner’s exhilarating and profound music stems, in part, from his minute analysis of the music of fellow international composers. In Europe and the U.S., through study, travel and personal discourse, he has shared ideas and learned from Messiaen, Britten, Berio, Andriessen, Stockhausen, Britten, Copland, William Schuman, Elliott Carter and Roy Harris as well as the many conductors and performers who have played his music. “He delighted in yearly travels... especially sojourns in the southern climates of Italy and Spain, where we attended countless live concerts, visited museums and art galleries, explored the old homes of writers, painters and composers, and haunted the stacks of bookstores and libraries. His musical allusions and painstaking selections of the texts for vocal works reveal Turner’s sophisticated affection for humour and illusiveness derived from these vital events, peoples and places he experienced as much as from the arcane cultural sources and influences he discovered in books and other composers’ scores,” said his son, Alden Turner.

Turner’s music has been widely performed over the last half-century. In the 1960s - 1970s Toronto Symphony Orchestra audiences heard several performances of Opening Night, the Concerto for two pianos, and three different conductors’ interpretations of the 12-tone work, Three Episodes.

During the 1980s and 1990s Rivka Golani premiered the Concerto for Viola with Charles Dutoit and the Montreal Symphony Orchestra; the National Arts Centre Orchestra with Rivka Golani premiered A Group of Seven, which was subsequently performed by orchestras in Vancouver, Edmonton and Hamilton; Kazuhiro Koizumi conducted the profoundly moving Symphony in One Movement “Gift from the Sea” and Uri Mayer with the Edmonton Symphony performed Shades of Autumn. Third Symphony, premiered by Bramwell Tovey and the Winnipeg Symphony, received several nominations and awards.

In 2006, composer Sid Robinovitch wrote, “One of the features of Dr. Turner’s music that is most apparent to me is its distinctively North American quality. I believe that his music has achieved what is characteristic of the great composers of this continent such as Copland, Harris, and Ives: it has absorbed the concrete realities of the world around us and, through wide-ranging artistic reflection, presents a mature vision of what we are all about.”

Calgary Opera commissions new opera by CMC composer
by Alex Bonyun

In January 2011, Calgary Opera will premiere The Inventor, a new opera composed by Bramwell Tovey with libretto by John Murrell. As this is Tovey’s first opera, the process has been exciting for everyone involved. Though Tovey would love to watch his opera from a seat in the audience, he will instead be conducting his new opera himself.

The Inventor is based on the true historical figure of Alexander “Sandy” Keith Jr., the black sheep nephew of the famous brewing family. Unlike the rest of his family, Sandy became a career criminal, scamming hundreds of thousands of dollars and acquiring a multitude of different identities throughout his lifetime.

“Little motifs that I’ve dedicated to Sandy Keith are everywhere in this music,” says Tovey. “The opera begins with the Sandy Keith motif, which is literally his name ‘Sandy Keith.’ This motif is on every page of the piece, sometimes heavily disguised, but still there, because it permeates the action. He is the central antihero.”

Tovey also admits that working with librettist John Murrell and stage director Kelly Robinson has been a particular joy in the creation process.

“When you’re dealing with people like John Murrell and Kelly Robinson, you’re dealing with people who have profound sense of dramatically what’s possible on the operatic stage,” says Tovey. “In dramatic opera you have the contrast between good and evil, funny and tragic, and Sandy Keith bordered so many of these things that he became the stuff of opera pretty quickly.”
More choral news from the Prairies

by Leonard Ratzlaff

On March 9, the Richard Eaton Singers with the Vancouver Chamber Choir and pianist Leanne Regehr, premiered a commissioned work by Ruth Watson Henderson, A Song of the Seasons. Commissioned by the Richard Eaton Singers in celebration of artistic director Leonard Ratzlaff’s 25th anniversary with the choir, the four movement work sets poetry by Edward Blodgett. Blodgett is a former poet laureate of Edmonton and winner of the Governor General’s Award for Poetry in 1996, and a member of the bass section of the Richard Eaton Singers. It was performed as part of a joint concert of the Eaton Singers and the touring Vancouver Chamber Choir.

Tonus Vivus celebrates 25 years of new music in Edmonton

During the early months of 1985, five former students of Violet Archer met in order to found a society devoted to the performance of works by local new music composers. The five founding members were Helve Sastok, Reinhard von Berg, Ron Hannah, Gordon Nicholson, and Jerry Ozipko. Their main concern? How to assure their music was played on a regular basis. Archer, ever full of enthusiasm for new music, had suggested that they grab the bull by the horns. “Stop complaining! Start a society that’d be a springboard for your work,” she said. “An entity which will allow you to find an outlet for your creative talents!” In May of 1985 the new society was officially incorporated.

Now, celebrating its 25th anniversary, the organization, in 2009 re-named TONUS VIVUS – Society for New Music (in Latin, “tonus vivus” means “living sound”), has a membership of $10 or more) 

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I Saw Eternity, a recent work by Ontario composer Leonard Enns, was performed by the joint choirs of the Universities of Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan, at Podium 2010, the biannual conference of the Association of Canadian Choral Communities in Saskatoon, Saturday, May 22, 2010 with Elroy Friesen conducting.

Your donation (we suggest $35/year) will help defray the cost of producing Prairie Sounds magazine. In addition, you will receive the following benefits:

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PRAIRIE NEWS Fall 2010 Canadian Music Centre Prairie Region
marriage. In the last song, purely Canadian, Pierre Falcon tells the Battle of Seven Oaks from the Métis perspective. Forsyth uses the piano part to create an atmosphere of pride and joy in their victory over the British soldiers.

Another cycle by Jean Coulthard, *Six Irish Poems for Maureen Forrester*, is an important addition to the repertoire. The poets are John Boyle O’Reilly, *The White Rose*; Padraic Colum, *Cradle Song*; George William Russell, *Frolic*; Francis Ledwidge, *Nocturne*; William Monk Gibbon, *Innocence* and *The Wise Lover*. The *White Rose*, published by Alberta Keys in Jean Coulthard Song Album for Low Voice, is a love song with elaborate piano part and flowing vocal part. Much work is needed to coordinate the performers’ rubato and the differing use of triplet rhythms. The Padraic Colum poem has been used by many composers; a tranquil lullaby with some a cappella phrases, it paints a lovely picture of the shepherds looking in wonder at the Mother and Child resting in the stable. This Cradle is found in Jean Coulthard Song Album for Medium Voice. Frolic is given a joyous setting by Coulthard with an almost continuous, rippling sixteenth note accompaniment. Nocturne is suitably sad and slow with triplets in the piano and smooth duplet patterns in the vocal line. Innocence has a childlike simplicity. Eighth notes predominate in both the piano and singer’s lines. *The Wise Lover* has a skilfully written accompaniment with Coulthard’s usual lyrical vocal line. A romantic, Coulthard has many expression marks to help the performers give the desired expressive performance.

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